



**THE
FOWLER EQUITY EXCHANGE**

Fowler, Kansas 67844

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NEWSLETTER

“Keeping in touch with your cooperative business”

January – February 2007

Manager’s comments

By Bob Bender

With the start of the new year, we all think ahead and hope for another good year in agriculture. The moisture we received in the last part of December will certainly help with growing conditions, especially in this area where adequate moisture has been a real problem. The wheat crop looks good thus far, and we should now have some subsoil moisture to aid in getting this year's corn crop off to a good start after planting time this spring.

The high demand for corn has kept grain prices much above what we normally see at this time of the year. The main reason for this is the potential for future usage by all the ethanol plants being built. When this “new” demand is added to the normal usage from livestock feeding, it creates a shortage and the market compensates for that in higher prices. How much higher those prices will go is anyone's guess. It may be that now is the time to begin locking in some new-crop grain to take advantage of these higher prices.

One thing I want to share with our members is a change in our handling charges on grain. These charges affect only grain that is hauled back out of the elevator. It has no effect on grain hauled in and then sold at a later date. These charges have not been changed since 1982, and our expenses have gone up dramatically in those 24 years. The previous charges

were 10 cents per bushel in and 10 cents per bushel out. The new charges will be 15 cents per bushel in and 15 cents per bushel out. Grain processed through the feed mill will be subject only to the 15 cents per bushel in charge. The effective date of the change is June 1, 2007. All other grain charges are the same as in previous years. The reason for the delayed effective date is to give everyone ample time to adapt to the change and to make plans accordingly. We appreciate your understanding of the need to adjust these charges.

With 2006 behind us, we would like to thank everyone for their business and support through the year. We look forward to serving your needs and the opportunity to earn your business in the coming year.

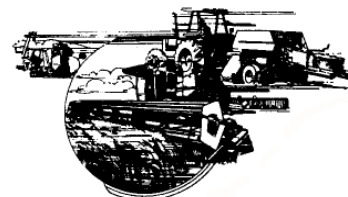
-TFEE-

Fertilizer Department

By Don Burdett

Last fall was a good one for getting field work done. Many of our patrons took advantage of the good weather and put down much of their fertilizer for next year's crops. Probably 80% of that work has been done as we enter the new year.

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Fertilizer Department *continued from page 1*

Now that we have received some slow, soaking rains, the potential for a wheat crop has been substantially improved. As soon as they can get on the fields, many producers will be top-dressing wheat to ensure that it has adequate nutrients to produce an optimum yield. Some will also apply herbicides to control weeds. So far, the price of nitrogen (N) has held quite steady, but when demand for those products increases the price will likely go up.

This is just a reminder that early applications of top-dress nitrogen nearly always produce the best results. It is important that the nitrogen be in the root zone when the wheat breaks dormancy and early application allows time for winter moisture to move those nutrients down where they can be utilized by the wheat plants. Three of the five factors that determine yield are determined very early in the growth cycle of the wheat plant. Many times producers top-dress too late to realize the most benefit from the fertilizer and maximum yields from their crops. Research data tells us that late application of nitrogen tends to improve protein content of the grain, but not yield.

The total N requirement for wheat is directly related to yield. About 2.4 pounds of N per bushel are required for winter wheat. Residual nitrate N in the

soil profile and organic matter decomposition will provide part of the required N and should be subtracted from the total N requirements.

Nitrogen deficiency symptoms:

- Overall light green color on small plants as well as yellowing of the lower leaves on older plants
- Reduced tillering
- Reduced vigor

We have the 32% liquid nitrogen you'll need for top-dressing your wheat.

It would be a good idea to look your wheat fields over for weeds. The conditions that are good for the wheat are also good for the weeds to germinate and grow. Don't make your wheat compete with weeds for moisture and nutrients. It may cost a few bushels of wheat to control those weeds, but not using herbicides and having a problem will likely cost a lot more bushels in the long-run. Chemicals can be applied along with the top-dress application or sprayed separately if you applied sufficient nitrogen earlier. It is important to do it early before the weeds become too big for efficient control. Here at your Co-op we keep on hand the basic chemicals and we can get any product you want.

Right now we know of several shop projects going on as our customers gear up for the spring farming season. We stock many of the supplies, parts, etc. that you will need. If we don't have it in inventory, we can special order for you. Those special orders usually come in no more than two days and many times the next day. It depends on where the source is located in most cases.

Please give us a call or stop by the fertilizer department and we will help with your crop production needs. We appreciate your business. **-TFEE-**

The Fowler Equity Exchange

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From the Service Station

By Brent Copeland

It is wintertime in Kansas and, as we have recently experienced, that means we can have some bad weather with which to contend. There are several things we need to do to be prepared. One is having your vehicles checked over to be sure the antifreeze



will prevent freezing as well as protect the cooling system from rust and corrosion. We have a supply of bulk and packaged antifreeze in stock. Antifreeze should be changed according to the manufacturer's recommendations. The old coolant may not freeze; however, the additives that prevent the formation of rust and corrosion eventually wear out and won't do a complete job of protecting the cooling system.

If you have a battery that is on the weak side, it will very likely let you down one of these really cold mornings. Even a new, fully-charged battery has only about half the cranking power when it is 0°F. as it does when it is warm. Couple that with a cold engine with cold oil in the crankcase and you have a potential problem. Let us check the battery in your vehicles and equipment and if you need a replacement, we have them for just about every application.

Good tread on the tires is very important, especially when you are forced to drive on wet, icy, or snow-packed roads. When you stop to think about it, there are only four small patches of rubber in contact with the road at any given time. You need all the traction you can get to be safe while driving in winter weather conditions. Again, we have quality tires at competitive prices that will fit your vehicles.

The rubber fillers in the windshield wipers may have deteriorated during the hot summer. They may be hard and cracked so they can't clear the windshield during rain or snow storms. Let us check them out and replace them if needed. It's another safety factor. Be sure all the lights are working properly. That's still another safety factor and you very likely use them more in the winter months.

A new service, fuel intake system cleaning, is now being offered at your Co-op's service station. The charge for this service is \$29.95. Cleaning helps restore the efficiency of the engine by cleaning out the deposits to make the engine run better and improve mileage per gallon of fuel.

We still offer transmission and cooling system flushes. Check your owner's manual for recommendations for those services. The recommendations may vary with the make and model of your vehicle.

Are you using E-10 unleaded gasoline? There are a couple of factors that are especially an advantage during the winter months. You should never have to add gas-line antifreeze since no moisture accumulates

in the fuel tank. It is absorbed by the ethanol. Another factor is the higher octane rating which means faster and easier starting during cold weather. Give it a trial run. We think you will see a difference.

If you use the car wash during cold weather, we urge you to use caution. Water freezes on the concrete and we don't want anyone falling and injuring themselves. -TFEE-

Bulk fuels/ propane

By Randy Reese



As we move on through the winter months, we will continue to run the routes and keep the propane tanks of our route customers filled. We remind those of you who are not on the route system but call each time to order propane to make sure you watch the gauge on your storage tank. Call your order for propane when the reading gets down to about 10% to 15% of capacity. If you run out of fuel, we are required to do a systems check and replace any defective or outdated parts before we can fill the tank. There is an extra charge for the check. There is also an extra charge if we are called out after regular business hours. All new customers are also required to have the safety systems check before we can fill their propane tank.

Thank you for your business. It is appreciated!

-TFEE-

Winter driving?

Reduce Risks

Manhattan, Kan. – Overlooking the need to prepare for winter driving can be a mistake — and a deadly one at that, said Mike Bradshaw, Kansas State University research and extension health and safety specialist.

Though Kansas has enjoyed relatively mild winters recently, state climatologist, Mary Knapp, who is based at K-State, also urged caution.

“Conditions can change quickly. A road can be clear on the way to an appointment, yet hazardous when it is time to return,” Knapp said.

Motorists can reduce their risks with a two-part process, said Bradshaw, who provided a seasonal automotive checklist and a list of winter driving “Do’s and Don’ts.”

*Please turn to **Winter driving** on page 4*

First, the checklist:

Battery, alternator, and starter: All should be in good working order. If the battery is near the end of its life, ask an auto technician to do a load test. Replace it early to ensure consistent starts.

Belts and hoses: If a belt or hose is showing wear or cracking, replace it.

Brakes: Check wear and replace pads or other mechanics, if needed.

Head, tail, and emergency lights: Make sure all lights work.

Heater, defroster, and fan: Make sure all systems work.

Radiator and antifreeze: Check fluid levels and antifreeze.

Windshield wiper blades: Replace blades annually. Use a snow brush and ice scraper to clear the windshield, side and rear windows, head, tail, and sidelights. Using wipers as ice scrapers can damage wiper blades and mechanism. De-icer also can be helpful if a vehicle is left uncovered for a period of time.

After completing the automotive checklist, use these tips to reduce risks on the road:

***Check weather conditions** by listening to radio and television weather reports and calling the Road Conditions Hotline: 1-800-585-7623. Kansas road condition information also is available on the Internet: www.kanroad.org. Adjust or postpone travel accordingly.

***Travel absolutely necessary?** Advise others of departure, estimated travel time and route. If you fail to arrive, rescuers will know where to begin their search.

***Travel during daylight hours.**

***Slow down.** Allow extra stopping distance between your vehicle and the one in front of you. And, keep an eye on the vehicle behind you.

***Reduce speed** when approaching an intersection, which can be particularly dangerous as snow melts and refreezes, turning corners and approaching or using on and off ramps.

***Accelerate slowly.**

***What to do in a skid?** The type of brakes dictates recommended responses. Generally, the rule

is to turn into a skid and then correct, with care not to overcorrect. *With* anti-lock brakes, press firmly on the brake pedal. *Without* anti-lock brakes, let up on the gas and pump the brakes to avoid wheel lockup. Practice starts, stops and responding to a skid in an empty parking lot.

***Slide off the road?** Staying with the vehicle is recommended. Tie a bright cloth or bandanna to the antenna or put the hood up to signal the need for assistance. If you have a cell phone along, use it to call for help. To stay warm while waiting, bundle up and/or run the heater intermittently — perhaps 10 minutes an hour — to conserve fuel until help arrives. Lower windows two to three inches to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. When snow is a contributing factor and a car or truck slides into a ditch or snow bank, make sure that the area around the exhaust is clear so that carbon monoxide fumes will be exhausted.

***Keep the gas tank close to full** to prevent condensation, add weight, and, if stranded, provide the fuel needed to run the heater.

Winter car kit

Think of a winter car kit as an insurance policy. What to include? Here are recommendations from Mike Bradshaw, K-State health and safety specialist:

- *Bright tie or bandanna to tie on antenna as a signal.
- *Cell phone, if you have one.
- *Extra warm clothes, such as insulated coveralls, jacket, hat, gloves, socks and boots.
- *Blanket(s).
- *Flashlight with extra batteries.
- *Flare or reflectors.
- *Non-skid mats or cat box littler (for traction, if stuck).
- *Bag of sand or salt.
- *Jumper cables.
- *Tow rope.
- *Shovel.
- *Tool kit.
- *First aid kit.
- *Two-day (or longer) supply of medications.
- *Candle, coffee can, and matches (stored in waterproof container).
- *Non-perishable food, such as dried fruit, nuts, cereal bars.
- *Water
- *Battery-powered radio.