



# PARTNERS

REAL SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

June 2008  
www.centrasota.com

## Count on Us in Changing Times

By Jeff Johnson, General Manager



When you're in a business that's constantly changing, you try to keep up on what's happening. I recently read a book containing two quotes on change that I believe are true:

***"It's not the strongest of the species that survive or the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change."***

— Anonymous

***"When you are through changing, you are through."*** — Bruce Barton

You and your cooperative operate in a climate of change. If we're honest, we always have been dealing with change. Since its establishment as Producers Cooperative Creamery in 1922, this company has changed as our farmers' demands have changed. It's just that change is happening faster these days, so we notice it more.

At Centra Sota Cooperative, we're preparing for the future, so by Bruce Barton's definition (above), we're not through changing. However, one thing remains constant: our commitment to you. We change, not for the fun of it or because it is profitable, but to help you meet the chal-

lenges you are facing and will face in the future.

Occasionally, it's good for every business to take a hard look at itself and say, "What am I here for? What's my purpose and vision?" Last fall, Centra Sota did just that. In the process, we adopted a new Brand Vision: **To be the partner you can count on, providing real solutions for today and tomorrow.**

We also came up with a word that sums up that vision: **Commitment.** That's our Brand Promise. Every time you see that word, please remember Centra Sota is committed to being your partner and providing you and your family with real solutions, for as long as you choose to farm.

### Our refreshed logo

At the top of this page, you'll also see that we have refreshed the Centra Sota logo, which has been around since 1967. We've combined the familiar outline of Minnesota with the sun and green fields of our Ag Solutions+ logo. As you read this newsletter, we're busy putting this new logo on all of our uniforms, equipment, buildings, and publications.

This logo represents our Commitment to be the partner you can count on—changing intentionally to meet your needs. ▀

## INTRODUCING "PARTNERS"

You're holding an old friend with a new look. The *Centra Sota Scene* newsletter, published since July 2001, has become *Centra Sota Partners* newsletter. Besides a name change, you'll notice a new design. The content of this newsletter will also gradually become more customer-focused. To see what we mean, read about the Sauer family's farm near Little Rock on page 5.

After all, you and your neighbors are the main focus of Centra Sota Cooperative, whose vision is "to be a partner you can count on." Learn more about our brand vision in Jeff Johnson's article at left. ▀

### INSIDE:

TWO GREAT STORES COMBINE . . . . . PAGE 2  
ST. MARTIN MERGER UPDATE . . . . . PAGE 3

ONLY GOOD WEED A DEAD WEED . . . . . PAGE 4  
LITTLE ROCK DAIRY RELIES ON CENTRA SOTA . . . . . PAGE 5

# Two Great Stores Combine as Buffalo Country Store

By Randy Latzig, Country Store Supervisor

With the expansion of County Road 35 through Centra Sota's property in Buffalo, The Country Store was forced to find a new location. We entertained several ideas and finally decided to purchase the Buffalo Farm Market from Dick Millerbernd, who was ready to retire.

On March 24, we officially took possession of the business, located on the State Highway 55 frontage road just west of McDonalds. Since then, we've been busy moving The Country Store's inventories to the Highway 55 location and combining the two businesses into what will be known as Buffalo Country Store. Our new location gives us much better visibility and accessibility than we had at our Soo Lane location.

You'll find many of the same great people from The Country Store and Buffalo Farm Market at Buffalo Country Store, including Jessica Gapinski, our assistant manager, Marilee Switzer, Brad Hayes, Dawn Kiefer, Burley Stevens, Carol Prindle, Whitney Latzig, Terri Lanagan, Ethan Painschab, and Brian Witzany.

## This is no big-box store

You'll also find that we've combined the full line of cat and dog foods from both stores, along with feed products and equipment for dairy, swine, sheep, poultry, and horse owners. Buffalo Country Store carries a good selection of exotic bird feed, as well as food for rabbits and other small pets.

Please note that the Carhartt® clothing and Red Wing® footwear from The Country Store has been added to the inventory of the Buffalo Country Store, plus a great selection of lawn seed and pasture mixes. And, we're still offering the same economical line of livestock gates and feeders we carried at The Country Store.

We're remodeling the inside of the Buffalo Country Store to display more products and offer our customers more options. Our goal is to retain the small, country store feeling—not to become a big-box store. You'll still find a friendly, knowledgeable staff and a store where you won't get winded walking through.

NOTE: Right next to the "red barn on 55" is the Untiedt's Garden Center, a joint venture between Buffalo Country Store and Untiedt Vegetable Farm. ▀



Country store customer Larry Hanson loads potting soil into his pickup.



Store supervisor Randy Latzig in front of new Red Wing boot and Carhartt clothing displays.



Terri Lanagan helps Mary, while Jessica Gapinski answers another customer's question by phone.



The colorful Untiedt's Garden Center is located next to the Buffalo Country Store.



Burley Stevens moves feed into the country store's warehouse.

# St. Martin Merger Update



By Dale Jans, Board Chairman

We recently mailed Centra Sota patrons with voting membership a letter about the plan to merge St. Martin Co-op into Centra Sota Co-op. While there are many reasons this merger is good for Centra

Sota stockholders, it really comes down to three:

- 1) St. Martin Co-op has a strong balance sheet, no debt, and consistent earnings. A merger with Centra Sota will strengthen the combined company and give us even more ability to provide you with services you need, while retiring the equities you have earned in the past.
- 2) St. Martin's territory is intermingled with our Albany and Eden Valley/Watkins territories. The merger will expand our geographic footprint to the north and west, where agriculture is thriving. We should gain additional efficiencies through cost savings and shared purchasing, allowing Centra Sota to continue providing you with great service and products you need at reasonable prices.

- 3) St. Martin and Centra Sota each have one-third ownership in the New Vision Alliance feed mill at Albany. A unified company would own two-thirds of this very successful, state-of-the-art feed facility.

Centra Sota Cooperative's board of directors strongly urges your support of this merger, as you have supported similar unifications in the past. For the merger to proceed, two-thirds of Centra Sota shareholders who vote and two-thirds of St. Martin shareholders who vote must approve the unification. If approved, the merger will take place October 1, 2008.

Ballots are available at any Centra Sota location or from your account manager or board member. You may vote and deposit your ballot at any Centra Sota location, with your account manager, or with your board member. Or, mail your ballot to: Centra Sota Cooperative, P.O. Box 210, Buffalo, MN 55313-0210.

All ballots must arrive at the Buffalo office by 1:00 p.m. on June 20, 2008. The vote will be tallied at that time. ▶

## Co-op Office Has Room to Grow

By Dan Malinski, Assistant Manager/Office Manager

Some time ago, we told you about the expansion of County Road 35 through Centra Sota's property in the City of Buffalo. It's finally happening. This spring, we moved The Country Store (see story on page 2) and our main office, and sold the property not affected by the road construction to a developer.

Our office is now located west of Buffalo, at the junction of County Road 12 and State Highway 55. The location is the former office and shop of Buffalo Bituminous. The move, which occurred in March, went smoothly with no major problems.

We had reached the limits of our old office. Our current office building provides us with considerably more space to grow, and the shop will give us additional storage space.

Most Centra Sota patrons have never

been to our Buffalo offices. They deal with our various locations, and that is as it should be. But we want you to know that you are welcome to stop by any time and see where your company is headquartered. In addition, this is the headquarters of our co-owned energy company, Centra Sota Lake Region, LLC.

The first person you will meet when you walk in the door is Pauline Morin. Read about her on page 4 of this newsletter. ▶



# The Only Good Weed Is a Dead Weed

By Adam Johnson & Peter Schindler, Agronomists



The wide acceptance of the Roundup Ready® and Liberty Link® traits was supposed to make weed control a non-issue in the corn-soybean rotation, but Mother Nature has a way

of adapting. Glyphosate resistance in giant ragweed has been documented as close as McLeod County. This has not come as a surprise to any of us sales agronomists.

Every year, we see more and more “wounded weeds” that just don’t seem to die, even with higher rates of glyphosate or Liberty. While herbicides rates are important (you certainly don’t want to go lower than a labeled rate), what’s crucial is how much chemistry you can get into the weed. Each year at the Santiago Answer Plot, Centra Sota studies plants treated with a half-rate of glyphosate and different adjuvants. This really tests the limits of weed control. More importantly, it shows us which products promote the best herbicide absorption.

Class Act® Next Generation (NG) has consistently proven superior to other adjuvants on the market. Its liquid formulation has also saved a lot of back-breaking work in dealing with 51-pound bags of ammonium sulfate. We wouldn’t sell it if we didn’t believe in it. You can expect to see Class Act NG in our custom application units this year.

For more information on Class Act NG or any ag chemical, contact your local Centra Sota sales agronomist or Agronomy Center. ▀

*Glyphosate resistance in giant ragweed has been documented as close as McLeod County.*



## Pauline’s Goal: To Surprise You!

The first voice you hear when you call our Buffalo office will very likely be Pauline Morin’s. If you visit the headquarters, Pauline will probably be the first person you see, since her desk faces the entrance. As our customer service representative Pauline is Centra Sota’s “go to” person for any question you have, any fuel order you want to place, and any comment you want to make.

“On my best day, I hope to provide the customer with the service they expect and, whenever possible, to surprise you with even better service,” says Pauline.

Pauline has had considerable experience satisfying customers. She worked for 26 years as customer service manager for the *Star Tribune* newspaper before joining Centra Sota.

### City background, country home

Raised in south Minneapolis, Pauline was introduced to the country by her husband of 27 years, Tom, who grew up on a farm near Corcoran. Now living in the Buffalo area, the couple has two sons: Jason, 24, and Matt, 23.

Pauline was looking for work closer to home, when a customer service job opened at Centra Sota in November of 2006.



“Tom had worked seasonally for Centra Sota for two or three years and had good things to say about the company, so I applied,” she recalls. “Now that I’m here, I love it.”

You’ll likely encounter Pauline when you call for fuel or to ask about your statement. But she’ll gladly take your call on any subject at 763-682-1464 or 800-229-1464.

“We want to be known for our customer service,” Pauline says. “It’s a cornerstone of this company.”

*EDITOR’S NOTE: Pauline enjoys snowmobiling, motorcycling, traveling, and shopping. “I’m also a Vikings fan, whether we’re doing well or doing poorly,” she smiles. ▀*

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

# Little Rock Dairy Relies on Centra Sota Fertilizer and Fuel



*The Sauer family with their restored International 1086, top to bottom, Justin, Susan, Treve (left) and Jerad (right).*

The RockaRosa Farm near Little Rock, MN, has been in the Sauer family for 90 years. Today, Justin Sauer runs the farm in partnership with his father, Treve, and mother, Susan. After working for seven years as a landscaper and tree trimmer, Justin took over the farm in 2003, following in the footsteps of Treve, who took over from his dad, Bill, in 1982.

The farm, which is located southeast of Little Falls, has long been a family affair. Justin's great-grandfather, Henry, started the operation in the early 20th century. Today, the Sauers manage a dairy herd with 75 milk cows and 150 to 200 head of young stock. They normally raise 200 acres of corn and 50 acres of alfalfa, and hay a lot of meadow. Justin's brother, Jerad, also helps on evenings and weekends.

The family sells their milk to Sunrise AG at Buckman, where they were first introduced to Centra Sota. "We started doing business with Centra Sota through Roger Grittner at the creamery," says Justin. Roger explained that Sunrise and Centra Sota were going to work together to provide agronomy and petroleum products to the dairy cooperative's customers.

## Sauers appreciate reliable service

Last year was the second season the Sauers purchased fertilizer and custom herbicide application through sales agronomist Tom Wilczek at Centra Sota's Little Falls Ag Center. They are pleased with their decision. "The corn gets sprayed on time, and the fertilizer is delivered the same day we call for it," says Justin.

This Little Rock farmer also appreciates the ability to contract his fertilizer ahead of time. "Last year, I contracted my fertilizer in January and saw a significant savings over purchasing it in season." Justin applied his own fertilizer with a spreader provided by Centra Sota and liked the convenience of picking it up from another farmer and dropping it off at a Little Rock staging area.

The Sauers also pre-bought diesel fuel through Centra Sota Lake Region and saved \$240 on 1,000 gallons. "The service has been excellent," Justin adds.

## Classic tractors offer fun hobby

When you open the family photo album, it's apparent the Sauers have made great improvements to the farmstead and to their dairy operation since Treve brought his family back to the farm in 1982, after years of logging in Wyoming.

In 1991, they doubled the size of their barn and built cow pens in the back. In 1999, they added a machine shed. In 2003, they added a 32-foot-by-160-foot loafing barn and a silage bagger. In 2004, they added 24 more stalls to their barn. In 2005, they built a feed room for a TMR mixer.

While they've worked hard to build a successful farming operation, the Sauers also make time to play. They enjoy restoring early model International tractors and currently own eight restored classics, including a 3588 (1981, 2+2, 4-wheel), a 1586, a 1206, a 1086, an 806, and a little 1956-vintage 450. All are red, and all are working. ▀



## ATTEND THE 2008 ANSWER PLOT TOURS

JUNE 18	FARMER TOUR
JULY 25	FARMER TOUR
AUGUST 21	SPECIAL FORAGE TOUR
AUGUST 26	FARMER TOUR

# Santiago Answer Plot Offers Solutions

For the third year, Centra Sota's Agronomy plant at Santiago, MN will host a Croplan® Genetics Answer Plot to give you an opportunity to study various agronomic solutions to problems you face on your own farm. Instead of showing you a slide of a field hundreds of miles away, we let you actually dig up plants at the Answer Plot, located behind the Santiago agronomy plant.

Follow the corn, soybean, and forage demonstrations at this irrigated mega-plot as the crops progress throughout the year. Three farmer tours are scheduled for 2008, including June 18, July 25, and August 26. A special forage tour is planned for August 21. Ask your Centra Sota sales agronomist for details.

## Not your average plot tour

Answer Plot tours are much different from tours of a normal plot. "We talk about the genetic family story, looking at different inbred lines and putting them together

to show how we make the hybrids," says Ryan Moeller, Regional Product Manager for Croplan. "Then we look at roots, stalks, and ears, detailing how the plant develops though the season. Finally, we tie in the environmental factors we've got going on."

If you can't make one of the scheduled tours, ask your agronomist to arrange a private tour. "When a grower comes to our office with a question that pertains to his or her crop, we often have the same situation going on in the Answer Plot," says Santiago Sales Agronomist Doni Martin. "We just jump in our golf cart and go out to the plot. That way we can better identify what's going on in the grower's field."

## Visit anytime

There's a standing invitation for anybody to come to the Answer Plot anytime. That goes for customers of any Centra Sota agronomy plant. "Just call us up and come on out," Martin says. ▀

## ON THE WEB

Sign up for our Agronomy e-Newsletter at [www.centrasota.com](http://www.centrasota.com). Get valuable information e-mailed directly to you throughout the growing season. Then, keep checking [www.centrasota.com](http://www.centrasota.com) for new information and features.



P.O. Box 210  
Buffalo, MN  
55313-0210

Phone:  
763-682-1464

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
VISTACOMM

## CHECK THE ONLINE DIRECTORY

You'll find a complete listing of Centra Sota locations and contact information for key co-op personnel at [www.centrasota.com](http://www.centrasota.com).

