

TRIED & TRUE

//// //// //// //// //// SINCE 1923

FALL 2023

5

**EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT:
AUSTIN SIMANSON**

6

**NAVIGATING THE DANGER
ZONE: TRENCH SAFETY**

10

**TAPPING INTO
INNOVATION WITH
CENTRAL PLASTICS INC**

14

**ADVANCING WATER
MANAGEMENT**

FRATCO

18

WIN A *TRIED & TRUE* HAT



To *Tried & True* Readers,

The world around us is growing and innovating faster with each passing day. Our dedicated team remains focused on producing the highest quality product with the most exceptional service, all while growing and innovating along with the world around us. With that in mind we are excited to share what the Fratco community has been up to and what innovations in the world of water management are coming your way. Thank you for playing an integral role in shaping our shared future. Your insights, experiences and support are what make Fratco truly exceptional.

In this issue of *Tried & True*, we place a special emphasis on safety. Our article, “Navigating the Danger Zone: Ensuring Safety in Drainage Trenches,” sheds light on the hazards of working around trenches during water management installations. We believe that staying informed about potential dangers and accidents is crucial to safeguarding our greater Fratco family. Together, we strive to prevent as many accidents as possible and foster a culture of safety within our community.

As we plan for the future, we also feature an insightful piece on the Agricultural Drainage Management Coalition (ADMC) titled “Advancing Water Management for a Sustainable Future.” By delving into the ADMC’s work, we gain valuable insights into the ever-evolving landscape of water management solutions, ensuring that we can continue delivering top-of-the-line products that meet the evolving needs of our community.

Our partnership with Central Plastics Inc., featured in this issue, is a great example of how we love to come alongside industry partners and help us all thrive together. Make sure you don’t miss out on Curt Yoder’s innovative product idea and how Fratco came alongside him to make it a reality.

In our reflection, preparation and planning, we reiterate our commitment to putting people first. Fratco is not just a company; it’s part of a community. Our priorities are driven by the collective desire to grow and thrive together. Whether you have been a long-time partner or are new to the scene, we extend a warm invitation to join our Fratco family.

Sincerely,



Chris Overmyer
President and CEO

IN THIS ISSUE

02 A LETTER FROM CHRIS

04 PRECIPITATION OUTLOOK

05 EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT:
AUSTIN SIMANSON

06 NAVIGATING THE DANGER ZONE:
ENSURING SAFETY IN TRENCHES

09 FRATCO NEWS

10 TAPPING INTO INNOVATION WITH
CENTRAL PLASTICS INC.

13 INDUSTRY NEWS

14 ADVANCING WATER MANAGEMENT
FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

17 WORK ANNIVERSARIES

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

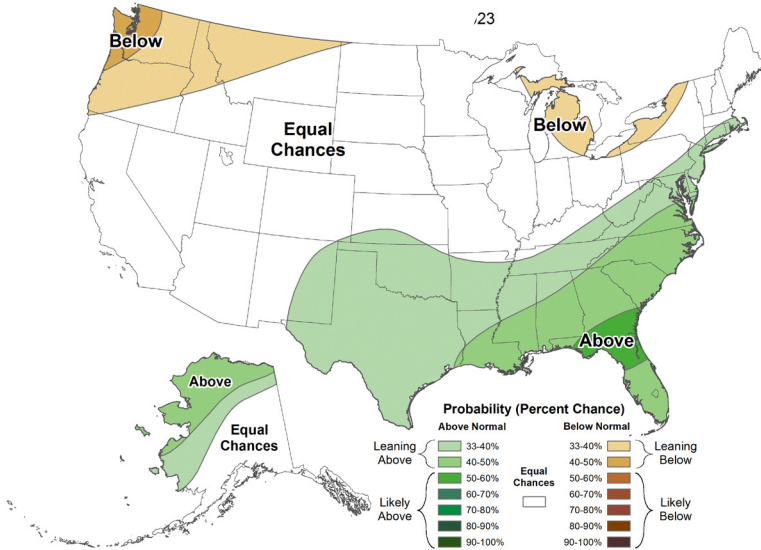
2023

OCT-DEC

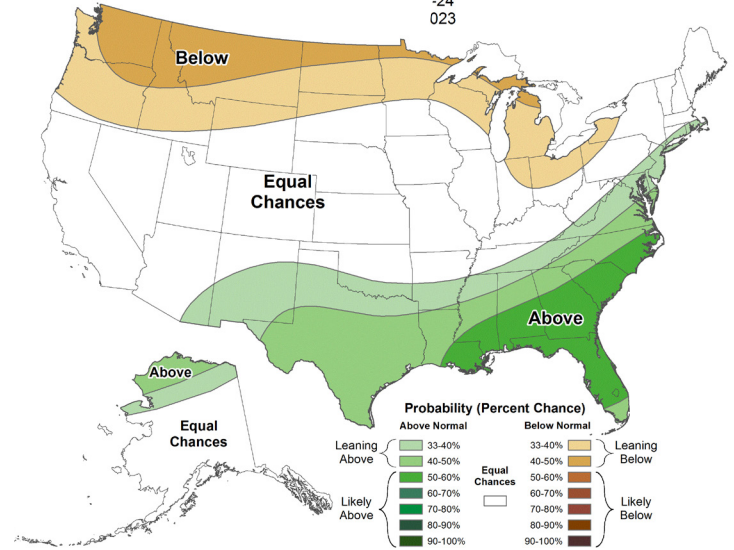
NOV-JAN



Seasonal Precipitation Outlook



Seasonal Precipitation Outlook



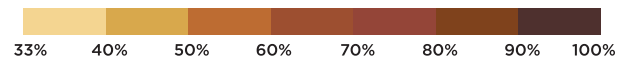
ABOVE NORMAL PROBABILITY



EQUAL CHANCES



BELOW NORMAL PROBABILITY



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.weather.gov

MEET AUSTIN SIMANSON

YARD OPERATOR AT THE FRANCESVILLE PLANT

About to celebrate his one year “workiversary,” Austin Simanson, has felt like part of the Fratco family since the moment he was hired last summer. He assumed he would feel like an outlier, like previous jobs he had, but little did he know, this job would be his dream job come true—not just because of the fulfilling work, but also because of the family-like culture and welcoming nature of his fellow employees.

At Fratco, Austin started as a one-ton truck driver. He loved delivering to customers and being able to interact with them, and quickly knew he wanted to do more. He wanted to learn more about the products that he was driving. After a few months of making deliveries, Austin made the move to his current job as yard operator—a role he loves even more than driving.



We don't want our customers to come in and try and make our day. We want to make their day.

On any given day, Austin can be seen loading trailers, helping customers in person or on the phone, arranging shipments through other carriers, handling orders, pretty much whatever needs to get done, he's willing to do it.

Austin's favorite part of working for Fratco is being able to help customers get the product they need to complete their projects. He says, “Work is always something to



look forward to and it always feels good to know I have helped people at the end of the day.” Austin knows people choose Fratco because of our dedication and willingness to go out of our way, no matter what it takes. The customer will always be number one.

He is constantly amazed about how well everyone at Fratco works together. From dispatch to the yard supervisor, from the shipping clerk to leadership, it doesn't matter. Austin says, “We are one big team, and we all work together.” He knows that if anything came up in his personal or professional life, Fratco would be right there by his side to help him through it. ■

Austin also wanted to throw in a shout out for all of Fratco's customers—he is so thankful for each and every one of you and for allowing him the privilege of being able to help them.



NAVIGATING THE *DANGER* ZONE:

Ensuring Safety in Trenches

Braving the trenches for drainage solutions is no walk in the park. Let's be real, it's tough, gritty work, and there's no sugar-coating it. Where there's drainage, there are dangers. Buckle up for a gritty dive into the challenges and triumphs of maintaining safety in the trenches!

The most common and most lethal hazard when working with drainage trenches is cave-ins.

¹The number of deaths related to trench cave-ins in 2021 came to 15. That number more than doubled in 2022 when it rose to 39. While

these numbers may seem small the importance and value of each individual worker cannot be overstated here at Fratco. We know that behind each life are countless loved ones left behind in the wake of grief. The risk of injury and death in trenches also brings lower morale and productivity.

In response to the drastic rise in fatalities, The U.S. Department of Labor has launched an enhanced enforcement initiative. The program brings awareness to the dangers of working with trenches and implements safety procedures, to show how these deaths can be prevented.

In an interview with *Construction Dive*, Doug Parker, assistant secretary for OSHA, stated that all of these deaths could be prevented if OSHA standards had been met at these locations. Part of this new initiative is an effort to hold employers accountable for the safety of their employees. Parker went on to say, "There simply is no excuse for ignoring safety requirements to prevent trench collapses and cave-ins, and leaving families, friends and co-workers to grieve when the solutions are so well-understood."

1. <https://blog.dol.gov/2023/04/05/protecting-workers-from-trenching-hazards>



THE US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND OSHA'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING TRENCH SAFETY:

This may be old news, but you can never be too careful. Take a few moments to refresh yourself.

1 CREATE A SAFE ENTRANCE AND EXIT FOR EVERY TRENCH

The entrance to a trench is often one of the more dangerous areas of a job site. Workers can slip and fall very easily as trenches often collect moisture quickly, and this area tends to be a bottleneck for everything coming in and out of the trench. Because of this, make sure that the entrance is clear and secure before regular use.

2 BUILD CAVE-IN PROTECTION

Taking the time to set up wall supports, trench boxes and other reinforcements could be the most important part of working in a trench. Although a trench may seem stable enough on its own, you can never predict what might cause the soil to shift. Taking the extra time and materials to set this up will save lives.

3 CLEARLY MARK THE TRENCH PERIMETER

The weight from construction equipment is one of the leading causes of cave-ins, disrupting the soil and causing the edges to fail. It's important to mark the trench perimeter so sites can avoid causing unnecessary strain on the trench walls. Even vibrations from machines or nearby roadways can cause soil to shift and collapse.

4 LOOK OUT FOR HAZARDS, UP AND DOWN

Everything tends to run, roll, or fall towards trenches since they sit low in the ground. Because of this, it's important to keep an eye out for hazards that have found their way into the trench or have the potential to do so. Standing water is a common one, especially when installing a drainage system. As the water runs into the trench it can cause the soil to shift and soften, losing most of its structure. Always remember to periodically check on the moisture level in the area.

Other common hazards to be aware of include air quality and busted utility lines. Air quality may seem like a minor threat, however depending on the type of soil, digging a trench can release all sorts of vapors, so it's important to know that the air is safe to breathe at the job site. Commonly overlooked on this list of hazards is working around already installed utilities. It's integral that the job site be surveyed properly before breaking ground so that any utilities in the area can be marked. The last thing you want to do is hit a gas line while digging. Avoid doing so by calling the national Underground Safety Alliance number, 811, to ensure the land you're working on is safe.

5 ONLY ENTER TRENCHES THAT HAVE BEEN INSPECTED

The key to safety lies in thorough preparation. So while it may feel obvious, it's important that the trench is inspected and passed according to OSHA regulations before it is used by anyone. When it comes to workplace safety you can never be too careful.

[Continue Reading](#)



To simplify these ideas, OSHA put together a “quick card” to remember the essential safety guidelines when working with trenches:

Slope it, Shore it, Shield it

1. Slope trench walls at an angle inclining away from the trench.
2. Shore trench walls with supports to minimize soil movement.
3. Shield trench walls with trench boxes to prevent soil cave-ins.

Working with drainage often means working with trenches. The work we do is important but the lives of employees are more important. Take the time to follow through on these safety precautions, and encourage others to take them seriously as well. It can mean the difference between life and death.

By bringing awareness to dangers like these we can better create safeguards. As long as we have each other's back, we can build a better tomorrow. ■



Fratco News



Distribution Update

A letter for our Francesville customers—stay informed about our overhaul of the distribution process and how it serves our customers all the better.



Scan QR code to check out the full story here!



100 Years & Beyond

Chris was honored to accept the Century Award from Governor Holcomb in August. Thank you to everyone who has been a part of Fratco's journey. We are excited to see what the future of Fratco brings!



Scan QR code to check out the full story here!



DISTRIBUTOR SPOTLIGHT

Tapping Into Innovation with Central Plastics Inc.

Central Plastics Inc. is a remarkable success story in the drainage industry. We talked with Curt Yoder, co-founder of Central Plastics Inc., to get the scoop on how they partner with Fratco in Illinois to bring the best quality products to the people who need them most. Founded in 2011 in Arcola, Illinois, Central Plastics Inc. has steadily grown into a trusted distributor of high-quality drainage products, primarily supplied by Fratco, a leading manufacturer in the field.

Central Plastics Inc. was born out of a collaboration between Curt Yoder and his father, Larry Yoder. After spending some time in the sales world in Dallas and Los Angeles, Curt received a call from his father, who saw an opportunity in the thriving drainage industry. Together, they considered manufacturing four-inch tubing but discovered an even better opportunity when they approached Fratco. The Yoder's knew there was an incredible opportunity, and being a multi-generational farming family, getting into the plastic drainage pipe industry seemed like a natural progression. With his brother running Yoder Farm Drainage, it felt more natural

to be a distributor for Fratco rather than buying the equipment to produce pipe themselves.

Fratco Partnership

Fratco welcomed the idea of Central Plastics Inc. becoming a distributor of their products. This was a significant decision, considering Central Plastics Inc. was relatively young, and Curt was only in his twenties at the time. Fratco's belief in the Yoders and their willingness to support the new distributor allowed Central Plastics Inc. to take root and grow.



Curt Yoder at Arcold, IL Facility

One of the key elements that set Central Plastics Inc. apart was the alignment of their values with Fratco's family-oriented approach. Both companies prioritize building strong relationships and providing exceptional customer service. This shared vision helped them forge a successful partnership that has lasted for over a decade.

The Flex Tap: A Game-Changing Invention

In 2018, Curt Yoder conceived the idea for the Flex Tap, a groundbreaking product designed to simplify and improve the installation of taps. The Flex Tap features a unique locking mechanism that eliminates the need for manually

squeezing and using shovels to wedge the tap in, making it more efficient and user-friendly. Yoder's partnership with Fratco proved vital in bringing this product to life.

When Curt approached Fratco with the Flex Tap prototype, they immediately recognized its potential and embraced the concept of innovation. Fratco's President, Chris Overmyer, fully supported Curt's vision, which resulted in a successful collaboration that led to the launch of the Flex Tap.

Continue Reading

Continued



Inside the Central Plastics Inc.
flex fitting warehouse



Curt Yoder with his son

Hear what Curt Yoder likes about Fratco



The Flex Tap's success transformed Central Plastics Inc. into a North American player, expanding its reach beyond the Midwest. The product gained traction not only in the United States and Canada but also attracted interest from potential European customers.

Continued Partnership and Growth

Over the years, Central Plastics Inc. and Fratco have maintained their strong partnership and continue to support each other. Fratco's dedication to planning ahead and communicating closely with distributors like Central Plastics Inc. has been instrumental in overcoming supply challenges and delivering products efficiently.

Curt Yoder's journey with Central Plastics Inc. is a testament to the power of innovation, partnership and strong values. The company's successful distribution of Fratco products and the revolutionary Flex Tap have cemented its position as a reliable player in the drainage industry. With a focus on customer service, continuous improvement and innovation, Central Plastics Inc. is poised for continued growth and success in the years to come. ■

Industry News

Remembering Jim Vantiger

We offer our deepest condolences to the Vantiger family after Jim's passing on July 3, 2023. We were honored to know him, work with him and get to know him most recently by peeking into the incredible life he led and the legacy he now leaves behind.



Scan QR code to check out the full story here!



The Farm Bill Extension

An extension will have to be filed with Congress as the deadline approaches. Here's a quick update on the 2023 Farm Bill.



Scan QR code to check out the full story here!





Advancing Water Management for a **SUSTAINABLE FUTURE:**

The Agricultural Drainage Management Coalition

Water is a precious resource vital for agricultural production and the overall health of our environment. As the demand for food grows and concerns about water quality and sustainability increase, it becomes crucial to find innovative solutions

for responsible water management. In this pursuit, the Agricultural Drainage Management Coalition (ADMC) emerges as a leading advocate for advancing America's water management practices. Since its inception in 2004, ADMC has

been at the forefront of fostering partnerships and driving initiatives to improve agricultural production efficiency, enhance water quality and achieve sustainable intensification goals.

Why ADMC

ADMC stands out as an innovator in the domain of agricultural water management in the United States. Through the dedication of its volunteer board of industry leaders and a small but knowledgeable staff, ADMC has been instrumental in shaping the development of critical water management practices. ADMC's advocacy, research and partnerships have not only improved crop production but have also addressed environmental challenges, leading to positive outcomes for both agriculture and sustainability.

About ADMC

At its core, ADMC is an industry-led organization, working towards the mutual benefit of enhancing agricultural production while improving water quality. Over the years, ADMC has championed the development of three water management NRCS (National Resources Conservation Service) conservation practice standards and provided extensive training for technical service providers and connected the drainage practitioners with the latest information from the research community. As an influential force in the field, ADMC plays a pivotal role in advancing water management practice adoption throughout the country, bolstering the nation's agricultural productivity while ensuring environmental sustainability.

ADMC's achievements are a testament to its effectiveness and impact. Through research funded by NRCS and FSA (Farm Service Agency), ADMC has contributed to the development of practices that have the potential to be installed on more than 30 million acres for drainage water management and over 200,000 saturated buffer sites. The coalition's dedication to innovation and collaboration has resulted in a remarkable increase in adoption rates of these practices accompanied by substantial cost savings for the landowners and a business opportunity for contractors. Moreover, ADMC has actively engaged with thousands of stakeholders, including

Fratco, through conferences, webinars and its weekly newsletter, making water quality practices accessible and understandable to a wide and influential audience.

Why Water Management is So Important

Water management is critical to the future of sustainable agriculture. Installing saturated buffers is just one of many water management techniques. The future of ag depends on smart ag practices, soil health and water management—the latter being often overlooked. ADMC brings water management to the forefront. Installing saturated buffers with the Batch & Build process is just one practice that they focus on. Others include denitrifying bioreactors, controlled drainage, wetlands and drainage water recycling.

What is a Saturated Buffer?

A saturated buffer refers to a zone of enduring vegetation situated between agricultural fields and waterways, serving as an intermediary for drainage from pipe outlets. In this system, drainage lines are linked to a control structure that facilitates the horizontal dispersion of water throughout the buffer area. As water flows into the buffer, the roots of the perennial vegetation play a crucial role in absorbing both water and essential nutrients, such as nitrate-nitrogen. A saturated buffer has the potential to remove 50% of nitrate-nitrogen from water that is diverted through the buffer.

Batch & Build

While the benefits of saturated buffers are excellent for the environment, historically, they have been very costly and time-consuming to install without a lot of monetary return for farmers and property owners. Over a 5-year span, only 49 saturated buffers and bioreactors had been installed nationwide using NRCS programs. We spoke with Keegan Kult, the Executive Director at ADMC, who explained to us how the innovation of the "Batch & Build" process has led to



Continue Reading

Continued

an exponential increase in saturated buffer installations. ADMC was part of a team that developed the Batch & Build idea to pilot in Polk County, Iowa. The new approach was needed as the county had a watershed plan to install 100 of these structures, but only had six put in the ground the previous five years.

Kult, Polk County officials, local NCRS agents and the state of Iowa joined forces to hatch a plan where a special project manager, called a fiscal agent, would be appointed. Farmers and landowners would give permission and assign payments to a fiscal agent who would then coordinate with the contractors to schedule batches of the installations. This way, ten to fifteen saturated buffers would be installed over a few weeks, which makes for a much more profitable and alluring agreement for the contractor. They could start at the top of a stream and just work their way down two to three miles and easily

pop each practice into place. Even the engineers who were surveying the land saved time and money, since they could survey ten sites in a day as opposed to one or two. With the implementation of the new “Batch & Build” method, they have been able to install 135 sites over the past three years in Polk and Story County.

Fratco's Role

Fratco is a Diamond Member of ADMC. Our Sales Manager, Craig Douglas, serves on ADMC's board and helps weigh in on strategic decision-making. Partnering with ADMC as a member is one of the greatest ways that you can support them as their membership accounts for 50% of their funding. They have seven different levels of membership that you can choose from, making it affordable for all organizations and businesses.

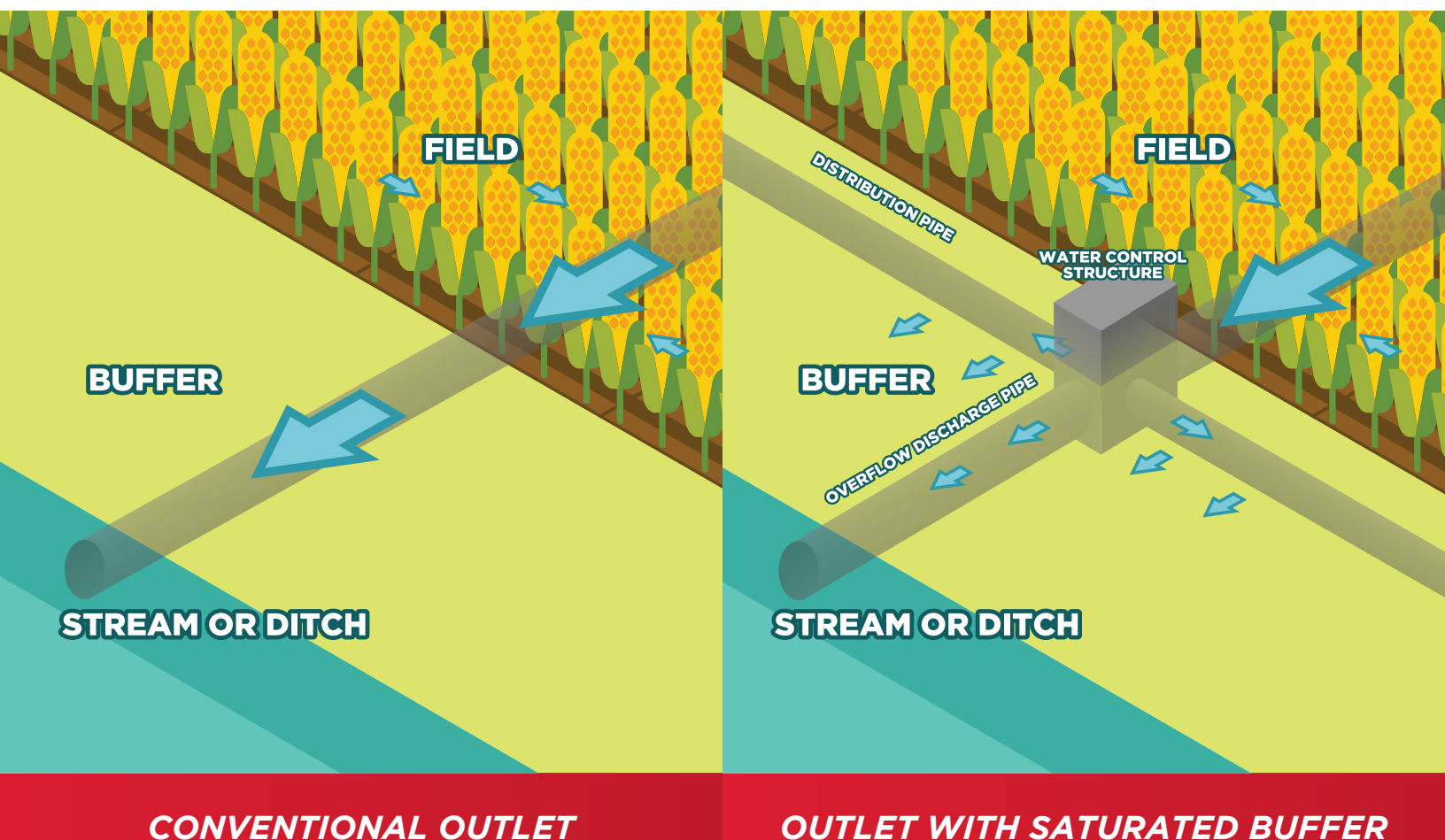
The Agricultural Drainage Management Coalition (ADMC) has proven itself to be a driving force in

the advancement of sustainable water management practices in American agriculture—a mission all of us in the industry can support. Through their unwavering commitment to driving implementation, communicating and educating, continuous innovation and promoting safety and responsibility, ADMC has significantly contributed to enhancing water quality, agricultural productivity and environmental conservation. As the world faces increasing challenges related to food security and environmental sustainability, ADMC's vision and mission remain pivotal in shaping a future where responsible water management is at the heart of sustainable agriculture. ■



Join ADMC today and learn how you can make a difference.

admcoalition.com/join-admc





WORK ANNIVERSARIES

Daniel Koebcke	<i>35 years</i>
Willie Parish Jr.	<i>35 years</i>
Dean Speece	<i>29 years</i>
Kent Towler	<i>27 years</i>
Edward Leszek	<i>25 years</i>
John Danford	<i>19 years</i>
Dreymond Carter	<i>18 years</i>
Roger Cavness	<i>18 years</i>
Anthony Hannon	<i>16 years</i>
Rebecca Blackburn	<i>13 years</i>
Chris Calisto	<i>11 years</i>
Stacie Baccam	<i>11 years</i>
Jeffrey Webb	<i>6 years</i>
Brendan Noggle	<i>5 years</i>

Oscar Velasquez	<i>5 years</i>
Hans Peter	<i>4 years</i>
Tiffany Grace Espinoza	<i>3 years</i>
Mark Anthony Garay	<i>3 years</i>
Felix Jonatham	<i>2 years</i>
Magdalena Alfaro	<i>2 years</i>
Lucas Duensing	<i>2 years</i>
Jerome Weiland	<i>2 years</i>
Gage Garpow	<i>1 year</i>
Darrell Luepnitz	<i>1 year</i>
Jason Dorothy	<i>1 year</i>
Tommy Mangan	<i>1 year</i>
Ana Alvarenga	<i>9 months</i>

WELCOMING NEW HIRES

Robert Hanlin
Devon Pocius
Garrett Grieger
Raemond Strohl
Jocelyn Favela
Martha Camila Romo
Adelso Vicente
Sergio Peralta

Wesley Rightman
Dawit Desta Sangele
Brandon Espinoza
Joshua Martin
Manuel Cordova
Erick Ponce Chavez
Austin Bolen
Madison Moseley

Arleth Alfaro Gonzalez
Pablo Perez Reyes
Nabbil Guido
Christopher Lagunas
Cheyenne Allen II
Ethen Courtney
Kelly Henneike

Howdy, Fratco Family!

WIN THIS LIMITED EDITION *TRIED & TRUE* CAP



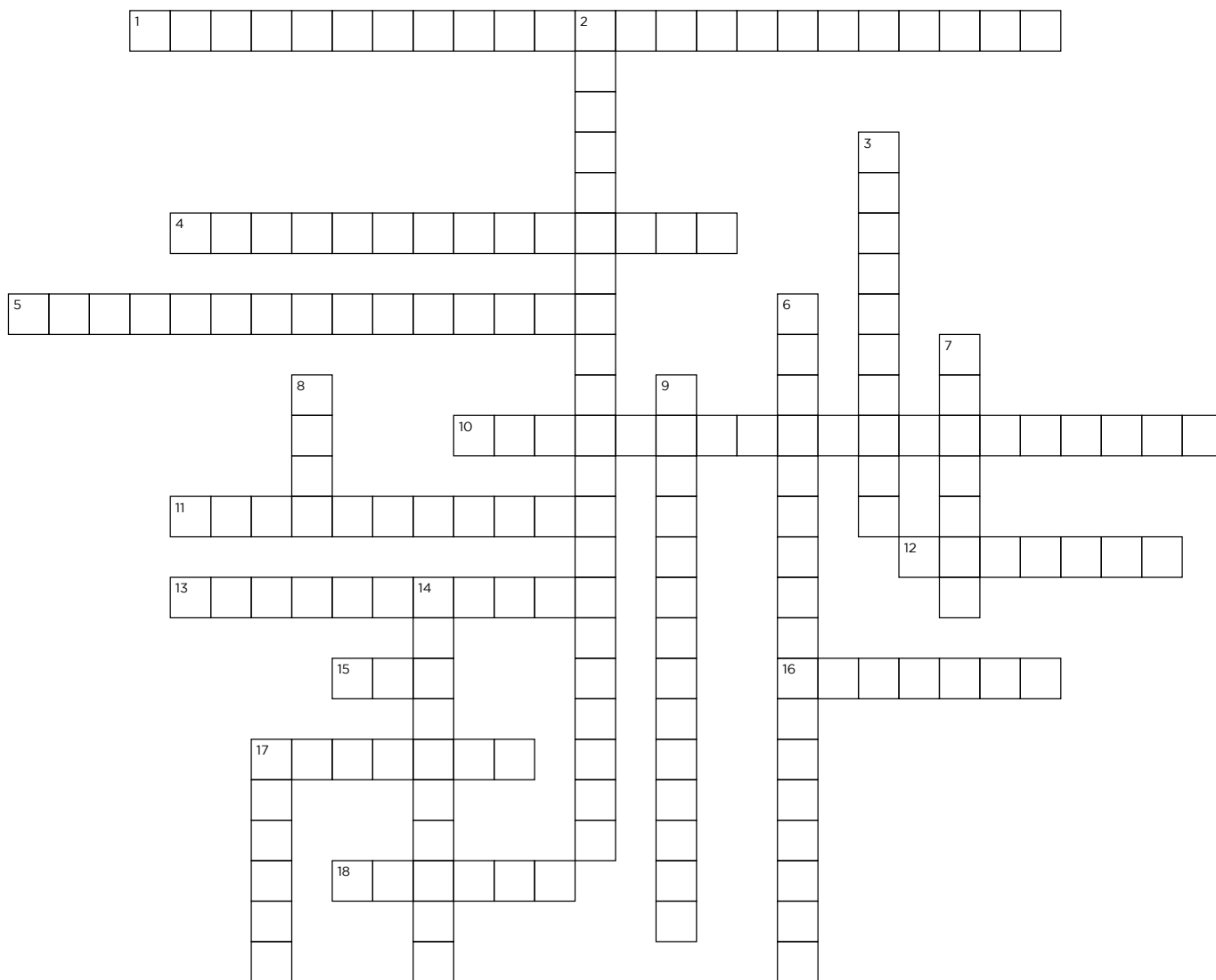
Complete the crossword puzzle, snap a picture of it, and email it to **tried.true@fracto.com** by December 31st. We will pick 5 lucky winners to receive a *Tried & True* hat! Fill out the information below and include it in your photo!

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____



CROSSWORD CLUES

DOWN

2. The award Fratco accepted in August 2023
3. Where ADMC's Batch & Build process was born
6. FSA stands for
7. The second step of OSHA's "Quick Card" for trench safety
8. A water management, industry-led organization
9. Central Plastics' approach that also aligns with Fratco's
14. There were this many trench related deaths in 2022
17. Leading manufacturer that supplies products to Central Plastics Inc.

ACROSS

1. One of the methods of water management that ADMC focuses on
4. Location where Central Plastics Inc. was founded
5. A zone of enduring vegetation situated between agricultural fields and waterways
10. Organization launching an enhanced enforcement initiative for trench safety
11. Project manager for ADMC's Batch and Build Process
12. Fratco's level of membership with ADMC
13. This man leaves behind a legacy of hard-work, entrepreneurship, and dedication to his community in Central Iowa
15. The name of the trade association representing plastic pipe industries
16. According to OSHA, the most common and lethal hazard when working with drainage trenches
17. Central Plastics innovative product that simplifies tile tap installation
18. ADMC has helped build practices for potential water management systems on this many million acres



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



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