

AG-SCENE

Your Local Agricultural Supplement **2022**

**A special supplement to The Renville County Shopper
& The Glencoe Advertiser**

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Resch is optimistic on agriculture

By Rich Glennie
Correspondent

“We have a strong farm economy, especially in the (Highway 212) corridor,” Dave Resch said recently when asked about the health of the area farm scene. “We had very, very good yields (in 2021) with 200-plus bushels of corn and 60-plus bushels for soybeans. (But) further west and north of Hutchinson, it was significantly less due to the drought.”

Resch, a familiar ag lender for Brown-ton’s branch of Security Bank and Trust, is well respected in the area not only as a lender, but as a farmer, as a former U of Minnesota-Extension educator and being involved for years with many aspects of local and state farming organizations.

The key to his optimistic view is “you need to start with good yields because you need commodities to sell, or it doesn’t matter.”

He said area farmers in 2021 had a good year to pay down their loans with over \$6 a bushel for corn and about \$14 a bushel for soybeans.

“But the markets continue to remain volatile,” Resch said. He said some farmers locked into 2021 prices at \$4.50 a bushel of corn, and if they hadn’t, they probably would have made another \$1 a bushel.

Where is break-even?

As an ag lender, Resch said he stresses to borrowers to first know what their break-even costs are and aim at a price above the production cost.



Chronicle photo by Rich Glennie

Dave Resch of Glencoe was presented the Friend of Agriculture award at the 38th annual 2022 McLeod County Agriculture Appreciation Banquet. Resch also has worked for the University of Minnesota Extension Service as a farm business manager for Scott and Carver counties, and was even president of the Extension Ag Educators.

He expects grain people to do well in 2022, but a factor may be the constantly rising “input costs.” He said they could be

double last year’s input costs if a farmer waits to go purchase them until this spring.

Those increased input costs include fuel, “which has gone up significantly,” he said. Chemicals like fertilizer and weed control for the fields, rent and real estate taxes have increased. “Understand where you are (on costs) and price accordingly.”

Also, landowners see farmers made out pretty well in 2021, “so landlords want higher rent,” Resch said.

Real estate taxes are based on valuations, and as the price of land goes up to \$8,000 or \$9,000 an acre, so do the property taxes.

“The margins (for being profitable) are less going into 2022 than in 2021,” Resch said.

Another issue facing farmers will be the supply chain problems in 2022. Farmers will be needing items like fertilizer or equipment repairs. Resch said he knows of one farmer whose combine has been sitting in the repair shop since September, “because they can’t get parts.” If you want to buy new equipment, they may not be available until 2023, he added.

Put together, higher commodity prices often go hand-in-hand with higher expenses. “Overall, it could be similar to the last 10 years,” he said.

Resch said area farmers are fairly solid with yields and commodity prices, “but going forward, the real question is do you know your costs? It’s not gambling,” he said of farming. “You can quit gambling, but farming ... no.”

Optimistic on ag

Turn to page 5

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Optimistic on agriculture

Continued from page 3

Resch admitted Americans continue to demand cheap goods, like food.

One industry not doing well is the milk industry. He said milk prices have not increased as well as other commodities. “But dairy never had great margins, not real high profits,” Resch said. As to the number of dairy farms in the area, “there are still a few.”

Higher interest rates

So how do possible increases in interest rates in 2022 impact farmers?

Resch said the United States Federal Reserve is looking at raising interest rates about 1 percent this year and another percentage point in 2023. That extra 2 percent increase on a \$1 million loan equals \$20,000 more in costs.

Meanwhile, land values are growing tremendously, Resch said. But land is a stable investment that has drawn others, besides farmers, to invest in land.

Reason for optimism

“Overall, I’m very optimistic for the future,” Resch said.

One reason for optimism is high gas prices also benefit ethanol producers, while new uses for soybeans also aid farmers’ bottom lines.

He also pointed to area farmers getting into organic production, or other similar

niche markets, like sugar beets, a seed-cleaning business or Tangle Town Gardens “which fills a good niche.” Another trend is livestock producers selling their animals directly to consumers, like Al-sleben Meats in Glencoe.

Also, there are off-farm job opportunities for farmers and their spouses, mainly to obtain health insurance for themselves and families.

But the labor shortage remains a nagging problem. Farmers are having a difficult time finding people to drive tractors and other farm equipment. But Resch said there is some help from new immigrants “who really want to work.” He pointed to a beef processing plant in Buffalo Lake that has its “parking lot full.”

Stronger export markets is another plus for farmers. While environmental issues could impact farmers, more likely in the future. One major debate is the switch from fossil fuels, like coal and oil, to more wind and solar power. If wind and solar win out, the country needs a “strong storage capacity,” Resch said.

Overall, how are area farmers doing? “Ag is pretty strong,” Resch said.

Farmers have a lot of good people to work with in risk management, insurance, equipment dealers and strong area lenders, too. Having solid working relationships is important, he said.



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Damian Mason speaks at local banquet



Chronicle photo by Rich Glennie

Damian Mason speaks on the two subjects he knows best: Business and Agriculture. Since 1994, he has spoken to over 2,400 audiences in all 50 states and 7 foreign countries.

By Rich Glennie, Correspondent

It was a strange combination of blending serious agricultural issues with fast-paced humor, but Damian Mason pulled it off Saturday, January 29th at the Pla-Mor Ballroom at the 38th annual Agriculture Appreciation Banquet.

Mason, an Indiana farm owner and

graduate of Purdue University, gave up his job in corporate America to become a “Bill Clinton comedian” in the 1990s. He said he wanted to be creative rather than be told what to do by corporate America, “So I turned comedy into a business.”

In introducing Mason, Ryan Mackenthun, president of the McLeod County Corn and Soybean Growers Association,

said Mason has spoken to audiences in all 50 states, five Canadian provinces and seven foreign countries giving his insights in how to successfully navigate “tomorrow’s agriculture.”

“There is no such thing as self-employed,” Mason stressed. “We all work for other people’s money. In ag we serve an audience. The market place sets the price

and we’re all price takers.”

In his monologue, Mason said he wanted to leave the audience with several things to think about.

First, stop saying: “If you ate today, thank a farmer.” He asked if anyone

Mason speech

Turn to page 8

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Mason speech Continued from page 7

thanks the foreigners who make their tennis shoes? “Do you thank the auto makers who make your cars? No! Agriculture is our business, so stop saying “Thank a farmer today.””

Second point, Mason said stop trying to educate consumers about farming. “Maybe consumers don’t want to be educated.”

Mason looked around the room and noted many Smart phones were on the tables. He pointed to one woman and asked if she was interested in how the phone was made or where the phone was made? She nodded no.

“The Smart Phone is smarter than the technology we had when we sent a man to the moon. We expect it to work every day. We expect it to be better next year,” Mason said.

The same is true for consumers of food, Mason added.

Rather than try to educate urban consumers, Mason suggested having a little perspective. “Share what we do, but not educate them if they don’t care to be educated.

“We need to stop being passionate in our advocacy about farming,” Mason said. He then gave the definition of passion as “being an out-of-control emotion.”

In a similar vein, he stressed that “activism is a business to gain power and influence,” and used the examples of vege-

tarians, Green Peace and PETA. “Activism is a fund-raising business.”

Green Peace was organized decades ago to combat the whaling business around the world, Mason said. The last three countries gave up whaling years ago, but did Green Peace go away? “No!”

“We in agriculture think we’ll appease them” by changing to plant-based foods, eliminating chemicals in farming or changing farming techniques to cave into animal rights activists’ demands to change.

“No,” Mason shouted, “you can’t appease them! Then they will move the goalposts. You can’t appease them because they need controversy to profit (from it). They lose their cause, they lose their money.” So these activists find a new cause.

A third point, Mason said, is to stop blinding people with science. He pointed to all the scientific explanations for using genetically modified organisms (GMOs). “You can’t use science (with consumers) who don’t understand science. Humans are moved by emotions, not science.”

His fourth point noted how amazing American agriculture is in that it uses less natural resources to produce every calorie in the country. “We are an abundant producer of food.”

Because of that, “We can never be pushed into a corner as long as we do not



cowtow to the activists or regulations (on agriculture). Agriculture is emotional.”

Mason suggested ag supporters push agriculture as a national security priority.

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Farmers can apply for ARC and PLC through March 15



By Extension University of Minnesota

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting applications for ARC and PLC enrollment through March 15, 2022.

The ARC and PLC programs provide financial protections to farmers from substantial drops in crop prices or revenues and are vital economic safety-nets for most American farms. Producers can elect coverage and enroll in crop-by-crop ARC-County or PLC, or ARC-Individual for the

entire farm, for the 2022 crop year. Although election changes for 2022 are optional, enrollment (signed contract) is required for each year of the program. If a producer has a multi-year contract on the farm and makes an election change for 2022, it will be necessary to sign a new contract.

ARC and PLC are not available for all agricultural crops grown in Minnesota. Only covered commodities with established base acres are eligible for participa-

tion in ARC and PLC sign-up. The 22 covered commodities nationwide include wheat, oats, barley, corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, sunflower seed, rapeseed, canola, safflower, flaxseed, mustard seed, crambe, sesame seed, seed cotton, dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas, large chickpeas, and peanuts. Farm Service Agency recognizes 13 covered commodities in Minnesota. UMN Extension’s Farm Bill educational analysis focuses on corn, soybean and wheat pricing and sign-up deci-

sions.

Some USDA Service Centers are open to limited visitors, but most are helping producers online. Producers should contact their Service Center to set up an in-person or phone appointment. More information related to USDA’s response and relief for producers can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

To learn more about ARC/PLC visit fsa.usda.gov or contact your local USDA Service Center.



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Career paths in agriculture

By Metro Creative Connection

As the world population grows, the role of the agricultural sector will become even more prominent. There should be significant demand for agricultural professionals capable of meeting the challenges facing the world as it confronts climate change and food shortages. That makes now a perfect time for students to explore potential career paths in the agricultural sector.

- **Agricultural engineer:** Agricultural engineers employ engineering principles to solve issues related to agricultural production. An agricultural engineer may design facilities or machinery or develop solutions to address problems related to irrigation and soil conservation, among other projects. Students interested in a career as an agricultural engineer can expect to study mathematics, physics, chemistry, computer engineering, and, of course, engineering analysis and design as they pursue their degrees.

- **Agronomist:** Agronomists work with crops and soil management and may work as analysts, environmentalists or forecasters. Agronomists may be tasked with analyzing soil structure and chemistry and study how water is moving within soil. Students will study agriculture, biology, chemistry, and physics en route to earning a degree that will help them become an agronomist. Mathematics also will be part of their studies, and statistics courses will be part of those studies.

- **Biochemist:** Biochemists study the chemical and physical principles of living



things and biological processes. Within the agricultural sector, biochemists will contribute to the development of agricultural products, including those that will serve a medicinal function. Biochemistry, chemistry, biology, calculus, and physics

will be part of students' courseload as they pursue degrees that prepare them for a career as a biochemist.

- **Climatologist:** Climatologists will figure prominently in the agricultural sector as the effects of climate change manifest

themselves more readily over the next several decades. Climatologists study climate change, variability and the biosphere. Climatologists offer insight about the effects of climate change on the growth and development of agricultural products, including fruits, grains and vegetables. The natural sciences feature prominently in climatologists' educations, and students also will study meteorology as part of their coursework.

- **Food scientist:** Food scientists study chemistry, biochemistry, microbiology, and engineering so they can assist in the development of new food products. Food scientists may manage processing plants and some serve as researchers in an effort to solve problems related to food production.

- **Plant pathologist:** Plant pathologists specialize in analyzing issues related to plant diseases. Research features prominently in plant pathologists' work, and many work in university settings. Some plant pathologists work for companies attempting to develop pest-resistant plants. Advanced degrees are necessary to work as a plant pathologist, and students will study mycology, bacteriology, virology, and physiology, among other subjects, as they pursue their degrees.

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1st	35	4520 DGVT2P	Kasson	MN	243.9
1st	72	5280 CONV	Truman	MN	220.4
1st	43	4520 DGVT2P	MNEC Summary	MN	199.3
1st	43	4520 DGVT2P	Foley	MN	114.3
2nd	58	5610 CONV	Kasson	MN	294.3
2nd	58	5610 PCE	Dexter	MN	256.5
2nd	43	4520 DGVT2P	Clear Lake	MN	249.8
2nd	72	5280 VT2P RIB	MNSE Summary	MN	248.5
2nd	69	5700 SS	Jeffers	MN	246.7
3rd	35	4520 DGVT2P	MNSO Summary	MN	219.9
4th	58	5610 PCE	MNSE Summary	MN	264.9
4th	72	5280 VT2P RIB	New Richland	MN	235.3
4th	35	4520 DGVT2P	Jackson	MN	232
4th	43	4520 DGVT2P	Milaca	MN	179.9
5th	72	5280 VT2P RIB	Cannon Falls	MN	275.1
5th	48	4880 VT2P RIB	Brooten	MN	267.2
5th	58	5610 PCE	Nerstrand	MN	266.3
5th	69	5610 CONV	Jeffers	MN	240.5
5th	35	4520 DGVT2P	Eyota	MN	235.1
5th	43	4300 VT2P RIB	Milaca	MN	179.7
FEDERAL HYBRIDS & APEX TRIAL RESULTS					
1st	17	AE2110 E3	U of MN - Becker	MN	61.3
1st	17	AE2110 E3	U of MN - Central Avg	MN	53.2
1st	17	F2290N R2X	U of MN - Rosemount	MN	42.7
2nd	10	F2121N LLGT+	U of MN - Wasceca	MN	65.4
2nd	54	AE1520 E3	Wendell	MN	55.8
2nd	17	AE1910 E3	U of MN - Rosemount	MN	38.7
3rd	54	F2320N RXF	MNSO Summary	MN	68
3rd	54	F2320N RXF	Kasson	MN	68
3rd	17	F2121N LLGT+	U of MN - Danvers	MN	66.3
3rd	17	F2290N R2X	U of MN - Becker	MN	56.3
3rd	54	F2210N RXF	Wabasso	MN	53.4
3rd	17	F2290N R2X	U of MN - Central Avg	MN	53.1
4th	10	F1909N LLGT+	U of MN - Fairfax	MN	75.5



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Dave Resch honored as a 'Friend of Ag'

By Rich Glennie,
Correspondent

Dave Resch of Glencoe was presented the Friend of Agriculture award at the 38th annual McLeod County Agriculture Appreciation Banquet Saturday night, Jan. 29, at the Pla-Mor Ballroom. The banquet, which was not held last year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, featured a mix of organizational business, award presentations and a generous dose of humor thanks to Damian Mason, a nationally known speaker, comedian, farmer and author.

"Being a Friend of Agriculture is very meaningful to me," Resch said in accepting the award.

A lifetime in ag

In introducing Resch, Ryan Mackenthun, president of the McLeod County Corn and Soybean Growers Association, said Resch "spent his life surrounded by ag. He is a former teacher at Glencoe High School. He spent seven years selling ag equipment before moving on to ag lending.

"In fact, he worked for every bank in Glencoe at some point," Mackenthun noted.

That point was not lost on Mason, the comedian, who came back during his talk to find the banker "who couldn't hold a job."

Mackenthun also noted Resch spends time with his lambing operation, RCR Showlambs.

Among his other accomplishments,



Chronicle photo by Rich Glennie

Glencoe's Dave Resch (right) was recently presented the Friend of Agriculture award by Ryan Mackenthun, president of the McLeod County Corn and Soybean Growers Association, at the association's annual McLeod County Agriculture Appreciation Banquet.

Resch also has worked for the University of Minnesota Extension Service as a farm business manager for Scott and Carver counties, and was even president of the

Extension Ag Educators, Mackenthun said.

Resch served on the Minnesota State FFA Alumni board, the McLeod County

Fair Board, and recently retired after 40 years with the Minnesota 4-H State Fair committee, Mackenthun added.

"Our board had the privilege of working with him," Mackenthun said. Resch served nine years on the local ag board, seven of those as its secretary.

Prior to the banquet, the board elected two new board members, Bryce Lindeman and Alex Marxen. They replace two outgoing members, Bob Lindeman and Samuel "Whitey" Sanken, who received plaques for their years of service.

"All your board members volunteer to be on this board because they believe in what this board does and stands for," Mackenthun said. "I thank them for everything they did for us."

The board

Current board members include Mackenthun as president, David Cohrs as vice president, Chad Hoese as treasurer, Lindeman as membership chairman, Matthew Fitzgerald as secretary; and directors Jay Mackendanz, Sanken, Mandy Dammann, Ryan Zimmerman, Matt Miller and Karen Johnson, McLeod County Extension educator.

Mackenthun also noted the McLeod County banquet "is one of the most attended county banquets in the state."

Three scholarships were presented at the banquet. The recipients are Cole

Resch honored

Turn to page 16



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Resch honored Continued from page 15

Bauer, who will attend South Dakota State; Kyle Hagen, who will attend South Central College in Mankato; and Tyler Reiner, who will attend Ridgewater College in Willmar.

The scholarships go to children of members who plan to continue their education in an agricultural field, Mackenthun said.

Two other reports were given by Johnson and Kaelyn Rahe on the Minnesota soybean outlook.

Mackenthun said membership in the state soybean and corn growers groups, “helps give all farmers in our county, our state and our nation a voice to those who make policies in government that we follow. Without that voice, most really don’t understand what we do out here in rural America.

“They don’t see how much we, as a farmers, support not only in rural America and the rural jobs ... but urban jobs as well.”

Using government website statistics, Mackenthun noted one in every five jobs in Minnesota is directly or indirectly related to agriculture. Industrial jobs such as machinery manufacturing plants, fertilizer

and chemical supply chains are related to agriculture. “Even technology jobs that continue to make farmers more efficient and help us continuously lower our carbon footprint. Minnesota has been a leader at lowering our carbon footprint for many years now.”

‘Value’ to corn, beans

Using the biofuel industry as an example, Mackenthun said, “bringing value to corn and soybean products that we all love to grow.” He noted two new uses of soybean oil are in design in making new vehicle tires and for the soles of new shoes and boots.

Minnesota’s agricultural exports are about \$7.1 billion a year, Mackenthun said, and agriculture exports account for more than one-third of the state’s total exports. The top commodities include soybeans, corn, feed grains and processed feed and pork. Those commodities account for 70 percent of the state’s total agricultural exports.

“All of this is done with just one-third of 1 percent of the total budget in the state,” he said.



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Strategic Farming: Let's talk crops! Focused on Sulfur

By Extension Educator,
University of Minnesota

Sulfur (S) might be considered a secondary nutrient, but it is essential for crop production. Historically, sulfur fertilizer was recommended on low soil organic matter soils and coarse-textured sandy soils, according to Jeff Vetsch, a soil scientist at the University of Minnesota Southern Research and Outreach Center in Waseca.

Then in a liming study that ran from 1999 to 2006, Vetsch started to recognize slight corn yield increases when S had been applied on a soil where they didn't expect a response. Further studies showed even greater yield increases and a study in 2010 opened their eyes to what a sulfur response on heavy, high organic soils could look like.

"What changed that we needed sulfur on these higher organic matter, medium- and fine-textured soils?" asked Vetsch. Researchers threw out several potential causes; perhaps it was higher yielding corn or perhaps fewer sulfur impurities in phosphorus fertilizers, but the cause that is most likely is the role of reduced sulfur emissions from power plants.

As part of the Clean Air Act, the Acid Rain Program (1995) required major reductions in sulfur dioxide emissions and set permanent caps for primarily coal-burning electric plants. Then in 2015, the Cross State Air Pollution Rule was enacted to reduce downwind fine particulate (soot) pollution, which further reduced sulfur dioxide emissions.



Sulfur dioxide emissions have decreased from a level of 17 million tons per year in 1980 to less than 1 million tons in 2020. As a result, atmospheric deposition of sulfur now is relatively small and not a significant source for crops.

Dr. Dan Kaiser, University of Minnesota Extension nutrient management specialist, focuses his research today on sulfur fertilizer sources, application rates and timing. Due to their responses, corn and alfalfa are the two crops that have shown the most benefit from sulfur fertilizer on fine-textured soils. As a result, fertilizer

guidelines have been updated.

"Sulfur fertilization hasn't been a one-size-fits-all strategy. There are a lot of options and it's trying to tailor fit those options with your crop rotation and tillage scheme," states Kaiser.

For more information on sulfur recommendations from the University of Minnesota Extension, visit extension.umn.edu/nutrient-management.

University of Minnesota's Strategic Farming: Let's talk crops! webinar series, offered Wednesdays through March, features discussions with specialists that provide

up-to-date, research-based information to help farmers and ag professionals optimize crop management strategies for 2022. Join us February 2 for a "Weed management update." For more information and to register, visit z.umn.edu/strategic-farming.

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Keys to a successful family dairy business

By Jim Salfer,
Extension Dairy Educator,
University of Minnesota

Farmers pride themselves on being part of farms that have been passed on through multiple generations. States give out awards for century farms. This is a major accomplishment because not many businesses succeed for multiple generations.

According to the Family Business Institute, only 30% of family-owned businesses transition to a second generation, 12% to a third, and 3% operate into the fourth generation or beyond. It is best for the vitality of our country and even more importantly for our rural communities if farms and other small businesses thrive. In the United States, family-owned businesses employ 60% of workers and create 78% of new jobs.

Family Business International analyzed family-owned businesses throughout the world. They discovered four traits consistently found within thriving and successful multigeneration family businesses: good governance, the ability to identify and develop family and non-family talent, an orderly succession strategy, and “family gravity” — described as an ability to capitalize on what makes their business special. Even though the businesses analyzed were not farms many of the keys to success are the same.

Good governance

The businesses studied had governing boards and were operated in a professional manner, not mixing business decisions with family dynamics. These businesses did not have family members with hidden agendas but made business decisions

transparently. They believed this led to sound decision-making and management practices.

Common traits of unsuccessful family businesses included family members with hidden agendas and preferential treatment favoring certain family members, which can result in irrational business decisions.

Identified and trained future leaders

The Family Business Institute observed that this is an area in which most family businesses could improve. Often not much time or thought is invested in identifying a leader that has the skills to maintain or grow the business.

Future leaders of the most successful businesses evaluated future leaders on skills, potential, and the value they brought to the business. The most important trait business owners looked for in their successor was shared values, vision, and a good cultural fit. These traits, along with a desire to change, learn new skills, and having the vision to adapt to the changing industry, were important. These future business owners and leaders worked within the business for several years and were provided training to be set up for success. All family members that joined the business were expected to add value to the business.

“Family gravity”

This term encompassed six key elements that successful companies aspired to implement.

1. These businesses had clearly defined values that united family members and



built strong relationships. This gave these businesses a moral center that helped sustain them in the face of challenges and difficult decisions.

2. The businesses had a clearly defined vision for the future, which was communicated and was the basis for the family’s business decisions. This is important in a rapidly changing business environment. This allowed the businesses to set goals and determine priorities.

3. Excellent communication ensured that everyone could carry out his or her responsibilities and be a positive force for the business.

4. Family members had a mutual understanding of respect and support. This al-

lowed for a healthy exchange of ideas and discussion of key and delicate issues. This determines how resilient the family will be and how it will respond to change.

5. Good family governance and a commitment to professionalism helped ensure that decisions were made and authority exercised to minimize conflict. This also allowed the business to attract and retain superior employees.

6. Family roles were clearly defined for all members.

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Crowd turns out for Soil Health Profitability talk

The Renville County Soil and Water Conservation District along with the Hawk Creek Watershed Project held a Profitability for Soil Health Meeting at the Renville Community Center on Wednesday, Feb. 9.



This meeting had 111 attendees who came to learn more about different soil

health practices and the new and ever-evolving topic of carbon credits.

This meeting emphasized the different soil health practices that local farmers can adopt that both benefit their soil health and reduce their costs by needing fewer inputs, machinery, fuel, and time. Keynote Speaker, Kari Olson. Kari, alongside her dad, Rob, operates a 2,300-acre grain farm near Hawley. Over time, they have reduced tillage on their operation and have been exclusively no-till for the past six years. Integration of cover crops over the last seven years has helped them accelerate some of the soil health benefits of no-till.

Following Kari's presentation was the carbon panel. Carbon credit representatives from Bayer, Cargill, Indigo, and Truterra each gave brief informative presentations on how their company operates when it comes to carbon credits, and then the Q & A followed for the representatives. Many questions were asked as our attendees were very interested in what carbon credits all entail and how they can begin to generate these carbon credits for profit while operating their farm. The discussion of questions was great with the Q & A last-



Over a 100 area individuals turned out for Renville SWCD and Hawk Creek Watershed Project's Profitability of Soil Health Meeting that was held at the Renville Community Center on Wednesday, Feb. 9.

ing for over half an hour. The panel was informational only and the Renville County Soil and Water Conservation District along with the Hawk Creek Watershed Project do not endorse one company over another nor do we have an opinion on selling carbon credits.



Carbon panelists, featuring representatives of Bayer, Cargill, Indigo and Truterra, took part in a Q&A on carbon credits with audience members.



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New generation of legacy farm focused on soil health

By Dick Hagen
Renville County Register

She's pert, stylishly trim, saucily free and forward. Her name is Kari Olson; she's 25 years old, she's a 2018 graduate of North Dakota State University where she majored in Agricultural Economics with a minor in Crops and Weed Science. Her maternal Great-Great Grandparents homesteaded their Clay County farm in 1872...about 25 miles east of Fargo...so Hawley is her home town. She and her father Rob Olson operate a 2,300 acre farm that experiments with 'conservation farming' practices. Over time, they have reduced tillage and have been exclusively no-till for the past six years. Plus integration of cover crops for seven years had helped them accelerate some of the soil health benefits of no-till.

Kari was the guest speaker at the February 9 Profitability of Soil Health event hosted by Renville County Soil Conservation Service at the Renville Community Center. When Kari spoke all 106 of us who attended, listened.....intently I might add. With background screen she projected scads of information detailing facts and figures about their Conservation Farming which features three crops woven into a 3-year rotation featuring minimum tillage and cover crops. She even shared a tweak into 'carbon farming' strategies as a future income generator also.

Kari consented to a brief, sit-down Q & A with me. So here we go:

Q: At age 25, you're already a 'shining star' in this exciting world of new practices

that assist Mother Nature in the healing the 'landscaping pains' of America's 'high-powered' agriculture. So was continual education into a PhD program a consideration?

Kari: My Dad had a health scare when I was midway through college. That significant health issue convinced me to come home and work with my Dad in his intriguing conservation farming endeavor would be a better choice. I considered a Ph-D, but knew this would be a better choice. And already I am happy with my decision. Sure, I had learned quite a bit about better farming and conservation technologies at NDSU. They have a great staff and in my opinion, they are always on the cutting edge of newer and better systems too. But perhaps most importantly I have learned in my few years of farming 'You have to find a way to work well with Mother Nature regardless your own ambitions, because Mother Nature always wins!'

Q: So how do you like your 'new role' in life?

Kari: I love this job. Yes, there are times I've questioned what I'm now doing. But the reality is the more I get involved with Dad's deep commitment to improving our farming skills for a better tomorrow for the next generations, the more I appreciate this life.

Q: Perhaps an easy question....the most influential person in your life?

Soil health
Turn to page 29



Kari Olson, a 2018 graduate of North Dakota State University, operates a 2,300 acre farm operation with her father Robert Olson that works to institute a variety of conservation farming practices.

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Soil health: Big ambitions have Olson's 'fired up' about the future of agriculture Continued from 28

Kari: That would be my Dad...he is so knowledgeable and has played a significant role in where I am today. If he wasn't already here, I really don't know what I would do. These past two health scares have really put that into perspective for me. Yes, I think I could run the farm. We've got the equipment setup and I can handle running it all but I want nothing more than to have my mentor by my side. Of course, I can't leave out my mom. I truly believe she is the glue that holds this farm and our family together. Whether it's a parts run, bringing meals to the field, or running the grain cart, she is able to keep us up and running. She was able to juggle all this on top of taking care of three daughters and our activities while my dad was busy. That is crucial to our operation; she deserves an award!

Q: Your father's age...and health today?

Kari: Dad's 60 so chronologically still a young man. This past year was most difficult however collectively he's on the mend and ready for another season. This winter he also had his gall bladder removed. But we're trusting our Lord to keep us both in this exciting and rewarding game together for many years.

Q: As you told us this morning, conservation farming is still a continuous learning game. What's the likely challenge for you folks this year?

Kari: I think it will be labor. My sister stepped back and is now starting her own business so we'll be looking to hire someone ready to join in with us...and who has the knack to be a quick learner too. Because we don't have livestock, it is difficult to employ year-round help. Also we don't currently offer health insurance so we have to find new ways to compete. One of my selling points is the unique quality of farm life itself and the flexibility it provides in your various work routines.

Q: So can you and your Dad make it work?

Kari: We think so. Dad is willing to step back but he also knows it likely will take some doing to find this 'right person.' We have some prospects that are highly qualified. And our family wants to see us keep this going. Another outlet may even be to contact one of our local colleges to see if they might have some students willing to work with us...but the Good Lord Willing, we'll keep it working. And our Olson family clan thrives on working together to help build a better future for ourselves, our neighbors, our country, and generations to come. Big ambitions? You bet...that's what keeps us fired up about the future of American agriculture.

Q: Changes for this 2022 cropping season?

Kari: Like all farmers, market trends influence our thinking too. Due to higher fertilizer costs in corn, soybeans seem to be a better choice for us. We're usually about a third corn, a third wheat, and third soybeans. This year we are shifting some of our corn acres to soybeans. But we're open to markets still...if corn gets looking stronger, we'll likely do more corn. And as you so well know, weather conditions right up to planting time can be a factor too. Suffice to say, we have a plan but it can change even until those final acres are

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- Maternal great-great grandparents –Rollag, MN 1872
- Paternal great grandparents- farmed in Hawley 1930s
- Still farm both original farms + added acreage
- Grandpa (Robert T) – 1960s
- Dad (Robert S) – 1983
- Kari – 2018
- 5th generation??



The Olson family farm seeded its beginnings in a Clay County homestead farm in 1872.

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Q: So are you already 'forward pricing' some of your anticipated 2022 crop?

Kari: We're still marketing some of our 2021 crop and likely will do some delayed marketing of this new crop too. There's no denying Chicago Board of Trade futures are compelling to lock in soybean futures. Key this year is that if you buy significant inputs for this year's crop you better 'cover your butt' with selected futures. But we're being careful as to how much we want to forward contract due to another potential drought year. There as been a slight recharge of soil moisture with fall rains. We rely on expertise of our weather and extension prognosticators but obviously we make final decisions. She chuckled, "Ask me again about June 1 or so."

Q: Your Dad, and now you too have concerns about building soil health. So how do you measure 'soil structure' in your ground with your 'new' farming system? And is soil structure improving?

Kari: The main thing is you just got to get out there and dig. Put a clump of soil in your hands and break it apart. If its easy and 'mellow' to work with versus being hard clods you'll certainly both see and feel the difference. And I think we're seeing a difference already...2019 was very wet yet we got everything harvested and we could drive across our fields without leaving wheel trenches. We're seeing more frequent large rainfall events it seems but all that moisture infiltrates into our soils fairly quickly. Surface runoffs of silt-laden soils just aren't happening. And we know that is good for everyone, even the fish in our streams, rivers, and lakes.

Q: Your farmland is well drained?

Kari: Dad did pattern tiling on one particular field and more spot tile on other acres. But I think as we get further into this system of farming, there's less need for tiling. Even in this drouthy 2021 season our

crops took a week or more to fire compared to neighboring fields. They were able to 'sustain their health' longer and that's telling my Dad and I we've got healthier soils. We apparently had a little more of a reservoir out there. On the flip side, we lost a good chunk of soybean acres to a late frost this spring due to no-till. These practices aren't the answer to everyone's problems, but it works for us. We're using 81-day to 88-day maturity hybrids. When buying our seeds, inputs or machinery, three things we focus on is buying locally, price and service. Price is a factor, but it isn't everything to us. And service is #1...do they treat

us well and timely. One thing my Dad focuses on is buying locally...because they pay taxes, they help support the community, they provide income for other kids and employees, they help the local school.

Q: Next question and you may not wish to comment: What's the consequences if this November there is a significant change of politics both Nationally and in Saint Paul?

Soil health

Turn to page 41



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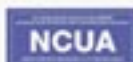
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100th anniversary highlights importance of co-ops

**By Allison Jenkins
Today's Farmer
magazine**

Late last month, I celebrated my five-year anniversary with MFA. When June rolls around, I will have spent 26 total years working for agricultural cooperatives.

And I have a century-old law to thank for it.

The Capper-Volstead Act, which is often called the "Magna Carta" of cooperatives, turned 100 on Feb. 18. It was signed by President Warren Harding in 1922 to legally protect collective action by farmers to market, price and sell their products. Without this exemption, agricultural cooperatives would find it difficult—if not impossible—to operate under antitrust laws that guard against monopolistic business practices.

In other words, if there were no Capper-Volstead Act, there may very well be no MFA—nor any other farmer-owned co-op that buys grain, markets farm products, supplies inputs or provides financial services.

To understand the importance of this legislation, you first have to understand its historical context. In the early 1900s, the United States was transforming from an agrarian society to a more industrialized economy. There was a growing divide among farmers, who were still relatively small, and the much larger companies that bought their products or supplied their inputs. Farmers weren't receiving fair prices, and those who tried to band together to create a more level playing field were in danger of violating antitrust laws.

Capper-Volstead—named for its sponsors, Sen. Arthur Capper of Kansas and Rep. Andrew Volstead of Minnesota—was intended to correct this imbalance by allowing farmers to form cooperative associations and strengthen their bargaining power. Under this statute, farmer co-ops are mostly immune from antitrust restrictions, but the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture has power to prevent them from achieving and maintaining monopolies.

Over the past 100 years, the Capper-Volstead Act has allowed cooperatives to flourish under its protection and evolve to effectively serve their members. At MFA, for example, our mission has grown well beyond pooling orders for better

buying power to providing members with an expansive selection of value-added products, services and expertise.

However, as co-ops have grown bigger and more complex, they have become prime targets for antitrust scrutiny. Over the past 10 to 15 years, lawsuits involving egg, cranberry, mushroom, potato and dairy cooperatives have centered on just how far Capper-Volstead's exemptions should apply to large, modern agricultural operations. While courts found some actions of these co-ops were not protected by the act's provisions, Capper-Volstead has ultimately continued to survive these legal tests. The pandemic could raise those questions again, having exposed the fragility of America's consolidated food-supply chain.

The relevance of farmer cooperatives today was discussion point at the Emerging Leaders in Agriculture conference hosted last month by MFA Incorporated and MFA Oil. Some 75 young farmers and ranchers participated in this inaugural event, which was, in part, designed to strengthen their knowledge about cooperative businesses and address issues and challenges facing agriculture and rural America.

Dr. Keri Jacobs, who holds the MFA Chair in Agribusiness and is a Graduate Institute of Cooperative Leadership Fellow, spoke to the group about the importance of the co-op business model. Without cooperatives, Jacobs said, American farmers would be at the mercy of the market in an economy dominated by large corporations.

"Do we really need cooperatives today?" she asked. "One field of thought is that no, we don't. Farmers are big enough to sustain their operations without them. But I think that's exactly wrong. Now more than ever, we need cooperatives. Consolidation in the ag industry means fewer choices, and I worry that we would step back to the early 1900s in terms of the market power producers have."

The danger to cooperatives today is not only scrutiny of their business practices, but also lack of support and loyalty among younger generations. Jacobs encouraged conference attendees to get involved with MFA and

other cooperatives that serve their farming operations. Developing the next generation of co-op members grows more important every year as the average age of principal farm operators climbs higher.

"Much like we say a

church is not the building, it's the people, a cooperative is really not the organization, it's the collection of people that it's representing," she said.

The milestone anniversary of the Capper-Volstead Act underscores the

need for more cooperative education, understanding, connection and engagement among farmers of all ages and career stages—both men and women. The statute does no good if members don't take full advantage of the

cooperative benefits the law serves to protect.

As Jacobs told participants at the Emerging Leaders conference, when it comes to your co-op's future, you either "use it or lose it."

The local legacy of Andrew Volstead

While the "Volstead Act" is remembered, the name of the architect of that legislation is not. He was Andrew John Volstead, a member of the House of Representatives for 10 terms. Volstead was a representative from Minnesota. He was born in that state on October 31, 1859, the son of Norwegian immigrants. He attended the public schools, then studied at St. Olaf's College, in Northfield, Minn., before transferring to Decorah Institute, in Decorah, Iowa. Volstead

"While the Prohibition Act has made my name known pretty much everywhere, I believe that this law is no less deserving of notice.... The cooperative marketing law will do more good than any other law that you can name because it will make it possible for the farmers through farm organizations to sell their products upon an equal footing with the businessmen. If farmers are going to be successful, it is in my judgment that they must become successful in that way." — Andrew J. Volstead



graduated from that institution in 1881. After studying law on his own (while employed as a schoolteacher), he was admitted to the bar in 1883, commencing practice in Lac

qui Parle County, Minn. In 1894, he was married to a schoolteacher and assistant county auditor, Nellie Gilruth who was born in Scotland; and a daughter, Laura, was born to the

couple the following year. Laura received a law degree and served as secretary to her father. She was married to Carl Lomen, the Reindeer King.

After briefly residing in Wisconsin, Andrew moved to Granite Falls, in Yellow Medicine County, in 1886. Volstead served as the county's prosecuting attorney from 1887-93 and from 1895-1903, and as mayor of Granite Falls from 1900-1902; he also squeezed in terms during that period as a member of the board of education (including a stint as president) and city attorney of Granite Falls.

He was elected to Congress as a Republican, and remained at his post from March 4, 1903 to March 3, 1923. For four years, Volstead was chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary. Among the unpopular stances he had the courage to take was arguing for en-



The Andrew J. Volstead House Museum in Granite Falls.

Volstead

Turn to page 37

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Volstead: Continued from 36

actment of federal legislation outlawing lynching. Before leaving Congress, he spearheaded passage of legislation less memorable than the Volstead Act, but of immense significance to his constituency, and to farmers nationally, the Capper-Volstead Act

The Capper-Volstead Act

The Capper-Volstead or "Cooperative" Act — which is still in effect — enabled farmers to form combines without fear of prosecution under the Sherman Antitrust Act. Volstead explained at the time: "Business men can combine by putting their money into corporations, but it is impractical for farmers to combine their farms into similar corporate forms. The object of this bill is to modify the laws under which business organizations are now formed, so that farmers may take advantage of the form of organization that is used by business concerns."

The Volstead Act

The name of "Volstead" will forever be associated with an experiment that failed. It was, however called the "Noble Experiment" — a characterization by Herbert Hoover — and it was grounded on a sincere desire to rid society of the ills of alcohol. It was designed to improve health, cut crime, and relieve taxpayers of a portion of the burden of subsidizing prisons.

The problem was: it failed to take into account human nature and the truism that things are apt to go wrong when the government tinkers too much with personal choices. What the 18th Amendment did was to ban "the manufacture, sale, or distribution of intoxicating liquors." It went into effect July 1, 1920. The Volstead Act — also known as the National Prohibition Act — was enacted in October, 1919 to provide for enforcement mechanisms. It gave federal authorities the power to prosecute violations. Also, it defined intoxicating beverages as those containing more than .5 percent alcohol.

After Congress

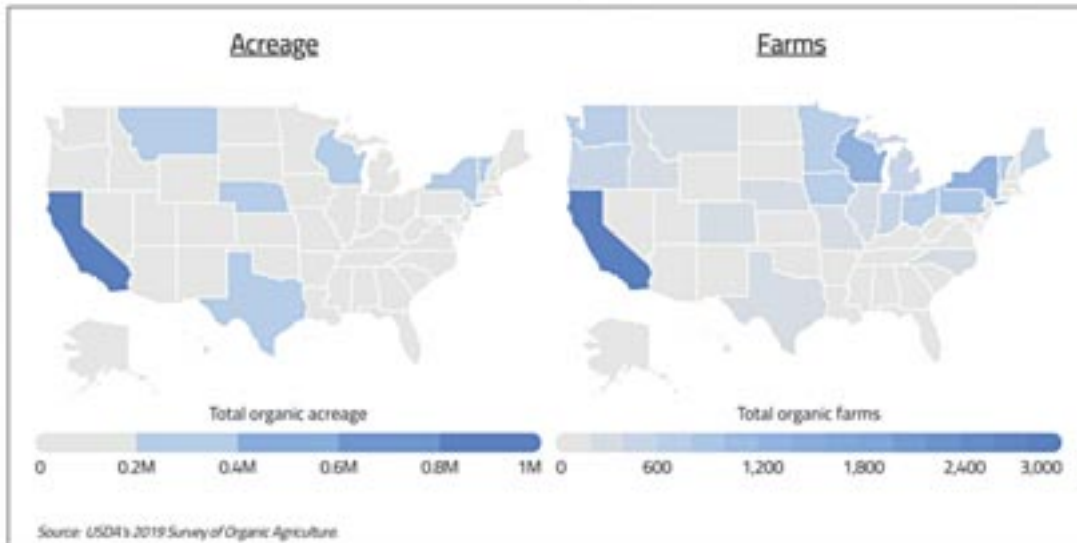
The loss of his congressional seat in 1922 was apparently more tied to low farm prices — resulting in rejection of numerous incumbents by voters that year — than to the Volstead Act. Volstead resumed law practice in Minnesota, then was hired in 1924 as legal adviser to the chief of the National Prohibition Enforcement Bureau. He served in that capacity until 1933, then returned to Granite Falls, remaining active as a lawyer until the age of 83.

Organic grows, more slowly in Minnesota

**Dick Hagen
Renville County Register**

In 2008, the U.S. had 10,903 organic farms covering around 4 million acres of farmland. In 2019, there were nearly 16,500 organic farms on 5.5 million acres. However, the sale of organic products has more than tripled over the same span, rising from \$3.1 billion to \$9.9 billion.

Within the nearly \$10 billion organic food market, milk, chicken and eggs are the top sellers. Organic milks leads all products with more than \$1.5 billion in sales; chicken is at \$1.1 billion and eggs at \$887 million. One location where organic agriculture has taken hold is



California alone accounts for over 20 percent of all organic farms and acres.

California which is now home to more than 3,000 organic farms...more than twice the

next-highest state. Total organic farming acreage in California is now reaching one

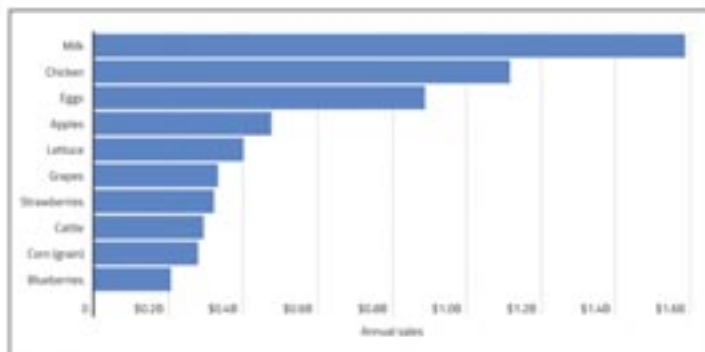
million acres, representing about 4 percent of the states agricultural acreage.

The list of organic states, on a relative basis is led by northeastern states including Maine, New York, and Vermont with organic acreage accounting for nearly 17 percent of its total.

So far only 0.68 percent of Minnesota farmland is organic production. That currently amounts to 172,968 acres on 635 organic farms. There are 68,822 farms in Minnesota and in 2019, these 635 organic farms sold \$113,606,000 worth of products.

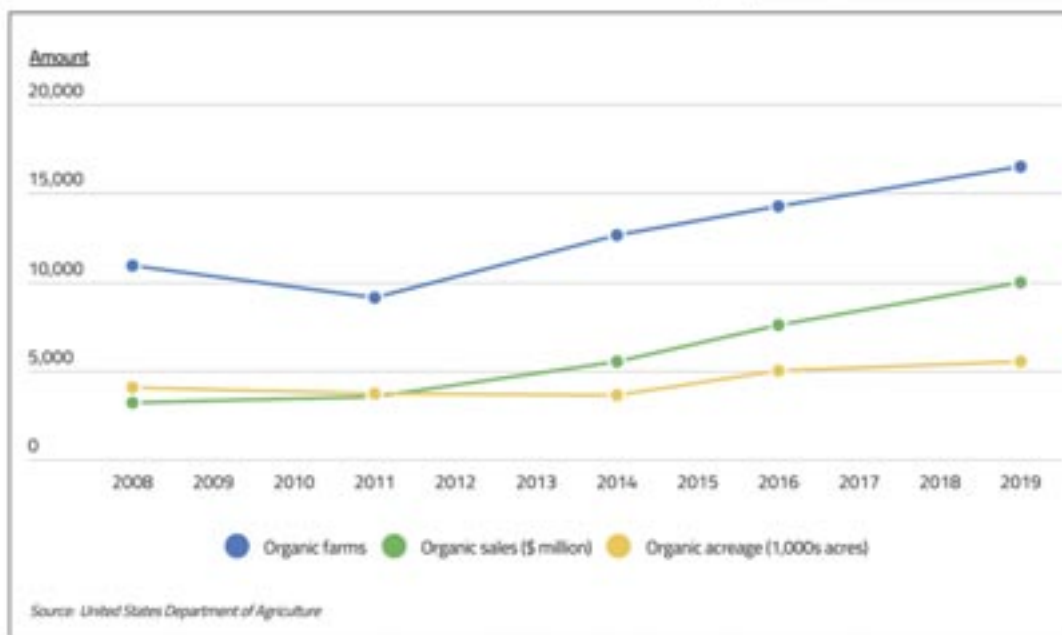
Given the continuing consumer growing taste for organic health foods, Minnesota will likely see more organic farmers each succeeding year. However, California with its burgeoning population and generally favorable growing conditions 12 months of the year will continue the 'organic bonanza' of American agriculture.

Locally check with the Renville County Soil and Water Conservation office for more information.



At left, milk and chicken are the top two organic commodities with sales over \$1 billion each. Below, organic food sales have more than tripled since 2008.

Source: USDA



Within the nearly \$10 billion organic food market, milk, chicken, and eggs are tops.

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Renville County, Minnesota LAND AUCTION

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2022 @ 10:00 A.M.



119.18 SURVEYED ACRES
2 TRACTS

The land is located southeast of Bird Island, MN. The farm is further described as being located in Section 36, T115N - R34W, Bird Island Township and Section 1, T114N - R34W, Norfolk Twp, both in Renville County.

BOTH TRACTS REPRESENT PRODUCTIVE, TILLABLE FARMLAND.

NANCY (DAHLGREN) JURGENSEN
Attorney: Kristal R. Dahlager | Anderson Larson Saunders & Klaassen, PLLP
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Lyon County, Minnesota LAND AUCTION

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2022 @ 11:30 A.M.



148.25 SURVEYED ACRES
1 TRACT

The Bahn land is located in northeastern Lyon County. Property is 3.5 miles east of Cottonwood, MN on 380th Street. The tract is further described as being located in Section 13, T113N - R40W, Lucas Plat Township, Lyon County.

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Renville County, Minnesota LAND AUCTION

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2022 @ 1:00 P.M.



155 ACRES±
subject to survey
1 TRACT

The land is located between Fairfax, MN and Franklin, MN on County Road 16. It is further described as being located in Section 36, T113N - R33W, Bandon Township, Renville County, MN.

THE FARM REPRESENTS PRODUCTIVE, TILLABLE FARMLAND.

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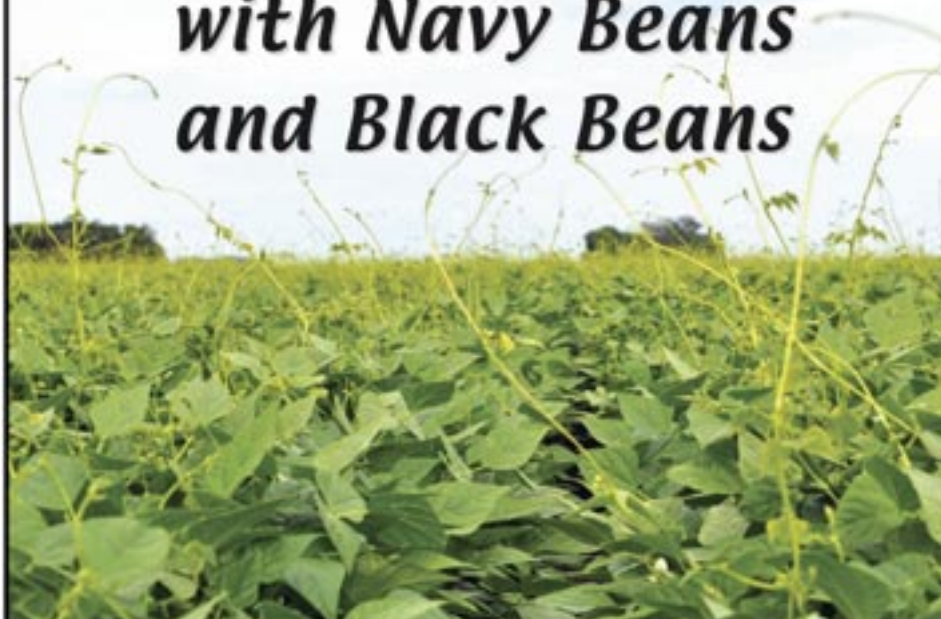

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The eternal question: More corn or more soybeans?

By Dick Hagen
Renville County Register

That question gets asked routinely amongst my 'gifted gurus' at the Round Table, Chatter Box Café, Olivia. As I listen none of these talented minds seems to know the answer. Figure that one for me. Two of the zaniest retired farmers certainly comment with some credibility. Bob Mehlhouse simply thinks the price of nitrogen fertilizer will put the clamps on corn acres for this 2022 season. Yes, all-time highs so if you didn't 'book early' you likely will reconsider buying nitrogen for spring application this season. Jim Zenk agrees, at least in theory, but his enterprising son did some applications last fall after harvest. Nitrogen prices, especially last fall, were about \$100 per ton cheaper than today. But Jim argues another point: The genetics of corn hybrids are amazing these days...last fall the highest yields ever on our farm with some fields in that 180+ bushel category...and we got a good recharge of soil moisture last fall. And corn market prices are good these days.

So what do the 'real pros' have to say about more corn, or more soybeans? "If we had spoken at the end of last year it



A variety of factors will play into whether soybean or corn harvest prove more lucrative.

would have been a no brainer,' says Peter Meyer of S&P Global Platts, "You would have looked at the board (Chicago Board of Trade) and said, "Okay, corn looks like the winner. Clients were asking and asking and I came out at 90 million acres corn and 90 million acres soybeans. Yes, already the price of nitrogen fertilizer was the talk, but the bigger question was its

availability?" "We saw natural gas this week up 50 cents one day and down 50 cents today. So as natural gas prices were going down a little I 'readjusted' my corn acres to 91 million and shrunk soybeans to 89 million acres."

Chip Nellinger of Blue Reef Marketing also acknowledges the acreage debate could be wild and cautions, "I could easily see

corn acres unchanged to lower. I think you could see a couple million more soybean acres too. It depends on where you're at. If you're sitting on the best ground in Iowa, Illinois and Indiana where you can raise 242 to 250 bushel per acre corn, you're saying 'there's no way I'm going to plant more bean acres.'"

Suffice to say the final answer to this incredible question won't

be known until 2022 corn and soybean crops are in the ground. So look for the USDA prognosticators to have an answer like sometime in June. Meanwhile at the Roundtable I can already predict some commentary like "So how much do you believe what these Washington experts say. What we see happening right here in Renville County is more reliable."

Soil health: Important to stay abreast of political efforts Continued from 29

Kari: That's a tough one but I do wish to comment anyway. This past year we've faced a lot of harsh commentary with the change of Presidency. There no denying President's actions affect agriculture more than most people realize... these proposed changes in estate taxes being a prime example. Our entire farm is applicable to real estate taxes. My concern was I could lose the farm if these proposed new taxes come into being. I'm aware how vital it is to pay attention to

what's going on in politics and voice your opinions, particularly as it pertains to the farms of America.

We're now facing legislation wanting control of what treatments we can use on our seeds, chemicals on our crops, and such. To me these are needless aggravations of our primary mission of providing food for people.

We're trying to do our best to work with nature; to protect the land we're farming. And we are blessed with a tremendous cadre of

agronomists; soil scientists; farm equipment specialists and so forth, all working cooperatively so that we may become ever more proficient in our challenges of preserving America's abundance!

Q: Are more farmers now asking you for information? At your young age, are you becoming a 'spokesperson' for agriculture?

Kari chuckled: No, let's not go that far. Perhaps it could be but I work much with Dr. Abbey Wick at NDSU. She's a soil health

specialist; she brings me along to her meetings to provide a farmer's perspective on top of her research behind our farming technologies. We do some of our own trials but results from her NDSU work is the guide stone to our own farming strategies. Replicated studies by University specialists which I learned at college is the cornerstone of tomorrow! And I certainly don't disagree.



Area individuals filled the Renville Community Center for a conversation on soil health on Feb. 9.



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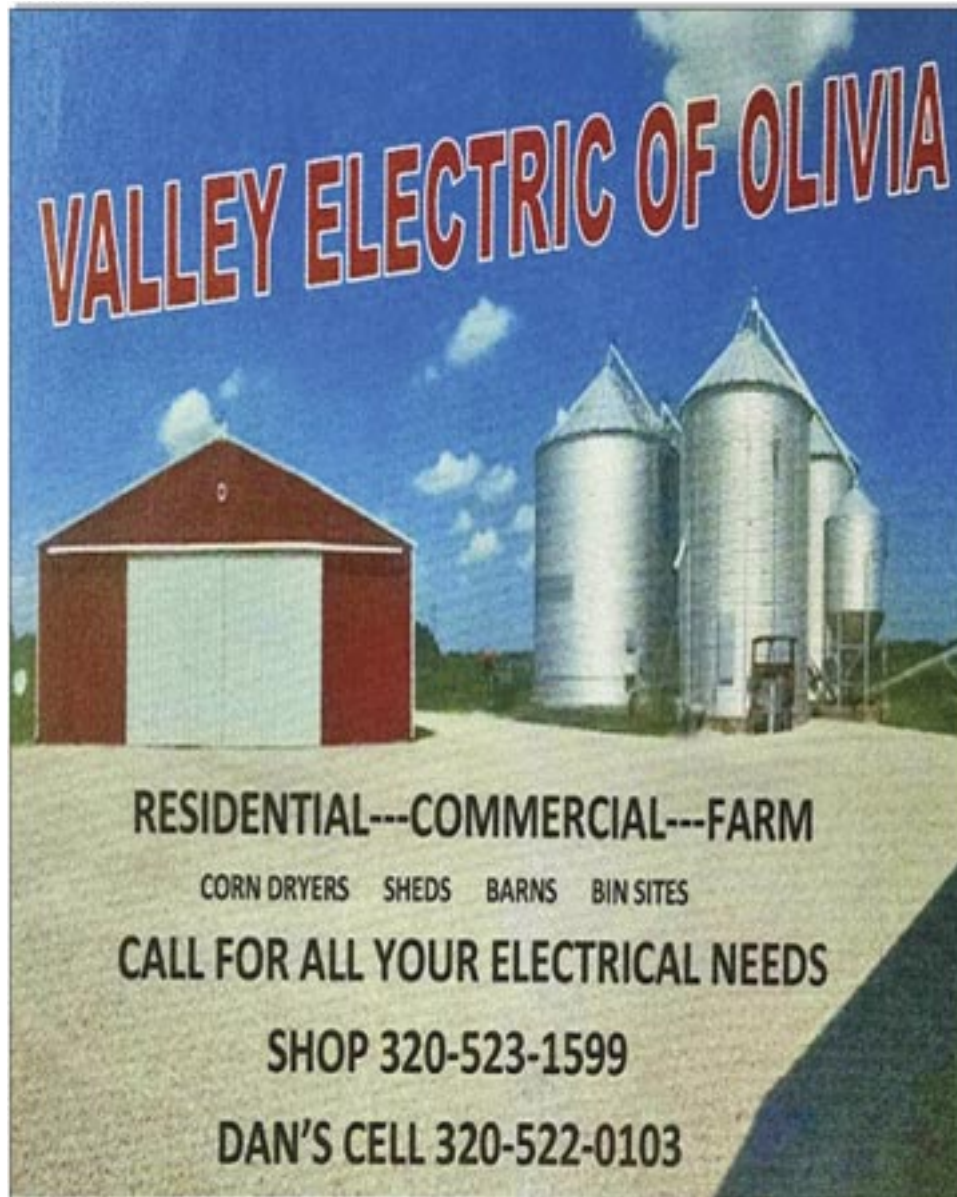
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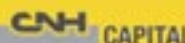
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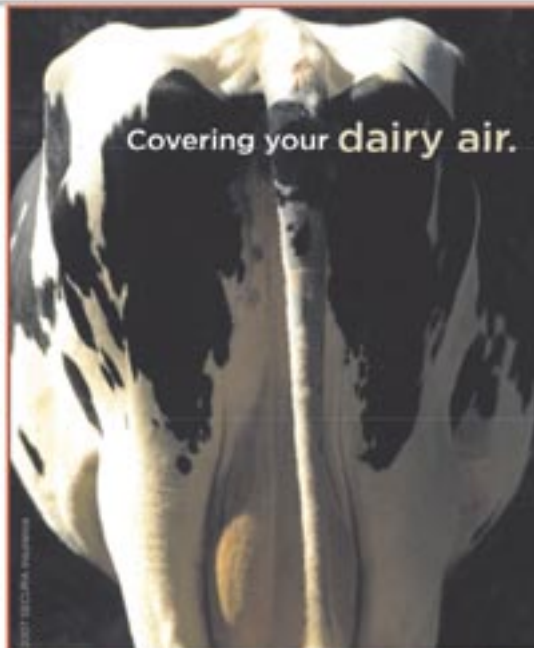
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