



Noland Farms

Blue Mound, IL

2017 Volume 1

Greetings from our family at Noland Farms

From Grant Noland



Superheros Hudson and Elizabeth visit the farm for Halloween

We hope the holiday season allowed you opportunities to spend time with family and friends. Reflecting over the past year, our family has been fortunate to experience good health and both personal and professional blessings. The 2016 farming season was a challenging, yet rewarding one! Each year our family farm actively participates in growing our world's food supply - a humbling endeavor and highlight of the profession. One unique aspect of farming is the "clean slate" each year allows for growing higher yielding crops by maximizing the plant's potential through intensely managing the timing and amounts of beneficial nutrients. We were fortunate to experience our second highest overall farm

"... record breaking soybean crop"

yield in corn, and a record-breaking, overall yield for the soybean crop! We continually implement agronomic and operational adjustments aimed at improving our efficiency and productivity, yet favorable weather conditions ultimately must

arrive in vital windows for all to come together. Mother Nature's blessing was upon us this year.

We've turned our focus to the upcoming 2017 season, and are excited for the continued growth of our business through new partnerships with landowners in Shelby and Christian counties. Relationships with landowner partners have allowed us to now expand our "geographical footprint" into six central Illinois counties.



Sprayer applying a fall burndown

Seasonal Recap

What a year for our family at Noland Farms! All spring field operations, which consist of spraying, working ground and planting, began in ideal conditions in mid-April. As I shared in our previous newsletter, we unfortunately encountered both weather delays and design flaws in the “high-speed” planting system installed on one of our planters. Although we grew frustrated during the unexpected challenges, we recognized the value in technology allowing for increased planting efficiency and seed spacing accuracy. Knowledge and growth are often produced through struggle, and we’ve often found that new obstacles can be transformed into our future strengths. We rallied to complete the majority of our field operations in the desired window, as the baton was passed to the next leg in the relay.

Mid-summer

As the growing season transitioned from early spring into mid-summer, both the corn and soybean crops matured through beneficial growing conditions. Throughout the key developmental stages of the hot summer months, timely rainfall and tolerant conditions allowed for plant stress to be minimized to roughly three to five days. During that brief period, visual confirmation of the stress was evident by corn plants “rolling leaves” to reduce the surface area exposed to heat. Although that period was short, we feel this event removed the top-end, record breaking potential of corn yields. Our “high-water mark” on overall corn yield was set in 2014. That detrimental window did not affect soybeans similarly, which allowed for momentum to be carried through to record yields. The growth stage in which a plant endures stress definitely has an impact on yield maximization.

Black beans on 80 acres

The 2016 season awarded us the introduction to not only new landowner partners, but also allowed for new oppor-

tunities to meet and work with industry professionals within our Crop Plan. Expanding upon the 2013 Edamame Project managed by Blake Noland, we grew two varieties of black beans on 80 acres in Christian County. Steve Jobs stated, “Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower.” We were fortunate to be included in the vision of an industry leader. The strategic collaboration in managing a new, edible bean has proved a phenomenal learning opportunity for all parties.

Improving Plant Health

Continuing with the theme of collaboration, we participated in a group effort aimed at improving plant health. Fungicide applications have annually proven to maintain plant health and deliver a positive return on investment. The timing of foliar applications is important and determined through in-field scouting (boots on the ground) for disease pressure in the plant.

Through a partnership with Lindell Aerial Ag Service, we achieved our goals of better managing the fungicide and insecticide applications in corn and soybeans. Operating off our centrally-located runway, a single plane was capable of covering roughly 2,500 acres in just one day. The group’s approach to maximizing operating efficiency within key windows developed into a competitive advantage as disease pressure became more prevalent in optimum environmental condi-



Black beans being harvested.

tions. For our family business to remain independently strong, we believe it’s important to become more interdependent with similar, like-minded businesses.

Harvest Season

As the summer faded with the turning of leaves, we eagerly made preparations to harvest the investments we had grown. Although we had documented favorable yield estimates through scouting fields in the final stages, a nervous anticipation and excitement was present as combines entered the first corn fields. As I previously shared, yields did not disappoint! Our grain facility in southern Macon County again served as a tremendous asset. The facility’s ability to unload grain efficiently led to a reduction in the number of semis necessary to transport grain during harvest. The daily grain drying capacity allowed for 50 semis’ worth of grain to pass through to dry storage.

The centrally-located grain facility also

“Our grain facility in southern Macon County again served as a tremendous asset.”

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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Planes preparing to apply fungicide for improved plant health.

served as the site of our temporary grain storage bags. The practice of grain bagging is widespread in nearly every grain producing region of the globe, and has gained popularity over the past five years in the United States. Each plastic bag is 10 feet wide by 300 feet long and holds 12-13,000 bushels of corn. High yields led to periods of logistical logjams at our preferred delivery point during harvest, so the temporary storage allowed our equipment to remain fully operational. Besides logistics, we identified many financial benefits to grain bags. In years where grain supplies are bountiful at harvest, the market price will typically fall during that time period. The commodity price will typically be higher in the future or deferred months, which encourages those with grain to store or keep bushels from entering the market. Market indicators such as these provide direction and increased value for those with the ability to store grain. As we enter the beginning of 2017, our family farm is excitedly preparing for growing another investment!



A sprayer applying fungicide on black beans.



Temporary grain storage bags being emptied.



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

www.nolandfarms.com



IN THIS ISSUE:

- Greetings from Noland Farms
- Seasonal Recap
- MidAmerican Gardener

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midAmerican gardener

As the second of four children born to Erma and the late Neil Noland, Dianne was born with a green thumb into a long line of farmers and gardeners. She has early memories of planting a vegetable garden with Grandpa Charlie (where Duane and Tina live today) and visiting the flower garden of her Sunday School teacher in kindergarten.

Today, Dianne is the host of WILL-TV's "Mid-America Gardener," beginning as a guest in 1992 and as the host for the past 17 years. The semi-retired University of Illinois horticulture instructor lives with her husband Dave on a 33-acre natural wilderness filled with multiple gardens near the Salt Fork River in rural St. Joseph. Teaching floral design and perennials for the landscape, Dianne is a popular instructor and her students have rated her an excellent instructor every semester since 1980.



Neil, Erma, Dianne & Dennis touring a U of I greenhouse in 1981.

"Gardening is so therapeutic. I actually love to weed because I can see the end product. **"**

