



# Noland Farms



Blue Mound, IL

2016 Volume 2



*Hudson (3) and Elizabeth (2)  
monitor soybean planting.*

## Greetings from our family at Noland Farms

Summer has officially arrived, and we hope you're enjoying beautiful weather with family and friends... hopefully with toes in the sand at a far-away, tropical paradise. If that's not the case, we hope the air conditioning has been keeping up at home and work.

For our family's business, summer represents a transitional period of spring review and fall planning. We've found that each crop year is uniquely different, and the

spring of 2016 definitely continued that trend. Historically warm temperatures in the month of March continued into April, and cooler than average temperatures in May led to scorching heat in June. Rainfall was excessive, then much needed... repeating that cycle into summer.

Mother Nature is a farmer's best friend, worst enemy and a constant topic of dinner table discussion.





## Expanding across five counties and improving efficiency

**O**ur farm was blessed with new, valued landowner relationships in 2016, and growth has provided a means to better manage our risk through planting crops across five counties in central Illinois. Expanding the geographical area in which we operate has historically helped us mitigate challenging weather patterns. Overall, we've been fortunate to avoid the severe events and experience favorable conditions throughout the early part of the growing season.

We enter each spring anxious to implement operational adjustments aimed at improving our efficiency. Directly following a season's conclusion, we discuss potential

"adjustments" for the following year's operations. At times, the rainfall and planting delays were challenging, frustrating, and a great learning experience for future seasons.

Our typical crop plan includes a sprayer applying herbicide with liquid fertilizer to a field prior to the crop being planted. We call this the "weed and feed" application. One "adjustment" was an additional chemical tendering unit added this spring to maximize the application efficiency. Although not a significant adjustment, the increased efficiency proved instrumental in early operations. We felt timeliness was a crucial aspect to setting the season's operational tone.

With weather variability creating condensed working windows, we highlighted planting efficiency as an extremely important element. Instead of purchasing an additional or larger planter, we increased the performance of an existing one through the installation of Precision Planting's SpeedTube kit. The system enabled us to plant twice as fast while also improving seed spacing accuracy. As is occasionally the case with new technology, we encountered a few design flaws in the product, leading us to believe we were on the "bleeding edge" instead of the "cutting edge."

## Producing a soybean with an enhanced value

**A**s farmers, we are essentially growing a raw commodity at the origination point for value-added products. Over the past five years, we have consistently increased the acres of contract seed production grown. Producing seed beans increases the workload associated with planting and harvesting each variety, but a bushel premium is typically awarded following a product quality inspection.

Early in this year's profit projections,

the value-added products provided much-needed revenue. Maintaining product purity is vital, so a full "clean out" of the associated machinery and equipment is conducted through the harvesting of each variety. Following harvest, the varieties are stored on farm in grain bins and delivered to a production plant through a "buyer's call" format. The production plant processes and bags each variety for commercial resale the following growing season.

In a strategic partnership, we expanded further upon our value-added focus by growing black beans on an 80 acre farm in Christian County. The venture has allowed us the opportunity to learn from new environmental and agronomic challenges associated with a commodity in a rapidly growing market. Consumer demand has clearly identified strong current and future interest in edible beans.

# International perspective and global relationships

In February and March, Grant spent two weeks traveling in Japan and Panama with the Illinois Ag Leadership Program. The opportunity to better understand agriculture's global relationship was a humbling experience.

Japan provided a new perspective on producer/consumer relationships and cultural product selection. Many of the products on grocery store shelves feature a picture of the actual farmer responsible for providing that fruit, vegetable, meat or egg. That photo might be a deterrent for some in America!

The uniformity, quality and appearance were also unlike anything available at an American market. Japanese producers are providing the product, appearance and quality the consumer demands. The group left Tokyo, a city of 30 million, and flew to Panama, a country of 4 million citizens. The weather and culture were on opposite sides of the spectrum, but the significance of agricultural trade remained a constant theme.

The expanded Panama Canal and free trade zones have established the country as a global hub for transportation and trade. With 70 percent of the total cargo passing through the canal originating in or destined to the United States, the expansion project has true value for American consumers' purchasing power.

The international experiences were rewarding and reaffirmed the importance of trade and agriculture.



**Current operational updates and new pictures are available on our website.**

**[www.nolandfarms.com](http://www.nolandfarms.com)**

## Farmland Investment

The current farmland market has provided exciting opportunities for those with current land holdings and individuals interested in purchasing a farm. We are excited to discuss investment opportunities!

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*Dianne Noland presenting scholarship at awards program.*

## **Noland Family Agriculture & Sciences Scholarship**

**E**ight generations of our family have been fortunate to farm in our community, and we strongly feel that as agricultural producers, re-investing in our industry's future is imperative to long-term success. These factors encouraged us to establish the Noland Family Agriculture & Sciences Scholarship in 2013.

The quality of applicants is encouraging, and we were excited to select Allyson Washburn, a graduating student at Meridian High School, as our 4th recipient. Allyson will be pursuing a doctorate degree in physical therapy after attending Richland Community College, and we wish her success in future endeavors.