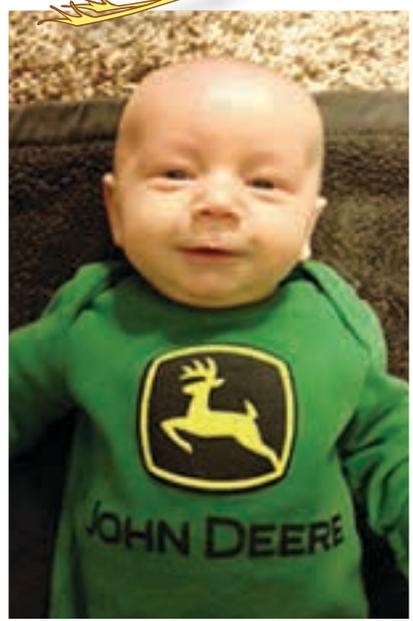




# Noland Farms, Inc.

Blue Mound, IL

2013 Volume 1



**Hudson Neil Noland**

**G**reetings from our family at Noland Farms! Writing our newsletter at the arrival of each new year has granted a prime opportunity for the reflection of life's annual blessings. Although the adverse weather conditions of the past fall proved detrimental to those in production agriculture, 2012 provided many exciting developments and blessings within our business and family.

- The entire family traveled to Pasadena for Blake and Kristin's Rose Bowl weekend wedding ... Neil and Erma celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary in Florida.
- Grant and Logan adopted a newborn baby boy in November ... Hudson Neil Noland.
- Terrific partnerships materialized with new landowners in Christian, Macon, Montgomery, Moultrie and Shelby Counties.
- Our business celebrated a safe and injury-free planting, growing season and harvest ... (Excluding Duane's back surgery).
- The establishment of the Noland Family Agriculture, Horticulture and Sciences Scholarship for a graduating student at Meridian High School in Macon, IL ...

we look forward to meeting the class of 2013's recipient!

- Successful completion, loading and unloading of our liquid and dry fertilizer and bulk diesel fuel on-farm storage projects.
- Opportunities to host an "Ag meet & greet" for local farmers in our dry fertilizer shed with Congressman Rodney Davis and an Ag field day on the farm for Decatur Public School students.
- Tremendous risk-management, agronomic, and marketing learning opportunities from the drought's widespread challenges.
- Grant's election as Secretary of Illinois Corn Growers Association and appointment as co-chair of Congressman Rodney Davis's Ag Policy Committee.



## Seasonal Transition



*Although the winter months provide our seasonal downtime, this time period is generally just as busy around Noland Farms.*

All fall fieldwork concluded in early December, and the equipment has been washed (some waxed) and put away for the winter! Post-harvest field operations such as chiseling corn stalks, spraying a “fall burndown” for winter weed control in no-till fields and applying limited anhydrous ammonia have been completed. Following these recent field operations, equipment key for spring planting was moved into the shop to undergo our preventative maintenance program. As is understood across all industries, mechanical failures at crucial points in time can equate to substantial negative consequences. Although eliminating all “weak links” prior to failure is unattainable, we plan to give it our best shot!

While Dennis has now started tending to equipment maintenance and preparation for spring, many other activities have progressed around the farm since harvest. Utilizing our semis for another new adventure in November, we purchased a tanker to haul liquid fertilizer to load and unload our on-farm storage. Hauling the product ourselves will reduce the cost of transportation through “upward integration” and should increase our sprayer’s efficiency and tendering capacity during in-season crop

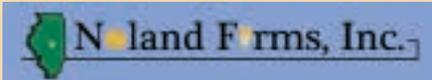
applications. In addition to hauling fertilizer, the mild winter experienced thus far has allowed suitable conditions for many of the outdoor projects on our checklist. One such project has been the removal and trimming of overgrown trees alongside field borders and roadsides. As trees grow outward or fall down through the years, limbs often encroach upon productive areas past the field’s borders. With fall’s transition to winter, the frozen ground presents suitable field conditions for minimizing the compaction and soil disturbance of driving equipment within the field. Aside from an improved and cleaner cosmetic appearance, this eliminates obstructions that could damage equipment and removes a corn or soybean plant’s tough competitor for sunlight and nutrients. A beneficial byproduct of all the trimming has been firewood, which has been utilized in our own and others’ wood-burning stoves. With trees’ annual growth, the removal and trimming equates to a source of guaranteed job security!

Another outdoor project completed over the past month was the addition of our dry fertilizer unloading hopper. Prior to fertilizer being loaded into tender trucks to leave the on-farm storage, this hopper acts as an intermediate containment structure. We dump the fertilizer into this holding bin (up to 20,000 pounds worth), then the product moves on a conveyor belt to an empty tender truck destined for a field to be spread on the soil. After initially pricing new hoppers (WAY too expensive) and searching the internet for used ones for sale (No luck), we started scouring the local



countryside for a suitable project hiding and forgotten amongst the weeds. After identifying a prospect, exchanging \$80 and loading it on a trailer, we drove home the proud (and cautiously optimistic) owners of our future fertilizer hopper. Then the work began! The next few weeks involved what seemed like endless hours of torching, cutting, hammering, sandblasting, welding, transporting and painting. After adding a custom tarp cover system, the \$80 fertilizer hopper was complete and ready for action! Although much time and effort was exerted in retrofitting this structure for a new use in life, we found that the final product was one that was cost-effective and customized to fit our exact needs.

Although the winter months provide our seasonal downtime, this time period is generally just as busy around Noland Farms. Each time someone utters “That is a great winter shop project,” or “We could improve that by spring,” the workload tends to grow a little larger. Typically, much of our time is spent delivering corn and soybeans to the market from our on-farm storage. Due to strong commodity prices, coupled with poor grain quality across our region, we elected to leave much of our on-farm grain storage empty. Advisors preach that one should never use grain storage “just because it is there.” Storage is an asset and tool in one’s marketing portfolio that should be used according to the situation and market conditions. Considering reports indicating that grain quality is already deteriorating, we are pleased that the risk of physically storing the product has been deferred to the commercial grain companies. The time typically allotted to delivering grain will provide the opportunity to install a system that automatically adjusts down pressure on each row of the corn planter and construct a chemical induction system for the liquid fertilizer storage complex. Spring is just around the corner!



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

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

## Farmland Investment

**T**he 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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## **Noland Farms, Inc**

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*From horses to GPS satellites, Neil S. Noland has  
witnessed an amazing transformation in agriculture.  
Thank you for your  
wisdom, leadership and love.*

## **Happy 85th Birthday**

