This year marks the 15th anniversary of High Plains Farm Credit. It began as a merger of PCA of South Central Kansas and the Federal Land Credit Association of Hays. The purpose was to bring short term lending to the association in Hays while bringing the long term side of lending to south central Kansas. The result was an association that went from the Nebraska border in the west central part of Kansas south to the Oklahoma border. It was also hoped it would bring stability to both associations in times of tough economic conditions. The additional earnings from the combined association would also provide a stable patronage payment.

I believe after these 15 years that we accomplished all our objectives. The association has grown almost ten times since the merger and income has increased substantially allowing a patronage to be paid for all 15 consecutive years. I have been privileged to have been your pres-

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ident for these 15 years and have thoroughly enjoyed the new relationships we created – as well as continuing our relationships with those of you who have been customers for the entire time.

During this time mergers with other associations have been discussed, but we determined the original goals of the combined associations wouldn’t have been enhanced by any type of organization expansion. We have seen our Farm Credit neighbors to the east merge with out-of-state Farm Credit associations but haven’t felt that was the right move for our stockholders, who – I still believe – enjoy having a local board with local management. Staying on our original course the directors laid out 15 years ago has continued to be successful for our stockholders and still provides good opportunities for the advancement of our employees.

As we close out the 2015 year, we have seen poor grain prices and a cattle market that has been extremely difficult to manage. Drought continues also to plague some of our farming areas. Looking forward I don’t think anyone expects grain prices to rebound in 2016, nor will there be any less volatility in the cattle business. It is certainly a time to be cautious for lenders and borrowers alike.

I personally think 2016 will be very difficult for many of our borrowers. I hope you have locked in your land and equipment interest rates in preparation for higher interest rates. It is expected that the Federal Reserve will make an interest rate move this month. I also wrote in prior newsletters about borrower term payments per planted acre and the need to watch that figure before making capital purchases. Unfortunately, today that number should be lower than past years due to low commodity prices. Price protection on all commodities should be used to some capacity whenever the economics allow them to work. I encourage any borrower who anticipates some economic troubles this year to see your loan officer and talk about different options to get through these times. We have many interest rate products that might prove to be useful. We are here to help you so don’t hesitate to call.

I close this newsletter thanking each and every one of our stockholders for making this association a success. I also want to thank our employees, many of whom have been here most of the 15 years, for their dedication to our customers. To all – enjoy the holidays and be safe. Thank you! – Doug

In Fond Memory of Rhonda Thomas, Friend and Co-Worker

It is with great sadness we tell you that one of our Dodge City employees, Rhonda Thomas, passed away November 8 after a long bout with cancer.

She had been with us for five years working as a credit support specialist. We can’t tell you enough about the strength and dignity she exhibited the last few years despite what the disease was doing to her. She never used it as an excuse – she was just always determined to continue to fight. She certainly left in all of us an example of how to carry ourselves in the face of adversity. Thank you Rhonda – we will miss you.

Brady Preisner and Makenzie Preisner, children of KC Preisner, HPFC Dodge City, enjoyed spending time with Rhonda.
Welcome To Phillipsburg Office

Don Moffet is a Credit Analyst in the Phillipsburg Office. Don grew up in Larned and now lives in Stockton. He is a graduate of Kansas State University with a Bachelor’s Degree in Agribusiness and a secondary degree in Natural Resource Management.

Don’s prior work history includes nine years of commercial banking experience, four years of managing a COOP location in Plainville, and a stint in the oilfield.

Don is married to Laura Moffet and together they have a daughter Madison (11) and a son Max (9). Don’s spare time is filled with following his children’s sporting events, coaching football/baseball/soccer, spending time at the lake and hunting and fishing when the schedule allows.

Elizabeth “Liz” Woodside is a Credit Support Specialist in the Phillipsburg office. Elizabeth grew up in Abilene. She is a 2013 graduate of Fort Hays State University with a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration and a minor in Agriculture.

Prior to joining HPFC, she worked as an Agriculture Technology Specialist in Western Kansas.

On October 3rd Liz married Eric Woodside. They reside in Prairie View on the Woodside family farm. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time on the farm, riding horses, baking, and running.

Year-End Interest Credit Options!

If you have an installment payment due January 1, 2016 and have money in either the Installment Fund or Trust Fund, you have the option to apply those funds to your payment prior to January 1 and receive interest credit in 2015. You will receive a letter if this applies to you. Please sign the bottom of the letter requesting 2015 credit and return to your local office by December 29, 2015.

Another option is to pay year-end accrued interest. Please give us a call and we would be happy to calculate your accrual to the end of the year. The cut-off is 11 a.m., Thursday, December 31, 2015 to bring in your interest check.

Internship Opportunities Available For College Students

We will be starting our search for the 2016 interns soon. The internship program is a 10-12-week program beginning in late May and ending in early August. Successful candidates will receive valuable, real-work experiences while working with our great team at all of our locations. College students and recent graduates majoring in Agriculture, Finance, or other business related fields with an interest in a career in the Farm Credit System are encouraged to apply. Applications will be accepted through January, 2016. To apply, please email a resume, transcript, and cover letter to: Jobs@HighPlainsFarmCredit.com
Centennial Year Approaches

At High Plains Farm Credit we take pride in being your financial partner. In July 2016, the Farm Credit System will celebrate 100 years of serving rural America. Leading up to the centennial we plan to share some of our history in our newsletters. This article takes a look at the Founding Fathers of American cooperatives and Farm Credit.

This time of year we celebrate by being thankful and preparing gifts for those we care about. As I look back over my 20 year Farm Credit career, I’ve come to realize how many people have taken the time to tell the cooperative story to ensure we remain a strong, viable organization for future generations. This story can be tracked all the way back to one of our Founding Fathers, Benjamin Franklin.

In 1752, Benjamin Franklin developed the first formally organized cooperative to resolve a number of pressing needs in the American colonies. Franklin organized a volunteer fire department and an adjoining mutual insurance company. Organized for the benefit of its policyholders, it proved the wisdom of the mutual idea whereby, as Franklin said, “every man might help another, without any disservice to himself.” His efforts helped create a national climate in which cooperatives could grow and influence the philosophy and conduct of the insurance industry.

Many years later, President Theodore Roosevelt planted the seeds of the Farm Credit System in 1908, when he appointed a Country Life Commission to address the problems facing rural populations. The commission documented a lack of adequate agricultural credit from which a farmer could readily secure loans on fair terms. Its findings led to additional government studies, which included extensive analysis of other nations' rural credit systems' cooperatives. Lawmakers eventually chose a cooperative credit structure financed by private capital investors, and on July 17, 1916 President Woodrow Wilson signed the Federal Farm Loan Act and Farm Credit was born.

Over the years, numerous lawmakers and great Americans have supported Farm Credit's cooperative structure. Many emphasized the aspect that the three best bargains available to farmers were fertilizer, electricity and credit – all areas of heavy cooperative involvement. All of these supporters understood that it is not only what cooperatives do that counts, but also what they make the private industry do to compete in price and service.

High Plains Farm Credit is very proud to be a part of the Farm Credit System and serve as your cooperative. Thank you for choosing High Plains Farm Credit and contributing to our success! After all, our success is your success.

Board To Approve Patronage Distribution

In December, the Board will declare a cash patronage distribution to all stockholders and a dividend for our preferred stock holders. High Plains Farm Credit has once again exceeded our financial goals and is prepared to share our strong financial performance with our stockholders. Another record cash patronage distribution is anticipated to be distributed in April and the 2% preferred stock dividend will be distributed in January. You can contact your local branch office if you have questions about either dividend program.
Crop Insurance Reminders

Just a few friendly reminders as I start to send out the Schedule of Insurance for your booked 2016 wheat acres. Please take time to examine the form carefully to make sure all information is accurate. If you discover errors or discrepancies, please contact me immediately at 620-285-6978. Errors cannot be corrected at harvest or loss time. If everything on the form is correct, simply keep them for your records.

All wheat acres and shares that are shown on the Schedule of Insurance must match what you reported to the FSA office when you certified. If a loss would occur, the adjuster will go off the FSA certified acres. If the acres do not match, you will be paid on only what you reported to the FSA office. It is very important to make sure all acres match.

SHORT RATED ACRES:
If you plan to graze out any of your wheat, you are eligible for Short Rated Acres. Short rate provides a reduced premium rate for acreage that will be destroyed prior to harvest. Short rated acreage is not eligible for a claim.

You will need to notify me prior to March 15, 2016 to get those acres short rated. After March 15th, if you do not harvest that field, you will receive a 0 (zero) on your production in your APH history. If you have any questions on this, please contact me and I can provide you with more information. I will also be sending out reminder letters.

High Plains Farm Credit would like to thank you for allowing us to write your crop insurance. Your support and patronage are greatly appreciated

If you have any questions or matters we may be able to help with, please feel free to give me a call.

Cory Johnson has joined the High Plains Farm Credit Team as the Crop Insurance Agent in Larned. Cory grew up in Larned and is a 2002 Graduate of Southwestern College, where he was a four-year letter winner on the football team and received his degree in Sports Management. After graduation from Southwestern he then attended Friends University. During his tenure at Friends University he was the Offensive Coordinator/Offensive Line Coach. While at Friends, Cory attained his Master’s Degree in Business.

Prior to High Plains Farm Credit, Cory was an insurance agent for 3½ years. Cory is married to Amanda, who is a first grade teacher at Holy Family School in Great Bend. Cory and Amanda have a son, Jax, a kindergartner at Holy Family, and a daughter, Averi, born November 25. In his spare time, Cory enjoys hunting, attending sporting events with his family, and smoking entrees on his grill.
Scholarship Applications Available

Two $1,000 scholarships will be awarded to college and university students for the 2016-2017 academic year.

The scholarships are designated to be awarded to a borrower or dependent of a borrower doing business with High Plains Farm Credit. Applicants must be a junior or senior in a four-year college or university, a graduate level student or attending a technical or vocational school or college.

Applications are due April 15, 2016 at 5 p.m.
Complete application information is available:
• From any of the five High Plains Farm Credit offices
• At www.highplainsfarmcredit.com
• By emailing Shannon Schmidt: Shannon.schmidt@highplainsfarmcredit.com

Important Dates At High Plains Farm Credit

December 24 – OFFICES CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS
December 25 – OFFICES CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS
December 31 – Payment cut-off 11 a.m.
January 1 – OFFICES CLOSED FOR NEW YEAR’S DAY
January 15 – Send out Schedules of Insurance for Wheat
February 4 & 5 – Women Managing the Farm Conference – Manhattan
February 15 – OFFICES CLOSED FOR PRESIDENT’S DAY
February 15 – Production Reporting Deadline – Spring Crops (Corn, Grain Sorghum, Soybeans)
March 15 – Spring Sales Closing Date – last day to add or make changes to your policy
March 25 – OFFICES CLOSED FOR GOOD FRIDAY
April 1 – Mail out Acre Reports for Spring Crops and Production Reports for Wheat
April 15 – Run Quotes for Hail Policies for Wheat

Larned Office
605 Main
Larned, KS 67550
(620) 285-6978
TOLL FREE 1-800-864-4458
FAX (620) 285-6140

Pratt Office
290 NE State Road 61
Pratt, KS 67124-8751
(620) 672-1265
TOLL FREE 1-866-672-1265
FAX (620) 672-5093

Dodge City Office
1405 East Comanche
Dodge City, KS 67801
(620) 225-4400
TOLL FREE 1-800-289-5370
FAX (620) 225-5867

Hays Office
2905 Vine
Hays, KS 67601
(785) 625-2110
TOLL FREE 1-800-369-9625
FAX (785) 625-4309

Phillipsburg Office
477 F Street
Phillipsburg, KS 67661
(785) 543-6535
TOLL FREE 1-800-815-8593
FAX (785) 543-5739

OFFICE HOURS
7:30 am - 4:30 pm M-F
www.highplainsfarmcredit.com