



# Fieldviews

SPRING 2023 EDITION

## COOPERATIVE CAREER PATHS:

Learn how the cooperative system has helped shape the careers of our senior leadership team.

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# YOUR JOURNEY JUST MIGHT LEAD YOU HERE



## MITCH ALTERMATT, CEO & GENERAL MANAGER

Growing up on our family farm in Wabasso, Minnesota, I developed a passion for agriculture at an early age. We raised corn, soybeans and cattle and weathered all the challenges and surprises a 'typical' day would bring. Like most farm kids, we learned early on to do whatever it took to keep things on the farm moving forward.

We learned the value of a strong work ethic and how to be resilient in tough times. Admittedly, I wasn't thinking a lot about the possibilities of where that experience may take me in business. I was busy picking rock, driving the grain cart and doing field work.

Running a farm is a business, of course. But when you start out, you're mostly in the business of hard work and sacrifice. That hard work and sacrifice eventually led me to the cooperative model and UFC.

Cooperatives are unique in that they provide many opportunities for a career. There is no one path to a job or one role a person may be limited to. In the early stages of my career, I was a general laborer sweeping floors, taking inventory of stock and pulling anhydrous tanks.

Most of the roles I filled were new to me, but the work wasn't. Seeing the many different operations of the cooperative model up close not only helped me better

understand what makes UFC and the cooperative model so valuable, it taught me invaluable lessons about the business.

Sixteen years later as CEO, those lessons are still with me today. I was learning business before I even knew I was learning business. And those lessons help inform every decision I make today on behalf of our cooperative and its members.

I highlight this experience not to just tell my story, but to emphasize the possibilities for anyone seeking a career in agriculture. Recruiting good people is a competitive undertaking. But one advantage we have as a cooperative is that hard work and sacrifice are rewarded here.

My story is not very different from most of our team at UFC. As we look ahead to grow and strengthen our cooperative, we aim to grow and strengthen our workforce, too. I want to encourage anyone considering a career in agriculture to consider UFC.

The opportunities are many. And the experiences I've gained from my role, I still bring back to our family farm today. More importantly, your own journey and experiences just might lead you here.

# EMPLOYEES ARE OUR NUMBER ONE ASSET



## JEFF MANDERSCHIED, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

I've farmed both part-time and full-time. Besides raising corn, sweet corn and soybeans, I've always been curious and passionate about agriculture and business.

My school was the school of hard knocks. I worked at General Trading Company for a total of 26 years, 15 of which I served as manager. That experience helped with my current role, big time. It taught me a lot about customer interactions and making decisions, which are lessons I try to bring to the UFC board today.

After serving on the board of directors for Bird Island Elevator, I decided to join the UFC board after the two entities merged in 2010, serving in roles as both vice chair and chair.

Being chair has provided me the chance to participate in the agriculture industry in a new way and serve our fellow cooperative patrons. It's helped me with my own risk management decisions on the farm, too. One of our core focuses is how we can better collaborate with our neighbors, build partnerships and create greater efficiencies.

UFC has always done a great job adapting to industry changes and we look for people who can do the same. Recruiting help is not easy in today's environment of remote work, shorter work weeks, people moving away from their hometowns and all the other factors.

Nonetheless, this is a very rewarding place to be if you want to be in agriculture. We want to find and keep good people. And we challenge management every day in how we can better do that. It's something we talk about all the time: how to find people and retain talent.

Employees are the number one asset of the co-op and without them we have nothing.

Anybody with a work ethic who wants to learn is welcome here. Anyone can be taught the skills required if they choose to join us. We're willing to teach them as a co-op.

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One of our core focuses is how we can better collaborate with our neighbors, build partnerships and create greater efficiencies.

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# TECH WILL CHANGE, NEEDING GOOD PEOPLE WILL NOT

JIM CARLSON, VICE PRESIDENT OF AGRONOMY

When I look back on my education and career, I can honestly say I had no clue I would end up here.

I went to technical school in Willmar, Minnesota and worked for a short period of time before I decided to continue my education at the University of Minnesota. After graduating with a degree in Agricultural Education, I worked for a seed company for a few years out of state.

When I decided to return to Minnesota, I started in the co-op system and haven't left since. Most of my co-op career was with CHS and previous companies, then ultimately, UFC.

While at CHS, I got to know many local co-op leaders and even called on UFC as a customer. I eventually met Mitch Altermatt and discovered we had a lot of similar philosophies in common. Those discussions led me to my role as VP of Agronomy for the past two years.

The agronomy business is driven by data, technology and innovation. We have the opportunity to work with data and technology every single day, which is exciting and rewarding. But what excites me the most is working with great people every day: employees and customers.

It takes good, smart people to do what we do: advance information forward and make decisions in the best interest of our customers. Many of our people farm

on the side, too. So, as employees and owners, we understand that when the cooperative succeeds, we all succeed.

For someone who is looking to work agriculture retail, there are always a lot of exciting opportunities including agronomy. We're currently conducting a trial program with artificial intelligence and drone technology where AI can identify pests and diseases. And again, that technology requires people to analyze that information, apply it to a grower's specific situation and make sound decisions based upon it.

Sometimes, there's an impression that a cooperative doesn't provide a lot of advancement opportunities, we need to fix that perception. If you want to work in our energy department and move to grain, agronomy or the front office, UFC is going to help you find your fit.

As the definition of education has evolved from a traditional four-year school to include technical and specialty schooling, training programs and apprenticeships, we've evolved in how we recruit, too.

If you have a doctorate, have a four-year degree or a high school education, we're just looking for good people. That will never change.



# VARIETY IS ONE WAY TO DESCRIBE A COOPERATIVE CAREER



CHAD WILSON, VICE PRESIDENT OF AG SERVICES, LAFAYETTE

Doing a variety of work has always been appealing to me. And, variety comes naturally when part of the cooperative system. You cooperate with others to get whatever needs to be done – done.

At our family's dairy farm in Lafayette, Minnesota, we milked cows and raised corn and soybeans. I have been involved in some form of agriculture my entire life. Farm life is no different than a cooperative, you cooperate to get things done.

After graduating from New Ulm High School and then South Central College with a degree in ag business and management, I started at UFC in 1995 in the seed cleaning plant, cleaning and bagging seed. I also worked as a custom applicator, spreading fertilizer and spraying.

During the summer months, I would build grain bins for UFC and eventually became the foreman for the grain bin building crew. Those experiences led me to become Agronomy Operations Manager and my current position as VP of Ag Services.

As you can tell, being employed with the cooperative system has allowed me a variety of job responsibilities.

But it's also given me the chance to work side by side with a variety of individuals: fellow employees, farmers and patrons of UFC.

The cooperative business model is really a one-of-a-kind system. We work for the owners, but also know the owners. And that makes us one big family.

If you're a motivated person, looking for a variety of job duties and opportunities for advancement, UFC is the place. While we love the business of ag, you do not have to have an ag background to work with us.

We have many individuals who come from a variety of backgrounds. There are lots of different employment opportunities and you can be part of a stable entity that is helping keep rural communities alive.

Collectively, we are a large family, passionate about what we do. We put in a lot of long hours together, but we have each other's backs as well - at work and at play.

If that's the kind of rewarding work you desire, we encourage you to consider UFC, no matter your background or experience.



# IMPROVING OUR COMMUNITIES - THE MOST REWARDING BENEFIT OF ALL



## JASON TEWS, VICE PRESIDENT OF GRAIN & FEED

When someone asks me about UFC and the cooperative system, it's always one of my favorite topics. Because it's not just simply about profitability each and every day. We need to make sure we are treating everyone fairly and equitably when making decisions about our business.

Growing up in North Dakota, I was able to see all sides of the ag business. In my youth, I was able to help my grandpa as he farmed small grains in western North Dakota. Throughout college, I worked for a local farmer, and a seed company doing research. I also had the opportunity to participate in internships with a local John Deere dealer while pursuing my associate's degree.

After graduating from North Dakota State University, I was hired by ADM in grain operations. My employment with ADM took me all across the upper Midwest managing multiple grain elevator locations. I was moving around a lot.

In 2012, my time with UFC began when ADM and UFC started a joint venture with grain. Two years later, when UFC bought back its' assets from ADM, I took the opportunity to stay with UFC. Staying with the cooperative was an easy decision. Not only was it the best choice for me and my career, but for stability for my family as well.

For others considering a career in agriculture and agribusiness, the cooperative system really opens up a lot of opportunities. My experiences exposed me to many different aspects of the business I likely would not have seen working for someone else.

As a cooperative employee, I was able to learn from some pretty amazing individuals along the way. These people were open to sharing information and helping progress my career.

But what UFC does is even bigger than that! You get to work for a company that is embedded in the

communities you live in and is invested in the communities around you. You are able to do rewarding work, support local producers and keep those dollars local.

At UFC, the wages and benefits are competitive, of course. And that's always an important consideration for any prospective employee. For me, seeing the positive changes we impact – and the differences we make for local communities – are the most rewarding benefits of all!

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“...you get to work for a company that is embedded in the communities you live in...”

# RETHINKING WHAT A COOPERATIVE IS



## JENNY KROHN, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

I've always had a passion for agriculture. But I had never imagined my career path would bring me to a cooperative.

I grew up on a dairy farm and milked cows and fed calves every morning before school. I became familiar with UFC at a young age because it was our family's co-op. We had UFC feed trucks, fuel trucks and agronomy products delivered to our farm on a regular basis.

When I thought of co-ops, I pictured truck drivers, applicators, and elevator operators. I didn't initially put two and two together that a cooperative was a business with a full office staff behind the scenes with opportunities for a wide range of careers.

I graduated from Winona State University with a double major in business administration and human resources management. Throughout college, my plan was to move anywhere my career would take me. But I quickly realized I wanted to get back to my roots and my family.

UFC was my first place of employment after graduation. There was a customer service position open at the Winthrop office and I started in March 2010. It's hard to remember a time where job openings at respectable

companies were scarce, but that was the case when I graduated. I felt very fortunate to get a job at our local cooperative.

A co-op career allows me to have the best of both worlds – human resources and agriculture. I worked in customer service for a couple of years and transitioned into a human resources role.

UFC values their employees and gives the employees resources to learn and grow within their career paths. We offer excellent benefits and competitive pay. In addition, there's flexibility during non-peak seasons. And for those who do not have an opportunity to work on a farm full time, UFC allows you to be part of agriculture in a similar capacity.

More than anything, I get to do what I love each day and still be a part of agriculture. I've met so many people through the cooperative system that have served as role models and mentors and have contributed to the progression of my career.

If you're thinking of a career in agriculture, consider rethinking what a cooperative is. You may just find the best of both worlds.





# WEARING DIFFERENT HATS – AND FINDING THE HAT THAT FITS



## DARV TURBES, VICE PRESIDENT OF ENERGY

My road to UFC was a little different from some. But like many, I grew up in agriculture and was no stranger to hard work along the way.

My family lived on a farm south of New Ulm. By the time I was nine, I stumbled into a job sweeping floors and cleaning at a local service station. I continued that all the way through high school. After graduation, I went on to college in Mankato for a degree in auto mechanics.

Following school, I was offered a chance to buy into a service station, which also sold bulk fuel and seed corn to agriculture accounts in Brown County. When my partner retired, I took over the business and wore many different hats as an independent sole proprietor.

In 2002, I had the opportunity to sell that bulk fuel business to UFC and was asked to lead our energy department. My experience had been on the private side, but as VP of Energy, I now put all that experience to work with the full support of the cooperative model.

I still get to enjoy working with ag based customers, but the cooperative system has supplied me with the other hats we all need to run our business: a CFO, GM, HR department and more. With this kind of support in place, I can take care of employees for the long term – some who have been with me since the beginning.

Speaking of wearing different hats, I think prospective employees will always have a path to do many different things and grow within the cooperative structure. If you're willing to put in the effort, there will always be an opportunity.

And that opportunity may not necessarily be in energy. At UFC, our divisions don't work in silos. While we may have a need at a particular position, we try not to pigeonhole people. If a person is better suited to the agronomy, grain or seed side of the business, our leaders work together to find the best fit. We try to keep an open eye for that and "Let 'em go and let 'em grow".

It's also about putting people in the right roles to be successful. We want happy employees that are safe, fulfilled and motivated to take care of our customers. Matching a person's skills to the right spot helps them prosper and enjoy their work.

When we can achieve that, it helps everyone we employ and serve. Our customers are our owners and always have a direct line to our people. With the culture that UFC has established, we're all here to help each other - and that's a very good position to be in moving forward.



# THE PATH TO TODAY

JONATHAN OLMSCHIED, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER



It does not feel like it has been three years since I joined the UFC team, but we all have heard the phrase “Time Flies When You’re Having Fun!”. I would agree with that phrase for my time spent within the UFC team and I am proud of what the team has accomplished. Although this role is my first formal employment role within the agricultural cooperative system, I’ve been affiliated my entire life, starting with growing up across the tracks from the co-op in Elrosa, MN which is still within the cooperative system. Although growing up in the metropolis of Elrosa (population 205), I found myself out at farms weekly as a kid delivering bags of feed to assist my dad in his role as an independent feed rep. One memory that I’m sure would make the UFC grain team cringe is that the elevator, which was also just across the tracks, would pile corn right on Main Street. My buddies and I would setup ramps and jump our bikes into the pile losing many shoes in the process.

I often get asked why I decided to be an accountant, especially for those that have met me in other avenues of my life that typically do not get associated with the accountant stereo type. Another phrase that was often heard while I was growing up was “there are two guarantees in life; paying taxes and dying.” I came to the conclusion that I should take advantage of at least one of these, people typically need an accountant to help with tax filings so I thought I should be able to find work. What I didn’t realize at the time of going to Winona State earning degrees in accounting and business administration is that the cooperative system would ultimately provide an opportunity for me to combine the experiences of my upbringing, education, and passions all into one role.

Prior to being a full-time accountant at a public accounting firm, I did an internship at a district office for an insurance company. My mom had an agency for this company, so I gained the certifications needed to sell insurance and financial products, but it was the assessment of risk side of the overall company that I experienced during the internship that resonated with me. There are very smart people that study numbers to help set rates and those rates vary by class and origin of the people and the property that policies are written to provide coverage. In a nutshell, similar tendencies and actions will more times than not, result in the similar outcomes.

One of the biggest benefits of working within the public accounting field is the exposure to a wide range of business industries, structures, and models. Being in greater Minnesota, the businesses generally have a tie to agriculture in some shape or form. I believe the cooperative structure provides the best platform to support a strong business model and best service the customers and employees alike. One of the main reasons I believe this is that the customers as member owners are dependent on the employees to service them as customers and run the business as member owners. Equally dependent, the employees need the customers business to be employed and need that member business to generate profits to support continuous improvements within the business for future longevity.

The cooperative structure is unique in the fact that each entity can determine its plan for future longevity each year utilizing allocations of equities. Each year, hopefully, profits of the cooperative can be retained and taxed

at the cooperative level or be allocated as qualified equity and taxed at the member level. If qualified equity is allocated, any portion not paid in cash at the time of allocation is held for future payout. Each entity also has the ability to determine how and when to make the future payout. UFC's future payout (revolvement) plan for qualified equity does differ from most of the surrounding cooperatives by being based on the age of the member verses based on year of allocation. UFC's fiscal year ends on August 31<sup>st</sup> each year so that date is the cutoff date utilized for UFC's current revolvement plan. If a member turns 69 prior to August 31<sup>st</sup>, all qualified equities are paid in the following fiscal year in two installments: local equity typically in December and Regional in April. Another payout occurs when a member turns 79 prior to August 31<sup>st</sup>. Also, if the member continues to earn qualified equity in years after the age of 79, it is paid out each year.

The cooperative structure has other tools that can be utilized to best plan for future longevity such as Non-qualified equity. UFC has utilized non-qualified allocations in the past but for any questions on those, please give me a call because if you are still reading this now, you wouldn't be for much longer.

In closing, everyone's path is different and unique to them just as UFC is different and unique compared to other cooperatives. I appreciate the path that has brought me to UFC and I enjoy learning the paths of all the wonderful people I get to work with everyday.

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# CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

## FULL-TIME JOB OPPORTUNITIES

- Agronomy Operations - Brownton Location
- Agronomy Operations: Winthrop Location
- Feed Delivery Driver- LeSueur Location
- Grain Handling Construction - Lafayette Location
- Account Manager- Brownton Territory
- Seed Warehouse/Agronomy Operations - Winthrop/Lafayette Location
- Custom Applicator - Brownton Location
- Custom Applicator - Winthrop Location
- Feed Delivery Driver - Klossner Location
- Tire Technician - Lafayette Location
- Feed Production & Warehouse Assistant - LeSueur Location
- Customer Service Specialist - Brownton Location

## SEASONAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES

- Agronomy Operations- Brownton Location
- Agronomy Operations- Hector Location
- Agronomy Operations - Norseland Location
- Agronomy Operations- Winthrop Location
- Grain Handling Construction - Lafayette Location

**For more information contact Jenny Krohn at 507.232.1013 or visit [ufcmn.com/careers](https://ufcmn.com/careers).**



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# REMINDERS + RESOURCES

## ONLINE BILL PAY

### PAY YOUR UFC ACCOUNT ONLINE VIA CREDIT CARD

Did you know you can pay  
your account online?

To access:

1. Visit [UFCMN.com](http://UFCMN.com)
2. Go to "My Account" in the upper right corner
3. Enter Account ID and Password
4. View your statement
5. As you are viewing your statement, you will see two options: pay with credit card or with your select bank account.

If paying by credit card, a 3% convenience fee will be charged. All credit card payments are processed via PayPal. You do not need a PayPal account to submit your credit card payment.

If you have questions, please call 507.232.1000 and a member of our team will be available to assist you!

## ORDER FUEL & PROPANE ONLINE

Added convenience for our patrons is something we take seriously. That is why we now offer online ordering for fuel and propane. Ordering online is fast, simple and convenient and allows you to place orders at any time from anywhere! Simply follow these instructions:

1. **LOGIN** - Go to [ufcmn.com](http://ufcmn.com). Click "My Account" in the top right corner. Select "Energy Order". The tanks from your account will be listed, simply select "Place Order" next to the tank that needs to be filled.
2. **SUBMIT ORDER** - Next, answer a few simple questions about your order. Review your order to ensure accuracy, then "Submit Delivery Order". You will receive a confirmation email with the details of your order.
3. **SIGN UP** - Don't have an online account?  
*Sign up online at [ufcmn.com/acctaccess](http://ufcmn.com/acctaccess).*

## ONLINE ACCOUNT RESOURCE

DID YOU KNOW? Your UFC online account is a valuable resource that puts data and information at your fingertips. Through your online account you can:

- Order propane and fuel online
- Pay bills online - fast and convenient especially during your busy times of year!
- Access account receivable statements. View a list of prepay and booking contracts.
- View patronage details - View a summary of details on outstanding local and regional equity, view the last three years of 1099's for tax preparation.
- Get a summary of tax information and year-end purchase totals.
- View grain sales and details - View contracts, grades, weight and prices all from the cab of your tractor!



# KEY UPDATES FROM THE AG SERVICE CENTER

## FARM EQUIPMENT

- **PLAN AHEAD and Pre-Order Spring Tillage for 2024**

If you anticipate needing new tillage equipment for spring 2024, stop in and talk to us now! If you wait to place your order until next winter it may be too late. Currently, we are receiving field cultivators that were ordered last spring. Don't wait!

- **New and Used Spring Tillage**

The Ag Service Center in Lafayette does have some inventory on hand for used spring tillage. We also have some new inventory coming in, although it is limited. If you need a specific piece of equipment and you don't see it on our lot, stop in or give us a call. We will work with you to find what you're looking for.

- **New and Used Hay Tools**

Hay season is just around the corner! Our new and used hay tool inventory is arriving for the season, however, it is unclear how long it will last and if we will be able to re-order. Stop in to get what you need right away. We carry round balers, rakes, hay tedders, 3-point mowers and more!

- **Skidsteers and attachments**

We have skidsteers and attachments on order. If you need one or the other, plan ahead and contact us today!

- **Lawn and Garden**

We proudly service and sell lawn mowers, tillers, snow blowers, chain saws, weed whips, leaf blowers and more! Stop in and visit us for all of your lawn and garden needs.

- **2024 Equipment Needs - All Lines of Equipment**

90% of current orders do not arrive until 2024! Plan ahead! If you know you need new equipment, or you're thinking about getting new equipment, stop in and place your order now. The supply chain challenges are not improving, this issue will persist well into 2024.



### **Planter Repair + Parts Available**

We hope that you don't have issues this spring. But, if you do know that our shop can service ALL planters regardless of brand, model, or year!

### **Vermeer Net Wrap and Baler Twine**

We currently have a wide selection of Vermeer net wrap and baler twine. Get in and take care of your bale season needs for the year now before it is too late.

### **WilRich Field Cultivator Parts In Stock**

As a friendly reminder, we have parts on hand for all WilRich field cultivators (old and new).

### **Spray Equipment + Parts**

We carry many different lines of sprayer equipment as well as parts from tips to pumps and everything in between! We have a variety of parts in stock now, stop in and get what you need for the sprayer season before they're gone.

## **QUALITY EQUIPMENT REPAIR AND TIRE SERVICE**

- **Onsite Service Truck | We Can Come to You!**

We invest in the latest diagnostic equipment to guarantee the equipment we work on is serviced correctly, and we only use quality replacement parts to maintain your manufacturer's warranty. From heavy-duty semi-trucks to your farm machinery needs, we can service your machinery at our shop in Lafayette or we can come to you with our on-site service truck or tire truck. GIVE US A CALL AT 507-228-8224, AFTER HOURS SERVICE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

## **GRAIN HANDLING**

- **Watch for Dryer Pre-Season Letter**

Our annual, pre-season dryer service letter will be hitting mailboxes in May. Completing the form and returning it to us is extremely important as it will ensure we get you scheduled for summer service. If you don't get this letter, call the Ag Service Center at 507.228.8224 by June 1<sup>st</sup> and we will get you scheduled. The form will also be available at [ufcmn.com/equipment](http://ufcmn.com/equipment).

- **Grain System Repairs**

Don't wait until fall to schedule your repairs! To prevent system downtime during harvest, plan ahead and get your appointment secured now.

- **New and Used Dryers for Sale**

Are you in the market for a dryer? We have new and used options to choose from. Call or stop in, we would be glad to help you out.

- **Grain Storage & Grain Handling Projects:**

The 2023 construction season promises to be one of UFC's busiest ever. With price increases on steel inching up and availability issues, now is the time to be thinking about your grain handling and storage projects for 2024.

## **PRECISION AG**

When you hit the field this spring, if you have questions about your Precision Planting technology, or how your planter is performing with Precision Planting technology, call or text Dan Hayes directly at 507.543.4198 for assistance.



**FIELDVIEWS**  
*Spring 2023*

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