

## Crop Production

# Reducing overlap offers solid returns



**BOOSTING EFFICIENCY:** Craig Wienbar says his friends will recognize his trusty Peterbilt truck. For him, precision manual guidance offered a payback even with his custom-cutter skills.

## Key Points

- North Dakota farmer finds he can really cut overlap by using a lightbar.
- Sprayer savings added up to 7.5% in 2009 by using a lightbar.
- Craig Wienbar is considering using the lightbar on his combine for harvest.

By WILLIE VOGT

**Y**OU'D think Craig Wienbar as a longtime custom harvester would be pretty precise behind the wheel of his machinery, and he is. However, from the beginning of the Precision Start program, that's the issue Wienbar has said is most important to him in trying out a lightbar.

PRECISION  
START

With a diversified operation south of Palermo, N.D., Wienbar is covering 1,800 acres while keeping his added labor investment under control. He was using a new John Deere lightbar paired with the new StarFire 300 GPS receiver to operate his pull-type sprayer with a 90-foot boom.

"First time I got out there, it was a little difficult getting used to following the lightbar," Wienbar jokes.

Like a lot of first-timers, Wienbar found himself overcorrecting to steer. A small change in the lightbar reading had Wienbar overcompensating changes in his steering at first. "I was weaving all over," he adds with a grin.

But a short time later he was used to the information the lightbar provided, and found that tiny changes in steering would keep his equipment on track.

Wienbar was most curious about how the precision-guided steering could improve his skills as a machine operator. Setting up the lightbar was simple, he says. Once he was used to guiding with the unit's input, he was off and running.

"This year we saved about 7½% on our spraying cost using this lightbar," he says. "I was surprised it was that much, but I compared my costs from last year, and that's what we did."

That's 7.5% less spray applied and more acres covered in a single day. And looking back on fields he sprayed, he sees no skips from his work, either.

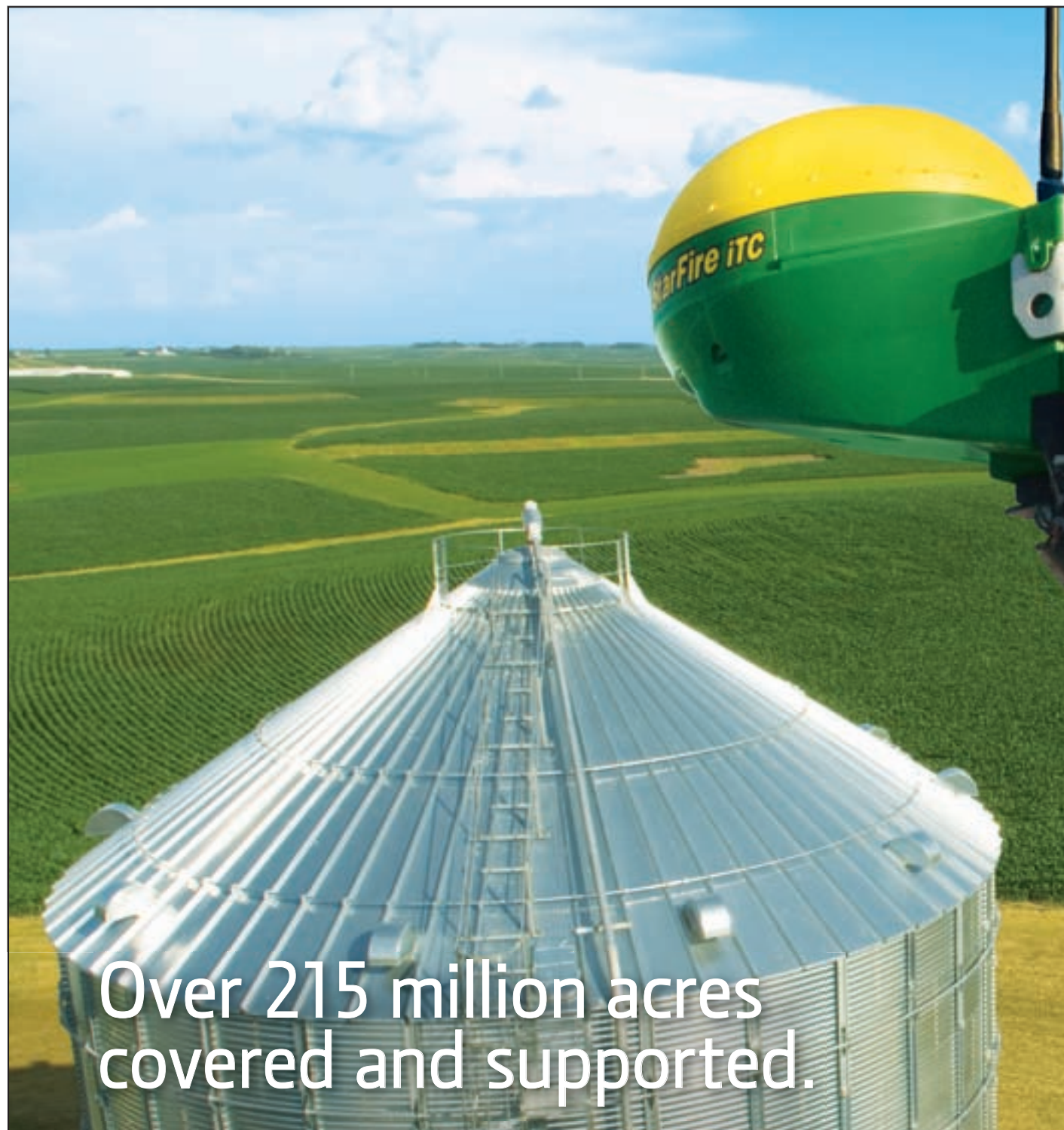
## Adding more uses

After a recent conversation with dealer Fritz Weisenberger and Joe Cunningham, an Ag Management Solutions consultant, both from Gooseneck Implement, Wienbar got a surprise: He could use the lightbar to harvest.

That could be a big deal in his part of the world, where dry peas are part of the crop mix. This dusty crop makes visibility a challenge. "I'm going to have to try that in the combine because I think it'll help a lot," he says.

Versatility and ease of use are two

key factors veteran users of lightbars know about. As more farmers find out about the systems, they'll want to consider moving up, too. Wienbar says he's talked to at least two growers interested in adding the systems for 2010.



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