

New Year's Resolutions for 2018

AGRI-VIEWS

by Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent

It has sort of become a tradition for me to issue some New Year's Resolutions in my last column of the year. Some of the resolutions are for me, occasionally I suggest resolutions for others. After all, it's always easier to suggest changes for someone else than yourself. Please note that some of these are sincere, some are made in jest, and the rest may fall somewhere in between. If any of them tug a bit at your conscience, feel free to use them for yourself!

I have to start out with some obvious ones because I never quite get them accomplished to the level that I need to. Therefore I resolve to eat less, eat better of what I do eat, and replace "junk" food and empty calories with fresh fruits and vegetables. I'm sure that this resolution will haunt me to the end of my days! I also resolve to walk more, try to exercise at least a little and while I may not lose any weight (but I'll try), I resolve to not gain any more weight. Sure I'd like to drop a few pounds, but if I can't succeed at that, at least don't make it worse by gaining any new weight!

I resolve to not complain as much about officiating of sporting events. I'm sure that there's a whole bunch of people laughing heartily at this resolution! I know that these officials are doing their best - in fact they're doing a job that it's getting harder and harder to find someone to do. It's easy to sit in front of a television and see the same play 10 times from 6 different angles and be critical. But trying to make the right call in real time is something I don't want to do! I will need to trust that if there are officials that are doing a "less than stellar job" the appropriate authorities will eventually take action.

I resolve to talk less and listen more. A great deal of my job is to talk to people and help them resolve issues or problems. But we all can probably do a better job of listening. Several times over the past year I have seen a saying that really resonates with me. The phrase may be somewhat paraphrased here but it goes something to the effect, "Too many people listen not to understand, but to respond." One of the biggest challenges I deal with is when I try to explain a problem in someone's lawn or garden to them but they aren't listening because they've looked up something on the internet and think they already think they know what the issue is. They just want me to confirm it, which I often don't. I need to remember to spend time listening to other's when I ask for their advice and make sure that I'm listening to understand, not just respond.

I resolve to continue to spend a great deal of effort to maintain tolerance of things that are contrary to my own beliefs, regardless of whether those beliefs are founded in fact, misinformation, or preconception. For example, I choose to eat meat and someone else may choose not to. That is their choice and it is not up to me to judge them for that. Of course I reserve the right, if they challenge or question me on my choices to respond, kindly, and ask them questions about their choices and offer to clarify any wrong information that they may have, in my opinion. But first and foremost, I must remember that tolerance is something that seems to be in short supply now days and the best way to encourage tolerance is to be tolerant myself.

Sure, New Year's Resolutions may be a bit of a joke. After all, we can initiate change in ourselves at anytime of the year. But as we start a new year, there is some sense in starting afresh with a resolution or two to improve ourselves. In the meantime, here's wishing all of you a very Happy New Year!