

**SPOTTED**

Family  
Story

**Wetovick**

Fullerton  
Nebraska

# A herd with a mission

by Kevin Wetovick

The Wetovick family has a rich tradition in livestock production. Kevin and his brothers Ken, Rick, and Rod all helped out on their parents' (August and Patricia) commercial hog, cattle and grain farm near Fullerton, Nebraska. Along with their two older sisters Cyndy and Pam, the family was active in 4-H with the girls making clothing and the boys exhibiting livestock.

Kevin's first success was exhibiting the 1970 Nance County Fair Grand Champion Market Hog. A crossbred rotation was utilized in the Wetovick herd featuring Yorkshires, Hampshires, and Chester Whites.

Kevin graduated from Fullerton High School in 1975 after a fulfilling career in football, track and boxing, as well as serving as FFA Chapter President. He attended the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and graduated with a dual major in ag economics and ag education.

Taking a job as high school agriculture education teacher in Creighton, Nebraska, was Kevin's first official job. It was during this time that he purchased some Yorkshires from Chuck Olsen and got back into the hog business. After two years of teaching, Kevin moved back home to Fullerton and rented a couple of farms while helping his dad with the family operation. In 1982 Kevin married Joetta Gragert, (Joet for short) whom he had met while teaching in Creighton. They moved onto the rented farm ("little house on the prairie" as Joet recalls it). They had an instant family as Joet had Arron and



Front row, from left: Kandi and Joet. Back row, from left: Kevin, Shelby, Jared and Arron.

Kandi from a previous marriage.

Adding some Yorkshire females from Doug Martin and a boar from Gary Huisman, propelled the operation to a "seedstock producer." Another son, Jared, joined the family in 1983.

In 1985 Kevin bought his first Spots from Don Plambeck at the Nebraska State Fair. Kevin considers Don his first mentor in the Spotted business. Don's hogs were the productive, growthy type with good muscle and they produced sound, aggressive boars that were well accepted by commercial producers.

Other Spot breeders around that time in the area were the Hansens, from Wakefield, Randy Naber from Utica, Kirby Joy from Nebraska City, Hirschfelds from Benedict, and Bill Maul from Kearney.

*Kevin shares his thoughts in the following paragraphs on numerous topics.*

One of the best boars I raised we named "Mr. Perfect" after a popular WWF wrestler that sported a muscular physique. The late 1980s and early 1990s were pretty good years selling over 100 breeding boars per year as well as partnering with "Bud" Francis, who owned a couple gilt multiplier units, to place hundreds of "Whiteline" gilts per year to area swine producers along with Spotted boars to complete the program. Several adult females were purchased from Charlie Peniston's production sale that contained Timber, Sprout, Stub, and Hey Rube breeding. We also had production sales a few of those years in the late 1980s. One of our bigger "claims to fame" came in 1989 at the

World Pork Expo held at Springfield, Illinois, with a test station boar we raised called American Express. He was named reserve champion Yorkshire boar by a panel of judges using the Olympic scoring procedure. This boar's sire was purchased with Rodger Longhofer from Junction City, Kansas, at the Nebraska State Fair from Ed Woeppele, who was using genetics from the Jim Volk herd at Battle Creek, Nebraska.

During the later 1990s the commercial boar business started to dwindle some. We tried the GOS lines a bit but felt they sacrificed too much in terms of stoutness and muscling. Our focus switched over to raising Hamp x York gilts with a base of Yorkshire sows. Our Spotted numbers were reduced quite a bit. A boar from the Niehaus firm at the Iowa State Fair kept the commercial usefulness in our Spots at that time.

We attended the Iowa State Fair several years during the late 1980s and early 1990s and got to know Craig, Doug, and Brad Olson as well as Max McCuen, Terry Lister, Bob Behnkendorf, Roger Caltrider, Todd Schuler, and Rod Fee. During this period, the Spots were using the slogan "The Problem Solvers."

In 1990, I was asked to start an Ag Program in Cedar Rapids, Nebraska, which is about 16 miles from home. Trying to fit part-time teaching in with farming and raising hogs got really interesting. We welcomed our youngest daughter, Shelby into the family in 1992. During the '90s, Spotted breeders were infusing the Pietrain breed into the Spots to improve percent lean and muscling. The stress gene added a whole new dimension to planned matings.

By the year 2000, my teaching position had transitioned to full-time, so the sow numbers were reduced.

In the early 2000's I purchased a Spot gilt from Terry Lister called Hip Hop, which is a sow family name that is still prevalent in our herd. Her litter out of Pol-ka-Dot from Triple B put us on the map (locally) for show pigs and Spotted breeding stock once again.

Other boars utilized during those years were One Giant Step at Top Cut and Step Up at Shaffer's Gold



Rush. We had our first annual show pig sale in 2003. Since breeding stock sales had nearly dried up, mostly due to the rapid expansion of large hog confinement operations in the area, the focus in our operation changed to show pig production. Artificial insemination was being used much more in the industry, which led to the rise of several large boar studs. Most of our demand for show pigs was for crossbreds, so we selected real hard in the Spots for production, soundness, and overall function.

At the Nebraska State Fair in approximately 2008, there were only four purebred Spots exhibited in the FFA division—all individuals from one litter farrowed on the Wetovick farm. The year prior to that we sold a young man a Spot barrow who was FFA Spot champion and went on to be named reserve overall market hog. In 2011, my grandson, Jayden, exhibited the champion Spot market

gilt at the Nebraska State Fair.

A herd sire that headed us in the right direction was NFG8 B & B 9-4. I acquired him from Todd Schuler who had purchased him at the 2009 World Pork Expo from Niehaus and Feldman. "Beast" as I called him, sired some big bodied, productive females including WET0 Hip Hop 11-8, who traced back on the maternal side to a home-raised son and grandson of Step Up 9-5. This sow, 11-8, has proven to be the most influential Spot sow in our operation. Her daughters by Swampman, who was owned with Steven Resler, were consistent, problem-free pig raisers. Some other boars that made contributions via AI were ARK Kolt 45, RRA Damage Control, MTMM Tidal Wave, and BRAT Premium Blend. When Phone Home 61-5 was used, the bar on productivity was raised again. There are still some eight and nine parity females going here today with that breeding.



2016 Nebraska State Fair Grand Champion Spotted Market Gilt. Bred by Wetovicks.



Kevin (right) and his brother, Ken, got attached to pigs at a young age.

## A Herd With A Mission

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I purchased RF4 Icon from Frank Raasch in 2015 at the Southwest Type Conference. He added bone and muscle and produced the reserve champion Spot gilt at the 2016 World Pork Expo as well as Spottylicious, the powerful female working for Rod and Eric Fee. Two AI sons of 3 Speed Dial, WET4 Speed Dial 11-3 and WET4 Speed Dial 11-2 (utilized for a while by the Brian Sensibaugh family of Ceresco, Nebraska) have intensified the productive traits and growth passed down from their grandma. WET0 Hip Hop 11-8.

Today, 11-2 still roams as a natural breeder in the dirt lots here. A boar named Shift Change, raised by Drew Voorhees, Illinois, produced females with outstanding maternal traits. A partnership between Steven Resler,

Dustin Feldman, Joel Olson and Wetovick Swine Farm has enabled us to own shares in the popular 2017 Indiana State Fair Champion, now called "Beatdown" who is currently causing quite a stir, as well as Millennial, the Guffey boar from the 2017 Summer Type Conference.

Another Spot boar who is doing some good here is the one I call "Nubbin," who was the Tim Marek entry at the 2017 World Pork Expo. A boar we own with Kirk and Bob Miller, STKN6 Heads Up has been used to add some show appeal.

On July 19, 2014, our grandson Jayden, Kandi's oldest son was killed in an automobile roll-over accident. Our family was devastated. Jayden was a fun-loving outdoorsman with a passion for fishing and hunting. He was a great helper around the farm—always handling pigs with patience. Jayden was a great hog showman and

big brother to Hunter and Taryn. We have a decal on our show trailer of a picture of Jayden and me that many folks have seen as we travel to shows and sales. It's a good feeling to take his memory along with us.

We hold our other grandchildren Cynan, Tia, and Zoe (Arron and Carla's) along with Dale and Gus (Jared and Sheila's) dear to our hearts. My proudest moment every year is when all my children and grandchildren come together and help with our annual show pig sale the first part of April.

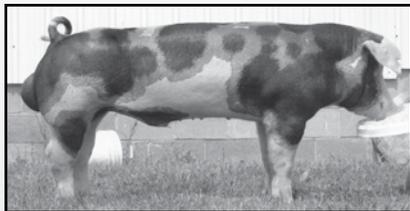
I took employment in 2009 as an ag instructor at Fullerton Public Schools and have been working there to the present. I was able to teach my daughter Shelby and most of my grandchildren. It has been a rewarding career. Balancing teaching, crop farming, and raising hogs while trying to be a decent husband and grandfather has been challenging. With the help and understanding of my family, I have been able to pursue these passions of mine.

When my son Arron moved back to Fullerton to operate the Overtime Sports Bar, his help on the crop side of things relieved a lot of pressure.

Today, our operation consists of approximately 70 sows and gilts, along with 11 boars. Six or seven boars are in stud at the farm with the rest at other stud locations. I perform all the daily tasks with occasional help from Joet who manages the clubhouse for Pawnee Hills as well as assisting Arron and Carla with Overtime Catering. Arron keeps the wood chip inventory adequately stocked, and Kandi helps out by doing chores when Joet and I are both gone. Jared is a banker in a neighboring community, so he isn't able to help as much. Shelby now lives in



*Icon added bone and muscle to the herd and also a powerful set of gilts.*



*Step Up, a boar housed at Shaffer's Gold Rush that was used in the Wetovick herd in the early 2000s.*



*Kevin pretending to be a good showman in approximately 1973.*



*Kevin and Arron with their 2016 World Pork Expo Reserve Champion Spotted Gilt.*



*Kevin and his partners showcasing their talents at the Pure Country Karaoke event.*



*A powerful sow prospect produced by the Wetovicks.*



*Kevin shown with some of his students who participated in western day for FFA Week.*



*Shelby and Jayden walking pigs at the farm.*



*Shelby at the Nebraska State Fair.*



*Family photo taken approximately 2008. From left, Kandi, Kevin, Arron, Joet, Shelby and Jared on the family prized John Deere 4020.*



*Spottylicious, a gilt the Wetovicks showed at the World Pork Expo who has done a tremendous job for Eric and Rod Fee, Iowa.*



*Kevin and his grandson, Hunter, with the reserve champion market gilt at the Nebraska State Fair.*

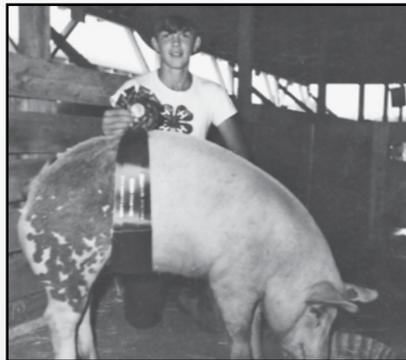
Leland, North Carolina. She misses the pigs almost as much as we miss her.

I really enjoy seeing folks have success with Wetovick genetics! It makes those long hours scraping manure, processing pigs, AI'ing sows, and grinding feed all worth it. Since my schedule prevents me from attending as many shows as I would like, breeders will not see as many "show boars" produced by our firm. Instead, we decided to strive to produce the "ultimate female."

I want to thank Jack Wall for this opportunity to share our story and for his help and guidance along the way. Thanks to Julie and Peggy for developing the ability to read my mind when it comes to magazine ads and pedigree information! Thanks to everyone who has been involved in the CPS fraternity for your friendship over the years. I cherish these friendships—they have been a true blessing and inspiration. It has been a fun ride!

I also want to express my thankfulness to God for his guidance and opportunities that I have been blessed with.

My best friends are people I have met at hog shows! If you are not my friend, then I must not have met you yet!



*Kevin with the 1970 Nance County Champion Market Hog.*



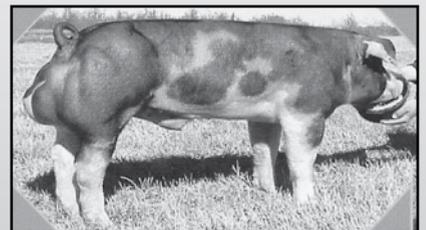
*Joet and Kevin on the "choremobile".*



*Jayden showed the 2011 Nebraska State Fair Champion Spot Market Gilt, bred by the Wetovicks.*



*Mr. Perfect, a boar raised by the Wetovicks in the late 1980s that was mostly Plambeck breeding.*



*Pol-Ka-Dot, a boar housed at Triple B Sires, Oklahoma, who had an impact on the herd in the early 2000s.*