Silvia Christen

South Dakota Stockgrowers
Executive Director

Education

- Rural Sociology and Ag Economics, University of Missouri

Career

- Lobbyist for Missouri Farmers Union
- Lobbyist for Dakota Rural Action
- Currently SD Stockgrowers' Exec. Director.

Advice

My advice to you first is to understand the value of your own integrity. Take humble credit for your accomplishments, but always give credit to others. Take absolute responsibility for your mistakes, follow through on your commitments, and hold people accountable when needed. Stand up for what you believe in, and always speak the truth. Repairing a broken trust or fixing a tarnished reputation is nearly impossible. Make sure that you lead your personal and career life in such a way that no one can ever question your integrity.

Second, I would tell you to always keep learning. Read books and the news every day so you know what is happening around you. Ask a lot of questions and listen to the answers, especially the answers you don't agree with. Share your opinions and gauge the response so you know if you're communicating effectively. Learn what's going on in the community around you. Meet new people and introduce yourself often. The more you know about what's going on around you the more likely you are to see opportunities coming, and to be able to capitalize for your own success.

South Dakota
Department of Agriculture

Careers in Agriculture: Success in Our Industry

West River FFA
Leadership Retreat

9-10 a.m. MDT
Friday, July 12, 2013
Camp Bob Marshall
Custer, SD

523 East Capitol Ave.
Joe Foss Building
Pierre, SD 57501
605.773.5425
sdda.sd.gov

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Panelists:

Silvia Christen,
Ag Communications

Grady Crew,
Cattle Rancher/
Crop Insurance

Courtney De La Rosa,
Ag Law

Dan Oedekoven,
Ag Extension Services

Grady Crew

Cattle/Wheat Rancher
Crop Insurance Agent
Business Owner

Education

- BS, Agriculture Business
- BS, Economics, SDSU

Career:

Grady's love of agriculture moved him to expand the ranch as well as build a seven agent crop insurance business covering western SD as well as expanding the family's two tourist businesses.

- Past President of Kadoka School Board
- Past President of White River Grazing District
- Secretary of Cenex Harvest States/ Midwest Coop
- Served on Senator John Thune's Ag Advisory Board
- Past Board Member of SD Wheat

Advice

If your family is not in production agriculture, I would encourage you to pursue an agri-business career because the future of agriculture will be one of the largest growing industries for many generations to come.

Courtney De La Rosa

SD Department of Agriculture
General Counsel/Director of Ag Policy

Education

- BA, Government, New Mexico State University
- Juris Doctorate, USD

Career:

- New Mexico Governor's Office (Constituent Service)
- Currently works for the South Dakota Department of Agriculture (General Counsel/Director of Ag Policy)

Advice

Agriculture is South Dakota's #1 industry employing over 122,000 South Dakotans. There are countless opportunities available for careers in the agriculture sector. From farm to plate, there are so many phases of food production and a variety of roles to play in the process. Stay involved and stay informed because you can make a difference.

Dan Oedekoven

SDSU Cooperative
Extension Service Director

Education

- BS, Farm & Ranch Management, University of Wyoming
- Masters, Education, SDSU West River Graduate Center

Career:

- Air Force
- Agricultural Loan Representative
- Directed Adult Farm/Ranch Mgmt. Program for Western Dakota Tech.
- Elected Meade County SDSU Extension Agent in 1994.
- Currently serves as Director of the West River Ag Center.

Advice

Be proactive. Show up, participate and get in the game. Begin with the end in mind. Write down your goals. Put first things first. Schedule your priorities, don't prioritize your schedule. Think win/win. People will follow and do business with a leader who wants their sucess as much as his/her own. Seek first to understand, then be understood. God gave you two ears and one mouth for a reason. Sharpen the saw-physical, mental, spiritual, social/ emotional-read a lot; stop and smell the roses; walk a mile every day; seek the truth spiritually-prayer helps.