



Making the Most of Their Acres

Leffler Farms Inc. Focuses on Efficiency

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Delegates Set to Vote on Three Board Seats

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Fall 2018

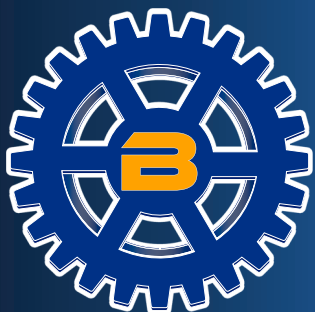
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Choices

C Choices. Don't you love them? Whether it's an ice cream flavor, a pair of jeans or the vehicle we drive, most of us like to have options. The same thing applies to our business at MFA Oil. In my last article, I wrote of the many things we've done to make it easier to do business with us. Things like online bill pay options and the ability to order online in the near future. We received several responses such as, "I'll never do business that way," and "MFA Oil has lost the personal touch with the customer by making us go that route."

As a point of clarification, these services are completely optional. We aren't forcing anyone to do anything. We are simply trying to offer the conveniences and service options many of our customers have requested. MFA Oil is fortunate to have been in business since 1929, and that means we've served some customers for many decades. We do business with customers in their 80s all the way down to the 15-year-old farm kid who just got his driving permit. Do you think the expectations of these customers might vary from one another? Of course they do. But the beauty of the situation is that we can offer a variety of ways to do business with our cooperative while still satisfying our customers' needs.

For example, we've recently began installing monitors on some of our customers' fuel tanks to track their volume. While this technology is relatively new to MFA Oil, it's been around in the industry for a while. In fact, I personally have worked with fuel monitoring technology for more than 25 years. And, guess what? It works. That's why we have established programs to incentivize our customers for allowing us to monitor the diesel volume in their tanks and to make sure the tank is of sufficient size, based on demand. It's a win-win situation but, ultimately, you as the consumer will choose whether you want to participate or not. It's really that simple.

We can afford to offer you a more competitive price in exchange for you helping to make us more efficient in our fuel and propane deliveries. Think of it like

calling an airline for a plane ticket. If you want to fly somewhere tomorrow and you book your flight today, you'll pay a much higher price than if you called a month prior to your flight. Similarly, by knowing what is in your tank, we can avoid costly trips when you may not need fuel yet. Making fewer trips with deliveries of larger volume puts less wear and tear on our trucks and reduces the risk of accidents for our drivers. But at the end of the day, you, the consumer, will choose how you want to do business with us as we are here to serve your needs.

Similarly, the MFA Oil management team makes choices all the time based on the feedback we receive from our customers, delegates, board members and field employees. For example, we recently chose to decentralize the routing of our trucks, sending it back to the local level. Doing so gives our plant personnel more input into that process. We have also chosen to increase the amount of training our plant employees receive and to bolster our field support staff by adding highly trained personnel at our Moberly Business Support Campus. Additionally, we've invested in upgrading our phone systems to ensure we can handle times of heavy call volume like we experienced last winter. All of these choices were made to improve our service based on the valuable feedback we receive from our members and customers.

Lastly, I'd like to mention Floyd Buckman, our board member from the Monroe City, Mo., area who passed away in August. Floyd was one of the best people I've ever had the pleasure of knowing. He was a kind gentleman, a great husband, father and friend to so many. Floyd was a fun-loving guy and a musician whose email handle was rocknrollhogfarmer. He was reserved and respectful, but he could also be tough and gritty when needed. And he did it all with a smile on his face. He was a friend and mentor to me, and I miss him every day.



Mark Fenner,
President and CEO



Fall 2018 • Vol. 3 No. 4

This magazine comes to you courtesy of MFA Oil Company, a farmer-owned cooperative providing energy solutions to customers for more than 85 years.

We deliver high-quality propane, fuels and lubricants to farmers and other customers across a 10-state region stretching from Indiana to Utah. *Momentum* is an information service for farm families published by MFA Oil.

Momentum is published four times annually.

For address corrections, story ideas or other inquiries, email editor@mfaoil.com or call 800-366-0200.

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ON THE COVER:

The Leffler family of Americus, Kansas is embracing technology and more intensive wheat management in an effort to boost the efficiency of their farm. Photo by Mindy Sue Photography.

Maze Masters

S Since 2002, the Shryock family has carved fields of corn into imaginative mazes. Located conveniently on Interstate 70 just outside of Columbia, Mo., the rustic labyrinths have firmly established the Shryock's Callaway Farms as an annual agritourism destination that draws thousands of visitors to the family's fields each fall.

The idea to begin cutting mazes into their corn came from Mike Shryock, a member of the farming family's fifth generation. Fresh out of college, he was looking at ways to diversify the farm's revenue streams beyond traditional row crops. The Shryocks soon discovered the small plot of corn they devote to the maze each year held immense potential – between 15,000 to 20,000 guests visit their farm annually.

While some farms hire specialty contractors to create custom corn mazes, the Shryocks have developed their own methods. Every winter, the family brainstorms ideas for the next theme. Once a consensus is reached, Mike sets to work devising the layout with a spatial management program on his computer.

Designs featuring local sports teams' logos are popular but require approval from copyright holders. The University of Missouri has been depicted in some fashion five times and the St. Louis Cardinals have appeared twice. This year's selection honors the upcoming 50th anniversary of Neil Armstrong's moonwalk.

In the 16 years since the initial design, the maze has grown from seven acres to its current 16-acre size. While the Shryocks plant most of their corn in the spring, the maze is seeded in late June.

"It goes in about a month-and-a-half later than the rest of our corn crop," Mike says. "That helps it stay green longer in the fall. We plant a long-season hybrid for the same reasons."



When the corn reaches two feet in height, the Shryocks begin mapping their agrarian artwork with flags marking each point of navigation within the field. Once the corn gets a bit taller, mowers guided by precision global positioning technology carefully begin the process of chopping stalks to form the maze's pathways.

AN ADMISSION TICKET TO THE CORN MAZE INCLUDES ACCESS TO THE ACTIVITY BARN WHERE KIDS CAN FIND A CORN PIT, ROPE SWINGS, AN OBSERVATION DECK OVERLOOKING THE MAZE AND A THREE-STORY TUBE SLIDE. THERE'S ALSO A ONE-ACRE PUMPKIN PATCH FOR GUESTS TO BROWSE.

"There's lots of trimming and maintenance work that's done to keep the field looking good throughout the season," Mike says. "We have someone go through it once a week to keep it clean, which is quite a bit of work."

Irrigation helps to ensure the late-planted corn matures to a suitable height and is healthy enough to last until early November when the maze season ends.

While the corn maze, which typically takes about an hour and a half to navigate, is the main attraction, the Shryocks provide visitors with plenty of agri-entertainment options. An admission ticket to the corn maze includes access to the activity barn where kids can find a corn pit, rope swings, an observation deck overlooking the maze and a three-story tube slide. There's also a one-acre pumpkin patch for guests to browse, and group hayrides are available by reservation.

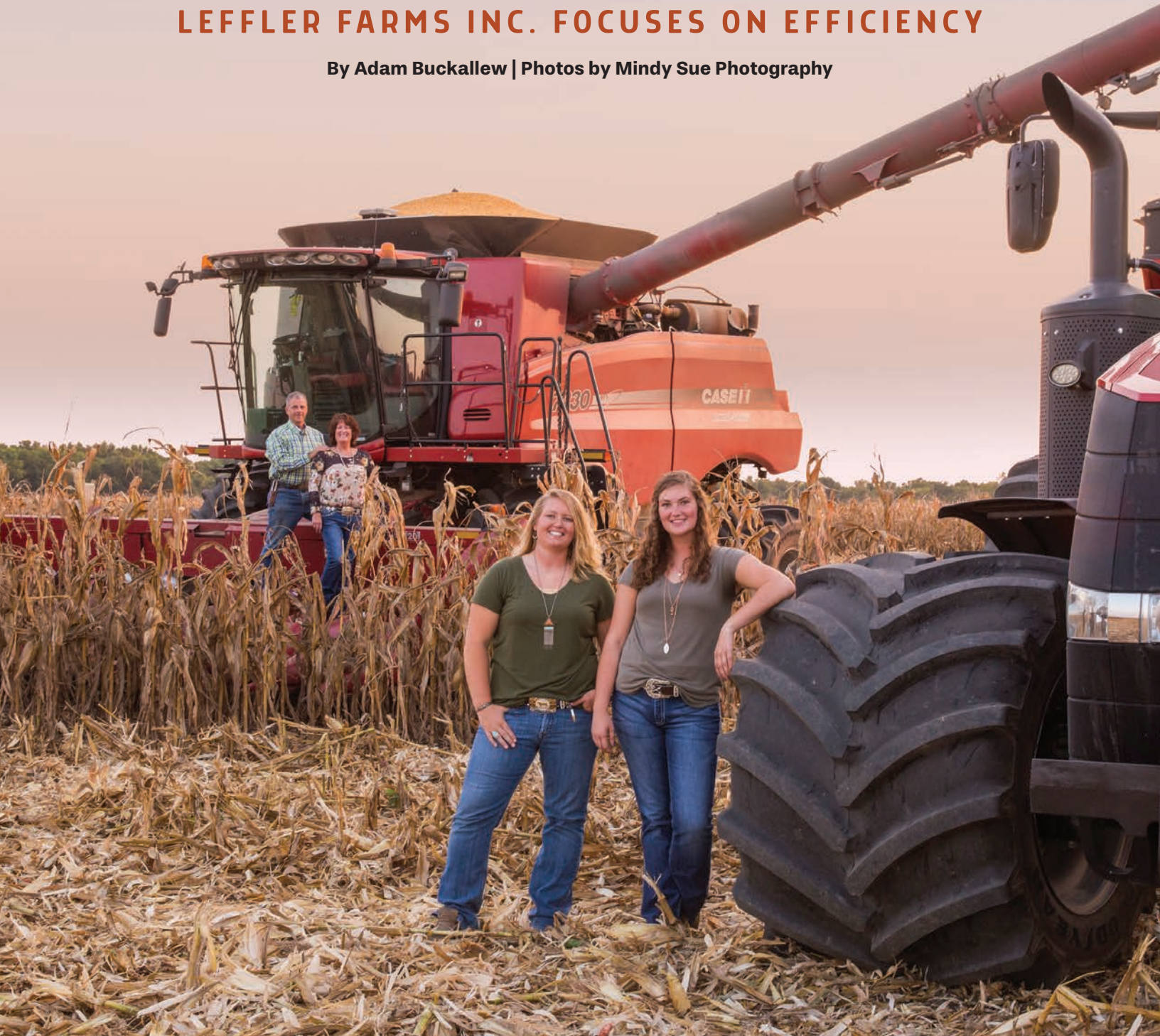
Besides amusing visitors, the Shryocks welcome the opportunity to talk with guests about farming.

"Getting into the agritourism business has been fun for our whole family and it's given us a chance to promote our industry to a lot of visitors who no longer have ties to agriculture," Mike says. "We get lots of interesting questions about farming, raising corn and food production." **M**

Making the Most of Their Acres

LEFFLER FARMS INC. FOCUSES ON EFFICIENCY

By Adam Buckallew | Photos by Mindy Sue Photography





On the fringes of the Flint Hills of Kansas, Bill and Jacquelyne Leffler are five years into an unexpected partnership. The father and daughter duo raise corn, soybean, wheat and cattle near Americus, Kan., but Jacquelyne's return to the farm was more happenstance than a carefully constructed plan.

Although she grew up working side-by-side with her father and grandfather on the farm, Jacquelyne had not intended to join the family business. Perhaps serendipitously, she got a job working as a track and field coach at nearby Emporia State University and soon an opportunity presented itself.

"My grandpa was getting ready to phase out of the operation, and I knew that would be my chance to become the fourth generation of the family to work on the farm," Jacquelyne says. "There's been a lot of blood, sweat and tears that have gone into this farm since 1941. A lot of pride. That's a legacy I wanted to continue."

In the time since her homecoming in 2013, Jacquelyne has proven to be a capable partner while carving out her own unique role by managing the farm's technology and data. She develops variable-rate seeding prescriptions that are customized to fit their fields and monitors crop production and progress via satellite imagery. The aerial reconnaissance aids the Lefflers in strategically applying fertilizer to their corn and fungicide to their wheat.

"Rising input prices have made it increasing important that we maximize our resources, and technology has definitely helped us make more informed decisions," Bill says. "If you aren't taking advantage of all of the efficiencies that you can afford to, you are going to get left behind."

NO TIME TO COAST

Bill and Jacquelyne are currently focused on boosting productivity across all of their acres and in the cattle they feed.

"If we expect to keep the farm going, we can't just sit and coast," Bill says. "We've got to keep moving forward. Our philosophy is that it's not about having the most acres, it's about having the most efficient acres. Rather than expanding, we are concentrating on taking better care of what we have."

One area where the Lefflers have made drastic changes to their farming approach is how they handle their winter wheat. What they once viewed as almost an after-thought has now become a core component of their crop rotation.

"For a long time, we weren't actively managing our wheat like a real crop, but we realized we couldn't afford to do it that way any longer," Bill says. "We've adopted a more intensive approach, and we're more willing to spend on fertilization and pest management practices to increase our production."

The shift in mindset toward their wheat, which they double-crop with soybeans, has paid dividends. The Lefflers' yields have gone from an average of 30 bushels an acre to 90 bushels per acre on their best ground.

The golden grain offers additional benefits that has helped it earn its place in the Lefflers' three-way crop rotation. The diversification from corn and soybeans breaks up weed and pest cycles while improving soil quality thanks to wheat's ability to improve the tilth and water infiltration of the dirt.

Bill and Jacquelyne are contemplating adding a fourth crop to the mix, but they are still researching what would fit best.

"We're looking at rye and other crops that could be beneficial to our cattle for grazing," Jacquelyne says.

MAXIMIZING RESOURCES

Leffler Farms Inc. sits due west of Americus near the Neosho River. Much of the farm's row crops are planted on river bottom ground while the cattle are reared on pastures filled with native grasses.

"We've got the best of both worlds," Jacquelyne says. "Our fertile river bottoms are well-suited for growing dryland crops, and the prairie grasslands allow us to put cost-effective gains on our cattle."

Native tallgrasses like Little Bluestem and Big Bluestem serve as a crucial piece of the profitability puzzle for the Lefflers.

"Our cattle perform well on native grasses, and it's an economical way for us to maximize our resources," Bill says.

Foreground: Sisters Jacquelyne (left) and Natalie (right) Leffler represent the fourth generation of their family to work on the farm. Background: Bill and Cindy Leffler are committed to ensuring their family's proud farming legacy is preserved for their daughters.

“The grasses won’t put a gain on the cattle as fast as a drylot feed situation, but this is so much cheaper that it’s worth it.”

In late September, the Lefflers were prepping their feedlot for an incoming shipment of 200 cattle from Georgia with another 125 set to arrive in two weeks. The feeder steers could be with them for three to six months depending on how the market shakes out.

“Our inventory of cattle is dictated by pricing,” Bill says. “The day they show a good profit or someone offers to buy them at the right price, they are gone. We’re looking for windows of time where we can max out their value. The cattle we get in January could be with us all the way through August, depending on the markets.”

FAMILY TIME

While Bill and Jacquelyne are the primary members of the Leffler family working the cattle and tending their fields, they are not without help. Bill’s wife, Cindy, plays a key support role, and Natalie, the couple’s youngest daughter, frequently pitches in when she’s not busy with her collegiate studies.

Natalie is in the process of completing her degree in secondary education and plans to become a math teacher after she graduates in May. Bill hopes she will continue to lend a hand on weekends or consider helping with the farm’s bookwork.

Whether it’s moving cattle or harvesting crops, any time the family farms together Bill considers special.

“The feeling I experience when my wife and daughters have been out working with me in the field is hard to describe,” Bill says. “Most people don’t get the opportunity to work with their family. That’s something that’s fairly unique, but when it happens, it’s so much fun.”

SPEAKING UP

While Jacquelyne enjoys working with cattle and raising crops, one of the highlights of her career as an agricultural producer happened off the farm. On a trip to Washington, D.C., with Kansas Farm Bureau, she had the opportunity to meet with Sen. Pat Roberts, chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee.

“I was one of two full-time farmers in the group, and as I sat there listening





to the others talk, I realized I needed to speak up," she says. "I made sure I expressed my views on the farm bill."

As she was leaving the meeting, one of the Farm Bureau employees who chaperoned the group stopped Jacquelyne to thank her for contributing to the conversation.

"She told me, 'It's the people with the boots on the ground that really need to be heard.' That gave me new perspective. I realized I can't think of myself as just a farmer. I need to be an ambassador and a lobbyist for our industry as well."

The trip reinforced to Jacquelyne the significant challenges farmers face in helping people understand what they do and why.

"It showed me how important it is to get outside of your county to make a difference," she says. "With social media being so prevalent these days, I try to advocate for agriculture by posting about our practices and engaging with consumers. To me, that stuff is just as important as the rest of the things we do here on the farm every day."

FORWARD THINKING

Having his daughter working alongside him has reinvigorated Bill's desire to make improvements to the family farm.

"If I didn't have someone who I knew was going to be farming behind me, I don't know that I would feel the need to be quite as aggressive," he says. "But with her here, and her future potentially tied to the farm, I feel the need for us to stay both progressive and aggressive. She's the spark that's driving me now. That's really her key role."


The two are collaboratively identifying areas where improvements can be made.

"We're searching for anything that will boost our efficiency," Jacquelyne says. "We keep finding little changes here and there that will give us better results."

While Bill says it's hard to tell what the future will hold, he's committed to ensuring the family's proud farming legacy is preserved for the next generation.

"We will continue to adapt," he says. "As long as there's a will and way, we're going to keep making it happen." **M**





It takes an average of 29 milkweed plants spread across a monarch's migratory flight path to ensure each butterfly reaches adulthood.

Milkweed Plantings Needed to Restore Threatened Monarch Butterfly

By Adam Buckallew

Every autumn, millions of vibrantly colored monarch butterflies embark on an incredible mass migration. The remarkable trip takes the butterflies up to 3,000 miles, traveling as far south as central Mexico before that generation's offspring return to the upper Midwest and Canada in the spring. The wonder of this natural phenomena could soon disappear if action isn't taken to plant more milkweed, the only plant capable of sustaining the species. Milkweed provides essential habitat and is the sole source of food for monarch caterpillars.

Since the 1990s, the eastern migratory population of monarch butterflies has dropped by more than 90 percent. In that same timeframe, an estimated billion-plus stems of milkweed have been lost due to herbicide spraying and land development. In addition to breeding habitat loss, other factors such as adverse weather conditions, loss of overwintering habitat, disease and exposure to contaminants have contributed to the decline of the monarch.

The widespread milkweed losses have imperiled Monarchs to the point the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is weighing whether to include the butterfly on the endangered species list. The service is expected to decide whether such a listing is warranted by June 2019.

In a 2017 study conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the University of Arizona and partners, scientists developed potential scenarios for incorporating milkweed into the midwestern U.S. landscape. The researchers found converting marginal cropland to monarch-friendly habitat provides the best opportunity for adding milkweed to help restore the eastern migratory monarch population. However, in addition to agricultural lands, the authors emphasized that planting milkweeds into other kinds of lands, including protected areas and urban and suburban locations, may be necessary.

“The main finding of our study is that an all-hands-on-deck approach could be essential to restoring the massive amounts of milkweeds needed to make the monarch population healthy again,” said Wayne Thogmartin, a USGS scientist and the lead author of the report. “These findings offer great hope for citizens from all sectors working together to reverse the substantial decline of these iconic butterflies.”

A USGS-led report found more than 1.6 billion additional milkweed stems may be needed in North America to return eastern migratory monarchs to a sustainable population size.

Much of the milkweed that once grew along the monarchs’ migration route has been wiped out from agricultural lands, as it’s long been viewed by farmers and ranchers as a nuisance. However, those views are beginning to change.

A broad-based coalition of agricultural organizations launched Farmers for Monarchs in March 2018. This united effort by farmers, ranchers, landowners, the agriculture industry, conservation groups and others seeks to encourage establishment and expansion of pollinator and conservation habitat—including planting milkweed along the monarch butterfly seasonal migration route.

The idea behind the effort is to do enough to save the Monarch voluntarily before potentially burdensome regulations from an endangered species listing come into play. Regulatory action could include limiting pesticide and herbicide use on farmland.

Farmers and ranchers are uniquely positioned to restore monarch habitat. Roughly two out of every three acres in the

continental United States is privately owned, and much of that land is used for agrarian production.

“Agriculture can play a crucial role in maintaining a beneficial relationship between native pollinators, native plants and food production,” says Tom Melius, Midwest regional director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. “You can help monarchs by planting native milkweed and nectar plants in your backyard, on your back forty and on every back road in between.”

Conservation practices that benefit monarch butterflies and other insects also help reduce erosion, increase soil health, control invasive species, provide quality forage for livestock and make agricultural operations more resilient and productive.

Through the Farm Bill, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides assistance to agricultural producers interested in making conservation improvements that benefit the monarch and other struggling pollinator species such as bees, birds and beetles, while also increasing the productivity and resiliency on working lands. Other programs conducted by local and state agencies and non-profit groups are also available

Farmers, ranchers and forest landowners are voluntarily combating the decline of monarchs by adding and maintaining high-quality monarch habitat on their land with a diverse mixture of native wildflowers, milkweed and other beneficial plants. NRCS conservationists and wildlife biologists can help farmers identify which practices best fit their lands. Fencerows, pivot corners, conservation lands, ditches, buffers and other low-productivity lands typically serve as excellent areas to establish pollinator habitat.

NRCS offers more than three dozen conservation practices that can benefit monarchs by managing for healthy stands of milkweed and high-value nectar plants and protecting these stands from exposure to pesticides. While many of these practices may target improving grazing lands or boosting soil health, simple tweaks to the practice can yield big benefits for monarchs.

Fall is the perfect time to plant milkweed. Consider adding some to any patch of land you have available. Every planting will bring the majestic monarch one step closer to recovery. **M**



HOW FARMERS AND PRIVATE LANDOWNERS CAN HELP MONARCHS:

- Establish a diverse habitat that has a mixture of native wildflowers, milkweed and other beneficial plants.
- Plant pollinator habitats in sites such as field borders, pivot corners, conservation lands, ditches, buffers and other low-productivity land.
- Work with local partners also interested in conserving pollinators. There are several financial and technical assistance programs available.
- Contact your local USDA service center for more information about technical and financial assistance available from NRCS.

Break
TIME

Put some fresh in your daily grind.







PROACTIVE TANK MAINTENANCE KEY TO PRESERVING FUEL QUALITY

By Adam Buckallew | Photo by Anthony Jinson

Barry Oden knows his customers count on MFA Oil for high-quality fuel. The challenge he sees is helping them maintain that quality once it's been delivered.

"I see the analysis of every fuel sample that customers in my district send in to our lab for testing and too many have sediment and debris contaminating the storage tank," says Oden, who manages the cooperative's East Central District. "That's the case in four out of every five samples."

Keeping fuel clean is paramount to preventing damage to today's sophisticated fuel systems. When contaminants compromise fuel injector performance, it can lead to loss of power, bad fuel economy, costly engine damage and downtime.

In an effort to help customers better manage their fuel storage tanks, MFA Oil is launching a pilot program this fall to assess fuel quality at all delivery sites throughout Oden's district. Company drivers, service technicians and plant managers will work together to ensure fuel filters are replaced regularly and test fuel tanks for sediment and water. Inspection slips will be left behind at each tank to verify examination and alert customers of any issues found.

"We want to promote a more proactive approach at the customer level to maintain fuel quality," Oden says. "Building awareness and educating our customers on how to prevent potential problems is a big part of that, but we are also exploring a tank maintenance service program that could be rolled out to all customers."


Oden says farmers and other heavy-duty equipment operators are well-acquainted with the importance of seasonal upkeep on farm implements and construction equipment, but he's aware of only a handful of customers with a fuel tank maintenance program in place.

"Our fuels are formulated to deliver top-of-the-line performance, but the quality will degrade over time if it's sitting in a dirty or neglected tank," Oden says. "We want to partner with our customers to help them understand this and develop a scheduled tank

care routine that prevents fuel quality problems from popping up. That's the key to extending the longevity of your engines."

MFA Oil recommends the following best practices to preserve fuel quality in storage tanks:

- **Paint tanks white.** Keeping water out of tanks is the number one way to protect fuel from degrading, and condensation is one of the most common ways water can accumulate. Painting tanks white keeps them cooler, which reduces the chances of condensation from forming when temperatures fluctuate. Cooler tank temperatures also reduce the rate at which fuel oxidizes and prevents light distillates in gasoline from evaporating in hot summer months.
- **Establish drain intervals.** All storage tanks should be drained at least twice a year of the water that naturally collects on the bottom due to condensation. Water contamination left unchecked will lead to rust and microbial growth.
- **Change fuel filters.** Filters have a limited life depending on the volume of contaminants they are catching. Plan to change them at least two to three times per year. Regular fuel filter replacement prevents sediment and other contaminants from building up inside fuel tanks on your equipment. MFA Oil recommends changing your filters at the same time you adjust your clocks for daylight savings time.
- **Consider an air filter.** If the tank is in a dusty environment, an intake/vent filter may be needed to prevent sediment from fouling the fuel. A vent filter can catch airborne particles and minimize the amount of dirt that can enter the fuel tank.
- **Right-size the tank.** If the contents of the tank are not being completely turned over at least two to three times per year, it is too large. Aim for a size that can handle complete fills because any open space at the top of the tank can result in condensation, rust and fuel contamination.

Customers who would like to have their fuel quality analyzed can contact the MFA Oil laboratory at 573-219-5750 for more information. 

Escalating Trade Tensions Continue to Weigh on Agricultural Exports

Farmers hoping for a quick resolution to the trade war between the United States and China may be kept waiting for the foreseeable future. The commercial conflict escalated when President Donald Trump instructed his administration to enact \$200 billion of new tariffs on a wide array of Chinese goods by Sept. 24.

Before Beijing had even announced its decision to retaliate with fresh levies of its own on \$60 billion of U.S. products, Trump threatened he would “immediately pursue phase three” which

would impose an additional \$267 billion worth of border taxes covering virtually all Chinese exports to the United States.

The latest tit-for-tat tariffs have intensified the dispute between the world’s two largest economies and dimmed the prospects of a return to the negotiating table in the short term. As Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping take turns slapping special taxes on imports from their counterpart’s country, the two sides plunge deeper into a protracted trade war without an off-ramp in sight.



As the trade war rages on, the agricultural community has borne the brunt of the fallout. Already weakened by years of low commodity prices, many farmers and livestock producers find themselves in precarious positions that have only been exacerbated by the ratcheting of trade tensions.

“As we head into the 2018 harvest season for corn and soybean out here in Iowa, this escalation of the trade conflict really couldn’t come at a worse time,” Iowa Agriculture Secretary Mike Naig said in an interview with CNBC. “Our farmers understand that there are issues that need to be resolved, particularly with China. But there is no doubt that the retaliatory tariffs are impacting our marketplace and our producers negatively.”

China has imposed hefty tariffs on more than 90 percent of the U.S. agricultural exports headed to its shores in response to

tariffs enacted by the Trump Administration. Nearly \$20 billion in U.S. agricultural exports went to China last year, with more than half of that amount coming from soybeans. Since the talk of tariffs began this summer, soybean prices have dropped more than \$2 a bushel.

Livestock producers are feeling pinched too. U.S. pork exports by volume to China are 58 percent lower than they were at this time in 2017 and 80 percent lower than this point in 2016.

In August, the Trump Administration announced it will provide up to \$12 billion in emergency aid to farmers to offset losses caused by retaliatory tariffs. While most farm groups have expressed appreciation for the assistance, they have made it known they would prefer “trade not aid” and that the payments would be insufficient in making farmers whole. **M**





FARM-TO- GLASS DISTILLERY EMBRACES HEIRLOOM CORN



By Callie Hanson





Most corn grown in fields these days is selected chiefly for its yield potential, but other factors such as disease tolerance, standability and maturity are important considerations. While a focus on these traits has led to bin-bursting harvests through the Heartland, it leaves something to be desired for whiskey makers like Gary Hinegardner, the man behind Wood Hat Spirits of New Florence, Mo.

Positioned on the outskirts of the Corn Belt, Hinegardner is distilling unique whiskeys and bourbons with a focus on heirloom corn varieties. While most whiskey produced in the United States uses yellow dent corn as its base ingredient, Hinegardner was convinced he could make a better tasting spirit by turning to the distinctive flavor profiles of heirloom corn. He knew the key to enhancing the taste of whiskey was to start with finding better tasting corn.

Hinegardner works with local farmers to procure throwback corn like Bloody Butcher, a variety characterized by deep-red striped kernels reminiscent of the blood on a butcher's apron. Bloody Butcher has been grown in the United States since 1845.

"When you change the corn, you really change the whiskey," Hinegardner says. "Each variety of corn has its own flavor, just like different types of grapes produce their own flavor of wine. Incorporating red, white and blue heirloom corn varieties really adds to the complexity of a whiskey."

Wood Hat Spirits is one of the few distilleries in the nation to use Hopi blue corn, which is used to make its award-winning Aged Blue Corn Whiskey, the unique Bourbon Rubenesque, un-aged Blue Corn Whiskey, and All-American Red, White and Blue Corn Whiskey.

As a craft distillery, Wood Hat Spirits produces smaller batches of whiskey and bourbon than mass-market distillers. This gives Hinegardner more freedom to experiment in his hunt for better flavor profiles. He operates with the mentality that corn not tasty enough to be served on the dinner table is also unfit for whiskey production.

"We haven't selected corn for taste in decades and the quality of whiskey has suffered," Hinegardner says. "Corn isn't what it used to be 40 years ago. Our

grandparents ate a lot different corn and drank a lot different whiskey than what we are right now."

He blames the pursuit of high-yielding commodity corn varieties for the decline in quality corn available for both table consumption and whiskey distilling. Farmers are paid by the bushel, not the flavor, so it's easy to understand why higher-yielding varieties grew more popular than less-prolific heirloom varieties.

Each variety of corn has its own flavor, just like different types of grapes produce their own flavor of wine. Incorporating red, white and blue heirloom corn varieties really adds to the to the complexity of a whiskey."
— Gary Hinegardner

"Whiskey in the open-pollinated corn days had to be an all-around better tasting whiskey," Hinegardner says.

In his quest to create rich new flavors, Hinegardner is looking far and wide for heirloom corn varieties he can grow locally to diversify Wood Hat Spirits product offerings. He's looking at the possibility of bringing corn from Central and South America back to Missouri.

ADDING VALUE

Drawing on his background as a former extension agronomist, Hinegardner is directly involved in sourcing the corn he uses to craft his spirits. With the goal of quality over quantity, he selectively breeds heritage varieties of corn to cultivate flavor profiles as unique as the wooden hats he's known for fashioning and wearing.

Hinegardner holds both bachelor's and master's degrees in agronomy and taught sustainable agriculture practices in India for three years while working in the Peace Corps. It was there he grew to understand the value of making use of local natural resources. That philosophy has guided Hinegardner ever since he launched Wood Hat Spirits in 2013.



Gary Hinegardner of Wood Hat Spirits works with local farmers to procure heirloom corn varieties he uses to make his whiskey and bourbon.

"I never understood why Missouri had an abundance of corn and the most sought-after barrel wood in the world, yet no stills," Hinegardner says. "We sell Missouri corn and white oak at bottom prices to distilleries across the world for them to make a byproduct worth well over 100 times as much."

Hinegardner saw his distillery as not only an opportunity to produce superior whiskey, but also a chance to add value to the local economy. Part of the reason he operates the only wood-fired still in the country is because of his proximity to one of the world's largest stave companies. Hinegardner's still is fueled by scrap wood from the nearby stave mill, and his barrels are crafted from high-quality, Missouri-grown white oak and pecan trees. Everything that goes into the business is locally sourced with the exception of the bottles.


He says the barrels, which add depth and flavor to his spirits, play a key role.

"There's something magical that happens inside the barrels. Aging whiskey is all about the wood and the alcohol and their interactions."

Wood Hat Spirits field-to-glass approach has garnered the distillery a well-earned reputation for quality, and Hinegardner's

creations have received numerous awards and praise from the American Craft Spirits Association and the American Distilling Institute, including a double gold medal and the distinction of best craft whiskey in the United States.

While Hinegardner has led the way for craft distilling in the Show-Me State, he encourages farmers to follow his lead.

"The most exciting part of my job is that I get to set an example for the agriculture community that adding value to their products is doable," Hinegardner says. "I want to see more farmers start distilling because they can add value to their products and put money in their own pockets instead of someone else's. Farmers have gotten the short end of the stick long enough, and I hope my work with Wood Hat Spirits can inspire farmers to consider how they can create their own value-added products and, ultimately, enrich the future of their families." 

Wood Hat Spirits, located at 489 Booneslick Road in New Florence, Mo., is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday through Monday, except on Sundays when it opens at 1 p.m. For more information, visit woodhatspirits.com or call (573) 216-3572. You can also find Wood Hat Spirits on Facebook and Twitter.

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'SEED DESTRUCTOR' TECHNOLOGY LIKELY THE NEXT STEP IN WAR ON WEEDS

By Ryan McGeeney, University of Arkansas

For decades, the fight against weeds in Arkansas agriculture—barnyardgrass and Palmer amaranth, in particular—has been an ongoing war of attrition as weed populations gradually acquire resistance to one herbicidal chemistry after another.

During this time, weed scientists and other experts with the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture have encouraged growers to adopt cultural practices and other alternatives to relying solely on chemistries for weed control, ranging from the use of crop rotation and cover crops to reduced row spacing.

As harvest approaches, Arkansas researchers are embarking on a multiyear trial that will test the efficacy of a new iteration of machinery known as the Integrated Harrington Seed Destructor and its ability to aid the practice known as harvest weed seed control. The practice is intended to prevent weed seeds from making their way back to the seed bank during harvest, thus denying them the opportunity to germinate and grow in the following season.

Originally designed as a trailer-mounted unit pulled behind a harvest combine on its own trailer, the new seed destructor being tested on large research plots at the Newport Extension Center is retrofitted into a John Deere 9760 STS. The destructor is powered by mechanical energy generated through a belt system attached to the combine's straw chopper. The destructor's grinder mill, which turns at about 3,100 revolutions per minute, effectively pulverizes anything put through it, ejecting a fine powder in its final stage.

Jason Norsworthy, a weed scientist with the University of Arkansas, said the integrated version of the equipment—originally designed and implemented in Australia, where farming conditions tend to be more arid—was a more practical choice for Arkansas farmers over the original design.

"In 2016, we tested a prototype on 12 common Arkansas weeds," Norsworthy said. "On 11 of those 12, we had a 99 percent kill rate or better. On the 12th, we had a 97 percent kill rate."

Extension weed scientist Tom Barber pointed out that at the time of the seed destructors widespread adoption in Australia, the nation had run out of control options for rigid ryegrass in wheat and other cereals.

"We're not completely out of options yet in the mid-South, but we're running short on options," Barber said. "We have pigweed populations in our state that are resistant to four different modes of action, especially in northeast Arkansas. So we're looking for that next thing that's not chemical. A new cultural practice that can reduce weed seed going back into the seed bank, which will, in turn, reduce the numbers we have to deal with the following year."

"This time of year, you'll see a lot of Palmer amaranth in soybean and cotton fields—some in rice fields," he said. "With this piece of equipment, the idea is that the majority of those seeds will go into the mill and be destroyed, and that's less that we have to deal with in the subsequent crop."

Palmer amaranth—commonly known as pigweed—has long been the bane of Arkansas growers' existence. The integrated seed destructor may prove especially effective in cutting into the weed's survival since 99 percent of the weed's seed is retained on the plant



Jason Norsworthy (left) and Tom Barber (right) of University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture are testing seed destructor technology in an effort to help growers contend with problem weeds like Palmer amaranth.

itself, a helpful fact when the plant is utterly pulverized during the destruction process.

Barnyardgrass, on the other hand, only retains about a third of its seeds, making it more difficult to impact the weed's soil bank numbers. Nevertheless, Norsworthy and Barber believe seed destructors have the potential to significantly reduce the weed seed bank.

"With Palmer amaranth, 95 percent or more of it will be gone from the seed bank within three years," Norsworthy said. "So by limiting these new introductions, we're going to quickly reduce the seed bank. It's not only Palmer amaranth, though. Things like barnyardgrass are going to be relatively short-lived in the seed bank."

The researchers warned, however, no single practice should be treated as a cure-all.

"There's some research in Australia that shows that if you only focus on weed seed control, after repeating that tactic year after year, you can select for resistance to the destructor, if it's the only tactic you use in the field," Norsworthy said. "This is just a tool, not a stand-alone system. It's a tool we can integrate into our current system that's going to help us sustain the utility of the herbicides we have today."

"We don't have any new modes of action—herbicides—being developed," Barber said. "It's been 30 years since a new mode of action was developed. We don't think our solutions in the future are going to come out of a jug, at least long term, because we've been on this resistance trend for at least 10 years now."

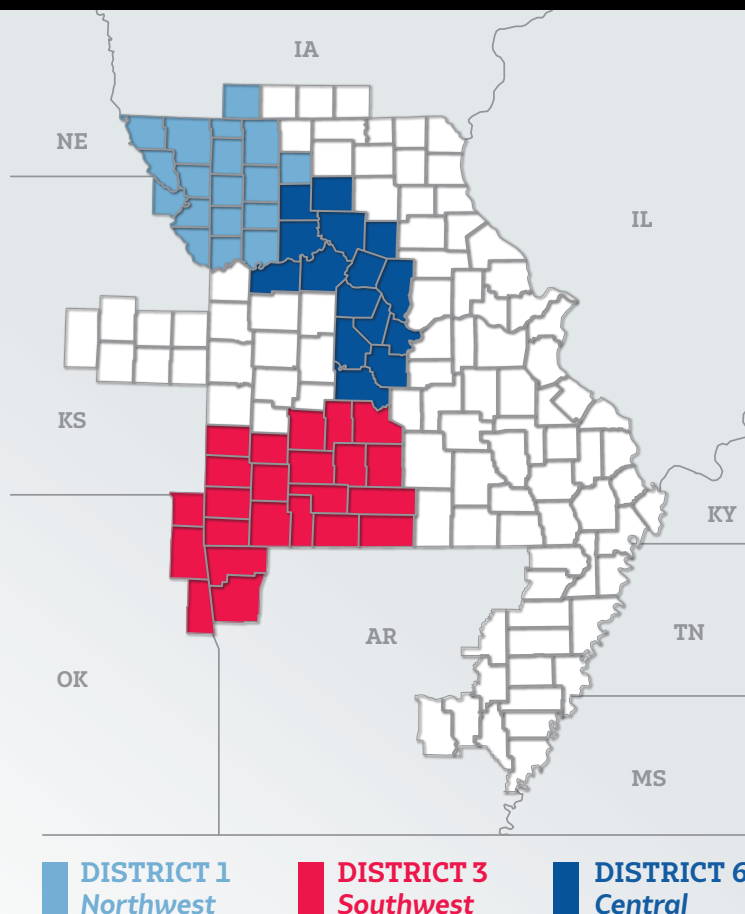
Norsworthy and Barber said they'd like to have at least three years of data on destructor efficacy in the state, and the first year will likely present a steep learning curve.

"We know that this technology works well in Australia," Barber said. "But this is Arkansas. Our combines have to have four-wheel drive, and massive tires. Sometimes we just have to 'cut in the mud.'"

"There's always going to be bugs in a system and learning what its limitations are," Norsworthy said. "Beyond that, we're looking forward to understanding what effect it's having on the soil seed bank, and how we're utilizing that in a cropping system." **M**

DELEGATES SET TO VOTE ON THREE BOARD SEATS

MFA Oil Company will hold its 89th Annual Delegate Meeting on Nov. 5, 2018, at the Hilton Branson Convention Center in Branson, Mo. During the meeting, delegates from the company's northwest, southwest and central districts will elect their representatives to the MFA Oil Board of Directors. The following individuals have applied for the board and will be listed on the ballot in their respective districts.



DISTRICT 1 - NORTHWEST



Dennis Erickson

Dennis Erickson farms in Tarkio, Mo., with his wife, Yolie, and son, Angelo, where they grow non-GMO food-grade white corn on nearly 9,000 acres. In addition to serving as an MFA Oil delegate, Dennis co-owns Erickson Farms with his son and serves as an officer/board member of Nodaway Valley Farms, Tarkio River Farms LLC and Erickson Global, a new venture corn snack company. He is a member of St. Paul Catholic Church.



Roger Frueh

Roger Frueh has raised grain and livestock with his family in Pickering, Mo., for the past 30 years. He is a lifelong member of MFA Oil and he has served as a delegate since 2006. Roger is a member of St. Gregory Catholic Church, the Nodaway County Cattlemen's Association, the National Cattlemen's Association, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks Lodge #760, and the Fraternal Order of Eagles.



Chuck Weldon

Chuck Weldon, a lifelong resident of Gallatin, Mo., is the owner/operator of Weldon Farms LLC, a corn and soybean operation in Daviess County. In addition to crop farming, Chuck is a contract pork producer for Smithfield Foods and co-owns Whitetail Fix, a popular hunting television show that airs on The Sportsman Channel. He serves as an MFA Oil delegate, an MFA Agri Services delegate, a board member of Harrison Township, a member of the Lake Viking building committee, and is an active member of the Chillicothe Elks Lodge 656.

DISTRICT 3 - SOUTHWEST



Keith Baxter

Keith Baxter is a seventh-generation farmer in southeast Greene County, Mo. He owns and operates K&K Cattle Farms with his uncle. Their cow-calf operation has herds in Greene, Christian and Webster counties. Keith also raises row crops and offers custom tillage, planting, haying and harvest services. In addition to serving as an MFA Oil delegate, Keith is an active member of the Missouri Farm Bureau, the Missouri Cattlemen's Association and the Beef Checkoff. He is also a member of the Center Point Church of Christ.



Glen Cope

Glen Cope is a fourth-generation cattle rancher from Aurora, Mo., with his wife, Leanne, and their two children, Orran and Katie. He is a past board member and chairman of the Missouri Beef Industry Council, past board member of MFA Incorporated, where he served on the audit, legislative and foundation committees, and past president of Barry County Farm Bureau. Glen served for three years as chairman of Missouri Farm Bureau's beef commodity advisory committee. He has served on the Missouri Farm Bureau board as well as the American Farm Bureau Federation board and on the Young Farmer and Rancher committees with both organizations. Glen is an MFA Oil delegate and currently serves on the FCS Financial board as well as Congressman Billy Long's agriculture advisory committee.

DISTRICT 6 - CENTRAL



Tony Brandt

Tony Brandt is a lifelong resident of Lafayette County, Mo., where he raises corn and soybeans on his family's farm. He is a 14-year volunteer for the Alma Fire Protection District, and currently serves as truck captain. Tony is a member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Alma, Mo., where he serves as secretary of the Trinity Cemetery Committee. He is a lifetime member of the Missouri Soybean Association, and he has served as an MFA Oil delegate for the last four years.

DISTRICT 6 - CENTRAL CONTINUED



Ronald Felten

Ronald (Ronnie) Felten is a lifelong resident of Pilot Grove, Mo., where he raises row crops and has a cow-calf operation. Ronnie currently serves on the Pilot Grove Coop Elevator Board and has served on the Cooper County Extension Council and the Cooper County Soil and Water Board. He is an active member of St. Joseph Catholic Church and formerly served as Grand Knight of his Knights of Columbus Council. Ronnie has been an MFA Oil Company delegate for 32 years and has served on the board of directors since 2006. He and his wife, Elizabeth, have been married for 30 years and have four grown children.



Kurtis Gregory

Kurtis Gregory operates a diversified operation with his family near Blackburn, Mo., where they raise row crops, cattle and hogs. He is an MFA Oil delegate, a member of Missouri Farm Bureau and a former board member of the Missouri Corn Growers Association. In addition to his farming activities, Kurtis is a licensed insurance agent with United Services Agency, an advisory board member for Royalty Capital Corporation and a member of the President Council of Raft Up Technologies. He can be heard on the Mizzou Tiger Sports Network, where he provides halftime and post-game radio analysis for Mizzou football games. He resides in Marshall, Mo., with his wife, Kella, and their children.



Jake Taylor

Jake Taylor of Ashland, Mo., is a first-generation grain and cattle farmer who started his operation from scratch in 2014. He and his wife, Molly, farm 400 acres of row crops and manage 30 head of cattle. Jake also manages his wife's family's farms in Henry and Johnson County, Mo. Jake is an MFA Oil delegate; a member of The Crossing Church of Columbia, Mo.; an advisory board member for Farm Credit Services; a member of the University of Missouri Extension's Boone County Council; and a past board member of Boone County Farm Bureau. In addition to farming, Jake is a partner with Winter Dent and Company Insurance Agency.

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MFA FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Every year, the MFA Foundation distributes hundreds of thousands of dollars to high school seniors. The Foundation is a nonprofit, philanthropic organization jointly administered by MFA Oil Company and MFA Incorporated with the primary purpose of providing educational opportunities to youth located throughout the trade territories of the two companies. Since 1965, the Foundation has awarded scholarships to nearly 14,500 students totaling more than \$15 million.

One scholarship is offered annually at each high school in whose town a participating MFA Agri Services Center, MFA Oil Company propane plant, MFA Oil Company bulk plant or other MFA agency is located. MFA Oil funds its contributions to the Foundation through unclaimed member equities.

Students interested in applying for a scholarship should contact their school counselor to see if one is offered in their area. Counselors obtain applications from participating locations. Local committees select the scholarship winners, who are announced at graduation ceremonies. The majority of the scholarships are \$2,000 and may be used at any college or university. This year 342 high school seniors received a total of \$680,000 in scholarships.

Istarlin Adan, Anderson
Katie Marie Adkison, Hamilton
Casey Lea Aholt, Glasgow



Karlie Marie Amos, Monroe City
Sierra Cheyanne Anderjaska, Buffalo
Rebekah Kathleen Angell, Centralia
Magaly Alexandra Arjona, Clarkton





Cooper Garrison Ashford, Union Star
Adriene Elizabeth Aubuchon, Owensville
Madison Rae Bader, Hermann
Trenton Joseph Bagby, Adrian
Abigail Catherine Bailey, Luebbering



Sophia Marie Bales, Lexington
Taylor Grace Barnes, Paragould, AR
Faith Ann Barrett, Eminence
Katelyn Renee Baxter, Quilin
Rachel Lynn Bebb, Mound Valley, KS



Katelyn D. Belding, Sharpsburg, IA
Savannah Rose Bennett, Bolckow
Claire Jessica Bilyeu, Columbia
Allison Renee Binder, Salisbury
Matthew Ryan Black, Richland



Bobby Ladon Blankenship III, Corning, AR
Caleb Terry Bleich, Jamestown
Kyle Justin Bocking, Chamois
Lysie Anne Boling, Hannibal
Abigail Anna Bond, Russellville



Garret D. Bradford, Bolivar
Raygan Scott Bradley, Neosho
Colton Gage Branstine, Garden City
Chance Mason Brewer, Purdy
Lindsey Renee Brinkley, Linneus



Audra Gilmer Brooks, Cassville
Samantha N. Bross, Palmyra
Michaela Ann Brown, Bolivar
Kaylan Shaye Brownlee, Stroud, OK
Jessica Corinne Brush, Osborn



Luke Anthony Buhr, Linn
Mariah Rae Burnett, Bakersfield
Emily Rae Butyenek, Madison
Leah May Caputo, Shelby
Alexander Tazwell Carver, Mound City

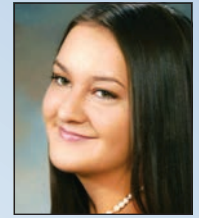


Caitlyn Morrow Chandler, Annada
Lauribeth McDonald Childers, Cooter
John Hunter Clark, Lono, AR
Kara Ann Cloud, Carthage
Nicole Elizabeth Cloyed, Blakesburg, IA

Kody Lane Collins, Ash Grove
 Alexys Pearl Coltrane, Grovespring
 Hailey Nicole Colvin, Fortuna
 Taylor LeAnn Combs, Hopkins
 Lane Edward Conderman, Foley



Dustin Joseph Conover, Maryville
 John Kyle Cook, Hornersville
 Rebecca Jo Cook, Amoret
 Cassandra Ann Marie Cortez, Bell City
 Liberty Jane Cox, Chillicothe



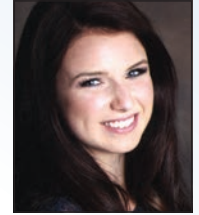
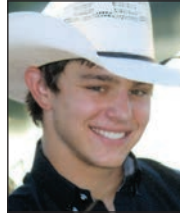
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 Payton Elaine Craig, Eagleville
 Collin Ross Crum, Rolla
 Carson Bryant Dake, Mount Vernon
 Whitney A. Dake, Stover



Neely Shae Danko, Fair Play
 Marcus James Daughton, Kellerton, IA
 Cody Lane Delcour, Phillipsburg
 Madelyn Grace Derks, King City
 William Anthony Derkum, Meta



Justin Robert Dieker, Emporia, KS
 Hayden Elizabeth Dillion, Tipton
 Ali Amanda Dobbins, Bosworth
 Ryan M. Dockins, Stella
 Terryn Leigh Dodson, Tina



Liliya Yevgenyevna Dudko, Willow Springs
 Morgan Josephine Duenke, Laddonia
 Brandi Anne Dumke, Steelville
 Reagan Kristine Dumm, Jasper
 Elizabeth Ann Dunkle, Malta Bend



Kelsey Marie Dunlap, Easton
 Sirrina M. Dunn, Martinsburg
 Adron Renae Durman, Seneca
 Mattie Ruth Eagleton, Stilwell, OK
 Parker Dale Edmiston, Eolia



Andrew Keith Edwards, Malta Bend
 Jade Elizabeth Edwards, Hamilton, KS
 Kaitlyn Elizabeth Edwards, Callao
 Alexander Paul Eftink, Chaffee
 Audrey Clae Eldringhoff, West Plains





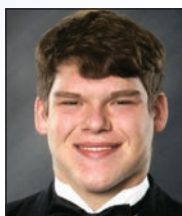
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Alyssa Dee Engeman, Montrose
Tim David Eoff, Willard
Jerett Wade Evans, Warrensburg
Aaron Clay Everett, Ava



Elizabeth Ashley Fahrmeier, Wellington
Maggie Claire Farrell, Winston
Rayne Alastair Grant, Warsaw
Madison Elaine Felts, Forrest City, AR
Chasidy Faith Finney, Cainsville



Shea Anne Fitzgerald, Holden
Ashlyn Wen Flanagan, Steele
Zachary Christopher Fleak, LaPlata
Esther Gabrielle Fleener, Moundville
Amy Sue Ford, Milo



Haylee Marie Fortune, Allerton, IA
Bailey Jo Frazier, Dora
Austin Paul Freund, Concordia
Benjamin Robert Friedrich, Lexington
Ashley Ann Fritsche, Frohna



Veronica Lee Fritz, Columbia
Amberlee Donna Gandy, Gower
Payton Dale Gentry, Bethany
Andrew James George, Canton
Kaylynn Marie George, Jamesport



Amber Rose Gerlemann, Beaufort
Keaton Dewayne Gibbs, Windsor
Alex Ryan Gibson, Piggott, AR
Lillian Carsen Glenn, Charleston
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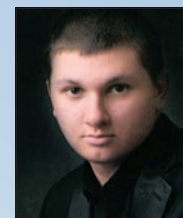
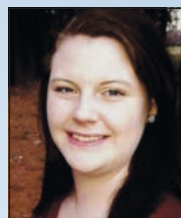
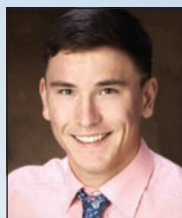
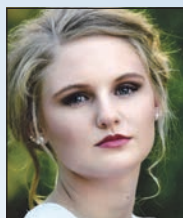


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Amarie Cooper Griffith, Cushing, OK
Ashtin Lynn Grigsby, Elmer
Claire June Grissum, Boonville

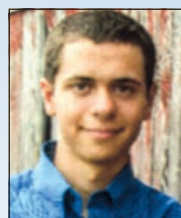


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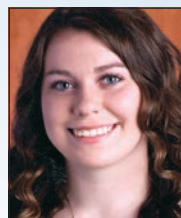
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Victoria Denee Harvey, Shenandoah, IA
Mason Hayes Hawk, Sheridan
Quinton Wayne Hays, Walker



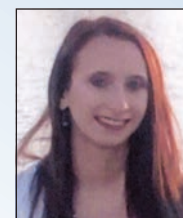
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Peyton Ashby Hein, Ludlow
Dylan Richard Helwig, Columbus, KS
Caitlin Lynnette Hickerson, Ewing
Delaney Jo Hicks, Winona



Amanda Storm Hilburn, Polo
Kynleigh Grace Hill, Keota, OK
Savannah Louise Hinkle, Fredericktown
Avery Kathryn Hlavacek, Lebanon
Vanessa Renee Hodge, Wheatland



Carrilee Madison Holliday, Salem
Kaleb Matthew Hooper, Lebanon
Kaden Paul Hoover, Fayette
Kathryn A. Horner, Curryville
Jessica Raelyn Huff, Rutledge



Abby Huffaker, Maysville
Alexander Jay Huffman, Emden
Kaylee Christine Hutson, Steelville
Kolton Jacob Jackson, Bedford, IA
Sierra Marie Jarrett, Cabool



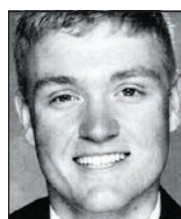
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Kendra Brooke Johnson, Newtown
Sarah Elizabeth Johnson, Dewitt
Sidney N. Johnson, Lincoln

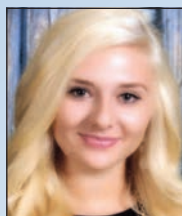


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Peyton Christopher Jones, McFall
Faithlynn Ann Jung, Aurora
Jessica Ann Justice, Harrisburg
Marcus Lynn Keathley, Dadeville



Grace Elizabeth Keilholz, Centerview
Kaitlyn Nicole Keller, Jackson
Gabriel Lee Kelly, Marceline
Kasey Morgan Kerperin, Jefferson City
Sydney Anne King, Strafford





Joey Beth Knuckles, Sullivan
Morgan Michael Kornbrust, Brookfield
Cassidy Anna Krieg, Linn
Chance Denver Kurzweil, Harrisonville
Vanessa Janae Lammers, Pilot Grove



Joseph Charles Landewee, Chaffee
Michael Thomas Lee, Reeds
Ashley Marie Lewis, Huntsville
Rachel Luise Licklider, St. Clair
Ashlynn Renee Liebl, Sedalia



Kasey Ann Lile, New Cambria
Emily Elizabeth Limback, Alma
Clint Jeffrey Littleton, Keytesville
Tyler Justin Livengood, Warrensburg
Cady Jo Lloyd, Pittsburg, KS



Lydia Rose Loethen, Hallsville
Courtney Bernice Lohmann, Perryville
Sean Douglas Loughridge, Licking
Madelyn Louise Luke, Stanberry
Shayne Dell Mallory, Miller



Tyler William Lee Mann, Humansville
Melina Christine Mansfield, Novinger
Audrey Elizabeth Martin, Bucklin
Austin Chase Martin, Galena
Mikayla Christine Mattson, Conception Jct.



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Mason Emory Mayberry, Dexter
Nick Rhea McCleave, Harrisonville
April Leann McCorkell, Wyandotte, OK
Amy Michelle McLaughlin, Unionville

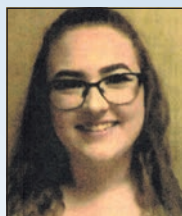


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Emily Brooke Meeker, Deepwater
Karlee Ruth Metcalf, Hume
Rylea Dale Meyer, Slater
Grace Charlene Miller, Walnut Grove

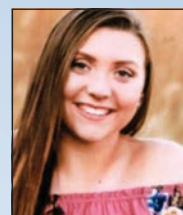


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Tacy Renea Mitchell, Fairfax
Emma Claire Mizer, Marshall
Katie Lorene Monroe, Mayview
Andrea Brielle Montgomery, Everton

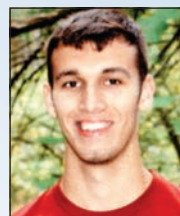
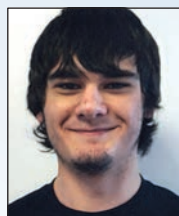
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 Cory Michael Moubry, Edina
 Makenzie Lynn Mulkey, Cuba



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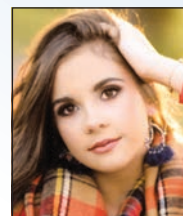
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 Travis Scott Nilson, Brashear
 Jered John Nolie, Sullivan
 Gracie A. Norris, Oologah, OK



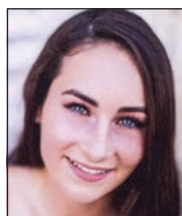
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 Thomas Franklin Otte, Saint Mary
 Barbara Grace Owenby, Warrenton
 Colton James Page, Adrian



Emma Katherine Pearson, East Prairie
 Hannah Nicole Persell, Trenton
 Ashlyn Layne Peterson, Madison
 Taylor Renee Petzoldt, Marshall
 Brittany Allison Pharis, Tyronza, AR



Blake Alan Plenge, Kahoka
 Caitlyn Rachelle Poore, Shelbyna
 Mackenzie Maura Portell, Vichy
 Gideon Cain Porter, Leon, IA
 Grey Wells Porter, Mercer



Michaelyn Nicole Porter, Crocker
 Allison Kathryn Procter, Jefferson City
 Savannah Rae Pruitt, Cole Camp
 Sadee Lynn Prussman, Forest City
 Regan Jean Ragsdale, Holliday



Anastasia Annette Irene Raines, Ridgeway
 Alyssa Marie Ramos, Sparta
 Makayla Ann Ratliff, Hale
 Madison Brooke Reed, Mountain Grove
 Sydney ShyAnn Rice, Lockwood

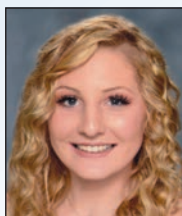




Brianna Laine Ridenour, Windsor
 Ethan Jared Ritter, Higginsville
 Abbigayle Morgan Roach, Naylor
 Haven Nicole Robertson, Lake City, AR
 Kellen Paige Robertson, Bucklin



Katelyn Rose Robinson, Wellsville
 Alexander Gabe Rogers, Braymer
 Andie Lee Roper, Eagle Rock
 Rachel Lauren Rowlett, Trumann, AR
 Nathaniel Scott Sanders, St. Clair



Emily Claire Scheer, New Haven
 Ronald Joseph Schiltz, Sheldon
 Brenna Mae Schmidli, Warrensburg
 Kayla N. Schmidt, New Florence
 Katie Lynn Schoen, Otterville



Taylour Leigh Schoene, Vienna
 Payton Jordan Schomburg, Rock Port
 Shaelyn Marie Scoon, Lancaster
 Taylor Marie Scott, Pittsburg
 Jacob Alan Search, Maryville



Chaney Lane Seitz, Berryville, AR
 Jade Ciara Sharpe, Ketchum, OK
 Paige Danielle Shaw, Liberal
 Makayla Lorene Skidmore, Holden
 Emily Jean Smart, LaHarpe, KS



Bradly Smith, West Helena, AR
 Drew Ryan Smith, Appleton City
 Nicole Janae Ann Smith, Bethany
 Rylee Elizabeth Smith, Sparta
 Ryan Arthur Spurling, Mexico



Kati Nicole Stafford, Humphreys
 Chandler Michael Stephens, Cleveland
 Emily Rose Strein, Jamestown
 Makayla Ann Stubinger, Lohman
 Kyleigh LaRue Sulkowski, Ste. Genevieve



Carli Jean Switzer, Excello
 Austin Flynn Sykes, Kirksville
 Kathleena Ray Tarkington, Verona
 Tiger A. Terpstra, Exline, IA
 Emma Kate Thoeni, Carrollton

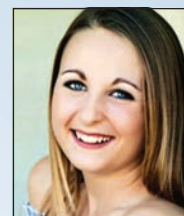
Hannah Michelle Thomas, Marshfield
Trace Michael Thompson, Glasgow
Derick William Thornton, Bolckow
Kylah Rene Todd, Rosendale
Kylann Darwyn Tourtillott, Rich Hill



Kinley Brooke Tucker, Cabool
Madison Lovie Turner, Elkland
Bailey Dawn Tyler, El Dorado Springs
Carter Christian Vandivort, Houston
Christian Luke VanHouten, Hazen, AR



Abigail Elizabeth Vaught, Sikeston
Hannah Elizabeth Viets, Sweet Springs
Katelyn Rae Voris, Halfway
Kayla Morgan Wagner, Farmington
Morgan Nicole Walsher, Clever



Megan Elizabeth Walk, Houstonia
Faithlyn Margaret Walker, Marmaduke, AR
Parker Scott Wallace, Vandalia
Nicholas John Wankum, Meta
Connor Elisabeth Watkins, Charleston



Kyle Thomas Watkinson, Columbia
Lane Ross Watson, New Hampton
Kodey Alan Weaver, Conway
Kaitlen G. Weekley, Blackwater
Seth Anthony Weidenbenner, Campbell



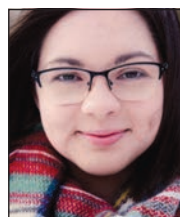
Brayden Sylvester Welch, Parnell
Shelli Elaine Wescoat, New Madrid
McKinzie Lynne Wheatley, Butler
Hannah Nicole Wheeler, Osceola
Colin Jacob White, Greenfield



Madison Cheyenne Wilkinson, Redfield, KS
Camden Douglas Williams, Milan
Madyson Jean Williams, Laredo
Hagen Matthew Wilson, Rogersville
Wyatt Ethan Wilson, Ava



Alex Stephen Wimer, Hallsville
Aspen Shae Wood, Welch, OK
Payden Leean Woodruff, Belle
Brooklyn Paige Woodworth, Lamar
Lora Jean Wright, Verona



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5 Questions with Marion Kertz



Q How would you describe your farming operation?

A My father got into farming in 1934 when he purchased a small parcel of land during the Great Depression. Our family has been farming the same area near Ste. Genevieve, Mo., ever since, and we now also farm across the river in Illinois. We have about 5,000 acres of cropland where we raise corn and soybeans. My sons and nephew have taken over the operation after I retired.

Q How important is the company's non-member businesses, such as Break Time or Big O Tires, to the cooperative as a whole?

A Anything that adds to the co-ops' bottom line is great because that translates into more value for our farmer-members. Our traditional propane and fuel businesses have well-defined seasonality, so it's helpful from a cash-flow perspective to have consistent revenue coming in from our Break Time convenience stores and our other

business units to keep things going smoothly throughout the year. So while some of our members may not directly interact with those businesses, they are still an important part of the company's growth and success.

Q What do you view as the most important issue facing MFA Oil?

A We need to continue to make sure we are consistently meeting the needs of our member-owners, especially the next generation of leaders. I think bringing in more young blood and getting them involved in the cooperative is going to be crucial moving forward. We need to make sure the ensuing wave of younger farmers is well-prepared to keep the co-op going strong into the future.


Q What has been the response to the reinstatement of delivery invoices in your district?

A I've had an opportunity to visit with many people at our local

annual meetings throughout District 4, and the feedback they have shared with me has been positive. Restoring this convenience to our customers was a major priority for the company. We heard loud and clear how important pricing at the time of delivery was to our members and customers, and I am proud of the work our employees have done in a relatively short amount of time to address the issue.

WE NEED TO CONTINUE TO MAKE SURE WE ARE CONSISTENTLY MEETING THE NEEDS OF OUR MEMBER-OWNERS, ESPECIALLY THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS. I THINK BRINGING IN MORE YOUNG BLOOD AND GETTING THEM INVOLVED IN THE COOPERATIVE IS GOING TO BE CRUCIAL MOVING FORWARD."
- MARION KERTZ

Q What do you view as the most critical issues MFA Oil members are facing?

A Nearly five years of falling commodity prices have put the farming community under a lot of stress. The situation has only grown more severe with widespread drought conditions across Missouri and recent trade disputes. The tariffs have hit many agricultural commodities hard. We need to get these trade negotiations figured out quickly, because the tariffs hurt not only farmers, but also our rural communities that depend on farm income across the Midwest. 



>> MARION KERTZ
District 4 –Southeast

Taking a Wider View

The energy market is full of questions these days. What is the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) up to and has the cartel reestablished its relevance? How much of a factor is Russia playing? Where does the United States stand with its abundant shale oil production and new position as the world's largest oil producer? If you put all this in a bowl and stir it up, what do you get, and more importantly, what does it mean for our local customers?

While the dynamics of the global oil industry continue to change, it remains a volatile business that is influenced by a number of worldwide factors. The mercurial nature of the energy market remains the one thing you can count on, no matter the effects of globalization on trade and production.

To gain a better understanding of the market, it's helpful to step back and take a wider view. OPEC agreed to cut crude oil production way back in November 2016, and those production cuts took effect in January 2018. OPEC members have done a surprisingly good job of sticking to the plan and, as a result, global supplies have tightened and oil prices have moved higher.

HISTORICALLY AND SEASONALLY, THE MARKET PULLS BACK IN THE WINTER AND OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE ADVANTAGEOUS PURCHASES.

If you look at the chart for weekly ultra-low sulfur diesel futures, the orange vertical line is on Sept. 18, 2017, roughly a year ago. Since that date, prices have gradually trended higher despite some corrections. A look at unleaded gasoline futures shows prices have charted a similar course.



Monthly Chart of NYMEX Ultra-Low Sulfur Diesel 2016–Present


Now, keep in mind, past results should not be relied upon to predict future performance as no two years are ever the same. The current situation and circumstances are different than they were a year ago, but are they better or worse and how can we use this information?

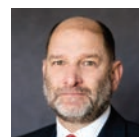
During my time as a hedging manager, the plan I've observed that has offered the best results has been to steadily buy over a period of time to average costs for a budgeted price level. Let me say that again. Make it easy on yourself by purchasing a percentage of your needs a bit at a time over the next several months. Doing so will help to average out your overall position and price. Knowing your budget for fuel can make this buying decision a whole lot easier.

Historically and seasonally, the market pulls back in the winter and offers opportunities to make advantageous purchases. The market did see a little pullback last December and January, but those dips didn't offer a better deal than

September's pricing. So buying some now, more before year-end and then again in January is a good strategy.

Check those time frames, pick a date and write it on your calendar or share your dates with your local MFA Oil bulk plant manager. This will help you execute your plan and take the emotions out of it.

If you would have participated in MFA Oil's contract program and taken this approach over the last 10 years, you would be ahead of the game. Would it have been a home run every year? No. But overall, you would have locked in a competitive price and saved yourself some time, money and headaches. I firmly believe if you take this plan and put it in place over the next 10 years, you will be better off than if you did not do it. 



» TIM DANZE
is the hedging manager
for MFA Oil.



Dameron Elected to MFA Oil Board of Directors

Tony Dameron of Vandalia, Mo., was elected to represent the East Central district on the MFA Oil Company board of directors through a special election held on Sept. 21 in Mexico, Mo.

The special election was held to fill the seat that became vacant due to the untimely death of former board member Floyd Buckman of Stoutsville, Mo. Dameron's term will run through 2020.

Dameron, who raises row crops and cattle with his wife, is a third-generation MFA Oil member and has served as a delegate for the cooperative since 2015. He is a lifelong member of Curryville Baptist Church and is a member of the Van-Far School Board. He is also an active member of the Vandalia Lions Club, Missouri Cattlemen's Association, Missouri Corn Growers Association and Van-Far FFA Alumni.

MFA Oil Supports Proposition D – Road and Bridge Funding

Roads and bridges in Missouri are underfunded and deteriorating due to a lack of resources to repair

them. Show-Me State voters have an opportunity to address the situation by increasing the state's gas tax for the first time since 1996. For 22 years, gas in Missouri has been taxed at a fixed 17 cents per gallon with no adjustment for inflation.

As the cost of maintaining roads and bridges has grown, the gas tax has remained the same and its purchasing power has been cut in half by inflation. This has created issues across the state, but especially in rural communities where local governments struggle with limited budgets.

Proposition D would gradually increase the gas tax by 2.5 cents per year over a four-year period and send 30 percent of the fuel tax funds directly to counties and cities to spend on local roads and bridges.

MFA Oil and its farmer-owners depend on safe, reliable roads and bridges to move large equipment throughout the state's backroads and highways. The rural transportation system provides the first and last link in the supply chain from farm to market. Passing Proposition D will provide much-needed resources to address the dire condition of the state's roads and bridges.

Drive to Feed Kids Campaign Raises Resources for 1.8 Million Meals

Missouri Farmers Care (MFC) continued its fight against childhood hunger with the second annual Drive to Feed Kids campaign, which raised \$145,000 for Feeding Missouri, a coalition of six Missouri food banks. The MFC donation will make it possible for the food banks to provide an estimated 1.8 million meals for hungry children from across the state.

Food insecurity affects one in five Missouri children, and the situation is

more dire in rural areas where one in three kids goes hungry.

The Drive to Feed Kids fundraiser culminated at the Missouri State Fair in August, when volunteers and fairgoers had opportunities to donate food through a variety of programs that brought in 18,932 pounds of non-perishable food for local pantries.

"This event raises awareness of food insecurity faced by Missouri school kids, especially children in rural areas," said MFC Chairman Alan Wessler. "It also speaks to the heart of Missouri's agricultural community, showcasing the tremendous work of farmers and ranchers who leverage science, technology, their expertise and natural resources to provide food for the world."

During the fair, MFC partnered with the Missouri FFA Association for the second annual Missouri FFA Food Insecurity Service Day on Aug. 14. More than 650 volunteers from FFA and agricultural organizations spent the day packing more than 100,000 meals to feed families of up to six people. The meals were distributed to Missouri's regional food banks across the state.

"The collective effort of Missouri's agriculture community is significant. As people become more aware of the hunger problem in Missouri, they're stepping up to do something about it and our farmers are leading the way," said Scott Baker, who serves as state director for Feeding Missouri. "The impact from this partnership will be felt by many of our neighbors in need throughout this new school year."

MFC is a joint effort by Missouri's agriculture community to stand together for the men and women who provide the food and jobs on which our communities depend. The coalition of more than 45 leading Missouri agricultural groups, including MFA Oil Company, promotes the growth of Missouri agriculture and rural communities through coordinated communication, education and advocacy. 

MFA Oil Wraps Fiscal Year with Three Acquisitions

M MFA Oil Company made a trio of deals in the fourth quarter of its 2018 fiscal year, bringing its annual acquisition total to eight.

The purchases included the propane operations of Rolla Farmer's Exchange of Rolla, Mo.; the propane and farm fuel operations of Frazier Oil & LP Gas Company, Inc., of Gower, Mo.; and the refined fuel operations of Rock Port Oil Company of Rock Port, Mo.

Rolla Farmer's Exchange is a farm input supply cooperative that MFA Oil has worked with for many years.

"Our long-time relationship with MFA Oil gives us a great deal of confidence that they will take excellent care of our propane customers and employees. This change allows us to concentrate on our strength, which is serving our agricultural customers," says Frank Brown, general manager of Rolla Farmer's Exchange.

"The acquisition of Rolla Farmer's Exchange follows our strategy of working with local co-ops who've decided to exit the energy business, yet still desire a strong cooperative marketer to serve their customers' energy needs," says MFA Oil President and CEO Mark Fenner.

Independent retailer Frazier Oil Company has serviced residential, agricultural and commercial customers in Buchanan, Clinton and Platte counties since its founding in 1969.

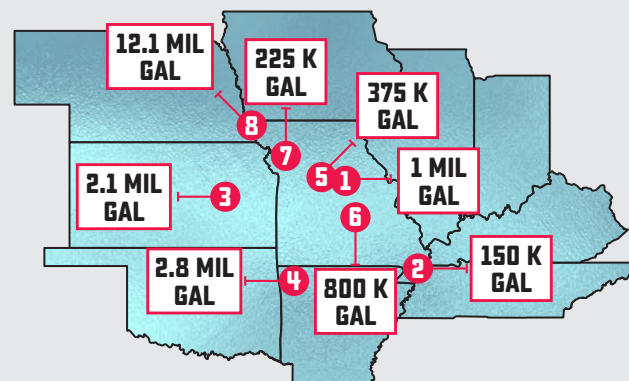
"Frazier Oil's propane and farm fuel business are a natural fit for our company, and we are excited to welcome their customers," says Jon Ihler, MFA Oil vice president of sales and marketing.

"We are really pleased to have found such an ideal fit for this aspect of our business," says Scott Frazier, president of Frazier Oil & LP Gas Company. "MFA Oil has a great team of people along with the resources and technology to take care of our long-time customers. They offer great service and will improve our operations, which is a great opportunity for our customers."

Rock Port Oil Company has been in business since the 1920s and has been owned by the Bunton family since 1950.

"Rock Port Oil has a well-earned reputation for outstanding customer care, and we are eager to build upon its success," Ihler says. "We share the same small-town values and plan to carry on the tradition of exceptional service and quality."

"Our family has been honored with the privilege of serving northwest Missouri for so many years and I am confident this transition will meet the needs of our community while



FY 2018 PROPANE AND REFINED FUEL ACQUISITIONS

JANUARY 2018

- 1. Callaway Propane LLC • Fulton, Mo.**
• 1 million gallons of propane annually
- 2. Raines Oil Co. • Senath, Mo.**
• 150,000 gallons of refined fuel annually
- 3. Cardie Oil, Inc. • Tampa, Ks.**
• 1.6 million gallons of propane annually
• 460,000 gallons of refined fuel annually

APRIL 2018

- 4. George's Gas Co., Inc. • Berryville and Harrison, Ar.**
• 2.8 million gallons of propane annually

MAY 2018

- 5. Howard Electric – MFA Propane LLC • Fayette, Mo.**
• 375,000 gallons of propane annually

JULY 2018

- 6. Rolla Farmer's Exchange • Rolla, Mo.**
• 800,000 gallons of propane annually

AUGUST 2018

- 7. Frazier Oil & LP Gas Company, Inc. • Gower, Mo.**
• 225,000 gallons of propane annually
- 8. Rock Port Oil Company • Rock Port, Mo.**
• 12.1 million gallons of refined fuel annually

upholding the same level of service and commitment to our customers," says Bill Bunton, president of Rock Port Oil.

MFA Oil will continue to evaluate strategic acquisition opportunities in its existing market areas and other regions where it can expand its footprint. **M**

Afterschool Program Broadens Students' Horizons



Every day after school, about 50 children from Chillicothe, Mo., arrive at the North Missouri Center for Youth and Families. The kids range from kindergarteners to eighth graders, but they all take part in the center's PowerUP! Afterschool program, which provides a nurturing environment for tutoring, help with homework, enrichment activities and a daily meal.

The program's goal is to empower youth to reach their full potential, and the children can choose from a number of options beyond academic support.

"We want the kids we work with to grow, explore and to gain exposure to potential new interests," says Maizey Knifong, the center's executive director. "So we try to provide the kids with opportunities to do things they might not otherwise be able to do."

Hands-on activities like cooking, gardening, sports, photography and sewing are some of the options kids can choose to do at the center. Whether it's growing watermelons and jalapeños in one of 18 gardening beds, building iPad-controlled robots or more traditional arts and crafts activities, a wide variety of experiences are available to broaden students' horizons.

"The kids we work with are at an impressionable time in their lives, so it's important that they have a safe, positive place where they can develop and grow to be successful in the future," Knifong says.

The MFA Oil Foundation recently presented a grant to the North Missouri Center for Youth and Families to pay for a sign that was hung on the building's exterior. Knifong says the sign was much needed and will help parents locate the center more easily and build awareness with community members.

"We're appreciative of the support from the MFA Oil Foundation," Knifong says. "Grants and donations are what keep us going. We also welcome volunteers and in-kind donations. Our kids can find uses for a lot of different things."

The MFA Oil Foundation is committed to assisting rural communities by donating resources to non-profit organizations dedicated to education, youth, human services and civic endeavors.

You can learn more about the MFA Oil Foundation's grant program, including eligibility and application guidelines, at mfaoil.com/foundation.


RECENT MFA OIL FOUNDATION GRANTS

In June, the MFA Oil Foundation Board of Directors approved more than \$40,000 in grants to 19 different organizations. An additional five grants were approved, pending the organizations raise 80% of their project funds first. The grant recipients are as follows:

APPROVED

Perry Volunteer Fire Department – Perry, Mo.
Miami County 4-H Foundation – Paola, Kan.
St. George School – Hermann, Mo.
Community R-VI High School – Laddonia, Mo.
Sullivan County Exposition Center & Fairgrounds – Milan, Mo.
Macon Senior Center – Macon, Mo.
City of Eldon Fire Department – Eldon, Mo.
Americus Fire Department – Americus, Kan.
North Missouri Center for Youth & Families – Chillicothe, Mo.
Families & Communities Together (F.A.C.T.) – Hannibal, Mo.
Adair County Sheriff's Office – Kirksville, Mo.
Clark County Council on Aging – Kahoka, Mo.
Brashear Booster Club – Brashear, Mo.
Arbyrd Volunteer Fire Department – Arbyrd, Mo.
Cancer Research Center – Columbia, Mo.
Tarkio Westboro Community Care, Inc. – Tarkio, Mo.
Clinton Intermediate School – Clinton, Mo.
Clearmont Baseball Association – Elmo, Mo.
Weaubleau R3 School District – Weaubleau, Mo.

PENDING

City of Seymour Park Department – Seymour, Mo.
Billings R-IV Schools – Billings, Mo.
Food for Morgan County (F4MC) – Versailles, Mo.
Rutledge School Restoration Society of Scotland Co. – Memphis, Mo.
Macon Rural Fire Department – Macon, Mo. 

Network Ops Team Tackles Tech Issues to Improve Customer Service

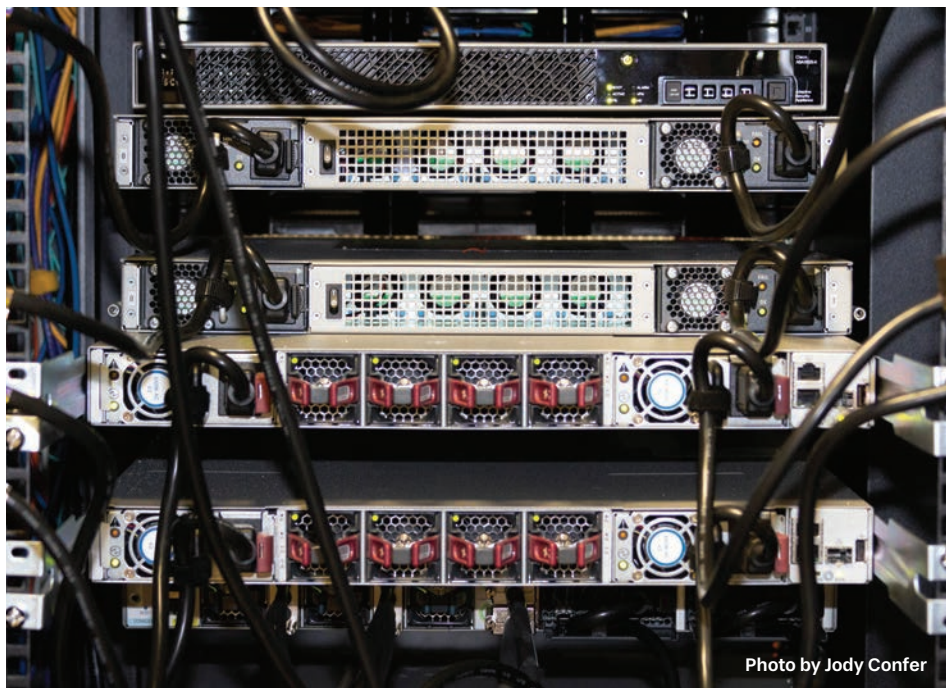
Throughout the spring and summer, MFA Oil has been hard at work upgrading its phone systems, enterprise content management system and server infrastructure to better care for customers. These efforts have been handled by the company's Network Operations department, which has worked diligently to replace outdated technology and install solutions that will allow for smoother and more reliable customer service.

"These improvements support nearly every level of MFA Oil and will make us a better company," says Greg Sellers, senior manager of network operations. "Our systems will communicate better and faster—which will translate to more convenient service for everyone with whom we do business."

Last winter, a few MFA Oil field offices had issues handling the high volume of calls that coincided with a prolonged cold snap. The phone system upgrades the Network Operations team has installed will enable the company to better manage calls during times of peak demand and allow for calls to be forwarded to available customer service representatives at the company's Business Support Campus in Moberly, Mo.

"We know it's frustrating to get a busy signal or to be placed on hold for long periods of time when calling for service," Sellers says. "Now that we can forward calls from overwhelmed offices to our team in Moberly, it should reduce wait times and ensure customers are always able to reach someone who can help."

When MFA Oil installed its new accounting system last fall, some activities such as reprinting customer statements began to unexpectedly take longer to produce. The modernization of MFA Oil's



enterprise content management system has sped up the process of reprinting statements, making it easier for customer service representatives to create them on demand.

AS MFA OIL HAS GROWN, SO TOO HAS THE AMOUNT OF SPACE THE COMPANY NEEDS TO STORE ITS DATA. SELLERS SAYS UPGRADES TO THE COMPANY'S SERVER INFRASTRUCTURE WERE OVERDUE.

As MFA Oil has grown, so too has the amount of space the company needs to store its data. Sellers says upgrades to the company's server infrastructure were overdue.

"We were at the point where we no longer had capacity left on our servers," says Sellers, "Our business was being limited

because our servers physically could not handle any more data."

By improving existing servers and adding new ones, Network Operations staff was able to increase the delivery speed of vital data and company resources to employees that will, in turn, make data-driven processes like truck routing and fuel delivery faster.

Aside from these projects, Sellers and his team are tasked with safeguarding the company's data. The Network Operations department, along with other members of the IT department, work to ensure that sensitive customer information is secured with the utmost care.

"Although we do most of our work behind the scenes, we take great pride in the system improvements and security work we do on behalf of our customers," Sellers says. ■

— By Callie Hanson



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