

Written Profile

Farm: Oak Hill Farms
Location: Sussex County, Virginia
Date of Origination: 1760
Industry Sector(s): Row crops



"We work hard every day to produce food, fiber and food for the world," shares Keith Dunn of Oak Hill Farms. "Very few people in this country truly know what it feels like to be hungry, and with the help of family farms, they never will." In operation for over two hundred years, Oak Hill Farms is a dynamic example of the investment family farms and ranches make each day to **Agriculture's Lasting Heritage**.

The family farm began in Sussex County, Virginia in the mid 1700's. The family began farming simply to support themselves and sold enough to buy the things they could not grow. Over the years much has changed, including technology. "The changes that have come about in just the last 25 years have been amazing," explains Dunn. Citing a plethora of precision agriculture options, improved seed traits and advancements in biotechnology, Dunn acknowledges that these changes enable farmers to produce more than their ancestors could have dreamed of. Dunn is hopeful that improvements in drought-tolerant crops will soon follow.

Driven by a connection to the land, Dunn shares how he made it back to the farm: "Those of us who are fortunate enough to have been raised on family farms have it in our blood. I never wanted to return to the farm until I went away to college; then I couldn't wait to get back!" Dunn takes to heart the challenges that come with the agricultural life. "The many years of poor crops have been the worst for me" he shares. It is difficult to work so hard toward a goal and not achieve it. He acknowledges that farming is especially challenging because of so many factors, particularly weather, which are out of one's control.

Dan is appreciative of the support provided over the years by the American Farm Bureau. "Farm Bureau has been a driving force for the American farmer," he states plainly. "They have given us a stronger voice than any of us could have had on our own."

Passion for managing the land on which his ancestors toiled for generations exudes from Dan's very presence. When asked what the long term survival of his family farm says about how farmers care for the land, Dan's message is very clear: "I tell people all the time that I am a seventh generation farmer. Why would I even think of doing something that would endanger what my Great Great Grandfather worked so hard to keep? I am very proud of what my family has accomplished and want it to be a wonderful legacy to leave to my daughter."

We appreciate the long-lasting investment made by Keith Dunn and his family. We are proud to recognize Oak Hill Farms and celebrate their contribution to **Agriculture's Lasting Heritage**.