



Silent Shade
PLANTING COMPANY

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A NEW YEAR...A NEW SET OF SOLUTIONS

By Jeremy Jack

Every new year, people across the world set resolutions for themselves. Usually, the resolutions are things they want to change in their lives to make themselves better. In farming, we do something similar, but they are more solutions than resolutions. Throughout the year, we track our processes, application totals, yield data, aerial imagery and the list goes on. At the end of the year, we take this information and look for problem areas. We look at decisions we made and the repercussions. Sometimes our decisions didn't turn out the way we wanted, or sometimes, they worked much better than they were supposed to.

Last year's weather has directly affected this year's problems and solutions. In my now twelve years of farming, I have endured only one other wet fall similar to last year. Those type of wet falls create repercussions in our spring work. For the first time that I can remember, we had little to no field work completed prior to this March. Our solution to this problem was first to be sure we hired enough trained employees to operate the equipment this spring. The other solution was to add another planter to our mix to help us get the crop in the ground at an extra fast pace.

With today's technology, our solution-making process is much more accurate than in the past. We have access to so much information instantly allowing us to track problem areas in fields, such as elevation or soil fertility. We can then make changes to improve that field's yield this year through applying the correct amount and type of fertilizer or by working on the field's elevation.

FUN FACT!

Ever wonder about the origin of the word, tractor? Back in 1906, there was a sales manager, W.H. Williams, who was working on some advertising copy. He was struggling with the cumbersome "gasoline traction engine." He decided to use the word tractor deriving from a combination of the words, "traction" and "motor".

People consider this a time of uncertainty for farming. Low prices, trade wars, unpredictable weather and regulations keep farmers on their toes. So many outside forces affect farmers' business despite their planning. Making these new year solutions is one way that we can try to prepare for the problems we know, but at the end of the day, we have to put our reliance on our savior, Jesus Christ, for the rest. My son has a t-shirt that he wears often with a Bible verse from Jeremiah 29:11. It says, "I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for." This verse gives me comfort in times of uncertainty, and I hope that it can for you too.

A VISIT WITH GRANJA BRETANHAS FARM IN BRAZIL

By Willard Jack

Last November, Jeremy received an email from Luciane Leitzke, the Senior Agronomist at Granja Bretanhas farm in South Brazil. Luciane had toured our farm earlier in 2018 with a group of Brazilian farmers on an agriculture tour of the South-eastern U.S. She had been particularly interested in the equipment and technology that we used to manage our farm. In her email, she invited us to visit their farm in January to share experiences and knowledge about rice and soybean agriculture and to create a sort of “internship” between our farm and theirs. Her gracious offer was one that we could not pass up.



In January, Laura Lee and I travelled down to their farm in Southern Brazil, just south of Pelotas in the Rio Grande do Sul state. The farm, Granja Bretanhas, has been in operation for more than 68 years. The farm expands over 70,000 acres and employs approximately 300 people. The acreage is divided between 30,000 acres of rice, 15,000 acres of soybeans, and the rest is used to raise beef cattle or is a permanent preservation area. Because the closest town is about an hour away, the farm provides housing for all of its employees as well as school for their children, grocery store and a medical clinic. It is a well-established, self-sufficient farm and community. To say Laura Lee and I were impressed would be an understatement.



We were housed on the farm campus in the owner’s house during the week of our stay, and each day, we toured different parts of their farm. We learned that they grew a high-yielding, high-quality, non-hybrid Clearfield rice crop, as well as conventional rice. When the rice was harvested, they dried some at their headquarters with woodburning dryers, and the rest was shipped to Pelotas to be dried commercially.

We also focused a lot of our time talking about our soybean crop. They are just now learning how to grow soybeans on rows and irrigate them with row water. Soybeans make a great rotation for their rice crop, but they wanted to improve their current soybean yields to make the rotation more profitable. Because the climate in their area is very similar to the delta, we were able to give some recommendations to help improve yield.

Their intricate irrigation system consisted of 130 kilometers of flume ditches, which are an elevated irrigation canal. The ditches feed off a large lake for their water source. Electric pumps are used to pump the water from the lake into the ditch, and then they gravity feed their rice from this ditch using poly-pipe side-inlet technology. While not all of their land is precision leveled, some is, and they have a goal of leveling the rest long-term. In addition to pumping water from the lake, they also used many tailwater recovery systems to use surface water.

What struck me the most about this farm was the sophistication of technology, equipment and practices that they were employing despite lack of federal infrastructure (as compared to the U.S.). They were using progressive farming technology and continually working to improve the efficiencies and sustainability of the farm.

Over the past couple of weeks, I have been calling this trip, “the trip of a lifetime.” Laura Lee and I learned so much from Luciane Leitzke, her father and CEO, Rubimar Leitzke, and the farm owner, Laura Ribeiro. It was such a special experience to be able to immerse ourselves in their culture and their world for a week. We have found some new friends in the Granja Bretanhas farm, and we look forward to nurturing that relationship in the years to come.

HYDE-SMITH COSPONSORS THE MODERNIZING AGRICULTURE TRANSPORTATION ACT

By Elizabeth Jack

Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith, a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, is looking after her Mississippi farmers once again. She recently co-sponsored S.600, the Modernizing Agriculture Transportation Act. The purpose of this legislation is to give agriculture a seat at the table when the Department of Transportation is developing policies on transporting livestock and agriculture commodities. According to the act, a working group would be established within the Department of Transportation to develop Electronic Logging Device (ELD) and Hours of Service (HOS) policy and legislative reforms for transporting livestock and other agricultural commodities.

In her press release on March 5, Senator Hyde-Smith stated, “The goal of this legislation is to allow the agricultural sector to make real-world, commonsense recommendations on shipping livestock and commodities safely. I believe this working group will result in greater flexibility and fewer federal regulatory burdens on farmers and ranchers.”

Last August, Senator Hyde-Smith cosponsored similar legislation, and in response, the FMCSA proposed to release agriculture from the Hours of Service regulations for hauling within a 150 air mile radius.

Our company, Willard Jack Trucking, which is a sister company of Silent Shade Planting Company, hauls primarily agricultural products throughout the year, including cotton bales, cotton seed, and grains. There are many other similar trucking companies throughout our area. Many of the rules and regulations that are demanded of traditional freight companies would be debilitating and unnecessary for the small agriculture hauling companies. When these policies are developed, it is so important to have someone with an agriculture knowledge and background at the table to provide that perspective.

The bill is currently in the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, and we hope to see it passed.

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RICE FLOUR BECOMING CHEF'S CHOICE FOR FRYING

By Elizabeth Jack

Rice is a regular staple on our household menu. We love to make beef consommé rice, poppy seed casserole with rice, or just plain rice with butter as a side. It is gluten-free, low in calories and has a number of vitamins and minerals that are healthy for us. I, like many others, thought of rice, the grain, as a dinner side. However, just this past year, I found out about rice flour, and its recent rising popularity in U.S. kitchens. Let me let you in on this secret, chefs have been using rice flour in many of their recipes to make the food look better and taste better for years, and you can too!

Rice flour is made up of finely milled rice. While recently popularized in U.S. cooking and frying, it has been the go-to method for frying in Asia for some time (for example – tempura fried chicken or vegetables). In the U.S., many chefs have started using it as an alternative to wheat flour for their frying because it produces a lighter, crispier fried food with less grease. In fact, during the frying process, rice flour has been proven to absorb less oil than traditional wheat flour-based batter. In research tests performed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, it was determined that chicken drumsticks fried in rice flour absorbed up to 62% less oil than its wheat flour counterpart.

Fast food companies are also reaping the benefits of rice flour. Hardees, Jack in the Box and Burger King dust their French fries with rice flour to create the tasty crunch that their customers enjoy.

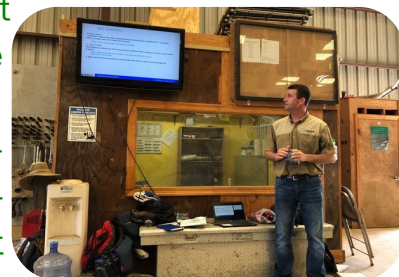
A tip for those interested in using rice flour for frying –be sure to use smaller pieces of meat because rice flour browns more quickly. Your final lighter, crispier, gluten-free fried food will be sure to please any difficult eater in your crowd.

CORTEVA SPRAYER TRAINING READIES STAFF FOR SPRING

There is a lot of planning and training that goes into the application of chemicals on our crops. Federal and state laws have set certain rules and regulations in addition to required training on the application of dicamba products. This year, we had each of our employees complete training to receive their certified applicator license, and they followed up this training with dicamba application training through the state of Mississippi online.

At the beginning of March, we were also fortunate to have Matt McGowin and Steve Crawford with Corteva Agrisciences provide training onsite addressing safety measures to use when handling and applying chemicals. While these chemicals help eliminate weeds, they do come with risks that requires a well-trained applicator. During the training, Matt and Steve addressed steps for tank mixing, sprayer hygiene and tank clean-out. When it comes to mixing, Matt emphasized that employees must follow the “WALES” method (water, dispersible granules, agitation, liquid formulations, emulsifiable concentrates, surfactants). Other topics in the training included choosing the right nozzle and boom height, targeting the correct weed size, and determining the effects of wind direction and speed on neighboring farms.

On March 22, we began running our sprayer through the fields, and thanks to the training provided by our extension service and Corteva, our employees feel prepared and equipped to get the job done with minimal error.



AROUND THE FARM...

