SUCCESS STORY
MINOT 2022
--- Since 1998, Great Northern Ag has been providing farmers with superior products and services both domestically and internationally.

Long-time family farmer, Mark Kok, founded the business as a seed retail company. Twenty years of growth and success later, they have expanded to a second facility in Bowman, ND. Great Northern Ag's focus is providing opportunities for growers in the region, selling hybrid seed varieties, as well as offering quality seed cleaning and processing of food grade pulse commodities.

Mark realized he wanted to start his own business when he was selling branded bagged feed seed on their farm. He discovered that vertical integration of the farming operation was more efficient than diversification into other endeavors.

What began as a two-person operation some two decades ago, has grown to have several employees in two locations and a track record of success.

Mark also began working with the ND SBDC program. Of course, like other businesses, through the success, Mark has had challenges.

Mark said, “I attribute our success to exceptional support from our long-term bank, lots of luck, and a passion for improving the options for farmers both financially and agronomically. Through the years the farming community has trusted us to handle their needs with superior products and service. They are the reason we exist.”
challenge to overcome was cash
flowing exceptional growth.

“Great Northern Ag has grown
from a small on farm seed
operation, to a multimillion-
dollar international company
with a diverse product mix both
in commodities and genetics,”
said Mark.

While getting his college degree,
Mark worked with the MN SBDC,
and was aware of the services
the organization
provided. Mark shared,
understand access to capital “A great deal
of the success of any business
is understanding how and
where the profits are made. The
advice and work that Mary Beth
contributed to our operation is
as invaluable today as was the
day we got it. We go and get a
business review periodically and
when our situation has changed.
We consider the ND SBDC and Mary Beth
a very important part of our management
needs.”

Mark has been able to meet with
Mary Beth, Minot Center Director
and as a result he had a better
understanding of his business
financials, which led to more
access to capital “The fundamental part
of managing a successful business
is knowing how the financials reflect the needs of a business to
to be profitable and how to manage
cash. Most small businesses
focus on the main objective of
the business and sideline the
financials. Having someone that
has experience in financials
and is objective about how the
business does, helps to outline
the course that has to happen for
the business to be successful.”

Mark’s advice to other
entrepreneurs is, “Make sure you
have the passion and financial
backing to make it happen with a
clear plan in place to guide you.”