JQ: So you said your dad worked on the farm before you…is...?

DA: Not very much.

JQ: Oh, he was mostly…

DA: He, he taught. Uh...he got the farm for us kids.

JQ: Oh...

DA: That's, that was…

JQ: That was the plan.

DA: That was his remark. So we grew up on the farm. I was seven when we moved here to the farm. We were at a very small farm north of town before--seven and a half acres.

ET: That is, that is small.

JQ: [unclear]

DA: And we had some cows up there, and that--for our own milk and use. When we moved here, the first year or so, the neighbors put their crops out and then my older brother that was in high school then, put some crops out. But Dad never did a whole lot on the farm.

JQ: So it wasn't really--farming wasn't necessarily in your family before then?

DA: No, no.
DA: My father grew up as a Texan. San Antonio.

JQ: Okay.

DA: And he went into the ministry then and then got a job here at the college in, um, 1927, I think.

JQ: Mmhmm.

ET: Okay.

MrsA: He mainly just milked the cow when you lived in town, didn't he?

DA: Yeah, when we were up there, he milked a cow. He milked a cow in Texas. Uh, just for our own use, for our own use. But--

ET: And, did you have--you said you had a brother--

DA: Mmhmm.

ET: Do you have other siblings?

DA: Yeah. The oldest one was a girl that left the family shortly after we moved here.

ET: Uh-huh.

DA: Then my older brother. And then I have a sister that's a couple years older than I, and I have a brother that is about six years younger than I.

ET: And did any of them end up going into farming, or did they just all, did they do other things?

DA: Well, my older brother was going to, and probably '55, 1955 he made plans. And Dad had a hired hand for a while.

ET: Okay.

DA: To, to farm. And then my brother took over that job as being the hired hand, and then he was gonna buy the operation out. And then, 'bout 1955, he got cancer.

JQ: Oh.

DA: So he thought he'd better not get into a big debt then.
DA: And so, he and his wife went back to school, and they became teachers. He's now retired and living down here in the south part of the county, and he and his boy are raising sheep.

ET: Oh.

JQ: Oh wow! So they still are...

DA: And my younger, my youngest brother worked in a factory, and my sister above me has been a housewife all of her life.

JQ: Hmm.

DA: My older sister was a schoolteacher.

JQ: Uh-huh. [unclear]

DA: Lots of schoolteachers.

JQ: Yeah, that's, that's what I was going to say. So how did you end up with the farm in the end, 'cause you said your older brother was working it and then--

DA: Yeah, he was, and then he decided he couldn't so, at that time, Dad thought the best thing to do... I was, I was a freshman in college then, I think. They sold out all the cattle, and sold off all of the machinery.

JQ: Mmhmm.

DA: And rented the farm out. And did that for a number of years, and when I got out of college, I went to work at the research center, and after five years, I went to work as an insurance investigator. I worked for a company called Equifax. Equifax is a, one of the big three credit reporting companies now.

JQ: Uh-huh.

DA: So you probably have heard of them. And I worked there for, mmm, five years?

MrsA: Something like that.

DA: Anyhow, during that time, I start farming part-time.
JQ: Oh, okay.

DA: I rented the farm from Dad, and we farmed and then, uh, um…

MrsA: Well, he decided he wanted to sell it.

DA: Yeah, we, we bought the farm and rented the other farm from Dad. Um…ten years or so. And then, we weren't makin' any money, and then…so we put the farm. We had an opportunity to put the farm—a government program came out that where, you could put all the acres in a, a what they call a set-aside program. So, we didn't, uh, uh crop the land, it was all sowed to grass--

ET: oh, okay.

DA: And we didn't, didn't crop it. We just kept it mowed.

ET: Uh-huh.

DA: And the commodity prices were very low then--

ET: Yeah.

DA: And what the government did, was they, about the equivalent of pay dirt, uh rent on the land. So, all I had to do was keep the land mowed down so it didn't go to weeds.

JQ: Mmm.

DA: Then I went and got a job in town, in a factory.

JQ: Oh, [unlcear].

DA: And then…and then that program went off and prices came up, and I went back to farming again. Oh--

MrsA: And we raised, we raised heifers.

DA: Yeah, we had some steers.

MrsA: Mmhmm.

DA: Not heifers, dear. We had steers--

MrsA: Steers, yeah.

DA: Um--
MrsA: We have heifers here now.

DA: Mhmhm. Uh--

MrsA: And you had a dairy cow.

DA: Well, yeah--

MrsA: One dairy cow.

DA: But that was early on. We had, one dairy cow.

MrsA: We, we had our own milk.

JQ: That's nice.

DA: But farming has never been a way to get rich. Uh, it's the most--

ET: Mmm.

DA: Probably the most competitive business there is. And it's probably the only business where the competitors help each other out.

ET: Mhmhm.

DA: You know, farmers are always helping each other out--

JQ: Mhmhm.

DA: If they, if they hear of something that works better, why, they'll tell their neighbors.

JQ: That's really good.

DA: You don't find that happening, happening in the industrial world at all.

JQ: No.

DA: Not only are we competing against each other, we're competing against the other farmers in the world.

JQ: Mhmhm.

DA: And in a sense, a good bit of our produce is, is in world trade. Whatever happens in other countries really affects--
JQ: Affects--

DA: Our prices.

ET: Right.

DA: And the reason, one of the reasons why prices have gone up so well this year on our farm commodities is because of drought in Russia and in China, and that's made the--

JQ: Mmmmm.

DA: The scarcity in, in corn and beans and wheat. Particularly wheat.

ET: Hmm. Interesting. So--

DA: So right now, prices are good, which is very rare--

JQ: Yeah, I was gonna say.

DA: We had a very rare year this year, and we here had really good yields, and we got really good prices for the crops.

ET: Hmm.

MrsA: Well, and we had rain. Rain at the right times--

DA: Mmmmm.

MrsA: I mean, we had, we had too much rain at times--

DA: So we were very--

MrsA: But, we had enough.

JQ: Better, yeah.

DA: Very fortunate this year.

MrsA: Yup.

JQ: That's really good.

MrsA: Once maybe in a lifetime.

JQ: Good [unclear].
[All laugh]

**DA:** Well, well that's the way it is, I mean, some years, we make money, and some years, we lose money. My degree is farm management and agroeconomics. Extremely dull subject.

**JQ/ET:** Mmhmm.

**JQ:** Even you say so?

[All laugh]

**DA:** I don't need to tell you do I? But, for your survival in this world, it's one of the more important things--

**JQ:** Mmm.

**DA:** If you learn how to handle money, you probably will survive.

**ET:** Yeah, that's true.

**JQ:** Yeah, that's really important.

**ET:** What are, um--so, since you've kinda been in the full farming scene for a number of years, what are the big changes that you've observed since you started farming up to today?

**DA:** Well, probably the biggest change that’s happened is not to the individual farmer's benefit...at all--

**ET:** Mmhmm.

**DA:** And that is the, the big advances we've made in--and I say "we" being the agriculture community--

**ET:** Mmhmm.

**DA:** Has made in genetics.

**JQ:**Hmm.

**DA:** Where the corn now--when I started, uh, uh, seventy-five, eighty bushels an acre was a good crop. This year, we had a hundred and eighty.

**ET:** Wow.
JQ: Whoa.

DA: And so, picture what that does to the price of corn.

ET: Yeah.

DA: And corn is one of the, more or less, inelastic commodities. So, if you have a need for ten bushels of corn, and you have ten bushels of corn, you don't want that eleventh bushel.

JQ: Mmhmm.

DA: And that's what happens to our prices, so--

ET: Yeah.

DA: For the last thirty years, forty years, the yield's been going up, and they've been going up until the last five years maybe, the yield's been going up faster than consumption, which just kept driving the price lower--

JQ: Price down.

ET: Right.

DA: And lower. Now they're telling us, maybe that, that we're gonna have more people wanting more food faster than what we can make it in. If that's the case, then maybe the curve will go the other way.

JQ: Go up...

DA: But all of our commodities that we, that we raise, the wheat, the corn, the soybeans, because of the genetics of the seed, it's been giving us a lot better yields. And like I said, that's not to my benefit.

JQ: Mmm.

ET: Right.

DA: I would rather see the yields low--

ET: Mmhmm.

JQ: Right.

DA: So we keep the prices up.
**JQ:** Prices up. Do you mean, like, the genetics of the seed, are they like the Roundup Ready, where you just spray 'em and…?

**DA:** That's part of it.

**JQ:** Okay.

**DA:** That gives us, a, a little better weed control--

**JQ:** Mmhmm.

**DA:** but the actual ability of the plant to produce a bigger seed--

**JQ:** Is actually…Okay.

**DA:** More seeds, uh, is what has really helped. Yeah, the Roundup Ready is a temporary assistance.

**JQ:** Mmhmm.

**DA:** And it's only temporary because we're seeing lots of weeds now that don't mind Roundup.

**MrsA:** Yeah, mmhmm.

**JQ:** Yeah, that's true.

**DA:** And, and, in the…so we're going to have to figure out something else.

**JQ:** More...

**ET:** Something...

**DA:** And the chemical people are telling us right now they don't have anything else.

**JQ:** Mmhmm--they just...

**MrsA:** When some of those weeds just keep getting bigger and stronger.

**DA:** Yeah.

**JQ:** Buildin' up resistance.

**MrsA:** Right, right, nothing for them.

**DA:** Uh-huh.
ET/JQ: Hmm.

DA: So you're right, there is—the genetics does affect us more than just the yield. From the ability of the plant, but it does also help us with weed control.

JQ: Oh, okay. And you just felt the need to buy these seeds because everyone else--just to keep up? Is that what…?

DA: Well--

JQ: ‘Cause you're saying you want to keep the yields low.

DA: Well, I don't want to keep the yields low for me if everybody else is going up.

JQ: Exactly, exactly.

DA: But, if we were still raising hundred bushel corn crops, the price would be a whole lot higher than it is now.

ET: Hmm.

JQ: Mmhmm.

ET: Okay. Interesting.

DA: Now its…the point also being the, the state and federal research that use a non-farmer are paying for that will help them get us better yields--

ET: Mmhmm.

DA: Is to your advantage, not mine.

JQ: Mmhmm.

DA: And that is why, it's, it's the, to the benefit of all you citizens to fund that research. It's not up to me to fund it, because it doesn't benefit me.

ET: Mmhmm. Hmm.

DA: Any, any of the research that makes better yields, doesn't help me at all.

JQ/ET: [Laugh]

JQ: [unclear]
DA: Doesn't help me a bit.

ET: Hmm.

DA: And we have commodity organizations that haven't really figured that out yet. We have the American Corn-Growers Association, the Soybean Association, the Wheat Board that we give money to; it’s taken away from us at the market. When we sell a bushel of corn, they take a couple of cents out of that and send it into the Corn Growers--

MrsA: Organization.

JQ: Mmhmm.

DA: And some of those directors are using that money to help increase yields, help fund research to increase yields, and I keep tellin' 'em, "No, no, no, no."

JQ: Yeah.

DA: That will benefit us if they use that money to help us find new markets, find new uses, to get rid of the product, not to get us more of it.

ET: Hmm.

JQ: Yeah, exactly.

ET: Hmm, interesting. Have you, have you ever had people help you on your farm or has it mainly been run by you?

DA: Well, we run it. But when we were farming full-time--

ET: Mmhmm.

DA: Uh, uh--

MrsA: When we had, what? Five farms? Five rental places?

DA: Yeah. Her father and uncle helped us some.

ET: Okay.

DA: During, during the busy time.

ET: Okay.

DA: Which is planting and harvesting.
**JQ**: Mmhmm.

**DA**: We were…

**MrsA**: They'd plow or disk or drive grain trucks, mainly.

**DA**: Yeah.

**JQ**: Oh.

**DA**: Mmhmm. So we did have some help then.

**JQ**: What about now?

**DA**: No...

**JQ**: [unclear]

**DA**: We, we don't--our time is not fully utilized right now.

[All laugh]

**JQ**: You have some time.

**DA**: We're partially retired.

**ET**: Right.

**MrsA**: But we haven't had hired people for years and years.

**DA**: No.

**MrsA**: We farm four farms without hired hands.

**DA**: When, when you hire people, you have to pay into an employment compensation form, you have to pay in--

**MrsA**: Workmen's Comp.

**DA**: Yeah, Worker's Comp. You have to pay that insurance. You have to pay in Social Security, and you have to take money out of their pay for social security. There's a lot of paperwork involved.

**JQ**: Mmhmm.
DA: And a lot of expense. Uh, so for just one person, it's better to keep the workload under what you need.

JQ: Yeah.

ET: Hmm.

JQ: You can do it. What was I…? So, what, what are kinda--what kinda things do you do every day around here? I'm just thinking…

DA: Right now, I just twiddle my thumbs.

JQ: Yeah, now's not the time of year.

DA: Yeah.

MrsA: Repair work, um, painting, machinery…

JQ: Oh.

DA: In the spring, uh, as soon as the weather starts to warm up, well then we, we make sure what machinery we haven’t fixed before we put it away, which is our standard--

JQ: Mmhmm.

DA: To fix the machinery before we put it away for the winter, er, for the season. But sometimes, there's the repairs that we know are going to be big enough then, we'll have to bring that machine into the shop when we're not busy and make repairs. Sometimes, it's a complete overhaul.

JQ: Mmm.

DA: Sometimes, the, the corn planter may be so worn down that we'll just take it apart and just put all new bearings in and put new disks on--

ET: Mmhmm.

DA: And just rebuild it. And, and those jobs take weeks.

ET: And that's mainly yourself, right?

JQ: Hmm.

DA: Yeah, yeah.

JQ: Mmhmm.
MrsA: We've had the first tractors we started with. We still have 'em.

ET: Yeah, we saw them.

JQ: We saw 'em.

MrsA: Did you see those?

JQ: That's really impressive.

DA: And this looks like the first winter when I'm not gonna have a major job in the shop to work on.

ET: Hmm.

JQ: That’s [unclear].

DA: Which is alright.

ET: So you can twiddle your thumbs some more, right?

[All laugh]

MrsA: We'll find something else to do, right?

DA: Well, uh, one of the jobs we worked on a couple of years ago is that yellow VW.

JQ: Oh, so you need another toy to work on...

DA: We had it torn, we had it torn completely down, and, and all of its parts painted; repaired it and painted it and put it back together.

JQ: Whoa.

DA: And that was a big job.

MrsA: Well, you did the fire truck, then, I think, this past--

DA: Well, yeah, I--

MrsA: Winter.

DA: I rebuilt the engine on that.

MrsA: Rebuilt that.
JQ: Mmhmm.

DA: Um...

MrsA: But as you can see, the house is an ever ending...something to do in the house.

DA: Well, that's right. There's this building, and this house, and then the other farm has a farmhouse--

MrsA: And a barn.

DA: And a barn on it.

ET: Oh.

DA: And, uh, that house is in worse shape than this one. And they all take a lot of work--

ET: Yeah.

DA: To keep maintenance on 'em.

JQ: Mmhmm.

DA: But, uh, in the spring, before we start planting, which is usually, the second week, or third week in April, we'll get into the fields. May spray herbicides on the fields, if we're gonna spread bulk fertilizer, we'll do that then. And then, and then we start planting and, uh, gettin', well we gotta get the fertilizer, the bagged fertilizer in--

JQ: Uh-huh.

DA: That we're gonna run through the planter--

JQ: Oh.

DA: To plant, when we plant corn. And, so we try to get started the third week of April planting. Sometimes'll be the end of the second week, but the best time to plant corn is in this area, is the first of May.

JQ: Oh.

DA: But since, uh, few people can plant all of the corn in one day, they gotta start early.

JQ: Mmhmm.

ET: Hmm.
DA: And, uh, then when we get the corn planted, then we'll plant the soybeans. And of course the wheat's already growing--and after we get the planting done, and we start going over the fields, and putting herbicides on 'em when needed, where needed. And we hafta keep an eye out for bugs, but we rarely have any trouble with insects.

JQ: Okay. Just the birds, you said?

DA: Well, in the fall, we have bird trouble.

JQ: Okay.

DA: There's not too much we can do about that.

JQ: No, there's not.

DA: Yeah. Um...

MrsA: You forgot your dear groundhogs.

DA: Oh yeah...

JQ: And groundhogs? [Laughs]

MrsA: We have groundhog problems.

DA: We, we do have groundhog problems, uh--

MrsA: Deer.

JQ: Deer?

DA: Not near like it had been, um, after I get the, the soybeans planted and usually all this planting will be done by the end of the first week of May--

JQ: Uh-huh.

DA: Then I start going around the fields, hunting up the groundhog holes and putting traps at the holes. And traps have to be checked every day, 'cause it's not fun to get a dead groundhog out of a trap after the third day.

JQ: Nooo...that's gross.

DA: It's kinda messy...messy thing. The trap kills 'em. Like that [snaps fingers].

JQ: Okay.
DA: Uh...

ET: What do they eat? Do they eat anything?

DA: Yes, they eat the soybeans.

ET: They like soybeans?

DA: And as the soybean comes through the ground, it, it comes through just the two halves of the bean itself. You know, the bean comes up out of the ground, the seed--

JQ: Mmhmm.

DA: Comes up out of the ground and then there's a...sprout that comes out between the first, uh, leaves. And they love to snip those off.

JQ: Mmhmm.

ET: Ohh.

DA: And the um, groundhog can eat a lot of soybeans when they’re just comin through the ground.

MrsA: That's dessert for them.

DA: One--

JQ: That's really sweet.

DA: One groundhog will have an area the size of this room just cleaned. Uh...

JQ: Do you do any like, crop rotations or…?

DA: Mmhmm. Our rotation is, is corn, soybeans, wheat.

JQ: Oh, that's [unclear].

DA: And then, back to corn.

JQ: Uh-huh.

ET: So, three-year rotation?

DA: Every year.
ET: Mmhmm, mmhmm.

DA: We had been putting corn out more than one year at a time--

ET: Uh-huh.

DA: But now that we're down to so few acres, it works well just to stick with that rotation.

ET: Hmm.

MrsA: You ask what he does now. He spends a lot of time getting ready to buy for next year. Buying corn, wheat--

DA: We have to study what we need--

MrsA: And supplies...

DA: Where our supplies are going to come from.

ET: Oh, okay.

MrsA: December's usually the time that we start ordering stuff ahead of time.

ET: Oh.

JQ: Uh-huh.

DA: And we take off a lot of time...do nothing.

JQ: Nice.

MrsA: Read.

DA: Yeah. Usually, usually from the middle of April till the middle of November, there's no time to do anything, when you're working by yourself.

JQ: Mmhmm.

DA: Uh, even, even with this few acres that we have now, every day there's something that needs to be done.

ET: Yeah.

DA: Tile lines to dig out, repairs to make, fence to build, uh, there's just something--
MrsA: Somebody wants something.

DA: Lawn mowed. Uh...

MrsA: Fields.

DA: Yeah and in the winter time--

MrsA: Waterways.

DA: The neighbors want their driveway cleaned out--get the snow out of the driveway. I do that.

MrsA: He does a lot of going around the neighborhood and clearing out--

JQ: Nice.

ET: Oh.

MrsA: Driveways. And in the summer, you mow for other people.

DA: Yeah.

MrsA: Mow their fields and pastures. So...church lots.

DA: That's pretty much freebie stuff.


ET: Who do you, um, who buys your crops? How, how does that process work?

DA: Most of the time, it goes right down there by the college to Land of Lakes, they're calling themselves now.

ET: Land of Lakes.

DA: And uh, when we want to sell, if we do it on what they call the "spot", cash spot market--we load it up, we haul it down and dump it, and we get the price they're offering at that time.

ET: Oh, okay.

DA: And sometimes when we think the price is going to be high enough, uh, we can sell in advance. So if, if I see that they're offering what I think's gonna be a good price in November and it's still July, I can sell in November, so many bushels at such and such a price. And then, when I deliver it in November, they pay me.
JQ: Mmhmm.

DA: They don't pay me when I sell it; they pay me when I deliver it.

ET: Hmm.

DA: And, uh--

MrsA: Forward contracting.

DA: Yeah.

MrsA: Mmhmm.

DA: And more times than not, you don't make money doing that, but you are assured a price.

ET: Oh.

DA: So, if I think that will pay my expenses, or if I think I've got a better chance of meeting expenses by forward contracting, uh, I'll do that, but only on partial, not very much of it.

ET: Hmm.

DA: This year was unusual and, uh, I even had the beans in the bin, and I forward contracted because I was getting a better price for selling them in January. I really wanted the money in January, not in December, for income tax purposes.

JQ: Mmm.

ET: Oh.

JQ: Yeah, so you could do your..?

DA: Yeah. So, uh, and we have yet to see whether I woulda been better off to wait and sell it in January.

JQ/ET: Mmhmm.

DA: But we got more money for our soybeans than we've sold before.

ET: Hmm.

JQ: That's interesting.
DA: It, it--the price is locked in now.

ET: Hmm.

MrsA: And the other place you sell to in uh...

DA: Oh, to Mansfield.

MrsA: Mansfield.

DA: To uh, another co-op, which is...

MrsA: I think...

DA: Town and Country.

MrsA: That's right.

JQ: Hmm.

MrsA: They put up huge, two huge bins.

DA: Really big.

MrsA: Million, million bushel?

DA: One's a million bushels, one's seven hundred fifty thousand bushels.

MrsA: Mammoth bins.

JQ: Huge.

ET: Wow.

DA: Uh. You know how the, the grain piles up 'cause it's dumped over in one spot, so then it piles up?

ET: Yup.

JQ: Mhm.

DA: What was it? Four, four trainloads?

MrsA: Something like that.
DA: Four--I think they told me they haul four trainloads out of this one bin before that cone had turned into the inverted cone.


DA: Where it's starting to take the grain off the sidewall.

ET: Yeah.

JQ: Yeah.

DA: So that, that cone would be two--

ET: It was thick.

DA: Two trainloads and the other one would be two train loads.

ET: Yeah.

ET: That's big.

JQ: That's a lot of corn.

DA: And I, I said to him, "You mean you filled it already?" 'cause they just put the bins up--

ET: Uh-huh.

DA: And they said yeah. They filled it.

DA: It was full.

JQ: Wow.

ET: And so does--is this corn and soy used for animal feed or for people?

DA: Both.

ET: Both.

DA: The corn, the corn principally is for animal feed. Um, the, uh, soybeans some of those soybeans may be used for diesel fuel. I don't know for sure.

JQ: Hmm.
DA: Uh, but most of it will be going to processors that will take the oil out of the soybeans, and they sell the oil for numerous--many, many, many--uses.

ET: Yeah.

DA: Uh, and if you go through your grocery store and look on your containers--anything that's bottled--you'll find soybean oil in a lot of that stuff.

ET: Yeah. Yeah.

JQ: Mmhmm.

DA: And then the meal that's leftover after they take the oil out--

ET: Mmhmm.

DA: Is used for animal feed mostly.

ET: Hmm.

DA: The beans themselves are not--most of them are not used for human food. Although we did have a company in, uh, Mount Vernon, which is thirty miles away, that had been making, uh, people food out of soybeans.

ET: Okay.

DA: They contracted with special, for special beans and special delivery.

ET: Oh, okay. Mmhmm.

DA: It's used as a protein supplement in animal food.

JQ: Yeah.

ET: Mmhmm.

DA: And it tastes good.

JQ: Yeah, you like it?

DA: Just soybeans, raw soybeans, taste good.

JQ: Yeah.

DA: They're better if they have chocolate on them.

JQ: Chocolate covered soybeans?
MrsA: Edamean or something?

JQ: Edamame. Yeah, those are really good.

MrsA: Right.

DA: But soybean meal is even better, since you don't have as much oil in it.

JQ: It's really good.

DA: It's good to eat.

JQ: I think I snacked on those before. They're good.

ET: Mmm. Okay, um. What should we talk about next?

JQ: [unclear]

ET: Oh, yeah. Do you wanna…?

JQ: Um, yeah.

ET: Go ahead.

JQ: I was just thinking, 'cause you're doing all the herbicides and fertilizer and stuff, and I was just wondering what your thoughts were on, like the organic food movement? Like more and more farmers going organic?

DA: Mmm. Oh yes...

MrsA: Oh, you--

DA: Oh, yes.

JQ: Oh, you have an opinion on this. Let me hear it.

[All laugh]

MrsA: That's a good one.

DA: Would you like to be hungry?

[All laugh]

JQ: That's [unclear].
DA: I think it's a niche market and for anybody that wants to grow their crops that way, and, uh, want to eat organic food, that's fine. But if we were to try to raise all of our food that way, we'd all starve. We really would. You wouldn't have the yields, and you'd have awful lot more work to it. We're now, what, what are we? About three-quarters to one percent of us are farming now?

JQ: Wow.

ET: That's low.

DA: And, if we were to raise things organically, we'd have to put a whole lot more people back to do the hand labor--

ET: Mmmhm.

DA: Involved.

ET: Mmmhm.

DA: And, instead of getting, uh, a hundred and fifty or two hundred bushels per acre of corn, it'd be back in the eighty to hundred bushels at the most. In fact, probably less than that, because uh, the organic people don't like to use chemical fertilizer.

ET/JQ: Mmmhm.

DA: And you can't keep taking phosphorus and potash out of the ground without putting it back in--

ET: Mmmhm.

DA: Uh...

MrsA: And the weeds to try to combine the crop--

DA: Yup.

MrsA: Tears up your machinery.

JQ: Hmm.

DA: We would have to, to go back to general farming, like our grandparents did.

MrsA: Yup.

JQ: Hmm.
DA: So that we'd have the manure to put on the ground to, to--

MrsA: Yeah.

JQ: Mhmrm.

ET: So your whole--the whole farm system would kinda change--

DA: Yup.

MrsA: Right.

ET: It'd be very different.

DA: Yup.

MrsA: Right, yeah.

DA: So, it'll work fine in a small spot where somebody wants to do that and as far as I'm concerned, the, the, uh, actual quality of the food is probably better when you have the bugs out of it.

JQ: Yeah, once you get...soak it.

DA: If you liked eating apples with bugs, then...

JQ: Yeah, apples are the worst, I think.

DA: Yeah.

MrsA: Yeah.

DA: Uh.

MrsA: But they have some beautiful, some beautiful product but it's expensive.

DA: The, the chemical use--

JQ: Yeah.

ET: Really expensive.

DA: Is, uh, fine as long as it's done properly.

JQ: That's what I was going to ask. Are there any, like, precautions you take, or...?
DA: Lots of precautions.

MrsA: Mmhmm.

JQ: Oh.

DA: And, and, we're all, we're all licensed to handle chemicals, which does not mean we all do it properly--

JQ: Mmhmm.

DA: But it means we've all been warned about the dangers and so, any of the, any of the chemicals that are a little bit hazardous, we can't even buy unless we have the license for them. Uh, which, I just--

ET: Is that, um, through the government?

JQ: You have your license on you?

DA: Right. Right.

MrsA: He has to go to a class--

JQ: Yeah, that's right...

MrsA: And take a test.

DA: Oh, I guess I've got it here. They sent me a new one because they changed the categories. There's the old one. Um, the categories are for grain crops or for handling livestock or for storing grain, uh, for preserving wood--

JQ: Mmm.

DA: Uh, for getting the weeds out of the forest, uh...anyhow, I have most of 'em.

JQ: Yeah. Um...

DA: But we had to, we had to take classes and pass tests in order to get the license--

ET: Mmhmm.

DA: Like I said, doesn't mean everybody's gonna do it the way they're supposed to. There's no reason not to.

ET: Mmhmm.
**JQ**: What are some of the main points that they try to teach you? And like, er...

**DA**: To, uh, physically handle the product in a safe way so that you don't get it absorbed in your skin.

**JQ**: Oh yeah, so...

**DA**: And, uh, there are--some of the chemicals that we used to use, which we don't much anymore--very deadly--there was one called paraquat. Uh, if you were to get that spilled on you, significantly, uh, get your clothes soaked with it, you wouldn't have time to take a shower--

**ET**: Hmm.

**DA**: Before you died from it. It, it's--

**ET**: Yeah.

**MrsA**: I remember that.

**DA**: Really bad stuff.

**MrsA**: Yeah.

**DA**: Uh, but, there's not much of that used anymore. The ones that are the most dangerous are the insecticides.

**JQ**: Mmhmm.

**DA**: Because you're more like an insect than you are a plant.

**JQ**: Yeah, exactly.

**DA**: And, uh, some of the, some of the herbicides and dangerous too, but the insecticides are the most. And, we haven't used insecticides for a long time in the fields. I still use 'em in the garden.

**JQ**: Well, that's nice.

**DA**: Uh...it's a, a matter of the order in which you put these ingredients in your spray tank, and what precautions you need to take when you're handling the concentrated material. Now we're using, uh, herbicides that you may only use two-thirds of an ounce per acre.

**JQ**: Mmm.
DA: Uh, that you put in the spray tank.

JQ: Wow.

ET: Wow, that's so--

JQ: That’s a pretty low concentration then.

DA: You don't want to put on, put on--yes, and it's not dangerous to people. It even has a caution label on it. Uh, they have “caution” is the least, and then they have “warning,” and then they have "danger," which has a skull and crossbones warning. But the caution label is the least and that's, most of the stuff I use is like that.

JQ: Caution, okay.

ET: Hmm.

MrsA: You used to have to wear gloves and all sorts of protective…

JQ: Yeah, breathing apparatus and the...

DA: Some of ’em, you wear gloves and a facemask…

MrsA: Yeah, goggles and a mask and…

JQ: Ugh!

MrsA: Right.

DA: If…for fumigating grain bins, you may even have to have a respirator.

JQ: Mmmm.

DA: And we don't, we don't have to do that...I have used some of the, powerful insecticides in the grain, but I haven't gone in the bin to do it. The kind I use, you can do it without getting in the bin.

JQ: Uh-huh.

DA: This is for, for, uh, bugs that can get in the grain that you're storing.

JQ: After...

DA: For storing grain.
JQ: Uh-huh.

ET: Hmm.

JQ: I think...

ET: Um, one thing that I guess I've growing up in the city, and that we've talked about in class is that, um, often nowadays, a large gap between the farmer and consumer--

DA: Mmhmm.

ET: And, um, I'm wondering if you have any comments on that, or if you think that the public in general does, do have a lot of misconceptions about farming.

DA: Yes, I think they have a lot of misconceptions. You're right.

MrsA: Especially driving by machinery. They do not know how to slow down. No way, no way.

JQ: Ohhh, ha ha ha.

MrsA: You take your life in your hands on the road.

JQ: Oh, gosh.

DA: We, we…our, our…more of the opinion than most I guess, that country is for country people. And, so, we think it's not really beneficial to, to us all, to be selling off farmland to put houses on. We hate to see the farmland used up for houses.

ET: Mmm.

DA: And the side effect of that is, not only do you lose the land, but then you have people driving in your area that aren't of your culture. So, it's hard--

MrsA: The smells.

DA: It's, it's hard to get out on the road and drive down the road with a piece of farm machinery--

ET: If they don't understand...

MrsA: Mmhmm.

DA: If they don't understand that you're out there trying to get food for them to eat.

ET: Mmhmm.
DA: And they, they don't wanna slow down--

ET: Right.

DA: Uh, give you a chance to get off the road to let 'em by, 'cause most of our machinery is wide.

ET/JQ: Mmhmm.

MrsA: Or spreading manure and--

DA: And then--

MrsA: Why should they have to have that smell next to them?

DA: They complain about the spreading manure, they complain about the dust that you make--

ET: Mmhmm.

DA: They complain about whatever they ever complain about.

MrsA: Or, did the spray drift over and kill their flowers?

DA: Yeah.

MrsA: Or that type of thing--

ET: Yeah.

JQ: Uh-huh.

MrsA: That, that we sometimes will get calls saying, "What did you spray next to us?"

DA: Yeah.

ET: Wow.

MrsA: You know, and that sort of thing.

DA: We got one neighbor that every time they see the sprayer out, they gotta call find out what I'm puttin' on.

ET: Wow.
DA: They've never had any problem--

MrsA: Mm-mm.

DA: They just wanna know what I’m putting on. I say, well that’s fine.

JQ: They just wanna know. Right, right. Uh-huh.

DA: Well, that's funny.

MrsA: They would be interested in what happened to us over on Warner Hill, by the plant with the lights and our crops.

DA: Oh, yeah.

MrsA: Speaking of, of building.

DA: Speaking of problems, um, one of the things that we don't usually think of is that crops use different triggers to decide what to do. And um--I'm giving the crop the ability to think--

JQ: Yeah. [laughs]

DA: Um, corn matures by the amount of heat that it's absorbed.

ET: Huh.

DA: So if you have, uh, really hot summer, it'll mature faster. And that happened this year. We had a really hot summer; the corn matured faster, it died off, it dried down faster--

ET: Mmhmm.

DA: And the grain was drier when we went to combine. Soybeans are told when to start maturing by the length of night.

ET: Oh.

DA: Not the length of day, but the length of the night.

JQ: Mmhmm.

DA: And so, and, the night gets shorter and shorter and shorter, and then it starts to get longer and longer and longer. And, it is triggered by that length of night, when it gets to the right spot.
ET: Mmhmm.

DA: You don't have night if you've got somebody with floodlights.

ET: Oh, right.

DA: And so, I've got a farm that I rent over here on the next road over--

MrsA: It's industrial. Mmhmm.

DA: That has, uh, floodlights on their lot, where they have plastic tile, drain tile, stored. And so, my soybeans grow and grow and grow and grow, and they don't know that they're supposed to go to seed.

MrsA: It’s not dark.

ET: Oh, yeah?

DA: And, uh, so that--

JQ: Wow.

DA: Two acres next to their lights--

ET: Didn't ever go to seed.

DA: Will, will never mature. It just stays green. And I'm in there, combining old, dry soybeans--they get dry and brittle when they're ready to combine, and yet this over there is all green.

ET: Interesting.

DA: So I go tell 'em, I say, "Hey, folks, look what you're doing to my soybeans."

JQ: Oh, my.

DA: And they've got floodlights that, that are aimed out instead of down in their lot. And so, we chatted with them a bit, and showed 'em what was happening and the next time they had their light guy in there with his cherry picker, they had him turn the lights down. Not enough, but they had 'em turned down.

ET: Huh.

DA: And now, instead of losing two acres, it's maybe half an acre.

JQ: Hmm. Oh.
DA: That stays green, so, uh. I think they're gonna turn 'em down a little bit more yet.

JQ: I hope so.

MrsA: Well, that's a case of educating.

DA: Mmhmm.

ET: Right. Did they seem responsive too when you went to go talk to them?

DA: Yeah, they've been--first of all, they didn't believe it.

MrsA: No, they had no idea.

DA: 'Course, who would thi--

JQ: Yeah, [unclear].

ET: Right.

DA: But, when they saw what was happening, and I explained it to them, well then they, they believed that might be it.

ET: Oh, okay.

DA: And, and their biggest users are farmers--it's drain tile for out in the field.

ET/JQ: Oh.

DA: You know about drain tile?

JQ: Um, yeah [unclear].

ET: Yeah.

DA: Sub, sub-surface drainage.

ET: Yeah.

DA: Uh, which gets extra water out of the ground--

ET: Mmhmm.

DA: So we can raise the crops. So they, they're, they're helpful. Our generation--your generation--
MrsA: Mmhmm.

DA: Our generation is removed from the old agrarian society--

ET: Okay.

DA: Uh, there weren't very many farmers farming yet when we grew up. Everybody had gone to town, but of course now, it's a whole lot worse.

ET: Right.

DA: So, if you have no one in your family that has any idea what farming's like, you aren't likely to have an understanding of it.

MrsA: Mmhmm.

DA: Or much sympathy for it.

ET: Right.

DA: You get your food out of the grocery store.

ET: Uh-huh.

JQ: Yeah, we don't...

DA: It doesn't come from the farm. It comes from the grocery. We as farmers don't have much say when it goes to the polls to vote either. And, we're running into that same problem now with the Humane Society of the United States, which is trying to drive people out of eating meat. They want everybody to be, uh...

MrsA: Vegetarian.

DA: Vegetarians. Because it's cruel to eat meat. And, uh, uh...

MrsA: Or to keep them in a cage.

DA: And they have a tremendous amount of money that they have to spend, and they have...they're trying to get rules passed that will make it unlikely to be able to raise livestock for food.

JQ: Wow.

ET: Hmm.
DA: They're workin' real hard at that.

JQ: That would take a lot of effort.

DA: They've had more success than what they should've. If you hunt up the facts on them, you'll find that very little of their money is spent helping animals. It's spent trying to drive animal agriculture out of business. And yet, they're advertising--even on TV. You'll see them advertising on TV this poor sick cat, this poor sick dog. “Send us money to take care of them,” but they don't take care of 'em. That isn't their business.

MrsA: Now, you may be talkin' to vegetarian girls.

DA: Now, that's all right.

JQ: I'm not vegetarian.

DA: That's a misunderstanding of--

ET: [unclear]

JQ: [unclear] Right.

DA: They say you, you're not supposed to, to put a calf in the barn in a, in a [unclear] stall.

MrsA: In a pen. Yeah.

DA: In a pen.

ET: Mmhmm.

DA: Where it's tied up. It has to be able to be out, running loose.

ET: Mmhmm.

DA: And--

MrsA: All the animals running loose, really.

DA: It just, just isn't the way that you can manage.

ET: Right.

DA: Uh--
ET: Well, it's probably the case for a lot of people in those groups, didn't grow up with a connection to farming--

DA: Right.

MrsA: Mmhmm.

ET: So they don't necessarily understand, you know?

DA: Right.

MrsA: Right.

DA: And yet, their great-grandparents butchered cattle--

ET: Right.

DA: Butchered hogs--

MrsA: Chickens for--

DA: Raised 'em.

MrsA: For dinner.

DA: And, AND the way we raise animals now is a whole lot cleaner and the way we kill 'em is a whole lot more humane than what it was fifty years ago, a hundred years ago.

JQ: Mmhmm.

ET: Mmhmm.

MrsA: Yup.

DA: Because it's, it's done methodically and...so yeah, I think there's a misunderstanding. And I've seen some ads on TV now that show that the...some of the farm organizations are trying to educate people on how animals are being taken care of.

ET/JQ: Mmhmm.

MrsA: Would you girls like a drink and some cookies? I've got pop. I've got cranberry juice. Got milk, water.

DA: You gotta tell her yes.

MrsA: No, I…
[All laugh]

**JQ:** That how it works?

**ET:** I might actually take some water. Thanks.

**MrsA:** Sure.

**JQ:** Water.

**MrsA:** We've got bottled water too. Do you want anything, Dave?

**DA:** No, thanks.

**JQ:** [unclear]

**ET:** Um. Yeah.

**DA:** Hmm?

**ET:** We have so many things we could talk about.

**JQ:** Yeah.

**ET:** We could be sitting here for like, a, all day.

**DA:** I brought you this--

**ET:** Oh, thank you.

**DA:** I didn't know if it would be of some help to you. Even though it's 2008, it's one of the latest. Uh, the front's there.

**JQ:** Uh-huh. Wow, thank you.

**DA:** And I thought you might be interested in this too. It's just a listing of--

**ET:** Thank you.

**JQ:** Uh, sure. Thank you.

**DA:** Listing of custom rates--

**ET:** Oh, okay.
DA: Uh...

JQ: Thanks.

DA: There are, uh, there are very few farmers that do everything all the time. So, there's usually somebody that you hire to do something. And so, we call that a "Custom Contractor"--

ET: Okay.

DA: Whether he comes in and paints the barn--

JQ: Mmhmm.

DA: Or whether he comes in and plows the field for you, or what's more likely is that he may come and combine the corn or combine the soybeans.

ET: Mmhmm.

DA: Combining is one of the more common custom jobs that a farmer'll have done for him. Although now that we're handling hay in a more mechanical way than we used to, there's a lot of custom operators that'll come and bale your hay for you. And they may, wrap it. You've seen 'em wrapped in plastic?

ET: Mmhmm, yeah.

DA: Marshmallows.

ET: Yeah.

DA: And so these are list of various custom rates--

ET: Okay.

DA: For different things that're done.

JQ: Uh-huh.

ET: And this price is per...acre?

DA: Yeah.

ET: Okay.

DA: Unless it's listed otherwise, it's per acre.
ET: Oh, okay. Got it, got it.

DA: There may be some per bale or something like that in there.

ET: Yeah.

DA: Uh...we're small enough now, we don't hire much done at all.

JQ: Yeah.

DA: Actually, the fence that you see here 'round the pasture--

JQ: Mmhmm?

DA: I hired a relative to build the fence this last time.

JQ: Fun.

DA: We'd always built it before, but it just seemed to make sense to hire somebody to do it this time. I did custom work for other people, when we were full-time farming. We had almost five hundred acres, I think.

JQ: Wow.

DA: We were farming full-time, and then about another five hundred acres, we did custom, where I would go and combine for other people.

MrsA: Mmhmm.

DA: Or work the ground. Or I'd...one farm, a hundred sixty acres, I did everything on. That's a, a little unusual situation you'd be interested in. At a farm over here, on the other road, a man by the name of Mr. Uhl had bought this farm and then he bought this farm and he bought this farm and he ended up with four farms right together--

ET: Uh-huh.

DA: And they were old, dilapidated buildings, so some of 'em were torn down. So, the farm had one good set of buildings on it...had two sets of buildings on it. There was one here and one there and the other buildings were torn down, or had fallen down--some of 'em had been completely removed. So, Mr. Uhl didn't have anybody to farm it, so he rented the farm out--he was between farmers--he rented the farm out. And, so we, we went and farmed some of it. I think it was maybe a hundred sixty acres we farmed one year. And then, uh, and then he sold it. And he sold it to an Amish-man. But the Amish-man wasn't allowed to own all that land because an Amish family--particularly the Old Order, or the conservative Amish--are only allowed to own as much land as they can farm.
DA: According to their church.
JQ: Mmhmm.
DA: So, he was not allowed to own all this land, and yet, the Amish are always trying to get as much land together, as a group, as they can--
ET: For their family.
DA: For growth. And yet, the church didn't want him to have all this.
ET: Mmhmm.
DA: So he bought all this land, but he bought it in the name of Mr. Steiner, who was an Englishman.
ET: Oh.
DA: Now, he's farming farm number one, but he can't farm all of this over here, so Mr. Steiner is farming this over here, but Mr. Steiner doesn't have any farm equipment. So Mr. Steiner came to us and said, could we farm it for him?
ET: Uh-huh.
DA: So we farmed it for him. And we charged him to do the plowing, and we charged him to do the planting, and we charged him for the harvesting--
ET: Yeah.
DA: And, and it was his crop, and he paid all expenses—paid for the fertilizer, and he got all the crop. So, the next year, this Amish-man could now farm a little bit more, because he got established and got this farm. So, as the years went on, he took over more and more of this land--
JQ: Mmm.
DA: And, he built another farmstead--
ET: Mmhmm.
DA: And he built another farmstead, because of his kids.
ET: Yeah.
DA: So now, here was this farm that was consolidated into one big farm now is divided back up again. And now there are...one, two, three, four farmsteads on this land now.

ET: Wow, interesting.

JQ: Wow. I just--

DA: Which is nice to see it going back to more general farming.

MrsA: And when you were farming it, you couldn't run the tractor--

DA: Yup.

MrsA: At certain times.

JQ: Oh.

MrsA: Because the Bishop was coming.

JQ/ET: [Laugh]

DA: The Bishop was, was...

MrsA: Couldn't have the power tractor running...

JQ/ET: Yeah.

DA: And uh, couldn't have the tractor tracks on the driveway either--

MrsA: Oh, no.

DA: 'Cause the Bishop might see that there was a tractor there.

ET: Oh.

JQ: Oh, wow.

DA: And another interesting place where he drew the line, uh, he, he would, this Amishman would come out to the field and sit in the truck and listen to the radio. When the truck would be sitting in the field because we were getting supplies off of it, he'd come out and sit in the truck and listen to the radio.

JQ: That's [unclear].
DA: And then there, uh, there's a time when I was doing some combining, and I got this field done, and I was going to go over to this field that was closer to his house, so I asked him if he wanted a ride over there. And yeah, he could ride over in the combine. But then I got to a spot where I saw I could do a little bit of combining on the way, and I turned the separator on to start the combine up, and he got off. Because the combine was now working.

ET: Oh.

JQ: Mmhmm.

DA: And he was not allowed to be on it if it was working.

JQ: If it was working. Huh.

DA: So, it was really interesting where they draw the line.

JQ: Yeah, I didn't know those rules.

ET: Mmhmm.

MrsA: They're interesting neighbors.

ET: Um.

MrsA: We gave them more than they needed or wanted.

JQ: No, I, I find it interesting.

MrsA: They're peanut butter and chocolate chip with nuts. Help yourself.

ET: Oh, thank you.

JQ: May I try one?

ET: Um.

MrsA: Do you want any napkins?

JQ: Yes, thank you.

ET: Thanks.

MrsA: Mmhmm.
ET: Um, I was just wondering what you think might happen to farming or the farming culture in the future in the next fifty years or so. Do you think there'll be a lot more very big changes as you've seen in the past?

DA: Mhm, yeah.

MrsA: I think the small farm--

DA: Faster, faster than I can comprehend, probably.

JQ: Mhm.

MrsA: I think the smaller farms will disappear and, and it'll just be big farms with big machinery.

JQ: Oh.

DA: Well, there is a limit. You'll see in your--in those custom rates, you get to the western part of the state, especially the northwestern, where you have big fields, and the custom rates will be lower because it's expensive to run a combine in a seven acre, irregular shaped field.

ET: Mhm.

DA: Compared with one that's a nice big square field.

JQ: Mhm.

DA: We have friends in Texas that're farming on land that used to be the Gulf of Mexico thousands of years ago. And their farms are a square mile acres--square mile fields.

JQ: Mhm.

DA: Six hundred forty acres to field, minus the road. 'Cause every mile, there's a road.

JQ: Oh.

DA: It's just like a checkerboard.

JQ: Oh, wow.

DA: And, so when you go into a field like that--as far as the efficiency on the equipment goes--you don't have to worry about water waste, where there's grass strips to keep the erosion down. You don't have to worry about trees, you don't have to worry about irregular shaped fields--
DA: Uh, there's no hills, no gullies, it's just an entirely optimum way to run equipment. These fields here...we're always going across waterways, we're always working around irregular sized fields, so it's much more expensive to operate equipment here.

JQ: Mmhmm.

DA: And, the size of equipment you can use in these fields is limited so there are going to be fields that will always be farming smaller equipment.

JQ: Mmhmm.

DA: But you get into the bigger areas, they can use bigger equipment. I think probably the size of the equipment is, is...probably there is larger equipment now that is available than what is economically feasible to operate. I think we've gotten machinery now that's about as big as it's gonna get, and where it's more effective to use two corn planters and two drivers than to have one driver drive a corn planter that's sixty feet wide.

JQ: Yeah.

MrsA: Or to move it on the road from one farm to the next.

DA: Or to move it, yeah. Uh...they're, they're getting combines now that're very limited to where you can use 'em, they're so big. And yet, some of us are caught up in the idea that bigger's better.

JQ: Mmhmm.

DA: And newer's better, and, and as you can see, we're conservative.

JQ: That works.

DA: We're farming the stuff that we bought--

ET: Right.

DA: When we first started to farm.

JQ: Mmhmm.

MrsA: And we can do that because he's very good at keeping things...repaired and keeping them in shape.

JQ: You have the same tractors and...
MrsA: Not abusing them or leaving 'em set out.

DA: Yeah, we don't let our machinery set out if we can, at all possible, to keep it in. The combine can stay out overnight, you know, we try not to let it get rained on. You know, the combine's thirty-five years old.

JQ: Wow.

DA: Which is really old for a combine 'cause it's made out of a lot of sheet metal.

JQ: Yeah.

DA: And sheet metal rusts easy.

JQ: Yeah, looks really...

DA: And, uh, and it wears. There's a lot of things in a combine to wear down. I have to patch holes sometimes. Keep the grain from running out.

JQ: You have the welders, so...

DA: Mmhmm. Yup.

MrsA: Does his welding.

DA: As a welder.

MrsA: That's the one thing about a farmer: he's got to know to do a lot of different things to...

ET: To be successful.

MrsA: Right, right.

JQ: Yeah.

DA: But the farms'll get bigger and the farms--the numbers of farmers will get smaller. There will be a, a point in which it probably will kinda stabilize.

MrsA: Now the, the--

DA: And we may be getting near that.

MrsA: There isn't anyone. None of our kids are interested in farming, so after we're done, why...
ET: Yeah.

MrsA: They may live here, but--

JQ: They're not gonna wanna...

MrsA: It may be rented out, who knows? It's nice when you can pass it down, but...

DA: We've rented a lot of different farms in different spots over the years, but they've always been this type of farm here where you have small fields. Fifteen acres one place and thirty acres another...

JQ: Mmhmm.

DA: I guess probably our smallest field is about two and a half acres. When we were farming Ramseyer’s back there behind...

MrsA: Oh, mmhmm.

DA: And you don't make money on those. One of the reasons I've farmed this field right across the back line here was to keep the weeds down. You know, if I didn't farm it, nobody's going to be farmin' it.

JQ: Yeah.

DA: And then there'd be weeds growin'.

ET: Hmm.

DA: This line of trees you see clear out to the back where it's dense trees. That's our back line.

ET: Oh.

JQ: Oh, okay.

DA: So, we've got, uh, we've got...we're right here. You came in the lane right here, and this is that back line you’re looking at right there.

JQ: Mmhmm.

DA: So we've got this, this farm is right here--these are just the fields, they're not the border of the farm--the farm comes out here. Uh, and extends down into here to this lower road.

MrsA: This is all pasture [unclear]
DA: And then, and then the other farms are rectangular farms across the top here. This farm is the one over on the other road, on old 30, where the…

MrsA: The lights are.

DA: The lights are right along here.

MrsA: The Ohio plant.

JQ: Oh, okay.

DA: This is old 30 comes up through here.

ET: Okay. This one? You were talking about this one, right?

DA: Mmhmm, that's over on...

ET: Do you rent this one?

DA: Yes. Yes.

MrsA: Mmhmm.

JQ: Okay.

DA: Yes.

ET: What's your, um, do you have a favorite thing about farming or something that is the most rewarding to you?

DA: Probably the harvest.

MrsA: Though I don't know about the spring, he says… he’ll get to smelling and he’ll say, "It’s time to get out there!"

DA: Yeah, uh, I, I guess it's harvest time--

ET: Yeah.

DA: 'Cause you're seeing the fruits of your labor, then.

ET: Yeah.

JQ: Mmhmm.
DA: And it's the best time to see how well you had the weed control, because once a crop is up and tall, it's more difficult to see what kind of job you did controlling the weeds.

ET: Mmhmm.

DA: I keep a, a picture of the farm in the combine and I mark on it when I see where I've had some weed problems, where I need to be careful about for the next year.

ET: Mmhmm.

DA: 'Cause if you have weeds, you have seeds.

ET/JQ: Mmhmm.

DA: And we have tried to have not a weed control program, but a weed eradication program. So if you get rid of the weeds entirely, you don't have them coming up again. And we're not a hundred percent successful at that, but we've been pretty good about it.

JQ: Uh-huh.

DA: So, harvest time.

ET: Harvest time.

DA: It's what spread out over the most time too. We start, um…

MrsA: Wheat.

DA: Well, yeah, wheat harvest is--

MrsA: Wheat harvest is...

DA: Wheat harvest is toward the end of July. This year, it was toward the middle of July. But we're down now to where, in a week's time, we're done with wheat. It used to be, when I did custom work, it was six weeks I worked in harvesting wheat. And then, the soybeans are the first thing we take off in the fall. And that…usually in the middle of September, maybe the last week in September and we take the soybeans off…we'll plant next year's wheat crop in the soybean's stubble after the soybeans are off and then we'll go to harvesting corn. And then corn…then we'll, now that we don't have a lot to do, we'll have that done in a couple, three weeks, depending on how fast it'll go through the dryer.

ET: Mmhmm, right, right.

DA: And depending on how much trouble we have with the dryer. But, when we were doing lots and lots of acres, why, sometimes we ended up taking corn off in spring
because the winter would come, and you can't harvest corn when there's snow on it. You can harvest it when it's cold and the ground is frozen, but not when there's snow on it.

ET/JQ: Mhmmm.

DA: Unless it's really cold and there's snow on the ground and it's zero, you can harvest it then because the snow will blow right through the combine.

ET: Yeah.

DA: But what happens if it's not cold is the snow melts as it goes through the thrashing operation and then there's lots of screens back there that screen the chaff and the dirt out of the corn and the screens collect the water, which turns to ice. There's a fan in there that blows air and as soon as that water coming through the combine hits the fan, it turns to ice and, and then all the crop goes out the back instead of into the bin.

MrsA: And then the deer love you.

JQ: Yeah. They are excited.

ET: Do you have any more questions?

JQ: I don't think so. Do you wanna make sure we answered all the questions needing, needed for the uh--

ET: Yeah. Oh, it's right here...

JQ: On the outline.

ET: I think...oh, just. We just needed to know the total number of years you've spent farming.

DA: 1968 until now.

ET: Was when you started?

DA: We started farming part-time. We started right at the beginning of the no-till process of farming.

ET/JQ: Hmm.

DA: You know no-till farming?

ET: Yeah.
DA: All right. The research center was doing some research on the idea of planting corn without plowing the ground first.

ET: Mmhm.

DA: Uh, there had been some research and some people before that that tried plowing the ground and then pulling the corn planter over the plowed ground. And that wasn't very popular—didn't work out too well for a number of reasons. But the research center had done some research on that and when we thought we might wanna start farming, it was suggested that we consider that. And there are a number of advantages to that for starting farming. One of the biggest advantage was all I needed was a tractor and a planter. I didn't need a tractor and a plow and a disk and a harrow and a planter.

ET: Yeah.

JQ: Mmhm.

DA: And since I was working at another job, it really decreased the amount of time that I would spend actually putting the crop out.

MrsA: Mmhm.

DA: Because I didn't have all these other operations to do. And, it decreased the amount of money that I had to spend. I did have to buy chemicals that I wouldn't have had to otherwise, but...the first year I bought that planter and I bought the, I bought the tractor.

MrsA: Tractor.

DA: And, and I was...there was two of us in the county that planted no-till that year. Two farmers.

JQ: Hmm.

MrsA: Yeah.

DA: And, I guess I had the first...the second no-till planter that was made in, that was sold in the county. Which I planted with for twenty-five years?

MrsA: Mmhm.

DA: Used the same planter. But there were lots and lots of things we didn't know at the time about the system and the problems that would come up.

ET: Mmhm.

DA: And so we had to learn how to do it.
ET: Yeah.

DA: And we worked closely with the research center, and we found out real quick that advice given to you is not always accurate.

MrsA: And we learned by doing.

DA: And I learned real quick that if I took somebody else's advice, it was my responsibility, not theirs, so I didn’t blame them. Things don't always work like they're planned to. That's not always ideal. But we're still plantin' no-till.

JQ: Oh, really?

DA: Yup--

JQ: Oh, cool.

DA: All the, all the corn's planted no-till. And, we tried to plant soybeans no-till a number of times, and soybeans just like to have ground loose.

ET: Hmm.

MrsA: You get much better yields.

DA: I, I--

MrsA: Plowing.

DA: So I still plant some no-till soybeans. If I've got ground that's sloping a lot, I don't want the chance of erosion--

ET: Yup.

DA: Then, then I'll plant either with my corn planter or hire somebody to custom work to come in with a no-till drill and plant the soybeans. And next year, I plan to have a no-till drill plant a good many of the soybeans because the ground that I'm planting on will be sloping ground.

JQ: Oh, okay.

ET: I think that's--

JQ: Yeah.

ET: I think that's everything that we had.
JQ: That's a lot of good information.

ET: Thanks so much for your time.

JQ: Yeah, thank you.