

# Consumers Cooperative

Consumers Connection

January, February, March, 2008

## Board of Directors

|              |                  |
|--------------|------------------|
| Brian Denman | Brad McCauley    |
| Steve Fuller | Jeff Monson      |
| Ron Kepler   | Ray Schmitz      |
| Dave Manning | Dave Unbehaun    |
|              | Vince Wiedenfeld |

## Plan to Attend

The Annual Stockholders meeting for Consumers Cooperative will be Wednesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Notices will be sent to active stockholders prior to the meeting. The meeting will be held at the Phoenix Center, Richland Center and will begin with a lunch at 11:45 to be followed by the Cooperative's annual report and the announcement of newly elected directors. Only active stockholders will receive a notice of the meeting, but all members are welcome to attend. If you wish to attend, and did not receive a notice by March 1<sup>st</sup>, please call the office so that we will have an accurate meal count. Patrons that are eligible to vote will be sent a ballot in the mail. There will be no voting at the meeting.

All voting will be done with mail in ballots only. Ballots must be received in the main office by 9:00 a.m. on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008 in order to be counted. The candidates appearing on this year's ballot are Brian Denman (incumbent), Ron Kepler (incumbent), Dave Manning (incumbent), and Ryan Keller. Resumes for each of the candidates will be sent along with the ballots.

This year the Cooperative will be paying a refund of about 4.7% on qualified purchases. The refund will be mailed after the Annual Stockholders meeting. Be sure to mark your calendar for March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to get a complete financial report of the Cooperative.

Jim Husnik

**GENERAL MANAGER**

## Spring Open House Scheduled

Mark your calendars and plan to attend our one-day Spring Open House on **Wednesday, March 12, 2008**, at the Phoenix Center in Richland Center. There will be representatives from the Agronomy, Feed, and Fuel Departments providing information on the latest products. Lunch will be served from 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Please check your local paper for more details.

Jim Husnik

**GENERAL MANAGER**



## National Agriculture Day

National Agriculture Day is March 20.

To celebrate, Consumers Cooperative is again sponsoring National Ag Day Poster Contest for area students in grades Kindergarten through fifth grade enrolled in local schools. This is the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Ag Day Poster Contest. The top eight posters from each grade will be displayed at the Coop's Annual Meeting on March 5<sup>th</sup> so that patrons attending the meeting can vote for their favorite posters. The students that create the winning posters receive a certificate of recognition, a gift certificate for a local restaurant, and a ribbon.

## From the Credit Department

Thanks to those customers who brought their account current before December 31<sup>st</sup> 2007. We really do appreciate this effort. Many of you still have accounts outside the Credit Standards of your Cooperative and we ask that the delinquent balances be made current just as soon as possible. As a customer, if you see a special problem coming up that will not allow you to pay on time, please let us know.

Prepaying crop inputs is always a good way to take advantage of the best prices. It is not too late to prepay crop expenses if you have not done so. If you are going to need credit for this year's crop inputs, it is a good time to be talking with your lender and getting things started. You may want to look into Farm Plan as another option as well.

To help spread out home heating costs, you might want to consider using our Budget Payment Plan. We have an increased number of customers using this plan as are well satisfied. You will be hearing more about this plan as the time draws near to the plan start date.

Most of us will be looking forward to the warmer weather of spring and putting the snow shovels aside.

Arnie Pharo

**CREDIT DEPARTMENT**



|              |                  |                       |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Feed</b>  | <b>Petroleum</b> | <b>Croplan Center</b> |
| 608-647-6173 | 608-647-6749     | 608-647-8894          |
| 800-232-1014 | 800-232-1014     | 866-470-6136          |

(Save for your Reference)

## Get Advantages With Ethanol

**CENEX PUMP 24**



Clean your fuel system as you drive. It is especially important to maintain a clean system during the winter. Having a gas line freeze, or a fuel problem during the winter is no fun, and it usually happens when the temperature is 0°F or colder.

You can avoid these problems by purchasing your gasoline at XPress 24. Our unleaded gasoline contains ethanol, a corn based fuel, which helps maintain a clean fuel system. **There is no need to add gas tank antifreeze when using an ethanol-based gasoline.** Due to a number of factors, all of our gasoline at the XPress 24 and the Boaz Country Store contain ethanol. By adding ethanol to unleaded gasoline, the risk of gasoline freeze is greatly reduced, fuel burns cleaner and engines run better. Using ethanol also helps to support our agricultural economy, and is a renewable source. Stop in at our XPress 24 today. Remember, new customers get the first \$5.00 of fuel on us, purchases paid by the due date receive a 3 cent discount, and purchases also qualify for a patronage refund.

Enjoy the benefits of XPress24, see us today!

Jim Husnik

**GENERAL MANAGER**

## From the Energy Center

As you read this, we hope the weather will be looking more like spring. This winter has brought back memories of winters past, lots of snow and cold. We appreciate those of you who have shoveled the snow to make your tanks accessible. March will soon be here and spring fieldwork is right around the corner. We will be contracting off-road diesel for your spring, summer and fall needs. If you are interested in a fuel contract and we do not contact you, please call the office at 608-647-6171. Prepay on L.P. was a good buy again this year. Thank you to all our customers who prepaid or budgeted their fuel this year. By doing so has allowed for our drivers and office staff to keep your tanks filled with no worries for you!

Have a safe and happy spring!

Carroll Clark

**ENERGY CENTER MANAGER**



OUR ENERGY COMES THROUGH™

## From the Boaz Country Store

Stop by and check out our Food Court offering daily: Soups and Chili, Hot Appetizers, Warm Lunch and Breakfast Sandwiches, New Jumbo Cinnamon Rolls baked here fresh every morning, along with Fresh Doughnuts, Pastries, and Cookies.

Also featuring our **NEW VALUE MENU:**

- ▶ **MONDAY** – Turkey Swiss Bacon \$2.29  
Slice of Turkey topped with Swiss and Bacon.
- ▶ **TUESDAY** – Taco Bowl filled with taco meat, Lettuce, Tomatoes, Black Olives and Cheese \$1.99, **OR** Two for \$3.50.
- ▶ **WEDNESDAY** – Cheeseburger Boat \$1.99  
**TRY ME!** Tastes like your favorite Bacon Cheeseburger Pizza! 2 for \$3.50.
- ▶ **THURSDAY** – Chili Bowl \$1.99  
Chili in a light crispy cracker bowl.
- ▶ **FRIDAY** – Hot Roast Beef Sub \$2.49  
Fresh slice of Roast Beef with American Cheese on a Hoagie Bun.

Stop in and try one of our Value Meals, or try them all!

We are your **ONE-STOP**, where you can get fuel, renew your license plates, and purchase your hunting and fishing license. Also, for your animal needs, our Boaz Feed Center is open 7-Days a week from 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. We carry a nice selection of feed for Calves, Cows, Horses, Chickens, Rabbits, and Dogs. We carry Barn Lime, Shavings and Bird Seed.

We are your **ONE-STOP** with our fast and friendly service. Stop in soon.

Ann Gerner

**STORE MANAGER**



As spring approaches, there will be many projects that will need to be attended to. Due to the huge snowfalls and cold temperatures that we experienced this winter, there may be a lot of damage to roofs from ice dams. Your lawn may also need some extra attention due to ice and salt damage. At the Grand Rental Station we have all the tools and equipment to help make those jobs easier.

Our Madison Parks lawn seed will turn those brown spots into a lush green lawn again and our quality lawn fertilizer will keep your lawn healthy and growing for the season. The over-seeder will make quick work of reseeding and the fertilizer spreaders will apply the right amount of fertilizer to your lawn.

We have ladders, roof nailers, roof jacks and man-lifts to make the roof repairs and other repair jobs easier.

Stop in or call to see how we can help you with your repair jobs. Thank you!

Mary Foege

**GRAND RENTAL STATION MANAGER**

## From The Feed Center

Spring is almost here, which means a very hectic time for you as you try to get crops in. As spring arrives some of our employees will go to the Agronomy Department to assist through the planting season. I would like to ask you to give us at least a two-day notice for feed deliveries if possible. With the high price of fuel and the shortage of labor, your advance notice of orders will help us coordinate our feed deliveries, and be as efficient as possible. It's hard to believe, but in a couple of months we will have been in our new facility for a year and things are going quite smoothly.

Before you know it, the show season will be here again. Consumers Cooperative carries a complete line of Honor Show Feeds, as well as Purina Show Feeds for you. Consumers Cooperative is also carrying bunker covers; silage bags and bale wrap again this year. We also carry a complete line of Nutrisave Preservatives for all of your crops. Stop in and check our very competitive prices.

We now carry a large variety of feed at our Boaz Country Store. Also, our Grand Rental Station has pet and bird feed. For your convenience, we have a bag route delivery system for delivery right to your door. Call our Feed Center at 647-6173 for additional details about our routing delivery service.

With the high cost of dry proteins, you may want to consider using liquid protein in your cattle rations. Currently, liquid is much more price-friendly. Check with Consumer's Cooperative for details about using liquid in your farming operation.

We hope you have a prosperous spring and summer. If there is anything we can do for you, please let us know. We look forward to working closely with you in the upcoming months.

Bill Tracy  
FEED DEPARTMENT MANAGER

Thank you for being a

**Consumers  
Cooperative**

**Customer!**

## AMPLI-Calf™ Technology – New!

Now available in Cornerstone 22% Starter from Consumers Cooperative: AMPLI-Calf™ Technology, the most significant breakthrough in starter in at least a decade! Your calves will love the new aroma, which makes them hungry. And, once they are eating, AMPLI-Calf™ Technology will fuel their growth to achieve superior performance!

AMPLI-Calf™ Technology delivers on all the key producer expectations from calf starters:

- Superior Calf Starter Intake
- Superior Growth
- Superior Weight Gain
- Superior Health Solutions

AMPLI-Calf™ Technology is research-proven and field-tested.

In Land O'Lakes Purina Feed proprietary research, calves, on AMPLI-Calf™ Technology starter consumed 11% more starter and grew 14% heavier and 3% taller. In nationwide field demonstrations, 40+ herds and 1,100+ calves confirmed the positive benefits delivered by the AMPLI-Calf™ Technology.

AMPLI-Calf™ Feature: Hip height, Weight Gain and Starter Intake. Both groups of calves were fed a 20% starter over 12 weeks. Test group received the 20% with AMPLI-Calf™ Technology.

AMPLI-Calf™ outperformed the control by:

- + 1.2 inches difference in hip height
- + 17 pound difference in weight gain at 12 weeks
- + 26 pound difference in starter intake at 12 weeks

Power your calves with AMPLI-Calf™ Technology for optimal growth and body volume and let them become great replacement dairy cows! Cornerstone 22% with AMPLI-Calf™ Technology available now at Consumers Cooperative.

Contact me today with any questions.  
Think Spring!

Amanda Daniels  
LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION SPECIALIST



## Introducing Kory Duerst

**Consumers Cooperative is proud to welcome Kory Duerst to the Feed Team. Kory is the perfect addition to our already strong Nutrition Team of Joe McDonald and Amanda Daniels.**



Hi my name is Kory Duerst. I am the new Dairy Production Specialist at Consumers Cooperative. I grew up on a family dairy farm in Verona, WI. It is here where I first gained my interest in agriculture, more specifically, the dairy industry. After graduating high school in 2001, I was elected as the State FFA Vice President. While serving the state FFA I grew many life long friendships and enjoyed the opportunity to work with countless strong agricultural students. I continue to enjoy working with FFA as a member of the Verona FFA Alumni.

I went to college at UW River Falls. While majoring in Dairy Science, I was involved heavily in the Dairy Club and the Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity. I served as a two-time officer in each organization. Upon graduation I accepted a position as a dairy specialist in southern Wisconsin. I am currently the Young Farmer Chairman for the Dane County Farm Bureau and am excited to become involved in many of the activities in the Richland County area both with Consumers Cooperative and in the community.

If you would like to have one of our Dairy or Livestock Production Specialists stop out and see you please contact the Feed Center at 647-6173 and ask for Kory, Joe or Amanda.

## Orphan Lamb Time

Land O'Lakes Ultra Fresh™ Lamb Milk Replacer is specially formulated with specific milk proteins, animal fat, and mineral levels to get lambs off to a fast and healthy start.

Here are some management tips to help with feeding orphan lambs:

- ✓ Lambs should receive colostrum milk soon after birth. Cow's colostrum will work if ewe's milk is not available.
- ✓ Remove lambs from ewes on the day after birth, if possible, and start lambs on Ultra Fresh™ Lamb Milk Replacer. Lambs should be removed from sight or hearing distance of the ewe.
- ✓ Feed Ultra Fresh™ Lamb Milk Replacer at body temperature.
- ✓ Keep milk replacer feeding equipment clean.
- ✓ Fresh, clean water should be provided at all times.
- ✓ Provide a warm, dry, draft-free area to start lambs. Lambs may require some assistance the first day or two to teach them to nurse on whatever feeding device is used.

Joe McDonald

**LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION SPECIALIST**

## Introducing Land O Lakes Does Match Premium Blend Kid Milk Replacer

Goats are the most popular domesticated animals in the world. The market is growing, fueled by an increased demand for meat and milk. It's estimated that more than 500,000 additional goats are needed simply to meet the current demand for meat in the U.S.

Now – just in time for the kidding season- Land O'Lakes animal science brings you a new way to tap into this accelerating market. Doe's Match premium Blend Kid Milk Replacer is the best choice a producer can make to help kids reach their full potential. It outperforms other milk replacers, even outperforms goat's milk.

It is both practical and profitable to use milk replacer. Doe's Match Kid Milk Replacer is specially formulated for the nutritional needs of goats. It is based around Architect Formulation System, a patented technology developed by the research team at Land O' Lakes Animal Milk Products, containing a unique combination of protein, fat, and carbohydrate. This proven nutritional advantage helps to grow bigger, more vigorous kids.

New Doe's Match Kid Replacer is ideal for any size goat operation. It's available in three convenient sizes. So get going, get those kids growing and grow your profit potential.

Joe McDonald

**LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION SPECIALIST**

## Croplan Center Products and Services Offered

### SPRING SEED NEEDS

Due to the volatile corn and soybean markets, the supply of soybean seed will be hard to determine for spring. The seed corn supply should be adequate for spring needs. If there are certain varieties you know you want, I would encourage you to order soon if you haven't already.

The supply of Alfalfa seed may be restricted this year and possibly for years to come. The abundant supply of the past 5-10 years is gone. I encourage you to order your alfalfa seed early. Remember that the higher yielding and higher quality varieties will more than pay for the difference in seed cost in the seeding year and the 1<sup>st</sup> year after seeding. Due to the increased cost of land, fuel and other crop inputs, I encourage you to plant top quality alfalfa to maximize your return per acre.

We should have a good supply of oats this spring. Order your forage or grass seed ahead if possible.

Please call the Croplan Center with your order or any questions you may have at 608-647-8894 or 1-866-470-6136.

### NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLANS

Consumers Coop can formulate a nutrient management plan for you. Call and talk to Steve Marr or Greg Ballweg at 608-647-8894 or 1-866-470-6136.

### SOIL SAMPLING

Soil Sampling is a valuable tool available to use in your farming operation. Higher fertilizer prices drastically increase the value of soil sampling. You may be applying more nutrients than you need and increasing the cost of inputs unnecessarily. It doesn't matter if you are writing a Nutrient Management Plan or just a simple crop plan; the value of soil sampling is greater than ever. Please call the Croplan Center as soon as possible for your sampling needs.

### NO-TILL DRILL AVAILABLE

Our 15' Case-IH no-till drill is available for rent on a per acre basis. The drill can be used for conventional as well as no-till seeding of alfalfa and soybeans. Drill rental costs will be the same as they were in the past at \$12.00 per acre, or get a \$2.00 per acre discount if you buy the seed from Consumers Coop. There is a minimum charge of 15 acres per ½ day of use.

### CORN AND SOYBEAN CONTRACTING

Consumers Coop can forward contract corn or soybeans for delivery to our grain plant next October or November. If you are interested in a price for your grain, please give Jim Husnik a call at the main office at 647-6171, or Greg Ballweg at the Croplan Center 647-8894 for details and prices.

### MANURE ANALYSIS

Manure Samples are an essential part of any fertility management program. Manure samples are relatively easy to take. Stop by the Croplan Center, or ask Steve or Vaughn, for a sample kit. Take an average sample of your manure when it is loaded in the spreader using the plastic bottle included in the sample kit. Freeze the sample and fill out the sample sheet provided. Place the frozen sample and completed form in the mailer tube and send out on a Monday or Tuesday to ensure it doesn't sit in the post office over the weekend. The results will be sent to the Croplan Center in approximately 10 days. Manure samples should be tested once per year, or every time you empty your manure storage.

### AGLIME

We have three grades of aglime available. We have 80-89, 60-69, and 50-59 Dolomitic lime,. We also have Calacitic lime. **New Volume Discounts are available on aglime. Ask us for more details.** We will custom apply the lime, or you can rent our lime spreader and apply it yourself. If you need lime this spring, call us as soon as possible.

Greg Ballweg  
CROPLAN CENTER MANAGER



### More Additions At The Croplan Center.....

We have just completed a storage building at the Croplan Center. As our cooperative continues to grow we find the need to expand storage. For the last few years we have been very short on storage space. Our seed and crop protectant sales continue to increase each year. Last year we depended on temporary storage to carry us over until we completed the Feed center project. We are also installing a load-out system for dry fertilizer at the Croplan Center. This should help reduce labor requirements and have fertilizer orders ready for load out in a timely fashion. Consumers Cooperative is always looking at ways it can add value to our products and services. It is always our goal to have adequate inventories on hand and to be able to get the products to our customers in a timely fashion. Be sure to see Greg or Steve to complete your spring cropping plan needs.

Jim Husnik  
GENERAL MANAGER

## Control Brush & Multaflora Rose

Controlling brush can be done several ways. You can simply apply a ready-to-use product, such as Tordon TRU, to fresh cut stumps with the squirt bottle applicator. Be sure to wet the cambium area along the inner bark. This treatment controls stump growth year-round.

Crossbow is another option. The same 4% Crossbow plus oil solution used for basal, or dormant, stem treatments also works on cut stumps. That allows a person to take along a chain saw, basal treat smaller stems, and then cut and treat stems larger than six inches in diameter. Thoroughly wet the cut surface and stump to soil level. Crossbow is an ester formulation, so you don't have to treat immediately after cutting. Crossbow also works very well on other woody plants including multaflora rose, prickly ash, berry briars, most broadleaf weeds as well as most varieties of thistle. Cimarron is another effective treatment for multaflora rose and brush. It is used much the same way as Crossbow.

Granular applications toss out brush problems. Spreading granules below a plant's drip line allows the herbicide to gradually move to the "targeted species" root zone. It then translocates throughout the plant. Applying a granular herbicide, such as Spike, keeps the applicator out of thorns, which can take their toll on clothes, skin, and a person's disposition. This product is also useful for tough-to-control species, such as oaks, or as a long-term solution for problem brush. For further information call the Croplan Center at 647-8894.

## Rotate Your Corn Hybrids

In this area we depend primarily on long-term cold weather to kill disease inoculums on corm trash. Since we have not had long term cold weather in the last two winters you can be sure that disease pressure is increasing along with insect pressures in your corn-on-corn fields.

Corn hybrid susceptibility to diseases can greatly depend on the genetics of each hybrid. Planting the same hybrid corn-on-corn, in the same field year after year, will lead to an increased level of disease inoculums that the hybrid is susceptible to.

**One very simple management tool you can use to reduce your risk for yield loss is to rotate the hybrids in your corn-on-corn situations. This can drastically change the spectrum of disease susceptibility in each field and prevent the build up of variety specific disease inoculums.**



## Insects, What to Expect?

Insects are a concern each crop year as they "over-winter". This winter there has been an absence of frost, and because of this, there could be high pressure from first generation European Corn Borer in early June. This in turn, could also increase the potential for high pressure from second and third generation ECB in July and August. Corn rootworm is expected to be high. All corn-on-corn acres should be planted with either corn rootworm resistant varieties or insecticides. Be sure to have your corn planter insecticide boxes calibrated. Due to higher input cost and grain value, use of Bt, CRW hybrids, insecticides and seed, treatments can significantly increase yields and profitability. You can be sure there will be pests again this year and it only takes a few to cause economic levels of damage.

Last year we had moderate Potato Leafhopper populations. With normal weather conditions this spring and summer populations can be expected to be similar or higher. Regular scouting of fields can determine if economic thresholds are exceeded. There are several spray options available to control leafhoppers.

Major pests of concern in soybeans are Soybean Aphids or Bean Leaf Beetles. Soybean Aphids reproduce rapidly. They remove water and nutrients from soybean plants and can also transmit plant viruses. Aphids usually become a problem in July. The economic threshold for aphids is 250/plant. This year we had the highest population ever of soybean aphids in this area since they became a problem in year 2000. "Over-wintering" populations are expected to be high this year. Expect Soybean Aphid population to reach economic thresholds this year. As a result, control-methods will be required. Bean Leaf Beetles are defoliators. They feed from the leaf tissue of beans. Bean Leaf Beetles can be a season long pest. They can potentially cause the most damage early in the spring shortly after planting, once soybeans emerge and begin to develop trifoliates. The economic threshold for Bean Leaf Beetles is 50% defoliation of the soybean plant. Scouting fields for aphids and bean leaf beetle damage, will allow us to make recommendation to prevent significant yield loss.

Steve Marr

**CERTIFIED CROP ADVISOR**

## Crop Scouting

We do have a crop scouting service available. Crop scouting is available for each crop. Scouting charges are based on a certain number of visits during the growing season. Scouting includes checking plant populations, scouting for weeds, insects, diseases, and nutrient deficiencies. If you are interested in crop scouting, have questions, or need more information, please call the Croplan Center at 647-8894.

Greg Ballweg

**CROPLAN CENTER MANAGER**

## **Fungicides**

### **CORN, SOYBEANS AND WHEAT**

Two more fungicides are being used today in field crops across the area. Fungicides have been used for years in high value crops like seed corn, potatoes as well as wheat. In the past two years a lot of plots have gone in across the Midwest on field corn and soybeans. Two years ago there were good responses to fungicides. Last year the results were mixed across the Midwest.

The results seen in western Wisconsin were very good due to the wet weather in August as well as the outbreak of diseases in this area.

With the high grain prices we are facing, the demand for fungicide applications is eminent. Continued research is being administered on fungicide use on corn silage to corn seed. Reducing disease in silage will increase feed quality and palatability and decrease toxins. As we obtain this information, we will share this with you in future newsletters.

In the United States, not much research has been conducted in soybeans. In Brazil, many fungicides are being used on soybeans to control disease. This information will be forwarded to the United States. With the higher bean prices there will be a large increase in plots and side by sides.

Fungicides have been used on winter wheat. Application of fungicides on wheat can start early in the growing season, just as the flag leaf emerges. (This is the best time!) Sometimes two applications are made, first with your herbicide and secondly as the flag leaf emerges.

Please talk to Greg, Steve or Vaughn to see how a fungicide program could help your operations. Feel free to stop by the Croplan Center or call us at 608-647-8894 or 1-866-470-6136.

### **Economics of Alfalfa-Corn Rotation**

Did you know the highest yields and highest quality alfalfa are harvested in the first two years of a stand? New stands are less likely to have disease and are less susceptible to winter kill. These are only a couple of reasons why you should speed up your alfalfa rotations.

Taking out an existing stand of alfalfa to plant corn will give you a nitrogen credit of about \$70.00/acre, your savings for not needing to apply insecticide (vs. corn-on-corn) equals about \$15.00/acre. Add to this the enhanced yield of first year corn at a value of \$80.00/acre and the approximate total value received is \$165.00.

Do you know how much it really costs to reseed alfalfa? The cost of proprietary alfalfa seed ranges from \$60.00 - \$70.00/acre and the cost of tillage and planting the seed is from \$30.00 - \$60.00/acre for a total of \$90.00/acre - \$130.00/acre.

As you can see from comparing your value of going from alfalfa to corn of \$165.00/acre to the cost of seeding alfalfa at \$90.00/acre - \$130.00/acre, it is economical to rotate your crops often.

Greg Ballweg

**CROPLAN CENTER MANAGER**

## **Seeding and Fertilizing Pastures**

Spring is a good time to seed your pastures. Abundant moisture and cool growing conditions will help establish legumes and grasses in your pasture. You may use a conventional tillage system or a no-till system to establish pasture.

There is a wide range of seed options available for pastures. The choice depends on your needs. Fertilizing pastures will help with seeding establishment, yield and feed quality. The type of fertilizer and amount of fertilizer will depend on the pasture type and soil samples. Another option for existing pasture is to frost seed into the existing stand to increase tonnage. Frost seeding of clovers and perennial grasses into pastures can increase tonnage and feed quality.

Fertilizing pastures will increase feed quality. Feed quality as well as thicken grass will compete with weeds and protect from soil erosion. Soil erosion may lead to rough areas, which can cause lame animals or even broken legs. Thicker pastures will not eliminate weeds but with mowing, it will help to keep new weeds from establishing.

For best results, a fertilizer program should be based on the type of forage grown in conjunction with the soil sample recommendation.

Please call the Croplan Center with any questions you may have.

Greg Ballweg

**CROPLAN CENTER MANAGER**

## **Sulfur for Increased Corn Production**

Sulfur is an important nutrient for raising corn. It is considered to be a necessary secondary nutrient for corn. With optimum soil test levels, a corn crop will require a total of 30-40 lbs. of sulfur per acre. This total can be split between sources such as manure and applied fertilizers. Manure is considered to be a source for sulfur, however the sulfur only becomes available as organic matter breaks down. UW studies show that approximately 2.8# of sulfur per acre per 1% of organic matter becomes available each year.

There are specific field conditions that will equate to sulfur deficiencies. The first soil condition causing deficiency would be saturated, or waterlogged soils. Deficiencies may occur in these field conditions because the bacteria responsible for breaking down organic matter, and releasing the sulfur, cannot survive in an anaerobic environment. The second soil condition causing deficiency is sandy, excessively well-drained soils. These soil conditions result in sulfur deficiencies because organic matter levels are low, and sulfur is more prone to leaching than nitrogen. Due to the very slow release of sulfur from organic matter, and the high leaching of sulfur, use of soil applied sulfur with Ammonium Sulfate or elemental sulfur will most likely result in a positive, cost effective crop response.

Steve Marr

**CERTIFIED CROP ADVISOR**



## What about Fertilizer? \_\_\_\_\_

### ► Availability

Fertilizer supplies are available at this time. Spring fertilizer needs may be limited, and as a result, we recommend that you order your fertilizer supplies as soon as possible. Without advanced orders, do not assume that the product purchases made last year will be available and waiting for you in the future. There may be random outages this spring, especially if you are using liquid starter.

### ► Prices

Fertilizer prices for **N-P-K** have risen from December 2006 to February 2008 between 25-50% or more. These prices have not reached the peak as of yet. More importantly than ever, you need to utilize soil samples and manure credits.

### ► Summary

Remember to utilize all credits possible, but do not ration your crops short of fertilizer. With higher grain prices, reducing fertilizer inputs can reduce profits enormously. A 20-bushel yield reduction can cost \$80.00 an acre. You may save \$10 - \$20 on input cost but in total, all other costs will remain the same. Be money-wise and apply what you need.

**Please call the Croplan Center to design a program for your professional crop nutrition program.**

## Management in Alfalfa Stands

Proper soil fertility, PH levels, variety of seed and seedbed preservation are important factors that affect the establishment and longevity of a good alfalfa stand. But what about weed control?

Keeping weeds out of newly seeded alfalfa stands increase feed value and give the young alfalfa plants time to establish into healthy plants. This is beneficial in monitoring tonnage, quality and persistence for the life of the stand.

Post-applied herbicides are a good way to control weeds in newly seeded alfalfa. Raptor has been our herbicide of choice in most cases for its broad spectrum of weed control. Timing is important when using any herbicide. If weeds get excessive, herbicides will have greater difficulty in minimizing the weeds and damage may have already be done to young plants. Anytime a plant is stressed, it reduces yield for the life of the plant.

In established stands, our product of choice is Velpar. Velpar can be impregnated with fertilizer and applied to established stands before alfalfa is 2" tall. Velpar controls tough broadleaves such as yellow rocket, pigweed, dandelions, white cockle, shepherd purse and mustards. Velpar also does a fair job on grasses and has suppression of clovers. Please contact us at the Croplan Center if you have any questions or want to learn more about weed management in alfalfa.

Vaughn Ramsden

**AGRONOMY SALES**

## How To Get 10 More Bushels

That's right! Ten more bushels.....achieving this goal will be different for you than for your neighbor. There are many factors to identify your starting point. Call Consumers Coop to assist you with your corn and soybean crop management plan.

You will be glad you did!

Greg Ballweg

**CROPLAN CENTER MANAGER**

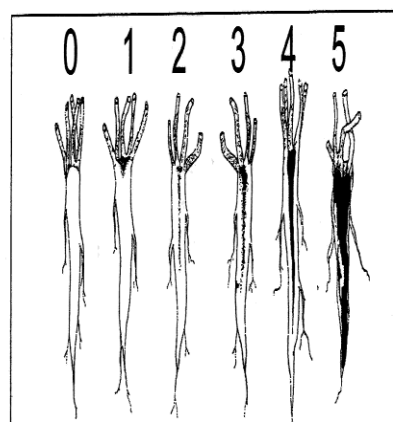
## Reading Your Alfalfa Stand

Alfalfa stand evaluations should be done this spring to determine if a stand should be left in production or rotated out. Call Greg, Vaughn, or Steve at Consumers Coop to do a root evaluation for you. Our Agronomy representative will evaluate your stand based on the condition of the roots. They will score your stand according to the following chart and evaluate your plant population. There is a limit of one credit per farm. We will do as many evaluations as time will allow. Call us to schedule your stand evaluation.



## Reading the Stand

Reference: Alfalfa Management Guide, © 2000 by the American Society of Agronomy, Inc., Crop Science Society of America, Inc., and Soil Science Society of America, Inc., Page 43



- 0 = Healthy plant
- 1 = Some discoloration
- 2 = Moderate discoloration & rot
- 3 = Significant discoloration & rot
- 4 = Greater than 50% discoloration
- 5 = Dead