KEY COOPERATIVE
your essential business partner

Connections

A publication dedicated to informing and connecting member-owners.

Nov. 2026 • www.keycoop.com

A SEASON TO BE THANKFUL

Key reflects on a year of youth involvement

By Sara Clausen, Director of Communications, Sara.Clausen@keycoop.com

THANKSGIVING—A CELEBRATION that traces back to the 1600s, with the sole purpose of throwing a harvest feast and reflecting on the blessings of the past year. Now established as a national holiday (which must include all the trimmings, like turkey, stuffing and pumpkin pie), Thanksgiving still aligns perfectly with the agriculture industry. In fact, at Key we often say: "Happy harvest!"

As we celebrate the season of harvest, we also reflect on what we're thankful for this past year. Our blessings are found in our communities. Cooperatives are naturally community-minded and genuinely want to contribute to the sustainability of our communities, which means we're rooted in our counties, cities and schools. At Key, we're thankful for the opportunity to spend so much time alongside our youth.

With locations in 13 communities, Key Cooperative employees and Board members have a tremendous opportunity to make an impact. We're ready to educate the next

continued on page 5

GRAIN FEATURE

This year has had many challenges relating to harvest.

See page 2 for the full story.

AGRONOMY FEATURE

Harvest provides an opportunity to assess this year's crop, then use those lessons to make better decisions about next year's corn hybrids and soybean varieties.

See page 4 for the full story.

ENERGY FEATURE

The Cenex Total Protection Plan ensures that only high-quality energy products are used to give you the power to keep your operation running.

See page 7 for the full story.

Sign up to receive Key's e-newsletter every other month. Just scan the QR code and enter your email address!

What's in Your Bin?

By Jarod Lemper, Grain Division Manager, Jarod.Lemper@keycoop.com

THIS YEAR HAS HAD many challenges relating to harvest. Hopefully by the time you read this article, we've completed the 2026 harvest and are well on our way with fall agronomy applications.

Maybe more than any other year, it's critical you maintain the quality of your grain. Getting the crop in the bin is only half the job. Keeping it in the best condition until it's delivered requires a little attention throughout the storage season.

It all starts with putting quality grain into a clean bin. Take time to clean out old grain, check for leaks and make sure fans and aeration equipment are working like they should.

Once the grain is stored, temperature becomes your biggest focus. Running aeration fans when conditions are right helps cool the grain and keeps moisture from building up in trouble spots. Make sure you're aware of the time it takes to pass a layer of air through the entire bin; partial cooling in the fall or warming in the spring can create more issues that it solves. Cool grain also slows down insect activity and helps maintain quality longer.

Don't forget to check bins regularly! This step can easily be forgotten during the winter months. A quick walk around every couple of weeks can help you catch problems before they become expensive. Keep an eye out for:

- Musty or sour odors
- Hot spots in the grain
- Crusting on the surface
- Insects or rodents
- Condensation under the roof

It's also a good idea to remove fines from the center of the bin when possible. Better airflow means fewer chances for spoilage.

At the end of the day, good grain storage comes down to being proactive. A few minutes spent checking bins and managing aeration can help protect grain quality and prevent losses until it's time to move grain to market.

KEY COOPERATIVE

Beef Feed Promotions

BOOK THROUGH DECEMBER 31

Fall Calf Creep Booking Program
- Booking options now available for Purina® RangeLand® Calf Creep B90 pelleted calf creep.
- Book by December 31, 2026. Pick up by March 31, 2027.
- Bulk calf creep products can be picked up at our Grinnell, Barnes City, Newton or Gilbert locations. Bulk products can also be delivered to your farm.

Fall Mineral Program
- Special pricing now available on Purina® Wind and Rain® 4CP mineral.
- Book by December 31, 2026. Pick up by March 31, 2027.
- Pricing options include booking, take early delivery or prepay for later delivery.

QLF® Ignite Beef Tubs
- Receive special pricing on QLF® Ignite Beef Tubs for a limited time.
- Book by December 31, 2026. Pick up by March 31, 2027.
- Book today and take what you need, when you need it!

Justin Crocheck | 515-291-0763
Senior Cattle Consultant

Kelcie Carpenter | 515-232-6515
Key Cooperative, Gilbert Feed Sales

Dan Harmsen | 641-203-8477
Swine Specialist

Renae Schumacher | 641-791-0740
Key Cooperative, Newton Feed Sales

Matt James | 641-236-6565
Feed Division Manager

Convenient Nutrition

By Justin R. Crocheck, Senior Cattle Consultant, Justin.Crocheck@keycoop.com

AS YOU KNOW, protein levels can differ by species of forage, by different fields and by different cuttings. The protein values of our forages were lowered again this year as the nitrogen content was diluted by the rains and/or the additional tons harvested. In many areas, our pastures are still green and washy with all the rain across a large area of the Key Cooperative marketing area. We also baled a lot of hay that was lightly kissed to drowned by rains that weren't forecasted to come. Making hay wasn't convenient this summer, but we can make supplementing protein for your cow-calf operation convenient this fall.

With the already wet fall we've been dealing with, we need a convenient way to supply supplemental protein to our cow-calf operations while we're bringing in the fall harvest. Your time is valuable and so is your herd!

Nothing could be easier or faster than to roll some tubs off the tailgate of your pickup, along with a salt block or two.

QLF® Ignite 30 and 40 protein tubs are formulated to help fill the gaps of medium down to the lower-quality forage of fall pasture, hay and stalk fields. These low-moisture tubs have been poured not pressed to combat the weather. QLF Ignite poured tubs are durable, and they limit intake by licking instead of biting. The tubs are palatable because of the molasses sources QLF uses to produce a more consistent intake compared to the softer, plant-based pressed tub.

As you prepare to wean this fall or have already weaned, we can add QLF Ignite Stress Max AV4® mineral tubs alongside the protein tubs to boost cows and calves in our weaning pens. These tubs are formulated with Availa® 4 mineral from Zinpro® to provide highly available sources of zinc, copper, manganese and cobalt to fill the gaps in the trace mineral needs of our herd.

Our stress tub formulation at Key Cooperative also contains a product called Celmanax™. It's a yeast culture that was originally created by VI-COR that contains yeast cultures, MOS and beta-glucan. It's designed to assist all stages of life in our cow-calf operations by improving the gut bacteria and animal immunity all in one convenient package by binding pathogens and toxins in the gut and expelling them from the animal's system.

Key Cooperative is your source of convenient nutrition this fall. To make it even more convenient for you, we're offering special pricing and/or booking options through December 31, 2026, to assist you in filling nutritional gaps this fall and winter.

Let us top off your bulk oil tank and we'll give you $0.25 off per gallon!

KEY COOPERATIVE

Discounted Farm Oil Fills

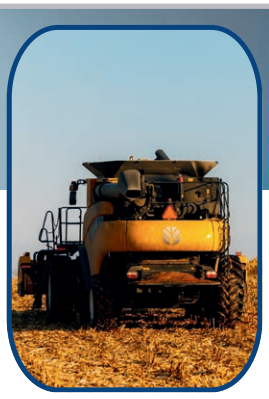
Order Now for Delivery, December 7-11, 2026

Offer Valid On:
Cenex® TMS 15w-40 Diesel Engine Oil
Cenex® HTB Tractor Hydraulic Fluid
20-Gallon Minimum Required Per Product

To order, call Riley at 641-594-8119 or your Certified Energy Specialist:
Bob Rabey | 641-521-6318
Chris Nady | 515-290-0009
Larry Pence | 515-338-1392
Rick Kucera | 641-780-1624

**Place order by November 30, 2026, to receive special pricing.*

FUEL FOR THOUGHT
Harvest Reminders



From farm equipment to fuel storage, here are a few tips to help you prepare for fall and winter:

- Drain and remove all water and contaminants.
- Change filters and clean pump screens.
- Keep tanks full to reduce condensation. Fill equipment every evening.
- Blend cold-flow additives at the recommended treat rate. More isn't better.

Always use Ruby Fieldmaster® or Ruby Fieldmaster® Seasonally Enhanced Diesel Fuel.

For more information, contact our Certified Energy Specialists:

Bob Rabey 641-521-6318
Chris Nady 515-290-0009
Larry Pence 515-338-1392
Rick Kucera 641-780-1624

Connecting This Year's Results to Next Year's Seed Decisions

By Nick Sawyer, Agronomy Division Manager, Nick.Sawyer@keycoop.com

HARVEST PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY to assess this year's crop, then use those lessons to make better decisions about next year's corn hybrids and soybean varieties. The challenge is turning all the available information into a plan that fits your farm.

Your Key Agronomist can help connect the dots! Brand information, regional research, local plots and your own field history each provide a piece of the puzzle. Your Agronomist helps bring those pieces together, interpret what they mean for your acres and align seed selections with your goals.

Start with what matters to your operation

The best seed plan begins with a conversation about what you want to accomplish. Are you pursuing higher yields on your most productive acres? More consistent performance across variable soils? Earlier harvest, lower drying costs, stronger standability or better protection against recurring disease challenges?

Most operations have several priorities, and those priorities may differ from field to field. As your essential business partner, we can help you define those needs and evaluate products accordingly. A strong recommendation starts with understanding your operation, then identifying the genetics and management approach that fit.

Assess the crop beyond the yield monitor

Yield is important, but understanding how a crop reached that yield is equally valuable. In corn, consider emergence, root strength, standability, disease performance, harvest moisture and dry down. In soybeans, evaluate emergence, maturity, lodging, disease tolerance and harvestability.

Results also need context. Planting date, soil type, drainage, fertility, rainfall, pest pressure and management can all influence performance. Your Key Agronomist can help determine whether a result reflects product fit, growing conditions, management or a combination of factors. That perspective helps prevent one exceptional—or disappointing—field from carrying too much weight in next year's decisions.

Bring every source of information into the conversation

Our brand partners—DEKALB®, BREVANT® and CROPLAN®—provide product information that helps establish strengths, limitations and placement considerations. Regional results, like the Answer Plot System, add perspective across a broader range of environments and management activities. Local plots bring the comparison even closer to home. Your own field records show how products have performed with your soils and management over time.

Which regional results are most relevant to your soils? Does a local plot reflect your planting date and management? Does a product's performance history support expanding its acres? How does its management response fit your willingness to invest? Is there a new entry that fits a need and deserves an introduction to your operation? Working through these questions together turns a collection of results into a seed plan with a clear purpose.

The highest-yielding entry in a single plot may deserve consideration, but it should be evaluated alongside performance across other locations and years whenever that information is available. Broader comparisons help build confidence in a selection. From there, your Agronomist can help build a lineup that balances yield potential, consistency, maturity, agronomic strengths and management requirements. Each corn hybrid and soybean variety should have a reason for being in the plan and a place where its characteristics fit.

As harvest wraps up, make time to review this year's results with your Key Agronomist. Bring your yield information, field observations, concerns and goals. Together, we can connect brand knowledge, regional research, local experience and your farm's history to make informed seed decisions for next season.

A Season to be Thankful

continued from page 1

generation of youth leaders, whether it's through our scholarship program for graduating seniors, our Bushels for Ag program in vocational ag classrooms, field trips, internships and job shadows or country fair meals served to 4-H and FFA members.

For more than a decade, Key Cooperative has been focused on developing a one-of-a-kind program called Bushels for Ag. Through this program, we donate the first 100 bushels of corn and 40 bushels of beans to be marketed by vocational ag classes, giving them a true hands-on learning experience and not just a grain donation. At the beginning of each school year, our team will make an initial visit to classrooms to introduce Bushels for Ag. That day is often the first interaction of many we get to have with students throughout the year.

"This program is all about giving students a real-life experience," said Key Field Marketing Specialist Greg Artz. "It gives these classes an opportunity to sell real bushels. It is not a simulation. The students realize the value of actual grain, just like an active farm."

Many of the best questions from growers today are related to productively marketing their grain. Key Cooperative believes this program is not only a great way for our ag students to obtain a better understanding of how to properly market grain but also stay engaged in agriculture as a whole.

"When we go into the classroom, we also introduce students to the career opportunities within agriculture," said Brent Metzger, Key Employee Development Lead. "Bushels for Ag is just one program that connects us with the future of ag!"

As harvest comes to a close, we turn toward the season to give. We invite you to consider supporting Bushels for Ag by making a gift of grain—a gift that comes with a lot of return for ag students! To partner with us and support your location FFA chapter, visit our website or scan the QR code to access the donation form.

Scan to learn more about Bushels for Ag

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach

ag LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

DEC 2&3 2026

GATEWAY HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTER • AMES, IA

register TODAY!

registrations.extension.iastate.edu/agleadershipconference

Working through a challenging fall together

continued from page 8

be limited. Our teams continue to work tirelessly to move grain safely and efficiently while providing the high level of service you expect from Key. We appreciate your patience and cooperation as our employees carefully manage grain quality, facility capacity and the added complexities created by this unusually wet season.

The same conditions affecting harvest have also delayed tillage and fall fertilizer applications, including dry fertilizer and anhydrous ammonia. Our Key Agronomy team has begun making applications where soil and field conditions allow, and they're prepared to support your operation whenever and wherever the opportunity opens. As you evaluate your fall plans and make adjustments, please reach out to your local Key Agronomist. They can help assess your needs, discuss timing and product options and develop a plan that positions your acres for a successful spring.

Our Key Energy team is also doing an excellent job serving customers through a volatile market. They continue to make timely deliveries of propane and refined fuels while navigating changing prices and supply conditions. Their planning, communication and commitment are helping keep homes, farms and businesses supplied during a busy and demanding season. We encourage you to stay connected with your local Key Energy representative regarding upcoming needs.

Fall also gives our team an important opportunity to invest in Key Cooperative's future. Throughout the season, our employees visit local high school FFA chapters and attend college career fairs to connect with students and recruit the next generation of Key employees. Through part-time positions and internships, students gain hands-on experience across our core divisions and learn what a career in agriculture and the cooperative system can offer.

Our internship program serves as a true "farm system" for developing our next wave of talent. It provides meaningful experiences, builds relationships and creates a strong pipeline for full-time roles. Today, approximately half of our Agronomy Sales and Location Manager team members participated in our internship program at some point in their careers. That record demonstrates the long-term value of creating opportunities for young people to learn, contribute and grow within Key Cooperative.

Thank you for your continued support of your cooperative and for the trust you place in our team. We remain committed to serving you through the challenges and opportunities of this season. Please have a safe and successful finish to fall.

Save the Date!

WINTER GRAIN OUTLOOK MEETINGS

Join Key's Grain team at one of their annual meetings in January! More details coming soon at keycoop.com.

Wednesday, January 13, 2027

Speaker: Kevin Clausen, John Stewart and Associates, Jethro's BBQ in Ames
10:30 A.M. Refreshments
11:00 A.M. Meeting
Lunch to follow at noon

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

Speaker: Trent Sauder, Advance Trading, Grinnell Agronomy Center
10:30 A.M. Refreshments
11:00 A.M. Meeting
Lunch to follow at noon

Cenex Total Protection Plan Pays BIG!

Managing what we can't control

By Scott Richardson, Energy Division Manager, Scott.Richardson@keycoop.com

NO MATTER THE SEASON, no one ever wants to utter the words, "We broke down." The Cenex Total Protection Plan® (TPP) can help.

Let us introduce you to this powerful program through the words of some of the most experienced people in the ag industry.

In 2024, New Sharon farmers Brett, Kent and Ben Ferguson added their recently acquired Case IH Farmall 140A to Cenex's TPP warranty program through Key Cooperative. While their other tractors are out in the field during harvest, this loader tractor is used year-round for their sizable cow-calf operation.

"We use this tractor every day," said Brett. "So the warranty was very worth it!"

This fall, they experienced the payoff when they received a check for $29,331.71 toward the repair of that loader tractor.

"Bob Rabey, our Key Certified Energy Specialist, reached out right away, brought in oil samples, and we stayed engaged," said Mike. "There were zero communication gaps, and he continued to check in even when we were waiting for parts. The repair went nice and smooth. I've heard from at least a dozen other farmers who are under a warranty like this one."

The Cenex Total Protection Plan ensures that only high-quality energy products are used to give you the power to keep your operation running. Whether you buy new or used equipment, this is a protection plan like no other, because protection is extended well beyond the original equipment manufacturer's warranty.

Certified Energy Specialist Bob Rabey presented the $29,331.71 Total Protection Plan check to the Fergusons. Pictured left to right: Logan Ferguson, Bob Rabey, Brett Ferguson and Colby Ferguson.

Your Key Cooperative Certified Energy Specialists can help you prepare for the unknown and review key program features:

- **Equipment coverage.** The warranty covers new equipment for up to 10 years or 10,000 hours and used equipment for up to 8 years or 8,000 hours.
- **Extended protection.** With the Cenex Total Protection Plan, you're going above and beyond original equipment manufacturer warranties.
- **Proactive reminders.** You'll receive periodic maintenance reminders to help keep your equipment in top condition.
- **Oil analysis tests.** Avoid downtime through LubeScan® used oil analysis fluid sample reports, which provide insight into the inner workings of your machine.
- **Equipment sale.** The warranty can be transferred to purchasers of the equipment.

To learn more about the Cenex Total Protection Plan, contact any of our Key Cooperative Certified Energy Specialists.

- **Rick Kucera:** 641-780-1624
- **Chris Nady:** 515-290-0009
- **Larry Pence:** 515-338-1392
- **Bob Rabey:** 641-521-6318

KEY PERSPECTIVES

Working through a challenging fall together

By Brent Deppe, CEO, Brent.Deppe@keycoop.com

SEPTEMBER BROUGHT record rainfall across much of Key Cooperative's trade territory, creating a fall season unlike most we've experienced in recent years. The timing and volume of the rainfall have presented significant challenges as harvest has progressed. Wet field conditions have delayed harvest for many of our member-owners and customers, while excess moisture has also contributed to grain quality challenges in soybeans and corn in some areas.

Crop conditions have slowed grading, unloading, handling and storage processes at our locations. We understand how important every hour is during harvest, especially when favorable field conditions may

continued on page 6

KEY COOPERATIVE
your essential business partner
13585 620th Ave.
Roland, Iowa 50236

PRST STD
AUTO
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 371
NEWTON, IA 50208

Our Board of Directors

Bryce Arkema, President
Mike Engbers, Vice President
Brian Larsen, Secretary
Brian Lowry, Assistant Secretary
Ryan Bell, Treasurer
Eric Henry, Associate
Todd Van Manen, Associate
Chris Davidson, Associate
Chad Hafkey, Director
Dave Hill, Director
John Koop, Director
Lucas Tjelmeland, Director
Nathan Voight, Director

PHOTO CONTEST WINNER

THE GLOW OF HARVEST

By Riley Van Gilst, Newton

About the winning photo: Harvest is a sunrise-to-sunset kind of job! And there isn't a more beautiful sight in Iowa.

Would you like to see one of your photos featured on this page?

The *Connections* photo contest is open to any member or customer who receives our newsletter. One winning photo will be selected and placed in the newsletter. Photos must feature agriculture, ag events or rural settings; Iowa-based scenes are preferred. Photos must be submitted by the tenth of each month in order to qualify for the following month's newsletter. Please include your name, address, phone number and email address with your submitted photo(s).

Submissions may be emailed to Sara.Clausen@keycoop.com.

Key Connections is sent to you courtesy of Key Cooperative. Please send comments or suggestions to Sara.Clausen@keycoop.com or call 515-388-8030.