The Spring 2009 AgEds 450 Class made a major improvement in efficiency this planting season by upgrading to a John Deere 1770-16 Row Planter. Prior to this semester the class has been planting with a John Deere 7200-12 Row Planter. This upgrade will allow the class to plant at least 5 more acres an hour. The ability to plant more acres per hour will help the class to be more efficient and timely, even in times of low labor and bad weather.

The next step to increase productivity will be to upgrade the corn head to match the planter. Currently, the farm owns a 6 Row Corn Head and would like to upgrade to an 8 Row Corn Head in the future.

AgEds 450 Class in Search of New Labor

With increasing custom operations and long hours in the fields, the AgEds 450 Class is evaluating the best solution for labor shortages. This summer the class will hire a student employee to assist with overall farm operations. This student will perform daily livestock chores, operate machinery for required field work, and work with the farm operator and class to help complete miscellaneous projects.

Ag 450 Farm Employee Requirements

- General Farm Background
- Proficient in Machinery Operations
- Self-motivator
- Good Work Ethic
- Availability for nights and weekend work
Buildings and Grounds
The Buildings and Grounds committee has kept very busy this semester working on a variety of projects. They removed two hoop buildings, finished putting new steel on the machine shed, repaired the roof on the feed shed, built shelving units for storage, cleaned up scrap metal, and updated utility maps for the farm. In the classroom, they did some organizational updating and installed a new toilet.

Crops
The Crops committee has spent the semester analyzing the input needs for the spring planting season. They have accomplished this by meeting with a variety of seed vendors as well as coops to understand the fertility and seed needs of each specific field. Another task completed was clearing the fence lines of brush to make fieldwork easier.

Custom Operations
The Custom Operations committee worked on a variety of tasks this semester. They put together a plan and budget for custom manure application. They also looked at potential sites for an additional swine facility and priced buildings while providing some upkeep to our current building.

Finance
The Finance committee worked hard at updating financial records and keeping things organized. They developed a Net Worth statement for the farm and created a cash flow budget for 2009. They worked closely with the Marketing committee to determine monthly cash needs and also analyzed the labor needs of the farm currently and into the future.

Public Relations
The Public Relations committee updated the video that is posted on the website to reflect changes to the class and farm. They also updated the farm’s website throughout the semester. This committee also purchased a new digital camera to capture the happenings here at the farm. They also worked on organizing computer records to make them more easily accessible to future classes.

Machinery
Besides purchasing the 16-row planter, the Machinery Committee upgraded our major tillage tractors to a 7630 and 8430. Thanks to Ryerson’s Implement, we are able to lease these new tractors which allow students to become familiar with new technology. New shovels were also put on the field cultivator.

Marketing
The Marketing Committee was very active in watching market trends this semester and trying to hit the highs. They sold most of the old crop and started pricing new crop. They looked at options as an alternative way of marketing, but it proved to be too expensive for the class. With the use of DTN and the Roach Report this committee was able to stay on top of the markets.