

The summer of 2007 will be my 19<sup>th</sup> summer on the harvest. I would not trade these summers in for anything else. I have learned so much from these long and hot summer days. They have made me the person that I am today. Due to harvest time, I have never been in my home state in the month of June.

My experiences on the harvest have been far and wide. I have learned to do things at a young age that others learn as they are getting old. There are not too many people in this world that learn to drive a semi at the age of 14 and at 16 can pull a combine behind it. This makes me feel like I have really accomplished something. I love pulling these big loads because it really makes me feel like I am able to do anything. Experiences like that are not easy to come by if you live in the city. Other things that I have learned are ways to act fast but still do it right and be safe. We once had a fire in our field and it was only my mother, brother and I. We did everything we could to make sure that the fire did not reach our combine. We used everything we had to stop it. This taught me how important it is to be prepared and how fast things can go wrong. I also have learned that doing things right is rewarding. I also learned how important a good first impression is. A handshake means more than 30 minutes of talking in some cases.

I have done many things by being involved with the harvest. I have been driving the machinery ever since I could see over the steering wheel. I can remember the first year I drove grain cart and I was driving through town and I got looks from people just wondering what a kid was doing driving. I really felt like I was "the man". Ever since I can remember, I have always been working in the field. I was never the kind of kid that wanted to stay at the camper to go swimming or do other things. I always wanted to be in the field and helping out. Once I became full time grain cart driver, I had a hard time dealing with the long hours, but I managed to get through it without failure. When I soon moved into the combine, I was very excited. As I ran alongside my mom and dad, I really felt like the underdog, but they were always telling me that I was doing a great job and to keep it up. My second year in the combine I was given the largest header, that made me feel proud. I guess maybe had a big head about it, too, but I sure was happy. When I turned 16, I got my CDL. I chose not to leave the combine but I still put some miles on the trucks. I started out by pulling the headers and now I pull the combines and tractor and grain cart. I really am starting to feel like the foreman because behind my parents I now have the most experience.

The harvest had impacted my life in so many ways. Without it, I would probably just have been working at some burger joint flipping patties. I believe that the harvest has prepared me for what is to come after high school and even after college as I go on to the real world. It has given me a hard working work ethic and made me a strong person.

My future goals are far and wide. I am going to attend Dickinson State University and there I am going to pursue a career in Agriculture Sales and Service. After that I would like to get a job selling cattle feed and also stay and help keep the farm and ranch. I currently have 17 cattle and would like to increase my herd as I grow older. I really believe that because of my harvesting background, I will be able to work hard and achieve anything that I want to.