

FEBRUARY
2025

RiverCountry CO-OP



IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 REPORT FROM BRUCE MLSNA, CEO
- 4 FINANCE UPDATE
- 5 ENERGY UPDATE
- 6 RETAIL UPDATE
- 8 AGRONOMY UPDATE
- 11 GRAIN UPDATE
- 12 FEED UPDATE

YOUR GUIDE TO LOCAL FARMING NEWS & MORE

Your Cooperative

It's the end of January and for the first time in maybe two years, we have had a somewhat normal month for cold weather but are lacking in snow. The weather plays havoc on our businesses, whether it's too cold, too wet, too warm or too dry. In 2024, we saw all of the variations in different seasons which affected your Co-op, from energy, agronomy, grain and feed.

Just some notes and a recap from 2024; last August we closed the books on another fiscal year. **Financially, sales revenues for the year ended around \$300 million with a net profit of around 3%, similar to the previous year.** In 2024, revenues were challenged by the weather in all our ag businesses and energy divisions. A warm winter that was the warmest on record in Wisconsin challenged volumes in propane and fuel. Then what followed was a wet late spring,

which saw 15% of the agronomy market acres not planted, which effected our agronomy operations. As we finished our growing season, unseasonably warm temperatures helped mature a late crop, and a dry October assisted in a harvest that showed diminished yields, resulting in lower grain volume intakes from the previous record year. In other business units, **last fiscal year in the feed division, the feed business' growth continued as record tonnages were manufactured in our feed facilities, mainly through the Owen production facility.** Year over year, volume growth exceeded fifteen percent and kept our growth at this rate consistent with the last five years. Higher volumes lowered our manufacturing costs, which in-turn was passed onto our feed clients. In the review of all of our businesses, we made adjustments and sold some business units that we determined did not meet critical benchmarks. Some of these

businesses were one of our country stores and four of our convenience stores. We determined that these assets were not meeting our return on investment guidelines and the reinvestment needed in these assets was challenged by the economics and the long-term sustainability of these businesses.

As a Co-op, we have reinvested in operations in several areas to improve efficiencies, update equipment and improve service.

As of February, we are already six months into this fiscal year. 2025 will hopefully bring a positive change from 2024 in terms of more favorable seasonal



Stock retirement checks

Update

by Bruce Mlsna, CEO



weather patterns and better farm economics. There is also the challenge of a new congress and administration that awaits us all. As a Co-op, we have reinvested in operations in several areas to improve efficiencies, update equipment and improve service. **As we look at this year's objectives and challenges, we are focusing more on equipment and applications to keep up with**

the growth in feed and improve agronomy technology with equipment that is more efficient and precise. We have also added updates in energy which include some new trucks and a new bulk fuel depot in Athens. At this time, we have no major acquisitions planned and are working toward improving balance sheet strength through paying down long-term debt and streamlining operations to

be as efficient and low overhead as possible. We continue to evaluate all our business models to make sure we are meeting our customers' expectations and we receive a return on investment that makes it a sustainable business unit long term.

Thanks for the business. ■

2024 Annual Meeting

The Co-op's annual meeting was held in Curtis, WI, on December 14th at approximately 12:30 PM. President Randy Mahr presided over the meeting that saw approximately 85 registered stockholders in attendance and a quorum was determined by Secretary Eric Vogel. All board members were introduced in attendance. Bruce Mlsna, our CEO, presented the audited financial report, update on operations and outlook for 2025. A dividend was declared based on the net profit and will be paid out in late February.

The mail ballots were collected and counted by the tellers as there were two votes on referendum. A vote was held for a western district board member between incumbent Les Danielson of Cadott and Evan Hillan of Sheldon.

...approximately 85 registered stockholders in attendance...

Vote totals showed Danielson winning re-election for a three-year term.

The other vote was to allow an amendment wording change to the Articles of Incorporation for the Co-op to remove the limitation of any restriction on the amount of authorization of Preferred Stock. The ballot measure also passed.

Question and answer period commenced and adjournment after door prizes were given out was declared at approximately 1:30 PM. ■



2025 Board Members

(Pictured L to R): Marc Boettcher, Jeremy Goessl, Eric Vogel, Randy Mahr, Brad Juedes, Steve Wall, Doug Geiger and Les Danielson



1099 Helpful Information

by David Wozniak, Senior Financial Officer
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Happy New Year! This is my first newsletter article since I took over for Marty Goss after his retirement in July. A little about me—I grew up in the Stanley area and got my bachelor’s degree from UW – Platteville. After graduation, I started my career in public accounting at CliftonLarsonAllen. I started at River Country Co-op in August 2019 as the Controller.

By the time this newsletter is published, 1099’s will have been sent out. I frequently get questions on “box 1” and “box 3” amounts. Box 1 are the Patronage Dividends. If you have an amount in Box 1, you will have received a patronage check last March. For most patrons, the amount in Box 1 will not agree with that check amount. Why is that? Patronage dividends have two parts, cash and equity. Box 1 Patronage Dividends includes both the cash and equity portion. The cash portion is the amount paid by check. The equity portion is your investment in your cooperative. The equity dividend is paid out as an equity retirement at a later date.

For most patrons, the amount in Box 1 will not agree with that check amount. Why is that? Patronage dividends have two parts, cash and equity.

An additional note on Patronage Dividends, they may not be taxable. If your purchases from the co-op are for personal use and not deductible, dividends from the co-op are not considered income. As always, consult your tax professional. Everyone’s tax situation is different.

Box 3 Per-Unit Retain Allocations are related to grain sales to River Country Co-op. The IRS allows the Co-op to classify grain purchases from patrons as Per-Unit Retain Allocations Paid in Money. This amount will not agree with the amount of your grain checks. This amount is before drying and checkoff fees. **A detailed report of this amount along with your**

1099-PATR can be found on the River Country Member Portal under Patronage and then 1099-PATR. The link is on the bottom of the page.

If you have not set up access for the portal, check out our website, rivercountrycoop.com, and click on “My Account” and then “River Country Member Portal”. After that there is a “First time sign on” link. If you have trouble, please feel free to call the office. Grain ticket information and account activity can also be accessed on the portal.

Patronage dividend checks for the Co-op’s August 31, 2024 fiscal year will be mailed in the next 60 days. Total patronage dividend approved by the board for fiscal year 2024 was \$1,330,000. ■

9999 MR PRODUCER
 Phone: 715-723-2828
 01/27/25 10:46:04

RiverCountry CO-OP
 715-723-2828 | 1-800-828-8395

2024 Form 1099-PATR

Menu Patronage Local & Regional Equity Detail

PAVER'S name, street address, city, state, ZIP code and telephone no. RIVER COUNTRY CO-OP 1080 WEST RIVER STREET CHIPPEWA FALLS WI 54729		1 Patronage dividends \$100	2024	Taxable Distributions Received From Cooperatives
PAVER'S TIN		2 Nonpatronage distributions \$		
RECIPIENT'S TIN 00-0000000		3 Per-unit retain allocations \$100		
RECIPIENT'S name MR PRODUCER		4 Federal income tax withheld \$	5 Redeemed nonqualified notices \$	Copy X For Viewing on Web Browser. This is important tax information and is being furnished to the Internal Revenue Service. If you are required to file a return, a negligence penalty or other sanction may be imposed on you if this income is taxable and the IRS determines that it has not been reported.
Street address		6 Section 199A(g) deduction \$0.00	7 Qualified payments (Section 199A(b)(7)) \$200	
City, State, and ZIP code		8 Section 199A(a) qual. items \$200	9 Section 199A(a) SSTB items \$.00	
Account number		10 Investment Credit \$	11 Work opportunity credit \$	
2nd TIN not. <input type="checkbox"/>		12 Other credits and deductions \$	13 Specified Coop. X	

View year-end report of Grain Settlements with 1099 Payments-Box3 using Adobe® Acrobat®

Contact RIVER COUNTRY CO-OP

eAgVantage Local & Regional Equity Detail

9999 - MR. PRODUCER +/-

Year	Qualified	Division	Local	Regional
2019	Yes	RIVER COUNTRY COOP	9000.00	0.00
2020	Yes	RIVER COUNTRY COOP	9000.00	0.00
2021	Yes	RIVER COUNTRY COOP	9000.00	0.00
2022	Yes	RIVER COUNTRY COOP	9000.00	0.00
2023	Yes	RIVER COUNTRY COOP	9000.00	0.00
Total Equity			45000.00	0.00

2022 1099-PATR 2023 1099-PATR 2024 1099-PATR

Contact RIVER COUNTRY CO-OP



Refined Fuels Investments for the Future

by David Hartley, VP of Energy | davidh@rivercountrycoop.com | 715-723-2828

As our Refined Fuel business continues to grow and change, we are planning to service your needs now and in the future. **We recently completed building a state of the art refined fuel depot located at our existing facility in Athens, WI.** The new fuel depot is equipped with six 30,000 gallon tanks with room for six additional tanks, giving us flexibility to continue to grow and to meet your needs as they change. It is more than two times larger than our existing facility which was located in Edgar. It also is equipped with a “bottom loading” feature allowing our drivers to fill without having to climb on the top of the truck, which is much safer and less time consuming.



6 – 30,000 gallon tanks - expandable to 12 tanks

Did you know that you can access the tank monitors with your smart phone to see your tank levels?



Ciara and Tim demonstrating new loading and inventory management at the new Athens fuel depot



We continue to utilize tank monitors, giving you the piece of mind to know we have an “eye” in your tank. Did you know that you can access the tank monitors with your smart phone to see your tank levels? **If you would like access to the tank monitors or to sign up for tank monitors, please reach out and we will get you set up. ■**



New fuel depot in Athens, WI



Spirit Pumps

by Heather Barrows, VP of Retail-West
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Part of the being a Co-op is giving back to our communities. River Country Co-op has installed a new fundraising opportunity for some of our local school districts. **We have installed three "Spirit Pumps" located in Chippewa and Cadott.** Spirit pumps are gas pumps that are designated to raise money for local organizations.

How it works

A percentage of each sale at that specific pump is donated back to the organization. Spirit pumps provide an easy way for consumers to support their communities by just filling up their cars. Spirit pumps also raise awareness about good works in the community. After our first three months of the pumps up and running, we were able donate almost \$900.00 back to the athletic departments at Chi-hi, McDonell, and Cadott High Schools. **Next time you are out and about, please consider filling up and supporting the cause.** ■



Cadott High School Spirit Pump



McDonell Catholic High School Spirit Pump



Chi-High School Spirit Pump

...we were able donate almost \$900.00 back to the athletic departments



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SEARCH FOR RIVER COUNTRY REWARDS IN THE APP STORE OR SCAN THE QR CODE. →





C-store Updates



by Brad Podevels, VP of Retail-East
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Edgar and Dorchester add DEF (Diesel Exhaust Fluid) to their Diesel Islands

At Edgar, we had updated the gas islands, sumps and containments a few years ago, and now it was time to update the diesel products to stay in compliance with state regulations. All containments under the pumps were replaced, along with new spill buckets, sump containments and all new wiring from the building to the islands. With this project, we figured it would be a great time to add DEF out at the pumps, giving our customers the convenience to add DEF to their trucks while filling.

Our Dorchester c-store involved a few more changes.

We made all the same updates and repairs needed to be done to stay in compliance, as well as needing to remove the bulk fueling station and re-pipe those tanks to the diesel islands. We removed a 35 year old 12,000 gallon underground tank that was no longer needed. DMV chip readers were also installed at all the Dorchester diesel pumps again offering another great opportunity to add DEF to the diesel islands.

We are working to continually keep facilities updated and looking new. The c-stores are an important part of the co-op that provides profits and service to our members. ■



Edgar C-store
All new upgrades to the diesel islands



Edgar and Dorchester C-stores - DEF pumps added at the diesel islands at each location



Agronomy Update

by Mike Christenson, VP of Agronomy
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I'm honored to join River Country Co-op as the Vice President of Agronomy in January 2025. Agriculture has been a central part of my life from an early age, growing up on a dairy farm in Amery, WI. My passion for the industry led me to pursue studies in Animal Science and Agronomy at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

After graduating, I spent 11 years working as an agronomist, starting in northwest Illinois before returning to New Richmond, WI, to continue my career. In 2010, I transitioned into an agronomy manager role with a neighboring cooperative, where I served until 2021. Over the final three years of my tenure, I focused on fertilizer procurement, gaining valuable insights into the supply chain and operational efficiencies. Cooperatives have played a key role in shaping my career, and I am excited to bring my experience and passion for agriculture to the River Country team. **I look forward to contributing to the growth and success of our cooperative and continuing to support the agricultural community.**

The year 2024 presented significant challenges for many producers, with weather extremes on both ends: too wet to start and too dry to finish the year. While these weather fluctuations are beyond our control, planning for 2025 is crucial to ensuring both your success and ours at River Country Co-op. **This winter, we've dedicated significant focus to financial analysis and break-even calculations with our producers.**

...we've dedicated significant focus to financial analysis and break-even calculations with our producers.

As of January 2025, the estimated break-even prices for corn and soybeans in Wisconsin are \$4.65 per bushel for corn and \$10.80 per bushel for soybeans. These prices are higher than the USDA's projections of \$3.90 per bushel for corn and \$10.00 per bushel for soybeans. Keep in mind that these estimates factor in input costs, machinery costs, and land rent, but they can vary significantly from one farming operation to another.

To be successful this year, it's essential to understand your break-even cost for each of your farms, fields, and crops. This knowledge will allow you to price and sell your grain effectively when market opportunities arise.

Our agronomy team is here to support you with these decisions. They can provide insights on crop nutrient needs, manure applications, seed placement, and herbicide options.

For our dairy and beef producers, production costs are a daily consideration for your herds, but don't forget about your alfalfa crop! With minimal snow cover and challenging weather conditions last summer, your alfalfa fields may face additional stress as we enter early 2025. Be sure to ask your agronomists to scout your fields this spring as they begin to green up and break dormancy. On a positive note, potash prices are currently very attractive. If your soil tests indicate it's time to build up soil potassium levels, this year may be an excellent opportunity to do so.

I want to take a moment to thank you for your continued trust in our team. We're looking forward to working with you and earning your business throughout 2025! ■



Fendt Airflow - new in 2025



Growing a Profitable Crop

by Luke Peterson, CCA, Agronomist
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I hope everyone's New Year is off to a fantastic start and you are reading this in much warmer weather than I am writing it in (-14 this morning without any windchill certainly wakes a person up in the morning). For the folks with animals and livestock, hopefully whatever is supposed to be liquid still is and you can feel your fingers and toes.

After a very humbling 2024 growing season (at least in the central part of the territory), things should only be able to trend upward, hopefully. **A few things that I would give some serious consideration heading into the 2025 season are evaluating hay stands in the spring** (particularly older fields), and the importance of soil sampling, especially in times of less-than-ideal margins.

It's no secret that the hay ground in the area got pummeled this past summer. Soils were constantly under saturated conditions, and the equipment we see out in the fields never seem to get smaller. In many fields you can see exactly where the wheel traffic had occurred for one or more crops. Also, there is no doubt that feed inventories are quite high of low-quality feed. I feel that if acres are in questionable production, it makes more sense financially to get them rotated out and have the potential of better-quality forage, in addition to capturing the nitrogen credits for the following crop, ideally corn. There also is the option of interseeding annual or even perennial grasses, but this often is more of a Band-Aid approach and requires some cooperation from Mother Nature. We all know what kind of sandwiches she likes to hand out from time to time... **Talk to one of the River Country Co-op agronomy experts to develop a plan, and put boots on the ground when things change from brown to green in the spring.**

Everyone knows fertilizer is a wonderful tool for farmers to be using, but how much is actually needed to grow a PROFITABLE crop.

It's obvious that margins out there are less than ideal on the cropping front. Everyone knows fertilizer is a wonderful tool for farmers to be using, but how much is actually needed to grow a PROFITABLE crop. We all like to chase yield but, in my eyes, it makes much more sense to be profitable. Knowing where the soil levels are is the first step in this equation. Even though sampling does add another expense, it often times will save you money on fertilizer. **Even if it doesn't save you money on fertilizer, it will direct you to spend your money WISER!** For those that have been diligent and have fields up to sufficient levels, do your best to maintain these levels. It's much easier to maintain levels instead of trying to play catch up and build nutrient levels. On the flip side, for those that have levels on the excessive end of the spectrum, it might be a good time to bring those levels back in check. Again, work with your trusted advisor and develop a plan and/or budget. Proactive is much better than reactive.

Best of luck for a safe and successful 2025! ■



Alfalfa Crops

by Joe Salter, Director of Agronomy Sales
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What can we expect from our alfalfa crop for 2025?

Forage quality continues to be a struggle with the challenges presented to us during the 2024 growing season. Currently, the lack of snow cover is bringing the harshness of the winter cold. **Evaluating your alfalfa stand will help you make better crop rotation/planting decisions for 2025.** But what are we evaluating? The following factors influence winter survival; variety, stand age, fertility, moisture/drainage and timing of fall cut. Weather is another factor that influences winter survival. Wet fall conditions, low soil temperatures, inconsistent snow cover, and freeze-thaw periods all play a role in the health of your stand.

The selection of the right variety can play a significant role in the health of your alfalfa stand. **It is very important to select a variety with the right fall dormancy and winter hardiness for a greater chance of winter survival.** In Wisconsin, a fall dormancy rating of FD 2 or FD 3 is the most common, which have the most adaptability for winter survival. Winter hardiness is the plant's ability to survive the winter without death or major injury. Winter hardiness ratings of WH 1 or WH 2 are the most common in Wisconsin.

River Country Co-op sells for two of the major alfalfa breeders in the United States. Both Croplan alfalfa and Legacy alfalfa have long been reputable and trustworthy alfalfa brands in our sales footprint. Both companies offer a wide range of products with fall dormancy and winter hardiness ratings that will meet your needs. To better understand the health of your alfalfa stands and the varieties we have to offer, reach out to your local River Country Agronomist today. ■

**Interested in state of the art applicator and technology?
Ask an agronomist about our airflow applicators available!**





Grain Update

by Nathan LeMay, VP of Grain
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715-214-5025

I remember walking around a science fair in middle school, and encountering the most accurate weather forecasting instrument that I have seen to this day. **They called it a “weather rock”!** It consisted of a rock hanging from a rope. The weather rock came with a simple operation guide. If the stone is wet, it’s raining. If dry, its not raining. If the stone is white, it’s snowing. If you cannot see the stone, it’s foggy. If the stone is gone, you’re in a tornado. As much as we all get inundated with advanced weather pattern indicators like the “El Nino”, **I think sometimes we could benefit from a simple weather rock.** In all seriousness, many of our producers struggled to plant a crop this past spring, due to the damp conditions. The crops that did make their way through the soil were met with leaching nutrients. Despite all of these challenges, most northern Wisconsin farmers still managed to produce a crop. It may not have been one for the record books, but a crop nonetheless. Thanks to all of these hard efforts, we still found ourselves scrambling to find space at many of our sites. **Although the crop volume was down, we did see higher test weights on average, and an overall dryer crop coming off the field.** What the farmer lost in yield toward the end of the growing season was partially recouped by lower drying expenses, and test weight discounts.

With the local farmer’s ability to consistently grow a crop, River Country Co-op is committed to offering a quality marketing destination. During 2024, we were able to make various improvements and updates. The Brokaw location has always struggled with flooding. This causes heaving mechanical components, lost grain, and a perfect gathering place for LOTS of rats. Over the years, we have slowly been addressing this issue. **In 2024, we were able to make a leap in the right direction with one of the most technical phases of concrete being completed.** We are already seeing a tremendous improvement. The co-op was also able to do some similar concrete work around the scale in Dorchester, and freshen up the turners in our Marathon dryer. The turners in a dryer are necessary to keep grain drying uniformly. Unfortunately, like everything else in the grain business, the turners see a lot of wear, and were essentially gone. **As a patron owned company, we will continue to invest in these sites to offer a quality destination for the local grain producer.**

Getting the bushels through the door is a big part of the game, but just as important is an effective marketing strategy. In 2025, I have no doubt that we will be faced with new opportunities and challenges in the grain market. One opportunity that has already presented itself are the stocks cut in the January WASDE report. What appeared to be a 2 billion+ bushel carryout on corn has been adjusted to a 1.5 billion bushel carryout. Many private estimates on soybean carryout have been north of 500 million bushels,



Board members, Eric Vogel and Brad Juedes at Brokaw Grain

with some nearing 800 million bushels. The USDA knocked 90 million bushels off in January to bring us to 380 million bushels. What does all this mean? **It is important to get the full picture. Instead of simply looking at current carryout numbers vs. historical numbers, we often look at something called the “stocks to use ratio”.** This ratio offers a tangible estimate to evaluate the current supply and demand situation. This can be calculated by simply taking the stocks and dividing them by the usage on the latest WASDE report. Currently, corn is an estimated 10.2%, and soybeans are an estimated 8.7%. Historically at these levels, Wisconsin corn has seen prices of approximately \$4.25. Not too far off the current \$4.15. Soybeans at an 8.7% stock to use ratio have historically traded around \$10.25 in Wisconsin. **With the current average price of soybeans around \$9.35, it would seem that there is some potential upside in soybeans, though it feels like there is a lot of skepticism around this number.** Much of this stems from what appears to be another record South American soybean crop on its way. There is around a \$0.75 trade range in the soybean stock-to-use versus price correlation that I think this market is taking advantage of with the skeptical environment. In short, pending USDA adjustments and fundamental pressure, I don’t believe we are grossly over or underpriced. To get an updated evaluation, give us a call at 715-568-2933.

As I wrap this up, I want to introduce you to an app that we have recently released to farmers. **It can be found by searching “River Country Ag” in your app store.** To sign into the app, you simply need to enter whatever mobile phone number is on your account. The app will then send a confirmation code to this number, and you’re in. **Once in the app, you can easily manage your contracts, markets, pricing offers, storage balances, scale tickets, prepaids, settlements, and more.** This is a convenient way for a producer to stay connected to their crop. We are happy to help set this up, and answer any other questions that you may have! As always, do not hesitate to reach out, and thank you for allowing us to be a part of your operation! ■



Feed News

by Brian Streveler, VP of Feed
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Greetings from the Feed Department.

It's hard to believe that 2024 is in the past and we are on to 2025. This past year we have seen another year of growth in the feed division. We had another year with increased sales. As we handle more feed through the mills, this helps keep our production costs down.

With keeping cost down and an increase in sales, this past year was our most profitable since the new feed mill was built in 2018. Thank you for your feed business. We would not have had this success without our customers!

Most of the growth has come with increases in dairy feed business, but we have also seen increases in many other areas. With additional chick barns being built, we have increased focus in that area and are seeing very good results. This chicken business is also helpful in utilizing more of our customer locally grown corn. There has also been an increase in organic and NON-Gmo feed sales out of our Athens location. Joe Petrie was hired this spring as our new location manager at Athens. Joe has been in agriculture his whole career and has done a great job with customer service and moving the location to run efficiently again. The increases out of Athens have been to local customers, and we are also producing organic and NON-Gmo feed for another feed company.

As we look forward to 2025, your Co-op continues to invest in the future with a focus on efficiency. We have purchased two new trucks to help get all the feed hauled. All of our new trucks have high output augers. These new trucks can unload a semi of feed in less than ten minutes for most feeds. This helps us get more feed hauled per truck in a day. We are also putting in a new robotic stacker for our bagging line. This will save on labor and help reduce injuries. Additional ingredient storage bins are being added to allow us to buy more ingredients in bulk which will help us keep feed cost down and improve production over using bagged product.

Finally, as a co-op, we are always looking for ways to serve you, our customer, better. **We are hosting many meetings in the near future for dairy and beef producers, horse owners and Show Clinics for our youth.** We are currently running promotions on beef products and our RiverMax line of inoculants. We also have added another bag delivery truck, set up with

forklifts for on-farm delivery. Keep-fill programs are also being utilized by many of our customers. If interested in any of these products or services, please call customer service in Owen. Thank you again for your business. We look forward to working with you and achieving another successful year! ■





Marathon Feed & Grain

by Todd Heise, VP of Marathon Feed & Grain
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Marathon Feed & Grain

What does 2025 have in store for us? What will the markets do? What will the weather be like? There are many times a magic 8 ball would be helpful in making the right decision. Whatever the year brings, let it be positive both professionally and personally for all. Agriculture has its challenges, but it also has its rewards. Marathon Feed & Grain is here to help you be successful.

We would like to welcome Jayden Neiter to our MF&G shop. He wrenches on trucks to keep our fleet moving. Cyrus Dehnke joins his twin brother Levi; do not worry they are not identical. We are excited to announce that our work study students, Colton Mroczenski and Alex Pawlowicz, have graduated from Marathon High School. Both have joined our team as full-time employees and have gotten their CDL's. **We have a talented team, long-term employees, and new hires.** Together, we can provide the exceptional customer service that you expect and deserve from us. If you see a new face, please introduce yourself.

Mitchel Muelbeck will be our location manager at the fertilizer plant in Marathon. As a reminder, this is only a production facility. **ALL** fertilizer ordering, invoicing and payments are done at the Marathon Feed & Grain office. Tracy, Liz, and Jessie are the helpful staff in the MF&G office that will gladly help you. **ALL ORDERS must go through the office** before picking up. Only **BULK** fertilizer can be picked up and loaded out of the fertilizer plant. If there are any questions, before the spring rush hits, just give us a call. We would be happy to walk you through the steps to make things go as smoothly as possible.

Chad Simon and Joe Nord can help you with all your agronomy needs. They are available to meet you at MF&G, or on your farm. Just give them a call to talk about your spring inputs and planting needs.

Marathon Feed & Grain bought a 2025 Freightliner equipped with a 450 HP DD13 engine, a 12-speed auto shift factory steerable pusher and tag axle. The chassis is equipped with a 2025 Walinga feed body. Its tank has six compartments; two have the capacity for two tons each and the other four have the capacity for four tons each for a total of 20 tons. It is equipped with a top door, safety rail and LED work lights. Ricky Volm moved from our shop to bulk delivery driver. It has been a few years since he has been behind the wheel, but he is excited to get on the road and see our customers.

Here's to 2025, may it be the best it can be. As always, if you have any questions, please contact me. ■



Managing your Feeding Program through Inventory Management

by Angela Blume, Nutritionist
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Measuring and monitoring forage inventory has many benefits to a dairy operation. With the 2023 and 2024 growing seasons showing a variety of challenges in weather, many producers in the area have reduced inventories on hand. **Knowing both inventory quantity and quality is important for multiple reasons.** For example, if you find your inventory is running lower than average for the year, you may want to look at making a 10% reduction during the winter period vs. having to make a 40% reduction in the last 60 days. It is a lot easier to prevent negative situations, which cause dramatic feed changes, if you know your numbers early. Cows like consistency; making small changes over a longer period can reduce stress on animals and can spread out additional purchased feed costs longer. If done now, producers can also take advantage of lower feed ingredient prices and can possibly lock in feed at lower cost for the next six months.

The key is to take the time to measure and monitor inventories.



Meyer Family Dairy – Loyal, WI

There are several technologies farms can utilize to track and monitor inventory. You don't need fancy equipment to measure and monitor. The calculations and tools used 20 years ago still hold true today. The newer technologies allow for an additional tool to cross check the inventories if utilized correctly. The key is to take the time to measure and monitor inventories. Then finish with a plan that you and your team are on board with, specific for your dairy operation. When we are proactive in monitoring early, we can generate better conversations with your farm team and continue to move your dairy forward in finding the efficiencies to increase profitability.

Lastly, I want to thank you for your time. If you would like more information on monitoring and measuring forage inventory, please do not hesitate to contact me or any of the nutritionists at River Country Co-op. ■



Haylage and Corn Silage bunker at Clark Co. Line



Feed Nutrition Guidance

by John Feiten, Nutritionist
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The Future is Bright

Who among us was excited to feed our 1st crop haylage? I hear crickets...turns out the saying "Poor feed doesn't feed as bad as we think and good feed doesn't feed as good as we expect it to" holds true. Milk production has been surprisingly well given what was handed to our dairy farmers in May, June and July. Butterfat futures for the next six months are averaging \$3.13/# and milk protein has gained momentum since the lowly month of April when it fell to 0.83/#, to now averaging a profitable area of \$2/# the next six months. Not a great price, but as cheese exports are at a record pace, up 2.4% year over year, we will continue to see price improvement in that area. Diets can once again put some emphasis on making milk protein.

Rumen Protected Arginine

I recently read an article in The Journal of Dairy Science looking for ways to improve colostrum yield during these short photoperiod days of winter. The study took place at the University of Florida last year and by supplementing rumen protected arginine (RPA) in the prepartum period, they were able to influence a positive response in fat, true protein, lactose and total solids. Net Energy increased by a whopping 38% in colostrum with a yield gain of 13.75#'s in first milking colostrum production on multiparous cows. By day 21, treated cows showed +5.28 ECM and by day 84 multiparous cows were +9.46 ECM from the control group. RPA is not yet commercially available, but shows promising advancement in both colostrum and overall herd production improvement.



River Country Co-op is the only feed mill in the area to designate bin space to farmers wanting to store and feed their high oleic soybeans (HOSB).



What are High Oleic Soybeans?

River Country Co-op is the only feed mill in the area to designate bin space to farmers wanting to store and feed their high oleic soybeans (HOSB). Conventional soybeans contain about 50% of linoleic acid (C18:2), which can increase the risk of butterfat depression. HOSB contain greater than 70% oleic and less than 10% linoleic, which will increase milk production, maintain body condition and improve fertility and not cause depression of milk fat secretion. Is it possible to feed less purchased calcium salt fat in the diet when feeding HOSB? Possibly, but that is a conversation between producer goals and their nutritionist. University research is ongoing and even looking at feeding raw vs roasted HOSB. This technology offers dairy farmers new ways to capture more revenue from a product many already grow on their farms.

I hope you enjoyed the topics and share in my optimism for the dairy industry in 2025. ■



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