

AUTUMN HARVEST 2024

SPELLMANS BOOST EFFICIENCY WITH NEW BINS

Faster harvest, better marketing opportunities drive decision to erect new grain bin system on the farm.

By Bob Bjoin

A modern grain bin system is paying dividends for Chad Spellman and his father, Joe, by offering a faster harvest and more grain marketing opportunities, considered critical during the current ag economic climate with declining commodity prices and high input costs.

Four dry grain storage bins, each with 90,000 bushels of capacity, plus a storage bin for wet grain, connected by a 10,000 bushel per hour loop conveyor system that provides efficiency for loading and unloading the bins, highlight the GSI grain handling system installed at the Spellman farm in Dallas County near Bouton in 2023.

Additional components under construction this summer include a drive-over pit to dump grain coming in from the field that will feed into the grain bins, a second wet bin with 60,000 bushel capacity and a stacked portable dryer with a capacity of 2,300 bushels per hour at 5 points moisture reduction.

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CHAD SPELLMAN

Taking the leap to install on-farm storage was an easy decision as the Spellmans looked to upgrade their operations while cutting down on hauling time and optimizing futures marketing opportunities. The father and son operate separately on their own farms but share equipment and are comingling grain for ease of storage.

They're able to track and record their own grain at harvest utilizing scales on the grain cart. “You just have iPads in the tractors, put the field in there and it automatically records it,” Chad explained.

“The bins on site allow for faster harvesting and more bidding options,” Chad added. “We mainly had hauled 80% to town, then some co-ops merged or did some trading and the basis really (dropped) around here. That was the main driver for this bin site, just the lack of other options.”

CONSTRUCTION TIMELINE

Erection of the initial four bins began after the pad was poured in March, 2023 and the project was completed by September. Chad said the first harvest with a new on-site grain bin system was terrific.

“The drivers liked dumping on this site much better than hauling to town,” he said. Just having the bins on site “has probably



Chad Spellman with sons Jay and Jack on their rural Dallas County farm. The family's new grain bins were recently constructed to help with faster harvest and more grain marketing opportunities. PHOTO / BOB BJOIN

saved us 15% to 20% on time. Harvest definitely was a little quicker.”

The 12-inch loop system that loads and unloads grain is efficient, he added. “It just goes around in a big circle,” Chad explained. “It's got chain and paddles; when you're unloading it goes from the pit and decides which bin you want it in, and then when you unload, it pulls out of the bottom and dumps into the truck.”

The Spellmans customized the system to include multiple sumps with intermediaries running through each bin. They also have temperature sensors allowing them to monitor bin temperature directly from their smartphone.

“So I can look any time of day and see what the temperatures are inside,” Chad said. “That's a good safety measure.”

HAPPY WITH THE RESULT

Working with GSI dealer Sorem Sales was outstanding, Chad said. Construction was on time and the finished product is just what they were hoping for.

Dale Sorem said he, John Sorem and their crews who supported the Spellman project regard it as exactly what the company hopes to accomplish when working with Iowa farmers.

“The new grain bins installed in 2023 and grain dryer added this season now enable

Chad to dry his corn on farm and have sufficient capacity to store it,” Sorem said.

The system should pay for itself in roughly seven years, sooner if the commodities market improves. Chad said he'd encourage other Iowa farmers to consider on-site grain storage if looking for options to market grain effectively as well as speed up harvest.

“If you're committed to doing a bin site, build at least half of what you need,” he suggested.

“Build as much as you can afford.”
(Chad Spellman lives in rural Dallas County and farms with his wife, Erin, and sons Jay and Jack.)