

## RECIPE CORNER

### Crazy Crust Pizza

by Kari Carlson

Yield: 6 servings

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 cup flour
- 1/2 tsp dried Italian seasoning
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp pepper
- 2/3 cup milk
- 2 eggs
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1 (8 oz) can pizza sauce
- 1 cup Mozzarella cheese

#### DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oven to 425°. Grease a 9x13-inch pan.
2. In large skillet, brown ground beef until thoroughly cooked; drain.
3. In a small bowl, combine flour, Italian seasoning, salt, pepper, milk and eggs. Blend until smooth. Pour batter into greased pan, spreading to coat pan.
4. Spoon beef over batter and top with onion. Bake for 25 minutes.
5. Spoon pizza sauce over pizza and top with cheese. Bake an additional 7 to 10 minutes.

Note: Can also top with mushrooms, pepperoni and black olives



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## SPRING WORD SEARCH

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a message about Spring.



- ALLERGIES
- APRIL
- BASEBALL
- BEES
- CROCUSES
- CYCLAMENS
- DAFFODILS
- DANDELIONS
- EASTER
- EQUINOX
- FLOWERS
- FROGS
- GOLF
- GRASS
- GREEN
- GROWTH
- IRISES
- LILIES
- MARCH
- MAY
- NEW LEAVES
- PLANTING
- RAIN
- RENEWAL
- ROBINS
- SEASON
- SNOW MELT
- SOFTBALL
- SPRING BREAK
- SPRING CLEANING
- TULIPS
- WARMER
- WET



PRODUCING FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

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### I-80 Farms Vision Statement

To produce quality crops through a profitable farm operation which will help sustain world demand for environmentally safe food and fuel. This will be accomplished by intelligent risk management, effective marketing strategies and overall great leadership. The foundation supporting our overall vision is formed by our strong family values and reputation for honesty, hard work and integrity.

We strive to remain a profitable, growing operation that will produce quality crops to fulfill world demand, using environmentally sound practices.

# The I-80 Informer

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## I-80 Overview

by William J. Talsma, President

As we prepare to plant the 2014 crop, I am sitting here thinking about the different environment we are in today, compared to a year ago. Today is March 6th and last year at this time, we had already seeded waterways and were in process of cleaning up an old building site and doing some tiling. Today we have snow on the ground, 35-50 inches of frost in the ground and are coming off one of the coldest winters since the 1800's. It is looking like there will be no activity in the field until at least April and that is assuming it starts warming up soon.

There is very little subsoil moisture at this time, but a year ago we were in the same situation at this time. It started raining and we didn't think that we were going to get the crop planted because of excess moisture. Things can change fast.....

The 2013 crop turned out fairly good, considering once we finally got the crop planted, it stopped raining during July and August. The 2013 corn crop was slightly below average. The soybean crop was the worst we have harvested in over 20 years. We had great success with our cover crops last year and we have several farms seeded again as a fall cover crop, to help control erosion on highly erodible soils.

The financial picture has definitely changed from a year ago. At this time, a year ago, corn was selling in the \$7.25 per bushel range and today it is selling at around \$4.50 per bushel. This is a huge decrease, which makes it extremely difficult to turn a profit. The decrease in corn prices is a result of record acres

being planted in the United States and around the world. In addition to record acres being planted, increased yields resulted from these acres.

With corn at \$7.00, the end users decided they could get by with less corn or could substitute corn for wheat. The 2013 wheat crop was also a large crop. On top of this situation, the EPA, Big Oil, and the livestock and poultry industries all ganged up on corn.

The higher grain prices have been good for the American farmer, and as landowners, it has been very good. It has also been a huge win for the United States economy, especially in the Midwest. The livestock and poultry producers have been some of the loudest critics of ethanol and higher grain prices; however, the last couple years and this year have been some of their most profitable years ever.

I have included several facts about ethanol and biodiesel in this newsletter. I truly believe that we can produce enough grain to support both the livestock industry and the biofuels industry. We need to be energy sufficient in this country and at the same time we must create a vibrant economy in Iowa and in the Midwest.

I would like to thank our landowners for being such great people to work with and for giving us the opportunity to farm their land. I would also like to thank our dedicated and hardworking employees. Our team is the very best. Thank you for making I-80 Farms a successful operation.



# Construction Projects

by David Talsma, Vice President Operations

Last fall's freeze was one of the earliest that I can remember. We were frozen out of the fields the last week of November, and never returned for the remainder of the winter.

Due to the frozen ground, we were unable to tile this past fall and winter. We did, however, rework several waterways and clean up a couple of building sites.

The first site was a nice acreage with a large barn and several out buildings on it. The house was destroyed by an unexpected fire, and we decided not to rebuild it. A neighbor wanted the barn, so

we gave it to him. He moved it a few miles down the road to his farm. He is real happy with it, and we are happy we didn't have to destroy it. A few other neighbors moved the other buildings off to their properties. We demolished the burnt house.

The other acreage we cleaned up was one that we recently acquired, adjacent to a current farm. It had a great big house on it, approximately 100 years old and was falling into a heap. The yard had never been trimmed and the buildings were in ruin. It was like a two acre jungle with three feet of junk thrown in it. We demolished and cleared off the entire acreage. We plan on farming it this year.

This spring we hope to have time to make a few repairs that we didn't have time to do last fall. Last spring, in parts of northern Jasper County, we had rain totals of 12-15 inches in two days. Needless to say some repairs have to be made on some conservation structures.

As I write this on the 10th of March, it doesn't look like we will be able to do any construction work or field work until April. Most reports, from the locals who are doing sewer repairs from thawing water lines, are seeing 3-5' of frost in the ground.

As we all know, things can change in a hurry.



Farm property prior to demolition and clean up.



Demolition and clean up in progress.



Farm property ready for planting.



New bridge on its way to the pond.



Setting the bridge in place.

# Shop Projects

by David Talsma, Vice President Operations

The shop at I-80 Farms has been busy this winter. Our guys rebuilt a corn head, rebuilt a planter and serviced and replaced worn parts on the grain carts. The combines and chisel plows have been serviced and are ready for work this fall.

Around Christmas time, everyone took some time to travel a little or to spend time with family and friends. After the first of the year we have been busy hauling grain, loading seed beans for Pioneer and getting tractors and machines ready for spring.

Our guys worked a few days in the shop, building a bridge for the pond at my home. I constructed the pond five years ago and made a nice island for it, but never had access to it. With some engineering and head scratching, we ended up with a masterfully engineered and structured bridge 7' wide and 65' long. Once the bridge was constructed we put an

axel under it and pulled it 10 miles down the road. We slid it across the ice and on to the island. It looks really nice. We should be able to cross the pond with a gator or a lawn mower. It gives Grandpa Talsma a new place to fish.

The guys have had a lot of other projects this winter. There is always a truck that needs to be serviced,

worked on or tires replaced. They are always busy repairing or engineering something to make a machine or tool perform better.

Supplies for this spring are starting to arrive. It looks like it's going to be one of those springs where everything is going to happen at once, but we'll get it done!

# Biodiesel, Conservation and Ethanol Facts

## BIODIESEL FACTS

- Biodiesel is a clean-burning, biodegradable, alternative fuel produced from vegetable oils or animal fats. To be called biodiesel, it must meet American Society for Testing & Materials (ASTM D-6751) quality specifications.
- Blends of biodiesel can range from one percent to 99 percent. Common blends used in Iowa are B2, B5, B10 and B20. Many farmers use even higher blend levels in their on-farm equipment.
- Biodiesel is the most energy efficient alternative fuel produced today with an energy balance of 5.5:1.
- Biodiesel provides engine lubricity which helps extend engine life and reduce maintenance costs. Even biodiesel levels as low as 1 percent can provide up to a 65 percent increase in lubricity.
- B100 reduces ozone (smog) formation by 50%.
- Biodiesel is a biodegradable, renewable fuel with positive performance benefits. Increased cetane, high fuel lubricity and increased oxygen content make it a preferred blending agent for ultra-clean diesel.
- As a domestically-produced fuel, biodiesel can reduce the need for fossil fuel and improve the nation's energy security.
- Biodiesel is registered as a fuel and fuel additive with the EPA and meets clean diesel standards established by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). B100 (100 percent biodiesel) has been designated as an alternative fuel by the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Department of Transportation.
- Using biodiesel in diesel engines does not void parts and materials workmanship warranties of any major U.S. engine manufacturer. For a list of

engine manufacturers and their biodiesel warranty statement, go to: <http://biodiesel.org/using-biodiesel/oem-information>.

- Biodiesel blended up to 20 percent (B20) exhibits cold flow properties similar to #2 diesel and can be used year-round.
- Biodiesel has the highest BTU content of any alternative fuel (ranging between #1 and #2 diesel fuel).
- B100 reduces exhaust emissions of carbon monoxide by 48 percent and hydrocarbons by 67 percent. Sulfur emissions are essentially eliminated with B100.
- A voluntary accreditation program has been established for biodiesel producers and marketers to ensure the highest quality standards are being met. BQ 9000 is a program that ensures biodiesel quality and integrity.
- The long-term savings in reduced wear, repairs, and maintenance and lost down time make biodiesel the best choice for America's trucking industry.
- Used cooking oil from restaurants and other sources of cooking oil can be used to produce biodiesel. This alone replaces half a million barrels of imported crude oil a year. Previously, cooking oil was just dumped down the drain.

### Biodiesel's Impact on Commodity Prices

- Nearly 72 percent of all biodiesel produced in Iowa in 2012 was produced from soybean oil. This demand for soybean oil benefits Iowa's farmers by raising the price of soybeans by more than 8 percent, and increasing the price of corn by more than 5 percent. For an Iowa farmer with 400 acres

each of corn and soybeans, this would equate to a more than 9 percent increase in net profits.

- The increased demand in soybean oil also reduces the cost of some feed ingredients, benefiting Iowa's livestock producers. Due to the biodiesel industry, soybean meal costs are reduced by more than 13 percent and distillers grains costs are reduced by 5 percent.
- ### Biodiesel Boosts Revenue for Iowa's Livestock Producers
- In addition to soybean oil, the biodiesel industry also used roughly 250 million pounds of animal fats in 2012.
  - Taking into account both production costs and revenues, biodiesel production boosts the net income for an Iowa farmer with finishing cattle by nearly \$16 per head.
  - The biodiesel industry also decreases production costs for hogs while increasing revenue. As a result, the net income for Iowa's hog producers is improved by more than \$4 per head.
  - "The bottom line is that biodiesel has a net positive impact on finishing hogs and cattle in Iowa"

### Biodiesel Boosts Revenue for Iowa's Crop and Livestock Farmers Even Further

When crop and livestock productions are combined, the benefits are even greater for Iowa farmers. Taking into account both production costs and revenue:

- An Iowa farmer raising crops and cattle would see nearly a 17 percent increase in net income.
- An Iowa farmer raising crops and hogs would see almost a 20 percent increase in net income.

## CONSERVATION FACTS

- Since 1987, Iowa's erosion rate is down 33 percent, meaning less soil, nitrogen and phosphorous are reaching Iowa waterways, according to the USDA National Resources Inventory.
- Iowa has more than 597,000 acres enrolled in Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), and represents almost 13 percent of total acres in the CREP program.
- A recent study from the Center for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) at Iowa State University (ISU), estimates that Iowans invest about \$345 million annually in conservation practices.
- Iowa farmers have voluntarily restored more than 250,000 acres of wetlands.
- Since 2004, voluntary watershed practices now collectively reduce sediment reaching Iowa's waters by 130,947 tons per year and reduce phosphorous by 202,312 pounds per year.

## ETHANOL FACTS

### Environmental

- Global ethanol production and use is estimated to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions by 100 million metric tons in 2012, according to energy experts. This is equivalent to taking 20.2 million vehicles off the road.
- According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, each gallon of corn ethanol today delivers as much as 230% more energy than is used to produce it.
- Ethanol production requires less water than gasoline; by a 3 to 1 margin.

### Energy Security

- With 13.3 billion gallons of domestic ethanol production, the U.S. required 476 million fewer barrels of imported oil in 2013.
- The U.S. imports approximately 35% of its petroleum needs today. This number is down significantly since the rise of the ethanol industry.

### Iowa Economy

- Iowa leads the nation in ethanol production, creating nearly 30% of all ethanol.
- The ethanol industry supports around 55,000 jobs in Iowa and accounts for \$5 billion of Iowa's GDP.

- Iowa's ethanol industry can produce more than 3.8 billion gallons annually, using more than 1.3 billion bushels of corn.
- A modern dry-mill ethanol refinery produces approximately 2.8 gallons of ethanol and 17.5 pounds of highly valuable feed co-products (distillers' grains) from one bushel of corn.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has approved E15 for 2001 and newer cars and trucks. E15 is one of the most tested fuel blends in history.