

# FARMERS



## THE ATKINSON FAMILY

3<sup>RD</sup>, 4<sup>TH</sup>, & 5<sup>TH</sup> GENERATIONS

DEKALB® MARKET DEVELOPMENT COOPERATOR\* IN DINSMORE, SK

“I never really considered doing anything else.”

Their days include research, strategic planning, market analysis, genetics, chemistry, and lots of hard work. When the Atkinsons choose to grow corn, they choose DEKALB® brand seed.

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### ADVERTISEMENT



TROY, TODD, JOSH, BRAYDEN, AND PARKER CHECK OUT THEIR CANOLA FIELD THAT WAS AFFECTED BY DROUGHT WITH DEKALB® TERRITORY ACCOUNT MANAGER, LEVI ADAMS

## INTRODUCING THE ATKINSON FAMILY

The Atkinson brothers always knew they would be farmers. “I saw my dad do it, he saw his dad do it, and his dad saw his dad do it. So, it seems like the right thing to do,” shares Brayden Atkinson. For the Atkinson family, farming is a strong family legacy and the passion of many generations. Brayden's father, Troy and his brother Todd represent the 4th generation of the farm, having taken over their parents, Dennis and Jeanne's farming company, Atkinson Agro, in 2000. “Whether it's right or wrong, I never really considered doing anything else,” Troy says with a chuckle.

Now, Troy's three sons, Josh (21), Brayden (23), and Parker (18) plan on following in their father and uncle's footsteps to be the 5th generation of farmers. Troy and his wife Stacey raised their sons on the farm. Stacey works at the Outlook Dental Clinic and commutes daily. The boys have fond memories growing up on the farm, which is one of reasons they all are choosing farming as their future. Like their father, all three boys said they didn't ever really consider doing anything else. They are now all attending Ag college at the University of Saskatchewan with the end goal of eventually taking over the farm from Troy and Todd.

Although farming is a huge part of the Atkinson family, they are also very involved in their community. Every 3rd week, Troy is an on-call Emergency Medical Responder. Throughout the 11 years he has been an EMR, he has had many life-changing experiences including delivering a baby who couldn't wait to get to the hospital. Troy is also on the RM of Mildred council. Troy and Stacey are Kinsmen and Kinette; were coaches or managers for hockey and baseball; and have been on the rink, church, and school boards. Todd is also a Kinsmen and is on the wildlife board. Todd's wife, Barb, is a Financial Advisor and drives to Rosetown for work, and is involved in the Dinsmore Girl Guides program. Brayden, Josh, and Parker are also very involved in the hockey community.

Located just outside of Dinsmore, the Atkinson farm is on the edge of what is considered traditional canola country. Troy says red lentils is really what built the farm up to what it is today. On top of lentils, over the years they have grown durum, spring wheat, flax, chickpeas, malt barley, and more recently, canola. The Atkinsons also have a small cow-calf operation. Troy laughed, “Todd would rather be out of [the cattle operation], but we will leave it up to the next generation to decide if they want to keep them or not.” He further explained that they tend to be more of a

nuisance than anything, but joked that “there is just something romantic about having some cattle.”

About six years ago, the Atkinsons decided they wanted to diversify their crop rotation and were considering canola because they had switched seeders and now had the appropriate equipment to seed the crop. Coincidentally, that year Carmen Gruber, their local DEKALB® Territory Account Manager, showed up on their farm on a cold call. “She was the one who got us started with DEKALB® canola. Honestly, it was more about her effort and her showing up to provide the information we needed more than anything else. She is good at what she does,” Troy remarked. While Carmen was on maternity leave, throughout the past year, Levi Adams became their rep and supported them with their DEKALB® crop needs. This year they also worked with local DEKALB® Agronomist, Kate Hadley on their first DEKALB® Market Development trial. The Atkinson family finds it extremely valuable to get yield data on their own land and compare new products side-by-side on their farm and under their own management practices.

The Atkinsons grew DEKALB® 75-65 RR and DEKALB® 74-44 BL canola this past season. Straight cutting is an important practice on their farm, which is why they like 75-65 RR canola for its pod integrity and standability. Although it's not a problem yet, Troy understands the risk of clubroot spreading closer to his farm in the future:

“Clubroot scares me. It's definitely something that we need to be concerned about. We will consider clubroot resistant hybrids in the future if that is what we have to do,” Troy said. He can count on his DEKALB® brand team around him to help the family incorporate clubroot stewardship practices on the farm to delay or manage the disease pressure if it comes.

In addition to disease pressure in the soil, the Atkinson family is focused on having enough soil to plant crops and to support three more farmers in the next generation. “We have to have enough acres for the farm to be viable and sustainable,” Troy shares, but he believes if necessary they will be able to find a creative solution by leveraging their new shop and diversifying their business in the future. In the end, it's a good problem to have young, educated people with a passion for agriculture who want to carry on this strong family legacy.

*We thank the Atkinson family for choosing DEKALB® brand seed for their farm and wish them a safe and successful harvest this year and for many years to come. Check out the results of the Atkinson's canola trial and other farmer-managed Market Development trials on DEKALB.ca this fall.*

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