

# Country Connection

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● SUPPLY LOCATIONS  
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## GRAIN SCOOP:



### WHAT IS A GOOD PRICE FOR CORN AND BEANS???



By Kim Holsapple

It always seems when prices are high and moving higher it is harder to pull the trigger than when prices are flat. One might ask why and I think most of us know the answer, but I will try to look at some of the more popular reasons this happens.

The most frequent reason I hear is, "I sold too early last year and I am not going to do that again." I have said and always will say if you can sell your crop and show the kind of income that will pay the bills and get a good return on efforts then do it. We went through an entire decade (the 80's) that we could barely break even. Granted part of that was due to yields, but the market does not usually allow you to make the kind of money that it is showing us this year. If you sell too early again this year

and the market goes on up, then sell more provided you are not 100% sold. If you are 100% sold then sell more for next year if it shows the same kind of profitability.

Another reason I hear why it is hard to pull the trigger, is that it must be going higher. Most likely it will go higher. But isn't there peace in knowing that you have enough of your crop sold to pay the bills and the remaining crop is the profit? If you are 50% sold on new crop grain do you want the market to go up or down? I have to ask producers this question every day. The answer should always be I want it to go up. It's better to sell the last half of the crop \$2.00 higher vs. \$2.00 lower! Right? The market closes every day at a point where the buyers and sellers agreed it should have closed. I get asked constantly where I think the market is going tomorrow even though it has not closed today. If it was a sure thing the market was going higher tomorrow it would already be there today. Think about it!

"Maybe I will not grow the crop" is another very popular answer for not selling. I hear this constantly but in my 35+ years, I have never seen a complete failure. Sure on certain farms there could be a wipe out but never a complete failure over all. Crop insurance even solidifies the reason you should be selling at these higher prices. This gives you some assurance that the crop will be there, if not the income will be.

History tells us that selling a crop in advance of planting has resulted in the highest average price over the years. This is when the most unknowns exist and the market has a built in premium for this. This does not work every year but 5, 10, and 15 year averages tell you this is the case. I'm not sure about you but I like going with something that has high probabilities.

Every bull market I have seen in the past 35 years is followed up with a bear market. That is the way the market is supposed to work. Supplies get tight, the price rallies, demand goes down and at the same time we are trying to produce more at high prices and then the market gets flooded. Just as we saw in 2008, we peaked nearby futures on corn at \$7.62 and the front month bottomed at \$2.90 that same crop year. In 2009 we bottomed at \$3.00 and in 2010 the nearby hit \$3.24. These are very recent bottoms and there is no reason to think we won't see them again. There is never a bear around when a bull market hits a top. Everyone thinks it has to go up.

If you know what your costs are on your farm and you can get desirable profits then lock them in. Not only for this year but for a couple years to come! It's very hard to think clearly in situations like this but it sure makes the game of farming much more fun when you are making money. You will be here to do it again if you lock in a profit.

This has been a tough start to what could have been a great year. But let's not make it worse by letting the market tell you what you are going to get, when the opportunity is here now to lock in historical profits.



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#### RAIN FALL

We have 26 locations that track rain fall throughout the growing season. These locations are located in the counties of Effingham, Clay, Marion, Shelby, Coles, Cumberland, Edgar, Clark, Jasper, Bond & Fayette counties. As in the past we will keep you updated on monthly rainfall at each of these locations.

Location	April 2011 Total
Ashmore	10.50
Casey	11.80
Charleston	10.50
Effingham	11.35
Fairgrange	9.50
Greenup	12.10
Greenville	9.25
Hagarstown	9.90
Hookdale	7.30
Humboldt	9.70
Ingraham	11.30
Jewett	11.90
Kansas	10.40
Lis	11.65
Louisville	12.20
Middlesworth	9.50
Mulberry Grove	9.90
Neoga	10.10
Newton	11.35
Rose Hill	10.70
Sandoval	14.00
Shelbyville	9.00
Toledo	11.70
Watson	12.20
Willow Hill	10.60
Windsor	10.60

## First Propane Fuel Injection Bus in the State of Illinois Our Customer North Clay Schools



The new Clean and Green school bus was delivered to North Clay schools in April. Those present were, (left to right) Chad Hankins, Bud Britton and Shorty Devall all from Effingham-Clay Service Co.; Marion Ertmer, Growmark, Bloomington; Terry Irwin, North Clay assistant principal, Ben Hanewinkel, regional sales manager, Central Bus Sales; Bryan West, bus maintenance foreman; Chris Rinehart, school board member; Ron Kaufman, propane sales from Effingham-Clay Service Company. (Beth Fancher Photo)

## NORTH CLAY TURNS BIG YELLOW BUS GREEN

By Beth Fancher

It may look just like the rest of the yellow school buses that travel up and down the roads of North Clay School district but the newest bus in the fleet is propane powered. This is the first of its kind in Illinois. A chance for the North Clay Red and Black to go Clean and Green.

Central States Bus Sales representatives Joseph Wright and Ben Hanewinkel delivered this quiet, clean and green, with less emissions (it doesn't smell), yellow bus to the district.

*"These may be new to Illinois but Texas and Florida have been using propane buses for a few years,"* Bryan West, North Clay's bus maintenance foreman explained. *"I talked to a school outside of Dallas/Fort Worth, TX and they have more than 100 of these same buses. Technology is much better than the ones used in the 70s, after the oil embargo. There is a company in Clay City, Abner Trucking that uses propane conversions and they have worn out several trucks without having to replace the engines. Propane just runs cleaner and allowing for less maintenance, including fewer oil changes."*

With school district's looking for ways to save money and less state transportation funds, West started doing his homework and found the chance to purchase this demo bus from Central States in Fenton, MO. Another big opportunity was an incentive that includes a 50 cent a gallon discount for purchasing propane fuel.

*"Diesel fuel costs us around \$3.47 per gallon versus \$2.07 per gallon for propane plus this 50 cents per gallon refund incentive from the federal government, making it \$1.57 a gallon,"* West said.

*"The Federal government's attitude on clean fuel has resulted in this tax incentive and I think this incentive will continue for the next several years,"* Marion Ertmer, manager of propane marketing for Growmark in Bloomington explained.

West explained the biggest problem had been the delivery of the fuel to the engine. Technology from Clean Fuel USA has solved this problem with a pump inside the on-board tank and the fuel kept under pressure, in a liquid state, until it is injected in the cylinder. In the 70s and 80s the old conversions would freeze up in the winter and the operator would have to pour a hot cup of water in the vaporizer (carburetor) to get it to go again.

*"We have been working with Effingham-Clay Service Company and they have gone the extra mile to help us get the fuel station to accomplish this,"* West said as he introduced Ron Kaufman, propane salesman for FS.

*"More than 95 percent of the propane we sell comes from the U.S.,"* Kaufman explained. *"It is domestically produced, not coming from the Middle East. There are no vapors like there is from gasoline or diesel and it is very very safe. No fumes come from a propane tank while fueling."*

Accompanying Kaufman were F/S employees Chad Hankins, Bud Britton and Shorty Devall.

*"Chad has been designing pumping stations for propane use, especially in truck stops and for use like this. We provide the fuel station as long as the district purchases propane from us,"* Kaufman said.

Other statistics that make the propane bus more economic include an engine warranty of eight years compared to diesel fueled engines with only a five year warranty as well as burning cleaner which adds up to less oil changes; one-fifth less emission fumes than diesel buses keeps in line with staying clean and green; propane engine will not have turbochargers (\$1,800), air to air after cooler (\$800), emission equipment such as EGR system, diesel particulate filter (\$800), diesel exhaust fuel and other related sensors and wiring to be replaced, keeping costs down.



## "GOT MILK"

Jennifer Boerngen, representing Effingham-Clay Service Company and FS Total Livestock Services spoke with Dieterich Elementary kindergarten thru second graders on March 17th. Representatives from Ag in the Classroom, Dieterich FFA members, and Jennifer were at six different stations designed for the kids to find out more about agriculture and where food and milk comes from. All stations tied agriculture in with Dr. Seuss. The group that Jennifer represented talked about dairy and where milk and milk products come from. The importance of providing a well balanced diet for cows to produce 8 to 10 gallons of milk each day was compared to children eating a well balanced diet each day to grow strong and healthy. Jennifer also passed out a "Magic Straw" for each child to try. Magic Straws turn white milk to different flavors as milk passes through them. Children were also able to make homemade butter as they toured the stations.



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# FAST STOP GENERAL STORE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The Fast Stop General Store anniversary celebration was held Saturday, May 7th. The celebration included taste testing and specials on our Illinois Homegrown Products such as jams, snack sticks, cheeses, and dips. Also, there was a discount on LP refills for gas grill tanks, registration for door prizes, and ALL ethanol fuels were discounted in cooperation with the Illinois Corn Marketing Board and the Effingham County Farm Bureau from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**Everyone at the Fast Stop General Store would like to thank the customers for making our anniversary celebration a success.**



*Mother's pick out their free pack of flowers.*



*A father and his kids pick out a hanging basket for mom for Mother's Day.*



*The registers were busy as customers waited to take advantage of the great deals at the store.*



*Customers waited their turn to get their LP tanks filled.*



*Cars are lined up out to the road to take advantage of the gas savings.*



*Two gentlemen get their fuel on the E85 pump.*



*Customers are lined up to try the samples of the Illinois Home Grown product table.*



*Pumps were busy for the three hours that the gas discount was offered.*



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# June is Dairy Month

**Milk has long been a popular beverage, not only for its flavor, but because of its unique nutritional package. Milk is one of the best sources of calcium in the American diet. It also provides high-quality protein, vitamins and other minerals.**





## Effingham-Clay Service Company Conducts Anhydrous Ammonia Training to the Volunteer Fire Fighters in Clay County

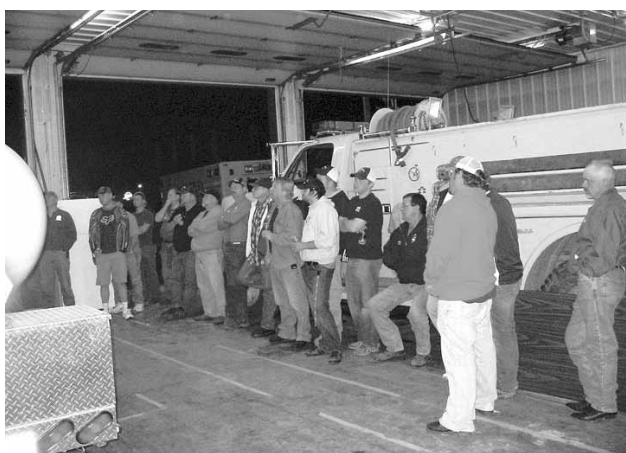


**Clayton Massie  
Clay County  
Facility Mgr.**



**Stanley Joergens  
Safety &  
Compliance Officer**

On Monday, April 11th Effingham Clay Service Company was invited to the Clay County fire fighter meeting held at the fire station in Xenia to conduct safety training on anhydrous ammonia. Effingham-Clay Service Co. was represented by their Clay County facility manager, Clayton Massie and the company safety and compliance officer, Stanley Joergens. After the entire group enjoyed a delicious catered meal, the group was given a short informational talk in regard to the manufacturing process and properties and safety of anhydrous ammonia. It was explained to the fire fighters how important anhydrous ammonia is to the farming community in supplying an economical form of nitrogen to the local farmers corn and wheat crops. Most of the lecture consisted of safety in transporting and handling of the product and how to react and respond to a release of anhydrous that they might be required to respond to. The attentive group was told about the effects of anhydrous ammonia on human flesh and eyes and how dangerous it could be if the proper personal protection equipment is not used while handling the product. The assembly was most interested in the display of a dollar bill that had been shrunk to less than half the normal size by previously exposing the bill to anhydrous ammonia which has the ability to attract to water and then draw the moisture out of anything that product comes in contact with. This was done to emphasize the importance of keeping the product off of the human body which is made up mostly of water. The anhydrous ammonia industry has a really good Safety track record and has had a very small amount of problems compared to the amount of product that is processed and delivered to be applied to the farmers fields which also includes the farmers in Clay County. The entire group then moved from the classroom to the garage section of the fire department where Effingham-Clay Service Co. had set up a demonstrator cut away model of an actual anhydrous ammonia tank. This tank demonstrates the thickness of the tank walls and the configuration of the valves and how the valves are designed to function and how the safety features of each are important to the proper handling and containment of the product in the tank. The demonstrator model tank is also designed to actually roll over upside down on top of the trailer to resemble an overturned tank and then they could actually visualize how the tank and valves and gauges will work in that position. This is something you talk about in the classroom, but it brings it to more reality if they could actually see the tank in that position and understand the manipulated configuration of the process at that point. It was stressed again and again to the group how important it is to have the proper personal protection equipment when working with and handling anhydrous ammonia. The fire fighters were then shown the proper cotton lined rubber gloves and the tight fitting goggles that we supply and demand that all of our employees and our farmer customers wear while working with this product.



Effingham-Clay Service Co. is very concerned with safety to our employees and our customers in any product that we handle and supply to our farming community. We are not only very concerned with the safety and protection of the people in our community but also with the environment and the protection of the ground and water in the communities that we work and live in. If there are any questions or if you feel that your emergency response personnel could benefit from information or training on products that we supply in your community, please feel free to contact your local Effingham-Clay Service Company location and ask for assistance. Any of our employees will be happy to help you or to get the knowledgeable training or material to you for that product.



**Stanley Joergens  
Safety &  
Compliance Officer**

### Effingham-Clay Service Co. / Sullivan Facility Sullivan Fire Department Tour 4-18-2011



On Monday, April 18th at 9:30 a.m. the Sullivan Fire Department represented by chief Mike Piper along with assistant Larry Edwards and Arlen Long took a guided tour of Sullivan facility of Effingham-Clay Service Company led by the facility foreman Cliff Yoder and territory dispatcher Brandon Laue. The fire department was shown and toured each of the facility buildings and were told what product or equipment would typically be in each building along with the power source or fuel source for that building or group of buildings that could be shut off in case of an emergency. As the group toured the facility, they were told about the hazardous products that the facility handles, such as LP gas, anhydrous ammonia and ag chemicals and how the safety valves, safety procedures, locks and alarms were put in place to comply with regulations and to make our facility products as safe as we can make them in our community. After the informative tour of the facility, the Sullivan Fire Dept. personnel met back at the facility office and were thanked for their interest in our facility. Fire Chief Piper was asked if their entire volunteer fire department would benefit from a training session on anhydrous ammonia with our company anhydrous ammonia tank demonstrator that our safety department has recently constructed for special training such as this. Chief Piper was very interested in that product and equipment training and he immediately set up a date for the training for the entire fire department personnel, which is set for June 6th, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. at the fire station in Sullivan.



**Left to right: Cliff Yoder (Sullivan Facility Foreman), Mike Piper (Sullivan Fire Chief), Arlen Long (Sullivan Fire Dept.), Larry Edwards (Sullivan Fire Department Assistant), Brandon Laue (Eff-Clay Northern Territory Dispatch Coordinator)**



# FAST STOP

## GENERAL STORE

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