

TRIED & TRUE

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FALL 2025

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Fratco family,

If there's one thing I've learned in this business, it's that the future doesn't take care of itself. It's built one day at a time, with the choices we make and the work we put in right now.

That's why this issue of *Tried & True* is all about foundations. Whether it's the contractors in the field laying pipe, our partners in manufacturing building tools that last or our own team here at Fratco keeping production steady, the same principle holds true: what we do today sets the tone for tomorrow.

The world around us will always keep shifting—costs rise and fall, markets change and the weather keeps us on our toes. But some things don't change, whether it's our dependability, the pride we take in every project or the way we treat the people working alongside us.

You'll see that spirit in the stories we've gathered here. They're about resilience and about people who show up every day to do the hard work of building something that lasts. They're reminders that while tools, materials and markets evolve, integrity and grit never go out of style.

At Fratco, we've been around long enough to know that's what matters most. It's what has carried us through more than a century of change, and it's what will carry us through the next one.



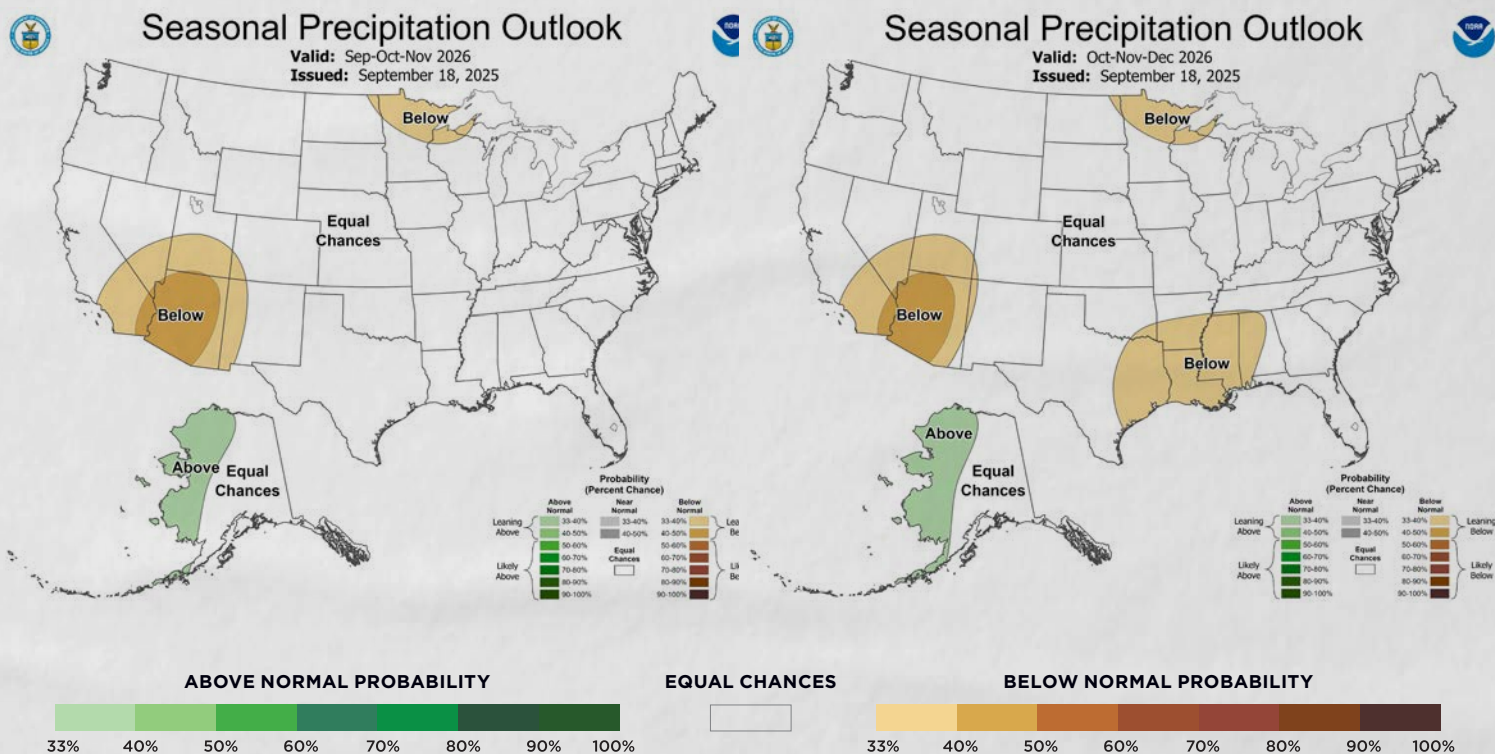
Chris Overmyer
President and CEO

Precipitation Outlook

FROM THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

SEP-NOV

OCT-DEC



The future brings a constantly shifting landscape, and weather predictions are no exception. In an industry where preparation is the cornerstone of success, having a glimpse into what lies ahead can make the difference between a normal day or an unforeseen setback. Staying vigilant with daily and weekly weather updates is essential. Take proactive steps towards a successful future by considering seasonal forecasts for a broader perspective on the coming season.

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

www.weather.gov



Blueprint for Success

The future depends on *what you do* today.

- MAHATMA GANDHI

Laying the Foundation

It's easy to think of the future as some distant horizon, maybe something we'll worry about when we get there. But Gandhi flips that idea on its head. The future isn't just ahead of us. It's being built right now, with each decision, each action, each day.

At Fratco, we understand the power of foundations. Every trench dug, every pipe laid and every project started—these aren't just tasks for today. They're investments in tomorrow. And it's more than infrastructure we're shaping. We are shaping communities, farmlands, businesses and livelihoods.

Whether you're on the job site, in the office or leading a crew, what you do today matters. The habits you form, the standards you set and the integrity you choose—all of it sets the tone for what's coming next. Even the smallest steps forward, when taken with purpose, create momentum that carries far beyond the present moment.

The future doesn't just happen. It's built moment by moment, action by action, by people who understand that excellence today leads to

success tomorrow. And when each of us commits to showing up with that mindset, we accomplish more than building strong projects. We are able to build a stronger future together.

So let's be people who build with vision. Let's treat today like it's the start of something bigger—because it is. ■

INDUSTRY NEWS

OBBB ACT COULD EXPAND

SUPPORT FOR AG DRAINAGE

SOLUTIONS

Proposed updates to the Farm Bill and the OBBB Act may increase funding for conservation drainage practices.



Scan here to learn more from www.fb.org!

Proposed legislation, such as the OBBB Act, could open new funding avenues for conservation-focused drainage solutions, making it easier for producers to invest in systems like Fratco's ProCorr and FlexCorr. With expanded support, Fratco's durable and efficient products are well-positioned to help farmers meet both productivity and sustainability goals.

BIOREACTORS BOOST

WATER QUALITY

Drainage systems play a key role in supporting bioreactor-based conservation efforts that reduce nutrient runoff.



Scan here to learn more from phys.org!

Fratco's advanced drainage systems, like TruFlo and SmoothCorr, are engineered to integrate seamlessly with conservation practices such as bioreactors—supporting efforts to reduce nutrient runoff and improve water quality. As shown in this article, innovations in agricultural drainage play a vital role in environmental stewardship, a mission Fratco proudly supports.

MEET

CRAIG THOMPSON

SALES SUPPORT SPECIALIST

If you've worked with Fratco's sales team over the past decade, there's a good chance you've crossed paths with Craig Thompson. While he's not pounding the pavement visiting job sites these days, his contributions are still an important part of the company's daily operations.

"I started out as an estimator for a waterworks company," he shared. "After that, I got into construction. I had my own tiling machine in the '70s, laid pipe and worked for a couple of big contractors before eventually moving into pipe sales." Craig joined Fratco in 2015, bringing with him a lifetime of hands-on experience in the drainage industry. His deep knowledge of drainage systems didn't come from textbooks. It came from years of boots-on-the-ground work installing pipe, reading plans and solving real-world problems.

After several years on the road as a sales representative for Fratco, Craig recognized it was time to step back from the physical demands of travel. Fratco saw the opportunity to retain his invaluable expertise in a new role. Today, Craig monitors project plans across eight states, helping identify jobs that require Fratco products. "I go through the plans, figure out what materials are needed and send that to our sales team," he explains. "It keeps me plenty busy."

What keeps Craig motivated after decades in the business? "Honestly, it's the people," he says. "I've worked for other companies, but Fratco is honest and straightforward. They don't sugarcoat things. It's a really good company to work for."

Watching the industry evolve over the years has been one of the most interesting parts of the job. "When I started, dual-wall pipe wasn't common in storm sewer work. It took years for engineers to get comfortable with it," Craig recalls. "Now, I see

it specified on jobs all the time, and polypropylene is becoming more common, too. The equipment has changed a lot as well. Self-contained plows have made installs faster and cleaner than we ever imagined back in the day."

When he's not reviewing plans or sending estimates, Craig enjoys time at home in Manson, Iowa, working on landscaping projects with his wife, who served as the city clerk for 38 years. "She does all the mowing," he jokes. "I handle the landscaping."

For anyone considering a job at Fratco, Craig's advice is simple:



***They'll be straight with you.
It's an honest company full of
good people.***

As the industry continues to change, Craig's steady presence is proof that experience never goes out of style, and that there's still plenty of value in a sharp mind, a good set of plans and knowing how to help water go where it's supposed to go. ■



JOHNS BROTHERS

TILING & EXCAVATING

BUILDING ON FAITH, FAMILY & HARD WORK

Some of the most successful companies are born from opportunity. Others are born from determination in the face of life's challenges. Johns Brothers is both.

In 2011, Eric and Earl Johns were each thriving in their own careers: Earl in agriculture and excavation and Eric in commercial construction. After 16 years, they had the skills, the work ethic and the industry knowledge. But when their mother faced a serious illness, the two brothers found themselves spending more time together and reflecting on what really mattered.

"Out of that season we decided, 'Hey, we ought to just quit our jobs and start a company,'" Eric says. "And that's exactly what we did."

With a \$100,000 loan, an old tiling machine from the 1980s and a backhoe, they set out on their own. What began as two brothers with borrowed equipment has since grown into a \$4 million-a-year, multi-generational business employing a dozen people, most of which is family.

A BUSINESS WHERE FAMILY RUNS DEEP

Family is the foundation of Johns Brothers, shaping how the company works and why it thrives. Out of 12 employees, only three aren't related, although every member of the team is treated like family.



One of the Johns Brothers' tiling machines.



Earl with his wife, Stephanie.



Eric with his wife, Maurie and two of their children, Crysta and Joshua.

Eric and Earl's older brother, Don, joined the business in 2013, keeping the fleet in top shape as a mechanic while also running excavators. Eric's son, Andrew, came on after earning a business degree from Grace College in Winona Lake and is preparing to carry the company into the future. Earl's son-in-law, Air Force veteran Tyler Skinner, joined in 2018 and now operates excavators and dozers on some of their largest projects.

Eric also points to longtime employee Nick Ames. "Nick kind of runs with the commercial excavating side of things," he explains. "We depend on him a lot, especially on the big dairy farms. He's a huge asset to us."

Behind the scenes, Earl's wife Stephanie manages the office from Francesville, handling billing, payroll and bookkeeping. Eric's wife Maurie, a nurse, keeps the shop running by stocking food and drinks, washing work clothes and making sure the crew always has what they need.

"It's such a dirty job that we even provide their work clothes," Eric says. "It's one of those little things that makes life easier for the guys."

FROM SMALL JOBS TO MASSIVE PROJECTS

When the company began, a \$20,000 tiling job was a big deal. Today, Johns Brothers regularly tackles half-million-dollar pattern tile projects covering hundreds of acres.

"We still do the small jobs," Eric says. "They're not always the most profitable, but that's what built our business. It's also an investment in future work, so we keep at it."

Their work now extends far beyond field drainage. Johns Brothers handles about 75% of Titan Construction's commercial dirt work and maintains strong relationships with large dairy operations in the region.

Their biggest dairy project was an 8,000-cow facility where they managed every bit of site work, including lagoon construction. This year alone, they have dug retention ponds for stormwater, prepared sites for new calf facilities and excavated for a biogas digester.

"There's never a shortage of work," Eric says with a grin.

A FLEET BUILT FOR ANY JOB

From their humble start with two machines, Johns Brothers now owns more than 30 pieces of equipment, including:

- 7 excavators
- 5 bulldozers
- 4 tiling machines
- 2 skid steers
- Multiple semis, dump trucks and support vehicles

Owning their own equipment, or as Eric would say, "owning their own iron," gives them the flexibility to take on nearly any job without waiting on rentals or outside resources.

CONTINUE READING >>>



Blacker Fields in Rensselaer, Indiana, where Johns Brothers did all the excavation work and final grading.



The diesel tank at Johns Brothers.

“SO WHETHER YOU EAT
OR DRINK OR WHATEVER
YOU DO, DO IT ALL TO THE
GLORY OF GOD.”

– 1 CORINTHIANS 10:31

A PARTNERSHIP THEY
CAN COUNT ON

Since day one, Johns Brothers has trusted Fratco for their drainage solutions. The connection runs deeper than business. Eric, Earl’s wife and several Fratco employees, including President and CEO, Chris Overmyer, all grew up together riding the same school bus. That lifelong bond built a foundation of trust.

“It’s not a perfect world,” Eric says, noting that in such a dynamic industry, mistakes are bound to happen. “But when they do, Chris is our guy—he always makes it right. That’s why we keep going back.”

For Johns Brothers, dependability is everything. “They’re always there to supply what we need,” Eric explains.

“In this business, timing is everything. If we call, they make sure we have it. That’s the kind of partner you hold on to.”

Eric explains, “John Danford is my go-to guy. He always makes sure we have what we need. He has had the guys load pipe up for us overnight so I could get it the next morning. He’s also been very flexible and accommodating if they didn’t have exactly what I needed, usually because of my lack of planning.”

Eric also appreciates the no-pressure approach of Fratco Sales Rep Jade Crum. “I don’t like to be pestered by salesmen,” he says. “If I need something, I call him and he takes care of it. That’s how I like to do business, and Jade honors that.”

GUIDED BY FAITH

From the very beginning, Johns Brothers has operated under a guiding verse:

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.”
– 1 Corinthians 10:31

This scripture isn’t just a motto on the wall. It is the principle that directs how the brothers lead their crew, treat their customers and think about their future.

With the next generation already stepping into leadership roles, Eric and Earl know that Johns Brothers’ foundation of faith, family and hard work will continue to carry the business forward for years to come. ■

WORK
ANNIVERSARIES

Chad Eberhart	31 years	Andres Gonzalez	4 years	Floralalma Perez	2 years
Chris Overmyer	28 years	Reece Eakins	4 years	Marvin Velasquez Eraso	2 years
Chad Nicholson	24 years	Ron Probasco	4 years	Angel Leenders	2 years
Scott Craig	23 years	Jade Crum	4 years	Masyuly Lisett Pina	2 years
Bobby Howard	23 years	Ricardo Cardoza	3 years	Jaime Hall	1 year
Alan Kruszka	16 years	Austin Simanson	3 years	Abbey Steele	1 year
Nathaniel Depew	5 years	Joel Hughes	3 years	Adam Luttrell	1 year
Cameron Dewitt	5 years	Jolene Hagedorn	3 years	Zachary Griffin	1 year
Carlos Gonzalez	5 years	Jason Lingenfelter	3 years	Trace McIlvain	1 year
Holly Craig	5 years	Makayla Cam	2 years	Todd Riley	1 year
Zachary Wesely	5 years	Tristan Carter	2 years		

WELCOMING NEW HIRES

Jesse McPherson	Brandon Septer
Jeise Sanchez De Diaz	Dominick Tello

MOLDING AMERICAN MANUFACTURING

INSIDE MICHIGAN TOOL WORKS

In a small town in southern Michigan, a business built on steel, sparks and sheer determination has become a vital link in the chain of American manufacturing. Michigan Tool Works and its sister company, Michigan Plastic Works, are more than a tool shop. They're a full-service operation built on hard work, trust and an unwavering drive to do things right.

Founded by Pete Stemen and Brent Morgan, the company has grown from a two-man passion project to a thriving 40-person team. From custom molds to molded parts, product design to production consulting, their operation in Sturgis, Michigan, has become a quiet powerhouse and a valued partner to Fratco.

"We started in 2006 with no money and one machinist," Pete says. "Brent and I were working day jobs, and my wife ran the office before we could even afford to work here full time." Their business took root in toolmaking, specifically injection and blow mold tooling, but it quickly grew as customers began asking for more.

"People started saying, 'Can you run these molds too?'" Pete explains. "So we started Michigan Plastic Works. That allowed us to take someone from idea to mold to finished product. We became a one-stop shop."

WORKING HAND IN GLOVE WITH FRATCO

Pete and his team first connected with Fratco when the need arose for durable, reliable tooling to support its growing line of plastic fittings. What began as a few repairs evolved into a full-scale tooling overhaul that strengthened both companies.

"We build new molds for Fratco, repair old ones and help modify existing tooling when the products change," Pete says.

They've been incredible to work with. Great people, great feedback and they take the time to collaborate so the end product is done right."

Recently, Michigan Tool Works helped to rebuild Fratco's entire injection mold portfolio as a proactive approach to replace its tooling ahead of the end of its service life. Much of the previous tooling had been imported and wasn't built to last. Pete's team replaced it with carefully engineered, American-made tools designed for endurance and precision.

"They'll get a lifetime out of what we built," Pete says. "We don't cut corners—I won't sell what I can't guarantee."

Ironically, one of those new Fratco molds was in a press when a fire broke out in the plastics division last year. The blaze destroyed all the machinery but spared the building thanks to a team member who happened to stop by and saw smoke pouring from the roof.

"We lost everything in the plastics shop, but we rebuilt," Pete says. "Everything's new now—better layout, better machines and better output. And Fratco got a brand-new mold out of it."

FROM THE GROUND UP

Pete's journey into manufacturing started the way many Fratco partners and customers can relate to—through a high school shop class, a strong mentor and a desire to build something real.

"I was a farm kid. My teacher told me what toolmakers made, and I thought I'd be rich," Pete laughs. "Cars, boats, women, houses—I had it all planned at 17."

He didn't strike it rich right away, but he did gain something better—experience. That early exposure to the trades sparked a work ethic that carried him through decades of highs and lows in the manufacturing world. Today, Michigan Tool Works employs toolmakers with decades of experience alongside a growing team of younger technicians.

But Pete is quick to point out the growing challenge in the industry.

"It's hard to find young people willing to learn it," he says. "College isn't for everyone. I tell kids all the time—find a job China can't take."

To reinforce that message, Pete and his wife launched a local scholarship program in memory of their late son that supports students entering skilled trades. No four-year degree required—just dedication to a craft.

"We've funded future toolmakers, barbers, nurses—you name it," he says. "We're trying to get more kids to see that the trades are a real path forward. You don't have to sit in a classroom for four years to have a successful, rewarding career."



To learn more or to donate to The Austin Stemen Scholarship for the Trades, scan here.

CONTINUE READING >>>

INJECTION MOLDED TEES

INJECTION MOLDED INTERNALS AND CAPS

INJECTION MOLDED ELBOWS

INJECTION MOLDED WYES



A look inside at the toolmakers.

That philosophy mirrors Fratco’s own values. As a company that has spent over a century building American infrastructure, one pipe at a time, Fratco knows the future depends on the hands that build it.

MORE THAN A MACHINE SHOP

Michigan Tool Works and Michigan Plastic Works handle everything from hand tool grips to millions of units for unique industries. They mold parts for agriculture, furniture, construction and even the funeral industry. No two projects are alike, but the attention to detail remains constant.

On any given day, you’ll find high-tech EDM machines burning steel with hair-thin wire, injection presses forming parts by the millions and laser welders fine-tuning precision molds under a microscope.

Still, Pete insists it’s not the machines that matter most—it’s the people.

“I’d go fishing with every single person here,” he says. “You can’t fake it when you’re in a boat with someone. If I’d fish with you, I’ll work with you.”

That people-first mindset extends to customers like Fratco. Over the past two years, Pete’s team has helped Fratco refine product designs, rebuild worn tooling and solve fitment issues as new product lines have developed.

They’ve been incredible partners. They listen, they collaborate, and they’re willing to work through the process. That’s all any of us want—to get to the best possible product.”

THE LONG GAME

For Pete, success hasn’t come from flashy pitches or quick wins. It comes from showing up, solving problems and sticking with it—even when it’s hard.

“We’ve made our share of mistakes,” he says. “But we learn fast and we never stop trying to get better.”

That mindset—plus some Midwestern grit—has helped Michigan Tool Works not only recover from setbacks but come back stronger.

“We’re not here because we’re the smartest,” Pete says. “We’re here because we’re the hardest working.”

In a world where fast and cheap often win the bid, companies like Michigan Tool Works prove there’s still room for something better, something built to last. And in partners like Fratco, they’ve found a shared commitment to doing things the right way, every time.

Whether it’s pipe or tooling, drainage or design, when it’s made right, it works right.

And that’s exactly how both companies plan to keep molding the future—one part at a time. ■



**MAXIMUM FLOW.
MAXIMUM STRENGTH.**

MADE FROM HDPP, PROCORR OFFERS AN ALTERNATIVE TO TRADITIONAL CONCRETE AND METAL PIPE FOR HEAVY-DUTY DRAINAGE PROJECTS. OFFERING UNPARALLELED COST-EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH IMPROVED LEAD TIMES AND FASTER INSTALLATION—ALL WHILE GETTING THE JOB DONE RIGHT.

*THIS IMAGE WAS CREATED FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADVERTISING. IT IS NOT A RECOMMENDED INSTALLATION OF THE PRODUCT. BUT WE’RE GUESSING YOU ALREADY KNEW THAT!

PRO CORR



THE SCIENCE OF FLOW

WHAT HAPPENS INSIDE THE PIPE WHEN IT'S OUT OF SIGHT

As many of you know, when it comes to drainage, a lot of attention goes to the plastic. Size, strength, flexibility—those are often the features that get discussed at the jobsite. However, what also matters is what happens inside the pipe, where flow is determined by a few simple rules that can make or break a project.

Whether you're draining a subdivision, controlling runoff in a commercial parking lot, running a mainline for agricultural runoff or replacing municipal infrastructure, understanding flow basics can help you choose the right pipe and keep your system running as it should.

FLOW 101: THE BASICS OF WATER MOVEMENT THROUGH PIPE

Water moves the way it always has, downhill and toward the path of least resistance. For gravity-fed drainage systems, the key is to design a path that water wants to follow. That means paying close attention to slope, diameter and internal friction.

Most drainage systems aren't pressurized like city water mains. Instead, they use open-channel flow, which means the pipe only runs partially full and relies on gravity to carry water from one end to the other. In open-channel flow, the smoothness of its interior and the steepness of its slope all affect how well water moves.

Smooth pipes, steeper slopes and wider diameters all help water flow faster. But push those too far, and you run into issues—like scouring at the outlet or unnecessary cost from overexcavation. That's where understanding the numbers behind flow can give you an edge.

MEET MANNING'S "n": THE COEFFICIENT OF SMOOTHNESS

Manning's Equation is the go-to formula engineers use to calculate flow in open-channel systems. It looks like this:

$$Q = \left(\frac{1.486}{n} \right) \times A \times R^{\frac{2}{3}} \times S^{\frac{1}{2}}$$

No need to memorize it, but many would say one piece matters more than the rest: Manning's "n", the roughness coefficient. In simple terms, it tells you how smooth the pipe is on the inside. The lower the number, the smoother the flow.

Here's a quick look at how different materials stack up:

- Smooth-walled plastic pipe: $n \approx 0.012$
- Concrete pipe: $n \approx 0.013$
- Corrugated single-wall pipe: $n \approx 0.022$

As expected, a dual-wall pipe with a smooth inner wall moves water faster and more efficiently than a single-wall pipe with corrugations inside or concrete pipe. A small difference in "n" can make a big difference in real-world performance, especially in long runs or systems that operate near capacity. It boils down to the math: smooth-walled plastic pipe outflows the others.

WHY PIPE DESIGN MATTERS: FLOW IN ACTION

Fratco's SmoothCorr (HDPE) pipe was built around that concept. It combines the strength and flexibility of a corrugated outer wall with a smooth interior surface that promotes faster flow. It's ideal for most dual-wall drainage installs, giving you the durability you need without sacrificing performance.

FlexCorr (HDPE), on the other hand, is built for adaptability. Its highly flexible dual-wall design makes it ideal for jobs with tricky terrain, tight contours or areas where rigid pipe just won't lay right. FlexCorr can be installed with a drainage plow, making installation faster and reducing the need for precise trench shaping, all while maintaining the strength needed for reliable drainage.

ProCorr (HDPP) is Fratco's heavy-duty solution for tough conditions. Its high-density polypropylene construction resists chemical corrosion and stands up to aggressive soils and fertilizers. With a rigid dual-wall design, ProCorr maintains exceptional flow capacity while delivering the strength needed for heavy-load applications. It's ideal for commercial, municipal or large-scale ag projects where long-term performance and reliability are a must.

CONTINUE READING >>>

SMOOTH CORR

FLEX CORR

FLEX CORR

INDUSTRY'S ONLY THIRD-PARTY-CERTIFIED
FLEXIBLE DUAL-WALL PIPE

WITH A MANNING'S "n"
VALUE OF 0.012 OR
BETTER.

PROCORR



Each pipe brings a different advantage to the job, though all dual-wall pipe offers high-flow efficiency, which helps reduce sediment buildup and cut down on maintenance. The right pipe depends on what the site demands—but either way, smart pipe selection leads to better performance and fewer headaches down the road.

SLOPE: THE INVISIBLE MVP

Slope can be one of the most overlooked factors in pipe performance, but it shouldn't be. Water can't move without gravity, and even small changes in slope have a big impact.

A slope of 0.5%, just 6 inches of drop over 100 feet, might not sound like much, but it's enough to keep water moving in most drainage systems. Get the slope wrong, though, and even the best pipe will fail to perform.

CAPACITY VS. VELOCITY: WHAT ARE YOU DESIGNING FOR?

Bigger pipe holds more water. Faster-moving water clears out debris. Both are good, but you rarely get both at the same time.

A larger diameter increases capacity but requires more digging and bedding, which adds to time and cost. Higher velocity helps move solids and prevent blockages, but too much speed can erode outlets and channels. The key is to find a balance based on the project's needs.

Fratco's dual-wall variants help contractors make those trade-offs. SmoothCorr, available in virgin and recycled, provides efficient, high-flow performance as the default in standard applications. While FlexCorr and ProCorr, both made from virgin resin, are ideal in more demanding sites, providing strength and ease of installation compared to traditional options like concrete. The right pipe is the one that fits the job, not just the specs on paper.

WHY IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT THE PIPE—IT'S ABOUT THE SYSTEM
Even the best pipe can't fix a bad design. Poor inlet placement, mismatched elevations and underperforming outlets can all cause backups or failures, no matter how smooth the inside of the pipe is.

That's why Fratco offers more than just pipe. Their team is available to support engineers and contractors with product recommendations and system insights when needed. Whether it's helping select the right pipe for the site or providing input on tricky drainage challenges, Fratco's goal is the same: to help water go where it's supposed to, efficiently and reliably.

IN THE END, IT'S SIMPLE
Water follows physics. It doesn't care what the invoice says or what the pipe looks like above ground. It moves the way nature tells it to. If you understand that and use the right products in the right way, you'll build systems that work, last and make the client happy.

Because drainage isn't just about what goes in the ground, it's about what happens inside the pipe once you walk away. ■



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON FRATCO PIPE, SCAN HERE!

TRADE TENSIONS CONTINUE

FRATCO REMAINS A RELIABLE PARTNER

Recent tariff developments—like the actions announced in March targeting steel, aluminum and certain Chinese-made goods—have added another layer to an already unpredictable global trade environment. While some of these changes aim to address long-standing concerns around trade imbalances and industrial policy, their broader impact is difficult to predict, especially for sectors like agriculture and construction that rely on global supply chains.

For companies using high-density polyethylene (HDPE) and high-density polypropylene (HDPP), the uncertainty doesn't stem from one specific action, but rather from the growing unpredictability of material costs, delivery timelines and international sourcing. Even industries not directly targeted by tariffs are feeling the ripple effects of instability in upstream markets.

In times like these, many contractors and suppliers are asking the same questions: How long will this last? What will change next? And how do we keep projects moving with so many unknowns?

While there aren't clear answers yet, there are still constants you can count on.

As a manufacturer with over a century of experience, Fratco has consistently demonstrated its ability to weather market cycles, global disruptions and supply chain challenges. With domestic manufacturing facilities and long-standing supplier relationships, Fratco minimizes exposure to the kind of volatility that can impact production schedules or field readiness.

Fratco's position is not only one of geographic advantage but also one of industry commitment. While trade and economic policies may evolve, our mission remains constant: to deliver pipe solutions that are proven, durable and ready when our customers need them.

We recognize that uncertainty around tariffs and trade negotiations can make planning difficult. That's why we remain focused on what we can control—dependable production, responsive customer service and a deep understanding of what our partners and customers require to keep working.

Markets may shift, but our commitment to reliability doesn't. ■

THE 100-YEAR PROJECT

WHY LONG-TERM INFRASTRUCTURE
NEEDS THE RIGHT PIPE TODAY

Most drainage systems are buried and forgotten until they fail. That's why engineers, municipalities and developers are designing infrastructure today with one big question in mind: will it last?

Whether it's a new subdivision, a stormwater network under a commercial site or a city's long-range utility upgrade, the best projects are built not just for now but for the next 50, 75 or even 100 years. And that kind of staying power doesn't happen by accident. It starts with smart planning, trusted materials and picking the right pipe from day one.

INFRASTRUCTURE THAT OUTLASTS ITS DESIGNERS

When municipal engineers approve a drainage system, they're not just thinking about next season's stormwater. They're thinking about long-term maintenance, lifecycle cost and how much trouble this system might cause 30 years from now. If it needs to be dug up prematurely, someone pays for that—whether it's taxpayers, developers or contractors with reputations on the line.

Increasingly, municipalities are requiring a 100-year design life in their specifications. That doesn't just mean putting in heavy-duty pipe. It means choosing pipe that's been tested, documented and proven over the years.

DURABILITY IS MORE THAN STRENGTH

When people hear "100-year infrastructure," they often picture reinforced concrete or steel. But while those materials once dominated long-term installs, they come with trade-offs—cost, weight, installation time, corrosion and in some cases, unexpected early failures.

That's why more engineers are turning to advanced plastic pipe—specifically dual-wall HDPE and HDPP—as a long-lasting, lower-maintenance alternative. Fratco's products, like SmoothCorr, ProCorr and FlexCorr, are made with long-term performance in mind. They're tough enough to handle heavy loads and harsh conditions, yet lightweight and easy to work with, which reduces installation time and labor costs.

They don't rust, rot or crumble from exposure to water or chemicals. And unlike some rigid materials, plastic flexes with the soil around it, which helps prevent cracking and joint separation over time.

BUILT TO LAST AND TESTED TO PROVE IT

How do we know plastic pipe can last 100 years? We don't just hope—it's been tested to the best of our ability to ensure we manufacture the longest-lasting plastic pipe possible.

Fratco's HDPE and HDPP pipes are manufactured using resins and processes that meet or exceed the standards set by PPI, ASTM and AASHTO. Independent studies, including long-term stress-crack testing and oxidation resistance evaluations, have shown that properly installed corrugated plastic pipe can maintain structural integrity for a century or more.

In addition to third-party testing, Fratco runs its own quality checks throughout production to make sure every batch of pipe performs consistently. Dimensional checks, resin certification, joint integrity tests and in-plant inspections all help ensure that the pipe going into the ground today won't become a problem in the future.

CONTINUE READING ►►►

DESIGNING FOR GENERATIONS

When infrastructure fails, it usually comes down to two things: improper installation or the wrong product for the job. That's why early design decisions are so critical. Developers who choose pipe based on price alone often end up spending more in the long run. The same goes for municipalities that don't consider long-term maintenance costs. The smart move is to choose products that reduce risk from the start.

Fratco's dual-wall lines are built to resist the kind of wear that creeps in slowly over time—things like joint leakage, root intrusion, sediment buildup and pipe deformation under load. These products are designed to maintain flow efficiency and structural integrity across a wide range of site conditions, helping extend system life and reduce the risk of long-term failures.

A GOOD INSTALL IS JUST THE BEGINNING

Long-term performance depends on more than material. A well-designed system with the right grade, support and outlet control is what really sets a project up for the long haul.

That's why Fratco offers more than just a product. Their team provides support to contractors and engineers through product guidance, installation resources and insights based on decades of industry experience. While Fratco doesn't design systems, their knowledge helps customers make informed decisions that support long-term performance.

THINKING BEYOND THE WARRANTY

Pipe is often one of the first components installed in a job and the last thing anyone wants to replace. That makes choosing the right system now one of the most important decisions on the project.

Fratco doesn't just manufacture products to spec. They design products to last. From the formulation of the resin to the shape of the joint, each detail is built with long-term durability in mind. For projects that are expected to serve future generations, shortcuts don't suffice.

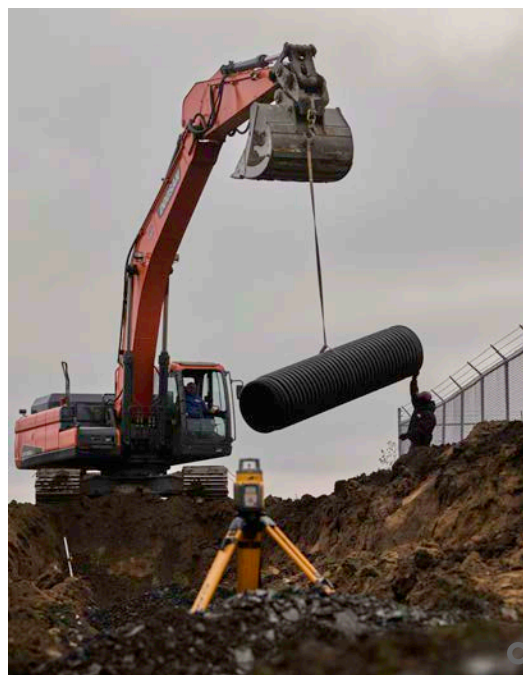
THE BOTTOM LINE

No pipe lasts forever, but the right pipe, installed correctly, can outlast most of us. That's the goal with every piece of Fratco pipe that leaves the plant: to be part of an infrastructure that works today, tomorrow and long after it's been forgotten about.

When you're building for 100 years, every choice matters. And choosing a pipe that's tested, trusted and built to endure—that's the kind of decision you only need to make once. ■



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON FRATCO PIPE, SCAN HERE!



SATURATED BUFFERS

A SIMPLE SOLUTION FOR CLEAN WATER

WHAT ARE THEY?

Imagine a system that uses nature itself to clean the water leaving our farms. Agricultural field saturated buffers are just that—natural filters sitting between farmland and waterways. They work quietly, using soil and plants to remove harmful nitrogen from the water.

HOW DO THEY WORK?

1 Collecting and Diverting Water
A control structure intercepts and diverts water flowing through underground pipe collected from nearby fields. An outlet pipe is in place for overflow events that exceed the capacity of the buffer.

2 Distributing Water Through a Natural "Buffer"
This excess water is redirected into a perforated distribution pipe parallel to the vegetated buffer strip, not far from a stream or ditch. This allows the water to naturally filter through vegetation and soil before entering our waterways.

3 Cleaning Process
As water slowly moves through the soil, plant roots and soil organisms remove nitrogen, a major pollutant.

WHY SATURATED BUFFERS?

Efficient | They treat water from entire fields, meshing perfectly with existing 6- to 12-inch drainage systems.

Eco-Friendly | A natural process that mimics the earth's way of purifying water.

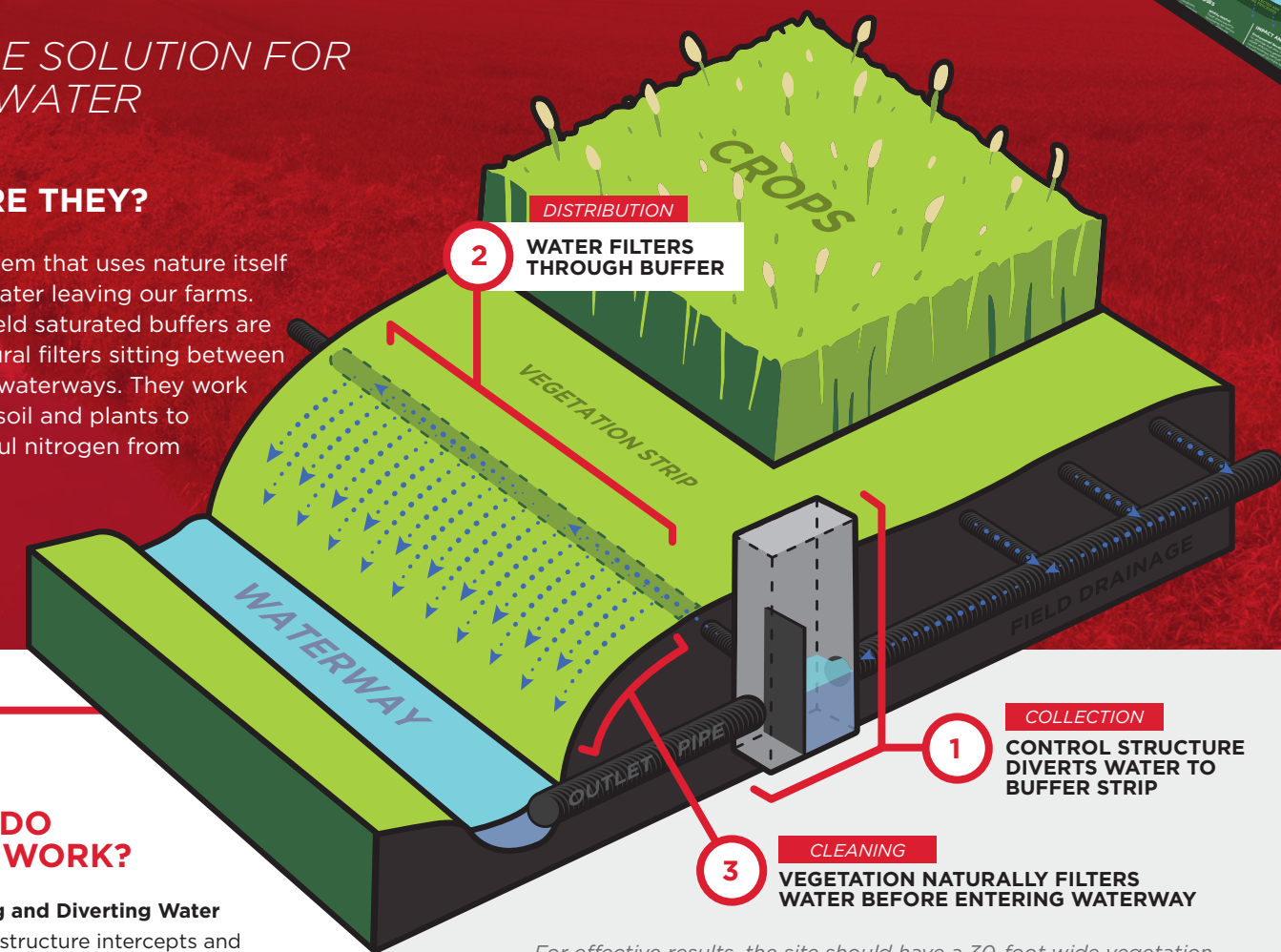
Cost-Effective | On average, they remove about 33 to 44 percent of nitrate loads, improving water quality at a low cost.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Research has shown that saturated buffers play a crucial role in reducing nitrate runoff, which is vital for improving water quality. Each installation moves us closer to cleaner waterways and a healthier environment. Offering a low-maintenance, cost-effective solution, saturated buffers work by using natural processes to filter runoff and protect our streams, making them an efficient approach to addressing a significant environmental challenge.

For effective results, the site should have a 30-foot wide vegetation strip, stable banks, organic soil content above 1.2 percent and no sand or gravel layers that could interfere with the filtration process

Scan to download the full series of Strategies for Eco-Friendly Water Management infographics!



SOURCE: AGRICULTURAL DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT COALITION (ADMC)

FIELD JOURNAL

TRIED & TRUE TRICKS OF THE TRADE

EYES UP: THE POWER OF SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

On any job site, conditions can shift without warning. One second you're laying pipe, the next someone's backing up too close or the weather starts turning. The crews that stay safe and efficient have one thing in common—they pay attention.

Situational awareness means keeping your head up, your mind engaged and your focus on more than just your task. It's about noticing the little things before they become big problems.

BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS

Before you fire up a machine or grab your tools, take a look around. Where's the gear? Who's nearby? What's the ground like? These checks don't take long, but they set the tone for the day. Awareness isn't a step—it's a mindset.

WATCH YOUR CREW

You don't need to be the boss to lead. Pay attention to body language, movement and energy. Is someone distracted? Are people moving in sync or out of rhythm? The more tuned in you are, the better your team works together.

MIND THE WEATHER

Fall is full of surprises. Temperatures drop, light fades faster and a light rain can turn solid ground into slick mud. Checking the forecast is a start, but staying alert to changing conditions throughout the day is what makes the difference.

DON'T COAST

Experience is valuable, but comfort can dull your edge. Even the best workers can zone out when things feel routine. The pros stay sharp—always scanning, always thinking. It's not about being jumpy. It's about staying ready.

SET THE EXAMPLE

If you've been at it for a while, you know what to look for. Help others get there too. Call things out, walk the new guys through it and build a culture where awareness is part of the job—not just a box on a safety form.

Situational awareness doesn't just keep you safe—it keeps the crew moving, the job on track and the day running smooth. Eyes up. It's one of the simplest ways to work smarter.

PACK SMART, WORK HARDER: THE GEAR YOU BRING SAYS A LOT

Success on the job site doesn't just come down to grit—it also comes down to what you bring with you. The right gear, packed with a little thought, can mean the difference between a smooth day and one full of avoidable headaches.

Packing smart isn't about having the fanciest tools or stuffing your truck like a rolling toolbox. It's about knowing your job, knowing your crew and bringing what you need to handle the day without wasting time chasing down missing items.

START WITH THE BASICS

There's a short list of non-negotiables: gloves that hold up, safety glasses that don't fog and boots that keep your feet dry. These aren't extras. They're the foundation. Showing up with worn-out gear doesn't just slow you down; it shows you weren't prepared.

DRESS FOR THE DAY

Fall mornings can be freezing, and afternoons can still bring heat. Smart packing means layers—ones you can shed or add without stopping work. A lightweight hoodie, a high-vis vest, a backup pair of dry socks—small things that make a big difference when the weather swings.

FUEL YOUR BODY

Hard work burns through energy fast. A packed lunch, a warm thermos, fresh water—these aren't just nice to have, they keep you moving. Skipping meals or relying on gas station snacks might work once, but it won't hold up for a long season.

THINK BEYOND TOOLS

Duct tape, a marker, zip ties, a multi-tool—every seasoned crew member has a few tricks in their bag. These little extras are the kind of things you don't think about until you really need them. Keeping them on hand shows experience and saves time when things go sideways.

PLAN FOR THE UNEXPECTED

Jobs change, weather shifts and machines break. The best workers don't wait to react—they come prepared. A rain poncho behind the seat, a small first-aid kit, a phone charger—none of it takes up much space, but all of it proves you take the work seriously.

Packing smart is more than convenience. It's about respect for the job, your crew and yourself. Showing up ready means you don't waste time, you don't slow the team down and you don't let the small stuff get in your way. Work smarter. Start with your bag.

The best tool
you can bring is
preparation

Howdy, Fratco Family!

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WORD SEARCH CLUES

- Fratco pipe that balances flexibility and strength (7 LETTERS)

Single-wall pipe’s Achilles’ heel, according to Manning’s n (9 LETTERS)

Faith verse guiding Johns Brothers: ‘Do it all to the glory of ____’ (3 LETTERS)

Fratco’s longtime mold and tooling partner (8 LETTERS)

This “invisible MVP” makes or breaks flow (5 LETTERS)

Jade Crum’s sales style (10 LETTERS)

What Fratco aims to help water do (4 LETTERS)

Toolmaker who won’t sell what he can’t guarantee (6 LETTERS)

Drainage contractor whose fleet grew from 2 to 30+ machines (5 LETTERS)
- SmoothCorr’s secret to flow (8 LETTERS)

Fratco pipe designed for high adaptability (8 LETTERS)

Stormwater system killers: poor design and this (12 LETTERS)

Longtime Fratco sales expert now reviewing plans (8 LETTERS)

Pete Stemen’s original dream: cars, boats, women, and these (6 LETTERS)

Fratco’s CEO who rode the school bus with the Johns brothers (8 LETTERS)


The number of excavators in the Johns Brothers fleet (5 LETTERS)

Johns Brothers’ first tiling machine was from this decade (8 LETTERS)

The go-to formula for calculating flow (7 LETTERS)



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



“Those who dare to fail miserably can achieve greatly.”

- JOHN F. KENNEDY

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