

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Russ & Mary Jeckel

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Oral History of Illinois Agriculture* project

Interview # AIS-V-L-2008-023

Russ Jeckel, a retired hog farmer from Delavan, Illinois, and his wife Mary were interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's and Illinois State Museum's *Oral History of Illinois Agriculture* project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: May 15, 2008                      Location: Delavan, IL

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: Richard D. Hull, D.V.M., ALPLM Volunteer

Technical Support (cameraman, etc): Mark Suszko, Illinois Information Service

Transcription by: Tape Transcription Center, Boston, MA

Edited by: Rozanne Flatt, ALPL Volunteer

Total Pages: 12      Total Time: 42 min = .70 hours

Session 1: Sit down

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on 9/26/2008.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

## Russ Jeckel, *Oral History of Illinois Agriculture*, AIS-V-L-2008-023

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Russ Jeckel is recognized as one of Illinois' pioneer swine producers. He was born on April 15th, 1926 in Delavan, Illinois, and was raised on a farm just north of Delavan, Illinois. His wife, Mary W. Jeckel was born on June 12th, 1926 in Champaign, Illinois, the daughter of a college professor. After high school Russ joined the Navy, then returned to farming after his military service. Russ graduated from the University of Illinois in the early 1950s, married Mary, his college sweetheart, and returned home to grow grain and raise pigs. His contributions to the swine industry are numerous. He was one of the first producers in the United States to apply the research done at the University of Illinois on corn-soybean diet for swine. This revolutionized the way pigs are fed and now has become the standard for swine nutrition. Russ was one of first producers in the nation to implement the concept of hog confinement buildings. He devised a plan for separating animal waste from the hogs, developing the hog slat, specifically constructing a building with slatted floors over a pit that would retain the excrement from the housed pigs for nine to twelve months.

Russ and his wife Mary were very involved in the organization of various swine producer associations, including the Local and State Pork Producers, the Illinois Swine Herd Improvement Association, the Illinois Pork Council and the state and national Porkettes. See also the interview with Russ's son, Scott, who showed pigs in a modern grower/finisher building. One of the first dairy barns to be converted into a farrowing house, and a 50 year old farrowing facility were shown and discussed

**Topics Covered:** Hog farm operations; growing up on the farm; service in the navy during WW II; U.S.S. Pensacola; early techniques of raising pigs; hog diet experimentation; Illinois Pork Council; developments in hog confinement facilities and hog waste management; national pork producer associations; Illinois State and National Porkettes; future of hog farming in America

**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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