

## **Managing 1,650 Acres**

Owning and managing over 1,650 acres, 916 being preserved with an additional 650 rented, is the daily routine for Roger Zweizig and his family. Zweizig Farms LLC. started in 1928 by Roger's grandfather. His parents began preserving their farms to guarantee their children the right to farm, which the family continues. The home farm was preserved in 1997 and is located in Perry Township. Three others were preserved in 2000, 2007 and 2018. Roger says, "I have just continued my family's philosophy". Their farms are located in Perry, Windsor, Tilden and Centre Townships.

Corn, soybeans, wheat, barley, and hay are raised which is sold and used to feed the 150-200 head of steers. The wheat and corn are sold locally to F. M. Browns Sons and the soybeans to Keystone Mills. Local butchers and Cargill purchase the beef animals. Farm inputs come from Deer Country, Growmark FS, and Albright's Mill along with other local farm supply businesses. To maximize the cost of today's equipment, various custom work, such as planting and harvesting of crops, is provided to local farmers. Roger stated, "When my father died, I decided to sell the dairy herd that had always been on the farm. There were people who had doubts I would survive, but I did and was able to grow the farm bigger. When I exceeded 1000 acres owned, it gave me a great feeling of accomplishment". Along with wife Kathy, partner and son Travis, as well as his wife Ambriehl, who just had their first child (Brandt) are all involved on a daily basis. Also helping is son Trent, daughter Kennedy who has off farm jobs and brother Larry who is retired.

There are many factors that affect a farmer's existence. Roger stated, "Weather can be very challenging, like this past summer's drought which cut our corn and soybean crop in half. Ensuring that we have enough rented acreage to continue our current operation is an annual task. Property taxes and interest rates are also major concerns". Roger states: "I think for the future of agriculture in Berks and Pennsylvania, property taxes need to be addressed". But farming is in his genes as he mentions, "If I wasn't farming myself, I would probably be working on a farm somewhere. I grew up doing this and have never done anything else. Some days are rough, but I wouldn't want to do anything else".