

Farmland SEASONS

FALL 2026



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Helping you harvest abundance in America



4 WAYS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR FARMLAND'S POTENTIAL

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4 WAYS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR FARMLAND'S POTENTIAL

Owning valuable farmland without actively managing it is a little like sitting on a goldmine without ever picking up a shovel. The value is there—but realizing its full potential takes attention, knowledge and good management.

Whether you've acquired a diamond-in-the-rough or own a good farm that could

be even more profitable, most farmland can benefit from some strategic investments that boost its overall value.

This requires more than just routine maintenance. You need a strategy for long-term growth and sustainability. After all, farmland isn't a short-term investment; it's a long-term asset. The ability to grow the value

of your land is the key to making the most of this valuable asset.

ENHANCING YOUR FARMLAND'S VALUE

The value of your farmland can be increased by making improvements that maximize your land's potential to become a profitable, long-term investment.

"Some of these improvements will pay you back quickly," says Steve Diedrich, an Accredited Farm Manager and Designated Managing Broker with MGW. "Some may not pay you back until you sell the farm. Others don't necessarily put money back in your pocket directly, but they keep the farm's value from diminishing, which helps your land hold its value."

What are some of these attributes that can help you unearth your farmland's true potential? Let's dig in.

1. Appearance. Your farmland's appearance matters—not just for its visual appeal, but for the value it adds to your property. A well-maintained farm is more attractive to potential tenants (or buyers) and could command a higher price. Start with the low-hanging fruit. "Improvements like removing obsolete buildings, fixing up structures where it's needed, and removing broken-down fences can make a big difference," Steve says. You might even be able to add some productive acres by removing tree overgrowth and repurposing underutilized areas of the farm, he adds.

2. Drainage. Effective ag drainage is a top consideration for maximizing your land's capacity to deliver consistent, high-quality crop yields over time. Sometimes drainage projects are more involved, but the investment is worth considering. Plant roots suffer when soil contains excess water. Too much water prevents the roots from getting oxygen and causes the plants to drown. Other times, extra water causes disease and stunts plant growth.

TAKE A NEW LOOK AT FARM IMPROVEMENTS

Perhaps your farm has some older buildings on the property that are functional and could be leased out after some minor improvements are made. Or maybe they're starting to deteriorate and are past their useful life.

Whether you intend to enjoy the farm as an investment, sell the property someday, or pass it along to heirs, we encourage you to look at ways to fully utilize the improvements.

"Some buildings and grain setups can be leased to the farm operator, or even someone nearby that needs extra storage space. As for older buildings that might be in poor shape, they can be a liability concern, and if insured, can increase the cost of ownership," says Steve Diedrich, an Accredited Farm Manager and Designated Managing Broker with MGW.

There are lots of decisions that come with building sites, and consulting with your farm manager can give you a fresh outlook to enhance the income of your property or decrease your insurance cost and risk.



CLEANING UP FENCELINES PAYS OFF

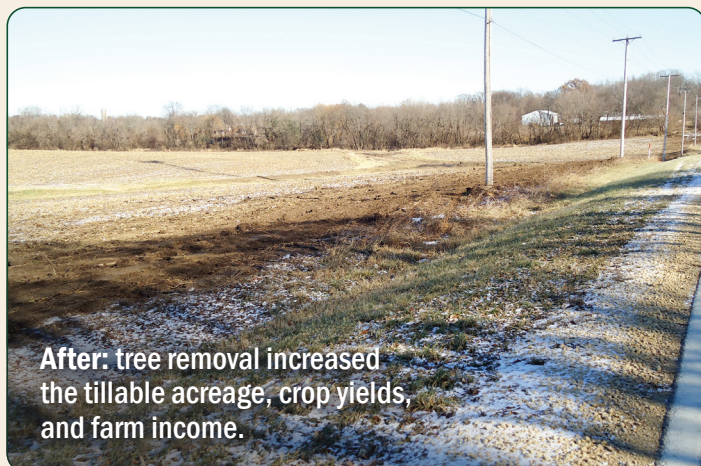
Cleaning up fencelines is one of those jobs that's not a huge deal, but can make a big difference in your farm's value.

Cutting down volunteer trees that are shading out the crop and pulling vital moisture and nutrients out of the soil can increase your farm's income potential. Once removed, crops can use the light and nutrients to produce higher yields.

While it's a good idea to keep some of the fence posts to define field boundaries, it's important to keep the fencelines clean. If they get overgrown, this vegetation can take over more of the crop ground each year. Some farms lose 40 to 50 feet to overgrown trees that could be productive farmland.



Before: volunteer trees along the edge of a farm in Winnebago County, Illinois.



After: tree removal increased the tillable acreage, crop yields, and farm income.

3. Irrigation. If your farm has sandier soil types, or you're raising high-value crops, irrigation might make sense on your property. There are a variety of irrigators on the market that can be paired with a productive well to increase yields significantly by providing crops with timely moisture. Improvements in technology have made irrigation straightforward to operate efficiently.

4. Waterways. Your farm might have a rolling topography that requires grassed waterways to handle surface water passing across portions of the farm during rainstorms. Crops planted in areas that should be waterways are generally a losing proposition—the plants and nutrients are washed away when rain erodes the soil. Effective waterways eliminate that loss and make farming more profitable. Plus, the grass can sometimes be baled and sold for livestock feed.

By focusing on these key areas, you're not only increasing the land's value today, but you're improving its future worth. That all adds up to a solid return on investment.

FARMLAND TRANSFORMATION

So where do you start? Sometimes it's best to go for the easy things that can pay you back right away, like a small drainage project.

"We usually define small projects as a few acres or less," Diedrich says. "Maybe there's a pocket or two in your field that seems to drown out frequently. Fixing this could be as simple as adding a couple 6-inch ag drainage tiles."

A properly tiled farm gives the ground several feet of non-saturated soil, ready to soak up rain. As a bonus, well-drained soil makes it easier to plant and harvest crops and keeps machinery from compacting the soil profile when driving over it.

Pattern tiling can be the answer when bigger areas of the field have drainage challenges. Pattern tile drainage is basically a network of underground pipes laid out evenly across a field. These pipes typically are installed at a consistent depth and spacing, moving excess water out of the soil using gravity. The goal is simple: keep water from sitting in the root zone too long.

"Pattern tile works especially well on flat fields with heavy soils," Diedrich says.

"When a field is well-drained, this increases the farmability of the land, which can help you maintain the cash-rent value of the land."

Good drainage also makes the farm more valuable for the long run. You may not need tile on every acre in a field, Diedrich notes. "We manage a lot of fields that have pattern tile in some areas and spot tile in other places."

LET'S TALK

Since every farm is unique, there are no cookie-cutter solutions for land improvement. "I like to get a handle on the numbers first by looking at the cost of the improvement and the return on investment," Steve says. "If the project makes financial sense, I'll present my recommendations to the landowner."

This is where having a strong relationship with a farmland management company like MGW pays off. We can provide you with the guidance and expertise needed to make the best decisions for your land. When everyone is invested in the productivity of your farmland, you're setting the stage for reliable, long-term returns—from current income and land appreciation.

UNDERSTANDING THE APPRAISAL PROCESS

A credible appraisal is a key for informed decision-making, whether you're buying or selling land or other agricultural assets. MGW has offered appraisals for decades for landowners, attorneys, bankers and other clients.

Brad Waddell, certified general appraiser and president of MGW Appraisal Services, Inc., offers a "behind-the-scenes" look at the process:

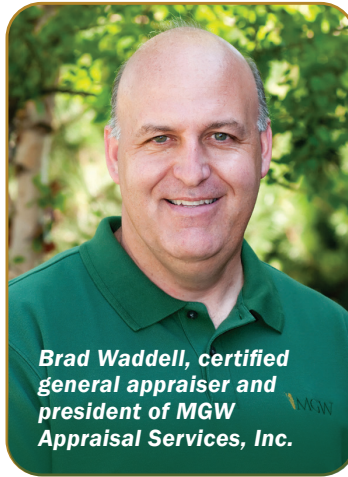
Brad, who are you completing appraisals for?

Our clients find benefit in appraisals for a wide variety of reasons. We often work with landowners that are buying, selling, trading, or dividing real estate, and bankers that need land or agribusiness values for lending purposes. We complete appraisals for attorneys who are working with families to plan or settle estates, and accountants and trust departments that need to determine inheritance, estate, or gift taxes.

What types of properties do you appraise?

Our certified general real estate appraisers complete a wide variety of appraisals, including:

- **Bare land:** agricultural, recreational, and all types of transitional and development land
- **Agribusinesses:** hog facilities, cattle farms, dairies, grain elevators, feed mills and fertilizer plants
- **Renewable energy:** wind, solar, and cell tower leases



Brad Waddell, certified general appraiser and president of MGW Appraisal Services, Inc.

- **Rural properties:** farmettes and hobby farms
- **Specialty and corporate:** partial interests in real estate, 2032A special use appraisals, conservation easements, LLCs and partnerships
- **Commercial:** manufacturing, industrial, and warehouses

What information goes into the analysis?

We look at a wide range of factors, including comparable sales in the area, depreciation of the existing structures on the property, financial analysis, local zoning laws, and more. The in-depth research required to complete an appraisal can take anywhere from three to four weeks. All appraisals will meet requirements of the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal

Practice (USPAP).

What's included in an appraisal?

Each appraisal is unique. It depends on the location of the property, the complexity of the appraisal and other factors. Some of the items included are value definitions, comparable sales, income analysis, aerial maps, photo pages, and more, all delivered in an electronic file or a printed copy.

Clients tell us our data-driven appraisals are thorough and easy to understand. You can count on MGW for credible appraisals that provide clarity and confidence at every step of the decision-making process.

MGW INVESTS IN THE FUTURE OF AG

County fairs inspire a lot of nostalgia, plus they're a connection to the future. That's why MGW is proud to support 4-H and FFA exhibitors.

Congratulations to Micah Huss of Lee, Illinois. Micah showed the 2026 DeKalb County 4-H Livestock Fair champion ewe. We were honored to support Micah at the DeKalb County 4-H Blue Ribbon Auction at the Sandwich Fairgrounds. Great job, Micah!

Champions like Micah are made in the barn before they shine in the show ring. Their awards and honors reflect hours of dedication, hard work and commitment.

We believe local 4-H and FFA youth who strive for excellence reflect the best of rural America. To us, they're a great investment in the future of agriculture!



Pictured (left to right): Maddy Mommsen, Mackenzie Mommsen, Mark Mommsen and Micah Huss.

MODERN TECH YIELDS MORE PRODUCTIVE FARMS

There's a saying that "the highest yield is when the seed is in the bag." Today's seed technology is a modern miracle that helps farmers grow resilient, higher-yielding crops. Advanced crop protection products also prevent harvest losses from weeds, insect pests and plant diseases.

For a boots-on-the-ground perspective of these exciting changes, we reached out to Dustin Spears, 44, who runs a DEKALB® seed dealership and farms with his family at Martz-Spears Farms near Lanark, Illinois. We also connected with Aaron Trenkamp, 44, an agronomy account manager with River Valley Cooperative, headquartered in Davenport, Iowa.



Dustin Spears
Lanark, Illinois



Aaron Trenkamp
Davenport, Iowa

Trenkamp: Traited seed genetics help protect crops from pests while reducing chemical applications. Farmers are using lower-use rate chemicals and products that are safer and meet more stringent EPA regulations than the products farmers used 40 years ago.

What technologies can help farmers manage weather extremes?

Spears: It seems like the weather is more extreme, with storms like derechos. For several years we've been planting short-stature corn, which is 2 to 3 feet shorter than normal corn. This new technology is amazing and holds up well against strong winds.

Trenkamp: While you used to get rainfall that came an inch or so at a time, now we're seeing more intense rainfall events, with 2 to 5 inches in just a few hours. Most farmers in my area use nitrogen stabilizer to keep nitrogen from leaching out of the soil and washing away. Also, hybrids that are more drought tolerant have helped take a lot of weather risk off the board.

In your career, what advances in seed technology or crop protection products have impacted farming the most?

Spears: When I graduated from Northern Illinois University in 2004, good yields meant 180-bushel-per-acre corn and 60-bushel soybeans. Now yields can exceed those levels pretty consistently with modern seed genetics and other technology.

Trenkamp: Today's seed genetics offer so many benefits like disease resistance, herbicide tolerance and more. Twenty years ago, we were looking at a lot more yield loss without these modern genetics.

How does precision ag technology fit into all this?

Spears: In 2013, I started using new technology called FieldScripts. It was powered by an iPad in the tractor cab. The computer combined corn hybrid performance data with our fields' data to produce variable-rate planting prescriptions for the planter. This technology has only gotten better over time. Instead of planting the same seeding rate across all our fields, these prescriptions allow us to plant higher rates on the good ground and lower seeding rates on poorer ground.

Trenkamp: Most farmers I work with use grid soil sampling. We divide their fields into 2.5-acre grids and pull soil samples throughout the fields to map pH, phosphorus, potassium and other nutrients. This data helps guide variable-rate planting and fertilizer applications. Then it's easier to plant higher seeding rates on more productive land and not over-fertilize less productive areas.

How does modern technology help farmers produce more while caring for the land?

Spears: When I started my career 20 years ago, seed genetics with specific traits were just coming on the market. Traits that help control corn rootworms have been a big deal, so there's less need to use insecticide.

What's a common misconception people have about farming and technology today?

Spears: There's a misconception that farmers don't take care of the land. We want to keep the soil in place. We're looking into strip-till to reduce tillage and place fertilizer only in the strip where the seeds are planted. For the past two years, we've also seeded cereal rye on our acres going into soybeans. These cover crops have really helped with weed management and controlling soil erosion.

Trenkamp: A common misconception is that farmers only care about profit. The farmers I work with want to be stewards of the land and leave it better than they received it.

What excites you about the future of farming?

Spears: I think artificial intelligence (AI) will really help with productivity and conservation. We've been using Deere's See & Spray™ technology, so we only spray herbicide where it's needed. This sprayer uses high-resolution cameras, AI and machine learning to differentiate crops from weeds in real time, which helps reduce herbicide use. Where we used to cover 50 acres with a tank of herbicide, now one tank is lasting 200 acres.

Trenkamp: Seed technology continues to evolve fast. We don't keep a hybrid more than three years, usually, because the seed companies keep offering improved genetics. I'm excited to see where all this technology can take agriculture.



BREAKING BARRIERS, BUILDING A FARM LEGACY: MEET MASTER FARMERS MIKE AND LYNN MARTZ

When Lynn (Larson) Martz was growing up on her family's farm in the 1960s and early 1970s, she didn't think a farming career would be part of her future. She had two older brothers, her cousins were all boys, and farming wasn't for girls, right?

"I loved being outside and doing things on the farm," says Lynn, who farms with her husband, Mike, and their family near Maple Park, Ill. "When I was in high school, I told my parents I might want to farm, but my mom said, 'Women don't farm!'"

Lynn thought she might become a teacher instead. Things changed, however, after she decided to major in ag business at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. While there were only five female students in the College of Agriculture in the mid-1970s, Lynn enjoyed the challenge.

Her farm background influenced other women, too. "I had a college roommate who wasn't from a farm," says Lynn, who earned her ag degree in 1979. "Until she visited my family's farm, she didn't realize farming was a business, with a lot of details to manage."

FAMILY EMBRACES NEW IDEAS

Lynn decided farming was for her, especially after she met her husband, Mike, at college. After they married, they had the opportunity to farm and raise beef cattle in Wisconsin for nine years.

In 1988, they sold the Wisconsin farm and moved to Maple Park, where Mike helped his father-in-law, Ray, manage the feedlot. The Martz's grew their family and their farm, which includes row-crop acres in DeKalb County and Kane County, Illinois.

They raise 7,100 acres of corn and soybeans and operate a 7,000-head cattle finishing feedlot. And they've done it with family. Mike and Lynn farm with their son, Justin, 40, and his wife, Jamie; along with Lynn's brothers, Norm and Dave Larson.

"We have a complete circle here, where the crop side feeds the cattle side and the cattle side feeds the crop side," Lynn says.

Mike and Lynn were among the five Illinois producers honored as 2026 Master Farmers



Master Farmers Mike and Lynn Martz (Photo: Holly Spangler, Prairie Farmer Magazine)

by Prairie Farmer magazine. The Master Farmer award is Illinois agriculture's lifetime achievement award. For more than 100 years, this honor has recognized exceptional agricultural production skills, a commitment to family and service to community.

Mike focuses on the cattle side of the business, while Lynn handles the grain side. "Women's attention to detail can be a real asset, especially when it comes to marketing," Lynn says.

There isn't anything Lynn won't tackle, Mike adds. "In 1996, when she had to take over the grain operation, she said 'I'll do it.' When we were short a semi driver, she said

'I'll go get a CDL and I'll do it.' She's just incredible."

This willingness to try new things extends to conservation, too. Lynn, who serves on the DeKalb County Soil and Water Conservation District, has experimented with cover crops and tried strip-till on 800 acres this year. "My dad was a very progressive farmer, so new ideas were never a problem on our farm," Lynn says. "We want to carry on that value."

ADVERSITY OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES

The Martz family also values the ability to adapt. "When you go through tough times, remember that adversity gives you opportunities," Lynn says.

She thinks back to the wet conditions of 2019. Instead of struggling through harvest, her family added new concrete walls to their feed bunker and filled it with earlage in October. "The cattle had much better feed conversion rates with the earlage, compared to dry corn."

Lynn's definition of success in farming has evolved through the years. "I think more generationally than I did in years past," says Lynn, who is grateful that her grandchildren Jaxson, 15; Jaedyn, 13; and Justis, 9, love the farm. "A great day is when we have all the generations working together to reach a common goal."

WORDS TO LIVE BY: MARTZ FAMILY VALUES

- How you treat people matters. Your word is your honor.
- You always need to be willing to adapt to change in this business.
- Encourage the next generation to grow the business. "It doesn't necessarily have to grow in the same way we grew the farm," Lynn Martz says. "We want the next generation to move in the direction of their passion."

BOONE COUNTY, IL

20 ac. Stilke Farm, NE of Capron. \$315,000. SOLD
51 ac. Carlson Road Farm, SE of Belvidere. \$15,275/ac. SOLD

BUREAU COUNTY, IL

80 ac. Croisant Farm, NE of Princeton. \$16,950/ac. SOLD

CLINTON COUNTY, IA

156 ac. Petersville Farm, SW of Charlotte. \$14,075/ac. SOLD
60 ac. Petersen Trust Farm, E of Wheatland. \$3,975/ac. SOLD
10.5 ac. Calamus Farm, NW of Calamus. \$9,000/ac. SOLD

DEKALB COUNTY, IL

227 ac. Drake Trust Farm, S of Shabbona. \$11,700/ac.
92 ac. Airport Road Farm, S of Sycamore. \$13,500/ac.
155 ac. Malta Road Farm, S of Kirkland. \$13,965/ac.
150 ac. Schoppe Farm, NE of Rochelle. \$17,500/ac.
873 ac. Sycamore Farm, city of Sycamore. \$21,500/ac.
54 ac. Brickville Farm, contiguous to Sycamore. \$16,900/ac. SOLD
320 ac. Bork Trust Farm, N of Shabbona. \$18,400/ac. SOLD
200 ac. MC Evers Farm, E of Sycamore. \$17,350/ac. SOLD
77 ac. Bloomfield Farm, NW of Malta. \$16,800/ac. SOLD
155 ac. Shabbona Farm, S of Shabbona. \$13,400/ac. SOLD
153 ac. Kehm DeKalb County Farm, N of Shabbona. \$16,350/ac. SOLD
533 ac. Henke Farm, N of DeKalb. \$16,950/ac. SOLD

HUMBOLDT COUNTY, IA

100 ac. Cougar Farm, SE of Gilmore City. \$14,950/ac. SOLD

GOLDEN VALLEY COUNTY, MT

5,400 ac. Golden Valley Farms, N of Lavina. AUCTION. SOLD

JO DAVIESS COUNTY, IL

708 ac. Shellady Farm, NE of Galena. \$7,900/ac. SOLD

JONES COUNTY, IA

207 ac. Borhart Farm, N of Mechanicsville. \$15,900/ac. SOLD

KANE COUNTY, IL

50 ac. Big Rock Farm, S of Big Rock. \$16,950/ac. SOLD
40 ac. Middleton Road Farm, S of Burlington. \$1,195,000. SOLD
1035 ac. Burlington Farm, village of Burlington. \$13,600/ac. SOLD

KANKAKEE COUNTY, IL

118 ac. Rockville West Farm, W of Manteno. \$13,500/ac. SOLD
91 ac. Rockville Farm, NW of Manteno. \$12,750/ac. SOLD

LASALLE COUNTY, IL

114 ac. Mendota Farm, city of Mendota. \$12,000/ac. SOLD
126 ac. South Somonauk Farm, contiguous to Somonauk. \$15,850/ac. SOLD
154 ac. Mohan Wilsman Farm, NW of Streator. \$11,850 ac. SOLD

LEE COUNTY, IL

120 ac. Staton Farm & Airport, S of Rochelle. \$17,450/ac. PENDING
80 ac. Brooklyn Road Farm, E of Amboy. \$14,900/ac. SOLD
253 ac. Bingham Road Farm, NW of Paw Paw. \$14,350/ac. SOLD
150 ac. Paul V. Herrmann Estate Farm, W of Shabbona. AUCTION. SOLD
84 ac. Route 251 Farm, SW of Compton. \$12,950/ac. SOLD
75 ac. Kehm Lee County Farm, W of Paw Paw. \$16,350/ac. SOLD
109 ac. Steward Road Farm, S of Steward. \$12,800/ac. SOLD

MARSHALL COUNTY, IL

323 ac. Wenona Farm, N of Wenona. AUCTION. SOLD
127 ac. Toluca Farm, N of Toluca. \$14,000/ac. SOLD

MCCONE COUNTY, MT

2,536 ac. McCone Farm, NW of Circle. AUCTION. SOLD

MCHENRY COUNTY, IL

396 ac. Interstate 90 Farm, NW of Hampshire. \$12,400/ac. PENDING
496 ac. Richmond Farm, W of Richmond. \$12,950/ac. SOLD
396 ac. Woodstock Farm, NW of Woodstock. \$12,500/ac. SOLD

MERCER COUNTY, IL

79 ac. Beelow Farm, S of Aledo. \$16,950/ac. SOLD



OGLE COUNTY, IL

65 ac. Deckard Farm, contiguous to Davis Junction. \$8,700/ac.
53 ac. Rochelle Farm, city of Rochelle. \$18,450/ac.
58 ac. Tower Road Farm, N of Byron. \$13,700/ac. PENDING
674 ac. Creston Farms, N of Creston. AUCTION. PENDING
152 ac. Rochelle West Farm, W of Rochelle. AUCTION. SOLD

ROCK COUNTY, WI

77 ac. Rykowski Farm, W of Beloit. \$8,850/ac. & 259,500. SOLD

SCOTT COUNTY, IA

298 ac. 4RC Farm, E of Bettendorf. \$39,500/ac.
41 ac. Dewall Family Farm, N of LeClaire. \$29,500/ac.
399 ac. Anderson 400, city of Princeton. \$36,215/ac.

WHITESIDE COUNTY, IL

13 ac. Shaver Property, city of Sterling. \$18,500/ac.
19 ac. Como Interstate Farm, SW of Sterling. \$7,000/ac. SOLD

WILL COUNTY, IL

240 ac. Green Garden Farm, contiguous to Frankfort. \$13,750/ac.
72 ac. Monee Farm, contiguous to Monee. \$29,500/ac.
36 ac. Frankfort Property, village of Frankfort. \$52,500/ac.
146 ac. Peotone West 45/52 Farm, W of Peotone. \$15,300/ac. PENDING
78 ac. Brandt Property, contiguous to New Lenox & Joliet. \$31,500/ac. SOLD

WINNEBAGO COUNTY, IL

39 ac. Rockford Farm, W of Rockford. \$12,700/ac.
8 ac. State Line Property, N of Durand. \$125,000. PENDING
10 ac. Eicks Road Property, N of Durand. \$104,000. PENDING
76 ac. Fidanza Farm, N of Durand. \$6,950/ac. SOLD
290 ac. Route 75 Farm, E of Durand. \$10,750/ac. SOLD
60 ac. Cook Farm, village of Cherry Valley. \$29,900/ac. SOLD

For additional details on these properties, please scan the QR code to the right, call us at (815) 756-3606 or (563) 659-6565, or visit our website at www.mgw.us.com.



THOMAS JEFFERSON GREW A NATION

Can you imagine 90% of the people in our country today working as farmers? That's the way it was before the Revolutionary War. It's no wonder America's founders, including Thomas Jefferson, viewed agriculture as the essential pillar of American liberty and economic strength.

To this day, many of Jefferson's farm-related quotes still resonate: "Agriculture is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals, and happiness."

If you're like me, you were probably taught that Jefferson was the third president of the United States (1801-1809). There's so much more to his remarkable story, though. Born in Virginia on a plantation in 1743, Jefferson grew up with the country. He loved spending time at Monticello, his country estate in central Virginia. These rural roots shaped Jefferson's distinctly American attitudes.

DID YOU KNOW?

As we celebrate America 250, I've enjoyed learning about Jefferson's close ties to the land, which have influenced the America we cherish today.

- By the time Jefferson was in his 30s, he had inherited 2,750 acres from his father, Peter Jefferson, and 11,000 acres from his father-in-law, John Wayles.
- The township-and-range grid system that defines much of the Midwest's farmland can be traced back to Jefferson. As a delegate to the Confederation Congress in 1783-84, Jefferson wrote a proposal that guided the Land Ordinance of 1785. This created a systematic way to survey and sell public lands in the west.
- Jefferson viewed land ownership as the essential foundation for personal liberty and political independence. He championed an agrarian republic built on the ideal of the self-sufficient "yeoman farmer," believing that citizens who owned land were best suited to govern themselves.
- Perhaps no one made a better land deal in American history than Jefferson with the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. French General Napoleon Bonaparte offered the entire territory of Louisiana (530 million acres in North America) for the bargain price of \$15 million (about 3 cents per acre). Suddenly, the United States had doubled in size, and Americans saw the dream of westward expansion coming true.

FARMING AND GARDENING AT MONTICELLO

I appreciate how Jefferson (like George Washington before him) was an agrarian at heart. When Jefferson wasn't serving the country, he relished the challenge of creating a profitable farm and productive gardens at Monticello.

- As minister to France, Jefferson observed European plow designs and found them deficient. In 1788, he recorded his plans to improve the plow by redesigning its moldboard.
- Monticello included a 1,000-foot-long vegetable garden, complete with terraces and 24 square growing plots. The garden provided food and doubled as a laboratory where Jefferson experimented with 330 varieties of more than 70 species of vegetables. Plants included corn and beans collected by the Lewis and Clark



Martin, Goodrich & Waddell, Inc.
(MGW), with offices in Sycamore,
Illinois and DeWitt, Iowa, is a

leading agricultural real estate services company. Since 1976, MGW has sold, appraised, and managed farms for thousands of clients across the U.S., with a special focus on Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin.

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AMERICA



expedition, figs from France, and peppers from Mexico.

- Jefferson documented his successes and failures in his Garden Book.
- Jefferson loved English garden peas. He participated in an annual neighborhood contest to see which farmer could bring to table the first peas of spring. The winner would host the other contestants at a dinner that included the peas.

The rural life was apparently good for Jefferson, who died at Monticello at the advanced age of 83 on July 4, 1826. It's interesting that former U.S. President John Adams died on the same day. Both men passed away within hours of each other on the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence.

As we celebrate 250 years of America, it's incredible to me how Jefferson's thoughts about land ownership and farming are more relevant than ever. As we look to the future of this great nation, Jefferson's words can help us stay grounded in the foundations of America's success: "Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country and wedded to its liberty and interests by the most lasting bands."



Mark

Mark Mommsen
President

mark.mommsen@mgw.us.com