



2017 ARA RETAILER OF THE YEAR APPLICATION

Asmus Farm Supply

50245 40th Avenue - Rake, Iowa 50465
641.566.3658
www.afschem.com

Introduction

Asmus Farm Supply (AFS) is a family owned agricultural business that has served growers since 1960. Harlan and Amy Asmus are second generation owners, with their sons Holden and Garrett as the third generation. Over the last year, both sons have been growing more with the company and learning the depths of the business for the next generation of family, as well as the next generation of producers.

Asmus Farm Supply specializes in farm chemicals, plant nutrition, seed and seed treatment. Today, we continue representing all major manufacturers, as well as several seed brands. With the exception of generic brands, all products we sell are backed with full manufacturer's programs and representation.

We have five company owned locations throughout Iowa and Minnesota. Our home office is located in Rake, Iowa. The other four locations are in Estherville and Manly, Iowa and Okabena and Fulda, Minnesota. Every location is equipped to meet our growers needs with state-of-the-art facilities, staffed with knowledgeable and professional CCA Agronomists and efficient friendly staff. In addition, we have several commissioned locations that represent Asmus Farm Supply throughout the Midwest states. These locations are often in conjunction with an established, professional salesman who serves growers through an ag related business such as seed, feed or crop scouting. Our commissioned locations must meet stringent criteria to represent the professionalism of AFS before being granted that status.



AFS Rake Location

At Asmus Farm Supply, we believe that selling is more than just a price. We strive to build personal relationships with each of our clients through face-to-face business. Each of our agronomists listen to our client's production issues and recommend a program that is tailored to their growing needs. We make sure that we are available for questions throughout the application season, not just after the sale is done. We also handle all rebate programs and are available to service all our products.

Our five core values hang in our break room where our staff can see them daily and in which our business is conducted: Integrity, Honesty, Detail Oriented, Customer Focused and Teamwork.

Consulting Clients with Sustainable Recommendations to Maximize Production is our mission statement and how we run our business. AFS is laid on the foundation of giving quality and sustainable recommendations for our growers to not only continue being stewards of the land, but stewards of our neighbors while helping them maximize their yield and crop potential.

Effective Employee Relations

We are not just a family owned business, we are family. At our company owned locations, AFS employees 32 full time staff, as well as several seasonal staff members. Our team philosophy is our success is dependent on each member doing their part. In order to foster the team atmosphere, AFS sponsors a local team-building event for all employees each year and a larger team-building event every other year for all full-time staff and their spouses. This previous spring, we took our staff to Montego Bay, Jamaica. Not only do the staff have the opportunity to meet and get to know spouses (who AFS recognizes as an integral support for our staff) outside of the work environment, but we also brought in a speaker to educate our staff and families about personal health and well-being at work and in the home. Nutrition continues to be a big part of our lives and communities, so it is important to keep everyone educated on how they can better themselves and their lifestyle. A happy health staff leads to a happy and healthy work environment!



Group photo of some of the AFS Staff and their spouses going out to dinner in Jamaica

Knowledge and education is also very important part of AFS's success. Each of our agronomists is required to obtain their Certified Crop Advisers status within a short time of hire. We support new agronomy team members through training and we pay for them to become a CCA. Once they become a Certified Crop Adviser, we continue to support them in the continuation of that certification through paying yearly membership dues and fees to obtain CEU's needed to maintain their certification.



Bil-AFS Senior Agronomist (front left) meeting with the Fairbault County Soil Health Team

Outside of the educational requirements of sustaining a CCA status, AFS also sponsors each sales agronomist through the Integrity Selling program as well as an annual two-day sales conference at our Rake location to prepare them for the upcoming season. We also highly encourage our Agronomists to be involved in outside groups and memberships to continue education and learning. Some of the outside groups and conferences staff members have attended and become a part of in the past include: NAMA (National Agri-Marketing Association), ICM Conference (Integrated Crop Management), Fairbault County Soil Health and ARA (Agriculture Retailers Association).

Aside from agronomic certification, we require all of our AFS staff to continue education through the ASMARK videos by our in house safety officer along with hands on demonstrations and drills.



Growers Breakfast Meeting

It is also important that we provide training for our customers. At our Rake, Iowa facility we have a training center where we hold growers meetings. Our facility holds up to 60 participants when set classroom style with tables, and 120 participants when set up auditorium style. This versatile facility can be set up to host any type of meeting or educational presentation.

Recently, AFS hosted a growers safety meeting, discussing the labeled requirements for the new Dicamba products.

Topics discussed included: product, land and ground water stewardship, in addition to approved tank mix products and proper application.

Asmus Farm Supply offers competitive wages, often higher than other local businesses and provides group health insurance for the employee with the option to buy in their family. AFS also assists employees as they plan for retirement through a 3% simple match into their retirement fund. Vacation days as well as sick days are a part of the total compensation package. We believe through our high retention record that this is due to our focus on recognizing our employee's needs based on company and personal goals.

Environmental Stewardship & Sustainability

Asmus Farm Supply makes a great effort toward environmental stewardship starting with our mission statement: "Consulting Clients with Sustainable Recommendations to Maximize Production." We want to be conscious about what we are using and how we are applying that product, while giving practical and quality sustainable recommendations to our clients so they can maximize their yield and crop production. Sustainability and stewardship not only applies to our recommendations but also nutrient management recommendations that ultimately affect water quality. This also applies to good stewardship of tools we have in pest management.

Our leadership is also highly involved in sustainability programs. One of our Plant Nutrition Agronomists sits on the 4R's initiative advisory board for Iowa and another two agronomists are 4R specialists. Our Senior Agronomist, Bil Schrader is a highly involved member on the Fairbault County Soil Health team in Minnesota, which he will be working alongside with for a Soil Health Field Day for local growers in August.

In addition, Amy Asmus leads the sustainable task force on the Ag Retailers Association board, where they work to provide guidelines and tools for retailers to implement their



Inside the main entrance of the Rake, Iowa location

own sustainability programs. Because of Amy's work on the board of the Agribusiness Association of Iowa and the board of Iowa Legal Defense Fund, she became involved with the stewardship associated with Nutrient Management and the water quality issues we face in Iowa. She also serves on the WSSA's herbicide resistance management outreach and education committee and is a CCA Certified Herbicide Resistance Management Specialist.

The environment is the future of our business and our lives and it is up to us to treat it with respect. In September of 2010, Asmus Farm Supply completed a new building complex that is environmentally friendly. Our offices are bright and spacious with several windows providing everyone with plenty of natural lighting, reducing the use of electricity. We also incorporate natural lighting into our warehouse facilities by utilizing translucent panels in the upper walls of the warehouse construction.

Our state-of-the-art geothermal systems heat and cool the office and training areas of both at our Rake, Iowa location and our Fulda, Minnesota location.



Holden Asmus, Seed Treatment Department Head practicing proper safety regulations in our warehouse while treating soybean seeds

Cleanliness and environmental responsibility carries into our warehouse as well. Our warehouse staff are trained on keeping the warehouses extremely clean and making sure no contamination occurs at our facility. The bulk facilities are properly diked, kept clean and all rinsate is captured and disposed of through proper channels ensuring nothing gets outside of the facility. We also strive to keep floors swept and keep anything that could be contaminated away from the rinsing area. Any tanks or items that need cleaning is rinsed within a contained area to prevent splashing back into the facility.



Photos of rinsing station inside our warehouse. Plastic covers were pulled back for photo purposes, and the tank in the photo held only water.

AFS also provides mini bulk tanks and pumps for growers to use in the repackaging and transportation of bulk products. This ensures a clean and reliable delivery system for all of our growers. To keep our bulk tanks and pumps in check, AFS along with their IT team, developed an asset tracking system to monitor the tank fleets called SecureTracs. This system was modified in 2011 to provide compliance record keeping for DOT and EPA mini bulk repackaging regulations. To view more information on SecureTracs, visit their website at: www.securetracs.com



SecureTracs tracking system

Reliability

At Asmus Farm Supply, selling is more than just a price. We strive to build personal relationships with each of our clients through face-to-face business. Our customers are our partners and with any good partner, we operate with respect and reliability. From when the customer first walks in the door to the end of harvest, our agronomists listen to our grower's production issues and concerns and then recommend a program that is tailored to each of their needs. We make sure we are available for questions throughout the growing and application season and meet them on their land. We also handle all rebate programs and are there to service all our products if they don't perform up to their standards.

Even though AFS doesn't offer custom application, we still need to be a source for our customers to have proper application through their sprayers. As mentioned above, we provide our customer with bulk product repackaging and reliable equipment to get that product safely to the field. All of our facilities are clean and set up for quick and accurate handling of product to prevent cross contamination. We make sure all receiving products are closely monitored, labeled and locked by our warehouse staff.

We stand by our five core values and strive to live these out in our daily work and through our interactions with each grower.

Community & Industry Leadership

The entire Asmus family and staff has been very involved in the community over the years. Industry leadership not only includes leadership for the present, but also for the future. Later the year, Asmus Farm Supply will be awarded the 2017 Emerging Philanthropist Award through Iowa State University. Harlan and Amy have been strong supporters of Iowa State through the College of Ag both financially and in their leadership involvement at ISU and helping young graduates pursue their career in Agriculture. Harlan and Amy developed a program for students called, Into the Field. Into the Field was integrated into the curriculum for the ISU College of Ag students to receive applicable education for an easier transition from the classroom to the field. Our future agronomists will be better trained through Into the Field because of the touch points created for them to gain field experiences and become stronger industry leaders. Holden Asmus has also been very involved with Iowa States College of Agriculture and Life Sciences young alumni group,

known as the Curtiss League. He also continues to be involved with the Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity at Iowa State. The success of our industry tomorrow begins with us properly training and passing on our experience and knowledge to the next generation. **See the included story for more details on the “Into the Field” initiative.*

Asmus Farm Supply is also involved in the community through local events such as the Fulda, Minnesota Wood Duck Festival Parade and the Easton, Minnesota St. Patrick’s Day Parade and sponsors for the Soil Health Field Day in Faribault County.



Asmus Farm Supply & family members at the Fulda Wood Duck Festival Parade

Harlan and Amy are also leaders in their hometown church on the council, while Holden and Garrett Asmus serve on the local fire department and emergency services to help protect and service the local community. In addition, several other employees of AFS also serve as volunteer fire fighters and first responders in our neighboring towns. We also offer our water storage and quick fill through our plant nutrition building in times of need to help speed up the process of filling fire trucks.

Asmus Farm Supply is commonly sought by leaders of major manufacturers and suppliers for direction and insights on the trends and attitudes in the market. With Harlan and Amy’s participation representing retail business, agronomists and growers, these industry forecasting and best management practice discussions have become standard for the AFS leadership team.

One of Amy’s roles in Asmus Farm Supply is that of external relations. She has worked with many groups within the Ag industry including extensive involvement in the Certified Crop Adviser program (where she is currently serving on the IPM rapid response team and in the past has served on the ASA, CSSA and SSSA public policy committees). In addition, Amy has been active in working with the Weed Science Society of America in the area of herbicide resistance weeds where she has spoken on behalf of retailers, agronomist and growers at several symposiums included those hosted by WSSA, NAS, CLA/RISE, ASA/CSSA, ISSSA, CropLife Canada and ICABR (International Consortium of Applied Bioeconomic Researchers). Amy is also a part of the board of ARA where she serves on the member services committee, and is a chair member of the sustainability task force as well

as providing input on public policy initiatives. Amy also participates in advocacy at local, state and national levels for agriculture programs through ARA, AAI, Extension services, CLA, CCA, and the American Society of Agronomy.

Relationship Building

As mentioned earlier, Asmus Farm Supply is extremely active in building relationships with each of our clients through face-to-face business when possible, even if that means driving several hours to meet with him on their farm. Each of our agronomists listen to our client's production issues and recommend a program that is tailored to their growing needs. We make sure that we are available for questions throughout the application season, not just after the sale is done.

We strive to meet the needs of our growers through those fostered relationships we have built over the last 57 years. Amy Asmus once said, "it doesn't matter whose name you wear on your shirt, we're all agronomists and we're all working toward the same thing: to give the best advice to our growers." This relationship building goes beyond just agronomists, but also manufacturers, government agencies and professional organizations. All we really want to do is work together to feed the world. Sure, each retailer has their own interests, but we need to work together for the industry.

Furthermore, Harlan and Amy as well as other AFS employees have developed and grown these relationships through being involved in the community and being involved on several committees and furthering education programs. Amy travels often to meet with industry leaders and actively pursues relationships both with our clients and leaders in Agriculture. These relationships help her better understand the needs of our farmers and how we can relay their message to industry leaders to improve agriculture and food production now and in the future.



Amy Asmus with Iowa constituents meeting in Washington, DC with U.S. Representative for Iowa, David Young, on why we should support Ag Research.

Technology Utilization

As mentioned earlier, Asmus Farm Supply has played in the development of the SecureTracs tank tracking system to better monitor and track mini bulk tanks.



SecureTracs Tracking Labels

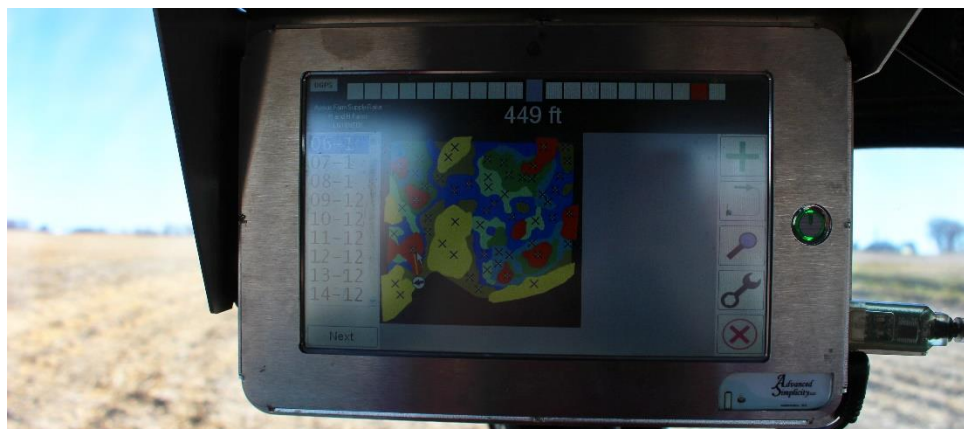
This ensures a clean and reliable delivery system for all of our growers to know the history of chemicals repackaged in the tank, how old the tank is, who had the tank last and when it was cleaned and inspected. All this information is gathered on tablets and iPads through a scanning system where it is then updated on an hourly basis and stored in the Cloud system.

In recent years, AFS partnered with MZB Technologies to help our growers gather and evaluate data on their field to make the best management decision for every acre of their operation. Our growers are able to work directly with our agronomists to make informed decisions on their specific field management according to that local grower's cropping systems, environment and economic goals.



MZB workshop to provide demonstrations and information for our growers

Overall, AFS encourages our agronomists and growers to conduct field trials and gather local data to be used to make informed decisions about products we promote.



Gathering field data and soil testing through MZB Technologies

Innovative Business Practices

There is much overlap when covering the categories listed above and Innovative Business Practices. Innovation is based on needs. Those needs are determined by the relationships that are built and the avenues of open communication between our customers, our employees and our partners in industry. Asmus Farm Supply is a true partner to our customers and we strive to listen to their needs and work together with them to fulfill those needs.

To help facilitate that communication, our Communication and Marketing Director works on outreach efforts within AFS and our business partners to educate growers through our social media platforms and our website, as well as other traditional methods. One of the initiative we are particularly proud of is our Agronomy Update series of videos we produce on timely issues our growers face. Examples of these Agronomy Update videos can be found on our website at:

www.afschem.com/ag-updates



Holden Asmus preparing to film an agronomy update

In order for us as a business to keep up with the growing concerns and development in Agriculture, especially with the recent rise in Dicamba use and anxiety surrounding that, we need to be willing to develop new concepts and innovations to show we are readily available for our clients both in knowledge and best management practices.

To keep up with these concerns, AFS produces demonstration plots to best serve our clients and their needs. The AFS demo plots are our on-site, small scale plots used to compare and evaluate

multiple products and concepts. With the recent influx of biological products and their lack of regulatory restrictions has resulted in an overwhelming number of new products available each year. This fact, in combination with the ever changing landscape of agriculture often provides us with more questions than answers. These plots help give us an idea of what can be expected from these new products on a larger scale. We have both corn and bean plots from each department for the 2017 season.



Concepts graduated from those plots then move into our grower innovation program known as First to the Field. First to the Field collaboratively connects agricultural manufacturers and retailers with progressive growers to effectively evaluate new products and concepts.

With these in field trials, Asmus Farm Supply is able to deliver field tested data and ROI information to our customers so they can better maximize production sustainably. To learn more about our First to the Field program and view recent trial results, visit:

www.afschem.com/first-to-the-field



Planting the AFS demo plots just down the road from our Rake, Iowa location

Conclusion

Included at the end of this application are various letters of recommendation and supporting files to give you further information and insight about Asmus Farm Supply. You can also find more information on our website: www.afschem.com or feel free to give Amy Asmus a call at 541.566.3658 for more specific questions.

Over all, Asmus Farm Supply works toward the betterment of the agriculture industry to assist growers in their needs and operation. Whether that's driving to meet them on their ground, or creating events and workshops to further educate them on growing matters; we care for the needs of the clients all while developing and retaining sustainable and stewardship practices of our land and neighbors.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS & LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Brent Baddeley CCA
Location Manager
Asmus Farm Supply
Estherville, Iowa 51334

I have held this position since 2004. In my opinion I have never worked with better people than the Asmus Family. They treat their employees like family. Being that I do not work out of the main office, I don't see them a lot, but they let me manage the Estherville, Iowa location and trust me to make my own decisions. If I ever have any questions they are only a phone call away and that means a lot to me.

We get a lot of people stopping in for donations every year and sometimes it can get overwhelming, but when it comes to 4-H or FFA programs from schools in the area, the Asmus's are happy to support them. AFS also has a charity match where employees can donate to an organization of their choosing and they will match that up to 100.00.

Farmers have gotten to rely on us for all of their farming needs. Most customers that have walked in the door have become our friends. The Asmus name holds a high reputation and means a lot of every farmer in our area.

Harlan and Amy allow employees to stay up-to-date on their CCA certification and has been very supportive over the years in the CCA program.

Amy is great at keeping the whole company up-to-date on new and upcoming rules and regulations with her connections and contacts through Washington D.C. I feel we are never behind on any information that we need to do our jobs best. Harlan and Amy value our inputs and always make us feel included when asking for our opinions.

They have also been vital in the program, First to the Field, which focuses on testing new products and see how they adapt and perform in the farmer's field. This program and data has become very helpful to the producer.

At Asmus Farm Supply, we thrive to keep our producers updated on environmental issues, product updates by using grower meetings, social media and our video agronomy updates.

I have worked many other places in my career, but none have compared to working here at Asmus Farm Supply.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Brent Baddeley



June 29, 2017

Agricultural Retailers Association
Attn: Brian Reuwee
1156 15th Street NW
Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: ARA Retailer of the Year – Asmus Farm Supply, Inc.
Letter of Recommendation

Please accept this letter in support of Asmus Farm Supply, Inc. ("AFS") as the ARA Retailer of the Year.

I have had the pleasure of working with Asmus Farm Supply since 2000, when Harlan's father, Harvey, was still active in the business. It has been wonderful to see the business grow and evolve over these 17 years to become the industry leader it is today.

AFS has shown its willingness to provide superior customer service in keeping growers informed and up to date within the industry. Not only do they keep an active blog on their website with video and other information pieces, I think they are most proud of the "First to the Field" program. This allows them to connect manufacturers and retailers with growers to review and evaluate new products within the industry. AFS utilizes its own demo plots to initiate a set of trial applications which provide extensive data analysis to empower the participant growers with valuable information to become industry leaders in their own right. The collaborative efforts of AFS have a powerful impact on our industry at all levels of crop production.

Providing a knowledge base to customers is a key component of the AFS philosophy. This is important not only to keep growers informed of new and ever-changing products, but to provide them with the relevant information they need to use the products in an environmentally safe and sustaining way. Most recently, AFS has embraced the Zone-based Precision Farming process by partnering with MZB Technologies. Together they provide the tools to help growers be better managers of every aspect of their crop, including input costs, soil properties, and nutrient holding capabilities.

Another innovative partnership was formed when they collaborated with Next Generation Technologies to improve and streamline the field of agronomic asset tracking, tank reconditioning and computer technology. This allows dealers and manufacturers to keep their tanks in compliance with DOT and EPA regulations – a benefit to their businesses and to the environment.

Amy is a very vocal and positive proponent of the CCA program and represents AFS and the industry through her leadership on the International Certified Crop Adviser board, as a member of the IACEC, the ISU Agricultural Education board and as a guest speaker across the country. Harlan and Amy have

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both participated in many site visits to the various manufacturer headquarters to have meaningful discussions about the future of the industry, new products and the synergy among manufacturers, distributors, wholesale, retail and the growers.

On a more personal note, AFS embodies the philosophy of employee education and wellness, giving back to the communities AFS is a part of and promoting the industry to generations to come.

AFS has made it a point to provide their employees with not only a professional and congenial work environment but also encourages team building and thanking the families that support their employees, especially during the busier times to the year. One of the way they accomplish this and give back to their employees and families is to take their employees and spouses/significant others on a trip every two years as a group. On their most recent trip, they brought in a nationally recognized speaker to talk to the group about wellness, healthy lifestyles, and overall betterment.

Both Harlan and Amy are incredibly dedicated to their hometown community and through their alma mater, Iowa State University. Not only do they donate financially, they have hosted various tours and discussions with youth and faculty to provide a real-world experience and collaboration. They are dedicated to encouraging the next generation to be a part of and take pride in the agricultural industry.

AFS has established a charitable gifting program for organizations within the AFS community, allowing the various locations to support different recipients which are important to them.

I wholeheartedly support the nomination of Asmus Farm Supply as ARA Retailer of the Year. If you have any questions or want to discuss anything in more depth, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dan Wallerich
Location Sales Manager
Dan.Wallerich@cpsagu.com

To whom it may concern:

In mid-2016, the Iowa chapter of The Nature Conservancy initiated an effort to understand and promote the importance of nutrient management, agronomic and conservation practices and how these practices fit together and lead to economic, environmental and societal benefits in Iowa. This effort was named 4R Plus with the 4R component referring to the best management practices of applying the right nutrients, at the right rate, at the right and in the right place, in combination with practices like reduced tillage (e.g. no-till and strip till), planting of cover crops and other agronomic and conservation practices.

In order to get buy-in from both agricultural and conservation stakeholders, a 4R Plus executive team was formed to develop the strategy and tactics to better inform farmers, crop advisors and landowners about the benefits of implementing 4R Plus practices in Iowa. Asmus Farm Supply was recommended to me as a progressive, sustainability-minded company so I talked to them about joining the effort. After discussing their role, Amy Asmus agreed to join and appointed Mike Perkins as the Asmus Farm Supply representative.

Mike is a certified 4R specialist and was instrumental in helping the 4R Plus team understand what Iowa farmers are looking for to make their farms more productive, profitable and environmentally sustainable. With Mike's help, the 4R Plus effort continues to progress and we look forward to Asmus Farm Supply utilizing 4R Plus outreach and informational materials with their customers. The Nature Conservancy is grateful for Asmus Farm Supply's support of the 4R Plus campaign and we look forward to continue our relationship with them in Iowa.

Sincerely,

Greg Wandrey, Ph.D.
The Nature Conservancy
Iowa Agriculture Program Director

June 30, 2017

Agricultural Retailers Association
1156 15th Street NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you in support of Asmus Farm Supply and Amy and Harlan Asmus and their application for ARA Retailer of the Year. As a District Sales Manager for Winfield United I have had the pleasure of working with Asmus Farm Supply for over 15 years.

Asmus Farm Supply is a family owned business that prides itself on hiring and developing well educated, courteous, and respectful employees. To be a member of the sales staff for Asmus Farm Supply, it is a requirement to be a Certified Crop Advisor (CCA). Amy and Harlan feel very strongly about doing the right things for the environment and providing sustainable solutions for their growers. This is evident with their involvement in the Certified Crop Advisor Organization and the development opportunities they provide their employees to make sure proper crop recommendations are being made to enhance and protect one of our most valuable resources, our environment.

As mentioned earlier, Asmus Farm Supply has a great staff of employees. Amy and Harlan are very fair with their employees. Many of the employees also farm and Amy and Harlan give those employees the time they need away from work to get their crops harvested in the fall. This gesture speaks volumes about the type of employer that Asmus Farm Supply is and the respect they treat their employees with.

Asmus Farm Supply has been a reliable supplier to their growers for over 50 years!! They've done this by operating their business with a high degree of integrity, they are always looking for opportunities to broaden their knowledge. As leaders of Asmus Farm Supply, Amy and Harlan are very involved in their community and the industry. They participate in many different organizations and volunteer their time on many occasions for the benefit of their local community and agriculture. I am always amazed at their unselfish attitude to participate in these different organizations that provide a benefit to many. Each year Asmus Farm Supply spends time attending various industry related meetings such as Agricultural Retailers Association, Certified Crop Advisor meetings, Agribusiness Association of Iowa just to name a few. They do this to network with other industry professionals and to look for ways to continue to improve their business. They also invest an extraordinary amount of time each year meeting with their business partners and sharing best practices to help improve each other's business. They are a very collaborative business partner. It has been a pleasure to work with Asmus Farm Supply on the Winfield United Innovation Trials. They have been an active partner in looking for new products and concepts to mitigate crop stress, reduce nitrogen loss, and other crop limiting stresses.

It is my hope you will strongly consider Asmus Farm Supply for the Agricultural Retailer Association Retailer of the Year award. They would be truly deserving of this award. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Regards,

Mike Sonderman
District Sales Manager

To: Retailer of the Year Award Committee

Innovative, tech savvy, environmentally conscious, and community minded were on your 'Wanted' post for applications for Retailer of the Year. These words clearly would describe the team at Asmus Farm Supply headquartered in Rake, Iowa.

I have enjoyed working the with Asmus Farm Supply team for the past 3 years. As a district manager for Syngenta I have worked with the leadership team on business and sales planning for our collective businesses. For AFS, they focus first on agronomics and the needs of the growers they service. Strong focus on issues like weed resistance and best farming practices drive their conversations – concluding with the best technical recommendation to meet the individual's needs.

Demonstrating technical leadership within their organization has always been visibly important. They have a tenured sales team that delivers experience and partnership with those they serve. AFS has required their sales teams to be CCA certified. This commitment to on-going education and knowledge of current issues and trends have contributed to their success.

In addition, AFS has invested in state of the art infrastructure to support the customers they service. They adopted and developed bar coding capabilities that give them real time views of inventory that drive efficiencies in their business.

Perhaps for me what makes AFS the most qualified to receive this recognition is their commitment to the agricultural industry and its continued improvement. This commitment is modeled by Harlan and Amy Asmus, but can be seen throughout their organization. For this team, their business is a life style, not a job. They invest in their communities and the nation through active participation and leadership at the national, state, and local level – on boards and committees with many organizations.

Asmus Farm Supply would be a worthy recipient of the ARA's Retailer of the Year.

Sincerely,

Lori Thomas

Lori Thomas
District Manager
West Heartland



7755 Office Plaza Drive North
Suite 145
West Des Moines, Iowa 50266
mobile 763-567-8674

lori.thomas@syngenta.com
www.syngenta.com



We create chemistry

Date: June 28, 2017

Letter of recommendation for Asmus Farm Supply (AFS), Rake, Iowa for consideration of the ARA Retailer of The Year Award.

My name is Jeff Gregg, Business Representative with BASF. I have had a business relationship with the AFS team for 20 years. AFS is the most innovative retailer I have encountered in my 25 years with BASF. AFS is always looking for new ways to serve their customers, the agriculture industry, employees and their community. They always think outside the box to make sure they are serving customers and the future of agriculture.

AFS is a very tech-savvy organization. They are willing to adopt new technology that improves agriculture for today and the future for the next generation. AFS is very environmentally conscious. They are great stewards of proper recommendations, product applications and simply doing the right thing today to protect the future of food production to feed the world. AFS is very community minded. They support their local community and Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. They are supporting the future of agriculture with Iowa State University by supporting a program that helps develop students that will be the next generation for agriculture. Their support allows students and professors at the University to get out in the fields for hands on learning with retailers. Amy Asmus has spent years serving on State, National and International Boards to give back and help shape the future of agriculture.

AFS has outstanding employees. They have a great staff of qualified agronomists, because AFS provides excellent training for all their employees. They have very little employee turnover because AFS is a great place to work and feel part of a true team approach. AFS has a very solid track record. AFS has been serving farmers, community and the future of agriculture for 50+ years.

Regards,

Jeff Gregg
BASF Business Representative
319-240-4030
Jeff.gregg@basf.com

Daniel J. Luers
Region Manager – Corn Belt
Koch Agronomic Services
1315 275th Street
Brighton, IA 52540
June 30, 2017

To Whom it may Concern:

The purpose of this letter is to highly recommend Asmus Farm Supply to be considered for the ARA Retailer of the Year Award. Over the past four years I have gotten to work closely with AFS through my role as a manufactures sales manager, and have had many points of contact with AFS's leadership and sales/agronomy team. I have also worked closely with Amy Asmus through our Agribusiness Association of Iowa Board of Directors roles.

In my role as a Regional Sales Manager with Koch, I work with many retailers across all of Iowa as well as Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Michigan. In my experiences and through my relationships with these retailers, Asmus Farm Supply stands out as leaders in their field. AFS has a great focus on Environmental Stewardship & Sustainability, and has very effective employee relations with a team of loyal high performing employees. AFS is also viewed as a very reliable retailer not only by their farmer customers, but by their competitors and other retailers in the industry. AFS is a leader not only in their community but throughout their region of NW IA and beyond to all of Iowa and Minnesota. I've also observed their style is to lead through a balance of innovative and visionary business practices partnered with "down-home" trust and service.

As I mentioned, I would recommend without reservation Asmus Farm Supply to be considered for the ARA Retailer of the Year Award. I also would be happy to discuss specific examples of how AFS is a leader in the aforementioned areas. You may reach me at 319-217-9664 or email at: Daniel.luers@kochind.com to visit further or if I may answer any question.

Sincerely,

Dan Luers

FIRST to the FIELD 2017

First to the Field is Asmus Farm Supply's innovation evaluation platform, allowing growers to produce quality and credible information with new technology designed to enhance yield.

Optify | **Stretch**
In-furrow biostimulant

toggle
Foliar Biostimulant
Corn: V4-V6 & VT
Soybeans: R2-R3

360 UNDERCOVER
Undercover application of
Headline AMP

FEED THE MONSTER
standard program vs high management
concept program

MZB
Zone-Based Precision Farming
Nitrogen Management program

BRANDT SMART TRIO
Foliar Nutrient Package Application with HPPD Chemistry

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ASMUS FARM SUPPLY: THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD PARTNERS AND CROP NUTRITION

By: Eric Sfiligoj, Crop Life Magazine

March 31, 2016

www.croplife.com/special-reports/asmus-farm-supply-the-importance-of-good-partners-and-crop-nutrition/#Tinsel/63455/6

As one of the nation's [**CropLife 100 ag retailers, Asmus Farm Supply \(AFS\)**](#) has spent most of its 50-plus years in the agricultural business catering primarily to the crop protection products marketplace. In fact, according to the company's own sales data in the 2015 CropLife 100 report, just shy of three-quarters (73%) of AFS' annual revenues come from this sector of the business.

But in recent years, however, more and more of AFS' business has fallen into the fertilizer category. In particular, says Co-Owner Harlan Asmus, liquid fertilizer has become an important part of the company's customer base. It was for this reason that AFS recently extended its operations in its native Rake, IA, to include a standalone liquid fertility facility just a few miles down the road from its main outlet.

"Our business model is one that services self-applied growers," says Harlan. "And we realized several years ago that the demand for plant nutrition products applied by our customers was increasing, and would continue to do so over the next couple of years."

But simply catering to this need was only part of the equation. According to Co-Owner Amy Asmus, one of the guiding principles for AFS through the years has been a commitment to forming partnerships, both with its customers and suppliers. For evidence of this, she points to the extensive training room housed within AFS' main office building. "Why do we have a training room?" says Amy. "Because we have to help train our agronomists and partners to keep them up-to-date on the latest production methods that are out there. Otherwise, who will?"

In addition, adds Harlan, AFS considered what kinds of crop nutrition products would be required to satisfy the needs of its grower-customers. "We also realized that we would need to offer not only basic products such as nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium to customers, but such things as biologicals and micronutrients as well," he says. "It was then we realized to properly do this, AFS would need to have a new liquid fertilizer facility to custom blend mixtures for our partners."

The Facility Takes Shape

AFS officially broke ground on its new liquid fertilizer plant in September 2013. By the following April, it was ready to start delivering products to customers. To design and operate the plant, AFS received aid and materials from several sources including Kahler

Automation.



“The plant was designed to house multiple ingredients with heated storage indoor and some outdoor storage and bring them together in a computerized fashion,” says Harlan. “This would allow our customers and operators to blend all these crop nutrition components efficiently, accurately, and safely.”

Just as important to the plant’s overall make-up, says Amy, was the selection of the crop nutrition products being offered to customers, like those from trusted suppliers such as AgroLiquid. “We always want to offer good, quality products to our customers and not something that could turn into Swiss cheese in some of their equipment,” she says. “That’s not something a good partner would do to someone who trusts them.”

In operation, the AFS liquid fertilizer plant can load up to two tankers at a time in each of its loading bays. Various weighing systems and flow meters are employed to help regulate the products being dispensed accordingly.

“When a customer wants a product, the recipe for these crop nutrients is entered into a computer in the facility, and then this goes out to the storage tanks and pulls the required amount that’s needed,” says Harlan. “This mix is then pre-blended on-the-fly and then prepared to load into the waiting tanker or nurse tank. When running at full speed, the system can load up to 700 gallons of blended crop nutrition products per minute.”

ASMUS FARM SUPPLY: AN OUTLET OF KNOWLEDGE

By: Eric Sfiligoj, Crop Life Magazine

October 1, 2012

www.croplife.com/croplife-top-100/asmus-farm-supply-an-outlet-of-knowledge/



Driving through the countryside of Northern Iowa, an observer is likely to see plenty of corn and soybean fields spread out among numerous gravel-covered roads that could accurately be described as “off the beaten path.” Indeed, just finding the tiny town of Rake could be a challenge for someone without the benefit of a Garmin as a guide.

Yet, amidst all this rolling farmland and wide open countryside, there is an impressive two-story structure made of glass and fine-crafted stonework. In fact, if it wasn't for the sprawling warehouses connected to the building, this structure could be equally at home in an industrial parkway in suburban Chicago or the hills of Silicon Valley.

This is the headquarters for [Asmus Farm Supply, Inc. \(AFS\)](#), a 52-year-old ag retailer with satellite locations in Estherville and Manly, IA, and Okabena and Fulda, MN, and Willow Lake, SD. A member of the *CropLife 100*, AFS has annual sales in the \$50 million range. These sales come from a range of areas, including crop protection products, plant nutrition, seed and seed treatment.

And judging by appearances, all these products have made a major impact on AFS' fortunes over the years. Walking into the company's main entrance, visitors enter a two-story waiting area, complete with cushioned chairs and views of many of AFS' offices. But probing even deeper into the facility, visitors will find a few things that would be more at home not at your typical ag retailer, but in some big city hotel or Fortune 500 corporate headquarters. These include a 2,500-square-foot training center (complete with a raised stage and all the latest electronic equipment) and a store room of logoed memorabilia from the company's manufacturer partners.

“Why do we have a training room?” says Co-Owner Amy Asmus when asked. “Because we have to help train our agronomists and partners to keep them all up-to-date on the latest production methods that are out there. Otherwise, who will?”

Of course, for anyone who has known AFS and its founding ideals, this desire to share information along with products is nothing new, says Co-Owner Harlan Asmus. “I would say that the one word that best describes our company is knowledge,” he says. “AFS is not about just selling products. To be successful, your customers have to have the knowledge to use these products correctly and in stewardship so they are not abusing the chemistries we do have.

“So when we are working with growers,” he continues, “we are not just selling them crop protection products, we are partnering in their business to make their use of these products a success.” It is for this reason, adds Harlan, that all of the company’s agronomists are required to obtain their Certified Crop Adviser status when hired.

Back To The Beginning

In essence, this information sharing approach to its business goes all the way back to AFS’ founding in 1960, says Harlan. “My father, Harvey, started the company when he was 32 years old,” he says. “Originally, he was only a representative for Monsanto and some of its herbicides and he conducted most of his business right out of his car.”

Within a few years, however, Harvey had built up enough of a reputation among existing grower-customers that a few local cooperatives began calling him to supply them with crop protection products as well. This allowed Harvey to build AFS’ first facility in Rake (which still stands today on the company’s grounds, serving as a storage shed for maintenance equipment).

According to Harlan, part of the reason for Harvey’s early success was his desire to move the crop protection business forward with grower-customers in ways beyond just the product sale. “He had a willingness to work with customers on an individual basis that didn’t always exist with other ag retailers at the time,” he says. “The customers were his friends, and he wanted to teach them as much as he could about how to best use the products he was selling them.”

As for Harlan himself, he returned to help his father run AFS once he completed college in 1987. Of course, one of his first experiences was dealing with a crisis of sorts involving an American Cyanamid soybean herbicide called Scepter (imazaquin).

“There were high hopes for Scepter when it came out, but it ended up hurting the corn crop the following years after its initial application,” says Harlan. “I got to see first-hand what it meant to our customers to have my dad sell them a product that didn’t work as advertised.”

Luckily, adds Harlan, American Cyanamid owned up to Scepter’s problems, taking full responsibility for its failure. “The company had an open checkbook and took care of all of the growers who were hurt by using Scepter, no questions asked,” he says.

With the Scepter event behind them, Harvey and Harlan continued to work together building AFS’ business throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, with Harlan gradually taking on more responsibility as the years rolled by. “My father kind of retired from the business in 2002 as his health declined,” says Harlan. “He passed away a few years later, in 2006.”

In between these years, Amy (who had married Harlan in 1987) joined AFS in 2001. “At first, I would come in on a part-time basis to help out with the company’s order-taking and product tracking,” she says. “Of course, this was before computers were widely used in the marketplace, so all of this information had to be entered and tracked by hand.”

Within a year, however, Amy found a software program from Software Solutions Inc. that allowed her to computerize all of AFS’ records. This allowed her the opportunity to become fully integrated into all aspects of the company’s business operations, especially once Harvey had stepped aside. “A lot of these early years for me were spent helping set up and run our satellite offices,” says Amy.

It was at this time in the mid-2000s, she says, that both Harlan and she realized that for AFS to keep growing, it needed to have an expanded headquarters location. So AFS began construction on its current facility. The warehouse was completed first, in 2010, with the main office building being finished in 2011.

Customer Types

“It was very important for us to have a large, modern warehouse to store all of our crop protection products and have someplace where our grower-customers and partners could come to learn whatever they needed to,” says Amy of the company’s new facility. “And you have to have this in today’s world when you consider what kinds of customers you are sometimes dealing with.”

As Amy explains, although AFS counts “several thousand” growers among its customer base, all are not created equally. And she isn’t dividing them up based upon their acreage size, either.

“In my mind, you can divide our grower-customers into three distinct categories based upon their attitudes and ways of conducting their businesses,” she says. “The first are what I call progressive farmers. These are willing to listen to what you have to say and do it because it will make their operations better in the long run.” By her rough estimate, progressive farmers make up approximately 15% to 20% of AFS’ total customer base.

Then there are the “middle-of-the-road” customers. “These growers will listen to what we have to tell them and understand that it’s probably what’s best for their operations to increase yields, but they aren’t willing to jump into that area just yet,” says Amy. “This group wants the progressive farmers to make the first moves and then will follow a few years down the line.” By her estimate, this customer group is the largest, between 50% and 55%.

Finally, there are the 20% to 25% of customers that could be called “deniers,” she says. “These are the guys, usually 60-plus years old, who deny that there is even a problem for them to address or that the problem will ever touch them directly,” says Amy. “All they are looking to do is get by for a few more years before they can sell their farms or retire. This group doesn’t want to do anything extra, even if it means keeping a small problem from becoming bigger in the near future.”

Ultimately, says Amy, it is this group of grower-customers that has helped make one of the agricultural market’s emerging issues — the spread of herbicide-resistant weeds — worse. By rough estimates, herbicide-resistant weeds exist in virtually every state of the country, with new types of resistant weed appearing almost on a monthly basis.

According to Harlan, this is the kind of problem that AFS has tried to address throughout its 52-year history. “There are a lot of people out there that only know the glyphosate era of weed control,” he says. “This group has absolutely no experience with some of the older chemistries that are starting to come back into use. But here at AFS, we’ve worked with these chemistries for decades because of our partnering with every major crop protection manufacturer and can share this information with our customers, on how these products perform best. That’s an advantage we have over almost anyone else in the ag industry.”

Still, not everyone in agriculture sees it that way. According to Harlan and Amy, they’ve noticed a disturbing trend among a few crop protection manufacturers recently when it

comes to their perception of ag retail's ability to address the weed resistance problem.

"There are some companies out there that don't seem to believe that the ag retailers are smart enough to deal with this weed resistance issue on their own," says Harlan. "Instead, they are looking to put company-owned staff out there and do the ag retailer's job for them."

In a few cases, crop protection manufacturer partners of AFS have asked the company for a list of its top grower-customers, "to help call on them as your partner," says Harlan. "We've resisted this request. I look at it this way — if a manufacturer representative makes a recommendation or sells a certain product to one of my customers and it doesn't work, it's not the representative that's going to get yelled at. It's us."

In his mind, AFS is better suited to deal with all grower-customer problems, including weed resistance. "We represent all the major crop protection manufacturers and will make the best recommendations to our customers based upon what they need, regardless of which company makes that product," says Harlan. "But an individual company representative has a vested interest in selling the customer one of his company's products. That's one of the main reasons ag retailers are important to this market."

Future Trends

In the coming years, Harlan believes this ability to balance product need and knowledge will only grow in importance. "I can see a day when there are only four major crop protection manufacturers left and retailer consolidation isn't going away, either," he says. "Given these facts, there will definitely be a need for companies such as AFS that provides both products and good information on how to properly use them to growers."

He also foresees a time when how this information is transferred from teacher and student will change as well. "The way our company and others will communicate with our customers will be very technology-based in the not-too-distant future," says Harlan. "A lot of it will be done via smartphones and other smart devices. Given that, our business will have to become something that works 24/7. Daily or weekly communication won't be good enough anymore."

Amy agrees with Harlan, adding that this is one of the big reasons AFS has continued to embrace its knowledge heritage with its new facility and training center. "How do you continue to get good industry information to not only the new people coming into agriculture, but the people who are trying to keep up with all the changes that are happening at the speed of light?" she asks. "That's what we are here for."



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June 28, 2017

To: ARA Retailer of the Year Award Committee

From: WSSA Herbicide Resistance Education Committee

This letter is to support the nomination of Asmus Farm Services for the ARA Retailer of the Year Award, particularly related to the Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability and the Industry Relationship Building areas.

Amy Asmus has been a member of the WSSA Herbicide Resistance Education Committee for about 5 years. This committee's purpose is to bring together weed scientists, social scientists, economists, industry, retailers, and government agencies to affect change in grower practices with the outcome of better management of herbicide resistance at the field level. Amy brings a unique perspective to the committee in that she comes from a major agricultural area and deals with grower issues on a daily basis. Her participation on the committee is critical in that she provides "ground truth" for the ideas generated by the committee related to viability of such ideas on the farm. Herbicide resistance is in essence an environmental stewardship and sustainability issue, and Amy's real-world understanding of how stewardship of current practices and sustainability on the farm are impacted by herbicide resistance gives credibility to committee output. This committee has sponsored two national Herbicide Resistance Summits, two symposia at WSSA annual meetings, participated with the US Soybean Board on the Take Action program, and conducted seven listening sessions across the US to get grower input on resistance management. Amy has played an active leadership role in each of these activities, and continues to do so today. Finally, she is no shrinking violet in committee discussions. She often takes the floor to defend Ag retailers' position in grower education and training, and is a staunch proponent of maintaining diversity of pest management practices on the farm.

Amy does a fantastic job at promoting industry relationships, both in her committee participation and by making many presentations at national and international meetings. As an example, Amy presented ideas from the field on voluntary stewardship of herbicide resistance at the International Consortium of Applied Bioeconomy Research meetings at Ravello, Italy in 2016 as part of expert panel with representatives from Europe, South Africa and the U.S. She also has collaborated with scientists to publish ideas on educational program reforms for herbicide resistance in peer-reviewed journals, informing weed scientists of real-time conditions at the farm level. She is sought after as a speaker because of her expertise in farm level pest management practices as well as her common-sense approach to communicating farm challenges to diverse audiences. The EPA Office of Pesticide Programs has called on Amy numerous times to help them understand the grower and retailer perspectives. Knowing the respect that Amy has at EPA, the WSSA nominated her to serve on the EPA Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee that meets with EPA on a regular basis to discuss pesticide regulatory, policy, and program implementation issues. She has a way of making complicated issues understandable and in doing so is an excellent spokesperson for the entire retailer industry. When Amy speaks, people listen!

Of course, Amy is not the only person at AFS promoting stewardship and sustainability as well as industry relationships. Harlan Asmus has met with the WSSA Committee at times and has the same

common sense approach to what will work at the farm level. It is clear when talking with Harlan that the grower always comes first when AFS personnel make recommendations for pest management practices, and keeping growers successful is the key to sustainability at the farm level.

The WSSA Herbicide Resistance Education Committee enthusiastically endorses Asmus Farm Supply for the Retailer of the Year Award.

Sincerely,

Michael Barrett

Harold Coble

David Ervin

Raymond Jussaume

Jill Schroeder

David Shaw, Chair

: Into The Field

INVESTING IN EXCELLENCE



"Into the Field will give students a broader vision of what we do in the ag world... It'll give us well rounded agronomists that will take the industry into the next 50 years."

Amy and Harlan Asmus of Asmus Farm Supply have established the Into the Field Fund to provide support for sharpening the diagnostic, critical-thinking and communication skills of agronomy graduates.

INTO THE FIELD

By Melea Reicks Licht

ASMUS FARM SUPPLY PARTNERS WITH AGRONOMY DEPARTMENT TO CULTIVATE FUTURE AGRONOMISTS

Asmus Farm Supply and the Department of Agronomy have teamed up to take students "Into the Field" to prepare them for the demands of today's agriculture industry.

The Into the Field program will help faculty and students develop relationships with practicing agronomists and provide field experience for agronomy students to enhance their value and viability in the workforce.

Asmus Farm Supply of Rake, Iowa, is a family-owned agricultural business specializing in farm chemicals, plant nutrition, seed and seed treatment. Amy Asmus, vice president of Asmus Farm Supply, sees the program as a win-win for companies and students.

"It has benefits for everyone in the future as we release into the field students that are well-trained and passionate about what we love, and that is ag retail," Asmus says.

Asmus Farm Supply started the fund in 2010 as part of its 50th anniversary celebration. They asked those who had planned to present them with gifts to instead donate to the fund. With a donation by Asmus, along with their partners, enough was raised and pledged to kick off the program. More will be needed to sustain the program over a long period of time.

"We wanted to make an impact on the future for ag retail and manufacturers," Asmus says. "We can cultivate the excitement of new students, carry it through four years of college and into the field which is how the program gets its name."

Kendall Lamkey, professor and chair of the agronomy department, says the program will allow students to take their education to the next level.

"At Iowa State University we are really good with teaching the technical knowledge that exists behind the scenes, but that is just one part of them being a professional. Into the Field will help further round out these young people into professionals," Lamkey says.

The program will provide support for teaching improvement. This will include opportunities for faculty to shadow industry agronomists; develop case studies for use in classes; pay fees to attend technology workshops and short courses; and accommodate travel to teaching conferences.

As part of Into the Field the agronomy department, in conjunction with industry, will develop a curriculum that will give students a broad range of experiences. It will also include an experiential field course for agronomy seniors with a focus

on sharpening diagnostic, critical-thinking and communication skills.

"Into the Field will give students a broader vision of what we do in the ag world and show them what's available to them," Asmus says. "It'll give us well-rounded agronomists that will take the industry into the next 50 years."

New industry partners are welcome to join Into the Field to help grow the fund and potentially endow the program, and to further develop relationships with the agronomy department. ☒



Amy and Harlan Asmus recently hosted members of the agronomy faculty, including department chair Kendall Lamkey (right), to discuss strategies to strengthen field experiences for undergraduates.