## Estate Planning

## Season 1, Episode 25

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**Olivia Amundson:** Welcome back to another episode of Cattle HQ brought to you by South Dakota State University Extension. I am Olivia Amundson Cow/Calf Field, specialist, based out of the Sioux Falls regional center along with my sidekick and co-host Kiernan Brandt from the Watertown Regional Center. Joining me on this episode is Heather Gessner SDSU extension, livestock business management specialists out of the Sioux Falls regional office, where she shares her expertise in the livestock industry as well as works with farm and ranch families on farm management issues such as livestock budgets and marketing, risk management, estate planning and farm transitions and whole farm business planning. I'm excited to have Heather on this episode of Cattle HQ to share her experiences and expertise with transition planning welcome to the podcast, Heather.

**Heather Gessner:** Thanks for having me.

**Olivia Amundson**: So this is, maybe we can say it's a heavy top topic, podcast it's definitely a large one to start thinking about, and sometimes I think people like to kind of maybe brush this one under the table and not worry about it until they have to worry about it, and you know, oddly enough, within this last month I've had conversations with multiple individuals talking about the importance of having a Will put together, and you know, I know that's just a little part of the whole scheme of things, and you talk a lot and work a lot with farm and ranch families when it comes to kind of, you know, thinking about things like this um, and especially farm transitions. So I guess to start out Heather, you know I guess. what is your role when it comes to helping individuals with some of these farm transitions or you know their whole farm business planning.

**Heather Gessner**: Yeah, so you know my title, none of what you said, said the word attorney or insurance agent, or anything like that. So my role is to really try to help the farm families and ranch families across the state really think about where they want to go and what their end goals are. You know, in the grand scheme of things in fifty years, what do you want this operation to look like? And if it looks like plan A, or it looks like situation B, or it looks like, you know, Section C. Okay, we can work with each of those different options based on your family operation. So let's figure out what those goals are and then how are we going to get there. And I can really help families with those conversations and you know kind of play that at Devil's advocate role going, all right so how are you going to get to that step? And once they tell me how we're going to get to that step and accomplish that goal, I ask them how they're going to get to that goal to start with. So you know It's a really it's a big process, and that's why it's not easy for everybody to do. You know, you could go on to the Internet and find estate.com, or whatever it is, and they'll let you print out a Will or something like that, but for farming ranch families with assets that make up several million dollars, and they want to continue the operation while still being fair to the next generation, and not giving as much in estate taxes to the government, as they possibly have to, Oh, but we need to fund long-term care, and we need to think about retirement funding for us, because, you know, at seventy-five or eighty-five, maybe we're not as active in the farm anymore, but how are we still getting income from an operation that we built? You know there's a lot of different moving parts in what that estate plan all entails, and a ton of different tools and different combinations of how they can put those things together. So if I can help be that advocate saying, “Have you talked to the attorney? Have you talked to an insurance agent? Have you found in tax uh plan or financial advisors that can help you?” I can kind of keep them moving forward with their plan. Make sure that they're thinking, maybe, if something different that hasn't been brought up yet to really focus on that whole farm need the whole family need, and how keep everything moving together and moving forward, so that wasn't necessarily a short conversation about what I do. But there's kind of what I do.

**Olivia Amundson:** Yeah, no, I appreciate that. And so I guess you know, just to kind of maybe keep it simple. You talked about how you kind of intertwine yourself with helping this farm transition. But where should people really start when it comes to putting something like this together?

**Heather Gessner:** You know the first and foremost thing that we have to think about is my favorite statement came from an old farmer guy, and he says, “well, when I die, this is what I want, or if I die this is what I would like to have happen”, and the keyword there that he used was, if I die well, the pretty much one guarantee I can make in this world is that probably we're all going to die at some point. So we need to move to the conversation of when I die this is what I want to have happen. And so, putting that first step in some people's minds of making that switch, and mentally thinking about the fact that we might be gone some day is really big for some people, and then the next thing we need to do is really look at some of the basics of how things are divvied out based on, titles that we might already have in place ownership of property, that we have any contracts that we've made for beneficiaries like through an a life insurance policy, or something like that. So we really need to be thinking about how we're setting up any of those asset purchases that we might make. So you know the courts are first going to look at what types of contracts do you have in place on any given item. So your estate really kind of ties in all of those things that are contractually based, titled for ownership, or given out in through the probate process through your Will or lack of a Will. So that's really one place where people can start looking and do some updates without having to involve an attorney is to go through all those contracts, especially if you've had some pretty huge changes in your life, and say who are the beneficiaries of my life insurance products, you know, is it going to an ex-spouse? Because a lot of times, you know, if you were married, and you have a life insurance policy your policy went to your spouse at that time, and they were named in your contract that you made as your life insurance policy. Or maybe it was, you know, the beneficiary of an IRA. If you had an off farm job someplace and you created an IRA. So just looking at some of those things would be step number one. Step number two would be to look at how all your assets are titled everything from your checking account to vehicles, land purchases that have been made. Are they titled in both spouses who might be part of the operations name? Did you accidentally put a kid on as an owner of your checking account, thinking they were really just going to be a signer, you know, so some of those are some of the first steps that you want to be thinking about, and then the Will, while sometimes it gets overlooked in this farm estate thing is really a pretty big component even if you create some of the bigger trust or business entities, because that's where the court looks at to divide up and finish anything else that's not given out by a contract, or that title already. So check your Will. A lot of times I've had people come to estate planning conferences, and their Wills are forty years old. They now have three more kids, and then what they had when they created that Will and nothing goes to those children because they weren't born yet, and they weren't named in the Will. So keeping the things updated is another really important part of the process.

**Olivia Amundson:** First off, I think you said a lot of good things there, you know talking about, if I die well again, the guarantee is we are all going die, and the thing is, when are we going to die? I hope I don't die for a long time because I've got three little boys that I need to get grown up and take care of. But you know it's something where I'm like if I were to pass away, who would take care of my children? And would they take care of my children the way that I would want them to? And so it really is something that's important, and something to think about. But another thing that you kind of talked about, I guess, is uh probate, and I'm not super familiar with this word. But could you just, I guess, discuss what probate is and how it's used?

**Heather Gessner:** Sure. So probate is basically the thing in estate planning that's probably got the most negative press of any of them. Because it costs so much, or it's such a long drawn out process, and those types of things. However, probate is also the final step that says everything of Heather Gessner's estate has now been completed. All the bills are paid for, all the assets are divided out, and we shut the door. That's that final that closure component. So probates really going to look at everything and say, yup uh any outstanding bills have been paid. All things that we're due have now been taken care of. We close accounts. It transfers titles to the next owner, you know, based on however, they were divided out through the contracts, the titles, and maybe it will came in for some items. But it really makes that last closure step, and it shouldn't be if your estates put together the way that you want it to be, it really shouldn't, be super drawn out or a horrible process for the family. Because if you've done some planning, everybody kind of knows what's going to happen and move through that process and where things are going, and we've taken care of it. It should just be that final chapter that says here, let's close the door, and we'll remember her memory hopefully in a great manner, instead of the fights that occurred, because that's the long-term goal of having this estate plan and transition plan put together is that everybody knew what was going to happen to the farm operation. We kind of had a plan on how it was going to happen. We have the financing situation figured out in our plan. Now we just need the closure, and everything's done.

**Kiernan Brandt:** Well, I had something before we switched directions on to probate that I was just, you know you mentioned obviously keeping Wills updated to the point where there's not children that aren't being unintentionally neglected out in Wills. But I just think that's something that's you know everybody knows somebody that that's happened to not necessarily like they were left out of a will, but that there was infighting among siblings, and you know people couldn't get along, or relatives from outside the family were coming back to try and get involved. And what ends up happening a lot of times we've all heard those horror stories as these beautiful operations get split and broken up, because no one can get along. The things have to be liquidated to make everybody happy. And I think, especially down where you guys are at, I mean, those are prime areas where that stuff gets subdivided, chopped up, even smaller, you know I think it just leads to a lot of you know, good or bad, we'll leave that out of it, but it's not keeping the family place intact. And how in in your time doing this, what is the best way to avoid that sibling the sibling conflict? And is it is there anything that you can do on the front end to minimize and eliminate some of that from happening?

**Heather Gessner:** Yeah, so that's a really huge thing, you know if you can't think of You know farm families, or just families in general that have fighting that has occurred at the death of the parents, you're really lucky, and probably in the minority, you know, because not just because I do estate planning as part of my job, but just in my personal life I can think of families that no longer are going to get together for Thanksgiving or Christmas, or any birthday celebration, because we had too many fights, and too many accusations made and hurled about what happened to this item or that item, because we thought I was going to get it but you thought you were going to get it and you know those types of things. So throughout this conversation that I have with farm families, you know, it's really important that the land owner, mom, and dad, grandma, and grandpa, whoever has the assets that they really start leading the conversation and say, this is what I want to have happen to my stuff. This is my desire, because it really is at the end of the day, their stuff that they need to figure out how it's going to be divided, and where it's divided to, and if they want to sell it and retire to Tahiti, that's their prerogative. You know they could take that three thousand acre cattle, operation or farming operation, sell everything and move because it's their stuff. The catch is most farmers and ranchers in South Dakota that I've talked to have no desire to move to Tahiti, so they're looking at how we can transition that to the next generation who's came back to the farm. So far they've been here for twenty, maybe thirty years already, and their kids are looking for a way to come back to the farm as well. So you know it's that multi-generational component that says, all right, Mom and dad, grandma and grandpa you need to look at this and say it's important to me that John can come back and farm. Little Johnny is going to get the farm after I die. So what do we put in place for tools and mechanisms to make that happen, so that the land transitions in a seamless manner, the business can continue in a seamless manner. And oh, by the way I have these other kids that I want to take care of as well and provide some type of inheritance to, full well knowing that it's not going to be an equal dollar amount, but it's really up to you to start talking about that, and saying all the memories that are here on this farm, and all of the things that have been able to be grown are because your brother, sister came back to the operation and helped me. It wouldn't have grown, it wouldn't have been sustainable, whatever the conversation is, so that I then that understanding that they're not going to get a quarter of the three thousand acres that they have um, you know, and sometimes having those conversations, one on one, I call them like intentional conversations. You intentionally sit down with Alice, Jill and Bob, and say, here's the situation. Johnny's been back, I want the operation to continue, I want this to be a legacy operation for Johnny, Jr. coming um back after his dad. So here's the things that I'm putting into place. You are not going to be a millionaire when I die and have the opportunity to sell, however many acres that you think would be equal. And make sure that you're having that top conversation on purpose, either through those intentional one on one conversations, or it's a family meeting sitting down, you know, Zoom has been an amazing thing that everybody kind of figured out through the Covid Era that we can have family meetings now on zoom and have people all hear the same message and conversation at the same time. You know anybody can do it pretty much. So those conversations really help tie in to families hopefully continuing to get together for Christmas dinner, provided somebody is willing to cook, you know. But you got to have those conversations and let people know that yeah, all the assets of the farm are tied up in this business structure this LLP that we created the lands all owned by this trust that we created. And I have a life insurance policy that is going to provide you with some cash as part of the inheritance at the end, or, you know, for three years Johnny is going to rent you some pieces of the ground but after three years that's a rent to own contract, and then you no longer have income coming from the farm. And sometimes people look at me like well, that's just crazy, and I couldn't have that conversation, and I really kind of throw back to him, So you want Johnny to have those conversations with his brothers and sisters when you're gone, and tell them that you basically didn't respect them enough to have the conversation with them while you were alive. So they're hard conversations, and they're kind of tricky to kind of get started for some people, but families that take the time and make the effort to have that conversation about what I really want to have happen are really better off in the long run. If your family, if your goal is to have your family still be a family once you're gone.

**Kiernan Brandt:** I think you've got to do it. I mean it's so awkward, and nobody wants to be the one to have to actually have those conversations. But like at the end of the day, if you don't, it turns into a, he said, she said, and there's emotions that nobody meant, or maybe nobody ever even thought about that it just been sniffled up in an imagination and now somebody's ticked off, and somebody's not talking to somebody else. And yeah it, you know, not to get too personal I'm one generation removed from you know it was just nine siblings that for the life of them there was no zoom yet, and they had no opportunity to fit nine of them they lived in a one, one bedroom farm shack, so that probably stuffed all nine of them in there for one meeting, and that just went so bad that everything blew up, and it was for sale the next day. But it can happen quick. What uh, what? What I kind of want to like, just talk through like a hypothetical like, so like, say, someone passes away the farm is open um available. There's this uh like once one son that wants to come back and farm it. There's two other siblings they're not, you know, Incorporated, or anything like that, they don’t have a LLP or a trust and the Will essentially just says like you three, figure it out get along, what it what's a successful something that you've seen work um kind of a good fair arrangement for everybody that kind of tends to last, maybe more than just all right we're selling everything and not dealing with it.

**Heather Gessner**: Yes, so hopefully I've talked to the land owner before you got to that point where everything is just going equally to those three kids that are involved. Because at that point, if now the three siblings all own everything together, they have to come up and make a decision together. And there's usually so many extenuating circumstances within each of those families. That that's where it gets really tricky, uh, you know, and not just because, yeah, John wants to farm it, and I don't It's because I have a special needs child at home, and I could really use that money from that asset to help pay for some things for them to upgrade my house, so things are better able for them to get around, or worse than that, now that I own that asset, and it's there on my balance sheet and as funds available now, we maybe are kicked off with some of the Federal funding and programs that we had been utilizing for the care and maintenance of that special needs, child, or even, you know, a kid going to college. We now don't, qualify for this Grant, or that scholarship, or something, because we have that asset change and that value change. So that's where some of the, I want to sell I don't want to sell really start to cause friction and issues because the kid that wants to stay in farm and has been there maybe needs to come up with a big chunk of change to buy out those brothers or sisters that don't want to be in the farming operation, and that's where it kind of gets tricky. You know some of the things that you could put into different plans, you know different contracts for purchases, least to own options first right of refusal to buy a piece of ground, so that you've already developed what the rate is going to be, and provide a time period. So that on farm child has time to come up with the funds and knows how much money he needs, so they can straighten out any bad financing situation they're currently in, look at getting a loan for that much money and those types of things within that kind of a reasonable time period, instead of you know, within a month, you need to, now come up with a loan package for three point three million dollars to pay off your brothers and sisters, so that they get their fair share or their equal share of the operation. So those are the situations I mean, that's exactly the situation that I'm trying to help avoid. When farmers and ranchers come, talk to me or come to our estate planning conferences is, what tools can we put in place so the operation is set up in a business structure, so you know, cows can keep being fed we can keep buying mineral, we don't have to wait for a judge through a probate court to say, yes, you can now spend this much money on protein, and you know, and it really comes down to some of those types of decisions, if there's not a plan in place, you've got a ten thousand head feed lot, and you need to go to the Probate Court every time you want to buy feed, to maintain that dairy operation or a feedlot operation that gets really crunchy for the person that's trying to maintain the operation. But if we can set up a business structure, so there's that different checkbook in place, and says, here's my Abc Ranch and Abc. Ranch has access to these funds to keep paying the bills to maintain the operation. We just avoided that one degree of disagreement, potential assumptions of mismanagement of funds and those types of things the assets might be owned by a trust, so the Trust says, at my death, here's how the assets turn over. You know they're still owned by this trust. The trustee is now Johnny, Jr. And so Johnny, Jr. takes over the management of the assets for the good of the trust. So that when we get to that point everybody kind of has an understanding of how things transition, how the operation is going to continue on, and we don't have those issues and fights and worry about how is my kid going now pay for college because I have an equal share of this farm that's worth five million dollars. It's part of my assets now that I have to report when I'm trying to help them with financial aid and those types of things. So that's where some of this pre planning it's bigger than just the farm it's all the other things that are tied into there, so and with everybody's different financial family dynamics and personalities tied in and you know, then you get those outlaws that have different ideas. Maybe they didn't grow up on a family operation, so they don't have the same concept of what that means to the family, and to that continuation practice.

**Olivia Amundson:** I have a, I have a question that's maybe going to go more into left field here. But so you just talked about transitioning to farm to directly family. But let's say you have a farmer or a rancher, and you know none of the, maybe they don't have any children, or maybe the children have no desire to come back to the operation. Yet, there's a young farmer young rancher that wants to start being integrated into the operation. Do you work with those certain scenarios, or how does one go about that?

**Heather Gessner:** Yeah, so those are sometimes more fun, because we already know the off-farm kids they're not involved in any of the decision making of the operation. So we don't have to worry about kids that are coming versus kids not coming. We can look at it from a strictly business standpoint and say, Okay, so at the end of the day this new kid is going to take over the operate ownership and operation of your ranch, and this is how we're going to set it up, you know. So we set up by-sell agreements, um rent to own type of discussions, so that there's not that great big requirement of income at one point, for you know for that on far or for that beginning, farmer, who's not related to you know they can buy into the operation by renting the ground, and after twenty years of renting the ground, here's a balloon payment and now the maybe the farmland is yours. You know those types of situations you can get creative with how you're going to put that purchase agreement together. The really important thing to kind of come up and think about is making sure the land owners realize that the ground is now going to be owned by somebody that doesn't have the same name and for some people that is, you know, this is a six-generation farm. Well, it might be a seventh generation farm it's just the seventh generation, not your kids. You know, I've had conversations with guys that really want to help that next guy get started and have him, you know, raise his family on the you know, on my estate and my heritage behind me, you know, but when I die I'm going to give it, you know, all to my kids, and that's probably not going to work for that kid that wants to start with your operation, because by the time I put my thirty, forty, fifty years into growing it, and then at seventy-five, you passed away, and now I either have new landlords in the form of your children, or I am now effectively retired because you gifted all of my land base that I've been working on and renting from you to your, to your kids. So those are the decisions that you really need to make and say Yes, I am willing to give this ground to the next beginning farmer, who will probably maybe raise another beginning, farmer. And so the legacy I am leaving Isn't necessarily the legacy that the Smith ranch continued in the Smith name, but the Smith ranch continued in the name of somebody else's beginning farmer and it's still in agriculture, and it's still creating jobs and revenue, and keeping the school open and Main Street viable, and all of those other things that everybody says is important to them. So if that's where your value and your real desire is, starting that next generation that's not related to you might be the best legacy that you can leave.

**Olivia Amundson:** How did somebody get started with something like that? You know not every young farmer necessarily is blessed with the opportunity to just jump on, you know, uh someone's ranch or farm. I mean, are there programs out there that help some of these beginning farmers find some of those scenarios?

**Heather Gessner:** I really wish there was a lot more available for people to meet up that way. Unfortunately, it comes down to knowing who in your community maybe has those kids that aren't returning, and really starting that process of talking to retiring age, or getting close to that age producer to be like, hey, you know, I'm willing to work as a hired man, and then move into a partnership situation, and maybe leasing your property from you. But when you're starting to do that, you really want to make sure that everybody knows the end goal and what kind of the plan is, so that you're not putting in time and effort someplace where you might not be rewarded at the end. So, having paperwork and documents that say, this is a forever lease. You know you can only have a ninety-nine year lease in the State of South Dakota, so you know but if you've got a long term written lease for pasture ground for twenty years, and it's above fair market rate. It also has maybe that sell agreement in there that says at the end of twenty years, here comes a balloon payment of you know cash as well to help in your retirement years and those types of things, you know, because maybe you need more long-term health care at that point than what you had, you know previously required. So making sure that, as you're having those conversations that not only do you have the heart conversations, but you do the legal part as well, and have it written down and have things notarized, and make sure you're talking about it with an attorney, an estate planning attorney, so that they have a good understanding about what everybody's plans and goals for this thing are, so that if one of your kids in the end says, well, there was undo influence on my dad, because he was here every day, you know, working with them, or that the attorney can say no, I've been meeting with these guys for the last fifteen years, and this is really what their plan was, and I will testify to that if it comes up, you know, in front of things and here's the Here's the history of all the work that we've done, creating this business structure for your dad and this new person. So you really want to have all your I’s and T’s dotted and verify and report those types of things so that you don’t have lawsuits and legal situations come up later. But it's a pretty powerful legacy to leave if you're that non farming, or if you don't have any farming children come back and you can help somebody else get started in a way that makes you money and lets you live a lifestyle of you know, semi comfort, or whatever you're used to in those, whatever standard you set. And you can start that next or beginning farmer, you know, really take off and grow and expand and live through the energy that they have for the operation and the love for agriculture as well.

**Olivia Amundson:** Honestly, I think it's a really neat concept. And it's definitely something yeah, like you said, which there's more resources and how to get those kind of people connected to each other, because there's plenty of kids out there that are willing to do the work and put in the time. But and I think you also brought up a lot of really good, just key points on things to think about in terms of how to make that transition as smooth as possible, and avoid any legal ramifications that could come.

**Heather Gessner:** Yeah, it all goes back to that silly communication word. It's a good thing. Communication is a long word, because it's also hard to do, you know, you got to be talking to your kids, saying, here's the deal you guys didn't want to come back and farm. I am working on selling the farm to this other non-related person, and that's how I'm going to make my legacy move forward, you know I have income from cash rent, or however, you set up the agreement. But yeah, I'm going to live the life that I want the best and longest that I can while actively involved in the operation with this other person being my partner in it at my death you have life insurance, or any of the income that I have left after you know, from rental expense or rental income, and those types of things and balloon payments or land payments. However, it works out so it's one of those things that you're going to have that conversation and communication with your kids to say this is really what I'm doing, and hopefully they love and respect you enough to appreciate what you're doing at that point. Whether you're trying to put your plan together to avoid taxes, or you're setting up a plan so that you've got retirement funds available, or you're setting up your plan, so that it provides enough income that you can pay somebody to come into your house and do at home care, whether it's moving you to an assisted living facility once you hit these magic targets that you have to be realistic with yourself on, am I really able to feed myself appropriately every day. Am I taking care of myself and bathing every day? Am I falling down, you know do I need those types of assistance, so that you take care of yourself in a manner that you're putting those plans together that you've got either long term care insurance that takes care of it, or some types of savings, or to some type of income coming in from the operation to look at, where’s that seventy to ninety thousand dollars a year for those types of expenses going to come from without having to sell assets straight off the bat to make those things all happen, and take care of you without having the assets be the only way, and we have to sell them to pay bills.

**Olivia Amundson:** Yeah, and I mean, if you think about it, there's so many things to consider, and if we're not communicating, that's really what causes a lot of that turmoil, you know downline, especially with family. Heather, you have some courses that you put on that really kind of maybe go in depth a little bit more when it comes to some of this transition planning. Do you want to just kind of jump into some of that, maybe put in a little plug for some of the things that you've got going on that producers can maybe utilize and learn a little bit more about some of these processes.

**Heather Gessner:** Yes, so we host the Sustaining the Legacy conferences every year this year, I'm doing one location per month, starting in December, so I'll be in five different towns across the state to uh host the sustaining the legacy conferences. What we do is meet three weeks in a row, 10-4, usually, because maybe throughout the rest of this podcast you realize there's a whole lot of things involved in this estate and transition plan. So we try to spread it out over three different days. Give you a bunch of information on different tools and techniques that you can use for your operation, and within your families on how to make this situation occur through the estate plan and the through the transition plan. So we really kind of start out we talk about some of the goals that you want to have for your operation, you know, what do you want to have happen? Because basically if you can't answer that big question, there's no reason paying a really expensive attorney to go in and say, I don't know what I want to have happen and have them kind of dig through all of those components. So what we're going to do is start with some of that, you know where do we really want to go? And what do I want to create for my operation? Then we're going to look at some of the tools, are you financially ready to bring somebody back into this operation? Is it big enough to have somebody else drawing a salary or wages from your operation, or what do we need to do to make that change? Let's talk about some of the ways that we can transition the business so creating an LLC or an LLLP or a formal partnership, or whatever that really is for your operation to keep the business viable once you pass away, and are no longer involved in the business, but it also provides some liability protection against you know death, divorce, or some other type of disaster, you know, through an accident or something like that. So we talk about maybe some different titles that maybe you should be considering for your operation. So how do we title our different bank accounts? How are we titling the tractors? Excuse me, tractors are not an asset that's titled. But your cars, your trucks the land and those types of things? Or are they titled and owned by a trust, you know. Did we create a trust? And is it a revocable trust, or is it an irrevocable trust? And what's the difference between those two things? Because they're pretty huge how the differences are, and how you set them up with what you're trying to plan, and what you're trying to do and maybe, if you have a trust, you change it up a little bit, depending on what your real end goal is for your operation, maybe life insurance is something that you think about, not just for providing some type of an inheritance to off farm kids. But maybe there's a lot of outstanding debt on a piece of property that we purchased, or the Derrecho took out our whole grain handling system. So, since all the bins were gone, we use the insurance money and an extra note to recreate a grain handling facility that's more effective, more efficient for our operation. But we cover that with a term life insurance policy, or something. So at the time of our death that insurance policy kicks in and pays off the debt, so that the estate doesn't have to look at how we're going to cover those expenses you know at that time. We're looking at long term care insurance. What does it cover? What doesn't it cover the types of insurances that are available there. We talk about Wills and probate. We talk about different contracts that you might use to put in place. We talked a little bit about rent to own contracts. First write a refusal situations. What do those types of purchase agreements and long-term agreements really look like? And how can they work for your operation? And then we talk about some of the more estate things of where do you want to be buried? What if you would no plan look like, what's your long-term care situation look like? Who do you um want to be your powers of attorney, you know if you're short-term disabled, disabled, you know, through a car crash, and you're in a coma for a short period of time. Who has the health control of your, you know your health power of attorney, who has your financial power of attorney to make sure that all the bills are getting paid, and making the decisions for your health care that need to be taken care of. So we cover a whole bunch of components over those three days that really hinge on, what do you want to happen to your operation? Who do we need to put you in touch with, so that those tools are put together in the appropriate manner. The industry professionals that we need to talk to, and then we also need to talk to our families and how can we make some of that conversation smoother and easier because talking about death, dying and taxes is not a fun thing, and estates are pretty much all death dying and taxes.

**Olivia Amundson:** Yeah, Heather. Thanks for that kind of synopsis of the course. I mean, if you think about it, each one of those topics could easily be put into once, you know, their own little podcast series. And so obviously today we really talked big picture in terms of transition planning estate plan. Well, you know we really didn't even probably touch the service on some of that estate planning things. But um! So I guess mainly for our listeners here the topic, or the reason for this whole conversation was really just to kind of start thinking about some of these things, the importance of some of these things. But then also some of the resources that SDSU Extension has out there and Heather as you were going through the topics of that course I was sitting here thinking that that's probably something that I should just sit through and learn more about as well, because it really sounds like a full time job in terms of putting all this together.

**Heather Gessner:** Yeah, it doesn’t really matter if you have a small estate and you think, oh, I don’t really have much, you still have something that needs to transition at your death, you know, even if it's just your checking account and your school loans, you still have an estate, you know, if you have a house that you bought. You have an estate that needs to be handled at your death at some manner. And so the more things you own, and the more people that are involved in the process the more complicated it could get. So we really try to put the conferences together to start at the basics and the bare minimums that you really need to have and move into some of the more complicated strategies that are maybe needed for some of our bigger operations that have a lot more assets employees involved in the operation kids coming back. So there's just a wide variety of things that can be done based on your family dynamics and who all is involved.

**Olivia Amundson:** Yeah, I just appreciate your expertise in this area and just having some of these resources available and for our listeners if you're interested in this transition planning course that heather does have, you can go to extension.sdstate.edu, and on the events tab, if you scroll through there you have some coming up is that right, Heather?

**Heather Gessner:** Right, so starting in December we’ll have one a month so you can register for whichever location is closest to you. So it's that December through April, everywhere from Yankton, Rapid City and Aberdeen so, and all points in between, I'll have five total conferences. So hopefully one of them is within a couple of hundred miles of you.

**Olivia Amundson:** And Heather, are these solely in person or do you offer anything virtually?

**Heather Gessner:** These are all in-person meetings just due to the nature of the conferences, and some of the you know people share their own personal stories, so we try to keep it personal within the room the room gets to know each other and learn from each other that way. And I'm bringing in, you know, the industry, professionals. So I'm bringing in different attorneys and insurance agents and those types of people to speak as well. So we try to keep these all in-person context, if we can

**Olivia Amundson:** I appreciate that anything else that you want to tell our listeners before we wrap this up?

**Heather Gessner:** I just want to encourage them that you know it is a daunting process. It seems huge. It does end up costing some money in the long run, or in, you know, in the short term. But if we can put together an estate plan a transition plan for our families that helps accomplish our goals, it's really much easier and cheaper in the long run, you know it keeps your family together. We don't have to pay fights, because when fights happen, the only people that win are the attorneys that are fighting them. So just encourage them to take that first step. Get started, check out the web page, Find what a location near you, and bring as many as your family members to that conference as you can. So everybody here is the same message at the same time, and you can start that conversation a lot easier.

**Olivia Amundson:** Definitely. I appreciate that. Well, Heather, Thanks for joining me on this podcast once again. This has been Cattle HQ brought to you by SDSU Extension headquarters for all things Beef Cattle visit extension.sdtate.edu for the latest beef Information.

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