



Between the Seeds

In This Issue:

- Data & Artificial Intelligence | 1*
- Digital Ag Update | 3*
- Risk Management Update | 7*
- HR Update | 9*
- Energy Update | 11*
- Scholarship Winners | 14*
- Grain Update | 15*
- Strategy Update | 17*

CEO UPDATE

Greetings,

A month ago, I attended the Land O'Lakes annual meeting. As part of the annual meeting, I had the opportunity to sit in on a roundtable discussion with other cooperative leaders and executive representatives from Land O'Lakes and more specifically, from Winfield United. There were a variety of relevant topics discussed, but the overarching theme was data and artificial intelligence.

Let's start with data. Now, like never before, we are seeing the impact of advanced technology and software platforms in agriculture. Both existing and emerging platforms provide data-driven insights to improve the decision-making process on the farm. By analyzing historical and real-time information, we can improve efficiency, sustainability, and productivity at the farm gate. Manufacturers, suppliers, and our regional cooperative partners will continue to have a heightened focus on this topic.

So, what are the challenges? First and foremost, the privacy and confidentiality of the data associated with your operations is crucial. Understanding who has access to your farm's data, and what their motivations are, is vitally important. Secondly, the agricultural space is extremely fragmented when it comes to data. Ag Partners

and the broader cooperative system are examples of this. We utilize our primary accounting system, or ERP, to consolidate information related to finance, human resources, supply chain, services offered and procurement.

Our ERP system helps manage inventory and expense tracking, forecasting, and producing our financial statements. Along with that system, we have a handful of other software system platforms related to our grain, agronomy, and energy divisions. Some of these systems integrate more seamlessly with our ERP than others. Unfortunately, there is no "silver bullet" for a system that provides a singular solution for our business needs. This is the reason for the new Ag Partners portal that was announced back in January. The goal is to provide a centralized point to access your information related to your business with your cooperative. It is also intended for the same purpose internally, providing employees with a more efficient and comprehensive resource to access information required for their daily tasks.

Because of the reasons I mentioned above, there have been challenges related to this new Ag Partners portal. All our various software platforms must integrate at some level with one another to abstract data into the portal. We are not alone in this space. Other cooperatives



are facing the same issues as they work towards streamlining their data and providing a better customer experience. We will continue to work through these issues to ensure you have access to reliable and accurate data for your farming operation through your relationship with Ag Partners.

I also wanted to share some thoughts about artificial intelligence or AI. It was mentioned repeatedly during the Land O'Lakes roundtable discussion that "AI won't replace people, but the people that utilize AI will". Now, I don't know how you all feel, but I have my own thoughts and concerns with AI. That being said, it is here and is already being used in production agriculture. I have seen real-life examples of producers using AI on the farm to make real-time decisions. Whether on application rates, fertility or when to make marketing decisions. Winfield United is working on an AI Agronomy Assistant tool to support member cooperatives like Ag Partners. Essentially, it will be an artificial assistant to provide support for your agronomist to answer questions and make recommendations on your farm as a resource for data and information that wouldn't be available otherwise.

So, what does all this mean? At Ag Partners, we have a responsibility to explore, research and provide you with emerging technologies, should you choose

to use them for your operations. With AI, it is a personal decision whether to utilize it on the farm or not. But again, this is here and being utilized, and will not be going away.

The spring planting season is upon us. For the most part, we have experienced a wide-open spring season, and our teams have been working hard to get products out the door and into the field. With current commodity prices, we are heading into this spring planting season with more concerns around farm income than in previous years. I would encourage you to engage with our grain, agronomy, and energy teams on where Ag Partners can assist you with your buying and marketing decisions to maximize the return on your farm.

I wish you all the best this spring planting season.

As always, please feel free to reach out directly to me with any questions or concerns.

- Wes Spohr, President & CEO



DIGITAL AG UPDATE

When it comes to the management of our soils, a few methods stand out in our geography. We have no-till, tillage, and cover cropping. In tillage, we are seeing predominantly vertical tillage with a little discing and strip tillage. There are reasons for and against doing all three of these things, which I listed below in the respective lists. However, I've been asked by some producers to look more closely at specific properties across these management practices – specifically nutrient stratification and compaction.

To test for nutrient stratification, we took soil samples from 0 to 2 inches, 2 to 4 inches, and 4 to 6 inches. Results are shown below with just the averages posted. We tried to pull multiple samples per management type to improve our accuracy. Management practices were also kept to a specific producer. The three nutrient tests we focused on were Bray P1, Potassium, and pH. As you look across the results, you can see that there was very little difference between practices. The field that was chiseled had a less dramatic change between the layers, but most producers would agree that deep tilling your field results in lost moisture and a decline in soil structure

For:



No-Till

- Improved soil structure
- Improved Available Soil Moisture
- Improved Soil Health: higher organic matter, increased organic carbon, increased microbial activity for nutrient cycling
- Decreased erosion



Tillage

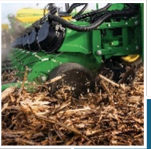
- Reduced residue equates to reduced insect pressure and reduced disease
- More consistent stand establishment
- Can reduce compaction and soil bulk density
- Warmer soils in the Spring
- Increases microbial activity in the short term thus increasing nutrient availability in the Spring



Cover Crops

- Improved soil health through an increase in soil porosity, overall microbial activity, and improved soil structure
- Weed control through allelopathy, nitrogen sequestration, or shading
- Crop diversification to break up weed, insect, and disease cycles
- Reduced soil erosion and runoff
- Improved soil moisture retention

Against:



No-Till

- Reliant on chemical control for weeds
- Increase in disease and insect pressure
- Increase in chemical resistance in weeds, insects, and disease
- Compaction issues and increased soil bulk density
- Erosion problems still occur and require tillage to fix
- Increased costs of chemicals
- Increased nutrient stratification



Tillage

- Over tillage or tillage at the wrong time can create more compaction
- Reduced soil structure
- Increased erosion and runoff
- Decrease in microbial activity and nutrient mineralization in the long term
- Decrease in available water
- Decrease in organic matter
- Cost of fuel and additional equipment



Cover Crops

- Can harbor certain pests
- Stand establishment is more difficult
- Increase in management
- Ground is cooler in the Spring
- Tie up of nutrients in the cover crop residue
- Costs of seed and establishment and possibly additional equipment
- Can create compaction and increased soil bulk density
- Increased nutrient stratification

which results in reduced yield. The main reason to deep till a field is for serious compaction issues. The field with a history of manure has a significant amount more nutrients below, but I believe this is a case where the soil's holding capacity is exceeded, and nutrients are moving down simply through diffusion. You can only fill a pitcher so full before it overflows. The strip till had inconsistent results on pH at the different depths, but overall, the nutrient values were unchanged moving from within the strip to outside the strip. My conclusion to this test is that certain tillage practices may be beneficial for compaction relief, residue control, and warming the soil, but they do not help much in terms

of nutrient stratification. Also, cover crops have advantages with weed control and soil health, but don't expect them to pull nutrients into the 2–6-inch soil depth. I also wonder if ag lime is better for extremely low soil pH's, but pell-lime is better where the pH is closer to 6. We sometimes saw that the surface pH was over 7 while the lower depths were still in the 5s. There is little research on soil stratification, but what little we found confirms our findings. One researcher also wondered if nutrient stratification is as much a problem as we think it is as our prairie soils were stratified as well with much of the residue being built up on the surface.

		No-Till Average Nutrient Levels			Chiseled Ground Nutrient Levels			Vertical Tilled Nutrient Levels		
		P1	K	pH	P1	K	pH	P1	K	pH
Avg ppm	0 to 2 inches	57	219	6.3	80	327	6.8	67	343	6.8
Avg ppm	2 to 4 inches	15	151	5.8	59	265	6.2	14	184	5.9
Avg ppm	4 to 6 inches	8	141	5.8	49	258	6.3	7	172	5.4
		P1 % Change	K % Change	pH % Change	P1 % Change	K % Change	pH % Change	P1 % Change	K % Change	pH % Change
Change from 0-2 to 2-4		-283%	-45%	-9%	-36%	-23%	-10%	-387%	-86%	-16%
Change from 0-2 to 4-6		-593%	-55%	-8%	-63%	-27%	-8%	-840%	-99%	-25%

		Cover Crop with History of Manure			Cover Crop with History of Manure and Recent Application of Manure			History Of Cover Crops		
		P1	K	pH	P1	K	pH	P1	K	pH
0 to 2 inches		135	462	7.3	117	861	5.9	69	327	6.5
2 to 4 inches		134	305	6.8	114	759	5.9	17	189	5.8
4 to 6 inches		68.5	211	6.2	119	833	6.5	8	181	5.8
		P1 % Change	K % Change	pH % Change	P1 % Change	K % Change	pH % Change	P1 % Change	K % Change	pH % Change
		-1%	-52%	-8%	-3%	-13%	0%	-307%	-73%	-11%
		-97%	-119%	-18%	2%	-3%	9%	-766%	-81%	-11%

	Corn Stalks After Strip Till - Inside Strip			Corn Stalks After Strip Till - Outside Strip			Bean Stubble Recently Strip Tilled - Inside Strip			Bean Stubble Recently Strip Tilled - Outside Strip		
	P1	K	pH	P1	K	pH	P1	K	pH	P1	K	pH
0 to 2 inches	42	310	6.7	34	274	6.9	49	300	6.2	55	297	6.1
2 to 4 inches	10	178	5.9	10	176	6.1	39	138	6.1	39	184	5.3
4 to 6 inches	6	161	5.7	6	158	5.8	23	132	5.3	26	155	5.3
	P1 % Change	K % Change	pH % Change	P1 % Change	K % Change	pH % Change	P1 % Change	K % Change	pH % Change	P1 % Change	K % Change	pH % Change
	-320%	-74%	-14%	-235%	-55%	-13%	-27%	-118%	-2%	-42%	-61%	-13%
	-600%	-93%	-18%	-509%	-74%	-19%	-114%	-126%	-17%	-112%	-91%	-14%

The next soil property we looked at was compaction. First we took a penetrometer and collected readings across management practices. We can see that tillage does reduce bulk density and compaction of the soil. It also appears that bulk density does not completely return to the original number within the first year or two as we can see from the strip till numbers and vertical till numbers from the tillage pass in 2020. It also shows that compaction from implement traffic is greater in the disced ground

compared to no-till as the soil structure has been depleted in the disced ground. It also shows that cover crops (in this case cereal rye) did little for compaction/bulk density relief. These cover crops were seeded with a drill, so there would be extra traffic on these fields. These fields have had multiple years of cover crops on them. This isn't to say that intense cover cropping wouldn't have different results, but cereal rye itself will do little in the short term for bulk density or compaction relief.

Penetrometer Reading in lbs/sq. inch	No-Till	In Tire Tracks	Disced	Soil Finisher	In Tire Tracks	V-Tilled Fall 2023	In Tire Tracks	V-Tilled Fall 2020	In Tire Tracks	Cover Crops	Tire Tracks	Brome Field
		208	244	180	190	300	138	193	175	250	220	283
Penetrometer Reading in lbs/sq. inch	Year Old Strip Till	Outside of Strip Till	In the Strip Till	Outside of Strip Till								
	198	210	50	197								

We took this a step further and looked at the data collected by MyJohnDeere from the customer with the vertical tillage. We looked at average downforce necessary to get a good stand. Downforce maps are a good indicator of where compaction might be in the field. Most customers do their vertical tillage pass after corn prior to soybeans. This helps with residue management as well as compaction relief. What we saw was that the automatic downforce required to plant the soybean seed was much less where fields had been vertical tilled. When we looked at the year after vertical tillage when the crop went back to corn, we could still see a reduction in the downforce required for planting. We could also see a general increase in downforce needed from one year to the next, showing that soils will slowly return to a heavier bulk density after vertical tillage. Our

conclusion from this was that downforce maps are a good tool to assess which fields may need tillage to erase some compaction issues. Different soil types have a direct effect on compaction as well as soil moisture conditions when equipment is going across the field. One field may not ever need tillage, while another field may need tillage every few years simply because it stays wetter and has a heavier clay that compacts more readily.

Average Downforce During Planting		
	Soy 2022	Corn 2023
V-Tilled Fall 2021	221	248
V-Tilled Fall 2019	212	288
No-Till	327	280

Average Downforce During Planting		
	Corn 2022	Soy 2023
V-Tilled Fall 2020	286	281
V-Tilled Fall 2017	264	270
No-Till	297	N/A

Average Downforce Across All Fields Vertical Tilled in the Last 8 Years		
2022	2023	% Change
240	267	115%

The last data we looked at was quality of planting after vertical tillage. When the corn crop is growing, our goal is to have it standing as straight and strong as possible to prevent lodging and down corn. To attain this, we use traits like Bt Corn and we apply fungicides and insecticides in our seed treatments and at tassel time. However, this has resulted in our residue not breaking down as fast in the field. Those same fungus and insects helped break down the plant for better or worse. Tillage is one method for breaking down that residue. Others are trying to use biologicals for residue management. In this case, we looked at how vertical tillage may help break down the residue and root balls while also preparing the soil for improved seed to soil contact. This can be shown through the planting metrics from MyJohnDeere. What we found here was an improvement in all numbers, from getting closer to the

target population, to singulation, to having a better seed spacing coefficient of variation (in this case a smaller number represents less variation in spacing which is a good thing). We even looked at corn the following year and still saw a very slight improvement in these numbers. It's difficult to determine if this resulted in higher yields or not as there are a lot of other variables to play into this, such as planting date and variety. However, we do know from K-State's research that earlier planted soybeans have the highest potential for yield. We also know that tilled soils warm faster than no-tilled soils. Just from observations, vertical tilled soils tend to have a better stand of beans when planted early. Does this mean you should go vertical till every field going to beans every year? I say no, but if you plan on using a vertical till machine to get rid of some compaction, that field would be a good candidate to plant early.

2022 Soybeans			
	Quality (Target vs Applied)	Singulation	Seed Spacing CV
Vertical Tilled*	98.8	99.7	0.15
No-Tilled	98.2	99.2	0.19
2023 Corn			
	Quality (Target vs Applied)	Singulation	Seed Spacing CV
Vertical Tilled*	98.3	98.8	0.11
No-Tilled	98.2	98.5	0.12

* Vertical tilled in November of 2021

All of this data and the multitude of variables we looked at here can be extremely overwhelming. It may even cause you to just throw your hands in the air and say, "I give up!" especially when it comes to nutrient stratification. There may be other ways of dealing with nutrient stratification that we didn't look at, or we may have overreacted to nutrient stratification and the effects it has on our yields. We can also stick to what we do know, and that is maintaining good soil fertility levels will give us our best opportunity for high yields. The 0 to 6 inch soil tests have been analyzed by many universities and the equations we use right now are the best that we have. Does that mean practices and science won't change soil fertility concepts in the future? No, but let's not give up on our soil fertility program just because we don't completely understand it.

moisture and reducing erosion. We also know that over tillage resulted in the Dust Bowl and significant amounts of erosion that led to degraded soils with reduced nutrients and organic matter. But even some of the most ardent no-tillers have found reason to till their fields. What we found is that tillage can help with compaction and planting quality. Is there one right way to manage a field? I say no.

This is where we must look at each field individually. Is there a compaction problem? Then we may want to vertical till the field. Are we hoping to plant early and manage residue? Then strip tillage may be warranted. Do we have low organic matter and poor soil structure or soil health? A cover crop is going to make sense here. Take a look at each field and try to understand what the most limiting factor is. Whatever the issue, we hope to help you understand it better and what your solutions are.

When it comes to tillage practices, we know that no-till has been critical to our geography in maintaining soil

- Ethan Noll, Digital Agriculture Director

RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

To kick things off, the Risk Management team would like to express a word of gratitude to all our current and new operations that chose us for their Crop Insurance needs in 2024. We are fortunate to have a thriving portfolio of insurance services and strive to be the best for our producers. We look forward to serving you all for many years to come. Thank you!

As I type this article in late March there is hail falling in portions of the Ag Partners territory, and unfortunately, this isn't the first hailstorm we've seen this March. I hate to say it's a sign of more to come this year, but reviewing your hail coverage options before a storm is much better than after. Whether you're a long-time buyer of hail policies or new to hail coverage it never hurts to reach out and learn more. We understand margins are thinner for operations this year, but nothing gives you the peace of mind with section-by-section coverage that a hail policy can. Plus, with a starting point around a couple bucks per acre, we will make sure it doesn't break the bank. Since hail coverage is a private product it's not a bad idea to look around at different companies for policy options. Or better yet, let the Ag Partners team do the shopping and offer you some new

choices that could put more money in your pocket this year.

Also, with planting season here, I wanted to touch on replant and prevent plant guidelines. Replant payments are calculated on a specific crop bushels x spring price. For example, corn is 8 bushel x \$4.66 = \$37.28/ac replant payment. There are certain dates and rules to follow but these payments are nothing to shake a stick at. Also, prevent plant normally pays 55% of your revenue guarantee per acre on corn and 60% of your revenue guarantee per acre on soybeans. Hopefully, Mother Nature doesn't throw us a curve ball but if you have questions about replant and prevent plant rules, please reach out to Jim Ward or Darcy Pralle ahead of time. Sadly the, "do it now and beg for forgiveness later" plan isn't listed in the Federal Government's rule book, so please reach out when you first notice an issue. We are happy to guide you through any scenarios or questions your operation runs into this Spring.

Wishing you a safe planting season, and thanks again to all our amazing producers! Please reach out when you first notice an issue. We are happy to guide you through any scenarios or questions your operation runs



into this Spring.

Wishing you a safe planting season and thanks again to all our amazing producers!

- Darcy Pralle, Crop Insurance Specialist

Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) programs offer significant benefits to farmers and ranchers, serving as a crucial risk management tool in the volatile agricultural sector. By providing subsidized insurance coverage against unexpected declines in livestock prices, LRP shields producers from financial losses stemming from market fluctuations. This safeguard allows agricultural operations to mitigate uncertainties inherent in livestock production, thereby promoting stability and sustainability within the industry. Currently, LRP is setting a July and August feeder cattle price at over \$260 and Fat cattle over \$180. If you would like an opportunity to lock in these prices please call Darcy Pralle (785)268-0634 or Jim Ward (785)741-1652 for more information.

- Jim Ward, Crop Insurance & CFA Specialist



HR Update

Ag Partners is taking a proactive step in addressing rural labor challenges by launching an apprenticeship program through the Kansas Farm Bureau's (KFB) Rural Kansas Apprenticeship Program (RKAP). This initiative aims to tap into local talent pools, particularly targeting graduating high school seniors within our geographical area who may not have plans for further education after high school. For these individuals, the apprenticeship offers a valuable opportunity to earn while learning a trade with a local employer right in their community.

The apprenticeship program offers positions for a custom applicator and CDL driver, providing a pathway for individuals to develop essential skills while being employed by Ag Partners. Through mentorship, training, and compensation, apprentices will embark on a journey to acquire valuable skills in a high-demand agricultural career path. This not only benefits the individuals but also serves Ag Partners' future employment needs. The program is

tailored to provide training and technical instruction for specific operations positions within Ag Partners.

KFB plays a role as the intermediary sponsor, working closely with Ag Partners and the Kansas Office of Registered Apprenticeship to administer these opportunities. The collaboration with KFB also signifies a mutual commitment to supporting agriculture and rural communities in Kansas.

In summary, Ag Partners' apprenticeship program, in collaboration with RKAP and Kansas Farm Bureau, presents a promising avenue for recruiting new talent from within our local communities. By offering opportunities for hands-on learning and skill development, the program not only meets the needs of Ag Partners but also provides valuable career pathways for individuals seeking to contribute to the agricultural sector in rural Kansas.

- Lacey Dalinghaus, SVP Human Resources



The AgCEPTIONAL award program operates based on anonymous nominations from coworkers that are then reviewed by an Employee Advisory Group. Nominations are accepted and recognized quarterly throughout the year, and each batch of winners will go into a drawing to be chosen as the AgCEPTIONAL Employee of the Year at the employee Christmas party in December. The goal of the award is to recognize employees who have gone out of their way and done something extraordinary that deserves to be recognized. The first quarter winners are:



Shannon Fischer
Inventory Control Specialist
Hiawatha, KS



Kevin Bergman
Regional Sales Director
Region 2

NEW EMPLOYEES

Stephen Lane Ethan Stewart

Custom Applicator,
Belvue, KS

Operations Technician,
Axtell, KS

Caitlyn Chandler

Agronomy Account Manager,
Region 2



Lisa Johnson

Customer Care Specialist,
Hiawatha, KS

Lisa was named Ag Partners 2023 AgCEPTIONAL Employee of the Year. Lisa Johnson is a Customer Care Specialist located at our Hiawatha Office. Lisa has served several roles in her 37 years with Ag Partners Cooperative.

Lisa was nominated by her supervisor at the time, Kristina Sudbeck, and here are a few points from her nomination: "Lisa puts in enormous effort to ensure that mistakes are addressed before the customer sees them, and if it does get to the customer, she goes the extra mile to get the issue resolved quickly. As a member of the customer care team, Lisa has been very willing to answer questions for new employees and be a resource for the team. Whenever help is needed, Lisa is always there to help. She is never afraid to add tasks to her already full plate, and has done so with an AgCEPTIONAL attitude, teamwork, and grace." Please help in Congratulating Lisa on an AgCEPTIONAL job well done!

NOW HIRING

Visit agpartnerscoop.com/careers for complete job descriptions and an application.

BENEFITS INCLUDE

Health Insurance
Defined Benefit Retirement Plan
Matching 401(k)
Paid Time Off
Paid Holidays
Life Insurance
Yearly Uniform Allowance

SVP HR

Lacey Dalinghaus

Email: laceyd@agpartnerscoop.com
Office Phone: (785) 336-6153
Cell Phone: (785) 294-0397



APPLY
HERE

ENERGY UPDATE

It has been somewhat of a pleasant surprise that February and March have been very mild, allowing a lot of field work to happen. However, in the energy world, we are not particularly fond of the warmer weather and wish we had some good propane weather. (HAHA!) It is true, though, that a good portion of our energy revenue comes from our propane sales. We have been starting to make our last push through the propane routes, trying to get as many contracted gallons out as we can before we say goodbye to this propane season. We will once again cancel any remaining contracts after May 31st, and issue refunds on unused gallons.

Propane contracts for this next heating season will not go out until around the first part of July. We tend to receive many calls leading up to July from customers wanting to know our price and when we will have contracts out. At this time, it is just too early to have any idea of what propane prices will look like for next season. However, if I had to guess, I don't think it will be much different than what we saw this year.

This was our first propane season using our new routing software, and our team, including our drivers, is still learning the intricacies and what this program allows us to do. With this system, we have been able to re-evaluate a lot of our propane business and processes. Please be on the lookout for information on these changes when we send out our contracts for next year.

On the refined fuel side, we saw some decent opportunities in December and January to lock in gallons for the year, and many took advantage. Typically, we see the prime time for fuel contracting during wintertime, December through February, and this year seems to have the same pattern. Fuel markets have looked like they want to break out and go one way or the other but seem to stall very quickly. I foresee some increased prices from now through mid-summer, then when the elections start to heat up, we likely see a downward trend.

Many of you probably already know that Gene Lierz retired on March 1st after over 40 years with Nemaha County Coop and Ag Partners Coop. Congratulations to Gene on his well-deserved retirement!

We will present our first quarter fuel donations for 2024

later in April. For the first two quarters of the year, donations will be distributed as follows: Seneca & Bern Fuel Pumps -> Northeast Kansas Arts Foundation, Corning Fuel Pumps -> Centralia Community Library, Axtell Fuel Pumps -> Axtell Booster Club, Powhattan, Robinson, Willis & Denton Fuel Pumps -> Horton High School FFA. We took a little bit of a different approach this year and had an application process allowing anyone to nominate a worthy club, organization or charitable group for a chance to be a recipient. We really appreciate our patrons for their support of this program.

We once again offered the Cenex Gift Cards for Gallons promotion from November through February. We have tabulated those transactions and are now working to get those gallons sent to Cenex to receive those gift cards. I know many people ask when they will get their gift cards, so please know that it takes a little time to receive them and then get them distributed to all of you.

Next, I'd like to give a little update on our Joplin location. For the last five months, we have been delivering refined fuel off of our own bulk truck. We have 2-3 terminals in that area where we can pull from at any given time. There are two Certified Energy Specialist (CES) salesmen on staff who are hitting the ground running and are bringing on a good customer base. On top of all of that, we have positioned our warehouse as a "mini-CLT" like what we operate out of Sabetha. We are very close to having assets in place to deliver lubricants, DEF, antifreeze and other energy products to a 2.5-hour radius out of Joplin. Our staff at Joplin have done a wonderful job of putting together our warehouse and office, and we are very excited about our future growth.

Over the last few years, the energy department has done a pretty decent job of being successful. We have seen tremendous growth over the last five years in every product line, and with that growth, we have experienced growing pains with assets and labor. We have been working



FUEL YOUR COMMUNITY

2024 Quarter 1 Totals

- Seneca & Bern Fuel Pumps - Northeast Kansas Arts Foundation \$512.01
- Corning Fuel Pumps - Centralia Library \$228.83
- Axtell Fuel Pumps - Axtell Booster Club \$232.01
- Denton, Powhattan, Willis & Robinson Fuel Pumps - Horton FFA \$194.30

Ag Partners is proud to donate a portion of all sales at our fuel pump locations to area organizations.

very strategically to get assets in place that help us efficiently and effectively deliver energy products to our customers, which is a task that I feel we are very close to accomplishing. We will continue to look at locations to help us deliver products, assets to get them to the end user, and ways to become creative with our labor issues.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to any of our team, from me, the ladies in the office, or our CES crew for questions on contracting, available programs, or any issues you are facing that we can help find solutions for. We greatly appreciate your business and look forward to serving you!

- Eric Osterhaus, VP Energy





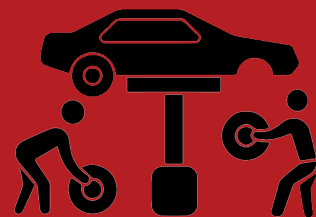
OIL CHANGE



SCAN HERE



TIRE CHANGE



ONLINE SCHEDULING TO SCHEDULE SERVICE:

- On your phone, use your camera to scan the QR code to the left OR visit www.agpartnerscoop.com/mr-tire/schedule-service and complete the online form.
- Find the form linked on the Mr. Tire page of our website.
- Call Mr. Tire at 785-336-2159



Appointments must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



Clarissa Jamvold

Horton High School
Missouri State University
Major: Accounting



Will Steinlage

Centralia High School
Kansas State University
Major: Mechanical Engineering



Hannah Albers

Doniphan West High School
Kansas State University
Major: Agriculture Comm & Journalism



Brayden Fulton

Wamego High School
Kansas State University
Major: Agribusiness Minor: Agronomy



Ian Wenger

Hiawatha High School
North Central Technical College
Major: Agriculture Technician

CONGRATULATIONS!

Ag Partners is pleased to announce the five recipients of the 2023-2024 Ag Partners Scholarship Program. Each recipient will receive \$1,000 to assist in furthering their education after high school in an agricultural-related field.

Thank you to all the students who applied for our scholarship program this year. We received numerous applications and can see the determination and passion for the ag industry in our youth. Students of Ag Partners member-owners and Ag Partners employees were eligible to apply and submitted an essay describing how they saw cooperatives impacting the next generation of the agriculture industry.

Ag Partners hopes this program will help the youth in our area pursue their future goals.



GRAIN UPDATE

Greetings from the Grain Department: Wishing You a Safe and Prosperous Planting Season!

As we gear up for another planting season, we want to extend our warmest wishes to each of you for a safe and efficient time ahead. From all of us in the grain department, we're rooting for your success!

In February, the grain team had the pleasure of hosting a series of grain marketing meetings. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our customers who took the time out of their busy schedules to join us. The discussions that we had were insightful, and we're eager to host more of these meetings in the future. One of the topics discussed was the adjustment of our open storage rates that went into effect last fall. Looking ahead, we anticipate continued adjustments in open storage rates in the years to come. However, it's worth noting that our DP (Deferred Pricing) rates will be increasing to 5 cents per bushel this fall.

As we navigate the current market landscape, it's evident that grains have entered a period of subdued volatility. However,

we do anticipate fluctuations in prices throughout the planting and growing season, driven by weather-related concerns, as is typical during this time of year. The uncertainty lies in the timing and magnitude of these price movements. To take the fullest advantage of price fluctuations I think utilizing target offers is the way to go. We hesitate to recommend these given the habits we have gotten into during the last few years (extreme price movements in the upward direction). We always like a target offer, but we do think you have to be cognitive of the reality of the potential volatility. To put it simply, keep target offers realistic. As a reminder, target offers can always be taken out or adjusted anytime before the offer fills. Once it is filled, it is a binding contract.

We are currently going through a technology transformation. We do not currently have a way for farmers to enter their own target offers, so you do have to speak with an originator or call your local office. We hope to have an offer management system up and running in the next couple of months to enable our producers to manage their own offers if that is something they would like.

Despite facing lower prices compared to the past three years, it's essential to consider locking in prices for new crop delivery. Historical trends coupled with reduced crop



inputs still present favorable pricing opportunities. It's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day price movement, but it's crucial to maintain focus on the bigger picture. (see price charts pictured below)

Reflecting on past decisions, many farmers have expressed the sentiment that selling off the combine might have been a better choice than storing grain, especially given this year's market conditions. It's essential to remind ourselves that every decision is made with the available information at hand. It is so important to remind ourselves of that when prices have traded off of the highs like they have. All any of us are ever doing is making what we think is the next right decision with all the information that we have at hand.

At Ag Partners, we strive to stay informed about market dynamics and provide timely insights to aid our producers in making the best decision for their operations. While market unpredictability is inevitable, we're committed to assisting you in navigating through these fluctuations. It's imperative to approach grain marketing as a business decision and try to mitigate emotional influences on marketing decisions as much as possible.

Understanding your break-even points is key to making informed marketing decisions. Despite the misconception

surrounding break-evens, they serve as invaluable tools for identifying areas of profitability within your operation. Armed with this knowledge, we can tailor a customized marketing plan to suit your unique circumstances.

Looking ahead, we believe that proactive grain marketing will be increasingly rewarded in the coming years. By staying ahead of the curve and leveraging personalized strategies, we're confident in your ability to maximize returns on your hard work.

Should you ever have questions on market-related matters, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're here to support you every step of the way.

Here's to a successful planting season ahead!

- Haley Steinlage, Grain Merchandiser



STRATEGY UPDATE

In the world of agriculture, while the turn of the seasons and the rhythm of the farm remain much the same, we see a shift in the horizon. You, our owners, are at the heart of this change, inspiring us at Ag Partners to evolve and innovate. It's clear that to truly serve you, we must meet you exactly where you are. This propelled us to develop segmentation models, adopt a CRM tool, and continue to expand our Globally Responsible Production program. We're continually evaluating our offering and working to ensure that it's tailored to align with your unique needs and ambitions. As you grow and adapt, so do we, ensuring that our partnership is as fruitful as the land you farm.

Let's start with segmentation models and how they impact you. Your different farms have different needs. Some of you ask that we're prepared to offer agronomic expertise, application services, supply management, and more. Others of you just want us to give you the cheapest price possible. With that in mind, we put effort into analyzing how our offerings line up, and what if anything we needed to consider in making changes.

Here's what we found. We were laser-focused on providing a full-service experience and that hasn't always resulted in us being the cheapest option. We've focused on creating the best return on investment for you with products that outperform their peers and responsive service focused on helping you to maximize your production. Simply put, we focus on exceptional service at a fair price that provides you with the resources needed to maximize your bottom line. But... there is a segment of you that doesn't need the agronomic expertise, agronomic services, or supply management. With that in mind, we created multiple segment offerings to meet you where you are, and I'd like to take a minute to tell you what that looks like.

Let me start with what we won't and can't do. We won't start carrying questionable products out of China or other countries with questionable regulations. We live in these communities and have decided that we'd rather hold our heads up high rather than match the practices of some of our competitors.

We can't offer agronomic expertise and on-demand delivery for a cash-and-carry price. Our talented team, technology, and operations cost money, so to ensure the lowest price possible they have to focus those resources

on the customers that value it.

Now let me talk about what we can do. We can and want to serve you in the way you want. Have a conversation with your account manager about your individual situation. A strong cooperative has and will continue to be the lynchpin of the community with employees that contribute to schools, churches, and more. Ensuring we are the ag retailer of choice that serves your business in the right way is our daily mission to ensure that continues for years to come.

Now on to our CRM program. A CRM is a customer relationship management tool. Our entire sales team is now entering records of their interactions with you. Why is this important to you? Now, if your account manager is on vacation or sick and you need to know what agronomic plan you agreed on you won't have to wait. With the CRM tool, another teammate can look up that information and provide it to you immediately. Another situation is if you called our customer care team and made some changes to a bill. Now, the account manager, grain originator, or Certified Energy Specialist can see those changes and ensure that there aren't any surprises. Entering these notes is a change and it takes time and effort, but our team is embracing it to serve you, our customers, because we believe your convenience is more important than ours.

Finally, by the time you are reading this, our Globally Responsible Production (GRP) team will have announced our second grain premium program, and there will be more to come. Additionally, we're facilitating access to trials and technology to customers who wouldn't have access without this program. Maybe the grain premium doesn't fit your operation; we can also facilitate access to carbon sequestration programs, even programs for those of you who've been no-tilling for years. We're incredibly thankful the GRP program has exploded, and that momentum has made us a favorite partner of outside companies. We completely understand that \$0.15 per bushel as a bonus didn't move the needle for many of you when corn was \$6, but as the cooperative focused on making sure the right opportunity is available for you when you're ready for it, we stepped outside of the box and started early. With corn (unfortunately) much lower, these types of programs are a big deal, and we are prepared to ensure you have market access to capitalize on them. We've done this

while deciding to ensure that you don't have to pay for the technology and access at a time when \$500 per year enrollment plus a portion of your premium is the norm from competitors.

In conclusion, we're thankful that you continue to choose Ag Partners and we promise to continue driving forward to enable your business to operate with the resources and access needed to succeed.

- **Jed Miller, Chief Strategy Officer**



Between the Seeds

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