

connections

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Here's What We Believe

By Chris Ludwig, General Manager

I am blessed to work with an amazing team of dedicated and talented employees who have a passion for serving our customers. We pair that commitment with a strong balance sheet and operations in one of the most productive agricultural areas of the world. Since coming to Viafield in January, I'm increasingly assured we have all the ingredients to be successful.

Our ability to serve you in the future depends on a positive, healthy culture that aligns all of our staff. Building a cohesive employee culture starts with a shared understanding of Viafield's direction and a strong sense of purpose. With this in mind, our directors and senior leadership team recognized the need to develop a new vision for our future. During the last two weeks of April, we collaborated as a team in the development of our vision, mission and values statements—definitions of our beliefs as an organization.

I am extremely pleased with our team's work, and I believe our new vision will result in a cohesive Viafield that is committed to the success of our

members and their cooperative. As you read the statement, know that the most important aspect for me is "Serving as the trusted advisor to our customers."

The rapid development of technology and volatility in agriculture makes farming more complex and risky. Viafield must be an expert in developing plans, managing complexity and delivering industry-leading innovation to the farm if we intend to remain relevant in today's marketplace. Therefore, it is our objective to develop a trusted, well-trained team equipped with knowledge and expertise. It will be their responsibility to leverage a suite of capabilities. We're committed to assisting you in becoming more profitable as we build long-term value for the patrons of this cooperative.

In the coming months, we will be refining our future plans with a renewed purpose and a shared understanding of what success should look like for Viafield and for our customers. I'm very proud to lead a dedicated team, and I'm excited about the future direction and success of Viafield! ●



OUR VISION:
Serve as the trusted advisor for the customer of the future through our talented team by delivering products, services, technology and innovation, ensuring their profitability and ours.

Nutrition From Dairy Makes Sense

...So Does Summertime Cow Comfort



What matters to dairy producers during Dairy Month? Our dairy specialist, Dan Franzen, favors an emphasis on smart strategies for staying cool.

How about a big, cold glass of milk or a smoothie made with ice and yogurt? After all, as the Midwest Dairy Council® points out, dairy makes sense in a nutritious diet to help control blood pressure, maintain a healthy weight and reduce your risk for heart disease. Dairy farmers provide one of the most affordable protein sources you can choose—milk at about 25 cents per glass.



**Viafield Dairy Specialist
Dan Franzen**

During the month of June, Viafield recognizes the long-standing commitment of local dairy farmers to sustainable agriculture and animal welfare. Taking steps to prevent heat stress in lactating cows, dry cows and calves is a key facet of summer management at a dairy.

These are Dan's top recommendations:

- Cows need adequate water in proportion to their dry matter intake. On hot summer days, cows might not feel like eating the nutrition they need to be productive.



- Because calves are so small, they dehydrate faster. By supplying electrolytes, producers encourage them to drink more and eat what they need to grow. Just be certain water is warmed to 100 degrees for calves.
- Don't ignore warm weather comfort for dry cows. "Make sure they're comfortable, too, before they freshen," Dan says. "Everything that happens when a cow is not milking impacts how she'll milk when she comes back."

Get to know our new dairy calf and heifer specialist

Krystal Regan will assist Viafield team members with customer questions about Purina feed and calf milk replacers. She'll conduct product demonstrations and feeding trials and provide calf and heifer management tips.

During her time as a Purina Livestock Production Specialist in Southeast Minnesota Krystal was very successful in helping her dairy customers achieve their goals using Purina products. Krystal and her family are connected to the dairy industry in a number of ways which makes it easy for her to relate to the issues facing our dairy customers. "Krystal will be a tremendous asset to our team at Viafield," says Tim Seabrooke, Purina Dairy Sales Specialist in Eastern Iowa. "She will be an



advocate for customers and for solid livestock nutrition."

Krystal will be focused on providing support in both Iowa and Minnesota. Contact Krystal through your Viafield dairy or beef team members.

Purina is adding resources throughout northern Iowa help producers raise the best young pigs and calves in the industry. Purina is making capital improvements and adding resources at the Mason City, Iowa, production plant. "We want to be a part of raising the best young pigs and calves in the industry," said Dan Moran, Senior Director of Livestock Projects for Purina Animal Nutrition. "That's why we are improving our young animal assets and producer resources to this area."



Animals speak louder than words.

If there's greatness on the inside, it shows on the outside.

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FEED GREATNESS™

Leveraging the Potential of Our Flagship Agronomy Location

In 29 years, location team leader Mike Katcher has watched facilities in Marble Rock grow to match customer needs. "I'm not saying we went from stone knives and bearskins to this state-of-the-art operation...but very nearly!"

He remembers a layout he calls "minimalistic," which featured a mere 18,000-gallon anhydrous ammonia storage and a converted 150,000-bushel, flat-storage pad for dry fertilizer. "We had one dry floater and one liquid application machine, plus a handful of very well-used toolbars and nurse tanks."

Upgrades came through mergers and customer-focused building initiatives. Today, it's hard to argue with the value of Marble Rock's top-of-the-line 23,000-ton dry fertilizer shed and four-million-gallon liquid fertilizer storage and loading setup. "Anhydrous availability has grown to 78,000 gallons," Mike said. "We're well

equipped with modern rigs for both dry and liquid application along with accompanying nurse tanks and tenders."

Mike knows machinery and capacity are nothing without qualified staff. Full agronomy service potential means a complete team. He believes he's made a good start with Andrew Kruse. "I hope to find three more like him," Mike announced. "I expect great things from Andrew. He really has the makings—a gift for building customer relationships. Right now he's soaking up product knowledge, which is increasing his value to customers."

Solidifying long-term customer connections won't take a backseat to building new relationships. "As we work with additional farmers, Viafield is committed to giving us the extra resources we'll need. For every decision I make, I start with the best interest of customers and team members in mind."

Your timelines are his starting point

Nobody would consider Andrew Kruse the new guy. For one thing, he's been on the job in Marble Rock as agronomy account relationship manager for a year now. For another, he's a face you know for a lot of reasons.

The Marble Rock native knows you, too, which he believes is one of the best aspects of his job.

"I enjoy working at this location and working with these people. I appreciate interacting with our customers because I grew up in this town!"

A year ago, in March, Andrew decided to try something different. After 17 years as a John Deere parts man in Mason City, he wanted to test his abilities and make additional use of his farm background.

Andrew's education at North Iowa Area Community College (NIACC) focused on ag sales and service. Throughout his career, he's been totally committed to the service aspect of the equation. "Years back I worked as a custom applicator. That and my experience with



Andrew Kruse



John Deere customers taught me to be very aware of each customer's timeline."

Andrew also pays close attention to every farmer's operating style. He believes building a good working relationship is as significant as the products and services he can offer. "I'm learning how to work with each of them. Some people want their agronomist to ease into a conversation with some banter. Others expect me to get right to business. So I do."

That said, there's one thing Andrew wishes all customers approached exactly the same way. "Plan ahead," he says. "We want to be sure you have everything you need when it is time for the next step—planting, spraying, fall fertilization. Don't think you have to go it alone. Rely on me to help you check off each step you can take to be ready. When we share in your process, you have a better chance of meeting your goals and deadlines."

The Kruse family includes Samantha,

who works for USDA at Butler County Farm Service Administration, daughter Avery, 9, and son Aiden, 5. In the summer, they take downtime at Andrew's parents' cabin in Faribault, Minnesota, on Lake Roberts to fish, tube and hang out together. ●



Mike Katcher

He Can Prove Precision Planting® Saves



A complete package of Precision Planting hardware and software controls Mark Wynthein's system. He uses the 20/20 SeedSense Monitor with the FieldView Cab app, controlling downforce on the row unit with Delta Force, along with the vSet2 meter with vDrive motors for drive and swath control. He is also running CleanSweep to control his row cleaners from the cab.

Last year, Mark Wynthein of Arlington realized one clutch in his planter's system wasn't doing its job. "One row wasn't shutting off as expected. When I looked in the hopper, I could see I'd used a full bag of seed on that row. It amounted to \$200 wasted in one field! That's when I made the switch to Precision Planting."

Mark realizes this planter technology may seem like a big first-time investment. "But it pays every year—maybe as much as a bag of seed in every field you plant. Yes, Precision Planting equipment costs up front, but I'm anticipating a return every year. One faulty clutch showed me how much."

Viafield precision ag specialist Nick Johansen says Mark's planter upgrade process started over a year ago. "He came to our planter clinic and told me he was interested in Precision Planting. He converted to DeltaForce last year but said, 'Don't order anything else yet because we're getting a new planter.' This is his second crop season with DeltaForce. This winter we installed vSet with a vacuum meter and electric drives on each row."

Time, seed and nutrients—and being efficient with all three—are the factors that drove Mark to adopt a better planting system. He has another motivator, too. "Obviously I care about planting using less money, but I'm also focused on being a better steward. I've not tilled for over 25 years, and I'm always concerned about doing what is right. Wasting the least amount of inputs improves my commitment to conservation. As I see it, Precision Planting is environmentally friendly."

Nick agrees. "Agronomy is really the economics of ecology. Mark is now able to effectively plant around a contour, assuring he doesn't deposit too much seed on the inside and not enough on the outside. There ought to be a seed every six inches to make best use of soil nutrients. Picture a speed boat pulling a child on a tube. As the boat turns short, the tube swings wide because the boat is turning faster than the tube. That's thrilling for kids but very inefficient for seed distribution."

"What Mark sees in the planter tractor is an exceptionally timely view of what his planter accomplishes," Nick explains. "The SeedSense monitor maps each row independently in one-fifth of a second."

(continued on page 10)



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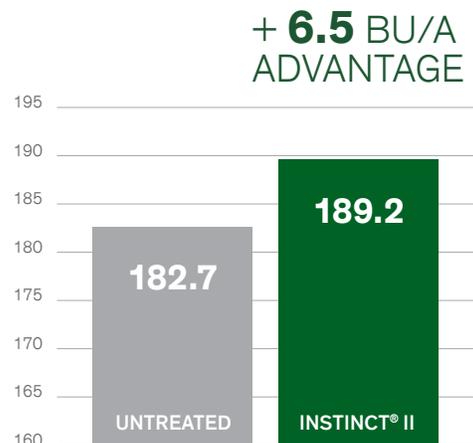
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"I like to describe DeltaForce this way: Ultimately it's like pulling 12 one-row planters across the field."

(continued from page 8)

Yes, it reacts that fast! Meanwhile, five or six times per second, DeltaForce will either add 650 pounds or lift 450 pounds from the row-unit."

It's the load cell's function to maintain two-inch seed down-pressure across all planter rows. "As a result, the three rows on the left of Mark's 12-row planter don't cross a particular spot at the same time. Each row is acting independently. I like to describe DeltaForce this way: Ultimately he's pulling 12 one-row planters across the field."

As Nick talks, he hands Mark an SD card and says, "All the data from several cards is now in one place on his iPad. The Precision Planting process Mark now employs hinges on both technology and accrued intelligence. He used his SeedSense maps from last year and built this year's planting maps from there."

Last year, Mark's precision maps were on screen in color visualization. "How the technology makes planting more effective is obvious when it's documented that way. The effects become more concrete."

Mark reviews his collected data two or three times over the winter. "I appreciate that my planting records are still there to see...I can draw conclusions from what I recorded."



Here's Mark's vSet2 meter equipped with a vDrive motor.

Emergence tells more of the Precision Planting story

Across each of Mark's fields, corn emerges at the same time! "Because of even emergence, I know I'll end up with more yield," Mark asserts. "I don't have to measure. I just know. Typically, when you spot a plant that didn't come up with the others, you know it won't yield."

Nick wanted to test that observation for himself, so he monitored a field where Mark's son, Kyle, lives. "The whole field emerged within 12 hours," Nick declares. "I could see no difference across the entire stand, not even where the planter crossed a wash."

And one more thing. Now that he's installed DeltaForce and vSet, Mark can choose to do variable-rate planting. That, he says, is the remaining step. "I'll be able to connect seed placement and fertilizer recommendations in a way that takes full advantage of variable fertility in each field. It will be another opportunity to control seed expenditures on my less-productive acres." ●



CleanSweep on Martin BK1360 row cleaners kept Mark planting through any field conditions this spring.

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New Ways We Can Help You Reach Your Marketing Goals

By Jerry Keleher, Grain Marketing Relationship Manager

In late spring, grain markets exploded to higher levels with the funds being the driver. Kudos to farmers who responded to those highs with sales. Now it's time to follow up with a plan incorporating several marketing tools Viafield offers. Some of those contracting instruments will be familiar, but others are new.

We can expand your range of opportunities with hedge-to-arrive, basis and minimum-price contracts. And we've now added flex price bonus premium contracts and freight-on-board (FOB) grain bids.

Flex price bonus premium is a very adaptable contract. It gives you an up-front payout on old crop—money you can bank now—with the opportunity to make an offer on new crop. In effect, you create a marketing plan that commits you to forward contract. The contract requires 5,000-bushel increments corresponding with a specific time for those sales.

So far, flex price bonus premium has been very popular with our customers. Viafield has traded it before, but not to the extent we're using it this year. I'd say the reception it's getting ties into your ability to custom tailor your selling points.

FOB bids offer another route to being more competitive in the marketplace. This tool is designed to help you find the best market for farm-stored grain. It gives you a price that takes freight costs into consideration. If you want, we can arrange delivery using our Viafield truck fleet or by contacting other local trucking firms.

Delivery to a destination other than a Viafield location doesn't hurt your ability to collect co-op patronage on those bushels. If you choose FOB delivery to an ethanol plant, run the transaction through us and it will build your patronage return. Or in other words, you'll actually get an even better price for every bushel. Essentially we're just adding another way you can access the ample supply of grain outlets accessible to the Eastern Iowa farmer.

There's one more slightly riskier contract you might want to investigate this year. An accumulator contract allows the producer to have bushels automatically priced weekly, above the current market and at no up-front premium



Jerry's Making Himself Easy to Find

Contracting, discussing your marketing plan, selling old crop or making offers on new crop sales is as simple as clipping this weekly schedule.

Talk to Jerry Keleher:

- Mondays in Arlington and Oelwein
- Tuesdays in Maynard and Sumner
- Wednesdays in Arlington and Oelwein
- Thursdays in Maynard, Lamont and Sumner
- Fridays in Elgin and Clermont

cost, if certain conditions are met. If futures settle above the accumulation price on the final pricing date, a double-up occurs and an additional amount equal to the initial quantity is sold. With that in mind, a producer should not commit more than 10% to 25% of expected production using this contract.

This spring, markets reacted to crude oil influences and responded to the strong U.S. dollar with decreased export sales. Based on those factors, prices continue to find both a bottom and ceiling levels. Expect more explosive market reaction as the crop season progresses.

Editor's note: Jerry came to Viafield last year to extend what's already been a 30-year career in the cooperative system. Now that he's moved back to the home place west of Elkader, he finds more time to enjoy what he calls "recreational farming" on that Century Farm. In his free time, he also officiates high school basketball games. Jerry's adult children are Madeline, who works for Travelers Insurance in Minneapolis, and Jack, who lives in Hiawatha and works for Toyota Financial Services. ●

Have Confidence in Our Safety Emphasis

By Mike Kuboushek, Energy Leader

You need to be confident your propane system is correctly installed and maintained. When you're done working for the day—on or off the farm—the last thing you want to worry about is whether your propane system is up to speed and running smoothly.

The Viafield energy team takes pride in making sure everything is done right the day your system is installed, and that all safety codes and practices are followed to assure you and your family stay safe. We're CETP certified, a training program endorsed by the National Propane Gas Association. Plus, our team members complete continuing education to ensure they're properly prepared to meet your energy needs.

The first step in installing a new propane system is a site survey performed by a member of our team. We determine where the system should be placed, based on current rules and regulations. After that, installation begins. Some of the services included are: properly

setting the tank, trenching the line and performing leak and pressure checks.

Our energy team can also update existing propane systems. Propane regulator manufacturers strongly recommend you replace your regulators after 15 years. That's because the regulator is constantly exposed to elements, which can cause the rubber components to deteriorate over time and not function properly. At any time, you can ask one of our qualified team members to update your regulator.

Current customers also have the option to schedule a periodic system leak check. If you order propane when your tank is below a predetermined percentage, we are required to do a system leak check as well. A leak check will help ensure the safety of your propane system. If it has been over five years since your system has been leak checked, please call or visit your nearest Viafield location to schedule a visit.





For your convenience, Viafield offers a scheduled delivery program. Our energy team members will take the responsibility for keeping propane in your tank. You won't need to monitor the level of propane and you will no longer need to call in your propane order.

Here's how it works. As long as your Viafield account is current, we'll put your tank on a route so it will be topped off regularly. Our scheduled delivery program works very well in conjunction with our propane contracting options.

The Viafield energy team takes pride in making sure everything is done right the day your system is installed, and that all safety codes and practices are followed to assure you and your family stay safe.

Contracting options through Viafield

- **Prepay** (home heat and farm) - Select the number of gallons you want to contract. The total cost of LP and sales tax is due when you sign the contract.
- **Budget plan** (home heat) - Select the number of gallons you want to contract. The total cost of LP and sales tax will be divided into eight equal payments. Payments are due the fifteenth of each month, September through April.
- **Booking** (home heat and farm) - Select the number of gallons you want to contract. LP gallons will be billed at delivery. Payment will be due according to normal billing terms.

Safety for you and your family is our highest priority. Therefore, we continually invest in training and quality equipment. To inquire about any of our services, please call or visit your nearest Viafield location to speak with an energy team member. The Viafield energy team thanks you for your business, and we look forward to serving you in the future. ●



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GM Chris Ludwig shares
the vision statement that
will lead us into the future.
Page 3.

What's that?
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You like ice cream. 🍦
You like cheese. 🧀
You like chocolate. 🍫

You're welcome. 🐮

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