

Farmers Struggle With Prices As New Season Begins

By: Gene Prim
Farmers and their bankers continue to struggle with the ag economy that has become the norm in the past few years. No matter how you run the numbers, it's very hard to come up with a reasonable plan that assures any kind of a profit from farming operations.

The big culprit is the pricing structure that has been dragging down the ag economy nationwide for the past few years. Corn at \$3.40 per bushel, soybeans at \$9.50 per bushel, \$6 wheat and \$40 per ton sugar beets just don't add up. But that's what farmers can expect to be paid for their crops at the end of the harvest and it's been that way for a half dozen years. And it's slightly better than last year at this time.

The crop year 2012 was the last banner year for farmers producing crops. That season saw \$9 wheat, \$17 per bushel soybeans, \$7 corn and \$70 per ton beets. It has been all downhill since then.

The only thing keeping many farmers in the game in recent years is a huge crop. Both 2016 and 2017 have produced tremendous yields for farmers. Huge yields have made up, at least in part, for some very sick markets for what farmers produce.

But how long can you continue to bank on big yields as a hedge against the markets? There will come a year when we have an average or below average crop. Those results could spell some real disastrous situations for farmers, especially those farmers who are relatively new to the game and have not built up as much equity as they need.

The only crop that has shown



Soybeans were dry and ripe but the fields were wet when harvest began. Where combines could go, the soybean harvest came off the fields quickly. Some fields, however, required that wet spots be farmed around and returned to when things dried up.

any kind of major movement in the past year has been wheat. That small grain crop, that had once been king of the valley, had seen less and less acres planted over the past few years. It was hard to compute any kind of a profit from wheat with the price hanging stubbornly around \$4.50 per bushel.

The price for a bushel of wheat seldom ever moved more than 25 cents per bushel in a year. Acres

that had previously been planted to wheat instead were planted to corn which at less than \$3 per bushel did not guarantee any kind of a profit either.

Then, in July of 2017 the wheat market took off for a brief but substantial rise. Demand for wheat pushed prices to over \$7 per bushel the first week of July. Some farmers jumped on the market and contracted the entire crop they had

out in the fields plus some bushels they weren't sure were there. If they had to, they would buy wheat to fulfill the contracts.

Other farmers waited for wheat to climb even higher but that never happened. Instead, the markets began a steady decline all the way down to about \$5.50 per bushel. From there it has made a slow recovery back to about \$6 per bushel.

While the \$5.50 per bushel wheat is a buck and a half less than it was in July, it is still a dollar per bushel better than it had been for much of the past several years. There is no real explanation for why wheat took a big jump but one possible reason given is the quality of the grain from this region.

There is wheat and then again, there is wheat...

...The local hard red spring wheat grown here has developed almost a secondary market. The softer winter wheat grown south of this region, in the west and pretty much of the rest of the world, does not create the demand that our hard red spring wheat does. There is a world-wide

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Dr. Allan Rostad, DDS Has Been In Practice For 40 Years



Doctor Allan Rostad, DDS has been looking after patient's oral health for 40 years in the Barnesville community. He has cut back now to only two days a week in his practice on Front Street. Good oral health contributes to the overall health of the body.

By: Karen Carpenter
Paying attention to the health of one's whole body is important. Sometimes teeth are overlooked in the realm of healthful habits.

Good oral health helps the rest of the body function as well as possible. All phases of health are connected.

Doctor Allan Rostad, DDS has been practicing dentistry in Barnesville for 40 years. His office located on Front Street has been a stable in the Barnesville business community.

"Everything in the body is connected," said Rostad. "Good oral health makes it easier to maintain good overall health."

Dr. Rostad has cut back on

his hours as he is skating around retirement. He sees patients on Tuesday and Wednesday each week.

There is still a wide age range of people that come to Dr. Rostad for dental care. "We have patients from age three to 100," stated Rostad. "It is an older practice so most of my patients are adults."

Maintaining oral health is a habit that must be practiced daily. Obviously brushing and flossing are the first line of defense when dealing with oral health.

"Other things to avoid are sugary foods, especially pop is key," said Rostad. "People should avoid tobacco products and heavy alcohol consumption as well to maintain

good oral health."

When Rostad's dental practice was open five days a week, he performed all procedures. "Since I have cut back on the number of days I practice, certain difficult procedures I now refer to specialists," remarked Rostad. An example would be a difficult extraction.

Keeping ones mouth clean and healthy can go a long ways toward preventing colds and flu. "The healthier we are in general, the stronger our resistance is to diseases of all kinds," commented Rostad.

The correlation to oral health and exercise is one of choosing good habits. "If you are taking the time

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The corn harvest saw some delays at elevators as everyone was bringing in the crop at the same time. It is never a long wait in line at the Agassiz Valley Grain site north of Barnesville as a semi can dump its entire load in less than five minutes. From the time the driver enters the facility until they exit is less than a half hour to sample the load, weigh in, dump, weigh out, collect the paperwork and head back out to the field.

A Stop At Barnesville Drug Can Lead To Better Health

By: Karen Carpenter
One of the obvious businesses in the community that looks to your health is Barnesville Drug and Hardware.

Whenever a medicine, medical equipment or advice on the use of medicine is needed, that is the place to head.

"When people receive prescriptions, we tell them what the medication is for, the side effects and any special instructions that the medication has. We also answer any questions the patient may have about their prescription," said pharmacist

Michelle Hoppe.

Michelle and her husband, Chris, purchased the drug and hardware business from Greg and Jean Sletten and Jim and Penny Bergeson in 2015.

She began working as pharmacist on a part time basis and then took on full time duties in 2015.

The Hoppes are Barnesville residents and have two children Emily and Jacob.

There are many different ways that Hoppe and the employees of the Barnesville Drug and Hardware contribute to the community's health.

"We provide information on prescription medications and give recommendations for over-the-counter medications and dietary supplements," stated Hoppe. "We also review patients medication profiles looking for drug interactions and problems. We can suggest alternatives that may be more beneficial and cost effective for the patient."

The drug store does not deliver medications but they do mail prescriptions out to customers. That can be a beneficial service when

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Pharmacist Michelle Hoppe, left, helps customer Kasandra Miller, right, with her prescription. Michelle and her husband Chris are the owners of Barnesville Drug and Hardware.