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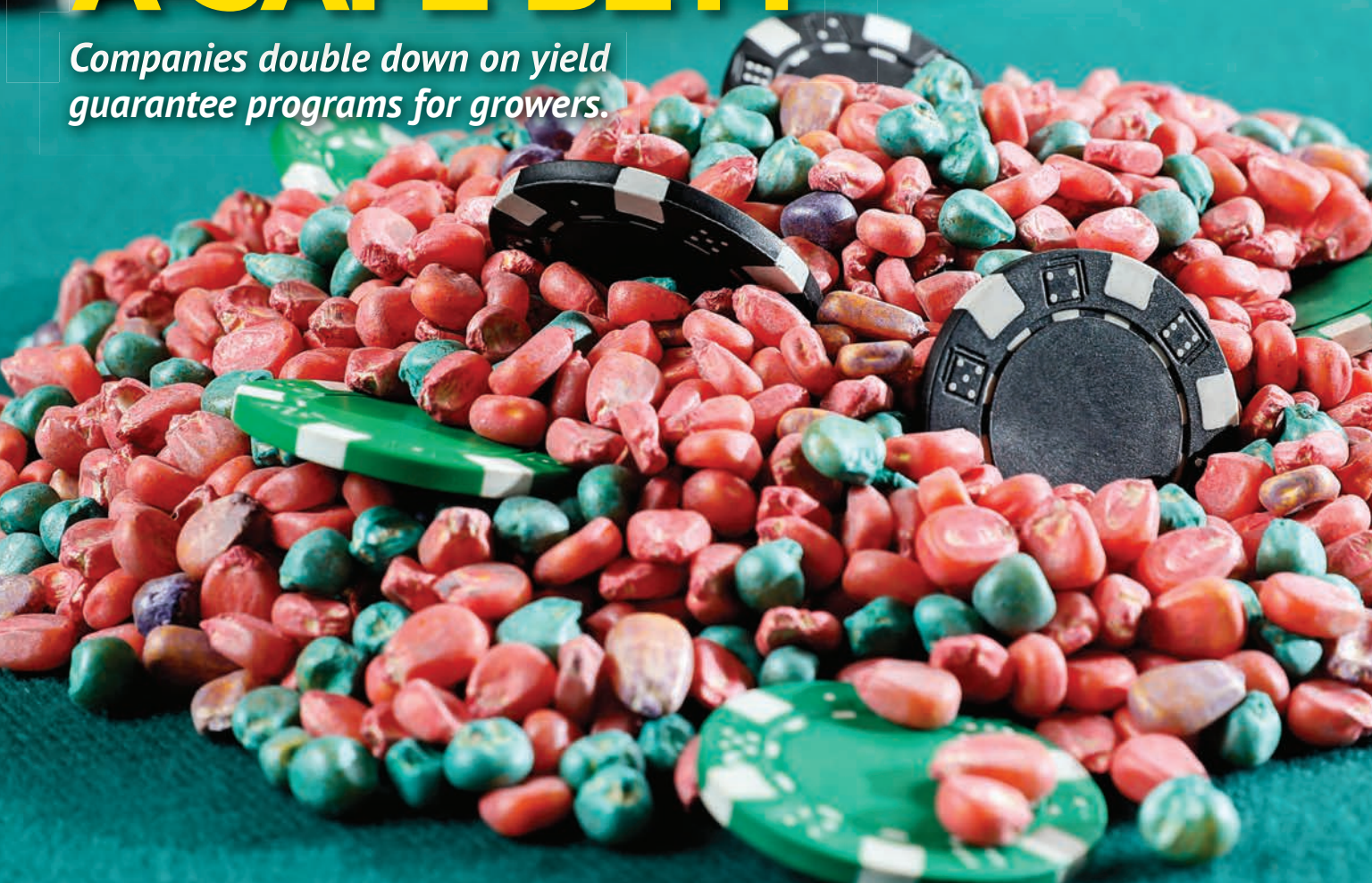
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Progressive FARMER

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A SAFE BET?

Companies double down on yield guarantee programs for growers.



EXCLUSIVE SURVEY:
COVID-19 CREATES CONCERNS FOR
FARMERS' FAMILIES & BUSINESSES

CONSERVATION PROGRAMS
OFFER BOOST TO GRAZING

CUSTOM HARVESTER RACES
AGAINST TIME AND WEATHER

Managing varying weather & soil conditions with local insights

A DTN customer from the start, Nebraska producer **Don Cantrell** shares how his solutions, particularly his DTN Ag Weather Stations, help him better manage his wide-spread operations and diverse soil types.

"My son and I both refer to our DTN solutions multiple times a day," said Don Cantrell. "Whether it's the markets, the weather, or looking at the radar, the information is just amazing — we grow our operation around it."

The central Nebraska producer lives in his late grandfather's home in Merna, following the family tradition of focusing on one's agricultural interests. For Cantrell and wife, Deb, it's growing seed corn and soybeans. For his son, Kyle and daughter-in-law, Gina, it's raising Angus cattle. Both support their decisions with help from their DTN solutions, which include MyDTN, DTN Ag Weather Station, and the original satellite-delivered service.

"The MyDTN. I love that feature. I've got it on my phone. I can look at the markets. I can look at how much it rained with my weather stations," said Cantrell.

Weathering wide-spread fields

To help manage his wide-spread fields, Cantrell relies on DTN Ag Weather Stations. These professionally installed and maintained

units collect and deliver detailed, highly-local weather and agronomy insights to support a wide variety of operational decisions, from planting to spraying, irrigation to harvest.

"We have three DTN Ag Weather Stations in our operation," explained Cantrell. "We're spread out over 52 miles from end-to-end. They're just so handy to have. If it rains, we can know instantly and see the intensity as it is raining. It's amazing."

"It also keeps track of the temperatures for us — even from 52 miles away. A couple of our stations are just 10 miles away from each other and the difference between them for the high and the low each day is more than you'd have any idea. It provides information like you wouldn't believe."

Targeting operations & irrigation

Since his fields are wide-spread, Cantrell's weather stations are especially helpful in planning his operations.

"Our DTN weather stations pay for themselves multiple times a year. They're worth it."

Don Cantrell





"We've got everything from gumbo to blow sand," he said about the soil types in his fields. "Our weather stations make quite a difference in helping us know which fields we can go to. We just look and see what the rain is and we may go look visually, but we have a very good idea before we even get there what the conditions will be so we can roll that day on that certain field."

One area the weather stations help is irrigation. "It makes a real difference," Cantrell stated. "We work with an agronomist who checks our fields every week, once a week on every field. They give us an outline of when they think we should irrigate, but we use our weather stations to help determine when to shut things off — especially if we get rain."

"During the 2019 season, every time we'd start the pivot in our field 30 miles away, it would rain. Every single time. But, with our weather station, we could see it and turn it off. We didn't have to drive the 30 miles to do it. That saved us a lot in irrigation costs, particularly if you look at the energy, time, and driving costs."

"Our DTN Ag Weather Stations pay for themselves multiple times a year," said Cantrell. "They're worth it."

Managing the markets

His MyDTN also helps him make business decisions. "One of the features I just absolutely love is the up-to-date quotes on the grains from my local elevators, minute by minute," he said. "It helps me keep on top of the futures prices and the basis, daily. That's really important."

"I'm a technician. I love the technical part of the charting for watching the markets. I love the charting program. I like it better than anybody else's, but I guess it's just because that's what I've grown up with," said Cantrell, who was one of the first to get a DTN satellite service when the company launched in 1984. "I've been with DTN kind of forever."

The DTN difference

To learn how you can get these same trusted solutions, please visit www.dtn.com/may-pf. ■

FEATURES

MAY 2020

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Serving Our Readers Since 1886

ABOUT THE COVER

Many growers will be examining if yield guarantee programs are a good deal.

Cover Photo by Matthew Putney

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: BARRY FALKNER / GETTY IMAGES

16

COVER STORY A SAFE BET?

Crop input and technology companies roll out yield guarantee programs.

12 YOUR LAND WORK BOOSTS GRAZING

Conservation projects help against drought and mesquite infestations.

44 YOUR LIFE BIG FIELDS, BIG STORIES AND BIG DREAMS

A summer with a custom-harvesting crew can be a roller-coaster ride.



12



34



44



50

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DEPARTMENTS

FIRST LOOK

- 6 **TAXLINK**
TOOLS FROM THE PAST
- 7 **WHAT'S TRENDING**
- 8 **WEATHERLINK**
- 9 **BUSINESSLINK**
- 10 **INSIDE THE MARKET**
- 11 **BLOGS: OUR RURAL ROOTS**

YOUR LAND

- 12 **CONSERVATION**
Work Boosts Grazing
- 14 **LANDWATCH**
Recent Farmland Sales

YOUR FARM

- 16 **COVER STORY**
A Safe Bet?
- 22 **ASK THE MECHANIC**
Story of the Rheostat
And the Potentiometer
- 24 **DTN EXCLUSIVE SURVEY**
Virus Concerns Change Farmer Habits
- 26 **FAMILY BUSINESS MATTERS**
The Keys to Great Communication

28 **HANDY DEVICES**
Editors Choice: Lazy Susan

31 **CROPLINK**
Inside Out Corn Disease Protection

32 **ASK THE VET**
Veterinarian Prospects

34 **CATTLELINK**
Let Efficiency Lead

40 **CATTLELINK**
Fencing Laws

YOUR LIFE

44 **WHEAT**
Big Fields, Big Stories and Big Dreams

48 **FARM SAFETY**
Progressive Agriculture Safety Days

50 **RECIPES**
Fiesta Time!

51 **COMMUNITY**
A Shot of Sanitizer

IN EVERY ISSUE

4 **WE'D LIKE TO MENTION**

56 **CORNERSTONES: WEATHER**

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Comfort Food



Gregg Hillyer
Editor In Chief

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As I write this month's column, the calendar says it's April Fool's Day. I keep hoping to wake up from this nightmare we're all in to discover it was just someone's idea of a cruel joke. But, it's not. The coronavirus pandemic is all too real. All too painful. All too consuming.

The United Nations secretary-general has called the coronavirus outbreak the greatest challenge since World War II. Nearly every day, we hear the battle cry **#wereinthistogether**. Yet, we're told to practice social distancing and to shelter in place. How ironic for a society that's used to being connected 24/7 to be ordered to unplug. The world has been turned upside down. Nothing seems to make sense. The new normal changes by the hour. And, people are as paralyzed as the economy.

The world may be in a daze, but I'm placing my faith in the resiliency of the human spirit to get us to the other side. Ordinary people are rising up to do extraordinary things to help their fellow man. Look around and give thanks to all who are on the front lines providing essential services—health-care professionals; first responders; postal, delivery, grocery and restaurant workers; and so many more. I see firsthand neighbors helping neighbors with simple acts of kindness, whether it's to check in and see how they're doing or give them a few rolls of hard-to-find toilet paper.

But, there's another story to celebrate and cheer as we work feverishly to flatten the COVID-19 curve: U.S. agriculture's amazing ability to keep food on the table. It has been the one constant among all of this uncertainty. Despite early panic buying and hoarding that left grocery shelves empty, the industry's distribution system from farm to fork has kept pushing on. Deliveries, for the most part, continue in order to restock shelves with America's bounty produced on the nation's farms and ranches.

Across the U.S., agriculture is in overdrive as farmers return to the fields. Spring planting is well underway, sowing seeds in the ground that will germinate, emerge, mature and eventually be harvested later in the



GETTY IMAGES

year. Suppliers are on the job to deliver crop inputs and fuel to keep the planters rolling. Elsewhere, spring calves are on the ground. Barns are filled with pigs and poultry.

Away from the farm, USDA has initiated steps to limit labor shortages for critical tasks such as harvesting fruits and vegetables.

It's all a well-oiled machine that makes American agriculture the envy of the world.

Make no mistake: There are difficult days ahead. It won't be business as usual when we come out of this crisis. Main Street businesses to manufacturers face tough decisions. We will face our own anxieties as we put our lives back together and send our kids back to school. I look forward to when we can once again greet one another with a hug or handshake.

Meanwhile, the nation's farmers and ranchers will bring comfort to a nervous nation as they do what they do best: produce food for our tables. ///

REQUEST TO OUR READERS

If circumstances due to COVID-19 prevent us from printing and distributing the magazine by mail, we want to be certain we are able to continue to deliver *Progressive Farmer* to you. Please update your email address so we can provide you with a digital version should it become necessary. This will not change your current delivery method and will be used only if we are unable to deliver the print version. Log in to our customer-care portal to update your email address at www.dtnpf.com/marketing/custserv.

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Keep Current And Stay Resilient



Rod Mauszycki

DTN Tax Columnist Rod Mauszycki, J.D., MBT, is a tax principal with CLA (CliftonLarsonAllen) in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

► Read Rod's "Ask the Taxman" column at **ABOUT.DTNPF.COM/TAX**.

► You may email Rod at **taxman@dtn.com**.

CORRECTION

The April issue of *Progressive Farmer* misworded the first sentence in the second paragraph of the Taxlink column. That sentence should read: *Two court cases, McNamara and Martin, have said that an agricultural taxpayer who rents land to an entity in which they materially participate in should be able to exclude self-rental income from self-employment tax.*

I'm sitting at home with three kids trying to do my part by social distancing. Many professionals, including myself, have either dramatically reduced or eliminated interactions with clients. My thoughts and prayers are with the agricultural community. With a prolonged recession in agriculture and now social isolation/distancing, the economic and mental health concerns are growing.

There has been some news on the tax front. This is rapidly changing, so I won't go into much detail. There are a series of webinars and videos online that are updated regularly to reflect changes. I'd urge everyone to keep up to date, as there will be a series of government programs for individuals and small businesses that will be useful to the farm community.

KEY DATES

Here is what we know at the time of this writing:

- Individual calendar-year C corps and Trust returns are now due July 15. No April 15 extension is necessary.
- You can file an extension by July 15 and extend until Oct. 15.
- Some states have passed legislation to follow federal guidelines, but it is a state-by-state decision.
- Payments are due July 15. This includes returns that have already been filed. Take advantage of it.
- Your first-quarter estimated payment is due July 15. However, the second quarter is still due June 15 (subject to change). Keep this timing difference in mind when making estimated payments.

LEGISLATIVE EXPANSIONS

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act expands the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and provides greater unemployment benefits for individuals impacted by COVID-19. Employers with fewer than 500 employees must provide Emergency FMLA and paid sick leave. There are some eligibility requirements for Emergency FMLA but not

for paid sick leave. To ease the burden, tax credits are provided to employers to help pay for emergency family and sick leave.

Under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, there is also a self-employed credit for family leave. If you are self-employed, there are federal benefits available to you.

KEY QUESTIONS

As COVID-19 plays out, many of my clients have come to me with questions.

- Will this impact H-2A? Yes, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services offices are closed at the time of this writing. And, keep in mind the ever-changing travel bans.
- What happens if a loved one passes away? I think this has been the most asked question. Many in our farm communities have not done much, if any, estate planning. Take it one step at a time. You may need to probate the estate if a trust was not set up (or funded properly). If there was a trust, the trustee should coordinate with legal and tax professionals to facilitate the process.

Stay safe. Stay positive. People need to eat. We are in a resilient industry. ///

TOOLS FROM THE PAST

QUESTION:

This tool is a real back saver. What is it?



ANSWER:

This is a bag drag. Slap the sharp teeth into a heavy burlap bag to drag it around rather than lifting it to carry.



360 POLL

Which of the following farm-business issues has you most concerned regarding the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic?

- 68%** general global market disruptions continuing to put downward pressure on commodity prices
- 10%** timely delivery of crop inputs for spring planting
- 10%** medium-term effects on meat markets should an outbreak close key processing plants
- 8%** spring labor shortages due to family/worker sickness or workers' inability to travel for work
- 3%** port/transportation disruptions causing specific trade issues

336 responses / Total may not equal 100% because of rounding.



Even the barn cats are practicing social distancing. @okiefarmer1

FARMERS ON TWITTER



Farmers are still working around the clock. They are preparing for #plant2020 and providing products to restock your grocery shelves. Follow along on our mission to be #StrongerTogether! @iowa_corn

I bet we could sterilize the whole city of New York with the ethanol we're not putting in our cars right now. @Colonel_of_Corn

Home schooling update: Well, look at that, it's a professional development day for the teacher. No school today. @dailydairydiary

BLOGS & COLUMNS



PRODUCTION BLOG

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May 12, 2020 WASDE Report: DTN lead analyst Todd Hultman evaluates and explains how the latest world agricultural supply and demand estimates will influence commodity markets.

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South America Hits Dryness Bump



Bryce Anderson
DTN Senior Ag Meteorologist

► Read Bryce's weather blog at ABOUT.DTNPF.COM/WEATHER.

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CHRIS CLAYTON

The final stage of the South America crop season has not been a carefree stretch. Production will be large, but the parade to new records, especially in Brazil, has hit a speed bump in the form of dryness.

REGIONAL EFFECT

The area of Brazil where dry conditions have been acute is the southern portion of the country, notably in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Since the first of the year, soils in Rio Grande do Sul have recorded only 20 to 40% of their normal precipitation. This dryness is having an adverse impact on full-season corn and soybeans that have yet to be harvested.

Total corn production in Rio Grande do Sul is estimated at under 5 million metric tons (mmt), down more than 20% from initial estimates and the lowest harvest size in two years, even though corn-planted area was more than 2% larger. And, soybean production is expected to fall by 16% to under 17 mmt, which would be the lowest production in the past four years since the 2015–16 crop year.

PRODUCTION STILL STRONG

It must be pointed out, of course, that Brazil

is going to put out big crops. Total Brazil corn production is estimated at more than 100 mmt, almost matching the output of a year ago. And, soybean production is estimated at around 124 mmt, which would be a new record. Those are large totals for sure.

However, without the southern Brazil dry pattern, corn production would possibly have ratcheted up to around 105 mmt, and the soybean production record would have worked close to 127 mmt—an even larger record total. That's because the northern half of Brazil's main production areas, especially the largest crop producer, Mato Grosso, had generally favorable crop weather conditions all season long. So, we have seen a definite “have” and “have not” rainfall pattern develop during the flowering and filling phases of row crops in Brazil.

So, Brazil will certainly be able to cover a lot of ocean freighter loadings with the bounty of the 2019–20 harvest. Still, it is possible that this modest, but still notable, reduction in total crop size will find its way into the world grain market to some extent. A greater portion of Brazil's crop will likely have to stay in-country to feed livestock and cover other industrial uses such as ethanol and biodiesel production. ///

Venture Capital Pours Into Ag

Venture capital investors poured \$2.8 billion into the ag tech startups across the globe in 2019, according to the 2019 “AgriFood Tech Investment Review,” an annual report from Finistere Ventures developed in collaboration with PitchBook.

While that’s four times more money than 2015, how that money is being deployed is changing. Seventy percent of 2019’s venture capital investments went to companies in later stages of development.

Investments in crop protection and input management are on the rise, while investments in digital agriculture solutions have stagnated. Last year, 37% of total ag tech venture capital investment went to solutions that boost yields, such as biologicals and seed treatments.

Digital technologies, which include imagery, precision agriculture and farm equipment, saw a

4% decline in the number of deals, while capital investment increased 5%.

The report states that robotics advancements and proprietary technology have been attracting the most growth.

Agriculture has taken longer to adopt digital technologies than many investors anticipated “due to challenges with farmers (and channel partners) integrating diverse data and insights into meaningful action.” However, the report’s authors anticipate a “second wave” of investment focused on using farm-level data to create climate certification programs or traceability efforts favored by consumers.

As the field of venture capital investors in the ag tech space increasingly diversifies to include the likes of Amazon, SoftBank and T. Rowe Price, the focus on consumer-driven priorities in the ag space will only continue to grow. ///



Katie Dehlinger
DTN Farm
Business Editor

► Read Katie’s business blog at **ABOUT.DTNPF.COM/BUSINESS.**

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The Bearish Hits Keep Coming



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Understanding where grain prices are headed is never an easy task, but here in early 2020, corn and soybean prices are already off to a bearish start, and the bulk of planting hasn't even begun.

Before the year even started, grain prices were already pressured by large U.S. surpluses, a trade dispute with China and the disastrous consequences of the record wet 2019 planting season, followed by difficult harvest conditions across the northern Corn Belt.

NET FARM INCOME

Even with aid from prevented plantings in 2019 and two years of market facilitation payments, the string of bearish hits has kept net farm income down the past six years, well below the 2013 total of \$123.7 billion. Given the rough start in 2020, USDA's slightly higher net farm income estimate of \$96.7 billion for 2020 is probably too high and will need to be adjusted lower.

FUEL PRESSURES

In 2020, the spread of coronavirus and Saudi Arabia's decision to increase oil production at a time when the global economy is nearly paralyzed sent oil prices sharply lower and took ethanol prices to record lows.

Without a profitable ethanol industry, corn prices are at risk of falling further. If that weren't enough, USDA estimated 2.64 billion bushels of U.S. ending corn stocks in

2020–21, an even larger surplus that points to national cash corn prices near \$3 a bushel.

FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN

The quick spread of coronavirus has arrived like something out of a science fiction novel. Photos on social media show once-bustling cities now looking like ghost towns. As this article nears print, U.S. deaths from the virus are above 5,100 and are rising rapidly. The Johns Hopkins global death toll is well over 48,000. By the time you read this, those numbers will be far higher, and no one can say when the disease might abate.

It is uncertainty that feeds our fears and sends prices plummeting. The theory of supply and demand is a nice concept for beginners, but one of the flaws is that both forces have to be active to achieve equilibrium prices. When potential buyers are scared, the market's pricing mechanism collapses. Emotional markets like those experienced in early 2020 are like tornadoes. It is difficult to sustain the energy level required, but you don't want to underestimate the damage that can be done.

For grain producers caught in the bearish storm, I can't guarantee prices won't get worse this year, but I do think it's worth noticing the relentless string of bearish misfortunes is historically rare. We don't know when normalcy will return, but when it does, prices are bound to look better than they do now. ///

Find a Thoughtful Spot

BY Jennifer Campbell

Winnie The Pooh has a “thoughtful spot.” It’s a special log with a special sign where Pooh sits down, taps his head, closes one eye and says: “think, think, think.”

My “thoughtful spots” aren’t as clearly defined, but like Pooh, there are certain places that help when I need to clear my head or find the right words—for things such as this article.

Thinking is hard. I used to force myself to focus only on what needed thinking about. It took years to recognize “my thoughtful spots” may not be as easy as sitting on or falling off a log.

There’s a saying that “idle hands are the devil’s workshop.” For me, idle hands make an idle brain. I’ve discovered I can clear the cobwebs and think more clearly if I’m busy.

Give me a dirty hog barn and a pressure washer, and I could potentially solve all the world’s problems. Put me in a tractor and tell me to stay until the field is done, and my mind is more productive. I call it “brain washing” and “cab therapy.”

Activity is good for mental health, productive thinking and creativity. This may be common knowledge to some, but it has taken me years to figure this out for myself.

I’m not Pooh Bear! If I sat on a log forcing myself to think, it would ultimately lead to me realizing I can’t think, and my brain would likely start to focus on something like the need to eat donuts. Like Pooh’s friend Piglet said: “The things that make me different are the things that make me, me.”

These past few months have given us all a lot of serious things to contemplate. I, for one, won’t be complaining (much) about long hours in the tractor cab this spring. It’s time to renew, refresh and gain some new perspective, and lucky me: I’ve got the perfect thinking spot to do it.



Jennifer (Jent) Campbell can be found sometimes thinking on her Indiana farm, where she writes a blog called Farm Wife Feeds (farmwifefeeds.com). Follow her on Twitter [@plowwife](https://twitter.com/plowwife) and on the podcast [@girlstalkag](https://www.girlstalkag.com).



JENNIFER CAMPBELL

Through My Daughter’s Eyes

BY Meredith Bernard

They say it takes a village to raise a child, and as we come upon Mother’s Day, I celebrate knowing I was blessed with a strong community of women that shaped me into the woman I am today.

My mother worked as hard as my father to provide for our family and taught me to see the beauty around me. My grandmothers sacrificed their own needs and wants to make sure others were taken care of first. When my mother passed 19 years ago, many women stepped up to support and encourage me, just like I was one of their own.

Then, I became the mother of a daughter, and as I’ve watched her grow these last nine years, I see now how much I’ve grown with her—because of her.

It’s been said I’m independent, so I guess that part of my daughter’s personality comes naturally (if not mirrored). Perhaps our similarities are what cause us to butt heads when we do (and we definitely do). But, more often than not, I find myself inspired by her more than any other female in my life. Not because I see so much of me in her, but because I see so much in her that I want to be.

I yearn to have her ability to see the good in others as well as the good in herself. She has a carefree abandon to embrace who she is without a care in the world to be someone she’s not. She finds joy in the everyday simple things that I can every day take for granted.

There’s a place for the “girly girls” of the world, and there’s a place for those who aren’t. Truth is, there’s a place for us all, and my girl reminds me daily that finding our place begins with being strong and secure in who God made us each to be. As I look at life through my daughter’s eyes, I pray she eventually sees more of me being more like her.



MEREDITH BERNARD



Blogger Meredith Bernard writes, takes photographs and ponders life and agriculture from her North Carolina family farm. Follow her on Twitter [@thisfarmwife](https://twitter.com/thisfarmwife) and visit her website at thisfarmwife.com.

Work Boosts Grazing

These ranchers say conservation projects offer a fighting chance against drought and mesquite infestations.

Over the past 15 years, Tom, Dan and Ben Griffin have increasingly partnered with conservationists to improve grazing on their two fifth-generation Texas ranches, parlaying brush-control programs into better shortgrass pastures, all the while fighting drought and natural succession of mesquite and cedars.

The Griffin Ranch covers a total of more than 45 sections on the Oldham County operation in the northern Panhandle and the Borden County ranch, near Snyder, south of Lubbock. The semiarid climate and fragility of native shortgrass pastures provide a daily challenge for the brothers as they seek to boost production of their Angus and Angus/Akaushi herds.

“In this part of the country, you either develop some kind of brush-management system, or you go out of business,” explains Matt Coffman, rangeland management specialist for USDA’s NRCS Southern High Plains Region. “Going back to 2004, the Griffins have used Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Tom Griffin says brush management is a key factor in the success at Griffin Ranch.



recommendations in a multipronged approach. They are grubbing mesquite and cedar trees, as well as using aerial applications of herbicides to clear the trees, pricklypear cactus and salt cedar.

“Since 2014, we’ve worked with them on fencing projects and the planning and construction of various water points in their pastures,” he explains. “And, when Dan came back to the ranch, he became very active in prescribed burning to fight brush and improve forage.”

GRUBBING PROGRAM

Tom, who runs the Borden County operation with Dan, recalls when he returned to the ranch from college, he just assumed the EQIP program was a “grubbing program,” and he was the principal “grubber” at the beginning.

Starting with a front-end loader, the Griffins fought with the mesquite on the Borden County ranch and cedars and yucca on the northern place, making significant headway clearing strips through the forest of succession plants. Today, they run a Caterpillar 320 excavator and have much better luck extracting the

Grubbing invasive trees, left, is effective long term when sprayed areas, right, can see regrowth.

mesquite by its taproot. “We’ve noticed mesquite trying to reestablish on

some of those acres we grubbed in 2004–05, so it’s a constant battle.”

In all, Griffin says over the years, they’ve cleared nearly 1,600 acres with the excavator in a program that Coffman says currently pays \$134 per acre cleared and raked.

“We mainly grub the trees,” he explains. “We have a lot of cotton in this part of Texas, and we want to be sensitive to our neighbors when it comes to applying herbicides with airplanes. Still, there are remote areas where aerial application is feasible, and the program currently pays \$20.56 per acre for that.”

With the southern ranch crisscrossed with cleared strips, Griffin says there’s been a marked difference in grass production where the trees have been removed. The ranches include bermudagrass pastures, as well as native buffalograss, blue grama and tobosa grass, which becomes unpalatable as it ages.

NIGHT AND DAY

“In our area, pastures rarely look really good,” Tom says. “But, where we’ve cleared and burned, the difference is like night and day, especially when it rains. The buffalograss is coming back, and the cattle are eating the regenerated tobosa again. Also, the strips provide good buffers for quail and deer, and they make it much easier to gather cattle,” he adds.

Coffman says the renovated acres suffer in drought just like the untreated acres on adjacent property to the Griffin operation. However, he says removing the mesquite and other competition for the grass leaves the Griffin pastures looking better than surrounding land, regardless of the conditions.

The Griffins are also enrolled in the NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program, which helps with pasture renovation practices such as rotational grazing



and prescribed burning to keep the grasses juvenile and vigorous.

“On our cleared acres, we’ve gone from stocking roughly 15 pairs per section to 20 to 25 pairs without running out of grass by the end of the season. Also, we’re on a five-year plan to manage the grazing to allow the pastures to rest at least 25% of the time—either in the spring or fall.”

PROTECT WATER

The brothers rotate areas where they feed and place mineral supplements away from water points.

“That way we’re not trampling and overgrazing around the water, and the cattle have to go find the grass,” Tom Griffin explains.

The brothers also have used NRCS technical help and cost-share for replacing more than a dozen aging windmills with solar-powered pumps to water their cattle on the Oldham County ranch. And, Coffman says they’ve laid nearly six miles of waterline and storage facilities to ensure a gravity flow to water points in seven pastures on the southern ranch.

Currently, the brothers are using EQIP, which is paying \$1.21 per foot to replace five miles of internal fencing that is roughly 50 years old.

Griffin says his family’s experience with the local NRCS office personnel has been very positive over the years and dates back to his father, Lane, and his original cooperation with the agency on early brush-control activities.

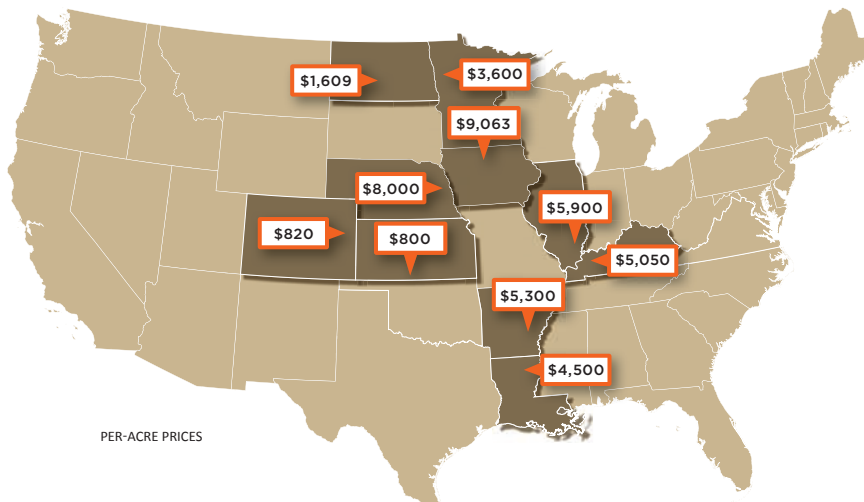
“They are always honest about what is and what isn’t approved, and we’ve had very good luck cooperating with them,” Griffin explains. “They understand us, and we seem to always be on the same page.”

He says because drought is the primary challenge to ranching in West Texas, water and grass conservation have been the biggest goals of his family’s cooperation with NRCS.

“It’s certainly helped with the trees that compete with our grass, and it’s given us a fighting chance in an area where it rarely rains at the right time.” ///



Recent Farmland Sales



ARKANSAS, Arkansas County.

Improved cropland totaling 318 acres sold for \$1.69 million. Average price per acre was \$5,300. Farm is leveled and irrigated, with a history of corn, rice and soybean production. **Contact:** Jeremy Stephens, National Land Realty; jstephens@nationalland.com; 864-331-1600

www.nationalland.com

COLORADO, Cheyenne and Kiowa Counties.

Large crop and grass property totaling 2,520 acres sold at auction for \$2.07 million in six tracts. Average per acre ranged from \$650 to \$1,244 and \$820 across the entire property. Crop acres totaled about 829, grass acres, 531. Seller retained all mineral rights. **Contact:** Travis Weaver, Farm and Ranch Realty Inc.; info@frrmail.com; 800-247-7863

www.farmandranchrealty.com

ILLINOIS, White County.

Single tract of 668 acres sold at absolute auction for \$3.94 million, or \$5,900 per acre. Property included 546 acres of flat cropland and a single center pivot. The remainder was in wooded areas, a large lake and river frontage. **Contact:** Jason Blue, Kurtz Auction and Realty Co.; jason@kurtzauction.com; 800-264-1204

www.kurtzauction.com

IOWA, Wright County.

Land totaling 80 acres sold for \$725,000, or about \$9,063 per acre. Tillage portion of the property was 78.03 acres, with a CSR2 of 83.6. This was a leaseback sale. **Contact:** John Kirkpatrick, MWA Auctions and Real Estate; john@mwallc.com; 515-532-2878

www.murraywiseassociates.com

KANSAS, Comanche County.

Cropland totaling 160 acres sold at auction for \$128,000, or \$800 per acre. Property included a 164.7-acre wheat base. Fencing was in place on two sides, and all mineral rights transferred with the land. **Contact:** Neal Mann, Farm and Ranch Realty Inc.; info@frrmail.com; 800-247-7863

www.farmandranchrealty.com

KENTUCKY, Webster County.

Five tracts of land totaling 514.7 acres sold at absolute auction for \$2.6 million. Tract prices ranged from \$2,500 to \$7,700 per acre; overall average was \$5,050. Farm was cropland, CRP and wooded. **Contact:** Mike Melloan, Kurtz Auction and Realty; mike@kurtzauction.com; 270-929-1410

www.kurtzauction.com

LOUISIANA, Morehouse Parish.

Irrigated property totaling 1,256 acres sold for \$5.65 million, or \$4,500 per

acre. Two farms made up the offering, both leveled and furrow-irrigated, with 11 wells. Both were rented on a 25% share and had been used for rice and bean production. **Contact:** Brad Brown, Brown Realty; bbrown@brownrealtyco.com; 318-728-9544
www.brownrealtyco.com

MINNESOTA, Clay County. A 241-acre farm sold at auction to two buyers for \$867,600, or \$3,600 per acre. The property included a farmstead and about 185 acres of cropland. Wheat, corn and soybeans were produced on the property. **Contact:** Kevin Pifer, Pifer's Land Auctions; kpifer@pifers.com or Steve Miller, smiller@pifers.com; 877-700-4099

www.pifers.com

NEBRASKA, Dodge County. Irrigated farmland totaling 130 acres sold at private treaty for \$1.04 million, or \$8,000 per acre. The entire property was tillable and sold to a local beginning farmer and related investors. **Contact:** Tom Sunderman, AgriSun Land Management Inc.; mail@agrisun.com; 402-727-7100

www.agrisun.com

NORTH DAKOTA, Oliver County.

Cropland, a wind turbine lease and recreational hunting land in a 640-acre property sold for \$1.03 million in four parcels. Prices per acre ranged from \$950 to \$2,820; overall average was \$1,609. **Contact:** Andy Mrnak, andy@pifers.com; Ali Paulson, ali@pifers.com; or Jim Sabe, jsabe@pifers.com; Pifers Land Auctions; 701-523-7366

www.pifers.com

These sales figures are provided by the sources and may not be exact because of rounding.

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A SAFE BET?

Crop input and technology companies wager yield guarantee programs will be a winning hand for growers.

Every year, row-crop growers bet that the seed, fertilizer and chemicals they choose will pay off at harvest.

Sometimes it does, and sometimes it doesn't. The weather is often the ultimate wild card.

Thanks to years of research, data collection, improved seed genetics and precision agriculture technology, several agricultural companies are confident enough to offer financial risk-mitigation programs to customers who buy their products or services. Most are variations of yield guarantees tied to the use of technology, specific inputs and agronomic practices, and the weather that provide rebates or cash back if targets aren't met.

It's a recent trend that's growing and likely here to stay, ag experts agree.

"You are seeing a tidal wave of change, even though it's only the first few ripples of companies offering guarantees," says Joe Young, president and chief operating officer of Growers Edge, Johnston, Iowa. The company partnered with Illinois-based Growmark to offer a yield guarantee program this year to the cooperative's customers who grow corn and soybeans.

Growers Edge, a small financial data company, is one of a handful of businesses to roll out guarantee programs in the past couple of years. Others include

agriculture giants such as Bayer, Syngenta and WinField United, which is owned by Land O'Lakes.

Young sees guarantees as a way for businesses to differentiate themselves from the competition and to provide farmers with the confidence to invest in the latest technology and products during a down farm economy. It's also a way to back up high-yield and return-on-investment (ROI) claims.

"With the flood of technology and capital coming into the ag sector, all the companies are knocking on ►

□ *Joe Young, president and COO of Growers Edge, believes guarantee programs will become a permanent option for growers.*



MATTHEW PUTNEY

“We analyze data and use our risk-management background to guarantee performance.”

—Joe Young, *president and COO of Growers Edge*

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Syngenta Weather Protection Program

- Commercial release this year in the U.S. for corn and soybean acres.
- Syngenta shares the risk if there isn't sufficient rain during critical growth periods.
- Precipitation is tracked in 3- x 3-mile “weather blocks,” with a 20-year weather history used for the offer.
- A robust weather database consisting of local ground stations and satellite monitoring agency data is used.
- If rain falls short of the target, farmers receive up to 30% cash back on purchases. The less rainfall, the higher the cash back.

Bayer Outcome-Based Pricing

- Currently a pilot program for corn.
- Climate FieldView use required.
- Establishes a yield guarantee based on agronomic information and past yield data using Bayer seed and chemical recommendations, or customized prescriptions.
- Farmers enroll as many or as few acres as they want.
- Multiple participation price levels are available based on risk protection.
- If yield is below expectations, the company will rebate a portion of the product price. If yield surpasses expectations, the farmer shares a preagreed portion of additional income with the company.

WinField United Advanced Acre Prescription Program

- Limited release in 2020 for corn and soybean acres.
- Service warranty for performance of data-backed prescription plan (seed, chemistry and more) and in-season adjustments.
- If customers don't get 95% of their annual production history, WinField will cover the cost of services.
- A 250-acre minimum required.
- Must be approved for secure financing to participate.
- The plan includes agronomist consultations and in-season optimization and tissue-testing.



GETTY IMAGES

Growers Edge and Growmark Agronomic Performance Product

- Growers Edge provides a performance guarantee for customers using certain specified products and agronomic practices.
- Growers Edge charges farmers a per-acre fee.
- Plans guarantee a farmer 90% of a field's average 10-year annual production history and county yield average or higher. All revenue is retained by the farmer.
- If the performance guarantee is not met, the farmer receives money back.
- Commercially available through Growmark for the 2020 growing season.

Azotic North America Envita Performance Guarantee

- Purchase and apply Envita, an in-furrow nitrogen-fixing bacteria, at labeled rates per use guidelines on at least 160 acres of corn by June 15, 2020.
- A test strip of at least 5 acres in the same field of application required.
- Apply nitrogen at recommended rates.
- If Envita doesn't increase yields by at least 3 bushels per acre, the customer can opt for free product in 2021 and agronomic support or \$5 per acre cash back.

the same grower's door," Young explains. "They all say their stuff is great ... so how do farmers cut through the noise at the kitchen table? [Guarantees] will do that."

Companies insist everyone wins with guarantee programs. Ag suppliers sell more products. Farmers get yield and income assurances. Bankers have more confidence to provide sufficient operating loans.

Ben Riensche, owner and manager of Blue Diamond Farming Co., near Jesup, Iowa, is skeptical of whether farmers will truly benefit from the guarantee trend. But, that isn't stopping him from participating in Bayer's outcome-based pricing pilot program, which shares the risks and rewards of farming.

Riensche depicts farmers as the ultimate gamblers and ag input companies as the casino.

"Most people don't expect to get rich walking into the casino ... they kind of expect the house to win," he says. "They [companies] are looking for ways to extract more value from their products.

"But, if you are a young farmer without much capital or greatly expanded an operation and not in a position to take a lot of risk, [guarantee programs] could be a good management tool," Riensche continues. "If you are well-capitalized and have a great production system, and are already on the high side of average making production choices, this may not be for you."

WHY NOW?

A combination of factors spurred ag companies to start offering various guarantees. Improved data and research, consolidation in agriculture leading to a need to increase product market share, customer demand for innovative pricing options and a lumbering ag economy spearheaded by several years of tight or nonexistent crop margins top the list.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture projects nationwide net farm income this year at \$97.7 billion, which is 30.5% below the market peak in 2013. Chapter 12 family farm bankruptcies increased nearly 20% last year from 2018 to 595 filings, according to the U.S. Courts data.

"The evolution of the input industry is beginning to accelerate," says Bruce Sherrick, a University of Illinois professor and ag economist. "Guarantees are a risk-sharing response that does make sense, even if incomes weren't compressed."

Company officials contend guarantee programs supplement, but will not replace, federal crop insurance.

Grain farmer Ben Riensche, of Jesup, Iowa, is skeptical but participating in Bayer's trial yield guarantee offering. MATTHEW PUTNEY

After several years of offering weather protection programs in Australia and other nations, and two years of testing in the United States, Syngenta believed the time was right to commercialize it in the U.S. in 2020.

"The ag economy is tough," says Steven Patton, Syngenta marketing lead for digital ag solutions. "In light of uncertain weather, we desire to provide confidence to invest in a better crop."



GUARANTEE DIFFERENCES

For farmers seeking an income or yield guarantee, several options exist.

Bayer launched outcome-based pricing for corn last year as a pilot program in Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota. It will expand into other states this year and test different versions of the program. Ultimately, a yield target is set based on company research of a product and the farm's data and history from the company's digital ag platform, FieldView.

If the yield guarantee isn't achieved, Bayer will rebate a certain portion of the original price (specifics weren't available at press time) of the product. If the yield is higher than expected, the farmer shares a preagreed portion of additional income with the company.

"While we believe this innovative approach could be an attractive option for farmers to help manage on-farm risk, choice remains important, including the opportunity to purchase products from Bayer as they always have," according to a company statement to *Progressive Farmer*. >



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The Growers Edge and Growmark plans differ from Bayer in that neither company seeks a piece of farmer revenue when performance exceeds expectations. But, there is an additional cost besides buying inputs.

Growmark customers must utilize its seed, grid soil-sampling and variable-rate fertilizer applications, as well as follow nutrient- and crop-protection recommendations. Users pay Growers Edge a per-acre fee, which the company couldn't disclose at press time. It guarantees a field—regardless of crop or location—will yield 90% or higher of its 10-year annual production history average and the yearly county average. If the plan's performance doesn't meet or beat that threshold, the farmer gets money back.

Growers Edge declined to provide specifics on cash-back amounts at press time.

“We analyze data and use our risk-management background to guarantee performance,” Young says. “A 90% or higher guarantee may not sound attractive, but it lets a grower invest with confidence.”

During a pilot program in 2019, Young says farmers averaged a 32% return on investment. He projects the company's warranty-backed product will cover 500,000 acres this year. Growers Edge is working on partnerships and pilot programs with other ag input companies.

Syngenta decided to focus on weather, a key variable to successful yields. To help customers confidently invest in their chemistry and technology, the Syngenta program will share the risk with producers if there's not enough rain during crucial crop-development periods.

A 20-year weather history is utilized to create a unique weather protection offer for any given farm, with up to 30% cash back on qualifying purchases.

When payouts occurred in U.S. test cases in 2018 and 2019, Patton says 15 to 20% cash-back payments were common. One individual payment exceeded \$200,000.

“We want to stand with you, Mr. and Mrs. Grower, through our weather protection offer to defend your bottom line,” Patton says. “Even with the volatile weather, we seek to help our partners stay rooted in agronomics. That's what the offer is all about.”

FARMER FEEDBACK

Rienschel offered several hundred of what he describes as his “toughest” acres—rolling topography and limited water-holding capacity—in Bayer's program last year. Program corn averaged 178 bushels per acre, 15% less than the yield prediction despite Rienschel planting the DeKalb hybrid as prescribed and following nutrient, herbicide and fungicide recommendations.

Under the base formula, he's expecting \$30 to \$50 per acre back.

“The crop didn't perform as well as they hoped,” says Rienschel, noting a wet spring played a role. “Weather will trump the very best production plan.”



Allan Miller (left), of Growers Edge, talks about the company's offerings at the 2020 Commodity Classic. MATTHEW WILDE

Some young farmers or producers without much precision ag experience could benefit from company-mandated crop prescriptions and production guarantees, he says. But, growers like himself who have embraced technology and prescriptive farming for years may not.

Rienschel plans to double acres in Bayer's program despite reservations. If production guarantees are the wave of the future, he wants to be ready.

“I applaud companies for trying ... you have to start somewhere,” Rienschel adds.

Mark Watne, a grain farmer near Velva, North Dakota, and president of the North Dakota Farmers Union (NDFU), is intrigued by yield guarantees to mitigate risk. However, he warns farmers to thoroughly vet contracts and understand how their data will be used. Companies say farmers retain ownership of data, and sharing it is voluntary but often a requirement for participation.

“From NDFU's perspective, we prefer farmers produce for the marketplace, and they burden the risk and rewards based on the ability to be profitable,” Watne asserts. “With that said, it's getting harder to do so. That's where these [guarantee programs] pop up ... which have merit.” ///

➤ Follow Matthew Wilde on Twitter @progressivwilde.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Azotic North America: www.azotic-na.com/guarantee
- Bayer: www.bayer.com/en/crop-science-division.aspx
- Growers Edge: www.growersedge.com/agribusiness
 - Syngenta: www.agriclime.us
- WinField United: www.winfieldunited.com/product/advanced-acre-prescription-program

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STEVE THOMPSON

Story of the Rheostat And the Potentiometer

Can you tell me the difference between a rheostat and a potentiometer? I've heard them called the same thing, but I think they have different functions.

STEVE: The rheostat is more concerned with current, and the potentiometer (pot) is more concerned with voltage, although they both can change voltage. Pots are used for controlling the signal level of a circuit and not the power of the circuit. You can always tell the difference by looking at the number of wires on the device or the number of terminals. The rheostat will have two wires, and the “pot” will have three wires (see photo). The variable rheostat simply decreases or increases the flow of electrons (current) in order to change voltage, but a pot divides the voltage, which is why it needs the third wire. An electronic control unit (ECU) can make adjustments to a function by reading the changing voltage feed. Incoming voltage is divided between the ground and the ECU as the potentiometer changes positions. This change in voltage is monitored by the ECU. Next, the ECU sends the necessary signal to a driven servo to make the requested change sent by the pot. Finally, the function is performed as requested by the voltage change sent from the pot on the machine or the operator. It works just like your farm. The battery owns the farm, the pot is the farm manager, the ECU is the foreman, and the servo does the work in the field.

I know that diesel engines seem to run a long time, but is it important to have the valve lash checked? If so, when do you recommend this should be done? Do the valves need to be checked because of wear from the rocker arm and the end of valve or valve cap?

STEVE: Yes, diesel engines of today have a long life, not only because of new engine technology but also the fact that today's engine oil is so much better—and specifically designed for a particular engine application.



Write Steve Thompson at Ask The Mechanic, 2204 Lakeshore Dr., Suite 415, Birmingham, AL 35209, or email mechanic@progressivefarmer.com.

I personally like to “run the valves” on my newer trucks with the Cummins every 150,000 miles. However, I run the valves on the old “dirty 12 valve” every 100,000 miles. The majority of the wear comes from the “seating” of the valves in the head, which increases valve lash, because they are constantly slamming against the head. Valve lash changes engine timing, and correct engine timing is related to engine longevity. Engines like clean oil that is changed regularly.

I have a late-model John Deere 4020 that has a fuel problem. It will start fine, run awhile then quit. It will start back up, but then it dies again. I have changed the fuel filter, lift pump and all the fuel lines from the tank. If I let it rest for a while, it will start and run longer, but still dies. The quicker I start it back up after it dies, the less time it will run. I guess the only thing left is the injector pump. Do you think I have air in the lines?

STEVE: More than likely the problem is with the return line being completely plugged. The return line is where fuel from each injector is “leaked off” by the injector. This return fuel is by design. It cools and lubricates the injector during operation, then it is returned to the tank. The blockage is usually in the fitting on the top of the fuel tank where the return line connects to the fuel tank. Make sure the passage is completely open all the way down inside the tank. ///

SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

When servicing a tractor with mechanical front-wheel drive (MFWD), special attention must be taken when running the tractor in gear and the rear wheels under power with rear wheels supported (off the ground). It is important to always support both the front and rear wheels when running the wheels during a test even though the MFWD is disengaged. Loss of electrical power or transmission or hydraulic system pressure can engage the front wheels. If this happens, the unsupported front wheels will pull the tractor off its rear supports. The hydraulically engaged MFWD tractors can require voltage to disengage the MFWD and no voltage to engage the MFWD. Never trust a switch or wire with your life. Electricity is great, but it is hard to control and is always trying to go to the wrong place or leave the right place.

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Virus Concerns Change Farmer Habits

Growers are worried about coronavirus' effect on their families and businesses.

Farmers are worried about how the coronavirus pandemic will influence the coming crop year, their businesses in general and even their family's health, according to a current online poll conducted by DTN and data analytics company Farm Market iD. Seventy percent of farmers polled don't have a prepared backup plan should they become sick with the virus themselves.

"We know that COVID-19 is taking a toll on populations around the world," says John Teeple, DTN senior vice president, agriculture. "Our farmers are entering a stressful planting season and now have to contend with the challenges associated with this global pandemic. They are on the front lines of ensuring that our world has food to eat."

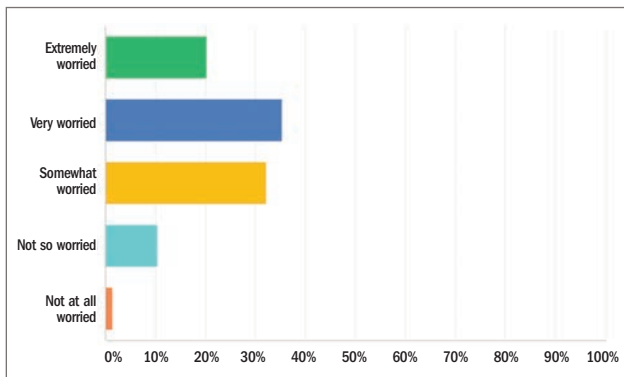
Farmers were sent email invitations to take part in the poll, "Coronavirus Impact on the Farmer and the Business of Farming," starting March 27. Percentages quoted are from March 30, when more than 450 farmers had responded to a 23-question poll. The general levels have varied only a percentage point or two through the March 27–30 period. An open poll of this type has a margin of error of plus- or minus-5 percentage points.

To view the entire poll results, visit www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-HMTW2FSM7.

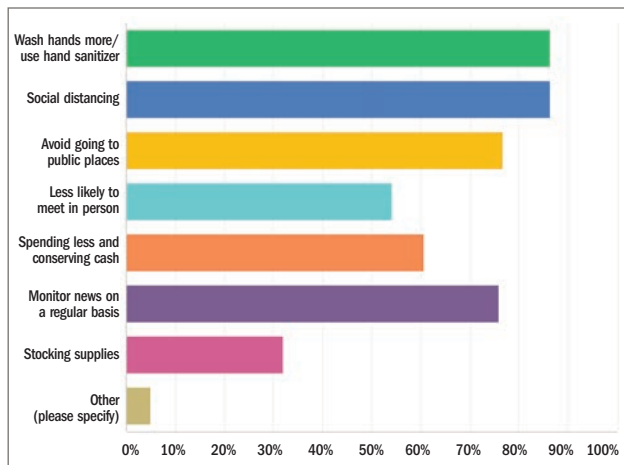
BUSINESS, HEALTH CONCERNS

When asked about the business effects of the virus, some 32% were at least somewhat worried it would hurt their business. Some 56% were either very worried

How worried are you about the impact of coronavirus on your business?



What changes are you making or might you make in your personal life? (Select all that apply.)



or extremely worried about the issue hurting business. In a recent DTN/Progressive Farmer online poll held in mid-March, more than 70% of respondents said their main concern was the overall global economy; substantially fewer were worried about their specific business success.

When asked about health concerns, 77% had at least some concern the virus would affect the health of family or friends. More than 43% were very worried to extremely worried about health issues.

A concerning point, given the relatively high number of respondents who were worried about health issues from COVID-19, is that the vast majority of farmers—70%—said they did not have a backup plan to continue current farming operations if they themselves got sick. It's not surprising, given that many farms are still single-proprietor or have few family members or employees as part of the operation. But, it also speaks to the downsides of that limited business leadership and how it can be crippled when the unexpected happens.

CHANGING FARMER BEHAVIOR

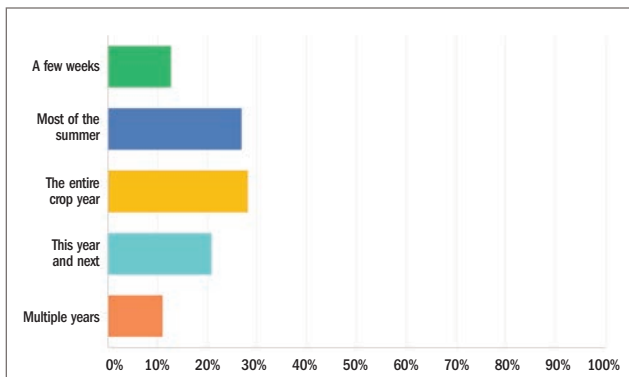
The poll included a number of questions exploring how farmers were changing behavior because of the coronavirus issue. About 55% of farmers had taken steps including meeting less, and nearly 61% are being

more careful with money expenditures. More than 86% were taking steps such as practicing social distancing and putting more effort into washing hands or using hand sanitizers regularly.

Farmers also were looking to various input suppliers and other vendors to work with them during this pandemic period. More than half of farmers were looking for improved flexibility in pickup and delivery of supplies, and thought suppliers should offer flexible financing terms. Some 68% were looking for price reductions from suppliers. The most popular expectation, with 71% of respondents agreeing to the need, was for more communication and openness from farm suppliers.

“The survey results indicate that farmers are delaying large purchases and instituting conservative farming decisions,” points out Steve Rao, CEO of Farm Market iD. “Agribusinesses should take notice to the challenges this presents their businesses.”

How long do you think the impact to your farming business will last?



STRONG SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT

Farmers were also asked about their support for the Trump administration and how officials were handling the coronavirus pandemic. It’s been well-documented that the president has strong support in farm country. More than 70% of respondents said they were satisfied with the response to the virus by the administration.

“This may be an important and early indicator for the 2020 presidential election, as we found that 90% of respondents plan to vote in the fall,” explains Steve Matthesen, CEO of DTN. “If they were pressed to vote today, more than 80% would vote for the current administration.” ///

Editor’s note: To encourage response to the coronavirus poll, DTN and Farm Market iD are each making a \$1,000 donation to Feeding America (www.feedingamerica.org) to support that organization’s 200 food banks and 60,000 food pantries.

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The Keys to Great Communication

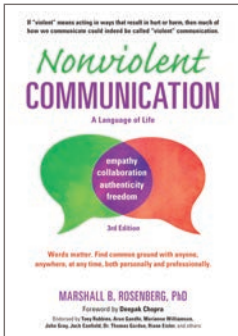
“While we may not consider the way we talk to be ‘violent,’ words often lead to hurt and pain, whether for others or ourselves.”

—Marshall Rosenberg



Write Lance Woodbury at Family Business Matters, 2204 Lakeshore Dr., Suite 415, Birmingham, AL 35209, or email lance.woodbury@kcoe.com.

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Facilitating family meetings

offers the chance to see significant interaction between people. More than two decades of leading such gatherings reinforces my belief that verbal and nonverbal communication between family members is the most critical skill in an effective family business. What people say, how they say it, what others hear and how they react says a great deal about whether the

family will survive in business together.

Marshall Rosenberg (1934–2015) gave us a practical way to think about communicating with others in his book “Nonviolent Communication.” The book has a number of fans, including the CEO of Microsoft, who gave the book to his management team when he took over as CEO in 2014. Following are the primary components of Rosenberg’s model.

SEPARATE YOUR OBSERVATION FROM YOUR EVALUATION

The first key to better communication is separating your judgment from your experience. For example, you may be upset if you weren’t included in a decision. Or, you may be frustrated if your team member didn’t do something you asked him or her to do. First, observe what happened: A decision was made without you. A task was not completed.

DESCRIBE YOUR FEELING

Rosenberg says to articulate how we feel, we should use words that describe specific emotions instead of general statements like “I feel good” or “I feel bad.” For example, instead of feeling bad, you might feel aggravated, irate, nervous or surprised. The more specific the description of your emotion, the easier it is for the other person to connect with your feeling. My



experience is that family members often don’t intend to have a negative impact on each other, but, to use our examples above, the task that didn’t get accomplished, or the decision that was made in your absence became the stimulus for the specific feeling.

ARTICULATE YOUR NEED CONNECTED TO YOUR FEELING

The next step in nonviolent communication is to describe what you need from the other person. In the examples above, you might need to be included so that you feel part of the family. Or you need someone to complete a task because you want the farm to be prepared for planting season. If you use the phrase “I feel ... because I need ...,” you have a better chance of improving communication with the other person and actually getting your needs met, which is what we all strive for.

MAKE A REQUEST OF THE OTHER PERSON

The final step in the process is to clearly express what you want the other person to do. Using our examples, you can request to be included in future meetings, or you can ask the other person to complete the next task and let you know when he or she is finished. A way to make sure they heard your request is asking them to reflect on what you’ve asked them to do. By the way, telling people what you don’t want them to do often puts people on the defensive, so be sure to frame your request as an action you want them to complete.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

For example, you might say, “When you did not include me in the decision to buy the tractor, I felt frustrated because, as an owner, I have a need to participate in the major financial decisions on our farm. I’d like you to include me in the next meeting.”

Using the nonviolent communication method doesn’t prevent conflict, and it takes practice to implement. But, it can improve relationships and help resolve conflicts earlier—and all family businesses would benefit from that. ///

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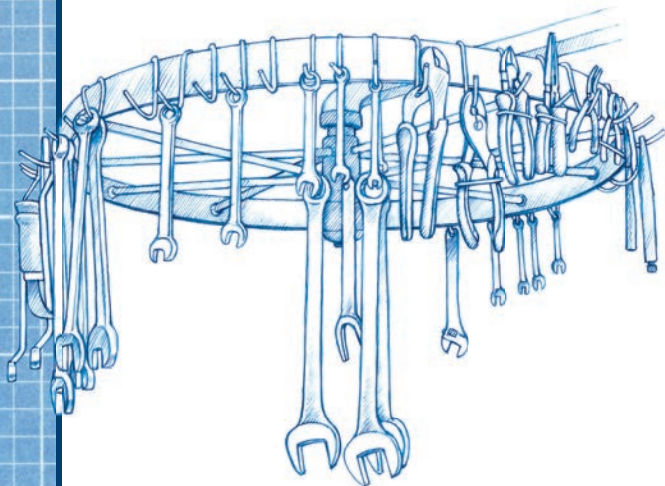
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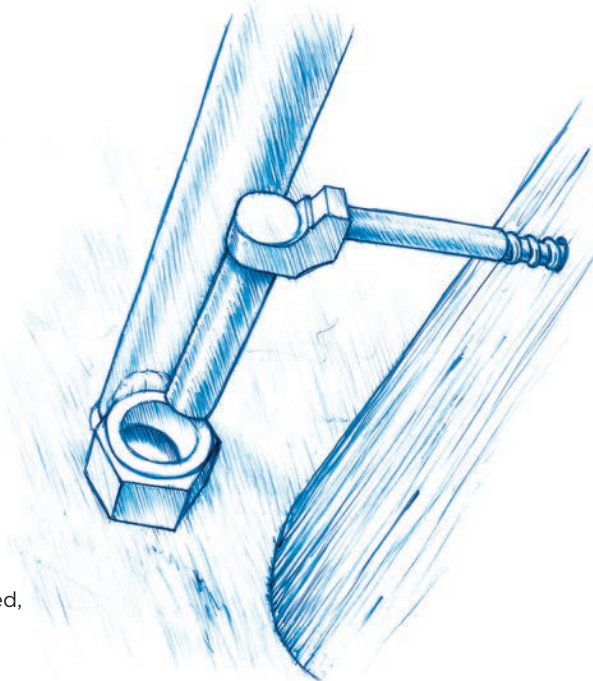
◀ LAZY SUSAN

Tools are easy to find for Ralph Eiken, Centertown, Missouri. He built a revolving tool rack using an old corn cultivator wheel with spokes and an axle. He made hooks from 1/4-inch rods and suspended the 9 1/2-foot circumference device from the ceiling above his round workbench.



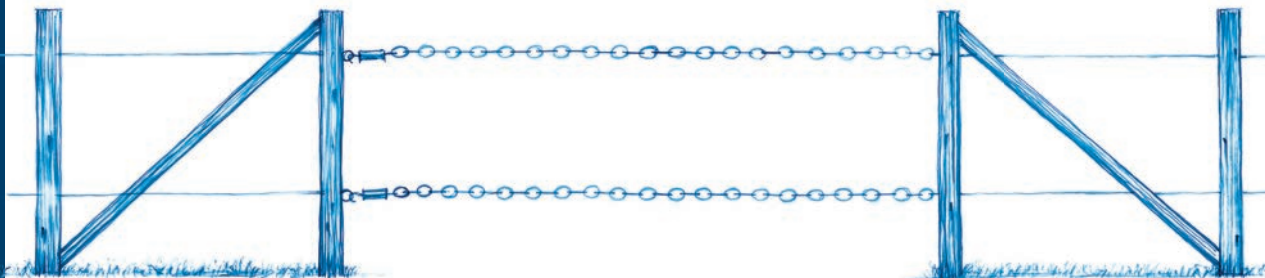
▶ HINGE REMOVER

Removing gate-hinge pins can be a difficult chore, especially if you are removing those close to the ground. Sherman Woods, Sulligent, Alabama, made a tool from a 3/4-inch x 3-foot piece of black pipe. He welded a 2-inch piece of the same material to the side of the pipe. Woods slips this over the hinge and uses leverage gained from the pipe to unscrew the hinge pins.



▼ CHAIN GATE

Rather than using stiff wire for electric fence gates, Tim Reed, Huntingdon, Tennessee, suggests using lightweight chain—the same stuff used for a swing set. If the metal is properly conductive, it will create a gate that is easier to open and close than one made of wire, which tends to kink and twist.



WINNING IDEAS: Win \$400 if your idea is chosen as the month's "Editor's Choice" Handy Device. Win \$200 for other ideas used on this page. To submit a Handy Device, please send clear photographs, detailed drawings and a complete explanation of your idea. With each entry, include your name, address and telephone number. Send Handy Device entries to Progressive Farmer, 2204 Lakeshore Dr., Suite 415, Birmingham, AL 35209. Sorry, but we cannot acknowledge submissions or return photographs, drawings or documentation.



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Follow the latest from Pamela Smith, Crops Technology Editor, by visiting the Production Blogs at dtnpf.com or following her on Twitter: @PamSmithDTN.

Inside Out Corn Disease Protection



At-planting fungicide that protects corn through tassel is the latest from

FMC Corp. Xyway 3D fungicide is applied in-furrow to control foliar diseases.

“Typically, corn growers wait until conditions are right for a disease to develop, or the disease has already appeared before applying a fungicide,” explains Gail Stratman, regional technical manager for FMC Corp. “Foliar applications are timing sensitive, and it can sometimes be a difficult decision on when to pull the trigger. This is a new approach where Xyway 3D fungicide is applied at-planting via soil application. It’s highly mobile and translocated throughout the plant, and its long residual can protect the corn crop through tassel and beyond. Look at it as inside out disease protection.”

Flutriafol (Group 3), the active ingredient in Xyway 3D, is effective on gray leafspot, Northern corn leaf blight and several other yield-limiting foliar diseases. Movement through the stalk and leaf tissues also helps stalk health. “It not only has inherent systemic movement in the plant, but it also has a long residual profile that makes this product unique, showing foliar and stalk disease benefits in research trials over 100 days after it’s applied,” Stratman adds.

Xyway 3D fungicide will be available for FMC’s 3RIVE 3D delivery system that reduces the water volume compared to conventional liquid in-furrow

systems, allowing up to 450 acres between fills.

On-farm and university trials for Xyway 3D fungicide continue in 2020 with an expected launch for the 2021 growing season. Labeled rates are 5.8 to 11.8 ounces per acre. FMC is also developing an LFR (liquid fertilizer ready) formulation that allows Xyway application with starter fertilizer in-furrow or potentially with other fertilizer placements.



ETHAN ZOEBER

Hook Up With Ease

No need for hydraulic hoses to be tangled like a string of Christmas lights. Outback Wrap is designed to make hooking up easier.

The polyethylene wraps take no installation tools and use the ISO color system for agricultural hydraulics. The letters “A” and “B” are lasered into the wrap to give a left and right, or an above or below, indicator when hooking up. A and B wraps are also cut to different lengths to give another visual aid. Wraps come in small and large sizes, and fit hydraulic hoses 3/8 inch to 1 1/4 inch. For more information, visit www.outbackwrap.com. ///

—Gregg Hillyer contributed to this column.

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GREG LATZA

Veterinarian Prospects

I am 13 and considering a career in veterinary medicine. Can you tell me if becoming a veterinarian is worth it? Is there anything I could be doing now that would help me get into vet school? Finally, do you ever regret becoming a vet?

Dr. McMillan: I believe any career is worth it if you love what you do and make a difference for good in the world. I was attracted to veterinary medicine because I grew up on a farm, and I knew I wanted to be a farmer or help farmers. There is something very special and fulfilling in being able to help a farmer with his livestock.

For now, focus on being the best student you can be. While science and math skills are clearly needed in preveterinary studies, in veterinary school and in your day-to-day work, it's important to have very good English and communication skills. Experience with livestock is always a plus. And, if you have the opportunity, consider working with a veterinarian. It will help you know if this is really what you want to do. It is also a plus in the admissions process to vet school.

Veterinary medicine offers many career paths, besides the obvious clinical practice. Veterinarians work in education, diagnostic laboratories, veterinary and human biomedical research and development, consultation, the military and the government.

There are also many career paths that do not require a veterinary degree. Licensed veterinary technicians or veterinary nurses can graduate with two to four years of training, and they are essential in all areas of our profession. Veterinary assistants, receptionists and other positions in clinical practice offer additional career options, and often these require no formal training. Pharmaceutical companies employ thousands of nonveterinarians in roles from research and development to sales.



Write Dr. Ken McMillan at Ask The Vet, 2204 Lakeshore Dr., Suite 415, Birmingham, AL 35209, or email vet@progressivefarmer.com.

To answer your last question, I have never regretted my career choice. I do regret those times when my work has interfered with my family time. A famous quote says, "No one on their deathbed ever said I wish I had spent more time at the office." So, my advice to anyone is to always consider your work- and homelife balance.

I wish you the best of luck. Find what makes your heart sing, and make a difference for good in every aspect of your life.

I have heard there is a new once-a-year shot to prevent heartworms in dogs. Does it really work? Is it safe?

Dr. McMillan: The ProHeart 12 injection is the once-a-year heartworm preventative you're talking about. It was approved and released in 2019. My practice actually participated in the company's clinical trials for ProHeart 12, and we have used it extensively for our clients' dogs since it came on the market. We were impressed with its safety during the trials. While it's new here in the U.S., this preventative has been approved in Australia since 2001. It is the most commonly used heartworm preventative in that country and, as such, has had an excellent safety profile with millions of doses given. ///

READERS TALK BACK

I recently read your column about the differences in hay rings and them versus trailers or wagons. My husband and I have about 40 mama cows (which is not a lot compared to large operations), but we take pride in always having a nice-looking and healthy group.



One point that my husband has made over the years is that we always move our hay rings to different locations throughout the pasture over the winter. We have noticed the cows will not waste as much because they are not standing on a pile of wet hay (that is saturated in urine and manure) trying to eat.

-D. Charles

Please contact your veterinarian with questions pertaining to the health of your herd. Every operation is unique, and the information in this column does not pertain to all situations. This is not intended as medical advice but is purely for informational purposes.

Leading Pill for Bouts of Reflux Becomes an Anti-Aging Phenomenon

Scientific studies show breakthrough acid reflux treatment also helps maintain vital health and helps protect users from the serious conditions that accompany aging such as fatigue and poor cardiovascular health



Seattle, WA – A published study on a leading acid reflux ingredient shows that its key ingredient improves digestive health while maintaining health levels of inflammation that contributes to premature aging in men and women.

And, if consumer sales are any indication of a product's effectiveness, this 'acid reflux pill turned anti-aging phenomenon' is nothing short of a miracle.

Sold under the brand name AloeCure®, its ingredient was already backed by research showing its ability to neutralize acid levels and hold them down for long lasting day and night relief from bouts of heartburn and, acid reflux, gas, bloating, and more.

But soon doctors started reporting some incredible results...

"With AloeCure, my patients started reporting, better sleep, more energy, stronger immune systems... even less stress and better skin, hair, and nails" explains Dr. Liza Leal; a leading integrative health specialist and company spokesperson.

AloeCure contains an active ingredient that helps improve digestion by acting as a natural acid-buffer that improves the pH balance of your stomach.

Scientists now believe that this acid imbalance could be a major contributing factor to painful inflammation throughout the rest of the body.

The daily allowance of AloeCure has shown to calm this inflammation through immune system adjustments which is why AloeCure is so effective.

Relieving other stressful symptoms related to GI health like pain, bloating, fatigue, cramping, acid overproduction, and nausea.

Now, backed with new scientific studies, AloeCure is being doctor recommended to help improve digestion, and even reduce the appearance of wrinkles – helping patients look and feel decades younger.

FIX YOUR GUT & FIGHT INFLAMMATION

Since hitting the market, sales for AloeCure have taken off and there are some very good reasons why.

To start, the clinical studies have been impressive. Virtually all participants taking it reported stunning improvement in digestive symptoms including bouts of heartburn.

Users can also experience higher energy levels and endurance, relief from chronic discomfort and better sleep, healthier looking

skin, hair, and nails.

A healthy gut is the key to a reducing swelling and inflammation that can wreak havoc on the human body. Doctors say this is why AloeCure works on so many aspects of your health.

AloeCure's active ingredient is made from the famous healing compound found in Aloe Vera. It is both safe and healthy. There are also no known side effects.

Scientists believe that it helps improve digestive by acting as a natural acid-buffer that improves the pH balance of your stomach and helps the immune system maintain healthy functions.

Research has shown that this acid imbalance contributes to painful inflammation throughout your entire body and is why AloeCure seems to be so effective.

EXCITING RESULTS FROM PATIENTS

To date millions of bottles of AloeCure have been sold, and the community seeking non-pharma therapy for their GI health continues to grow.

According to Dr. Leal, her patients are absolutely thrilled with their results and are often shocked by how fast it works.

"For the first time in years, they are free from concerns about their digestion and almost every other aspect of their health," says Dr. Leal, "and I recommend it to everyone who wants to improve GI health before considering drugs, surgery, or OTC medications."

"All the problems with my stomach are gone. Completely gone. I can say AloeCure is a miracle. It's a miracle." Another user turned spokesperson said, "I started to notice a difference because I was sleeping through the night and that was great. AloeCure does work for me. It's made a huge difference."

With so much positive feedback, it's easy to see why the community of believers is growing and sales for the new pill are soaring.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND ALOECURE

AloeCure is a pill that's taken just once daily. The pill is small. Easy to swallow. There are no harmful side effects and it does not require a prescription.

The active ingredient is a rare Aloe Vera component known as acemannan.

Millions spent in developing a proprietary process for extracting acemannan resulted in the highest quality, most bio-available levels of acemannan known to exist, and it's made from organic aloe.

According to Dr. Leal and leading experts,

improving the pH balance of your stomach and restoring gut health is the key to revitalizing your entire body.

When your digestive system isn't healthy, it causes unwanted stress on your immune system, which results in inflammation in the rest of the body.

The recommended daily allowance of acemannan in AloeCure has been proven to support digestive health and manage painful inflammation through immune system adjustments without side effects or drugs.

This would explain why so many users are experiencing impressive results so quickly.

REVITALIZE YOUR ENTIRE BODY

With daily use, AloeCure helps users look and feel decades younger and defend against some of the painful inflammation that accompanies aging and can make life hard.

By buffering stomach acid and restoring gut health, AloeCure's ingredient maintains healthy immune system function to combat painful inflammation...reduce the appearance of wrinkles and help strengthen hair and nails ... maintains healthy cholesterol and oxidative stress... improves sleep and energy.... and supports brain function by way of gut biome... without side effects or expense.

Readers can now reclaim their energy, vitality, and youth regardless of age.

AloeCure Taken Daily

- Helps End Digestion Nightmares
- Reduces appearance of Wrinkles and Increases Elasticity
- Supports Healthy Immune System

HOW TO GET ALOECURE

This is the official nationwide release of the new AloeCure pill in the United States. And so, the company is offering our readers up to 3 FREE bottles with their order.

This special give-away is available for the next 48-hours only. All you have to do is call TOLL- FREE 1-800-589-1625 and provide the operator with the Free Bottle Approval Code: AC100. The company will do the rest.

Important: Due to AloeCure's recent media exposure, phone lines are often busy. If you call and do not immediately get through, please be patient and call back. Those who miss the 48-hour deadline may lose out on this free bottle offer.



Let Efficiency Lead

Don't cull cows strictly on size. Consider the whole picture first.

BECKY MILLS

She looks like a walking refrigerator. She probably weighs well over 1,500 pounds. Is she on the cull list come fall? Slow the roll. Weight isn't all there is to efficiency in a cow herd today.

Ryon Walker, livestock consultant at Noble Research Institute, says there's a lot to consider when looking at how efficient a cow herd is overall. Weight is a starting point, but there are a few other things commercial producers should consider.

"Cow size is a start, but we can't just go in and get rid of all our big cows," he says. "Most producers don't know what their cows actually weigh. They are not as good at guessing those weights, and we've found they almost always underestimate. So, when we're talking about cow size, I encourage people to get specific first."

That said, it is a fact that all cattle sizes have been trending up for the last five decades. Data from the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) shows between 1962 and 2015, carcass weights have gone up significantly for bulls, cows, steers and heifers. Cows, for example, averaged 509 pounds (chilled carcass weight) in 1962 and, in 2015, were coming in at 662 pounds. Steers went from 654 pounds to 884 pounds during that same period.

In terms of sustainability, there is a positive side to this. While production of beef has increased in

pounds, the number of cattle slaughtered to achieve that production has decreased. The May 2019 NASS report, "Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry Outlook," notes that in the cattle business: "... record beef production has been achieved with fewer animals as the result of an industry that has changed dramatically over time. For example, improved breeding practices have helped produce more efficient cows that have offspring with better growth rates and feed conversion efficiencies. Enhanced cattle performance on grass and in feedlots has provided faster turnover of feeder cattle with heavier carcass weights. These cattle make their way through the value chain as a better and more consistent product thanks to improved feeding technologies and better husbandry practices, enabling the industry to produce more beef per cow."

This tracks with other data that shows during this same period of time, the cow/calf segment of the beef industry has improved weaning weights significantly. Noble's Walker says this is a result of more selection for growth and performance at the producer level. He explains there are strong genetic correlations between weaning weight and mature cow size, particularly in *Bos taurus* breeds (Angus, Hereford, etc.).

In terms of feed efficiency, though, there are still a lot of unknowns.

"We are seeing more intention at the producer level in terms of selection for feed efficiency, but it's too early >



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to know if that is going to impact cow size,” he explains. “Feed-efficiency traits aren’t that old; we need several generations of data to evaluate what the overall impacts will be of an emphasis on feed efficiency in the cow herd.”

START WITH ENVIRONMENT

As producers work to maximize the efficiency of cow herds, Walker says the environment is key. Match the cow to her environment. “In New Mexico, you can’t have a 1,500-pound cow, for example. But, in colder climates, it takes a bigger cow. So, you have to consider environment as part of this selection process.”

He notes research studies evaluating dry matter intake in mature beef cows showed a 4- to 6-pound difference in intake per day. These were cow-to-cow comparisons of animals of the same weight with the same average daily gain and same body condition. Cows of the same size, then, can eat different amounts and have calves that all wean at the same weights.

“Phenotype may be the same, but there can be this big difference in feed intake,” Walker explains. “And, if you multiply that times 365 days a year, it’s a huge difference in input costs.”

Jason Smith, beef cattle specialist at Texas A&M, says when he looks at replacement heifers with producers in the state, he sets some basic selection criteria. He considers: As a calf, was she healthy? Did she perform well? Did she become pregnant during the breeding season? Was she able to calve without assistance by the time she was 2 years old? And, was she able to rebreed and do it again the next year?

He calls this “bare minimum criteria,” adding that to stay in the herd, she will also have to be able to maintain acceptable body condition with little to no protein or energy supplementation. And, she must wean a healthy, desirable calf that meets expectations year after year.

“If she can’t do those things, she doesn’t fit your environment and will hinder your ability to move forward,” he says.

To evaluate cow efficiency, be sure to pair calf with dam and track weaning weights.

JIM PATRICO

TRACK WEANING WEIGHTS

There’s a lot of research that shows a heavier cow does not necessarily wean a heavier calf. Researchers at the Dickinson Research Extension Center, in North Dakota, for example, evaluated production efficiency in its herd and reported a 300-pound range in body weights on cows from heavier to the lighter dams. The heavier cows only produced 1 pound more calf at weaning.

Walker says one of the key takeaways for producers is that to properly evaluate a cow’s contribution to the herd, they have to know which calf was weaned by which cow. This is the only way to determine whether a cow is the best fit for a particular herd and environment.

Smith cautions there are times when producers can focus too much on output without considering what else may come along for the ride. Selecting only for weaning weight or yearling weight without considering other growth- or size-related traits will cause mature cow size to increase. That increases overall nutrient requirements and forage intake.

“That doesn’t mean we can’t use genetics to select for improvement in weaning weight, it just means we need to divergently select the genetics that will allow for an improvement without increasing cow size.”

DON’T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

Noble’s Walker says everything circles back to good data. He acknowledges some producers don’t have scales, and in those cases, he says to rely on body condition score of a cow at weaning and frame score. ➤





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BECKY MILLS

“Frame scores have a high correlation with weight, so if you consider that along with your sell weight on a calf, you will have a basis to make decisions. What’s important is that you marry those two pieces of data. I know it sounds simple, but you really need to know what calf belongs to what cow.”

Smith agrees with Walker, adding there is a lot of value in a set of scales. He believes those producers who make that investment are quickly paid back.

“If we want to get a handle on where we are as far as mature cow size, we need to level the playing field by correcting weight for body condition,” he says. “It is incredibly difficult to manage what you don’t measure.”

Walker recalls a producer who started a herd from scratch and didn’t have a set of scales. Walker convinced him to make the investment.

“He did, and when he weighed his cows the first time, he told me he was shocked at the variation. There was a 900-pound difference from his lightest to heaviest cow, and he did not have a clue. Because of that, he wants to know even more about the herd. He’s measuring weaning weights and looking at the pair instead of just the cow so he can be more efficient overall.”

FERTILITY AND EFFICIENCY

If, after calving, a cow can’t get rebred on time, she’s not an efficient member of the herd, Walker notes.

“If she can rebreed early, even if she’s thin at weaning, that’s a positive when it comes to evaluating her place in the herd. But, if lactation has caused her problems, and her body isn’t ready to rebreed, she probably doesn’t fit the program. There’s no way to know, though, without good recordkeeping. That’s the beginning.”

He adds that especially during times of market vulnerability, it’s key for producers to control every aspect of their cattle program that they realistically can.

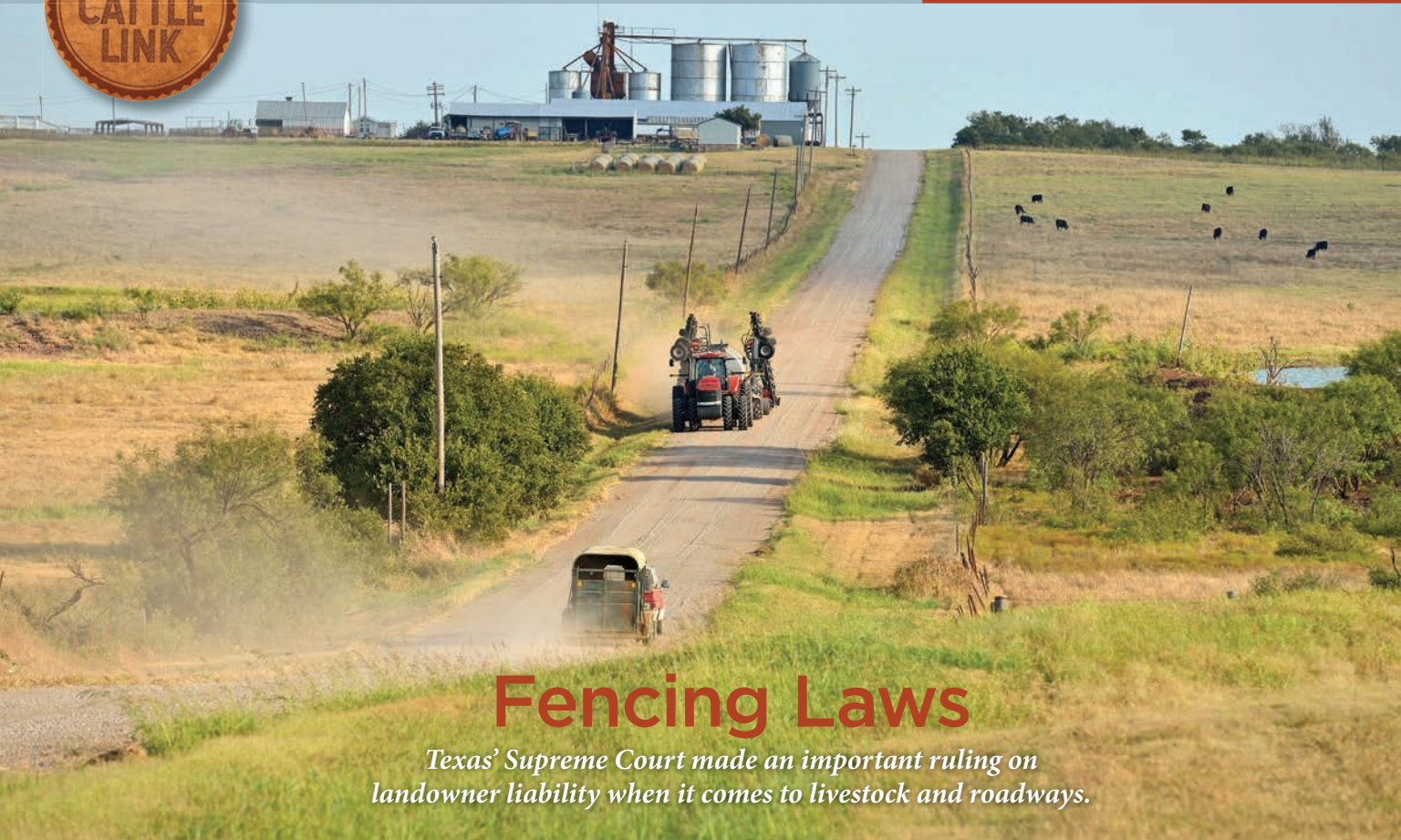
“We can’t control markets, but we can control how efficient our cows are and how they reproduce.

“We can control average weaning weights we are seeing. We have our biggest impact as producers when we look at return on cost,” he continues. “That cow with good body condition who doesn’t need us to sink a lot of money into feed for her and who rebreeds early and produces a good calf ... she should stay in the herd. It’s not all about size of the cow, but that’s a good place to start.” ///



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Fencing Laws

Texas' Supreme Court made an important ruling on landowner liability when it comes to livestock and roadways.

Across rural America, the story is not unusual. Joshua Garcia was driving through Wilson County, Texas, when a bull owned by Shary Pruski wandered onto the highway. Garcia hit the bull, killing it. In the process, his truck was wrecked, and he was injured. He sued Pruski.

The case went all the way to the Supreme Court of Texas before a final decision was made as to Pruski's liability. It came down to an interpretation of two very similar sections of Texas agricultural law, both of which happened to apply at the time of the accident.

Tiffany Dowell Lashmet, agricultural law specialist at Texas A&M, explains the plaintiff in this case made an interesting legal argument.

“When a collision occurs on a state highway, Texas statute says that in order for an animal owner to be found liable, he or she has to ‘knowingly permit’ the animal to run at large,” she explains.

“When a collision occurs on another road in a county with a stock law, the law says the plaintiff only has to prove that the animal owner ‘permitted’ the animal to run at large. At issue in this case was what happens when both of these situations occur, and the accident is on a state highway in a county with a stock law? Which of the two standards is applicable?”

The court of appeals in San Antonio sided with the plaintiff. But, the Supreme Court of Texas reversed that ruling, finding for the cattle producer. As Lashmet explains, the difference hinged on where the bull was at the time and whether Pruski “knowingly permitted” the bull to be out.

EXTENDED IMPLICATIONS

Lashmet says agricultural law specialists in the state had been watching this case with a lot of interest.

“It was really important, especially if you look at all of the areas this could come up. Any location where a county has a local stock law and a state or U.S. highway is going to be impacted by this ruling,” she says.

In Texas, if there is no stock law at the county level, that county is considered “open range” except for U.S. and state highways within the county, which are closed range pursuant to the state statute. Landowners in these open-range counties are generally under no obligation to fence livestock in.

“But, anywhere there is a local stock law, the responsibility is different,” Lashmet explains. That’s where this ruling will impact livestock owners. She says it will not apply to farm-to-market roads or county roads.

For any collision on a state or U.S. highway, the negligence standard, then, is based on the word “knowingly” along with the type of road the livestock has wandered onto. How does a plaintiff prove someone “knowingly permitted” livestock onto a state or U.S. highway? Lashmet says these will be very fact-specific instances.

“The courts will look at things like what condition fences were in, whether a gate was knowingly left open or whether the owner of the livestock received notice animals were out and did nothing. Also, it would make sense to consider how often these animals were out. It is going to be very fact-specific.”

In this case, Pruski testified the only other time cattle had escaped the property was eight years ago. And, Lashmet adds, she knows of only one appellate case where someone in the state was found to have knowingly allowed livestock to be out, and it was considered egregious.

KNOWLEDGE AND INSURANCE

The case is a good reminder, the attorney says, for livestock owners to know the status of their county when it comes to local stock law.

“Does the county where you have livestock have a local stock law? If so, does it apply to the entire county or just certain portions? To what animals is it applicable? I would recommend asking your local county Extension agent, county judge, county attorney or county clerk to see if a local stock law has been passed.”

Lastly, this underscores the importance of liability insurance regardless of where a livestock producer lives.

“Accidents happen, and having liability insurance to cover these situations is extremely important,” Lashmet says. “Keep in mind that in addition to providing coverage for damage up to the policy limits, insurance also provides a defense, meaning the insurance company takes care of providing the attorney to defend the policyholder in any litigation.” ///

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Texas Agriculture Law: agriflife.org/texasaglaw
- The National Agricultural Law Center: nationalaglawcenter.org



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• 4400 lb. capacity
• Weighs 383 lbs.

Customer Rating
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\$659.99

~~\$779.99~~

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SNAP-ON
\$3,745

MODEL: KRA5311FPBO

SAVE **\$3,085**

Item 64864, 56111, 64458, 56110, 64163, 56112

WOW!
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SAVE 94%
SWIVEL LENS HEADLAMP

- Water resistant
- Lightweight

Customer Rating
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LIMIT 3

NOW **\$2.99**

WOW! **89¢**

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ENERGIZER MODEL: HDB32EH

ITEM 63598/61319/64073/64145/45807 shown

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20% OFF

ANY SINGLE ITEM*

79150371

Limit 1 coupon per customer per day. Save 20% on any 1 item purchased. *Cannot be used with other discounts. Coupon on any of the following items or brands: Inside Track Club membership, Extended Service Plan, gift card, open box item, 3 day parking, Led Cello item, compressor, floor jack, saw, storage solutions, chains for tools, trailers, welders, Airmax, Ames, Atlas, Bogen, General Machinery, Cobra CoverPro, Daytona, Diamondback, Earthquake, Fischer, Hercules, Icon, Jupiter, Lantz, Pankin, Perisher, Tailgator, Viking, Vonsh, Zambis. Not valid on prior purchases. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 7/1/20.

PITTSBURGH SUPER COUPON

42" OFF-ROAD FARM JACK

Customer Rating
★★★★★

- 3-1/2 ton capacity
- Multipurpose design for lifting, pulling and spreading
- Ideal for lifting off-road vehicles and field equipment

NOW **\$47.99**

COMPARE TO STRONGWAY **\$69.99**

MODEL: 48204

SAVE **31%**

ITEM 60668/6530 shown

79151009

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

SUPER COUPON

AMMO DRY BOX

Customer Rating
★★★★★

NOW **\$3.49**

COMPARE TO RANGEMAXX **\$9.99**

MODEL: 1312-92

SAVE **65%**

ITEM 63135, 61451 shown

79151097

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

GREENWOOD SUPER COUPON

4 GALLON BACKPACK SPRAYER

Customer Rating
★★★★★

- Durable polyethylene tank construction

NOW **\$19.99**

COMPARE TO ROUNDUP **\$59.98**

MODEL: 190314

SAVE **69%**

ITEM 61368/63036/63092 shown

79151533

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

SUPER COUPON

7 FT. 4" x 9 FT. 6" ALL PURPOSE/WEATHER RESISTANT TARP

Customer Rating
★★★★★

NOW **\$2.99**

COMPARE TO BLUE HAWK **\$8.78**

MODEL: BGEK10-Y

SAVE **65%**

ITEM 69115/69121/69129/69137/69249/877 shown

79151796

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

McGRAW SUPER COUPON

8 GALLON, 150 PSI OIL-FREE AIR COMPRESSOR

Customer Rating
★★★★★

- Air delivery: 4.1 SCFM @ 90 PSI

NOW **\$119.99**

COMPARE TO STRONGWAY **\$137.99**

MODEL: 48204

SAVE **\$39**

COMPARE TO KOBALT **\$159**

MODEL: 300841

ITEM 56269/64294 shown

79152275

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

SUPER COUPON

3 PIECE SOLAR DECORATIVE LED LIGHTS

Customer Rating
★★★★★

NOW **\$5.99**

COMPARE TO ASTRAEUS **\$15.99**

MODEL: CL-07378

SAVE **62%**

ITEM 60561/69462 shown

79152405

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

TAILGATOR SUPER COUPON

900 WATT MAX. STARTING 2 CYCLE GAS POWERED GENERATOR

Customer Rating
★★★★★

- 5 hour run time

NOW **\$114.99**

COMPARE TO POWERSMART **\$126.10**

MODEL: P650

SAVE **\$11**

ITEM 63024/63025 shown

79152540

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

SUPER COUPON

HEAVY DUTY FOLDABLE ALUMINUM SPORTS CHAIRS

Customer Rating
★★★★★

- Folding side table
- 3 side pockets

NOW **\$19.99**

COMPARE TO COLEMAN **\$39.99**

MODEL: 635394

ITEM 63066/62314 shown

79152654

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

Diablo SUPER COUPON

3/8" x 25 FT. INDUSTRIAL GRADE RUBBER AIR HOSE

Customer Rating
★★★★★

NOW **\$9.99**

COMPARE TO GOODYEAR **\$29.99**

MODEL: 46544

SAVE **66%**

ITEM 61936/62885/62889 shown

79153529

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

PORTLAND SUPER COUPON

14", 9AMP ELECTRIC CHAINSAW

Customer Rating
★★★★★

NOW **\$39.99**

COMPARE TO CRAFTSMAN **\$80.74**

MODEL: 071-45247

SAVE **50%**

ITEM 64498/64497 shown

79153880

LIMIT 2 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

PITTSBURGH SUPER COUPON

9 PIECE FULLY POLISHED COMBINATION WRENCH SETS

Customer Rating
★★★★★

LIFETIME WARRANTY

YOUR CHOICE **\$5.99**

COMPARE TO HUSKY **\$17.97**

MODEL: HCW10PCSAE

SAVE **66%**

Item 42304 shown

TYPE	ITEM
SAE	69043/63282/42304
METRIC	69044/63171/42305

79153905

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

BADLAND SUPER COUPON

2500 LB. ELECTRIC WINCH WITH WIRELESS REMOTE CONTROL

Customer Rating
★★★★★

- Weighs 14.3 lbs.
- 11-1/8" L x 4-1/2" H

NOW **\$49.99**

COMPARE TO SUPERWINCH **\$189.99**

MODEL: 1125220

SAVE **\$140**

ITEM 61258/61297/63476/61840 shown

79154525

LIMIT 2 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

CHICAGO SUPER COUPON

ELECTRIC CHAINSAW SHARPENER

Customer Rating
★★★★★

NOW **\$24.99**

COMPARE TO TIMBER TUFF **\$49.99**

MODEL: 399020499

SAVE **50%**

ITEM 63804/40208/61613/63803/68221 shown

79155110

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

WARRIOR SUPER COUPON

3 PIECE TITANIUM STEP BIT SET

Customer Rating
★★★★★

- 28 unique hole sizes
- 1/4" hex shank

NOW **\$8.99**

COMPARE TO IRWIN **\$13.99**

MODEL: 15504PKSM

SAVE **85%**

ITEM 69087, 60379, 91616 shown

79155233

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

FRANKLIN SUPER COUPON

17 FT. TYPE IA MULTI-TASK LADDER

Customer Rating
★★★★★

- Versatile - 24 configurations
- Safe + Secure + Stable
- Super Strong - Holds 300 lbs.
- Weighs 34 lbs.

NOW **\$109.99**

COMPARE TO LITTLE GIANT **\$298.99**

MODEL: XE M17

SAVE **\$189**

ITEM 63419/67646/62514/63418/63417 shown

79155560

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

WARRIOR SUPER COUPON

18v LITHIUM-ION 3/8" DRILL/DRIVER KIT

Customer Rating
★★★★★

NOW **\$27.99**

COMPARE TO IRWIN **\$74**

MODEL: P1810

SAVE **62%**

ITEM 64118

79155731

LIMIT 2 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

PREDATOR SUPER COUPON

CHIPPER/SHREDDER WITH 6.5 HP GAS ENGINE (212 CC)

Dual action slicer cuts through the toughest branches

~~\$489.99~~

NOW \$429.99

COMPARE TO POWERHORSE \$569.99
MODEL: 53134

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$140

ITEM 62323

79156158

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

HARDY SUPER COUPON

MECHANICS GLOVES

AVAIL. IN SM, MED, LG, XL, XXL

~~\$5.99~~

NOW \$4.99

COMPARE TO VALEO \$14.99
MODEL: 25521

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 66%

ITEM 62434, 62426, 62433, 62432, 62429, 64179, 64248, 64178 shown

32186659

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

Apache SUPER COUPON

WEATHERPROOF PROTECTIVE RIFLE CASES

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

YOUR CHOICE OF COLOR \$114.99

NOW \$149.99

COMPARE TO PELICAN \$269.99
MODEL: DOUBLE RIFLE

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$155

BLACK ITEM 64520
TAN ITEM 56862

2" Heavy duty ball bearing wheels

Super strong reinforced polypropylene construction

Adjustable pressure relief valve equalizes pressure for easy opening

50-3/8" L x 13-5/8" W x 5-1/8" H

Strong, secure, easy-open latches

Pick and pull foam insert for impact-absorbing protection

Pre-drilled for two padlocks (locks sold separately)

NEW

79156648

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

Kenway SUPER COUPON

12v LED MAGNETIC TOWING LIGHT KIT

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

~~\$34.99~~

NOW \$22.99

COMPARE TO BLAZER \$42.65
MODEL: C7300

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 46%

ITEM 64282

79156707

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

PREDATOR SUPER COUPON

6.5 HP (212 CC) OHV HORIZONTAL SHAFT GAS ENGINE

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

~~\$119.99~~

NOW \$99.99

COMPARE TO HONDA \$329.99
MODEL: GX200UT20X2

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$230

ITEM 60363/56911/69730 shown
ITEM 68121/69727 CALIFORNIA ONLY

79156793

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

PITTSBURGH SUPER COUPON

3 PIECE CURVED JAW LOCKING PLIERS SET

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

~~\$99.99~~

NOW \$69.99

COMPARE TO STALWART \$29.99
MODEL: M5500021

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 76%

5" 7" 10"

ITEM 64036/91684/61249/64035 shown

79156827

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

HaulMaster SUPER COUPON

3-POINT QUICK HITCH

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

~~\$109.99~~

NOW \$79.99

COMPARE TO DOUBLE HH \$199.99
MODEL: 10712

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$120

ITEM 97214

2000 lb. capacity

27-3/16" clearance

79157031

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

VIKING SUPER COUPON

4AMP HIGH FREQUENCY BATTERY CHARGER/MAINTAINER

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

~~\$36.99~~

NOW \$27.99

COMPARE TO SNAP-ON \$105
MODEL: EEBM500A

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$77

ITEM 63350

79157780

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

WARRIOR SUPER COUPON

4-1/2" CUT-OFF WHEELS FOR METAL - PACK OF 10

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

~~\$8.35~~

NOW \$5.99

COMPARE TO DIABLO \$19.97
MODEL: DBD045063710F

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 70%

ITEM 61195/45430 shown

79157904

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

PITTSBURGH SUPER COUPON

6 FT. x 8 FT. ALUMINUM GREENHOUSE

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

~~\$329.99~~

NOW \$249.99

COMPARE TO PALRAM \$599.99
MODEL: 741353

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$350

ITEM 63354/47712 shown

79157946

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

HaulMaster SUPER COUPON

18" x 12" MOVER'S DOLLY

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

~~\$109.99~~

NOW \$79.99

COMPARE TO BUFFALO TOOLS \$22.99
MODEL: HDFDOLLY

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 65%

ITEM 60497/62399/63095/63096/63097/63098 shown

1000 lb. capacity

79158067

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

HaulMaster SUPER COUPON

4000 LB. CAPACITY CABLE WINCH PULLER

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

~~\$21.99~~

NOW \$14.99

COMPARE TO AMERICAN POWER PULL \$29.92
MODEL: 18600

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 49%

ITEM 30329/63448/57191/61964 shown

79158112

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

PITTSBURGH SUPER COUPON

RAPID PUMP® 1.5 TON LIGHTWEIGHT ALUMINUM FLOOR JACK

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

~~\$79.99~~

NOW \$59.99

COMPARE TO K TOOL \$151.42
MODEL: KT163094

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$91

ITEM 64552/64832/64980/64545 shown

79158413

LIMIT 2 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

PITTSBURGH SUPER COUPON

12" RATCHETING BAR CLAMP/SPREADER

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

~~\$42.99~~

NOW \$29.99

COMPARE TO IRWIN \$19.98
MODEL: 1964718

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 85%

ITEM 46807/63017/62123 shown

79158536

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

PITTSBURGH SUPER COUPON

2 TON CAPACITY FOLDABLE SHOP CRANE

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

~~\$239.99~~

NOW \$189.99

COMPARE TO BIG RED \$299.99
MODEL: 11674699

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$110

ITEM 60388/69514 shown

79158759

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

FISCHER SUPER COUPON

HEAVY DUTY MULTI-VEHICLE 750 LB. HIGH LIFT JACK

500 lb. saddle capacity

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

~~\$209.99~~

NOW \$179.99

COMPARE TO KOBJACK \$412.19
MODEL: PRO

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$232

ITEM 64884/63298 shown

79158797

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

PITTSBURGH SUPER COUPON

16 OZ. HAMMERS WITH FIBERGLASS HANDLE

LIFETIME WARRANTY

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

~~\$5.49~~

NOW \$2.99

COMPARE TO KOBALT \$9.98
MODEL: 62742

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 70%

Item 47873 shown

TYPE ITEM
CLAW 69006/60715/60714/47872
RIP 69005/61262/47873

79158801

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

THUNDERBOLT solar SUPER COUPON

100 WATT SOLAR PANEL KIT

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

~~\$149.99~~

NOW \$119.99

COMPARE TO WINDYNDATION \$292.44
MODEL: SOK-100WP-P30L

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$142

ITEM 64335/63585 shown

79159068

LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 7/1/20

VOYAGER SUPER COUPON

15" TOOL BAG WITH 14 POCKETS

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

~~\$10.99~~

NOW \$6.99

COMPARE TO HUSKY \$12.97
MODEL: 823035M12

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 46%

ITEM 94993/62348/62341/61469 shown

Tools sold separately.

79159415

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Big Fields, Big Stories And Big Dreams

A summer with a custom-harvesting crew can be a roller-coaster ride.

The problem is the sky to the west, though JC Schemper doesn't quite believe it yet. A dark horizon looms, distant but persistent, beyond the wide-open expanse of a western Kansas wheat field.

The morning weather report suggests that a line of storms could pop up, but that they'll dissipate by the time they hit the Kansas-Colorado border and before they impact Schemper and his custom-harvesting crew working near Scott City, Kansas.

Schemper slides his sunglasses to his forehead and squints through the dust his combine kicks up in the 200-acre field.

"Just a sun-blocker," he says.

The dark horizon was only one of the things looming over Schemper that day, his crew's first day working on a big, new contract.

That crew, mostly young men, is always one of those concerns. They're good employees, Schemper assures, but kids all the same. He always has one eye on everyone else in the field, offering advice and orders with a two-way radio that rarely leaves his right hand.

Then, there's the client and the job to consider, and what a job—more than 5,000 acres of wheat in the summer with a promise of that much and more corn in the fall. There is nearly \$500,000 on the line, and already on the first day, there's a problem.



JC Schemper



Schemper had sold the job in the winter on the promise of four John Deere combines cutting from the first acre to the last, not out of brand loyalty but to generate consistent yield-mapping.

Schemper Harvesting splits its eight combines into four teams that can spread across the region.

When he arrived for that first acre, he rolled in with two Deeres and a Gleaner. Some initial infield tinkering couldn't get the different brands to produce compatible information.

"Oh, he noticed," Schemper says of his client. "He's already mentioned it twice. He said if we can't produce a consistent map, we need to park it."

There are long-term concerns bouncing around Schemper's mind, too. He's a third-generation custom-harvester, and he lives for those summers on the road. Still, he can feel it all vanishing, fewer crews every summer, perhaps a dying way of life.

And, there are dark clouds to the west.

"Just a sun-blocker," Schemper repeats, more hopeful than confident before returning his sunglasses to his eyes and his focus to the golden field in front of him. "It'll fizzle out."

CUTTING IN

The traditional custom wheat harvest industry is shrinking for several reasons.

Wheat acreage has decreased nationally five of the last six years. The 2019 crop, 45 million acres, was down



Home seems distant for Alex Caillaux, a French student who joined the Schemper crew through a college intern program.

nearly 30% from 20 years ago.

The 6.9-million wheat acres in Kansas last summer was the smallest planting since 1909 and about half of what was planted in the 1980s.

But, it's not as simple as custom-harvest providers disappearing alongside that demand, either.

Equipment is larger and more efficient, but also much more expensive. The cost of a new combine has nearly tripled in the last 25 years.

"It's getting bad," says Greg Thurman, another third-generation custom-harvester. "The equipment costs too much. The insurance costs too much, and you can't get any labor. It's killing us."

Thurman has made the Texas-Canada run 43 times since he bought his first combine in 1976. That was a Massey Ferguson 510, and he paid \$23,000, 20-foot header included.

"Now, \$23,000 won't even put tires on a combine," he says.

Thurman has seen the custom-cutting lifestyle disappear around him. His hometown of Kiowa, Kansas, was once a hot spot for custom crews and home to 29 teams in the 1990s. The local John Deere dealership sold 127 combines in one year, and there was a thriving Massey dealership, as well. Now, those



dealerships have closed, and just three custom crews remain.

Thurman says there will likely just be two by the start of this summer's run. Seventy years after his grandfather took the family's first harvest run, he's done.

"I'm selling out," he says. "We're a dying breed, that's for sure."

But, Schemper, based in Holdrege, Nebraska, isn't ready to quit.

His grandfather first took to the road when the 250 acres he farmed in northeastern Kansas didn't prove enough to feed six children. Now, Schemper Harvesting runs a total of eight combines.

JC manages most of the business and leads a team with two machines. His dad, LaVern, uncle Lonny and brother Jared each have their own teams, as well.

JC lights up at the idea of his children taking over someday. His wife, Trisha, and their three boys spend the summer on the road as a part of the crew. For JC, that's still the best part of the whole thing: time with his family.

THE GRAND ADVENTURE

Motivations varied greatly among Schemper's crew.

Lee Bowman, 18, wanted to work with the kind of big machinery you don't find in the small Virginia fields where he's from. >

Alex Caillaux, who drives the tractor and grain wagon, is French and hopes to parlay a summer working the harvest in the United States into a life farming back home.

James Gavin has long enough running with Schemper, six years, that he's considered family. Roy Wahlgren, meanwhile, went his whole life working on farms dreaming of a harvest run. Finally, at age 62, he gave in.

Nick Devine, 23, is on his second harvest run and worried that it may be one too many. He's always wanted to farm his own ground back home in Indiana but doesn't have the ground to farm or the money to buy it.

He drives the trucks and dreams of being somewhere else, perhaps not even Indiana. He's trying to learn

French as he hauls wheat, listening to lessons on his smartphone.

Maybe when this is all finished, he wonders aloud, glancing for traffic down a deserted gravel road, he'll visit his new friend Alex and try to get a job on a farm in France.

Hiring help is a big part of the job for operators, and they sell the gig hard, appealing to romanticism, adventurism and even patriotism.

"Do you want to travel the country and gain valuable experience on the great American harvest run?" one radio ad blares.

"Do your part to help feed the world by joining an American harvest crew today!"

Schemper offers \$2,500 a month as a base salary. Then there's food, whipped up by Trisha. Lunch is eat-as-you-harvest, but dinner demands a full stop.

"I know some other guys, you might not get supper until 1 a.m. I like to sit down and enjoy talking to my guys for 15 minutes," Schemper says. "We stop, even if the rain is coming, even if the next farmer is saying, 'I need you right now.'"

A place to stay—a rolling bunkhouse—is included in the compensation package, as well.

Finally, there's a bonus system for anyone who finishes the season.

That's not many. Only two of Schemper's crew make it to the final field of corn in late November, just a week before Thanksgiving. An attrition rate of 70% is normal, Schemper says. But, at least \$600



extra per month awaits those who persevere, so long as certain rules are met:

- Go to bed and be up and ready to work on time.
- Be able to perform tasks when asked.
- Don't drink.

Other operators lean heavily on foreign workers. It's all Thurman has hired in recent seasons, pulling in help from Iceland to Romania to New Zealand.

Schemper has been there but now hires only one foreign worker per season.

"I want him to connect with us and have a very good experience learning the American culture," he says. "If you have two, they sit over here and talk amongst themselves, and don't get to know the rest of us."

RACING THE RAIN

The dark cloud to the west of Scott City on July 1 threatens only more headaches for what's been a migraine of a season for Schemper Harvesting. A wet, cool spring and early summer set harvest back weeks, which then threw off the delicate south-to-north and, to a lesser degree, east-to-west ripening patterns that make the Texas-to-Canada summers work.

The company's eight combines are spread across Kansas by July, and Schemper's promise of four together, all providing compatible mapping, is impossible.

There was hope to get the mapping information from both brands to sync, but it wasn't happening on the go.

"It's just all we have right now," Schemper says of what he was able to start with, his two Deere machines and a Gleaner on loan. "A lot of my friends aren't even out here yet, so we're ahead of the game."

The last thing they need is more rain. But, as evening comes on, and the crew puts the finishing touches on its first 200 acres of the contracted 5,000, the line of storms has yet to break up as scheduled.

Several hours later, in the darkness and after moving down the road to a new field, Schemper and the crew scramble through a drenching rain struggling to shut down and protect their machinery as a deluge comes from above.

They try three different fields the next day, eager to find dry grain anywhere, but to no avail. After finally giving up on the last field, the crew, young and old, pile in the trucks and head for town, leaving behind a day on the great American harvest. ///



Trisha Schemper cooks lunch and dinner, and wrangles the youngest helpers, their three boys.

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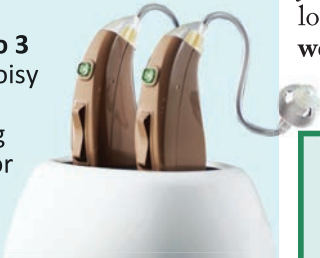


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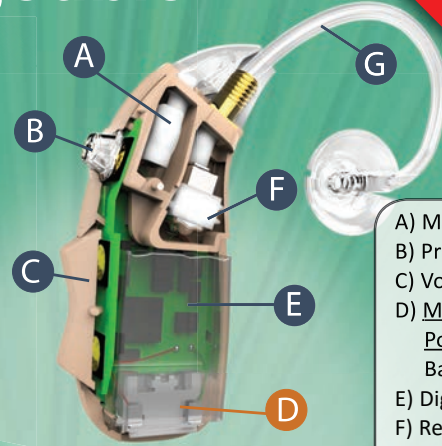
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Progressive Agriculture Safety Days

When it comes to safety, seconds count. Let's shed light on life-saving skills learned at Progressive Agriculture Safety Days.



Did you know May is National STOP THE BLEED® Month? This observance highlights the importance of STOP THE BLEED® training and offers the public training courses in bleeding-control techniques. Minutes and seconds count! Someone who is severely bleeding can bleed to death in as little as five minutes. That is why bleeding control and keeping the blood inside the body is so important!



In 2019 alone, First Aid Safety reached nearly 42,000 participants at Progressive Agriculture Safety Days, while an additional 22,000 participants took part in First on the Scene hands-on activities and demonstrations. These activities aimed at cultivating vital lifesaving skills and techniques.



In addition to teaching about various safety topics, Progressive Agriculture Safety Days also promotes the adoption of healthy lifestyles among participants, including preventing the spread of germs through proper hand-washing practices.



SEND A KID TO SAFETY DAY

To donate, text the word **SAFETYDAY** to **44321**.

SUCCESS STORY

"We were able to partner this year with a nearby trauma center that provided three presenters for Bicycle Safety, Stop the Bleed and general safety for farm children. They have pledged to help with donation of goods, such as bike helmets and safety vests for next year. What a great boost to our Safety Day that this partnership helped create!" -Debbie Tice, Progressive Agriculture Safety Day Coordinator, Lebanon, Pennsylvania

Months of planning went into hosting 600 fourth-graders at Bunge's annual Progressive Agriculture Safety Day. The goal was to reach youth with one simple message: **Safety first in everything you do!** The event, which had taken place at the schools in the past, welcomed students to Bunge's headquarters, near St. Louis, Missouri. "We hosted more children than ever, and by holding it at the office, we were able to engage more than 125 colleagues in what is our largest volunteer event of the year," says Greg Billhartz, Bunge vice president, deputy general counsel (governance and securities) and corporate secretary. "The support and flexibility that every Safety Day team member demonstrated truly reflected our values of safety and teamwork," says Jim Rice, Safety Day coordinator and committee co-chair. "We can be proud of the positive memories and safety messages we created for these children, and hope that they will make a lasting impact on their lives." Since 2007, Bunge has hosted 109 Progressive Agriculture Safety Days. These Progressive Agriculture Safety Days, held in 11 U.S. states and one Canadian province, have reached a total of 21,118 youth participants and 6,552 adult volunteers.

BUNGE



Connect With Us

Visit progressiveag.org or call us at **888-257-3529** for a complete list of all upcoming 2020 Progressive Agriculture Safety Days or to see how you can host a Safety Day during 2021.



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For more than 200 years Bunge has helped bring food to tables around the world. But we know it isn't enough for children to be well nourished. Bunge is proud to support Progress Agriculture Foundations' Safety Days, providing education, resources and training to keep children and their families safe and healthy. Together, we are helping protect the next generation.

BUNGE
At home everywhere



The Progressive Agriculture Foundation (PAF) is proud to be recognized as a Better Business Bureau Accredited Charity. Additionally, PAF has a 3-star rating with Charity Navigator and was awarded a Gold Seal of Transparency with GuideStar. All donations are tax-deductible.

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Fiesta Time!

Don't forget Cinco de Mayo this year with these easy stay-at-home recipes.

SKILLET BEEF NACHOS

One plate of these may not be enough.

MAKES: 4 SERVINGS
TOTAL TIME: 20 MINUTES

- 8 ounces lean ground beef
- 1 cup white onion, diced
- 3 tablespoons taco seasoning
- 10 ounces tortilla chips
- 1½ cups Monterey Jack cheese
- Toppings: sour cream, nacho jalapeño, cilantro, diced avocado

1. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat; add beef, diced onion and taco seasoning, stirring to break into crumbles. Cook until no longer pink (about 10 minutes). Transfer cooked beef to a plate.
2. Preheat oven to broil. Settle half the chips into the skillet; sprinkle with half the cheese and beef. Top with remaining chips, cheese and beef.
3. Broil 3 minutes or until cheese is melted. Garnish with desired toppings and divide among plates; serve.

BLENDER SALSA

So good and it's super easy to make and store.

MAKES: 3 CUPS
TOTAL TIME: 40 MINUTES

- 2 (14.4-ounce) cans fire-roasted, diced tomatoes
- 1 jalapeño, seeds removed
- ½ white onion, quartered
- 1 cup fresh cilantro leaves
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon sugar

1. In a blender, combine all ingredients; pulse until finely chopped. Taste and adjust seasonings.
2. Allow to chill 30 minutes before serving. Salsa will keep in the fridge up to five days.

CREAMY GUACAMOLE

Make it fresh with avocados and cilantro.

MAKES: 2 CUPS
TOTAL TIME: 15 MINUTES

- ½ small red onion, finely diced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ¼ cup fresh lime juice
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 3 large avocados, halved and pitted
- ½ cup fresh cilantro leaves, chopped

1. In a bowl, combine onion, garlic, lime juice and salt; toss to coat and set aside for at least 10 minutes.
2. Using a spoon, scoop avocado flesh out of the skin; add to the bowl. Mash avocado with a fork (or potato masher) until smooth and creamy; fold in cilantro.
3. Serve immediately. Cover surface of the guacamole with plastic wrap for proper storage.



Recipes and photos by Rachel Johnson
www.stupidgoodrachel.com



A Shot Of Sanitizer

Craft distillers put their spirits to work as hand sanitizer.

In early March, Whiskey Acres Distilling Co. was making plans to expand its DeKalb, Illinois-based and award-winning spirits business to Nebraska. But, the rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic swept those plans aside.

Only a few days later, Whiskey Acres president and CEO Jamie Walter prepared his production line to produce hand sanitizer instead. Hand sanitizer has disappeared from retail store shelves and is in short supply in doctors' offices and even hospitals. Walter believes the distillery that produces buckets of alcohol could help stem the shortage of the product.

Walter saw the family's business literally drying up by the hour. Its 4,000-square-foot bar and retail space closed a week before the decision to shift production. Whiskey Acres' products were also sold in restaurants, which were closed in Illinois. The Nebraska plans are on hold. "We're down to grocery and liquor stores," Walter says. "A significant piece of our revenue has dried up."

Whiskey Acres, paired with a commercial, 2,000-acre grain farm, produces internationally recognized bourbons, rye and vodka, sold in Illinois and Wisconsin.

It also produces an artisan series of bourbon from an imaginative stock of ingredients, including blue popcorn, Oaxacan heirloom corn and someday, perhaps, sweet corn. The family has been farming about 60 miles west of Chicago since the Great Depression.

The distillery opened in 2014 as a way to diversify the farm, which once included seed sales and a crop-insurance business. The distillery has since become the largest piece of the total business.

"We were quickly making a name for ourselves in this space," Walter says.

He is also concerned about his employees. Whiskey Acres has five full-time employees and 15 part-timers. He is loyal to them. They also represent a skill base he

does not want to lose. But, employed to do what? A production line that ran two shifts seven days per week is now a single shift, Monday through Friday.

The sanitizer idea came up when shortages made headlines. Sanitizer is made from ethanol, glycerol and hydrogen peroxide. Walter had not been able to secure aloe vera, an ingredient used to make a gel form of hand sanitizer, so the product will be a spray.

"We want to do this partially to fill a need. There really is a shortage," Walter explains. "It has some marketing and PR [public relations] value, too. But, third, and this is a surprise to me, it's become important to our employees. They want to contribute."

DISTILLERIES JOIN THE FIGHT

Eight Oaks Farm Distillery, in New Tripoli, Pennsylvania, is another distillery entering the highly

in-demand world of hand sanitizers. Logan Snyder, cofounder and director for distillery operations, says the work contributes to the supply of a hard-to-find item and keeps employees employed.

Eight Oaks is a veteran-owned, family-run craft distillery on 300 acres located in Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley, about 70 miles north of Philadelphia. The corn, wheat, rye and barley produced there are routed through the distillery. The distillery sells bourbon, rye whiskey, rum, vodka, gin and applejack.

Bottles for the hand sanitizer were one challenge for Eight Oaks Farm. The former owner of a soap store heard of the distillery's efforts and donated 7,500 8-ounce and 2-ounce bottles, Snyder explains, as another truck full of bottles pulls into the distillery's drive.

Snyder says Eight Oaks Farm intends to start distribution locally then move out regionally. Children's Hospital of Philadelphia will be one of the first recipients. "I was surprised it was short of sanitizer," Snyder says.

Their asking price? Make a free-will donation. You can make a donation to the Eight Oaks Hand Sanitizer Project at eightoaksdistillery.com.

"We're upset with the hoarders, so we are doing what we can do, maybe push prices down," Snyder says. With enough bottles and pumps, Eight Oaks can produce several thousand bottles per week. ///



(From left) Nick Nagle, Jamie Walter and Jim Walter, Whiskey Acres. The hand sanitizer project is important to employees who want to help out during the pandemic. ROGER KYLER

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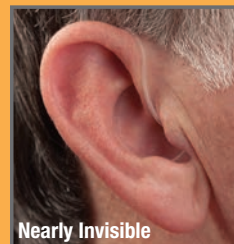
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GETTY IMAGES



“The storm starts, when the drops start dropping. When the drops stop dropping then the storm starts stopping.”

–Dr. Seuss

Weather

It is best to read the weather forecast before praying for rain.

MARK TWAIN

What dreadful hot weather we have! It keeps me in a continual state of inelegance.

JANE AUSTEN

Out of the south cometh the whirlwind: and cold out of the north. By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened.

JOB 37:9-10 (KJV)

Whenever people talk to me about the weather, I always feel quite certain that they mean something else.

OSCAR WILDE

For the man sound in body and serene in mind there is no such thing as bad weather; every sky has its beauty, and storms which whip the blood do but make it pulse more vigorously.

GEORGE GISSING

We shall never be content until each man makes his own weather and keeps it to himself.

JEROME K. JEROME

The climate is what you expect; the weather is what you get.

ROBERT HEINLEIN

Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it.

CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER

Let the rain kiss you. Let the rain beat upon your head with silver liquid drops. Let the rain sing you a lullaby.

LANGSTON HUGHES

Some are weatherwise; some are otherwise.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

I wonder if the snow loves the trees and fields, that it kisses them so gently? And then it covers them up snug, you know, with a white quilt; and perhaps it says, “Go to sleep, darlings, till the summer comes again.”

LEWIS CARROLL

Some people feel the rain. Others just get wet.

ROGER MILLER

How sweet the morning air is! See how that one little cloud floats like a pink feather from some gigantic flamingo.

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

Clouds come floating into my life, no longer to carry rain or usher storm, but to add color to my sunset sky.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

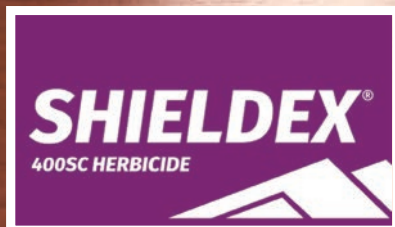
Snow in April is abominable. Like a slap in the face when you expected a kiss.

L.M. MONTGOMERY

The best thing one can do when it's raining, is to let it rain.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

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NAGGING FEELING?**



**Introducing a powerful
new weapon against weed
pressure in corn.**


SHIELDDEX® 400 SC contains new HPPD inhibitor herbicide technology that has proven effective in over 400 University trials. And it's safe for use on all types of corn*. So, don't stress over problem weeds. Try new SHIELDDEX.

**SHIELDDEX HERBICIDE IS SOLD
EXCLUSIVELY THROUGH HELENA
AGRI-ENTERPRISES AND TENKOZ
MEMBER COMPANIES.**

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*SHIELDDEX 400SC has not been tested on all inbred lines for tolerance. Contact your seed corn supplier for specific usage recommendations.

The logo for Summit Agro USA features a stylized mountain range icon above the text "SummitAgro" in a bold, sans-serif font, with "USA" in a smaller font to the right.



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