



## DTN GRAINS®

### Henry Farms

Dane, Wisconsin

Henry Farms is a contract seed producer raising 1,200 acres of seed corn and 400 acres of soybean seed which they sell to retail companies. Joe Henry owns the operation and has five full-time employees, including Dale Gretebeck, production manager, who has been with the operation eight years.

#### The challenge

Joe and Dale need the latest market and weather information to run Henry Farms efficiently and to maximize their profits.

#### The solution

For years, Henry Farms subscribed to DTN/*The Progressive Farmer* for weather and market information via satellite. In the spring of 2006 they upgraded their computers and switched to DTN Grains Professional Online. "We tried it for a free 10-day period, liked what we saw and decided to go with it," said Gretebeck.

#### The results

"Instead of having to get up from my desk to go check the DTN/*The Progressive Farmer*, now I just click on the icon on my computer and there it is," said Gretebeck. "The online version offers you more information to make your decision-making that much easier."

Gretebeck and Henry use the system extensively, and they have a third computer for other staff to access weather information. Their new system features more extensive weather information and commentary as well as DTN Six Factors® Market Strategies which follow six factors that drive the markets. "I look at the Six Factors all the time," said Henry, who is the primary user of the strategies information. "It gives me more information, which helps me in pricing."

In general, Henry and Gretebeck use market information on the service to know when to contract their soybeans, for which they have more flexibility than corn, and to sell extra corn or soybeans to the elevator. "I check the service a couple times a day just to see what the market is doing," said Gretebeck.

"When we know we have some extra corn or soybeans that we're considering selling to the elevator, we'll look hard at the market information for a couple days and try to position ourselves to get the best possible price."

Gretebeck finds the charts on the service helpful. "You can pick up trends, upsides, downsides and why the market is reacting the way it is. You can combine the information with your own opinion to make better decisions in the future."



They also depend on the weather information from the service. "We plan according to the information the system provides about the weather," said Gretebeck. For example, during planting, if it's a Monday and they're predicting rain on a Wednesday, there are certain fields that we know don't dry as quickly and we'll try to get those done first to beat the weather. Once the corn is up and we're spraying herbicides or insecticides, we follow the weather patterns to see if it's going to be windy or rainy," he added.

During the last spraying season, Gretebeck used the PrecipTimer®, which tells when precipitation is going to start and how long it's going to last. "I've been following it and I'm amazed as to how close it can get. If you're spraying an herbicide out there and they're calling for rain within an hour and the rain fast on the product we're using is four hours, then we know we don't have time to get something done and we should wait for the rain to pass before we start up again. It's a management tool and it can help you save money."

During the next growing season, Gretebeck also plans to use data the service provides about the evapotranspiration rate to help make decisions about irrigating, especially during the hot days of the growing season. "I think that will be a useful management tool."

#### The client's view

"I think, overall, DTN Grains Professional Online gives us good information. During the growing season some of the weather information it provides to us can be critical in making decisions."

Joe Gretebeck, production manager, Henry Farms