

FEATURE STORY



The annual National Farm Machinery Show provides an excellent opportunity to see cutting-edge products and network with farmers outside your normal circle

Meet me in LOUISVILLE

By Philip Shaw*

Information provides the power required to manage change. For the past 2 years, part of my effort to source relevant new information for my farm has taken me to the National Farm Machinery Show in Louisville, Kentucky. I like to call it the “Super Bowl” of North American agriculture. It’s a big show. If there is anything new and visionary on the agricultural scene waiting to be discovered, I’m sure I’ll find it in Louisville.

About 800 exhibitors fill over 1.2 million square feet inside the Kentucky Exposition Center. This show attracts farmers from all corners of the U.S. and beyond. I’ve enjoyed lunch with American farmers from Kentucky, Tennessee and points south. It’s a fascinating cultural and professional mix. One of the first things you notice is how many young people attend.

I’m not easily impressed by new farm equipment or new farming technology. Economic viability is always the key litmus test in my mind — it has to pay for it to be of interest to me. At Louisville, I

found a few products and services that made an impression on me.

Seed handling

Bulk seed handling seemed to be a popular theme at the Louisville show this past year. I have always favored bulk handling of my wheat and soybean seed. However, I still lug seed corn bags. At the Louisville show there was all kinds of “bulk handling” equipment, which handled tote boxes of seed corn in addition to soybeans, wheat and other crops.

Pictured is the Unverferth Seedrunner 3500. To me, it stood out because of its ability to both fill and unload itself with an attached conveyor. The conveyor swings in and out on a pivot for filling and unloading.

Jerry Ecklund of Unverferth offered this about the Seedrunner 3500, “It has a split compartment for 2 varieties of seed, a cupped conveyor for gentler seed handling and the ability to add scales to make it work as a weigh wagon at harvest time. Overall, the Seed Runner provides farmers

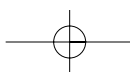
an easy way to take advantage of the cost-efficiencies of buying bulk seed and using the conveyor to easily and gently fill their drills or planters.”

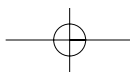
Also pictured is another bulk handling unit called a Bulk Seed Buggy manufactured by Ag Dryer Services, Inc. of Elm Creek, Nebraska. Seed totes are positioned so seed flows into the 2 black square orifices. From here the seed goes to the auger. These units were in abundance in Louisville, some with the ability to carry and access seed from 6 or 8 seed totes. Farmers can use them to load seed drills for soybeans or wheat, and they are also helpful for corn growers who use both Bt and refuge corn hybrids.

Spraying technology

Farmers and their sprayers are inseparable. At Louisville there is every known attachment, spray nozzle, pressure valve and sonar attachment imaginable. The 4-wheel supply trailer pictured from Redball Products caught my eye.

The Redball liquid supply





trailer with 4-wheel-steer (4WS) is used as a supply system or nurse-tank for planters, strip-till rigs, field cultivators and spraying equipment.

According to Redball, it features a fully supported 1,600-gallon elliptical product tank with 2" quick fill plumbing and a sump for complete emptying. It has 10-bolt hubs and spindles and 31" of ground clearance with

optional 320/85R38 tires. Its 4WS capabilities, which allow front and rear tires to follow the same track, result in less trampled crop during row-crop operations and a tight turning radius of less than 12'. The 4-wheel system is easily converted to 2-wheel steer by operator-side cam locks.

At the Louisville show, the supply trailer was attached to a 3-point hitch sprayer. When the spraying is done, the tank could easily be used for other farming applications. Interestingly, Redball displayed the trailer in front of a backdrop showing a map of Brazil, which identified all their Brazilian dealers. Brazilian staff was on hand to talk to potential customers.

Internet solutions for the farm

Agricultural applications for the Internet were another very popular theme at this year's show. Several

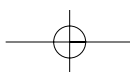
vendors had displays that focused on using the net to buy and sell equipment on their site. TractorHouse.com was one example.

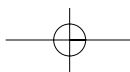
TractorHouse.com connects buyers and sellers of used farm equipment. It has free access to auction results helping farmers determine the value of equipment. Farmers can look through over 50,000 listings and 1,500 dealers. It was only one example of many at Louisville.

For me, the Louisville show represents one big classroom. I saw tractors from India and China. I saw grain handling equipment from all corners of the U.S. and, yes, southwestern Ontario. There is a Canadian presence. It is not uncommon to run into somebody you know from back home. And as I mentioned, the American farmers you will meet are almost as interesting as the equipment on display.


The National Farm Machin-

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ery Show in Louisville, Kentucky, is a 7-hour drive south on 1-75 and 1-70 from Windsor, Ont. Admission is free. Next year's show is set for February 14-17, 2007. 

* Philip Shaw, president of Philip Shaw Farms Inc., farms near Dresden, Ont.

