



**MOMENTUM**

## Help From Above

Buckman Aviation LLC  
Elevates Farmers'  
Yield Potential with  
Spraying Solutions

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# FLYING *High*

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Zucker Feather Products based in California, Mo., has spread its wings under the leadership of third-generation owners, Abby Arauz-Chase and her brother, Anthony. Photo by Jason Jenkins.



# Assessing AI

## WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF AN AI

boom. I counted over 50 Wall Street Journal headlines featuring AI in April 2024. Artificial intelligence is now used in customer service, predictive analytics, marketing personalization, fraud detection, supply chain optimization, healthcare diagnostics and more. As AI technology continues to evolve, it has taken many shapes, including digital chatbots, data entry clerks, graphic illustrators, navigators and writers.

For anyone unfamiliar with AI, it is essentially machines drawing on vast data resources to perform a given task. It's a simulation of human intelligence and problem-solving capabilities.

We have yet to integrate AI within our operations at MFA Oil and its subsidiaries. We are approaching AI cautiously. The technology certainly merits consideration, but we aren't ready to take that leap yet.

Some MFA Oil employees have dabbled with ChatGPT for information summaries, while others have used generative AI for image editing. In our automotive sector, AI has aided in technician training by generating test questions to enhance comprehension.

At industry events, I'm hearing more and more about AI and its business possibilities. I recently attended a meeting with cooperative leaders where AI was a major topic of conversation. Some think AI is the future of agriculture. There are many unknowns about artificial intelligence, including its lack of regulation, but it has quickly become something we cannot ignore.

There are many questions to consider when contemplating AI adoption. Can it comprehend ethical and safety concerns to make responsible decisions? Can controls be put in place to protect and respect intellectual property? More transparency within AI systems is imperative to tackle these issues.

Artificial intelligence cannot yet match a human employee's empathy, judgment and originality.



Jon Ihler

However, AI can excel in automating repetitive administrative tasks like data entry. Allowing AI to handle mundane tasks could potentially free up time for employees to focus on higher-value-added work that puts their skills to better use, ultimately enhancing productivity and job satisfaction.

The key thing to remember is that AI lacks the living wisdom and experience of a human employee despite its ability to simulate it. This distinction is crucial, especially in roles where complex problem-solving is paramount.

Whether we like it or not, AI has already taken hold in the business world. It screens job applications, generates delivery routes, creates product recommendations, makes grammar suggestions and is embedded in a wide range of productivity software.

We are assessing potential AI use cases. If AI adoption includes robust measures to protect data, mitigate risks and build trust while enabling greater focus on customer service and excellence, then it could indeed benefit MFA Oil and its operations. We will keep these important standards in mind as we explore the possibilities of AI technology.

Jon Ihler,  
President and CEO



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# Can High Cattle Prices Pay for Mistakes?

**WITH CATTLE PRICES AT RECORD HIGH LEVELS AND** many forecasts projecting relatively high prices for the next couple of years, some producers feel they can do no wrong. In times like these, even less-productive cows and mismanaged calves are likely to make a profit.

High prices are a welcome change for cattle producers, but it's important to remember that higher prices mean mistakes cost more than when prices are low, said University of Missouri Extension livestock specialist Eric Meusch.

Profit margins briefly increase during the high part of the cattle cycle, but this is also when a lot of money can be left on the table through poor management, Meusch said.

“Rather than becoming complacent and sloppy, it pays to refine your management to capitalize on higher prices and ensure that more money ends up in your pocket,” he said. “This means following the same approach you must follow during low cattle prices. Pay attention to the basics.”

**The Golden Rule.** A beef cow should have a calf every year, on time, without exceptions. It is the producer's job to set the cows up to succeed by providing proper nutrition and health programs. If a cow can't do this job, she needs to go. Cows that need extra feed or care to keep up with the herd may pay for themselves when calf prices are high, but they won't in the long run. Luckily, cow prices have been high, so it's great to get rid of less-productive cows and focus on the cows that produce, Meusch said.

**Wean and work calves!** Buyers always want calves that are castrated, vaccinated and weaned. These animals can make the transition to the backgrounder or feedlot the easiest. When calves aren't prepared to be stressed and commingled, they are more likely to become sick and are less profitable. Buyers are less willing to pay good prices for calves. They need to be more confident that they have been handled well. “Interestingly, when calf prices are high, a larger percentage are sold uncastrated, not vaccinated or fully weaned,” Meusch said. These calves might still be “profitable,” but a lot of money is left on the table when a producer thinks, “Why bother when calves are so high anyway?”


**Watch your inputs.** When cattle prices are high, the costs of production inputs increase as well. Feed, fertilizer, equipment, etc., all increase in price and aren't likely to go down when cattle prices



do. “When profit margins are high, we can afford to spend more on feed and fertilizer, but it's important to remember that these inputs may not pay for themselves in times with lower cattle prices,” Meusch said. Hay is a good example. Hay has been expensive, but the high calf prices have been paying for it. When calf prices come down, hay prices may remain high, so producers need to remember to work on their pasture and grazing management to reduce their hay needs.

**Invest in the future.** When cattle prices are high, there seems to be a lot more new trucks, tractors and equipment around.

“There is nothing wrong with these things, but it's also important to remember to make investments that can increase productivity in the future,” Meusch said. That could include infrastructure, fertility and genetics. Facility improvements are always beneficial, but those that reduce labor are likely to be especially valuable in the future. Things like better fencing and cattle handling facilities, storage, etc., can make life easier no matter what cattle prices are doing. Soil fertility is always a good investment, and improving pastures can provide benefits for years to come. Good-quality genetics are also an investment in the future. Investing in a little better bull when calf prices are high is likely to continue to pay when prices drop and margins are tight.

“Everyone involved in the cattle business hopes that prices remain high and good times continue, but we know from experience that this won't always be the case,” Meusch said. “It's important to make the most of the present profit opportunities and plan for a leaner time in the future. Being a good manager is just as important when prices are high as when they are not. Hopefully, this has you thinking about where you stand and how to capitalize on this part of the cattle cycle.” 

— BY UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION

**Contact Eric Meusch with any questions or to request additional information at 573-729-3196 or [meusche@missouri.edu](mailto:meusche@missouri.edu).**





# FLYING *High*





LEFT: Bright, vibrant colors, such as those seen here in these marabou and ostrich feather boas, abound at Zucker Feather Products in California, Mo. The company prides itself on quality products and excellent customer service. ABOVE: As a young girl, Abby Arauz-Chase would travel with her grandparents selling feathers to fly fishermen for their flies. Today, she and her brother, Anthony, lead the family business.

## Third-Generation Family Feather Business Roosts in California, Mo.

Photos and Story by Jason Jenkins

When life gives you lemons, you make lemonade. But what about when life gives you feathers?

You start a company and let it soar to new heights.

What began as a side business in a family's basement more than seven decades ago has today become one of the largest U.S. suppliers of wholesale and retail feathers and feather products.

Based in California, Mo., Zucker Feather Products and its sister companies furnish feathers for seemingly every facet of life—from function to fashion. Led by the third-generation owners Abby Arauz-Chase and her brother, Anthony Arauz, the business has 70 employees at locations in three states providing feathers that grace everything from the Broadway

stages of New York City all the way to the soundstages of Hollywood.

"I don't know if my grandma and grandpa could have ever imagined how much fun we're having now with everything they started all those years ago," Abby said.

### OPPORTUNITY TAKES FLIGHT

The family's feather journey began with Abby's grandparents, John and Minnie Dick, who operated a hatchery in the 1940s. As they developed relationships with inspectors at turkey-processing plants, they recognized an opportunity.

"Back then, the plants were just throwing the feathers away, so my grandparents collected them and brought them home," said Abby, explaining how the Colfax Feather Co. began. "They literally used

their washer and dryer to clean the feathers, then they'd dye them different colors and sell them to fly fishermen. My grandpa also cut fletching for arrows."

Abby recalls taking trips with her grandparents in the summer to fly-fishing destinations such as Yellowstone National Park and Jackson Hole, Wyo., where John and Minnie would sell directly to anglers. In the 1960s, Colfax Feather relocated to California, Mo., where they were closer to more feather suppliers. In the late 1970s, they took up residence in the Heck Saddlery Building on the courthouse square where the business would continue to grow.

The couple raised two daughters—Abby's mother, Donna, and her aunt, Dorothy—and both would find their own niches in the feather business. Donna met Abby's father, Juan Arauz,





TOP LEFT: Feathers can be dyed virtually any color in the rainbow. The process begins by precisely mixing a dye recipe. The company maintains a library of both standard and customized color recipes. TOP RIGHT: Zucker uses commercial steam kettles when dyeing feathers. The vessel allows for a more consistent temperature, allowing for more precise color. MIDDLE LEFT: After dyeing, feathers are dipped in a slurry of corn starch and water before being placed in a spin cycle. The corn starch helps remove any extra moisture from the feathers. CENTER: A worker squeezes cornstarch slurry from a batch of recently dyed ostrich plumes. MIDDLE RIGHT: Once they've gone through a spin cycle, feathers head for the dryer. BOTTOM LEFT: A worker hangs up feather boas that just came out of the dryer. This will allow the feathers to open up and become even fluffier. BOTTOM RIGHT: Feather fringes, sewn together in-house, are one of the popular items in the Zucker catalog.





ABOVE: At the Zucker Feather Products offices just outside California, Mo., many of the company's offerings—including wings, feathered mohawks and other attire—are on display. TOP RIGHT: Feathers and fashion are synonymous with Zucker. The company provides feathers for costuming on both the stage and screen. BOTTOM RIGHT: Colorful headdresses for events such as Mardi Gras and Carnival are yet another offering in the company's vast catalog.

while attending St. Louis University. Their careers took them to Fayetteville, Ark., where they opened Arkansas Valley Feathers and focused on the craft industry side, selling feathers to the likes of Hobby Lobby, Jo-Ann Fabrics and others.

“My parents eventually moved back to California and bought my grandparents’ business,” Abby said. “Then, in 1984, they purchased Zucker Feather Products, a company that had been in business in New York since 1872. That move expanded my parent’s business from anglers and crafts to all the other possibilities, including fashion, stage and screen.”

Abby and Anthony worked in the family business through high school before embarking on their own pursuits. A love of dance took Abby to New York where she’d reside for 20 years, spending about 10 years performing with the Radio City Rockettes.

“I really thought I’d never go into the feather business,” she said. “A lot of feathers are used on stage, so I started brokering deals with the different theaters and costume designers. That led to us opening a showroom in New York called

the Feather Place in 1997, and then in 2007, we opened a second location in Los Angeles. However, the heart of the business is still here in Missouri.”

**Every feather we sell is a byproduct of another industry, so it's kind of the ultimate in recycling and 'upcycling.'"**  
**—Abby Arauz-Chase**

Today, the operation consists of three entities: Arkansas Valley Feathers, which handles the sale of washed and sanitized feathers to other feather businesses; Zucker Feather Products, which handles wholesale business; and the Feather Place, which handles retail sales.

## INSIDE THE FEATHER FACTORY

Thumb through the Zucker Feather Products catalog, and it’s quickly apparent that the business of selling plumage is

complex. Not only does the company sell feathers from many bird species—including duck, goose, guinea, ostrich, partridge, peacock, pheasant, rooster and turkey—but each bird also possesses several types of feathers in varying sizes. Terms such as quills, pointers, tails, flats, rounds and marabou are part of the vernacular, all describing feathers with different attributes and uses.

“Every feather we sell is a byproduct of another industry, so it’s kind of the ultimate in recycling and ‘upcycling,’” Abby said. “Of course, it’s different than when my grandparents started. Nobody’s just giving them away these days. We have contracts with processing plants to handle feather removal.”

A vast majority of the feathers that Zucker uses are turkey feathers. Bales of feathers are shipped from processing facilities to the Zucker dye shop on the outskirts of California, Mo., where they’re washed and sanitized. These “raw” feathers are then either sold to feather businesses or used to create the products that Zucker and Feather Place sell.





ABOVE: The Zucker dye shop is housed in the former MFA Oil distribution center near the outskirts of California, Mo. TOP RIGHT: Bags of turkey feathers arrive awaiting washing and sanitation at the dye shop. BOTTOM RIGHT: Once washed and sanitized, the "raw" feathers are air-dried before being dyed at Zucker or baled up and sold to other businesses.

Once washed, the feathers can be dyed virtually any color in the rainbow. Abby said they maintain a library of both standard and customized color recipes.

"We're able to exactly match the color of feathers dyed today with ones we dyed years ago," she added.

Once a dye recipe is mixed, it's dissolved into a solution using water and steam. Then, it's mixed with more water in a commercial steam kettle to which the feathers will be added. After soaking long enough to achieve the desired color, the feathers are rinsed, spun and finally dried.

"Sometimes, we'll bleach feathers to remove some of the natural color before adding the color a customer has requested," Abby said. "It helps to make the colors more vibrant."

## FEATHERS FOR ALL OCCASIONS

While Zucker still sells fly-fishing supplies and arrow fletching as Abby and Anthony's grandparents once did and craft supplies as their parents did, the company's offerings

run the gamut from feather dusters to cat toys and everything in between. They sell feathered wigs, masks, boas, headbands, halos, headdresses and wings.

## Once washed, the feathers can be dyed virtually any color in the rainbow.

"Halloween is a big season for us with costuming, but so are Mardi Gras and Carnival," Abby said. "Feathers have been popular for wedding décor, and we're also seeing more Christmas and home décor sales. Feather fashion also has become popular at festivals such as Burning Man and Coachella."

Abby's connections in New York and Los Angeles have led to their involvement not only on the stage but also in television and movies. They supply all the feathered props for "Saturday Night Live" and have played a role in the costuming for films such as "Maleficent," "The Hunger Games: Catching Fire" and "Rocketman." The

company has also provided feathers that decorated the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Met Gala benefit.

"We don't necessarily always get the credit because we're behind the scenes working with the designers, but it's neat to just be part of it," Abby said. "We try to be ready so that when a trend comes along, we can meet the need."

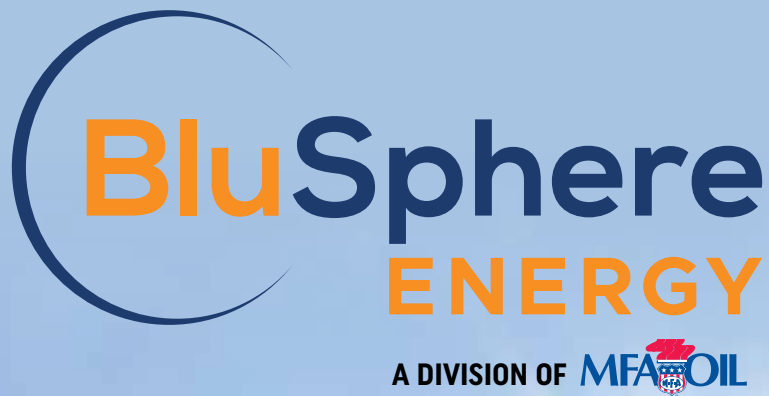
Competition from foreign manufacturers and the growth in online sales have changed their business model over time, but the ability to innovate and customize orders keeps Zucker ahead of the pack, Abby contended.

"You really can't replicate the natural beauty and iridescence of a feather," she said. "They're beautiful, and they make people happy. We take tremendous pride in what we do and the quality and customer service that we offer." **M**

**For more information about Zucker Feather Products and the Feather Place, call 573-796-2183 or visit [www.featherplace.com](http://www.featherplace.com).**



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# Help FROM Above





# Buckman Aviation LLC Elevates Farmers' Yield Potential with Spraying Solutions

By Adam Buckallew  
Photos by Casey Buckman

Jay Buckman had a fungal problem in his fields in the summer of 2015, and he knew he needed to act fast to limit the damage. Buckman hired an aerial applicator to spray his crops with a foliar fungicide that would eliminate the yield-robbing pest. The plan was solid, but the pilot abandoned the job, leaving Buckman's corn and soybeans at risk.

In a pinch, Buckman contacted a Texas helicopter pilot he heard was spraying for other farmers in central Missouri. The Texan agreed to help and sprayed Buckman's fields near Hallsville, Mo.

Watching the helicopter pilot gracefully maneuver over the green sea of crops captivated Buckman.

"Not long after that experience, I started thinking of buying a helicopter," he recalled. "I saw there was a better way to spray."

The fateful turn of events inspired the creation of Buckman Aviation LLC.

## TAKING FLIGHT

Within a year of marveling at the precision and efficiency of agricultural spraying by helicopter, Buckman began training for his pilot's license. In March 2017, he obtained his private rating, and the same day, he bought a Robinson R44 helicopter in Cape Girardeau, Mo., and flew it home to Hallsville.

While Buckman continued to farm and work toward earning a commercial license, he hired a pilot, Skip Elkin, to help get his business idea off the ground. Elkin handled the first year's commercial spraying services while training Buckman to take over the flying.

In 2019, Buckman earned his commercial certificate and began piloting spray flights. By 2023, Buckman Aviation



LEFT: Mid-Missouri farmer Jay Buckman offers aerial applications of fungicide and insecticide sprayed by helicopter. ABOVE: Buckman has piloted commercial spray flights since 2019. In 2023, his company sprayed 143,000 acres of cropland.

has grown to spray 143,000 acres in the most recent crop year. As demand for aerial applicators grows, Buckman has expanded his operations with two additional helicopter purchases. He's brought in a team of contractors—three pilots, three truck drivers who also serve as mixers, and a mechanic—to keep up with client requests.

This year, Buckman plans to delegate some flying duties to another pilot, allowing him to focus more on managing the business. Given its expanding scope and scale, this shift to a more hands-on operational role is essential for the company's growth. Juggling crew management and booking spray contracts, Buckman's phone is constantly abuzz, with him logging around 10,000 minutes of conversations each month. Flying less often will allow Buckman to handle logistics, take calls promptly and ensure smooth operations.

Every spraying operation involves a two-person team: a pilot and a support person. The support person's role includes driving the truck, mixing chemicals and loading the helicopter. Helicopters are usually equipped to cover approximately 50-55

acres per load, each taking around five minutes to spray.

The spraying season is relatively short but intense. Buckman and his team spray winter wheat fields in the spring, but the hectic season begins in July and runs through August. During the dog days of summer, Buckman's crews often work from six in the morning to nine or ten at night.

Dustin Reese serves as Buckman's helicopter mechanic. His responsibilities include handling all in-season maintenance tasks. During the peak season, Reese performs about one, 100-hour inspection per week on Buckman's helicopters. Working diligently overnight, Reese meticulously inspects the choppers, aiming to minimize downtime and ensure the pilots can swiftly return to the skies without delay the next day.

The 100-hour inspection, spanning 25 pages, is crucial to maintaining the aircraft's compliance and airworthiness. With numerous inspections mandated to keep the helicopters up to standard, Reese's expertise and dedication are pivotal in ensuring the fleet remains operational, and the pilots come home safely.





“It’s a 60-day grind for all of us,” Buckman said. “It’s physically and mentally taxing. We all have our limits, and I talk with my crew to ensure they are getting rest.”

Maintaining focus and diligence in the air is crucial. Anything less can prove catastrophic. An industry saying speaks to the risks: There are old pilots, and there are bold pilots, but there are no old, bold pilots.

## FARMER PERSPECTIVE

In addition to running his spraying business, Buckman farms 3,200 acres of corn and soybeans in the Boone County area. All fertilizer and chemical applications on the farm—by air or ground—are done in-house. Buckman has embraced modern practices such as variable rate applications, grid sampling and technology integration.

Buckman’s experience and understanding of farming are key selling points when talking to prospective clients.



Photo courtesy of Jay Buckman

TOP: Buckman Aviation LLC has three helicopters it can deploy to help farmers facing fungal and insect infestations in their crops. ABOVE: A team of contractors—three pilots, three truck drivers who also serve as mixers and a mechanic—sprays thousands of acres of corn and soybean fields for the company daily.



"I have a unique perspective and understanding because most sprayers aren't farmers; they're just pilots," he said. "With my farming background, I know what needs to be done and what a farmer expects. My agricultural experience allows me to offer valuable insights to my clients. Unlike other applicators, I may not always agree that spraying makes sense."

## DELIVERING RESULTS

Buckman rigorously tests all his services on his farm, verifying that the results demonstrate a return on investment and sustainability, ultimately boosting yield and profitability. Seeing the success on his farm drives Buckman to extend his expertise to other farmers.

"We've done side-by-side tests with farmers, where they spray a portion of the field with their ground rig equipment, and we spray a portion with the helicopter," Buckman said. "The helicopter's results are always better."

Buckman has won over several farmers who doubted aerial spraying would provide a return on investment.

**Buckman's standard spraying rate is \$14.50 per acre for two-gallon mixes of fungicide and water. The price goes up if fertilizer or insecticide is added to the mix. Farmers must provide their own chemicals.**

"There's a farmer in Sedalia who always swore that it wouldn't pay to fly his beans," Buckman said. "One day, I saw him spraying with his ground rig and asked him to give me an honest shot. I offered to spray a portion of his field and asked him to let me know how things turned out. He called me later from the combine and said, 'I don't know how you did it, but these beans you sprayed are yielding 7 bushels higher than the ones I sprayed.' Results like that pay for the price of an aerial application pretty quickly."

Buckman's standard spraying rate is \$14.50 per acre for two-gallon mixes of fungicide and water. The price goes up if fertilizer or insecticide is added to the mix. Farmers must provide their own chemicals.



Demand for agricultural spraying services continues to grow. Research from the MU Certified Strip Trial Program shows soybean growers saw an additional 1.8 bushels of yield per acre over nontreated acres when applying fungicide at the R3 development stage. Similar trials at 240 small-plot sites in nine additional states and Ontario, Canada, demonstrated 2.7 percent higher yields.

## GROWING DEMAND


While fungicides don't increase yield, properly timed applications can protect the yield potential of crops threatened by fungal diseases.

The Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council has helped fund 43 Missouri foliar fungicide strip trials through the MU Certified Strip Trial Program since 2018. In those trials, Missouri soybean growers saw an additional 1.8 bushels of yield per acre over nontreated acres when applying fungicides at the R3 development stage. The increase was not unique to Missouri. Researchers in 240 small-plot trials in nine states and Ontario, Canada, reported 2.7 percent higher yields.

Recent advancements in fungicide products, such as multiple modes of action to control fungal damage, have significantly bolstered farmers' interest in Buckman's services. However, due to the condensed timeframe to spray crops with foliar fungicide applications, there's often more demand than pilots available to spray.

Drones have the potential to help fill the gap. While drones offer benefits such as targeted spraying and access to hard-to-reach areas, challenges such as payload capacity, flight time and manpower may limit their scalability. Buckman sees drones as a niche tool for small or irregularly shaped plots.

"On average, one guy with a drone can spray 80 to 120 acres daily if everything is going well and he's moving at a good pace," he said. "I can go out with two guys and spray 1,000-2,000 acres per day in a helicopter. So, it would take much more manpower and drones to match what we are doing. When the season hits, there's not an army of people trained and ready to run a ton of drones."

"People ask me if I'm worried about competition from drones or planes, but we don't have enough aircraft to meet the demand. There's such a broad customer base that wants and needs these services—we can use all the aerial sprayers we can get." 



# EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DIESEL FUEL

By Zach Studer

Photo by Starboard and Port





Do you know what's in your diesel fuel? Did you know that diesel specifications change throughout the year? Should you be buying additives for your fuel? These are important questions you need to be able to answer to get the most out of the fuel you buy.

Many people commonly assume diesel fuel coming from a fuel terminal meets the same specification year-round. In fact, there are many differences in the fuel, which can dramatically affect the performance of your equipment.

## SEASONAL FUEL VARIATIONS

Each April, the pipeline specification for #2 diesel changes to the summer formulation, which has a max pour point of +10°F and a max cloud point of +20°F. A fuel's pour point is measured as 5°F above the temperature at which a fuel ceases to flow due to the formation of wax crystals that increase its viscosity. Cloud point measures the temperature at which long-chained paraffins begin to crystallize, causing the fuel to appear cloudy. Since wax and temperature concerns are not an issue in summer, increasing the pour and cloud points allows for longer chain paraffin in the fuel, which provides more energy and increases horsepower.

The summer fuel specification is maintained until August when pipelines transition to winter formulations. The winter diesel specification lowers the pour point from +10°F to 0°F, and the cloud point drops from +20°F to +15°F. Removing the longer paraffin chains in the winter helps ensure the fuel remains fluid and flows smoothly in colder temperatures.

It's crucial to understand that the shift from summer to winter fuel, and vice versa, is a gradual process. Fuel movement through the pipeline takes time, and terminals may still have seasonal fuel in storage for distribution. Similarly, bulk fuel retailers like MFA Oil need to cycle through their inventory. These transitions can span several weeks, so it's important not to rely solely on the date for fuel specification assumptions.

## KNOW YOUR ADDITIVES

Additives are vital in fuel and are used at refineries, pipelines and fuel terminals.

They can also be introduced through splash-blending in storage tanks or equipment. Every additive has a defined role based on need.

Refineries often add pour point depressants to help the fuel flow at low temperatures, corrosion inhibitors that protect metal parts and conductivity improvers to prevent against static discharge. A drag-reducing agent, which reduces frictional pressure loss, is another additive injected at the pipeline. These products consist of long-chain hydrocarbon polymers designed to shear away when they pass through a pump. Lubricity additives are injected into diesel fuel at terminals to restore or enhance its lubricating properties. Diesel engines rely on lubrication to minimize friction between moving parts, which helps to prevent wear and tear on engine components. Insufficient lubrication can lead to increased friction; premature wear of engine parts; and, ultimately, engine damage.

## IT'S CRUCIAL TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE SHIFT FROM SUMMER TO WINTER FUEL, AND VICE VERSA, IS A GRADUAL PROCESS.

These additives are in every drop of fuel picked up from the terminals. Think of them as the bare minimum of additives in diesel fuel. They are present whether we want them or not. However, we can add additional additives to enhance the fuel's properties further.

## DON'T OVER DO IT

Like many things in life, more is not always better. There is a point of diminishing returns, and over-additizing can produce adverse effects. Plus, some additives are simply not compatible with others.

Temperature and solubility rates are important considerations to determine before taking action. Some additives are only soluble at certain treatment rates. Think of it like making a pitcher of sweet tea. You can add only so much sugar before the tea becomes saturated. Once you hit the saturation limit, the remaining sugar does not dissolve but

drops to the bottom. The same is true of some diesel additives.

Typically, cold flow improvers and wax anti-settling agents should only be added when the temperature of the fuel is at least 20°F above the fuel's cloud point. So, if the cloud point is 14°F, you need to use these additives when the fuel temperature is at least 34°F. Pouring these additives into your storage tank or equipment when it's already freezing is likely too late. The fuel may be too cold for the additives to blend with the fuel, and the additive may drop to the bottom of the tank. The concentrated additive entering the fuel system can cause filter plugging. However, if you purchase a premium diesel fuel like BOSS Performance Diesel®, the fuel will already contain all the additives needed to perform properly, and any additional product could throw off the delicate balance. Always consult your local MFA Oil bulk plant manager or the MFA Oil laboratory before adding anything to your fuel.

## KEEP IT CLEAN

Contaminants can wreak havoc inside storage tanks and your equipment's fuel systems. Even under ideal conditions, contaminants can find their way into the fuel, plugging filters, damaging pumps and destroying injectors. The most common contaminant in diesel fuel is water, and a small amount of water is common.

Typically, water found in diesel fuel is held in suspension and is measured in parts per million (ppm). While the standard specification for diesel fuel oils, ASTM D975, allows for up to 500 ppm of water in diesel fuel, we usually see less than 100 ppm. The bigger problem we see is free water, or water not held in suspension.

Since water is denser than diesel fuel, it drops to the bottom of the fuel system, where it accumulates. The water can lead to oxidation, rust and microbial growth throughout the fuel system if left unchecked.

Water can enter a fuel system in several ways. Leaking gaskets or a fill cap left open on a bulk storage tank can allow rainwater to enter the tank. One of the most common ways water enters



a tank is through condensation. On a hot summer day, a fuel tank will begin to warm up. As the tank warms, the fuel and air inside the tank also heat up. At night, the walls of the tank begin to cool, and when the warm air inside the tank hits the cooler tank walls, water droplets form inside the tank. These droplets can add up to significant volumes of water over time.

Dust and debris are also an issue in fuel. Storage tanks naturally aspirate or breathe. As a tank warms during the day, the air inside expands and is pushed out of the tank through the fill cap or through a breather. At night, the air inside cools and contracts, creating a vacuum. The negative pressure inside the tank causes air from the outside to be pulled in to fill the void. As air is pulled into the tank, dust, debris and other sediment carried by the air are also pulled into the tank.

## CHANGING FUEL FILTERS

Changing fuel filters on your equipment is rarely a pleasant experience. They're usually difficult to get to, the timing is never convenient, and they're expensive. Eventually, filters need to be changed. However, you can prevent premature filter plugging on your equipment. Filter the fuel before it gets to your equipment.

Most equipment today comes with 10-micron or smaller fuel filters, and the newer Bobcat skid steers and John Deere tractors utilize 2-micron filters. If you plan to prolong the life of the filters on your equipment, you'll need to get the fuel filtered down to at least the same micron rating as the filters on your equipment. So, what size micron filters are on the dispensers where you get your fuel? It may surprise you to learn that in the state of Missouri, there is no mandated fuel filter micron rating for diesel dispensers at retail locations.

If you have your own bulk fuel pumps, the best practice is to use filters on your dispensers as fine as those on your equipment. The more you filter the product before it gets to your equipment, the better. This goes for transfer tanks as well. If you have a transfer tank in the back of a pickup, the fuel should be filtered when filling the transfer tank.

Photo by Dan Videtich



We also recommend changing your dispensing equipment's filters at least twice a year. When you're setting your clocks either forward or backward and checking the batteries in your smoke detectors, don't forget to change your fuel filters.

## MAXIMIZE YOUR DIESEL FUEL

BOSS is formulated with an advanced additive package to keep your engine running at peak performance. The additives in BOSS inhibit the formation of carbon particles, prolong fuel filter life, and maintain optimum power and fuel economy. Cetane improvers help fuel ignite more quickly and burn more completely. Oxidation improvers offer superior storage life, extending the time fuel can sit in storage tanks without degrading. These additives can be injected at some terminals, or they can

be packaged for retail sales and added to bulk storage tanks or directly to the fuel tank on your equipment.

During the winter months, BOSS utilizes cold-flow improvers, wax anti-settling agents and icing inhibitors. Cold-flow improvers and wax modifiers prevent wax from sticking together by modifying the size and structure of the paraffin so it can pass through a filter. Wax anti-settling agents keep the wax dispersed evenly in the fuel rather than allowing it to settle and accumulate near the bottom of storage or fuel tanks. Multiple-stage icing inhibitors depress the freezing point of free water in the system.

No matter the season, BOSS Performance Diesel will improve your fuel economy, clean your fuel system, increase your horsepower and improve your diesel fuel reliability. [M](#)

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# Q&A with Dean Snyder of the MFA Oil Board of Directors



**Q** How would you describe yourself and your farming operation?

**A** Agriculture has been important to several generations of my family. I grew up on my family's farm in Caldwell County, and farming is a lifestyle I've been proud to grow up with and continue to promote. Fortunately, the opportunity came after high school, and I've been blessed to be able to farm ever since. We are a family-operated farm. My wife, Nancy, helps in daily operations and bookkeeping. Our son, Creston, and his family farm with us full-time. Our daughters, Kari and Emily, have careers off the farm but help on the farm when they can.

We raise soybeans, corn, hay and a cow-calf commercial herd. We had the opportunity to acquire my wife's childhood home and farm, keeping it in our family and ensuring it became a Century Farm.

I enjoy supporting family, church, community, and agricultural events and organizations. I currently serve as president of the Hamilton Lions Club, president of the Hamilton Fire Protection Board, trustee for Kingston Township and treasurer at Kendall Chapel. I've been involved with MFA Oil and MFA Incorporated for many years, serving as a delegate and on advisory boards.

Photo by Kelly Pingleton-KP Photography



**Q** You were elected to the Board of Directors in February. How do you view your new role and responsibilities?

**A** My main responsibility is to be a voice for the farmers and delegates in my district, work with other board members and represent my district's interests to the executive team. As we look to the future needs of the cooperative, it's important to consider what will be needed to keep it successful now and 20 to 40 years down the road.

I am committed to doing my best for everyone in the organization. Whether that be promoting the cooperative and its values, getting to know the delegates, or supporting our employees, I will do whatever I can to ensure my obligations as a director are met.

**Q** What motivated you to serve on the MFA Oil Board of Directors?

**A** Serving on the MFA Oil Board of Directors is something I have wanted to do for several years. MFA Oil has had good leadership over the years, and I will work to continue its success.

I value the cooperative model, and I enjoy working together with positive, motivated people to help grow the business. I like the fact that our members can voice their ideas and be heard.

I appreciate that MFA Oil and its employees give back to the communities it serves through scholarships and grants. I also like how the co-op's business generates significant tax revenue for our local communities while the

patronage returns we share with our farmer-members help contribute to the local economy.

**Q** MFA Oil has served the needs of its members for nearly 100 years. Why do you believe the cooperative remains an essential service for its farmer-owners?

**A** MFA Oil is known for providing top-notch products, which have been essential for building a strong company reputation. Delivering high-quality products and services is a win-win for the company and its member-owners because it builds trust and loyalty. In many farm families, the long-term relationships MFA Oil has built with its members have been passed down from generation to generation.

The need for dependable suppliers is as important now as ever. As we prepare for the next generation of agriculturalists, MFA Oil is working to ensure young farmers know of the quality products and services it provides and the benefits of cooperative membership. The company

hosts the Emerging Leaders in Agriculture Conference to gather feedback about the needs and expectations of younger producers. It also encourages young farmers to get involved in cooperative governance as delegates. Building on these relationships is key to maintaining the cooperative's role as an essential service provider.

**Q** What have you learned in your time on the board that you weren't aware of before your election?

**A** From my time on the board, I have learned several things. I've gained a greater appreciation for the dedication of the co-op's employees, who work hard to provide the best results for the company. The teamwork among the employees—from our local field staff to the executives—is crucial for the continued success of the cooperative.

I have been impressed by the vast knowledge base that the Board of Directors shares collectively. We all bring unique perspectives and experiences to the table. The board strongly desires to

keep the cooperative moving forward, and we know that by looking for long-term investments, the business will continue to grow and serve future generations.

I am also learning how diversified MFA Oil is, not only as a fuel supplier but also through its non-member investments in Big O Tires, Break Time, BluSphere Energy and other opportunities to build a solid, well-rounded company. **M**

» Dean Snyder is a lifelong farmer from Hamilton, Mo., in Caldwell County. He and his wife, Nancy, and children, Kari, Emily and Creston, own and operate a row-crop, hay and livestock operation. Snyder has been a delegate for the MFA Oil bulk plant in Hamilton for many years, ensuring it provides excellent service to members. He was elected to the MFA Oil Board of Directors in 2024.

# NOTICE

## MOMENTUM MAGAZINE IS GOING DIGITAL.

Momentum magazine will transition to a fully digital format beginning in 2025. To stay connected, informed and up-to-date on MFA Oil news, sign up for digital delivery.

**M** Scan the QR code or visit [mfaoil.com/momentum/#subscribe](https://mfaoil.com/momentum/#subscribe)

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# New Petro-Card 24 Pumps Debut

**THE LATEST ADDITION TO THE MFA OIL PETRO-CARD 24** network, a new location in Dadeville, Mo., provides a glimpse of upcoming improvements to the company's more than 180 unattended fueling sites.

Both the Dadeville and the newly upgraded Versailles location are equipped with new pumps and payment technology, making refueling comparable to what motorists typically experience at modern gas stations. All transactions are handled at the pump, and customers will have various payment options, including MFA Oil's Petro-Card 24 and Preferred Customer credit cards, plus all major credit or fleet cards.

MFA Oil is committed to updating select Petro-Card 24 locations with the upgraded pumps and payment processing equipment

throughout the remainder of 2024. We are moving swiftly with the hopes of upgrading most sites by the end of the 2026 calendar year, bringing customers a new and improved fueling experience.

Many locations will receive additional enhancements for improved visibility, such as digital price signage and LED lighting.

Kenny Steeves, senior vice president of MFA Oil operations, said the new equipment will enhance the convenience and reliability of the sites.

"Our Petro-Card 24 fueling sites are strategically located in rural areas to meet the needs of our members and the communities we serve," Steeves said. "The new technology we are installing will eliminate single sources of failure that exist in our current setup, providing our members and customers with dependable fuel whenever they need it." **M**



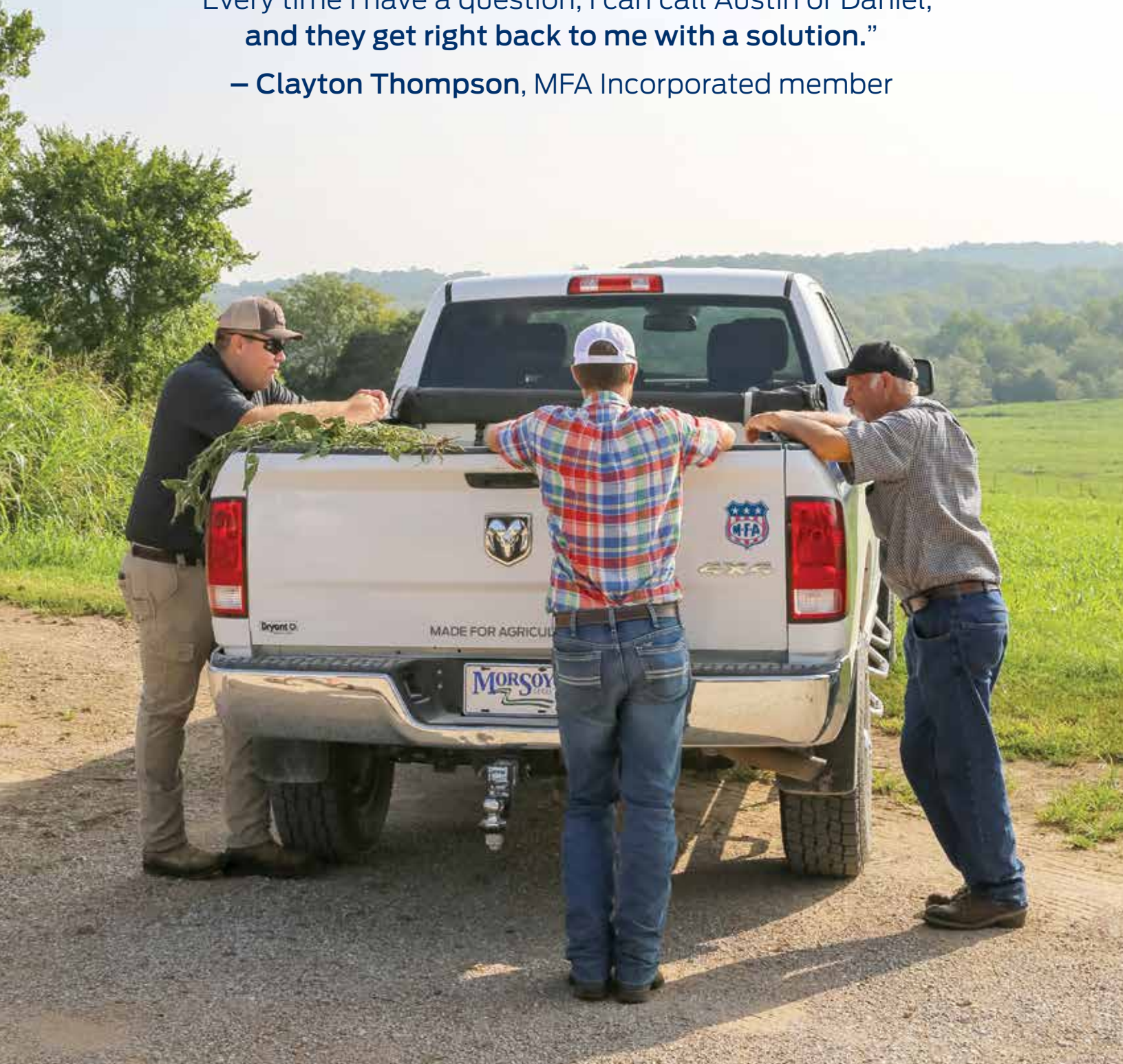




# Your whole farm solution.

“Every time I have a question, I can call Austin or Daniel,  
and they get right back to me with a solution.”

– Clayton Thompson, MFA Incorporated member





# THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

Amanda Reid, a 21-year veteran teacher at the Concordia school district in Lafayette County, Mo., has leveraged the power of partnerships with the Missouri Farmers Care Drive to Feed Kids and Agriculture Education on the Move™ (Ag Moves™) programs. As an agriculture instructor and FFA advisor, Reid has enhanced her students' experiences, their leadership development and the activities of the Concordia FFA Chapter. These programs offer hands-on opportunities for FFA chapters and members to "learn to do" and "live to serve" their communities. The achievements of Reid and the Concordia FFA chapter, in addition to Lafayette holding an "Agri-Ready" designation from Missouri Farmers Care, stand as a testament to the transformative power of partnership with the programs.

"Missouri Farmers Care programs are a bonus for any FFA chapter," Reid said. "They provide financial support, materials and resources, and a great network!"

With Reid's guidance, Concordia FFA members have developed an outstanding repertoire of activities that have made a significant impact on addressing food insecurity in their community. The Missouri Farmers Care Drive to Feed Kids FFA Mini-Grant program supported the Concordia chapter's ambitious projects addressing local food insecurity. The chapter's Back-Snack project, which provides weekend meals for food-insecure students in Concordia schools, has not only helped kids but also supported entire families each weekend. This realization inspired Reid and her students to add additional food security projects to their chapter activities, further strengthening their impact on the community and fostering a sense of pride and accomplishment.

"There used to be food drives at the school until we realized that we were inadvertently asking the very food-



TOP: Concordia FFA members lead an annual meal-packing event, where the entire student body is invited to help pack meals for families in need. The students work as a team to pack more than 30,000 meals. BOTTOM LEFT: High school students volunteer as Ag Moves™ partner educators to teach third-grade classes about farming and agriculture. BOTTOM RIGHT: The Missouri Farmers Care's Drive to Feed Kids FFA Mini-Grant program has supported the Concordia FFA chapter's ambitious projects addressing local food insecurity.

insecure students to contribute to food collections," Reid said. A meal-packing event is a more inclusive way for all students to help fight food insecurity in our community because each student can help through the service of their hands."

Concordia FFA members lead an annual meal-packing event where the entire student body is invited to help pack meals for families in need. Students combine grain or rice, protein, and nutrient fortifiers to create a complete meal for a family of six. During the packing day, Concordia students work as a team to pack more than 30,000 meals, and every meal stays in the community to support neighbors in need. The agriculture department warehouses the meals, which

are distributed through the Back-Snack program and two community self-service food pantries, which the FFA chapter supplies. Community members facing need can pick up necessities stocked in part by the FFA chapter.

"I encourage each class to complete a service project," Reid said. "The self-service food pantries are small, enclosed buildings that an agriculture construction class built a couple of years ago."

Concordia FFA members are "living to serve" and inspiring their community to serve. Since erecting the food pantries, local churches have added two more to the community, making four pantries



available for neighbors in need. The chapter receives generous financial support from local businesses to conduct its annual meal-packing event. A local donor provides hams for Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday bundles, the compilation of which are another food security project of Concordia FFA. Chapter members apply food science knowledge to fully cook meat and sides delivered to local families at Thanksgiving and Christmas. To maximize the meals the holiday bundles provide, the chapter includes recipe cards to help families use leftovers.

"If there is a food security need in your community, the Drive to Feed Kids FFA grant is simple to complete," Reid said. "This grant facilitates our projects and helps meet needs in our community."

**Missouri Farmers Care programs are a bonus for any FFA chapter. They provide financial support, materials and resources, and a great network!"—Amanda Reid**

A fellow agriculture education instructor encouraged Reid to sign up her chapter to become an Ag Moves partner educator. Reid loves to see her agriculture students in action each semester, teaching Concordia third graders. Many of these "student teachers" plan to become agriculture or elementary educators. The chapter's goal is to expand Ag Moves to the local private school in the future.

"I prepped my students to become teachers for the Ag Moves lessons, but I was completely sold on the program when I took my students to be trained by the Agriculture Education on the Move staff and college mentors," Reid recalled. "That training gave my students confidence and allowed them to take ownership of Ag Moves as their own."




Amanda Reid teaches agricultural education classes at Concordia High School and advises the school's FFA chapter. With Reid's guidance, Concordia FFA members have developed an outstanding repertoire of activities to help address food insecurity in their community.

Reid's FFA students have learned about themselves, as well as how to communicate and cooperate with third-grade teachers, as they have taught 10 STEM-focused lessons covering crops, livestock, soil and water conservation, nutrition, careers in agriculture, and more. Lessons align with state learning objectives and provide fun, interactive ways of learning as students complete hands-on activities such as making soybean germination necklaces, corn plastic, butter, feed rations and soil profiles. The FFA members serve as mentors to younger students and make impacts inside and outside of the classroom. The program helps FFA members grow personally and professionally and adds value to the chapter.

"Our Ag Moves student teachers are teaching third graders who can become my agriculture students within the next several years. The elementary students will remember the Ag Moves experience, and we will see those students again in high school. And all I need to provide is some

heavy whipping cream and a dozen eggs!" Reid shared, referring to the fact that the Missouri Farmers Care Foundation provides all non-perishable supplies, materials and resources for Ag Moves at no cost to FFA chapters.

Reid and her husband, Garrett, are rooted in the Concordia community, where they raised their three kids. They are passionate about production agriculture and teaching others about the importance of agriculture. Reid is a member of the Missouri Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association, a partner of Missouri Farmers Care.

Missouri Farmers Care is excited to partner with more Missouri FFA Chapters in 2024. FFA chapters can sign up as partners with Agriculture Education on the Move at [www.agmoves.com](http://www.agmoves.com). To learn more about Drive to Feed Kids FFA Mini-Grants, visit [www.mofarmerscare.com/drive](http://www.mofarmerscare.com/drive). 

— BY MISSOURI FARMERS CARE

**Agriculture teachers are vital to developing their students' understanding and appreciation for the agricultural industry. In recognition of their important role, MFA Oil is profiling the amazing work ag teachers do to prepare the next generation of leaders in agriculture.**



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# MFA Oil Foundation Grant Recipients

## THE MFA OIL FOUNDATION

provides cash grants to non-profit organizations that are working to improve communities where MFA Oil has a significant concentration of members and employees. In January 2024, the foundation approved \$111,987 in grants to 46 organizations.

- Bowling Green R-1 School District  
Bowling Green, Mo.
- Bowling Green R-I School FFA  
Bowling Green, Mo.
- Boys and Girls Club of Jefferson City  
Jefferson City, Mo.
- Brunswick R-II School District FBLA  
Brunswick, Mo.
- Capper Foundation—Topeka, Kan.
- Carlisle Bison Band Boosters  
Carlisle, Ark.
- Chase County Fire Department  
Cottonwood Falls, Kan.
- City of Macon Police Department  
Macon, Mo.
- Coyote Hill—Moberly, Mo.
- Crowder Industries, Inc.—Neosho, Mo.
- Dadeville R-II Schools—Dadeville, Mo.
- Elmo Betterment Corporation—Elmo, Mo.
- Fayette Main Street, Inc.—Fayette, Mo.
- Food for Morgan County Inc.  
Versailles, Mo.
- FosterAdopt Connect—Springfield, Mo.
- Friends of the Finke Theatre  
California, Mo.
- Gentry County Senior Center, Inc.  
Stanberry, Mo.
- Glasgow School District—Glasgow, Mo.
- Holy Rosary School—Warrenton, Mo.
- Immaculate Conception School  
Macon, Mo.
- Laredo R-VII School District—Laredo, Mo.



The MFA Oil Foundation presented a grant to the Missouri State Fair Foundation to sponsor the 1901 Society and the enshrinement of the inaugural class of the Missouri Agriculture Hall of Fame.

- Leon Chamber of Commerce Community  
Playground Committee—Leon, Iowa
- Lilys House—Adrian, Mo.
- Linn County Humane Society  
Brookfield, Mo.
- Macon County R-1 FFA—Macon, Mo.
- Macon County R-1 FCCLA—Macon, Mo.
- Matfield Green Works  
Matfield Green, Kan.
- Mercer County Fire Protection District  
Princeton, Mo.
- Missouri State Fair Foundation  
Sedalia, Mo.
- Missouri State University Foundation  
West Plains, Mo.
- Monroe City Sheltered Workshop  
Monroe City, Mo.
- Montgomery County Fair Society  
Montgomery City, Mo.
- Mountain Grove Fire Department  
Mountain Grove, Mo.
- No Time To Spare Animal Rescue &  
Sanctuary—Forestell, Mo.
- NOCOMO Industries Inc.—Maryville, Mo.
- OATS, Inc.—Columbia, Mo.
- Otterville R-6 School District FFA  
Otterville, Mo.
- Owensville Area Ambulance District  
Owensville, Mo.
- Piedmont Pound Paws, Inc.  
Piedmont, Mo.
- Piggott Public Library—Piggott, Ark.
- Ralls County Library—Center, Mo.
- Renick R-V School District  
Renick, Mo.
- Salisbury Parks & Recreation  
Salisbury, Mo.
- Slater School District—Slater, Mo.
- St. Ignatius Loyola Parish & School  
Marthasville, Mo.
- Woodson School District USD #366  
Yates Center, Kan. **M**

# A Passion for Pigs

## DONNIE HAYS HAS BEEN FARMING SINCE HIS FEET

could touch the tractor pedals. The sixth-generation farmer works with his father, Todd, and uncle, David, on the family's Ketsenburg-Hays Farms in Monroe City, Mo.

Donnie manages the family's farrow-to-finish sow operation. He spends much of his time caring for sows and their piglets, taking care of breeding and ensuring the animals stay healthy and happy.

The Hayses are independent pork producers who raise about 625 sows, or mother pigs, that deliver two to three litters of piglets per year. Litters typically consist of seven to 12 piglets weighing about two to three pounds each at birth. Each piglet is nurtured until it reaches 30 to 40 pounds. The piglets are then sent to a finisher and fed for about six months until they reach a market weight of 300 pounds.

The pigs are raised in climate-controlled barns, which provide a warm, dry environment for the piglets and a temperature-controlled environment for the sows to rest.

"My family used to raise pigs outside, but we built barns in the 1990s to keep them out of the elements," Donnie said. "We want to make the pigs as comfortable as possible. Some farmers raise their animals outside, and that works for them, and that's great, but this is what works best for us."

Living indoors protects the pigs from pests such as lice, ticks, worms and rodents. In addition to climate-controlled accommodations, the pigs get their own space to eat and relax, eliminating fights over food and water.

Indoor living is not only safer and more comfortable for the pigs but also for their handlers.

"The working conditions are better, and we can keep a closer eye on the pigs in the barn than we can in a field," Donnie said. "We also don't have to worry about tripping in a hole or getting run down by a hog."

Dependable propane deliveries from MFA Oil ensure the family's pigs stay comfortable and cozy. Donnie has served as an MFA Oil delegate for six years and enjoys representing his community in the cooperative.

"Propane is incredibly important for our sow operation, and the local staff do a great job of keeping up with all our needs," he said. "We put monitors on our tanks a while back, which was a game-changer. It's one less thing for us to worry about on the farm."

## Finding Fulfillment

Raising pigs is a labor of love passed from generation to generation in Donnie's family. His grandfather, Gene Ketsenburg, started



raising swine with his uncle, David Ketsenburg, and Donnie's parents, Todd and Rosanne, joined the farm when they married in 1989. The family's first hog confinement barn was built in 1994. A bigger building was added in 1997, providing enough space to bring all their hogs inside and off the dirt.

When Donnie sees shoppers buying bacon, pork chops or pork steaks at the local grocery store, he feels proud.

"They could be buying meat from one of the pigs we raised," he said. "I feel a special sense of accomplishment from knowing I'm helping feed people."

In addition to raising pigs, the farm includes 2,600 acres of corn and soybeans. The corn is used to feed the pigs while the soybeans are a cash crop. The family also grows about 28 acres of specialty corn called Jimmy Red that they sell to a local distillery.

While Donnie has dedicated much of his life to the farm, he briefly ventured beyond its borders to pursue higher education at Northwest Missouri State University, where he earned a degree in agricultural science. After graduating in 2014, he knew his calling was to return to the farm in Monroe City. That same year, he married his wife, Ashley. The couple now have a daughter, Thea (7), and a son, Madden (5).

"I've seen the passion that my dad and grandpa have shared in farming, and I am proud to follow in their footsteps," Donnie said. "They've built a legacy of stewardship and sustainability that I want to ensure continues." **M**



# What Will Move the Market?

## HAVE YOU EVER HAD YOUR VEHICLE

stuck in the mud? It's a frustrating experience. You're in a deep rut, spinning your tires but going nowhere. Or maybe you start inching forward, but the moment you ease off the gas, you slide back and are stuck again. This is how the energy markets feel right now.

Many factors influence supply and demand dynamics, and a high level of uncertainty has left the market relatively stagnant within its current range. Various concerns related to the economy, energy demand, production and refinery operations are prevalent. Despite these factors, market conditions have remained largely unchanged. Notably, even geopolitical conflicts in regions such as Ukraine and the Middle East have failed to provide substantial momentum to drive significant market movements.

**I try to limit political commentary, but the election outcome could influence energy policy and regulations and impact pricing in the short and long term.**

U.S. crude oil production has been strong for over a year now. At the end of 2023, production was just under 13 million barrels daily. So far in 2024, production is up around 13.12 million barrels per day, a very strong number. Crude supplies have built from 415 million barrels in early January 2024 to nearly 460 million in mid-May. WTI crude oil futures prices have gone from almost \$70 per barrel in January to \$87 in mid-April before selling off to around \$80 per barrel as of this writing. The ongoing wars and a positive economic outlook spurred the surge.



Gasoline futures have followed much the same path as crude oil, seeing lower prices early in the year and a rally that peaked in April. January's price was roughly \$2.00, and we saw prices hit \$2.85 in April. Since then, gasoline futures have traded lower to approximately \$2.45 as I am preparing this article.

The diesel market has charted a similar path but on a smaller scale. The January low of \$2.50 for ultra-low sulfur diesel futures was followed by an early peak in February of \$2.90. ULSD futures have been trending lower ever since, dropping below the January low, which we didn't see in crude or gasoline futures.

So, where are things headed? Diesel prices continue to trend lower despite supplies hitting levels on the lower end of the three-year average (but above 2023). I think prices were pressured lower by a lack of escalation in the geopolitical conflicts and worries about the U.S. economy. In late May, diesel futures are testing new lows, and basis values on forward contracts have eased lower, offering an excellent seasonal opportunity. Historically, diesel futures can see a downside correction from late April to May. Trends show those pricing slides are often followed by a fall rally from August to October.

I am almost hesitant to mention it, but I am often asked what will happen to energy pricing as the upcoming presidential election approaches. I try to limit political commentary, but the election outcome could influence energy policy and regulations and impact pricing in the short and long term.

Historical pricing trends show relatively normal patterns in election years; however, they may be exaggerated or slightly sped up in anticipation of the election. As mentioned before, diesel prices typically move gradually from a winter low to a fall high. Due to the election, we may see the rally peak earlier and the beginning of the historical end-of-year decline sooner than usual. Generally, the election cycle implications are more impactful in the equities markets than in energy.

With all this in mind, now is an excellent time to look for fall pricing protection. I recommend looking for opportunities to take hedge protection from higher prices by locking in a comfortable percentage of your fall needs against a seasonal rally. **M**



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



### MFA Oil Raises \$150,000 for Hunger Relief

MFA Oil Company, a farmer-owned energy cooperative, announces its 10th Annual Charity Golf Scramble and Concert, raised \$150,000 in donations for Feeding Missouri to provide hunger relief across the Show-Me State. Over 240 golfers attended the event, which was held on June 3, 2024, at The Club at Old Hawthorne in Columbia, Mo.

“At MFA Oil, we believe in the power of community and the importance of helping those in need,” says MFA Oil President and CEO Jon Ihler. “Our partnership with Feeding Missouri exemplifies this commitment as we join forces to combat food insecurity across our state. With this \$150,000 donation, we proudly support Feeding Missouri’s efforts to provide nourishment and hope to individuals and families facing hunger. Together, we strive to build a brighter, more resilient future for all Missourians.”

The event featured a golf tournament, a dinner and a private concert by country music artist Carly Pearce.

“MFA Oil’s generous donation is a testament to the company’s commitment to serving the community,” says Feeding Missouri Executive Director Heather Hargrove. “We are sincerely grateful for their support of Feeding Missouri’s mission to fight hunger and provide vital assistance to individuals

and families in need. With partners like MFA Oil supporting us, our food banks are better equipped to aid the 1 in 7 neighbors experiencing hunger in the state.”

Feeding Missouri is a coalition of Missouri’s six regional Feeding America food banks. Through a coordinated network of more than 1,200 community and faith-based feeding programs, it provides hunger relief to every county in the state and the city of St. Louis.

### New Directors Elected to MFA Oil Board



Dean Snyder and Doyle Oehl

MFA Oil Company hosted delegate meetings across its eight voting districts in January and February. The farmer-owned cooperative held elections for its Board of Directors at four district meetings where two incumbents and two newcomers won.

**Dean Snyder** of Hamilton, Mo., one of the two new directors, farms in rural Caldwell County, where he raises row crops, hay and livestock with his wife,

Nancy, and children, Kari, Emily and Creston. Snyder was elected to a one-year term to represent the company’s Northwest District at a meeting in St. Joseph, Mo., on Jan. 30. He is involved in various community, church and agricultural organizations.

**Doyle Oehl** is the newly elected director for the co-op’s Southeast District. He was elected to a three-year term on Feb. 21 at a meeting in Ste. Genevieve, Mo. Oehl raises corn, soybeans, wheat, hay and cattle with his son, John, in Jackson, Mo. He is a member of St. Paul Lutheran Church of Jackson, where he has served on several boards and is an usher. Oehl serves on MFA Incorporated’s Board of Directors and is vice president of the Citizens Electric Board of Directors.

**Monte Fisher** of Brashear, Mo., and **Tony Dameron** of Vandalia, Mo., were re-elected to three-year terms on the cooperative’s eight-member Board.

Fisher has represented the company’s Northeast District since 2017. He was re-elected at a delegate meeting in Kirksville, Mo., on Feb. 6. He raises cattle and crops on his family farm with his wife, Lisa. Fisher also serves on the Adair County R-II School Board. He is the longest-tenured member of the MFA Oil Board of Directors.

Dameron, representing the East Central District, won his third term at the Feb. 7 delegate meeting in Perry, Mo. He and his wife, Sheri, operate a row-crop and cattle operation in Audrain County, Mo. He is a Curryville Baptist Church member and a Van-Far School Board member. Dameron is a third-generation MFA Oil member and has served on the MFA Oil Board of Directors since September 2018.

MFA Oil hosts delegate meetings each year to inform its farmer-owners about the cooperative’s operations and performance, provide updates from management, and share local company news for each district. **M**





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