

## 2018 Farming: Looking Back to Look Forward

I really debated whether to write a reflective 2018 blog post or not. On the farm, it wasn't a year I wanted to remember. If you have been following me, you know our struggles. Weather, low yields, low commodity prices, hog health issues. Literally, the whole bucket was thrown at us this year. We have asked ourselves, "Why are we working so hard for so little?"

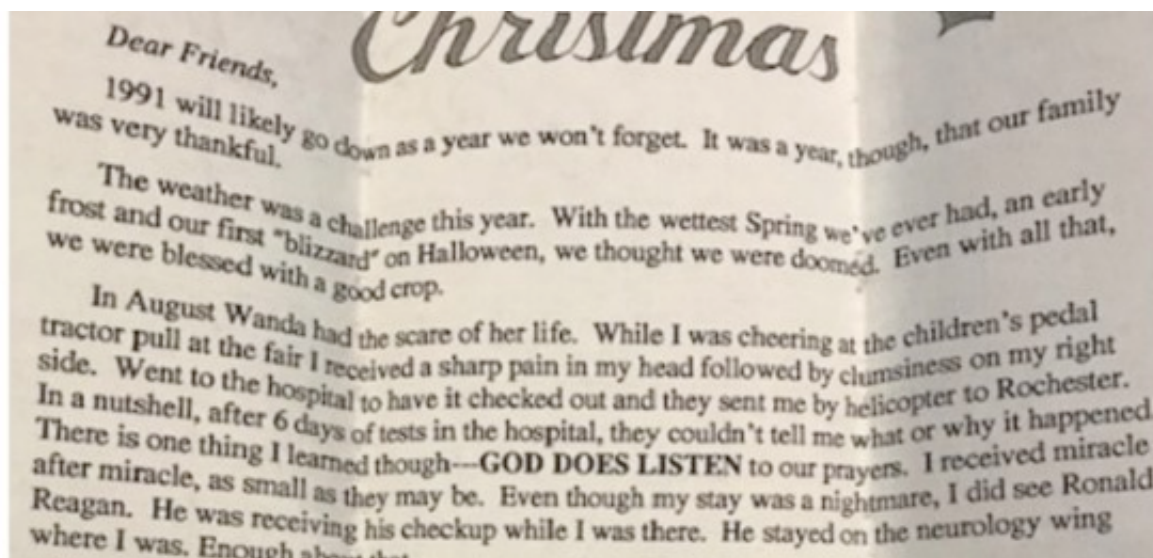
Then, this happened:

### Life's Accumulations

I am not sure if any of you can relate, but after 40 years of marriage, we have accumulated insane amounts of pictures. In fact, I have one 5-drawer dresser stuffed with pictures, both in the drawers and on top of the dresser. Recently, we decided one cold afternoon to tackle decluttering some of our pictures.

Sorting. Throwing away. Reminiscing. Memories. Emotions. Tears.

As we perused through old pictures, I came across a Christmas letter I wrote in 1991. Here is an excerpt:



1991 Christmas Letter

### Life in 1991

Oh, the memories of 1991. Sometimes we just need subtle reminders of our past. Many of you may remember the blizzard of 1991. I sure do. The only year I did not take my kids trick-or-treating. They survived, I survived and our crops did too, even with terrible weather conditions.

But, oh, the second paragraph. Scared to death. Realize, I had an 8, 6 and 11-month old at home. I honestly didn't know if I would live to see them again. The doctors initially thought I had an aneurysm. After a helicopter ride to Rochester Mayo, I lay in bed, awaiting a possible surgery (which I didn't have), wondering if this was the end of my life and thinking how was my husband going to take care of our three young girls . . . and farm.

## **What I didn't care about**

Thoughts were rushing through my mind at this point. I didn't care about work. I didn't care if my laundry was done. I didn't care if the bills were paid. I didn't care if I missed a calendar appointment.

*I simply just didn't care.*

## **What I did care about?**

My family—my husband and my three kids. I thank God that he thought my family and the world still needed me.

Sometimes we all need wakeup calls. What is most important in your life? Was it an accident that I still had this old Christmas letter? I think not. With fresh tears, my husband gave me a hug while he remembered that very scary time in our lives.

## **Looking back to look forward.**

Sometimes we really do need to look back so we can look forward. What have we learned? How do we look forward? Here is my take.

We will always have tough times in farming. Some may be worst than others. It wears us down emotionally, no question. But at the end of the day, we still have our family, which overrides anything we do or don't do on the farm.

And also knowing God is on our side. He is rooting for us. Some doors may close, but if we allow, doors will open. We just need to be open to it. Life truly is a journey.

And with that, My wish for you in 2019, is to realize your life's priorities.

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