

# Tips to Navigate 2020:

## Step One - Breaking Down the Film

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2019 was crazy. 2019 was rough. 2019 was....history! Wow, it is crazy to think that a new planting season is on our doorstep, but for a lot of us it will be good to put a challenging 2019 behind us and immerse ourselves into a brand-new year. This spring has the potential to be challenging with standing corn and beans from 2019 waiting to be combined, saturated soils and poor field conditions, field work needing to be done, manure that needs to be spread, and so much more. With so much that needs to be done how can we navigate the craziness of this growing season? Well, in the coming weeks I will be putting together a step-by-step plan to help you be prepared for the 2020 season. So buckle-in and lets take a look at **Step 1: Breaking down the film:**

### #1. Film Session: Review Last Year and Self-Evaluate

The best players and coaches in professional sports all have one important thing in common: they are masters at breaking down film from previous games and are able to take away key information and apply it to their game. **They find their weaknesses and turn them into strengths.** They break down each play and ask themselves "What should I have done in this situation?" Do you want to be the best farmer you can be? The first step is to think back to last year and "break down the film." I get it, last year is a year a lot of us would like to forget, but that is what makes it all the more important for us to each think back and learn from what happened. Any good coach worth their salt will tell you that you can learn more from a game where everything went haywire than from a game where everything went perfectly.

Take out a piece of paper and make a list of things that you did well and see if you can improve them. Then, make a list of things that went poorly and think about how you would change them if you could time-travel back and do it over. Be real with yourself and self-evaluate. What is really holding your farm back from making it the very best it can be? What are your greatest strengths and what are your personal weaknesses? **Don't beat yourself up for your weaknesses, but use it as motivation to turn your weakness into your strength.**

"Well," you ask, "what if I don't know how to make my weaknesses into my strength?" Good question! We all have strengths and we all have weaknesses. Find someone who has a strength where you have a weakness and ask them for help.

Whaaaaaaaaaat?! I can't ask someone for that "Help" word because I don't want to admit TO ANYONE that I need help because it may make me look weak or less of a man or woman or whatever the reason may be. WRONG! That is why the best coaches have assistant coaches and scouts...because they admit that they need help with the team, they admit that they don't know everything, and they realize that they will be stronger when they get help from people who specialize in things that they don't. A wise man once wrote: **"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed."** Build yourself a circle of advisors you trust.

Need help with machinery? Ask another farmer or an implement dealership for pointers. Need help with herbicides or fertilizer? Get in touch with an agronomist who has your best interest at heart and is not just looking at the dollar signs (yes, we do exist) and will explain WHY they are recommending certain things rather than just telling you what to do. Need help with seed? Find a seed salesman who can admit that they don't have all of the answers but will take the time to teach you about the seed rather than just force a variety down your throat because "it's really good." News Flash: **EVERYONE HAS A GOOD VARIETY OR TWO BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT'S THE BEST ONE FOR YOU.**

Now as I step down from my soap-box and get real for a moment I want to recognize that we can't control everything (really, we can't control a whole heck of a lot). You can't control the weather, you can't control grain or milk prices, and you can't control land rent. **What can you control? Your attitude, your ego, your planning, and your ability to adapt to change.**

Let's learn from the past to prepare for the future. Does that mean we may need to think differently than we have thought in the past? Absolutely. Is it going to be hard to do? You bet. Will it be worth it in the end? That is up to you. **I can't predict the weather, the markets, or the future but I can tell you that if you let go of the things you can't control and work on improving the things you can control, it will set you up for success in the future.**

**2020 Game-Time is coming soon. The film room is open, the pencils are sharpened, and last year's tape is on the screen. Are you ready to go to work?**

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**Join me in the coming weeks for the next steps in Tips to Navigate 2020**

- #2. Set Goals for 2020 and Prioritize
- #3. Put a Tentative Crop Plan Together
- #4. Get Your Inputs Covered
- #5. Get Good Field Maps and Acres Planned
- #6. Put Together a Rough Timeline
- #7. Be Flexible and Breathe