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3 A KANSAS HOMECOMING

785 YEARS OF INNOVATION

11 NINE GLEANER R75s. 1000 ACRES A DAY. 79 DAYS WITHOUT A BREAK

18

72 HOURS IN THE IOWA HARVEST







A KANSAS HOMECOMING

BY THARRAN GAINES

Even though he made the statement nearly 400 years ago, William Shakespeare could have easily been talking about the relocation of Gleaner® combine manufacturing to Hesston, Kansas, when he commented, "The wheel is come full circle." Ironically, that statement is true in more ways than one.

First of all, AGCO's Hesston, Kansas, manufacturing facility is located less than 40 miles from Nickerson, Kansas, where the Baldwin brothers built and marketed the first Gleaner self-propelled combine in 1923. By the mid-1920s, thanks to a 1,000-mile demonstration trek through the wheat states, the Gleaner Manufacturing Co., was in business with a reputable product; but it didn't have a manufacturing facility. Consequently, in 1925, the company purchased the factory and machine tools of the Baird Pneumatic Tool Co. in Independence, Mo., and moved the headquarters to Kansas City — where manufacturing remained for the next 77 years.

However, there's another irony to the relocation in that the Hesston factory — which now houses combine manufacturing for all AGCO brands — actually got its start as a manufacturer of combine components. It all began in 1947, when Lyle Yost, one of the original founders of the Hesston Machine and Manufacturing Company, was employed as a farmer and custom wheat harvester.

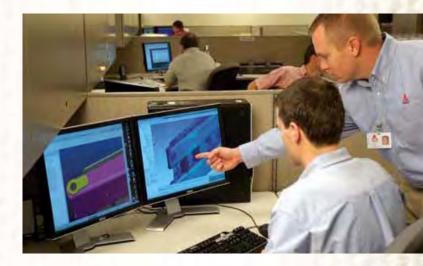
As Yost explains, noting that combines weren't yet equipped with unloading augers, "When the bin got full, you had to stop the combine and empty the grain by gravity into a waiting truck."

It was a process that could consume up to five hours of harvest time per day with two machines. That's when Yost came up with his idea for an unloading auger. With the help of Adin Holdeman, a local machine shop operator, a business was soon born. By the early 1950s, the Hesston Unloading Auger was available for nearly every combine on the market.

In the meantime, Hesston developed and introduced a number of other combine components, including the first "straight-through" platform auger, the industry's first straw spreader, the first retractable finger auger and one of the first straw choppers available for a combine. All total, Hesston Manufacturing Company developed more than 70 new attachments and components in the name of "Making Good Combines Better."

It wasn't until 1955 that Hesston introduced the world's first commercially available self-propelled swather — a product that established a company reputation for hay and forage equipment that has now lasted for more than 50 years.

Today, the Hesston manufacturing facility encompasses approximately 1.3 million square feet of office and manufacturing space on 347 acres. The under-roof facilities include a



According to Kevin Bien, product marketing manager for Gleaner combines, Hesston was chosen for combine manufacturing for a number of reasons — the most obvious being the existing technology and available space.

"Founded by Mennonite farmers in the 1800s, the Hesston community

120,000-square-foot plant built in 2000 that is devoted specifically to combine manufacturing. The facilities in Hesston, Kansas, also include a training center, built in 2001, that incorporates classrooms with adjacent service bays for training

field and dealer personnel for all AGCO products.



"In 1991, when AGCO Corporation purchased Hesston Corporation from Fiat S.p.A., the company also acquired a 50 percent interest in Hay and Forage Industries, which had previously been a joint venture between Fiat and Case IH," Bien explains.

However, in May 2000, AGCO completed the total purchase of HFI, which dramatically increased the manufacturing capacity available for other AGCO products and brands. As a result, AGCO not only relocated Gleaner combine manufacturing from its previous location in Independence, Missouri, but consolidated the manufacturing of New Idea manure spreaders and disk mowers; White planters, and Tye grain drills.

In the process, AGCO brought in more than 110 major machine tools from other plants to supplement the state-of-the-art machine inventory that already existed in Hesston's four plant locations.



has long been known for its strong work ethic and honest principles."







"However, AGCO didn't quit there," Bien relates. "In the last year alone, AGCO has installed new lighting at the Hesston facility; replaced a number of machine tools with multi-function CNC machines; installed even more robotic equipment, and built a dedicated header line that offers integrated manufacturing of all platforms, as opposed to batch manufacturing."

Since the relocation, the combine line has also featured integrated manufacturing, which permits different models and different brands to be produced in any order.

"We can literally have an R65 follow right behind an A85, which may be right behind an R75," Bien explains. "In addition to providing us with a lot more flexibility, it helps improve quality," he adds, noting the Hesston facility is also ISO 9001 certified. "The employees aren't having to change everything over for a batch setup, and they're not having to relearn the differences between models every few days or weeks.

"There's more to the Hesston facility than its central location and easy access to Interstate I-135, though," Bien adds. "Founded by Mennonite farmers in the 1800s, the Hesston community has long been known for its strong work ethic and honest principles.

"Equally important, many of the 1,200 Hesston facility employees still live on farms or, at least, grew up on a farm. So they understand combines and farm equipment," he concludes. "Given the superior design of Gleaner combines; the technology inherent throughout the Hesston facility, and the pride and work ethic that goes into every machine we build, you won't find a better combine anywhere in the world."



It's often been said that necessity is the mother of invention; but in the case of the first Gleaner® self-propelled combine, the incentive was closer to adversity. Born to an immigrant family who moved to a farm near Nickerson, Kansas, in 1902, Curtis Baldwin and his two brothers, George and Ernest, often spent from dawn to dusk feeding wheat bundles into a threshing machine.

In addition to harvesting the family's crops while they were in their youth, George and Curtis had their own custom threshing business by the time they were 17 and 18 years old respectively. In the process, they not only gained a wealth of information about wheat harvesting, but an impressive mechanical aptitude, as well. It was often stated around Nickerson that "if the Baldwin boys can't fix it, it can't be fixed."

Convinced that the right machine could eliminate most of the hard work of handling the crop twice, Curtis and his brothers ultimately designed and built the first Gleaner self-propelled combine in 1923. Mounted on a Fordson tractor, it could cut an acre of wheat for every mile of travel.

However, that wasn't their first attempt to build a field harvester. In 1910, at the age of 23, Curtis developed his "Standing Grain Thresher." A pusher-type machine with four horses hitched to a rear draft pole, it operated much like today's stripper headers, pulling the grain heads from the stalks, while leaving the straw in the field. Although the design worked well, the standing grain thresher was not an economic success, causing The Baldwin Company to fold in 1918.

That didn't seem to deter the Baldwin brothers, however. Having dealt with droughts, crop failures and blizzards on the Kansas prairie, they were used to challenges.

With the help of Clarence A. "Cal" Stevens, who joined the two remaining Baldwin brothers as general manager, George and Ernest reorganized as the Baldwin Brothers Co. In the meantime, Curtis took off alone for Colorado to work for the Savage Harvester Co. It was here that he first began working on his tractor-mounted, or self-propelled combine idea. However, before his idea could be put on the market, the Savage enterprise failed and the assets were acquired by the Advance-Rumely Thresher Co.

In the meantime, Curtis's brothers, George and Ernest, Cal Stevens and George Michael were back in Kansas designing the Fordson-mounted Gleaner — ironically with some help from Curtis, who was now sending them his ideas. Since Curtis was still working for Advance-Rumely, the new patents were filed in Stevens' name.

Regardless of where the credit is due, the machine led to Patent No. 1,702,323 for the company in 1923, and a major turning point for American agriculture. Besides being the first self-propelled harvesters on the market, the Baldwin's Gleaner combine introduced several "firsts," including an auger that replaced canvas drapers, a rasp bar threshing cylinder instead of a spiketooth arrangement, and a down-front cylinder that



put threshing closer to the crop. It also introduced the use of galvanized sheet metal and the name "Gleaner" — two trademarks that have remained unchanged for more than eight decades.

After a series of field demonstrations, which generated sales of around 100 combines, Gleaner Manufacturing Company was organized and the company purchased a facility in Independence, Mo., relocating headquarters to the Kansas City area. About the same time, Curtis Baldwin left Rumely and rejoined his brothers as vice-president of the company. Unfortunately, the tenure was short-termed. When Gleaner management refused to build a new pull-type combine he had designed, Curtis packed his bags and moved on, focusing on other inventions until his death in 1960.



85 Years of Harvest History 9

starting with the Model P in 1928.

A year later, in 1929, Gleaner came out with another "first" when the company introduced America's first standing corn combine. Unlike today's corn heads, though, the Gleaner Baldwin Corn Combine cut and gathered the whole corn plant, carrying the stalks and leaves through the threshing cylinder. Like today's headers, the corn head could also be removed and replaced with the standard grain table, making the machine one of the industry's first multiple-use harvesters.

Unfortunately, the corn combine was several years ahead of its time since the industry lacked a means of drying corn. Worse yet, the great depression was just beginning to have an effect on everyone — farmers and factories included.

By 1931, the company was broke and had gone into receivership. The new corporation, which elected to use the established company and equipment names under the banner Gleaner Harvester Corporation, spent the next two years liquidating existing inventories in an attempt to survive. Not until 1934 did production again resume.

A return to self-propelled machines

With the end of World War II and the progress in technology that followed, it was clear that a new era in harvesting was coming. In fact, it was said that self-propelled combines would soon replace their pull-type counterparts.

In response, Gleaner built four self-propelled prototypes in 1950 and in 1951, built 500 new

Model A and Model R combines, which were identical machine, except for straw walkers on the "A", and a raddle-type separation system on the "R". Both models also included a Gleaner exclusive that has since become a

standard feature on nearly all combines — a stone-ejection concave door which opened when a stone or obstacle entered the cylinder.

Gleaner self-propelled combines were just catching on, however when the Gleaner Harvester Corporation was acquired by Allis-Chalmers Mfg. Co. In the process, the P-80, the only remaining pull-type machine in the Gleaner line, was dropped in favor of A-C's proven All-Crop harvester.



"When Gleaner got started in self-propelled combines, they sold the machines on their center-line design, the down-front threshing cylinder, the two-fan cleaning system and the simplicity," says Ross Yohn, a retired Gleaner engineer who started with the company in 1957. "Those were features that carried all the way through Gleaner's history."

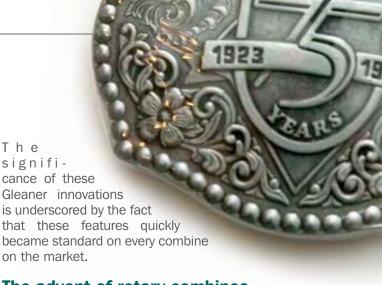
By the 1960s, the market was demanding more capacity; so Gleaner met the need with larger models like the Model F, which was about 20% larger than the earlier A2, and the "G", which was approximately 13% larger than the C2. Hydrostatic steering was standard and for the first time, Gleaner combines were available with a diesel engine.

Over the next several years, Allis-Chalmers led the company in the production of numerous new models, as well as a wealth of new technology. One example was the Model MH Hillside Special, which could self-level up to 23 degrees or a 43 percent slope. The MH also introduced the industry to the use of load-sensing hydraulics on a combine.

"One of the biggest changes, however, came in 1972, with the introduction of the Model L," adds Yohn. "It represented a major change that allowed Gleaner to increase the capacity compared to the width. It was the first Gleaner combine with an open concave for more separation at the cylinder. The L also showcased the transverse-flow fan with two outlets. Plus, it was the first combine with electro-hydraulic controls."



According to Kevin Bien, product marketing manager for GLEANER combines, the transverse-flow fan and electro-hydraulic controls were both new concepts in the industry. So was torque-sensing drive, which also made its debut in 1972.



The advent of rotary combines

"Of course, Gleaner took things to an even higher level in February 1979, when Allis-Chalmers introduced its North American dealer organization to a new concept — the Gleaner transverse-flow rotary combine," Bien continues. "Nobody before or since has ever built a rotary machine that rivals the natural crop flow offered by the Gleaner transverse rotor."

The first model to be released was the N6, which carried grain headers up to 30 feet and cornheads up to 12 rows. It was soon followed by the N5 and the N7, the largest combine of its day. In the meantime, Gleaner was into its third generation of conventional combines with the F3, L3 and M3. All three models included solid-state electronics and expanded Tattletale electronic monitoring.

However, Gleaner history took yet another turn in 1985, when the Allis-Chalmers Corporation was purchased by Kloeckner-Humboldt-Deutz A. G. (KHD) of West Germany and renamed Deutz-Allis. The following year, the company introduced the Gleaner "R" Series. The new owners also dropped the remaining conventional models from the line, leaving only rotary combines. Two years later, Deutz-Allis added a zero to each rotary model number to designate new styling and the use of a Deutz air-cooled engine.

One of the most dramatic impacts on the Gleaner combine line, though, came in 1990, when Robert Ratliff and a group of senior managers and investors acquired the Deutz-Allis Corporation from KHD to form AGCO Corpora-



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tion. Within a year, the new owners had turned out the new Series 2 Rotary Gleaner lineup with improved threshing, a new ComforTech cab and 25% fewer drives.



In 2003, after making multiple improvements over the years, AGCO introduced the R5 Series, which continues to be the most important combine product in North America for AGCO Corporation. Not content to limit customers to just one type of machine, though, Gleaner introduced the axial-rotor A5 Series in 2007.

bines throughout their 85-year history, this 21st century machine includes features not previously found on any other brand or model, like the fastest unloading rate in the industry at 4.5 bushels per second. It also features the largest rotor found on any combine and a parallel-linkage concave that offers 160 degrees of wrap. "Equally valuable, the A85 features CANBUS electronics and AGCO's new AGCO Advanced Technology Solutions Console II monitor, which allows the operator to make adjustments from the screen and program combine settings for different crops or fields.

"As talented and visionary as the Baldwin brothers were back in 1923, I doubt that even they would have foreseen a combine with a 350-bushel grain tank and the ability to plot yields on a map with the aid of global satellites," Bien concludes. "But thanks to the solid base they provided, we've come a long way in 85 years." §







On a dry day, he starts with checking equipment, rounding up fuel and noting the weather. Mel Gossen rouses his custom cutting crew around 7:30 and together they wait for the humidity to drop and signal the start to another thousand acre day. On a wet day they might wait until noon. And on a day where the rain won't let up, the team watches movies, plays horseshoes or cards while constantly on watch for when they can get back in the field.

This is not a new thing for Gossen AG. The family of custom harvesters has been cutting wheat, milo, corn and other crops since the 1940s and in that time has brought in the harvest of countless acres for farms up and down the Great Plains.

Mel is a man who looks like a legend. He talks with authority and you can often catch him gazing

at distant horizons, perhaps to the field that the next day or week's work will take him. He speaks with genuine care for his team and it's easy to see why they follow him. His family is interwoven into the cutting crew and several of Mel's children drive combines many hours each day.

The tradition of Gossen AG started in the 1940s when Sam Gossen, Mel's father, returned from the war and began harvesting with friends and family in Oklahoma. As equipment was difficult to acquire, farmers would hire Sam Gossen to harvest their fields with his Massey Ferguson combines. As years progressed, the family received jobs in Kansas, Colorado and Montana and started replacing their fleet with Gleaner combines.



In the '40s and '50s, Sam Gossen blazed a trail up from Oklahoma through western Kansas, eastern Colorado, western Nebraska and on up into the Dakotas. According to Mel, his father had occasionally bought his combine, truck and pickup new at the beginning of the trek and sold them after the last crop was brought in. The proceeds were used to acquire farmland back home.

Today, Gossen AG runs a fleet of nine Gleaner R75 combines outfitted to cut wheat, milo and corn, in addition to their 18 transport and support vehicles. Realizing that conventional campers could not withstand the rigors of a custom cutting crew on the road, the team built quarters out of trailers which they haul along with the fleet through the Great Plains during cutting season.

To call the operation impressive is an understatement. Gossen AG typically fields the latest Gleaner combines with every bell and whistle available, along with a few bells and whistles of their own. Mel's son, Riley Gossen, is said to have modified his machine to an extent that it has created a demand for former Gossen combines among several farmers and harvesters, owing to the machines' high performance.





As for living on the road, the custom built trailers are extremely impressive. The cabinetry in the main trailer is nicer than many homes. The bunks in the guys' house look a lot like a college dorm, as do the rows of washers and dryers. Mel and his wife's trailer holds the main dinner table, large enough to seat the crew.



Gossen AG and Gleaner have had a long and mutually prosperous relationship for several decades. Started with a set of L2s, Gossen AG has owned over 100 Gleaners of all shapes and sizes. Mel Gossen maintains a close relationship with the manufacturer and speaks highly of Gleaner response to the innovation in farming. "When we switched from the Gs, the engineering didn't change much but the machine ran faster. When the engineers realized that we were wearing out certain parts faster they started chroming and double chroming certain parts for a longer life of a very durable machine."

When asked about the future of custom cutting, Mel is both philosophical and realistic, saying, "Population growth means there will be more and more mouths to feed and the experts are telling us that many of those mouths will be dependent on the U.S. (crop). That right there is big opportunity."

When discussing opportunities, Mel is careful to mention that with rising commodities prices, managing input cost with efficiency is crucial. As farmers are paying more to plant and fertilize their crops, getting every bit of crop out of the field efficiently is imperative.

The subject of skilled operators is always important for Mel. He says a skilled operator can do more in a Class VI combine than a poor operator



in a Class VII combine. The combination of a high volume machine and highly skilled operators is increasingly what it takes to meet the needs of today's farms.

"Years ago, you go out and plant a wheat crop and you'd get a wheat crop," Mel adds. "Today, with the genetic of these crops you only have a certain number of days to get this crop in or you are going to miss it. It didn't used to be that way; it has become a very sophisticated business."





Oil field and construction jobs strain the supply of harvesting workers. And Mel says many young people just can't or don't want to endure the tough life on the road for the wages it pays. Mel says, "It's a tough world. It's a seasonal job. You got to go 7 days a week and there is not a lady on earth who wants her husband on the road all the time."

The road ahead is not always clear for this family of custom harvesters. Increased regulation of emissions and transportation is making it harder to haul crops and machinery to where it needs to go. That, mixed with labor shortages and the shrinking number farms is making life for the customer harvester more complex.

Yet Mel musters on. This year he'll cut a track not too dissimilar to the one his dad cut years ago. Mel will start up from Oklahoma through Kansas, Colorado and Nebraska. Unlike his dad's original track, he'll skip the Dakotas and cut wheat in Montana. After Montana, he'll return to Kansas for the fall harvest.

2008 will be the first harvest Gossen AG will make without Sam Gossen. Sam passed away during the harvest in 2007. The crew flew down to pay their final respects and shed tears and then boarded a plane back to the harvest which would not wait for anyone. Mel is obviously emotional when he recounts how his dad raised him and brought him into the business saying, "Life in rural America is still the best way to raise a family. I don't think you could pick a better life. It's the way Dad raised us kids." §







IT'S COLDER THAN I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE. My last trip to lowa was sunny and perfect. Anticipating the cold, my colleague Richard and I stopped at REI Outfitters before our flight from Atlanta. I got a fleece. He got a vest. It wouldn't be long after we landed in Minnesota that he wished he'd bought something warmer.

The last time I saw Rick Hurley he was taking delivery on a new A85. It was last summer and he gave us a tour of the Gleaner flagship. I have worked around R75s before but the A85 really makes you feel small.

As we pull through Curlew, Iowa and closer to the Hurley's farm, I spot the goliath in a distant field. Even within the rolling hills the top of the giant combine looms large. We pull off to take a few pictures as the machine chews through corn, lit by the setting sun. This is our welcome to the lowa harvest.

Rick does not slow down. When I interviewed him over the summer, he sat down for a few minutes and chatted with me about rising commodity prices and inputs and how he is hopeful for the future. Today he is a flash between augers, trucks and the combine. We begin to chat about late season rain when, without warning, Rick dashes into the truck, pulls it forward and releases the next grain to go up the auger. It seems he is aware of everything and it is impressive to watch.





Wanting to see the field up close, I climb aboard the A85 for a few passes in the corn. Immediately, I am struck at how high up we are. I stand outside the cab to get a few shots. Despite a damp field and brisk speed, the ride is smooth and I hold on.

Dark settles in and we bid Rick farewell and start our trek to Sioux City. As we pull away, I see the lit A85 still slicing through the corn. There's still a lot of corn out here, and a lot more days just like this one getting it in.

We start the next morning meeting up with a cherished friend, Lenny Robinson of Robinson Implement. I met Lenny last summer as well and he introduced me to his friends and farmers in the Irwin, lowa area. Lenny is a true gentleman and his love of farming in lowa is evident.

Lenny leads us out to a soybean field and I see immediately what I had been warned about. When I had griped about the dust from wheat harvesting that impeded our photography in Montana, a Gleaner Marketing Manager snickered at me and said, "You ain't seen nothing yet. Wait until you photograph someone beaning."

The plumes of bean dust blend into the horizon to create an infinite fog. I walk a few rows in and wait for the big R65 to pass. As the combine crosses, a wave of bean dust washes over me, crouched against the wave. Eyes closed, I pull my shirt over my nose and mouth to avoid inhaling.

Watching someone beaning is not as grandiose as, say, watching wheat or corn get harvested but there is something elegant to it. The harvested ground is clean and flat and we walk right up to the combine as it moves by. Even though we see a bunch of corn still in the fields, this field of beans is nearly done and many in the area are seeing the last days of this year's harvest as well.

With the help of Lenny, Richard and I make our way to two more farms to watch more beaning as well as some corn harvesting. I



am impressed with how beautiful the land is. The terraced soybean field forms a sort of amphitheater and it is truly something to stand on the edge as the massive silver combine comes roaring down the side.

We pack up and make it to our last stop of the day. Lanny Newland is another farmer I met over the summer. He is a wonderful, personable man and I am glad we have a chance to visit the farm he's harvesting before we run out of sunlight. We pull up to the homestead and some family members point us out to where Lanny is bringing in soybeans.

Lanny's working a property that is far hillier than the others we were on earlier. We walk out to a patch of beans between two rows of trees and the field makes a sort of fairway, dipping down and back up. The sun begins to fall and the sky turns a sapphire blue. In the combine, Lanny disappears behind the hill for a brief while and when he returns back over, the lights are in full blaze.

A fully-lit Gleaner in a bean field at night can be ominous, like a machine from another world. The light makes the beans glow a golden tan. The illuminated head turns, allowing you to notice the movement in a way that's easy to miss in the day.

With the sun down, it starts to get cold in a hurry. Richard laments again for having bought a vest rather than a full fleece. We bid our friends goodnight, load up the car and head in for the night.

Even though it's quite a haul, we cannot leave lowa without visiting the Brownlees. Dan Browlee tells me we can find the field he is in by looking for the cell phone tower and he is not kidding. You can see the tower for miles and Richard and I just keeping following the roads that seem to be aiming that way.

I know we are at Brownlees when I see the two bright orange tractors and two R65s so new they still have the factory numbers written on the windshield and plastic covering the seats.

No longer a stranger to bean dust, I trek out in the field waiting for Dan to start beaning. It's the first hot day on this trip and when conditions are right for bean harvesting it also means conditions are probably right for bringing along a bottle of water.

Finally, the R65 roars to life and Dan starts down the hill. I have taken all the pictures I need, so I hop on the combine and take advantage of the air conditioner. Dan tells me this is a good year for beaning. He and his Dad did not plant less beans this year in favor of corn and that has done them a favor. The field we're in is seed beans and they'll fetch a good price this year.

Dan can really drive a combine. Most of the harvesters I have ridden along with were on long, mostly flat fields. Even riding in Rick Hurley's monster A85 through massive corn felt like mostly straight lines. But Dan drives this thing like a zero-turn mower. The field has its share of gullies and ravines and I ponder for a moment whether to ask for a helmet. I also make a mental note to suggest Dan to some friends at AGCO to let Dan test the new model combines to see what they can really do. It is something to watch and even more daunting to ride along.

We pass through some other fields and I ask Dan which ones are his. Then something catches my eye, young soybeans growing in fairly straight rows. I ask Dan who would be growing soybean this late. Ever kind, Dan coyly remarks that those beans were not planted on purpose. They had fallen from the back of a neighbor's non-Gleaner combine and seeded themselves. "That's why I drive Gleaner," he laughs.

It's getting late in the day and the several days in the field have taken their toll. I've met a lot of good folks. Saw a lot of combine harvesting. Caught more than a few winks riding up and down lowaroads. It's good to be back in lowa. And I'll miss it again until next time.

Editor's Note: Twice in 2007, AGCO Corporation sent writer and photographer Jeff Snowden and videographer Richard Tatarski to visit the heart of corn and soybean country in lowa to record the words and images of Gleaner customers and dealers.



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