

Excerpt from Interview with Matthew Hughes

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Interviewer: Mark DePue

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DePue: Man, it's when we get up to the cab that you realize just how much technology has revolutionized your business. Tell us a little bit about what you've got in the cab.

Hughes: Well, basically a lot of monitors to help us know what is going on with the combine, know what's going on with the crop out here and collect data so we can take it back to the office and analyze it later. Uh, I guess the first thing that everybody catches their attention is our yield monitor. It gives us on the go picture of what is being harvested out there and what it looks like and how it's yielding. It's also recording that data and it's tied in to GPS so we know exactly where all the yield is coming from on that field and that's something we'll take back to the office this winter and evaluate our fields and look for problems in specific areas and try to make decisions for the future. Uh, right below that is our navigation system. It's our source of GPS but it also helps us take some fatigue off, for fatigue purposes and also for productivity, but it's basically tied in to a system that basically steers the combine when we're in soybeans. We can go in here. It helps us keep the head a little more efficient and also takes a lot of fatigue. You'll see it gets very dusty. It's kind of hard to see out here sometimes. It can kind of help avoid some problems in that area and also we run this thing long hours during the day and anything we can do ...

DePue: The computer is steering more than you are?

Hughes: Well, basically when we're going straight to the field, there is a lot to watch here and that's one less thing we have to worry about so, yeah, this computer steering and we're watching other functions and making sure the head is feeding right and doing some other things. And, uh, you know, what that entails. Uh, down here is the monitor for the combine itself. And there again, I could monitor, it tells me if I've got any excessive losses going out or any losses that aren't being properly separated by the combine. It tells me how different functions on the combine are operating and my settings and I can make a lot of adjustments on the go right here. I can change it. Just about any feature on this combine can be done from sitting right here and I don't have to get out and I can

get them fine tuned as I'm going through the field. That's very important to us. This field we are going to harvest is being grown for seed so quality is very important to us so we can watch our tank back here and look for splits and things like that but we can make adjustments to make sure that we are getting high quality seed in our tank and getting that job done. Uh, and then, the only other piece of equipment is our radio back here. We have auger wagon that we will catch on the go here and so that's so we can communicate and let each and everybody know what is going on.

DePue: Heating, air conditioning, all the comforts of home.

Hughes: .Oh yeah. The main thing is that it is airtight. We keep the dust out as much as we can. It still gets in but, uh, and then we're talking about a lot of window space so, yeah, air conditioning is a must and ...

DePue: How about ... I would assume you can also monitor exactly how full you are and when you need to unload?

Hughes: Yeah, absolutely, have sensors in the tank that let us know when we get to seventy percent full and then it lets us know when we are full. And, uh, that helps us. And we can also see through the window how things are progressing there until it covers up the window. But, yeah.

DePue: Are you able to determine things like moisture content?

Hughes: Yeah. That gets back to the yield monitor. The yield monitor is collecting not only estimating the weight, but it's also collecting the moisture. It runs through a moisture sensor so we know basically exactly how much it is yielding at this given moment and what the moisture is in that area and how crops are going.