



Noland Farms

Blue Mound, IL

2015 Volume 1



Wet, wet, wet...

Greetings from our family at Noland Farms! We hope you've had the opportunity to enjoy the summer months thus far with travel, family and friends.

The season's weather has been wet, wet, wet. June rainfall accumulation registered historic levels and presented challenges for those across many industries. For those of us in central Illinois, we have been fortunate to avoid much of the severe and damaging storm events that many outside the immediate area have experienced. We vividly recall the challenges of damaging weather from

just a few seasons ago. We are blessed to operate in an area that hasn't been impacted as much as those in other areas.

Current droughts and flooding across the country remind us that moderate and favorable weather is often under appreciated. Bountiful yields, one key component in profitability, is truly reliant upon elements far out of our control, such as Mother Nature. Accepting this reality is vital for maintaining one's sanity, calming one's nerves and potentially slowing hair loss!



Field conditions ideal for corn planting

Each new growing season begins with high expectations and tremendous promise. The spring of 2015 was no different. Our corn crop was planted into ideal field conditions within the targeted calendar window, which is typically more easily said than done. We utilized our geographic diversity across five counties to keep equipment operational.

Soybean planting began in late April, and we achieved 95% completion before our first rain event. Our 2015 soybean portfolio consisted of three varieties, which are all contracted for seed production. Half of our soybean acres are contracted in non-GMO (genetically modified organisms) varieties, which is an additional risk reduction measure.



Our fertilization program is centered around multiple, well-timed and placed product applications.



Spoon feeding nitrogen

Planting operations transitioned smoothly into the application of nitrogen fertilizer for the growing corn crop. We've intensified our "spoon-fed" approach to nitrogen application, and eagerly awaited the opportunity to put the plan into action. Our fertilization program is centered around multiple, well-timed and placed product applications. Although this approach greatly increases the workload, the benefits of a nutrient management plan are without a doubt measurable.

Our corn nutrient management plan utilizes variable rate technology to apply a "prescription" across a farm, which individualizes each acre through zones built from years of data collection. Our plan typically consists of four nitrogen applications and a concerted effort to match the timing, placement and amount of fertilizer

to the plant's actual needs. Prior to our final application, our plan calls for an evaluation of the prescription. Economic, environmental and agronomic factors can alter this nutrient plan.

Pre-sidedress nitrate testing is one avenue we identified to help intensify and reaffirm our decisions. Prior to the final, sidedress application, we maneuver a utility vehicle between the corn rows to take soil samples with a probe at predetermined locations. Up to 30 samples could be pulled from one field, which is not an easy job if the ground is hard. The soil samples are submitted to a lab, which generates reports that are evaluated by our agronomist. At that point, decisions can be made from scientific evidence regarding the amount of fertilizer needed by the plant



Committed to improvements

A commitment to improvement keeps hands from becoming idle within our business. The 2014 crop's yields were record breaking, and the increased volume identified areas of vulnerability within the grain harvesting operation.

The ability to efficiently dry harvested corn has specifically been a bottleneck for our business. This spring, we broke ground on a new corn drying and storage facility that will be located at a site between Blue Mound and Macon in southern Macon County. The new site is within five miles of two state highways and has access to natural gas and three-phase electrical service. Natural gas provides a lower-cost fuel source, and ultimately allows us to better manage our current risk of sole dependence on liquid petroleum (LP) at our other primary grain drying site. Collectively, we will increase our drying capabilities to 65 semi trucks (65,000 bushels) per day, which we hope correlates to a reduction in the overall time associated with harvest. The site is on schedule to be fully operational by August 15th.

Our business has been fortunate to experience sustained growth, and with that growth has come the need to transport greater volumes of products throughout the year including grain, fertilizers, limestone, etc. This need led to the establishment of Noland Farms Transport, a commercial trucking enterprise operating independently from our family business. We look forward to the new opportunities this venture will present.

Turning our focus to the upcoming harvest, technological upgrades to equipment are underway. New hardware components installed in the combine will allow for increased speed and accuracy in measuring yield and additional integration of an iPad.



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

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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Family news

Life has been full of new adventures for our family. Duane recently chaired a panel discussion in Chicago with David Axelrod, who served as Senior Adviser to President Obama, and Kenneth Duberstein, President Reagan's final Chief of Staff. The common message was one of finding your voice, staying true to your vision and not giving up despite setbacks.

Blake was recently elected to City Council in Macon and accepted a nomination to serve a five year term on the Macon County Zoning Board of Appeals. He is also leading the growth of NFi Sales, a manufacturer-direct trailer sales business.

Dennis has been actively engaged in planning for the upcoming harvest and new technological implementation for 2015 and 2016. With new developments in "high-speed" planting, he's preparing for the transition. He and his wife, Dani, embarked on a motorcycle trip on their Harley Davidson Ultra Glide to California in July.

Grant is entering the final year of the Illinois Agricultural Leadership Program, and recently accepted a nomination to join the Macon County Board on a three year term. He and his wife, Logan, are expecting their third child in October. Hudson (3) and Elizabeth (2) are excited to welcome a new brother!