



▶ AND THE FARMER SAYS

According to the Farmer's Almanac, precipitation for the next 60 days will be below average and temperatures nearly normal. We have received 33 inches of snow across our wide territory which is three inches above normal. Records show that weather is the number one factor in yield potential. History shows that droughts in southeast United States move to the northwest towards the Midwest the next season, but their drought has recently been washed out!

La Nina and El Nino are inconclusive friends going nowhere. The ice cover (9.6 percent) on the Great Lakes just recorded one of the lowest percentages since 1970 during the coldest week of the year which historically means dry summer weather. Farming is a gamble – not for the faint of heart.

If you go to the Casino, you know if you're a winner within a few minutes – farmers bet big money at their table for six months or more always hoping for a winner! And if you eat food, it is always in your best interest to hope farmers win every year!

▶ CHECKING BINS!

Be sure to check the condition of your farm stored crops. A few years ago, a farmer noticed on frosty mornings that all of his neighbor's bins had frost on the roofs except for one which was frost free. You can guess what was going on inside. Corn shouldn't be growing in the bin when its 25 degrees outside. Don't wait – pop those lids now and smell. Good cardiac exercise for you and great for us!!

▶ WHAT IF?

There is no doubt that Washington, DC, is on the move – right or wrong! As you look at your forward marketing, keep this in mind. How would you feel if you heard on the morning news that a major importing country of our farm products decides to shut off any or all US imports? More important, could your farm finances handle the consequences of such an announcement? Every action has a reaction equal to or more severe than the original. The supply-demand marketplace could quickly succumb to political posturing or payback. What if?

▶ FEBRUARY MARKETS

Locally at our elevators we estimate that 80 percent of 2016 beans have been sold with corn at 40 percent. The 90 cent bean basis is ridiculous and should be seen with \$16 beans and not \$9.00 per bushel prices. Over 81,000 bean contracts have been bought in the past weeks and beans rallied 45 cents. Keep in mind that we now have 176,000 long bean contracts and they peaked last summer at 210,000. Getting close?

Unless something unexpectedly happens with the South American harvest or in Washington, DC, crop prices are range bound. Corn, for example, since July of 2014 has 80 percent of the time traded between \$3.30 and \$3.90. If for some reason corn breaks out to the topside over \$3.80, cheap worldwide wheat prices will then become attractive to foreign buyers. To show corn upside potential, commodity funds bought a massive 150,000 contracts in the past weeks and corn went only up a pathetic 7 cents!



▶ READY FOR 2017

BY RANDY BROESDER

Last summer we celebrated this Coop's centennial and recalled the history of not only this business but farming in the territory we serve. From humble beginnings, Farmers Coop Association has grown to meet the needs of its member owners, expanded our trade territory, and always kept customer service as our key focus.

To continue to grow and serve our patrons well, we must always look ahead. We are prepared for the 2017 growing season and ready to work with our customers in all areas – agronomy, petroleum, grain, and livestock feed. We are positioned to offer outstanding service to our existing customers with room to grow and gain new business.

Steady and thoughtful investments in equipment mean Farmers Coop Association has the resources to handle your needs. This includes agronomy custom application units with operators to cover your acres efficiently and effectively. We have back-up petroleum trucks now to ensure uninterrupted service which is essential during spring and fall. Our feed trucks are updated, larger, and more efficient.

Along with our equipment and facilities, we have the staff to make all the processes work. The environment at Farmers Coop Association is one of service, loyalty, and team work.

*Thank you for your patronage, your loyalty, and your future business. We are here to help you grow!*

▶ CHECK IT OUT

If you have not used this feature already, please check out FCA's website, [farmerdata.com](http://farmerdata.com) where you can review your past and present statements. It also shows open grain and grain settlements. Please have your FCA account number available, along with your last four digits of the social security number used on the FCA account, to sign in. Feel free to contact the Forest City office if you have any questions.

FOREST CITY

Address: 406 East K Street  
Phone: 641-585-2814 or  
800-483-6832  
Fax: 641-585-2052

LELAND

Address: 609 B Street  
Phone: 641-567-3341 or  
888-676-7439  
Fax: 641-567-3380

KIESTER

Address: 100 West Front Street  
Phone: 507-294-3697 or  
877-294-3697  
Fax: 507-294-3540  
Agronomy: 507-294-3427

WINNEBAGO

Address: 601 6th Avenue SE  
Phone: 507-893-4800  
Fax: 507-893-4305

BUFFALO CENTER

Address: 6401 Highway 9  
Phone: 641-561-2800  
Fax: 641-561-2216

## ▶ DOWN AT THE CARDTROLS



When gasohol was introduced in our area in the late 1980s research showed that it made the air we breathe 23 percent cleaner than straight gasoline. Now, newly released testing by the USDA shows that air currently is actually 43 percent cleaner than gas and could go to 60 percent with new technology by 2022! Great news.

Hope you are enjoying our new pumps in Forest City and thank you for your patience for our upgrading of our system. Winners of \$10 free fuel this month are **Holland Contracting, Dr. Gene Fjeld, and Randy Arrowsmith** from our Forest City location and from Kiester, **Terry Halverson**. Pumpin it Back 2U recipients for February are the **Forest City Come Along Club and Kiester Ambulance**.

## ▶ TIPS FOR CARDTROL USE

Last month, Farmers Coop Association upgraded the pumps at our Forest City cardtrol island to accept chipped credit and debit cards. Please be sure to follow the directions at the pump as the chip cards can only be inserted one way to be read successfully.

When you're pumping gas with us, always remember to flip the lever at the pump BEFORE you open the nozzle to fill your vehicle. This prevents the pump from thinking there is a fuel leak which slows down delivery to your vehicle.

Thank you!

## ▶ GEARING UP

Like many farmers, we as a Coop are finalizing our spring inventory needs and receiving new products for 2017. The upcoming year will find us with an expanded sales territory, new customers and a lineup of equipment to fully service our base with the latest technology. Like each of you we are excited about a new year and the possibilities it brings! We are here to serve - always been that way - always will be that way! One hundred and one years - thank you for your partnership!

## ▶ NEW WEBSITE LAUNCH

FCA launched a newly updated and revised website. If you haven't yet checked it out - please do! [www.farmersca.com](http://www.farmersca.com). You will find easy access to grain markets, news, weather, and contact information for all departments. Recently, the DTN markets were added to the homepage along with news and an improved weather app. Our goal is to provide a clean and easily accessible site for our patrons. We will continually make revisions to better serve you. If there is additional information you would like to see on our website, please call the main office or fill out the Quick Contact form on our site.

## ▶ BREAKING NEWS

A two seater airplane crashed into a cemetery late last night in Poland. Rescuers have recovered 215 bodies and expect to find more as the intensive search continues around the clock!

## ▶ FROM THE FEED DEPARTMENT

BY MITCH THORSON

Spring calving season is rapidly approaching and in the last trimester of pregnancy, cows' nutrient needs increase dramatically. Producers should monitor cows' body condition and feed accordingly. Typically, better quality roughages are fed at this time to help ensure the higher nutrient requirements are met. If lower quality roughages need to be fed, additional protein should be fed to promote better fiber digestibility. Producers could feed a pellet in a grain mix or use convenient Crystalyx tubs to supply the protein, along with vitamins and minerals needed, to produce a strong healthy calf and a cow that will breed back for next year's calf crop.



Newborn calves must get colostrum within a couple of hours to get off to a running start. In those times when the cow can't supply colostrum, or not enough, we have a top notch colostrum replacer to help the calf get a good start.

The new mixer and liquid molasses line is up and running in the cattle mill. We think this will help supply your needs in a more timely fashion and provide a better mix.

In these days of high cash rents and tight margin for grain producers, if you're interested in generating more income, we encourage you to give us a call. Livestock production is one way to spread your risk. We would be happy to meet with you and share options that might work for your situation!



## ▶ A CHANGING GUARD

BY KINGSLEY JOHNSON

We have recently made a change to our nation's leadership. Our new President has selected a new cabinet. Of interest to us will be the new Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue. He will be in charge of the USDA with a budget of close to \$155 billion for 2017. This is a department with programs providing assistance for nutrition, conservation, and farms. He will have to help guide our government on the impacts of immigration reform, trade agreements and regulations as they affect agriculture. Our last three Secretaries of Ag were from the Midwest. Although Sonny is from a smaller agricultural state, his roots are in agriculture.

Trade and regulations are another area of concern for agriculture. The Trump administration has proposed fewer regulations. This has the potential to be helpful to agriculture. Some have suggested the Waters of the US (WOTUS) and GIPSA are infringing on agriculture. The new Secretary of Ag will help outline the new GIPSA rule being proposed. With the appointment of Scott Pruitt to head the EPA, some feel WOTUS will not last or be enforced.

On area of concern is trade, particularly discussions with Mexico. President Trump's campaign pledges to rewrite NAFTA and talks of a 20 percent tax on Mexican goods caused the cancellation of a meeting between the two leaders. The US and Mexico are closely aligned in many economic areas such as cars, auto parts, food goods, and grain which flow back and forth. These actions could cause a trade war which wouldn't be good for either nation. Could we have this happen with other trading partners?

The environment and conservation will continue to be topics of discussion. Recently the Iowa Supreme Court ruled that the Des Moines Water Works could not sue three Iowa counties for monetary damages. This suit was thrown out but there is a federal suit requesting tile line be point source pollution which could require permits. Pollution and conservation will continue to be a focus. We need to tell our story of what we do to protect our resources.

## ▶ PLANTER GOODIES

Practical Farmers does a lot of testing in corn and bean production to push the limit with technology to harvest more income. Most planters are sold with solid V-type closing wheels. PF research over the years shows that by replacing just one of the two solid press wheels with a tine type will increase yields. The big punch comes in wet soils where solid wheels compact the seed to excess. Tines tend to firm but also aerate the soil.

Another successful, proven test is the seed firmer which causes the seed to gently be push into seed contact causing a more even stand producing more yields. The faster you plant, the more the seed firmers help control any bouncing of the seed drop. Returns to dollars invested according to independent farm trials says these two add-ons might require a second look.

