

# The Dispatch

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Family Business Insight for your Agriculture Company  
March 2023: Springing Forward

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By the time you read this, the official beginning of Spring and the time change will have happened. While some might luxuriate in the return of colors, birds and the scents of nature returning to life, some might look at this in terms of a new season of life that beckons us to work, discover, learn, serve and deepen our lives. What are you “springing forward” to today? That is the theme of this month’s Dispatch. Lance encourages us to look backwards as we go forward. Davon picks up on a concept, sustainability, that she finds productive in her work and life. And Ethan, well, he is a parent now for the second time! He is not only wondering whether sleep will return but what having two girls under two years of age will bring for him. We hope your Spring is a rich one; let us know your thoughts. [Bill](#)

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## Moving Forward by Measuring Backward

[Lance Woodbury](#)

When planning for the future, we often consider questions that have a directional or aspirational focus: Where are we headed? What are our goals? What metrics—for example, yield, profitability, or growth—indicate success? Many of us are optimistic planners, setting our sights on a distant horizon that includes a significant amount of stretch.

Goals that stretch us are great, and achieving them feels wonderful. But a downside of hitching our measurements only to future success, is the disappointment we feel when we don’t make it. Sure, we can say we tried. But if we fall short, miss the mark, or don’t accomplish what we set out to do, we’ve failed.

However, if we also measure our success based on where we’ve been, a different story emerges. We have gotten better. We’ve improved, become more efficient, or grown. We’ve achieved some measure of progress over prior years. Viewed with an eye toward the past, we actually haven’t failed, we’ve made progress. It may be incremental, but we are still moving forward.

The key to maintaining a great attitude is to have goals that propel you forward, and measurements that account for your progress from the past. C.S. Lewis said, “We all want progress. But progress means getting nearer to the place where you want to be.”

“Getting nearer” means recognizing where you’ve been. As you begin the Spring, where have you been, and how will you get closer to where you want to go?

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## Moving Toward...Sustainability

[Davon Cook](#)

In this time of springing forward, I asked myself, “What am I, and perhaps others, moving toward?” At first, I thought along lines of, “What do I want more of?” But then I realized my answer is really about maintaining balance. It involves a sometimes controversial word in our industry: sustainability. Oxford Dictionary defines sustainability as “able to be maintained at a certain rate or level.” Consider these three versions of seeking to maintain.

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- Taking care of the resources God has created. Our opinions on precisely how to do so may differ, but I don't know anyone who says, "I want to harm this earth"—especially in ag where our livelihood depends on it. I seek to live in a way that stewards resources, which means adapting with evolving science and knowledge of how best to do so.
- Functioning at a satisfactory pace of life. We all juggle to maintain the right combination of work, family, fun, commitments that feed me, commitments that feed others, etc. Having the energy to sustain those competing needs is the goal.
- Financial return to support my desired activities. Some make money to be able to be generous. Some want to provide greater opportunities for family. Some want to enjoy activities, toys, or life experiences. Some are energized by solving a business problem and building something—financial return is simply the indicator of doing that well. Regardless of your "why," we each have a desired financial maintenance goal.

What are you moving toward, or seeking to maintain sustainably, this season?

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## Parenting Forward

[Ethan Smith](#)

As we think about springing forward in 2023, for me it wasn't turning the clock ahead, trees budding, or a new calf crop hitting the ground. No, this year my wife and I were catapulted forward as we welcomed our second daughter into the family in February. Hold your congratulations until I tell you the next part—this gives us two children under two. Now you can type the congratulatory note as you smile and reminisce on the joys of your children. Just know, I am in that season.

Welcoming a second child brought the realization to me: Wow! This is happening! I am a parent who now carries the responsibility of nurturing and teaching two little girls. Now my wife and I are playing man to man coverage in our household. The assurance that we have gotten one child thus far is comforting. However, no parenting book or grandparent consultant can help you with the emotional question of, "Can I invest enough of myself into our second child as I did the first"? The answer to that question in all reality is, no. The positive note is that I am aware that the experience that I've gained in raising one child benefits the next. Reminding myself of this is a daily task. The best way to spring forward that I have found is just to cherish the day and watch all of us bloom.

Sleep will come again (I am told), and as we move forward we are certainly looking forward to what this season has in store.