



Palmdale Farms

Barry Palm of Winnebago, IL could very well be described as a modern day farmer.

Palm has been a member of the Illinois Farm Bureau for 30 years and has served on the Winnebago-Boone County Farm Bureau Board of Directors in the past.



Palmdale Farms has been in Palm's family for more than 50 years and has been passed down through three generations.

Palm began working in the dairy industry after college, milking cows for his father. Then, in 1990, Palm and his brother, Marty, bought their father's herd of Holstein dairy cows.

However, after nearly three decades milking cows, Palm sold his portion of the farm to his brother and decided to focus on his community.

In January of 2007, Palm took over as the Winnebago Township Highway Commissioner. Being involved in work off the farm gave Palm new experiences, including serving on the Winnebago School District when his three children, Jessica, Layne, and Heather, were going through school.

Palm also volunteered as the wrestling coach for the youth K-5, middle school and high school wrestling programs in Winnebago for 18 years and also is very involved at Heartland Church.

“When you talk about a small community, you generally can't afford to hire everything done that you could in maybe a big city,” Palm said. “You need volunteer help and I've always enjoyed that. Especially with coaching, I always really enjoyed the kids.”

Palm found himself very busy after deciding not to farm full-time. However, he still finds time to come back to the farm and help out.

Since the Palm's family raises corn, soybeans and alfalfa each spring, he helps out with planting and with harvest every fall. Even though Palm may not be as hands on as he was before, he is still a big part of Palmdale Farms.

"I still have coffee with my dad and brother probably three or four times a week and they keep me up-to-date with what's going on with the farm," Palm said. "And with me being involved with the community, I'm able to pass on some information there as well."

One thing that remains very important to Palm, no matter how involved he is with his family farm or in his community, is advocating for agriculture. Since he now works off the farm, he has many opportunities to do just that.

And Palm's children have the same opportunity.

"My daughter worked for me on the farm," Palm said. "Her experiences are different than mine because she goes to school where she meets people from a very wide variety of backgrounds and some of them have never been on farms."

Balancing the roles of road commissioner, community volunteer and part time farmer can be a little stressful, but Palm makes it work because he is so passionate about all of his commitments.

"I'm sure I will always be involved with the farm," Palm said. "But for now, I will stay where I am and continue getting involved with my community and supporting agriculture in different ways." (Published August 7, 2015)