

Country Focus

CHS COUNTRY OPERATIONS
EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

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COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT— PLAINVIEW, TEXAS

With roots that run deep in the Texas Panhandle and a tradition of unparalleled service, the former AgroSouth Division of Agrilience has cultivated a loyal following among producers in its section of the Lone Star State. On September 8, this successful organization became part of Country Operations.

“CHS is excited to have a new agronomy footprint in Texas,” states Larry Schermerhorn, vice president, farm supply, for CHS. “The diversity of crops they work with in that area brings another dimension to Country Operations.”

Mark Morris, general manager of the Texas business unit, echoes that excitement. “With the financial strength, stability and diversification of CHS, I am excited about the future of our business and the growth opportunities,” he states. “I think this is a very good fit for both organizations.”

The Texas unit consists of 11 locations, two distribution warehouses and a liquid distribution terminal served by truck and rail. It's 107 miles from the northernmost location in Hereford to Tahoka in the south. Farmers in the 17-plus counties grow a wide variety of crops, including cotton, corn, grain sorghum, wheat, alfalfa, forages, potatoes and peanuts.

Those producers are served by 70 full- and part-time employees, who Mark notes are the group's greatest asset. “Many of our employees have worked in their communities for many years and have developed strong relationships with their local producers,” he says. “That has been a key to our success.”

FIELD FOCUSED

“As a former Agrilience unit, we're agronomy-oriented,” Mark says. “Our retail stores offer a wide range of products and services, and we sell a tremendous amount of seed as well as seed treatments, dry and liquid fertilizer and crop protection products.”

They also offer all the services necessary to deliver those resources to the field, including custom-blending capabilities, seed treatment equipment and custom application of fertilizer and crop protection products. Their large team of certified crop advisors handles soil sampling,

fertilizer recommendations and crop scouting, while a squad of professional drivers takes care of on-farm deliveries. This dynamic agronomy business generated \$65 million in revenue last year.

Mark reports that they are looking forward to their affiliation with Country Operations. “With CHS having 50% ownership in the former Agrilience, we expect a smooth transition as we become employees of Country Operations,” he states. “On our end, we will continue to focus on meeting customer demands through superior service with integrity and work to foster a safe working environment for our employees, customers and the communities we serve.”

That's a perfect fit with the vision that Larry has for the Texas unit. “We'll give direction to the business and harness the momentum that this new acquisition has created for both Country Operations and the employees in Texas,” he concludes. “I've met with them on several occasions, and they are as excited to work for us as we are to have them in our organization. We're all going to enjoy the rewards of succeeding together.” ♦

People and resources you can count on. Always.

COUNTRY OPERATIONS TO THE RESCUE

The rural community is known for taking care of its own when disaster strikes. That's the concept behind Farm Rescue, a non-profit organization that plants and harvests crops free of charge for family farmers who have suffered a major illness, injury or natural disaster.

There is a Country Operations connection to Farm Rescue efforts. Brad Haugeberg, general manager of SunPrairie Grain in Minot, met founder Bill Gross and was intrigued by his mission.

"We had a couple of growers in our area who had asked Farm Rescue for assistance," Brad relates. "They came into the area, and I had the opportunity to visit with Bill. We decided to help sponsor them as a co-op."

Bill, a pilot for UPS, grew up on a wheat farm in Cleveland, ND. "His father died while he was attending college, and he thought he would have to give up his dream of flying," Brad relates. "But the neighbors got together and paid his way so he could finish. Though they're all gone now, this is Bill's way of paying them back."

Turns out that SunPrairie wasn't the only Country Operations location that thought what Farm Rescue was doing was worth supporting. "In talking to Delane (Thom) at Southwest Grain, we found out they were also helping," Brad states, "as were South Central

Grain and Dakota Prairie Ag. We decided to put our resources together, and that put us at the platinum sponsorship level, the same as UPS."

PITCHING IN

In addition to financial support, Farm Rescue depends on its sponsors for everything from planters and combines to assistance with feeding the workers. "We have a couple of big grills we tow behind a pickup, and we've used them to prepare food for the Farm Rescue workers when they are helping someone in our area."

Currently, Farm Rescue is able to help about 20 families get the crops planted and harvested each year. They operate mostly in the Dakotas and Minnesota but are looking to expand south into Nebraska and Kansas.

"They will be helping a couple of producers in our territory at harvest, one at Westhope and the other near Velva," Brad says. "Bill called to see if we could help him with some CDL drivers, and it's possible the grills will be rolling again for those. It's a great organization, and we're happy to be able to help." ❁



CELEBRATING A CENTURY OF PROGRESS

The past and future came together in one big party as New Horizons Ag Services celebrated something old and something new. Between 850 and 900 patrons, vendors and community members turned out on August 6 to help commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Herman elevator and tour the co-op's new fertilizer hub plant.

It was June 19, 1909, when area producers held a meeting to organize a farmers' elevator. The result was the Herman Market Company. In those early days, the elevator was subsidized in part by a harness business, and power was supplied by gasoline engines until 1914.

Times have definitely changed, and visitors got to see just how much

as they got acquainted with the inner workings of the 31,400-ton mega plant and later were treated to supper. "The new plant went into service just after the first of the year," explains New Horizons General Manager Jerry Kramer. "We had always planned to have an open house for the new plant, but with the anniversary this summer, it made sense to put the two events together."

Jerry adds that the new plant was a star this spring, too. "It worked out very well—exceeded our expectations, actually," he states. Located virtually in the middle of the New Horizon trade territory and capable of receiving unit trains of product, the new hub increases efficiency and provides support for the co-op's smaller plants, most of which were built in the '70s. ❁

