

S RIVER VALLEY COOPERATIVE SOLUTIONS

March 2015



Shannon Verbeck • Ag Operations • Annawan Location

RIVER VALLEY

COOPERATIVE

Your Success – Our Future

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COOPERATIVE

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Locations

Altona • Annawan • Clarence
Dixon • Donahue • DeWitt • Durant
Eldridge • Fenton • Galva
Geneseo • Lost Nation • Martelle
Olin • Osco • Ryan • Sperry • Stanwood
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Board of Directors

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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.

Women in Agriculture Conference

Thursday, March 19

Optional Special Thursday Night Dinner & Conversation

Featuring Dr. David Kohl – Building Resiliency & Agility

Social Hour at 6:00 p.m. • Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

Presentation at 7:15 p.m.

Friday, March 20

Registration & Light Breakfast: 8:00–8:30 a.m.

Welcome and Comments: 8:30 a.m.

Door Prizes & Send Off: 3:35–4:00 p.m.

Jumer's Casino & Hotel

777 Jumer's Drive • Rock Island, IL

River Valley Cooperative is proud to be a sponsor again this year and we invite you to attend.



This year's speaker is a nationally known agriculture expert and economist, Dr. David Kohl. Kohl received his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Agricultural Economics from Cornell University. For 25 years, Kohl was Professor of Agricultural Finance and Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia. He was on special leave with the Royal Bank of Canada working on advanced initiatives for two years, and also assisted in the launch of the successful entrepreneurship program at Cornell University. Kohl is Professor Emeritus in the Agricultural and Applied Economics Department at Virginia Tech and regularly writes for Corn and Soybean Digest, and other ag lending publications.

Additional speakers will include: Cathy Ekstrand, Stewart Peterson Consulting; Martha Smith, University of Illinois Horticulture Educator; Tim Harris of Capital Agricultural Property Service; Rita Cook of Coalition to Support Iowa Farmer's and Lauren Lurkins of the Illinois Farm Bureau.

Choose from a wide range of breakout sessions:

- Coalition to Support Iowa Farmers
- Farm Leases: How Do I Know Which Lease to Use?
- Work-Life Balance
- Speaking with Consumers About Agriculture
- Marketing: It's What Sets You Apart (Marketing 101)
- Vegetable Gardening 101
- Environmental Issues Facing Agriculture
- Does This Marketing Plan Look Good on Me? (Marketing 201)

"Confessions of a Farm Wife" Live Podcast - 3:10-3:35 p.m.

Register online @

www.womeninagricultureconference.com.

WOMEN in AGRICULTURE

Manager's Report

Tom Leiting • General Manager, CEO • tleiting@rivervalleycoop.com

At the end of December, your River Valley Cooperative hit a new milestone with a reported net worth of slightly over \$81 million. This would be the first time we booked a net worth over \$80 million and represents a 48% increase in net worth of your organization from 2010, or five years ago.

Your cooperative has had the opportunity to capture value from the past five years of record farm profitability as you have within your farming operation. Just as you have reinvested in your farming operation over the past five years, your board has directed reinvestment in your cooperative with about \$50 million spent on fixed assets, technology, software and rolling stock investments since 2010. Your board has attempted to spend wisely, by investing in asset changes that fit current and future needs for grain and product movement versus historical asset replacement. This has not always been easy to do, both from attempting to forecast future needs as well as the hard recognition we cannot be everything in all communities our parent companies had operated facilities in the past. Assets we build today are designed for efficiency of today's farm size and scale and require a larger distribution area than facilities built back in the 1970s and 80s. Ultimately, the investments made today have to bring value to our customer operations of today and tomorrow for your cooperative to remain competitive and relevant for our members.

As your board has positioned the balance sheet of your

cooperative over the past five years they have committed to allocating qualified equity (what you pay taxes on in the year it is earned) in a manner and quantity that the company

can revolve in a timely manner and return to you. Forty percent of what is allocated each year is paid in cash in August and 60% is issued as Qualified Preferred Stock. At their January 2015 board meeting the board approved paying the 2002 (oldest year out) Qualified Preferred Stock of approximately \$2.1 million. This revolvment was put into the mail to our member owners in the first week of February. Since 2010 about \$12 million of deferred equity has been paid back to our member owners. The board's goal is to revolve back to our member-owners between seven and eight percent of the total qualified preferred stock pool on an annual basis. They have exceeded this goal over the past five years.

We recognize, that as on the farm, your River Valley Cooperative will be impacted in our business with lower corn and soybean prices than what we have seen for some time. We also appreciate what the past five years have done financially for your cooperative and our member-owners to weather a few years of financial downturn. Thanks for your business and opportunity to work together both in the good times and in the downturn times. We make a pretty good team together.



MESZ Makes More Sense

Jimmie Daugherty • Precision Ag Specialist • jdaugherty@rivervalleycoop.com • Follow on Twitter @ DaughertyJimmie

MicroEssentials® SZ™ or MESZ is a phosphate and micronutrient combination fertilizer product from Mosaic. The analysis is 12-40-0-10s-1zn. MESZ has been viewed by many as a premium product with a premium price. The reality is that it is a fertilizer source with a unique blend of micro and macronutrients that yields better Return on Investment (ROI) than traditional dry phosphate only fertilizers.

When we look at the analysis of MESZ vs MAP (11-52-0) the sulfur and zinc jump out at us immediately. We know that phosphorus is a critical

macronutrient in plant growth. Phosphorus aids in root growth, nutrient production and transportation, photosynthetic activity, as well as the genetic transfer of characteristics (seed production) from one generation to the next. We, as growers and producers, are well aware that without sufficient levels of P in our soils and plants our yields will suffer greatly, but what functions do the other components of MESZ play in crop development?

Sulfur has become the sexiest of the micronutrients lately. As we have seen our air become cleaner, the

reduction in acid rain has led to there being less sulfur being naturally added to the soils and more being removed by increasing crop yields. These factors have led to widespread sulfur deficiencies across the corn belt. Sulfur acts as a structural component of peptides and proteins within the corn plant that help it to grow and assimilate nitrogen (especially the nitrate form) and phosphates. Sulfur also plays a critical role in helping to produce other plant compounds that are essential to chlorophyll production and photosynthesis.

Sulfur comes in two primary forms in fertilizers: elemental (i.e. 90% sulfur granules), and sulfate. In order for a plant to use elemental sulfur it must first be broken down into sulfate by soil microbes and mycorrhizal fungi. Much of this activity does not occur until soils have warmed adequately in the spring. As a consequence of this, if a grower is only using elemental sulfur to supplement then it will not be available to a young plant as it tries to grow rapidly. The sulfur MESZ is comprised of 50% elemental and 50% sulfate. This means that it will deliver sulfur to young plants when they need the nutrient most to rapidly grow roots and tops, as well as slowly release sulfur to a plant during later growth stages when the plant needs sulfur for nitrogen efficiency and grain fill. Applications of sulfur



Phosphorus

Zinc

Sulfur

have shown numerous profitable yield responses in trials, as well as consistent 4% higher ROI in multi-year real world applications.

Zinc is one of the most critical, and least talked about nutrients in high yield crop production. Zinc itself does not cause any one function. Instead, it is an essential component of enzymes, hormones, and growth regulating auxins throughout a plant. Traces of zinc can be found in virtually every type of yield regulating and growth function in a corn plant. Zinc fertilization is critical to the initial root development and growth of a young corn plant, as well as throughout its life cycle. When a corn plant is young and the roots are not fully developed soil microbes are not releasing enough zinc to adequately feed the plant. When this is coupled with zinc's immobility in corn plants it becomes crucial to have a readily available zinc fertilizer source like MESZ throughout the growing season. Applications of zinc have shown a consistent 13% higher ROI in real world scenarios over multiple crop years.

By combining phosphate, elemental and sulfate sulfur, as well as zinc into one product, MESZ is able to not only address the nutrient deficiencies most common in a young and vulnerable corn plant, it also has the staying power to continue to reduce yield limiting deficiencies

that can cost your bottom line later in the season. MESZ is also able to give a much better agronomic fit to applying these nutrients in correct proportion through variable rate. In order to achieve the same analysis using MAP a grower is forced to blend multiple products together and then spread them as a blend or increase applications. Blended products become difficult to maintain consistency of mixing and spreading as each product has its own density, shape, and spread characteristics - picture trying to throw a Frisbee® and a handful of rocks at the same time into a five-gallon bucket 20 feet away. This is exactly what it looks like at the back of the applicator when zinc, sulfur granules, and MAP are blended and spread. With MESZ all of the nutrients are bound into each pellet so that as you vary the rate to match your fertility to yield management zone you increase all of these crucial nutrients in MESZ uniformly across the entire application width.

When margins are tight growers need to maximize the ROI of every input. By combining nutrients that have proven themselves as high ROI products into a single form, MESZ is able to give growers a higher ROI on their fertilizer investment vs MAP. Further, the combining of these high ROI products into one pellet ensures even spreading of all nutrients for more consistent yields and higher field averages. MESZ is able to produce a 7% higher gross ROI while being less expensive than purchasing its critical fertilizer components separately.





Heating Oil – When to Buy

Kayla Tebbe • Certified Energy Specialist • kayla.tebbe@chsinc.com

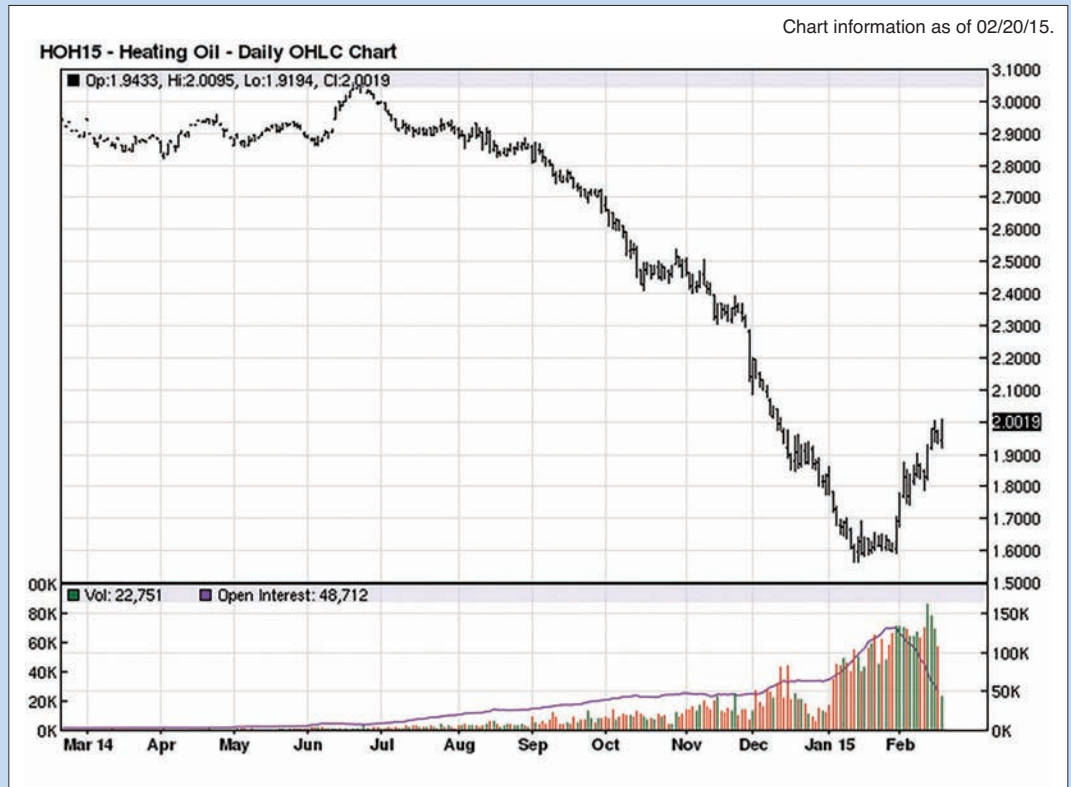
No one knows where the bottom of this crazy roller coaster of crude oil and heating oil prices will be. Many of you are probably wondering when is the right time to buy and how much should you should buy. Below is a chart depicting the previous 12 month heating oil pricing off the NYMX (prices at New York Harbor). Key things you should consider are, heating oil prices are currently at the best value seen in five years and are way below any budgeted targets for 2015. Be careful getting too long with purchases solely based on taking advantage of historically low pricing but also cover risks for upward movement that may impact your business’s budget for 2015. Best case scenario would be to start or continue to layer in contracts to cover market volatility risk. Contact your energy specialist to learn more.

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Key Energy Highlights

- United States oil rig counts have dropped across the country, but oil production has been steady. US oil output is roughly one million barrels per day higher than this time last year.
- The EIA (Energy Information Administration – the data arm of the US Department of Energy) updated their prices forecasts. They expect WTI (West Texas Intermediate crude oil) to average \$55 per barrel in 2015 and \$71 per barrel in 2016.
- The US dollar has come off of its highs which some have used to explain the recent rally in WTI (West Texas Intermediate crude oil).
- The House of Representatives passed the Keystone XL pipeline bill, but as you’ve probably read, this will likely get vetoed by President Obama.
- Most reports show that Russia and Saudi Arabia (the number one and number two crude oil producers in the world) continue to increase production. The EIA (International Energy Agency) recently published an interesting article on Saudi Arabia’s wealth fund, stating the Saudi’s remain in a much better financial position than most of the other OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) members. By most accounts, Saudi Arabia has the cheapest crude oil production costs in the world (some fields less than \$10 per barrel). However, production costs ≠ the oil price needed to balance government spending.
- The IEA (International Energy Agency) reported 2014 global oil demand increased by 640,000 barrels per day from 2013. Non-OPEC supply was up 1.6 million barrels per day according to the IEA. Other sources have estimated non-OPEC supply growth closer to two million year on year.

Spring Calving is Here or Near!

Shawna Spain, Livestock Production Specialist • 563-320-7276 • sspain@rivervalleycoop.com

It seems like majority of the producers in our trade area are either a few weeks into calving season, or will be starting in the near future. It is a busy time of the year for livestock farmers with spring calving, possibly scooping snow out of feed bunks, and getting equipment ready for spring fieldwork. Checking cows throughout the day and making sure the calving pens are freshly bedded are now on the daily to-do-list.

After the calf is born, it is important to start thinking about the cow's nutrition now that she is in lactation. In early lactation, her nutritional requirements for energy and protein increase. To keep her in great condition, more protein and energy will be required in her daily diet. It would be ideal to separate cows based on where they are in reproduction (last 1/3 gestation versus early lactation) during the calving season.

While touching on nutritional requirements during the calving season, it would be appropriate to talk about what can be done 365 days a year to increase the profit potential of your herd. Sustained® Nutrition, a 12-month cow care program helps support cows' nutrition and their calves year after year. When does a cow support for only

herself? The answer is never (hopefully never). If she is producing a calf every 12 months, she could be providing for two or three (herself, calf at side, and developing fetus) at the same time. It has been found that a calf's performance at slaughter start from what the cow's nutrition was throughout the entire gestation period. Sustained® Nutrition has benefited cow herds by improved conception rates, increased weaning weights, and increased calf health.

How can you provide Sustained® Nutrition to your cow herd? Having a balanced ration or a free choice supplement that includes both protein and energy available to your herd all year round. The supplement consumption will be based on the forage quality and quantity. When forage is short or lower quality, they will consume more of the supplement. At pasture turn out, when pasture is in great condition, they will consume less of the supplement. It makes sense to ensure they have the nutrition they need 365 days a year. Do doctors want women to lose weight during pregnancy? The answer is no. Then, why is it okay for cows to lose weight when they are pregnant?



9:30 AT NIGHT.

No Problem.

3:00 IN THE MORNING.

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**Our 24/7 Fertilizer Load Out Facilities
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Illinois: Geneseo, Galva

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• Corn Starter Products • RVC In-Furrow Starter Mix

Contact your nearest RVC location for details.



What is a Cooperative?

A cooperative is a business that is owned and controlled by the people who use and benefit from its services.



COOPERATIVE

Your Success – Our Future



Your board of directors meets regularly with RVC's management team.

Did you know that these companies are part of the cooperative system?



Cooperatives actually date back thousands of years. The first recognized cooperative business in the U.S. was a mutual fire insurance company, founded in 1752 by Benjamin Franklin, which continues to operate today. Although River Valley Cooperative isn't quite that old, our roots do go back to 1906, when a group of local farmers pooled their grain together. They had a need, fulfilled it, and a cooperative was born.

River Valley Cooperative is just one of over 47,000 cooperatives operating throughout the U.S. There are many type of cooperatives and they are in every business sector of our economy. These include agronomy cooperatives (like ours), housing, food, health care, energy, child care, credit unions, and insurance companies, just to name a few.

Cooperatives are like most other businesses, but being a cooperative makes us unique in many different ways. Our business is based on the standard seven cooperative principles of:

- Voluntary and open membership
- Democratic member control
- Economic participation by members
- Autonomy and independence
- Education, training and information
- Cooperation among cooperatives
- Concern for community

Thank you for choosing River Valley Cooperative. We take great pride in serving you and the communities where we all live, work, and play.

New Soybean Seed Treatment Offers SDS Protection

Dustin Hoeft • Seed Business Lead • dhoeft@rivervalleycoop.com

If you have grown soybeans in the last 20 years in Iowa or in Illinois you are well aware of the soybean disease called Sudden Death Syndrome (SDS). This devastating and demoralizing disease was first discovered in Arkansas in 1971 and moved north to Illinois by 1986 and to Iowa by 1993.

SDS has contributed to an annual estimated economic

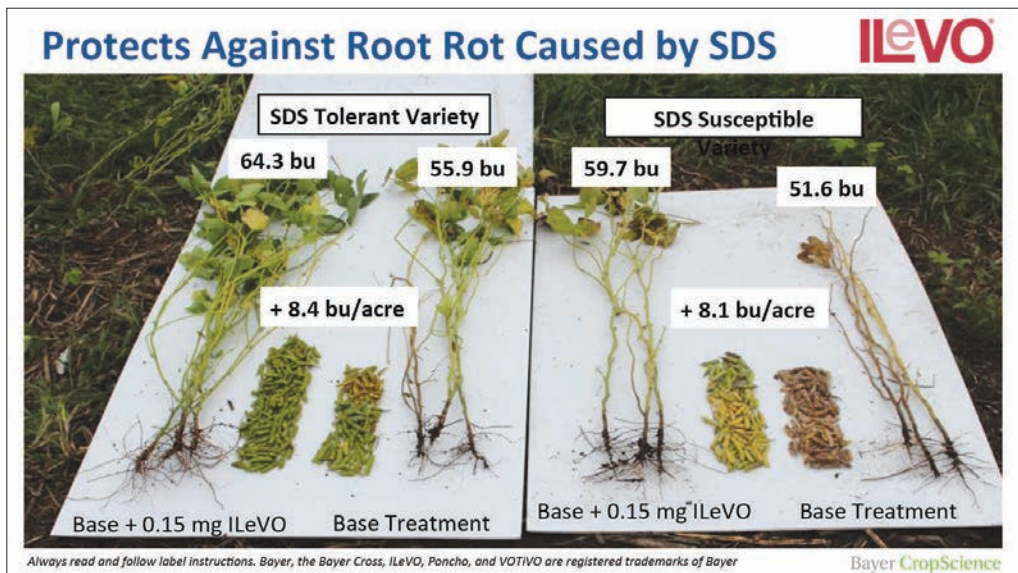
loss of over \$540 million a year and is rising. Infection of this soil born pathogen can occur within days after soybeans are planted, long before visual symptoms are ever noticed much later in the growing season. SDS is persistent in all soil types and overwinters in residue from the previous year's crop (including corn residue). Even when no visual above ground symptoms are noticed the root rot from SDS can still contribute to 20-30% yield loss. When visual symptoms are present yield loss can exceed 70% in worst cases.

Have you ever experienced this on your farm? Chances are you have and you know all too well how bad this disease can ravage your soybean crop. Until now, all you could do is hope you picked the best bean variety for your farm by evaluating tolerance ratings for SDS and hope for the best at harvest.

For the 2015 crop year Bayer CropScience has just recently received approval for a new soybean seed treatment. ILeVO™ seed treatment is the only solution for

SDS that also has activity against nematodes. ILeVO™ protects against three areas of concern:

- Foliar SDS symptoms
- Root rot caused by SDS
- Nematodes



In the test noted above, ILeVO™ has provided a yield increase as much as eight bushels on both a SDS susceptible variety as well as a tolerate variety. In field testing from 2011-2014 proved ILeVO™ seed treatment provided a positive yield response at 89% of the test site locations.

It is important to note that ILeVO™ will not completely eradicate the disease symptoms from the field but the

incidence will be lowered and plants will sustain healthier roots and maintain leaves allowing longer nutrient uptake to increase pod count provide fuller pods, thus better yields. The same variety with and without ILeVO™ seed treatment in 2014 is pictured in the photo to the left.

For this crop year River Valley Cooperative will have a limited amount of ILeVO™ to custom apply for our seed customers. Our intentions are to have good, quality, local yield data to share with you this fall, with a full launch of the product for the 2016 crop year. So please stay tuned!



Did You Know?

by Sarah Meyer • Controller • smeyer@rivervalleycoop.com

Did you know that you can have your monthly statement emailed to you?

No more waiting for postal delivery and the exact same information.

Did you know that you can have your grain settlement check direct deposited into your designated bank account?

You'll receive next business day availability on the funds and no more worrying about it getting lost in the mail. We will continue to mail or email your settlement sheets to you, whichever you prefer.

Did you know that we can pay your monthly bill automatically?

No more writing that check and wasting that postage stamp. We will deduct the funds from your designated

account on the 17th of the month or the first business day following.

Did you know that if you need help understanding your statement I will meet with you at the location nearest you?

That's right, just give me a call or send me an email and we'll set up an appointment - (563) 285-1727 or smeyer@rivervalleycoop.com.

Some of you may have received or will receive a telephone call from one of our locations asking for information to update your customer profile such as contact names, email and postal addresses, and phone numbers. Thank you for taking the time to talk with us. We want to make sure you know what we have to offer and that we are here for you, our valued customer.



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.

ANDERSEN, CHARLES J
ARENDS, DEWAYNE
B G ENTERPRISES
EINFELDT, WILLIAM
ELSE, DAVID D
FARMERS NATIONAL
FOWLER ESTATE, JOYCE
GROUNDS CONTROL
HARPER, ROY
HELMRICH, RICK

HODGE FARMS INC
JOHNSON BROS FARM PR
KENNEDY, RICKIE
LINDQUIST, JERROD
LONG MFG
LUTH, JOHN
MCCRABB PROBE-A-LOAD
MCKENNEY, WARREN
MICHL TRUST, SARA
MORGAN, IRA & BRAD

NIEHAUS, TODD
PETERS, KURT
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2,000 lbs. of Wind and Rain loose mineral

• **\$20 OFF**

1,000 lbs. of Wind and Rain loose mineral

• **\$50 OFF**

8 Wind and Rain Mineral Tubs

• **\$20 OFF**

4 Wind and Rain Mineral Tubs

Call Shawna Spain to talk about a mineral program for your cow herd today!



*Free delivery until April 1, 2015!

For more information, contact:
Shawna Spain
Livestock Specialist
563-320-7276
sspain@rivalleycoop.com



MarketEdge

RIVER VALLEY COOPERATIVE

by Mike Moellenbeck • Vice President Grain Business Unit
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Website Offer Program Gets a New Look!

If you are one of our nearly 200 users of our online offer program, you have noticed changes in this tool that is available on our website. DTN is now the provider of this tool to RVC and during the month of February we transitioned from the DPP to the DTN Offer Portal. If you have been a DPP user in the past you will need to begin using the DTN Portal to place offers, manage your orders, or review your pricing history. Through your desktop, tablet or mobile device you will need to go to www.rivervalleycoop.com and click on the following link to access the offer portal.

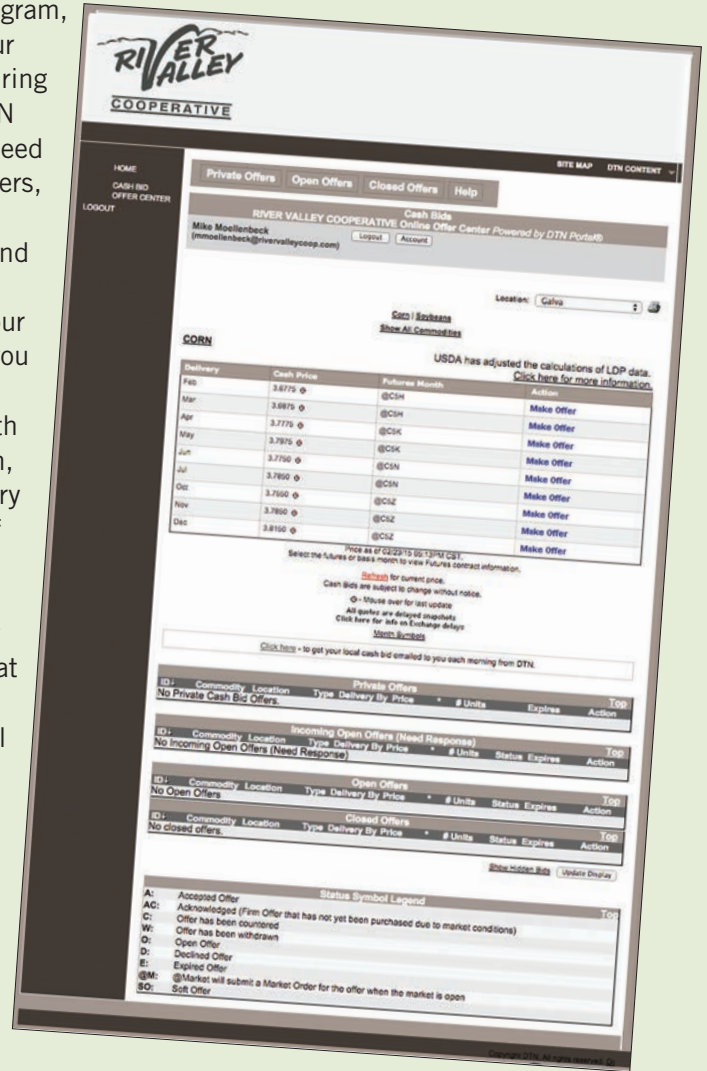
This will take you to the login page. You will need to enter your username and the temporary password previously e-mailed to you by DTN to login. Your username and temporary password were sent to your e-mail address on file with DPP in early February. Once logged in, you will need to change your temporary password to a permanent password of your choice. You may choose to reset

Click to
Make
an Offer



your temporary password to be the same as your previous password. Click on "Account" to change your password and any other information. You will need to complete the consent area at the bottom of this screen to be able to leave offers and then click on "Submit Request". You are now ready to utilize the tool to review your pricing history and leave new price offers.

If you have any questions about the DTN Grain Portal or the transition between trading platforms, please contact River Valley Coop at 563-285-1736 or email your grain originator listed below. The market need for 24/7 access to an electronic grain trading platform has never been greater, and River Valley Cooperative is expertly positioned to fulfill this need. We look forward to your continued support as we complete this transition.



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Sign up for MarketEdge and receive information regarding market news and prices daily.
Contact one of our origination team members with your e-mail to begin receiving.

The World of Fertilizer - March 2015

Larry Wenthold • Vice President Agronomy Business Unit • lwenthold@rivervalleycoop.com

There have been a lot of questions regarding fertilizer prices for this spring and what should be expected going forward. I will give you a snapshot of what is going on and some of the things affecting world supply, production and pricing.

The Big Picture: The share of total world nutrient use by major countries (N-P-K).

- China 29%, India 16%, USA 12%, Brazil 6%, all others 37%. It is important to understand this distribution of demand. Producers in the United States truly compete in the world market for access to crop nutrients.

Nitrogen

- Over the past five years the U.S. has imported, on average, 50% on the nitrogen used. This will only be 40% for 2015.
- The Ukraine/Black Sea area has been a large producer of nitrogen for the world market. The east coast of the U.S. has historically imported ammonia and 32% UAN from this part of the world. The four production plants for nitrogen in eastern Ukraine are in the middle of the conflict area. Production and transportation for export has been greatly affected.
- There are a number of nitrogen plants that are being, or have been, updated over the last several years along with some major investment in brand new greenfield projects. Some of these that will have a direct effect on our market are the Iowa Fertilizer Co. at Wever, IA (\$2 billion +), CF Industries expansion at Donaldson, LA and Port Neal, IA (\$3 billion), CHS at Spiritwood, ND (\$3 billion), Rentech expansion at East Dubuque, IL (\$200 million), along with several others across the U.S.
- The new plant at Wever, IA alone, at full capacity, will have the ability to produce enough nitrogen for seven million acres.
- Over the next four to five years if all the new proposed U.S. production capacity comes on line it could completely replace the need for imported nitrogen.
- Approximately 70% of all U.S. ammonia production today is used for agricultural products.

Phosphate

- The U.S. has been the largest exporter of manufactured phosphate in the world. Primarily DAP and MAP.
- China is gaining in a share of the world export market. China produces 65 million tons compared to the U.S. at 26 million tons.
- China, India and other Asian countries use 53% of the phosphate in the world.
- Morocco has over 60% of the world's known phosphate rock reserves.
- Mosaic, after the deal with CF Industries, controls the big majority of the production in Florida.
- The three key U.S. producers are Mosaic, Simplot and Agrium.
- Saudi Arabia and Australia are producing more phosphate with new production plants.
- Demand in South America continues to grow.

Potash

- World potash supplies are improving and at the same time world demand continues to increase.
- China, India and other Asian countries use 41% of the world's production of potash.
- Billions of dollars have been invested in increased potash production by the Canadian companies.
- Russia and Belarus, when in full production, have the capacity to produce 11.8 million tons. Canada today can produce 9.5 million tons.
- A major Russian mine has been flooded for the last several months. Exports have been limited from Russia.
- Only 14% of the potash in the world is used for corn production.

Summary:

As corn and soybean producers, we do compete in the world market for crop nutrients. Input costs over time will adjust to \$4.00 corn.

This will not happen short-term, and strong world demand will keep a balance on things for pricing. The world is big compared to the Upper Midwest and the nitrogen supply factor will be a big deal over the next couple of years as new production comes on line.

What Challenges Lie Ahead This Spring?

Jimmie Daugherty • Precision Ag Specialist • jdaugherty@rivervalleycoop.com • Follow on Twitter @ DaughertyJimmie

The largest upcoming challenge that I see for this spring will be nitrogen management and application. With the forecasted prices for corn, and potentially higher prices on nitrogen due to availability, decreasing the cost of production per bushel becomes more challenging. Cutting back on the rates of nitrogen will have an immediate and drastic effect on yield. Any decreases in yield will lead to a direct rise in the production cost for each bushel. Growers will have to make sure that they are placing every unit of nitrogen in the part of the field and at the right time to gain maximum ROI, and optimum yields. In order to do this growers are going to have to analyze their operational models and current nitrogen strategies to formulate new approaches to application and management. Growers will be

forced to abandon the inefficient one application and done nitrogen management strategy, and replace it with more investment efficient split applications. This type of approach will necessitate managing each yield zone within every field for optimum nitrogen ROI. To do this growers will have to not just formulate a different plan for each of these zones, but also have a backup plan for mother natures "if" "then". Advances in application equipment, nitrogen stabilizers, and precision programs have given growers an unprecedented ability to custom tailor their nitrogen strategies to achieve maximum ROI and yields. Getting these operational plans in place and then successfully executing them will be the deciding factor for everyone's success this upcoming year and beyond.

If You Build It, They Will Come

Tom Dale • Swine Feed Account Manager • tdale@rivervalleycoop.com • 563.357.0093

If you have ever considered putting up a contract hog building, the time is now. Demand for building space is very high. Our swine owner/producers are moving forward and are looking for pig spaces throughout our trade area. They need the buildings, so let us know if you are interested in discussing this opportunity. Build

equity, utilize fertilizer value of manure, and take pride in being part of the production of pork - a highly demanded product in our nation and the world.

If you have interest in discussing the opportunities of putting up a swine finishing facility please give me a call.



Anhydrous Ammonia Safety is Always a Priority

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This spring many of you will be applying or handling anhydrous ammonia to your corn crop which supplies essential nitrogen that corn requires. If you, a family member, or hired hands handle anhydrous ammonia, I urge all of you to take twelve minutes to view a great safety video from the Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association along with the Illinois Department of Agriculture. This twelve minute video is a very valuable safety learning aid, which makes the use of anhydrous ammonia safe when handled correctly.

Make sure you have in hand our Anhydrous Ammonia Safety Sheet for Customers – this sheet is available at our locations. It has listed safety personal protection equipment (PPE) needed to handle anhydrous ammonia safely, rules and regulations, other important safety items, and what to do in case of an emergency. Please make sure you receive indirect vented goggles and NH₃ gloves that River Valley supplies to you, and always wear them while around the equipment.

Please take your time this spring while preparing and planting your farm fields, contact me or our River Valley personnel if you have any questions on any products that you might handle this spring.

Again, I urge you to view this twelve-minute video on anhydrous ammonia safety.

The following safety information is from the Illinois Department of Agriculture, which includes two websites that will take you to the video:

Each spring and fall, farmers apply anhydrous ammonia to provide essential nitrogen to their corn crops. River Valley Cooperative and farmers transport anhydrous ammonia to the field in white nurse tanks and connect the tanks to tool bars behind a tractor. The product then is injected into the ground where it bonds to soil to provide nitrogen to the corn crop.

Because of the potentially hazardous nature of anhydrous ammonia, the Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association (IFCA) and Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) have produced a 12-minute video outlining the proper safety procedures that farmers should take each and every time they handle the product. The video highlights the most common safety errors that can lead to an anhydrous ammonia accident or release and is intended to supplement the training that the

IFCA provides each year to over 1,000 commercial ag retail employees who handle ammonia at retail facilities.

"Our Association saw that a basic need exists for farmers to have ready access to proper safety, handling, first aid and emergency response information to help ensure the farmer's own personal safety and to better understand what procedures to follow if a release of ammonia occurs while the farmer is transporting or applying the product," IFCA President Jean Payne said.

The Fertilizer Research & Education Council (FREC) paid for the video with proceeds from a 12.5 cent fee on each ton of agricultural fertilizer sold in Illinois. FREC's purpose is to fund projects that improve fertilizer efficiency as well as promote proper use of fertilizers.

"While preparing for spring planting, I encourage farmers to review proper ammonia handling and safety procedures," Illinois Agriculture Director Tom Jennings said. "Thanks to FREC and the Fertilizer and Chemical Association, all it takes is 12 minutes, which is a small investment of time to prevent potentially costly errors.

The high-resolution video can be accessed at the IFCA website at www.ifca.com, scroll to the second to the last section at the bottom of the page "Anhydrous Ammonia Safety Video for Farmers". It is also available at the Illinois Department of Agriculture's website at www.agr.state.il.us/anhydrous-video.

Thank you to the Illinois Department of Agriculture, the Fertilizer Research & Education Council, and the Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association for this very educational information and video.



Be safe out there!