



Season's Greetings 2023

To our family and friends from us at Matt Farms!

Soybeans were grown on the farm this year. While not as fun and exciting as the popcorn grown last year, they are a part of the usual crop rotation. The soybean yield was disappointing with the lack of rain in the area. Rain is not only important for growing crops, but we've learned that it's also important for their shipping. About 60% of grain exported from the United States travels by barge on the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico. The lack of rain in the Midwest has affected the river level and how much grain can be loaded onto a barge.

Water runs through the waterway on the farm east to west and travels eventually to the Mississippi River by way of the West Nishnabotna (one of our Mom's favorite words to say) and the Missouri Rivers. Interestingly, we learned that the farm is located only about a mile from the M and M Divide in Iowa (marking the line for water draining toward the Missouri River to the west or the Mississippi River to the east).

After the popcorn harvest last fall we modified some of the grass terracing on the farm and entered the waterway into a federal conservation program. The program expanded the grass strips along its banks by 3.94 acres to filter the water draining into the waterway. Our Mom began installing grass terracing throughout the farm in the 1980s. We wanted to update the terracing to more modern farming conservation practices and add the grass strips along the waterway to continue and build upon her conservation efforts to be good stewards of the land.

The farm totals 311 acres M/L (farm jargon for more or less) with 285 acres now actually being farmed after the "dirt" work done last fall. The 26 other acres consist of the waterway and grass strips (roughly 8 acres), the grass terraces (roughly 7 acres – estimated at around 22,000 feet!) with the rest being the ditches, the Iowa Highway 141 right of way on the north border and half of the gravel roads on the west and south borders (farmers actually own the land under the adjacent gravel roads in Iowa). We're learning a lot about farming, but we still have a long way to go!

Finally, we'd like to share that over the last few months, with indispensable help from our big sister Annie, we have been developing a website for Matt Farms to share information regarding the family farm. Visit us at <https://mattfarms.com/> and enjoy a few photos, a little history and a drone flyover video. We plan to "dig in" and "really grow" the website in the new year, and so please stay tuned.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Dick and Bill



P.S. The holiday images were hand drawn by our Dad and used to "spray snow" on the living room windows of the house where we grew up. The images are colored in M. A. Hadley blue (our Mom's favorite stoneware) for this holiday letter.