

Editor's Notebook



Scott Geyer
Editor & Publisher

Contributing Editor Looks Back During Anniversary

By Jim Ruen, Contributing Editor

I'm proud to have contributed to FARM SHOW magazine for the past quarter of a century. I've had many wonderful opportunities in my professional life, but none match writing for FARM SHOW. That's in part due to the unbelievably broad range of topics covered, but more so to the interaction with sources and readers, often one and the same.



Ruen has been writing for FARM SHOW for more than 25 years.

I've written about the latest technology (at the time), both new and old machinery, livestock breeds, fruit and grain varieties, products from small farm-based businesses, and products from some that grew into large businesses. I've shared the stories of inventions, modifications and innovations in equipment, tools and systems for farming, rural living and rural businesses.

Best of all, I've gotten to know and count as friends so many wonderful FARM SHOW readers from throughout the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Whether single-source or repeat contacts for multiple stories, they've shared their successes and failures, personal histories and family joys, and often their love and appreciation for FARM SHOW.

More than one person has mentioned having every issue of FARM SHOW since they first subscribed, often 20 or 30 years ago, and in several cases since our first issue.

For all of this and more, I thank FARM SHOW's subscribers. You make it all possible!

Here's to Volume 50 and everything to come!



Sullivan used a local crop consulting firm to develop the planting prescription for the maze. He planted 13 acres of corn using a computerized tractor.

Corn Maze Proposal Earns A 'Yes'

A custom-designed corn maze at Circle S Farms in Grove City, Ohio, provided the perfect backdrop for farmer Timothy Sullivan's proposal to Caroline Liggett on an airplane ride.

"Our family has always had a corn maze for our Fall Fun Days event," says Sullivan. "I was mowing the yard, thinking about how I wanted to propose, knowing it needed

to be something big she would always remember. The idea hit me — a corn maze!"

Sullivan used a local crop consulting firm to help implement the idea.

"They created the planting prescription for planting the maze in my proposal design."

He began planting 13 acres of corn on June 3 using a computerized tractor.

"It was a challenge ensuring the proposal would come out of the ground," says Sullivan. "We were fortunate with moisture and heat to get the corn sprouting in less than a week after planting."

By mid to late June, the message was visible from the air, and he faced the far greater challenge of keeping the proposal secret.

"Several times, I thought we were close to her finding out. My girlfriend asked about the design throughout the summer."

He was nervous for weeks about other planes flying overhead, possibly spotting it and posting photos online.

But the secret held. Once the maze was ready, Sullivan needed an excuse to get Liggett on an airplane.

"I told her I was interested in learning how to fly and that she should tag along for the first flight."

On the day of the proposal, Sullivan drove Liggett to the Madison County Airport, an engagement ring in his pocket.

"A local farmer had a plane and took us up. We flew over the farm, but unfortunately, Caroline was looking out the other side of the plane and did not see the maze. This led to us having to fly back over and ensure she could see the design."

This second flyover proved to be the charm, and Liggett said yes.

"I officially got down on one knee after we landed," Sullivan says.

While he believes Liggett expected him to be elaborate and intentional, the proposal blew her away.

"Caroline and I both work in the ag industry and have enjoyed how much this story has allowed us to share our passion as well as how our food, fuel and clothes are grown in a sustainable way."

He suggests that other farmers think outside the box with their own love stories.

"Do something bold and have fun with the proposal. Find something you both are passionate about and integrate it."

Their wedding is planned for early summer 2026.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Timothy Sullivan (timothy3sullivan@gmail.com).



Nine-liter, E98, 350-hp spark-ignited engine produces power comparable to its diesel counterparts without the need for DEF.

E98 John Deere Hits Farm Fields

By Jim Ruen, Contributing Editor

John Deere tractors burning straight ethanol are in fields this spring. The experimental tractors are operating in Iowa and Illinois and will spend some time in Nebraska. It's the second year of field trials for the E98s. The 9-liter, 350-hp spark-ignited engine delivers power comparable to its diesel equivalents, without the need for DEF.

"To get the same high level of power density as diesel, we need the high percentage ethanol," says Buddy (Harold) Kavalier, large tractor engine research strategist with Deere. "You need more ethanol in order to have the same energy content as a gallon of diesel."

Given the cost differential between ethanol and diesel, ethanol should be an attractive alternative. Add to that the incentive to use the fuel produced from the crop you produced.

"Farmers provide the feedstock for the ethanol plants," says Kavalier. "The E98 is an opportunity for them to buy the fuel back from the plant they sold to. We're creating a little bit more of that circular economy."

The E98 engine is essentially the proven and popular 8R diesel engine.

"We kept as many components as we could," says Kavalier. "We had to change out air and fuel components and develop the computer controls to allow it to run on ethanol. Cold starts

are still a challenge, but we've made a lot of progress over the past six months."

He explains that although bottom-end torque differs from that of a diesel, the engine compares well to a diesel as it moves up the power curve. He credits advances in computerized controls with making an ethanol-powered tractor viable.

"Even 10 years ago, it wouldn't have been an option," Kavalier says.

Powering farm tractors with ethanol was a dream shared by many farmers during the late 1970s energy crisis. In 1979, M & W Gear Co. (Vol. 3, No. 6) promoted its Aquahol kit to convert diesel tractors to run on home-brewed alcohol. Although many attempts were made to repower gas-fueled tractors, poor-quality ethanol was a major problem. Kavalier notes that the availability of high-quality ethanol is no longer a problem.

"We need high-quality fuel for the E98 engine, and the infrastructure and equipment are in place with existing ethanol plants," says Kavalier. "Every plant produces 98% ethanol, and every terminal has it on hand in order to distribute it to us as 10% and higher ethanol at the fuel pumps."

Deere is working with GrowMark FS to provide fuel distribution services.

"We want to make sure we've got other distributors who are capable of getting the E98 ethanol as well," says Kavalier.

Later this summer, the E98 ethanol-powered prototype will be on display at major farm shows. It was first showcased at Commodity Classic 2026 after 4 to 5 years of research and development.

Kavalier emphasizes that the research continues, but don't expect to order one anytime soon.

"This tractor is a number of years away before we would look at going to production or commercialization," says Kavalier. "This is the first pass-build of an ethanol-powered engine."

The E98 tractors have been field-tested in Brazil. Kavalier notes that Deere is also considering the engine for the Canadian market.

"We're starting to get insights on how it would work there and hope to get tractors up there as well," he says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, John Deere (<https://about.deere.com/en-us/our-company-and-purpose/technology-and-innovation/alternative-energy/renewable-fuels>).

Liberty Quotes

"You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today." *Abraham Lincoln*

"Prosperity tries the fortunate, adversity the great." *Rose Kennedy*

"Patriotism is supporting your country all the time, and your government when it deserves it." *Mark Twain*

"Great things are done by a series of small things brought together." *Vincent van Gogh*

"All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them." *Walt Disney*

"It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit." *Harry S. Truman*

"You may delay, but time will not." *Benjamin Franklin*

Ole and Lena were leaning against the pig pen when Lena recalled that the following week would mark their golden wedding anniversary.

"Let's have a party, Ole," she suggested. "We'll kill a pig." Ole scratched his head.

"Gosh, Lena," he finally answered, "I don't see why da pig should take the blame for something dat happened 50 years ago."

Ole was shopping at the mall when he met his friend Sven outside the jewelry store. Sven noticed a small, gift-wrapped box in Ole's hand.

"What have yew got dere?" asked Sven. "It's Lena's birthday tomorrow," replied Ole. "When I asked her dis morning what she wanted for her birthday, Lena said, 'Oh, I dunno, dear, yust get me something with lots of diamonds.'"

"So, what did you get her?" Sven asked. Ole said, "I bought her a deck of cards."

Sven was filling up at the gas station. He said to Ole, "I bet dese awful fuel prices are goin' ta go even higher."

Ole replied, "It von't affect me. I always put in just \$10 worth."