

## **Markum Farms - Holistic Management Testing Questions**

**What can Mark and Uma do in terms of stepping back from the operation while bringing Butch into more of a managing position and keeping Tanya interested in the farm?**

**They brainstormed lots of potential enterprises and scenarios and came up with two potential courses of action which were considered good options.**

**Proposed Action 1 – *Expand the strawberry and sweet corn operations and convert them to organic production.***

**Proposed Action 2 – *Phase Tim out of the operation and have Butch take over his responsibilities and prepare him to take over the farm.***

**Cause and Effect** – Does this action address the root cause of the problem?

*There was much discussion around what if any was the problem they were trying to deal with – was it lack of adequate income overall, a succession problem with Butch wanting to take the farm a different way from Mark & Uma, and what about Tim?*

*It was decided that for this testing they were dealing with an opportunity not a problem so they decided this question was not applicable. They did acknowledge that their course of action could lead to problems especially Proposed Action 2.*

### **Weak Link:**

***Social*** – Have we considered and/or addressed any confusion, anger, or opposition this action could create with people whose support we need in the near or distant future?

*Proposed Action 1 passed this test, Mark wants Butch to take over eventually so was okay with Butch's interest in organic production. This would also keep Tim involved in the farm.*

*Proposed Action 2 failed this test as Tim would be very disappointed and really should have been included in this testing – it made them questions whether he was a decision maker or not. It also would have made testing this decision very difficult if he were included. They discussed how they could help Tim start his own operation perhaps in cooperation with Butch, as Tim and Butch got along well. They will discuss sitting down with Tim after this testing not wanting to alienate him.*

***Biological*** – Does this action address the weakest stage in the life cycle of this organism?

*Not applicable.*

**Financial** – Does this action strengthen the weakest link in the chain of production?

*They were not sure if this test was applicable but played with the chain of production in terms of: Raw Resources – more overall production (corn, strawberries, beef, etc), Product Conversion – picking, packaging, butchering, etc; Market Conversion – road stand, advertising. They decided that this should really be done for each enterprise (beef, strawberries, etc) so would not work for this test so was not applicable.*

**Marginal Reaction** – (Comparing two or more actions): Which action provides the greatest return in terms of our holistic goal for the time and money spent?

*Proposed Action 1 seemed to be favored in terms of their holistic goal because it didn't cause Tim to leave and kept everyone together as they described in the hg, so it passed.*

*Tanya said it didn't necessarily pass for her because it seemed like Mark & Uma weren't considering her interests, it was all about Butch. While surprised at her comments the group agreed that they all wanted Tanya to stay connected to the farm and they would need to discuss some other enterprises (Tanya likes the idea of looking into doing something with poultry) that she might be willing to manage. Butch expressed his interest in keeping Tanya close to the farm and he didn't want her to feel like she was not part of things as she is very sharp and has always been great at financial records and bookkeeping stuff.*

*Proposed Action 2 did not seem to pass because it moved the farm away from the holistic goal so it failed.*

**Gross Profit Analysis** - (Comparing two or more enterprises): Which enterprise contributes the most toward covering the overheads of the business?

*Both actions would improve the finances, covering overheads of the business, but in two different ways. When pressed Butch expressed that he wants to change things so farming the way Mark & Uma have been didn't exactly excite him. But from strictly a finance view they felt that expanding (Proposed Action 1) had more risk (they needed to gather more information) and that cutting expenses (letting Tim go) and having Butch take over more of the operation would be best for profitability. So Proposed Action 2 would Pass here and Proposed Action 1 would be less profitable (based on the information they had at present.)*

**Energy/Money Source and Use**

Is the energy or money to be used in this action derived from the most appropriate source in terms of our holistic goal?

*It was determined that Proposed Action 1 would require more fossil fuel use so it failed, while Proposed Action 2 would require less so it passed.*

*Proposed Action 1 would require utilizing the line of credit with perhaps a loan from the bank, so it would fail compared to Proposed Action 2, which would require no interest payments so it passed.*

Will the way in which the energy or money is used lead toward our holistic goal?

*Proposed Action 1 would pass both energy & money use in that it lead them toward their holistic goal.*

*Proposed Action 2 failed both energy & money as it lead them away from their holistic goal if they considered Tim and Butch's desire to manage the farm differently.*

**Sustainability** – If we take this action, will it lead toward the future resource base described in our holistic goal?

*Proposed Action 1 passed and Proposed Action 2 failed, especially when considering Tim.*

*They felt that they had not really thought out Proposed Action 2 clearly, as Tim was a decision maker and helped craft their holistic goal, so they were feeling pretty bad that they had left him out of the testing and had even considered this action. They decided they should sit down with Tim and have a frank discussion on how he felt about the farm and if he had any interest in his own place.*

**Society & Culture** – Considering all the questions above and our holistic goal, how do we feel about this action now?

*They agreed that Proposed Action 2 was not an option without a discussion with Tim.*

*They realized that Proposed Action 1 had some good possibilities so they would sit down with Tim and re-test and perhaps include another proposed action, maybe something to do with poultry that might better involve Tanya. They realized that while expanding the strawberries and corn enterprises seemed promising they needed to gather more information. Tanya offered to help Butch crunch some numbers on these enterprises if he would help her look into egg production and broilers.*