

The wind is howling as I write this article. A cold wind on this early February day. We have had some much appreciated wet weather this winter. Though the wet and wind has slowed much progress in our fertilizer application, it has done wonders for the feed business. Another stellar feed season for both the Hackney and Kellogg feed mills. Record volumes continue to be produced and delivered each week. We appreciate the cattlemen's business for this continued growth. Nearly every month we add 2 to 5 new feed customers and members to our roles. Thank you for your confidence in the Valley Coop, Inc. feed business. The new commodity barn and overhead bins at the Kellogg facility have been a great addition for our processing needs. If you are ever in the area please stop by to see how it makes our operation more efficient.

As most of you are aware, the consolidation of Valley Coop, Inc. and Two Rivers Coop did not happen. With a two thirds majority needed to pass the resolution and only a 50% favorable vote from the Valley Coop, Inc. membership present and voting, the motion failed. The continued consolidation of the industry and economic climate we will be in over the next few years, with lower commodity prices and shrinking margins, times will get tougher for both producers and cooperatives alike. The proposed Milan rail loader will no doubt compress margins on grain as it has no alternative other than to bid prices to the producer higher than is reasonable in order to secure product to run through the facility. Good for the producer (short term) but detrimental to the long term of all facilities in the area. Your investments over the years

in facilities will erode. Valley Coop, Inc. is positioned with a good balance sheet and strong financial position today. With continued support, we will continue to serve our producer members well into the future, without it.....

The board of directors has made the decision to upgrade the outside leg at the Hackney facility to increase our ability to handle grain faster. We will be putting in a 15,000 BPH leg and equipment to improve our grain handling ability. It will be ready for the coming wheat harvest.

As many of you know, I will be retiring on May 31, 2016. I have had the privilege of serving the Valley Coop, Inc. members for 15 years of its 25 year history. A lot has happened in those 25 years. Two coops became one, after a second try. Then a third was added in 1995 to make up the current cooperative. In the past 15 years we have built new storage at two facilities, added new legs or replaced with larger capacity legs at 5 facilities, built a commodity barn for feed ingredients, a tire shop and warehouse, added a second pellet mill, and overhead feed storage bins, made numerous application equipment purchases and feed truck upgrades including adding 2 tractor trailer units. It has been a busy 15 years. I hope that in some small way that I have had a positive influence and that I leave this cooperative in a better place than it was in when I became General Manager here. I wish you all the best for the future of Valley Coop, Inc.

Richard Kimbrel
General Manager

KEEP EMOTION IN THE GMO LABELING DEBATE

The below article was written by James C. Greenwood, CEO of the Biotechnology Industry Organization, and published on October 16th in The Hill.

In the food labeling debate about genetically modified organisms (GMOs), emotion often drives the dialogue, while science is too frequently disregarded. Unfortunately, most consumer fears about products containing GMOs are based on myths.

I understand that people have questions about biotechnology and GMOs. The Council for Biotechnology Information created its GMO Answers initiative to address such questions. While these efforts have led to a more open dialogue and exchange of views, confusion remains and emotion still runs high.

This is why the Biotechnology Industry organization (BIO) is a strong proponent of the House-passed Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act, which provides a uniform national standard for food labels with clarity and consistency for American consumers. And this is why we need the Senate to consider similar legislation soon. On October 21, the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry will hold a hearing examining the federal regulation of agriculture biotechnology.

The promises of biotechnology—including agricultural biotechnology and GMO food crops—can be articulated using science, but also with facts that should evoke positive emotional responses. Perhaps rather than always relying on scientific arguments we should also convey the benefits of GMOs that can make us all feel good and will help consumers understand that what's really at stake is more than a label.

For example, in 2014, 46.7 million Americans lived in poverty and 48.1 million lived in food-insecure households. For a family of four, mandating the labeling of foods containing GMOs can add an additional \$500 per year in grocery costs.

GMO crop cultivation actually helps keep the cost of food down. GMO crops require less water, land, and fewer chemical applications than conventional crops, and they are better able to survive drought, disease, weeds, and insects.

Studies show that the larger, more reliable harvests of food products such as corn and soybeans made possible by GMO crops cost 6 to 10 percent less than if biotechnology were not available. These benefits have allowed farmers to spend less time in the fields and more time with their families and volunteering within their communities.

Globally, farmers choosing to grow GMOs have seen net economic benefits at the farm level amounting to \$18.8 billion in 2012 alone. This allows small land holder farmers to provide more food, enjoy economic security and even better educate themselves, their families and their villages.

The environmental, economic and societal benefits of biotechnology provide poignant human success stories. But fears about food safety are also at the heart of this debate even when the scientific evidence calls for no such concern.

So it's important to know that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, National Academies of Science, American Medical Association and the World Health Organization—among hundreds of other science and health authorities—have agreed that foods containing GMOs are no more risky than the same conventional and organic foods.

Furthermore, the American Medical Association believes, "there is no scientific justification for special labeling of bioengineered foods." The American Association for the Advancement of Science, the most prestigious scientific organization in the country believes, "legally mandating such a label can only serve to mislead and falsely alarm consumers."

So why do foods containing GMOs need to be labeled differently from other foods if there's no difference? And why force all consumers—including those who can least afford it—to pay extra for such a label? Especially if non-GMO choices already exist and are clearly labeled?

Consumers with such preferences are free to choose non-GMO and USDA Organic-labeled products to avoid genetically modified ingredients. The non-GMO and organic food industry is growing and is always adding new products to appeal to this market.

Along with America's family farmers, the food and agriculture industries want to work together to address real problems such as alleviating hunger, mitigating climate change and protecting the environment—not stigmatize a farming technology that can help provide solutions to meet these challenges.

Forty-six million Americans live in poverty and a lot of children go to school hungry. That's both an emotional argument and a scientific fact.

Greetings from the North



The groundhog said an early spring and it feels like it these last few days. Corn planting is just around the corner and the producers are keeping the wheels of our NH3 tanks rolling. Top dressing wheat and brome is keeping our dry spreader busy.

In January, we held a grower meeting with CPS's Lance Ragan about resistant weeds, with the main focus being on the importance of pre emerge chemicals with several modes of action. The turn out was very good and our new shop made a very comfortable meeting room.

We had quite the trapeze act the past week, as Webb Painting painted the outside leg of the elevator. It turned out looking good and no one got hurt.

Keep us in mind for all of all your farm and ranch needs, including tires. We also have many of the yard & garden products formerly carried at our Manning location. We appreciate your business.

As always the coffee pot is full so stop in and have a cup.

Atlanta Crew: Darren, Katherine, Jimmy, Andy, Terri, Paul, Mike—& Ric, Justin, Lyle

News from Burden and New Salem

Well it's that time again. It's finally dry enough to get back in the fields and do some more top dressing on wheat, well if you can find a day when the wind is not blowing like crazy. I have sure been enjoying this warmer weather. I'm just ready for the temperatures to even out and stay warm.

We are still in the process of shipping out all of the fall crops so we can make room for the upcoming wheat harvest. We have repaired the side load out shoots at New Salem so we can load out trucks faster and not hold up the unloading grain trucks as long.

We thank you for your Patronage and hope you come in and see us. The coffee is always on.

Nick & Bobby

News From the South

This has been pretty unusual weather for the middle of February considering the number of days we've had in the mid 60 degree range the last couple of weeks. Also, we have had enough wind lately to remind myself the reason I left western Kansas a few years ago. Besides working around the wind, we have had some good opportunities to get a head start on topdressing wheat which is in pretty much full swing at this point. Now is also a good time to think about pre-emergent chemicals for spring crops. Give us a call and we can discuss the various options we have available this year.

We have started handling livestock equipment here at Hackney since the first of the year. Please come by and check out our new inventory of panels, gates, fence supplies, bale feeders, etc., In addition to the outside equipment we also have a full line of small animal health supplies and most large animal vaccinations and wormers needed for the upcoming spring. As always we want to thank you for your continued support of your cooperative and look forward to provide any service you might need.

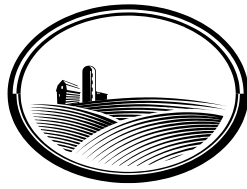


Hackney: Todd L., Stacie, Chance, Todd P., Frank R., Ronnie Dean, Nate, and Frank K.

HAVE YOU HEARD THIS ONE?



An out-of-towner drove his car into a ditch in a desolated area. Luckily, a local farmer came to help with his big strong horse named Buddy. He hitched Buddy up to the car and yelled, "Pull, Nellie, pull!" Buddy didn't move. Then the farmer hollered, "Pull, Buster, pull!" Buddy didn't respond. Once more the farmer commanded, "Pull, Coco, pull!" Nothing. Then the farmer nonchalantly said, "Pull, Buddy, pull!" And the horse easily dragged the car out of the ditch. The motorist was most appreciative and very curious. He asked the farmer why he called his horse by the wrong name three times. "Well...Buddy is blind and if he thought he was the only one pulling, he wouldn't even try!"



FIELDNOTES

What's new? Plenty of changes, let me share some of the highlights!

- Grid Soil Sampling: Valley Coop will be using Heartland Soil to bring grid sampling & variable rate application as an option when supplementing fertility to your soil. More details coming soon.
- Xtend SB's, yes with China's approval Dicamba resistant SB's can now be purchased. The only problem is the Dicamba herbicide to be applied post emerge hasn't yet been approved by the EPA. Will keep you updated as we know more.
- Agriculture & Agri-Business continue to fight legislation that affects our livelihood. EPA, OHSA and the current administration are working hard to take away some tools we take for granted for crop production. NH3, 24D, Dicamba and even Glyphosate are on the table for restrictions or complete removal. Exercise your right to vote and retain Friends of Ag in the legislative process.
- Latest Ag Facts brought to you from the Kansas Department of Ag: Agriculture drives the Kansas economy and is the state's largest employer at 229,000. Also is the state's largest industry at nearly 43% of the economy worth \$62.8 billion. Ag is the state's largest exporter totaling \$4.9 billion. Congratulations to those men and women that choose Ag as their profession.
- The "Rick Kimbrel" era at Valley Coop will come to an end June 1st. I'd like to thank him for his wisdom & leadership of this fine agri-business. Rick along with a host of talented board members have made many capital improvements to bring your coop to the forefront. His vision has brought Valley Coop to a level to sustain success now and into the future. I encourage all members to wish him well in his much deserved retirement.

Thanks for your business,

Kirk



Brown Butter Berry Cobbler

Recipe Submitted by Ingrid Elam

1 Box Yellow Cake Mix

1 Stick Butter

3 Cups Berries (Fresh or Frozen)

1/2 Cup Sugar

Melt butter—brown it just a little. Add the cake mix to the melted butter and mix until crumbly. Combine berries and sugar in a large bowl. Pour berry/sugar mixture into the bottom of a greased baking dish. (9X11 or 9X13 will work, but it is better with the smaller dish.) Bake for 40 minutes at 350 degrees until bubbly and browned on top. Serve with ice cream.