

TRAILHEAD

"BRINGING INNOVATION AND SUCCESS TO THE SANDHILLS"

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- Mr. Tire – Ainsworth 402-387-2533
- Toll-Free..... 800-233-6627
- Fertilizer Plant..... 402-387-2323
- Feed Mill 402-387-2810
- Mr. Tire – Mullen..... 308-546-2281
- Mr. Tire – Valentine..... 402-376-2060
- Valentine Feed Store..... 402-376-3045
- Toll-Free..... 866-376-3045
- Springview..... 402-497-2020
- Bassett – Fuels 402-684-2811

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MEET SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

For the third year, Farmers Ranchers Cooperative is pleased to play a role in encouraging area youth to seek careers in agriculture through our scholarship, "The Future of Agriculture."

Recipients must be from the Sandhills region served by Farmers Ranchers, exhibit both strong leadership skills and excellent academic performance, and be enrolling in an agriculture-related program at a two- or four-year post secondary school. This year's applicants also wrote essays describing why they were interested in a career in agriculture. Anna Cronk, Landon Miller, and Joey Schumacher are the 2008 recipients, each receiving the \$1,000 scholarship.

Anna, of Springview, is the daughter of Stephen and Judy Cronk. She graduated from Keya Paha County High School and plans to major in Veterinary Technology at Eastern Wyoming College in Torrington, WY. Anna has been active in speech and student council. She currently works part-time for a local accountant.

Landon, of Cody, is the son of Phillip and Patricia Miller. He attended Cody-Kilgore High School and will be majoring in Agribusiness

MANAGER'S MOMENT

by Keith Erickson
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at Chadron State College. Landon has been active in FFA, speech, and athletics. He excelled in basketball, starting for four years in high school, and is one of only three students in the school's history to score more than 1,000 points.

Joey, of Ainsworth, is the son of Pat and Linda Schumacher. He is a graduate of Ainsworth High School and will be majoring in Grassland Management and Ecology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Joey has been active in athletics, student council, and FFA, serving as chapter president.

Everyone at Farmers Ranchers wishes these three students the best as they continue to prepare for leadership roles in the agricultural industry. Thank you to all of the students who applied. We also want to encourage any youth dreaming about what their future holds to give the world of agriculture serious

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Discover Farmers Ranchers' milestone moments by going to www.farmersrancherscoop.com and click on "Our History."

consideration. The possibilities are endless and the rewards are many. We should know. At Farmers Ranchers, we have the privilege of serving people every day who have made agriculture their life's work. To find out more about "The Future of Agriculture" Scholarship, contact the Main Office at 402-387-2811, or toll-free at 800-233-6627. ■



Anna Cronk



Landon Miller



Joey Schumacher

OFFICE UPDATE

MEET THE CONTROLLER

Coming to work each day at Farmers Ranchers Main Office in Ainsworth is nothing new for Linda Schumacher. She's been doing it for 10 years as accounts payable clerk and handling payroll. For the past few months, however, coming to work has meant expanded responsibilities.

In March, Linda was named controller. In that role, she works with her team to handle the basic financial operations that keep the cooperative running smoothly—including making daily deposits, sending out statements, compiling financial reports, and continuing to do payroll and accounts payable.

It's a challenge, says Linda, to follow in the footsteps of former controller Bob Mulligan, who left to manage a cooperative in Oklahoma. And she's quick to thank others as she takes on the added responsibilities. "I've got a lot to learn," she says, but adds that Bob gave her opportunities to stretch her knowledge and abilities. "Bob encouraged and challenged me to learn all I could."

And then there's Dwain Grunke, who recently retired in Ainsworth after years in the business world. Dwain handled the controller responsibilities until Linda was named to the position and has been providing assistance as she becomes more comfortable with the job. "Dwain has been so helpful and supportive," says Linda. "He's been a great teacher."

In a busy co-op office, Linda must stay on top of a multitude of activities. Fortunately, multi-tasking is nothing new for this Lynch, NE, native. Since moving to the Ainsworth area in 1979, she and her farmer/rancher husband, Pat, have been raising seven children.

Andy, the oldest, is married and lives in Columbus with the Schumacher's first grandchild. Carrie is teaching in Omaha. Steve is in Manhattan, KS, finishing veterinary school. Daniel is a senior at Kearney State. Joey will be attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Tommy and Michael are both students at Ainsworth High School.

"My life is full between following our children and chasing our grandson," says Linda. "They are my top priority." She admits that her job is also high on that list. "I love my job," says Linda. "It's important to serve our customers and patrons, and have a cooperative that's respected and financially sound. I'll give 100% to do my part." ■



4-H/FFA FEED DISCOUNT

Farmers Ranchers is offering a 10% discount on feed for area youth who are showing animals in local 4-H or FFA shows this summer. If youth are showing market animals, they can charge their feed at no interest from now until they sell the animals and receive their payment. To receive the discount and interest waiver, you must show proof that you are enrolled to show livestock in a local county show.

There are additional incentive programs available to these youth through Land O'Lakes® Purina Feed. For details on this, or the Farmers Ranchers 4-H/FFA program, talk to Jackie Lurz at Valentine Feed Store (402-376-3045), Donna Jones at Springview (402-497-2020), or Shelly Strand at Ainsworth Feed Mill (402-387-2810). ■



VOLATILITY IS THE WORD

Vol-a-til'i-ty (vāl'ə til'ə tē): The dictionary definition of volatility is 'unstable and potentially dangerous.' In agriculture, the definition would be 'nerve-racking and a potential cause of insomnia.'

High energy prices continue to impact agriculture and rural America. Consider this: in the first quarter of 2007, crude oil was trading in the \$60-range. Since then we've experienced a 100% increase. While there have been a few price dips, it is still considered a bull market. The question is, what's causing the volatility and how long can it continue?

Understanding the increases

Why the high prices? The reasons are multiple:

1. Energy demand is up globally. China has been purchasing a lot of product. Reports are that they are using more diesel instead of coal to produce power, attempting to clean up their air prior to this year's Summer Olympic Games. India's commercial energy consumption is growing at almost double the world's average rate—nearly as fast as China's. And an especially cold winter in South America prompted higher importation rates of diesel. In fact, out of all the energy products, diesel is currently in highest demand globally.
2. Investor money has been pouring into commodity markets, and speculators are still long in energy markets. Until some of those dollars begin to move out of these positions, a downward price trend is unlikely.
3. A weak U.S. dollar doesn't help. As our dollar drops in value to other currencies, it holds crude prices up. That's good news for our exporting grain farmers; bad news for those seeking relief in the cost of energy.
4. New energy sources are slow coming on line. Hydrogen, electric and hybrid vehicles, ethanol and biodiesel all help. Unfortunately, to date, none has proven to be the magic bullet. New technology takes time and money. We're getting closer as a nation, but we're not there yet.

What's the future?

Enough gloom and doom. Every commodity will cycle, and there will eventually be a correction phase in energy. Some expect it to happen late in the second quarter, or sometime in

EYE ON ENERGY

by Kent Taylor
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the third quarter of 2008. No one is certain of the time, but rest assured, no trend lasts forever.

And remember, higher prices encourage us to conserve and develop innovative products. New technology holds the promise of growing a greater portion of our fuel and using resources available in the U.S., including coal, natural gas, and nuclear power.

Farmers Ranchers' commitment

Like our customers, Farmers Ranchers is negatively impacted with this higher cycle of prices. We, too, depend on energy sources to power our vehicles, equipment, and facilities. While we cannot turn the current high-price cycle around, we strive to purchase quality energy products during optimum times, provide our customers with pricing opportunities through contracting, and offer products like E-85 that can make a positive difference for customers.

As energy and grain markets cycle and technology makes its impact, agriculture continues to evolve. Who knows? Someday you may be driving electric tractors! What is certain though, is that agriculture continues to be the most honorable of professions and Farmers Ranchers is proud to serve our farm/ranch customers through it all. ■



IT'S ON THE WEB!

You won't waste your time by checking a website that never changes. That's why we strive to keep our website fresh, with information you need. Now, find more market information on our home page, along with short bios and photos of our board of directors. Go to www.farmersrancherscoop.com and check us out! ■

LOCATION PROFILE: SPRINGVIEW

SMALL-TOWN SERVICE

Stop by Farmers Ranchers just north of Springview on Highway 183 and chances are you'll be met with a friendly smile and warm greeting. It's the first sign that branch manager Donna Jones and feed delivery driver George Mizner are intent on serving the customer.

"We want to find out what our customers need and help out where we can," says Donna. "I think any customer you visit would say they're pleased with the service we provide. It's a major part of why we do business."

Business for this Farmers Ranchers branch revolves around livestock. With its three-ton capacity mixer and either the 8- or 12-ton truck, George delivers bulk feed to a 100-mile radius. Both Donna and George are adept at running the mixer and can help customers load needed bagged products, like feed or mineral, or a mineral tub or two.

There's also a wide assortment of vet supplies, including vaccines, baling products, posts, stock tanks, and gates—"pretty much anything you need for livestock," explains Donna.

While the Springview location has had fuel pumps for several years, business picked up substantially when the town's only other fuel business closed its doors in 2007. "We are the only gas station now in Springview," explains Donna, who says they've been exceptionally busy offering highway and off-road diesel and gasoline. The facility also includes bulk fuel storage for Farmers Ranchers.

With the variety of products and services at Springview, Donna says her ability to multi-task comes in handy. She began working at the location in 2003, taking over as manager a year ago. George has been delivering feed for 10 years and takes pride in the location he calls home. He can recount incidents like the 136-mile-per-hour straight line wind several years ago that took down the building over the feed unloading area, and when the Keya Paha Cooperative merged with Farmers Ranchers to become the Springview location back in



Donna Jones and George Mizner are eager to serve you in Springview.

1992. "We're a team," says Donna. "I don't know what I'd do without George. He's a very good and dependable employee."

That team is ready to assist its customers—whether it's providing the vaccines for working cattle, fencing supplies, mineral tubs, gasoline for the car, or a cold soda and a quick visit about cattle prices or the weather. "We enjoy our customers," says Donna, adding that she and George will continue to work hard to provide quality products and service to the Springview area. ■

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4-H/FFA SPECIAL FEED DISCOUNT

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