



Rock County Star Herald

Ag Mag



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**Fall Ag Mag
top story:**

**Local John Deere
implement dealer
expands operation
to meet growing
demand ... page 2**

New ag business hits niche market in Rock County

Midwest Dry Cast is constructing a concrete dry cast manufacturing plant with plans to roll out the first castings next month. — Page 8

Self-taught welder grows family business in Luverne's industrial park

Mert and Bobbi Kracht moved their Mert's Repair business (and Bobbi's Cut and Color salon) into a brand new shop in Luverne's industrial park last year. The advantages, they say, are about more than just the extra space. — Page 14

All is not well on the farm (and in town)

Local farmers — and eventually farm communities — struggle as trade disputes, tariffs, renewable fuel policy and big supply drag down commodity prices. One local analyst estimates Rock County will be down \$40 million in grain sales this year compared with 2015. — Page 6

What's in your engine?

Red Rock Oil is working to keep farm machinery running clean and making bulk DEF deliveries to keep farm operations running smoothly. — Page 12

Rural America is under assault Why aren't we talking about it?

The nation's two largest farm organizations have teamed up to bring attention to the opioid epidemic in farm country and provide information and resources to help those struggling with opioid abuse. — Page 22



September 27, 2018, agriculture edition

How do we meet growing ag demand?

C&B Operations, Luverne, debuts new facility in 2018 to accommodate growing ag operations



By Lori Sorenson

Rock County Implement — now known as C&B Operations — is doubling the size of its John Deere operation on South Highway 75 in Luverne.

A 100-by-225-foot repair shop was added to the existing structure, which was completely gutted and remodeled for use as a showroom and parts and sales store.

Also, a 35-by-100-foot wash bay will accompany the new building.

“Everything is completely different,” said general manager Dan Block. “It is unbelievably big. ... The front will be totally refaced with the front door on the other end.”

He said the John Deere team is already appreciating the new — and far more adequate — shop space for farm machinery.

“We were sometimes taking up to two hours just to get organized,” Block said.

“Now, with our overhead crane and the new accessories we have here, our repair jobs are so much faster.”

John Deere expansion/see p. 4

Lori Sorenson photo/0927 ag tab john deere expansion

For the past several months of construction, six C&B Luverne staff members have worked in close quarters of what will be the break room of the new facility. Pictured here are (from left) Tom VerSteege, Jeremy Lehman, Ron Schouwenburg and Dan Block. “Right now, we’re all working out of the break room. ... Six of us in one room,” Block said. “The furniture is going in next month, and after that we can move in. Then it will be unbelievable.”

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Grow bigger to meet growing demand



C&B Operations Luverne staff members assemble in the south overhead doorway of the new shop on Tuesday, Sept. 18. Pictured are (from left) Jeff Kopplow, Matt Lynch, Mike Hart, Jake Syndergaard, Bob Hoffman, Austin Garms, Nathan Ackerman, Bruce Osenga, Tom VerSteeg, Jeremy Lehman, Ron Schouwenburg, Jared Kopplow, Eric Sandbulte, Mark Tweet, Lexy Aukes, Josh Gacke. Gary Solma, Micheal Nieuwboer, Matt Dellman and Dan Block. Dirt work started last fall on the new building, which will be completed in October. Lori Sorenson photo/0927 john deere expansion

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feature John Deere lawn and garden products and gifts and it will expand parts selection in stock.

The project will utilize LED lighting and energy-efficient heating and cooling. "We'll be the first C&B store with all LEDs," Block said.

Dirt work started last fall on the new building, which will be completed in October.

"Right now, we're all working out of the break room. ... Six of us in one room," Block said.

"The furniture is going in next month, and after that we can move in. Then it will be unbelievable."

Beck and Hofer Construction, Sioux Falls, is the general contractor.



John Deere expansion/continued from page 2

And this, Block said, translates to less down time for farmers, who can more quickly return to their farm work.

"We are so much more effective for the farmer," he said. "We have created a labor savings for the customer, because we're spending less time on the

job."

The bottom line is that the new building has grown significantly bigger since the implement structure was first built in 1972.

"We were due," Block said. "We outgrew our existing building a long time ago."

C & B Operations, Gettysburg, South Dakota, owns 38 John Deere farm equipment dealerships throughout the Midwest, and Block said the corporation decided this year to make capital investments in Luverne.

The expansion will allow for six new full-time employees to join the existing 17 workers in Luverne. One will be in sales and the other five will be service technicians.

"We will be able to serve our customers much better, and let's face it, people like to do business at a nice place and this place is going to look great," Block said. "We're looking forward to it."

The larger showroom will



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Photos on opposing page at left: The current storeroom and parts room will expand into an all new, larger area (inset photo) to make room for more and additional product offerings.


The front entry and showroom (at right) will have ample space to showcase John Deere lawn and garden products, along with clothing and gifts items. Pictured in the back, right corner of the photo is what will be new office space.

Below, the south end of the showroom has an overhead that will allow products and machinery to be driven onto the showroom floor.


Below right is the view from upstairs storage space overlooking the the new shop below.



Lori Sorenson photo/0927 ag tab john deere expansion

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How important are corn and soybeans to our community economy?

We're about to find out in the wake of Rock County farmers losing \$40 million in grain sales since 2015

Local farmers — and eventually the farm community — struggle as trade disputes, tariffs, renewable fuel policy and big supply drag down commodity prices

By Lori Sorenson

With trade wars and retaliatory tariffs dominating news headlines for the past several months, American consumers are wary of how it will affect prices of the goods they buy.

But to the farmers and the farm communities who rely on global trade relationships, the struggle is real and the effects on local farm economies have been immediate, according to Rock County Corn and Soybean Growers President Lucas Peters.

“It appears Rock County farmers will struggle financially in near term,” he said. “Trade disputes, tariffs, renewable fuel policy and big supply are all weighing on commodity prices, and none are quickly corrected.”

Congress approved a \$12 billion Market Facilitation Program (MFP), but Peters said the relief will be small and will not make producers completely whole.

Peters, Luverne, works as a Field Marking Specialist with NAU Crop Insurance.

He said farmers won't be the only ones struggling as the ag economy falters.

“With less money coming in, Rock County farmers will have less money to spend and there is no doubt our local communities will feel the effect,” Peters said.

“

I knew the price was significantly lower (since 2015) for soybeans and lower for corn, but when you take that loss across all the bushels in Rock County, it is a staggering amount.

— Lucas Peters, president
Rock County Corn and Soybean Growers

”

But he stopped short of calling it a crisis.

“Rock County farmers have had good yields the last few years and the crops look decent again this year,” he said.

“Many farmers are diversified with livestock, and most farmers are using a variety of risk management tools to prevent having to sell all their crop at these price levels and allow themselves opportunity to sell at different times when prices may improve.”

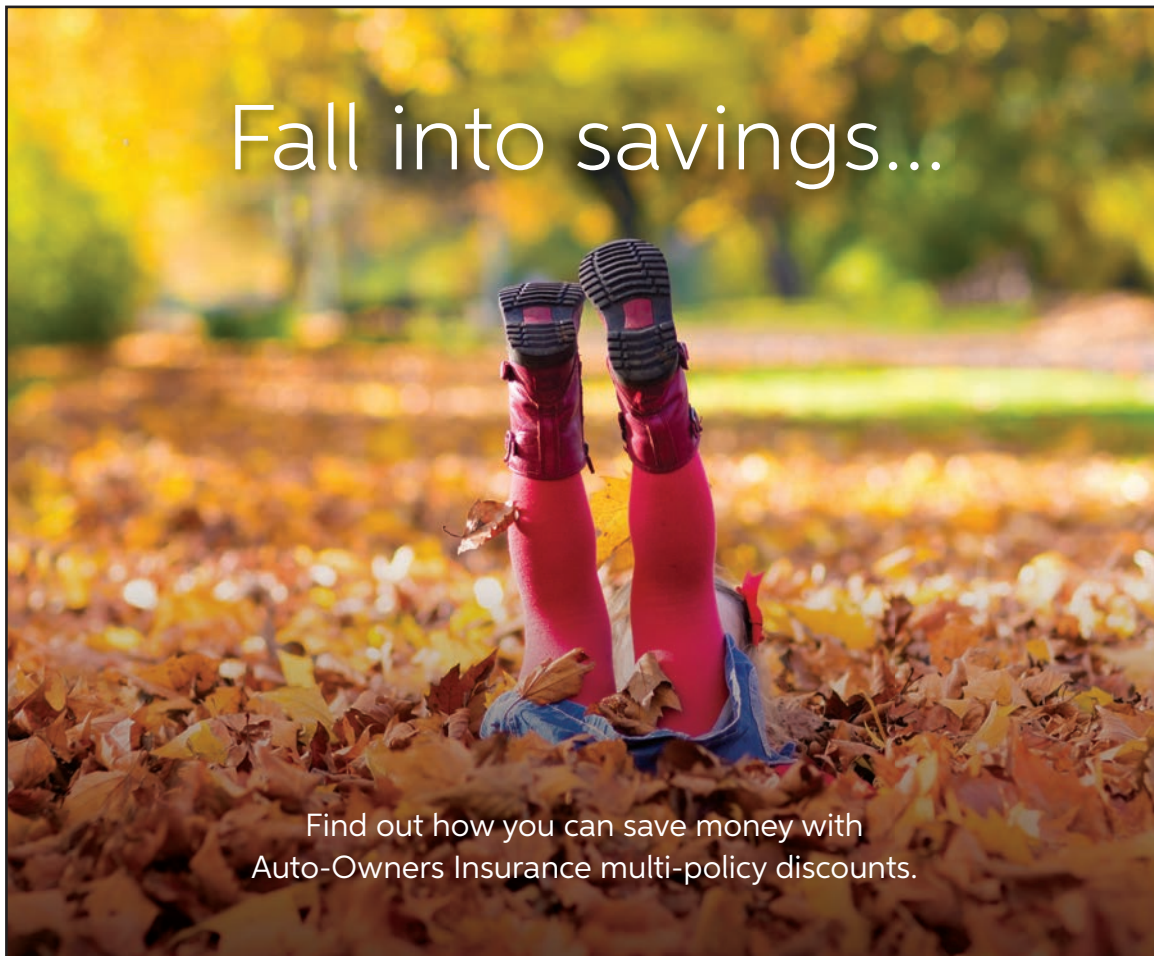
If current prices continue and if input prices stay high, Peters said many farmers will face a difficult 2019.

He recently compared current local farm data to information he shared at a 2015 community meeting, and he said the losses since then are “staggering.”

He's estimating roughly \$40 million less in grain sales in Rock County today versus 2015, considering all production is sold at current prices or if prices stay at these levels for the next few months.

“I knew the price was significantly lower for soybeans and lower for corn, but when you take that loss across all the bushels in Rock County, it is a staggering amount,” Peters said.

Struggling ag economy/see page 27



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Mavis Fodness photo/Ag Tab Midwest Dry Cast
 AJ Pronk (left) with Buffalo Ridge Concrete and Midwest Dry Cast employee Alex Elgersma discuss the shuttle system that lifts the formed concrete products to the cure shed. The fully automated plant will blend the correct measures of aggregate, sand, cement powder mixture and water and press them onto one of two casting tables. Every 10 minutes the newly cast product is moved from the cast to one of multiple drying stations where steam cures the product to its final hardness.



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Mavis Fodness photo/Ag Tab Midwest Dry Cast

The 3,600-square-foot attached office building is currently under construction at the Midwest Dry Cast facility south of Luverne. Equipment is being assembled in the 100-by-250-foot manufacturing plant with the start of production anticipated in October. Wet spring weather delayed construction by six weeks.

Only dry cast plant in U.S. starts manufacturing soon

Midwest Dry Cast makes new home south of Luverne in 100-by-250-foot building

By Mavis Fodness

Workers are putting the finishing touches on a concrete dry cast manufacturing plant with plans to roll out the first castings next month.

Officials with Midwest Dry Cast broke ground south of Luverne this spring and had planned to be in production by now.

However, wet spring weather delayed construction by six weeks, resulting in a midsummer opening moving to this fall, according to company chief executive officer Aaron Waldner.

Earlier this month the drying facility inside the 100-by-250-foot building was in the midst of being assembled along

with the other manufacturing equipment for production.

Workers were also still finishing the 3,600-square-foot attached office to the plant.

Initially the company will manufacture concrete flooring for swine confinements, but its dry cast method can be applied to any concrete work that fits into the 4-foot-wide by 22-foot-

long by 12-inch-deep castings.

"That's the main reason we settled on this equipment," he said. "It's extremely versatile."

The dry cast process also uses considerably less water than the traditional concrete manufacturing process.

Materials used in the manufacturing process are stored in large bins located on

the outside of the manufacturing building.

No materials are stored on the ground, Waldner said.

Once in full production, 10 semitrailer loads of aggregate materials will be brought to the plant daily with materials divided into one of five separate

Midwest Dry Cast/see page 10



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Midwest Dry Cast to begin manufacturing this fall/continued from page 9

aggregate bins. The bins hold three days' worth of production materials.

Materials are unloaded into a below-ground hopper with belt conveyers moving the material into the correct bin. Another conveyer system weighs and moves materials into the plant where they are emptied into a giant mixer.

Two bins along the building's west side hold the cement powder.

The fully automated plant blends the correct measures of aggregate, sand, cement powder mixture and water and presses them onto one of two casting tables.

Every 10 minutes the newly cast product is moved from the cast to one of multiple drying stations where steam cures the product to its final hardness.

Eleven hours later the slabs exit the drying stations and move to outside storage.

Five employees work for Midwest Dry Cast and are currently assembling the equipment with three technicians from the equipment manufacturer.

Waldner said because the local workers are watching the



Mavis Fodness photo/Ag Tab Midwest Dry Cast
Aaron (left) and Melvin Waldner, pictured in the east end of the Midwest Dry Cast building currently under construction south of Luverne, operate the SD Industries in Alexandria, South Dakota, and are working with a French company to assemble the equipment to produce agricultural concrete products. Plans are to produce floor slats in Luverne for swine facilities beginning next month.

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Pictured at right, aggregate, sand, water and cement powder are conveyed into a giant mixer system. Once complete, the dry cast materials are pressed into casts. After 10 minutes the newly manufactured product is moved to the drying shed for an 11-hour curing process.

Below, two casting tables are being assembled at the Midwest Dry Cast facility being constructed south of Luverne.

Mavis Fodness photo/Ag Tab Midwest Dry Cast



equipment get assembled from the ground up, future maintenance and potential repairs will be made easier.

"They know where everything is," he said.

Midwest Dry Cast is expected to create at least 12 new jobs within the next year to 18 months, paying \$16 to \$23 per hour.

Midwest Dry Cast is part of SD Industries out of Alexandria, South Dakota.

The company, which began in 2006, manufactures stainless steel equipment for swine facilities but has expanded services to make other products from its two facilities in Alexandria.

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Mavis Fodness photo/Ag Tab 2018 Red Rock Oil

Quality lubricants and diesel exhaust fluid make up the majority of Red Rock Oil's bulk sales and delivery services. James Klosterbuer is the Luverne company's full-time sales person.

Good engine output starts with what's put inside

Industry change to mandatory DEF products propels Red Rock Oil to filling local need

By Mavis Fodness

Express Ag owners Jerry and Kathy Stevens of Luverne are familiar with bulk nitrogen products, so expanding their business to sell diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) was an easy decision.

The couple formed Red Rock Oil in 2015 to supply DEF in bulk to area producers who use diesel-powered equipment.

DEF is a fluid that reduces a diesel engine's harmful exhaust.

Mandatory use of DEF in all farm equipment manufactured after 2010 caused concern and was a bit of mystery with local producers in how to store and transport the liquid.

The Stevenses were familiar with nitrogen-based liquids through Express Ag, which was used in handling of crop fertilizers and pesticides.

"It's something we dealt with every day," Jerry said.

They added bulk oil sales and delivery because DEF customers also

had a need for lubricants and related equipment.

"High quality lubricants are going to save you long-term maintenance costs," Jerry said.

Red Rock Oil is the area's only independent bulk oil supplier operating in Luverne. The office is located at the Express Ag LLC facility on West Hatting Street in Luverne.

Salesman James Klosterbuer assisted the Stevenses in expanding into the bulk oil business.

"We can buy a large selection of oils. You don't need to stick with one company," Klosterbuer said.

Selecting the best oil weight will help an engine perform at its peak and will make it less likely to fail during the spring and fall, the busiest times for ag producers.

Klosterbuer, who grew up on a farm south of Luverne, has first-hand knowledge of the pressures of timely planting and harvesting, and he knows it's important to take care

of equipment early in the season to prevent costly repairs later.

He returned to the family farm after his father, Jerry Klosterbuer, died a decade ago.

"I love getting into the combine and hearing the hum of the engine," he said. "I don't have the radio on."

Klosterbuer said his father used to tell him that he couldn't hear problems with the engine if music was playing in the background.

At Red Rock Oil, Klosterbuer said part of the service is to make sure oils and lubricants are suitable for specific engines.

"When you do that, you save \$2 to \$3 a gallon," he said. "I was raised to change oil every 150 to 200 hours and in cars every 3,000 miles."

Oils, fluids and lubricants can be tested through a number of companies Red Rock Oil works with. They can also upgrade hydraulic tubing systems to be more efficient in providing power to equipment.

The free oil deliveries can be made in a variety of sizes including in totes, drums and/or 2.5-gallon containers. Same-day delivery is also an option.

Besides ag producers, other customers of Red Rock Oil include agribusinesses, trucking companies and auto repair shops.

Also sold at Red Rock Oil are oil and air filters, anti-freeze, greases and windshield washing fluid.

DEF is sold in one-gallon containers or in bulk up to 275 gallons. DEF's regular use is recognized as reducing pollution.

"It's better for the environment," Klosterbuer said. "What a better way to help everybody out."

Along with oil for everyday engines, Red Rock Oil also handles specialty oil for racecars.

The company services the four-state area that includes Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Iowa.

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Minnesota and Rock County are perfect place to raise pigs

**By Kevin Barnhart
Rock County Pork Producers**

Minnesota is one of the nation's leading pig farming states raising nearly 16.2 million market pigs in 2017. There are a couple of unique things about Minnesota that make it a great place to raise pigs.

The farmers

There are more than 3,000 family pig farms that call Minnesota home. Many of them are industry leaders in the areas of pig health and genetics while maintaining a strong commitment to responsibly and sustainably protecting the environment.

They also play a vital role in rural communities providing careers and opportunities for other families and businesses to thrive.

The infrastructure

A few key enterprises and pieces of infrastructure make pork production in Minnesota more competitive than some neighboring states. Minnesota is home to three packing plants with another handful of processors just outside of its borders.

Minnesota pig farms are economic engines that spur other businesses, create rewarding careers, and help build strong rural communities

Minnesota farmers raised 16.4 million market pigs in 2017, worth \$2.4 billion.

\$2.4 BILLION

3,200 family pig farms support 66,000 jobs directly and indirectly related to farming in all sectors.

3,200 Farms 66,000 Jobs

The state's roads and bridges make moving animals safer and more efficient. There are also key supporting industries including world-class veterinarians, swine nutritionists, feed mills, universities, electricians, plumbers, and business advisers that keep Minnesota's pig farmers on the cutting edge of technology and innovation.

The land

Minnesota's cropland is another asset to pig farmers. There is an abundance of acres suitable to manure application, allowing both crop farmers and pig farmers to benefit. Manure is a great source of natural nitrogen and other nutrients crops need to thrive. This makes a great replacement for com-

mercial fertilizer while providing other natural benefits to the soil such as increasing organic matter and improved soil structure.

This cycle continues with the corn and soybeans that are harvested. They make up the majority of a pig's diet and thus, the nutrient cycle continues.

Minnesota's other precious resources include its lakes, streams and other waters. Pig farmers know and live the importance of protecting Minnesota's waters and are continuing making advancements in technology and other management practices to ensure the environment, their farms, and their communities can continue to thrive well into the future.

However, the pork sector is not without its share of challenges.

Pig health and African swine fever vigilance

Pig health remains farmers' top priority.

Countries including China, Russia, Belgium, Romania, and other western European

Pigs and the economy/see p. 17



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On Dec. 5, 2016, the Mert's Repair crew moved into the 80-by-136-foot shop, which is three times bigger than the East Hatting Street operation. Mert Kracht said they immediately appreciated the higher ceilings (20 feet) and taller overhead doors (18 feet versus 14). "Everything's getting bigger," Kracht said about the farm equipment he works on.

Local welding operation expands into new, bigger shop in Luverne's industrial park

By Lori Sorenson

Mert Kracht has been welding most of his life, 30 years professionally.

And, after all these years, he said he still enjoys going to work every day.

"People come to me with their ideas, and I make it a reality," he said, explaining that this is the most challenging and rewarding aspect of his work.

This time of year, he and his crew of four welders get busy fixing what gets broke in the fields during harvest.

Right now it's ailing trucks, choppers and other silage equipment that either get hauled to his shop in town or get repaired in the field with a portable welder.

Between these never-ending repair projects, Mert's

crew also chips away at custom creations.

For example, they recently designed and built a lift to help an 80-year-old farmer get into and out of a combine. It was similar to one he made several years ago for a disabled farmer.

And four years ago, Kracht created a double-decker "toy hauler" for a customer to tow behind his RV. It carries two

Harley Davidson motorcycles on the top deck and a Corvette on the lower level

Some requests, though, are as simple as cutting pieces of metal for customers working on their own projects.

It's this variety of work, and the steady demand, that makes his job interesting, Kracht said.

"We never do the same thing twice," he said. "And we're

never really caught up."

He and his wife, Bobbi, have been operating Mert's repair for 10 years in Luverne, but his welding experience comes from 20 years of working with other operations, such as Dave's Repair, Midwest Rail, Rock Rapids Machine and Welding, Cor-Tech Manufacturing and NorthCo Manufacturing (which is now Facco).

His education, he said, comes from the school of experience.

"I learned on the job," Kracht said simply.

That education — and experience — has served him well.

Up until two years ago, Mert's Repair operated out of the former W&W (Dean Wenzel) Repair building on East Hatting Street east of the former Sharkee's building.

But the world of changing farm equipment and increasing demand for welding services forced some business decisions in 2016.

Sweet deal for more space on a new industrial park lot

Around the same time Kracht started outgrowing his space, the city of Luverne began eyeing his lot for a TIF district connected with the Sharkee's demolition and property improvement. (Des Moines developer Bill Ludwig now has a development agreement to build Town Square on that lot.)

When Kracht approached the city about expanding Mert's Repair, city officials proposed a land swap to put his operation in the industrial park.

Kracht agreed to sell his 2-acre lot to the city for

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The new shop has a press brake for bending steel (something the old shop didn't have) and three additional wire-feed welders (the old shop had three) also come in handy, as does the in-floor heat. "That has made a huge difference in the winter," Mert Kracht said. The new shop allows for more projects, which meant he hired two more welders — which means they can take on more projects.

Lori Sorenson photos/0927 ag tab mert's repair

The Mert's Repair team includes (from left) owners Bobbi and Mert Kracht and welders Zach Barton, Garritt Beaner, Shane Hoag and Trevor Kracht. Up until two years ago, Mert's Repair operated out of the former W&W (Dean Wenzel) Repair building on East Hatting Street east of the former Sharkee's building. But the world of changing farm equipment and increasing demand for welding services forced the business in 2016 to consider expanding.

\$160,000, and he bought a new 3-acre lot from the city for \$10,000 (a discount from the \$13,000 asking price) on Gabrielson Road, which is zoned for industrial use.

On Dec. 5, 2016, the Mert's Repair crew moved into the 80-by-136-foot shop, which is three times bigger than the East Hatting Street operation.

Kracht said they immediately appreciated the higher ceilings (20 feet) and taller overhead doors (18 feet versus 14).

"Everything's getting bigger," Kracht said about the farm equipment he works on.

A press brake for bending steel (something the old shop didn't have) and three additional wire-feed welders (the old shop had three) also come in handy, as does the in-floor heat.

"That has made a huge difference in the winter," Kracht said.

The new shop allows for more projects, which meant he hired two more welders — which means they can take on more projects.

"I almost wish I had built bigger," Kracht said.

Mert's Repair/see page 19

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Here are three tips to save money on cow-calf operations

For the cow-calf producer, a few ways to ensure your operation stays afloat include following good nutrition practice, checking pregnancy status and making sure your herd is in general good health.

Dr. Erin deKoning, DVM

With the current downturn in commodity prices and the general agriculture economy, finding ways to save money becomes critical for your operation's success or even farm survival.

For the cow-calf producer, here are a few tips to ensure your operation stays afloat. A few areas that we will evaluate today include nutrition, pregnancy status, and general herd health.

The No. 1 financial input for any livestock operation, no matter the species, is feed.

Current data out of the University of Nebraska indicates that feed can be anywhere from 40 to 70 percent of the total cost to maintain a cow for a year. For an entire year, that can calculate out to as high as \$550 to \$600 per cow. This is a significant investment considering the average price for selling a 550-pound weaned calf is only around \$850 when sold locally.

How can a producer save money on feed?

A great starting place is to contact and work with a nutritionist if you are not already doing so. A nutritionist can take samples and analyze available feed ingredients to create a recipe for a well-balanced diet. Feeding a balanced

ration can help save on feed costs by reducing feed waste and not overfeeding cows.

Cows being fed a well-balanced diet will stay healthier, breed back faster, have fewer problems calving and raise a healthier calf.

Additionally, the majority of veterinarians and nutritionists will recommend feeding an ionophore such as Rumensin. Ionophores have several cost-saving benefits that include increased feed efficiency, improved cow fertility, and weaning a heavier calf.

The only way for a cow-calf operation to make money is to have a calf to market, either as a feeder or a finished fat animal.

If a cow does not produce a calf each year, there is no reason to keep her around. She will continue to eat and cost money while not returning any dollars through her marketed calf. Finding open cows early on can be a huge cost savings.

The earlier a producer can determine the pregnancy status of a cow, the more dollars on feed will be saved. The average price to have a cow "preg checked" by a veterinarian is around \$5. Spending just \$5 to find an open cow early can lead to hundreds of dollars in feed savings in a year.

Another means to save dollars in a cow herd is to follow an excellent vaccination program.

Spending money on herd health will actually help save money by reducing the incidence of sick animals.

A good vaccination program varies based on each individual herd, but all programs will follow the same general guidelines.

Cows should be vaccinated with a pre-breeding vaccine that includes common reproductive diseases such as Vibriosis and Leptospirosis.

Cows should also be vaccinated pre-calving with a scour vaccine that includes coverage for bacteria and viruses such as Clostridium perfringens, E coli, Rota and Corona. Calves should be vaccinated at least twice before marketing with a modified live viral vaccine that includes coverage for BVDV, IBR, BRSV and Pasteurella.

Another common vaccine for calves is called 7-way/Blackleg, which provides coverage for the Clostridials.

The best vaccination program is tailored to the specific needs of your herd, which only your veterinarian can help you determine.

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Pigs and the economy in Minnesota and Rock County/continued from page 13

countries are seeing outbreaks of African Swine Fever, a trade limiting virus that only affects pigs, make a large impact on their herds.

The entire industry is keeping a close watch on these outbreaks while they continue to use tight biosecurity protocols. While biosecurity is important for pig health, it is also critical when using feed ingredients with origins in countries where the virus is actively being transmitted. Farmers and those providing feed ingredients should know where the product has been and for how long in order to best mitigate risk associated with introducing foreign animal diseases.

Trade Issues

Pork continues to face a variety of trade challenges including tariffs and access barriers keeping pork from being competitive in foreign markets.

Currently, pork has a 20-percent tariff into Mexico, the U.S.'s largest volume importer of pork. U.S. pork is still entering Mexico; unfortunately, the price on the products has to be discounted in order to overcome the current tariff.

That's in addition to tariffs placed on U.S. pork by the Chinese coming in at 62 percent. China is the third largest importer of U.S. pork and is the largest consumer of the offal, products not typically eaten anywhere else.

Trade disputes have caused a significant decrease in prices farmers are receiving for their pigs. According to economists from Iowa State University, tariffs have cost the pork industry \$2 billion since March of this year.

Other countries like Japan, the largest value importer of U.S. pork, do not have a free trade agreement with the United States.

Pursuing other trading partners continues to be a priority of trade and commodity organizations and is looking at countries like Vietnam and the Philippines for new market opportunities.

— Lauren Servick of the Minnesota Pork Producers Association and Minnesota Pork Board is a source of information for this article



Pig Farming and Rock County

By Kevin Barnhart Rock County Pork Producers

Pork is the world's most widely eaten meat and luckily for Rock County members it is being grown and produced right in their own community.

Pig farmers in Rock County are active members of their community who take pride in the care they provide their pigs and the product they produce.

When a piglet is born it weighs only three pounds but in just six months it will be full grown and weigh 280 pounds.

In 2017 Rock County pig farmers sent an estimated 620,000 pigs to market. That is a lot of pork that can be used to feed families in the community and across the state.

In order to raise healthy pigs a good diet is needed. Rock County pigs consumed more than 7 million bushels of corn and more than 1.5 million bushels of soybeans last year that was raised by area farmers.

What goes in must come out. Pig manure is used locally as a natural form of fertilizer to grow crops. Pig manure adds beneficial nutrients and organic matter to the soil and reduces the need

for synthetic fertilizers.

Sustainability is important to Rock County pig farmers and they are doing their part to protect the environment by investing in new technologies that reduce water, feed and energy.

Pig farming in Rock County also benefits the local economy. Gross income generated in 2015 from the sale of Rock County pigs was \$121.9 million.* That allows pig farmers to invest in the local economy, which added another estimated \$341.3 million* into the Rock County economy.

Pig farming wouldn't be possible without the support of the community. Thank you to Rock County for all of the support and we look forward to continuing to be a leader in the pork industry.

*These are estimates based on the 2012 census data against 2017 production. It doesn't accurately account for new barn constructions. New censuses data will be released next spring.

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Lori Sorenson photos/0927 ag tab mert's repair
Mert's Repair co-owner Bobbi Kracht works on Vicki Walker's hair in Bobbi's Cut and Color, which opened in January 2017. The salon serves as the front office for Mert's Repair, and Bobbi Kracht also works as the business's bookkeeper in an upstairs office of the new shop.

Some projects are as simple as cutting a piece of metal for a customer that is working on his or own project. That's what Mert's Repair welder Zach Barton (at left) is doing for customer Jim Stroh (in background) in the photo above left.

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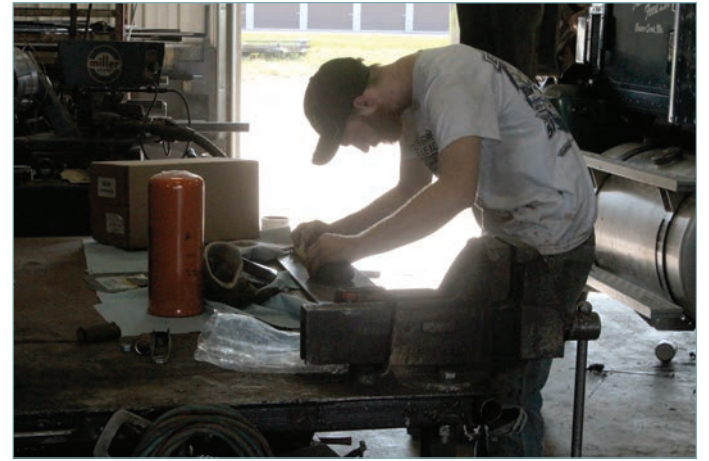
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Mert Kracht (right) works with Garritt Beaner to repair a grain truck — setting the brakes, packing the wheel bearings and aligning the wagon. Mert's Repair customers rely on the local welders for all kinds of welding fabrication projects, like this metal tube (at right) Shane Hoag is building for local custom manure haulers to pump manure from livestock pits into tanks. Trevor Kracht cuts a piece of metal for a project.

Mert's Repair/continued from 15

A space of her own — Bobbi's Cut and Color

Bobbi Kracht meanwhile pursued dreams of her own.

In addition to keeping books for the Mert's Repair business, she completed classes and training three years ago for her cosmetology degree.

She began working in Remedez Salon, Luverne, in addition to managing the family and the family business. Their children are Trevor, 22, (who is also a welder at Mert's Repair), Jackson, 19, Kacie, 16, Cade, 12, and twins Allie and Caleb, 10.

When the new shop was completed, Bobbi moved her salon to the new space, rather than lease a chair in another salon.

So, the front office on the main floor is Bobbi's Cut and Color, which also serves as a reception area for Mert's Repair customers.

The upstairs office is where she goes for her other job — running the numbers for Mert's Repair.

The salon can be reached at 507-227-1115 and the phone number for Mert's Repair is 507-449-0479.

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 W CH Steiger 450 Quad RowTrac, '14, 775 hrs, lux cab, susp cab, 10 HIDs, side HIDs, full guidance, 3pt, PTO, high flow, 5 remotes, drive wheel scrapers, 120" spacers, 18" Camso tracks, tow cable, includes 48/1200 additional Powertwin warranty (B090907) \$253,000.00
 W CH Steiger 500 QuadTrac, '14, 1650 hrs, lux cab, front & rear HIDs, HID side lights, dual beacons, full guidance, radar, HD drawbar, twin flow, power beyond, 1000 PTO, tow cable, 30" tracks, diff lock, 48/1200 hour PT warranty from time of sale (A8038011) \$245,000.00
 W CH Steiger 580 QuadTrac, '14, 2145 hrs, lux perf cab, 10 HID lights, side HID lights, full guidance, cold weather start pkg, radar, HD drawbar, high flow w/ 6 remotes, power beyond, 1000 PTO, diff lock, tow cable, 30" tracks, 48/1200 hour PT warranty from time of sale (A1038011) \$245,000.00

TRACTOR - 4WD

LH 6588, 7500 Hrs. TA & Clutch OK, Injection pump done; 18.4X38 bias ply Tires, rear duals with 9 bolt hubs \$16,200.00
 L CH 9150, '89, 6333 HRS, 3 remotes, 20.8-38 bias mismatched 50%, cab interior poor, Service check yearly, (C80004300) \$29,000.00
 LP CH 9230, '95, 18.4x38 duals, 3 pt. PTO, PS, Row Crop Special, 5900 hrs (JEE0033860) \$57,500.00
 W CH 9260, '91, 18.4x42 duals, 12 speed powershift, 5000 hours, bareback (JBC0027306) \$36,500.00
 LP Case IH Steiger '30, '13, guidance ready, 760 hrs, pto, lux cab, 520/85R46 (ZDF134957) \$179,500.00
 W CH Steiger 370 HD, '17, 275 hrs, lux performance cab, performance lighting, LED side worklight pkg, single beacon light, full guidance, cold weather pkg, std drawbar, high flow w/ 4 remotes, power beyond, 1000 PTO, diff lock, 480/80R50 Firestone duals, radar (ZGF311208) \$234,900.00
 W CH Steiger 370 HD, '17, 298 hrs, lux performance cab, performance lighting, LED side worklight pkg, single beacon light, full guidance, cold weather pkg, std drawbar, high flow w/ 4 remotes, power beyond, 1000 PTO, diff lock, 480/80R50 Firestone duals, radar (ZGF311214) \$234,900.00
 W CH Steiger 580 HD, '17, 396 hrs, luxury performance cab, performance lighting pkg, side LED lights, single beacon, full guidance, 6 remotes, diff lock, Firestone 800/70R38s, radar, 1 owner local trade farmer owned, like new! (ZGF31100) \$319,500.00
 L CH Steiger 620, '14, 2855 hrs, PTO, twin flow with 8 remotes, Full guidance, High capacity drawbar, dual beacons, trailer brakes, diff lock, radar, backup alarm, power beyond, cold weather pkg, new 710x42 tires (ZDF300015) \$230,000.00
 L CH Steiger 620, '14, 2075 hrs, PTO, twin flow with 6 remotes, Full guidance, High capacity drawbar, dual beacons, trailer brakes, diff lock, radar, backup alarm, power beyond, cold weather pkg, new 710x42 tires (ZDF300016) \$235,000.00
 W CH STX325, '05, 2180 hrs, 520/85R42 Firestones, 24spd man trans, 4 hyd, deluxe cab, bareback, nice farmer owned tractor (JEE0106223) \$95,000.00

TRACTOR - MFD

W CH Farmall 45C, '17, 65 hrs, ROPS, MFD, 1 rear remote, 540 PTO, CaseIH L360 loader w/ skidloader mount, like new with warranty call for pricing
 W CH Farmall 70A, '18, 75 hrs, ROPS, 2wd, 1 rear remote, 540 PTO, 14.9 x 28 rear tires, 7.5 x 16 front tires, 8 x 8 synchro transmission, like new! \$24,900.00
 W NEW CH Farmall 110A, '17, MFD, cab, high vis window, rear wiper, 4 front/4 rear cab lights, extremely light, instructor seat, air susp seat, 40kph, 16 x 8 transmission w/ power shuttle, swinging drawbar, 98" bar axle, 18.4 x 38 rear singles, front fenders, loader ready, 10 rear wheel weights - CALL FOR SPECIAL RATES call for pricing
 W CH Farmall 110A, '17, 79.5 hrs, MFD, cab, air susp seat, 40kph trans, 16 x 8 power shuttle, 2 remotes, 98" bar axle, 18.4 x 38s, front fenders, loader ready, wheel weights, warranty \$64,500.00
 W NEW CH Farmall 120U, '18, MFD, cab, suspended high vis cab, performance motor with ISO, premium air seat, 3 rear remotes, 2 midmount valves with joystick, 540/1000 PTO, HD MFD axle w/ diff lock, 460/85R34 rear singles, HD rear flange axle, front & rear fenders, loader ready, 4 LED lights, 6 rear wheel weights, HD brake discs, 200 amp alternator - CALL FOR SPECIAL RATES call for pricing
 W CH Farmall 130A, '16, MFD, DOT tractor, 250 hrs, 18.4R38 rear, bar axles, 14.9-28 fronts, 3 remotes, 16x8 power shuttle, instructor seat, loader ready call for pricing
 L CH Farmall 140A, '16, MFD, 326 hrs, loader ready, 8x8 power shuttle, 18.4-38, bar axle, 14.9-28 (DOT/DEMO Unit)/Warranty Start 6-26-18) \$61,900.00
 L CH Magnum 7130, MFD, '89, 18.4R42 duals, 380/85R28 fronts, 1000 pto, 2 spd rev, 4415 hrs (OH on 3000 hrs), 1 owner, JIA0011688 \$38,000.00
 LP CH Magnum 7130, MFD, '90, 14.4 x 42 rear duals, 1000 pto, 4 sp rev, 6370 hrs (JIA 0029647) \$39,500.00
 LP CH Magnum 225 CVT, '13, 1060 hrs, Frt Susp, Susp Cab, 360 HID, lux cab, rear duals, frt fenders, 540/1000 pto, guidance ready, 50k, 480/80/46 rear duals, 380/85/34 single fronts (ZDRH05024) \$514,000.00
 W CH Magnum 225 CVT, '14, Approx. 775 hrs, Front Susp, Susp Cab, High Flow Pump, HD Lights, 4 Hyd Remotes, Full Guidance, 380/85R34 front, 480/80R46 rear duals, front and rear weights (ZDRH07415) - 1 owner local trade - very nice! Call For Pricing
 W CH Magnum 225, '14, 908 hrs, 19 spd powershift, d/cx, susp cab, d/cx, dispersive response seat, elec mirrors, HD drawbar, power beyond, 540/1000 PTO, AFS ready, high flow with 4 remotes, 2000hr rear weights, 480/80R46 rear duals, 380/85R34 front singles (Michelin rubber - in great shape)/ZER001123) \$110,000.00
 W CH Magnum 250, '15, 1195 hrs, lux perf cab, elec mirrors, AFS ready, 19spd PS, HD drawbar, 3pt hitch, high flow w/ 4 remotes, power beyond/motor return, 540/1000 PTO, std 4.75 MFD, front & rear weights, 480/80R50 rear duals, 420/85R34 front singles - 60/1500 additional powertwin warranty (C156217) \$142,500.00
 LP CH Magnum 250, '15, 1147 hrs, lux perf cab, elec mirrors, full guidance, 19 spd PS, HD drawbar, 3pt hitch, high flow w/ 4 remotes, power beyond, 1000 PTO, std MFD, front & rear weights, 480/80R50 rear duals, 420/85R34 front singles, 60/1500 additional PT warranty (869117) \$139,500.00
 W CH Magnum 250, '15, 1200 hrs, 480/80R50s, frt fenders, afs ready, high flow, 4 hyd, 540/1000 PTO, 10 front weights, 2000r rear weights, luxury performance cab, std MFD (749117) - includes 60/1500 hours additional Powertwin warranty \$142,900.00
 L CH Magnum 250, '15, 1015 hrs, luxury performance cab, elec mirrors, AFS ready, 19spd PS, HD drawbar, 3pt hitch, high flow w/ 4 remotes, power beyond, 540/1000 PTO, Class 4.75 MFD, front & rear weights, 480/80R50 rear duals, 420/85R34 front singles, 60/1500 additional PT warranty (756217) \$142,500.00
 LP CH Magnum 260, '12, 1965 hrs deluxe cab, dual beacon, 18 ft wghts, 5 remotes, 1000 PTO, guidance ready, 380/90/54 rear duals, 380/80R38 frt singles, (ZBRD06811) \$105,500.00
 L CH Magnum 260 '12, 1128 hours, Susp Frt, Luxury, Susp Cab, 540/1000, HD Drawbar, 380/85R34 Frt Duals, 480/80R46, 4 HYD, Pro 700, NavII, 18 spd PS, (ZBRD08365) cenex oil warranty till Jan 21 2021 \$135,000.00
 L CH Magnum 260, '13, 1225 hrs, Luxury Susp Cab, 540/1000, High Flow Hyd, 380/80R38 Frt Duals, 380/90R54, 4 hyd, Pro700, NavII, 18 spd PS, (ZCRD05871) cenex oil warranty till 8-20-2022 \$135,000.00
 W CH Magnum 260, '14, Approx. 1130 hours, Luxury Susp Cab, 540/1000 PTO, 4 Hyd Remotes, 18 spd PS, Front Suspension, Full Guidance, 380/85R34 front duals, 480/80R46 rear duals, front and rear weights, 1 owner local trade - very nice! (ZDRD07755) Call For Pricing
 W CH Magnum 260, '14, 695 hrs, 480/80R46 rear duals, 380/80R34 frt duals, standard MFD, hi flo, 4 hyd, 360 HD pkg, full guidance, 540/1000, front fenders, weights, includes 48/1200 additional Powertwin warranty, (B8381017) \$137,500.00
 L CH Magnum 260, '13, 1461 hrs, 480/80R46 rear duals, 380/85R34 frt duals, lux cab, susp cab, 360 HIDs, leather seats, full guidance, HD drawbar, hi flow w/ 4 remotes, power beyond, 540/1000, std MFD, front fenders, front & rear weights (C105887)/ZDRD02990 - includes 36/900 additional Powertwin warranty \$123,900.00
 LP CH Magnum 290, '14, 2000 hrs, lux cab, susp cab, elec mirrors, leather, AFS ready, 19 spd PS, 3pt hitch, high flow w/ 4 remotes, power beyond/motor return, 1000 PTO, Class 5 std MFD, front & rear weights, 420/85R50 rear duals, 420/85R34 front singles, 48/1200 additional PT warranty (C722987) (ZDRD07127) \$134,900.00
 W CH Magnum 290, '13, 980 hrs, 480/80R50 rear duals, 380/38 front duals, luxury cab, susp cab, front & rear HIDs, 540/1000, full guidance, high flow, 4 hyd, susp MFD, front fenders, includes 36/900 additional Powertwin warranty (B832217) \$139,500.00
 L CH Magnum 290, '12, 978 hrs, 380/80R38 Frt Duals, 480/80R50 Rear Duals, 2000 lb rear wt, FWF w/ 19 spd, 540/1000 PTO, 4 Hyd, big pump, HD MFD, 1000 PTO, afs ready, (ZCRD07083) \$135,500.00
 W CH Magnum 310 CVT, '14, 1310 hrs, lux performance cab, elec mirrors, 360 HD pkg, full guidance, block/trans heater, 50kph transmission, radar, hyd trailer brake, HD drawbar, 3pt, high flow w/ 6 remotes, power beyond/motor return valve, 540/1000 PTO, Susp MFD, front fenders, front & rear weights, front & rear duals, 380/54 rear duals, 380/38 front duals - PT warranty until 7/15/18 or 2000 hours (ZERF05533) \$169,500.00
 W CH Magnum 310, '17, approx 750 hrs, deluxe suspended cab, single beacon, full guidance, block heater, severe duty fuel filter, 19 spd powershift, radar, HD drawbar, high flow w/ 4 remotes, 1000 PTO, 480/80R50 rear duals, 380/80R38 front duals (All Firestone rubber), front fenders, 10 front weights, 2000r rear weights (4 available) \$189,500.00
 LP CH Magnum 310, '17, 450hrs, Lux Cab, Suspended cab and ft axle 540/1000 pto, 5 rear outlets, 50k trans, afs ready, (ZGRF05022) \$208,000.00
 L CH Magnum 310, '15, 929 hrs, 23spd PS, lux perf cab, full guidance, HD drawbar, hi flow w/ 5 remotes, power beyond, 1000 PTO, susp MFD, 480/80R50 rear duals, 420/85R34 front singles, front & rear weights - includes 60/1500 additional Powertwin warranty (C469117)/ZERF08443) \$172,000.00
 LP CH Magnum 310 CVT, '15, 1590 hrs, lux performance cab, elec mirrors, full guidance, 40kph

CVT, HD drawbar, 3pt hitch, high flow w/ 5 remotes, power beyond/motor return, 1000 PTO, Class 5 susp mfd, front & rear weights, 480/80R50 rear duals, 420/85R34 front duals, 60/1500 additional PT warranty (031907) (ZERF09463) \$163,500.00
 W CH Magnum 315, '13, 1827 hrs, d/cx cab, MFD, front & rear duals, susp cab, front & rear weights, HD drawbar, 1000 PTO, AFS ready, 19spd PS, std hyd pump, 4 remotes, std MFD (1-JBC-JAYCOX - 118887) \$134,900.00
 W CH Magnum 315, '14, 740 hrs, lux cab, susp cab, HIDs, full guidance, hi flo, 5 hyd, 1000 PTO, weights, 480/80R50 rear duals, 420/85R34 front duals, susp MFD, includes 48/1200 additional Powertwin warranty (B486987) \$164,900.00
 W CH Magnum 315, '14, 1950 hrs, d/cx cab, susp cab, F & R duals (all new Firestones), weights, 1000 PTO, hi flo, afs ready, 4 hyd (3 available) \$139,500.00
 W CH Magnum 315, '14, 1950 hrs, d/cx cab, F & R duals (all new Firestones), weights, 1000 PTO, hi flo, with guidance, 4 hyd (3 available) \$149,500.00
 W CH Magnum 315 CVT, '14, 1265 hrs, lux cab, susp cab, elec mirrors, 360 HID work lamp pkg, full guidance, 40kph CVT transmission, radar, HD drawbar, 3pt hitch, high flow w/ 5 remotes, 540/1000 PTO, Class 5 suspended MFD, front fenders, front & rear weights, 380/90R54 rear duals, 380/80R38 front duals, 48/1200 hour PT warranty from time of sale (B7938011) \$169,900.00
 W CH Magnum 340, '14, 910 hrs, lux perf cab, electric mirrors, 360 HID work lamp pkg, Pro700 only, 19spd PS, radar, HD drawbar, 3pt hitch, high capacity hydraulic pump w/ 6 remotes, power beyond, 1000 PTO, Class 5 suspended MFD, front fenders, front & rear weights, 480/70R34 front duals, 480/80R50 rear duals, 48/1200 hour PT warranty from time of sale (B0326011) \$167,500.00
 W CH Magnum 340, '13, 1635 hrs, lux cab, susp cab, high flow w/ 5 remotes, HD MFD, hyd trailer brakes, 1000 PTO, full guidance, severe duty fuel filter, electric mirrors, radar, block heater, front & rear HIDs, 19 spd powershift, AM/FM/Bluetooth, 480/80R50 rear duals, 380/80R38 front duals, HD drawbar, front & rear weights, 480/80R50 rear duals, 480/70R34 front duals (ZDRD02391) \$164,900.00
 W CH Magnum 340, '15, 895 hrs, d/cx performance cab, full guidance, 18 spd PS, HD drawbar, 3 pt, std hyd pump, 4 remotes, power beyond/motor return, 1000 PTO, Class 5 std MFD, front & rear weights, 480/80R50 rear duals, 480/70R34 front duals, 60/1500 additional PT warranty (C918011) \$182,000.00
 W CH Magnum 340, '15, 1195 hrs, lux performance cab, elec mirrors, full guidance, 19 spd PS, HD drawbar, 3pt hitch, high flow w/ 4 remotes, power beyond/motor return, 1000 PTO, Class 5 susp MFD, front & rear weights, 480/80R50 rear duals, 380/80R38 front duals, 60/1500 additional PT warranty (C790717) \$173,500.00
 W CH Magnum 340, '15, 1047 hrs, lux performance cab, elec mirrors, full guidance, 19 spd PS, HD drawbar, 3 pt hitch, high flow w/ 4 remotes, power beyond/motor return, 1000 PTO, Class 5 susp MFD, front & rear weights, 480/80R50 rear duals, 380/80R38 front duals, 60/1500 additional PT warranty (C108017) \$173,500.00
 L CH Magnum 340, '15, 1205 hrs, lux performance cab, elec mirrors, full guidance, 19 spd PS, HD drawbar, 3 pt hitch, high flow w/ 4 remotes, power beyond/motor return, 1000 PTO, Class 5 susp MFD, front & rear weights, 480/80R50 rear duals, 380/80R38 front duals, 60/1500 additional PT warranty (897017) \$173,500.00
 L CH Magnum 340, '15, 904 hrs, deluxe performance cab, full guidance, 18 spd PS, HD drawbar, 3pt hitch, std hyd pump, 4 remotes, power beyond/motor return, 1000 PTO, Class 5 std MFD, front & rear weights, 480/80R50 rear duals, 480/70R34 front duals (3918011) \$179,500.00
 L CH Magnum 340, '15, 894 hrs, deluxe performance cab, full guidance, 18 spd PS, HD drawbar, 3pt hitch, std hyd pump, 4 remotes, power beyond/motor return, 1000 PTO, Class 5 std MFD, front & rear weights, 480/80R50 rear duals, 480/70R34 front duals (C918011) \$175,000.00
 LP CH Magnum 340, '11, 2700 hrs, frt fenders, susp cab, front/frt duals, susp cab, HIDs, 5 remotes, HD Drawbar (ZBRD04242) \$129,500.00
 W CH Magnum 370 CVT, '14 1426 hours, Luxury Susp Cab, AFS Complete, High Cap hyd, 5 Remotes, 18 front and 2/200R Rear Duals, 380/85R34, rear duals 480/80R50, PT warranty until 3/29/2022 or 3/700 hours (ZDRD09245) \$173,500.00
 W CH Magnum 380 CVT, '15, 898 hrs, luxury performance cab, high flow w/ 5 hyd, 480/80R50s, power beyond, 1000 PTO, Class 5 susp MFD, 480/80R50 rear duals, 380/80R38 front duals, HD drawbar, full guidance, weights - includes 60/1500 additional Powertwin warranty (945217) \$199,800.00
 L CH Magnum 380 CVT, '15, 850 hrs, lux performance cab, elec mirrors, front HID & LED work lights, full guidance, 40kph, radar, HD drawbar, 3pt hitch, high flow w/ 5 remotes, power beyond/motor return, 1000 PTO, Class 5 susp MFD, front & rear weights, 480/80R50 rear duals, 380/80R38 front duals, 60/1500 additional PT warranty (225221) \$209,500.00
 W CH Maxcum 140 T4, '13, 5100 hrs, suspended deluxe cab, beacon, air susp seat, cold weather pkg, HD battery, powershift, hi flow pump, 3 rear remotes, 540/1000 PTO, 98" bar axle, 460/85R42 rear tires, rear wiper, low pressure return, joystick, wheel weights, CaseIH L750 loader with Euro quicktach \$54,900.00
 LP CH Farmall 95 C, 2015, MFD, Cab 2038 hrs \$31,500.00
 LP Kubota BX2660, '12, 4wd, 60" drive over deck, L344 loader, LandPride S1" snowblower, 660 hrs \$15,500.00
 W Kubota BX2760, '16, 2 Post Foldable Rops, RCK60B23BX Mower Deck, Plus Loader Valve, Ladder/48" Pin on bucket, Turf Tires, 263hrs, New Blades, Oil & Filter, Fuel Filter Changer at 250 hrs, SN-33710. In Great Shape, \$12,950.00
 W Kubota L2850, BF500 Loader with bucket, approx 3120 hours, 8 Speed Transmission, 2ear remotes, Turf Tires, 540 PTO, \$79,500.00
 W Kubota L6060HSTC, '17, 1700 hrs, cab, 4WD, R4 titan tires, Kubota LA1055 w/ 72" quick attach square back bucket - NEW call for pricing
 W Kubota M5-1111HD24, '18, 24 speed, hydraulic shuttle, cab, 460/85 rear singles, 320/24 front tires, R1 treads, Kubota LA1854 loader with hyd self leveling, grille guard, 84" quick attach bucket call for pricing
 W New Holland T6050 Elite, '08, 4174 hrs, 16 Spd Power Command, 540/1000, 2 hydr remotes, 18.4x38, 14.9x28, Miller GP30 loader w/ 8" HD bucket, joystick \$53,900.00

TRACTOR - 2WDR

LP Case 2290, '18, 4x38, Westendorf WL 42, 9357 hrs, new service \$16,750.00
 L Case 841 Propane, '64, Unknown Hrs, wide rear, never fronted tires, 3P w/ quick hitch, Dual-Range trans (824708), GB 880 Loader \$3,500.00
 W CH Farmall 70A, '18, 2wd, 55 hrs, ROPS, 1 remote, R1 tires, like new! \$24,900.00
 LP CH JX65, 2 wd, 725 hrs, Butler Loader, \$18,500.00
 L John Deere 4020, '64, gas, 1 Hyd and triple spool valve, conv. to alternator, synchro, wide front, 18.4-38, (21768778) \$6,500.00
 W John Deere 4840, '81, 7550 hrs, powershift, 2wd, 1000 PTO, 3 remotes, AC conversion, quick hitch, 20.8 x 42 rear tires with duals, Westendorf T8-86 loader w/ bucket in great shape call for pricing
 L Oliver 1800, '61 checkerboard, complete OH with 2 hours on it, work order details available, wide front, 2 remotes, 540, 18, 34 rear (113-123-886) \$13,500.00
 LP BH 756 gas, '67, NE, 5050 hrs, 18 tires, Westendorf loader (8956) \$4,950.00
 W 2017 Kubota BX2380T60V0D-1, Turf tires, 60" drive over deck, Rops and loader valve, LA344 loader with grille guard, 48" bucket 2 lever quick tach, LandPride Sb1051 snow blower, big tex 355A-12 trailer with ramp gate, 2 tie straps, \$20,500.00
 W 2018 Kubota BX2680T60V0D-1, Turf tires, 60" drive over deck, Rops and loader valve, LA344 loader with grille guard, 48" bucket 2 lever quick tach, LandPride Sb1051 snow blower, big tex 355A-12 trailer with ramp gate, 2 tie straps, \$21,750.00
 W B2011 4wd, HSD, Rops, R1 tires, loader valve, La344 loader with grille guard, 50" bucket, Big Tex 45x 16" trailer, LandPride sb1064 snow blower, 2 load straps \$20,750.00
 W 2018 Kubota B2650HSDC w/cold weather cab, R4 tires, LA534A loader 2 lever quick coupler and 54" bucket, LandPride Sb1051 Snowblower, Big tex 70CH-20 tandem axle w/ ramps, 2 load straps \$29,999.00
 W 2018 Kubota B3305UHD 4WD R1 tires, Rops, La534A loader, grille guard, 54" pin on bucket, LandPride sb1064 snow blower, Big Tex 70CH-20 tandem Axle 20" w/ ramps, 2 load straps \$24,500.00
 W 2018 Kubota L2501HST Rops, R4 tires, LA525L loader, grille guard, 60" bucket, Big Tex 70CH-20 tandem Axle 20" w/ ramps, LandPride sb1064 snow blower, 2 load straps \$25,500.00
 W 2018 Kubota L3901HST, 4WD, ROPS, R4 tires, hydro trans, LA525FL loader, grille guard, 66" quick tach bucket, Big Tex 70CH-20 tandem Axle 20" w/ ramps, LandPride Sb1574 snow blower, 2 load straps \$29,999.00

SKID STEERS, TELEHANDLERS, EXCAVATORS, BACKHOES

W Bobcat 5600 Toolcat, '15, 985 hrs, cab w/ heat & AC, deluxe road pkg, high flow, new 29 x 10.5 traction tires, HD battery, attachment control, power bobcat, radio, traction control (AHG81170) \$39,500.00
 LP Bobcat 7753, '99, 3100 hrs, open cab, loader, 68" bucket, loader engine (509611194) \$13,500.00
 W Bobcat 853, 5563 hrs, cab w/ heat & AC, deluxe road pkg, call for pricing (512821679) \$12,500.00
 LP Bobcat MT 52 Walk Behind Skid Steer 36" Bucket, 1014 hrs 2009 (A3WR12543) \$17,950.00
 LP Bobcat S-650, '13, std controls, 1150 hrs, A-51, cab/heat/ac/radio (A3NV20228) \$37,500.00
 LP Bobcat S-650, 16 std controls, 294 hrs, A-51, cab/heat/ac/radio (ALB187891) \$39,500.00
 LP Bobcat S-770, '17, A-91, ACS, Air Seat, Radio, 2 sp, Hi-Flow, 75 hrs (A18A20155) \$53,500.00
 L Bobcat S250, '08, ACS Controls, 2 spd, 7018 hrs, power bobcat, cab w/ heat, radar, just through shop, many recent repairs (530918677) \$16,900.00
 LP Bobcat S300, '04, cab, heat, 305 hrs, (525812305) \$25,000.00
 LP Bobcat S570, '10, A91, 220 hrs, hi flow, 2 sp, d/cx, panel, radar (ALM416097) \$37,500.00
 W Bobcat S590, '14, 339 hours, A91 pkg high flow, power bobcat, cab w/ AC, attachment control, self leveling, sound reduction, deluxe panel, keyless start, 2 speed), ACS controls, in excellent condition (AR9R11881) \$37,900.00
 L Bobcat S590, '14, A51, Std Controls, Cab/AC, 2 spd, blk heater, power Bobcat, radio, 3506 Hours, Tires 70% (AR9R11346) \$32,500.00
 W Bobcat S590, '17, 191 hours, A71, ACS controls, power bobcat, cab/AC, 2 spd, block heater, factory warranty until 9/5/18, like new (AR9R18202) \$38,900.00
 W Bobcat S590, '17, 92 hrs, A71, ACS controls, power bobcat, cab/AC, 2 spd, blk heater, reversing fan, like new (AR9R17913) \$38,900.00
 W Bobcat S650, '13, 375 hrs, S/C controls, A71 pkg (cab w/ heat & AC, power bobcat, keyless start,

deluxe panel, attachment control), 2 speed - machine is in like new condition! \$38,900.00
 W Bobcat S650, '16, 1299 hours, ACS controls, H51 pkg, 2 speed, power Bobcat, cab w/ heat, 33x15.5-16.5 flotation tires, (ALR18433), remaining warranty \$32,900.00
 W Bobcat S750, '14, 1608hrs, A71 pkg, std controls, cab w/ heat & AC, deluxe panel, sound reduction, 2 spd, block heater, IT4 Kubota engine (ATDZ13407) \$32,500.00
 W Bobcat S770, '13, 2993 hrs, A71 pkg, std controls, cab w/ heat & AC, deluxe panel, sound reduction, 2 spd, IT4 Kubota engine, ride control, radio, (ATF212042) \$29,500.00
 W Bobcat S770, '17, 112 hours, std controls, cab w/ heat & AC, deluxe panel, sounds reduction, 2 spd, ride control, air ride seat, radio, reversing fan, like new condition with remaining warranty! \$49,500.00
 LP Bobcat S850, '11, A71/pkg, 2000 hrs, std controls, 2 spradio, air ride control \$39,950.00
 LP Bobcat T250, 06, std controls, 2925 hrs, new reman Bobcat engine, radio, heat/ac, bobtach, newer tracks (531811163) \$28,500.00
 LP Bobcat T450, '16, cab/heat/ac, A-81 pkg., 123 hrs, bobtach, keyless (AUNP12707) \$39,950.00
 LP Case 2012 SV250, Cab, Heat, AC, 2 Speed, Manual controls, 3600 hrs (NCM444700) \$25,500.00
 LP Case 2014 SV250 Cab, Heat, AC, 2 Speed, Manual controls, 2400 hrs. \$27,500.00
 L CASE SV250, '12, 1600 Hours, AC/Heat, Manual-Heat, E-H Controls, New Tires, 2-Speed Perform Pkg. Radio (AFSV250TCM460699) \$29,000.00
 LP Case TR270, '14, 425 hrs, cab/heat/ac, radio, 2 sp, quick tach, new tracks (NEM482396) \$39,500.00
 W Cat '12 TL642 telehandler, 240hrs, very nice condition, farmer owned, \$95,000.00
 W Cat 257B, '13, track loader, 2 speed, cab, ac, 72" bucket, 923 hrs (C02578tkb701729) \$36,500.00
 LP Ditch Witch MX272 Mini Exc, '09 1343 hrs (GZ2588) \$23,500.00
 W Doosan DL200TC-3 payloader, 200 hrs, hydra load isolation system, JRB style quick coupler, 2.5yd GP bucket, 60" pallet forks, like new \$129,500.00
 L JCB 260 eco, (2196590) 44, 2000 hr, ISO control, cab w/AC, reverse fan, hyd quick tach, tires 90%, 2000# lift, 74hp, \$34,500.00
 L Kubota SVL95-2SHFC, '16, 18" tracks, Cab, Hyd QA, High Flow, Radio, 519 Hours (SN 32252) \$59,500.00
 W Kubota SSV65HC, '17, New tires, 2spd, cab, A.C, 2500 hours \$28,500.00
 W New Holland L220, '13, 2157hrs, Cab Heat/AC, new tires, std controls, 2spd, Standard Hydraulics 20gpm, Quick-Tach, Radio, \$24,500.00

COMBINES

L CH 2166, '95, 4078 E2823 Sep, RT, Y & M monitor, 30.5-32 newer firestones, hopper ext, no FT, (JCO179422) \$35,000.00
 LP CH 2188, 96, FT, RT, Mauer Ext, Y/M Monitor, 30.5x32 3900e hrs, 2700 s hrs (JCO193639) \$30,000.00
 W CH 2388, '05, 3097 Eng/2329 Sep, 4WD, Yield Monitor, (HAJ293602) - included 0% for 60 months! \$67,500.00
 W CH 2577, '07, RT, FT, bin extension, auger extension, Pro600 monitor, chopper, 1600 sep hours, Kirchner straddle duals, 2nd \$92,500.00
 LP CH 2577, '07, RT, FT, Mauer Ext, 1800 e hrs, Pro 600 monitor (HAJ301431) \$96,500.00
 L CH 5088, '09, 1334 sep forks, 1770 engine, Pro600, ACS auto crop settings, lateral header tilt system, deluxe lighting, 2500 grain tank, radio, 1.58" sieves, Firestone 30.5L-32 single tires, HD rotor cone, block heater, chopper, large wire concaves (Y9G002392) \$109,500.00
 L CH 6130 '13, 1162 Sep Hours/1499 Engine Hours, Deluxe Cab, Tank Ext, 520/85R38, 540/65R30 SN/YDG009704 \$149,000.00
 LP CH 7010 '08, d/cx, cab, pro 600,520/85R42 front duals RT 1284 hrs, 1859 s hrs (HAJ203456) \$99,500.00
 W CH 7010, '07, FT, rock trap, 2095E/152

USDA report of projected yields surprises experts

By Kent Thiesse
Farm Management Analyst;
Vice President, MinnStar Bank

The Sept. 12 USDA Crop Report surprised many experts by increasing the projected 2018 U.S. average corn yield, compared to the Aug. 1 estimate a month earlier.

The USDA yield estimates were based on U.S. crop conditions as of Sept. 1; however, the USDA projections do not agree with that analysis of U.S. crop conditions by many private crop and marketing analysts.

Many of the private analysts cite excess moisture and poor early season growing conditions in portions of Minnesota and Iowa, along with late season dry weather in southern portions of the Corn Belt, as reasons for concerns with the 2018 USDA corn yield projections.

The Sept. 12 USDA Report projects the 2018 national average corn yield at 181.3 bushels per acre, which is an increase of 2.9 bushels per acre from the August estimate. If achieved, the 2018 U.S. corn yield would be a new record, surpassing the previous record corn yields of 176.6 bushels per acre in 2017 and 174.6 bushels per acre in 2016.

Most private grain marketing analysts have been indicating an average estimated U.S. corn yield in a range of 176-179 bushels per acre.

The estimated 2018 total U.S. corn production of just over 14.8 billion bushels would be the second highest on record, trailing only the 2016 record U.S. corn production of 15.2 billion bushels. The 2017 production was near 14.6 billion bushels.

The USDA Report on Sept. 12 estimated total 2018 U.S. soybean production at a record level of just over 4.69 billion bushels, which would exceed the previous record U.S. soybean production of 4.39 billion bushels in 2017.

USDA left the estimated 2017 harvested soybean acreage at 88.9 million acres, which is slightly below the record U.S. soybean acreage of 89.5 million acres in 2017.

USDA increased the projected 2017 U.S. average soybean yield to the record level of 52.8 bushels per acre, which was an increase of 1.2 bushels per acre from the Aug. 1 estimate. This was in line with soybean yield estimates by grain trading experts.

The estimated 2018 U.S. soybean yield compares to 49.1 bushels per acre in 2017, and the previous national record yield of 52 bushels per acre in 2016.

The September USDA Report listed Minnesota's 2018 corn yield estimate at 191 bushels per acre, which is unchanged from the August estimate.

The 2018 yield would be the third highest ever, trailing the record state average corn

Many of the private analysts cite excess moisture and poor early season growing conditions in portions of Minnesota and Iowa, along with late season dry weather in southern portions of the Corn Belt, as reasons to doubt USDA corn yield projections.

yield of 194 bushels per acre in 2017 and 193 bushels per acre in 2016.

Other 2018 USDA September corn yield projections, compared to the August estimates, include Iowa at the record level of 206 bushels per acre, up four bushels; Illinois at 214 bushels per acre, up seven bushels; Indiana at 192 bushels per acre, up six bushels; Nebraska at 198 bushels per acre, up two bushels; South Dakota at 173 bushels per acre, up three bushels; and North Dakota at 142 bushels per acre, down 6 bushels.

USDA is projecting record 2018 corn yields in 11 states, including Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Minnesota's 2018 average soybean yield is estimated at 50 bushels per acre, which is up 1 bushel per acre from the August estimate. Other 2018 state yield projections, compared to Aug. 1 estimates, are

Iowa at 60 bushels per acre, up 1 bushel; Illinois at 66 bushels per acre, up 2 bushels; Indiana at 60 bushels per acre, up two bushels; Nebraska at 62 bushels per acre, up 1 bushel; South Dakota stayed steady at 49 bushels per acre; and North Dakota at 36 bushels per acre, down two bushels.

USDA is projecting record soybean yields for 2018 in 10 states, including Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Nebraska and Ohio.

Sept. 12 WASDE report

The updated USDA World Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) released on Sept. 12 included the projected increase in the 2018 U.S. corn yield. The report also showed slight increases in expected corn usage for feed and ethanol during the 2018-19 marketing year, but a slight decrease in corn exports, compared to 2017-18 levels. Corn ending stocks for 2018-19 are now projected at 1.77

billion bushels, which is down from just over 2 billion bushels in 2017-18 and a decline from nearly 2.3 billion bushels in 2016-17. The 2017-18 corn stocks-to-use ratio is now estimated at 11.7 percent, which would be down considerably from the previous two years.

USDA is projecting an average on-farm corn price for the 2018-19 marketing year, which runs from Sept. 1, 2018, through Aug. 31, 2019, in a range of \$3.00 to \$4.00 per bushel, with an average expected price of \$3.50 per bushel. The September estimated average 2018-19 corn price is \$.10 per bushel lower than the August price estimates. The 2017-18 national average corn price, which will be finalized on Sept. 30, 2018, is estimated at \$3.35 per bushel, which compares to national average prices of \$3.36 per bushel for 2016-17, \$3.61 per bushel for 2015-16, \$3.70 per bushel for 2014-15, and \$4.45 per bushel

for 2013-14.

The recent WASDE estimate is projecting 2018-19 soybean ending stocks at 845 million bushels, which would be at the highest level in decades and would be more than double the estimated 2017-18 ending stocks of 395 million bushels. Soybean crush levels for 2018-19 are projected to increase slightly, but soybean export levels are expected to decline by 70 million bushels, compared to 2017-18 levels. The projected level of soybean carryover would result in an estimated stocks-to-use ratio of nearly 20 percent, which is quite high.

USDA is now projecting an average on-farm soybean price for the 2018-19 marketing year in a range of \$7.35 to \$9.85 per bushel, with an average expected price of \$8.60 per bushel. The September soybean price estimate was lowered \$.30 per bushel from the August estimate. The 2017-18 final national average soybean price estimate is unchanged at \$9.35 per bushel, which compares to national average prices of \$9.47 per bushel for 2016-17, \$8.95 per bushel in 2015-16, \$10.10 per bushel in 2014-15, and \$13.00 per bushel for 2013-14.

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The opioid crisis has struck farm and ranch families much harder than the rest of rural America. Farm towns will overcome this epidemic through strong farmer-to-farmer support and the resilience of our communities. The nation's two largest farm organizations have teamed up to bring attention to the opioid epidemic in farm country and provide information and resources to help those struggling with opioid dependency.

Are you or is someone you know struggling with addiction?
Call one of these three emergency hotlines for immediate support.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

SAMHSA National Helpline
1-800-662-HELP (4357)

SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline
1-800-985-5990

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.

SAMHSA's National Helpline is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service (in English and Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders.

SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline provides 24/7, 365-day-a-year crisis counseling and support to people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters.



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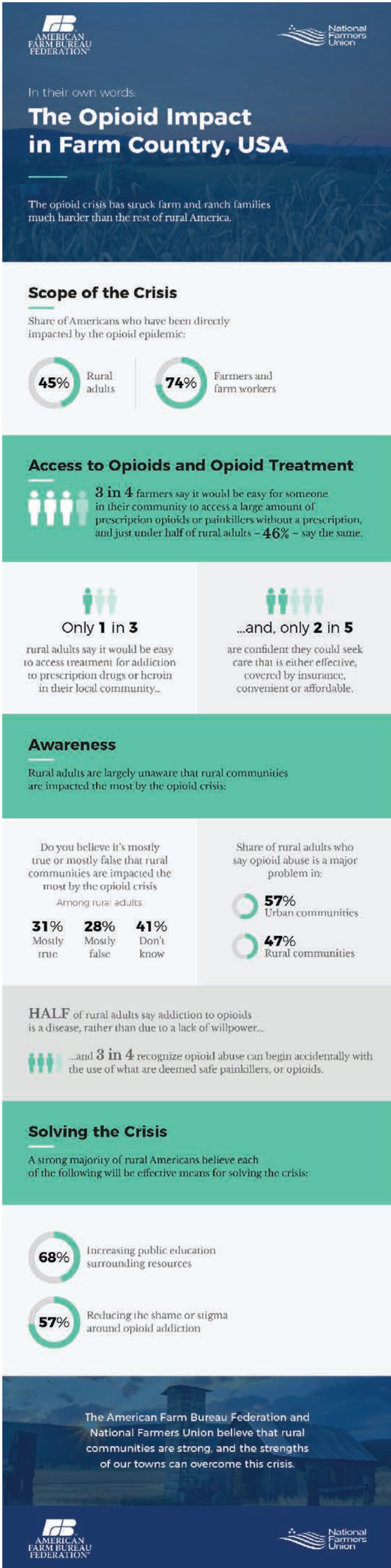
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The Opioid Impact in Farm Country, USA

The opioid crisis has struck farm and ranch families much harder than the rest of rural America.

Scope of the Crisis
Share of Americans who have been directly impacted by the opioid epidemic:

- 45% Rural adults
- 74% Farmers and farm workers

Access to Opioids and Opioid Treatment

3 in 4 farmers say it would be easy for someone in their community to access a large amount of prescription opioids or painkillers without a prescription, and just under half of rural adults – 46% – say the same.

Only 1 in 3 rural adults say it would be easy to access treatment for addiction to prescription drugs or heroin in their local community...

...and, only 2 in 5 are confident they could seek care that is either effective, covered by insurance, convenient or affordable.

Awareness
Rural adults are largely unaware that rural communities are impacted the most by the opioid crisis:

Do you believe it's mostly true or mostly false that rural communities are impacted the most by the opioid crisis? Among rural adults:

- 31% Mostly true
- 28% Mostly false
- 41% Don't know

Share of rural adults who say opioid abuse is a major problem in:

- 57% Urban communities
- 47% Rural communities

HALF of rural adults say addiction to opioids is a disease, rather than due to a lack of willpower...

...and 3 in 4 recognize opioid abuse can begin accidentally with the use of what are deemed safe painkillers, or opioids.

Solving the Crisis
A strong majority of rural Americans believe each of the following will be effective means for solving the crisis:

- 68% Increasing public education surrounding resources
- 57% Reducing the shame or stigma around opioid addiction

The American Farm Bureau Federation and National Farmers Union believe that rural communities are strong, and the strengths of our towns can overcome this crisis.



Farm groups work to address rural opioid epidemic

As farming communities face mounting challenges with the nation's opioid epidemic, the nation's two largest general farm organizations are teaming up to confront the issue.

The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) and National Farmers Union (NFU) today announced a new campaign, "Farm Town Strong," to raise awareness of the crisis' impact on farming communities.

The campaign will also provide resources and information to help farm communities and encourage farmer-to-farmer support to overcome the crisis.

The groups have launched a new website, FarmTownStrong.org, to provide easy access to information and resources that can help struggling farm families and rural communities.



The Farm Town Strong campaign comes on the heels of a recent [survey](#) commissioned by AFBF and NFU that highlighted how the opioid epidemic has hit farmers and farm workers especially hard.

While just under half of rural Americans say they, a family member or friend have been directly impacted by opioid abuse, for farmers and farm workers it's 74 percent.

A strong majority of respondents also support increasing public awareness of anti-opioid resources and reducing the stigma that surrounds addiction

to help solve the opioid crisis.

"Farm country has been hit hard by the opioid epidemic - even harder than rural America as a whole, or big cities," said AFBF President Zippy Duvall.

"It's going to take everyone working together to combat this crisis to make a difference. That's why Farm Bureau and Farmers Union are teaming up to show unity on this issue and encourage farm families to help their neighbors. If you or a family member has been affected by opioid addiction, it's important to talk about it so that others will know they are



not fighting this alone."

"Opioid addiction—along with all of its consequences—is a silent, but very real, crisis for our farming communities," said NFU President Roger Johnson.

"The lack of services, treatment and support exacerbates the issue in rural areas, and the negative stigma associated with addiction makes it hard for farmers to discuss the problem. Too often, those struggling with addiction and their family members don't seek the support they need. Through the Farm Town Strong campaign, we're tackling this crisis

head-on by encouraging more dialogue, more information sharing, and more farmer-to-farmer engagement."

The two organizations have been hosting public events and launched a social media campaign, #FarmTownStrong, to highlight the crisis and share resources.

In Luverne, that event just happened on Sept. 17 in the Bluestem where about 30 community members gathered to share information and learn about what they can do to help farm families struggling with opioid dependency.

See the Sept. 20 Rock County Star Herald (www.starherald.com) for coverage of that meeting.

More information on the campaign can be found at FarmTownStrong.org.

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USDA launches trade mitigation programs

**By Fraser Norton,
Rock County FSA**

USDA launched the trade mitigation package aimed at assisting farmers suffering from damage due to unjustified trade retaliation by foreign nations. Producers of certain commodities can now sign up for the Market Facilitation Program (MFP).

USDA provided details in August of the programs to be employed.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will administer MFP to provide payments to corn, cotton, dairy, hog, sorghum, soybean, and wheat producers.

An announcement about

further payments will be made in the coming months, if warranted.

The sign-up period for MFP is now open and runs through Jan. 15, 2019, with information and instructions provided at www.farmers.gov/mfp.

MFP provides payments to producers who have been significantly impacted by actions of foreign governments resulting in the loss of traditional exports.

Eligible producers should apply after harvest is complete, as payments will only be issued once production is reported.

A payment will be issued

Market Facilitation Program

The is a list of commodities, the estimated initial payment, and the payment rate in \$1,000s:

- Cotton; \$0.06/lb.; \$276,900.
- Corn; \$0.01/bu.; \$96,000.
- Dairy (milk); \$0.12/cwt.; \$127,400.
- Pork (hogs); \$8.00/head; \$290,300.
- Soybeans; \$1.65/bu.; \$3,629,700.
- Sorghum; \$0.86/bu.; \$156,800.
- Wheat; \$0.14/bu.; \$119,200.

on 50 percent of the producer's total production, multiplied by the MFP rate for a specific commodity.

A second payment period, if warranted, will be determined

by the USDA.

Total of all commodities listed above is \$4,696,300. Initial payment rate is based on 50 percent of production.

MFP payments are limited

to a combined \$125,000 for corn, cotton, sorghum, soybeans, and wheat capped per person or legal entity. MFP payments are also limited to a combined \$125,000 for dairy and hog producers.

Applicants must also have an average adjusted gross income for tax years 2014, 2015, and 2016 of less than \$900,000. Applicants must also comply with the provisions of the Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation regulations.

For further information, please contact the Rock County FSA Office at 507-283-2369, or the Pipestone County FSA Office at 507-825-5478.

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Did you know...

- Eye injuries are the leading cause of blindness among farmers.
- Farmers' eyes are the second most frequently injured body part.
- Over time, UV ray exposure can lead to cataract development and eyelid skin cancers.
- Eye injuries are more likely to occur when repairing farm machinery than when operating it.
- The most common causes of eye injuries are:
 - Flying objects
 - Chemicals
 - Dust particles
 - Sun exposure
- Protective eyewear can prevent eye injuries in over 90% of cases.



Inspect farm shops for safety

Service and maintenance tasks can often lead to serious injury.

The farm shop and the field are the primary locations where repair operations are completed.

Make sure your farm shop is part of a farm safety solution, not a problem.

- Organize your workshop so that everything has a designated place. Make sure items are secure so they will not fall on anyone.

- Clean walkways to reduce trips and falls.

- When working on agricultural equipment, make sure that the equipment is turned off, all rotating parts have stopped moving, and safety locks are put in place.

- Keep all guards and shields in place on power equipment.

- Use hand tools only for their intended purpose.

- Equip your shop with Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters to help prevent electrical shock.

- Make sure your shop is well lit.

If the shop is heated, ensure it is properly vented and that flammable liquids are kept out of the shop area.

- Wear personal protective equipment (PPE)

when performing repair jobs.

Standard PPE for a farm shop should include leather gloves, chemical-resistant gloves, safety glasses, face shields, earplugs or muffs, steel-toed boots, respirators, hard hats, protective aprons and welding shields.

Perform an inspection

- Are electrical cords undamaged?
- Is an appropriate fire extinguisher present and operable?

- Is a fully supplied first aid kit available?

- Are guards and shields in place?

- Are walkways clear of debris?

- Are chemicals stored in a locked cabinet?

Information supplied by the National Safety Council's Agricultural Division, the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS) - www.necasag.org or 888-844-6322.



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MnDOT asks motorists, farm equipment operators to safely share the road during harvest season

Motorists traveling on Minnesota highways this fall need to be aware of large farm equipment transporting crops to markets, grain elevators and processing plants, according to the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

“Harvest season is getting in full swing across the state and farmers and their equipment are out on the highways,” said Ray Starr, acting state traffic engineer.

“Motorists need to be prepared to encounter slow-moving farm vehicles, especially on rural, two-lane roads.”

Farm equipment is large and heavy, making it hard for



operators to accelerate, slow down and stop.

The equipment also makes

wide turns and sometimes crosses over the center line.

In addition, farm vehicles can create large blind spots, making it difficult for operators to see approaching vehicles.

All of these factors can cause serious crashes.

From 2015 to 2017, there were six fatalities and 386 crashes involving at least one farm vehicle, according to the Department of Public Safety’s crash data.

Of the six fatalities, three were farm vehicle riders. Of the 166 injuries, 56 were farm vehicle riders.

“Most of all farm equipment crashes and fatalities are distraction-related,” Starr said. “Other factors are speed-related and alcohol-related.”

Motorists should:

- Pay attention at all times when driving.
- Watch for debris dropped by trucks hauling sugar beets and other crops. It is safer to brake or slowly drive through debris than to veer into oncoming cars or off the road.
- When approaching farm equipment, slow down and use caution.

Put additional space between your vehicle and the farm equipment ahead.

Don’t assume the equipment operator can see you.

- Be patient and wait for a safe place to pass.
- Wear seatbelts.
- Drive with headlights on at all times.

Farm equipment operators:

- Use lights and flashers to make equipment more visible.
- Use slow-moving vehicle emblems on equipment traveling less than 30 mph.
- Drive slow-moving vehicles in the right-hand lane as close to the edge of the roadway as possible.
- Consider using an escort vehicle when moving equipment, especially at night and if the equipment is large enough that it may extend across the center line.
- Avoid encouraging or signaling motorists to pass. Pull over when safe, and let traffic pass.
- Pick up any debris left on the highway by the equipment or contact MnDOT to remove it.
- Plan their routes so wide equipment will not hit or damage signs, guardrails, light poles and other roadway structures.

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Struggling Rock County ag economy/continued from page 6

Corn and soybean production remains a key player in Rock County's economic health:

- crop production supports dozens of other ag businesses, such as elevators, implement dealers and herbicide and pesticide retailers — and their spin-off industries.
- crop production in turn supports other business that support agriculture business, such as e banks, insurance agents, restaurants and other local retailers.
- crop production supports young families in providing a solid environment to raise children.
- crop production provides a wide array of employment opportunities at the ag businesses it supports.

When our farmers hurt, we all hurt

"The success of these family farms provides opportunities for young people to come back to Rock County and take over an operation while starting their own family to support Rock County for years to come," Peters said, adding that farming creates employment opportunities for all workers.

"Farms are employing young people that are taking over in operations, temporary workers are hired during the spring and fall busy seasons, and also local ag businesses are employing specialists to help local farmers utilize precision technologies."

All these opportunities are at stake when local ag economies suffer, Peters said, and he's hoping farmers are taking advantage of risk management tools and a helping hand wherever they can.

This includes reaching out to each other for support and to mental health resources as needed.

"The high suicide rate among farmers is a real crisis," Peters said. "Farmers tend not to be the most open communicators, and financial struggles can hurt their pride and make them feel hopeless."

Now more than ever he said farm families and community members need to look out for each other.

"In a rural community, everyone needs to be aware and listen to their friends and family members and be willing to take action if they feel someone is thinking of hurting themselves," he said.

"Open dialog and knowing help is available can prevent a real tragedy."

Help is only a phone call or click away

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture provides a free, confidential, 24/7 call center staffed by trained staff and volunteers. The Minnesota Farm and Rural Helpline

is 833-600-2670 x 1

"If you or someone you know is struggling with stress, anxiety, depression, or suicidal thoughts — call," the MDA states on its website. "Sometimes it's easier to talk to somebody you don't know."

•The University of Minnesota offers free online webinar workshops to help families and individuals learn to manage stress. Go to <https://extension.umn.edu/stress-and-change/dealing-stress-web-based-educational-series>

While tailored to those in agriculture, the information contained in these workshops are applicable to anyone who feels stress on a regular basis.

•Other resources are the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-8255 and

•The Crisis Text Line, TXT4Life. (Text 741741 from anywhere text with a trained crisis counselor)

Farm impact on Rock County by the numbers:

There are roughly **675 farms** in Rock County that cover 83 percent of Rock County's land.

Rock County producers planted 143,000 acres of corn and 112,500 acres of soybeans in 2017, which is similar to 2018.

These fields produced 29,472,300 bushels of corn (206.1 average bu/acre) and 6,525,000 bushels of soybeans (58 average bu/acre).

Based on average marketing prices of \$3.05 per bushel for corn and \$9.15 per bushel for beans, the sale of corn and soybeans in Rock County generated \$150 million in revenue last year.

This grain is used to feed cattle, pigs and poultry and it used in the production of ethanol and soybean oil.

To illustrate expense and revenue per acre, a football field is 1.3 acres.

On that 1.3 acres it costs \$910 to

plant corn or \$585 to plant soybeans.

To grow a crop on this piece of ground, direct costs include seed, herbicide, fertilizer, fuel, equipment, insurance, parts and more, plus other expenses like land payments (or rent) and labor.

Projected gross revenue from that 1.3-acre piece of ground using 2017 yields and 2018 prices would be \$612 for corn and \$424 for soybeans. (This is a drop from \$900 for corn and \$650 for soybeans only two years ago).

This income is used to pay for farming expenses (at local ag businesses) and to provide for families (who spend money in the community).

The concern today is that low commodity prices are **lowering or eliminating profits**, and producers are seeing **increasing costs** from government regulations and health insurance premiums.

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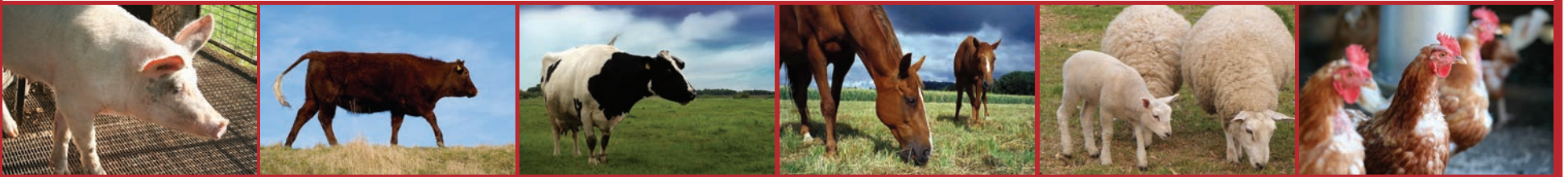
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