

When the Farming is Done . . . What Do We Do In The Off Season?

The crops are harvested. The long hours in the field are done. The grain is in the bin waiting to be fed to livestock or sold to an elevator, processing plant or ethanol plant. So when the work is done in the fall, usually November for us in Minnesota, what do farmers do in the off season?

It all depends . . .

If you have livestock, the crop seasons do not matter. The animals still need to be tended to everyday. Life carries on with livestock.



Winter weather. It depends on what kind of weather winter gives us. **Winters can create havoc for farmers.** I remember some brutal Minnesota winters where all that was accomplished was either cleaning up after the last winter storm or getting ready for the next. Cleaning up after a winter storm means pushing snow out of the way so feed trucks can get to the feed bins, grain bins, clearing out driveways, and other areas people need to get at. Getting ready for a snowstorm means making sure all the livestock feed bins are full so if feed trucks can't deliver feed for a few days, the animals will not go hungry. Also making sure nothing is outside that you don't want covered in snow.

Repairs and Maintenance. If the winter is mild, we do a lot of repairs and maintenance. And I mean a lot! The list is endless. So far this winter we have fixed feeders, waterers, feed bins, heaters, fans, and the loading chute. Also, our tractors and combine have been inspected at the local John Deere Implement shop with needed repairs completed.



Financial Analysis and Income Tax. It is also this time of year when most farmers have their business "year end". Financial statements need to be completed and visits with lenders, farm management personnel, and/or accountants to review the "business" aspect of farming. Not always a favorite time for farmers.

Deliver grain. Fill the truck, drive to town, empty truck, drive back home and repeat. This is a common sight during the "off season" of farming. We feed about 1/3 of our corn to the hogs, we sell the remaining 2/3 corn and all of our soybeans. We are thankful that our markets are close. We have a grain elevator, an ethanol plant and a soybean processing plant all within 10 miles of home.

Continuing Education. Not only is there work on the farm but this is also the season of meetings. This is a great time for farmers to continue their education.

- They learn of new and better products
- They learn how to do things better on the farm
- They keep abreast of changes and how they may affect them

One example of the type of meetings and education available to Minnesota hog farmers is the Minnesota Pork Congress. It is held at the Minneapolis Convention Center. Seminars as well as a trade show are available for the benefit of farmers. Seminars are very informative while the trade show is lined with vendors and their products. Great time for hog farmers to learn what is new on the market to make their farm better. Also [Agstar](#) sponsors seminars. One earlier this year was with [Dr. David Kohl](#). He is insightful and keeps your attention with information and humor.



Church. And not only repairs and meetings but we are also involved in our church. We have held church offices such as elder, trustee, and financial secretary. In a small country church the question isn't if you will hold a job, but when!



Time to Recharge. The off season is also a good time to recharge your energy by taking a little time off. And everyone can benefit from time to recharge!