

The Commercial Review/Ray Cooney

POET.COM/PORTLAND | 260.726.7154

Agritourism drives visitors to region

Pumpkin patches, orchards, corn mazes help draw attention

By **JOSEPH S. PETE**
The Times (Munster)
Tribune News Service

Region families have been flocking to pumpkin patches, apple orchards and corn mazes this fall.

Northwest Indiana residents have been taking part in time-honored fall rituals, such as going on hayrides, grabbing pints of apple cider, stocking up on apple cider donuts by the dozen or stalking through the geometrically rigid rows of trees on the hunt for the juiciest Honeycrisp apple.

People have been flocking to attractions like County Line Orchard, Harvest Tyme Family Farm, Johnson's Farm Produce, Garwood Orchard and Fair Oaks Farms during "the signature season for agritourism in Northwest Indiana." Harvest Tyme Family Farm in Lowell has a corn maze depicting Sesame Street characters while County Line Orchard has one of Michael Jordan's iconic Jumpman pose as part of its "Who's the G.O.A.T.?" theme this year that includes a G.O.A.T. Float with apple cider, ice cream, an apple cinnamon donut, whipped cream, sweet caramel, a cinnamon sprinkle and a caveat that napkins are necessary.

Agritourism is one of the main drivers of visitation to Northwest Indiana in the fall and is one of the Region's most visible tourism sectors, South Shore Convention and Visitors Authority spokeswoman Stephanie Smith said.

"Fall is a major driver of agritourism visitation in Northwest Indiana — especially September and October — as farms, orchards and family attractions host harvest festivals, pumpkin patches and seasonal events," Smith said. "25% of the total annual visitation happens at these four attractions during September and October."

County Line Orchard, Harvest Tyme Family Farm, Johnson's Farm Produce and Fair Oaks Farms collectively generated more than 3 million visitors last year.

"County Line Orchard and Harvest Tyme are the strongest fall performers, with nearly half of their annual visitation concentrated in those two months," Smith said. "Fair Oaks Farms, though year-round and peaks in the summer, still sees a seasonal uptick in October, reflecting fall tourism's regional importance. So, fall is the peak season for agritourism in Northwest Indiana, both in volume and in visibility."

The farms are regional attractions that draw heavily among locals but also bring in visitors regionally, she said. Fair Oaks Farms is a national agritourism destination that brings in 64% of its visitors from more than 50 miles away.

"County Line Orchard is a major local magnet but still draws more than 14% of their visitors from more than 50 miles away. Johnson's and Harvest Tyme offer more specialized, seasonal experiences that cater to families from both Indiana and Illinois. Johnson's draws almost 25% of their visitors from more than 50 miles away, and Harvest Tyme draws around 5% of their visitors from more than 50 miles away," Smith said. "Fair Oaks Farms operates as a regional destination, drawing visitors from major metro areas like Chicago, Indianapolis, Cincinnati and Louisville. Nearly two-thirds of visitors travel more than 50 miles."

About one in seven of County Line Orchard's visitors travel

'The mix of farms offering experiences ... keeps agritourism active nearly year-round. The combined data show fall as the clear peak season, especially September and October, when pumpkin patches, corn mazes and harvest festivals dominate.'

—Stephanie Smith
South Shore Convention and Visitors Authority

from a distance, mostly from the suburbs of Chicago. About one-quarter of Johnson's Farm Produce's visitors come from at least 50 miles away, but it's most popular during the June Strawberry Festival. Most of Harvest Tyme Family Farm's visitors come from within 50 miles, but it also draws from Illinois in the fall.

The agritourism industry is a major source of seasonal employment and hospitality spending, Smith said. It also supports local food sales, farm-based retail and event rentals, including for weddings, meetings and festivals.

"The mix of farms offering experiences throughout the year, like Fair Oaks and Johnson's and those focused on seasonal events like County Line and Harvest Tyme, keeps agritourism active nearly year-round," she said. "The combined data show fall as the clear peak season, especially September and October, when pumpkin patches, corn mazes and harvest festivals dominate."

County Line Orchard sees 40% of its visitation in September and October. Harvest Tyme Family Farm peaks with about

50,000 visitors in October. Fair Oaks Farms draws throughout the year but experiences its third highest visitation in October.

"Fall is the signature season for agritourism in Northwest Indiana — but attractions like Fair Oaks, Harvest Tyme and Johnson's help sustain interest in spring and summer, too," Smith said.

Josh Sickinger first started offering the public a pumpkin patch with hayrides at Harvest Tyme Family Farm in Lowell 18 years ago. The farm's annual Fall Festival has exploded in popularity to where it includes 30 attractions, 10 amusement rides, a 3-acre corn maze, a petting zoo and a Pumpkin Glow Trail.

Harvest Tyme Family Farm now holds events throughout the year, including a Tulip Tyme Festival in the spring and its annual Christmas Tyme Lights. But the Fall Festival remains the most popular. It's a tradition for many families to find their way through the corn maze or survey the pumpkin patch for the perfect pumpkin to carve into a jack-o'-lantern.

"It's a great place for families to come together and enjoy a whole day's worth of fun for a reasonable price," Sickinger said. "It's somewhere to go for great experiences and great memories."

It draws from across Chicagoland, Indianapolis and the South Bend area, many who make a day trip of it. Social media has helped fuel its growth as families share photos of their kids picking pumpkins or petting goats.

"The agritourism space is 100% growing in popularity with new venues popping up all around the country," he said. "It's become as focused on the entertainment as it is on the agriculture."

Harvest Tyme Family Farm is constantly adding new attractions to keep visitors coming in.

"I was a CPA before I quit my job to work on the farm full-time," Sickinger said. "We do operations year-round to maintain cash flow. But we're absolutely busiest in the fall. It's when we have the highest attendance and the most success. It helps get the word out to everybody that we're here."

AFFORDABLE QUALITY FARM EQUIPMENT

THE

RIGHT EQUIPMENT for YOUR FARM

We've been buying, selling & trading equipment for over 25 years and specialize in quality used tractors & machinery. Our inventory is changing daily so be sure to check our website regularly or feel free to stop by & visit with Mike directly!



Mike Rinker Farm Equipment
765-748-1200
574 N. Delaware St., Albany, IN 47320
(on State Road 67)
www.mikerinkerfarmequipment.com
Monday-Friday 8-5
Saturday 8-Noon

2008 MONTANA 4340C



MFWA, CAH, quick attach loader, quick attach bucket, 45 hp., 1, 512 hrs.
\$15,750

OMC MUSTANG 442



40 hp. Kubota diesel, bucket, forks, LED lights, aux. hydraulics.
\$6,250

FORD 4000



Diesel, loader, PS, Live PTO, 3 pt., 5 sp., 1-owner.
\$6,750

KIOTI LK 2554



25 hp., FWD, diesel, quick attach joy stick loader, 382 hrs.
\$5,250

JOHN DEERE 1250



Land Pride quick attach joy stick loader, diesel 40 hp., 2,650 hrs., new rubber.
\$13,750

JOHN DEERE 4320



FWA, 400CX quick attach loader and bucket, hydro 50 hp., CAH, new tires, 3,200 hrs.
\$25,500

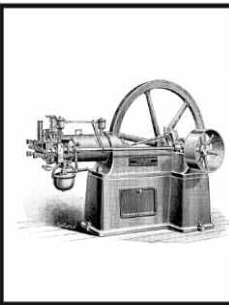
These local businesses care about the health and safety of the farmers, ranchers and agricultural workers they serve.

Please take a moment to review these simple tips designed to protect your health and safety on the job.

Tri-State Gas Engine & Tractor Assoc.



1010 N Morton St.
Portland, IN 47371
260-466-2047



Wall Tax Service, LLC

• Professional • Personal • Confidential
ACCOUNTING & TAX SERVICES

- 45 Years Experience
- Tax Prep & Consultation
- Individual • Business • Agricultural
- Payroll & Bookkeeping
- Truck Filings
- Notary Public

Call Sharon E. Wall
Year-Round Service



122 East Adams St. • Portland
Office 260-726-7435 Cell 729-2087

LOY REAL ESTATE & AUCTION

101 West Main Street • Portland, IN

260-726-2700

www.loyrealestateauction.com

LOY AUCTION AC31600027
Gary Loy AU 01031608 Travis Theurer AU11200131
Aaron Loy AU11200112 Kaden Khayyata AU12400069

WAYNE OIL CO

419-375-4256

wayneoil@bright.net

219 N Wayne St. • Ft Recovery, Ohio

PRACTICE FARM SAFETY

Protect workers,
kids and families!



Here are some tips from the
Jay County FFA
to keep you safe this harvest season

When around farm machinery and equipment,
be aware of your surroundings and
understand the situation you are in



Do not let children around moving
equipment like augers,
PTO shafts, and tractors.

When approaching a Slow Moving Vehicle
like a tractor or combine, be considerate
of the equipment and farmer.

Keep your distance away from the
machine, get over to the side of the road,
and safely pass the SMV.

Never enter a grain bin being
loaded or unloaded.

Have all wiring inspected often to avoid
fires and shocks from electricity.



IT'S HARVEST SEASON
BE ALERT. BE PATIENT. SHARE THE ROAD



Arnold Lumber Co.

Hours: Monday thru Thursday: 7 A.M. to 5 P.M.
Friday: 7 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.
Saturday: 7 A.M. to 11:30 A.M.
Decatur, Indiana

260-724-3108

1-800-903-4206

sales@arnoldlumberinc.com

check us out on Facebook

Serving Indiana, Ohio, Southern Michigan
We will build any size

JACK HOUCK REAL ESTATE

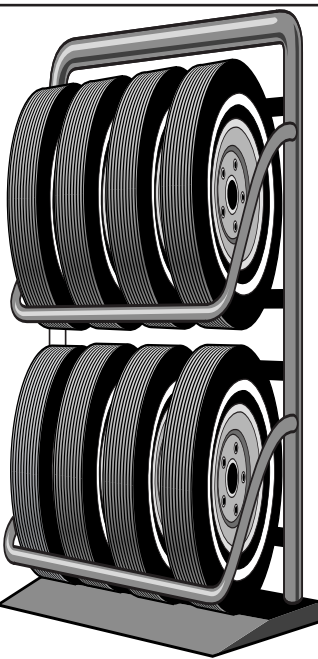
We enjoy helping people with their Real Estate Needs



Jack Houck
Owner

1415 W Votaw St
Portland, IN 47371
260.729.2164

jackhouck2012@gmail.com



Portland's

BEST ONE
Tire & Auto Care

210 S. Meridian St.
Portland, IN

260-726-9321



SHAWVER AUCTIONEERING AND REAL ESTATE

AC31800004

AUCTIONEERS

Pete D. Shawver Lic# AU19700040 260-726-5587
Zane Shawver Lic# AU10500168 260-729-2229



Purdue University/Andrew Griswald

John Evans, assistant professor of agricultural and biological engineering, and Greg Shaver, professor of mechanical engineering and director of Herrick Labs, worked on a project between Purdue University and John Deere to develop an initial demonstration of Auto Unload. The technology seeks to improve productivity, reduce operator fatigue and save time during harvest.

Harvesting in sync

Purdue, John Deere develop automated unloading tech

By ANNA O'NEILL ALEXANDER
Purdue Ag News

Harvest is one of the most demanding times in a farmer's year. The clock is always ticking, and every grain spilled or minute wasted equals profit lost. One of the most intricate maneuvers on the field is unloading grain from a combine into a grain cart while both vehicles are moving. It's a task that requires near-perfect synchronization between the com-

bine operator and the tractor driver pulling the grain cart. That same kind of close collaboration recently played out in a project between Purdue University and John Deere. Combining industry experience with research expertise, the two organizations developed an initial demonstration of Auto Unload, a precision technology that improves productivity, reduces operator fatigue, and saves valuable time during harvest.

It's a partnership that mirrors the technology itself: two parts moving in sync toward a shared goal. During harvest, efficiency is everything. Unloading grain on the go can improve combine productivity by as much as 23 percent, but it's a complicated procedure that demands tight focus and coordination between the combine and tractor operators again and again. "It's like landing an aircraft," explained Corwin Puryk, staff

engineer and John Deere's principal investigator for the project. "Farmers face intense pressure to align the machines with precision – sometimes up to ten times per hour over a twelve-hour workday." John Deere's existing Machine Sync system already offered a partial solution to keep the vehicles aligned during unloading. But it still required constant attention and manual adjustments from the combine operator to distrib-

ute grain evenly across the cart. Purdue University and John Deere had been discussing opportunities to collaborate, and the development of an automated unloading system was the perfect chance to combine forces. Purdue didn't just have technical expertise – the university also offered agricultural insight and the facilities to test emerging technologies in real-world conditions. See Sync page 7B



GENUINE
PARTS

HULL BROTHERS, INC.
FORT RECOVERY, OH
419-375-2827
www.hullbros.com



Make & Model	Year	Hours	Description
TRACTORS			
IH 574	1973	1793	1 remote, loader, gas \$7,900
CIH Maxxum 115	2015		coming
CIH Magnum 340	2024		Row Trac coming
CIH Steiger 370	2014	4123	PTO, 3pt hitch, leather interior \$189,000
Cub Cadet 7205	1998	1651	with Bush Hog loader, 20 Hp \$9,500
Kubota LX2610	2023	215	no loader, 72" deck, hydrostat \$19,500
Kubota L4760	2015	1798	2 remote, Glide shift, loader \$26,900
Kubota MX5200	2017	769	3range hydro, 1 remote, loader \$23,900
Kubota M5091	2017		coming
New Holl TG230	2003		coming
GRAIN HEADS			
Case IH 1020-25'	1998		rock guard, SCH cutter bar, like new \$9,500
Case IH 3020-30'	2013		short dividers, flighting extensions \$22,900
Case IH 2162-40'	2012		good sickle & guards, great drum \$49,000
Case IH 2162-40'	2010		new center drum being installed \$39,000
Case IH 2162-40'	2010		all belts very good, rock guard \$35,900
Case IH 2162-45'	2021		45' width \$49,000
Case IH 3162-45'	2019		45' draper, extra sickle, very nice \$25,000
Case IH 3162-45'	2017		guards are 70%, spare center belt \$29,000
COMBINES			
Case IH 2188	1995	7339	5164 sep, 4WD \$18,900
Case IH 2188	1995	5524	4WD \$16,900
Case IH 7230	2014	3154	2517 sep, 40' auger, pivot spout \$169,000
Case IH 8250	2019	2376	1708 sep hrs coming
Case IH 9250	2023	765	tracks, Harv Comm, fold auger \$579,000
CORN HEADS			
Case IH 1063	1995		field tracker, tall corn attachment \$6,500
Case IH 1063	1992		no field tracker, ear savers \$6,900
IH 863			coming
Case IH 2206	2002		6 rows \$17,900
Case IH 1083	1990		good knives, steel snouts, field trckr \$3,900
Case IH 2408	2007		8row, 30" spacing, hyd deck plates \$16,900
Case IH 3408	2010		8rows, 30" spacing \$10,900
Case IH 4408	2018		hyd deck plates, excellent cond \$49,900
John Deere 643	1976		set up for 2500 series & down \$4,900
RTVs & ATVs			
Kubota RTV1100	2012	2285	hyd dump, a/c, diesel Worksite \$12,900
SKID STEER LOADERS			
Case SR270	2016		new Reman engine, enclosed cab \$49,000
Case SR270B	2019	2211	enclosed cab, 2speed \$34,900
Case SV340	2019	2275	hiflow, heat & a/c \$37,900
New Holland LS180	2004	3413	heat, hand & foot, no a/c \$14,900
New Holland L321	2021	758	new tires, hyd coupler \$32,000
Bobcat S750	2015	1772	ISO or Hpattern, very clean \$31,900
DISKS & PACKERS & MULCHERS & HARROWS			
Unverferth 225	2020		30' wide, excellent condition \$17,900
Unverferth 1225			30' wide, 1bar, dual lift wheels \$13,900
IH 490 disk			21' wide, new blades \$8,900
Landoll 743133			33' disk, rear hitch & hydraulics \$26,900
Brillion WP108			23' packer, all cast wheels \$4,900
DMI Crumbler			30' working width, 7/8th bars \$6,900
J&M TF21232'			12' base, 10' wings, green \$21,500
FIELD CULTIVATORS, CHISEL PLOWS, CHISELS, AND RIPPERS			
Case IH 870 EcoloTiger	2010		9 shanks, good points \$49,000
Case IH Tigermate II			26.5' wide, 5bar, new sweeps \$22,900
Kill Bros FC3600			28' wide, walking tandem \$2,900
DMI 527 chisel			5 shanks, blades tight, #198031297 \$12,900
DMI 527B			5 shanks, 19" & 20" blades \$11,900
DMI Tigermate			21.5' width, new 9" sweeps \$12,900
John Deere 980			27.5' width, 3bar, new sweeps \$14,900
John Deere 960			21' width, 15' base, needs sweeps \$5,900
AUGERS			
Mayrath 10 x 62'			pwr walk swingaway, perf screen \$6,900
Hutchinson 8 x 62'			top drive, not a swingaway \$995
Mayrath 10 x 62'			swingaway, hydraulic lift coming
Mayrath 8 x 45' auger			45' elec top drive, 5 Hp motor \$3,900
Mayrath 8 x 62'			swingaway, gear drive, hyd lift \$5,900
Mayrath 10 x 62'			swingaway, gear drive, hyd lift coming
PLANTERS AND DRILLS			
Case IH 1255 planter	2016		12 rows coming
Case IH 5100 drill			21hole, grass seeder \$9,500
Case IH 1240 planter			12/23 rows, pivot planter coming
Case IH 1245 planter	2013		12/23 rows, bulk fill \$79,900
John Deere 7200			12 row, Smart Box insect, vacuum \$5,900
ROTARY CUTTERS & FINISH MOWERS			
Woods BW12MF			12' bat wing, 540 PTO \$15,900
Woods BW12			12' wide, swivel hitch, chains \$10,000
Bush Hog SM160			direct drive (no hyd pump) 5' mower \$1,900
Bush Hog 257			540 PTO \$950
John Deere HX15	2012		15' width, bat wing, no deck rings \$10,900
Bush Hog 3368R			14' wide, semimount, good cond \$5,500
Bush Hog 12815CD	2020		15' width, new main drive shaft \$18,900
Bush Hog 2515			15' width, front & rear chains \$12,900
MISC.			
Patz feed mixer			coming
Bucket			88" bucket, long lip univ QA \$950
Rotomec 166231 tiller			66" wide, 3pt hookup, can offset \$1,100
Land Pride BB1248 box blade			48" wide, 5 knives, like new \$1,150
Meyer's VForce 7500			3000 gal, 2 vertical beaters \$9,900
New Idea 3743 spreader			540 PTO, 2speed apron, hyd gate \$18,900
WAGONS, GRAIN CARTS, AND HEADER CARTS			
J&M HT8 header cart			30' bar, telescoping tongue \$4,950
J&M HT974 header cart	2010		25' top bar, very nice \$5,500
Unverferth header cart			23'4" top bar, adjust tonue \$5,100
J&M 750 grain cart			18" unload, no scales or tarp \$29,000
EZ Trail 510 grain cart			side auger, adustable augers, lights \$8,900
J&M 250 wagon			8 ton gear, tongue does not telescope \$2,900
J&M 250 wagon			8 ton gear, dumps left, wood runners \$695
J&M 350 wagon			13 ton gear, higher welded gear \$2,900
J&M 350 wagon			13ton gear, rocking bolster \$2,900
J&M 350 wagon			wood side boards, 13ton gear \$4,900
Kill Bros 385 wagon			heavy duty 13ton gear, dumps left \$3,900
Ficklin grain wagon			with seed auger, divider box \$3,900
J&M 500 wagon			tarp, brakes, 16.522.5 tires coming
J&M 540 wagon	2002		425 tires, disc brakes, metering door \$15,500
J&M 540 wagon	2004		425 tires, disc brakes, metering door \$15,900
J&M 540 wagon	2005		425 tires, brakes, metering door \$15,900

‘Farmageddon’ can’t be solved by bailout

By **PATRICIA LOPEZ**
Bloomberg Opinion
Tribune News Service

It’s harvest time in the Midwest and farmers are bringing in bumper crops of soybeans, corn and wheat. They should be elated.

But their best customers are shopping elsewhere as a result of a global trade war ignited by President Donald Trump. Punishing tariffs have created what some are calling “Farmageddon.”

China, once a top destination for American soybeans, has signaled its displeasure with Trump’s tariffs by locking out U.S. farmers in favor of more stable partners in Brazil and Argentina. Soybeans are this country’s largest agricultural export, valued at more than \$24 billion in 2024, with about half usually going to China.

But China has made no purchases from this harvest, with disastrous results for American growers. Soybeans are piling up across the Midwest, spilling out of bins and grain elevators from North Dakota to Missouri.

And farmers are suffering a double whammy because the costs of the inputs needed to grow those soybeans — fertilizer, seeds, potash, equipment — are rising, also because of tariffs. Much of the potash used by Midwestern farmers comes from Canada. Parts for farm equipment often originate in China or other Asian countries.

“It’s a big concern that farmers are producing a crop that (is) going to cost more to make than it is the revenue that they’d receive,” Ohio Soybean Association Executive Director Kirk Merritt said recently.

One could argue that farmers should have seen this coming. Trump has long telegraphed his belief that tariffs are the Swiss Army knife of economic tools, creating new jobs, pushing enemies, rewarding allies, and useful as leverage for pushing whatever policy he favors. And, of course, generating billions in new government revenue.

But that revenue, which

Patricia Lopez



Trump says he now may tap for a farmer bailout, is no windfall paid by foreign countries. Farmers know all too well it comes from U.S. companies and consumers as a hidden, regressive tax that chips away at their margins. If the proposed bailout feels a little like he’s paying them back with their own money, it’s because he is.

We’ve seen a version of this play out before. When farm profits started to nosedive in 2018, after Trump’s first round of tariffs, the president ordered \$28 billion in bailouts to farmers over the course of his first term. When the pandemic hit, he sent yet more money to farmers, boosting agriculture payouts to unsustainable levels. Farmers responded by supporting Trump heavily in 2024, just as they had in previous elections.

Now reality is once again refusing to bend to Trump’s will, differing sharply with the enticing carnival pitch he rolled out to supporters. The answer for Trump is another bailout. He’s been discussing a possible \$10 billion package for weeks, but no details have emerged.

There are two problems with that. One, bailouts are a temporary patch. Farmers want to sell their products, not depend on government handouts. Christopher Barrett, an economics and public policy professor at Cornell University, noted in April that government bailouts “rarely match up well with farmers’ actual losses,” and are an added burden on taxpayers.

And second, Trump’s 2018 tariffs altered trade patterns, setting in motion long-term shifts and eroding U.S. market share. A decade ago, U.S. soy-



Tribune News Service/Getty ImagesScott Olson

Soybeans are loaded into a truck so they can be hauled to an elevator and sold on Aug. 1, in Dwight, Illinois. China, once a top destination for American soybeans, has signaled its displeasure with President Donald Trump’s tariffs by locking out U.S. farmers in favor of more stable partners in Brazil and Argentina.

bean growers were the top exporters in the world and China was their top customer. Then came Trump’s election and his subsequent trade war. Soybean farmers got caught in the crossfire. Brazil seized a potential opening to expand its sales to China at competitive prices. A decade later, Brazil has displaced the U.S. as the world’s top exporter of soybeans, thanks in large part to Chinese sales that previously had gone to American growers.

This time around, Trump has given a boost to another competitor, Argentina, where far-right President Javier Milei is floundering. Trump, who favors Milei, has pledged a \$20 billion economic rescue package, even as American farmers wait for details of their own bailout.

Adding insult to injury,

Argentina has suspended its export tax and was rewarded with Chinese orders last month for 20 shiploads of soybeans, deepening a market downturn for American growers.

“The frustration is overwhelming,” American Soybean Association President Caleb Ragland said in a statement. “U.S. soybean prices are falling, harvest is underway, and farmers read headlines not about securing a trade agreement with China, but that the U.S. is extending \$20 billion in economic support to Argentina.” Ragland then called on Trump to “prioritize securing an immediate deal on soybeans with China.”

Republican Iowa Senator Chuck Grassley asked in a recent social media post, “Why would USA help bail out Argentina while they take

American soybean producers’ biggest market???”

Why indeed.

And the damage goes beyond tariffs. Trump’s dismantling of USAID and cuts to SNAP, the nutritional program for the poor, have also hit two major outlets for American farmers’ goods.

Farmers have been among Trump’s most devoted supporters. In the last election, out of 444 farm-dominant counties, Trump won all but 11. He proclaims himself to be the “best friend” farmers have ever had. It’s getting harder and harder for farmers to see it.

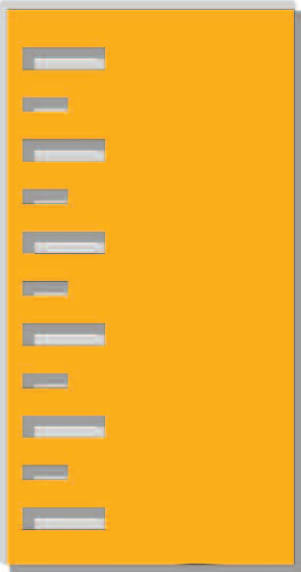
.....

Lopez is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering politics and policy. She is a former member of the editorial board at the Minneapolis Star Tribune, where she also worked as a senior political editor and reporter.



CITADEL
SUPPLY

765-209-0670



9096 HWY 67 WEST • REDKEY, IN 47373

Store Hours: M-F 6:30 am – 6:30 pm, SAT 7:30 am – 5:30 pm, Sunday 11:00 am – 5:00 pm (ends 9/7/2025)

YOUR COMMUNITY HARDWARE STORE!



**Agriculture Hardware,
Lawn & Garden Tools &
Accessories, PPG Paint & Paint
Accessories, Contractor Products,
Plumbing Tools & Supplies,
Fasteners, Milwaukee Tools,
Gas & Electric Water Heaters,
and much much more!!**

**Thank
YOU!**
WE APPRECIATE YOUR
LOYAL SUPPORT!

Shop Small, Shop Local!

**WE SELL
HUNTING &
FISHING LICENSES**

Grain cart goals

J&M’s new 14 Series aims at being the world’s best

By RAY COONEY

The Commercial Review

The goal was a lofty one. After more than a decade of development, J&M Manufacturing of Fort Recovery believes it has achieved its longtime goal — building the best grain cart in the world.

The company unveiled the new 14 Series carts at the Farm Progress Show in August.

“That was a really cool moment,” said Mike Vujea, who handles marketing for J&M. “It’s really neat to see the reaction in the field that the farmers have had this year now that they’ve been finally able to use it.”

They were available in limited release this fall and will be in full production for 2026.

Early going

J&M started testing toward the eventual goal of developing a new grain cart in 2014. They began by testing speed to determine the most efficient design.

That work led to the more intense start of the process five years ago.

“When Sean first set out in 2020 ... he was very clear that he wanted to make the best grain cart in the world,” said Vujea, referencing J&M head of engineering Sean Kahlig.

“I want to take all the feedback that we can take from everybody and reimagine what a grain cart could be.’ ... That was his goal.”

After starting with physical testing — trial and error included looking at different diameters, pitches, configurations and intake openings — technology allowed the design and engineering team to look even closer. Using computers, they have been able to do kernel-by-kernel analysis to study the way grain flows through the carts. It also allowed changes to be made instantly instead of hav-

ing to tear down a component and rebuild it each time they wanted to try something new.

“We’re able to do that just in a simulated environment and hone in on what the ideal design was and then just verify it when we got done,” said Kahlig.

J&M staff also sought feedback from customers. What did they want? What did they need?

That included a trip to Iowa to spend several days with a customer learning more about their operation. It was important to look elsewhere, Kahlig said, as farming is different in

each location based on field sizes, soil types, terrain, yields and a variety of other factors.

Through that process they determined that, while everyone is different, farmers were looking for a grain cart that is simple, reliable, fast and still usable even if some of the technological bells and whistles are not in use.

Designing details

After settling on targets, the J&M Manufacturing team began to focus on the “how.”

Starting with the features that were “needs” first, they brainstormed

ideas on how to make each component the best it could be. All ideas would be tested, with the group then coming back together to decide what path was best.

“We didn’t want to just pick one thing and run with it because we were comfortable with it or because it was easy or because it was the first idea we had,” Kahlig added. “We wanted to make sure we settled in on the best one.”

While the development was the focus of the design and engineering team, they used input from throughout J&M.

See Cart page 8B

Because Pets Are Family Too

We are committed to providing your pet with the highest level of quality care. Have your pet checked regularly!

Quality Veterinary Care

Internal Medicine | Preventive Care | Vaccines |
Surgery | Spay & Neuter | Dermatology |
Microchipping | Flea Control |
Dentistry | Laser Therapy | Geriatric Care |
Behavior Consulting | Boarding & Grooming

Portland Veterinary Clinic

1407 Votaw St.
Portland
260-726-7370
Christian Bader DVM



Call
for appointment
• Emergency service available
Hours:
Mon - Friday
8 - 5 p.m.
Call for Saturday Hours

Fisher named senior advisor

By ANNA O’NEILL ALEXANDER

Purdue Ag News

Purdue University alumna Halee Fisher, who earned degrees in agricultural economics and political science, was recently appointed Senior Advisor for Research, Education and Economics (REE) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture — a natural progression for her career in agricultural policy.

Fisher grew up in rural Indiana, where she fell in love with agriculture as a 10-year 4-H member. As a high school sophomore, she presented research on zoonotic diseases and vaccine development at the World Food Prize, later earning a Borlaug-Ruan International Internship in Mexico with CIMMYT.

“I knew as soon as I got back that I wanted to be in the College of Agriculture at Purdue,” she says. “It’s Indiana’s most prominent agricultural space and I could feel the family culture.”

Initially unsure of her direction, Fisher found her calling after taking a political science class at the suggestion of her advisor.

“It was exactly the intersection of agriculture and policy that I loved,” she said. She added a second major in

political science and pursued opportunities in Washington, D.C., including internships with the USDA Foreign Agriculture Service and the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Just as the 118th Congress convened, Fisher accepted a position as Legislative Correspondent for Congressman Rudy Yakym III, finishing her last college credits online. She later joined the U.S. House Agriculture Committee as a legislative assistant, handling research, pesticide, biotechnology and horticulture policy.

In June, Fisher’s appointment to the USDA was announced. She now advises five agencies under the REE mission area, connecting with land-grant universities and agricultural stakeholders nationwide.

“I constantly say D.C. is run on relationships,” she explains. “Purdue really helped me build the people skills I use now.”

Fisher continues to mentor students interested in policy and hopes to strengthen the Purdue alumni network in Washington, D.C.

.....
This story has been edited for length. For the full version, visit ag.purdue.edu/news.

Pole Buildings



Serving Indiana, Ohio, Southern Michigan
We will build any size

Arnold Lumber Co.

Hours: Monday thru Thursday: 7A.M. to 5 P.M.
Friday: 7 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. • Saturday: 7 A.M. to 11:30 A.M.
Decatur, Indiana

260-724-3108
1-800-903-4206

sales@arnoldlumberinc.com
check us out on Facebook



Sync ...

Continued from page 1B

“We really see Purdue as one of the leading universities to look to in agriculture,” said Jennifer Preston, vice president at John Deere Electric Powertrain and CEO of Kreisel Electric. Her own Boilermaker ties run deep – she holds a degree in electrical engineering from Purdue and serves as the Executive Focal from John Deere to Purdue.

Where John Deere’s engineers brought practical insights from the field and a track record of building dependable machinery, Purdue contributed deep agricultural roots, broad technical knowledge, and access to a perfect test site at the Agronomy Center for Research and Education (ACRE).

“Purdue and John Deere have a long history and this is a great example of what we can do together,” explained Eric Woods, Executive Director of Industry Partnerships at Purdue University. “They came to us with a complex problem, and we had the research capabilities to find a solution.”

Greg Shaver, professor of mechanical engineering and the director of Herrick Labs, served as the university’s principal investigator. He assembled a team of faculty and students across disciplines: Aerospace Engineering, Agricultural and Biological Engineering (ABE), Agronomy, and Mechanical Engineering.

Shaver’s expertise in vehicle automation was complemented by John Evans, assistant professor of agricultural and biological engineering, who contributed first-hand farming experience as well as a background in agriculture robotics. Mechanical engineering PhD candidates Ziping Liu, Chufan Jiang and Shveta Dhamankar also played a significant role in creating the automation system models and algorithms.

“I knew going in that Purdue could help,” Shaver said. “This was a challenging, unique opportunity to work with John Deere on a multi-year effort – and, ultimately, it was successful.”

Much like the machines themselves, the people behind the project had to work in tandem. Shaver and Evans, together with Purdue colleagues Daniel DeLaurentis and Tony Vyn, guided graduate and PhD students in developing and testing the technology.

At John Deere, the efforts were equally cross-departmental. Puryk, an engineer in Crop Harvesting Advanced Engineering, worked closely with Ryan White, Brandon McDonald and other colleagues in the Intelligent Solutions Group to ensure Purdue’s upgrades were compatible with existing hardware.

“I was impressed by the caliber of work and breath of fresh air Purdue brought to the project,” noted Puryk. “The students were always eager, full of questions, and willing to learn.”

Working together, they tackled challenges one by one: overcoming visibility issues caused by dust, light and weather; maintaining alignment over uneven terrain; detecting fill levels in the grain cart to maximize each load.

The auto unload system was built on John Deere’s Machine Sync and Machine Vision technology, using sophisticated algorithms to automatically measure the amount of grain and autonomously move the cart to evenly distribute the load. Extensive testing in the ACRE fields proved its viability.

After two years of development, Purdue delivered a working prototype at the end of 2020. A variant of the vehicle automated

unloading system was officially granted a U.S. patent in 2023 and a fully integrated solution with the latest hardware architecture will be available to customers as a John Deere Precision Upgrade beginning in late 2025 and as a factory option in 2026.

But the bigger achievement was the partnership itself – one that benefited John Deere, Purdue and, most importantly, the farmers who stand to gain from the technology.

“Seeing this have an impact on farmers is one of my proudest achievements,” said Evans. “They have enough on their plate already. This takes one more thing off their hands.”

For John Deere, the project reaffirmed the value of working closely with a university partner who brought fresh ideas and cutting-edge research capabilities. For Purdue, it gave students hands-on experience solving real problems facing modern farmers, from theory to implementation.

“We’re delighted to have made a positive impact on John Deere and its customers,” Shaver added. “Having the work we do with our students and industry partners implemented in the real world is the ultimate satisfaction.”

A productive harvest is built on timing, trust, and teamwork – and so is a successful relationship between industry and university partners.

“With our strategic alliance, John Deere and Purdue are able to accomplish more than either organization could alone,” said Woods. “This project was another step towards our shared goal: to help the feed the planet and change people’s lives.”

As labor, scale, and budget demands on agriculture continue to rise, developing new technologies to ease the pressure on farmers will be increasingly important.

It’s a challenge the engineers and researchers at Purdue and John Deere are eager to take on.

Collaboration between the two organizations opened the doors for an automated solution that makes one of the most complicated harvest tasks more efficient, reliable, and less stressful for the people behind the wheel.

“There’s more grain harvested. There’s less grain on the ground. And when the farmer goes home at the end of the day, they’re going to be happier and less exhausted,” Shaver explained.

It’s an example of how Purdue University excels at working with industry partners to develop novel solutions to practical problems – while helping ensure the people feeding the world have the tools they need to succeed.

Get all of
your local news
online at
theocr.com

Wayne Oil Co.



419-375-4256

wayneoil@bright.net

219 N. Wayne St. • Ft. Recovery, Ohio

Dennis Guggenbiller Ivan Kaffenberger
419-852-0473 937-238-3004
for all your fuel, filter, and tire needs!

Lehman
FEED MILL
Inc. Berne, IN

CHEMICAL • FERTILIZER • FEED • GRAIN

BECK'S 260-589-2451
HYBRIDS 5111 S 000 Rd.
Berne, IN 46711

HUBBARD

Piece ...

Continued from page B2

They nearly always wave back. If they don’t, I figure it’s either because they’re distracted by something they’re working on or because my dad’s habit has fallen out of style.

I hope that’s not it, but I suspect it might be.

That recent day when farm vehicles slowed down traffic on 27, the

drivers of the cars around me didn’t seem too respectful of the farmers. They zipped around the gigantic pieces of harvest equipment as if the machines were mere inconveniences.

Well, maybe not mere. Major inconveniences. But those inconveniences are there for a reason.

None of us – including farmers – could survive without the work farmers do.

Of course, farm vehicles take up a lot of space. Of course, they move slowly.

So what? Think about it. What they are doing is essential.

Don’t worry so much about slowing down. Take the time to be respectful.

Be thankful for the food that is being produced and the hard work involved.

If you zip along too fast, no one will see you wave.

Always wave.

Because Pets
Are Family Too

We are committed to providing your pet with the highest level of quality care. Have your pet checked regularly!

Quality Veterinary Care

Internal Medicine | Preventive Care | Vaccines |
Surgery | Spay & Neuter | Dermatology |
Microchipping | Flea Control |
Dentistry | Laser Therapy | Geriatric Care |
Behavior Consulting | Boarding & Grooming

Portland
Veterinary
Clinic

1407 Votaw St.
Portland
260-726-7370
Christian Bader DVM



Call

for appointment
• Emergency service
available
Hours:
Mon - Friday
8 - 5 p.m.
Call for Saturday Hours

We're Hiring at Your
Local Newspaper!

*Hours may vary each week.
*Interviews at time of application.

PART-TIME
INSERTER

You can apply for this position by :
Contacting us by email at: business@theocr.com
OR
Step into our office! Located at: 309 West Main Street Portland, Indiana 47371

GRAPHIC PRINTING NEWSPAPERS

LYONS FARM DRAINAGE & EXCAVATION

611 East 400 South Portland, Indiana 47371

DITCHING - WATERWAYS
PONDS - FENCE ROWS
SITE PREP. - DUMP TRUCK

REX 260-726-5920

CURT 260-729-2872

CY SCHWIETERMAN
INC.



BACKHOE WORK
FARM DRAINAGE

EXCAVATION WORK
SEWAGE SYSTEMS

1663 Cranberry Road
St. Henry, Ohio 45883
419-925-4290 • Fax 419-925-4888
www.cys-inc.com

Cart ...

Continued from page 6B
That included expertise in machining, assembly, flight balancing, etc.
“It was a team effort from the whole company,” Vujea said. “We changed how we manufacture the cart. We changed a lot of things about how the cart looks. ... Many people in the factory had a hand in making this turn out how it did.”
After multiple rounds of design and testing, the team built its first prototype in 2023, refined it the following year and prepared for limited release.

The product

The new 14 Series carts are billed as having an unload speed of 900-plus bushels per minute for a single-auger cart. They also have larger capacities, with models ranging from 1,700 bushels to 2,100 bushels.
They also feature a “4-Way Side Shooter Spout,” which allows for multi-directional control and filling trailers with less need to reposition. It has 20 inches more forward reach and 18 extra inches of side reach than previous options.
The cart also integrates with the J&M app, has a high-definition LED display, a redesigned roll tarp, a front window eight times larger than previous models and offers various customization options.

Vujea noted the need to develop a cart that works well for those who are hungry for new technology, tools and features while also serving those who are comfortable with how their grain carts have worked for years.

“I think where we ended up in our eyes is a cart that’s the fastest, it’s dependable, it’s simple to use,” said Kahlig.
The newest model is a display of how much farming has changed since J&M put out its first gravity wagon — it held 110 bushels — for a local farmer in 1961.
One of the goals of the design and engineering team was to make sure the 14 Series



Photo provided

J&M Manufacturing of Fort Recovery unveiled its new 14 Series grain carts during the Farm Progress Show in August in Decatur, Illinois. The cart had been in the development stages for more than a decade, with J&M’s design and engineering team setting out to make “the best grain cart in the world.”

is ready for continued improvements, as technology quickly advances. To that end, they sought to ensure that “hardware is there to support the software that is coming.”

What’s next

As the first limited release of carts is in the fields, J&M staff have been on the farms in an effort to make sure the first customers know how to use the carts to their highest stan-

dards and to be able to help out if anything goes wrong.

They’ll continue to tweak as they get feedback from the end users.

There are also changes happening internally, as one of the goals was to make the new carts easier to build than previous models.

“With that, there’s a big change in the manufacturing process,” said Kahlig. “So, as we go to full production from

just a limited release that we had this year, that’s one of the things that we’re ramping up.”

Ultimately, he said, the more than a decade of conceptualizing and last five years of earnest design and development work have been about the customers who will use the carts in the fields.

“One of my favorite parts of the job is when ... if we’re at a farm show, when you see people come up to one of your

products and want to take a picture in front of it,” he said. “Or it’s a dad and his little son and he wants to have his little son step up onto the tracks and take a picture because they’re so excited ... That part’s neat to see after you’ve put in so many hours and days and months and years working on something and really trying to make a product that will be good for them and that they’ll love and appreciate and enjoy.”



V WELDING & STEEL
Fort Recovery, Ohio

3234 St. Rt. 49, Fort Recovery, OH 45846
419-375-4087 • Fax **419-375-2466**
Email: vores@bright.net

Vores Welding & Steel, Inc. is celebrating over 35 years of specialized needs of industrial and commercial clients along with our staff who has over 150 years of combined experience. We Will continue to serve the highest quality standards to fit your needs.
Have a specific question on capabilities?

Call us...We look forward to doing business with you!

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Fabrication (Steel, Aluminum, Stainless Steel) Repairs
- OSHA Guarding
- Storage Bins & Hoppers
- Automotive & Commercial Material
- Handling Racks & Containers
- Weldments
- Short & Long Production Runs

CAPABILITIES:

- On-Site Service
- Press Brake
- Punch Press
- Milling
- CNC Plasma Cutting Service
- Welding-MIG, TIG Spot Shearing
- Production & Sub Assembly
- Steel Sales
- Powder Coating & Galvanizing





Tough jobs require tougher equipment.

claas.com

Everywhere you look on the CLAAS JAGUAR forage harvester, you’ll find improvements and innovations inspired by conversations we’ve had with hundreds of farmers like you. From unbeatable throughput to impressive fuel efficiency, this machine is proven to perform exactly the way you need it to - starting with the first all the way to the last load of silage.

VISIT: www.kandltractor.com



K&L Tractor Sales, Inc

1737 St. Rt. 49,
Fort Recovery, Ohio
419-375-2330
www.kandltractor.com



© 2021 CLAAS of America Inc. JAGUAR is a registered trademarks of CLAAS KGaA mbH.