



Executive Women in Agriculture Conference Provided Abundance of Information

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More than 320 women from around the United States attended Top Producer's 4th Annual Executive Women in Ag Conference, held December 4-5 in Chicago. The agenda was the perfect blend of networking opportunities, trade show and dynamic speakers, providing loads of business, finance and regulatory information that attendees could take back to the farm and put to immediate use. Interestingly, regardless of the topic there were four themes that ran through virtually every session:

Everyone in agriculture has to take the time to better communicate. This includes better communications internally among all of the employees of the farm and to our end consumers. Consumers are more concerned than ever about where their food is coming from. We (Agriculture) need to make the time to explain our operations and the science behind what we do; otherwise consumers have no choice but to go to food and environmental alarmists, like Food Babe, for their information.

Every agribusiness needs to have a succession plan. The old adage "failing to plan is planning to fail" was stated many times throughout the conference. Even more telling were the personal stories from several speakers and fellow registrants about how families were emotionally and financially damaged by the lack of a well-thought-out and implemented plan.

Hire out your weaknesses. Today's ag businesses are sophisticated. Create a team of trusted advisors that can help you make decisions that advance your goals and minimize your risks. That said, be selective about the professionals you hire. You want to be sure the advisors you hire have significant experience with agriculture and that you feel that the advisors are trustworthy.

Make a decision. Dr. Nicole Olynk Widmar from the Department of Agriculture at Purdue University offered great insight on the components of the decision making process and offered suggestions on

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how using a structured process can help to make good decisions.
