St. Cloud Meeting, What the heck was that? A primer for PEP instructors

1. MDA Scholarships: The Minnesota Department of Ag will pay half the tuition for beginning farmers. Must have farmed 10 years or less, enroll for 8-10 credits per school year and have less than 40 FBM credits in their career. This scholarship fund WILL run out. If you have beginning farmers, get those applications in ASAP. The fund will probably disappear in December. Last year it ran out in January. When you email the applications, please make sure to put ‘FBM Scholarship, # of Applications’ in the subject line to help the MDA manage their inbox and ensure they know how many applications are attached. Do not guarantee the student scholarship money until you hear back from MDA <http://mda.state.mn.us/agri-beginning-farmer-farm-business-management-scholarships>
2. MDA Tax Credit: A new program in 2018 that provides tuition tax credits for FBM students, and tax credits for asset owners who sell or rent to beginning farmers. Lots of paperwork, but a great opportunity for farmers to sell or rent assets. Remember, it can’t be direct line relatives like father/son transfer. It can be uncle/nephew sales or rental. Get the applications in by Nov 1 <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/bftc> If you have beginning farmers in your program, they can use this for all their landlords, or if they rent other assets like machinery, buildings, pasture, those asset owners are also eligible. Your student will receive a tax credit for their tuition, up to $1500.
3. The Vault: Just try it now and get it out of the way. Your computer will crash during your career, and at least your Finpack will be backed up.
4. Nate C and Evernote: I’m trying this program this year. The biggest struggle I have during analysis season is being on the road, and files and notes being at the office. I may not be at the office for a week so I’m trying to stay as mobile, and paperless, as possible.
5. Agcentric.org library, your password is Farmbiz101$ Please take a few minutes to dig around the library. Lots of good resources. You will probably create your own materials, but use this to get started and get ideas.
6. Tina L. and Adobe Connect: You will be required to host an Adobe Connect meeting with someone (not me!) before our New Ulm meeting. Work with another PEP instructor to schedule a meeting. You should each spend 5 minutes learning how to share a screen, or a program, use the video, etc.
7. MAELC: They’re great. You don’t know everything that happens behind the scenes, but MAELC does, so you don’t have to. A great organization of people leading ag education. This is a legislative council, so there are no dues to pay. Just make sure you appreciate all the work they do. <http://mn.gov/maelc/>
8. MAAE: Pay your dues. Great professional development opportunities, plus they advocate at the legislature for us. <https://mnaged.org/>
9. NFRBMEA: Pay your dues. A national organization working especially hard with the National Council for Agricultural Education. Ag ed is often associated with FFA, but there is so much more. <http://www.nfrbmea.org/>