

THE HIGH PLAINS
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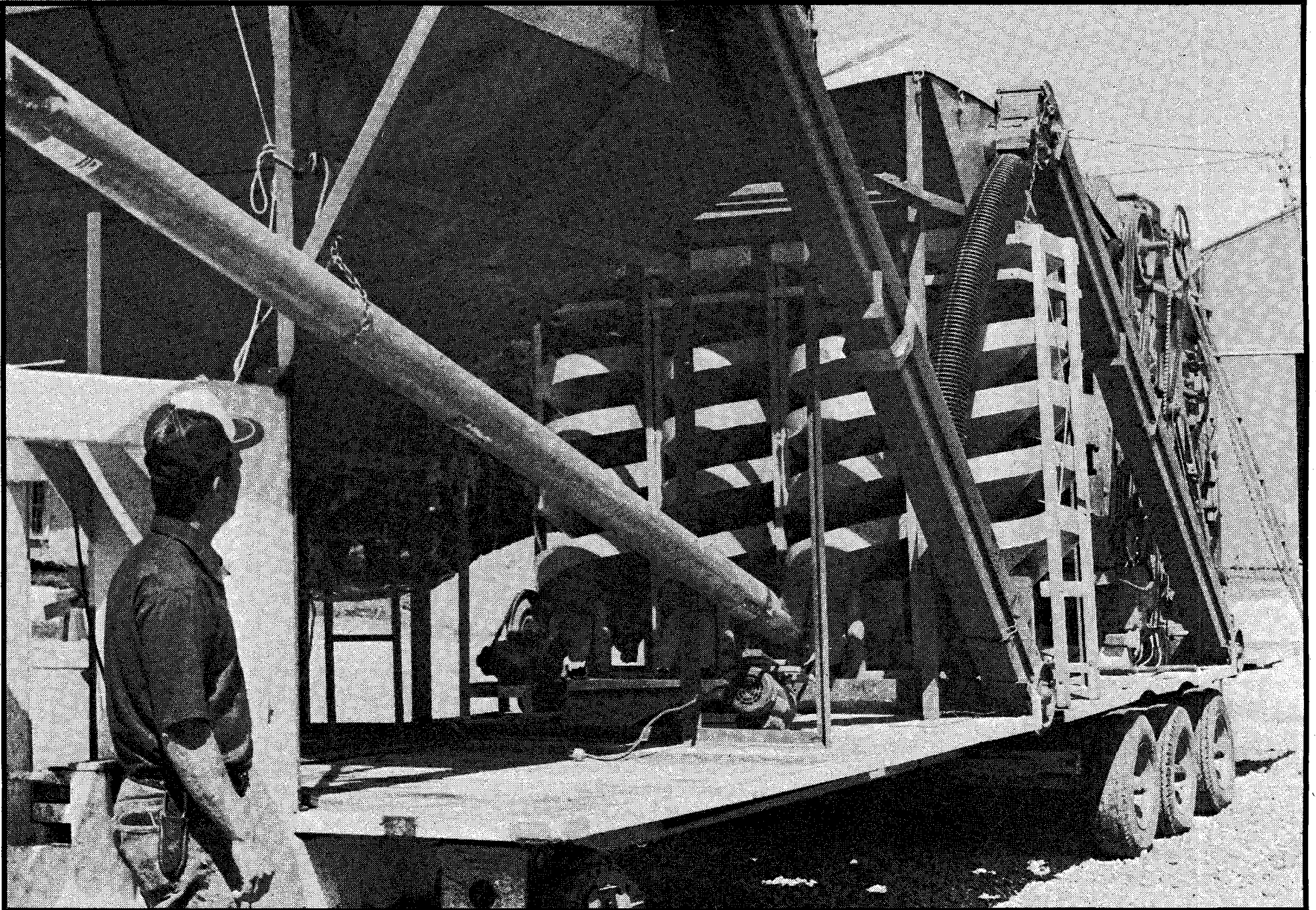


Section A

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Good seed offers good potential

By Bob Keating

The pace of life has moved fast for Don Phillips since he quit teaching school four years ago and moved into farming full time.

He has gradually acquired more land, has continued some custom harvesting, has started a registered cow herd, has built up a certified seed production and

marketing program for wheat, soybeans, alfalfa and oats, and has operated a seed cleaning business.

And he has plenty of plans made for the future.

Phillips and his wife, Connie, farm near Hope in Dickinson County, Kan.

He says his main desire always has been to get into farming, but

he spent a few years off the farm getting his education—bachelor's and master's degrees in agricultural education from Kansas State University. He also completed most of the work on a master's degree in agronomy, taught some agricultural engineering classes at K-State while he was a graduate student, and then taught high

school vocational agriculture.

There wasn't enough room for Phillips to move into his family's dairy operation, so he turned to crop production. He was farming some ground and custom harvesting while he was teaching, and he started putting his operation together more intensively four years ago.

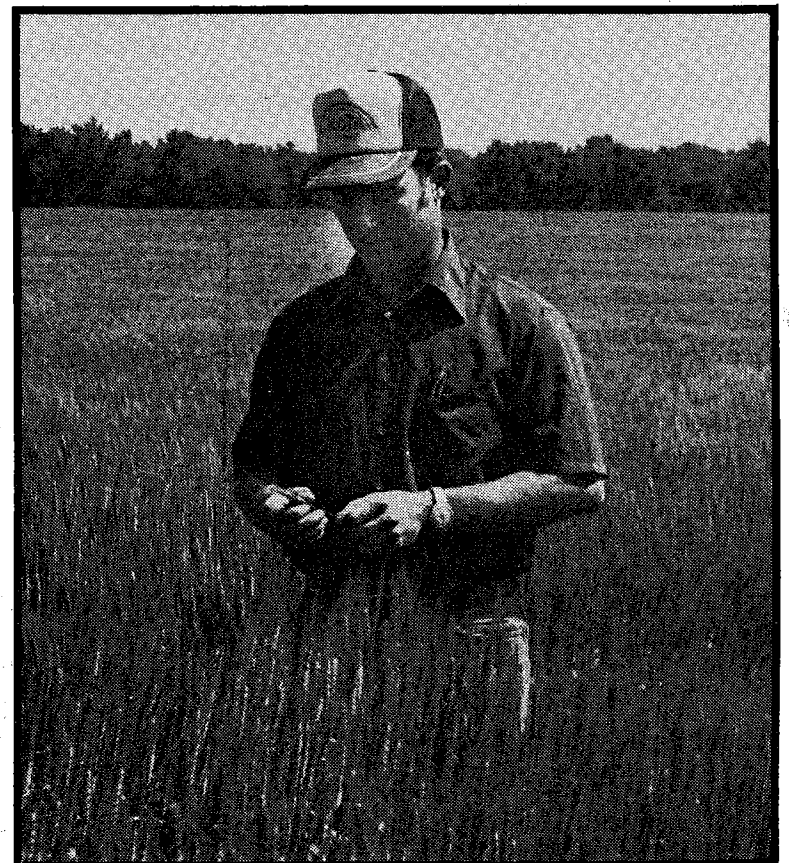
"I ran out of seed wheat then

and bought some. After that I got interested in seed production. It just seemed like another step up," he says.

Phillips feels he is off to a good start in farming, despite the unstable economics of the period. And he can pinpoint the reasons. "For somebody to start out in

(Continued on Page 2-A)

IN THE SEED BUSINESS—Late May was a busy time for Don Phillips as he prepared for the coming wheat harvest in his certified seed operation in Dickinson County, Kan. He examines his seed cleaner, discusses the specifications for two round bins with the building contractor, and checks on the progress of his registered Arkan seed wheat crop. (Journal photos by Bob Keating.)



'You'd better know what will move in the area or you'll be stuck with it'

(Continued from Page 1-A)

farming at my age, you have to have something extra as part of your business," he remarks. "Seed production is definitely one way to turn a profit. You have the extra time and management going into that crop, but it can be profitable."

There are three main reasons the new farming business has been able to progress steadily, Phillips says. One is that Connie has an off-farm income. She is a court reporter. Another is that his custom harvesting business, although slowing down the last two years, brought in some needed income during some critical years. Then the seed production and custom cleaning operations added a lot of stability.

Phillips also has relied heavily on his farm management association for help every step of the way, and that analysis has been the basis for many decisions.

The aim of Phillips' certified seed business is to spread out his offerings to try to meet the greatest demands in his area. This year he is producing registered Arkan, registered and certified Newton, and registered and certified Tam 105.

He is handling Cumberland, Sparks and Williams 82 soybean varieties this year, and he has a field of Riley alfalfa and a field of Larry oats. He also is contracting with some other farmers in the area to produce wheat and soybean seed for him. And he has four dealers marketing his seed. Phillips also handles Rohm and Haas and Cargill's Bounty hybrid wheats.

"I can see hybrid wheat production playing a very important role in the grain business in five years, but I feel there will always be a demand for the public and private varieties being developed and released," he says. "And I think farmers in this area are aware of the advantages of updating their seed wheats and going with the new varieties and pure varieties."

"Certified seed production can be profitable for the seller and the buyer, too. It's a good deal for the buyer, compared to not having that new seed, or growing and cleaning his own certified seed."

"I try to pick out the things that are coming into demand and look like they will stay in demand in this area," he adds. "The added production costs and certification costs that go into seed production are a considerable amount, so you'd better know what will move in the area or you'll be stuck with it."

Phillips produces his own registered seed to keep his lines going. "I make it a practice to go to Manhattan every year to get either foundation wheat or soybean seed," he says.

Soon after he started raising seed, Phillips found it was getting expensive to haul his production somewhere and get it cleaned. So he bought a used 200-bushel-per-hour seed cleaner and rebuilt it. And he came up with the idea of designing a whole layout, including two hopper bins, to mount on a gooseneck, flatbed trailer he had built for hauling hay. And he will replace the cleaner soon with a used 400-bushel-per-hour cleaner he bought this spring.

Phillips starts cleaning his own wheat seed right after harvest, then he starts his custom cleaning for several weeks. Most of his

business, both in selling and cleaning seed, is within a 20-mile radius of his home place in southern Dickinson County. Now he is bagging about one-fourth of his certified wheat seed and all his soybean and alfalfa seed.

His seed business is moving—literally. This past winter Phillips bought the farm where his grandfather had been living, and he moved his operation to the new headquarters. Now he is starting construction on a new grain storage and handling facility he feels will give him the flexibility he needs in the seed marketing business.

He is planning initially to build up to 30,000 bushels of storage capacity in round, flat-bottom bins and 15,000 bushels of capacity in hopper bins, with a dump pit, a cleaning area and a bag storage area. His layout will allow much more expansion to match his needs in the years ahead.

Phillips puts a lot of thought into the decisions he makes, and he likes to keep an eye on the future. He is setting up his whole operation now so it will take him where he wants to go.

He feels an important part of being in the seed business is keeping up with new developments in crop production. A producer has to be up to date in his practices and his knowledge. That's why Phillips planted 24 wheat varieties in a plot on his land for the Extension Service this year. He also planted seven of the leading wheat hybrids in a 20-acre field comparison.

Although wheat is his main crop, Phillips stresses that his soybeans and alfalfa are very important to him—for their seed production and commercial production, and for his rotation. He likes the value of the legumes in the crop rotation on his land.

"I rotate my ground fairly fast. I don't like to keep any piece of ground for seed production in any one thing for more than two years, and the only way I can rotate ground that fast is using soybeans," he points out. "I plan to keep a field of alfalfa in production only two or three years, too."

"The alfalfa and soybeans have added a lot of tilth to the ground where I work them in," he adds.

Phillips is getting a registered cattle program set up with 25 purebred and percentage Gelbvieh cows. He aims to supplement that cow herd with the steer program he has been maintaining. He backgrounds steers in the fall and winter, then puts them into a commercial feedlot.

These haven't been easy years to get started in farming. But Phillips has spread out his risks as much as he could. He has used the futures market some in the past for his wheat, soybeans and cattle. And he has relied on his certified seed business to provide a stable income.

His farming operation now hasn't gone in quite the direction he anticipated when he left the education field. But the education Phillips acquired opened some doors for him and allowed him to move into some production areas where he saw good opportunities. And he's not looking back now. He's ready to keep building on the foundation he has laid and to keep watching the demand for quality seed.



VARIETY PLOT—Don Phillips is using side-by-side comparisons to test the performance of 24 of the top wheat varieties for his area. He planted the wheat variety plot in cooperation with the county Extension Service this year, and he also planted some of the leading wheat hybrids in a field-scale comparison on his land. (Journal photo by Bob Keating.)

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Meat Board planning aggressive ad campaign

Kansas
By Gary Hellebust
Executive Vice President
Kansas Pork Producers Council

The National Live Stock and Meat Board has just released details on one of its most aggressive promotional programs ever.

One of the board's long-range goals during the program is "to increase consumer understanding of and appreciation for red meats' role in a balanced and varied diet."

To accomplish that goal, the Meat Board will invest more than \$5.6 million this year to promote a positive diet-health image for beef, pork and lamb. The total amounts to 43% of the board's budget, offering testimony to the tremendous importance the board places on the issue.

The framework for the plan is based on the statement of principles adopted by the organization's board of directors last February. The principles stress the communication of scientifically accurate information in a positive manner, rather than reacting to every anti-meat statement.

The program will be centered on three areas: updating research information, communication and measurement of results.

Within the research arena, the Meat Board will finalize work on a nutrient composition study, and finance research grants to expand the collection of scientific information regarding meat in the diet.

Additionally, the board will step up new product development, participate in scientific meetings and seminars and develop a research advisory committee.

Nearly \$5 million will be directed toward communication. Consumers will be reached via food editors, public relation activities and combined retailer-food service efforts. Other targets of the communication program will be the health care professionals and meat and food scientists.

The third area of the board's plan will allow monitoring and measurement of the entire program's results. The board will continue its ongoing evaluation of consumer and health care professional attitudes about red meat. To study the effectiveness of the advertising efforts, all targeted audiences will undergo pre- and post-advertising evaluations.

The Kansas Pork Producers Council applauds the aggressive program outlined by the National Live Stock and Meat Board. The program offers pork producers a concrete and responsible program in exchange for voluntary checkoff funds.

The meat industry has weathered numerous anti-meat attacks over the years, but the evolution of the diet-health controversy has reached a mature state and producers have some challenging claims to answer—the Meat Board's program will provide answers to those questions.



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