

AGRICULTURAL DIVISION RESTRUCTURING: CONSULTATION

Consultation group evolves to better serve today's producers

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Historically, the Noble Foundation has been known for its consultation program, a one-on-one producer-focused effort that builds generational

relationships as we help them achieve their goals. Consultation is an integral part of accomplishing our organizational goal to advance agriculture by serving producers and offering science-based knowledge and best management practices.

For decades, we have offered an integrated, multidisciplinary consulting approach that provides producers with access to a team of specialists in areas including pasture and range, beef cattle, agricultural economics, soils and crops, and horticulture. We use this team approach because we know that together we can provide better solutions for producers than any one of us could alone. We're not there to manage producers' operations; we're there to help them manage their operations to achieve their agricultural and land management goals. We feel fortunate to have the luxury of spending quality one-on-one time with producers, and it has proven successful.

During the Agricultural Division's



recent restructuring process, we identified areas we could expand upon to complement these traditional services and better meet producers' needs. We know these needs change over time, and we want to be flexible enough to adapt to them.

One area in which we are expanding our efforts is producer education. In the 20 years I have been here, we have seen an increase in the number of producers we work with who are new to agriculture and those with smaller properties. Much of what we do is help producers in the areas they lack experience. Many of these

new producers are highly educated and found success in other industries like business, medicine and law. They don't have much agricultural experience, but they do have initiative and want to learn how to be good resource stewards. We want to provide them with resources to succeed.

University Extension services and other organizations do a great job of education, and we're not trying to reinvent the wheel. We want to add more educational resources that complement these existing services as well as the consultation services we already provide. We will do this ►

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by adding an education services program dedicated to providing educational content and learning opportunities. These resources may include online and interactive resources, including videos, in-person demonstrations and curriculum.

Another area we are expanding into is agriculture advocacy. The growing gap between producers and consumers is a challenge agriculture faces today, one that will worsen if we don't do something about it now. We will develop educational materials and programs that expose the general public to production agriculture and its many positive contributions

to society. We also want to provide education and resources to producers on how they can be better advocates for their industry.

As Agricultural Division Director Billy Cook, Ph.D., mentioned in the last *Ag News and Views*, the four new Centers of Excellence were developed to further support producers by concentrating our research and outreach efforts within four specific areas in which we are already heavily involved. In the following issues, each of the center managers will further explain how these centers support producers and agriculture.

Much of what we do at the Noble

Foundation is all about relationships. Each of these expanded efforts will help us continue building and leveraging relationships beyond southern Oklahoma and northern Texas. We have the ability to have great impact on producers here at home and beyond in areas we have extensive knowledge in – forage-based beef cattle production, wildlife, pecans, no-till cropping, etc. We'll always be linked to our home base and pay special attention to those close to home, but why limit ourselves? Our vision is to serve producers in the Southern Great Plains and beyond, today and in the future. ■