



THE BUSINESS OF DAIRYING

Goals and Objectives Need to be SMART

Who We Are

Greg Squires manages DairyES and has consulted in business and financial planning for hundreds of dairy operations in over 30 states. Through this work and a strong background in production management consulting, Greg has cultivated significant relationships with dairy producers and other industry influencers across the U.S.

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Resources for Today's Dairy Industry

If you believe in managing change and are considering steps to improve the productivity and efficiency of your business, DairyES can help you meet your goals. To learn more about how DairyES can lead your business through the process of managing change, please contact us.

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In the Mel Gibson movie *The Patriot*, Gibson's character suggests to his two young sons that they "aim small, miss small" while preparing to ambush British soldiers who had taken their older brother prisoner. This phrase suggests that aiming for a small, specific piece of a target will allow for possibly missing the smaller bullseye for which you aim, but be much less likely to miss the larger target (bigger, long-term goals).

Goals are valuable management tools to help ensure that your dairy business will aim small, miss small. The "SMART" acronym is a time-tested portrayal of how to more effectively set goals and objectives - probably because it addresses all of the critical elements:

"OBSTACLES ARE THOSE FRIGHTFUL THINGS YOU SEE WHEN YOU TAKE YOUR EYES OFF YOUR GOAL."

-Henry Ford

Specific Exactly what are you wanting to change or improve? To simply state, "I want to spend more time with my family," describes an expressed desire but certainly is not very specific. It doesn't say *where* (working with them on the farm vs. vacationing on the beach), let alone *when* (sometime before my daughter graduates high school vs. the second week of June). In order to create action, goals and objectives must be very specific and narrowly defined - so be sure to define what is to be accomplished along with a timeline or deadline.

Masurable This is one of the most important attributes of an effectively defined goal or objective. Consider the phrase "what gets measured, gets man-

aged." Stating "I want to lose some weight" is completely vague compared to "I will lose 10 pounds in the next six weeks and maintain a 195 pound bodyweight." If the goal cannot be measured, how will you know if it has been reached?

Attainable Goals that aren't somewhat aggressive will not stretch and motivate us toward the desired change. Likewise, if we define a goal too aggressively, it will cause us to give up before even starting because it is so lofty or unrealistic. If the desired change or improvement is drastically different from the current performance level, the long-term goal can be broken down into smaller objectives. Cause and effect should also be reevaluated before establishing each new goal.

Relevant The desired result or outcome should always be considered when defining goals and objectives. Make sure there is a cause-and-effect relationship between the desired result and how the goal is defined and stated.

Tracked Monitoring and evaluating results is the final sub-step to this repetitive process. A consistent goal-setting process becomes one of the foundations to effective employee management. Employees should be integral contributors to developing their own goals who then carefully review results with their managers at regular intervals throughout the year. 