

## Grower Files

Steve Dugan (left), Dugan Farms owner, and Bret Weil, *Mulberry Grove, Ill.*



# Varied ground gets productive boost

When Bret Weil started as farm manager for Dugan Farms in Mulberry Grove, Ill., with owner Steve Dugan 10 years ago, the operation looked a lot different. "At first we just did a couple hundred acres and used a bit of everybody's products. As we started to grow, we needed more knowledge," says Weil.

That's where Alan Lurkins, crop specialist at South Central FS Inc., came into play. "Alan came out, sat down and went over the program with us. We were able to pull from his years of experience. As we grew, he stayed right with us. FS is great to work with," Weil says.

Lurkins knows the area well and likes the dependability of FS Seed for his customers. "Obviously with input costs going up, they can't afford any surprises out there. FS Seed has been very dependable. Nothing is risk-free, but we're trying to look for seed products that are lower risk. We want our customers to have confidence in the investments they've made," he says.

For the past seven years, Dugan Farms has been 100% FS. "We buy all our herbicides, insecticides, seed and fertilizer from them. Before we were buying seed corn from one guy and soybean seed from another and fertilizer from someone else. Now, we have 100% of their products, so we have their undivided attention," says Weil.

Today, Dugan Farms raises 3,200 acres of corn and soybeans on a 50-50 rotation. The farm's yield goal is 150 bushels per acre for corn and 45 bushels per acre for soybeans. "In this part of the country, we have to think of soil type and rainfall. What hybrid will adapt to that soil, and stand not to have rain for three weeks? We need 1 inch of rain per week. If our corn takes three weeks of no rain, we can easily lose 30 bushels per acre," Weil says.

Both the FS Seed Corn and FS HiSOY products really perform well when conditions are ideal, too. "Five years ago we had a great amount of rainfall. On 1,600 acres of corn we averaged 188 bushels per acre. Our average for beans was 54 bushels per acre that year," Weil says. "We need a seed that when under stress will get you a decent yield, but when conditions are perfect will also go ahead and yield on that high end."

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