



PLANNING FOR THE UNEXPECTED

With Becki Leach, Kite Consulting

Planning for the unexpected - Never a more relevant topic than in 2020! No one, literally no one, had “global pandemic resulting in multiple and extended National & International lockdowns” on their radar as a possibility and yet, here we are!

That said, we often perceive that many of the challenges we as farmers face, are totally unexpected and uncontrollable – the weather, politics, and family to name a few, but I would suggest many of these are predictably unpredictable! Nevertheless, we are all human and can be caught “off guard” from time to time, so here are some rules to follow which might help you plan for the unexpected:

RULE 1.

The (Covid) Principle

Expect the unexpected...but don't worry about it too much because there is very little you can do about something that is truly 'unexpected'.

RULE 2.

Planning

As the well know saying goes - Proper planning prevents poor performance, so periodically undertake some form of formal risk analysis & planning. This means sitting down and considering where you and your business are now and what are the risks to your business? The aim is to consider how likely they are to happen and what level of impact they could have.

RULE 3.

Prioritise

Once you have identified the risks which are most likely and could have the biggest impact on your business, then prioritise your efforts on tackling those! It sounds totally obvious but these are the things that get bumped down the to-do list because they feel like a big task and you don't know where to start. Prioritise these high risk things first, aiming to reduce either the likelihood or impact of them happening.

RULE 4.

Be Proactive

You cannot control the Brexit trade deal negotiations or the weather; but you can consider what each scenario might mean for your business and be proactive in changing things you do have control over. Focus your energy on the things you can directly control or influence – which seed variety is most tolerant to wet or drought? Which of your key inputs do you need to stock through December and January? What is your growing cost per tonne of wheat or Kg of prime lamb?

RULE 5.

Give it Perspective

When you feel overwhelmed or out of control, aim to gain some perspective. Ask yourself; how significant is this on a scale of 1-10, how important will it be in 6/12/24 months' time? Is my response proportionate? Can I influence or improve the situation? What can I learn or do differently? What is the positive of the situation? Most farming businesses are “playing the long game” and in general, most unexpected disruptions, no matter how significant they may seem at the time, will have a relatively short-term impact in the grand scheme of things.

RULE 6.

Be Positive

Easier said than done when you are in the midst of a crisis! But to quote Baz Lurhmann’s Sunscreen Song “Worrying is as effective as trying to solve an algebra equation by chewing bubblegum”. In most instances, worrying serves no purpose and can even hinder your decision-making process, leading you to make irrational and drastic or over cautious decisions.

The agility and energy to deal effectively with the unexpected relies on strategic planning and effective accounting, in all aspects of your business and life. Building resources; cash, natural capital, emotional capital and relationships during the good times so you can draw on these when needed. Putting this on paper and putting it into practice are two very different things and it can be difficult to know where to start

If you would like support with your business or personal strategy – please contact Becki Leach 07595 415756 or one of the Kite team to discuss how we can help. www.kiteconsulting.com



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“To expect the unexpected shows a thoroughly modern intellect” Oscar Wilde