

My father, Ed Ackerman, has been custom harvesting for thirty-six years and I have been going with him for fourteen years. I've only been helping with harvest for about ten years. Before I was old enough to help with harvest, I just rode on the combine with my father or in the truck with my mother, Toni. I think all those hours in the combine and truck made me want to be a custom harvester.

I began driving grain cart at age four. My father would have me drive the grain cart up to the combine when he was full and he would unload on me. Then I would take it to the truck and have somebody else dump on the truck for me. As I gained confidence and experience, I began unloading on the move and I eventually began dumping on the truck. Then at age ten, I was promoted, if you want to say, to the combine. Ever since then, I have been combine operator along with my dad, but I do drive truck sometimes when there is only one combine running. I have definitely had my share of mistakes but you can only learn from your mistakes and I think they have made me a better operator.

After I graduate from high school, I plan to attend Northwest Kansas Technical College in Goodland, KS and major in Diesel Technology. Another one of my plans for the future is to take over our family farm and the custom harvesting business. As far as working on combines and other machinery goes, I have been helping my father for quite a few years. Diesel Mechanics will give me the knowledge to be able to work on engines too and save a lot of money. I have always loved farming and harvesting and that is what I want to do for the rest of my life. I hope I can be successful at it.