

OUTLOOK

By Bruce F. Shank, Executive Editor

Seed Country: Working long days adds up to better turf for everyone

The usually sleepy Northwest, seed country to us, is buzzing this summer. Between the rain, field burning and a rash of personnel changes, seed country is more like Wall Street than small towns surrounding grain elevators.

Harvest time is always tense. Everyone works long days driving combines and trucks, processing seed at the cleaning plants, and torching fields when the state says it's alright to burn.

Seed growers like Bill Rose, Willard McLagen, and Dave Dorfler begin each day at 7 a.m. breakfast meetings with their foremen. They are constantly in touch with their crews by radio as the harvest progresses.

The state might tell a grower he has two hours to burn a 300-acre field. The grower must quickly round up enough people from other operations to drive water and torch trucks, much like a volunteer fire department. There are few complaints about helping out. The days are long and the work is hard, but pitching in is a part of life in Seed Country.

Things were rushed even more this year because two valuable weeks of time were lost to rain. Suddenly, unsold seed from last year's harvest, which threatened to drive the price of this year's crop down, became the surplus needed to cover this year's potential losses from the rain.

Right in the middle of all this excitement, the editors of Weeds Trees & Turf show up, asking a bunch of questions and taking lots of pictures. Some people might have told us to get out of the way or come back later. Not the seed people. They asked us to join them at breakfast meetings, in their trucks as they burned fields, at their cleaning plants in full operation, and after a long, hard day for a barbecue. We did it all and felt fortunate to be in the middle of the nerve center of the seed industry.

If they'd make time for us, they'd make time for you too. That's the kind of people they are.

So, next time you buy seed, you might think of it as more than just seed, but a product from a friendly bunch of people working hard to make your turf look as good as it can.

WTT



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