



connections

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A Team on The Move



RUDD/ROCKFORD TEAM LEADER

SARAH WINTERS

When did you start with Viafield?

I started in 1987 working at the scale for harvest as seasonal help which then turned into full time as the counter person at Rockford. In the last 20 years I have worked in agronomy, energy, grain and customer service departments. Five years ago I took the Seed Support Specialist position where I order all the seed corn and beans along with other small seed like oats, alfalfa and grass seeds for all the Viafield locations. In February of 2017 I decided it was time for a change and took on my biggest challenge yet, becoming the Location Team Leader of Rudd. This has been a challenge because I have never worked in the feed area before. Thanks to a great team I have at Rudd and the support of the other location leaders and management, I am learning a lot. With Lyle Chambers retirement I also am Location Team Leader for the Rockford location.

What is your biggest challenge now as a Location Team Leader?

My biggest challenge as a Location Team Leader is time management. Trying to balance the time between locations and seed. There just isn't enough time in the day to get everything done I want to do. In this role I learn something new every day.

What do you enjoy most about your career at Viafield?

The thing I enjoy most about working at Viafield is that every day is different. There are great team members to work with and I really enjoy working with our members and helping them in anyway possible.

Who is someone you look to for professional guidance/advice?

I want to say thank you to my parents who have taught me to work hard and be honest. I also want to thank Laura Boyd who throughout my years at Viafield has taught me so much and has also been a good friend. I also know that I have great support from other team members and without that I wouldn't be where I am today.

What hobbies/activities do you enjoy in your spare time?

In my spare time I like to spend time with my son Levi and my family and maybe try my luck at the casino.

connections

Fueling Cooperative Growth

by Chris Ludwig, CEO

At Viafield we have a clear vision of the future we are working to grow and build. To achieve success, our entire team knows our #1 goal is to be the trusted advisor, enhancing your operation's profitability and well-being. It's a fact, organizations that have talented people helping customers realize untapped value deliver the best performance and growth. If Viafield can help you prosper, we will all realize shared success.

In this issue we are highlighting our commitment to building our team of trusted advisors. This past year we continued to invest in talent of the future through our internship program. This program has been successful in delivering value to our members and building our talent pipeline. Some of our most valued advisors are graduates of this internship program. We are also introducing you to new team

members who will focus on delivering industry leading agronomy consulting and sales. It is this commitment to talent combined with information and technology that will deliver industry leading profitability and results on your farm. It is our commitment to continue building our team to serve your needs now and into the future.

At the time of this writing, crop development in NE Iowa has been excellent and should lead to one of the best crops ever produced. Markets have been a continual challenge this year with languishing corn prices and narrow windows of opportunity. Our team of Grain Relationship Managers can help you develop a plan to make the most of your grain sales this coming year. We have a suite of price risk management tools and access to the best markets for your crops. This year we are putting additional focus on FOB farm bids and competitive pricing delivered directly to local

processing plants. Our website, viafield.com, is your one stop shop for competitive bids delivered to a wide range of third party processing plants, as well as Viafield locations. Grain delivered to processing plants is now eligible for patronage, enhancing your long term profitability. Call us today and let Viafield help you maximize your farm revenue this crop year.

Viafield's vision for growth is starting to show results. Our fiscal year ends August 31st and we are forecasting significantly improved local savings vs this time last year. This growth and performance is a direct result of our talented team who worked extremely hard to deliver value and service to our members this past year. Our entire team is thankful for your patronage and we are looking forward to helping you grow again in the 2017 crop year. Together, we can grow profitably into the future!

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.



Students Get A Taste For A Life In Agronomy

Each summer a few fresh faces can be seen around Viafield's various locations: interns. Viafield treats their interns as though they were a full-time team members. They are given a variety of necessary tasks to complete. While many of the students' classmates will spend their summer internships completing busy work the regular full-time team members can't be bothered with, Viafield puts their interns in real world situations giving them authentic opportunities and experiences.

Nathan Arthur is the youngest of Viafield's interns. He will be entering his sophomore year at Iowa State University this fall. After speaking to Viafield representatives at an Iowa State University career fair, Nathan decided to further explore our internships.

"So, at the career fair at Iowa State, I was just looking around, I kind of wanted to stick pretty close to home this summer," Nathan said. "I recognized Viafield as a cooperative close to us and I ended up looking into them and it ended up working out very well."

With agronomy as his minor emphasis, Nathan hoped the internship would answer questions about how agronomy might play a role in his future. "What I really wanted to do this year is...test the water just to see where I really fit in and if I liked that sort of work," Nathan said. Nathan also plans to take what he's learned and pass it onto his family. "I (want to learn) some different skills to take back to my own farm," he said. "My family farms a significant acreage that I might want to take on."

Nathan's Viafield advisor, Gina Panuska, hopes to give him a chance to learn those skills as well as gain a better understanding of what an agronomy career entails. "I feel like you can't really get a good grasp on what an occupation involves until you're doing it," Gina said. Her goal for Nathan is to give him a variety of opportunities to experience a career in agronomy.

"I have done quite a bit," Nathan said. "Right now, I've done a lot of scouting on my own – looking at the fields, looking at corn or beans, looking at the weeds, stand counts, making sure everything looked good."

Nathan's favorite part of the internship is seeing the positive change he is affecting. "Seeing something that I've done, or spotted, or worked with, or worked with a farmer, or worked with Gina that I fixed...for example seeing the weeds die, making a difference, that is probably the most rewarding," he said.

Iowa State University junior, Mathew Johnson, brings a different background experience than the typical Viafield intern. "I grew up in the food business," Mat said. "My family owns a restaurant and catering business. I didn't grow up on a farm."

Although not a "farm kid" Mat was active in his area 4H club where he enjoyed showing animals. Now he is studying Agriculture Communications with focuses in animal science, agronomy and horticulture. Although most of his personal experience is with animals, Mat wanted to further explore everything else agriculture can offer. "I had never gotten the experience on the agronomy side so I didn't just want to rule it out and I saw a lot more opportunity there other than being a vet," Mat said. "I thought I'd try it out and take a few classes. It's been really cool to see the other aspect of agriculture."

Mat's Viafield advisor, Chelsea Watkins, also started her education with an animal science focus before becoming an Agronomy Account Relationship Manager. "It was nice because Chelsea was an animal science major, so she is helping me learn stuff that she didn't know that she wished she had known," Mat said.

Chelsea has made it her goal to give Mat a well-rounded experience so he can better decide where his future might lead. "I have experienced internships that can be frustrating and challenging, and I have had ones that I loved," Chelsea said. "I want him to learn about this job."

Mat's initial feelings of worry quickly faded as he began interacting with Viafield's growers. "They were really good with me and helping me with stuff and things I didn't know," he said.



Nathan Arthur
Randalia



Mathew Johnson
Arlington

Living in Iowa, agriculture is seemingly everywhere. However, just being around it wasn't enough for Viafield's Northwood intern, Kyle Peterson. He wanted a deeper, more complete experience to round out his agronomy degree at Iowa State University. "I just kind of want to add a more in-depth knowledge," Kyle said. "My grandparents on my mom's side of the family (farms) but my dad's doesn't. I have always kind of been around farming but just didn't actually live on one."

Kyle's advisor, John "JJ" Julseth, agronomist in Northwood, has done his best to give Kyle the complete immersion he desired. "I put him to the test since day one to figure out what he knew, what he didn't know," JJ said. He is happy to report, Kyle has risen to the challenge with every new task. "I've given him some things that weren't very popular to do and he's done well," JJ said.

However unpopular the tasks may have been, Kyle has been happy to live real world experiences. "Getting your feet wet in some of these different areas you can learn a lot more through internships than you necessarily do in the classrooms," he said.

Throughout this first half of the internship, Kyle has "gotten his feet wet" in a variety of areas. "I do some crop scouting, help in the chemical shed, or pick up seed boxes...I spend a lot of time out scouting fields, helping out around the plant yard, whatever anybody needs," he said.

One thing JJ hopes Kyle learns from his summer experience is the importance of building relationships with growers. "The main thing I'd like to have him take away from this internship is how to interact with people. People buy from people; your first impression might be your last if they don't like you," he said.

The people – working with his summer coworkers and the growers – are among some of the more favorite things he has experienced this summer. "Getting to know coworkers, getting out and applying what I learned out in the field and meeting the customers is nice," Kyle said. "There are a lot of good people out there."

Callahan Seehase will be entering his senior year at Upper Iowa University this fall. Both his father and grandfather farm and use Viafield as their preferred cooperative. Having grown up listening to his family speak about Viafield's reputation, Callahan decided to explore its internship opportunities.

Starting the internship in mid-May, Callahan hoped he would be able to delve deeper into agronomy, expanding on what he has already learned. "Crops and soils, anything of that nature – matching crops to soil types," Callahan listed as things he hoped to take away from the internship.

What Callahan was hoping to learn, matched the goals of his Viafield advisor Hope Cline. "He will learn a great deal more than he would in classes; crop staging, disease, insects, things like that," Hope said. Although Callahan had an idea of what he hopes to gain from the internship, he does not yet know exactly how he wants to put it to use after he graduates next spring. "I'm kind of undecided right now," he said about his future career plans. "But, I have a family farm at home that I'd like to eventually take over and start running. Right after college is still up in the air."

According to Callahan, so far, his internship has involved a little bit of everything. "My job description has pretty much been crop scouting, delivering and picking up feed and seed (and some soil sampling)," he said. "We put together a list of things we'd like him to do and send him off on his own and then he'll come back and report to us what he found," Hope said.

While Callahan is learning the ins and outs of an agronomist's duties, Hope is able to rely on an extra set of eyes out in the field. "I think for, John (Swehla, Agronomy Account Relationship Manager) and I, it's a pretty great asset to have somebody who can scout fields for us," she said. "Based on his findings, we can follow up with the grower."

By being involved in the crop scouting and the recommendations based on his findings, Callahan is learning a variety of methods to create a better crop – another one of his personal internship goals. Callahan also hopes to learn how to be "more efficient and get the most of out of your farm as you can."

Callahan looks forward to being able to take what he has learned this summer to help his family improve upon their own growing practices until it is his turn to take over the family farm.



Kyle Peterson
Northwood



Callahan Seehase
Clermont

Held to the Highest Standards

If you're responsible for feeding your family—buying the groceries, making the meals—you don't take your task lightly. You buy fresh ingredients to make sure your family is getting the best, most nutritious dinners. Viafield knows producers have the same mindset when it comes to feeding and caring for their livestock. This is why we go above and beyond to ensure our feed mills only offer the best product.

Viafield follows HACCP – hazard analysis critical control point – regulations to ensure our feed mills are certified or compliant. Our Elgin feed mill is HACCP certified. To be certified,

the Elgin mill undergoes an annual audit by a third party, outside auditor. "We just went through our seventh audit," Lori Miller, Viafield HACCP Coordinator, said. "I'd say out of 1000 points, we've always gotten a score between 920-960. We've always done very well on these audits."

Viafield's feed mills in Maynard and Rudd are HACCP compliant. "The Food and Drug Administration does not require us to be certified, but we take it a step further in Elgin," Lori said. "I take the same standard operating procedures and audit Maynard and Rudd myself."



Lori Miller
auditing the
feed storage
area at the
Elgin facility.

Applying the same standards throughout Viafield's feed mills helps instill a sense of confidence in producers. "We have written and documented operating procedures in place," Lori said. "Everyone follows the same procedures so it has helped to streamline and make sure everyone is doing the same thing." These practices decrease instances of accidental cross contamination and make sure biosecurity is strictly upheld.

Elgin Feed Operations Leader Chris Bausch has also been working to improve producers' experience. Besides providing top of the line feed, Chris wants to make sure the feed is readily accessible when the producer needs it. "We have been doing a lot of updates to the system to get more tonnage out," Chris said.

Part of the challenge in servicing producers is the timeframe in which they need their feed. "When the producer calls, we need to get their feed made and out as soon as possible," Chris said. To meet the producers' needs, more feed needs to be available more quickly. "We've restructured our load out system so we can load trucks at a more reliable pace," Chris said.

Changes to the computer control system have decreased the amount of time spent mixing the feed. "We've cut our mix time from 100 seconds per batch, down to 80 with a plan to go to 60," said Chris. "So if we can mix a batch of feed in 80 seconds...it doesn't sound like a lot, but when you mix roughly 200 batches a day...20 seconds on

each one can give us an advantage to push out an extra 100 ton or more."

Another way Viafield is working to increase the tonnage of feed we distribute, is by reorganizing team members' duties based on their talents as well as implementing a new maintenance schedule. Chris believes these practices will decrease the downtime while making it easier for the feed mill team to complete their duties. "With some of these updates and our new maintenance program, the quality of feed we're getting out is even better," Chris said.



Chris Bausch
Feed Operations Leader

Give Me The Facts!

Insight into the livestock feed industry

- **The U.S. animal feed industry is the largest producer of animal feed in the world.**
- **Corn is the primary U.S. feed grain, accounting for more than 95 percent of total feed grain production and use.**
- **Corn can be used in four different forms: whole, flaked, cracked and ground.**
- **Swine feed is generally based on corn as a carbohydrate source, soybean meal and/or DDG's as a protein source, as well as minerals and vitamins.**
- **Viafield is currently producing feed at three mills covering our entire trade territory. The Elgin mill was updated in 2012 to increase production capacity and speed.**

VIAFIELD AGRONOMY TEAM



Few people rush to the challenge of a career in sales. Viafield's Agronomy Sales team has recently welcomed one of the rare few who eagerly steps up to that challenge: Rick Haase.

"I have always had a passion and drive for working with sales people and working to help the producer," Rick said.

Rick now fills the role of Viafield's Agronomy sales leader position. While

the sales team looks to instill growth and success in producers' fields, Rick plans to do the same thing within each of Viafield's sales members.

"I guess my passion is working with sales people, so-to-speak, and developing their skills," he said.

Previously, Rick worked as a regional manager for Landus Cooperative and was responsible of both sales and operations. Knowing Rick's love for working in sales, a friend suggested he look into Viafield's available positions.

After reviewing Viafield's Agronomy Sales Team leader job description, Rick knew Viafield was where he wanted to be, "it looked like it fit and was something I would want to be doing."

After meeting with Agronomy Team Leader Bob Camp, Rick was even more excited to become part of Viafield.

"I could tell Bob and I had the same philosophy process," Rick said. "I was pretty impressed with Bob and his thoughts on where we could take the agronomy side."

As Rick was introduced to the rest of the sales team, he saw he would be surrounded by hardworking and driven people. "I was very impressed with the sales staff, they are very agronomically strong," Rick said. "They (have) the best and deepest concern for the customer at heart."

VIAFIELD GROWS WITH PASSION

Rick also noticed Viafield's sales team offers a blend of talents and experiences. "We have a mixture of both people that just started and those in their sixties," he said.

Rick looks to not only help grow the skills of those who are brand new, but also wants to aid the experienced team members in finding new ways to benefit the producer, as well as bettering their own skills. He looks forward to helping the sales team hone their skills for the betterment of the producer and Viafield.

While working to develop the sales staff is Rick's true passion, it also comes with its own set of challenges. Being that sales is such a unique career path, it is difficult to find the right person to fill the role. According to Rick, one of the greatest difficulties is retaining and recruiting qualified sales people.

"There are a lot of people looking for a job, it's challenging to find the right people," he said.

Despite this difficulty, Rick is confident the challenge will be overcome. He feels fortunate to have been welcomed to a team of people who have the same goal in mind. Rick says he is confident that he and Bob Camp along with Human Resources, Anne Benning will be able to fill Viafield's sales positions with only the best candidates.

"We share a lot of the same thoughts, the combination of all three of us working together, (we will) find the right people," Rick said. "Our goal is to go forward to grow the team."

Rick began his position with Viafield in March. He and his wife Karen live in Easton, Minnesota. They have three children and four grandchildren.

"I have always had a passion for working with sales people."

— Rick Haase

LARRY HARRAH - AGRONOMY SALES • MARBLE ROCK

Larry joined the Viafield Agronomy Sales team in April. He has a great deal of knowledge and experience with agronomy products and practices and is looking forward to getting to know producers in the Marble Rock, Rudd and Rockford area.

You can email Larry at lharragh@viafield.com or call (641) 330-0631



CONNOR KUHLEMEIER - AGRONOMY SALES • MARBLE ROCK

Connor was a Viafield Agronomy Intern during the summer last year. After graduating from Iowa State, he accepted a position on our team. Connor is from the Rudd area and is excited to be working close to home.

He can be reached at cuhlemeier@viafield.com or (641) 330-2903



YOUR ONE STOP SHOP ENERGY SOURCE



"If I have a question about anything, I can get ahold of Mason"

— Al Rausch

Viafield's services span way beyond feed, seed, fertilizer and general crop care. They also include a variety of ways to maintain farming equipment in proper working order. When it comes to energy services, Viafield has it all.

Al Rausch has been relying on Viafield to keep his farming operation well oiled and fuel topped up for the past 40 years. Throughout those years, Al ranks Viafield's services and accessibility as second to none.

When it comes to energy, Al takes advantage of nearly all Viafield offers. From the ruby red diesel fuel, lubricating oil, grease, to gas and propane.

Knowledge about available products is as important as the availability of the products. Al also relies on Viafield to keep him informed on the latest changes to each of the products he uses on a regular basis. Al was one

of the energy customers invited to attend the energy meeting hosted by Viafield this past March. "I wished I could remember everything they talked about," Al said about the meeting. "It was a good meeting, one of the better ones I'd say."

One of the things Al appreciates is the ability to easily stock up on any of the lubricants or fuels he might need. Bulk containers enable him to keep a regular stock on hand.

"I use two (bulk containers), 15W-40 in one and quick lift hydraulic oil in the other," he said. "When I run low on oil, I just call the coop and the truck comes out." Viafield has a truck that delivers bulk and packaged oil scheduled every two weeks.

Viafield doesn't stop at oils, lubes and greases. Keeping customer's homes and livestock comfortable is another one of our many energy expertise. Roughly two years ago, Al and his wife decided to add onto their house. The

addition would include a fireplace and a gas stove in their basement. "We had to dig a gas line, which the coop did, and the guys were very helpful when digging a new line," Al said.

Al also uses Viafield's LP to keep his nursery cozy during Iowa's less than favorable temperatures. Being able to keep temperatures regulated without worry of running low on fuel is crucial. Viafield's Scheduled Delivery Program is just another added convenience. This program takes the worry away from Al ordering LP. His Propane Delivery Specialist keeps his LP tank topped off. Al also schedules an annual summer fill to ensure he is ready when the thermometer drops.

An extended line of services is only as good as the professionals available to help provide and explain the products. Al is happy to be able to rely on Energy

Sales Specialist, Mason Kleitsch. "If I have problems, Mason is just a hop and a skip away," Al said. "If I have any questions he's over in Maynard – 6 miles away – I can call him if there is a problem or a question."

There is an added piece of mind knowing should an issue arise, it can quickly be solved. "If I have a question about anything, I can get ahold of Mason," Al said.

With a 40 year relationship, Al is confident in recommending Viafield's energy services. "I guess I would say give them a try," he said. "I sure didn't have any bad luck over the years with them, the service has always been good."

*Viafield Energy Specialist
Mason Kleitsch with
energy customer
Al Rausch*





1001 Blunt Pkwy
Charles City, IA 50616

Connections

Save up to 70% on all NAPA Gold Filters

Get huge savings on all NAPA Gold Series Filters starting on Sept. 1st running through Sept. 15th. Call our NAPA store in Greene at 641-816-5566. Ask about delivery to your nearest Viafield location!



ANOTHER \$200 ACH WINNER

We hope by now you have heard of our ACH program. With automatic deposits and withdrawals (ACH), you have greater control over your Viafield account with faster deposits and greater flexibility for making payments.

And when you sign up for ACH, you are instantly entered into a drawing to win a \$200 Visa Gift Card.

Congratulations to our winner from this quarter, Bob King!

Bob is now taking advantage of having his grain checks automatically deposited into his bank account. It's fast, it's safe and it's convenient.

Visit our website or stop into your nearest location today to sign up and get entered.



Viafield Rudd Location Leader Sarah Winters presents our \$200 Visa Gift Card winner, Bob King, with his prize.