

# Roland Harvesting joins All Aboard Harvest



COMBINES—Both CR 9070 combines during last year's harvest.



Megan Roland

By Megan Roland

Growing up in a family harvesting business, I was raised with a deep appreciation for agriculture and its beginnings. My family has many interesting ties in agriculture, as I had ancestors who homesteaded in the Sand Hills of Nebraska, to relatives who farmed in Iowa.

The origin of Roland Harvesting traces back to my grandfather, Robert Roland. After serving in World War II he followed the wheat harvest for a couple seasons and was able to experience the life of a harvester. My father, Alan Roland, recalls hearing several of my grandfather's intriguing stories about the harvest adventures he had experienced. It is these stories that sparked my dad's initial interest in harvest.

In 1978, my father graduated top of his class with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanized Agriculture degree from California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, Calif. During the summer of 1978 he returned to the family farm in Hemingford, Neb., and purchased his first combine, a New Holland TR '70, and harvested crops near his home area while working with a local custom harvester. Dad purchased his second New Holland TR '70 combine in 1979 and started to head south on harvest with the help of a small crew.

In 1983, my mother, Loretta, married my father and joined the harvesting business, and she accompanied him on the road to follow the wheat harvest for many summers. A few years later our family was started, beginning with my older sister, Ashley, followed by me and my younger brother, Brandon. We were all raised on our family farm located near Hemingford and have been involved in our harvesting operation from birth. My siblings and I learned responsibility and work ethic at a young age. We spent countless hours riding in vehicles and combine cabs, and as we got older we have driven considerably more. Harvest is always an adventure and it is a way of life for my entire family.

Every summer Roland Harvesting begins our season by heading south to Texas; we gradually work our way north through Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska and back to Hemingford as we follow the wheat harvest. In August, we travel to Wyoming and Idaho to harvest malting barley for Coors and Anheuser Busch. During the end of August, much of the crew is lost as many of us return to college. The season is finally finished by my parents in the late fall with corn, bean, and sunflower harvest in the Panhandle of Nebraska.

Roland Harvesting is currently operating two CR 9070 New Holland combines with 36-foot draper headers. In fact, Roland Harvesting has proudly owned and operated New Holland twin rotor combines for over 30 years. In addition, we have three semis and grain trailers to haul the grain. A tractor and grain cart are also usually brought on the road to help with the harvest, along with two service trucks that assist with maintenance of the machinery. We also have a TR '98 combine that we usually keep at the farm to help out with home harvest or to

take on the road if we need to split the crew.

Our crew is primarily made up of family with some hired help but it varies from year to year. In years past, Ashley was one of the main combine operators on the crew, but since she graduated from college last year and is now in the "real world," she is no longer able to join us for the full run. However, Ashley and my future brother-in-law, Kurt, are able to meet up with us and help out during the weekends when we get closer to home. My mom has spent many years on harvest in the past, but she now mostly stays busy at home to help take care of all the family farming operations as well as do all the necessary bookkeeping for the harvest business. My parents constantly remind me that Roland Harvesting would not have been successful without the help and support of extended family members and loyal customers throughout the years. Our extended family continues to be very important assets within our harvesting business as they are always willing to help when needed.

For this season, our main crew consists of Dad, Brandon, James, Jason and me. Overall, Dad and Brandon continue to lead our harvesting business, although since we have a smaller sized family operation most of our tasks and jobs overlap a fair amount. Dad and Brandon typically operate the combines, while James and Jason drive truck and haul the grain into the elevators. Jason is our excellent head mechanic and is showing James all the "ins and outs" about all the equipment. Our entire crew is also skilled in operating combines and everyone has a Class A CDL and is capable of driving semis and hauling equipment.

With Brandon being my 19-year-old brother and James being our 20-year-old cousin, and me just a year older, we have quite the young energetic spark within our group. This is Brandon's 10th year on the road and over the years he has sure learned a lot about what to do and what not to do. Nonetheless, he has turned into an outstanding combine operator and is even beginning to polish up his new profound "boss skills." James also grew up around harvest but this is his first year joining the crew down south. Jason was also on our crew last year and we are glad he has returned for another season with us.

I will be on harvest periodically throughout this season. With most of the wheat crops in Texas being poorer than usual, we did not bring the tractor and grain cart with us for the time being. I typically operate the grain cart as well as help run combine and drive truck as needed. In addition, I carry out my duties of the job I have been dubbed—"Supply and Distribution Manager."

Harvest is a very important aspect of our entire family's lives and has provided countless memories, adventures and experiences. We like to think of harvesters as the last inhabitants of the frontier. Following in our ancestors footsteps, we continually move with the land in an attempt to make a living. It's amazing to think we are one of the final generations to live in this manner. I look forward to sharing Roland Harvesting's adventures with you all this summer!

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ROLANDS—The Roland Family in 2000 is pictured: Alan, Loretta, Ashley, Megan and Brandon.



CREW—Meet the 2011 Roland Harvesting Crew (from left to right): Brandon, James, Jason, me, and Dad. It was bitterly cold and raining as we loaded up all the equipment before we headed south. This is the first year we ever left wearing sweatshirts, work jackets and muck boots! Two days later, upon reaching Texas, we were exposed to blistering 105-degree temperatures. Talk about climate shock!

NEW HOLLAND—In 2007, Dad "resurrected" one of his old New Holland TR '70 combines and ran it in the field with our CR 960 we had at the time.



## Section B



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