



7th Generation Farmer Leading by Example



Matt Kellogg looks over his plan with NRCS District Conservationist Jen Hamer

Just a few miles outside the sprawling urban communities of Chicago, Matt Kellogg farms land that has been in his family for generations. His ancestors homesteaded the land in 1846 when President Polk was in office and they started the operation of raising multiple types of animals.

Today, Kellogg, the seventh generation, and his father jointly operate the 2,800 acre farm. Up until a few years ago his father was raising 35,000 hogs, now it is solely a grain farming operation. "My father was very involved in the swine industry and served in almost every leadership role," he said, "all the way to being president of the National Pork Board for four years." Even though Kellogg himself is considered a beginning farmer, he has worked

closely with his father for many years and understands how precious the land is and what needs to be done to care for it.

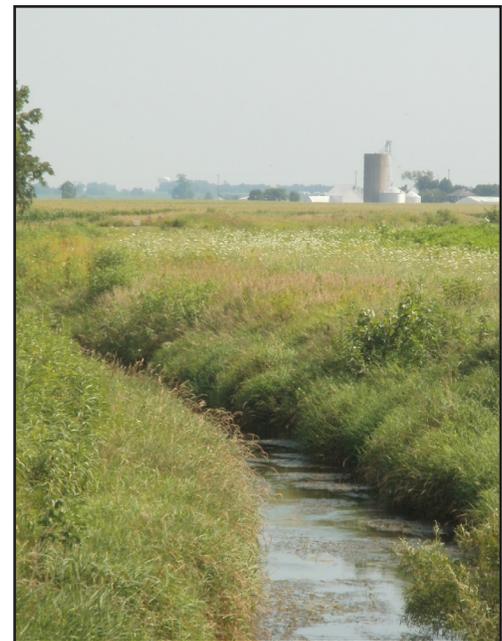
That mind-set, to take care of the land, has allowed him to participate in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), a voluntary program administered through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

CSP is designed to reward good stewards for what they have done and encourage them to address additional resource concerns on their land.

Years ago, Kellogg planted filter strips along six acres of the Aux Sable Creek to protect water quality, all without federal

program funding. However, "We followed NRCS guidelines," Kellogg said.

Through CSP contracts they maintain and manage their existing conservation practices, like filter strips, and install new conservation enhancements. They use drift-reducing nozzles to manage pesticide applications and address air quality resource concerns. They also recycle 100 percent of their farm lubricants to address energy resource concerns. In order to address water quality resource concerns, they use precision application technology to apply nutrients and conduct plant tissue testing and analysis to improve nitrogen management.



Kellogg protects the Aux Sable Creek with filter strips.

When still raising hogs, the Kellogg operation played a major role in a study that eventually led to the adoption of a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP).

A CNMP is a conservation plan for animal feeding operations, which is administered through NRCS. The study, a coordinated effort between the Kelloggs, NRCS, and other partners, included the use of many commonly used practices and their affects on the land.

Kellogg also signed up for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), another NRCS program that assists producers in furthering their conservation efforts. These EQIP contracts helped Kellogg develop a CNMP and then implement and install waste utilization and manure transfer system, a roof runoff structure, and a field windbreak.

In his spare time, Kellogg shares his natural resource commitment by serving as the Chairman of the Kendall County Soil and Water Conservation District Board.

Yet, with all these actions taken to protect the environment and food sources, he still has concerns about the lack of understanding and misinformation that reaches urban dwellers. There is a 'disconnect' between where food is grown and what goes into farming.

To help improve those relations, both Kellogg and his father hold teacher training sessions on the farm. "My dad was a member of a group that designed the 'Teachers on an AgriScience Bus' program 20 years ago," said Kellogg. This is a credit earning, hands-on class for



The Kellogg Farm sign (left) is reminiscent of the hog old operation in comparison to the farm now in row crop production. (below)

elementary and high school teachers who take lessons learned on the farm back to the classroom.

The Kellogg family also hosts the *Summer Agricultural Institute* teachers through the Kendall County Farm Bureau where students also earn Graduate Credit/Certification Units. Reaching out to the public is an important part in educating the non-farm communities about farming, especially with an increased focus on locally grown foods.

After so many generations who worked and lived on the land, it becomes obvious that when you



take care of your natural resources, they will be around for many generations to come.

To learn more about USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service conservation programs and assistance, contact your local USDA Service Center or go to www.il.nrcs.usda.gov.

The Kellogg farm pond has been used for pond management demonstrations.



Harnessing USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service programs to support local and regional food systems