

March 16, 2021 - March Madness of Farming

March Madness has officially begun. For those of you who do not know, March Madness is the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Tournament. It is one of the biggest and most exciting events in all of sports. It is a single-elimination basketball tournament with a bracket of 64 teams that are competing to be the National Champions. This is a thrilling event because the possibilities are endless. Anything can happen. An underdog can cause a major upset and have a Cinderella story, sending the predictable, better-known teams home. That is why it was given the name March Madness because of the unpredictability. However, farming can easily be compared to March Madness.

For instance, unpredictable brackets are like unpredictable markets. Mathematicians predict that you have a 1 in 9.2 quintillion chance of picking every outcome in the March Madness bracket. Those are some crazy odds. The markets for the ag industry are just as unpredictable because they are constantly changing. What the markets are in the morning can be completely different by nightfall. If farmers knew the markets, they would definitely have fewer grey hairs. Every day farmers are taking risks, picking what day to sell and when to wait in order to reach the best outcome. Just like when making a bracket you are picking what teams to win and to lose to predict the best possible outcome.

Another example is predicting the weather. In the tournament, it is unknown when a team will be hot and playing amazing or when a team will be cold and not so great. You never know when lightning is going to strike. Just like in farming you can have the perfect game plan and have the day all planned out. However sometimes lightning will strike, and the unforeseen forecast will change your plans instantly.

Teamwork is also important in both basketball and farming. In the tournament, it is not just one player doing all the work. They are working together as a team. Even more than that, it is the players, coaches, managers, athletic trainers, bus drivers, and of course the fans. When it comes to farming it also takes a herd of people to make the dream work. It takes the farmer, family members, farmhands, veterinarians, equipment dealers, seed dealers, parts people, neighbors, and even community members to make the operation smooth sailing. If we all work together, anything can be accomplished.

Although that is just a few of the similarities between March Madness and farming, there is also one big difference. March Madness takes a few weeks to determine the National Champion and farming is year-round. Farmers do not get a halftime, or a time out. All 365 days of the year farmers are putting in the hard work and feeding the world. It takes them a whole year to find out if they hit the best crop yield, finished out great cattle, or made a big profit. And that my friend, is like a slam dunk! Have fun cheering on your favorite team and don't forget to cheer on your favorite farmer as they start hitting the fields next month! ~ Kesley Holdgrafer