



THE
FOWLER EQUITY EXCHANGE

Fowler, Kansas 67844

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NEWSLETTER

"Keeping in touch with your cooperative business"

January – February 2005

Manager's Comments

By Bob Bender

With the start of the new year, we look forward to another good one for our members. At the time of this writing, we have some nice weather which allows some of you to start applying nitrogen to corn ground. Hopefully, we will continue to have good weather conditions so we can get caught up on fertilization that normally occurs in the fall right after harvest. The price of anhydrous ammonia, since it is based on the cost of natural gas, is substantially higher this year. We hope that nitrogen prices, as well as fuel prices, have stabilized and will begin to decrease as we get into the spring.

The Fowler Equity completed our six month audit and your cooperative remains on track for another profitable year. Operational results are slightly lower than budget, and we hope to improve on this with the large fall harvest that we had. That will result in increased storage income and grain margins. Grain prices, as expected, are under pressure with increased farmer selling at the beginning of the new year. Most analysts agree that we should see some increase in the grains for the next few months.

You may see some new construction activity soon at the Equity that your cooperative has planned. We are building a new dump pit with a 15,000-bushel-per-hour leg and handling system to speed up our capacity during harvest. This is a much-needed improvement to your facilities and is something that many of you have said is needed. Since this almost doubles our current handling capacity in the north elevator, lines should, hopefully, be eliminated during harvest. This will not only increase our

efficiency, but we felt that we were losing some grain business because some of our patrons were hauling grain to places that had no, or smaller, lines at harvest. The construction should be completed sometime in April or May so we can utilize the new facility starting with the 2005 wheat harvest.

The accounts receivable of your cooperative remain in good condition. We thank you for your continued cooperation in keeping accounts within our credit terms.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns regarding your cooperative, please call or stop by the office. Thank you for your business! **-TFEE-**

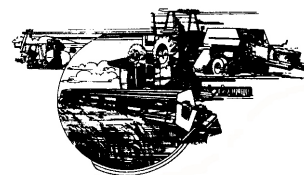
Fertilizer Department

By Don Burdett

Not much field work has been done this late fall and early winter. It has been too wet in most areas. However, some of our patrons were able to go on cleaner ground and got some fertilizer applied, but the moisture we had early in January put a stop to activity again.

We have had a pre-pay program for anhydrous ammonia. At this writing on January 3, there are 139 tons left and when it is gone the program concludes. The price is \$338 per ton. If you contract, the product must be used by the end of March 2005. Call Bob for details and to contract.

*Please turn to **Fertilizer Department** on page 2*



Fertilizer Department *continued from page 1*

When field conditions allow producers to go to work, there will be a big run on equipment. *Please return empty nurse tanks promptly.* Your neighbor may be waiting to use them. If we all work together, we can get everyone's needs for nurse tanks satisfied. Thanks for your help.

The wheat top-dressing season is upon us. We remind you that we have 32% liquid nitrogen in stock. The following information points out the importance of a good fertilizer program and the necessity of good timing in order to make full use of your fertilizer dollars:

There are five components involved in final grain yield and attention must be paid to all of them for efficient wheat production. The potential of each of these yield components is determined during different stages of wheat development, and all are affected by plant nutrition.

1) Plants per acre —

This is heavily influenced by planting practices and vigorous early plant growth. Adequate early fertility is needed to promote deep, extensive root development.

2) Tillers per plant —

Winter wheat tillers in both fall and spring. Nutritional shortages during these time frames often produce thin stands and reduce heads per acre.

3) Spikes per head —

The potential size of the head is determined prior to jointing. Inadequate fertility prior to jointing reduces head size.

4) Kernels per head —

From jointing through the boot stage, the potential number of kernels per head are developed. If plant nutrition is limited during this time, potential yields decline.

5) Kernel weight —

Developing the large, plump kernels that typify big yields requires sufficient nutrition between the flowering and hard-dough stages.

In planning your overall fertility program, each of these components demands careful attention. Environmental conditions during the growing season also affect the potential of each of these components. While you may have little control over these forces, you can help protect your wheat crop by planning a sound fertility program.

Nitrogen (N) is the most common nutrient that limits wheat production. Nebraska research has indicated that fall root system development can be reduced 50% or more with inadequate N nutrition. Since most of the root system is developed early, adequate N must be in place early in order to provide the greatest water use and production efficiencies.

Fertility programs that include part of the total fertilizer N as preplant applications get the wheat plant off to a strong vigorous start. Adequate N is also needed to promote tillering, head formation, and grain filling.

Since three of the five yield components are determined by jointing, fertilizer N must be in the root zone early. Frequently, top-dress N applications are made too late and profitability is reduced.

The total N requirement for wheat is directly related to yield. About 2.4 pounds of N per bushel are required for winter wheat. Residual nitrate N in the soil profile and organic matter decomposition will provide part of the required N and should be subtracted from the total N requirements.

Nitrogen deficiency symptoms:

- Overall light green color on small plants as well as yellowing of the lower leaves on older plants
- Reduced tillering
- Reduced vigor

If hard red winter wheat contains less than about 12.5% protein, nitrogen probably limited grain yields. Grazing removes large amounts of N and needs to be accounted for. About .04 pounds of N per pound of beef weight gain is removed by pasturing the wheat.

If you are working in the shop this winter, we have many of the parts and supplies you will need as you prepare your fertilizer equipment for the season ahead. If we don't have what you need in inventory, we can probably special order and have it for you in a few days. Come see us. -TFEE-

The Fowler Equity Exchange

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Kyle Lewis	Associate Director
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Propane —

This is just a reminder that the propane bottle fill facility is now at the Fertilizer Department. Bob, Randy, Don, and LeAnn are certified to fill LP bottles, so give us a call.



Carbon Monoxide —

Carbon monoxide (CO) can be a threat at any time, but we are particularly vulnerable this time of year. Our homes are tightly closed to keep out the cold winter weather and ventilation may be lacking. Here are some things to think about regarding carbon monoxide:

Carbon monoxide is a hidden hazard. When inhaled, even in small quantities, carbon monoxide is absorbed in the blood stream where it interferes with the transportation of oxygen. It can be highly dangerous. If a furnace or appliance is not functioning properly, excessive amounts of CO can be formed. Get fresh air immediately if you suspect you are breathing carbon monoxide.

Causes of CO:

- Anything that plugs the vent system: a bird nest, an internal collapse of a masonry chimney, or damage to the vent piping, for example.
- Vent pipes rusting through inside the building.
- A leaking heat exchanger in a furnace or space heater.
- Plugged fresh-air vents in crawl spaces, basements, utility rooms, or closets housing a gas appliance.
- Excessive caulking, insulating, or sealing, or use of taped plastic storm windows can reduce the natural influx of fresh air and “starve” an appliance of oxygen, causing excessive levels of carbon monoxide to form.**
- Improper air adjustment, wrong orifice size, or misalignment within burner systems which can create excessive amounts of carbon monoxide that may infiltrate indoors if the vent system isn't working properly.

Common indicators of CO:

- Chronic headaches, nausea, or eye irritation when indoors.
- An unidentified chronic odor inside the building.
- Drying house plants.
- Condensation on cool, indoor surfaces.
- Discoloration or soot buildup at warm-air outlets of the heating system.

If you spot any of these indicators, immediately have someone who is adequately trained and qualified check for the presence of CO.

Preventive measures:

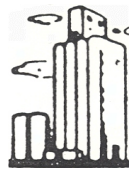
Read and follow manufacturers' operating and maintenance instructions on all appliances and equipment. Have a qualified propane technician check the system periodically and make any necessary adjustments to ensure proper combustion.

Remodeling or repair work around the home may affect how a furnace or appliance performs. Before you do any insulating, caulking, or sealing, or before adding an exhaust fan, wood stove, or fireplace, call a qualified propane service technician to correct anything that could create a carbon monoxide problem.

Randy has one-time CO detectors available for about \$5 each. If you are interested, ask him for more information. It could be a very good investment. **-TFEE-**

From the Grain Department

By Dan Mahieu



We hope you all survived the old year and are getting geared up for the new year! With the moisture we have received and above normal temperatures, the wheat crop outlook is one of the best we've have in several years; but it is a long time until harvest!

Don't forget to check your farm-stored grain. The cool weather is good, but bin tops still need to be checked. Moisture may have blown in and there may be sprouted or spoiled grain, and possibly crusting on top of the grain mass. It pays to keep grain in condition.

Our final tally for grain received this fall was just over 1.9 million bushels of corn, soybeans, and milo. We ended up with 34,000 bushels of milo on the ground pile. Test weights on milo were off a little but, overall, they were above average.

Once again, we thank you for the opportunity to handle your grain. We look forward to serving you in 2005.

-TFEE-

From the Service Station

By Ron Smith



It is winter time in Kansas and that usually means some bad weather with which to contend. There are several things we need to do to be prepared. One is having our vehicles checked over to be sure the antifreeze will prevent freezing as well as protect the cooling system from rust and corrosion.

Please turn to Service Station on page 4

We have a supply of bulk and packaged antifreeze in stock. Antifreeze should be changed every couple of years or so. The old coolant may prevent freezing but the additives that prevent rust and corrosion eventually wear out and won't do a complete job of protecting the cooling system.

If you have a battery that is on the weak side, it will very likely let you down one of these really cold mornings. Even a new, fully-charged battery has only about half the cranking power at 0°F. that is has when it is warm. Couple that with a cold engine with cold oil in the crankcase and you have a potential problem. Let us check the battery in your vehicles and equipment and if you need a replacement, we have them for just about every application.

Good tread on the tires is very important, especially when you are forced to drive on wet, icy, or snow-packed roads. When you stop to think about it, there is only a small patch of rubber in contact with the road at any given time. You need all the traction you can get to be safe while driving in winter weather conditions. Again, we have quality tires at competitive prices that will fit your vehicles.

The rubber fillers in the windshield wipers may have deteriorated during the hot summer. They may be hard and cracked so they can't clear the windshield during rain or snow storms. Let us check them out and replace them if needed. It's another safety factor. Be sure all the lights are working properly. That's still another safety factor and you very likely use them more in the winter months. How long has it been since you had the transmission on your vehicle flushed and the fluid changed? Most manufacturers recommend a flush and fluid change every 30,000 miles. Bring your car or truck in and let us check it over and service it and be ready for safe driving this winter.

Are you using E-10 Unleaded gasoline? There are a couple of factors that are especially an advantage during the winter months. You should never have to add gas-line antifreeze since no moisture accumulates in the fuel tank. It is absorbed by the ethanol. Another factor is the higher octane rating which means faster and easier starting during cold weather. Give it a trial run.

You have probably noticed that fuel prices have backed off a little the past few weeks. What we'll be paying in the weeks ahead is anybody's guess as it depends on so many factors. But you can be assured we will continue to do all we can to provide quality fuels at the best possible prices.

If you use the car wash during cold weather, we urge you to use caution. Water freezes on the concrete and we don't want anyone falling and injuring themselves. Have you noticed the new coin changer at the car wash? It will accept \$1, \$2, \$5, and \$10 bills. **-TFEE-**

Reduce road risk

Mike Bradshaw, Kansas State University Research and Extension health and safety specialist has the following suggestions for reducing risks on the road:

***Check weather conditions** by listening to radio and television weather reports and calling the Road Conditions Hotline: 1-800-585-7623. Kansas road condition information also is available on the Internet: www.kanroad.org. Adjust or postpone travel accordingly.

***Travel absolutely necessary?** Advise others of departure, estimated travel time and route. If you fail to arrive, rescuers will know where to begin their search.

***Travel during daylight hours.**

***Slow down.** Allow extra stopping distance between your vehicle and the one in front of you. And, keep an eye on the vehicle behind you.

***Reduce speed** when approaching an intersection, which can be particularly dangerous as snow melts and refreezes, turning corners and approaching or using on and off ramps.

***Accelerate slowly.**

***What to do in a skid?** The type of brakes dictates recommended responses. Generally, the rule is to turn into a skid and then correct, with care not to overcorrect. With anti-lock brakes, press firmly on the brake pedal. Without anti-lock brakes, let up on the gas and pump the brakes to avoid wheel-lockup. Practice starts, stops, and responding to a skid in an empty parking lot.

***Slide off the road?** Staying with the vehicle is recommended. Tie a bright cloth or bandanna to the antenna or put the hood up to signal the need for assistance. If you have a cell phone along, use it to call for help.

To stay warm while waiting, bundle up and/or run the heater intermittently – perhaps 10 minutes an hour – to conserve fuel until help arrives. Lower windows two to three inches to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

When snow is a contributing factor and a car or truck slides into a ditch or snow bank, make sure that the area around exhaust is clear so that carbon monoxide fumes will be exhausted.

***Keep the gas tank close to full** to prevent condensation, add weight, and, if stranded, provide the fuel needed to run the heater. **-TFEE-**

