

Invest in Yourself

When the economy is as bad as ours has been lately, it's even more important to invest in yourself. No matter how tightly your resources are stretched, some must be reinvested in yourself.

Yes, you'll see others giving up. You'll see farms selling out. You'll hear a lot of grumbling. The "Ain't it awful" club is huge. But you've heard the saying, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." Well, the grumblers, the whiners, and the complainers are not going to get going—are not going to have success. You can. This is the time to **invest in yourself!**

No matter how bad the economy gets, there are always some who thrive. If it were entirely about the economy, then everyone would fail. But they don't. It is by looking at what those who succeed are doing, that we can discover what makes the difference.

Invest Your Time: No matter how efficient you have been, there are some places where you have been spending time non-productively. This is the time to re-examine the time wasters—TV, email that is non productive, meetings that go nowhere, people who sap your energy. Find the places you're wasting time.

Every moment spent in happiness is well spent. Happiness is free. Happiness is always a choice. Steer clear of the things and people who are not making happiness choices. Don't allow gossip, complaining, and negative 'what-if's' into your psyche and into your time. Spend your time in a positive mind-set. "This will work" as opposed to "This will never work." "My business has huge opportunities here," instead of "Times are so tough." Don't spend your time on strategies that don't promote your business and your life.

Invest More Effort: Use it on valuable goals. Valuable to you that is. It could be a clean closet, a new wholesale account or a championship at the next show. What's worth some elbow grease, some brain-challenge for you to be able to say "I did it!" Prioritize.

Invest in Education and New Directions: Learn! Read. Take seminars and workshops! Buy a new book. Master new skills. Try out a new environment or venue for getting your information or products out there and learn what works. Give yourself new experiences, looking for ideas all the time that have not occurred to you before. Plan for what these will cost in your marketing and your research and development budget. Education is never a cost, but an investment.

Relationships: Take some time to nurture relationships. They uphold you and enhance your life. Don't take the people you love for granted. Spend some time expressing your appreciation (to family, friends and customers).

Who can you write a thank-you note to, who has contributed to your well-being? Is there an overdue love letter to a parent, child, spouse or friend? Who could you call to encourage—someone who may be struggling in some way?

Keep your long-term goals in mind at all times: If you know what you want, always move toward it. If you don't know what you want, now is a good time to figure it out. Spend a few minutes working backwards from the results you want to see. The results you want to see—that's your dream. When you put a time line on it and make it specific, it's a goal. "I want my farm to be successful" is a dream. "My farm will have a gross income of \$50,000 by the end of 2010," is a goal. See "**Growing Your Rural Business**" for a chapter on goal setting, or attend

one of my workshops!

You may have to go over, or around or find a new way to reach a goal, but keep your eyes on the results you want until you get there or think of something even better.

Investments to Avoid...

- Time and energy spent in fear, guilt, anger, resentment, blame or regret.
- Commiserating about how awful it all is.
- Following a path that leads away from what you want.

If you find these three creeping into your life, note it and say something like, "Rewind," or "Not productive," "Let's don't go there." Stay on track! Invest in yourself!