



Sustaining the Family Farm

“Being good stewards of the land is what every farmer is trying to achieve; they’re not trying to mine the land for what they can get out of it in the near term only because they do want to pass it on to their children.”

**Mark Linnebur, Colorado
Hard White Wheat Farmer**

For Mark Linnebur and his family, farming is so much more than a job, it’s a family affair. Mark was one of 10 children and the farm today supports six different families. Mark has seven children and there’s 25 grandchildren so there’s never a shortage of helping hands. For the Linneburs, sustainability has just as much to do with protecting the environment as it is ensuring the land is profitable and prepared to support another generation of their family. The family partnership has focused on improving the land they have and making it more productive through leaving the land that is not suited for agricultural production to wildlife and pasture and improving the land on which they grow crops through no-till farming and recycling waste by using it as fertilizer through biosolids. Mark says, **“This is a family farm, not a corporate farm, and we love the land and we want to keep the land producing for our families, to raise our families out here. If we can do that, then we will keep not only the environment safe, but we will make agriculture the greatest in the world.”**



A FAMILY BUSINESS

The Linnebur family is BIG. Six different families work together and use the farm as their main source of income.



CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

The Linneburs have taken 8,000 environmentally sensitive acres on their land and removed it from agricultural production while planting species that help improve the environmental quality of the land.

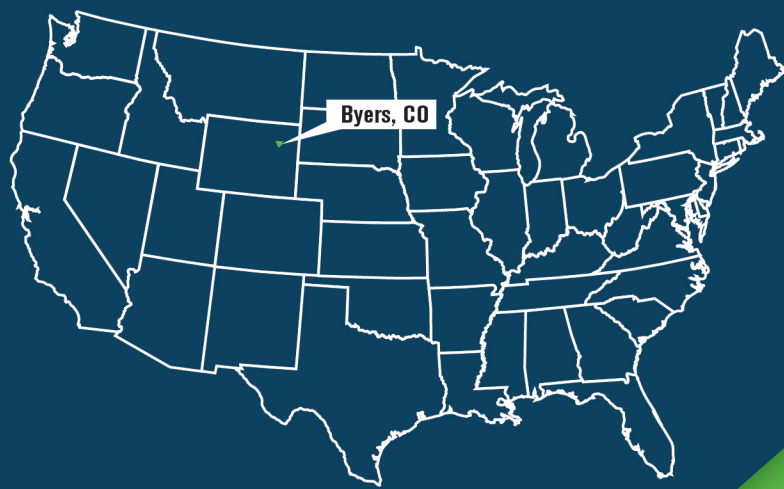


NO-TILL FARMING

By using no-till farming (not turning up the soil each year to remove weed threats) the Linnebur families are able to conserve 1/2 inch of water resources each year.

Stewardship

Twenty years ago, the Linnebur families realized they needed to do something different to sustain their families with the same amount of land. By transitioning their farm no-till, they've doubled the grain production on their farm while at the same time reducing their soil erosion. No-till also helps the soil retain moisture and in dry years, they've seen 20-50% better yields because of the water they have been able to conserve in the soil.



Byers, CO

“ Sustainability is more than just environmental sustainability. If the family farm in general is not sustainable, then the environment will not be sustained. The fact that we are raising our families on this farm is what keeps our love for the land in place. If we don't love the land, we're not going to take care of it. So first and foremost, sustainability means economic and generational sustainability. As a result we will get environmental sustainability. ”

Sustainability Through Biosolids

Biosolids are organic matter that is derived from sewage, which sounds gross, but is a very “green” way to farm. Instead of chemical fertilizers, on some of their 25,000 acres farm the Linneburs use biosolids that contain beneficial micronutrients helping improve the quality and protein levels of the soil. Closely regulated, biosolids are what Mark describes as “bug manure” or the organic matter from waste water facilities after it has been broken down by helpful yeasts and bacteria. Once the matter is processed through the “bugs,” then it is safe to spread out on the farm and adds what would have previously been considered waste, as a helpful fertilizer to grow food.



U.S. Wheat Associates (USW) is the industry's market development organization working in more than 100 countries. Its activities are made possible by producer checkoff dollars managed by 19 state wheat commissions and through cost-share funding provided by USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service.

