

Western Farmer

The Official Publication of the Garden City Co-op, Inc.

FEATURES

December 2007

Western Farmer

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IMPORTANT

**All Garden City Co-op Locations
will be closed:**

Monday, December 24th at noon

Tuesday, December 25th

Monday, December 31st at noon

Tuesday, January 1st

Country Corner Holiday Hours:

Monday, Dec. 24th (5:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m.)

Tuesday, December 25th - Closed

Monday, Dec. 31st (5:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.)

Tuesday, Jan. 1st (7:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m.)



88th ANNUAL MEETING

The Garden City Co-op, Inc. held its 88th Annual Meeting on Tuesday, November 27, 2007, at the Plaza Hotel in Garden City, Ks. There were 126 voting members among those that attended the meeting.

The auditing firm of Lindburg & Vogel, Chtd. was once again engaged by the Board of Directors for the independent audit of the records of the cooperative. Ed Michel, representing the firm, confirmed the audit and reviewed financial highlights in the Annual Report including Sales \$237,672,007.49; Gross Margins \$13,736,659.53; Gross Income from Local Operations \$17,034,326.06; Total Operating Expenses \$18,816,364.00; Other Savings \$9,046,891.06; Net Savings \$5,706,230.14; Total Assets \$119,816,622.95; Total Current Liabilities \$79,089,727.64; Total Long-Term Liabilities \$9,709,614.26; Total Member's Equity \$31,017,281.05; Retained Earnings \$9,098,226.54; and Patronage Dividends \$2,965,515.74.

Boyd Lear, Board Chairman, gave the Directors Report. In reflecting on the past year, Boyd expressed his appreciation for ice, snow, and generators and the ability to deal with all of the advances in the farming industry. Boyd reviewed items from their Planning Session held February 2007 where Dr. David Barton was able to give insight to the Board and Staff into where exactly the company was going. The company continues to grow and is extremely strong.

John McClelland, General Manager, then gave the Management Report.

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88th ANNUAL MEETING (cont.)

Cont. From Page 1

John reported that covering a 200 mile area has created its problems and challenges. However, the successes shown in the balance sheet reflect a level of competence in dealing with very difficult times. The first lesson learned is that we have to continue developing what has been left to us; the second lesson is that we must learn to deal with an infrastructure that does not always care about our needs; and third, that the employee group that currently exists at the Garden City Co-op who takes care of the needs of the members and customers is truly one of the greatest strengths. John further advised the estimated patronage amounts. He thanked the membership for their continued support of the cooperative system and specifically of the Garden City Co-op.

Rick Horton and Todd Graham both spoke as to their experiences as Associate Board Members and thanked the Board & Staff for their experiences.

Boyd asked for a vote on the proposed changes to the Articles of Incorporation & Bylaws. It was moved and seconded to accept the proposed changes and the motion carried unanimously.

Dwane Roth, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, was called upon to handle the Board elections. Dwane reported that the Nominating Committee consisted of Steve Sterling, Bruce Howard, and himself. He announced that the candidates for the two Director positions were Boyd Lear and Tim Miller. There were no nominations from the floor. It was moved and seconded that a unanimous ballot be cast for Boyd Lear and Tim Miller to serve a three year term. There was then a unanimous vote for this motion.

Leon Westbrook with CHS spoke recognizing the Garden City Co-op as one of CHS's largest customers. Westbrook went on to compliment the management and direction of the Garden City Co-op. Wise and significant decisions were made, therefore giving very positive direction to a strong, well respected company. He further expressed the extreme need that exists in the world for energy supplies. In discussing CHS's investments, both locally and internationally, Westbrook detailed information regarding local need in connection to need in other areas of the U.S. and how supportive CHS is to the G.C. Co-op. Westbrook recognized Rod Petty for the critical role he has played in the development of the relationship between CHS and the Garden City Co-op.

Garden City Co-op employees who received service pins for years of service to the Co-op included: Kary Smith, Connie Munoz, Jeff Boyd, Rick Albers, Dave Frazer, Pete Maestas, Phyllis Orozco, Delores Guthrie, Dean Perry, and Brent McMillan - 5 years; Kurt Strasser and John Streckfus - 10 years; Bob Almos - 30 years; and Ken Jameson - 35 years. John also recognized three retirees - Jay Warren, Lester Webb, and Rod Petty.

A question and answer session was then opened with questions ranging from the new transportation division, storage issues in grain, rail issues, ethanol issues and E85 availability, to a woman serving on the Board.

One handmade quilt, a box of Dodge City Steaks, and a sculpture by Greg Todd were given as door prizes to Bobby Unruh, Lamar Fulmer, and Ron Olomon. Early redemptions of stock up to \$1,000 were given to Lynn Lightner, Bill Pitts, Steve Standley, Dale Unruh, and Lawrence Miller.

Boyd Lear adjourned the meeting for refreshments.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dwane Roth, Nominating Committee

Central to the success or failure of any cooperative is a functioning Board of Directors that represents all of the Co-op's members. Therefore, it is critical that the right Co-op members are nominated and elected to the Board of Directors. Some cooperatives struggle with the nominating process, and finding qualified members to serve on the Board, or even finding individuals who are willing to serve, can be quite a challenge.

The Board is responsible for the long-term future of the Co-op. This makes it vital that Directors will look after the interests of the cooperative and be free from conflict (personal, financial, or other). Directors must also work to understand and represent the diverse need of the membership. The Board balances these needs with the Co-op's long-term goals, ultimately making decisions that are beneficial to the Co-op in general, and to the Co-op membership as a whole. Directors should use their position as leaders to ensure that the cooperative remains focused on its vision, purpose, core values, and performance. Boards have a responsibility for understanding the cooperative's business as well as the external environment in which the business operates. The Board of Directors, working together, sets policy and oversees the cooperative's operations and decisions while paying particular attention to the welfare of the Co-op and the members. The Board is responsible for bringing value to the cooperative and its membership as a whole.

We are asking you as members to consider running for a Board position in the future. Our nominating committee hopes to start their process of looking for new Board electives sooner in the upcoming year. We ask that if anyone is interested in running for a Board position that you contact our Nominating Committee and let them know of your interests.

COMMITMENT STATEMENT
"Moving Forward Together"

GRAIN DIVISION NEWS

Ken Jameson, V.P. Grain Division

We want to thank everyone that delivered their hard earned bushels to us this past year. We are also excited to be able to pay those who supported us with a patronage refund of 12.24 ¢ cwt. On grain sold and 21.31 % of storage income collected this past year, 30% to be paid in cash. What other businesses that you deal with will share their profits with you?

2007 was quite a year for your Grain Division as we took in the fourth largest wheat harvest we've ever taken, followed by the third largest milo crop in our history and a corn crop that broke the old record by 1 million bushels. When the dust settled, we handled over 32 million bushels this year compared to 15 million bushels last year. Obviously, when you handle this kind of volume, there are bound to be some bumps in the road and we experienced a few, but thanks to your patience and dedicated elevator employees, we were able to get the crop under cover. We began dumping the fall crop on August 18th and as of December 5th, we are still receiving some milo.

Another amazing thing about 2007 is along with good crops, we have historically good prices for those crops. The wheat market led the way when production around the world took a hit this year dropping world supplies to their lowest in years. Following wheat was the corn market as the ethanol boom started the food versus fuel war that continues today. We are at price levels today that no one could of imagined one or two years ago. Can these levels be maintained is the \$60 question today. Wheat is a crop that is grown around the world so stocks can rebuild fairly quickly if production bounces back this next crop year. Unfortunately, the wheat crop in our trade territory is in desperate need for moisture but that is something we have come to expect.

The corn and soybean markets appear to continue the food versus fuel war and a battle for acres. Congress is working on legislation that could increase mandates even further on biofuels. If that happens, then the battle for acres will heat up even more. Many in the trade question whether we can achieve the acres needed without opening CRP acres for cultivation.

With all the focus on commodities today from index funds, commodity funds, etc., the volatility in all the markets will continue. Volatility however does offer opportunity and risk. It's more important than ever to have a game plan in place for marketing your crops. Sell orders are a very important tool to use in these markets where daily swings can be 40¢ a bushel. We have seen days where the market would run up and hit our sell orders only to close lower for the day. Give us a call, we would be glad to visit with you about all the markets.

All of us in the Grain Division want to thank you for this past year's business and look forward to earning your business next year. We also want to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Happy Holidays!
The employees of the Garden City Co-op
wish you a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year!

GRAIN DEFERRED PAYMENTS FOR JANUARY 2008

For those of you that have grain contracts payable January 2, 2008, they will be put in the mail on December 31st unless you contact us to hold your checks.

If you have not returned a signed copy of your contract, please do so in order for us to mail your check to you on time.

If you need to sell grain before the end of the year for tax purposes, please do so by noon on December 31st. All locations (except Country Corner) will be closing at noon on Monday, December 31st and will re-open Wednesday, January 2nd, 2008.

For Daily Grain Bids or To Sell Grain

620-275-6161 (G.C.)
620-356-1219 (Ulysses)
620-397-5343 (Dighton)
785-391-2336 (Utica)
785-731-2275 (Ransom)
Visit our website at:
www.gccoop.com or
www.gccoop.com/mobile



See Jayrene at Dighton for all your cell phone needs. Jayrene is located in the Dighton Office
Phone 620-397-5343

SEED NEWS FROM WESTERN COOPERATIVE SEED

Chris Irvin, Seed Sales Manager

First of all, I would like to say thanks for all of the early corn, soybeans and milo orders for the 2008 planting season. With excellent performance from Dekalb and Croplan Genetics in 2007, I have never felt so confident in recommending these companies hybrids and varieties.

On the corn side of things, most hybrids are still available but there are a few different hybrids that are getting sold out. Those hybrids include Dekalb DKC 61-73, DKC 64-78, DKC 52-63, DKC 52-59 and Croplan 6818 RB, and Croplan 691 RR. Don't forget the next deadline for quantity and prepay discounts is February 1st. Also WCS is still offering a dryland corn program on three different hybrids that will reduce your seed cost on those tough dryland acres. The sooner you order the better chance you will get what you want and don't forget to book early and save big.

Switching gear to beans, I just received some information that everyone needs to hear. Soybean production areas were very dry going into the spring then received large amounts of rain and then turned off dry again causing poor germination throughout the soybean seed production industry. Therefore many varieties between 1.9 to 3.6 maturities have 60-80% seed germination. State laws require a minimum of 85% germination. Therefore with near 10 dollar beans and less production than expected bean supplies could get extremely tight. Right now it is still too early to tell how much bean production will be lost due to poor germination, but to be on the safe side I would recommend any customer that is wanting beans for 2008 planting, including double crop, to get in touch with me as soon as possible to get them on order to secure them for the planting season.

Milo, sunflower and alfalfa supplies are in very good supply for the upcoming season. I do not see any shortages in these areas. Please call with any questions you may have and let me help you in determining with hybrids will maximize your production on every acre of your farm. My phone number is 620-271-8150. Thanks again and Happy Holidays to all.

YIELD EXPECTATIONS FOR LATE PLANTED/ LATE EMERGING WHEAT

Fred Fisher, Agronomist, Crop Profit\$

With ongoing dry weather in many parts of the Garden City area we are getting into a time period of concern for the 2008 wheat crop. In areas north and east of Garden City most wheat stands are adequate. East and north of town stands are a little spotty. In large areas to the south many growers had to dust in wheat and still do not have adequate moisture for germination and emergence.

Long term research at the KSU Agronomy farm in Garden City sheds some light on yield expectations for late planted or late emerging wheat. A study conducted at this site from 1985 to 1991 suggests that optimal planting dates occur between October 1st and 15th. Although this research is quite old now the same fundamentals for yield expectations very likely remain true. As expected, yield potential drops by November 1st and continues to decline through the winter months. Keep in mind the numbers in the chart below represent averages from the years included in the study and late fall weather really dictates the expected outcome for the 2008 wheat crop. In years where we maintain mild temperatures later in the fall the impact of delayed planting or emergence will be minimized. The goal for high yielding wheat should be to establish crown roots and at least 3 tillers per plant entering the winter months.



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Garden City, KS 67846
Office: 620-272-9608
Fred Fisher: 620-640-1400
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WESTERN TRANSPORT

Kary Smith, Manager

Western Transport is on the road! We currently have three trucks in service, with two more coming on soon. We have been hauling fuel, dry fertilizer, liquid fertilizer, and some grain. We will soon be hauling NH₃ as well. Our NH₃ trailers are being set up as of this writing. The Garden City Co-op is committed to supplying their customers with what they need, when they need it. Transportation is a huge piece in the puzzle.

At Western Transport, our entire focus is moving product in a safe, timely, and professional manner. Transportation is our only business. When you see those Western Transport trucks on the road, you will know that your cooperative has product on the way. If you have any questions about our operation, stop by our office located on the second floor of the Petroleum Building. We would be more than happy to visit with you.

PATRON NOTE PROGRAM

We continue to offer Patron Notes (Certificates of Indebtedness). Following are the series and dollars currently available to members.

Note Series	Dollars Available
5-Yr. @ 7.50%	\$149,950.00

To participate in the Garden City Co-op Patron Note Program, you must be a Common Stock holder and also live in the state of Kansas.

Planting Date	% of Optimal Yield
Oct. 1st	100% of optimal yield
Oct. 1st	77% of optimal yield
Nov. 1st	59% of optimal yield
Dec. 1st	57% of optimal yield
Jan. 1st	41% of optimal yield
Feb. 1st	16% of optimal yield
Mar. 1st	0 yield/wheat failed to vernalize & head out
Apr. 1st	

PETROLEUM NEWS

Pete Maestas, Petroleum Manager

With harvest behind us we would like to thank each and every one of our customers and friends for your continued support and business here at the Co-op.

From now till the end of January you still have a chance to earn a \$25.00 gift card for 100 gallon purchases of TMS 15/40, HTB Qwiklift Hydraulic Oil, Maxtron DEO and Maxtron THF. So check your tanks and place your orders. Several major blenders have announced price increases for January on lube oils.

It is also time to start thinking about next years diesel. We are watching spring and summer contracts and hope to be pricing some soon. Give us a call or come in and see us and we can discuss your needs.

Installation of the new fuel pumps at the bulk plant is complete. You should be pleased with the upgraded equipment.

As many of you know Rod Petty will be retiring as of December 31st. He will truly be missed here at the Garden City Co-op. I have been here since April of 2002 and have earned a great respect for Rod. He has done an exceptional job of leadership for the Petroleum Division. Feel free to stop in or call and wish Rod luck. We here at the Petroleum office wish Rod and Vickie the best of luck with this new time in their lives.

I'm looking forward to serving you as VP of Petroleum in the same ways that you are accustomed to.

COUNTRY CORNER SPECIALS

Country Corner is currently offering a Car Wash Special (\$3.00 off of an Ulti-mate Wash with a \$20.00 gas purchase).

We are also offering pre-paid gift cards. They can be purchased for amounts from \$5.00 to \$100.00. They will be rechargeable if you would like to add more to the card after they have been purchased. So, if you are looking for a quick gift, come in and purchase one from us.

[illegible]

DIGHTON STATION NEWS

Jeff Berning, Manager of Other Ag Inputs

The Garden City Co-op Dighton Station continues to offer a wide variety of products and services to our customers. See us for your tire needs, gas, diesel, oil products, and exchange of propane bottles. We are a full service station taking appointments for oil changes, chassis lubrications, safety checks, and even hand car washes.

When purchasing tires from the Garden City Co-op Dighton Station, the first tire rotation will be provided for free. Thereafter, a fee will be charged for any other rotations or tire balancing.

The Dighton Station has tow manned tire trucks that are ready and willing to come to your rescue for farm equipment tire service. This service extends to the surrounding counties including the Ransom area. Give us a call at (620) 397-5311 to help with your tire problems.

The Co-op also carries some livestock supplies, with the availability to furnish other items you might require.

Thank you from the Dighton Station (where the coffee is always hot) to our customers for your continued business.

CROP PRODUCTION UPDATE

Tim Giesick, V.P. Crop Production

As many of you know, we have been busy with a tremendous fall ammonia run. Since August 31st, Garden City Co-op Crop Production has moved over 10,000 tons of ammonia. With the shortage of production of NH₃, the only tons available are prepay tons from the manufacturer. Garden City Co-op went out early and prepaid NH₃ tons in order to have ammonia for their customers. Although we ran out a few times, after being put on allocation, NH₃ flow has been smooth.

The U.S. imports about 60% of its liquid nitrogen needs. Right now, foreign countries like China and India are in the market buying up a lot of these tons causing a shortage in the U.S. market and making fertilizer very expensive. All U.S. forecasts on fertilizer are calling almost every product short. Potash is almost non-existent. We have bought all we can for our customers and it will be sold on a first come first serve basis. We are sold out of 10-34-0 at this time. Hopefully we will be able to secure more tons in the near future. We have made it a point to allow the Garden City Co-op customers to lock in their needs and rest easy at night knowing they have secured their fertilizer needs for the new crop year.

If you have been around the country, many of you have noticed our big NH₃ rigs in many fields. We have a very long list of acres to do so if this is something you are interested in, I would encourage you to turn your acres in.

We have a new face out at our Lowe facility. His name is Derrick Bownes. Derrick will be the yard supervisor. With his work ethic and expertise, you will notice a big change in service and performance thru out crop production. Please take the time to stop in and meet this fine young man.

In the future, our sales people will be coming to your farms with chemical pricing and programs for the upcoming year. Please take the time to hear what they have to say. The employees of Garden City Co-op Crop Production would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season and look forward to serving you in 2008.

ULYSSES CROP PRODUCTION

Daron Cowan, Sales Manager - Ulysses

I recently attended the Land O Lakes/Purina Mills Expo in San Antonio. This is where LOL/Purina Mills dealers see all the new products available to us and also attend educational workshops and seminars. Attendees also get discounts on feed and livestock products which helps keep our prices competitive. Feed sales are keeping steady, but I aim for them to pickup when the colder days start. We also have a good supply of bright yellow wheat straw for winter bedding at \$4.50/bale. The Feed Department at Ulysses and Lakin have changed the Feed Quantity Discount Schedule.

1 Ton(40bags) 5% off list price—Includes all bagged feed except salt and pet food.

49 bags 5% off list price—water soft and stock salt.

Pet food discount is the Frequent Buyer Card—Buy 6 get 1 Free.

Trailer and Livestock Equipment sales have picked up in the last couple of months and should stay steady throughout the winter. We have these year end specials on our livestock equipment

1. Filson Calf Tipping Table. Regular price is \$980.00, sale price is \$850.00.
2. 25% off all remaining stock of Powder River chute parts and calf alley gates.
3. Blattner 3-bale Hay Feeder Trailer on sale for \$2400.00(regular \$2690).

Trailer Sale!!!!!!

We have these year end specials on our TopHat Trailers.

1. Take \$125.00 off any single axle utility trailer. \$200 off any 2 axle trailer.
2. Hold over 2006 model trailer it is a 20ft gooseneck with a dovetail, 5ft slide in ramps, spare, and 2-6k axles with brakes, regular price at \$4,725.00 on sale for \$4,000.00
3. 3-Bale transport regular price \$2585.00 on sale for \$2300.00

Just a reminder at GCC-Ulysses we are carrying a full line of LOL/Purina Mills feed, Blattner Livestock Equipment, Butler Bale and regular flatbeds, Tophat Trailers and Pace Edwards Roll-Top Tonneau covers. We are also a dealer for Keystone Automotive Accessories.

Thank you to all of our customers that have made this a wonderful year. Please call Daron for all your Feed, Trailer, and Livestock Equipment needs at 620-356-1219 or 353-8587.

EQUIPMENT FOR SALE

The Crop Production Division will be taking sealed bids on a 1997 1/2 Ton straight cab Ford Pickup with approximately 150,000 miles. This pickup can be seen at Lowe Crop Production. Bids will be opened at 1:00 p.m. Jan. 15th, 2008. The G.C. Co-op reserves the right to refuse any and all bids.

The Petroleum Division will be taking sealed bids on a 1980 Ford F250 Pickup. It has 4-wheel drive, a flat bed, and a snow blade. It also has standard transmission. This pickup can be seen at the Petroleum Div., 107 N. 6th. Bids will be opened at 1:00 p.m. Jan. 15th, 2008. The G.C. Co-op reserves the right to refuse any and all bids.

OTHER EQUIPMENT FOR SALE

Location: G.C. Coop Elevator - Utica

Truck: 1990 GMC Top Kick
Mileage - 195,969
366 Tonawanda Engine
Allison Automatic
Good Rubber

Box: Smeal Mfg. Co.
Bulk Feed Delivery Box
Model# VT-1654B
Serial# 6497

Truck: 1976 Chevy C65
Mileage - 79,692
366 Engine
5-speed manual trans.
Good Rubber

Box: Kraus Bulk Feed Delivery Box
Serial# K65247474883

Bulk Feed Bins:
5 - 850 to 1000 bu. bins with augers and ladders
1 - 850 to 1000 bu. bin with ladder/no auger

1 small Grain Roller Mill
1 small Seed Wheat Cleaner

All equipment sold **ASIS** and **WHERE IT IS**. Make offers to Jeff at Dighton Station at (620) 397-5311 or cell (620) 290-3342.

DIVINE GARDENS

Abby Dechant, Summer Intern

As diversity in agriculture becomes more important to keeping “afloat”, families are finding ways to incorporate hobbies and interests into a profitable operation. The Claar Family of Deerfield has done just that by creating Divine Gardens.

Four years ago, farming faced one of its more challenging years. Many families realized the importance of diversifying their operations. Tim Claar spent some time reading about the options and opportunities that come with running a greenhouse and was convinced that hydroponics was the way to go. Tim’s mother, Chris, didn’t take much convincing either. After visiting with experienced producers at a national convention, it seemed like an easy fit. Chris’s husband Ron and their younger son Aaron however weren’t so easily sold. It took solid research and hard evidence to prove that this investment would pay off.

With everyone onboard, the Claar Family’s first step was to find an abandoned greenhouse in Colorado. It was more profitable to find used equipment and move it themselves than to order new, or pay for a moving crew. The family was able to disassemble, haul, and rebuild the greenhouse over three days in February of 2007. All of the construction, cement, and dirt work was done by the family, friends, and neighbors. In order to learn the best systems and routines, Ron and Chris spent time working with other greenhouses in Kansas. This training taught them what was required of a greenhouse operator and the employees. March 29th, 2007, they felt prepared to manage their own operation and the first tomato seedlings were planted.

During the beginning stages, the Claars found local greenhouses to be very supportive. They have been able to slit truck loads of fertilizer and provide advice during challenging situations. Ron and Chris have been fortunate to have their children so

close and so willing to assist. While the men still work out on the farm, their wives are able to work together in the greenhouse. Tim’s wife, Jennifer, does the majority of the bookkeeping while Aaron’s wife, Heather, spends time helping Chris with the plants. Their cousins, nieces, and nephews also volunteer to spend quality time with family pruning the plants and picking the vegetables. “Working with family brings personality to the operation”, comments Chris.

Now that their plants are in full production, the house is very busy. The current marketing route consists of ‘farmer markets’ and ‘out of house’ sales. Tomatoes are the main cash generator; they provide the most pounds of sales. In the beginning, the family chose several varieties of cucumbers to produce and have been able to narrow them down to the most desired varieties. Lettuce is another experimental crop. The ‘whole salad’ has been very popular – consisting of a variety of textures in one bundle. You can typically find Divine Gardens produce at farmer’s markets in Garden City, Scott City, Leoti, and Lakin. Their cucumbers are also sold at Russ’s Food Center in Ulysses.

The medium that the plants are grown in is a 2/3 perlite, 1/3 vermiculite mixture. The plants are fed a food grade acid and fertilized using an in soil injection method. The volume of fertilizer is measured using an electric current. The house is fully automated with shade, in floor heat, automated feeding systems, and its own generator for use during those famous Kansas storms. The pollination of the tomatoes is done by bees. The house requires a Class B hive once a month. Because the tomatoes are dependent on the bees for pollination, the bees are well protected. The hive stores their food source and is capable of shielding the bees from insecticides that may be required when treating the plants. The lettuce is an exception to the system. It is located next to a ‘water wall’ that provides humidity to the house and is

quite cool compared to the rest of the house. Lettuce grows in a continuous flow of water and nutrients and is sold with the roots on.

Production varies between crops. Tomato seedlings are planted every 2 ½ months. Each plant’s first cluster is its most productive. Lettuce seedlings are planted every 2 weeks but demand is so high that they are moving to weekly. Cucumbers produce for 4 months with seedlings planted monthly. The Claar Family has decided that they have a lot of learning to do before any expansions will be discussed. The house will grow about 1,740 plants at 35 pounds of production per plant, making the anticipated production for this year nearly 30 tons of product.

Divine Gardens is looking forward to hosting an open house for the public to tour the operation and better understand hydroponics. Until then, the public is invited to visit the greenhouse or meet at a farmer’s market to purchase their vegetables.



GREAT KIDS & HOME GROWN TOMATOES

We have really enjoyed the last two summers as we opened up the Co-op to college student summer interns. We had a great experience this last summer with Abby Dechant from a farm east of Garden City and Dusty Witthuhn from a farm south of Bazine. We are blessed to have lots of interaction with 4-H and FFA kids all year long but working with outstanding youth every day through the summer really makes us appreciate how wonderful these kids are.

Abby worked as a Co-op reporter for a day and was sent out on location to the Claar farm north of Deerfield last August. Her article about the Claar's new vegetable greenhouse is included in this Western Farmer edition. It is hard to imagine a couple of more fun people that celebrate life every day than Abbey Dechant and Chris Claar. I imagine the whole interview experience was a blast for both.

That is the message of this article. We can take a lesson from everyone mentioned in this article about being positive and pushing right on through adversity. We have much to celebrate. We can choose to celebrate the past year's harvest and grain prices resulting in record income for many farmers. We can appreciate the efforts and know-how of your Co-op employees that have delivered fertilizer to your farms this fall and fuel last wheat harvest when many suppliers could not. We can take encouragement from the pioneer spirit of the Claar's and their goal to provide off-farm income while keeping all the family members on the farm.

There can be negatives found everywhere we look. Western Kansas is losing population and putting stress on communities and businesses. Farming practices have changed resulting in fewer jobs most of the year and then not enough people when we need them. The past issue of the Reader's Digest has a special report on "You've Been Had, how the government wastes nearly a trillion dollars of your money every year" and number four on the list of ten top culprits is the farm program. Maybe the drought is back, or maybe either the lack of or price of fertilizer will break us all. Sound familiar?

Well, I say enough already! I choose to take my lead from Abby and the Claars. Adversity is never overcome by fretting and being tentative. Despair is no match for contagious enthusiasm. This Christmas Season I am planning to celebrate the many blessings we have been given. I want to think much



John McClelland
General Manager

about the great opportunities that are before us if we are willing to trust and share, to dream and plan, and then get to work to make it happen.

My New Year's resolution is to enjoy the sweetness of life. That includes getting to work in agriculture and help feed a hungry world. I want to draw from the enthusiasm of youth and the pioneer spirit of you farmers. The one resolution that my doctor and my wife will help me follow is to eat more vegetables. That will be a lot easier with the Claar greenhouses. As the song goes "there is only two things that money can't buy, and that's true love and homegrown tomatoes". I have now told you where to find the tomatoes, so I hope you all have good luck in finding and enjoying the true love of the season. Merry Christmas!



P.O. Box 838
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