

Agriculturists Are Eternal Optimists!

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There is so much in agriculture that is beyond the control of those involved that without a positive attitude and outlook the farming community would not be able to cope, and we would be without those that provide the essentials of life; food, clothing and shelter. Of course, farmers do whatever they can to control whatever they can and minimize the risks with diversified options. But Mother Nature has a mind of her own, which definitely can be an everyday challenge. Today our local farming community is part of an international sector, with added dimensions that impact all we do. We are bounded by regulations that provide us with documentation that we are doing what we have always done as the true environmentalists looking to sustain what we use for future generations.

The true reflection of sustainability includes profitability, which is a major consideration, which in many cases includes a variety of areas beyond our control. Individual farmers do not control the price received for many commodities, and in many instances, they do not control the level of the charges incurred for marketing, preparing the commodity for market, and in sometimes for the trucking of the commodity. They must deal with increases by becoming more efficient and cutting production costs as those costs continue to rise for their inputs as well as all expenses related to their business.

The farming community must also deal with labor issues, as do all businesses, with the one special consideration, the image that agricultural labor is intense but requires no special skills is total and complete unreality. The labor force needed for agriculture is diverse and tech-savvy, as all we use and do germinates from the ever-changing impacts of research and development. The equipment used represents a major investment and the operators must be adept at using all the advancements, so they maximize their efficiency. It is not as simple as it was, which is totally evident if you have ever witnessed the operation of combines, grape harvesters, potato planting and harvesting and even the operation of the equipment for everyday chores. The equipment cabs of today resemble the space ship pictures we viewed as children.

Dealing with all the stresses within the ag industry requires some very special talents, totally represented by the farm community. Whatever their product or enterprise, they represent a variety of talent, enthusiasm, creativity and positive attitude that is amazing. Farmers may complain, but they are always looking forward to a future that is upbeat, and they know they can deal with anything and recover from all that comes their way. They are a true community, helping neighbors as well as their farming sector family. I am so proud to be a member of this tremendous family!