

77th Annual Indiana Farm Management Tour La Porte and Starke Counties June 23 and 24, 2009

Tuesday June 23, 2009

Preregistration: The public is invited. Pre-registration is required to participate in the dinner on June 23 and/or the lunch on June 24. The price of each meal is \$5 per person payable on the tour (cash or check please, no credit cards). **Please preregister by Friday June 18 by calling 1-888-EXT-INFO or 219/324-9407.**

1) Wappel Farms – 1:00 p.m. (CDT) All sites on this farm tour are in the central time zone.

Larry Wappel's father, Ed, started farming during World War II. Ed retired in 1986. In 1988, Wappel Farms started raising mint. Larry currently farms in partnership with his wife Debbie and their two sons, Larry, Jr., and Eric. In 2009, Wappel Farms will raise over 6,000 acres of corn, soybeans, and mint in Starke, Jasper, Porter, and Pulaski counties. A specialty crop like mint requires specialized equipment, more capital, and a keen ability to market the product, mint oil, through brokers to end users. Mint complements corn because it spreads out labor usage. Larry has served as a director of the Mint Industry Research Council and was instrumental in negotiating production contracts for mint oil for the industry. Larry, Jr. was recently elected to serve on the board of directors of the Indiana Mint Market Development Council. Guests from over 30 countries have toured the Wappel's mint operation. They also host tours for local school children and the annual North Judson Mint Festival.

2) Schafer Farms – 3:00 p.m. CDT

Schafer Farms originated near Crown Point in Lake County when Harold Schafer, a depression-era survivor, started the operation with a small herd of Hereford cattle. In 1972, when sons Myron and Vern were ready to join the operation, the farm left the encroaching urban development of Lake County and invested in farmland near La Crosse in La Porte County. Vern's son Matt later joined the operation after following in his father's footsteps by obtaining a degree at Purdue. The current operation includes 75 brood cows in a cow-calf operation, where calves are fed out on the farm. Row crops include corn, soybeans, about 300 acres of green beans and cucumbers, and seed corn for Remington Seeds. The balance of acreage is in pasture, hay, and CRP. Approximately 1,800 acres are under irrigation. The Schafers are planning to add a new shop/office building and a new grain dryer to their existing grain complex this year.

3) Pinney-Purdue Ag Center – 5:30 p.m. CDT

Tour, Dinner, and Evening Program: "To ACRE or Not to ACRE, and Other Decision-Making in the Wake of the 2008 Farm Bill"

Wednesday June 24, 2009

4) Lawrence Brothers Farms – 8:00 a.m. CDT

Brad Lawrence and his younger brother Todd own and operate the farm started by their parents, Clarence and Peggy Lawrence. The operation is organized into several entities to provide advantages of management and liability protection. The general farming operating entity is a partnership called "Lawrence Brothers" and involves Brad and his son Matt and Todd and his son Josh. A regular C corporation was formed (L & L Corp) to pay salaries and own vehicles. A Subchapter S corporation, BTL Corp., was formed to own the farm equipment. Brad is currently the sole shareholder of N & L Pork, a contract feeder pig grower operation working with Co-Alliance. An important part of the hog operation is the production of manure nutrients made available for the cropping operations. Crops grown in 2009 will include seed corn for Pioneer Hi-Bred, commercial corn, soybeans, and mint. About 3,000 acres are under center pivot irrigation.

5) Abbett Farms, LLC – 10:00 a.m. CDT

Abbett Farms, LLC, is in its second generation as a large, innovative farm involved in seed corn, specialty crops, and aviation. Lou and Joan Abbett began the operation in a different location in 1962. They purchased land near La Crosse in 1968. In 1983 Lou negotiated a 100-acre tomato contract with Heinz. Glenn graduated from Purdue with a degree in Mechanical Engineering and joined the farming operation in 1994. The farm has continued to grow in acreage and types of crops. For 2009, the farm will raise tomatoes for Red Gold, green beans (double-cropped), seed corn for Remington Seeds, commercial corn, and soybeans. Most of the crop acreage is under center pivot irrigation. Besides the principal operators, Abbett Farms also has five full-time employees actively managing parts of the operation and three regular part-time employees. Abbetts have used their airplanes to investigate farming practices in California and other parts of the US as well as to monitor their own crops.

6) Abbett Farms – Lunch at 12:00 p.m. CDT

See the text box on pre-registration for meals. For special dietary needs, contact 219/324-9407 by Friday June 18.

7) Abbett Farms – Ag Outlook – 1:00 p.m. CDT

Dr. Chris Hurt, Purdue Marketing Specialist

Lodging: Lodging is available in Valparaiso, IN. For information, contact the Porter County Convention and Visitors Bureau at 800-283-8687 or <http://www.indianadunes.com/>.

