

Decisions matter significantly in farm success

PEORIA, Ill. — Decisions matter. Where we are today has been affected by the decisions we have made in the past. Many variables play in to where we find ourselves today.

We have all had those moments when we have found ourselves thinking, “Oh, if only I had done that differently.” The form of our life is chiseled, drilled and molded by our daily decisions and the decisions of others.

You decided to go to college or not. You decided on a major. You decided to come back to the farm. You decided he or she was the one you wanted to be with for the rest of your life. You decided to expand when interest rates were high. You decided that you didn’t have time for the details or paperwork. You decided this was the time to sell corn. Even not making a decision results in how things play out.

All decisions take you somewhere, lead you to the next step and can define you by having a hand in creating your future, your business and your legacy.

Philanthropist and investor Warren Buffett made a decision as a boy that impacted his future. He decided to sell newspapers. He decided to buy his first shares of stock at age 11. He decided to drop out of Wharton Business School and transfer to the University of Nebraska. He decided to take a Dale Carnegie public speaking course. He decided integrity would be a guiding beacon in business. He decided to donate his fortune to charity.

Some of his recent decisions have put Buffett in the news again, in a less flattering



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way—proof that every decision is important.

The objective of this message is not to create decision anxiety, but to raise awareness that solid decisions can help us move forward with a purpose. Consider this three-step approach:

Reflect on where you have been, where you are now and how you arrived there. This first step is crucial to laying the course for your future.

What past decisions were influential, if not key, in determining your lot in life today? What can you learn from your decision making history and what would you change if you had to do it over again? What can you still change? Most importantly, what is stopping you?

Second, take what you glean from your personal reflection and share it with a trusted and honest friend. Seek feedback. Lay the expectation ahead of the conversation, explaining how you value the opinion of this person.

Remain completely open to what your friend says and think on what they share. Knowing more about yourself and your ability to make sound decisions makes setting the course for your future less stressful.

Deciding what decisions to make to move your business in a better direction is step three. Here are some suggestions: Decide to become a student of the financial ramifications of your business decisions. Make a decision to monitor your operation effectively and learn a new computer program that can help you with tracking. Decide to invest 30 minutes one day a week reflecting on the impact of the decisions you make that week.

These things begin charting a course to making you an effective CEO of your farm. Begin to better manage your time by improving your delegation skills and training your employees more effectively. Determine to have the tough conversations that go with building a legacy plan for the future of your farm, and set a time for the first talk.

Having a strategy for your farm sounds intimidating, but it really is a culmination of several smaller decisions.

You can accomplish a change by moving through the steps above; reflect, seek feedback and apply what you learn to make better decisions. Engage in these steps the next time you are called on to make a decision, because decisions matter.