

Robin, Heath and Blake Burger  
Benton, Mo.  
Triple B Partnership  
Products: Corn, soybeans, wheat and rice  
Size of Operation: Several thousand acres  
In Business Since: 1970  
Farm Credit Partner: Progressive Farm Credit Services  
Working with Farm Credit Since: 1981



For the Burger family, farming is a generational thing: Robin Burger started farming with his father and older brother in the 1970s, and now farms with his brother, his son and his nephew with another son preparing to join them. Maintaining a successful family farming operation that will continue to support the next generation doesn't happen by accident; it takes a lot of work, planning, commitment and a willingness to take on risk. "It takes lot of hours," says Robin, "but it pays off."

Since Robin started farming, the family has almost quadrupled the amount of land it farms, which is necessary to support the increasing number of people it supports as children grow up and start families of their own. Today, the farms span two counties in Missouri and one in Illinois, land that is approximately one-third owned with the rest leased from a number of landlords, some of whom have rented to the Burgers for 40 years. "We have contracts with some of our landlords," Robin says, "and with some we've worked with just a handshake all our lives."

The Burgers raise a variety of grains including corn, soybeans, wheat and rice, with soybeans representing twice as much as any other crop. The grains are sold a number of places, including local grain elevators, and the majority is exported - 100 percent of the rice crop and 80 percent of their other grains. This global market represents the Burgers' biggest opportunity. "For the last few years, we've had excellent opportunities for marketing our crops at really great prices," Robin says. "That's what we need to keep up with our costs for land, fertilizers and other inputs. It's what we need to keep doing what we're doing."

Keeping the need for profitability in mind, the Burgers have invested a significant amount of money on modern, efficient equipment and installing irrigation systems on their land. Approximately one-third of their land has been leveled and irrigated with center pivots, delivering water that helps crops survive drought and increases yields. Using current technology, including ongoing soil testing that helps them manage the timing for fertilization and watering, also contributes to increased yields.

Managing their crop once it's harvested is another focus area, and they've installed grain storage systems – enough to hold 250,000 bushels – so they can retain some of their crop waiting for the right price. These grain bins, along with land and equipment purchases, have been financed with help from Progressive



Farm Credit. “Anything we’ve needed, they’re ready to help,” Robin says. “I’ve worked with them, my dad did, and now my sons are, because they understand agriculture, land values and what the markets are doing.”

Uppermost in their minds, too, is the safety of the food they raise. “We eat the same food as everyone else, so we’re not going to do anything to contaminate it,” Robin says. “Everything we do is safe because we’re not going to put anyone at risk.”