



Field Notes for The Week Of

2-6-2023

Connecting Farmers with Farm Agencies

February is here and no matter what the groundhog says, winter is halfway over, and spring will soon arrive. This is what I continuously tell myself and many other farmers do as well. This winter has been a not-so-normal winter. The extreme weather changes have kept many farmers on their toes. From frigid temps to soggy warm days, old man winter has thrown just about everything at us. I was able to talk to many farmers this past week and the common theme was I wish it would stay one way or the other, either cold or warm! This past week did present some opportunities for livestock producers to get some hay moved and manure applied as Friday and Saturday temperatures dipped in the teens allowing the soil to freeze. Grain producers continue to deliver grain to the local elevators, and I saw a few land clearing and fence row work taking place in my travels. I was able to fit a school visit into my schedule this week as well. I made a trip to Manchester High School where I had the pleasure of presenting to the Junior and Senior FFA students about farm finances, balance sheets, and farm budgeting. I was amazed by the interest and respect that the students showed me. Mr. Sparks is truly preparing his student to be this country's future leaders!

Speaking of farm finances, just like every business, the cost of doing business has gone up, unfortunately, most businesses can adjust for the higher cost of business by adjusting prices for their products, farmers on the other hand don't always have that ability. Farming is a high-input business and that is why finding assistance with capital investments, improvements, expansion projects, or just operating expenses is important. This is where your local farm service agencies might be able to assist. This past Wednesday evening I invited producers to come out and meet one on one with local resource professionals from the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Soil and Water Conservation District. Topics of discussion included the Livestock Indemnity Program, Farm Commodity Storage loans, Specialty crop Insurance, Wildlife control permits, conservation cost-share programs, farm loans, and technical services provided. After the meeting was finished producers were able to talk personally to resource professionals about their unique needs for the farm. My goal in organizing this meeting was to allow the producer to think about their current operation today and where they would like to see it in the future and where these programs and agencies fit into those goals and aspirations. Another goal of this meeting was to get young and beginning farmers involved, too many times youth leave the farm, not because of lack of interest but rather the lack of financial support. My goal was met, I had 20 producers attend five of whom were young beginning farmers!

