

http://magicvalley.com/business/agriculture/farmer-regifts-tractor-win/article_fa9c32ea-bcbd-51e5-8622-5c90302873e2.html



MALAD • A chance of a lifetime is how Paul Hubbard describes an unexpected chance to use a brand new tractor this summer.

Hubbard's neighbor, Scott Fuhrman, won the Idaho Grain Producers Association annual tractor raffle entitling him to 50 hours of free use of a tractor during the 2015 growing season. But as soon as he heard his name called, Fuhrman was already making plans to gift the windfall to Hubbard.

"I immediately thought of Paul," Fuhrman said. "Retirement is in my future. This is the future, this is our future," he added sweeping a hand to encompass all of Paul's family. "These are the ones we need to be in agriculture and to love family farming."

Hubbard grew up on a farm in southeastern Idaho and farmed with his dad and brothers. About 10 years ago, he and his wife Kathy decided to start farming on their own and began buying some farmland.

Even with the support of his family and Fuhrman, farming is an expensive business to enter. Hubbard has tried taking advantage of beginning farmer loan guarantee programs through the U.S.

Department of Agriculture but has had trouble finding local banks that will accept the federal guarantee.

Like many other young farmers, most of Hubbard's capital is tied up in land rather than equipment.

"Paul does a great job maintaining his equipment, it's all older stuff," Fuhriman said. "His equipment looks good and it runs good."

In addition to keeping his equipment running, Hubbard also grows wheat, hay and alfalfa seed. He also hauls grain, hay and cattle for other farmers.

Fuhriman views the tractor donation as fulfilling the faith an older farmer had in he and his brother 45 years ago when that farmer rented them his land. The Fuhrimans still rent the farmland from his children.

"Scott's done a lot for us," said Kathy Hubbard looking around their farmyard. Paul nodded in agreement while pointing out which pieces of equipment belong to Fuhriman including a semi, disk and chisel plow.

"It if wasn't for Scott and my two brothers, I wouldn't be in the business," Hubbard said.

While he is carefully considering which John Deere tractor series he will use this summer, Paul isn't expecting to drive it much. His oldest son, Eric, farms with him and will probably spend the most time in the leased tractor during June when they are putting up hay. "It won't take long to use fifty hours," he said laughing.

Having an extra tractor available — even just for 50 hours of use — will allow the Hubbards to keep their oldest tractor, also a John Deere, at their Arbon Valley farm for summer fallow use. Otherwise, they would haul the tractor back to the Malad City farm for haying.

IGPA began raffling 50 hours of use on a John Deere tractor in 1998. Over the years, the raffle proceedings have been used to create scholarships for agricultural students at both the University of Idaho and BYU-Idaho, and a political action committee to identify potential state legislators that are friendly to agriculture.

John Deere donates the 50 hours of use and delivers a tractor of the winner's choosing to their farm. Hubbard hasn't quite decided which tractor to request.

Sid Cellan, IGPA president, doesn't remember any other winner re-gifting the tractor hours. "What Scott is doing is s great for young farmers like these," he said.