Managers Report

March has come in like a lion, and is still wanting to be a lion as of this writing. I’m hopeful that by the time you receive this publication it will be sunny and 75.

Despite the colder than normal weather we have experienced ample field work and fertilizer application as the soil has dried this spring.

Nashville Ag Chemical Shed Progress

The cold winter has put us slightly behind schedule on the new Ag Chemical shed at Nashville. We still plan to be operational by April 1, but the schedule will be tighter than originally planned.

When complete the Ag Chem loading portion of the shed will accommodate 2 bays for loading tender trucks and sprayers and a third bay for receiving product. If needed this third bay can be converted to load out product as well. All loading will be done via bottom loading, an important safety feature for our employees.

The new control system will be computerized for up to 21 different chemical products that can be added to product mixes as needed to aid in getting the correct formulation to your field. A computerized water flush system will be an intricate part of every load to eliminate the potential for contamination.

In addition to the Chemical loading area of the building, the south half of the building will be dedicated to warehouse space. A portion of which will be dedicated to heated storage space for products that cannot withstand freezing.

Stock Redemptions

Gateway FS redeemed $897,000 of patronage stock in March. The years redeemed included 1994-1996 and all prior year issues. This redemption along with the cash patronage paid in November 2013 generates a total of $3,078,000 in cash returned to member owners of Gateway FS. As a cooperative, we will continue to distribute earnings back to our owners. No other business structure in the grain and ag supply business has the ability to refund a portion of purchases back to you.

New Website Features

Check out our website, www.gatewayfs.com for new features this month. You can view your account, current amounts due and lookup purchasing history reports. We now also have the capability to process ACH payments directly from the website. The third update is the ability to lookup your grain account on line. This feature will allow you to look at outstanding grain contracts, storage bushels and history of grain settlements. See more detail in the grain comments section this month.

Think Safety

As we start the spring season, we all need to practice safe operating procedures and practices. Accidents only take a fraction of a second to happen, but the ramifications of the accidents last a lifetime. Let’s all work safely this spring.

Last but not least, Thank you for the business you do with Gateway FS! Enjoy this issue of the Gateway News and have a safe, prosperous spring in 2014.

Gateway FS’s, Evansville, Ill. river terminal, located on the Kaskaskia River, loads a few hundred barges each year. However, none as unique as the one they loaded on Tuesday, February 25th. South bound traffic on Route 3 crossing the river could not avoid seeing a bright pink barge moored in front of the Gateway FS Evansville Grain Facility. Ceres Barge Line’s BIG HOPE 1 barge, which is painted bright pink for cancer awareness, made its way to the dock to be loaded with corn. With a percentage of the barge’s earnings going straight to cancer research, the BIG HOPE 1 has raised approximately $300,000 in donations since its launch in May 2012. Once the BIG HOPE 1 was fully loaded with corn, it headed south to the Gulf of Mexico to be offloaded at an export facility.

Pay Your Gateway FS Account Online

Gateway FS now offers the option to pay your account via electronic check online through our website at www.gatewayfs.com. All you will need is the information located on your monthly Gateway FS statement, including your account number, along with the routing and account information on your check. Please contact the Gateway FS Main Office at (618) 282-4000 for any questions or assistance accessing your account.

NOTE: A 3% fee will be applied to all statement balances paid via credit card.
On March 19, 2014, the Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association and the Illinois Department of Agriculture held an Anhydrous Ammonia training session for area farmers at the Okawville Golf Course in Okawville, IL. This event was co-sponsored by Gateway FS and other area ag retailers to discuss and demonstrate safe NH3 handling practices.
Grain Remarks

By Wade Marten

Nearby grain prices have seen a steady increase since mid to late January. Corn, soybeans, and wheat have all advanced to the upper side of $4, $13, and $6 respectively and at times have traded into the next figure above. Subsequent USDA Supply and Demand reports in February and March have on their own held no large surprises, much like the January’s. But in each, underlying demand strength, coupled with modest reductions in grain production expectation out of Brazil, have trimmed U.S. and World production carryout estimates for the current year. In addition has been the development of political turmoil seen in the Black sea region, which exports a significant amount of grain.

Enough concern emerged to cause speculative investors and fund managers to alter their bearish perception, observed last fall in grain markets. Corn and wheat witnessed funds switch from a short (sold) position to a long (buy) position in February and March respectively. Soybeans, albeit in a volatile fashion up and down, have continued to see funds add position length (bought).

As we enter spring we have also experienced the seasonal tendency of prices to rise for the upcoming new crop. Weather remains at the forefront this year, and risk associated with late plantings or possible frost threats should support prices through April. Planting intentions are likely to reflect a shift of corn acres to soybeans. Expect those markets to fight it out as neither can tolerate much vulnerability to production problems, especially soybeans.

New crop wheat prices have added additional risk premiums to price, as dry cold weather continues to deteriorate stands coming out of dormancy. The southern plains are forecast to suffer a continued lack of rain, and even in Southern Illinois wheat is at a point where showers would be welcome.

A new service has recently been added to the www.gatewayfs.com website. On our tabs at the top of the page as well as on our quick link section, you can click and navigate to view and or pay your accounts. Grain account access will now be available for customer viewing.

Congratulations to Dale Burmester on successfully completing his recertification requirements for the 25th year as a Certified Crops Advisor.

SPRING IS HERE!

Winter is finally over and the snow has melted away. Area farmers are eager to get the 2014 crop year started. This picture taken on March 26 in rural Red Bud indicates the progress of the 2014 Spring season. Gateway customers in western Monroe County have been applying Anhydrous Ammonia since March 13th.

Gateway FS would like to remind everyone that the planting season is just as important as harvest in that everyone should use caution around equipment, chemicals, etc.

Have a safe and successful 2014 from Gateway FS!
Lester Kothe, Percy Elevator Manager, retired from Gateway FS after 41 years of service. Lester started his career at the Sparta fuel station (Fuel 24), he then drove the bulk feed truck for 6 years. In 1980 he started working at Percy Elevator, in 1987 he took over as the location manager at Percy. He has been the location manager at Percy for the last 27 years. We congratulate Lester for his service and wish him the best in retirement.

The Paint Corner

By Brian "Boomer" Garleb

Paint Brush Cleaning

Hello, I thought I would talk paint brush cleaning. I know people will read this line and think what is he talking about this time? Well, as your paint specialist, I know a lot of you do your own painting. So I thought you would like to know how to keep your brushes clean and in good working condition.

First, no matter how much of a hurry you are in, at least three generous rinses are needed to properly clean your brush. If you are right-handed, hold the brush in your left hand and dip the brush deep into the thinner or water. Next, bring the brush up until the bristles are pointing straight over the pot of thinner or water. Then, take your left hand and squeeze the bristles, forcing the water or thinner from the heel of the brush. Spin your brush in your palm to remove any excess water or thinner at the end of your last rinse. If you followed my instructions, your paint should be coming out. Here is something I know you as a customer do to get that final water or thinner out—you hit the brush on top of your boot. This is a big "No-No!" You don’t want to do this because it will bend the metal frame, which holds the bristles in place and straight. If the metal is bent, it will cause the bristles to stick out like a cowlick. When you do this, it will loosen the parts that hold the bristles together.

Another problem I have found is that people use wire brushes to remove dried paint or to reshape the brush after you are done spinning. A wire brush will damage the filament, which in turn will not let the paint flow onto what you are painting. I recommend a paint brush comb that cleans from inside out and doesn’t damage the filament.

Finally, when cleaning your natural bristle brush with hot solvent, like lacquer thinner, it’s good to give a final rinse in mineral spirits. If you are working with deep colors or latex, wash your brush in hot soapy water. If it doesn’t come thoroughly clean, do a final rinse in mineral spirits. Don’t leave your paint brushes in paint or water overnight. This will disfigure the bristles because of the weight of the brush sitting on the bottom of the can. When you go to use the brush it won’t make a decent edge.

I hope this gives you a little insight to keeping your brushes cleaner and lasting longer. If you need any painting inside or out, call me: Brian “Boomer” Garleb at 618-282-3454, ext. 15.

Your Gateway FS Energy Team was honored recently at a dinner provided by Growmark, Inc. They were recipients of the coveted “Top Achiever” award. The award is presented to the member cooperative with the Largest Dieselsex Gold Percentage Sales Increase. Gateway FS earned this award in Growmark’s Southern Region for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. The award, in the form of a plaque, was presented by Alan Drake and Clark Wilhite on behalf of the Growmark Energy Department.

Your Energy Team tallies many hours of hard work and dedication promoting and providing this quality fuel to our valued patrons. Dieselsex Gold is, and has always been on the top rung of the ladder when it comes to premium diesel fuel. As such, we would like to thank our patrons for helping us achieve this level of success. Without your support and understanding of the need to use our premium diesel fuel, awards like this would not be possible.

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