

Dilldine renovated the elevator for about a fifth of the cost of building new.



## Rebuilt Elevator Provides Economical Grain Storage

“We had a terrible drought in 2022 that lowered river levels and crashed the basis on our crops by negative \$1.60, so I had to do something drastic,” says Arkansas farmer

Dalton Dilldine. “Everyone was looking for storage, including me, so I inquired about a 75-year-old rusted and dilapidated grain elevator in a neighboring town. I called a

friend who worked with bins. We looked at the facility, and I quickly decided to buy it. With our crew and help from a millwright, we were dumping grain there in 10 days.”

Dilldine said many people thought the 750,000-bu. elevator, built in 1946, was a wreck beyond salvage. At one time, it was a thriving co-op elevator where Dilldine’s grandfather served as a director. The 11-acre site was served by a rail line, but that line was abandoned, and the facility eventually closed. Unused for six years, the facility’s hopper bins were rusting, the receiving building was in rough shape, and paint was peeling from the silos. Despite its outward appearance, Dilldine saw it as a diamond in the rough, a reclamation project worth pursuing. He acquired the 11-acre site, two dump pits, two scales, and the entire storage facility for just \$115,000.

“Because it was a commercial facility, it was built really well, so there was a lot of good, but a lot was wore out, too,” Dilldine says. “We had to restore the unloading pits, put new floors in some bins, and replace one of the leg belts. We drilled 2-in. holes through 7/16-in. steel bin walls to install GrainVue digital monitoring cables. Now, I can be anywhere in the country, and my phone shows me real-time grain moisture and

temperature at the site. The system is great insurance against spoilage.”

After completing initial rehabilitation on a portion of the bins, Dilldine says his crew can dump semi-trucks in about 6 min. and load them out in about 12 min. He says rebuilding the elevator has been one of his best accomplishments over the past 15 years of farming, since his father passed away when he was 18. Now married with a young daughter, he and his wife operate nearly 6,000 acres. The elevator is an integral cog in their operation, providing economical storage at a fraction of the cost of new construction.

“We put about \$900,000 into the reclamation, which computes to about \$1.50 a bushel. The best part is we’re only 20 min. from the river and about the same distance from my furthest fields. A new facility like it would cost five times that much, not including the land it would be built on. A couple people have told me this facility might be worth \$10 million. I’m feeling very blessed to have this opportunity to continue the legacy of Dilldine Farms.”

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dilldine Farms, 540 E. State Hwy 239, Blytheville, Ark. 72315 (daltondilldinefarms@gmail.com).

## Device Remotely Monitors Fertilizer And Seed Flow

Fagro Ag Tech is helping farmers more accurately monitor seed and fertilizer flow on planters and drills with its VISUM Seeder RF. The system detects the presence or absence of seed and fertilizer during planting, alerting the operator to full or partial blockages in a flow tube.

Fagro Ag Tech says the device is easy to install and use. Sensors about the size of a playing card are applied to the outside of individual seed or fertilizer tubes or manifolds. No cutting, drilling, cabling or zip ties are required. Sensors are accurate for tubes with an outer diameter of 1 to 4 in. Fagro’s proprietary wireless technology uses replaceable batteries that last more than 4,000 hrs.

Each sensor transmits a reading to the central controller in the tractor cab. The

controller then sends the flow rate to an ISO display in real time using a 2.4 GHz radio frequency compatible with most tractor and air seeder ISOBUS configurations.

Excellent durability is achieved in real-world farming conditions because the sensors are dust and water-resistant and aren’t affected by static electricity or seed treatments. The VISUM Seeder RF will monitor up to three product streams and up to 120 rows per product. Plugged seed tubes, lines, runs and manifolds will be detected instantly, enabling quick repairs and helping the operator avoid nuisance skips in fields.

Contact the company for pricing, which varies by system size and equipment needed.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Visum Seeder, Fagro Ag Tech (ph 506-899-0097; sales@fagro.ca; www.fagroagtech.com).



Batteries power individual Visum Seeder RF monitors, which verify the flow rate of seed or fertilizer and send electronic signals to the tractor cab.

Walker Brothers focuses on developing new asparagus hybrids that deliver high yields, consistent spear size, disease resistance, and excellent flavor.



## Asparagus Offers Innovative Hybrids, Seed

Walker Brothers Seeds and Plants, LLC., of Elmer, N.J., is one of the world’s largest producers and developers of high-quality F1 hybrid asparagus seed and crowns. The farm has decades of experience in fresh-market production and in asparagus crown and hybrid seed production, and it maintains an in-house tissue culture lab.

“Asparagus has been part of our company’s story for five generations,” says Dr. Wenjing Chen, Assistant General Manager. “It’s a perennial crop that rewards patience, precision and long-term vision, qualities that fit our philosophy as both farmers and breeders.”

The farm traces its roots to Paul Walker,

who began growing produce in 1869. In the 1960s, it supplied eggplant, peppers and tomatoes to Campbell’s Soup. Its transition to today’s asparagus operation began in the early 1970s, when Howard Ellison of Rutgers University visited, seeking a farm that hadn’t grown asparagus before. The family found success with the crop and, by 2000, shifted its focus to breeding new varieties for U.S. farmers and beyond.

“From an agronomic standpoint, asparagus is one of the most resilient vegetable crops in the world,” Chen says. “It thrives in diverse climates and soil types yet still has enormous potential for genetic improvement. We see it

as both a heritage crop and a frontier crop, one that connects our past to the future of sustainable farming. Over the decades, we’ve built a global network with growers, researchers, and industry partners, all committed to advancing asparagus production and expanding its potential in regions around the world.”

Today, the Walker Brothers team focuses on developing new hybrids that deliver high yields, consistent spear size, disease resistance, and excellent flavor. New Jersey soil is prioritized for testing because it provides data on Fusarium infestations, high humidity, and both high and low temperatures. The seed is sold worldwide, and the crowns are sold across the United States.

“Because asparagus crowns are long-lived, evaluating persistence and disease resistance requires patience and consistency,” Chen says. “The crop’s deep root system and strong seasonality also make it challenging to replicate results across environments, which is why our global testing partnerships are so important. We rely on coordinated field trials with growers and researchers worldwide to ensure our hybrids perform reliably under different soil, climate and management conditions.”

Chen notes that it can take up to 15 years for a new asparagus variety to reach commercial sale, assuming a lot of luck and good experiences.

“Unlike annual crops, asparagus is a perennial that takes years to evaluate. From seed to meaningful yield data can take 8 to 10 years.

And, because the plants have separate male and female individuals, maintaining breeding populations is much more complex. Each cross represents a long-term investment of time, field space and resources.

“Our breeding process starts with selecting parent lines that have demonstrated strength, vigor and adaptability. After crossing selected parents, we evaluate their offspring in replicated field trials across diverse regions. We work closely with our network of growers and research partners to collect multi-year data on yield, spear quality, and field longevity. Only the most consistent performers advance to commercial release.”

Looking ahead, the team plans to continue improving its asparagus varieties, including accelerating asparagus production.

“Our work is built on decades of collaboration with the asparagus community, from breeders and researchers to farmers around the world,” Chen says. “Today, Walker Brothers’ varieties are grown on every continent except Antarctica. We’re proud to serve asparagus growers worldwide and to be a leading, driving force in the global asparagus industry. Every hybrid we release reflects years of shared effort, innovation and passion for this remarkable crop.”

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