

Looking at Challenges as Opportunities

We are faced with challenges everyday. So how can we turn them into opportunities? We get up and go to work and all of a sudden the phone rings and we are faced with a challenge. This is something that you just have to do. An opportunity is an elective event. You may take advantage of the opportunity or pass it by.

One of the current challenges facing all businesses with employees is the increase in minimum wage. This challenge is not a choice but might be an opportunity in disguise. It is up to you to turn the challenge into an opportunity. This is a case of life giving you lemons and you making lemonade and not just a sour face.

Even if it seems like a very bad thing has happened it might turn out to be very good ... but only if you have the right attitude.

When Ann and I got married, I left a very secure job in machining in Phoenix. My challenge was to find something that was comparable in northern California. I had been a machinist for 17 years. It took two years to figure out that it was not possible. I had come to a crossroad. So now what was I going to do? I looked around and saw that Ann's business needed help so I started there. I had no background or experience in plants or marketing at that time. This became a real opportunity and eventually led to our current business. I continue to look for new challenges and turning them into opportunities every day.

To some degree we should challenge ourselves every day to do the right thing and make the right choices. Without challenges none of us can grow and reach our potential or goals.

A CHALLENGE OF OUR OWN

In 1994, Ann decided to leave the University of Florida. She was a professor and had a very secure job. Returning to California was a family-based decision, but creating a family business was never in her mind. It was one challenge after another but, in retrospect, the only way for her to continue to grow her expertise.

In 2011, we left that business (also very successful) to return to Arizona. And then another set of challenges presented themselves since we were no longer doing the core business we had created during the 15 years in California.

In our current business, we continue to face daily challenges like every other business. Health insurance, liability insurance, life insurance, retirement planning, taxes and just finding time to relax are daily challenges.

Marketing has been a special challenge and great opportunity. We decided to eliminate the old website and trim down to a blog site. This is more interactive and easier for us to keep up to date. We even decided that Chase Archives (our newsletter from 2002 to 2011) should be available to everyone. Now you can search it and find specific fungicides or diseases as you need.

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Most recently we are accepting the challenge of launching a new educational event called "Western Roundup." This is my dream borne out of years of conversations with all of you at trade shows and your nurseries. This 1½-day meeting focuses on casual interchange designed to create practical solutions to your pest management challenges. We are keeping attendance small at about 25 with short presentations by Ann and a few other industry experts. The topics covered will focus on new problems and new solutions or new ways to look at them.

CASE IN POINT

Ann was visiting nurseries in Wisconsin a couple of weeks ago and heard about how one person's challenge could turn into someone else's opportunity. The farmer mentioned that since the drought in California, lettuce growers had cut back dramatically on what they could produce. The local farmers who were growing soybeans and corn jumped in and started producing lettuce for their local market. This directly supports the sustainability of agriculture by making at least some percentage of products locally grown.

One of our clients is a farmer/rose grower in California. Years ago, he faced a situation where water was expensive, scarce and somewhat poor quality. His solution was to use buried drip irrigation tape. This solved the water issues and a few others. The water is now going exactly where it does the most good. He is fertilizing this way too, which minimizes runoff and waste and possible contamination. His weed populations are very low since the surface stays dry. And the roses are better quality than ever before! So this very expensive water challenge became a great opportunity to produce a better crop in a more sustainable way.

So once the initial shock of your next challenge is over — stop and think! How can I take advantage of this rotten situation to do better? What is the silver lining on the gray cloud? Turn your challenges into opportunities. [gpn](#)



Chase Agricultural Consulting, LLC was formed in 2011 by Ann (A.R.) Chase and Mike Zemke. Ann has more than 35 years experience in research, diagnostics and practical consulting in plant pathology. She has been retired from the University of Florida since 1994 but remains on staff as a Professor Emeritus. Mike holds an Associate of Applied Science in manufacturing drafting and started his education in horticulture when he and Ann were married in 1995. He specializes in communications of all sorts within the industry.