WEST-CON Update

WINTER 2013

WEST-CON Plot Results

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

New Blending Tower at Kensington

LP Dealing with the SHORTAGE

Planning for the Future

Dean Isaacson
General Manager

We were very fortunate to harvest a good corn and soybean crop, but the fall of 2013 will be remembered for years to come. The corn crop was wet all the way through harvest. We dumped close to 11 million bushels of wet corn that averaged over 20% moisture. We were only 10% into harvest when we began to run short of LP. We have 120,000 gallons of storage and we also had 275,000 gallons contracted. This should have covered us for the first 395,000 gallons, you would think. Not the case. Our contracted supplier did not have our LP online and our transportation company was at best, giving us one truck per day. We burn 2,500 gallons per hour which means that we need a transport approximately every 3-4 hours.

We were lucky to locate one truck from Texas that came up for about two weeks to help us out. We also picked up a transport from Western Coop Transport and pulled it with one of our trucks and were then able to operate at about 70%.

Next, we went to work to bring in a portable Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) and converted our two dryers in Holloway to LNG. This conversion to LNG not only helped us in Holloway, but doing so also then gave us the opportunity to move all LP to our Twin Brooks location. This fall, we burned about 800,000 gallons of LP and 100,000 gallons of LNG, totaling 900,000 gallons.

The question on the minds of many has been, "What happened to LP this fall?" There were a number of reasons for the shortages and the problem plagued elevators and producers throughout the entire region. In preparation for harvest each year, we project our drying needs and contract LP with our supplier. If the crop ends up coming in dryer than anticipated (resulting in less drying) we end up paying to get out of the contract(s). For example, in both 2011 and 2012, West-Con had a lot of LP contracted that did not get used and we paid discounts of about $50,000 to get out of the contracts. This year (2013) we again contracted our LP, filled our storage and were completely prepared for harvest, but both our supplier and transportation company fell asleep on us. The entire LP industry was well aware of the demands of harvest, yet they (including the Benson pipeline) cut their capacities. To get through harvest, we did end up pulling from a number of different terminals including: Benson, MN; Pine Bend, MN; Yankton, SD; Wolsey, SD; Sanborn, IA; Whiting, IA; Greenwood, NE; Genevea, NE; and Slaughter, TX.

As you have probably noticed, this is getting long and my blood is still boiling over this issue. So, what will we do for next year? First of all, we will look at alternative suppliers and transportation, including LP rail. We will consider more LP storage and we will also be looking into setting up our Holloway location to burn both LP and LNG. Grain drying is a very important portion of our business – a lot of our producers depend on us to provide it and we intend to do all we can to maintain our level of reliability.

Let's talk fertilizer. As I am writing, we still have a lot of fertilizer to put on and there continues to be a lot of hype throughout the industry about possible lower prices next spring. While we would all like to achieve the lowest price possible, please do consider that at the end of the day there is only so much capacity. We can only spread and inventory a certain amount of fertilizer in the spring and after just working through the nightmare presented by the LP shortages, I ask that you give careful consideration to securing your spring fertilizer needs as soon as possible. If producers do not indicate a demand, like the LP industry, the fertilizer industry could follow the same pattern and adjust capacities and availabilities for spring.

On a positive note, we are currently in the process of adding a new blending tower at our Kensington location. The new blend tower will not only help improve services to producers within the Kensington area, but will also help take some pressure off of our main Holloway location.

As we come to the close of 2013, we are fortunate to report an average to slightly above average crop and anticipate another good year for West-Con. I would like to personally thank the West-Con employees for their dedication and hard work this fall. You are an amazing group of employees and your work is much appreciated.

From myself and all of the West-Con employees, we extend our "thank you" to all members for your continued support and wish you a wonderful holiday season.

contents

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Kensington Adds Blending Tower

BY SCOTT MATTOCKS AND SCOTT STRAHM

Currently, we are working on a construction project at our Kensington, MN location. When this fertilizer plant was built in 1999, it was designed with a future blending tower in mind. It has been on the radar for a few years to get a tower at this site to help with efficiencies and the increased demand. Over the years the towers have gotten much bigger and more efficient and trying to work with the original design has been limiting our scope. This summer, the design of a new tower system was finalized and construction started this fall.

This blending tower is designed a little differently than our towers in Holloway and Twin Brooks. Our existing blenders are 10-12 ton vertical blenders and two of these in each blending tower allow us to have a full load blending at the same time. The down side to the existing design is that they have fairly long mix times due to the large amount of fertilizer in them. In recent years, with more and more impregnation and smaller amounts of concentrated additives going into the blends, the blending times have become more crucial to get a good blend on the final product.

The mixer that is going into Kensington is called a High Intensity Mixer (HIM). This mixer has a batch size of 3 ton and a mix cycle of 30 seconds. It is also very good at blending additives and impregnation of chemicals. With dual mixing blades it does not add any mixing time no matter how many additives are used.

There are a couple of other things that this tower does as well to help increase flow. There are two weigh hoppers above the mixer that can each hold 3+ tons of fertilizer. The mixer can either alternate between these hoppers or pull from both of them at the same time. This is determined by where fertilizer is stored in bins above the hoppers. The mixer also utilizes very large bomb bay style doors for almost instantaneous emptying into a lower hopper, which then loads into the truck while the mixer is weighing up the next batch. With large gates throughout the entire tower system, this tower should be capable of loading trucks at 200 tph, which is a semi about every 8 minutes. There will also be 200 tons of overhead storage, and 300 tph equipment feeding this overhead storage.

KENSINGTON CONSTRUCTION CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

News from the Fuel Department

BY JOE MEYER

Happy Holidays from West-Con's Twin Brooks location. It is amazing that another year is almost behind us. The crop season could be easily summarized by a very busy, fast-paced spring and a long drawn-out fall. Mother Nature took opportunities to remind us of who really is in charge just as we were getting started with corn harvest, presenting us with more major rain events resulting in high moisture corn and beans, slowing down the pace of harvest for everyone.

The addition of the new 6500 gallon refined fuel truck showcased a big change within our fuel department and has already made fuel deliveries this fall much more efficient. We were able to keep up with customers' diesel and gas needs and for much of the fall season we had two fuel trucks on the road. Gas and diesel remained readily available and with prices actually coming down slightly at harvest time, whereas much of our focus and energies were spent dealing with the shortage of propane.

As I am writing, it is mid-November and there is a lot of discussion regarding bio-fuels and more specifically, ethanol and soybean biodiesel. Droughts and high grain prices have given way to near trend line yields and high carryout numbers bringing grain prices down, however, the justification of these energy sources is still being debated in Washington and throughout the media.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently proposed a lowering of the 2014 Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) mandate from 18.15 billion gallons to 15.2. Of the 15.2 billion gallons, 2-2.5 billion gallons would be advanced bio-fuels or non corn-based ethanol fuels such as soybean based biodiesel, sugar ethanol or even ethanol derived from algae. This leaves a 12.7-13.2 billion gallon minimum of corn-based ethanol to blend into gasoline to meet RFS requirements. The RFS initiated a mandate for corn-based ethanol in 2006 and every year the mandated amount grows and ethanol production has exceeded the mandate every year except for 2013 due to the blend wall. Ethanol production can exceed the mandated amount when it is profitable to produce ethanol.

If the lowered mandate goes into effect, ethanol and biodiesel production will be determined by the economics of blending it domestically or exporting the fuel. Since the beginning of the great recession in 2008, gasoline consumption in the United States has not grown and has actually gone down due to economy, higher gas prices and more fuel-efficient cars. This has created a blending cap or blend wall (10% ethanol blend in U.S. Gasoline by law set by EPA). The surplus above the blend wall can be exported, kept in reserves or used in higher blends such as E85 or E15.

The bottom line is that the Renewable Fuels Standard is the best new energy policy we have had in 40 years. As the industry grows and our dependence on foreign oil lessens, we will have a more consistent supply of viable fuels and as always West-Con will stay committed to finding the most efficient and best ways to serve our customers. Thank you for the business and have a great holiday season.

GRAIN MARKETING

LP Shortage Impacts Harvest

BY PAUL MATTSON

Push until you find the weak spot. That is what happened this fall. The later and wetter corn harvest all over the United States exposed some flaws in our drying system at West-Con. We had only LP to fuel our dryers and the LP distribution system simply cannot keep up with the peak demand on a year like this. When we have all three of our dryers going at capacity we need five transport loads a day.

Grain elevators and farmers alike have expanded the size of their drying equipment, and we had made the assumption that the supply chain would just work and keep up. That was not the case this year and we will not be able to make the assumption that it will improve in the years ahead. West -Con will make adjustments to ensure a more reliable supply next year.

We did put in a temporary Liquid Natural Gas system in Holloway. It worked great and we learned a lot. Look forward to us having two fuel sources next year!

Despite some of the fuel supply issues we had a very successful harvest. We filled up and only had to pile about 600,000 bushels of wet corn that was picked up quickly once harvest ended.

Thankfully your cooperative has invested a great deal in storage, as freight costs this fall exploded higher and railroad performance was very poor. Because we were empty and we do have a large amount of space we were able get through harvest with our patrons not noticing a 60¢ increase in rail freight rates. Things should improve on rail rates as we move deeper into the marketing year and we move past the peak demand period of harvest.

One thing evident this year is with record or near record corn and bean production, grain prices will be in a whole new range. Expect that the corn market will go back to being in a carry after many months of being inverted. Lower prices will encourage grain storage both on the farm and in the elevator. Please monitor those bins. Pull the centers out, get the tops leveled off and monitor them on a regular basis. Storing grain is hard work and it takes regular management.

Finally, I would like to thank all of our patrons for the opportunity to earn your business. I would also like to wish all of you a Merry Christmas!

Kensington Construction

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

This tower is a great and exciting addition to the Kensington location. Right now with our current blending system, depending on the blend, we load out 24 ton trucks in 15-25 minutes. We feed the mixer with a skid loader, one scoop at a time, handling every load as we need to load it. So by having the tower, we will in theory have 6-8 loads in the tower at all times, which in itself will speed up the process.

Having the ability to load the trucks at a greater speed, the wait times for the machines should be minimal. As well, the trucks should spend more time on the road and at the field than in the lot waiting to be loaded. This in turn should greatly increase our speed and efficiency of both the trucks and machines. Additionally, for the growers that need or pick up loads directly from the plant, the waiting time will be greatly reduced as well, allowing for more time spent in the field.

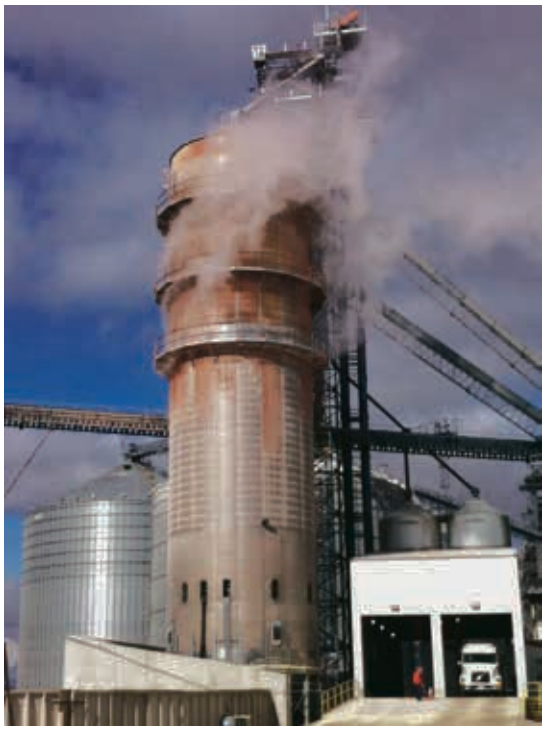
Lastly, this mixer, as stated above, is made for impregnation and additives. Not only that, it creates a consistent even blend every time. The system that we use today does a good job, but this will be even better. With the tower having the full automation, we can eliminate the possibilities of human error that can and do occur. Again this is a great addition to our location and we are extremely excited to have the opportunity to use it soon.

By the time you read this article, the concrete will be finished and awaiting the arrival of the equipment. This new tower should be up and running for the spring season.

MAKING *Marketing Decisions* EASIER

BY CHRIS AASLAND

With the completion of fall harvest, we have wrapped up another growing season. We didn't have any early freeze issues and the hot weather helped push the corn crop to maturity. There was concern about how the soybeans would yield with the hot August weather, but most people were very surprised and satisfied with the resulting bean yields. The corn crop was expected to yield very well and I think most people had some space issues at the end of harvest. I don't need to dwell on the propane shortage issue that we experienced as that put a damper on an otherwise smooth fall harvest.



The market has been grinding lower throughout the fall harvest with corn trying to put a bottom in and soybeans hanging on above the $12 mark. The USDA crop report raised yields as expected in corn and soybeans, but corn carryout did not go up as expected due to a reduction in harvested acres of 1.9 million. We will be watching for both corn and soybeans to put lows in and then attempt to rally sometime early next year. There is talk of an improving demand situation which will help start and sustain a rally. Watch for opportunities for selling this year's crop as well as next year's new crop prices.

Many people are calling in requesting copies of their assembly sheets from this fall's harvest and their grain balance details. We can always print and mail these to you, but many people are getting theirs emailed to them. We can easily convert these documents to a PDF file format and email your assembly sheets to you. Doing so would provide you with a digital copy to forward to your crop insurance agent and a copy for your own records. Instead of keeping paper copies, you can keep digital PDFs of your production records for future needs or reference.

Our website is packed full of information at your disposal. A question that is sometimes asked is about past grain prices. We have all the closing cash grain prices all the way back to 2008 on the website. They can be found under the "Grain/Past Grain Prices" category. They are displayed on an easy-to-read template with the months across the top and the days on the left hand side.

Another place for finding pricing information is on the charting ability that our website has to offer. For example, if you open up the cash grain bids page and click on any of the individual month's prices, a chart will be displayed for your analysis. You can then move your mouse over the chart to display each day's date and its price. At the bottom right there is a link called "download chart data" which will place all the prices and dates in a Microsoft Excel format for you as well. The site also enables basis to be charted so you can analyze levels as when to set basis against HTA contracts.

Don't forget about our "Quick Links" buttons on the upper right corner of the site. The spreads button gives you access to all the different corn and soybean spreads between various months. These can also be put into a chart format which will help with making decisions.

Please contact myself, Paul, Joe or Kevin with any of your marketing needs and thanks for doing business with West-Con. Have a safe and happy holiday season.

Careers AT WEST-CON

West-Con has many employment opportunities available throughout our multiple locations. We are continuously growing and looking for energetic, qualified people to fill positions. If you are interested in pursuing a career in agriculture, please visit our website at www.west-con.com or contact Kerry Bonk at 320-394-2171 extension 233.

FROM THE OFFICE

Get Ready for the Annual Audit

BY AL CONNELL

Our year end is fast approaching. That means it is time to get ready for our annual audit. The auditors will be in to review our financial statements in January and part of their process is to send confirmations to a random number of patrons. It is important that everyone return these confirmations. They will be verifying accounts receivable and grain storage balances.

If you agree with the balances, sign and return directly to the auditors in the envelope provided. If you disagree, please state why and send it back to the auditors. This process gives the auditors outside verification of balances that we provide to them. Remember, the auditors are working for all the patrons to ensure that the company's financial statements are fairly presented.

All 1099 forms will be mailed to patrons by the end of January. If you need a summary print-out of all the business you did with us this past year, just call the main office and we will mail you that information.

The checks for deferred payment contracts will be ready on Thursday January 2, 2014. Be sure your contracts have been signed and returned to us. Checks will not be issued until each contract has been signed. If you want the checks mailed to you, please call us that day.

All drying and freight charges have been billed to anyone who delivered grain placed on storage or delayed pricing this past harvest. It is our policy that all drying and freight charges will be paid right away. If you choose to wait until you sell the grain, you will be paying our normal finance charge of 1.5% per month or 18% annually.

I would like to thank you for all the business you have done with us this past year and wish everyone a Happy Holiday Season.

Ag Processing Inc (AGP) pays a visit to West-Con

Traveling from their corporate headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska, the Board of Directors and Management Team from AGP toured the West-Con facilities in September.

Credit Report

FINANCING PROGRAMS FOR 2014

BY CHAD SYLTIE

Looking back on 2013, I do believe this will be a good year to finally put to rest. We went through wet conditions in the spring, beautiful July weather for pollination but ended with extreme heat in August and early September. Harvest season seems to have gone well with some rain, but has left us time yet to still get our work done. With the fall work aside, now is the time to work indoors to get our plans in place for 2014. Book work completed in the month of December becomes very beneficial in decision making the rest of the year.

As always, we provide a variety of financing programs and will do so for 2014 as well. This year we will be offering our full-farm financing program which we have offered to our customers for many years which provides a complete operating line of credit to handle all your operating costs throughout the year. This has been an excellent program for farmers to use and it provides competitive interest rates. Along with this program we do have the option of providing financing for livestock, machinery and real estate purchases to qualified applicants. Please stop in or call the Holloway office if you are interested in this program.

Now is the time to get your financing in place so you can take advantage of prepay discounts on seed, fertilizer and chemicals. It will also be helpful in doing your tax planning to finish up for 2013. This year, more than any, it will be extremely important to your operation to have capital available to take advantage of these discounts. As they say in business, "cash is king" and having this cash available allows you opportunity for profitability when it comes to locking in your input costs.

Another avenue for financing input purchases at West-Con this season will be John Deere Financial and Quick-Link. Both of these programs give you the ability to purchase inputs from West-Con now and have until December 2014 to pay back the financing company. Both companies do charge interest on the amount of funds you borrow for the amount of time you use it. Many seed companies are using John Deere Financial as their source of financing and it does provide a nice and simple way to finance your seed and chemical purchases at very competitive interest rates. Please check with your West-Con agronomist or call me at the Holloway office for more details on these two programs. When talking with your West-Con agronomist, be sure to ask about the interest rates on these special programs because they vary depending upon which products you are purchasing.

I also want to make our Minnesota customers aware that West-Con is able to handle your crop insurance and crop hail needs for 2014. We have three licensed agents who are ready to serve you in this area. Crop insurance plays a major role in your farming operation so having the right coverage is a big deal. A large portion of your crop inputs may come from this company, so working with our West-Con insurance agents to help care for your investments makes good sense.

Lastly, as far as accounts receivable, I would like to thank our customers for taking care of their obligations and making our collections run smoothly this year. There are a few agronomy accounts from this summer that need to be paid so please make arrangements to get these balances paid as quickly as you can. Remember, if balances become past due, West-Con charges 18% on all past due balances. If you find yourself running out of capital and paying this 18%, please check into the aforementioned financing programs and secure the capital needed to avoid paying late charges. And, for those that did fall fertilizer, a reminder that these purchases need to be paid by January 10, 2014.

In closing, I would like to personally thank you for your support this past growing season and look forward to working with you another year. May you all have a blessed Christmas as you share this special time with your family and friends. Thank you.

West-Con Plot Results Are In

BY AL GOLDENSTEIN

In 2013, we have had the opportunity again to host a Winfield Answer Plot in Holloway. As in past years, we have showcased a wide variety of corn hybrids and soybean varieties designed to fit your local farms. Along with seed, many crop management trials have been shown including fertility programs, starter fertilizer programs, fungicide trials and many others. The local plots have been a great success where nearly 200 farmers have taken advantage of touring the plots this year. We look toward expanding our research in the future. By having a local research plot, farmers like you have the opportunity to see and assess the results and easily adapt to your own farming operation.

In addition to the Winfield Answer Plot, many of you have viewed and assessed the plots we do just north of the Holloway office. We are very fortunate to have approximately 150 additional acres where West-Con does its own local research and yield trials. On the west side of the road between the office and grain facility, we have our own West-Con yield plots. These plots include both corn and soybean yield trials where there are approximately 15 acres of corn and 15 acres of beans in the yield plot. This year we had about 40 different corn and 40 different soybean varieties in the yield plot. The area is fairly uniform in soil texture and topography and is also well drained, providing a uniform perspective on yield potential. For informational purposes, the yield data for the corn and soybean plots can be found in Charts A and B.

A soybean population study was also conducted on the west side of the road. Questions arise every spring on stand loss on beans and when to replant. The study reinforces what a lot of research has already shown and that is, if the loss is uniform, beans can compensate for loss in stand. The yield data for this population study can be found in Chart C on the following page.

Chart A **Holloway Corn Plot Yield**

Corn Brand	Hybrid	Traits	Harvest Moist%	Tst Wt. lbs/bu	Bu/Acre @ 15.5% mst	Yield Rank	Income Rank
Dekalb	DKC50-66	VT3	19.4	55.2	197.0	24	22
Dekalb	DKC50-66	VT3	18.7	55.7	196.1	25	21
Dekalb	DKC41-32	GENSS-RIB	17.5	55.8	187.9	36	24
Dekalb	DKC42-42	GENSS-RIB	18.6	54.7	183.7	37	36
Dekalb	DKC43-48	GENVT3P	17.2	56	199.3	19	9
Dekalb	DKC44-13	GENSS-RIB	18.1	55.6	202.9	13	4
Dekalb	DKC46-20	GENVT3P	17.5	56.9	199.1	20	11
Dekalb	DKC47-35	GENSS-RIB	19.5	55.9	199.6	18	19
Dekalb	DKC48-12	GENSS-RIB	19.2	55	211.0	6	1
Pioneer	9917	RR2	22.5	55.3	198.0	23	29
Dekalb	DKC49-29	GENSS-RIB	19.6	55.7	206.1	10	6
Dekalb	DKC50-66	VT3	18.6	56	199.7	17	12
Pioneer	P0062amx	AMX RR2	21.2	53.2	175.0	40	40
Dekalb	DKC50-83	GENVT2P	20.3	54.9	208.7	8	5
Dekalb	DKC52-30	GENSS-RIB	25.0	53.8	215.4	3	18
Dekalb	DKC53-56	GENSS-RIB	23.7	53.5	223.7	1	2
Dekalb	DKC53-78	GENSS-RIB	23.2	52.8	216.3	2	8
CROPLAN	5415	GENSS	29.0	52.5	198.8	21	39
CROPLAN	5398	GENSS	21.9	53.5	193.7	28	32
NK Brand	N49W	3000GT	23.2	53	201.2	15	25
CROPLAN	4975	GENVT3P	20.2	54.4	188.6	34	33
NK Brand	N45P	3011A	23.6	53.3	212.1	5	15
CROPLAN	4199	GENSS-RIB	21.8	54.5	208.2	9	13
NK Brand	N41Y	3000GT	20.0	53.1	191.7	30	28
NK Brand	N42Z	3111A	21.0	53.3	193.9	27	30
CROPLAN	4033	GENVT3P	20.1	55	213.0	4	3
CROPLAN	4099	GENSS-RIB	22.8	54.1	209.0	7	17
NK Brand	N40L	3000GT	21.3	53.3	204.9	12	16
NK Brand	N37S	3111	21.2	54.3	190.4	32	34
CROPLAN	3733	GENVT2P-RIB	20.0	55	199.9	16	20
Mycogen	2Y479	GENSS	23.0	53.4	195.0	26	35
CROPLAN	3899	GENVT2P-RIB	20.8	54.1	205.1	11	14
CROPLAN	3699	GENVT3P	19.4	55.5	190.3	33	27
CROPLAN	3533	GENVT2P-RIB	19.1	54.8	193.3	29	23
CROPLAN	3499	GENVT3P	19.2	55.9	188.4	35	31
CROPLAN	3399	GENSS-RIB	19.2	55.8	190.5	31	26
NK Brand	N29T	3111	17.6	55.9	179.3	39	37
CROPLAN	3055	GENVT2P	17.8	55.9	179.5	38	38
CROPLAN	2845	GENSS-RIB	17.0	56.5	198.1	22	10
Dekalb	DKC50-66	GENVT3P	18.2	55.2	202.4	14	7

Chart B Holloway Soybean Plot Yield

Brand	Hybrid	Traits	Harvest Moist%	Tst Wt lbs/bu	Bu/Acre @ 13% mst	Yield Rank
Asgrow	AG0732	GENRR2Y	11.4	56.1	52.1	36
Pioneer	P90M80	RR1	11.5	57.2	54.5	34
Asgrow	AG0833	GENRR2Y	11.2	56.7	54.7	33
Asgrow	AG00934	GENRR2Y	11.1	56.5	58.9	18
Asgrow	AG1230	GENRR2Y	11.3	58.2	55.0	32
Asgrow	AG1431	GENRR2Y	10.9	60.6	59.0	17
Asgrow	AG1534	GENRR2Y	11.3	56.4	59.7	15
Asgrow	AG1733	GENRR2Y	10.8	57.4	59.7	13
NK Brand	S18-C2	RR1	11.7	57.5	55.2	30
Asgrow	AG1832	GENRR2Y	11.1	56.9	57.7	23
Asgrow	AG2031	GENRR2Y	12.0	56.8	59.7	12
Asgrow	AG2134	GENRR2Y	11.5	57.1	62.0	4
Asgrow	AG2232	GENRR2Y	13.8	55	65.0	1
Asgrow	AG1733	GENRR2Y	11.1	57.5	58.1	22
CROPLAN	R2C2263	GENRR2Y	11.2	57	62.7	3
CROPLAN	R2C2120	GENRR2Y	11.5	57.8	61.3	7
NK Brand	S20-T6	RR1	11.1	56.9	61.0	9
Mycogen	5N206R2	RR2 SCN	11.9	56.5	63.1	2
CROPLAN	R2C2072	GENRR2Y	11.1	57.2	61.2	8
CROPLAN	R2C1972	GENRR2Y	11.0	57.5	58.4	19
NK Brand	S18-C2	GENRR2Y	11.1	57	58.3	20
CROPLAN	R2C1873	GENRR2Y	11.3	57.7	61.9	5
CROPLAN	R2C1869	GENRR2Y	10.7	58.1	58.2	21
Mycogen	5N180R2	RR2 SCN	10.6	56.8	61.5	6
CROPLAN	R2C1770	GENRR2Y	10.9	56.3	59.7	14
NK Brand	S17-B3	GENRR2Y	11.1	56.7	60.4	10
NK Brand	S17-G8	GENRR2Y	10.8	57.3	57.2	25
CROPLAN	R2C1671	GENRR2Y	10.7	54.6	57.4	24
Mycogen	5N155R2	RR2 SCN	10.4	56.5	56.3	28
CROPLAN	R2C1572	GENRR2Y	10.9	57.3	57.1	26
NK Brand	S14-J7	GENRR2Y	10.8	56.6	55.4	29
CROPLAN	R2C1312	GENRR2Y	10.6	57	54.1	35
CROPLAN	R2C1173	GENRR2Y	10.7	56.6	56.5	27
CROPLAN	R2C1003	GENRR2Y	10.7	56.2	55.1	31
CROPLAN	R2C0842	GENRR2Y	10.6	56.2	59.2	16
Asgrow	AG1733	GENRR2Y	10.4	57.1	59.8	11

Chart C Soybean Population

Brand	Hybrid	Harvest Moist%	Tst Wt. lbs/bu	Bu/Acre @ 13% mst	Yield Rank
CROPLAN	RC21821	10.5	58.7	58.7	5
CROPLAN	RC21821	10.5	58.7	54.6	10
CROPLAN	RC21821	10.5	58.7	55.2	9
CROPLAN	RC21821	10.5	58.7	56.4	8
CROPLAN	RC21821	10.5	58.7	58.5	6
CROPLAN	RC21821	10.5	58.7	59.2	2
CROPLAN	RC21821	10.5	58.7	58.8	4
CROPLAN	RC21821	10.5	58.7	59.3	1
CROPLAN	RC21821	10.5	58.7	58.5	6
CROPLAN	RC21821	10.5	58.7	58.9	3

2013 West-Con Plot Results *continued*

On the east side of the road, there were a wide variety of fertility and fungicide trials. The first were the corn starter and fungicide trials. These trials encompassed approximately 21 acres. The trials were conducted using Dekalb DKC48-12 corn hybrid. Again in 2013, the data shows a positive response to a fungicide treatment and it also reflects a positive response to the use of starter fertilizers and the addition of zinc in starter fertilizer programs. In 2013, starter trials were conducted on both soybean/corn and corn/corn rotations. The yield data for the starter trials on a corn/soybean rotation can be found in Chart D. Yield data for starter trials on continuous corn is Chart E and the fungicide trials in Chart F. If you have any questions, call your local agronomist for more information.

The soybean trials on the east side of the road consisted of the use of fungicides and timing of application of those fungicides. Included in the studies were the uses of CoRoN on soybeans at the R3 growth stage. The information shows a very nice response to fungicide treatments for soybeans at the R3 growth stage. The information from these plots can be found in Chart G. In 2011 and 2012, the yield data showed a similar positive response. It should be noted that in 2013, all the soybeans in the plots were sprayed for aphids.

To the far east of the research farm, there was an iron chlorosis trial. The objective of the trial was to assess the value of adding a chelated iron at planting to minimize iron chlorosis effects on yield. The research farm would be considered to have a minimum to moderate

Chart D Corn/Soybean Rotation Starter Trials

Treatment	Harvest Moist%	Tst Wt. lbs/bu	Bu/Acre @ 15.5% mst	Yield Rank
Untreated	21.3	52.8	185.3	8
10-34-0 6gal 1qt Trafix	20.5	53.2	194.8	5
10-34-0 6gal 2qt Trafix	21.2	53.6	198.2	4
10-34-0 6gal	22.4	52.6	204.4	3
10-34-0 4 gal + 2gal RiSer	22.3	52.7	207.4	1
RiSer 4.5 gal	18.1	52.7	205.7	2
6-24-6 4.5 gal + 1qt Kickstand	22.9	51.8	193.3	6
Untreated	23.0	55.9	191.1	7

Chart E Continuous Corn-on-Corn Starter Trials

Treatment	Harvest Moist%	Tst Wt. lbs/bu	Bu/Acre @ 15.5% mst	Yield Rank
Untreated	24.7	50	187.4	5
10-34-0 6gal 1qt Trafix	24.3	51.6	193.1	2
10-34-0 6gal 2qt Trafix	24.5	51.3	193.8	1
10-34-0 6gal	24.4	52.6	191.3	4
10-34-0 4 gal + 2gal RiSer	24.2	52.7	192.3	3
RiSer 4.5 gal	26.4	52.7	168.7	6
6-24-6 4.5 gals + 1qt. Kickstand	26.8	52.8	168.1	7
Untreated	26.8	52.5	165.3	8

iron chlorosis problem. In summary, the response to a chelated iron was very positive considering the severity of the issue. In 2013, the use of chelated iron displayed a similar response to 2012. An interesting benefit was noticed in both 2012 and 2013, that being better weed control where the iron was applied which we believe was a result of faster crop canopy. The yield information for that plot can be found in Chart H.

Something new for 2013 was the use of additional 28% nitrogen applied in-season and this test was conducted in two different areas of our research plot on a corn/soybean rotation. In the spring, 165 pounds of actual nitrogen was applied in the form of urea and field cultivated into the soil. Then, an in-crop application of 28% UAN was applied with one study using 30 and 38 pounds of actual N, the second study using 30 pounds of actual N. The area where the studies were conducted is well drained and had no standing water during the growing season. The yield information for the plots can be found in Chart I.

Some additional trials will be added in 2014, including the use of fungicides in a corn-on-corn rotation. In 2012, we began a corn-on-corn rotation on approximately 9 acres. These 9 acres plus an additional 7 acres added this year will be used in the future to evaluate different agronomic practices for a corn-on-corn rotation. Herbicide trials are also being conducted on about 10 acres of the research farm. Managing weed resistance is becoming an extremely important part of the farming operation and that is why we are researching many new tank mixes and combinations. Plant Growth Regulators, nitrogen stabilizer, and the use of ESN nitrogen are just some of the additional research topics discussed for the 2014 West-Con research plot.

For those of you who visited our West-Con plot this year, we hope you enjoyed viewing the many different trials and demonstrations. These plots are designed for you to evaluate local research and help you make more informed decisions on your farm. If you have any additional questions or would like to see something additional added in 2014, make sure to let us know. Remember, this is your coop and your plot so please communicate your ideas and needs with our agronomy team and we will do our best to accommodate you. Thank you for doing business with West-Con and best wishes for a safe and prosperous 2014.

Chart F Corn Fungicide Trials

Treatment	Harvest Moist%	Tst Wt. lbs/bu	Bu/Acre @ 15.5% mst	Yield Rank
Untreated	23.0	55.9	191.1	12
CoRon 2 gl VT	21.8	53.5	195.7	7
Stratego Yld V5 and VT	22.1	52.9	195.6	8
Headline V5 and Priaxor VT	22.1	52.4	201.7	3
Quilt excel V5	22.4	53	203.3	1
Headline V5	22.7	52.8	198.4	5
Stratego Yld V5	21.8	53.3	203.0	2
Priaxor VT	22.0	53.5	197.9	6
Stratego Yld VT	22.5	53	193.0	10
Headline AMP VT	22.8	53	194.5	9
Headline In Furrow FB Headline AMP VT	22.8	53.2	198.9	4
Headline In Furrow	22.9	53	191.0	13
Untreated	22.7	52.4	191.2	11

Chart G Soybean Fungicide Trials

Traits	Harvest Moist%	Tst Wt. lbs/bu	Bu/Acre @ 13% mst	Yield Rank
Untreated	12.6	58.7	56.1	8
Headline @ R3	12.6	58.7	60.0	4
Stratego Yld @ R3	12.6	58.7	59.2	5
Priaxor @ R3	12.6	58.7	59.2	7
Untreated	12.6	58.7	54.7	9
Stratego Yld + Coron @ R3	12.6	58.7	61.3	2
Headline + Coron @ R3	12.6	58.7	61.0	3
Priaxor + Coron @ R3	12.6	58.7	63.0	1
Coron @R3	12.6	58.7	59.2	5
Untreated	12.6	58.7	54.5	10

Chart H Soybean IDC Trials

Treatment	Harvest Moist%	Tst Wt. lbs/bu	Bu/Acre @ 13% mst	Yield Rank
Untreated	10.7	58.7	55.4	3
Soygreen 3 lbs	10.7	58.7	58.8	1
Untreated	10.7	58.7	55.1	5
Soygreen 3 lbs	10.7	58.7	58.2	2
Untreated	10.7	58.7	55.4	4

Chart I Nitrogen Sidedress Study

Treatment	% Moisture	Test Weight	Yield @ 15.5% mst
Untreated	25.5	52.8	193.9
38 lbs N 28% sidedress	24.0	53.2	209.9
30 lbs N 28% sidedress	25.3	53.6	204.3
Untreated	25.2	52.6	195.3
30 lbs N 28% sidedress	24.6	52.7	201.4
38 lbs N 28% sidedress	24.7	52.7	202.1
Untreated	25.2	51.8	193.6
Untreated	25.7	52.3	175.4
30 lbs N 28% sidedress	22.7	52.8	199.8
Untreated	23.4	53.3	185.1
30 lbs N 28% sidedress	23.0	53	196.1
Untreated	22.9	53.1	182.2

AGRONOMY NEWS

LOOKING TOWARD SPRING

BY ROBERT RANUM

What will next spring be like? That is the big question on many minds right now. Looking at our fall fertilizer numbers compared to last fall and the three year average, lots of questions come to mind getting ready for the spring application season.

Compared to our three year average, our Phosphate and Potassium tonnage for the fall is coming in right on average to higher than average. Our Nitrogen tonnage is the number that concerns me heading into spring. We ended the fall at just over 50% of the urea on the ground vs. the average of the last three years.

Talking with others in the industry, we are not alone in this situation. Although anhydrous ammonia application is up this fall over last fall, it is well below the three year average. Now, I am taking into consideration that we are selling more and more liquid 28% nitrogen in the spring each year and it appears there could be a slight decrease in corn acres next year but, even if corn acres are down 10%, with only half of the "normal" Nitrogen put on this fall, will there be enough time and enough product in the spring to get the job done?

If the spring thaw comes early and application is extended out over a long period of time and we can get started in some areas before others, things should run smoothly and logistics should not be a problem. However, as has been the case the last few years, if all of the ground in the upper Midwest is ready at the same time, we could see some product shortages and longer waiting time to get product to the fields. Planning ahead will be more important than ever! Visit with your agronomist to make sure product is booked, field plans are ready and maps are correct.

"Planning ahead will be more important than ever. Make sure product is booked, field plans are ready and maps are correct."

West-Con is taking the steps needed to get ready for a busy spring. We have purchased two new TerraGator dry fertilizer spreaders, both twin bin machines with VRT capabilities. Along with these two new dry floaters, we purchased two more of the Ray-Man 30 ton fertilizer tenders. These tenders allow us to load the floaters with fertilizer faster to keep them putting product on the field with less time filling.

We also added another new TerraGator Liquid floater and the supporting tendering equipment to go along with it. These new floaters and tendering equipment along with another new pay loader should help us out in what looks to be a very busy spring. We thank you for doing business with us at West-Con and look forward to working with you in the spring.

Merry Christmas and best wishes for a happy and prosperous new year!

DEVELOPING A WEED MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

BY CHUCK NOLTING

Herbicide-resistant weeds are becoming more of a problem, forcing growers to alter their weed control programs. With memories of weed control challenges from this summer and fall harvest scouting information fresh in our minds, we can move into winter with a weed management strategy and have time to develop a plan to successfully implement that strategy.

Today, some of our most troublesome weeds (including waterhemp, common and giant ragweed) have confirmed glyphosate resistance, while lambsquarter, velvetleaf and others are proving tougher to control. However, according to Chris Boerboom, University of Wisconsin and Mike Owen, Iowa State University, the majority of weed escapes are not due to glyphosate resistance. Certain weed species, such as yellow nutsedge, morning-glories and wild buckwheat are naturally tolerant to glyphosate. Also, environmental and application factors can lead to glyphosate performance problems. These factors include:

- Incorrect rate for weed size or species
- Rainfall before glyphosate is completely absorbed by the weed
- Weather stressed weeds from drought, cold, etc.
- Incomplete spray coverage of weeds below the canopy
- Reduced glyphosate activity with early morning, late evening or night applications
- Weeds emerging after the glyphosate application

If natural tolerance or application factors do not explain weed escapes, glyphosate resistance may be possible. Use this checklist to determine the possibility of glyphosate resistance:

- There were no known application errors and the correct glyphosate rate was added to the spray tank
- The environment was favorable for glyphosate performance
- Only one species escaped control (escapes may be in patches)
- The weeds show evidence of being sprayed (glyphosate symptoms)
- Glyphosate typically controls the weed species that escaped

Adding diversity to your weed control program is the key to dealing with problem weeds. Diverse practices can provide additional benefits since many of these practices improve the overall level and consistency of weed control, add flexibility in scheduling applications, and reduce the risk of yield loss. Here are some recommendations for developing an effective weed control program.

Formulate a weed control program with knowledge of the weeds present. Scout fields regularly, identify the weeds present and record their locations on maps to allow a quick response to changes in weed populations.

Attack problem weeds with multiple modes of action and multiple tactics. Maximize the number of modes of action and avoid applying the same mode of action more than two times per growing season. Use this website to download a corn and soybean herbicide modes of action chart: http://ipcm.wisc.edu/download/pubsPM/Herbicide-MOA-CornSoy-3parts.pdf

A pre-emergence herbicide followed by a post emergence herbicide offers the most consistent weed control in both corn and soybeans. Use a PRE herbicide with activity on key broadleaf weeds that also provides some early season activity on grasses. Follow the PRE with glyphosate and an appropriate POST herbicide tank mix partner for the weed species present. The PRE herbicide will help control or reduce the population of problem weeds giving the POST treatment a better opportunity to control any later-emerging weeds and prevent a problem if weather delays the POST application. The PRE can also allow for a slightly later POST application, providing better control of late-emerging weeds such as foxtails, giant ragweed, black nightshade, waterhemp and perennials.

If you decide to use a total POST program, timeliness is critical. Make your application early, before weed height exceeds 2 to 4 inches. Again, include an appropriate tank mix partner with your glyphosate, preferably one with residual activity to achieve optimum weed control.

Whether you use a PRE plus POST program or a total POST program, using residual herbicides with multiple modes of action will help control problem weeds and reduce the risk of developing herbicide resistant weeds in your fields. Using herbicides or tank mixtures with multiple effective modes of action, timely POST applications, and maintaining clean fields will reduce weed population shifts and the risk of resistance. Growers planning for the coming season can consult their West-Con agronomist for help in developing a management strategy for herbicide-resistant or problem weeds.

Seed Planning for 2014

It seems too early to be starting out like this, but I would like to extend a Season's Greetings from the Agronomy Department here at West-Con and a thank-you for your business this past year. Most of you have started having discussions regarding your 2014 seed needs and many have signed seed orders dating back to the beginning of August. In reference to possible availability issues that could occur, placing your early seed orders puts you in a very good position and in addition, it also helps put us in a better leverage our position to launch orders for on high demand seed varieties. For those of you that still have more seed to order, it is very important for you be in contact with your West-Con agronomist so we can place orders and secure our inventories. Along with availability, the longer we wait, the greater the risk of not getting the desired seed size, grades and weights.

We have compiled quite a list of data from our Monsanto Market Development Plot, Winfield Solutions Answer Plot and our own West-Con hybrid and variety trials. Using this information, we can look at a number of factors including the strengths and weaknesses of the genetic families available, along with maturities, traits, combating insect, herbicide programs, and placement and assist you in finding the best answer to your seed needs. Good seed choices, combined with incremental changes in crop inputs and placement strategies can provide you with the potential to turn good yields into great yields. A review of our data regarding rotations, row spacing, seed treatments, crop protection, foliar feeding and much more, can help establish small changes that can bring big results.

As you place your orders for soybeans, please remember to also book seed treatments. Wet, poorly drained soils can be typical during spring planting and crop emergence and these characteristics favor the development of the fungal pathogens that cause soybean seedling diseases resulting in slow germination and plant growth. Early season insect pests may also damage soybean seeds and seedlings causing adverse affects on plant growth. Therefore,

BY DARRELL BARTZ

it is very important to take steps that may prevent diseases and insect damage. Seed treatments can help protect seed and seedlings from pests, resulting in more uniform plant stands, better yield potential and ultimately increased return on your investment.

Soybean seed and seedlings are susceptible to a number of pathogens lurking in the soil. Soil conditions can turn cold and wet overnight and under these cool (less than 60 degrees) and wet soils, the soybean seeds will germinate and emerge very slowly, making them more susceptible to attack by seed and seedling pathogens. Fungicide seed treatments along with the insecticide treatments can be a valuable tool to use to protect soybean seed and seedlings against these diseases. Under certain soil types and management practices and field histories, the probability of seeing additional benefits from the seed treatment is very good.

We look forward to working with you and serving your needs in the upcoming 2014 season. Happy Holidays!!

2014 West-Con Seed Return Policy

CORN

West-Con has instituted a zero return policy on the following corn hybrids for 2014. With the high demand on new hybrids, additional corn acre shift, and drought in the seed production areas last season, it is necessary to implement this policy to serve the growers and maximize our efficiencies.

Zero Return Products

DKC 47-35
DKC 50-66

Limited Return Policy

All remaining Dekalb products, along with all other corn brands West-Con carries, will have a 5% return limit. A restocking fee of $30/unit may be charged to units over the limit.

SOYBEANS

Unopened soybean seed packages will also have a 5% return limit. A restocking fee of $15/unit will be charged to units over the limit. There are NO returns on bulk or treated soybeans.

Having this information in advance will allow time for planning and assure these products get planted. Feel free to contact your West-Con salesperson with questions.

Managing Corn Rootworm

BY BEN JOHNSON

The crops are harvested, the fertilizer spread and the tillage is done! That's how I know we have once again had another successful harvest season. While we often see success, it seems that every growing season presents a certain set of challenges and one challenge experienced by many growers this year was corn rootworm (CRW).

Managing corn rootworm can involve many steps and requires a full season of attention. Choices in managing CRW start with decisions made over the winter months and there are several management conditions to consider, before rotation is necessary. Selecting the correct trait package paired with the right genetics is essential to controlling CRW. There are many traits packages out there, but research has shown that SmartStax (SSX) hybrids continue to control CRW with the most effectiveness. SSX hybrids provide multiple modes of action below ground which will not only help with efficacy but also prevent CRW from developing resistance to the traits.

CRW can also be controlled with a soil applied insecticide. Once again there are many choices when it comes to insecticides. Some growers have been using Capture LFR in furrow with their starter fertilizer. While this is a good choice and very convenient, it does not control CRW as well as granular applied insecticides such as Aztec or Force. Your insecticide choices should be based on CRW pressure and also what best fits your operation. Many insecticide companies also have equipment programs to assist you in purchasing the required application equipment.

Controlling adult beetles is also necessary for season long control of CRW. It not only can prevent silk clipping but also can help control CRW populations for the next season. If adult beetle populations are high, aerial applications of insecticides around tassel are warranted. Targeting the female CRW beetle is important; most females tend to emerge 10 days to 2 weeks after the males emerge. Controlling female beetles and their eggs will help control CRW for the next cropping season.

"Managing corn rootworm can involve many steps and requires a full season of attention."

If previously noted management steps have not been able to prevent crop injury from CRW, crop rotation may be needed. CRW larvae cannot survive in the stubble of other crops. Rotation is not only a good way to reduce CRW populations but is also a good management practice to prevent disease. Generally speaking one year of rotation will greatly reduce CRW populations. If rotation has been decided, make sure to keep fields clean of volunteer corn. CRW larvae can overwinter in volunteer corn residue even in soybeans and can make hot spots of CRW in the following year's corn.

With new technologies in chemicals and hybrid traits, growers have many options available to them to manage and control CRW while still producing top end yields. If you have been experiencing issues with CRW, contact your West-Con agronomist to help you choose the best methods to solve your CRW issues and get you on track for another great growing season!

NITROGEN MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

BY BRANDON KOCH

With rising costs and potential environmental concerns, efficient use of nitrogen fertilizer has become increasingly important. Important nitrogen management decisions include choosing the appropriate rate, source, timing and placement. As described below, the West-Con team offers a variety of products and services to assist you.

ESN

ESN is a urea granular that has a flexible polymer coating on it. This coating releases the nitrogen when the temperature and soil moisture conditions are right. There a couple of different times that ESN can be applied.

As a pre-planting application

A single ESN application at planting is convenient and saves time while providing a single nitrogen application. Use rates would be around 70-90% of the total recommend nitrogen, using urea to achieve the additional % of total nitrogen needed. With high rate spring applications, applying a week before planting would be ideal.

Side-dress or top dress application

Here you would apply a blend of ESN at a rate of 50-80% of the total recommended nitrogen up to the V4 stage. Any applications after should have a blend of 20-30% to ensure that the plant is receiving the proper amount of nitrogen when it is in a very crucial point. Applications of ESN at this point of the crop are done very easily and efficiently using our Ag Chem Rogator with a spinner box.

Part of a fall nitrogen program

ESN can be used here in a blend of 50-75% of total recommended nitrogen. This is a nice program when the fertilizer can be blown on top of worked ground and left for the next year.

In-crop application of 28% UAN

Another program that has been gaining strength at West-Con is applying 28% down when the crop is in the V7-V10 stages. This program works out really nice when the crop is limited on nitrogen caused by the following factors:

- **Heavy rainfall –** fields that have received more than 2 to 3 inches of rain have a good chance of some lost nitrogen.
- **Soil type –** lighter soils have harder time retaining nitrogen versus a heavy soil type.

Multiple applications of nitrogen throughout the season allow the plant better access to nitrogen when needed during critical plant growth stages. It also minimizes environmental losses that may occur during the season resulting in more efficient use of every pound of nitrogen.

TRANSPORTATION

BY GARB HOHN

As another year comes to a close, the transportation department at West-Con would like to thank all of you who used our trucks this past fall and spring and we look forward to doing business with you again in the upcoming year.

During the winter months we will continue to do pick-up of agricultural products, as well as deliveries to farms and terminals. As always, we will need to watch the weather as we will not dispatch trucks during heavy snowfalls, storms, ice or extremely cold temperatures.

We would like to remind you that during the winter months we do pickups on the farm to the destination of your choice – including, but not limited to West-Con, or CVEC or Denco, etc. Wherever it is your grain needs to be, count on us to assist you in transporting your hard work to market.

To book your transportation needs or for a rate please call us at 1-800-368-3310 and visit with us, Aaron (ext 234) or Garb (ext 205). Or, if you dial "3" all lines in the transportation department will ring. As always when placing your call please have as much information as possible including: name, telephone number, county, township, section, quarter and any other necessary information.

We appreciate your cooperation and continued support and wish you all a safe holiday season.

Harvest Review

TWIN BROOKS AGRONOMY IN HIGH GEAR

BY STEVE NEGEN

As I am writing, corn harvest is winding down. We still have some producers combining with anywhere from 100-1200 acres left to do. Overall, I believe it was a good harvest with corn coming in on yield monitors from 120 to 200 bushel per acre and on pivots, 200 plus.

Soybeans actually did better than most expected. We did have bushel-per-acre reports of 10s to 20s, but for the most part customers reported 35-50 bushels per acre.

At the grain terminal, things went fairly smoothly. We experienced a few traffic issues when filling the hoop building with beans and while dumping wet corn inside the outside bunker. These issues, however, are something we will be looking at in the coming months to resolve and alleviate some of the congestion.

With harvest coming to an end, the agronomy department is busy. We have our entire fleet going plus we have two units from Holloway and one from St. Leo. We also have been running our chisel plow and air cart around the clock. We are just finishing up the acres that we had booked and with Mother Nature's blessing, have had the opportunity to take on some additional acres. Our Directors and Management team have recently approved the purchase of a new Case Payloader and our Agronomy Team is looking forward to its arrival.

The Twin Brooks staff and I thank you for your business and wish you a safe and happy holiday season.

PHOTO CREDIT: PHOTOS.COM

NEW FACES

Welcome to West-Con, Chelsea

The West-Con Administrative Team welcomes Chelsea Lundberg. She grew up on a dairy livestock and crop farm near Benson, MN and graduated from high school in neighboring Hancock. Following high school, Chelsea attended Presentation College in Aberdeen, SD, where she earned her Bachelor's Degree in Business with Finance and Management minors. Armed with her business education and strong background in agriculture, she is well prepared to meet the challenges of her new assignments in the Accounting Department.

Recently married, Chelsea and husband Nick live in the Holloway community and in her spare time she enjoys being outdoors and stays active by running and playing basketball. Welcome, Chelsea (Voorhees) Lundberg.

season's greetings

All of us at West-Con wish you a happy holiday season and a prosperous New Year. Thank you for your patronage.

Mark Your Calendar

MONDAY MARCH 10, 2014

Western Consolidated Cooperative

ANNUAL MEETING

CANDY CANE COOKIES

From the kitchen of Chelsea Lundberg

1 cup shortening (half butter or margarine)
1 cup sifted confectioners' sugar
1 egg
1½ tsp. almond extract
1 tsp. vanilla
2½ cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp. salt
½ tsp. red food coloring
½ cup crushed peppermint candy (optional)
½ cup granulated sugar

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Mix shortening, sugar, egg and flavorings. Mix flour and salt into shortening mixture. Divide dough in half. Blend food coloring into one half.

For each candy cane, shape 1 tsp. of dough from each color into 4-inch strip. For smooth, even strips, roll them back and forth on lightly floured board. Place 1 red and 1 white strip side by side, press lightly together and twist like a rope. For best results, assemble cookies one at a time because if all the dough of one color is shaped first, strips become too dry to twist.

Place on ungreased baking sheet. Curve top of cookie down to form handle of cane. Bake 7 to 8 minutes or until set. While still warm, sprinkle with mixture of candy and sugar.

Optional Tip: Brush cookies with a thin vanilla glaze and sprinkle with crushed peppermint candies.

Makes about 4 dozen canes.

Capture it
PHOTO CONTEST

Congratulations to **Kathy Bahr**, winner of this edition's Capture It Photo Contest.

In Kathy's words, "This was an unposed picture; the guys (my husband and son) were looking at the ground and carrying on a conversation. Grandpa (my husband's dad) is in the combine, so this is basically a three-generation picture. I like it for several reasons.

Overall it just captures a true farming moment. Secondly, it reminds me of the *Been Farmin' Long?* picture of old! Thirdly, the lighting is just as it was in the field – dusty, getting close to sunset. Lastly, the three generations just is a special time out in the field."

If you have a photo to submit, please email it directly to shoffman@west-con.com or contact Editor Sheila Hoffman at 320-394-2171, ext 238.

Western Consolidated Cooperative

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If you have stories of interest or would like to be added to our mailing list, please contact Editor, Sheila Hoffman at 320-394-2171 ext 238