

TRAILHEAD

"BRINGING INNOVATION AND SUCCESS TO THE SANDHILLS"

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CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER

It's always great to see the quality of young people in the communities we serve. We're also excited to see that many of them plan to use their talents in the agricultural field. That is why we're proud to announce this year's winners of the **Farmers Ranchers Cooperative** "The Future of Agriculture" Scholarship.

In its second year, this \$1,000 scholarship is one more way your cooperative strives to give back to the community. Its purpose is to encourage our youth to contribute to the agricultural industry and, hopefully, our Nebraska Sandhills region.

Recipients must be enrolling in a two- or four-year post-secondary ag-related program in the fall of 2007.

In addition to exhibiting strong leadership skills and excellent academic performance, the students wrote essays describing why they are interested in a career in agriculture.

This year's winners were **Jacqueline Hines** of Cody, **Katie Phillips** of Mullen, and **Adam Sawyer** of Bassett.

Jacqueline is the daughter of

MANAGER'S MOMENT

by Keith Erickson
President & CEO
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Gary and Andrea Hines. This Cody-Kilgore High School graduate will attend Kansas State University in Manhattan, KS, majoring in animal science. She has been

active in band, student council, and FFA.[®]

Katie, the daughter of Lyle and Twila Phillips, graduated from Mullen High School. She will be attending Hastings College and plans to major in biology. She has been involved in 4-H, cheerleading, student council, and FCCLA.

Adam, a graduate of Rock County High School, is the son of Arlen and Becky Sawyer. He will be attending Howard College in Big Springs, TX, majoring in ag business and finance. He has been active in high school rodeo, National Honor Society, FFA, and sports.

Farmers Ranchers wishes these three young people the best as they

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Katie Phillips



Adam Sawyer



Jacqueline Hines

PROTECTING YOUR FEED SUPPLY

Over the past few months there's been plenty of media attention on the pet food scandal. While **Farmers Ranchers** feed business is primarily focused on cattle, there is definitely a trickle-down effect to all of us in the feed/food chain—and rightfully so. When it comes to our food supply, we cannot be too careful.

In the case of the pet food incident, some of the ingredients were brought in from China, where melamine was added to the wheat gluten in order to raise the food's protein level. Melamine is a molecule that has a number of industrial uses and is used as a fertilizer in some parts of the world. One wonders why the company manufacturing the pet food would source their ingredients outside the U.S., but that's a topic for another day.

What we want you to understand is the length Farmers Ranchers goes to ensure that the ingredients going into your livestock feed is safe—not only for your livestock, but ultimately for the consumer. At our feed mill, all of our feed's major ingredients originate in the U.S. In addition, we must be able to trace one step forward and one step back on each and every ingredient that comes into the mill.

For example, when an ingredient is delivered, we verify where that ingredient was picked up, what truck hauled it to Ainsworth, what that truck hauled prior to this load, and how the truck was cleaned in between those loads. Then we begin tracking that same ingredient to our bins, feed, delivery truck, and farm or ranch bin.

FEED FOCUS

Farmers Ranchers goes through an extensive process on each and every load of feed that you receive. You can have confidence knowing that your cooperative, for five years running, has been awarded with the Land O'Lakes® Dedication to Quality Award. We pride ourselves on playing our part to ensure that we're feeding the world safely!

by Rocky Sheehan
Feed Marketing Director
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Creep feed and twine source

Studies show a 3-to-1 payback on your creep feed investment. That's a pretty good return. To find out more about our creep feed options, talk to our feed staff.

We're also your source for twine. You'll find a variety of different twines at our Springview, Ainsworth, or Valentine locations.

Enhanced mineral delivery

Farmers Ranchers now has the ability to haul up to 10 tons of minerals right to your farm or ranch. As a convenience to our customer, we'll bring out the mineral on pallets, haul our forklift behind the delivery truck and place the mineral right into your shed. It can definitely save you time during these busy summer months. Call us for more information. ■



CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER

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continue to prepare for leadership roles in the agricultural industry. Thanks, too, to all of the students who applied. It was rewarding to see the number of applicants increase this year, and we hope that trend continues. If your son or daughter fits the qualifications for the scholarship, make certain they get an application in early 2008.

From scholarships to baseball

Farmers Ranchers believes in our communities and wants to help them thrive. That's why we contribute not only through our scholarship program, but in many other ways as well. For example, this spring your cooperative provided one

of our semi-drivers to drive to Shakopee, MN, to pick up a load of Red Ball Diamond Aggregate, a finely crushed limestone, for the Ainsworth ball park. It's just one more way we try to make a positive difference in the communities where we live and work.

I'd also like to thank our agronomy staff. With this spring's weather conditions, they've put in long hours to get the job done. That's not unusual for the Farmers Ranchers team. Whether it's agronomy, energy, or feed, our employees are always ready to step up to the plate. We appreciate their dedication and your continued business. ■

KEEP US POSTED FOR SPRAYING

Staying ahead of this season's weeds and grasses in your fields depends on spraying them at the right time. In fact, timeliness in post-emergent application is critical.

We'll have a person out in the country checking fields, but your input will also be important. If there's a field we need to look at, let us know and we can come take a look. We're also

relying on you to call and let us know the height and variety of grasses and weeds in your fields. Our goal is to get there in a timely fashion, so the better you keep us informed, the more effective we can be

with our post-emergent spraying. We have a team that is ready to provide you with the products and services that can make a difference for you this growing season.

The demand for fertilizer continues to put pressure on supply and price. At this time it looks as though **Farmers Ranchers** purchased enough product to cover our customers' needs. It's important to understand, however, that if additional fertilizer is needed, it will almost certainly be at higher prices.

Jim Jackman of Johnstown (left) discusses soil testing results with Kenny Eggers. Jim says he likes the excellent service he receives from the co-op's Agronomy Center. "I appreciate the discount we receive when we pick up the fertilizer ourselves," says Jim. "The fertilizer facility is top of the line. We get loaded fast, and we're gone back out to the field."



Summer annuals and meadows

As you get ready to plant summer annuals, Farmers Ranchers is proud of our diverse and extensive lineup of seed. For more information, give us a call or stop in.

We're also pleased to see that those producers who took advantage of our meadow fertilization program this past winter are seeing the benefits, especially with the spring moisture we received.

As we head into these growing months, know that Farmers Ranchers is here with a variety of products and services—whether it's for your fields or pastures. Call or stop in to discuss any of your agronomy needs. ■

IMPACTING YOUR BUSINESS

Every sector of the agriculture industry is impacted by energy prices—from inputs like fertilizer to the fuel in the tanks of vehicles hauling commodities at harvest. This year we're again seeing record-high prices—not so much in diesel, but in gasoline. Those prices are being driven by strong demand and refinery issues. Several refineries this spring were down for maintenance or had unplanned outages. That means gasoline supplies are tight, especially in the Midwest. Additional energy imports and getting more refineries on-line should help ease the shortage as the summer moves along.

The growth of ethanol in Nebraska and across the Midwest is also having a big impact—felt primarily through a strong demand for corn and subsequent

higher corn prices. One of the newest plants is the US BioEnergy 50-million-gallon-per-year facility in Ord. Not only is CHS an owner of US BioEnergy, but also the provider of fuels to **Farmers Ranchers**. CHS is committed to finding domestic solutions to our U.S. energy needs, and it's exciting to see that happening in our own backyard.

Ready for grilling?

Summer means grilling, and nothing is faster and cleaner than cooking on a propane grill. New propane grills are available at our Appliance Center in Ainsworth. We have grills in a wide range of prices, from the basic to

EYE ON ENERGY

by Kent Taylor
Energy Marketing Director
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stainless steel models. Stop by and take a look. You, too, can be enjoying the convenience of grilling with propane this summer. ■

Find more info about
US BioEnergy and
grilling tips at

www.farmersrancherscoop.com.

LOCATION PROFILE: MR. TIRE - VALENTINE

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

For some businesses, providing a quality product at a competitive price is good enough. Not for **Mr. Tire** in Valentine. This **Farmers Ranchers** location has an additional goal. "We try to give a little extra service," says manager **Kelly Stenka**. That might include giving the customer a ride to work while their vehicle is in the shop or offering a cup of coffee or hot chocolate while they wait. "We try to get to know our customer," Kelly adds. "We like to call them by name."

That's easier now that Mr. Tire has been in Valentine for three years. Farmers Ranchers moved the business into the former Western Oil building, and Kelly took over the manager's position after serving as a technician and assistant manager at the Ainsworth Mr. Tire before moving to manage Mullen and then Valentine.

More than tires

Today, Kelly and his crew handle a multitude of vehicle-related tasks, including tire alignment, transmission flushes, brake work, starters, alternators, fuel pumps, air conditioning systems, and working on trailer lights and brakes. The location's farm tire truck—manned by **Oleg Anderson**—travels 100 miles in any direction to service farm and ranch customers.

The location also serves as a hub for a propane and fuel delivery truck. **Jon Bice**, who drives the propane truck, also helps with tire sales. **Mike Brinda** mans the Hunter Alignment System, while **Alex Anderson** serves as assistant manager while working on vehicles and selling tires. This spring, **Kim Parkhurst** joined the team as receptionist.

It's still tires

Mr. Tire surprises customers with its variety of services,

but tires are still its mainstay, with car and pickup tire brands like Cooper, Hankook, Dean, Firestone,[®] Goodyear,[®] and Michelin. What Kelly likes is that those tires are sold with a road hazard replacement warranty that can be used at any Mr. Tire location.

You'll also find tires for lawn mowers, campers, boat trailers, ATVs, trucks, and heavy equipment. "We can get just about anything you need or want," says Kelly. "Just ask us."

Business growing

The combination of tires and friendly service must be working. Sales have grown each year, and recent changes in the show room create a more attractive space to display tires and other products. "We're creating a little more space and making it nicer for the customer while they're waiting," says Kelly. True to form, even the showroom face lift is geared toward customer service. ■

The friendly faces at Mr. Tire - Valentine are, left to right, Mike Brinda, Kim Parkhurst, Alex Anderson, Jon Bice, Oleg Anderson, and Kelly Stenka.



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INSIDE
FEED SAFETY IS PRIORITY ONE
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