



American Society of Farm Managers & Rural Appraisers

Should You Hire a Professional Farm Manager?

And How Should You Select One?

The term "farm manager" is broadly used to describe a range of job descriptions. Those who look after family land but do not actively farm sometimes call themselves a farm manager. Politicians are sure to add this to their resume, if possible. Or the good neighbor who oversees a few farms may be a "farm manager." While there is nothing wrong with these titles, there is another category that you should be familiar with: the "professional farm manager."

A professional farm manager dedicates his or her career to the management of farm land, most often for "absentee" landowners, which can be another misnomer. While many landowners do not live nearby, their interest in their land is usually not absent, nor are they absent-minded. Truth is, many are highly engaged in the activities of their farmland, regardless of distance.

A landowner/farm manager relationship is often long-term. Many last decades or even generations. Selection of a professional farm manager may be a critical step in the future of your farmland ownership. A good farm manager will immediately want to understand your goals for the current and future of your land.



Assuming your goals are ethical - and most are - you will want to hire a farm manager with the same high ethical standard. How can you be ensured of this? After the usual questions about background, education, and experience, a defining question may be whether he/she holds active membership in a professional organization.

For professional farm managers, the choice is the American Society of Farm Managers & Rural Appraisers. ASFMRA members run the gamut from one-man shops to the largest firms in the nation. What they share is dedication to the highest level of professional service to clients, tenants, vendors, and other farm managers.

Many ASFMRA members choose to pursue becoming an Accredited Farm Manager (AFM). Other designations can be earned in appraisal, review appraisal, and consultation. To achieve accreditation, members must hold a four-year degree; demonstrate a minimum of four years of qualifying work experience; pass numerous ASFMRA peer-reviewed classes; produce an approved demonstration report; and maintain a solid work history including background check. Last, and certainly not least, all accredited members are taught high ethical standards throughout the duration of their ASFMRA membership, including completing a required Ethics course periodically along with fulfilling continuing education requirements.

When considering a farm manager, be selective and ask whether he/she is a member of ASFMRA and whether he/she is an AFM or on track to become one. You'll be dealing with the best in the business!

*10/27/2020, blog post courtesy of - Dennis Reyman, AFM, ARA currently serves as company treasurer for Stalcup Agricultural Service in Iowa, for whom he has worked since 1993. He has appraised more than 3,000 agricultural properties throughout Northwest Iowa and the surrounding areas and manages farms in twelve counties in Western Iowa and Northeast Nebraska, along with real estate services. **Reyman will serve as President of the ASFMRA in 2020-21.***

