

## Treats galore in Minnesota ag

There are treats galore in agriculture these days. That was the comment of one of my coffee-drinking friends the other morning at the Chatterbox Café in Olivia.

Without asking for an explanation, he volunteered, "In my 43 years farming I've never seen both corn and soybean prices go up during harvest. Also I've never had the pleasure of running my combine through 68-bushel to 74-bushel soybeans. My corn is running anywhere from 175 to 195 bushels with lots of 200+ showing on the indicator. It's going straight to the bin with 16 percent moisture or less. And it looks now like I'll be done with corn harvest and fall tillage by mid-October. And if I'm smart enough I may even do some pricing on my 2011 crops. That Oct. 8 USDA crop report apparently has blown the lid off commodity futures. How crazy is it going to get?"

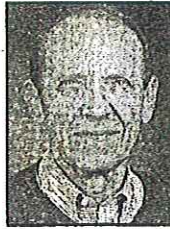
Well, no one volunteered an answer to his last question. Obviously no one knows and with crop yields continuing to shrink across the Corn Belt, is it not somewhat logical to think commodity prices will do anything but continue to expand? There are marketing experts in this issue of *The Land* who perhaps will give some info and advice (Turn to Page 18A for such advice.)

Meanwhile our livestock farmers, just getting used to seeing some black ink once again, are now having to tighten up their strategies. As so often happens in this agricultural economy what is surprisingly good news for one segment is usually disgustingly difficult news for another segment.

Perhaps the exception these days is the sheep industry, which continues quietly moving along with record prices for lamb, mutton and wool. As some would say, "It's not baaaaaaad to be in the sheep business these days."

Another treat last week was the field lunch delivery by many Farm Credit Service offices across Minnesota. I was driving a semi rig for long-time farming buddy Bob Mehlhouse on Oct. 6, but riding in the combine cab with Bob when we noticed a Ford pickup stopping at the end of the field. Out stepped Pat Halbe, vice president of Financial Services for the Olivia office of United FCS. He handed a lunch bag to each of us and simply said, "Enjoy. This is a small thank you for the services you provide to American families."

We opened our lunch packet. Inside was a sliced-



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ham sandwich with mustard and mayo, a bottle of water with the United FCS label, a bag of Lay's Classic potato chips, a fresh Honeycrisp apple and for dessert a delicious Pearson's Salted Nut Roll.

Halbe also dropped his business card into each bag. On the lunch bag was a special FCS tab with the signatures of all eight employees at the local Olivia office. What a treat for a *Land* writer to be tasting the same special treats as hundreds of Minnesota farmers harvesting their bounteous crops.

As many farmers are saying (and should be saying this fall), "life is good."

Back in April I was writing up my "Land Minds" and said that ironic today is that the Minneapolis Convention Center is bulging with thousands of irate, irritated and indignant Minnesota taxpayers listening to U.S. Congresswomen Michelle Bachmann and Alaska's former governor Sarah Palin. I continued, "Does this audience represent the heart and soul of the American conscience? I think so, in a big way. More and more Americans feel disenfranchised by their own government. And that is why the Tea Party movement continues to explode across America. Basically it's millions of free-enterprise citizens wanting to be heard. Their voices will be heard next November."

As I share my "Land Minds" today it is now ever so obvious that Election Day, Nov. 2, will indeed see a restructuring of government at state and national levels. The question begging for an answer: "Will the new faces really make a difference?"

President Ronald Reagan shared interesting thoughts about government, such as when he said, "Government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it."

Meanwhile, thank you Minnesota farmers for harvesting record crops of both corn and soybeans. No other state pulled that off this year. Mother Nature gave some help but the credit goes to you and the good Lord.

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