



Two Rivers

Cooperative

Monroe: 259-2232

Otley: 627-5311

Pella: 628-4167

Tracy: 949-6411

www.tworivers.coop

MISSION STATEMENT

“Two Rivers Cooperative Is Committed To Building Profitable Business Relationships Based On Integrity And Quality”

Two Rivers Cooperative

Pella, Iowa 50219

March, 2005



Crop Talk

By
Robby
Wilson

This past fall, the huge task of handling the vast number of bushels from the record corn crop our farmers had produced presented some unique challenges.

First of all, there was the sheer volume of bushels to handle as yields in excess of 200 bushels per acre, sometimes well in excess, poured in from all directions to our locations.

Second, a lot of this crop was wetter than the crops we've been handling in past years, thus requiring additional drying to be done, and we both know what a time and labor intensive task drying corn is.

Third, even though we entered harvest with our entire storage complex as low on inventories as we ever have, the magnitude of this crop soon had our facilities overflowing into temporary storage and ground piles, creating additional demands on manpower.

Fourth, the combination of huge yields and wetter corn, plus a few weather delays along the way, caused harvest to drag out well into November.

As I said, the additional drying and handling demands created by this crop put extraordinary demands on our manpower throughout the long and very busy fall season.

Therefore, when the normal time to address fall P & K and/or lime applications rolled around and our people were still working virtually around the

There Will Never Be A Better Time
To Put **PRECISION** To Work In Your Fields

Outback E-Drive * Outback S

Outback 360

Farming With “**PRECISION**” Is
No Longer Intimidating

Get Many Great Features

No Other Systems Can Match

At Special **PRE-SPRING 2005 Prices**

Contact The Two Rivers Team For Details
On The Outback Systems We Carry



clock drying and moving grain, we arrived at a crossroads that demanded us to make several tough choices.

One choice would have been to pull a percentage of our manpower from the tasks of drying and handling grain to take care of fall spreading.

The people who would have been needed to blend P & K rates, load them into the spreaders and tenders, drive the tenders and, of course, custom apply your P & K or lime in the fields would have left us short-handed at the grain dryer, the receiving pits, the grain piles, etc.

The ultimate result of that would have been to create additional log jams, logistic snags and delays, perhaps even requiring us to shut off receiving so the reduced workforce handling grain could catch up with the steady flow of bushels coming in, needing to be dried, needing to be moved to the bunker, ground pile, and/or to create additional room for the next day.

The other choice, and the one we elected to make, was to give the ultimate priority to handling your crop and to dedicate the full manpower

resources of Two Rivers to that task so you could keep your combines rolling each day to finish your harvest chores in the most timely manner.

In making that choice we took a calculated risk that we would have decent weather after the harvest had been completed so we could shift our manpower from handling your grain needs to serving your fall fertilizer needs.

We felt then, and we still feel that risk was justified given the alternatives of delaying harvest and/or shutting down receiving in an attempt to stretch our manpower out to cover both grain and agronomy at the same time.

Well, as we both know, Mother Nature has not been cooperating.

Wet weather, snow and ice frustrated our attempts to get much spreading handled this winter, thus we arrive at spring with some of our customers asking us why they haven't had their lime and P & K orders completed.

I hope the things I have been talking about in this article have answered those questions, and I assure you that

CROP TALK
Continued On Page 2



**Fuel
Facts**
By
**Scott
Bensink**

March Fills: We are going to start our **Pre-Spring Diesel Fill** program in March so we can get a good jump on having as much fuel in the country where it belongs and where it will be needed to start the spring season.

This will allow us to lay in additional inventories at our bulk storage tanks and, hopefully, give us an edge against the possibility of long lines, delays and perhaps even spot shortages at the pipelines and terminals as demand for diesel mushrooms.

As an added incentive, we are also offering a **3-Cent Per Gallon Cash Discount** for March Fills paid within 10 days of delivery, giving you additional savings on your fill above and beyond the other discounts we offer.

Contracting: Those who have already contracted their spring diesel fuel with us at Two Rivers have already seen what a solid decision it was to act early, while we had an opportunity to take advantage of a soft period in the market and stable pricing.

Since that time the price has bounced back up 8-9 cents already, and with spring looming on the horizon there may not be too many more opportunities to act before in-season volatility and peak demand put added pressure on prices.

If you weren't able to contract your needs with us this last time we had a window in the market, be watching for any openings to appear that would enable you to contract your needs before spring arrives.

LP Contracts: At this time we're winding up the 2004-05 LP contracts, with our LP Team delivering whatever gallons remained on your contracted volumes as they run the routes.

Be sure to keep a close watch on your LP gauge and plan with us on wrapping up your LP contracts in the weeks ahead so we can help you avoid running out, and therefore having to pay more for additional LP.

In-Season Keep Full? As we begin planning and preparing to head into the upcoming spring season, your Fuels Team is looking for ways that we can continue to provide our fuel cus-

tomers with the most timely and efficient services to keep everyone well-supplied with their fuel needs.

At the same time, we also need to work on improving our efficiencies to help keep the lid on soaring delivery costs and to make the most effective and efficient use of our manpower.

One way that I believe will make a huge difference is by implementing a **Diesel Keep Full Route System** similar to the **LP Keep Full Routes** we run during the winter months.

Over the course of the season a Keep Full Route for diesel could save hundreds of hours of delivery time, countless miles of backtracking covering the same roads several times a day, boost productivity, free up manpower so our people could assist elsewhere, and most importantly save time, labor and money for you your co-op.

Obviously, however, for a system like this to have any chance whatsoever of being successful, enough people **MUST WANT IT** and enough people **MUST USE IT**.

So before we can go any further on this, **I'M ASKING YOU** if you are interested in an **In-Season Keep Full** program for diesel.

And even more importantly **I'M ASKING YOU** if such a program is offered, **Will You Use It?**

Your input will be very important in helping make this decision, and we will appreciate hearing from you on this. Get in touch with me soon!

CROP TALK

Continued From Page 1

we will be doing everything the weather and field conditions allow us to do to get spreading orders and all spring spreading needs taken care of in the most timely and efficient manner.

Please help us serve you by communicating your needs with your Two Rivers Agronomist, and by working with us very closely to plan and schedule our manpower and equipment so that we're getting the most done each day we can be out in the country.

Winter Kill: One thing many of you can help out with is scouting your

alfalfa for winter kill situations, since this year's prolonged ice cover may have taken a heavier toll on stands.

In recent years it has been paying off very well for those who have been using an aggressive fertility and nutrient management plan for their alfalfa acres, and with potash supply and pricing continuing to be under pressure, the nutrient investments you make this year will be even more important for the future.

Fine-Tuned For Profits: It may be hard to imagine there are ways to boost corn and soybean yields beyond what we produced last year.

And yet we firmly believe there are many areas of crop management a farmer provides that could be fine-tuned and perhaps "tweaked" in one or several ways that would pay off in consistently higher yields.

It may be something like matching seed to soil type to draw on the full genetic potential of different hybrids and varieties to produce yields in various types of soils.

It may be something as simple as calibrating the planters, making sure seed is planted at the proper depth, proper spacing, proper population and of course planting at the proper speed to eliminate the risks of skips, etc.

It could be investing a little more for seed treatments and/or insecticides to provide protection for seed/seedlings at their most vulnerable stages.

Yes, you may have to spend a little more time, but the objective in crop production is not to be the fastest and first done, it's getting the best crop and the highest yield.

And yes again, in some cases, a little more capital may be required as well. However if a small investment can boost yields from every acre, you will certainly be well paid.

Your Two Rivers Agronomy Team is anxious to assist you with these and other suggestions to fine-tune your crop production efforts.

And the best thing about that is that our assistance in helping you costs you nothing extra, since all are a part of the services we supply with the business you do here at your co-op.

THE TWO RIVERS TREASURE HUNT

Can You Help Us Locate Any Of The Following?

**Clarence De Penning
William Dieleman
Abe Goemaat
Fred C. Rietveld
Garret Ryke**

**Warren Taylor
Marion Vander Hart
Ray H. Vander Linden
Robert Zylstra
Tulip City Nursery**

**Seed
&
Stuff
By
Jay
Van Woerkom**



Right now we seem to be entering **Phase 2 of the 2005 Asian Soybean Rust Saga.**

Phase 1, which began some 90 days ago, has been a **Period For Education & Information** about the threat this disease poses, strategies for control, product information etc.

There have been ample opportunities through meetings and seminars, trade articles, items Robby and I have put in the newsletter and from data included on numerous web sites that have filled the internet to get the details you will need to know.

If you have not already availed yourself of this information, do so very soon, because with March now here, **Awareness & Information** are some of the best assets you can possess.

This **Phase 2** I've referred to can best be described as the **Watching & Waiting** period in which the weather and how this disease has done in those southern areas where it has over-wintered will be the main focus.

We will continue to monitor these and any other related developments very closely to help keep all of our Two Rivers customers advised and up to date on the situation as it unfolds in the weeks ahead.

We also continue to invite and encourage your questions so we can assist you in planning your strategies to deal with whatever rust issues develop for our crops.

Seed Size: Moving on to other key issues that need attention in planning for spring, please be aware this year's soybean seed is somewhat larger than the seed you planted in 2004.

This larger seed means there are typically 2,500 and in some cases up to 3,000 seeds per pound in the bags of beans you'll be planting in 2005, compared to seed sizes of 3,000 to 3,500 per pound in 2004 soybean seed bags.

This seed size differential will obviously need to be taken into consideration in planting rates, planter calibration, seed placement and so forth, so be aware of these differences and adjust accordingly.

Frost Seeding: By now you should be getting ready to wrap up this season's "frost seeding" programs, but if you still have some of these chores remaining, please don't hesitate contacting us for your needs.

Inter-seeding pastures and similar programs can still be done up to early April, and we also welcome the opportunity to supply you with quality seed products for those programs as well.

Corn Delivery: As difficult as it is to believe, we'll be getting started on seed corn delivery chores in the very near future, since we need to attend to seed delivery duties as soon as possible to make the best use of manpower and delivery equipment.

Early delivery also means we can plan to get out there while these country roads and drives can be navigated in the mornings and/or following a cold spell that firms them up for these heavy loads to move, rather than sink in and create ruts.

If you have a space cleared for seed to be stored, get in touch and we'll make arrangements for delivery.

If you don't have a space cleared, get one ready soon and give us a call.



**Feed
For
Thought
By
Jason Smit**

Our newly designed bags of pet food and chicken feeds are starting to arrive in our inventory, and in the upcoming weeks the horse feed line will be rolling in as well.

Remember, the only difference is in the packaging and the name on the package. The products inside are the same, and so is the manufacturer, Land O' Lakes.

Our Feed Team will continue assisting our customers with the transition to the new names and packaging in the weeks ahead until everyone gets accustomed to ordering their specific

product preferences.

I might add that if you haven't already tried our line of pet foods, now would be a good time to give them a trial with your pets.

Our entire pet food line is made from the highest quality selected ingredients, using precise nutritional formulations to match the requirements of different sizes and breeds of pets, and their competitive price makes them a top value.

Minerals: A couple of months ago I indicated we were investigating the addition of a new **Wind & Rain Mineral** product to our line of cattle minerals.

We've completed our inquiries into this addition, but we still need to hear from our local beef producers to determine if there is sufficient interest to proceed with adding another mineral to our line.

Space and inventory costs being what they are these days, we need your input to make the best decisions, so **We're Asking You** to let us know your interests.

We feel the durability of these Wind & Rain Mineral products makes them a perfect fit in our changing and challenging Iowa weather, but you're the ones using the mineral, so you're input is needed. Give me a call!

Speaking of mineral, we've had a good season for Mineral Tub sales and we thank all of our customers who purchased these convenient, high quality products.

Now is also the time to be looking ahead to spring, thinking about and ordering your minerals with Altosid, the fly control product.

An early start on feeding this product is the key to success, so lay in your supplies early.

Pigs Outside: In closing and with spring soon to be here, we're now looking to make arrangements with producers who have outdoor facilities for finishing pigs.

There are some very decent opportunities available, so if you have the facilities contact me.

**Would You Be Interested In
IN-SEASON
DIESEL FUEL
KEEP FULL ROUTES
See "Fuel Facts" For Details
And Let Us Know Soon**

**We Are Now Taking
MOWING BIDS
For Two Rivers Locations
Monroe * Otley * Pella
If You Are Interested Contact
Manager Tracy Gathman
For Details And Bid Submission
(Deadline For Bids Is 3-31-05)**



As I See It
By Tracy Gathman
General Manager

The month of February has just the final day remaining in it as I write my article, and tomorrow as we turn the next page on the calendar we will see March at the top of the page.

I hesitate to use the over-used cliché that declares: **“Spring Is Just Around The Corner”** yet another time, but old and over-used as it may be, that is pretty much what it all boils down to for all of our customers and for the employees of Two Rivers.

Spring is a time of extreme optimism on the farm, and for us at your co-op as well, since it is when we both once again renew the annual rites of starting out the work that will bring us a brand new and, hopefully, big and bountiful crop in the fall.

Anyone but a pure optimist, and one who also possesses a bright and positive outlook for the future at that, would be hard-pressed to engage in a livelihood filled with as much uncertainty, as many unknowns and as numerous factors they have no control over as do those of us who are involved with crop production.

All this uncertainty, the unknowns and the factors beyond our control are, in fact, at the very core of your business and ours, the things that make each year different, each year a challenge, and each year an exciting and sometimes adventurous experience as it unfolds over time.

One of the things I personally believe makes this upcoming season of crop production so interesting and exciting to think about is this past crop season, one in which many fields and farms produced yields that shattered all previous records for bushels per acre.

I don't think there would be too much argument with the notion that the 2004 crop benefited in many ways from favorable weather, ample moisture, and the lack of any significant stresses or challenges during the course of the season.

And yet 2004 was far from being that ideal, perfect sort of year we have

often dreamed about.

After all, it started out rather late and wet, we probably had one of the coolest months of August we've ever had, and there was a time or two along the way when things were starting to dry out enough to raise concerns for yields.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of fields were able to overcome these and whatever other obstacles they may have encountered to produce the biggest crop ever, with numerous 60+ bushel beans, and corn yields in excess of 200 bushels per acre, sometimes by a great margin.

A crop of this immense proportions naturally puts added pressure on commodity prices, and the recent bids posted on the Chicago Board of Trade have certainly made it even more difficult to believe there was a time in 2004 that we had \$3.00 plus corn and beans topping \$10.00 per bushel.

This **“Dollars Per Bushel”** figure, while clearly the one most watched and talked about, is and always has been an inadequate measurement of a crop's true value and worth.

The surest yardstick to use in gauging the success any crop brings is the **“Dollars Per Acre Return”** it generates for the farmer, his family and the farming business.

If it is indeed true the 2004 crop has taken us to a new and higher level of crop production capacity in which yields are to be consistently higher, then it will be your ability to focus upon and maximize that all-important **“Dollars Per Acre Return”** from each acre you will be planting in 2005, and beyond, that will determine the ultimate success of your production investments and efforts.

And it is in precisely this area where your cooperative assets - its custom application equipment and services, the knowledge and experience of our well-trained staff of Agronomists and their ability to help you fine-tune your level of management and production practices - are going to be even more important and valuable to your farm and your fields.

Elsewhere in their newsletter articles this month, both Robby and Jay have talked about some of the many ways they and their Team can be of service to you in this fine-tuning process that will give your crops an edge that will carry yields beyond the norm, and beyond what you may have become accustomed to settling for in the past.

With the production bar now set higher than ever, and with the investments and stakes greater than ever as well, settling for anything than **“The Best Crop You Can Raise”** will leave you short of where you can be, need to be, and should be.

Breaking News: At their February 28th meeting the Board of Directors authorized moving forward on a storage expansion project at the Two Rivers Pella location.

The bidding process has been initiated and we are addressing the details of this project with our lender and local government departments on financing and the necessary permits.

As currently proposed, the project would involve approximately 500,000 bushels of additional storage which would help ease our dependence on ground piles and other temporary storage that are so much more time and labor intensive, and which are so much more susceptible to problems with grain quality.



P.O. Box 47
Pella, Iowa 50219

Presorted Standard
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Des Moines, Iowa
Permit No. 2929

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED