

## Written Profile

**Farm:** Speer Farm

**Location:** Elizabethtown, Indiana

**Date of Origination:** 1876

**Industry Sector(s):** Corn and Soybeans



"There is no better place than on the family farm," shares M. Speer of Speer Farms. The passion that emanates from these words is the same passion that has driven the family to cultivate a sustainable farming practice for well over 100 years. We are excited to share their story, as we recognize the contribution made by Speer Family Farm to **Agriculture's Lasting Heritage**.

In March of 1876, the original piece of land was purchased by Mr. James Rogers. His son, Harry Rogers farmed with James until James' death in 1920. Harry took over the family farm and eventually called on his son-in-law, Robert Speer, to join Harry on the family farm. Robert and his wife, Marifrances Rogers, moved to the original farm. Their son, Ronald Speer, farmed with his father until Robert's death in 1992. In 1993, Speer Farm Inc. was formed with all shares held by Rogers descendants. Today, Ronald and his sons farm together.

Farming the same land for over 100 years brings with it inherent challenges. "Sever weather has no doubt caused some of the greatest challenges on the family farm," Speer explains. His father Ronald often references the droughts of 1982, 1988 and 2012 as significant challenges. Amidst these unforeseeable circumstances, "we have been blessed with the ability to survive even the worst weather situations," acknowledges Speer. The family also experienced a notable challenge with the death of James Rogers in 1920. "According to his obituary, my Great-Grandfather found him dead after he had dismounted the tractor. James died without a will," Speer continues, "which could have caused a lot of friction between family members, but it did not." The family's commitment to the land prevailed and continues to drive their efforts.

The longevity of this family farm speaks volumes about how farmers care for the land. "There is no doubt that good stewardship of the land that we farm has been passed down from generation to generation," shares Speer. "A closeness and respect of the land is gained when one stops to realize how important the land was for one's Great-Great Grandparents, and down through the generations that followed. Certainly this kind of reflection can build pride in anyone."

Advancements in technology over time have helped the family farm operate efficiently and effectively. "The technology offered through GPS and Farm Works has offered us the ability to look ahead to better planning," shares Speer. The family is looking forward to adding variable rating to more equipment in the near future. Through the years Farm Bureau has also provided support as they lobby and educate legislators about the needs of farmers. "Without Farm Bureau's support," explains Speer, "There is no doubt that there would have been more difficult and trying circumstances for family farms."

In closing, Speer offers this poignant reflection: "Family farms that are passed down through the generations are evidence of how important and valuable farming is to the fabric of our nation. Many who are not involved with the family farm are not able to experience the value of farming together as a family and the attachment that is developed for the land that is farmed." We recognize the sacrifice and investment made by the Speer family, and we celebrate their contribution to **Agriculture's Lasting Heritage**.