

THE TRIBUNE



Winter 2010

Agribusiness

Many Mid-Iowa
businesses spring
from agricultural roots



Ames
Business
Quarterly
sponsors:





Winter 2010

Vol. 3, No. 1

CONTENTS

5 W&G Marketing



- 8 Wineries
- 10 Cutting-edge agriculture
- 12 Ethanol industry
- 14 Ag Information Center
- 17 Seed companies
- 18 Farm Progress Show

ON THE COVER

Cover illustration by Carmen Cerra, The Tribune.

CONTACT US

Ames Business Quarterly is a publication of The Tribune, 317 Fifth St., Ames, IA, 50010; (515) 232-2160.

WELCOME TO THE ISSUE

Ames: Fields of opportunities

At the start of another new decade, when everyone is on the lookout for the next advancement in technology, it may be easy to overlook a state still so grounded in agriculture. But by combining new innovations that much of the planet hasn't even heard of with rich soil and traditions, Iowa, and Ames, specifically, will continue to feed and fuel the world for generations to come.

With snow shovels still at the ready, it may be hard to think about the 2010 Farm Progress Show returning to the Central Iowa Expo grounds (just west of Ames) this summer, but planning is well under way for the more than 200,000 people who will come in late August. Take a look at the story on page 18 for an update from key players involved in this internationally reaching event. The Ames Convention & Visitors Bureau, along with the Ames Chamber of Commerce and Ames Economic Development Commission, is pleased to work with other local and state organizations to not only give attendees a remarkable experience here in our backyard, but also to showcase



DAN CULHANE
president and CEO, Ames Chamber of Commerce and Ames Economic Development Commission

Central Iowa replete with dynamic improvements for sustainable agriculture.

This issue of Ames Business Quarterly also looks in on a number of agricultural developments coming from Iowa State University. The new BioCentury Farm, along with industry-changing research coming out of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture and other program at the university, is constantly bringing the industry to the cutting edge — and

then pushing further into the future.

In the early 1900s, Iowa was ranked among the top wine producers in the country, but when crops shifted to corn and soybeans in the 1930s, the ranking fell steeply. However, in the last two decades, Iowa has experienced a resurgence of growing grapes and now boasts more than 70 wineries across the state as well as a specialization in viticulture at Des Moines Area Community College. Read about the profiled wineries in and around Ames.

And it's no longer possible to mention agriculture without mentioning renewable energy. This value-added industry is what many perceive to be an answer to our country's increasing troubles with international oil producers. Is Mid-Iowa's renewable energy industry solvent? Industry representatives from Hawkeye Renewables, Renewable Energy Group and Lincoln Way Energy respond.

This will be another issue that just skims the top of all Ames has to offer, especially in agriculture, but it's at least a taste of what's at the heart of our state and at the future of our world. Welcome to our fields of opportunities.



By RONNIE MILLER/THE TRIBUNE

■ MID-IOWA ECONOMIC DATA

Economy steadies in Ames, Story County

By BOB ZIENTARA
Staff Writer

Ames and Story County appeared to hold their own in the face of a difficult economy during the final three months of 2009.

Local lending institutions reported an overall increase in deposits during the fourth quarter, but the slowing economy made itself felt with an overall decline in outstanding loans of nearly \$5 million.

Some available cash left the Ames area, due to an order issued in late September by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

All FDIC-insured lenders were required to pay three years' worth of "risk assessment" to replenish federal coffers that were drained by bank failures around the country. But local lenders also reported they were well capitalized and had money to lend as the year closed.

Two lenders did not provide numbers for the survey, U.S. Bank and Wells Fargo Bank. Spokespersons Angie Kaipust, of Wells Fargo, and Robert Weiss, U.S. Bank regional president, said it is the policy of their banks not to disclose local numbers.

But both representatives said their institutions had solid performances in 2009. Kaipust cited an FDIC market survey current to June 30, 2009, which shows Wells Fargo's Story County outlets had deposits of \$101,690,000, or 6.7 percent market share. U.S. Bank's Story County deposits were \$157,630,000, or 10.4 percent market share.

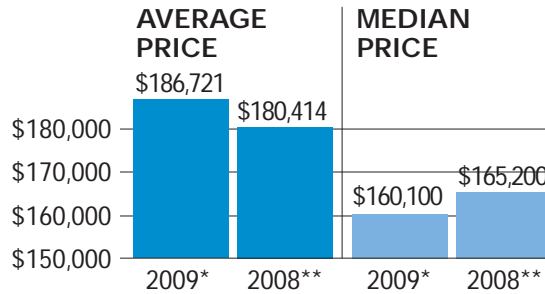
Weiss said in 2009, U.S. Bank's Ames offices posted increases of 8 percent in loans and 12 percent in deposits.

There were 208 bankruptcies in Story County during calendar year 2009. That was 59 more than the year before, but 87 fewer than the 295 bankruptcies declared in 2005, the year before new laws made it more difficult to declare bankruptcy.

The Story County unemployment rate remains consistently lower than state and national

HOUSING MARKET

12-month home sales for Ames and adjoining rural subdivisions



SALES

2009*	2008**
546	578

Sales are down 5.8%.

AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET

2009*	2008**
98	94

*12 months ending Dec. 31, 2009
**12 months ending Dec. 31, 2008

SALE PRICE TO LIST PRICE RATIO

2009*	2008**
95.1%	95.2%

Ames listings and pending sales

Date	Active	New listings*	Sale pending*
Oct. 2009	220	45	30
Oct. 2008	250	44	39
Nov. 2009	214	43	20
Nov. 2008	255	47	23
Dec. 2009	184	22	28
Dec. 2008	242	38	22

* From previous month

Source: Ames Multiple Listing Service, compiled by Hunziker & Associates Realtors

RETAIL

Iowa sales tax receipts

- Third quarter 2009: \$382,942,000
- Second quarter 2009: \$512,570,000

Ames hotel/motel room tax quarterly receipts

- September 2009: \$301,452.69
- Fiscal 2009 (July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009): \$1,839,443
- Fiscal 2008: \$1,105,363

averages, hovering between 4 and 5 percent during the final three months of 2009.

The Iowa Department of Revenue said statewide, retail sales

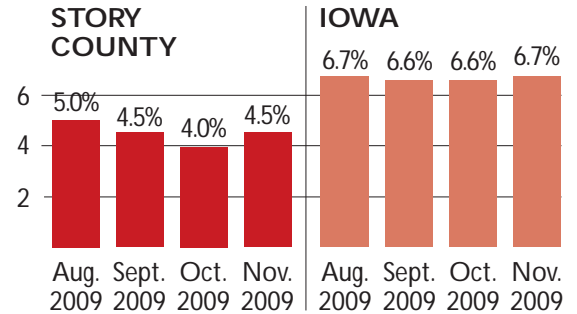
declined nearly \$130 million in the third quarter of 2009 compared to the previous three months.

Ames' housing market sustained a loss of about 6 percent in

total sales for 2009 compared to the previous year, but home values, time on the market and the ratio of sale price to list price remained steady.

WORKFORCE

Unemployment



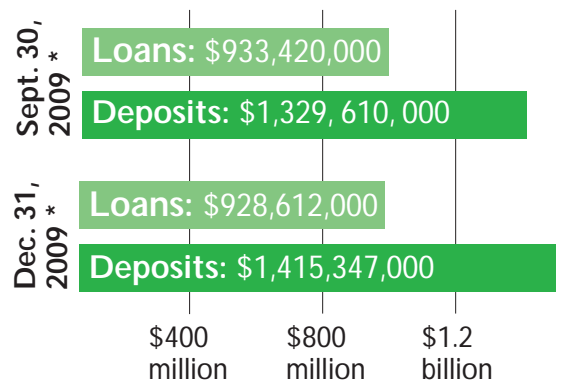
Labor force/employment

	November 2009	August 2009
Ames	32,700/31,400	32,200/31,100
Story Co.	49,900/47,600	49,000/47,200

Source: Iowa Workforce Development, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

FINANCE

Ames lenders, deposits and loans



Source:

* Participating lenders: First National Bank of Ames, Midwest Heritage Bank, Valley Bank, Banker's Trust, F&M Bank, First American Bank, Ames Community Bank, ACE Community Credit Union, River Valley Credit Union and Greater Iowa Credit Union.

Bankruptcies

- Story County as of Dec. 31, 2009: 208, or approximately 17 per month.
- 2008 calendar year total: 149, or approximately 12 per month.

Source: U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Des Moines

Energizing Iowa's Economy

Through our business outreach programs, more than 500 companies and small business owners across Iowa have generated more than \$200 million in sales increases, new investments and cost savings, and have created 2,000 new jobs.

Iowa State channels \$1.52 billion into the state economy annually, more than six times the state's appropriation.

Over \$1 billion in private gifts have been received to support Iowa State over the past decade. 73% has been from donors outside Iowa.

Our faculty and staff have been awarded more than \$839 million from federal grants, contracts and cooperative agreements over the past several years. These research dollars support projects that impact the lives of our citizens.



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

www.iastate.edu

■ W&G MARKETING



BY RONNIE MILLER/THE TRIBUNE

Dale Christianson, left, and Ting Hoang, team members at W&G Marketing Co. Inc., do a final trim of beef briskets as Mike Busick, back, also a team member, places them into containers Dec. 31, 2009, at the plant in Jewell.

Ames companies connect with, add value to Iowa agriculture

BY BOB ZIENTARA, *Staff Writer*

Ames business owner Marv Walter is involved with enterprises that range from golf to real estate.

But he said it was his ties to agriculture that brought him back to Iowa from Illinois in the late 1970s. Walter said that while agriculture may not be visible to visitors to Iowa State University, or to the thousands of people who work in commercial, retail and manufacturing businesses, agriculture forms the bedrock of the Mid-Iowa economy.

Some of his own businesses prove that, he said.

Once a bank, now a nerve center

Walter directs several ag-related business operations from an office in downtown Ames. It's there he often meets with two assistants Darren Dies, president, W&G Marketing Company Inc., and Mark Henry, operations manager, Walter & Associates LLC (the Centralized Ultrasound Processing Lab).

W&G Marketing processes meats at plants in Jewell and Sidney, and ships them from a warehouse in Ames, which sells

products throughout the United States and several foreign countries, Dies said.

In the meantime, Henry maintains connections with some 130 technicians trained to use the ultrasound technology.

Test data is sent to the home office in Ames via satellite, he said.

"We are licensed users of Iowa State University technology," Henry said. "And we have improved on that technology."

MARKETING *please see page 6*

Marketing

Continued from page 5

There are important reasons why hundreds of business people, cattle raisers, meatpackers, shippers and technicians derive employment and profit by locating in the Ames area and in Iowa, according to Walter, Henry and Dies.

“This state accounts for 26 percent of the nation’s hog production and 31 percent of hog slaughtering,” Walter said. “All of that activity reflects back on Ames.”

The connections range beyond state borders.

Henry said CUP Lab maintains business relationships with “a number of breeding associations all across the country, particularly in Kansas City, Nebraska, Texas and Montana.”

Many of the technicians who work with CUP Lab are ISU animal science students, he said.

Plant serves large customers

On a subzero December day, Robert Olinger, W&G vice president of operations, gave a tour of the company’s Jewell meat processing plant.

“We are a small operation compared to others, but when you factor in the specialties (smoked, seasoned meats), we are reasonably sized,” he said. “We take raw product — cuts of meat from vendors like Tyson-Swift, Nebraska Beef, National Meat Packers and others — and add value to it.”

Employees add spices to beef brisket, sliced or shredded meats and back ribs, some with sauce, some without, then cook or smoke the meats, Olinger said.

In a refrigerated room, workers wheeled up racks of cooked brisket, trimmed them and then put them through a packaging machine.

Once packaged, they’re cooked again.

Olinger said the first cook-

Ames links to U.S. agriculture

Federal ag-related organizations in Ames:

- Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
- National Animal Disease Center
- National Veterinary Services Lab
- Center for Agricultural Research and Development
- National Soil Tilth Lab
- Council for Ag Science and Technology
- Meat Export Research Center
- Center for Designing Foods to Improve Nutrition
- Center for Crops Utilization
- One of two federal irradiation centers to work on meat and other ag products

Professional ag-related organizations in Ames:

- National Farmers Organization
- Iowa Cattlemen and Beef Industry Council
- Iowa Turkey Federation
- Iowa Crop Improvement Association
- Iowa Egg Council
- Iowa Farm Business Association
- Iowa Institute for Cooperatives
- Iowa Poultry Association
- National Correlation Center

Source: State and federal ag-related agencies, organizations

ing finishes and tenderizes the meat. The second, at 160 degrees in the package, guarantees safety to “as high a degree as we can provide.” The size of the plant makes it more nimble and adaptable, he said.

“For example, we are working with a restaurant chain from the southern U.S., to cook chickens,” Olinger said.

The workforce varies between 10 and 20 employees, but can be as high as 25 in high-volume periods. Most employees live within 15 miles of the plant, he said.

“Seasonal ups and downs in livestock production are still part of the industry, but not as pronounced as they were decades ago,” Olinger said. “With today’s indoor facilities for raising meat animals, the supply tends to be steadier.”

Ultrasound on the feed lot

“Centralized Ultrasound Processing” sounds like a

place where obstetric technicians check on expectant mothers and unborn infants.

But according to Stefanie Charlson, an employee with CUP Lab, ultrasound technology serves a different purpose in Iowa. The beneficiaries are people who raise livestock and the customers who buy and eat meat products.

Using hand-held ultrasound devices, trained technicians “measure the meat” in cattle and swine. The ultrasound equipment can “establish the ‘expected progeny difference,’” (or EPD, as the abbreviation is known in the livestock industry) in a cow, Charlson said.

“Using ultrasound technology in the feedlot side of the business is just beginning to catch on. The reason is simple: Show me the money.”

The company bills itself as “the largest third-party unbiased interpreter of carcass

ultrasound images in the world.” Its Web site is www.cuplab.com.

By using their training and ultrasound technology to “scan” cattle, technicians can pick the ones most and least likely to turn out the best quality meat, which saves feed and transportation costs for the livestock farmer and guarantees better quality meat for customers.

Does it work?

Charlson said, “Many studies ... show a strong correlation between ultrasound measurements taken (months before slaughter) and actual data” on the quality of the meat.

The process also can help livestock farmers pick the best day to send their cattle to market. Knowing that correct day can help better the bottom line for the farmer by up to \$35 per animal, she said.

Roots in Iowa

W&G celebrated its 30th anniversary in September 2009. Partners Walter and Jerry Grauf started the company in 1979.

Walter’s career as an entrepreneur was profiled in the January 2008 issue of *Angus Journal*. He said he and Grauf, an investor from Elvaston, Ill., about 10 miles east of Keokuk, started out small with Walter making sales and deliveries with a panel truck.

He had earned a bachelor’s degree in 1962 (animal science) and a master’s degree in 1964 (meat science) from ISU, then worked for the American Meat Industry and as a floor trader on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange.

Walter and his partners have started 18 businesses, including a racquet and fitness center, golf course and horse stable.

Last year, he and his wife, Janice, donated \$1.5 million toward the \$7 million agriculture pavilion planned for the ISU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.



WE PROMISE.

Sigler Companies' 200+ employees resolve to be your go-to resource in 2010 and beyond. We promise to listen.

To innovate. To deliver. That's a resolution we can keep.

Sigler Companies
Innova • Sigler • Signify

www.siglercompanies.com



■ WINERIES

Thriving wineries

grow on Mid-Iowa landscape

BY BOB ZIENTARA
Staff Writer

Iowa winemaking has grown in the past 20 years from negligible beginnings to a thriving industry with more than 70 operating wineries and some 100 active vineyards.

Mid-Iowa is no exception, with three operating wineries in the counties of Boone (Snus Hill Winery), Story (Prairie Moon Winery) and northern Polk (Oak Hill Vineyards).

Named for a cat

A January snowstorm didn't stop owners of the Snus Hill Winery from half a day of bottling.

According to Chris Hudnall, who helps to manage the family-owned operation, the winery opened in 2006 and makes wine with fruit grown on its own 10-acre tract of grapevines, as well as grapes, juice and assorted fruits from other locations.

John Larson, another co-owner, said he started making wine as a hobby, and his experience grew to the point that he's the official Snus Hill winemaker.

The winery and vineyard are located on land settled by Swedish immigrants in 1869. It's named after a cat owned by Larson and his wife. "Snus" is the nickname for a tobacco snuff favored by "Scandihoovians" and honors the immigrant settlers, Hudnall said.

"John and his wife named the cat in honor of her great-great-grandfather," he said.

Red grape varieties grown on the property include Marechel Foch and Frontenac. Whites include edelweiss, Seyval, La Crescent, St. Pepin and Elvira.

"We've had success with these cold-hearted, climate-friendly grapes, he said.

Hudnall said the winery has started to grow Marquette and Prairie Star varieties, and these will become part of Snus Hill's 7,000-gallon annual production in coming years.

The Iowa-friendly grapes produce some unique flavors, he said.

"This is such a young industry in Iowa that winemakers are doing a lot of experimentation and discovering new flavors," he said.



BY RONNIE MILLER/THE TRIBUNE

Diane Larson, left, and sister-in-law Linda Melin are co-owners of Snus Hill Winery, along with John Larson.

It's common to see 50 or more people in the fields during harvest time in August and early September, Hudnall said.

"They are friends, family members, volunteers," he said. "We've even had the Madrid Lion's Club send its members. We paid them for every five-gallon bucket they picked, and they donated the proceeds to charity."

University offers wine resources

Iowa State University supports the winemaking industry with a variety of resources and services.

A 23-page workbook has been produced by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, the Agricultural Marketing Resource Center and ISU Extension, to help entrepreneurs map out a business plan and the cost of producing wine.



The resource estimates how many years before a winemaker can expect to make a profit, planting methods for grapevines, topographic features to use (or avoid) when planting, subsoil and water requirements, even how to protect new vines from harmful chemicals and marauding critters.

Marketing paid by producers

The Iowa Wine and Beer Promotion Board was formed by the Iowa Legislature in 1986. A tax is assessed on “native wholesale Iowa wine and beer,” including \$5.89 per 31 gallons of beer and \$1.75 per gallon of wine.

Board participants are class A wine or beer permit holders. In the case of brew pubs, those that also sell liquor or other wines do not qualify as native beer or wine establishments, and they don’t pay tax into the special fund.

Board members through July 1 include Teresa Albert, Millstream Brewing Co., Amana;

Doug Bakker, Madison County Winery, Urbandale; and LuAnn Reinders, research and welcome center manager, Tourism Office, Iowa Department of Economic Development.

Follow the wine trail

Fifteen wineries participate in the Central Iowa Wine Trail, which engages in joint promotions and wine tours. The wineries include Dale Valley Vineyard, Stuart; Eagle City Winery, Iowa Falls; Grape Escape Vineyard and Winery, Pleasantville; Jasper Winery, Des Moines; John Ernest Vineyard and Winery, Tama; LaVida Loca Winery, Indianola; Penoach Winery, Adel; Prairie Moon Winery, Ames; Rosey Acres Winery, Runnels; Snus Hill Vineyard and Winery, Madrid; Southern Hills Winery, Osceola; Summerset Winery, Indianola; Tassel Ridge Winery, Leighton; Two Saints Winery, St. Charles; and White Oak Vineyards, Cambridge

For more information visit www.heartofiowawinetrail.com.

Iowa Wine facts

As of late 2009:

- There were 72 licensed wineries in the state, including 28 in the central region.
- There were more than 100 vineyards in the state.
- It takes 200 hours of work per acre per year to maintain a vineyard in Iowa.

Mid-Iowa Wineries:

- Prairie Moon Winery: 3801 W. 190th St., Ames, (515) 232-2747, www.prairiemoonwinery.com
- Snus Hill Vineyard and Winery: 2183 320th St., Madrid, (515) 795-3108, www.snushillwine.com
- White Oak Vineyard: 15065 N.E. White Oak Drive, Cambridge, (515) 367-7777, www.whiteoakvineyards.com

On the Web:

Iowa State University:

- www.extension.iastate.edu/Wine/Resources/iowawineries
- www.leopold.iastate.edu
- www.agmrc.org
- viticulture.hort.iastate.edu

Statewide:

www.iowawineandbeer.com

— Sources: Iowa Wine and Beer, Mike White, ISU Extension

DAYTON ROAD DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL LEASING AND SALES
DEVELOPMENTAL GROUND

For current listings, visit our website
www.DaytonRoad.com
Or contact Bill Woodward at
515.231.3226
bwoodward@friedrich-realty.com

413 Kellogg Avenue • Ames, IA • 50010

Successful businesses never stop planning.

For all your design and construction needs...

Accord architecture **HENKEL** Construction Company

www.accordarchitecturecompany.com
Ames, IA 50010
515.663.9643

ISU leads the way to cutting-edge ag technology



PHOTO BY NIRMALENDU MAJUMDAR/THE TRIBUNE

BY BOB ZIENTARA, Staff Writer

Congress passed the Morrill Land Grant Act during the Civil War to encourage state institutions of higher learning for agriculture, mechanical arts and home economics.

Iowa State University was the first school to be founded through the act.

With that kind of history behind it, ISU has held a leading role in agricultural research, and its reputation spans a spectrum from the submicroscopic substances, such as DNA and genes, to the limitless realm of outer space.

Excerpted from ISU News Service coverage, some ways that the university is introducing cutting-edge agricultural technology to the rest of the world follow:

• Soil moisture is being monitored from outer space,

according to ISU assistant professor Brian Hornbuckle. He assisted the European Space Agency after it launched a satellite in 2008 to collect data on moisture and salt content in soils.

Hornbuckle led a team from ISU, the University of Iowa and the USDA's National Soil Tilth Laboratory to measure central Iowa soil moisture on the ground.

ESA will take satellite readings and compare them with readings from Hornbuckle's land-based team, then will adjust their readings to calibrate the satellite.

In exchange, the space-based readings will be provided to ISU free of charge.

By getting this experience, Hornbuckle hopes that when NASA launches a soil moisture-measuring satellite, ISU can be part of that program.

"If we can understand moisture behavior in certain areas, then we can start to understand some of the variability in crop yields," said Amy Kaleita, an assistant professor in agricultural and biosystems engineering, who helps monitor soil moisture with Hornbuckle.

Eventually, Kaleita thinks the information collected through moisture satellites may be useful for precision farming, using GPS technology to plant and grow crops.

• A first-draft of a domesticated pig genome was announced

in November 2009 by the USDA, a three-year process in which ISU played a major role.

"The sequencing of the pig genome is a scientific advance that will offer great benefits for consumers and human health," said Max Rothschild, professor of agriculture in animal science, at the time the project began.

He is director of ISU's Center for Integrated Animal Genomics.



Hornbuckle
ISU assistant professor

"Understanding the swine genome will lead to health advancements in the swine population and accelerate the development of vaccinations for pigs," said Roger Beachy, director, National Institute of Food and Agriculture. "This ... can help reduce disease and enable medical advancements in both pigs and humans."

The project allows researchers to pinpoint genes that are useful to pork production, immunity or other physiological processes. It will enhance breeding practices, offer insight into diseases that afflict pigs — and, sometimes, humans — and will help in efforts to preserve the global heritage of rare, endangered and wild pigs.

Because its genome is similar to humans, the project could lead to future biomedical advances.

"The pig is an outstanding model to study human diseases," Rothschild said. "Understanding the pig genome should provide enormous opportunities for treating human disorders like obesity, diabetes and heart disease. It also could improve the breeding of pigs to produce human-transplant organs."

ISU and Iowa Pork Producers were among the agencies providing money and/or technical support. For more information, visit www.nifa.usda.gov.

• Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, headquartered at ISU, leads the search for environmentally responsible agricultural technology and practices.

Two examples are:

• The ISU Grass-Based Livestock Working Group will soon fund ideas for research and demonstration projects to boost the viability of the grass-based livestock industry. In late 2009, Leopold Center said it would fund up to five grants, totaling \$21,000.

"Our strength is in diversity," said ISU Extension small farm specialist Andy Larson, who coordinates the group. "These R&D grants are a great way to create new collaborations and for the working group."

• A team of ISU researchers is studying cropping systems that blend biomass forages, including sorghum and aspen trees, with corn-soybean row crops.

The goal is to create crop combinations that protect soil and water, can be used to produce renewable energy and turn a profit for farmers.

Ken Moore is an agronomist on the ISU research and demonstration farm west of Ames in Boone County.

"The real promise is ... to grow other crops while still being profitable," he said. "We will evaluate and compare energy and fertilizer inputs, biomass productivity, water, nutrient and carbon cycling across all the cropping systems."

Project leader Lisa Schulte-Moore, associate professor of natural resource ecology, said the team will compare findings to a continuous corn system.

• Robotics on farm fields. Lie Tang, assistant professor in the ISU College of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering, helped develop a new agricultural automation and robotics lab for students in advanced agricultural machinery engineering.

Tang developed an automated sensing system for corn plant spacing measurement for Deere Company.

The ag automation lab got a boost from Caterpillar Inc., which made a donation in 2005 to help create a hydraulics facility at the lab. Its work supports projects that merge electronic controls with mechanical components. Agricultural and biosystems engineering students are using this knowledge to design projects like an "autonomous agricultural vehicle" to collect soil samples in agricultural fields.

A new Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering building is on the drawing board. It will be a part of a three-structure complex that will cost \$72.3 million, with \$13.7 million to come from private funding and the remainder to be sought from the Iowa General Assembly.

■ ETHANOL INDUSTRY

2009: A shakeout year for Iowa ethanol industry

By LAURA MILLSAPS
Special to *The Tribune*

When new industries begin, they bring attendant risks to both entrepreneurs and employees. In the case of the Mid-Iowa alternative fuel industry, that certainly seems to be the case.

Despite the presence of a federal tax credit designed to make it cheaper for oil companies to blend and sell gasoline with ethanol, volatile commodity prices served to make 2009 a difficult year for the industry.

But the failure to anticipate high input costs doesn't seem to have affected demand for ethanol, according to a roundup of recent developments in the Iowa ethanol industry.

- The ethanol industry in Iowa ended a volatile financial year with the announcement of Hawkeye Renewable's chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings in December. Two of its plants, in Fairbank and Iowa Falls, were turned over to a consortium of lenders in the company's restructuring plan to deal with debt approaching \$1 billion.

- In March 2009, Texas-based Valero Energy purchased four Iowa ethanol plants from Verasun, which had filed for bankruptcy in October 2008. At the time, VeraSun was the largest ethanol producer in Iowa.

- Lincolnway Energy, LLC, of Nevada, posted a \$6.4 million loss for 2009 while posting a record production year of 52.4 million gallons of ethanol.



By RONNIE MILLER/THE TRIBUNE

Lincolnway Energy LLC, of Nevada, posted a \$6.4 million loss for 2009 while posting a record production year of 52.4 million gallons of ethanol.

According to the annual report filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, company officials attributed the loss to record-high corn prices, lack of diversification and an unfavorable credit market. In 2008, the company posted a profit of \$4.8 million, and in 2007, a profit of \$19.9 million.

- Despite bankruptcies and market volatility, ethanol production remained strong in 2009. The Energy Information Administration reported a record production of 964 million gallons nationwide in October 2009.

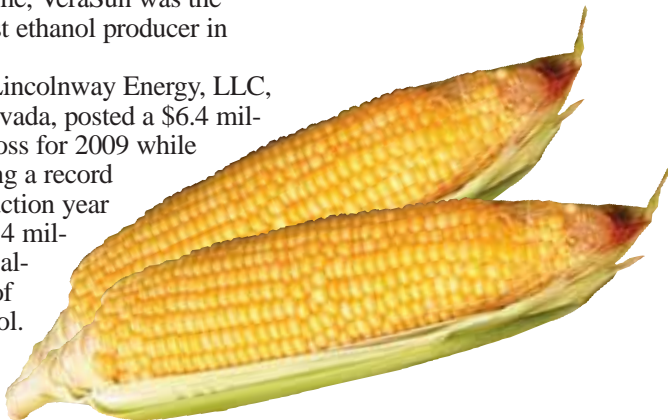
- The Commodity Research Bureau predicted at the beginning of 2010 that production of ethanol would continue to grow as bankrupt plants come back online under new ownership. Demand for ethanol also will remain strong, in part because of the federal Renewable Fuels Standard requirement.

- The Environmental Protection Agency announced in December that it would delay possible approval of E15 fuel blends at the pump. While the

EPA acknowledged that ethanol would need to be blended into gasoline at higher levels to meet federal renewable fuel mandates, further scientific data would be needed before approval.

The announcement's wording however, indicated E15 approval was only a matter of time. "Although all of the studies have yet to be completed, our engineering assessment to date indicates that the robust fuel, engine and emission control systems on newer vehicles ... will likely be able to accommodate higher ethanol blends, such as E15."

The approval of E15 is now delayed tentatively until mid-2010, setting back an incentive much desired by ethanol producers.





www.HunzikerRealty.com

Ames
105 South 16th St.
515-233-4450

Ankeny
1255 N. Ankeny Blvd.
515-963-8618

Boone
1327 SE Marshall St.
515-432-8699

Nevada
1229 South G. Ave.
515-382-5667

HunzikerRealty.com and Hunziker & Associates' Agents the only things you need to buy or sell your next home!

HunzikerRealty.com – We've got Central Iowa covered! With offices in Ames, Ankeny, Boone and Nevada, our website features all of the homes listed on the Ames, Boone and Des Moines Multiple listing services. At HunzikerRealty.com you can search for homes, view photos and virtual tours, access community information, calculate mortgage payments, obtain relocation assistance, see what homes are scheduled for Open houses, and much more.

In 2009, 60% of the visitors to our site were returning unique visitors while 40% were new to our site.
(information based on Google Analytics)

Our Agents – The REALTORS® of Hunziker & Associates are committed to developing and maintaining positive relationships with individuals and families to meet their real estate needs. Our client-centered focus is directly responsible for our success over the past 57 years and going forward.

Experience-

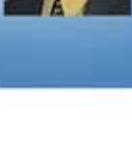
Our agents average over 12 years of real estate experience.

Dedication-

Our REALTORS® stand behind each transaction and promise with an uncompromising dedication to first-class client-level service.

Knowledge-

Through continuous research, our agents know the Market like no one else.



■ AG INFORMATION CENTER



By RONNIE MILLER/THE TRIBUNE

Ken Johnson, with Ag Systems in Mitchell, S.D., looks over a Case IH 1250 16 Row Front Fold Planter at the Ag Information Center on Dec. 17, 2009, west of Nevada.

Ag Information Center brings world to Mid-Iowa

By BOB ZIENTARA
Staff Writer

It may look like a large implement dealer sitting among Mid-Iowa corn and soybean fields.

But since it opened in January 2000 at 23942 590th Ave., Nevada, the Ag Information Center has hosted an average of more than 600 events each year, often two events in a day, and sometimes more than that.

Julie Briggman, facility manager, said the center concentrates “on row crop operations, and we do programs for dealers and service technicians.”

Most visitors are from the Midwest, but they sometimes

Ag Information Center

23942 590th Ave.
Nevada, IA 50201
(515) 382-6170

Manager's e-mail:
Julie.Briggman@cnh.com

come from as far away as Texas and California, “and we’ve also hosted people from Canada, China, France and Russia,” she said. “We do train-the-trainer seminars for company representatives sent here from other countries.”

Events can last from as little as less than an hour to as long as four days, involving instructors and students who come here from other locations.

Other companies can use the space when time permits, Briggman said.

“We look at it as a way to be of service to others in the ag industry, as well as a networking opportunity for our companies,” she said. “If Syngenta or area co-ops want to hold conferences here, we do our best to fit them into our schedule.”

Case/International Harvester and New Holland commit a lot of time, money and human resources to its product launches, and that means training and

information sharing for dealers and technicians, according to Briggman, who does the center’s scheduling.

She said there are plenty of good reasons for the center’s presence in central Iowa:

- It’s close to Interstate 35 and Interstate 80.
- It’s in the geographic center of the U.S. agricultural community.
- It’s accessible to major partners in the ag industry, such as seed companies and implement manufacturers/dealers.
- It’s close to the country’s row crop farm base, “and we rely on these folks for demonstration opportunities and feedback,” Briggman said.

• It's next door to one of the nation's top ag research universities.

"The proximity of Iowa State makes it easy for us to collaborate with a number of their departments," said Briggman, herself an ISU graduate.

While only three full-time people run the Ag Info Center, the number of people whose jobs are connected to it, all or in part, go far beyond that.

Briggman said five territorial reps for New Holland and Case/International Harvester use the center as a base for their sales work in the United States. Three service trainers often conduct sessions at the center, but they branch out around the country, too.

The center has hosted events for as many as 450 people and, in season, conducts demonstrations and training both inside and out.

There are just less than two acres of space under one roof, about 81,400 square feet, as well as 10 acres of demonstra-

tion plots. The center often leases farmland for additional space, Briggman said.

"We'll conduct photo shoots for brochures and Powerpoint demos, field days, customer appreciation days, show plots, whatever the client group requests, as long as the land is available," she said.

The Ag Information Center had a booth at the 2008 Farm Progress Show for both Case/International Harvester and New Holland equipment, and plans to be back for the 2010 show this summer.

Briggman said other plans for 2010 include customer training sessions this spring for purchasers of Case IH/New Holland planters and "combine clinics." The center will serve as a staging area for the equipment that will be on display at Farm Progress.

Nonagricultural programs include a two-day "fire school" for Mid-Iowa rural and/or volunteer fire departments, scheduled in late February.

Web links Mid-Iowa ag with the world

The Ag Information Center may be situated in Nevada, but its parent company links it to the rest of the world, as proven by a visit to the New Holland or Case/International Harvester Web sites.

New Holland's North American link includes pages depicting everything from the hydrogen-powered NH2, a 106-horsepower prototype introduced in 2009, and a retro-look, open-cockpit tractor with a nostalgic, vertical grill and a pair of teardrop-shaped headlights.

According to the Case-New Holland Web site, CNH is a majority-owned subsidiary of Fiat S.p.A., the parent company of the Fiat Group, a public company whose capital stock is listed on the Milan Stock Exchange (FIA.MI).

The Fiat Group is a leading Italian corporation focused on the automotive sector over the past century. In addition to the CNH brands, it manufactures Fiat, Alfa Romeo, Ferrari, Lancia and Maserati cars, and Iveco trucks and commercial vehicles, and recently acquired the Chrysler group in North America.



On the Web:

- www.newholland.com
- www.caseih.com
- www.cnh.com

Source: Fiat Group, Agricultural and Construction Equipment

Trusted Choice *for your* Health

McFarland Clinic is a physician-owned clinic with 160 physicians offering over 30 specialties in 11 central Iowa communities.

Adult Medicine
Allergy
Anesthesiology
Audiology
Cardiology
Dermatology
Emergency Medicine
Endocrinology
Family Medicine
Gastroenterology
Gerontology
Hematology/Oncology
Infectious Diseases

Nephrology
Neurology
Neurosurgery
Obstetrics/Gynecology
Occupational Medicine
Ophthalmology
Optometry
Orthopedic Surgery
Otolaryngology
Pain Medicine
Pathology
Pediatrics
Physical Therapy/Sports Medicine

Podiatry
Pulmonary Medicine
Radiation Oncology
Radiology
Rheumatology
Surgery
Urology

*For more information,
please call us at
515-239-4400 or
visit us on the web at
www.mcfarlandclinic.com*



McFarland Clinic PC

www.mcfarlandclinic.com

Out of reach.
Seemed so.

Out of touch.
Thought so.

Out of ideas.
Give us a minute.



Bankers
Trust[®]

BankersTrust.com

Member FDIC

Genuine concern bridges the gap.

Longevity in the marketplace is often a measure of strength, stability and solid decision making. At Bankers Trust we've taken all of that and an unparalleled customer experience to new heights, and that's what sets us apart. We care more and it shows. So, if you're standing on the edge of a widening expectation gap with your current bank... **give us a minute.**

Contact us in Ames at 515.233.4424 today.

■ SEED COMPANIES

Seed companies compete both globally and locally

By KATHY HANSON
Staff Writer

Story County's country vistas offer more than meets the eye. They're a natural backdrop for global and local corporations doing high-tech seed research and development. Thriving on brisk competition, seed companies locate here to take advantage of Mid-Iowa's rich soil, work ethic, infrastructure and proximity to Iowa State University. They say it's a good place to be firmly planted while they hone genetic seed traits such as drought and pest resistance and herbicide readiness in the midst of constant changes in the marketplace.

Monsanto Co., touted as the world's biggest seed maker, recently announced it lost \$19 million in the first quarter of fiscal year 2010, for example, due to sagging global sales of its Roundup herbicide in the wake of generic competition. Instead of handwringing, the company said it will shift focus to its biotech seeds division and develop new, patented crops that yield higher profits, according to the Associated Press. The shift could be good news for Monsanto's 15 facilities in Iowa.

The global seed giant employs 2,973 permanent employees in Iowa, plus nearly 2,300 seasonal workers that draw from a \$101 million payroll, according to Darren Wallis, Monsanto's director of public affairs.

"About 70 employees are in Ames," Wallis said.

On the small, locally owned end of the seed production scale, Story City's Sansgaard Seed Farm Inc., is braced to preserve job security for its 20 employees and hold onto a market share of \$5.5 million dollars. According to infoUSA, Sansgaard primarily sells products purchased from others producers, but also sells some plants and seeds which it develops and grows.

Syngenta Seeds Inc., which lists as one of the leading providers of crop protection products worldwide, identifies its relationship with Iowa State University, the responsiveness of the Ames Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the proximity of the Farm Progress Show, which



PHOTO BY NIRMALENDU MAJUMDAR/THE TRIBUNE

alternates between Boone and Decatur, Ill., among the attributes that sealed the deal for building its Slater facility.

The company maintains a work force of more than 24,000 employees in more than 90 countries, providing fungicides, insecticides, herbicides, plant activators and seed treatments for fruits, potatoes, rice, soybean, tobacco and leafy vegetables.

Ben Hable, Syngenta's head of North American corn product development, is stationed at the company's Slater facility. He said Mid-Iowa has the right labor pool to create a win-win situation for the company, its employees and the clients it serves. For example, of the 115 employees at the Slater facility who work full-time, 27 have post-graduate degrees, many of which come from Iowa State University.

Syngenta's Engineering Services group is housed on the Slater campus, Hable said, employing six full-time engineers on site.

"In addition, we hire seasonal staff, (including teenagers) peaking during the summer months at about 300," he said.

One of Syngenta's Parent Seed facilities also is located at the Slater site, Hable said.

"Parent Seed has 14 full-time staff and peaks with about 70 additional seasonal staff each summer," he said.

Julie Weeks, director of the Ames Convention and Visitors Bureau, said agribusiness adds diversity to the local economy.

"Local agribusiness companies bring individual corporate travelers to the community for business meetings. They also host a significant number of group training and sales seminars that bring additional travelers to Ames and positively impact our local economy," she said. "The local presence of these businesses is also a key component in attracting larger events, including the Farm Progress Show, Integrated Crop Management Conference and other agricultural-based conferences and events."

Seed companies

Sansgaard Seed Farm Inc.
Story City
www.prairiebrandseed.com
Employees: 20
Annual sales: \$5.5 million

Syngenta Seed Company
In Ames
Web site: www.nk.com
Employees: 22
Ultimate parent: Syngenta AG
Annual sales: \$5.3 million
In Slater
Employees: 150
Annual sales: \$97 million

Monsanto, Co.
In Huxley
Employees: 4
Annual sales: \$700,000
In Ankeny
Employees: not available
Annual sales: \$95.3 million

Source: infoUSA through OneSource

Kathy Hanson can be reached at (515) 663-6933 or khanson@amestrib.com.

■ FARM PROGRESS SHOW



BY NIRMALENDU MAJUMDAR/THE TRIBUNE

The Central Iowa Expo hosted its first Farm Progress Show in 2008. Return visitors to the 2010 Farm Progress Show can expect to see many improvements to the venue.

2010 Farm Progress Show

International event generates \$10 million for local economy

BY LAURA MILLSAPS
Special to The Tribune

The Farm Progress Show returns to Mid-Iowa this year, and organizers expect increased international visitors and expanded exhibits, following trends at the 2009 show that was held in Decatur, Ill.

Matt Jungmann, the national shows manager for Farm Progress, said the newest and most cutting-edge farm equipment and technologies are unveiled at the exposition, making it the place to be for those in agribusiness.

“Just like the Detroit Inter-



**Farm Progress
Show online**

www.farmprogressshow.com

national Auto Show is for motorheads to ‘ooh’ and ‘ah,’ this is where farmers go to ‘ooh’ and ‘ah,’” Jungmann said.

Last year’s show in Decatur saw double the amount of international visitors, and they represented 56 countries from around the world. A total crowd of more than 100,000 attended the event.

Jungmann said the predictability of two rotating permanent sites, along with Farm Progress’ reputation for hosting the newest and best, explained the increase in international traffic.

“Many companies are unveiling new technology for the first time at Farm Progress, not just to local farmers, but globally,” he said. “Farming practices in the U.S. are very progressive compared to the rest of the world.

“Things we have been doing for 10 years are just being adopted in Argentina, for example, and visitors from that country are looking

to make themselves more competitive in the global market.”

Despite the downturn in the economy, agribusinesses have stayed relatively stable, Jungmann said. And while the number of exhibitors has stayed about the same, the exhibits are taking up more space and are increasingly sophisticated.

“Exhibitors are showing more equipment, and shining things up a lot,” he said. “There are plasma screen displays, and you can sit in the cab of a tractor and operate it in a simulation. It’s a lot more experiential.”

The other big trend in farming exhibitions, Jungmann said, is where science meets farming.

“Historically, seed companies have always promoted new varieties at the show,” he said. “Now the chemistry, the genetics, the science that all went into that seed bag are also there, and what they can use that enhances the crop they are growing.”

The 57th-annual Farm Progress Show will be Tuesday through Thursday, Aug. 31, Sept. 1 and Sept. 2, at the Central Iowa Expo in Boone.

Facilities improvements continue for venue

Andy Long, of VenuWorks at Central Iowa Expo in Boone, said there are many improvements in place for the next Farm Progress Show, despite the setbacks of weather and the economy.

Central Iowa Expo, new in 2007, was named as the per-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

National shows manager for Farm Progress Matt Jungmann said, “Just like the Detroit International Auto Show is for motorheads to ‘ooh’ and ‘ah,’ this is where farmers go to ‘ooh’ and ‘ah.’”

manent biennial site of the Farm Progress show that same

year. After its first show at that site in 2008, Farm Progress returns to the venue in 2010.

“We got a ton of rain in 2008,” which delayed construction on parts of the venue, Long said. “After the show and through this year, we’ve worked to get improvements complete.”

Long said meetings with local and state officials for planning the three-day event already were under way.

Return visitors to the 2010 Farm Progress Show can expect to see:

- **Improved access.** A grant from the Iowa Department of Transportation made it possible to install hard-surface pavement to 217th Street on the south side of the property.

- **Improved drainage.** Grass plantings and improved drainage to the site have been added since the 2008 show.

- **A complete administration building.** Long said the


building was completed in November 2008, after the first show, and is now completely outfitted for events.

- **Wind generation.** A wind turbine installed by the Van Wall Company provides environmentally friendly power source and lowers the non-profit site’s utility bills.


VenuWorks also is working on contracting with large exhibitors to maintain permanent buildings at Central Iowa Expo.


“We’ve approached companies, like Morton, asking them to build permanent buildings on site for their exhibitions,” Long said. “The rest of the year we can use those buildings for trade shows and other events.”


While he has received no commitments yet, Long said Boone’s permanence as Farm Progress’s biennial site and a future improved economy should help attract these kinds of agreements.




ADMINISTRATION BUILDING AVAILABLE FOR YOUR EVENT!











*National Farm Progress Show
Aug. 31-Sept. 2, 2010*



IOWA'S

NEWEST
OUTDOOR & INDOOR EXPERIENCE!

For more information
 Randy Baumeister: (515) 433-6900
 Rbaumeister@venuworks.com



PRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
AMES, IA
Permit No. 22

POSTAL CUSTOMER
LOCAL

February 10, 2010

Bessie Myers Auditorium

5:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Registration is \$10
by February 8, 2010.

Register online with a credit card
or by sending your check payable to
MGMC Heart Symposium to
Mary Greeley Medical Center,
c/o Community Relations,
1111 Duff Ave, Ames, IA, 50010.

Seventh Annual
Mary Greeley Medical Center
Heart Symposium



The featured speaker is Emmy-winning actress Tracey Conway who turned her miraculous recovery from a sudden cardiac arrest into a poignant yet laugh-out-loud presentation that is sure to entertain and engage you.

The Mary Greeley Medical Center Heart Symposium also offers tips on heart health from Dr. Dotani, education on healthy arteries from Mary Greeley Medical Center cardiac catheterization staff, a fitness demonstration, and a heart-healthy dinner.

Do not miss the inspiring, informative presentation that will motivate you to get passionate about your health and life priorities.

If you care about your heart, think "Specialized care. Personal touch."

WWW.MGMC.ORG

1111 Duff Avenue, Ames, Iowa 50010

Mary Greeley  Heart
Your heart is in the right place.