

Action Of The Auction Lures, Keeps Employees At Sales Stables

Part 2 of 2

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Editor's note: This article is part two of a two-part series on New Holland Sales Stables. Since the business encompasses many facets of agriculture, the articles feature several people with associations to the sales stables.

NEW HOLLAND (Lancaster Co.) — There must be something about the livestock auction business.

Something about working

“keeping everybody busy.”

Watching others taught him how to clip horses and dairy cows. “I always liked improving the animals,” said Weidman. He quickly became comfortable with the process as he helped to clip 100 horses every Sunday to get ready for Monday’s sale.

Preparation for Monday’s horse sale usually entailed watering, bedding, feeding, and currying the horses. Tuesday, then, was a cleanup day. “We



This picture shows the beef barn and arena when it was built in 1950. In the auctioneer’s box at left is Charles Hershey, featured in last week’s article. Aaron Kolb is at the bottom right-hand corner, opening the door.

with animals, or watching the market, or socializing with farmers, or hearing the auctioneer’s chant, or buying the best animals. Something that could create employee loyalty, stability, and long-lasting careers.

Following Father’s Footsteps

Wayne Weidman of New Holland has worked at the sales stables since March 1944, while his father worked there. One day a week, Weidman would be picked up from his one-room school when he was 13 years old to work from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the auction.

He began leading cows and calves through the ring. “That was when we had both dairy and beef sales in one day,” said Weidman. “We didn’t have separate barns for calves, so we sold them after the beef.” Although the hours were long, “I just liked the work,” he said.

Even after 57 years in the business, he still remembers his beginning salary. “I got 75 cents an hour, \$7.50 a day... \$7.35 take-home pay,” he said.

He also remembers beginning work at six or seven in the morning on Thursday and getting home on Friday evening. Around 1955 he became barn foreman and was responsible for

cleaned out the stables by hand, hauling manure out with a dump cart and a horse when the stables were smaller.”

Wednesdays he helped “take in” dairy cows for the following sale, which meant tying, clipping, and milking the animals by hand. Thursdays featured the dairy sale. In 1950, when the beef barn was built, the dairy sale was moved to Wednesdays. Fridays, then, was another cleanup day.

January through March became draft horse season, as work horses from mostly Iowa and Kansas came in a steady clip — five railroad cars every week were unloaded at the sale barn.

According to Weidman, “Farmers bought them for spring work. The bulk of them sold their horses in the fall and bought new ones in the spring so they didn’t have to winter them.”

The sales stables did not always have a ring and surrounding bleachers, said Weidman, who remembers a platform which buyers stood on an look at the animals being led around below.

Weidman has seen changes and shifts in his years in agriculture. “Herefords used to be the main beef breed, then Charolais, and now blacks and black bald-



Every Thursday the fed steers, feeder steers and heifers, then cull cows keep the ring filled from 9:30 a.m. until 8 p.m. An average of 1,300-1,400 head go through the ring on Thursdays. Here Dale Stoltzfus, auctioneer, David Kolb, at the computer, and ring man Ron Ranck keep the sale moving during the afternoon.



Dairy farmers deliberate on which animals to purchase to increase their herds.

ies,” he said. “There was a time when some buyers bought nothing but Hereford cattle.”

Another change has been the steady decrease in the number of buyers at the sale. “There was a time when the beef ring was nearly full to the top of buyers,” he said. “Now there’s fewer ‘little’ butchers buying two, three, four, or ten animals.”

Even with this trend, however, Weidman predicts that there will always be a need for the sale barn, as farmers will still need a place to sell their animals.

He also sorted fed cattle for many years, “before we had a roof over that area,” he said. Sorting cattle, in fact, is one of his favorite aspects of the job. “I always enjoyed seeing how to line the cattle up for size. I try to put the better ones in one pen and the rest in another.”

An Order Buyer’s View

H. Paul Good, Fivepointville, estimates that he was 20 or 21 when he began buying animals. Now 89, Good still spends his af-

ternoons at the sale barn buying animals.

Over the years he has spent many such afternoons at the barn buying animals for customers since his first purchase, a \$38 heifer at the nearby Green

Dragon auction.

Following in the footsteps of his father, also an order buyer, Good is a familiar face around the barns. Ironically, he didn’t chose the business as much as the business “chose” him when

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This truck is parked in front of original stockholder Aaron Kolb’s (Norman Kolb’s father) home in East Lampeter, Lancaster County.



At the Monday horse sale, approximately 200-250 horses are sold. The supply, while mostly riding horses and ponies, includes a few draft and driving horses also.