

Christmas came a little early this year

LIFE-CHANGING events are few and far between.

On Oct. 20, my life was changed forever with the birth of my first child, Lucas Garner Flint.

My wife, Tiffany, and I were looking forward to celebrating our third anniversary on Oct. 15. She had her weekly prenatal checkup that afternoon, then we were going to dinner. Lucas had other plans.

At the appointment, we learned Tiffany had severe preeclampsia. As a result, she was moved immediately to the labor and delivery floor at Carle Foundation Hospital in Urbana. The plan was to keep her pregnant as long as possible.

Lucas decided enough was enough on the morning of the 20th. He was taken C-section at 7:18 a.m.

Seeing him for the first time was amazing. My wife is the love of my life. We've been together for about four years now. In that one instance, Lucas also became the love of my life.

Since he was born before his Dec. 1 due date, Lucas went to the neonatal intensive care unit. For the next three days, I split time between caring for Mom and sneaking down to hold my baby boy's hand.

He was so small (4 pounds 4 ounces at birth) that his entire hand would barely fit around my pinkie.



For Starters

By JOSH FLINT

While he was still in ICU, we would drive up each day to see him. I thought it was tough driving an hour there and back each day. After 10 days at the hospital, Lucas was released. The real workout began when we got him home.

I thought Executive Editor Frank Holdmeyer was halfway joking when he said, "The sleepless nights begin." Unfortunately, Frank wasn't joking at all.

Lucas loves eating and sleeping. Unfortunately, he likes to alternate between the two activities each hour. I'll often be sound asleep when the little man decides to test Dad's hearing. However, any irritation about getting up at 2 a.m. is forgiven when I see his little face.

Along with sleep deprivation comes the fear and worrying. Lucky for us, someone bought him a Sudden Infant Death Syndrome monitor. It fits under the mattress and senses the child's movements from breathing. Unfortunately, the monitor isn't false-alarm proof. On



LITTLE BUDDY: Lucas has his mother's eyes, nose and mouth, which is excellent news since she's a lot better looking than me. I think he inherited Dad's curly hair.

one particular night, I threw my back out trying to get to his bedside as the SIDS monitor falsely accused him of not breathing.

The apple of my eye

After a long day at work, I'm so excited to get home and hold my son. I love daydreaming about all of the wonderful things we'll see and do together. Rather than forcing myself to rake leaves this year, I kept picturing him helping me when he gets a little older.

The other day, I found my old football in the garage. I tossed it to myself, the whole time imagining he was on the receiving end of Dad's pass.

The other day, Tiffany and I were talking about the upcoming holiday season. With her on maternity leave and the medical bills on the way, she said that we'll have to watch our spending on each other this year. That's just fine with me; I have everything I could ever want.

**Make It Yours—
And Win!!**

NEW!

www.PrairieFarmer.com

**Register Online
Chance to Win
\$1,000
Cash!**

**See our dynamic
redesigned
Web site!**

*No purchase necessary. Void where prohibited or restricted. Open to active farmers who are legal U.S. residents 21 years or older. Ends December 31, 2008. Full drawing details available online. Sponsor: Farm Progress Companies.

SECURITY.

For more than 90 years, as a part of the Farm Credit System, we have been serving the northern 42 counties of Illinois with financial solutions that help create a successful business.

Thank you for making us a part of your legacy and tradition.

1st Farm Credit Services
AT THE HEART OF A GROWING AMERICA
800-444-FARM

1st Farm Credit Services is an equal opportunity provider.