



A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Our view of life is always challenged when we enter new territory. Perhaps it happens with the birth of a child, a new job, or moving to a new location. To borrow a line from an old movie, when I stepped out of the airport in Buenos Aires, Argentina on Jan. 4, I knew that I wasn't in Nebraska anymore! Leaving home, if only for one week, and experiencing life and agriculture in this new environment challenged my perspective. Let me share a few observations from the trip, which was sponsored by CHS, our regional cooperative.

First, the world is truly a global marketplace. Our first stop was Buenos Aires, Argentina's capital and largest city. Home to 14 million people, I was thankful that I did not have to drive. As we toured the city, the number of multinational companies amazed me. Citizens of Buenos Aires are able to buy a McDonald's® burger, but we also observed them driving Chevys and Fords. LAY'S® potato chips are on the shelves, and Argentines can shop at Walmart.

As we moved into the countryside, I observed Pioneer® brand and Monsanto® seed corn, Case IH® and John Deere equipment, and multinational grain companies like Bunge and Cargill. Global trade is a reality, and it's amazing to see many corporations of U.S. origin doing business in South America. It was a strong reminder of the interconnectedness of the global agriculture industry.

The other lesson I learned is how the rule and regulation of government affects lives everywhere. As we interacted

with ag business leaders, they related time and again how government taxes and regulations impact their business. For example, farmers deal with a 35% export tax on soybeans. Putting this in perspective, it would be like loading up three semis of beans...you take two and give the third to the government. The current administration in Argentina has forged a policy that restricts imports, so while we were at a John Deere dealership, the manager expressed frustration in his inability to get new equipment. There was only one new item on the entire lot!

The highlight of our trip was a visit to the rural community of Trenque Lauquen, a city of about 50,000 approximately 270 miles from Buenos Aires. We interacted with two farm managers (best friends from college) who run a cattle and crop business. They discussed their challenges with finding good help, determining the best time for calving, and dealing with local officials in attempting to get their road graded. Sounds like home, doesn't it? However, the response from one of the two men says it best: "We know our country has problems, but we love our country and we love farming and we want to tell you about that." Wow! I learned that no matter where you go, farmers and ranchers are the bedrock of a successful society.

Finally, let me express my gratitude to the board for allowing me to attend the entire seminar of which this trip was a part. The best aspect of travel is meeting other people. Throughout the seminar I was privileged to interact with 39 other cooperative leaders from across

MANAGER'S MOMENT

By Kent Taylor
President & CEO
ktaylor@frcoop.com

the U.S. Spending quality time with people is always a learning experience. There are some great co-ops in our nation with dedicated people striving to serve American farmers and ranchers. At Farmers Ranchers Co-op, we will continue to broaden our perspective while staying focused on you, our customer. ■



While in Argentina, Kent visited with a variety of people in agriculture, including this gaucho (cowboy) in charge of several employees at a farm/ranch located in the middle of the pampas and about six hours west of Buenos Aires.

A view from atop the Feed Mill provides an overview of Ainsworth.

CUSTOMERS: PARTNERS IN SUCCESS

By the Farmers Ranchers Co-op Feed Team

In celebration of Beef Month, which is in May, Farmers Ranchers Cooperative (FRC) would like to thank you, the beef producer, for your contribution to the success of the Feed Division. Last year was a record-setting year. We manufactured a total of 53,052 tons from September 2013 through August 2014, and there have been no signs of slowing down. In fact, 2015 has started out with a bang! Just six months and 19 days into the 2015 fiscal year, we have already manufactured 56,325 tons, breaking the record for the entire previous fiscal year.

Much of the success is due to you, our customers, for the loyalty you have shown over the years. The FRC feed team has done an outstanding job working around the clock to manufacture and deliver high-quality feed in a timely manner. New business has come our way because of restructuring in the feed manufacturing world. In the state of Nebraska, there is a lack of feed production facilities, and the future looks bleak for many that are currently producing cake and/or pellets. As this trend continues, we anticipate more growth.

Challenges of growth

This success has not come without trials and tribulations. Farmers Ranchers Cooperative is working diligently to come up with a plan to alleviate production and delivery delays. We appreciate and thank you for your patience and understanding when it comes



Farmers Ranchers Co-op Feed Mill continues to break production records. It's also the destination for a preschool field trip, where children learn the basics of manufacturing feed.

to timeliness of ordering and feed delivery. There is an old saying, "If you're not growing, you're going out of business." It has not been a walk in the park manufacturing 56,325 tons in just over six months, and we have had to strategically plan ordering, manufacturing, and delivery. We take pride in producing top-quality feed. Even the amount of time a product cools before delivery makes a big difference when it comes to quality. With that being said, we ask that you allow 10 to 14 days for delivery and a two- to three-day lead time for grain mixes.

With increased feed production, additional labor is required, and qualified employees are becoming more difficult to locate. As a result, we are looking to restructure positions and schedules to accommodate a larger pool of people. More part-time positions may become a reality. Those types of positions could be an opportunity for those who want to continue to work on the family farming or ranching operation, but who are looking for added income. If you or someone you know may be interested in this opportunity, please contact the FRC Feed Mill today.

Once again, thank you for your dedication to the beef industry. Not only do you supply the best beef in the world, but by partnering with Farmers Ranchers Cooperative to feed your herd, you are also a major player in the success of the cooperative you own. ■



READY FOR GROWING SEASON

By Justin Nelson, Agronomy Division Manager, jnelson@frcoop.com

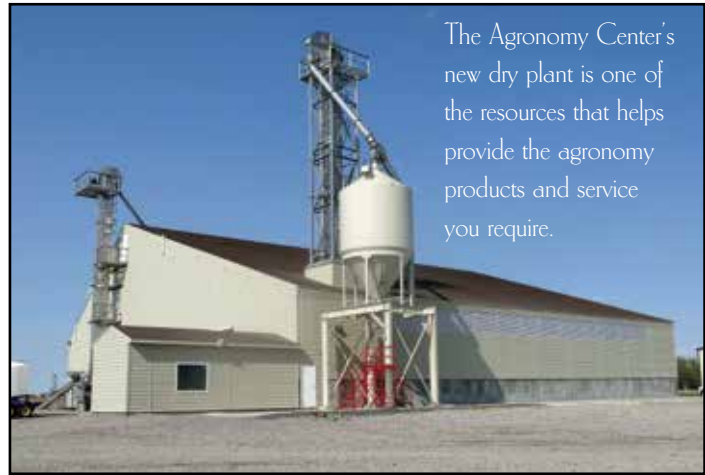
It's great to see Farmers Ranchers Co-op's investments in its Agronomy Division making a difference in servicing our customers. Two years ago we built the seed warehouse and seed treatment system, and we've seen good demand from customers for corn, soybean, oats, and pea seed—as well as other specialty seeds. We'll also have a good selection of second forage crop seed once the oats and peas are done and you're ready to reseed.

This past year we completed the new dry facility, and what a difference it makes. We've pushed several tons through the plant already, and we're finding it really efficient, with easy loading and unloading. It looks like we'll be increasing total tonnage of fertilizer this year as compared to previous years.

Our two 120-foot-boom sprayers and variable-rate technology dry spreader are ready for action, with a full staff in place to get the job done. You can count on Farmers Ranchers Co-op to meet your post-emerge fertilizer and chemical needs for the year. We're also proud to be home to an Answer Plot® by WinField™. For the fourth year in a row, our customers will have access to the expertise and latest information and data coming from this resource. We'll again be hosting an Answer Plot Knowledge Event during the summer.

We're also signing up growers again this season for the WinField R7® Tool program. Using satellite imagery and local seed and crop protection data from Answer Plot test sites, the R7 Tool provides you with field performance data on the acres enrolled in the program.

Give us a call at the Agronomy Center at 402-387-2323. You can also reach the agronomy staff on their cells: Justin Nelson at 402-760-1291, Mark Ewert at 402-760-2568, and Jeff Dolberg at 402-760-1509. ■



The Agronomy Center's new dry plant is one of the resources that helps provide the agronomy products and service you require.

TIRES, BEET JUICE, AND SUMMERTIME TRAVEL

By Dennis McBride, Mr. Tire Manager-Ainsworth, dmcbride1@frcoop.com

With the growing season in full swing and our customers' tractors and equipment getting heavy use, the Farmers Ranchers Co-op tire trucks are on the road. With two tire trucks out of Ainsworth and one in Valentine and a large selection of radial and bias farm tires, we're proud to provide the service and products that keep you going. It also helps that we have experienced operators: Dale Mapes in Ainsworth and Kelly Stenka in Valentine. Dale is also training Travis Magary as a backup.

This season we're carrying a new product that could benefit any of you who use a liquid ballast to add weight to your tractor. It's called Rim Guard® and is often referred to as Beet Juice™ because it is actually made



Travis Magary, with Mr. Tire in Ainsworth, injects Rim Guard, a non-corrosive and biodegradable liquid ballast.

from sugar beets. It is biodegradable, nontoxic, and noncorrosive, unlike the more traditional calcium chloride, which is toxic and highly corrosive and can corrode/rust rims.

Even better, Rim Guard, unlike calcium chloride, does not require an inner tube. With Rim Guard, punctures can simply be plugged, making repairs less expensive than puncture repairs with a calcium chloride-filled tube that requires a complete breakdown of the tire. Give us a call if you'd like more information, or go to rimguard.biz.

Car ready for travel?

It's time to begin planning your summer travel. That means it's time to bring your vehicles in for servicing. In Ainsworth, Dave Kackmeister can complete the alignments and check your exhaust. Chuck Irwin is ready to handle the oil changes and brake work, while Richard Master is our tire tech. We encourage scheduling an appointment if possible. Call Ainsworth Mr. Tire at 402-387-2533 or 800-233-6627; call Valentine Mr. Tire at 402-376-2060 or 800-557-3732. ■



INSIDE

FEED DIVISION SETS RECORDS

PAGE 2



BRINGING UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE

When Randal Rathe pulls his chair up to the board table each month, he brings a unique perspective to the Farmers Ranchers Co-op board of directors. Named associate director this spring, Randal came to Ainsworth four years ago. Growing up on his family's farm, the McCook, NE native took a job at his hometown's Frenchman Valley Co-op, working his way up to agronomy operations manager. After 13 years at the co-op, and ready for a change, Randal became a conductor for the railroad and ran his own construction business on the side. It was while working for the railroad in Lincoln that he met Erin Bejot, daughter of former board director Steve Bejot. The two married and the rest, as they say, is history.

Today, Randal manages the agronomy side of Bejot Farm and Feedlots. "We do silage, high-moisture corn, and normal grain corn," explains Randal. Headquartered just west of Ainsworth on Highway 20, Bejot Farm and Feedlots is a long-time customer of the co-op's fuel, oil, and tire products, as well as agronomy products and services.

Growing enough corn to feed thousands of feedlot cattle is a full-time job, but Randal's responsibilities do not end at the machine shed door. He is father to two sons and two daughters—ages 16 to 24—from a previous marriage, enjoys a grandson and granddaughter, and is now father to a 2½-year-old son.

He also tries to get in some softball games in the summer, as well as hunting and woodworking whenever possible. "I can't kick it," says Randall. "I have a building bug. If I'm not building something once in awhile, it drives me nuts."

This farmer has a desire to serve. He was asked to run for one of the two open director seats this winter,



but lost the election. "Nobody really knows me yet, and so that wasn't a surprise," explains Randal. Then, he was asked to serve as an associate director. What persuaded him to carve time out of his busy life to serve in a position that entails attending the board meetings and participating in discussions but not having a vote?

"I'm in the community," says Randal. "If they're interested in me doing it, and I can bring my 13 years of co-op background to the discussions—especially in the agronomy field—I can hopefully make this cooperative stronger. I figured I'm going to be here a long time. I might as well get my feet dirty."

He believes his experience as a co-op employee will also bring value. "I'm a farmer but I also worked for a co-op," says Randal. "Hopefully, I'll be able to bring it all to the table." ■