

# So Why Do People Go Into Farming?

BY DR. MIKE ROSMANN

A few summers back, as my wife and I were traveling by car from our farm in Western Iowa to Santa Fe, we stayed overnight in La Junta, Colo.

Early the next morning, I arose while Marilyn was still snoozing and found my way to the nearest local restaurant where I noticed farmers had gathered around a table for coffee.

When I asked if I could join the group, a man in jeans and wearing a bent cowboy hat said, "Pull up a chair."

After introducing myself and mentioning I was an Iowa farmer, I asked the standard opening question, "Have you had any rain lately?"

A husky graying fellow in overalls answered, "When it rained 40 days and 40 nights everywhere else, we got a quarter inch."

Another silver-haired man wearing a seed company cap summed up his philosophy: "I wait for everybody else to go broke and then I buy up what they can't afford."

"Yeah, I don't mind if I'm the only one left," a fourth fellow opined.

These comments in our first minute of conversation illustrate behavioral factors Drs. Marilyn Shrapnel and Jim Davie of the University of Queensland in Australia documented as characteristic of successful farmers: capacities for hard work and perseverance, confidence in making their own decisions, ability to tolerate adversity, comfort with solitude and self reliance.

I would add two observations of my own about these men that depict successful farmers: underneath their humor there was considerable openness to talking frankly with others who share their culture, and substantial wisdom and intelligence.

Research conducted by Dr. Joyce Willock and her colleagues at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland yielded similar findings. Successful farmers were conscientious, self-reliant and willing to take risks.

What drives these farmers and other farmers and ranchers to pursue this way of life?

In a 2010 article (The Agrarian Imperative, "Journal of Agromedicine," 15, 71-75), I proposed agricultural people are motivated by a basic human instinct I called the agrarian imperative.

Like most animal species, humans have a basic drive to acquire sufficient territory with adequate resources to produce the food and shelter required by their families and communities.

This genetically programmed instinct inclines farmers to hang onto their land at all costs. The agrarian imperative instills farmers to work incredibly hard, to endure unusual pain and hard-

ship and to take uncommon risks.

The drive for people to acquire territory is demonstrated in the way we mark our land, homes and workspaces. We build fences around our property, post signs that declare

ownership and signify that we reside in this domain.

Even in our work cubicles we display favorite photos and decorations that send the message: "This space is mine."

There aren't a lot of farmers in the United States and Canada, but about a fifth of the world's population is farmers. About 4.5 million people in the

United States and another 680,000 Canadians are actively involved in farming.

Another 3.5 million or so farm workers help produce food, fiber and biofuels in the United States and Canada.

I include Canadian farmers, because our two countries are integrally entwined. Several Canadian papers publish this column.

The remnant population of people involved in agriculture in our two countries represents intense selection of the fittest over multiple generations during the past 11/2 centuries.

These people exhibited the characteristics mentioned earlier as keys to survival as farmers.

It is interesting to observe how domestic animals revert back to the wild.

Pigs that become feral develop elongated tusks, long hair and wary behaviors when they escape or are deliberately released from their pens. They carry these survival capacities in their genes.

In a similar fashion, we humans enjoy tilling many acres of land or just puttering in our gardens. Something about these activities makes us feel useful and gratified.

Emerging research is beginning to uncover information about where in the human genome various behavior predispositions or tendencies are located.

It will be interesting when we learn where the drive to work extra hard to hang onto agricultural land is located in the human genome!

This exciting scientific work has a lot of potential to add to the knowledge of why people farm.

*Additional information on this topic is available in Dr. Rosmann's book, "Excellent Joy: Fishing, Farming, Hunting and Psychology," which recently received the silver award from Foreword Reviews as the 2011 book of the year in the nature category. Especially see the last chapter.*

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Dr. Mike ROSMANN

# Tax Valuation Of First Keystone Pipeline Jumps

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The latest tax assessment of the first Keystone pipeline to cross the state carries a promise of extra revenue for 10 Nebraska counties.

The \$538.5 million assessed valuation released this month is nearly four times the previous valuation of \$145.2 million.

The latter figure reflects that portions of the project were still under construction when the centrally assessed value was set a year ago by state property tax administrator Ruth Sorensen, the *Lincoln Journal Star* reported.

The Keystone pipeline runs more than 2,100 miles from Hardisty, Alberta, Canada to refineries at Wood River and Patoka in Illinois and Cushing, Okla. Deliveries to Wood River and Patoka began two years ago, and deliveries to Cushing began in February 2011.

The second TransCanada pipeline, Keystone XL, is still under review by the U.S. State Department and the Nebraska Depart-

ment of Environmental Quality. It's designed to carry Canadian tar sands oil from Canada to Gulf Coast refineries.

Opponents have questioned its safety and its original route through the environmentally sensitive Nebraska Sandhills and near underground water in the Ogallala aquifer. The company has since proposed a new route.

TransCanada spokesman Shawn Howard told the *Journal Star* that the new valuation is no surprise to his company.

"This is consistent with what we've said, and it shows what a contribution this project is making in the state of Nebraska as the project gets up and going," Howard said.

The valuation figures vary from county to county.

Cedar County Clerk David Dowling said the new valuation might let his county lower its levy. But however it works out, Dowling said, "It has added to valuation, and that's been really good."

## Visiting Hours

# Sleep Is Key To School Success

BY ABBY GOEKEN, RPSGT, EEGT  
Avera SH Sleep Diagnostics Lab

National Sleep Foundation and Avera Sacred Heart Sleep Diagnostics Lab urge parents and kids to make sleep a priority during the school year and offer tips for back-to-school sleep schedules.

As the new school year approaches, the National Sleep Foundation (NSF) and Avera Sacred Heart Sleep Diagnostics Lab encourage parents and kids to put healthy sleep on the list of back-to-school necessities. NSF and Avera Sacred Heart Sleep Diagnostics recommend gradually adjusting sleep schedules now in order to be alert and energized as well as to assure optimal learning, participation and health.

"Kids tend to sleep and wake up later during the summer, making the transition to the school year sleep schedule difficult," explains NSF CEO Richard Gelula. "As tempting as it is to enjoy sleeping late in the final days of summer break, getting up earlier for school will be much easier if kids begin adjusting their sleep schedules now."

Going to bed as little as 15 minutes earlier each night until the desired "school's-in bedtime" is achieved will help start a new schedule.

All children — even adolescents — need more sleep than adults. According to NSF most kids in the U.S. do not get the amount of sleep experts recommend. Children need 9 to 10 hours and teenagers 8.5 to 9.5 hours of sleep each night. Optimal sleep is essential to children's health, safety and academic performance. The study also found that kids who do not sleep well are more likely to have behavioral problems and face academic challenges.

"Adequate sleep is just as important to kids' health and well-being as diet and exercise," says Daniel Lewin, Ph.D., director of the Pediatric Behavioral Sleep Medicine Program at Children's National Medical Center in Washington, D.C. "Inadequate sleep can lead to attention

and mood problems in children and sleepiness increases the likelihood of drowsy driving crashes, which are particularly common among drivers aged 25 and younger. Adequate sleep also facilitates learning and improves memory, both vital to improving academic performance as well as optimizing participation in social and athletic activities."

Parents may also find themselves unprepared for the sleep challenges that the new school year brings. Many parents need to wake up earlier in order to pack lunches, drive their kids to school or help them get to the bus stop on time. This is particularly true of mothers, many of whom are already sleep-deprived. NSF's 2007 Sleep in America poll revealed that 60 percent of women in the U.S. report only getting a good night's sleep a few nights a week or less, leaving them time-pressed, stressed-out and too tired for romance and spending time with their friends. Adults should try and achieve 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.

NSF and the Avera Sacred Heart Sleep Diagnostics Lab recommend these sleep tips to help parents and children start the school year strong:

- Gradually adjust to earlier

## S.F. Fair Pursuing New Rules For Profanity

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Performers at the annual St. Louis Fair may soon be watching their language.

The *Argus Leader* reports that future entertainment contracts will likely include a provision forbidding profanity.

The move stems from two recent instances in which performers used profanity: one this year and one last year from rocker Ted Nugent.

Fair Director Scott Wick spoke to the Minnehaha County Commission about the issue Tuesday.

He says a representative of the concert promoter suggested this year's incident was in direct response to performers being told not to use profanity.

Says Wick, "They did it because I told them they couldn't."

## Omaha Names A New Police Chief

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Omaha Mayor Jim Suttle has named a veteran police officer as the city's next police chief.

Todd Schmaderer, who joined the department in 1996, was introduced during a news conference on Tuesday. Schmaderer replaces Alex Hayes, who retired in March.

The 40-year-old Schmaderer has served as precinct captain, shift commander and detective. He served as deputy chief since 2010.

Interim Police Chief David Baker led the department before Schmaderer's appointment but wasn't selected as a finalist for the job.

Schmaderer will be sworn in Wednesday night during a ceremony at City Hall.

## Mock Village Eyed For Ellsworth Bombing Runs

RAPID CITY (AP) — South Dakota officials have agreed to spend \$50,000 to help Ellsworth Air Force Base construct a mock village for practice bombing runs.

Air Force spokesman Maj. Matthew Reese described the proposal as being in the "planning stages."

The director of South Dakota's Ellsworth Development Authority says the authority's board is backing the project.

Scott Landguth says the initial discussions have called for the South Dakota National Guard to build a mock village that Ellsworth would design.

sleep and wake schedules 7-10 days before school begins. This will set biological clocks to the new schedule.

- Keep a regular sleep schedule and avoid extremes on weekends. Having a regular bedtime increases the likelihood that kids — including teens — will get optimal sleep.

- Establish a relaxing bedtime routine. Reading before bed is a good choice for kids of all ages and for parents.

- Create a sleep environment that is cool, quiet, dimly lit and comfortable.

- Keep television, video games and other electronics out of the bedroom. NSF's Sleep in America poll revealed that having electronic devices is associated with an increased risk of falling asleep in class and while doing homework. Eliminate exposure to electronic media (television, video, and computer games, etc) within an hour of bedtime.

- Limit caffeine, especially after lunchtime.
- Eat well and exercise.

NSF also found an awareness gap between kids and their parents. While more than half of adolescents reported not getting the sleep they

need, 90 percent of the parents felt that their adolescent was getting enough sleep. Parents should talk to their children about their sleep and seek help for any sleep problems that may arise.

Here are more sleep-smart tips from NSF and Avera Sacred Heart Sleep Diagnostic Lab for parents:

- Be an example. By practicing good sleep habits, your kids are less likely to adopt bad ones.

- Talk to your kids about the importance of healthy sleep and the consequences of sleepiness, including drowsy driving.

- Recognize that children - including teens - need more sleep than adults.

- Children who have difficulty waking in the morning on more than 3 days a week or who snore may not be getting adequate sleep.

- Establish a one-hour "electronic-free" time before bedtime.

- Ask teachers whether your child is alert or sleepy during class and take steps to improve your child's sleep if you feel that he or she may have a sleep problem.

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE NATIONAL SLEEP FOUNDATION

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**Thursday, August 16**

7:40 am Yankton Chamber  
(Carmen Schramm)

8:15 am Yankton Conv/Vis  
(Lisa Scheve)

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The Press & Dakotan

**CARD OF THANKS**

The family of Steven Vellek wishes to express their gratitude to friends and relatives for their numerous acts of kindness at the time of his death.

Thank you all so much for your kind words, the memorials, cards, flowers, food, phone calls, etc. It is so deeply appreciated.

A special Thank You to both Todd and Audrea Hecht plus Francis and Patricia McDonald for their extra help through this tiring time. Father John Rutten for the beautiful service.

Thank you to Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home, honorary urnbearers: Todd Hecht, Jay Walsh, Frank/Mark/Richard Vellek, Francis & Duane McDonald, Trent Nelson and Pat Cummins, and the Ladies of Sacred Heart Catholic Church for serving lunch plus all others who provided help.

Thank you to Dr. Max Farver and his staff; Dr. Leona Cammock and her staff, and finally thanks to Avera Sacred Heart Hospice.

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