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Harley Hanke: Well, my name is Harley Hanke, and my title was-- well, they called in animal scientist for a while. H-A-R-L-E-Y, H-A-N-K-E.

Chris Butler: What were Feeder Days?

Harley Hanke: Oh, the livestock Feeder Days were days when we invited the area farmers into the station that had that particular class of livestock. If we had a sheep day, we would run experiments on these sheep, and to start with, we would get a carload of feeder lambs from the west. We'd divide them up maybe into 12 different pens. We'd feed them different ways, and then we would do some of that type of work with the ewes as well, and we would put this together in a booklet, and we would invite the area sheep men to come to our day, and that's kind of what a livestock day was. Then later on we had swine days and beef Feeder Days, and cow/calf days, and so forth.

Chris Butler: So it was your way of sharing your research with the public?

Harley Hanke: Yes, that's right. Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Chris Butler: Were these popular, Feeder Days?

Harley Hanke: Well, I'd say they really were. But I'd also say that when I say they were-- they were popular-- I'd also that if I had any success in that area, it was largely due to the help of many other people.

Chris Butler: How many people would come to a Feeder Days, and where would you have it, physically?

Harley Hanke: Well, to start with, we had our Feeder Days in what the University of Minnesota Morris now calls the Cow Palace. And then they built the Edson Hall Auditorium, and then we moved over there, and Edson Hall Auditorium would hold 500 people, and there was a few times that we had more people than that, and we moved out to the armory to accommodate them. So we had good attendance.

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Chris Butler: So more than 500 people would come to Morris for these Feeder Days.

Harley Hanke: At times. Then later on, as numbers of farmers and these types of producers became less, oh, we'd probably have 200. But if we didn't have 200, I'd consider we had a pretty small crowd.

Chris Butler: You wanted to share research, but there was also a social aspect. There was a social part of Feeder Days. Describe that.

Harley Hanke: Well, yes, there was a social part of Feeder Days. We tried to do some different things. One of them was we developed a Bellwether Club, and the Bellwether Club was made up of producers who had been to our Sheep Days 20 years or more. And I'd have to take a quick glance here, and see just how many. We had 55 Bellwethers, either alive, or that had died, that came to our programs. And we were real pleased about that. I might just mention that in one occasion, a Bellwether down here at Milan, Minnesota-- A.J. Olson [ph?] was his name-- and he was in a rest home. He was 94 years old. He got his grandson to drive him up to the Morris Sheep Day one more time, and we were so pleased that he thought enough of our days to come and do that. There were some other things that we did. I asked the local county agents to send me a list of the livestock producers that they had in their county, like for the sheep men and the hog men and the beef men, and the cow/calf people. And then we would invite them to come to our days once or twice. If they didn't come, we didn't try to get a message to them again. The other thing, I don't know if I've mentioned this already or not, but when these people came to our Livestock Days, we registered them, and so we had their name and their address, and we put a nametag on them. Just aside from that, these Bellwethers, when they came, we put a gold bell on them. When noon came, we had a special dinner table for them. So they had that little extra recognition.

Chris Butler: So Harley, tell me, what was the schedule of a feeder day? From morning to night, what would people do?

Harley Hanke: That's a good question. Well, basically, the schedule at Feeder's Days was that, to start with, we started at 10 o'clock in the morning, and I was a real crank on that, because I thought if we didn't start when we said we were going to start, those that drove in from Iowa and North Dakota and South Dakota, some as far north as Canada, we would be penalizing those that were there on time. And so we started at 10 o'clock,

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and very often-- well, we'd welcome the crew first-- and then very often I'd maybe start the program with a report on what we had done experimentally that past year. And we also made a point of telling these producers whether we had made money or whether we had lost money on these particular experiments. We thought that was important to them. Then, oftentimes, we would have a producer on our program. I really tried to do that, and it was very well accepted by those in attendance. It was someone that was out there doing it himself. He wasn't a college professor, but he was a producer. And then if I could get them to accept the invitation to come and speak at our day, I'd tell them, "I'd come out, and I'll take pictures of your setup, and we'll have slides made, and then you can use those slides when you make your presentation." Another part of those days oftentimes would be, if we had a specialist come in from St. Paul, he'd give a talk concerning that particular class of livestock, and oftentimes we'd also have a specialist come in from either North or South Dakota, or Iowa or Wisconsin. And then, somewhere along the line, oftentimes I'd try to return that favor and appear on their program. And that's kind of the way it went. At noon we'd break, and we'd go over to the dining hall, and the dining hall girls usually had a dandy dinner for us. And if it was Sheep Day, they had lamb. If it was Beef Day, we had beef. Pork Day, we had pork. And that worked out very, very well. Then we'd kind of wind it up about, oh, three or four o'clock in the afternoon.

Chris Butler: And they would get to take away this program that had all <inaudible>.

Harley Hanke: Yes, they would get to take away this program, and we didn't charge for that program. That isn't always so anymore. But my thinking was that the taxpayers had already paid to have that work done, and then do we charge them to give them a copy of what happened? I didn't think we should do that, and we didn't. And we also tried to charge them a nominal charge for these dinners. I remember talking to Superintendent Edson, and saying, "Allen, can't we hold the price of that meal to two dollars or less?" And so we lose a little money at it. Part of our reason for being here is to get this information to our producers.

Chris Butler: You mentioned that in the program you wanted to have a producer that wasn't a professor.

Harley Hanke: That's right.

Chris Butler: Why? What was that important for a producer to be on the schedule?

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Harley Hanke: Well, the farmers really listened, I thought, to what a producer actually had to say. Not that they didn't listen to what we had to say, but they have very good acceptance for these great producers. And that worked out real well. I was telling my wife this morning, I had a few of the farmers-- even from North and South Dakota-- that were so interested in coming, if they couldn't come, oftentimes they would call me and tell me why they couldn't make it today. And I thought that was kind of nice.

Chris Butler: A follow-up question: Why, in your opinion, was it important that the School of Agriculture did these Feeder Days? I mean, you might just do your research and publish it, but you had this entire event about your research. Why was that important to do?

Harley Hanke: Well, we thought it was very important to do because, for one thing, it got the information to our area people. Now, we could publish that information, and we oftentimes did, and it would go national. But we were very interested in the people of Minnesota, that were paying the taxes and paying our way, that they got first choice and first chance to find out what had happened with the trials that we had run. And before the Days started, a few days before, I'd be on the radio, and tell the area people Swine Day was coming, or Sheep Day, and what the program was going to be, any special speakers that were going to be there. And that worked out quite well. Well, it also had it in the newspaper, and then we sent these letters to these people, and I really think the best thing we had was to send a letter to those that had been in attendance the last five years or so. Very often they'd respond and be there.

Chris Butler: It sounds like you're saying-- in other words, you're saying, "We were just doing what a university should do, which is take the work of experts, of professors, and take it to the public." That's what you believe a university is supposed to do.

Harley Hanke: Yes, I guess I'd say I think it was important for us to get that information that we had collected from our trials to these people, and we also tried very hard to figure out which trials gave us the best return per sheep or per hog, or per beef animal. So when these folks went home, they knew what trials paid the best as far as the experiment station was concerned. And there were times that we were feeding, oh, from 400 to 900 head of cattle in some of these trials. The sheep, we were feeding a carload, which would probably be about, oh, about 150 head of sheep. And then we ran 100 registered Columbia ewes. And then the hogs. We had Pig Town, down in the

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flat between the University of Minnesota Morris and where the experiment station is now, and we had 45 different litters from three different breeds down there. Each litter had its own pen, its own feeder. Two litters would share the water. So we really kind of had the first proven hogs as far as feed conversion was concerned, and people were interested enough in them that there were times that we sent a whole carload of boars to-- well, one was to Noblesville, Indiana, and to some of these neighboring states. And so when we released our boars for sale, there were times there'd be, oh, 10-15 trucks lined up waiting to get over to the hog house.

Chris Butler: So people knew about your livestock.

Harley Hanke: Yes, they did. Yeah. Yeah.

Chris Butler: I want to talk a little bit about your teaching now. What were some of the courses you taught at the West Central School of Ag?

Harley Hanke: Well, I taught Feeds and Feeding, and Livestock Breeding, and Livestock Diseases, and at least probably two courses in Livestock Judging, and Butchering. And then, in later years, when the UMM started, and we didn't have quite as large a faculty, I ended up teaching general science and a math course, and a laboratories techniques course. And that worked out quite well. We used the animals that we had on the campus for these Livestock Judging courses, and we also used the cull animals sometimes in the butchering classes. And at that time, we would butcher, and then we'd hang the animals after we'd butchered them in the coolers, and then my office was upstairs and I had a buzzer up there, and if the cooler went up, the bell rang up my office. And then we would take these animals that we had butchered to the dining hall, and they were used then to feed the Ag School students. But we had to very careful, disease-wise.

Chris Butler: So it was kind of self-sustaining. You grew your own vegetables for the dining hall, you had your own meat.

Harley Hanke: That's so. Yeah.

Chris Butler: Tell me about the Cow Palace. What was the Cow Palace used for?

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Harley Hanke: Well, the Cow Palace, that kind of got its name after the university came. But we used that for livestock judging a lot, and for-- I taught most of my classes to the students in that Cow Palace. It was a small auditorium that would probably handle, oh, maybe 150 to not more than 200 people. And there were times then, before Edson Hall was built, that that's where we had our Sheep Days programs as well, and our Livestock Day programs. I remember on one occasion, when we had our Sheep Day program, we had two rooms in addition to the Cow Palace, for those that were in attendance. And one of the speakers, he was standing up there in front, and he had a pointer, and he kept moving that back and forth, and all of the sudden it broke. And he said a few words that I won't say, and those that were in the rooms over across the hall wondered what happened because they couldn't see him, but they could hear him. But that worked out well for us. I remember one time there when superintendent Edson asked if I would give a little orientation talk to the incoming freshmen in the School of Ag. So I did, and I kind of tried to tell them how it worked and what we expected of them. And he said, "And by the way, tell them that their folks can eat dinner with us this noon at no charge, if you want to." And so I did. I told them a little bit about how the school worked and all, and then I announced that their parents could eat dinner with us at no charge. And during the noon hour-- see, these young people were just out of the eighth grade, so they were pretty young. And this little guy came up to me and he said, "Mr. Hanke..." and he was crying. The tears were coming. He said, "My folks already went home." But it rang a bell with me how young these students were, and they then lived in the dormitories and they ate in the dining hall, and they were pretty much on-schedule as far as their classes were concerned. And in the evening, they had one hour of supervised study, and in the summertime, they had projects at home, and there were perfect leaders that went out and visited them on their own farm and saw how they were coming along with their projects. And that all worked out quite well.

Chris Butler: Were you one of those people? Would you go out to the farms?

Harley Hanke: I did a few times. I didn't regularly. But one thing I did notice when you went out to those farms, if you had a student in school that was having a little problem with discipline and all, when you visited his home, sometimes we could kind of see why he was the way he was, or she. But that all worked out quite well. See, the Ag School only ran six months, whereas the high school ran nine months. But by having that extra hours of supervised study in the evening, and by having these projects out on their own farms, the educational office of the state accepted the six months as a year of high school.

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Chris Butler: I understand that to be a teacher at the West Central School of Ag, you were more than just a teacher. You also had to be a disciplinarian and a supervisor. You told me a funny story about Mahoney [ph?]. What was that story?

Harley Hanke: Well, to start with, I started teaching Veterans' Ag here. That was the class for the veterans out on their farms. They came in at night, and then we visited them. So I was a Veterans' Ag teacher for a couple years, but I also was the assistant preceptor in Senior Hall dormitory. Well you know, at that time, about the only students that I got to know real well were, I used to say, the bad actors, or those that were excellent students-- the two extremes. Well, I came up from downtown, and there was a group of boys standing there by Senior Hall Dorm, and about that time, one of them jumped out of the upstairs window and down. Well, I almost could care less whether he did that, but I thought, "Well, if I'm supposed to be an assistant preceptor, I better say something." So this group of, oh, seven, eight boys standing there and having a big time. So I hollered, "Mahoney, come on over here." He came over, and he said, "How'd you know it was me?" I didn't know it was him. He was red-haired, and he was the only one I could call by name. And so I knew who had done it anyhow, and it wasn't that big a thing, but we kind of wanted them to have some discipline.

Chris Butler: It seems like the students that went to the West Central School of Agriculture, they learned a lot more than just what they had in classes. What else did they learn?

Harley Hanke: Well, I'd say they learned how to live away from home, and there were many of those students that got married and went farming shortly after they got out of the Ag School. I always thought it was kind of interesting. Many of those students' parents also had gone to the School of Ag, and that was kind of nice that it kind of continued on generation after generation. But the girls, they learned how to cook and sew, and a big part of their learning was just learning to live together, and to do a good job. We were kind of strong disciplinarians I guess at that time. If we gave them something to study, we expected that they would study it, and learn it. So when they got out of here, we used to think that, or hope, that they would be successful farmers. And of course, there's a lot more to the school than just my animal science courses. Les Lender [ph?], he was teaching physics and some of the engineering courses, and they were taught how to overhaul a tractor, and how to weld, and there were classes in business for the students. They'd learn how to type, and bookkeeping, and they'd learn how to swim, and the athletics. So there was a broad spectrum there. And of course

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one of the things that I taught them, and I was kind of glad when I got rid of that course, was butchering. Because it was a double time for that course, and if the bell rang, my students would leave, and if there was still a mess there, you know who had to clean that up. But that worked out all right. I'd like to say that I felt we had a tremendous group of students. There were very few discipline problems, really. They were a fine group of young people to work with. When I hear instructors today tell us some of their discipline problems, many of those problems we just didn't have.

Chris Butler: The Cow Palace, when you were do livestock judging there-- and actually, there was a ramp in there, right? Describe that for me.

Harley Hanke: We had that Cow Palace with an overhead door, like a big garage door, and we could open that up and then lead the livestock in, and we'd tie them by their neck, like the beef cattle and the dairy cattle, and the sheep would have pens that we'd put them in. And then when we were judging, the students would hold those four animals, and the rest would judge. But then this ramp that went down, that was a ramp from outside downstairs into the butchering room. So when we brought those animals down, that's where we butchered. I was fortunate that Glennan Rose [ph?], who was our swine man, he had helped Professor Jordan with his butchering class, and he was willing to help me as well. So that worked out well.

Chris Butler: The last thing I want to talk to you about, Harley-- it's just your opinion. So in 1960, UMM arrived, and West Central School of Ag phased out. What were your feelings about that at the time?

Harley Hanke: Well, I guess I'd have-- my feelings at the time with the UMM coming in and the ag school phasing out was kind of two ways. One, I kind of hated to see the ag school phase out, because I had attended the School of Ag in St. Paul myself, and that was after high school, and I thought a lot of the education and the programs that these schools of ag had. But on the other hand, I realized that the need for the School of Ag was not the same as it had been when it was founded. When it was founded, the farmers were farming with horses, and they needed that boy home to help farm early in the spring, and they needed him to help get the crop out late in the fall. So that was primarily the reason for starting the Schools of Ag, as I saw it. And other than that, I also thought it was a good thing that the University of Minnesota Morris was starting. They started one year at a time, and we phased out a class one year at a time, and so it took the four years before that transition was made. But I couldn't help but think that it was great that that offered a college education to many of the area students, instead of

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their going off to St. Paul or Fargo or wherever a college might be, right here at home. And I thought that they started a wonderful group of faculty, and I thought Professor Briggs did a great job of getting that University of Minnesota Morris off the ground.

Chris Butler: Can I ask you to finish that thought? You were saying when the ag schools started, boys were needed to be at home to plow and to harvest. What was different about farming in 1960 that made that not necessary?

Harley Hanke: Well, for one thing, when the ag schools first started, the source of power out on the farm was horses. That's one reason why they were breeding Persian horses at the experiment station. But then in later years, the source of power was tractors, and larger equipment. And so it didn't take as long to put the crop in, nor did it take as long to get the crop out, once they had tractors. And of course nowadays, when we see these big tractors and pieces of equipment-- I used to tell my wife, the farm I came from, you could hardly turn around on one of those little fields that we had.

Chris Butler: Did you tell us the number of Feeder Days you did for each of the different types?

Harley Hanke: Well, there were 60 Sheep and Lamb Day programs. Now, I can't take credit for all the 60, because Professor P.S. Jordan, Phil Jordan, put on 29 of them, and his son, Professor Robert Jordan, who followed him in the St. Paul station, headed up the sheep work in the whole state, and he and I put on 31. So his dad put on 29, and we had 31. And then the Swine Days, we had 25 of those. I see back in the '70s, one of those days, we had over 500 at Swine Feeder's Day. And then we had a Beef Feeder's Day, and we had 20 for that, catering to the people that were feeding cattle, and we were feeding feeder cattle from the west, and in different types of studies, and then we had Beef/Cow/Calf Day, and we reported what we had done, and also had producers come in and professors from the cities and from other states to help us with those days. So there were really quite a few different Livestock Days.

Chris Butler: Did you ever get feedback from someone who came to a Feeder Day? Did they ever see you years later and say, "Harley, you know, the information I got from those Feeder Days really helped my farm, really saved my farm." Did you ever get feedback like that.

Harley Hanke: Yes. Well, that sound some kind of braggy, but we did have nice

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feedback from those that had attended. Some of those areas have been discontinued, and there are people that felt bad that they were discontinued, because they thought they were quite worthwhile to them. I had a couple of them call here not long ago, and this man wanted to buy a short-horn bull, and I told him that we didn't have the short-horns anymore. And his comment was, "You mean to tell me that the University of Minnesota got rid of that herd?" But I can see why they did. But there was good demand for information from the farmers at these days.

Chris Butler: That wraps up all my questions, Harley. Thank you so much.

Harley Hanke: Well, you're sure welcome. And I appreciate very much the opportunity to visit about the experiment station and the ag school. And I'd have to say that I was thankful for those that helped me out, and I was thankful for the help and the support that I got from my wife, Helen, for those different days, and oftentimes the days got a little long, and you'd go back at night, and sometimes Saturday and Sunday, to get the job done. But I appreciated her enthusiasm and interest in what I was doing, and also the enthusiasm and interest shown by our daughter, Sara.

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