

GOING BEYOND THE OCCUPATION

As the crops ripen, the convoy is loaded up, and the tearful goodbyes are said on a cold spring morning. I know what the coming months have in store for me. Restlessness develops as harvest is fast approaching. Not only is it an occupation, it is what we live and breathe from April to December every single year. It goes beyond the fields of golden, ripe wheat waiting to be engulfed by the rotating header. To my family, it's not a job; it's a tradition – a way of life – that has carried on for the past four generations.

Each new year of harvest offers a variety of new faces, places and experiences. Growing up, I was not accustomed to the typical family activities during the summer months. When most kids were taking their family vacations camping, I was instead going to the wheat field. Our family vacations consisted of the rolling fields of wheat waiting to eagerly be cut. As unexciting as it may sound, I thoroughly enjoyed these trips. At first, they were only to visit my Dad and spend some time on the harvest trail, whether that was for a week or for a month. As I grew older, this role changed from visiting Dad to working for Dad. I learned the ways of harvest early. Each and every day we head out to the field greeted by the roar of the combines and the smell of churning dust, only stopping when halted by Mother Nature. My biological clock became familiar to waking up at the crack of dawn and returning home long after dusk. Spilt wheat out of my grain cart meant getting a shovel and scooping it up. There were no shortcuts to the job.

Harvest taught me valuable lessons to succeed in the future. Work ethic is a must. Doing the job well the first time is the only way things should happen. Having seen my grandfather, father and brother run the operation; I can only wonder what my role will be on the team some day. My only hope is that I will be equally as successful and achieve the same perfection for running the growing operation. As a result, I plan to extend my education in Ag-Business and support our family tradition in my own future.