



## STANDING STILL IS NOT AN OPTION

Whether we like it or not, there is a truth you can't avoid if you're part of the agricultural industry: If you're not advancing, you're falling behind. The pace of change in our business, and the corresponding growth of just about everything associated with it—crop yields, planting, harvesting, application equipment and price tags—demands a response.

So, when you drive by Hull Co-op and see a building project in progress, rest assured there is a solid, well-thought-out reason

behind it. Yes, we are doing quite well as a cooperative. That success is the result of several factors, but two stand out—the support of our members and our ability to provide a level of service worthy of that patronage.

To remain financially strong and able to meet your needs, we can't stand pat. We are doing well financially because we're very efficient relative to the marketplace, and because we constantly challenge ourselves to make sure we remain competitive. That

efficiency, and the level of service we're able to provide, has also led to growth as new members are attracted to Hull Co-op.

We will continue to invest in our people and facilities, always looking for ways to handle growth by the most efficient of means. The current feed mill project is a perfect example. Though the ag economy is not at a high point, when the board was presented with the details of the project, they approved it quickly due to the benefits of improved productivity and lower costs—both vitally important during leaner times.

Because we've focused on efficiency in all aspects of our business, your cooperative has the working capital needed for these projects, and we'll continue to use our resources to make Hull Co-op the best supplier we can be for our members.



By Ed Westra  
General Manager



*Continued on page 2*

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Continued from page 1

## Another solid year

At our annual meeting, to be held March 22 at the Boyden-Hull School, we will once again be able to report very good earnings to our members. With that said, we are also very aware of the tight financial conditions faced by our farmers due to low commodity prices. In addition to our patronage payments this year, Hull Co-op will also be distributing \$150,000 in deferred equity at the annual meeting to help your cash position.

We are able to pay patronage and deferred equity by maintaining a strong financial position. I'm pleased to say that we are in the best position in terms of accounts receivable that we've been in for the past 10 years. Thank you to the members who are diligent in paying their bills on time.

## Accounts receivable credit policy

With that said, we are going to work hard to maintain our solid financial footing. We

will continue to enforce our credit policy in order to keep our finances in order and protect the privilege of convenience credit for all our members.

For your reference, our policy is: Payment is due on the 10th of the month following purchase. If you miss a second payment, you are subject to being placed on a cash-only basis and no longer receiving convenience credit. ♦

## MEET YOUR BOARD CANDIDATES

### Darwin Te Slaa

Darwin lives just west of Hull, where he raises corn and beans, feeds cattle and hogs, and does custom work.



After farming with his father through the high school years, Darwin started his own operation in 1987. He and his wife, Lisa, have two sons: Spencer and Tanner. Lisa owns and operates Precision Leadership Group in Hull. Previously, Darwin has served as the deacon chair at First Reformed Church in Hull.

### Brian Zoet (Incumbent)

Brian and his wife, Jacinda, along with their four children live on the family farm northeast of Hull. Brian graduated from South



Dakota State University and started farming with his father 18 years ago. Together they work the land and raise corn and soybeans. They also have beef cattle, finish hogs and custom feed nursery pigs and heifers. In addition to serving on the Hull Co-op Board, Brian is also an active member of the Sioux County Pork Producers and has served on his church's consistory.

### Doyle Wissink (Incumbent)

Doyle and his wife, Jan, live on a farm south of Hull. They raise cattle and grow corn and soybeans on a 60/40 rotation. Doyle also



does custom fieldwork in the spring and fall seasons for some neighbors. Doyle has been farming since the mid-1970s, and his sons, Justin and Josh, are now partners in the operation. In addition to serving on the Hull Co-op Board, Doyle served on the Rock Valley Rural Water Board and has served as a member of his church's consistory.

### Brent De Jager

Brent farms west of Hull with his father, Loren, and son, Zach. They feed cattle and hogs and raise row crops. A farmer as long as



he can remember, Brent "officially" started farming in 1990. In addition to Zach, he and his wife, Amy, have three daughters: Shae, Jessi and Teagen. Brent currently serves on the Hull Christian school board.

### Hank Vander Waal

A northwest Iowa native, Hank ran a greenhouse operation in British Columbia for 16 years before moving back to Hull in 2003.



He raises cattle and crops southeast of Hull with sons Brian, Jonathan and Mark. In addition to the three boys, Hank and his wife, Laurie, have four girls: Krystle, Rachel, Alyssa and Emily. Hank currently serves on the Rock Valley Rural Water Board.

### Kevin Wielenga

Kevin runs a dairy operation on the farm where he grew up southeast of Hull. He's been involved in farming all his life, but



started dairying on his own in 1994. He and his wife, Pam, have four children: Nicholas, Kelsey, Dalton and Keegan. Kevin currently serves on the Sioux DHIA #1 board, is the swine superintendent at the Sioux County Fair, and has previously served as a deacon at First Reformed Church in Hull. ♦

# EVENING OUT EMERGENCE

*By Lonnie Egdorf, Agronomist*

Depending on the weather, we could be in the field in a little more than six weeks. It's time to tune that single-most important piece of springtime equipment, your planter.

From an agronomist's standpoint, the key to a good, high-yielding stand of corn is uniform seed depth and even spacing. That leads to even plant emergence, which has a surprising impact on final yields. Why?

Once a plant falls behind, other plants will compete. The larger, older plants will have the advantage for water, sun and nutrients. Studies have indicated that if one-quarter of the plants were delayed a week and a half, you could lose six bushels per acre. Despite the common wisdom, the study showed no differences between fixed-ear and flex-ear hybrids.

## Even it out

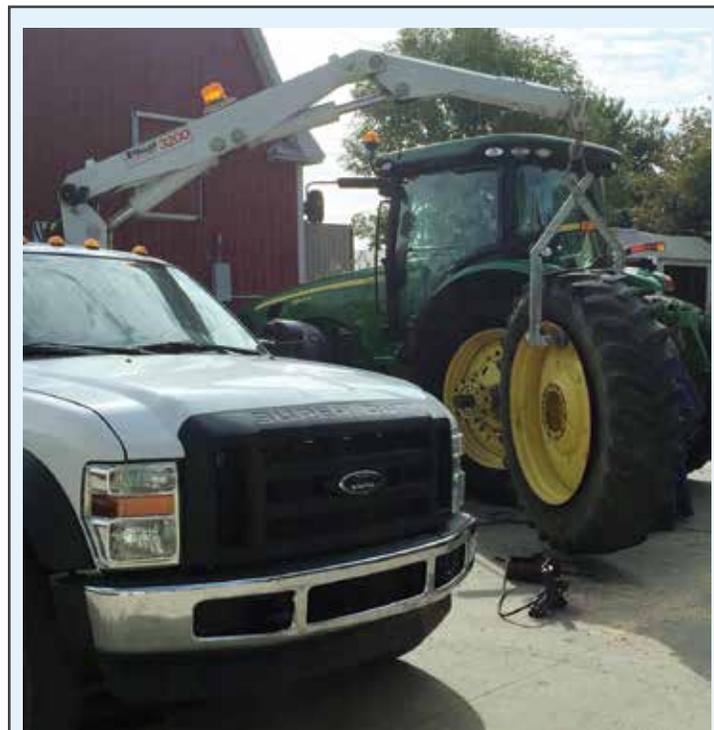
So what can you do to help ensure that "picket fence" stand of corn? First, check the mechanical components of your planter. Go through the entire checklist from making sure the row units are running level to possibly calibrating your seed meters. If you're considering calibration, we work with someone who can do that for you.



Other factors to consider include:

- **Planting depth**—make sure seed is 2-2.25 inches deep.
- **Seedbed preparation**—working soil that is too wet leads to clods and poor seed/soil contact. Too much tillage can dry the soil, again leading to seed/soil contact issues. Some seed may find moisture while others don't.
- **Planting conditions**—planting in wet soil can result in sidewall compaction, leading to root penetration issues down the road. In minimum tillage, high-trash situations, it's best to try to distribute that trash as evenly as possible. Otherwise, you'll have different ground temperatures impacting emergence timing.

Ultimately, once you've done everything you can on the front end, the seed has to be planted. Once the seed is in the ground, watch the corn closely when it emerges to determine what issues you see and what you can do to correct the problem for the next season. ♦



## TIRE SERVICE ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

*By Brad Nielsen, Asst. Petroleum Manager*

Trouble never hits when it's convenient. That's why we field a tire truck and offer in-field tire service. We can come to you wherever and whenever you need us. ♦

## JOIN THE DRIVE TO FEED KIDS

This year the Hull Co-op will again help co-sponsor the Hunger-Free Kids supper and auction on Friday, April 1, 6 p.m. at the Dordt College Rec Center. The money raised helps fund the Snack Pack programs in our area communities. In the Hull area alone, we are currently packing 132 Snack Packs each week. These are sent home with students on Friday afternoon to help ensure they have food for the weekend. If you have any questions about this event, contact Ken Nielsen at the Hull Co-op, 712-439-3427, or by email at [ken.nielsen@hullcoop.com](mailto:ken.nielsen@hullcoop.com). ♦

## NEW FACE IN FEED

With more than 17 years behind the wheel, Alan Trei has logged a lot of miles delivering feed to cooperative customers in northwest Iowa. Since January, he's been putting his experience to work for Hull Co-op, delivering feed and helping in the mill.

"I'm still new here, but this is a good place to work and I'm happy to be here," Alan says. When he's not driving or working in the mill and warehouse, Alan enjoys hunting, fishing, trapping and four-wheeling. ♦



## START YOUNG, FINISH STRONG

*By Amanda Altman, Calf and Heifer Specialist*

One of the best ways to maintain a top-producing dairy herd is to keep close tabs on your replacement calves. That's the goal of our new dairy calf benchmarking program. For those dairies on the program, we'll visit the farm regularly to take weights and heights for the heifer calves. That information is significant, because their



growth during the first six months will determine how well they'll milk for the rest of their lives.

By doing this, we can benchmark the heifers on these farms against the standards that universities and research farms have set. When we find areas of concern, we can determine what we can change on the nutrition side to get those calves where they need to be. It's a way to dial in the calf nutrition program, and one more thing that sets the Hull Co-op feed department apart.

We know milk prices are not great now, but cutting calf nutrition is not your best cost management option in the long run. If you can spend a little more on the calves and get them into production 45-60 days sooner, you'll reduce the amount of feed they're eating as a bred heifer and they'll produce more milk. We can show you that the ROI on calf nutrition is very favorable.

If you're interested in our benchmarking program, get in touch with me at 712-209-7119 or [ajaltman@landolakes.com](mailto:ajaltman@landolakes.com). ♦

## ENERGY IS A GREAT DEAL

With crude oil prices as low as we've seen them in years, farm diesel prices have also been held down. We recommend keeping your farm tanks topped off at the current prices. As long as crude prices stay down, we don't expect to see them climb. At the moment, there is plenty of product available, which also serves to hold prices down. Feel free to give me a call regarding current prices, and keep your tanks topped off with

quality Cenex® Ruby Fieldmaster® Premium diesel for all your spring planting needs.

In addition to the fact that there is no better diesel fuel in the ag industry, there is another great reason to use Ruby Fieldmaster. When combined with quality Cenex lubricants, your farm equipment qualifies for the Cenex warranty program. The Cenex warranty protects new

equipment for up to 10 years or 10,000 hours—you can also get warranty protection for used machinery. Stop in today and talk to Brad regarding your warranty options. You can also view warranty details online at [www.cenex.com](http://www.cenex.com). ♦



**By Barb Bynes**  
*Petroleum Manager*

# SAFETY IS A CHOICE



**By Karen Luinstra**  
Human Resources  
and Safety  
Manager

I recently attended a meeting of safety directors where we discussed, among other things, how important our producers are to us and how to migrate our safety message from the co-op to the farm. It's well documented that farming is one of the most dangerous professions. More people per capita are injured or killed in agriculture than in any other industry. The sad—and frustrating—fact is that it doesn't have to be that way.

Most of the common causes of injury and death on the farm are relatively easy to guard against. And, two age groups are particularly vulnerable—those over 65 and those age 15 and under. Here are some of the most common risk areas:

- **Machinery**—this is no surprise, but some of the specific hazards can be easy to overlook and are relatively easy to guard against.
  - o PTOs—keep the guards in place, don't step over them, wear the proper clothing, teach kids to stay away.
  - o Highway travel—have your SMV placards in place, flashers working and in use, stay alert, especially when tired or under the gun.
  - o ROPS—any tractor manufactured after 1975 has a ROP

system. Older tractors can be retrofitted. If you have ROPS, wear your seatbelt—if not, don't.

- o Slips, trips and falls—basically, keep work areas picked up, take your time, walk around rather than stepping over.
  - o Use eye protection when mowing and using just about any smaller power tool, such as a string trimmer or chain saw.
- **Livestock**—obviously, their behavior can be unpredictable. Apart from the usual hazards, though, there is an area that is often overlooked—one that is shared with machinery. Like the equipment you operate just about every day, animals in confinement can generate more noise than you think. Over time, hearing loss can occur—which makes it harder to detect danger as you age. Consider using ear protection.

The Iowa Center for Agriculture and Health and Iowa State Extension are great safety resources, and I would love to be a resource for you as well. We do a hazard assessment on a regular basis here at the co-op. It's a good idea for your farm too. Your safety is our concern, so please don't hesitate to rely on us for safety advice just as you would count on our agronomy, grain or feed specialists. We're here for you because this is your cooperative. ♦



*Each year, the Hull Chamber of Commerce asks the people of the Hull community—employers, employees, volunteers and residents—to nominate area businesses for the Employer of the Year Award. The Chamber is looking for businesses that go above and beyond to help Hull succeed and grow. This year, Hull Cooperative Association was proud to receive this award.*



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## In This Issue

- Meet your board candidates  
Page 2
- Evening out corn emergence  
Page 3
- Getting calves off to a strong  
start - Page 4

# BUILDING MATERIALS? LOOK NO FURTHER

As we move into 2016, we would like to thank everyone for their patronage this past year. You helped make 2015 a very successful year at the Hull Co-op Building Center.

Spring is almost here, so I would like to remind everyone that the Building Center is a full-line building material retailer. We sell everything from small hardware and tool items up to everything you need for large homes, ag buildings and commercial structures.

For example, the Building Center is currently working with Excel Construction Company of Lincoln, Neb., on a new low-income housing development here in Hull. Located in the northeast corner of town, Goldfinch Grove features six duplexes, and we are supplying all the building materials. This will be a nice addition to the Hull housing market.



**By Eldon  
Van den Top**  
*Lumber Manager*



We have a computerized drafting program that enables us to create house plans. We just updated the program and purchased a new, more powerful computer to run the program more efficiently to make the planning process even more enjoyable for you.

So, if you're looking to replace your windows or shingle your house, or if you're considering a new home or ag building, come talk to us. We would love to help you with any projects you may have—big or small.

Thanks for your support in 2015, and we look forward to serving you this year and beyond. ♦