



SHIFT TO MORE BEANS

Next in a series from Iowa farmer Tyler Bruch, Global Ag Investments, who farms 44,000 acres in Bahia, Brazil and 7,500 acres in Ukraine.

Chuva, chuva e mais chuva. Rain, rain and more rain (in Portuguese). This has been the wettest planting season since I have been in Bahia, and most of the locals who have been here long before me agree that this planting season has been one of the wettest on record. It's normal to get a lot of rain – 60-80 in. – during the rainy season, however it's usually dry for a few days in between rains.

This year we had 10-12-day streaks where we were unable to run. As the planting season dragged on, it forced us to make a couple changes to our acreage. We have cut some cotton acres and will plant soybeans instead. Cotton is the most expensive crop to grow, and we are starting to flirt with yield drag. It costs the same to plant and take care of, and the difference from 1.5-bale cotton to 3-bale cotton in the end is too big of a risk for us to take.

Corn, popcorn and soybeans all look very good this year. The corn is knee-high and growing fast. Normally, we'd split our urea applications, but with all the rain and the speed the corn is growing, we are going to put it down in one shot.

This year we were able to get a few hundred bags of Bt corn; that just makes life so much easier and the corn really stands apart from the non-Bt.

The beans are young, but look good. If you can get them out of the ground and keep the bugs off of them, they seem to flourish rather quickly.

Our new U.S. planter is a great addition to the line-up, especially with our wet weather and the need to cover ground when we can. We are able to get 84 acres/hour out of it. It's amazing how much gets done when it's running.

ALL OF BRAZIL has had issues so far this growing season. Southern Brazil has areas that are burning up from lack of rain while other states have been drowning. Then throw the credit debacle and cash shortage into the mix, and it appears that yields for Brazil will be off as much 5-10% from original projections. A lot of farmers were unable to purchase fertilizer or are applying half rates to their acreage this year because of the cost and lack of credit.

In Iowa (my family's home farm), we started the winter with a lot of snow, wind and sub-zero temps. I was planning to be home for Christ-

mas, however the cold weather is making me rethink that decision.

In Ukraine, things are pretty quiet right now. The last major hurdle was poisoning mice around the fields. There is so much crop that is lost in general at harvest from poor management, that they are having a real issue with rodents. They claim that mice can eat off a whole wheat field under the snow, and you wouldn't know it until spring.

Recently, they found a tank-buster bomb from WWII (it was a dud) out in one of the fields. While the local authorities came to remove it, a member from the fire department walked up and kicked it a few times to make sure it was dead – unreal.

While we have expanded in Brazil and now Ukraine, we are looking forward to more growth in 2009, and with it will come more headaches and challenges – that's a guarantee. **CSO**



▲ Global Ag's new 108-ft., 36-row, 36-in. planter from Deere Bauer allows planting cotton at 84 acres/hour.

PHOTO: GLOBAL AG INVESTMENTS