

April

2006

TENNESSEE Cooperator

Connecting the **CO-OP** community

Volume 47, Number 4

Horse-powered heritage

**Two Co-ops honored for
promoting biodiesel use – p. 8**

**Aerial imagery heightens
precision ag programs – p. 14**





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Located in a century-old train depot, the Cowan Railroad Museum features photos and memorabilia from the age of steam and steel. Visitors can see a rare antique locomotive, flatcar, and caboose as well as two model railroad layouts. The museum is open May through October. Admission is free. — Photo by Allison Morgan

Tennessee Cooperator

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Editor	Allison Morgan
Assistant Editor	Mark E. Johnson
Communications Specialist	Kim Newsom
Contributing Editor	Jerry Kirk
Advertising Manager	Mack Barrett
Art Director	Bob Gillespie
Graphic Designer	Shane Read
Editorial Assistant	Polly Campbell
Circulation	Beth Phillips

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Mailing address: Tennessee Cooperator, Tennessee Farmers Cooperative, P.O. Box 3003, LaVergne, TN 37086
Phone: (615) 793-8339; **E-mail:** amorgan@ourcoop.com

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Cover story



16 Horse-powered heritage

Held each May, the annual 6 Ts Horse Farming Day in Dresden recalls the days before tractors took over the farm. Featuring teams of towering draft animals — like these Belgian/Percheron cross and Belgian horses pulling a riding plow driven by Royce Abnatha — the field day is hosted by the Turbeville family and is open to everyone.

COVER SHOT: During the children's plowing contest, 10-year-old Bradley Hunt focuses on the tough task of guiding a walking plow pulled by a pony mule named Bee. — Photos by Allison Morgan

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AS I WAS SAYING

By Jerry Kirk, contributing editor



Jerry Kirk has been part of the *Tennessee Cooperator* staff for more than 30 years, serving as editor from November 1972 until his retirement in April 2001. He continues as a contributing editor.

Album for his mom showcases hymns we grew up with

Maybe 20 years older than country music superstar Alan Jackson, but he and I still have some important things in common. For example, we both:

- are proud of our southern roots;
- grew up singing old-time gospel hymns in our hometown churches;
- always tried to please our mamas.

I've never met Ruth Jackson but am eternally grateful that she convinced her 47-year-old son to record an album of old-time hymns he learned and sang at First Baptist Church back home in Newnan, Ga., a small town of just over 16,000 a few miles southwest of Atlanta.

The result is a fabulous 15-song "Precious Memories" album Alan Jackson recorded as a special surprise for his mother this past Christmas. Reports are that Ruth was delighted — and deeply touched — by her son's thoughtfulness. One report says that "she just cried and cried" when Jackson gave her the special album.

I lost my mother, Lochiel Kirk, 14 years ago, but she would have loved Jackson's new album, too. It includes "Are You Washed in the Blood?" and other songs she sang for half a century as a choir member at Whitesburg Baptist Church in East Tennessee. An alto, Mama learned shaped-note singing as a young girl at Morrisett's Chapel Baptist Church near St. Clair.

When "Precious Memories" was released on Feb. 28, my wife, Jane, helped make it the first gospel album to debut at No. 1 on Billboard magazine's country album charts. Jane and I both love the CD and have played it dozens of times already.

It's not just the songs — from "Blessed Assurance" to "The Old Rugged Cross" — that make the album great. It's the way Alan Jackson sings them — naturally, simply, easily. No frills nor trills, no embellishments — just his pure country voice singing to the accompaniment of a piano, acoustic guitar, or sometimes an organ. Talented singers provide flawless harmony on some of the songs. Alan's wife, Denise, and two of their daughters, Mattie and Ali, lend a family flavor to "'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus."

Original plans called for production of about 100 copies of "Precious Memories" for Jackson to give family and friends — after his mother got hers, of course. But when the record label's top man heard the album, he knew that this was one for the ages — and the masses. I, for one, am glad it was made available to the public.

In a Sunday, March 12, article in The Tennessean newspaper in Nashville, writer Peter Cooper said, "On paper, the album doesn't seem like anything extraordinary. It's Jackson's comfortable, flannel shirt of a voice wrapped around simple songs from the Cokesbury hymnal."

That mention of the Cokesbury hymnal sent my mind reeling to special Sunday mornings when I worshipped with my grandmother, Ma Kirk, at "her" church — Whitesburg Methodist. There was never more than a handful of people there, but Mrs. Pauline Pangle, an accomplished pianist, brought out the best in the hymns found in the little brown Cokesbury. The Broadman hymnal from which we sang in the Baptist church had wonderful old songs, too. There, one of my earliest recollections as a small child has me thinking we were singing about "Bringing in the Sheeps" rather than the "Sheaves."

In his newspaper article, writer Cooper said that as Alan Jackson grew up in the Baptist church in Georgia, the star-to-be didn't think a lot about the songs he sang there.

"But as I got older, the music meant more to me," Jackson was quoted as saying. "I didn't realize how much a lot of that had soaked in over the years."

With his "Precious Memories" album, Jackson reminds each of us just how much of our upbringing did "soak in."

We can all thank him — and his mother — for that.

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New name unifies merged Co-ops, represents region

Story and photos by Kim Newsom

Co-op members in a four-county area in East Tennessee have adopted a new name for their farm supply business, Valley Farmers Cooperative, to represent the entity formed last year in a merger of McMinn Loudon and Roane Farmers.

The new name became official March 1, and Valley Farmers Co-op now encompasses four locations — Athens, Decatur, Harriman, and Loudon — and serves more than 1,500 members.

The July 2005 merger was a mutually beneficial move by both McMinn Loudon and Roane Farmers, says Fred Brewster, Valley Farmers general manager. He adds that during consolidation discussions, the cooperatives' boards of directors determined a new name would reflect the Co-op's extended trade territory and unify the membership.

"By definition, the Co-op belongs to its members, so we thought they should have the honor of naming it," Brewster explains. "We organized a contest for our members and customers to submit potential names and offered gift certificates as prizes. I was really pleased that the contest turned out so well."

Some 300 names were suggested by more than 130 Co-op customers, and the board of directors chose two to be voted on by the membership during the Co-op's annual meeting in October 2005.

The winning name of Valley Farmers Cooperative was submitted by Bob Jolley of Kingston and Glen Long of Rockwood. Both are patrons of the Harriman store, and each received a \$250 Co-op gift certificate. Jeanette Mason of Niota and Leona Layman of Athens suggested the second-place name, Southeast Farmers Cooperative.

"I was really surprised to win," says Jolley, a 15-year Roane Farmers customer and retired chemist from Oak Ridge National Laboratory. "It's exciting to drive up to the Co-op now and know that I helped to name it."

Long, a cattle farmer and Co-op customer since 1960, says Valley was the first name that came to his mind when the contest was announced.

"This geographic part of the state is commonly referred to as the Tennessee Valley," explains Long, who served as a Roane Farmers Co-op director for 12 years. "Our Co-op falls right in the middle of the Valley region which runs alongside the Tennessee River. It just seems logical to have it as the name."



ABOVE: Fred Brewster, left, Valley Farmers Cooperative's general manager, congratulates Doris and Bob Jolley of Kingston for submitting the winning name for the consolidated Co-op. BELOW: Rockwood native Glen Long, who served on the Roane Farmers board during its merger with McMinn Loudon, also suggested Valley as the name.

Under its new Valley Farmers Cooperative name, the former Roane Farmers Cooperative store at Harriman is being extensively renovated. The project is scheduled for completion in early summer.

"We've had a lot going on here," Brewster says. "From renovating the Harriman store to renaming the Co-op, it's definitely been a little different, but I think we're moving in the right direction. The Co-op is serving its customers better than ever, and that's been our primary goal since the beginning."



news briefs

Claiborne Farmers has new manager

The board of directors of Claiborne Farmers Cooperative has selected Rick Keck as manager of the Co-op, headquartered in New Tazewell. He assumed his new responsibilities March 6 and replaces Tim Day, who resigned the position he had held since 1995 to pursue other interests.

A native of Claiborne County, Rick started working for Claiborne Farmers Co-op in 2001 and has most recently served as assistant manager. He has two children, Holly, 12, and Ryan, 8.

Co-op goes live on Saturday morning TV

In an effort to share the Co-op story with new audiences and promote Tennessee agriculture at the same time, Tennessee Farmers Cooperative will be broadcasting six 90-second commercials during the Saturday morning news program on Nashville's News Channel 5 network in April.

These "Co-op Hometown Saturday" commercials will be broadcast live on April 8, 15, and 29 between 6 and 9 a.m., offering helpful tips and information from TFC personnel in the areas of agronomy, livestock, automotive care, lawn and garden, equine, and pets.

This program has been made possible through a grant from the Tennessee Agricultural Development Fund with matching money from TFC. This fund, supported by purchases of the "Ag Tag" specialized license plate, is used to finance projects in agricultural awareness, education, and marketing.

As part of the grant requirements, the Co-op broadcasts will also be used to promote the Tennessee Department of Agriculture's "Pick Tennessee Products" program. Many of Co-op's own products, such as feed, seed, fertilizer, gates, feeders, and other hardware items are manufactured here, not to mention the many other Tennessee-made products that can be found in Co-op stores across the state.

Channel 5's viewing area reaches 60 counties, including most of Middle Tennessee, the edges of East and West Tennessee, and southern Kentucky.



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Serving up good news about Tennessee agriculture



Competing in the "Cast-Iron Chef" omelet cookoff are Channel 2's Heather Orne, left, and Joe Dubin. Meteorologist Justin Bruce was also on the WKRN team, which tied for second place. The event was held March 20 in Nashville to celebrate Ag Day.

Media personalities celebrate state's farm industry at Ag Day event in Nashville

By Allison Morgan, Photos by Kim Newsom

Good news about agriculture was the story of the day on March 20 as Nashville media personalities whipped up a tribute to Tennessee's rich agricultural heritage.

Held on the 33rd anniversary of National Agriculture Day, the second "Cast-Iron Chef" omelet cookoff at Ellington Agricultural Center pitted news teams from competing Nashville television stations against each other as well as representatives from the Tennessee Radio Network and the Nashville Scene magazine.

During the high-energy event, the celebrity cooks "scrambled" to create the perfect — or most unusual — omelets, which were then judged by a panel of agricultural leaders, including Bart Krisle, Tennessee Farmers Cooperative's chief executive officer. Beneath the light-hearted fun, however, was a serious message about the state's deep-rooted farm tradition.

"Diversity is the best way to describe Tennessee agriculture," said

Nancy Edwards of Valley Home Farm in Wartrace, who opened the event with remarks on behalf of the farming community. "What Tennessee agriculture means to the full-time live-stock producer or soybean producer means something very different, yet very much the same, to the part-time farmer who works another job to support his farm. It is life reduced to the simplest and most gratifying level — planting a seed and watching it grow. It is the pleasure of truly living instead of just making a living."



Channel 4's Alan Frio and Holly Thompson fill their omelet with a variety of Tennessee-made ingredients. The perfect omelet, according to Ann Cox of the Egg and Poultry Board, is made with two eggs and two tablespoons of water.

Edwards also served as one of the judges for the omelet cookoff along with Krisle, Lacy Upchurch, president of Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation; Larry Reynolds of Second Harvest Food Bank; and Joe DiPietro,

vice president for agriculture at the University of Tennessee.

"Any event where I get to eat is fine with me!" laughed Krisle. "This is a fabulous concept that reaches a broad base of people and brings attention to what we're doing in agriculture while promoting our farmers and their products."

This was the sixth consecutive year for the omelet-cooking contest hosted by The Farm and Forest Families of Tennessee (TFFFT), a coalition of agricultural organizations — including TFC — dedicated to building awareness of the public contributions made by the state's farming industry.

Tennessee Agriculture Commissioner Ken Givens made the celebration official by presenting a proclamation from Gov. Phil Bredesen designating March 20 as "Agriculture Day" in the state. The proclamation described the American farmer as "a national symbol of strength and strong moral fiber" who has "displayed ingenuity in times of prosperity and perseverance in the face of hardships while supplying our state, nation, and world ... with an abundance of high-quality agricultural goods and products."

Participants were the Tennessee Radio Network's Bill Storey, Buddy Sadler, and Charlene Dempsey; WKRN Channel 2 reporter Joe Dubin, anchor Heather Orne, and meteorologist Justin Bruce; WSMV Channel 4 anchors Holly Thompson and Alan Frio; and the Nashville Scene's Carlington Fox and Jim Ridley.

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ABOVE: Omelet judges are, from left, Tennessee Farm Bureau President Lacy Upchurch, Tennessee Farmers Cooperative Chief Executive Officer Bart Krisle, and Wartrace farmer Nancy Edwards. Also judging were Joe DiPietro, vice president for agriculture at University of Tennessee, and Larry Reynolds of Second Harvest Food Bank. RIGHT: Farm Bureau's Lee Maddox, left, interviews the winners, Charlie Neese and Jennifer Kraus of Channel 5, who took home the cast-iron skillet trophy for the second year in a row. A donation of \$500 was also made in their names to the Second Harvest Food Bank.

For the second year in a row, WTVF Channel 5 weekend meteorologist Charlie Neese and anchor Jennifer Kraus took top honors and the highly appropriate trophy — an iron skillet. The judges were impressed with their creative omelet theme: the Dr. Seuss-inspired “Green Eggs and Ham.”

“This is a great event, and we love coming back each year,” said Kraus. “It’s a wonderful way to celebrate the first day of spring and recognize the contributions of our farm industry.”

The teams from Channel 2 and the Nashville Scene placed second in the competition.

Though her team didn’t take an award back to the Channel 4 station, Holly Thompson said she enjoyed her first time at the omelet cookoff.

“This was fun and informative,” she said. “More importantly, it helps us get the word out about Tennessee agriculture and Tennessee products. And I’ll just warn the other teams — we’ll have a better game plan for next year, so watch out!”

The real winner from the Ag Day event, however, was Second Harvest Food Bank, an organization devoted to feeding the hungry in Middle Tennessee. For the first time, donations of nonperishable food items were collected for Second Harvest, and monetary gifts were presented to the organization in the name of the competing teams, including \$500 on behalf of the winners.

“Today is about recognizing our state’s 85,000 farmers and the products they work hard to produce,” said Pettus Read, TFFFT president and communications director for Tennessee Farm Bureau. “We felt like it was very important that we give some of that back to the community.”

Observed annually on the first day of spring, National Ag Day is a reminder for citizens to show gratitude to the men and women who make agriculture possible. It also recognizes the entire industry dedicated to providing a plentiful and safe food supply and wide range of fiber choices.

NEW RELEASE

Top Pick

Pinkeye

Cream

Brown Crowder

Across Tennessee, Vegetable Growers Report Top Pick Peas are Superior!

<div style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>Jason Tanner Taft, TN</p> <p>“Produced on top, nice clean peas, excellent yield, very easy shelled. Better taste than regular pinkeye purplehulls.”</p> </div> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>J. V. Odem St. Joseph Milling Co St. Joseph, TN</p> <p>“Really fine peas, shell good, grows good. My wife really liked them, taste great. I don't know of anybody that would not like these Top Pick Pinkeye Peas. There was only one problem, I did not plant enough of them this year.”</p> </div> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>“More than doubled the yield of my other purplehull peas. Easier to shell, taste delicious. They are all I will plant next year.”</p> <p>Ruth Walls Big Sandy, TN</p> </div> <div> <p>Nellie Nolen Cumberland City, TN</p> <p>“They are the best peas I have tried even better than the purplehulls. Easy sheller, very tasty. I have already put in my order for next year.”</p> </div>	<div style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>Tater Daniels Lawrence County Co-op Lawrenceburg, TN</p> <p>“The Top Pick Pinkeye is a very good pea, grows good and you can pick them by the hand full, they shell out really good. Also taste really good. I would suggest that any gardener or truck crop farmer try them next year. My dad is a truck crop farmer and he really liked the turn out and ease in picking.”</p> </div> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>J. B. Harris Erin, TN</p> <p>“Better stand, easier to pick and shell and tastes better than most peas through the years. Just did not have enough planted this year. Told the TFC store in Houston County to be sure and get them for next year.”</p> </div> <div> <p>Betty Walters Benton Farmers Co-op Camden, TN</p> <p>“Big peas, good turn out, easy shelled, fantastic taste - a really good pea.”</p> </div>
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UTILITY PATENT PENDING

Environmental group praises Co-ops' efforts to offer biodiesel

Hawkins and Washington Farmers Cooperatives have been recognized as Ozzie Award recipients for their efforts in preventing the formation of ozone in northeast Tennessee.

The awards, sponsored by the Ozone Action Partnership (OAP), were presented to Tom Henard and Tom Bible, managers of Hawkins and Washington Farmers Co-ops, respectively, on March 10 at the annual East Tennessee Environmental Conference in Kingsport.

"These Co-ops are contributing to a decreased dependence on foreign oil and an improved air quality," said Jan Compton of the Tennessee De-

partment of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) during the Ozzie Award presentation.

Compton acknowledged Hawkins Farmers' switch to biodiesel in May 2005 and its numerous fuel services.

"The Co-op delivers diesel fuel to farms and construction companies and provides them with on- and off-road diesel choices," she said. "They also have a card system on site that allows 24-hour biodiesel purchases."

Compton said the Co-op in Rogersville also plans to increase its biodiesel blends and add an ethanol pump for gasoline.

Washington Farmers converted to

biodiesel blend B5 in July 2005, said Compton, adding that as of December, the Co-op's sale and usage of biodiesel totaled more than 50,000 gallons. The Co-op in Jonesborough offers delivery service and has converted its own fleet of trucks to biodiesel.

"Judging by the praise its customers have expressed for the program, Washington Farmers Co-op intends to expand its efforts," she said.

"They plan to offer a B20 blend and an off-road biodiesel sometime this year."

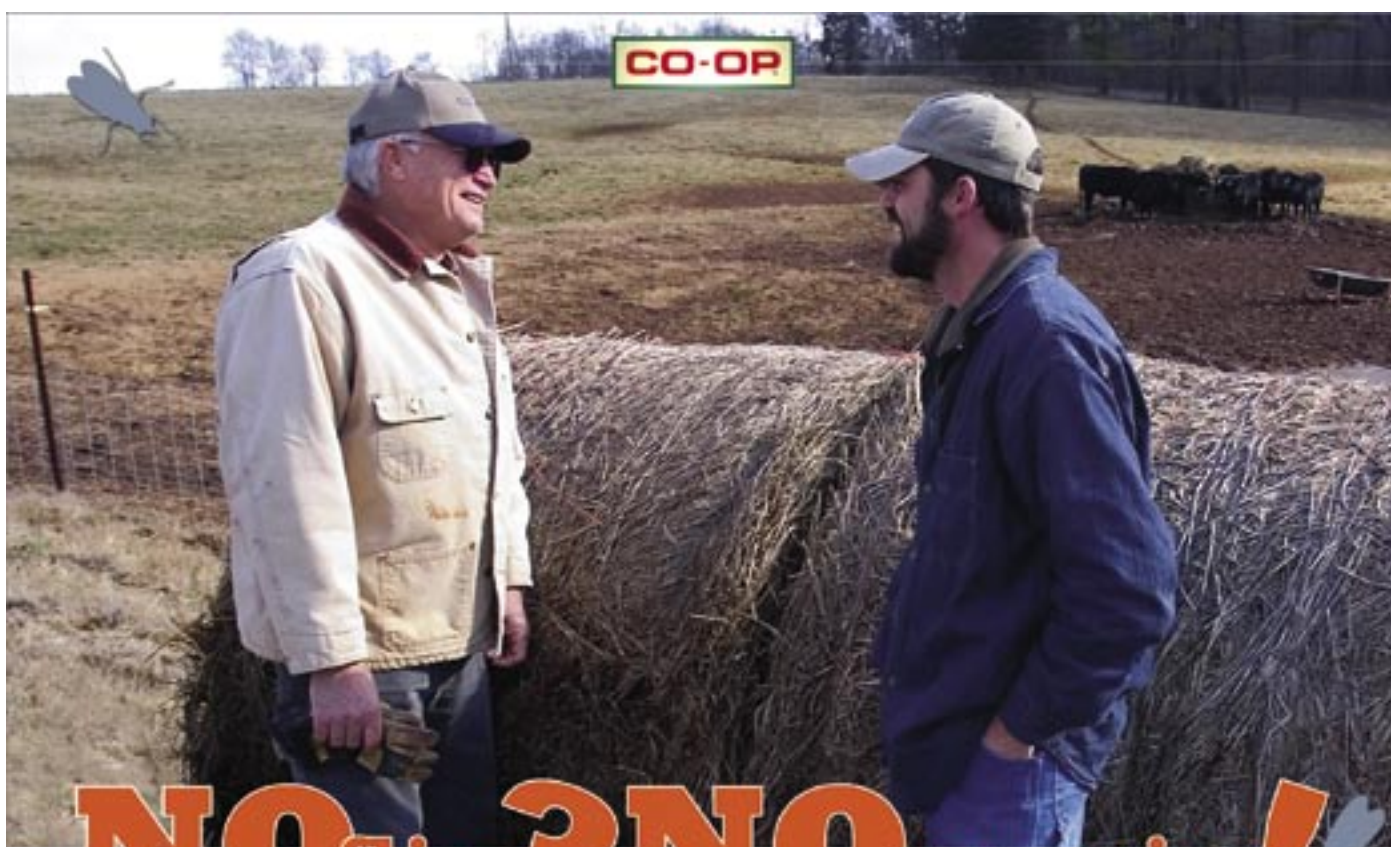
Ozone is created by the combination of pollutants from many sources.

Utility companies, industry, cars, gasoline-powered lawn equipment, paints, solvents, and even plants and trees all contribute to the formation of ozone. The OAP was established in 2001 to create a voluntary plan that would help the region keep ozone levels down and is the first program of its kind in Tennessee.

The four other 2006 Ozzie Award recipients were Jonathan Overly of the East Tennessee Clean Fuels Coalition, Southern Appalachian Greenways Alliance, Barry Stephens of TDEC, and the Visual Image Study Code and Ordinance Review Project in Kingsport.



Jan Compton, right in both photos, presents Ozzie Awards to Tom Henard, top, and Tom Bible for their Co-ops' use of biodiesel.



NO flies? NO surprise!

A black cloud of horn flies buzzing around his cattle herd on a hot summer day wouldn't necessarily be a surprise to Huntland cattleman and swine producer Terry Holder.

A concern? Definitely. A surprise? Not at all.

But the former three-term director on the board of Franklin Farmers Cooperative was in for a big surprise early last summer when a contract employee reported a strange sight in one of Terry's pastures.

"I hired this guy to do some bush-hogging," Terry recalls. "He came back the next day and said, 'Where are all the flies?'"

Terry, who is part owner in the 57-head purebred Angus operation with his son, Scott, had recently begun offering Co-op's Ultimate Repro Mineral with Altosid (#96678) free-choice to his cattle on the recommendation of Tennessee Farmers Co-op feed and animal health specialist Rick Syler and David Benson, manager of Franklin Farmers Huntland store. Approved for both beef and dairy applications, Altosid is a "feed-through" pesticide that prevents immature horn flies from developing into adults.

"I figured it must be working, so I rode out to the pasture to see for myself," says Terry. "It beat anything I've ever seen. There was hardly a fly at all!"

Rick says that horn flies (*Haematobia irritans*) are a larger problem than some cattlemen may realize. Recent studies indicate that American cattle producers lose more than \$850 million each year thanks to the biting parasites through decreases in weight gains, feed efficiency, and milk yields.

"Chemical controls such as rubbing stations, dust bags, sprays, dips, and ear tags aren't as effective as they used to be because of a buildup in resistance by the flies," explains Rick. "But Altosid kills them before they can grow into resistant adults and cause any harm."

Rick stresses that an insect growth regulator like Altosid interrupts the life cycle of the flies, creating a long-term, preventative solution that, together with a secondary program like ear tags, keeps horn flies at tolerable numbers.

"It certainly did the trick," says Terry, who with his wife, Margaret, and son, Dennis, also operate a 1,900-head swine farm on their 260-acre homestead. "Those cattle spent the entire summer as calm as could be. You didn't see them switching their tails or biting at their backs at all. We've seen no pinkeye, and the overall health of the herd is excellent. I'm really impressed."

Co-op offers three free-choice mineral products containing Altosid: Ultimate Repro Mineral-Alt (#96678), Supreme Repro Mineral-Alt (#96622), and Supreme Hi Mag Mineral-Alt (#96623). For more information, visit the professionals at your local Co-op.



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B26 **\$26.99***



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B13 **\$29.99***



Work Short
7.5-ounce, 100% ring-spun cotton canvas. Left leg has hammer loop and ruler pocket. Triple-stitched main seams. 8 1/2-inch seam.
Waist: 28-44 inches.
B144 **\$26.99***



Workwear Pocket Tee
Jersey knit for comfort.
Sizes: S-4XL.
K87 **\$11.99***



**Big and tall items are subject to slightly higher pricing. Prices effective April 1-15, 2006. At participating Co-op stores.*

carhartt.com

Changing faces

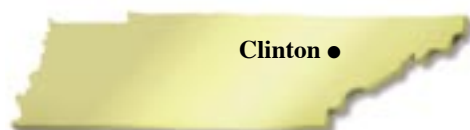
Anderson Farmers Cooperative's newly renovated store appeals to an expanding customer base



Located on a bustling street in downtown Clinton, Anderson Farmers Cooperative's newly renovated store attracts a wide range of customers. Manager Anthony Hastings says the Co-op's board of directors wanted to build a store that would be strikingly noticeable while maintaining a "hometown" appeal.

Story and photos by Kim Newsom

For the past few months, Anderson Farmers Cooperative in Clinton has been the talk of the town. Its six-month renovation has caught the attention of numerous passers-by and triggered question after question of just what was going on over at the Co-op.



And it's no secret why, with the store's impressive transformation from a modest, painted-brick structure to a charming building with stone exterior, green metal roofing, and welcoming entrance, not to mention an additional 6,000 square feet in the showroom. With few modifications since its original construction in 1961, the Co-op was in desperate need of more space and an updated look to attract new customers.

"Agriculture is really changing in our county," says Anthony Hastings, Anderson Farmers' manager since 2002. "There are very few full-time farmers here anymore, and our customer base is becoming more of what I call 'homeowners' and part-time farmers. We

wanted to bring in new products and reset the store to appeal to this group of potential customers while maintaining our agricultural roots."

The Co-op officially celebrated its grand opening on March 10 and 11 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and special customer-appreciation deals. Attendees browsed through the bright, gleaming showroom, registered for door prizes, and enjoyed refreshments like ham and biscuits during the breakfast hours and a celebratory cake decorated with the Co-op logo.

"We couldn't be more pleased

with the turnout for the grand opening," Hastings says. "I don't have an exact count of how many people came through the store, but we did transact more than 800 individual sales during the two-day event. I'm sure even more people just came in to see what the store has to offer."

One such attendee was David Irwin, a retired Clinton farmer and local Co-op celebrity. An incorporating director of the Co-op and its first president in 1959, Irwin was attending his second Anderson Farmers grand opening. As he strolled through the spacious showroom, he

commented on the changes he'd seen in the farm supply business during the Co-op's 47-year history.

"It's just like the rest of the state," he said. "There's been so much change in agriculture, especially in this region. The Co-op is changing with the times, and I applaud those efforts. This new store is really nice, and I don't know why anyone wouldn't want to shop here."

The additional space in the showroom allows the Co-op to broaden its mix of merchandise and attract a variety of customers, says Hastings, pointing out the new gift and clothing lines, truck accessories, and an expanded equine and pet department.

"We have garden accessories, jams and jellies, soaps, Montana Silver-smith jewelry, sunglasses, wind chimes, toys, all kinds of pet supplies, and the list just goes on and on," he says. "And the Co-op offers more for our farmers, too, with items like air compressors, leather boots, and additional complete product lines."

"This building is amazing," said longtime patron Mike Hendrix of Clinton as he shopped in the large equine section during the grand opening. "There's more variety and a lot more products than before. From now on, I shouldn't



Anderson Farmers' first board president, David Irwin, left, discusses the Co-op's 47-year history and praises the look of the new store with Van Medley, showroom and warehouse manager.



have to shop anywhere else for my horse items.”

To further meet customer needs, the Co-op has decided to expand its store hours. It's now open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday, a change that Hastings thinks will be more convenient for patrons.

In addition, Anderson Farmers now has mulch bins, increased dock space, and a more attractive look to the property overall. Perhaps the most dramatic change, though, is the exterior of the store. The previous showroom was expanded on both sides, and a new entrance, shaped like a traditional barn, invites and welcomes customers. The store's landscaping has been redesigned, and red bricks now spell out CO-OP in flowerbeds facing the street.

“When our board of directors met with the architect, they quickly learned the importance of an eye-catching exterior,” says Hastings. “We were determined to make the Co-op more than ‘just a store,’ and building its aesthetic value was a perfect way to do that.”

He adds that the Co-op's prime spot on Charles Seivers Boulevard in downtown Clinton helped seal the deal.

“More than 30,000 cars pass by our store daily,” explains Hastings. “Anyone involved with a retail business knows the importance of location, and we are thankful to have

one right in the heart of downtown Clinton. But we didn't want the cars to just drive by our store. We wanted them to notice it, and I think now they do.”

ABOVE: Members of the Clinton Chamber of Commerce help officially open the new Anderson Farmers Co-op during a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday, March 10. ABOVE LEFT: Customers browse the Co-op's significantly larger showroom during its grand opening.



Samuel Hastings, son of Anderson Farmers' Manager Anthony Hastings, enjoys trying on one of the store's many new products, as his mother, Ann, looks on.

ourcoop.com

SPECIAL EDITION *Daily* *Beef* Spring Edition

CO-OP FEEDS DELIVER KNOCKOUT PUNCH

In a recent on-farm feeding trial conducted in Lincoln County, Co-op 14% Select Hi-E Cattle Pellets with Rumensin (#94176) were compared to a commodity blend feed manufactured by Tennessee Farmers Co-op, 13% Beef Coarse (#94153). This coarse textured feed is very similar to the products being sold in Tennessee by commodity shed type operations and is positioned in the marketplace to compete in the economy portion of the beef feed market.

Twelve weaned beef heifers were utilized. A single crossover experimental design was used with each feed being offered to both groups of heifers during two identical periods. This design helped to minimize variation in results due to animal genetics by giving each feed a chance to perform with each group of cattle. All heifers were offered Co-op Supreme Repro Mineral (#678). Over the 66-day period, 8.33 lbs. of Co-op 14% Select Hi-E Cattle Pellets and free-choice forage produced an average daily gain of 2.60 lbs. with a total feed conversation of 7.82:1. Using current prices from Lincoln Farmers Co-op and 12 lbs. daily hay consumption (valued at \$70/ton), this performance indicates a cost per pound of gain of \$0.42. Contrast these figures with the performance gleaned from an identical amount of coarse-textured or "commodity blend" feed (Co-op #94153). Using the same cattle under the exact same conditions, the coarse feed produced an average daily gain of only 1.92 lbs. with a total feed conversation of 10.59:1, and a cost per pound of gain of \$0.51. It is generally accepted that the simple addition of Rumensin to a beef ration will account for a 10% improvement in feed efficiency. However, when combined with Co-op's Feed Formulation Technology, Co-op 14% Select Hi-E Cattle Pellets with Rumensin (#94176) demonstrated a 35.42% advantage in feed efficiency. When supplementing beef cattle on pasture with complete feeds, there is no comparison. Co-op pelleted beef feeds demonstrate time and again, on different farms, in a controlled environment or under more variable on-farm conditions, their superiority in terms of average daily gain, feed conversion, and cost per pound of gain than commodity blend or coarse beef rations.

Round for round

	#94176	#94153	Advantage
Average Daily Gain	2.60	1.92	35.42% Greater
Feed Cost/lb. of Gain	\$0.24	\$0.28	14.29% Less
Feed Cost/lb. of Gain (including hay)	\$0.42	\$0.51	17.65% Less
Total Feed Conversion	7.82:1	10.59:1	35.42% more efficient

See your local Co-op feed specialist for further details.



Dr. Kevin Cox left his private veterinary practice in May 2004 to become Tennessee Farmers Cooperative's animal health sales representative and serve as the Co-op system's first licensed veterinarian.

Manage cow herds for better beef production

In recent years, much attention and focus have been put on proper health care programs for stocker and/or preconditioned cattle. As a result, producers have learned a great deal about vaccinating, deworming, and overall sound management techniques for the calves they produce.

While this is a positive direction for the beef industry, it is often beneficial to take a step back and look at what other avenues we might pursue to improve our operations even more. One of the keys to producing high-quality calves is by keeping the cows in good health. Calves going into a preconditioning program will still need sound management and vaccination decisions, but through good brood cow management, we can improve the health of our calves and hopefully increase our profitability at the same time.

Good cow health begins with good nutrition. Cows that are fed properly and have the correct vitamin and mineral balance will produce more milk and, in turn, wean a heavier calf. Many of our other management decisions depend on how well we feed our cows. We must provide the cow with the nutritional tools she needs to utilize the vaccinations and deworming protocols we choose. Cows that are nutritionally sound will be able to respond better to vaccines, thus producing stronger immunity for them as well as their calves.

We have two main goals when vaccinating brood cows: immunity for the cow against disease and production of high-quality colostrum for the newborn calf. Cows and bulls should be vaccinated for the four most common respiratory viruses: bovine respiratory syncytial virus (BRSV), bovine viral diarrhea (BVD), infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR), and parainfluenza (PI3). Cows and bulls should also be vaccinated for leptospirosis. Adult cows should also be vaccinated for blackleg with a seven-way clostridial vaccine. Many times it is a good idea to vaccinate pregnant cows with a rota-corona/E.coli vaccine before she gives birth to the calf. Here again, the primary aim is to produce colostrum rich in antibodies for these diseases.

Other vaccines that should be considered for brood cows, depending on

individual needs, are for the diseases Haemophilus somnus, pinkeye, and vibriosis. Questions regarding these more optional vaccines can often be answered by your local veterinarian or an animal health specialist at your Co-op.

When vaccinating cattle with any program, it is extremely important to follow the manufacturer's instructions. If a particular vaccine indicates that it should be followed by a booster in three to four weeks, then boosters are necessary for the efficacy of the vaccine. Failure to follow instructions will often render the vaccines useless, which none of us can afford. While it is not often convenient, cows that are vaccinated four to six weeks prior to calving have the best chance of producing that highly desired quality colostrum. Keep in mind that certain vaccines are safe for pregnant cows and some are not. Ask questions if there is any doubt.

Another important factor in cow health and milk production is to keep the cows dewormed. We often fail to notice the effects of parasitism in adult cattle; however, cows that don't have to compete with internal parasites for nutrients will perform better and almost always wean a healthier, heavier calf. There is sufficient research telling us that deworming pregnant and nursing brood cows will be economically beneficial. It's also important to follow manufacturers' recommendations concerning frequency and method of application.

There are many areas to consider when focusing on managing a cattle operation of any kind: genetic selection, good handling facilities, proper nutrition, effective animal health programs, and more. The list can be long and sometimes overwhelming. Being profitable and sustaining that profit can be a daunting task. To be profitable, we need to wean healthy calves from each cow every year. A sound health program for your brood cows will put your herd a long way down that road.

Special livestock equipment offers from your



Offers good March 20 through April 28, 2006.



WW 210 Sweep System

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- Heavy-duty construction 2-in. x 14-ga. high tensile steel tubing
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- 2-in. x 14-ga. heavy-duty tube construction
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Powder River "Tennessee Tub" 1/4 Circle Portable Sweep

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\$2,199

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\$1,899

- 16-ga. tube construction
- 180-degree sweep



Eye in the sky

Aerial imagery helps growers take crop production to a higher level

By Allison Morgan

Aerial imagery has been providing humans with a bird's-eye view of the land since 1858, when the first aerial photograph was taken from a hot-air balloon over Paris, France.

Today, nearly 150 years later, aerial photos captured digitally from airplanes are taking precision agriculture programs to a higher level. While yield monitors and grid soil sampling have been useful tools to help farmers improve next year's crop, the ability to use site-specific technology to make informed decisions during the growing season has been limited — until now.

OptiGro, a new variable-rate program developed by John Deere, is combining high-resolution aerial imagery, innovative computer software, and timely advice from Co-op agronomists to help growers implement in-season management practices that can result in lower inputs, higher yields, and greater profits. Instead of the traditional one-size-fits-all approach, the OptiGro system allows farmers to monitor their growing crop and target specific areas for specific treatments of crop protectants and fertilizer.

"Variable-rate technology is conservation, both environmentally and economically," says Jamie Perry, a certified crop adviser with Mid-South Farmers Cooperative and one of the leaders in the Co-op's aerial imagery program. "It allows growers to only use what the field needs, where it needs it. Anything extra is unnecessary expense."

OptiGro was used commercially for the first time in 2005, mainly in cotton production, where the technology appears to offer the most value. The program is offered to growers through a partnership between John Deere and Co-op.

"We aren't delivering this technology through our John Deere dealers," says Terry Brown, account manager for John Deere AgriServices. "Instead, we're relying on companies like Co-op that have the personnel with agronomic expertise to help the growers use the information this technology provides."

Last year, Mid-South and Tipton Farmers Cooperatives were the first to offer the aerial imagery program to their cotton growers to apply plant growth regulators and defoliant at variable rates.

"I believe in the technology," says Mid-South Farmers Co-op member Willie German, who grows 3,500 acres of cotton in Hardeman, Fayette, and Haywood counties. "There's no doubt it will pay. Today, the only way growers can survive is to farm small portions of our fields exactly the way they need to be farmed."

Typically, cotton producers make at least two applications of plant growth regulator — a small dose early in the season and then a higher rate a few weeks later to get the plant in the fruiting mode rather than the growth mode and increase the number and size of the cotton bolls. Most growers use one uniform rate for an entire field. The drawback to this approach, says German, is that the areas of "rank" or heavier growth that could benefit from a higher rate are under-treated while areas of lagging growth are over-treated.

By being able to apply the plant growth regulator at variable rates, growers can use those chemicals more efficiently and effectively and improve yields by producing a more uniform crop.

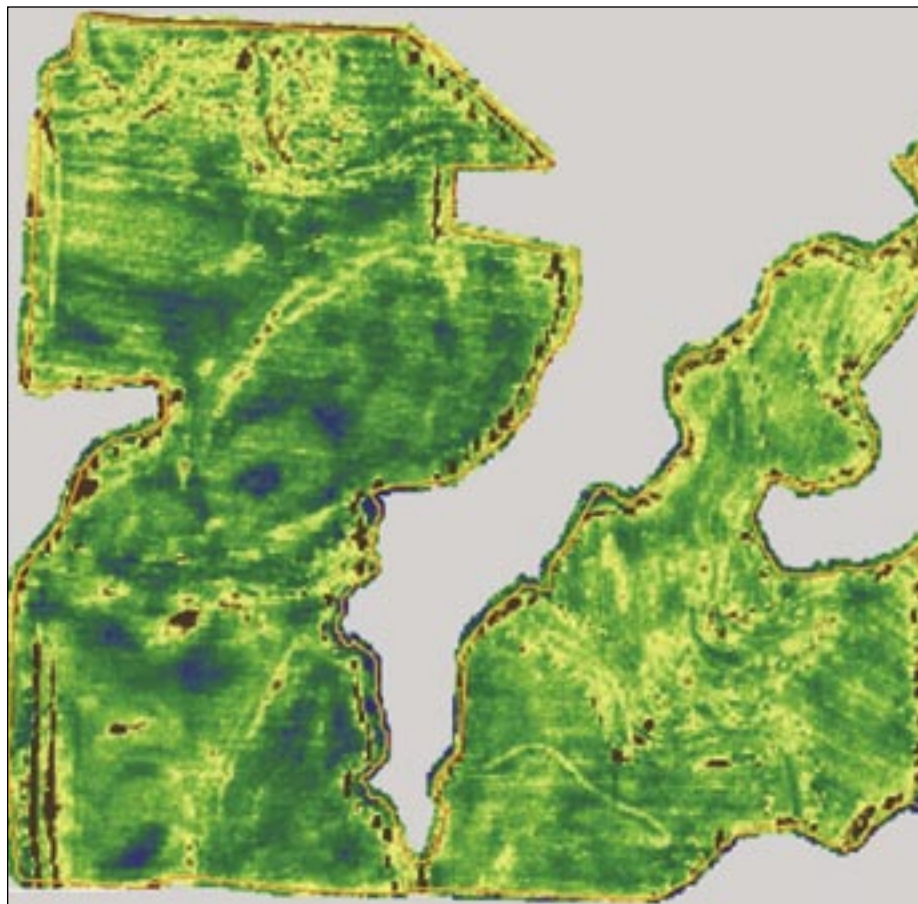
"You could always eyeball the field and see the areas that were too rank and too short, but you couldn't do anything about it," says German. "We always just sprayed an average across the whole field. We wouldn't get enough on the cotton that we needed to stop and too much on the cotton that didn't need any."

"With this aerial imagery, I don't know that we used less chemicals, but we got more for our money," he continues. "We put the product where it paid to put it but left it off where it didn't. It's just more efficient."

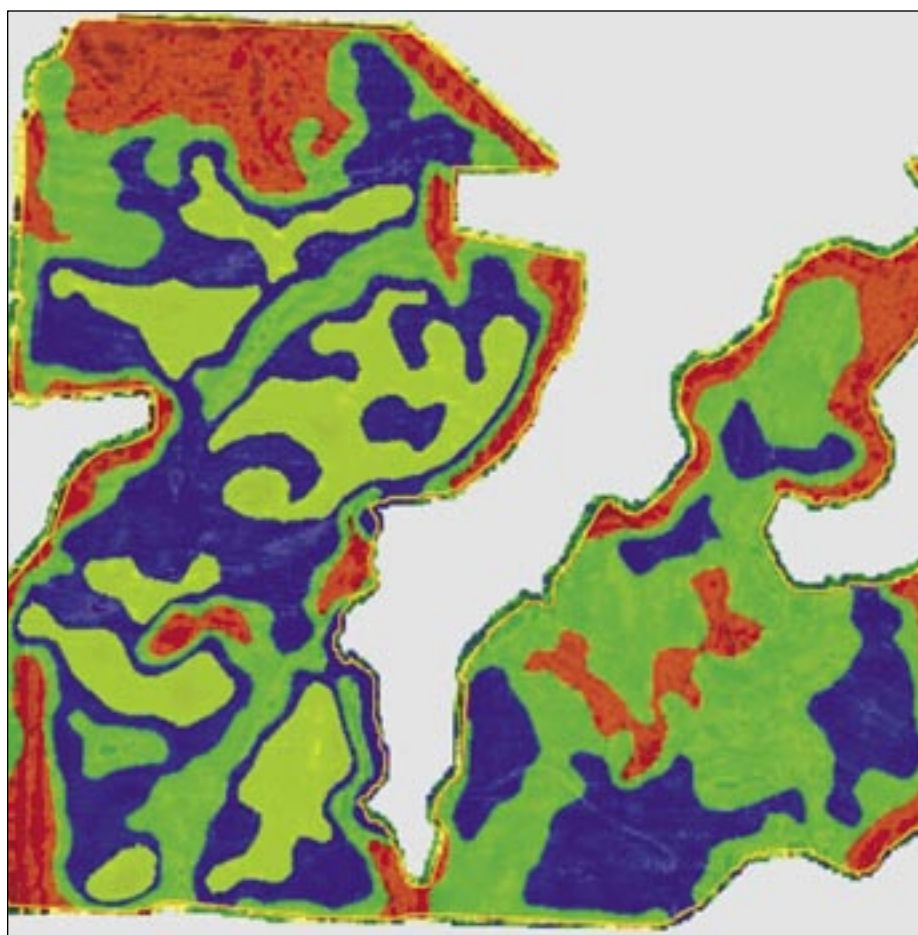
Field studies prove value

The value German discovered has also been proven by field trials conducted by North Carolina State University. In these studies, variable-rate applications based on aerial images provided better control of cotton growth, improved boll retention, and higher yields than traditional, uniform applications. The result was an increased net return from \$34 to \$66 per acre.

"It won't cost the grower more money just to try variable-rate programs," says Perry. "They'll pretty much break even on the cost of sampling, mapping, and imagery on the front end, but the profit potential is there on the back end with higher yields and higher quality. When the



This image is an example of an aerial photograph taken and processed in the OptiGro system. Captured by near-infrared digital photography, this bird's-eye view of a cotton field shows the reflection of chlorophyll in the plants, an indicator of crop health and growth. The darker green and blue areas represent areas that are healthier or have heavier growth. The lighter green and brown areas indicate areas where the plants may have slower growth or are less healthy; if the image was taken near the end of the season, those areas could show where plants have fewer leaves and more open bolls.



This is how that same aerial image looks after it's been processed in the "ZoneMaker" computer software program. The different colors represent individual management zones that will be assigned the appropriate rates of plant growth regulator and defoliant. Before any spraying is done, however, the growers work with their Co-op agronomist to "ground-truth" the results and determine the cause of this variability.

picker runs through the field, that's where you're going to make money."

In the OptiGro system, the whole process is based on geo-referenced field maps that are uploaded to Co-op's proprietary, Internet-based program called "Agfleet," which is used to coordinate precision ag services and provide recordkeeping for producers. At the crop's critical growth stages, the Co-op agronomist orders an aerial image from John Deere, and a trained pilot flies over the field with a digital camera

mounted to the airplane's strut to take hundreds of near-infrared photos at a 2½-meter resolution (each pixel representing 2½ meters of the field).

These images capture the reflection of chlorophyll in the plants, which indicates the size or health of the crop. For example, the areas of a cotton field that have healthier, larger plants will appear darker green while the weaker, smaller plants or those that have already lost their leaves and opened their bolls will show up as brown spots in the photo.

The photos are then processed by a computer on board the plane, overlapped, and assembled together to make one digital image. By using global positioning satellites (GPS) to match images to specific areas in the field, the processed images highlight areas that may indicate plant variation or potential crop problems.

“A lot of growers think this system is a black box, some sort of magic that will tell them how to solve their crop problems,” says Brown. “It’s not. What it will show are the parts of the field that have more reflection than the others. The images tell you where the problem is, not what it is or how to fix it. That’s where the Co-op comes in.”

Maps divided into zones

Within 48 hours, two photos of the field are delivered via the Internet to the Co-op consultant, who analyzes the images through computer software called “ZoneMaker.” This program divides the field into zones of variability that can be managed individually, allowing the agronomist to write a prescription recommendation with the rates best suited for each zone.

The prescription is programmed into the computerized rate control system in the sprayer and used to apply the appropriate chemicals at variable rates according to the digital map. The data is compatible with some 12 different controllers, not just John Deere products, says Brown.

Aerial images were taken July 10 on all of German’s cotton acreage, and Perry divided the resulting field maps into three zones, assigning them rates of eight, 12, and 16 ounces of plant growth regulator. The software will allow up to seven zones, but Perry says the three-zone approach seemed to fit his growers’ needs and was less complicated.

Using that precision prescription, German relied on Mid-South Farmers Cooperative to spray his fields with variable-rate applications of plant growth regulator during the last week of July.

“It evened up my field,” says German. “And I know it yielded more. No doubt.”

Hardeman County farmer Barry Lake also ordered his first aerial image around the same time, and he used that photo and Perry’s three-zone prescription to make two variable-rate applications of plant growth regulator — one mid-season and one at the end of the season to “finish the crop off” — using his own high-cycle sprayer he had recently equipped with a new Mid-Tech Legacy precision control system.

“I don’t know that it saved a whole lot of costs on plant growth regulator, but it made the crop more uniform, easier to manage, and easier to defoliate,” says Lake, who grows some 300 acres of cotton near



LEFT: Willie German was one of the first growers to use Co-op’s aerial imagery program last year for the 3,500 acres of cotton he grows in Hardeman, Haywood, and Fayette counties. RIGHT: Hardeman County farmer Barry Lake, right, also used the system for variable-rate applications of plant growth regulators and defoliant. He and German, both members of Mid-South Farmers Cooperative, relied on Co-op agronomist Jamie Perry, left, to use those images to make precision prescriptions for their fields.



Hickory Valley. “For me, the benefits of variable-rate aren’t really the cost savings but the chance to increase yields.”

Used for defoliation, too

Another image was shot in early September to create a prescription for Lake to use in variable-rate defoliation. This allowed him to create picture-perfect harvest conditions by applying higher rates of defoliant to dense foliage and lower rates to sparse foliage.

“There were definite savings on the defoliant, plus we were able to get in the field four or five days earlier because most of the crop was ready at the same time,” says Lake. “That’s important because the longer the cotton stays in the field, exposed to the weather, the more quality it loses.”

So far in Tennessee, the OptiGro system has only been applied to cotton, but in other parts of the country it’s been used in grass seed production, orchards, and vineyards and could eventually be used here for variable-rate applications of nitrogen on corn and wheat.

Last year, the Co-op agronomists and their customers were “just getting their feet wet” with aerial imagery, says Perry, but he is convinced that this technology has unlimited potential to help growers make the most of their inputs and add pounds and quality to their cotton crop — whether they have 3,500 acres like German or 300 like Lake.

“If you don’t know where you’re going, you’ll end up someplace else,” says Perry. “Yogi Berra said that, and it couldn’t be a more appropriate way to describe farming these days. This aerial imagery program is just another way to show farmers where they’re going so they can make better management decisions along the way.”

For more information on the OptiGro aerial imagery program, contact the agronomy specialists at your local Co-op.



New! Simple Solutions For Pasture Weed Control

This year, southern pasture managers have two new options to improve weed control and simplify pasture management. Both options are based on revolutionary new chemistry.

New ForeFront™ R&P herbicide from Dow AgroSciences delivers four to six weeks control of more than 60 broadleaf weeds, including thistle, horsenettle and tall ironweed. It carries no grazing restrictions, and you don’t need a license to buy or apply the product.¹

ForeFront R&P combines advanced, new chemistry with a familiar standard. The new active ingredient is aminopyralid, reviewed and accepted for registration under the Reduced Risk Pesticide Initiative of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The program is reserved for compounds that demonstrate lower risk to the environment and to humans than market standards. ForeFront R&P also contains 2,4-D, a trusted broadleaf herbicide since the 1940s.

With two active ingredients, there’s no need to tank-mix for broadleaf weed control. ForeFront R&P offers both foliar control of emerged weeds and soil residual activity to control later-emerging broadleaves. In southern field trials, ForeFront R&P herbicide at labeled rates controlled buttercup, bull thistle, burdock, Canada thistle, cocklebur, curly dock, henbit, horsenettle (bull nettle), horseweed (marestail), tall ironweed, musk thistle, plantain, ragweeds, spiny amaranth and more. To add brush control, ForeFront™ R&P herbicide may be combined with PastureGard® or Remedy® herbicide.

ForeFront R&P herbicide is safe on desirable grasses, including fescue, orchardgrass and Bermudagrass. ForeFront R&P has no grazing restrictions for any class of livestock, including lactating dairy animals, beef cattle, horses, sheep and goats. Forage may be harvested for hay only eight days after spraying with ForeFront R&P herbicide.

In situations where a manager prefers not to use 2,4-D, there’s another new option. New Milestone™ herbicide controls specific, invasive weeds with minimal environmental impact. Milestone features aminopyralid as its *only* active ingredient.

At labeled rates, Milestone provides post-emergence and four to six weeks residual control of bull thistle, Canada thistle, musk thistle, horsenettle (bull nettle) and several other broadleaf weeds. It does not control plantain or dandelion.

Milestone has no grazing or haying restrictions, and does not require a license to buy or apply.

With either new product, by removing weed competition, you can make more forage available to livestock. That may come in pounds of grass or by removing prickly invaders that discourage grazing. Either way, effective weed control can increase carrying capacity to yield more pounds of beef per acre.

For more information on these new products, contact me or your ag chemical supplier.



Jon Doran
Range & Pasture Specialist
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(423) 736-6020



¹Because it contains 2,4-D, state restrictions on the sale and use of ForeFront R&P apply. Consult the label before purchase or use for full details.
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www.RangeAndPasture.com

Story and photos by Allison Morgan

Visitors to the Turbeville family's annual 6 Ts Horse Farming Day in Dresden may feel like they've taken a 100-year leap back to the days when strong, towering draft animals provided all the power for running a farm — from pulling every kind of implement imaginable to transporting people and supplies.

But for the Turbevilles, who often use their Belgian draft horses to perform tasks such as raking hay or spreading manure, it's just another day on the farm. Home to 22 registered Belgians, 6 Ts Farm is keeping this power of the past alive, and once a year they share that heritage with other draft horse enthusiasts and the community.

"What we're trying to do with this field day is get people involved," says Mike Turbeville, who, along with wife Janet, purchased the family farm in 1994 when his father, Joe C., wanted to retire. "We're only about one generation away from losing this part of our culture. You can't learn this kind of stuff from books. You need to experience it."



Planned this year for Saturday, May 20, the field day will feature demonstrations and contests with antique and modern horse-drawn equipment such as walking and riding plows, disks, mowers, wagons, hay rakes, balers, and planters. A 13-acre plot on the Turbevilles' 168-acre farm is dedicated to the event, which is open to anyone and everyone — whether they want to work, watch, or play.

"This field day isn't about horses," says Janet, office manager for Weakley Farmers Cooperative in Martin. "It's about family and friends and people getting together. Some come to see it for the first time, and some come to see what it feels like again."

"Some people come just to renew their dislike of the days when they farmed with horses," adds Joe. "They'll say, 'Now I know why we went to tractors.'"

This is the seventh year for the field day, which was organized in 2000 as a memorial to Mike's mother, Jean, who died in 1999. Since then, the event has steadily grown in size and popularity. The first year featured 17 or 18 horses; in 2005, there were more than 60 horses, including Belgians, Percherons, Suffolks, Shires, and crosses of every kind. Some 200 visitors from across Tennessee and several neighboring states also took part in the festivities.

"My mother was involved with every aspect of our farm, and we had

talked about doing a field day like this for years," says Mike. "She really enjoyed the horses. She was the one who loved on them; Daddy was the one who disciplined them."

The Turbevilles have been in the Belgian business since 1980 when Joe bought a mare named Tara in hopes of eventually doing most of his farm work with horses.

"I'd read about farmers who did all their work with horses," says Joe, who remains active in the family's horse operation. "But the economics just weren't there for us. It was too slow."

These days, the Turbevilles still do some farm work with their horses and have continued to improve genetics and increase their herd. They have developed a steady market for their Belgians in the Indiana Amish country and sell some locally as well. They also take their horses to four or five shows every year and often enter them in local parades.

The horses fit into what Janet describes as their "cyclical" farming operation. The Turbevilles finish out some 12,000 hogs each year and then use the lagoon waste to irrigate and fertilize the 55 acres of Bermudagrass they raise for pasture and hay. They sell the hay to horse owners and beef producers and, of course, feed it to their own horses, which can eat some 40 pounds a day.

"The horses are the constant that keeps everything pulled together," says Janet, adding that Co-op is involved in every aspect of the family's operation. "Our horses are the calming agent, our psychiatrists. They hear a lot of problems, and they can't talk back."

And when time permits, Joe and Mike put their horses to practical use on the farm, a move that serves two purposes — it gives the animals a workout and reduces the family's dependency on expensive machinery and ever-increasing fuel costs.

"Although I don't know that we can ever get to the point where we can completely handle the farm work with horses, to me it's still a goal," says Mike. "We can use any kind of farm implement that a tractor would use. It's an unbelievable feeling when you're out there and all you can hear is the machine working and the horses. It just gives you a different perspective."

However, many draft horse owners don't get a chance to work their animals very often, says Mike, but at the 6 Ts Horse Farming Day, they can hitch up their teams and do some good, old-fashioned field labor. Some have even broken their horses at the field day.

"This is relaxing, even though it's a lot of work," said Royce Abnatha of Bardwell, Ky., as he hitched his Belgian horse and Belgian/Percheron cross to a 1940 Oliver riding plow

Horse-power

Annual field day at 6 Ts Farm in Dresden recalls life before tractors



During last year's 6 Ts Horse Farming Day, Calvin Elder of Ripley expertly guides his draft horse to

at the 2005 event. "When you're stressed, being with these horses will get it out of you."

Even those who come just as spectators — whether they're 9 or 90 — often can't help but grab the plow handles and cultivate some lasting memories.

"We had one fellow two years ago who was 91 and could barely get out of his chair," recalls Mike. "But once he got behind that plow, the youth came back. The old ones like

to come and tell us younger ones how it used to be done, and then we'll tell them how we like to do it now. That's the enjoyable part — just getting these folks together."

The Turbevilles say their field day wouldn't be possible without the help of friends, family, the community, and local businesses like Weakley Farmers Cooperative that donate items to be given away as door prizes. But the entire family — including Mike and Janet's children,

ered eritage



am as they pull a disk through the field.

Andrea and Kevin, Mike's sister, Joetta White, and her husband, Ken — put in many hours of hard work to make each year's event a success.

"That day wears me out worse than anything, but it's rewarding to see the kids and the adults get out there and work," says Mike. "Once they grab those plow handles, there's a transition there I can't explain. People are scared to death at first, but by the end of the row they're asking if they can go again."

Tennessee Cooperator



LEFT: Bradley Hunt, 10, takes a try at guiding a walk-behind plow pulled by a pony mule named Bee under the supervision of his father, Brad, advisor of the Dresden FFA chapter. Plowing contests are held for both children and adults. ABOVE: An antique "sulky" or riding plow slices through the spring soil. The Turbevilles lend many of the implements used at the field day, but participants and guests can bring their own as well.



Demonstrations of horse-drawn equipment, from riding implements to the walk-behind kind, continually take place throughout the day. Both seasoned veterans and newcomers to this horse-powered equipment are welcome to participate. Owners of any type of draft animal — horses, mules, and even oxen — are invited to bring them and take part in the field day. Mike Turbeville says he even plans to show how his Belgian team can pull a modern hay baler that runs from a PTO shaft hooked to a motorized cart behind the horses.



The family patriarch, Joe C., back row left, purchased the farm in 1955, and he and his late wife, Jean, raised four children — Mike, Joetta, Holly, and Sherry. The farm, "6 Ts," is named after those original six family members. Mike, front left, bought the farm in 1994 from his father and now has a hog-finishing operation along with the Belgian business. He and his family — front from left, son Kevin, wife Janet, and daughter Andrea — are hosts of the Horse Farming Day along with Joetta, back right, her husband, Ken White, front right, and their 6-year-old daughter, K.J. This May will be a busy month for the Turbevilles. Normally held on the second Saturday in May, the field day was moved to May 20 this year because Andrea will graduate from Freed Hardeman University on May 13. Two weeks later, she will be married on a hillside at the farm, with plans to arrive at the ceremony in a carriage driven by her grandfather, Joe, and pulled by one of their Belgians named Comanche.

Put your hand to the plow

This year's 6 Ts Horse Farming Day will be held Saturday, May 20, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. There is no admission charge or entry fees, and the event is open to anyone who wants to sit back and watch or bring draft animals and work. Concessions will be offered by Dresden FFA.

To find 6 Ts Farm, take Highway 118 North out of Dresden. Travel 6½ miles and turn right on Turbeville Road, which is marked by the farm's sign. The field day will be about 1½ miles on the left.

For more information, contact Joe Turbeville at (731) 799-4932 or Mike Turbeville at (731) 799-3104.

Civil War history comes to life in historic Bolivar April 29-30

An interactive, living-history tour on Saturday, April 29, and Sunday, April 30, in Bolivar will give visitors a glimpse inside the town's historic sites, homes, and events from the Civil War era.

The annual tour is a fundraising project of the Hardeman County chapter of the Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities (APTA). Twelve historic homes and structures and two cemeteries will be part of this year's tour. At each site, costumed re-enactors will describe its history and tell stories about real events that occurred there. Tour stops are:

The Pillars — Built in 1828, this property, now owned by the APTA, was the home of the John Houston Bills family until the late 1960s.

The Columns — This beautiful Greek Revival home was built in 1860 and remodeled in 1909. The home reflects the life of an affluent banking and merchant family.

Magnolia Manor — Now a bed-and-breakfast, this Georgia Colonial home was built in 1849. During the Civil War it was headquarters for Generals Sherman and Grant.

The Fentress-Black House — Situated in a grove of ancient oak trees, this dignified and stately Colonial-style home was built in 1849.

The Durrett House — One of the oldest homes in Bolivar, it was built in 1826 on land donated by Samuel Polk, father of President James K. Polk.

The Presbyterian Church — The oldest church structure in town was erected in 1853. It is noted for the pipe organ added in the late 1800s.

The Little Courthouse — This is one of very few log courthouses left standing in the U.S. It is Hardeman County's original courthouse and was moved to its present site in 1827.

St. James Episcopal Church — Built in 1869, this Gothic Revival building has beautiful stained-glass windows and unique woodwork.

Ingram Hall — Located behind St. James Episcopal Church, this property was built in 1875 as a parish house.

Chamber of Commerce — This unusual brick structure was built in the early 1900s for use as the city's water plant.

Sons and Daughters of Charity Building — This structure, built in 1928, served as headquarters for this charity organization founded in 1873 and still active today.

Hardeman County Courthouse — The county's third courthouse, built in 1868, was one of the first in the state to be completed after the Civil War.

Other special attractions include a Confederate camp, period clothing display, royal commemorative porcelain exhibit, and contraband camp where guests will learn about the struggles of freed slaves and hear a

Jubilee Choir sing. Vendors of food, fresh baked goods, and antique and craft items will be set up on the shady grounds of The Pillars. Refreshments will also be served during a Confederate Tea at Ingram Hall.

Tour hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday. For advance tickets, contact the Hardeman County Chamber of Commerce at (731) 658-6554 or e-mail infohccc@bellsouth.net. During the tour, tickets and information will be available at the Chamber of Commerce at 500 W. Market Street in Bolivar. More information is also online at www.thepillars.info.



The Columns, a Greek-revival home built in 1860, is one of the historic homes to be open as part of Bolivar's living-history tour on April 29-30. Owned by the Ingram family from 1900 until 1995, The Columns is now owned by a preservation foundation. It is decorated in the late Victorian style and served as a hospital during the Civil War.

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A lifelong equine enthusiast, Kim Smith holds a master's degree in animal science from West Texas A&M, where her academic research focused on horse nutrition. In 1999, she joined Tennessee Farmers Cooperative as Co-op's first statewide equine specialist.

Rodeo loses legendary performer

In April 2004, I attended an open house at Dickson Farmers Cooperative in Dickson. While visiting with many horse owners, I met Mrs. Lenore Rowe, a genuinely charming lady who spent some time telling me how much she liked feeding Co-op Equi-Mate 12 to her horses. She told me she never had to worry about its consistency, and her horses always did well on this feed, especially on the road. I enjoyed talking feed with Lenore, but at the time I didn't realize that I was face-to-face with a legend.

A very loyal customer of the Co-op in Dickson, Lenore was a rodeo star who entertained audiences across North America for more than 50 years with her trick-riding, trick-roping, and other performing horse acts. Her shows were seen in 40 states as well as Canada, South Africa, and Puerto Rico. She also shared her expertise with many other performers and was one of the founding members of the International Professional Rodeo in 1961. She and her husband, Bobby Rowe, owned Imperial Rodeo Productions and staged rodeos across the country, including the Dickson Stampede Days Rodeo.

Sadly, Lenore passed away on Oct. 8, 2005. She left behind husband Bobby, her biggest fan and long-time love, and two sons, Bill and Justin. Bobby proudly accepted the "Old Timers" belt buckle on behalf of Lenore at the International Finals Rodeo in Oklahoma City in January.

"Lenore will be deeply missed, but most of all, I will miss her love for life," says Ann Holbrook, an employee of Dickson Farmers Cooperative.

During her years of performing, Lenore owned many horses, including a

bucking horse that could jump across a pickup truck, a high-jumping Shetland pony, and a Lippizan mare, but her last horse, Golden Nugget, had ties to another legendary horse. This palomino gelding was the great-great-grandson of Roy Rogers' famous horse, Trigger Jr.



Lenore Rowe

Lenore was a dear friend of Dickson Farmers Co-op employee Kelley Hampton, who rode with the rodeo performer for two years. She says that Lenore "constantly thirsted for knowledge on how to better herself and her horses," mentioning that they attended a Pat Parrelli clinic together just last year.

"Lenore had more grace and style than anyone I've ever met," says Kelley. "She was the ultimate professional."

In March 2005, Lenore and Golden Nugget performed at the Volunteer Horse Fair in Murfreesboro. At the age of 67, Lenore could still bring awe to the audiences who watched her perform.

It was an honor to see her in action. In the eight years that I have worked for Tennessee Farmers Cooperative, I have met many customers from across the state. I will always remember Lenore.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 1-800-366-2667, extension 8108, or e-mail me at kimsmith@ourcoop.com. Remember, all of my past articles are available on our Web site at www.ourcoop.com.

Cultivating agriculture's leaders



These farmers and agribusiness representatives are among the 2006 graduates of the state's two agricultural leadership development programs — AgStar in West Tennessee and AgriLeadership 20/20 in Middle Tennessee. The program curriculum included intense, hands-on sessions involving ag issues and opportunities, technology, communications, and governmental lobbying and legislation. These programs were organized and sponsored by some of Tennessee's top agricultural organizations, including Tennessee Farmers Cooperative. ABOVE: Graduates of the AgriLeadership 20/20 program are front row, from left, Alfred Ballinger, Dimple Geesling, Joe Woody, Janet Dickens, Dick Conley, Mitzi Dunham, Tom Banker, Tammy Tidwell, Jed Young, and Rusty Chilcutt. In back are Rick Merinar, Jason Searles, Wade Faw, Brian McLerran, Wayne Key, Frank Buckler, Ron Johnson, and Brandon Robbins. RIGHT: Graduates of the AgStar program are, front row from left, Rob White, Latisha Nettles, Ginger Kemp, Don Pearson, and AgStar Committee member Joe McKinnon. In the second row are Brandon Karcher, Paul Albright, Ray Thomas, and Jesse Garner. Not pictured are Bryan Bomar, Robert Baskin, and Jamie Tuck.

— Photos by Mark E. Johnson and Allison Morgan





Safe at home

After 27 years on the road as a big league ump, Jonesborough's Dale Ford is back to calling balls and strikes in East Tennessee

By Mark E. Johnson

Dale Ford prepares to move a disk implement on his five-acre Washington County farm. A Major League umpire for 27 years, the former beef producer has downsized his farming operation in recent years in order to spend more time with his wife, Joyce, five children, and nine grandchildren. Dale is a longtime customer of Washington Farmers Cooperative.

As Earl Weaver, the feisty manager of the Baltimore Orioles, charged across the diamond toward first base umpire Dale Ford during a Sunday afternoon game in the late 1970s, every fan in the ballpark knew what was about to happen.

"He was coming to kick dirt on me," says Dale. "I had just made a close call at first that had not gone Earl's way, and he was fit to be tied."

So to thwart the manager's attempt to put on a show for the partisan Baltimore crowd, Dale used the straightforward, country logic he had developed years before on his parents' Washington County tobacco farm.

"I simply moved into the grass," he laughs. "He couldn't do anything. He tried to kick grass on me, but that didn't work. He screamed and cursed and turned red in the face. He eventually just gave up and walked away."

Jonesborough •

Sitting at the kitchen table of his 100-year-old Jonesborough home, Dale reflects on a 27-year career that placed the son of tobacco farmers Nelson and Cleo Ford smack in the middle of some of Major League Baseball's most memorable moments. For example, Dale was behind the plate during the sixth game of the 1986 World Series when Boston first baseman Bill Buckner let a routine ground ball trickle between his legs and out into right field. New York's Gary Carter scored the winning

run and furthered the "Curse of the Bambino" for Red Sox fans when the Mets won the championship the following night.

Dale was also calling balls and strikes in Texas during the 1993 season when White Sox third baseman Robin Ventura charged Ranger pitcher Nolan Ryan after the legendary fastballer plunked Ventura. The resulting brawl was one of the most talked-about in baseball history.

In 1979, Dale was partly responsible for another classic sports image when he ejected Yankees superstar Reggie Jackson after the slugger complained about Seattle pitcher Gaylord Perry's questionable ball movement on a swinging strikeout. (Perry was famous for illegally applying a "substance" to the ball and not getting caught.) Jackson went ballistic, throwing bats, balls, gloves, and coolers onto the field on his way to the clubhouse.

Matter-of-fact about his success, Dale guesses that down-home common sense, together with lots of hard work and a fair amount of luck, is responsible for his lengthy tenure in the big leagues as well as his 25 years refereeing major college basketball.

"Back when I went to umpire school in 1970, most of my friends and family told me I'd never make it to the big leagues," says Dale, a longtime, devoted customer of Washington Farmers Cooperative. "They'd say, 'Only New York City Italians become Major League umpires.' But I was hardheaded and determined to prove them wrong. I worked every day like the boss of the American League was

watching me. I hustled every minute, and within four and a half years, I was in the big leagues."

Dale credits a tough, but fair, upbringing on the farm for instilling a well-developed work ethic in him and identifies his mother and older sister, Mary, as the inspirations for his hard-nosed umpiring style.

"I was seventh out of 13 kids, so you can imagine that my mom was tough — she had to be," he says. "She was only about four-foot-10, but you didn't mess with her. I'd rather try to shave a tiger as to make that woman mad. And my sister, Mary, was even worse. Mom went to town twice a year — once at Christmas and once to get school clothes — and Mary was left in charge. We stayed out of the house that day for fear of messing something up, let me tell you. Mary would fight a circle saw!"

Dale, a former beef producer who has recently downsized to a five-acre farm, says that although the eight boys and five girls in the Ford family worked hard milking cows and hoeing corn and tobacco, they played hard, too. Baseball was the game of choice.

"Oh, we were baseball-crazy," Dale admits. "On Saturdays, us boys would play three games: morning, afternoon, and at night. If it was bad weather and we had finished our farm work, we'd listen to the games on the radio."

Although Dale was named all-conference three consecutive years as a catcher at Sulphur Springs High School, he concedes that he just wasn't good enough to play pro ball. But during his teenage years, he be-



Dale was known for his hard-nosed, no-nonsense style of umpiring.

gan getting valuable experience as an umpire and basketball referee.

"My high school basketball coach was also the elementary coach, and lots of times, he didn't have anybody to ref the seventh- and eighth-grade games," explains Dale. "So he'd get me to do it. It paid \$5, and if I did three or four a week, I thought I was rich."

By the time Dale entered the Major League's umpire development school in Kissimmee, Fla., he had already gained substantial experience as a high school umpire and referee and had also been a foreman at the Holston Army Ammunition Plant in Kingsport and a cook in the U.S. Army.

"One of the keys to umpiring is the ability to deal with people and situations, and I guess I was good at that," he says. "So after about four and



At a recent University of Tennessee vs. Akron University baseball game in Knoxville, Dale positions himself for a close call at second base. — Photo courtesy of UTSports.com

a half years working in the minors, Calvin Griffith, the owner of the Minnesota Twins at the time, saw me call a AAA game and referred me to the supervisor of the American League umpires. I went [to the majors] toward the end of the 1974 season and never left.”

As Dale developed a tough but fair reputation as a major league ump, he crossed paths with some of the game’s biggest personalities. He shares his thoughts on some of them:

- Gaylord Perry (journeyman pitcher, 300+ game winner, and Hall of Fame member)

Gaylord never did use Vaseline [to grease a ball]. But he kept an empty tube of it in his pocket. When he’d notice the cameras on him, he’d get that tube out and fiddle around with it just to plant the thought in everybody’s mind. But he’d put KY jelly all over himself: in his hat, his collar, his belt, everywhere. He went through all these gyrations [before each pitch], and you couldn’t tell where he was getting it from.

- Reggie Jackson (Hall of Fame outfielder, slugger, best known for stints with As and Yankees)

Guys like Reggie Jackson should have stayed at the hotel when Gaylord was pitching. Gaylord had him so psyched out, he’d swing at anything.

- Pete Rose (all-time hits leader, utility fielder best known for stints with Reds and Phillies)

In my opinion, he should be in the [Major League Baseball] Hall of Fame strictly on his statistics. Y’know, Pete Rose was a mediocre ballplayer, but every day at noon, he was out there taking batting practice. He made himself into a superstar, and that’s why I respect him. I often tell kids, “Every high school and college player is a potential big-leaguer. All he needs to do is watch Pete Rose because it’s according to how hard you’re willing to work.”

- Billy Martin (hard-drinking, argumentative manager of the As and Yankees)

It’s no secret that Billy didn’t like me and I didn’t like him. He was always tough to deal with. Billy made a statement in the paper one time that his mother could whip me. Of course, the reporters couldn’t wait to get a response from me, so I said,

“Well, if anybody in that family can whip me, it’s his mother!”

- Nolan Ryan (pitcher, all-time strikeout leader, best known for stints with the Astros and Rangers)

I called two of Nolan Ryan’s no-hitters. I was giving a speech in Oklahoma City a while back, and a fellow asked me, “What does a Nolan Ryan fastball look like coming at you at 100 miles an hour?” I said, “Sir, you’ll have to ask someone besides me. I didn’t see one. If the catcher caught it, it was a strike. The batters couldn’t tell anything because they couldn’t see it, either.”

- Earl Weaver (notorious manager of the Orioles)

I ejected Earl Weaver — we called him “Rooney” — 14 times during my career. One night, I “ran” him during the national anthem. He had been on me all game the previous night, and I was checking the lineup card during the anthem. They brought out this great big black lady to sing it. Rooney and I were standing side-by-side as she was singing, and out of the side of his mouth, he said, “Well, Dale, how many plays are you going to screw up tonight?” I said, “It doesn’t matter, Rooney, ‘cause you’re not going to be around to see it. When this fat lady’s done, you are, too. And if you try to kick dirt on me, 56,000 people are going to think you’re nuts because nobody knows you’re gone but you and me.”

- Kirby Puckett (clutch slugger of the Minnesota Twins, recently deceased)

Kirby was a great guy but very intense when he came to the plate. [Chicago White Sox / Boston Red Sox catcher] Carlton “Pudge” Fisk was bad to talk to the batters to try to distract them. He’d always ask about their family or something. So the

first time Kirby would bat when their teams were playing, he’d say, “Hey, Pudge. I’m okay, my wife’s good, the kids are fine, the dog’s all right. Now shut the heck up, I’ve got to bat!”

Since retiring from the Major Leagues in 2001, Dale, an avid golfer, has been active in community service, working as athletic director for the Jonesborough Parks and Recreation Department. He and his wife, Joyce, also cook a weekly meal for senior citizens at Hawthorne Church of the Brethren in Johnson City, where the Fords are members.

“I know it’s a cliché, but this community has been really good to me over the years, and it’s time to give something back,” he says. “Whenever I’ve been at some far-off location to umpire a game, it’s always meant something to me when the public address announcer calls out, ‘Dale Ford, Jonesborough, Tennessee,’ during the introductions before the game.”

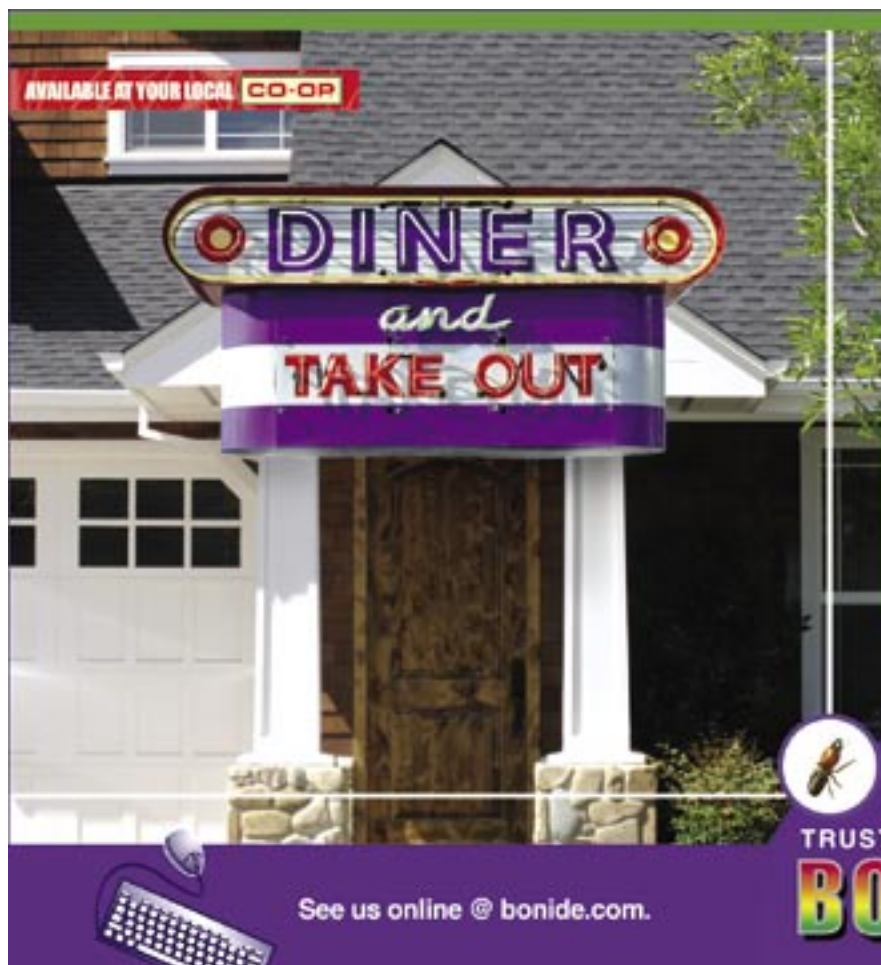
A father of five and grandfather of nine, Dale still umpires area college, high school, and even elementary school games and says he jumps at the chance to work with kids.

“Oh, they have a million questions,” he laughs. “It’s a lot of fun.”

A well-known personality in the Jonesborough area, Dale is even a candidate in the November elections for a seat in the State House of Representatives for his district.

“It’s another way that I’d like to give back to this area,” he says. “I know it doesn’t pay much, but I don’t care about that.”

“Look, anytime I can work with people or help somebody, I’ll do it. And if, when I die, people can say that the world is a better place because of me, I would consider that a success.”



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115933
115937

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Poulan 6.5 hp, B&S, 22-in. cut, side-discharge with mulch, HW
Poulan 6.5 hp, B&S, 22-in. cut, side-discharge with mulch, HW, FWD SP
Poulan 6.5 hp, B&S, 21-in. cut, side-discharge with bag, mulch, electric start

Item No.

115941
115942
115944
115947
115950

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Description

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119057

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FFA state officers visit LaVergne

The 2005-06 state FFA officers toured Tennessee Farmers Cooperative's LaVergne facilities Feb. 22 as part of their statewide Goodwill Tour during National FFA Week. The officers spent six days traveling across the state to visit with sponsors, FFA members, alumni, and legislators to promote the state's FFA programs and represent its 13,000 members.

The state officer team, pictured at right, are, from left, Jessie Hartle, vice president; Heather McLean, president; Rachel Clark, vice president; Bonnie Fakes, treasurer; Kara Tipton, sentinel; Jessica Jarrell, vice president; Emily Wood, reporter; and Brit-tany Cole, secretary.

Made up of all females for the first time in Tennessee FFA's history, the state officer team will conclude its year at the 78th State Convention April 3-5 in Gatlinburg. More than 2,000 FFA members and advisors will attend the conference to hear motivational speakers, compete in career development events, and attend leadership workshops. Stuart Joy, national vice president, will give a keynote address, and the 2006-07 state officers will also be elected.

For more information on the state convention, agricultural education, or Tennessee FFA programs, contact Steven Gass, state FFA advisor, at (615) 532-2847 or steven.gass@state.tn.us.



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UT Martin student group claims state conservation award

The University of Tennessee at Martin student chapter of the Wildlife Society recently won the Tennessee Wildlife Federation 2005 Conservation Organization of the Year award and was honored during a presentation March 21 in Nashville.

"This is the first time that a student group has won this award, which typically goes to statewide groups," said Dr. Eric Pelren, UT Martin associate professor of wildlife biology and adviser of the student chapter.

During 2005, the student organization of more than 50 members hosted the Tennessee Wildlife Federation's Blue Ribbon Panel on West Tennessee waterfowl hunting, organized a workshop for Northwest Tennessee row-crop producers, and started a column in "West Tennessee Outdoors" as a conduit between hunters and the wildlife profession. As volunteers for the annual West Tennessee Youth Outdoor Jamboree, Wildlife Society members provided labor and recruited for students and future professionals.

The UT Martin students also collected deer brainstems for the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency's (TWRA) "Chronic Wasting Disease" analysis and assisted with TWRA and Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge deer hunter check stations.

One of the student chapter's on-campus activities was a "Hunting 101" program that paired wildlife majors with students who were interested but had never hunted. The program provided students with critical knowledge about wildlife hunting and culture.

In 2005, members also attended two Tennessee Wildlife Resources Commission meetings and represented the state at a National Wildlife Society Meeting in Madison, Wis., and the Southeastern Wildlife Conference in St. Louis.

Choose plants wisely for an attractive, healthy garden

Planning to purchase some herbs or flowers for your garden or patio? Here are some tips from Dr. Susan Hamilton, director of the University of Tennessee Gardens, on how to select healthy and vigorous plants.

- Purchase younger, more succulent plants that are not in bloom. While older plants may look great and catch your eye, they will not adapt to your garden as quickly as younger plants that are vigorously growing.
- Carefully study the color of the foliage on plants you are selecting. Foliage color can be an indicator of nutritional problems. Pale green

to yellow foliage generally means poor nutrition, especially in nitrogen, unless the plant is a variety meant to have yellow foliage. A good dose of fertilizer can often remedy the problem.

- Select plants that have a uniform growth habit and form. Misshapen plants can take time to balance out and appear normal in their growth. Branching should be evenly spaced.
- Inspect plants carefully for insects. Common insects include aphids, scale, mealybugs, slugs or snails, and spider mites. A thorough inspection includes looking on the

underside of foliage and at the base and underside of leaf petioles. Also, shake the plant to see if any insects fly away. Don't buy a plant that has an insect infestation.

- Make sure the plant's root system has filled the container but is not rootbound. Plants that are rootbound can be stunted and hardened-off due to a high demand for water and lack of root space.
- Inspect plants carefully for foliar or root diseases. Foliar diseases are generally brown to black but can be red and result in spots or dieback on leaf margins or flowers. Root diseases attack and kill the root

system. Symptoms include stunted growth or wilted foliage. Remove the plant from its container and inspect the roots. Healthy roots should be white to light tan in color. Diseased roots will be dark brown to black and will break apart easily. The soil could have a foul odor as well.

- Select plants free of any mechanical damage such as scars, bruised bark or stems, and broken branches. Open wounds are an invitation to diseases and insects.
- Make sure that plants are snug and secure in their container. Wobbly, dry plants are an indication of broken roots around the base of the stem.

Green Industry is growing

The U.S. environmental horticulture industry, also known as the Green Industry, is one of the fastest growing segments of U.S. agriculture. A recent economic impact study by the University of Tennessee and the University of Florida attributes that growth to the nationwide boom in housing and other construction associated with urban development.


One of the co-authors of the study is Dr. Charles Hall, UT agricultural economist. Hall says that surprisingly few of the economic impacts of the industry had been previously measured at the national level, but their value was significant.

"Economic impacts for the U.S. Green Industry were estimated at \$147.8 billion in output, more than 1.9 million jobs, \$95.1 billion in value-added products and enterprises, \$64.3 billion in labor income, and \$6.9 billion in indirect business taxes," Hall says. These values are expressed in 2004 dollars.

The Green Industry includes wholesale nursery and sod growers, landscape architects, designers/builders, contractors and maintenance firms, retail garden centers like Co-op; and marketing intermediaries such as brokers and horticultural distribution centers (re-wholesalers). In addition to these commercial sectors, many state and local governments have significant urban forestry operations for management of parks, botanic gardens, and rights of way that are an integral segment of community infrastructure.

Hall says that while he was not surprised by the big numbers generated by the study, others have been.

"Most of the media and legislative contacts that I have talked with so far have been very impressed with not only the size of the Green Industry but the significant number of jobs it represents," he says.



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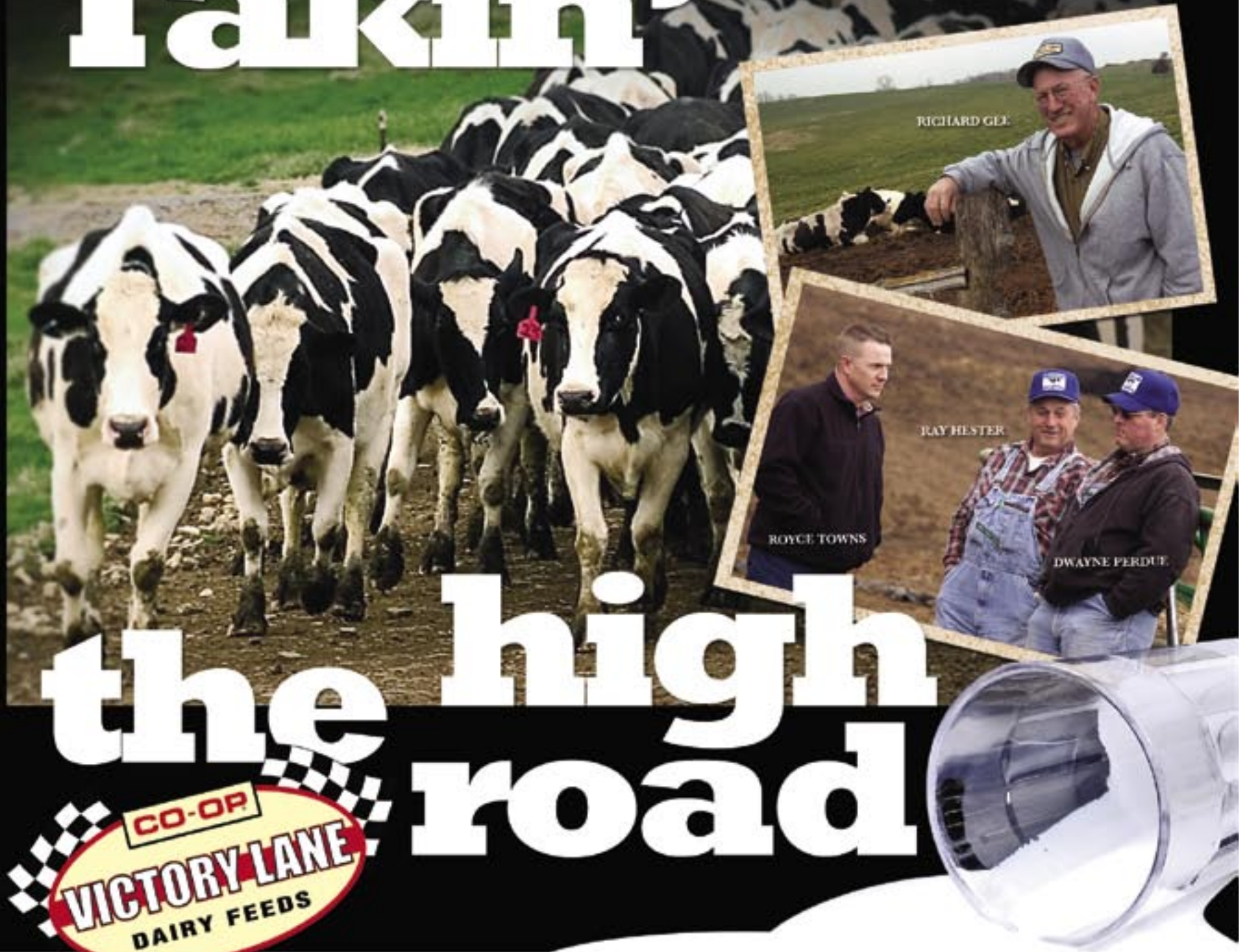


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Butterfat and production numbers continue to rise for Tennessee dairymen using Co-op's Victory Lane RAC+ feeds

Talkin'



It's an age-old challenge for dairy producers — how to increase butterfat percentages without compromising production, and vice versa. Like opposite ends of a child's seesaw, one tends to go up while the other goes down.

Advances in technology and genetics often boost production numbers to the point that butterfat content can't keep up. In other cases, butterfat and production numbers both suffer from the lack of available nutrients in the forages at hand. And it all boils down to a smaller milk check.

In 2005, Tennessee Farmers Cooperative introduced Victory Lane RAC+ dairy feeds to address these very problems. Based on cutting edge research, Victory Lane is formulated to stimulate butterfat percentages when fed along with typical Tennessee forages like fescue, alfalfa, and corn silage while providing a well balanced diet to improve overall health and, in turn, boost production. Several different formulations of the feed, ranging from 20 to 24 percent, suit a variety of forage types.

Thompsonville, Ky. dairyman Richard Gee was experiencing problems with production, butterfat, and hoof health when he began using Victory Lane RAC+ in November at the suggestion of TFC Feed and Animal Health Specialist Royce Townes.

"I was really struggling with the butterfat," Gee admits. "It had dropped as low as 2.7 percent. Production was down, and the condition of the cows was declining."

Gee says the improvement was quick and dramatic after beginning the feed program. "It all began to improve almost immediately," Gee says. "Butterfat and production

increased, the cows visibly looked better, and I stopped having any new abscesses or hoof issues. My last butterfat test was 3.67, and it has gotten as high as 4.1. I've never achieved the levels I'm at now and it's obviously thanks to the feed."

Sumner County producer Ray Hester was dealing with similar problems when he switched to Victory Lane RAC+ in October.

"Although my butterfat percentages weren't great, the biggest issues I had were cow health, foot problems, and low production," says Hester, who operates a 100-head Portland dairy with his son-in-law Dwayne Perdue. "Within a month's time, the cows were eating a lot more hay, production had jumped nearly 10 pounds, and you could just tell they were going to do much better."

Hester says the feeding program is particularly well suited to his operation, which doesn't include silage.

"It's just been ideal," he says. "Butterfat has stayed between 3.65 and 3.9 percent, I'm getting more milk, and the cows look 100 percent better."

To learn more about the Victory Lane RAC+ line of feeds, visit with the professionals at your local Co-op.





Co-op cooks have a long tradition of sharing recipes in the "What's cookin'?" column, which has been a regular feature of the *Tennessee Cooperator* since June 1978.

Feeling our oats

Oats are known as one of the world's healthiest foods, offering benefits that range from helping to prevent heart disease to aiding in weight control.

And, as this month's "What's cookin'?" column proves, this wholesome grain is also a versatile ingredient in many types of recipes.

Healthy meets hearty for breakfast in Rhonda Huskey's "Oatmeal Pancakes," which are topped with a tempting buttermilk syrup. Rhonda is our Cook-of-the-Month for April.

Other recipes featured are Buffalo Chips, Granola, Sunday Oatmeal, Blue Ribbon Meat Loaf, Oatmeal Brownies, Trout Bake, and Pineapple Secrets.

Enjoy!

Oatmeal Pancakes

- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 cup old-fashioned oats
- ¼ cup wheat germ
- ¼ cup instant nonfat dry milk powder
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups buttermilk
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- Buttermilk syrup:**
- 1 cup sugar
- ¼ cup butter or margarine
- 1 tablespoon light corn syrup
- ¾ cup buttermilk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Combine dry ingredients in a large bowl. In another bowl, beat together eggs, buttermilk, and oil; mix well and stir into dry ingredients just until blended. Pour batter by ¼ cupfuls onto a lightly greased, hot griddle; turn when bubbles form on top of pancakes. Cook until second side is golden.

For syrup, combine sugar, butter, and corn syrup in a saucepan. Bring to a boil on medium heat; boil and stir for five minutes or until golden brown. Remove from heat; stir in buttermilk and vanilla. Allow syrup to stand five minutes; stir and serve with pancakes.

Yield: 16 pancakes and about 1½ cups syrup.

Rhonda Huskey
Sevierville
Sevier Farmers Cooperative



Buffalo Chips

- 1 cup butter or margarine
- 1 cup solid shortening
- 2 cups packed brown sugar
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 4 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 2 cups quick uncooked oats
- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 cup coconut
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 2 cups Rice Krispies
- 6 ounces chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350°. In a large mixing bowl, cream butter or mar-

garine and shortening. Add sugars, eggs, and vanilla; mix well. Stir in oats, flour, baking soda, and baking powder. When well blended, stir in coconut, pecans, Rice Krispies, and chocolate chips.

When batter is thoroughly mixed, place ¼ cup batter for each cookie on a large ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 10-12 minutes or until edges are golden. For a crispier cookie, bake 12-15 minutes.

Cool slightly on baking sheet before removing.

Yield: Four dozen large cookies.

Jeana Owens
Cumberland Gap
Claiborne Farmers Cooperative



Topped with tempting buttermilk syrup, Rhonda Huskey's "Oatmeal Pancakes" are a healthy, hearty breakfast. Rhonda is our Cook-of-the-Month for April.

— Photo by Mark E. Johnson, food styling by Allison Morgan

Granola

- 10 cups oatmeal
- 2 cups coconut
- 2 cups brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups walnuts
- ½ cup peanut butter
- 2 sticks (1 cup) butter or margarine
- 1½ cups brown sugar

In a large container, combine oatmeal, coconut, 2 cups brown sugar, salt and walnuts.

Melt together peanut butter, butter or margarine, and 1½ cups brown sugar. Pour over dry ingredients and mix well.

Pour into pans and toast at 270° for 1½ to 2 hours or until golden brown, stirring occasionally.

Kathy Miller
Guthrie, Ky.
Montgomery Farmers Cooperative



Sunday Oatmeal

- 1 cup natural rolled oats
- 2 cups boiling water
- 1 large red delicious apple, cored and chopped
- ½ cup raisins
- ⅛ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ cup brown sugar, loosely packed
- ¼ cup Tennessee sorghum
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon butter

Place oats and boiling water in a quart microwave-safe dish. Microwave (uncovered) on high setting for three to five minutes, stirring once. Add remaining ingredients to the dish and microwave on medium-high setting for an additional two minutes. Let stand for two minutes more and adjust the seasonings to suit your taste.

Yield: Two generous servings.

Variations: If creamier oatmeal is desired, milk may be substituted for half of the water. Use a golden delicious apple for a sweeter taste or a Granny Smith for a more tart flavor.

Add ¼ cup of your favorite chopped nuts for more fiber.

The cook says: Oatmeal is like your everyday work/school day: just kind of ordinary and plain. But on Sunday or go-to-meeting day, things are dressed up more special. So that's how I started treating my family's oatmeal. I made it taste just a little more special. Now they ask for it by name: Sunday Oatmeal.

Merrie Thomas
Covington
Tipton Farmers Cooperative

Blue Ribbon Meat Loaf

1 cup tomato juice
¼ cup finely chopped onion
1 teaspoon salt
¾ cup uncooked oats (quick or regular)
¼ teaspoon black pepper
1 egg, beaten (optional)
1½ pounds lean ground chuck or round

Heat oven to 350°. Combine all ingredients except ground beef; mix well. Add ground beef and mix lightly but thoroughly. Press into loaf pan or shape in loaf and place on a rack in a greased casserole dish. Bake one hour. Let stand five minutes before slicing.

The cook says: This meat loaf is tasty without being too spicy.

Irene Greer
Jamestown
Fentress Farmers Cooperative

Oatmeal Brownies

½ cup butter
1 cup sugar
2 eggs, well beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla

½ cup flour, sifted
½ cup cocoa
½ teaspoon baking powder
1 cup oats

Combine ingredients in order listed; mix well. Pour into greased pan and bake at 350° for 30 minutes.

Sarah Sisk
Belvidere
Franklin Farmers Cooperative

Trout Bake

4 trout filets, halved
1 cup milk
¾ cup oat bran
4 tablespoons cholesterol-free margarine, melted
½ cup roasted almonds

Soak trout in milk for an hour before cooking; drain.

Combine oat bran and melted margarine in a bowl. Dredge trout pieces in oat bran mixture and place in a baking dish. Sprinkle almonds over filets. Bake uncovered at 350° for 30 minutes or until the fish flakes easily with a fork.

Yield: Eight servings.

Leroy Nelson
Maryville
Blount Greenback
Farmers Cooperative

Pineapple Secrets

1 cup granulated sugar
2 tablespoons cornstarch
1 (No. 2) can crushed pineapple and juice
1¾ cups self-rising flour
1 cup brown sugar
1½ cups oats

¾ cup butter or margarine
For filling, combine granulated sugar and cornstarch in a small sauce-

pan; add pineapple and cook over medium heat until thick; set aside.

Combine flour, brown sugar, and oats; cut in butter until crumbly.

Place half of mixture in a greased 9-x-13-inch pan; pat down firmly. Spread filling evenly on top; add re-

maining crust and pat down as firmly as possible. Bake at 400° for 25-30 minutes. Cool and cut into bars.

Yield: 20 bars.

Frances Jamison
McEwen
Humphreys Farmers Cooperative

OUR COUNTRY CHURCHES



139th in a series of photographs to show where rural Tennesseans worship

Old Charlotte Road Church of Christ in Cheatham County

The Old Charlotte Road Church of Christ dates back to 1927 in a small community near Pegram. It was first known as Chestnut Grove Church of Christ. In 1967, the congregation moved into its present building across the road from the old church. Clifford Dobbs has been minister since 1988. — Submitted by Michael DeGeorge

(Editor's note: If you have a "Country Church" you'd like to see featured in the *Cooperator*, send us a recent picture that is of good quality, along with pertinent facts and history about the church, to: *Country Churches, Tennessee Cooperator*, P.O. Box 3003, LaVergne, TN 37086. We'd love to hear from you.)

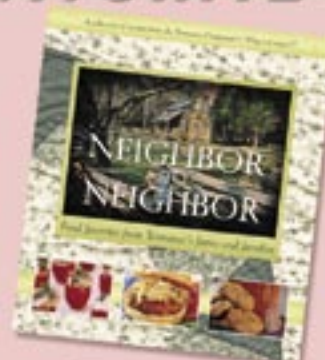


What are you getting mom this year for Mother's Day? How about our 60th anniversary cookbook *Neighbor to Neighbor?*

Packed with the most delicious recipes you will ever taste, our cookbook will surely become an essential ingredient to mom's kitchen and one of her favorites.

Also ask about the second release of our 50th anniversary cookbook *"What's cookin'?"*

See your local Co-op for these cookbooks!



CO-OP

Celebrate Dairy Month, start of summer with ice cream recipes in June

It wouldn't be summertime in the South without a batch of good, old-fashioned homemade ice cream. As the season heats up, our June "What's cookin'?" column will cool you down by featuring your favorite ice cream recipes. It's also a great way to celebrate June Dairy Month and thank Tennessee's dairy farmers for all they do.

The person submitting the ice cream recipe judged best will be named Cook-of-the-Month and receive \$10. Others sending recipes chosen for publication will receive \$5.

Monday, May 1, is the deadline for your ice cream recipes.

Don't forget: Only recipes that include complete, easy-to-follow instructions will be considered for publication. Several recipes are disqualified each month because they do not contain all the information we feel is needed to prepare the dishes successfully. Recipes featured in "What's cookin'?" are not independently tested, so we must depend on the accuracy of the cooks sending them. Always use safe food-handling, preparation, and cooking procedures.

Send your entries to: **Recipes, Tennessee Cooperator, P.O. Box 3003, LaVergne, TN 37086.** You can submit more than one recipe in the same envelope. You can also e-mail recipes to: amorgan@ourcoop.com.

Be sure to include your name, address, telephone number, and the Co-op with which you do business. It's important that your Co-op be included because we want to give it recognition if your recipe is printed. Recipes that appear in the "What's cookin'?" column will also be published on Tennessee Farmers Cooperative's Web site at www.ourcoop.com.



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I work for
somebody else.
From 5:00 on
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WELCOME TO THE COUNTRY.

In an effort to better serve our diverse mix of customers, Co-ops are continually offering new products and informative publications. This special section is designed to keep our readers informed about what's going on "down at the Co-op." Here are a few of the new items that can be found at your participating local Co-op. Always check with your Co-op for availability and price. Some products may require a short delivery time.



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New Co-op Safe-Guard Pellets (#94227) provide proven internal parasite control for beef and dairy cattle in a convenient feeding form. These pellets give the convenience of a one-day treatment with the ability to strategically deworm cattle without restraint. They are formulated for cattle of all ages. Lactating dairy cows can be dewormed without loss of milk income because there is no milk withdrawal. One 40-pound bag treats eight 1,000-pound cows.



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Fully assembled and ready to use, this air tank boasts a high-quality brass manifold. It comes equipped with an air pressure gauge, air line shut-off valve, pressure relief valve, easy-access fill valve, a 4-foot by 1/4-inch air hose, and air chuck. Great for all your inflating needs. This tank also comes with a one-year limited warranty.

Coleman 20-gallon Contractor Series Portable Air Tank

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Sweat equity

Wilson County dairyman Phillip Lea embodies the spirit of American ingenuity and perseverance

Story and photo by Mark E. Johnson

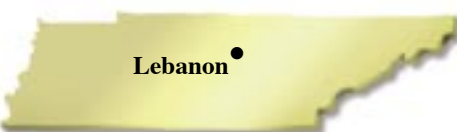
Wilson County dairyman Phillip Lea is known among friends and neighbors for his innovative and tenacious approach to farming. Phillip oversees a 70-head operation on 330 acres.

Throughout history, individuals have emerged from obscurity to symbolize certain enviable qualities. The literary figure Robinson Crusoe, for example, embodies self-sufficiency. Ben Franklin is known for his inventiveness. Wilbur and Orville Wright are models of persistence and tenacity.

And some could argue that Wilson County dairyman Phillip Lea fits nicely on this list.

He may not be famous like the aforementioned icons, but Phillip shares many of the same characteristics. Maybe in even greater quantities.

He doesn't live in the lap of luxury or on an exotic island, but Phillip has probably focused more time and energy on the rocky 330-acre farm he shares with his parents, Riley and Edith, than do most millionaire owners of big-time country estates.



And though the longtime member and former director of Wilson Farmers Cooperative has worked hard for the majority of his 47 years for what some might consider meager returns, his attitude is as light and cheerful as if he'd just won the lottery.

"I often overhear people complaining about their jobs and how they hate going in to work every day," Phillip says, shaking his head. "I can

honestly say that there's not a morning goes by that I don't look forward to getting up and doing my thing out on the farm. It's what I enjoy most."

Phillip applied this "can-do" attitude to a seemingly mundane problem that presented itself in the early 1980s, soon after the recent Middle Tennessee State University graduate purchased the farm his parents had been renting since their marriage in 1958. Phillip needed rough-sawn lumber — and plenty of it.

"One of the first things I wanted to do after buying the place was build some equipment sheds," he recalls. "We had plenty of timber on the place, and all we needed was a mill to saw the lumber."

Simple enough, right? It seemed to be at first. A friend of the family had recently opened a small sawmill nearby and agreed to saw the lumber for Phillip's project.

"I thought, 'Wow, this is great,'" Phillip says. "The mill was close enough that we could haul the timber up there with a tractor and wagon. We thought we had it made. But soon after we got started, our neighbor sold the mill. He was too busy at his day job driving a Greyhound bus."

Unfazed, Phillip looked up a friend's father who owned a sawmill near Gladeville.

"His name was Mr. Rufus Capps, a great old gentleman," says Phillip. "I took some logs down there and developed a friendship with him. I learned a great deal by watching him. He was good about explaining things, and I was very curious. I thought, 'Good — we've found us a place to saw some logs.'"

But before Phillip could say "two-by-four," Rufus had sold his mill to a log home manufacturer in Mt. Juliet.



"And so we lost that source," laughs the congenial dairyman. "Next came a neighbor of ours back on Burnt House Road who had a little mill. He helped me saw enough lathing to finish my first shed project, but when I had a bunch of timber to do, he just couldn't get to it quick enough. The job took months to complete, and by the time it was finished, we'd missed our building season."

By this time, Phillip says, he had seen and helped with enough sawmill work that he was getting comfortable with the process. One day, after realizing that he needed more lumber than what he could get milled, an idea began to brew.

"I thought to myself, 'If I had me a mill, I believe I could run one,'" he says. "So I began to look around. Mainly, I was noticing them in the

back of the Farm Bureau magazine, but most were nicer than I needed for just an occasional project. At the same time, I began riding around backroads looking for old, dilapidated mills that I might be able to buy. But normally, the old farmer would say, 'No, I might want to fix that up some day,' or 'I sawed on that a long time, and it's going to stay right here.' I began to get kind of desperate."

But Lady Luck smiled on Phillip the day his father, Riley, remembered an old mill located alongside a nearby road that had been recently widened by the county.

"They had literally taken a bulldozer and pushed what was left of the old mill into a brush pile," Phillip recalls. "So I got ahold of the guy who owned the place and asked him if I could dig around in the pile for parts. He said to help myself."

Phillip salvaged several metal components from the pile but had no idea what they were or how to assemble them. So he began enlisting the help of retired "sawyers," or sawmill operators.

"I found this one old guy up near Alexandria who loved a sawmill more than anything," laughs Phillip. "He had lost an arm and several fingers over the years, but he'd still rather be around a mill as anything. He looked at those metal parts and said, 'I don't know what you've got, but it's old!'"

Phillip gamely pressed on, determined to uncover the mystery of the

old parts. His investigation led him to a machinery shop in Nashville, where an employee compared the serial numbers on the metal pieces to parts in antique catalogs. Still no luck. The employee then referred Phillip to a man in Morton, Miss., who was acknowledged to be one of the country's foremost experts in antique sawmills.

"His name was Alan Dull," says Phillip. "I went right home and wrote him a letter explaining my situation."

The dairyman says he received a response within a few days.

"His letter said, 'Son, what you've got is so old, there's no parts available, and there's not even any parts manuals in existence. But I'm going to send you a manual for what took its place: a double-aught Frick,'" recalls Phillip. "It was a relief to find someone who knew what I had."

With his new parts manual in hand, Phillip began watching the Farm Bureau classifieds again, this time with a new sense of confidence. One day he noticed an ad for a three-headblock carriage, one of the many parts he needed. He traveled back to Nashville, purchased the carriage, and before he left, Phillip asked the seller if he had any other parts.

"The guy said, 'Yes, I've got a blade and some items left over from a double-aught Frick,'" Phillip recalls with a grin. "I said, 'From a what?'" 'A double-aught Frick.' I said, 'Fella, I believe we need to go take a look in your pile!'"

The seller's "pile" turned out to be the motherlode for Phillip, yielding nearly every other part the dairyman needed. Excited, he returned to Lebanon with a truckload of the "awfulest load of junk you ever did see." For the next two years, Phillip "grabbed a minute here and there between milkings and cutting hay" to disassemble, clean, restock, and reassemble the antique mill, using spec sheets and blueprints more than twice his age along with some good old-fashioned ingenuity.

"I'd get out there whenever I could," he says. "I poured concrete pillars for it to sit on. I covered and uncovered it no telling how many times to keep the rain off it. I painted it and put water seal on it. I devised a way to power it from the power take-off shaft of one of our tractors. I asked Bob Wright, a man from the Forestry Service who was a local expert on sawmills, to come help me learn how to use it. Finally, after all those years, I got the thing running."

But there was a problem. The saw wouldn't cut with the accuracy Phillip had seen at other mills. After all his preparation and careful attention, Phillip was now at a loss.

"I was out there one day after I'd had it built for a pretty good while and just couldn't get it to saw ac-

curately," he says. "It was hot that day and the sweat was dripping in my eyes as I was looking down at the blade — you know how you'll kind of close an eye and look down something. For some reason, I noticed that the [blade] tooth was wider on one side than the other. There's a tool called a 'swedge' that sawyers use to 'shape' the tooth. I thought, 'That thing is swedged a little heavier one way than the other.'"

Phillip used his swedge to bend the tooth a little to "let it angle more the other way." Frustrated, he went to his house to join his parents for lunch.

"As we were eating, I told Dad, 'If it doesn't saw now, I'm just going to sell it. I've had it.' So we went back out there after dinner, ran a log across, and, lo and behold, it sawed!

It all boiled down to about 1/32 of an inch of swedge one way or the other."

Now, 14 years later, the results of Phillip's persistence and innovation are standing throughout the farm. The sawmill, still running smoothly, is covered by a sturdy wooden structure, the first project built from the mill. After that came a 68-by-32-foot calf barn and then, a 30-by-60-foot tool shed, a dairy barn, hay shed, and 106-by-30-foot shop building. And there's no end in sight.

"We need several more buildings if we can just find the time to build them," laughs Phillip. "People ask me why I don't just buy the lumber and hire out the work. I tell them that I know the quality that I'm putting into the buildings because I do it all myself. I'm using the resources I've

got here on my farm, and it would seem foolish to sell the timber just to turn around and buy it back in lumber."

In 1989, the Wilson County Jaycees named Phillip "Farmer of the Year." He recalls what he told the audience when he accepted his plaque during the awards ceremony.

"I said that a lot of times when you're out there [on the farm] doing something by yourself and it turns out good, there's nobody to see it but you. To accept that award felt like everybody in that room was giving me a little pat on the back and saying, 'That's a good job,'" says Phillip. "It was a good feeling to be recognized, but that's not why I farm. I do it because I love it."



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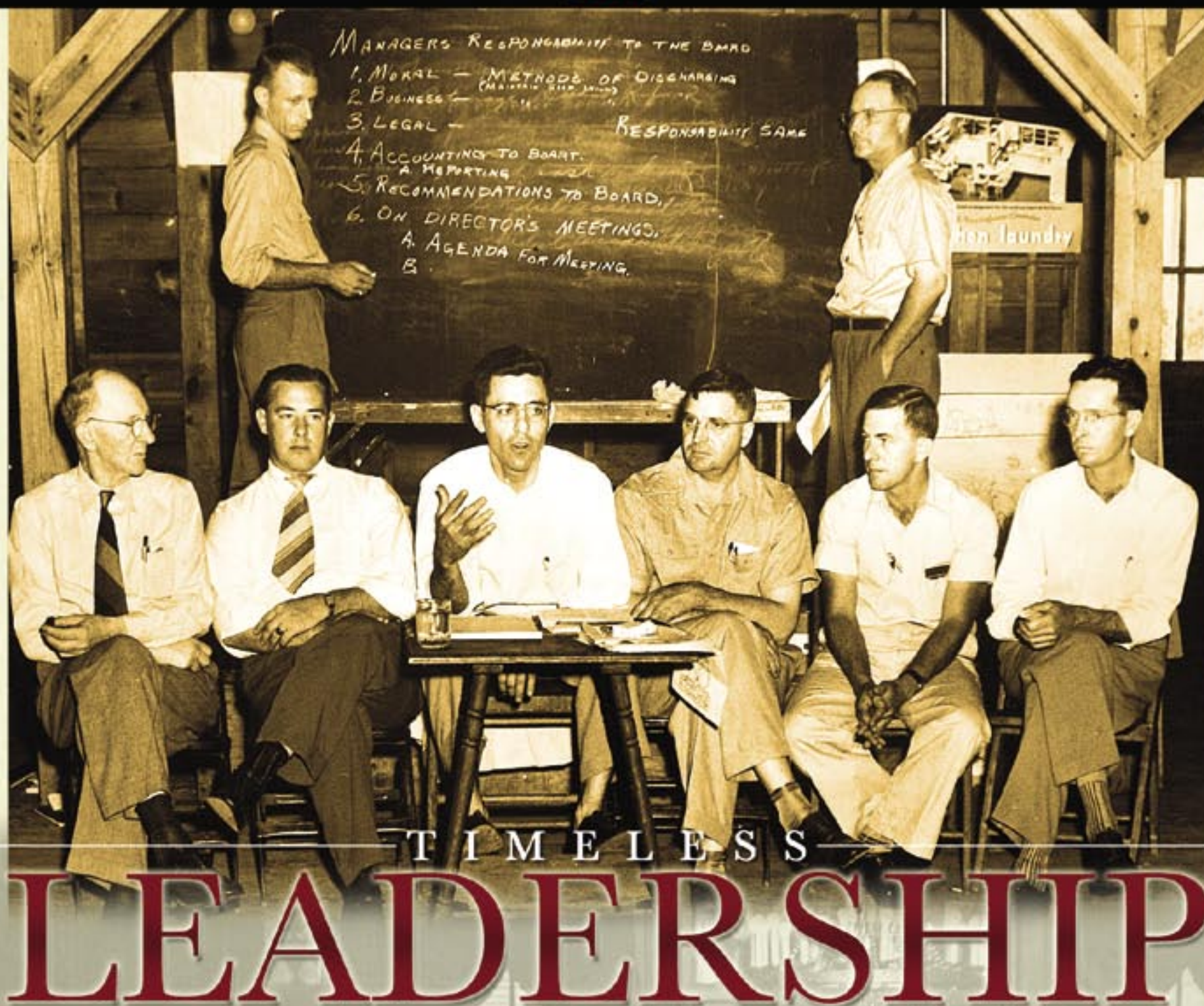
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TIMELESS LEADERSHIP

A cooperative's success can be measured in the leadership of its members and employees. Without people who believe in the Co-op way of doing business, we cease to exist. So many dedicated directors, employees, managers, and farmer-members have worked tirelessly through the years to keep the dream of their fathers, grandfathers, or great-grandfathers alive. Sixty sets of directors have led this cooperative with vision and foresight. TFC and member Co-ops have been blessed with competent, knowledgeable, and dedicated employees, many with a long history working for the Co-op system.

The concept of cooperation is just as timeless as it was more than 60 years ago when a group of individuals decided to pull together and establish a Co-op that would be there to serve them and give them control over their own farming affairs. These were simply people who had a dream and worked hard to make it a reality. Those first farmers probably didn't realize they were creating a legacy that would endure well beyond their lifetimes. But as it turns out, protecting the best interest of farmers is an idea that has served our system well. That's why we're still here today.

TIMELESS