

TRAILHEAD

"BRINGING INNOVATION AND SUCCESS TO THE SANDHILLS"

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WE NEED YOUR INPUT

At **Farmers Ranchers Cooperative**, we decided that if we wanted to know what our patrons think of our products and services, we should ask them. That's exactly what we're preparing to do.

In early November, you'll be receiving a one-page (front and back) survey from Farmers Ranchers. Quick and simple to fill out, this survey will not only give you an opportunity to express your opinion about your cooperative, but it will also help us gather important information about you, our customer.

For example, which services and locations do you use, and how do you find out about them? How are we doing at delivering those services? Are there products/services we don't offer that you would like to see? We'll also be asking questions that will help us better understand your farming/ranching business.

Your cooperative board and management will be reviewing the results carefully. The information will help us identify possible trends and better enable us to tailor what we offer. It will assist us in determining where improvements or changes need to be made. The goal is to make Farmers Ranchers more responsive to your needs.

It's also important to know that the information you provide will be anonymous. CHS and Land O'Lakes Member Services will compile the results. You can include your name in order to be eligible for a drawing for \$50

MANAGER'S MOMENT

by Keith Erickson
President & CEO

Cabela's® gift certificates, but be assured that we won't know which names go with individual returned surveys.

It's been six years since we conducted the last survey, and it's time to get your input once again. We appreciate your time and effort in helping us be the cooperative you need for your success.



Fiscal year looking good

Our fiscal year ended in August. We are in the midst of compiling the figures, but at this point we've got a good year going. It looks as though feed volumes will be up as well as energy due to increased sales of diesel fuel. We're also pleased to see that, while agronomy unit sales industry-wide this past spring were down about 15%, your cooperative gained market share. That's a great trend. We will be providing a more detailed year-end report, but we wanted you to know that things are looking positive at this point.

CHECK OUT OUR REBATE PACKAGE

You've heard the message from beef industry leaders for years: good health and performance in your calves depends on a combination of the right nutrition and immunization program. With pre-conditioning and weaning time fast approaching, **Farmers Ranchers** has the know-how and products to help you develop a program to fit your specific livestock business.

To help you get started, we're offering a total package rebate this fall. When you feed your calves a creep or weaning ration for 30 days pre- or post-weaning, followed by vaccinations for pasteurella, blackleg, and a 5-way (e.g. Bovi-Shield® 5, Express® 5, Pyramid® 5), we'll send you a rebate check for \$1 per head. If you don't qualify for the total package rebate, we will still offer our traditional discount program of 5% off product when you order your vaccine one week in advance.

Not only do we carry a large inventory (Pfizer®, Boehringer Ingelheim®, Fort Dodge, Novartis®, and Merial®), but we monitor our vaccines, making certain they are kept at the correct temperatures. In addition, we keep a vaccination record on your cattle. That record is available when you take the cattle to the sale barn, feedlot, etc.

New this year to our animal health services is the

SelectVAC® Assurance Program, which allows you to enroll your calves in an age- and source-verification program.

We've got ration answers

With the drought this year, you may be questioning how best to feed your cattle. Farmers Ranchers and Land O'Lakes can assist you. We can sample your forages and build a ration that is best suited and most cost effective for your herd.

For example, this year, alternative feeds may be a good option. We can then put the idea to paper to see if it works with your cattle and whether it can save you dollars. Or, there may be an idea working for another producer that will fit your business. Utilizing the resources of our feed specialists could be the key to help you get through the winter with your cattle.

If you have questions on any of our programs, please contact us for further prices and details. We look forward to serving you this fall. ■

FEED FOCUS

by Jackie Lurz
Valentine Farm Supply Manager



IT'S CAKE TIME
Call now to book
your order.

YOUR INPUT Continued from Page 1

In addition, Farmers Ranchers recently paid out \$185,000 in equity to those 65-year-olds who applied for 2005. We're one of the few cooperatives who revolve equity to those who request it at age 65.

Plan agronomy purchases

As we believe our financials will show this year, agronomy products and

services are a growing segment of our business. We also know that in order to be effective in the highly competitive agronomy arena, your cooperative must order and pay for more products earlier than ever before. That's especially true with fertilizer.

What does that mean to you, the customer? It's critical that you plan further ahead for your fertilizer needs and put those orders in early. In today's

market, growers simply can't wait until the last day to purchase product. Orders and payments will need to be made in advance so that we have the amount of product on hand to handle your needs—but not more product than we can use. It's one more way Farmers Ranchers can remain financially strong and offer you the products and services you need at competitive prices. ■

TIME TO ORDER TRITICALE

If you aren't one of a growing number of livestock producers utilizing triticale in your forage plan, you might want to give it a try this year. This popular winter annual crop is a cross between wheat and rye. It provides the production volumes of rye, but better protein numbers from the wheat side.

Planted from now until just before freezing, most area producers will graze the crop until early spring. They will then pull off the cattle, fertilize the field, and cut it for hay in mid- to late June. While more expensive than rye, you get better results. It packs more value for the dollar.

We have an adequate supply of triticale seed on hand for a normal sales year—at competitive prices. However, we advise that you call early with your order, since it will be challenging to get more seed should we experience larger-than-normal demand.

YIELD DATA ON WEB!

Farmers Ranchers will be posting local yield data on our Web site. Check in to see harvest results.

www.farmersrancherscoop.com

YOUR SAFETY COMES FIRST

It's difficult to spend hard-earned dollars to fix something that seems to be working just fine. It's also better to be safe than sorry. That's why **Farmers Ranchers Cooperative** is following the manufacturer recommendations when it comes to changing out older regulators on customer propane tanks.

When your propane delivery driver comes to fill your propane tank in preparation for the heating season, he'll be checking the regulator. Regulators more than 15 years old need to be upgraded. If we find an older model, Farmers Ranchers will notify you. Remember, it's for your safety—which always



Propane delivery driver Jeff Frederickson will be checking regulators on customers' propane tanks

Fertilizing meadows pays dividends

There's no doubt about it. In conversations with producers who have utilized the **Farmers Ranchers** meadow fertilization program, we've discovered it's worth the investment. The consensus across the board is that they have enjoyed at least a two-to-one return on every dollar they spend.

Not a bad payback, especially in a year of limited hay supplies. We'll be applying the fertilizer in November. Prepays begin soon, so give us a call and get on our list. ■

AGRONOMY ADVICE

by Glen Howell
Agronomy Division Manager



PROPANE POINTERS

by Wes Luther
Propane and Application Manager

comes first at Farmers Ranchers.

Avoid gas-out situations

It's also a great time to remind you to avoid gas-out (out-of-gas) situations. Make a point of having your tank filled when it hits the 30% mark.

Not only is it inconvenient to be out of propane, but these gas-out situations can be dangerous.

When they happen, all gas valves on the tank or cylinder should be turned off. Be sure to shut off all appliances. Call Farmers Ranchers for refueling, and let us know the tank is out of gas. We will then perform safety checks according to industry standards before relighting the system.

The best and safest way to prevent a gas-out is to never let the tank become empty or nearly empty. Getting on a propane delivery route will help avoid the problem. When you're on the route, it's our responsibility to make certain your tank has an adequate amount of propane.

We'll soon be sending you more propane safety information. It's one more way we work to provide you with an efficient, effective, and safe heating fuel source. ■



DIRECTOR PROFILE: STEVE BARTAK

CORN AND SOYBEAN MAN

It doesn't take long to realize that **Steve Bartak** enjoys talking 'farming.' Whether it's discussing rotation, nitrogen application, or the complexities of irrigation, he does it in his calm, even way—but with definite enthusiasm for the work he does each and every day.

This Long Pine-area crop farmer—who can look out over acres of his irrigated corn and soybeans—likes the challenges of agriculture. That attitude probably started as a young boy growing up on an irrigated farm in central Nebraska. He nurtured the interest at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL), where he received a degree in agronomy. He put his experience and education to good use as a crop consultant in the Ainsworth area before deciding to begin farming himself. That was back in the late 1970s, and the Sandhills have been home ever since.

Moving to the area brought even more opportunities. It's also when he became acquainted with **Farmers Ranchers Co-op**. He was first elected as an associate director in 1988, and as a voting director this past year. On a more personal note, it's also where he met his wife, Jeanne, a North Dakota farm girl who happened to be working in the area. The couple has three sons and a daughter: Jason, 20, a college student in Flint, Mich.; Chris, 17; Brent, 15; and Jessica, 12.

Today, whether it's in his farming operation or his role as

co-op director, Steve brings that desire to learn new things and face challenges. For example, some of his irrigated acres are in the second year of a joint UNL and Bureau of Reclamation demonstration project. The project studies the efficient use of water and nitrogen—using a variation of rates to see the results. "It's very interesting," says Steve.

In addition to the efficient use of water resources, Steve says farmers today are increasingly challenged by the rising costs of inputs. That's why it's important to him that the cooperative not only be strong financially but also stay competitive.

"I hope we're always competitive with our prices and services," explains Steve, who purchases all of his fuel from Farmers Ranchers and utilizes the co-op's agronomy products. "Members' equity is important, but a farmer is going to do business with us because we earn their business." ■



It's On the Web!

Here's one more reason to check the **Farmers Ranchers** Web site. We've moved the corn, soybean, and cattle future market reports right to the home page. It's a quick and easy way to access the numbers that help you market more effectively. More extensive market reports are also available on the site.

www.farmersrancherscoop.com

Check it out today!



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INSIDE
**IT'S TIME TO FERTILIZE
MEADOWS**
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