University of Nebraska’s “Returning to the Farm Program”
The University of Nebraska Agricultural Economics Department has offered the “Returning to the Farm” program each year since 1987. The original focus of the program was directed exclusively toward UNL students that were considering returning to their family farming operation. Early curriculum was directed to farm management topics such as cash flow budgeting and the use of financial management tools such as trend sheets, balance sheets and ratio analysis documents. Over the years participants requested assistance with communication issues such as goal setting, family business meetings, personality types and farm succession planning. Today’s “Returning to the Farm” program targets topics for both the beginning as well as the senior members of the farming business. Senior generation topics include:

- Goals, expectations, forced communication activities
- Business Succession Planning
  - Do you want a successor?
  - Have your heirs contributed equally to the success of your business
  - Have they been compensated proportionally for their contributions
  - Will you divide your farm equally or fairly?
  - What is the length of the transition period
  - What type of transfer model works best for your operation?
    - Super Farm
    - Spin Off Farm
- Detailed Farm Business Succession Plan
  - Transfer Income
  - Transfer Labor
  - Transfer Management
  - Transfer Ownership
- Retirement Planning
  - Do you want to retire?
  - What does retirement look like for you?
  - Retirement Budget
  - Retirement Income sources
- Estate Planning
  - What is the size of your estate?
  - How are your assets titled?
  - How long do you wish to control your assets?
  - Who do you want to give your assets too?
  - When do you want to give your heirs your assets?
    - What about long term care? Beginner generation topics include:

  - Goals, expectations and forced communication activities
  - Farm financial management skills
  - Access and management of Agricultural Credit
  - Programs and resources available for beginners