

Through the Agriculture in the Classroom program, K-12 students learn about our food and fiber system and the role ag plays in our economy and society.

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# CONNECTIONS

*A publication dedicated to informing and connecting members.*



## Key Perspectives

Establishing a sound strategy before we go into the field

By Boyd Brodie, General Manager,  
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**ACCORDING TO PHIL**, spring is coming! As we emerge from winter, it's a good time to reflect and prepare for challenges and opportunities in the year ahead. One primary challenge is the markets. The current market

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## Ag in the Classroom Educates the Next Generation

By Sara Clausen, Director of Communications, [Sara.Clausen@keycoop.com](mailto:Sara.Clausen@keycoop.com)



**AGRICULTURE IS NOT JUST A PART OF OUR STATE**—Iowa IS agriculture! As producers who are also member-owners of Key Cooperative, it's hard for us to imagine that the level of ag knowledge has decreased. But fewer kids are being born and raised on row crop or livestock farms today, and the number of jobs supported by the ag industry is also much smaller than in the past.

For this reason, it's absolutely critical to build awareness and educate the youth in our schools about the ag industry. They must carry the torch for the future of our state, country and, quite honestly, mankind. Too much of a heavy lift? Not if we rely on resources from today's leaders in agriculture!

Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) may be just the answer. Administered by the Iowa Ag Literacy Foundation (and an affiliate member of the National Agriculture in the Classroom organization), the mission of AITC is to help students in grades K-12 acquire the knowledge they need to become

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# New Crop May Be the Greater Concern

By Zack Gardner, Grain Marketing & Origination Specialist, [Zack.Gardner@keycoop.com](mailto:Zack.Gardner@keycoop.com)

**IT SEEMS AS IF THE MARKET** just keeps grinding lower every day. In the absence of any news, it also seems like the market leans red. Even if we get some positive news, we get one solid green day followed by two or three in the red. The biggest reason for this is how bearish the world's fundamentals are on paper. "On paper," you say? Barring a black swan event, basically our only bull story is a drought scare, and it's hard to trade a drought scare in the middle of winter when we don't have a crop in the ground yet.

So, let's review the bearish fundamentals that the market is continuously grinding lower on:

- The big January 12 USDA report raised both corn and soy production as well as stocks in the U.S.
- Argentina has recovered from last year's drought and is on track to double last year's production.

- Brazil's crop estimates slowly get lowered each month, but as a whole, South American production will still be a record.
- As for new crop in the U.S., the Funds traders are siding with our geneticists and anticipate we will produce yet another crop in drought conditions.

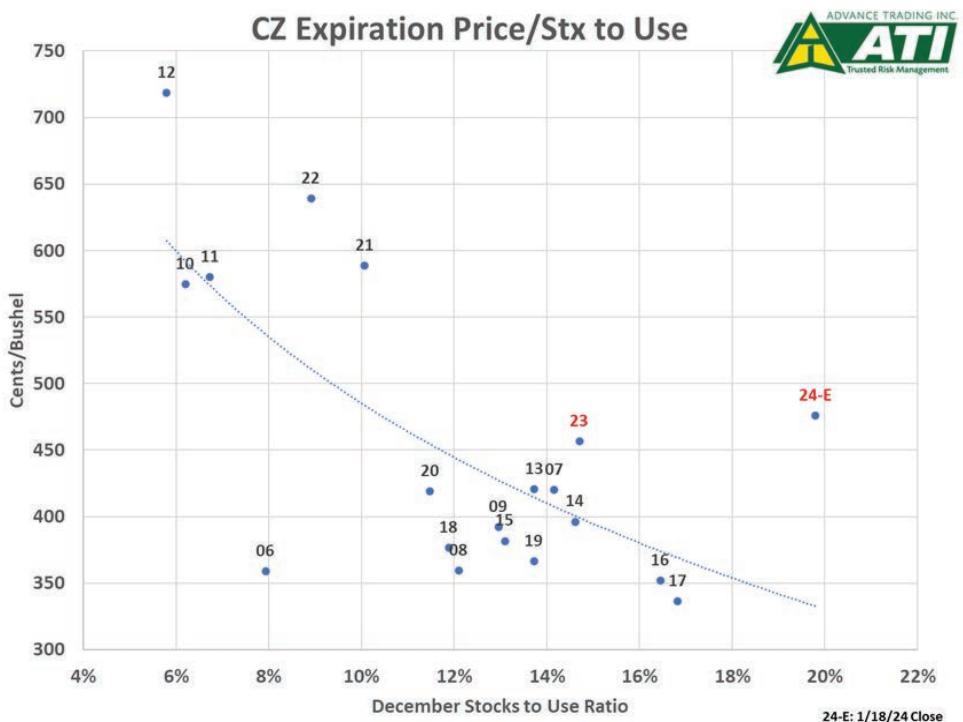
Overall, it seems like the solution to high prices is high prices. The world is finally producing enough crop to satisfy demand. Now that we are well into a bear market, the question becomes this: Where are prices going? For that, I will lean on this chart that compares stocks-to-use (basically excess supply) to traditional price levels.

The red 23 is the crop we just harvested. The red 24 is next year's crop. According to this chart, our current crop is priced relatively accurately given our current market fundamentals. This might explain why it seems like futures

have stalled out for the time being in the \$4.40s. My big takeaway from this chart, however, is new crop. There is a huge price disparity between December 2024 futures and where it should be trading according to its fundamentals. Using a generic corn acreage number of 92.50 million with a yield of 178 bushels per acre, December 2024 corn will have an approximate 19 percent stocks-to-use ratio. This basically means a fifth of the corn we produce next year won't be consumed! These fundamentals tell us we will probably see corn around \$3.75 come harvest.

If the fundamentals were so accurate, why aren't we trading there already? Iowa must first catch up on a lot of moisture. Also, there's a big disparity between the USDA and most private analysts' estimates for the *safrinha* corn crop in Brazil (the USDA is approximately 10 MMT higher than most other analysts). Currently, the approximate \$1.00 premium in December 2024 corn is probably factoring some of those stories in.

So, what are we going to do about it? The fundamentals tell us to aggressively forward market next year's crop, but the potential drought in our backyard says we might not have a crop. There are several marketing tools out there that let us forward market our grain. They let us set a price floor in case the fundamentals turn out to be right, while still allowing for upside potential in case we do see a weather rally. Give the Key Cooperative Grain team a call if you'd like to talk through some of these strategies. We are here to talk about all things grain and custom tailor strategies for your operation!



## Ag in the Classroom

*continued from page 1*

agriculturally literate. The program's objective is to encourage educators to teach about our food and fiber system and the role of agriculture in our economy and society.

As Outreach Coordinator for the Jasper County Farm Bureau Federation, Trish Hafkey is very familiar with agriculture. She has turned her lifelong passion into a profession of leading our next generation, in part through AITC. "I serve as an active presence and resource for Jasper County Ag in the Classroom, both in-person and online," said Trish. "I have coordinated in-person field trips for hundreds of students, organized and led many hands-on activities in classes and facilitated virtual field trips connecting students with interesting people and places throughout the country."

Trish and other county Farm Bureau coordinators offer lessons that align with Common Core standards for maximum educational benefit, using curriculum generated by National Agriculture in the Classroom and the Iowa Agriculture Literacy Foundation. The curriculum weaves in creative lessons, hands-on projects and programs that

integrate technology so students can learn where our food comes from, why conservation is important and how technology impacts agriculture in our state.

"It's important to reduce the barriers that educators have in using agriculture as the vehicle to teach," said Trish. "Through the support of Jasper County Farm Bureau and the Iowa Agriculture Literacy Foundation, we can offer free resources to educators, homeschool families and educational co-ops, and we can also be a resource for community organizations."

The efforts of AITC align perfectly with celebrating National Ag Day on March 19. As member-owners and customers of our cooperative, the most effective role you can play in our industry is to spread the word about ag literacy. Mention the resources discussed here with educators in your school districts or contact your county Farm Bureau!

To get in touch with Trish Hafkey, call 641-792-6253 (extension 105) or email [Trish.Hafkey@ifbf.org](mailto:Trish.Hafkey@ifbf.org). ■

Sources: [www.iowaagliteracy.org](http://www.iowaagliteracy.org) / [www.jaspercountyfb.com](http://www.jaspercountyfb.com)



Schools that participate in Agriculture in the Classroom have opportunities to send students on field trips where they learn firsthand about things like raising livestock.



**2024 Spring Lubricant Sale  
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**[www.keycoop.com](http://www.keycoop.com)**

# It's Showtime!

By Joel Edge, Purina® Sales Specialist, jnedge@landolakes.com

**FAIR SEASON IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER**, which means it's time to get your animals on the right show feed to ensure successful projects. Turn to our thorough line of Purina Honor® Show products, which contain the necessary ingredients to maximize daily gain and added benefits to cure many "evils."

## ALL SPECIES

ALLEVIATE® is a supplement we recommend for all species. It is a unique product that helps regulate the pH in your animal's digestive tract and helps keep animals on feed and avid roller coaster intakes. Supporting feed intakes is crucial with show animals, and every day is important!

## SHOW PIGS

We recommend using Honor Show 519 for starting your show pigs. 519 is a pelleted feed that is 20 percent protein to accentuate growth and 6.5 percent fat to get pigs going. 519 includes Dena-gard to reduce scours and is recommended to be used on new pigs until 25 pounds, when they can advance to Honor Show 719.

## SHOW LAMBS

We have some unique ingredients in our show lamb starters, including PuriFerm™ to help with fiber digestibility and Lambitine™ to help with the digestive tract. All our show lamb products contain ammonium chloride, Zinpro®, Diamond V yeast and PuriFerm. These ingredients are unique to ensure gut health, intakes and overall performance.

Honor Show Lamb Creep Pellet is a great option to ensure proper growth level, with 20 percent protein and 5 percent fat. Young show lambs and goats love this creep feed! If you prefer a texturized creep/starter feed, Honor Show Flex Lamb is slightly lower in protein and fat. Flex Lamb is another proven creep feed with Deccox®, which helps keep lambs fuller and reduce scours.

## WHEN STARTING ON FEED WE RECOMMEND:

**PIGS:** Feeding 8-10 oz./day for 7-10 days

**SHEEP & GOATS:** Feeding 6-8 oz./day for 7-10 days

**CALVES:** Feeding 24 oz./day for 7-10 days

## SHOW CATTLE

Feeding consistency is crucial with show calves. Other key management tips include providing clean and fresh water, grass hay and Stress Care Tubs. Many customers utilize Precon® Complete for the first one to two weeks when starting new calves (at least part of the ration).

All Purina Honor Show cattle products contain Amaferm®, Tasco®, Availa® 4 mineral packages and Diamond V to ensure consistent intakes and performance development. Purina offers two main complete feeds for young cattle: Full Range™ and Fitter's Edge®. Full Range is a "do-it-all" feed that promotes bloom and fill. It works great on market steers and heifers, including breeding heifers that need more energy. Fitter's Edge is a higher-protein, high-fiber product with moderate energy. It works great for breeding heifers, especially those that are moderately framed. ●

Contact any member of the Key Lifestyle Feeds Sales team to get your animals ready for the show. Good luck with your projects!

Ceara Smothers

641-260-6179

Kelcie Carpenter

515-232-6515

Brooke Gifford

641-888-0818



**SHEEP & GOAT PROMOTION**  
MARCH 1 - APRIL 30, 2024

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### Ceara Smothers

Lifestyle Feeds Sales Specialist  
Jasper, Mahaska & Poweshiek Counties | 641-260-6179

### Kelcie Carpenter

Key Cooperative, Gilbert Feed Sales  
Boone, Polk & Story Counties | 515-232-6515

### Brooke Gifford

Lifestyle Feeds Sales Specialist  
Marshall & Tama Counties | 641-888-0818

### Joel Edge

Purina Sales Specialist  
319-331-3667



# Diesel Exhaust Fluid

## Unloved but necessary in your operation

By Scott Richardson, Energy Division Manager, [Scott.Richardson@keycoop.com](mailto:Scott.Richardson@keycoop.com)

**WAY BACK IN 2010**, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) mandated the use of selective catalytic reduction (SCR) in diesel engines. The thing that makes SCR work its magic is a consumable fluid called diesel exhaust fluid (DEF), which owners of diesel vehicles must add to their vehicles. No one likes paying more money for something inconvenient, but the reality of DEF and SCR turned out to not be that bad once engine manufacturers got their heads around using it and making the engines still reliable.

In an SCR-equipped vehicle, the exhaust gas from the engine is routed first through a particulate filter to catch all the soot and ash generated from burning what is a relatively impure fuel. From the particulate filter, the exhaust gas travels past a nozzle that sprays DEF into the stream of gases. (DEF is made from deionized water and a very pure form of urea. This is a refined form of the compound and is mostly used in the agricultural industry as a component of fertilizer.) The hot exhaust gas and DEF then enter the catalytic converter, where the urea from the DEF and the exhaust gas react with a variety of metallic compounds to convert nitrogen dioxide and monoxide into nitrogen and water. Nitrogen is the primary component of the air we breathe, and water is, well, water.

The world isn't going to abandon diesel anytime soon. We depend on diesel-powered vehicles to move our goods and ourselves around the world, be they trucks, trains, tractors or boats. The SCR technology and the advent of

more cost-effective biofuels mean that until we're ready to abandon internal combustion entirely, we'll keep things relatively clean, which is important since sustainability and good stewardship of the land are paramount in our world of agriculture.

Key Cooperative strives to meet the needs of our producers and consumers for DEF products by keeping variations of all sizes and equipment on hand. We have DEF in bulk storage for customers to pick up at our Roland and Sully locations. Better yet, we can now deliver DEF in bulk to your site's storage tanks with our delivery trailer. If you're not into bulk storage yet, we have totes of DEF in 330- and 140-gallon sizes for pickup or delivery, as well as 55-gallon drums. For the customer on the go, we also carry 2.5-gallon jugs of DEF at all our Key locations.

Our Energy Service Department has trained technicians and an assortment of equipment, including bulk storage, DEF pumps, hoses and nozzles to help you no matter the size of setup your operation needs. We know that some producers still don't have DEF in their operations, while some producers have DEF in all their equipment and trucks. We're here to help with any need or size of operation. **Get in touch with our Energy Sales Specialists listed below.** ■

**Chris Nady**

515-290-0009

**Rick Kucera**

641-780-1624

**Bob Rabey**

641-521-6318



reflects the reality that our hard work and dedication don't always directly translate into the financial returns we desire. To be prepared for that, we need to establish a sound strategy before we head into the field. The first part of that strategy is setting up or updating our marketing plans; the second part is focusing on what we do best: production.

Thankfully, commodity prices will continue to ebb and flow, influenced by Funds trading, energy markets, global economies, weather patterns and geopolitical shifts. We must take advantage of that market volatility and any opportunities it provides. To accomplish that, make sure you're establishing or updating your marketing plan with the Key Origination team. You can trust Zack, Greg, Linda and the rest of the Key Grain team to develop a plan and keep it updated as the market changes.

As noted, the other part of a sound strategy amidst these market uncertainties is focusing on production. Be deliberate in updating your cropping plans with your

Key Agronomist and our CENTROL team. We need to be timely, accurate and efficient when conditions are right to make sure we get a great start and are well-positioned to address the opportunities this coming season provides. Conditions can change rapidly, and we have to be prepared to adapt successfully.

In this month's newsletter, we'd also like to shine a spotlight on one of our members, Trish Hafkey, and two remarkable organizations that champion agricultural literacy and education: the Iowa Agriculture Literacy Foundation (IALF) and the Iowa Farm Bureau. As members of Key Cooperative, you play a crucial role in supporting these initiatives. By celebrating Iowa's agricultural heritage, we sow the seeds of curiosity, understanding and appreciation in the hearts of our youth. Let's continue to nurture this partnership, ensuring that every student knows the story behind the food on their plate and the hardworking farmers who make it possible. ●

## Key Cooperative Community Scholarship Deadline Approaching!

Applications are due  
**MARCH 25, 2024**

**Calling all high school students who are graduating this May!** Key Cooperative will award twelve \$1,000 non-renewable scholarships this spring. To read the scholarship criteria or download the application, visit [www.keycoop.com](http://www.keycoop.com) or contact your local Key Cooperative office.

Applicants' major course of study should be in an agricultural or ag business field. Other acceptable majors include animal science, communications, information systems, accounting and carpentry or masonry construction. Students must have a parent or guardian who is a Class A or Class B member of Key Cooperative in good standing.

## INTRODUCING OUR NEW ONLINE PAYMENT PORTAL!

**KEY IS PLEASED TO INTRODUCE CUSTOMERS TO OUR NEW ONLINE PAYMENT PORTAL.** We know you like options, so in addition to payment by check, you're now able to pay your monthly statement by credit/debit card\* or bank withdrawal by way of this portal. You can also set up autopay and get notifications of when your bill is due.

This process offers not only convenience but the added level of security and data privacy that is necessary in today's environment. The portal is mobile friendly, so check out the QR code and get enrolled today. For desktop computers, visit our website and select MY ACCOUNT in the top right.

The payment portal is separate from MY ACCOUNT and will not feature grain information or copies of statements. Any previous login credentials for MY ACCOUNT

will not work for the payment portal. If this is your first time using the payment portal, you will need to create a new login.

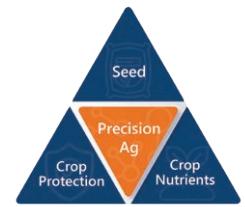


\*A 3 percent convenience fee will be added to any credit card charge.



# Tax Credit Offers New Opportunities

By Landon Van Dyke, Conservation Agronomist, Landon.VanDyke@keycoop.com



## THE WAIT IS

**FINALLY OVER!** Your reward for conservation practices by way of a grain premium is here. A new tax credit (45Z) allows ethanol plants to offer a premium to farmers for low carbon intensity (CI) grain. This program includes any grain sold starting January 1, 2025, and goes for three years. This means the crop we're planting in just a couple of months will be eligible, so now is the time to begin preparations.

To qualify, the CI of your grain must be lower than the threshold (which is about 29 for most counties). While we don't know for certain, it's likely this will be on a field-by-field basis. This standard and other aspects are still to be determined by further guidance from federal agencies. The premium is also being worked out, but it is anticipated to be somewhere in the range of

\$0.01–\$0.06/bushel/point of reduced CI. Using the middle point and a CI score of 15, the premium would be \$0.49/bushel. This falls in line with one recent study estimating an average premium of \$0.40–\$0.50/bushel.

## DETERMINING YOUR CI SCORE

To determine your CI score, you will go through a verification process that records and documents emissions attributed to your grain production. The best way to prepare for this process is to get involved in the Truterra® program (which Key Cooperative can help you with). This program will get you ready for the information you are required to report. The main factors in a CI score include:

- Tillage passes and depth
- Cover crop usage
- Fertilizer products and amounts

Fewer trips across the field and reduced soil disturbance mean fewer emissions and a lower score. Planting a cover crop also lowers your score because that growing plant is taking CO<sub>2</sub> from the air and putting it in the soil when the ground would normally be bare. A lesser-known way to reduce your score is by achieving higher yields (or more bushels to spread the carbon footprint over). That's the same goal we've always had, which means carbon sequestering does not have to go against your existing goals!

While some of the details are still being ironed out, we understand the framework and what practices lead to a lower score, so we're able to help you start right away. Call me at 641-780-9885 to get enrolled in the Truterra program, so we can begin the documentation steps and make sure you're ready. ■

## New Directors Elected to Lead Your Cooperative!

**THE ANNUAL MEETING FOR OUR MEMBER-OWNERS WAS HELD ON JANUARY 24** at our Grinnell Agronomy Center. A highlight of the meeting was the election results. We're pleased to announce that the following directors have been elected to the Key Cooperative Board.

### SOUTHEAST DISTRICT

- Chad Hafkey, Grinnell
- Brian Lowry, Searsboro

### NORTHWEST DISTRICT

- Brian Larsen, St. Anthony
- John Koop, Kamrar

The Board convened after the Annual Meeting and appointed Chris Davidson (Pella) to the Southeast Associate seat. Additionally, the Board appointed a third associate for the first time, naming Eric Henry (Nevada) as a second Northwest Associate, joining Nathan Voight. Elected directors serve a three-year term and associates serve in a nonvoting capacity for two to three years. ■



Brian Larsen, St. Anthony



Brian Lowry, Searsboro



Chad Hafkey, Grinnell



Eric Henry, Nevada



Chris Davidson, Pella



John Koop, Kamrar



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## PHOTO CONTEST WINNER: HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU, KIDS

By Sally Foster, New Sharon



*These little charmers are ready for their closeup!*

Would you like to see one of your photos featured on this page? Enter the Connections photo contest, which is open to any member or customer who receives our newsletter. One winning photo will be selected and placed in the newsletter. **Winning photographers will receive a \$20 gas gift card!** Photos must feature agriculture or rural settings; Iowa-based scenes are preferred. Photos must be submitted by the 10th of each month in order to qualify for the following month's newsletter. Please include your name, address, phone number and email address with your submitted photo(s).

Submissions may be emailed to [Sara.Clausen@keycoop.com](mailto:Sara.Clausen@keycoop.com).

## OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bryce Arkema, President  
Mike Engbers, Vice President  
Branon Osmundson, Secretary  
Brian Larsen, Assistant Secretary  
Ryan Bell, Treasurer  
Nathan Voight, Northwest Associate  
Eric Henry, Northwest Associate  
Chris Davidson, Southeast Associate  
Chad Hafkey  
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**WE ARE  
KEY**

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