

RIVER VALLEY COOPERATIVE

# Solutions

July 2016



Neal and Doug Nelson "Doing the Right Thing" - Pages 10-12

RIVER VALLEY

COOPERATIVE

Your Success - Our Future

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# COOPERATIVE

## In This Issue

- 3\* Reflections on a 43-Year Career
- 4-5, 17\* Benefits of AFD - Farr Transport
- 6\* Meet Our Summer Interns
- 7\* Seeing the Unseen
- 8\* 2016 Scholarship Recipients
- 8\* Answer Plot Dates Announced
- 9\* MarketEdge - Contracting Options
- 10-12\* Nelsons "Doing the Right Thing"
- 13\* Home Heating Propane Contracts
- 14\* AgCelerate - Licensing Program
- 15\* Healthy Start for Weaning Calves
- 16\* R7® - A Powerful Tool
- 18\* Sign electronically with DocuSign
- 18\* Safety Training - Local Fire Depts
- 19\* Election, Unclaimed Patronage
- 20\* Family Fun Nights

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### Locations

Altona • Annawan • Clarence  
 Dixon • Donahue • DeWitt • Durant  
 Eldridge • Fenton • Galva  
 Geneseo • Lost Nation • Martelle  
 Olin • Osco • Ryan • Sperry • Stanwood  
 Stockton • Sunbury • Walcott

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### Mission Statement

River Valley Cooperative is dedicated to delivering personalized services and expert solutions that enhance and ensure the longterm viability of our customer-owners, employees and communities.

# Caring for Our Communities



Pictured l-r: North Linn High School Principal Scott Beaty; RVC Operations Ray Archibald; students and FFA members Rachel Zumbach, Brady Henderson, Jaysen Moyer, Brock Henderson, RVC Ryan Location Manager Larry Lahr; and North Linn High School Superintendent Karl Kurt.

River Valley Cooperative recently presented a check for \$2,000.00 to the North Linn High School in Troy Mills, Iowa, to help provide financial assistance for the North Linn Applied Agricultural Science and Mathematics Building construction fund. This donation represents a \$1,000 contribution from River Valley Cooperative and a \$1,000 contribution from Land O'Lakes, Inc. Foundation's Member Co-op Match Program.

River Valley Cooperative and Land O'Lakes, Inc. are committed to the communities where our members, employees, plants and facilities are located and which we serve.

## SAVE THE DATE

River Valley Coop will be hosting our summer 2016 grain outlook meetings in August. Our guest presenter will be Troy Lust, INTL FCStone. Troy will presenting on what to expect for the upcoming grain market, details of the August 2016 crop report, and much more. You will not want to miss this opportunity to gain valuable information to make strategic marketing plans for your farm!

### Registration Details:

- Light refreshments will be provided
- There is no cost to attend, registration is not required

### Date and Locations:

#### August 24, 2016

Ryan River Valley office 9 am – 11 am  
 Martelle River Valley office 1 pm – 3 pm

#### August 25, 2016

Durant Community Center 9 am – 11 am  
 Buzzy's - Dewitt 1 pm - 3pm

#### August 30, 2016

Geneseo River Valley office 9 am – 11 am  
 Galva River Valley office 1 pm – 3 pm



Please feel free to contact your grain originator for more details. We look forward to seeing you in August!

# Manager's Report

Please join us in extending best wishes to Larry Wenthold, Vice President Agronomy Business Unit, who is retiring from River Valley Cooperative on July 22 after almost 34 years of dedicated service. We invited Larry to share a few thoughts as he gets ready to start a new chapter in his life.

**A farewell luncheon will be held for Larry on July 22 from 11 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at our Geneseo location – 108 Progress Lane, Geneseo, Illinois, all well-wishers are welcome to attend.**

## Reflections on a 43-Year Career

Little did I know that growing up on a dairy farm near the small northeast Iowa town of Festina would prepare me for a long and fulfilling career in agriculture.

I appreciate the fact that working with my dad on a livestock-intense farm operation that I adopted a strong “get it done” work ethic. I also played a number of team sports in high school and at Luther College. To win and get better it took the effort of the entire team to accomplish the task. This was a lesson that carried over into business.

I started working in ag retail in June of 1973. With my business degree and farm background I had accepted a position as a management trainee with one of the regional cooperatives. I always liked the farm and wanted a job that would keep me close to agriculture. In the trainee position, I was introduced to all aspects of the business. From building grain bins, running a pickup sprayer, delivering truckloads of bagged starter fertilizer to stack in the corncrib driveway, to exposure in working with credit, it was a great opportunity. Over the next several years I also had the opportunity to be directly involved in sales and manage a location where we had an old feed mill which many of our Amish customers would come to have their grain ground and mixed with protein. This is a far cry from our River Valley feed mill in Sunbury, Iowa.

**July 1976** - My wife Sandy and I were married and that November we moved from Fairbank, Iowa, to take a position managing a new cooperative that was being organized in Byron, Illinois. I was only 25 at the time and it looked like both a challenge and an opportunity. With good support of the local producers the company grew and built a nice balance sheet in just a few years.

We spent seven years at Byron before coming to Geneseo where I became the General Manager at Cooperative Gas and Oil Co. in the late summer of 1982. In November of 1982 the Set Aside Program

was announced in order to reduce production. The coop was a supply company and the following spring 40% of the acres were taken out of production in the coop's trade area. Over the years, and with a great group of employees and dedicated directors, the company grew, became financially strong and a real influence in the market the coop served.

When Sandy and I settled in Geneseo we had a two-year old and a two-month old, over the years we were blessed with a total of six children - two girls and four boys. They now range in age from 21 to 35.

**March 2008** - After the three-way merger of Cooperative Gas and Oil, Gateway Cooperative, and River Valley Cooperative, I assumed the responsibility of Vice President of the Agronomy Business Unit at River Valley Cooperative. Over the years I have enjoyed working with and being a mentor to others, helping them become successful in their careers, too. Having an experienced staff on both the operations and sales side and under the leadership of Tom Leiting as CEO, River Valley experienced good growth over these past eight years. We also achieved and maintained the goal of having a financially sound company.

Over the past two years River Valley has focused on positioning the company for the future. A key part of the effort was creating what is now referred to as River Valley's 2020 Strategy. Knowing that we had folks like myself approaching retirement age this allowed for some succession planning as well as organization change. Having been involved in developing the 2020 Strategy for River Valley, I feel confident that what has been put in place, and the people that have been positioned, will help achieve the



**Larry Wenthold**  
Vice President  
Agronomy Business Unit

goals for River Valley by the year 2020. I also believe that what has been put in place will be good for customers and for the employees of River Valley.

**July 2016** - Well, the time is right and I am looking forward to spending more time with Sandy and our family, staying active in our church, volunteering, and doing some part-time work on the side.

Ag retail has been a rewarding career and I will miss the people that have been on the team over the years and customers I've worked with. People in agriculture are good hard working folks that have adapted to change while becoming part of a world market that has adapted new systems and technology to keep improving yields, efficiency and profitability.

I've had several customers stop by my office once they heard I was retiring from River Valley. They have had some kind words regarding the business relationship we have had over the years, are appreciative that their coop is still a significant influence and a solid business in the market, and for the contribution they felt I have made toward the success of their coop. These long-term customers made me appreciate the business relationship I have had with so many good people during those 43 years, and the dedicated team I have worked with making the effort to provide for our customer needs and increasing their profitability.

Thank you everyone, it's been a pleasure.

# On-Site Fuel Brings Added



When Jim Farr, owner of Farr Transport, made the decision to put in an on-site fueling system with Cenex Premium Fuels at his trucking business in Iowa City, Iowa, it wasn't an easy one. He knew it would be quite an expense for a smaller trucking firm like his, but soon realized he made the right decision.

Jim started Farr Transport in 2002 while also running his repair business, Iowa City Brake. An opportunity came along to buy and fix up a truck to create some additional revenue. That led to more and more opportunities to haul.

Over the years Jim's one truck grew into a fleet of 12, employing 10 full-time drivers running locally and over the

road. Jim's daughter Jamie is the office manager and his son Michael works in the shop.

When Jim was looking to put a fueling system on site, his friend Tim Daufeldt of West Liberty Foods suggested he talk with Pat Steward, Certified Energy Specialist with River Valley Cooperative.

Pat was more than happy to share the benefits of River Valley's Automated Fuel Delivery system and Cenex Premium Fuels. Jim said,

"When Pat came in I was really just looking at the convenience of having fuel on site, the additional fuel mileage with the premium fuels we're now getting was a pleasant surprise." He went on to say, "The fuel mileage increase is huge, we're seeing a minimum of a mile per gallon increase and we're not having to change the fuel filters as often."

Since putting the fueling system in about a year and a

**"You buy better, you save, you get better fuel mileage. That's huge, that's really huge."**

Jim Farr - Farr Transport



Automated Fuel Delivery

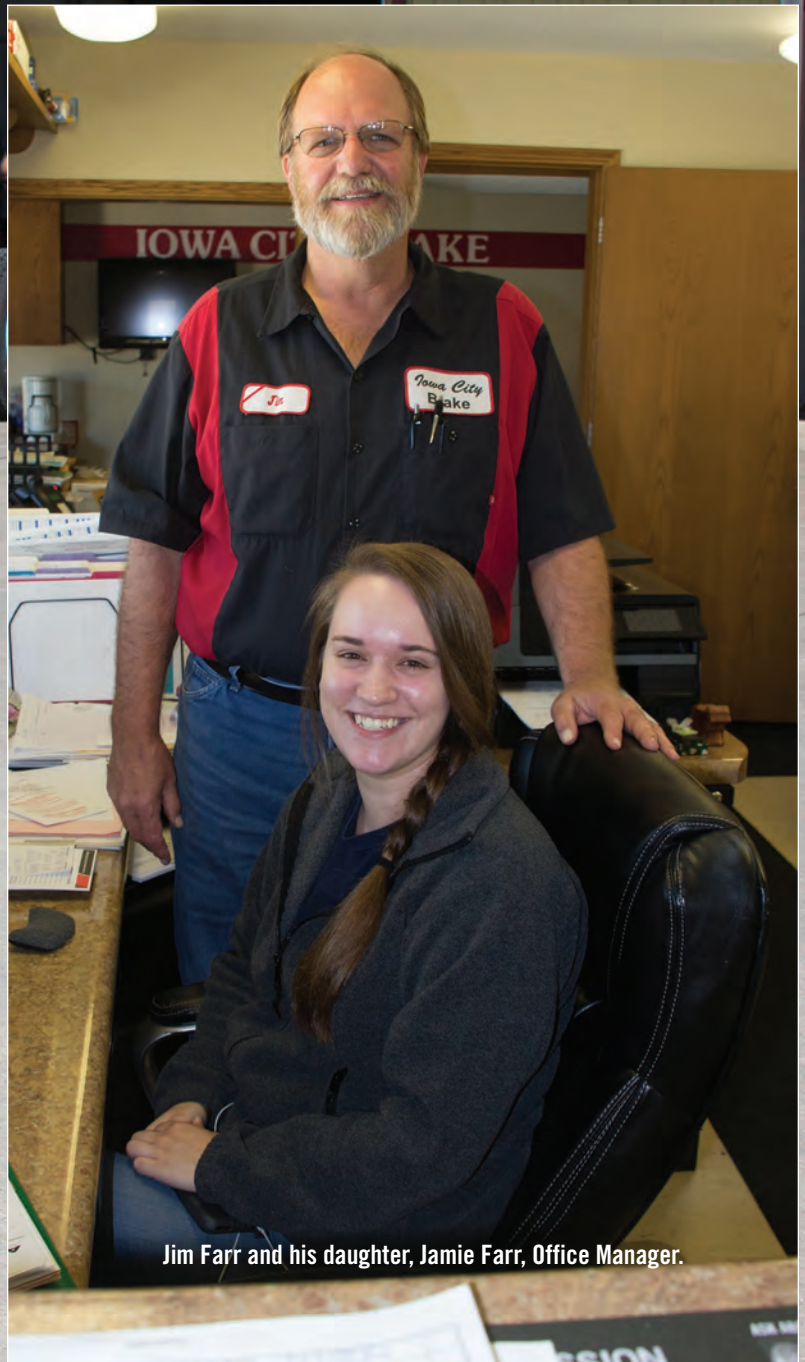
# Benefits



half ago, both Jim and Jamie agree that the largest benefit, more than the fuel itself, is having the fuel on site. Jim stated, "Rather than having to take an hour to stop and fill up their truck at a truck stop before returning, they can bring the truck in, go home, and we'll fill it up for them. They enjoy that, nobody likes to stop and get fuel. When you go to a truck stop you're going to possibly stand in line 30 minutes just to pay for the fuel."

Having fuel on site solved another huge problem. Farr's fleet is a reefer fleet with refrigerated trailers needing fuel when they're sitting running all weekend. Jim said, "If someone happens to pick up a load in Salt Lake and it's delivering on the east coast they bring that trailer in. If it's low on fuel, somewhere over the weekend my city guy would have to come in, hook up to it, take it clear to Coralville, put fuel in it and bring it back. At

*Continued on page 17*



**Jim Farr and his daughter, Jamie Farr, Office Manager.**

# Meet Our Summer Interns

**R**iver Valley is pleased to provide so many of our area youth the opportunity to learn about agriculture in a hands-on environment this year.

We have a record-setting number with eight agronomy sales interns and 14 operations interns.

Several of our interns are attending two-year colleges, some will be transferring to four-year institutions while others are already seeking four-year degrees. One thing they all have in common is the desire to seek a career in agriculture and an eagerness to learn.

Throughout the summer interns are working alongside mentors, spending a few days with key individuals in our grain, feed, energy, and agronomy departments, touring local vendors such as Big River Resources, CHS,

Monsanto, Deere Harvester, attending training at our Answer Plots, and assisting at some of the bucket calf shows that River Valley sponsors throughout the summer at six local fairs.

Our agronomy sales interns are Grant Maurer, Heidi Hamilton, Keaton Keitzer, Kyle Lafrenz, Erin Peterson, Jessica Manthe, Ashley VenHorst, and Trevor Nelson. Operations interns are James Clow, Caleb Kaufmann, Victoria Morgan, Bailey Steffen, Austin Hinkhouse, Evan Dietz, Natalie Dewell, Spencer Armstrong, Garrett Mengler, Connor Cahill, Wade Gerlach, and Adam Brooks. Joining the interns at some of the events this summer are Alec Kueter, RVC Sales Trainee - Ryan location, and Scott Denton, WinField Associate - Annawan location.



## 2016 River Valley Cooperative Interns

**Front (l-r):** Evan Dietz, Caleb Kaufmann, Trevor Conrad, Kyle Lafrenz, Grant Mauer

**Middle (l-r):** Jessica Manthe, Victoria Morgan, Ashley VenHorst, Heidi Hamilton, Natalie Dewell, Erin Peterson, Trevor Nelson

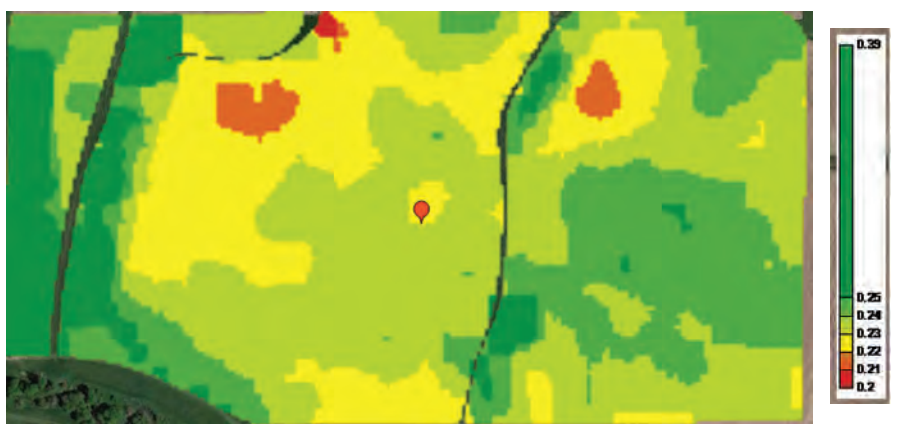
**Back (l-r):** Garrett Mengler, Connor Cahill, Wade Gerlach, Steven Poppe, James Clow, Keaton Keitzer, Spencer Armstrong

**Absent from photo:** Bailey Steffen, Austin Hinkhouse, Adam Brooks.

# Seeing the Unseen in Your Fields

Dean Lievens, Ag Technology Manager  
dlievens@rivervalleycoop.com

When you are out walking your crops, some things are a lot easier to see than others. With that being said, River Valley Cooperative has partnered with our friends at WinField, to offer in-season satellite imagery. What are the benefits to using in-season imagery:



- See season-long crop development variability in each field
- Scout parts of your field to diagnose issues in time to defend each field's yield potential
- Use current imagery to create a plan to zone tissue sample for plant nutrition deficiencies
- Apply crop protection products early to defend against diseases and insects
- Evaluate performance of in-season management decisions at the end of the season
- Compare split-field trials to evaluate plant nutrition or crop protection strategies

In-season imagery enables timely management decisions to maximize the potential of today's high-yielding genetics. You've already made the investment in seed, fertilizer, and crop protection. Maximize your return on those investments by actively managing your crop all season long.

Be sure to contact your local agronomy advisor for more details.



YieldVantage™

# Mark Your Calendars and Plan on Attending!

# **KNOWLEDGE EVENTS**

**August 22**

**Stanwood Answer Plot**  
Highway 30 • Stanwood, IA

**August 25**

**Manchester/Ryan Answer Plot**  
Highway 13 • Manchester, IA

**Answer Plot**<sup>®</sup>  
By WINFIELD

VIP tours available at both locations throughout the growing season. Contact your agronomy account manager and schedule yours today!

## Congratulations to our 2016 Scholarship Recipients

River Valley Cooperative awarded \$10,000 in scholarships this spring to some very deserving high school and college students.

Each applicant was asked to answer questions regarding their community and school involvement, scholastic achievement, why they chose the college or university they are or will be attending, their knowledge of the cooperative system, and how they promote agriculture to those less

familiar with it.

River Valley Cooperative has provided \$40,000 in scholarships since 2013. We are committed to supporting area youth and their journey toward a rewarding career in agriculture. Thank you to all who applied.

Details for the 2017 scholarship program will be available in November.



**Ashley Cooney**  
Deer Grove, IL



**Allison Hand**  
Woodhull, IL



**Gage Hank**  
Aledo, IL



**Jessica Hilby**  
Manchester, IA



**Tayler Johnson**  
Reynolds, IL



**Savannah Keitzer**  
Mediapolis, IA



**Colby Lafrenz**  
Maysville, IA



**Rebecca Lyons**  
Clinton, IA



**Cortney Price**  
Monticello, IA



**Caleb Stahl**  
Lafayette, IL



# MarketEdge

RIVER VALLEY COOPERATIVE

by Mike Moellenbeck • Vice President Grain Business Unit • mmoellenbeck@rivervalleycoop.com



## Contracting Options

Prior to planting, the market came into the spring season with visions of large acreage bases for corn and soybeans, along with prospects for large crops to be harvested this fall. Price trends were flat at best with ideas we would see sub \$3.00 corn and \$9.00 beans for fall prices. Beginning in April bean prices began to move higher as concerns of a shorter crop in South America and overall strong bean demand for export and crush. The corn rally started about a month later, again due to a shorter crop in Brazil and potential weather concerns in the US. By the end of June prices had rallied nearly \$3.00 in beans and near \$1.00 for corn.

Producers took advantage of the rally by making new crop sales, but in many cases the prices were on the lower end of the rally as opposed to the upper end. Despite this, it is very possible the original sales will turn out just fine when it comes to the time of delivery but what are some ways to protect against selling too soon aside from buying

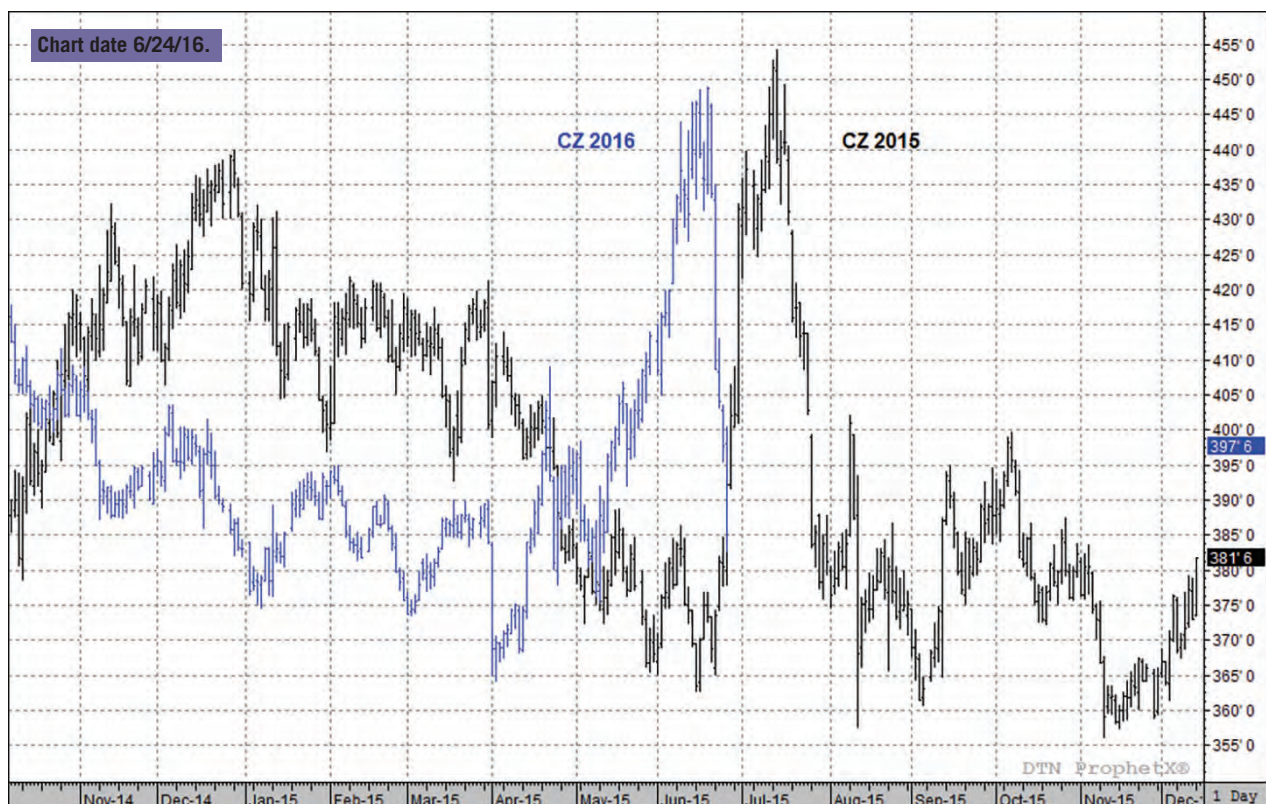
back a position in the futures market? Here are some thoughts:

An easy plan to talk about, but can be hard to do, is keep selling the rally. Scale up selling helps bring up the average price and helps achieve being in the top half of the price range instead of the lower half.

Minimum Price Contracts involve selling the grain and then buying back a Call Option that allows the contract to gain value when the market moves above an established strike price. There is a cost to these contracts that is for the purchase of the Call Option. The downside risk is limited to the cost of the option while the upside is unlimited.

Min-Max Contracts are similar to Minimum Price Contracts except there is an additional sale of a higher strike price Call Option to cheapen the cost, but it limits the upside potential.

**December 2015 versus December 2016 corn chart...\$4.50 was a great sale a year ago.**



# Doing the Right Th

Farming the rolling hills of Henry and Mercer counties in Illinois has been a way of life at Nelson Family Farms for four generations.

After years of working the ground to death, and milking the last bushel of corn and soybeans from every available acre, Doug and Neal Nelson have now shifted full throttle into conservation mode.

With one eye on the future, and the

other focusing on the immediate importance being placed on water quality issues, the Nelsons want to be leaders when it comes to protecting the environment.

“At the end of the day, it’s just the right thing to do,” said Doug, 60, and a member of the River Valley Coop Board of Directors.

“We’re just trying to be proactive,” said his son, Neal, 35, who serves on

the Henry County Soil and Water Conservation District board. “When we first started talking about implementing CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) border and filter strips into our operation, we said somewhere down the road it’s going to be mandatory, so why not start now.”

A little over a year ago the Nelsons decided the timing was right. In his three years on the SWCD board, Neal has seen the benefits to be gleaned.

“When I first got on the board, it was eye-opening to see the different stewardship practices, and this really pushed our future thinking,” he said. “Corn went down, and we looked at it and saw that CRP programs were a strategy that could generate more money than we’d get farming, and its environmentally the right thing to do.”

Both Neal and Doug wanted to lead by example.

“My background is with the hogs and working with the state pork producers,” said Doug. “We’re high visibility. We understand our role. We have to be leaders.

“We put manure on 250 to 300 acres a year, and I know the rules. Now, that doesn’t mean the neighbor can’t turn me in, but if you do the right things, and put filter strips in and obey set-backs, it helps keep us out of potential hot water.

“We’ve checked with individuals at the EPA, Department of Ag, and Soil and Water,” he continued, “and every one of them says we will vouch for you 100 percent if you ever get turned in because you’re doing the right thing. That’s no guarantee, but at least it’s an example.”

CRP protects millions of acres of American topsoil from erosion, and by reducing water runoff and sedimentation, it protects groundwater.

The filter strip program allowed the Nelsons to plant grass and other



(l-r) Neal and Doug Nelson discuss the progress of one of their filter strips with Jason Neidigh, Agronomy Account Manager.

# ing

native plants along open waterways and ditches, as well as along tree lines where shade may have affected crop production.

Border strips, planted with pollinator mixes that will provide better habitat for honeybees and other wildlife, were also added on field borders.

## A history of conservation

While the Nelsons are just getting started in implementing field and border strips, soil conservation has always been a big part of their farming and hog operation.

“When I first started doing no-till beans 35 years ago, I was an outcast around here,” said Doug. “I live right on Interstate 74, and one day a lady at church said she felt really bad for me.

“She said she was going by and all she could see were these weeds growing up in my field, and then she looked again and saw that the weeds were in perfect rows. I sure wasn’t going to rent any ground by no tilling, that’s for darn sure. At least for the first few years.”

To be certain, the initial impetus for the Nelsons to embrace conservation practices wasn’t solely to protect the environment. In Doug’s mind, it was a way to survive.

“Way back in the day, like everybody else, we used moldboard plows and worked the ground to death,” said Doug. “When I came back from college we went to chisel plows and started leaving residue.

“Back then, we weren’t real big, but we couldn’t farm any bigger just because we were physically wore out with all the tillage and livestock work. You just couldn’t do any more.

“The irony is that no-till was conceived to benefit the small farmer, but it just went backwards,” he continued. “Instead, it’s allowed the



(l-r) Neal and Doug Nelson are smiling now, but admit they were a little worried about the filter strips in the beginning. Neal explained, “They looked ugly when they first got seeded, then they greened up a little, then went dormant. We wondered what we did wrong, and if we’d blown a lot of money on seed. Then, almost magically overnight, it’s green again and really growing.”

larger farmer to farm that much more and get bigger.”

Today, the Nelsons make their livelihood on ground spread across two counties and multiple soil types. They farm everything from heavy, black ground to sand piles; across flat land, over rolling hills, and even one farm with an F slope.

The only tillage they do is minimal.

“Of the vertical tillage-type tools, the only piece that we own touches, at most, a quarter to a third of our acres,” said Neal. “Long-term, that tool will go by the way-side, too.”

Like anything having to do with agriculture, the Nelsons agree that farmers are slow to adopt change, and that’s especially true when it comes to conservation practices.

“Conservation is kind of like technology,” said Neal. “When yield monitors came along, it was like, ‘We don’t need them.’ Back then, other than watching it in the combine cab, they really were a waste of money because they weren’t doing a whole lot – at least not to the point of what we’re doing now.

“Now, it’s a no-brainer to have them, and a necessary tool. It just takes a few people to do it for others to see the benefits. Once the neighbor does it, you start to think that maybe it’s something for me.”

Soil conservation and water quality issues are definitely something that have not only caught the Nelsons’ attention, but something they’re seemingly staking the future of their operation on.

“We’ve talked about buffer and filter strips for years,” said Doug. “There were always programs out there, and it would’ve been a good idea, but at \$7 corn nobody puts in buffer strips because you can make too much money.

“Now, at the very least, it’s not costing you any extra because you’re getting some payments, and you wouldn’t be generating that much more by farming those marginal areas.”

“If we’re going to be completely honest,” added Neal, “when there was \$7 corn there were waterways and

*Continued on page 12*

# Doing the Right Thing (continued from page 11)

other areas that we were farming, and probably shouldn't have been. But, it's just the nature of the CRP.

"They were poor waterways, anyway, but we had to make somewhat of an attempt to farm them because they had to be farmed for a couple of years if you wanted to put them back in CRP. It just so happened that corn and bean prices were high enough and made you feel OK about it."

## Getting started

The CRP process was definitely time-consuming, and the Nelsons spent countless hours working with soil and water conservation experts, looking at maps and trying to decide what ground would work, and which acres would qualify.

The Nelsons also received plenty of help from River Valley Agronomy Account Manager Jason Neidigh.

"Filter strips are relatively new in our area and we definitely encourage them," said Neidigh. "There are a lot of places where it needs to be done."

Neidigh said that farmers who work with River Valley's YieldVantage Premier program are able to look at every acre of their ground, and see the pluses and minuses.

"We provide them with fertility maps because there is a certain fertility level criteria that needs to be met for these programs," he said.

"With the maps and yield monitors, we were able to utilize data we got from the edges of fields, along open ditches and near tree lines to verify where our yields were low," said Neal. "We could see where we were spending lot of time and money putting in a crop, and not getting a return."

"It's a complicated," added Doug, "but when everybody works together, it's doable. It just takes a plan."

The Nelsons planted more than 40

acres of filter and border strips this spring, including 13 acres on one farm in Mercer County. They are quick to admit that for a family that loves things to look neat and tidy, they are struggling a bit while watching the native grasses take root.

"It's a bit of a mental challenge for us," said Doug. "We try to mow and make everything look nice and neat around our land, but we can't touch these strips for three years. You just let them go so they can reseed."

"They looked ugly when they first got seeded," added Neal. "Then they greened up a little, then went dormant, and we were worried the residual chemicals from previous years might have affected it.

"We wondered what we did wrong, and if we'd blown a lot of money on seed. Then, almost magically overnight, it's green again and really growing."

And, the seeds in the pollinator mixes aren't cheap.

"These aren't 'off the shelf' seeds," said Doug. "There's a lot of different seeds in a mix, and they cost about \$50 an acre extra."

"The mix of seeds is made to time out so that when one species finishes blooming and completes its life cycle, another one starts to bloom."

"And you only apply a quarter pound of seed per acre," said Doug. "It's similar to spreading poppy seeds, but it's worth it. With the decline in honeybees and butterflies, we need pollinator programs like these. In some places we're getting to the point where we're mowing ditches and spraying so much that wildlife habitats have disappeared."

## Looking ahead

The Nelsons are still getting used to looking at the strips of native grasses growing on the edges of their fields,



Rye is just one of many plants in the pollinator seed mix that the Nelsons planted.

and they're already looking ahead to possible future projects.

"It's not a perfect science, and after this first year we've even seen some things we might want to change down the road," said Doug.

"When managed the right way, this is a very appropriate program," added Neal. "We're on the right track in terms of putting strips in environmentally sensitive areas. It's a work in progress.

"If the funding was there, and we didn't have the budget issues we have in this country, I'd probably go into the office right now and start tweaking and signing up and reshaping. Now that we've gotten to farm the ground a little bit, I'd tweak it a little bit to accommodate sprayers and planters, and maybe add a few acres here and there." The Nelsons are committed to making soil conservation and water quality a focal point of their farming operation, almost to the point where they rank right up with hogs, which have been a mainstay.

"We do a lot of things, where, like I said, we're leaders by example," said Doug. "And that's both good and bad. We've certainly done our share of things where people have wondered what we're doing.

"Even what we're doing now isn't a perfect science, but for us, and the environment, it's the right thing to do."

# Stay Warm With Propane This Winter

Providing a comfortable home for your family is important to you. At River Valley it is import to us, too, and right now is the time to lock in your future winter needs on home heating propane. Historical records show that summer is the best time of the year to lock in your heating needs before winter's cold weather drives the market up.

Listed below are **three options** River Valley is offering to our customers. We urge you to sign up on the program that fits your needs the best.

## Home Heat Contracts >

**PROPANE**  
EXCEPTIONAL ENERGY™

### Prepaid

Total due when contract is assigned.

### Even Pay Plan

Last year's usage or an estimate of your usage is used to figure the total and this is divided into even monthly payments.

### No Money Down

A signed contract locks in the price and payment is due on monthly statement.

All current "auto fill" customers will be automatically summer filled. If you do not want to be summer filled, please call us as soon as possible. If you normally call us for a delivery (not an auto fill) you will need to call us to be summer filled.

Prices are subject to change with market fluctuations, so call us for more information and lock in your propane needs today. We appreciate your business and look forward to serving your energy needs.

**Durant Energy**  
563-785-4808  
800-730-2838

**Geneseo Energy**  
309-944-4616  
800-359-4312



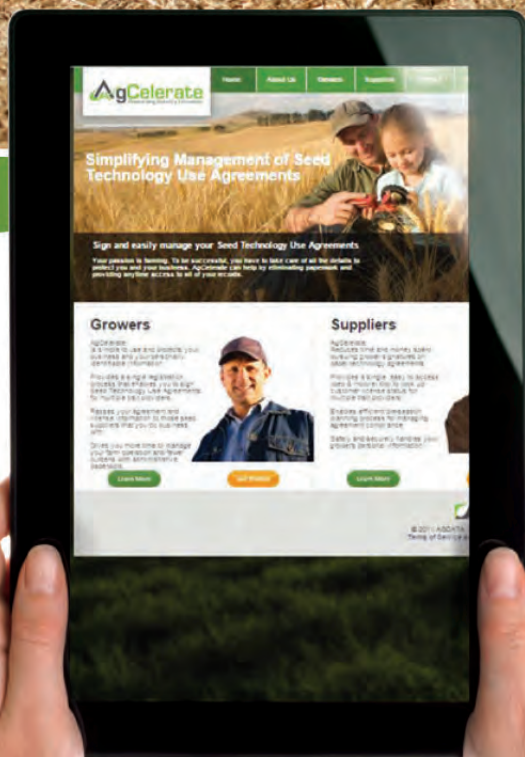
## Refer a Friend PROGRAM

**\$50 For You - \$50 For A Friend!\***

\*Current River Valley Cooperative propane customers who refer a friend, family member, or neighbor to our Energy Department and the new customer purchases or contracts a minimum of 300 gallons of propane within three months, both will receive a \$50 credit on their propane account. Contact our Energy Department for details or complete a referral form online at [www.rivervalleycoop.com/referralprogram](http://www.rivervalleycoop.com/referralprogram). \$50 credit to be used toward customer's next propane purchase and must be used within one year of issuance. No cash value. Additional exclusions may apply.



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but, **PAPERWORK** takes time.



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ALLEY**  
**COOPERATIVE**

# Weaning Calves for a Healthy Start

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These last couple months have been great for crops and cattle. Most of the first crop of hay was baled without getting rained on, what a difference compared to a year ago. With the prediction of La Niña weather this summer, cattle might have less days on grass. Less grass could turn into feeding cows earlier this year, which can also result in weaning calves earlier. Trust me, I am not trying to jinx our weather!

Weaning is the most stressful time of a calf's life. Stress can take a toll on the development and value of your cattle. Calves can go through several traumatic events in a short amount of time such as: being weaned from the cow, commingling, new environment, new diet, castration, vaccinations. If the mother of the calf is well supplemented during gestation, she will transfer trace minerals to the fetus and the calf will then be born with stored levels of copper, zinc, and selenium. From birth to weaning, mineral stores of the calf decreases. By weaning time, the trace mineral status of the calf is often deficient. At weaning, the challenges can be overwhelming and every effort must be made to keep stress minimal. Calves with

an abundant trace mineral status will experience less impact from weaning and shipping stress when compared to those calves who are trace mineral deficient. How can we improve mineral statuses of our starting cattle? Creep feeds can help increase minerals before weaning as well as free choice mineral that calves can reach. We can also provide these calves with a palatable feed or tub that is has higher levels of minerals (preferably chelated) and vitamins for the first 14-21 days of being weaned or started in a feedlot. This can help reduce mortality and morbidity, increase the feed intakes of calves, and get them off to a healthy start every cattle producer likes to see.

## Four Tips for Reducing Stress on Cattle

1. Avoid dietary changes. Keep them on same ration 14-21 days after weaning or receiving cattle.
2. Wean in ideal weather (if possible).
3. Provide clean water.
4. Check gates, fences, and feed bunks before cattle arrive in pen.



# One Powerful Tool

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Many of you have attended our Answer Plot® events around River Valley's trade area. These demo plots are a tremendous resource for River Valley to showcase and demonstrate many of the products and practices that we recommend for our growers' acres to help them maximize their return on investment. The demo plots are only a small part of the Answer Plot® system. The most powerful piece of the system is the research plots and R7® tool that feeds from this research.

The R7® tool is the most advanced data-driven seed placement and selection tool in the ag industry. It allows River Valley's seed sellers to compare and select hybrids specifically matched to the management practices and conditions in each field and management zone within a growers' operation. How does it do this? Through highly accurate, replicated data from across multiple soil types, weather conditions, and growing environments.

When looking at plot data, it is critically important to look at the LSD. This will tell us statistically how many bushels of difference between hybrids or tests we need to use for those results to be statistically different. In many plots and trials, the LSD is around 8-12 bushels for corn. This means that every hybrid or trial in that plot that yields within 8-12 bushels of each other statistically is the same. This also means that in most plot trials there really is no significant difference in hybrid performance. In the research plots there are so many replications of the same hybrid and test that we generally see LSDs of 1-2 bushels, meaning almost all reported yield differences are statistically significant and meaningful.

By using data that is this precise, it allows the true characteristics of a hybrid to be shown. This information is



then fed into the R7® tool in order to not only determine how a hybrid will react on various soil types and yield environments, but also how it will adjust and perform under various management practices and products. By using this information, your River Valley agronomist can then custom place the right genetic, in the right place, under the right management conditions to achieve maximum yields. The R7® tool also gives River Valley's seed team an almost three-year advantage in placement and management of hybrids as they come to market as the guess work and pitfalls common to new product launches have already been discovered. This allows you, the grower, to gain a competitive advantage by optimizing the latest high-yielding genetics precisely where they make the most sense one to two years before your competition. It also allows for improved scouting and nutrient placement options within the crop year as we at River Valley know

Soil Type	Year	Hybrid	Yield
1 (S)	2015	DKC65-59RIB	268.5
		P1839YHR	268.9
		860V73PRIB	269.4
2	2015	P1479AM	253.5
		P1401VYHR	253.5
		DKC67-72	250.8
3	2015	P1639YHR	250.5
		DKC67-72	249.7
		P1802AMX	248.3
4	2015	DKC66-59RIB	245.3
		DKC63-71RIB	244.8
		DKC67-72	244.6
5	2015	DKC65-59RIB	243.5
		708V72PRIB	240.4
		6640V73PRIB	239.0
6	2015	860V73PRIB	238.9
		N74R-3000GT	238.3
		N78S-3111	237.8
7	2015	2C799	237.2
		N74L-GT	231.9
		N78A-GT/CBLL	230.3
8	2015	P1318MRW	225.9
		2C799	224.5
		2Y744	224.3
9	2015	2Y767	224.1
		N75H-3010A	216.0
		N73V-3111	213.6
10	2015	DKC65-59RIB	259.7
		DKC63-71RIB	253.9
		DKC65-59RIB	253.2
11	2015	DKC63-71RIB	249.4
		DKC67-72	247.3
		P1479AM	239.9
12	2015	DKC65-59RIB	236.6
		DKC63-71RIB	235.6
		DKC66-59RIB	235.2
13	2015	708V72PRIB	235.2
		N78S-3111	233.5
		860V73PRIB	233.4
14	2015	860V73PRIB	232.7
		2C799	232.2
		N74R-3000GT	231.5
15	2015	N78S-3111	230.9
		DKC67-72	230.0
		DKC63-71RIB	228.9
16	2015	DKC65-59RIB	228.9
		708V72PRIB	228.9
		860V73PRIB	227.5
17	2015	860V73PRIB	227.5
		2C799	225.1
		N78S-3111	224.2
18	2015	DKC67-72	223.6
		P1318MRW	223.0
		N74R-3000GT	222.0
19	2015	N74L-GT	222.0
		N78A-GT/CBLL	218.1
		2Y744	218.4
20	2015	2C799	218.3
		2Y767	217.2
		2Y744	210.5
21	2015	N75H-3010A	210.4
		N73V-3111	207.6

from the R7® data which hybrids will show the most economic return on fertilizer and plant health investments and can zero in on those products. The R7® tool, coupled with the agronomic knowledge of your River Valley agronomists, YieldVantage nutrient placement and analysis functions gives River Valley an unparalleled advantage when it comes to leading with seed in the complete systems management of your acres. To get a better look at how this approach can help you earn more money on every kernel of seed you buy please contact your River Valley agronomist today for a demonstration.





# On-Site Fuel Brings Added Benefits *(continued from page 5)*

that point I'm paying him up to two hours on a weekend and if there are four or five of them, he just killed all day Sunday. Now we can pull them up here, fill them, back them up in a row, let them run, and top them off if needed. That is huge for us."

Jamie mentioned that their fuel reporting people like the system, too. They get a little more detailed report and don't have to wonder if the guys are going to write it down when they fill up or if they miss one.

Jim said, "The drivers have really adapted to the system and have even started a challenge amongst themselves to increase mileage. We download the truck computers every week to look at idle times, their speeds, all of these sorts of things and discuss how they can be improved."

"As the owner, you see dollar signs", says Jim. "We run

to Columbia, Missouri, quite a lot. Now I can tell you exactly what it costs me in fuel to go to Columbia and back. It's so easy. I can pull up here, make sure it's topped off before I leave, and top it off when I get back. You could never do that before. It's made it easier to put rates together because you know exactly what it's costing.

You buy better, you save, you get better fuel mileage. That's huge, that's really huge. That's one thing I didn't even think about when putting in the on site fuel system. That wasn't even a thought, it was just something that came along with it."



**Automated Fuel Delivery**



(l-r) Pat Steward, Certified Energy Specialist, with Jim Farr, owner of Farr Transport, in front of the fuel tank and fueling system.



# Sign Your Grain Documents Electronically

River Valley Cooperative now offers DocuSign® to help make your farming operation convenient and hassle-free. DocuSign®, is an electronic signature platform that we have implemented in our grain business unit. DocuSign® allows you to sign documents anywhere, anytime, on any device. That's right, you can now electronically sign your River Valley Cooperative grain business documents from the cab of your truck, tractor, or combine! Grain contracts will be sent directly to your

email address where you can access them from your phone, computer, or tablet, and sign easily and securely. The document will be available to be printed from your email for your own personal records at any time. It is as easy to use as sign, send, done. Contact our grain accounting department or your grain originator to learn more.



## Safety Training for Our Community Fire Departments



Brian Oostenryk, RVC Location Manager, presented a check to Chief Doug Rutledge and members of the Erie Fire & Ambulance Department after a recent training session.

RVC's Fenton location recently hosted a tour and anhydrous ammonia training session for members of the Erie Fire & Ambulance Department, Erie, Illinois.

Providing the tour was Brian Oostenryk, Fenton Location Manager. He also assisted Lon Warnecke, Safety and Compliance Director, with the anhydrous ammonia training. At the close of the evening Brian presented a check to the fire department as a thank you for attending.

River Valley appreciates all of our local fire departments and has provided similar training at the following locations this year:

- **Jones County Fire Meeting - Oxford Junction Fire Department** - Oxford Junction, Iowa: Anhydrous ammonia training - attended by most Jones County, Iowa fire departments.

- **Bennett Fire Department** - Bennett, Iowa: Cofferdam grain bin rescue tube training.
- **Long Grove Fire Department** - Long Grove, Iowa: March - Anhydrous ammonia training - also attending were McCausland, Princeton, Eldridge, and Donahue fire departments. April - Propane safety training - also attending were Eldridge, Princeton, and Donahue fire departments.
- **Olin Hose Company** - Olin, Iowa: Anhydrous ammonia training.

Thank you to River Valley employees Russell Brand, Don Schneckloth, Steve Lyon, Ron Zimmerman, Jake Evans, Hobie Stutt, Brian Oostenryk, Lon Warnecke, and others for volunteering your time at these training sessions.

# River Valley Cooperative Board Election

**R**iver Valley has a nine-person board who set policy and oversee operations and future development of the company. Board members are elected from our active Class A farming membership. Terms are three years and are set up on a rotation with three of the board seats up for election each year. This year the board seats held by Dean Adrian of Maquoketa, Tom Weiland of Stanwood, and an open board seat formerly held by Dan Baum of Geneseo, are up for election. Dean is seeking another term

and Tom Weiland has decided not to seek another term after many years of serving on your board. We appreciate both Dan and Tom's time and commitment over the past years.

A nominating committee will be active in June and early July contacting possible candidates. If any active Class A member would have interest in serving, please reach out to either Doug Nelson, nominating chair at 309-945-8808, or Tom Leiting at 563-285-1731.

## Let's Get Social



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Follow our employees on Twitter  
@LifeAtRVCoop



Follow us on LinkedIn  
@ [www.linkedin.com/company/river-valley-cooperative](http://www.linkedin.com/company/river-valley-cooperative)



Be sure to check out our new website at [www.rivervalleycoop.com](http://www.rivervalleycoop.com)

## Unclaimed Patronage Distributions

The following members have unclaimed patronage distributions. The disbursement will be forfeited to the cooperative unless a claim is filed for the disbursement within six months of the publication date. To file a claim for disbursement please contact River Valley Cooperative at (563) 285-7820 or write to P.O. Box 256, Eldridge, IA 52748.

ALLEN, JASON  
ARP, KENT  
BLOOM, WILLIAM  
BLUNK, ROD  
BRADEN ACRES INC  
CLINE INC

GUTSCHLAG, STEVEN D  
HOWARD, RICHARD (MARILYN)  
JOHNSTON, ALAN K  
LACOCK, JOHN  
LARSON, ELIZABETH  
LINDQUIST, JERROD

MONAGHAN, JOHN  
NEDCO  
PROSKE, FRANK  
RIELING, DARRELL K  
RYAN, KEVIN J  
RYLANDER, DAVID J

SHRECK, LEWIS  
TENLEY, DEREK  
VAN WASSENHOVE, ROBERT  
WILLMARK FARMS INC

*Please Join Us!*

RIVER VALLEY COOPERATIVE

*Family*



FUN NIGHT

*at the Ballpark*

Tickets available at the River Valley Cooperative table located outside of the stadium on game night.

**QUAD CITIES - Friday, July 29th**

Game Time 7:00 pm (gates open at 6:00 pm)  
Quad Cities River Bandits vs. Peoria Chiefs  
Modern Woodmen Park • Davenport, IA



**CEDAR RAPIDS - Friday, Aug. 5th**

Game Time 6:35 pm (gates open at 5:35 pm)  
Cedar Rapids Kernels vs. Clinton Lumberkings  
Veterans Memorial Stadium • Cedar Rapids, IA



**BURLINGTON - Friday, Aug. 12th**

Game Time 6:30 pm (gates open at 5:30 pm)  
Burlington Bees vs. Clinton Lumberkings  
Community Field • Burlington, IA

