

News Column for Use Week of 02/11/2019
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River Valley Extension District
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Landlord/Tenant Relations – a “Two-Way Street”

I have had several phone calls in the Concordia Extension Office lately pertaining to land lease questions, terminating leases, land rental rates, etc. At our annual River Valley District Lease Survey Meeting, Dr. Mykel Taylor gave some relevant insight into what she sees as a major issue with many of our lease arrangements, and it boils down to a lack of communication. Dr. Taylor spoke rhetorically, posing questions to those attending the Meeting like: “Tenants, how many times have you offered your landlord a ride around their property to show them what you have been doing or what you have been working on?” “Landlords, imagine going from \$100,000 net income to \$1,000 net income in less than 12 months.”

Just as many “old-timers” have told me, “Education, gives the lesson first followed by the test, while experience gives the test followed by the lesson.” So, I will humbly tell you today, both experience and education are important, just as communication between tenants and landlords is also important. Speaking from experience, when I was younger, I witnessed firsthand the changes and impacts as seen from a tenant’s perspective, resulting from the loss of ground and how it impacts one’s standard of living. Albeit, many of these extenuating circumstances cannot be controlled, more effective communication may have helped to alleviate some of the issues along the way. Talking with many tenants, landlords, and extension professionals for Kansas State Research and Extension, I have concluded that the following tips are effective ways of communicating between Landlords/Tenants:

- Tenants: a pickup ride around the properties you rent from said landlord may take up a morning or afternoon, but it shows your ultimate intent and emphasizes the part you wish to fulfill your landlord’s desires for the land, all the while displaying your intent to be a good steward of the land.
- Tenants: choose a medium of communication that suits your landlord. Adjust according to their age and knowledge of agriculture. For example, if your landlord is 80 years old, a handwritten letter in the mail with some pictures shows the extra time and effort you have put towards being a good tenant in the eyes of your landlord.
- Landlords: communication with your tenants on what they see as needs for the land (i.e. structural improvement, maintenance, fertility program, etc.), as well as other landlord/tenant arrangements regarding inputs is essential.
- Landlords: communicate with your tenant punctually, clearly, and effectively, if you are planning on altering, terminating, or have other changes in mind regarding the lease or the land.

For more information, or tips on how to improve your Landlord/Tenant relationship, contact Tyler Husa, Crop Production Agent in the Concordia Extension Office by calling (785) 243-8185 or emailing thusa@ksu.edu.