



Serving North Central Iowa

North Iowa Cooperative

VISION:
*We Will Be A Diversified Cooperative
With A Passion For Customer Success*

MISSION:
To Serve Our Customers With Dedication And Integrity

NORTH IOWA COOPERATIVE LOCATIONS

Thornton: 998-2711 or 1-800-531-9241 ** Portland: 423-5311 or 1-800-341-5311
Plymouth: 696-3382 ** Clear Lake: 357-5274 ** Farmers Lumber: 357-2151
United LP Mason City: 423-4011 or 1-800-475-5742 Rockwell: 822-4971

www.nicoop.com

March, 2010



**In
The
Country
By
Dennis
Maertens**

SOIL CONDITIONS: Spring 2010 looks like it could be what we needed to get both subsoil and top soil moisture levels back to capacity, and that is something that is always welcome.

The snow and cold is behind us (at least we hope it is), and that has given way to the process of drying our soils and the beginning of the 2010 growing season.

From the very beginning we can increase yields by fine tuning our management practices, since once again **Soil Compaction** will be a big issue going into this year.

With the amount of snow cover we experienced over the past winter, deep frost is scarce.

The freezing and thawing effect we typically experience is an excellent natural occurrence to break down compaction we may have created last year.

However, with limited deep frost of this winter, we may not get the same benefits from the freeze-thaw cycle that we normally do.

Therefore, as we do our planning, please keep in mind what fields may have the perennial wet spots and we will have to work around those.

Soil conditions are a major factor in the net return as we identify limiting stress. **"Control the Controllable."**

IN-SEASON SEED: We have done a lot of pre-spring planning and we are ready to serve your in-season needs. We still have an excellent supply of seed corn and soybean varieties to fit all soils and farming practices.



As the photo at left shows, we're in the process of dismantling the old grain dryer at the Thornton location in preparation for the installation of a new Sukup tower dryer that will feature 4,700 bushels per hour drying capacity.

This is one portion of the two major upgrade projects that we will be working on this year to enhance grain services to our customers

I'm very pleased to announce that by placing orders early we were allowed seed stocks with an excellent germination score.

Dekalb, Asgrow and Croplan, along with Prairie Brand, have given us the seed to service those in-season needs, numbers that you can be confident in to bring in the top yields you expect.

Seed will be available at each of our 3 distribution centers (Portland, Thornton and Clear Lake), so please let us know of any specific needs you might have.

OTHER SEED: Remember, along with a complete lineup of seed corn and soybeans, we also have all of your forage needs, including Premium Leafhopper Alfalfa to top the list, all the way across the board to grasses for waterways as well as your lawn that can be ordered.

Some products are on hand and ready to be delivered or picked up. Specialty mixes are usually only one day away from warehouse stock.

ONE MORE LOOK: I encourage each of you to take another look at your cropping plan, since planting time is getting near and we want you to feel confident about how things have been laid out.

We still have time to put any concerns behind us, and we want you to begin the season feeling good about identifying all possible limiting factors.

NEW SERVICE: One of the new services we will be introducing this year is **Tissue Testing.**

We feel as though we have a program with high integrity to identify any deficiencies prior to the stage of becoming a yield robber.

If you are interested in this service, give us a call.

FIELD MAPS: We are in the process of putting together all data on the field maps that will be needed for our spreading and spraying services to be as accurate and as efficient as possible going into spring.

Please stop by or give us a call to double check that everything is in order.

SEED DELIVERY: Another service we are in the process of is seed delivery. Please help out as soon as you can by getting a place readied for whatever seed you may want to have delivered.

As always, **PLEASE CALL ME AT 641-420-1824** with any questions or concerns, and let's all have a very safe and productive spring.



**Bill's
Crop
Report**
By
Bill Riley

Well, it has now been a year since I came to North Iowa Cooperative, and it has been a very interesting time and a tremendous learning experience as I have worked for and with you on your crop products, programs and services.

I want to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to all the customers who have been so helpful in this process of helping me get to know your operations, your needs, and what we at North Iowa Cooperative can do to serve you and meet your expectations for service.

We know that to earn your business tomorrow we need to deliver the goods today, and we work very hard to do that.

I know all of the employees at all locations and in all departments have **Customer Service The Number 1 Priority.**

That is what our business is all about, that's what separates us from others, and we will always work hard to earn your business today and tomorrow so we can earn it for the future.

Again, thank you one and all for the welcome that has been extended to my family and to me to your cooperative and your communities, and to your farms and fields.

I am looking forward to the upcoming spring and to learning more as we move forward so that I can better serve you and better serve your agronomy needs.

As we look to spring, with all the snow cover and the likelihood of saturated soils as these drifts and snow banks melt, this spring is shaping up to be a soggy one that will be even more soggy and therefore more challenging if we get substantial spring showers.

We also know we have a considerable amount of carryover work remaining from last fall along with the normally heavy workload every spring brings to us, and with that in mind I think you can understand why it's important to do everything we can do now to plan, prepare and to get all the preliminaries lined up and

ready to go.

The bottom line is the more we do now, before the big push in the fields gets started, the more time we will have to do time-sensitive work when it does get here.

Probably the first thing out of the chute will be to be sure to take care of any and all dry fertilizer spreading work on the spring schedule, so if you have fields needing P & K this spring, be sure those acres are listed with us as soon as possible.

We want to try to get right out just as soon as fields are open, perhaps even getting into some to spread over frozen ground if we can, and that means we need to have spreading orders and needs confirmed right away.

Next we come to the NH-3 work, and here again, we want and need to have the products, equipment lined up in advance.

Next we'll get into the pre-plant liquid nitrogen applications, and if you haven't talked to us yet about applying one of the pre-plant products ahead of the post, please do so, since the benefits and advantages are fantastic, the cost is economical, the results exceptional and the improved performance and yields will certainly be noticed.

Of course we also need to be sure we've covered such details as having your **2010 Private Pesticide Applicator License** information into us before spring arrives and having **All Field Maps In & Up To Date** well before any products are spread or sprayed, since this is an absolute must to assure timely, accurate service.

There's a lot to do, time is running short and spring will be here soon. Let's take care of these things today so we can all concentrate on the big jobs of getting the corn and soybeans in the ground in the most timely manner.



**Mark's
Crop
Report**
By
Mark Bausch

After what seems to have been a **Never Ending Winter**, spring is at last on the horizon. We've had a lit-

tle snow melting, the days are getting longer and at last the sun is shining for more than a few hours at a time.

During the past few weeks I've been out and about talking to customers, and I will continue to be coming out, since in the next few weeks I hope to meet with all of the customers I work with to go over application maps for this spring's spreading and spraying services.

Please be sure you let me know if there have been or will be any changes in your corn and soybean acres, if there have been changes made in fields or field boundaries, and of course if there are any changes or modifications in your crop plans that would be different from those we've previously discussed.

The guys in the shop are continuing to go through our custom application spreading and spraying machines, the tender trucks, the NH-3 equipment and everything else so we will be field-ready as spring arrives.

It's going to be a long and busy season, and we're doing all we can in advance so that we can minimize delays and downtime.

As Dennis has noted in his article elsewhere, this year your North Iowa Cooperative Agronomy Department is promoting a new service in corn and soybeans: **Plant Tissue Testing.**

The primary benefit of this service is in helping us to identify any shortages in nutrients, specifically micronutrients, at different stages of the crop's growth.

This latest technology will further help us identify potential yield limiting factors so that we can be more successful in **Controlling The Controllable.**

Even though there is still a lot of snow on the ground, spring is coming on fast and I am looking forward to doing business with and providing services to all of you.

Let's hope for a warm, dry, early arriving spring so we can get started.

**Have You Checked Your Bins
This Week?**

During March?

Since Valentine's Day?

During 2010?

**If You Can't Say "YES"
To Any/All Of The Above**

CHECK YOUR BINS TODAY

The Grain Report

By
Craig Backhaus



GRAIN QUALITY CONCERNS: I really can not over-emphasize the importance or urgency of asking all of you to **Please Check Your Bins**, nor can I over-state the value of doing so, since there is absolutely no doubt in anyone's mind that the 2009 corn crop is not keeping well in storage.

All of the basic reasons for this have already been stated many times and many places, and they all add up to a lower quality crop that went into the bins last fall being more susceptible to damage, and more likely to go out of condition much faster than would a crop of normal quality.

The severity of this winter may have helped to hold back the damaging effects of higher moisture grain, the higher content of fines and FM, and the growth of molds somewhat, but as temperatures start to climb these factors will quickly cause significant deterioration in grain quality.

Molds can start growing in corn that is above 16.5% moisture at temperatures as low as 40 degrees, and as these molds metabolize they generate heat, pushing grain temperatures even higher and accelerating the deterioration process.

Additionally, with so much snow and the strong winds of this winter, it's likely snow seeped into the bin, settled on the surface and formed a crust over the top layer that will inhibit aeration.

Now that some of the snow is melting and access to the bins is once again open, I highly recommend pulling the core out of each bin so you can check on how it has held up through these tough winter months, and so you can take moisture and temperature readings.

This will also help clear the center core of the fines and FM that typically congregate there and thus serve as a starting point for runaway damage.

USAGE UP: Another indicator of the lower quality of the 2009 corn crop is the increased usage of corn by the ethanol and livestock sectors.

Livestock producers are having to feed more bushels of corn to get

their animals to reach market weight, since the feed efficiency and rates of gain are lower with the lower quality 2009 crop.

The ethanol industry must also use more bushels of corn to get the optimum economic yield of alcohol, since the starch levels of the 2009 corn crop are much lower.

It should be interesting to see how the increased usage by these two key sectors of demand might affect the figures in the **March 31st Stocks On Hand Report** from USDA, as many traders feel the new usage numbers should reflect a faster rate of disappearance.

S & D REPORT: Speaking of USDA reports, we'll have the most recent **Supply & Demand Report** information in front of us by the time you are reading these words, since USDA will be coming out with those figures March 10th.

Included in this report will be USDA's re-survey of the acres not harvested last fall due to the late harvest and early arrival of severe winter weather.

The original USDA report on January 12th counted all acres as harvested, but following a re-survey of results the USDA stated they felt as much as 600 million bushels of grain remained in the fields.

Recently, the consensus in the trade has been that at least 200 million bushels of corn has not been harvested this past fall, and of that they feel as much as 20 million bushels are total losses.

PLANTING INTENTIONS: On March 31st we will get yet another USDA Report, the **2010 Planting Intentions** estimates, and this one has typically had a substantial impact on our corn and soybean markets for the period leading up to and just after the figures are released.

With the basic fundamentals in the market mostly bearish, the "buzz" generated from the figures in these various reports, and of course speculation and concerns over the weather as we approach and enter

the planting season, will likely be the only "news" that would promote a rally, so be watching for these opportunities, which will come and go very quickly in the weeks ahead.



Lumber Yard Notes

By
Marley Freese

Andersen Windows, Inc. has announced a new program to make it easier for you to identify products that meet the new and stricter tax credit performance requirements.

It's the EcoExcel Energy Performance Package, and using it will eliminate any doubt or confusion from the minds of builders, remodelers and homeowners about which Andersen windows and doors qualify for the government's \$1,500.00 tax bill credit, which is available for qualifying products purchased and installed throughout 2010.

Andersen's have also eased the process of claiming the tax credit by providing the documentation needed to receive it.

With the new energy tax credits now available there are even greater incentives for you to choose window and doors that have Energy Saving Features built into them.

However, it is important to choose wisely, and the new EcoExcel Energy Performance Package helps you do that too.

All Andersen windows and patio doors with the EcoExcel Package will qualify for the energy tax credit, and Andersen's has the widest selection of qualifying products available, plus with the EcoExcel Package there is no need for expensive upgrades.

For additional information, contact Gene Warner at Farmers Lumber in Clear Lake. The number there is 641-357-2151.

HERE ARE THE E-MAIL ADDRESSES OF NORTH IOWA COOPERATIVE STAFF

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**Your
Manager's
Comments**
By
Chuck Schafer

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**Presorted Standard
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The tremendous advances that have occurred in crop production, genetics and technology have now taken us to crop yields that just 5 years ago were only in the imagination.

These higher yields and bigger crops have led to bigger equipment on your farms to harvest and transport your corn and soybeans, enabling you to combine more acres in less time and to haul more bushels into us in less time as well.

In response, in recent years your North Iowa Cooperative has been working hard in an on-going effort to upgrade, expand and enhance the entire grain receiving, drying, handling and storage system at our locations to keep pace with you and to better serve your grain needs.

As I briefly touched on in my article in the previous issue of the newsletter, the Board of Directors and Management of your North Iowa Cooperative have made the decision to once again dedicate substantial resources on expanding and improving our grain receiving, drying and storage capabilities and capacities to best serve the needs of our customers for the immediate and long term future.

Two major projects have been scheduled for this season's agenda:

At Thornton: We will be installing a new Sukup tower dryer with a 4,700 bushels per hour drying capacity, thus doubling the current rate of drying at Thornton.

We will be dumping wet corn dump at the west dump pit, thus increasing our receiving capabilities to handle more wet corn from your fields.

At Plymouth: Subject to building permits and approval from the Plymouth City Council, we will be installing a new 3,000 bushels per hour Sukup tower dryer, thus tripling the current drying capacity now in use at Plymouth.

Additionally, we will be putting up 2 new steel storage bins, each of which will hold 250,000 bushels of grain, plus we are putting up a 60,000 bushel bin that will be dedicated to holding wet corn as it awaits drying.

To enhance grain receiving at the Plymouth location, we are also installing a 1,000 bushels per hour

receiving pit and a 10,000 bushels per hour grain leg.

INSIDE PROJECTS: The severe winter has certainly taken a toll on everyone, and while there hasn't been much that we could do outdoors, I am very pleased to report that during this past winter we've been working on a couple of remodeling projects indoors at the Plymouth and Thornton offices.

If you've been in to see the "**Fresh New Look**" as these projects have taken shape, I hope you'll agree they are both more functional for conducting business and also more attractive, and if you haven't stopped in lately, we hope you'll do so to take a look at these nice improvements.

WELCOME TODD: I am pleased to announce that beginning in April Todd Zietler will be joining your North Iowa Cooperative as the new United LP Operations Manager at our Mason City location.

Todd, who is originally from Owen, Wisconsin, brings an outstanding background and over 20 years of sales and service experience in the propane industry with him to this key assignment for your cooperative.

Nancy Amundson will be retiring, but will continue working full-time through the end of July to assist in every way as Todd becomes more familiar with all areas of operations at United LP, and she will then switch to a part-time schedule for the future.

We are both pleased and excited to have a man of Todd's experience and expertise assuming these important duties and responsibilities, and I ask that you join with me in welcoming him to our cooperative and communities as he settles in and works to serve your propane needs for the future.

OFFICER ELECTION: At the January meeting your Board of Directors elected the individuals who will serve as

officers on the Board. They are:

**Marcus Spotts - Chairman
Bruce Schlichting - Vice-Chairman
Tom Hyde - Secretary**

These officers will serve for the remainder of the 2010 fiscal year and through the Annual Meeting in December.

AN HONOR: I was very honored to be selected at the January Annual Meeting of AGP in Omaha to serve out the final year of a three year term on the AGP Board of Directors.

This opening on their Board was created upon the retirement from Board service of one of the 5 local cooperative manager Directors who serve on AGP's nine Director Board, with the remaining 4 Director positions held by local producers.

AGP is one of the major regional cooperative associations that your cooperative belongs to and with whom we conduct a variety of business transactions, most notably with their soybean processing facilities in Mason City and Eagle Grove.

It is owned by local cooperatives like North Iowa Cooperative. While AGP is most commonly associated with the local plants they operate in Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri and Nebraska, they are also very active in the soybean industry here in the United States, North America and in many nations around the world.

Direct Corn Bids Available To



**Contact Any Location Of
NORTH IOWA COOPERATIVE
Or Visit With Craig Backhaus
1-800-531-9241
For Direct Bids To
GOLDEN GRAIN ENERGY**