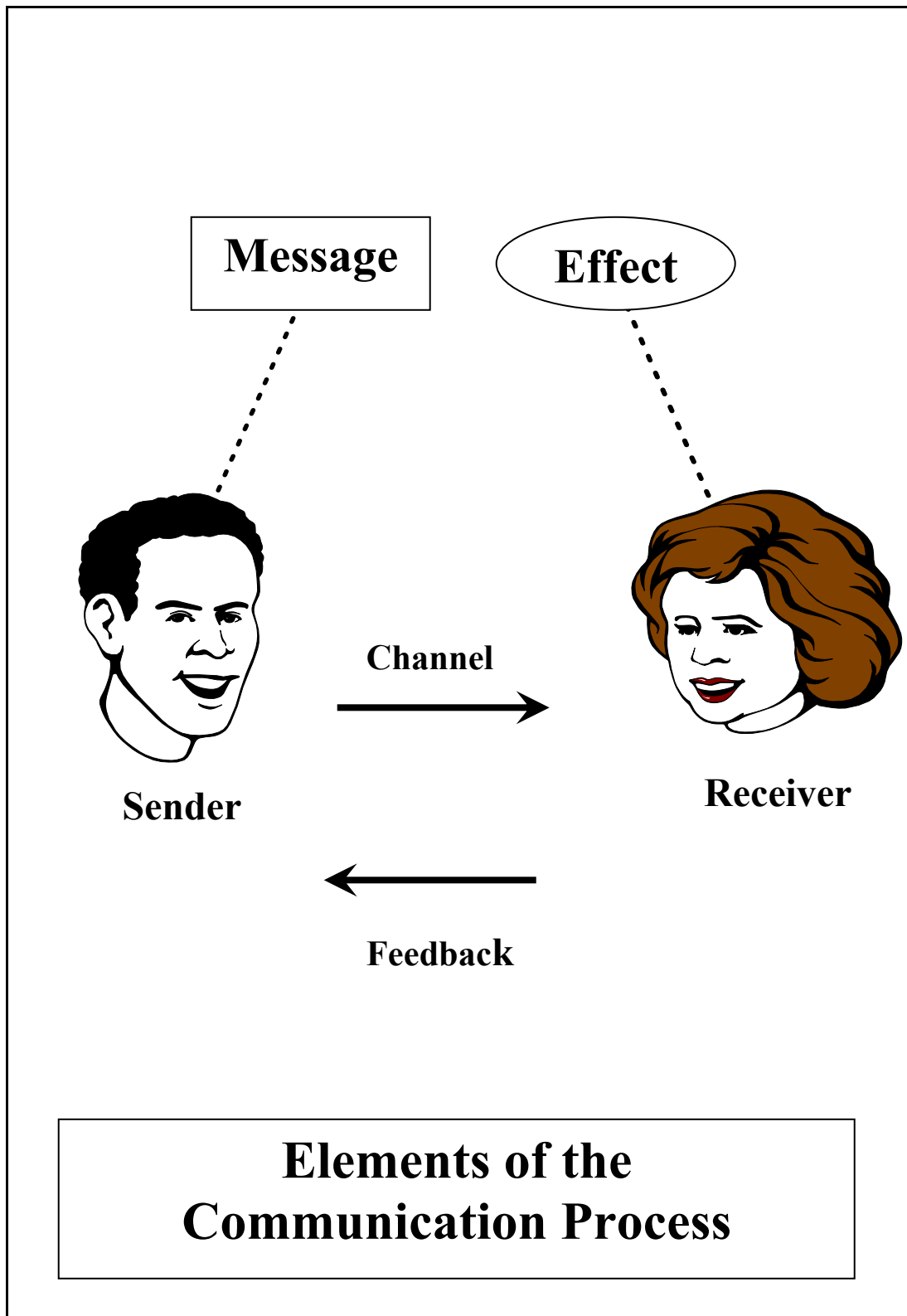


***People Considerations***  
***How Can We Work Together?***



## *Family Communication*

### **Ideal Behaviors**

- Communicate your wants and needs, hopes and expectations
- Respect the range of feelings other family members may experience
- Listen actively for the thoughts and feelings of others
- Problem solve with others and negotiate win/win solutions
- Praise others often; criticize others with great care
- Use adult-adult communication and treat others as adults
- Learn how to deal with your anger - report it to others
- Watch for the early warning signs of conflict and act on them
- Take time for others to develop and communicate opinions and ideas

### **Common Behaviors**

- Expect other family members to “know your wishes” or “read your mind”
- Act as if “My feelings are the only ones which count!”
- Ignore others or listen only for their ideas and ignore their feelings
- Stand firm and hold your ground; don’t consider problem solving or negotiation
- Chew others out when they screw up; ignore any contributions they make
- Treat sons and daughters as “the kids”; treat parent as “the old man” or “old lady”
- Yell, scream or vent your anger; bury it or use “the cold silent treatment”
- Act as if you are not upset and ignore the signs that others are in turmoil
- Operate on “My Timeline”

## *Communication As A Key Element In Management*

Good communication skills are critically important if the business is to realize its mission. Let's look at the communication process and some guidelines that may prove helpful in improving your communication skills.

### **Communication**

#### **A Key Element in Successful Management**

Communication plays a major role in the development of an effective working relationship between you and everyone working with you. It influences the effectiveness of how people do their work, and the amount of enthusiasm displayed in doing it. Good communication opens the channel for feedback. Feedback can help you verify that your messages are clear and understood.

The elements of communication are:

- (1) the sender
- (2) the message
- (3) the channel used to send it
- (4) the receiver
- (5) the effect the message has on the receiver
- (6) the environment

#### **Guidelines for Effective Communication**

- 1. Have clearly in mind what is to be communicated** (the message) before attempting to communicate it.

- 2. Use various means of communication**

A face-to-face conversation between two or more people is probably the most common approach. Examples of other means of communication include written messages, posters, pictures, videos, and movies. Non-verbal communication such as facial expressions and gestures can often "say" more than spoken words.

- 3. Remove communication barriers**

Use language that is understood. Attitudes of senders and receivers can erect or tear down barriers. People tend to erect barriers against messages they feel are unimportant or threatening.

- 4. Use feed back techniques**

You should be sensitive to the reactions of those you communicate with. One of the most effective feedback techniques is to ask the receiver to restate or summarize the information just received.

- 5. Be an effective listener**

A sincere interest in how much of the message as been understood is the beginning of effective listening. Making it clear to others that you are willing to listen to their problems, concerns, or suggestions is also important.

- 6. Listen for Accuracy, Empathy and Joint Collaboration**

## *Conflict Resolution<sup>1</sup>*

Conflicts usually arise when communications break down or when disagreements occur.

Conflict is a daily reality for everyone. Whether at home or at work, an individual's needs, goals, objectives, and values come into opposition with those of other people. Some conflicts are minor, easy to handle, or can be overlooked. Others of great magnitude, however, require a strategy for successful resolution so they don't create constant tension or hostility at home or on the farm.

Conflicts left unresolved and festering at the expense of others' well being are common occurrences on the farm or in any small

business. The ability to resolve conflict successfully is probably one of the most important social skills that a person can possess. In spite of this fact there are few formal opportunities in our society to learn it. Understanding what conflict is and what it can do is only one part of the problem. Developing and using conflict resolution skills is the next step.

Consider that conflicts often have two dimensions, thoughts and feelings. Use these questions to move toward mutually resolving the conflict. What do you think about this situation? What do you feel about this situation? Explore both of these dimensions.



---

<sup>1</sup> Contributions from Pro-Dairy, Guy K. Hutt and Robert A. Milligan, Cornell University Extension. Used with permission.

---

## *Some Suggestions for Successful Conflict Resolution*

- 1. Focus is on defeating the problem, not one another.**
- 2. Consider taking a “time out” to become objective.**
- 3. Everyone is involved in the process in order to create a sense of shared responsibility for the solution.**
- 4. Negotiate a reasonable time line.**
- 5. Solutions are evaluated in terms of quality and acceptance to the parties.**
- 6. Questions are asked to elicit information, not to belittle the other party.**
- 7. Feedback is descriptive, specific and non-judgmental.**
- 8. Information is shared equally by everyone.**
- 9. Parties believe that mutually acceptable solutions are possible and desirable.**
- 10. Parties trust each other, are not defensive, angry or threatened.**
- 11. Parties do not make "we-they" distinction; instead it's "we vs. the problem."**
- 12. Problems are jointly defined by the parties.**
- 13. Problem description, solution generation and solution evaluation are separate phases of discussion.**

***Exercise  
Conflict Resolution***

Briefly describe a recent conflict. Consider how you might have used the Conflict Resolution Suggestions to deal with the situation.



---

## *Exercise* *Rating your Goals*

Complete this worksheet. **Date it.** Goals change as time passes and you will need to do it again. Some creative managers do this exercise on a regular basis. We recommend it.

Review the list of Goals below. Then identify the one most important to you and give it a value of 1. Continue evaluating the remainder. Mark statements with an "X" that do not reflect you Goals.

*Name:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

<i>Goals</i>	<i>Your Score</i>	<i>Your Spouse's Score</i>
To operate a farm business that produces a steady income.	_____	_____
To avoid being unable to meeting loan payments.	_____	_____
Selecting a farm enterprise with the highest return on investment.	_____	_____
Having the value of our net worth accumulate steadily.	_____	_____
To obtain a desirable level of family living.	_____	_____
To be recognized as a top farmer in the community.	_____	_____
To have time away from the immediate responsibilities of the farm to to spend on leisure activities, with good friends, and for self-improvement.	_____	_____
To reduce the physical effort and strain in our farming operation.	_____	_____
To equal or exceed the average production of farms in the area.	_____	_____
To be able to afford a few luxuries.	_____	_____
To be able to send the kids to college.	_____	_____
To be asked to join the Ag Advisory Board.	_____	_____
To successfully exhibit at fairs and expositions.	_____	_____





## People Considerations

---

To provide an attractive, comfortable, and efficient home to meet family needs and happiness.

\_\_\_\_\_

To provide the needs of the home, using credit and other income before improving or expending the business operation.

\_\_\_\_\_

To obtain as much income as possible from a business operation or employment.

\_\_\_\_\_

To obtain income levels from work which will enable continued enjoyment of its freedom and independence.

\_\_\_\_\_

To help plan and use influence in guiding policies and activities in the community and the country for worthwhile purposes.

\_\_\_\_\_

***Other Goals:***

## Follow-up Questions

Did your discussion with your spouse and/or partner(s) turn up any big surprises?

Note the compromises needed: a) within your own goals, and b) between yours and your significant other(s).

List the goals you specifically want to accomplish in the *next 2 years*.

List the goals you want to accomplish in the *next 5 years*.



---

# *AgVentures*

## **Business Arrangements and Farm Transfers**

### Homework Assignment I

#### *Are You Ready to Farm Together?<sup>2</sup>*

Have a family meeting before the next class session and answer the following questions. Rate yourself in your respective areas according to:

- ✓ 1 = Always
- ✓ 2 = Often
- ✓ 3 = Sometimes
- ✓ 4 = Never

#### **Fathers:**

Can you discuss business matters with your children without getting emotional or upset? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to give him/her the “breaks” you didn’t have in order to get the partnership started? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to let him/her make decisions that will probably cost you both some money? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to try new ideas that your children may have? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to let your children become the “business front” or “spokesperson” for your operation? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you like and get along with your child’s spouse? \_\_\_\_\_

---

<sup>2</sup> Matt Glewen, Calumet County Agricultural Agent. 10 December 1997.



**Mothers:**

Does it bother you that your child's family spend money easier and have more material possessions than you and your husband had when you started? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you really like your son or daughter's spouse? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to allow your child's spouse as much or more say in the operation as you have? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to accept increased levels of indebtedness in order to bring your son or daughter and their spouse into the business? \_\_\_\_\_

**Son or Son-in-Law:**

Are you patient enough to "grow into" a business that your parents or parent-in-law has spent a lifetime building? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you accept the fact that any type of change will be difficult for your older partners? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to defend your spouse in family disagreements? \_\_\_\_\_

**Daughter or Daughter-in-law:**

Do you really want to farm? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you often feel like an outsider to your spouse's family? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you accept the fact that your mother or mother-in-law spent a lifetime working and is now entitled to rest, travel, nice furniture, and other things that you probably can not afford? \_\_\_\_\_



---

# AgVentures

## Business Arrangements and Farm Transfers

### Homework Assignment II

#### *Stress Test*

Make your own stress scale: indicate the relative points given in a scale index where 100 = the death of a spouse. Add up the stress points that you have experience in the last 12 months. If they total more than 300 points, stress may be having a significant effect on your life which you should be aware of.

	<i>Your Personal Stress Points</i>	<i>Your Spouse's Stress Points</i>
<b><i>Events on the Farm</i></b>		
1. Expanding the major enterprise by 50% (cropping or livestock)	_____	_____
2. Going to a creditor to refinance the line of credit.	_____	_____
3. Borrowing \$400,000 for a major business expansion.	_____	_____
4. Watching the market turn against you; threatening a cash flow bind.	_____	_____
5. Getting turned down on a loan application.	_____	_____
6. Choosing the jobs that must be done today.	_____	_____
7. Losing some help and handling an extremely heavy workload; for long periods of time.	_____	_____
8. Planning what to grow next.	_____	_____
9. Bargaining to buy or rent the land next door.	_____	_____
10. Deciding when to price grain, cattle, or milk you have for sale.	_____	_____



## People Considerations

---

11. Discovering a serious disease in your crops or livestock. \_\_\_\_\_
12. The corn planter breaks down with 3 days of rain predicted and 120 acres to go. \_\_\_\_\_
13. Having a break down at harvest time. \_\_\_\_\_
14. Natural disaster such as hail, frost, flood, or drought. \_\_\_\_\_
15. Forming a partnership or incorporating the farm. \_\_\_\_\_
16. Hiring or firing a full-time hired man. \_\_\_\_\_
17. Working with a custom harvester. \_\_\_\_\_
18. Other events?? \_\_\_\_\_
19. \_\_\_\_\_
20. \_\_\_\_\_

## *Goal Setting/ Action Planning*



## People Considerations

---

**Directions:** After you have established a clearly defined goal and target date, then outline the action steps necessary to reach this goal and identify a target date and person (s) responsible for each action step. Complete an action plan for each goal.

Goal (be specific): \_\_\_\_\_

---

Target Date (again, be specific!): \_\_\_\_\_

Action Steps	Target Date	Person(s) Responsible
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

---

<p><b>Agreement: I/we recognize that our future depends on the goals and action steps outlined above. I/we agree to carry out this plan or modify it if it proves to be unrealistic.</b></p>
--

Signature

Date

---

Signature

Date