

Behind the scenes with an ag leader

By ELIZABETH FRITZ

SCOTT Fritz is one farmer you're as likely to find in a suit and tie as in work jeans and boots. Or you're as likely to find him jetting to Greece or China as riding his tractor. Fritz, Winamac, is a farmer who's also an international leader for the ag industry.

His path started in 1991 when he became a board member of the Indiana Soybean Growers Association, now part of the Indiana Soybean Alliance. In 1997, he was selected as one of Indiana's two directors on the American Soybean Association.

Currently, Fritz is a director of ISA, on the board of ASA, chairman of the United States Soybean Export Council and chairman for the World Initiative for Soy in Human Health.

In this question-and-answer

session, you'll discover what he wants to accomplish.

How did you become an agricultural leader?

Fritz: It was an example from my parents. I watched my parents get involved in community organizations, and I did too because it was part of my family tradition. I started to serve on agricultural boards, including the Pulaski County Fair Board, the Pulaski County Co-op Board and the Pulaski County Soil and Water Conservation District. I felt I could contribute and learn a lot.

Why did you choose the organizations you're involved with?

Fritz: I grew up in 4-H, and I relied on the Purdue Extension Service to answer questions. Conservation was always important to me, and I was third-generation director on the Pulaski County Co-op Board. Later, Kenny Gardner of Winamac nominated me as a DuPont Young Leader. Karen (my wife) and I were named Young Leaders of 1990. From there, I served on the ISA.

What is your goal as USSEC and WISHH chairman?

Fritz: I want to run the boards efficiently and support the staff. I want them to work to their best potential. I also want the board of directors and executive boards to be proud of the strategic plan that is set in place and feel it's the best plan possible for them.

What do you hope your kids take out of your leadership?

Fritz: I hope they see the value in participating in the community and giving to others. It's not only giving, but it's also getting wonderful rewards from the community. You get to share yourself and see the talents of others. I certainly hope our kids will contribute in one way or the other.

What are your rules on leadership?

Fritz: The rule is to be passionate and professional. At the end, it's the decision of the board. My goal is to make sure they can answer with openness and transparency, and that all board members contribute and have their thoughts and opinions heard. Another important part is to meet fiduciary duties.

When you speak in front of others, what's that last-minute thought in your head?

Fritz: Smile! Enjoy yourself and be informative.

FARM THE WORLD: Scott Fritz is at home in the cornfield, but also comfortable traveling the world, making a difference for global agricultural efforts.



BUDDING WRITER: Elizabeth Fritz jumped at the chance to interview her very unique father, who currently leads both national and international committees.

Why do you think there's a shortage of young rural leaders?

Fritz: I'm not sure there is, but I would like to see more people involved. I know it's hard to find time with families and business. What they don't realize is how much they can learn and bring home. What young leaders get back is a lot more than they ever put into the organization.

Do you believe you've missed farming opportunities because of off-farm activities?

Fritz: Yes, I probably have. The yard gets a little long, and fencerows haven't been cleaned. I would like to think these experiences I've had and the things my family get to do outweigh it. Soon enough the brush will get done.

What's your greatest accomplishment?

Fritz: One person can make a difference. Many times we've had discussions with legislators for ASA that could have resulted in votes important to farmers. Sometimes these can

Guide to various organizations

HERE'S how to learn more about organizations Scott Fritz currently serves.

Indiana Soybean Alliance (Indianapolis): It works to improve the viability of Indiana soybean farmers and industry partners. Visit www.indianasoybean.com.

American Soybean Association (St. Louis, Mo.): It represents U.S. soybean farmers through policy and international market development. Visit www.soybeangrowers.com.

United States Soybean Export Council (St. Louis, Mo.): The group carries out activities that create and sustain demand for U.S. soybeans and soybean products. Go online to www.ussoyexports.org.

World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (St. Louis, Mo.): This group promotes exports of U.S. soy protein for human use in developing countries. Visit www.wishh.org.

World Soy Foundation (St. Louis, Mo.): It delivers soy protein and nutrition education to people around the world. Check out www.worldsoyfoundation.org.

be big or small victories, but one person can get involved and make a difference.

What do you plan to do with your time once you step down?

Fritz: Mow the yard. I don't have any intention of slowing down for a while. Andrew is

taking over (the farm) as the next generation. Our daughters are starting jobs. I hope to contribute to their successes as my dad contributed to my success.

Elizabeth Fritz is a senior in Purdue Ag Communications, and the daughter of Scott and Karen Fritz.

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Commentary

Life with Dad

By ELIZABETH FRITZ

IT was my pleasure to interview my world-traveling father. Just what drives him? Once I sat down with him, it became obvious.

He's a man who loves what he does: farming. He's a man who strives to be a great role model. And he's a man who genuinely enjoys being involved.

He and my mom have three grown children: Kacie, 27, Andrew, 25 and me, 22. Kacie is a graduate student at the University of California-Davis. Andrew is stepping into the farm and started his own business. I am a senior at Purdue University. Dad and Andrew farm 2,500 acres of corn, soybeans and popcorn.

Along with the family and farm, Dad enjoys spending his time on boards and committees. Like many others, his leadership began in local church, agriculture and community organizations and projects.

Three things carried him to the next level: the strong example given by his parents, the opportunities that came and were taken, and the sacrifices in other areas of his life.

His first leadership opportunity gave him the confidence to continue. Since then, he has gone statewide, nationwide and is now an international leader.

Through it all, he's still the one I call "Dad."