

# RIVER VALLEY COOPERATIVE Solutions

WINTER 2018

## Committed To:

- Our member-owners and community.
- Serving agriculture.
- Customer satisfaction.
- Being here every step of the way.

## Soaring to New Heights:

Lisbon students step out of the classroom and into a cornfield.

## Giving Back:

Sharing across our communities.

## Students Feed the Hungry:

Kewanee High School FFA Hatch for Hunger Program provides over 2,000 dozen eggs to area food pantry.

## Helping Hungry Children:

Backpack programs provide meals to those in need.

# RIVER VALLEY

## COOPERATIVE

*Your Success – Our Future*

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# COOPERATIVE

Your Success – Our Future

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### Locations

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

### Board of Directors

Dean Adrian - Maquoketa, IA  
Brent Daufeldt - West Liberty, IA  
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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.

# MANAGER'S REPORT



Tom Leiting • CEO

This past year we began a marketing effort designed to better recognize where we fit with our member-owners and your farming operations. Just as you operate your farm business every working day, your cooperative operations and business support teams are with you each step of the way. Feed manufacturing and delivery, grain handling and marketing, propane and refined fuels delivery, and all agronomic services we provide to you year-round and in a timely manner. During the busy harvest season and over the recent holidays, our folks adjusted their time with family and friends to make sure your livestock were fed and your homes kept warm. We appreciate what all these teams do ON THE GROUND YEAR-ROUND.

In this issue of *Solutions*, we'd like to share a little historical and current information about your River Valley Cooperative and the impact we have in the local communities we operate in. You can be proud of the cooperative you and your parents have built over many years and what it means to our farm-owners and their rural neighbors.

We hope this issue of *Solutions* finds you and your family well as we move into a new year. We appreciate the business relationship we had in 2017 and look forward to the opportunities to work together in 2018.

You can be proud of the cooperative you and your parents have built over many years and what it means to our farm-owners and their rural neighbors.



# OUR STORY



From one season to the next, River Valley Cooperative is there for member-owners and the communities we call home. More than just another supplier, we're neighbors invested in the success of local agriculture. Like you, we combine the latest technologies and insights with roll-up-your-sleeves hard work that doesn't end with harvest. To us, every season of the year is another opportunity to grow. That commitment is why we've been around since 1906 and why we'll be here for generations to come.



**COOPERATIVE**

*Your Success – Our Future*



# OUR COMMITMENT TO MEMBER-OWNERS AND COMMUNITY

by Tom Leiting, CEO

**R**iver Valley Cooperative's foundation was built more than 100 years ago when local farmers pitched in money to buy out grain elevators in their communities to purchase and market their grain. Our earliest parent cooperatives were at Walcott, Iowa, in 1906 and Eldridge, Iowa, in 1909.

In the 1930s and 40s, farm equipment began showing up on area farms creating a need for on-farm fuel. Out of this need farmers banded together forming the roots of our parent cooperatives Cooperative Gas and Oil at Geneseo, Illinois, and the former S/M Service Company in Walcott, Iowa.

River Valley Cooperative, as we know it today, was formed in 1996 when three of our parent cooperatives in Scott County, Iowa, made the decision to pool their resources and employee teams together for the benefit of everyone. Why did those companies put their assets, liabilities, and employee teams together? It was a recognition that their neighborhoods were changing, farms were consolidating, and they wanted to be able to bring more value back to their member-owners. They identified that by combining their resources they could be more effective and efficient in how they served their member-owners.

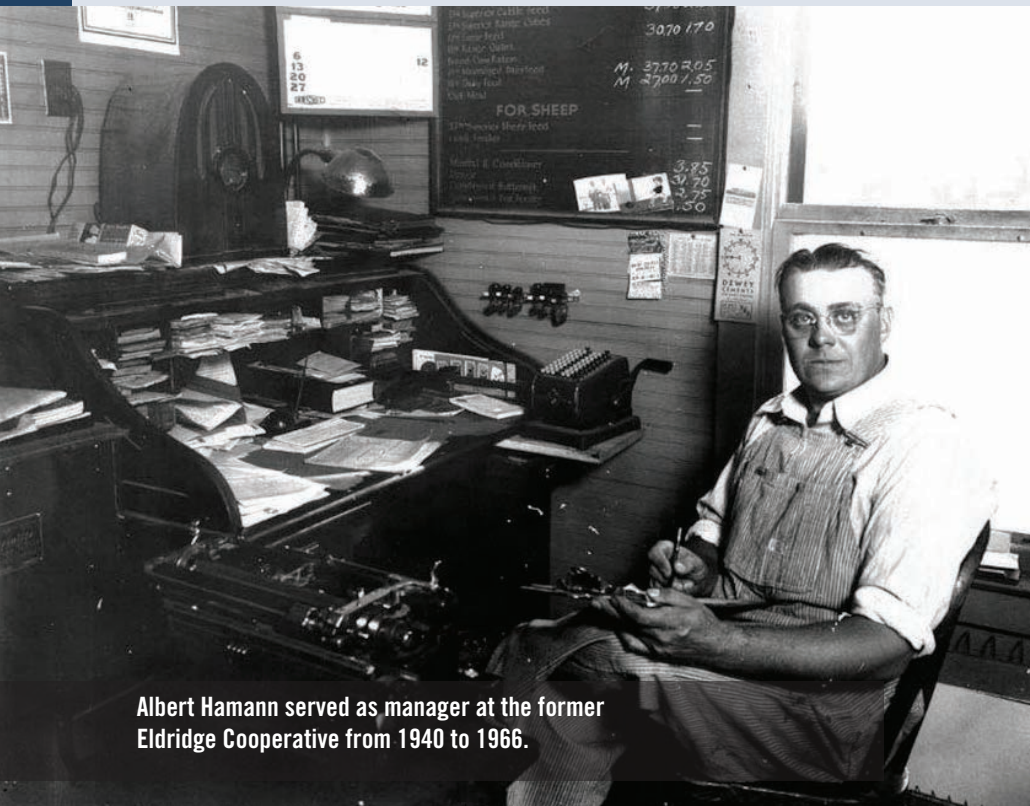
## What is the value of a cooperative membership?

Each year, River Valley Cooperative has between 60 and 85 new members/farming operations that join us. In some cases, they join for grain marketing and in other cases it's for purchasing inputs from the cooperative.

By transacting business with us and becoming member-owners it provides an opportunity to earn patronage value on their purchases with us. When River Valley is profitable, which we historically have been, a portion of those profits are shared back with our member-owners as either cash or assigned equity to be paid out in the future. Although patronage is an important benefit of being a member-owner, the main reason people transact and do business with us is because of the value proposition we bring to their farm which ties back to our mission statement of helping our customers and member-owners be financially successful on their farms. If they're successful, we think River Valley will be successful, too. This is what sets us apart from other ag retailers who do not have that same relationship with their customers as River Valley does.

## Local Facilities – Local Impact

River Valley Cooperative operates facilities in about 20 communities in Western Illinois and Eastern Iowa. In 16 of these communities we have offices that are open every day. The remaining locations are used in the



Albert Hamann served as manager at the former Eldridge Cooperative from 1940 to 1966.

busy times of spring and fall and are not operated year-round.

We have a strong attachment and are heavily engaged with those communities we operate in. River Valley Cooperatives has 250 full-time employees and another 50-70 part-time employees during our busy spring and fall seasons. These are good paying jobs with benefits for families in our rural communities. Many of our employees are involved in local community activities serving on town councils, school boards, fire departments, and as EMTs providing medical support in our communities. Many, along with their families, are also actively engaged in school and local activities that benefit the communities that they live in.

### **Sustainability**

River Valley Cooperative has a strong stance, as many of our customers do, on wanting to do the right things for our soils, our water, and our communities. We work with our customers, whether it be with the livestock that they take care of or the crop production products that they use on their land, to make good choices. We provide precision ag programs, which include soil sampling. We like to call it by the square foot rather than by the field, but it allows customers to work with prescriptions that best fit the parts of the fields that require nutrients and for maintenance of growing a good crop without being excessive in what they do. Our farmer customers do a really good job of balancing that.

### **Economics**

As I mentioned earlier from our mission statement, River Valley Cooperative's primary focus in



River Valley Cooperative CEO Tom Leitig (right) presenting a \$12,000 check to Leslie Corlett, River Bend Foodbank Resource Developer, for the River Bend Foodbank Backpack Program. Read more on this program on page 19.

working with our customers is to help our farm families be profitable on their farms and if they are profitable we will be profitable. It's really mission-critical for River Valley to have a strong balance sheet to have the staying power in the commodity markets that we operate in. With the fact that our company is over 100 years old we, or our parent cooperatives, have provided valued services for many farms that are multi-generational. It's important that we have the balance sheet strength, through profitable operations, that allows us to continue to service those farms and to have a strong footprint in our ag community.

### **Community Engagement**

River Valley Cooperative is committed to giving back to the communities in which we serve and where our employees live and raise their families.

Whether it's providing financial support for community projects and events, scholarships for students seeking careers in agriculture, or the many county fairs we support annually, we're glad to be here supporting our communities.

I invite you to see some of the highlights from this past year on pages 14 and 15 of this issue of *Solutions*.

# OUR COMMITMENT TO SERVING AGRICULTURE

by Jim Gruenhagen, Operations Vice President

Over the years, our ability to service the whole acre has grown along with our geographical footprint. From Ryan, Iowa, our furthest location to the north, to our newest location in Edelstein, Illinois, we cover roughly a 200-mile radius. We do this effectively and efficiently with our dedicated employee team, strategically placed hub systems, and state-of-the-art technology.

## OUR CORE BUSINESS UNITS

### Energy

River Valley supplies over 15 million gallons of fuel and propane and 70,000 gallons of lubricants to over 5,000 farm, consumer, and commercial accounts. We have two routes in Illinois and five in Iowa, all with the ability to pull product out of storage tanks located throughout of our facilities. With our dispatching program, drivers know exactly when to pick up product and where.

### Feed

Over the years, we have consolidated outdated feed mill facilities and have grown the capacity of our two feed mills located in Galva, Illinois, and Sunbury, Iowa. Between the two mills, we will manufacture over 450,000 tons of feed annually with a capacity to produce over 600,000 tons. Our feed business will utilize over eight million bushels of corn and over 1.8 million bushels of soybeans (meal) annually.

### Grain

This past year a new 788,000-bushel capacity grain bin was installed at our location in Sunbury, Iowa. This brings our total grain storage capacity to 28 million bushels between our 14 elevator locations. River Valley handles approximately 55 million bushels of grain on an annual basis company-wide.

### Agronomy

Throughout Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois, we have 16 locations to pull anhydrous ammonia from, 11 for liquid fertilizer and crop protection, and seven for dry fertilizer. These are served by two hub systems which are located in Geneseo, Illinois, and Stanwood, Iowa. Each of these has around 15,000 tons of fertilizer storage capacity giving us the ability to build up inventories and move product to outer locations when needed.

### TECHNOLOGY

Technology allows us the ability to move people and equipment around our trade area when and where it's needed most through AgLogic™ our dispatching system. Depending on workloads, there are times where we drive equipment back and forth between locations and for the farther locations we actually put equipment on a semi for transporting. AgLogic™ is an agronomy program that we utilize in all of our custom fleet today. Whether it's a custom ammonia operator, dry operator or liquid operator, they all have the same system set up.



There is also a lot of technology inside the machines, including autosteer, autoboom shutoff, and auto height boom for boom height adjustments. Some of our newer equipment even has communication packages enabling the manufacturer to troubleshoot engines, transmissions, and more.

Our feed department utilizes a program called Teletrac® which is a tracking system that can also be used for dispatching. This technology provides the feed mills the ability to know where the feed trucks are at any given time and provide drivers turn-by-turn direction in the cab. They can pull up a new building site on the Teletrac® map, print it and hand it to the driver.

Along with our feed fleet, Teletrac® is also used in our semi fleet and LP delivery fleet. With its safety features, it can monitor vehicles for extended use of speeding, harsh braking, and harsh cornering. With around 140 large trucks in our company, and 80% of them on the road every day, we want be sure we bring them all home safely every day.

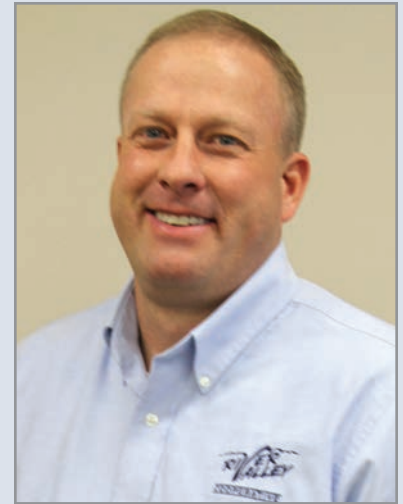
# OUR COMMITMENT TO CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

by Tim Burress, CFO

Today River Valley enjoys a very strong and stable business foundation. We have built a long-term and sustainable business model primarily because the customer is at the core of everything we do.

Our core values are based around ensuring our customers are successful. That's critical to the River Valley brand story and a key part of our value proposition. Every employee in the organization shares in the responsibility to meet the customers' individual needs and to help cultivate the long-term partnerships we covet.

We believe we shouldn't strive to just satisfy the customer, we should exceed their expectations to the point where they feel we have created an exceptional service experience and an experience for them that is worth sharing with others. Positive customer service experiences create lasting impressions, which in turn equate to long-term, and often generational, relationships. We solely exist because of our customers and the trust they place in us each day of the year.



## Vision

We will be the first choice retailer and employer by having best in class operations, experts in the field, financial strength and the technology to meet our member/customers' needs.

## Mission

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

## Values

### Customer Success

Customer success is our success. Through long-term partnerships, we consistently provide each customer the personalized, cutting edge information and technology to meet their individualized needs.

### Employee Focused

Our people are our most valuable asset. Commit to on-going education, safety and development, enabling us to be a progressive partner to our customers for years to come.

### Integrity

Our integrity is unwavering. We consistently display respect when interacting with customers and within our team, regardless of function, location or job description.

### Strong and Stable

Our company is financially strong. By maintaining a positive attitude and striving for continuous improvement, we remain a strong and stable partner that contributes to our customer-owners' success by investing in their future.

### Supporting Our Communities

Service stretches beyond our customers. We continually seek opportunities to serve our customers and the communities where we live, work and play.



# OUR COMMITMENT TO BEING HERE EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

by Andy Rash, Vice President Sales and Marketing

**R**iver Valley Cooperative has built strong, customer-focused roots over years of practice in being the best provider of services, being embedded in our communities, and by being a convenient partner. River Valley is no stranger to being committed to the customer and that's why we continue to evolve, so we keep that sharp focus on being relevant for you. We have to be ahead of what's coming to bring value to your farms, and we will always be "On the Ground Year-Round".

As the farmer changes, and as the ag economy continues to churn, it forces companies to build themselves to better service the farmer of today. Thriving companies will be built on a more nimble platform and be committed to attract, develop and deploy best in class people. River Valley is absolutely committed to be

the company that will provide modern services for today's needs and we are "all in" on talent! This is our formula for relevancy.

As we look at how we truly bring value to the farm gate, our competitive angle is really very simple and is the reason we want to earn the majority of the business in the communities we serve. We are able to step alongside the farmer at every phase of the ag cycle! Let's break that down...

We have good agronomy competitors, but after that crop is planted, fed, and protected they have the opportunity to walk away. River Valley kicks into another gear and works with you on marketing strategies of your

grain, how we can house your grain, and how we can work with you on your storage and drying programs. Even then, we're still not done... We can provide propane to the on-farm dryer you have, we can heat your home and put fuel in your tractors, trucks, and vehicles, and we can do it all with the latest in technology. If you have livestock, we can manufacture

commercial livestock feed in our state-of-the-art feed mills, supply supplements and mineral tubs to your beef cattle herd, or we can provide protein and diet design to your feedyards and feedlots.

We can truly and confidently say that we can step with the farmer at every phase of the ag cycle when our competitors can't do that. We own it and we will collaborate across all of our business units with our leading sales talent that come to your farms and provide consultation. They will align and work together to create solutions and ease in doing business with your company.

Our people are also committed to what we call "The Three C's". The first C is culture. We couldn't do what we do without our employee team. We have a strong commitment to having a culture that attracts and retains talent, provides the best resources, tools and training to that talent so they're able to create value at your farm.

The second C is customers, and we're committed to being relevant for you.

**River Valley is absolutely committed to be the company that will provide modern services for today's need.**



Andy Rash, Vice President Sales and Marketing, at River Valley and WinField United's new Answer Plot near Princeton, Illinois.



Relevant with technology, practices, and consultation that you seek out today. We want to create programs that allow for you to simply collaborate across our four business units. What if you could use a hedge with River Valley to pay for your agronomy inputs? What if you could leverage energy and agronomy inputs into one to consolidate a cost per acre so you can simply identify what your

total cost of production is? What if those tools came easier? We're committed to doing that.

The third C is community. River Valley is deeply embedded in communities across Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois, not only where our assets sit, but also where our employees, member-owners, customers and their families live, work, and play. It's really

impressive that ag continues to be the stronghold and mainstay in our communities and we're committed to keeping it that way. It's something that we take a lot of pride in.

This is our commitment and this is how we will earn the opportunity to be **"On the Ground Year-Round"** with you and your family's farming operations.

## Culture

Fenton location operators James Pell and John Wiersema enjoyed visiting member-owners and customers while serving lunch to a hungry crowd at the annual customer appreciation luncheon.

## Customers

Aaron Trenkamp, Agronomy Account Manager - Eldridge location, with rural Scott County farmer Larry Wilson during a yield check this fall.

## Community

Agronomy Account Manager Ross Kleppe (far left) and Sunbury Location Manager John Trenkamp (far right) presented a check to the Durant Community Fire Department for the purchase of AED devices.



# Soaring



to New Heights with  
Project-Based Learning



This is not your ordinary classroom.

Gone are the typical desks, that for decades have been the mainstays of education, and visitors are quickly given a glimpse of the future as they take in the lowly lit atmosphere, see the stylish and comfortable tables and chairs, and view the walls lined with high-tech equipment.

Welcome to Lisbon INC, a project-based business class at Lisbon Community High School that focuses on Innovation, Networking and Creativity.

The program, now in its second year, gives students who are looking for something other than traditional elective classes, a different perspective on learning. It allows them to work on projects based on their interests and passions, and

helps them discover their strengths while working one-on-one with business professionals as mentors. Together, world problems are solved.

“Each new school year I try to get to know the students in the careers class that I teach,” said Business Education teacher Gina Snyder. “I keep asking them what their strengths are, what do they like? Not very many students could answer that question. I kept thinking that we have to change education somehow and get students some more real-life experiences.”

With that, the idea was born. Gina talked to the school administrators and researched what other districts were doing.

“Once I presented the information to the administration they were excited about it,” said Gina, “and very supportive. They let me give it a shot.”



Business Education Instructor Gina Snyder taking photos as students were interviewing and recording River Valley Cooperative employees for their video project.

This year there are 14 students enrolled in the program, which Gina says is “plenty,” especially when there

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Lisbon INCers (l-r) Thatcher Krob, Gage McCoy, Max Abodeely, and Tatiana Mallie collaborating on the River Valley video project using a newly purchased interactive flat panel display.



Allan Mallie, third-generation farmer and Lisbon Community School board member.

are eight to 10 projects going on each semester, with two to three students working on each of them. She said she's hoping that they'll be able to expand the program in the future.

Before students are accepted in the program, they must meet certain criteria. Gina said she likes students to come to class with a project in mind, or at least know their interests. She then tries to find area business professionals who are willing to share their expertise and experience to make the projects come to life.

Some of the projects the INCers, which is what the students call themselves, have undertaken include: Battle of the Bookworms, video productions, therapy dogs, 21st century learning space, a make-up blog, cards for veterans, vintage sports gear, and graphic design.

### ONWARD AND UPWARD

School board member Allan Mallie, a third-generation farmer, was all for the

creation of Lisbon INC.

"What we're doing is getting the kids to think outside the box," he said, "and get them into more real-life situations so that they can learn what it's going to be like to communicate, do interviews, and promote a business."

Mallie said that by doing that, they have several different things going on within Lisbon INC.

One of the ideas that students had was purchasing a drone and possibly do some aerial footage. With a drone, they felt they could find a way to create income on the side to help subsidize their ideas.

When the students brought their idea of a drone to the school board, Mallie was all in. "You know what," he said, "I might have something for you!"

He and the students discussed the possibility of using the drone to document the full life cycle of a test plot that he and River Valley Cooperative have partnered on for several years. The students and Gina were all for it, and thought it was a great idea.

### TEST PLOTS

With so many different varieties of corn and soybeans available today, it can be a tough decision for farmers on which varieties would work best in their fields. Local test plots are a valuable tool and one River Valley Cooperative uses in many parts of its trade area.

Allan said the project officially started last February with the concept, and then the planning.

"Look guys," he told the students. "When we get ready to do the planting, I want you to come out and do some aerial footage, and then I want you to come out two more times during the summer, once when the corn is knee high and another time when it's tasseling, so you can see the different stages of growth.

"I also want you to come back in the fall and video the harvest."

Allan said the students were all gung ho, and that they were eager to get their project launched. Spring couldn't get here soon enough.

### PLANTING DAY

After a long winter and a slow start to spring, it was time to get the crops in the ground and the drone in the sky. On May 8, students Ryley Scott, Clay McCoy, and Max Abodeely met up with Allan and River Valley Cooperative Agronomy Account Manager Brandon Lewin and District Sales Manager at Monsanto Company Pete Thome at the test plot. As the students skillfully navigated the drone overhead, Allan drove his tractor pulling the planter back and forth, row by row. Brandon and Pete kept detailed records and marked the rows as they filled and refilled the planter with various test seed varieties throughout the planting process. After gathering hours of aerial footage, it was time for the students to head back to the classroom and begin the editing process.

As the corn grew over the summer, students visited the test plot two more times to get video of the different growth stages. They commented on how they could really see the differences in the various seed varieties from up above.



Despite the windy weather on planting day, students were able to take some great aerial footage with the drone.

Photo by Lisbon INC



With the drone, students were able to capture a beautiful harvest scene that few get to see.

Photo by Lisbon INC

### LET THE HARVEST BEGIN

Summer came and went and the students were soon back in the classroom and anxiously waiting Allan's call to let them know when the plot was going to be harvested. When the day finally came, teacher Gina Snyder and students Max Abodeely,



River Valley Agronomy Account Manager Brandon Lewin looks on as Gage McCoy and Thatcher Krob set up the drone.

Photo by Lisbon INC

Thatcher Krob, and Gage McCoy headed out to the field with the drone and video camera in hand. Fellow-INCer Tatiana Mallie, Allan's oldest daughter, was there, too, documenting the video process with her camera, capturing some great still shots.

Allan let the kids and Gina take turns riding in the combine as row by row of golden corn was harvested, bringing the drone and recording portion of the project to an end.

### IT'S SHOW TIME!

Now that the harvest was over, it was time to get down to business and start editing all the footage and photos. Thatcher did the majority of the editing on the final video, including choosing the background music and inviting River Valley Cooperative employees Jimmie Daugherty, Agronomy Account Manager, and Dustin Hoeft, Agronomy Coordinator, to provide voice over comments.

Everyone involved at River Valley Cooperative has had nothing but praise for the students and all their hard work and dedication on this project.

"I was very impressed," said Brandon. "They did a very good job of editing and flying, and it was a good experience all around."

Allan also gave the students high marks.

"I think they came out with a really good video and they were super happy to be able to do the job," he said. The project was so successful, that a lasting partnership may have been formed with Allan saying he just might have a few more drone video projects in mind for his farm.

### SUMMING IT ALL UP

Allan also encourages others to see what Lisbon INC has to offer. People can visit [www.lisboninc.com](http://www.lisboninc.com) and look at the videos the students have made, as well as the projects they've worked on with other businesses in the community.

"That's a great thing about the whole concept," said Allan, "people in the community working with the students. That's why we call it Lisbon Community School, not Lisbon School. The community and the school have to work in a combined effort because it takes a village to raise a kid and it takes a community to educate a school full of children."

### CHECK OUT THE FINAL PRODUCT

We invite you to view the videos created by the students of Lisbon INC at [www.lisboninc.com](http://www.lisboninc.com) under the videos tab or at [www.youtube.com/rivervalleycoop](http://www.youtube.com/rivervalleycoop).



On the far right (l-r), students Clay McCoy, Ryley Scott, and Max Abodeely interviewing River Valley employees Jimmie Daugherty (front) and Dustin Hoeft.

# Serving Our COMMUNITIES



Supporting the Jones County Pork Producers and partnering to feed hungry farmers as they brought grain into the Olin location this fall.



\$7,000 was raised at a River Valley Cooperative employee charity event benefiting backpack programs.



Patterning with DeWitt Central FFA students to feed area farmers lunch on a busy harvest day.



Participating at the 5th Annual Eastern Iowa Progressive Agriculture Safety Day for area youth ages 8-14.

Eldridge location employees showing their patriotic spirit on the Fourth of July.





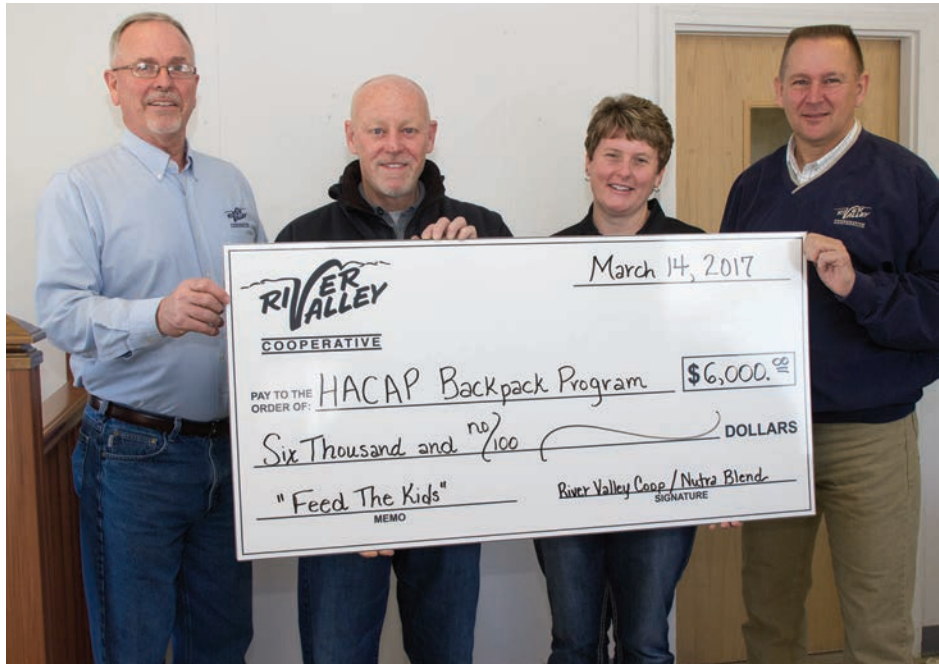
Supporting area ag youth at our county fairs.



West Delaware High School FFA animal lab facility project receives donation.



The Cambridge Food Pantry was among over 15 different local food pantries receiving donations this past year.



Providing support for Operation Backpack through HACAP.

Farmers visiting from Brazil were eager to learn about American agriculture.





# Helping the community

Ag Education Teacher and FFA Advisor Joe Schneider, center, with students after the group collected two dozen eggs in the chicken barn at Kewanee High School. Students (l-r) Bobby Ince, Claudia Chamberlain, Alysa Gorden, and Harley Johnson.



# ONE EGG AT A TIME

Which came first, the chicken or the egg? While that question has been debated for ages, at Kewanee High School, in Kewanee, Ill, it was actually a garden. Then the chickens, followed by the eggs, and finally the hogs.

For several summers, ag students and FFA members have planted a vegetable garden and harvested more than 10,000 pounds of fresh vegetables that were donated to the Kewanee Food Pantry. Wanting to do more, the high school's FFA Chapter started the Kewanee FFA Hatch for Hunger Program in April of 2016, and since that time, more than 2,000 dozen eggs have been collected and donated, not only to the community's food pantry, but the high school pantry as well.

In the United States alone, one in every five people do not have access to enough protein and other nutrients to meet their body's needs, and Kewanee and surrounding communities were no different. That



The chickens are happy to see FFA member Claudia Chamberlain as she brings their morning food.

fact resonated with Kewanee students, and they wanted to help tackle the challenges that face undernourished children, senior citizens and their families.

Putting their desire to serve their community into action, the chapter originally purchased 150 chicks with the hopes of raising eggs to help feed the hungry. Over the summer of 2016 the chicks grew into laying hens, and students began collecting eggs on Sept. 4 of that year. The rest is history. Not only have eggs been donated to the food pantry, but the school's FCCLA club used 200 eggs to make 86 cheesecakes that were sold as part of a fundraiser.

Why eggs? Because they're rich in protein, vitamins and minerals, and a single egg is able to provide almost half the protein and all the iron a young child needs in one day.

Even though eggs are one of the most demanded products in many food banks, they're also the least supplied because of their fragility and need for refrigeration. Through the Kewanee FFA Hatch for Hunger Program, students are able to serve

the Kewanee Food Pantry with a great protein source that is sustainable throughout the year.

The Hatch for Hunger Program is just one of many projects that the school's 39 FFA students can get involved in, said Joe Schneider, the school's ag teacher and FFA advisor. With 80 to 90 students attending ag classes, the school offers a wide variety of agricultural classes, including two ag science courses, a veterinary science course, horticulture and landscaping, ag business management, and mechanics. There is also a construction class where students will be building a hoop house, and an introduction to agriculture class designed to get kids interested in agriculture.

The school also has a greenhouse, where students start and grow plants for not only the vegetable garden, but a butterfly garden as well. On average, students plant around 80 perennials each year in the butterfly garden, and then gather the seeds in the fall for the following spring.



FFA member Alysa Gorden and one of her favorite chickens.

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This year, for the first time, students planted soybeans on 11 acres of land owned by the school, and harvested the crop with a donated used combine.

“I have never combined in my life, never even ran a combine in my life,” said Mr. Schneider. “It was an experience because I had the kids out there with the wagon and we plugged the combine up 18 times and unplugged it. It took us 11 hours to harvest 11 acres of beans. That’s an hour an acre, but the kids had a blast and I had a blast, too.

“We haven’t sold the soybeans yet because we’re waiting for the price to go up. Some of that money will be used for the fencing out at the farm for hog gates, and we’re expanding the cattle pasture.”

The projects don’t end there, the students also raised 10 pigs this year, nine of which were donated, as was the feed. Students even showed the hogs at the county fairs before sending them off to market to be processed. Most of the processing was donated by the Illinois Pork Producers Association, and the meat and sausage were put into two-pound



Photo courtesy of Kewanee FFA

Students gather about four dozen eggs each day. FFA chapter vice president Gage Behnke (center), gets help from his fellow FFA members each Wednesday to sort, candle, clean, dry, package and label the eggs to USDA standards. Andrew Young (left), is washing the eggs while Gage and Harley Johnson (right) dry them.

packages and donated to the Kewanee Food Pantry in September and October.

With so many projects, it’s no easy task to keep them going. Taking care of the chickens is a group project, as the chickens have to be fed and watered every day, with eggs being gathered twice a day.

“There are several very dedicated kids,” said Mr. Schneider. “Gage Behnke (FFA Chapter Vice President) has helped with the program since day one, volunteering to clean the eggs each week and help take them to the food pantry. Alysa Gorden and Claudia Chamberlain are out in the chicken shed every night after school and on the weekends. Andrew Young goes out on the weekends to collect the eggs and make sure they’re fed and watered. Even over the summer the students

share in the chores.”

The students follow strict USDA guidelines when processing the eggs. After the eggs are cleaned they are labeled with a sell by date, Julian date, supplier identification number, name and address, and then delivered to the food pantry for distribution to the community.

The Kewanee FFA Chapter, with help from the community, has funded the entire Hatch for Hunger Program, but moving forward needs additional funding to keep the project going and growing.

Students would like to double the size of their laying flock and build a portable chicken coop. With the extra eggs, they are hoping to provide every family that is served by the Kewanee Food Pantry a half-dozen eggs each month. The students say it’s their way of helping the community one egg at a time.

If you would like to donate to the Kewanee FFA Hatch for Hunger Program, please contact Mr. Schneider at Kewanee High School - 1101 E. 3rd St. - Kewanee, IL 61443, (309) 853-3328, jschneider@kcud229.org.



FFA members (l-r) Andrew Young, Trevor Swanson, and Claudia Chamberlain, helped deliver 29 half-dozen eggs to the Kewanee Food Pantry just before Christmas.

# COMMITTED TO FEEDING HUNGRY CHILDREN

Did your children have dinner last night? Did they get plenty to eat at breakfast this morning? According to Leslie Corlett, River Bend Foodbank Resource Developer, there are over 43,380 children in the 23-county area in eastern Iowa and western Illinois they serve who may not have. Nine of these counties are within River Valley's trade area.

These children are food insecure – they don't know where their next meal is coming from. Some of these children may be eligible to receive free or reduced breakfasts and lunches at school, but what happens to them over the weekends? Will they have anything to eat? It's a long time between lunch on Friday until breakfast on Monday.

Throughout the school year, the River Bend Foodbank partners with schools and non-profit after school programs to provide children with food to take home over the weekend through their Backpack Program.

Each week, their partner sites

receive bags of food for the children participating in the program. The bags of food are discreetly placed in a backpack and sent home with each child on Fridays to sustain them through the weekend. The program is operated with respect for the children's confidentiality.

A similar program is available through HACAP – Hawkeye Area Community Action Program Food Reservoir's Operation Backpack program. HACAP serves a seven-county area in Iowa, including the counties of Jones, Linn, and Cedar. For the 2017-18 school year they have 77 participating schools where they will distribute over 95,000 backpacks.

River Valley Cooperative has made a commitment to help fight hunger in our communities and this past year



Photo and cover photo by Mary Adams, River Bend Foodbank.

provided contributions in the amount of \$17,000 to the River Bend Foodbank and \$9,000 to HACAP. These funds were earned through our feed supplier NutraBlend's Drive to Feed Kids hunger program and at company sponsored events by many generous River Valley employees.

River Valley Cooperative looks forward to having additional fundraisers this year to benefit the River Bend Foodbank and HACAP as well as our local food pantries.



River Bend Foodbank collects wholesome donations of food for distribution to more than 300 charitable community organizations that support the hungry in eastern Iowa and western Illinois.

PLEASE JOIN US



# 2018 RIVER VALLEY COOPERATIVE AG OUTLOOK

Thursday, February 15th

## Rhythm City Casino Resort

7077 ELMORE AVENUE • DAVENPORT, IA

After dinner, we invite you to stay and enjoy the evening listening to Dueling Pianos of Andy Anderson and Mike Leeds and have some fun in the casino.

NOON - 1:00 PM: REGISTRATION

(snacks/beverages will be provided at registration)

1:00 - 5:00 PM: MEETING

5:00 - 6:00 PM: SOCIAL HOUR

6:00 - 7:00 PM: DINNER

7:00 - 9:00 PM: DUELING PIANOS

There is no cost to attend this event, thanks to our generous sponsors. RSVP/register online at [www.rivervalleycoop.com](http://www.rivervalleycoop.com) by February 5. For additional information regarding the event, please contact Jayne at River Valley Cooperative - (563) 285-1715 or [jayne@rivervalleycoop.com](mailto:jayne@rivervalleycoop.com). For hotel information, please contact Rhythm City Casino Resort at (563) 328-8000.

### Featuring keynote speakers:



**Mike Vande Logt**

Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Ag Technology Land O'Lakes Inc.

For nearly 40 years, Mike has worked in all aspects of the seed industry, with nearly 30 of them in evolving roles at Land O'Lakes, Inc. Today, Mike leads the Ag Technology platform focused exclusively on leveraging research and product development to advance the next generation of Ag Tech consulting offerings. Throughout his tenure at Land O'Lakes, Mike has focused on using insights to support local agricultural retailers in meeting farmer's needs to increase productivity using fewer resources.



**Todd Hubbs**

Clinical Assistant Professor Agricultural Commodity Markets - University of Illinois Dept. of Agricultural and Consumer Economics

Todd Hubbs is an agricultural economist specializing in commodity market analysis and risk management. His research focuses on commodity price forecasting and risk analysis in the agricultural sector. He writes the Weekly Commodity Outlook for the farmdoc website that can be found every Monday at <http://farmdocdaily.illinois.edu/>.

We are hosting, with our key partners, a great opportunity to join us and learn more on current global pressures on inputs, farm economics and grain marketing. This is a chance to hear two industry leaders, Mike Vande Logt and Todd Hubbs, connect the dots between inputs and grain sales. We are excited to bring a proactive discussion to our customers and communities. You won't want to miss this!



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*Your Success – Our Future*



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