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This harvest, Key Cooperative and CoBank awarded the Nevada FFA chapter with a \$5,000 grant to purchase a sweet potato plow from Strickland Brothers in North Carolina. The plow will allow the students to harvest the potatoes more efficiently and with less crop damage.



CONNECTIONS

A monthly publication dedicated to informing and connecting members.



Key perspectives Giving thanks

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

WE CONDUCTED our strategic planning session during the first half of August. For me, the timing was extremely fortunate—or should I say lucky. My dad always told me luck can sometimes be better than sense, but the wisdom is in knowing the difference. On the other hand, my mom would

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Cream of the crop

Central Iowa FFA program is making a name for itself

By Sara Clausen, Director of Communications, Sara.Clausen@keycoop.com

GOING TO SCHOOL is supposed to be fun, filled with friends, extracurricular activities and—don't forget—learning! Iowa's educational system ranks among the top in the nation, and many families choose to live in small, rural communities because the schools are often fantastic. Within such a school system, one program in Central Iowa is rising to the top because students can't get enough of it!

At Nevada High School, Kevin Cooper leads the FFA chapter and teaches a Vocational Agriculture (Vo Ag) class unlike any other. An instructor in his thirty-fifth year of teaching, Kevin started working in the Nevada Community School District in 1988, when the Vo Ag program was shared with Colo-Nesco Schools. In 2000, "Coop"—as his students refer to him—had grown the program so successfully he could no longer share his

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More tricks than treats in latest Reports

By Scott Stabbe, Grain Merchandiser, Scott.Stabbe@keycoop.com

HARVEST DID NOT START OUT

at break-neck pace this year. Early bean yields have been surprisingly good; the little dab of corn that has been harvested has been respectable as well. That said it should be no surprise that the USDA did not change their numbers by much. Bean-yield projections dropped 0.4 to 49.5 bu/acre while corn increased nearly 2 bu/acre to 171.8, less than 3 bushels off last year's record corn yield. As you would guess, this in turn increased the overall corn crop to 14.280 billion bushels and the ending-stocks to 2.340, which was above the October report last year.

These USDA Crop Reports have become akin to waiting for Christmas, with all the hoopla and build up... then it's over and you go back to the old daily routine. Although once in a while you get a surprise gift from Santa Claus, or in this case the Funds.

The report appears bearish by

the numbers and the average trade guesses, yet we end up going higher as we saw in this report. The Funds may have been waiting on the report before they started a fourth-quarter move in building their position, and that my friends is precisely why we continue to warn against trying to guess what the market is going to do. The Funds have taken most of the predictability—which was limited to begin with—out of the markets. Yet based off the report numbers, you would think we are in for another year of prices like last year. Most of the report numbers point that way, but you never know what's up the sleeves of that ole rascal Santa Claus (Funds).

I guess I'm using Christmas analogies because you see Christmas stuff out already in October. But for those who prefer to keep October for Halloween, maybe the Funds are just trick or treating. Hopefully everyone grabbed some of the treats—they may

be tough to come by, as has been the case this last year.

Having a marketing plan will again be the key to grain-marketing success. If you need some help in that area, Jason Dubberke, your Key Cooperative Grain Market Development Leader, can assist you. Another thing to keep in mind is the need to keep your in-bin grain in good condition. Do what you need to do to get that job done, especially in the bin that always gives you fits, even if it means moving it. With both grain marketing and quality grain storage, planning ahead is always the key.

Thank you for your patronage and your patience. From your Key Cooperative Grain Team, we hope you have a bountiful and safe harvest as well as a Happy Thanksgiving! ■

"Do something today that your future self will thank you for."
- Unknown

SAVE THE DATE! Annual Business Meeting

Saturday, January 6, 2018
Grinnell Agronomy Center
9:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m.



The Key Cooperative Annual Business Meeting will be a little different this year, but only because we are planning a fantastic member celebration this summer!

At the Business Meeting, continental breakfast will be provided, and facility tours will be offered. Watch your mailbox; invitations and ballots to vote for the Board of Directors will be coming in December!

SAVE THE DATE! TECH CONFERENCE

Tuesday, January 9, 2018
Monsanto's Learning Center
Huxley, Iowa

Join us for our annual winter Tech Conference, where we will introduce what the future holds for precision Ag. Keep an eye on our website for a link to RSVP!



Key Cooperative market outlook meetings

Join us at any of our market outlook meetings! If you have questions, contact a member of our Grain Team:

- Greg Artz, 515-215-0062
- Jason Dubberke, 515-450-6684
- Rick Weigel, 641-990-1713

Kelley Community Center

December 14, 2017 – 8:00 a.m.–10:00 a.m.
Breakfast provided
Speaker: Dr. Chad Hart

Grinnell - Grinnell Agronomy Center

December 14, 2017 – 12:00 p.m.
Lunch provided
Speaker: Dr. Chad Hart

Nevada - Gates Hall

January 10, 2018 – 12:00
Lunch provided
Speaker: Rich Morrison

Roland - S-14 Office

January 15, 2018 – 3:00 p.m.
Speaker: John Stewart & Associates

Sully - Sully Office

January 16, 2018 – 8:00 a.m.
Breakfast provided
Speaker: John Stewart & Associates

New Sharon - McVay Center

January 16, 2018 – 12:00 p.m.
Lunch provided
Speaker: John Stewart & Associates

Newton - Newton Office

January 17, 2018 – 8:00 a.m.–10:00 a.m.
Breakfast provided
Speaker: Lee Schulz

Gilbert - Open Flame

January 17, 2018 – 12:00 p.m.
Lunch provided
Speaker: Lee Schulz

Story City - Bowling Alley

January 22, 2018 – 3:00 p.m.
Speaker: Ryan Moe, FC Stone

Zearing - Dakins Center

January 23, 2018 – 8:00 a.m.–10:00 a.m.
Breakfast provided
Speaker: Ryan Moe, FC Stone

LeGrand - Monet Center

January 23, 2018 – 11:00 a.m.
Lunch provided
Speaker: Ryan Moe, FC Stone

Barnes City - Legion

January 24, 2018 – 8:00 a.m.
Breakfast provided
Speaker: Trent Sauder, Advance Trading

Sigourney - Pizza Ranch

January 24, 2018 – 12:00 p.m.
Lunch provided
Speaker: Trent Sauder, Advance Trading

Williamsburg - Williamsburg

Recreation Center
January 25, 2018 – 9:00 a.m.
Breakfast provided
Speaker: Trent Sauder, Advance Trading



It's never too early to lock in margins

By Jason Dubberke, Grain Market Development Leader,
Jason.Dubberke@keycoop.com

THIS YEAR'S LARGE CROP—on the heels of last year's large crop—has driven the market toward full carry-out into next summer and fall. Specifically, as I write this article the carry is 44 cents in the cash market from October 2017 to October 2018. While I'm not recommending you hold your corn for a year, I do think it's worth considering starting next year's marketing today by forward-contracting some corn or placing some offers at your targeted profit levels.

The chart to the right demonstrates potential per-acre margins for next year by laying out fair estimates of 2018 corn-on-bean cost structures, combined with a 195-bushel-per-acre yield goal and the October 2018 cash price at Key Cooperative, which is \$3.45.

Contact your Grain and Agronomy team members at any Key location if you are interested in determining your breakeven and locking in some profits for next year. Members of the Agronomy team can help you determine cost structures for next year, right down to the field. Members of the Grain team can help you lock in profitability by designing a marketing plan specifically tailored to your operation. ■

Estimated input costs for corn-on-beans - 2018

| | Cost/acre | Bushels |
|--------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Land cost | \$240.00 | 69.6 |
| Fertilizer | \$90.00 | 26.1 |
| Pre-emerge program | \$45.00 | 13.0 |
| Seed | \$110.00 | 31.9 |
| Corn herbicide | \$30.00 | 8.7 |
| Field operations | \$100.00 | 29.0 |
| Crop insurance | \$20.00 | 5.8 |
| TOTAL | \$635.00 | 184.1 |

| Yield goal | 195 |
|--|----------|
| Oct. 2018 cash price (as of Oct. 2017) | \$3.45 |
| Estimated gross | \$672.75 |
| Estimated profit per acre | \$37.75 |



Central Iowa FFA program

time and serve both schools. So, Kevin gave leadership of the Colo-Nesco program to another teacher and began to focus solely on Nevada.

Enrollment numbers at Nevada exploded over the next few years, and the Vo Ag program soon outgrew its space. A major turning point came in 2004 when a neighboring 3,000-square-foot building was donated to the school. It was quickly designated as the Ag Mechanics lab and filled with historic tractors in need of restoration.

With the students' enthusiasm leading the charge, Kevin continued to respond to their requests for more projects. For the past five years, the chapter has given back to its community by collaborating with Swanson Farms in Nevada, providing seeds they've sown in their greenhouse—most recently sweet potato and watermelon seeds—for Swanson to plant. The produce is then provided to the Nevada School District for the K-12 lunch program. "I've always loved growing things—more than just corn and soybeans," said Andy Swanson, owner of Swanson Farms. "I'm thrilled to show the kids they can grow local foods that taste great and help feed our world."

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In 2015, the school made a \$1.1 million investment in the program to add a 16-station welding instruction space and a greenhouse. "The more you do in the real world, the more the students understand problems and develop their best problem-solving skills," said Kevin.

FFA chapters are often very visible in their communities during their annual fruit sales, but the Nevada chapter has grown into something more—a highly recognizable group of student leaders. For example, in 2016 a group of FFA students started the Student Movers program after they were asked to move a piano from one house to another. A few months later, someone else called and asked if the students could move their piano if they made a donation. Now, just one year later, the students have brought in over \$5,000 in revenue from a program that was built simply out of kindness—out of kids helping the community. "If you're out helping others, it will come full circle," said Kevin. "The best way to improve yourself is to help others."

Want to learn more about the Nevada FFA's projects? Check out the chapter's Twitter and Instagram accounts by searching for @NevadaFFA. ■



Stay in the know while on the go

Keep an eye on the markets and Key Cooperative grain bids with our mobile site and text message service. Key Cooperative mobile helps you work from anywhere, keeps you up-to-date while you're on the move and maximizes your efficiency. Sign up for text message updates at keycoop.com or visit our mobile site from any smartphone. Questions? Contact Sara Clausen in Roland at 515-388-8030 or email Sara.Clausen@keycoop.com.

say luck was what happened when hard work and preparation met opportunity. Somehow, I never felt all that lucky when I was stuck doing chores. Nevertheless, in this case the time at which I was given the chance to lead your Cooperative forward into strategic planning was full of opportunity.

One of the primary topics of our strategic planning session was *change* and how to utilize it as a competitive advantage. All of us are experiencing an ever-increasing pace, breadth and depth of change. Change is the constant; how we acknowledge it, accept it, adapt to it and leverage it to our advantage is, to a large degree, an indicator of how successful we will be.

Simple, right? Yes, but simple generally doesn't mean easy. From an organizational standpoint, there is always a drop in productivity when changes are being implemented. The challenge is minimizing the breadth and depth of that drop in efficiency and eventually climbing out at a higher level, which is the goal of implementing change in the first place.

For me, the first necessary change was addressing the mission, vision and values of Key Cooperative—the reason we exist, if you will—and establishing them in a way that is functional and meaningful for both our employees and our members. So we compressed years of work and pages of dialogue into what I would call a Cooperative identity statement. This statement affirms that Key Cooperative is *your essential business partner, committed to the success of*

our owners by delivering innovation through exceptional, customer-focused solutions; by providing leadership and empowering a healthy and adaptive team; and by achieving sustainable results for both members and the Co-op.

Why is this important? This identity statement drives the long-term mission of the Cooperative—our vision to unify the efforts of your employees and the values that define how we approach our responsibilities on a day-to-day basis. Being your essential business partner means we strive to be a vital and indispensable part of your farming business. We are committed to your success—you come first, period. We promise to continuously pursue new and better systems and methods that directly benefit you. We promise to lead by providing vision, expectations, resources, training, authority and accountability through our locations and the Key employees you care about and depend on every day. Finally, we promise to realize measurable improvements in yields, operational efficiencies and profitability for you and your Cooperative in a sustainable and socially acceptable way.

I am thankful for this opportunity, eager for this challenge and motivated by the potential of what our Cooperative can ultimately become. I am very thankful for this dependable group of devoted employees and supportive members who are committed to one another's success. I hope your harvest season continues to be safe and productive. Let us know where we can help. ■



For the Grinnell Feed Mill, it's all about the corn

By Jim Hawkins, Feed Manager, James.Hawkins@keycoop.com

IN 2013–2014, the Board of Directors and members of Key made deliberate investments in the Grinnell Feed Mill to make it an industry-leading pelleting facility. The improvements increased load-out storage capacity and doubled feed ingredient receiving speed—providing the best quality feed possible. The improvements brought annual mill capacity to 400,000 tons, requiring over nine million bushels of corn.

Requiring such a large amount of grain makes it necessary for us to regularly monitor corn moisture. Because moisture is a particularly important factor at the mill and has a large impact on feed quality, we are asking for your help in keeping the moisture levels of corn coming into the mill at 15 percent or less. Moisture levels above this percentage negatively affect the consistency of our ground corn and have an even greater negative impact on the pelleting operation. In fact, high moisture levels decrease capacity and, in the long run, overall pellet quality.

With harvest well underway, the mill at times reaches full capacity, so we need to allocate deliveries from customers. We recommend customers call the feed mill at 641-236-6565 before delivering corn to make sure we have room. Our receiving hours are 7:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m., unless we reach full capacity. ■

DON'T LEAVE FALL NITROGEN UNSTABLE



NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT is as important in the fall as it is during planting. According to Dr. Eric Scherder, a field scientist with Dow AgroSciences, growers considering a fall anhydrous ammonia application can take measures to make the most out of their fertilizer investment while supporting nitrogen management best practices.

"Nitrogen isn't a one-time event," said Eric. "There has to be forethought about how to manage it today and tomorrow."

Growers who are serious about reducing nitrate loss into groundwater can take steps when making fall applications. These steps include evaluating application methods, paying attention to temperature and using a nitrogen stabilizer to reduce nitrate loss through leaching and denitrification.

Important considerations before fall application -

There are best management practices growers can follow this fall to optimize fertilizer applications.

First, let temperature drive timing. Fall nitrogen applications should be based on soil temperature, not calendar date. Wait to apply nitrogen until soil temperatures drop below 50 degrees Fahrenheit.

"*Nitrosomonas* bacteria, which converts ammonium nitrogen to the nitrate form that's susceptible to loss, are active until soils reach freezing temperatures; however, their activity is significantly reduced once soil temperatures drop below 50 degrees," said Eric. "This is important to consider when making fall applications to protect that investment."

The significance of a stabilizer - Once nitrogen converts to the nitrate form, it can be lost through leaching and denitrification. Instinct® II and N-Serve® nitrogen stabilizers protect nitrogen in the fall by keeping it in the ammonium form longer so it is available in the root zone when corn needs it most in the spring. N-Serve can be applied with anhydrous ammonia, while Instinct II can be used with UAN, urea or manure.

Keeping nitrogen in the ammonium form longer reduces the amount of nitrates lost into groundwater and enables the corn plant to get the nitrogen it needs to grow stronger and healthier.

N-Serve and Instinct II have been rigorously tested by third-party experts and proven effective. Studies with nitrapyrin show soil nitrogen retention increased by 28 percent, and nitrogen leaching decreased by almost 16 percent*. They are the only nitrogen stabilizers on the market accepted for registration by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

For more information on protecting fall-applied nitrogen, visit NitrogenStabilizers.com. ■

Article courtesy of  Dow AgroSciences

*Meta-analysis published in 2004 by Wolt.

®Trademark of The Dow Chemical Company ("Dow") or an affiliated company of Dow. Instinct II is not registered for sale or use in all states. Contact your state pesticide regulatory agency to determine if a product is registered for sale or use in your state. Do not fall-apply anhydrous ammonia south of Highway 16 in the state of Illinois. Always read and follow label directions. M53-137-059 (10/16) BR



fuel for thought

FROM FARM EQUIPMENT TO FUEL STORAGE, HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO HELP YOU PREPARE FOR FALL AND WINTER.

- Drain and remove all water and contaminants.
- Change filters and clean pump screens.
- Keep tanks full to reduce condensation; fill equipment every evening.
- Blend cold-flow additives at the recommended treat rate; more isn't better.

Always use Ruby FieldMaster or Ruby FieldMaster seasonally enhanced diesel fuel.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

| | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Rod Meyer 641-521-6318 | Chris Nady 515-290-0009 | Shawn Welcher 641-521-5243 |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|



Pilot project at the pumps!

This month, two of our fuel stations—Nevada and Story City—will feature a fuel product change. The change is part of a pilot project to measure the success of E15. During this pilot project, we will replace E85 with E15 at these two stations.

So why E15?

- More vehicles can run on E15 versus E85.
- More vehicles running on ethanol means more support for our local corn growers!
- E15 is approved by the EPA for all vehicles 2001 and newer.
- E15 will be \$0.10 less than Super Unleaded.
- E15 is a blend of 15 percent ethanol and 85 percent gasoline. It is an environmentally friendly fuel that burns cleaner than gasoline.
- The latest research shows that ethanol produced from corn can reduce GHG emissions by as much as 59 percent relative to gasoline.
- There has been more testing of E15 than any other fuel additive in the history of the EPA fuel waiver process. In six million miles of testing, the Department of Energy found no problems with the use of E15.

We want your feedback! Do you want to see E15 at your Key fuel station? Have you tried E15? Tell us about your experience. Call us at (800) 469-1040 to give us your thoughts on a change to E15.

Visit www.iowarfa.org to learn more about E15 and the Iowa Renewable Fuels Association.

LAST CALL FOR 2017!

Key Cooperative and Land O' Lakes matching grant program

Key Cooperative is pleased to partner with the Land O'Lakes Foundation matching grant program. The program allows Key Cooperative to give back to our communities by contributing grant funding to community betterment and food-related projects.

Your project may be the perfect match for our program! Don't wait though; this year's grant application deadline is the end of November. The application can be found on our website, www.keycoop.com/community-involvement. You can also receive the application by calling Amy Van Weelden at 641-594-8129, or email her at Amy.VanWeelden@keycoop.com. ■

A REWARDING INVESTMENT. POWERED LOCALLY.



Earn a \$50 Visa® gift card for every 125 gallons of high-quality Cenex® oils, hydraulic fluids, gear lubes and greases you buy between November 1, 2017, and February 28, 2018. See us for details, and ask about the Cenex Total Protection Plan® for up to 10 years/10,000 hours of coverage. **Stop in today to earn gift cards.**

Contact your Key Cooperative CES to learn more:

Rod Meyer 641-521-6318
Chris Nady 515-290-0009
Shawn Welcher 641-521-5243





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Roland, Iowa 50236

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PHOTO CONTEST WINNER: COUNTRY MORNING By Susan Beck – Bondurant, IA

In September, Key Cooperative member Susan Beck captured this beautiful photo of the sun rising over the thistles and cornfields near Bondurant.



OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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The *Connections* photo contest is open to any member or customer that 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.