

Juneau County
4-H Oral
History Project

Bob Franke

Interview

7/30/2013

Bob Franke Interview

Interviewer: Emily Rebhan

Rebhan: Today's date is July 30, 2013. The time is 3:00 pm. We are at the Hatch Public Library in Mauston, Wisconsin. My name is Emily Rebhan and I am interviewing Bob Franke about his years involved in the 4-H program. This interview is a part of the Juneau County 4-H Oral History Project.

So thank you so much for meeting with me. I really appreciate it.

Franke: Well, I appreciate being asked to be here.

Rebhan: So, what was your involvement in 4-H?

Franke: Well, my sister was involved in 4-H in about 1940, '41, and then in '42, well, she belonged to Lindina Busy Bees, and then in about '42, they decided that we had enough people in Sumi-Linda, on the line there, to start our own 4-H club, which eventually grew to about sixty members. And the first project that she took was sheep, and showed at Mauston and Elroy fair. And then when I got old enough, which was '42 or '43, well, I had raised rabbits before I was in 4-H. I was offered two cents a pound for them, and I refused. For two cents I said to that I would take them home and turn them loose, and told my dad that what I really wanted was one of these Herford cows, and raise Herefords. And Manley Sharp was the county agent at that time, and he had a farm up in Ladysmith. Beef was just coming into the area. Before that it had been dairy. Some cross breed with shorthorns and so on, but shorthorns were kind of going out, and Herefords were coming in. He brought down a bunch of Herford heifers. There was about twelve different people in the area then became beef members. And I think I got maybe the choice pick because I won first place with my heifer first year. She cost me eighty-two dollars and fifty cents. In three years showing at the Mauston fair, I had her paid for.

Rebhan: Wow.

Franke: Now the payment at that time is more than it is today in actual dollars. If you took first or second you automatically was in open class, which is not the way it's done today either. But the second or third year I was invited to go to Oscar Mayers and tour the packing plant.

Rebhan: Fun.

Franke: So along with, I forget what the other award was, but it was an invite to tour the packing plant at Madison, which I did. So, after that in, it was a few years later, my sister showed grade dairy cattle for a while, and in about '45 or so on we bought a registered heifer. And then in '47 we bought eight head of registered heifers and we got started in the registered Holstein business. And I showed at Mauston and Elroy as a 4-H member, and I was still in 4-H when we were showing in Baraboo, Adams, Viroqua, and later on after we was married in about '55 to '60, '65,

in those years we showed at Marshfield at the interstate fair. It was Wisconsin Central State Fair. And I was also one of the original showmen at the Central Wisconsin livestock show in Adams. We showed beef there. I sold four steers and bought a tractor. This was before the price roll-back. We got forty-eight cents a pound for our steer, one year, and after the price roll-back we got nineteen cents. Then when the Dairy Expo started, we was also one of the first exhibitors there. We showed at the Black and White show to help organize the Juneau County Holstein Association. Held a district Black and White show here in Mauston, and a state Black and White show here in Mauston through the years. Other than that, we showed hogs, Registered Poland Chinas. I have showed practically every species of livestock except llamas and I didn't show rabbits either. At that time, the old fair barns, if you've got the pictures of them, was completely full. One year at the Elroy fair, with the number of 4-H kids which was getting started through the calf club project, and so on, we had four less Holsteins on the fairgrounds at Elroy than they had at Open Class at the State Fair. This is the size of shows that used to be.

Rebhan: So how many animals are we talking?

Franke: You're talking four hundred, plus.

Rebhan: Wow. At the Elroy fair.

Franke: Yes. Well, when we had our show herd at its peak, it was forty-eight head. At that time we were showing Holsteins and Registered Shorthorns. We showed draft horses and that was after 4-H, but, there was a 4-H horse project in about '38 to '40 that was real popular here in Juneau County. I know several people through the years who showed there at that time. We had all the breeds in 4-H. The Rollins had some Ayrshires. Amburgs had Brown Swiss. The Remingtons had Jerseys. The Gudahls and Hansons and Bruxs had Guernseys. Then there was the Holsteins that was Barretts, Schneiders, Pfaffs, Voss, Gross, and Doc Thompsons. And for beef, you had Bob Rott. And...right off hand I can't think about it now. I'm trying to think back to far to what the names were now.

Rebhan: But basically you had all the breeds from...

Franke: We had all the breeds. We had all the dairy breeds. We had Milking Shorthorn. Holsteins. Ayrshires. Guernseys. Jerseys. Brown Swiss. We had, well, basically we had at least one herd of each. And some of these color breeds even had five, six different exhibitors. So I mean, it was a full show. It's different from what it is now, but the cattle at that time, Juneau County had some of the top in the nation. Several of these if you look back in the old herd books, some of these 4-H projects went on to be some pretty important breeding stock. Your questions, kid.

Oh, by the way, did you know that in 1942, ninety-two men got on the train to go to World War II? All local Juneau County men. The ones that were enlisting came down to the train. And a lot

of their friends that came down to see them off, they got on the train with them. No clothes. Not enlisted. They just got on the train to go with them.

Rebhan: So, were you in a 4-H club then?

Franke: Yes, I was in Sumi Linda from the time I was old enough to be till after we was too old to be a member, I was a leader for several years. My mother and dad was leaders. Then my kids belong to Sumi Linda for a while. They moved to town and went with TNT, and they were all active, and now it's my grandkid that are showing. We switched varieties and breeds a little bit, but basically, we have showed, the family has shown at the Mauston fair, and it goes clear back to my great grandfather, and grandfather. They was in Durham cattle at that time, and horses. It's been kind of a summer vacation where you work like heck.

Rebhan: I was going to say, that's not a vacation. It's not a vacation week.

Franke: It still is. It still is a vacation even though you work hard. We worked hard but we played hard. Some of these families that, is closer than family, and you only see them once a year. Sometimes you see them maybe once in several years. But because of being connected with 4-H, and showing and so on, I was asked to show cattle for other herds. I went to Waterloo, Iowa, just to see the show, and got handed a lead rope to go in. We was to Chicago, International, and Piper Brothers says, here, take this cow in for us. We was out in New England show, and the same thing happened. Then years later I showed at the Western show at Denver, Colorado. We've been around a little bit.

Rebhan: All unplanned, right. You just show up and...

Franke: Well, I showed out there one year and then went out several years to the show just to help out and call it a vacation when you didn't have to work.

Rebhan: I suppose. So it seems like every fair you just can't get your animals loaded with no problem and get them to the fair. So, did you ever have those problems where you just had the animal that would just escape on you or wouldn't get on the trailer, or anything like that?

Franke: You learn how after a while. I did have one that was very hard to break to a lead. But after we finally did get her to break to lead, she was one of the best animals for showing showmanship. Because all you had to do was whistle through your teeth a little bit just real soft and she perked her ears up and walked real fine.

Rebhan: Holstein?

Franke: Yeah. But, we showed at State Fair several years. And, in 1948, they regrouped the 4-H kids for State Fair exhibit. They hadn't showed, I think the last time they'd showed was about '36, '38, maybe '40, right in there. They hadn't showed for several years. And then they decided for '48 Centennial we ought to show up, so we did. Margie Barrett, I think her name is Lowe

now, and I think her sister, there was a Larry Gudahl, I think there was about fourteen of us went down, and did quite well there. And this was also the year that kids from Juneau County showed people in Milwaukee how to get chocolate milk out of a Holstein cow.

Rebhan: Okay.

Franke: It still works.

Rebhan: Okay.

Franke: You've just got to shift them into gear.

Rebhan: I see.

Franke: There has been, I remember that first year I was showing that Herford, and it still hurts when they do that, is when an animal steps on your toe, and then twists.

Rebhan: Ouch.

Franke: It still hurts. Steel toed shoes might help, but not always, because they get above it. Oh yeah, we've had a few things that didn't go the way we planned it, but most of the time, after you've handled animals, and so on, and they get so they know what to do. Evertt Schultz hauled for us. He came to our place at 4:00 Thursday morning, and that's when we loaded them. It was six miles home from the fairgrounds. We took two truckloads to the fair, unloaded them, and he was back at 4:30am to pick up the feed, bedding, equipment, and show boxes. And Everett, probably, hauled more cattle into the fairs, at that time, than anyone else. And at 4:00 Sunday afternoon, we took two truckloads home, unloaded them, and at 4:30 he was back at the fair to take someone else's cattle home.

Rebhan: 4:00 am?

Franke: Yes. So it was long days and short nights, but it was worth it. It was worth it, and like I say at that time, they paid fifteen dollars for first place, and now they only pay eleven or twelve. Times have changed, but the funny part of it is, and it goes back with 4-H days I was in Chicago, and I heard the experts tell us that because the farmer produced more during the war time, he was paid more. He produced more. Now, if we lower the price, he will produce less. And something in that equation does not work, but they have been trying to make it work for the last sixty, seventy years. This is why you see fewer cattle at the fair. This is why you see empty barns that have fallen down and so on. Because the future of our, of the generations that came after me, if they went to the city, and worked, they could make a decent living. The farmer has been producing less and less on a percentage wise, profit all these years, and it is going to, in the future, near future, we are already a third world country when over sixty percent of our kids are in poverty, and especially rural areas. The other thing about 4-H is, and I think this is one of the main things, you take a kid that has been in 4-H, and if he's been in 4-H, and has a livestock

project especially, by the time he is twelve, thirteen, you can have that kid, he will know how to do things. He will be able to manage moving livestock, getting feed, have the schedule there, and well, its responsibility. My grandkids have done it, and I did it. When the truck left with the cattle in the morning, you went with them. You had to prepare the stalls, find out where you was, make the entries, get them checked in, and this is responsibility that a , well, preteen kid will do. Where, today, we have kids who haven't been with that experience, wouldn't know where to start. And the other thing that came off in '42, '43, was Victory Gardens. This was planting enough for yourself, and planting for other people. One of the things that was introduced at that time was broccoli. Never seen it before. When do you eat it? Everything else gets ripe. We had broccoli get up three feet high and had yellow flowers on it. We didn't know you were supposed to eat it before it ever started to bud.

Rebhan: So, Americans just never planted it, or...

Franke: Well, it wasn't a common vegetable.

Rebhan: Okay.

Franke: But, now, today, it's getting more popular, and so is some of these other things that...well, I've been doing the farmer's market, and we have people, basically two generations that really don't know too much about vegetables, or farming in itself. I'm starting to write a book, "Stupid Things that Educated People Don't Know." I'm not downplaying education, but it's just, people should know better. One is plant a leaf lettuce that's probably sixteen, eighteen inches across. What do I do with it and how do I fix it? I've never seen it like that. I always buy lettuce already shredded. Someone who is in a managerial over a midsized city, small city, maybe, don't know how to pop popcorn. This is things that you learnt with a five second, or a five-minute demonstration in 4-H.

Rebhan: Absolutely.

Franke: Demonstrations was a big thing in that regardless what the subject was, in our club you had to give at least one demonstration a year at a 4-H meeting. And that could be on any subject. One was that I remember how to install a light switch. A ten year old would give this demonstration.

Rebhan: It's not that complicated.

Franke: No, but today you have to have a licensed electrician to install that.

Rebhan: Or you could do it yourself if you know how.

Franke: Yeah, but, this is the thing. How to trim a cow's feet. How to prepare vegetables for canning. How to make ice cream.

Rebhan: All the necessary life lessons. (Laughing)

Franke: Yeah. This is all things that demonstrations, we, Caroline Rollins, and I went to State Fair and gave a demonstration on the correct way to wash a milk machine. And Ben Preston, the Surge dealer from Union Center, provided us with the milk machine. When we first started showing cattle you milked cows by hand at the fair. Ben provided us with a machine. And then later on, they added a milking parlor and milking stalls.

Rebhan: At the State Fair?

Franke: At the local fair.

Rebhan: Here is Juneau County?

Franke: Yes, and at State Fair. This has all developed since, well, since '48. Before you used to have to milk cows by hand.

Rebhan: Wow.

Franke: And one of the things, especially at Elroy, you milked the cows and then hauled the milk to the local creamery.

Rebhan: You had to do that?

Franke: Yeah.

Rebhan: No one came to pick that up for you?

Franke: No one picked it up.

Rebhan: So you would have it in cans, wouldn't you?

Franke: We had it in cans. At the fair it would be nothing to have a full pickup load of milk.

Rebhan: I'm sure there wouldn't be. Per family?

Franke: No. You would collect it...

Rebhan: I see. I see.

Franke: And everybody would go with whoever hauled the milk and get breakfast at the restaurant, because there was no meals at the fairgrounds. Not till noon. Breakfast you ate at the restaurant.

Rebhan: I see.

Franke: They kind of liked to see you come in because there would be all the way from six, eight, to a dozen kids in there and they would all order pancakes and sausage and eggs and so on. So it was...well, there was one time we was bringing in eight to ten cans of milk just off of our show string.

Rebhan: That's a lot.

Franke: Well, it's a fair amount. Especially when you've got cows that are milking close to a hundred pounds of milk a day.

Rebhan: And you'd milk them by hand, then, right?

Franke: Well no. By that time...

Rebhan: By that time you had the...

Franke: By that time we had the, had milk machines. Yeah it was, it was...there's a lot of stories about that. One time my dad went with the kids over to Elroy to the restaurant and he ordered a double order of pancakes, which was six. He was thinking pancakes about like this.

Rebhan: Right. About four inches. That's what he was thinking.

Franke: About four or five.

Rebhan: Four or five.

Franke: No, these was out on a big full plate. They fed them good. Well, through the years, this was also when the Calf Club was going, and we kind of started that to.

Rebhan: Yeah, tell me about that. What was the Calf Club?

Franke: This was, the Calf Club was that the registered breeders would provide a calf for a managerial project for a kid, either a heifer or a bull. They would feed it up until, usually October, then, they became half owner. Then they would either buy out the breeder or the breeder would buy out the calf, or else they would sell the whole thing to a third party.

Rebhan: And these were all 4-H kids that could...

Franke: Yep.

Rebhan:...get in on it.

Franke: Yep, these were all 4-H kids. 4-H and FFA, mainly 4-H. But at one time there was about thirty-five, forty head of cattle in this project. This is why when it came, if a kid got started in say first, second, or third year of 4-H, by the time they graduated from 4-H, he had a herd of his own started.

Rebhan: I was going to say, and these would all be registered animals.

Franke: Yes. And some of these went on to be some pretty decent cows. I mean, well, there was Phaff had registered Holsteins, Voss', Jokiels, Schneiders, these were all starts from the Calf Club.

Rebhan: And how did the kids pay for the calf, how did they buy it?

Franke: They fed the calf.

Rebhan: I see.

Franke: They fed the calf and became half owner.

Rebhan: Okay. So, to become full owner, what did they have to do?

Franke: They had to buy out the other half at the sale. That was it.

Rebhan: Well, that isn't too hard.

Franke: And it got a lot of kids started. Well, that's how we ended up with one class at Elroy had nineteen registered cows.

Rebhan: All the Calf Club?

Franke: Most of them was between the regular breeds and then all these Calf Club kids. And the big show, at that time, you could show 4-H and Open Class. But you had, if you had two in a class you put one in 4-H and one in Open Class.

Rebhan: Sure.

Franke: So, it worked out pretty good.

Rebhan: And were you one of the people who helped start the Calf Club, or...were you one of the brains behind that?

Franke: No, I wasn't the brains behind it, but we were one of the contributors through the years. We had...what year was that...I think the Calf Club was probably about in the early '50s, maybe.

Rebhan: And how long did that go for? Ten years, twenty years?

Franke: Oh, that went on, I don't know when the Association quit.

Rebhan: Did it last quite a while?

Franke: Oh yeah, it lasted, I would say it lasted pert near twenty years or better.

Rebhan: Wow.

Franke: Yeah, it was, and every late October, early November they had the sale, usually it was down by the county shop by the fairgrounds, and some of these animals brought pretty fair prices, and at that time there were quite a few bulls being used yet. So this was a place where the grade breeders could come and buy a good registered bull. Well, they were all production tested, so it kind of helped out. No, it was quality. Adams County had a partnership in that too. And I think Marquette County; there was some on the border there. But it provided quality cattle for kids that normally couldn't afford it, that quality. But gradually the Holsteins kind of took over and your color breeds went by the wayside some, because they was interested in just total milk. And after a while they got, well, a couple bulls out of Canada that was low testing but extreme amount of milk, for that time, anyway. They found out that you had to have a test in order to have protein because fats, and proteins, and solids made cheese. And unless you've got at least a ten-to-one ratio, you need a whole lot more milk in order to make cheese. At one time on this 2% milk, it takes about twelve pounds, where you can get down to about nine pounds cheese if you've got the testing and protein. And then there was one famous bull that was showed in 4-H as a project animal, wasn't in the club process, but that was Kreamelle, which went, Russ Thompson's bull, had him. I'll take that back, he was out of 4-H by then. But the offspring of that bull we used, and we had eight head on the original proof, and this bull went on to be one of the top of the breed, and was showed at Elroy fair, for a couple of years. Some of these cattle went on to make national grade.

Rebhan: So now that we're talking about cows, I know that you were able to host farm...farm days...

Franke: Farm Progress Days.

Rebhan: Farm Progress Days on your farm. So, when did that happen?

Franke: 1957.

Rebhan: And how did you get to be the lucky farm that was able to host that?

Franke: Well, I don't know if we was the lucky farm or not because there was a lot of hard work in it.

Rebhan: I'm sure.

Franke: But we had, well, it was kind of location. They had, well, we had the registered Holsteins, and then it was at that time, Ritlands had Angus, but you also had Art Overgaard which was a main player in the neighborhood with Overgaard Construction, and lime quarry, and he owned a farm there, on O and G. And it was just a good set for the amount of acreage that they needed. And there was a road on three sides of us, so the access was available. Well, let's put it this way, it was probably at that time as good a place in Juneau County to locate it. There

has been a couple of times that we've been thinking, we haven't been thinking, but other people have that we should host it again, and it never, the second time it never happened. There was I think seven farms involved. There was one, two, three, four. Yeah, there was seven farms involved. And this was the third Farm Progress Days, it was. Approximately 80-100,000 people showed up. We was remodeling the barn. I think that was probably why we got included. We changed from the cows being crossways to putting them lengthways, and giving them a little more room because the cattle were bigger than what had been there. That was the start of Grade A milk. It was, well, Elmer Fritz was across the road, and both of us were talking about going Grade A. So, I'll tell you how fast this was developed, sometimes. We had the university plans for remodeling our barn, and they were going to tear out two sides of our milk house and extend it bigger. And one of the dealers, I can't recall his name right off hand, but I probably will later on, came out Sunday morning, and said to my dad, Art, you see that crack in the wall? Yeah. Why don't you cut that from there over to there and make a doorway, and put up a milk house here, and run the roof on top of the old roof? So we built two walls, already had two walls, just had to build two more. And put a roof on, and had to put a stud wall for an alley. This was about ten or eleven o'clock Sunday morning. Sunday night we had the foundation dug.

Rebhan: No way.

Franke: Oh yeah. Monday, or Sunday night we hadn't poured the concrete yet, floor. Monday, we started putting up blocks. Tuesday was Farm Progress Days, and we just had to put the roof on.

Rebhan: So who was helping? Did neighbors come out to help?

Franke: We had neighbors and we had the construction crew, and everybody helped. But at the same time, we also had a sawmill. This was part of the forestry demonstration.

Rebhan: Okay.

Franke: And the buildings were here, and on the side hill a stand of pine. So, they cut the pine, sawed the rafters and everything that we needed for the milk house. By Tuesday night the roof was on. By Wednesday it was shingled.

Rebhan: Did you do the remodeling for Farm Progress Day, or, you were going to do it anyway?

Franke: We were going to do it anyway.

Rebhan: This gave you a nice excuse to get it done.

Franke: This gave us an excuse to hurry it up. Yeah. But it was, things went, well, at that time, I don't know if you heard of Louie Brux. Louie Brux was also one of the guys that started with wheel track corn planting.

Rebhan: Okay.

Franke: And this was a for-runner of no-till. You plowed the ground, you went with the tractor, you had the front wheels for one set of rows, the back wheels for the other, and you had four row corn planter, or two row, depends on.

Rebhan: Sure.

Franke: And you planted in tracks. That was it. And another thing that was done at that time was interseeding alfalfa in corn. And that was also done, with a narrow, you put the corn rows extra wide, and you had, Allis Chalmers made a narrow seeder that went in between the rows and you sowed the alfalfa in the corn rows, between the corn rows.

Rebhan: So all this stuff, could you see demonstrations on it?

Franke: Oh yes. The other thing was pasture renovation. Now, we're fifty years later, and we're talking pasture renovation. But it kind of died out shortly after that because this was the introduction of the flail chopper, because that cow was not making you any milk if she had to walk after that grass. This was the new thinking. And it was also the first kick baler. John Deere brought a kick baler in that threw the bales in the wagon, which was a first. This was also some of the very early sprayed corn. But in order to make the corn look good, they did cheat and hoe a little bit around the edges.

Rebhan: Just for the visitors, right.

Franke: Just for the visitors to think it worked good.

Rebhan: Well. (Laughing)

Franke: They didn't have it quite tweaked out the way it is now with the all different chemicals and so on. But it was a start. But then there was, there was a lot of demonstrations that was being done at that time in plots, and so on, and new varieties of stuff that came out. I was also one of those in '68 and '70, I became involved with growing triticale. Did you ever hear of Norman Borlaug?

Rebhan: I haven't, no.

Franke: You haven't?

Rebhan: No. Educate me.

Franke: 1970 Nobel Peace Prize winner...

Rebhan: Okay.

Franke: For wheat, corn, and triticale.

Rebhan: Triticale.

Franke: And this is a cross between wheat and rye. It's a natural cross. We raised that until we had a year like it was about two weeks ago, where you had constant rain. It was ripe, you had to combine it when it was warm and humid and it grew in the head. We lost our base, and wasn't able to acquire seed stock back. We also had a twelve row, twenty-nine kernel length head, which would have been fantastic, except one lady thought it would make an awful nice winter bouquet. We took half of it. This is one plant out of several hundred acres. So there was not a sufficient amount left to even start.

Rebhan: Tell me about some of the work you had to do to get ready for this.

Franke: To get ready for this?

Rebhan: Yes, because I know how much work it is even hosting a dairy breakfast can be, so...

Franke: Well, it started. We had to get the field work done. We laid out strips. This was regular straight planting up and down hills and so on. We laid out contour strips, and then, they were kind of crooked because these were small, small hills, but steep. This was right at the edge of the lake. Part of the land that was in this, on this farm, these farms, was lake bottom. Part of it was unglaciated. It's all the same field. And well, right here, you should have been under a hundred and fifty feet of water. You get over there and you're up in the hills. We was right at the edge of it. And back, if you want to go way back in history, this was part of a swamp yet when Blackhawk went through, and he went through that area to head west. But down here were the cemetery is, below Mauston, when that broke through, the clay bank, when that broke through, that drained what they call Cattail Valley, everything from 12 to 16, all the way up through. And that was, before that time, you could take from where we was located, on the edge of summit, over to Seebeckers, in a canoe. Can't do that now.

Rebhan: No.

Franke: And there was a sod hut that a trapper had on ours there, that was from about 18...late 1820s to 1830s.

Rebhan: Is it still there?

Franke: There's just the mound there, that's all. But this is how this land has changed. Now, if you think you're going to do something about it, you might, some. But nature has its own way of doing things.

Rebhan: I would say so.

Franke: Like I tell quite a few people that come into this area, well, this is lake bottom. That up there was top of the water. Because all of this land around here is hill country.

Rebhan: Oh yes.

Franke: Okay, what's on top, what kind of rock have you got on top?

Rebhan: Oh, so now it's a test. It's the rocky rock, the stuff that dad sends us out there and says go pick it off the field.

Franke: Yeah, but when you get that stuff, the top stuff, down there a little ways you've got lime rock.

Rebhan: Yes.

Franke: What makes lime rock?

Rebhan: I should know it.

Franke: Seashells. And you will find seashells in it. That means that water was clear up there at one time. What happened?

Rebhan: Obviously the water isn't there now.

Franke: Somebody pulled the plug down here at the Dells, the Narrows, and drained all this. They say it took about four days. But, what about the people in the valley? Someone did a damn poor job of plowing, or farming, because look at the ditch. A hundred and thirty miles long.

Rebhan: So I have a question for you. Your kids were in 4-H. So how big was the club when they were members?

Franke: Well, I don't know.

Rebhan: Was it real, real big?

Franke: Probably about, I think about thirty-five, forty.

Rebhan: All different ages?

Franke: Oh yeah. When I was in, we topped out at about sixty-five.

Rebhan: Well that's a good size club.

Franke: Oh yeah. The thing that we had in our club, we had probably more musicians, and people that went on to be musicians. Did you ever hear of Buddy Daug's?

Rebhan: No. I should.

Franke: Plain Country, the band, Plain Country. Well, ah...

Rebhan: He was one of the 4-Hers?

Franke: He was one of our 4-Hers. And then the Blue Denim boys, they were part of our club. Basically and the Cook boys, one of them, oh, what band is he in...but anyway, these guys played for 4-H, all the time. Buddy at that time had a guitar that was bigger than he was. And...

Rebhan: So where were these kids playing? You said they played for 4-H all the time, where were they playing?

Franke: Well, at 4-H meetings. If we would put on an ice cream social, we'd put on plays. At that time at an ice cream social we'd have three, four hundred people show up.

Rebhan: Homemade ice cream?

Franke: No, we'd have to buy it. But we'd go through fifty gallons.

Rebhan: Wow.

Franke: But at that time, and this is what the difference is: at that time the banker, the doctor, and the businessman, and the farmer all sat at the same table.

Rebhan: Of course. They were neighbors.

Franke: That don't happen today. That don't happen. It's an entirely different situation. But they were all equals.

Rebhan: So were you doing the social for like a fund raiser?

Franke: Yes.

Rebhan: Okay.

Franke: And we would have a dance. Well, it would be in the old hall over here, we had quite a few dances there. And this would raise sometimes as high as three, four hundred dollars.

Rebhan: Which I'm sure back then was...

Franke: And we would pay a hundred, a hundred and fifty dollars for a band.

Rebhan: So you did it right.

Franke: There wouldn't be, well, there was room to dance and that was about it. But everybody danced, the kids who was that big to the people in their eighties or nineties. This is when the family went together. Then in the fifties somebody got the idea that, well, you can't be going places with your parents. And it was just...the difference between the people that graduated high school in the first half of the fifties, and the last half of the fifties, are exactly opposite.

Rebhan: That much of a difference that fast?

Franke: Yes, because those that graduated in the last half, we used to square dance, and I called square dances for years. And everybody danced. I think you will see if you look back at some old, old pictures, you will find Sumi Linda having a square dance on a wagon in a parade. But this was when everybody danced. Now the same people who graduated high school in the late fifties, why, they wouldn't square dance. Twenty years later they paid big money to learn how to square dance. They could have done it for nothing.

Rebhan: I suppose so.

Franke: I know several of those people. Moved to Madison. Oh, they would never square dance. Oh that's old fashioned to do that. And then paid big bucks in order to learn to square dance down in Madison.

Rebhan: Because it's fun.

Franke: Well yeah it's fun.

Rebhan: So you had 4-H plays that you would do as a club to?

Franke: Oh yeah.

Rebhan: So how did that work? Would you do them at the county...

Franke: We, basically we was based at the chapel out there on O. Before that, well, we used to, the early years we used to meet at people's homes. And then the club got so big there wasn't any house that could hold us. See some of those older members in that club, right now, are ninety, ninety-three years old, so this is back a little while. And then we got use of the chapel and we held our meetings there, and by the time you pack in fifty kids or so with parents, and so on, you had a house full.

Rebhan: I would say so.

Franke: You had a house full. We always ate good too.

Rebhan: Would you have meals at the end of every meeting?

Franke: Oh, we always had sandwiches and something to drink, and oh, somebody would bring cake, and once or twice a year you had to pony up some lunch.

Rebhan: So would you rotate it, like a family once a year would bring something.

Franke: Yes.

Rebhan: Okay.

Franke: And then as far as meetings, other than the monthly meeting, very seldom did we have... We had Farm and Home Week at University, and a lot of kids would go to that.

Rebhan: So tell me about that.

Franke: The University would put on this program for farmers and farm wives. At the University. And this would be like a three, four day affair.

Rebhan: Was this in Madison?

Franke: Yeah. Yeah. I mean people would crowd in there, and that was a big thing.

Rebhan: I'm sure. So what would you do there?

Franke: The latest thing on handling livestock, or cooking, it was a four day, or three day college course. That was it. I mean, you could learn most anything. If you wanted to learn how to make cheese, probably this year there'd be cheese. Next year probably how to take care of bees. It might be how to prepare food.

Rebhan: Did you get to pick whatever you wanted to learn about?

Franke: Oh yes. You just went from one to the next to the next.

Rebhan: Were they classes, or where they demonstrations?

Franke: Well, there was classes, demonstrations.

Rebhan: Everything.

Franke: And this was put on by the professors.

Rebhan: How much fun would this be.

Franke: Yeah, well, that's one thing that has changed. I mean, we've got people now that you never meet out here in the country. And it's like our politicians. Secretary of State, Bob Zimmerman, could walk into a cow barn at any fair and call people by names. The governor used to come and tour the fairgrounds. This is what the difference was.

Rebhan: There was actually a connection.

Franke: The farmer was important. Today, well, he's kind of been left by the wayside. And we're trying to reinvent farming on a small scale, but it's not happening enough to create enough income. I had an uncle who was born in 1890, and the older I get the smarter he was. And he said it this way: "When the rural community doesn't make a profit, it takes only about two or three years and it gets downtown. And downtown will not recover until these people can make profit enough to buy stuff from downtown." Makes sense.

Rebhan: It does. It does to me.

Franke: Well, it doesn't to politicians because they haven't been working.

Rebhan: So would you do plays, like musicals or drams with the club?

Franke: Oh we put on, you'd pay fifty cents or a dollar admission, and you'd have two, three hours of entertainment.

Rebhan: Admission where? Would this be at the county festival?

Franke: This would be out there at the chapel.

Rebhan: Oh, so people would come in to watch you.

Franke: Oh yeah.

Rebhan: You were that good.

Franke: Well, yeah, I suppose. But then the Homemakers out there used that too, and we had a big Homemakers club. We had about, forty, fifty ladies in the Homemakers.

Rebhan: And what would they do?

Franke: Well, what does homemakers usually do?

Rebhan: Well, they bake, and they sew, and they preserve.

Franke: Get together and did things for the servicemen and stuff like that. Yeah, they...my daughter's got a quilt that's got all the names of the members on it. They raffled it off, and I don't know how we ended up with it. I don't know if my mother won it, or who. But anyway she ended up with it, she got it put together. It was just the top. Well, then we had...well, this Farm Progress Days started out before that being a plowing contest. And after the plowing contest that was a part of Farm Progress Days, and then that got dropped, and you went on to other machinery. But one of the early things that we did, especially with strawberries, blackberries and stuff like that, I was probably four or five when I could tell the difference between a quarter and a fifty cent piece, if the quarter was laying in the door sill, between the screen door and the door, and there was a quarter laying there, you left a box of berries. If there was two you left two boxes. Now if it wasn't there, then on the window sill, on the porch, next to the door, if there was a quarter or fifty cents lying there, you left a box of berries. And it wasn't till last year at Cesky Den, I was telling a young gal, a little older than you about that. She says, my grandpa said something about that. And I said yeah. And I asked her who her grandpa was, and she told me, and I said, yeah, they lived in that brick house that's a block down, and about a half a block over, from Kwik Trip downtown there. And that's the way we did business. We do business kind of like that once in a while now, not as much.

Rebhan: It's a little bit different.

Franke: Yeah.

Rebhan: So when you see kids in 4-H, because I mean you've been in this program for so long, I'm sure that you have seen people, kids, grow up in it, and now their kids are in it. What do you think about? How has 4-H changed them, how has it made them a better citizen or a better community member?

Franke: Well, they know how to do things. One thing, we have made 4-H too busy. If you take a couple of different projects, we have way, way too many qualifications of meeting that you have to attend. We've got these kids going so much, now, that there's no family life left. Between school and 4-H, you know one day, one hour, of demonstrations of what the kids know and a group discussion would be enough, but some of these you've got three, four meetings a year that you have to attend to. Well that's one project, and then you've got another project. And then you've got another project. And it's got to be, I myself wouldn't be able to keep up with it.

Rebhan: Is that one of the bigger changes that you've seen 4-H make over the years?

Franke: That's one of the bigger changes that I see. We're making it just, the learning part, and this is why I quit being a leader, was I could not help some other kid from some other club how to fit his calf. If the kid come to me and asked, I couldn't help him because I wasn't the parent.

Rebhan: That's too bad.

Franke: Yeah. And I said, when I can't do that, I quit being a leader. Because one time, over by Viroqua, there was a boy, he was about fourteen, and he brought in three real nice Holstein heifers. One was a junior calf, a senior calf, and a yearling. Long hair. All he had was a rope halter, and not a good one at that. And us guys that was in Open Class said, you know. His dad just came and dropped him, that was it, said goodbye and left. He said, you know, I wish my calf would look like yours. Well it can. Here's the clippers. Well, I don't know how. Well, we'll tell you how. So we had him, showed him how, helped him clip a little bit, showed him how to do it. Well, if you want to use one of our halters, you can use one of our halters. And he helped different ones, carry water one to another. Well, he went in and took two firsts and a second.

Rebhan: Good for him.

Franke: His dad didn't recognize his cattle.

Rebhan: They looked so good.

Franke: They looked so good. But, that kid, the next year, he knew how to do it.

Rebhan: I bet he did.

Franke: He knew how to do it. And he learned from some of the best. This was...the interaction of some shows they didn't care about having Open Class in 4-H. 4-H learnt from the Open Class. That was your teacher.

Rebhan: You're looking at the Open Class to see how they are doing it.

Franke: Yes. And a lot of times these kids would come and ask, and ask questions. How I should do this, how I should do that? How do you do that? And this is how they learnt. And the mix of generations is what passed down a lot of this knowledge, and so on. This is why 4-H is important, that we pass the knowledge of quality, breeding, handling, and all of this. The education, because you're not going to learn it from a book.

Rebhan: No.

Franke: You're not going to learn it from a book.

Rebhan: And you need time. You need time to absorb it.

Franke: Yes. You don't always get it all at once.

Franke: No, you don't always get it the first time around. So this is, I've worked with kids, I probably associate more with kids than I do with people my age. Well of course my age people are dying off anyways. But no, it's how to do things, and the thing of it is, how far 4-H can take you, because you do know something, you do know somebody. And you've got these trips to go places.

Rebhan: Yes you do. You can go to Washington D.C., or Atlanta, Georgia.

Franke: What's in Atlanta, Georgia?

Rebhan: I think they have a 4-H conference down there.

Franke: They used to in Chicago.

Rebhan: I heard about that. Did you go?

Franke: Yes. 1952.

Rebhan: 1952? You went down to Chicago?

Franke: Yeah, I think that was one of the years.

Rebhan: So you went several times?

Franke: I went a couple of times.

Rebhan: Okay. So what did you do down there?

Franke: Well, I met kids from all over the United States. They had their awards programs, and so on, and we also got a free ticket to go to the WLS barn dance. Well, I sent down several times, in '53 I had the chance to go down to the Club Congress, but then we went several times to the International Livestock Show, which was about the same time, or a week later. My high school teacher didn't want to give me a pass.

Rebhan: To get you off of school so you could go?

Franke: And I said, well tough, I'm going anyway.

Rebhan: This was a big deal.

Franke: Yeah. I said, I'm going, if you excuse me or not, because this is once in a lifetime chance.

Rebhan: Did your family have to pay for you to go?

Franke: No, not that I knew of, I can't remember.

Rebhan: How did you get selected for that? Did you just say you wanted to go?

Franke: Well, through your record books and your projects, and so on.

Rebhan: So they were probably talking the older kids who were really active.

Franke: Well, yeah, I guess there was a rating system somehow or other. Anyway, yeah, I think I know where that picture is. I can't place myself in there anymore, but they gave us a picture of the whole deal.

Rebhan: The whole delegation, that went down?

Franke: Yeah.

Rebhan: Did you attend workshops, or..?

Franke: Yeah, it was workshops, and one thing or another. And I was a member of the Key Club, and then you become a red scarf, a Wisconsin Red Scarfer, that was everybody that went in the past, and so on.

Rebhan: Did they give you a real red scarf?

Franke: Yes, you had a real red scarf.

Rebhan: Okay. Did you get to wear that at school, or would you kind of save that?

Franke: Well, it got kind of saved for special occasions when you went to, well, when you went to Farm and Home Week in Madison, and so on. That was a reunion time. And yeah, you kept track of all these people.

Rebhan: So Farm and Home Week, when was this going on, like, what decades are we talking about?

Franke: '50s.

Rebhan: '50s.

Franke: '40s, '50s, '60s. I think about '70, it kind of went by the wayside.

Rebhan: Did you get to stay right in the dorms, like you were college kids?

Franke: No, we just went down for the day.

Rebhan: Oh, I see.

Franke: You went down for the day, did chores early, or else got somebody else to do chores for the day. You went down, and the next day you had to do chores for somebody else who was going down. Up north they used to come in with bus loads. I mean this...

Rebhan: This was a big deal.

Franke: This was a big deal, yeah. And one thing, back at that time, before, I would say before '55, our research was funded by tax dollars.

Rebhan: The research for Ag, Agriculture.

Franke: Yeah. Since then, it's been by grants, from companies, so the answer is there before the question is.

Rebhan: I would say so.

Franke: You're looking at a guy who was one of the first protesters of BGH. There was three of us, John Kinsman, Aldin Helms, and I. We didn't think much of it then, we think less of it now. I was also one of the early producers for Organic Valley.

Rebhan: Wow.

Franke: Number ninety-four.

Rebhan: Not quite a hundred. Pretty close.

Franke: Well, I was second yeah, either first or second year I produced for them. Fifteen hundred zucchini squash.

Rebhan: (Sighing) Oh dear. So you were shipping vegetables?

Franke: Yeah.

Rebhan: So did you ship milk to them as well?

Franke: No. We was out of the milk business by the time they was in. I will tell ya, you plant your zucchini rows north and south and you go out there about five, six o'clock in the morning, when the sun's just coming up, then you can walk along, the sun shines underneath the leaves and you can see if they are ready. If you see one, like that (holding up hands) you better pick it tonight, because it will be that long (lengthening space between hands). Tomorrow morning it's going to be that long (lengthening space between hands again) and that's too big. And then you go late in the afternoon, and the sun shines the other way. Now, if it's east and west, you're going to have to look under leaves to see it.

Rebhan: That's going to take way to long.

Franke: A lot of bending over.

Rebhan: I would say so.

Franke: But it go so you'd twist them off, we did at that time. And after a while, you've got to twist the other way to, or otherwise your hand doesn't want to go. And then Pattypan squash, cabbage, and I was hauling stuff over there about, oh, three times a week. And I was over to their fair. Did you ever go to the fair over there?

Rebhan: I believe I have, yes.

Franke: You have.

Rebhan: I believe so.

Franke: I kind of enjoy it. I would go down to La Valle and after I got done down there I went over. Went through part of it anyway. If there's any new ideas. And you know, this is basically, what they're doing, or they do at the Kickapoo fair, is kind of, a little bit like what Farm and Home Week was. Same kind of a learning experience.

Rebhan: I see.

Franke: You might learn things that you might not even have thought of. And basically, I would say that's probably a good comparison.

Rebhan: So when you were with your 4-H club, back when you were a kid, did they ever do community service projects?

Franke: Oh yeah.

Rebhan: So what kind of projects would you take over?

Franke: I know they had a deal at that time, that they did something for veterans. I don't recall what the heck it was. But, we really didn't have, we really didn't have as much of that at that time. I'll tell ya, in the '40s, you had people that was poor, but they wasn't that poor that...the poor people we have today are poorer in condition wise than what they used to, and we've got a whole lot more living in town. I'll tell you what the deal was at that time, you might get a dollar a day, but, a dollar a day, you could buy five gallons of gas. Pair of overalls, cost you two, two and a half. So I mean, if you did anything at all, one thing was, at that time, chicken was worth a dollar. Okay, but, for that dollar, you had chicken on Sunday, you had leftovers on Monday, you had soup on Tuesday, and Wednesday you watered down the soup and put dumplings in it, so you got four days out of a dollar, and you'd feed a whole family. And you take that today, I don't know, at that time, I know of some families that was poor. But, families would live together and there was a lot of three generation places. Now in '29, '30, '31, '32, the kids all moved home. Our farmhouse had eighteen people in it. There was three married families.

Rebhan: Did that ever seem odd back then, to do it that way, or difficult?

Franke: No, that was the way you did it.

Rebhan: And everybody would be on the farm, helping.

Franke: Yeah, and then, in a matter of three, four, five years, when the banks got straightened out, and so on, then everybody got their own farms. It was just...that particular time...during the Depression, dad sold the Guernsey heifer for four dollars and sixty-nine cents, or something like that. Two year old. You got hogs sold for two cents a pound. So that two cents a pound, a two hundred pound hog, that's four dollars. But, then when you go to the '40s, of course, a baby pig was, you had a limit on how many you could raise, and if you had more than that they just knocked them in the head and that was it, but that was to control the production and price, but when war time came, you got a little more, but there was a demand, we fed all of Europe...

Rebhan: Exactly.

Franke: Part of Russia, Northern Africa.

Rebhan: Now we want the American farmer to be productive.

Franke: Yeah, but we still aren't paying him. At one time, there was a super cargo plane landing in Berlin every three minutes. Every three minutes. So figure that out in tonnage. But at that same time, I sold five steers and bought a tractor, later on.

Rebhan: What kind of a tractor?

Franke: A Massey.

Rebhan: Massey.

Franke: A Massey 30. And the dealer took dad and I out for a steak dinner.

Rebhan: I bet he did.

Franke: And this was...but...at the same time, March 1951, milk was two dollars and eighty-six cents a hundred. And we made money at it.

Rebhan: It was a different time.

Franke: Yes. We had it figured out, some of the stuff that we bought at that time, and it was a shock. Yeah, about eighty thousand pounds of milk would buy you a new truck. Two thousand dollars.

Rebhan: Very different from today.

Franke: Yeah. Now, you take the same truck, and the same figures, and this is wholesale price of milk, and to come up with twenty-five, thirty thousand, it takes almost, what, a couple hundred thousand, two hundred, two hundred and fifty thousand.

Rebhan: It's astronomical now, what you would have to produce.

Franke: Well that's just it, I mean, I remember when you could buy chickens for eighteen to twenty dollars a hundred. A bushel of seed corn was nine to eighteen dollars. Sure you got two dollars a bushel, or a dollar sixty-nine a bushel. I'd pick corn for four and a half an hour. It paid for the machine, and I had two thousand dollars left from day after Labor Day till the day before Christmas, and picked every day except for Sunday and deer hunting week. That was from six in the morning until eight or ten at night.

Rebhan: So were you ever a project leader for vegetables, or helped out with that?

Franke: I was a General Leader.

Rebhan: So you did everything.

Franke: Yeah. And I guess I still am. I teach people how to...well, one that I've been telling people lately...Close your eyes, and take your thumb, and push it alongside your other thumb, like that.

Rebhan: Okay.

Franke: Just close your eyes. Do you feel that skin move just a little bit?

Rebhan: Yes.

Franke: Okay. When you do a tomato, and you feel that peel move just that little bit, then it's ready to eat. Then it's at its peak. Up until that time it's green.

Rebhan: Even if it looks red, even if it looks ripe.

Franke: Yep, but you wait until you just feel it and you just feel it just a little bit move, and you slice a tomato like that, and slice a tomato like you get out of a store, there's no comparison.

Rebhan: No there isn't.

Franke: There's no comparison. That's one of the things that I've, well, I've been teaching people. They come back for tomatoes because they taste good. Well it's because they are ripe.

Rebhan: Pick them when they are ready.

Franke: No, pick them before, but don't ever refrigerate them.

Rebhan: No.

Franke: Don't ever refrigerate a hot tomato, or give her a cold shoulder.

Rebhan: So what you are, you're not just a 4-H leader anymore, you're just kind of a general leader for everything.

Franke: Oh no. I'm just an old geezer that talks too much sometimes, but I've got a lot of people come and ask me things. And what I know I pass on to other people. Sometimes they like what they hear and sometimes they don't.

Rebhan: Just keep on.

Franke: One day at a time.

Rebhan: So you have grandchildren now in 4-H, who are doing it, so what have you seen in them, since they've been in 4-H?

Franke: Well I've seen, well, the oldest granddaughter used to show my horses. I sent her up to Marshfield when she was with the horses in the trailer and I would bring a load of feed behind. And she had to unload it. And she was, I think she was ten. She must have been about ten. And she had to unload it in the stall. They decided they had to have them in a different stall besides where they was, the barn manager decided they should be moved. So she moved them. And then they decided they was going to move them one more time. And she said no, she said we moved them once, those horses are going to stay there, we're not moving them again. This is a ten year old. She is also the one that drove my stallion in the cart class. Now, sixteen years later, she is still driving that old stallion, and the horse lives at her farm now. She's also right now, she's in Iowa. She just had the baby, so now I have a great grandchild. And I know he's going to be in

the horse business, because I got him a horse already. It's a wooden rocking horse that travels. And I've got to make a horse for grown-ups, like this. If you lean ahead, the back end comes up, if you lean back, the front end goes up. And if you go like this back and forth, you're going to go right across the room.

Rebhan: You bet you are.

Franke: Well, for the fair convention, I think I need about four or five more. You ever been to the fair convention?

Rebhan: I haven't. Should I go?

Franke: Yes. Yes. You should go if you're going to be in this, 4-H, extension, or so on, you should go. Because that's where you meet the carnival, that where you meet all the ideas from the other fairs. I get kind of an in there too, I do photography for them.

Rebhan: Oh.

Franke: And I just trade. They give me room and board and I cover their convention.

Rebhan: So you take all the photographs for it.

Franke: Well, not all of them.

Rebhan: Most of them?

Franke: I take between five hundred, and probably seven or eight hundred. If they say, what thing do you all do, I don't know, because I do a lot of stuff.

Rebhan: So is there any kind of memory that just sums up to you what 4-H is or what it can do for kids?

Franke: Well I think out of all the programs, youth programs, I think that 4-H is probably one of the most important because of the wide variety of activities that they've got. They learn how to do business. And, the association of kids with older people, and these kids learn responsibility. And I think that is one of the main things. We have so many things for kids now a days, but they don't learn the basic responsibility of how to do things. The education of how to do things, and well, the interaction between generations because of the fairs, and I think fairs are one of the most important things because of the associations between generations, between people, between different occupations. I think it's probably, if anybody follows through the 4-H program, well, now you've got Cloverbuds from then on, I think this is an education that even college couldn't compare with. It might. There you specialize in something, here you have a broad view over an overall content of many things, compared to an education in one thing in particular. You may not be a specialist. You may not be an expert, but you have a general idea, and common sense, that is useable in everyday life. That makes sense to you?

Rebhan: It certainly does.

Franke: Well I would hope so.

Rebhan: Is there anything else that you would like to share with me?

Franke: Don't know. What would you like to hear?

Rebhan: I think I am flush out of questions.

Franke: You mean you're out of questions, now come on now kid.

Rebhan: Unless there is something else, you know, that you did in 4-H, or that you've seen change over time, or that you were especially proud of, that you were a part of.

Franke: Well one of the things that I was proud of was that the herd, we had an outstanding herd, I forget the year, at the District Black and White show, and it was all homebred cattle.

Rebhan: Wow.

Franke: And that was through the association of 4-H, and mainly through 4-H because that's where I got exposure to some of these places. I met Augie Pabst, and Fred Pabst, when they was in their cattle business in the '40s. Today, I have the biggest Pabst can in the country, because I have an original Pabst milk can.

Rebhan: Wow.

Franke: We bought cattle from them when they had their sale. I was asked to help fit the herd at that time. I wasn't able to go, my brother-in-law did, but I wasn't able to. But this was, opportunities, much like some of these kids, well, grandkids, have shown sheep in three or four different state fairs for a fellow from Richland Center, showing sheep, and these are big shows. You know, there is such a thing as showing at a local fair, with one, two, three in a class, but then you get to the big breeders circle, and this is kids that can step into that circle, and they become a part of that, long before they normally would. These kids grow up, I would say, ten years faster than what they do...I mean, there's a lot of these 4-H kids that could go and do business for you, because they've had the experience, and it's stuff they've learned in 4-H. I didn't have a chance to go on to college because I was too involved in farming before I graduated from high school, and part of that is to blame on 4-H and FFA. Really, the people I met through 4-H and otherwise, but mainly because it was a connection with 4-H, I think I've had a college education.

Rebhan: I would think so too.

Franke: I mean, I spent two days with Norman Borlaug. You look that up some time.

Rebhan: I will. The wheels in my head are turning right now.

Franke: And do you have any Jaquishes down here?

Rebhan: No.

Franke: Used to have. Lime Ridge. Lime Ridge area. Carr Valley?

Rebhan: Oh yes.

Franke: We shipped milk to La Valle, and La Valle would be first place or second place for butter, Carr Valley was first for cheese. This was during the '50s.

Rebhan: And your milk went into that.

Franke: The milk went into La Valle and we knew Carr Valley cheese, and anytime at that time it was just a little factory down there at Carr Valley, and the other one was well known. And part of the expansion of...a lot of milk was getting in the way, I don't know about now. Color breeds was from herds that kids had showed in 4-H. Of course they are retired now. I mean, some of these herds are small but they are still going. And some of these families in 4-H have been, well, like Barlass' with the Jerseys, they have been, it must be awfully close to eighty years or so, in 4-H. Vogils in Green Country, Janesville, that kind of stays in the family.

Rebhan: I would say so.

Franke: And the chances of farms being passed down to the next generation, 4-H kids are more apt to take ahold of that responsibility. They might go off to school for a couple of years, but they are more apt to take on that responsibility. But you know the other thing that they have said about this crisis, well, the farmer doesn't have to make any money because when he sells his farm, it will be worth more than what it was when he bought it. But the next generation can't buy it.

Rebhan: No.

Franke: Somebody along the way has to be able to pay for it. Well, it's personal property it will be old and outdated, but his farm will be worth more. This is the kind of thinking of the experts. I'm not an expert.

Rebhan: No.

Franke: That's why I don't think that way.

Rebhan: I was going to say. Well if you have anything else I would love to hear it, otherwise, I would thank you so much for your time.

Franke: Well, I'm sorry that I was late.

Rebhan: Oh, that was fine. I was more than happy to wait on you.

Franke: If you need some more information...I've seen old building go here at the fairgrounds, new building up. In fact I helped build that, well, the big fair building out here. That was built I think in '58, after Farm Progress Days. Because Ritland Brothers went in to the old building, built this, and that was one of the first buildings, and that was volunteer labor that put that up.

Rebhan: Wow.

Franke: Didn't take long to do it either. The only building out there that was from the old ones I remember is the chicken one. Other than that all the buildings are new. There used to be two long, half sheds, down this way, and they were where the pig barn, sheep barn is. And there was two, well, they were the original pole sheds really, there was a big dairy barn with two rows down on each side facing in, and there was a horse barn the same way, and then there was the little 4-H barn on this end. And there was times when you had to have tents besides that. And over at Elroy, they had tents, they had everything over there was full. There was no horses. That was all cattle. All those buildings there, except, well, between exhibit building and the cow barn, it is a driveway now, there was a sheep barn, and other than that, all those buildings over there was full of cattle. Plus a tent.

Rebhan: I am sure it was something. Something to really see.

Franke: It was. It was quite a fair at that time. But there's, there's an awful lot that has been changed. We didn't have nowhere near the regulations that we do today. But if you showed in Open Class, if you showed a full class, of entries, and if you took second place, whatever the group paid, whatever the premium paid, that was profit. That was profit. And I know people, my father-in-law is one of them, showed at six, seven fairs, after expenses paid, he went out and bought a new bailer. From the sheep and cow premiums.

Rebhan: Just from fair premiums?

Franke: Yeah. Because at that time it cost seventy-five dollars to go to Marshfield with a semi. And the guy made money on it.

Rebhan: Wow. Well I can't thank you enough for your time. I appreciate it so much.

Franke: Well, we'll have to get together again sometime.

Rebhan: We will have to do that.

Franke: So where do you live, you said...

Rebhan: I live in Cazenovia. Not too far from here. So...

Franke: I know where it is. Which way out of Caz?

Rebhan: Oh towards, um, towards Ithaca way.

Franke: Oh, down 58?

Rebhan: Yeah.

Franke: On which side of the hill?

Rebhan: Do you know where the old Catholic church is, in Germantown?

Franke: Yeah.

Rebhan: The farm across from that is ours.

Franke: Okay.

Rebhan: Yeah.

After transcribing, Emily Rebhan gave a paper copy of the transcription to Bob Franke's daughter, Kim Pufahl. After reading it through several times with her father and other family members, together Kim Pufahl and Emily Rebhan edited the transcription to make it as accurate as possible. During those conversations, Mr. Bob Franke also remembered other information, so we added it to the transcription, even though it is not on the audio interview.