



Director's Report

Dan Jones, *Board Chairman*

Co-op Neighbor Discussions

Back on April 29, we mailed out a letter to our voting members informing them of discussions we'd been having with River Region Cooperative over the last several months.



Roger Kienholz,
General Manager

Like Crystal Valley, River Region is a full-service grain marketing and farm supply cooperative with core businesses in agronomy, feed, grain, petroleum and propane. They are approximately \$90 million in annual sales with good earnings, a strong balance sheet, and very little term debt. River Region's main office is located in Sleepy Eye with branch locations in Cobden and Essig.

Our directors held joint board meetings with the directors of River Region on January 19 and April 18. After those meetings, we mutually agreed to conduct a financial feasibility study to determine if there was sufficient benefit in bringing the two companies together and creating a stronger organization.

The financial study was put together by members of each company's management team and then reviewed by the boards of directors in late May.

Following a joint meeting on June 2 of the Crystal Valley and River Region boards of directors, it was decided to discontinue the merger discussions. Although the results of the financial feasibility study looked promising, directors felt that the timing was just not best for moving forward with a merger right now. Perhaps that will occur in the future.

Also, over the last few months we've had a couple board to board visits (February 29 and May 25) with the directors of the FCA Coop of Jackson, Minnesota.

FCA Coop is a full-service ag cooperative with annual sales around \$160 million in the same core business as Crystal Valley. Their main office is in Jackson with branch locations in Lakefield, Okabena, Round Lake, Sherburn, Trimont and Wilder.

While these talks with FCA have not led into a full merger study, the discussions have been valuable as we continually look for ways to improve our respective companies and expand our services to producers. The board and management of Crystal Valley is determined to investigate and evaluate all opportunities to make Crystal Valley a better and stronger organization to continue serving American agriculture well into the future. Thank you for the trust and confidence you've placed in Crystal Valley as demonstrated by your patronage and support.

Have a great summer!



Agronomy Report

Dale Botten, *Agronomy Division Manager*

Spring Planting in the Area

Planting and growing a crop has been a bit challenging this Spring. Cold nighttime lows resulting in frost damage, spotty rain showers resulting in flooded or poorly emerging crops and scattered hail affected plant health and populations. Planting in our trade area east of Mankato started early. Areas west of Madelia made slower progress due to wet soil conditions. Farmers continued to replant corn and beans up to the middle of June. This makes for a long planting season. It was encouraging to see crops take off and grow once temperatures warmed up.

The fast rate of planting this spring's crop required a lot of fertilizer/herbicide to be custom-applied in a short period of time. A big thank you goes out to our operations/custom application staff who continues to make it happen by putting in long hours giving you the best possible service. In addition, our agronomy sales staff did a great job planning this winter to insure everything went smoothly this spring with custom application and customer service.

Your precision ag department was busy in the off-season preparing for the spring planting season. It is certainly rewarding to our precision staff when they see their service and product offerings being well received by customers.

Our summer interns have been busy with soil sampling. The demand for summer grid sampling continues to grow allowing more precise crop nutrient recommendations before applying fertilizer this fall. Contact a Crystal Valley agronomist to line up your sampling needs.

Fertilizer supply and price continue their volatility. Most retail fertilizer dealers were focused on having fertilizer bins/tanks empty by the end of the spring application season. We expect to have a reset in fertilizer prices for the fall application season.

Our new agronomy planning and invoicing software was released this spring. The software performed very well thanks to the hard work by our I.T. Software Development staff along with input from our agronomy operations staff.

The Crystal Valley Agronomy team's goal is to increase our customer's per-acre profitability. We are committed to increase Precision Ag offerings relying on our experienced agronomy sales staff and support from our in-house Precision Ag Department.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to partner with you to meet this goal. We look forward to working with you this summer helping you maximize bushels harvested this fall and positioning you for a successful 2017.

HAVE A SAFE AND FUN SUMMER!



Agronomy Update

Matt Schoper, *Agronomy Sales Manager*

New Product Line at Crystal Valley

We continue to evaluate new technology and services as they come to the market. Although some do not fit well in our trade area, I'm pleased to announce that Crystal Valley recently accepted a Yield 360® dealership. The dealership will run in conjunction with our Precision Planting® dealership. Ben Youngerberg will manage this exciting venture. Yield 360® is up and coming on the market. The owner/founder was the previous owner of Precision Planting®. They have an evolving product line we are excited about supporting. The two products offered for nitrogen management are the Y-Drop System® and Soil Scan®. However, this is not all they are focused on. They bring a 360 Chain Roll® for combine heads and the 360 Bullets® for rippers to the market. We believe this partnership will bring an exciting line of products to our customers. Crystal Valley looks forward to moving forward with Yield 360® for several reasons. First, the level of interest in the product offerings by our customers. Second, the fit with our existing Precision Planting® dealership. Finally, with more and more regulatory control on nitrogen management there is a continuous need to place nitrogen where it is needed. Please contact Ben Youngerberg or your Crystal Valley agronomist if you have interest in learning more about our Yield 360® dealership and product offerings.



New Employee: Brent Meshke

Brent Meshke joined the Crystal Valley team as an Agronomy Trainee in May when he graduated. He completed his degree in Ag Sciences from South Dakota State University. Brent grew up on a family farm in the Lake Crystal area. He completed two internships with Crystal Valley as well as one internship with WinField Solutions®. Brent will complete his agronomy training in Lake Crystal. Please help me welcome Brent to the team.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR BUSINESS!

Crystal Valley Training



Mark Jewell

Speaker, Trainer & Coach | Creator: *The Millennial Mastermind* | *Coaching Next Gen Leaders & Sellers in Agribusiness* out of Omaha came onsite and trained our Crystal Valley salespeople in March.





Grain Report

Jeff Spence, *Grain Division Manager*

On the Horizon in Your Grain Division

After a wet spring we finally have the crop planted. We are all guessing as to the size of the corn and bean acreage as we wait for the big June 30th acreage report. I project the corn acreage will be reduced by the weather delays and the sharp rise in bean prices. If that logic holds true, bean acreage will be up a little also. I don't think the acreage shift alone will be enough to give us a big bull or bear market. The funds have stepped in by being big buyers of beans and soybean meal. I would have never guessed in January the price of beans would be today's \$11.00. We have seen the funds buying huge amounts of futures primarily due to weather talk (La Nina). Corn has followed along slowly with a large farmer ownership position that wasn't present in beans. I believe the two biggest factors affecting corn and bean prices this summer will be the June 30th acreage report and weather. Remember, when funds are more responsible for a market rally than fundamentals and if they bail on their positions, the markets can go down faster then they go up.

We have loaded 31 trains so far this year between Madelia and Hope. We have another 9 trains on the books to ship this summer. We also hope to purchase some additional bushels. As usual we will have our elevators cleaned out to handle your harvest needs.

We had a few projects this year in the Grain Division. The biggest project has been putting natural gas into Hope. The dryer will be fired up before the end of June to make sure everything is working correctly. Our next biggest project has been doing an automated software project upgrade at our Madelia terminal. It should be wrapped up by the end of June also. We have done some work at the truck elevators by replacing conveyors and spouting. All our facilities will have all the projects finished well ahead of harvest.

We will set our harvest policies the end of August and will have them in our fall newsletter. We will do a mailing to our customers ahead of harvest so everyone will be aware of our service fees. Please contact us about any of your marketing questions for either old crop or new crop to make sure you don't miss out on any of our many marketing options.



– THERE ARE –
969,672
FEMALE FARMERS
in America
THAT'S 30%
of all **AMERICAN**
FARMERS



Grain Marketing

Ryan Brandts, *Grain Marketer*

Grain Marketing This Summer

After the March USDA planting intentions report, very few would have expected corn and bean prices to be where they are today! South American crop issues coupled with the trade's anxiety over this summer's La Nina have pushed prices to values not seen in quite some time, giving the farmer some great opportunities to lock in better than anticipated prices.

Let us put this historic soybean run into perspective for you. At the time of writing this article, July 2016 beans have rallied up about \$3.15 in the last 15 weeks. They have closed the week higher 14 of the last 15 weeks with one down week and that was only down \$.01. For the nine weeks (4/11/16 to 6/6/16), July 2016 beans were up about \$2.60 and the last time that happened was in 1973.

In the June 10th report, the USDA gave the soybean market more fuel as they trimmed the old crop carry-out by 10 million bushels. They revised new crop carry-out down to 260 million bushels with an increase in projected exports. Old crop ending stocks were down 95 million bushels to 1.708b/bu with the USDA increasing exports 100m/bu. New crop ending stocks were reduced 50m/bu with an increase in exports due to the increased competitiveness worldwide and the smaller Brazilian crop. New crop corn was still left with a 2.008b/bu carry-out.

There was plenty of talk regarding more bean acres due to the bean price surge we experienced this spring. The USDA will tell us June 30th how many bean acres were actually planted. Even with an additional two million acres, the cushion added will only partially offset a 1 bu/acre loss from the USDA's current yield. This further points out the importance of weather and yield as this crop progresses this summer. Any substantial crop issues perceived or realized could make for a volatile summer.

With the recent emphatic and fast upward movement of these markets, it is easy to get bullish and remain on the sidelines. With so much relying on this summer's weather, it is almost impossible to predict what prices will do. What we do know is that these values were almost never predicted and shall allow farmers to hopefully pencil a profit.. Hopefully we can pencil a profit. The degree to how much a person should have marketed varies differently for every individual with varying break-evens and logistics. We do have strategies that we can help you with that allow you to set a floor and maintain upside potential.

If you have any questions on the markets or on any marketing strategies, please feel free to give one of us a call. *We would be happy to meet with you! Have a great Summer!*



Joe Williams,
Grain Marketer



Jim Johnson,
Grain Marketer



**WE ARE NOW OFFERING FREE DP
ON CORN AND BEANS!**

*Bushels need to be priced by
September 30th, 2016. Quantities may be
limited based on available space.*



Energy Report

Nathan Monroe, *Refined Fuels/Lubes Department Manager*

New Faces in Your Energy Division

I would like to introduce our newest Refined Fuels Driver, LeRoy Urban. LeRoy is working out of our Madelia location where he is driving our newest refined fuels truck. We now have three full-time fuel drivers to better serve our customers throughout our entire trade area.

We also have a new fuel driver out of our Janesville location, Jesse Nikoley. Jesse has replaced Mike Scott who has taken over Lloyd Skluzacek's sales position. Lloyd retired as of June 1st. We thank Lloyd for his hard work and dedication over the past three years and wish him well.

We are happy to announce the privilege of having an energy intern, Sarah Libra working with us. This is our first intern opportunity. She is doing a great job!



Sarah Libra
Intern



Jesse Nikoley
Refined Fuels Driver



LeRoy Urban
Refined Fuels Driver



Sarah made her first sale!

Congratulations Sarah!

Leroy pictured with the new 2016 Freightliner 4500 gallon fuel truck. He drives out of Madelia.





Energy Report

Jim Jung, Propane Department Manager

Propane in the United States and Rebate Opportunities

Hello! I hope everyone is enjoying the warmer weather. You should have received our yearly summer fill letter and Duty to Warn information in the mail in early May. We hope you took time to review the information. We feel it is a good review for you and your family's safety. Please remember if you ever smell propane or suspect a gas leak, call us right away and we will send someone right out. If you have changed any appliances or had any work done on the gas system, please let us know, and we will do a free system check. Remember, our service department is here to help you with any propane problems. We are your friends and neighbors and want you and your family to be as safe as possible.

Propane supply and pricing seem to be fairly stable at this time. Inventories are strong in the Midwest. However, there seems to be a constant draw in the Gulf Coast, with most of this product going to South America and China. This keeps the United States total inventories from growing very fast. Needless to say, we wish we had a crystal ball to forecast for our customers. If you want to protect your winter price, you may contract at any time with at any of our locations.

\$\$ REBATES \$\$

The Minnesota Propane Association is offering rebates of up to \$650.00 on the installation of a new propane water heater. If you are planning on installing a new water heater or need the details of the program, give us a call at 507-726-6455. And ask for the Propane Service Department. The program will last until August 31, 2016.

Summer is just beginning. However, the need for heating will be just around the corner. Crystal Valley can help you with heating your garage, shop or barn. We offer Modine Hot Dawg® garage heaters, Modine shop unit heaters, and Roberts Gordon tube heaters. We also provide a complete line of LB White barn heaters and stock Genuine LB White Parts. You can call the main office for a free quote on any of these products. We service what we sell and stock most parts for these units.

We look forward to working with you!

Let Hot Dawg® Bring Heat To Your Pet Projects.



To chase away the cold in any space or garage, new or old, just call on the Hot Dawg® compact unit heater.

- » Hush-puppy quiet warmth from natural or propane gas.
- » Better fuel efficiency and more-even heating than other heater styles (electric, infrared, salamanders, etc.
- » Certified for residential, commercial and industrial use.
- » Lightweight, easily installs (only 1" from ceiling) with quick connections to gas and electricity.
- » Exhausts combustion gases (and moisture) from work space.
- » Simple venting through wall or roof with standard power exhaust.
- » New separated-combustion units burn outside air for:
 - » Increased durability in dusty, dirty or humid work spaces.
 - » Greater heating efficiency.



Feed Report

Bob Raue, *Feed Division Manager*

Additions to the Feed Division

The Crystal Valley Feed Division would like to introduce it's newest full-time bulk feed delivery driver. Matt Lange will be delivering feed out of our Vernon Center feed mill. Matt has previous feed experience as he worked for Crystal Valley in the LaSalle area part-time and more recently for South Central Feed & Grain in their feed department.

Matt's first day was February 29, 2016. Matt lives in Truman, MN. Please join us in welcoming Matt to Crystal Valley.



Matt Lange
Feed Driver

We would like to welcome Brad More to the Crystal Valley Feed team. Brad is our 2016 summer intern. Brad attends South Central College in North Mankato, MN and is majoring in Agribusiness Service and Management. Brad is from Blue Earth, MN and graduated high school in 2013. He has been working for Big Gain in Mankato part-time while attending school. Brad is learning about all aspects of the feed division during his time with our team. We want the internship to be a learning experience for Brad. Young adults of his nature are our future industry leaders. We are proud to have him on our team and that we are playing a role in his education and growth for his future.

Antibiotics on the Farm: What You Need to Know about New Regulations

On January 1, 2017, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) new regulations addressing on-farm antibiotic use in food-animal production will take effect. The agency's effort is aimed at eliminating the use of medically important (to human illness) antibiotics for growth promotion purposes in food-animal production and bringing therapeutic use in feed and water - to treat, control or prevent specific-disease - under additional veterinary oversight. Producers, veterinarians, feed mills and suppliers, will all face new requirements.

The take-home message for producers: Talk with your veterinarian about using any antibiotics that fall under the new VFD requirement. If you do not have a veterinarian relationship today, it is very important that before January 1, 2017 you develop a relationship with a veterinarian. Most antibiotics labeled for use in swine will be affected by the VFD rule. However, a few compounds of interest will not be effected. These include bacitracin, tiamulin, carbadox, ionophores and bambermycin. For a list of affected products and additional information on the VFD rule, go to www.pork.org/antibiotics. Also, feel free to contact your Crystal Valley feed mill or salesman for additional information on the upcoming VFD rule. © 2015 America's Pork Producers and the Pork Checkoff

Common Swine Industry Audit

Background

In October 2014, the National Pork Board officially announced that a new common swine industry audit platform for pork producers, packers and processors was certified by the Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization (PAACO) and was available to the public. Part of the driving force to create the new audit tool stemmed from the Pork Checkoff's Board of Directors who met with their European

counterparts in 2011. These overseas producers complained about audit programs in their countries that were duplicative, costly and inefficient.

The concept of a common audit was first introduced at the 2013 National Pork Industry Forum and reintroduced at the 2014 World Pork Expo in Des Moines, where a coalition of packers and pork producers explained how the audit is a credible and affordable solution for improving animal well-being.

Goal of Audit Tool

The overarching goal of the common audit process is to provide consumers greater assurance of the care taken by farmers and pork processors to improve animal well-being and food safety. The audit tool builds on the existing Pork Quality Assurance® Plus (PQA Plus®) program and expands it to serve as a single, common audit platform for the pork industry.

To help avoid duplicative, costly and inefficient audit programs that are commonplace in some countries, this new tool is designed to:

- » Meet individual company and customer needs.
- » Be focused on outcome-based criteria that measure and improve animal welfare.
- » Provide clarity to producers about audit standards and expectations.
- » Minimize duplication and prevent over-sampling.
- » Ensure greater integrity of the audit process through consistent application.
- » Provide an objective, science-based platform to facilitate continuous improvement in animal care.

Common Industry Audit Frequently Asked Questions

Why was the Common Swine Industry Audit created?

Third-party auditing is a widespread, recognized and

valued practice within the food production industry and is one component of a comprehensive commitment to building and maintaining the trust of customers and consumers. Third-party audits can bring transparency, credibility and assurance of process compliance to production units and provide useful feedback for continuous improvement.

The 2013 Pork Industry Forum delegates passed a resolution encouraging the National Pork Board to work with the various packers and other industry stakeholders to develop a common foundation for on-farm animal welfare audits, facilitate equivalency among packers, and minimize the need for multiple audits on a farm that supplies multiple packers. The common foundation for the audit would be based on Pork Quality Assurance® Plus (PQA Plus®) and Transport Quality Assurance® (TQA®).

Who was involved in the development of the Common Swine Industry Audit?

In 2013, a task force of industry stakeholders – including producers, veterinarians, animal scientists, packers, processors and retail and foodservice representatives – were tasked with developing a workable, credible and affordable common on-farm audit system for the swine industry. The common audit materials were submitted for external academic review and underwent beta testing to:

- » Determine the approximate amount of time required to conduct an audit on sites of various sizes and phases of production.
- » Determine if the audit tool and standard provide necessary clarity to auditors on how to evaluate audit criteria.
- » Validate that the scoring mechanism is appropriate and provides an accurate summary of the conditions of the site and pig management.
- » Gather input from the perspective of third-party auditors who have experience with on-farm auditing.
- » The task force reviewed feedback from the academic review and beta testing and made changes to strengthen the quality of the materials.

How was the Common Swine Industry Audit developed?

The task force developed the Common Industry Audit standard while considering scientific evidence, ethics and economics, which are the three factors that must be balanced for the swine industry to remain sustainable. The world and the marketplace are dynamic, and so the Common Industry Audit standard also must remain dynamic. The task force will consider revisions to the Common Industry Audit Standard on an annual basis by reviewing results of aggregated audit data, new scientific discoveries, changes in the marketplace and evolving consumer trends. Balancing these inputs on a consistent basis and adapting the Common Industry Audit standard will foster pro-competitive continuous improvement within the U.S. pork industry.

The Common Swine Industry Audit is PAACO Certified. What does this mean?

Certification of audit instruments is one of the services offered by the Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization (PAACO). Its welfare auditor trainings and certification of auditors for meat plants and poultry have become an industry standard. In order to become PAACO-certified, the program must be submitted for a third-party review by a species-specific panel of animal welfare experts appointed by

PAACO and overseen by a PAACO representative. The group initially critiques the audit for improvements and primarily evaluates it to determine if the audit meets all 12 minimum criteria established by the PAACO board of directors for a certifiable audit instrument. The criteria apply to all meat-animal species. PAACO has granted Certified Audit status to the Common Swine Industry Audit.

I have several production sites. Do the audit results of one farm apply to all of my farms?

No. Audit results apply only to the specific site that is audited. A site is defined by its standard premises identification number (PIN). A PIN is assigned when a producer registers the site through a state, tribal or federal animal health authority that obtains the PIN through the USDA APHIS PIN allocator. A standard PIN is made up of seven alphanumeric characters that uniquely identify a specific geographic location. Registration and contact information for each state can be found by contacting the Pork Service Center at (800) 456-7675. An on-farm third party audit must include all pigs and facilities located at the geographic location identified by the PIN.

If an audit is completed on my farm, do I still need to complete a PQA Plus site assessment?

Yes. The site assessment and audit have different purposes and outcomes. The PQA Plus site assessment is an educational and benchmarking tool that provides measurement and feedback from the PQA Plus advisor on effectiveness of training and management to ensure pig well-being. The audit is completed by an independent party who provides verification that the animal well-being system is working as designed. There is no education component to the audit; rather it is an objective snapshot in time of the farm and is one element of the animal well-being assurance process.

If I have recently completed a PQA Plus site assessment on my farm, will that count as a third-party audit?

No. Again, the site assessment and audit have different purposes and outcomes. The PQA Plus site assessment is an educational and benchmarking tool that provides measurement and feedback from the PQA Plus advisor on the effectiveness of training and management to ensure pig well-being.

The audit is completed by an independent party to provide verification that the animal well-being system is working as designed. There is no education component to the audit, rather it is an objective snapshot in time of the farm and is one element of the animal well-being assurance process.

What happens if I refuse to be audited?

If a customer in the marketplace (i.e. packer) has asked you to complete a third-party audit as a condition of sale and you decline, it is up to the customer to decide if they continue to purchase from you as a supplier.

What resources are available for producers to help them prepare for an audit?

There are several resources currently available for producers to help them prepare for an audit. Fact sheets, record templates and training materials can be accessed at www.pork.org/commonaudit.

Crystal Valley

would like to recognize...



5 Years

Chris Baumgard
Feed Delivery
Vernon Center



5 Years

Jason Leary
Precision Ag Specialist
Madelia



5 Years

Dean Morrison
Grain Driver
Madelia



5 Years

Shane Shumski
Custom Applicator
Janesville



10 Years

Tony Elg
Custom Applicator
Madelia



10 Years

Dave Limoges
Feed Sales
Vernon Center



10 Years

Don Epper
LP Delivery
Nicollet



10 Years

Bill Landin
Energy Operations
Lake Crystal



15 Years

James Prince
Agronomist
Waldorf



20 Years

Matt Missling
Custom Applicator
Madelia



20 Years

David "Wally" Dahl
Feed Delivery
La Salle



20 Years

Terry Kalis
Agronomist
Janesville



25 Years

Greg Lassas
Plant Operator
Madelia

the following employees for their
years of **DEDICATED**
service to our patrons.

The Ag Economy Saga Continues

It's no secret that the Ag Economy is taking a hit right now. Regardless if you are large, small, long-term, just getting started, Production Ag or retail we all feel the pinch. There is no magical wand that can fix the situation. Nor, is the trend a quick fix.

Farming has been good the last several years. When times are good and things are easier, we tend to forget the norm. Life is made up of cycles. A person can analyze the ag economy and weather patterns and see a trend. The results can be scary at times. It should take the guess work out, right? Not exactly. Change is inevitable. It can alter any strategy in farming. However, the law of averages will always be there. It is something we can count on. Looking at the forward projections of climatologists and economists, we could be right where we are at for a while. Don't let that scare you, we are just getting back into the norm that drives the integrity of the American Farmer.

I can be a second set of eyes to look at your operation and analyze your financial scenario. Whether it's advice on making a cash flow, making a financial strategy for long-term debt management or looking into reorganizing your debt, my door is always open! AgQuest® has many tools in the toolbox that can help keep your business operating as efficiently as possible to ensure a future for you and the next generation of your farm!

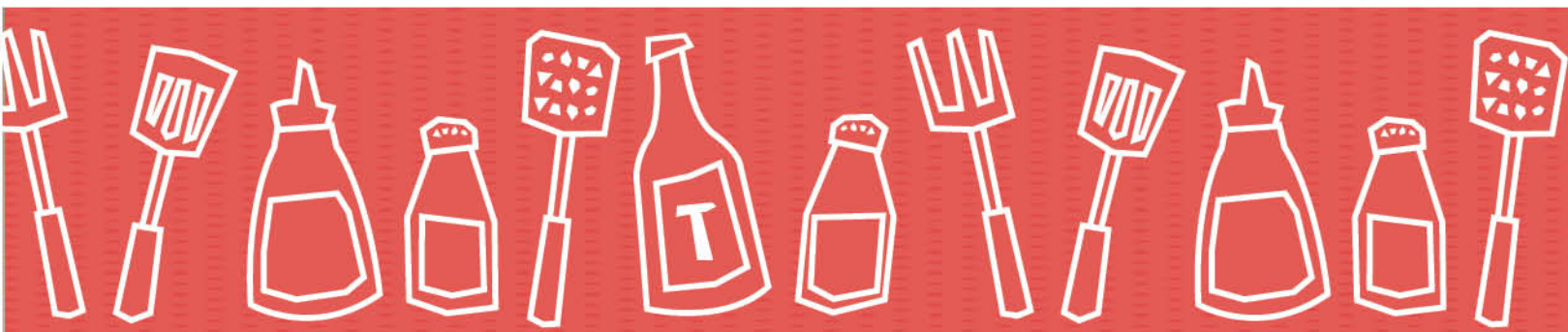


For more information contact:
Crystal Valley's AgQuest® **Ryan Feist**,
AgQuest® Financial Services.

rfeist@agquest.net | 507-508-0206
www.agquest.net



For all your Financial and Insurance needs.



INGREDIENTS:

- » 2 bell peppers (1 red and 1 green) cored
- » 1/3 cup plus 2 tablespoons corn oil
- » 4 large ears corn, cooked
- » 2 cups small red new potatoes, cooked
- » 3 tablespoons finely chopped red onion
- » 2 teaspoons minced fresh tarragon
- » 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley
- » 2 teaspoons Dijon-style mustard
- » 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- » 1 tablespoon tarragon vinegar
- » Salt and pepper to taste

SERVING: 6 - 8 LARGE SERVINGS

NAME: Corn Salad

DIRECTIONS:

Cut peppers into thin strips; then, in a medium-sized skillet, saute over high heat in 2 tablespoons of the oil until peppers are browned in spots. Set aside. Cut corn from the cob and dice potatoes fairly small. Mix remaining 1/3 cup of oil with onion, herbs, mustard, soy sauce, and vinegar. Stir in the peppers, then add the remaining vegetables and season to taste. Stir well and chill in a tightly covered 2-quart bowl for at least 2 hours, so flavors have a chance to blend.

This salad will keep well in the refrigerator for 2 or 3 days.

Recipe from: The Old Farmer's Almanac, "useful with a pleasant degree of humor" since 1792. On the web at <http://almanac.com/>

2016 Interns

MEET THE ROOKIES



Scott Vogel

Son of Tim and Jill Vogel of Springfield, is entering his senior year at South Dakota State University majoring in Agronomy. Scott will be working primarily at our La Salle location.



Alex Dahle

Son of Merrill and Shery Dahle of Waseca, is entering his sophomore year at South Dakota State University majoring in Ag Systems Technology. Alex will be focusing his time at our Waldorf location.



Nick Meixell

Son of Doug and Lori Meixell of Lake Crystal, is entering his sophomore year at South Dakota State University majoring in Ag Systems Technology. Nick is working out of our Vernon Center Agronomy location.



Cody Guenther

Son of Doug and Carol Guenther of Lafayette, is entering his sophomore year at University of Wisconsin River Falls majoring in Crop and Soils. Cody will be primarily working out of our Nicollet location.



CJ Windschitl

Son of Dale and Gina Windschitl of Sleepy Eye, is entering his final semester at South Dakota State University majoring in Agronomy. CJ will be working primarily at our Darfur location.



Mark Jacobs

Son of Tony and Laurie Jacobs of Lake Crystal, is entering his sophomore year at Iowa State majoring in Agriculture Engineering. Mark will be working in Precision Ag out of our Madelia location.



Kally Philipp

Daughter of Larry and Deb Philipp of Welcome, is entering her junior year at South Dakota State University majoring in Agronomy. Kally will be working out of our Madelia location.



Abigail Kibble

Daughter of Steve and Pam Kibble of Mankato, is entering her senior year at South Dakota State University majoring in Ag Business. Abigail will be working primarily at our Madelia location.



Dylan Harbitz

Son of Wayne and Terilyn Harbitz of St. James, is entering his second year at South Central majoring in Ag Business production. Dylan will be working in our Agronomy department out of La Salle location.



Carter Lantz

Son of Matt and Cheryl Lantz of Lake Crystal, is entering his third year at Iowa State University majoring in Agricultural Business. Carter will be working primarily at our Madelia Precision Ag location.



Nick Stiernagle

Son of Bob and Brenda Stiernagle of Kilkenny, is entering his sophomore year at South Central majoring in Ag Service Technician. Nick will be working out of our Janesville Agronomy shop location.



Sarah Libra

Daughter of Kent Libra and Gayla Galbraith of Jackson, is entering her senior year at South Dakota State University majoring in Animal Science. Sarah is working in entry level sales primarily out of our Nicollet location.



Brandon Laborde

Son of Steve and Val Laborde of Lake Crystal, is entering his sophomore year at South Dakota State University majoring in Ag Business. Brandon will be working out of our Madelia Grain location.



Darrin Thurston

Son of Tracy and Brenda Thurston of Madelia, is entering his sophomore year at University of Wisconsin River Falls majoring in Ag Business. Darrin will be working in our Precision Ag department out of our Madelia location.



Brad More

Son of Bruce and Tammy More of Blue Earth, is entering his sophomore year at South Central College majoring in Agribusiness Service and Management. Brad will be working at our Vernon Center location.

MEET THE VETERAN



Jamison Schneckloth

Son of Gary and Debilee Schneckloth of Grand Meadow, is entering his junior year at South Dakota State University majoring in Agronomy. Jamison is focusing his time at our Janesville location.

Intern Spotlight

Why did you choose Agriculture, and Agronomy specifically?

Growing up on a family farm, I have always had a love and passion for the agricultural way of life. Agronomy gives me the chance to fulfill my passion and make a difference in the world with production agriculture.

What is your ideal job?

My ideal job would be to return home to the family farm and carry on the family legacy.

What are your hobbies and special interests?

Special interests include anything that involves agriculture. Hobbies include bow hunting and fishing.

What is your fondest memory?

My fondest memory/memories would include each and every time I was able to meet face to face with the grower and interact with them on a personal basis.

What made you return to Crystal Valley for a second year?

I returned to Crystal Valley a second year because I was given the opportunity. An opportunity to learn, an opportunity to grow and an opportunity for a future.

What advice do you have for local students in regards to internships?

You will learn more through a 3 month internship than you will through 3 months of classes.





Bill Ewert

What distinguishes the merely driven from the truly devoted is an incredible work ethic and “love for home”.

When I asked Bill Ewert what he treasured most about his time at the cooperative, I was taken a little aback with his answer. “Work is work” and “it was close to home”. That simple. That pointed. He stated both of his answers with the slightest glimpse of fond memories of days gone by. At 89 years old, Bill Ewert has worked in and around the agricultural and cooperative world for well over half his life. I am not sure what I was expecting for an answer. However, my angle and approach quickly shifted. A LOVE FOR HOME no matter how it can be interpreted individually was encompassed by two things for Bill – proximity and roots.

Two key words from Bill struck me and I decided to run with them. WORK ETHIC and LOVE FOR HOME: what an incredibly powerful combination.

Bill is our oldest employee. He is a 1944 high school graduate of the Janesville Schools. Although extremely humbled, he quietly stated he served in WWII. He was brought home on a dependency to run his family’s dairy business until 1964 when he closed the business. He married the love of his life in 1947, broke his back in 1949, survived an explosion, was trained in anhydrous delivery and has been behind the wheel of some sort of delivery truck for the better parts of his days. Unbelievably, this vast and extensive accord of life’s experiences has not tired him out.

A consistent theme was appearing as I quickly took notes to keep up with Bill’s pace: work, work, work. “A person has to keep working. That’s just the way it is” as he quietly looked at his life-experienced hands with the smallest shake of his head. The strength of his determination to keep moving and working is not found every day. The motivation and allegiance literally flowed from his eyes. I was absolutely awestruck.

A beautiful segue into my writing was inadvertently created as I turned my page of notes. When asked what he treasured most about his 30+ years with the cooperative he answered, “It was close to home”. Although fully prepared for an obvious answer of a memory here and a memory there of the “Good Ol’ Days”, he moved me into a completely different direction. Since the interview and before writing this article, it brought on an entirely more powerful meaning.

A cooperative at its inner core involves an intrinsic value of deep-seeded roots, giving back to those who have given before us and dedication to “being one of the Good Guys”. At the center of these? Being close to home. In retrospect, I would bet money that Bill’s answer of being close to home was meant entirely different than the way I interpreted and centered my feature around. No matter how a person spins it, being “close to home” in our trade sets us apart from many other industries in today’s society.

My time with Bill ended too quickly. In fact, it seemed to stand still. There seemed to be no age difference, no generational gap or even interpretational divisions. The wisdom in his years not only instilled a greater understanding of what true hard work, dedication, and extreme commitment mean – it placed a momentary pause on today’s hectic pace to reflect. To not only reflect, but to give thanks to people who hold life’s lessons like Bill’s in their years. People who provide entirely more than any guidebook or training simply by their existence. People who are absolutely humbled beyond words on their very own acts of blood, sweat and tears. Although they may feel unworthy to pass on these incredible and heartfelt testimonials to people who needed to be reminded at times, I personally walked away with a stronger sense of the importance of doing what is right...doing what is expected...and doing it well.



WORK ETHIC and LOVE FOR HOME – a wonderful union of two traits in a person that can bring us all to our feet.

Courtney Hennis,
Communications Director





Congratulations Lloyd on your retirement!

When did you start?

May 2013

What was the state of the co-op at the time you started and throughout your time?

Hope location was just added. We also added 3 full time refined fuel drivers. We actually paid patronage on refined fuels in 2015.

What is your fondest memory?

Too many to list. All the wonderful coworkers and new customers I had the opportunity to work with.

What did you enjoy most about your job?

Everything. Management, coworkers, customers, working together to get the job done. All the joking and fun we had.

What do you plan to do with your retirement?

Spend lots of time with my grandkids and kids. Catch big fish, enjoy the memories at Crystal Valley and enjoy life.

Anything else you would like to add?

It's been a fun time, I enjoyed my time at Crystal Valley, working with a great bunch of people. I'll miss the customers too and all the people I had the privilege to work with.

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES!



Lloyd celebrating with his family.



Lloyd pictured with the energy team.



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