

# On the HOME FRONT



Spring 2025 | Volume 11

A #FarmerStrong Publication



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**NEW CUSTOMER** 

# **SPOTLIGHT: Farm Safety**

By Terra Wierson, Communications Specialist

"We're only here because of our customers," is a common phrase at Ag Partners. The vitality of our customers is our business. For Ag Partners employees, we have a team of people which help to implement safety in the workplace, but when you're on the farm, it's more or less up to you. Be the hero on your farm by adding these safety tips to your existing good habits. Share them with your farm hands, young helpers, and neighbors. You never know who might benefit.

MACHINERY: Properly train in new operators and practice routine machine maintenance. If machinery is stuck, get someone to help and avoid using chains to pull as they can break unexpectedly.

FALL PREVENTION / GRAIN BIN SAFETY: Use guardrails and/or harnesses when possible; climb ladders on level ground. Take the extra time to use appropriate safety equipment when inspecting grain bins. Never enter grain bins when equipment is running. Always use a spotter when entering any confined space and communicate so that someone knows where you are at all times.

CHEMICALS: Handle all chemicals according to label instructions. Use personal protective equipment (PPE) when instructed (gloves, eyeware, long clothes, etc). Be sure to contact your local waste and recycling center with questions about disposal of extra product or used containers.

LIVESTOCK: Handle livestock animals with care as they are unpredictable. Store detergents and medications in original containers.

PERSONAL HEALTH: Stay hydrated, use sun block and stay aware of severe weather and extreme temperature exposure. Prevent hearing loss from loud environments by wearing ear protection.

Prioritize good safety practices and lead by example to foster a safe farming environment. Establish and communicate safety protocols, including what to do in case of an emergency. Have a successful and safe spring, all!

### Resources

MN Duty Officer: 651-201-2222

WI Duty Officer: 800-943-0003

Poison Control: 800-222-1222

Not sure? Call 911 or your local non-emergency number depending on the situation.

ATV, snowmobile and other safety courses:

-- MN DNR: 651-296-6157 dnr.state.mn.us/education-safety/ index.html

-- WI DNR: 888-936-7463 dnr.wisconsin.gov/Education/ OutdoorSkills/safetyEducation

### SAVE THE DATE:

### **Ag Chemical Safety**

"Lunch and Learn" **Outdoor Event** 

Wednesday, September 3

> 10 am - 2 pm ≤

#### **Morristown Ag Partners**

6676 250th St W. Morristown, MN 55052

FREE - RSVP to 507-412-0155 (text or call)

Co-hosted with Community Co-op, Faribault Fire, Rice Co. Waste/Recycling, and the U of M Extension

A special thank you to our safety team for inspiring this article.



# MAKING PREPARATIONS FOR SPRING APPLICATION

By Matt Thoreson, Sr. Agronomy Operations Manager

During the off-season the custom application staff at Ag Partners spends a lot of time training to do their jobs well. This training includes time spent with manufacturers learning how to operate and maintain the machines. It includes defining a high-quality application, learning about the mistakes that have previously been made, the factors that create application errors, and why striving for high-quality applications is so important. And it includes time spent with senior experienced applicators and Ag Partners Agronomy management to learn about the products we provide, the purposes of those products, and tying it all together to give them the best opportunity to provide consistent quality applications for our customers.

#### **EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS** TRAINING -

At different times throughout the year, our applicators work closely with manufacturers' technicians to inspect, maintain,

and repair the application equipment. Information is presented to our staff at dealership clinics and in our own shops during our annual preventative maintenance inspections (PMI's). Each applicator works closely with the techs during the PMI to learn about functions and wear tolerances of the machine as well as maintenance tips and intervals to keep the machine performing reliably and accurately. They review features of the machine and computers frequently to optimize performance. This shop time also gives the more experienced applicators a chance to share their

knowledge of the machines with those who have less experience.

#### **IN-HOUSE TRAINING -**

In addition to training with technicians, there has been an increased effort over the last few years to provide our application staff a more customized training in house. A couple of times per year applicators of all experience levels are brought together as a group to review products, product expectations, quality expectations, safety and internal procedures in place to achieve these standards.

This training also addresses













common mistakes that can result in application claims. The composite lists of claims are shared with the whole group as well to identify trends that may be specific to location, products, operation type, and/or experience level.

Another increased effort in recent years has been to provide new and less experienced applicators specific, focused training about being a custom applicator. During this time the groundwork for our new and less experienced

applicators is laid out to better understand our customers' expectations. This "basic training," developed and presented by senior experienced applicators and agronomy management, includes the core principles of custom application. The material presented is intended to provide a more consistent background knowledge base, speed up skill development, and raise awareness of handling situations they are likely to encounter in a controlled

setting before experiencing the real-world event. While "quality over quantity" is always stressed, procedures for optimizing productivity are also presented.





By Ryan Ness, Agronomy Department Manager

#### Layering Residual Herbicides: A Smarter Strategy for Corn and Soybeans

With herbicide-resistant weeds like waterhemp, Palmer amaranth, and giant ragweed becoming more aggressive every season, effective weed control demands more than a one-pass approach. Layering residual herbicides - combining pre- and postemergence herbicides with long-lasting soil activity is one of the best strategies to protect yield, preserve herbicide effectiveness, and keep fields clean through canopy closure.

#### WHY LAYERING MATTERS

Corn and soybeans are most sensitive to weed competition during the first 4-6 weeks after emergence. Missing that window can result in yield loss that can't be recovered. Layering residuals ensures a clean start and sustained control, reducing the weed seed bank and improving harvestability. Plus, using multiple modes of action in sequence helps delay resistance development.

Continued

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#### TOP RESIDUAL HERBICIDES TO CONSIDER

Here are five effective herbicides that fit well into a layered program:

#### • Tendovo®

Tendovo is a powerful **pre-emergence soybean herbicide** offering three modes of action (Groups 14, 15, and 27) for excellent residual control of grasses and broadleaves, including waterhemp. It provides a strong foundation and helps reduce pressure on post-emergence products.

#### Dual Magnum® (S-metolachlor)

Widely used in both corn and soybeans, Dual Magnum provides reliable residual control of annual grasses and small-seeded broadleaves. It can be applied pre- or early post-emergence and pairs well with burndown herbicides or tank mixes for broader-spectrum control.

#### SureStart® II

SureStart II includes Surpass (Group 15), Stinger (Group 4), and Python (Group 2), making it a flexible and broad-spectrum **pre-emergence option** in corn. It controls over 60 weed species and helps delay resistance when used ahead of a layered post-emergence program.

#### • Resicore®

Resicore combines Surpass, Stinger, and Callisto (Group 27) for excellent **post-emergence residual control** in corn. It targets tough weeds like giant ragweed, foxtails, and pigweeds and fits well as a follow-up to SureStart or other pre-emergence herbicides.

#### • Acuron® GT

Acuron GT is a **post-emergence herbicide for glyphosate-tolerant corn**, combining four active ingredients, including, glyphosate, bicyclopyrone, Callisto, and Dual Magnum. It delivers both post emergence activity and long-lasting residual control of over 70 tough grasses and broadleaf weeds, including waterhemp and Palmer amaranth. It's ideal for mid-season layering, especially where weed pressure is high, or emergence is staggered.

#### **EXAMPLE LAYERED PROGRAMS**

#### Corn:

- **Pre-emergence:** Apply **SureStart II** at planting.
- Post-emergence: Follow with Acuron GT or **Resicore** + glyphosate between V3–V5.

#### Soybeans:

- Pre-emergence: Start with Tendovo for a clean foundation.
- **Post-emergence:** Use a trait-compatible postemergence product (e.g., dicamba, 2,4-D, or Liberty) along with an application of Dual Magnum to clean up escapes and reinforce season-long control.

#### **FINAL THOUGHTS**

Layering residual herbicides like Tendovo, Dual Magnum, SureStart II, Resicore, and Acuron GT is one of the most effective ways to manage resistant weeds and protect yield in corn and soybeans. It's a proactive strategy that pays off in cleaner fields, fewer escapes, and a stronger return on investment.

Don't wait for weed pressure to take control—start clean and stay clean!









## How to Beat the Heat:

# Tips for Managing **Heat Stress**

By Lindsey Borst, DVM, Calf & Heifer Specialist

Summer and hot weather are around the corner. While we can't control weather and the fact that heat stress negatively impacts cows and calves, there are steps we can take to manage comfort, performance, and ultimately the economical impact during hot weather.

#### A HOT OVEN = A HOT BABY

Let's start our heat stress conversation with a group of animals that often gets forgotten about when it comes to heat mitigation... dry cows! While dry cows do start to experience heat stress at a higher temperature and humidity index (THI) than lactating cows (THI of 75-77 vs. THI of 68-72), that doesn't mean they should be ignored. Research shows cows that are cooled during their dry period will produce 8-10 pounds more milk in their next lactation compared to non-cooled cows. But the benefits don't stop there. Calves born from cows that were cooled during the dry period had improved health, growth rates and higher milk production when they entered the milking herd.

#### **CALF & COW PERFORMANCE IMPACTS**

Calves become heat stressed when the ambient temperature goes above 77°F. Decreased starter intakes and average daily gains are often a consequence of warm temperatures. Any slowdown in a young calf's growth rate will cause her to produce less milk as an adult cow. Heat stress can also negatively impact the immune system. As cows and calves use more energy to keep cool, the less energy they have to maintain their immune system. Depending on the severity, heat stress will lead to 2.5-10 pounds per head per day of milk production loss. Health and reproduction will also be affected by heat stress.

#### SIGNS OF HEAT STRESS:

- Increased respiration rate (normal is ~30-60 bpm in calves and ~10-30 bpm in cows)
- Open mouthed breathing
- Decreased feed intakes
- Increased standing time, more perching ob-
- Bunching

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT:**

**Airflow:** Increasing air movement improves comfort by decreasing air temperature and flies. Move more air by opening vents, sidewalls, and doors in calf hutches or barns. Use fans whenever and wherever possible. In freestall barns, depending on the size of fans, fans should be spaced 30-40 feet apart. Fans should be set to turn on when temperatures are above 68 degrees, if not lower during times of severe heat stress so that cows can properly cool down overnight. Place cinder blocks under the back end of calf hutches so air moves through the hutch. If at all possible, do not use dome type hutches in summer. Domes are designed to keep calves warm in the winter, but they are very poorly ventilated for summer.

**Water Soakers:** These systems should be sized to provide ~1/3 gallon of water per cow per soaker cycle. Sprinklers should wet the back and then stop



to allow the water to evaporate prior to another cycle. Soaking frequency should be increased as the temperature increases.

**Provide shade:** Keeping hutches under trees or placing a shade cloth over hutches can significantly decrease the temperature inside the hutch and make for a more comfortable working environment for employees as well.

#### **NUTRITIONAL MANAGEMENT:**

**Water, Water.** This needs to be a top priority in mitigating heat stress. Heat stressed cows' water intake can increase by 20-200% depending on severity. Ideally cows have direct access to water as they enter and exit the milking parlor. Heat stressed calves on milk will still drink up to 6 gallons of water a day. Offer fresh and warm (yes warm... they will drink more of it!) water at least twice a day.

**Keep Feed Fresh:** Just like us, cows and calves don't eat as much when they are hot, so we need to do everything we can to keep them eating. Feed cows during the coolest parts of the day... either early morning or late at night. Feeding at night can help prevent feed from heating. Adding an acid preservative also can help keep feed from heating. Heat, humidity, flies, rain, and drinking water all make it difficult to keep starter



fresh and tasting good. Change starter daily so it stays fresh enough to keep calves eating.

Extra Hydration for Calves: Offering free choice, diluted down electrolytes can help encourage water intake in calves and help better maintain adequate hydration than regular water... think of it the same way as us drinking Gatorade to rehydrate.

#### NO STRESSORS WHILE IT'S HOT:

Avoid any stressors, such as weaning, grouping, vaccinating, castrating, or dehorning, during the hottest hours of the day. These activities should be done early in the morning while it's cool. Cattle will not respond properly to vaccines when under heat stress and the most serious vaccine reactions are usually seen during warm temperatures.



# Save the date for Customer Appreciation Days:

WEDNESDAY August 13

**Ag Partners** 27594 Cty Rd 25 **ELGIN**, MN 55932

THURSDAY August 14

**Ag Partners** 411 Business Way ELLSWORTH, WI 54011

TUESDAY August 19

**Ag Partners** 1273 W Derrynane St LE CENTER, MN 56057

THURSDAY August 21

**Gopher Hills Golf Course** 26155 Nicolai Ave **CANNON FALLS, MN 55009** 

Ag Partners Coop 101 Broadway PO Box 218 Goodhue, MN 55027













# The Garden Center is Open and flourishing!

Our garden center at 820 E Main Street in Belle Plaine - the Town & Country ACE Hardware - is stocked and ready for the season! Each spring, it's open 8-10 weeks from the end of April to the beginning of July.

Store Manager Susan George says she is asked early and asked often: "when is the garden center opening for the season?" The following question is always: "are Maureen and Bev coming back?" Maureen is on her 13th season running the garden center. She previously worked for Brewery Creek in Belle Plaine for 23 years. That gives her 36 years of aquiring garden center experience! Bev is another seasonal staple. She worked in the hardware store for numerous years before retiring.

There are very few people that shop the garden center that Maureen and Bev don't know. Both ladies have a closeness with Belle Plaine. Customers appreciate the knowledge and honesty of our ladies when seeking advice on plants, and when to and where to plant them.

We're anticipating another busy Mother's Day weekend. Our annual Mother's Day sale will start Friday May 9th and run through Sunday May 11th. Hanging baskets will be on sale for \$27.99 and all Evergreen Garden Décor will be on sale for 30% off.

95% of our plants are sourced locally in southern Minnesota. Holasek is our biggest nursery, and others include Bailey's, Sailer's Greenhouse, Hybels, and Donahues.

We pride ourselves in supporting local and providing our customers with fresh and healthy plants all at a reasonable price.

A big shout out to our fuel drivers and agronomists who helped fix and re-wrap greenhouses after a wind storm caused damage to all three of them. Although preordering flowers for the season is done nearly a year in advance, their help was essential to starting this season on time.

# SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE IN AG. **YISIT A COUNTY** FAIR THIS SUMMER!

#### **MINNESOTA**

Waseca July 9-13 Winona July 9-13

Dodge July 16-20

Rice July 16-20

Fillmore July 21-26

Olmsted July 21-27

Scott July 23-27

Blue Earth July 24-27

Freeborn Jul 29-Aug 3

Wabasha Jul 30-Aug 2 Sibley Jul 30-Aug 3

Washington Jul 30-Aug 3

Dakota August 4-10

Goodhue August 5-9

Mower August 5-10

Nicollet August 6-10

Brown August 6-10 Steele August 12-17

Houston August 13-17

Le Sueur August 14-17

#### **WISCONSIN**

St. Croix July 16-20

Trempealeau July 16-20

La Crosse July 16-20

Dunn July 23-27

Buffalo/Pepin Jul 31-Aug 3

Pierce August 7-10

# There are Differences in **Premium Diesel Fuel**

By Dan Schmidt, Energy Sales

Currently there are 5 properties or ingredients that the National Conference of Weights and Measures has determined could be included in the legal definition of any marketed premium diesel. The 5 ingredients, or minimum standards are: Energy Content, Cetane Number, Low Temperature Operability, Thermal Stability, and Fuel Injector Cleanliness. This is disappointing and misleading though.

Diesels marketed in the U.S. that are sold with the terms: premium, super, supreme, plus, or premier must conform to only 2 of the above stated ingredients or minimum standards.

The Premium fuel Ag Partners recommends is Cenex "Ruby Fieldmaster" or highway diesel, "Cenex Roadmaster." The optional Cenex Additive Package includes the list on the right.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has requirements of emission levels for diesel engines. We all know engine pollution exists and engine manufacturers continue new designs for diesel engines such as, the common rail fuel system. The problem with this newer technology is that the engines are operating under increased temperatures and pressures that can literally cook straight #2 diesel fuel. Cooked fuel is actually burned black and much of this fuel is recirculated

back to the fuel tank, for later burning. The fuel industry is getting reports of power loss, reduced fuel efficiency, filter plugging, injector problems, etc.

Introducing another pro-active additive to keep you in the field or on the road: Injection Stabilizer which will help address fuel oxidation problems as well as preventing injector fouling in engines with tight tolerances.

Our Premium Diesel will save you money, time, and it will give you peace of mind. In todays competitive fuel market our competition will often push straight #2 heating oil in order to grab more of the market share. Most suppliers also offer a "premium," but what is that premium? What are you getting? How was the additive incorporated into the fuel? Our

premium diesel is injected into the fuel as it's loaded at the terminal - not splashed in the tank out of a dusty jug in the back of the truck. Ag Partners believes in quality premium diesel, even if it costs a little more.

Annual tank maintenance is always a good practice. A new fuel filter, and sampling the bottom of your tank is recommended. We can help you with this. While sampling, we are looking for water, microbial growth, and sludge.

Wonder what kind of fuel is in your tank? Sampling will also show if there are any additives in your fuel. Give us a call. We will sample and have the results sent back to you.

When comparing retailers, I like to remind shareholders that, historically, dividends are paid to you each December and your business is *always* greatly appreciated.

Lets be careful out there, Dan Schmidt, Energy Sales

**DETERGENT:** Helps keep fuel injectors clean for a proper spray pattern, gives you a 5% increase in power and fuel efficiency.

**CETANE IMPROVER:** More combustible, easier engine start, less smoke, typical cetane index of 48.

**LUBRICITY IMPROVER:** This additive protects the fuel pump & injectors. It improves the lubricity of low sulfur diesel. Provides 10-15% more lubricity

STABILIZER: Extends fuel life by 2 for longer storage, this anti-sludge component reduces filter plugging.

**CORROSION INHIBITOR:** Prevents rust and Corrosion on metal parts, reduces engine wear, reduces down time.

**DEMULSIFIER:** Helps to force water to the bottom of the tank to allow draining, reduces filter plugging.









# Trade Wars and the Grain Markets

By Rick Anderson, Risk Manager

No matter what market you are following, trade wars have captured the world's attention and the impact on our grain markets is front and center. We may not have much ability to influence world politics but how we respond can have a big impact on our farming operations.

As tariffs are imposed on foreign producers of products the U.S. imports, it seems a favorite target for retaliation is to impose tariffs on U.S. farm goods. This creates pain and headlines. In years where the U.S. has abundant stocks, exports are key to supporting prices and using up that abundant supply.

Price volatility increases as headlines can drive prices lower or higher daily. We've seen erratic price moves and reversals from night to day trades at times.

Since China is by far the world's largest importer of soybeans and much of the trade tension seems to be focused on them, soybean prices are especially vulnerable. This comes at a time when Brazilian production and supply to China keeps growing while China is also trying to reduce their appetite for soybeans.

As China relies more on other soybean sources and less on the U.S., an opportunity emerges to move U.S. soybeans into other markets. However, those moves may not always be the most efficient since tariffs can distort the natural flow of grain.

Shifting tariffs also creates room for instability in markets and over the long term, and risks making the US thought to be less of a reliable trading partner. Fortunately, at this time U.S. corn and soybeans are very competitive in world markets and we have been enjoying better than expected shipments of the 2024 crop which has been a welcome surprise to this year's grain balance sheets.

So what can you do about trade wars? Not much. It's probably best thought of something to deal with like the weather which you also have no control over. It's not worth losing sleep over, but just another hurdle to clear.

Continue to do what you do best - produce the best crop you can as efficiently as you can. Use the tools that are available to help you manage risk while taking advantage of the volatility the markets offer. That's where we're here to help you in any way we can. Give us a call and we can work together to help find the profits in 2025.

# CONGRATULATIONS, **Scholarship** Recipients

Congratulations to our 2025 Scholarship Program Recipients! We received a wonderfuly large number of applications this year, and these few were selected by our independent selection committee. Criteria is based on coop membership, community involvement, work ethic, demonstration of leadership, and more. Best of luck to our scholarship recipients, and to all 2025 graduates this spring and beyond.

Braydon Anderson Thomas Brand Mason Byrnes Hailey Chambers McKenna Edgar

Grant Horihan Emmerson Horstmann Jaclyn Jenson Caden Johnson Addison Johnson

Kaedyn Judd Keegan Kuball Julia Kubes Miranda Palmby Jobb Saemrow

Drew Scheps Chloe Sioquist Grace Soltau Joshua Sparby Lydia Sparby

Cadence Tews Hailey Web

Share your pics for the 2026 Ag Partners calendar,

and don't wait too long!

**DEADLINE: AUGUST 31** 

welcome; and snowy, wintery photos are always in short supply. Photos received after

August 31 will be kept for consideration the following year.

YOU ARE THE BEST CUSTOMERS!



Upload your digital photos: agpartners.net/calendar-photo-submission/



THERE ARE STILL A FEW OF CHICK DAYS OPPORTUNITIES LEFT ON THE CALENDAR FOR THE YFAR...



#### Pine Island Farm Store

417 N Main Street, Pine Island, MN 55963 507-356-8313

#### FRIDAY, MAY 9TH

#### Meat Birds:

Straight Run Cornish Cross

#### Female Layers:

Americana Barred Rock **Black Jersey Giant Buff Orpington** Cream Leabar Rhode Island Red Easter Egger

#### Goodhue - Main

101 N Broadway, Goodhue, MN 55027 651-923-4496

#### FRIDAY, MAY 16<sup>™</sup>

#### **Female Layers:**

Americana Barred Plymouth Rock Blue Laced Red Wyandotte Lavender Wyandotte Sapphire Gem Red Star

#### Town & Country ACE Hardware

Last Call for Chicks!

820 E Main Street, Belle Plaine, MN 56011 952-873-3244

#### THURSDAY, MAY 22ND

#### **Female Layers:**

Americana White Leghorn **Buff Orpington** Barred Plymouth Rock Salmon Faverolles Cinnamon Queen

Don't forget starter feed & supplies!

LAMPS, FEED, BEDDING, WATERERS, FEEDERS

Ag Partners Coop 101 Broadway PO Box 218 Goodhue, MN 55027













Find our Ag Partners app on Google Play or the Apple App Store. You can also navigate to connect.agpartners.net on your computer. Download and log in-give us a call if you need assistance. 651-923-4496.

- Sign contracts
- Check futures and cash bids
- Request quotes
- Look up grain elevator hours
- Pay bills
- Share files with your Ag Partners rep

# Phubarb Torte

About 24 bars Preheat oven to 350°

#### **Crust:**

- 1/2 lb. Butter
- 2 C. Flour
- 2 T. Sugar

*Mix and put in the bottom* of a 9x13 pan. Bake for 15 minutes.

• 5 C. Rhubarb, cut fine

Pour boiling water over the top and let sit a few minutes, then drain. Layer over baked crust.

#### **Custard:**

- 6 Egg yolks (save whites)
- 2 C. Sugar
- 4 T. flour
- 1 C. Cream

Beat yolks, add cream, flour, and sugar and mix to a nice custard. Layer over the rhubarb. Bake for 35 minutes.

#### **Meringue:**

- · 6 Egg whites
- 2 T. Sugar per egg
- 1/2 t. Salt
- 1/2 t. Vanilla

Beat until stiff peaks form. Pour meringue over top of torte and brown in the oven 10 to 15 minutes. Cool, Cut & Enjoy!



Recipe from Merry Kay Bandelin, Le Center: "This torte and rhubarb cake are always my favorites when the rhubarb comes up in the spring."



To submit your recipe for the next issue of Home Front, e-mail to editor: Terra.Wierson@agpartners.net. Enjoy!

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