



MOMENTUM

A Passion for Poultry

For More Than a Quarter Century, Campo Lindo Farms
Has Raised the Freshest Free-Range Chicken and Eggs

Page 6



*livestock
legacy*

Page 10



We live where you do.

Summer 2022

BEFORE STARTING YOUR ENGINE, START WITH THIS.

You want to get the most out of any diesel engine? Start by filling it up with BOSS Performance Diesel. BOSS keeps engines clean, improves performance and helps machines run more efficiently, longer. In other words, put good in, get good out.

**MADE TO
WORK**

BOSS[®]
PERFORMANCE DIESEL

MFA OIL
Petro-Card 24

Find our products
near you by visiting
BossPerformanceDiesel.com



Contents

Features

6

A Passion for Poultry
For More Than a Quarter
Century, Campo Lindo Farms
Has Raised the Freshest Free-
Range Chicken and Eggs.

10

Livestock Legacy
Overcoming Tragedy, Fourth-
Generation Sullivan County
Farmer Forges Ahead to Grow
the Family Business in Animal
Agriculture

14

**Acquisitions in
Southern Missouri Grow
MFA Oil Presence**

20

**ASE Certification
Gives Big O Tires
Customers Confidence
in Mechanics**

22

**What Role does FFA
Have in the 21st
Century?**



In Every Issue

- 4 Letter From the CEO
- 5 Spotlight
- 16 From the Board
- 18 The Big Picture
- 23 Giving Back
- 24 Delegate Profile
- 26 Market Commentary
- 27 News Briefs



On the Cover:

Fourth-generation farmer Trevor Shafer was 19 years old when he was thrust into a more prominent role in his family's animal agriculture business. He raises cattle and swine in Sullivan County, Mo. *Photo by Jason Jenkins.*

Wrestling with the Inflation Bogeyman

THANKS TO A UNIQUE CONVERGENCE OF EVENTS, INCLUDING an extended period of near-zero interest rates, pandemic-driven government spending, supply chain disruption, labor shortages and geopolitical unrest, we are dealing with inflation near 40-year highs. Data from the Consumer Price Index showed that U.S. inflation had hit 8.6 percent in May—a level not seen since 1981.



Jon Ihler

Prices for goods and services around the world have risen dramatically in the last year and are producing a lot of financial anxiety. Questions about the U.S. economy abound. Can the Federal Reserve get inflationary forces back under control? Will supply chains untangle any time soon? It's too soon to tell, but my gut says no.

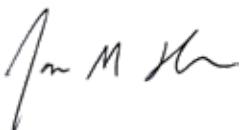
By a wide margin, most Americans view inflation as the top problem currently facing our country. A recent poll conducted by the Pew Research Center of 5,074 U.S. adults showed 70 percent of Americans view inflation as a “very big problem” for the country, followed by the affordability of healthcare (55 percent) and violent crime (54 percent).

Every sector of the U.S. economy has been affected by inflation in some form or another. Whether it's higher energy prices, rising grocery bills or the booming U.S. housing market, inflation is hitting us all.

From a business standpoint, it has been challenging to stay ahead of the inflation bogeyman. We've had to act quickly as prices across the board have surged, but I am proud to report MFA Oil remains healthy and on a growth trajectory. The cooperative is performing well through the first three quarters of the fiscal year with earnings thus far exceeding our expectations. Rising gross margins at the retail level have contributed to revenues. However, we have also experienced increasing expenses in fuel, repair costs, credit card fees and labor. Our company's ability to deftly manage supply this winter has been beneficial to our success. As volatility continues to push energy markets higher, we remain focused on finding the best values we can to support members' and customers' needs.

Management and the Board of Directors have worked the last three years to establish a company culture anchored by our core values that align with our purpose to drive the success of our customers and communities through exceptional products and services and our more than 90 years of heritage. Our culture has given the cooperative the strength and resilience to handle disruptions like the surging inflation we face today.

This summer and fall, we will host customer open house events at our bulk fuel plants. These gatherings are an excellent opportunity for our members and customers to learn more about the cooperative, share feedback about our services and let us know how we can better serve you. We look forward to these meetings and the chance to hear what matters most to you. I hope you will join us. Our schedule of events is available at www.mfaoil.com/openhouse.



Jon Ihler, President and CEO



Summer 2022 • Vol. 7 No. 3

This magazine comes to you courtesy of MFA Oil Company, a farmer-owned cooperative providing energy solutions to customers for more than 90 years. We deliver high-quality propane, fuels and lubricants to farmers and other customers across an eight-state region stretching from Indiana to Kansas. *Momentum* is an information service for farm families, published by MFA Oil.

Momentum is published three times annually. For address corrections, story ideas or other inquiries, email editor@mfaoil.com or call 800-366-0200.

www.facebook.com/MFAOil
www.twitter.com/MFAOil

Address: One Ray Young Drive
Columbia, MO 65201

President and CEO
Jon Ihler

Sr. Director of Sales and Marketing
Will Reniker

Sr. Manager of Marketing Services
Ashley Bower

Editor
Adam Buckallew

Graphic Designer
Kristin Branscom

Board of Directors
Glen Cope (Chairman),
Jake Taylor (Vice Chairman),
Tony Dameron, Monte Fisher,
Marion Kertz, Scott Mitchell,
Mike Moreland, Chuck Weldon

©2022 MFA Oil Company
www.mfaoil.com

Cold Weather Additive Bolsters BOSS Performance Diesel

DIESEL GELLING. FEW PHRASES

are more dreaded for anyone who runs a diesel-powered truck or equipment for a living throughout the winter months.

Gelling occurs when paraffin wax within diesel fuel solidifies and bonds together at extremely low temperatures. This is known as the fuel's cloud point, which for No. 2 diesel is typically around 14°F. When fuel reaches its cloud point, it has a hazy appearance. As the wax particles grow larger and larger, they begin to restrict flow.

In an effort to reduce cold-weather issues faced in previous years, MFA Oil has reformulated the cold-weather additive in its BOSS® Performance Diesel fuel.

Zach Studer, MFA Oil senior manager of distribution, procurement and quality control, said the cooperative worked with Mid-Continental Chemical (MCC) to evaluate more than 60 different formulations. The two companies began testing alternatives in 2019 and have completed hundreds of trials.

There are two essential components in the additive MCC has developed for MFA Oil: a cold flow improver (CFI) and a wax anti-settling agent (WASA). CFI works by changing the shape of the paraffin structure and breaking the waxy bonds into smaller particles, allowing them to pass through filters. When wax crystals begin to appear, they float around in the fuel, but as the temperature decreases, these crystals tend to sink to the bottom of the tank, forming a thick layer of dense wax. A WASA works by keeping these particles suspended in the fuel, prohibiting them from accumulating in the bottom of tanks. Fuels with high-quality cold-weather additives like BOSS can extend



cold-weather operability down to around 0°F.

The new additive performed well this past winter, said Barry Oden, northeast and east-central district manager for MFA Oil.

"The fuel performed as customers expected it would," Oden said. "Customers don't always tell us how good we're doing, but they certainly will let us know if our products are not meeting their expectations. I'm proud to say we had zero complaints about the cold-weather performance of our diesel fuel in the first year after the reformulation."

Studer said MFA Oil's goal is to reduce and eventually eliminate the need to blend No. 2 diesel fuel with No. 1 diesel fuel at some of the co-op's northern

locations. Eliminating blends with No. 1 diesel fuel, which is more costly, would allow the company to pass fuel savings on to end-users.

"We are committed to working with MCC to proactively evaluate additive formulations that will best serve our members and customers," Studer said. "We are always working on new formulations. As additive technology advances, we will continue to ensure we are at the forefront of the industry."

While there are many diesel fuel options available to customers, Oden said it is hard to find a more complete fuel than BOSS.

"We've got a high-quality fuel with the right combination of performance characteristics and protective additives that prevent downtime and costly repairs," Oden said. **M**



A PASSION *for* poultry

For More Than a Quarter Century,
Campo Lindo Farms Has Raised the Freshest
Free-Range Chicken and Eggs.



Photos & Story By
Jason Jenkins

Just a few. That was the plan when Jay and Carol Maddick raised their first broiler chickens in the 1990s on their farm in Clinton County, Mo. But a few quickly turned into hundreds, and from hundreds, thousands weren't too far behind.

"I jokingly told Jay that if we ever raised more than 9,999 chickens in a year, I was leaving," Carol recalled. "Well, I try not to do the math these days because we raise just a few more than that."

In fact, the Maddicks now raise roughly 5,000 free-range chickens a month at Campo Lindo Farms, supplying whole chickens to grocery stores and restaurants in the Kansas City region. They also maintain a flock of laying hens and sell free-range eggs.

THE JOURNEY TO 'BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY'

Neither Jay nor Carol had actually intended to become farmers when they enrolled at the University of Missouri in the 1980s. Instead, Jay, who grew up in northwest Missouri, and Carol, whose family lived in St. Louis after immigrating from Chile, both aspired to become veterinarians.

"We were pre-vet students in animal science, and that's how we met—in a livestock genetics class," Carol recalled. "It's funny looking back. We were so sure that neither one of us had an interest in chickens. We never attended our poultry science class."

Both eventually opted not to pursue veterinary school. Jay graduated one year ahead of Carol, taking a job with a dairy genetics cooperative in Pennsylvania. The young couple found their way to Texas and married in 1987. Carol worked at an equine facility, while Jay managed a cattle ranch. After a stop in Tennessee, the Maddicks decided it was time to come home to Missouri. They found their "campo lindo," which is Spanish for "beautiful country," southwest of Lathrop.

During their first years on the farm in the 1990s, the Maddicks raised tobacco—a cash crop that Jay had grown up with—and beef cows. While Jay managed the farming operation, Carol went to work for an animal health company in Lee's Summit, Mo. When their son, Brandon, was born, they decided they needed to find a way for the farm to solely support the family.

"We planned to raise and sell grass-fed beef, but that was a harder sell back then than it is today," Jay said. "We asked ourselves what we could do to entice more customers to the farm to buy our beef, and we thought, 'It's hard to find good chicken.'"

Carol and Jay started raising a few chickens, selling whole birds direct to consumers off the farm. While their beef marketing idea didn't take flight, word of their flavorful fowl spread, reaching a few Kansas City chefs who asked if the Maddicks could supply chicken for their restaurants.

"As we started raising more and more chickens, there were some weeks when we had more than the restaurants wanted, so we started going to farmers markets," Carol recalled. "As things progressed, we added a few laying hens and started selling eggs at the markets, too. It just grew exponentially from there."

As the chicken and egg business grew, so did the Maddick family with the arrival of a daughter, Isabel. Both she and Brandon grew up helping on the farm. One of their chores was gathering



LEFT: Cornish crossbred broiler chickens that arrived at Campo Lindo Farms as 1.5-ounce chicks grow to a finished weight of a little more than 5 pounds in just 49 days. ABOVE: For more than 25 years, Jay and Carol Maddick have provided the Kansas City region with the freshest free-range chicken and eggs.

eggs. By the time the pair was in middle school, Campo Lindo Farms had a flock of 3,600 laying hens. Each carton of eggs includes a personal note that lets customers know what's new and happening with the farm and the family.

Jay and Carol would quit the farmers market circuit when Brandon and Isabel reached high school. Instead, they opted to grow their business with grocery stores and supermarkets, something they had first established with a few independent grocers in the late 1990s.

THE POULTRY PROCESS

The Maddicks raise a strain of Cornish crossbred broiler chickens. Each week, they receive a shipment of day-old chicks directly from the hatchery. The white-feathered, yellow-legged birds are known for their quick growth and plentiful breast meat.

"They hatch on a Monday, and we get them in the mail on a Tuesday," Jay explained. "We'll get them into the barn and get them on feed and water immediately. To give them extra protection, we keep them closer together using draft guards that limit how much of the barn they can access."





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: As free-range chickens, the birds at Campo Lindo Farms can choose to stay in their barn or venture out into the pasture where they can forage for insects; Carol places a freshly processed whole chicken into an ice bath; Icing down the chickens allows the carcasses to cool quickly and helps ensure the best product; After being plucked, each chicken carcass is eviscerated. The farm recently began selling both chicken hearts and livers; While a plucking machine removes nearly all the feathers, Jay and Carol process each chicken by hand; Freshly processed whole chickens await USDA inspection before being iced down. OPPOSITE PAGE: Campo Lindo Farms free-range eggs and whole chickens can be found in grocery stores and supermarkets in the Kansas City region.



One week later, the draft guard is extended to provide the rapidly growing chicks with extra space. Depending on the weather, the chickens are allowed outside by their third to fourth week of life.

Each group is assigned its own barn and pasture space. As free-range chickens, the birds have a choice between staying inside the barn or venturing out into the pasture. Each morning, Jay opens the barn doors and turns out the chickens. They'll scratch and forage for insects for a while, return to the barn for feed and water, then find a shady spot to rest. At night, they return to the barn to roost—and to find protection.

"We have plenty of predators who have found the smorgasbord," Carol said. "They're easy pickings for sparrow hawks during the day, especially when they're little."

Jay adds that skunks and opossums will prey on chickens at night, as will owls. "If you leave the doors open, the owls will fly right into the barns, so we lock them up at night."

The Maddicks follow guidelines developed by the Global Animal Partnership (GAP) when raising their chickens. The birds are given non-GMO feed without antibiotics, supplements or other additives. After 49 days, the fowl that arrived at Campo Lindo Farms as 1.5-ounce chicks now weigh a little more than 5 pounds each and are ready for processing. Butchering is done completely by hand under the watch of a U.S. Department of Agriculture inspector. The freshly cleaned chickens are iced down immediately to cool before being weighed and packaged. A live bird that weighs about 5 pounds will yield a 3.5-pound whole chicken.

"We butcher today, and we deliver to our customers tomorrow," Carol said. "Because our chicken gets into the store a lot sooner

than chicken from the big guys, it has a 10-day shelf life without any artificial ingredients."

In addition to being featured on the menus of more than two dozen restaurants in the Kansas City area, Campo Lindo Farms chicken can be found in some of the region's independent grocers and meat markets, along with larger supermarkets such as Hy-Vee, Price Chopper and Whole Foods Market. The farm's eggs are available in many of the same stores, as well as Natural Grocers locations.

For several years, Campo Lindo Farms chicken—including individual cuts—and eggs also have been available for purchase through Shatto Home Delivery service. And this spring, the farm began offering chicken hearts, livers, necks and feet for sale online.

"The feet and necks are great for making a healthy stock that is full of glucosamine and chondroitin, which are extremely beneficial for joint health," Carol said. "The hearts and livers are packed with vitamins and minerals."

With their children grown and moved away, Jay and Carol employ workers to help with butchering and delivery of their chicken. They also partnered with an Amish family to oversee some of the egg production. After more than 25 years of raising free-range chicken, the Maddicks still enjoy waking up and getting to work their "beautiful country."

"I take pride in the fact that we do right by the chickens," Carol said. "I know they're having a good life while they are here on the farm, and I know our customers appreciate that." **M**

To learn more about Campo Lindo Farms, visit www.campolindofarms.com or call 816-740-3625.

LIVESTOCK

Legacy



Overcoming Tragedy, Fourth-
Generation Sullivan County Farmer
Forges Ahead to Grow the Family
Business in Animal Agriculture

Photos and Story By Jason Jenkins



Growing up in north Missouri's Sullivan County, just a few miles from Green City, Trevor Shafer always felt his place was on the family farm. After all, the Shafers' roots run deep in this ground. Trevor's great-grandfather, Charlie, started the operation in 1935. His grandfather, Leon, and his father, Roger, both followed in those footsteps. Young Trevor planned to do the same.

By the time Trevor was 12 years old, the Shafers' farming endeavors included row crop operations, a spring-calving beef cattle herd and several finishing barns where they raised market hogs on contract. After graduating high school, Trevor enrolled at nearby North Central Missouri College in Trenton. Though he wasn't particularly excited about higher education, he considered it as a brief detour on his way to a career in agriculture.

Tragedy, however, would hasten Trevor's full-time return to the family homestead. In June 2009, Roger Shafer lost his life due to injuries sustained in a pickup accident. He was only 49 years old.

"It was tough when my dad died," said Trevor, who was only 19 at the time. "I had to start learning a lot quickly, and most of it I learned the hard way. I had to grow up fast."

LIFE LESSONS BY TRIAL AND ERROR

In the wake of their father's death, all three Shafer siblings—Trevor, along with older brother, Logan, and older sister, Gentrie—helped their mother, Tammy, maintain the family farm. Trevor didn't return to college in the fall. Logan suspended his own construction business, while Gentrie put college on hold for the remainder of the year.

Initially, the brothers worked together on all aspects of the family farm. However, Trevor said that from the outset, he knew his agricultural interests leaned toward the livestock side of the operation and not the row crops.

"There's just too much uncertainty for me in corn and beans," he said. "Folks will say that when you row crop, you just work a couple months in the spring and a couple in the fall. But to me, it just seemed like it never quit."

Trevor eventually divested himself of row crop responsibilities. While he operated a custom application business for a few years, his focus was managing his mother's cattle herd and hog finishing barns. Though he'd occasionally raise some feeder cattle for market, the cow/calf operation was and continues to be the primary focus.

"After a few years of just taking care of my mom's spring-calving cows, my brother and I went in on buying some fall-calving cows," Trevor explained. "Then I added some more spring calvers of my own and just kept growing from there."

Today, the Shafers manage more than 1,500 acres of pasture and hay ground to support their beef operation. Trevor prefers to crossbreed his Angus cows to Hereford bulls, producing "black baldies."

It was tough when my dad died. I had to start learning a lot quickly, and most of it I learned the hard way. I had to grow up fast. —Trevor Shafer

"Red or black, it doesn't really matter to me," he added. "I'll run some red Angus and Simmental, too. Just a little bit of everything. You're not going to see picture-perfect cows out in our pastures, but we keep the mommas who are good milkers and who take good care of their calves."

The young livestock producer also continued overseeing the hog operation for his mother. In 2020, he invested in his own nursery barn. The 80-by-400-foot facility provides enough room to house around 9,000 weaned piglets.

"In Mom's barns, we raise fat hogs to go to market, but in mine, we're taking those little pigs and raising them up to 50-60 pounds," said Trevor, who serves as a delegate for MFA Oil. "We'll turn out a group about every seven weeks. Then, we'll wash everything down, sanitize the barn and bring in the next group."

While he acknowledged that his love of animal husbandry probably stems from



TOP: Trevor Shafer feeds a portion of his family's cow/calf herd using a bale processor to lay down a windrow of hay. Trevor prefers to crossbreed his Angus cows with Hereford bulls, producing "black baldies." MIDDLE: In 2020, Trevor invested in his own nursery barn for raising hogs. Over the course of roughly 7 weeks, a group of about 9,000 weaned piglets will be raised to 50–60 pounds inside the 80-by-400-foot facility. ABOVE: For more than 20 years, the Shafer family has raised hogs like these on their Sullivan County farm. Today, they operate both nursery and finishing barns. (photo courtesy of MFA Incorporated)

the fact that it's the only vocation he's ever known, Trevor added that caring for livestock provides a very specific sense of purpose.

"With the pigs, you get them in as little ones, and how well you take care of them determines their success and yours," he said. "When you provide them with the best feed and living conditions, you'll produce healthy, productive pigs."

"With the cattle, you're making sure those mommas have everything they need to grow healthy calves," Trevor continued. "When it's time to calve, you're checking on them, making sure that everything goes how it's supposed to and helping if there's trouble. When you get those calves worked and kicked out on good grass, that's when it's really fun."

FIFTH-GENERATION FARMER ON THE WAY

The construction of the nursery barn wasn't the only big event for Trevor recently. In October, he married Jalynn Gilworth. The couple also has another nursery project in the works as they are expecting their first child in mid-August.

"The farm that joins up to the family place came up for sale recently, so we bought it and now we're remodeling the house," Trevor said. "We're really hoping the contractors finish up before the baby arrives."

The additional acreage that came with the new farm has the 32-year-old considering an expansion of his cow/calf operation as well as the potential addition of a flock of sheep or a goat herd. "We have a bunch of little lots with electric fence already ran, so we're thinking about trying it," he said. "Nothing crazy at first. Just a few to see how they work in with the cattle and hogs."

Though it's been 13 years since Roger Shafer passed away, Trevor continues to honor his father's memory and his family's farming legacy, following the lessons he learned as a young boy.

"Every day, we work hard to make the farm better—not just for our animals or for ourselves, but for the future and for future generations," said the expectant father. "There's a lot of pride that comes with knowing that you're building something that will last beyond yourself." **M**

MFA Oil Foundation Grant Recipients

The MFA Oil Foundation provides cash grants to nonprofit organizations that are working to improve communities where MFA Oil has a significant concentration of members and employees. In May, the foundation approved \$105,320 in grants to 65 different organizations.



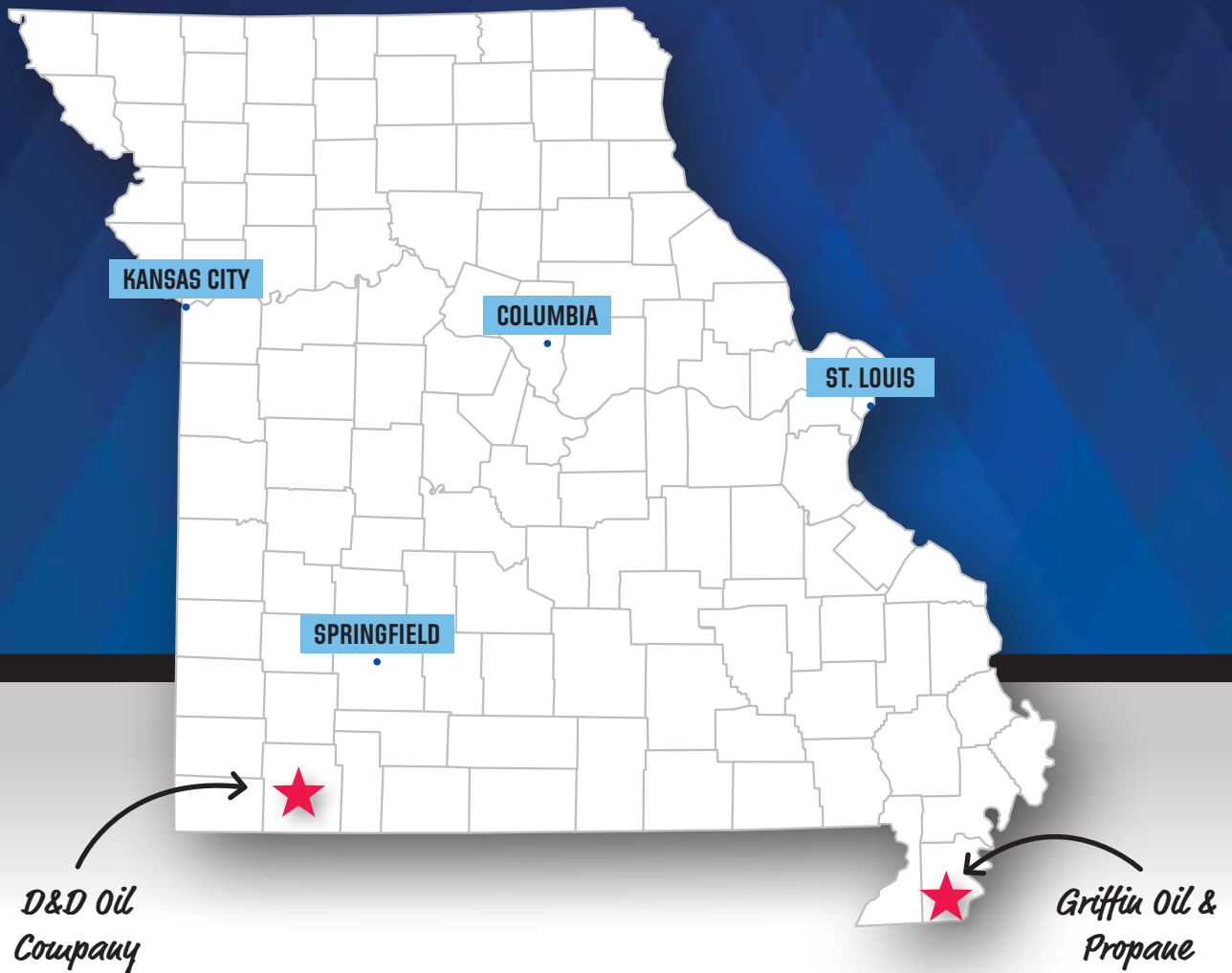
| | | | |
|--|--------------------|---|--------------------|
| Appleton City Athletic Boosters, Inc. | Appleton City, MO | New Life Project. | Lebanon, MO |
| Atlanta Volunteer Fire Department. | Atlanta, MO | Nodaway County Senior Citizens Senate, Inc. | Maryville, MO |
| Barnabas Foundation, Inc. | Purdy, MO | North Callaway R-1 School District. | Kingdom City, MO |
| Braymer Food Pantry. | Braymer, MO | Ohio County Senior Services. | Hartford, KY |
| Children's Center of Southwest Missouri. | Joplin, MO | Our Lady of the Snows School. | Eugene, MO |
| Choices for People Center for Citizens with Disabilities, Inc. | Rolla, MO | Palmyra Christian Academy. | Palmyra, MO |
| City of Houston Fire Department. | Houston, MO | Pantry for Adair County. | Kirkville, MO |
| City of Maples Repertory Theatre. | Macon, MO | Pemiscot Progressive Industries, Inc. | Hayti, MO |
| Coffey County Library - Lebo Branch. | Lebo, KS | Pocahontas Volunteer Fire Fighters Corp. | Pocahontas, AR |
| Dubois County Humane Society. | Jasper, IN | Poplar Bluff Museum. | Poplar Bluff, MO |
| Ebenezer Historical Society. | Springfield, MO | Poplar Bluff Trails Coalition. | Poplar Bluff, MO |
| Friends of Christian Education of Missouri, Inc. | Willow Springs, MO | Power of Hope Equestrian Center. | Steelville, MO |
| Friends of Library District No. 2 of Linn County. | La Cygne, KS | Putnam Co Sr. Citizens Organization. | Unionville, MO |
| Fulfillment House. | Kearney, MO | Ridgeway R-V School. | Ridgeway, MO |
| Garnett Fire Department. | Garnett, KS | Second Harvest Community Food Bank. | St. Joseph, MO |
| Grand River Multipurpose Center. | Chillicothe, MO | Seneca Area Fire Protection District. | Racine, MO |
| Home of Hope, Inc. | Vinita, OK | South Central Regional Veterans Group. | Rolla, MO |
| Humeston Fire Department. | Humeston, IA | Ste. Genevieve Museum Learning Center. | Ste. Genevieve, MO |
| Infinity Academy. | Springfield, MO | Stilwell Youth League. | Westville, OK |
| JT Richardson Northwestern Community Shooting Sports Complex. | Sumner, MO | St. Clair Fire Protection District. | St. Clair, MO |
| La Plata Christian Ministries. | La Plata, MO | St. Mary Catholic School. | Glasgow, MO |
| Leon Little League. | Leon, IA | St. Paul's Lutheran School. | Concordia, MO |
| Lincoln County R-III Education Foundation. | Troy, MO | Teen Challenge International Neosho, MO. | Clark, MO |
| Living Hope Thrift Store and Pantry. | Maysville, MO | The Rolla Mission. | Rolla, MO |
| Long Branch Area YMCA. | Macon, MO | The Wesleyan Church. | Orleans, IN |
| Madison Township Volunteer Fire Department. | Odon, IN | University of Missouri Ray County Extension. | Richmond, MO |
| Mainstreet Macon Downtown Association. | Macon, MO | Wardell Volunteer Firefighters Assoc. | Wardell, MO |
| Marmaton / Osage Fire Department. | Moran, KIS | West Plains Police Department. | West Plains, MO |
| Marthasville Community Ambulance District. | Marthasville, MO | White Rock Fire Protection District. | Jane, MO |
| Maysville Endowment Fund. | Amity, MO | Willow Springs Police Department. | Willow Springs, MO |
| Monroe County Extension Foundation. | Paris, MO | Wood Memorial High School. | Oakland City, IN |
| MU Health Care. | Columbia, MO | Wyman Center, Inc. | Eureka, MO |
| | | Zion Public School. | Stilwell, OK |

A New Day is Dawning for Energy...



Get a Free Quote at www.energized-solar.com

Acquisitions in Southern Missouri Grow MFA Oil Presence



MFA Oil Company recently made a pair of acquisitions in the Show-Me State. The company acquired the propane and refined fuel operations of Griffin Oil & Propane, an independent retailer based in southeast Missouri, on March 30. MFA Oil completed another acquisition when it bought D&D Oil Company of Wheaton, Mo., on April 27.

The Griffin Oil & Propane deal included offices in Deering, Mo., and Portageville, Mo. MFA Oil gained a new storage location in Cassville, Mo., and a service station in Wheaton from the D&D acquisition. Both purchases included the acquisition of trucks, tanks, employees and customer accounts.

“We are very excited to have added new team members from Griffin Oil & Propane and D&D Oil Company to our staff,” said Kenny Steeves, senior vice president of MFA Oil operations. “Both companies had top-notch teams that we were pleased to welcome to the MFA Oil family. Adding these new employees’

talents to our current resources is helping us bolster our efforts in southern Missouri.”

PASSING THE TORCH

The owners of both companies thanked their customers for many years of support and explained why they felt MFA Oil was best positioned to continue to care for their energy needs.

Joe King, co-owner and managing partner of Griffin Oil & Propane, expressed gratitude to the many customers serviced by his company for decades.

“When we decided to pass the torch, we wanted to ensure our employees and customers would be in good hands,” King said. “MFA Oil is best positioned to provide the high level of care our customers expect. As we have worked through the transition, their interactions with our people and clientele have been nothing less than amazing.”



Steve DeCocq, president of D&D Oil Company, thanked customers “for allowing us the privilege of providing your fuel needs for so many years.

“When my wife, Brenda, and I decided to retire, it was imperative to us that we find a company that we believed would have the best culture to take care of our customers and our employees,” DeCocq said. “MFA Oil was hands down the best fit.”

STRENGTHENED POSITION

MFA Oil actively seeks out expansion opportunities through acquisitions. Buying Griffin Oil & Propane and D&D Oil Company strengthens the cooperative’s presence in southwest and southeast Missouri.

“These purchases fit well with our existing operations, and the addition of their resources will allow us to better serve customers in southeast and southwest Missouri,” Steeves said.

MFA Oil has now made three acquisitions in its 2022 fiscal year, which began on Sept. 1, 2021. In November, the company acquired the propane and refined fuel operations of Midwest Propane, the energy business of Mid-West Fertilizer, LLC in eastern Kansas, western Missouri and northeast Oklahoma.

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



MFA OIL SELLS INTEREST IN NORTHWEST MISSOURI GRAIN, LLC

On May 31, MFA Oil and MFA Incorporated, a grain marketing and farm supply cooperative, announced an agreement under which MFA Incorporated will acquire full ownership of Northwest Missouri Grain, LLC.

Five years ago, the two companies came together to construct a state-of-the-art grain-handling facility just outside Hamilton, Mo. MFA Oil’s investment in the project was instrumental in financing its construction and providing operating capital. The two companies jointly agreed to exercise an option in the operating agreement that allowed MFA Incorporated to become the sole owner by purchasing MFA Oil’s one-third interest in the joint venture.

The grain-handling facility provides additional opportunities for members of both cooperatives to market their grain and maintains MFA Incorporated’s access to end-user markets to the south and southwest, including export markets.

“Together with MFA Incorporated, we successfully opened an operation that has brought new marketing opportunities to farmers in the region,” said Jon Ihler, president and CEO of MFA Oil Company. “We are proud to have played our part in helping to finance Northwest Missouri Grain, LLC.”

As MFA Incorporated assumes full ownership of the Hamilton facility, it’s worth noting the spirit of cooperation is powerful when like-minded organizations set sights on a shared goal. **M**

Q&A with Chuck Weldon of the MFA Oil Board of Directors



Q How would you describe yourself and your farming operation?

A I am 45 years old and married my wife, Becky, in 2005. I have a stepdaughter, Hannah, who graduated from the University of Missouri in May. My life and farming operation are quite diverse. My father, Jim, technically retired from the day-to-day operations on the farm a few years ago, but he still works every day and honestly could outwork men half his age.

When my dad retired, my wife and I formed an LLC for our row crop operation. We raise corn and soybeans in three different counties in north Missouri. I'm also a contract pork producer for Smithfield Hog Production. I'm a gilt developer and raise replacement gilts for the company. I started that shortly after high school. In 2005 and 2013, I added barns. We have six barns with a capacity for 6,800 pigs.

As a young child, I always had a fascination with the radio. I started working part-time in radio broadcasting during my senior year of high school. I went on to work at KFKF in Kansas City and became the No. 1 fill-in for the station. In June 2020, I was hired as the midday DJ at KMZU in Carrollton.



I'm also an owner of Whitetail Fix television, a hunting show that airs on the Sportsman Channel.

Q Since its founding in 1929, MFA Oil has evolved with the times to meet its members' needs. What must the co-op do to continue to serve future generations of farmers?

A We need to continue hiring, training and retaining the best employees and giving them the tools and resources to do their jobs at the highest level possible. We need to continually provide superior products and services at a competitive level. In this ever-changing

world, we must be proactive and willing to change with the times to whatever extent that might be.


Q What do you think sets MFA Oil apart from its competitors?

A We offer a full line of products in-house, from gas, diesel and propane to our lubricants and our new solar division. We provide energy in many forms. I believe we have the best services in our business, and with our Petro-Card 24 stations, our members can easily find a place to fill up their vehicles all over Missouri and in many of the surrounding states.

Q Why is it important for members to get involved with their cooperative?

A Involvement is essential when it comes to the sustainability of our organization. MFA Oil has dependably served the energy needs of our farmer-members for 93 years. We need members to engage with us so that we can learn what they need and how to serve them best. The cooperative model is an old-school model, but it is something we need to protect.

Q You serve on the MFA Oil Foundation Board and have had the opportunity to present grants from the foundation to various non-profit organizations in your district. How impactful are these grants to the communities the cooperative serves?

A I've just started my term on the MFA Oil Foundation Board, but this has been my favorite part of my three years on the MFA Oil Board of Directors thus far. Presenting those checks, hearing how that money will be used, and seeing how grateful the recipients are is something that always makes me smile. I'm honored to be a part of such a great co-op that gives back to our communities. 

» Chuck Weldon, a lifelong resident of Gallatin, Mo., is the owner/operator of Weldon Farms LLC, a corn and soybean operation in Daviess County. He serves as an MFA Oil delegate, an MFA Agri Services delegate, a board member of Harrison Township, and a member of the Chillicothe Elks Lodge 656. Weldon was elected to the MFA Oil Board of Directors in 2018 to represent District 1-Northwest.

WORK HORSE

THEY DON'T CALL IT WORK HORSE FOR NOTHING.

Run with the oil too proud
to quit before the job is done.



Pouring the latest technology, advanced additives and 90-plus years of expertise into every quart, Work Horse® begins by exceeding original equipment specs.

We follow up with unrivaled customer support in testing and maintenance. The result: A new breed of oil powered by the same work ethic that pushes you.



WorkHorseLubes.com



Missouri Farm Income to Set New Records in 2022

MISSOURI FARM INCOME APPEARS ON PACE FOR another record year, according to John Kruse, associate research and extension professor in agricultural and applied economics at the University of Missouri.

“It’s not often when there are back-to-back record years for Missouri farm income, but the data suggests 2021 set a new record for Missouri farm income at \$4.27 billion, and 2022 appears to be close behind at \$4.19 billion,” Kruse said. “The last time Missouri farmers saw income levels this strong was in 2013 and 2014. Comparable real net farm income levels (2022 dollars) were \$4.02 billion and \$4.09 billion in 2013 and 2014, respectively.”

USDA won’t release official 2021 Missouri net farm income estimates until November.

Kruse presented his report on the Missouri farm income outlook at the recent Abner Womack Missouri Agriculture Outlook Conference, hosted by MU’s Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute.

Commodity prices—which have gradually increased as global supplies have gotten tighter—are driving the income growth, he said. Last year’s drought in Canada reduced canola production 35 percent, and dry conditions continue to linger in south-central Canada. Southern Brazil and Argentina experienced a second year of La Niña-induced drought, significantly reducing their current soybean crops. Dry conditions in Europe are raising concerns for the coming growing season. In the United States, 30 percent of the wheat crop is reported to be in good to excellent condition,



compared with 53 percent this time last year. Drought conditions persist across much of the southwestern United States, including areas supporting cattle grazing.

In addition, the Russia-Ukraine war is likely to reduce exportable crop production from Ukraine in the current marketing year 2021-22 as well as for the next marketing year 2022-23 and possibly beyond, mostly affecting wheat, corn and sunflower products, Kruse said. Sanctions on Russia are expected to affect fertilizer supplies and energy prices, and prices will likely remain high for these inputs for the next few years.

Global corn, wheat and oilseed stocks remain tight, with rice the only large food commodity with stocks above the 30-year average. Commodity prices are likely to remain volatile, reacting strongly to new developments.

Missouri farmers are also experiencing wider basis levels, which suggests prices at the Board of Trade are not necessarily reflected well in local prices, Kruse said. He advises producers to use risk management tools for pricing and production.


While higher commodity prices are expanding crop revenues, they also mean higher feed costs for livestock producers. Missouri beef cow numbers dropped 6.3 percent from January 2021 to January 2022. Missouri breeding hog inventories dropped 2.3 percent in year-over-year estimates on Dec. 1, 2021, after falling 10.2 percent

in the previous year. Although 2021 livestock receipts are estimated to be up \$1.3 billion, that increase is more than halfway offset by rising feed and feeder livestock costs. Projections in January 2022 suggested that margins could get tighter, but livestock prices in the first quarter of 2022 have been higher than were anticipated in January and will help bolster livestock receipts in 2022.

As farmers look to the 2022 growing season, there is reason for continued optimism, Kruse said.

“The strength in farm income occurs even as ad hoc government payments are significantly reduced from 2020 levels,” he said. “Stronger commodity prices may add to crop and livestock cash receipts, but there will likely be some offset from higher production expenses, especially feed, fertilizer, fuel, labor, interest, etc.”

Kruse suggests farmers pay close attention to new opportunities offered under USDA’s Climate-Smart Commodities program that could generate new revenue streams through nontraditional sources.

Kruse is part of the Agriculture and Environment Program, a partnership of MU Extension and the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. 

— BY JULIE HARKER, UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

The 2022 Missouri Farm Income Outlook is available for download at umurl.us/MoFarmIncome2022.





ASE CERTIFICATION GIVES BIG O TIRES CUSTOMERS CONFIDENCE IN MECHANICS



When you visit an automotive repair shop, you want to know that your vehicle will be serviced by a reputable professional who knows what they are doing. Since 1972, the National Institute of Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) has been certifying mechanics to ensure they have the experience and practical knowledge necessary to reliably fix vehicles.

As the only industrywide recognition available for automotive professionals, ASE certification is tangible proof that a mechanic has worked in the industry for at least two years and has the technical know-how to pass tests in specialized areas that cover every aspect of automotive repair and service.

MFA Petroleum Company owns and operates 22 Big O Tires franchise stores in Missouri and Arkansas. The company has made training and ASE certification a priority. Casey Graham, Big O Tires employee advancement manager, said the company pays for training and ASE certification for its employees.

“We see it as an opportunity to set our stores apart from our competitors,” Graham said. “When you know the employees at

an auto shop have gone through the training and passed the tests to certify their skills, it gives our customers a level of comfort and peace of mind that their vehicle is in good hands.”

Having an ASE-certified mechanic at every Big O Tires location is something customers can appreciate. Big O Tires currently has 24 ASE-certified mechanics spread among its stores and is urging additional employees to consider pursuing the accreditation. One way the company is encouraging the training is by raising the requirements for its advanced mechanic positions.

“If you want to move into a more senior position with better pay, we are requiring a minimum of at least two ASE certifications to qualify for the promotion,” Graham said. “Because brakes and steering and suspension are two of the biggest safety components for vehicles, we are asking for certification in those areas.”

There are up to nine certifications mechanics and technicians can receive to demonstrate they have the knowledge and skills necessary to diagnose, service and repair cars, SUVs and light-duty trucks. Tests offered include engine repair, automatic transmissions, manual drive train and axles, suspension and

steering, brakes, electrical systems, heating and air conditioning, engine performance, and light-vehicle diesel engines. The certifications last for five years and then individuals must retest to maintain their ASE standing.

Anyone who passes all nine tests is considered an ASE master technician. Big O Tires has three employees who have become master technicians: Sam Campbell, who works at the Big O Tires on Glenstone Avenue in Springfield, Mo.; Landon Cook, who works at the Big O Tires in Nixa, Mo.; and Brandon Stoutmeyer, who works at the Big O Tires in Lebanon, Mo. Campbell was recognized as the 2021 Big O Tires ASE Technician of the Year by the corporate Big O Tires office. He was selected from a group of national nominees who work at Big O Tires stores across the country.

When you know the employees at an auto shop have gone through the training and passed the tests to certify their skills, it gives our customers a level of comfort and peace of mind that their vehicle is in good hands." – Casey Graham


"I grew up in the automotive business and believe it's important to continue to challenge yourself," Campbell said. "These certifications have helped me prove my work reaches the caliber I expect of myself and ensures my customers are receiving high-quality work on their vehicles."

Graham is also encouraging service advisors, who act as liaisons between customers and the mechanics who work on the vehicles, to pursue ASE certification.

"Certification helps our front-counter staff better communicate information from our mechanics to our customers and vice versa," Graham said. "The faster we can identify what may be wrong based on a customer's description of the issue, the sooner we are able to schedule service for that customer. Additionally, certification gives our service advisors a better understanding of the types of repairs that are necessary from a safety perspective versus those that we recommend from a preventative maintenance perspective—which is important to distinguish to customers."

MFA Petroleum is working to ensure its employees who have earned ASE certification are properly recognized in its Big O Tires stores. The company displays employee certifications and photos in the lobby of its service centers to recognize their training and accomplishments.

As the technology in cars and trucks continues to advance, Graham said it's now more important than ever to ensure the people you trust to work on your vehicle know what they are doing.

"It's imperative that we keep up with our training and certifications so that our team has the knowledge and skills customers can trust to keep them and their vehicles safe and on the road." 



Sam Campbell, a mechanic at the Big O Tires store on Glenstone Avenue in Springfield, Mo., was named the 2021 Big O Tires ASE Technician of the Year.

BIG O TIRES ASE CERTIFIED EMPLOYEES

Brandon Bailey • Jefferson City, Mo. - Jefferson St.

***Sam Campbell • Springfield, Mo. - Glenstone Ave.**

Torrey Collins • Warrensburg, Mo.

Andrew Cook • Springfield, Mo. - Republic Rd.

***Landon Cook • Nixa, Mo.**

Ryan Cramer • Sedalia, Mo.

Ronald Draman • Nixa, Mo.

Brandon Dunnivant • Jefferson City, Mo. - Jefferson St.

Chad Franks • Columbia, Mo. - Business Loop 70

Chris Frey • Lebanon, Mo.

Michael Frey • Camdenton, Mo.

Casey Graham • Columbia, Mo. - Big O Tires Operations

Michael Haines • Warrensburg, Mo.

Anthony Hollas • St. Robert, Mo.

Christopher Holtkamp • Columbia, Mo. - Business Loop 70

Frisco Martin • Rolla, Mo.

Danny Meyer • Columbia, Mo. - Peachtree Dr.

Kyle Meyer • Columbia, Mo. - Peachtree Dr.

James Miller • Columbia, Mo. - Business Loop 70

Alvie Scott • St. Robert, Mo.

Cody Singleton • Jefferson City, Mo. - Jefferson St.

***Brandon Stoutmeyer • Lebanon, Mo.**

Brandon Weber • Osage Beach, Mo.

Steven Whittenberg • Jefferson City, Mo. - Missouri Blvd.

***ASE Master Technicians**



WHAT ROLE DOES FFA HAVE IN THE 21ST CENTURY?

Jason Dieckhoff and Marshall Streit teach ag at the Cass Career Center in Harrisonville, Mo. The center, which draws about 120 ag students from five area high schools, has had great success. Neither teacher likes to boast, though maybe they should.

The two were named Harrisonville Community Teachers of the Year, and Dieckhoff received the 2021 National Ag Educators Teacher Mentor Award. Dieckhoff has taught at the center for nearly 20 years, and Streit has 20 years of industry experience, notably with Iowa Beef and Pork (now Tyson). They complement each other: Dieckhoff teaches plant science and conservation, and Streit teaches ag tech and animal science.

“We prefer to avoid the limelight,” Streit said. “We like to keep our focus on the students. We may not be flashy, but our students come out professionals, ready for their next step (in ag).”

BUT IS AG STILL A VIABLE CAREER?

“While those directly involved in production agriculture continue to decline, the amount of jobs continues to rise,” Dieckhoff said. “There are more jobs available than recent graduates from high schools and colleges can supply. We feel we need to teach students about production agriculture, but also the skills and knowledge to support it—animal health, sales and marketing, machinery technology, conservation, and sustainability.”

Streit is more direct: “Ag companies are screaming for people! Students don’t need a college degree to make a great living. Students can come out of a



Marshall Streit (left) and Jason Dieckhoff (right) were named Harrisonville Community Teachers of the Year by the Harrisonville, Mo., Chamber of Commerce. Former State Representative Donna Pfautsch presented the pair of FFA advisors with copies of a resolution from the Missouri Legislature honoring their teaching accomplishments.

community college with no debt and join an ag career starting at \$50,000.”

They say they are merely meeting local needs with classes. This includes a veterinary science class to fill the dire, nationwide need for vets; an equine science class (the county has a large horse population); expanding conservation classes to grassland management, forestry and soil conservation; and expanding ag science, power and mechanics to include GPS. The center recently bought a John Deere tractor to demonstrate GPS. In 2015, they bought a computer numerical control (CNC) plasma table, too.

CNC machines are operated by AutoCAD, a complex computer-aided design and drafting software.

“Some students don’t want to weld,” Streit said. “Okay, they can design. If you can play a video game, you can run a CNC machine.”

One former student who’s benefited from this hands-on and modern approach is Trevor Campbell, now an ag business major at Mizzou’s College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. Streit saw how adept he was with engines and

encouraged him to pursue his passion. The result was a successful business, Campbell’s Small Engines and Lawns.

“They (Dieckhoff and Streit) were always there for me,” Campbell said. “They are fully the reason I’m studying at MU today.”

George Frees, another former student, is studying biochemistry and plant sciences at Mizzou. Frees won a national FFA agriscience award for research into speeding sugar cane growth for ethanol production. Frees conducted a year-long research project evaluated by ag PhDs, aided and encouraged by both teachers every step of the way.

“I hope they both know how much of an impact they made on me and countless others,” Frees said. “I would not be where I am without them.” That where, incidentally, may be everywhere: Streit says Frees’s research could transform life in the United States in 20 years.

Adds Campbell, “It’s easy to underestimate the time and care they put into helping students like me achieve their potential and success.” **M**

— BY NEAL FANDEK

MFA Oil Supports State FFA Groups

AS A FARMER-OWNED COOPERATIVE, MFA OIL understands the need to support programs dedicated to developing future leaders in agriculture. The company has partnered with state FFA organizations in Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas and Oklahoma to sponsor opportunities for youth to pursue hands-on educational, personal development and leadership training.

One of the ways the company is helping FFA is by sponsoring the purchase of the iconic blue FFA jackets in Kansas and Oklahoma. The blue corduroy jackets not only are part of the FFA official dress code but also serve as a symbol of community and pride for members. Providing the jackets to FFA members in need helps to remind the students that they are part of something bigger than themselves.

Estrella Molina, an FFA member from Marlow, Okla., is one of 14 students in the Sooner State who received an FFA jacket because of an MFA Oil sponsorship.

“Thank you for your support in providing me with this jacket,” Molina wrote to MFA Oil. “I deeply appreciate you giving me this opportunity to wear my jacket with pride. Your contribution is helping me achieve something great.”

Sponsorship of FFA supervised agricultural experiences (SAEs) is another area where MFA Oil is providing resources to students. The cooperative sponsors SAE grants for FFA members who need financial assistance in Arkansas and Kansas. The grant programs allow FFA members to start or expand their SAE through the purchase of necessary equipment, livestock or supplies.

One Kansas student who benefitted from an SAE sponsorship is DeAnna Smith, a member of the Mission Valley FFA chapter in Eskridge, Kan. Smith has raised show goats for eight years and received a grant to help with the purchase of bedding materials, veterinary bills and minerals for her goats.

“My goats are my pride and joy,” Smith wrote in a thank-you letter to MFA Oil. “Watching the kids jump around and play are my favorite part of my day.”

Jennifer Cook, executive director of the Arkansas FFA Foundation, said SAEs provide experimental learning opportunities for students.

“FFA members who succeed with their SAEs demonstrate they are self-starters who can set and achieve goals,” Cook said. “I think when we reward kids for their hard work, they are motivated to work even harder. We validate their efforts and applaud their choice to develop career-readiness skills. They also



Estrella Molina, an FFA member from Marlow, Okla., is one of 14 students in the Sooner State who received an FFA jacket because of an MFA Oil sponsorship.

learn that even when we set goals and work hard, sometimes things don't work out exactly how we planned. This is real life!”

In Missouri, MFA Oil sponsors FFA leadership training activities. The state's leadership camp provides a week-long opportunity for high school FFA members from across Missouri to learn how to set goals, overcome obstacles and develop their communication and interpersonal skills.

“Sponsorships from MFA Oil and others allow Missouri FFA to stretch our financial resources to provide a quality experience for the campers,” said Keith Dietzschold, who serves as agriculture education director for the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Missouri FFA state advisor. “MFA Oil's sponsorship of leadership programs at Missouri FFA Camp provides the tools and resources to allow our MO FFA members to continue on a path to develop Growing Leadership, Building Communities and Strengthening Agriculture skills.”

MFA Oil supports FFA because the need for more advocates and leaders in the agricultural industry continues to grow.

“We know that FFA members represent the future of our industry, and we are proud to assist FFA organizations in ways that help students achieve their goals,” said Jon Ihler, MFA Oil president and CEO. **M**

A Desire to Dig

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT DIGGING HOLES THAT little boys and girls just can't resist. Whether it's in the sandbox, the backyard or at the beach, few children will pass up the opportunity to play with toy bulldozers, backhoes and dump trucks, moving sand and soil to build moats around castles or little lakes to house handfuls of tadpoles.

Eventually, most outgrow this desire to dig and leave the toys behind. Some, however, just decide to get bigger toys. Kevin Seaton falls into this second category.

For more than three decades, Kevin has made his living from the cabs of all types of heavy equipment. Today, he is the owner of Seaton Excavating & Basements based in Unionville, Mo. Working primarily in north-central Missouri and south-central Iowa, Kevin is a second-generation excavator, a trade he learned from his father, Vern.

"Dad had his own business, and he was a working machine," Kevin said. "He'd work sunup to sundown, 14 to 15 hours every day, and that was on a dozer with no cab, no air and no hydraulic blade. That cable blade was work."

After graduating high school, Kevin moved to the Kansas City area and worked for his uncle, who was also in the excavating business. He'd eventually tire of city life, opting to return to Putnam County in the early 2000s.

Since starting his business, Kevin has relied on MFA Oil Company to supply both diesel fuel and oil for his heavy equipment.

"I started with a tracked excavator, working a couple days a week and fishing the rest of the time," Kevin said with a laugh. "That was fun. But business kept growing by word of mouth, and before I knew it, it was a full-time job."

Today, Kevin operates a full fleet of excavating equipment. Most of his work includes construction of ponds, field terraces and building pads, along with clearing for home sites and along field edges and fence rows. He also does some basement repair.

"We used to build basements, but concrete is stressful. I didn't know what stress was until we got into that business," Kevin said. "With concrete, if it isn't right, you have to tear it out and do it again. Dirt is a lot simpler. If it isn't right, you just move it."



When digging today, Kevin says an excavator must be extremely cautious, even after calling 811 to have underground utilities marked.

"There's so much stuff buried in the ground nowadays," he said. "Power lines, water lines, phone lines and fiber optics—you've got to be really careful. It's not like the old days. Used to be, if you accidentally got into something, they'd come out and fix it. You'd apologize, they'd laugh at you and tell you not to hit it the next time. Now, you hit something, especially one of those fiber-optic lines, and you're paying for it."

Since starting his business, Kevin has relied on MFA Oil Company to supply both diesel fuel and oil for his heavy equipment. He currently serves as a delegate representing the bulk plant in Unionville. "Any time I need anything, they have me covered," he added.

Kevin isn't the only entrepreneur in the family. His wife, Shelly—who had been a middle school math teacher at Putnam County R-1 School District—operates Strive Time Nutrition. Located on the square in Unionville, the business offers protein smoothies, energizing teas and other health drinks. She's also a sales agent for United Country Gilworth Real Estate and Auction.

Together, the couple has three children: Kaden, Jade and Karley. When they aren't working, they enjoy attending their kids' sporting events, riding ATVs, hunting, fishing, golfing and relaxing at nearby Lake Thunderhead.

At 50 years old, Kevin isn't ready to park his bulldozer quite yet. In fact, he says his dad didn't quit working until he was nearly 80.

"When you like what you do, it's not really work," he said. **M**

—STORY & PHOTO BY JASON JENKINS

Take yields to new heights



The yield-boosting benefits of fungicides are proven, but MFA's Gold Advantage Trend-B takes their performance to a higher level. This foliar-fed, slow-release nitrogen works in synergy with fungicides to deliver targeted nutrition when the plant needs it the most. It also includes added boron, which is essential during the crop's reproductive stages. Trend-B doesn't replace sound soil fertility, but it enhances the plant's ability to use nutrients at peak uptake and produce a top crop.



Boost plant health and increase yield with Trend-B.

Contact your MFA Agri Services for additional information, or call (573) 874-5111.



www.mfa-inc.com



MADE FOR AGRICULTURE®

War, What Is It Good For? Absolutely Nothing

ON FEB. 18, 2022, SIX DAYS BEFORE

the Russian invasion of Ukraine began, West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude oil was trading at \$91.07 per barrel. Since then, many countries have condemned the Russian aggression and responded to it with sanctions and banning imports of Russian energy products. As of May 26, more than three months since the conflict began, WTI crude is now trading for \$113.69 per barrel, a price increase of 24.8 percent.

A look at energy product inventories helps to show why domestic fuel prices have risen dramatically in such a short timeframe. On Feb. 18, gasoline stocks were at 246.5 million barrels and distillate inventories were at 119.7 million barrels (which was already 33 million fewer barrels than the prior year). As of May 20, gasoline stocks were at 219.7 million barrels and distillates were at 106.9 million barrels. Gasoline inventories are about 8 percent below their five-year average, and diesel stocks have declined roughly 24 percent below the five-year average.

Pricing has bounced around a little since the war began, but we are now entering the summer driving season with the average gallon of gas in the United States hitting a high of \$4.60 on May 26, about 51 percent higher than a year ago. The average cost of a gallon of diesel fuel is \$5.54, which is also at record levels and approximately 74 percent more than at the same time last year.

At the time of this article's publication, we have yet to see any real progress made on any front that would help us to determine where these energy markets might head. Despite the sanctions and bans on Russian energy products, those products have still found their way to buyers. Energy sales have been crucial in financing Russia's war effort. At the same time, the Russian crude has kept supplies around the globe from



tightening any further than where they could be or should be.

It does appear as though sanctions may be beginning to have some impact. In its May sales for June delivery, Russia offered some of its crude and refined products and demanded to be paid in rubles. This time, there were no buyers. Several potential buyers complained that the options to pay were too limited and it just couldn't be done. Traders will likely figure out a way to work around these issues, and I would guess these barrels eventually get sold.

The oil barrels released from strategic petroleum reserves around the world gave us a brief decline in prices, but it was short-lived. I guess you could conclude that the release of the barrels from reserves has helped keep crude inventories flat, but gas and diesel stocks have fallen behind. These two products are in a concerning situation.

Diesel supply concerns were an issue before the war, and the situation has only worsened. The market has been exceptionally volatile with large intraday moves. The week of April 25, ultra-low

sulfur diesel futures increased more than 90 cents per gallon. That is extreme and distillate inventories are tight, but this situation clearly has more behind it than meets the eye. Prices are likely to continue to move higher until we see demand destruction. At what price level that happens remains unclear, but we've yet to see it occur.

I find it hard to contract fuel at the current price levels despite the fact that I believe prices in the near term are headed higher. If you are concerned, I would recommend locking in a very conservative volume of fuel or spending the 25 cents to obtain the protection of a maximum price contract. The longer-term picture is much harder to forecast, but I believe the market is moving higher to curb demand, which it will accomplish eventually. Markets do not like all this uncertainty, so I expect volatility to remain high. **M**



» **Tim Danze**
is the hedging manager
for MFA Oil.



From Left: Chuck Weldon, Glen Cope and Jake Taylor

Three Directors Re-Elected to MFA Oil Board

MFA Oil hosted delegate meetings in February across the company's eight voting districts. In Missouri, the delegations gathered in Harrisonville, Jonesburg, Kirksville, Marshall, Mt. Vernon, Ste. Genevieve and St. Joseph. Arkansas delegates met in Jonesboro.

MFA Oil delegates from District 1–Northwest, District 3–Southwest and District 6–Central voted to re-elect three incumbent members of the MFA Oil Board of Directors. Chuck Weldon of Gallatin, Mo.; Glen Cope of Aurora, Mo.; and Jake Taylor of Ashland, Mo. were each reappointed with a three-year term on the co-op's board.

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, Weldon is a contract pork producer for Smithfield Foods and co-owns Whitetail Fix, a popular hunting television show on The Sportsman Channel. He serves as an MFA Oil delegate, an MFA Agri Services delegate, a board member of Harrison Township, and a member of the Chillicothe Elks Lodge 656. In addition to farming, he is an on-air talent for KMZU Radio in Carrollton, Mo. Weldon was elected to the MFA Oil Board of Directors in 2018.

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. Cope 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. Cope currently serves on the FCS Financial board as well as Congressman Billy Long's

agriculture advisory committee. Cope was elected to the board in 2018 and has served as its chairman since 2020.

Jake Taylor of Ashland, Mo., is a first-generation farmer. He and his wife, Molly, started J Taylor Farms, LLC in 2014. In July of 2021, Taylor retired from the insurance business after a successful 21-year career. Today, Taylor works full-time expanding his grain and cattle operation. He also sells Einbock equipment used for weed control in organic row crop production and manages his in-laws' farms in Henry and Johnson counties in Missouri. Taylor is an MFA Oil delegate; a member of The Crossing Church of Columbia, Mo.; an advisory board member for Farm Credit Services; and a past board member of Boone County Farm Bureau. Taylor was elected to the MFA Oil Board of Directors in 2018 and became its vice-chairman in 2020.

MFA Petroleum Brings Big O Tires to Ozark, Mo.

MFA Petroleum Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of MFA Oil Company, opened its latest Big O Tires store at 5533 N. 22nd Street in Ozark, Mo., this spring.

Big O Tires offers tire services and repairs, wheel alignment, batteries, shocks, struts, and a wide range of diagnostic, repair and routine maintenance services.


"We see a lot of opportunity in southwest Missouri, and that is why we have opened our seventh store in the region," said Charlie Alexander, senior director of Big O Tires for MFA Petroleum Company.

The new store boasts seven automotive service bays and is open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays. Sean McClure serves as the store manager for the Ozark location.

Customers can call (417) 567-6371 or visit www.bigotires.com to schedule an appointment.

MFA Petroleum owns and manages 22 Big O Tires franchise stores in Missouri and Arkansas.

Fisher Receives Cooperative Governance Certification

Monte Fisher, who represents District 2–Northeast on the MFA Oil Board of Directors, was recently awarded certification recognizing his completion of the Advanced Governance Series training program for cooperative board members. The series, which is offered by FCC Services, provides training on the complexity of co-op governance and the fiduciary responsibilities directors face. Fisher was recognized for his achievement at the company's Jan. 27, 2022, board meeting. 



P.O. Box 519
Columbia, MO 65205

PROPANE PROVERB #39

THOSE WHO
PLAN AHEAD
PUT WINTER
WORRIES TO BED

The earlier you plan for your propane needs, the more comfortable your winter will be. Ensure your home will be warm and your budget will be kept by contracting with us today. With three convenient ways to lock in your price, you'll take the worry out of winter long before it even starts.



keepwarm.com

3 WAYS TO SAVE

- 1 100% Pre-Buy:** Pay the full cost when you sign up.
- 2 4-Pay:** Pay 25% down and 25% per month for 3 months.
- 3 Budget Billing:** Make a down payment, then divide the balance over the remaining months until April.