



# BROADCASTER

## DIRECTORY

### **BELGRADE AGRONOMY**

320-254-8231 Ext 2

### **MELROSE AGRONOMY**

320-254-8231 Ext 3

### **FUEL & OIL, PROPANE**

BELGRADE  
320-254-8231 Ext 1

### **COOP'S CORNER C-STORE**

320-254-3108

### **RESTAURANT**

320-254-3204

[www.belgradecoop.com](http://www.belgradecoop.com)



## **MANAGER'S MESSAGE**

*Eric Paulson*



As I write this, we have recently completed our 97<sup>th</sup>

year as Belgrade Cooperative.

With the world we live in, and many of you would agree, the best word I can come up with for 2025 is "Resilience" for our members and the Cooperative, alike. Belgrade Co-op finished another successful year increasing our overall sales volumes exceeding \$48M while providing a 2.5% local profitability of \$1.2M. With the foundation of what we are built on, we pride ourselves on utilizing our profitability to invest in our Co-op to enhance the services we provide our customers as well as passing back a portion of our profitability to our customers through the form of cash patronage and equity retirements.

I am excited to share that Belgrade Co-op has continued to enhance our foundation within the Co-op system. Over the course of the past 6 years, we have invested nearly \$12M back in our business through additional storage for all 3 major departments, as well as infrastructure and technology updates to provide additional efficiencies for our services and delivery departments. Along with those investments, we have been able to return nearly \$8.2M back to our members in the form of cash patronage and stock retirement — a key highlight we pride ourselves on being a Cooperative.

As we look ahead into the winter months, we have some exciting changes on the horizon. Over the last few long-range planning sessions, our Board of Directors and Management team have identified our long-term needs to ensure continued success.

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With that said, we have made the decision to invest in a new fertilizer plant that will be added to our existing site to allow great benefits and additions to both speed and storage, ultimately benefiting all member-owners. This project has Belgrade Co-op’s goals and initiatives at the forefront to include enhancing our service to our existing members while giving us the capability to grow into the future and adapt to the changes of our local family farmers, all while maintaining the number one focus – customer service. This new project will allow us to bring our Belgrade staff within all departments under one roof to maximize our products and services we offer to all customers more effectively. Most importantly, we look forward to completing this construction project with all local vendors and contractors who have continued to support our business over the years.

With another successful year behind us and an exciting future ahead — we are nearing our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Belgrade Co-op! This is an accomplishment most businesses and organizations do not get to fulfill and to be where we are at today takes a complete team. Your Co-op has a strong

legacy built on customer service, a seasoned staff excited to grow and adapt to your management strategies whether that be at the farm, within your business, or servicing your residential projects. Over the next few years, you will see various articles, letters, updates on our social media and websites begin to come out as we are excited and look forward to celebrating 100 years with all our customers and members that have helped along the way to get us to where we are today.

Lastly, I would like to say ‘Thank You’ for the business this past fiscal year and we look forward to earning your business in 2026. Our sales staff have been busy in the country promoting prepay programs and farm planning for the next season while our service team is nearing the end of another successful fall season of servicing fertilizer, LP, and refined fuel need; in addition they are beginning to shift their focus on the preventative maintenance season and going through equipment in preparation of a busy 2026.

I wish you all an enjoyable and safe holiday season and look forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming annual meeting later this winter!



## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN AFFECTS FUEL ASSISTANCE FUNDING

Paige Prentice

The cold weather is upon us and homes are in need of heating. At the end of October, Belgrade Co-op received a notice from the State of Minnesota that fuel assistance funding will be delayed for the 2025-26 heating season due to the federal government shutdown. TRICAP is allowed to continue processing applications, however they do not have the funding to send your grants to your propane or electricity provider. Once Congress passes a budget or a resolution that includes Energy Assistance Funding, the fuel assistance agencies will receive about 90% of their funding within one month, and payments to your supplier will start shortly after.

We strongly encourage customers to plan ahead by making payment arrangements to avoid out-of-gas

situations as we do not know how long the shutdown will last. Our minimum delivery is 200 gallons.

If you are in need of assistance but have not applied for the 2025–26 heating season, please contact Paige at [paigep@belgradecoop.com](mailto:paigep@belgradecoop.com) or 320-254-8231.

The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) helps income eligible households with paying a portion of their home heating costs.

- Households who are at or below 50% of the state median income are eligible
- Size of grant is based on household size, income, fuel type and energy usage
- Federally funded through U.S. Department of Human Services
- Funds are available for renters or homeowners



## WINTER SAFETY TIP FOR PROPANE TANKS

Morgan Lewis

Snow or ice can cause serious damage to your propane system. Accumulation may lead to cracks or breaks in pipes, valves, or regulators — creating a

potential gas leak. It’s important to regularly clear all propane tanks, valves, regulators, and piping of snow and ice. Use a broom or your hand to gently remove snow or ice buildup. If a shovel is needed, take precautions to avoid damaging equipment.



**If snow or ice cannot be easily cleared, contact us for assistance. NEVER TRY TO REMOVE BUILDUP BY KICKING OR STRIKING PROPANE EQUIPMENT!**

## CHICKEN AND DUMPLING SOUP

### Ingredients for Dumplings:

- 1 box of Red Lobster Cheddar Bay Biscuits
- ¾ cup of cold water
- ½ cup shredded cheddar cheese
- Seasoning packet in the box

### Ingredients for Soup:

- 1–2lbs of cooked boneless skinless chicken breasts/thighs or rotisserie chicken
- Salt and pepper
- Garlic powder
- Onion powder
- Italian seasoning
- 1 Tbsp garlic olive oil
- ½ stick of butter
- ½ yellow onion
- 5–6 medium carrots-sliced or shredded
- 1–2 celery stalks
- 2 cloves of garlic cloves-minced
- ¼ cup of flour
- 4 cups of chicken broth
- 2 cups of heavy cream

### Directions:

Turn stove on medium heat and add oil and butter into a stockpot until hot. Add in onion, carrots, and celery. Cook for about 5 minutes to get vegetables tender and onions translucent. Add the garlic and the remaining seasonings, and cook for an additional 2 minutes. Stir in flour and cook for 3–4 minutes to remove raw flour taste. Slowly add chicken broth and heavy cream, stirring continuously and bring to a boil. Add in chicken. Turn to low-medium heat. For the dumplings, make the biscuits according to the box. Be careful not to overmix. Spoon in golf ball size dumplings into the stockpot. (Don’t worry if they touch) Cover with a lid and let it cook for 20 minutes. DON’T PEEK! The steam will cook the dumplings perfectly! Once the time is up, separate the dumplings with a spoon, remove from heat, and let it sit for 5 minutes. The soup will thicken and be ready to serve hot. ENJOY!





## CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT THE FELLING FAMILY

*Questions answered by Brandon Felling, with additional commentary from Kelly Felling*

### Can you tell us about how your family's farm came about?

My parents, Bruce and Kelly, started farming in the 90s. My dad had grown up on a dairy farm but as an adult wasn't looking to get into farming and had a full-time job in St. Cloud in a cabinet shop. My mom didn't grow up on a farm but was in the agricultural world as a nutritionist for Purina. The two met and started dating. Sometime later, my mom was working with a local farmer from Paynesville who was interested in selling his 45 dairy cows. My dad was not interested, but she persisted and suggested they just go take a look. After seeing the genetics of the cows, they decided to go for it!

Kelly adds, "We were both working 'regular' jobs but felt that we needed something more; we wanted to fill our time with something productive."

January 1, 1990, they took ownership of the Holsteins and rented the farm site until they moved themselves and their cows to Clarissa. Eventually they realized they wanted to be closer to home, moved their cows again, and settled in the Spring Hill area. At this time they were up to 120 dairy cows.

In the meantime, the Zilliox brothers, Joe and George, were interested in selling their land outside of Belgrade to a young family. My parents purchased it but didn't move right away. While milking cows

and living in the Spring Hill area, they eventually built up the farm, adding a parlor and shed among other projects. In 1999, the timing was right to move to their farm site, which is where they are today.

### When and how did you become involved with farming?

I grew up doing chores in the morning before school. All of us kids [siblings Carrie, Shawn, and Kyle] helped out in one way or another when we were at a certain age. I started out scraping the barn, but was too young to milk. When I got a little older I started helping with the calves, tillage and fieldwork, eventually phasing into milking the cows as well.

My wife, Tessie, came into the mix in 2010. We met at Ridgewater College and she grew up on a dairy farm as well.

### What does the farm operation look like today?

Currently we milk 700 cows and grow our own crops. We also raise heifer young stock. Everyone is still involved in the farm one way or another; some full time and others help when they can.

My dad and Kyle do crops and my mom does the financials. My wife Tessie and I take care of the dairy side of things, herd health, and employees.

Kelly points out that Brandon, Kyle, and Tessie are the "workhorses" of the farm and that other family members Carrie, Matt, and Shawn are quick to lend a hand when needed. She states that they also have several long-term employees in which the family is very appreciative of their dedication to keeping operations running smoothly.



### In what ways do you utilize Belgrade Co-op's services to assist you in your farming operations? Why do you choose to stay with Belgrade Co-op?

Pretty much anything and everything we need to keep the operation going – fuel, lubricants, gas, propane for the house, parlor and corn drying, seed, chemical, fertilizer, and spraying. We like doing so much of our business with Belgrade Co-op for two main reasons: the level of service provided, and they are family oriented.

Kelly adds to that affect, saying that for her, it's the employees – seeing the employees as friends at church and out and various local, community happenings. She appreciates that Belgrade Co-op and its employees give back to the community; this is important to them so they try to do as much as they can with their farm locally as well.







## FERTILIZER MARKET UPDATE

*Jackson Gregory*

Harvest is done or nearing a close. It was an interesting one. While we were planning for the worst given the summer and spring we had, mother nature played a little nicer with us and gave us some pretty good harvesting conditions. That said, we discovered an immense amount of variability in fields. With the weather early in the season it isn't surprising but nonetheless it has been generally disappointing. At least most of it was dry and we didn't have to get stuck too often to get it out of the fields!

A little update on the fertilizer market. As you know — if you'd like more details on any of these things talk to your agronomist or I to try to gain a better understanding of what is going on in the marketplace. The international goings on have been a big talker in the grain market with China and soybean purchases, Argentina and beef imports so it shouldn't be a surprise to anyone that international story lines are the big driver in fertilizer as well. Going into the fall urea was expensive. A bit unusual as we usually see a price reset at that time. However the main story line holding urea price was China and it's exports. This has been a storyline for a few years as their exports have been much lower since COVID, but it came to a head in 2025 when their exports were at essentially through June. This brought global supply to a pretty tight spot with China withholding product for several years and then completely shutting the spigot off in 2025. It left all the major importers of urea fighting for product with their cash. Finally, reports began coming out of China and they exported an immense amount of product from July-September. Which has brought the price down to where we are today, about \$80-\$100/ton off the high we had seen in August. **The time to buy your urea for spring preplant is finally here.** China has once again shut exports off, and our terminals upriver are no longer accepting barges, this means that local price will begin to trickle up throughout the winter months. Not only this but our closest production facility that we can sometimes rely on, getting us cheaper mid-winter product has been on maintenance turn around for the last few months

so they will be rebuilding stocks for a good part of the winter giving them little reason to sell cheaper product than the river terminals.

Phosphate has been a talker as well similar to urea, China's exports of phosphate have been down drastically since COVID – affecting the global supply. There is a little more flare to this topic though because the U.S. is in a particularly tight spot on phosphate because two of the other major exporters of phosphate (Russia and Morocco) the U.S. has some anti-dumping duties placed on them from their act of “dumping” super cheap phosphate into our market a few years ago, negatively impacting the U.S. based producers of phosphate. This has limited our trade partners to buy phosphate on the world stage drastically and caused us to be higher priced than the rest of the globe for the last couple of years. This has remained the case throughout fall of 2025. Some downside potential does exist in phosphate though, as the Government is reviewing the anti-dumping penalties on Russia and Morocco right now – I have hopes that they lift them and we begin to see that product flow once again. Morocco does intend to have a new gigantic production facility online this winter that will greatly increase the global supply of phosphate as well so watch for that to help prices sometime soon as well. The reduction in the use of phosphate is certainly being felt by producers of the product as well, which should help reduce prices going into the winter as well. Watch for a good time to buy spring phosphates sometime soon!

There is a lot more to go over but I'll leave it at that for now. Overall things remain incredibly volatile in the fertilizer world. You can trust though that we are ready to dissect the markets and get your product at the correct time with the best possible price, through our diligent analyzation of the goings-on, along with a logistical mind to make sure we have the product in our sheds when you need it. Please feel free to stop by and gain the insight of your agronomist anytime! Thank you for your continued business and have a safe winter!



## SOIL SAMPLING

*Al Braegelman*

I love the Fall season! Farmers get to reap the rewards of their hard work, and I get to dig in the dirt!

I like it when Farmers do any kind of soil sampling but Grid Sampling gives you a much clearer picture of what is really going on out in your field. Soil grid sampling is important because it precisely maps soil variability across a field, allowing for optimized and variable-rate fertilizer applications, which helps increase crop yields while reducing environmental impact. By creating a comprehensive picture of nutrients, we can help farmers make more informed decisions tailored to specific areas of the field instead of using a one-size-fits-all approach. This is particularly relevant in Minnesota, where soil conditions can vary widely due to topography and past land use.

Key benefits of soil grid sampling

- **Identifies field variability:**
  - It reveals how soil fertility, pH, and nutrient levels fluctuate across a field, which is crucial because Minnesota's soils can be highly variable.
- **Enables precise management:**
  - The data allows for variable-rate applications of nutrients and other inputs, ensuring that the right amount is applied to the right place at the right time.
- **Optimize fertilizer use:**
  - It helps determine the actual fertilizer needed for each zone, preventing over-fertilization and maximizing return on investment.
- **Reduces environmental risk:**
  - By preventing over-application, especially of phosphorus, grid sampling helps protect water quality by reducing nutrient runoff.
- **Provides a baseline for future management:**
  - Storing sample locations with GPS coordinates allows for future sampling in the same spots, which is key for tracking changes in soil over time and making informed adjustments to nutrient management plans.
- **Timing:**
  - Fall after harvest and before tillage is ideal time for sampling to reflect the soil's nutrient status before next year's growing season.



# LEAK CHECKS

Andy Borgerding

At Belgrade Co-op, safety is a top priority. As part of our safety protocols, we conduct routine leak checks to ensure the integrity and security of the propane system. These inspections are crucial for detection of any potential issues, enabling timely repairs and maintenance to mitigate risks.

Routine leak checks are carried out anytime there’s a change of ownership situation, new customer or new tank set, or a disruption of service. Our leak check process comprises two primary components. Firstly, we conduct a pressure test along the entire propane system, spanning from the tank to each individual appliance. Secondly, we perform a visual inspection of both the tank and the gas line. Should any leaks be identified, we will repair them, in addition to implementing any necessary updates to ensure compliance with codes and regulations.

In addition, we urge customers to promptly report any suspected propane leaks. Our service department is ready to respond swiftly to ensure the safety and functionality of your propane system.

If you smell gas in your home, the Propane Education Research Council and Belgrade Co-op recommend you do the following:

- 1. NO FLAMES OR SPARKS.** Immediately put out all smoking materials and other open flames. Do not operate lights, appliances, telephones, or cell phones. Flames or sparks from these sources can trigger an explosion or a fire.
- 2. LEAVE THE AREA IMMEDIATELY.** Get everyone out of the building or area where you suspect gas is leaking.
- 3. SHUT OFF THE GAS.** Turn off the main gas supply valve on your propane tank if it is safe to do so. To close the valve, turn it to the right (clockwise).
- 4. REPORT THE LEAK.** From a neighbor’s home or other nearby building away from the gas leak, call your propane retailer right away.
- 5. DO NOT RETURN TO THE BUILDING OR AREA** until your propane retailer, emergency responder, or qualified service technician determines that it is safe to do so.
- 6. GET YOUR SYSTEM CHECKED.** Before you attempt to use any of your propane appliances, your propane retailer or a qualified service technician must check your entire system to ensure that it is leak-free.



# FOLIAR DISEASES

Tucker Schultz

The 2025 growing season presented a high-risk environment for foliar disease development in corn. Frequent rainfall events, extended periods of high relative humidity, and prolonged leaf wetness created ideal conditions for pathogen infection and disease progression. These environmental factors contributed to widespread outbreaks of several major foliar diseases across the region.



When managing foliar diseases, fungicide application timing remains the most critical factor influencing efficacy. The optimal application window occurs between the R1 (silking) and R3 (milk) growth stages, when the upper canopy is fully developed and most critical for photosynthetic activity. Fungicides function primarily as protectants rather than curatives, meaning applications must occur prior to visible symptom development to effectively suppress infection and protect yield potential.

The predominant foliar diseases observed this season included Northern Corn Leaf Blight (*Exserohilum turcicum*), Tar Spot (*Phyllachora maydis*), and Common Rust (*Puccinia sorghi*). Disease severity varied by hybrid susceptibility, crop rotation history, and local environmental conditions. Fields lacking crop rotation or planted with susceptible hybrids exhibited the highest disease pressure.

Effective management of these diseases can lead to increased yield potential. This past summer scouting, I could visually see the difference in the color of the plants. The plants that had fungicide treatment were lush and dark green compared to the unapplied acres. In some cases, you could even see the cob was visually larger on the treated acres. In this image to the right, you can see the difference in cob size. The cob on the left was treated with fungicide, and the right cob was untreated.

## Research

On a farm trial conducted for research purposes, a fungicide application showed an average of 14 BPA (bushels per acre) response. The trial with no fungicide was 3 acres and yielded 247 bushels per acre. The average moisture was around a percent wetter when fungicide was applied. Overall you can see the benefit this year on a fungicide application in this case. If you have any questions or concerns talk to your local agronomist at Belgrade Coop.

	Yield	Moisture	Acres
No fungicide	247 bu/ac	20.9%	3
Delaro Complete 12 oz	259 bu/ac	22.1%	3.7
Forcivo 8 oz	263 bu/ac	21.1%	3.3





## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT - THANK A FARMER

Lindsey Brower

In mid-Minnesota, we are either directly or indirectly involved in agriculture or know several people who are. We see the headlights off in the fields as we're traveling down the road

and *patiently* drive behind tractors, combines, and other equipment as they are making their way to or from those fields. Maybe you've even had to hop on a four-wheeler with a cooler and a plate of food for someone out in the field or ridden in the cab of a tractor just to be able to see a loved one that week!

We are aware of the long hours our local farmers put in this time of year and while it takes a toll physically and mentally, farmers seem to do it all humbly and with pride.

We wanted to thank and honor our dedicated local farmers, even those who may not be customers of Belgrade Co-op! This fall, we launched a new-to-us campaign called, "Thank a Farmer." The idea being that one recipient each week during the harvest season would win lunch on the Co-op for them and their helpers; Co-op staff would bring hearty, warm meals directly to them, whether it be in their shop, farm site, or current field.

We took to Facebook and asked for nominations for a deserving farmer or farm family that we could show our appreciation to and were blown away by the responses! Thank you to everyone who sent in nominations!



*Rachael and Isaac delivering meals*

The Thank a Farmer program concluded after running for four weeks this fall. We look forward to its return in 2026!

The four recipients of Thank a Farmer meals were:  
T & L Dairy, Greenwald area  
KLC Farms, Sauk Centre area  
Jacob and Carlee Gaebel, Melrose area  
Ampe Farms, Belgrade area



## Thank a Farmer RECIPIENTS



*T & L Dairy*



*KLC Farms*



*Jacob and Carlee Gaebel*



*Ampe Farms*





604 Parkway Drive  
Belgrade, MN 56312



## FUEL DEPARTMENT – NEWS AND NOTES

*Todd Trustheim*

With a growing customer base and the current customer base's needs increasing as well, the fuel portion of the bulk plant underwent a much-needed project of increasing fuel storage capacity. The project consisted of adding four 25,000-gallon tanks to our existing fuel storage facility in Belgrade. The additional storage also allows for more flexibility when purchasing as well as the logistics of supply and demand within our customer base.

A few things to note:

- We are currently offering fuel contract prices for fuel to be delivered in 2026. Call in or check Co-op Connect for current contract pricing.
- Fuel tanks in a variety of sizes are available for purchase or lease.
- Transport-sized fuel deliveries are available.
- We carry a full line of base to full-synthetic Cenex lubricants and oils. They are available packaged at offices in Belgrade at all times and at the Melrose office within a day or two of requesting it. In addition, Cenex Lubricants TMS 15-40 (diesel engine oil) and Quicklift Universal (tractor hydraulic oil) can be delivered to you in bulk.



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