

# THE HAY STACK

August 2019

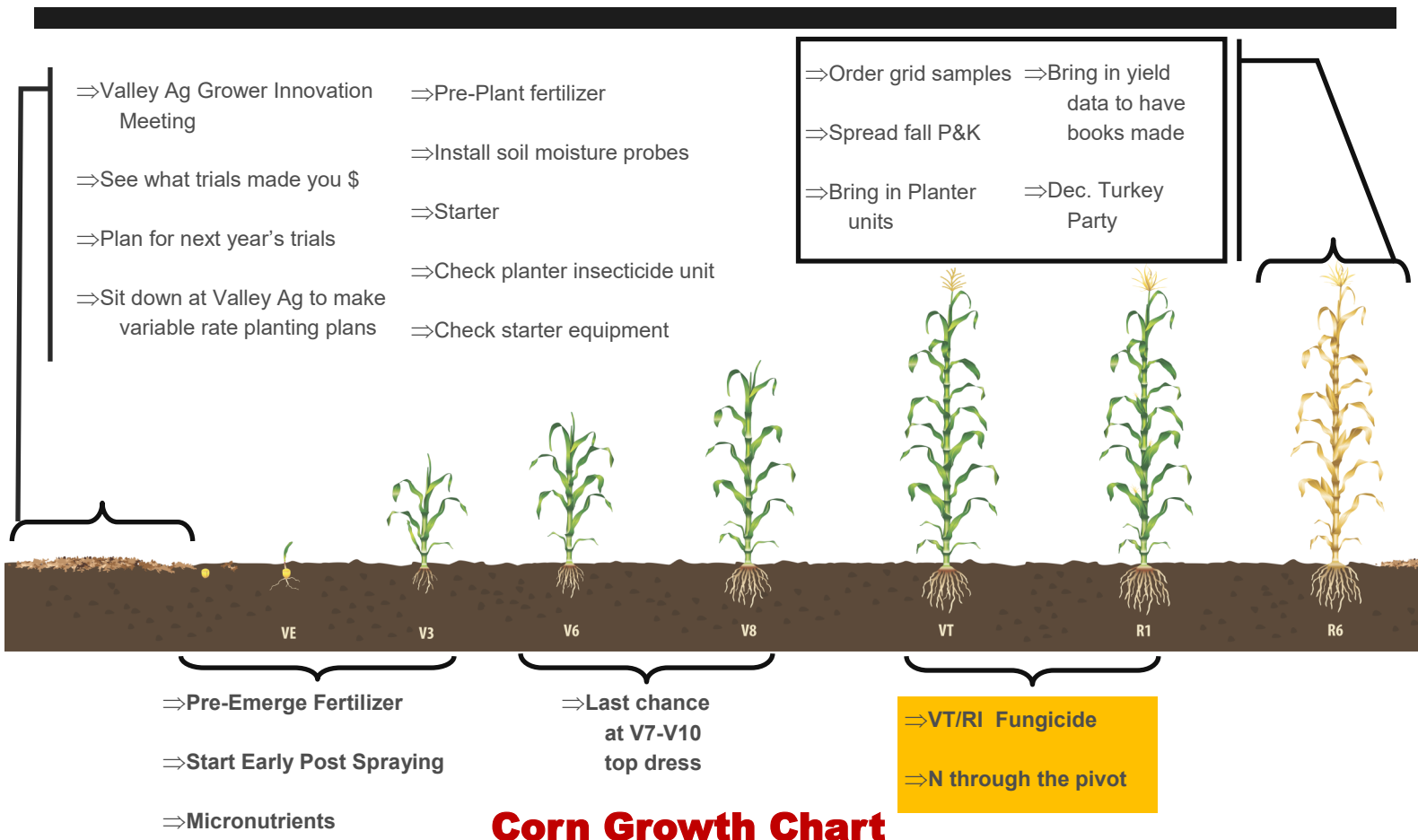
## Why Plant a Cover Crop by Scott Bottorff

We know that it has been a challenging spring and summer, but for all of the prevent plant acres out there, here are some reasons to plant a cover crop.

First is erosion, whether it be rain or wind erosion we want to keep the soil in the field. Second is Fallow Syndrome, which can severely limit growth on next years crops in soils where no vegetation has occurred in the past year. Fallow syndrome occurs on small corn plants, turning them purple due to sugar build up in the plant showing phosphate deficiency. If there hasn't been any plant growth in an area for a long time the population of soil organism or good fungi called arbuscular mycorrhizae, are dramatically reduced because they need actively growing roots to survive. These organisms assist in the uptake of phosphorus and other nutrients (such as zinc) that have less mobility in the soil. Corn will tend to show a greater impact of fallow syndrome than soybeans.

Weeds could serve as a cover crop, but that would result in a bigger weed seed bank, which in turn would increase weed management for next year and into the future.

Grasses like rye, wheat, oats and sorghums would be a good choice along with a legume crop. Turnips or radishes are not a host to arbuscular mycorrhizae and should be mixed with a host type cover crop.



**Corn Growth Chart**

## From Tara's Desk

It's been a while since I've updated our customers on the state of our business and the state of the Pirak family.

First, our family. We now sit at 51 weeks without Greg. It is truly unbelievable to imagine this life without him and yet here we are, surviving and most often thriving. Greg's monument was placed last week. There's a staggering sadness to see your husband and business partner's name written in stone. I could have never known that I'd have my name on a tombstone at 41 years old. But there I am, right next to Greg. I thought we'd have more time together. Losing him has made me realize that sweating 99% of the things I used to sweat is a total waste of time. Our boys are good! They still run a successful mowing business, they took our boat out with friends this summer (apparently mom isn't cool enough to go. Weird huh?!) they volunteered at bible school and generally do all the home chores. I'm incredibly grateful for them. They're funny and sassy and I love them!

The business side...Liquid fertilizer's fill program was launched in a manner never seen in my twenty years. The manufacturers are only selling two months' tonnage production for a July offering of 2020 tons. This makes 28% look in high demand, but was more of a joke in the market. Of the three vendors we source our 28% through, one wasn't even invited to sell any (had no supply nor price), one had offered me tons and then needed to give those tons to retailers who buy 100% of all fertilizer from him (I don't do that); and the last vendor had been bought out by a large national and they were big enough to get to participate in this allocation dance. We were able to take 44% of what we'd normally buy in July for the following spring. Now we wait for the next round of allocation and pricing. Sources tell me that they may wait for the USDA corn report on August 12<sup>th</sup>. It truly is anyone's guess. Will we have plenty of s. Do I know when we will have prepay prices, nope! But as always, I have faith in you! Have trust in that. Our team won't let you down.

This year I've decided to cancel the golf day. We are having an 89% year to date over 2018's year. It's not great, but given the year it could be way worse. That being said, I wasn't so excited about celebrating this year. Will we do it again next year? You bet!

We want to put more effort into our test plot Sept 5. For those customers who signed a seed pledge last September, he/she was entered to win all the pledged seed (*or up to \$15,000*, whichever is less). I have a BIG Valley Ag Supply check to sign that night. It's real cash, it's not a discount, not a 'if you do this, I'll give you money". Like a real check!

As I've said before and I'll say it forever, I'm grateful for our customers' support and business. This has been a trying twelve months for us (myself and my colleagues) we were doing tasks that we had never done before. You all believed in us and never lost the faith. We will continue to work hard for you all to earn your business each and every season. We remain fiercely independent, as we always have been!



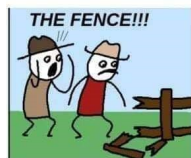
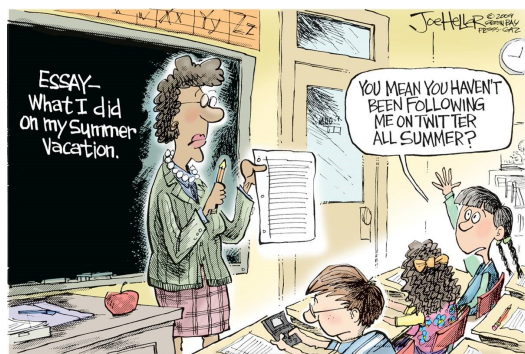
~Tara Pirak

# A word from Alan Moehring

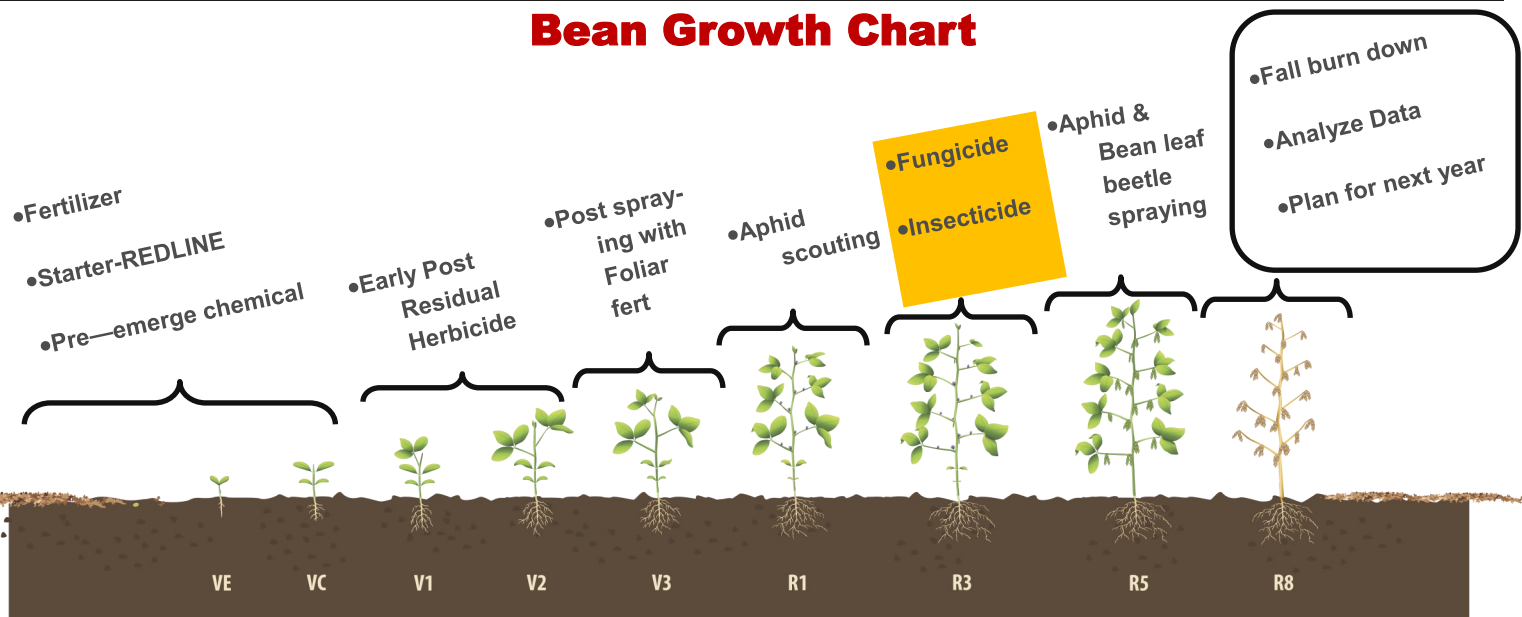
WHAT A YEAR! We have learned a lot at Valley Ag Supply. Some has been very helpful and fun and other things I hope I will never have to use again. A challenging year for sure, for us at Valley Ag Supply and for our customers as well. As we near harvest, we will get to see how our different strategies paid off. We have learned more about pre-emergent burndown chemistry, post-emergent burndown chemistry, 6 foot tall weed burndowns (never easy to do), shorter seed hybrids, and multiple cover crops and their uses, just to name a few easy things.

We had a few insects show up and cause a bit more pressure than normal. Thistle caterpillars showed up in soybeans and caused some defoliation early on. Potato leafhoppers were a constant pressure in many of the alfalfa fields this year as well. Lately I have seen more stink bugs, bean leaf beetles, and aphids in soybean fields.

As we get towards August and September we slow down a little around here and start to plan some fun events with our growers. On August 1<sup>st</sup> we went to the Winfield United Answer plot and spent the morning talking about different disease, insects, fertilizer, management strategies, along with whatever else we had questions on. It was an informative meeting talking with some industry professionals. Normally we have the Valley Ag Supply golf day as a way to say thanks for the business and interact with customers more. As we all know this has been a leaner year with the extra moisture and acres not getting planted, so we are pulling back some of our expenses as well and not having our golf day this year. Instead, we will say thanks and be combining it with our test plot on Thursday September 5<sup>th</sup>. This will be an exciting night where you can still come ask questions, talk with friends and neighbors, eat great food, and we will be kicking off our seed pledge again! To start our seed pledge we will be giving away up to \$15,000 to someone who signed up during last year's seed pledge week.



## Bean Growth Chart





# Valley Ag Supply puts the Fun in FUNgicide!

Six years ago, Valley Ag Supply started working with Syngenta to take customers on an exciting trip. Over the years, 26-42 people per year have come along for the food, entertainment, and new agricultural learning opportunities. We want to make sure all of our customers have the chance to come with us!

## Northern California, 2014



## Louisiana, 2015



*Speed boat rides*



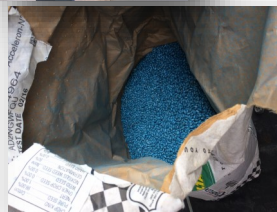
## Florida, 2016



*Tomatoes grown in sand!*



## Texas, 2017



*George Ranch; entertained by a three piece cowboy band, a young woman branding wood & a roping horse with calf!*



# Georgia, 2018



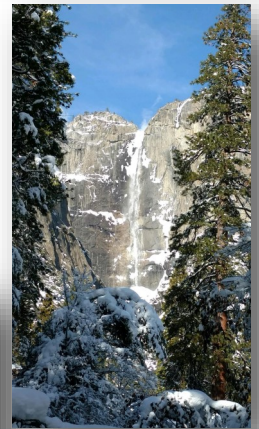
*Chicken plant  
tour*



# California, 2019



*Entertainment while  
getting snowbound!*



# Want in on the FUN?



We are excited about our 7<sup>th</sup> annual fungicide trip February 6-10, 2020 to North Carolina. There is still time to qualify and what better way to go on an amazing trip than to get product to help your crops! We have seen some really good fungicide yield response from the applications, so it's a win-win! Talk to one of our agronomist today to see what it will take for you to qualify for the trip.



**Miravis<sup>®</sup>Neo**

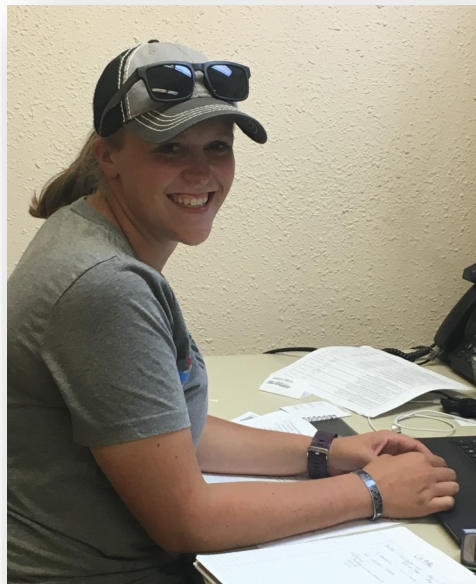




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Elk Point, SD 57025

# Introducing...

My name is Leah Bunkers. I am the new sales agronomist at the Gayville location. I am from the small town of Granville, in Northwest IA, where I grew up working for my family's independently owned elevator, Bunkers Feed and Supply. After high school, I headed to Brookings for four years and there started my love for South Dakota. In May I graduated from South Dakota State University, majoring in agronomy and minoring in ag business and precision ag. Go Jacks! As I started my job hunt, I knew I needed to be somewhere that wasn't a mega corporate company. I knew when I came in for my interview and met their team, that Valley Ag Supply was going to be the place for me. I thank those of you that I have already met for being so welcoming, and I look forward to meeting everyone else.



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