July 2018

On the Farm....

Welcome to the third edition of On the Farm. I hope this newsletter finds you well on the way to a prosperous 2018 production year!

What a difference just a few short weeks can make. Looking back at the last newsletter I find commentary about below normal temperatures and above normal precipitation, yet here in the waning days of July the vast majority of producers finding themselves positioned for strong crop yields again this year.

I often think back about how it was growing up on a small grain farm in Morgan County in the late 60's and early 70's and am truly amazed with today's farming practices. Granted the cost of raising a crop isn't what it was back then, but the results our farming friends consistently generate is truly remarkable. From all of us here at Prairie State Bank & Trust, we applaud you on the job you do!

I hope you enjoy our newsletter.

Mike Battefeld

Regional President– Lewistown

Inside this issue:

County Fair Season is in Full Swing

It's pretty likely that you've been to a county fair at least once in your life. Or, if you're like me, you may visit multiple fairs each year.

It could be any number of things that attracts you to a fair. It's the food you say? Without a doubt fair food is in a class unto itself. Maybe its your favorite grandstand entertainment or taking in the plethora of exhibits and livestock shows. For whatever the reason, county fairs are a valued Midwest tradition.

But step back for a minute and think about what a county fair really means. The economic impact is obvious. According to a 2014 study conducted by the University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service for the Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs, related spending was estimated at $170 million, $90 million of which was directly with the state economy. The study indicated that these numbers represent a return of 18 times the state's investment in the county fair aid program. In 2014 there were 1,000 jobs created statewide.

It's not all about dollars however. County fairs are a major social event, obviously focused on celebrating Illinois agriculture. It remains vitally important that the consuming public continues to be educated on the significant social and economic contributions from farming each year. Further, county fairs are integral in creating the farmers of tomorrow.

We encourage you to join us in enjoying and supporting your county fair!

> "Agriculture is the most healthful, most useful and most noble employment of man."
>
> -George Washington

No two soils are the same

Soil classifications are often talked about in the context of a farm's ability to produce a crop, and consequently its value. On the surface it seems like this topic is obvious and straightforward. The reality is, however, that there is a lot of science that goes into determining soil types and classifications. Its by no means simple.

Defining soil classifications was undertaken by the United States Department of Agriculture as early as 1936. Utilizing a reasonably sophisticated process coupled with modern technology, the Natural Resource Conservation Service today has soil maps covering more than 95% of the land in the United States. The NRCS goal is to have 100% of our land mapped in the near future.

The NRCS uses an eight class system to rate soils with Class One being the most desirable for ag production and Class Eight being the least desirable. The table below shows an interesting comparison between the State of Illinois vs. the United States as a whole.

Soil Class	US	IL
1,2	23%	63%
3	21%	22%
4	14%	6%
6	19%	6%
7,8	23%	3%

Lender Focus

With this issue of On the Farm we are rolling out a new regular item called Lender Focus. As the name implies, in each issue going forward we will take a closer look at one member of the Prairie State Bank & Trust ag lending team, sharing with you some information to help you get to know us a little better.

For the July 2018 issue we thought it appropriate to feature recently retired Southern Regional President Greg Toppmeyer.

Greg grew up near Hardin, IL, attended Calhoun High School and graduated from Quincy College. Greg's career in the financial industry began in 1973 as a State of Illinois Bank Examiner. In 1976 he moved to Virden, IL and transitioned to President of Farmers and Merchant's State Bank soon thereafter. Over the course of the next 42 years with our company Greg consistently represented us well in the Macoupin County market while also serving on various committees and the Prairie State Bank & Trust Board of Directors.

Greg and his wife Carole are the parents of three children, Brett 33, Blake 30 and Melanie 27. While much of the retirement plan is still to be written, Greg and Carole enjoy travelling and Cardinal baseball.

Greg handed off management of the Southern Region to newly appointed Regional President Sam Leak effective June 30.

From all of us who have had the privilege of working with Greg over the years, we congratulate him on a distinguished career and wish him a long and enjoyable retirement.

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