



Farmers' Guide

Communicating with Farmland Owners

Landowners' expectations of farmers are changing; however, leasing land is an income opportunity, but frequently landowners are more concerned with keeping their land healthy and productive than strictly profits. Many landowners removed from agriculture want to be involved in the decisions made regarding their farmland, however they may avoid asking basic farming questions for fear of causing friction with their tenant farmers. As a farmer, you can help relieve this fear by communicating with your landowner about your farming practices.

By establishing successful conversations with your landowner, you'll be on the path to informing them and working with them in a way that meets their expectations. This document presents a roadmap for solving the puzzle of building farmer-landowner relationships.

Building relationships
through effective
communication begins with
trust and understanding.

Puzzling Out Pieces for a Successful Relationship

Encourage your landowner to visit their property and offer to show them around. Explain the impacts of agreed upon management practices. Discuss potential changes for next year.



Fulfill your promises. If something arises, communicate with your landowner.

Prepare to listen, even if your opinions on management choices on their land differ. Consider what they have to say, ask them what their concerns are, and discuss appropriate options.



Encourage your landowner's curiosity. There are no 'stupid questions' about farming. Explain why you make certain management choices. The more they understand about farming practices, the better equipped they will be to offer you flexibility and support.

Find something you have in common with your landowner and build on that. Take note of important life events such as birthdays or illnesses. Respond accordingly with cards, well wishes, or offers of support.



Be up front with your landowner if a change needs to be made in the operation or you need to rectify a mistake.

Right Communication: Right Situation

Each landowner is unique in how they communicate as a whole. It is important to establish the best form of effective communication for your relationship. Technology makes communication more convenient than ever but miscommunication can happen quickly.

Consider asking the following questions with your landowner:



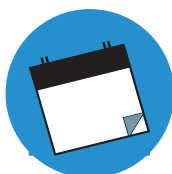
1 Which method of communication would you prefer during the season (phone, email, or text)?



2 How often should we meet face-to-face to check in, provide updates, and ask questions?



3 What issues or concerns would you like to discuss?



4 Would you like me to explain anything in further detail that you might not have understood?

Put it in writing! Informal agreements can foster misunderstanding, lacking guidance and protection when disagreements occur.

A written lease is often as simple as putting what was agreed upon over a handshake into writing.

Recognize the Signs

Modes of communication are ever-increasing and it is up to you and your landowner to determine what works best for your relationship in various situations. When communicating with your landowner be aware of their tone and body language. By putting the pieces of the communication puzzle together you can ensure a future with effective interactions and positive decisions with your landowner. This will guide you on what they might be thinking.

Furrowed Brow –

Something is confusing or questionable. Re-word your statement or ask if they have any questions.



Avoiding Eye Contact –

Uncomfortable with the current situation or distracted. Slow down and reassess. Think about what each others' main concern is and encourage discussion. Clearly communicate any immediate next steps and agree on a time to continue the conversation.

Mouth Slightly Open –

Something to say but doesn't want to interrupt. Take a breather and let them get a word in.

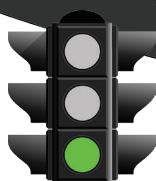


Crossed Arms, Hands on Hips, and/or Feet Pointed Away –

Defensive and protective. Pump the brakes and address the issue.

Nodding and Leaning Forward –

Agreeing and on board. You're doing great!



For more information, questions, and how you can get involved please contact:

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