

Technology Developments help Advance Family

Story and photos by Sara Schwertner

This is one in a series of stories about Kansas pork producers targeted toward general consumers. The stories will be utilized in multiple communication pieces including Operation Main Street talks, Facebook, and our website.

Some may say that the good old days included times without computers, pagers and cell phones. But to Alan Haverkamp, these technological advances have aided in the growth and management of his family farm.

Technology has come a long way in helping this Kansas hog farmer produce a healthy and delicious pork product and he wouldn't go back. Haverkamp is one of five brothers involved in Haverkamp Brothers Inc., located in Bern.

The four oldest brothers, Alan, Robert, Mark and Leon, started

raising feeder pigs in high school, which slowly grew into a full farrow to finish hog operation. In 1982, the brothers decided to form a partnership and constructed their first building. Now, Haverkamp Brothers Inc. is involved in all aspects of pork production.

Haverkamp lives near the operation with his wife, Ronda. They have three kids, Curtis, Cole and Kristin, all which grew up helping their dad on the farm.

Although family owned and operated, Haverkamp Brother Inc. has incorporated state of the art products into their facilities. Two advances which have recently been made include auto sort scales and a feed bin monitoring system.

The auto sort scales are located in the wean-to-finish barns and each hog must cross the scales in order to reach the feed. These are located

in ten barns and weigh over 25,000 hogs daily. This allows Haverkamp to view a graph with the hogs grouped by weight online.

"The auto sort scales allow us to monitor and sort hogs to a specific market weight," said Haverkamp. "We can monitor the number of hogs in each weight and make changes accordingly."

After monitoring the hogs' weight, Haverkamp may make changes by adjusting the feed intake of the smaller pigs and separating the hogs which have met market weight and are ready to be shipped.

Another state of the art advancement Haverkamps use on the farm is the bin monitoring system. This is used to track timing of the delivery of feed. It ensures space is available in the bins before feed is delivered. Haverkamp is able to view this information online as well, so he can



ly Farm

keep track of which feed bins are full or running low.

“With the technology that is available today, I have the ability to spot problems early before they evolve into a larger issue,” said Haverkamp. “I have monitoring and diagnostic tools available and can be very accurate and stay in tune with the health of my animals.”

And with 7,400 sows producing over 180,000 pigs per year, accuracy is extremely important to the Haverkamps and how they operate on a daily basis. Advances in technology over the past thirty years have helped the Haverkamp family farm become one of the most well managed pig farms in Kansas.

Haverkamp is a member of the Kansas Pork Association and currently serves on the Executive Board. He is serving his second term on the board and said he joined to help promote pork.

“I wanted to be involved in the producer organization and I enjoy working with other pork producers,” said Haverkamp.

Being involved in KPA has also helped Haverkamp see how other producers of the state have used technology on their operations. In turn, it has helped him build and sustain his operation to involve the next generation.

Left: Haverkamp's family, Cole, Kristin, Ronda, Alan and Curtis, pose in front of the family sign. Top Right: Haverkamp uses today's up to date technology to care for each and every one of his pigs, from nursery age to market size. Bottom right: Haverkamp works hand in hand with employees to make sure the farm is running smoothly. He knows that a well-run farm has content people, well-cared for animals, compassion for the environment and gives back to the community.

