



News Release

For Immediate Release

HUTCHINSON, KANSAS NATIVE WINS JOHN DEERE GATOR IN I AM FARMLAND SWEEPSTAKES

USFRA Delivers Gator to farmer and rancher John Wildin

Chesterfield, MO (August 26, 2015) – When Hutchinson, Kansas native John Wildin put his entry form into the *I Am FARMLAND* sweepstakes box during the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association convention this past February, he never dreamed he would win [a John Deere Gator](#). The promotion was the brainchild of the [U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance](#) (USFRA) to help create awareness about the documentary [FARMLAND](#) and encourage the agriculture community to help bring the film to consumers across the country. To draw people into USFRA’s booths, John Deere, a long-time USFRA supporter, donated a coveted Gator. It worked. Thousands of people at agricultural trade shows across the country not only entered to win but have since viewed and purchased copies of the documentary.

“When I got the call I let it go to voicemail, and then even after I called them back [USFRA] I still didn’t believe I had won,” said Wildin whose great grandfather homesteaded on the Arkansas River.

Wildin’s father became more aggressive expanding the grain business and starting a dairy. He sold refurbished farm equipment off Highway 50 and used the money to grow the farm. Today, John’s brother Jerry is farming the land and they still own the farm in Arkansas.

“I’m excited,” said Wildin of the John Deere Gator. “The utility of the vehicle out on a farm in this day and age is just incredible. We’ve got big plans for it.”

When Chuck Studer, Director, Industry Relations with John Deere was approached about the *I Am FARMLAND* sweepstakes, they donated the Gator without hesitation. Studer, who is also a USFRA board member, said they wanted to support the FARMLAND promotion because it was an opportunity to give individual ranchers and farmers the opportunity to engage in the story of agriculture and share that message with food consumers across the country.

“Oftentimes as producers we don’t know how to engage with others about agriculture,” explained Studer. “The *I Am FARMLAND* sweepstakes gave them an opportunity to contribute to the story of agriculture so that we can ensure more people understand how U.S. agriculture operates today, how their food is grown, and how it’s produced.”

When asked about FARMLAND, Wildin noted that he sells farm and ranch real estate and the people in the film are the people he works with. “The struggles for young people in agriculture is just incredible,” said Wildin. “The film is filling a huge gap in this country. There is a huge disconnect. I’m 61 and in my day we had Westerns and John Wayne. Today people think their food comes from the grocery store.”

It's this belief, among others, that led to the need for FARMLAND. Studer said what was attractive for John Deere, and he believes many other organizations, was the film gave the industry the ability to tell the story of U.S. agriculture. "As consumers' interests change, we need to change our mediums," added Studer.

"We're excited about how the film came about. We're excited about the reception it's received; certainly within the agriculture industry but more importantly outside the agriculture community," said Studer.

He noted that today FARMLAND is available on [Netflix](#) and can be purchased in select Walmart stores, on [Walmart.com](#) and on [Amazon.com](#). He also said in collaboration with Discovery Education, there will soon be curriculum available for high school teachers across the country.

USFRA will celebrate its 5th anniversary this fall and John Deere has been a supporter since the first discussions of forming the Alliance began. "I believe USFRA in many ways is like a family. There might be slight differences of opinion, but in the end we have a lot more in common and if we work together we can meet the goals of the individuals within the family. We've come together to focus on what's important to the consumer and how best to answer their questions in an honest and transparent way; and consumers are responding in a positive way."

So what's next for Wildin? After he takes the John Deere Gator for its first spin around the farm, he plans on sharing it with Jerry, who, he says, bleeds green.

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About U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance® (USFRA®)

U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance (USFRA) is a group of more than 90 farmer-and-rancher-led organizations and agricultural partners leading a movement to answer questions about how food is grown and raised. USFRA provides resources and tools to navigate today's food issues landscape with a broader goal of building trust in American agriculture.

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