



While the main store area is at far left, the warehouse is on the right. Nelsons has been locally owned for its entire history.

Nelsons Premix & Vet Supply marks 50 years in business

Everything from alfalfa seed to hoop buildings to vaccines

Customer service is No. 1 priority

BY DOLORES CULLEN
Dave Merten remembers going in to Nelsons Premix & Vet Supply as a kid with his dad, and getting a glass of pop made this stop all the more appealing.

Today, the fountain pop machine is still there and Merten owns the Storm Lake business along with Rob Parcel.

Now celebrating its 50th year, Nelsons continues to thrive because of its quality products, dependable service and friendly attention to customers. Hand-lettered signs taped to the shelves identify everything from vehicle filters, vaccines, to pest control products to pet food.

A line of chore boots, lawn products and nuts and bolts inherited from the old Lake Avenue Coast to Coast store add to the variety. Then there are halters, whips, waterers, metal gates and feeders for livestock needs.

Becoming a dealer for Sioux grain bins and ProTec



Rob Parcel with a hay feeder.

hoop buildings rounds out the offerings.

In the unusual category were the medical workers who came in during the covid pandemic and found masks and disposable coveralls at prices far below other vendors.

BEGINNINGS

Nelsons originated in 1975 in a tiny building east of what is now Tyson. Henry and Arlene Nelson started small. An acquaintance, Leland Smith, would help them launch the business and source their feed. Eventually, Smith moved to Nebraska, but to this day, Nelsons Premix & Vet Supply's



These hoop buildings were put up by Nelsons along Radio Road for the county. The hoop buildings can house machinery or livestock. They can also store hay, followed by pens for cow/calf pairs that eat the hay.

premises come from the
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2B



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Dave Merten is on the phone with a customer. The sign advertises Tuffy's Gold dog food.

Nelsons...

continued from page 1B

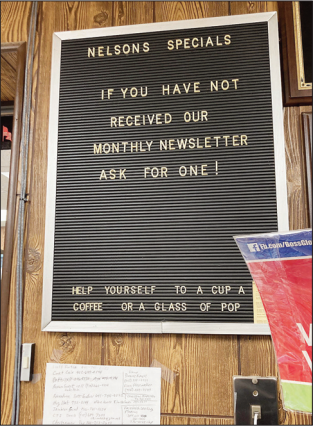
same vendor, Custom Feeds of Norfolk, Neb.

In a year or so, Nelson purchased the property in the Bargloff Addition – 131 Old Creek Road – the current home of the business.

Nelson bought out a local veterinarian and began carrying vet supplies.

In its heyday Henry and Arlene Nelson and four employees worked to provide for the farmers who depended on them.

“Everybody had hogs, chickens and cattle,” explained Merten. A large walk-in cooler was filled with veterinary products. Henry and Arlene sat in desks that faced one another in the office – desks that now belong to Merten and Parcel.



This sign has been up for quite a few years.



A well worn reminder on the counter to take care of rats.

Both men worked at Nelsons, starting in the 1990s. The duo, along with a third employee, Steve Frank, would take over the business in 2007 when the Nelson couple sold out. Frank retired five years ago, leaving Merten, Parcel and a delivery driver.

Merten is a graduate of Storm Lake St. Mary's in 1988 who had grown up on a farm near Storm Lake. He earned a degree in business from St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn.

Parcel, a Cherokee native now living in Alta, worked at IBP (now Tyson) 10 years before joining the Nelsons staff.

CHANGING WITH THE TIMES

Nelsons Premix & Vet Supply has had to adjust to the changing farm economy over the years. Hog feed once dominated their premix sales.

“When hog prices tanked we added horse, goat, sheep and companion animal feeds,” said Merten. Today cattle feed is top on the list.

Loyal customers that keep coming back is what keeps the doors open at Nelsons. “We’re a little more personalized,” said Merten. “They can get some of these products elsewhere, but they don’t get the knowledge that goes with it.”

For instance he mentioned a farmer who inherited two horses that were in poor shape. Advice on the proper feed made these animals turn around in a matter of weeks.

Taking the time to help a farmer decide on the type and size of ProTec building is appreciated.

Parcel's expertise on cars and vehicles is respected by customers buying oil, grease and filters.

Even big livestock produc-

ers come to Nelsons for some repair jobs. “Medicators,” or the devices that mix medication into water for turkey or hogs often need to be fixed right away instead of sending them elsewhere.

Repair of electric fence equipment is also available. Delivery to the farm Tuesdays and Fridays is another perk.

Small producers come from as far away as Wisconsin and Minnesota. Merten tells them to go have a bite to eat at Lakeshore Cafe until the repair job is finished.

Some drive from Haywarden, Ruthven, Battle Creek and Gillette Grove, to name a few.

Parcel composes and sends out a monthly newsletter with tips for farmers, products of note and reminders like “Worm your animals...”

As much as Nelsons customers enjoy having a full service farm store, what Parcel and Merten like most about their career is the relationships they have built with their patrons. Nelsons is a place where people can feel comfortable. “People like it the way it is,” says Parcel of the store. “There’s no pressure here.” Snazzy improvements aren’t necessary. And a free glass of pop or cup of coffee is always at hand.

At this time, no special events are planned for the 50th anniversary, but as Merten says, “We hope we can be here another 50.



In the warehouse, at left is a walk-in cooler for vet medications.



The fountain pop machine still functions.



Nelsons sells and repairs “medicators,” which mix medication or vaccine into water for livestock.

‘Market to Market’ 50th anniversary event in Cherokee

BY ERIN RYDGREN

Iowa PBS will celebrate the 50th season of its agricultural news and analysis program, "Market to Market," with a live podcast recording at the Cherokee County Agriculture Show on Feb. 11.

"Market to Market," a program broadcast on 21 public television stations across 16 states and online at markettomarket.org, has covered agricultural issues for five decades. The program addresses topics ranging from global trade conflicts to emerging technologies, impacting the nearly 60 million people living and working in rural America. Its analysts provide expertise on commodity markets and trends.

Host Paul Yeager will lead a live discussion with market analyst Kristi Van Ahn-Kjeseth at 11:45 a.m. The public is invited to attend and partici-



pate. The Cherokee County Agriculture Show runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Attendees can visit the Iowa PBS table for giveaways and conversations with the "Market to Market" team.

The event is free, but registration is encouraged at iowapbs.org/events. Additional 50th-anniversary events are planned for 2025.

"Market to Market" is supported by Pioneer/Corteva

Agriscience, Sukup Manufacturing, Steiner Tractor Parts and Grinnell Mutual.

Iowa PBS .1 can be livestreamed at iowapbs.org/watch, pbs.org/livestream, the PBS app, Local Now, YouTube TV and Hulu + Live TV. On-demand streaming is available via the PBS app on iOS, Android and other devices. Additional content is available at iowapbs.org, Facebook and YouTube.

A black and white photograph of a woman standing in a field of tall corn. She is looking down at something in her hands.

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The John Deere logo, featuring a leaping deer inside a green circle.

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The Marcus Lumber logo, featuring a red outline of a building and the text "Marcus Lumber".

Cherokee County Ag Show set for Feb. 11

The 30th annual Cherokee County Ag Show is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb.11 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Little Sioux Event Center, 201 Linden Street. The event is hosted by the CAEDC Agri-Business Committee. Admission is free.

The Ag Show offers two private applicator training sessions — one at 9:30 a.m. and the other at 1:30 p.m. Pre-registration is required. Call 225-6196.

A free lunch will be served from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. Lunch is sponsored by Central

Bank, Cherokee County Cattlemen's Assoc., Cherokee County Pork Producers, Cherokee State Bank, Chesterman Company, Farmers State Bank, Lopez Foods, North Star Community Credit Union, State Savings Bank and United bank of Iowa.

At 11:45 pm, IPBS Market to Market will host and record a live podcast celebrating their 50th season. Host Paul Yeager will be joined by market analyst Kristi Van Ahn-Kjeseth and attendees are invited to participate.

Vendors include:
Alta Implement, American Cancer Society, C-S Agrow Service, Central Bank/Central Insure, Cherokee County Extension Office, Cherokee County Fair, Cherokee County Farm Bureau, Cherokee County Soil and Water, Cherokee FFA, Cherokee Locker,

Cherokee Regional Medical Center, Cherokee State Bank, D&B Agro-Systems, LTD, Exit Realty, Foundation Analytical Lab, Farmers State Bank/Agency, Freed Farms - Pioneer Hi-Bred, Golden Harvest — Aaron Smith & Cody Simonsen, Gustafson Realty, High Point Land Company, Honey Producers, Iowa Soybean, Iowa State Bank, Jorgensen Hearing, KCHE Radio, Logic Ag, Marcus Lumber, Market to Market, Midwest Land, MMCUR FFA, Nicky Sleezer — Farm Bureau Financial Services, Power Solutions, Public Health, Rasmus Realty, Signature Real Estate, Smith Insurance, State Farm - Jennifer Griffin, State Savings Bank, Storm Lake Tarps, Teraplex Northwest, United Bank of Iowa, Vietnam Veterans of America -- Chapter 888, Ymker Insulation.

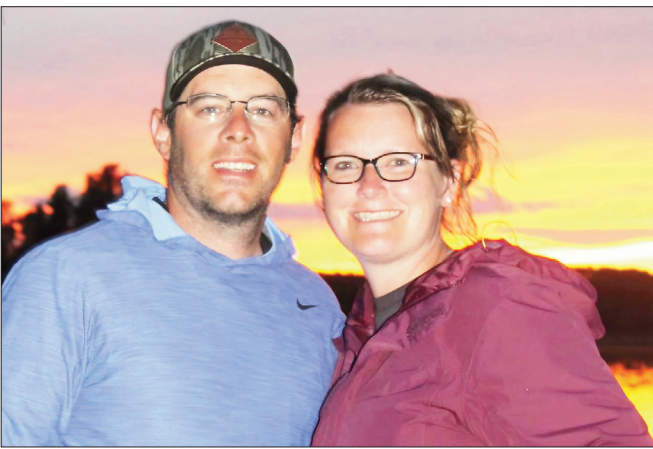
Nielands win statewide pork awards

Congratulations to Aron and Crystal Nieland of Newell, who have been recognized by the Iowa Pork Producers at the annual Iowa Pork Congress held in late January.

Crystal earned the Belle Ringer Award, which honors women in the pork industry who have gone above and beyond in helping promote and educate about pork.

Crystal has served on the Buena Vista County Pork Producers board for four years, including as president. She has assisted with numerous promotional activities, including the BV Bacon Buddies event and several educational programs.

Aron accepted the Hog Wild Award, which recognizes and honors men who have



ARON AND CRYSTAL NIELAND

gone above and beyond in helping promote and educate about the pork industry.

He has served on the BV County Pork Producers board for four years, including as president. He has coordinated many projects and volunteered for several committees.

Luxes named 2024 Master Pork Producers

BY ERIN RYDGREN

The Iowa Pork Producers Association has named Kevin and Devin Lux of Cherokee 2024 Master Pork Producers. The award recognizes pork producers nominated by their peers for their contributions to the industry.

Second-generation hog producer Kevin Lux and his son, Devin, a third-generation producer, operate a family-owned independent farm. They raise their own crops to feed their livestock, minimize labor costs and maintain high animal care standards. The father-son duo are proud to continue their family's agricultural legacy together.

The Luxes implement strict biosecurity practices, controlling farm access and limiting deliveries as a way to prevent disease. They follow the We Care initiative, providing ample outdoor space for sows, using drip cooling systems in farrowing houses and injecting liquid manure directly into the soil, avoiding tiles and waterways. They also raise corn, soybeans and cattle.

Kevin Lux has been a member of the Cherokee



Kevin and Devin Lux accept their award.

County Pork Producers for 18 years, sponsoring the annual banquet and other programs. Devin is looking forward to continuing The family has three daughters who were "Little Miss Pigtales." They are members of Holy Name Church in Marcus and support the MMCUR FFA group and school booster club.

"The Master Pork awards showcase the best of pork production – celebrating those who are driven by passion and

committed to feeding the world a safe, high-quality protein," said Brielle Smeby, IPPA producer outreach director. "As the top pork producing state, Iowa's success comes from our hardworking producers who face challenges head-on and continue to set the bar for excellence in the industry."

A video about the Luxes is available on the Iowa Pork Producers Association YouTube page.

Hinkeldey completes Pork Leadership Academy

BY ERIN RYDGREN

Aaron Hinkeldey, a master pork producer from Aurelia, was recognized at the Iowa Pork Congress in Des Moines for completing the Iowa Pork Leadership Academy.

The program, which included trips to Des Moines, Washington, D.C., and the Carolinas, offered participants insight into pork industry policy and advocacy.

Hinkeldey and other class members met with Iowa and national lawmakers to discuss issues important to pork producers. A trip to North and South Carolina exposed the group to different agricultural practices, including cotton, peanut, and tobacco farming, as well as varying pork production and manure management methods.

Hinkeldey said Tyler Kannegieter, a previous academy participant, encouraged him to apply. He said the program provided valuable knowledge about the policy side of the pork industry and the work of



From left: Scott Osborn, Christy Badtram, Marla Conley, Aaron Hinkeldey, Janet Sullivan, Tyler Kannegieter and Rod Parker. Hinkeldey graduated from the 2024 Iowa Pork Leadership Academy and was named a Master Pork Producer last year.

Iowa Pork. The application process included an essay, and twelve candidates were selected to participate.

Calling the program "eye-opening," Hinkeldey said he plans to become more involved with Iowa Pork and local pork councils. He will now serve on the Cherokee County Pork Producer board.

"We want to support our communities and show people that we care about our communities," Hinkeldey said.

Hinkeldey is a fifth-generation hog farmer with a feeder-to-finish operation that includes about 8,000 hog spaces.

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The red cross chickens are extraordinarily tame for some reason, says Williams.



Hens in the barn mill around feeders



Part of the flock pecks at chunks of ice while the farm's one rooster stands by.

Williams chickens flu free

BY DOLORES CULLEN
Dave Williams, who has produced certified organic eggs for at least the past 15 years, reports that his flock has never had the bird flu. The hens are kept in a barn on the Williams farm about a half mile east of Storm Lake's Gateway Lighthouse. The barn doors are left open during the day. "They're outside every day," he says. The red cross breed chickens are seen

pecking and scratching in the dirt around the farm yard. While the number of eggs laid per day is around 40 now during the winter, the amount will increase, perhaps by double when the weather warms up. Williams' wife, Norma, candles the eggs to find if any are defective. The eggs are delivered to Fareway in Storm Lake. The price has just been increased to over \$6 per dozen. The price

of all eggs has risen sharply because flocks with bird flu need to be euthanized to prevent the spread of the disease. Non-organic eggs last Friday at Fareway were \$5.99. Williams says the high grade feed he gives his flock helps them remain healthy. Problems with other poultry diseases, including coccidiosis, have affected his chickens in the past. A few years ago raccoons were a serious problem.

Wild birds, known to spread bird flu, are present on the farm, says Williams. "There are birds all over." Sparrows fly in and out of the farm. A nearby pond attracts water birds. Even without the bird flu, business is still only marginally profitable, says Williams, but he enjoys being able to provide eggs from chickens raised naturally to the community.



Williams eggs at Fareway in 2010 priced at \$2.99.

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Cherokee County Ag Show



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