



Many Swings In Swine Seen By Breeder With Oldest Continuous Show Pig Sale

"I'm sorry I couldn't answer the phone. I was busy working with a sow in the breeding barn."

Raising hogs is hard work, requiring lots of time. It's obvious in making contact with Jerry Sleichter at Sleichter Duroc Farm, Abilene, who has seen more "water under the bridge" in the hog industry than just about anybody.

A lifelong enthusiasm for raising hogs has not faltered as Sleichter talked about "pendulum swings" in the industry during six decades. First on his mind now, though, is planning the 46th annual Five Star Pig Sale advertised on 580 WIBW.

"We had the first show pig prospect sale in the state which continues today, thus making it the longest running pig sale," Sleichter said. "Hogs have always been part of the farm, and I've enjoyed working with them."

Successfully showing home raised Durocs in 4-H, Sleichter then attended Kansas State University, and was manager of the Kansas Swine Test Station in Manhattan.

At that time, Sleichter started the annual prospect auction at the Dickinson County Fairgrounds at Abilene. "There were a group of breeders in the Abilene area who sold pigs at private treaty, and when anybody would come to the farm, they'd always want 'first choice.'

"So, we decided the best way to handle that was to have a sale, put all of our top pigs in it, and let them have their 'first choice' against the other bidders," Sleichter remembered. Such a success, the sale has continued with this year's sale, Saturday evening, April 20, to be the 46th consecutive.

Originally there were five consignors of different breeds in the sale. "That's how we got our name: Five Star Pig Sale. Others in the sale changed periodically over the years, and now we're the only ones with pigs in it," Sleichter said.

"There were breeding hog production sales, but we had the first show prospect pig sale that I ever knew of. Today, there are hundreds of them, maybe even a dozen in Kansas alone," Sleichter said. With 50 sows in the operation, there are Durocs, along with Chester White, Yorkshire, Hampshire and crossbreds: "Five Stars."

Sleichter and his wife, Sandy, have three children, Jeff, Jay and Jill, who successfully showed home raised hogs to a number of championships. Now, the grandchildren are following family tradition.

The swine business remains close to the heart of one of the longest continuing family hog operators in the country, and he's still optimistic for pork production. However, Sleichter said, "I plan to continue breeding hogs, but as I get older, the operation may get smaller.

"It's been a great life raising hogs," Sleichter summarized.



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Padre says:

"Life is what you make of it, kinda like Play-Doh."