

Duo takes precision plunge

By WILLIE VOGT

WHEN new technology flows into a market, it's easy for editors covering agriculture to write about the systems as if every farmer is already a buyer. However, at Farm Progress we know from market surveys that there are a lot of farmers out there who have taken a wait-and-see approach to new technology, and we wondered what it would be like to work with someone still near square one.

PRECISION
START

That's what drove this series of articles we're starting this month. We've connected with Randy and Shaun Glinge, who farm near Bourbon, Ind., and arranged to place in their hands a new precision guidance system. We partnered with John Deere on the program because it turns out the company also was looking at this "tentative" market segment and is offering a new product for 2009, the GreenStar Lightbar system, which will be part of our series called "Precision Start."

While farmers will see this story next to a John Deere ad, the company is not "editing" the series. In fact, we would not take on the project if we couldn't show you all the good, and bad, of starting out with such a system.

For this first installment, we want to tell you about the Gingles, talk a bit with the dealer they're working with and give you some basic information about the equipment they'll be installing.

No teaching jobs

When Randy Glinge returned home from college, he was set on becoming a teacher and coach near his northern Indiana town. Turns out the 1970s were a time when a glut of teacher candidates flooded the market. "There were 10 teachers for every job," he recalls. "So I went to work at UPS."

Randy's father had a small farm, and Randy considered the occupation, but started slowly. He credits help from neighbors and his father — a longtime employee of AM General — with giving him a good start.

When he was old enough, Shaun, Randy's eldest son, joined the operation and helped it grow to more than 1,800 acres of corn and soybeans. Shaun wants to bring precision guidance into the operation, and Randy is curious how the technology could boost efficiency.

Making tough choices

The Gingles have been building their operation steadily over the years and made some key decisions since the farm started. "We raised hogs for 30 years," Randy says. "It was a supplement to our income, but we got out of hogs in 2003. We were at a place where it was either get a lot bigger or get out. We chose to leave the business."

The focus now is on cash grains.

As for Shaun, he started farming out of high school, and father and son divide labor in a logical fashion: When work needs to be done, they do it. A second

son, Rance, who works in the banking industry, helps out from time to time.

Shaun says he thinks he's pretty efficient at applying anhydrous on the farm without an overlap, but he's curious how the parallel tracking system will help avoid the problem. He notes that during this spring trial, he's going to run some tests with the system on and off to

check how it improves efficiency. We'll tell you more after those early tests.

And Randy? "I think [this system] is going to be easier on me. And I think we'll like it once we start using it."

STARTING OUT: Randy Glinge (right) and son Shaun will bring precision guidance to their spring work for 2009.



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