

## Tips for Communication in Farm Businesses

1. Recognize the family's role in the business
  - a. According to USDA, 98% of farms are family businesses. In most farms, the family is heavily integrated into the farming operation
  - b. "Establish agreements about the family members' roles in the family and in the farm business" (The Farm's Legacy – page 31, Balancing Work and Family, Aadron Rausch)
2. Conflict isn't necessarily bad. Acknowledge conflict and utilize it as an opportunity to move the business forward and improve relationships. If people are not attached and invested in the business, they will not care enough to disagree/have conflict about it. Realize that each person has a different conflict style.
3. Explore family feelings
  - a. "Identify feelings and issues that get in the way of sound business practices" (The Farm's Legacy – page 30, Balancing Work and Family, Aadron Rausch)
4. Discuss issues before they become a crisis (The Farm's Legacy – page 31, Balancing Work and Family, Aadron Rausch)
5. Discuss and clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations.
  - a. This can lead to more effective, collaborative, and supportive relationships within the family (The Farm's Legacy – page 28, Communication in the Family, Aadron Rausch)
6. Focus on goals and setting them in a collaborative style.
7. Listen to what others are saying, not just how they are saying. Context and content matters more than the tone in which it is communicated.
8. Transparency and honesty go a long way in moving the farm and the family forward.
9. Engage in active listening.

- a. This encourages others to continue interacting. You can use both verbal and nonverbal communication techniques (The Farm's Legacy – page 29, Communication in the Family, Aadron Rausch)
  - i. Rephrasing
  - ii. Tone of voice
  - iii. Nonverbal cues

10. Do NOT schedule farm family meetings on holidays.