

MN Agriculture: Dylan Thisius, Young Beginning Farmer



Day 12 of my "30 Days of MN Agriculture" is Dylan Thisius from Wells located in south central Minnesota. Dylan is a young, beginning farmer working into his family's farming business.

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

I have been farming full-time since 2012 after I went to college at South Dakota State, but have been involved in the farming lifestyle since I was born. I work with my dad, Dan, on a day to day basis taking care of our livestock. We have about 500 head of dairy steers and roughly 2,300 pigs. I also am involved with our crop operation which includes my grandpa and my dad's uncle. We run about 1500 acres of corn, beans and sweet corn. My main jobs are feeding and monitoring the pigs, and bottle feeding the calves we get from a local dairy farm. As for the crops, I have started to plant and help pick out which seed variety goes on which field. In the fall I help get the combine ready, run grain cart and run our drying system.

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

Our farm keeps a large amount of the corn as a feed source for the cattle and pigs, the rest of the corn and our beans are sold to local elevators. We generally have about 80-100 of acres of sweet corn that goes to a local canning factory. As far as livestock, our pigs and cattle are sold for meat that will eventually find its way to a grocery store.

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

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I am proud that I get to farm and work with my family every day. As a young beginning farmer, there are so many things that happen on a daily basis that may be new or different, and it's always great to have your family to look to or lean on for support and advice. Growing up in a farming family, I always saw my dad and grandpa working, and now that I am involved, I appreciate all the sacrifices they have made and the time that was put in. I look forward to continuing our family's legacy with helpful advice from the past.

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

The decision to have corn, soybeans and pigs was made well before I was alive. The farm decided to get into dairy steers after I came back from college as a way to keep me busy. Oddly enough, my dad is the one who took on the cattle and I shifted my focus on care for the pigs. We are diversified to try and minimize the risk of low markets and so not all of our "eggs" are in one basket.

What is one interesting fact about your farm/crops/livestock/business you would like to share.

Along with our livestock, we have always had a variety of other animals around. From the typical dogs, cats and chickens, I grew up with goats, llamas, peacocks, emus, guinea pigs, snakes, geckos, chinchillas and probably a few others I am forgetting. My love for animals has grown over a wide range.

What is one thing you wish consumers knew about what you do or your farm/business?

I wish consumers knew the passion and commitment that it takes to farm. Whether something negative is being said about farmers, farming or agriculture, or if you are losing money, you still have to get up every day and take care of your farm.

Who are your customers? Or what would you like to tell your customers?

We take pride in raising healthy livestock, producing safe food, while being sustainable and efficient. The technology we have today is allowing us to move toward being more efficient, while finding new and better ways of doing things. This includes auto steer on tractors for precise planting, new seed varieties for fighting off disease and pests, and the continued research on producing better, quality livestock.

What is one thing about Minnesota that people from other areas do not know about or are missing because they don't live here?

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High health insurance premiums. Kidding. Well, kind of.