

Corn Yield 2016


## Harvest 2016 another record-setting year

Rock County tops previous corn and soybean records by 2 to 3 bushels per acre

## By Mavis Fodness

One year after Rock County farmers set corn and soybean yield records, they topped those records by 2 to 3 bushels per acre.

The new record corn yield in the county is 201.2 bushels per acre up from 198.8 set in 2015.

Soybean yields are now at a record 61.9 bushels per acre up from last year's 58.2.
Rock County was one of 14 counties in Minnesota that surpassed the 200-bushel-peracre yield mark in corn production.

Murray County (200.4) joined Rock County on the 200-plus bushels per acre list, according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service Minnesota field office's year-end estimates report.

Pipestone and Nobles counties recorded corn yields of 199.5 and 187.4 respectively.
Nicollet County recorded the top corn yield average in 2016 with 209.4 bushels per acre.

The state's corn yield average in 2016 was 193.0 bushels per acre.
In soybean production, nine counties surpassed 60 bushels per acre in the state. The top soybean-yielding county is Faribault County with 64.1 bushels per acre.

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Soybean Yield 2016


Harvest 2016 records/ continued from page 2

Rock County tied with Olmstead County for second-highest yield in Minnesota at 61.9 bushels per acre. That compares with low averages of 52.5 bushels per acre

Rock County tied for the second highest yield for 2016 with Olmstead County (61.9).

Pipestone, Murray and Nobles counties yielded 58.3, 58.2 and 54.8 bushels per acre respectively.

The state's average bean yield was 52.5 bushels per acre.
Locally, producers planted 500 more acres of corn $(142,500)$ than last year and 1,000 more soybean acres $(108,500)$.

The county produced 134,600 bushels of corn for grain and 108,200 bushels of soybeans.

Prices, however, were not record-setting.
For the 2016 marketing year, Minnesota's corn averaged $\$ 3.30$ per bushel, down 7 cents per bushel from 2016, according to the USDA website.

Soybeans were 50 cents higher in 2016 than in 2015 for the marketing yield at $\$ 9.25$ per bushel versus $\$ 8.75$.

By comparison, Iowa's top soybean yield was 10.1 bushels per acre in Cherokee County.

Forty-nine counties, or nearly half of the counties in Iowa, had average soybean yields above 60 bushels per acre in 2016, and all counties in the State had average yields exceeding 50 bushels per acre.


## Follow these tips on when to offer calving assistance

Dr. Erin deKoning, DVM Rock Veterinary Clinic As a veterinarian, I like calving season. I enjoy the opportunity to help bring new calves into the world.

After a long winter, baby calves give us hope that spring and warm weather is not too far away. However, not all calving cases are easy or have happy outcomes.

One of the worst jobs as a veterinarian is pulling a dead calf out of a cow.

Dead calves at birth always lead to the same question: When should we provide assistance to calving cows?

An article from Beef Magazine indicates that 80 percent of calves born dead were anatomically normal. How did they die?

Often deaths are from delays in being born, injuries during calving, or suffocation. Is there a means to prevent these deaths? By following a few simple rules, producers can greatly decrease losses associated with calving.

Keep everything clean
When offering assistance during calving, cleanliness is critical. Cows should be cleaned with soap and water prior to vaginal exams. Additionally, producers should thoroughly wash their hands and arms prior to vaginal exams.

Pregnancy exam sleeves should be worn both for cleanliness for the cow and to protect the producer from any diseases.


Consider lubrication
Proper lubrication should be added if needed, either purchased from a veterinary clinic or cooking compounds such as Crisco.

Mineral oil and soaps should not be used as lubricants because they can cause infertility later on or create additional dryness.

Roughly 80 percent of calves born dead were anatomically normal.

How did they die?
Often deaths are from delays in being born, injuries during calving or suffocation. Is there a means to prevent these deaths? By following a few simple rules, producers can greatly decrease losses associated with calving.

Check diligently
The best way to prevent calving problems is to check cows often.

Cows and heifers should be checked every three to four hours.

By checking often, many calving problems can be detected early on in the calving process.

Typically any problem that has been going on for three hours or less can still result in the birth of a live calf with assistance.

During calving season, follow the 30 -minute rule. If you observe a cow or heifer that is in labor and actively straining with no progress after 30 minutes, it is time to investigate. The ani-
mal should be placed in a chute and examined to determine the cause of the calving delay.

Recognize common problems
Common problems include bad positioning such as a leg back, a head back, backwards, or multiple calves trying to be born at the same time.

With a vaginal exam, you should also be able to gather other details about how far the cow has progressed with her la bor. These other details include dilation of the cervix and if the water sac has broken.

By this point many producers are ready to call the veterinarian.

As a veterinarian, we encourage producers to call early on, rather than waiting. Remember, there is no shame in calling the veterinarian for calving problems.


## Amid insurance questions, keep an eye on the goal

## By Barbara J. Anderson

 Cattnach Insurance AgencyWhat are your goals, hopes and dreams? When you think about the most important things in your life your insurance plan probably doesn't come to mind, but it should.

Youworkhardto earn aliving and provide a good life for your family. Protect what you love for the future.

It's important to protect your assets with property and liability insurance. It makes sense to cover your cost of production with Multi-peril crop insurance coverage.

A good insurance agent will review your policies annually for the routine changes to keep up with your evolving operation.

Now its time to take it a step farther.


Let's consider your goals: -Retirement at age (you fill in the blank)
-fund a college education for children or perhaps pay off your own student debt
-Pass the farm to the next generation. Preserve the assets
for a son or daughter who wants is another option.
These are especially helpful in situations with large deductibles. They often cover without a deductible, pay quickly and cover expenses that traditional health care coverage does not.
-Death of the family's main income earner.

Is your family prepared to make house/farm payments and continue the family lifestyle? Life Insurance is the key to family protection.

Take some time to really consider what it would cost to replace the income. Each family is unique and has differentneeds Thisisnotthe time to take a cookie cutter approach. Determine the amount of current and future debt. The younger you are when you purchase life insurance the less expensive it will be.
-The desire to pass assets to the next generation. Parents wantto treatall children fairly, but often times that is very complicated. The desire to have the child who has beenfarmingcontinue to operate the family farm is strong

This is where Life Insurance coverage comes into play. You will need to see an attorney to draft your buy-sell agreement and then you can fund it with life insurance. The proceedsfrom the life insurance can be used to pay the otherheirs a cashinheritance while the farm stays in the family

There are a lot of things to consider when makinginsurance decisions. Startbydecidingwhat is most important to you. Insurance should protectyouin case of a natural disaster, defend you in a lawsuit and most importantly give you piece of mind.

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Luverne wouldn't be here if it wasn't for agriculture. As we celebrate Luverne's 150th birthday, it is important that we recognize the importance of agriculture in our past, present and future.

The first settlers to Rock County were farmers. A few came as the result of the May 20, 1862, Homestead Act, bu they were few and far between. Amap of 1856 showed a handful of farms, mostly by streams and the Rock River. No settlements were shown.

In 1865, the end of the Civil War, soldiers returned to their homes on the East Coast along the Appalachians, and in the Ohio valley to find their businesses, families, farms, and jobs gone.

They saw scarce opportunities. They needed to build a new life. The veterans saw nothing else to do but head west of the Mississippi to seek their fame and fortune.

On June 8, 1872, the United States Congress passed an act that provided that the homestead settler who had served for more
than 90 days during the Civil War should be entitled to have the period of his military service deducted from the time required to perfect title to the lands claimed.

Congress also provided if soldiers served for ninety days and were honorably discharged and made a homestead entry prior to June 22, 1874, for less than 160 acres, they should be entitled to a soldier's additional homestead entry, without the requirement of residence and cultivation for the difference between the land entered and 160 acres.

There was good land in Rock County and soon the word began to spread. Civil War vet erans and their families began to arrive in growing numbers. Rock County historian Betty Mann estimates that as many as 75-80 percent of our early settlers were Civil War veterans

Luverne was born out of the need to serve these farmers. When our founder Philo Hawes built his cabin on the bank of the Rock River by the city of Luverne's power plant, his mail route kept the these families
connected
Soon shops and service businesses opened their doors. Luverne was formally founded in 1867 to support the "creators of the economy," the Rock County farmers and their families.

American history shows clear evidence that the Agricultural Revolution created the Industrial Revolution and in turn, fueled the Technological Revolution.

Thus technological, indus trial and agricultural develop ments are not alternatives but are complementary. They are mutually supporting as to both input and output.

Long story short, the Agri cultural Revolution continues to be as important today as it was when the Midwest was founded.

Luverne's history shows living proof of how the agricultural revolution is directly connected to our economic growth and vitality. Creameries like Forres Dairy, Worthmore, Terrace Park and Land-O-Lakes were major players in Luverne's economy, serving the needs of the dairy industry.A.R. Wood Manufactur-
ing was for many years a major local employer and player as they manufactured state of the art equipment for producers.

When Midwest Beef Processing opened its doors to serve the cattle industry in the 1960s; hundreds of families living in Luverne made a good living working in the plant.

The agricultural revolution happened again in Rock County when local farmers joined together to createAgri-Energy and to build wind generators. Co-op elevators continue to invest in infrastructure

Plumbers, electricians, masons, building specialists and contractors are kept busy when farmers invest in new and innovative production methods. Equipment dealers, seed/fertilizer dealers and animal specialists work hard to meet the demands for farmers who compete in the growing global economy.

The lessons drawn from the economic history of Luverne and Rock County show us that the prosperity of the men, women and children in the service and business sectors are directly
related to the prosperity and in novations by our local farmers Agriculture is the backbone of an economy as it provides the basic ingredients to mankind and the raw material needed for industrialization.

Agricultural progress is essential to provide food for growing non-agricultural labor force, raw materials for industria production and saving and tax revenue to support development of the rest of the economy, to earn foreign exchange and to provide a growing market for domestic manufacturers. If the process of economic develop ment is to be initiated and made self-sustaining, it must begin in the agricultural sector.

The Luverne Area Chamber and CVB recognize and applaud the work of our farm families and all of the businesses organizations and individuals who support today's agricultural revolution.

We know that Luverne is here and can celebrate the 150th year of its birth because of you! Hats off to the Rock County farmer!


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# Agriculture Commissioner: Greater Minnesota needs better healthcare options 

 Many rural families are paying premium hikes of 40 to 60 percent over last year's cost. For example, a family offour in Owatonna is paying \$29,772 per year in healthcare premiums today. Many of these plans are high-deductible plans with limited coverage options.

By Dave Freetericiconn, Minnesota Department of Agriculture commissioner

Minnesota farmers are some of the best in the world at what they do. We have been blessed with incredibly fertile soils, ample rainfall and an unmatched innovative spirit and hard work ethic.

The success of our agricultural economy has been a cornerstone of our state's rural communities and has been the underpinning of our state's success.

Since the early days of our state's history and through our pioneer roots, Minnesotans have always addressed our shared challenges head on. We have always looked for creative ways to conquer obstacles to our growth and address threats to our success. As Minnesotans, no challenge is too big to solve.

Today, farmers and rural communities are facing significant head winds. Farm commodity prices are low. Input prices remain high. Farm profitability has plummeted in recent years.

We all know that when farm prices are low, the impact ripples through the main streets of Minnesota. One way we work to offset this is through crop insurance which serves as a safety net for our farm families.

As farm profitability has

gone down, individual health insurance market premiums in rural areas and across our state have skyrocketed. Many rural families are paying premium hikes of 40-60 percent over last year's cost. For example, a family of four in Owatonna is paying $\$ 29,772$ per year in healthcare premiums today. Many of these plans are highdeductible plans with limited coverage options.

The bottom line is: Greater Minnesota needs better, more affordable healthcare choices.

That is why Governor Mark Dayton and state legislators have outlined a solution to reduce costs and expand coverage options for all Minnesotans.

In 1992, Republican Governor Arne Carlson and a bipartisan coalition of legislators created MinnesotaCare - a health insurance plan that provides coverage to Minnesota's

As farm profitability has gone down, individual health insurance market premiums in rural areas and across our state have skyrocketed.
low income families. Today, over 100,000 Minnesotans have MinnesotaCare which offers a high quality coverage plan at more affordable prices.

Now, some 25 years later, Gov. Dayton and state legislators want to build on the successes of MinnesotaCare to lower the prices for more Minnesotans and their families. Gov. Dayton's plan would allow everyone who buys their insurance on the individual marketplace to have the added choice to buy into MinnesotaCare.

The process of choosing MinnesotaCare would be similar to buying crop insurance. Working with their local agent, farmers would select the plan that works best for them and their family. In areas that have other healthcare options, MinnesotaCare would be another tool in the toolbox.

The result would be higher quality healthcare options at a


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far lower cost compared to the individual market today. For example, on average, MinnesotaCare insurance would cost about $\$ 469$ per person per month - this is 12 percent less than the 2017 average monthly premium for commercial health plans. Savings for families would also be significant - that family of four living in Owatonna could see an annual savings of $\$ 5,820$ per year.

At a time when farm families are operating in the red, buying into MinnesotaCare is a smart decision and an opportunity to reduce costs. This is clearly an opportunity legislators in St. Paul should not overlook.

Furthermore, Minnesotans who choose MinnesotaCare would pay their own way - which means that, after an initial start-up investment, their premiums would fully pay for their coverage without any additional costs to taxpayers. And, MinnesotaCare consumers would still be eligible for federal tax credits through MNsure.

There has been more than two decades worth of discussion about the lack of health insurance options in Greater Minnesota. Rural residents are tired of paying expensive premiums that don't provide the option of choosing and keeping their own doctor. MinnesotaCare addresses this problem and expands choices for Minnesota families. It has a broad network of physicians and health care providers that offers more families more options.

I urge Minnesota farmers and rural residents to support Governor Dayton's proposal to let all Minnesotans buy into MinnesotaCare. The original program was the product of a bipartisan effort in 1992. It's time to set aside our political differences and address real issues Minnesotans are facing. This plan can be a bipartisan effort again.

Our farmers and rural communities are depending on our state legislators to get the job done.

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## Life changes - make sure your policy changes with you

By Shirley Top
Kozlowski Insurance Agency
Today's life changes in a heartbeat. Without regular reviews ofyour insurance program, it is possible for gaps to form. The result can be disastrous for a family.

Nothing is more unfortunate than finding out after a loss that you weren't covered for a particular risk.

In order to ensure that your coverage stays current with your circumstances and needs, it is importanttohave annual reviews.

What information should you discuss at your annual review?
-Have you made improve ments on buildings? Verify discounts and coverage.
-Do buildings have replacement cost coverage or will there be depreciation?
-Verify coverage on dwelling.
-Scheduled personal prop-

erty such as cell phones, jewelry, computers, etc.
-Have you finished the basement? Do you have backup of sewer, drain, sump pump coverage?
-Have you formed different entities such as corporations or trusts?
-Verify coverage amounts
on buildings. Are they adequate? - Verify coverage on farm personal property
-Do you have livestock liability coverage? If not, you may qualify for a discount.
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-New in recent years is con-
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coverage.
-Worker's compensation. -Have you considered a high deductible health plan; a health savings account?
-Is your life insurance adequate?
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-Long-term care coverage.

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That's notnecessarilytrue.In the event you are underinsured, everything you have worked so hard to obtain can be taken away, leaving families exposed to financial ruin.

Schedulingan annual review of your insurance program can help identify gaps in your cover age or help additional discounts.

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## Holy pig! Rock County pork has big impact on local economy

Pork is the world's most widely consumed meat, and a good share of it comes from Rock County pork producers Rock County currently ranks No. 47 in the nation and seventh in the state of Minneso ta for the number of pigs raised

In 2015 Rock County pork producers sent over 726,000 pigs to market to feed families in the community and across the region.

When a piglet is born, it weighs only 3 pounds, but in just six months it is full-grown and weighs 280 pounds.

In order to raise healthy pigs a good diet is needed. In 2015 Rock County pigs consumed over 7.6 billion bushels of corn and over 2.7 million

bushels of soybeans - grain raised by area farmers.

What goes in must come out. Pig manure is used locally
as a natural form of fertilizer to grow crops. Pig manure adds beneficial nutrients and organic matter to the soil and reduces

Gross income generated in 2015 from the sale of Rock County pigs totaled \$121.9 million. That allows pig farmers to invest in the local economy, which adds another $\$ 341.3$ million into the Rock County economy.
the need for synthetic fertilizers Sustainability is important to Rock County pork producers and they are doing their part to protect the environment by investing in new technology that

## reduces the need for water, feed

 and energy.Pig farming also benefits the local economy. Gross income generated in 2015 from the sale of Rock County pigs totaled $\$ 121.9$ million. That allows pig farmers to invest in the local economy, which adds another $\$ 341.3$ million into the Rock County economy.

Pig farming wouldn't be possible without the support of the community, and Rock County wouldn't be what it is today without pork production.

Source: Kevin Barnhart, Rock County Pork Producers from his presentation at the Feb. 27 annual meeting of LIFT, Luverne Initiatives For Tomorrow.

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## FSA offers microloans for ag purchases and operations

The borrowing limit for Farm Service Agency micro loans is now $\$ 50,000$, with beginning farmers having up to seven years to repay their loan.

Annual operating loans are repaid within 12 months, or when the agricultural commodities produced are sold.

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the regular FSA operating loan rates that are in effect at the time.

Microloans can be used to purchase land and buildings, as well as make soil and water conservation improvements.

This is in addition to
microloans being used for
approved operating expenses including:
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-family living expenses -purchase of livestock, equipment, and other materials

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essential to farm operations; -minor farm improvements such as wells and coolers;
-hoop houses to extend the growing season; -essential tools; -irrigation; and -delivery vehicles. Microloans offer borrowers simplified lending with less paperwork. To complement the program, additional changes to FSA eligibility requirements will enhance beginning farmers' access to land, a key barrier to entry level producers.

FSA policies related to farm experience have changed so that other types
of skills may be considered to meet the direct farming experience required for farm ownership loan eligibility.

Operation or management of non-farm businesses, leader ship positions while serving in the military or advanced education in an agricultural field will now count towards the experience applicants need to show when applying for farm ownership loans.

Contact the Rock County FSA Office at 507-283-2369 for more information and application forms.

For more information on FSA programs, visit the Rock County FSA Office, go to www. fsa.usda.gov/conservation, or call 507-283-2369


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## How important are corn and soybeans to Rock County and Luverne?

There are roughly 675 farms in Rock County that cover 80 percent of Rock County's land.

Rock County producers planted 136,700 acres of corn and 106,600 acres of soybeans in 2015.

These fields produced $27,175,960$ bushels of corn and 6,204,120 bushels of soybeans.

The sale of cornand soybeans in Rock County generated $\$ 160$ million in revenue in 2015.

This grain is used to feed cattle, pigs and poultry and is used in the production of ethanol and soybean oil.

To illustrate expense and revenue per acre, a football field is 1.3 acres.

On that 1.3 acres it costs $\$ 910$ to plant corn or $\$ 585$ to plantsoy beans (according to 2017 U of M


Extension projections.)
To grow this piece of ground, direct costs include seed, herbi-

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cide, fertilizer, fuel, equipment, insurance, parts and more. Other expenses are land payments (or rent) and labor.

Projected revenue from that 1.3 -acre piece of ground is $\$ 900$ from corn and $\$ 650$ from soybeans. This income is used to pay for farming expenses (oflocal ag businesses) and to provide for families(who spend money in the community).

The concern todayis that low commodity prices are lowering or eliminating profits, and producers are seeing increasing costs from government regulations and health insurance premiums. Corn and soybean produc
tion remains a key player in Rock County's economic health
-crop production supports dozens of other ag businesses, such as elevators, implement dealers and herbicide and pesticide retailers - and their spin-off industries.
-crop productioninturn supports other business that support agriculture businesses, such as banks, insurance agents, restaurants and other local retailers.
-crop production on family farms provides opportunities for young people to come back to Rock County and take over an operation while starting their own family to support RockCounty for
-crop production provides a wide array of employment opportunities.

Farms are employing young people that are taking over the operationandtemporaryworkers during the spring and fall busy seasons. Plus, local agbusinesses are needing to employ specialists to helplocal farmersutilize precision technologies.

Source: Lucas Peters, Rock County Corn and Soybean Growers. Thisinformation waspresented at the Feb. 27 annual meeting of LIFT (Luverne Initiatives For Tomorrow).


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# Minnesota Corn Growers: We will become the most sustainable and environmentally responsible corn farmers in the nation 

## Sustainability approach focuses on people, planet and profitability

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) announced they are implementing an ambitious set of initiatives with the goal of making Minnesota corn farmers the most sustainable and environmentally responsible in the United States.
"This is a grassroots, farmer-driven effort that addresses values shared by both farmers and non-farmers. It's a lofty goal," MCGA President Harold Wolle said in making the announcement
"But we believe the approximately 25,000 corn farmers MCGA represents are already making great strides in achieving it.
"We want to be a model for the rest of the country in how we take care of the land while also managing profitable and
highly productive farm opera tions."

The plan calls on Minnesota corn farmers to engage in sustainability programs and implement on-farm best management practices that fit their specific farm.

It also expands a new MCGA grant program focused on conservation, calls for greater investment in developing new uses for corn and seeks to grow partnerships with outside organizations.

Examples of action steps include encouraging Minnesota corn farmers to engage in existing sustainability programs.

These include the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program and adopt best management prac tices (BMPs) such as following the University of Minnesota's

nitrogen fertilizer use guidelines.

MCGA also recently launched an Innovation Grant program to help farmers imple-


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ment new BMPs.
The organization has also invested in new market opportunities in the areas of sustainable polymers, biofuels and green chemistry.

We don't need to choose between profitability and environmental sustainability. We can achieve both," said Chad Willis, a farmer near Willmar who chairs the Minnesota Corn Research \& Promotion Council (MCR\&PC).

Part of being sustainable is remaining profitable so you can invest in new conservation efforts and ensure that the land you currently farm is left in good shape for the next generation."

Nearly 100 percent of farmer and non-farmer respondents to a recent survey conducted by MCGA said that "protecting water quality of Minnesota lakes, rivers and streams" was important.

Nearly 80 percent of nonfarmer respondents to the same survey said that as a general rule, Minnesota farmers try to do what's best to protect water and the environment.
"Farmers live and raise families in the communities where they farm. The last thing we want to do is have a negative impact on our own community's natural resources,' said Wolle, who farms near St. James.

I think most non-farmers understand that and trust farmers to do the right thing. But farmers are also held to an incredibly high standard, and rightfully so. We have to continuously improve so we can become even better stewards of the land and contribute to healthier and more vibrant rural communities"

Building new partnerships
and strengthening existing collaborations are also a key part of MCGA's new initiative. MCGA invests approximately $\$ 4$ million annually in research efforts - the majority through the University of Minnesota that focus on water quality and nitrogen management.

The American Lung Association has been a key partner in helping MCGA make Minnesota a national leader in the use of cleaner-burning ethanol fuel. Recent new partnerships include the Environmental Initiative and Fishers \& Farmers.
"We're asking how we can leverage our resources with the resources of other organizations that share similar goals and values," Willis said.
"Divisiveness and pitting various groups against each other won't improve water quality and result in more productive farms. We have to invite everyone to the table to collaborate and see how we can work together."

MCGA leaders will be high lighting the plan at an event at the University of Minnesota on Monday, Oct. 17, titled "9 Billion and Counting: Abolishing Hunger." The event comes a day after Minnesotans celebrate "Norman Borlaug Day." Borlaug was a famous $U$ of $M$ researcher who focused on using science to improve agricultural practices.
"I'm proud of our farmer leaders for setting the bar as high as they have with this set of initiatives," said Dr. Adam Birr, MCGA Executive Director.
"I believe our state's corn farmers are up to the challenge. This plan incorporates everything from water quality to profitability to help our farmers get there. It's truly a farmer driven effort."


## Soy adds value through aquaculture

Casting a wider netto increase soybean meal demand is paying off. The soy checkoff, along with the Soy Aquaculture Alliance and many others, is opening doors to increase soybean use in U.S. aqua feeds Following years of checkoff-funded research, the Association of American Feed Control Officials recently authorized a new definition for the use of synthetic taurine in fish feeds. Approving taurine from additional sources reduces the need for fishmeal in feeds and allows for more soy protein; a change that could directly impact farmers' bottom lines.
"Years ago, we recognized that taurine was a limiting factor to maximizing our share of a fastgrowing market," says Mike Beard, soybean farmer from Frankfort, Indiana, and director on the United Soybean Board. "This new approval opens up a significant part of the aquaculture diet for soy."

Following this approval, farmers could start seeing added demand and the benefits it brings.
Soybean meal offers a high-quality, renewable protein source for many species of fish. This makes it an economical choice for fish feed manufacturers. The potential for increased soy-demand in this market will have a direct impact on the return farmers receive for their soybeans at the elevator.

Demand for seafood is growing at a staggering rate. Identifying this opportunity years ago ensured that farmers would be able to begin capturing their share of value right along with it.
"This is a great example of the checkoff's commitment to maximizing soybean farmers' profitability," comments Beard. "We will see our efforts from this innovative investment in aquaculture pay off for years to come."

USB's 73 farmer-directors work on behalf of all U.S. soybean farmers to achieve maximum value for their soy checkoff investments.

These volunteers invest and leverage checkofffunds in programs and partnerships to drive soybean innovation beyond the bushel and increase preference for U.S. soy. That preference is based on U.S. soybean meal and oil quality and the sustainability of U.S. soybean farmers. As stipulated in the federal Soybean Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act, the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service has oversight responsibilities for USB and the soy checkoff.


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## Cattle production drives Rock County economy

There are 70,000 head of cattle on hand annually in Rock County.

Of those, 63,000 head of finished cattle at today's value of roughly $\$ 1,560$ each generate a total of $\$ 98$ million per year.

Included in the inventory are 7,000 mother cows that produce 7,000 calves that are sold for $\$ 700$ each when they reach 500 pounds for $\$ 1.40$ per pound. This generates another $\$ 4.9$ million per year.

Considering calf sales and finished sales at today's prices, our Rock County cattlemen generate $\$ 102.9$ million annually

The multiplier effect of that economic impact in the community is $\$ 721$ million per year.

Each of the 63,000 finished animals consumes 50 bushels of corn per year totaling 3.15 million bushels annually. This accounts for 12.5 percent of all corn produced on 17,000 acres in Rock County.

For perspective, local cattle eat 12.5 percent of Rock County's 17,000 acres of corn.

Thislocal consumption addsvalue to our Rock County corn products.

Sustainability has become a buzzword amongmostareas offarm-
ing, but cattle producers have been doing it for years.

Here's how it happens: cattle make manure, manure grows corn, corn makes beef and beef generates money.

All this creates jobs and supports families - who spend money in the community.

To farm sustainably, producers need to consider their economic, environmental and quality-of-life practices thatallowfor future generations of farming

Environmental responsibility is on the minds of most local farmers, including beef producers.

Rock County's feedlots are compliant with state regulations, and local cattlemen have worked hard to achieve current compliance.

In fact, Rock County has served as a model county for the rest of the state with its successful feedlot ordinance and cooperation with farmers to achieve compliance.

Rock County is a delegated county, which means state rules are implemented locally.

Farming is what we do here in Rock County; 80 percent of the economy is driven by agriculture.


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## Good stockmanship reduces

## animal stress and worker injuries

Moving and handling 1400-pound animals is not a job for everyone - it is however, one that dairy farmers do every day.

Across the Midwest large dairy cattle are moved to and from the parlor several times each day.

Also, when sows weighing 300 to 400 pounds are placed in group pens, human caretakers are potentially at risk for injuries. Unfortunately, livestock-related injuries account for a high rate of lost work days.

People are a major source of anxiety for the cow or the pig. Stressed cattle and pigs are more difficult to handle and this puts workers at an increased risk of accidents. Much of an animal's anxiety comes from how it is handled.

Studies have shown cows handled by an aversive handler had reduced milk efficiency

Farmers using low stress animal handling methods are less likely to be injured and face fewer challenges moving cattle.
compared to cows with gentle handlers.

Animals quickly learn to recognize individuals and can distinguish between those who treat them gently and those who do not.

Knowing livestock behavior
is the key to good stockmanship.
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handling interactions (i.e. communication) between humans and cows and includeslow-stress handling techniques.

Stockmanship takes advantage of the basic, natural movements of livestock and is a method for humans to interact with these animals in a way that they understand.

Knowing livestock behavior is the key to good stockmanship. For example, a calm and relaxed cow at milking means minimal defecation and kicking in the milking parlor, and improved milk let-down.

Farmers using low stress animalhandlingmethods areless likely to be injured and face fewer challenges moving cattle.

## - Jeffrey Bender DVM,

University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine

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# Corn and soybean cash prices drive down average farmland rental rates in southern Minnesota 

The average cash price for corn and soybeans each calendar year since 2000 is listed in the table at right.

Columns 2 and 3 list the average cash prices each year in Worthington for corn and soybeans.

Column 4 lists the average percent change in corn and soybean prices from the prior year.

Column 5 shows the average rent paid by 1,200 farmers in southern Minnesota who are part of Adult Farm Management Programs.

Column 5 multiplies the price percent change by the previous year's actual average rents to determine the farmland rent each year.

Column 7 starts with the average rent $\$ 98.31$ in2000 and then multiplies this by the corn and soybean price change ( -3.21 ) to determine a rental rate of $\$ 95.16$ for 2001.

To determine the 2002 rental rate, start with the 2001 rate of $\$ 95.16$ and multiply this by the price change (15.06) to determine an average rent of $\$ 109.49$ for 2002.

This process was repeated to determine rentals rate through 2016.

There are two question marks for 2016, as the average rent will not be available until March of this year.

The last three columns vary quite significantly. If the change

| Column 1 | Column 2 | Column 3 | Column 4 | Column 5 | Column 6 | Column 7 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Calendar <br> Year | Cash <br> Corn <br> Price | Cash <br> Soybean <br> Price | Average <br> Corn \& Soybean <br> Price Change | Southern <br> Minnesota <br> Average Rent | Actual rents <br> multiplied by <br> price change | Previous year rent <br> multiplied by percent <br> change in grain price |
| 2016 | $\$ 3.17$ | $\$ 9.19$ | $-3.74 \%$ | $?$ | $\$ 223.25$ | $\$ 203.77$ |
| 2015 | $\$ 3.48$ | $\$ 9.06$ | $-17.83 \%$ | $\$ 231.92$ | $\$ 198.34$ | $\$ 211.68$ |
| 2014 | $\$ 3.85$ | $\$ 12.25$ | $-24.35 \%$ | $\$ 241.36$ | $\$ 184.19$ | $\$ 257.59$ |
| 2013 | $\$ 6.04$ | $\$ 13.99$ | $-0.38 \%$ | $\$ 243.47$ | $\$ 199.12$ | $\$ 340.50$ |
| 2012 | $\$ 6.82$ | $\$ 12.64$ | $2.30 \%$ | $\$ 199.88$ | $\$ 173.21$ | $\$ 341.79$ |
| 2011 | $\$ 6.53$ | $\$ 12.62$ | $48.06 \%$ | $\$ 169.32$ | $\$ 249.12$ | $\$ 334.11$ |
| 2010 | $\$ 3.84$ | $\$ 10.01$ | $7.08 \%$ | $\$ 168.25$ | $\$ 170.10$ | $\$ 225.65$ |
| 2009 | $\$ 3.40$ | $\$ 9.89$ | $-22.78 \%$ | $\$ 158.86$ | $\$ 113.16$ | $\$ 210.74$ |
| 2008 | $\$ 4.92$ | $\$ 11.59$ | $47.27 \%$ | $\$ 146.55$ | $\$ 184.73$ | $\$ 272.91$ |
| 2007 | $\$ 3.38$ | $\$ 7.78$ | $50.78 \%$ | $\$ 125.44$ | $\$ 173.14$ | $\$ 185.32$ |
| 2006 | $\$ 2.15$ | $\$ 5.39$ | $10.45 \%$ | $\$ 114.83$ | $\$ 121.94$ | $\$ 122.91$ |
| 2005 | $\$ 1.68$ | $\$ 5.80$ | $-25.28 \%$ | $\$ 110.40$ | $\$ 79.13$ | $\$ 111.28$ |
| 2004 | $\$ 2.32$ | $\$ 7.53$ | $17.26 \%$ | $\$ 105.90$ | $\$ 121.65$ | $\$ 148.93$ |
| 2003 | $\$ 2.10$ | $\$ 6.07$ | $15.99 \%$ | $\$ 103.74$ | $\$ 117.81$ | $\$ 127.00$ |
| 2002 | $\$ 2.00$ | $\$ 4.78$ | $15.06 \%$ | $\$ 101.57$ | $\$ 112.63$ | $\$ 109.49$ |
| 2001 | $\$ 1.70$ | $\$ 4.25$ | $-3.21 \%$ | $\$ 97.89$ | $\$ 95.16$ | $\$ 95.16$ |
| 2000 | $\$ 1.69$ | $\$ 4.57$ |  | $\$ 98.31$ |  |  |

in corn and soybean prices was the main factor determining southern Minnesota farmland rental rates, you would expect the actual rental rates to be similar to the Column 6.

Comparing these figures, the estimated rents using the price change factor were $\$ 25.94$ lower than the actual rents listed in Column 5 over 15 years or an
average of $\$ 1.73$ per acre peryear very close.

Usingthe second calculation of starting with the 2000 average (\$98.31) and adding or subtracting the price change each year to the previous calculation, there is much more variability.

And with calculated rents in Column 7, they were higher by $\$ 775.67$ over the 15 years - or
$\$ 51.71$ per acre per year, which is a significant difference Rent increased by less than $\$ 10$ from 2000 through 2005.

Then rental rates started increasing more rapidly from 2006 through 2010 and then increased only slightly in 2011 due to lower prices in 2009 and 2010.

With $\$ 6$-plus corn and $\$ 12$
plus soybean prices, rents took
offin 2012 and 2013 before begin ning to decline in 2014 as corn and soybean prices moved lower Many factors - like property taxes, input costs, yields, prices and gross income - affect rental rates, but there does seem to be a relatively close tie to corn and soybean prices and rental rates.

- Source: U of Minnesota



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## Enroll now for 2017 USDA safety coverage at FSA

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) urges producers who chose one of the safety net programs known as Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) to give the Rock County FSA Office a call at 507-283-2369 to schedule an appointment to complete their 2017 enrollment.

Although the choice between ARC and PLC is completed and remains in effect through 2018, producers must still enroll their farm by signing a contract each year to receive coverage.

If a farm is not enrolled during the 2017 enrollment period, producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program.

Although enrollment will run through Aug. 1, 2017, the FSA Office would like to complete this task before farmers get busy in the spring and before they come into the office to certify their crop acreage. So please contact the FSA Office as soon as possible.

For more information on FSA programs, please visit the Rock County FSA Office, go to www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation, or give us a call at 507-283-2369.

## State Fair and Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation accepting Century Farm applications

Minnesota families who have owned their farms for 100 years or more may apply for the 2017 Century Farms Program.

Produced by the Minnesota State Fair in conjunction with the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation, the Century Farms Program was created to promote agriculture and honor historic family farms in the state.

More than 10,000 Minnesota farms have been honored since the program began in 1976.

Family farms are recognized as Century Farms when three requirements are met. The farm must be:

1) at least 100 years old according to authentic land records;
2) in continuous family

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ownership for at least 100 years (continuous residence on the farm is not required); and
3) at least 50 acres.

A commemorative certificate signed by State Fair Board of Managers President Sharon Wessel, Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation President Kevin Paap and Governor Mark Dayton will be awarded to qualifying families, along with an outdoor sign signifying Century Farm status.

Applications are available online at mnstatefair.org (click the "Recognition Programs" link at the bottom of the home page); at fbmn.org; by calling the State Fair at (651) 288-4400, or at statewide county extension and county Farm Bureau offices.

The submission deadline is Monday, April 3. Recipients
will be announced in May. Previously recognized families should not reapply.

Information on Century Farms will be available at the Minnesota Farm Bureau exhibit during the 2017 Minnesota State Fair. A Century Farm database is also available at fbmn.org.

The Minnesota State Fair is one of the largest and bestattended expositions in the world, attracting more than 1.9 million visitors annually.

Showcasing Minnesota's finest agriculture, art and industry, the Great Minnesota Get-Together is always 12 Days of Fun Ending Labor Day. Visit mnstatefair.org for more information.

The 2017 Minnesota State Fair runs Aug. 24 - Labor Day, Sept. 4.

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## Behind the numbers, lives forever changed; Farm Bureau to honor 150-year-old operations

Minnesota Farm Bureau's Sesquicentennial Farm program will honor Minnesota families who have owned their farms for at least 150 years. Since the Sesquicentennial Farm program began in 2008, over 225 farms have been recognized.

The Sesquicentennial Farm program recognizes family farms according to the following qualifications:

The farm must be at least 150 years old this year (2016) according to the abstract of title, land patent, original deed, county land records, court file in registration proceedings or other authentic land records. Please do not send originals or copies of records.

Your family must have owned the farm for 150 years or more. "Family" is defined as parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, first cousins and direct in-laws (father, mother, brother, sister, daughter, son-in-law).

Continuous residence on farm is not required, but ownership must be continuous.

The farm should consist of 50 or more acres and currently be involved in agricultural production.

A commemorative certificate signed by Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation President Kevin Pap, Minnesota Departmont of Agriculture Commissooner Dave Frederickson and Governor Mark Dayton will be awarded to qualifying families, along with an outdoor sign sig nifying Sesquicentennial Farm recognition.

Applications are available by writing Sesquicentennial Farms, Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation, P.O. Box 64370, St. Paul, MN 55164; emailing info@ fbmn.org; or calling 651-7682100. Applications are also available on our website, www. fbmn.org.

Deadline for application is April 3. Previously recognized families should not reapply.

Century Farms are not automatically recognized as Sesquicentennial Farms.

Families must apply to receive Sesquicentennial Farm recognition. County Farm Bureaus are encouraged to work

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with county agriculture societ iss and county fair boards on local recognition of recipients. Recipients will be announced at the beginning of June.

To see a list of previously recognized Sesquicentennial Farms in Minnesota, visit fbmn org/pages/farm-recognition. Minnesota Farm Bureau Farmers, Families, Food is comprised of 78 local Farm Bureau associations across Minnesota. Members make their views known to political leaders, state government officials, special interest groups and the general public.

Programs for young farmers and ranchers develop leadership skills and improve farm management.

Promotion and Education Committee members work with programs such as Ag in the Classroom and safety education for children. Join Farm Bureau today and support efforts to serve as an advocate for rural Minnesota, www.fbmn.org.






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## Farming is a dangerous occupation; data shows common sources of injuries

Information about farmrelated injuries in 2015-2016 have been gleaned from news reports across the U.S.

Developed by staff at the National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety (NCCRAHS) in 2015, the numbers in the chart are based on reports from newspaper articles a combination of Google alerts, review of media clippings and verified personal submissions.

From this database injuries and illnesses were summarized
throughout the upper Midwestern states (Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin).

The database identified 53 agriculture work-related injuries in 2015 and 76 (as of October 1) in 2016. This includ ed 24 fatalities in 2015 and 45 fatalities in 2016.

Tractors accounted for 41 percent of the injuries and fatalities reported during 2015 and 2016 (as of Oct 1, 2016).

Other farm equipment including hay wagons, forage


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choppers, cherry pickers, and other machinery were also listed in the top five causes of injury for both years.

Overwhelmingly, most of the people involved in these incidents were 18 years of age or older ( $80 \%$ ) and male ( $93 \%$ )

There were 5 children under the age of 10 recorded in the database.

The table shows a general comparison of the source of work-related injuries in the Upper Midwest from 2015 and 2016 as of Oct 1, 2016.



## SUPPORTING A STRONG FARM ECONOMY



The Luverne Farm Store is a proud supporter of all our local swine producers. We continue to focus our efforts toward bringing new technology in Feed Premixes, Animal Health Products, Advancing Barn Efficiencies, and Livestock Marketing to our local producers. The Luverne Farm Store applauds the efforts of all area farmers in utilizing local livestock manure as an innovative method of fertilization. We look forward to providing more value-added services to local farmers, as we all work to protect our environment and strengthen our local farming economy.

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