



# The Point



## Risk creates rewards

Gary Smith, General Manager

**Today's business climate** is fun, exciting and full of opportunities; especially for companies willing to take risk. Nationally acclaimed management consulting and training guru, Tom Peters, sums it up best: "It is always better to try a swan dive and deliver a colossal belly flop than to step timidly off the board while holding your nose."

The board of directors and management team were recently engaged in the strategic planning process of NorthStar Cooperative. Among our tasks we reviewed the progress NorthStar has made in the last few years; scrutinized where we are today, and established what we want the business to look like in the next five to 10 years. During our discussions we kept in mind that risk creates opportunity for rewards, which is the mindset that has gotten us to where we are today.

Renewing the mission and vision for the Cooperative is a continual process. When we reviewed 2006's key demographic information we saw tremendous opportunity in NorthStar's core service area. Dairy cows in our three state service area total more than 1.1 million in 11,000 licensed herds. Additionally, the average herd size has grown to more than 100 cows and milk production in these states is among some of the best. While our core service area is showing increases in cows and milk produc-



tion, let's not forget we have business units that are not limited geographically and have national and international appeal. In 2006, U.S. dairy producers set historic records - obviously NorthStar's opportunity for growth and success is high.

With a renewed understanding of our customers, the board of directors set out to create a vision statement for the Cooperative. As such, NorthStar's vision for the future is, "To build an organization that develops premier services and products that can be utilized by Agriculture producers to enhance their business and well being. This will be accomplished through the expansion of current and new services/products obtained through support of technology research and development, by NorthStar Cooperative entities investing or developing and collaborating with other business partners."

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## Bruce Clark joins NorthStar Cooperative

**Keeping with NorthStar's mission** of "enhancing producer profitability through integrated services," a new business unit focusing on training and technical services has been created and will be spear-headed by Bruce Clark, DVM, of Coldwater, Michigan. In this business unit, Bruce is responsible for assisting with the development of personnel training and recruiting, as well as growing the sales and service of the Cooperative.

No stranger to the dairy industry Bruce was most recently employed by the Monsanto Corporation in the Animal Agriculture Division (Dairy) as their East Region Technical Services Manager and prior to that worked as the Area Technical Services Specialist for Michigan, Ohio and Indiana. Bruce received his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from Mississippi State University and worked in private practice for several years before pursuing an active teaching career at both his alma mater and the University of Missouri.

Currently Bruce serves on the board of directors for Dairy Records Management Systems (DRMS), and is a member of the Michigan Veterinary Medical Association Food Animal Practice Committee. Previously Bruce served on the board of directors for AntelBio.

Bruce began his responsibilities at NorthStar in early September. His extensive background in teaching, record analysis, farm management practices and animal reproduction make him a valuable addition to NorthStar. ★

