

# Exploring Options

**Kansas Agricultural Mediation Services** supports the Kansas ag community by providing confidential ag-related legal, financial and mediation resources at no cost. Contact us by calling **800-321-3276** or visit [ksre.k-state.edu/kams](http://ksre.k-state.edu/kams).

**KANSAS AGRICULTURAL  
MEDIATION SERVICES**

**800-321-FARM**

## Mediation: Exploring Options, Generating Solutions

Ever wonder how mediation can help an ag business? Mediation is designed to assist participants in exploring options and generating solutions for their agricultural management or succession concerns. It is a form of alternative dispute resolution (ADR)—a method for resolving an issue between two or more participants that will meet everyone's needs. Mediation is a time-saving, low-cost alternative to appeals and litigation and fosters constructive communication between participants. The mediator serves as a neutral third party that uses active listening skills to facilitate discussion between all participants and work through ag issues. Professionally trained mediators have backgrounds in counseling, law, social work, and farming.

Mediation is voluntary for all participants and has many benefits. Discussions about issues occurs in a confidential, non-adversarial setting, allowing participants to generate solutions together. While a drawn-out litigation can cause undue stress, mediation is generally completed in one or two meetings within a few months' time. Neutral resource persons are also available to participate in the meetings to help all parties understand the issues at hand, including financial feasibility and legal rights and obligations.

*At Kansas Agricultural Mediation Services (KAMS), we want to prepare participants for mediation through our state-wide network of financial analysts and attorneys. These resources help all participants understand their options and reach mutually acceptable solutions. Call 800-321-3276 to speak with the KAMS staff attorney confidentially and at no cost to you.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Topeka Farm Show

Calving Management  
Schools

Ag Profitability Conferences

Lease Workshops

Women Managing the Farm  
Conference

Women in Ag  
Educational Series

## 12 Steps to Overcome Succession Planning Roadblocks

Is your family thinking about succession planning? It is never too early to develop a plan and start implementing it. Even with young children, you can introduce leadership and management opportunities to develop the skills necessary to owning an operation.

Perhaps the two most difficult steps involved with succession planning is initiating the conversation and determining what's next once the conversation has begun. To aid families uncertain of where to start, K-State Research and Extension has a publication called *Transition Planning: 12 Steps to Keep the Family Farming*. It outlines key steps to navigate through the process and develop a plan.

*(continued on next page)*



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**QUICK LINKS**

**Kansas Agricultural  
Mediation Services**

**Succession Planning**

**KSRE Farm Analyst  
Program**

**K-State Research and  
Extension**

**AgManager.info**

**Kansas Agrability**

**Farm Service Agency**

**USDA**

What surprises many is that estate planning falls near the end of these steps and that it is just a small portion of the overall plan. We've all heard horror stories of revelations the family discovers after the older generation has passed. Disputes break out, lawsuits ensue and a family and operation that has endured for generations is shattered into pieces. Of course, this is a worst case scenario, but ensuring a successful and even smooth transition requires careful planning—planning that begins with conversations, uncovering emotional roadblocks and determining what each family member desires for the operation. These are some of the first steps for succession planning. All 12 steps include:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. What Matters Most                         | 7. Do We Have What We Need?                   |
| 2. Identifying Wants, Needs, Hopes and Fears | 8. SWOT Analysis of Internal/External Factors |
| 3. Establishing Vision, Mission and Goals    | 9. Financial Feasibility                      |
| 4. Human Resource Evaluation                 | 10. Developing a Business Plan                |
| 5. Transferring Management                   | 11. Estate and Retirement Planning            |
| 6. Financial Overview                        | 12. Put the Plan into Action                  |

Keep in mind that each of these steps will take some time and cannot be accomplished in one sitting. Succession facilitators suggest holding family meetings no more than three hours in length. If one step is not completed or needs more research, revisit it at the next meeting.

*Complete information on the 12 Steps can be found by visiting this publication link: **Transition Planning: 12 Steps to Keep the Family Farming**. Additional succession planning resources including videos, slideshows and educational documents can be found at [k-state.edu/kams/succession](http://k-state.edu/kams/succession).*

**Her AgriCULTURE Story: Women Managing the Farm Conference**

Experience a conference designed for women with a vested interest in a farm or ranch operation, whether they are owners, partners or beginners just starting in agriculture. Women Managing the Farm focuses on the active roles women play in all aspects of financial and risk management while also addressing the unique dynamics of the agricultural operation and the household. Topics include: production, management, finances, legal, relationships and health.

The 2016 Women Managing the Farm Conference takes place Feb. 4-5 in Manhattan, Kansas. This year's theme is *Her AgriCULTURE Story: Wisdom, Stewardship, Heritage*, with keynote speakers Bonnie Lynn-Sherow, associate professor of history, Kansas State University, Amy H. Gales, Executive Vice President, CoBank, Mykel Taylor, ag economist, Kansas State University and Mary Lee Chin, dietitian. Pre-conference workshops will also be offered on Feb. 3 and will focus on working with Excel spreadsheets, livestock handling and growing grain knowledge. Conference information, registration and scholarship applications are available at [womenmanagingthefarm.info](http://womenmanagingthefarm.info).



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