

The **ORGANIC**  
**Cultivator**

Winter 2018

Cultivating soil, knowledge, relationships

## A COUPLE OF FIRSTS! (WE'RE GROWING)

Meet our newest employees who are taking on two brand-new roles at Albert Lea Seed: our first-ever Dealer Services Manager (Carl Gaudian) and a new Marketing Manager (Chaunce Stanton). They join our team to better serve the needs of our customers and distributors and to help us continue to grow our organic and non-GMO network of farmers and seed distributors.



By **Mac Ehrhardt,**  
Co-owner



**Carl Gaudian,**  
Dealer Accounts Manager

**Chaunce Stanton,**  
Marketing Manager

With a background in communication and farming, Carl will help to support our dealer network and our sales team.

Carl grew up on a family farm near Hayward, Minn. He remembers picking up seed with his uncle as a kid and enjoying the fast-paced environment that spring-planting brings.

"When I started making trips to the seed house by myself, it was like a rite of passage."

Since then, Carl has grown organic registered oats for Albert Lea Seed, and he has worked in our warehouse assembling orders.

He graduated from Bethany College in Mankato, Minn. with a degree in Communications. In his free time, Carl enjoys weight-training, gardening, and cooking with his wife and three children.

Chaunce brings his professional background in marketing communications to help us shape our outreach strategy and to manage communication projects.

Chaunce is avid writer, organic gardener, and amateur blacksmith. He thinks farmers have the most important jobs in the world, second only to mothers.

"I want to get the word out to everyone – and their mothers – about Albert Lea Seed and Viking Corn and Soybeans."

Chaunce grew up in Annandale, a small town in central Minnesota where he was active in FFA. He graduated from St. Cloud State with a bachelor's degree in English, Creative Writing.

"One of the things I'm most proud of was producing a video of a Hastings, Minn. blacksmith reconditioning plow points. It's important to keep those stories alive."

## FEATURES

- We're Growing!
- Grower Profile: Kluenders
- 2017 Open House Review
- Viking Non-GMO Options
- Grain Millers Update



## Field Report: Organic Sumo Oats

Jonathan Olson in Cottonwood, Minn. grew Sumo oats for the first time – a variety we knew organic farmers were going to like, and Jonathan agreed:

*"I raised 75 acres of Sumo oats this year. It was the best oats I have raised in recent years. I weighed the first couple loads and estimated the field to average about 132 bu/acre. It was standing pretty well. Had a couple small spots that lodged but overall it looked great. It tested over 38# test weight. I was very happy with the Sumo oats. I got a lot of straw from the field. I would recommend Sumo oats."*

# THE KLUENDERS ARE ALL-IN: NO TURNING BACK FROM ORGANIC

A life-changing chemical reaction drove Archie and Denise Kluender into organic farming more than two decades ago.



**Now there's no turning back.**

"My grandfather farmed organically and didn't know it," Archie Kluender said, describing his family's farm in Walters, Minnesota that's been 110 years in the making. "But my father began using chemicals after that, like most others did."

Archie ran the family farm using chemical treatments until 1994 – the year he experienced a significant physical reaction resulting from chemical exposure. He and his wife Denise changed the direction of their farming operations, raising their first organic crop in 1995 and achieving certification in 1997.

"When we first started, organic soybeans was the only crop with a premium," Archie recalled. "So that was a struggle."

Now they grow corn, soybeans, alfalfa, winter rye, buckwheat, and hairy vetch in a three-year rotation on more than 800 acres.

## Organic: A Hard-Earned Premium

Like most farmers, Archie Kluender always hopes the weather will cooperate.

"Organic methods don't change that," he said. "You're always looking for timely rains and a good early warm up."

The Kluenders plant corn a week or two later than their conventional neighbors to avoid contamination.

"We planted late in 2017 – on May 28 – but our corn caught up," Archie said. "We're not getting the same yield as our neighbors, but we're getting higher quality, and we outperform them dollar-wise."

"And we earn it!" Denise Kluender added. "Farming organically definitely isn't a get-rich-quick scheme."

## "Organic Seed for Where We Farm"

Archie admitted that organic farming presents its own difficulties when compared to conventional methods.

"We've had trying times, bad years and weeds. But that's why we plant at least three different varieties of Viking organic seed."

Archie plants Viking organic seed because it's suited to on-farm conditions.

"They help us pick out the best varieties for our location or for aphid-resistant varieties. They see which varieties are performing best on certain types of ground, so they know which ones work best for us."

## Soil Health: Organic's Big Pay-Off

Even though the Kluenders work their ground more often in the organic method, a multi-crop rotation provides long-term, practical benefits. For example, they don't experience disease problems. The alfalfa provides nitrogen for corn, but they still sidedress with fish emulsion and incorporate organic turkey manure compost.

That extra effort and material means the Kluenders are building something precious to them: soil health.

"We're proud to be organic," Archie stated. "We'll never go back to conventional. Through organics, we've changed the health of the soil on this farm."

Denise said the Kluender's goal is to leave the soil better than when they started.

"It's like a dance," she said. "We're not being forceful with nature. It's a gentle cooperation with the land." ▶

## Archie's Advice: Keep Calm & Partner Up

To the future generation of organic farmers, Archie suggested finding a mentor and getting past the profit motivation.

"If your first question is 'can I make money?', then organic farming isn't right for you. It's a different mindset."

He also suggested finding a seed dealer who understands the needs of organic farmers inside and out. The Kluender family has been working with Albert Lea Seed for decades, and they continue to grow Viking organic seed because of Albert Lea Seed's commitment to developing quality organic seed lines.

"Other seed salesmen just want to sell you their top-yielding hybrid," Archie explained. "When I come to Albert Lea Seed, they know I'm organic. It's not all yield. It can be quality for food-grade or milling. Or it could be disease-resistance or plant height to block out weeds or emergence. They know what I want and what will work for us."

Denise agreed that working with Albert Lea Seed is a good fit for them. She manages the complexities of documentation needed to maintain organic certification.

"Albert Lea Seed know what forms and labels we need," she explained. "We're on the same wavelength."

# ORGANIC OPEN HOUSE HUGE SUCCESS!

By Matt Leavitt, Sales Agronomist



Despite a cool, wet fall with a lot of corn and soybeans still in the field, more than 120 farmers attended the annual Albert Lea Seed Organic Open House in November.

We put a lot of thought into booking informative speakers covering a range of organic agriculture topics. And, of course, we're doing it again next year. **Stay tuned for the 2018 Organic Open House dates!**

## In Case You Missed It! Highlights from the 2017 Open House



Joel Gruver

### Organic Weed Control

Joel Gruver, Associate Professor of Soil Science at WIU, led an in-depth discussion of organic weed control strategies. He shared insights about organic no-till research, seeding rates, and management suggestions.



Eric Jackson

### Organic Demand Growth

Eric Jackson, CEO of Pipeline Foods, described the strong growth in certified organic acres in the U.S., continued consumer and supply chain demand of organic and non-GMO grains.



Dr. Francis Glenn

### Organic Leafy/Floury Silage Corn

Dr. Glenn from Glenn Seed gave us important management takeaways for the new Viking Leafy/Floury silage hybrids, launching in 2018.



Couldn't make the Open House this year?  
[www.youtube.com/user/AlbertLeaSeed](http://www.youtube.com/user/AlbertLeaSeed)

## Viking Ultra-Pure Corn Gets a New Look for 2018!

We're bringing more elite corn hybrid genetics to our expanding Viking Ultra-Pure and Pure line-up for 2018.

Our focus on seed purity doesn't stop with corn. We've expanded our Ultra-Pure offerings to include Viking organic soybeans with six select varieties targeted to the food and dual-purpose markets guaranteed 99.9% pure. We've also invested in an alfalfa purification and production program that will allow us to bring Viking organic Ultra-Pure alfalfa seed to you starting in 2019.

VIKING PURE & ULTRA-PURE SEED CORN

## Purity is the Premium

The purity of your non-GMO seed corn is extremely important. Because you can't grow non-GMO grain if the seed you plant has high levels of GMOs.



GEOGRAPHIC ISOLATION



DEDICATED EQUIPMENT AND TRANSPORTATION



STRINGENT TESTING

### Field Report: Purity Performs!

"With a late planting and a less than ideal growing season the **Ultra-Pure Viking 084-95UP** performed extremely well. On my best field it averaged a little better than 240 bushels."

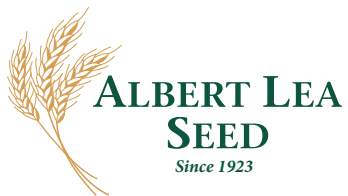
Sandy S. • Oconomowoc, Wisconsin

To plant the purest non-GMO seed corn on the market, call (800)352-5247 or email us at [seedhouse@alseed.com](mailto:seedhouse@alseed.com)




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## MORE VIKING ORGANIC HYBRIDS ACCEPTED BY GRAIN MILLERS

Albert Lea Seed now offers even more hybrids that are accepted by the Grain Millers Plant in St. Peter, Minnesota!

### Newly accepted organic corn hybrids for milling include:

- Viking O.58-85P – Yield, stress tolerance, and adaptability.
- Viking O.71-90P & UP – Adaptable, go-anywhere hybrid for grain or silage.
- Viking O.31-92P – Strong, healthy hybrid. “Jumps out of the ground!”
- Viking O.82-95P – Well-rounded with above-average stress tolerance.
- Viking O.86-03UP – Outstanding all-around performance.

Contact Amanda Eustice of Grain Millers at (952) 983-1282 for more information.

