

Brubakers Wrap Up 50 Years In Ag Business

BY BONNIE SZYMANSKI

Rubber tires were just beginning to replace steel-cleated wheels on farm machinery about the time Roy Brubaker began selling agricultural equipment to Lancaster County farmers.

Following graduation from high school in 1936, Brubaker joined his brother, L.H. Brubaker, at his Strasburg farm machinery store.

When the Lititz branch of the L.H. Brubaker enterprise was established, Roy moved here to manage the operation. When L.H. retired in 1970, Roy assumed proprietorship of the Lititz business.

He and his wife, Martha Jane, continued to operate the Woodcrest Avenue store for 40 years until their recent retirement.

They prided themselves not only on a good product but also on service to their customers.

"We tried to be available to repair parts and service, especially in busy seasons," said Brubaker recently, speaking from his home on Starlite Drive.

Because farmers rarely take holidays, the Brubakers made certain someone was usually available to handle field repairs for farmers.

Brubaker recalled how, during peak seasons, his business had maintained a 24-hour service for feeding equipment, silo unloaders and machinery critical to harvesters.

Moving to the Woodcrest Avenue building in 1946, the Brubakers picked up most of their sales by

word of mouth.

Having been in the business for a decade helped, but Brubaker's status as the last of 10 children may have contributed to his capacity for work. And it was of no small account that his father, a minister, bequeathed the children a desire to be of service.

Brubaker asserted that all his family's decisions have always been made "with the Lord's guidance."

A quietly confident man, Brubaker lists church and family as having prime importance in his life, with community and vocation following close behind.

His interests even in retirement remain constant. He considers reading one of his more important pastimes, concentrating on religious and agricultural subjects.

State of farming

Not because he found it expedient to be informed about farmers and farming but because of a genuine interest, Brubaker can converse on virtually any aspect of the state of agriculture in this country.

Locally, he has observed how the rapid encroachment of residential and industrial development has changed the face of Lancaster County farmland.

Comparing his farm neighbors with the unfortunate farming population in the Midwest, Brubaker acknowledges that Lancaster County is still an ideal place to own and operate a farm.

But even here, the value of

agricultural real estate has soared, and young people who might have once considered the life of a farmer are opting for a more affordable career.

Although some children still have the opportunity to purchase farms from their parents, that land must be sold for a fair price, which, on today's local market, means a high price. Anything else would be unfair to the other children in the family.

According to Brubaker, farmers in some parts of the country have learned to survive on government subsidies, a gratuity farmers in this area would generally prefer to live without, he said.

But when the federal government starts talking about getting out of the farm-subsidizing business, explains Brubaker, the strong farming lobbies in the Midwest throw their influence in the direction of continued subsidization.

Brubaker says he understands the plight of the Midwestern farmer but considers government intervention more of a hindrance than a help to the farm economy as a whole.

The former ag businessman also sees a real dilemma for farmers who want to preserve the farmland for future generations.

When the question of whether or not to join an agriculture preserve arises, farmers are torn between wanting to maintain the right to dispose of their property as they see fit or sign a preserve contract forbidding the sale of their land for development.

Brubaker also is well aware of the part played by farmers in environmental issues.

Acknowledging that nitrate runoff from area farmlands have been hazardous to the Chesapeake Bay, he noted that modern technology as well as lowered farm acreage in the county have combined to aggravate the Chesapeake's problems.

Brubaker said that, as of 1984, Lancaster County had the highest



Mr. and Mrs. Roy A. Brubaker

farm income of non-irrigated counties in the United States.

That may be good for the farmers, but because of the continual decline in farmed acreage, nitrates in the soil from the farmers' own organic fertilizer manufacturers - their livestock - leach into the water table and ultimately flow to the Chesapeake, where they upset the balance of plant and animal life.

Brubaker said he thinks once it is economically feasible, turning manure into methane gas for fuel would be a practical and useful way to rid farms of livestock leftovers.

Decision to retire

Brubaker's decision to retire from the farm machinery business hinged ironically on the fact that "five or six years ago, they couldn't make farm equipment fast enough."

At that time, farmers were purchasing their heavy equipment ahead of schedule to take advantage of government-backed investment credits and the tax advantages of equipment depreciation.

They were lulled into a feeling of false security, contended Brubaker, adding that, at the same time, credit institutions lent money to farmers under the assumption

that the value of their land would keep appreciating.

It didn't, and farmers who borrowed heavily found themselves in the sad state of having little or no equity on which to seek refinancing.

As a result, the farm machinery business began to falter. As an old-timer in the business, Brubaker was able to meet the demands of increasing competition.

But he saw the handwriting on the wall. He began scaling down his operations to allow other dealers to keep up their sales volume, he said.

He began to find the demands of competition demoralizing, he explained, and decided it was time to get out.

Brubaker says now he may help out other dealers from time to time, but his retirement is filled with many activities, including his strong involvement in the Rotary Travelogue programs.

Brubaker was chairman of the travelogue program and promotion for 20 years and was president of the Lititz club when the first travelogue was presented 24 years ago.

Brubaker is an active member of the Lititz Mennonite Church. He and his wife are the parents of four children.

Delaware Agronomy Student Receives Scholarship

NEWARK, Del. - A University of Delaware sophomore, Anthony R. Gundry of Seaford, Del., has been awarded the \$1,000 Lynthwaite Farm Scholarship for 1986.

Gundry, who is majoring in agronomy at the university's college of agricultural sciences, was presented his scholarship on the basis of his overall grade

average and faculty recommendations. The son of Mr. and Mrs. John Gundry, he expects to continue operating the family vegetable farm with his father after graduating from the university.

He is a member of Alpha Zeta, an honorary agricultural fraternity.

AG TEC The All-Purpose Sprayer

For:
Sweet Corn,
Nursery,
Vegetables -
Gives Them
Wrap-Around
Protection

Orchard & Vineyard
Heads Available

Featuring:

- 190 MPH Air Stream
- Rotating Head (3 Pt. Hitch or Pull Type) Sprays With The Wind
- Low Volume Efficiency Reduces Chemical & Fuel Cost

SHORT ON CASH?

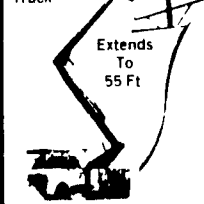
If So Consider Our 3 Yr. Leasing Program
Available On Ag Tec Sprayers Only
See Us For Details

Lancaster County's Only Dealer Specializing In
Sprayer Sales & Service

LESTER A. SINGER

96 N Ronks Rd Ronks, PA 17572
(717) 687-6712 In Pa. Only 1-800-262-8285
Mon-Fri 8 to 5, Sat By Appointment

We Specialize In
Aerial Work
Using Our Twin
Bucket Boom
Truck



ELECTRICAL CONTRACTING

Specializing In
**AGRICULTURAL
WIRING**

Also Residential Industrial
And Commercial Work
Free Estimates

C. M. HIGH CO.

320 King St
Myerstown PA 17067
Phone 717 866 7544

We Have Poles In
Stock 25 30 35 & 45

WOODWORKERS!



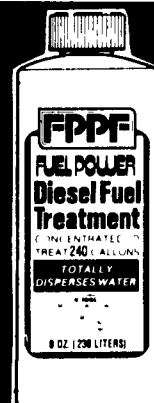
14" BANDSAW
A Heavy Duty Bandsaw With
Enclosed Stand And Motor

\$285⁰⁰

Call (215) 445-7307
Hillside Sales
New and Used Woodworking Machinery

Mon., Tues., Wed. CLOSED
Thurs 8-8, Fri. 8-5; Sat 8-11 AM

1/2 Mile Off Of 625, On Spook Lane, Between Terre Hill and Bowmansville



THE NUMBER ONE YEAR
ROUND BEST SELLER

DIESEL
TUNE-UP
AVAILABLE
Call For Appointment

AUTO/TRUCK DIESEL TREATMENT totally disperses water.



It eliminates water even better than water separators. It also keeps injectors clean, improves engine efficiency, and contains no harmful alcohol. Use it in every tankful all year 'round. The all purpose heating oil treatment IT COSTS SO LITTLE TO PROTECT SO MUCH. Use POLAR POWER from Dec thru Feb to prevent waxing and gelling. It also dispenses water GAS TREATMENT treats leaded & unleaded gasoline. Totally disperses water and increases mileage.

**DIESEL FUEL INJECTION &
TURBO CHARGER SPECIALIST**



MILLER DIESEL INC.
6030 Jonestown Rd., Harrisburg, Pa. 17112
717-545-5931
Interstate 81 Exit 26