

# Daylight Savings Time

Daylight Savings time ended last weekend, now the sun comes up later in the morning behind these corn stalks. As long as the weather holds, it won't be long and the crops will all be harvested, ready for the shorter days of winter.

PHOTO BY SANDY MCCURDY

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## Farm Rescue lends helping hand to local family

By SANDY MCCURDY | Fontanelle Observer

Doug Steele was going to have a hard time with this fall's harvest, due to his wife, Lynnette's being ill and his father not feeling so great, either. Two hundred acres of corn were waiting to be harvested.

A friend of the Steeles from eastern Iowa knew about a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization called Farm Rescue, which provides planting, haying and harvesting assistance free of charge for farm families in crisis, and contacted them. And so, last week, the corn was combined and hauled out, finishing up on Wednesday evening.

Levi Weilenga is just one of the volunteers who give their time and talent for the organization. He is from Sioux Center and has been a volunteer with Farm Rescue since the spring of 2011. He grew up on a farm and says he loves farming with all his heart. This is his volunteer hobby. But, his "paying" hobby is as a locomotive engineer for the BNSF railroad. His wife Carol is the coordinator for all the volunteers, where they are going and what they are doing.

The jobs, be it planting, making hay, or harvesting, are worked at until the job is finished. Farm Rescue has four paid employees and many vol-

unteers covering the five states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa and Montana. All of the operations are funded by donations from businesses, organizations and individuals that support America's tradition of independent family farms and strong rural economics. The donations are used to pay the many expenses associated with the operations to help farmers finding themselves in an unexpected crisis of one kind or another.

For the Steeles, the group brought in two combines, three grain carts and semis. Levi himself ran one combine, with his toddler son, Lincoln. There are around 750 volunteers from all 50 states. Basically, the group helps one farmer at a time, as equipment is available.

John Robertson, of eastern Iowa, was at the Steeles'. He has been a volunteer for three years and is a retired truck driver. Kenneth Chyle, the team leader, is a retired farmer from Kentucky. Emil Baranko is from Chicago and has been with Farm Rescue for two years. Will Rudolphi of Champaign, Illinois, has been a volunteer for about six years. Most of the volunteers are retired. This is a way for them to come out and "play" — the boys with their

toys, Levi said.

This is rural Iowa. A lot of the times, the neighbors come in and help out, and Levi said that Farm Rescue does not want to interfere. They will let the neighbors come in and help. They are here to help take the pressure off the neighbors who also have their own work to get done.

As he was finishing up one of the fields of corn, Levi said what a sense of accomplishment it is to finish a field. On the website, farmrescue.org, Levi said one of his favorite aspects is spending time with his wife and son. Having Lincoln with him in the combine is special, as well. "We are making memories," he said. More information about Farm Rescue can be had at farmrescue.org.



Farm Rescue volunteers at Doug Steele's farm last week, were, from left, Kenneth Chyle, Emil Baranko and Levi Weilenga, holding his son, Lincoln. Photo by Sandy McCurdy



One of the semis is loaded as the Doug Steele's crop is being harvested by Farm Rescue, from Horace, North Dakota. Photo by Sandy McCurdy



One of two combines belonging to Farm Rescue of North Dakota that came to help Doug Steele with the corn harvest makes headway on a field. Photo by Sandy McCurdy



Fall Panicum blew like tumbleweeds, attaching itself to whatever it blew up against. This is a fence, covered with the fluff containing seeds. Photo by Sandy McCurdy



It almost looks like a flocked Christmas tree, only it isn't, it's a small evergreen covered in fall panicum that blew and attached itself to the trees and all the ground in this pasture. Photo by Sandy McCurdy

### COUNTRY LIFE

## Panicum flies — and piles up — on windy day

By SANDY MCCURDY | Fontanelle Observer

During a very windy day a couple of weeks ago, the property of Greg and Jane Cooper looked like a blizzard was attacking. It was caused by a large amount of fall panicum blowing from buffer strips on a cornfield south of their acreage.

Come to find out, the seed was included in the CRP mix that was sold to the property owners of the cornfield for the buffer strips, and it shouldn't have been.

After the windy day, the fall

panicum stems with seeds attached still remains on the property, blanketing everything with a thick layer of cotton candy looking fluff. It puts one in mind of the tumbleweed, only the volume was greater because there was so much of it.

Fall panicum is a grassy annual sometimes known as panicgrass or spreading or smooth witchgrass. The stems grow 1 to 4 feet tall and root wherever the nodes touch the soil. Seeds are produced from June to Oc-

tober on panicles that grow 4 to 10 inches long on the tips of the stems. When mature, the panicles break off and tumble about, scattering the seeds. The seeds do not sprout until the next spring.

It can be controlled with chemicals, but the Coopers don't like to use chemicals. It does have shallow roots and can be hand-pulled or hoed. But, the amount that has covered the Coopers' property, it will be all they can do to control it by hand-pulling

and hoeing. They were told that the seed never should have been in the packet of seed that was planted in the buffer strips. But it was, and the damage is done. The problem was compared to having a neighbor's leaves blowing off the trees into your yard, or the corn stalk leaves blowing around. But, the big difference is that these fluffy stems are carrying seeds that will sprout, causing problems for years to come, and possibly not only to the Coopers.



This is just one stem of the Fall Panicum, with many of the seeds already fallen off. Photo by Sandy McCurdy



The fall panicum that blew from the buffer strips in a corn field wasn't picky about what it covered and gathered on. Photo by Sandy McCurdy



The evergreen trees caught a lot of the fall panicum stems. Photo by Sandy McCurdy