Grain Scoop: Kicking The Can Down The Road

By Kim Holsapple

As a kid, riding the school bus to and from school was not one of my favorite things. Our farm was not far from the country school, but unfortunately the bus would start out west and we lived east so it consisted of a very long and slow ride. There was a point very near the beginning of the route that was only a half mile from our house, but it consisted of a ¼ mile walk down a dirt road then another 2-mile thorough the woods and down the hill to the river bottom home in which I lived. Very often my brother, sister and I would convince the bus driver to drop us off at the beginning of our long route. When taking this walk we would kick a can, rock, stick, or anything else that might be in our path down the road towards home. So kicking the can down the road was just a game, and I’m sure you have all played it. But today kicking the can down the road from a producer’s perspective when it comes to marketing his grain, is a whole new game.

Here at TGM we have millions of bushels of unsold producer’s grain. Some of these bushels are from the 2015 crop, some from the 2016 crop and a lot from the 2017 crop. From a marketing standpoint, a lot of us have kicked the can down the road and the can is hitting the ditch after every kick. Storage and carrying cost are eating the value of this grain up. When do we cry uncle and just sell the stuff?

If the USDA numbers are right (and I still have my doubts) the demand must climb a very big hill to see a rally of any proportion. We have good carrying charges to sell in deferred months but it is only good when you lock the sale in. A typical carry market will see each future month erode to the prior month’s expiration and it appears that is where we are heading this year. For the sake and space that means this market is in big trouble and until we see a disruption in production of a fairly large magnitude, this market is dead in the water. I have often heard and have even been known to say the corn price must rally to buy acres to plant this spring.

We all know that the $3.50 we are offering for new crop corn is below cost of production and nobody will plant it. Or will they? We are assuming in the previous statement that beans are $9.50 or $10.00. But what happens if beans go to $8.00 for an example. Do you plant $8.00 beans or $3.50 corn? That is a question that can only be answered by you but the point is, corn does not have to rally and at this time doesn’t look like it is going too.

Last year we had multiple changes to sell $10.00 beans out of the field. With our more than abundant supply of beans this year it does not appear that we will or need to rally beans to that level. I have started selling new crop 18 beans and hope to be sold completely out by the time you read this article. I will sell up to my crop insurance guarantee. I would not anticipate buying protection on these sales in the options market but that is an option if the need should arise.

Kicking the can down the road might work, but you better have deep pockets and a good banker. We have been here before and until prices get cheap enough to discourage production somewhere around the world or a major drought hits, we are not going significantly higher. As when kicking the can down the road and the can become very odd shaped, adjustments had to be made to the kick to keep it in a straight line, so must adjustments be made to our marketing decisions? I’m ready for Spring and a whole new set of marketing decisions. Stay warm!

Cold Weather, Hypothermia and Frostbite

It has been several years since I discussed cold winter weather concerns in this Safety Article. After a couple of mild weather winters those concerns were kind of the back burner but after some of the cold below zero weather we experienced in January of this year I thought we could revisit some things that could help man and beast to survive these extreme temperatures. As I was growing up I would spend a lot of time with my Dad on the farm especially with the cattle. Dad always had calves born in winter and I would question that timing by suggesting to Dad that it would be a lot easier if we had calves in the warmer weather as we were getting the cows into the barn and bed them down with dry straw. Dad would remind me that those calves can take a lot of cold if you keep them dry and keep them out of the wind. He was apparently right because we very rarely lost any calves and they always seemed to be healthy. Dad would tell me that those rollercoaster cold then warm temperatures would be more advantageous to promote sickness and in the winter time there are no flies to spread sickness and disease. I have used a lot of this helpful information in raising livestock taking care of animals on the farm and also protecting my children and grandchildren from the dangers of extreme cold weather. Those of you that have enjoyed deer hunting in the winter know that sitting in the tree stand in the winter especially with a blanket of fresh snow is really enjoyable and we can take a lot of cold temperatures except on those days when it is overcast or when the wind is blowing and we chill out rather quickly. Following in this article is helpful information dealing with cold weather, hypothermia and frostbite.

With the cold winter weather upon us, it is important to consider possible hazards that go along with freezing conditions. When your body gets so cold that it is unable to warm itself, cold weather related injuries and illnesses may occur which can cause permanent skin damage or even death. In freezing temperatures, the proper amount of warm clothing should be worn as personal protective equipment. Hypothermia and Frostbite are the two most common cold related illnesses.

Hypothermia is a condition where the body’s core temperature drops below 95 degrees F. Our skin and the tissues under it are kept at a constant temperature by blood circulation. The body temperature falls when the skin is exposed to colder surroundings, which increases heat loss or when the flow of blood is decreased. The risk of cold injuries increases when nourishment is inadequate. Cold injuries usually don’t occur, even in extremely cold weather, if the skin fingers, toes, ears, and nose are well protected and not exposed for more than a brief time. When exposure is longer, the body automatically narrows the small blood vessels to direct more blood to vital organs such as the heart and brain. However, this self protective measure results in less warm blood reaching the other parts of the body, they cool more rapidly, making them susceptible to cold.

Frostbite is the term used when deep layers of the skin and tissue freeze. Frostbite usually affects in adequately protected body extremities such as the hands, fingers, feet, toes, ears, and nose. This condition makes the skin appear pale white and feel hard and numb. The beginning of hypothermia and frostbite is usually so gradual and subtle that neither the victim nor others realize what is happening.

• Cold air and wind can carry heat away from the body by convection.
• The cold ground, a metal surface or wet clothing will drain heat from the warm body to other colder surface by conduction.
• Body heat can be lost from exposed skin, especially on the head, through radiation
Cold Weather
(continued from page 1)
and the evaporation of sweat.
• Hypothermia frequently occurs
when a person is immersed in cold
water, the colder the water, the faster
hypothermia develops.
• Hypothermia causes fatigue,
drowsiness, uncontrolled shivering
and slurred speech. Movement
becomes slow and clumsy, reaction
time is longer, the mind becomes
blurred causing irritability, confu-
sion and irrational behavior. Judg-
ment is impaired and hallucinations
may occur.
• A person who has hypothermia
may fall, wonder off, or simply lie
down to rest and perhaps die.
• In the early stages, changing
into warm, dry clothing and drinking
hot beverages can help recovery.
• If the person is found uncon-
scious, further heat loss must be
prevented by wrapping the victim in
a warm, dry blanket and if possible,
moving the victim to a warm place
while arrangements are made for im-
mediate transportation to a hospital.
• Because the risk of an uncon-
scious victim dying is high, such
people must be treated and moni-
tored at a hospital to have a chance
of survival.
The generally accepted first aid
measures for cold related injury or
illness involve getting the person
out of the cold conditions and into
a warm, dry, environment as quickly
as possible. Get the person changed
to dry, loose fitting clothing which
will not constrict blood circulation
and wrap in blankets. Give the
person warm, sweet liquids with
out caffeine and high carbohydrate
containing food, such as pasta. In the
case of frostbite, where frozen tissue
is apparent, immerse the person or
place the affected area in like warm
water and slowly warm for 25 to 40
minutes. Do not rub frostbitten body
parts as this will damage frozen
tissues. Seek immediate medical
attention.
Preventing hypothermia, frost-
bite, or other cold injuries is simple.
Stay aware of the weather condi-
tions in your area such as the
forecast highs and lows, impending
storms, and wind chill factors. Many
layers of clothing, preferably made
of wool or hooded jackets filled with
down or a synthetic fiber, plus a light
windproof cover, protect people un-
der the harshest conditions. Because
a lot of heat is lost from the head,
headgear is essential. Eating
enough food and drinking enough
fluids also help. Follow these guide-
lines for cold weather safety.
South Central FS, Inc and To-
tal Grain Marketing LLC and its
employees are concerned with the
health and wellbeing of all of our
employees and our customers and
community. We would ask that
all our employees and community
would take steps to protect them-
selves and family members from the
dangers of extreme cold and enjoy
the tranquility of the winter season.
Spring is just around the corner.

Stanley Joergens
Safety and Compliance
South Central FS, Inc and Total
Grain Marketing LLC

South Central FS
& Total Grain Marketing
sponsor scholarship program

Do you want to earn after you learn?
Choose a career in Agriculture.

We will pay the cost of tuition, books, & fees per
semester and upon successful completion of
required qualifications, will have a full-time
position for you upon graduation.

To apply, simply inquire at any South Central FS
or TGM location.

Scholarship applications are
due by March 31, 2018

South Central FS

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FEBRUARY SPECIAL

Little Debbie Snacks
2 for $2.00

Supporting our Communities

Save like a Pro

Take advantage of available Safe Appliance Rebates up to $400 for replacing or upgrading propane appliances for your home.
South Central FS, Inc and Total Grain Marketing LLC

Funding for this program is made available by Illinois Propane Education & Research Council and is administered by the Illinois Propane Gas Association. Applications for this program will be accepted for consideration from January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018. This program will only be offered as long as funds are available: the IPGA reserves the right to suspend the program at any time it determines funds are being exhausted.

All applications must be received or post-marked within 30 days of the safety inspection or if the inspection is close to the end of the year; by December 31, 2018 to be processed in the 2018 Appliance program funding.

Application and receipts can be faxed to 217-529-8482 or emailed to krichardson@illpgaa.org

This program establishes an incentive program for new energy-efficient propane appliances that are safely installed. Eligible new propane appliances: will replace an existing electric, fuel oil, natural gas or propane water heater, fireplace or furnace/burner with a new propane water heater, direct vent or B-vented fireplace or furnace/burner; or are installed in new home construction; or are installed in new manufactured homes. The program will reimburse consumers for safe installation of approved energy-efficient propane appliances in the amounts listed below:

- Water Heater – Standard $100.00 (This Program Starts 1/1/2018)
- Vented Shop / Garage Heater $100.00 (This Program Starts 1/1/2018)
- Direct Vent or B-vented Fireplace $100.00 (This Program Starts 1/1/2018)
- Water Heater – Power Vent/TTW/Tankless $200.00 (This Program Starts 1/1/2018)
- Central Heating Ducted Furnace/Burner $200.00 (This Program Starts 1/1/2018)

A maximum of $400.00 per residence may be claimed per year.
Neoga elevator was acquired by Effingham-Clay Service Company late in the 1960’s. Back then the facility had the ability to load 3 rail cars at a time. The company ran as Effingham-Clay Service Co. until 2006 when Total Grain Marketing was formed. The growth started in 1998 when there was a 500,000 bu bin put up west of the office giving them the ability to load up to 25 cars at one time. In 2006 Total Grain Marketing was formed and in 2007 TGM built a 500,000 bu bin, new dump pit with a 15,000 bu an hour leg east of the office and went from loading out 25 rail cars to being able to load 100 car trains. In 2008 another 500,000 bu bin was built, the office was remodeled and additional scale was added. This meant they had an inbound and an outbound scale, which made them more efficiently handle inbound grain.

In 2012 a 1 million bushel bin, a 175,000 bushel bin to hold wet corn and a new 4800 bushel per hour grain dryer were built. The grain dryer is unique for this area. It is a fully enclosed dryer which reduces dust emissions. The dryer is very fuel efficient and has reduced noise levels. It is divided into compartments so we can run 1/3, 2/3 or full capacity. This also makes the energy use very efficient. With this addition Neoga has a total of 3.5 million bushel storage capacity and an unload capacity of 40,000 bu per hour. In 2014 we added a Titan Track Mobil to help us load railroad cars more efficiently. In 2017 all the gravel truck routes are now either concrete or asphalt maximizing dust control.

Ryan Brown is the manager of the facility. Ryan is a graduate of Southern Illinois University with a major in Ag Business. He has been with the company for almost 20 years. Ryan started his career working at Greenup unloading trucks and doing general labor before becoming facility manager. After 8 years in Greenup he was promoted to be the manager at Neoga where he has been for 11 years. Ryan is married with two children.

Nancy Moses is the Office Manager at Neoga. Nancy started her career with TGM at Casey where she worked for 1 year. She then became full time at Neoga where she has been for over 10 years. Nancy takes care of customer support as well as all office functions and anything else the farmers need for their records. Nancy is married with two children and one grandchild.

James Overbeck started his career with TGM thru the purchase of Moomaw Grain in 2014. Two years ago he took the opportunity to work at Neoga to learn the rail operations side of the business. In 2016 he filled in weighing and dumping grain at our Effingham facility. He is well rounded to handle operations and customer service. James has three children.

Dwight Thompson has been with TGM for 8 harvests. He started helping out at the scale during harvest and has been full time for the last 7 years. Dwight works in Customer Support and takes care of the quality of grain, loading and unloading inbound and outbound grain.

Also in Customer Support we have Chase Williams. He also takes care of the quality of grain, loading cars or unloading and loading trucks. Chase worked for us part-time for 1 ½ years before becoming full time in August of 2015. He has four children.

Neoga is in a position not only to help our farmers but also help our other locations when room gets tight during harvest. On each 110 car unit, we ship out approximately 400,000 bushels of corn or 385,000 bu of beans, which helps TGM move grain very quickly. Neoga is set up to handle large volumes of grain in a very efficient manner. TGM continues upgrading and adding to our facilities to better serve our customers.

Ryan Brown is an Associated Person of Midco Commodities and operates a branch office for Midco Commodities. He would be very happy and capable to handle your hedging needs with futures or options. Neoga is one of 8 TGM branch offices for Midco Commodities, just another way for TGM to serve our customers.
Protection Against Corn Rootworm

It’s no secret that low commodity prices have forced growers to re-evaluate many of the practices they’ve considered as standards in the past. As an agronomist, I get lots of questions about whether certain inputs are really necessary. For the growers in the northern part of our territory one recent production practice in question is the use of rootworm corn. Many growers are considering giving up one of these for rootworm protection provided in smart-stax seedcorn due to the higher cost associated with this technology.

There are 3 types of corn rootworms: Northern, Western and Southern. While they can all be present in Illinois, northern and western are able to overwinter here and southern must move in from the south each year so it is rarely a problem. Northern and western corn rootworm can cause damage in 2 stages of its life cycle. The larva hatch and feed on the corn roots, which can lead to root and stalk problems, like lodging and reduced nutrient uptake. The adults feed on corn silks and inhibit pollination. Both stages can cause great economical damage and there are no reactive control measures. In cases where no control measures were used yields were decreased by up to 80 bu/ac. Crop rotation, soil insecticides and the use of rootworm-traited corn have been the main control measures used to prevent economical damage from these 2 pests. However, in recent years a new strain of western corn rootworm has adapted and is able to lay its eggs in soybean fields, leaving un-treated corn and soil insecticides as the only real control methods.

The main arguments I hear from growers in our northern territory who are considering using non-rootworm traited corn are: 1. They will give up the trait and use soil insecticide 2. We’ve not seen the pest cause problems the past few years. I’ll address soil insecticides first. If a grower has been using a soil insecticide and traited corn in the past they may be able to consider giving up one of these for rootworm control. However, if he/she wants to switch from traited corn to a soil insecticide, they won’t be saving any cost and will be exposing themselves to additional handling risks. So, I’d recommend sticking with traited corn.

Now, to the argument that it may be possible to give up rootworm-traited corn because we haven’t had economical damage lately. I have some things to consider. First, is it possible that we haven’t seen damage because of the high adoption of traited corn? I relate this to the topic of vaccines. Before the vaccine there is an epidemic. This causes everyone to get vaccinated. Now that everyone is vaccinated the disease is almost extinct, and because we don’t see the disease anymore people start to question whether they should be vaccinated. As people decide not to get vaccinated we have new outbreaks of the disease. I can’t predict the future, but I have real concern that if we stop using rootworm-traited corn, we will see new outbreaks of the pest. Second, the University of Illinois published data showing the number of Western corn rootworm beetles was higher in 2017 than in 2016 and 2015. And, although these numbers are still relatively low, there is a higher likelihood of having a problem with the pest in 2018 than in 2017 or 2016.

As a grower, you are the decision maker on your farm. You have to decide whether rootworm protection is something you are willing to give up or not. While the cost savings associated with switching from rootworm-traited corn look attractive, understand that there isn’t much that can be done once the pest is present in your field.

Precision Farming Hindsight

We’ve all heard the saying, “hindsight is 20/20” and usually it is quoted with a somewhat negative connotation because it usually means something has not gone well. We may also say the same thing this way, “it’s easy to fix the right thing to do after something has happened.”

With that said, I want to take hindsight and use it as a positive manner. Yes it is the time of year when all the crops are harvested and most of the equipment has been parked till next spring. So what can we do with hindsight? Most of us have some means to collect data that gives us a good idea of what happened this fall. Good data is a barometer that tells us if the decisions we made worked, worked ok, or did not work at all. Of course we cannot control the weather but there are some things we can do.

As your Digital Ag Partners we would like to share some things to look at from the past year (hindsight) that will help you prepare for the next year.

1. Copy old data onto a card/jump drive and place card in safe storage
2. Secure a new card/jump drive for the new season.
3. Make sure your planter and harvester display has the latest updates offered by the OEM.
4. After the updates and all data have been saved, clear the memory to free the display of any old data that may hinder or complicate the collection of new data and begin a new season.
5. If desired you may pre-load Grower/Farm/Field and hybrid/variety into your display.
6. Inspect all the components that make up your system – Antenna and cables – power connections – cables in cab and outside cab – cables and hardware on the planter or combine. If you see any discrepancies then you can take care of it before it becomes an emergency issue.
7. Power up the display and check to make sure the GPS and other components are operational.
8. Calibrate – if you want data that is viable calibration is necessary.

The items listed above are positive things that come from hindsight. Another positive that comes from hindsight is the realization that we cannot do it all due to time restraints or other priorities that need attention. So what can we do? Well, we may not like to admit it, but to become more efficient and economical we may need to secure help with our technology needs or seek advice on what tools would help you with technology, efficiency, and economics.

Here are some of the precision tools that your South Central FS Digital Ag Partners (Precision Department) have to assist you in your search for keeping your current tools in good shape or find the right tools that will fit into your operation.

Here we go;

1. Ag Leader dealer * we have a complete line of precision ag tools from auto steer – to planter drives and down force – to yield monitoring
2. Technicians * to help you with all your service and data processing needs.
3. MyWay RTK * cell based RTK correction source.
4. Certified Climate / Field View Drive dealers.
5. Mavryx * satellite and high resolution imagery (by airplane).
6. Profit Zone Management Tool * software that allows grower to pinpoint the ROI of every acre on your farm.
7. Data Management Programs * programs that cover soil testing – to VRT recommendations – to planting and harvest data processing – to providing advanced reports for analysis.

Well there we have it, the positive aspects of Hindsight. You may not know what the future holds but you can make good use of your hindsight and prepare to have a great season for 2018.

Please give us a call and see how we can assist you with your Digital Ag needs.

Happy New Year!!
Nick Robertson * 217-342-5091
Ryan Ochs * 618-780-9257
Heather * 217-342-5092

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