

# Del Unger

**B.S. Agricultural Economics, Purdue University 1984**

## **Growing for the Future**

It hardly gets more black-and-gold than the Unger family. Del Unger's parents graduated from Purdue, Del met his wife Tammi there, and the couple's son and daughter both recently returned to the farm with Purdue Agriculture degrees in hand. That might have something to do with their father's decree: "You can go to school anywhere you want — but if you want me to pay for it, you'll go to Purdue," he says with a grin.

Unger is the owner-operator of Unger Farms, which consists of 5,000 acres. Cash grains include double-crop corn, doublecrop soybeans, wheat, and hay. Seed corn, green beans, popcorn, and white corn are grown on 1,800 acres irrigated for specialty crops. Of the farmed acreage, 1,700 acres are family-owned. The Ungers also operate a cow-calf operation on some of their rolling land. Unger takes a high- output production approach to derive the highest output and best efficiency from every acre.



The labor force includes the four Ungers, two full-time employees, and Del's supposedly retired father. Unger Farms has increased acreage by nearly 60 percent and more than doubled on-farm storage in the last ten years. Expansion is important to ensure the farm's future for his children, Unger says: "When we saw their interest and their desire to come back, and their love for it, we knew we had to grow."

As the operation has expanded in size and complexity, Unger has organized it into functional units that involve various combinations of owners, equipment, and land to manage risk and pave the way for the farm's passage to the next generation.

Unger has hosted international visitors and state officials, and his operation has been featured in several agricultural publications. Unger Farms also hosted the Indiana Farm Management Tour in 1996 and again in 2011. He says that such experiences are not only a great excuse to get everything painted and cleaned up, but a valuable learning experience and a chance to promote farming: "We need to do a better job in agriculture of telling our story, that we provide a safe, reliable feed for the world."

## **Pull out Quote**

"The economic principles that Purdue instilled in us, we use every day. It used to be that I'd sit across from the local banker who bought my calf at the county fair and who knows my dad and knew my grandfather. It's not that way anymore. Knowing the fundamentals of finance will make or break this next generation."

**1984**

B.S., Agricultural Economics, Purdue University

**1984-present**

Owner-Operator, Del Unger Farms

1984-present

Member, Indiana Beef Cattlemen's Association

**1985**

Outstanding Young Farmer in Sullivan County

**1995-1999**

Sullivan County Marketing Club

President, 1998-1999

**1997-present**

Growers Co-op Board

Chairman, 2006-2009

**1997- 2008**

Sullivan County 4-H Fair Board

Vice President, 1998-1999

President, 2000-2001

**2006-2008**

Sullivan County Extension Board

**2007-present**

Board of Directors, Ceres Solutions, LLP, Crawfordsville, Indiana

Vice president, 2007

President, 2008-present