



FIELD&FEEDLOT a monthly agriculture publication for Northwest Iowa

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Online References

Ag Decision Maker

www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/

Iowa Beef Center

www.iowabeefcenter.org

Manure Management Action Group

www.agronext.iastate.edu

Iowa Pork Industry Center

www.ipic.iastate.edu/

ISU Extension Dairy Team

www.extension.iastate.edu/dairyteam

Locate a County Office

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/countyservices/>

Numbers to Know

AnswerLine 800-262-3804

Beginning Farmer Center 877-BFC-1999

Iowa 2-1-1 211

Iowa Concern 800-447-1985

Iowa Healthy Families 800-369-2229

Teen Line 800-443-8336

Generational Differences in Farm Families and Businesses

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At the Dairy Discussions program in December, I presented on how different it is to manage the five generations on the farm. This is the first time in history that it is most likely employers will have members of each of the five distinct generations working for them.

If you think about it, farm families have always had several generations choring on the farm. For example, I started feeding calves milk twice each day and sweeping feed back to the cows in the comfort stall barn before I started kindergarten. Dad worked with the field equipment and my uncle milked and chored in the barn. As I grew older, I washed and dipped the cows, then milked and cleaned the barn. All this was under the supervision of gramps who fed grain and forked out silage.

With hired labor, management has changed to match the life experiences and perspectives of the newer generations. While many farms are managed by traditionalists or baby boomers, I'm seeing more Generation Xers every year. In fact, globally Gen Xers now account for over 51 percent of leadership roles.

The "generational gap" in the workplace is, broadly speaking, the difference in behavior and outlook between groups of people who were born at distinctly different times. Each generation grows up in a different context and, as a result, may have different work expectations. For instance, members of the Traditionalists generation are typically depicted as being very fiscally conservative, while baby boomers may show more liberal fiscal tendencies. Gen Zers are heavily tech-reliant and comfortable using social media platforms, while older generations may prefer other forms of communication. Since each generation can have a different preferred communication method, the potential exists for information to be missed by certain employees who are not as reliant on technology.

Looking at the demographics through the lens of your employees, often your youngest and oldest employees are family members which contributes to their own communications issues.

Problems in managing generational gaps in the workplace can arise from misunderstanding. Each generation can have its own preferences and expectations when it comes to completing job responsibilities. For instance, Gen Xers, baby boomers, and members of the traditionalists may be more deferential to authority than their later-born counterparts. They may also put more stock in loyalty to their employers.

Generational Differences in Farm Families and Businesses, *continued*

While there are exceptions in every generation, knowing your employees' general framework of experience can help you understand their point of reference and set management policies appropriately.

Generational cohorts are rough groupings of people by their year of birth. Growing up at the same time, each group was shaped by cultural and world events that affected their values and opinions—creating common characteristics. Today's workforce likely includes all five generations of employees:

- Traditionalists: Born before 1946; over 74 years old.
- Baby Boomers: Born in 1946-1964; currently 56 to 74 years old.
- Generation X: Born in 1965-1980; currently 40 to 55 years old.
- Millennials: Born in 1981-1994; currently 26 to 39 years old.
- Generation Z: Born in 1995-2012; currently 8 to 25 years old.

Most people are surprised to know there are significant size differences in the number of individuals in each generation in the United States.

Currently, the oldest generation is referred to as the Traditionalists or Greatest Generation. The newest generation is referred to as Generation Z, Generation Next or post-Millennial. Take note that Gen X is approximately 20 million less births than the baby-boom generation, and 10 million less births than the millennial generation. In a most basic breakdown, this means fewer potential employees down the road.

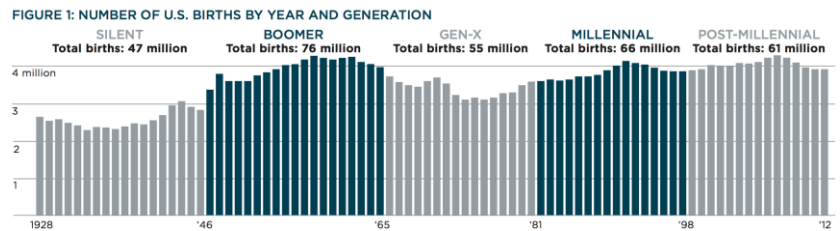


Figure 1 source: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services and Human Services National Center for Health Statistics

Remember that these are averages, and an average doesn't capture the whole story of American agriculture. Some farms operate with five generations active in managing daily activity, each generation consuming media and communicating differently. While the principal operator might have the final say on what gets done and how it gets done, the others will eventually take leadership roles on the farm and are currently forming opinions on what works best for the farm.

So, what does this mean for agricultural employers?

- The Baby Boomer generation is reaching retirement age.
- Generations X and Y have a different outlook on work and family life as compared to previous generations. The more recent generations place a greater value on maintaining a balance between family and work. Workers in these generations are less likely to willingly work extra hours. They are not workaholics like the Baby Boomer generation.
- Flexibility is a key word when it comes to Generation X and Y. Members of this generation want to be able to attend their son or daughter's baseball game or have dinner with their family and then return to work.
- Money may not be the motivating factor for some in Generation X or Y. Members in these groups often want flex scheduling, to collaborate with others, and not perform routine tasks.
- Generations X and Y have a greater focus on technology. This can be a real plus to a farm as the use of technology grows. These generations are much more familiar with and accepting of technology.
- Generations Z and Alpha are too young to make any conclusions. However, we do know that these generations are heavily focused on technology, so stay tuned...

Each generation brings with it challenges and opportunities. As you think about your next employee or the next generation to enter your business, what factors will you consider?

Preparation for a Foreign Animal Disease

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African Swine Fever (ASF) has been spreading around the world for the past couple years, from Russia getting into China, eastern Europe wild boars, and countries around China like Thailand and Vietnam. Now we have cases in the Dominican Republic close to home, making pork producers nervous. **It is important to remember the good news - people cannot get this disease. It is exclusively a pig disease; therefore, pork will be safe for human consumption.**

The problem is that if ASF is diagnosed in the U.S., the export markets would likely close to U.S. pork and remain so until it was clear the virus was eliminated. As over 25 percent of our pork is exported, that pork would have to be consumed domestically at a cost to the swine industry. A recent study by economists at ISU estimates the impact of an ASF outbreak to the U.S. pork industry at \$15 billion to \$50 billion. The faster the disease is found on farms and eliminated, the faster the recovery, and of course, lower the cost.

Preparation for a Foreign Animal Disease, *continued*

The Pork Board is working hard to help reduce the risk of entry and to help producers prepare for the disease if it gets here. One of the things that will happen if the disease makes it to the US is that all pig movement will stop until all the disease sites are located. To help track down the locations of disease outbreaks producers will be asked for pig movement records. The faster these records are gathered, the quicker the disease can be eliminated.

Pre-outbreak preparation will be key to eliminating the disease quickly.

A tool the Pork Board has developed is called AgView. Patrick Webb, DVM, Acting Chief Veterinarian for the National Pork Board has said, *"We need everybody to create an AgView account – whether you are a large, small, niche or show pig producer – I don't care why you're raising a pig, we need you in the system."* AgView uniquely makes pig movement data instantly available, with the producer's permission, to animal health officials. This is important for rapid disease traceback on day one of a foreign animal disease (FAD) outbreak. AgView is available at no cost to pork producers of all types and sizes, according to Webb. It delivers important information, including disease status updates, premises information and pig-movement data for contact tracing. *"It is critical for state veterinarians and USDA, who will be responding to an FAD, to have the most accurate information in front of them quickly so they can determine where the disease is and where it likely is not; and were to deploy resources,"* Webb said.

Movement records need to include pigs of any age and any time they are moved. That means show pigs, cull animals or pigs moving between production sites such as weaned and growing pigs. The other big area to pay attention to is biosecurity. The AFS virus is a large virus making aerosol spread highly unlikely. This disease will be tracked from one site to another. Enhanced biosecurity will be key to keeping the disease out of Northwest Iowa farms if it gets here.

It is easy to find AgView on the porkcheckoff.org website. For help with learning how to use AgView or help setting up an enhanced biosecurity plan, contact Dave Stender at 712-261-0225 or dstender@iastate.edu.

Soil Fertility Workshop to be held in Algona and Le Mars

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Knowing when you need to apply fertilizer to your crop or when you can get by without an application can make a big difference to your annual cash flow if you are a crop producer, especially this year with greatly increased input costs. If you are a landowner renting out your land, a crop that can utilize the nutrients that are stored in your soil has value – are you recovering that value being used? Likewise, if your soil has very little in storage, indicated by your soil test level, then a tenant might need to apply more fertilizer than just a removal rate for his crop, which lowers the value to that tenant.

Soil fertility management seems like a tough issue for many. It is not just about what is applied and how that effects the crop this year. How much we apply also slowly alters what the soil holds in storage, which can influence its future productivity.

Based on decades of replicated research across Iowa on how fertilization impacts yields and soil test levels, ISU researchers published "A General Guide for Crop Nutrient and Limestone Recommendations in Iowa" to help producers make soil fertility decisions. Knowing the soil fertility of your fields through soil testing is the key for good decisions, but interpretation of those numbers is the next critical step. A copy of this publication, which can be vital when interpreting the results of your soil tests, is available free at this website: <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/product/5232>. The general concept in these recommendations is for long-term profitability and reducing risk of yield loss by emphasizing response-based applications for very low and low soil test categories, and removal-based maintenance replacing what has been removed with crop harvest in the optimum category. These recommendations do not encourage the rapid build-up of soil test levels when in the low and very low categories, but rather longer-term profitability goals. This report also updated suggested removal rates, based on thousands of grain samples analyzed in recent years.

To help producers maximize profits, the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Crops Team is hosting several workshops in February and March called "Soil Testing Interpretations and Recommendations: Maximizing Return on Investment." Northwest Iowa sessions scheduled are February 8 from 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Water's Edge Nature Center in Algona; or March 17 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the LeMars Convention Center. Additionally, a virtual statewide option is being offered via Zoom. This will be offered in a four-part series from Feb. 22 – 25 each day from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m.

These workshops will lead farmers through the basics of soil testing, analytical tests, calculating crop nutrient removal, understanding return on investment from fertilizer applications, how crop response correlates to soil test levels and what is known about crop response to micronutrients. The workshops are designed to help producers develop the skills to understand their current soil nutrient situation and how to best allocate fertilizer input dollars on their farms.

Space is limited for each session and preregistration is required. Registration is \$40, and includes publications, copies of presentations, and a meal for in-person meetings. Registrants should contact the ISU Extension and Outreach Kossuth County office for the Feb. 8 session (515-295-2469), or the ISU Extension and Outreach Plymouth County office for the March 17 Le Mars session, (712-546-7835). Additional questions can be asked of Joel DeJong, 712-540-1085.