

AGP Strategizes for the Future with FCC Services

Looking for an informed outside perspective and skilled professional facilitation, leading ag co-op AGP has turned to FCC Services to support its annual board and management strategic planning session.

AGP is the world's largest cooperative soybean processing company and a leading supplier of soybean meal and refined vegetable oils, as well as biodiesel. AGP faces a number of challenges, including managing through changing domestic and international policy.

"There's a lot of policy uncertainty which not only impacts AGP, but our member-owners as well," says Kyle Droscher, AGP's Vice President of Finance. "Tariffs and trade negotiations are impacting commodity prices and exports, while also contributing to cost escalations on steel and other materials. In addition, domestic energy policies, including the Renewable Fuel Standard [RFS], present both challenges and opportunities to the biodiesel market."

AGP is also facing challenges that span the cooperative world: industry consolidation, which is expected to continue albeit at a slower rate, and attracting and retaining talent in the face of the rural-to-urban migration and the aging of the workforce.

"We're continually looking at how we can effectively lead and develop our employees to meet our business objectives while also understanding the younger generation to ensure they become successful leaders at AGP," says Kyle.

Discussing these and other opportunities and challenges is the key purpose of AGP's annual strategic planning session, where the senior team develops a business plan to address both internal and external factors. For the past three years, FCC Services' Jean Cantey Segal, Senior Vice President of Organizational Effectiveness Consulting and Bill Wilson, Vice President of Agribusiness Consulting, have worked with AGP to ensure a relevant and productive session.

"AGP has a very effective strategic planning process, which we've been able to support from planning the event through onsite facilitation to delivering a final meeting recap," says Bill.

"Their experience topically and globally is a great benefit as we look to identify emerging trends and approaches," says Kyle. "Based on their exposure to different organizations and industries, they've helped us continue to position ourselves for a successful future."

Their first step is to talk with the board and CEO and then assist management in crafting a meaningful agenda that addresses the cooperative's challenges, includes relevant expert speakers and incorporates approaches to stimulate strategic thinking. During the event, Jean and Bill facilitate conversation while ensuring that it remains targeted, using anonymous real-time polling to further inform discussions and drive interaction. After the event, they deliver a comprehensive report encompassing the session that then informs the strategic plan.

"FCC Services brings their insight to our process, keeping our discussions on topic and ensuring that the result is a meaningful and actionable strategic plan," says Kyle. "This enables us to mitigate challenges, capitalize on opportunities, and most importantly, continue to deliver value to our members."

"We appreciate the opportunity to work with AGP each year to support them in developing a targeted strategic plan that will carry them forward with continued success," says Jean.