



I was out putting corn down on the property this week, and by the time I got back to the truck my shirt was soaked through and I had deer fly bites on every inch of skin that wasn't covered by clothing. It felt like a hundred-something degrees at seven in the evening. The bugs hadn't gotten the memo that fall was supposed to be coming.

There's no good reason to enjoy that. If you described it to somebody who'd never done it, stand out in the heat, get eaten alive, sweat through your shirt, just to pour corn on the ground so deer get used to feeding there, they'd tell you to wait for cooler weather. And they'd be right, by every reasonable measure.

I've been doing it since I was about six years old anyway.

I used to think it was strange, how something so uncomfortable could turn into something you actually look forward to. Not despite the heat and the bugs, either. That's the part that took me a while to figure out. It's not that I put up with August to get to November. Something about the discomfort is part of what makes it feel like mine. Anybody can enjoy sitting in a cool stand in November watching deer come to a pile that's already established. It doesn't cost you anything. All summer and in August is where the actual work happens, when nobody's watching and there's nothing to show for it yet but sweat and bug bites.

My sons are old enough now to want to come along, and they complain about the heat the exact same amount I did at their age, which is to say constantly, and shows up anyway every time I ask if they want to go. I don't think any of them could tell you why yet. I'm not sure I could fully tell you why either, even now. Wendell Berry wrote that a person "should be able to think, and hence to work, according to a decent and reasonable pattern," and I think a lot about how little of that has to do with comfort. Putting corn down in August isn't glamorous and it isn't fun. It's just what the season requires if you want anything to come of November. There's something to be said for doing the unglamorous part on time, every year, whether you feel like it or not.

Most of what's worth passing down to your kids isn't the easy part anyway. It's the part where they watch you do the boring, hot, bug-bitten work on purpose, without being asked to explain yourself, so that something good is already in place by the time it matters.

The deer flies will still be there next August. I'll still be out there too, complaining the whole time, not going anywhere.

Take care,

Mason

PS: If you ever have questions or need anything, don't hesitate to reach out. I'll be glad to help.