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Ron Clayton and his wife, Judie, have made their farm home to over 100,000 honeybees! They have three hives, which can each produce between 50 and 60 pounds of pure honey in a year.



CONNECTIONS

A publication dedicated to informing and connecting members.



Key Perspectives

A look beyond the dog days of August

By Boyd Brodie, General Manager, Boyd.Brodie@keycoop.com

WE'VE PASSED through the dog days of August. School is resuming, fall sports are starting up and all our thoughts are turning to the harvest season ahead. This summer has been long and hot, and it got drier as

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Farm, Family and Fresh Honey

Honoring National Honey Month with Clayton Farms

By Ellie Horn, Digital Communications Specialist, Ellie.Horn@keycoop.com

YOU'VE HEARD the expression “busy as a bee,” but you probably didn’t know beekeepers are just as busy! Ron and Judie Clayton of Grinnell can attest to that wisdom. While their operation, Clayton Farms, has traditional row crops, it is also home to their grandson’s FFA Boer goat herd ... and a haven for honeybees.

Ten years ago, the couple sold their cow-calf operation. Around the same time, Ron took up beekeeping because it had always interested him. “My favorite school lunch used to be peanut butter and honey sandwiches,” he recalled. “My first stop at the Iowa State Fair is always the Iowa Honey Producers Association booth in the Agricultural Building.”

Ron enjoys taking care of his bees, but he admits it can be a lot of work. It’s important for bees to have sufficient access to water, especially when the

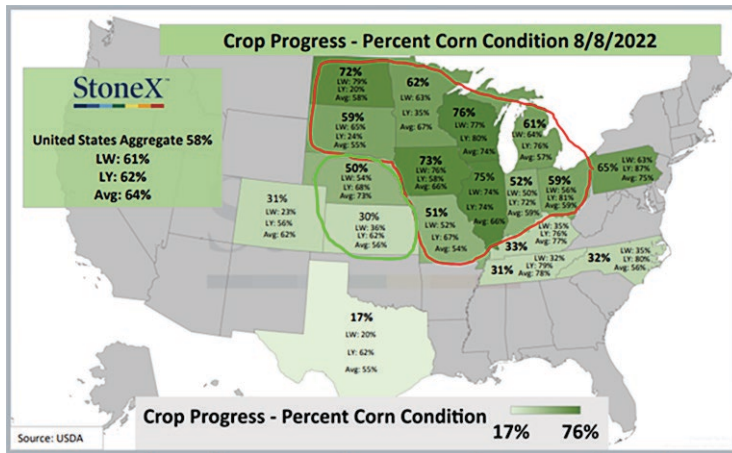
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U.S. Crop Conditions and the Big Picture of Global Grain

By Zack Gardner, Grain Marketing and Origination Specialist, Zack.Gardner@keycoop.com

OUR CROP, especially south of I-80, is starting to struggle with the lack of rain. Yet as we inch closer to harvest, we have to keep in mind our grain markets revolve around global trade. We can't base our marketing plans on what we see outside our kitchen windows. Our crop is definitely going to struggle locally. With how corn is currently faring, I think Iowa's crop ratings (see map below) need to be reduced. However, looking at the big picture, a majority of the states in the U.S. are on par with last year's crop ratings or well above them (see red circle on map). Circled in green are the two big states in the Midwest that are not at or above last year's levels.



Getting into the nitty gritty of our crop, I could argue that Iowa's crop estimates need to adjust a significant amount. In the areas that are tributary to Eddyville, do we back off our yield estimates by 15–20 percent? In the areas that are tributary to Cedar Rapids, do we raise yield estimates by 5 percent? There are pockets of both good and bad—even if we dropped the overall state yield estimate by a 10 percent average, we'd be only 1 percent behind last year's crop ratings. I think these yield pockets may be more about the function of local basis at the various ethanol plants next year.

Another short-term factor for our markets will be the August 12 USDA report. Traditionally, we see an expected yield drop, but this year's report will also have Minnesota and the Dakotas' acreage resurvey on it. I

think we will magically find more acres of corn, beans and wheat, as the market was incentivizing producers to plant every acre they could (even if they were flooded). The big question will be if an increase in acres will outweigh any reductions in yield for the U.S. balance sheet. With this report, we have to keep in mind that even though a lot of the U.S. is in drought conditions, the acres they may find in the Dakotas will likely be of good yield. South Dakota's ratings are 35 percent better than last year, while North Dakota's are 52 percent better than last year.

On a global scale, it seems like we continue to see extreme headlines on both sides of the aisle. So much so that it almost feels like the market doesn't know how to react or which way to go. For example:

- **Bullish global headlines:** 50+ percent of Europe is under heat stress. Italy is buying corn from the United States. U.S. inflation didn't increase in the month of July. Finally, 28 percent of U.S. corn is within an area experiencing drought.
- **Bearish global headlines:** China's economy is slowing and showing signs of a recession. Twelve Ukrainian grain vessels have been exported so far, and China is ramping up military drills/aggression over Taiwan.

As of mid-August, the market seems to be trading water until we know more about this crop. That observation, along with these drastic headlines, tells me that once the market finds a direction, it will probably go that way in a hurry.

How does this all tie to marketing? The hot and dry weather that's sending our crops backward is forcing a lot of us to be comfortable with the number of forward sales we have on the books. Before the market gets too crazy (in either direction), it may be wise to double check the sales you have on the books, check on your crop insurance levels and double check any offers you still have in the works that we might need to pull or adjust. ●



A honeybee resting on one of Judie Clayton's flowers.



Honey harvesting is a family affair for the Claytons, involving Ron, Judie, their children and their grandchildren.

Honoring National Honey Month with Clayton Farms

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summers are dry. Ron's bees drink from the electric goat waterers, the farm pond and even the landscaping fountain by the house. He feeds his bees corn syrup, but many producers feed their bees a sugar water mixture. In addition to food and water, the bees have access to all of Judie's beautiful landscape flowers and her vegetable garden.

The bees are also active in the soybean field around the Claytons' home. "I've heard that bees can increase bean yield by a bushel or two an acre," Ron said. For a farmer who keeps bees as a hobby and for their honey, an increased bean yield is definitely an added bonus.

Judie may not be out caring for the bees herself, but she does her share by processing the honey. After hosting pheasant hunters at their in-home Clayton Farms Bed & Breakfast for 22 years, she has mastered the art of preserving natural sweets to serve at her table. In addition to canning honey, she makes treats like apple, pear and grape butter, as well as blackberry, strawberry and strawberry rhubarb jam.

Ron has three beehives containing 40 to 50 thousand bees each. A single hive can produce as much as 50 to 60

pounds of pure honey every year. Processing that much honey calls for all hands on deck. The Claytons' kids and grandkids come over for a family honey harvesting day each September. Together, they spin the honey from the comb and place it in pint jars bearing the Clayton Farms label. Ron and Judie send the kids home with lots of honey. The remaining 30-plus jars go with the couple as they winter in Texas. There, they sell their honey, along with Judie's preserves, to friends and locals.

Honey can be used as a natural sweetener in many recipes, but Ron's favorite way to eat honey is to simply swirl it in a jar of chunky peanut butter. Judie enjoys the same—except with creamy peanut butter.

This September, we encourage you to celebrate National Honey Month by cooking with honey and finding your own favorite way to enjoy it! For recipe ideas, check out the National Honey Board at honey.com. As for the Claytons, they'll stick to making the honey they enjoy. In Ron's words: "Beekeeping is hard work, but if you enjoy it, it's worth it!" ●



Photo credit: Thinglass | shutterstock.com

Make an Impact on Iowa Ag and Your Cooperative

Become a Key Cooperative Director!

AS A MEMBER-OWNED ORGANIZATION, Key Cooperative is governed by a 12-person Board of Directors. Ten members are elected, and two are appointed. Each fall, we invite our member-owners to consider running for the upcoming election or nominating other members as potential directors.

If you're interested in serving your fellow members on the Key Cooperative Board, please contact Board President Perry Ritland (Perry.Ritland@keycoop.com) or Vice President Bryce Arkema (Bryce.Arkema@keycoop.com).

Highlights of being a director:

- Directors develop personally and professionally.
- Directors work as a team and build their leadership skills.
- Directors learn how to navigate the cooperative system through strategic planning and budgeting.
- Directors have regular opportunities to network with their peers and develop relationships within the industry.

Qualifications:

- A director must be a Class A member.
- Each elected director serves a three-year term.
- Each director serves on one or two subcommittees.
- Board meetings are held once a month.
- New directors are announced at the Annual Meeting and take their seats in January. ●



Sign up for Free Farm Safety Webinars

HARVEST IS just around the corner, which is why September is a great month to recognize National Farm Safety & Health Week! Each day during this week, the Iowa-based National Education Center for Agricultural Safety will offer two FREE webinars on a range of safety topics:

- **Monday, September 19** - Tractor Safety & Rural Roadway Safety
- **Tuesday, September 20** - Overall Farmer Health
- **Wednesday, September 21** - Safety & Health for Youth in Agriculture
- **Thursday, September 22** - Confined Spaces
- **Friday, September 23** - Safety & Health for Women in Agriculture

To register for a webinar, visit necasag.org! ●



Receive texts from your location

As we approach harvest, you need important messages from your location, including the daily delivery hours. Text any of the keywords below to 844-458-7824, and you will be added to that location's list.

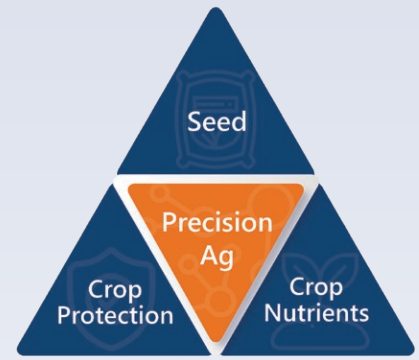
Location	Keyword
Barnes City	barnescity
Energy & Retail Center (Sully)	retail
Gilbert	gilbert
Grinnell Elevator	grinnell
Grinnell Feed Mill	gfm
Kelley	kelley
LeGrand	legrand
Nevada	nevada
New Sharon	newsharon
Newton	newton
Newton Rail	nrc
S14	s14
St Anthony	stanthony
Story City	storycity
Sully	sully
Zearing	zearing

*Message and data rates may apply.



It's Time to Start Making Seed Decisions

By Josh Fosenburg, Sales Agronomist, Josh.Fosenburg@keycoop.com



WE'RE QUICKLY approaching the time of year when we start thinking about what to plant next season. There are many things to take into consideration when making this decision. Here are just a few of the questions your Key Agronomist will ask when you sit down and talk about seed:

- Are you going to have any corn-on-corn?
- Do you need an earlier-season corn or a fuller-season corn?
- What kind of rootworm pressure do you have in your area?
- What do you want to spray on your beans next year?
- What kind of fertility program do you run?

Key Cooperative is fortunate to be able to offer a wide variety of genetics and traits through our partnerships with companies like DEKALB®/Asgrow®, Brevant®, NK® and CROPLAN®. From a seed standpoint, we're confident we can accommodate almost any need.

How do we decide which products to recommend for your operation? If you've worked with us before, there's a high probability your Agronomist has talked about WinField® United Answer Plot® data or Bayer's "FIT" Plot data. These are highly intensive test plots that are grown in our own "backyards." WinField and Bayer test a wide range of hybrids and varieties, all with different management practices (like high and low nitrogen levels, high and low population, and

fungicide versus no fungicide). All of these trials are replicated multiple times to get the best data possible. Your Key Cooperative team then uses this data to make the best recommendations for your operation.

Talk to your Key Cooperative Agronomist about how we can help you raise more bushels in 2023, starting with your seed. We will soon have seed guides available for you to look over ... and don't forget about pre-pay and financing options! We look forward to working with you in the 2023 growing season and hope you have a safe harvest. ●

Get Ready for Bushels for Ag 2022-2023

IN THE UPCOMING school year, Key Cooperative will partner with your local FFA chapter in a one-of-a-kind program: Bushels for Ag!

Through Bushels for Ag, Key Cooperative gives high school students real life experience marketing corn and soybeans. Key donates 100 bushels of corn and 40 bushels of soybeans to each participating FFA chapter. All Key Cooperative growers are also invited to donate to the program. Then, Key Field Marketing Specialists help students build marketing plans to sell these bushels. All proceeds go directly to the participating FFA chapters. ●

For more information about Bushels for Ag, please contact our Field Marketing Specialists:

Greg Artz, 515-215-0062

Rick Weigel, 641-990-1713

Linda Kuhl, 641-750-0633



Get Your Laying Hens on Track This Flocktober

By Marissa Eekhoff & Ellie Moser, 2022 Key Cooperative Feed Interns

THE CHICKS you bought this spring are now hens, and it's time for them to start laying eggs! As your chickens reach 18 weeks of age and start slowly laying, it's important to remember that their nutritional needs have changed. To produce quality eggs, your hens need more calcium in their diets.

In addition to mixing our own layer feed, Key Cooperative also carries several high-quality Purina® layer products. For first-time layers, we highly recommend the Purina Layena® feed line. All Layena products use the Oyster Strong® System for an extra boost of calcium (3.25–4.25 percent). This blend of oyster shell, vitamin D and manganese helps promote strong-shelled eggs.

Another option for hens of all ages is the Purina Home Grown® Layer feed. This complete feed provides slightly less calcium (3–4 percent) than the Purina Layena feeds, but it still includes 16 percent protein and all the necessary nutrients for optimal egg production.

Treats and other scratch grains are important for keeping your chickens busy. To encourage natural pecking behavior, we recommend the Purina Flock Block®. This whole-grain supplement makes a great treat for laying hens and other poultry. Key Cooperative customer Bob Roseland says his hens like their Flock Block: "They seem to get bored being penned up, and it gives them something to do. It keeps them busy, and it lasts a lot longer than throwing scratch grain on the ground."

If you have questions about feeding your new laying hens, the Key Feed team can help. We're here to assist you with raising a healthy flock, whether you have chickens, geese, ducks or even peacocks! ●



Protect Your Equipment This Harvest

HARVEST IS HERE, and you don't want anything to stand in the way of getting your crop out. Prepare for the unknown by talking to your Key Certified Energy Specialist about the Cenex® Total Protection Plan®. When your equipment is protected by this plan, you'll have peace of mind, knowing you'll be covered if something unforeseen happens.

Here are just a few benefits of the Total Protection Plan:

- **Equipment coverage:** The warranty covers new equipment for up to 10 years or 10,000 hours, as well as used equipment for up to 8 years or 8,000 hours.
- **Extended protection:** With the Cenex Total Protection Plan, you're going above and beyond original equipment manufacturer warranties.
- **Proactive reminders:** You'll receive periodic maintenance reminders to help keep your equipment in top condition.
- **Oil analysis tests:** Avoid downtime with LubeScan® used oil analysis fluid sample reports, which provide insight into the inner workings of your machine.

Whether you buy new or used equipment, protect your investment with the best warranty in the ag industry! To learn more about the Cenex Total Protection Plan, contact a Key Cooperative Certified Energy Specialist: Rick Kucera, 641-780-1624; Chad Larson, 515-290-0009; or Bob Rabey, 641-521-6318. ●





Flocktober Promotion

September 1 - October 31, 2022

Purina Layena® Feeds: \$1.00 off per bag

Includes:

- Layena® Layer Feeds
- Layena® High Protein Feed
- Organic Layer Crumbles & Pellets
- Homegrown Layer Feeds
- Purina Duck Feed



Joel Edge
Purina Sales Specialist
319-331-3667

Ceara Smothers
Lifestyle Feeds Sales Specialist
641-260-6179

Kelcie Bohning
Key Cooperative, Gilbert Location
515-232-6515

we went along. Crop conditions are generally good, but they are certainly spotty. We will see that extreme variability across fields and our territory. The Key Agronomy team just completed its initial comprehensive corn yield survey. Surprisingly, we are currently running pretty close to last year. Obviously, late rains will tell the tale on grain fill for both corn and beans.

The Key Agronomy team is also starting to work on input plans for fall and the 2023 crop. We continue to see price volatility and supply concerns, which warrant taking a strategic approach to the input market. We remain cautious at these price levels, layering in positions and recommending that our members and customers consider doing the same to mitigate as much risk as possible. I would also like to take a moment to remind our members and customers that Key Cooperative, your essential business partner, has outperformed our neighboring suppliers on timely and reliable product supply for several years. While that strategy appears slightly less competitive at times, especially during volatile market swings, our approach has proven that we can ensure you have product on hand to get field work done when conditions and timing are optimal.

On the grain side, we continue to see many of the same price and supply factors at play. Crop reports are exchanging acres and short exports with lower yield expectations. Outside that, the other major headlines affecting the market are widely

varied and send a complex mix of signals. Beyond deciphering the final South American yields, Europe is facing its own heat and drought issues while teetering on the brink of recession and facing a severe energy shortage at the hands of the same guys attacking Ukraine. Fortunately, Ukraine has been able to move a few more vessels of grain out of its ports (but to keep that in perspective, it takes roughly 85 vessels to equate a 1 percent drop in U.S. yield). Nearby, China continues to squeeze Taiwan, limiting access to energy that's necessary to produce and export the microchips that everyone is waiting for.

Domestically, we have our own dynamics in play from the Fed, which is intent on boosting interest rates to force a recession to ultimately address inflation. The Fed's actions continue to drive stocks lower, forcing investors to bounce

around in commodities, looking for returns or a temporary haven. These actions have also resulted in a stronger dollar, which feels good from a purchasing perspective, but makes our grain exports that much more expensive to the rest of the world. It is really nice not having to talk about the pandemic, so I'm not going to.

With all of this going on, I just want to finish by advising all our members and customers to maintain an open channel of communication with their Key Agronomists, Energy and Feed Specialists and the Key Grain Origination team throughout harvest. Your team at Key Cooperative will help you stay informed on local markets and stay ahead of operational needs. We're ready to serve all of you throughout the season, and we look forward to bringing this crop in and getting fall work done safely and efficiently. Be safe and have a productive 2022 harvest! ●

CONDOMINIUM STORAGE FOR SALE

Condominium (condo) storage provides members with a powerful set of storage advantages including: guaranteed, low-cost storage space; elimination of grain storage quality risk; access to all marketing contract alternatives; multiple-location delivery; tax benefits*; and high-value retention on resale. As an investor in the LLC, you may deliver your storage bushels to any Key Cooperative grain location.

For more information about purchasing condo storage, contact Vicki Gruhn at 641-260-2111 or Vicki.Gruhn@keycoop.com

* You should consult your own tax, legal and accounting advisors before engaging in any transaction.





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PHOTO CONTEST WINNER: BROTHERS (AND FARMERS) FOREVER

By Don. E Hanson & Steven Hanson, Roland



Don E. Hanson (left) and Steven Hanson (right) are pictured here some 70 years ago. The brothers have been working Hanson Brothers Farms for decades and are longtime members of Key Cooperative!

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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.

Key Connections is sent to you courtesy of Key Cooperative. Please send comments or suggestions to Sara Clausen at 515-388-8030 or at Sara.Clausen@keycoop.com.