



Cultivating *Progress*

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

Planting Season Marred by Wet Conditions *And Narrow Windows of Opportunity*

Our planting season began with wheat seeding on March 15. Dry conditions persisted from nearly a snow-less winter and the drought from 2023. As we drilled the wheat in dust about a month earlier than usual, all we could think was, "What if it doesn't rain? Can we withstand another year of low rainfall?"

Those fears were quickly settled by the third week of April. Planting got off to a good start in the middle of the month with over half of the corn and beets going in during that time. But then the rains came, and the balance of planting was difficult with soft field conditions and very narrow time frames to get seed in the ground. Here is a summary of the spring planting for each crop:

Sugarbeets

We seeded just under 1,600 acres of beets this year, and basically did so in two tranches. About 2/3 was planted from April 15-25, and the other 1/3 was planted May 15-18. The delay was due to multiple inches of rain and cool weather. Despite the recurring rains, we did not have to replant any beets. We did have to leave some small wet spots that, to this day, we would still not be able to get into but the total acreage of unplanted beet ground maybe totals an acre. Overall, the beet crop got off to a great start, our pre-emerge herbicide applications were



Sunset over one of our sugar beet fields

activated well by the rains, and things looks good as this goes to press.

Corn

Corn planting started on April 22 and concluded on May 20. Similar the beets, the corn planting came in two groups as rain delays impacted the schedule in early May. 2,800 acres of corn were planted, and, as with the beets,

there were a few small pockets that couldn't be planted totaling a few acres. We did have to take the prevented planting insurance option on one 65-acre field that could have been corn—we simply could not get into it all spring. It has a cover crop on it and will be cut, baled, and prepared for next year this summer.

We have observed some tough-looking corn fields around our area but we feel pretty good about the state our corn is in. Despite the challenging planting conditions, we were able to utilize every planting window we were given and got the crop in. Now we just need to see some heat units to get it growing!



Planter covering ground this spring season.

Kidney Beans

We planted 420 acres of dark red kidney beans. The planting conditions were actually the best we saw in all of the crops—of course the planting didn't take place until May 29, so the weather was warmer and we had some drying of the soils to help. Unfortunately, after planting was complete, we received a pounding 2" of rain on the kidney bean fields that hampered the stand of the plants. Edible beans are very sensitive to water. They are not as strong as soybeans or corn when it comes to emergence if the dirt forms a crust after a heavy rain, and ponding kills any sprouted kidney beans almost instantly. We had several acres of kidneys drown out, but, as was the theme of 2024, we did not get enough windows to replant those areas. And even if we had, several inches fell on several occasions that would have flooded out those low areas again anyway.

Soybeans

Our soybean acres were up considerably this year as we scaled back our kidney beans. The kidney market has not rewarded the added risk and overhead needs in the past couple of years, and while we wait for a realistic market

to resurface, we decided to mix in a lower input crop. We planted 940 acres of soybeans, with most of them located on our irrigated ground near Belgrade. We have not typically pushed soybeans into our irrigation rotation so thought this would be a good opportunity to mix it up. The majority of our soybeans contained the Enlist trait, which allows us to apply several different modes of herbicide action to fight resistant weeds such as water hemp.

Soybean planting started on May 9 and did not finish up until June 10. Several washouts required us to move between fields that were fit, often relocating 30 miles to find dry ground. The last planting occurred on a farm near Big Bend, where the first half was planted on May 20, a heavy rain forced us out before the field was complete, and we were not able to return until June 10. It is very rare that we would ever have a 20-day difference in planting dates within the same field but that's what makes 2024 unique...in a bad way.

Peas

Peas were seeded near Belgrade on April 15 and due to rains very little irrigation was required to raise the crop. As of the printing of this newsletter, the peas have already been harvested and yielded above average. We had 110 acres of peas this year, and they are contracted to Lakeside Foods. They are harvested as a fresh green product.



Quad track tractor with double rainbow in the background.

Sweet Corn

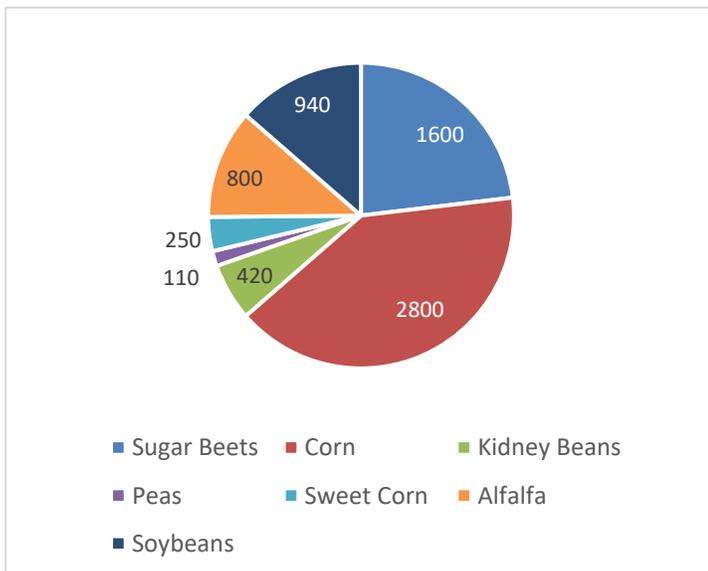
Following the peas, we double-cropped sweet corn. Within days of harvesting the peas, we rolled in with the planter. All of our 250 acres of sweet corn were planted on June 27. They are all on irrigation on the Belgrade land.

Alfalfa

The narrow windows for planting also made getting the new alfalfa planted challenging, but we got the drill rolling and seeded around April 25. We apply a pre-emerge herbicide, typically the only line of defense, other than one application of Roundup, until the first cutting of the hay. We also roll the field after seeding to push down any stones that can affect cutters and choppers. The roller also helps create a more even seedbed and seed depth for even emergence. The flat top to the field aids in future harvest conditions.

The alfalfa came up very well with the frequent rains, and luckily we were not affected by too much ponding so replanting was not necessary. As this goes to press we have completed the initial cutting and are pleased with the stand we see on the 170 acres we seeded this year.

Overall, our crew did a great job of taking advantage of the opportunities they were given in getting rocks picked, ground prepped, and planting done whenever and wherever possible. Numerous changeovers and transports of the planting equipment were necessary to find the dry fields to plant, and we took the extra effort to get the job done. At this point, the crop appears poised to be a good one. We hope that averages will correct themselves and we will not see the same wet conditions for the harvest season.



3rd Annual Farm BBQ

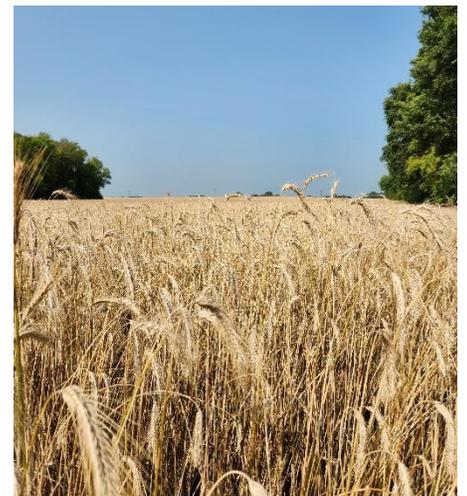
We are eagerly awaiting the 3rd Annual Farm BBQ! This year we opted for Thursday August 8th from 5:30pm – 7:30pm here at the Hultgren Farm. Our farm fresh hamburger patties will be on the grill, potato salad, baked beans, cookies and more will be served up and enjoyed by all! Since beginning we have thoroughly enjoyed inviting friends, family and neighbors to the farm to spend an evening catching up on life and relaxing despite everyone's busy lives.

HULTGREN FARMS
3RD ANNUAL
FARM BBQ 5:30pm – 7:30pm
THURS AUGUST 8, 2024
FOOD | FRIENDS | FUN
11804 15th Ave SW
Raymond, MN 56282
RSVP: JULY 31ST (call/text)
Reno 612-532-0727



Hay for Days

The weather this spring has caused all sorts of issues in the field – this rye will be harvested shortly for bales (grain and all) we plan to hold some back to feed the cattle for extra roughage and the rest will be sold locally to other farmers. The added rain, compared to years past as allowed up to refill our hay storage with really good quality hay. This hay is also used to feed the cattle during the cold months when pastures are inaccessible, we are currently going through our counts and will set aside what we need and sell the rest! If anyone is looking feel free to give us a call!



FFA Traveling

By: *Elias Hultgren*

At the beginning of the summer, the MACCRAY FFA chapter, which I am apart of, left for a 6-day summer trip. We thankfully took a coach bus with comfortable seats and foot rests so the ride wasn't so bad. Most of my friends were along on the trip which made the long hours of driving feel like it was a lot shorter. We would mainly talk about, you guessed it, farming. We loved to see how different farms were around America.

Our first stop was an aronia berry farm in Iowa where they gave us lunch and a dessert made with aronia berries. It was an interesting fruit to try. We then continued our way into Nebraska where we stayed in Grand Island. The whole day I was anticipating the Case IH combine factory tour and could not wait for it tomorrow.

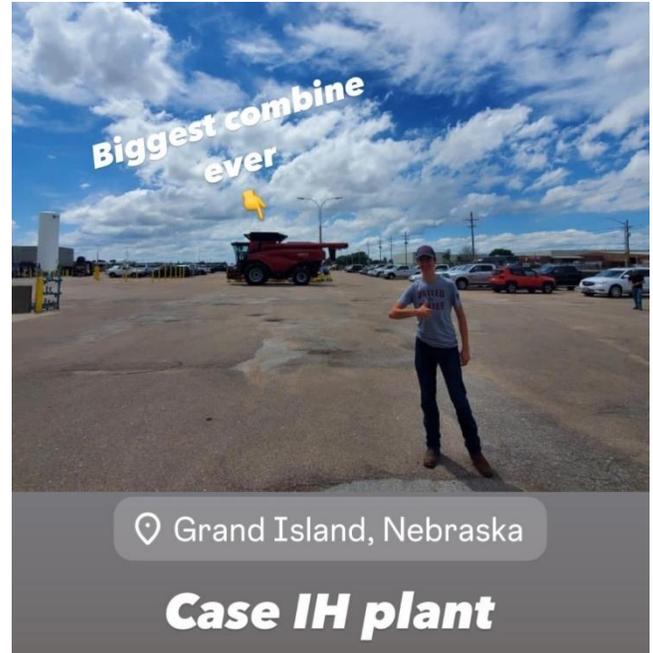
When we got to the factory, we passed a huge lot full of brand new combines and swathers. It was an impressive sight to see! We got into the tour room, and we were required to put safety gear on like hardhats, reflective vests, etc. While we were waiting for the tour, one of the funniest things happened. My friend, Evan, had a John Deere hat on and the tour guide told him he had to take it off to go on the tour! The tour guide definitely knows what brand is best!

We are then led into the main factory floor and the first thing I see is multiple combines slowly moving down the line. We saw the finished side, so we got to see a brand-new combine start up and drive off the line. The tour guide took us around and showed us the laser cutters. I was very impressed with these machines as they cut out multiple pieces of combine parts in a matter of minutes. We then walked down the lane where there were tons of welding machines and welders welding on frames, etc. that would be used for the swathers. He showed us the massive oven that the side panels go through to dry the paint. It was definitely hot! We also saw the huge tanks where they would put the panels in to stick the paint to the panels which would then run on an overhead track to be installed.

Then came my favorite part. I got to see the massive 775 horsepower, twin turbo engine be installed into Case's biggest combine: The AF 11. The combine's bottom frame and top frame were built separately then bolted together on the line. The combines would go through a dyno room to test the engine performance. We ended the tour off by stepping outside and seeing the massive AF 11, the biggest combine in the world (class 11

machine, complete and sitting in the lot. This was most definitely my favorite stop of the trip!)

Some of our next stops in Nebraska were a bison beef ranch and Nebraska bull service, before we entered Colorado. In Colorado, we went to a camel milking farm, a massive beef feed lot with about 25,000 head and then



Elias during his FFA trip to the Case IH Plant in Nebraska.

drove into the mountains to stay for the night. The next morning we took a beautiful train ride through the mountains, visited a sheep feedlot and stopped in Wyoming where the next day we went to a western museum and drove into deadwood South Dakota where we watched a PBR rodeo. Then on the last day we went to a butcher shop and made the long drive home.

It was an amazing trip and it's always interesting to me how big agriculture in general is. I also just love seeing the scenery of America and seeing the different ways of farming on different soils. But after almost a week on the road and eating fast food and staying with friends in the hotel room, I was ready to be home and see our own farm.

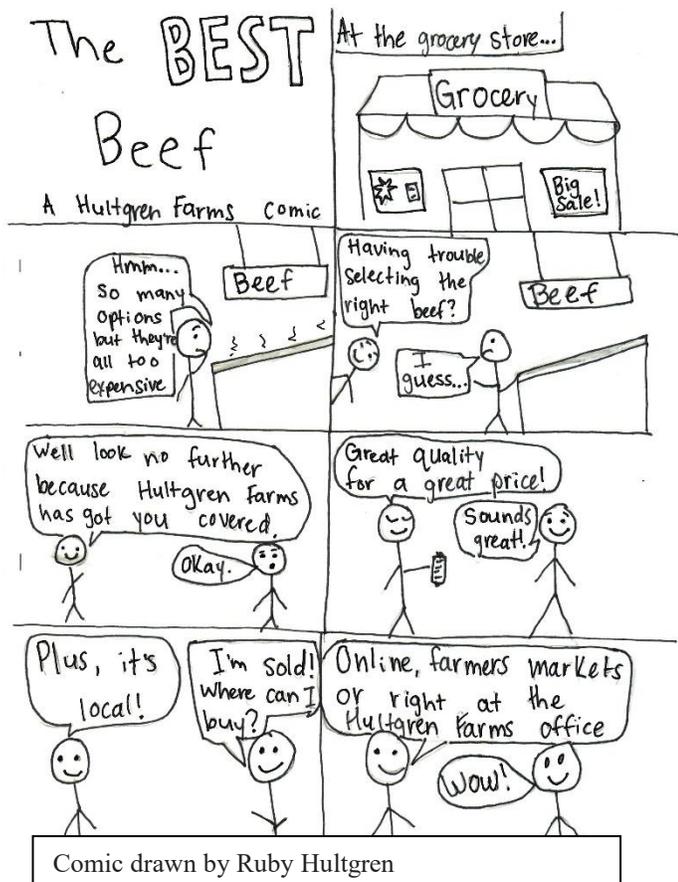
We Have the Beef

Ruby Hultgren whipped up this great drawing of a Hultgren Farms comic, aren't kids just full of awesome talents! The comic is spot on, grocery store beef has gotten to be rather expensive, out of stock, and low quality when you can find it.

This is a growing challenge we are working to solve with new customers. Each week at the farmers markets we find families who have lots of questions about our beef, how it is raised, fed, and processed. We certainly appreciate inquisitive customers, that tells us they truly care about the food and beef they want to feed their family.

As always we have raised our beef on grass pastures, with free choice hay, without antibiotics/hormones, and finish on a balanced grain ration. All of our animals are processed under USDA inspection at Carlson Meat Shop in Grove City – they do a fantastic job cutting and packaging for both us and our customers.

Farmers markets have been a great place to expand our beef, we bring individual packages of hamburger, steaks, roasts and such which allows customers to buy a selection to try before filling their freezer with a beef share.



This season you can find us at these markets:

Monday – Clara City 4:30pm – 7pm

Wednesday – Hutchinson 2:30pm – 5:30pm

**Thursday – Benson 3pm – 5:30pm

**Friday – Rockford 3pm – 6:30pm

Saturday – Willmar Robbins Island 8am – 12pm

Every other week

Can't make it to a market – feel free to order online at Hultgrenfarms.com or give us a call 612-532-0727.

A quick search on Walmart.com shows 93% / 7% burger is nearly \$7.50/pound – while our burger is still only \$6.50/pound – save money and eat better with us!

Growing Team

Each year the farm gets busier! This winter we started looking for great people to add to our team. We were excited to have Junior Aviles and Matthew Lingbeek join us this spring – check out their employee spotlight below:



Junior Aviles - Mechanic

- Town – Clara City
- Family – Wife (Danelle), children Julien, Esmé, and Iris
- Favorite movie – Dumb and Dumber
- Favorite food – Mexican
- Hobbies – Watching documentaries



Matthew Lingbeek – Operator

- Town – Pennock
- Family – Mom (Dawn), Dad (Jon), sisters (Hannah and Aliyah)
- Favorite movie – Star Wars
- Favorite food – Lasagna
- Hobbies – Farming
- Favorite equipment – Class 990 Chopper

Spaghetti Squash with Meat Sauce



Ingredients:

- 1 pound **Ground Beef** (93% lean or leaner)
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic

- 1 can (15 ounces) no salt added or regular tomato sauce
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) Italian-Style diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 can (6 ounces) tomato paste
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1 medium spaghetti squash (about 3 to 3-1/2 pounds), cut in half lengthwise, seeds removed

Cooking:

1. Heat stockpot over medium heat until hot. Add Ground Beef, onion and garlic; cook 8 to 10 minutes, breaking beef into 3/4-inch crumbles and stirring occasionally.
2. Stir in tomato sauce, diced tomatoes, tomato paste and crushed red pepper; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer 20 minutes to develop flavors, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat; stir in basil, if desired.
3. Meanwhile, place squash in 8 x 8-inch microwave-safe baking dish, overlapping halves slightly. Microwave on HIGH 10 to 12 minutes or until squash is tender. Let stand 5 minutes. Scrape squash with fork to separate strands.
4. Serve sauce over squash. Serve with Toppings, if desired.

To Roast Spaghetti Squash: Place squash halves, cut-side down, in 13 x 9-inch ovenproof baking dish. Bake in 350°F oven 45 to 55 minutes or until squash is tender.

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!

