

A Scoop Full of News



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2023 Year-End Recap

The 2023 growing season has come to an end and, to our surprise, the crop this year turned out to be exceptional. This is the second consecutive year of very dry conditions we've had, but yields were good for not only us but everyone in the area as well. Even with very little rainfall, we had our best yield in soybeans and sweet potatoes, along with the second highest in corn! Genetics in the crops have improved, and the rain we were blessed enough to receive was very timely in keeping the crop progressing. The corn and bean prices have been fair, while the sweet potato market is a twelve-month market, so we will not know until next year how prices go since there is so much fluctuation and so many factors in play. Lastly, our turkeys and hogs continue to do well. We are looking forward to the upcoming year and what it will bring for our farm.

Reggie's Fall Travels

Trip to Germany and Poland for USSEC



USSEC members at their booth at the 63rd European Commodities Exchange

The week-long trip started in mid-October in Hamburg, Germany, where the group met with Bunge and ADM, who both represent a large percentage of the soybean purchases in that country, and then on to Munster, Bonn, and Düsseldorf. At these locations, Reggie was able to tour three feed processing facilities: Agravis, which was the cleanest feed mill Reggie had seen anywhere in the world; DVT, another leading food processor in the German feed association; and DEUKA, the largest private compound feed manufacturer in Germany. Next, in Warsaw, Poland, the group had a dinner meeting with the European Feed Manufacturers' Federation's (FEFAC) Board of Directors, where they discussed the recent decision by the European Union regarding deforestation regulations, which has caused great concern for Europeans. This decision will require all soybean purchases, beginning in 2025, to be from non-deforested land (since 2020), which in the U.S. is not an issue. However, it is a major concern for the U.S. in regards to meeting the requirement of the EU for needed documentation. This is a situation where we will have to wait to see how it unfolds. The trip concluded with USSEC attending the 63rd European Commodities Exchange, where many very meaningful discussions with customers took place. This was one of the best trips Reggie has made while representing U.S. Soy.

USB and USSEC Meetings in St. Louis Area

In early December, Reggie traveled to St. Louis for a meeting-filled couple of days for both the United Soybean Board (USB) and the U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC). USSEC board members gathered for the winter board meeting with a focus on emphasizing strategies to elevate the preference for U.S. Soy. The meeting's agenda involved discussions around program advancements, global strategies, and updates from key committees, along with invaluable insights from Grower Leaders and Regional Directors.



USB Meeting



USSEC Meeting

The agenda also encompassed vital discussions on U.S. Department of Agriculture funding and other crucial industry topics. As for the USB meeting, the main purpose of the gathering was to elect officers for 2024 and set priorities for FY2024 investments. They also hired a new CEO, Lucas Lentsch. Notably, these December meetings coincided with the American Soybean Association board gathering at the same location, fostering collaborative efforts toward a thriving U.S. Soy industry.

Trip to Dubai for CrushCON

Reggie's latest travels for USSEC took him to Dubai for CrushCON, which was held on December 13th and 14th. This event provides an opportunity for the global soy supply chain to network and learn about industry advancements as well as build trust and confidence in U.S. soy products. On day one, the USSEC Team in South Asia put together a unique selection of speakers who provided international perspectives. The following day, a set of local market panels was assembled so that everyone in attendance could gain knowledge and insight. Also in attendance were South Asian industry leaders, who provided their perspectives on various topics and, despite the obstacles that they currently face, were very optimistic.



Adventures of Savannah and Grayson



Savannah and Grayson have been staying busy with work and school, and they will both have an eventful year ahead of them. Grayson is on track to graduate this coming May with a bachelor's degree in accounting and a minor in pulp and paper engineering. He will be moving back to Raleigh for his final semester to attend his in-person classes since many of his prior classes were online due to the pandemic.

At the start of the new year, Savannah will be taking an exciting step in her career, returning to the family farm. She answered the questions below about what her return to the farm entails and what she's most excited for in this new chapter.

1. What will your position be once you return to the farm, and what will your responsibilities include?

My "official" title will be Business Development and Marketing Specialist. The jobs that fall under that are to be determined. Dad and I agree, to be knowledgeable on the farm I need to understand each part of it - hogs, turkeys, row crops, financials, etc. So, I will be doing a little bit of it all in the beginning. With my experience over the last 3 years working at the Farm Service Agency, I will be handling the majority of the farm's business with the FSA offices. Having this experience from my previous role will enable me to work well with the staff in those offices and understand how government programs work.

2. Please list any degrees, past job experience, etc. that will help you in your return to the farm and the responsibilities that you will be taking on.

I have a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Business Management with minors in economics and Spanish. I hope to apply this knowledge while learning the business side of the operation and working alongside our H2A labor.

3. What are you most excited about in this new chapter of life?

I'm most excited about working with and learning from my family. The people in the agriculture industry have always been my "why" for choosing this profession. I'm looking forward to building an even stronger bond with daddy, granddaddy, and all of our employees.

4. What is your favorite memory of growing up on the farm?

One fond memory I have while hanging out with dad was riding around in the truck with him. We always had great conversations and sang along with the music. An added bonus was typically a stop at the old country store for a cowtail or getting a fried chicken leg from the Piggly Wiggly!



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