

S RIVER VALLEY COOPERATIVE SOLUTIONS

September 2014



RIVER VALLEY
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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Mission Statement

River Valley Cooperative is dedicated to improving the long-term profitability of our customers by delivering superior, personalized services and competitive, quality products.

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Open House Slated for New DeWitt Grain Building

You're invited to join us at an open house of our new hoop grain storage building at our location in DeWitt, IA on **Saturday October 4th from 11:00 – 1:00**. The Central Community School District FFA will be serving a light lunch.

The new structure, which covers 1.6 acres of ground, has a grain storage capacity of 2.1 million bushels.



Life Saving Equipment for Durant



Pictured left to right are; Officer Orville Randolph; Diane Burkey, RVC Energy Operations Support; Mayor Dawn Smith; Dave Schulz, RVC Vice President Energy Business Unit; and Sgt. Brad Longlett.

River Valley Cooperative recently presented a check for \$2,000.00 to the City of Durant, Iowa, to help purchase four AEDs (automated external defibrillators). The purchased units will equip two police vehicles and provide installation of units at City Hall and the Durant Community Center, providing life saving equipment when time is of the essence. 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.

Ready to Roll

From preparing new equipment for the fields, tuning up truck engines, calibrating spreaders, setting up propane systems to inspecting anhydrous tanks, RVC employees have been very busy and we're ready for the busy harvest season and whatever winter blows our way.



MarketEdge

RIVER VALLEY COOPERATIVE

by Mike Moellenbeck • Vice President Grain Business Unit
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As harvest approaches we wanted to communicate our policies for the upcoming year. The following are the key programs for this fall. You can see a more detailed version of all policies and programs on our website, www.rivervalleycoop.com. In advance, we thank you for your business and wish you a safe harvest season.

CORN MOISTURE DISCOUNT

All corn received at elevators that tests over 15% moisture will be charged a moisture discount as follows:

Corn received at: **15.1% to 24.0%** Discount: **3.0 cents/point**
24.1% to 30.0% **4.0 cents/point**

Corn over 30% moisture is subject to rejection.

Custom Drying: Discounts as above plus 14 cents/bu. handling charge.

CORN SHRINK RATES

Moisture shrink 1.18%

Handling shrink .22%

Total shrink 1.40% for each 1% of moisture removed

Corn purchased on contract, basis or NPE will be shrunk and dried to 15%.

Corn put into storage or grain bank will be shrunk and dried to 14%.

BEAN MOISTURE DISCOUNT

All beans received at River Valley Cooperative elevators that test over 13% moisture will be discounted as follows:

Beans received at: **13.1% to 15.0%** Discount: **15 cents/half point**

Beans over 15% moisture are subject to rejection.

CORN STORAGE CHARGES

Minimum Charge - 15 cents/bushel for the first 90 days or fraction thereof. After 90 days, storage charge of .1000 cents per bushel per day (3.0 cents/month).

SOYBEAN STORAGE CHARGES

Minimum Charge - 17 cents/bushel for the first 90 days or fraction thereof. After 90 days, storage charge of .1150 cents per bushel per day (3.50 cents/month).

8 cents IN charge and 8 cents OUT charge will apply to all grain taken out of storage. This is in addition to the regular storage charges.

Minimum storage charges will be billed when storage receipts are issued. Additional charges will be billed monthly.

GRAIN BANK CHARGES

6 cents per bushel for the first 90 days. After 90 days a monthly charge of 3 cents per bushel per month (.10 cents/day) will apply on remaining bushels. Grain must be used within 12 months of issuance. Grain bank corn sold to the warehouseman will be charged regular storage rates from date of delivery. Whole grain that is taken from grain bank and not mixed through the feed mill will be charged In/Out charges as posted for regular storage. Posted grind/mix/delivery charges will apply if cracked corn is taken from grain bank.

DEFER PAYMENTS

River Valley Cooperative will offer producers the ability to defer the payment on grain sold.

Payment can be deferred up to 12 months. Once a deferred payment is issued it will not be reversed and will be paid out as stated.

KNOW WHERE TO GO

RVC requires notification prior to delivery of any grain that contains transgenic events not approved for US export markets.

RVC reserves the right to refuse delivery of grain that contains unapproved traits, as not all RVC facilities will accept varieties not approved for export.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES - NEED HELP MOVING YOUR GRAIN TO MARKET THIS FALL?

Strong logistical support is a key part of River Valley's grain business allowing us to ensure dependable and prompt transportation of grain to our facilities and to market. Our semi-tractors are fully equipped with GPS tracking software, allowing our staff to carefully monitor load and travel times for better service for our customers. For more information contact our grain origination team.

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Manager's Report

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

September brings the turn of seasons, startup of school, beginning of harvest and close of summer activities. In our family, with our eight-year-old grandson, we switch from baseball gear to football. I probably enjoy this season change as much as any as we move to cooler evenings and prepare for bringing in the rewards of another crop year.

Your cooperative's 2014 annual meeting was held on September 18th in our boardroom at our Central office in Mount Joy. The work is done and we simply reported results. 2014 was a good fiscal year for your River Valley and our customers. Most of the statistics for the year are in our annual report you received or can pick up at one of our locations. Record sales volumes were recorded in most of our primary product line areas and with your help, along with our employees and support of your board, we produced earnings of slightly over \$9 million before income taxes are addressed. Thanks for everyone's help in making this happen.

As a locally owned and controlled cooperative, there are a few other numbers I would like to share with you from this past year. Your support by doing business with your business allowed the profits from your cooperative to remain in our local communities versus being sent to a shareholder outside of our geography. This money has gone back to our members, about \$4 million of current or past earnings to be reinvested in their farms or spent locally.

\$14 million this past year was reinvested by River Valley in assets in our local communities to grow our capacity in serving your farming operations. This is our largest capital reinvestment done in a one-year time

period and it was done without adding long-term debt. Pretty neat.

Slightly over \$1 million was paid in property taxes in our local counties to support local schools and infrastructure that helps us all. We provided thousands of dollars for local communities and schools in donations and support. \$10,000 was provided in scholarships to local community youth.

\$15 million was spent in fiscal year 2014 on payroll to run your River Valley Cooperative. Our employee team is the best in the business and we take great pride in their accomplishments and professional growth this past year. Good people with good jobs living in yours and my local communities. Many of our employees are engaged in local fire departments, school boards, town councils, and local community activities. They contribute to the backbone of what makes living in small town Midwest communities great. Thanks to all our employees for your many accomplishments this past year.

Yes, 2014 was a successful year for your cooperative. Thanks for your help in making it happen.

I hope you take as much pride in your River Valley Cooperative business you own as me and the rest of your employee team who come to work here every day. Thanks for letting us serve your farming operation!



Prepare Now for Fall and Winter Propane Needs

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey has encouraged farmers, rural residents and other Iowans that use propane to consider taking steps to ensure adequate supply this fall and winter.

“Last fall and winter the price of propane jumped sharply to more than \$5 per gallon in some locations as a number of events severely tested the capacity of the current propane delivery system and infrastructure,” Northey said. “Such a dramatic price increase seems unlikely this year, but it is important for propane users to be prepared.”

Actions that farmers and other propane users can take now in order to prepare for this fall and winter include:

- Making sure propane supplies for grain drying, livestock facilities, homes and machine sheds are full going into the fall season.
- Take advantage of early buy/booking programs
- Consider expanding on site capacity at facilities and homes.
- Communicate early and regularly with propane suppliers.

Crop projections continue to suggest a record corn and soybean harvest in Iowa and the nation. With a large crop in Iowa and neighboring states, the demand for propane use for grain drying could be significant again this year.

Fortunately, crop maturity is significantly ahead of last year and slightly ahead of the five year average, which could limit some of the need for propane.

In addition, there are some significant changes within the energy sector, and specifically affecting propane, that will continue to impact supplies in Iowa:

- On July 1, 2014, Kinder Morgan Partners MLP, reversed the Cochin Pipeline that once delivered Canadian propane to Iowa. This pipeline provided approximately 13% of Iowa’s annual use and 38% of Minnesota’s annual use.
- While the USA is now producing record amounts of natural gas liquids (NGL’s), energy companies are also exporting record amounts of propane from the Gulf of Mexico region.
- Increased rail movement of propane is challenging due to limited capacity and already high demand from other sectors.

Northey has also reached out to a number of Iowa agriculture organizations and the Iowa Propane Gas Association to encourage them to work with their members and partners to continue to prepare to meet propane demands this fall and winter.

Source: Dustin Vande Hoef, Iowa Department of Agriculture



Fall Supplementation for Cow Herds

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

With pasture quality declining and harvest time right around the corner (could be harvest by the time you are reading this), it is time to start thinking about what you are going to do for your cows this fall. With cornstalks being the common forage for the first month or two after harvest, or possibly all winter, it

is important to make sure cows have enough protein and energy to maintain body condition. Cornstalk's nutritional value varies, but majority are 4-7% crude protein. Mature cows need at least 7% crude protein to feed the rumen microbes. Bred heifers

should be provided 8-9% of crude protein. Without providing the recommended amount, the rumen microbes will not be able to digest and utilize the forage provided. Protein supplements (tubs or liquids) are a great option in supplementing cow herds on cornstalks. They supply the adequate amount of protein, energy, and other nutrients in a molasses based supplement. These are both free choice products. The liquid is provided by a lick tank, with consumption ranging from 1-1.5lbs/hd/day. The liquid supplement can also be used to enhance nutritional value and palatability of hay, straw, or corn stalks bales. Protein supplementation is not a substitute for a roughage diet, it is made to complement them. Don't forget about mineral! Mineral should also be provided either in loose form, force fed, or in a tub.

Contact me today at (563) 320-7276 to find out what product or option would work best for your situation.



Tips for a Successful Weaning Season

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

The most stressful period of a calf's life is the first 30-45 days after it is weaned. Weaning suppresses the immune system and makes calves more susceptible to disease and sickness. It is equally important for the cow-calf and feedlot producers to take the time to manage weaning and receiving cattle to reduce this stressful time in their life. Here are my top seven tips for a successful weaning:

8. Watch your cattle closely for the first 14-21 days to catch sick ones early.

Some of these tips can be applied to receiving cattle in the feedlot situation as well. What is your starting program? If you would like to discuss starting programs, please contact me at (563) 320-7276.

1. Don't rush the weaning process. Ship cattle when they are fully weaned.
2. Avoid performing other herd functions such as dehorning and castration at the same time as weaning. Complete well before weaning or 30 days after.
3. Avoid large dietary changes for weaned calves.
4. Avoid weaning or working cattle at the hottest times of the day. Minimize dust in pens to reduce respiratory issues.
5. Use creep feed a couple weeks prior to weaning to get them used to eating.
6. Use a starting program that contains Availa®4 (Stress tubs, Stress Care™ 5, Precon™, Accuration® Starter). It will help their immune system and replace the diminished trace minerals caused by stress.
7. Provide plenty of WATER! Water drives intake.



Agriculture's Future is in Good

A One-of-a-Kind Facility, the Muscatine Ag Learning Center

They come from all walks of life, traversing the gravel roads of Muscatine County, Iowa, and the city streets bordered by the mighty Mississippi River and Highway 61.

Farm boys, city girls and urban kids alike, all drawn to a building perched high on a hill just off the Highway 61 bypass, and each cultivating a deep love for an industry that some think faces an uncertain existence.

The walls of the Muscatine Agricultural Learning Center show no favorites, and family backgrounds are checked at the door. Inside, it's one for all and all for one, and the message emanating from the \$3.5 million facility rings loud and clear.

Farming's future is definitely in good hands. In existence since 2009, the state-of-the-art learning center is a cooperative effort between the Friends of the Muscatine FFA, the Muscatine Community School District, and Muscatine Community College, not to mention several area businesses.

Located at 3200 Lucas Street, the center, which was funded by private donations, features a 20,000 square-foot indoor horse arena, 14,000 square feet of barn space, and 8,500 square feet for classrooms. The facility houses MCC's Veterinary Technology program, and is the centerpiece of the high school and middle school FFA and Ag programs.

Every day of the week school buses can be seen driving up the long lane, and on a recent Friday nearly 400 students from the high school and middle school were on site.

Learning about everything from growing crops to raising livestock, students receive a hands-on education that gives them a leg up when it comes to pursuing agriculture careers in college, or just being positive contributors to society.

"This has really turned into something special," said Sam Paul, one of four Ag teachers employed by the Muscatine



The Muscatine Ag Learning Center houses Muscatine Community College's Veterinary Technology program.

Community School District. "The original idea was not only to have a community barn, but to teach high school kids some hands-on skills and get them some experiences.

"For a hands-on lab, there is nothing better. It's hard to teach kids about crops, soils and animal science without having a facility like this. This is a great teaching tool, and a great way to get our kids to the next level."



Students can utilize one of two classrooms, and the draw is that they can easily move to the barn area for hands-on experiences.

"One of the biggest problems we're going to have in the next several years is feeding the population," Paul



The Muscatine Ag Learning Center is located on Lucas Street, just off the Highway 61 bypass in Muscatine, Iowa.



Good Hands

is Making Sure of That!

continued, “and now we have all these extremely qualified kids who just basically need someone to open the door with opportunities.”

Whether students have a love for livestock or a passion for crop production, the Ag center provides real life experiences for all.

The center sits on a 70-acre plot, 60 of which are tillable. Students receive hands-on experience in planting and harvesting corn and beans, as well as alfalfa. Sinclair Implement, a John Deere dealership across the street, provides some of the equipment.

While the center was built with private donations, it was also designed to be self-sustaining. The crops that are harvested are used to offset expenses, and the indoor horse arena is rented out for anything from dances to cattle sales to circuses.

In addition, there are 20 horse stalls that people can rent to board their horses, and the facility has a heated wash rack.

When it comes to livestock, cattle, horses, pigs, sheep, goats and chickens can all be found on site at various times throughout the year. Last summer, 30 students showed pigs at the county and state fair, while others exhibited sheep or heifer projects.

“Not only do kids get to tinker with the showing side of things, but we also talk about the production side as well,” said Paul. “We’ve had some kids be really successful in things like FFA judging and livestock evaluation competitions, and a lot of these kids are city kids who have never been exposed to livestock.”

Alyssa Scholz is one of those “city kids,” who just happens to have a love for agriculture.

“Being an urban kid,



Muscatine High School senior Tori Richardson is planning on being a vet tech.



Visitors to the Muscatine Ag Learning Center are greeted by this giant mural depicting agriculture as a way of life.



Ag instructor Sam Paul is pictured with students Tiffany Tomlin (l) and Alyssa Scholz.

I’ve never had the chance to have animals at my home,” said Alyssa, a sophomore. “I come out here to be able to work hands-on with these animals, and I find it fascinating to learn more about them.”

“One of the best things about this facility is being in the classroom and studying a diagram of an animal’s body, and then being able to come out to the barn and actually see the body parts.”

Just recently, a camera was installed in one of the stalls and now students will be able to watch from the classroom when an animal gives birth.

Alyssa participated in a heifer project last summer, where farmers leased their calves to students who didn’t

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Crop Nutrient Update

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



YieldVantage™
Premier

Good moisture in the Southern Plains has kept demand strong for crop nutrients throughout the summer, especially for nitrogen. Also factoring in the demand was that railroads fell behind schedule last summer and never did get caught up. The railroad's priorities are oil, coal, grain - way down on the list is fertilizer.

There is still a significant amount of grain to be moved this fall and it has caused barge rates to increase if not already contracted for the season. Spot barge rates to Clinton, for example, are \$13-\$14/ton to \$21-\$22/ton. After the spring season the total supply chain was as empty as we have seen it in years and recharging the "working inventory" takes thousands of tons. India, Pakistan and Brazil are back in the international markets covering phosphate needs and fall markets are just tight enough to be firm to stronger for the fall season.

NH3:

- Tampa NH3 has been significantly stronger in September due to the tension in the Ukraine and Russian. Also, the Trinidad gas curtailments range between 20 to 40%. (Most comes to USA)
- Southern Plain wheat market is having a good run, spot NH3 pricing there has been strong.
- Coming out of spring the system was empty and they are still trying to refill storage.
- Have seen an increase on terminal prices from earlier contracts. Fall ammonia will be stronger.

UAN:

- Producers had a good run on UAN fill orders during the month of June, selling UAN production through the end of the calendar year.
- UAN market will likely adjust to stronger ammonia market going forward.
- Higher gas costs in Trinidad and Eastern Europe countries have limited UAN imports.
- The cost per unit spread between ammonia and UAN is closer than the last several years.

Phosphates:

- Steady world demand has firmed pricing for the fall. Imports are coming, but some vessels will be too late for fall. Supply chain was empty at the end of spring, Brazil demand has U.S. producers exporting DAP and MAP for better net backs.
- Import vessels slated for U.S. have

been rerouted to South America.

- Lower commodity prices will keep some pressure on prices medium and long term.

Potash:

- Current river terminal pricing is up from early summer. With the situation with Russia there are limited tons being imported. New barge freight rates will affect pricing on any imported product.
- Fill tons by rail are currently behind. They are working to catch up, but fall railroad potash tons will be a challenge to get delivered on time.
- Potash producers are bullish and pricing will be firm to strong.
- Agrium Canadian mines went down on August 1st on a 100 days turn around. Agrium will not have product until December.
- Brazil demand the past several months has firmed the world potash prices. Brazil growers have seen good results to better potassium rates.

What does all this mean?

We will see ammonia prices increase some as retailers sell out of their earlier contracts. There is currently a favorable price spread that favors UAN compared to ammonia and phosphate and potash prices may move up some from current levels as we get into fall (no big moves).

What can you do?

Be sure to make the best use of your dollars. Get your cropping plans put together for 2015 and check to see if your soil tests are current. There will be good yields that will call for replacement of nutrients and lower grain prices require maximum bushels.

Have a safe harvest season!



Employees at RVC's Geneseo, IL location unload a railcar of potash. Unloading the railcar are Todd Godwin and Craig Palmer, Denny Boelens is in the railcar mover.

RIVER VALLEY COOPERATIVE

In Furrow Plant Nutrition Program

Base Program: \$.25/gallon of custom River Valley in furrow starter mix
which includes Ascend® + Ultra-Che® Corn Micro + 8-19-3 Starter

Winfield will pay up to \$2,400.00 toward any system with a minimum purchase of 30 gallons of Ascend®. River Valley Cooperative offers additional equipment support for planters or nurse equipment. Contact your agronomy account manager today for more information.



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.

A-LINE CRUSHING SERVICE
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CARTON, WARREN JR
CLARK, WENDELL
COMLEY, DOUG
CRISMAN, JIM
DEWITT CENTRAL FFA
DICKS, DURWOOD
DIERKS, ROBERT D
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ERICKSON, LOREN
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GROUNDS CONTROL
HAFNER LAND
HAFNER, DEAN
HAISLER, RICHARD
HAMMANN, ALLAN
HARPER, ROY
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KAMMEYER, TIMOTHY W
KUHL, LESLIE
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LIBERTY FARMS LTD

LICHT, BRIAN
LIEVENS, DAVID R
MAERTENS, MARK
MCCUSKER, DAVID G
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MOHR, WILLIAM G
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NAGLE, KURT
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PRITCHARD, HUGH
ROBINSON, LLOYD
ROCHAU, ARNOLD
SALLEE, REX
SANQUIST FARM

SCHERER FARM'S LLC,
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What's a Little Rain, Wind, and Cold!

A little inclement weather didn't seem to phase attendees at this year's Answer Plot Knowledge Events and River Valley's first Ladies Nights at the Answer Plots in Stanwood and Osco.

Even though both Ladies Nights were moved indoors because of the weather, it was still a very special evening honoring women and thanking them for the role they play in agriculture today.

Breakfast, hot coffee, and information were served at the Answer Plot Knowledge Events where Winfield agronomy experts and River Valley staff discussed current

yield enhancement products and management techniques to help optimize the production and profitability from every farm acre.

Drone demonstrations wrapped up the events at both Osco and Stanwood. The top right photo below was taken by a drone during the Osco Answer Plot event. What seemed so futuristic not too long ago is now becoming another important tool in the technology toolbox.

Thank you to everyone who attended the Answer Plots this year.



Answer Plot[®]
By WINFIELD

RIVER VALLEY

COOPERATIVE



Farming's Future

Continued from page 9

live on a farm. The students were able to work with the animals, show them, and then return them to the farmer.

"It was such a great learning experience," said Alyssa. "I got dragged around a little bit, but it was something I really wanted to do. I'd always heard stories about my grandparents raising cattle, and now I'm able to see how that works."

Since her parents don't have ag-related jobs, Alyssa says her love for farming "must've skipped a generation."

"I don't know where that love came from," she said, "but I definitely want a career in agriculture. I've thought about being an Ag teacher because it's so important to spread the word about agriculture, especially because there seems to be a lot of misinterpretations about the industry. I want to clear that up."

Tiffany Tomlin, a junior at Muscatine High School, has been part of the Ag program for three years. She's one of a handful of students who are also employed at the center, and she boards her horse at the facility.

"I've had my horse out here for three years," said Tiffany, also a city girl. "It's a really nice facility that's heated in the winter, and it's a great arena to ride in. I also enjoy working here. I come out in the morning and feed horses and clean stalls, and when there's cattle here I take care of them as well."

"I feel very fortunate to have this facility. We travel around a lot and see what other FFA programs have, and there's nothing that compares to this."

Bryer Bartlett was raised on a farm, but acknowledges he still has plenty to learn before pursuing a career in agriculture. He says the Ag center is the perfect place to



Haley Holladay joins other students as they perfect their pig showing skills in the large indoor arena.

learn.

"Someone at school told me about the Ag center so I started taking classes," said Bryer. "Even though I've helped out on the farm at home, I've learned so much here."

"I'm learning a lot about livestock that we don't raise on our farm, and now I'm getting into the tractor stuff. I helped plant sweet corn on our plot this year, and that's the first time I've ever planted anything. It was real entertaining, and I learned a lot."

Students like Alyssa, Tiffany and Bryer attend class at the center for two periods every day, spending half their time in the classroom and the rest in the barn.

Students in Ag 1 and Ag 2 classes visit the center every Friday. Paul spends every Friday teaching at the center, and is on site every afternoon the rest of the week.

"We have one of the bigger FFA programs in the state," said Paul, "and having a facility like this certainly doesn't hurt."



Bryer Barlett plays the role of livestock judge as fellow students parade their pigs in front of him.



Rachel Schoer, Kammi Anderson and Nicole Bowers demonstrate the proper way to set up sheep for showing.

My Cooperative Experience

by Lauren Weirup, 2014 River Valley Cooperative Agronomy Intern

Growing up in a small town I became accustomed to a certain way of life. Everybody knows everybody, and even when people are in a fight they will still look out for their own. When we all work together life is not only easier, it's more enjoyable. I grew up around family values. Family comes first, and if you work hard and help others you will live a happy life. Through thick and thin you stick together and never stop believing in improvement. To me, that is what a job should be and that is what I found at River Valley Cooperative. Not only are the people you work with everyday like your second family, but also those who you work for, the member-owners and customers. The member-owners and customers, whether new or seasoned, young or old, hold the heart of the company.

I just recently finished a summer internship with River Valley Cooperative, where I had the privilege to work alongside the local account managers and I was able to see firsthand what customer contact looks like. Throughout my internship I was able to ride along with many divisions of the company, such as agronomy, grain and feed sales. During these opportunities I not only was able to witness that job firsthand, but also was able to get to know the people behind the faces. It did not matter whom I was working alongside, everyone that I met had a positive outlook for life and for agriculture.

When I first applied for the internship I had no idea what a "co-op" was, so I looked it up. According to Dictionary.com a cooperative is "working or acting together willingly for a common purpose or benefit". This alone was enough of an open-ended statement to draw me in and make me want to know more. So, after taking the internship, I spent some time observing my environment. What I saw was a group of people who worked together day by day, enjoying what they did. This was odd to me, because no matter what the day had in store they seemed to enjoy themselves. Odd, yes, that is until I asked them, "Why do you like your job?" to which the most common response was "we are here to help in anyway we can, even the little things make a difference". I have worked in many different environments that are known for customer service, but there was something about River Valley Cooperative in how no matter who I asked, CEO or sprayer operator, their answers were always focused around the customer, and that made me feel right at home.

One of my favorite parts of the internship was getting a tour

of the Big River Resources ethanol plant in Galva, Illinois. The plant was very interesting, but my favorite part was a bus full of teachers from Chicago who joined us for the tour. These teachers were blown away by the plant, but not by the vast technology that is now being used, but by the simple fact that we can open semis from the bottom and let the seed fall out. They were also impressed by the enormous amount of product that is being moved and processed in different ways every day. These are things we as farmers or agriculturalists see as normal and don't think twice about. Interacting with these people while they walked through the tour and asked so many questions was so humbling to know that, as farmers or as agriculturalists, we are not simply working toward "bigger, better, more", but also for educating the world on the importance of our hard work.

My major in college is Agriculture Communications and International Ag. I study agriculture through the ways we communicate, not only overseas, but also in our own backyards. Although my internship was labeled for agronomy, it is safe to say that I learned far more than crops and soil. I saw a lot of both! I saw that no matter which department you work in, energy, feed, seed, or agronomy they all have the task of representing something bigger, agriculture, and the importance of its presence in our growing world. River Valley Cooperative offered not only a learning experience, but also a growing experience. I have made new friends, learned many tricks-of-the-trade, and have grown professionally in how I view the roles of a company in the ever-demanding task of advocating for agriculture, or as I call it - Ag-Vocating.

Although I don't miss the long hours in the hot cornfields, I do miss the people that I had the privilege to work alongside, the people that work tirelessly behind the scenes to help keep agriculture moving forward.

Since my internship I have a newfound passion for interacting with the general public and spreading the knowledge and importance of the agriculture industry. I want to say thank you to River Valley Cooperative for giving me this opportunity, and thank you to "the guys" who had to put up with me all summer - I know I asked a lot of questions. The overall experience was educational and just plain fun. I would encourage anyone to intern at their local co-op, because you never know who you will meet or what you will learn about that company, and especially what you might learn about yourself.



Lauren Weirup

River Valley Cooperative is proud to provide a limited number of summer internships to college students who are seeking a career in agriculture. Our program is designed to expose students to a variety of settings within our company, providing a hands-on, practical work experience. RVC staff will be attending ag career days at Iowa State University and Western Illinois University in October, we invite students interested in an agronomy internship to stop by and visit with us.

A Blue Ribbon Summer

In the blink of an eye another summer has come and gone. What did we do and what do we have to show for it? Well, we worked hard and had some fun along the way.

We were very busy with several construction projects at some of our locations, two of our largest projects involved adding grain storage capacity. Our Sunbury, IA location now has a new 700,000 bushel capacity grain bin and a 2.1 million bushel hoop style grain storage building is nearing completion at the DeWitt, IA location.

This summer River Valley participated in 16 county fairs

throughout our trade territory. We're very proud to support our area 4-H and FFA youth through bucket calf programs, food coupons, fair passes, and financial donations.

What is summer without a baseball game? Over 1,000 member-owners, customers and employees enjoyed our Family Fun Nights at the Ballpark in Davenport, Cedar Rapids, and Burlington, Iowa. The Family Fun Nights have become a tradition for many families and we look forward to hosting them again next year.

