

DAN MARTIN FINANCIAL SERVICES

1ST QUARTER NEWSLETTER

114 N. 3rd St., Howells, NE 68641 402-986-1306



Review of 2014 and Optimism for 2015

The S&P 500 increased at a little over 13% in 2014 and United States indexes led the world in most areas*. The US economy continues to plow forward at slow-but-steady pace, and that is good for both the overall economy and the stock market. Most analysts are predicting more gains in 2015, although we will most likely see more volatility as well. In the past month or so alone, we've seen a large number of triple digit swings both negative and positive. The bond market has been a little tougher and will continue to struggle as the FED contemplates, and eventually, raises interest rates, as they have been promising. The biggest surprises for 2014 included a further drop in interest rates, a sharp decline in the price of oil, and a significantly stronger U.S. dollar. As always, please remember that past performance does not guarantee future results.

Sir John Templeton coined the phrase, "Bull markets are born on pessimism, grow on skepticism, mature on optimism and die on euphoria." The analysts I follow believe we are entering the "optimism" phase. While the rest of the world experiences a myriad of financial and geopolitical problems, the U.S. should continue a stable and growing economy. Some sectors of the economy will grow faster than others, and each year there is plenty of variance between small, mid-cap, and large-cap companies. In a properly diversified portfolio, you might see some areas/funds grow faster than others, but hopefully there is adequate downside protection while the overall portfolio grows.

Sincerely,

Dan Martin

Dan Martin Financial Services

*Bob Doll, Nuveen Investments, Morningstar.com

*****Since Ameritas has changed its custodian bank, checks for brokerage accounts should now be made out to [National Financial Services](#).*****

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Why Estate Planning is Important for Farmers & Ranchers

In the next decade over a quarter of the nation's agricultural land is likely to change hands. As this transition occurs, the land and those who have an interest in it may become vulnerable to conversion of the land to new owners and other uses. Estate planning is one of the most important steps that farm and ranch families can take to ensure that productive land remains available for agriculture. A solid estate plan should lay the framework for a smooth transition of farm or ranch ownership and management. A well-crafted plan can provide for the needs

of all family members, even those who aren't directly involved in the operation. A sound estate plan can help accomplish at least four goals:

1. Transfer ownership and management of the operation, land and assets to a new owner/operator;
2. Avoid unnecessary transfer taxes (income, gift, and estate);
3. Address the settlement and liquidity problems associated with the transfer of land
4. Develop the next generation's management capacity.

Laws, and as we have seen most recently, tax laws, change. Two fundamental elements of an estate plan are setting goals and then revisiting them over as families, finances, laws and priorities change.

Potential Issues

1. Liquid assets, cash and cash equivalents are essential to settling farm and ranch estates. The presence of cash allows families to pay medical bills and expenses without having to liquidate assets and sell land.
2. It is important to remember that equal does not always mean fair. Equitable settlement does not necessarily mean equal shares of a farm or ranch estate. Children or heirs that are involved in a family farm have generally contributed a substantial amount of energy, time and resources to ensure the success of the business. These individuals may have substantial sweat equity in the operation compared to the disinterested child that has moved away.
3. Successful estate planning for the transfer of a farm or ranch requires a team effort. This team may include the family, a financial consultant, an insurance advisor, a lawyer, and an accountant. Plans should be tailored to individual circumstances and must be designed to meet a variety of unique situations.

Delight in the New Year!

freedom through planning...Starting the new year with a life insurance policy review can ensure you have the appropriate coverage in place and give you the chance to adjust accordingly.

If it's been a year or more since you last looked at your life insurance policy, now might be a good time to sit down and make sure your current needs are being met. Some of life's changes have more potential than others to impact your life insurance needs. Have there been changes since you last evaluated your insurance coverage?