

dps MOOSLETTER

Dairy Performance Solutions Newsletter

September, 2015



Aristotle

"We are what we repeatedly do."

Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit."

In This Issue

- **FEATURE: "In Pursuit of Excellence"**
- **Urgent: Time is Running out on "FEWER Program" opportunity (Page 2)**
- **MPP Deadline Has Been Extended (Page 3)**
- **FARM™ Program materials (Page 3)**
- **News/Links (Page 3)**
- **Ponderings (Page 4)**



In Pursuit of Excellence

Everyone is in search of excellence. No, you say? Fine. Everyone that's completely satisfied with every detail of their performance both personally and professionally should stop reading right here. With all due respect, you're out of my league.

I believe we all want to do or be better than we are in some aspect of our existence. We want to achieve "excellent" results in the things we undertake. Otherwise, what's the point? I believe that this phenomenon applies to everyone, no matter who or where you are or what you do. Even bank robbers want to do things well, right? Think about it.

While we could argue ad nauseam about exactly what "success" is, I believe we are all "hard-wired" with an innate desire to succeed, whatever that may mean to each of us. We are wired to strive for excellence.

Excellence is not perfection. Excellence is a means whereas perfection is an end – a target for which to strive. Arguably and like most everything else that involves human beings, there is a wide range of interpretation of and commitment to excellence, and that is not a bad thing. It is that "wide range" that allows us to all be individuals. As such, it also allows us to differentiate ourselves from the rest of the pack if we so choose.

It is my strong belief that everyone is a manager at some level. Everyone has to manage something. How good we are at managing the things we are in charge of depends on our understanding, attitude and passion with regards to excellence.

Everyone has the seeds of excellence within them. It is how those seeds are nurtured, grown, and cultivated that ultimately determines where each of us ends up on the management spectrum. Some folks may only become "seedlings", failing to nourish their skills adequately and thereby dwarfing their potential to express the elements of excellence. At the other end of the scale are those who purposefully grow and develop those seeds, developing the elements of excellence into thriving aspects of their existence, attitude and approach to everything they do. These are those who climb the ladder of success, becoming leaders of all kinds and at varying levels within the home, church, school, work and government.

I have said that excellence is not the same thing as perfection. So, what is it? I believe that excellence is composed of three distinct elements, each of which is critically important in its own right, yet none of which is capable of propelling any of us to success on its own. Those three elements are discipline, compliance, and accountability. Like the legs of a milking stool, they are equally important in the quest for excellence. And, just like any other seed in God's creation, how those seeds develop depends on the environment and cultivation practices to which they are subjected.

Like many words, "discipline" has more than one meaning. What first comes to mind is punishment for misbehavior. That is, physical action aimed at correcting unacceptable performance or behavior. Most of us have been on the receiving end of that kind of discipline. Certainly, in any management situation, there is a time when disciplinary actions must be engaged. However, "discipline" as we want to understand it means more than simply punishment.

Discipline is also used to describe a person or a process. As an example, we might describe a person as being a very well-disciplined individual, meaning that we see that

"Excellence is not perfection."

person as being very much in control of their self, and by their very nature they are a person that can be expected to follow the rules and do things right, even with no one is watching. Discipline in this case means doing what is right because it is the right thing to do. We might refer to a sports team as being “well-disciplined” because they do not draw penalties very often. We might describe a protocol or process as “disciplined” because it is keenly focused on a particular result and does not vary with unrelated circumstances. These are the meanings of the word that are integral in developing the right attitude and approach to excellence. Interestingly enough, if a person understands this definition of “discipline” and ascribes to it as a part of their character, then there is seldom a need for punishment (disciplinary action) in connection with their work or performance.

Compliance refers to how closely a task or process is performed or completed relative to the requirements that are outlined. There are many situations that use the word “compliance” in their activity. For example, there are rules and requirements that must be followed when one builds a dairy facility in order to achieve compliance. There are environmental codes, electrical codes, and health codes as examples. In each of these cases, there is a regulatory authority that inspects performance along the way to insure that the rules are being followed for the purposes of meeting building codes, but also to make certain that safety codes are met. These all require not only knowing what to do, but knowing how to do it, and the physical act of getting it done.

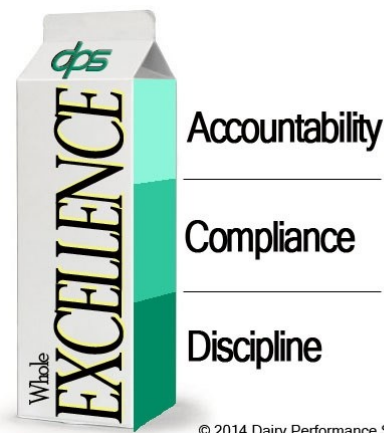
When we are looking at processes to measure how well they have been done, we are simply measuring the degree of compliance that is involved in their execution. When compliance is well-achieved within a process, it is highly likely that the desired result can be achieved, or in the case of a failure or a less than desired response, it will be for some other reason other than non-compliance.

Accountability is a word used to describe the act of being responsible for some “thing”, process, or outcome. It means that a person can be “counted on” with regards to responsibility. In its highest form, it means that those who are responsible for that thing, process, or outcome willingly accept and by choice place themselves in the position of being held accountable for what happens, even if the outcome is negative. People who are highly accountable are viewed as being people of high moral integrity and very responsible in their approach to everything they undertake. Accountability implies honesty, transparency, and a willingness to assume a position of responsibility regardless of the circumstances. In the workplace we want to look at accountability from the standpoint of tying people (individually or collectively) to a process or outcome, and to be able drill down into the chain of accountability in a positive way in order to equip ourselves with the ability to correct unsatisfactory performance at the root of its origin.

Accountability is not a “blame game”. Properly set up, people should clearly understand in advance what their role and responsibilities are, and what the expected outcomes are. Collectively, that lets them know specifically that for which they are “accountable”. As the process develops and proceeds, management is then able to evaluate and assess the situation openly and to offer guidance where necessary to keep the process on a desirable track.

Our ultimate goal is to achieve maximum efficiency through excellence in operations. The elements of excellence are discipline, compliance, and accountability.

The combination and application of these three ingredients by ownership and management in every dealing of the business both internally and externally will foster the right environment for everyone connected to the business. Internally and most importantly, employees will be able to thrive and to perform at optimum levels. It is that level of performance throughout the organization that will lead to peak efficiency in the various processes of the dairy. It is that sustained peak performance efficiency which drives the opportunity for profitability higher, and that is the purpose of all our effort.



Time is running out!! Don't miss the boat....

In July we told you about the [Farm Energy and Water Efficiency Realization \(FEWER\)](#) program that makes funding available to cover 75% of the total project cost of qualifying energy or water saving projects, up to \$25,000 per farm/business.

Funding for the FEWER Program is available to farms and businesses ANYWHERE IN FLORIDA, and is made available through the [Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services \(FDACS\)](#). The program is being administered through the [Suwannee County Conservation District \(SCCD\)](#) offices. Additional funding for larger projects may be available through other programs. SCCD is prepared to work through its vendor, [EnSave](#), to help you access additional project funding through USDA and NRCS.

Initial energy audits are AT NO COST to the producer!

Funding is available on a first-come, first-served basis with limited funding available.

Call EnSave at (800) 732-1399 or contact your SCCD office at (386) 362-2622, Ext. 3 today!

Additional information and contact info can be found by [CLICKING HERE](#).



FARM Program Information and Resources

Consumers want to purchase food from sources they know will take care of animals, and operate in a way that is consistent with their values and expectations. Dairy farmers have a longstanding commitment to doing what is right. The National Dairy FARM Program: Farmers Assuring Responsible Management™ provides consistency and uniformity to best practices in animal care and quality assurance in the dairy industry.



Certified FARM™ Evaluator

Call today to discuss the program or visit the [FARM™ website](#) to access the program information and excellent tools available to you for becoming an informed member of the FARM™ family!

USDA Extends MPP-Dairy Enrollment Deadline



USDA has extended the deadline to enroll in the 2016 Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP-Dairy) until Nov. 20. If you have already enrolled for 2016 margin coverage, you may change your coverage levels up until the new deadline, according to the National Milk Producer Federation (NMPF).

[In a press release from Jim Mulhern, CEO of NMPF](#), Mulhern praised the decision by Secretary Tom Vilsack's office, expressing appreciation for the extension which had been requested in a letter to the Secretary from NMPF in mid-September.

MPP-Dairy, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, allows dairy farmers to purchase income insurance on margins – the difference between the price of milk and feed costs. Enrollment for 2016 was scheduled to end Sept. 30.

"The fall harvest is a busy time of the year for agriculture, so this extension will ensure that dairy producers have more time to make their choices," said Vilsack. "We encourage all operations to examine the protections offered by this program, because despite the very best forecasts, markets can change." [See Secretary Vilsack's full announcement here.](#)

LGM-Dairy, MPP-Dairy

Dairy farmers are reminded they may participate in only one USDA dairy margin insurance program. Dairy farmers electing coverage under the USDA Risk Management Agency's Live-stock Gross Margin for Dairy (LGM-Dairy) for any month in 2016 may not participate in MPP-Dairy during the year.

Vilsack encouraged producers to use the USDA's Farm Agency Service (FSA) [online Web resource](#) to calculate the best levels of coverage for their dairy operation. This secure website can be accessed via computer, smartphone or tablet.

Vilsack also reminded farmers enrolled in 2015 that they must make a coverage election for 2016 and pay the \$100 administration fee.

Although any unpaid premium balances for 2015 must be paid in full by the enrollment deadline to remain eligible for higher coverage levels in 2016, premiums for 2016 are not due until Sept. 1, 2016. Also, producers can work with milk marketing companies to remit premiums on their behalf.

To enroll in the Margin Protection Program for Dairy, contact your [local FSA county office](#).

*This article adapted from [Dairy Herd Management](#).

Timely Industry News and Information Links

- [Tips for Answering Difficult Questions About Your Farm](#)
- [There Are No Antibiotics in Your Meat](#)
- [IDF president: Worldwide dairy demand will double in 15 years](#)
- [Golden Arches and Freestall Loops](#)

PONDERINGS



One of the most unforgettable lessons that I learned as a child was that the truth is simple. That concept was indelibly imprinted on my heart and mind (and my rear end) at the ripe old age of about eight years or thereabouts. I had knowingly and willingly falsified an answer to a simple question. What I didn't know at the time was that Mom and Dad already knew the real (and simple) truth, and were not impressed by my complicated answer. In addition to the just and fair punishment I received, I will never forget their words that day. "It is much easier to tell the truth. When you lie, you have to remember what you said. When you tell the truth, it's simple." I believe that singular (it only took once!) little episode is largely responsible for my personal attitude that the simpler we can keep things, the easier it is to get them done, both in word and in deed.

Keeping things simple is in no way to be confused with taking the easy way out. In my experience, just the opposite is true. Sometimes even the simplest things end up being tough to get done for a variety of reasons. In my observations and personal experience, the problem is usually related to the failure of someone along the way to give a certain detail the care, attention or effort that was required to end up with an excellent result. It's a common saying that, "The devil is in the details". How true I have learned this is.

I have pondered on excellence throughout my career, and no doubt will unashamedly remain focused on that going forward. Who would want to be good when they could be great? Authors S.L. Parker and Mac Anderson wrote a great book called "212° The Extra Degree" that uses the analogy of heating water to describe the quest for excellence. They talk about how water is hot at 211°, but will not boil until that last degree is attained. They go on to point out how at 212°, water becomes steam, and steam can power a locomotive, all because of that one last degree of heat (effort). The point is that grasping and applying this concept whether in business or in our personal lives is what separates the "good" from the "great".

I am fully aware that I have been in some cases ridiculed for my dogmatic belief that details are important. Maybe some who are reading this now can even think of even some recent examples where they found it hard to understand why I want every "i" dotted and every "t" crossed. It is really pretty simple. The train ain't gonna' move until the water boils!

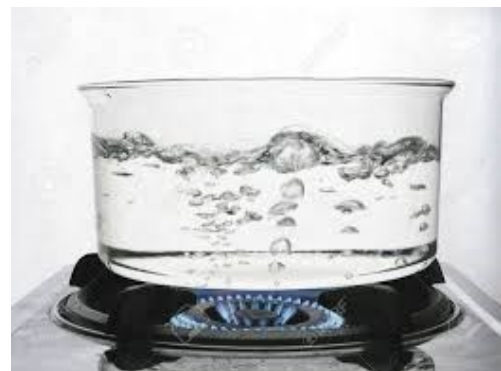
I believe that we should operate on protocols that are built on the concept that details are important and that the way to get them properly executed is to be clear about the

steps in the process so that everyone involved in the process along the way can do their part properly and the result agrees with our original goal. The simple truth is that it only takes the omission of one detail in many cases to end up with an entirely different and sometimes unacceptable result.

Excellent execution boils down to that last degree that the book 212° so aptly elaborates upon. If I want to be great at anything, I must be willing to go the extra mile, to achieve that last degree in the process. Otherwise, I am not much different than anyone else, and neither are the results I get. And, after all, if I am not giving my best effort and putting that last required degree of effort into the process to get the thing done right, am I not really lying? If to no one else but myself? Mom and Dad would not be proud... And for me that is unacceptable. You see, their pride in me is important to me. Further, I have learned (again from guess who) that there is nothing wrong with taking pride in a job well done, so I don't want to disappoint myself either!

So, where do you fit into all of this? Who matters to you? Who would you not want to check your work on those days when you don't put in that extra degree of effort? How do you see yourself on those days? What are you going to do about it?

I submit to you that the team of people that make up your company is no different than any team of any other kind. Unless everyone knows their assignments well, has trained relentlessly to be able to perfect their part of the "play", and then gives their all in the performance of "the game", you will never achieve the excellence that is possible. Fundamental to that entire process is that last degree of effort in every step of the process by every member of the team.



When's the last time you made the water boil?