

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Doug Parrett

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and
Illinois State Museum's
Oral History of Illinois Agriculture project

Interview # AIS-V-L-2008-037

Doug Parrett, a Professor of Animal Sciences at the University of Illinois, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Illinois State Museum's *Oral History of Illinois Agriculture* project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: July 22nd, 2008 Location: Historic Round Barn on the University of Illinois campus

Date: August 7th, 2008 Location: Livestock Building at the Illinois State Fairground in Springfield, IL

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Technical Support (cameraman, etc): Mark Suszko and Tony Bateman, Illinois Information Service Studio

Transcription by: Tape Transcription Center, Boston, MA

Edited by: Ann Countryman & Rozanne Flatt, ALPL Volunteers

Video Indexed by: Illinois State Museum staff

Total Pages: 63 Total Time: 1 hr + 61 min + 61 min. + 35 min. = 3 hrs. 36 min./3.62 hrs.

Session 1 & 2: Growing up on an IL farm, and life as Animal Science professor

Session 3: Walking interview of U. of Illinois farms & Grow Safe cattle feeding

Session 4: Doug discusses judging sheep, cattle and hogs at state fairgrounds

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on 9/19/2008.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

Abstract

Doug Parrett, *Oral History of Illinois Agriculture*, AIS-V-L-2008-037

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Doug F. Parrett was born on June 22nd, 1951 in Champaign, Illinois and grew up on his father's farm in rural Champaign County near Mahomet. The farm was a typical 710 acre farm (230 acres owned) of the 1950s and '60s, raising cattle and hogs, with most land in corn and soybeans. Doug's interest in farming, and especially in livestock, grew over the years. He became active in cattle judging competitions. He studied agriculture at the University of Illinois intending to return to the family farm. When the opportunity arose to attend graduate school at the University in 1973, however, he elected to stay, and eventually earned his Ph.D. in Animal Sciences in 1980, and thereafter joined the University faculty. Doug described his relation to farming and his father's influence throughout his life. He married fellow student Susan Limacher in 1979.

Doug also discussed the history of the U of I as a center for agricultural teaching and research, and the College of Education's evolution from its founding in 1867 to the present, renamed the College of ACES (Agriculture, Consumer and Environmental Sciences). He stressed the dual mission of the College of ACES: one part teaching, and the other research, stressing the considerable contributions the College has made toward advancements in genetics research and optimizing feed efficiencies for cattle and livestock. The ability to obtain grants from either governmental entities or private industry is crucial in funding research. Doug discussed the changes in cattle genetics over the last several decades, the impact of grain prices, and the optimum feed for livestock, especially cattle. He also addressed the use of growth hormones in cattle, transgenic manipulations, animal cloning, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (Mad Cow disease), the international marketing of beef, many uses of the university's farm land, challenges of keeping the university's dairy program open, and the Grow Safe cattle feed monitoring system. He finished the interview with an exhibition of livestock judging standards for cattle, sheep and hogs.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Growing up on the farm in east central Illinois; Mahomet, Illinois; University of Illinois College of Agriculture; beef cattle industry, growth its trends, and management; cattle genetics; cattle judging; sheep judging; hog judging; University of Illinois College of Agriculture, Consumer and Environmental Sciences; Department of Animal Sciences; future of the American family farm; obtaining grants for research; Grow Safe cattle feed monitoring system; bovine spongiform encephalopathy (Mad Cow disease); animal cloning; transgenic manipulations

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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