

MN Agriculture: The Flemings, Continuing the Family's Farming Legacy

MN Agriculture: Chris and Kelly Fleming



Day 3 of my “30 Days of MN Agriculture” is the Chris and Kelly Fleming From Garden City, MN. Garden City is near Mankato, MN and located southwest of Minneapolis. Kelly works as an accountant along with working along side her husband, Chris on the farm. They are a young farm family with two children. They are also a fifth generation farm family. I personally know Kelly as she lived in our farming neighborhood while growing up.

Tell me a little about your farm and/or business?

“I am an accountant at Andring, Collins, Norman & Co. Chtd in Mankato. I work full-time during tax season and part time the rest of the year, so that way I am able to help out with our farming operation. At my job I work mostly with farm tax and accounting clients. I am currently in the process of getting my CPA license, I am half way there with two tests done and I have two tests to go. I help out on the farm where ever I can, my husband Chris and his Dad do most of the day-to-day stuff together on the farm. I spend a lot of time running the books of our operation. In the spring and fall, I help where ever I can. I run the combine, grain cart, tillage, and yes I can even drive a semi to help out when I need to. I also help my husband when customers’ needs to come and pick up seed from us in the spring.



Fleming family

Chris and I have two children, that God willing, will hopefully take over the farm one day. The kid's favorite time of year is in the fall during harvest, because with both parents out in the field, our family time is spent in the combine and tractors. We are fifth generation farmers, and we are farming together with my husband's parents, and we all live on the same building site on the farm."

How long have you farmed or been in business?

"I have been in the farming business my whole life. I grew up on a dairy and crop farm in Martin County. I married my husband in 2004 we have lived on the farm since then. We used to be a farrow-to-finish hog farm, but we were still doing our breeding in outdoor barns, so we stopped farrowing, and then we were just finishing hogs, until the hog and grain market turned, and then decided it was more cost effective to rent our barns out to other producers. We now sell our corn that we were previously feeding to our hogs. We still take care of the pigs that our in our barns, by doing the daily chores, and checking to make sure the pigs are healthy and that everything is

working properly in the barns. We also take the manure from the hog barns, and spread that on our fields in the fall and this provides fertilizer for our next year's crop."



Aerial view of the Fleming Farm

Tell me a little about what you grown/raise/produce or service provided.

"We currently raise corn and soybean crops, and we also sell products for DuPont Pioneer, corn, soybean, and alfalfa seed."

Where do you sell or provide services to? Who is your end consumer?

"The corn we grow is delivered to a few different places. The local cooperative, where it is either ground for hog feed, or loaded on to trains that are headed west, either for domestic use or to be exported to other countries. The other place we sell a majority of our corn is the Ethanol plant, just west of Lake Crystal, MN. Where it is ground for ethanol and once they are finished with ethanol production the remaining mash is dried into a product call Dried distillers grain (DDG's). The DDG's are a high protein animal feed, similar to soybean meal that is used in many feed rations for hogs, cattle, and poultry. The Ethanol plant also loads railcars of DDG's to head to the western states and even as far south as Mexico. All of our soybeans are delivered to one of the two crushers in Mankato, CHS or ADM, where the oil is extracted for cooking and vegetable oils, and similar to Ethanol production the remaining solids are dried and sold as soybean meal, another high protein animal feed. In hog feed, DDG's and soybean meal are added to ground corn in different amounts to help balance a feed ration."

What makes your farm/business unique or special? What are you proud of?

“I believe our farm is special because it’s *OUR farm*. We have invested blood, sweat, and tears into building it, by investing money in our farm we are trying to build a sustainable business for two separate families today, but for possibly more in the future. There are thousands of farms in the country similar to ours that produce corn, soybeans, hogs, but we believe that *what makes our farm special is the generations that came before us*, one bought the land where are farm stands today, one generation built the original farm house, the barn, multiple other sheds, one built the hog barns, the modern grain handling system that continues to be expanded and improved upon today. My husband and I are contributing to our farm by adding larger machine storage sheds and hopefully a larger shop for the next generations to enjoy, and by purchasing farmland to grow our crop, and for the next generations to enjoy.”



Fleming family helping

Why do you grow/raise/produce? What went into your decision to do what you do?

“My husband and I decided to be farmers, because it is in our blood, we love it, and I love raising our kids on the farm. Farming makes us happy, it is amazing to watch the crop grow over the summer, it starts as just a little seed, and grows into something that is helping feed the world. You will find my husband several days a week during spring and summer out counting the number of plants that came up, and the numbers of pods on the beans, and the number of rows on the ears of corn.”

“My husband and I believe that God made us Farmers, and we intend to preserve this great land that he created. We like to consider that we are steward’s of our land, we are here to take care of it for a little while, and we want to leave our *land in better shape* than we received it. We want our land to be well preserved, so that we will be able to grow

crops, and future generations will be able to grow crops on this same land.”

What makes Minnesota the place to farm?

“Minnesota is a great place to grow corn and soybeans, the ground is rich in nutrients, and has a lot of nice deep black dirt. It also has a good growing season for the crops, but all crops rely on the weather patterns that southern Minnesota receives. We have close markets for our crops, and don’t have to haul them long distances to find a buyer.”



Fleming Family

There are others that are also participating in the 30 Days of Blogging Challenge. Feel free to check these out:

- [Janice Person aka JP Loves Cotton: A Month of Memories](#)
- [Rural Route 2 – 30 Days of Farm Girl Faith](#)
- [Prairie Californian – 30 Days of Food](#)
- [Mackinson Dairy – Women in Dairy](#)

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