A Solid Start to 2017

BY CHAD DYLLA, GENERAL MANAGER

When you consider the rest of the country, and even some areas not far from us, we’ve enjoyed a very good spring. Virtually all our corn and most of our beans got into the ground before the rains came, and that moisture was needed. You don’t have to go very far west to find conditions still very dry.

I don’t know how many record crops we can have in a row, but if this summer gives us another one, we’ll definitely take the bushels with corn prices remaining stuck in the $3 range.

Favorable planting weather also meant conditions were right for the agronomy department to cover a lot of acres this spring. Now the emphasis switches to spraying, sidedressing and scouting. If you need help keeping an eye on your fields, don’t hesitate to get in touch with a Prairie Ag agronomist.

Grain outlook

Overall, Prairie Ag is having an improved financial year compared to 2016. We’re well aware the economic environment is still tough for ag, and we’re always looking for ways to help you improve your return on the crops you grow. We offer forward-pricing contracts that can capture premiums above current market prices, and extended-price contracts that can help you save on storage charges. Talk to me with any questions on the options we have available.

One opportunity I do want to mention is high-protein wheat. I expect the demand for quality wheat to be very good in our area, especially spring wheat.

Our grain guys are busy with maintenance in anticipation of another big crop this fall. In addition, they’re still working on picking up the remainder of last year’s bunkers.

Agronomy had a good spring fertilizer season, and a good spray season is underway. Seed sales were up and hopefully, with good weather, chemical application acres will be up as well. We found good markets to the east, so I would strongly encourage you to call us before you harvest your wheat this summer.

Finally, if you have any on-farm pickup needs, we have trucks that can be scheduled to help.
Well-Traveled Agronomist

Having grown up one generation removed from the farm, agronomist Michael Meester was interested in getting a better hands-on feel for agricultural production. So, he took his talents to Australia.

After graduating from South Dakota State University and working as an agronomist for cooperatives in Wisconsin and Grant County, South Dakota, the Webster native spent a year in Australia trading work for food and lodging.

“I worked on a dozen or so operations, backpacking between them and spending anywhere from a week to a month at each one,” he explains. “They ranged from vegetable production to sheep raising to a vineyard. It gave me the hands-on experience I was looking for and let me see what production agriculture looks like in a different ecosystem. Even more than today, agriculture in the future will center around water, and that’s why I chose Australia. It was an eye-opening year.”

As an agronomy major with a minor in range science and a passion for land management and rangeland ecology, the Australian adventure was right in Michael’s wheelhouse. He joined the Prairie Ag team this March, and is enjoying the opportunity to work out of the Bancroft location. “In addition to corn and bean production, we have quite a bit of small grain in the area and I have an opportunity to work with cattle producers and their pastures,” he says.

As to hobbies, Michael has only one at the moment. “My father and I have 160 acres just a few minutes from Lake Preston where we’re putting land management principles into practice—everything from grassland management to orchard management to food plot management,” he states. “Recently, I spent a Sunday planting 61 trees by hand. You feel that the next day.”

Linking Field and Farm Data

Want to get a better handle on your farm data? We can help. If you’re an agronomy customer, we already have your field dimensions and information. Now, thanks to our new accounting system, we can link that information to your yield data. When you bring a load of grain across the scales, we can match that grain to a specific field.

Our own Nila Duffy from our Lake Preston office knows firsthand how helpful this can be. “My husband and I used this system on our farm last year,” she notes. “We could tell how our inputs related to our yields, we didn’t have to sort through tickets and it made it much easier to handle the accounting. It’s also great for your crop insurance.”

Want to know more about our field and farm data capability? Stop in to the office in Lake Preston and talk to Sharon or Nila, or give them a call at 605-847-4844.
Did you know…

- Most food we eat comes from farmers and ranchers
- Breads, cereal and pastas are made from flour and flour is made from wheat seeds
- A group of plants grown by people for food or other uses are called crops

Riley Casper, raising sheep for a living

You are going to have good years and bad years, but don’t give up. Save when you can, don’t spend all of the profit and if you save long enough you are able to get something really worth saving for is the advice Riley Casper, (12) of Lake Preston, SD has for all kids looking at starting their own business in the Ag Industry. Riley started helping his older brother Paydon with his sheep when he was younger. As Paydon got busier with school activities, Riley started doing more and more with his sheep and decided to take over his sheep herd. Sheep were easy for him to manage when he was younger and it was something different from the beef cattle that his parents raised.

Riley would purchase his lambs when they were one to two days old and then would grow them until they reached 120-130 pounds and then sell them.

At his peak, he was caring for 30-40 bottle lambs at a time. Before selling his lambs each year, he would keep the better ones to show for his 4-H projects. Last year he decided to keep some of his ewes and breed them. He now has 15 bred ewes that are due to lamb in March and April.

Raising bottle lambs has taught Riley some valuable life lessons already. Some years he puts lots time and money into them and the lambs just die. Some years after all the bills are paid, there is not much of a profit left. But then some years are profitable and you can see that all your hard work does pay off.

The sheep business, even with its ups and downs has been good to Riley. He has started a savings account for college, he tithes and pays his bills that are associated with raising his sheep. What is left over, he calls his “spending” portion and after saving that for several years, in 2016 he was able to purchase himself a side-by-side. Keep up the good work Riley, you are an inspiration to hundreds of young kids like yourself wanting to get more involved the agricultural community.
The Food Pyramid

Farmers and ranchers play a huge part of producing the foods that we eat every day. They produce many of the foods in the six food groups. The six food groups include Fruits, Grains, Vegetables, Proteins, Dairy and Fats and Oils. Let's take a look at each of these groups a little closer and some of the foods that farmers and ranchers produce every day.

Fruits: 2-4 servings daily. Fruits provide you with vitamins, minerals and fiber that help your body stay healthy. Some fruits that farmers grow include strawberries, apples, bananas, oranges, grapes, grapefruit, blackberries and blueberries.

Grains: 6-11 servings daily. Grains provide us with carbohydrates that provide us with energy as well as providing us with vitamins, minerals and fiber. Farmers grow wheat, rice and oats that are used to produce breads, cereals and pasta.

Vegetables: 3-5 servings daily. Vegetables should be included in every meal. Vegetables provide vitamins, minerals and fibers—like fruit—to help your body stay healthy. Some vegetables that farmers grow include potatoes, carrots, beans, peas, sweet potatoes, peppers and lettuce.

Meats and Nuts: 2-3 servings daily. Most of our proteins come from animals and contain great sources of protein, calcium, iron and zinc. Farmers provide beef, pork, chicken, fish, and nuts in this food group.

Dairy: 2-3 servings daily. This food group is an excellent source of calcium which is important for strong, healthy bones. Some foods that farmers grow that are in the dairy group include milk, yogurt and cheese.

Fats and Oils—use sparingly and include salad dressings, oils, butter and soft drinks.

**Words**

- Fruits
- Cereal
- Vegetables
- Wheat
- Corn
- Milk
- Grain
- Cheese
- Hamburger
- Eggs
- Pork
- Nuts
- Chicken
- Beans
- Apples

**The Six Food Groups**

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**South Dakota Farmers Union**

United to Grow Family Agriculture
Spotlight on Ethan Palmlund

It doesn't matter how old or how young you are, you can still be a farmer and grow your own food and even help support the family, just ask Ethan Palmlund,. Ethan is seven years old and lives on a farm near Bancroft, SD with his brother Haden, 13, and sisters Kendra, 11 and Clara, 4. He is the son of Matthew and Natalie Palmlund. Matt farms cattle, corn and soybeans and puts up a lot of hay. Natalie is an ER nurse in Watertown.

Just like his father, Ethan too has a love for the farm. He is the chicken producer in the family. He raises chickens and sells the eggs that he picks. He also likes to help his dad farm. This spring he decided to grow his corn, or as his family calls it, his “muddle puddle crop of corn.” He was very proud of his crop and his harvest.

Keep up the good work Ethan.

The Food Groups

Words:
- Food
- Grains
- Six
- Meat
- Dairy
- Fats-and-oils
- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Milk
- Pork
- Peas
- Wheat
- Canola-Oil

Across
3. You should eat 2-4 servings daily and include strawberries, apples and bananas.
6. Part of the dairy food group that cows produce daily.
8. Eat this food group sparingly.

Down
1. Eat 3-5 servings daily and should be included in every meal.
2. This food group includes milk, yogurt and cheese.
4. This is part of the Meat group and comes from pigs.
5. These are used to produce breads, cereals and pasta.
6. Which food group provides the most protein for your diet?
7. The ______ pyramid shows recommended amounts of each food group to eat.
9. There are how many food groups.
Food Safety, It is Very Important

Farmers and Ranchers play a huge role when it comes to providing food for us to eat. They are responsible for providing beef, pork, chicken, fish, several vegetables and fruits for us, to just name a few. Farmers have many guidelines that they must follow to ensure that the food they produce is safe for us to eat.

But we as consumers have responsibilities as well to make sure our food is safe to eat. You should always wash your hands before cooking or preparing any food. All fruits and vegetables must be washed before eating them. It is very important to cook meat thoroughly to make sure you do not get sick from eating it. The following are recommendations to follow when cooking meat.

Ground beef should be cooked to 160 degrees and steaks and roasts to 145 degrees

Pork cook to 145 – 165 degrees

Chicken cook to 165 degrees

Another thing that is important to remember is to keep food refrigerated so that it does not spoil. Leaving certain foods unrefrigerated can cause them to spoil and make you sick if eaten.

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Extend the Fight
BY MICHAEL MEESTER, AGRONOMIST

As the 2017 production year gets underway, we are standing on the forefront of a bean year with similarities to the 1974 Roundup® or 2009 Liberty Link® growing seasons. The goals we look to achieve go part and parcel with remembering where we have been and how we arrived here. The days of two-pass, one-product weed control are gone. Correspondingly, our list of weed control resources has shortened.

Enter Monsanto’s Roundup Ready 2 Xtend® cropping system. Soybeans engineered with dicamba and glyphosate-tolerant traits were developed to help growers reclaim fields plagued with resistant, tough-to-control broadleaf weeds like waterhemp and marestail. Although dicamba is not new to the ag world, Xtend beans will give growers a much needed tool with increased application and planting flexibility.

By reformulating the chemistry, Monsanto has released a product that reduces the fear of dicamba drift generated by past experience. As stewards of the land, we must use this tool in the manner intended and in accordance with regulations or risk compliance fines, the potential loss of EPA registration or creation of yet another resistant biotype.

Herbicide development
Going hand-in-hand with XtendiMax® herbicide are various application requirements intended to help maximize onsite control while reducing offsite chemical movement. One of first major discoveries made during testing product was the role AMS played in drift management. AMS was historically used to help condition, water making the chemistry more effective in its control. Unexpectedly, testing revealed AMS was increasing the volatility of the chemistry, resulting in increased drift that led to offsite crop damage. As a result, all AMS-based additives are prohibited as tank mix partners with XtendiMax.

The emergence of glyphosate resistant cultivars can be tied directly to the repeated use of a single mode of action and application at reduced rates. Thus, XtendiMax application rates associated with various windows of application must be strictly adhered to. Up to 28 days prior to emergence, growers can apply 22-44 fl. oz./A. Post-emergence, 22 fl. oz./A can be applied up to the R1 stage. Note that 22 oz. is the lowest rate that can be applied at any time. A maximum of 88 fl. oz. may be applied through the growing season.

Winds speeds are also of concern. Maximum winds speeds for application top out at 10 mph and may not drop below 3 mph. Spray volumes must not drop below 10 gallons to the acre while ground speeds may not exceed 15 mph.

I chose to mention just a few key topics to illustrate a point—the list of compliance checkpoints is not a short one. Topics like downwind buffer zones and tank compatible adjuvant and herbicides are too expansive to cover here, but must be followed in accordance with the regulations. This brief summary is by no means a guide, but rather a sampling to get one thinking about where EPA herbicide mandates and registration are heading.

We have an opportunity here, and everyone—from farmers to applicators and agronomists—needs to maximize the window created by the introduction of the Xtend cropping system. It wasn’t that long ago that glyphosate was viewed as the silver bullet. Time has proven that to be false, and the Xtend system is no different. Improper product use led to the resistance situation we’re facing, and it can happen again.

Since 1994, dicamba resistance has been observed in kochia out west. Most say it is just a matter of time until it travels east. The question remains: Are you willing to do your part to ensure history does not repeat itself? ☝

Making the Rounds
It’s summer-fill season, so you’ll see Mark and Cory out filling propane tanks. They’ll also be changing out regulators due for replacement and performing system leak checks. Both our insurance and the government require us to replace regulators every 10 years and do leak checks every five. Even if they weren’t required, we would do them anyway because your safety is our first concern. Malfunctioning regulators and undetected leaks can cost you money and, more importantly, can compromise the safety of your propane system.

If you have questions or need to contact Mark or Cory, here are their numbers:
Cory – 605-695-0407  Mark – 605-860-8710
Are Your Fall Forage Needs Covered?

BY BRIAN NELSON, FEED SALES

Everyone in the livestock industry is feeling the pressure to keep costs in line while maintaining the health of their herd. The answer to both may lie right in your fields in the form of forages and cover crops.

We’ll be holding a don’t-miss event on this topic on Tuesday July 25 at 6:30 p.m. in the back room of the New Horizon Lounge in Lake Preston. We’ll have a speaker from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) talking about cover crops as forage, and how to work them into your cropping rotation. Jeff Jackson from Winfield Solutions will be here to discuss how to make and store top-quality silage. Finally, we’ll have a representative from Purina covering supplement programs to help your cattle get the most from post-harvest stubble and stover. For reservations, call either Brian (605-860-0004) or Travis (605-203-0554).

Finding profitable ways to put pounds on cattle is the topic of our meeting, but I would be missing an opportunity here if I didn’t mention two more ways to put pounds on your cattle and calves.

The economics of creep feeding still works. In addition to putting economical weight on calves, creep feeding helps them make the transition from mom to other feed sources.

The other tool—fly control. Uncontrolled flies keep cattle from eating and also cause them to expend more energy trying to keep the pests away. See us for fly control solutions that dramatically reduce fly pressure for your cattle.

PROFITABLE WAYS TO PUT POUNDS ON YOUR CATTLE

A Don’t-Miss Event

Tuesday, July 25
6:30 p.m.
New Horizon Lounge, Lake Preston

To reserve your spot, call:
Brian (605-860-0004)
Travis (605-203-0554)