

# 2024 Fall Ag



A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE

★ **ESTHERVILLE NEWS**

PHOTO BY DAVID SWARTZ



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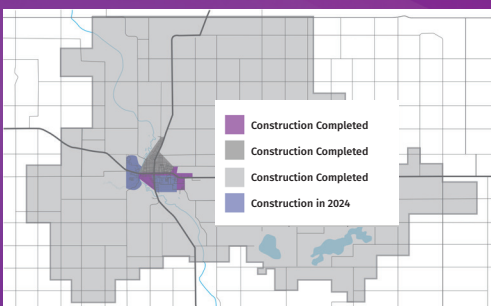
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# Relabeling, setbacks and GMO continue to challenge ag industry

## Baddley said regulations and lack of investment in R&D present challenges to crop farming

by Amy H. Peterson  
STAFF WRITER

Wes Baddeley of Asmus Farm Supply recently spoke to Estherville Rotarians about a variety of topics related to farm chemicals, technology and sustainable farming practices. Baddeley is an agronomist at the company and lives in Gruver. Baddeley covered the challenges in the required, periodic review and relabeling of chemicals for agricultural use, the potential setbacks for chemical use due to the Endangered Weed Species Act, and the development of insecticides that target specific pests.

When chemical manufacturers are required to change their labels, retailers' inventory and profit are affected.

"How the chemical world goes: every so many years [generally 10-15 years], even a chemical that has been on the market for 20 years has to go through a relabeling process," Baddeley said.

Baddeley gave the example of Dicamba, a selective herbicide.

"When that became a labeled product, it changed the whole landscape of how things get relabeled now," Baddeley said.

The relabeling process includes the Environmental Protection Agency telling retailers like Asmus which nozzles must be used and which chemicals can and cannot be mixed together. Other setbacks to the broad use of chemicals include the Endangered Weed Species Act. This Act greatly affects Emmet County because it's designated as an Endangered Weed Species County.

According to the Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources, channelization of streams and rivers, soil erosion, development and urban expansion, and intensive row crop agriculture

have contributed to the loss or degradation of suitable habitat for numerous plant and animal species.

Individual species of plants and animals may contribute to the survival of other species within a community. The loss of what appears to be an unimportant species may result in the decline or loss of species that we consider to be very important. If we ignore species that are in danger of being extirpated from Iowa, we may be making decisions that cannot be reversed in the future. Conserving these species for future generations requires the coordinated effort by public agencies, private organizations, and property owners.

Farmers and farm suppliers also factor into achieving the balance between preserving the environment and earning revenue in a farm operation.

"There are certain setbacks on certain products we have to have and without current administration, they will be looking [at various products on the market]. If we move forward



Right now soybean aphids are hitting really hard as we see all the planes flying. We haven't been bombarded like this in quite a few years, but there's a product called Safina. It only kills sucking insects like aphids

**-WES BADDELEY**



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with the same administration, or very similar, we could be looking at more chemicals that are going to be taken off the market,” Baddeley said.

Baddeley said in the field of insecticides, more directed products are coming out that kill pest insects, but not others, like pollinators, in the process.

“Right now soybean aphids are hitting really hard as we see all the planes flying. We haven't been bombarded like this in quite a few years, but there's a product called Safina. It only kills sucking insects like aphids,” Baddeley said.

The farm chemical industry is concerned about sustainability.

“There's a lot more drive right now in our industry about going to biologicals – looking at stuff that's more sustainable,” Baddeley said.

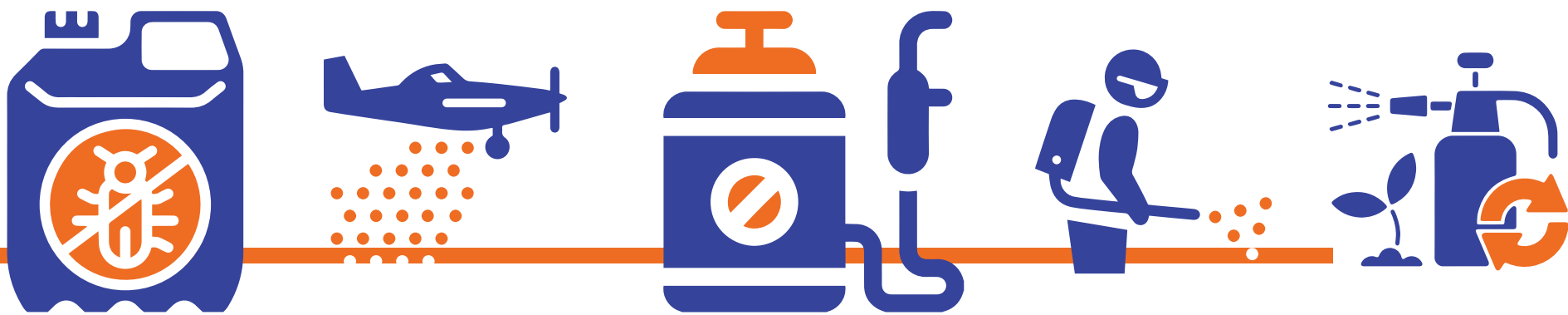
Previously, more of the active ingredients in farm chemicals came from overseas, and it remains difficult to get the ingredients in the U.S. Most of the farm chemical products

are manufactured in the U.S., but the ingredients may come from countries like India and China. Court decisions and legislation on importing certain products will affect operations throughout the chemistry world, Baddeley said.

One of the co-owners of Asmus is chair of the Retailers Association. She travels to Washington, DC to give Congress and the EPA the on-the-ground story of how their decisions affect retailers in the rural area.

“It might look great on paper, but in real life, it doesn't work. And you could put that in perspective,” Baddeley said.

Some of the results achieved through retailer advocacy include products that had been off market returning to market in a directed way – labeled only for use on soybeans, for example. During the two-year process of relabeling, researchers continue exploring whether some crops might have a better experience with the specific product, and



with the positive outweighing the negative, the product once taken off market completely might return for use on only one crop, or on several crops, but not corn, for example.

It's information on which retailers like Baddeley and Asmus Farm Supply must keep up.

"A lot goes into all this chemistry and it affects our business quite a little. We try to run everything we can, professionally as we can, and

we try to sustain a culture, and that's why we like to make decisions based on agronomy, not price, not just trying to sell something," Baddeley said.

To be a certified crop advisor or sales agronomist for AFS requires passage of an international agronomy test and the state of Iowa test, plus eight hours of continuing education each year.

"Our company wants to do that

because that way we try to stay up to date on most current products. You know farmers want to have less inputs," Baddeley said.

The future holds a great deal of innovation, Baddeley said.

"The chemical companies believe we're not far behind. At the end of 2027 to 2030, there's going to be quite a few new modes of action that are going to be brought out. The last new mode of action was brought

out in 1987 in the herbicide world," Baddeley said.

Despite the introduction of a number of new products, and new mixtures of fungicides, herbicides and insecticides, there hasn't been a new mode of action in the last few decades.

"We've come a long way from where we were in the herbicide world, but they're still trying to get ahead of these weeds, because



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Artificial intelligence on crop fields could affect the chemical industry by allowing the farmer to use

# 65% less herbicide

due to the ability to direct the application.



it's getting harder and harder to control weeds," Baddeley said.

What about GMO?

"There's a lot more non-GMO corn planted now than there was five years ago, and that's driven by seed costs," Baddeley said.

Corn rootworm and soybean aphids have put up a fight, however.

With the emergence of non-GMO, chemical applicators like Baddeley have to ask the farmer more questions about what the neighbors are planting, and how decisions on chemicals will affect crops throughout the area to avoid cross-contamination and other negative consequences.

Technology has helped with safe application, too.

"The technology is actually out there that if we send a map to a [drone] sprayer, the sprayer won't turn on unless it's in the right field. Just like autonomous tractors, there was a field right outside of town last fall with nobody in the tractor. There was a logjam on Highway 9. Everybody going by was watching it," Baddeley said.

John Deere has also innovated see-and-spray technology, in which the sprayer detects weeds and sends a direct spray only to the weeds, Baddeley said.

"Drones are becoming a huge thing," Baddeley said.

One emerging technology is a field scouting software loaded into a drone, allowing the drone to detect and indicate how many weeds are in a field, what the standard count is, and differentiate among grasses, broadleaves, and soybeans or corn, generating a

report via email. The cost will be about \$4 per acre more than the cost of a current drone operation.

Artificial intelligence on crop fields could affect the chemical industry by allowing the farmer to use 65% less herbicide due to the ability to direct the application.

"It would change the way we have to market things. Moving forward like that is good for the environment – and that's where sustainability comes in," Baddeley said.

As products and applications become more specialized, sustainability will increase as will environmental safety," Baddeley said.

After harvest and through the winter, AFS offers winter meetings for continuing education for farmers and chemical applicators. This allows the designated applicator on a farm to renew their restricted use chemical license certification.

"Not everybody can come in and buy chemicals from me," Baddeley said.

Applicators consider the environment in their applications and work to comply with required setbacks.

"If you're spraying insecticide within one mile of a certified beehive, you have to do it before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m. because that's when bees go back to their home. SO when we're applying products we have to look at field by field and see if there's endangered or organic factors there. We have to pay attention to all of that," Baddeley said.

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# POWERWASHING FOR BETTER PORK

Local bio-security business owner provides pressure washing services to local farmers

By AMY H. PETERSON

APETERSON@ESTHERVILLENEWS.NET



Maria Rodriguez and her adorable baby

Maria Rodriguez came to the United States at age 17 after growing up in Mexico.

“I was learning English and I had a full time job at that time,” Rodriguez said.

Eventually, Rodriguez got married and her father, who was working for a power washing company, said the industry could provide remunerative business opportunities and suggested that the couple start a business in Estherville. One of De Los Angeles LLC’s major contracts is with Christensen Farms.

No longer married, Rodriguez operates the business with seven employees currently, including two supervisors who assist with scheduling employees to power wash barns after farrowing is done, and to prepare for a new set of sows and piglets.

Biosecurity is critical to preventing viruses and bacteria from spreading among pigs due to their environment. Power washing reduces organic material in a building along with adding the right disinfectant, making it a necessary part of biosecurity and cleaning barns between pig turns. It’s time and labor-intensive. Outsourcing it to a company like De Los Angeles can be a smart move for farmers to allow on-site employees to spend more time in direct care of the pigs, Rodriguez said.

“We understand how crucial it is to keep livestock free from diseases and parasites. Hence, by providing high-pressure power washing, we eliminate accumulated grime, waste, bacteria, and possible disease agents,” Rodriguez said. The company also offers whitewashing with natural, white clay powder for barn covering, power washing of homes, fences, and other structures, grain dryer lower, and hog vaccinations.

Rodriguez is developing a marketing plan, including advertisements in the Estherville News, to reach more farms and farmers in the area.

“I made a business card, and I was putting it in every farm or every site that I could see,” Rodriguez said. She began receiving calls for her services, and word of mouth spread that her team was organized, thorough, and positive to work with.

“We are growing and growing every year. We have a lot of sites and a lot of customers,” Rodriguez said. Rodriguez said it feels great to provide an essential service to hog

farmers and, with her employees, to perform the job to a high standard that ensures the site’s biosecurity.

“You have to do your best to work and make your customer happy. Today with hogs it’s very specialized

**“My goal is to have more customers, more work for my employees, increase profits, and to have our customers say De Los Angeles does a good job. The word of the farmers and companies we serve is very important to me. We’re all about professionalism and integrity,” —Maria Rodriguez**

and they keep them in a healthy environment with a high level of biosecurity,” Rodriguez said.

Christensen Farms sends Rodriguez a schedule each Wednesday for the following week for loads and vaccinations. Farmers also contact Rodriguez through WhatsApp and emails to schedule a time for her crew to load hogs to go to market. The customer base extends to a radius of about 60 miles from Estherville. Rodriguez works with her crew to determine their travel schedule so they always arrive on time. The company hopes to increase its customer base in and around Estherville, including sites

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“My goal is to have more customers, more work for my employees, increase profits, and to have our customers say De Los Angeles does a good job. The word of the farmers and companies we serve is very important to me. We’re all about professionalism and integrity,” Rodriguez said.

The challenges Rodriguez faces include the steps she’s identified in meeting her goal. It starts with ensuring biosecurity at each site. The human touch is essential to ensuring the high standards of biosecurity are met at each site. A study by Pipestone Research compared the effectiveness of robotic power washing of swine barns to manual, human-powered washing. The Swine Health Information Center’s Wean-To Harvest Biosecurity Research Program, along with partners, looked at time to complete the job, staff time, water usage, and cleanliness markers. SHIC Director Dr. Lisa Becton said, “This technology is out in the industry and people are trying to understand what is the value and use of this in their own particular systems... the robotic system or rail-mounted wash system for both the August and February (2023) components of the investigation did have increased water usage when compared to the manual system.”

Dr. Becton added that the robotic system required extra manual power washing for touch ups and other

points around the building as well as taking more time compared with humans operating a power washing machine.

“Any time you’re washing a barn, it is labor-intense, it takes a lot of time, and it’s not necessarily a fun procedure, and anything that we can do to investigate options to make this an easier and more efficient process values all producers,” Dr. Becton said.

Hiring a reliable contractor to power wash a farrowing barn or other farm outbuilding can be a solution to the fact that farm employees may not be eager to do the task of power washing. De Los Angeles also takes on the challenging task of handling hog loads. Rodriguez said her employees take every measure to ensure that the customer’s hogs are transported safely and efficiently from one location to the next.

Rodriguez said the best part of her job is when customers text her to say, “Hey, you guys did a good job,” letting her know that her employees are continuing to do their jobs very well. One customer wrote, “I opted for their professional hog barn power-washing service, and the results are just fantastic. I loved how my hog barn looked and felt after their power-washing solution. They were meticulous about their job.”

De Los Angeles Power Washing is a source to help farmers get their pigs to market and stay healthy throughout their lifespan. Maria can be contacted for jobs at 712-207-3329 or kande.powerwashing@gmail.com.



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# Enersons embrace farm life



**It's been said that Iowa's greatest export is its youth. However, that doesn't apply to some young Emmet County couples who have chosen to remain in the area where they were born and grew up.**

by Michael Tidemann  
STAFF WRITER

That's the case for Tyson and Shelby Enerson of the Gruver area. Agriculture brought them together and agriculture is what's going to keep them in Iowa. You might say their love for agriculture opened the door for their love of each other. "Although we can't pinpoint exactly when we met, we both agree it was through 4-H. Tyson was a nine-year member of Center Champions and I was a nine-year member of Jack Creek Feeders," said Shelby, voted Emmet County Fair Queen when she was still in high school. "We served on some of the same committees and were active in a lot of the same activities. Our mutual interest in agriculture and involvement in our family farms helped shape who we are, and in turn, helped bring us together years later."

It was their role in their family farm operations that also made them decide to sink their roots into

Emmet County soil. "We are both very involved in our family farming operations," said Shelby. "That kept us strongly tied to the area. Tyson opened Center Tire when he was 21 and I dove into my passion for the farm around age 22. We got together shortly after that and knew right away that we wanted to build our life and raise our family here. We are expecting our first child in a few months. Our son will actually be part of the sixth generation, for both of our families, to live in Emmet County." Growing up with their family farming operations, both Tyson and Shelby continue to be busy with crops, hogs, feedlot cattle, a cow-calf herd and a small goat herd. Besides running his tire shop, Tyson hauls grain or helps with the grain cart or tillage equipment. Shelby also helps with the grain cart all fall and cultivator all spring. When not busy with fieldwork, they help maintain livestock. "We are both incredibly lucky to

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work alongside our families,” said Shelby. “Tyson is able to farm with his brother, Trevor, along with his parents and grandparents. I help my dad with his crop farming operation, along with my mom and sister, Chelsey. My sister and I have been involved in the cow calf herd from a very young age, and we both recently started finishing cattle with our dad in the feedlot section of Guse Family Farms.”

The Enersons can offer some solid advice for other youth considering staying on the farm.

“We both hope to see more and more youth interested in agriculture,” said Shelby. “If young people in our community are lucky enough to be involved in agriculture, and have a love for farming, they should find a mentor. Neither of us would be able to be nearly as involved as we are without the guidance of generations before us. We are trying to make our way in the farming world and feel very lucky to have both of our families to fall on for advice.”

Shelby credits her father Bruce for her interest in agriculture.

“My dad really influenced my love for agriculture,” said Shelby. “He never pushed the lifestyle on me, but he was generous enough to share his love of the farm with me. I never appreciated that when I was younger, but the older

I get the more I realize how lucky I have been. I really pride myself in taking good care of my livestock and that is 100 percent thanks to my dad. He showed me how rewarding the hard work that goes into livestock can be. I can never find the words to express the love of livestock that he has shared with me, but I know that it is very important to me that I try to pass it on to Tyson and my son as he grows. 4-H helped shape my future in agriculture and gave me the tools that I still utilize to be successful, not just in agriculture, but in every aspect of my life. 4-H was hands down, the most influential and important program I was involved in growing up.”

To say Tyson carries a full load is putting it mildly. You just have to pass by Center Tire in Gruver to see just about every vehicle imaginable that has tires. Besides running the shop, Tyson farms with his brother, Trevor, who sells seed locally, thanks to the help of family.

The Enersons look forward to expanding not only their farming operation, but also their knowledge and love for the industry in the future so they can pass their passion for agriculture on to the next generation.

Not very many people dream of much less start a major



business at 21. But Tyson has since turned Center Tire into a full-service auto repair shop, specializing in farm equipment, semi work, track sales/service and alignments. To meet the demands of customers, he has updated shop equipment, including investing in an alignment machine. He plans to continue meeting the needs of his customers who include his friends and neighbors.



**Shelby and Tyson are true animal lovers with many furry friends at home.**



# STAY SAFE DURING THIS HARVEST

## A cautionary tale

By David Swartz

DSWARTZ@ESTHERVILLENEWS.NET

As farmers ramp up this year's harvest, safety should stay top of mind of both the producers as well as drivers meeting farm equipment on the road.

Nearly every farmer has a tale of when their attention lagged at the wrong moment which led to either serious injury, to damaged equipment or even death. A quick internet search cites six farm-related accidents that led to someone's death in Iowa during 2023.

Here's a cautionary tale from my past.

I grew up on a dairy farm near Maple Hill. One late summer day, my dad had plans to empty a grain bin in preparation for the upcoming harvest. We required an extra hand so

I called my friend Greg to come help us for the day.

We had a sweep auger that was attached to the main auger via a bolt. Unfortunately, the connecting bolt wasn't up to the task and it broke.

In recalling the incident to Greg in later years, he told me the bolt had to be replaced more than once. I only remember the one time.

That's because my friend Greg was responsible for using a crowbar in the PTO (power take-off) shaft, to align the bolt holes so that my dad could put in a new bolt.

However on the final time of going through this process, Greg forgot to take the crowbar out of the PTO joint before turning on the auger again.

All I heard from inside

the bin was a loud clang of the crowbar. I came outside to find Greg bent at the waist.

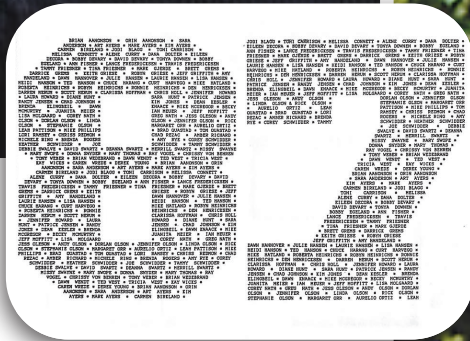
He looked up at me and a portion of his bottom lip was dangling.

"Get me a towel," he said.

To shorten this story, my dad took him to the hospital where his jaw was wired shut for six weeks and he missed most of his senior football season at Lincoln Central.

As farmers know, PTO shafts can be one of the most dangerous areas to be.

So please take precautions around large equipment and be aware of your surroundings.



Our two characters in this cautionary tale are (left) Greg Nath, and (below) David Swartz. Here are their senior photos in the 1987 Lincoln Central Yearbook.

# FARM SAFETY TIPS

from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship

### For Drivers and Road Safety

- **Be Patient:** Farm equipment often moves slowly. Be patient and wait for a safe opportunity to pass, considering that it may be difficult to see around large machinery.
- \* **Keep a Safe Distance:** Stay a safe distance behind farm equipment, especially when that equipment is turning or slowing down, to avoid collisions.
- **Signal Awareness:** Be aware that farm equipment may make wide turns and may not always be able to signal. Watch for hand signals or other indicators from operators.
- **Avoid Distractions:** Stay focused on the road and avoid distractions like texting or using your phone when driving near farm equipment.

### For Farmers

- **Safe Operation:** Avoid shortcuts and stay alert while operating machinery.
- **Emergency Equipment:** Ensure a first-aid kit is well stocked, a fire extinguisher is in working order and your cell phone is charged and easily accessible at all times.
- **Equipment Maintenance:** Regularly inspect and maintain all farm machinery. Ensure that guards are in place and signals,

lights and safety features are functioning properly.

- **Proper Training:** Follow the guidelines for operating equipment. Ensure that everyone operating farm equipment has proper training.
- **Protective Gear and Chemical Storage:** Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, goggles and hearing protection. Store chemicals in their original containers with proper labels and always use them according to their label.
- **Safety Around Grain Bins:** Never enter a grain bin unless necessary and only if you have proper training and safety equipment. Do not work alone.

### Mental Health

- **Stress Management:** Engage in stress-relief activities and take breaks when needed. Activities such as exercise and hobbies as well as plenty of sleep can help.
- **Talk About It:** If you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed, do not

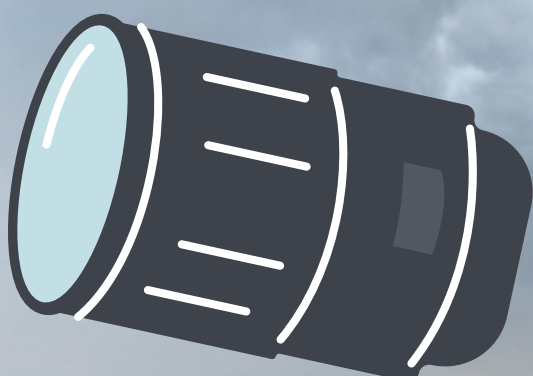


hesitate to reach out to family, friends or mental health professionals. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach has farm stress resources available that were created in part through a grant from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.

- **Iowa Concern Hotline:** The Iowa Concern Hotline at 1-800-447-1985 offers confidential mental health support and resources for those in need.

# FALL AGRICULTURE

# HOT PICKS





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# Harvest 2024

The crop season has had its ups and downs this year with floods and cool temps, but overall, this is going to be one of the best years in the last 10 years for crop production.

The harvest season looks to continue that trend. Early planted corn matured about September 15 and is drying down nicely and will be below 25 percent on October 1. The National Weather



**Kris Kohl**  
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Service has just come out with their prediction for temps and precipitation for the next 30 days, warmer than normal and drier than normal. This is good news for corn field dry-down and low temp drying. Typical field dry-down is 3 points per week when high temps are in the 70s, 2 points per week when in the 60s, and only 1 point per week when high temps are in the 50s. A day with rain often takes 2 days to get back to making progress.

In natural dry bins, we will dry out 7-bushel points per hour at 70 degrees, 6 at 60 and 5 at 50. In a typical 10-horsepower fan and 24-hour day, we will dry 1,680 bushel points from the bin at 70 degree high days. If the corn in the bin is at 20 percent, this 10-hp fan would dry (20-14=6 bushel points per bushel), 1,680 bushel points per day/6 bushel points per wet bushel = 280 bushels per day. Hopefully it is a little dryer to start with



The New Cooperative Inc. location in Gruver will be ready for delivery of this year's harvest. Photo by David Swartz

so we can get the bin dry in about 2 weeks or we should let it dry-down in the field before combining it.

More grain goes out of condition each year because of storage at high temperatures than because of high moisture. With the warm forecast, don't forget about the soybeans in the bins. Run the fans at night when the forecast lows are in the 40s. A 10-hp fan will cool 800 bushels per hour or about 10,000 bushels per night. This will also help to dry wet beans or corn in a bin from slightly uneven maturity due to field conditions. After the first cooling this fall, a second cooling should be done when the average temperature is below 40 degrees.

Replant areas for corn should be run through a dryer or sent to town as corn or beans more than 4 points wetter than the average will separate in bins because of the friction and density differences, causing all the wet to end up in the same spots which will cause them to start spoiling. A clump of wet grain the size of a basketball can cause a chain reaction of spoilage that can destroy a whole bin regardless of size. When it is run through the dryer, the wetter grain will dry more, and the movement will tend to mix them up so that they don't all end up in the same spot.

With a good forecast and high-quality crop in the field, have a safe harvest!



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With rains drowning out spots in nearly every area field earlier this year, some green can be seen throughout the middle of soybean fields.

Photo by David Swartz

# Fall Soil Sampling: Get to know your fields

Soil is an important resource in Iowa farm fields. Productivity for corn and soybeans can vary based on nutrient levels, pH, and organic matter content. Soil samples should be taken every two to four years to understand nutrient levels available in the soil for the upcoming crop.

Different crops have specific nutrient needs. A resource for soil fertility in the state of Iowa is publication PM 1688 “A General Guide for Crop Nutrient and Limestone Recommendations in Iowa.” The publication is available online as a free download from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/product/5232>. The guide outlines nutrient recommendations for crops in the state of Iowa as well as lime recommendations.

Best practices for soil sampling include timing, sampling depth and methods of sampling. The ideal time for soil sampling is during the fall after harvest or early spring before planting. Allow enough time for lab results to be processed and returned before making a fertilizer application.

For corn and soybeans, samples should generally be taken from the top six inches of soil. ISU Extension and Outreach recommendations are based upon the six-inch soil depth. Pulling cores that are consistent with this depth is important for obtaining consistent results.

Options for soil sampling include grid soil sampling, zone sampling, and whole farm sampling.

- Grid soil samples utilize a composite sample taken in each of the grids ranging from 1 to 10 acres. Grid samples are formed with a pattern of uniform sizes of grids across the field.
- Zone sampling factors in field history, yield maps, topography, and other management factors creating zones. Composite samples are then collected from each zone forming representative samples.
- The final method is whole farm sampling. This method of sampling gathers subsamples across large areas of the field. A drawback of this method is that not all areas of the field are represented in the sample. If your farm



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has variability, whole farm sampling would not be recommended.

When taking composite samples, factor in past management strategies in your plan for sampling. Old feedlots or areas of the field that were managed another way may not be a representative sample area and should be treated differently than an area that has less variability. Other non-representative areas of a field may include depressions or wet spots, end rows, areas that are heavily traveled, and locations where manure or lime was stored prior to application.

Each soil sample should consist of multiple subsamples collected from various locations within the designated area to ensure a representative analysis. Typically, a subsample of 12-15 cores is combined into one sample.

Label the samples and keep records of the sampling locations and conditions. This information is invaluable for tracking changes over time. When fields are soil sampled it assesses soil health and nutrient availability, enhancing crop productivity, reducing costs, and contributing to sustainable agricultural practices.

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