

Farmers Faith

By Doug Godke

This remembering when column has been intended to record information about life growing up on a farm in central Illinois. In most cases it, has been humorous and maybe informational. It has never been intended to be controversial. For this reason I have tried not to include items such as religion or politics. However, I believe that religion has always been an important part of farm life, so I am going to include it as a topic for this remembering when article.

I have no facts to back it up, but I believe that most farmers and their families overall have a very strong religious faith. The reason for my belief is that farmers more than the general population face many trials and tribulations on a daily basis. They often see the birth of a calf on the farm. They sometimes also see the death of that same animal right before it is ready to go to market. Or they may see all of their time, effort and expense putting a crop into the ground, and then have it disappear in a few minutes during a hail storm. But farmers continue year after year. I don't believe they could do this unless they had faith in some higher being.

When I grew up on the farm almost all farm families attended a church. We didn't all go to the same church, but almost everyone went to some kind of church.

One of the local town churches found that a lot of their members were not attending during the summer. So they sat up some logs in a small group of trees and held their church service there. They had a good attendance. On our way to church we would often drive by all of the cars parked along the road and see the people walking to their church service. I am not sure what the actual name of the church was but it was always called the "Church of the Friendly Trees." They no longer hold church there, but everyone still refers to that small group of trees as "The Church of the Friendly Trees."

Many of our neighbors went to rural churches in the country. Our family went to a church in town. It was the church where my father's family has gone ever since they migrated to the U.S. from Germany in the early 1900s.

It was a fairly large church for a small town. Every Sunday our parents would take us children to Sunday school. Then they would go out for a donut and a cup of coffee. This gave them an hour alone, kind of a date without the kids, even if it was at the local Cake and Cream coffee shop.

Following Sunday school we would go to the church and our parents would meet us there for the church service.

My parents and all six of us children sat in the very back pew of the church. Everyone in the church knew that was our seat. Most people respected our seats. As a matter of fact, most people in the church sat in the same seat every church service. However, if someone sat in our seat it created a real catas-trophe. Our family would run around like a bunch of chickens with their heads cut off. We knew if we moved to another seat it would disrupt the seat of someone else. We would usually move up a row. Now not only would we be displaced, but so would the people that usually sat in those seats. Of course we and the other people that were displaced would glare at the strangers sitting in the back row. How dare them sit in our seats. The next

week my parents would eat their donut quicker, so they could get to church early to make sure we would get our regular seat.

As a child, I remember sitting next to my father in church. He would put his arm around as many of us as he could, without causing a fight among us. It may seem like an unusual thing, but one of my fondest memories was closely examining the rough callused hands of my father. Hands made rough and strong from working in the factory at night and on the farm during the day.

Church was a large part of all of our lives. Each child went through confirmation, my brother, my sister and I all attended the school provided by the church. There were many Christmas programs, Easter breakfasts, youth groups and many other programs and activities. However, the one item that had a large impression on all of us children was VBS, Vacation Bible School.

VBS was always held in early summer. I can't give you the exact dates, but like other farm kids I can base it on what was happening on the farm at the time. VBS was usually during corn plowing and the first cutting of hay.

VBS was held in the basement of the church building. It was held in the morning. My mother would bring us to VBS and drop us off. We would go to the class. The class included some religious lessons. Then we would do some type of a craft project. Many of the women of the church taught the classes. The year that I had my aunt I had to behave. It wouldn't take long for the word to get back to mom and dad if I didn't. The craft projects were usually fun.

Toward the end of class, we would have refreshments. This usually included cookies or cupcakes. It also included Kool-aid. But it was not just any Kool-aid. The best way I can describe it is the most watered down Kool-Aid in the world. I think the recipe was as follows; make regular Kool-Aid. Then put the same amount of water in it again. If it still looks or tastes anything like Kool-Aid, add the same amount of water again. Then serve it warm in a paper Dixie cup. I think they served close to 60 or 80 kids for 10 days and only used half of a three oz. package of Kool-Aid. Now that is what you call stretching it. But the cookies and cupcakes were good.

After refreshments we would go into the church for the closing of VBS for the day. Each day we sang, "This Little Light of Mine." Then the minister or one of the teachers would provide a brief church service. Then we would be ushered out of the church by singing; "Onward Christian Soldiers." When we heard that song we knew that we would soon be on the way home to start with baling hay, cultivating corn or herding cattle up and down the road bank.

I don't regret my parent's dedication to make sure that all of us children received a religious education. It has made a difference in my life. I work with many farmers and I know that many of them have strong religious faith. As a farmer faced with so many trials and tribulations, I know that many of them must pray on a regular basis. Their faith is also one of the few things they can depend on to get them through those tough times.

The only thing that I do regret is that to this day, I can't drink Kool-Aid full strength, even out of a Dixie Cup!

Young Leader Antique Tractor Pull Results

By Doug Godke

The Tazewell County Young Leaders held their 12th Annual Antique Tractor Pull on July 30th and 31st during the Tazewell County 4-H Fair. A total of 72 tractors and drivers signed up to pull this year. Members of the Young Leader Committee took care of all the details for the pull. Several local businesses helped to sponsor the event by providing the use of equipment, services or goods. The Young Leaders would like to thank the following sponsors for providing items that helped to make the pull possible. Deppert Farms donated the use of their equipment for preparing the track. Mike Deppert also served as pull chairman and spent a lot of time preparing for the pull. Stelter Hofreiter Inc, in Havana, IL, provided the pull back and scraper tractors, Mike Yordy Excavation & Land Improvement provided use of a roller to pack the track down. Hopedale Lion's Club provided the sled, people to operate it and a sound system. Trophies were provided by the Tazewell County Farm Bureau. The Pekin Park District provided work in getting the park ready for the pull. AgLand FS provided the water wagon and fuel for the equipment to run the pull. Cat Equipment Rental provided use of the lights so we could finish the pull safely. Nick Uhlman provided the announcers trailer. The Tazewell County Farm Bureau office staff helped work out many of the details for the pull.

The Tazewell County Farm Bureau and the Tazewell County 4-H Federation provided a food stand for drivers and spectators. All of the profit from the food stand and the pull itself is donated to the County 4-H Federation to specifically be used for 4-H programs.

3700

1st - Duane Schleder, Pekin, AC WC (47)
2nd - Karis Parkin, Pekin, IH Super C
3rd - Marsha Mountjoy, Mackinaw, AC WC
4th - Lori Parkin, Pekin, AC WC

4300

1st - Josh Wagner, Mason City, Oliver 77
2nd - Duane Schleder, Pekin, Massey 44
3rd - Karis Parkin, Pekin, IH H

Others in class

Marsha Mountjoy, Mackinaw, AC WC; Karlee Parkin, Pekin, IH H; Lori Parkin, Pekin, AC WD; Troy Saal, Pekin, 1951 Farmall H

4900

1st - William Hinrichsen, Goodfield, MF 65 Diesel (59)
2nd - Duane Schleder, Pekin, MH 44

Prime Timers Upcoming Events

On September 16, 2014, the Prime Timers will have their annual Wiener Roast. It will be held at Merle and Donna Woodrow's cabin by their lake.

In October, the Prime Timers can attend a play and a Halloween Party at the Farm Bureau. More information will be coming.

If you are interested in attending any program or interested in becoming a Prime Timer, please call the Farm Bureau at (309) 347-3165.



OLD TRACTORS STILL HAVE SOME PULL

The Tazewell County Young Leaders had 72 tractors pull in their 12th annual antique tractor pull held at the Tazewell County 4-H fair. Due to the number of tractors the pull was held on two evenings, July 30 and 31. Shown above; Nick Hasler, a member of the Young Leader Committee stands ready to drop the flag on a tractor as soon as its forward progress stops, or when the front end of the tractor comes off of the ground over knee high. A large crowd watched the pull this year which included almost perfect weather.

3rd - Mike Miller, Tremont, Oliver 77

Others in class

Dean Harfst, Mason City, Oliver 77; Greg Hasler, Pekin, JD - B; Lori Parkin, Pekin, IH F20; Josh Wagner, Mason City, Oliver Super 77 Diesel; Josh Wagner, Mason City, Massey 44; Ken Watkins, Delavan, JD B

5500

1st - Keith Lindstrom, Tremont, Case DC

2nd - Chuck Martin, Manito, Oliver 88 Row Crop (53)

3rd - Duane Miller, Tremont, Oliver 88 (52)

Others in class

Bill Brandenburg, Mackinaw, IH - M; Dean Harfst, Mason City, Oliver 77; Russ Miller, Tremont, IH Super M; Louis Moehring, Delavan, 1960 Oliver 77; Terry Parkin, Pekin, IH M (48); Eddie Proehl, Manito, Oliver Super 88; Duane Schleder, Pekin, Oliver 88; Mark Sommer, Tremont, IH M (46); Don Swing, Pekin, IH M (48); Jim Wistehuff, Manito, JD A

6150

1st - Darwin Morgan, Mackinaw, JD G

2nd - Eddie Proehl, Manito, MM UB (53)

3rd - Russ Miller, Tremont, IH 450 (57)

Others in class

David Baer, Tremont, MM U; Louie Moehring, Delavan; Oliver 880 (58); Terry Parkin, Pekin, IH Super M (53); Troy Saal, Pekin, IH M Super (53); Jim Wistehuff, Manito, JD A

6650

1st - Roy Wagner, Mason City, Oliver 88

2nd - Duane Schleder, Pekin, MM UB

3rd - Louie Weishaupt, Mackinaw, Oliver 88 (57)

Others in class

Ron Garman, Forest City, Oliver Super 88; Jim Groeper, Brimfield, JD G (51); Don Manahan, Mackinaw, JD 620; Tom Miller, Tremont, IH 400 (55); Lori Parkin, Pekin, Farmall 450; Matt Studyvin, Tremont, Oliver 50; Joe Weishaupt, Mackinaw, JD G

7150

1st - Duane Schleder, Pekin, MM UB

2nd - Eddie Proehl, Manito, MM GB (55)

3rd - Josh Wagner, Mason City, Oliver 88

Others in class

Richard Roskamp, Forest City, IH M; Terry Parkin, Pekin, IH 560 (59); Gary Fluegel, Tremont, IH 560 (59); Kevin Coers, Chestnut, Oliver Super 88; Joel Brown, Mackinaw, IH 450 (57); George Weyhrich, San Jose, Oliver 880 (58); Don Manahan, Mackinaw, JD 60

8650

1st - Ron Wistehuff, Forest City, JD 720 Diesel (58)

2nd - Duane Miller, Tremont, JD 730

3rd - Joe Warrick, Mackinaw, JD R

Others in class

Aaron Baer, Morton, JD 730; Kevin Bergman, White Heath, MM GVI (59); Andy Sauder, Tremont, JD 730

10,500

1st - Kevin Bergman, White Heath, MM GVI (59)

2nd - Eddie Proehl, Manito, OLIVER Sup 99

3rd - Larry Keim, Green Valley, JD 820 (58)

Richard Roskamp, Forest City, IH 450



QUIZ BOWL TEAM PARTICIPATE IN STATE CONTEST

Three members of the Tazewell County Farm Bureau Young Leaders Committee recently participated in the State Young Leader Quiz Bowl during the Illinois State Fair. This year's team included from left to right; Jacob Walker, Jenna Walker and Mike Deppert. The team competed against over 30 other young leader teams from around the state. During the quiz bowl, teams are asked to answer a variety of questions concerning agricultural and rural life. Although this year the team did not win the overall contest, they did answer many questions and had a good showing to represent Tazewell County at the contest.