

## Farm Management

## Boost brainpower

**N**EUROSCIENTIST David Rock points out that increasing understanding of how the brain works can help align work practices with the brain's affinity to create a more productive and successful workplace. He lists five neural leadership practices that can help managers and employees work better to solve problems and make better decisions.

**Foster fairness.** Neuroscientists have discovered that people's feelings of being treated unfairly stimulate activity in the amygdala, the part of the brain that performs a primary role in processing memory and emotional reactions. In short, memories of being treated unfairly run deep, so it is better to err on the side of being fair than right. Understanding this innate need helps to create relationships that focus on respect, acceptance and equality. Maintaining a fair environment will likely create synergy among workers, who will unite to evaluate and find viable solutions to difficult problems.

**Take a social approach.** The human brain is mainly a social organ. It needs some level of socially driven interactions and goals. Most workplace cultures, however, focus on optimizing results instead of improving social interactions. The unintended consequence of focusing on results instead of people is that, over time, even top performers will feel devalued, less secure or maybe even unfairly treated. This means that it's important to inspire teams to be collaborative in their



## On the Money

BY JOHN OTTE

approach to doing the job. Collaborative teams are productive teams. Over time, they will demonstrate enduring engagement and improved results.

**Get sufficient sleep.** The brain needs sleep. Neuroscientists believe that during sleep the brain consolidates memories, makes new connections, conserves energy and unconsciously chips away at problems. Enough rest also improves safety and trims number of mistakes. During the workday, encourage workers to take a break, go for a walk, or enjoy lunch without checking phone messages or working all in the interest of re-energizing and recharging their brains. Step away from the caffeine and be sure to get 40 winks, as well. Finally, recognize teams for a job well done. Their brains will release dopamine, which is a natural energy booster.

**Focus on one task at a time.** When tasks compete for the same limited mental resources, the quality of the results of all tasks diminishes. Prolonged multi-tasking causes a decline in and erosion of the quality of thought and energy. In other words, it's probably not in anyone's best interests to try to work on a report, review contracts and market crops at the same



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time. Focus on one item at a time to fully process each discrete task.

**Stop predicting.** People are wired to predict. The danger in creating predictions is that most are inaccurate or incomplete. With experience, the ability to make predictions will improve. However, holding on to a prediction may stop a person from

seeking new perspectives that can help set a better strategy or make a better decision. To break the prediction cycle, teach workers how to recognize when they are jumping to conclusions and encourage them to suspend judgment long enough to entertain alternative solutions.

Otte is a Farm Futures editor.

## LIVESTOCK CALENDAR

## APRIL

|   |  |    |  |
|---|--|----|--|
| 2 | Spring Lake Angus Sale, Timperley, NE  | 7  | Hubert Charolais Ranch 36th Annual Polled Bull Sale, Oakley, KS    |
| 3 | Dethlefs 47th Annual Sale, Loup City, NE   | 9  | McClun's Lazy J M Ranch Angus & Hereford Bull Sale, Torrington, WY |
| 4 | Kraye Angus Production Sale, Mullen, NE  | 10 | Hollman Angus Bull Sale, At the farm 1 1/4 mile Nor Hallam, NE     |
| 4 | Wisconsin Beef Improvement 58th Annual Performance Selected Bull Sale, University of Wisconsin Prattville Pioneer Farm, WI | 11 | Hebbert Charolais 33rd Annual Bull Sale, Hyanis, NE                |
| 4 | Wyoming Beef Cattle Improvement Association, 30th Annual Bull Test Sale DVAuction 1:00 p.m.                                | 11 | Jacko Valley Annual Bull & Female Sale, Missoula, SD               |
| 6 | Green Garden Angus - 1:00 Lorraine, KS   | 20 | Bullis Creek Spring Production Sale, Burwell, NE                   |
| 6 | Windmill Ranch 41st Annual Production Sale, Haigler, NE  | 20 | Jorgensen Land & Cattle Sale, Ideal, SD                            |
| 7 | Weers Angus, Diller, NE  | 25 | Wienk Charolais 45th Bull Sale, Lake Preston, SD                   |

## Beef.

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## Blocked waterways

**D**EBRIS can sometimes block waterways preventing the free flow of water, which can lead to floods and damaged roads. But who is responsible for clearing the debris?

Often, the landowner adjacent to the waterway is responsible to clear debris. The debris may be removed using backhoes and other machinery. The landowner should try to keep the machinery out of the waterway to prevent any leaks of fuel or oil. If the machinery must be used in the waterway, the Army Corps of Engineers should be contacted for written approval.

Sediment also can be removed from waterways if it is restricting flow. But material can only be removed directly in a one-step process to an upland area or to a truck that transports the material to an upland area. Pushing material around in the waterway or using a two-step process is not allowed under the Clean Water Act. No dredged or fill material can be placed into waterways without a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers. Also, the course of the waterway cannot be changed without permission.

If a landowner leaves obstructions, county commissioners have authority to remove the debris, under Ohio Revised Code Section 6151.14. If a landowner places an obstruction in a waterway or negligently allows an obstruction to remain in a waterway, the board may remove the debris and charge the cost to the landowner, plus a 50% penalty.

Landowners may find themselves in a situation where they have maintained the waterway adjacent to their property, but



## Country Counsel

BY ROBERT MOORE

a landowner downstream has allowed the waterway to become restricted. The downstream landowner's inaction has caused flooding or other damage to the upstream property. The landowner is not permitted to enter onto the downstream owner's property without permission to remedy the problem.

Instead, the landowner with the damage has a few options. A lawsuit could be filed against the downstream landowner for negligence or nuisance. The lawsuit could ask for injunctive relief, which would cause the court to order the downstream landowner to remove the construction. The landowner can also file a ditch petition with county commissioners. If approved, the commissioners can have the debris removed and pass along the costs to the landowners along the waterway.

Before removing debris or sediment from a stream or river, a landowner should check with local authorities to be sure a permit is not required. When in doubt, it is a good idea to contact the Army Corps of Engineers to ensure the removal activity does not violate the Clean Water Act or will not alter the course of the stream or river.

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