

Column Name- The Heartland Minute

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New Year, New Records

Since the 1st of the year, I think we have all heard our friends or family members discussing about their new year's resolutions. They ranged from eating healthier, to spending more time with family, to reading more books, and anything and everything in between!

Which got me to thinking, in regards to our agriculture producers, what should be on our minds as we begin 2018, what should our "resolutions" be? When I ask producers "what is one thing you need to improve most in your operation", many times the answer I seem to get is in regards to record keeping. Whether that be I need to keep better records, or I need to start writing more information down, it always seems like record keeping is where some producers fall short.

Record keeping is a topic few producers really like discussing. It is time consuming and it keeps producers away from the activities they would much rather be doing- in the fields. But how can we manage an operation, we don't measure? Many producers not only are trying to keep detailed financial records now, but production records, even weather records!

Financial records are still the most important records to keep. A detailed chart of accounts will help you or your accountant create the financial reports you need. There seems to be a lot of variety in the way producers are keeping records today. Some producers have completely transitioned to electronic record keeping, some systems are so detailed that it can create profit and loss statements by the individual fields. If computers aren't really your specialty, there is nothing wrong with the good old paper records. One set of account books that seem to really help producers is the Kansas Farm Account Book, which

can be picked up at the Greenwood County Extension Office. These books have the abilities to track receipts, expenses, cash flow, inventories, balance sheet, income statement, and crop/livestock production information.

Whatever method works best for your operation, whether electronic or paper, is a great start to being able to better manage your business. Being able to locate your strong and weak points in your farm organization and operation, will set you on a better track for the upcoming year.

For more information regarding Agriculture and Natural Resources, 4-H Youth Development, or K-State Research and Extension call the office at 620-583-7455, email me, Lindsay Shorter, at lindsayshorter@ksu.edu, or stop by the office which is located inside the courthouse. Be sure to follow K-State Research and Extension- Greenwood County on Facebook for the most up-to-date information on Extension education programs and the Greenwood County 4-H program.