



Cultivating Progress

A SEMI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO KEEPING OUR PARTNERS UPDATED ON OUR FARM'S GROWTH.

Weather Causing Whiplash on the Farm

Wet – Dry – Wet – We are just as confused as you!

Just when you think you've got MN weather figured out, wait 10 minutes and it will change drastically. After 2023, which saw record snow in the winter, we went into a drought through the growing season. Luckily, we received normal fall precipitation, so we had something going into winter 2024. We were graced with winter entering like a lamb, and it pretty much stayed that course. Many days of above freezing temperatures and little snowfall had us believing field work would start in earnest earlier than normal. When we went out to do some light tillage in mid March, and the ground was receptive, we figured for sure spring planting would be early.

April MN proved, we had a cold and wet start to the planting season. Eventually, we got all the crop in by June. While temperatures stayed moderate for a lot of the growing season, the rain continued nearly to fall. The fears of a wet fall loomed large as silage, beet prep, and kidney bean harvest started. For us to have the crops finish out and be able to harvest the crop before the snow flew, we would need heat and dryness. Those prayers were answered! From September 1 to November 10, nearly all the land we



Rain fall chart June – Nov (inches on right)



Reloader machine loading beets off clamp pile into trucks

farm received less than an inch of precipitation. Some areas only had a few tenths.

Sugarbeets

After a record setting beet crop in 2023, we knew it would be difficult to repeat. 2024 proved to be a challenge. In the end, our co-op harvested a 26-ton crop average, while we harvested a 30-ton crop. Historically, those are good numbers as our crop yields climb over the years.

Our area, while wet for a large portion of the season, received less “monsoon” rains than many others. It was a challenge to be able to get timely spraying for both weed pressure and disease.

We had to hire more hand weeding than normal to be able to control glyphosate resistant water hemp. This weed grows fast and cannot be controlled once it is established. We look forward to “triple stack” beet seed, which has other modes of action to be able to control this pesky weed.

When prep work began in late August, we had to deal with a few rain events. Based on the spring and summer, it looked like a doom and gloom fall. The weather shaped up and we were able to harvest about 20% of our crop by the start of full harvest in early October.

Full harvest commenced on October 4th and finished October 22nd. This year the beet harvest was different.

We were asked by the beet co-op to try a harvest plan



Last pass of 2024 sugar beet harvest

used more prominently in Europe and other areas in the U.S. This method is called clamping, the beets are harvested and put into long piles in the field for a different machine to direct load into a truck. This style

speeds up the harvest as separating lifting from

freight allows the machines to run on their own schedule.

We hope to continue to clamp in the future. The weather was great and there were no rain delays during the beet harvest. Not having a rain delay certainly was a first for this farm!

Corn

In 2024, we grew over 2,800 acres of corn. It would have been closer to 3,000 acres but we had to have some prevent plant acres this spring due to the wet conditions. We tend to do about 50/50 split of grain corn and silage.

Planting the crop started in late April. We had to get a lot of acres in a short amount of time with the wet conditions. Being able to plant up to 10 miles per hour



Corn combine in field at sunset

with our high-speed planter along with other planter upgrades, allowed us to get the crop in and to get the crop emerging consistent and even.

Like beets, it was a struggle to get all the weed control chemicals applied on time. We spray a pre-emerge chemical on nearly all of our corn, so early season weed pressure is lessened.

Yields for both grain and silage were variable.

Having well drained soil and less residue from a previous corn crop proved to be key this season. Our overall yield for grain was 190 bushels/acre and 23.12 ton/acre on silage. Both of these yields were lower than our 5-year average. Within those results we saw really good and really bad fields. Field averages were anywhere between 130 – 230 bushels/acre. The late season warmth helped finish the crop with good test weight and a fairly low moisture content. This helped

us not to have to dry it down and allowed our dryer to work quicker and more efficiently.



Corn silage pile being built during corn chopping harvest.

Soybeans

Over the years our farm has not grown a high percentage of soybeans. In 2024 we decided to grow nearly 950 acres of them due to crop rotation, labor, and machinery capacity.

Our planting season started a little later than average and didn't finish until June 10. We had to prevent plant 20 acres due to wet conditions. The wet theme continued with this crop as it was difficult to get timely chemical application.

We grew about 250 of these acres as seed beans, while the rest of them were grown and sold to the local elevators. The warm dry fall actually made the moisture content less than ideal at harvest as an overly dry bean can get discounted. We were able to harvest a



Soybeans in pod ready for harvest

46 bushel/acre average. While less than our 5-year average, it isn't bad for the year we had. There was a 50-acre portion that was harvested after corn harvest due to its extreme green and "lively" condition.

Kidney beans

Kidney beans were planted in early June between massive rain events. This caused about 10% of the

crop to not ever come up or were submerged in water when they did emerge they drowned out.

Fortunately, the beans that were there were good. We planted just over 400 acres in 2024, which is our lowest in many years. The markets, labor, and machinery were reasons for the lower amount.

We started rodding beans in early September and combining shortly after. The warm weather actually was a detriment as the bean plant was green, while the bean itself was dry. The combine has a tough time separating dry beans from green stems at harvest. There were only a few light showers that slowed production, but we were able to finish harvesting the crop by late September.

Yield averaged 2,610 pounds/acre, which is higher than our 5-year average. Just think if those low areas wouldn't have flooded out!

Vegetables

Sweet corn and peas were raised under irrigation in 2024. 105 acres of early peas were planted in late April. Their season is short, and it is important to get them to emerge quickly. The irrigator rarely ran for them with the ample moisture from the sky. We averaged 4,339 pounds/acre, which is significantly higher than our 5-year average. Once the pea crop was harvested in late June, we were able to double crop sweet corn on those same acres. We also planted another irrigated field to sweet corn in late June.

A total of 235 acres were planted to sweet corn. We averaged 6.3 tons/acre. This was a little below average as the late planting approach was less than

ideal. All of our peas and sweet corn are grown and contracted to Lakeside Foods in Brooten.



Peas flowering in field

Alfalfa

This year, 737 acres of alfalfa were grown. 170 acres of that was seeded this spring. New seeded alfalfa typically yields half that of an established crop. We mixed that with some 3 – 6-year crops. The early season rain made for good hay, but delayed harvest several times. About 75% of our acres get harvested by CY Harvesting and delivered to Meadow Star Dairy. We supply some of the trucks and labor to help spread some costs for Hultgren Farms. We also cut and baled about 150 acres for our beef herd. Most of those acres are watered, with some dry hay in odd spots.

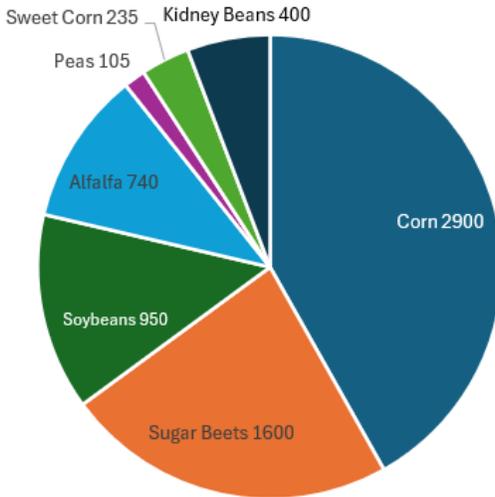


Chart of crop acres grown in 2024 season

Hemp

No hemp was grown in 2024, without a steady or defined marketplace, we decided we weren't going to put any in. We would grow it again if the market allows.

Overall, 2024 was a good year. It saw many weather challenges from planting, spraying, and harvest season. We spend many hours analyzing and managing the best we can. The good Lord controls Mother Nature and most of the time, she knows best! We are blessed to be in the part of the world where we can usually count on adequate moisture, adequate temperatures, and adequate conditions. We just don't get it all in the right order.

Thank you to all of our great team working at Hultgren Farms. We mix full time and part time people together and are blessed with good ones. Thank you to all our

landlords and partners for helping make it possible to grow food, fuel, and fiber for our amazing country and beautiful world.

Holiday Season

The end of the year seems to go by quickly each year. We have turned the corner after harvest and now our calendars are filled with Thanksgiving meals, company holiday parties, gift shopping, gift wrapping, and many Christmas events. While this time of year zooms by it is important to remember to enjoy



the little moments with the family and friends we love. Be sure to take



those group pictures, talk about the old days, share family recipes, and be thankful for another great year with our loved ones.

Hay for Days

We were certainly blessed with the perfect hay growing weather this year! The rain was plentiful, and yet gave us windows for putting up great quality hay. We have more than enough for our beef herd and have extra on hand that has been quality tested. Stop into the office, or give us a call if you are looking to supplement your supply.



Rows of hay baled and ready for feeding

Fall on the North Shore

By: Lily Hultgren

Your local Hultgren college student is here for an end-of-fall check-in! I was very lucky to spend another gorgeous autumn here in Duluth, starting my second-to-last year of undergraduate studies at UMD. This fall was one of the warmest on record, with temps averaging in the upper 60s to low 70s all September and most of October (I think a few of the days, highs were in the 80s!). I took advantage of the weather, spending as much of my free time outside as possible. I went hiking with friends, walked the boardwalk in Canal Park, continued to do lots of running, and sat in the sun as much as I could. It's always great when I can keep wearing shorts until the middle of October! Funnily enough, as I'm typing this, I'm watching snow fall and gust around outside...Duluth weather is truly bipolar!



Sunset over Lake Superior

The fall colors were beautiful this year, of course, and I didn't have to go far from campus to get some good views of them (as you can see in the photos I took). The trees held their colorful leaves longer than they usually do, partially due to the warm weather and lack of frost until late October.

This semester has been flying by, and it's hard for me to believe I only have a year and a half left here at UMD. I am enjoying my challenging classes this semester and staying very busy, especially with an election and voter research project I am conducting.

I hope everyone had a safe and enjoyable fall, and just know that I'm already looking forward to Thanksgiving dinner!



Leaf covered path through the colorful woods

Best Beef

We wrapped another great season of connecting with our customers at farmers markets in several local towns, several days a week. It is always fun to see regular customers, interact with new ones, and help educate everyone on their food, especially beef. Our fall beef shares are nearly sold out with just a couple left in December, so if you are looking to fill your freezers give Reno a call get your share reserved. Be on the look out in the first part of the 2025 year for a price lock opportunity for early reserved beef shares. This gives you a good deal and helps us schedule our butcher appointments for the coming year. We appreciate all our fantastic customers who have become close friends over the years, thank you!

Thank you!

With the beautiful fall weather, we have an opportunity to get our newsletter with the harvest report out by Thanksgiving. And what a fitting time to be grateful for the many hands that carry the weight on our farm. From those that run the 132-foot sprayer to the 600 horsepower quadtracs, to the kids mowing the lawn and cleaning the office, to the seasonal folks who jump in a beet truck for a couple weeks of “fun” on their vacation from their jobs in town, it takes a village to raise a crop and to do it safely. We expanded our team this year and I think it provided some much-needed support to our full-time staff that had been helping us ramp up as we grew. Our full-time crew for 2024:

Junior Aviles
Blake Klaphake
Matthew Lingbeek
Ben Lundebrek
Reno Williams
Dan Youngkrantz

We appreciate all they do in working with our family, and we thank their families for understanding the ups and downs of farming. Sometimes the days are long, and the long weekends few in this game of agriculture and we don't take your patience for granted. Even longer is the list of seasonal and part-time help that have contributed to our farm over the course of the year. We couldn't do it without you, and it was truly a pleasure to work with each and every one of you this year. Our seasonal crew members were:

Josh Larson	Butch Fest
Ken Hanson	Ivan Cornejo
Elias Hultgren	Lily Hultgren
Ruby Hultgren	Hannah Hultgren
Oliver Hultgren	Nora Hultgren
Evan Peterson	Kent Rusten
Jake Lindquist	Flo Miclea
Leon Jacobs	Hugo Muller
Nick Schneider	Don Hauptli
Cowan Mortensen	Lauren Anderson

I'd also like to list some of the folks we have the pleasure of doing business with from year-to-year that are our go-to people. They have proven time and time again that we can depend on them to deliver when promised, and to make it right if something isn't meeting expectations. They are honest, fair, and ready to help. It is easy to complain about “poor service these days”, so we'd better recognize it when we experience the good relationships. I want to thank the following for going the extra mile in working with our business in 2024:

Kevin Trapp, Central Counties Cooperative
Jeremy Ruf, Dooley's Petroleum
Joe Leenstra, Joe's Auto Repair
Troy Stevens, Bremer Insurance
Mike Bakker, Citizens Alliance Bank
Alex Everson, Ace Ag
Justin Kidrowski, Arcs & Sparks
Carlos Portillo, Meadow Star Dairy
Darrin Herickhoff, D&H Field Services
Jason Fussy, Centrol Crop Consulting
Steve Hiniker, Hertz Ag

We did a bit of a shift in how we handled the order and fulfillment program this year, but we want to thank our loyal beef customers for their continued support.

As always, thank you to our landlords for your trust in us. We treat every acre that you rent to us no different than the acres our family owns and treasures—we appreciate the opportunity to work with you on one of your biggest life investments!

May the Lord bless your family this Thanksgiving.

Thank you for
helping our
farm be the
best this year!

Slow Cooker Italian Beef Sandwich



Ingredients:

- 1 boneless beef Chuck roast, (2-1/2 pounds)
- 1 packet Italian dressing mix
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1/4 cup Banana Peppers
- 1 teaspoon granulated garlic
- 1 cup low sodium beef broth
- 4 hoagie rolls

Cooking:

1. Press dressing mix and Italian seasoning evenly onto all surfaces of beef Chuck Arm Roast. Place banana peppers and garlic in 4-1/2 to 5-1/2-quart slow cooker; top with roast and beef broth. Cover and cook on HIGH 6 hours or LOW for 8 hours or until pot roast is fork-tender.
2. Remove roast and shred into a medium sized bowl. Cut rolls lengthwise and fill with beef. Top with giardiniera and extra banana peppers.

Contact Us!

Our offices are 5 miles west of Willmar on MN 40.
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Order our farm-fresh, pasture-raised beef online:
www.hultgrenfarms.com or stop by anytime for the best
ground beef in the state of Minnesota!

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Check out our Facebook page!



HAPPY THANKSGIVING



MERRY CHRISTMAS



HAPPY NEW YEAR



Hultgren Farms wishes you and your family the happiest of holiday seasons! Enjoy a full Thanksgiving table, a cheery Christmas season, and a wonderful New Year!