

New CEO of All Points shares thoughts on job, grain industry

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Friday, 10 May 2013 13:16 -



E. Tod Clark took over All Points Cooperative on May 1, taking the reins from Ed Foster who retired.

The 51-year-old managed the Farmers Coop Elevator in Hemingford before becoming All Points CEO and lived in Gothenburg from 1991 to 1996 when he worked for Farmland Industries in the feed division.

Clark oversees 150 full-time employees across the company. Part-timers, especially during the busy agronomy season, push the total to 212.

The cooperative serves the communities and surrounding areas of Amherst, Arnold, Gothenburg, Lexington, Cozad, Callaway, Eustis, Farnam, Loomis, Overton, Sumner and Westerville.

What were the overriding factors in taking the job of CEO/president of All Points Cooperative?

“My familiarity with All Points and knowing it as a progressive and financially strong company.

Also the strong foundation provided from a talented employee group to work with was a positive. Another important aspect for me was the strong and talented All Points board of directors.”

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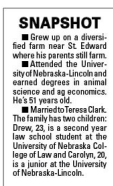
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After leaving Gothenburg in 1996, was it in your mind that you wanted to return someday? If so, why?

“I wouldn’t say it was necessarily in a master plan but the opportunity to return when I heard of Ed Foster’s pending retirement had us very interested.

After interviewing with the board of directors and then receiving an offer of employment, it was an easy decision to say yes. Teresa and I really enjoyed everything about our first time in Gothenburg and still have good friends here—the progressive community, the friendly people and the chance to lead a successful, progressive and strong cooperative like All Points made our final decision easy.

An added bonus is that our two children attend school just three hours away in Lincoln, plus we enjoy going to Husker football and basketball games.”



What strengths do you bring to the job?

“I have been involved in the coop system my entire career. I started out cleaning the boot pit of an elevator during a part-time high school job and have performed many of the jobs that we do at cooperatives in serving our customers.

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I am a strong believer in the cooperative business model.

The grass roots governance and the customer ownership model are true advantages if given the chance to succeed.

Also, the ability to return our profits back to our member owners is the foundation of what coops are all about. We don't send our profits off to some big city or foreign country. We take our profits and invest in assets in our communities or send it back in patronage to our owners."

What do you see as the biggest challenge?

"All successful companies need to be on a path for growth. All Points has had good growth under Ed Foster's leadership.

Finding new growth opportunities that enhance our viability in meeting our customers needs into the future will be important to determine.

Finding the right growth opportunities while maintaining the current strong balance sheet that All Points enjoys will be the challenge."

What do you see as challenges in the business? What are the good things going for the business right now?

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“Production agriculture has been a good business the last few years. I am optimistic that strong export demand (particularly in the Asian markets) will continue to provide positive returns for our producers.

One challenge I see on the horizon is that in good times, it is easy to overbuild assets.

The cooperative system needs to be diligent in ensuring that this does not happen to the detriment of balance sheets and ultimately our members’ equity in our businesses.”

Do you have a philosophy on life? If so, what is it?

“Work hard, be honest in your dealings with people and always do what you say you will do.”

Any changes you plan for the company right away?

“I suppose every new manager has different ways of doing things but I do not anticipate any major changes.

All Points has been a successful company under the leadership of Ed Foster. Change for the sake of change is not a smart strategy so I anticipate that I will do a lot of listening to customers in the coming months to make sure any change that is done is done for the right reasons.

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Additionally, listening to our talented employee group and what ideas they have will be a big part of my first few months on the job.”

Have you settled in Gothenburg yet? What does your wife Teresa do?

“We have bought a house and expect to be moved by mid-May. Teresa is a freelance writer and editor and has done contract work for the marketing department of Regional West Medical Center in Scottsbluff for the past 15 years. She will continue working for Regional West on a freelance basis.”

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