

OUR SAY

Nebraska leaders lead by their examples

NEBRASKA farmers and ranchers are entrepreneurs and leaders, many of whom you've read about over the years in *Nebraska Farmer*.

Those featured in this issue bring that point home once again.

Dennis Gengenbach of Smithfield hopes to burn ethanol in all his gasoline-

and diesel-powered farm and family vehicles someday before he retires, but he knows the technology is as yet unavailable. He's helped a central-Nebraska

group test a converted GM 8.1-liter irrigation engine to run on 100% ethanol, and has two of those engines on his own farm. "If we grow the fuel, we should fuel up with it," he says.

Picking up on that irrigation engine potential — approximately 100,000 wells exist in Nebraska — is another newly formed partnership, CleanFlex Power Systems, featured on Page 18. Their concept involves a stationary John Deere diesel engine modified to burn diesel and hydrous ethanol.

There needs to be more incentives for these renewable-fuel solutions and more coordination among the innovators. And more farmers need to get involved.

We produce 1.6 billion gallons of ethanol annually in Nebraska, but consume only 5% or less of it in our low-population state. Since ethanol is already here in vast amounts and it's a valuable renewable resource, let's find ways to use more of it in Nebraska.

Stewards and innovators

Another focus in this issue is on the leaders of the beef and pork quality-assurance programs in Nebraska and why participation in these programs is more critical than ever. Livestock handling practices that document your animal-care practices may well be mandatory someday. To avoid that possibility, join your state livestock organizations and enroll in their BQA programs. Animal-rights extremists are waiting in the wings to control your livelihood and even try to shut you down. It's happening in other states right now.

Nebraska's dairy producers can expect a dairy beef quality-assurance program to be rolled out next winter.

In this issue, too, are great examples of livestock producers recognized as environmental stewards. Terry O'Neil of Friend, shown on our cover, works hard to make his family's pork operation a showplace on swine rearing and natural resource protection. On Page 32, he explains a how a biofilter in a finishing barn exhausts air through a bed of pallets topped with wood chips, significantly reducing odors.

For beef quality-assurance leaders, read about Anne Burkholder and John Schroeder in this issue.



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