Ed Foster to retire from company after 42 years.

When Ed Foster showed up to work in the tire department of Farmland Service Coop in 1971 he didn't plan on staying.

Newly married, Foster needed a summer job and was going to student teach in the fall while pursuing a teaching and coaching degree.

"But I got tangled up with coop," he said with a laugh.

So he switched his major to business education and administration and eventually worked his way up to chief executive officer/president of All Points Cooperative.

On April 30, the 63-year-old will formally retire from the position and E. Tod Clark of Hemingford will become CEO/president.

Once Foster received his undergraduate degree in 1972, he became assistant office manager and worked his way through the jobs of controller, credit manager and finally CEO/president.

During those years, the cooperative weathered a bad farm economy and two elevator explosions.

When agricultural land prices dropped in the 1980s, Foster said the cooperative endured two years of losses at about $2 million dollars.

Times were challenging, he said, but the cooperative restructured.

“We looked at different enterprises and got out of services that weren’t contributing to the bottom line,” Foster said, noting that most service stations were eliminated. “I wasn’t real popular at the time but it was definitely the right decision.”

Dealing with two elevator explosions, in 2008 and 2010 was also difficult, he said.

What was destroyed or damaged was rebuilt.

Foster was at the helm of the cooperative when All Points Cooperative of Lexington merged with Farmland Service Coop and became All Points Cooperative. Under his tenure, All Points also bought AgriAlliance in Cozad and Arnold.

The cooperative now serves the communities and surrounding areas of Amherst, Arnold, Gothenburg, Lexington, Cozad, Callaway, Eustis, Farnam, Loomis, Overton, Sumner and Westerville.

Foster pointed to big changes in agronomy, noting the cooperative’s switch from anhydrous to liquid ammonia. Fertilizer storage tanks and load outs have been built in Gothenburg and tanks added in Sumner, Arnold and Cozad.

A petroleum bulk plant to store diesel and gasoline is under construction in Cozad.

More grain storage was also added to Gothenburg and Farnam.

What Foster has enjoyed most about his job is dealing with producers and employees.

“We’re fortunate to have a super employee group,” he said. “That makes it easier when everyone is working toward the same goal.”

However finding and retaining a quality labor force has been challenging, Foster said, as is complying with increased state and federal regulations.

“Record keeping is endless,” Foster said, noting that one employee performs full-time compliance duties with help from an outside consulting firm.

Foster is most proud of the cooperative’s solid financial foundation.

While in management at Farmland Service Coop, beginning in 1985, sales and operating revenue have increased from $42 million to $264 million.

“Every year we’ve created a budget and have fixed assets where we can expand and improve services,” Foster said. “We’re financially sound and in a position to take any opportunity forward and command financing for any kind of venture,” he said.

Foster is married to Virjean Foster and the couple has two married sons, a granddaughter and grandson.

In retirement, he said the couple plans to remain in Gothenburg but will spend winters in Phoenix.

Foster plans to golf and spend time with his brother at a cattle ranch in Taylor,

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