



PUTTING TECHNOLOGY TO WORK

By Nick Alderson, CEO



You may wonder why so many of my articles feature or touch on the use of technology at CBH CO-OP. The fact is, technology is one of the greatest keys to increasing efficiency as an organization, and increased efficiency translates to improved patron service and a stronger financial foundation

for the cooperative you own.

One of our technological advances is not entirely new. Blender is an agronomy-focused point-of-sale software program that is part of our main DC&H accounting package. We were using Blender to a limited extent in our Belle Fourche location. However, we are now implementing it company-wide and will be fully utilizing its capabilities. Please read Todd Reif's article regarding Blender on page 3 in this issue.

On the energy side, we're conducting trials with the provider of an innovative tank-monitoring system in both refined fuels and propane. We wanted to see how the product worked on our own company inventory before expanding availability to our home and business customers. We've seen good results, so we've expanded the test to a few of our end users.

This monitor will allow both the cooperative and customers to monitor their tank levels utilizing an app. So, let's say you have a second home in Deadwood. When this app is available, you would be able to see the levels in that remote tank, as well as place a fill order. In addition, these monitors have an outstanding battery life — from 10-18 years.

Our drivers are excited about these monitors and so are we. As we are all aware, in our vast region delivery cost per mile is expensive and can add up quickly. Monitors allow us to schedule deliveries most efficiently, saving unnecessary trips and miles. The end result is more timely deliveries and a better bottom line. Plus, our customers don't have to worry about their tank levels.



Consider this card

If you operate more than one vehicle on your farm, ranch or business, you should seriously consider the Cenex® Voyager Fleet Card. In addition to the rebate program, the card provides detailed tracking reports of expenses and mileage for each vehicle tied to a card. There is no annual fee and the card is accepted at more than 230,000 locations nationwide.

We use the card here at the CO-OP, and accounts payable says getting a card for each vehicle was the best move we've ever made. View the benefits yourself by going to www.cenex.com/cards/fleet. If you have questions, you can speak with our credit department at either the Sturgis or Gillette location. We'll continue to make our members aware of all of the benefits of doing business with CBH CO-OP and Cenex.

We are in the midst of our propane summer-fill program. We're using the Optimizer feature through Energy-Force™ to get as much propane out into the country as possible as a precaution in case we have a second round of COVID-related restrictions.

I hope everyone had a great 4th of July and that you're enjoying your summer despite the pandemic.

Real Research Right Here

By Todd Reif, Director of Ag

We all understand the value of research as a tool in decision making. However, the fact is that not all data is equal. That's why we've decided to conduct our own creep feeding trials this summer. Data from North Carolina may be interesting, but you don't ranch there.

The trial consists of between 50 and 100 pairs selected based on several factors — comparable ranch genetics, females of comparable age, and similar pasture and water supplies. One member of each pair will receive creep feed and the other will not. Our primary goal is to collaborate with ranchers to analyze the economic and calf performance advantages of implementing a creep feeding program throughout the CBH geography.

This will include the final weight of calves and the economic conclusion on sale day for both groups enrolled in the trial. We are also planning to collect data on the impact on cow health and breed up. We have participating ranchers in Gillette, Belle Fourche and Union Center. The cost of the trial is shared equally between Payback Feed, CBH, and the participating rancher.



One of the motivations for this trial was the fact that ranchers kept telling me they were actually receiving less for their creep-fed cattle. This was interesting to me. What I believe has been happening is they are receiving slightly less per pound, but the additional weight gained by the creep-fed calves more than makes up for this. We'll see what the trial results prove out.

An unanticipated benefit of the trial is that we had our salespeople working closely with Payback and the ranchers. As conditions got drier in Wyoming, we were already connected with the area ranchers and were able to help them find ways to stretch their grass and keep their cattle fed.

We'll fill you in on the results once the trial is completed. We are also considering a mineral trial later this fall. I also want to mention that we do carry and source basic ingredients — DDGs, wheat midds, soy hulls, soy meal and more — for those of you who like to make your own feed. Prices change with the markets, so give me a call at 605-490-9768 if you're interested.

Fully staffed to serve

With Vic and George in sales, Ashley, Matt and Brandon managing, and now the addition of Jevon Grace, our livestock production specialist, we've assembled an excellent team on the feed side at CBH. I've received many, many compliments on the timeliness of plant food delivery this spring and we're seeking to hire an agronomist. All this to say that our ability to serve our customers depends on the quality of people we have in place, and that just continues to improve.

We are committed to continuous improvement and look forward to serving your livestock and agronomic needs in 2020 and beyond.

New Addition Strengthens Feed Team

Jevon Grace, a Payback nutrition consultant, has recently joined CBH CO-OP as a livestock production specialist. Jevon was raised in a small town in South Dakota. After growing up on his family's row crop and cattle operation he attended Lake Area Technical Institute, then chose to continue his education at South Dakota State University.

Jevon enjoys partnering with producers and helping them to achieve their operational goals. He offers hay and forage testing, water

testing and ration balancing (feedlot, background, bull feeding program). "By using rancher-produced feedstuffs we can balance rations using ingredients and manufactured goods to attain the production goals of each individual ranch," Jevon notes.

He is certainly finding his place here with CBH CO-OP, as he's been in the field meeting and working with local producers already. We are happy to have Jevon aboard and appreciate all that he can bring to our local communities.



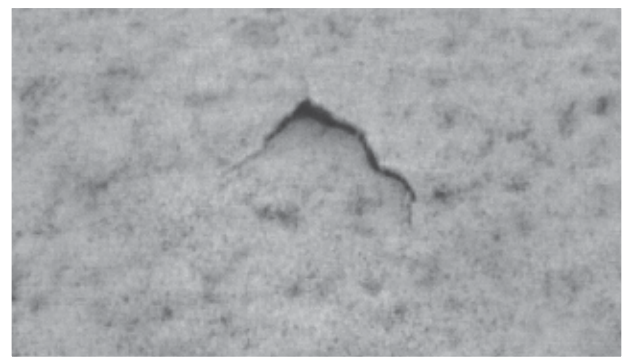
605-630-1832

jevon.grace@chsinc.com

Welcome Jevon!

Roof Restored in Gillette

After a hailstorm hammered our Country Store location in Gillette, the roof was in need of repair. Allspray Roofing Solutions cleaned and power washed the entire original roof system. Any hail damage to the original roof was repaired and additional SPF roofing foam was applied to areas that needed improved drainage. Finally, a fresh coat of silicone was applied to the entire roof. Let's hope the big hail stays away for a while.



Blender Improves Billing Visibility, Accuracy

By Todd Reif, Director of Ag

As Nick mentioned in his article, the board has approved the full implementation of the Blender software program. Blender is a point-of-sale program developed for the management of ag products and services, like fertilizer, chemicals and custom application. The program can maintain and track prepaids, bookings, credit accounts, billing quotes, loading tickets and invoicing.

Blender fully interfaces with both our main accounting and Enable inventory management programs. That's a big plus for back-office efficiency. It's also going to make ag transactions much easier for location staff and customers. Many of our customers do business at more than one of our locations. Blender allows all of our locations to access the same information in our customer accounts. Now, for example, our Gillette employees will know when one of our customers has prepaid for something at our Belle Fourche location.

This program also enables us to keep track of custom blends by field, farm and customer. Once these are

set up, the information can be used year after year to see what was done in previous production cycles.

Because this is a complete billing system, information only has to be keyed in once. When a customer comes to pick up an order or products are delivered by an employee, a loading ticket is issued. That ticket stays open in the system until the products are picked up or delivered, at which time it is converted to an invoice.

A report can be generated showing all open loading tickets at any time during the month. This system ensures that all loads are billed in a timely fashion and that no loads are "lost." When a load is invoiced, the system also knows whether the customer has prepaid.

The bottom line is, Blender is going to make invoicing easier and more accurate for everyone from the location staff to the customer. It will save time, improve efficiency and generally make life a little better for all involved. It's just another step we're taking to better meet the expectations of our patrons — and those that we've set for ourselves.

COVID-19 Cleaning

CBH CO-OP partnered with Titan Solutions to disinfect our travel plaza in Gillette with Electro-BioCide®. This is a revolutionary, new, environmentally friendly cleaner developed to address the sanitation challenges of today, including coronavirus.

This was another step in our ongoing effort to provide a safe environment for our patrons and employees during the pandemic. You can stop by our Gillette Travel Plaza with confidence!





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