

## East central Soil and Crop bus trip to Iowa August 26-30, 2018

Bruce and Sonya McKeown

Iowa is the Agriculture capital of the United States. There is more corn (thirteen million acres) production than in any other state, and more than all but a handful of countries (Canada grows 3.6 million acres). They lead the United States in pork and egg production. The largest manufacturing sector in Iowa is food processing, followed by farm machinery production. Iowa produces 30 percent of America's ethanol. Even the Indy car race, at Iowa Speedway, is sponsored solely by agriculture related businesses. Indeed, everything in Iowa focuses on agriculture. For this reason we decided to plan a trip to this state, to give the members a chance to visit a variety of interesting highlights.

The first day, we drove for 12 hours to reach Joliet Illinois. By 7 on Monday morning, we were back on the bus and headed toward Iowa, reaching Antique Archeology, the home of American Pickers by 9:45. Le Claire Iowa offers other attractions, including the Buffalo Bill museum, views of the Mississippi River, and many lovely gift stores.

We arrived at the Kinze Innovation Center and plant by 1:00. The plant was not in operation, due to a power rationing, but we still got a thorough tour, with detailed explanations along the entire production line, of the plant facilities, and also toured the innovation centre and gift shop. Founder, John Kinzenbaw has become a world renowned designer of innovative farm equipment. Growing out of his unique ability to problem solve for farmers who came into his tiny one man operation 50 years ago, there is now a plant in Lithuania for easy access to Europe and Russia. The ever evolving plant now has over 900 employees.

Supper was at the well known Iowa Machine Shed restaurant which focuses on promoting Iowa farm family agriculture and enjoyed a delicious, hearty meal. The gift shop had unique gift items, many featuring Iowa farm scenes.

Tuesday morning we were on the bus before 7 and headed to the Farm Progress Show arriving before the 8:00 opening. Pre-ordered tickets allowed us speedy entry, and we spread out over the show, to see whatever interested us. With over 360 acres of crop demonstrations, and a huge area of tents and exhibits, some of us were thankful for the golf carts we had rented. Evacuation and a heavy thunderstorm stopped our fun at 1:00. We did some quick thinking and headed to Amana colonies. On our way we stopped at a privately owned elevator, and learned about their business. They stored some crops outside due to lack of bin space, and were located alongside a major rail line, with trains going by every 15 minutes.

In Amana we went for a walk through the quaint town and enjoyed another delicious dinner. We arrived home tired and satisfied.

On Wednesday morning we went back to the farm show for another 3 hours. Because of the early closing on Tuesday we were allowed free admission. Everyone was back on the bus by 11 am, and we lost no time heading for our final planned stops: The I-80 Truckers museum, and Cinnamon Ridge Jersey farm.

The Museum was very interesting, and was situated beside the World's biggest truck stop, which included a mall of shops and food kiosks and truck accessories.

Cinnamon Ridge Jerseys offers complete tours and information presentations about their diverse operation. In 1997 they were named the National Jaycees Outstanding Young Farmer. Their main focus is on farm tours and have had over 6,000 visitors so far this year. They farm 4,000 acres of incredibly good soil. We saw pigs, cows, beef and crops, as well as their roadside shop. They milk over 200 Jerseys with robots and are currently averaging 36 litres per day. They raise their bull calves as steers to 18 months, and sell or serve the meat from these animals. They raise 10,000 pigs, in four barns, mainly for the manure. John showed us his cash flow projections which showed corn at 260 Bu and beans at 65 Bu per acre. Like many farms with high yields, they credit much of their success to lots of manure. Three out of the last

four years they have had corn yielding over 300 Bu to the acre. They use some of their own milk to make cheese in a small on farm plant, run by John's brother who is an anesthesiologist during the week, and makes cheese on the weekends. They even have a roadside store, where they sell preserves, frozen chicken, beef and pork, and their own flavoured cheese curds. The store is unmanned, and payment is received on the honour system. Finally, they even served us a delicious T-bone steak dinner. Thirteen South African farmers toured with us and we learned about a few of their challenges: One farmer's neighbours had recently been murdered. The Maxwells sometimes counsel South Africans who want to move to the United States to escape these realities.

Thanks to everybody for their co-operation during the quick changes in itinerary. Thanks for being flexible, and easy to get along with, but most of all thanks for being on time, so that we always arrived everywhere on time. Special thanks to Kelly Maloney for her nimble fingers on her new Galaxy 9 phone, which helped quickly assess changes in itinerary, find places to stop and numbers to phone. Kelly was also the unofficial social media person, and sent great summaries and pictures out into cyberspace about our trip. As first time bus trip organizers, we could not have done it without Kelly's wise guidance. Special thanks also to Keith, our amazing bus driver for being one of the gang, learning about farming, and for being flexible and accommodating. He got the bus in and out of tight spaces, gave us a smooth ride, and never left or arrived late. He even kept the cooler stocked with ice from the hotel ice machine. He made the trip go smoothly. And Thank you to our fellow participants, who never complained, always arrived at the appointed time, and never forgot anything. They were flexible, accommodating, happy and thankful and a lot of fun.

Thank you so much for your sponsorship:

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