

Statewide FBM Advisory Meeting

49 participants including

- 25 Farm Business Management instructors
- 7 Deans
- 5 Lenders/FSA
- 1 student
- Representatives from MAELC (2), CFFM (2), MDA, MDI, Rural Mental Health (2)
- Mary Rothchild – Minn State System Office
- Del Lecy and Judy Barka

Chat Comments from Meeting

- From mauricedurheim : As a lender, I agree with what Craig is saying about boots on the ground on the farm. The input that can be provided to the farmer influences the decisions they make.
- From Josh Tjosaas : I believe the importance of transition of instructor mentorship is extremely important and we need to find a way to continue that program for our PEP instructors. I believe one of the lenders stated the importance of recruiting/mentorship and training.
- From Kevind : As only 2 months+ into the job, the opportunity to have a mentor with me has been priceless. Without Brad, I would have been dead in the water. If finances and personel allow, I would recommend it for all new instructors. Kevin Dahlman
- From Deron Erickson : I am still concerned about the Beginning Farmer Scholarships and the different requirements from different Colleges in order for the Farmer to apply for the scholarships.
- From Sarah Dornink : Agreed with all that has been said with special emphasis for me on continued retention of instructors (mentoring and professional development), creative offerings for curriculum (blending in person and using technology), and reaching new audiences.
- From Bradley Burklund : There has been a chat question regarding how to attract a larger or deeper candidate pool and several mentions about faculty recruitment. This is not a new problem. I will go on record to state that I believe we need to address credentialing issues and the restrictions it imposes on some excellent candidates, especially when it comes to H.S. Agriculture educators. Not sure how that process can be addressed but in my view it is one of the larger barriers restricting candidate pool size and quality.
- From Billy J : I agree totally Brad.
- From Zach Rada : The credentialing issue is a union issue. Several of us have tried to address it without activity being taken. It might be time for some of us to try to carry that message to the Union again and ask for adjustments to credentialing.
- From Dan Miller : The Farm Transition Collaboration with Megan and Jim has been great. Still large need out there that I do not see diminishing. The covid issue and poor farm economy may have put a pause on demand.
- From mauricedurheim : Well Stated Mark. We lenders are serious supporters of this program, and are willing to offer what we can to be helpful.

Comments from Break-out group #1 – Kevin Dahlman

FBM State Wide Advisory Zoom Meeting

4-8-2020

3 Best Practices

- a) FBM records help the farmer understand his true cost of production
- b) The FBM package is a 5-star program for farmers

3 Challenges

- a) We need to personally introduce ourselves to bankers, veterinarians, lenders, policy makers, farmers, and other agri-business stakeholders, and have a presence at meetings
- b) We need to advertise ourselves more to sell our message, and keep the message out there.
- c) Need to collaborate with the land grant institutions, and extension to work together
- d) Help to find the right people for vacant FBM positions
- e) With mentor/mentee relationship, have the mentor assess the individual to see if he/she is truly fit for the position after the first year.
- f) We need to highly encourage FBM instructors to be community active within the Ag and non-Ag community's

FBM Statewide Advisory Group #2 Pauline Van Nurden

Biggest Successes:

- The educational approach of 1 on 1 education, that builds a strong relationship with students
- Statewide nature of the program, providing similar education across the state.
- The training and resources are provided through the Centers of Excellence on a statewide basis. (Each college isn't on their own to provide this). The success and usefulness of PEP and CFFM training.
- Collaborative nature of the program with students/farmers, instructors, and lenders working together.

Biggest Challenges:

- Instructor time constraints –
 - Asked to work with more students, mentor new faculty. This is often times done gratis, as many instructors are maxed out on overload and get no payment for helping new instructors.
 - Administrative support needed for instructors to help with non-teaching activities. How can activities be streamlined? Expense reports is an example.
- Faculty stress – dealing with long-term downturn in Ag economy and now COVID-19. The stress is mounting for farmers and faculty.
- Finding/recruiting new instructors – many instructors feel the need to recruit their replacement or feel their program will end.

- A challenge posed to statewide leadership – the need to recruit, train, and retain quality instructors is paramount.

A Challenge & Opportunity:

- COVID-19 – this challenging situation will have long term impacts for farms and educators. Opportunity to utilize new delivery methods, like Zoom to enhance programming. Provides challenges and a learning curve, but can make program delivery more efficient.

Megan Roberts Group

Based on what we are hearing/seeing, what are the 3 best practices that could be used to market the FBM (what are we doing well that the public would value)?

Unbiased, educational information, financial information, Farm Business Management instructors have no agenda but the best interest of their students.

Providing educational workshops that are open to students and general farmer population as a way possibly to increase awareness of FBM. This is not necessarily an immediate response, but sometimes it is more long term reactions. Examples content meetings include Farm Bill, Beginning Farmer Scholarship and Tax Credit, Prevent Plant, etc. Create content experts college wide to build awareness with community.

Meet every lender that is in each FBM instructor’s area, including bankers, FCS, FSA, credit unions, etc. This is Face-to-Face.

Based on what we are hearing/seeing, what are the 3 biggest challenges we need to address as a state FBM organization?

Getting the word out is a challenge. Some are very aware, some have no knowledge of the program. There are pockets of the state that don’t have

Consistency is tough. There is variation in value across the state. How do you market across the state when not every FBM instructor is consistent? We have new instructors, we have different colleges, and we have different administrators.

Training is key for both instructors and administrators.

Students need way to provide anonymous feedback (some colleges do a really good job on that and some do not).

Brad Milbrath

Subject: Advisory meeting small group marketing and challenges

Practices to market FBM

- Statewide database
- Testimonials
- Program is beneficial in good times to maximize profit and efficiency. More vital now than ever to keep farms alive.

Challenges

- Rising tuition
- Instructor retention and hiring
- Recruiting and retaining new students

Breakout Room 4 – Lynn Hoffmann

Best practices to market:

1. Finbin data base to run reports
2. Relationships with lenders
3. Trained instructors (sharing of information between each other through group email that happens at Riverland)

Biggest challenges:

1. Credentialing and education of new instructors outside of PEP
2. Cost of program = decrease enrollment during difficult financial times or lack of business volume
3. MAELC grant program, meeting all the necessary criteria to receive full funding
4. Beginning Farmer Scholarship program funds being depleted rapidly

Lynn Hoffmann, MBA

Group #5 FBM Breakout

Participants: Josh Tjosaas-Recorder NCTC FBM, Brad Schloesser-South Center of Agriculture, Sarah Dornick-MAELC Director, Travis Birhanzl-Ridgewater FBM, Bob Rick-CLC FBM, Kyle Huneke-Riverland FBM

3 Best Practice to Market FBM Program

1. MAELC Survey of Non FBM Students (cost/what want out of program), this is currently happening, but how do we respond to the survey
2. Social Media (Geofencing) to promote FBM
3. Instructors as Guest speakers at various groups, not to necessarily promote program but works as promotion as see the value of program and education provided

Additional Items discussed

Radio Efforts in 2019 (Red River Farm Network and Linder Farm Network)- good publicity but not sure about increase in students from it, additional promotion on publications (dairy)

Kyle discussed the local markets (metro area/ small business supported by our students to help tell the good stories to state legislature) Students selling to Surly, Local Meat Markets, etc.

3 Biggest Challenges to address

1. Smaller farms are either going out of business or consolidating, creating mega farms that may not enroll in FBM- How do we reach smaller or new audiences. A lot of legislative support is metro and wants to see/hear the good “stories”
2. Tuition Cost- Beginning Farmer Tax Credit is only good if they need to pay taxes, Lack of enough funding to support all the beginning farmer scholarship, Discussion on Stressed Farmer Scholarship
3. Credentialing issue-Need to recruit and maintain high quality instructors-system issue
 - a. Need to keep good instructors/support/mentor them-no other job completely prepares a person to teach FBM