

Lebanon farmers, businessmen swap jobs

Hoover, Broderick exchange

LEBANON — What does it feel like to go from farmer to administrator of a large hospital? And, can a hospital administrator handle the complexities of a day in the life of a farmer?

To find out, you'd have to talk to farmer Abe Hoover and Good Samaritan Hospital Administrator Dave Broderick. Each experienced hectic days while wearing the other's shoes.

For Abe Hoover, who is copastor of Gingrich's Mennonite Church along with his farming responsibilities being inside the hospital was nothing new. But acting as the administrator — now that was a new step.

Hoover explained that his day at the hospital began at 7:30 a.m. with a department of medicine meeting, where physicians reviewed various reports. The pace picked up with a tour of the facilities, an annual report review, a meeting with nurses to discuss staffing problems, a meeting on the United Way campaign, and a meeting with the volunteer services director.

That took him up to 3 p.m. and a three-hour tour of some more of the hospital's facilities. Then at 7 p.m. it was off to the Jonestown Lions Club to talk to the group about hospital services.

According to Broderick, who was at Hoover's side through this hectic day, it was just a typical day of a hospital administrator.

Like his fellow exchange participants, Hoover said he was excited about the personal relationships and communications between hospital employees and administration. "Everyone is treated on the same level, no matter what the position," he said. "The function or roles can change, but everyone is important."

Hoover added he was impressed with the current data available to the administrator through the computer system at the hospital, and reemphasized the importance of keeping daily records at the farm.

"I also noticed how important it is to departmentalize," he said. "Expertise and specialization are needed in various areas in the hospital. This can be easily applied to my farming operation, where one of my sons can specialize in field crops, another in dairying, another in chemicals and fertilizers, and so on."

Hoover pointed out that his day as hospital administrator made him aware of how much importance city businesses place on beautification. "It's important to keep the outward appearance neat and clean whether in town or on the farm," he said.

"And finally, it's vital to have a vision for the future

in the agricultural community," Hoover said, while looking over blueprints for future architectural improvements for the hospital.

In describing his exchange to the farm, Dave Broderick commented, "I didn't realize how a successful farmer had to be a good manager too. All those cost accounting records, future planning — I was impressed — you'd think Abe was president of GM."

Broderick recounted his day on the farm which started at 4:45 a.m.

"After Abe listened to the Western markets on the radio at 5 a.m., we headed for Farm No. 4 and opened the doors for 50 dairy cows that were waiting to be milked. While there, we took a look at the DHI records.

"Then, we drove to Farm No. 1 where I learned the mechanics of milking 80 cows.

"When we reached Farm No. 2, we fed 185 head of beef steers and talked a bit about the crops grown on the farms.

"At the next stop, the Henry farm, I helped to shovel feed for 40 dairy heifers and dry cows. And at the Smith farm, we fed 120 steers and 20 heifers.

"Then it was back to Farm No. 4 where I watched the milk being picked up by the tank truck

"Later that morning, we loaded 15 head of steers and headed for Vintage Auction. On the drive down, we talked about profit planning. Abe knew exactly what it cost him to feed those steers, and just how much he'd have to get for them at auction

"After a swing by the Lancaster Feeder Pig Auction and the feed mill, we headed back to the farm for a big family dinner

Hoover Farms, which is a family partnership under consideration for incorporation, consists of five farms along with some leased acreage. Along with father, Abe, three sons, Dale, Dean and Reed, work full-time on the farms with another son, Nevin, employed part-time.

There are numerous enterprises at Hoover Farms, including 130 milking registered Holstein cows plus 80 replacement heifers. They also raise about 100 head of hogs and 600 head of beef steers each year, along with keeping 7000 laying hens.

What makes Hoover Farms a successful operation? Abe concluded by saying, "We operate as stewards of the soil and believe that God is owner of everything. Our success reflects God's goodness."

In its first attempt at a farmer-city businessman exchange, it appears that Lebanon's Farm City efforts have been successful, too

"Agriculture needs to have a vision for the future," said Abe Hoover, second from right, while looking over future hospital building plans with Dave Broderick, Good Samaritan Hospital Administrator, left; Naomi Loy, Associate Director of Nursing, Bob Hoffman, Director of Community Relations; and Wilbur Weik, Interior Designer



Nurses Mary Kanagy, left, Pam Miller, center, and Carol Miller, demonstrate the defibrillator monitor to Abe Hoover, the Good Samaritan Hospital "Administrator-For-A-Day."



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