Paul Freund Farms

Conservation Farmer Award

Presented By:

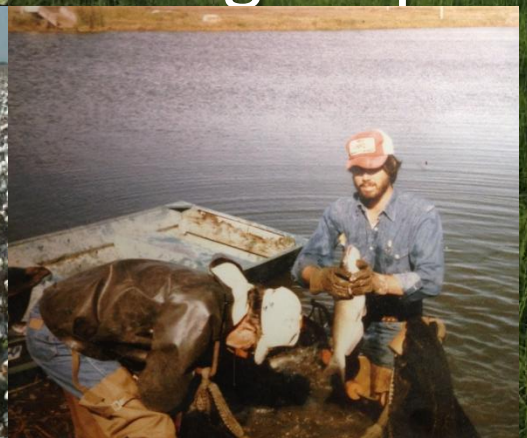
Coastal Plains Soil and Water Conservation District #317

Background

- Paul is a 3rd generation farmer/rancher
- Growing up, Paul had typical farm chores – milking before school, working cows, and working in the field
- Paul and Linda married in 1983 and began the Joint Venture Farming Operation in 1992, after Paul's father retired

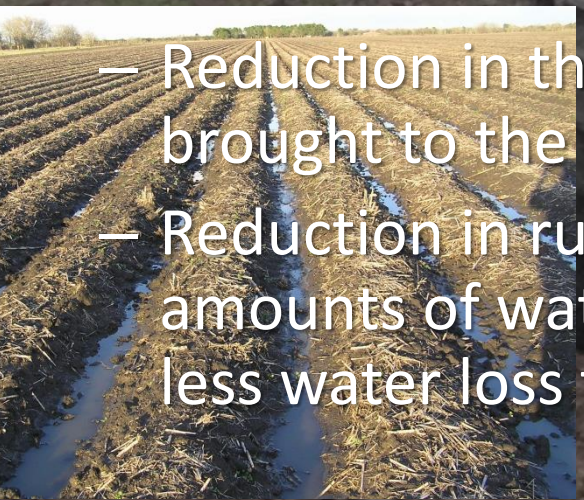
Farm Details

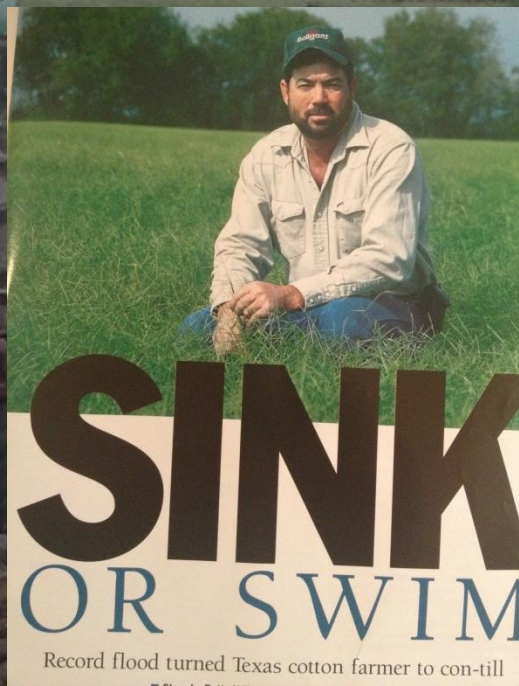
- Approximately 1,500 acres in production of:
  - Cotton
  - Corn
  - Grain sorghum
  - Hay
  - Cattle
- Worked with NRCS to build eight ponds for raising catfish, designing one pond to be used for irrigation of surrounding crop land



Conservation Practices: Soil and Water Conservation

- Adopted the Stale Seed Bed method of reduced tillage in 1993, coinciding with the arrival of their son, Dakota Paul
- The stale bed method has benefits including:
  - Improved water holding capacity and increased populations of earthworms and beneficial microbes
  - Reduction in the number of weed seeds brought to the surface by tillage
  - Reduction in runoff, which allows greater amounts of water to infiltrate the soil and less water loss to evaporation





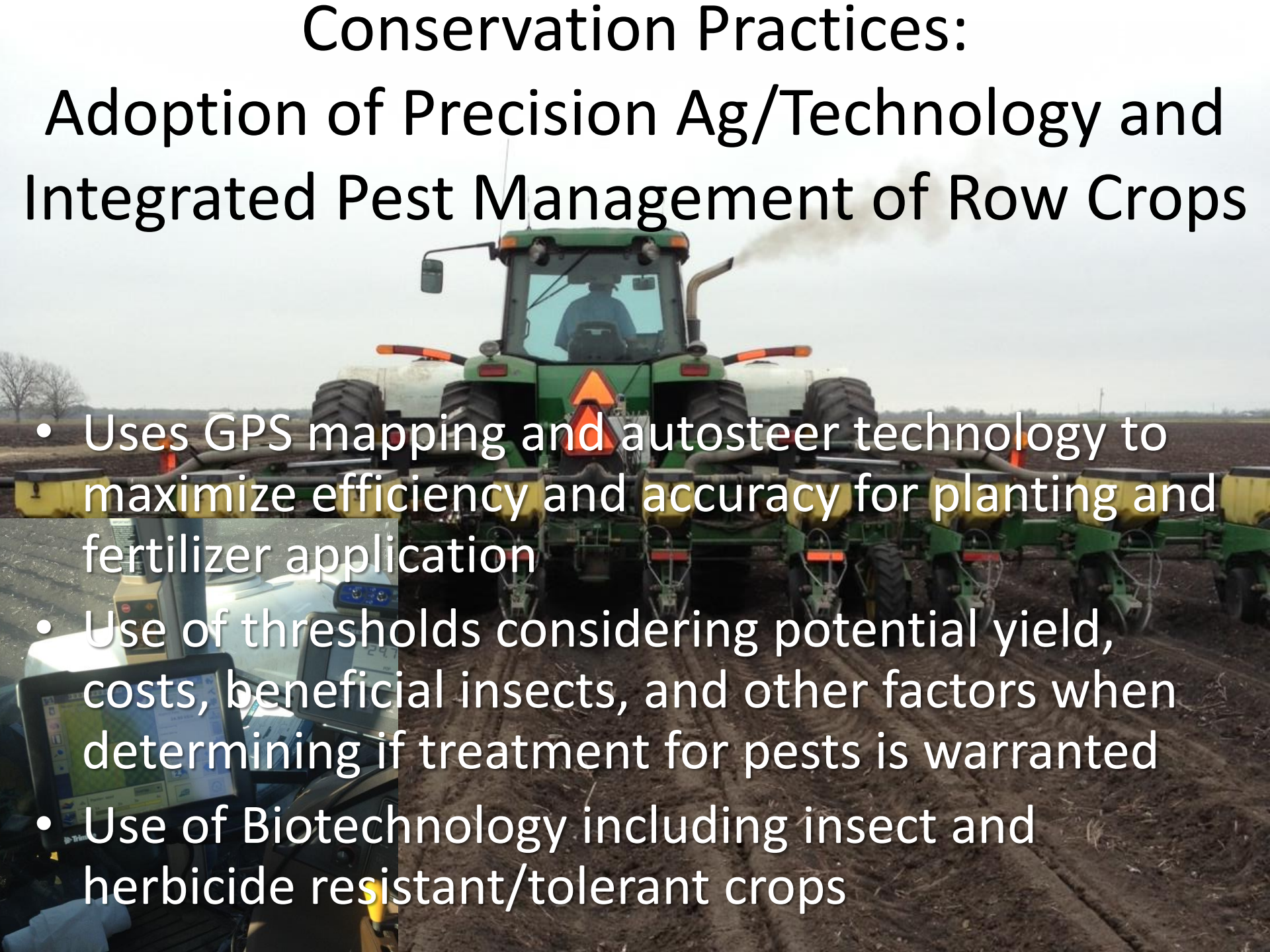
Conservation Practices: Soil and Water Conservation

- Utilizes crop rotation to keep land in row crop production fertile and viable
- Utilizes grazing rotation and hay production to maintain appropriate use of land to avoid overgrazing and decreases in production
- Promotes wildlife, including migratory birds by providing seasonal food plots

Conservation Practices: Nutrient Management

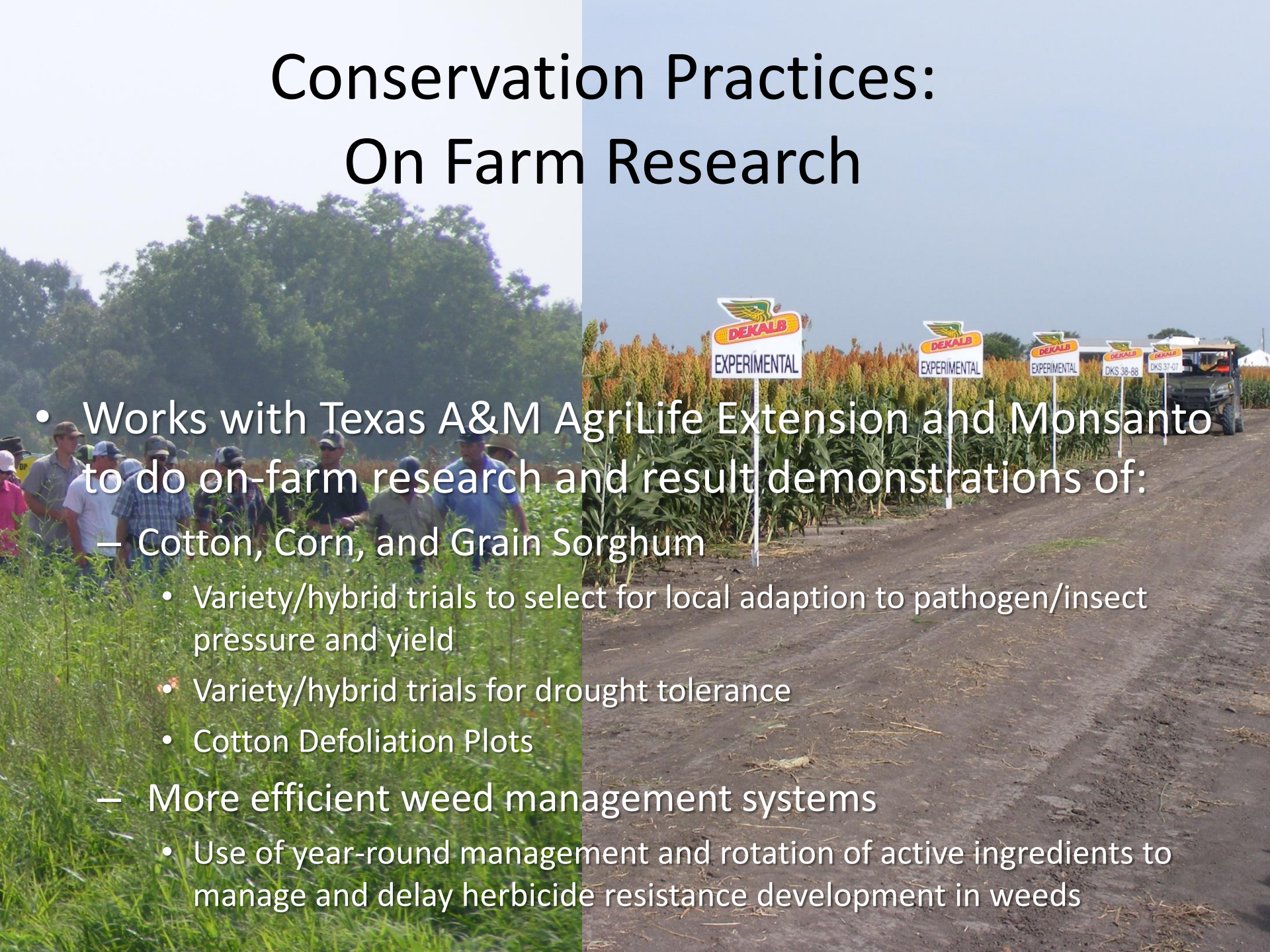
- Conduct soil testing to determine nutrient needs
- Use of near planting and side-dress fertilizer application timings to maximize crop availability
- Use precise fertilizer placement at both application timings to minimize loss and environmental impact
- Application of lime to improve soil chemistry making nutrients more plant available

Conservation Practices: Adoption of Precision Ag/Technology and Integrated Pest Management of Row Crops



- Uses GPS mapping and autosteer technology to maximize efficiency and accuracy for planting and fertilizer application
- Use of thresholds considering potential yield, costs, beneficial insects, and other factors when determining if treatment for pests is warranted
- Use of Biotechnology including insect and herbicide resistant/tolerant crops

Conservation Practices: On Farm Research



- Works with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and Monsanto to do on-farm research and result demonstrations of:
  - Cotton, Corn, and Grain Sorghum
    - Variety/hybrid trials to select for local adaption to pathogen/insect pressure and yield
    - Variety/hybrid trials for drought tolerance
    - Cotton Defoliation Plots
  - More efficient weed management systems
    - Use of year-round management and rotation of active ingredients to manage and delay herbicide resistance development in weeds

Agriculture Boards and Committees

- Paul is on the Fort Bend County Farm Bureau Board of Directors
- Paul is Vice President of South Texas Cotton and Grain Association
- Paul is Member of Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Upper Coastal Bend Management Zone Committee and the Texas Department of Agriculture's Cotton Producer Advisory and Pest Management Committee for the Upper Gulf Coast
- Linda is District Secretary for the Coastal Plains Soil and Water Conservation District
- Linda previously served as advisor for the Fort Bend County FSA Committee
- Linda is Secretary for AgriLife Extension – Fort Bend County Ag-Hort Advisory Committee and is Secretary/Treasurer for the AgriLife Extension - Fort Bend Row Crops Committee
- Both Linda and Paul Serve on Fort Bend Row Crops Committee working with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension to plan and facilitate grower meetings, applied research, and result demonstrations

Through the continued conservation practices on their farm, Paul and Linda are convinced that the use conservation practices are the key to a more productive, profitable, and sustainable farming operation. They remain committed to the conservation of natural resources and to supporting agriculture and local communities