



# Noland Farms, Inc.

Blue Mound, IL

Spring 2010 Newsletter

## Growing an Investment

*Noland Farms, Inc.*



**G**reetings from our family at Noland Farms. Ladies and gentlemen, start your lawn mowers... spring has arrived! The departure of winter and arrival of spring is an exciting transformation that we anxiously await each year. Last year record rainfall led to planting and harvesting delays across central Illinois. But this year we were blessed with a tremendous window of opportunity to plant. Let's hope harvest weather is just as cooperative later. Our family's 2009 corn crop was planted over the course of six weeks. This year corn planting took just ten days. What a difference a little precipitation can make!

Although the extreme weather conditions of last year might not be replicated for years to come, the opportunity to learn from those situations allowed for future planning. With the 2009 corn harvest concluding

in early December, the time allotted for winter projects this year was unfortunately shortened. The time spent increasing the efficiency of our sprayer and liquid fertilizer nurse trailer paid great dividends economically and in the reduction of downtime during a day of spraying this spring. Hauling

grain to market and rock to the grain bin project's site were also recent farm activities as the weather turned warmer. After the analysis of last year's harvest data and current commodity markets, corn and soybean hybrids chosen for the 2010 "line-up" were planted during April and May.

## Field Activities

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**A**s spring temperatures began to climb and soil conditions improved, we elected to refrain from applying anhydrous ammonia prior to planting our corn. Although applying anhydrous as a fertilizer source through the side-dressing of standing corn is difficult and dependent on weather, this “spoon-fed” approach is economically advantageous. With high costs of inputs necessary to grow a corn crop, we are utilizing this approach on 100% of our 2010 corn acres.

Prior to planting corn, we used our sprayer to apply liquid fertilizer and herbicide to the field’s surface. The high-volume applied per acre on some fields required our 1,200 gallon tank on the sprayer to be refilled every 40 acres. As I previously mentioned, this winter the filling capacity

on the nurse trailer was increased from a 2” diameter hose to a 3” hose to reduce downtime while refilling the sprayer. Herbicide will be applied to corn and soybeans throughout the growing season according to our weed management program. By doing this work ourselves we can avoid custom application costs and provide our landlords with additional savings.

With the purchase of a forklift last winter, all seed was delivered to a centralized, on-farm location prior to planting. This reduces the time spent driving to a seed dealer during planting and allowed more self-sufficiency. The seed arrives in hard, plastic boxes that contain enough seed to plant around 100 acres, and can be stacked during storage. The boxes are then loaded into our seed tender, which uses a conveyor



to fill the planter in the field.

We feel that every farm operation should conduct its own on-farm test plots and evaluate the data collected to implement practices that yield the strongest returns. With the variety of soil types and productivities across central Illinois, and even within the same field, relying just on information from universities' studies might lead one to adopt practices that produce less than optimum results. We are excited to conduct

trials this year on a corn root growth promoter and starter fertilizer. A "split-planter" program controlled by the AgLeader Insight monitor in the tractor cab will allow for 24-row corn planter to be split into two 12-row, independently-controlled, sections. We utilized this feature to produce accurate

side-by-side comparisons for corn hybrids and seed population tests. Continuing to explore new strategies and reaffirm ones currently implemented is important to the sustainability and growth in any business.

## Spring Projects

**O**ur family believes a continuing commitment to implementing value-added improvements is essential to the growth of our business. Just as the world has embraced new technology and internet-based communication, we feel our farm must follow suit. Through the **development of our website, [www.nolandfarms.com](http://www.nolandfarms.com)**, we are excited to provide additional information to our current and potential landowners. We hope this tool will supply more in-depth information on our family and farming practices through pictures, past publications and current events. You will discover weekly updates on our current activities through pictures and blog entries.

This spring also marked the ground-



breaking of our 2010 grain bin project. As I mentioned in the winter newsletter, the 2009 harvest was delayed due to grain elevators' long lines of trucks with high-moisture corn. This led many elevators to

hold limited hours... some open just four hours each day. On-farm grain storage allowed us less dependence on commercial elevators, which was vital in a year of adverse weather conditions. Applying lessons learned from last year, we are increasing our on-farm storage and improving corn-drying efficiencies. Additions to our current bin site will include dedicating a bin solely for wet corn out of the field, an improved drying system and another bin for storing dry corn. We anticipate the increase in storage to allow for 85 fewer semi loads of corn to be delivered to the elevator at harvest. This will not only improve harvesting efficiency and decrease the cost per bushel to dry our corn, but also provide the opportunity to maintain ownership control and delivery flexibility of the grain.

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## Noland Farms, Inc

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*In 1833, our family began farming North of Blue Mound in Macon County. Through honesty, hard work and the adoption of progressive farming practices, we strive to be your operator of choice in Central Illinois.*

## College Graduate

Congratulations to Blake Noland upon graduating from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale with a bachelor's degree from the College of Agricultural Sciences. His major was Agricultural Systems Technology with a minor in Agri-Business. Along with an Associate's Degree in John Deere Technology from Lake Land College, Blake has achieved numerous certifications as a John Deere technician and will be joining a local farmer's operation. We wish him luck as he joins the working world as a young farmer in Central Illinois.



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