



# DR. RON HANSON

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## Passing on the Farm

### SPEAKING KIT

Preserving Farming Legacies.  
Protecting Family Values.  
Planning Our Future.

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# ABOUT RON

Ron Hanson has counseled and worked with farm families for more than 40 years to help them resolve family conflicts in a more positive manner and to improve family relationships through better communications. His most recent efforts have been directed at farm business ownership succession planning and the transition of management control between farming generations. Through his publications and professional travels, Ron is recognized as a keynote program speaker on the topic of farm ownership family succession to continue farming legacies for the next generation of family farmers.



# KEYNOTE TOPICS

Additional Learning Objectives are Available by Request



## STRATEGIES FOR FAMILY FARMING SUCCESS IN THE SHARK TANK OF WHAT IF

**PROGRAM OBJECTIVE:** What happens when “this will never happen” suddenly does happen? Few farming operations survive an unexpected change to the ownership organization and/or the management structure of their farming business, let alone a crisis situation within the family itself. Real life “what if” issues such as unexpected death, sudden illness or a farming accident, family legal disputes, as well as financial struggles are often never discussed. Family members often pretend this could never happen to our farm. But what if it does happen? What might now happen next? Being prepared with a contingency plan enables a farm business to survive a potential shark attack (unexpected change) while still continuing to prosper for future generations.

Most farm families realize the importance of implementing a contingency plan for farm ownership succession if and when something unexpected ever happens, but seldom does a family ever accomplish this business management goal. Family obstacles as well as personal anxieties can become road blocks which prevent family members from working through this transition planning process without becoming tangled up in family disputes or even legal problems. There are seven Shark Tank questions which frequently arise when planning for farm ownership succession. These challenging questions must eventually be discussed and resolved to everyone’s agreement. This presentation will address each of these seven questions and offer solutions for a farm family to achieve a successful transition of ownership between generations to continue their farming legacy.

An effective management strategy is to put yourself in the Shark Tank and begin addressing the difficult questions and situations that might arise from the uncertainties and risks of farming. This action is a required step in protecting/managing the farm’s wealth as well as preserving farm business assets for future generations.

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# RON'S PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS FOR FARM AUDIENCES

## MAPPING A PLAN TO KEEP YOUR FARM IN THE FAMILY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

**OBJECTVE:** Mapping out a succession plan to transfer farm ownership between generations can be an overwhelming task. There are no short cuts or quick fix solutions to this process. Neither are there easy to find answers. **Developing and implementing a farm business management contingency plan is crucial for the continued success of a farming operation for future generations.** Having a business management plan is an important step in preventing potential misunderstandings between farm family members which helps in avoiding possible family legal disputes. Farm families must embrace a vision which insures the future of their farm and then follow through with a management plan to accomplish this purpose for future generations. The ultimate goal must be directed at being prepared with a plan.

Farm families often question how to begin contingency planning for our farm. What is the first step? How can this ownership transition planning process ever be accomplished? Although this task may seem overwhelming, farm family members must identify a clear vision for the continued success of their family farming operation and then formulate a contingency plan for the next farming generation. This vision becomes the farm's mission statement and provides direction for effective decision making to achieve management goals. A necessary requirement to insure the future of a farming legacy, as well as to preserve the heritage of a farm family, is being prepared with a contingency plan for farm ownership succession.

## FAMILY FENCE POSTS TALKING TO EACH OTHER

**PROGRAM OBJECTIVE:** Farm family members must be motivated to adopt effective communication strategies when farming together to build better understanding and eliminate potential family conflicts. Simple misunderstandings as well as the stress of farming can prevent family members (or even a farm marriage) from effectively communicating and working together in a multi-generation family farming operation. Establishing effective channels of communication can create a dynamic change in the personal relationships between farm family members as well as be an extremely powerful tool in achieving stronger family bonds especially during stressful times in agriculture.

Juggling the current working demands of the farm along with family obligations can become quite a challenge to anyone. One gets so wrapped up in their own individual problems that they fail to communicate effectively with others. Everyone is talking; but no one might be listening. This breakdown in family communications can quickly lead to misunderstandings as well as cause potential conflicts between farm family members. Never underestimate the importance of family communications in order to achieve a more positive impact in family working relationships on the farm. Striving toward building family harmony while avoiding potential conflict is one of the real secrets for success in a farming operation that is committed to open and effective communications between family members. Helping farm families to build stronger family relationships through better lines of communication is the goal of this presentation.

# **RON'S PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS FOR FARM AUDIENCES**

## **BUILDING STRONGER FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS FOR MULTI-GENERATION FARMING**

**PROGRAM OBJECTIVE:** Achieving stronger and more positive working relationships between farm family members is a management strategy that promotes a more successful multi-generation family farming operation. Identifying opportunities which avoid the common mistakes that often cause a family farming failure is a strategy for long term success. The bond of family members working together to achieve the same goals provides a farm family with the inner strength to overcome the stress and daily pressures of the farming operation itself. Strong family relationships are characterized by a dedicated commitment to the success of their farming operation as well as fostering support and appreciation for each other.

Some multi-generation farming operations are defined by family harmony and success while other operations struggle from one conflict after another. That raises the immediate question "why?". Personal conflicts within a family can destroy the effective working relationships of a farming operation. This presentation shares the real life experiences of farm families that Ron has counseled for more than 40 years. The seven most common mistakes that result in family farming failures will be identified. Ron will point out several ideas on "what to do and what not to do" to help family members better understand each other when farming together. Family characteristics of successful multi-generation farming operations will be examined to demonstrate how potential conflicts can be resolved in a more positive manner. Ideas on how to build stronger family relationships in a multi-generation farming operation (even during stressful times on the farm) will be shared to help farm family members continue farming together with a successful future.

**SUMMARY POINT:** Never forget that the real success of a family operation being a total "team effort" among all family members involved in the farm production business. The need for all family members to have the same goal and commitment to make it work as a farm family unit can never be overstated. The importance for all family members to feel included with the opportunity to be involved in business decisions is crucial for insuring the continued success of a multi-generation farming operation.

## **BE SURE TO COUNT THE ROOSTERS**

**PROGRAM OBJECTIVE:** Many times in a family farming operation or a family business, the efforts and contributions of individual family members are quite easily taken for granted and are never fully recognized. Too often the hectic pace, the burdensome workload, and the numerous stresses of the farming operation itself prevent family members from expressing their actual feelings and personal needs for each other. It is important to remember that farms can always be replaced but farm families can never be replaced. Strong and loving relationships between farm family members are priceless!

Often times the contributions and efforts by farm family members (and even employees) are quickly taken for granted and the personal words of appreciation and affection are never spoken or shared. Unfortunately, there are too many broken relationships between farm family members in agriculture. Individuals lose focus of what is most important in farming: FAMILY. This presentation uses real life humor and personal stories to emphasize the importance for family members (especially farm couples) to initiate a more determined effort to spend more personal time together as well as to better communicate and to share their feelings with each other. Sharing a few simple words of love and appreciation can be a very powerful tool in building a stronger bond between farm family members. Everyone needs to be reminded of the importance of family and avoiding the mistake of taking others for granted. Persons love to be appreciated and to feel needed. That their efforts are important and that their contributions to the overall success of the family farming operation are recognized and appreciated.

**SUMMARY POINT:** This keynote address is both an entertaining and humorous program presentation packed with laughter along with a message on the importance of family relationships. The motivating impact of this presentation stressing the very importance of "strong and loving family relationships" will generate a tremendous audience response and many positive comments. This presentation shares a positive personal message that will be long remembered by each member of the audience. This program is ideal for an evening dinner function or a General Session keynote presentation.

# RON'S PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS FOR FARM AUDIENCES

## AVOIDING THE MISTAKES OF A FARM FAMILY SUCCESSION PLANNING TRAIN WRECK

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE: Most farming family members operate their farm business with the best of intentions along with the hope of keeping their farm in the family for future generations. But often a lack of family communications and the failure by family members to share expectations with each other can quickly put an abrupt end to a farming legacy. Too many times, family farms end up being divided during a dispute or even sold at public auction. Bitterness and blaming between family members now takes over; even to the point where some families no longer will speak to each other. With proper planning strategies, most often this conflict could have been resolved and a successful solution determined that keeps a farm in the family for future generations.

This program will share guidelines and farm succession planning strategies as well as identify solutions that result in a successful transfer of farm ownership/management control between farm family generations. What are often the succession planning mistakes by farm families that cause this failure when transferring a farm or ag business enterprise to the next generation of young farm business owners? More importantly, how can these mistakes be avoided to insure a more successful transition so that a farming operation legacy continues and prospers for future generations? What are the business management planning tools along with the family dynamics/communication strategies that will be necessary to accomplish this task and to empower a family farming legacy for further success?

This program will accomplish the following five Learning Objectives for family farming operations:

1. Identifying and understanding the ten most common mistakes that cause farm succession planning efforts to fail and often derail the transition of a family farming operation to next generation. Adopting the necessary business management strategies and planning tools to insure a more successful transition of farm ownership/management control between generations.
2. Avoiding potential family disputes and jealousies between adult siblings as well as possible legal problems to insure a family farming legacy continues for the next farming generation. Why does family conflict even happen? Adopting guidelines to resolve potential family conflict with more positive outcomes which keeps a farm in the family for future young farm owners and creates a foundation for their farming business success.
3. Initiating a discussion process with all family members to begin this task of succession planning. Taking steps to insure all family voices are being heard during this planning process. Outlining the farm succession planning questions that family members should be asking each other.
4. Learning to communicate more effectively as family members when discussing the emotional feelings as well as fears that are often involved when drafting a farm ownership succession plan. Encouraging family members to share their EXPECTATIONS with others to avoid possible misunderstandings and to prevent potential family disputes leading to a planning train wreck.
5. Capitalizing on the personal family dynamics to promote the continued success and profitability of a farm business operation for future generations. Striving for family harmony/unity while building stronger family relationships throughout the succession planning process to preserve a farming legacy. Creating a mission statement with an identified purpose to insure a family farming succession train wreck never happens.

# RON'S PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS

## FOR FARM WOMEN

### *I Only Need a Minute of Your Time*

An entertaining and very humorous program message designed specifically for a farm women's audience dealing with farm family relationships during stressful times in agriculture while keeping a positive attitude and focus in the family. Program content is very similar to *Be Sure to Count the Roosters* but the message is directed toward farm women and their vital role in the family dynamics of a farming operation.

### *What Happens Next If Mom Takes Over the Family Farm?*

A farm business succession planning program designed for farm women. The focus of this presentation is directed at the fact that most farm women usually outlive their farming husband. If no previous farm family ownership succession planning has been accomplished, the surviving wife now has the burden of taking over the ownership as well as the management decision making of the family farming operation (often with limited preparation and experience). This can be an emotional and certainly stressful situation for some farm women. Too often farm wives are faced with the challenge of keeping the farm in her family along with handling any potential conflicts with other family members.

Program content is similar to *Keeping your Farm in the Family for Future Generations and Mapping Out a Succession Plan to Continue your Family Farming Legacy* but the message is directed toward farm wives who might be required to take over both the roles of ownership and management of a farming operation while being faced with the task of developing a farm business succession planning strategy for the next generation in her family.

## FOR YOUNG FARMERS

### *So You Thought You Were Buying the Family Farm: Guess Again!*

A farm succession planning program designed for young farm producer dealing with farm ownership family succession and business planning strategies when farming with parents while helping to avoid potential conflicts/jealousies with other siblings who are not involved with the family farming operation. Program content is similar to *Keeping your Farm in the Family for Future Generations* and *Mapping Out a Succession Plan to Continue your Family Farming Legacy* but the message is directed toward young farm producers who someday hope to gain a share of ownership of their family farming operation. Will their years of sweat equity be fully rewarded? How can young producers convince their parents of the importance and need to develop/implement a farm ownership succession plan? What planning options allow a young farmer to work with their parents to accomplish this task as well as identify a management strategy that creates an opportunity for their future farming success and allows them to accomplish their dreams/hopes as a young beginning farmer.

### *Be Careful of Empty Boxes*

An entertaining and humorous program for young farm couples with a motivational message on the importance of not taking each other for granted in farm marriage. Program content is similar to *Be Sure to Count the Roosters* but the message is directed toward younger farm couples in their early years of marriage.

# TESTIMONIALS

“I cannot express enough gratitude for the incredible Farm Transitioning Program you facilitated for us. Your message was clear, concise, effective, meaningful and powerful. There are very few programs that one can attest that truly help people, but this one is the exception. You touched at the very core of family values, family issues, and family relationships. Your presentation was inspiring and presented real information on a subject that is rarely discussed within families. This was without question the best educational program we have hosted in a very long time. Thank you for making it a rousing success!”

**Ron Kern**  
Ogle County Farm Bureau, Manager

“Thank you so much for taking time to travel and to speak at our Annual Meeting. The feedback we got from our customers was tremendous. I believe there was a high number of people that regretted not coming after hearing about your program from their neighbors. Don’t be surprised if you are asked to come back to the Nebraska Panhandle and speak again. You absolutely met all my expectations in having a successful Annual Meeting.”

**Bart Moseman**  
**Farmer’s Cooperative,**  
**General Manager**

“Thank you for traveling to Marion, Ohio to present and meet with our AgCredit members. We had several positive comments about your presentation and it has encouraged our members to get their succession plans in place or at least start thinking about it. I hope you can continue to make an impact on farm families so we will have more farm families survive. I want to personally thank you for helping families get their thoughts started and for giving them direction on how to have a successful farm succession planning family meeting.”

**Libby Wixtead**  
**AgCredit, ACA, Account Officer**

“I wanted to thank you again for presenting at our series of workshops. The feedback has been tremendously positive. You did a fantastic job. Your delivery of your message was perfect. I believe we lawyers can say the same things to these folks, but coming from an outside voice and an expert like yourself makes it more well received in my opinion. People were listening and talking. Your words motivated them to act. We appreciate your message and your time and experience in getting this message out. It is a tremendous value to farm people.”

**Janet L. Krotter Chvala**  
**Krotter Law Group,**  
**Attorney at Law**

# FULL BIOGRAPHY FOR DR. RON HANSON, PHD

Ron currently holds the title of Harlan Agribusiness Professor Emeritus at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Professor Hanson accomplished a 46 year agribusiness teaching and student advising career that earned 31 university and national award recognitions. Ron was selected as the Outstanding Ag College Instructor, received the John Deere Agribusiness Teaching Award of Excellence, and was named as the University Educator of the Year.

Ron was the first University of Nebraska professor to receive the prestigious USDA Excellence in University Teaching Award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture which is the top ranking national teaching honor granted in the area of agricultural and food sciences. His highest career honor was earned by being named the Nebraska Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation.

Ron was raised on an Illinois family farm and earned his undergraduate degree from Western Illinois University and his graduate degrees from the University of Illinois. He counseled with Nebraska farm families for more than 40 years to help them resolve family conflicts in a more positive manner and to improve family relations through better communications. His most recent efforts have been directed at farm business ownership succession and the transfer of management control between generations. He has been honored by the Nebraska Ag Youth Council, Nebraska Farm Bureau, Nebraska Agricultural Leadership Council and the Nebraska FFA Foundation for his dedicated service to both rural youth and farm families.

Through his publications and professional travels, Ron is recognized as a keynote program speaker on the topic of farm ownership succession planning and the transition of management control to the next generation of family farmers.

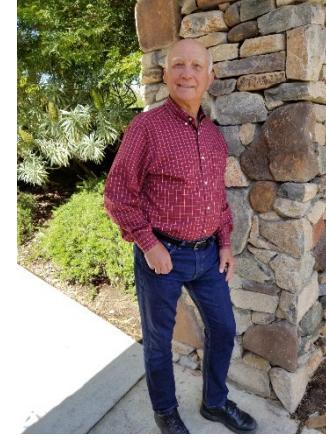
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### FARM SUCCESSION PLANNING HANDOUT

### MULTI-GENERATIONAL FAMILY FARMING HANDOUT

#### PHOTOS APPROVED FOR MEDIA USE



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# CONTACT RON

ron@passingonthefarm.com



My Mission: To encourage as well as to help farm families to develop business management strategies and to begin implementing a succession planning process that will accomplish a transition of ownership and management control that keeps their farming operation in the family as well as family members on their farm so that their family farming legacy continues with success for future generations.