

# TRIED & TRUE

////// SINCE 1923

SUMMER 2022

**FRATCO**

**5 MEET JOHN DANFORD**

**6 GENERATIONS IN THE  
MAKING**

**10 CULTIVATING THE NEXT  
GENERATION OF FARMERS**

**15 THE FUTURE OF FARMING  
AND FOOD**



**To *Tried & True* Readers,**

With Fratco's 100th anniversary just around the corner, we've had a lot to reflect on within the company. Between the pandemic's disruption to commerce and the subsequent resin shortage, the recent years leading up to this moment have been fraught with unprecedented challenges. At the same time, these years have also brought unprecedented success. In spite of the obstacles facing our industry, Fratco continues to grow, our customers continue to be satisfied and—even with the possibility of a impending recession—the outlook on the horizon continues to grow brighter.

This issue of *Tried & True* is largely dedicated to that horizon: to what lies ahead for both Fratco and the ag world at large. In "Cultivating the Next Generation of Farmers," we sat down with an expert from Purdue University to discuss farmers-in-the-making. In "The Future of Farming and Food," we look at how the current generation of farmers may need to adapt to coming changes.

As we consider the future, however, we also can't lose touch with the past. Fratco takes its roots very seriously—this is a fourth generation family company, after all—and we believe in honoring those old customs that were handed down from father to son. One such custom is the subject of "Generations in the Making," where Rudy DeSabatine invited *Tried & True* to enjoy a very special family tradition. This story highlights the importance of family as the bridge between the future and the past.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Tried & True*. Maybe it will spark some fond memories of the past, or perhaps it'll kindle some optimism for the future. Fratco is sure to be here for that future in big and exciting ways, and we look forward to making new history with all of you by our side.

Sincerely,




**Chris Overmyer**  
President and CEO

# IN THIS ISSUE

- 02 A LETTER FROM CHRIS
- 04 PRECIPITATION OUTLOOK
- 05 MEET JOHN DANFORD
- 06 GENERATIONS IN THE MAKING
- 09 SPAGHETTI AND MEATBALLS RECIPE
- 10 CULTIVATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF FARMERS
- 13 WORK ANNIVERSARIES
- 14 INDUSTRY NEWS
- 15 THE FUTURE OF FARMING AND FOOD
- 18 CROSSWORD PUZZLE

## Locations

- 1 **Francesville**  
4385 S. 1450 W.  
P.O. Box 368  
Francesville, IN 47946
- 2 **St. Anne**  
499 S. Oak St.  
St. Anne, IL 60964
- 3 **Mt. Pleasant**  
1600 W. Washington St.  
Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641
- 4 **Algona**  
2502 E. Poplar St.  
Algona, IA 50511
- 5 **Westfield (Stateline Tile)**  
23942 IA Hwy 12  
Westfield, IA 51062
-  **Corporate Office**  
105 W. Broadway St.  
P.O. Box 311  
Monticello, IN 47960

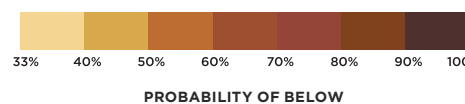
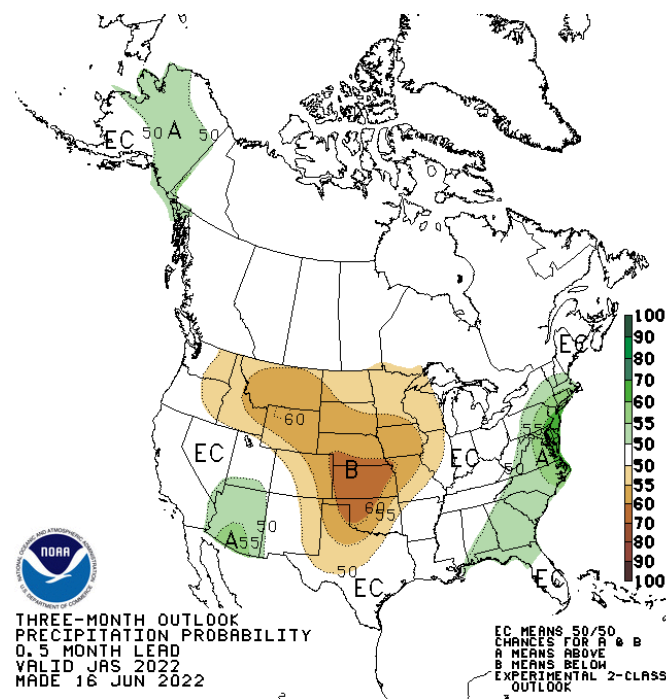


# PRECIPITATION OUTLOOK

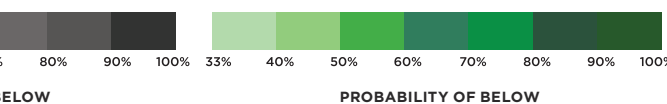
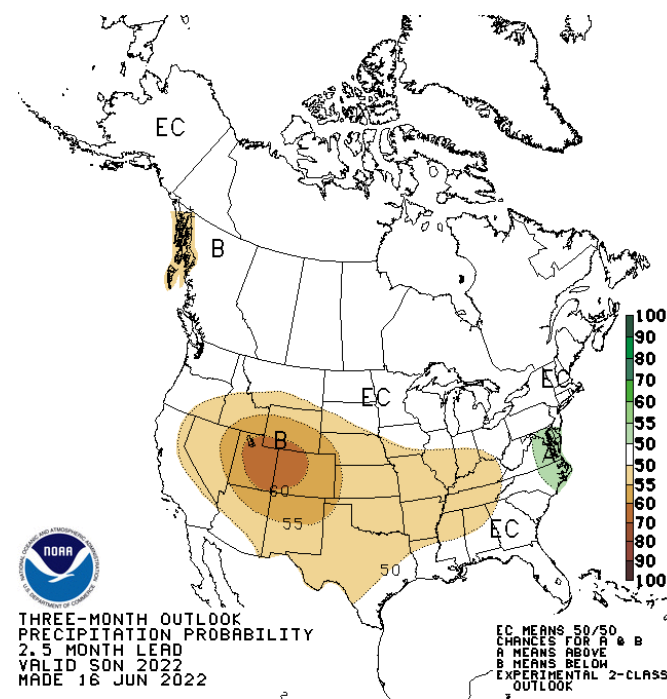
## FROM THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

2022

AUG-SEPT



SEPT-OCT



Nothing about the future is set in stone, and weather predictions are no exception. But in an industry where thorough preparation is fundamental, having an idea of what lies ahead can be the difference between business as usual and battling rain delays. Always keep an eye on daily and weekly weather outlooks, but also set yourself up for success by planning ahead through seasonal forecasts.

For the latest weather information, visit the National Weather Service's website.

[www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov)

## MEET JOHN DANFORD

DISPATCH FOR IN-HOUSE SALES IN THE OFFICE YARD



A lot can happen in 24 years—that's enough time for a newborn to grow into adulthood, for technology to progress leaps and bounds, or for an entire world order to be shaken up by changing norms and circumstances. In John Danford's case, 24 years is more than enough time to become a respected and valuable member of the ever-growing Fratco family. "It'd be 34 years if I hadn't left and then came back," notes Danford, referring to the decade he spent at another company before being asked to return by former Fratco CEO, Steve Overmyer. "As far as the actual technical name of what I do," laughs Danford, "I'm not sure what you'd specify it as—but I run the dispatch for in-house sales here in the office yard."

Perhaps Danford's varied roles throughout his quarter-century with Fratco is why he doesn't pay much mind to the detail of titles. Previously, Danford was loading trucks for Fratco himself, and he also worked in the office for nearly eight years as an assistant dispatcher. "Nothing's the same. Everything's always different in the day-to-day business of working with people," Danford says when asked what he likes about working for Fratco. "You get all kinds of different viewpoints and perspectives from the people you work with."

In addition to all the variety, Danford cites Fratco's recent and on-going expansion as a benefit of working at the company, with new opportunities for employee advancement created as Fratco continues to grow. Danford also alluded to Fratco's generous retirement package as an important perk he's looking forward to on the horizon. Retirement doesn't seem to be in Danford's immediate future, however, with his mind clearly focused on the here and now of the drainage pipe industry.

When asked about the recent resin shortage, Danford had a lot to say about how it's shaken up the sector, as well as the world overall. "People don't think about how much plastic impacts their day-to-day lives, how it's constantly around them and constantly being consumed. You look at almost every industry, any product, and right from the manufacturing line all the way to packaging, it takes plastic to make it happen."

Danford may have been one of the first in the industry to come face-to-face with the challenges of fluctuating resin prices. But as an old pro, he doesn't begrudge the circumstances. Instead, Danford makes the most of the hand he's been dealt.

**"Of course the medical field is the top priority for the little resin supply there is," he explains, "but we're still pushing on and still making top quality product. That's just life."**

When it comes to life in general, Danford shares Fratco's top priority: family. Luckily, John's many years with the company have made his coworkers feel like family, too.

**"Everybody I deal with in the company feels like family," says Danford. "The drivers and I, we all work hand-in-hand to get things done."**

Countless farms across the midwest—as well as Fratco itself—are grateful for the work Danford puts into drainage. One can only hope he plans to stay in the business for another decade or two.



FEATURE STORY

# GENERATIONS IN THE MAKING

THE DESABATINE FAMILY,

SIMPLE TRADITIONS

AND FRATCO

Few can claim a closer connection to the excavation business than Rudy DeSabatine. Not only has Rudy spent his own professional life laying tile, he also grew up watching his father, Paul, do the same. Two of Rudy's brothers, Bob and David, are old industry pros as well, and together, the family accounts for decades of industry knowledge.

"I still remember when Fratco switched from clay to resin tile," Rudy told *Tried & True*. "Must have been sometime in the mid-sixties. Of course, that freaked a lot of people out. You know: something new!"

"How did you feel about the change?" asked *Tried & True*.

"I freakin' loved it," Rudy laughed. "Those clay tiles were kinda heavy."

Rudy and his brothers have been around for many such landmark moments in the industry. They've watched the business grow and change (and in many ways, stay the same) through the eb and flow of time. With the humble, easy-going attitude that seems to run in the family, they've always adapted.



DeSabatine family, 2022



DeSabatine family, 1980s

## A DELICIOUS TRADITION

Every workday afternoon, friends and members of the DeSabatine family gather around the table for a hearty, home-cooked lunch. On this occasion, *Tried & True* was welcomed into the DeSabatine home to partake in the tradition.

That home belongs to Betty DeSabatine: matriarch of the large family. The DeSabatines count their blessings in children, and—thanks in large part to the fact that twins are common in the DeSabatine genepool—Betty now presides over more than a hundred grandchildren and great-grandchildren in total.

"Mother, tell them how many you had over for Thanksgiving," Rudy says.

"Seventy-five," answers Betty, glowing with pride.

"Most young couples these days aren't having that many children, anymore," notes *Tried & True*. "They have no idea what they're missing," Betsy replies.

As lunch is served, the table fills with crispy fried chicken and heaping sides like mashed potatoes and taco salad.

"Does it get any better than this?" Rudy asks as Monica, David's wife and the family's lunchtime chef, slides plates of chocolate cake in front of everyone.

As we eat, the DeSabatines reflect on their long relationship with Fratco—both how it began and why it's lasted so many years.

"We started working with Fratco because they were close," shares Betty. "Convenient and local."

**"We kept using them because their quality is top shelf,"** Rudy explains. **"Their service is incredible, and the quality of their product is incredible."**

"And just the people at Fratco in general," Rudy goes on. "They're like me, they're like you. They're common joes. When you need something from them, you're never gonna hear: 'Oh, we need to take care of this bigger guy first.' That's not Fratco's style."

[Continue Reading](#)





## A CRAFTSMAN'S TOUCH

As lunch winds down, Rudy shows *Tried & True* another one of his passions aside from excavating: landscaping. First, he flips through some pictures on his phone of the work he had done for friends' yards.

Next, Rudy hops in his truck and leads us over to his own residence in Winamac, Indiana, where he's outfitted his backyard, pool and fire pit with beautifully contoured boulders that are as comfortable to sit in as La-Z-Boy recliners. Then, Rudy leads the crew on a tour of his early-1900s farmhouse-style home, the inside beautifully decorated by his wife, Cindy. Between Rudy's landscaping and Cindy's decorating, the home is truly something special.

Leaning on family to accomplish something greater than oneself was the overarching theme of the trip. Certainly, Rudy's skill and work ethic alone would have seen him to success in life, but with his family always by his side, he's been able to accomplish so much more.

With that in mind, we were eager to learn about Rudy's favorite memory of doing business alongside his relatives.

To this, Rudy paused for a solemn moment to gather his thoughts, then replied: "My dad. Working with him was phenomenal."

It's plain to see that Rudy's father did a phenomenal job: both with the children he helped raise and the business he helped build. Fratco, meanwhile, remains both grateful and honored to have the DeSabatine legacy intertwined with its own.

The DeSabinates' story is a reminder of the importance of family, and it highlights how valuable traditions can be. As Fratco looks forward to what comes next, the company knows it's important to remember who and what came before.

**To Fratco's partners new and old: Fratco stands with you, just like they have for generations, and they're dedication to high-quality products and outstanding service are traditions they aren't abandoning anytime soon.**

**Hear what Rudy DeSabatine likes about Fratco**



Scan QR Code or Visit  
[tinyurl.com/Fratco](https://tinyurl.com/Fratco)

# Spaghetti & Meatballs



BY *Betty DeSabatine*

**We asked the DeSabatine brothers which of their mother's recipes is their favorite. They all mentioned her spaghetti and meatballs, and Betty was happy to share how she makes the dish with *Tried & True* readers.**

## SAUCE

*INGREDIENTS:*

**12 oz.** tomato paste  
**24 oz.** basil and garlic tomato sauce

*DIRECTIONS:*

- Mix ingredients in the large pan with meatballs and Italian sausage
- Simmer for a little over an hour, stirring occasionally

## MEATBALLS

*INGREDIENTS:*

**2 lbs.** hamburger meat  
**1 lb.** Italian loose sausage  
**2** eggs  
**1/2 cup** Parmesan cheese  
Salt (to taste)  
Pepper (to taste)  
**1 tsp.** garlic powder  
**1/2 cup** bread crumbs  
**2** slices of bread broken up in 1 cup of milk

*DIRECTIONS:*

- Mix all ingredients together well, leaving some Italian sausage to the side to brown later
- Form mixture into 2" balls
- Brown the meatballs in a skillet with some oil
- Remove meatballs from skillet and place in large pan
- Brown the remaining Italian sausage in the skillet
- Add more garlic to the sausage then place meatballs back in the pan

## PASTA

*INGREDIENTS:*

**1 1/4 lb.** spaghetti noodles

*DIRECTIONS:*

- Cook pasta according to package directions
- Drain cooked noodles
- Mix noodles in with sauce and meatballs



# CULTIVATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF FARMERS

*The future of agricultural education*

Seasons come and go as crops are sown, grown and harvested by farmers who feed the world. And just like every harvest must be carefully nurtured, the same is true for each generation of farmers. So what will the next “crop” of agricultural professionals be like? What unique additions will they bring to the never-ending, ever-changing world of food production? How will they be similar to past generations of farmers, and how will they be different? *Tried & True* was eager to find out.

Located in the heart of the midwest in West Lafayette, Indiana, is Purdue

University’s College of Agriculture. Originally founded in 1874 as the Purdue School of Agriculture and Horticulture, the College has gone on to accrue a reputation of prestige, innovation and excellence in the world of farming education. There’s a good reason many industry insiders refer to the school as “the Harvard of Agriculture.”

Recently, *Tried & True* had the pleasure of sitting down with Sara E. LaRose, Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education at Purdue. LaRose specializes in the process of education itself, so *Tried & True* was excited

to pick her brain about the latest changes and developments occurring in higher education agricultural classrooms. Perhaps the latest and most drastic development is how we define the classroom,” says LaRose. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Purdue and other institutions were forced to go online in order to keep students and faculty safe. During this time, dorm rooms and guest rooms became classrooms as students and teachers logged on to Zoom for lectures.



**Sarah E. LaRose**  
Assistant Professor of  
Agricultural Education  
at Purdue University

**“Hands-on learning is a huge part of agricultural education,”** explained LaRose, **“so it was difficult to balance the virtual classroom with the in-person experiences universities such as Purdue like to offer.”**

For Purdue especially, the temporary shift to online learning was a harsh blow to handle. In the nearly 150 years since its founding, the College of Agriculture has invested millions

of dollars in state-of-the-art equipment to strengthen students’ agricultural training. The campus currently touts facilities like a fully-functioning slaughterhouse for teaching students about livestock and meat production, a sprawling greenhouse for botanical studies as well as dozens of laboratories and lecture halls. All of that, however, went unused during the height of the pandemic.

LaRose, however, is quick to point out the lasting silver lining of this sudden switch to virtual learning. The normalization of distance learning has made agricultural education more accessible to people all over the world. Before, receiving an education from Purdue was only viable for a small number of international learners who were willing and able to relocate to campus. **Now, distance education is opening the door for more people in developing countries to receive quality education, creating a more diverse generation of agricultural professionals.**

Greater diversity in agriculture is one of the overarching goals on Purdue’s agenda. “Here in the College of Agriculture, we have a really big focus on what we call ‘inclusive excellence,’” explains LaRose.

***We want to make agriculture more inviting to certain people and groups that may have felt intentionally excluded in the past.***

**Continue Reading** ➤







Students working at the Purdue Student Farm to harvest and deliver leafy greens to local food banks.

Photo Source: Purdue University College of Agriculture

“We want to make agriculture more inviting to people and groups who have been excluded in the past.”

“I think there was a moment early in the pandemic when people started questioning where their food would come from if things continued to get worse,” says LaRose. Although it seems the pandemic is winding down, the question lingers about the resilience of food supply chains.

“There’s a concept trending in agricultural education called ‘Glocal,’ shares LaRose, “which is a hybrid focus on both global and local food production.”

A sort of renaissance in locally grown organic food had been underway well before the pandemic, and it seems like the circumstances forced upon the population during COVID only added fuel to the fire. Local,

however, doesn’t necessarily mean “rural,” and the drive to bring food production to urban environments—the mythical “vertical” farm housed in a skyscraper, for example—is still thriving in the world of agriculture overall. The next generation of farmers, therefore, may not follow the same outdoorsy archetypes we’re familiar with today. The Purdue College of Agriculture even offers a certificate in Urban Farming, with other universities across the country conducting similar nontraditional farming programs.

**The next generation of farmers may look noticeably different than the farmers we’re used to. They also may operate in locations that haven’t been traditionally associated with farming in the past. Together, these changes are sure to bring new and valuable perspectives that lead to more innovation.**

As always, Fratco welcomes such changes with open arms—knowing that wherever food is grown, water management and drainage solutions are essential. Whether future Fratco contractors are installing drainage systems in flat fields or vertical skyscraper farms, the company will continue to adapt to changing norms as they’ve always done.

Learn more about Purdue’s College of Agriculture:



SCAN QR CODE  
OR VISIT AG.PURDUE.EDU

# WORK ANNIVERSARIES

Willie Parish	35 years	Ken Craft	8 years
Scott Elston	33 years	Matt Deweese	7 years
Todd Denton	31 years	Paul Liggett	5 years
Tim Ballard	25 years	Skylur Moseley	4 years
Andrew Leman	22 years	Trent Watt	4 years
Chad Nicholson	21 years	Charles Yohnka	3 years
Bobby Lewark	16 years	Katie Anne David	3 years
Alan Kruszka	13 years	Hayley Mulligan	1 year
Stephen Cole	11 years	Kevin Pawlowski	1 year
Brandon Herron	9 years		

## WELCOMING NEW HIRES

Caleb Talob	Robert Morris
Ethan Egerton	Shain Yenna
Josh Ellis	Sierra Wood
Nicholas Symonds	Sunilda Alpizar



# Industry News

Having access to up-to-date information is crucial for understanding how the industry evolves.

Here are a few key news items and recent developments to help you stay informed.

## I PPI ANNOUNCES PROJECTS AND MEMBERS AWARDS FOR 2022

During its annual membership meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona, the Plastics Pipe Institute announced award winners across five separate divisions: Building & Construction, Drainage, Energy Piping Systems, Municipal & Industrial, and Power & Communications.

Notable project winners included the Saving Texas Water Supply project, which oversaw the implementation of nearly eight miles of HDPE PE4710 pipe for rural Texas communities. Additionally, Dr. Gene Palermo was given this year's Lifetime Achievement Award for his contributions to the industry over the past several decades. Congratulations to the team behind Saving Texas Water Supply, Dr. Palermo and the rest of this year's winners!

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



Link to press release:

<https://plasticpipe.org/common/Uploaded%20files/1-PPI/General%20Literature/Press%20Releases%20and%20Announcements/PPI%20Annual%20Awards%20News%20Release%20FINAL%20June%201%202022.pdf>

# THE FUTURE OF FARMING AND FOOD

## CHANGING TASTES, EVOLVING TOOLS AND YOU

Outsiders often think of agriculture as a low-tech and primitive industry. To some, the world of farming still resembles the iconic imagery of 1930s *American Gothic*: weathered-looking people with pitchforks turning over bales of hay on their dusty old farms. But as ag insiders know, that notion couldn't be further from the truth. **In reality, Big Ag sits up there with Big Tech as one of the most technologically advanced and innovative industries on earth.**

In a sense, farming is technology—one that defined civilization long before other forms of technology existed. Irrigation was a discovery that expanded the territories where human settlements were able to thrive. Crop rotation was a breakthrough that reshaped our relationship with natural resources. People can scarcely imagine farming (or society in general) without these fundamental practices, but indeed there was a time when they—like any other form of technology—had not yet been invented.

Likewise, there are agricultural inventions that have yet to breach the mainstream consciousness; breakthroughs and discoveries that have yet to be fully refined. Agriculture on the whole is always changing. What changes are just now coming down the pipe? Let's take a look into the future through the lens of producer and consumer alike.

Continue Reading ►





## NEAR-FUTURE FARM EQUIPMENT

Technology is constantly evolving. Just look at your smartphone today compared to your cellphone from a decade ago for the perfect example. Farming technology has also advanced rapidly throughout history, and it will continue to do so.

- **DRONES.** This technology is already being used for farming applications. Whether it's surveying land or spraying crops, expect these bots straight out of science fiction to become more common in the years to come.

- **THE INTERNET OF THINGS.** This concept of making previously inanimate objects into "smart" objects is making its way into ag. Smart tractors that synchronize with your smart phone, for example, are becoming commonplace on the market. And out of that comes...
- **AUTOMATION.** Lots and lots of automation. Self-driving farm equipment that runs on a predetermined schedule and route? Software that measures and optimizes the amount of fertilizer being used on the fly? That's just the tip of the iceberg. Expect big corporate farmland, especially, to invest in automation in big ways in the years to come.

Still, the skill and expertise of traditional flesh-and-blood farmers will still be in-demand for many years to come. All of that automated equipment will need to be coordinated and overseen by human experts, after all.

## A DEMAND FOR SOMETHING DIFFERENT

**Need shapes technology, but want shapes the market.** As such, rapidly-changing consumer demands will shake up what, and how, crops are produced in the years to come.

- **PLANT-BASED FOOD FRENZY.** In recent years, plant-based meat alternatives like the "Impossible" line of products have made huge waves in the market. Expect demand for peas and soybeans—the main sources of plant-based protein for these products—to increase as these formerly niche menu items become more mainstream.
- **HUMANE AND SUSTAINABLE.** Decades ago, consumers started asking more questions about the food they were buying. The dominant question of the 80s and 90s was simply, "Is this good for me?" But in the new millennium, that question has expanded to include, "Is this good for the planet overall?" Today, even issues once seen as unrelated to food production—such as diversity and equality—are being factored into common grocery store purchases.

Today's food buyers aren't just health-conscious or eco-conscious. **They're also ethics-conscious. They want to feel confident they're supporting humane, sustainable and equitable farming practices.** Expect a demand for more quality assurances in this regard and for more specialized agencies to emerge that evaluate production practices.

- **DIVERSIFICATION OF TASTE.** As the ethnic makeup of the United States continues to grow more diverse, so do the palettes of people. Dishes that used to be considered occasional delicacies like sushi and curry are becoming everyday staples, and demand for their ingredients is growing as a result. Fresher is always better, so the closer to home these more "exotic" ingredients can be sourced, the more valuable they'll be.

For all this futuristic talk, it's important to remember that some things never change. The bare necessities are always, well, necessary. Even farms of the future will need simple and reliable drainage solutions such as Fratco pipe. Sure, we here at Fratco enjoy geeking out over new advances in manufacturing methods, material design and installation, but when it comes down to the core foundations, Fratco is always striving to ensure their products far exceed the expectations of today so you're ready for tomorrow.

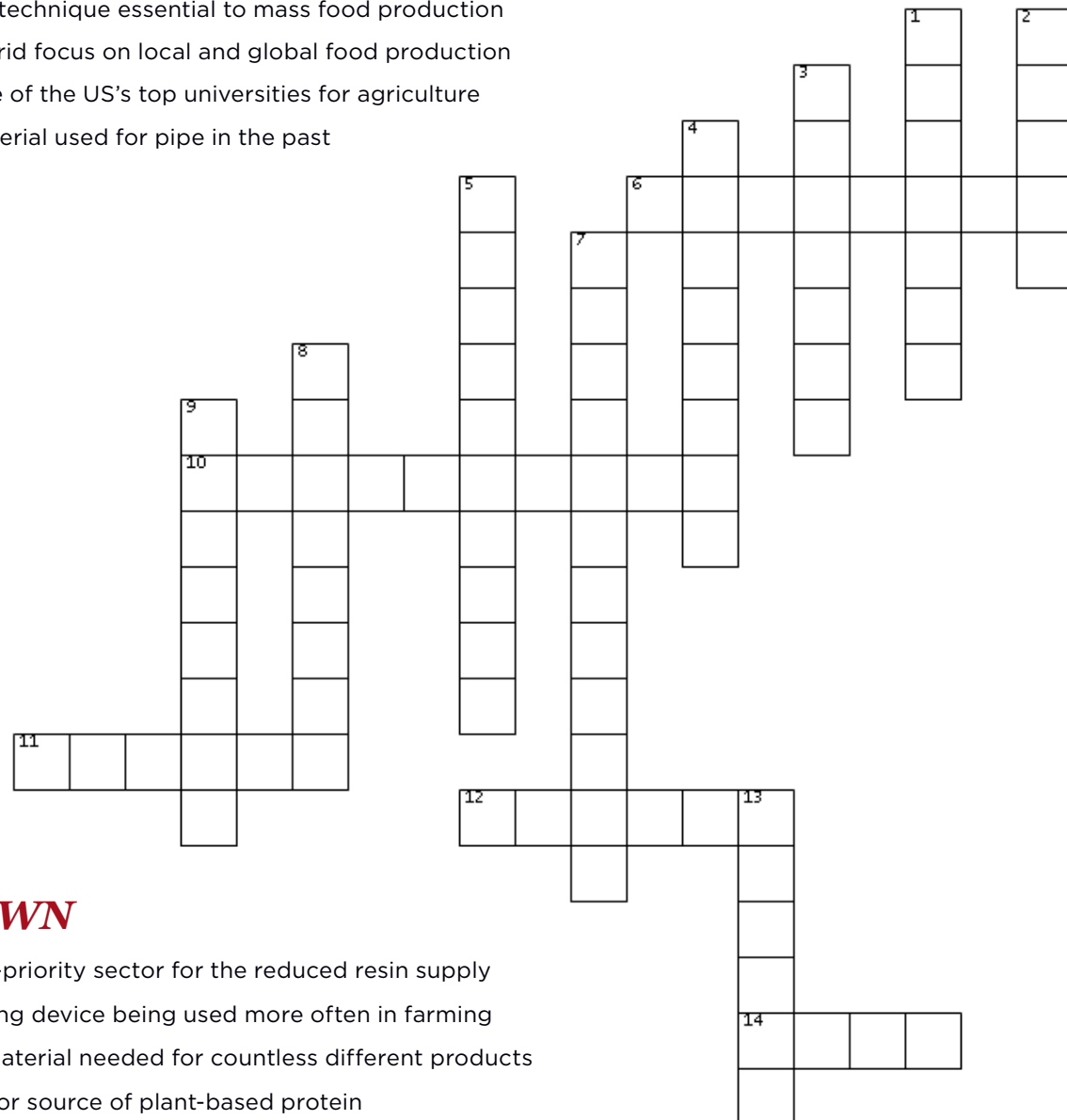




# CROSSWORD

## ACROSS

6. A practice done with crops in modern agriculture
10. Ag technique essential to mass food production
11. Hybrid focus on local and global food production
12. One of the US's top universities for agriculture
14. Material used for pipe in the past



## DOWN

1. Top-priority sector for the reduced resin supply
2. Flying device being used more often in farming
3. A material needed for countless different products
4. Major source of plant-based protein
5. Growing trend in agriculture and industry in general
7. A field of science that often overlaps with agriculture
8. Farming type popular in urban settings
9. A type of learning more popular in ag education since lockdown
13. Something food consumers are increasingly taking into account

ANSWER KEY

1.MEDICAL 2.DRONE 3.PLASTIC 4.SOYBEANS 5.AUTOMATION 6.ROTATION 7.HORTICULTURE 8.VERTICAL 9.DISTANCE 10.IRRIGATION 11.GLOCAL 12.PURDUE 13.ETHICS 14.CLAY



INSTRUCTIONS: Cut along the dotted line for 5x7 frames, cut out the image for 4x6 frames.





**FRATCO**

**Fratco**  
4385 S. 1450 W.  
P.O. Box 368  
Francesville, IN 47946

MAILING  
**FPO**