

## Potential New Year's Resolutions for Farmers

One of my favorite articles to write is my predictions as to what farmers' might set as their New Year's Resolutions. For many those resolutions might mean going to the gym more often, eating healthier, or spending more time with family. For a farmer, they may look something more like these.

#1 – Sit down with your family and discuss the future of the farm. Discuss at what level everyone wants to be involved and determine if a succession plan is in place. Some farmers might be surprised to find out just how involved (or how little involved) their relatives might want to be in the farming operation. This discussion should take place annually and a succession plan should be developed and updated as needed. Purdue Extension Succession Planning Team is hosting a number of programs related to succession planning. The closest program will be held on Feb. 2-3 at the Hendricks Co. Extension Office (Danville, IN). To sign up and pay the registration fee (\$150 for 4 family members), please contact Purdue Extension — Kosciusko County at (574) 372-2340.

#2 – Address potential nutrient issues in your livestock feed rations. This past year was difficult as producers attempted to avoid the rain and put up hay in a timely manner. This means that the quality of hay that was produced may not be as nutritious as we had hoped for. Therefore, to ensure your livestock are getting the nutrients they need at the right time, it is best to do a forage analysis. Purdue Extension can assist you in obtaining the analysis and can help you determine when to feed each type of hay given the stage of development your animals are in. Purdue Extension can also help you determine what additional feed ingredients you should feed in order to meet your animals' needs while avoiding issues such as improper rumen pH (sometimes caused by too much corn in a diet) and bloat potential (sometimes caused by too much soybean hulls in a diet).

#3 – To improve my pastures. It is always important to maintain a healthy pasture for your animals. To improve the quality of your pastures, you should scout your pastures weekly. When scouting you should take an inventory of the forages and weeds in the pasture, evaluate the height and cover the forages are, and look for heaving (when the roots of the legume is above the soil). You should also take a soil test once every 3 years to make sure your soil is in good condition.

When doing your inventory, identify what is the desired forage and what is a weed. It is a good rule of thumb that you should see less than 10% of the soil when looking at a cool-season grass or cool-season grass and legume pasture and that there is at least 2 legume plants per square foot. If it does not meet the rule of thumb criteria, then you should consider reseeding the pasture. When evaluating the pasture, if the grasses are below 4 inches in height, then you should rotate your livestock to a new pasture.

Visit our homepage at [www.extension.purdue.edu/putnam](http://www.extension.purdue.edu/putnam) or you can contact the local Purdue Extension Office by calling 765.653.8411 for more information regarding this week's column topic or to RSVP for upcoming events. It is always best to call first to assure items are ready when you

arrive and to RSVP for programs. While many publications are free, some do have a fee. Purdue University is an equal access/equal opportunity institution. All times listed are Eastern Time.

Upcoming Events:

January 4 – Extension Office Reopens after New Year’s Holiday

January 5 – Succession Planning webinar, 12 Noon, Register at  
<https://ag.purdue.edu/Extension/wia/Pages/webinars.aspx>

January 11 – Volunteer Program 4-H, Extension Office, 5:30 pm

January 12 – Volunteer Program 4-H, Extension Office, 5:30 pm

January 12 & 13 – Succession Planning Workshop, Seymour, \$150 per family, Call 219-984-5115 to register

January 15 – Enrollment Deadline for 4-H

January 20 – Hay Program 2016, Martinsville, \$30 to get hay tested, Call 765-342-1010 for more info/register

January 28 – Gardening Conference, Beef House Restaurant, \$20, 6-9 PM, Call 765-762-3231 to register

January 31 – Registration Deadline “4-H Grows Knowledge” clinic

February 6 – Clinic “4-H Grows Knowledge,” Cloverdale KNOY Center