

# SFG Update

Smith Fertilizer & Grain

December 9, 2011

## Max Smith General Manager



The Holiday season is upon us. We have indeed been blessed this past year. Fall was extremely long this year, which allowed us time to catch up on work. I enjoy driving through the countryside observing all the conservation on necessary field work being done. It is rewarding to be part of an industry that so willingly takes care of what we have. We are just “caretakers” of our surrounding’s and will one day pass this on to the next generation. My grandmother used to tell me that anything worth having was indeed worth taking care of. I have thought about that often over the years.

The past couple of weeks the

grain department finished cleaning equipment and grain dryers for the winter. Grain bins have been topped off and cored. We have even cleaned out our flat storage at Albia so we can store equipment inside, so we don’t have to dig equipment out of snow drifts when needed.

Markets have leveled off. We are waiting for world events to level out in Europe and to analyze crop conditions in South America. China plans to import more corn this year as their population’s diet is changing to more like what other countries enjoy. The US is now exporting more refined oil than they import in crude oil. (As reported by FCStone). This is a major shift as we find more oil and natural gas inside our borders. Canada is also ramping up to supply the U.S. with 25% of its oil needs in the next decade. Maybe we can tell the Arab countries to fly a kite and keep our troops home. The media doesn’t talk much about this, but the US has made a lot of progress the last few years to make our country better off than it has been. Farmers are selling over 100 billion dollars

of produce this past year we are healing up in the Midwest. Now if we could just predict how long this is going to last. Right?

Feed business is still growing. Ashley Knust, our feed salesperson, has enjoyed meeting new clients. According to Gary, we shipped 14 truckloads of feed the first two days this month which is an excellent start going into December business. SFG has been able to pass savings from our vendors on to our customers. This enables us to provide increased profitability to your business.

Agronomy applicators have been in full swing for two months with very few days off. The lime crew has been continuous with a month of work still on the books. We added another dry spreader this past week to take care of our business growth and converted our John Deere dry spreader unit into a twin bin to accommodate our increase in Variable Rate Application business. We have seen a growing shift to grid sampling on more farms than ever before.

Super Grow work has been constant. We have adapted to the “allotment system” and should have a steady supply from here to spring. This will alleviate some of the problems we had in previous years. If you have Super Grow purchased you will have a scheduled week for product delivery. Snow and rain will alternate these dates some.

Seed sales are wrapping up for the fall season. We plan to add more services in areas of different delivery methods. We soon will be receiving winter deliveries to our new seed shed and are ready to secure seed numbers you have selected to insure availability.

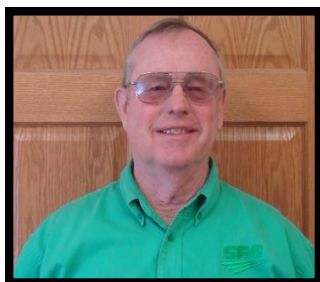
I would like to extend our appreciation for your continued trust in us to handle your farm inputs this past year and for the coming 2012 year. Everyone at SFG takes pride in providing quality service to you. Thank you for letting us be a part of your operation. Happy Holidays from everyone at SFG and the Smith Family.

Max Smith

General Manager

For more articles and new market information please visit our website at [www.sfgiowa.com](http://www.sfgiowa.com).

## Gary Sterling Albia Location Manager



Harvest is now winding down; almost everyone has their grain either in bins or delivered. It should be time for the market to try and get it out of your hands. Instead of the market going up to get the grain bought, the scare is to get you to sell. The supply has not changed to affect the markets, but there seems to be many other factors. Every countries financial condition (including the US) and foreign grain com-

petition which is selling for up to \$.50 cents less a bushel delivered to destination, are playing a role in the markets. It is interesting to see that the weekend after a Thanksgiving shopping spree makes the whole economy seem better and plays a role in the markets. Since the last article I wrote, November corn has dropped \$.62. That happened right around the first of November. All of the news about the mar-

kets has kept a lid on grains. Hearing about financial issues around the world and the Chinese economy slowing down (the biggest importer of our products) could cause lower markets in the coming weeks.

### December Specials:

- Crystalyx tubs \$2.00 off a 250# tub
- Hubbard mineral \$2.00 off per bag

## Mark Young Agronomy Manager



There are 17 nutrients that are essential for plant growth and production. An insufficient supply of one or more can have an adverse effect on plant growth, maturity, and yield. Phosphorus (P), one of the three key macronutrients (nitrogen and potassium are the other two), is present in every living plant and animal cell, and is vital I plants for harvesting the sun's energy for growth and reproduction. This requirement is the same whether the plant is growing on soil or in water (such as algae); hence, the concern regarding P levels I surface water

and the accelerated aquatic plant growth associated with high P levels. When plant available P is deficient in soils, crops demonstrate symptoms of deficiency, such as reduced growth, leaf discoloration (purpling of corn leaves early in the spring), and reduced yield. Visual symptoms typically show early in the season but disappear as the plant grows. It is important to monitor soil tests and apply P when the plant available soil supply is deficient.

SFG producers are interested in finding ways to squeeze profit out of their input dollars while avoiding negative impacts related to the environment and water quality. Managing soil P levels is one way to address profitability and environmental sustainability. By identifying critical nutrients, P, that provide the greatest potential return to your operations, you can target input dollars to high priority areas, thus reducing risk and potential regulation of nutrient application.

To make informed decisions about P applications, you need to know what

plant available levels exist in your soils. Soil tests are the only reliable way to determine the status of available nutrients in a field. Reliable soil test results and recommendations from SFG depend upon good soil sampling, calibrated soil analysis procedures, and research based fertilizer recommendation guidelines. With accurate gridded soil test results, SFG agronomists can calculate specific fertilization needs and make good decisions about the application of P to meet reasonable crop yield expectations.

Phosphorus management on the landscape is a long term proposition, monitoring soil tests, determining application needs when soil tests are low, avoiding applications when tests are very high, and replacing P removed in harvested crops when tests are optimum. With a SFG assisted long term approach soil P can be adequately managed for optimal crop production and minimal environmental risk.

## SFG Pre-Pay Open Houses

Meal served from 11 am to 1 pm  
(Locations are open all day)

**December 19:** Pleasantville **December 20:** Knoxville **December 21:** Albia **December 22:** Centerville

## Ashley Knust Feed Sales



It is hard to believe it is almost Christmas, but here we are once again. Thinking of finances might not make you feel very merry this time of year, but Hubbard has an option that can help. Apply for a feeder

finance contract and pay **no interest** on Hubbard beef feeds for up to one full year! This contract will help you match feed expenses to income (the sale of cattle), and you will still receive your cash discount from SFG. There are options available for dairy, swine, and sheep producers as well. Give me a call for more details!

Now is the time to get 4-H and FFA students signed up for their 2012 finance agreement. This is a great way for students to manage and take ownership of their livestock projects. SFG will finance feed purchased for 4-H and FFA projects at 0% interest.

### Finance terms are:

**Beef:** 12-1-11 through 8-15-12

**Swine and Sheep:** 3-1-12 through 8-15-12

These dates accommodate weigh-ins through sale. Purchases made on the finance agreement are eligible for the regular cash discount. Call or stop in at any SFG location to fill out a finance agreement.

Since my article this month is all about saving money, I would be remiss if I did not tell you to make sure to take advantage of our December promotion! It is time to stock up on Hubbard mineral and Crystalyx.

I hope you all have a wonderful holiday season. Stay safe, enjoy your family time, and have a **Merry Christmas!**

## Corey Garrington Agronomy Sales



With cold weather setting in and snowflakes beginning to fly safety should be your top priority. There are numerous safety issues on a farm but I am only go-

ing to touch on a couple of the key issues at this time. As temperatures fall below freezing, most Ag chemicals need to be evaluated for proper storage temperature. The label gives advice for proper storage. **ALWAYS** store chemicals in the original containers with the labels still intact. A couple quick reminders when moving or storing chemicals:

- Wear proper protective clothing.
- Never store chemicals near food or drink containers.
- Keep incompatible chemicals separated.
- Always have materials close by to

clean up any spills.

I have only touched on a few of the key issues with the storage of chemicals just remember - **always read the label!**

The second key safety issue is shop safety. With the weather being extremely nice everyone has gotten a lot of field work accomplished this fall. We never had a chance to slow down and regroup for the next task. Now with the weather getting colder, the time has come to move most projects into the shop (where the heat is). Here is a link to a farm shop safety check list from the National Safety Council. Checklist can be found at: <http://www.necasag.org/>.

**Effective January 1, 2012**

Grain check pickup will be available on Tuesday and Friday **AFTER 12 pm**



## Casey Cortum Seed Specialist

With the sun shining in the window today, and the forecast telling us we may be done with all field work after tomorrow, most of you may be looking for some

things to do to stay warm and dry. Most of our customer base has some form of yield monitor and some of you have the ability to map your yields. Now after spending hours calibrating this fall, don't forget to analyze the results!

I don't mean to sound demanding but I'm a big believer that if you have results, we need to utilize the information. Yield maps can tell many things including but not limited to:

- Places that need tile/water drainage
- Areas where certain hybrids work well/ and don't work
- Hybrid performance
- Places of compaction

All of this being said, if you have access to your previous years yield data that helps even more. You can compare from year to year and see if certain spots show up every year depending on the weather. Many of you probably have already done this, but just extending a friendly reminder! It is extremely important to use the information because what works the best on your farm (hybrid, fertilizer rates, tillage) is the best answer for your operation! Have a safe holiday season!



*Happy Holidays from all of us @ SFG!*

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**Service is Our Specialty!**



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