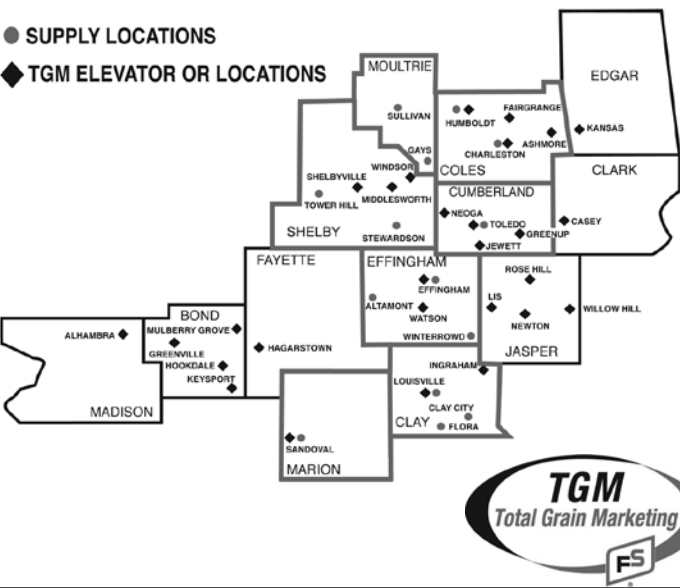


Country Connection

www.effclayfs.com

● SUPPLY LOCATIONS

◆ TGM ELEVATOR OR LOCATIONS



GRAIN SCOOP: Will We Run Out of Corn



By Kim Holsapple

On March 31, 2011, the USDA released a report that may have been one of the most surprising in the history of reports. Traders had been saying for some time this might be the report of the century and whether they were right or wrong I think that it tells us a lot. Number one, it was going to give us a look at the acres, mainly corn that was intended to get planted this spring. Most of the industry knew it was going to be virtually impossible to come up with enough acres to free up the supply of corn to give us ample breathing room to make it through another year. Indeed there was a big surprise in the report! But it came from the stocks that we had on hand and not the acres that we intended on planting.

The acres that are supposed to get planted came in a little on the high side at 92.2 million, which is up a modest 4 million acres from last year. We all know that Mother Nature has as much to do with the corn planting as what our intentions are on March 1st. After all, we have to get in the field before May 1st to plant all the acres we want. You know more today than I do writing this article on April 2nd about the corn acres, but what I do know at this time is that corn stocks will be extremely tight late this summer. If you remember on the September 1st stocks report the USDA released a number much higher than anyone expected causing the market to crash. We were assured that the September 1st number did not include any new corn, and for those of you who can remember last summer we had a fair amount of corn harvested in the U.S by September 1st. As a matter of fact TGM started receiving corn last year before August 20th. Well, I think the USDA just discovered that they did have new corn reported in the report in September and here is why. We started the year with 14.175 billion bushels. Made up of the 12.447 billion we produced and the 1.708 billion that the USDA said we carried into this year. If this is correct and the March 31st report of stocks of 6.523 is correct it tells me we used 7.652 billion bushel of corn in the 6 months of our marketing year. As of today we have seen no liquidation of livestock, ethanol production is coming in at near record highs, and just last week we had a record in export sales. With my elementary math skills, I can easily see that we have to decrease usage over the balance of the year and if our first 6 months disappearance is correct, we have to cut demand sharply.

Now I am not here to tell you that the numbers released are correct. In fact the point that I want to get across is I think the USDA report in September included new crop corn, in fact I think it included a lot of new crop corn. But the key is, even if they were off 300 million bushels this crop has to get rationed. A pipeline supply (this is the absolute minimum we need to get through a year) is near the 500 million bushel level so demand rationing MUST occur quickly. Throw in any delays for wet weather, dry weather or a late frost in April or an early frost in September and this market will be explosive.

I will stand by my marketing plan and sell corn into this highly unpredictable market. I know as well as you that all good things will eventually come to an end and the profit potential now and in the future is as good as we have seen in American agriculture in decades. What if the 92 million acres get planted early and harvest starts again in August? We will go down temporarily but remember things will be just as tight next year and we get to do this all over again. Hope all is going well!



GENERAL STORE

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Effingham, IL 62401
217-342-9234

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2011 LP Gas Summer Fill Program May 1, 2011 thru August 31, 2011

Summer fill programs allow for summer fill pricing and two payment options

- 1. Cash Discounts Available
- 2. Deferred Payment Options

Watch your mail for Winter Contract information

Energy Solutions from the Propane Specialists at Effingham-Clay Service Company

PLANT HEALTH PROGRAM



By Tracy Heuerman Clay County Crops Specialist

As the spring gets in to full swing, there are a lot of things on everyone's mind: will this year be wet or dry; is it going to be a hot summer or a cooler summer; or maybe we'll get lucky and have a "normal year" –whatever that means anymore. Although we all wish we could, we can't predict or change the weather that Mother Nature throws our way.

However, we do things to help reduce our risk throughout the season. We plant multiple crops, use hybrids and varieties with different lengths of maturity, treat our seed, and use foliar fungicides.

Although foliar fungicides have been around for several years, the topic seems to be a great debate among industry, growers and academia. While universities recommend an IPM approach, industry has taken somewhat of a different stance based on data collected from the thousands of on-farm trials completed since 2005. While the decision to spray a foliar fungicide is ultimately based on the potential of increased yield, there are many other factors to consider during your decision-making process such as application timing, plant health benefits and economics or return on your investment (ROI).

Application timing is very critical for obtaining the maximum benefit from fungicides. Yield response from fungicide applications results in a bell-shaped curve where the greatest response is at the timings described below. If you apply before or after the optimum timing you should expect to see less of a yield response. There are two key application windows for applying fungicides in wheat. An application of a strobilurin fungicide, which has preventative characteristics, should be made at flag leaf (Feekes 8 to 10) to target foliar wheat diseases like powdery mildew and rusts. Applications of curative or combination fungicides targeting head scab should be made when the heads are fully emerged and plants are beginning to flower (Feekes 10.5). The proper fungicide application timing in soybeans is between full bloom (R2) and full pod (R4). Full bloom is designated by an open flower at one of the two uppermost nodes on the main stem with a fully developed leaf. Full pod is reached when there is a ¾ inch long pod at one of the four uppermost nodes on the main stem with a fully developed leaf. Corn, like wheat, has two application timings. If you plan to make only one application of a fungicide, apply at full tassel (VT) for the greatest yield advantage. If you already plan to spray at tassel, then consider spraying an additional application at V5, or when five full leaves are emerged.

Along with yield response, fungicide applications result in several other plant health benefits, which by themselves are reason enough to spray every acre. Spraying fungicides results in increased standability. Avoiding combining corn that has gone down saves not only time, but also money in the form of fuel expenses. Increased utilization of nitrogen is another benefit, especially in corn. Foliar fungicides slow respiration in corn, allowing the plant to conserve more energy, resulting in less nitrogen loss during hot, dry nights. Improved grain quality and enhanced stress tolerance to situations such as heat, drought and hail, are a few of the other notable benefits.

If you've ever considered spraying a fungicide before, this is definitely the year to try one based on sheer economics. Consider the following situations: Corn: Applying the fungicide is about a \$26 per acre investment. With corn prices around \$6 per bushel it only takes 4.3 bushels of corn to pay for your investment. However, the average yield increase in corn is 15 bushels per acre which would result in an average return of \$64 per acre (\$90 - \$26). Soybeans: The cost of application can vary more in soybeans but assume the cost of a fungicide and insecticide to be about \$24 per acre. With soybean prices close to \$13 per bushel it only takes 1.8 bushels of soybeans to pay for the investment. The average yield increase in soybeans is 5 bushels per acre which would result in a \$41 per acre return (\$65 - \$24). The same holds true in wheat: Application costs are around \$21 per acre, so with \$7.50 per bushel wheat it takes only 2.8 bushels per acre to pay for the application. With the average yield increase of 10 bushels per acre your return would be \$54 per acre (\$75 - \$21).

As the year continues and you have many decisions to make, consider protecting the investments you've already made in your crop by applying a fungicide. If you've used a fungicide before but did not obtain the averages yield increases listed above, I encourage you to try one again because with our current crop prices, you have very little to lose and a lot to gain in both yield and crop health. If you are currently using fungicides on a limited basis, consider experimenting with additional crops and spraying every acre this year. The ROI potential in the year ahead is greater than it has ever been in the past.



**For more information, contact your local
Effingham-Clay Crops Specialist**



CONGRATULATIONS JEROD FLEENER AND JED GOECKNER



Jed Goeckner
EMS Marion County



Jerod Fleener
EMS Clay County

Jerod Fleener, Louisville, IL and Jed Goeckner, Sandoval, IL, energy specialists for Effingham-Clay Service Company, have recently achieved the designation of Energy Management Specialist (EMS) by GROWMARK's Energy Division.

According to Jim Meinhart, Southern Business Manager of Effingham-Clay Service Company, reaching this level of professionalism is a considerable achievement. "Jed and Jerod have shown that they have the technical expertise and knowledge to earn their EMS certification. There are few others in this area who have attained this career benchmark."

To qualify for the EMS testing program, Jed & Jerod had to have a minimum of two years of sales experience selling FS petroleum products including premium power fuels, renewable fuels, lubricants, and filters. In addition to attending several sales and product schools conducted by GROWMARK Energy Division, Jed & Jerod had to demonstrate technical skill as well as sales and service professionalism.

As potential candidates, they then had to be nominated by both an Effingham-Clay Service Company sales manager and a GROWMARK regional marketing director prior to completing the series of tests required by the program.

"We are very proud of Jerod Fleener and Jed Goeckner and this outstanding achievement," said Jim Meinhart, Effingham-Clay Service Company. "Jerod & Jed continue to be valuable resources to the patrons they serve in Clay & Marion Counties."

Congratulations Steve Devall for achieving the Challenger Award from Land-O-Lakes



Steve Devall, Swine Enterprise Specialist for FS Total Livestock Services is shown with the Challenger Award he received from Land-O-Lakes. Land-O-Lakes awards sales people throughout the United States for excellence in nutrition, financial management, and sales. Steve's ability to become a partner on his clients' farms has been the key to Steve's success and the success of his farmers.

Steve and his wife Karen reside in Newton. Steve retired January 1st from FS Total Livestock Services after 32 years of service due to health challenges.



Do You Need a Propane Generator?

Events like we had this winter from Mother Nature might spark an interest to why you might want a propane backup generator. If you have a fear you'll be without power for days a propane powered generator is your solution. Remember it is not just the winter ice storms that can leave you without power. Other natural disasters like tornados or Power Blackouts can leave you in the dark as well.

Keeping appliances like the refrigerators and freezers operating can hinder spoiling of food is just one benefit by owning a generator. Your alarm system can be kept running for security and other important items requiring power can be maintained including your television and lights. And oh yes let's not forget about the furnace and AC to keep you comfortable using your FS "COMFORT PRO" propane.

If you are like most people when the power goes out, you'll step outside and see if the neighbors are without power too. Now you can take the first step and be the envy of the neighborhood and have your backup plan in place with a home powered generator and enjoy the comforts you desire.

There is a variety of portable and standby home generators and surely one to fit your needs. Understanding the difference is that a portable generator can be used during power loss by running extension cords to various appliances that need to be powered. Standby home generators are more efficient as these generators are installed directly into the house's electrical system. Depending on the individual needs, either choice will work but standby home generators are superior with options for instant power restoral during most interruptions.

Although having a generator at home is not vital for everyone, those whom really consider safety and comfort will definitely have a backup plan for their home! **For more information call your local Propane Specialist at Effingham-Clay Service Company.**



Congratulations Jason Propst and Ashley Sayers for achieving the Consultation Award from Land-O-Lakes

Jason Propst, Stewardson, and Ashley Sayers, Effingham, both swine enterprise specialists for FS Total Livestock Services are shown receiving Consultation Awards from Kevin Kapelski of Land-O-Lakes.

Land-O-Lakes Awards sales people throughout the United States for excellence in nutrition, financial management and sales.

Both Jason and Ashley's ability to become partners in each clients' operations is a key ingredient in their success along with the success of each farm.

Ashley lives in Stewardson with his wife Kristi, and their three children, works with swine and beef farmers throughout Southern Illinois.

Jason and his wife Jen live near Neoga along with their two children, and works in south central Illinois.



Kevin Kapelski from Land-O-Lakes (left) presenting award to Jason Propst, FS TLS (right)



Kevin Kapelski from Land-O-Lakes (left) presenting award to Ashley Sayers, FS TLS (right)



Ron Kaufman, Southern Propane Sales
217-663-6698 (right)
and Bud Britton, LP Specialist
618-839-7745



Comfort Pro by FS marketing booth at Flora Home Show March 19 & 20, 2011

Comfort Pro by FS (Effingham-Clay Service Company) booth at the Flora Home show displayed the many products we offer our customers.

Thank you to everyone who stopped by to see us.

SPCC PLANS



- 1. What are they?**
They are Oil Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure program plans.
- 2. What is the goal of these plans?**
The goal of the SPCC program is to prevent oil spills into waters of the United States and adjoining shorelines. Oil spills can cause injuries to people and damage to the environment. A key element of this program calls for farmers and other facilities to have an oil spill prevention plan, called an **SPCC Plan**. These Plans can help farmers prevent oil spills which can damage water resources needed for farming operations.
- 3. What is considered a farm under SPCC?**
Under SPCC, a farm is: "a facility on a tract of land devoted to the production of crops or raising of animals, including fish, which produced and sold, or normally would have produced and sold, \$1,000 or more of agricultural products during a year."
- 4. Is my farm covered by SPCC?**
SPCC applies to a farm which:
 - Stores, transfers, uses, or consumes **oil or oil products**, such as diesel fuel, gasoline, lube oil, hydraulic oil, adjuvant oil, crop oil, vegetable oil, or animal fat; **and**
 - Stores more than **1,320 US gallons** in aboveground containers or more than **42,000 US gallons** in completely buried containers; **and**
 - **Could reasonably be expected to discharge oil to waters** of the US or adjoining shorelines, such as interstate waters, intrastate lakes, rivers, and streams.

If your farm meets all of these criteria, then your farm is covered by SPCC.
- 5. If my farm is covered by SPCC, what should I do?**
The SPCC program requires you to prepare and implement an SPCC Plan.
If you **already have a Plan**, maintain it. **If you do not have a Plan**, you should prepare and implement one. Many farmers will need to have their Plan certified by a Professional Engineer ("PE"). However, you may be eligible to self-certify your amended Plan if:
 - Your farm has a total oil storage capacity between 1,320 and 10,000 gallons in aboveground containers, and the farm has a good spill history (as described in the SPCC rule), you may prepare and self-certify your own Plan. (However, if you decide to use certain alternate measures allowed by the federal SPCC Rule, you will need a PE.)
 - Your farm has storage capacity of more than 10,000 gallons, or has had an oil spill you may need to prepare an SPCC Plan **certified by a PE.**

TIP: If you are eligible to self certify your Plan, and no aboveground container at your farm is greater than 5,000 gallons in capacity, then you may use the Plan template that is available to download from EPA's Web site at: <http://www.epa.gov/oem/content/spcc/tier1temp.htm>

For more information contact your local Effingham-Clay Service Company Energy Sales Specialist.
Clay, Cumberland, Effingham, and Marion Counties:
Kris Zerrusen (217) 663-4333
Coles, Moultrie, & Shelby Counties:
Julie Tomlinson (217) 232-5856

Safety Section

UCR & USDOT@ Regulations for Illinois Framers

1. Do these rules apply to Farmers?

Yes, if the farmer operates a commercial vehicle in interstate commerce. There is no farmer exemption from the UCR or USDOT#.

2. What are these programs for?

The fees associated with the Unified Carrier Registration (UCR) are used by states to enforce "safety" (Motor Carrier Safety Regulations) and "fitness" (insurance) regulations. The registration of vehicles (under the USDOT# program) allows enforcement agencies to track all vehicles operated by an individual carrier in order to establish the safety record for the carrier's entire fleet.

3. Where'd it Originate?

Unified Carrier Registration (UCR) was established by federal law, in the *Unified Carrier Registration Act of 2005*, which was part of the federal highway reauthorization bill known as the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act, A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). It replaced the Single State Registration System (SSRS) in participating states, including Illinois.

4. When did they take effect?

Carriers where first required to register under UCR by in 2007. Registration is an annual requirement. The USDOT# has been around since the early 1980's. New entrants must register for both programs prior to beginning interstate carrier operations.

5. Who is subject to the UCR & USDOT#?

Regulated for-hire motor carriers and unregulated private and exempt carriers, as well as brokers, freight forwarders, and leasing companies who operate commercial vehicles in interstate commerce are required to register and pay fees.

6. Who is not subject to them?

Purely intrastate motor carriers are not subject to either. States that participate in UCR can elect to extend the requirements of UCR to their intrastate carrier population. Illinois has chosen not to.

7. How do I figure out if I have to register my operation under either program?

You are required to register if your operation includes at least one vehicle that meets both of the following two conditions:

A. It must be a "commercial vehicle."

That has nothing to do with for-hire hauling. Instead, it is generally based on the vehicle's size. Virtually every farm truck and truck/trailer combination is considered a "commercial vehicle."

For purposes of the UCR and the USDOT# registration, a commercial vehicle is one vehicle or a combination of vehicles that is operated in commerce (includes farming) and has a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of at least 10,001 pounds or, in the case of a passenger vehicle, is one built to carry 9 or more persons (for hire) or 16 or more persons (not for hire), including the driver. It also includes a vehicle that transports hazardous materials in a quantity that requires the vehicle to be placarded.

B. It must be used in "interstate commerce."

Federal regulations define it as follows [49CFR390.5]:

Interstate commerce means trade, traffic, or transportation in the United States –

- (1) Between a place in a State and a place outside of such State (including a place outside of the United States);
- (2) Between two places in a State through another State or a place outside of the United States; or
- (3) Between two places in a State as part of trade, traffic, or transportation originating or terminating outside the State of the United States.

Farming is commerce (you're trying to make a buck), so that part is easy. The more difficult distinction is whether the truck is operated on an "interstate" basis.

Your operation can be considered "interstate" in either of two ways. Crossing the state line is clearly an interstate move. However, traveling point-to-point within the State of Illinois is also considered interstate if the load you're hauling is part of an interstate shipment (generally, cargo that originates in one state and is ultimately destined for another state or country.)

8. I don't really have a commercial truck, just a "farm"-plated truck.

The term "commercial" has nothing to do with the license plate or "for-hire" hauling. For purposes of the UCR and the USDOT#, a farm truck is considered "commercial" generally based on its size – if it is over 10,000 pounds GVWR or a combination vehicle (truck & trailer) with a GCWR over 10,000 pounds. A "farm" plate does not determine commercial or non-commercial status.

9. So, if I'm hauling grain to an elevator or a rail terminal that later ships it out of state, do I need to register under the UCR and USDOT# programs?

If it is probable that any portion of the grain a farmer delivers to a location in Illinois will ultimately be delivered out-of-state, then it is also probable that UCR & USDOT# regulators – state and federal – will consider that farmer's delivery as the first leg of an "interstate" move, requiring registration.

The reverse (improbability) is also true. If an in-state grain elevator sells all of its grain to in-state users (e.g.: livestock feeders, feed mills, ethanol plants, millers) then regulators would likely consider deliveries to that elevator from within Illinois to be intrastate moves and those trucks would not be subject to registration. In between is a lot of "gray." Having a letter from that grain elevator certifying intrastate shipments only could save you trouble.

10. What if I haul to an ethanol plant or soybean processor in Illinois that ships processed product out of state?

Generally, that would be considered intrastate, not interstate. Because the raw commodity (e.g.: corn or soybeans) would be transformed into some other product (i.e.: ethanol, DDGs, soybean oil or meal), the interstate "map" is reset from the point where it is processed.

11. Does the UCR replace the USDOT#?

No. The UCR is in addition to that requirement. The USDOT# is the federal identification system. The UCR is a fee collection system. States work through federal programs to ensure uniformity among states. If you need one registration, you'll also need the other.

12. Are there fees associated with registration?

For the USDOT#, no; for the UCR, yes. For motor carriers, the fee is based on the total number of commercial motor vehicles operated in interstate commerce. (They differ for brokers and freight forwarders.) The UCR fee is not dependant on the range of a carrier's operations, only on the number of commercial vehicles it operates in interstate commerce. For 2011, the fees are the same as they were for 2010:

• 0-2 Vehicles	\$76	• 3-5 Vehicles	\$227
• 6-20 Vehicles	\$452	• 21-100 Vehicles	\$1,576
• 101-1000 Vehicles	\$7,511	• 1001 or more	\$73,346

13. How is the number of vehicles counted?

Count only the power units, not the trailers. Typically, use the number of commercial vehicles operated in interstate commerce in the 12-month period ending June 30 of the prior year or the number entered on form MCS-150 when applying for the USDOT.

14. Is there a credential for carriers under the UCR?

No. in section 4306, SAFETEA-LU includes a general federal prohibition against state requirements on interstate motor carriers to display any credentials in or on a commercial motor vehicle. Although there are a number of exceptions to this general prohibition, none seems to apply to the UCR. The implication is that Congress did not intend for there to be any UCR credentialing.

The USDOT# registration requires that commercial vehicles be marked with the legal name, or a single trade name, of the business entity that owns or controls the motor carrier operation. City and state are not required to be displayed, but are allowed.

Unlike the USDOT#, the UCR does not require its information to be displayed on the vehicle nor is there any UCR paperwork to carry with the vehicle.

15. How do I register for the UCR?

Complete the form provided by the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC). Illinois' UCR form and instructions are available on the ICC website or you may call them to request a copy.

There is currently no means of registering directly online. With up-to-date Adobe Reader software, the .pdf application form can be filled out on your computer, then printed out for mailing to the ICC; or you may simply print out the blank form and complete it by hand, writing your responses on the paper form.

Once completed, either:

- Mail it in along with your check to the ICC or
- Fax it back to the ICC at 217-785-1448 and make payment using VISA or MasterCard.

16. If I need the UCR, will I need the USDOT#, too?

Yes. In fact, you will be required to have the USDOT# before registering for the UCR.

17. I'm just getting started in interstate hauling, what can I expect under the UCR and USDOT# program?

New-entrants into interstate motor carrier operations should register under both the UCR and the USDOT# programs before they begin interstate operations.

Under a Congressional requirement stemming from the 9/11 terrorist incident, first-time applicants for a USDOT# from the federal government will undergo a new-entrant audit within 18 months of their application – likely about a year from the time of application.

All first-time carrier applicants for a USDOT# will be automatically enrolled in the FMCSA New Entrant Safety Assurance Program. This program requires new entrants to pass a safety audit and maintain acceptable roadside safety performance over an initial 18-month period before they are given permanent registration status {FMCSA}

18. What is a New-Entrant Audit and how will it be conducted?

USDOT auditors – or IDOT auditors working on behalf of the federal government – will notify the carrier of a pending audit and arrange a time for the meeting. The auditor will visit the carrier's place of business and ask to see records required to be kept under Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations regarding the carrier's safety management system. Those records include but are not limited to:

- Driver Qualifications;
- Driver Duty Status;
- Vehicle Maintenance;
- Accident Register; and
- Controlled Substances and Alcohol use and testing requirements.

Illinois farmers who have undergone a new-entrant audit, report it to be more of an educational experience than a regulatory enforcement. Serious violations, however, could result in fines or penalties or a loss of interstate operating authority. New entrants will most often be given 30 to 60 days to correct any shortcomings.

All carriers – new and established – are subject to a "Compliance Review" (another form of audit) at any time.

19. As a New-Entrant carrier, do I get a break on first year fees?

No. Fees for the UCR are not prorated so carriers newly entering interstate commerce late in the calendar year will owe the same fee as those who registered early.

Since new entrants don't have a prior year's experience on which to base the number of interstate vehicles in their fleet (needed to calculate the UCR fee), they can instead base that number on the count used to complete form MCS-150 – the form used to obtain the USDOT#. That form calls for "The number of vehicles that will be operated in the U.S."

20. What About Farm Wagons?

A farm wagon weighing up to 36,000# GVW is considered to be an "implement of husbandry." State regulators are not imposing UCR or USDOT# registration requirements on implements of husbandry (i.e.: farm tractor pulling wagon.) Trucks used to pull wagons are regulated.

21. How is the USDOT# to be displayed?

The following information must be displayed on both sides of each power unit (not trailers) operated by the carrier:

- The legal name, or a single trade name, of the business entity that owns or controls the motor carrier operation. (Match that on Form MCS-150).
- The motor carrier identification number issued by the FMCSA, preceded by the letters "USDOT."
- In letters that contrast with background and are legible from 50 feet in daylight.
- May be painted on or included on an attached sign.
- City, state and address are optional.

This document provided by: Illinois Farm Bureau. More information and a PDF version of this document is available at www.ilfb.org.