

Farming is the Nixon family project

New technology,
old values keep
their ideal going

By DEBORAH LUCAS

YORKTOWN — Farming isn't just a business to the Don Nixons; it's a way of life and a family tradition.

Don, along with his father, Byron, and his brother, Dennis, farm about 5,000 acres. They plant and harvest corn and soybeans on their own property and custom plant and harvest crops for other farmers.

Don, his wife, Susie, and their three children could be called representative of the evolution of agriculture. They have kept the best of the old family farm values and used technology to keep their farming operation up to date.

Don, a graduate of Vincennes University and the Purdue University agricultural short course, said anyone who thought it didn't take a good education to run a farm was mistaken.

"To be competitive and stay on top, you have to have modern technology and you have to have an education," he said.

Radio-equipped farm



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Don Nixon

machinery keeps workers in touch with each other and helps save time and trips to the field. A secretary runs the farm office with the aid of a computer.

Like traditional farm wives before her, Mrs. Nixon also helps out during the hectic planting and harvesting season. But unlike her predecessors, she has her own career. She teaches kindergarten at Pleasant View Elementary in Yorktown.

The Nixons met while she was a student at Ball State University. They married in 1973 and moved into a 100-year-old farm house surrounded by corn fields.

"I looked out and thought, 'Oh my gosh, there's no one out there,'" she said. "But I learned to love the relaxed atmosphere."

"We make a good blend. I came from a total city

background, and Don lived on a farm all of his life. We both have a strong work ethic. We really do have the best of both worlds."

Today, the Nixons live in a modern multi-level home just south of Yorktown. There they can enjoy a rural setting within minutes of town.

It is important to the couple that their children — Brian, 16; Emily, 13, and Bradley, 11 — have a well-rounded education, are exposed to new experiences and give their best effort to everything they do. All of the children cook, clean and have responsibilities around the home and farm. They are also active in their schools, church and 4-H.

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Brian, a sophomore, is a member of student council and the junior varsity basketball team at Yorktown High School. He is a junior deacon at church and raises and shows swine in 4-H.

Emily also is a student council member and is a cheerleader for the seventh grade boys' basketball team at Yorktown Middle School. She participates in foods and also raises and shows swine in 4-H. She, too, is a junior deacon.

Her favorite part of life on the farm "is definitely the animals."

Bradley, a fifth-grader at Yorktown Elementary, plays basketball and football and is also active at church.

All three plan to attend college, but only Bradley has selected a career. He plans to be an oceanographer or "a pro

basketball player."

Susie often brings her kindergarden class or other classes to the farm to see the peacocks who wander freely or to visit the baby pigs.

Emily said her friends also enjoy visiting the farm and getting a crash course in agriculture.

But it isn't just city kids who like to visit the farm. Once, an entire dinner party moved from the house to the barn when it was learned that a litter of pigs was being delivered.

Regardless of whether the children decide to make their careers on the farm, both Don and Susie want them to return every year for the holidays and remember the lessons they learned.

"A family farm," Don said, "is people working together."