

Ohio's Livestock Industry: A Critical Economic Link



Pat Hord's youthful looks make the fact that he manages a large livestock operation surprising to those who first meet him. The business, Hord Livestock Co. Inc. near Bucyrus, markets more than 150,000 hogs each year.

The farm is also a family operation, where Pat is carrying on the legacy of his father and grandfather. His wife, mother, sister and brother-in-law all are involved in some capacity on the family farm as well.

Ohio's livestock and poultry sector is an important component of the agriculture industry and consequently the rural economy, contributing more than \$7.89 billion to Ohio's economy. The livestock industry is responsible for generating more than 37,000 jobs in our state.

Hord employs 60 people directly and generates thousands of dollars of tax revenue for local coffers. Hord's farm also helps smaller family farms stay in business; last year Hord purchased more than one million bushels of corn

from local farmers. Farmers like Pat also are working hard to protect the environment. In 2002 Hord won the Environmental Stewardship Award from the Ohio Livestock Coalition. The award is given to farms that show leadership in protecting the environment.

Sometimes farmers like Pat Hord and his family are put into situations where they feel the need to apologize for the size of their farm. "If I grew up in my dad's generation our farm would look more like what many people think a traditional farm should look like," he said. "Dad did what he had to do at that time to be successful, and my grandfather had to do the same thing. That's what I'm trying to do."

Building successful farm businesses necessitates working with neighbors, other farmers and business partners. Often one farm can be another farm's best customer by creating markets for their products. The big winners with such relationships are communities where jobs are created and a strong economic foundation is established. Ultimately, however, we all benefit as consumers by being provided with the safe, abundant and affordable food supply that we all enjoy.

Four generations of Hord family farmers, from left: Bud, Duane, Phillip and Pat Hord.



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