

Lovas Farms

NEWSLETTER | SEPTEMBER 2013

STRANGE WEATHER SEASON

When I started writing this newsletter in late April, there was plenty of snow on the fields and in the ditches—a sharp contrast from 2012’s early spring planting conditions. I hoped for a quick improvement in the weather so we could get out and plant. Unfortunately, we did not get to start planting until May 7!



There was still plenty of snow in the fields in late April.

SHOP SEASON

The long winter meant an unusually long “shop season.” I crave the first day of warm weather, when we can finally turn the furnaces off, open the shop doors, and welcome the sunshine in. The long winter season did allow plenty of time for proper equipment maintenance, which is always a good thing.

In addition to winter maintenance repairs, we made an equipment upgrade to the planter, with individual electric row clutches. These row clutches enable the planter to turn off and on as individual rows of the planter cross into either planted or unplanted parts of the field. The seed savings when planting

fields that are not square was a significant advantage with the row clutches, as well as better yields and drier crop moistures at harvest.



An example of the precision from individual electric row clutches (above). (Photo courtesy of deere.com)

An individual electric row clutch on the planter (right).



As the planter operator, I also appreciate the reduced operator fatigue that comes with the row clutches. It can be quite difficult to gauge when to raise and lower the planter when fatigue sets in late at night, in the dark, or when dusty conditions further reduce visibility. It was a great advantage to have the machinery doing the work when I couldn’t see so well!

In order to control these individual row clutches we needed to increase computer power on the planter, which meant more monitors, control modules, and wires. The planter is starting to look like a wiring experiment gone wrong!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

SHOP SEASON (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

We also started using Precision Planting®'s "FieldView" this season. This technology uses an iPad® in the cab of the planter tractor and shows a live update of numerous planter conditions over a Google Earth™ map of the

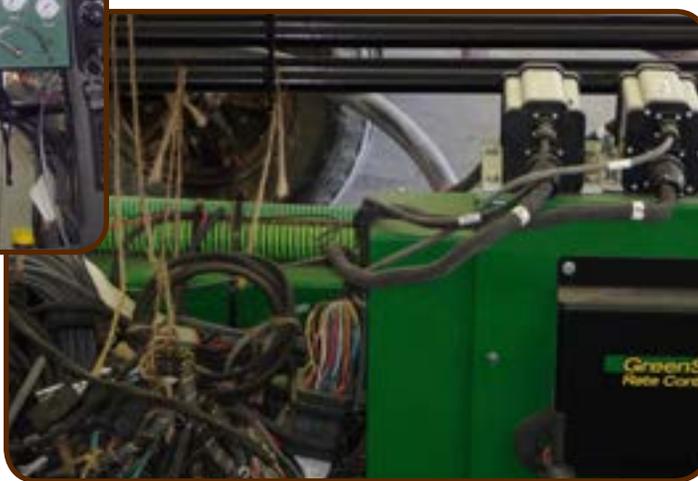
in the middle of the field and recall exactly what planter variables were occurring at that very location, such as seed singulation, planting population, planter speed, and downforce of the planter units, to name a few.

Every year I'm struck by the speed of technological advances in agriculture that enable us to more efficiently utilize the inputs for crop production.

Other than the upgrade to our planter, all other planting equipment was the same as last year. For me, there is a comfort in going out to the field with equipment that I'm familiar with and that I know will perform well.



The tractor cab gets pretty crowded with monitors now!



Wiring for the electronic row clutches.

field. We also used this technology later in the growing season for scouting. Because of the GPS capabilities of the iPad, I'm able to stand

TEST PLOTS

We are again cooperating with three different entities for test plots this year.

American Crystal Sugar® has an aphanomyces test plot. *Aphanomyces cochlioides*, more commonly know



as root rot, is a plant pathogen that can affect crops like sugar beets. Just by its common name of root rot, you can tell it's a bad thing that Crystal really wants to get ahead of. Crystal Beet Seed®, a division of American Crystal Sugar, likes to use our land because it likes to test on fields that are drain tiled.

Monsanto®'s Corn Breeding division also requested a test plot to test varieties of corn that are not yet available commercially. They plant hundreds of repetitions (mini plots within the test plot area) for this research. Our cooperation with this will hopefully facilitate Monsanto's selection of corn varieties that will thrive in our soil.

The third test plot is for North Dakota State University. It is a weed research plot where NDSU tests different adjuvants (additives put into the spray solution that change its physical properties to enhance the efficiency of the herbicide) on a variety of different crops.

It can be time consuming and clumsy farming around these test plots—making sure spray drift is not an issue and fertility is to the researchers' liking—but we are happy to contribute to their research. These companies' successful research helps everyone in the agricultural community.

SUMMER FUN!

Sarah and I had the opportunity to visit my sister Jeannine and her family in Lincoln, Nebraska, this summer. During our visit we got to enjoy perfect weather and fun with immediate and extended family.

Everyone had a great time!



Sarah, Jason, and niece Kate (Jeannine's daughter) enjoy a train ride at the Lincoln Children's Zoo.



Jason drove the Harley to Lincoln to visit family this summer. Looks like we're well on our way to turning niece Kate into a Harley rider!

HAIL!

This growing season saw two exceptionally damaging hailstorms pass through the farm. Dad can't remember Lovas Farms ever experiencing a worse hailstorm. After each of the two storms, we were busy taking crop adjusters through the fields, evaluating the extent of the damage. It's difficult to gauge the exact damage caused by the hail until harvest begins, but I'm sure it will be significant.



Most of the corn plants (above) survived; however, they lost several weeks of growing conditions. In a year with delayed planting and a cool spring, bringing this crop to maturity will require a significantly warm fall and later-than-average first frost date.



Notice how short the bean plants are (above) and the thin stand as a result of the hail. Another anticipated problem is how low the pods are, which will make for higher harvest loss than usual.



The beans above show significant hail damage that will delay crop maturity this fall.

JASON P. LOVAS, 701-371-1272 • SARAH E.H. LOVAS, 701-866-1704 • PETER LOVAS, 701-430-0774

607 5TH AVE SE • HILLSBORO, ND 58045
SHOP LOCATION: 448 HIGHWAY 81 SE (1/2 MILE SOUTH OF ALTON GRAIN TERMINAL)

NEW ACRES

We added a couple new fields this year. We installed drain tile on these fields in early June. We're excited to watch these fields excel with the addition of drain tile.

A factor in the decision to add acres to the farm was the increased truck dumping speeds we received from the addition of our dump pits last summer. This made a significant difference in our harvest speed, so we felt confident our trucks could keep up with the combines during harvest with more acres.



The dump pits that were installed last summer made it possible to farm more acres this year.

NEW ADDITION TO THE FLEET

This winter I concluded that with 148,000 miles on it, the time had come to retire the old Dodge from active duty. I decided that a diesel Ford F550 was the best choice for our needs around the farm.

I ordered a cab and chassis from Wallwork Truck Center in Fargo. Once that was in, I again went to Alum-line, headquartered in Cresco, Iowa, for a service body. (I really think Alum-line puts out a great product.) Then I welded a new grill guard, changed the configuration of the exhaust pipe for easier access to toolboxes and a decreased threat of



fire, added an air compressor, toolboxes, and other storage compartments to keep things neat and tools where I need them, when I need them. It's no fun trying to search for tools in the dark. I also installed a backup camera that helps when I'm hooking up equipment and a holder for the iPad®.

I'm happy with the choice I made in the new Ford. It has been a great addition. I like that I can pull anything I need to, from implements to trailers and everything in between!

And it looks pretty sharp, too!

LATE HARVEST ANTICIPATED

Looking ahead to harvest, we anticipate a late starting date and below average yields. We're hopeful that the recent warm weather will push the remaining crop to maturity so we can finish harvest during the 2013 calendar year and not let the corn stand until spring. We had similar weather patterns in 2008 and 2009 and

were still able to finish by Christmas. Hopefully, those experiences will guide us in making the right harvest decisions for 2013.

See you after harvest!