
Hewitt-Ware Feed & Supply Co.

**A family business serving Montgomery
County farmers for three generations.**



Back in the early years our help included, from left, Frosty Wilton, John McClain, Lee VanAlstine, Woody Stephenson, Frank Ware, Dude Cress, Charles Newport and Bill Cooper.

**Agriculture's greatest changes
have happened in the last half-century.
The people of Hewitt-Ware have been
leaders in helping farmers meet
and prosper with change.**

It all began with the Ware brothers in 1915 . . .

Sixty-six years ago, in 1915, Frank Ware, whose ancestors founded and named the Ware's Grove settlement in this county, established a feed and supply company in Hillsboro. Members of his family have continuously operated the business since then.

Mr. Ware had been a successful farmer in Butler Grove Township until the severe 1913-14 drouth, "when the chinch bugs, the Republicans' brand of farm relief, and the dry weather, damn near ruined me," he declared.

Frank and his brother, Roy rented the old Jim Short elevator out on Railroad Street and a feed store on Berry Street. Frank also leased and operated the C.B. Munday elevator in Butler with Roy in charge of the Hillsboro business, until 1925, when Roy sold his interest to Frank, and his family moved to Florida during that state's boom.

Clarence Barnstable of Nokomis bought half-interest in the Hillsboro feed business in October 1925, and for six years the company was operated as Ware and Barnstable, Inc. In 1931 the company was reorganized, and renamed Barnstable-Ware Feed and

Supply, the name it bore for nearly a quarter-century.

In 1936 Barnstable-Ware Feed & Supply Co. opened a newly constructed grain elevator and handling plant, fronting on Broad Street, and remodeled its feed store sales and display rooms on Berry Street. A grand opening advertisement described the new electrically operated plant as "the latest word in equipment for the rapid, convenient and efficient serving of farmers who have grain to sell or want to buy grain and feeds."

Barnstable-Ware was retailer and wholesaler of Ful-O-Pep Feeds, Wayne Feeds, poultry supplies, Ball-Mason fruit jars, Morton salts, fencing and barbed wire, binder twines, agricultural limestone, Swift and Company's tankage and fertilizers, and was a large distributor of Mother's Best, Big Time, Enterprise, Master Loaf and Gold Medal flours, and Godchaux's pure cane sugar.

With World War II came heavy demands on the farmers of this community to produce more food for the war effort. Barnstable-Ware helped farmers meet these demands by becoming large suppliers of commercial fertilizers and hybrid seeds.



Frank Ware in 1938.



Then Roy joined in . . .

Roy Hewitt, an Iowa native who was reared in northern Illinois, joined his father-in-law's business in 1940. He had been engaged in active farming for himself for 10 years, and during that time had also been a rural school teacher and principal, teacher and coach of upper grades at Manlius, in Bureau County, for eight years before marrying Miss Jessie Ware of Hillsboro on Sept. 3, 1938. In 1941 he purchased the William Speiser poultry business, next door to Barnstable-Ware, and managed it in addition to his work with his father-in-law.

After Frank Ware's unexpected death in November 1945, Roy purchased his father-in-law's stock and assumed full management of the family business. During the latter part of that decade he was among the county's first farm businessmen to promote and supply pesticides and herbicides to improve crop production.

Roy soon recognized the increasing demand for better grain-handling facilities, and in 1950 convinced his company's board of directors to build a new elevator in Taylor Springs. That 50,000 bushel elevator, completed

The first load of red top seed to leave the county left Barnstable-Ware in 1941 for Schultz Seed Co. Workers included Frank Ware, Roy Hewitt, Wayne Beatty, Lee VanAlstine, William Cooper and Woody Stephenson.



Ed and Richard came, too . . .

in 1951, allowed farmers to dump grain with a minimum loss of time. Two years later, the Taylor Springs facility was enlarged to accommodate another 20,000 bushels, and the Coffeen elevator was purchased from Albert Carlock.

Liquid fertilizers were first sold by Barnstable-Ware Feed & Supply Co. in 1952, and the company was first in the county to operate a liquid suspension fertilizer blending plant.

Roy's brother-in-law, Ed Ware, joined the family business in 1953. Ed held bachelor's and master's degrees in physical education and had taught science and coached basketball at Olney High School for two years.

Clarence Barnstable withdrew from the company in 1954, and its name was changed to Hewitt-Ware Feed & Supply Co.

Richard Hewitt, Roy's oldest child, joined the firm in 1959 after one year of college. He operated the Donnellson elevator, purchased by Hewitt-Ware in 1965, for 14 years before assuming his present management of the Taylor Springs facility.

In early 1960 the Ed Ware, Roy Hewitt, Macon Toberman company also purchased elevators at

Fillmore and Bayle City. Ed Ware managed both facilities for nearly two decades, when he and his sons-in-law, Bob Pollard and Dany Baker, bought full interest in the two elevators.

The main elevator of Hewitt-Ware's Taylor Springs business burned to the ground Aug. 20, 1962. Loss of the 75-foot tall structure and thousands of bushels of stored corn and soybeans totaled about \$200,000.

The elevator was soon rebuilt, and a new office building was added, allowing Hewitt-Ware to move all of its business from the Bery Street location. In 1969 that property was sold to the City of Hillsboro for parking lot expansion. A feed mill, seed cleaning and processing equipment were installed at the Taylor Springs elevator, and more recently, a large garage building was erected to house grain hauling trucks and spraying equipment.

Four years ago Roy Hewitt retired from active management of Hewitt-Ware Feed & Supply Co. At that time the Donnellson elevator was sold so that Richard Hewitt could assume full responsibility of the Taylor Springs business. Coffeen Grain Co., which continues as part of the Hewitt-Ware firm, is managed by Mark Voyles.

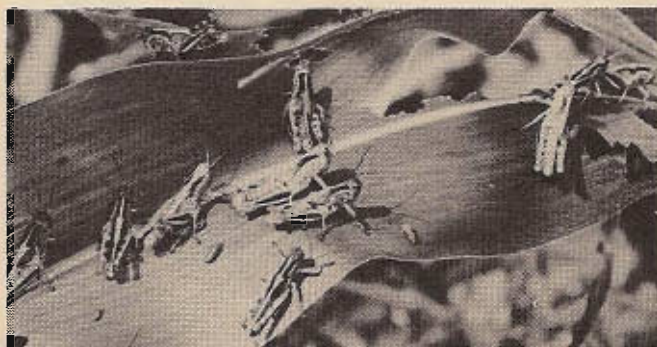


Early in 1953 Frank Ferguson (back to camera) was waited on by Roy while Ed Ware took care of Ray Towell. Roy Ware is in the background.

Leaders in the sale of insecticides and herbicides to improve Montgomery County crops . . .



Eustace Payne, in 1950, spraying a clover field for grasshoppers.



Grasshopper infestation on George Brohammer's corn field.

In the late 1940s Hewitt-Ware Feed & Supply became one of the county's first to promote and sell 2-4-D. And they were local pioneers in offering a crop spraying service.

A grasshopper plague in 1950 devastated hundreds of acres of Montgomery County fields. Hewitt-Ware's 15-foot sprayer, attached to a small Ford tractor, helped many farmers that year save their crops.

Hewitt-Ware was among the first in the county to sell liquid fertilizer, beginning in 1952, and was the first to install a liquid suspension fertilizer blending plant at its elevator in Taylor Springs.



From left: Hal Whitten, a DuPont Chemical salesman, Roy Hewitt, Clarence Bamstable and Earl Martin

Hewitt-Ware

Chick Days 1951-1961

For ten years, 1951-61, Montgomery County farmers always came to Hillsboro in late February for Hewitt-Ware's Chick Day. In one year alone, 20,000 live chicks (Honegger Cockerels) were given free to families who purchased chick starter feed.

Dozens of prizes were always awarded, including live calves and dogs, electric fencers and fence posts, seeds, feeds and fertilizer. There was live musical entertainment and radio broadcasts, and visitors were treated to coffee, donuts, cheese and crackers.

The customer making the largest purchase on Chick Day was given a new Easter outfit (man's or woman's) from a Hillsboro apparel store.



Chick Days also included a calf or two pictured here with, from left, Jake Kimbro, Charles Groh, Roy Hewitt, Ed Baran, Richard Hewitt and Fred Lehnert.



Two major fires in 20 years . . .

Hewitt-Ware has recovered from huge financial losses in two major fires in the past two decades. On Aug. 20, 1962 the main Taylor Springs elevator burned to the ground. The midnight fire apparently started in the corn cob room and moved quickly up the wooden interior of the 75-foot tall structure. About 40,000 bushels of stored soybeans and corn were destroyed.

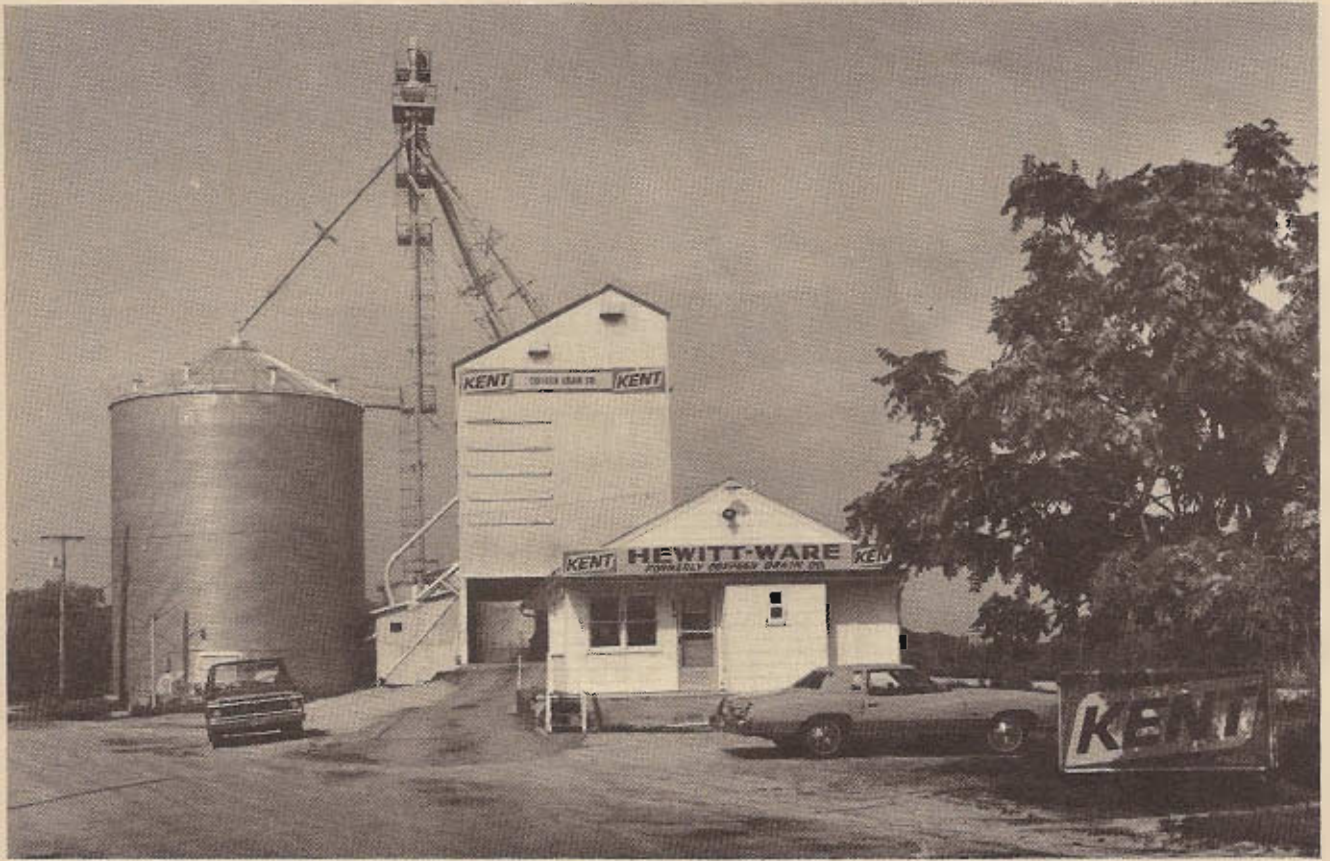
The elevator was rebuilt soon thereafter, enlarging its storage capacity to 150,000 bushels. At the same time a new office building was erected, allowing

the company to move all its business records and retail display area from Berry Street in Hillsboro to the Taylor Springs property.

In 1980 the Hewitt-Ware warehouse on School Street was totally destroyed by fire. Because of the hazardous insecticide and herbicide chemicals stored in that warehouse, the company suffered enormous clean-up expenses as required by EPA, in addition to the inventory loss.



The warehouse fire in 1980.



Our Coffeen facility . . .

Coffeen Grain Company was purchased by Hewitt-Ware Feed & Supply Co. in 1953 from Arthur Carlock. In recent years it has been enlarged to become the firm's largest facility with storage capacity of 160,000

bushels, and a new office building was also erected.

The business was operated for more than 25 years by Joe and Pearl Herman of Coffeen, who retired in 1980. It is now managed by Mark Voyles.



Some of Hewitt-Ware's rolling stock.



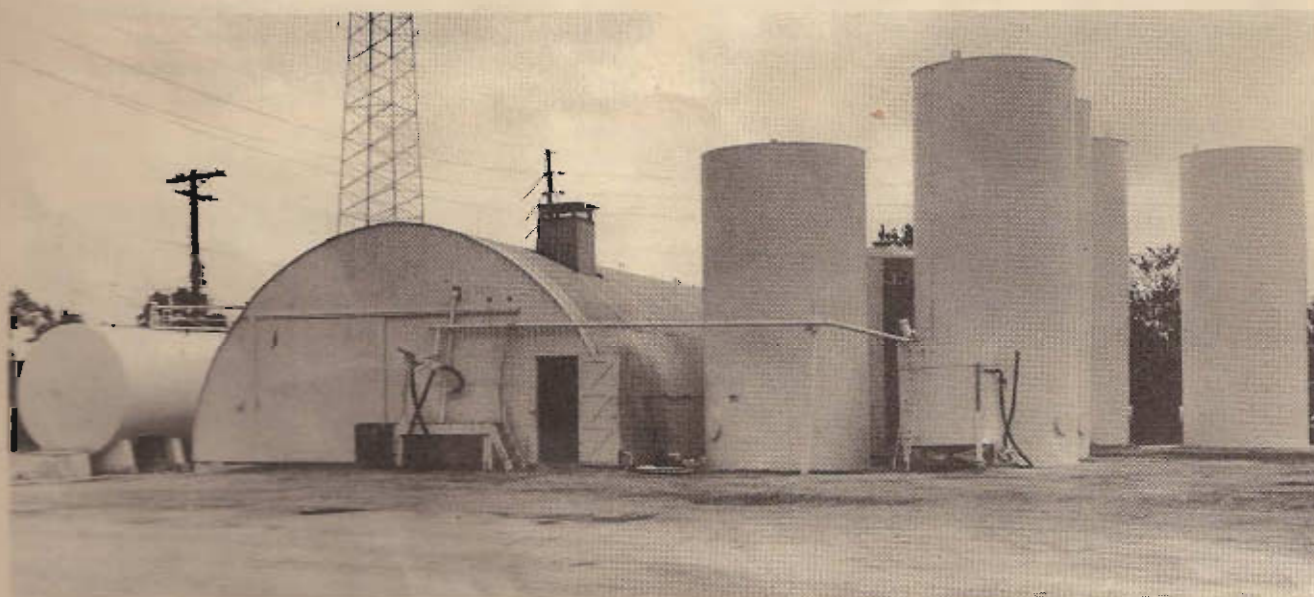
Our Taylor Springs facility . . .

The Taylor Springs elevator became the headquarters of Hewitt-Ware Feed & Supply Co. in the early 1960s. After the August 1962 fire that destroyed the main unit, the company built a larger, 150,000 bushel-capacity elevator, a separate office building and a liquid suspension fertilizer blending plant, the first in Montgomery County.

Eight years ago a shed was erected to house the firm's rolling stock, which includes three large hopper-

bottom hauling trucks, four flotation-tired spray trucks and two smaller spray outfits, and numerous other vehicles.

Hewitt-Ware's Taylor Springs facility now offers complete agricultural services -- seed cleaning, processing and storage; grinding and mixing; fertilizer blending; crop spraying; wholesale and retail sales of seed, feeds, fertilizer, insecticides, herbicides and many other farm products and supplies.



Our fertilizer blending facility.



Richard and Roy Hewitt in 1981.

The Hewitt-Ware poem

Written by Russell Sparks for our Christmas party in 1954

Hewitt Ware will grind your feed.
They buy your grain and clean your seed.

They feed your chicks and cull your hens.
Then with Honegger Feed they fill your bins.

They help you make gardens grow
By supplying you with Vigoro.

They will surround your farm with a barricade
Of quality fence which U.S. Steel made.

They supply the water for each cow and horse
With a brand new pump by Fairbanks Morse.

With a Premier Brooder they warm your Brood
While good Stock-Gro supplies them with food.

Kem-tone paint will brighten your home
Till you'll be proud that it is your own.

Your fields will produce a lot of feed
If you plant Funks Hybrid quality seed.

A Thuro-Bilt house out on your farm
Will keep those little chickens warm.

You'll have a lot of eggs to sell
If your boxes are full of Oyster Shell.

Hewitt Ware will supply your needs
With fence or paint or seeds or Feeds.

From this policy they will never swerve
Their motto is "We like to serve".

This book published August, 1981
by The Hillsboro and Montgomery County NEWS.