

Leading Edge

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No-till
On The Plains

Eye of the Storm

by Roger Long

There's a calmness that comes with confidence. Confidence that you know what you are doing, and what you are doing is right. For Roger Oplinger, it's doing what is right economically, and what is right with nature. And in the case of Oplinger, proprietor of Spring Creek Farms, the calmness is pervasive. With all the enterprises Roger has, he still takes time to share his thoughts on equipment management, soils, no-till experiences, his new outfitting venture, and more.



With so many entities demanding Roger's attention, the list alone would drive most people into exile—with three distinctly different farms totaling over 13,000 acres, a new guide service 'Spring Creek Outdoors,' cattle, a house in Jewell at the farm, and a house in Manhattan where his wife, Barbara, is the coordinator for Ks Foundation for Ag in the Classroom.

Roger Oplinger returned to his Jewell, KS home in 1971 after graduating from Kansas State University. He started with 12 gilts purchased "by mortgaging a '66 Pontiac," and a modest bit of farmland of around

400 acres. Approximately four years later, a couple of retiring farmers in the area turned over their cropland to Roger, jumping him to around 2,000 acres. Oplinger was off and running. Before long, the hogs were gone, displaced by his nicely profitable cropping enterprises: "We run ROIs from 30 to 50% on Spring Creek Farms [excluding land investment which comes in at 6 to 7%]." Numbers that are shocking—pleasantly shocking—to their banker (and I'm guessing Roger isn't too disappointed, either.)

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Photo by Barbara Oplinger.

Dryland corn, a 500-acre "experiment" at Oplinger's Jewell County farm.