

Be warned, there are people out there that are trying to rip folks off.

One of our subscribers and advertisers reached out to offer a warning about scammers, including ones that offer to buy your equipment listed in the Ag Review.

Evan Meyers, a retired school principle and retired farmer from Wallburg, contacted my chief of staff Zane Hedgecock to tell him what happened, explaining he thought the scammer saw the listing online since he was from out of state.

I'll start by saying it's always a good idea to be on alert for scams and anything that doesn't seem or sound right when doing business with someone you do not know. In Meyers case, the man contacted him about buying a 1982 combine he had for sale in the newspaper.

Part of the man's story was that he was in the hospital undergoing chemo, but was planning to move to North Carolina soon and farm.

After discussing the price, the man agreed to send Meyer a check. When the check arrived, it was for more than double what had been agreed upon.

Meyer said THAT was the first red flag.

When he called the man, the man gave him a story about his secretary having accidentally combined the price of the combine with a fee that was supposed to be paid to the person who would be transporting the combine.

So, to keep the sale moving along, the man asked Meyers if he would go ahead and cash the check and transfer the extra amount of money to the man who was supposed to be transporting the piece of equipment.

And, THAT was the second red flag. At that point Meyers said he was pretty sure the whole transaction was a scam.

Meyer talked with his bank and had a hold put on the check to ensure it was legitimate. Sure enough, he said, the very convincing looking check from a credit union in Michigan was no good.

The man meanwhile had continued to contact Meyer asking him if he deposited the check and transferred the extra money yet. Once he knew the check was no good, Meyers said he wrote back a particularly pointed note basically saying no, because you are trying to scam me.

Thanks to Meyers suspicions, he avoided being scammed, but scams involving checks written for over the amount of a sale are one of the more common scams these unscrupulous people try.

In fact, it made the list of top three scams, which included:

- Lotteries and Sudden Riches Scams
- Online Auctions, Classified Listing Sites, and Overpayment Scams
- Secret or Mystery Shopper Employment Scams

There are a lot of online resources discussing these scams and what to watch out for, including one from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) at this link:

<https://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/news/august2019.html>

Meyers said he had heard about similar types of scams before, but he had never personally been scammed by one. It hit a little too close to home and he wanted to be sure others were aware of what had happened.

That's why I chose to write about this in my column. I want people to be aware and watchful, too. I'm sorry that someone tried to use the Agricultural Review as part of their scam. Pay extra attention to out-of-state buyers and if something doesn't sound right, pay attention. Stay safe!