

## Message from the President



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As either a rancher or farmer, water plays an irreplaceable role in your operation. Crops, whether raised for feed or sale, and livestock both need water for growth and survival. This natural resource has become a much larger discussion point within agriculture in the past few years, both for its scarcity and excess depending upon the region of the country in which your operation exists.

Author Steven Solomon in his book, *Water: The Epic Struggle for Wealth, Power and Civilization* argues, "Water is surpassing oil as the world's scarcest critical resource." He also states, "Water's cost doesn't reflect its true economic value. While a society's transition from oil may be painful, water is irreplaceable." These are two undeniably accurate points. The true monetary value of water greatly exceeds the cost we pay for it and there is no replacement for this resource. Research outlined in Mr. Solomon's book notes, "Our water use between 1900 and 1975 tripled relative to population growth. From 1975 to the present day, our use of water has flat-lined. This has occurred despite a 30% population increase and a corresponding GDP escalation, which is an amazing increase in water efficiency."



**Alan Hoskins**  
President

Many farmers and ranchers in the western sections of the United States, know all too well about the challenges of doing more with less when it comes to water availability. They are dealing daily with the challenges of little to no water due to excessive drought caused by a general lack of rain and a lower than normal snowpack melt. Shrinking water tables have caused wells, historically providing the lifeblood necessary to raise farm products to either diminish in their capacity to provide water or fail completely.

Recently, I had the privilege to visit farmers and ranchers in both Nevada and California, two of the most affected drought-stricken areas. One of the hay producers I spoke with in Nevada commented on the need to install a metering system on his wells to better understand his water utilization and develop a greater conservation plan. He is one of the lucky ones, as water is already metered throughout many sections. In portions of California, the situation is dire at best. There is a shortage of individuals to dig wells, and if you are fortunate enough to gain accessibility to one of the rigs, the cost for each well ranges from \$50,000 to \$500,000.

There is no quick fix to the water shortage challenges confronting many farmers and ranchers. These producers are working diligently to be good stewards of their water resources. They have found ways to do more with less and continue to look for new conservation practices. Despite the challenges they face, I saw individuals who continue to be positive about the future and determined to find new ways to succeed. These positive attitudes are a huge part of the reason I feel so blessed to be able to work with individuals involved in production agriculture.

*Source: Alan Hoskins, President*





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## Georgia Peach Council Touts Good Crop, Summertime Marketing

Georgia Peach growers are gearing up for a plentiful crop. To highlight the outstanding flavor of the quintessential summertime fruit, the Georgia Peach Council has launched a new, seasonal marketing campaign aimed at both retailers and consumers.

"There's nothing like the taste of a Georgia Peach," noted Will McGehee, of the Georgia Peach Council. "Our new campaign highlights what has always been the best time of year to enjoy peaches from Georgia."

For consumers, the Council will step up its social media presence by sponsoring three summertime contests. A "Pin it to Win it" Pinterest contest will invite peach

lovers to create boards to pin and share Georgia Peach recipes

An Instagram consumer photo contest is also in the works. Both contests will use the hashtag, #LoveGeorgiaPeaches, and winners will receive \$500.

Additionally, the Georgia Peach Council will sponsor a "Share Your Summer" giveaway, which lets shoppers of participating grocery stores pin photos to an in-store board or on the grocers' social media channels.

To extend its brand awareness and educational efforts, the Georgia Peach Council will also schedule a number of television cooking

demonstrations in target markets throughout the Southeast, Northeast and Midwest.

On the retail side, supermarkets in targeted markets may utilize turnkey point of sale merchandising display bins, posters with tips on how to pick the perfect peach and a retail dietitian toolkit complete with recipes, nutritional information, blog posts and thought starters.

To encourage dietitians to communicate the delicious, healthy benefits of Georgia Peaches, the dietitian with the most social media reach will receive an expenses-paid getaway to tour the heart of Georgia's peach country.

*Source: Southeast Farm Press*

## *American Farm... NEWS*

### **Spartan Livestock Open – Mason, Michigan**

American Farm was a proud sponsor of the Spartan Livestock Open on June 20, 2014. The golf tournament serves as a fundraiser to support the meats and livestock judging team at Michigan State University.



### **Green Valley Farms - Randleman, North Carolina**

CONGRATULATIONS to Green Valley Farms and the Hockett Family on receiving the Southeast Member of Distinction Award given by the DFA (Dairy Farmers of America)!

## **Succession Planning: Starts Simple**

"Good succession planning doesn't lend itself to one-size-fits-all solutions," noted by Lance Woodbury at Family Business Matters. Every family may face similar issues such as retirement, land transitions, off-farm heirs, returning family members, growth opportunities or even spousal conflict. Yet each family's history, relationships, culture, business strategy, expectations, personalities and assumptions combine to form a unique, dynamic and evolving transition challenge. While succession has its share of complexity, there are several simple practices that can have an immediate and positive impact on your planning efforts.

### **EXPRESS GRATITUDE**

If you're part of the younger generation that will be taking over the family business, tell your parents or in-laws "thanks" for building a business or stewarding assets that will benefit you and future generations. If you are from the retiring generation, express your gratitude to your successors for their energy and commitment.

### **ASK FOR INPUT**

Organizational changes go better when people feel they have a stake in the outcome. A team will be more supportive of a new employee if they have some input into her hiring. There are fewer events in a family business bigger than management and ownership transitions, so it's worth slowing down and gaining input in order to garner support.

### **STATE YOUR INTENTIONS**

Leaving family members guessing about your plans for the future creates a political environment where family members jockey for position and favor. Tell your family members what you plan to do. For agricultural businesses, summer is a difficult season to begin succession planning discussions. However, the suggestions here will help ensure that when you do revisit your transition plan this fall or winter, you've laid the groundwork for a worthwhile process.

*Source: Lance Woodbury, Family Business Matters  
DTN The Progressive Farmer*



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