

FARM PROGRESS 2000

A LOOK AT THE PAST 15 YEARS IN ALBIA AND MONROE COUNTY

THE ALBIA UNION-REPUBLICAN, MARCH 30, 2000

Change is constant as farmers meet new demands

Fifteen years from 1980's disaster, farmers still face an uncertain future

By DAVE PAXTON
Editor and Publisher

Fifteen years ago the men and women engaged in farming in Monroe County were locked in a financial crisis unmatched in the history of United States agriculture.

Beginning in the late 70's farmers began buying up overpriced land with high interest loans based on a spike in commodity prices that would not last. The crash came when prices crashed and interest rates soared near 20 percent, causing not only a crisis on the farm but a crisis in rural banking.

Hundreds of farmers went out of business across the state. Dozens of banks were closed.

The incredible stress of those bleak years caused untold family problems. Divorce, suicide and spousal abuse were discussed in the same breath with bankruptcy, liquidation and four dreaded letters -- FDIC.

The farm disaster (it was more than a crisis) of the 1980's left immeasurable scars on the land. Families were changed forever. But farming survived in Monroe County.

And there were two things that played key roles locally (in addition to lowered interest rates and improved commodity prices). One had to do with federal farm policy. The other had to do with off-farm in-

come.

CRP -- Conservation Reserve Program -- literally rescued the marginal land and farm operations on the brink of shutting down. The Conservation Reserve Program, initially a 10-year program where farmers received anywhere from \$60 to \$120 per acre for putting previously cultivated land into grasses, began in 1985 under the 1985 Farm Bill.

Monroe County farmers had up to 50,000 acres of land in CRP in the early days of the program. Farmers nearing retirement were able to stabilize their operations and draw important new income. Marginal land, once used for crops in an attempt to pay off farm notes, was now idled, protected from erosion and farmers were guaranteed income for 10 years.

CRP now consists of around 23,500 acres in Monroe County.

Even though CRP was largely an economic and environmental success, many argued the program prevented young farmers from entering the business in the late 1980's and early 1990's. Beginning farmers typically rented or bought the kind of marginal land now placed in the CRP program and without land to start their cow herds, they simply sat on the sidelines because the cost of other ground to buy or rent was too high.

Industry returns

There is great irony in the fact that the very definition of huge corporate agriculture was a key factor in keeping many Monroe County family farmers on their land.

When Cargill arrived on the scene at Eddyville in 1986, Monroe County cattlemen were some of the first to be hired on. The four days

on, three days off, three days on, four days off, 12-hour work day schedule was ideal for farmers interested in maintaining their cattle herds and supplementing their family income.

On the heels of Cargill came Ajinomoto, Heartland Lysine and then plants began to come to Albia. As industrial jobs returned, farmers and their wives found an economic life-line.

But that has also changed the face of Monroe County farming. There are very few farmers in Monroe County who do not work at off-farm jobs. And, if they don't, their wives do. It is a modern fact of farming life in Monroe County.

That fact, however, has kept farmers on the land and has encouraged young farmers to pursue their dream.

Other major changes

Some things CRP and industrial jobs could not prevent. The swine industry in Monroe County, never extremely strong, is almost non-existent. Except for a couple of medium-sized confinement operations, and a few independent farmers with small facilities, farmers are not raising hogs. Vertical integration, domination of the industry by corporate farms and a complete collapse of the hog market around 1997 laid to rest most of the swine industry in Monroe County.

Fortunately, the cattle industry, particularly the cow-calf herds present in south central Iowa, have experienced relatively profitable times.

But statistics do not lie when it comes to cattle numbers. In 1987 there were 2.8 million head of cattle marketed in Iowa. In 1999 there was almost a million less, 1.9 mil-

lion. It was estimated that Iowa farmers had 5.3 million head of cattle on their farms in 1985. As of Jan. 1, 2000, the estimate is 3.7 million.

But the major losses, according to the latest statistics, have not been in beef cow herds. In 1985 Iowa farmers had 1.2 million head of cows. On Jan. 1, 2000 there was an estimated 1.025 million. The major losses have come from the feedlot. Iowa cattle are being sent out of state for finishing.

There are still three or four major dairy farms in the county and a number of farmers raise sheep. Purebred breeders of sheep and cattle have found excellent niche markets over the years, providing lambs and calves for the show ring and breeding stock for other farmers.

Large scale corporate farming, in either the chicken or swine industry, has not gained a foothold in Monroe County.

Cattle type has changed.

Fifteen years ago the grand champion steer at the Monroe County Fair was likely a lanky exotic breed with a light-colored hide, still unfinished at 1,100 pounds.

The kind of cattle, even purebred breeders, are producing has experienced amazing change, fueled by meat packer demand for black hides and uniform carcasses.

It used to be one of the pleasures of driving the countryside to see the multi-colored herds and name the breeds by color and size -- white-coated Charolais, the tan colors of Simmental, the speckles of Maine-Anjou.

Breeds are still important, but you've got to be a near expert to point out one breed from another in a commercial cow-calf operation.

Everything is going black. Simmental, Chi, Main-Anjou are all being bred to black, much to the chagrin of traditional Hereford, Red Angus and Shorthorn breeders.

As ridiculous as it may seem (since the hair off a cattle hide is either removed or dyed anyway) packers are demanding a uniform product off the farm, including hair color. The reason, according to marketing experts, isn't so much the color but what packers believe is typically under the black hides of cattle -- lean, well-marbled meat with uniform cuts and acceptable levels of tenderness.

Monroe County Extension Director Sue Delaney thinks pressure from packers and consumers will continue to drive how cattle are bred. The one problem she sees is the fact that many older farmers may be either unable or unwilling to make the kind of genetic changes in their herds to remain profitable.

Who owns the land?

Most of the farm land in the northern half of Monroe County still rests in the hands of families who have farmed here for generations. But in other areas, farms are not being purchased by farmers. The timbered hills south of Highway 34 are being bought up by investors from all over the country, looking for hunting and fishing opportunities or tax write-offs.

According to a 1999 land survey conducted by the Iowa Department of Agriculture, only 29 percent of the land purchased in south central Iowa was purchased by existing farmers. That compares to a state-

CHANGES

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How Iowa State University Extension has developed

Extension was invented by the American people to meet a vital educational need--the need to provide an educational base for making rural life profitable, healthful and attractive.

1912 -- First County Agent hired in Clinton County

1914 -- Smith-Lever Act created a partnership between the USDA and state Extension

*The federal government contributed to funding of the extension service

1917 -- Each county had one county director and 40 counties had home economists

*Funding was primarily from local private organizations

1920 -- Federal government cut back funding for extension and many county agents and home economists were pending cutbacks when Iowa Farm Bureau was formed. 110,000 memberships were received which helped pay to keep local extension staff. Clothing classes and nutrition classes were very popular with rural women as well as home accounting and home butchering demonstrations. Boys and girls clubs (later known as 4-H) had 14,733 youth participants in the state of Iowa.

1933 -- Agricultural Adjustment Act was passed by the federal government in response to the depression. Corn was \$13 per bushel and pork was \$0.03 a pound. Through this act Extension agents helped educate the farmers as to the purposes and provision of the legislation, explained corn-hog contracts, and organized and trained other farmers.

1934 -- The first of two major droughts struck Iowa. Extension staff responded with seed and feed conservation meetings. Despite the financial hardship the number of home economists in Iowa grew from 32 to 47. Services such as cooking, art and music appreciation, and nutrition, were all free.

1940 -- Boys and Girls clubs became known as 4-H. Starting in 1941 with the onset of WWII extension programs became focused on increasing food production and preservation of food. Despite the depression, in the 30s many farms became mechanized and by 1943 almost 100 percent of Iowa farms used hybrid seed corn. The crops that were planted changed. Farms became bigger, less oats (for feeding horses) and more commercial crops were raised as mechanization grew. Farm labor shortages became a problem and extension agents helped locate additional workers including German and Japanese prisoners.

1953 -- Farms once again experienced economic down turns with a slump in exports, surpluses, lower farm prices, and higher farm costs. At the same time the Secretary of Agriculture ordered Extension and Farm Bureau to sever ties. At that time the County Agricultural Extension law was passed which created the county councils to assist with the administration in every county.

1960s -- In the field Extension officials phased out districts and implemented an area plan, in central administration ISU officials created the office of Dean of Extension. The agents also began to reach out to urban clients with programs such as the Expanded Nutrition program. Extension increased involvement in the area of economic development. By the end of the decade boys and girls clubs were participating in joint programs and projects.

1970s and 1980s -- Early in the 70s emphasis was on greater and greater production due to depleted grain supplies. Technology became increasingly important to agriculture which still was Extensions main role in Iowa. Extension programming changed, as environmental issues became more and more important especially when discussing pesticides. Home economists changed their programming moving away from the recipe approach and moved more towards an issues approach. And as resources became limited one on one services were reduced and programming was done in a group setting, toll free numbers for questions relating to home and family became available. Extension started to work more closely with low-income families in the areas of nutrition and home repairs. 4-H program focused more on development of personal growth and leadership and less on specific projects. By the early 80s the glory days had faded and the farm sector experienced economic downturn. In 1984 Extension implemented programs to assist farm families with financial analysis and counseling in addition to community resource committees to help families deal with stress. At this same time the Iowa Rural concern hotline was established and between Feb. 1985 and May 1986, 15,544 calls were taken in the state of Iowa. The federal government was cutting resources, taxing the state resources more. More and more split positions became common. Where there used to be a full time agriculturist who served as the county director, a home economist, and a 4-H and youth worker many counties shared all 3 with another county. In the past decades the county director was always a male and in the late 80s some were female.

1990 -- Because of continued budget cuts a major reorganization happened in 1992. Field specialists were moved to county offices, every county hired a full time county director to manage administration and programming, area offices moved onto community college campuses, partnering with other agencies and organizations became common to cooperate and avoid duplication in services. 4-H has broadened the commitment to youth serving any youth that wants to participate.

2000 and beyond -- Extension has and continues to be more flexible in how it serves its clientele and what kind of programming it offers. Extension will continue to collaborate with other agencies and organizations in addition to drawing outside resources for programming.



FORMER AMERICAN FARM Bureau President Dean Kleckner presents the Monroe County Ag Hall of Fame award to Vaughn and Patricia Faber.



FORMER AMERICAN FARM Bureau President Dean Kleckner presents the Monroe County A Hall of Fame award to Betty and Paul Stocker.

Vaughn and Patricia Faber of rural Blakesburg were named to the 2000 Monroe County Ag Hall of Fame at an Ag Day celebration held Thursday in Albia.

The Fabers were inducted along with Paul and Betty Stocker as farm families and Don and Angelina Baker as Agri Business leaders. Kevin and Wendy Dyson were named 2000 Outstanding Young Farmers.

The Fabers were married in 1947 following Vaughn's return from military service in the South Pacific during WWII.

Raised on a southeast Monroe County farm, Vaughn remembers herding cows and driving cattle to pastures on horseback and working livestock in the 1930's and 40's. He also remembers the first new tractor his dad ever bought in 1941.

Vaughn attended school in Appanoose, Monroe and Wapello counties and Patricia grew up in Newton.

Following their marriage, they bought their first farm in the fall of

1947. The Fabers have raised swine, cattle, chickens and operated a dairy over the years along with their row crop operation.

Truck driving has served as the supplemental income for the farm operation and Vaughn has driven a truck since the late 40's. He worked on wheat, millet and milo harvests in Kansas, Nebraska, North and South Dakota and Montana and trucked from coast to coast from 1973-1993, much of the time for Hy-Vee. He still hauls steel in the Midwest.

The Fabers joined the Farm Bureau shortly after starting their farming operation and were active in the young Farm Bureau couples group.

The Fabers were both 4-H leaders and were involved with the Monroe County Fair, sharing hours of enjoyment with their 10 children. Vaughn served on the first

FABER

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Paul and Betty Stocker have been life-long residents of Monroe County. Paul was raised on the farm and Betty spent her early years growing up in the mining camp of Lockman, one of a family of 12 children. Both graduated from Albia High School.

The couple was married in 1946 and have raised five children. Cathie is a doctor of clinical psychology in Washington, D.C.; Michael is an engineer at John Deere and lives in rural Albia; Beckie is a medical technician with a degree in blood banking and lives in Kansas; Mark works for Pac-Lease and is attending college in Des Moines; and Lesa works for GM in Minnesota and lives in Eden Prairie. The Stockers have five grandchildren.

Both Paul and Betty have been active in Monroe County life. Betty served a Girl Scout Leader, judged 4-H projects and served on the Extension Council. She has been a member of the Activity Center board (now Ragtime Industries), plays the organ for Eastern Star in Albia and Eddyville as well as for the First Christian Church, the

Monroe Care Center and Oakwood Estates.

She has also taught Sunday School and Bible School for her church.

Betty has worked part-time at the Monroe County Recorder's office since 1949 and was deputy recorder for six months.

Paul has been an active Mason for many years, serving as Past Master of the Astor Lodge AM/FM. He is Past High Priest of the Royal Arch Masons and a member of the commandry. He is a representative of the Scottish Rite of the Valley of Davenport and is a member of the 32-degree club of Ottumwa.

Paul has also served as trustee, elder, deacon, chairman of the board and property chairman at First Christian Church and has served as sexton of the Selection Cemetery since the 1960's. He has also served as Township Trustee.

The Stockers have been very ac-

STOCKER

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FORMER AMERICAN FARM Bureau President Dean Kleckner presents Wendy and Kevin Dyson their award

Dysons named 2000 top young farmers

Kevin and Wendy (Gray) Dyson each grew up on their parent's farms, participating in 4-H and FFA and graduating from Albia Community High School.

Both have degrees and successful jobs. Kevin has a degree in computer maintenance and is a control engineer at Cargill. Wendy is a radiology technician for Integra Health Clinic in Knoxville.

STOCKERS

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tive in Monroe County politics, serving in leadership positions in the Democratic Party for years. Betty is currently central committee secretary.

The Stocker farm operation centered around a 280-acre diversified crop and livestock operation that started in 1952. Paul retired from John Deere in Ottumwa after 32 years of service, farming during that entire time.

The Stockers bought their farm from Paul's relatives making it a Century Farm. They raised cattle, hogs, alfalfa, hay, corn and soybeans and were early subscribers to conservation tillage methods.

The Stockers are proud of two facts. First, the farm helped send all five of their children to college. And, secondly, grandson Matthew is starting his own farming operation on their farm.

In their spare time Betty enjoys knitting and crocheting and Paul likes to hunt, garden and take in the activities of his grandchildren.

But even before they were married in 1994, the couple had invested in a 150-acre farm to begin their farming career.

The farm couple raise corn and soybeans and have a cow/calf operation as well as raising hogs.

The Dysons have two children, Mary Kathryn, four, and Tyler Gene, nine months.

GM planting intention measured

The National Corn Growers Association conducted a poll of 175 farmers in 23 states who attended the Commodity Classic annual conference in Orlando, FL. Results of the poll, released the week of March 6, 2000, indicate farmers plan to reduce planting of genetically modified (GM) corn in 2000 compared to last year says Ralph Mayer Iowa State University Extension Farm Management Specialist. About 20 percent of the farmers who said they grew GM corn last year won't do so this year.

Twenty-seven percent of the farmers said they intend to reduce their plantings of GM corn while the remaining 5 percent said they plan to maintain or increase their planting of GM corn in 2000.

Reasons given for reducing intended planting of GM corn were uncertainty about the marketability of GM corn and the high GM seed costs.



DON AND ANGELA Baker received the Angri-Business Award from Dean Kleckner

Bakers honored for serving farmers through agri-business

Don and Angelina Baker retired last year after operating their Baker Feed and Grain for over 25 years. The company was sold in 1999 to Quality Ag Services.

During those years the Bakers not only supplied feed, grain, seed and fertilizer services to farmers, but took an active part in the community, working with the FFA

chapter, helping at the fair, serving on the Extension Council and holding membership in the Iowa Feed and Grain Council, Iowa Cattlemen's Association, Iowa Pork Producers, Iowa Soybean Association, Iowa Corn Growers Association and the Albia Area Chamber of Commerce.

Don and Angelina were married in 1959 and raised six children. They are active in St. Mary's Catholic Church where Don has served on the Parish Council and Angelina serves on the Alter and Rosary Society. Don is a fourth degree member of the Knights of Columbus.

One of the reason the Bakers were able to serve their farm customers so well is the fact they too are farmers. In 1965 they started their 250-acre farming operation in Troy Township and over the years raised both hogs and cattle on their farm.

FABERS

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ever Monroe County Extension Council.

Vaughn also holds memberships in the American Legion, Rathbun Rural Water Association, has been a township trustee for over 30 years, was a member of the Monroe County Fairboard and served as a township school board member. He was also on the original planning committee for Chariton Valley RC&D and the Rathbun Area Solid Waste Agency.

He is also a member of the Midwest and Iowa Tractor Rodeo Association.

The Fabers have 10 children, 26 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Manure application season

DES MOINES - Spring has arrived in many parts of Iowa and for manure applicators that means the busy season.

Many applicators spent the past winter attending training sessions across the state learning how to determine the correct amount manure to apply per acre, about axle weight limitations, and what to do if a spill happens.

"These sessions have helped producers and manure applicators apply manure at rate that benefits the environment and saves the landowner money on fertilizer," said Wayne Gieselman, coordinator for the DNR's animal feeding program.

Commercial and confinement

site manure applicators were required to be certified beginning last year. The certification may already be paying dividends.

"The number of manure related fish kills dropped from 31 in 1998 to five last year. That is a dramatic change," he said. "It will be hard to duplicate such dramatic numbers this year, but I think with the continuing applicator training, these numbers will continue to get better."

All manure applicator certification sessions are through for the year, so anyone who needs the certification must go to the county extension office and watch the video.

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China dead would increase beef exports

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. cattle producers are primed to significantly increase beef export markets if Congress votes to make effective the trade deal recently negotiated with China, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) said today.

"If not U.S. producers, who will sell their beef to the 1.2 billion consumers in China?" said Wythe Willey at a news conference here. Willey is NCBA vice president and a cattle producer from Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

"China is negotiating trade deals with many other countries that produce beef. We can't allow American beef producers to be shut out of the Chinese market and be left behind," Willey said. For the trade deal to take effect, Congress must help take down market barriers by approving permanent trade relations (PNTR) with China.

"A vote against PNTR is a vote against cattle producers," Willey said. "Increased exports are vital to the long-term viability of the cattle business."

Under the trade agreement, beef exports to China are expected to grow from the current 23,400 metric tons to more than 70,000 metric tons by 2005. The trade deal would lower tariffs on beef from 45 percent to 12 percent over five years. The agreement also would allow the U.S. beef industry to deal directly with Chinese businesses instead of going through government middlemen.

U.S. cattle producers also called on the Chinese government to take steps to lay the foundation for increased U.S. beef trade so that action by the U.S. Congress will see an immediate impact. China already has recognized U.S. meat inspection as equal to its own so that any USDA-approved plant is eligible to sell beef to China. Chinese officials now must put the proper rules in place so that U.S. beef export certificates can be accepted in their country.

NCBA has been working for years to gain greater access to foreign markets. Ten years ago, the U.S. beef industry gained access to another Asian market, Japan. Since that time, Japan has grown to become the top U.S. beef export market, buying more than \$1.7 billion worth of U.S. beef in 1999.

CHANGES

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wide average of 64 percent. Sixty percent of the land sold in south central Iowa in 1999 was purchased by investors.

The good news is that four percent of land sold went to new farmers, a higher percentage than any place in the state.

The change has not made the land less available to farmers interested in renting pasture and crop ground, but it has changed the population of many parts of the county as old farm houses and farmsteads are taken down.

Aging farmers

Two other trends have not changed since 1985. The average age of farmers is rising. And the average size of farms is growing.

In 1987 the average age of an Iowa farmer was 47.6 years of age. In 1997 the average age had risen to 52.3.

The average size of an Iowa farm jumped four acres from 1998 to 1999 from 340 acres to 344 acres.

Ag Hall of Fame honors those who served well

The Monroe County Farm Bureau founded the Ag Hall of Fame in 1984 to honor members of the agricultural community who devoted their lives to their farms, families and communities.

Since the first four were named in 1984, John Spencer, Claude Rogers, M. Leo Beary and Tom Dougherty, a total of 25 individuals and six couples have been inducted.

In addition, the Farm Bureau began presenting an Agri-Business Award in 1995 as well as an Outstanding Young Farmer Award.

Monroe County Ag Hall of Fame

1984 -- John Spencer, Tom Dougherty, M. Leo Beary, Claude Rogers.

1985 -- Albert Etcher, Walter Gardner.

1986 -- Tobe Reed, Francis Hamilton.

1987 -- Allen Wilkin, Herb Bettis.

1988 -- George Kasper, Carl Van Zante.

1989 -- Lennart Larson, Lawrence Amoss.

1990 -- Stanley Bay, Wilbert Hoover.

1991 -- Duane Wilson, Lloyd Ammons.

1992 -- Ralph Goode, Estil Gay.

1993 -- Stee Kurimski, Lloyd Clark.

1994 -- DeVayne and Wanda Johnson; Robert and Betty McGinnis; Ollie Kaldenberg (posthumous).

1995 -- John and Lois Knowles; James N. and Charlene Wilson.

1996 -- Kenneth and Bernice Bettis; Earl and Blanche Rowley; Earl Albertson and Melvin VandePol (posthumous).

1997 -- Frank and Dortha Chelar; Dick and Theresa Brown.

1998 -- Art and Laurine Townsend; Charles and Rosemary Scott.

1999 -- Albert and Joyce Tangie; Everett and Ruth Ella Gardner.

2000 -- Paul and Betty Stocker; Vaughn and Patricia Faber.

Agri-Business Awards

1995 -- Dr. Dean Stocker.

1996 -- Bill and Norma Henderson.

1997 -- Donald and Barbara Bettis.

1998 -- Gary and Connie Belzer.

1999 -- Dr. Howard Lindaman.

2000 -- Don and Angelina Baker.

Outstanding Young Farmer

1995 -- Scott Etcher.

1996 -- Jim Beaumont.

1997 -- Tim Kaldenberg.

1998 -- Stacy DeTar.

1999 -- Brian Hindman.

2000 -- Kevin Dyson.

State sets GMO recommendations

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Patty Judge today announced recommendations for Iowa farmers as they as they begin to make production and marketing decisions for the 2000 planting season. The recommendations are a result of the (GMO) conference sponsored in Ames, last month by the Iowa Department of Agriculture, the Iowa Corn Growers Association, and Iowa State University Extension. Recommendations from the conference are as follows:

1. All major grain handlers are accepting GMO's. However, some wet milling facilities are only accepting varieties that are approved for Europe. Check with your local wet milling facility. At present this does not include Roundup-Ready corn.

2. Farmers should talk with their local elevators regarding acceptance

and needs for segregation.

3. Opportunities exist for non-GMO production that could result in premiums of 10-15 cents a bushel. Several river terminals along the Mississippi are offering these premiums as well as certain country locations. It is advised however, that producers should secure their market before planting and to secure their premium in writing.

4. There could be problems with seed availability levels, if there is an overwhelming demand for non-GMO seed. However, if demand stays at its current level, seed companies have indicated that there will be no problems of availability for GMO or non-GMO seed. If at all possible the double booking of seed is discouraged. In any case, talk to your seed dealer.

5. Farmers should not sign any-

thing that makes claims that they can't totally verify. Producers should consult legal counsel before signing any binding contracts regarding GMO's.

"As we near the 2000 planting season it is important that Iowa farmers have the information they need to make production and marketing decisions. I am encouraging

all producers to talk with their local seed dealers and elevators in this effort," advised Secretary of Judge. She concluded, "I recommend that producers weigh their marketing opportunities carefully this planting season. The Iowa Department of Agriculture and I stand ready to assist Iowa producers in their production decision as the 2000 planting season nears."

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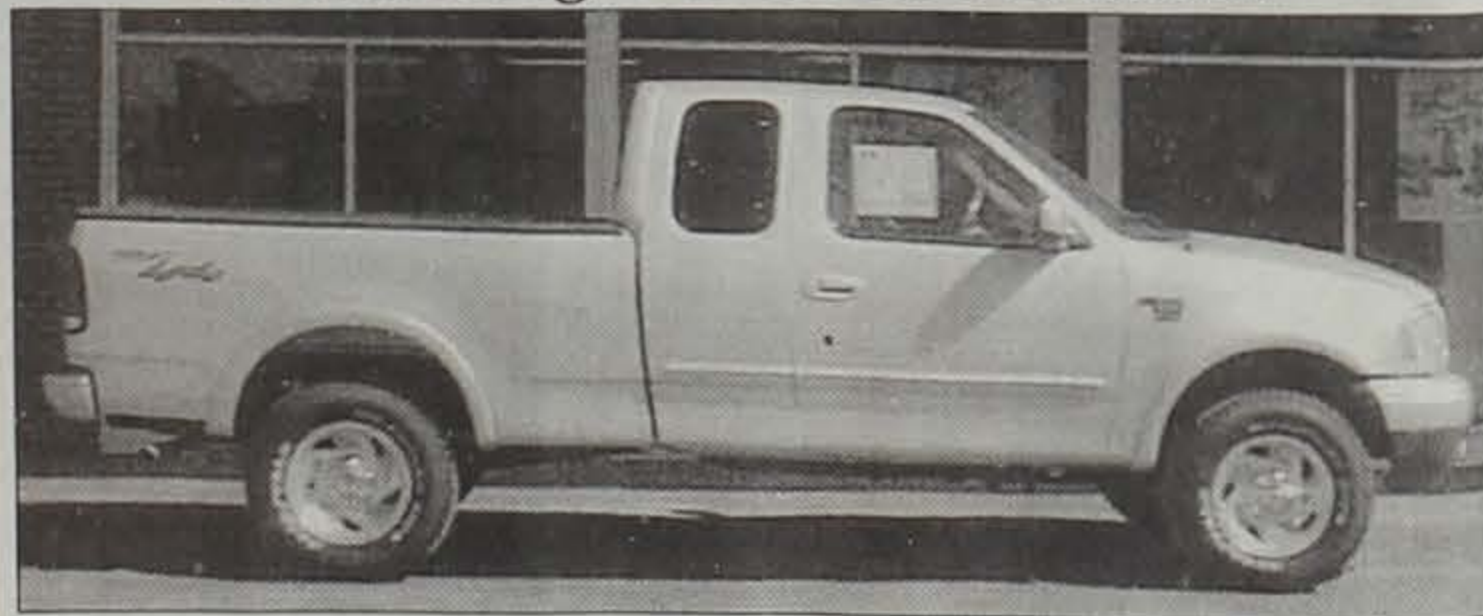
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10 71.50	10 46.00												
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State fair seeks to Iowan nominees

DES MOINES -- The search has begun to find Iowa's finest who radiate the true meaning of being an Iowan. Your help is needed to locate and nominate community leaders, volunteers and extraordinary citizens to become Iowans of the Day during the first ten days of the 2000 Iowa State Fair, August 10-22.

The Iowa State Fair Blue Ribbon Foundation is encouraging Iowans to nominate friends, family members, neighbors and co-workers who have made a significant contribution to their communities. While serving their community through continued volunteerism, award winners must have demonstrated their true Iowa spirit--integrity, dependability, sense of community and a strong work ethic. All nominees must currently reside in Iowa.

While exploring the Fairgrounds in a complimentary golf cart and being recognized on the Bill Riley Stage, each of the stars will shine over the Iowa State Fair for a day. The winners will also receive \$200 cash, VIP parking, gate admission, Grandstand tickets, hotel accommodations at the Des Moines Marriott, and a one-year subscription to Iowan Magazine.

"This award was created to thank exceptional Iowans for making our state such a great place to live," said John Putney, executive director of the Iowa State Fair Blue Ribbon Foundation. "We hope that their accomplishments influence others to get involved in their own communities."

The Iowan of the Day program, created in 1997, is sponsored by the Iowa State Fair Blue Ribbon Foundation and Cookies Food Products. The Blue Ribbon Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. Since its inception in 1993, the Foundation had generated more than \$47 million for renovations and improvements to the Iowa State Fairgrounds.

Iowan of the Day nomination forms are available at your local library or by calling the Blue Ribbon Foundation at 1-800-450-3732. The deadline for nominations is July 1, 2000.

B&B Equipment sells cattle feeding equipment

B&B Equipment is a home-owned business that sells cattle-feeding equipment, mainly creep feeders to boost weight gain in calves, and hay wagons to feed silage, ground hay and bales of hay with less waste.

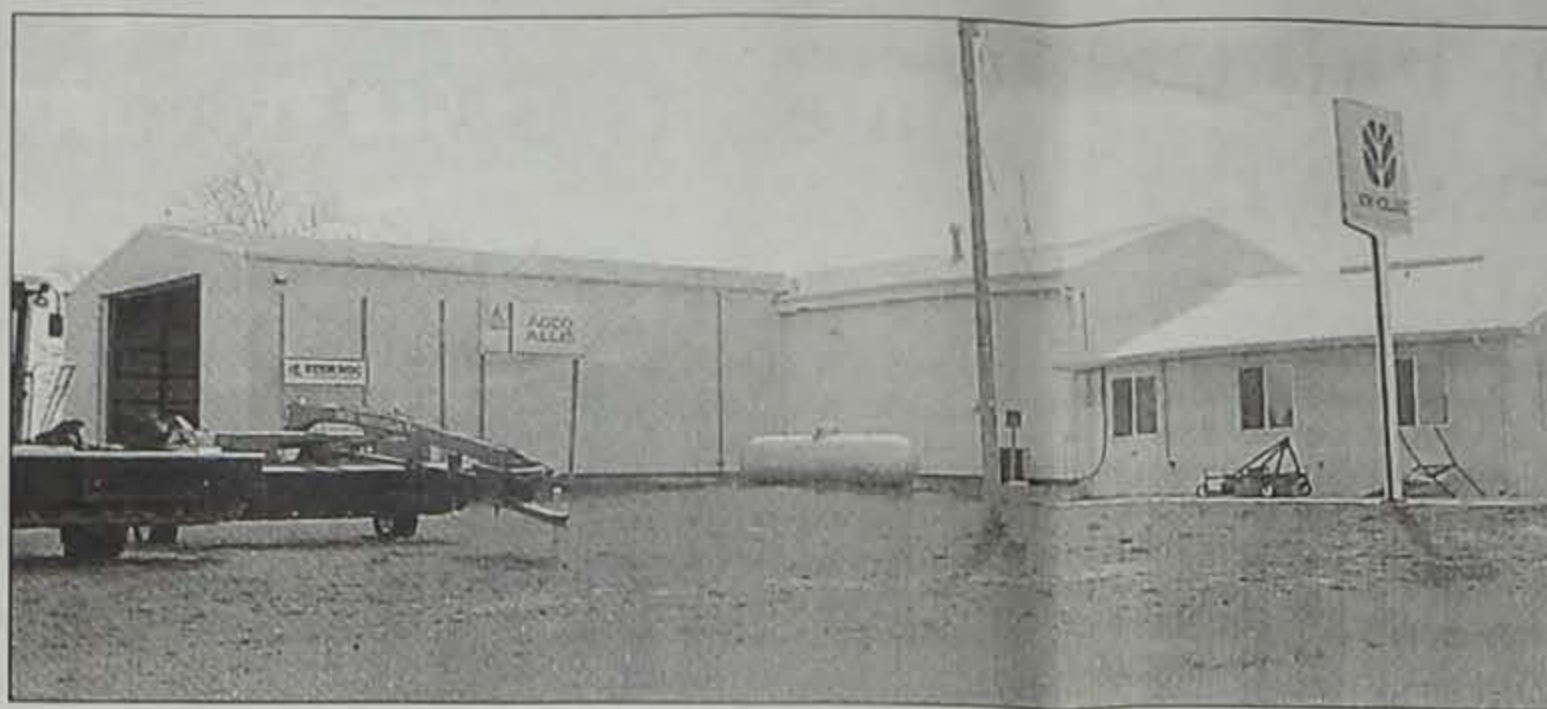
Dean and Julie Bettis operate the business at their home two miles north of Albia on Highway 137.

The Apache brand feeders have also been modified for deer, elk, llamas and longhorn cattle. B&B also handles dumpsters and roll-off containers which are sold to garbage collectors, businesses and schools.

In 1989, Dean saw the Apache feeder displayed at the Iowa State Fair and had to order a semi-load of feeders from Nebraska to become a dealer. Over the next nine years, he sold over \$1 million in wholesale equipment.

Julie recently traveled to Nashville, Tenn. to receive a Century Club Award while Dean set up feeders at the Iowa Beef Expo.

The feeders are displayed along Highway 5. A new product, a portable steel building made in Greenfield, Iowa, used for cattle shelters, garages, horse barns, etc., has been added to the B&B Equipment line.



THE NEW ADDITION to Coltrain Implement

Coalition to select top teachers

DES MOINES -- The Iowa Agriculture Awareness Coalition is sending one lucky Iowa teacher to a national educators conference National Ag in the Classroom Conference June 14-17 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Kathryn Thompson, IAAC chair, announced today that the coalition will be offering its second annual "full-ride" scholarship for the conference. The winner will be an Iowa teacher selected from those entering the contest at the IAAC's web site at <http://www.agaware.iastate.edu>. En-

try deadline is Friday, April 28.

"We're hoping that Iowa teachers of all subject areas and grade levels will visit our web site to see high quality strategies for infusing information about agriculture into their curriculum," Thompson said. "While they are there, we invite them to enter our contest." The IAAC will cover expenses for travel, lodging, food and registration--a package valued at up to \$1,600. Last year's winner was Travis Benner, a 4th and 5th grade science teacher at Blue Grass Elementary in Scott County.

The National Ag in the Classroom conference offers four days of speakers, workshops, exhibits, and make-and-take sessions on food, fiber and the environment. Conference participants take home a wealth of knowledge, hands-on activities and resources to pass on to youth in their communities.

Ag in the Classroom is a national program funded by private

and public funds, active in all 50 states to bring agriculture to America's students. Information on the program is available by contacting Dorothy Jackson, AITC National Program leader, phone (202) 720-7925; or visiting the program web site at <http://www.agclassroom.org/>. A link to the national and other state AITC web sites is also available from the IAAC's web site.

The IAAC web site offers a host of creative curricular ideas, a rich array of links to IAAC member web sites, as well as quality agriculture and environmental education sites around the world. Ideas can be integrated into subjects such as math, social studies, science, nutrition, and history. Many of the activities are focused on grades K through 6.

The IAAC is a nonprofit organization comprised of Iowa commodity groups, educational agencies, and other groups interested in agricultural education.

Roerman Feed & Grain

Roerman Feed and Grain of Blakesburg bought out Goode Seed and Feed in 1992.

The company maintains elevator facilities in Albia and Blakesburg. In addition to grain storage, the company sells a full line of livestock feed and farm supplies.

Carl Kendall is the Albia manager.



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Hawkeye Farm Management and Real Estate



612 ac. edge of Marysville - Good crop, CRP, timber, bins, hunt, \$420,000
240 ac. NW of Unionville, MO - crop, pasture, 2 barns, old house, \$126,000
225 ac. N of Melrose - Exc. crop, **PENDING** RP, good investment, \$229,000
220 ac. SW of Seymour - CRP, timber, deer/turkey, split off 60 ac., \$143,000
236 ac. NE of Unionville - Timber// **PENDING**, fences, site to build, \$1,000/ac.
239 ac. SE of Centerville - 3 bdr. home, crop, pasture, deer & turkey, \$148,339
175 ac. E of Moravia - CRP, tim **PENDING** water line to site to build, \$135,625
160 ac. NE of Promise City - Pasture, some timber, creek, good fences, \$92,000
160 ac. SE of Corydon - Crop land with hunting, \$96,000
155 ac. SW of Seymour - CRP, 7 a **PENDING** to build, \$110,000
158 ac. N of Lineville - Hunt, garage, barn, corn crib, 90.9 WRP, MAKE OFFER
138 ac. N of Albia - combination, hunting, bordered by DNR land, \$110,400
96 ac. Lucas County - 6 bdr. home, outbuildings, crop, pasture, \$155,000
80 ac. N of Plano - Excellent cr **PENDING** RP, \$97,000
80 ac. SE of Melrose - 68.4 CRP acres/wincome through 2003, \$80,000
77 ac. W of Albia - Clean pasture, barn lots, \$55,000
73 ac. N of Moravia - exc **PENDING** \$82,500
69 ac. SE of Centerville - active spring, pasture, hunting cabin, \$69,500
52 ac. N of Lake Rathbun - CRP, site to build, \$52,000
13.5 ac. W of Moravia - View of L **PENDING** 2,300 per ac.
29.5 ac. near Lk Rathbun - 34 crop ac., pond, exc. fences, hwy, \$46,800
17 ac. SE of Melrose - Home w/bas **PENDING** r garage, timber/wildlife, \$56,000
1 ac. N of Iconium - 22'24' garage, site to build, near lake, MAKE OFFER
1 a. S of Albia - place to build, close to creek and deer crossing, \$6,500
7 lots @ Lake Rathbun - Pond, electric, rural water & phone available, \$14,900
East Madison, Centerville - Fertilizer storage mixing bldg. & office, \$35,000
903 W Lee St., Seymour - 3 bdr. ho **PENDING** unattached, shed, dog kennel, \$24,900
120 South A St., Albia - 4, 660 sq ft. commercial office bldg., \$100,000/offer
N William St., Moravia - Commercial bldg., auto body shop, 9,800 sq ft., \$58,000

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Three strong players in farm equipment business in Albion

While hundreds of farm equipment dealerships went out of business in the 1980's, Albion retained three of its four dealerships. Those three remain a strong and vital part of the agricultural and business community.

Henderson Implement was started in 1956 by Bill and Norma Henderson, offering sales and service of John Deere farm equipment, John Deere lawn and garden prod-

ucts and Goodyear Tires.

The Henderson's son, Roy, is now part-owner in the business which employs eight people.

G.B. Equipment Co. was established as Blezer Ford in 1969 by Gary and Connie Blezer and changed to G.B. Equipment in 1977. The company moved to its present location on Highway 34 E. in 1987.

The Belzer's son, Paul, joined the company following his graduation from Iowa State University.

G.B. sells and services Ford and

New Holland equipment.

Richard Coltrain started his farm equipment business with his father in 1964 selling Ford and New Holland equipment. He built the first part of his current facility in 1971 on Highway 5 S.

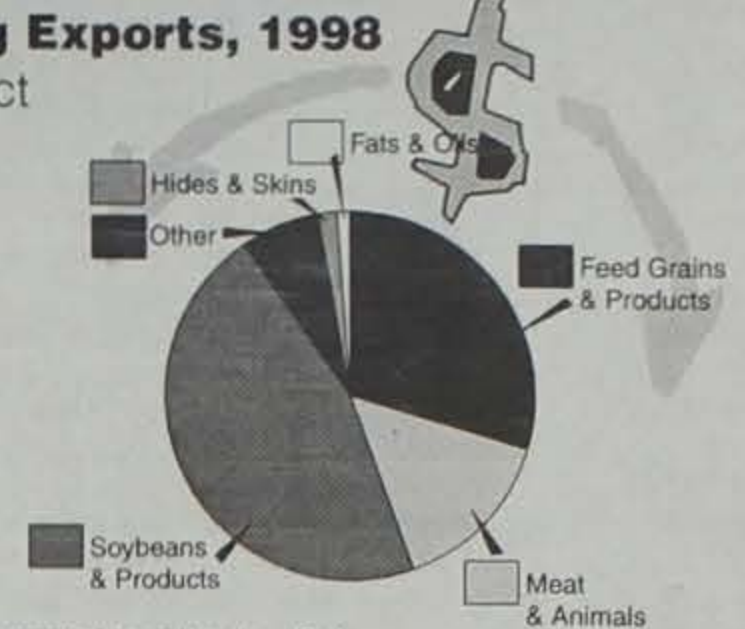
The company has added two additions to the business since that time. Coltrain now sells and services AGCO-Allis and Massey tractors and New Holland forage equipment along with other brands of farm equipment.

Average age of an Iowa farmer:



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Iowa Facts, 1998
INA Graphics

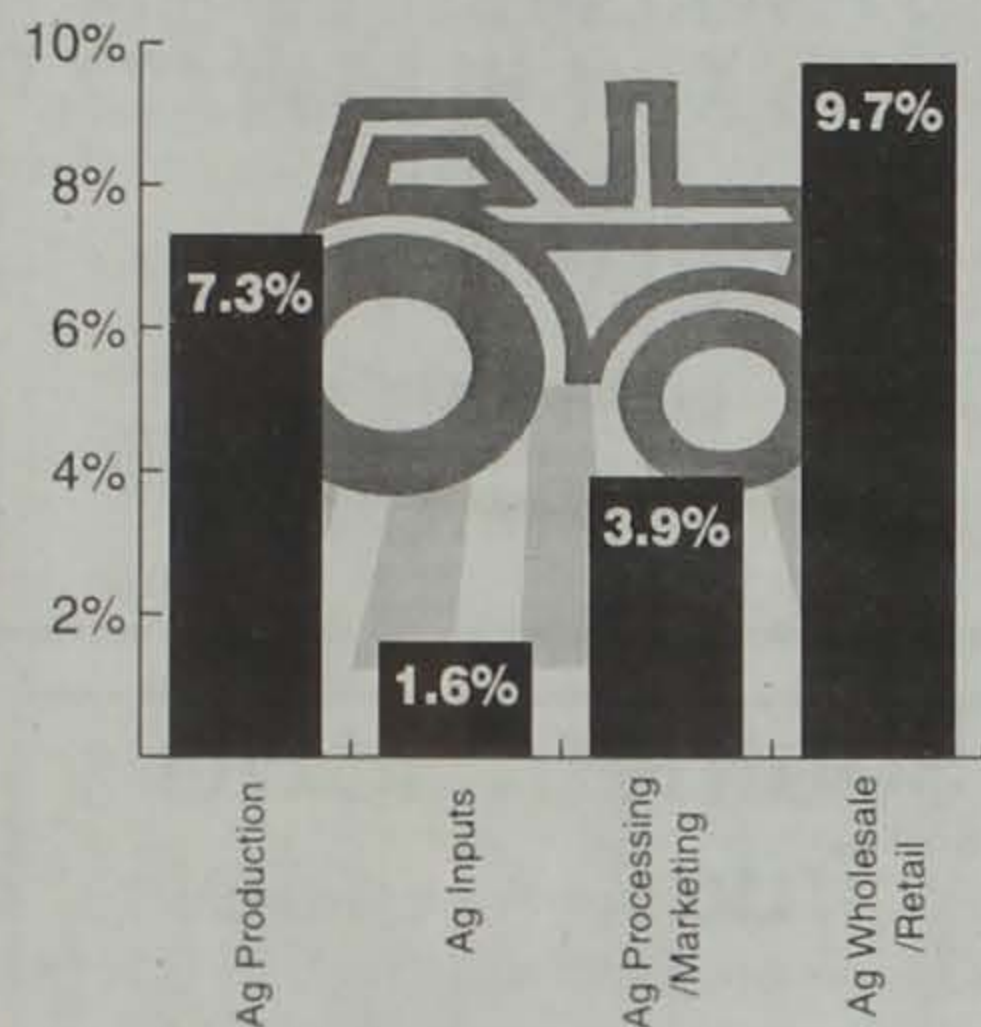
Iowa Ag Exports, 1998
by product



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Iowa Facts
INA Graphics

Farm Jobs

In Iowa, 22.9 percent of those employed work on farms and in farm-related jobs, broken down as follows:



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Iowa Facts
INA Graphics

We at Gardner Crop Insurance salute all the area farmers



Thank you
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customers

Tim Gardner, 1326 350th Ave. Albion, Ia.
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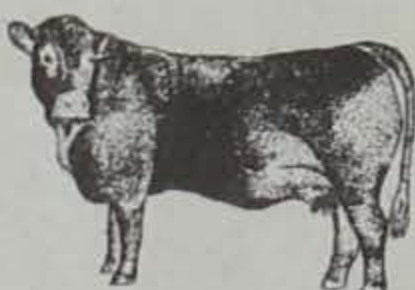
- 18" Burly
- Insul Pac
- 16" Plain Toe



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50¢ discount for each bag over 10.

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ISU Extension Calendar for 2000

April 2000

- April 4.....4-H Indoor Dog meeting
Trinity United Methodist Church
April 4.....4-H Committee meeting, Extension Office
April 5.....NEST meeting - Helping Hand
April 10.....PQA III certification training (for all non
certified swine project members)
April 11.....Master Navigator Class - Extension Office
April 12.....Fishing Club Day Trip - Red Rock Lake
April 12.....Career Trek for 9th and 10th graders in Ames
April 12.....NEST meeting - Helping Hand
April 13.....Clover Club - Grant School
April 13.....Master Navigator Class - Extension Office
April 14.....Application due for Monroe County 4-H scholarship
April 17.....Ladies Night Out - Trinity United Methodist Church
April 18.....Master Navigator Class - Extension Office
April 19.....NEST meeting - Helping Hand
April 20.....Master Navigator Class - Extension Office
April 22.....State Fair weigh in for Derby pigs -
Oskaloosa and Chariton
April 24.....Growing Hope Dinner - Trinity United Methodist Church
April 25.....Outdoor dog project meeting
April 25.....Master Navigator Class - Extension Office
April 26.....NEST meeting - Helping Hand
April 27.....Master Navigator Class - Extension Office
April 27.....Extension council meeting

May 2000

- May 1.....Financial Aid applications due for summer camps
May 2.....Youth and 4-H committee meeting
May 2.....Outdoor dog workshop
May 2.....Master Navigator Class - Extension Office
May 3.....NEST meeting - Helping Hand
May 4.....Master Navigator class - Extension Office
May 5.....Sheep and breeding beef weigh in from
6-8 p.m. at the fairgrounds
May 9.....Outdoor dog workshop
May 10.....NEST meeting - Helping Hand
May 11.....Clover Club - Grant School
May 13.....Project Fair at Trinity United Methodist Church
May 14.....Fishing Club - fishing 1-3 p.m.
May 15.....Livestock (animal) ID sheets due at Extension Office
(No late ones will be accepted)
May 16.....Leaders training
May 16.....Outdoor dog workshop
May 17.....NEST meeting - Helping Hand
May 23.....Outdoor dog workshop
May 24.....NEST meeting - Helping Hand
May 25.....Extension Council meeting -
Extension Office
May 29.....Office closed for Memorial Day
May 30.....Outdoor dog workshop
May 31.....NEST meeting - Helping Hand

June 2000

- June 3.....Wood refinishing workshop at John Botts
June 6.....Horse committee sponsored clinic
June 6.....Outdoor dog workshop
June 6.....4-H committee meeting - Extension office
June 7.....NEST meeting - Helping Hand
June 13.....Outdoor dog workshop
June 14.....NEST meeting - Helping Hand
June 20.....Horse committee sponsored clinic
June 20.....Outdoor dog workshop
June 21.....NEST meeting - Helping Hand
June 27.....Outdoor dog workshop
June 28.....NEST meeting - Helping Hand
June 29.....Extension council meeting - Extension

July

- July 1.....Deadline to register livestock for the Iowa State Fair
July 7.....Deadline to register for clothing event and
communications project
July 11.....Dog obedience practice and graduation
July 18.....Clothing events at Trinity United Methodist Church, 1-6 p.m.
July 20-25.....Monroe County 4-H and FFA Fair

August

- August 10-20.....Iowa State Fair

Quality Ag Service expands Baker business

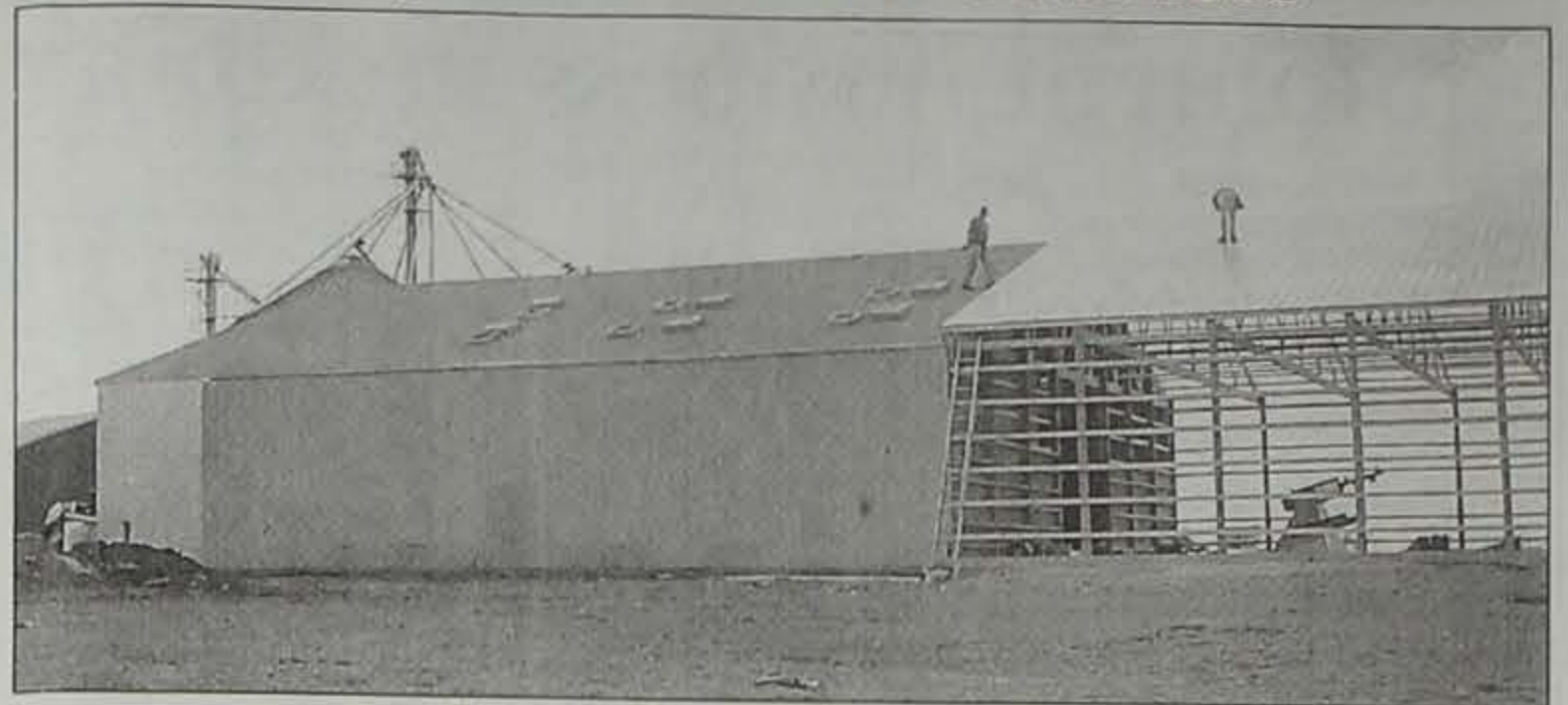
Quality Ag Service actually began in 1996 but is now a year old at its present location after Joe Sinclair and Todd Ryan purchased Baker Feed and Grain in 1999.

"We have one goal in mind," said Sinclair, "To help our customers maximize their income. Our customers' profitability drives our decision making process."

Quality Ag uses field sprayers to inject chemicals into the spray water "on-the-go" to vary the rate according to weed pressure. Their custom combine is linked to the Global Positioning Satellite System to help identify yield problems.

The company also features the only roller feed mill which prevents shattering the corn kernel. Rolled corn is more uniform, has less dust and provides more nutrition for livestock, said Sinclair.

The elevator is open seven days a week during harvest season.



Quality Ag expansion is now under construction.

"At Quality Ag we can provide every item that our customers need to raise profitable crops and livestock," said Sinclair.

Change in land value

Year	Value/A.	Index 1967 = 100	Annual Change	
			\$	%
1999	\$1,781	107	\$-20	-1.1%
1998	1,801	455	-36	-1.9
1997	1,837	464	155	9.2
1996	1,682	425	227	15.6
1995	1,455	368	99	7.3
1994	1,356	343	81	6.4
1993	1,275	322	26	2
1992	1,249	315	30	2.5
1991	1,219	307	5	0
1990	1,214	306	75	7
1989	1,139	287	85	8
1988	1,054	265	179	20
1987	875	220	88	11
1986	787	198	-161	-17
1985	948	239	-409	-30
1984	1,357	342	-334	-20

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We have rented ground north of Albia on Highway 5 and will be conducting auctions on this site.

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Seedlings available

DES MOINES - State Forest Nursery supplies of trees and shrubs are in good supply heading into the spring planting season.

"There is a great opportunity this spring to plant trees and shrubs for wildlife habitat, water quality and soil erosion protection on your property or acreage," said Mike Brandrup, DNR state forester. "The DNR's State Forest Nursery in Ames still has a good supply of selected tree and shrub seedlings that are adapted to Iowa conditions and are available for conservation plantings."

Good supplies remain of Norway spruce, white spruce and scotch pine, great for Christmas tree or wildlife habitat plantings, for \$20 per hundred seedlings. Seedlings are six to 18 inches in height. The state nursery also has a good inventory of hybrid poplar, silver maple, white ash and willow for reforestation and stream bank stabilization projects. Deciduous shrub seedlings of gray and redosier dogwood are available for wildlife habitat. Deciduous tree and shrub seedlings sell for \$35-40 per hundred seedlings.

"Seedlings purchased from the State Nursery must be purchased in lots of 100 seedlings with a minimum of a 500 tree seedling order for purposes of wildlife habitat, reforestation, Christmas trees, soil erosion control and water quality buffers," said Brandrup. "For folks with small areas to plant, consider trying the 'songbird' or 'wildlife' packets of trees and shrubs."

The "Songbird" packet is perfect for portions of land where birds and small mammals need cover and it contains three willows, six ninebark, six gray dogwood and five white spruce and sells for \$20. The "Wildlife" packet sells for \$65 and is perfect for that half-acre that landowners may wish to plant with 50 scotch pine, 50 white spruce, 50

gray dogwood and 50 ninebark."

Tree and shrub orders can be made Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. by calling the State Forest Nursery at 1-800-865-2477.

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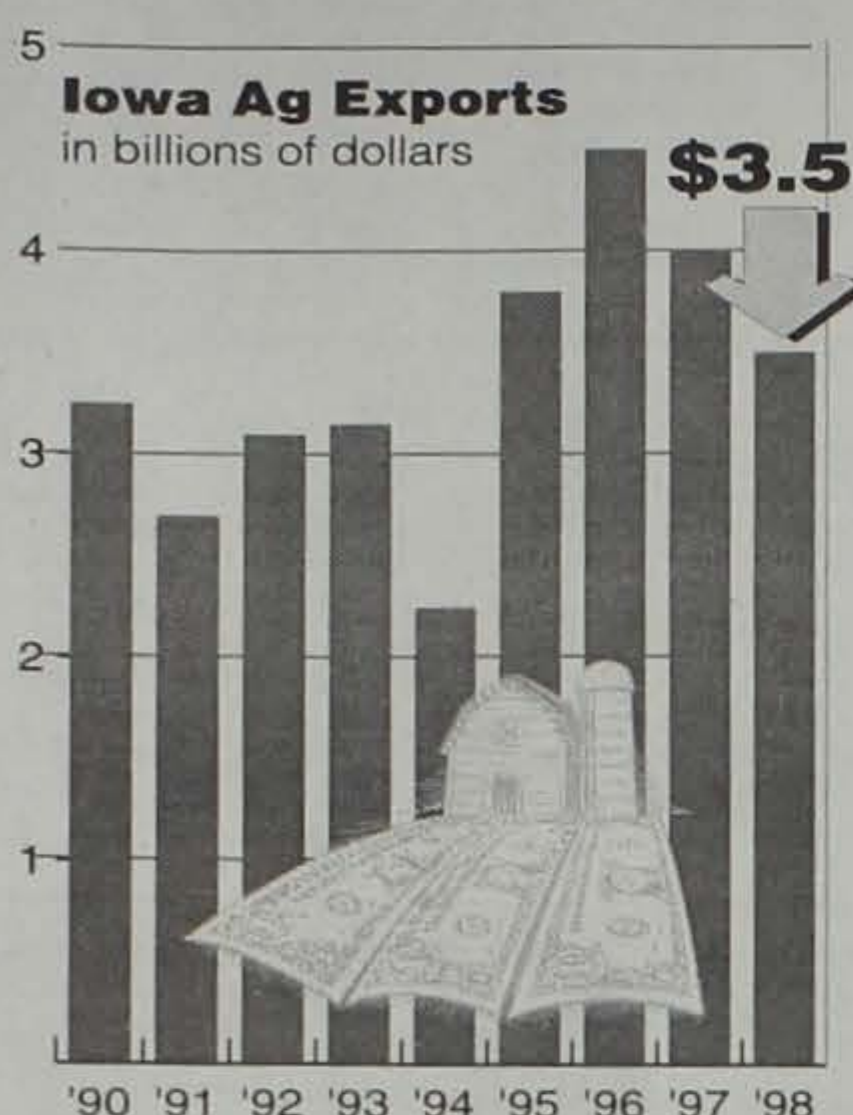
Take a close look at one today.



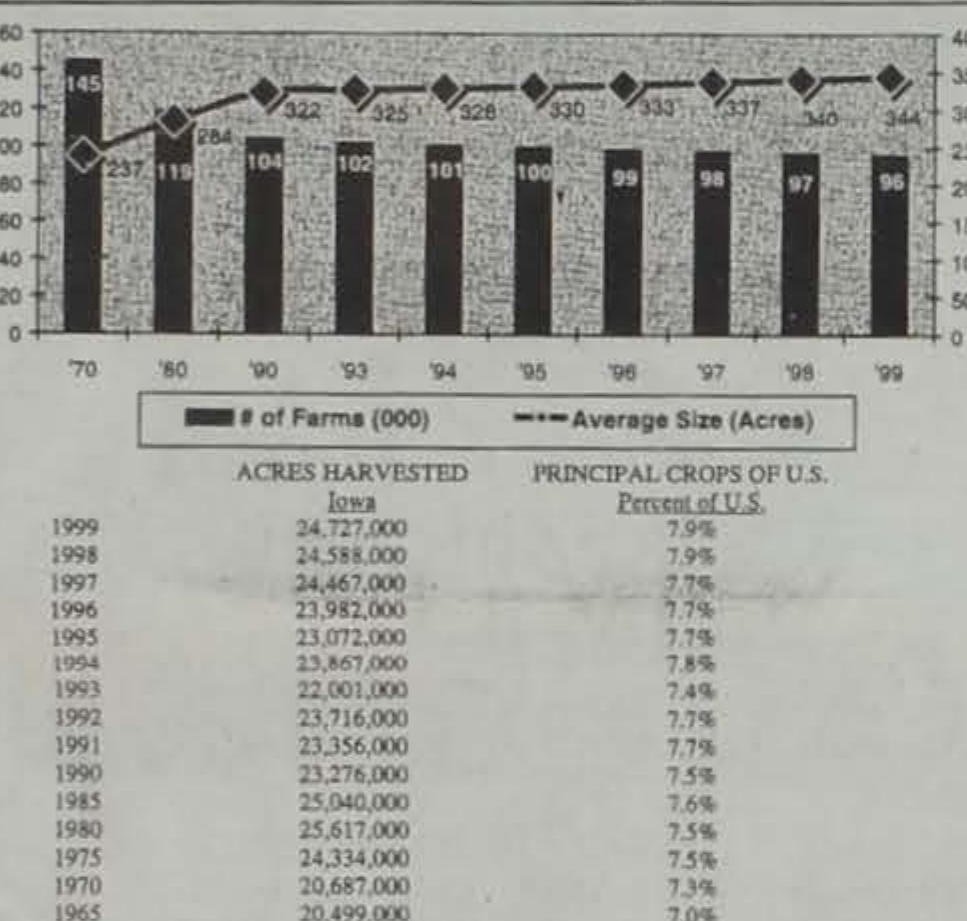
Coltrain Implement

Hwy. 5 South, Albia, Iowa
Phone 932-2745

Iowa's total ag exports peaked at \$4.5 billion in 1996, then began a decline due to an economic downturn in the Far East. In 1998, Iowa's ag exports were \$3.5 billion.



Number of Farms and Average Farm Size



Production, use of renewable fuels must become priority

By AARON PUTZE
Iowa Farm Bureau

With motorists paying more than \$1.50 a gallon for gasoline and prices not expected to ease until fall, one would think the time was right for increasing the nation's production and consumption of renewable fuels. Yet, even during these times of high energy prices and low supplies, ethanol and biodiesel struggle to claim market shares from the large and powerful petroleum industry.

Simply put, utilizing domestic energy sources has been more of a goal than a priority. In the meantime, America's dependence on foreign energy has grown.

Today, the United States imports nearly 50 percent of its energy, more than any time in history. That number is expected to grow to 60 percent by 2010. Last year, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) decided to cut oil production by 2.1 million barrels a day. Today, we're reminded of just how precarious our nation's fuel supply remains. And while they've agreed to increase production in the coming weeks, we shouldn't wait for the next energy price crisis to get serious about utilizing domestic fuel sources.

After all, using ethanol and biodiesel fuels made from corn, soybeans and other grains makes economic and environmental sense. Motorists displace one barrel of imported oil for every 23.8 gallons of ethanol used. This ethanol use is responsible for more than 55,000 American jobs. And from 1996 to 2002, ethanol use will add \$51 billion to the U.S. economy.

Just as ethanol production is good for corn growers, biodiesel is good for soybean producers. A study conducted by the Food and Agricultural Research Institute predicted a sustained market for 70 million gallons of biodiesel annually could return up to \$225 million to soybean farmers in the form of higher prices for soybeans.

Using renewable energy sources also has environmental benefits. For example, ethanol reduces harmful carbon monoxide emissions by 30 percent. And according to the Iowa Corn Promotion Board, ethanol is an efficient use of energy resources, resulting in a 25 percent net gain in energy.

While the United States may never be 100 percent energy independent, it is reasonable to increase the use of fuels that are made from domestic sources. The economic and environmental benefits will be well worth the effort.

Hawkeye Farm Management

Alan Ammons has managed Hawkeye Farm Management and Real Estate in Albia since 1989, providing farmland and rural residence sales, agricultural consulting, farm management and residential real estate sales.

Two full-time brokers, two full-

time sales people and an office manager are on staff at Hawkeye.

"We're doing more commercial real estate than before," said Ammons. "We also plan to become more active in Albia residential sales."

Expand Your Territory Sportsman 500

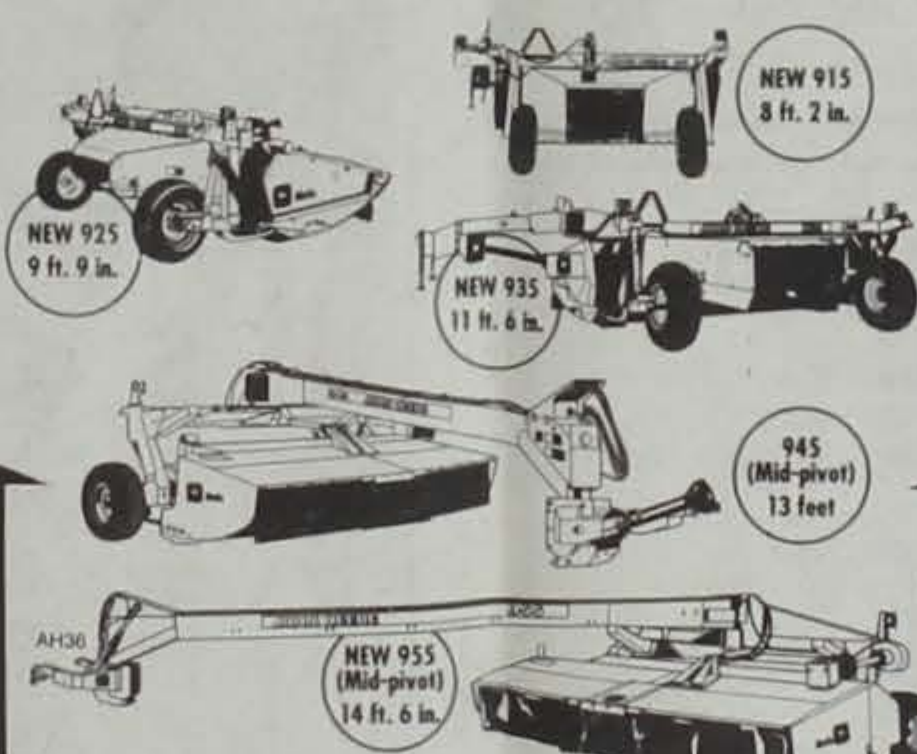
- Powerful Polaris 500 4 stroke, liquid-cooled engine
- Exclusive, independent long-travel (9.5 in.) rear suspension with stabilizing anti-roll bar
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R/J Performance & Polaris 1113 E. Main St., Ottumwa, Ia. 52501 (515) 684-8400

Polaris ATVs may not be ridden by anyone under 16, and all riders should take a safety course. For safety and training information, see your dealer or call Polaris at 1-800-342-3764. ATVs can be hazardous to operate. For your safety always wear a helmet, eye protection, protective clothing and never carry passengers. ©1999 Polaris Sales Inc.

We Salute the farmers of the
Monroe County area for their
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Teachers honored by Judge, Vilsack during Ag week

DES MOINES, IA--Governor Tom Vilsack and Secretary of Ag Patty Judge recognized two Iowa teachers for their outstanding efforts at infusing agriculture into their classrooms at an Iowa Ag Day reception held March 20 in honor of National Ag Week.

The awards, sponsored by the Iowa Agriculture Awareness Coalition, were presented to Peggy Henson, Kindergarten teacher, Lamoni Elementary, Lamoni; and Jan Price, Kindergarten teacher at Garfield Elementary, Clarinda. The selected teachers will each receive \$200 from the IAAC to acquire materials and activities that increase their students' understanding of agriculture.

Henson incorporates information about agriculture into all areas of her curriculum and teaches students how agriculture and life go hand in hand. Her students explore different kinds of farms, crops, seeds,

equipment, transportation, animals and safety.

Price involves community members and parents as she shares producer to consumer concepts with her 21 students. Thematic ag education units spark her students interest and participation. Field trips and commodity educational materials are included in her curriculum.

The Ag Day reception was sponsored by the Iowa Chapter, National Ag Marketing Association. This is the seventh year the IAAC has recognized teachers who integrate agricultural concepts into their curriculum.

The IAAC is an alliance of public and private organizations and individuals working to increase agricultural literacy among Iowa's school children grades K-12. For more information, contact the IAAC at (515) 225-2323.

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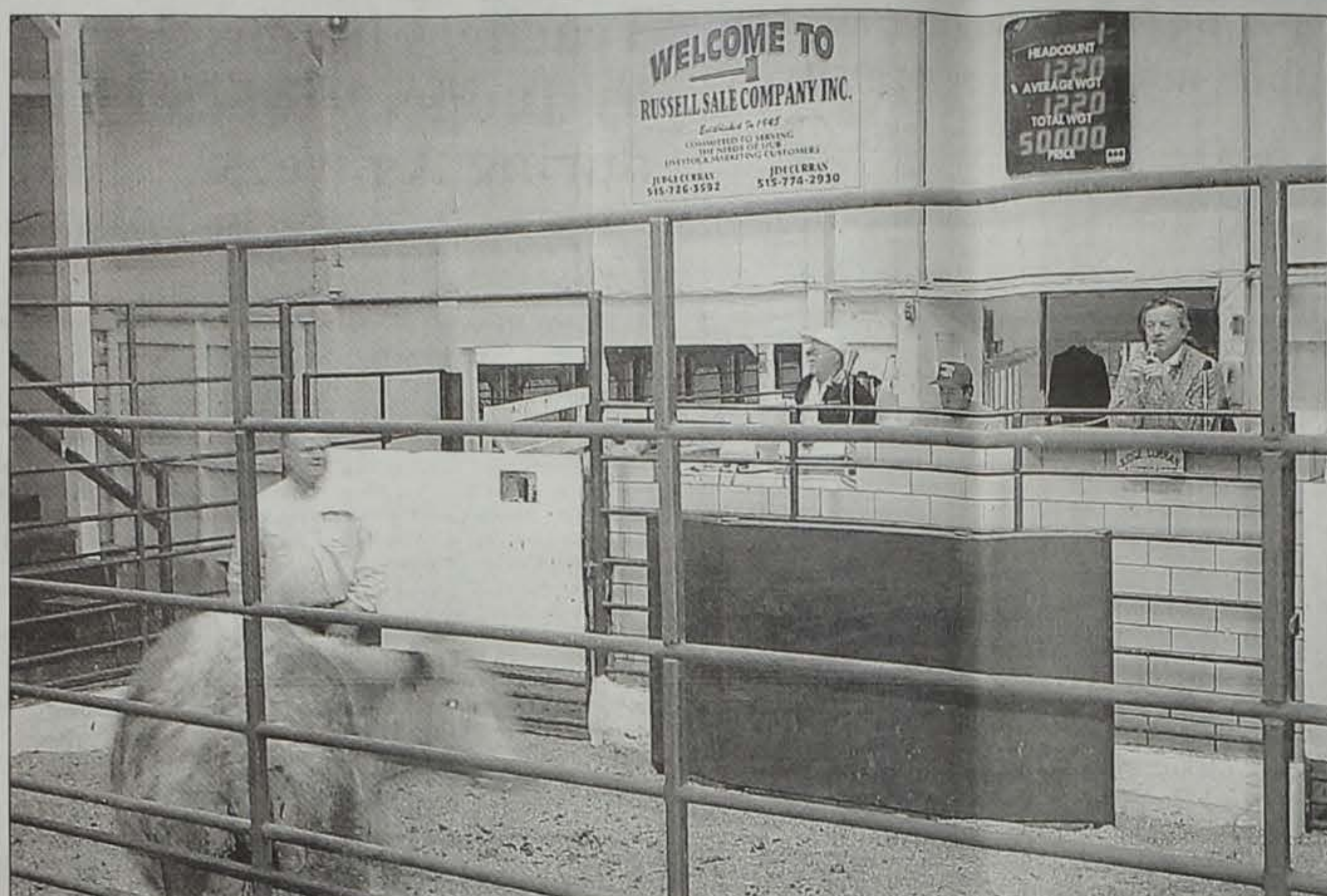
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Judge and Jim Curran work the ring.

Russell Sales Company moves cattle to market

If C.D. and Maurice Curran could talk today, the two brothers who built the Russell Sale Co., probably wouldn't think the business they established on Highway 34 between Albia and Chariton in 1945 has changed much at all.

On any given Monday, farmers and cattle buyers sit in the bleacher seating above the sales ring and respond to the auctioneer, buying cows and bull for slaughter, picking up bed cows for their own herd, calves for their feed lots or a good cow-calf pair in a dispersion sale.

The one thing that has not changed in 55 years of doing business is moving cattle off southern Iowa pastures into feedlots and packing houses across the Midwest.

But other changes inside the sales facility might cause original Curran brothers to wonder.

A bib-overalled farmer reaches for one of several telephones in the seating area and talks for a minute or two. A cattle buyer is on another sale barn phone, has his cell phone ring and is talking on both phones at the same time.

Another man in the audience sits at a laptop computer. Everyone in the sale arena looks at the digital scales which provide immediate weight information to buyers.

It is old-fashioned cattle marketing existing in the 21st century and the Russell Sale Co. is making it work.

The business has always been managed by the Curran family, one side living around Russell and Chariton and the other side from around Melrose.

Last year the company management reorganized with R.D. and Danny Curran taking a more active role in family farming enterprises and Judge and Jim becoming senior officers. Judge lives just outside Melrose and Jim lives in Chariton. Judge is the son of founding partner, C.D. and Jim is the son of the other founding partner, Maurice.

Judge's wife, Maureen, is the company's office manager and Dan-

ny's wife, Jean, works in the office.

The company has weathered the hard times of the 80's and while farming in general is in the middle of another downturn, cattle are doing good.

"Cattle are the only commodity making any money right now," said Judge Curran as he prepared for a dispersal sale of a retiring farmer. "Most of the guys around here have kept their cow herds, partly because bankers know that cattle are where they need to be to make a profit."

Although cow and calf numbers are still good in south central Iowa, there is considerable competition between sale companies. Russell used to go head to head with the Albia Sales Company, which closed in the late 1980's. Today there are sale companies at Humeston, Lamoni, Bloomfield, Centerville and Oskaloosa that compete for business on many of the same farms.

In a highly competitive environment with constant changes in

technology, packer and consumer demands, the Russell Sales Co. and the Curran family has 55 years of service to farmers to rely on.

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Producers should watch storage rules closely

Iowa producers planning to build or upgrade grain storage facilities in 2000 are cautioned that certain actions could jeopardize their eligibility for an upcoming Farm Storage Facility Loan Program, according to Bob Soukup, State Executive Director of USDA's Farm Service Agency in Des Moines, Iowa.

"A proposed rule detailing how the program will be implemented will be published in the Federal Register for public comment very soon," stated Soukup. "Although a similar program was available in the past, this proposal is for a new program with terms and conditions that differ from the previous program."

Producers who take any of the following actions before the rule is published in the Federal Register, would not be eligible for a loan.

* purchasing, executing purchase contracts, or ordering storage structures, drying equipment or handling equipment

* accepting delivery of purchased equipment

* beginning site preparation, foundation construction, or structure construction

"Producers, who take any of the previous listed actions after the proposed rule is published, but before the program is implemented and an application for a loan can be accepted and approved, may not be eligible to participate," Soukup said. "There is no guarantee producers will be eligible for a loan if any of these actions are taken too soon."

Details about eligible types of storage structures and components are not final along with other key provisions of the program. Interested producers should watch for more information on this program and ensure that no equipment is purchased or ordered, or no construction is started before the Farm Storage Facility Loan Program is implemented.



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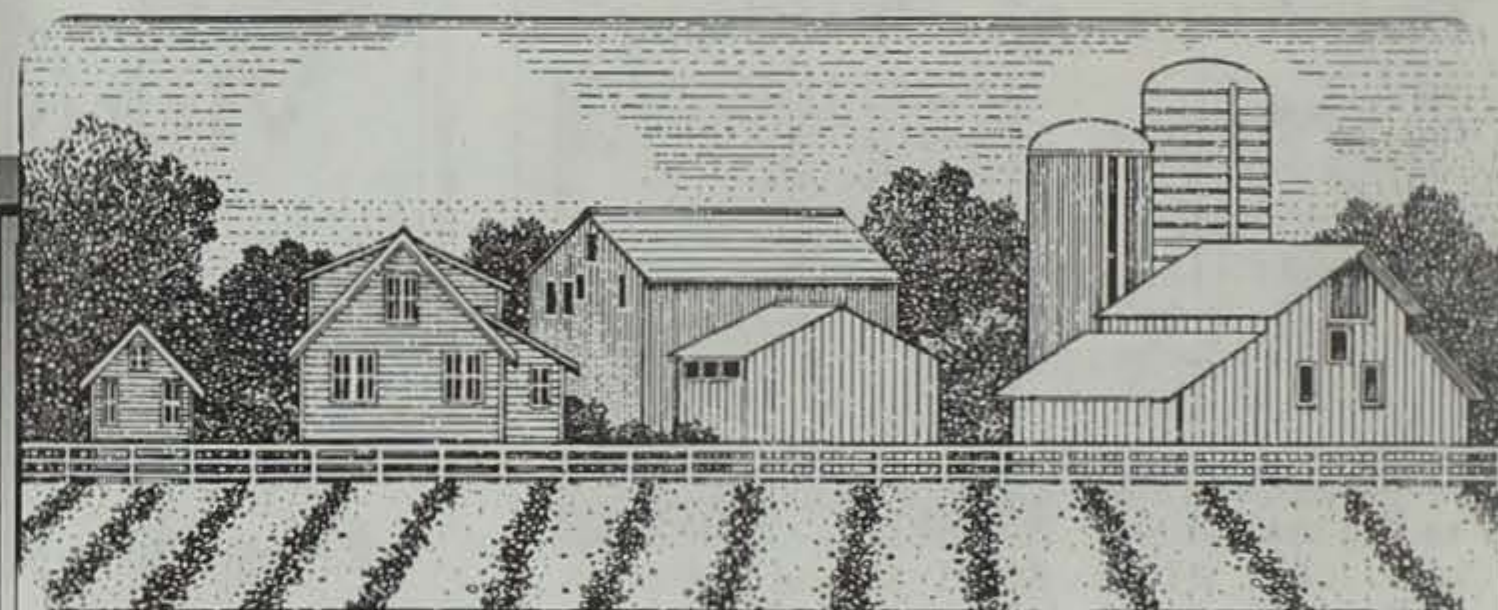


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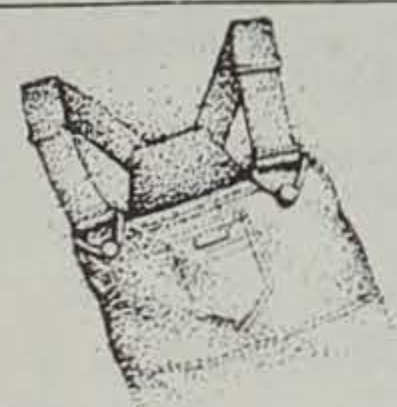
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