

## Young farmer took a chance to pursue his dream

☐ Mike Reskovac making a name for himself in the Pennsylvania ag industry

By Gary Brower, Editor

Mike Reskovac was just beginning his climb up the corporate ladder, but even on the lower rungs, life was pretty comfortable.

Fresh off earning an agricultural systems management degree from Penn State University, Mike landed a job as a store manager for a large agriculture supply retail chain. For someone in his early 20s, he was making good money and it was a steady income.

But after three years, he knew his heart just wasn't in it.

"I probably could have been a district manager by now, making \$70,000 to \$80,000 a year. But I wasn't happy. I realized that money isn't everything," Mike said. "I didn't see that as being a good life. I didn't want to be working there in 10 years."

It is now 10 years later and he is the owner of Reskovac Farms. As one of southwestern Pennsylvania's up-and-coming young producers, Mike is a customer of that retail supply chain rather than part of its leadership team.

And he knows he made the right decision.

"If you don't try this stuff and follow your dreams when you are young, it's 10 times harder when you are older because you have too much responsibility," he said. "I thought, 'Let's not regret not taking the chance.'"



PGP photo by Brian Kelly

**RISK AND REWARD:** Mike Reskovac, owner of Reskovac Farms in Uniontown, Pa., left behind a well-paying, secure job 10 years ago to pursue his passion of farming, and hasn't looked back.

The chance Mike took was leaving behind the steady job to go to work as the crops manager for a local dairy owned by brothers John and Jim Piwowar. At about the same time, he began renting ground and growing corn and soybeans on his own. Though Mike wasn't raised on a farm, he grew up next to the Piwowars' Vances Mill Dairy, which is where his passion for farming developed.

"I had started farming when I left (the retail store). I started to rent a few acres close by the dairy and also started to do some custom combining," Mike said. "I was doing more and more acres and when (John Piwowar) decided to get out of the dairy farm in 2009, I took over the ground

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# Service

*Service is at the heart of everything we at PGP do. The employees of PGP strive to provide superior customer service and quality products that enhance the profitability of our customers.*

## Have corn prices reached their peak for 2014?

**By Brian Kelly, Grain Merchandiser**

In case you haven't been watching the corn market, we saw the market rally from March through early May on the crisis in the Ukraine, increased export demand and a cool, late-arriving spring.

Traders saw opportunities to buy corn contracts and move to a long position. Over three months, the board of trade price increased about 75 cents.

In mid-May, the market started to take it all back. Over three weeks the price declined by 75 cents.

The corn was planted in the Corn Belt and the threat of abandoned acres or corn acres switching to beans retreated, so the traders sold their position and the price dropped.

Hopefully, you were able to take advantage of the price increase and price old crop corn and possibly some new crop corn.

So, we have returned to the "What's going to happen with the corn market?" question, which actually means, "I don't like this price, please tell me it will get better."

We have entered into a weather market. We will have to see if weather impacts pollination.

If so, you'll need to be ready to react. If we don't have any weather scares this summer, as last year, we see corn prices slowly declining as we get to December.

If you have corn to sell, we recom-



File photo

**WAITING ON THE WEATHER:** Though parts of western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio have been wet in the spring and early summer, nationwide the growing conditions have been better than the past few years. Barring any weather-related incidents, the possibility exists for a large corn crop and lower prices later in the year.

### Corn update

mend you take an inventory to determine the bushels available for sale.

Next, you need to consider the current market. Currently, the crop conditions and weather forecast for the Corn Belt are favorable for a good yield. Therefore, it may take a month or more for any weather concerns to factor into the price.

Then you should consider what the market is telling you to do. Based on our posted prices through September, we are telling the farmer to sell now and not to wait. While today's price may not be as good as earlier this year, selling some today may be better than

waiting.

Next, we suggest setting some target price orders.

Lately, when the market does move, it has been at night or brief spikes. Those with target orders were the ones who received the best prices recently. Some of you will need to reconsider your

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Pennsylvania Grain Processing, LLC

*The PGP Agrisource is published quarterly by PGP for customers and employees of PGP.*

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## RESKOVAC: *Risk pays off for up-and-coming farmer*

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he was using for the dairy crops. This is my 10th crop. It's come a long way in 10 years."

This spring, Mike planted about 900 acres – 450 each of corn and soybeans – all on rented land. He said the only ground he and his wife, Sheilah, own is the quarter acre on which their home sits. He's hoping to change that by purchasing more than a hundred acres close to their homestead in Uniontown by the end of the year.

The 900 acres Mike and Sheilah farm are spread out over several parcels in the Uniontown area. Mike said the largest field is about 35 acres and the smallest is one acre, but all are within about a 10 mile drive of their home base. The average field size is between eight and 10 acres.

In addition to the 900 acres he farms, Mike also did custom combining of another 950 acres last year and hopes to do about 1,000 acres around Fayette County this fall.

"That's been something that kind of helps along the way – having another income source," he said. "The more things you can generate as far as income, the better off you are."

Despite not coming from an ag background and not having a long family history in farming, Mike has quickly established himself as a respected voice within the Pennsylvania ag industry. Just 34 years old, he has been named the president of the Penn-



PGP photo by Brian Kelly

**TOP PRODUCER:** Mike Reskovac farms about 900 acres in southwestern Pennsylvania. He was the West Tier winner of the 2013 Pennsylvania Soybean Yield contest, bringing in more than 71 bu/acre. sylvania Corn Growers Association, is vice president of Fayette County's Penn State Extension Board and is also a member of the Fayette County Farmland Preservation Board.

In 2009, Mike was named Conservation Farmer of the Year in Fayette County, and last year was the West Tier winner of the Pennsylvania Soybean Yield contest, taking in more than 71 bushels per acre from one field. He said 2013 was his best year yet in terms of yield, averaging about 52 bushel an acre of soybeans and 147

bushel per acre of corn.

Last harvest, most of that corn went to Pennsylvania Grain Processing, almost three hours away in Clearfield, Pa.

"We sent some corn (in 2012) the year (the current ownership) took over. Last year, about 80 percent of our corn went there," Mike said. "They were very good about picking the corn up. They come and pick up everything for us."

In addition to Mike's industry involvement, he and Sheilah try to paint a picture of life on a family farm through their blog "Two Hearts – One Harvest," which they write for American Agriculturist. The blog appears on the American Agriculturist web site, as well as several other affiliated sites.

Now that his 10th crop is planted and on its way, Mike has taken the time to look back at the journey. His love of agriculture has been the driving force behind the success of Reskovac Farms, but he is grateful for the help and the advice he has received along the way and says he couldn't have done it alone.

"When you have a passion and you want to work hard to get somewhere in life, you are going to make it happen no matter what," he said. "I've had a lot of good people along the way that have been supportive, helped make decisions and helped get the work done and are still helping. That's been nice."



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## Rising protein prices stabilize domestic DDGS market

**By Steve Blackburn, DDGS Merchandiser**

The demand for Dried Distillers Grains with Solubles (DDGS) remains high despite possible Chinese rejection of U.S. product due to government regulations.

That news caused a fast drop in prices due to the reduction in export market. However, domestic usage is high, especially as the prices of other protein sources remain higher than expected.

### *Distillers update*

DDGS is becoming a very good protein supplement to help offset the cost of soybean meal.

The corn producers and corn buyers continue to do a great job with keeping the mycotoxin levels low in all incoming corn.

At PGP, we will be adding another

staff member to assist me in the DDGS merchandising so we can meet your needs in a timely manner.

Please feel free to contact us at any time with any questions.

### *DDGS Merchandising*

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## *Corn: Prices may not go much higher as new crop arrives*

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working target orders, as it might be difficult for some of them to get filled. Setting targets 10 to 25 cents higher than the current price should give you an opportunity to capture some gains in the market.

You may want to keep some corn unpriced for a “home run,” just in case

the market gets back to the \$5 area. With or without targets, you should set a date, or dates, to sell some of your corn.

### *Corn Merchandising*

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In a declining market, this will force you to sell when you don’t want to, but may ultimately be the better price.

When it comes to grain marketing, hindsight is right, but you have to go forward and make a decision with the current information available.

Call Nikki or one of the Brians at PGP to discuss the options available to you.