

IOKA FARMS

Annual News
Volume 8
Winter 2021

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2021 began as what we were lead to believe would be a more ordinary year around the farm. How could things possibly be worse than 2020? A return to normal life as we once knew it should be here anytime. Soon the year became filled with extraordinary events and a host of new challenges to face. The bitter cold ice storm which covered parts of the valley in inches of ice, followed by long spells of early summer heat did no favors for our crops. These two events, along with lingering Covid induced supply chain and logistical issues put a real hamper on returning to “business as usual”. All of these problems can really put business owners to the test, however, we kept moving forward, doing the best we could with the hand we were dealt.

Ice damage to our hazelnuts was wide spread and severe. (Keep reading through this newsletter to see a report on how we dealt with attempting to save our hazelnut trees.) Our timber acres fared rather well during the ice storm with the exception of some younger stands at lower elevation losing some tops. The inversion kept it slightly warmer at higher elevation leading to less ice accumulation. Our field borders were cleaned up with relative ease thanks to our tractor loader with brush rake, excavator, and many hands for helping. Heading into seed harvest things looked to be shaping up for a decent yield, but the late June record setting heatwave wreaked havoc on seed yield and quality. Even through harvest, earlier maturing crops seemed to fare the heat ok. Initial dirt yields were near average for fine fescues. Perennial ryegrass was off historical average yield by over 50%, likely due to the stage the crop was in during the heatwave. As the different crops started to be run through the cleaner the outcome continued to get worse. Tests coming back on cleaned seed are having very serious germination and purity issues, likely due to the extreme heat. On the bright side, grass seed markets are positive and prices are strong. Seed dealers are clamoring for whatever seed they can get their hands on due to a global shortage along with strong demand. This shortage of course was initially brought on by Covid shut downs, with more people staying at home taking care of their yards.



Cleaning up field borders post ice storm with the brush rake.

Along with the increase in seed prices has come an even more significant jump in agriculture input costs. We are just now getting pricing for our 2022 fertilizer and the jump is shocking. Fertilizer costs are expected to be double to triple of last year’s price. Costs to get seed to the buyer have greatly increased as well. Lack of truck drivers, hold up in the ports, along with many other things you’ve probably heard about recently in the news, have led to sky rocketing costs for shipping seed. Shortages of items from poly seed bags to equipment parts are cause for concern as well. Auction prices for used equipment have been setting records and equipment dealers are not able to fulfill customer orders in a timely manner. While much of this news may sound negative, we know we are not the only business sector facing these types of challenges. We are poised to adapt and find solutions to continue to be profitable while meeting the needs of our customers, neighbors, employees, and families.



Field burning was greatly reduced this year due to hot and dry weather conditions. Two thirds of our fine fescue acres were baled, hence the dropped straw rows above.

The life of a farmer can often be like fighting a battle. Unordinary weather, pests, disease, and regulations are all things we look at daily to come up with a game plan. We strive to be proactive, rather than reactive. Constant field scouting and monitoring of the crops is crucial to staying ahead of the game. Looking at long and short range weather forecasts is done multiple times a day. Fall seeding of crops was a challenge this year for many farmers with the weather pattern we were given. Luckily, we had enough planting equipment to get all of our brassicas, perennial ryegrass, wheat, and meadowfoam in the ground before the fields became too saturated. Hazelnut harvest was a bit of a challenge as well, trying to pick in between rain showers. The grass cover crop in our orchard again proved to be a beneficial partner as we were able to pick when others were slipping in the mud. Our second and final picking for the year was completed on Halloween. Our hats go off to Pape Machinery for loaning us two hazelnut harvesters when they were struggling to find a gremlin problem within our machine.

As we move forward into 2022 we do so with the knowledge that we’re doing the best we can with the current circumstances and with a resilient team to take on the challenges. Ioka Marketing added Brandon Bishop to the team to help with the import and export markets, and train under Mindy. We returned to “normal” travel with our annual trip to Kansas City for the Western Seed Association Convention where we met quite a few new contacts and reminisced with some old. We look forward to growing our business into 2022 and beyond with a dedication to superior customer service and vast product offerings.

Hazelnut Ice Damage

The historic ice storm of 2021 brought all things to a standstill at Ioka for nearly two weeks. Not much can be done around the farm in the winter time without power, but we did make it out to the field to assess the damage to the hazelnut trees, and start to clean up fallen limbs and brush.

Some tough decisions had to be made on best strategies for repairing, pruning, or cutting down hazelnut trees. Damage was widespread and severe in our orchards, hitting our pollinator trees the hardest. These trees had a larger density of catkins allowing more ice to build up on them. We decided to proceed with bolting the salvageable trees back together with large lag screws. While it may not be the best long term solution versus cutting them down and starting over, we felt that to keep the majority of the living tree intact would provide the least amount of yield loss for the 2021 harvest. Roughly 90% of the damaged older trees were able to be repaired. Our two to four-year-old trees did not take well to being bolted back together as they did not have large enough diameter trunk or branch to accommodate a big enough bolt to hold the weight. The bolts pulled out as the trees put on weight from leaves and nuts. The older trees made it through the growing season and harvest mostly intact. After the fall rains set in we noticed a problem with the technique used to bolt the trees together. We applied grafting wax to the split in the tree after the bolts were installed. The wax hardened and is not keeping water from entering into the inner area of the tree. Many of the repaired trees are likely going to rot from the inside due to water intrusion. Many hazelnut growers in the area simply cut their losses and removed the damaged trees, replanting a new tree in its place. Our plan is to wait and see what happens with the damaged trees over the course of the winter. We expect that many of them will have to be replaced. Let's hope and pray that an ice storm like the one of winter 2021 doesn't happen again.



Trees damaged this severe were cut down



Drilling a pilot hole to bolt a tree together



Trees split like this were able to be repaired



A sad sight - trees normally 15 feet tall bent in half



Ioka Team Member Notables



Ioka Marketing is pleased to welcome Brandon Bishop as our International Operations Lead. Brandon comes to us from the Marion Soil and Water Conservation District where he worked with farmers throughout the Willamette Valley with soil health, cover crops, and seed recommendations. He brings his conservation, agronomy, and production experience to our team with a knowledge of local production in Marion County.

Brandon has quite a bit of history with Ioka. When he was little he'd help his father load Christmas tree trucks and as he grew, deliver grass seed from his family's farm to be cleaned. He is an Oregon State University graduate with field experience in many different crops. "Ioka Farms has been a part of my family for many years," said Brandon. "This is an amazing opportunity to work with such an outstanding producer. I feel I can bring a lot to the farm and truly care about its continued success." Brandon will focus on import and export, as well as working with local growers to meet forecasted production needs. When not in the office you can find Brandon adventuring with his wife and two children. He is very active in his community as a volunteer firefighter and EMT, as well as a youth sports coach. Ioka Marketing is glad to add Brandon to our team!

On a normal day you'll find our Lead Mechanic, Rodney Lutgen, keeping our fleet in tip-top shape. However, last year, when days weren't normal and wildfires threatened our community, Rodney sacrificed his own safety and rushed towards the fires that were threatening our farm and so many others.

Last July, Rodney was recognized by the Aumsville Rural Fire Protection District with the "2020 Chief's Award" for going above and beyond the call of duty. He and a group of fellow volunteers were also recognized with a unit citation for their outstanding efforts during the Beachie Creek fire.

Over the past three years Rodney has been working hard to further his commitment to the fire protection and EMT services in Aumsville. He is a certified water tender operator and has recently completed his EMT basic training, allowing him to respond in the ambulance to medical calls. In January, Rodney will be starting fire academy training to become a NFPA certified volunteer fire fighter.

Congratulations Rodney and thank you for serving the community!



10-14-1961

David and Rita Doerfler celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary this past October. Family and friends gathered for a celebration at the Festhalle in Mt. Angel. Congratulations David and Rita on this special milestone!

Ioka's Core Values

Integrity:

We base our reputation on being an honest and moral organization. We believe in standing behind our word.

Stewardship:

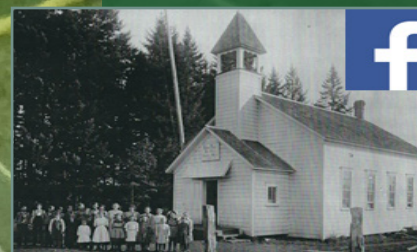
We practice sustainable agricultural production practices by balancing productivity, profitability, people, and the environment, to provide for future generations.

Commitment:

Through teamwork in the community and our business we strive to maintain excellence in all we do.

Respect:

We honor each individual relationship and seek value in people's experience.



Have a community related event to share? Lost your dog? Had some livestock escape? Theft in the area? Have Victor Point photos to share? If you have a Facebook account, check out the Victor Point Community Facebook Group.

Formed in August of 2015, the VP community group was started by Tracy Duerst. It is dedicated to the memory of Shirley Duerst who had a passion for preserving and sharing history of the community with her family and friends. The group is open to anyone who is a past or present resident of the Victor Point area. Members are welcome to share their memories and photos in the group.



Planting the Perfect Lawn

There's no better way to spruce up your spring landscaping and get ready for that first BBQ of summer than by planting a new lawn. Sometimes this can be an overwhelming task to take on, but with a few tips and a good plan, planting a lawn can be a fun and rewarding project.

The first thing to consider when planting a new lawn is temperature of both the air and soil. Grass seed germinates best when the air temperature is between 60 and 85 degrees Fahrenheit. This also allows the soil to warm up and for those brand new roots to thrive. Plan to plant your seed when the air temperature will likely stay in this range for six to eight weeks.

When preparing your seed bed, consider the existing soil type. Is the soil you're planning to plant into the native soil, or is it fill brought in after construction of a new home? Most soils in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) have adequate fertility for a strong and healthy lawn, but in some cases it may be necessary to bring in top soil, if fill dirt was brought in for new construction for example. You may consider having your soil tested to determine the pH level and decide if adding lime before planting is necessary. Most turf grasses will do well in pH levels of 5.5 to 6.5.

Preparing the soil comes next, and this is done to loosen the soil and to make it easier to grade and level. If your yard is rough, you may consider rototilling to prepare the seed bed. Avoid tilling when the soil is wet as this can damage the soil structure and create large clods. If you are adding lime, make sure to incorporate it in to ensure it is mixed well with your



Raking



De-thatching

soil. Rake and roll the seedbed to achieve a nice and smooth surface- no one likes running barefoot on a bumpy lawn!

If you are renovating an existing lawn, or your former lawn was smooth, there are other options to consider. Perhaps your lawn is just needing a spruce up? If you have some good existing grass you would like to keep, using a de-thatcher may be a good option. A de-thatcher can also create a nice seed bed for complete lawn renovation by going over the ground in several different directions. These tools are available to rent locally and cut vertically through the existing turf and into the soil at a shallow depth. This creates a fine soil condition that is perfect for good seed germination. This method will create a large amount of thatch that will need to be raked up and hauled away. After the thatch is removed, the loose soil can be raked, rolled, then grass seed can be spread.

The biggest decision you'll likely have to make when planting a new lawn is deciding what kind of grass to use. In the PNW, there are three main turf grass types to choose from; Perennial Ryegrass (PRG), Tall Fescue (TF), and Fine Fescue (FF). Perennial Ryegrass is the most common type planted. It has a beautiful green color and is soft on your kiddos' bare feet in the summer. This turf grass does best in full sun, but also requires more water to keep green as its roots are shallower than fescue. It has higher fertility requirements, so plan on fertilizing more often to keep it lush and green. Plant 8-10 pounds of PRG seed per 1,000 square feet. Tall Fescue also is often used for lawns in this area. While it has thicker, slightly stiffer grass blades, it

Planting the Perfect Lawn

is more drought tolerant than PRG, and also holds up to the wear and tear of kids, lawn games, and mowers better. It grows well in sun or shade, and newer varieties have a nice dark green color. Plant 8-10 pounds per 1,000 square feet for this grass as well. Last but not least is Fine Fescue, which comes in three types: Creeping Red Fescue, Chewings Fescue, and Hard Fescue. Fine Fescues are a good blend of softer bladed grass, with the higher wear and tear and drought tolerance of Tall Fescue. This grass is a good choice for soils with lower fertility and or shaded areas, and are typically used in a mix with PRG and/or TF. Planted alone as a lawn, the seeding rate for Fine Fescue is 5-7 pounds per 1,000 square feet. Maybe want a blend of the above features? The Ioka "Sun & Shade" lawn mix could be a great fit for you!

Once you have decided on a turf seed type or mix, it's time to plant. Use a drop seeder to spread seed and follow with a roller to ensure good soil to seed contact. You may choose to do an application of mulch or peat moss on top of the seed to hold moisture and help aid germination, and also possibly help with erosion if your lawn is sloped. Make sure to spread your mulch or peat no thicker than 1/8 - 1/4 inch thick.

When making an irrigation plan, you want to keep the seed moist so it will germinate, but not soggy and water logged, as this could cause rot issues. Ideally, the area should be watered 2 to 4 times daily, just long enough for the surface to look wet. Do this until you see that the majority of the seed has germinated and that green covers the entire area. Don't count



Alex Duerst with father in law Roger Freeman just finishing up a complete lawn renovation.



A properly prepared seed bed



The results....a beautiful Tall Fescue lawn!

on the spring rains to do this for you, you'll need to keep a watchful eye for the first week or so after you plant your seed. Once the grass is up and growing, slowly transition to longer, more infrequent waterings.

Lastly, it's time for fertilizer. For seeded lawns, you can use nearly any fertilizer that is relatively high in nitrogen (N). Nitrogen, either alone or in combination with phosphorus or potassium, stimulates growth after germination and speeds establishment of the turf. In most situations for seeded lawns, try the following approach: Apply a complete fertilizer (N-P-K) when you plant at a rate of 1.5 to 2 lb nitrogen per 1,000 sq ft. You can use 15-15-15 if you like, but regular turf-grade fertilizers high in nitrogen and potassium and low in phosphorus (e.g., 10-2-6, 21-7-14, 24-4-12, etc.) are best. Reapply at the same rate about four to six weeks after planting to further accelerate establishment. These will be the two most important applications you will ever make to your lawn.

Start to mow as soon as there is enough grass to cut, and enjoy the endless benefits of a beautiful lawn!

Need lawn seed? Try our Sun and Shade Blend. Roughly 60% perennial ryegrass and 40% fine fescue. Available in 10, 25, and 50lb bags.



Generation 1-John Duerst

For the past seven editions of this newsletter we have introduced generation three, the grandkids of John and Shirley, and Dave and Rita. This year we will swing back around to the older generation with one of the pioneering members of Ioka Farms, John Duerst. While we can't include a life story or full introduction of our generation one members within the confines of this newsletter, we'll provide a history of John's involvement in agriculture and his journey to being an owner and Vice President of Ioka Farms.

John Duerst, a charter member of the Ioka Farms team, grew up near Silver Falls State park on a farm now referred to as "The Duerst Place". This property was acquired by John's father Frank in 1929 through a trade for Frank's house in Portland. The 160-acre property was primarily timberland, but approximately 10 acres were planted to strawberries. Before grass seed entered the Silverton Hills, strawberries were the crop of choice. Most farmers in the area chose to grow strawberries, as the price 80 to 100 years ago was similar to the price of strawberries today. Packing companies made it easy for growers in the area to get their product delivered. There was a barreling plant on Silver Falls Highway for Marshall variety strawberries and a receiving station on Drift Creek Road.

After WWII many farmers in the area began converting their strawberry fields to bentgrass or chewing fescue. Many stories have been told about how bentgrass was introduced to the area. Who knows which one is true? John's account is a rather interesting one. Rumor has it that bentgrass seed was scattered throughout the area, originating from the former Ditters store in Sublimity. Ditters was importing dishware sets from Germany that were packed with straw for protection inside the crates. When a customer would purchase a dish set, they would take the crate along with the straw packing materials inside. It is very possible that this straw contained viable bentgrass seeds that were blown by the wind and germinated on roadsides. John's family opted to skip over the bentgrass and in 1945 converted their cropland from strawberries to chewing fescue which was primarily used for erosion control. Erosion from wind and water was a terrible problem in the Midwest at the time and they would take any



John tending his garden with Whiskers in 1943

grass seed they could get to help combat the problem. John's family rented a neighboring farm and bought an AC pull type combine to harvest their fescue.

After John graduated high school in 1952 he went to work for a local logger and home builder. While John ran a bulldozer clearing land for homes for three years, he also picked up some skills in home building. Following this job, he started working at the Producers Co-op in Salem on Commercial Street where the current Truitt Brothers cannery is located. For 11 years he was the warehouse foreman in charge of shipping and labeling and periodically hauled loads to Portland. This is also when he purchased a bare lot near the Salem Golf Club and began building a home for himself and his wife Shirley. At that time, he was approached by his father- and brother-in-law, Alex and David Doerfler, about coming to live on the farm to help David manage Ioka Farms. Having had just completed the framing and roof on his house, the project was put on hold and in 1962 John and Shirley moved into the original Doerfler home. John hired a contractor to finish the house he started in Salem, sold the completed house, and used the proceeds from the sale to purchase the Lorence farm on Riches Road where his son Rob's house currently sits.

Ioka Farms was not in the seed crop business until David graduated college. Alex Doerfler was basic in livestock and tree crops, and rented his land to the King brothers who grew grass seed. When John and David began farming together in the early 1960's, they took possession of Alex's land and gradually purchased and rented more land. Two seed cleaners were in operation in the early years, one being at the current production location and another at the Hansen farm on Frazer Road. In 1968, at the advice of their accountant, Ioka Farms was incorporated. In 1974 John and David purchased the Miller farm where today's seed cleaner is located. There was an existing cleaner on the property and in 1977 a new modern grass seed cleaner was constructed. Many of the neighbors brought their fescue seed for custom cleaning. John migrated from helping manage farm operations to taking over management of the new seed cleaner. Throughout the 80's and 90's John continued to oversee the seed cleaner operations and began selling oat seed into California.

Throughout John's agriculture career he was involved with



John receiving the 2004 Seedsman of the Year award.

Ioka Historicals



John in 2011 with Ioka's seed cleaner in the background

many industry groups and organizations. He volunteered his time with the Fine Fescue Commission, Marion Soil and Water Conservation District, Silverton Fire Department, Farm Credit advisory board, and he was the chairman of the Meadowfoam Board. Johns recognitions over the years included: The Wheat Growers League award and Outstanding Cooperator award from the Marion Soil and Water Conservation District. These two awards were shared with David. In 2004 John received the Seedsman of the Year award from the Oregon Seed Growers League.

It seemed the seed business was John's true calling in life. John says his start in the business was when he was around 10 years old. He reminisces that in the back of his "funny books" were mail order forms to purchase Northrup King flower and garden seed packets. He and his mother sent off for a variety of these seed packets to plant on their farm. John decided that maybe he would try to make some money, so he took a few of the packets and went door-to-door to his neighbors to sell them. He promptly sold out of his seed inventory, a good thing for a seed salesman to do! John's agriculture teacher in high school told his students: "If you want to farm you need to do one of three things-buy land, inherit land, or marry your way into some land." John did all three. At 87 years young John has been enjoying retirement for many years, staying active, traveling, and remains in good health. Thanks John for helping to create the Ioka Farms we know and love today!



John with the Massey 90 tractor in the late 1980's

Marketing in the days before social media, emails, and cell phones looked quite a bit different than in today's world. Alexander Doerfler needed a way to get his message out about his farm and his product offerings. Many journalists and curious folks would travel to visit Ioka Farm and write about their experiences. Below is an example of one poet's take on Alex's Ioka Farm, published around 1930.

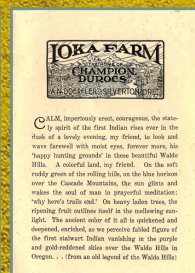
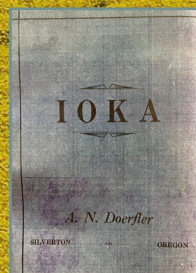
Impressed deeply with the Waldo Hills, Frank Carleton Nelson, the noted poet of Auburn, Indiana, has written the poem reproduced below, especially dedicated to the Ioka Farm of Mr. A.N. Doerfler.

Now when it comes to words, I claim
Ioka Farm is just one name,
Or two, perhaps, that no one yet
Has rhymed with anything, I'll bet
Besides, you've never seen
In any book or magazine
One single word that's yet been writ
About the wondrous charm of it.

No one has ever tried to write
Or even tell about the sight
That meets the eye when once you drive
In miles, I guess, some four or five
From Silverton, and view that spot,
And I have heard that just a lot
Who've made the trip were so surprised
They thought it was paradise.

And as for folks, none can compare
With those who bid you welcome there,
That dad and mother, A.N. too,
Just make you feel you lived and grew
Right up with them and right away
You think you'd like to always stay
And live the life that well we know
God meant that we should live below.

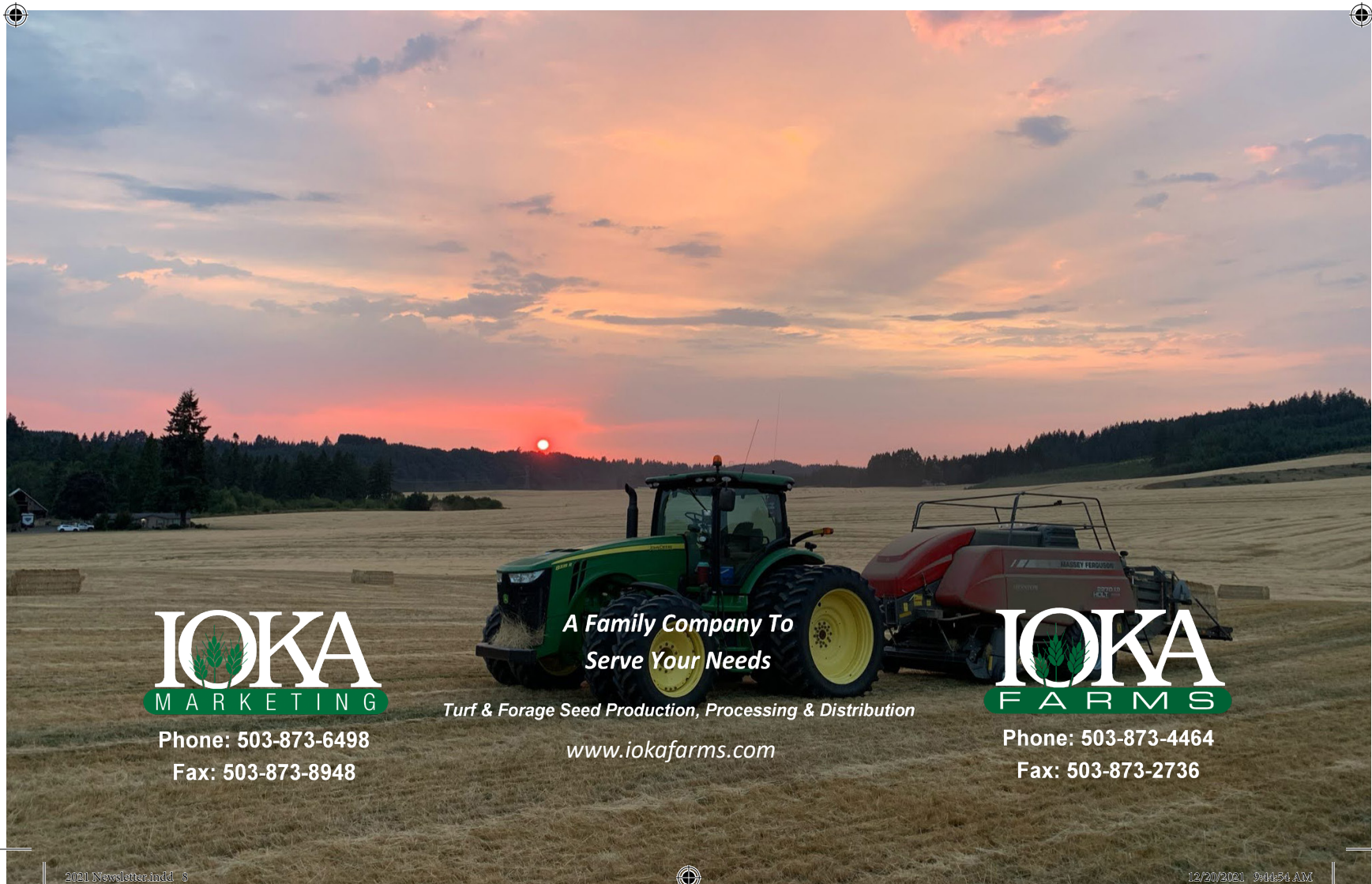
Too short, indeed, were those few hours
We spent with them among the flowers,
Beholding all those scenes so grand,
The masterpiece of nature's hand,
And words of mine can ne'er express
Our thoughts for them and thankfulness
That we should know and feel the charm
God gave to old Ioka Farm.



Booklet covers of historical Ioka Farm promotional material.



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