

window on the West

A look at businesses serving farmers in the 21st Century

www.technotill.com **Technotill** Seeding system

Technically advanced, simple and profitable

Dean Krause is a believer in the benefits of useful farm equipment technology, and Technotill has a product he finds compatible with modern crop production and variable rate systems. "I am always looking for ways to increase profit and improve efficiency on our farm," says Krause,

"The fundamentals of growing a crop haven't changed: proper nutrition, pest control, seed bed preparation and variety selection are some of the building blocks required to grow a good crop. They are also within our control and can be managed.



"What we cannot control is the soil type and topography. These two factors create zones of higher and lower production in the field." Muyres says technology has developed so these different zones can be examined independently. "We shift the average by increasing

Dean Krause and Paul Muyres, discuss crop plans on Krause's farm.

who farms near Wetaskiwin, Alta. He and his wife Melinda, and sons Brandon, Ian and Jeremy, are the third generation to own and operate the family farm. In partnership with his parents, Roger and Bev, the Krauses operate a mixed farm, including cropland seeded to cereals, canola and hay. They also have a commercial beef herd.

"In terms of the cropping component of the farm, we want to get the best germination possible and best return for inputs. For the past several years we've seeded with a Flexicoil 3450 Variable Rate Cart and Flexicoil 820 equipped with the Technotill Seeding System.

"In 2010 we'll be using a New Holland P1060, 430 bushel Variable Rate Air Cart and 60 foot New Holland P2060 equipped with Technotill." Krause became interested in variable rate technology in 2008, when he contracted with agronomist Paul Muyres to provide recommendations about spraying.

"There's a wide range of chemical products and technology being marketed to farmers. I wanted to have an independent, knowledgeable consultant to ensure that we were using the

the production in highly productive areas and decreasing inputs in less productive areas, fertilizing strategically to achieve maximum returns from inputs while reducing risks. "Muyres applied his skills to Krause's land. His first priority was to scout fields and take soil samples, as he does with other clients. Analysis of infrared satellite images of crop density helped him establish five to seven zones in each field. This information was combined with topography, crop rotation and yield data to generate field maps.

All data is used as the basis for discussion with the farmer to plan the next year's cropping program. The final product of the discussion is a prescription written for each field. These are installed in the task controller in the tractor. Muyres monitors customers' seeding and spraying operations through the spring and summer, trouble-shooting and revising prescriptions as needed.

From Dean's perspective, Muyres' assistance has paid off.

"Our spraying program is more efficient because he has recommended a plan that allows me to

Krause's crops yielded at area averages in 2009, despite very dry conditions.

the transition to VR easier than it might have been otherwise." Krause says he believes the investment will pay off for his farm's profitability and efficiency. "Our family does the work on this farm, and we need equipment and a plan that allows us to get things done properly while managing costs. Based on the past year's experience with VR technology, I can see that it can simplify crop seeding in the spring, manage costs, and allow me to plan my time more effectively." He recommends a cautious approach for those considering variable rate technology. "The equipment is different and expensive, and there is lots to learn for everyone. That takes time. And remember, it has to pay." As for Technotill, Krause continues to use it to



complement his more complex approach to crop production.

"We bought Technotill in 2002 because we were looking for crop seeding technology that would give us excellent seed placement, on-row packing, fertilizer side-band capability and less soil disturbance.

"Technotill does all of that, and in addition requires minimal maintenance. It's technology that helps make our farm profitable. That's what I want and expect."

Krause realized good yields in 2009 despite dry conditions in Central Alberta.

most effective sprays and applying them properly in a timely manner, to achieve best results.

"Paul's recommendations were very helpful so we decided to contract additional assistance from him to begin a variable rate fertility management program in 2009."

Muyres, owner-operator of Solid Ground Solutions Ltd., operates his business from Beaumont, Alta., south of Edmonton. Using extensive education in the agricultural and resource engineering fields, he consults with landowners on agronomic and environmental issues. He has also worked in the private and public sectors in Alberta, the United States and Australia on projects related to soil reclamation, water use and seed production.



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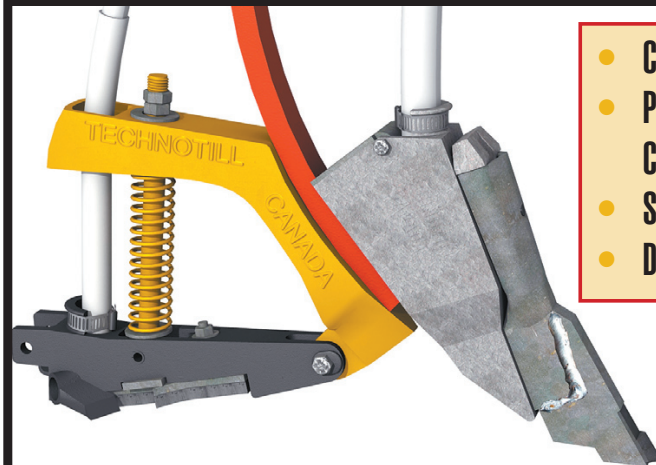
"In addition, Paul keeps on top of product supply of chemicals and fertilizer. That's prevented us from having a nasty surprise when shortages happen.

This year, as we have introduced variable rate fertilizer management to our farm, there has been lots to learn. Paul's advice has helped make

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