

A Christmas Wish List

AGRI-VIEWS

by Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent

I know everyone has a propensity for waiting until the last minute to get their Christmas shopping done. Me, I'm somewhere in the middle on that. Some of my shopping is done, but I've still got a few things left to pick up for family. So just in case you're done with your shopping early, or you have a little extra in your shopping budget, here's a few things that you might be able to help me out with.

The first thing on my wish list is some way to understand this new Farm Bill. Congress blesses us with a new farm bill every 5 to 7 years. It's supposed to be every five years but the past few rounds, because they can't decide what they want to do, or maybe they feel there's more pressing matters than FOOD, they drag their feet and extend previous farm bills until they can get around to figuring out what they want to do. Well this most recent farm bill is a zinger and there's a lot of confused folks out there. We've got to get producers signed up by the end of March so if someone can figure out a snappy way to make it easy to explain, I'd be all for that! You don't even have to wrap it or put a bow on it, I'll take it just like it is!

Number two on my list would be someone to sit down with Mother Nature and have her give us a clue what to expect for the next 12 to 18 months. I don't think I'd even have to expect it to be anywhere close to normal, although that would be nice, just give me a head's up so I could give all the farmers and gardeners a little bit better idea of what to expect. I once heard a plant physiologist say that as farmers and gardeners, we can control less than half of the factors that influence how a crop is going to perform. So if I just had a clue of what to expect, I could sure help everyone else be a little bit better prepared. How about it Mother Nature? Are you interested in cooperating here?

This next one's going to be tough. We just went through those every other year events known as an election. Things seemed to have gotten pretty ugly in some cases and in other cases just down right nasty. So we need some magic dust that's about equal parts of forgiveness and acceptance with a healthy dose of tolerance on top of it all. In the end, it doesn't really matter where people are from and what little letter follows their name on a ballot. We all live in the same city/county/state/country and we all have to live, work and play together. Thinking back to my kindergarten report card I think a lot of these folks would have to have had "does not work and play well with others" marked on their report card!

So, since we're all in this together (and let's expand that to include this planet while we're at it), let's figure out how to forgive one another for things that may have been said hastily and while a little less than calm. Let's try to be a little more accepting and tolerant of folks who have slightly, or even greatly, different views than we do. Just because you don't agree with someone, you don't have to hate them. You can politely agree to disagree and then move on to other subjects. It's important that we remember that what made this country strong was not everybody being just like everyone else, but all of our differences, blended together, gave us some really unique and resilient qualities!

So, there you have it. It isn't a really long list. It may be a bit challenging, but I think if everyone just tries a little bit, we can fulfill all of those items, well, maybe except for the Mother Nature one. In the meantime, have a safe and wonderful holiday season, and a very merry Christmas to one and all!