



Mid-County

Fall/Winter **Messenger**

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www.midcountycoop.com

Celebrating 90 years of Mid-County Coop!



90 Years Strong: Mid-County Coop's Legacy of Family and Service



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September of 1935, Mid-County Coop was born. 90 years is a long time, and a lot has changed. One thing that hasn't changed, is who owns and controls us. There is an article within this newsletter on the Hoen family, of which I have always considered dedicated owners of this coop. When I say dedicated, it is because of their actions to perpetuate their coop. First and foremost, they are strong supporters by investing in the future of the coop by purchasing their inputs and using its services. Secondly, by being part of the leadership, such as Lenny Hoen serving on

the Board of Directors for many years. And lastly, is always communicating on a customer level of how we can improve. The Hoen family has roots that started with Mid-County in the beginning and is still supported by not only Lenny, Rose and Steve but also by the families of Roger, Rich, and Dan.

I sometimes think of what life was like back when Mid-County started. A quick reminder is to get into our 1941 parade fuel truck and drive that for a few hours. You realize how rugged you would have to be to drive that truck day after day, when many of the roads were not much more than a path. To top it off, the customers fuel was not pumped, it was carried in 5-gallon cans and poured into a tank with a funnel.

I remember my great uncle who was born in the early 1900's, and lived through the depression, commenting that the "good old days" were not always so good, and it was

a tough life back then. But they persevered and made a good life, and a good living farming.

Our challenges are different now, but the things that still remain at Mid-County is that we will persevere, and perpetuate and adapt to our customers' needs in the future.

Is Mid-County still viable after 90 years? of course! In a world where banks, phone companies, airlines and the like are merging at a rapid pace, there are still companies like us that want to talk to a customer face to face, and still publish a phone number so you can talk to an actual person.

We hope you can join us at the Annual Meeting on December 12th at the Young America Pavilion. I believe you will once again be pleased with the performance of your coop.

As always, I appreciate your comments to improve your coop.

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AGRONOMY



Your Mid-County Coop Agronomy Partner: Better Soil, Bigger Returns

Here at Mid-County Coop, our mission is simple: to help our farmers reach the peak potential of every single acre. We know that in farming, decisions made from general averages simply aren't good enough anymore. That's why we're proud to lead the charge in soil management, transforming the way you apply inputs through systematic grid sampling and variable rate application.

The Precision Difference

For too long, fertilizing decisions have treated entire fields as equal, leading to overspending in some areas and underfeeding in others—costing you both yield and money. Our agronomy team tackles this variability head-on.

Grid soil sampling is our foundation. We systematically break your field into small, equal-sized cells, most commonly 2.5 acres. From each cell, we take a number of soil cores at a **consistent 6-inch depth** and send them **directly to our lab partner**. We're testing for nutrient levels (including micronutrients), organic matter, and pH.

The pH of a field plays an important role in overall soil health; too much lime applied in a blanket approach can tie up other nutrients and even affect how herbicides react to the soil. Our precision approach ensures we never make that mistake.

Once the samples are back, we connect this information to our soil data program. This allows us to build detailed application maps that guides precise variable rates of Lime, Phosphorus (P), and Potassium (K). This means:

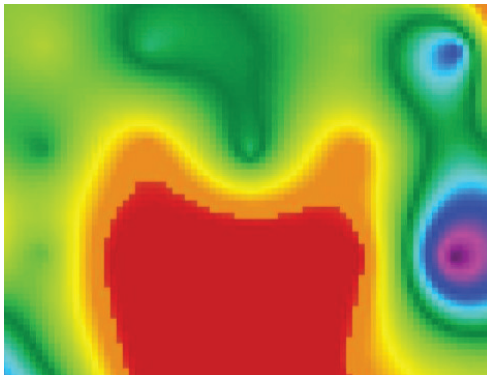
- Increasing low pH to prevent nutrients being tied up.
- Taking advantage of high fertility levels by reducing rates that save you money.
- Helping build up fertility where levels are low.

Increasing Yields and Saving You Money

This approach is about more than just smart spreading; it's about a better bottom line. By ensuring every acre has the correct balance, you reduce waste and eliminate the hidden



Soil Sampler: Mid-County Coop's soil sampling equipment takes consistent and accurate cores from the field.



Nutrient mapping shows what is needed where and connects to the machine to apply the right products in the right place, creating cost savings for the farmer.

yield drag caused by improper nutrient placement.

In nearly every case, utilizing our variable rate service will reduce the total amount of fertilizer needed—a direct cost saving for your operation. The cost associated with soil sampling is quickly offset by the resulting increased yields, ensuring a very strong Return on Investment (ROI) and increasing your farm's profits.



Mid-County Coop offers its members and customers a variety of equipment to apply lime and fertilizer. Pictured here is our lime spreader.

What Makes Mid-County Coop Unique?

When you work with us, you're not dealing with a third-party contractor; you're partnering with your neighbor.

We do our own soil sampling and send the samples directly to the lab. Other companies often hire out this work, which can cause potential delays.

Results are typically back in as little as three days! This allows us to work with you quickly to create a nutrient plan and apply the proper mix when you need it.

Our approach to soil health is holistic, adjusting the application of nutrients, application rates, and timing. All to help you increase soil health, save you money, while increasing your yields.

Ready to see the condition of your soil? Give our agronomy team a call to set up a meeting. Steve and Ryan are ready to help you plan the soil health strategy for your fields! Give us a call at (952) 466-3730.



Generations of Growth: The Hoen Family and 90 Years with Mid-County Coop

It's often said that the most important farm deals are sealed not in sterile boardrooms or on the steps of a courthouse, but right where life happens—at the family kitchen table. For the Hoen family of Carver County, this table has been the epicenter of a farming legacy stretching back 90 years, a history intertwined with the very foundations of Mid-County Coop.

We sat down at that very table with Lenny and Rose (Schmeig) Hoen to discuss their life, their family, their farm, and the enduring partnership they share with a coop their grandfather helped build.

A Commitment Forged in 1935

The Hoen family's roots with the Mid-County Coop are as deep as their farm soil. Lenny's grandfather, P. J. Meuleners, was an original stockholder when the coop was incorporated in 1935. "There was never a question about being part of Mid-County Coop," Lenny stated simply. "This is what we (our family) started." P. J. believed in the value of the coop way, instilling in future generations the belief that "The Coop Way is the Best Way."

Today, the family that began with P. J. has grown into a vast network of Meuleners/Hoen descendants—so many that counting how many rely on Mid-County Coop is "too vast to count," according to Lenny and Rose. "Virtually every extended family member is part of the Coop in one way or another."

Four Generations Strong: A Family of Farmers

Lenny and Rose's own family is a testament to the growth of their operation, spanning generations that are still deeply rooted in agriculture. They raised a large family, including children Theresa, Tom, John, Steve, Mike, and Matt. Lenny and Rose continue to share stories about the love of agriculture they shared with their first born, Theresa, who passed away. Lenny and Rose also had infant twin boys who passed away. Lenny, the oldest of seven siblings himself, is now the 4th generation to farm, while his son, Steve, is the 5th generation.

Their farming lineage was recently celebrated when the family was named the 2025 Carver County Farm Family of the Year. Lenny and Rose were completely surprised by the honor, receiving the news at the Dairy Day Dinner.



Lenny and Rose at the kitchen table, a piece of family history that made it to their home and became part of where their family grew.

"We didn't think we were worthy of the award," Rose confessed, but the pride that came with the plaque and recognition was immense. Lenny beams with optimism, hoping that with grandchildren already showing great interest, future generations will talk about the 15th or maybe 20th generation of Meuleners/Hoen family farmers.

From DHIA to "Kitchen Chair Farmer"

Lenny's journey into farming began early, living with his grandfather P. J. until age seven and later helping on the farm where his brothers, Roger and Rich (Hollandale Farms, also past Farm Family of the Year), still farm today. His dedication was evident when he was awarded the first American Farmer as part of his involvement in FFA in Waconia.

After high school, he attended the University of Minnesota, which led to a 15-year career with the DHIA (Dairy Herd Improvement Association), a job that allowed him to continue farming and growing his operation.

Lenny and Rose married in 1968, naming their new venture Roslen Farm. Rose asserts that, amidst all the hard work and challenges,



Aerial view of the Hoen Family Farm, west of Cologne.



Libby Hoen (granddaughter of Lenny and Rose) and Madalyn Sons, show off their bibs while milking.

"The farm is what has kept us together."

Lenny's success has always been tied to smart business practices and forward thinking. He remembers his first land purchase, made on the steps of the courthouse, leading one German observer to exclaim, "Er ist verrückt" (He is crazy/mad) or something close. But Lenny stood by his dad's advice: "If you don't do it now, you never will."

The Science of Farming

When asked what he has learned over the years, Lenny points to one key lesson – his unwavering commitment to genetics in his dairy herd. He started with a calf named "Lenny 28," a gift from his father. Today, the entire herd is still genetically tied to that original cow. For Lenny, the joy of farming remains simple: "I am doing what I like," and a deep love of genetics. Rose, however, sums up the farmer's ultimate reward



Grandchildren of Lenny and Rose Hoen, enjoying a day at the Carver County Fair.

as simply “a good way to support a family and teaches them not to be afraid of work.” These days, Lenny has earned the affectionate title of a “Kitchen Chair Farmer,” still working diligently to keep the farm moving forward.

A 90-Year Partnership with the Coop

The relationship between the Hoens and Mid-County Coop is not just historical; it is functional and vital to their daily success. Lenny recalled one of his first farming lessons: after renting land and applying Mid-County fertilizer, he saw a significantly larger yield. The success was undeniable, even if it did lead the landowner to demand higher rent the following year—a moment that prompted Lenny to start buying land instead.

“Mid-County has been there to help us grow our crops,” Lenny affirmed. “Delivering the genetics we need in our seed, supplying us with the fertilizer we need and crop protection products. They have been our partner as we make our way through the farming way of life.” Mid-County continues to work alongside the Hoen family, supporting their efforts to assist those who aspire to be a Dairy Princess through a donation to the Theresa Hoen Feist Memorial Scholarship.

That commitment to the coop is why Lenny has served on the Mid-County board for 30+ years, the only board (among many over the years) that he has continued to be a part of. He enjoys being part of the leadership team that



P. J. Meuleners, Lenny’s grandfather, and founding member of Mid-County Coop in 1935.

makes the decisions on how the coop operates and grows, remaining committed to P. J.’s initial belief.

Looking to the future, Lenny knows the world and farming are changing fast. He is confident, however, that Mid-County will “continue to evolve and progress, staying true to their mission to be the Coop that the farmers can count on for service.” His single hope for the next 10 to 20 years is that the coop will continue to “take care of all of them, Big or Small.”

Advice from the Heart

Before we left the table, Lenny offered a final thought for the next generation and all readers, a perfect blend of business sense and community spirit.

“Support Your Local Businesses,” he advised, followed by a nod to the complexities of farm life, “Be Patient.”

And for the world outside the county limits: “Once a farmer, always a farmer. Farmers get to take care of the land and the people that it feeds.”

The Hoen family kitchen table is more than a piece of furniture; it is a center of history, growth, and commitment—a reminder that the success of a farm, a family, and a coop are all woven together, growing with the strength of their shared legacy.

***As Paul Harvey would say “And now you know...the rest of the story”
“Good Day!”***



Your Propane System: Safety, Efficiency, and Partnership with Mid-County Coop

Greetings, whether you're a seasoned propane expert or brand new to using propane! At Mid-County Coop, our commitment is to ensure the safe and efficient delivery of propane to your home, garage, shop, or business.

Keeping Your Propane System Healthy

Your entire propane gas system—from the tank outside to the appliances inside—relies on a variety of equipment working together perfectly. Maintaining this system is crucial for your safety and to keep your energy costs low.

How Mid-County Coop Supports You

- **Detailed Records:** We maintain comprehensive records for every tank and the appliances connected to the system, regardless of whether you own or lease the tank.

- **Essential Maintenance:** Based on these records, you may receive communication from us regarding necessary, required maintenance, including:

- **Leak Checks:** Verifying the integrity of your system.

- **Regulator Replacements:** Ensuring the proper, safe pressure of gas delivery.

- **Flow and Lockup Tests:** Confirming the regulator and system are operating correctly and efficiently.

- **Expert Service:** Our service department is fully trained and equipped to perform all necessary maintenance, repairs, and adjustments on your propane gas system, both inside and outside your structure.

We value you as a customer and ask for your partnership in keeping your system safe and operating at its best.



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Action	Why It's Important
Call immediately if you smell gas.	Safety First! Propane odor (often described as rotten eggs) means you need to act fast. Call us 24/7 at (952) 466-3700.
Notify us of any appliance changes.	If you replace an old appliance or add a new one (e.g., a new furnace, water heater, or shop heater), your existing propane system may need to be adjusted or "tuned up."
Schedule a leak test after system changes.	Adding or replacing an appliance is a change to your system. A required leak test must be performed to ensure the integrity of the updated piping.

Efficiency Note: A well-maintained and correctly adjusted propane system can significantly help with efficiency, which ultimately leads to cost savings for you!

Have Questions? We Are Here for You!

Please do not hesitate to call us with any questions or concerns you may have about your propane system, its efficiency, or required maintenance. We are your local, dedicated resource.

Stay Safe and Stay Warm!



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Harvest Outlook: Tariffs, Supply Pressure, and Market Volatility

Global Trends Drive Local Fertilizer Costs

Mid-County Coop members received a detailed look at the fertilizer markets from WinField United's Lee McAtee at the annual pre-harvest Agronomy event. Lee McAtee, a WinField United industry veteran in the crop nutrient division, emphasized that fertilizers are global commodities, with prices updating constantly in response to three major forces: geopolitics, energy costs, and affordability.

Winfield United operates as a distributor rather than a basic manufacturer, with one of its primary functions being to provide co-ops such as Mid-County with daily market intelligence.

Low U.S. Inventories: Strong demand and more corn acres have left U.S. nitrogen inventories (Urea, UAN) at or near 20-year lows. New domestic ammonia plants in Texas are largely built for export, not domestic distribution, which initially puts production on the global market. However, he explained that the new ammonia production in Texas being exported could potentially pressure major exporters like CF Industries to keep more supply within the US domestic system. This suggests that Nitrogen prices may see further increases to secure domestic supply, so early planning is essential.

Energy and Affordability: Natural gas, the main cost driver for nitrogen, remains stable domestically (around \$3–\$4 per MMBtu). However, European production shutdowns caused by the Russia-Ukraine conflict continue to disrupt global trade, influencing U.S. affordability metrics.

Supply Concerns: Unexpected plant turn-arounds have cut U.S. urea output by roughly 350,000–400,000 tons, increasing reliance on imports. To keep product in the U.S., prices may need to rise high enough to slow exports to better-paying markets.

He also detailed how China and India shape global urea markets. China, once producing 60 to 70 million tons of urea annually through coal-based facilities, has scaled back production over the last decade. When local Chinese prices spiked last year, the government shut down exports entirely, throwing international markets "into quite a tizzy," McAtee said.

Exports have since resumed, but McAtee noted the US does not trade fertilizer directly with China and only benefits indirectly from increased global supply. India, meanwhile, maintains enormous urea demand and a government subsidy that allows its farmers to buy urea for \$60 to \$80 per ton despite import prices up to \$500 – an arrangement that keeps In-

dian demand consistently high.

Phosphate and Potash: Different Constraints

Phosphate (P) Crunch: U.S. production has declined for years due to limited reserves.

Five years ago, a company called Mosaic successfully petitioned the US Court of International Trade to impose countervailing duties on phosphate imports from Russia and Morocco – 16.6% and roughly 40%, respectively. McAtee said those duties effectively removed both countries from the US market.

Mexico is now one of the only remaining non-prohibitive sources, but its volume is insufficient, pushing the market toward new phosphate-type products. Growers are encouraged to consult with their Mid-County agronomist about new phosphate product options to ensure a reliable supply for next season.

Potash (K) Stable: Supply is strong and stable, with nearly all North American product coming from Canada. Global supply and demand are balanced, and a new Canadian mine opening next year is expected to add capacity. The current affordability of potash is encouraging farmers to purchase more, and a strong supply makes this a good time to ensure your Potassium levels are optimized for the best possible yield.

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