

The Edge For Success

Syngenta's AgriEdge Excelsior Makes Field Recording Easy

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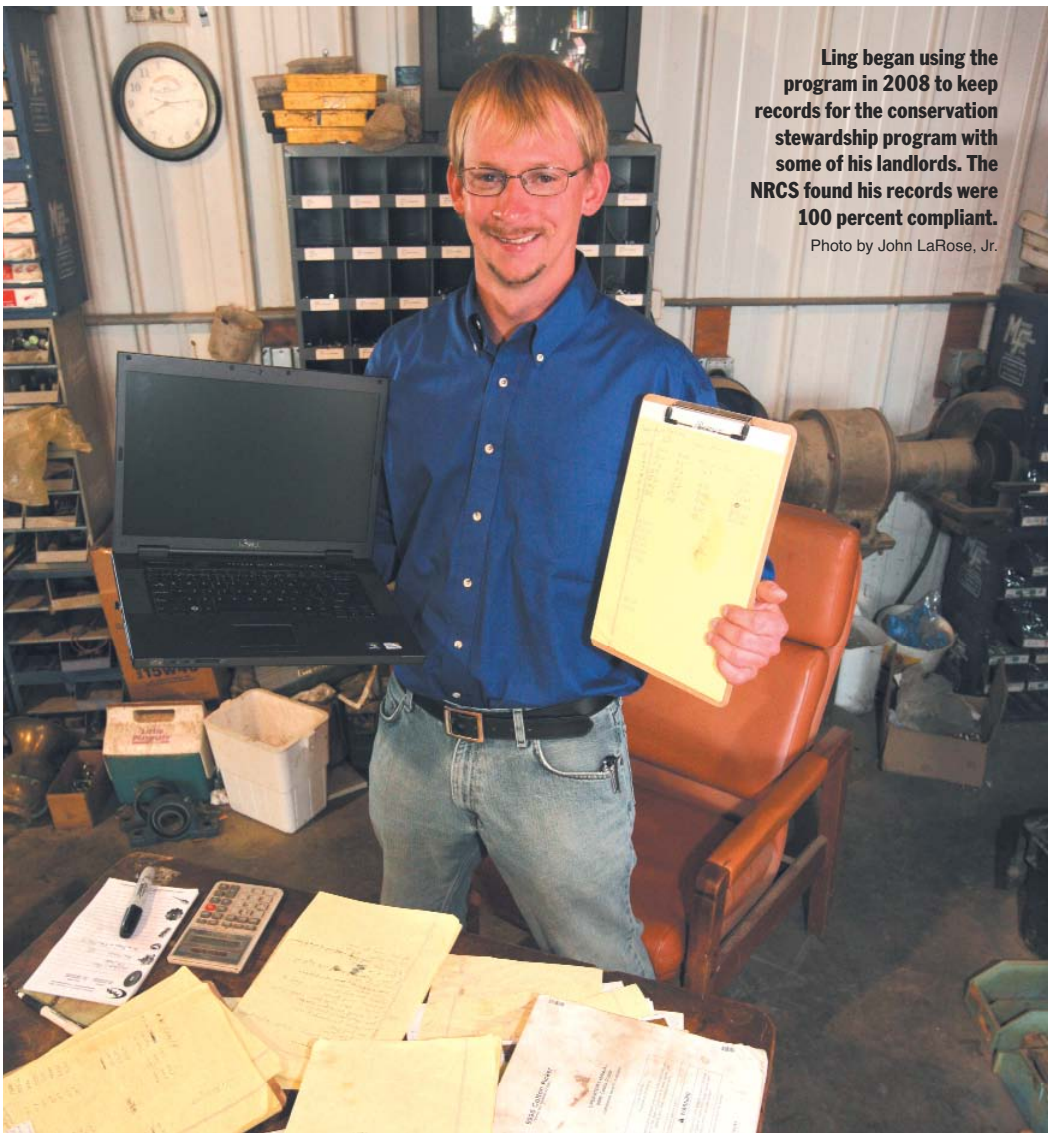
Justin Ling of Ling Farms in New Madrid County, Mo., is sold on the AgriEdge Excelsior program by Syngenta. Ling and his father, Rick, raise 4,800 acres of corn, cotton and soybeans in the Missouri Bootheel.

"I started the program in 2008 because I was looking for something to keep better records as opposed to pen and pad; we were getting into the conservation stewardship program with some of our landlords and they want pretty meticulous records," he said. "The NRCS wants to know everything that took place on the field throughout the year; this has really worked out

"It all comes back to the laptop, but in the field, I could be sitting on the tractor taking my records and the tractor is driving itself," he explained. "I've got nothing better to do. They also have an application for a PDA. I do have it, but I just don't carry it anymore because I've been testing this iPhone application called AgC Mobile."

The AgriEdge Program, while doing a superb job of managing the business, also has allowed the Lings more free time.

"Oh yea, it frees up a lot of time just because everything is there; in the old way, you had to consolidate all your yellow pads into one to take to the FSA office," he recalled. "With this program you just print out a report. The computer



Ling began using the program in 2008 to keep records for the conservation stewardship program with some of his landlords. The NRCS found his records were 100 percent compliant.
Photo by John LaRose, Jr.

well for that."

The NRCS found his records were 100 percent compliant. Since beginning the program, Ling has found many more ways to use the program. He also got a better concept of how some of the ground driven herbicides, like Syngenta's Prefix, and some other chemicals, were performing.

"The Land.db record keeping program was the big jump we took, that was the big decision maker," Ling said. "It's been a great program; a lot of programs you buy they hand you a CD, pat you on the back on your way out the door, and you're on your own. With this program, if I call for help on a problem and they can't fix it over the phone, somebody is in my driveway within a matter of a day or two to fix it. They use updated imagery so we have a very recent image of all of our farmland. So if we want to measure out something, just fertilize half a field, it's real close on that."

Before the AgriEdge program, he used the old legal pad. The Lings still have stacks and stacks of legal pads and little pocket notebooks from previous years. Justin found that making the change to the AgriEdge program was very simple.

"I am a little more tech savvy than your average farmer I guess," he said. "We implement technology all around this farm. We were the first that I know of in this area to have auto pilot. We're on our 10th season with that. So it wasn't really all that hard; and any question I had, they were able to answer in a quick manner. It's been a great program."

To the best of his knowledge, Justin is the 4th generation of Ling men to farm. He thinks today's technology would just have the previous generations spinning their heads.

"My grandpa grew up with mules," he recalled. "He went from mules to tractors and it would just spin his head to see this; and not only the record keeping aspect of it, because he had been around computers and I taught him how to use the internet to check markets; but like your auto boom technology and your yield mapping capabilities now, it's just amazing how much time, effort and money that it is saving us."

Ling estimates there's a 5 percent to 10 percent savings with using the program. On top of that, there's the mountain of legal pads he no longer has to wade through; everything he needs now is on one laptop in the back seat of his truck with room left for passengers. He also uses an iPhone which can replace the laptop for in-field use.

finds the information that you need and puts it right there altogether."

While he hasn't yet uploaded all the yellow pad information into the computer's history, he's looking forward to the day when he can trash the yellow pads.

"Before too long we're going to hit that five-year mark and then we'll have a lot more filing cabinet space," he envisions.

"All of the records from 2008 and forward also is stored on the Ag Connections server, so even if my computer were to fail or be stolen, get run over, anything extreme that could happen to it, I've got all of my application records backed up."

While Justin is the record keeper now, he finds his father is very pleased with the new methods.

"He likes it. We try to embrace any technology that will make our lives easier; I guess we're one and the same there," Justin said.

The old way one may have to go through 20 legal pads to find the answer to what happened on the farm; with AgriEdge, it's there with the push of a button.

"Exactly. You start this program up, go right down to your farm records, bring it up, and see what's happened all through the year," he said. "It's all right there."

The AgriEdge Excelsior program will provide detailed information about every aspect of your operation that you put into it.

"If you put in your fertilizer, it will give you the total analysis of what you put out through the year. There are restricted use pesticides that are limited as to how much you can apply per year. It will keep track of that, and tell you if you're getting close to your active ingredient limit. It will keep track not only of your cost per field but cost per acre, what all you've applied, just how you're coming along in that field," Justin explained.

"It's a very strong program. These guys, the great thing about them is, they've all come from farming backgrounds so they know what the end user, such as me, needs. They've made a great program I believe out of that."

While it's only as good as how much information the farmer puts into it, Ling finds that Ag Connections technology, provided by the Syngenta AgriEdge Excelsior Program has added value to his operation.

"It's a great program, I can't say enough good about it," he summed. Δ

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