



# Between the Rewards

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# CEO UPDATE

**Strong Roots, Stronger Futures** - As we move through the summer of 2025, it's a good time to reflect on where we've been—and where we're headed. Across Kansas and beyond, the cooperative system is facing a season of significant challenges. Many cooperatives throughout the state have reported net bottom-line losses over the past year. Escalating operating costs, volatile commodity markets, supply chain disruptions, and increased regulatory burdens have combined to create one of the most difficult environments our industry has seen in decades.

Yet amid these headwinds, Ag Partners Cooperative has remained strong and resilient. In fact, the past two years have marked the top two earnings years in the history of our cooperative. This exceptional performance has allowed us to return record levels of cash patronage to our member-owners, reinforcing the strength of our business model and the value of cooperative ownership, even in uncertain times.

While the current year's business results will not reach the record highs of the past two years, we do anticipate reporting another successful year this year. We look forward to sharing those results with you once our annual audit is completed this fall.



## The Agronomy Industry Is at a Crossroads

One area of particular concern across the industry is agronomy. Many of the basic manufacturers—those who produce crop protection products and seed—are dealing with lawsuits, regulatory scrutiny, and shifting market dynamics. Some of these companies have seen their stock values decline significantly, driven by legal liabilities and the cost of navigating changing public sentiment around certain chemistries and technologies.

While these issues may seem distant from the farmgate, they have real implications for retail agronomy providers like Ag Partners. Retailers serve as the final link in a complex supply chain, and when disruption occurs upstream, it often cascades down. From product availability and pricing uncertainty to changes in support structures and partnership models, we anticipate meaningful transformation across the agronomy sector in the near future.

Ag Partners is actively working to stay ahead of these shifts—strengthening supplier relationships, investing in local agronomic expertise, and continuing to prioritize service, transparency, and the success of your operation.

## A Strong Start to the Growing Season

Locally, we're pleased to report a successful and timely spring planting season across northeast Kansas. Conditions were largely favorable, and our teams were proud to support growers in getting crops in the ground efficiently.

In recent weeks, timely moisture has provided a much-needed boost as crops move into key growth stages. While there's a long way to go, the outlook is encouraging, and we remain optimistic about the season ahead.

## Looking Ahead Together

As a farmer-owned cooperative, we understand that our strength comes from you—our member-owners and customers. That's why we remain committed to navigating industry challenges with clarity, agility, and a long-term focus on supporting your success.

Whether it's through stable operations, strategic reinvestment, or returning value through patronage, Ag Partners is built to weather the storm and grow through it. We're proud of what we've accomplished together—and even more excited about what lies ahead.

On behalf of the entire Ag Partners team, thank you for your trust and your partnership. We wish you continued success throughout the growing season.

Sincerely,

- **Wes Spohr, President & CEO**



# AG DAY @ THE K



JOIN THE AG PARTNERS  
TEAM FOR FOOD & FUN  
BEFORE THE GAME!

**TAILGATE PARTY STARTS 5:00 PM**

**Hall of Fame Tent in the outfield**

**ALL ARE WELCOME!  
LIMITED NUMBER OF FREE TICKETS AVAILABLE.**



**VS.**



**FRIDAY, AUGUST 15 @ 7:10 PM**



# 2025 MEET THE INTERNS

Ag Partners welcomed five interns to our team this summer! They kicked things off with intern training led by David Dam and later took part in a DiSC Workplace Training to better understand team dynamics and communication styles.

Throughout the summer, interns have been busy with individual tasks, participating in Lunch and Learns, catching a Royals game, and more. Each internship will conclude with a final presentation, where interns will share their summer projects with peers, mentors, and the Ag Partners Leadership Team. We're excited for the experiences still to come—read more about each of our interns below!



Trent Mars **Agronomy Intern**

**Hometown:** Corning, KS

**Year in School:** Senior

**College Major:** Ag Business

**University Attending:** Kansas State University

**Mentor/Supervisor:** Kevin Bergman

**Hobbies:** Golfing, fishing, hunting.



Hilary Kabourek **Agronomy Intern**

**Hometown:** Brainard, NE

**Year in School:** Junior

**College Major:** Ag Business

**University Attending:** Kansas State University

**Mentor/Supervisor:** Kevin Bergman / Levi Lehmkuhl

**Hobbies:** Concerts, hunting, hanging out with friends and family.



Wyatt Prawl **Agronomy Intern**

**Hometown:** Highland, KS

**Year in School:** Junior

**College Major:** Agronomy

**University Attending:** Kansas State University

**Mentor/Supervisor:** Nicholas Blevins

**Hobbies:** Hunting, fishing, riding my four-wheeler.



Sophie Schumacher **Marketing & Communications Intern**

**Hometown:** Seneca, KS

**Year in School:** Senior

**College Major:** Marketing

**University Attending:** Kansas State University

**Mentor/Supervisor:** Jessica Hermes

**Hobbies:** Art, time with friends and family, listening to music.



Taryn Bergman **Marketing & Human Resources Intern**

**Hometown:** Baileyville, KS

**Year in School:** Senior

**College Major:** Marketing

**University Attending:** Kansas State University

**Mentor/Supervisor:** Brenna Eilert / Laura Steinlage

**Hobbies:** Traveling, time with friends and family, listening to podcasts.

# NEW EMPLOYEES

## Christian Small

Operations & Delivery Technician  
(Hiawatha, KS)

## Nick Meyer

Semi Truck Driver  
(Hiawatha, KS)

## Nicholas Ronnebaum

Operations Technician  
(Vliets, KS)

## Jesse Moss

Warehouse Attendant  
(Lathrop, MO)

## Garrett Smith

Warehouse Attendant  
(Lathrop, MO)

## Paige Berry

Controller

## Timothy Gaskins

QA Specialist  
(Lathrop, MO)

## Jacey Leech

Merchandising Assistant  
(Seneca, KS)

## Jonathan Renyer

Operations Technician  
(Sabetha, KS)

## Mike Mestagh

Operations Technician  
(Vliets, KS)

AgCEPTIONAL  
Q2 Winners



**JOSH BELLING**  
Operations Technician  
Hiawatha, KS



**TREVOR KUHLMANN**  
Digital Ag Technician  
Hiawatha, KS



**BLAKE BOUCHEY**  
Agronomy Account Manager  
Belvue, KS



# INTRODUCING PAPERLESS STATEMENTS

## WHY SWITCH?

- Faster Access
- Convenience
- Less Clutter
- Better Security
- Cost-Effective
- Eco-Friendly



**We invite you to try out  
paperless billing today!**



Fill out the digital form at [agpartnerscoop.com/about/resources](https://agpartnerscoop.com/about/resources) or call your local office to request digital statements.

# RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

**Sizzle of Summer** - The Summer weather has cranked up the thermostat to hot with a chance of severe storms. If you are hit by any hail or wind damage, please take a look at your farms and let your agent know which ones need to be turned in for insurance adjusters. Even if you don't have a Hail & Wind policy, it's worth giving your Crop Insurance agent a call if you see considerable damage. If you would like to sign up for Hail & Wind coverage, it's not too late! A quick phone call to Ag Partners and Jim Ward or Darcy Pralle can get you covered before the next big storm hits.

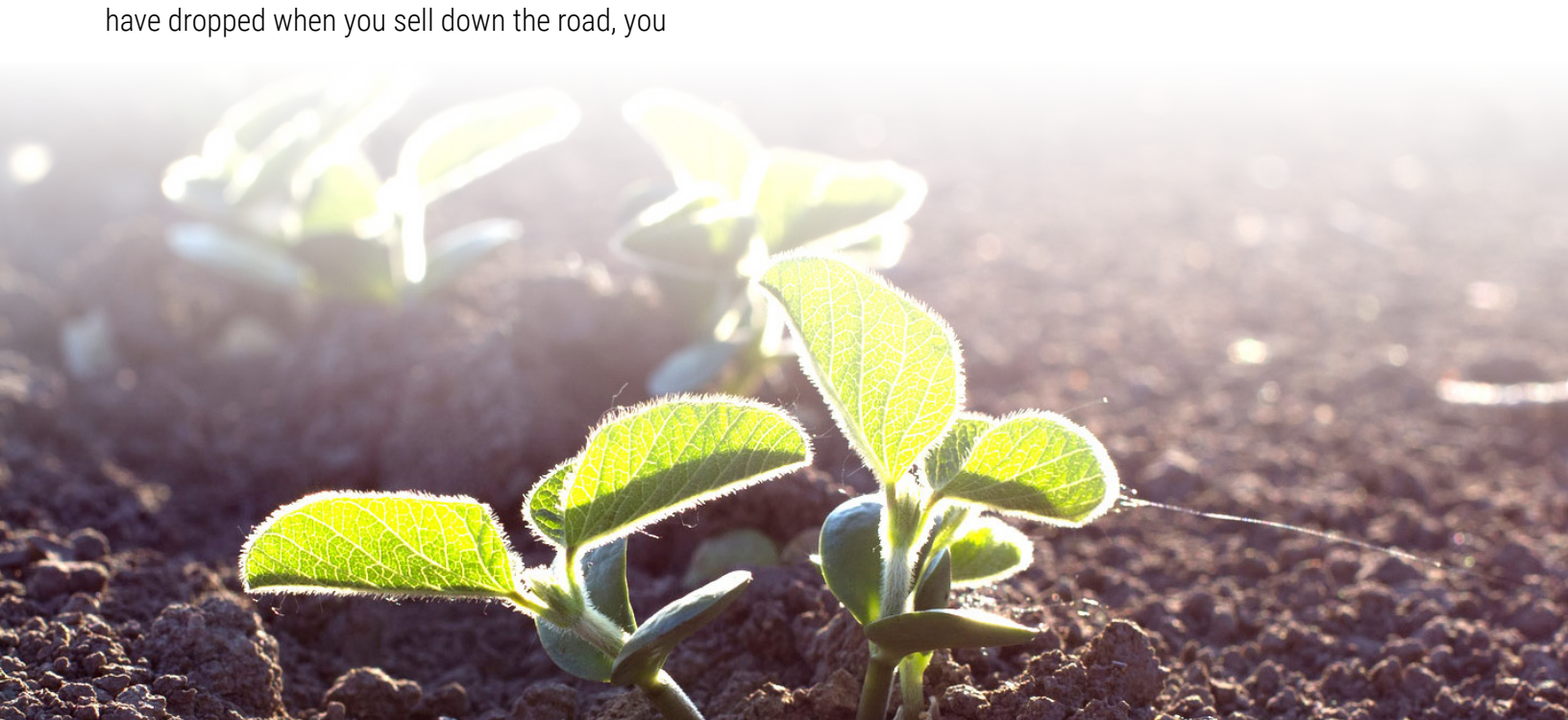
The cattle markets are also riding the summer wave as grilling season gets into full swing. Like last Summer, our beef prices have stayed high and even risen a bit. The problem is that no one knows what the next 6 months will look like. If you are even slightly concerned the cattle you are feeding now could drop in price, we highly recommend locking in your profits today. Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) Insurance can set a floor on today's high cattle prices, so if prices have dropped when you sell down the road, you

will be protected. We already have numerous cattle operations using LRP, so don't hesitate to reach out if you want to learn more.

We saved the best for last. The producers who signed up for the 2024 Enhanced Coverage Option (ECO) might see some claim checks headed their way. The Government has released the final 2024 County yields for Corn and Soybeans across our area. In most Counties the Corn yield was average, and Soybean yields were slightly below average. This means that 2024 ECO can now be calculated with these County yields and the price drop we experienced last year in the grain market. The initial numbers show 2024 ECO paying on most Soybean policies and even some of the Corn policies as well. If your current agent didn't discuss ECO Insurance for 2025 you owe it to your operation to call Jim Ward or Darcy Pralle and learn how your neighbors are making so much money!

Wish you a fun and safe summer!

- **Darcy Pralle, Crop Insurance Specialist**





# ENERGY UPDATE

I'm sure that most of you have been paying attention to worldwide politics lately. I can't necessarily speak for the grain or agronomy departments regarding how worldwide tensions affect their commodity prices, but in the energy world, it seems that fuel and crude prices tend to be a lot more volatile when wars, bombings, and other things happen. At the time of this writing on June 18th, we have seen a 40-cent price rise in diesel prices and about 20 cents on gasoline. Crude Oil and refined products had taken a turn over the last couple of months, down to where we had seen lows on fuel prices for the last couple of years. I would pay very close attention to these events as they will continue to cause severe volatility in the markets.

We are currently working on getting our propane contracts put together for the upcoming season. Propane prices have not trailed off like many had anticipated and it is looking like there will be a little bit of a higher price than last year. Our propane contracts will be sent out the first week of July like we have always done. We do ask that you return these contracts back to us before August 1st to give our staff enough time to enter contracts into our systems and also update accounts and other things. If you do not receive your contract by the middle of July, please contact our offices. Please be sure to review our propane policies form that will be included in the contract packets. Also of note on propane contracts, we sent out propane refund checks in the middle of June. Those are refunds for customers who did not use all of their contracts this past season. We do this to ensure

a clean cut-off for the next season and prevent confusion in the reconciliation of accounts going forward with new contracts. Those of you who qualified for this past winter's Cenex Gift Cards for Gallons promotion for oil should have received those cards in the last month or so. If you feel that you should have gotten one and did not, please contact me so I can verify.

I also wanted to provide an update on our Joplin, Missouri location. Our sales and operations staff there have done a tremendous job over the last year. One year ago, we were just getting our lubricant truck moving and starting to get moving on fuel. Here is a breakdown of what those guys have built in the last year:

- Oil – 6300 gallons to 12,000 gallons YTD
- DEF – 20,000 gallons to 60,000 gallons YTD
- Diesel – 287,000 gallons to 442,000 gallons YTD
- Gas – 30,000 gallons to 69,000 gallons YTD
- Direct Diesel – 315,000 gallons to 425,000 gallons YTD

I know it is a little early to be thinking about harvest already, but it will be upon us before we know it. Please take a look at your Oil, DEF, and ancillary products and let us know if you need topped off. It really does help us if we can get ahead on knocking out deliveries before things get overly busy for our farmers.

Thank you all for your continued business and support! It is greatly appreciated!

**- Eric Osterhaus, VP of Energy**







Ag Rewards is about giving back to you. Every purchase adds up to rewards that are designed to reduce costs and provide real value for your farm.

There are four tiers to Ag Rewards:



**BRONZE**



**SILVER**



**GOLD**



**PLATINUM**

No sign-up necessary! You benefit just by doing business with us! Visit **agpartnerscoop.com** or call your local office with questions!

**1 POINT = \$1 OFF  
SELECT ITEMS!**

# GRAIN UPDATE

At the heart of any successful grain operation lies not only quality products and timely logistics but also strong collaboration with our fellow departments. From agronomy and energy to accounting and maintenance, every part of the company plays a critical role in helping the grain department operate efficiently and serve our customers with excellence.

In recent months, we have made great strides in improving our communication and teamwork with other teams:

- With Agronomy and Energy, we have implemented plans to take advantage of our current relationships and turn them into more opportunities within our current customer base.
- The Originating Team has goals in place to grow our business, creating future opportunities for Ag Partners and our members.
- Grain Accounting will continue to service our customers in a manner that provides quality customer service.

We know that success in the grain business isn't just about what happens in the bins or on the scales—it's about people working together. Whether it's a quick heads-up about a delayed truck or a cross-departmental meeting to tackle long-term planning, each interaction strengthens the entire company.

As we quickly head into a new fiscal year, we look to continue building these relationships. Processes may change but our ultimate goal of serving our customers and returning money to our members, while staying relevant in the marketplace, will continue to drive our business.

## Market Overview

The past several months have provided ever-changing headlines that have made marketing decisions even more difficult than they already are. Tariff and biofuel policy news can contradict themselves from one day to the next and significantly change thoughts on future decisions from buyers. What news may have an end-user shy away from buying anything in the foreseeable

future may be followed with the next headline saying they should pivot their thoughts. Certainty is what most people want, and we haven't seen much of that for a while.

What a producer can do to help with the uncertainty is to have a plan and look at it on a regular basis. Just because you have a plan doesn't mean you cannot divert from it, but having goals in mind for your sales will give you a reason to make sales when market opportunities are presented.

## Grain Department at a Quick Glance

The grain department has a couple of changes on the personnel side. Trevor Valburg has moved into the role of Director of Merchandising. He will continue to work in the Seneca office and service the customers he currently handles.

I would also like to introduce Jacey Leech to our team. She started in May as a Merchandising Assistant in the Seneca office. Jacey is a recent graduate of Northwest Missouri State University. If you haven't had a chance to speak with her yet stop in and say hi.

Ag Partners has experienced a solid year in grain. Early selling opportunities and gaining ownership early created good margins that we were able to capitalize on. Having a fantastic fall harvest obviously helped as well.

Our plan going into the last harvest was to carry bushels longer than we have the past several years as market carries paid to hold those positions. With that comes additional costs in interest and added labor strains during the busy agronomy months, but our operations team responded to the challenge, knowing it was the best move for Ag Partners.

As we look at next year's budget, it will be tough to replicate some of the opportunities we experienced this year. However, we feel it is achievable, as we develop a good plan and execute it. We are currently working through these projections and look to grow our business in a way that provides value to you.

- **Lincoln Hillyer, VP of Grain**

# Q3 DONATION RECAP



**Hiawatha Community Foundation:  
Match Day**



**Friends of Morrill Public Library:  
Roof & Guttering Fundraiser**

## Other Donations:

- Tarkio Rodeo Association: Annual Rodeo
- Centralia Ball Association: New Softball Field Fundraiser
- Hope Brown County: Dinner Theater Fundraiser for Community Medical Costs
- Sabetha Middle School: Summer Sports Program
- Pottawatomie County Fairboard: Supplies for Livestock at the Fair
- Hamm Foundation: Scholarship Fundraiser

## Coming Soon:

- Greater Sabetha Community Foundation: Match Day
- Highland Foundation: Diesel Tech. & Precision Ag Programs
- South Brown County Community Foundation: Match Day
- Nemaha County STEP Foundation: Match Day



# CRO UPDATE

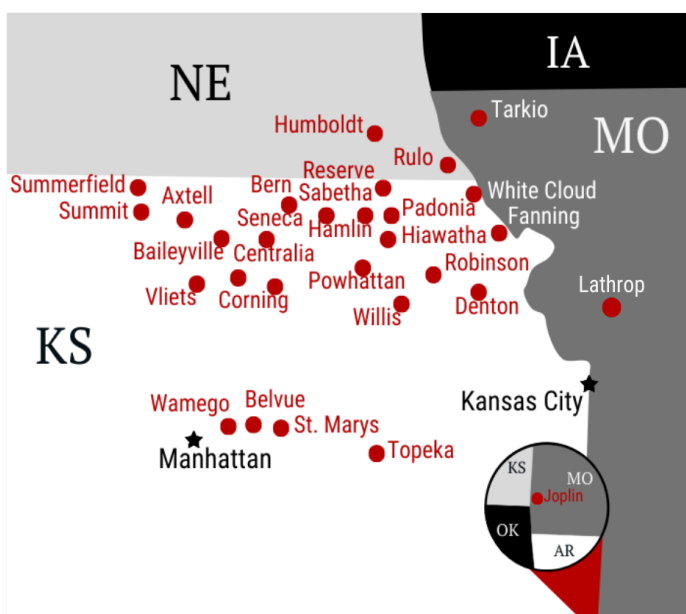
## Investing in Alignment, Growth, and

**the Future of Ag Partners** - Over the past few months, we've been working through some realignment at Ag Partners. On the surface, it may not seem necessary—or like the best use of our time—but we believe that fresh perspectives and new ideas are healthy.

Some say Ag Partners is too big. Others say we need to grow. The truth is, we're somewhere in the middle. We're not a massive co-op, but we're certainly not small. We like to think of ourselves as a large, midsize cooperative. And while growth is important—both organic and inorganic—we've recognized that some of our best opportunities for growth are right here at home.

## DEFINING "HOME"

Home might be Seneca, Hiawatha, Sabetha, or Powhattan. For others, it's Tarkio, Topeka, Wamego, or Joplin. With 31 locations, our footprint covers a lot of ground. But we've come to define "home" simply as wherever our customers are. And within our existing customer base—and their friends and neighbors—we believe there's untapped potential.



## CHASING EFFICIENCY -- EVERYWHERE

To better serve you, we've been identifying and improving efficiencies in every corner of the business:

- Operations: From location performance to inter-company logistics like product transfers, placement, and inventory controls.
- Sales: Driving cross-divisional selling and using existing relationships to uncover new opportunities.
- Back Office: Increasing electronic business to reduce postage and labor on statements and contracts.

Despite these improvements, we know business still happens the way it always has—through personal relationships, face-to-face conversations, and trust. But by streamlining our internal processes, we can support those relationships better than ever.

## WHAT WE'VE DONE SO FAR

We started with accounting. Each division (Agronomy, Energy, and Grain) used to have separate accounting teams. Today, all accounting has been realigned under Ben Walker, our CFO. The same people are doing the same jobs—but now with consistent policies, practices, and procedures.

We've also aligned our sales teams. Instead of each division operating independently, they now work toward common goals as one team. Each division still has its own leader—Director or Vice President—who manages day-to-day business while collaborating across divisions. These leaders work closely with me in my new role as Chief Revenue Officer to ensure we stay aligned, focused, and true to our Mission:

**"Committed to serve our patrons to achieve value and growth,"**

and our Vision:

**"Strategically planning to enhance profit and innovation."**

## LEADERSHIP UPDATES

As I transition out of my former role as SVP of Grain and Business Development, we're confident these changes are an investment in making Ag Partners your preferred business partner. Some leadership roles remain unchanged; others are shifting slightly:

- Lincoln Hillyer is back leading the Grain Division (Lincoln previously held this role before a stint at AGP—we were lucky to steal him back).
- Adam Jefferis continues as SVP of Agronomy.
- Eric Osterhaus remains our Energy Division VP.
- Jim Ward continues to lead Crop Insurance and Input Financing, as the Director.
- Andy Determan continues overseeing our Identity Preserved (IP) business, as its Director.

## WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

Honestly, not a lot—at least not right away. These are mostly small, incremental changes. If I hadn't mentioned them here, some might go unnoticed. But here are a few things you will see:

- **More cross-divisional ride-a-longs:** Someone new may join a familiar face on your next farm visit. It's simple—we want your business, and we're going to

- leverage existing relationships to earn more of it.
- **AgRewards:** Our new customer loyalty program rewards you with points for past business. You can use those points for discounts on select Agronomy products, with certain items offering better deals—just like any rewards program.

Other changes will be behind the scenes, but we hope you feel the impact—better internal communication, more planning before the busy seasons, and a sharper focus on efficiency and financial stewardship.

## A FINAL THOUGHT

Nothing changes overnight. And while we all wish it did, we also know that slow, methodical changes often lead to better results. We won't pretend we have all the answers. Not every decision will be perfect. But we'll adjust, call audibles when needed, and stay focused on delivering value to you. Because the way business was done yesterday is changing—and we're working hard to be ready for what tomorrow brings.

Thank you for your continued trust and partnership.

- **Brice Elnicki, Chief Revenue Officer**





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Ag Partners News

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[agpartnerscoop.com](http://agpartnerscoop.com)  
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