



Eugene Berges Director Profile

Eugene Berges, Onaga, was elected in 2008 to his third term as a cooperative board member.

FARMING OPERATION: My son Jonathan and I continue to operate the family farm that was started by my great-grandfather west of Onaga in 1868. We have spring and fall calving cows and raise corn, soybeans, milo, wheat, and hay.

NUMBER OF YEARS AS COOP DIRECTOR: 7 years

OTHER BOARDS YOU HAVE SERVED ON: Pottawatomie County Fire District No. 3; Pottawatomie County Rural Water District No. 3; Pottawatomie County Farm Service Agency.

COMMENTS: The trend we have seen to fewer and larger farms will continue, as will the increase in more part-time and hobby farms. The challenge for our Cooperative is to have the staff, equipment, and inventory to service the demands of the ever-shrinking number of full time farmers in the area, and to expand our presence in the part-time and hobby farm market. Because of our geographic location we need to have both groups in our Cooperative to give us a larger customer base to insure financial security.

The trend to consolidation is not limited to production agriculture, but is also present in the cooperative system. There are far fewer, but far larger Coops than there were 25 years ago. Our Cooperative needs to grow and expand its service area if it is to prosper.

Look at the farmers of retirement age in your community (as if farmer ever retires): If there is no one interested in taking over the farming operation, then the farmer sees no need to update equipment and facilities, nor acquire additional land just to continue another 5 or 10 years. When he's ready to quit, he can take his cattle to the sale barn, auction off his equipment and rent the land to a neighbor.

On the other hand, the farmer who sees that there is a family member who would like to maintain and expand the operation will continue to invest in equipment, facilities, and land to ensure the success of that next generation.

The Members of this Coop, its Board of Directors and Staff will need to decide which of these two paths we follow.