



Two Rivers

Cooperative

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MISSION STATEMENT

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

Two Rivers Cooperative

Pella, Iowa 50219

May, 2006



Crop Talk

By
Robby
Wilson

By and large we seem to be off to a respectable start on spring work as the month of April comes to a close.

We've had several decent showers move through the area which, when coupled with the sunshine and steadily increasing temperatures we're getting, have brought out the annual broadleaf weeds and annual grasses.

Now that these “pests” have broken the soil, my **First Recommendation** to everyone is to **Get Out There To Scout Fields** to identify weed and grass species, to monitor height and stage of development, and to do both of these things **Before The Fields are Sprayed**.

Remember, the choice of herbicides to put into some of these tank mix control strategies, as well as the rates and timing of application, are all based largely on crop and/or weed height and stage of development.

Next, while it's understandable everyone is anxious to keep moving along as steadily as possible to get whatever corn planting remains done, and to get the beans in as soon as possible too, don't get in such a big hurry to do today's work that you overlook all the work you've already done.

And that brings me to my **Second Recommendation** this month, which is to urge all of you to be sure you **Set Aside & Take Time To Scout** your fields to assess and evaluate the herbicide's performance **After Fields Have**

As You Plant Your 2006 Corn & Soybean Crops Are You Planning How To Market Your Crops Too?

By Tracy Gathman

As we go to press this month, recent showers across the Grain Belt, including right here in our own Two Rivers area, have helped eased the concerns of drought that were being widely discussed over the winter. At least for the time being.

We can't know how the weather will treat us through the year, of course. However, if we consider the prospects of even a “normal” crop being raised this year added to the massive volume of bushels that remain to be marketed from the large 2005 crop, the outlook for grain prices, grain movement and basis levels is not a rosy one.

The most recent estimates from USDA project the 2005 corn carryout at above 2 billion bushels, and while demand for corn has been decent, only 4 months remain in this marketing year to move that huge volume into the marketplace.

Processors know this glut of grain needs to come out of storage to make room for a new crop in the fall, and if that new crop appears to also be a large one, it should be obvious to all where prices and the basis will move as summer begins to wind down.

Space occupied by old crop bushels reduces space available for new crop, whether it's on the farm, at country elevators, on trains or at the processors, so we believe prompt attention needs to be given to moving old crop out in the early summer rather than delaying to late summer and the inevitable logistic log jam that will ensue.

We also believe that good marketing opportunities should not be overlooked, for both old and new crop bushels alike, and we encourage you to look at marketing tools that protect you from risks while expanding the selling decision process.

Been Sprayed.

This is critical, and you need to be monitoring not only how the herbicide program is working and the weed/grass control you're getting, but also how the crop is emerging and what the plant populations are.

Hopefully, you've kept track of planting rates and the plant population you had targeted with those rates so you can compare the emerged stand and make sure it's in the ballpark with your targets.

If it's not, you need to start doing some investigation about why it's not and what could have happened.

Your Two Rivers Agronomists will be pleased to help you with these evaluations and the assessment of any potential problems or causes for a

stand that falls short.

While you're out there, you might just as well take care of my **Third Recommendation** for this month, which is to **Keep Scouting Fields** to check for signs of diseases, weed and grass escapes, any performance questions or concerns, and of course to see if there are any signs of insects feeding on seedlings, emerged plants, etc.

Iowa State's bug experts are continuing to caution us about a significant threat from flea beetles in corn this season, with pressures meeting and/or exceeding economic threshold levels very likely to be found in many areas.

Flea beetles cause Stewart's Wilt in

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

BUDGET BILLING: By now I am sure most of our LP customers have received a letter outlining our Budget Billing program for 2006-07.

If not, then I have included some of the highlights of this program elsewhere on this page.

Before going any further, I want to call attention to and put emphasis on the very first point in the program, namely: **Budget Billing Is Available For ALL Qualified LP Customers of Two Rivers** to use as an alternative.

Next, of course, is to call your attention to the **Sign Up Deadline** if you want to be included in this coming year's Budget Billing program.

That date is **May 15th**.

Please be sure you have contacted one of the three individuals listed in the announcement elsewhere on this page by the close of the business day May 15th to be enrolled in the Budget Billing program.

LP CONTRACTS: We have just finished up delivery of the LP Contracted for the 2005-06 season for all customers on the Keep Full Routes and, hopefully, for all or most of those on the Will Call In list.

I would strongly recommend that if you call in to place LP orders with us that you take a few moments to double check to be sure we have delivered the gallons you contracted, just in case we might have missed someone in the rush of spring work.

FUEL PRICES: I was watching the news the other night and saw there are already places in this country where the price for gas has not only topped \$3.00 per gallon, it's actually pushed over the \$4.00 per gallon mark.

Much of this can be traced not to the oil companies, who have usually been the traditional targets when looking for someone to blame, but instead to a select group of commodity and index fund buyers who have assumed a much greater control over our basic **"Commodity Markets"** through the buying and selling of the futures to move prices in either direction, regardless of actual supply and demand.

If you will refer to my article last

month you'll see I mentioned several **"powder kegs"** creating lots of speculation in the fuel market, and, if anything, each of these situations has worsened, rather than easing.

There is so much volatility and speculation spread through the fuel/energy markets than ever before, and I fear it may have reshaped the entire industry and marketplace we've known and operated in.

CROP TALK

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corn, and while many hybrids have a level of resistance, these bugs can do a lot of damage to young corn plants.

We're also hearing reports coming out of parts of Missouri about **Bean Leaf Beetles Chewing The** - - - out of the early planted soybeans, so we may want to take this as an Advanced Warning sign from our southern neighbors, and plan accordingly.

Which now brings me to **Recommendation Four**, and that is to **Strongly Consider** the tremendous value for investing in **Seed Treatment Protection** for your bean crop!

Our area's farmers who have treated their soybeans with Cruiser Max have seen the benefits and results in the form of **Hardier, Healthier, More Uniform/Consistent Soybean Stands** from crop emergence on, and that naturally translates into **Bigger, Better Yields At Harvest**.

Next, and I certainly hope this is not

coming out to you too late, my **Fifth Recommendation** for this month for those of you who will be spraying a post-emerge corn herbicide, or having one sprayed for you, is **Be Absolutely Certain** you have the **Correct Match** between the **Corn Hybrid Genetics** you planted this season and the **Herbicide Technology Matched To Those Seed Genetics**.

Finally, as you look at the **Various Recommendations** I've included this time, there is one more I want to offer, **Recommendation Six**, which applies to all the above for all customers:

If in the course of taking care of any of the above items you encounter situations you're not sure about, or you have any questions or doubts, **Call Your Two Rivers Agronomist** to ask for assistance, service and/or answers **BEFORE You Proceed**.

It may take a little more time, but there aren't any prizes for being first done, and there are certainly a lot of consequences and problems waiting if you **Leap Before You Look** when it comes to cropping decisions, products and programs

I'm sure if everyone thinks back to when they were a kid, they can recall someone telling them to **"Take Time To Get Things Right The First Time So You Won't Have To Go Back To Do Them Over Again!"**

In the long run it will save time and probably money to keep those words in mind as the season progresses.

2006-07 LP Budget Billing Program

- * *This program is available to all qualified LP customers of Two Rivers Co-op.*
- * *To be "eligible" the customer's account balance must be paid in full prior to May 31, 2006.*
- * *Customers on the Budget Billing Program make monthly payments from June through April, with a final payment to "clear" any remaining account balance to be paid in May, if necessary.*
- * *Two Rivers will establish the monthly payment based on past usage and current propane pricing.*
- * *Sign up for Budget Billing begins May 1st with a May 15th Deadline to participate in this year's program.*
- * *Those participating in Budget Billing will be placed on a Keep Full Route basis as long as monthly payments are kept current. No finance charges are assessed.*
- * *Budget Billing customers automatically receive the 4 Cent Per Gallon Cash Discount.*
- * *The propane price used will be locked in at the June 1, 2006 price for LP. Over the past 4 years, June 1st has recorded the "LOWEST" price for LP for the year.*
- * *No deposit is required to be on the Budget Billing Program.*
- * *We also offer a "Direct Withdraw Option" for payment of Budget Billing accounts, with customers using this alternative receiving an additional 2 Cent Per Gallon Discount.*

For Additional Information And To Sign Up For 2006/07 Contact
Nick Steinbach At Monroe - 259-2232 Or 1-800-642-6498
Robin Redding At Pella - 628-4167 Or 1-800-223-5512
Scott Bensink At Otley - 627-5311 Or 1-800-344-5628

Seed & Stuff

By
Jay
Van Woerkom



Each year the evidence of the value and importance of timely scouting seems to become clearer to everyone.

While everyone agrees that seed selection and planting dates are among the most important variables every farmer needs to consider, the fact remains that if the fields are not scouted and monitored for crop performance throughout the season, all the advantages of genetics and technology can be lost very quickly.

For proof of that statement, just think about soybean aphids in 2003.

Timely scouting means starting before the crop is planted if you're having any of the "pre" products/programs sprayed, and definitely as the crop emerges in all situations.

The importance of early season scouting after emergence is because there is still time for many problems to be "corrected", if not completely, then at least to some degree.

Here are some additional scouting benefits and procedures that we feel will enhance crop performance and yields.

* **Get out and walk fields.** The front of the field along the road may look great.

But out there 50 yards or so, over the rise or hill, down in the valley or wherever else you can't see from the road as you drive by, there could be all sorts of problems you don't see until it's too late.

* **Keep good records** of what you see, and what you did about it.

* **Know where to get** information about crop challenges and performance issues, and ask questions any time you encounter something you're not sure about.

And don't forget, your local Two Rivers Agronomists are always available to be of service.

* **Check plant stands** in all fields.

* **If you've had** any early season emergence or stand problems and/or challenges, evaluate all the re-planting options/costs.

* **Inspect individual plants** closely to determine health, growth stage, performance.

Some early season challenges are environmental (such as cold temperatures) and will be overcome with time, sun, heat units.

Others, such as nutrient deficiencies, insect pressures, weed/grass competition and so forth can be overcome through timely management.

* **Identify weed species** and determine if weeds and grasses are present, along with height, stage of development to help in selecting the most effective and economical control, as well as rates and timeliness of application.

* **Young plants** are extremely susceptible to insects, so scout all fields for signs and symptoms of insect pests that may threaten your crops.

* **Monitor all fields** for signs and symptoms of diseases as well.

Now for some additional specifics, and first I want to touch on **Bean Leaf Beetles** which, as Robby notes, are already causing all sorts of problems to the south of us.

One of the major issues with Bean Leaf Beetles is **Proper Identification**, since these bugs look very similar to many of the others you may see out there as you scout, including different species of lady beetles.

The one distinguishing characteristic that clearly identifies Bean Leaf Beetles from all the others is a black triangle behind the "neck" of the beetle.

Alfalfa Weevils are also showing up in larger numbers this season, and if you have alfalfa stands you definitely need to be checking for these pests in the weeks ahead so you can spray if needed.

Finally, as Robby has also touched on, **Flea Beetles** in corn have the potential to be a significant threat this season as a result of our mild winter weather, since over-wintering populations attack seedling corn.

Not only do Flea Beetles cause physical damage, with the heavily injured seedlings turning brown and wilting, they also transmit a bacteria causing Stewart's Wilt, which many corn inbred and sweet corn hybrids are very susceptible to.

I'd encourage you to scout fields for all of these pests and to take preventative measures if the populations justify treatments.

Feed For Thought By Jason Smit



I am very pleased to announce Two Rivers Cooperative feed mill has, for the **22nd Consecutive Year**, been awarded the **Dedication To Quality** certification following an intensive inspection of our facilities and feed manufacturing processes by Land O'Lakes Feed.

As a Food & Drug Administration (FDA) Class One Feed Mill, our mill is held to the highest standards for quality control, safety and consistency throughout the feed industry.

The annual inspection by Land O'Lakes is one of four major inspections conducted annually at our mill

Inspectors representing FDA also come to our mill annually, and with all the health and safety concerns related to the food chain at the national level, including the most recently announced concerns about bio-terrorism, I am sure you can understand and appreciate just how thorough, extensive and exacting the FDA's requirements are.

As an example of these requirements, our mill must be able to document and trace each feed order we process from the time the order is placed through all the feed manufacturing and milling processes and up to the time it is delivered, plus provide a sample of that order for inspection if asked to do so.

The newest bio-terrorist threats I referred to have expanded that to include the complete trace-ability of each and every bag of feed we manufacture that goes out the doors, and at this time I am writing the procedural systems for us to be able to maintain this level of trace-ability.

You can be very proud of the dedication and commitment to quality which the people serving the needs of your livestock operation have demonstrated to earn this recognition for each of the past 22 years.

MAY IS BEEF MONTH

*We Thank & Recognize Area Beef Producers
And Their Families For Their Contributions And Efforts
IOWA BEEF - IT'S THE VERY BEST*



As I See It
By Tracy Gathman
General Manager

There's a tremendous amount of activity taking place all across Two Rivers Country, and certainly right here at your Two Rivers Co-op, as we go to press with this issue of the newsletter the final week of April.

For one thing, we're moving forward as quickly as possible with replacing the Pella location's scale, and in the process of doing so we're making a few modifications and upgrades.

The new scale that has been ordered is 80-feet in length, so we've added an additional 10-feet to better accommodate the steadily increasing size of a lot of the rigs being used to haul grain into us these days.

Scale width will remain at 12-feet, however as we are installing the new scale we'll also be moving it approximately 3 to 3.5 feet out from the side of the office, creating additional space for maneuvering and so forth.

The new scale, like the one it is replacing, will be a mechanically operated system.

There have been some who have asked why we did not replace the old scale with an electronic scale system, and indeed the Board considered both options as they were evaluating this project.

While the initial investment in an electronic scale may have been slightly lower, when costs are evaluated over the longer term and the extensive maintenance costs of an electronic system are factored in, that initial savings is quickly offset by the reduced maintenance demands for a manually operated system.

Additionally, as with any electronic system, there is the ever-present risk of having all of the circuitry completely "fried" in an electrical storm and/or by a nearby lightning strike.

Longer term, therefore, after the Board had made thorough evaluation of the two types of systems, they reached the conclusion that a manually operated system would be the best choice to serve the needs of Two

Rivers and the membership.

Another decision which your Board reached is to proceed with the investment in an E-85 Ethanol fuel storage and distribution system at the Pella Card-Trol location.

At this time we are in the process of taking bids for the site preparation and equipment that needs to be installed to offer E-85 at a separate pump.

I would expect these preliminary phases of the project to be completed within the next 30 days, with work to be underway sometime in June, and with the goal of being operational and offering E-85 to customers sometime in the late summer.

We are indeed very excited about being able to offer this new and exciting alternative and a renewable source of fuel to our area's motorists, so be watching the newsletter for updates and additional information as this project moves forward.

Speaking of renewable energy sources, let me now ask a couple of questions:

"Are you currently using Soy BioDiesel fuel for your farm's diesel engines?"

And if your response to that question was no, let me ask you: **"Why Not?"**

The cost for the 2% rate of Soy BioDiesel is the same as the cost of conventional premium quality diesel fuel, and the 2% of soy diesel that's added will provide enhanced lubrication properties to better protect your diesel engines.

I don't think anyone would argue about the dramatic, positive influences which have been created for corn production by the expansion of the ethanol fuel industry, and clearly your

Two Rivers Co-op is excited about bringing its new E-85 Ethanol retail site to our area.

The prospects are equally bright for Soy BioDiesel, and we feel the time has come for a groundswell of grassroots level support to pave a similar path for our soybean production industry as well.

The start of a new crop season is also a major issue all across the area and, I am sure, all of us feel much better planting our crops into soils that have had depleted moisture levels replaced by several nice April showers.

The corn crop is going in very nicely, and spraying has been progressing well, especially when one factors in the rain delays and the seemingly omnipresent strong winds we get every time the sun shines.

We have sincerely appreciated the cooperation of customers in planning and scheduling custom application needs with the Agronomy Team, and more of this cooperation will be needed in the weeks ahead as the corn planting transitions into planting the bean crop.

I ask also for your thoughtfulness and consideration of all of the employees who are doing their absolute best every day to provide the very best, most timely and efficient services to each customer.

Please keep your expectations realistic, please show these people the respect they deserve, and please treat them the same way you would want them to be treated if they were a member of your family, which indeed, as members of our Two Rivers Cooperative Family, all of us are.

Finally, of course, **Please Be Safe** in all of your work!



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