

PREMIER NEWS

SPRING 2015



PREMIER
Companies

Responsible Ag | Facility Updates | Spring Planting Tips

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RESPONSIBLE AGRICULTURE

Premier Companies is dedicated to our customer's success. You see the importance we place on exceeding our customer's expectations as you review the articles we've included in our newsletter.

In Energy, we spend time sharing what it means to be part owner of CountryMark and the benefits it creates by controlling both the sourcing and refining of high-quality, light sweet crude oil to make our gasoline and diesel fuels. Additionally, we want to take the opportunity in this issue to brag a little on Heyob Energy-winner of the 2014 Pride Award.

Our Crops Division has spent the winter preparing for what is sure to be an intense spring planting season. The challenge for Premier Ag is to stay ahead of our farmers' needs. In this issue we discuss expansion plans at our Greensburg facility. In addition we continue to add additional equipment and manpower as demand warrants.

Finally, I invite all our readers to look over our web page, "like" us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

- **Website:** www.premierag.com
- **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/PremierCompaniesColumbus
- **Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/Prem1erCo>



Part of the conversation we are attempting to initiate on social media is how much effort and care production agriculture employs to bring the U.S. consumer high quality, safe and affordable food. Around

8 percent of an average American's income goes towards purchasing food. In addition, much of the cost we spend for food in the United States has the added convenience of already being ready to eat factored into the purchase.



Today's consumers also want to know details about how farmers produce crops. They want to know if the food they buy was raised in a sustainable manner. Did we protect our natural resources including land, water and air; and will leave the world a better place for our children?

We know these are questions being asked, are confident in the methods we employ, and we look forward to being more open about our farming practices to those that have a greater interest. Please join us online, share your thoughts and concerns and learn more about what the American farmer does to help feed a growing world population, utilizing less-not more-resources.

Harold Cooper

CountryMark: Premier's pipeline to high-performing American fuel



Unlike most other fuel refiners, CountryMark, an American-owned oil exploration, production, refining and marketing company, is a cooperative business.

CountryMark is owned and controlled by CountryMark member cooperatives, including Premier Energy. In turn, as a cooperative, Premier Companies is owned and controlled by local farmers in Southeastern Indiana.

CountryMark's complete line of premium quality liquid fuels begins with light, sweet American crude oil brought in from Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky. This American crude oil is refined to the highest specifications at the CountryMark refinery in Mt. Vernon, Indiana.

Fuel quality is protected as it travels north along a 238-mile private pipeline. State-of-the-art blending technology at each CountryMark fuel terminal ensures that biodiesel and ethanol blended fuels are formulated for optimal driving performance and winter operability.

Through this distribution network, CountryMark fuels and lubricants are delivered daily to individuals,

companies, farms and government entities throughout Indiana and neighboring states.

CountryMark products fuel an estimated 65-70 percent of Indiana farmers and power about half the buses that deliver Indiana children to school each day.

To learn more about CountryMark, visit www.countrymark.com. To see CountryMark in action, visit http://youtu.be/irtTNz_KYqA to watch their latest video.



Responsible Agriculture

Responsible Ag was founded in 2014 to promote public welfare by assisting agribusinesses as they seek to comply with federal environmental, health, safety and security rules regarding the safe handling and storage of fertilizer products.

Premier Ag Safety and Risk Manager Jerry Boger will be going through training to become a certified ResponsibleAg auditor. As an auditor, Boger will be able to audit all Premier Ag locations, as well as other locations when called upon.



"Our goal is to improve safety and security associated with storage and handling of fertilizer products, supporting compliance with federal regulations, demonstrating accountability and transparency and providing for the safety of employees, customers and communities-while continuing to serve the vital need of the agricultural community for crop nutrients," Boger said.

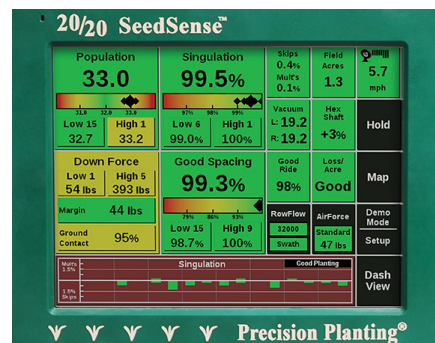
To learn more about Responsible Ag, visit www.responsibleag.org.

Proper planter maintenance is critical for correctly placing seed into the ground when planting begins. Farmers need to take care of maintenance now before the planting window opens.

As a Precision Planting dealer, Premier Ag is positioned to help you with planter preparation. We use MeterMax test stands to properly evaluate seed meter operation. If necessary, we are equipped to rebuild those meters with Precision Planting parts for maximum performance. We also have access to a complete line of Precision Planting parts for your planter including the latest in variable rate technology, row control, planter down pressure, and planter monitoring.

Follow these 10 planter preparation tips to maximize the return on every square foot of your field:

- 1. Level the Planter Check hitch height.** Make sure the planter's tool bar is level (vertically) or running slightly up hill.
- 2. Check Bushings and Parallel Linkage.** Worn bushings increase row bounce which increases seed bounce. Stand behind the row unit and wiggle it up and down and back and forth checking to make sure bushings are tight.
- 3. Drive System Check every chain.** Kinked chains cause shock and vibration in the meter. Start with fresh, lubricated chains and check them daily.
- 4. Calibrate Corn Meters.** Take your meters and samples of your seed to a certified MeterMax representative to optimize performance.
- 5. Double Disk Openers.** Test to make sure there is good contact between the double disks. In general, the disks must be more that 14.5" in diameter and disk contact should be approximately 2".
- 6. Seed Tubes.** Inspect seed tubes for wear at the bottom. Frequently, the tubes will have a small dog ear flap on the left side of the seed tube. Replace them.
- 7. Closing Wheel System.** Consider an alternative to rubber closing wheels. For cool, moist planting conditions, take a look at running one spike wheel (15") and one rubber



wheel (13"). For no-till, an even more aggressive approach may improve trench closing. Two 13" spike wheels with a drag chain provide the most aggressive action.

8. Closing Wheel Alignment. With your planter setting on a concrete, pull ahead about five feet. Look at the mark left behind the planter by the double disk openers. The mark should run right down the centerline between closing wheels.

9. Row Cleaners. With higher levels of residue and more corn on corn, almost any planter can benefit from well adjusted row cleaners. Make sure row cleaners gently sweep residue – you don't want to move soil, just residue.

10. Improve Germination with Seed Firmers. Keeton Seed Firmers promote uniform germination by improving depth control and seed to soil contact.



With Premier Ag's TRAX program, we can help you prepare for planting.

Exclusive to Premier Ag, TRAX harnesses the powerful combination of agronomy and technology to help create a precise crop management plan designed exclusively for your specific needs.

TRAX is the perfect fit for producers who are interested in a powerful—yet affordable—crop management system that increases efficiencies, conserves resources, cuts costs, and increases yield.

For more information, contact our TRAX Technology Specialist, Brent Geis, at bgeis@premierag.com or 712-593-7859.

FARMING FORWARD

New Dry Fertilizer Building

For those who have interacted with our Greensburg Crops Facility over the last 10 years you have seen us upgrade or replace nearly every structure on the property due to fourfold growth. Time and time again increased farmer's trust in us has caused us to outgrow our infrastructure.

Since 2002, we have torn down the old feed mill, shop, grain storage and office. We have built two new seed warehouses, a 60 X 120 ft shop, expand our storage of diked liquid storage and added to our covered storage for vehicles.

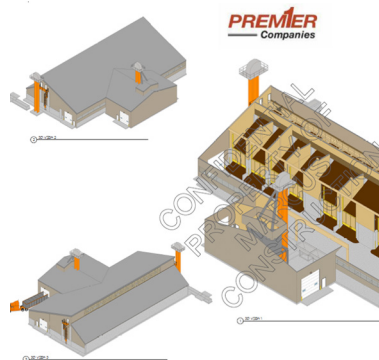
The last remaining building is our dry fertilizer building which the Board has approved replacing this summer.

The reasons for this upgrade include:

Increased storage. We are going from 3,500 tons of storage to 6,400 tons with the means to expand to 10,000 tons. We want to be able to have a greater percentage of our needs on hand to reduce the possibility of delay due to transportation or availability. We want to be able to supply the needs of our growers whenever they need it.

Greater number of product choices. We are going from four bins to seven. Modern agriculture is learning more and more each year how and what a crop requires for proper nutrition. A corn or soybean plant can have as complex a diet as an animal or human. We want to

be sure we provide the means to supply proper, science-proven nutrition to a growing plant. That requires greater flexibility in the number of nutrients applied, their frequency and timing of application. We only want to provide a plant what it can utilize when it can benefit from that supplement.



Increased speed. The window to plant and care for a crop efficiently continues to narrow. Timely applications benefits yield potential, lowers operating costs, and reduces the unwanted exposure of having a fertilizer not used for the reason intended (improved plant growth) and possibly even move off-target. No one- including most of all the farmer- wants an investment made for improved crop growth not be available when and where intended. Our new building will have a declining weight system

installed which will reduce the time to load a 16-ton truck from 20 minutes to 3 minutes. This will greatly improve our efficiencies and capability to serve a greater number of acres.

Better quality control of product. Concrete walls along with heated concrete floors will greatly improve the storage of the products stored. The structure is also designed to reduce or eliminate dust.

Anhydrous Ammonia Safety Training

Premier Ag will host two sessions of Anhydrous Ammonia training for farmers on Wednesday, March 18.

- 9 a.m. at the Premier Ag Branch in Franklin. (750 East Hamilton Ave., Franklin)
- 1 p.m. at the Premier Ag Branch in Greensburg. (766 West Main Street, Greensburg)

This training will focus on the safe handling of Anhydrous Ammonia and will feature a live demonstration. The sessions are open to anyone who applies, handles, transports, and/or works on equipment related to anhydrous ammonia.

For more information, or to register, call 317-736-5131 (Franklin) or 812-663-6411 (Greensburg).



Pride Award

Heyob Energy excels in safety and organization

Every year, Premier Companies honors one Premier branch with what is called the Pride Award. The Pride Award program started in 2000 as a way to honor branches for efforts in environmental, safety and organizational stewardship.

Each year's winner is selected based on audits performed at each branch by Premier's Safety and Risk Manager Jerry Boger. These audits consist of a facility safety/environmental walk through inspection.

The audits allow Boger to:

- Listen to the concerns of employees and supervisors
- Gain further understanding of jobs and tasks
- Identify existing and potential hazards
- Determine underlying causes of hazards
- Monitor hazard controls
- Recommend corrective action

"We evaluate the physical conditions of the workplace, equipment, and materials we use to complete our activities, and we note when things are being done well and when things are not as they should be," Boger said. "If a deficiency is identified, we try to find the root cause of the problem and amend the process."

This year, Heyob stood out, excelling in organization and safety.

"It's often the little things that make the difference," Boger said. "Heyob does an excellent job at keeping equipment clean and



Heyob Energy employees Arnie Huner, John Gerhardt, and Mark Hoff.

organized. They also have all of their files in order and every employee knows where to find a document if needed. These kind of details matter in the event of an emergency."

Premier CEO and General Manager Harold Cooper said that Heyob employees go above and beyond.

"They demonstrate in their actions and behaviors that they put their customers and the environment

first," Cooper said. "In everything they do, they show great respect and appreciation for the customer and community."

Boger said the Pride Awards serve a greater purpose than honoring a specific branch.

"The program helps employees take ownership for organizational safety," he said. "They start noticing potential hazards and keep each other accountable. Their extra commitment helps prevent injuries and potentially serious hazards."



About Heyob: Heyob Energy provides diesel, heating oil, propane, gas, lubricants and other energy related products and services.

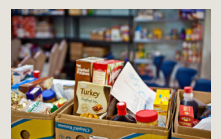
Location: 111 May Drive, Harrison, Ohio

Phone: 513-367-6868

Giving Back to the Community

At Premier Companies, we believe it's important to recognize the needs in rural communities and provide assistance where it is most impactful. Here are just a couple of the programs we were proud to have been a part of this year:

- As a farmer-owned cooperative, Premier was proud to support a Purdue University building project this year. Premier made a donation to help fund an agricultural and life sciences building to support animal sciences at West Lafayette.
- Premier made a donation to the Clarksburg Volunteer Fire Department to help the department build a second station at Lake Santee. The new station houses a pumper truck and medical truck. The department consists of 33 volunteer firefighters.
- As a cooperative member partnering with Land O'Lakes, Premier has the opportunity to make a significant impact on community hunger relief programs. The Land O'Lakes Foundation matches dollar-for-dollar the cash donations of member cooperatives, thus doubling the funds available for projects that address hunger issues. This year, Premier made donations to the food pantries at the Harrison Avenue Assembly of God in Harrison, Ohio, and to the Greensburg Community Bread of Life in Greensburg, Indiana.



New Fuel Bulk Plant

This spring we will complete the construction of our Greensburg fuel bulk plant which will allow us to maintain a strong presence in the Greensburg area. Decatur County and its surrounding area continues to be a very supportive market for CountryMark Fuels supplied by Premier Energy.

Our new fuel bulk plant will be our fourth and final facility built with underground tank storage.

The benefits of underground storage include:

Environmental. We use double walled tanks with continuous 24-hour monitoring. It is easier to provide strong environmental stewardship when tanks are underground. You don't need to worry about tanks exposed to harsh weather, dealing with rain or run-off, or corrosion to equipment.



Fuel Quality. Our high fuel quality standards are also easier to maintain in an underground controlled environment. Variations in temperature that invite water, algae or gelling are minimized. You also eliminate vaporization of fuel into the atmosphere when utilizing underground storage. We will also install state-of-the-art fuel filtering systems to provide the cleanest fuel possible for today's demanding engine technology.

Premier Energy employee receives Distinguished Achievement Award



CountryMark CEO Charlie Smith presents Premier Energy employee Johnny Tedder with the Petroleum Sales Representative of the Year Award.

Premier Energy employee Johnny Tedder was named Petroleum Sales Representative of the Year by CountryMark, Premier Energy's liquid fuel supplier. CountryMark honored Tedder at its annual sales awards banquet.

"The Distinguished Achievement Awards recognize individuals that work in the CountryMark cooperative system and who have exhibited outstanding performance and leadership in the roles they serve," said Jon Lantz, CountryMark Vice President of Marketing. "These dedicated individuals not only exhibit excellence in their daily work in the cooperative system, but also contribute to the communities they live in."

Recipients were nominated by their member cooperative and were evaluated against a set of desirable criteria and traits. The criterion included, but was not limited to: professionalism, superior customer relations, leadership characteristics and the implementation of innovative ideas.

Tedder, a Premier Energy Petroleum Sales Representative, has been a Premier employee for 29 years. He delivers fuel to small and large commercial and farm accounts. Last year, he delivered 1.4 million gallons of fuel to Premier Energy customers.

Mike Carson, Premier Companies Vice President of Energy, nominated Tedder for the award.

"Johnny always has a positive attitude and is always willing to go above and beyond for the customer and for Premier," Carson said. "This is a well deserved honor for one of Premier's most dedicated employees."

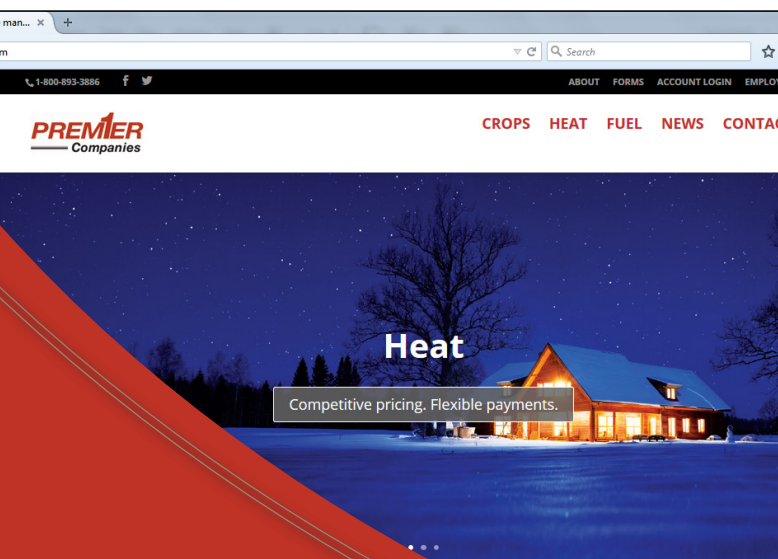
Lock in your savings now!



Now's the time to lock in your Premier Energy Propane Heat price for savings next winter.

Limited availability. Call for current price.

Contact Premier Energy at 877-435-3230 or Heyob Energy at 800-991-FUEL.



New Website

Premier Companies recently released its new website (www.premierag.com).

Designed with a fresh new look and user-friendly navigation, the updated site features the latest information about our products and services. We hope the new design will allow users to quickly find the information they are looking for.

One of our main goals was to build a site that was simple to navigate. We hope that you will enjoy browsing our new site, finding more options and information each time, and that it will be yet another tool for helping you achieve your goals.

We have also revitalized our Facebook page. Please visit www.facebook.com/PremierCompaniesColumbus and “like” our page to stay up to date on all of the latest news.

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www.premierag.com

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