



Cody Book



September 22nd was the first day of fall. For most of us in the agriculture industry, fall means harvest. For the Book family of Harvard, IL, they did not waste any time beginning this process. On the 23rd of September, I climbed up into the combine next to Cody Book and got an inside scoop of not only what goes on inside the cab of the combine while harvesting corn, but also the ins and outs of Book Cattle and Grain LLC.

Cody Book is the fourth generation in his family to farm land in Boone, Winnebago, and McHenry counties. The Book's home farm is located in Harvard, Illinois and he himself lives on the Boone-McHenry County line. Cody farms with his brother, Jeremy, and his father, Ken. His wife, Katie, and 14 month old son, Hank, also play vital roles on the farm. Katie has a specified role in the family feedlot and while I was in the combine with Cody, his son

Hank, who will soon be the fifth generation on the farm, was riding in the grain cart with his Uncle Jeremy.

“We have been farming in this area since the 1930’s,” said Book. “We came here from Naperville and settled where we are today.” The Book family started their family business with beef cattle. They now operate a 1,500 head feedlot and farm 4,500 acres of cropland across the three counties. On his farm he grows corn, soybeans, wheat, and hay. The hay is mainly sold in the horse industry but he also sells to farmers who have alpaca and bison.

Book spends most of his time on the grain side of their farm. “We all pitch in labor wise,” said Book. “My dad takes care of the cattle management and my brother is mostly in charge of our hay business.” The Books also sell Channel Seed. “This is kind of a side business,” said Book. “If things get poor and we are not able to turn a good profit on the crops, we have some supplemental income to keep our families fed.”

Earlier I mentioned that I climbed up into the combine next to Book. This is the machine that harvests grain crops. It is called a combine because it combines the tasks of reaping, threshing, and winnowing. A combine harvester is one of the most economical, efficient, and labor saving inventions. While no part of the machine seems simple, the technology that is seen inside the cab of a combine is far more intense than one would expect. While operating the combine, a screen was directly to Book's right. This is called a yield monitor. This monitor is GPS operated and has the ability to tell the farmer exactly how much his land is producing. It can inform the farmer whether the ground is too wet or too dry or even whether he has applied too much fertilizer or not enough. This enables farmers like Cody to make sure every acre on his farm is as productive as possible.

Efficiency on the farm gives Book spare time to advocate for the industry he lives and works in. Cody was recently elected onto the Board of Directors for the Winnebago-Boone Farm Bureau. He sees the public and the agriculture community benefiting largely from organizations like Farm Bureau.

"The agriculture community benefits from Farm Bureau because it gives us a voice," said Book. "As farmers, we are few in numbers, but when you put us together as the Farm Bureau, we are very strong." Within the Farm Bureau organization there are many strengths. "The major strength of the Farm Bureau in my eyes has a lot to do with how we can all network together," said Book. "It's a very good way for us, as farmers, to grab state wide strength and nationwide strength. It's a great way to connect farmers."

Harvest time is very busy for all farmers. I am grateful to Cody, and all the other farmers, who take time out of their busy schedules to talk with me about their farms. As for all of us at the Winnebago-Boone Farm Bureau, we wish a happy and safe harvest to all of the agriculture community! (Published September 30, 2016)