

Brothers Work Long Hours To Open Vet Clinic

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DOVER (York Co.) — Doctors Dan and Dave Pike know what it takes to build a successful veterinarian clinic. It takes 24-hour days and an excellent partner. That's why they made a pact before either one attended vet school that they would be partners in veterinarian medicine.

Only a year and a half after the Pikes opened the Dover Area Animal Hospital, they have grown from a handful of large animal and no small animal clients to more than 3,000 small animal customers, 70 to 75 dairy herds, some beef herds, and a few sheep and goat customers.

But the Pikes' interest in veterinarian medicine didn't start anywhere close to Dover. In fact, that interest originated half way around the world. The Pikes grew up in Heidelberg, Germany, and worked on farms over there.

"The farms where we lived in Germany are very similar to farms in the United States, although the herds are smaller

and the quota system exists in Germany," said Dan. "All of agriculture is more regulated in Europe than over here."

The Pikes moved with their family to the Dover area in 1986. Dan started college at Penn State York, and Dave started at William Penn High School. After two years at Penn State York, Dan transferred to the University of Kiel in Northern Germany. He finished up the last year of his undergraduate work and all four years of vet school at the University of Tennessee.

Dave followed in Dan's footsteps by studying at Penn State York for three years and then getting an early transfer to the University of Tennessee's vet school. Dan graduated from vet school in 1995, while Dave graduated in 1997.

"We both wanted to be vets since we were twelve years old," said Dan. "I knew I needed a partner that I could depend on, so before I went to vet school, I made Dave promise that he would do it, too."

To reach their goal, the Pikes had to go through several big

hurdles. The first was getting into vet school as out-of-state students. They both needed to maintain a 3.8 grade point average in college. The second hurdle was getting through vet school.

"Eight kids dropped out of vet school while I was there," said Dave. "There were only 52 in my graduating class."

The third and probably the biggest hurdle was opening up their own clinic together. "We didn't have any money, our starting salaries were low, and we had high debt from school," said Dan. "Nobody in their right mind was going to loan us the money we needed to start the clinic."

So they achieved their dream the old-fashioned way — through hard work. When Dan graduated from vet school, he started working at the Northside Veterinarian Clinic in Cumberland County as a large animal vet.

With the money he earned at Northside, he purchased a run-down carpet store in Dover to renovate into the clinic. Fortunately the past owner was willing to finance the property for Dan.

After working all day, Dan worked on renovating the house and gutting the entire building to prepare it for the clinic. It took an entire year for him to gut the building, put a new roof on it, and get it ready for the contractors.

In 1997, Dave graduated and went to work for Northside, too. After the contractors finished the walls, framing, electric, plumbing, and heating, the Pikes did all of the finishing to the building after their regular working hours. A family friend, Steve Smith, also helped renovate the building.

In January 1999, the Pikes opened their practice. But the hard work didn't stop there. "From January to July, Dave and I both worked three jobs," said Dan.

When they opened the clinic, the Pikes started out with only three to four customers each



Putting a lot of miles on his truck, Dan travels throughout the Cumberland, York, and Adams county area to work with dairy, beef, sheep, and goat herds.

day. So they continued working at the Northside Vet Clinic while they built up their customer base.

Dave would work at the Northside Clinic all day, while Dan would be out working with large animal clients in Cumberland and York counties. They had a receptionist at the Dover Area Animal Hospital, taking calls and scheduling appointments for after 5 p.m.

If a customer had an emergency, then Dan would have to fit it in between his large animal calls. In the evenings, either Dan or Dave would take care of the regular clients at Dover and handle emergency calls for both the Dover Area Clinic and Northside Clinic, while the other one would work a full shift at a local emergency hospital.

"It felt like we were working 28 hours a day," said Dave. "But we were willing to work because we wanted our own clinic and didn't want to wait."

According to Dan, most veterinarians practice for 10 or more years before they can start their own business.

"Not only were we opening our own clinic only one and a half years after Dave graduated, we also had to support two veterinarian salaries," said Dan. "That's why we worked addi-

tional jobs."

Currently the Pikes are devoting all of their time to Dover Area Animal Hospital but still work long hours. Typically Dave will see 35 to 40 regular small animal clients and does four to five surgeries every day for six days out of the week. Dan averages eight to twelve calls with large animal customers every day seven days out of the week.

"Right now we're still very busy, but we're more content," said Dan. "We're hoping to hire another veterinarian soon to help us out."

Both Dan and Dave are on call 24 hours a day. This is one of the benefits of having both a small and large animal practice.

"Most small animal vets work only normal office hours," said Dave. "I typically see between 10 and 12 new clients each week on an emergency basis because we're on call 24 hours a day."

"We're expanding to 8,000 square feet in the next year," said Dan. "We're putting in a dog and cat grooming facility and will have more space for the hospital and office area."

"It has always been a team effort," said Dave. "We do have our disagreements every now and then, but you couldn't have a better partner than your own brother."



Dave often does surgeries on Sundays to work around his regular small animal appointments and to get the assistance of Dan, who is out with farmers most hours of every day.

Farmers, Environmentalists Hold Similar Values Regarding Pollution

COLLEGE PARK, Md — Environmentalists may have a surprising ally in the fight to prevent pollution in the lower Eastern shore's waterways: farmers.

Results from an ongoing study conducted by a team of University of Maryland anthropologists shows that the same farmers who routinely have been accused of being the source of water pollution, specifically the toxic algae bloom *Pfiesteria*, consider themselves true environmentalists. It also suggests environmentalists might be better served by tapping into farmers' expertise as a credible resource in their efforts to protect the area's natural resources.

Since summer 1998, Maryland anthropologist Michael Paolisso, Erve Chambers, and Shawn Maloney have been using in-depth interviews and questionnaires to understand cultural beliefs and values regarding the environment and pollution among farmers and environmentalists. The researchers found that both groups share similar values

toward preserving the conserv-

ing the environment although they differ on the effectiveness of voluntary self-regulation among farmers as a strategy to protect the environment.

"These farmers and environmentalists talk the same talk. They are equally passionate about protecting the environment," said Paolisso. "Neither one wants to see the water or the land polluted. Based on their values, they are natural allies."

The study also identified a clear "farmer environmentalist" point of view among the Delmarva peninsula's poultry and grain farmers that is consistent in scope with views commonly held by environmentalists. Many of the farmers, who run the area's 5,800 broiler houses that produce 606 million birds annually, consider themselves "real environmentalists" whose livelihoods are dependent on the quality of their land and environment, thus making them very concerned about pollution.

Farmers also expressed deep feeling of disenfranchisement following the *Pfiesteria* scare in the late '90s, when they were branded as polluters, putting a question their integrity. Resentment and bitterness built up when outside groups began calling for tough regulations of farmers. Farm owners and operators for years have used best management practices to regulate themselves in fact, Delmarva farms had one of the most successful voluntary nutrient management programs in the nation. However, according to the study, when farmers felt they were being accused of knowingly — and unknowingly — polluting the Bay and its tributaries, they dug their heels in and assumed an adversarial stance against environmentalists. Farmers believed they were viewed as part of the problem, instead of part of the solution.

In interviews, farmers expressed beliefs that environmentalists saw an opportunity in the "*Pfiesteria* hysteria" to push long-standing water quality issues by unfairly and unscientifically targeting poultry and grain farmers on the lower Eastern Shore as the *Pfiesteria* culprits. The farmers felt alienated and ignored, and rallied against nutrient management

regulations.

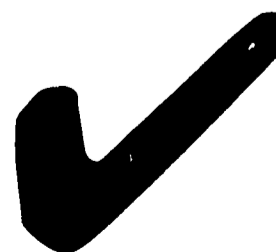
"By not tapping into the expertise that these farmers can provide, we are losing resources to improve water quality. Our study shows that an adversarial relationship among farmers and environmentalist groups is not inevitable," said Maloney. "Rather, these groups have much more in common than it would appear on the surface. The health of the water and land on the lower Eastern Shore

depends on highlighting these similarities in points of view, respecting the differences in core values and beliefs, and realizing that consensus building by

environmentalists and government agencies among farmers can provide new insight for environmental health solutions."

Ultimately, the research shows that incorporating farmers into key decision-making processes is essential in garnering farmer support.

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