

Spring / Summer 2012 Edition

2012 Growing Season Update

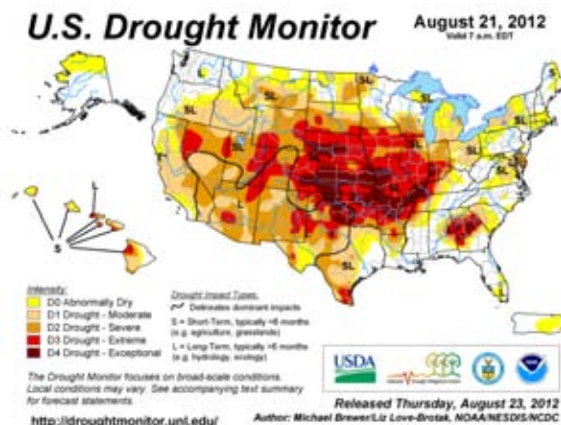
Another crazy year is about over. The last major drought that we experienced in the Midwest was in 1988, now we have another entry for our history books. Early corn harvest has started in our area with reports of 140-150 bushel average corn at 17% moisture. This was corn that was planted prior to federal crop coverage, so it was risky to plant prior to April 11th. As harvest continues, the story will be told if the risk of planting prior to the April 11th date was good this year or not.

With 70 degree weather starting in March, it made for a very early spring. It was hard keeping the planter parked in the shed. We did not plant until after April 11th. However, on April 11th it rained for about 10 days not allowing us in the fields until April 24th. The corn was planted from April 24th thru May 15th. The soil conditions were warm and we had great soil moisture from the 6-8 inches received in that April 11-24 timeframe. The corn was up with in 7-10 days due to warm soil conditions. There was only 30 acres we had to replant on two farms due to a cold rain received on April 28th. It was a cold heavy rain that effected some germination on 2 of those farms.

We started planting soybeans on May 15th and were done in 3 days. Soybeans go in the ground pretty fast. Pictured below is us planting soybeans on the Haire #1 farm.

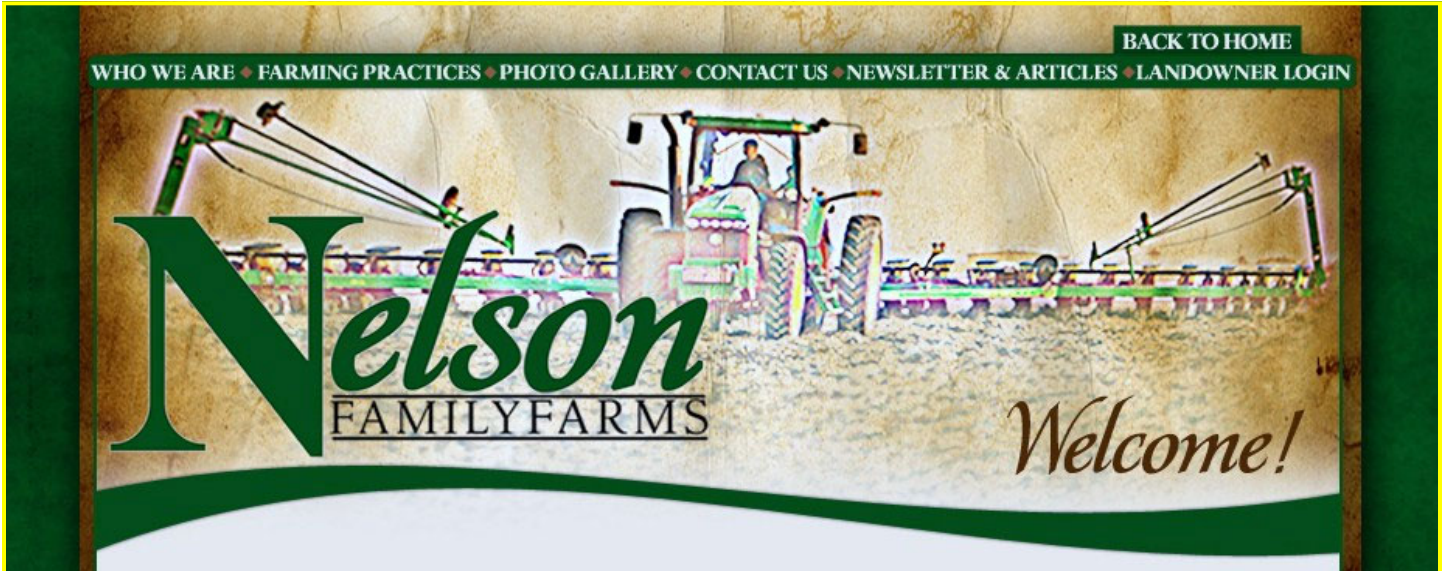
The spring started off with good moisture, but after the April 28th rain, it was the beginning of our drought. With dry conditions and slow growing weeds, the herbicides struggled to work this year. Weedy fields were a problem early, but they cleaned up well with the second application of Roundup.

You can see by the drought map to the right a footprint of the wide spread drought that has plagued the entire US corn belt. This drought has given us \$8 corn which is a record high, but the impact will effect both the farmer and local consumer for multiple years to come. We need approximately 9-10 inches of rain to get our soil moisture levels back to normal for the 2013 crops.



OUR FAMILY DOING BUSINESS
WITH YOUR FAMILY!

Our Website: A CONTINUED BIG HIT!!!!



Have you visited our Website this summer? Have you noticed that I have been doing a lousy job of keeping it updated????!! I am embarrassed to admit this, but with such a busy and hectic summer, I have let the website kinda just float out there. HOWEVER, even though I have been slow to update pictures and landowner login pages, the website still gets many visits on the world wide web. Here are some recent statistics:

Total hits on our website in the past 12 months:	259,824
Total number of visits to our website in past 12 months:	11,181
Total pages viewed in the past 12 months:	27,509

With this type of traffic, it is telling me that we have many repeat visitors as well as many new visitors everyday. I have plans this winter to give our website a new look. I also have one of our Precision Ag Technicians at Brokaw lined up to help me feed field data into the landowner login page. We hope the website has been informational to you as business partners and landowners. Please bear with me as I get the website more interactive and full of useful information!

**“I skate where the puck is going to be,
not where it has been...”**

Wayne Gretzky

Hockey Player

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Farm Improvements

With such a nice open winter it allowed us time to clean up some farms that have been needing some extra work. From pulling old fence lines, to dozing and burying old farmsteads, to just simply picking up some rocks, we've gotten a lot of work done this year.

2012 Land Improvements

Farm I: Helped with the clean up of the CRP Filter Strip and demolished the old quonset and grain bin.

Farm F: We removed the old fence and cut back the old fence line with the dozer

Farm N: We removed the remaining old fence and cut back the old fence line with the dozer

Farm L: We removed the remaining old fence and cut back the old fence line with the dozer
Re-seeded the CRP filter strip along the dredge ditch

Farm D: We removed the remaining old fence and cut back the old fence line with the dozer
Helped with the demolition and cleanup of the old farmstead

Farm A: Re-seeded the filter strips along the dredge ditch

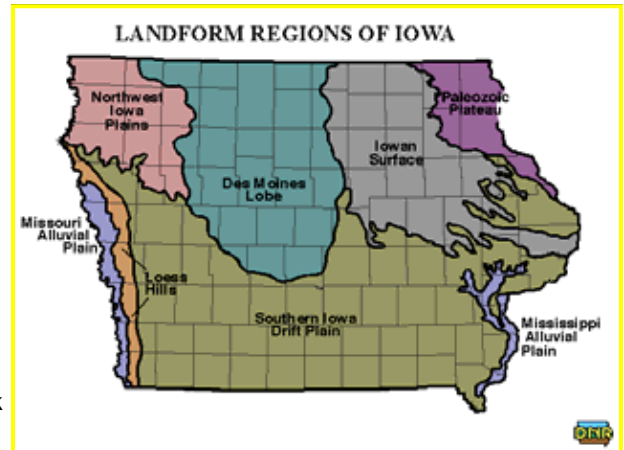


More Tile Goes In

This past winter was another busy time for us with all the new tile being installed on a few of our farms. The ground hardly froze this past winter making for a busy season for local tile contractors. Even though there hasn't been much water to run through the new tile this summer, the value of this new drainage tile will be experienced for many years to come.

The map to the right shows the different soil associations in the state of Iowa. If you think back to geography class and how the soils in Iowa were developed, you will remember the Des Moines lobe being some of the most fertile and flat ground located in Iowa. When the glacier advanced from the north some 15,000 years ago, then retracted about 12,000 years ago, we were left with a very flat topography that became home to our native prairie grasses. The desire to grow crops and take advantage of this fertile soil has required artificial drainage of our NC Iowa soils. As agriculture took a strong hold in Iowa, the digging of drainage ditches and installing underground drainage tile became a common practice. Today, the farm tiling industry is very strong with the many advancements in the technology of underground farm drainage.

As we evaluate our farms, it is very easy to recognize the farms with drainage structures such as grass waterways and underground tile. These farms are the most productive year in and year out. This year we had 3 farms that received more tile. It will take 1-2 years for the soils to settle back in around this new tile, but the advantages will be exponential for the farm!



Above: Pieces of tile for the main that was installed on Smeltzer #1.

Above Left/Center: Digging in the main approximately 12 feet deep on Smeltzer #1

Below: Looking across the field on Smeltzer #1 after the tile was installed.



Above Right: A look down the trench on Smeltzer #1.

Below: A look at the work being done on Haire #1



Iowa Farm Environmental Leader Award



On August 17th at the Iowa State Fair, our family was presented with the Iowa Farm Environmental Leader Award. We were one of a select few farmers in the state of Iowa that were chosen for this great award. This award sponsored by Monsanto and the State of Iowa recognized our family for our commitment to the conservation and environmental practices that we have implemented into our farming operation. This award is a very special honor for our family! Picture above are Left: to Right: Dave Tierney (Monsanto), Fonda Nelson, Governor Terry Branstad, Dave Nelson, Gary Nelson, Karma Nelson, IA Secretary of Ag Bill Northey, IA DNR Director Chuck Gipp, and EPA Region 7 Director Karl Brooks, Front row are the kids, Mason (6 months), Morgan (7), and Tyson (5).

The **IOWA FARM ENVIRONMENTAL LEADER** Award is a joint effort between the Governor, Lt. Governor, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, and Iowa Department of Natural Resources to recognize the efforts of Iowa's farmers as environmental leaders committed to healthy soils and improved water quality.

This award seeks to recognize the exemplary voluntary actions of farmers that improve or protect the environment and natural resources of our state while also encouraging other farmers to follow in their footsteps by building success upon success.

It recognizes those that have taken steps in their farming operations to serve as local leaders in environmental stewardship on their farms, utilizing a variety of techniques and best management practices. As environmental leaders, these farmers have adopted best management practices and incorporated environmental stewardship throughout their farming operations. True stewards of the land, they recognize that improved water quality and soil sustainability reaps benefits that extend well beyond their fields to reach the citizens of Iowa and beyond, and have made environmental stewardship a priority on their farms.



New Technology on the Farm

This year we continued with more upgrades to our 24 row John Deere planter. Our planter is a 1997 model, however, the basic row unit of the planter has not changed since back in the 70's. What has changed are products from Precision Planting that allows you to modify the mechanics of the row unit to achieve near perfect planter performance. There is no need to purchase a brand new \$300,000 planter when the new row units are the same as what our planter has. This winter we spent about 3 weeks in our shop going through the planter and adding the following technology: CleanSweep, 20/20 AirForce, and starter fertilizer system with dual placement capabilities.



CleanSweep is a dual air cylinder that is mounted to each residue manager on the planter. This dual cylinder is adjustable from the tractor cab allowing us to precisely adjust the amount of residue being cleared from in front of each row unit. Being able to adjust for differing residue coverage is key with this product. Things such as different tillage practices, soil types, field conditions, humidity in the air are all things that can affect the amount of residue needing to be cleared. As we go from corn on corn, or strip till to conventional tilled ground, we would spend significant time adjusting residue managers on our planter. CleanSweep now allows us to make adjustments on the go.



20/20 AirForce is another product from Precision Planting that allows us to reduce the down force that is created on each double disc opener on our planter. When the seed is placed into the trench, careful attention should be made to not compact the sidewall of that V shaped trench. The 20/20 AirForce automatically measures and manages the down force weight on each row unit to make sure you run as light as possible, while maintaining the ground contact that assures uniform seeding depth. The AirForce system consists of 2 air bags (Up bag & Down bag) mounted on each row unit. The air for these air bags to be pressurized comes from a hydraulic controlled air compressor mounted on the planter. As the sensors on the planter sense a need for more or less air, the 20/20 monitor sends a signal to air UP the bags or let DOWN the bag pressure. We witnessed instant results this planting season in our stands from reduced sidewall compaction, resulting in a more even stand of corn.



Liquid Fertilizer being applied on the planter is another practice that has not been too common in NC Iowa. Why? It all goes back to our naturally rich soils that we are blessed with. We mounted two inner tanks on our CAT Challenger to carry 800 gallons of liquid starter. It is then applied in 1 of 2 locations on our planter. Either in the bottom of the trench with the seed or out the back of the closing wheels through dual stainless steel tubes. It will be interesting to evaluate our final yields where we used the starter fertilizer products. This is just another example of how we can further help our individual soils and areas of the field be more productive.



“We cannot expect a plants productivity to be greater than the foundation and health of the soil...”

Corn on Corn - Strip Till Style

This is our second year working with corn on corn in a strip till environment. Over the past 3-4 years there has been a spread in the corn and soybean market prices, making for a better opportunity to make higher profits by planting corn. Corn on corn acres have grown substantially in our area as well as around the state, largely due to the local ethanol industry. We have made it our mission to perfect corn on corn in a strip till environment. Why? With strip till we are protecting our soils from runoff, building the organic matter, reducing compaction as well as reducing trips across the field. When you compare the advantages of strip till to the normal conventional till, the strip till is by far the most environmental and agronomic way to grow corn. Going from 40 acres last year to approximately 400 acres this year, our corn on corn is looking great. Below are a few pictures of our strip till corn on corn process.



Above: Strip Tilling in the fall into standing stalks.

Below: Planting our corn on corn acres.



Above: A look behind the fall strip till machine.

Below: A look behind the planter.



Above: After the spring "Freshening Up"

Below: A beautiful stand of corn in the spring.



Above: After the spring "Freshening Up" the berm is approx 4 " tall and the soil tilth & seed-bed are ideal.

20" Corn = Higher Populations = Higher Yields???

As technology advances in seed genetics and the push for higher corn yields, we are continually looking for that next yield increase in our corn. One way to increase our yields is by planting more plants. In a 30" row we are also only utilizing a portion of the soil and a portion of the sunlight coming down between the rows. So if you can more evenly distribute more corn plants and allow for more light interception by the corn leaves, you can continue to increase your population to higher levels. More plants, means more ears, means more kernels, means HIGHER YIELDS!!! This year we purchased for our farm a 20" planter. We are starting to evaluate the benefits that may come with higher populations. We stripped many of our fields with side by side field trials. We varied populations in both the 30" rows as well as the 20" rows. We are excited to see where 20" corn might take our farm in the future. One thing we do have to closely evaluate is the idea of strip till in 20" rows? Will it work? It will be much harder to manage the residue on the soil surface when trying to implement strip being only 20" apart compared to our now 30" strips. Stay tuned for our on farm results!!!



Gary Travels to Brazil

Last summer Dave sent me (Gary) to Des Moines for a strip till demonstration at the state NRCS conference. The last thing he told me before I left was not to volunteer him for anything (like I would do that). I got to take Karma with me and stay in a nice motel in Des Moines (very romantic and tax deductible). While I was there Bill Northey who is the Iowa Secretary of Agriculture came by the booth and said he wanted Dave or I to go with him to Brazil in February. Bill along with Delaware Secretary of Ag, Ed Kee was hosting a group of farmers to tour Brazil. Instantly, I remembered that Dave had told me to not volunteer him for anything, so I told Bill that I would be excited to go!

We left from Des Moines on Feb 14, and returned on the 25. The group was made up of about 40 farmers and agribusiness people from both Iowa and Delaware. Throughout our 10 day trip it was interesting visiting with the Delaware farmers about their state and how different agriculture is for them.

We flew into several different cities and then would head out to the countryside to experience Brazilian agriculture. Fish, cotton, corn, soybean (lots), sugar cane and finally a banana plantation were the farms in which we got to spend our time. One soybean field was 1 ½ miles by 7 miles (approx 6,720 acres). In this field we watched seven combines all combining at the same time with planters following right behind putting in the second crop. It was truly amazing to see the farms first hand.

It would rain everyday and two hours later they would be back out in the field working. The government is real strong on conservation and each farmer has to keep 1/3 of his farm in the permanent forest reserve. They are very strong on protecting the workers' rights as the farmer has to provide lunch where the workers can sit in the shade and have their meals. They put picnic tables on hay racks with a roof on top for the shade and take them out to the fields for the workers. The workers in Brazil are very well taken care of. Security of the workers and theft of the equipment is a major problem for the farmers. They have to house all the workers on their farm due to being so rural located. The farmsteads are surrounded by walls and fences with razor wire on top. Security guards stand at all gates. All this just to protect the farmers employees and his equipment.

We spent one day on the Amazon River and saw where it joins with another major river. The one river flows dark brown dirty water and the other is cocoa colored. Each river flowing at different speeds and different water temperatures, the waters does not mix together for about two miles down the river. So you can see in the water two different colors flowing and finally mixing into one color. This was neat.

Poverty in Brazil is a major problem. The largest population was in the urban areas where in our country the population is out on the farms and now moving to the urban areas. The currency is the Re Aul and with their high inflation rates it discourages many visitors to their country. The farmers trade a bag of beans to buy land, purchase farm machinery, as well as purchase inputs such as fertilizer and seed. They harvest soybeans at 16-18% moisture and dry them in wood burning dryers. Something that stuck out as being very interesting to me was the cost per bushel of soybeans to get them transported from the field to the market. It is a three day trip for a truck to get one load of beans to the closest market. They would then wait in line to dump the beans for many hours even up to a day's time. Then a three day trip back to the field. The average cost to transport their soybeans is approximately \$3.20 per bushel. That is just crazy. If they would ever get their railroads and highway systems up to date, they would be a greater threat to American agriculture.

The trip was an experience that I will never forget. Seeing and experiencing firsthand the poverty and sub grade agriculture that the Brazilians live with every day make me appreciate the great American way of life. If anyone has an opportunity to visit Brazil I would highly recommend it! Dave has since changed his standing offer to me, I now have to check with him before I volunteer him for things. He wishes that he could have gone! Traveling to Brazil was a great experience!



Above Left: A view from afar of the rivers coming together.

Above Right: See the separation of the 2 water.

Right: Touring a Banana Plantation.



Above Left: Standing next to a sugarcane field.

Above Right: Dave Tierney (my roommate on the trip) shows off a bag of Roundup Ready Soybeans.

Projects on the Farm



The latest project in Gary's shop is the restoration of a 1967 John Deere 4020. It was purchased brand new by Keith Green of Altoona, Iowa. Keith was the father of Gary's best friend in high school, Ron Green. This tractor is a diesel with a powershift transmission. Gary remembers Keith and Ron buying this tractor and how fancy of a tractor it was back in the 60's. A Koiker loader and cab was later added to the tractor.

Since Keith's retirement in 1995, the tractor has been setting outside. Gary bought it from the family this past spring and hauled it home to the shop. With the busy summer Gary has stripped it down and split the tractor. The engine has been overhauled and its ready to go back together. Hopefully this winter it will be finished and have a new paint job. I wonder if we will see Gary in any parades??



Above: Dave and Gary load it on the detach semi trailer.

Below: Backed in the shop and ready for the "Tear Down"!!!!



Above: Taking the cab off with the 4630.

Below: Gary is proud to own this tractor. Driving it in high school and now he owns it. Many Memories!



Above: Cab off, loader off, now its ready to go in the shop.

Below: Tractor is split, the motor is out, now for the overhaul!



Decisions are a choice....

And Since our Thinking Dictates our Decisions...

Then we are where we are because of our Thinking...

President Harry S. Truman

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New Horse Barn

This spring's project was Dave and Fonda building a horse barn for their family. Their acreage, being located just east of Fort Dodge on old hwy 20 had the perfect layout for a barn and pasture in the front yard. The 40x40 barn adjoins an outside riding arena along with about 2.5 acres of fenced in pasture. Horses and rodeo has become Dave and Fonda's family hobby, so the barn was an excellent addition. If you are ever driving by and see us out riding, please stop by and say hi! We'll even let you ride "Buddy" or "Pal"!



Above: The poles are set for the barn.

Below: Our barn, arena, and pasture has provided for great family time!



Above: The barn going up.

Below: Washing "Buddy" before a rodeo.



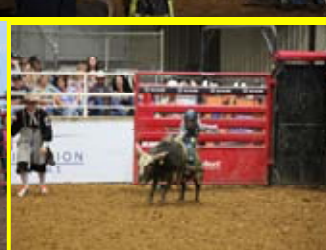
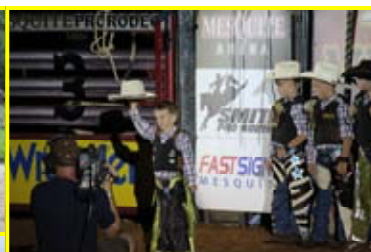
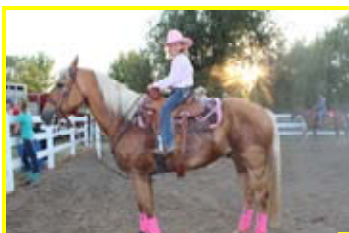
Above: Our fencing from Kentucky.

Below: Morgan practicing in the outdoor arena.



Junior Rodeo

Rodeo has become the hobby of choice for Tyson and Morgan. Tyson has been riding miniature bulls since he was 3 years old. Last year he was the National Champion of the Tiny Tots in the Tuff N Nuff Miniature Rodeo Assn. Morgan competes in the Junior Barrel Racing and has been doing an awesome job with her Palomino horse "Buddy", whom we bought from a good friend in Louisville, Ky. They have competed in the Mesquite, Texas PRCA rodeo, we've traveled from Minnesota to Kansas and Nebraska to Iowa. It has been a great hobby for our family! Stay tuned for a trip this winter to the Denver Stock show in January.



New Addition to our Family

On February 24th, Dave and Fonda welcomed into their family their 3rd child. Mason Ethan. Mason was born at 7:32 PM weighing in at 8 lb 11 oz and 21 inches long. We were blessed with a healthy mom and baby. Morgan and Tyson were excited to come up and see their long awaited little brother. 9 months of waiting is just too long for a 7 and 5 year old. Grandpa Nelson made it to the hospital after being up for 36 hours on his return trip from Brazil!

Mason is now 6 months old and already starting to roll over and very attentive to his surroundings. He comes to work with Fonda 2 days a week and just hangs out with everyone at Brokaw. He is either laying on her desk or sitting in his car seat. Everyone loves to make him smile as they walk past her office.

It is such a blessing to have Mason in our family. Will he farm someday? Tyson thinks Mason and him should farm together and of course ride bulls too!



Above: Mason Ethan, our new little farmer.

Below: Mason comes out to see Grandpa on the farm.



Above: Proud to be new grandparents.

Above Right Morgan and Tyson inspecting their new little brother.

Right: Mason isn't in the rodeo yet, but Tyson and Morgan love showing him off to their friends.



Left: Mason hangs out with Fonda at work. He is not old enough to be on the payroll yet.

Right: At 6 Months old already, Mason is our little man who loves the outdoors.



Photo Journal



Above: Dave and Tyson pickup up rocks on the Stark farm in the January 60 degree weather.



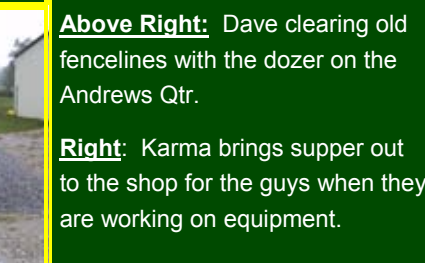
Above: Spraying Roundup on the cover crop in March.



Above Right: Dave clearing old fencelines with the dozer on the Andrews Qtr.



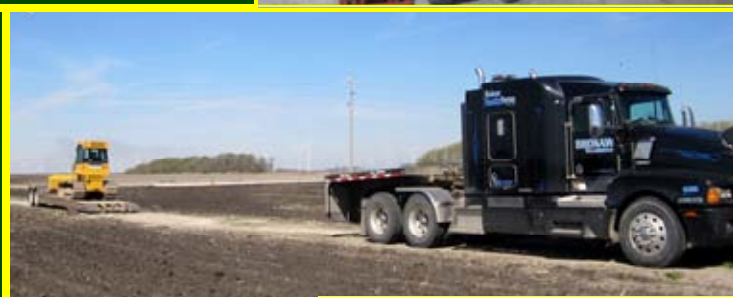
Above: Dave and Morgan drove to Kentucky in March to pick up Morgan's new horse.



Right: Karma brings supper out to the shop for the guys when they are working on equipment.



Below Left: Gary, Dave, Tyson, and Mason. The 4th, 5th and 6th generations of our Nelson Family Farms!!!



Above: Unloading the Dozer to clean up some farms this spring.



Below: Tyson got to drive the Ranger while picking up rocks.



Above: Putting on Spring Nh3 on the Andrews Qtr.

Left: Gary Filling the sprayer on Smeltzer #4.

Right: Getting all the new electronics on the planter working.



Photo Journal



Above: Filling the 8420 with fuel at 4 AM. During field work time, the days get long, but we love what we do!!!
FARMING TOGETHER AS A FAMILY!!!



Above: See the spray coming out of the booms on our Apache sprayer.



Above: Tyson helping dad change the planter over to soybeans.



Above: Filling the planter with corn on the Andrews Quarter.

Right: A view out the rear window of the CAT while planting on the Hogan Farm.



Above: Dave making some adjustments to the planter while on the Iowa Farmland 220.

Below: This is the glass cage that Dave lives in while planting.



Below: Morgan and Tyson come out and visit dad when he is filling the planter.



Below: Grant and Karma pose for a picture while loading bulk soybeans. Grant is our agronomist.



Above: Tyson eating the fun lunch that grandma packed for him.

Below: Loading bulk soybean seed at the elevator.



Photo Journal



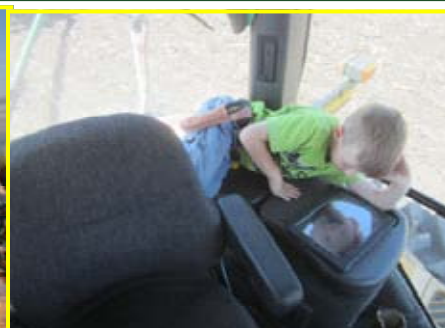
Above: Getting ready to plant 20" rows on Smeltzer #1.

Below: Planting all night long. Gotta Love it!



Above: Karma and Dave filling the planter on the Zinn Farm.

Top Right: Tyson playing on the I-Pad while riding with Dad in the planter.



Above: Filling the inner tanks on the CAT with starter fertilizer.

Left: Dave doing a camera interview for Monsanto.



Left: Corn fungicide & insecticide being sprayed by airplane on the Schaupp Farm.

Right: Strong winds in July blew the corn over on our Haire and VanDiest farms. These farms are going to be very difficult to combine.



Right 2 pics:

This year we side dressed mainly Nh3 with our custom built Yetter Magnum bar.

Center Right:

Some corn on corn acres got side dressed with 28%.



Above: Power washing off the planter after spring work. Good maintenance is important.



Above: Mowing ditches on the Zinn Farm. All ditches get mowed 3-4 times.

Photo Journal



Above: Gary takes his 10 O'clock in the old semi seat.



Above: Son in Law Andrew gets to experience walking beans.



Above: Grandpa and Tyson riding motorcycles together .

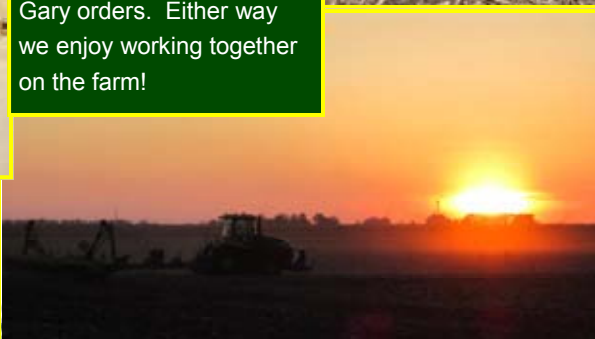


Above Right: Not sure if this is Gary giving Dave orders or if its Dave giving Gary orders. Either way we enjoy working together on the farm!

Right: Dave was featured on the TODAY IN AMERICA TV Show.

Bottom Center: Karma snuggling with mason on a summer evening.

Below: Dave spreading out the new gravel at Gary and Karma's house.



Above: A beautiful spring sunset while planting on the Haire #2 farm! Karma captured this picture as Dave went across the field with the planter.



OUR FAMILY DOING BUSINESS WITH YOUR FAMILY!

With your involvement, our Family Farming Operation continues to grow! As the summer of 2012 comes to a close, we would like to thank all of our farming & business partners. Without your help we would not be where we are today!

If you or anyone you know is looking for a long term tenant, we would be excited to share more details about our family operation. We pride ourselves in the relationship and open communication with everyone that we do business with. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please feel free to contact us! - The Nelson's



Our Century Farm Since 1889



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"Leadership is the Challenge to be Something More than Average..."

Jim Rohn

Spring / Summer 2012



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WITH YOUR FAMILY!**

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