



Two Rivers

Cooperative

Monroe: 259-2232

Otley: 627-5311

Pella: 628-4167

Tracy: 949-6411

www.tworivers.coop

MISSION STATEMENT

“Two Rivers Cooperative Is Committed To Building Profitable Business Relationships Based On Integrity And Quality”

Two Rivers Cooperative

Pella, Iowa 50219

February 2013



Agronomy Update By Jay Van Woerkom

Everyone knows the “**Absolutes**” of crop production, those major inputs at the top of the list in today’s crop production, the ones that have the greatest influence on performance, yields and profitability.

Obviously, those at the top of the list are **Fertility**, the nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium (N-P-K), **Seed** that is of the highest quality, and a sound **Crop Protection** program to control weeds, insects and disease.

These are the basic ingredients of crop production that traditionally receive the bulk of attention and interest, and justifiably so, and they are the items you and we focus most on each and every year as crop plans and decisions are being made.

In recent years technology advances have given us increased productivity accompanied by higher commodity prices, thus providing an opportunity to “**Dig Deeper**” into the mysteries of boosting crop performance and yields and to look more closely at some of the lesser known factors that can take us to the next level of productivity, performance and profitability.

Here are some of the additional tools Two Rivers has available:

Crop Scouting: One of the first factors to have its role in improving crop yields more brightly illuminated was **Crop Scouting Services** that put the grower out front in the fight against performance and yield limiting

challenges.

Even a few acres of poor weed control, poor stand emergence/performance, or increased disease and/or insect pressure will cost significant yield losses and thus take a larger bite out of profits.

Seed Treatments: The critical and important role of protecting your seed as soon as it is planted with seed treatments was, like crop scouting, another factor recognized early on.

Two Rivers has for a number of years now been offering seed treating services to apply insecticide/fungicide products like Cruiser Max and seed inoculants to your bulk soybeans to protect the seed and seedling from a host of challenges during those crucial first stages of development.

Fungicides: Plant health was not given much attention for years, however as crop input costs and grain values have both increased significantly over the past 10 years or so, the drive to promote plant health has become a much more visible issue.

The application of fungicides with ground or air equipment to alleviate disease pressures that can limit crop performance and lower yields has become a much more important part of the crop planning process here at Two Rivers.

Tissue Testing: More recently, Two Rivers introduced our **Tissue Testing** program which enables us to identify the **Hidden Hunger** that can

lurk in corn/soybean plants as we analyze plant tissues through the early, mid and late season periods to identify nutrient deficiencies.

Starters: Early season plant health/vigor are critical, and to further promote these key head start benefits Two Rivers can offer plant growth promoting products like Ascend and applications of a micro-nutrient package.

Foliar Feeding: One of the most economical ways to supply nutrients that may be lacking at different stages of the season is to utilize the foliar feeding program that we have at Two Rivers.

Training: For the past two years Two Rivers has been very fortunate to serve as a host for one of a series of **Answer Plots** that provide a comprehensive look at the very latest information on all of the key forces that are being used in crop production today, as well as a glimpse into the future at those which will be used going forward.

I am very pleased to report we will once again host the **Answer Plot** at Two Rivers, and as in past years this will allow us to conduct some extensive demonstrations and presentations as the season progresses.

The Goal: Two Rivers has the latest in custom application equipment and technology, a well trained, knowledgeable staff of agronomists and seed

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Fuel Facts

By
Scott
Bensink



Any thoughts of this winter being as nice as last winter went out the door before Christmas, and the combination of some bitterly cold days plus the snow and gale force winds that we've had a few times in January drove that difference home sharply.

LP usage is obviously higher thus far this winter than it has been the past two, so I urge **Everyone** to be sure to keep a close watch on their gauge just to be sure their supply doesn't dip too low.

The emphasis on the word **Everyone** is intentional, since even if you're on a **Budget Billing and/or Regular Route**, it definitely does not hurt to check periodically during these periods of cold weather.

Of course the **"Will Call"** customers who order delivery as needed should be checking their gauge weekly to monitor use so they can call in advance to have their LP delivery worked in with those customers living in the same area as the driver serves that particular route.

I also want to remind **Everyone** who might have installed a new furnace or a new/larger or additional LP heater in any shop, garage or livestock building, along with anyone who is now using their propane fireplace more frequently, or who has recently installed one or added any new propane appliance to **Check Your Gauge**, since usage will have increased from what it has been in previous years/months.

DIESEL CONTRACTS: Hopefully you have started layering in your spring diesel supply needs by now, but if not then be sure you are checking our **Spring Diesel Contracting Price** to cover your needs in the weeks ahead.

Historically, prices start edging higher the closer we get to spring, and this colder winter is bound to be creating heavier demand for diesel, which typi-

Two Rivers Fuel/Energy Team
MONTHLY SAFETY TIP
Call Us For A Safety Check
Any Time You Have New
LP Equipment Installed

cally translates into higher prices down the road.

OIL/GREASE TOO: It's not too soon to get your oil, grease and other lubricating fluids ordered with us, so get in touch with Gary or Lonnie soon to place your orders, especially if you are one of our bulk oil system customers.

BUDGET BILLING: Just a quick reminder that the new Budget Billing cycle begins in May, so information will be coming out to all current Budget Billing customers in late March or early April so they can sign up for the new season.

If you are not a current Budget Billing customer and want to sign up for the next season, or you have questions, please contact Robin in Pella.

MARKET NOTES: Crude is still trading in the lower \$90.00 per barrel range and retail prices at the pumps were mostly stable through much of January.

However, there are some steady price increases at the wholesale level, and as the lower priced gallons in storage tanks disappear, retail prices are now beginning to reflect the higher cost of replacement gallons.



Livestock Production

By
Nick
Steinbach

From October through February there isn't much Vitamin D available to the sow due to reduced photochemical conversion from the sun.

Additionally, Ultraviolet B (UVB) light rays do not readily pass through glass for sows housed indoors, even if windows are present.

As a result, sows are more prone to Vitamin D deficiencies in the winter, and without proper levels of Vitamin D

sows can experience higher levels of lameness, decreased feed intake, reduced nutrient absorption and they will produce lower quality colostrum.

At the same time, pigs raised by Vitamin D deficient sows may have more significant levels of lameness and locomotive disorders, plus a greater potential for hypocalcemia, rickets and mortality.

Mineral deficiencies may be a contributing factor to sow lameness, and low dietary mineral levels can cause many cases of bone disease.

To prevent metabolic bone disease, sows must be fed a mineral mix that will provide proper levels of calcium, phosphorus and Vitamin D.

Vitamin D is also a key driver of colostrum quality, and since pigs are born with relatively low levels of the vitamin, high quality colostrum produced by the sow can help pigs to reach their full potential much better, as colostrum is a fairly rich source of Vitamin D.

When producers raise larger litters, each pig receives less colostrum, therefore they may experience lameness or other health problems later in life.

Supplementing sows with Vitamin D can improve nutrient levels provided to the pigs through colostrum, and through lactation.

Based on these factors, many industry groups and researchers have recognized the need for additional attention to be given to the role of Vitamin D.

All of the sow diets manufactured at Two Rivers are formulated to exceed the Nutritional Research Council's requirements for all vitamins and minerals, including Vitamin D.

That being said, the sows in today's breeding herds are more prolific than ever before, and Vitamin D deficiencies therefore can still occur.

If you are seeing signs of deficiency in your operation, please stop in or call and we can visit about some low-cost **"tools"** you can use on the farm to help correct the situation.

PLEASE WELCOME STEVE HOL TO THE TWO RIVERS LP TEAM

Steve will be providing service to our LP customers in the Monroe and Newton areas as he handles the route that Mark Rempe previously covered.





**Marketing
Analysis**
By
**Justin
Huebner**

Well, we seem to have been able to survive the “**Big News**” USDA Report on January 11th, and this year the “**Big News**” was mostly limited to the buildup that was going on leading up to the figures coming out, since once we had the numbers in front of us the trade’s reaction was pretty much “**Big Deal**”.

We have had limit moves in the market occur in five out of the past six years on the day USDA gives us final production numbers, some years limit up, others limit down.

Now we can make that five out of the last seven, as the market’s move was nominal.

As January comes to an end we appear to be entering a **Second Weather Market**.

The first being ours, with the range of predictions ranging from this coming year being a repeat of last year’s dry condition to the total opposite, and all stages in between.

The second is several thousand miles to the south, where the guesses and predictions about South American weather as their harvest season nears are equally uncertain.

It is at this point I will once again make the statement you have seen/heard from me so often, namely that **Weather Markets Can Be Extremely Fickle**, and that statement applies to those in this country as well as to any other.

These **Weather Markets** can be kind and wonderful to you one day, giving you a warm and cuddly hug, and the very next day they can turn on you completely, kicking you where it hurts the most.

I suppose if there is one silver lining to this uncertain outlook it’s that any sell-off in corn or soybeans we might experience following the January 11th USDA Report will have to be somewhat limited if the 602 million bushels of corn carryout and 135 million bushels of soybean carryout are anywhere close to accurate.

After all, with such a limited old crop supply available, how big could a sell off really be?

As February arrives, the real “**Big**

News” we have before us is this month being the one for the Spring Discovery Prices to be established for crop insurance purposes, with the daily average price being the one that will be used going forward for this year’s coverage.

A lot of very good information about this and other issues was covered in the presentations at our January 23rd meeting, and I want to thank all of you who attended for your support, interest and participation.

One of the things we tried to stress at this meeting is that everyone needs to give a serious look at their 2013 marketing plans/strategies, and that process should be under way **NOW!**

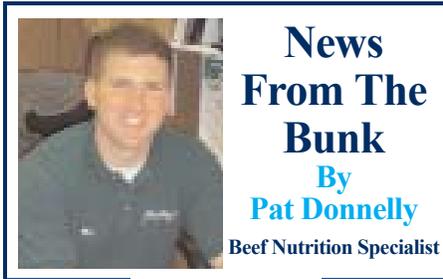
Where are you at with your plan/strategy?

Do you have your 2013 input purchases covered with 2013 crop sales?

We all know the one thing we cannot predict is weather, and this year’s weather could take the corn and soybean markets to some remarkable highs or plunge them down to lows we haven’t seen in a couple of years.

Does your marketing plan provide for these contingencies?

If you need any assistance with your marketing plan so it takes you where you need to go to cover your production costs, protects you from the risks of a down market and keeps the doors open to participate in an up market, please call or stop in to visit.



**News
From The
Bunk**
By
Pat Donnelly
Beef Nutrition Specialist

Now that February is here we should be at or perhaps even just passing the mid-winter stage, and I am sure most of our cattlemen hope we’re past it, since the forage piles are definitely shrinking fast.

Compounding the rapid disappearance of the forage you stocked up on to carry your cows through the winter season we have a combination of much colder winter weather this year and lower quality forages we laid in due to the challenging conditions of 2012.

A number of you have been supplementing your hay bales with corn stalk bales to stretch supplies as much as possible, but the lower nutrient values of these forages just

can’t take your cows where you need to have their nutrition levels at to maintain conditions scores in our colder winter weather.

This is where you definitely need to bridge the nutrition gap by supplementing the forages you’re feeding, and pouring bales with our QLF liquid will not only increase protein levels, they will enhance palatability so you get the most value from your lower cost, lower quality forage.

Additionally, QLF is urea based, which helps the cow’s rumen break down and thus utilize the nutrition in the forages you’re feeding.

Here again, that will help cows digest the forage they are consuming more efficiently to maintain their body condition despite the lower quality of the forage.

I highly recommend using our QLF liquid to help enhance the nutritional value and palatability of your forage piles so they last longer and do more for the cows as we’re about to enter the calving season.

RECORD KEEPING: Everyone I work with already knows what a big believer I am in the value/importance of good records, and during the calving season you have an opportunity to put record keeping to work to help you make some big decisions later in the season.

For example, keeping track of things like how easy/difficult each cow calves, whether their calf is typically too small or too large and cow temperament can provide you with important information you can use to make better culling decisions later.

And speaking of looking down the road a bit, I’m seeing a lot more bulls and bred cows at the sales lately, and while in this weather it’s not easy to think about the breeding season coming on, April 1st is less than 60 days away, so that time is going to be on us soon.

If you’re thinking about replacements and/or looking for something in particular to bring into your herd, please feel free to get in touch with me if I can be of service.

**HAVE YOU CHECKED
YOUR GRAIN IN 2013?**
**Rapid Temperature Changes
Snow Blowing In
Crusts Forming**
Are All Threats To Grain Quality
Check Your Bins Weekly
If You Have Farm-Stored Grain



As I See It
By Tracy Gathman
General Manager



P.O. Box 47
Pella, Iowa 50219

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

I am writing this month's article with just a couple of days left in January, and as I am sure everyone will quickly agree, this month has been one wild roller coaster of weather with the full spectrum thrown at us.

Just a few days ago temperatures were approaching 60 degrees and the only snow a person could see was what still lingered in a few normally sheltered/shaded areas or where the piles were stacked.

We also have had temperatures in single digits, with wind chills that were in those nasty minus ranges, and today as I write this we're dealing with what is reportedly a fresh 6-inch snowfall.

Winds howling at 20 to 30 mph have blown some areas clean, or at least down to a crust that accumulated as snow started falling with the ground still wet and fairly warm from the fog we had, but drifting very high in other areas and with a virtual white out at times to make driving an exciting adventure.

So I can fully appreciate why you might shake your head and wonder how and why I could be talking about spring with all this winter wonderland scenario underway, and yet as I check the calendar I also see **April 1st is less than 60 days away!**

That 60 days will, as we all know, pass very quickly and, depending on your age, pass by a lot faster than actually seems possible.

Regardless of how fast it is or seems, that is not all that many days to go until April arrives, and in that limited number of days there will be a lot of things we all need to do, a lot of plans and decisions we will need to make to be ready for the 2013 planting season to arrive.

There is indeed a sense of urgency we need to start feeling about getting ready for spring now, since from past experience I am sure we all know the consequences of not being ready when spring gets here is not a good place to find yourself

And I can definitely attest to the fact that it is most assuredly not a place where your Two Rivers Team intends to ever find itself.

That's why the guys in the shop are very busy working to get all of the custom application equipment and the tenders that support those machines field ready to serve you, and why they are going through the nurse tanks and tool bars and any other equipment so everything is ready for the action to get underway.

It's why today I am urging all of you to be sure you take time to visit with the Two Rivers Agronomists and Seed Sales Staff to finalize your orders and, if you have inputs not yet on order that you cover those bases as soon as possible.

While you're at it, take time to double check your plans, programs and needs just to make sure **All The Bases Are Covered.**

We both know there are a lot of different inputs that go into your crop, and while the **Big Things** like seed, fertilizer, fuel and custom services get the lion's share of attention and are therefore usually covered before spring arrives, there are also a lot of **Smaller Things** that need to be on hand or at the ready when work commences.

Having these **"Incidentals"** covered before work is underway will save lots of time when it is, so do like the kids do at Christmas, **Make A List & Check It Twice.**

In addition to the sense of urgency to plan and prepare for the start of another spring season, I can also appreciate the added degree of uncertainty which many are feeling as this spring looms on the horizon.

We are, after all, coming out of an extremely dry 2012, and naturally

questions are being raised:

Will this be another dry year like last year?

Can it happen again?

We probably have the full spectrum of predictions and forecasts being made about 2013 weather, and the one thing we all know, or should, is that nothing is ever sure or certain when it comes to weather, so we can never plan for what the weather **"Might Be"**.

That being the case, we need to always plan to raise a good crop and do whatever we can to assure a good crop, because that is the only way we can produce a good crop.

Finally, for those who subscribe to the some of the dry weather talk we're hearing from the pundits, please keep those words in mind when we have a solid week of rain in late April or early May and everyone is wishing and hoping things dry up.

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salesmen, qualified custom applicators and support staff to help you use all of these tools, and more, to be more efficient, more productive and more profitable in your corn and soybean crop production efforts.

We are dedicated to assisting you reach the next level of crop production success through the use of these and other tools that are best suited to your farm and to help you **Control The Controllable** for each field you plant.

As you can tell by checking the calendar, April is less than 60 days away so we hope we can get together with you to discuss these additional programs and services to determine which are the best fit to you as you make plans for your farming operation.