



## Family in Hart County Making Sweet Use of the Internet

**Name:**  
Sweet Farm Equipment

**Internet:**  
www.sweettractors.com

**Products/Services:**  
Farm Equipment and Mowers

**Location:**  
Munfordville & Canmer/ Hart County

**Leadership:**  
Ken Sweet, Founder & Co-owner  
Greg Sweet, Co-owner

**Employees:** 3

**Founded:** 1977

**Reach:** International

**Innovative Insight:** *“A lot of companies have websites, but don’t maintain or update them. That is not wise.”*

**Way Internet Has Made You More Competitive:** *“It has brought in more sales, and has allowed us to expand our business to another location.”*

**Advice to Growing Companies:** *“Take it slow. Seek out all your options, and know your customer.”*

**Ways to Continue to Attract the Best Workers:** *“Offer competitive pay, benefits and good insurance.”*

**Munfordville, KY** - Located in the “heart” of Hart County is a shining example of how Kentucky farmers can use the technology offered by the Internet with a little strategy and a lot of determination.

Sweet Farm Equipment in Munfordville, Kentucky was born when Ken Sweet, founder and co-owner, sold five pieces of farm equipment in 1977 to area farmers as a way to bring in a little extra money for the family. Thirty years later, business is booming with two locations in Hart County and an international reach on the web.

Sweet Farm Equipment became a family tradition when Ken’s son, Greg, purchased half of the business in 1995 after graduating from Western Kentucky University with a degree in agriculture-business. With Kentucky’s farmers struggling in a faltering economy, Greg soon realized that in order for his family to continue to be prosperous, business needed to change.

“The local business at the time was slowing down, and we were looking for something that would broaden our customer base,” said Greg. He soon found a way to incorporate the computer skills he gained at Western with the agriculture he knew so well.

In 1997, Sweet Farm Equipment began selling new and used farm equipment online. Today Greg estimates that about 70 percent of their sales can be attributed to online sales. One look at their site’s hit tracker tells the story – since August 26, 2004, the site has had 712,363 visitors. Greg said that they have sold their products, which include Kioti tractors and Dixon mowers, to nearly every state and some other countries, and business continues to grow. In 2003, the company was given the “Business of the Year” award by the Hart County Chamber of Commerce.

“When we first started we were on dial-up and we would get knocked off a lot. It was so slow you could hardly do business. Then DSL comes in. We can take a phone call and quote a customer rate over the phone rather than having to call back or wait for something to download.”

The efficiency of DSL has simplified business processes and increased sales. “One thing leads to another – if you are more efficient and do things quickly and easier, it has to lead to more sells,” Greg said.

Today Greg and his father mostly cater to small farmers with 20 acres or less. Being farmers themselves, with a 350 acre farm with beef cattle and burley tobacco, Greg feels their experience gives them a unique advantage when selling tractors and farm equipment. Over the years, Greg said the way they sell might have changed, but their philosophy has stayed the same.

“We strive to present the best product at the best price, and with the lowest possible shipping rates in the industry,” he said.

Even with the continued success of the business, Greg and his father are concerned about recent legislation proposing a state tax on online sells. Greg said. “Anything you buy out of state, there’s no sales tax on it. If this passes, it would be detrimental to small businesses.”

Despite this threat, Greg said he and his dad are very glad they took their business online, and will continue to adjust their company to fit the needs of America’s farmers.

