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Trail Blazer



OUR LOCATIONS

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785-949-2222

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785-922-6505

COUNCIL GROVE

620-767-5105

DILLON

785-366-7228

DURHAM

620-732-3123

DURHAM STATION

620-732-3315

GYPSUM

785-536-4260

HERINGTON

785-258-2286

HOPE

785-366-7213

LINCOLNVILLE

620-924-5228

NAVARRE

785-479-2221

PEARL

785-479-5870

TAMPA

785-965-2221

TAMPA FERTILIZER

785-965-2224

WHITE CITY

785-349-2214

WHITE CITY STATION

785-349-2225

WOODBINE

785-257-3315

SUMMER 2019

Research You Can Rely On

Just because a corn hybrid sets the world on fire in central Iowa doesn't mean it will perform well in the conditions on your farm. While national data can be helpful, we believe local research is the best way to find out which products and practices will deliver the best return on investment for Agri Trails' customers.

That's why we've established our first research plot next to the Tampa agronomy center. We'll be testing a variety of hybrids, fertilizer applications and production practices. For example, we'll be looking at OptiStart® starter fertilizer, working with tissue sampling to help nail down the best times in the growth cycle to sample and comparing foliar fertilizer applications.

A portion of the research plot is a more standard yield trial setup, while the rest will be strictly set aside for research. All the data will be available to Agri Trails' customers following harvest.



This plot is the best way for us to understand exactly what are the right products for us to offer and what delivers the strongest results in our area. This is our first year, but we see this as an ongoing research effort that will allow us to gather comparative data over a number of seasons.

If you'd like to take a look at the plot during the season, just talk to Kellen and he'll walk you through it. Or, you can set up a visit with your local agronomist. ■



AGRI TRAILS Welcomes ...

ISAAC BRITTON

Start Date: April 1, 2019

Job Title: Tender Driver and Grain Operator

Hometown: Florence, Kansas

Interests: Spending time with family



BRIAN LEARY

Start Date: May 13, 2019

Job Title: Operator

Hometown: Norfolk, Virginia, but grew up in Florida and Illinois

Interests: Anything outdoors, playing with kids, swimming



BRYCE WOODALL

Start Date: May 20, 2019

Job Title: Fuel Department Manager

Hometown: WaKeeney, Kansas

Interests: Camping, old cars, and following my kids around to their activities



Putting the Power of Precision to Work

By Chase Hageman, Precision Ag Specialist



If the lean times we're going through in ag have proven anything, it is the fact that we are all going to have to farm smarter in the years ahead. Utilizing costly resources as efficiently as possible has to be the goal, and that's exactly where precision agriculture comes into play.

Every year we gain more powerful tools we can put to work on your operation to maximize the output from your inputs. Let me give you a quick overview of some of our precision programs that can make a difference in your operation.

Let me start with the R7[®] tool from WinField[®] United. The R7 tool uses satellite imagery and soil maps to reveal field variability. It then utilizes Answer Plot[®] data to show how hybrids and varieties respond to cropping systems and management factors under similar conditions. In short, it helps you place the right seed on the right acre, allowing that input to best deliver on its full genetic potential.

The R7 tool also allows us to create variable-rate fertilizer and seeding prescriptions for your fields. Variable-rate technology allows you to increase inputs in areas where the yield opportunities are high and cut back in sections with

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Gene Kieckhafer, Navarre Location Manager

START DATE: May 15, 1996

HOMETOWN: Woodbine, Kansas

PRIOR TO AGRI TRAILS:

Gene attended Fort Hays State University and came directly to Agri Trails after college. He started as a go-fer, and over the years has run the counter, worked in the feed mill, driven a feed truck, dumped grain and treated seed. "I was Greg Stroda's right-hand man for many years before becoming the location manager," Gene says.

FAMILY:

Gene and his wife, Kim, a nurse, have a son, Hunter, 7. Gene also has a daughter, Zoie, 22, who lives in the Chicago area.

OUTSIDE OF WORK:

Gene enjoys hunting, fishing and Royals baseball. "We try to get to five or six games a year," he notes. He and Kim also like to travel.



HIS WORK AT AGRI TRAILS:

"I'm all about making sure my customers are taken care of. I am a people person, and it doesn't matter what mold they're cut from. People buy from people, and I don't care if you're the richest man in the county or a hobby farmer, I'm going to treat you just the same." ■

limited potential. The corn hybrid trials provide detailed information on a hybrid's response to fungicide, planting population, nitrogen and a host of other variables.

The new R7 Field Forecasting Tool is a web-based crop modeling application that uses field-specific information—as well as data from the Answer Plot program and WinField's NutriSolutions 360° program—to simulate daily crop growth and development. This enables you to predict the best timing and rates for in-season nutrient and water application. You can also test various production scenarios to see which one is most likely to provide the best return on investment.

Then there is Climate FieldView™. This application allows you to stream data directly from your combine, planter or sprayer into your account for access at any time. You can see field maps in real time and transfer data easily between FieldView and other agronomic software applications. FieldView also monitors precipitation

field-by-field and can provide field health images.

Of course, there are also the custom services provided by the Agri Trails agronomy staff. Our drones can record video and pictures, and provide valuable information on areas of your field that are impossible to see from the road.



Drones can be used to check cattle, highlight trouble spots in a field for further scouting and document issues for crop insurance purposes.

Finally, I'd like to highlight our tissue-sampling service. Tissue sampling can pinpoint nutrient deficiencies before they become yield-robbing problems, allowing you to take corrective action. We have an arrangement with an area lab that turns those samples around quickly.

Let us help you get the most from every input and every acre—because every bushel counts. Talk to your location agronomist or contact me at 620-388-4262. ■

Protein Price Outlook Not Positive



By Roger Will, Tampa Location and Feed Department Manager

We've all heard the news about delayed and prevented planting in the Corn Belt due to excessive rain and flooding. That may also impact what you pay for protein this winter. The processors are already using this as an excuse to crank up their fall and winter contract prices. They're anticipating shortages of corn when they need it and expect to pay higher prices for the corn they do purchase.

Your coop normally starts watching winter contract prices in June or July to lock in some of your needs when prices are traditionally lower. It doesn't look like that plan is going to work this year. There is already a hefty premium on contract prices due to market volatility. Last year we were able to lock in some attractive product prices through December, but the January through March prices had too much premium built in for our comfort.

Unfortunately, I expect more of the same—or worse—this

year. Most years, the prices begin to increase around the winter holidays

due to plant closings and transportation problems, then stay strong until the cows go to grass in the spring. If this trend continues, you may want to re-evaluate your winter feeding program. For example, consider purchasing alfalfa this summer or raising some higher-quality forage to replace some of the DDGs in your ration.

We will keep checking the forward prices throughout the summer hoping for breaks in the market, but the outlook is not good for reasonably priced proteins this winter. Mariah and Derek will be available this fall to help you evaluate your options and formulate a least-cost ration. Also, if you want to look at contracting some of your winter protein needs, please feel free to give Derek or me a call and we'll let you know the current pricing. ■



The Importance of Forage Testing



By Mariah Harris, Livestock Production Specialist

Spring forage harvest is upon us. However, have you stopped to think about when to harvest in order to capture the highest nutritional value? As the plant matures and begins to create a seed head, the nutritional value decreases. The fiber content increases while digestibility, protein and energy levels all fall. Generally, your tonnage will increase when the plant reaches full seed stage, but does that higher yield make up for the decrease in nutritional value?

FALL FORAGES

With the many demands of the spring season, testing forages for fall and winter use is not on the top of our minds. However, now is the time to be thinking about the nutritional value of your fall and winter feed sources, especially if the rain is hindering your forage harvest. This spring's pasture is next winter's feed.



Knowing when to harvest forages can give you a good idea of their nutritional value. The only way to know for certain is to test your forages. Having a quality forage sample that has been tested is of great use to a nutritionist.

Using book values to formulate a ration can be of some value, but these may not provide an accurate representation of the forages from your operation. When we test forages and receive the results from the lab, we are able to precisely design an economical and easy-to-execute feeding program for your operation.

Also, annual forages harvested for hay—such as foxtail, millet, oats, sudangrass—and sorghum-sudangrass hybrids should be analyzed for nitrates. Nitrates in these forages can accumulate to toxic levels under certain weather conditions, and the only way to know if the danger exists is to test.

When testing forages it is important to get a representative sample of your feed source. Hay samples should be taken using a probe or core sampler. Using your hands to get a “grab sample” will not provide a reliable result. In addition, taking samples from multiple bales is a great way to get a representative sample of a lot.

CALL US TO TEST YOUR FORAGES

We are happy to come to your operation, test your forages and send the samples to the lab. Please contact one of your Agri Trails nutritionists, Derek Schrader at 785-258-0604, or Mariah Harris at 785-643-7181, to discuss forage testing or to have us come out to test. ■

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Marketing Can Still Make a Difference



By Jake Leis, Grain Originator/Merchandiser

The last few years have not been easy on the ag sector. Between the trade wars, severe drought and, more recently, more rain than we know what to do with, we have seen our fair share of adversity. Finding ways to stay profitable and above the red ink has been more challenging than ever.

As producers, wearing multiple hats is just part of the job, and often the grain marketing cap is the last one we want to put on. Getting the crops in the ground, up and through to harvest comes first and foremost—then we'll worry about marketing. The problem comes from the fact that the best marketing opportunities often come before the grain is made. Instead of waiting too long or assuming there's no way to make the market work in our favor, let's take a more proactive approach. Let's be ready to move when the market gives us opportunities—and there have been opportunities already this year.

Planting problems in the Corn Belt which threatened to take 5-10 million acres of corn and yet unknown acres of beans out of the picture for 2019 pushed

markets higher in early June. Were you ready to take advantage? Will you be ready for the next rally, no matter how brief?

We offer many contract options at Agri Trails, from simple forward contracts to more complex hedge-to-arrive and basis contracts. We will also do min/max contracts using options to set a price floor. I am an introducing broker, so if you want to do more futures paper trading, we can set you up to trade futures and options through our office. There are many different market strategies we can pursue, but the key is to have a strategy in place to make certain we are profitable.

If there is a contract you have yet to try because you are unsure of how it works—or simply haven't used contracting before—call us. We can walk you through the options or set up a time to sit down together and talk through various marketing approaches. Our job is to make sure you understand and are using all the tools you need so we can both be profitable in the months and years ahead.

Please reach out to the grain department, and let's work together to help you succeed. ■

IN RECOGNITION & THANKS

Gary Schmutz, Board of Directors for 18 years.

3 years with Agri Trails Coop and 15 years with Alida-Pearl Coop prior to the merger.

Lynn Kauffman, Board of Directors for 35 years.

3 years with Agri Trails Coop, 22 years with North Central Kansas Coop and 10 years with the Navarre Farmer's Union Coop.

Ken Novak, Board of Directors for 6 years.

3 years with Agri Trails Coop and 3 years with Agri Producers Coop prior to the merger.

We would like to thank you for your many contributions over the years. We would not have been able to accomplish our successful transition from three organizations to one without your wise counsel and patient advice.

As you look back on your service to us and to our customers, please know that our achievements would not have been possible without the three of you by our side. Thank you for your dedicated service!

Thank you!



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Adding Profitable Pounds with Creep

By Derek Schrader, Livestock Production Specialist



Many livestock producers may associate creep feeding their calves with a dry year where forage quality can be poor and production limited. In fact, creep feeding can be a profitable management tool that can be used regardless of the growing conditions.

The purpose of creep feeding is to provide additional nutrients, protein and energy that supplement a calf's diet. In good forage years, the daily consumption of creep is less, but the results can be equal to or better than the years when it is used to a greater degree.

Agri Trails utilizes pelleted grain byproducts and a balancer pellet to formulate both a 14%- and 16%-crude-protein creep feed. The balancer provides needed vitamins and trace minerals, and also serves as a vehicle to deliver Rumensin® to your calves.

In a typical year, consumption should average 5-6 pounds of creep feed daily, which your calves will convert to one additional pound of gain each day the feed is available. We also offer a complete pelleted creep feed for those producers who are looking for a more uniform visual appearance.

In addition to the heavier weaning weights achieved with creep, we expect calves that have been on a creep feeder to transition to a dry feed much more quickly when weaned in the fall. Creep fed calves are already bunk broke.

Agri Trails offers 160-bushel (3-ton) creep feeders. These are available to rent for \$1.50/day to producers using our feed. We also offer used feeders for sale from time to time.

The creep feeders need to be checked periodically to ensure moisture doesn't deteriorate the feed and cause flowability issues. Feeders should be located in a central place, ideally near fresh water to encourage daily visits.

Run the numbers yourself, and you'll see creep feeding is a great way to add economical pounds of gain to your calves no matter what your forage situation is. Call the Navarre location, 785-479-2221, to line up your creep feed and feeder or to discuss the benefits of creep feeding in general. ■

