

Idaho's Bounty Co-op, besides providing an outlet for people to sell food, creates a market for sustainable products. Farmers will grow what there is demand for, and the co-op serves as a strong customer voice. Producers can also act as customers, as in this case, where egg producers were looking for some non genetically modified (non-GMO) feed for their chickens, but couldn't find any. After hearing about this demand, Seth Matthews decided to take action, and come harvest this fall, he will have locally grown 100% non-GMO feed.

Seth Matthews, along with his wife Patty, has owned and run Matthews Grain and Storage in Weiser, Idaho for 32 years. He bought an old building, built in 1897, and opened for business in 1977. An all around farm supply store, they sell baby chicks, ducks and turkeys and grain to feed all types of livestock. They also sell tack and saddles, clothing and boots, and are expanding to serve their customer base.

Seth was raised on a farm and has stayed on. He currently raises 300-400 meat chickens and 50-60 turkeys annually. He also raises butcher beef, hogs and sheep. Seth and Patty (along with their three daughters) personally use the feed they sell, to ensure that the animals enjoy eating the feed and are strong and healthy.

After hearing that some Idaho's Bounty producers were looking for non GMO feed, Seth did some research, and couldn't find any local non-GMO corn to put in the feed. He contracted with a local farmer he trusts, who purchased and planted some non GMO corn seed. The guaranteed non-GMO seed was easy to find. They have also ordered some test kits they can use to ensure it's non-GMO.



To make feed, Seth combines corn with a protein source, vitamins and minerals. He had been using soybean meal as the protein source, but it's genetically modified as well. After more research, Seth found a non-GMO wheat protein to use. When the first crop of non-GMO corn is harvested in October, Seth will have all the pieces he needs. He can formulate feed for poultry and all livestock, including hogs, cattle and dairy cows, changing the amounts of protein and minerals for different ages and species. Customers have different desires for protein levels and amounts of nutrients, fineness of grains, etc. and the feed can be manufactured to order.

Matthews Grain and Storage will sell 50 pound bags for about the same price of normal feed (\$10-\$15 per 50#). If it goes well, more and more feed will be made with non-GMO corn. The process involves a lot of planning ahead. It's a matter of contracting with farmers in April or May, and deciding how many acres and tons they'll need to last the whole year. These first years, they'll see how it sells and hope to have more non-GMO feed available each year.



Besides the Idaho's Bounty Co-op producers who wanted feed for poultry, Seth has several customers who are interested in non-GMO feed. A lot of people are raising their own poultry at home and are interested in what is in the food that they're feeding them. They want to make the healthiest choice possible and want to be sure they know exactly what is in the feed. With more education gained by talking with Seth, people have come to realize that the "normal" corn used in feed has been genetically engineered. Introduction of non-GMO feed has been a wake up call for a lot of customers, and Seth is happy to provide them with information and the freedom to make their own choice.

Imagine . . .

Knowing where your food comes from, who is producing it, and their ethics and farming practices

Working in support of the health of your local community food shed where energy stays local and supports our rural economy