

ECONOMICS

New consultant wants to know producers' record-keeping needs

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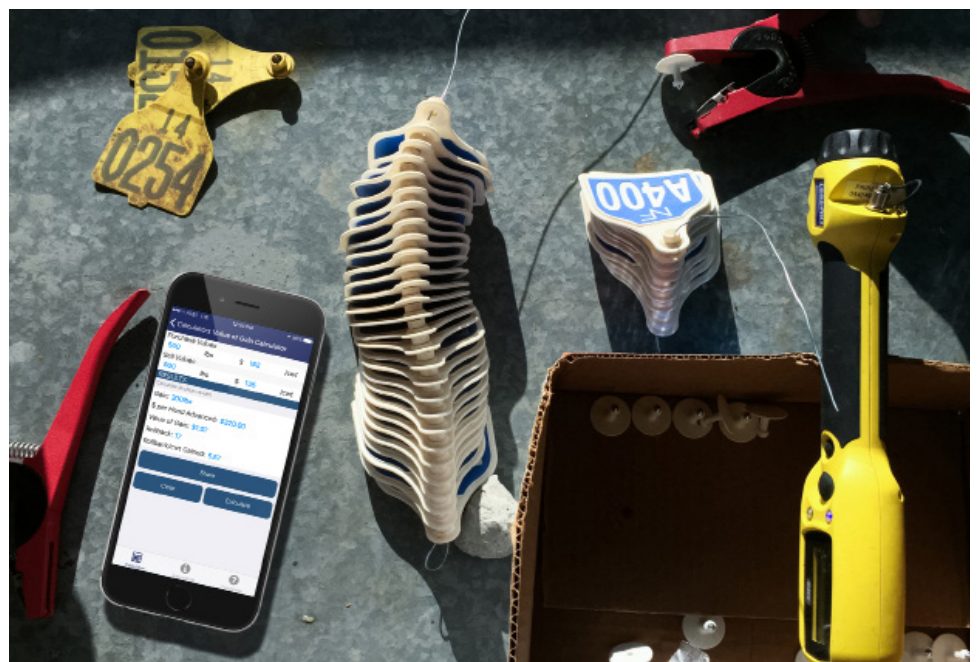


Hi, I'm Myriah

Johnson, and in June I joined The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation as an agricultural economics consultant. For the last six and a half years I have

been at Texas A&M University where I completed my master's and doctoral degrees in agricultural economics and animal science, respectively. Don't be mistaken, though. I am a huge Oklahoma State Cowboys fan as that is where I received my undergraduate education. I grew up in Perry, Oklahoma, on a wheat, cow-calf and stocker operation. So, it is exciting to not only be joining the Noble Foundation but to be back closer to home as well.

While everything feels new, some things feel like old hat. In 2007, I served as a summer intern here at the Noble Foundation. So, in coming back there are some familiar faces but many new faces as well. For me, production agriculture feels a little bit



like this too. Having grown up on an agricultural operation, many aspects of it feel quite familiar. However, with the rapid change of pace in the industry, I often feel like I can barely keep up with all of the new technologies and tools available, let alone the newest research in agriculture. Perhaps you feel this way too. If so, you are not the only befuddled one out there!

As a consultant, part of my job is to help you with that. One of my goals is to help agricultural producers and landowners capture data from their operations and turn it into usable information

that helps them make management decisions. Hopefully, from this, new insights can be gained and the operation can be improved.

Record-keeping and data entry is never a fun chore. It's also the last thing many people want to do when they get home from a long, hot day of work. What type of tools would help you better record data on the go? I'd like to know specifically from each of you what would help you do your job easier or start doing things you haven't done before. When you see me, let me know. ▶

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There are software tools available for livestock, but I have never found one that has completely suited me or my family's operation. Many times, I feel the cutting-edge technologies are developed for crop farms. If those technologies are applicable to livestock, they often take years to transfer into the livestock realm. Two programs I have been looking at lately are Granular (www.granular.ag) and FarmLogs (www.farmlogs.com), which are designed for crop operations. I envision something similar to these platforms for livestock operations. Additionally, within the same platform, I think it would be useful to have various calculators and budgets available for forecasting what things may look like in the upcoming season.

Here at the Noble Foundation, we hope to build a suite of record-keeping tools in an online platform that will be useful for you. My goal is that these tools will help you complete your job more efficiently, saving you time while also helping you identify ways in which you can keep moving forward in your operation. If you have thoughts or ideas on the subject, I would love to hear them. I look forward to working with each of you in this endeavor. ■