
HOW STELLA SAVED THE FARM

A Tale About Making Innovation Happen

SYNOPSIS

MAIN CHARACTERS

Marcus (Horse)	CEO of the farm until his retirement
Deirdre (Horse)	CEO of the farm after Marcus's retirement
Bull (Bull)	Chief operating officer
Maverick (Horse)	Leader of the new luxury wool business
Stella (Sheep)	Aspiring young leader with the idea for the new business
Maisie (Cow)	Head marketer, luxury wool; later social network marketer
Andrea (Alpaca)	Professional luxury wool marketer who replaces Maisie
Rambo (Ram)	Head of "ovine operations"
Einstein (Rooster)	Quirky head of R&D
The Sheep	Producers of commodity wool
The Alpaca	Newly arrived producers of luxury wool

PART ONE

Chapter 1: Deirdre Will Be Next to Lead Windsor Farm

Marcus tells Deirdre he wants her to take over as the farm's leader. Deirdre doesn't feel ready, but she cannot refuse her father.

The other animals on the farm had expected that Bull would be the next leader, but Marcus is worried that Bull will "run the farm just like he did." The problem is that even if Windsor is run with perfect efficiency, it can't match the scale of gigantic human-run farms and their enormous machines.

Marcus is scared that someday there will be no choice but to sell Windsor Farm to McGillicuddy, the owner of the neighboring farm. McGillicuddy runs a big, impersonal operation, not a family farm. He does not respect animals and would not treat them well.

Chapter 2: Bull is Angry and Unsure of his Future.

Marcus and Deirdre break the news to Bull. He is very angry, even after Deirdre offers to create a new role for him as chief operating officer.

Bull's motto is "faster, stronger, more efficient." He wrote it on the barn wall. Bull does not warm to the idea of working for Deirdre, even as a chief operating officer.

Chapter 3: The Noteworthy History of Windsor Farm

Marcus dies, and Deirdre is on her own. Windsor Farm has a rich history. It was the site of the revolution that first led to animals running their own farms generations earlier.



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Chapter 4: Deirdre Under Pressure

Deirdre faces early trouble. Hail. Bugs. Sheep walking off the farm. She asks for advice on how to improve performance. Bull responds: “I will work harder.” Other animals respond with good ideas, but Deirdre feels that they are insufficient. Deirdre sees McGillicuddy driving by in a gigantic, brand-new tractor, and later dreams that McGillicuddy runs her over with it.

Chapter 5: Deirdre Asks for Bold Ideas

At a farm-wide meeting, Deirdre shares her dream about McGillicuddy’s gigantic tractor. The animals are very afraid of the possibility that McGillicuddy will take over. Deirdre makes an appeal for bigger and bolder ideas. She announces a “big idea hunt.”

Chapter 6: Stella Returns with a Big Idea

The Big Idea Hunt generates a handful of promising ideas. Coincidentally, Stella returns from Peru just in time to present an idea of her own: a new luxury wool business.

Chapter 7: Deirdre Commits to Luxury Wool Business

Deirdre and Bull decide that luxury wool is the best idea that they have. They plan a big celebration to announce the winner of the Big Idea Hunt. Stella is thrilled and comments, “It just shows that you never know where your next crazy idea will come from.” And then... the party was over. It dawns on Deirdre that she hasn’t really thought carefully about next steps.

Chapter 8: Mav Will Lead Luxury Wool

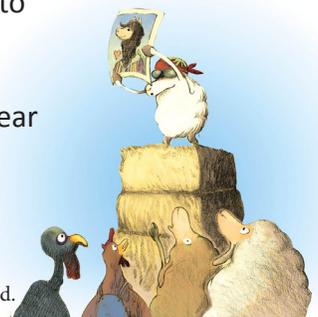
Deirdre and Bull select Mav to lead luxury wool. They could have selected someone more senior, but that would have meant taking someone out of a critical job running the existing business. Deirdre has Mav report to Rambo, since luxury wool seems most like the existing sheep wool business.

At a farm-wide meeting, Mav is introduced as the leader of luxury wool. The animals are excited, and Mav lets the animals know he will be looking for volunteers to help him. Then, Bull reminds the animals that they must work harder at the existing business.

Chapter 9: Mav is Confronted by “The System.”

In this chapter, Mav learns how hard it is to push a new idea forward inside an established business. There are “rules” that make sense for the core business that get in Mav’s way, such as tight standards for bringing new animals on the farm, compensation standards, and spending guidelines. And, nobody seems to have much free time to help Mav. Bull is keeping all of the animals extremely busy. Rambo also seems to be unable to help.

Deirdre is very angry about the lack of progress. Hadn’t she made it very clear that the future of the farm depended on luxury wool?



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PART TWO

Chapter 10: Mav Gets a Dedicated Team

Deirdre recognizes that in the contest between innovation and ongoing operations, between Mav and Bull, Bull was going to win every time. Bull was working the animals very hard. They were running the core business as best possible, and this left little time for anything else.

Deirdre decides that Mav should report directly to her so that she can act as his sponsor. Rambo is relieved that he can focus just on meeting Bull's demands. Deirdre gives Mav a dedicated team of three: Maisie (marketing), Matt (sales), and Max (ops). Bull is angry to be losing three talented people. How was he going to do his job without them?

Chapter 11: The Animals React Poorly to Mav's "Special Treatment"

The animals, because they are working so hard to please Bull, are as angry as Bull about the loss of three people to Mav's team. Deirdre insists that "we must find a way to do two very different things at the same time. We have to sustain excellence in the existing business and build a new and uncertain one. Nobody said that it was going to be easy." The animals react poorly. They want to know: Why is Mav getting special treatment? Why does he get a dedicated team?

Chapter 12: Mav and Rambo Combine Animal Care and Yarn Making Ops

The alpaca arrive. The sheep feel like the farm has been invaded by aliens, and they wonder "are these strange creatures really the future of the farm?" Stella works hard to bring them together. Mav is unable to persuade Rambo to let the alpaca graze on the same land as the sheep. As a result, the alpaca are sent to "The Back Forty," where they suffer. They need better grazing land to be healthy.

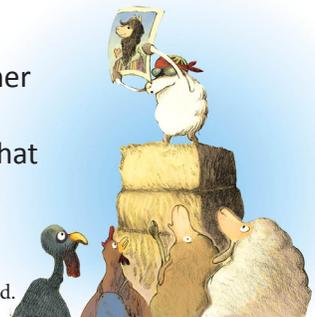
Meanwhile, Mav wants to use Rambo's yarn making equipment to produce the first few batches of alpaca yarn. Rambo resists. Deirdre decides that the dedicated team cannot operate independently. She insists that Rambo combine both animal care and yarn making ops with Mav.

Chapter 13: Combining Yarn Making Ops Proves a Disaster

Stella proves an able peacemaker. She helps the sheep and alpaca get along. Once the sheep and alpaca learn to share the same land, combining animal care operations proves easy. However, combining yarn making just doesn't work at all because the processes for luxury and commodity wool are very different. Deirdre and Mav decide to set up a separate yarn-making operation for luxury wool after all.

Chapter 14: Maisie, Marketing Wizard?

In an important customer visit, Maisie proves out of her depth. The customer wants to talk about operations; Maisie wants to talk about fashion. Mav recognizes that while Maisie was the best person on the farm for the job, that did not mean she was the best person available for the job. Mav finds Andrea, an alpaca wool marketing expert from Peru. Though Deirdre is



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uncomfortable about hiring Andrea, she decides to “let go.” She can’t simply try to force the new business into the mold that was most familiar to her.

Andrea insists on some important changes. Mostly, she elevates the importance of “delivering what the customer wants” over “keeping costs low.” Mav’s team initially resists, but Mav formally empowers Andrea to make some critical decisions.

Chapter 15: A Near Brawl on the Farm

When luxury wool orders start to roll in, Deirdre shifts her focus to other priorities. Soon, however, it is clear that conflicts on the farm are once again on the rise. The alpaca start to feel Very Important and let their success go to their heads, irritating the sheep. Also, Mav keeps bringing more and more alpaca to the farm. It’s getting pretty crowded. There was almost a fight between the sheep and alpaca. Making matters worse, the team that cared for the animals is very busy, barely able to keep up.

Mav and Rambo yell at each other during a meeting with Deirdre, who decides to solve the problem by hiring another farm to care for some of the sheep. Later, she gives a rallying “We must all work together as a family” speech.

Chapter 16: Einstein Insists that the Luxury Wool is an Experiment

Mav and Deirdre are trying to evaluate the progress of the luxury wool business. Mav has not really been keeping his plans up to date. Einstein insists that the business should be treated as a disciplined experiment. The first priority is to learn from the experiment. Learning leads to better results.

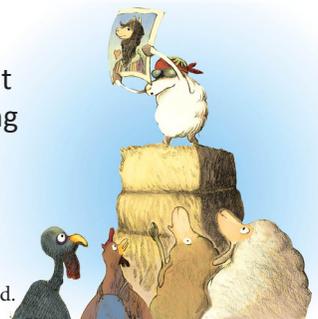
Chapter 17: Experiments Within Experiments

Mav and Einstein work together to follow a disciplined process for managing an experiment. Andrea wants to invest in marketing through social networking websites. Einstein notes that Andrea’s idea is itself an experiment – an experiment within the bigger experiment, the luxury wool business. Deirdre approves the investment.

Chapter 18: Time for Performance Reviews

Deirdre doesn’t know how to evaluate Mav’s performance. He has missed the plan by a mile. She recalls that Marcus was unflinching in holding managers accountable for poor performance. Bull was the same way. Deirdre had an instinct that Mav should be evaluated by different standards because he managed a new business. But what standards?

Einstein persuades Deirdre that Mav can be evaluated on the basis of how well he managed a disciplined experiment. Deirdre delays Mav’s review, but rattles him by setting very specific expectations that lay out what “managing a disciplined experiment” really means.



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Chapter 19: One Final Crisis

Mav is excited to receive a favorable performance review. However, luxury wool is still draining resources. Money is tight; tensions are high. Bull asks the animals to work harder still, and the animals start to revolt. They can't take it anymore. Einstein explains his analysis ... that if the farm can just hold on for three months longer, all will be fine. Deirdre gives another inspiring speech.

Conclusion: Good bye, McGillicuddy

The luxury wool business is going really well. Deirdre is considering more new business launches. The farm says a boisterous good-bye to McGillicuddy.

