



REAPING REWARDS WITH STRIP-TILL, NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE

FOR TYLER HANDS, a successful farm means more than staying in “the black.” It means producing profitable crops, reducing costs, saving time and preserving the land to keep the farm sustainable long term.

A fifth-generation farmer, Tyler is the first of his generation to come back, and today works alongside his mentors—dad Gregory and uncles Sam and Cedric.

Growing up, Tyler says he, his siblings and cousins were always encouraged to do what they love. “[Our parents] also made it clear we were more than welcome to come back.”

Tyler graduated from Kansas State University in 2005 and worked for Quaker Oats, before returning to Triangle H in 2008. Now a father himself, Tyler says, “I’m here because of what my great-great-grandpa, great-grandpa and grandpa started, and what my dad and uncles have continued. I want to help preserve what is here and make it last for my kids and grandkids, if that’s what they choose.”

To be successful, the Hands believe in customized management and make decisions field by field and case by case. “We do our homework. First and foremost is finding the right seed for every acre. Genetics are key, and we want to optimize those genetics for best yield. We find what choices work in different field situations.”

Two-thirds of their corn and soybean acres are strip-tilled, which Triangle H switched to 11 years ago, Tyler says. “It’s a totally different way of farming. In my grandpa’s day, a field was not ready to plant until all the trash was worked in.”

One of the many things Tyler learned from his family is that farms need to evolve to stay successful. An example is adopting RTK and GPS, which allows them to precisely apply nutrients and accurately place seed, says Tyler.

“You have to do what is best with what you know and what is available to you. Strip-till is a commitment and is not a cheap investment, but it can reap rewards.”

FACT FILE

NAME

Tyler Hands

NAME OF OPERATION

Triangle H

LOCATION

Garden City and Deerfield,
Kansas

CROPS

Corn, soybeans, wheat,
milo and alfalfa (also raises
cattle and operates two small
feedlots)

ACRES 10,000

SOIL TYPES

Loam, sandy loam, sandy

ASSOCIATIONS

American Soybean
Association, Garden City
Co-op, Kansas Wheat Growers
and National Corn Growers
Association (as well as
livestock and beef groups)



“Strip-tillage just makes sense where it works well. It helps us be more profitable, and is one choice that helps secure the future of all our acres.”

The Hands have proven that strip-till yields, earning multiple state yield contest awards. They placed second in the no-till/strip-till irrigated category last year with 261.0 bu/A and took third in the same category in 2008.

“We’ve seen a boost with the strip-till on our sandy and sandy loam soils,” Tyler says. “The crop has a better stand, and with fertilizer in the slice, as soon as the root gets down there, it’s got it.”

Additionally, Tyler points out soil health and water conservation as vital elements to success—both now and in the future.

“Out in southwest Kansas, the wind blows like no other. In sandier soils, we need something to hold the ground down. Plus, anytime you’re not tearing earth up, moisture stays in the ground. With the water table declining, that is critical,” he explains.

Triangle H’s decision to strip-till also reduces trips across field, requires less labor and uses less fuel. “With strip-till, we take three, maybe four, trips across a field in a season versus conventional tillage, which can be twice as many,” Tyler says. “Time is money. Fuel is money.”

“Strip-tillage just makes sense where it works well. It helps us be more profitable, and is one choice that helps secure the future of all our acres.”

For more on implementing conservation-based production practices such as those used by Tyler Hands, farmers can contact their nearby university Extension office to speak with an expert. Additional resources can be accessed through www.HarvestingThePotential.org.