



Cultivating Progress

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

Early Start, Early Finish, But Late Struggles

Features of the 2025 Planting Season

After a winter that was essentially free from snow cover, the 2025 planting season got off to an early start. With alfalfa seeding beginning on April 11, sugarbeets hitting the ground on April 16 and corn on April 17, we had a good window to get the planting process going.

Soil conditions were dry going into the season since we had gotten very little snow over the winter and only small events of rain in late March. They remained dry throughout planting, and the crop was put in with very few interruptions. But what started as an optimistic situation has turned challenging as of the writing of this article.

Here is a crop-by-crop description of the 2025 planting season:

Sugarbeets

We planted 1,600 acres of sugarbeets, starting on April 16 and finishing on May 2...for the first time. We saw great planting conditions throughout our growing area. Fields located in the Pennock, Big Bend, and Belgrade areas all had good seedbeds, with dry soil. As is always the case with sugarbeet planting, we have concerns about ensuing moisture because we plant the seed in the top 1"-1.5" level. This soil can dry out very fast after planting if we don't get rain and leave some seeds ungerminated.

And although it seemed like we had almost perfect conditions where we could place the seed on top of a shallow moisture layer at planting, we experienced several days of unseasonal heat over 90 degrees and strong winds in late April. As we went out to assess early stand counts in our beets, we noted that most fields had disappointing emergence numbers.



Planter all ready to plant sugarbeets

To gauge this, we set a goal to see between 175-200 plants per 100 feet of row. This is the stand that will achieve maximum yield potential at harvest. Unfortunately, we were seeing counts close to 100 plants per 100 feet. After a couple of rain events totaling almost 2 inches, we were hopeful that it was an issue of the seeds not having enough moisture to sprout and that we'd see some late emergence. It never came.

What caused this sub-par germination remains a mystery. Was it dry soil? Was it the heat and wind at just the right time to burn off sprouts? Was it poor seed quality? Was it a herbicide residual in the soil from the dry conditions in 2024? Was it tied to prior crop residue? Cold soil temperatures from earlier than usual planting? Our co-op, Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Coop, had about 8,000 acres that experienced this situation and were forced to replant. We decided to replant about 260 acres or about 16% of our beets around May 29. Being over a month later than normal, we know the yield will be reduced on these acres but the stands were simply too low to expect any more than half a crop, and the weed suppression by the crop canopy with the large stand gaps would be less than we could bear. To add insult to injury, many of our remaining fields did not achieve optimal stands either.

As this article goes to press, a catastrophic rain system moved through the heart of our growing area and flooded areas of almost every one of our beet fields. This will also take a bite out of our yield expectation. It has been a rough start to what was originally an optimistic planting season on our sugarbeet crop. But this is why there are higher margins in specialty crops like beets—some years we have these struggles to establish the crop or harvest it. And it is far more risky than corn or soybeans.

We will manage to the best of our abilities to squeeze whatever we can from this crop, but we know it will require a lot of tough decisions for the rest of the growing season. Luckily there are large areas of our beet cooperative that have great looking beets and will have good yields that will keep our factory full and help us achieve a solid payment on the tons we are able to glean off of this sub-par crop.

This was our first year planting beets with a high-speed planter and it was quite an odd feeling for me as an operator to be buzzing along at 8 MPH planting beets. I spent my whole career in the 3.5-4 MPH range.

Corn

Hultgren Farms planted 3,000 acres of corn. It is planned that about half will be chopped for silage, and the other half combined as dry grain corn in 2025. We started planting on April 17 and wrapped up on May 9.

Most of the corn crop went in fairly uneventful as we had dry conditions at every site. We did have a cold, rainy, windy snap after emergence that almost froze the emerging corn, and it looked sick for over a week. But warm temperatures returned and the corn snapped out of it. The crop was looking great until this recent rain storm that has ponded in the corn fields. We will lose yield to the flooding. At this point it is difficult to determine as we don't know how much of the corn was tall enough to stay above the water.



Corn seeds emerging this spring

Soybeans

We started planting our 900 acres of soybeans on May 3, which is earlier than normal for us. We finished on May 13. Many farmers have started planting soybeans before corn (in April) as a new practice that shows some promise for positive returns. We have not gone down that path yet for fear of late frost and cold rain damage, but we may have to investigate further in future years. Most of our soybean acres followed combined corn fields from

2024, and due to the lack of snow and rain over the winter, the old stalks did not decay at all so we were faced with a lot of trashy residue to plant the beans in. Luckily our planters are equipped with automated downforce to assure good ground contact with the planter units. We have row cleaners that move the trash aside so that the seed gets good soil contact. And then we use a roller to level off the field and assure that the seeds are in firm soil with a closed top to assure even emergence. The rolling also improves conditions for fall harvest as the harvester header doesn't have to push rocks and residue as it is cutting off the soybean.

We no-tilled 18% of our soybeans this year. 18% of our acres are being raised for seed beans, so there will be some premium for that value-added identity preservation.

Like the corn, we had good emergence and yield expectations on the soybeans until this recent rain event. The ponding will take out significant acreage and we will be faced with a decision on whether to try to replant those low areas with an early-maturity bean. But we don't see those soils drying out until late June, so it will be difficult to expect much yield even if replanting is possible.



Lots of rock picking to be done this year.

Kidney Beans

380 acres of dark red kidney beans were planted May 30-June 2. We typically hold off on dry bean planting until later in the planting season, and considering some cold, rainy conditions in late May, we felt good about the planting window we hit. Soils were dry and warm like we want for kidney beans.

Unfortunately, kidney beans fare terribly in wet conditions such as what was brought on by the 5+ inches we just received. Even plants that are newly emerged and not in standing water will be weakened or die due to supersaturated soils. And anything that sits under water for more than several hours will be dead. And so as this goes to press, another replant decision looms. The positive? Kidney beans have a shorter growing season and planting in June is not as penalizing. The negative? We are unsure when soils will dry out enough to facilitate replanting. Typically, we park the planter on July 1 and do not replant anything after that as we feel the frost risk becomes too great.

We hope for a warm, dry month going forward and that we can report surprisingly good news on our kidney bean crop in our harvest report, but we are not off to a good start with the plant population that will be on the field at the beginning of the growing season.

Alfalfa

We seeded 135 acres of new alfalfa this year, starting on April 11 and finishing on April 21. Like the beets, we saw some uneven emergence especially on the clay hilltops. Alfalfa is planted even shallower than beets (in the top inch of the soil profile) and so it is susceptible to drying out and damage from wind, heat, and frost. The alfalfa experienced all of the above in the early stages of its emergence. With help from some timely rains, we feel we achieved the stand required so that we will not have to reseed any of these hilltops, but they are certainly not at optimum levels.

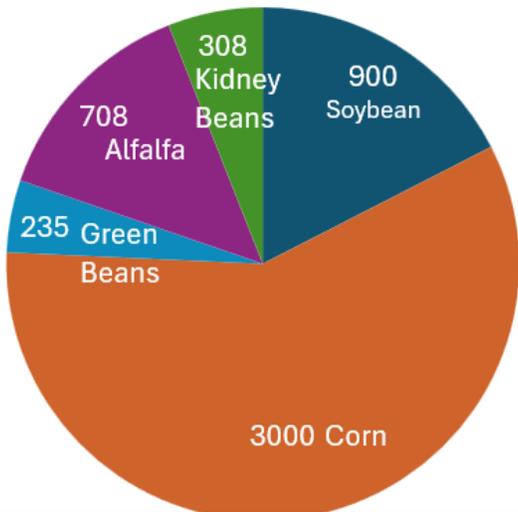
Alfalfa will branch out over the first couple years of its life cycle to compensate for some of the missing stand. We will cut this new seeding in mid July and then again in mid August. So we expect two crops off of new planting as opposed to four per year in our established fields. It is that half-yield in year one that is sometimes a deterrent to growing alfalfa. We have seen enough soil health and labor utilization benefits to justify the year one losses. As

always, we hope to make it up with a good run of four or five years of good production.

Green (Snap) Beans

For over 20 years, Hultgren Farms raised sweet corn and peas for Lakeside Food in Brooten, MN. Lakeside decided to end their sweet corn and pea production following the 2024 season, and switched their processing plant over to snap beans for 2025. We will plant 235 acres of this specialty bean, which is planted in mid-June and harvested in late August. The planting date is dictated by Lakeside, and we have not been scheduled to plant as of this article being written. We expect to plant around June 20. This will be our first time raising this type of bean, but feel the agronomy of it is similar to kidney beans. However, Lakeside will harvest it “green” with their equipment, taking the whole bean pod for frozen or canned green beans.

The 2025 planting season got off to a racehorse start but we are seeing now as the weather challenges materialize that it will be a workhorse finish all the way to harvest.



Acres of each crop this season

Girls State Basketball

Ella, Sam, Nora, and Ruby participated in the 2025 Class A STATE Girls Basketball Tournament this past March. They played for the MACCRAY Wolverines. The team started the playoffs by playing in Montevideo against YME. After beating the YME Sting, they moved on to playing the Minnesota Vikings. Once they defeated them in a close game, they moved on to play at SMSU to compete in the Sub-Sections against CMCS. For the first time that season they beat their rivals (CMCS) to move on to the Section Championship game. They played Hills Beaver Creek in a very exciting game to continue to STATE. They first played Mayer Lutheran and beat them 55-51. They moved on to playing Sleepy Eye Saint Mary's and won 60-56. Then came the STATE Championship game versus West Central Area. The Wolverines sadly ended their season as STATE runners-up. Everyone experienced the STATE Tournament in different ways and would like to share their point of view.



Nate, Nora, Ruby, Ella, Sam, and Noah

Ella's Point of View:

Hi, my name is Ella, daughter of Noah and Paula. The state tournament was a surreal experience that will be engraved in my mind forever. It was the perfect way to end my senior basketball season. I had gone up to watch state the past couple years with my dad and always dreamed it would be me on the court. The work my team and I put in to get through wasn't anything easy. We had to condition every practice, put up hundreds of shots, and even have 2 practices a day sometimes. It was all worth it. From the start of the season I knew that we had a chance to go because we had a perfect lineup. Everyone on the court could shoot and we had a star player that no one could guard.

down and screaming with my teammates. My favorite memory from the whole season is when we won against Hills Beaver Creek, we got the Section Champs trophy and our whole student section came running onto the court to celebrate with us. I will never forget that feeling of happiness. STATE was the coolest experience of my whole life. At the STATE Tournament I made so many memories with my cousins and friends. The whole atmosphere was so different and energized! Being able to watch my team play in a huge arena was amazing! I have never cheered so hard in my life. Me and my other teammates on the bench made up cool cheers to do. We were all so supportive and happy for our team every step of the way. In my opinion, being on the bench and being supportive of the team is nearly just as important as actually being on the court. At State our fan section was the loudest and biggest I've ever seen it. I am so grateful for the opportunity to go to STATE and play in the Championship. I am so proud of my cousins and sister for always playing their hardest and leaving everything on that court. I will never forget my freshman varsity basketball season as long as I live.



Big support from all the Hultgren cousins.

The support we had not only in the small community of Clara City but all over Minnesota impacted how we played tremendously. I still get people telling me congrats and that they watched my games. It is really special to me that my team and I made that big of an impact on everyone. I hope that this opens the door for MACCRA basketball and that I will be able to cheer on my cousins and sisters for many years at the state tournament. Being able to play along side my sister, cousins, and best friends was an experience I will never forget.

Ruby's Point of View:

Hi, my name is Ruby, daughter of Nate and Jaime. Halfway through the season I got pulled up to varsity. It was cool to be the only freshman on the team to sit varsity. Sitting and sometimes playing varsity was a really great experience mostly because I had the help of three other family members. I had so much fun during the playoffs, and I remember after beating CMCS, jumping up and



MACCRA Girls Basketball team

Sam's Point of View: Hey, my name is Sam and I'm the daughter of Noah and Paula. STATE! Wow! It was one of the best things that has happened to me. I got to play my favorite sport with some of my closest friends. Not only did I get to play with friends, but I also got to play with my cousins and my sister. At one point in the season our coach wanted to put all the Hultgren's in at one time for our grandparents. It was so cool to hear all our names be announced to substitute in. After winning against some good teams in regular season games, I knew that we could go far. It has always been a goal of mine to make it to STATE in basketball. At the beginning of the season, we talked as a team about our goals and one of the goals that

I said was making it to STATE. Everyone laughed, including me, as if it was a goal that we couldn't reach. We went from the first round to the second round, to subsections, to sections. After beating CMCS we knew we had a chance to make it to STATE. The day of the game came, and we were ready. We won! It was the first time since 2006 that MACCRAY Girls Basketball had made it to STATE. We shook hands and then it was time to celebrate. I remember when we had just gotten our medals, and the team captains went to receive the Section Champs trophy and the whole student section went on the court to celebrate with us. STATE came and we were walking to get something to eat, and my coach pulled me aside. He knew that I had been struggling with my confidence, so he talked to me about it. He gave me some advice, and I ended up hitting 4 three pointers that game. The next game came, and I was trying to keep the same mindset as the day before and again I hit 3 three pointers. Those two games were my favorite games I have ever played. The games were so hype and surreal. One memory from after those two games was when we got back to the hotel we were greeted by all our MACCRAY supporters. The night before the championship game we had some free time at



Duane and Nancy are very proud of all their granddaughters' achievements!

the hotel. It was so fun to hangout with all the people that stayed at the hotel, and I wish I could go back to it. Then came the STATE Championship game and we were so excited that we had made it this far. We ended up falling short and became the STATE Class A runners-up. I was so sad that we had just lost the STATE Championship game but at the same time I was also so proud of everyone. I am so grateful for all the support that I had throughout the STATE Tournament. It was so cool to see a sea of blue in the stands and to hear all the cheering.

Our fan section was one of the biggest fan sections out of all the teams in the tournament. I will never forget the feeling of walking on to the court and seeing that view. Still to this day I will have people come up to me saying they watched all our games and how exciting they were. It is also cool to think that people that weren't on the team also made some of the coolest memories at STATE. I will miss playing with my older sister next year but am grateful for the memories that we made throughout our basketball careers. I could go on and on about the tournament and how cool and unforgettable it was. Just thinking about it makes me get butterflies. I will forever remember the season we made MACCRAY history!

Nora's Point of View:

My name is Nora, and I am the daughter of Nate and Jaime Hultgren. Making it to state was like a dream come true and an experience I will never forget. I have actually only been in basketball for 4 years, so being able to make it in my short basketball career is crazy. In the beginning of our season, we were still learning how to play with each other and so we came up with some goals and one of them was state. Most of us laughed at that thought because it was such a big goal, but it ended up becoming a reality. After winning the first games in Montevideo, we then advanced to SMSU where we got to play CMCS. This was a big game because they are our "rivals", and the stands were filled up with fans. We ended up winning against them and the next game was our one-way ticket to state. Playing a few minutes in this game was so fun and hearing the crowd was energizing. With about 10 seconds left in the game, our coach grouped up our bench and told us to run on that court and cheer with our team. That is what we did when we won. I cannot forget the moment of our team advancing to state. I was astonished with my hands on my head and smiling the whole time. My favorite part was when we received the section champs plaque and the whole student section came running in to celebrate with us. It was unforgettable. The excitement continued as we made our way to the cities for the STATE tournament. Playing on the Pav and the Barn courts was so cool, and it was such a different perspective when you are actually playing or cheering on the bench by the court. Seeing the big sea of blue in the stands made the games more hype and I just can't describe how incredible an experience this was. It was sad to come up short in the State Class A Championship, but I

am so proud of all the girls that helped us make it there and make MACCRAY history. Walking up to receive the medal was still a great feeling and I never thought that our team from the beginning of the season would make it this far. I am so grateful for this season and being able to play with my sister and cousins was so fun. Hearing all four of our names being announced in one game is something you don't hear every day and playing together on the same court is exciting. I am going to miss playing with our seniors, but I am thankful for all the memories we made during the long basketball season. State is truly an experience I will never forget, and I will always remember it even as I get older. It is the best feeling and to make MACCRAY history is incredible!

Summer BBQ

Mark your calendars for another great evening at the farm! Thursday August 14th, 5pm – 8pm. Official invites will go out in the mail in July, but feel free to use this newsletter to get a jump on your RSVP. We will be having a Hultgren Farms burger supper with everyone's favorite baked beans from Jaime, Paula's delicious potato salad, and Nancy's homemade cookies. Bring out the whole family for a evening of fun, farming, and food!



Celebrating 20 Years with Dan!

The year was 2005. Sprayers were 90 feet wide, diggers were 40 feet, autosteer wasn't a thing yet, and Dan Youngkrantz signed on to become a part of the Hultgren Farms team. A lot has changed since Dan started with us, but one thing that hasn't changed is Dan's commitment to doing a great job of operating safely and effectively.

For those of us who have experienced farming firsthand, we know that it isn't just showing up to work and climbing into a tractor seat and driving. There is proper maintenance and repair involved, and Dan has always been good at recognizing the need for both the skill of driving equipment as well as maintaining it. We have appreciated his skills as a welder, and his ability to manufacture parts when they weren't available.

We don't take for granted the fact that for 20 years, Dan has showed up on time and ready to work. Farming requires long hours during the growing season, and whether it was prepping the ground for planting, being the chief operator of the sprayer, or running the sugarbeet harvester, Dan understands the need to get the job done. Not only are we grateful to Dan for putting in the time, but we know it requires patience and understanding for his family at certain times and we appreciate them as well.

As a sign of our appreciation for 20 years of working together, Hultgren Farms purchased a pickup for Dan. This vehicle is a gift—not a company vehicle, he owns it. Thank you Dan for your hard work over the last two decades! Together we've seen a lot of growth in our business and we don't take your contributions for granted!



Dan with his new truck!

We Have the Beef

The beef market has been an increasing hot market these last couple years. In general, it is caused by the basic – supply vs. demand. A majority of the beef raised in the country comes from out west on cow/calf ranch operations – these areas have been plagued by drought summers and record snowfall winters. Farmers have had to make the difficult choice to reduce herd numbers causing a short supply. Coupled with higher crop prices, which have since come down, it was difficult to bank roll feeding out beef for the market supply. Unlike the cycle for chickens or pigs which allow for quick repopulation between daily eggs, and short gestation for sows, from the birth of a heifer calf it is approximately 3 years before she is able to produce her first calf. All this to say the beef market is still reaching record high prices week after week, and the powers that be, believe it may continue into 2026/2027. What this might mean to you, the reader?

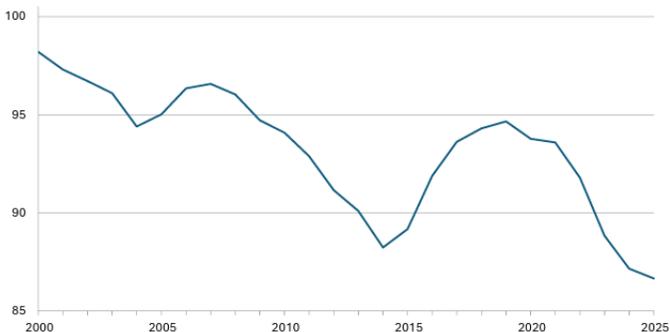
It's time to consider booking your next beef share! While we have stepped back from farmers markets to focus more on the day to day of the farm – we are still raising the delicious beef you've come to love. In doing so we've been able to reduce costs associated with weekly travel and time and pass those savings along to you. Our schedule has a few spots for the fall left – reach out quickly – or order online to secure your spot.

If you want to put in an order for the 2026 schedule, give us a call and we'll get your spot secured!

Thanks for supporting us, we enjoy feeding your families with quality beef!

All Cattle and Calves Inventory – United States: January 1

Million head



Paula's Family's Famous Pancakes

Ingredients

- 3 eggs
- 1 qt buttermilk
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 2 cups flour

Directions

1. Beat eggs, then add all other ingredients except 2 cups of flour
2. Mix until well combined
3. Fold in remaining 2 cups of flour until combined
4. Batter may still be a little lumpy – do not over mix!
5. Pour batter onto a hot griddle

Note: this recipe makes a lot of pancakes. You can cut it in half for a smaller batch.



Contact Us!

Our offices are 5 miles west of Willmar on MN 40.
11804 15th Ave SW
Raymond, MN 56282

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!

Call us! 320-316-0292

Check out our Facebook page!

