March 26, 2018

Ag Valley VISION

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General Manager's Report

Kent Taylor

ADVERSITY: Fires, Bunkers, etc. Life Happens!

The month of March has certainly been an interesting one within the Ag Valley area. On Tuesday March 5th, high winds and dry conditions led to a bad day for our neighbors in McCook. A grass fire supposedly started by a piece of tin off a shed which hit a power line, lead to the first spark. And then things got interesting! Thankfully, the fire was put out before it got deep into the town. My point in remembering this is to thank the Ag Valley employees who responded. Some of our crew, who serve as volunteer fire fighters, traveled over to help. Also, the Indianola location sent trucks with water. The employees, who serve you, came to the assistance of their neighbors. I know this is a common practice in our corner of rural America, but your dedication to those in need is always worth retelling the story.

I don't think the bunker is supposed to look like this? Is it?– An old phrase says: "My You Live in Interesting Times!" Well, the last few weeks have proved to be interesting in Edison as first one, then the second new bunker split open. Right away, the grain department went to work cleaning up as much as possible, moving corn to other locations and getting more sold. The plan is to pick up all this corn and then repair the bunkers so they will be ready for the fall harvest. Adversity comes to us all in life, so our choice is how to handle it. While fires, equipment failures and other life events are certainly disheartening, this bunker issue and the other setbacks from the past few months will not deter us from our primary goal of serving you, the producer/owners of Ag Valley Co-op. We will continue to move on and do our best one day at a time. Adversity happens to us all; our choice is how we respond to it.

A New Leader for the Grain Department – After receiving many excellent applications from across the grain industry, we have completed the selection process and hired a new Grain Division Manager for Ag Valley Cooperative. I am pleased to announce that Adam Flavin will begin with us on April 2nd.

Adam has had grain industry experience with Lansing Trading Group & Archer Daniels Midland. Most recently, he was with the Redwood Group in Mission, KS. He has a BA from Washburn University in Topeka, KS and a Master of Agribusiness from Kansas State. Adam and his wife, Amy, have three children and currently live in Overland Park, KS.

I am excited that Adam was interested in Ag Valley, took the time/effort to interview with us and now is willing to join us in our continued efforts to serve you, our member-owners. We will have more from Adam in the next issue of this newsletter.

UNL Class on Cooperatives - If your son or daughter is currently attending the college at UNL, I want to make you aware of a class which is offered each fall. AG Econ 474 is a 3-hour class which focuses on the cooperative business model and the impact co-ops have upon agriculture and the economy. This class would apply to both ag and business students. Sign up is happening now. For more information you can contact the instructor, Dr. Greg McKee, at gmckee3@unl.edu. Dr. McKee specializes in cooperatives and assists our industry with training and research.

That's all for now…Stay safe this spring…Take care, Kent

From the Agronomy Department

Side wall Compaction Issue in Corn

Side wall compaction can be a yield limiting factor that can have season long effects. Side wall compaction in corn was a big issue in our trade territory last year. This occurs is when the walls of the furrow are sealed or compacted to a point where roots can't penetrate and spread freely through the soil profile. There are several causes of sidewall compaction that are preventable: wet soil, too much down pressure on the gauge wheels, too much pressure on closing wheels, and shallow planting depth. Wet soil conditions were the main reason for this problem last year with the rainy April and May that backed up planting dates and forced farmers to plant in less than ideal conditions. The other three reasons are linked to proper planter adjustment. This can be a very time-consuming process that may need to be adjusted from field to field and day to day. Taking your time to make sure the planter is set properly can affect the outcome of stand establishment, root development, water uptake, and nutrient uptake. In the spring, we all know we want to get the crop in the ground on good time, but waiting for proper field conditions and taking time to set the planter properly can lead to successful crop right from the beginning. If you have any questions about this or other agronomic topics, contact your local Ag Valley Co-op agronomist.

Importance of Fungicides on Corn and Soybeans

Using fungicides in corn has proven plant health benefits. Applying fungicide at tassel delivers the most yield potential. It increases tolerance to stresses like drought, excess moisture, and cold. Using fungicides also increases photosynthesis which improves yield and harvestability. Plant health protection prevents lodged corn and stalk breakage. 75% of the energy needed for yield comes from the ear leaf and above canopy. These leaves must be protected to maximize yield. The lower canopy produces energy to maintain the root system during grainfill and serves as a nitrogen source for remobilization in late grain fill to maximize kernel size.
Using fungicides in soybeans has plant health benefits, also. 80% of a typical soybean plant's yield is produced in the middle of the canopy. A soybean plant at R2 is roughly half grown and will nearly double in height and canopy volume. The best time to apply fungicide is from R2-R4. Soybean plants may abort 60-70% of their flowers, resulting in fewer pods. Applying fungicides to improve plant health can be a key to tapping into more of the plant's genetic potential by retaining more pods and allowing them to fill. If you have any questions about using fungicides, be sure to contact your Ag Valley agronomist.

Importance of Pre-Emergent and Post-Emergent Herbicide

As many of you know, weed control is getting to be more and more complicated. With some of the resistance issues we are seeing in the fields these last few years, it is now more important than ever to take advantage of using pre-emergent and post-emergent herbicides. There are many option for the crops grown in our area to come up with a strategy to manage tough to control weeds.

Pre-emergent herbicides are very important and lay the foundation of how the weed control is going to be for the season. It is also important to know how long we can "realistically" expect these chemicals to work on our soils to keep our fields clean. This expectation relies on many factors, but the biggest one is weather. Questions to think about when planning your program are: how long before planting will these chemicals be applied, how long do we expect these chemicals to last, will planting be delayed because of moisture, what are the restrictions, and what is my backup plan if something unexpected happens? These are all questions to think about but (with planning) can be managed and get us started in the right direction for the season. This direction will most likely include a post-emergent application.

Post-emergent applications should be in everyone's plans when preparing for the season. The idea of trying to get by with a single-pass spraying plan usually creates problems later. Even if there are only a few weeds in the field by the time harvest comes, just remember that one pigweed can produce over 100,000 seeds that must be dealt with again in the future. Post-emergent application may include a burndown if weeds are visible and possibly a residual herbicide to increase the longevity of clean fields. A more proactive approach is to spray bare ground before any weeds begin to emerge. This increases full ground coverage to allow these chemistries to work more properly. Talk to your local Ag Valley agronomist to see what plans would work right for you and help take back your fields!