



# THE HAY STACK

September 2019

## Seed Pledge Weeks

September 5th-20th

Sign up to be entered in a drawing to win up to \$15,000.

Pledge the number of bags of seed you plan to get at Valley Ag Supply in 2020. The value of pledged seed (up to \$15,000) will be entered in the drawing for September of 2020

Join us at our test plot night in September of 2020 where we will draw the next winner! A fun family event for all.



2019's winner was Randy Svendsen. He received a big check AND a \$15,000 check from VAS!



Tara Piraks' boys

## *From Tara's Desk*

Dear Customers and Friends,

Quite a few of our customers have commented that they like my updates in the Haystack. I realize it's where my home life and business paths intersect but they've really never been that separate in my life so now is no exception.

Our boys are doing well. Their picture is here in the Haystack. Will is going through a 'nah, I don't need a haircut' phase. His hair is crazy curly; it's the hybrid of Greg and Tara. Fancy that, Will's the hybrid of Greg and Tara.

The twins are sophomores, they practice basketball quite often—that's their sport of choice.

I survived the one year mark without Greg. My crew had a giant bouquet of flowers delivered to my office with a card; I had customers stop with a bottle of Crown so we could toast missing Greg together and the hugs and tears were readily available. Greg and I would have celebrated our 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary on Sunday, September 15<sup>th</sup>. Last year was extremely difficult for me. Without a husband, there really is no anniversary. I will count my blessings that I had nearly 17 years with him, but as many a widow have told me, whatever years given, it's never enough. (This was our engagement picture. February 2001)

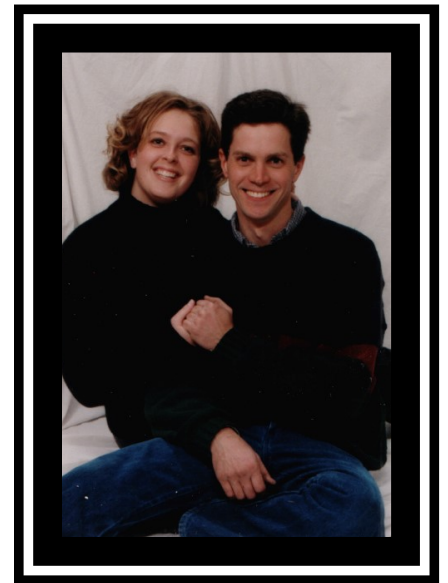
This year's Valley Ag Supply vacation will be in a week. I'll take the crew to Mahoney State Park west of Omaha for a little R&R. It's been important to us for years to celebrate the end of our busy season with a weekend away with our crew. Without each and every one of them, this place doesn't function properly. This year especially with the loss of Greg and the extremely wet season, we need to focus on the positives having lived through a rough spring.

That being said, our sales numbers (Jan-Aug) hit 92% of 2018s sales. Do I love this? No. Would I have thought 105% was better—of course! We were poised to reach that goal. Our prepay was strong and our customers were extremely supportive, we had gained a couple new customers also. But we know what Mother Nature thinks of well-laid plans. This week I will head to Minneapolis to attend an INDEPENDENT ag retailers collaboration meeting. I'm looking forward to learning about trading with China, the hemp industry, strategies for adapting in a changing ag climate, e-commerce's play in our current market and the state of the industry as seen through the eyes of vendors who work primarily with smaller co-ops and independents. We may not have a national presence but we remain #96 on the Crop Life 100s list of top retailers in the United States. Valley Ag Supply must stay relevant—we work hard to ensure we are.

Currently our seed pledge campaign is in full swing. We launched this program last year and finished our inaugural year last week. Now we start on 2020s seed pledge campaign. It's your chance to win up to \$15,000 cash on seed you're purchasing anyway!

The liquid fertilizer market continues to be on sales allocation. After the first tons available for sale the end of July there's never been more tons for sale again. This is not a size of our business issue, a cash available issue or a lack of confidence by our vendors issue; I truly believe this is an inventory vs shareholder number issues from the liquid fertilizer manufacturers. Being un-aligned with a national retailer makes us nimble to purchase fertilizer from a number of vendors. We will continue to wait on additional 2020 tons. I keep hearing 'we've never seen a year like this before...' It's entirely true in both my personal and professional life. But I guess this is life and we learn from it each and every day.

*~Tara Pirak*



## BENEFITS OF FUNGICIDE BY ALAN MOEHRING

Another wet year means more opportunity for the disease triangle to be completed, and the higher potential for us to see more bacterial and fungal diseases in the plants. This year in corn physoderma brown spot, gray leaf spot, and rust, showed up earlier than we are used to seeing. In the soybeans we saw septoria leaf spot and lots of frogeye leaf spot. Frogeye leaf spot has shown up the last two years earlier and more prevalent than we are used to making fungicide a good option.

With the added disease pressure early, and a small rally in grain prices in the middle of summer, it spurred some excitement and we were able to use some fungicides on our fields to help keep our plants healthier and increase yield! Another added benefit of using fungicide from Valley Ag Supply is we use the revenues to take growers on a trip to learn about agriculture in a different part of the United States. This February 6th-10th we are going to North Carolina on our 7th annual fungicide trip!

We have put together our lists of customers who have used fungicides this past year and are sending out sign-up sheets to come along with us to North Carolina. Last year we had 42 guests to California and this year is looking to be bigger yet

There are a number of ways to qualify to go on our fungicide trip, first would be using a Syngenta branded fungicide on 700-900 acres. If we only reach part of the goal we offer the option to bank the acres and use them towards next year's trip. Otherwise, we have a buy in option for anyone who wouldn't normally use enough fungicide to qualify, but think we are a lot of fun to be with and want to come along anyways!



## THE IMPORTANCE OF GRID SAMPLING BY TYLER DOTY

It's that time of the season where we need to talk about grid sampling or taking composite samples. First question we usually get is how do I know when I need to sample? The easiest way is to talk to your agronomist and have them check when the last time it was sampled. We need to make sure we try not to go over 5 years between sampling because the soil can change a lot in those years. If we are doing a full removal of 180 bushel corn and 50 bushel soybeans but are pulling more nutrients out of the field, we need to make sure we are either using harvest maps (if you have a combine that records that) and the soil sample to get a better understanding of the actual yields pulled off the field. The fertilizer maps we make with the soil samples and harvest maps cost 50 cents per acre to do but will help us better place the fertilizer in the field since we will be using actual yields instead of a blanket yield across the whole field.

We at Valley Ag Supply know the tough year we had with all the wet ground and prevent plant acres doesn't leave everyone feeling eager to spend \$10.50 per acre on grid sampling. The prevent plant acres are not good fields to sample this year due to the fact that there was nothing other than weeds growing, and it could throw your samples off. I also want to remind you if you prepay chemical or fertilizer, we give you 1% of the pre pay amount to use towards grid sampling.







47261 SD Hwy 48  
Elk Point, SD 57025

# Field To Table

790! Over the course of 3 days we had 790 students join us to receive a fantastic education about agriculture. The first two days were geared toward the elementary (4th graders), while the third day was geared towards the middle school (7th and 8th graders). Many volunteers, as well as Valley Ag employees, helped us to teach the 4th graders about soybean growth and development, corn growth and development, livestock, soils, machinery, dairy, and plant nutrition. The 7th and 8th graders were taught all these plus finance and biotechnology and genetics. This was the 11th year that we have held the event, and intend to continue to teach the youth about South Dakota's #1 leading industry.



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**Valley Ag  
Supply-  
Gayville  
605-267-3100**

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Supply-  
Spink  
605-761-1001**

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