

# SFG Update

Smith Fertilizer & Grain

May 12, 2014

**Mark White**

**Knoxville Location manager**



Once again, we enter a spring season where farmers will try to compress six weeks of field work into two weeks. The compressed spring season has everyone wondering, how will all of this work get completed in such a short period of time? For those like me who have been through the battle before, we know it will all get done. After several productive days in the field, the wet weather throughout the past week allowed us to repair and fine-tune our application equipment.

When field work is not an option, there is plenty of work to do. People sometimes ask what we do with all our help when it rains. We continually work off lists that are reviewed daily and weekly by SFG managers. Our plan is not to skip a beat regardless

of the weather. We have a plan B in mind everyday, and our employees will tell you there is minimal downtime before we find work for them. We invest extra time into our equipment to keep it looking good and performing correctly. We want our customers to feel confident that they are doing business with a knowledgeable company that is proud of their employees and equipment.

In April, I started posting a weekly blog on our Smith Fertilizer & Grain website, [sfgiowa.com](http://sfgiowa.com), pertaining to the grain markets. The grain blogs can be found under the grain heading on our home webpage. I do not claim to be an expert at grain marketing, but I am exposed to a lot of information everyday. I will use these blogs to share some of this information. There may be times I will use information from our brokerage firm MidCo Inc. They collect a great deal of information, and I will draw on their articles plus some others in the industry. This past week my thoughts centered on the CME's decision to expand the daily trading limits on the board of trade. Beginning May 1st, soybeans can trade \$1.00

and corn 35 cents daily. They have a formula utilizing a set of factors to adjust these limits every 6 months. I'm having trouble seeing how this will benefit producers. Unfortunately, we don't have a better method of price discovery for our commodities than the Chicago Board of Trade, so we will have to deal with measures like this. In order for the board to work well, it takes a considerable amount of money from both investors and speculators. Policies such as these increased limits may reduce this money, which in turn may limit our ability to price protect ourselves. To comment directly, go to [CME.com](http://CME.com) and click the feedback icon at the top of the page. You can then type in your comments. I suggest keeping the feedback short and to the point. The board will not change their policies unless they hear from numerous concerned individuals. This is your chance to be heard!

## Jason Smith Centerville Location Manager



Well folks, SFG is proud to announce that the new dry fertilizer building at the Centerville location is now fully operational for the spring of 2014! With the Centerville fertilizer addition, SFG now has two dry fertilizer buildings; Centerville and Pleasantville respectively. Completion of the dry fertilizer building did not happen a moment too soon. Once the power was turned on, we had two trucks and a dry cart waiting to

load! That being said, the building has been working great. I couldn't be more proud with the Centerville crew we have assembled and how they have handled their new rolls this extremely busy spring season.

As busy as the spring season has been for fertilizer, dry fertilizer and NH<sub>3</sub> application has began to taper off. Our liquid application equipment has been tested and tuned. Our operators have gone through our in-house applicator training and are ready to go as well. Herbicide application will soon be in full swing. Feel free to contact Taylor Banks (641-218-0286) or myself (641-891-6070) for any of your spring needs.

Stay tuned for details of our new shop/storage building to go up later this spring!



## Jay Hoch Knoxville Office Manager



After growing up on my parent's family farm in Melcher-Dallas, Iowa my entire life, moving to Ames for college was a unique experience. While attending Iowa State University, I studied developmental plant genetics in several USDA labs. During my final year of education, it became clear to me that family and agriculture were two priorities that I would continue to pursue. In December 2013, I thankfully accepted the Knoxville Office Manager position for Smith Fertilizer & Grain, and no one was more excited about my decision to accept the position than my wife

Haley.

My family consists of my wife Haley and my 19 month old daughter Ellyson. I'm very blessed to have both of them in my life! They have been very supportive of my career decisions. Since moving back to Knoxville, there has been more time to see family and help at the family farm. Haley asked me one day, "What do you like most about your new career?" My response was, "The ability for me to interact with customers on a daily basis." With my understanding of agricultural science and agronomy, I look forward to assisting all our customers in anyway possible. If I cannot answer a question, no worries, I will direct customers to any one of our knowledgeable employees. If you come to the Knoxville location, feel free to visit my office area. I look forward to meeting more customers as the

spring farming season progresses. I hope all farmers have a safe and successful spring season!

**SFG**

**Specials**

**\$20.00 off per ton of**

**Crystalux<sup>®</sup>**  
Brand Supplements

**Tubs**

**(1 ton minimum)**

## Kyle Smith Albia Location Manager



Many of you are busy finishing up calving season and are going full speed in the fields to get your acres planted, so I'll keep my article brief!

We're in the process of inspecting all our creep feeders to make sure they are ready to go as you request them this summer. Cur-

rently, we have plenty of feeders available. Please let us know if and how many your operation will need, so we can do our best to have them available for you.

Starting May 12<sup>th</sup>, you will notice a new face around the elevator and in our feed trucks. Tyler Crall will be working for us delivering feed and assisting around the elevator. He has a feed background and knows many of you. We feel that he will be a great fit!

I've been working with both the city council and planning and zoning committee and have just recently gotten their approval to display our sign along Hwy 5. It was voted that we can no longer have it located in front of our office. We

can however move it down the road in front of our propane tank. We also received permission to have it lighted but are still debating whether to do so.

For those who don't know, we carry grass seed as well as lawn fertilizer for all four seasons of the year (Crabgrass Control, Weed & Feed for dandelion control, Lawn Food, and Winterizer to help maintain a healthy lawn during the winter months. We also have Ambrosia (Bi-Color) and Incredible (Yellow) sweet corn seed for your garden. Please stop in and our staff will be happy to assist you in selecting the best product for your project!

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

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## Charles Smith Pleasantville Location Manager



It sure has been a long winter, which is why I cannot wait for the warm weather to move into the state. The month of April started out extremely busy at the Pleasantville elevator. Throughout the first two weeks of April, SFG and farmers applied NH<sub>3</sub>, dry fertilizer, and seed throughout much of south central Iowa. Farmers reported the ground was optimal for spring field work. That is one benefit from the deep freeze we experienced this winter. Within this two week time frame, I estimate that 90% of our pre-work is

complete. Thankfully the first part of the month permitted field work, because rain was the headline for the last two weeks in April. We received just under 3 inches of rain on the 13<sup>th</sup>; and for the month of April, Pleasantville received slightly more than 6.5 inches of rainfall. The rainfall can stop at any time, so we can get back in the fields.

The rainfall provided us with an opportunity to prepare all our sprayers for the approaching farm season. SFG thoroughly tests each nozzle on our sprayers. A person would think that individual nozzle performance could be visually determined; however, that is not the case. We test each nozzle at a constant pressure to verify performance. Usually, we find that nozzles are wearing more or less than others. Nonetheless, we ensure that all nozzles spray the uniform rate requested by the customer. This part takes time but pays off. The weeds are getting more difficult to kill at a

full rate let alone at a reduced rate due to a nozzle not working correctly.

As NH<sub>3</sub> application finishes for this season, we get our toolbars ready for the next season. Now is the perfect time for us to service our toolbars. Each bar usually needs routine maintenance. This is how we keep our equipment in good working condition. If we continue having rainy weather, all toolbar maintenance will be complete before summer. After maintenance is complete, the toolbars are put in the shed so they are protected from the elements. The sun is one of the hardest things on them. Wagon service will be done in the summer after the spraying season.

We will be ready when the weather allows us to get back in the field. Lets just hope that the weather will cooperate.