

OKLAHOMA AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

CLASS XVI

Scribe Notes
Seminar 4
December 5 - 7, 2012

Theme: *“Leadership and Communications”*

December 5, 2012

Scribe: Rusty Roush

Ron Hays (Class I), Director of Farm Programming, Radio Oklahoma Network (RON)

Ron Hays graduated from the University of Kentucky. The University of Kentucky did not have an Agricultural Communications major so he selected classes from existing coursework to form his own major. After graduation, Ron moved to Wichita, Kansas to work in radio. In 1977, he helped form the Oklahoma Agrinet. Now, Ron works for RON and also produces a daily email that is sent to about 3500 recipients.

Ron discussed the evolution of technology in radio from AM to FM to satellite. He also discussed other platforms for agriculture such as print, television, and some of the more recent social media platforms. We discussed Twitter, Pinterest, Flickr, Blogs, and Facebook. The overall theme of this discussion was that as advocates for agriculture, we need to incorporate our personal agriculture story into the use of these platforms. We need to add a human face to the agriculture industry.

Jim Apel, News 9

Jim Apel graduated from Northwestern Oklahoma State University in Journalism. He worked on the assignment desk at News 9. The Assignment Editor controls all the content that is on the newscast. Jim gave us four tips to get our story on the news. Our story must be: compelling, visual, timely, and easy. The best way to contact the assignment desk is by email (newsdesk9@news9.com). Alternatively, you can develop a relationship with a reporter because they must submit ideas for the news.

Watched "Farmer Style" by the Peterson Brothers on YouTube

Group Activity

The group activity consisted of five topics. Each group selected a spokesperson to be interviewed about the topic. The topics included: Farm Bill (Jenson), Animal Welfare Issues (Jeans), EPA Plans to Require Permitting for Spraying (Stinnett), Estate Tax (Roush), and Doing Away with Sales Tax (Fuhlendorf). After this activity, Ron gave us some tips: be passionate, make the argument personal, be still for the camera, wear solid colors.

Community Service Project at Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma

We boxed over 4000 pounds of food and household goods in 487 boxes and had a good time doing it!

Regional Food Bank's Urban Harvest Tour

The Food Bank distributes to 53 counties in central and western Oklahoma. It is volunteer-driven and saved over \$2.4 million in labor costs last year due to volunteers. Part of the Food Bank's service includes the Urban

Harvest. The Urban Harvest is a teaching garden not a production focused garden. They have After-School programs for urban youth. We toured their composting, greenhouse, and Aquaponics facilities.

Later that evening, we had a Dirty Santa Gift Exchange at the hotel.

December 6, 2012

Scribe: Casey Sharber

We began the day at 8:00 a.m. at the American Farmers & Ranchers Auditorium. Dr. Rob Terry, Department Head for Agricultural Education, Communications and Leadership began the morning by quoting Socrates, "Know thyself".

Prior to this session, class participants were each responsible for completing a Myers-Brigg test and StrengthsFinder test and were expected to bring their results with them. Name tents were handed out and we each wrote our results on our name tents.

We then took one additional personality test – The Pig Test. We each were asked to draw a pig on a blank sheet of paper. Dr. Terry then described various personality traits based on the detail and position of our pig.

If the pig is drawn:

Toward the top of the paper, you are positive and optimistic.

Toward the middle, you are a realist.

Toward the bottom, you are pessimistic, and have a tendency to behave negatively.

Facing left, you believe in tradition, are friendly, and remember dates (birthdays, etc.)

Facing right, you are innovative and active, but don't have a strong sense of family, nor do you remember dates.

Facing front (looking at you), you are direct, enjoy playing devil's advocate and neither fear nor avoid discussions.

With many details, you are analytical, cautious, and distrustful.

With few details, you are emotional and naive; you care little for details and are a risk-taker.

With less than four legs showing, you are insecure or are living through a period of major change.

With four legs showing, you are secure, stubborn, and stick to your ideals.

The size of the ears indicates how good a listener you are.

The bigger the better.

The length of the tail indicates the quality of your love life.

And again longer is better!

Dr. Terry explained that although this may seem somewhat accurate, it isn't based on any research and is more for entertainment. The Myers-Brigg Test and the StrengthsFinder, however, are based on science and research. Ones percentages on the Myers-Brigg may change slightly and your top strengths may be in a slightly different order or #6 may make an appearance in the top five, but these tests tend to be consistent over time.

Dr. Terry explained we are born with certain strengths and weaknesses. It is important to know these so we can surround ourselves with those who will complement us. Knowing this information about ourselves will allow

us to recognize what we are capable of doing, will serve as a baseline for improvement, and serve as a foundation for exercising our influence. Influence means leadership.

As we are growing up, we often take other tests that are supposed to give us a better understanding of who we are and learn about our strengths. However, there tend to be a few flaws with these tests. Usually when we are a teenager we take an interest inventory. The problem with these tests is we are often too young to know our true interests and passions. The standardized tests which are used to evaluate our intellectual strengths in various subject matters do not take into account ones motivation, work ethic, and creativity and therefore do not necessarily reflect the true story.

Personality tests such as the Jung Test and Myers-Brigg Test represent something a bit more stable. However, it is important to recognize that these are on a continuum. Everyone tends to have their “comfort zones,” however, you are not one or the other, but it is a scale. Therefore, if someone is an introvert, that doesn’t mean they don’t often or can’t get up in front of people to speak – it just simply means it may not come as easy.

As a class, we then reviewed the various personality traits and strengths identified by the two tests. We were able to see how the class divided up accordingly and hear how some participants felt that these did or did not suit them. For the most part, it was a good mix.

After a short break, we divided into teams to do a fun Big XII mascot game, in which we had to identify the team based off a clue that described the mascot.

We then began talking about weaknesses. We have often heard we should identify and work on these, but Dr. Terry pointed out how this may not be the best thing. It is one thing to know your weaknesses, but we should not spend much energy fixing our weaknesses or trying to turn them into strengths. Exerting this time and energy can actually be a deterrent to one’s success. Instead we need to make sure we are capitalizing on our strengths. He used the analogy of a sprinter versus a marathon runner. A sprinter must be good at getting off the line quickly and may spend a good deal of time practicing to save those valuable seconds. If a marathon runner isn’t good at getting started quickly, with a strength of long distance running they can capitalize on it to make up the difference. Additionally, getting a quick start is not as vital because the duration is longer; therefore a marathon runner should feel comfortable getting a good start but does not need to focus on perfecting it.

This analogy went along with the fact that people can learn certain behaviors; however, they are often impossible for us to master. Everyone is born with unique talents and abilities. These talents are like the rooms in a home most often used. Yes, the other “rooms” (a.k.a. skills) are used in the house, but they aren’t the ones in which we are most comfortable. They may be skills we have learned, but they are not our talents. Talents are not rare to have; it is rare to recognize them and use them. Often talents are diamonds in the rough, waiting to be discovered. Achievement results when talents are utilized.

Dr. Terry shared an interesting story about how someone didn’t like the word “potential”. Potential means it hasn’t happened yet – if something hasn’t happened yet, than it doesn’t mean anything. Like the idea that potential can have a positive meaning (future success) or negative meaning (currently failed to achieve), all the 34 talents discussed in the StrengthsFinder can also be negative. This is why it is important to find a position in life that plays up ones strengths, rather than fighting against them.

“Talent is cheaper than table salt. What separates the talented individual from the successful one is a lot of hard work.” ~ Stephen King

Talent x Investment = Strengths

Investment is the building of knowledge (facts & lessons) and developing the skills or the steps of an activity. Strengths are the specific qualities that enable a person to do certain things well and create near perfect performance in an activity.

Dr. Terry recommended a couple of books for students who would like to know more:

How Full is Your Bucket, Tom Rath

StrengthsFinder 2.0, Tom Rath

After a catered lunch at the AFR building, we resumed in the auditorium. Tammi Didlot and Andrea Hutchison with the American National Cattle Women presented. They pointed out that it is up to agriculturists to protect agriculture and that everything in agriculture, whether growth hormones or GMOs are in someone's crosshairs. Also, most consumers are three generations removed from the farm and this disconnect causes them an inability to distinguish between pets and food animals.

Blogging is a great way for those on the farm to communicate with those who don't understand. The following are tips for a successful blog:

1. Know your purpose
2. Listen and engage in the conversation
3. Be clear
4. Participate in your social media
5. Always take the high road
6. Follow the leaders
7. Converse from an agricultural perspective
8. K.I.S.S. (Keep It Simple Sweetie)
9. Show you care
10. Have fun

Farmnwife.com is one blog she recommended.

Tammy Gray-Steele presented next about the National Women in Agriculture Association. She is currently the national president and Oklahoma is the headquarters with chapters in eight other states. They are a diverse group and their mission is to bring help to rural women. They have a three-acre garden at the YWCA. Their youth group is called the "Hip Hop Producers" and they are trying to establish a men's group.

We then adjourned in order to get ready for the Christmas dinner at the Myriad Gardens. Because the Crystal Bridge would be closed that evening, Class XVI member Casey Sharber, Director of Horticulture, gave an informal tour through the Crystal Bridge Conservatory to those who were interested.

We reconvened at 6:30 p.m. for a tour of the 17-acre Myriad Gardens and Devon Tower Christmas display. The mass of 90 people was divided into two groups. Rodd Moesel, American Plant Products (Class V), and Casey Sharber each led a tour. At 7:30 p.m., dinner was served in the Water Stage Room at the Gardens. Rodd Moesel then made introductions and gave class representatives a chance to speak. Rodd Moesel and Casey Sharber then gave some information about the history and future of the Myriad Gardens.

December 7, 2012

Scribe: Scott Stinnett

The agenda for the day started at the American Farmers and Ranchers headquarters beginning with presentations by OSU Professor and Extension Economist, Dr. Larry Sanders and Assistant Professor and Extension Economist, Dr. Jody Campiche. Dr. Sanders started with his presentation "The Economy, Political Changes and the Farm Bill."

Dr. Sanders described the macroeconomic influences affecting agriculture including the federal budget, global markets, energy production, employment, and capital costs. He emphasized how most producers are relying more heavily on off-farm income.

The status of the American economy was the next subject in the presentation. The picture is not impressive, but appears to be moving in a positive direction. Indications show slowly declining unemployment, along with slow economic growth with manufacturing increasing, consumer spending up, and a strengthening housing market. Other positives for the economic picture included a decreasing trade and budget deficit driven somewhat by a weak dollar.

The global economy was growing much slower than the American economy with many factors contributing to the pace such as concerns about the European economy, Chinese economic slowdown, and the continuing instabilities in countries affected by the Arab Spring. The Asia/Pacific Rim explosive economic growth could be the key to getting the global economy on tract.

He then presented what possible things could help the economy. He pointed out total GDP was up but per capita GDP was lower. Although government spending was down, business investment was not taking up the slack, even though businesses have cash reserves. Businesses seem to be waiting on more positive economic signals from the economy before they invest in growth measures.

As for agriculture, Dr. Sanders describe its condition as doing better than the rest of the economy, despite the effects of the drought on individual producers. Farm income is increasing with government payments remaining flat. Globally, American agriculture exports were up, creating a trade surplus.

Dr. Sanders concluded with the challenges that will face the United States and the world over the next twenty years. The main focus was on shifting world demographics. An estimated world population of nine billion by 2050 would have a one billion person increase in the middle class; with an increase in per capita food consumption, that will put great demands on agriculture in the future. These future challenges will greatly drive future agricultural policy.

Dr. Jody Campiche then presented a specific look at the possible 2012 Farm Bill. She began with an explanation of the current 2008 Farm Bill and its makeup. Policy makers appear poised to present two bills with very similar language, with some programs and allocations to be debated. Dr. Campiche gave a brief history of the Farm Bill. She stated, with the exception of two, the Farm Bill is rarely passed by the end of September, and two have been extended. If a Farm Bill is not passed, permanent laws, passed in 1938 and 1949, will take effect.

The current Farm bill appears to be similar, in the fact it will be over 75% budgeted for nutrition programs. It will most likely replace many direct payment programs with risk management tools and crop insurance. The Senate and House have their own programs to bring to the table including ARC, SCO, PLC and RLC.

In closing, Dr. Campiche's prediction was that the 2008 Farm Bill will be extended into 2013 and a new Farm Bill will be debated after the "fiscal cliff" has been resolved. She also told of her extension work, developing decision tools for producers to help them determine the appropriate government programs for their situation. This work will be delayed until the completion of the new Farm Bill.

The final sessions of the day were held in Norman at the National Weather Center (NWC). The group was welcomed by Al Sutherland, OSU Mesonet Agricultural Program Coordinator. The current National Weather Center office was opened in 2006, at a cost of \$70 million. It employs 550 people in sixteen units within the center. We were then introduced to Daphne Thompson, Educational and Media Relations Coordinator with NOAA. She took the group through the Storm Prediction Center and Norman Forecast Office.

In the Storm Prediction Center, Ms. Thompson explained that the purpose of the office is to observe the weather patterns of the 48 contiguous states and issue storm watches for affected areas. Within the office were a minimum of five meteorologists who were responsible for putting together information for the entire U.S. including Convective Outlooks, Mesoscale Forecasts, and Fire Weather as well as the Storm Watches. Each forecaster had multiple monitors with information to work from, but they still produced hand-drawn weather maps to help with their work. Forecasters were in the storm center 24 hours a day, working in 8 hour shifts that rotated on a weekly basis.

Norman is the only site for the Storm Prediction Center. In case of a possible storm hitting the building, it was constructed with Kevlar walls and windows built to withstand EF3 speed winds. They had a contingency plan in case of an evacuation – Scott Air Force Base in Illinois would handle any temporary work if the Storm Center needed to be evacuated.

We then moved over to the Norman Forecast Office. The job of this group of three meteorologists is to monitor a specific area of 56 counties in western Oklahoma and Texas. They issue storm and tornado warnings for the area and work with first responders when weather information may be needed for an emergency situation. It is one of 122 nationally, along with the Amarillo office which covers the Oklahoma panhandle, and the Tulsa office which covers eastern Oklahoma. After the tour of the Storm Prediction Center and Norman Forecast Office, the groups split and toured the other parts of the facilities with Al Sutherland and Dr. Chris Fiebrich, Associate Director of Mesonet.

The National Weather Center was built with modernization in mind. Each floor was extra thick with each floor of the building being 16 feet instead of the standard 10. The extra space allows for all the various utilities and technology cables to be run, maintained and upgraded without doing major renovation in the future. The building also has other unique features like the roof top observation deck with full 360° views and a roof top experimental garden with data collecting instruments.

Within the NWC building are various entities. The College of Meteorology is housed inside along with several demonstration labs, the meteorology library and server rooms to handle the extensive data processing associated with meteorology. The Mesonet offices are also inside where employees monitor the stations, they develop software for users including the OK First and OK Fire sites, and there are labs to calibrate the instruments used at the individual Mesonet Stations.

Outside the main building is an example of a typical Mesonet Station with all of its instruments, and the mobile weather units the University of Oklahoma uses for monitoring and data collection of severe storms. There are also two radars: one Dual Pole which is the newest in the field, and the developing Phaser Ray radar which will be the next generation radar. Other buildings surround the NWC as part of a business park setup to attract weather-based businesses.

After the tour, lunch was sponsored by Wade Stewart of InterBank. Al Sutherland gave the final presentation of the day on the Oklahoma Mesonet and weather in agriculture. He explained the history and background of the Oklahoma Mesonet which began in 1994, and the partnership between OU and OSU.

He then went into the effects of weather on agriculture, especially the costs associated with the recent drought creating over \$2 billion in losses the past two growing seasons. His advice was for producers to prepare to adapt to a changing climate, a position which has been endorsed by prominent weather scientists. He gave several examples of what producers could do to mitigate the costs and possible losses associated with a warmer and drier climate.

Mr. Sutherland finished the day by showcasing some of the uses of the Mesonet for the public and agriculturalists. The Agriculture Essentials were explained and how they could be used by agricultural producers as decision making tools.

The day ended with synthesis and goodbyes for all the OALP Class IVX members until the next seminar in February.