

HARVEST DAYS

SEPTEMBER 2019

**SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT
TO THE GLENCOE ADVERTISER
& RENVILLE COUNTY SHOPPER**



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The McLeod County Chronicle

Renville County Register

Array of issues disrupt U.S. commodities market



Photo by Ashley Alsum

Michael Nepveux, Kent Beadle and Mark Schultz together during an Aug. 7 Farmfest panel concerning present and future market influences.

United States and Chinese trade relations, African Swine Fever and 'slowest planting in history' all factor into volatile environment

By Ashley Alsum
Renville County Register

The marketing forecast for grain and livestock is not a catastrophe, but it is mostly cloudy according to a panel at Farmfest Wednesday, Aug. 7. Michael Nepveux, (Economist, American Farm Bureau Federation) Kent Beadle, (Commodity Broker, CHS Hedging) and Mark Schultz, (Marketing Analyst, North Star Commodities) weighed in on current and future market influences.

China tariffs

With current tariff's and more recently threatened, exports are suffering. China

has even stated they will stop accepting U.S. goods altogether. The ag markets are suffering most as China was a huge importer of soybeans (for swine feed) and a variety of other goods.

Currency devaluation also plays a part, though it is not the main issue at hand. Countries with lower valued currency than the U.S. are having banner years with crop production. This is allowing other countries, including China, to buy their exports cheaper than from the U.S. even without tariffs in place. And in a year of low yields and high prevent planted acres, farmers cannot afford to lose out on trade opportunities.

Nepveux said a Trade Mitigation Pack-

age is available again this year, similar to the one released last year to alleviate some of the shortfall farmers are facing. The package is worth \$16 billion and sign-up is currently open.

With all the tariff talk and continued volatility from the administration toward other countries, the market is responding adversely. Nepveux is equally concerned the situation will cast a poor light on U.S. relations for the future.

"In my mind we've almost shown China they can make it work without us, at least in the short term," Nepveux said. "It's very disconcerting."

African Swine Fever

Tariffs aside, China's biggest concern is the African Swine Fever ravaging the swine population of South East Asia. It is not harmful to humans but appears to be 100 percent fatal in swine. It is easily contracted several different ways and is spreading like wildfire across the area.

Commodities

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Commodities: swine fever Continued from page 3

"China is a big deal to the global pork market," Nepveux explained. "They have about half the world's pork supply."

Information out of the area is unreliable so there is no way to know for certain, but estimates are that more than 30 percent of China's swine are already dead. To put that in perspective, 20 percent of China's herd is larger than the entire U.S. swine herd. And that 20 percent is equal to 11 million metric tons. The global trade is equal to 8 million metric tons.

There is currently no cure for the swine fever. The panel believes this loss of a staggering number of swine will lead to an animal protein shortage. Beef and

poultry will most likely look to capitalize on the pork shortfall. There is still a lot of pork in the freezer so there will not be a shortage immediately; but, there is likely to be a five to ten year fallout from this event, so the market will adjust over time to whatever the new normal becomes.

"It is amazing how quickly it spread throughout the area," Nepveux said of the swine fever. "It is imperative we do not get this in the United States."

Commodities

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Commodities: A myriad of variables at play within global agricultural markets Continued from page 4

Crop update

Schultz touched on the state of crops in the area and midwest in general. He currently lives in Texas and paid attention to the crops on his flight and subsequent drive to the area for Farmfest.

"I didn't see a lot of things that looked bad from the air," he said. "We've got a long way to go to maturity, but I thought it would look worse from what I had heard."

Soybeans are short, but they are dark green and lush for the most part. Much of the corn has tasseled. But Schultz also guessed there are 10-12 million acres in

prevent plant this year. With 60 percent of the soybean crop planted in June, it has been the slowest planting in history.

And because the crop was in late, Schultz said farmers need to be able to take the crop "all the way to the finish line." Similar weather situations occurred in 1993 and 2013. A late freeze helped give the crops time to grow one year but in the other much of the crop never reached maturity.

Unfortunately, pulling in a large yield won't help market prices. The opposite is true. A terrible crop year will see the market

jump. The same is true of crop failures in other countries — though this year other grain producing countries are having very successful growing seasons.

Volatile market

Beadle urged farmers to keep their options open and protect against the downside when it comes to marketing their commodities. Though, currently Beadle said basis levels are still extraordinarily good around the country.

"We have an awful lot of yield uncertainty," Beadle said. With a wet spring, yield damage is often not truly realized until harvest in the fall.

More than anything, the end users are nervous about the possible grain shortage situation. Farmers have more storage capacity than ever before and it is likely they will fill their silos full first. This means it will be harder for consumers such as elevators and ethanol plants to get their

hands on grain.

Soybeans are much more uncertain than corn with the trade and swine fever issues in Asia. Beadle believes we will have a soybean shortage with fewer acres and likely lower yield potential. He also thinks pork and beef will be volatile as the market is in a corrective mode.

"We ought to be selling huge amounts of hogs to China, but we're not. We're selling some, but it should be more," Beadle said. Even if the U.S. sold every pound of excess pork to China it would not make up for their loss. And as far as beef and poultry making

up the difference in the meat supply, there is as much a cultural wall as a trade issue. China likes to eat pork and not as much beef and chicken. With closing

statements the panel reemphasized their points. The current trade issues will have long term implications on several levels. This year's yield expectations are below average but probably won't be reflected until after harvest. The market basis is good for the farmer right now. Consider a different marketing strategy. Focus on what works best for you in your situation right now, and not what your neighbor is doing because their situation is different. As long as farmers stay prepared, there is a partly sunny outlook for the future.



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Mental health proved to be a heavy subject at FarmFest

By Jakob Kounkel
Staff Writer

During the 2019 FarmFest National Issues Panel, a somber and typically unspoken problem spiraled an otherwise hopeful panel session into heartache: increasing suicide rates among farmers.

The only good news surrounding the issue was when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced it made a categorical error in the oft-quoted farming statistics from 2012 that had shown farming, fishing and forestry workers as having the highest suicide rates.

Although the rate of suicides among farmers isn't the highest in the country categorically, it's still around five times that of the general population and climbing according to a Cal Poly Luis Obispo study. The same 2018 study found the suicide rate among farmers is double that of veterans, and veteran suicides are notorious for being excessively high.

The same study suggested suicide rates could be even higher because of deaths that are reported as accidents rather than suicides, and that not all farm states are included in the CDC's farm suicide statistics, like California, Iowa, Illinois and Nebraska, which could skew the CDC's numbers. It also mentioned that rates appear higher in the Midwest than in states like California, which has a greater likelihood of financial profitability.

The most recent data from the CDC in 2015 concluded farmers are in the category associated with the eighth-highest suicide rates among all occupational categories. While rates among farmers seems to be dropping among occupational standing in the CDC study, which may be skewed due to the non-inclusion of major farming states in the Midwest, it still reports increasing numbers of suicides in the agricultural community.

The daughter of Harold Wolle, who serves on the National Corn Growers Association from Madelia, Minn., raised the question about mental fitness of farmers to the National Issues Panel at FarmFest. Wolle and other members of the panel suggested farmers, ordinarily self-reliant and unlikely to seek out help, need to be more outspoken about the issue and get help from the right people.

They suggested the Farm Crisis Center, which has an online presence and phone numbers for farmers to call and talk about issues. The numbers are for the Farm Aid Hotline (800-327-6243) and the National Suicide Hotline (800-273-8255). The Farm Aid Hotline can be dialed Monday through



Governor Tim Walz made an appearance at FarmFest in Morgan, Minn. this year. His main message was one of unity, calling on Minnesota to unite under his One Minnesota plan. He argues that rural Minnesotans shouldn't have to fight against urban Minnesota for resources.

Members of the 2019 FarmFest National Issues Panel included:

- Mark Dorenkamp, Brownfield Ag News
- Scott VanderWal, American Farm Bureau Vice President
- Rob Larew, National Farmers Union Senior Vice President of Public Policy and Communications
- Tamara Nelsen, Executive Director of the Minnesota AgriGrowth Council
- Joel Schreurs, Soybean Growers Association director
- Harold Wolle, board member of the National Corn Growers Association

Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

During the closing statements portion of the National Issues Panel, Wolle took the time, even though he had something else prepared, to tell a personal story about mental health. When his daughter took the mi-

crophone to ask about mental health in farming communities, she spoke about a family friend who was a farmer and had taken their own life.

In trying to hold back tears, Wolle said he wanted to make sure farmers utilize the

appropriate resources when battling mental health, and that they aren't embarrassed or ashamed to seek help. One family friend's suicide is enough to send an entire community into grief. He said it's hard to think about the network of people impacted by anybody's suicide alongside the personal struggles that a person who takes their own life goes through.

Wolle and many exhibitors, attendees and various speakers were adamant about getting help when dealing with mental health issues. They said there's no shame in looking for help.

A few attendees even noted it should take priority over signing up for government aid programs, and that if a farmer is willing to go through arduous processes in order to get help on their farms, they should go through the simple process of calling a helpline to combat mental health challenges.

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Many feel small oil refinery exemptions hurting farmers

By Jakob Kounkel
Staff Writer

One of the major topics at 2019 FarmFest in Morgan, Minn. was the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) implementation of small refinery exemptions.

The exemptions were asked about frequently, mainly throughout FarmFest's National Issues Panel and the U.S. House Agriculture Committee Listening Session on farm economy. The listening session was hosted by U.S. Congressman Collin Peterson and made available to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue for questions.

The Trump administration's EPA, which allows oil refineries to be exempt from mixing a Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) specified ethanol blend into their fuel, has resulted in billions of gallons of lost ethanol production, Brian Thalmann said, of Thalmann Seeds.

The move is a significant blow to already struggling Minnesota farmers who were hoping for a break with year-round E15 consumption, Thalmann said.

On the one hand, it was a win for the president among farmers, widening an existing market while Trump-fueled tariffs relinquished an even bigger corn and soybean market in China. China was the United States' main importer of corn and soybeans before tariffs took hold.

On the other hand, the president didn't make any friends when his then-appointed EPA director, Scott Pruitt, allowed greater numbers of refinery exemptions through, and with a stunning lack of transparency, Thalmann said. He said the EPA isn't required to release the names of companies that receive exemptions, and according to the Renewable Fuels Association in Washington, D.C., the EPA has a fair amount of flexibility when deciding whether to issue exemptions.

The United States EPA's website says a small refinery can obtain exemption from the renewable fuel standard "if it determines that the small refinery has demonstrated economic hardship..."

The exemption is a two-year hiatus from the renewable fuel standard, at which point a company can re-apply.

"Last I checked, the oil industry is doing pretty well," Thalmann said. He also said it's likely many of the small oil refineries receiving exemptions are subsidiaries of larger oil companies, effectively giving financial breaks to what he called "big oil."

Mark Hueser, of Hueser Grains in Glencoe, knows how the ethanol market has been hurt because of the president and the previous leaders of the EPA.

"Ethanol plants are hurting right now. Seriously hurting," Hueser warned back in June. "I hate to use the cliché, 'a perfect storm,' but you have horse[manure] ethanol

Minnesota is the fourth leading producer of ethanol and corn in the country.

Renewable Fuels Association in Washington, D.C. /
U.S. Department of Agriculture.



U.S. Rep. Collin Peterson (D-MN) sat next to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture at FarmFest's congressional listening session. They talked about issues ranging from foreign trade to small oil refinery exemptions.

prices and climbing corn prices — it's the absolute worst scenario for an ethanol plant."

Corn board member of the National Corn Growers Association Harold Wolle, of Madelia, Minn., said at the National Issues Panel that the EPA's small refinery exemptions are a major impediment to farmers. He said farmers and farming associations need to speak up and tell Trump, if he's committed to farmers, he needs to repeal exemption waivers.

Perdue was asked about refinery exemptions numerous times. He mainly said he's aware of the issue and knows it's a problem that needs to be addressed. He didn't mention a plan to limit the amount of exemptions being given out. But he also said that there's only so much he can do from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) side of things when the exemptions are handled by the EPA.

One way which Perdue elicited a small grain of hope from the audience was that he talked to the president the day before he spoke at FarmFest about small refinery exemptions and noted the USDA is working to make progress on the issue.

Peterson, who's the chairman of the U.S. House Agriculture Committee, said he has

a bill to eliminate the waivers from the EPA altogether. He said ethanol plants are barely operating "by the skin of their teeth." He promised to continue pushing the bill.

Peterson also briefly mentioned Brazil's fuel standard of a 30 percent ethanol blend, which he would eventually like to see in the United States.

Many of those on the panel agreed that Perdue is an ally to have in office to fight against refinery exemptions, among other issues farmers are facing in 2019 and going forward. Perdue also gave general words of

encouragement to farmers and reminded the audience and cameras that it's natural for the ag market to occasionally dip, but that they will bounce back.

Perdue's words echoed another recurring theme throughout FarmFest. Despite oil refinery waivers, tariffs, massive market share reduction, a difficult planting season, signs of a slowing economy and general volatility in the market, farmers rallied around shared pride in what they do and encouraged each other not to give up.



The listening session at 2019 FarmFest brought out many of Minnesota's congressional delegation and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. Some Glencoe area farmers and residents asked questions about ethanol production and small oil refinery exemptions.

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U of M Extension honors Ide Family as farm family of 2019

By Karen Johnson, Kylee Sherod, University of Minnesota Extension

The Ide farm has been running since 1969. Larry and Bertha became farmers that year by purchasing 80 acres for a cow calf and sow feeder pig operation. A few years later, the cattle were sold and trees were logged for land. In 1993, Nate joined the business. Seven years later, they sold the remaining hogs and expanded land for grain.

Currently, the farm owns 240 acres yet grows on 2,000 total acres. Larry and Bertha still reside on the farm. Nate works full time on the farm with his sons Mike and Phillip. Their daughter, Beth Ann, lives in Stewartville.

The Ide's have been advocates for the agricultural industry for many years in McLeod County. Larry and Bertha were actively involved in the Pork and Porkettes organizations. Bertha was state director, Beth Ann was a county pork princess, and Nate was a county ambassador. Larry taught Sunday school and was on the church board of education for four years. He recently retired from the county corn and soybean board.

In the 1990's, Nate worked for the National Pork Producers as the live animal site manager. He also was the first dealer to bring Agrigold to central Minnesota. He has worked with county commissioners and businesses to help raise \$140,000 for an addition for 4-H on the fairgrounds.

The family was officially recognized earlier this month in a ceremony at the annual



Submitted photo

The Ide family of Lester Prairie was honored as the county's farm family of the year for 2019. The family includes (from left) Phillip, Mike, Bertha, Larry and Nate Ide.

Farmfest near Redwood Falls. The Ide Family was also honored Friday, Aug. 16, during the McLeod County in the indoor show arena.

Families receiving honors were selected by their local county Extension committees and have demonstrated a commitment to enhancing and supporting agriculture and

agriculture production.

"These farm families are a major driver of Minnesota's economy and the vitality of Minnesota's rural communities," said Bev Durgan, dean of University of Minnesota Extension. "The University of Minnesota is proud to recognize these farm families for their contributions to agriculture and their

communities."

Along with Farmfest, University units sponsoring the recognition event include University of Minnesota Extension, Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, and the College of Veterinary Medicine.

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Slow Year for Aphids a gift from Mother Nature

By Dick Hagen
Renville County Register

Seems strange but Mother Nature apparently is 'on your side' regarding the 2019 soybean aphids season. How can that be?

"So far it's been a slow year for aphids. A few farmers doing some spraying but very little so far. Some fields have hit threshold numbers (250 aphids/plant) but statewide it's a very localized issue," explained Bruce Potter, University of Minnesota Extension Plant Pathologist.

Why?

"Give some credit to Nature," he said, during an August 20 visit to the Southwest Research and Outreach Center office in Lamberton. "We've had lots of rain. Aphids don't thrive in saturated soils. They have a hard time processing all that sap. But credit extremely cold winter conditions too. Where we didn't have snow cover some of those aphid eggs might have froze."

Potter said he thought the biggest factor we had was the late spring providing no where for the newly hatched aphids to go upon exiting their over-wintering habitat (buckthorn).

"We had patches of volunteer soybeans. We found aphids there. But many of the patches got 'herbicide tilled' when farmers finally found another opportunity to get at their corn planting," he said.



Photo by Dick Hagen

Aphids

Turn to page 14

Rich Sigurdson and his 750 hp Piper Air Tractor.



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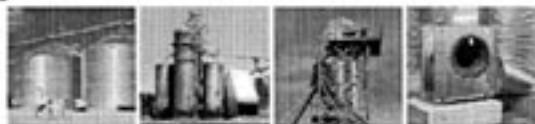
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Aphids: Renville County often most aphid infected, but very little activity for 2019 Continued from page 13

"So a small population to begin with and then constant rain during their hatching season, it's been a tough year for aphids. Yes, I'd likely agree that Nature was on our side. However a few other things out there make up for fewer aphids. Lots of defoliators ...Painted Ladies, Sweet Clover Worms, that sort of thing. Keeping score so far it's been good for soybeans; not so good for aphids."

Plant pathologists don't like to prognosticate. Potter wasn't predicting an 'explosion of aphids' was still to happen, he merely reiterated "...so far it hasn't been a good year."

He added, "This year because of the large number of late-planted soybean acres, we may need to scout later in the season than usual. Also, aphids could begin their move to buckhorn anytime from now until mid-September. Insect killing fungi may be collapsing aphid populations because of dense, moist canopies and cool temperatures."

The soybean aphid is native to China but now occurs in several Southeast Asia countries. In America, 31 states now do battle with this most costly pest.

How about Renville County?

Predictably this corn and soybean county often leads the parade for the annual aphid invasion. And the best indicator is how many aerial applicators are swirling through the skies in this annual bug fight.

But this year? Apparently no aphid war.

In an Aug 22 visit at the Olivia airport with Rich Sigurdson he said so far only five calls for aphid control. "Sure, we're pleased for our farmers but the simple fact is this annual battle against aphids was good money for us aerial

app guys.
Get a



normal
season with
crops planted

Aphids have not been as
bad as this year.

on time is what our farmers really need," he said. "Plus better crop prices so they can get above their 'break even' income stranglehold and we'll all be happy...even we aerial guys can make this business work without the aphid explosions."

Piper Air Tractors with turbine powered 750 hp engines make up Sigurdson's Aerial Spraying Inc. fleet at Olivia which includes 3, 500-gallon rigs and one, 400-gallon plane. Yes, farmers invest \$500,000 in tractors and combines...often more.

These Piper spray planes cost some big money also. "About \$700,000 per plane but a new Piper Air Tractor is a \$1.2 million investment. So, yes, we like to keep our birds on the job as much as we can," said Sigurdson. Airborne at 6 a.m. is not unusual at the Olivia airfield.

And yes, these are productive machines. Like 200 acres per hour at 130 to 140 miles air speed while laying down a 60' wide swath! And all this precision while flying only 10 feet above the fields being sprayed. Spray pilots pay big money to get certified. They often have about a six-month working time frame each season. Accuracy is their creed.

Just like GPS guidance keeps farmers amazingly on track in their fields, so too for these Air Tractors. Get this: pilots plug in the coordinate locations of their next field and GPS guides their airplane directly to the it. The same precise system even activates the actual

spraying when the plane reaches the field; and precisely turns the system off when pilot gets to the end of field and makes his climbing turn to get redirected the other direction.

"Sure this all comes with a price but accuracy is how you survive in this business," said Sigurdson. "Farmers have lots of money invested in every field we cover. We totally understand precision is what we're all about."

Technology keeps upgrading whether on the ground in your farm equipment, or in the air as spray pilots do their best to assist farmers in their annual challenge of 'better' than break even revenue for each customer. Collaboration is the key word.

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The various benefits of farm-to-table

Few things are more satisfying than biting into a fresh tomato right from the garden or seasoning a meal with herbs picked from a windowsill greenhouse. Restaurants recognize the value of such experiences, and more and more are relying on locally sourced products in their kitchens.

The farm-to-table movement is not new, but it has gained momentum as consumers become increasingly enamored with the flavor and environmental impact of locally sourced foods. The National Restaurant Association found that farm-to-table food was one of its top 10 trends for 2015. Furthermore, the group says that one in five consumers are willing to pay more for local food, and 41 percent admit that locally sourced ingredients influence their decisions when choosing where to dine.

Newcomers to the farm-to-table dining experience may not understand all the fuss surrounding this popular trend. The following are some of the key benefits of farm-to-table.

- **Peak freshness and ripeness:** Local produce ripens on the plant and can be harvested at the last possible minute before it turns up on a plate. This helps ensure that it contains the highest amount of nutrients and flavor, according to the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Food that has to travel further is often picked well before it is ready, ripening on the way to stores or other vendors.
- **Better for the environment:** Food that needn't travel far before reaching diners' plates saves roughly 500 gallons of diesel fuel to haul produce a distance of 1,500 miles. This conserves fossil fuels and prevents harmful emissions from entering the atmosphere.
- **Supports neighboring farms:** Supporting farm-to-table restaurants and other eateries keeps business local in two different ways. It not only benefits local restaurants, but it



also directly supports neighboring farms, fisheries and other suppliers.

- **Accessibility to seasonal choices:** Farm-to-table eating provides a wide variety of in-season foods. This can translate into tastier foods because they are grown and harvested during their optimal growing season.
- **Reduces factory farming:** According to O.info, the informational resource powered by Overstock.com, farm-to-table and local farming can reduce reliance on large, profit-driven corporations that may focus on maximum production over animal health and welfare. Local farms

- may be more inclined to treat their animals well and institute sustainable practices.
 - **Learn about the community:** A person might live in an area and never know that a local vineyard is in the vicinity or that a producer of straight-from-the-hive honey is nearby. Exploring farm-to-table resources can open people's eyes to local businesses doing great work in and around their communities.
- Farm-to-table is a popular movement that people are embracing for various reasons.

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'Prevented planting' helping farmers protect unusable land - Crop insurance helps recoup costs



Brownton-area farmer Ryan Mackenthun relied on a cover crop for about 450 acres because it was too wet to plant corn or beans in this spring. The cover crop radishes and oats, will provide nutrients for the soil and help prevent runoff.

**By John Mueller
Editor**

The jury is still out on the yield most McLeod County area farmers will enjoy when harvest time arrives in the area. In a season plagued by early damp and cold conditions, most farmers have done all they can to enjoy the best possible yield.

Now all they can do is wait and hope the first frost takes its time in arriving.

For farmers like Ryan Mackenthun, the 2019 growing season has been an exercise in patience. Spring rain kept Mackenthun, and farmers like him, out of his fields along Highway 15, between Brownton and Hutchinson. He planted about 2,300 acres of field corn and soybeans, as the soil moisture would allow. Mackenthun, who is following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather on land in Sumter Township, is counting on crop insurance to help recoup some of the lost revenue from what is likely to be a shorter-than-usual growing season for his cash crops.

Mackenthun started planting soybeans May 5. Already a week behind last year's planting date, he found the conditions were so wet he had to wait two days to return to the fields to continue planting. He tried to plant corn but found the ground very damp. The damp conditions prevented Mackenthun from planting as much of a crop as he wanted to put into the ground.

"I think we knew from the start there was going to be problems," he said.

The rest of his land was committed to a

practice known as "prevented planting." Mackenthun had about 450 acres he said were too wet to plant this spring. Nationally, over 19 million acres were too wet to plant, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In Minnesota, just over 1.17 million acres were incorporated into a prevented planting program. Prevented planting is the inability to plant an insured crop with the proper equipment by the final planting date. Prevented planting coverage is available for most crops and covers insurable causes of loss such as floods, hurricanes, or excess precipitation that occurs during the insurance period and prevents other producers from planting, too.

The USDA's website says farmers planted a crop in approximately 207,600 acres of farmland in McLeod County this spring. About 12,145 acres had a prevented planting cover crop in it. That's just over the approximately 11,515 prevented planting acres in Sibley County and less than the 13,951 prevented planting acres in Meeker County.

Unusable acres

Unable to put corn or soybeans in the ground, Mackenthun had to turn to prevented planting. He planted a cover crop after deadline for planting an insurable crop, something that would keep the soil from eroding and leave it in a workable state in the fall and again next spring. Mackenthun planted tillage radishes and oats. The taproot from the radishes prevents "compaction is-

sues" in the soil, he said.

The cover crop will put more nutrients into the ground and satisfy McLeod County's interest in not leaving the land bare. A crop in the ground, even tillage radishes and oats, will minimize or prevent runoff. The crop will also keep weeds from taking over the soil.

Because the radishes and oats won't generate enough of a crop to harvest for feed, Mackenthun plans to till it under this fall. Tilling the radishes and oats will have some benefit. The soil will benefit from the nutrients and the radishes will help it be easier to prepare for planting in the spring.

"Next year's crop should look phenomenal on it," he said.

Farmers had to report to their insurance agent how much land they put into prevented planting by June 1. Mackenthun called his agent that day to report that he would be putting 450 acres into the program. He wishes the number was much smaller.

"We planted all the good acres we could," Mackenthun said.

On a typical season, he'd average about 225 bushels per acre of corn and about 50 bushels per acre of soybeans. Because of the wet spring, those numbers will be difficult to reach this year. Mackenthun expects the corn planted in early May might average 225 bushels per acre. But the corn he couldn't plant until late May will likely generate only 150 bushels per acre.

The soybeans he planted might generate

about 60 bushels per acre. Mackenthun expects the beans planted late will likely generate around 40 bushels per acre.

Financial report card

The final numbers will be determined when farmers harvest their crops in the fall. While he's hoping for a late frost, Mackenthun expects he'll be in the combine beginning the harvest during the second week of October.

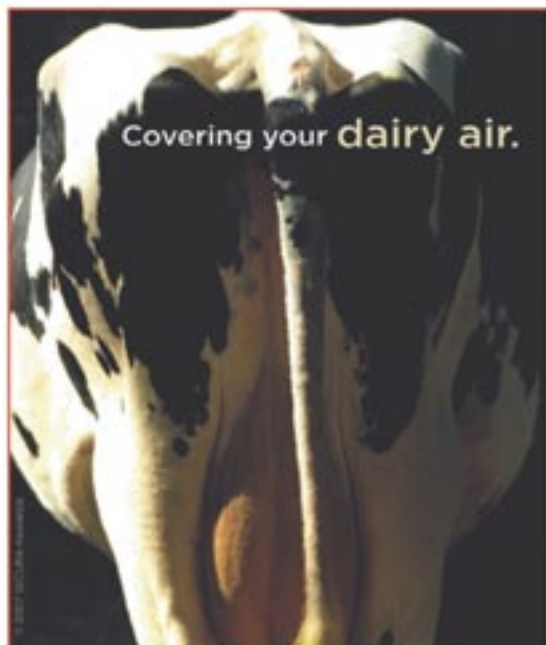
Planting a crop is a case of weighing numbers. Planting a cover crop on unusable land under the prevented planting program will minimize the financial loss a farmer like Mackenthun faces from being unable to plant on those acres.

The program uses the spring price for corn, \$4 per bushel, as a base. Using the average yield, about 200 bushels per acre, and a 55 percent guarantee for cover crop, he'll end up with \$440 per acre of cover crop.

But after land rent and the cost of planting the cover crop and tilling it under next spring are incorporated into the equation, "you might end up with \$50 (per acre) to live on.

As a steward of land, Mackenthun supports the prevented planting program.

"It's all about risk management and taking care of it," he said.



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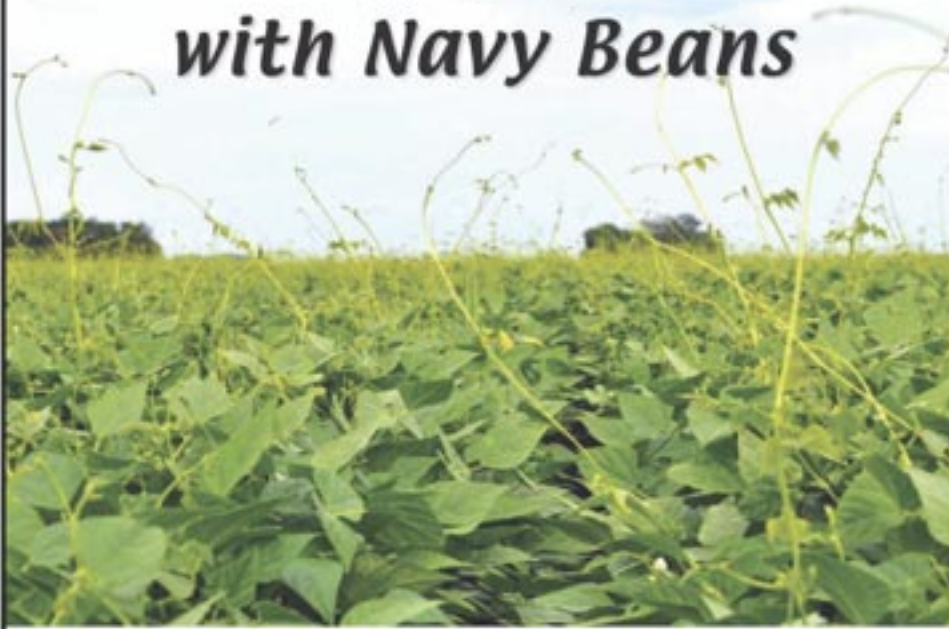


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Walz, commissioners behind ag community

By Nic Hendriks
Renville County Register

Agricultural families always face a level of uncertainty. This year, in particular, the weather has played a headlining role in the agricultural community. The state government also can play a role in the unanswered questions of an agricultural family. During this year's Farmfest, near Redwood Falls, a guest panel consisting of Minnesota State Commissioners or their proxies was held to discuss issues impacting farm families.

Governor Tim Walz was on hand to address the people that crowded into the Wick Buildings Farmfest Center on Tuesday afternoon, Aug. 6. In his first year as Governor and no stranger to Farmfest, Walz was dressed in blue jeans and a t-shirt. Acknowledging the plight of the farmer, he stressed his administration is working hard for farming families.

Walz thanked the crowd for showing up to talk policy and for offering their suggestions on how the government can serve constituents better.

"I think that's the theory behind this very unique panel you're going to hear from," he said, noting each served the state as commissioners of their respective agency.

"In the case of Ag Commissioner Thom Peterson ... one of the things we're talking about is making government more responsive to you; making government smarter in how it deals with issues and recognizing that people don't come in pieces."



Photos by Nic Hendriks

Governor Tim Walz speaks to a sizeable crowd at Farmfest.

Walz said it is ridiculous for individuals to have to run from state agency to agency when the agencies themselves don't communicate between each other. Or for the state to throw money at school districts to improve test scores when those students go home and sleep in the streets.

To not include housing as a strategy, that doesn't work," Walz said, speaking to the interconnectedness of issues. "There's not a single [panel member] here who can pave the way of the roads to the Mississippi River, or build the locks and dams

on the Mississippi River to move your soybeans to markets around the world. There's no one that can build a hospital themselves and figure out how we fund that. There are certain things that we do together and I brought this group together to talk about how we can be more deliberate and more effective in making sure that things government should do they do well, and the things government shouldn't do we stay out of."

Walz said that when took the job he was asked why the state 24 separate agencies.

"I had no idea why," he said. "Some-time years ago they decided it was the best thing to do. The world has changed a lot in the last 30 years since that form of government function was put it. So we're asking the questions you all should be asking: Are there smarter, better ways we can align things that deliver the services people need to make sure we're doing what we're supposed to do?"

Blois Olson of WCCO News Talk 830 was the moderator of the guest panel as part of forum broadcast. Forming the panel was MN Department of Revenue Commissioner Cynthia Bauerly, Asst. Commissioner for Policy and Community Development at Minnesota Housing Ryan Baumtrog, MN Pollution Control Agency Commissioner Laura Bishop, MN Dept. of Commerce Commissioner Steve Kelley, MN Dept. of Transportation Commissioner Margaret Anderson Kelliher, MN Dept. of Labor & Industry Commissioner Nancy Leppink, MN Dept. of Employment and Economic Development Commissioner Steve Grove, MN Dept. of Natural Resources Deputy Commissioner Barb Naramore, MN Dept. of Health Asst. and MN Dept. of Health Asst. Commissioner Courtney Jordan Baechler.

Walz

Turn to page 27



A full house turned out for the governor's state of Minnesota ag panel.

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Walz: state department recognizes importance of farm families across Minnesota Continued from page 26

Each panel member gave a quick run-down of current issues their agency is working on. During her part of the panel Revenue Commissioner Bauerly reported, "At the Department of Revenue our mission is working together to fund Minnesota's future. So it's not just about ensuring that everyone who has an obligation under Minnesota's laws has a convenient and easy way to make sure they complete that obligation but also the opportunities in our tax code. For example, in the 2019 tax code, Gov. Walz signed into law a provision called 179 Expensing which allows for accelerated depreciation for equipment. It's really important to farmers, it's important to the implement dealers around Minnesota and we know this is an important provision and we're really glad we were able to bring that to Minnesota and that it matches up with the federal bill."

Bauerly also commented on an issue many school districts are facing, including the BOLD School district, as they plan facility upgrades.

"We work with counties, particularly as



Cynthia Bauerly, Ryan Baumtrog, Steve Kelley, Margaret Anderson Kelliher and Nancy Leppink served to comprise half of the 10-member panel present to discuss the state of Minnesota's agriculture economy.

counties are going to be implementing, again a provision signed into law by Gov. Walz in the 2019 tax bill, around the Ag2Schools bond credit. In Minnesota, we have a 40 percent credit for the agricultural school bond which represents a \$40 million cut to farmers in their property taxes for those school capital levies. This will grow to an \$80 million investment as that grows to 70 percent over the next few

years. So there are a lot of ways we intersect with farmers."

After each panel member shared, a time for questions was opened to the gallery. Several people asked specific questions that had to do with issues about their individual counties. Questions fielded ranged from deer population to watersheds and J-turn intersections which affect farmers hauling loads to market.

Overall the atmosphere was positive and the panel did a good job connecting with the crowd and reassuring them that even though not every issue is a simple answer or solution, the state is working to help agriculture families who are still the mainstay of Minnesota's economy.

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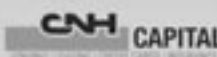
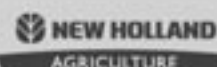
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DUAINE & DALE KURTZBEIN

FAIRFAX, MN

FRI, SEPT. 13, 2019, 10:30 A.M.
MULTI PARCEL RENVILLE COUNTY
REAL ESTATE AUCTION
140 ACRES +/- OF PRIME RENVILLE
COUNTY FARMLAND
LOCATED IN SECTIONS 23 & 26,
CAIRO TWP, T-112-N, R-32-W
LAND WILL BE SURVEYED!
CPI RATINGS = 92.5 & 93.3!!
GOOD HEAVY RENVILLE CO. SOILS.
ESTELLE RIEKE ESTATE

HECTOR, MN

TUES, SEPT. 17, 2019, 10:00 A.M.
LIVE & ONLINE COLLECTIBLE
TRACTORS & FARM EQUIPMENT
IH 4386 4WD, IH 1586, IH 826 DSL,
FARMALL 560 DSL, FARMALL 460
GAS W/LOADER, FARMALL SUPER
M, (5) FARMALL H, FARMALL A,
(2) FARMALL B, FARMALL SUPER C,
FARMALL CUB
NO DRIVE ON INSPECTIONS
KENNETH TEGNER COLLECTION
83429 490TH ST., HECTOR, MN



MONTEVIDEO, MN

ONLINE FARM EQUIPMENT
RETIREMENT AUCTION!
OPENS: FRI, SEPT. 6, 2019, NOON
CLOSES: WEDS, SEPT. 18, 10 A.M.
MIKE & AMY JORGENSEN
9017 HIGHWAY 40 NW
MONTEVIDEO, MN, 56265



DAWSON/BOYD, MN

THURS, SEPT. 19, 2019, 10:00 A.M.
PRIME LAC QUI PARLE COUNTY
REAL ESTATE AUCTION
157.47 ACRES OF PRIME LAC QUI
PARLE COUNTY FARMLAND
LOCATED IN NW 1/4 OF SECTION
33, BAXTER TWP, T-117-N, R-42-W
LAND WILL BE SURVEYED!
CPI RATINGS = 92.2!!!
GOOD HEAVY SOILS WITH COUNTY
AND PRIVATE TILE!! NORTH SIDE
BORDER DITCH ACCESS!
ARNOLD WEBER ESTATE

MARINE ON SAINT CROIX, MN

FRIDAY, SEPT. 20, 2019, 10:30 A.M.
FARM & LIVESTOCK EQUIPMENT
RETIREMENT AUCTION
TRACTORS, HAY, LIVESTOCK
EQUIPMENT, THROW RACKS,
GRAVITY BOXES & GEARS,
LIVESTOCK GATES, FARM
PRIMITIVES, ANTIQUES AND
MUCH MUCH MORE. IH 3288 2WD
TRACTOR, IH 1086 2WD TRACTOR,
JD 3010 GAS, 4243 HRS,
BOBCAT 753 SKIDLOADER, 2742
HRS, GEHL 125 GRINDER MIXER,
JD 348 SMALL SQUARE BALER,
VERMEER 5400 REBEL RD BALER,
JD 2 ROW SILAGE CHOPPER, JD
630 MOCO HAYBINE, JD 4R38" MAX
EMERGE II CORN PLANTER,
5 GRAVITY BOXES, 3 THROW RACKS
ROBIN BOOREN, SELLER
11529 MAYBERRY TRAIL NORTH
MARINE ON SAINT CROIX, MN 55047



PINE RIVER, MN

SATURDAY, SEPT. 21, 2019, 9:30 A.M.
FALL INVENTORY REDUCTION &
CUSTOMER APPRECIATION
LIVE & ONLINE AUCTION
8 NEW & USED FISH HOUSES -
VARIOUS SIZES & MODELS, 6 NEW
STORAGE BUILDINGS - VARIETY
OF SIZES, MISCELLANEOUS
FISH HOUSE PARTS, BUILDING
MATERIAL, DOORS, WINDOWS,
ROOFING MATERIAL & SIDING
& VARIOUS SKIDLOADER
ATTACHMENTS
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MANUFACTURING**
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TRUCKS AND EQUIPMENT AND
MANY OTHERS.

GUSTE BLAD ESTATE

3 ASH AVE • BIRD ISLAND, MN

MONTEVIDEO, MN

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 25, 2019, 10:00 A.M.
FARM EQUIPMENT &
COLLECTIBLE ESTATE AUCTION
NEW HOLLAND SKID LOADER,
ATTACHMENTS, CATTLE CHUTE
& LIVESTOCK TUB, LARGE DIRT
SCRAPER, FARM & TILLAGE
EQUIPMENT, FARM PRIMITIVES &
COLLECTIBLES

DONALD & FLORENCE HALVERSON ESTATE

3450 465TH ST. • MONTEVIDEO, MN



MONTEVIDEO, MN

WEDNESDAY, SEPT 25, 2019, 12:00 NOON
121.02 ACRES OF HUNTING/R.I.M.
LAND LOCATED ADJOINING AND
ALONG THE MINNESOTA RIVER!!
LAND IS LOCATED IN SECTIONS 28
& 33, SPARTA TWP, CHIPPEWA CO.

DONALD & FLORENCE HALVERSON ESTATE

3450 465TH ST. • MONTEVIDEO, MN

MONTEVIDEO, MN

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28TH,
2019, 9:30 A.M.**

LARGE ANNUAL INVENTORY
REDUCTION AUCTION
LIVE & ONLINE AUCTION
ICE CASTLE FISH HOUSES, NEW
PORTABLE STORAGE BUILDINGS,
TOOLS, FURNITURE, CARPET &
FLOORING, ICE FISHING SUPPLIES,
BUILDING SUPPLIES

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STEWART/BROWNTON, MN

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 13, 2019, 10:30 A.M.
266.24 ACRES OF PRIME
MULTI-PARCEL MCLEOD COUNTY
FARMLAND AUCTION
LOCATED IN PENN, SECTION 31,
T-114-N, 29-W & ROUND GROVE
TWP, SECTION 36, T-114-N, 30W
GOOD HEAVY MCLEOD COUNTY
SOILS, C.P.I. RATINGS AT 90+
LAND HAS BEEN SURVEYED!!
RAY & ELAINE RETTIG ESTATE

BUFFALO LAKE, MN

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2019, 10:00 A.M.
PRIME MULTI-PARCEL
RENNVILLE CO. LAND AUCTION
APPROX 195 ACRES LOCATED IN
SECTION 29, BOON LAKE TWP,
RENNVILLE CO., GOOD HEAVY
RENNVILLE COUNTY SOILS, C.P.I.
RATINGS AT 90+
TO BE SOLD IN TWO PARCELS!!!
LAND HAS BEEN SURVEYED!!
LORRAIN BUEHLER ESTATE

GIBBON, MN

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2019, 10:30 A.M.
PRIME SIBLEY COUNTY
FARMLAND AUCTION
APPROX 80 ACRES LOCATED IN
SECTION 12, SEVERANCE TWP,
SIBLEY CO., GOOD HEAVY SIBLEY
COUNTY SOILS, C.P.I. RATINGS AT
89.9!! TAR ROAD ACCESS!
LAND HAS BEEN SURVEYED!!
BERNICE RUBISCHKO, SELLER

LAKE LILLIAN, MN

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 20, 2019, 10:00 A.M.
VERY CLEAN JOHN DEERE FARM
EQUIPMENT RETIREMENT AUCTION!
VERY CLEAN, LOW HOURS
TRACTORS, COMBINE, HEADS,
SEMI TRUCK, GRAIN TRAILER, FARM
& TILLAGE EQUIPMENT
JMW FARMS
JEFF & MARY WALLENTA
17301 135TH ST. S.E.
LAKE LILLIAN, MN

WILLMAR, MN

THURSDAY, NOV. 21, 2019, 11:00 A.M.
200 ACRES OF PRIME KANDIYOH
COUNTY FARMLAND AUCTION
LOCATED IN WHITEFIELD TWP,
T-118-N, R-35-W, 160 ACRES IN
SECTION 8, WHITEFIELD TOWNSHIP,
C.P.I. RATING = 88.6; 40 ACRES IN
SECTION 9, WHITEFIELD TOWNSHIP
C.P.I. RATING = 86, GOOD HEAVY
KANDIYOH COUNTY SOILS
LAND HAS BEEN SURVEYED!!
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Hemp fever continues to persist in farm country

By Dick Hagen
Renville County Register

Yes, the fever is real! And so too the acres of Minnesota crop land growing hemp this year. In a July telephone visit with Minnesota's Industrial Hemp Program Coordinator Margaret Wiatrowski, it was indicated 12,573 acres have been approved for growing hemp in 2019. Needless to say, this opportunity for a shot at Minnesota's potentially new alternative crop has created lots of excitement and activity in the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

"We've had 630 applications from 'wanna be' hemp farmers. So far we have licensed about 300 growers for the 2019 season. That represents almost 700 different fields," explained Wiatrowski, who has already picked up the unofficial title of Minnesota Hemp Queen.

"I don't mind," she chuckled. "I've worked with this new industry for quite a stretch. It's exciting to see Minnesota agriculture get cranked up on something still so new. At this stage potential growers greatly exceed processing capacity. And that will be the stumbling block that keeps the Minnesota hemp industry big on chatter but not so big on production."

However Minnesota history tells us don't sell Minnesota farmers short. Going back 30 some years when ethanol was still called 'gasohol' a collective group of visionary farmers got to thinking about building their own corn processing facility. So they quit talking and started writing out checks. Net result was over 2,000 farmers collectively financed and built Minnesota Corn Processors, at that time the largest farmer-owned ethanol facility in America. And the ethanol fever ramped up. Today there are 29 ethanol plants in Minnesota, primarily financed by Minnesota corn growers.

Could that same scenario be the building blocks of the industrial hemp industry in Minnesota?

Sure, time will tell. But there's no doubting the enthusiasm is brewing. At the July meeting of the Industrial Hemp Exploratory Subcommittee of the Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar EDC, guest speaker, Todd Mathewson, Consultant, Just BioFiber, was present. This Alberta, Canada firm is making a big splash in the building world with building blocks that look like concrete but have picked up the trade name of Hempcrete...with hemp (hemp hurd) as the primary component plus bio cement.

Some interesting notes:

- 11-inch hempcrete block weighs 13 lb. (versus about 25 lbs. for concrete block).
- Structural strength for structures up to eight stories.
- No need to insulate; hempcrete has an R32 value.
- No vapor barrier needed.
- Lesser building costs comparable with stick building and concrete blocks.
- Because of high R value, heating costs of a hempcrete structure are up to 50 percent less.



Photo via Google images

The potential of hemp appears immense.

Q/A with Mathewson:

Q: A hempcrete block looks much like a traditional concrete block. Tell us about hempcrete?

Mathewson: This hemp fiber block uses hemp hurd, lime cement combined with a structural internal frame made from a bio resin. These components create a structural block equivalent to a CMU block, or a Concrete TipUp or a wood or steel stick frame structure.

Q: Very good insulation values too?

Mathewson: What you see here is an R32 value. And very convenient....it stacks up just like a lego. It's fully modular. It can go into any shape you can make with rectangles.

Q: This is so new to the building industry. Are you actively selling?

Mathewson: We are not yet actively selling because already we can't fill demand. Just from trade shows we have attended, word has traveled rapidly about this new building block concept. There has been a lot of Government attention because it is a carbon negative product. So you've got as totally sustainable carbon negative product. And that is a huge plus for us. We're doing a lot of demonstration buildings, both government and private industry. A cool building scheduled for Interior British Columbia is a self-storage facility completely off the grid. Price is so close to any other type of building material plus the environmental aspects we think will rapidly

make it a most interesting new building product.

Q: So your firm in Alberta is still young yet you have some daily production?

Mathewson: Very limited...currently about 1,000 blocks per month. But plans are in the works for a six-line production facility which gets us up to about 30,000 blocks per month or 3.6 million blocks per year. That sequesters 88,000 tons of CO2. And that is a prime reason why environmentalists are keenly keeping up with this new product Lime cement. When it cures it pulls CO2 out of the atmosphere.

Q: A farmer-owned ethanol plant sits just a few miles from where we sit this morning. Lots of carbon sequestration in that ethanol production process. Would that interest your company?

Mathewson: Anywhere we can create partnerships that benefit someone else plus ourselves—why wouldn't we look at that facility?

Q: As you gathered from the morning session with this Hemp exploratory group, it likely would be a quick process to crank up 10,000 acres of hemp production. How might that fit with the future of your Alberta Just BioFiber firm?

Mathewson: To speak bluntly, at this stage we are a start up business. Finding money for a 'start up' is quite different than finding money for an expansion. We'll have to sell others that this is an idea that can succeed. So we'll be looking for partners to bring in capital. At this stage we don't know who will be the biggest market for fibers. The textile industries are pretty picky when it comes to what type of fiber they are wanting. I don't think the auto industry needs to be this particular on the type of fiber. What I'm saying is hemp fiber already is going in many directions.

Q: I'm guessing Canadian farmers are already lined up to grow hemp for you and other processors. How will our Minnesota guys compete against Canadian growers?

Mathewson: I think the biggest key is having proximity to where it's grown. So we want to be producing close to the source. Shipping can really kill you. That's why I'm here rather than saying we'll just ship it all into the Twin Cities and make it there.

Q: Sitting with us is Kim Larson, veteran Kandiyohi County farmer who's been a frequent voice for 'value added' farmer owned coops. Kim, what's your take on this?

Larson: Well, if you had market pricing competitive with my corn and soybean crops, I could see 10 percent of my acres on a trial run. If that works financially hemp could become a major crop for me. Typically we farmers will first stick our toe in the water, like maybe only 15 to 20 acres. Then if it seems like this hemp crop is even better financially I likely would ramp up acres fairly quickly!

Future of hemp

Turn to page 34

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Future of hemp: building material one of a plethora of postrain uses for hemp Continued from page 33

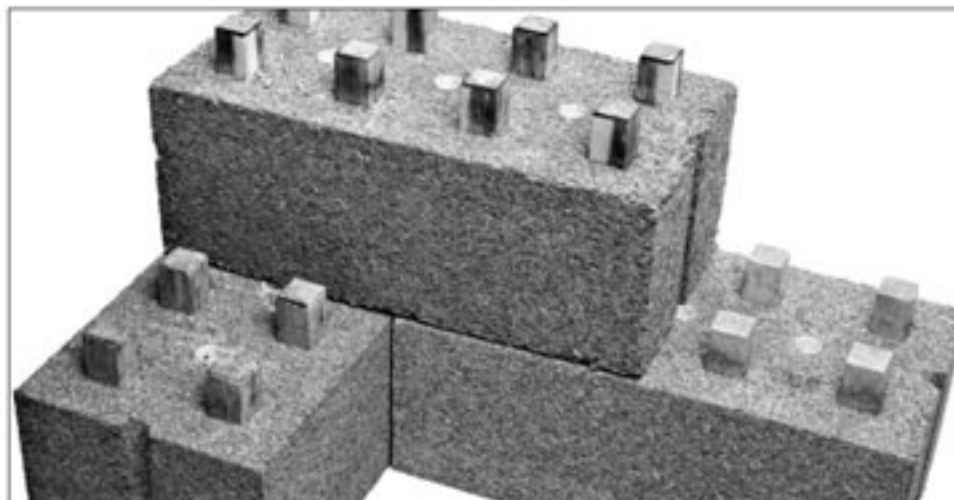
Q: Todd, you are saying environmentally hemp is an attractive crop....less pesticides needed, perhaps less herbicides too because it grows so fast.

Mathewson: I think you need to talk to farmers about those issues. I'm not a farmer.

Larson: We had a couple growers in our area last year. They indicated it grows so aggressively their hemp choked out the weeds. Plus they are organic producers so they don't use any herbicides. I don't know about fertility...perhaps they use livestock manure.

Q: So how critical is processing location for your firm?

Mathewson: From a broad perspective, first consideration is likely to be close to where it is grown. But that can be a step process too. Start with a limited first process; then move to the next processing step. At this stage we really don't know how that will work out for us and our Hempcrete building blocks. But Kim mentioned something that would be a concern for us...we likely can't rely on a limited number of growers who might just want to dabble in this new opportunity. We likely won't get involved if we can't be assured that there will be enough hemp product to meet our market demands. That's why I'm meeting with you folks down here. We'll need some firm commitments. Our Hempcrete blocks puts us at the extreme end of the value chain but to make our sales fire up we need to get to the front of the value chain. Then you are positioned for a great future.



'Hempcrete' blocks are one potential revolutionary use of hemp.

Q: So why the Twin Cities as a good market area for your Hempcrete building blocks?

Mathewson: I was here for other reasons but was in contact with the two founders of Just BioFiber. As we talked we started realizing this Twin Cities area is a fantastic area for the introduction of BioFibers. Twin Cities are a healthy economy; growing well; good expansion of various trades and industries. And because of the organic criteria of Hempcrete, I think it will gather lots of interest in the Twin Cities which is recognized nationwide as a center for environmental activity.

Q: And your take on the 10 people here this morning listening to you?

Mathewson: I was impressed. I was asked a lot of really great questions. Many

were the questions I wanted to hear so I can really sense the strong ambitions of this group to make industrial hemp a major addition to your farming income.

Q: You are living evidence to your ambitions. You are wearing a hemp shirt. Where did you get it and what did it cost?

Mathewson: This is a Duluth Trading Company shirt. Its 55 percent hemp and 45 percent organic cotton. Yes, cost me \$55 so I guess the cotton came free! It feels good. With that Duluth Trading Company name it obviously will be a good durable shirt. I bought it out of curiosity to see what hemp felt like as a clothing item.

Q: What do you think is the future of hemp in North America? It's a major crop in European Countries so they obviously already have come up with lots of uses?

Mathewson: I think first we need to get our heads around legislation. I'm told during WWII there were something like 150,000 acres of hemp cultivated in the U.S. with much in Minnesota. Then the confusion started happening on medicinal hemp and marijuana. That stopped the entire industry. We need to get our heads better understanding both the medicinal and the fiber values of this crop. I think hemp is a great product. Clearly there are some fantastic medicinal and health values from this crop. There are fantastic uses for fiber well beyond clothing. And I'm told the auto industry very much wants to get into hemp panels. Hemp fiber is stronger than carbon fiber. We use hemp hurd, essentially a byproduct, yet this is creating a truly sustainable building product. Cut down a forest for stick buildings and you're looking at 50 years for regrowth. With hemp we have a new crop every year. We're doing our environment a favor!

Q: Your business background has equipped you with an entrepreneurial spirit. Is the industrial hemp program in America in an entrepreneurial attitude?

Mathewson: Absolutely. I see entrepreneurial opportunities for farmers, for processors and for marketers.

Stay tuned. And for play-by-play action on what's happening in Minnesota don't be bashful about calling our Hemp Queen, Margaret Wiatrowski, MDA State Program Coordinator for Industrial Hemp. Her office: 651-201-6600. Her email: Margaret.wiatrowski@state.mn.us.



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Bird Island, MN

A Pesina on the land since 1869

Family sesquicentennial farm honored at fair

By John Mueller
Editor

Leon Pesina likes the idea that one day, his son will take over the family farm and maintain a family legacy dating back to the late-1860s.

Pesina, 72, and his family farm about 165 acres on Koala Avenue north of Biscay in Rich Valley Township. His family farm received a sesquicentennial farm designation during a ceremony Friday evening, Aug. 16, at the McLeod County Fair. Surrounded by members of his family, Pesina accepted the only McLeod County sesquicentennial farm honor handed out this year.

"It's a nice award," he said. "It was kind of nice to have everyone around."

Pesina's great-great grandfather, Anton, acquired the original property in 1869. Anton Pesina came to the area from Czechoslovakia in the mid-1860s. Years later, Anton handed the farm down to his son, Anthony. He came over with Anton when he was just 18.

Leon Pesina's grandfather, Theodore, farmed the land before passing it down to Leon's father, Harvey. Leon purchased the farm from his parents in 1983. He has purchased adjacent land from a neighbor in the years since to bring the acreage he owns to 165.

Owning the farm and raising soybeans and corn as a blend of feed and cash crop allowed Pesina to keep his job at 3M in Hutchinson. He worked at 3M for several years as a machine operator and forklift driver before retiring 17 years ago. The country lifestyle appealed to him.

The lifestyle

"It's a lot quieter out here," he said. "I just kind of fell into it, but I liked the way of life."

Pesina knows his ancestors went through tough times on the land. The area was primarily wooded when his great-great-grandfather, Anton, came here in the 1860s. Today, about 20 acres remains wooded, he said.

"I can't imagine what they went through.



Chronicle photo by John Mueller

Leon Pesina's family was honored Friday night at the McLeod County Fair for its sesquicentennial farm north of Biscay in Rich Lake Township. Besides Leon and his wife Donna (center) the family includes (from left) daughter-in-law Katie Pesina, grandson Kaeden Pesina, grandson Brett Baumgarten, son Mike Pesina, grandson Keagen Pesina, daughter Lynn Baumgarten, son-in-law Rich Tabbert, daughter Lori Tabbert and grandson Nick Tabbert.

There was no road system. I can't imagine how people lived," he said.

When Pesina bought the farm from his father in 1983, he asked his father about applying to obtain the centennial designation. The elder Pesina didn't put much thought into the idea. He was always looking forward instead of thinking about the past, Leon said. But Leon wanted to honor and

recognize the efforts of his father and his ancestors. Over the years, Pesina has come to appreciate the connection with the land built by his father, grandfather, great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather.

"I thought it was kind of important. It was his farm. I grew up there but it was the farm his family started," Leon said.

Today, only one of Pesina's children, his

son Mike, 39, seems interested in farming. He has two sons that could one day take over. Leon knows he won't be around to see his grandsons hopefully take over the farm.

"I'd like to see it happen that way. I guess we'll see," he said. "This could go on quite a while. As long as it's made it this far, that'd be great."

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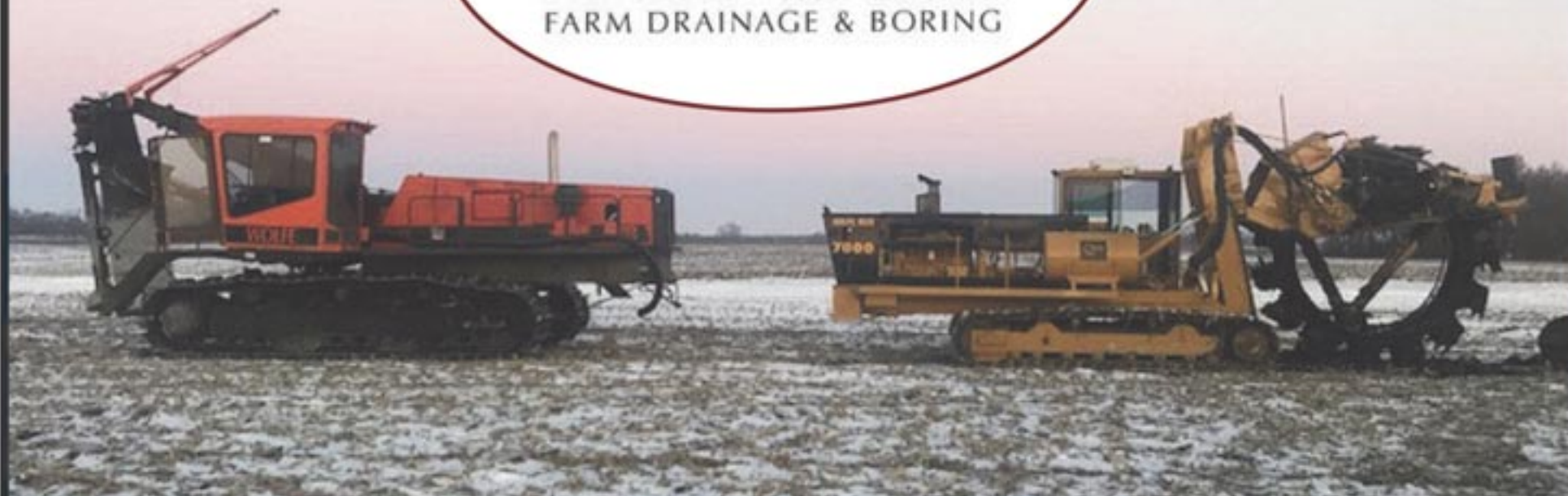
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