

at variable population rates for a given area of a field.

The Rings collect soil samples from 2½-acre grids to gather nutrient data. Not only do they use commercial fertilizer, they also apply manure from the dairy herd and litter from the turkey houses. Grid sampling allows them to determine what is in the soil and fine-tune application rates.

In addition to providing fertilizer, the livestock operations are a source of diversification and cash flow. “We have the facilities, we have great help, and we get regular checks,” says Dave. At least 10% of their corn is used for feed and corn silage for the dairy herd year-round, while the rest is sold on the open market.

As Dave has stayed busy with more day-to-day farming duties, he has allowed Brent to take on the lion’s share of management responsibility for the farm. In particular, Brent handles all the planting duties and most of the expertise needed to run the turkey facilities.

And if either of them want to shed any more work, there’s always young Dylan, champing at the bit to do whatever job exists on the Ring Farms. **FL**

CROP CIRCLE ON THE RING FARM.

Read this strange tale of an other-worldly encounter at myFarmLife.com/ring.



David, Brent, Dylan and Kathy, Dylan’s grandmother, on the farm.



Staying With What Works

DAVE RING DOESN’T HESITATE

to give an opinion as to the best feature of his Massey Ferguson® tractors. It’s the same feature he loves about his AGCO-brand tractors. “CVT is the coolest thing we ever bought,” says Dave, referring to the continuously variable transmission. “No matter who gets in the cab, they know how to run the CVT,” he says. “You can set the rpm’s and ground speed to keep it constant whether you’re planting or chopping silage. The fuel savings is just phenomenal.”

Power isn’t sacrificed to get that savings, though. “It has more than enough power to handle anything,” says Dave. “We pull big manure tanks; we pull a 16-row planter up and down hills. The real advantage, though, is being able to set the CVT so that when you’re going uphill or downhill you keep a constant speed.”

Today, the Ring family’s prime workhorses are a 1-year-old MF8680 and an MF7624. “The cabs, I think, are as comfortable and as user-friendly as anything on the market,” says Dave, who jokes that at age 68 he needs comfort.

The tractors are also high-tech. The MF8680 is equipped with a Topcon 350 RTK guidance system. Topcon is an AGCO partner. The MF7624 is equipped with an AGCO brand Auto-Guide 3000 satellite-assisted steering technology. “Both systems are doing everything we wanted them to do,” says Dave. The RTK system on the larger tractor allows for greater location precision on jobs for which that is required.

The association with AGCO heritage didn’t begin with Dave. His father also used AGCO, having purchased one of the first Allis-Chalmers WD45 tractors with factory-installed power steering. “My dad bought the first 4-row corn planter Blesch Bros. sold,” Dave says.

Today, they also use an AGCO DT205B, an AGCO DT180 and a Gleaner® A76 combine.

It doesn’t hurt that Blesch Bros. Equipment is located 2 miles from the farm. To get an idea how long the company has been around, you should know they started out decades ago selling horses to area farmers. “If we have any issue, they are right here,” Dave says of the Blesch commitment to customer service.

“We try our best to do machinery business within a 70-mile radius of the dealership,” says Kevin Lubbehusen, a Blesch Bros. partner. “We feel like we need to be able to get to any customer within an hour. We are a service center and we carry a lot of parts inventory.”

Staff training regarding new technologies and machinery, according to Kevin, has become a big part of the dealership’s off-season schedule. Nearly every staffer completes three to four weeks of classes during the winter, often at AGCO headquarters in Georgia or the Hesston manufacturing plant in Kansas.

“You’ve got to continue to educate every person in the dealership,” says Kevin. “It is vital to what we do.”