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Grower Files

Tony Garrelts, Lone Rock producer



Matching seeds to soil offers top returns

"Excellent" is the word Tony Garrelts uses to describe the quality of seed and satisfaction with the level of service from his local FS cooperative.

This Lone Rock, Wis., farmer runs more than 1,000 acres of cropland along with more than 200 head of beef cows and fat cattle in partnership with his father, Jim. That ground is planted with corn, soybeans, wheat and hay — nearly all of which are FS brand seed. Five hundred acres of sandier soil is under irrigation to keep crop production consistent from year to year.

The signs along Garrelts' 700 acres of vigorous looking corn note the FS seed hybrids of his choice. "The 4453 hybrid year in and year out is a good corn," he says. "And the 4366 with YieldGard corn borer protection has been running really well, too." He also plants the 5087 and 4475 FS seed corn.

Garrelts has built a loyalty to the brand because it delivers what he wants for the market he targets. "Ninety percent of the crop is sold on the river in Prairie Du Chien. That's why test weight is a big issue. The crop must be clean and heavy yielding. This year I yielded more than 200 bushels per acre on corn," he says. "I've had really good luck with the FS seed corn."

Out in the bean field, the 2456 and 2555 varieties of FS HiSOY® soybeans proved their worth. "We had a wonderful test weight on the beans this year," Garrelts says, noting that the 100 acres planted with FS seed grew to be "chest-high" and topped 75 bushels per acre.

For 15 years, more than great seed has kept Garrelts' business with the Frontier FS Cooperative out of Spring Green. "They've got a good crew in town. They take care of any problems," he says.

FS crop consultant Brian Frank, he points out, also has been an important player in cropping decisions on the farm. "He comes and rides in the combine with me," Garrelts says. The Frontier FS Cooperative takes care of many other needs on the farm, including spray, fertilizer, soil sampling, fuel and dryer propane.

Sponsored by FS Seeds

Old tool creates mystery

By CHERRY BRIESER STOUT

LIKE many farmers, Russ Rosenboom likes nothing better than to go to an auction and find a bargain on a piece of farm machinery or an interesting antique to share with wife Marilyn.

A couple of years ago, the Master Farmer from Iroquois County brought home an unusual tool from an auction at a local floral shop that liked to display special arrangements on farm and rural antiques.

"It was my kind of day," says Russ, who also purchased an old corn sheller, a whetstone and an antique trunk at the auction. "People there weren't antique buyers," he adds.

Russ paid about \$12 for the rather cumbersome antique, but has yet to discover its purpose. He keeps it on display in an old barn that's used for gatherings of the Rosenboom family and their friends. The unusual tool has stumped many visitors.

It consists of two separate pieces. The large base is made to sit at an angle, with one end several inches off the floor. The second piece is a long oar-like handle that fits nicely in a groove in the center of the bottom piece.

"I think maybe it was used to cut watermelon," speculates Russ, but he continues to be perplexed by the tool.



WHAT IS IT? Clifton farmer Russ Rosenboom is asking you to help him figure out what this tool was designed for.

You are invited to answer "What is it?" Write to *Prairie Farmer*, 1301 E. Mound Rd., Decatur IL 62526, or e-mail your answer to cstout@farmprogress.com. Look for responses in a future issue.

Volume 179 ■ Number 1

Contents:

Inside Illinois Ag.....	1
Prairie Views.....	9
Crops.....	14
Technology.....	22
Classified/Marketplace.....	M1
Natural Resources.....	27
Livestock.....	28
Farm Management.....	32
Prairie Life.....	36
Marketing.....	42

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Kids' museum premieres special farming exhibit

IT'S billed as the largest ag exhibit at a children's museum in the world. The Children's Discovery Museum in Bloomington installed the AgMazing exhibit in November at a cost of about \$1 million, much of which came from local donations.

The hands-on exhibit lets visitors immerse themselves in agriculture as they track grain's journey from the field to the plate, starting with the tractor planting the field to harvest, storage, processing and finally consumption. Visitors can plant seeds, drive a tractor, crank an auger to move grain, process soybeans and milk a cow.

AgMazing was developed in partnership with the McLean County Farm Bureau Foundation and the University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service Foundation.

■ Learn more at www.childrensdiscoverymuseum.net.

Keep up on ag news in the region; check out www.prairiefarmer.com. We feature updates on a wide range of topics, marketing data and weather information you can put to work in your operation.