

# NEWSLETTER

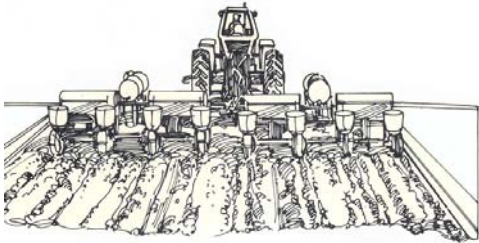
*"Keeping in touch with your cooperative business"*

March – April 2006

## Manager's comments

By Bob Bender

It's hard to believe that spring planting time is just around the corner. Soon April will be here and, hopefully, Mother Nature will be generous with the moisture needed to plant and grow a good crop.



Most of you have completed a good share of your fertilization ahead of time by taking advantage of the open winter we have had.

Fertilizer prices, nitrogen in particular, have been stable for the last several weeks. At the time of our last newsletter, our nitrogen suppliers were expecting prices to rise substantially. Fortunately, they were incorrect in their prediction, which brings me to a very important subject about which I am sure many of you already know. It seems that no matter where you turn (either on the radio, in print, or on television) there is someone out there who is an "expert" on what the markets are going to do in the near term as well as the long term. I caution you to take this prediction for exactly what it is worth — someone's opinion. A sound marketing program is one that makes use of many different options to spread risk. If one area does

poorly, it does not spell disaster and leaves the other areas to, hopefully, pick up the slack. So the old adage, "Don't put all your eggs in one basket" is so very true in today's volatile marketplace.

We have a new employee at the Fowler Equity Station. Jacob Patrick is our station manager replacing Ron Smith who has decided to further this career in another area. We thank Ron for his good work in the past and wish him the best of luck in his new endeavors. I am sure you will see that Jacob is an ambitious young man who is willing and eager to provide all of your service needs at the station. Please stop and get acquainted with him, if you haven't done so already.

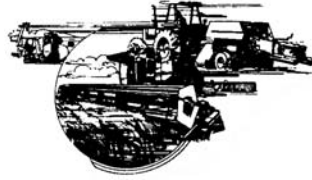
Your Co-op has only two months left in this current fiscal year, and it looks like we should end the year on a positive note. The good crops last year are certainly having a lot to do with the good year we are experiencing. All this would not be possible without the help and support of all of you, our farmer members. We sincerely thank you for that.

If you have any questions or concerns about YOUR cooperative, please feel free to stop by or all the office. Thanks for your business! -TFEE-

**Don't forget to check  
your farm-stored grain**

# Fertilizer Department

By Don Burdett



Spring work has been going on for some time now. In fact, anhydrous ammonia has been applied during most of the winter because of the open weather. We'd estimate that well over half the pre-plant fertilizer for the spring crops has already been applied and we continue to be busy. Some chemicals are beginning to move. The past two weeks we have noticed that the wild mustard is coming on along with other winter annual weeds. Now is the time to control them while they are small and easy to kill. The longer they are allowed to grow the more moisture and nutrients they will use that could have been utilized to produce wheat. We keep the more commonly used chemicals in stock, and we can get any product you will need. Just let us know how we can help.

The price of anhydrous ammonia has not changed since the last newsletter. Everyone in the industry was looking for significant increases at the time we wrote the last newsletter, but that did not happen. The relatively mild winter over much of the country

probably had something to do with that. As you know, natural gas is a primary ingredient in the manufacturing of nitrogen fertilizers and the demand for gas for heating was not as great as expected. There has been a little increase in the cost of 10-34-0.

Many of you are getting equipment such as sprayers, etc. ready to go for the season. We try to keep the more universally used sprayer parts on hand. If you let us know by 3:00 p.m. we can special order any parts you need and nearly always have them here the next day.

If anyone has a recipe for having it rain, please use it. It was surprising to see the effect the small shower, we recently received, had on the growing wheat. A good rain would be most welcome.

**Safety is an issue** about which all of us should be concerned. During the spring season when we are trying to get our crops in the ground, it is easy to try to accomplish too much in too short a time. We get tired and sometimes take shortcuts that leave us vulnerable to accidents. Anhydrous ammonia is a product about which we have special concerns when it comes to safety. Here are some reminders that we all should review from time to time.

Anhydrous is made up of one volume of nitrogen and three volumes of hydrogen. This fertilizer, when in contact with the human body, can become very dangerous.

The major areas of the human body that are affected are the lungs, eyes, and skin. When liquid ammonia comes in contact with skin, a severe burn takes place. The burn is not a "heat" burn but rather a "freezing" burn. The way to prevent an anhydrous ammonia accident is to make sure that everyone is aware of the hazards and realize that extreme caution must be used at all times.

Here are some rules to follow:

- ✓ Wear personal protective equipment (gloves and goggles).
- ✓ Do not wear contact lenses.
- ✓ Wear rubber gloves with an extended cuff that can be turned down.
- ✓ Wear long-sleeved shirts or coveralls.

Please see **Fertilizer Department** at top of page 3

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## The Fowler Equity Exchange

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### Directory

#### Office

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Fertilizer Department	620-646-5428
Service Station	620-646-5284

#### Officers and Directors

Tom Huelskamp	Chairperson
Dale Zortman	Vice Chairperson
Doug Heinz	Secretary-Treasurer
Kyle Lewis	Director
Jay Lundeen	Director
Brent Post	Director
John Thomas	Associate Director
Bob Bender	General Manager-President

## **Fertilizer Department** *continued from page 2*

- ✓ Always have an ample supply of water.
- ✓ Never fill a tank over 85% of capacity.
- ✓ Use a proper hitch, safety clips, safety chains, and a “Slow-Moving Vehicle” sign when towing equipment.
- ✓ Always work upwind.
- ✓ Inspect hoses, fittings, and valves.
- ✓ Bleed off pressure before disconnecting.
- ✓ Carry the hose by the valve body or coupling, not the valve wheel.
- ✓ Never leave the transfer process unattended.
- ✓ Never assume a tank, hose, or an injection knife is empty.

If you are exposed to anhydrous ammonia on your skin, make sure to put water on the wound as soon as possible. Remove contaminated clothing immediately to prevent further burning and clothing from becoming attached to the skin. When nursing the wounds, do not put any oils or ointments on the sores. The sore needs to “breathe” in order to heal. Oils and ointments will only smother the burn resulting in a longer and more painful recovery process. We hope these tips will become helpful this year when you are applying fertilizer to your fields.

-TFEE-

## **Propane**

*By Randy Reese*

The season is upon us when the barbecue grills will be getting much more use. This is just a reminder that we cannot legally fill a propane bottle that is more than twelve years old. The date of manufacture is stamped on the collar of the bottle. If there is a re-certification stamp on the bottle you are using, that re-certification runs out at the end of five years. Bottles that are dented, rusted, or damaged in any way that may compromise the safety of the bottle cannot be legally filled. These rules apply to bottle of all sizes from 5 pounds to 100 pounds.

Here are some reminders about using those grills safely during the seasons ahead:



## **Safe outdoor cooking with propane gas**

- Take your cylinder to a reputable propane gas supplier for filling, repairs, or disposal of unused propane.
- **Do not allow children to tamper** or play with the cylinder or grill.
- Use your propane gas cylinder in an upright position. Grills are designed to use propane vapor. Unless the cylinder is upright, liquid can come out of the cylinder valve.
- Never use, store, or transport the cylinder where it would be exposed to high temperatures. Do not store a spare cylinder near a gas grill.
- **Do not use your gas grill close to the side of the house** or other structure and never under any surface that will burn such as a carport, porch, or garage. If there is a fire due to a propane leak or flare-up from grilling, the fire can spread to combustible material close by.

### **Replacing an empty cylinder —**

- **CAUTION: Do not depressurize the cylinder before taking it to be refilled.**
- If the cylinder has been filled before, or if the cylinder valve has been left open, the propane supplier must purge the cylinder with propane vapor to remove the air. Before filling the cylinder, the propane supplier will examine it to make sure it is suitable. If it is an older cylinder, they may mark the collar to indicate that the cylinder has been re-qualified. They will check the cylinder and valve for leaks.
- The typical grill cylinder holds approximately 20 pounds of propane, leaving some room for the liquid to expand. **Do not ask the propane supplier to overfill the cylinder.**
- The propane supplier cannot return the cylinder to use unless the cylinder valve has a plug in the outlet. (Valves with quick-connect outlets do not need to have a plug.)

*Please turn to **Propane** on page 4*

- The propane supplier cannot return the cylinder to you unless it has a proper warning label on it explaining the potential hazards of propane.

### Transporting the cylinder —

- Secure the cylinder in an upright position. Put a cap or plug in the cylinder valve outlet (unless it is a quick-connect type cylinder valve).

**NOTE:** Larger units including 100-pound cylinders must be upright to transport.

- **Do not transport more than four 20-pound cylinders at one time in an enclosed vehicle.**
- Take the cylinder(s) directly home after they have been filled. **Never leave cylinders in the trunk of a vehicle nor in direct sunlight.** Heat raises the pressure of propane which can cause the relief valve to vent flammable gas.
- The law states that moving companies cannot transport cylinders containing propane. Return the cylinder(s) to your propane supplier for proper handling. -TFEE-

## From the Service Station

*By Jacob Patrick*



First, let me introduce myself.

My name is Jacob Patrick and I started work at your Fowler Equity Service Station the middle of February. I grew up in Ashland, Kansas and attended the local school system. The end of December 2005, I graduated from Universal Technical Institute in Houston, Texas. The emphasis of my studies there was on auto mechanics with a minor in body repair. Now my intent is to put what I learned to work in serving the patrons of your Fowler Equity. Everyone in the community has been extremely nice to me and I am enjoying working with our customers.

As we move forward, we plan to carry essentially the same products and services as in the past. There is one exception, however. We no longer stock the sprinkler irrigation parts.

As you take your farming equipment out of winter

storage you will need to check it over carefully, service it, and have it is ready for the busy season ahead. We are here to help in any way we can.

Air up the tires on your equipment to the proper pressure. Wait a few days and check the pressure again. If you suspect a slow leak, now is the time to repair or replace those faulty tires. We have tires for your pickups, trucks, and farm equipment. If we happen not to have exactly what you need, we can special order and have them here in just a few days.

Batteries may need to be charged or replaced. We have the Interstate line of batteries that fit almost all applications. That includes your vehicles and farm equipment as well as lawn mowers, garden tractors, boats, etc. We can order the battery you need for your golf cart. There are so many different sizes and types that we can't keep them all. Most of the time, we can get same-day delivery on special orders for batteries. Come see us.

Antifreeze is just as important as a coolant to prevent boil-over during the summer as it is to prevent freezing in the winter. We stock Prime (green) antifreeze in bulk and in gallon containers. We also have DEX-COOL (red) and Motorcraft (gold) antifreeze in gallon containers. Newer model Ford vehicles require gold antifreeze and General Motor vehicles require the red antifreeze.

Most manufacturers recommend that your vehicle's transmission be flushed and the fluid changed every 30,000 to 50,000 miles. How long has it been since you had that done? It's just as important to change the transmission fluid as it is to change oil in the engine. We provide that service.

Balancing and rotating the tires will help prevent the development of wear patterns and substantially prolong the useful life of a set of tires. We recommend doing that every 8,000 miles or every other oil change.

We plan to continue to keep a complete record of the services performed, the mileage, the date, etc. on each of your vehicles you bring in for service. This is a free service that could prove to be valuable. When you get ready to sell or trade the vehicle we can give you a copy of the service record. That could very well make the vehicle more valuable to the prospective new owner.

We are at your service. Come see us! -TFEE-