Director Candidates: Region 1 – Minn. (4-year term), Candidate 2 of 2

Nicholas Sandager
34 years old
288 20th Ave., Hills, Minn.
Farm Credit Member since: 2021

Family: Married to Emily Sandager. We have three daughters.

Brief description of agricultural operation and employment/business experience for the past five years: I've been farming with my dad in Southwest Minnesota since I graduated from SDSU in 2015. We raise corn, soybeans, and hay. I manage and keep the financial records, help make day-to-day decisions, and maintain and operate the farm machinery. I also help neighbors and relatives out with cattle and hogs when needed.

Additionally, I assist with the management of the family ranch land near Burke South Dakota.

I have been a fieldman for the Southwest Minnesota Farm Business Management Association (SWMNFBMA) since 2019. With this I work with 32 individual farming clients by analyzing their farming practices and financial records to help guide them towards their goals using data-based decisions. In addition to the farm analysis, I assist these clients with their tax planning and have previously prepared and filed their taxes for them as well. I have also represented and presented data for the Association at state-level agricultural forums.

I started a crane equipment business with a business-partner in 2020. I direct the financial side of the business by maintaining the books and overseeing the overall financial strategy and welfare of our company. We originally started with one used crane and have expanded to our current fleet of seven cranes.

Boards or committees you currently serve on and boards or committees you have served on in the past 5 years (please include the principal business of any board listed, e.g., "local school board" or "agricultural supply co-op" etc.): Local Church Board of Trustees – 2018-2022

Officer (Sergeant at Arms) in my local American Legion Post

Community involvement/government service: I served in the Army National Guard from 2010-2018 as a combat engineer.

We have hosted students from the Southwest MN CEO program at our farm to talk about the business side of becoming a farmer and working in agriculture.

Education: I graduated with a double major from South Dakota State University in 2015 with a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Systems Technology & a Bachelor of Science in Aviation Management.

What is your vision for the future of agriculture? A future where farmers have the opportunity to operate successful, maintainable businesses within their local communities.

What do you believe are the primary issues facing agriculture and Compeer Financial? Two of the main issues that I see in agriculture and Compeer are the availability and affordability of land, as well as the challenges surrounding succession planning.

As land values continue to rise, both purchased and rented land have become increasingly expensive. This directly affects a farm's profitability, growth opportunities, and longevity. For Compeer, the higher land costs affect the risk management and overall financial resilience of the farmers they work with. I think available and affordable land is one of the most important factors in the success of a farming operation.

One of the most common and difficult questions that I hear is what will happen to the farm when the current generation is ready to step back. With tight margins and economic uncertainty, this is a very personal and important question for so many individuals and families in agriculture. Having options and plans in place to successfully transition a farm is a major component of both an agricultural business's success and the success of the financial institutions supporting them.

Why do you want to serve on the Board of Directors at Compeer Financial? I believe I have strong practical skills, a solid work ethic, and relevant experience to contribute and handle the roles and responsibilities of a board member. Through my various experiences on my own family farm, my work with many farmers through the Farm Business Management Association, and my experience in small business ownership, I would bring a unique perspective that would add value to the Compeer team.

I also welcome the opportunity to learn from and work alongside current board members as Compeer continues to navigate challenges and new opportunities.