

TRIBUTARY

*A newsletter of Two Rivers Cooperative,
a farmer-owned cooperative committed to building
profitable relationships based on integrity and quality.*

THE COOPERATIVE'S PRIORITY

Tracy Gathman- General Manager

During this time of year, I find myself attending many meetings, several of which are annual meeting events hosted by our regional cooperatives. As I gather alongside managers and directors from across the state, region and even U.S. at these meetings, I am reminded of the following quote from Nelson Gardner, a leading Virginia dairyman and long-time cooperative supporter.

“Cooperatives have to remember what they started out for: the purpose of a farmer cooperative is to enhance members’ income—and they should keep that at the top of their priorities list.”



This quote, also found on our website, identifies the type of cooperative Two Rivers aims to be. When I, and your management and directors, attend these regional meetings for leadership, education or representation purposes, we find the most valuable

aspect is networking with those in attendance. It is an excellent opportunity to share our experiences with one another, but it is also a great reminder of how Two Rivers has correctly focused its priorities on the customer.

We strive to utilize the cooperative system to its fullest in order to see you, the member owner succeed. From the local producers, to the local cooperative employee team, and up through the regional cooperatives, this system enables us to provide you with the tools and products that you may otherwise not have access to. Currently, Two Rivers is a member of five regional cooperatives, including AGP, CHS, Land O’Lakes, CoBank, and CFA. The memberships in these regional cooperatives allow us greater product supply, financial services and knowledge. Consider our fuel solutions. Through the larger system at CHS, we have been able to provide our Cenex fuel efficiently and at competitive prices. And as Jay Van Woerkom refers to in his newsletter article, there are many changes and advancements taking place in the seed industry. With our membership in Land O’Lakes, we are able to access advanced seed technologies and services, including our Winfield Answer Plot system.

The benefits of the cooperative system, and the priority of serving the customer, are not only gained on a regional scale. These benefits start at our local level, with a strong employee and management team that understands and exhibits the importance of serving the customer. This has been, and will remain, the focus of Two Rivers Cooperative.

CREATING SOLUTIONS FOR GROWTH

Jay Van Woerkom- Seed Department/Agronomy Sales Manager

In agriculture, we see growth occurring in many forms, and while growth is good, at Two Rivers, we want to make sure we are meeting solutions with that growth. This allows you, as a producer, to remain confident that we are prepared with the solutions and options required of remaining progressive.

Take for example grid soil sampling. This valuable resource of information will only continue to grow, but so will the need for time to review the results, plan nutrient recommendations and make input purchases. The most efficient time to do this is during the summer, and that is why Two Rivers has begun offering spring grid soil sampling, a solution to the growth of this service.

Now if we look at the seed industry, the growth in research, management recommendations, traits, and varieties and hybrids is astounding. That is why we are evaluating where we, as a seed department, can adjust in order to continue providing the most advanced services and products.

There are a few different directions we are actively moving towards to achieve this. With the growth in seed treatments and the quantities of seed purchased, we are looking into a bulk seed system that would better serve your growing needs. While no plans have been officially established, it is a solution I feel will strongly benefit both you and the future of the Two Rivers seed department. Further, the seed brands we carry, including Dekalb, Asgrow, Croplan and NK, will undoubtedly grow their product offerings, and we must have the facilities in place to bring those to you.

Our solutions for growth are not limited to facilities and services however. We must also equip ourselves with the best staff to



provide the necessary knowledge and expertise to our customers. With the seed brands I previously mentioned, and many more, bringing new information and changes to the seed industry, there will be a need for us to create a seed specialist position in our department. The agronomy team would still remain involved in seed, however, this would allow more time for the sales team to service the customers and have access to a valuable seed information source. The agronomy team at Two Rivers wants to recommend the best possible products, regardless of brand, and do so with current industry information. I believe this solution would allow for that to continue.

As your agronomy resource, you can be assured we will meet the momentum of the changing seed industry with solutions that bring you value.



Two Rivers agronomy has been able to provide quality grid soil sampling services as seen above. Collecting these samples in the spring help the producer work with their agronomy salesman to determine the best management plans during the summer months and plan input purchases accordingly.

Be sure to finalize your spring plans.

Make sure you have finalized your fertilizer, NH₃ and seed products. There is still some time left to take advantage of pre-pay options, but only through the middle of March.

PRODUCTION BENEFITS IN MINERAL

To enhance the function and performance of your entire herd, Two Rivers Cooperative now has **Availa 4** mineral tubs available. These minerals have proven to increase conception and lead to shorter calving intervals in cows and heifers. The balanced mineral nutrition provided during gestation will produce healthier calves with a better vaccination response and improved weaning weights.

When used in bulls, semen quality and quantity are increased. Problems associated with bulls, such as feet and legs, have also been shown to decrease with Availa 4 use.

Keep in mind when testing bulls for spring cows, that it takes 60 days for sperm to develop. Let us know how we can help with your rations and heifer and bull development.

Ryan Healy-Feed Nutrition Specialist

What's in Availa 4?

Availa 4 provides key essential trace minerals which each play a role in a successful, balanced feeding program.

Zn
Zinc
improves conception rates and milk production, and promotes immune response and hoof integrity.

Cu
Copper
is essential for resistance to disease and infection. It also supports lactation and helps maintain gestation.

Mn
Manganese
supports proper digestion, metabolism and reproduction, and is critical to healthy bone growth in young animals.

Co
Cobalt
is needed by rumen microbes for fiber digestion and vitamin B₁₂ synthesis.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PROPANE

Scott Bensink- Petroleum Department Manager

This late winter has been met with both harsh weather and propane prices. However, we are in this together, and rest assured that we are doing all we can to help alleviate as much stress on your budget as we can. Let's first get a better understanding of why we are seeing price increases in the propane supply.

Last fall, farmers brought in a wet corn crop that started both early and went long. The necessary drying for this crop led to a higher usage in propane. Transportation of product can only go so fast, and as we headed into the winter months, pipeline maintenance restricted some of the supply. It wasn't too long after that and we began experiencing extreme cold temperatures that have continued still. All of these factors have meant a large increase in the usage of the commodity.

Currently, we are making adjustments to help you and your neighbors through this. As a cooperative, we are here to provide the best service possible, and that is why we have been making changes, such as lowering our minimum quantities on deliveries and

honoring our customer's contracts.

It is important to know that we are sitting well on delivery and supply for our customers. Our delivery team has been working extremely hard and putting in long hours to ensure your tanks are filled.

So what can you do in the future to help eliminate the effects of a spike in price? There is no way to control the weather or the crop conditions it brings, but to protect yourself I highly recommend contracting your propane needs. I anticipate prices will continue to decrease, and while it still may not be as low as last year's price at contracting time, it should be a price to take advantage of. Also consider your propane storage. If you believe an increase in storage may get you through the winter months on one fill, that may be a valuable addition to make. This is especially important for livestock producers who may be adding to their operations. Talk to our team and let us help you manage your propane needs with these options.





109 South Street
Pella, IA 50219
800-223-5512

www.tworivers.coop

Locations in
Pella- 641-628-4167
Otley- 641-627-5311
Monroe- 641-259-2232
Tracy- 641-949-6411

A CornerPost Marketing Communications Publication

PLANNING AND PROJECTIONS

Justin Huebner- Financial Services Advisor

Crop Insurance enrollment
ends on March 17

Just around the corner, on March 17, crop insurance applications will be due. As before, the revenue policy prices are based on the daily average of November futures for soybeans, and December futures for corn. Before you head out the door to the nearest crop insurance agent, first consider the benefits of working with your local Two Rivers Cooperative for your crop insurance needs. We have the ability to focus solely on crop insurance, access industry experts, and better understand what insurance needs best fit your farming goals. You trust the cooperative with your input purchases and grain services, and because of that, we are able to look at your input costs per acre and determine the proper levels of insurance to help you eliminate risk.

Alongside planning for your crop insurance needs, it is also the time of year to pay close attention to the market projections. The USDA Ag Forum, held February 20-21 will release the first official new crop estimates. These are normally always bearish, and rightfully so, as why would you overpay for a shortage that never materializes?

In those February estimates, corn will most likely be projected

near 92 million acres planted, with at least 160 bushels per acre or more yield estimate. This would be only slightly higher than the 159 bushels per acre yields in last year's estimates. In terms of demand, the carryout of corn should stay around 1.9 billion bushels. At that number, corn carryout would be 90 percent more than what we consider to be comfortable. However, if we see 150 bushels per acre averages, the resulting carryout will be just over 1 billion, or right at the comfortable level.

I expect soybean estimates in February to be at 81 million acres planted. With yield estimates of 45 bushels per acre, a carryout of 450 million bushels will be expected. In soybeans, 200 million bushels is considered comfortable, and these estimates will far exceed that level. If, however, actual yields turn more towards 41 bushels per acre, carryout will be closer to 130 million bushels. The pricing difference that this change in yields can create is fairly wide. If we see yields at 45 bushels per acre, expect soybean prices to be \$9 per bushel. If yields lower to 41 bushels per acre, expect instead to see \$12 per bushel prices.