

Kevin Corn: A Legacy of Farming Innovation and Family Heritage

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In the heart of Ontario, Oregon, Kevin Corn, alongside his wife Elizabeth, continues a rich family tradition of multi-generational farming. Their story is one of growth, adaptation, and a deep-rooted commitment to both the land and their community.

Kevin began farming after graduating from Utah State in 2012. On the 100-acre farm he rented, he began growing corn, wheat, sugar beets, and onions. Over the years, Kevin has added to his acreage and will be operating 1,700 acres in the 2024 season. While onions and sugar beets are the main cash crops, wheat and corn serve as essential rotational crops, ensuring soil health and water conservation as well as the overall success of the farm.

In addition to farming, the Corns also own Snake River Produce, an onion packing shed where they sort, bag, and ship onions to customers nationwide. Their company thrives, employing nine full-time workers on the farm and an additional 50 seasonal employees in the packing shed, with more growth opportunities in the future.

For Kevin, farming is more than a profession; it's a way of life deeply ingrained from a young age. His family has farmed in the Treasure Valley for more than five generations. Some of the land his father farms have been in the family for 80 years. He recalls his early days working alongside his father while he was still in grade school, getting his start in what would later become his full-time profession.

"I started working with my dad on his farm from a young age helping with irrigation and some manual labor," he says. "Mostly, I just love to spend time with him and learn. I had an active role all through school hoping to get to go farming each day after school."

Embracing innovation has been a hallmark of Kevin's farming philosophy. Transitioning from conventional furrow irrigation to drip irrigation for onion crops marked a significant shift on the farm. While it presented its fair share of challenges, the rewards have been substantial. They

now use half the total water they would have used with conventional irrigation, and they now save on fertilizer and other inputs.

Looking ahead, Kevin envisions further automation and efficiency measures to ensure the long-term sustainability of their operation. "I know that this trend of automation will continue to play a role in long term viability," he says.

Beyond the farm, Kevin is actively involved in the Oregon Wheat Growers League. Introduced by his neighbor, Oregon Wheat Commissioner Dana Tuckness, he found himself immersed in a community of like-minded individuals dedicated to advancing the interests of farmers. Attending conventions and engaging with fellow members has been a rewarding experience, providing insights and networking opportunities that contribute to his growth as a farmer and leader.

As Kevin looks to the future, he is committed to fostering the next generation's involvement in farming. With three young children, he hopes to create an opportunity for the next generation of his family. "We are still working on getting [our kids] more involved," he says, "but family tractor rides, especially at harvest, are a highlight of my day."

As their journey continues, the Corns' dedication to farming, innovation, and community serves as a testament to their enduring legacy.