

SDARL Class VI
Mitchell/Huron Seminar #10
January 10-12, 2012

Tuesday, January 10, 2012

Class VI met at the Highland Conference Center in Mitchell. The seminar began with Program Director, Michelle Robbins, going over the agenda and other important information. SDARL Executive Director, Dan Gee, followed up on the seminar in Sioux Falls. The last of the China reports were given by five class members.

Jolene Brown a professional speaker, author, and family business consultant who owns and operates a eastern Iowa corn and soybean farm with her husband, was our guest speaker for the day. The afternoon workshop and evening keynote were open to alumni and their guests.

Her trademarked presentation “Top 10 Stupid Things Families do to Break Up their Business”™ was well received with a lot of tools to get started. Worksheets were handed out to concur with the top 10 things. The top 10 things centered around the danger in assumptions, communications or the lack thereof, and failing to consider important factors.

Ms. Brown gave a powerful afternoon presentation. Many families were able to bring the different generations together to listen to the important tools of transition. A lot of lawyers can give you the mechanical tools to transfer a farm or ranch from one generation to another, but that may have little to do with the emotional side.

After a break and supper Ms. Brown presented her trademarked keynote presentation “It’s a Jungle Out There”™. After a lot of laughter everyone in the room was ready to listen. We found out about the four big influences on us, the following are a small snapshot of each bullet:

Pace: it is so fast

People: What can you do to make this place better—farmers/ranchers feed the world – listen to what is important—people have changed

Process: Is local, organic and natural perceived as safer

Products: educate ourselves to better educate others—people want time, youth, health and the experience. Ms. Brown gave an example of the experience when she attended a slow food dinner (a meal that is meant to take hours) during each course a farmer talked about what he produce that was on their plate.

As the evening was coming to a close we were given advice on how to find happiness:

1. Accept things we cannot control or change
2. Look for humor every day, keep a humor journal, write down all the great funnies that happen on a daily bases
3. If you want to enjoy your journey hang out with those who do.

As Ms. Brown was winding up she said “The world is hungry for those who bloom where they are planted” I could not help but think SDARL is making many blooms.

Tammy Basel, Reporter

Wednesday, January 11, 2012

Strategic Planning

Our day began with **strategic planning** with Denny Everson, SDARL Foundation Director. Denny gave us an overview of the process and led us through the basics of strategic planning, based on the book “From Good to Great.” We were asked to think of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the SDARL program. As we separated into groups, we each had input and helped in identifying issues in each of these areas. Some of us have used the method before, which helped those who have not seen how it worked. Ideas in each of these areas were written on big white sheets of paper and after the allotted time, the group shared those with other groups. Members of other groups were able to challenge what was listed which made for helpful discussion. Denny explained that many places do this over a two or three-day session, which allows much greater depth. This was just to give us a brief intro.

Oak Lane Hutterite Colony

John Wipf at **Oak Lane Hutterite Colony** welcomed us to the colony. John said there is a board of directors and he is the business manager. Workers are rotated through the livestock, grain, shop and other areas when they are young and then placed where they work best. If an area is short of workers, they can pull from other places that aren’t so busy. They work in conjunction with other colonies. When a couple marries, the woman moves to the colony of her husband.

The tour started at the school, where we visited grades 1-4 in one room in a new building. English is taught in the school. The native language spoken at home is a mixture of German, Romantic and Slavic languages pieced together as they moved around Europe due to persecution. Because of South Dakota state laws, the local school district provides a teacher for the students. Students go to school through the eighth grade. If they need specialized training after that, the colony will send them to places such as Minneapolis to get technology training. John encouraged the group to ask him any question they wanted to.

John said the colony bought the farm in 1986. All crops and livestock are organic, and they don’t believe in using feed additives. The milk barn was built three years ago, and they use a water flushing system to keep floors clean. At Oak Lane, there are 126 people with about 37 working men. The board decides who works where. In 1997, many buildings were damaged or destroyed in a storm. The next day, 250 people arrived to help rebuild. John said that such situations have been catalysts to many couples meeting and falling in love. People travel a lot to other colonies. Cell phones are used when people leave the colony on business so they can keep in contact in case they need to pick up supplies. There is limited use of the Internet because of some inappropriate sites, but John feels it can also be very useful.

About 9,000 acres are farmed and 3,000 leased, using the latest technology. The class caravanned around the operation to see the hog barns where they farrow to finish 1,200 hogs. About 300 Jersey cows are milked with milk going to AMPI and also supplying the needs of the colony. There are about 70,000 turkeys raised on this colony. We also stopped at the shop where we saw some of the huge combines and headers used to harvest crops.

The class was treated to a delicious lunch of turkey cutlets, garden vegetables and homemade bread and cookies prepared for us by the women of the colony. John led us to the church where we asked questions about their lives and ways they do things.

Redstone Feeders

From there Class VI travelled to **Redstone Feeders**, near DeSmet. Brothers Todd and Bill Wilkinson started the operation with their father in 2005 after studying cattle feeding in the Midwest. This land wasn't really good for farming so they decided to put in a large scale feedlot. In 2005 they built a monoslope building, 1200 feet long x 100 feet wide. They added outside pens and manure lagoons. Dad died in 2005 so the sons reevaluated and decided to go full speed ahead.

There are 11 full-time employees. Bill handles animal health and Todd does the purchasing and marketing. They added a second barn in 2007. In 2008, the market went sour and so they held off on building more. They have the capacity to put 15,000 cows under roof. They finish 18,000 to 22,000 head a year. Cattle are primarily purchased in North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming., Montana, and Nebraska. Once Redstone agrees to purchase calves, they will send out eartags and supplies for shots to producers to keep all of that uniform. As each animal is source- verified, Redstone is able to receive a premium when they are sold.

Redstone buys feed from area farmers, mostly within a 30 miles radius. They don't custom feed; these are their cattle. The price of feed is a big variable. When corn went from \$3 to \$4.50, cost to feed went from \$650 to \$900. They have to use DDGS that provide a consistent level of sulfur. Since they have artesian water, limiting sulfur is important to prevent "brainers" which is the term used to describe the freeze that affects the brain of the animal.

They are proud of their death loss, which is less than ½ of 1 percent. One of their biggest headaches is the amount of manure that must be handled. They are working with Basin Electric on building a manure digester that would provide electricity to Basin. That is still in the works.

Huron

That evening, the class gathered at the Beadle County Extension Building. Alumni Brad Sanderson welcomed us and introduced to other alumni from the area that helped provide the supper. We enjoyed beef sandwiches and SDSU ice cream sundaes. Dan and Michelle answered more questions about China and passed out rubber boots for our farm visits in China.

Connie Groop, Reporter

Thursday, January 12, 2012

Day three of the Mitchell/Huron seminar started at the Crossroads Hotel in Huron. Terry Schiltz, President of AgSense, LLC, gave an overview of his company, which supplies producers the opportunity to monitor and control irrigation equipment, grain storage, and confinements remotely via the digital cell network. Customers can monitor and control their equipment through the website www.wagnet.net, pda, or cell/smart phone giving them the opportunity to start, stop, control pressure, pace, and specific pieces such as guns at the end of the pivot. The site also works with soil probes to determine moisture or soil temp to maximize information agronomists use for consultation. AgSense can be used in confinements to monitor temperature and power sources (currently used by onion and potato storage facilities as well as livestock confinement barns and grain bins). AgSense has 13 employees who focus their efforts to the United States but have seen an increase in demand in Australia, Brazil, Africa, and some potential in China.

Ty Eschenbaum, South Dakota Department of Ag Value-Added Marketing Specialist, shared his story about traveling to China for medical treatment. Ty was raised in Lake Preston on the family seedstock operation and was diagnosed with leukemia at age 15. After a long battle of fighting the leukemia between the Sioux Falls hospital and Mayo, enduring shingles, staph infection, multiple ports and spinal taps, bone marrow biopsies, and a fungus on his lungs (only 5-10% survival rate from the fungus), Ty was cancer free. Through the treatment process, the steroids in the chemo treatment caused Avascular Necrosis (AVN), which restricts the blood supply to the bones and causes joint pain and deterioration. Ty's case was the most severe Mayo had ever seen, solution given by US doctors was full joint replacement of all joints affected (knees, hips, elbows). In doing research, Ty found a place online that treats AVN in China. Ty and his mother, Jody, traveled to China for one month in 2007 when Ty was a freshman in college. Since then, Ty has made 11 trips to China for treatments. The hospital uses traditional Chinese medicine; herbal supplements, range of motion exercises, body baths, and electrical stimulation. Ty's doctor in China, known as the Professor, is well respected across the world for the electric stimulation machine that Ty uses for his treatment. The Professor was an orthopedic surgeon for many years prior to starting The Emperor Hospital, treating 175-200 patients at a time. Ty is South Dakota's medical mystery and miracle. He will be in China during Class 6 study abroad and has scheduled a tour of the Emperor Hospital for the class. Ty's story is available online at <http://www.caringbridge.org/sd/ty/index.htm>.

Class 6's final tour was of Dakota Provisions. Ken Rutledge, CEO, gave the class an overview of the turkey plant that started in 2007 which includes both a slaughter and finished product line. Dakota Turkey Growers DBA Dakota Provisions is owned by 43 Hutterian Colonies in ND, SD, and MN. It employs 800 people and produces 200 million pounds of product per year, approximately 10 million live turkeys per year. They have the potential to move production up to 400 million pounds per year within the facility now. Dakota Provisions runs one shift per day, each shift processing 4.9 million turkeys-that's 42-46 birds per minute. They also process pork, beef, and chicken on the finished product side. They produce all the pork and most of the turkey for Denny's, all the turkey for Panara Bread, all the turkey and chicken for Firehouse Deli, and most of the products for Trader Joe's, to name a few of the companies they work with. They also have their own line called Prairie Grown. The plant takes delivery from two or three farmers per day, utilizing a CO₂ chamber for stunning. The birds

spend three minutes in the chamber prior to being placed on the line. The birds average about 42 pounds each, referred to as “heavy tom’s” as this facility doesn’t process hens. Dressing percentage on a bird is 82-83%, and 60% after deboning. They can trace the birds back to the grower, in the case of any disease or quality issues. Each bird is inspected by a USDA inspector.

The final day of the final seminar for Class 6 was very educational. Thank you to all the speakers for their time and hospitality.

Danci Baker, Reporter