

KEEPING THE US SWINE HERD SAFE

Hopefully the mud bog days are behind us. This past month had to be the fastest snow melt ever experienced. Travel and feed deliveries were for sure challenged, if not impossible, for a couple weeks. We can be thankful we didn't experience what the folks in southwest Iowa and Nebraska are going through. Whole farms and towns were devastated. Our hearts go out to those that lost their homes and farms. Thousands of cattle, calves, and other livestock were lost and bins full of grain were destroyed. We are fortunate in our area as it could have been a lot worse.



BY MITCH THORSON

At a Hubbard swine seminar, the biggest buzz was about the "March Madness" in hog prices. With the speculation for China's need for a lot of pork due to African swine fever, markets have skyrocketed this past month creating opportunities for profitable pork production. The threat going forward is to keep the disease out of this country and North America.

Bill Even from the National Pork Board spoke on what they and other organizations are doing with Customs to keep this from spreading on this side of the ocean. He admitted there are big challenges working with China and other countries on prevention of it getting into our herds. People can spread it with their shoes and clothing as well as traveling from one country to another. More needs to be done immediately with biosecurity at both borders.

If African swine fever was to get into our herds in the US, pork and grain production would be devastated. Exports and movement of pork would completely stop. We rely heavily on exports of pork and the grain sector relies heavily on exports and domestic usage. The result could depress grain markets even further than what they are and maybe (probably) rival the farm depression of the 1980s. Biosecurity is top priority for not only on our farms, but also as people travel abroad.

▶ BLACK AND WHITE

With the late fall, many fields were not fall tilled and laid open for the winter. For those who have an interest in saving our precious topsoil, there's no need to look farther than any roadside ditch to see the black/white difference. It's especially noticeable in ditches next to untilled bean fields from last fall that protected the soil from wind and water erosion this winter. One driving I-35 to Des Moines this past month saw 120 miles of what fall tillage, or lack of it, can do in preserving our resources.

▶ TAXES

When those letters come from the courthouse with a return address of "Tax Assessors Office" and land in your mailbox, it can turn a good day into a bad one. Well, happy days are here again as recent Iowa letters going out are showing a devaluation in the assessment. Farmland values have been dropping for the past years and 2020 is when the dog catches the car!

Winnebago County land was valued at \$28.25/CSR2 point and that rolled back to \$20.00 reflecting the times. Average CSR2 for Winnebago County is 74. Now the state and the levy rate adjustment will be plugged in for a final dollar per acre cost to you. So far so good! Fingers crossed!!

▶ FROST!

It's the time of March Madness and the countryside of our customers, especially the roads, can identify with that. Reports of frost going down 44 inches have heaved and loosened the roadways and soils to a precarious position. Add to the fact farm truck traffic on gravel roads increases each year which means it could take months, if not years, to return to normal. Parts of Winnebago County are experiencing heavy truck traffic with the wind farm upgrades. One farmer estimated over \$20,000 of rock was hauled by the wind farms for just a mile and a half of road upkeep.

▶ SHOW US THE MONEY

We don't want to beat a dead horse, but many farmers, young and old, are feeling their ship has already sailed. Hopefully Mother Nature will be so kind to take out a new deck of cards and deal us a new hand that will work for rural America. Those cards would include good weather, tariff elimination, no swine fever, increase demand, and Washington living up to what they promised. The old adage of, "It's not what you say, but what you do" rings loud in the countryside with farm bins full of grain. We have many young farm families who have come back to farm, but current conditions will not keep them down on the farm very long.

▶ PHONE CALL

A farmer gets a phone call from a farm research company offering a substantial monetary gift for answering some questions. But before the farmer begins the survey, a series of qualifying questions has to be answered. The farmer agrees and gives them information about his personal farm and purchasing information after which the caller politely says, "Sorry, you don't qualify." Sound familiar after you just gave them your information?

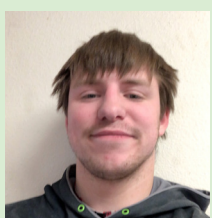
<p>FOREST CITY Address: 406 East K Street Phone: 641-585-2814 or 800-483-6832 Fax: 641-585-2052</p>	<p>LELAND Address: 609 B Street Phone: 641-567-3341 or 888-676-7439 Fax: 641-567-3380</p>	<p>KIESTER Address: 100 West Front Street Phone: 507-294-3697 or 877-294-3697 Fax: 507-294-3540 Agronomy: 507-294-3427</p>	<p>WINNEBAGO Address: 601 6th Avenue SE Phone: 507-893-4800 Fax: 507-893-4305</p>	<p>BUFFALO CENTER Address: 222 N. Main Street Phone: 641-561-2800 Fax: 641-561-2216</p>
--	--	---	--	--

▶ DOWN AT THE CARDTROLS



We apologize for the short shutdowns you experienced at the Cardtrol. Complicated electronics mixed with wild and wet weather conditions do not make good partners, as we found out. Winners this month of one of the four \$20 gift pork certificates are **Branstad Farms**, **Anthony Gray**, and **AH Hermel** in Forest City and **Tom Eilertson** in Kiester.

▶ WELCOME KALEB MOHWINKEL



A move to Forest City gave Kaleb Mohwinkel the opportunity to go to work for Farmers Coop Association.

Kaleb is a feed truck driver working out of our Leland location and he started on March 11.

Prior to joining Farmers Coop, Kaleb worked in the feed mill for CFS at one of their Minnesota locations. He appreciates Farmers Coop's friendly atmosphere and teamwork.

Kaleb was born and raised in the St James, Minnesota, area. His early years were spent on a farm before his family moved to town. "I like the farm life," Kaleb remarked. "I'd rather be doing this than sitting at a desk anywhere." When he's not working at Farmers Coop, Kaleb likes to play sports when he can and enjoys spending time with his girlfriend.

Kaleb looks forward to getting to know Farmers Coop Associations customers and providing outstanding service to livestock producers!

▶ DIRECT SHIP

We have bids to Christensen Farms direct ship from your farm. When the grain is delivered, have them put the name in Farmers Coop and bring it to our office then we will write a check out to you. No need to wait days to get your payment. Our bids are on our website – www.farmersca.com.

▶ COMPLETED

In Forest City, we have completed a new office for Mike Geitzenauer for the agronomy department. Larry John, from fuel, and Randy Main will now move into Mike's old office space. Also, in Buffalo Center, we have a new office at 222 North Main Street. It is open 9 am to noon Monday through Friday or by appointment. Stop in and see us!

▶ HEADING FOR THE FIELDS

There's an old truism about farmers. Farmers have to be optimists, or they wouldn't still be farmers.

This rings true today, more so than ever. After several years of low prices, farmers will take to the fields to plant another crop. They will use the best production practices to raise the best crop that Mother Nature will allow.

We continue to struggle with large supplies of corn and beans. Corn stocks were down 3 percent in the recent Grain Stocks report totaling 8.60 billion bushels. Soybean stocks were up 29 percent from a year ago at 2.72 billion bushels. Soybean exports are reported to be down 80 percent since September largely due to the tariffs.

The prospective planting report was released with intentions reported as of March 1, 2019. The acres could shift or be reduced by the flooding that has occurred this past month. Some estimate that 55 percent of corn acres and 60 percent of soybean acres could be under risk of major to moderate flood risk. The June Planted Acres report will show us how much, if any, weather has affected acres planted.

As you market your unsold grain, consider using our direct ship program. If you have any questions on this program, feel free to stop in and get them answered.



BY KINGSLEY JOHNSON

▶ YOUR SPRING LIST

Spring is here and I hope you all survived the winter! It was truly a doozy!

With spring upon us, we at FCA have been getting ready for a season I think will be here sooner than we expect. With that being said, we have a to do list for you to help us with.

Maps

If you haven't thought of it yet, please come in and clarify with us what your crop plans are so we can have them ready to go. I know this seems to be repetitious, but it is the easiest way for us to make sure we get things right.

Fertilizer

If you didn't spread your fall fertilizer on or haven't been in to tell us your spring intentions, please do so immediately. Unfortunately, the fertilizer market is extremely messed up right now with the flooding on the river systems on both sides of our state. As of today, there isn't a ton of phosphate to buy that will be delivered before the first week of May. We hope we have enough in house today to cover everyone's needs.

Seed

If you haven't covered all of your seed needs yet, please call one of our agronomy account managers soon. We still have a good supply of corn and beans on hand.

Chemistry

We have had good prepay on chemicals and still have some good deals on chemistry. Many of the chemical companies we work with have some great flexible plans for payments if you need to extend some time to pay for them. Just let us know your needs.

Well, this is probably a long enough list for now. We appreciate your business and look forward to working with you this coming year. If there is anything we can do for you, please don't hesitate to let us know.



BY RANDY MAIN



▶ GREAT NEWS

A new report on monarch butterflies overwintering in Mexico shows the count is the highest in 10 years. However, it states for every monarch there is this year, there were 16 of them 40 years ago. Perhaps mixing milkweed seeds in CRP seed mix is helping with their recovery in numbers!