

# MISSOURI RURALIST

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**PLANTING PREPPED:** Kevin (left) and Kent Dye, brothers and farming partners from Paris in Monroe County, have seed, storage and marketing strategies set for the 2007 crop season.



**Learn to burn your pastures**  
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**Through my father's eyes**  
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# Plant corn!

By JERILYN JOHNSON

### Key Points

- Dye Farms follows trend of planting more corn in 2007.
- Decision is based on futures price and storage capability.
- Growing ethanol demand and plant access are market drivers.

**B**EFORE hooking up the planter and heading to the field this spring, the Dye brothers have already made a lot of decisions that will influence their crops.

They locked in their 2007 corn contracts. They also expanded grain storage and built an additional 70,000-bushel bin on their farm. Over the winter, specific corn hybrids and soybean varieties were selected. By February, they made the biggest decision yet: to increase corn acreage and go to a 55-45 corn-soybean planting ratio.

"This is the first year ever that we'll plant more corn than soybeans," says Kevin Dye, who farms along with his brother, Kent, and dad, Jimmie, in Monroe County. "We tradi-

tionally use a 50-50 planting ratio."

The Dye brothers have been building the family's grain operation in recent years. They have put together a sound marketing strategy. By all accounts, the partners are well prepared to take advantage of more bullish times.

Projections of \$4 or higher corn are enough to persuade the Dyes and many other Missouri crop growers to follow through with their plans. Many did fall field work and applied

fertilizer anticipating this shift to corn. Now, they'll wait for good planting weather.

At Dye Farms, some soybean acreage will be sacrificed, and 5% of the crop ground will be corn-after-corn planting. To overcome yield reduction, the Dyes will apply extra nitrogen and will plant a hybrid corn with an improved disease-resistance package.

Dye Farms has been expanding its on-farm grain storage over the past 10 years. They now have a total capacity of 380,000 bushels plus an additional 60,000 bushels of bin storage on other rental farms.

"Having your own storage spreads the risk of grain marketing," Kent says. "We are not trying to capture one market at one time of the year anymore. We have to deliver corn

monthly to our markets." Last year, Dye Farms delivered some 500 semitrailer loads of grain. At 900 bushels per load, that's 450,000 bushels of grain.

Dye Farms is a member of the Northeast Missouri Grain LLC at Macon. Corn is marketed to the NEMO ethanol plant as well as to Missouri Ethanol LLC at Laddonia.

"We are well-positioned between the two ethanol plants," Kevin says. The Macon plant is 48 miles away, and the Laddonia plant is only 26 miles from their farm.

Many predict that a bumper crop of corn in 2007 could result in a major storage shortage in Missouri. "In 2004, we had a tremendous corn crop and discovered, like many other farmers, that we had few storage options by the end of

harvest," Kevin adds. "We want to avoid that."

The Dyes know the picture has changed with the growth in biofuels demand. They are confident they have made the right decisions for the 2007 crop. But when pressed about plans for 2008 and beyond, they admit they aren't ready to commit to more corn — yet.

"Our region's shallower soil and droughty conditions force us to stay with a crop rotation," Kevin says. "I don't think we will ever get into heavy continuous-corn planting — even if corn prices stay high."

"Over the years, we've found that the market usually takes care of itself," Kent adds.

■ **Read more about state planting intentions and storage on Pages 8-9.**

**Powerful Performance**

