

Crops, Beef Farmer Receives York Chamber Award

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Though he spent his childhood helping tend the farm, Dave did take an off-farm job one summer, driving truck for a roofing company. Despite the good wages, one summer was enough to convince him that farming was what he really wanted to do with his life.

"I hated it," recalls this quiet-spoken farmer of his brief, off-farm job. "I never wanted to go back."

After high school graduation in 1949, he left again to pursue a two-year agricultural-degree at Penn State. But when a key employee left within a year, Evans cancelled his college plans and come home for good to manage Margaretta Furnace Farms, with the Guernsey herd then doubled to 80 head.

In 1953, neighborhood farm daughter Janet Gilbert became his wife. Over the years, the family grew by three daughters, Victoria, Christine and Corinne, expanding to include their families and five grandchildren through the ensuing decades.

Dairying was phased out in 1971, giving way to more grain and beef production. Today, Evans farms 900 acres within a five-mile radius of the farm planted to corn, wheat, barley, soybeans and hay and annually feeds out 50-80 head of fat cattle. Just as his own farming interests have altered over the years, so Dave Evans has watched agriculture in general to adapt to progress.

"Marketing has changed," asserts this grain producer, who has a keen eye for the daily commodity price swings. "When we started, a farmer could make a living with a strong back. Now, a farmer has to be a business person. You must market right, buy right, sell right."

"It's just different today," Evans insists.

While commodity marketing plays a big role in Evans farming operation, he has no hard-and-fast philosophy, except perhaps to remain flexible.

"We store, we spot market, we contract," Evans ticks off as his marketing methods. Having 40,000 bushels worth of bin storage room has, in most years, proven to be a reasonable hedge against grain price vulnerability. But, he is quick to point out that this past season, with grain prices leveraging downward since harvest, goes against most marketers' experience.

Figuring soybean futures to be somewhat flat long-range, Evans leaned heavier toward corn acres for this planting season. And, though a long-time, no-till advocate, Evans will readily lug a chisel plow onto fields as he sees a need based on soil and weather conditions.

While farming is Dave Evans lifelong vocation, the machine love of his life is not the tractors or combines neatly parked away in the farm sheds. That honor goes to another motorized "vehicle" parked nearby in its own private shelter: his Cessna 172 four-seater, private airplane.

Evans became intrigued with flying in the 1950s, taking lessons between cropping and milking cows. Lack of time and the cost of flying limited his involvement. Life without a milking string left a little more free time; and, in 1971, he purchased his first plane. Then, Dave Evans got serious about learning to fly.

A 1400-foot airstrip, licensed since 1972, is kept neatly mown, with the nearby small, open-sided shelter housing his prized plane. Six years ago, daughter Corinne also earned her wings; now, father and daughter often fly activities together. Janet,

though not a pilot herself, enjoys passenger status. Evans holds an instrument rating, allowing him to fly in less than clear, perfect weather, while Corinne is working on her instrument clearance.

"It's a different world up there," grins Evans, whose enthusiasm for flying is almost contagious. "And, since our daughter flies, it's even more enjoyable."

Still, the sleek little Cessna - his third and "maybe last" plane - is not just a hobby aircraft, but an important farm tool. Evans often flies to pick up equipment parts, holding machinery downtime to a minimum during critical planting and harvest windows.

The plane has also brought opportunities for the Evans' to travel and vacation in unique ways. Though he has never flown north into Canada, Evans

often sets a heading for south, to places like the Atlantic coast, Florida, the Bahamas. Both Pennsylvania's Ag Progress Days and New York's comparable Empire Days agriculture expositions are near-annual destinations on the Evans' flight log. And, when a large group of private planes converged a few years ago on the Dominican Republic for a celebration and tour honoring the landing of Christopher Columbus, Dave and Corinne were among the pilots.

Evans is quick to emphasize the safety of flying, though - of all things - a bag of potato chips once gave them a brief scare.

"We usually fly in the 3,000 to 4,000 feet range, but that day we headed up to 7,000 feet," explains Evans. "Janet had an unopened bag of potato chips along in the back. All of a sudden there was this loud bang."

Though the exploding sound initially startled the Evans, concern turned to laughter when they realized the air pressure change had caused the chip bag to burst. It also left them wondering what would have happened if they had flown at a higher altitude the day they had hauled a whole case of York County potato chips along on a flight.

Sandwiched between cropping operations, moving cattle and flight plans, Dave Evans has also made time to serve the York agriculture community in many ways. He is chairman of the York Farm Services committee, chairs the Agway local committee, serves on the Agribusiness committee of the Chamber of Commerce and has been active on the York Farm and Natural Land Trust for land preservation.

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Dave Evans is an avid private pilot, putting his Cessna 172 to work often picking up replacement parts. It's also handy for flying off on a fishing trip.

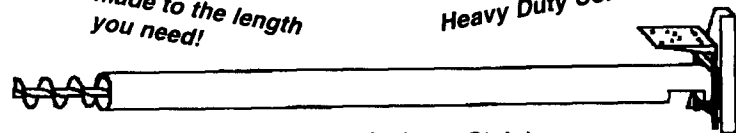


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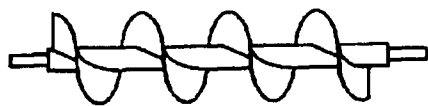
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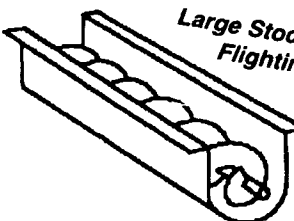


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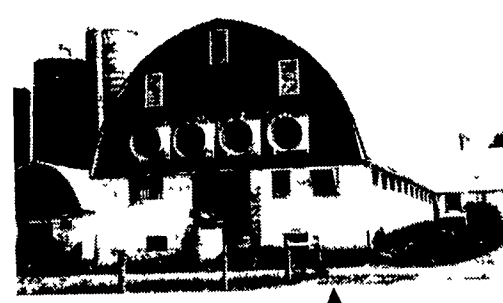
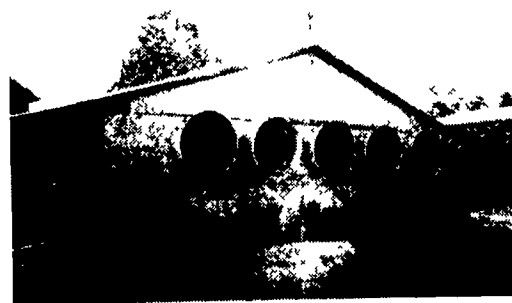
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