

PEOPLE WHO CARE. PRODUCTS YOU TRUST. VALUE FOR LIFE.



Wayne, Eugene, and Greg Lenneman of Lenneman Dairy, Inc., St. Michael, MN

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## Established Dairy Likes Co-op Service

The Lenneman Dairy near St. Michael was established back in the late 1920s. Brothers Eugene and Wayne Lenneman are the third generation to make their living from the dairy. Along with their older brother, Greg, they milk 130 Holsteins in a stanchion barn, and also raise corn, soybeans, and alfalfa.

"Last year was one of the best we've seen in dairying, and this year is one of the worst," says Eugene. Greg, who has been at it for 37 years, says he's never seen a bigger swing from one year to the next. "When milk goes up, both feed and machinery costs go up," Greg says about the tight economics. "The feed costs do come down, but never as far as milk prices." Inputs are the same way.

So, the brothers watch their input costs pretty carefully and try to be as efficient as they can. They appreciate the good information they get on pricing from the co-op, which helps them time their input purchases. "[The co-op] also scouts our fields when necessary and lets us know when they are seeing aphids in the area," adds Eugene.

The Lennemans have done business with the co-op since the 1980s, purchasing their feed, and also their fertilizer, seed, chemicals, and propane through the Albertville Ag Center. "Service is the big thing to us, and we get very good, responsive service," says Eugene. "They've got a good team over there."

To offset low milk prices, the Lennemans are trying to keep milk components like butterfat up and somatic cell counts down, to earn what premiums they can. But as Eugene observes, "It's still not enough in this economy." So the brothers are hoping the market will come back soon.

Still, the dairy has been the brothers' livelihood for many years. With all three involved, they have every third weekend off, and they have help in the dairy from a couple of cousins and a nephew who also help them at planting and harvest.

"This is a pretty good way to make a living," admits Greg. His brothers agree. ☺



# Give Us Your Toughest Field

By Craig Gustafson, Agronomy Manager and Kevin Carlson, Certified Professional Agronomist

Okay, we're going to answer the most often asked question (among farmers) in the fall of 2009. Ready? Here goes. "Should I consider buying seed that costs \$300 a unit?" Here's our answer—"Yes, you should . . ." Now, before you jump to conclusions, listen to the whole answer. "Yes, you should consider buying seed that costs \$300 a unit, if it has the technology to increase the profitability of your best fields.

Producing top yields is the easy part on your productive soils. What most producers need to know is how to get top profits from their marginal ground. You might have acres on which an \$89 corn will produce the most profit. That's where Federated Co-ops' agronomy staff is particularly valuable. We can supply you with both \$300 corn and \$89 corn. And we can help you decide, based on your soils and your farming practices, which will extract the most profit from each field.

## LET'S GO DEEPER

To justify investing even \$89 per bag—to say nothing of \$300 a unit—

the germplasm and technology in that bag has to fit the situation in each of your fields. We can provide the information on each hybrid or variety that you need to decide whether it's a fit. But information is not all we bring to your kitchen table. Seed selection is an art, not an exacting science. Your Federated Co-ops' agronomist is gifted and skilled at painting every acre of land with the right seed. The result is a uniform horizon of growing corn that would be the envy of any landscape artist.

The trick is, we're on the edge of the Corn Belt, and some of the technology the industry releases each year does not perform well in our area. That's why we planted six corn and five soybean test plots last year, and harvested dozens of yield checks to identify what works and what doesn't.

We have dealer agreements with four major seed companies, to ensure we can offer the best options from each company. And, we take seriously our responsibility to

select the right seed treatment to protect and enhance the traits of the seed you end up choosing. So, we can truly customize a solution for every acre of your land, whether it requires price, technology, seed treatment, or any other traits.

Federated Co-ops' agronomy personnel are the seed selection experts. Beyond that, we can bring all the other pieces of the puzzle—fertilizer, crop protection products, fuel, crop insurance, and financing—together to form a profitable crop production picture for you. But the cornerstone of that puzzle—the thing that keeps everything else straight and true—is the seed.

If you're not currently doing your seed business with Federated Co-ops, then prove us. Give us your toughest field, and let us show you what we can do. ☎



We'll customize a solution for every acre based on price, technology, seed treatment, or any other traits.

## 2009 Seed Cooperators Thanked

Federated Co-ops wishes to recognize the following seed cooperators for graciously hosting test plots and Plot Days on their land:

- Craig, Janet, and Neil Gustafson, Osceola
- Dennis Le Mon, Rush City
- Alvin, Jeff, and Gayle Bursch, Albertville
- Robert and Todd Steffen, Ogilvie
- Paul and Janet Bostrom, Isanti
- Larry and Sharon Wilhelm, Princeton

Thanks also to everyone who attended Plot Days on these farms and made it a successful event for both producers and the co-op. ☎

# Weed Views From Your Combine

By Bob Rodrique, Manager, Ogilvie Ag Center



Some of you may still be harvesting. Others just finished. No doubt most of you spotted some pesky weed patches from the combine cab. If you have a yield monitor in your combine, you probably watched it go into freefall as you passed over those patches.

Now is the time to record where those patches were located and what kind of weeds you'll be dealing with next spring.

This wasn't the best year for weed control. It was dry all the way through July, and if you used only pre-emerge herbicides, you probably had some escapes. Glyphosate was a big driver this year and will probably

see even greater demand next year, with the recent price decreases. But along with glyphosate, you'll also need some broad spectrum conventional herbicides that offer residual control.

It doesn't pay to cut rates and corners on your weed control program, as several of you found out this past year. It came back to bite you.

### PLANNING YOUR ATTACK

The weeds you saw from the combine cab were escaped annual weeds or winter annuals, like white cockle, shepherds purse, and Hoary alyssum. For those of you who

minimum till, winter annuals and perennial weeds will be up and hard to kill before the crop is ready for its first shot of glyphosate.

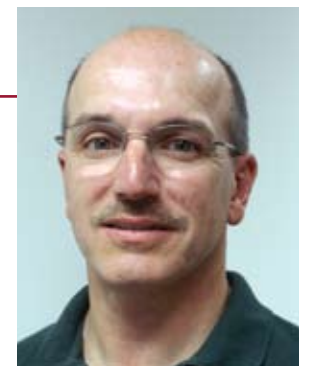
If you're looking at a particular weed and scratching your head, bring it in and we'll help identify it. Let's get a head start on planning your weed management for the coming year. Instead of fretting all winter, you can put your harvest equipment away with confidence that you'll be able to go out there next spring and kill those weeds BEFORE they rob your 2010 crop of valuable moisture and nutrients. Call us today. ☎



Record the location of weeds spotted from your combine cab and make plans to eradicate them next spring.

# You + Federated Co-op = A Partnership

By Jim Barthel, Agronomy Manager



Federated Co-ops wants to be more than a vendor to you. We want to be a partner whose knowledge, products, and service you can count on to help be more profitable. We want to be your preferred local supplier. Likewise, your co-op must know what you need and be able to count on your business if we are to stay financially healthy in these turbulent times. That would benefit you, since you own Federated Co-ops.

### WANTED: A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP

Federated Co-ops deals with many suppliers to bring you what you need, but these days we work with a handful of suppliers very closely. These suppliers can depend on Federated Co-ops to help move product,

and we can depend on them to guarantee supply, quality, and the best value for the money. These partnerships are absolutely necessary and mutually advantageous in today's turbulent markets.

In the same way, Federated Co-ops is striving to build partnerships with our grower-customers. If we know you will purchase your ag inputs from us, Federated Co-ops can guarantee a reliable supply of the quality products you need. We may not always be the cheapest, but we'll always be the best value when you take quality, supply, and service into consideration. Those factors have become more important as planting and harvesting windows have gotten smaller.

### TELL US WHAT YOU NEED

Of course, you can always express your concerns and suggestions to any of our staff, but the survey carried in this newsletter is another way of telling us what you need.

Please take 10 minutes to answer the questions on the survey. Simply drop it in the mail. No postage necessary. Thanks! Your partner is listening! ☎



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## Co-op Helps Young Farmer Get Started

Lane Selin, 23, has always wanted to farm. "He's farmed since he was small, with toy tractors in the dirt in front of the house," says Bonnie, Lane's mother.

For the past 10 years, Lane has worked with his father, Dale, on their family farm near Isanti. He's gradually taken on the farming responsibility. "I've actually managed the crop production for the last three years, and this is the first year I've managed the entire operation from a financial standpoint," says Lane.

This was also an expansion year. His grandfather, Ken, rented Lane all of his land which brought the total he farms to 570 acres of corn, soybeans, rye, and a little hay.

As a sharp, young producer taking over the family farm, Lane faces big challenges. "The biggest is eventually owning the land," says Lane. "Running a close second would be upgrading equipment." Lane owns 70% of the equipment he farms with and none of it is new. "My newest tractor is 15 years old and my oldest is 65," he states.

Lane recently invested in an 8-row JD 7200 conservation planter to do minimum till planting right. "I've gravitated toward minimum tillage, since about half my ground is sand," he says, adding, "It has really paid off in these drier years."

"I can't afford a lot of technology right now," he continues. "We don't have Internet on the farm, so my cell phone has been invaluable." He uses it constantly to check markets, and it has paid for itself in better grain marketing.

Lane has acquired his farming knowledge through hands-on experience, but he hasn't ruled out taking some college level business

and marketing courses. Meanwhile, he takes every opportunity to learn more about his industry. "I've learned a great deal at the co-op [grower] meetings," he states. "The corn meeting [last winter] was very educational."

Lane says he is really fussy about putting exactly the right nutrients on each field. "I've relied heavily on the co-op to tailor mixes for what I want to see in the field," he states. With last year's results in hand, he sits down with his Federated agronomist and plans next year's crop production.

"What I value about Federated Co-ops is their service," says Lane. "If I've got a question, I call them up and they'll answer it. If I need fuel or fertilizer delivered, they'll bring it right out. And if I'm concerned about the crop, they'll come out and look at it, and give me their input." 📞

