

Farming Faith

Raising cattle and sharing God's word seem to go hand in hand.

by Sara Gugelmeyer



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Maybe it's the close proximity to God's work. Maybe it's the close proximity to nature's devastating power. Maybe it's just that we tend to be more traditional in all our behaviors. No matter the reason, generally speaking, those involved in agriculture are often strong in faith.

We didn't have to look hard to find three men who are doing just that — balancing raising Hereford cattle and raising church-goers'

spirits with messages of inspiration and education.

They, too, have noticed how God influences those in agriculture. “You can't help but see God's hand when working with soil or when a cow gives birth,” Lutheran pastor and Wisconsin Hereford breeder Mark Schoen says.

Similarly, part-time pastor Gordon Jamison, Quinter, Kan., says, “I think every time you witness a new birth it's a miracle. How do you deny the existence

of God when you see that miracle taking place? We see it so often it does strengthen our faith. It also tries it pretty severely.”

Methodist pastor and Tennessee Hereford breeder Roy Hopkins says he uses many farming analogies in his sermons, in part because farmers and ranchers rely so much on variables outside their control. “The trust you must have adds to your faith,” Roy says. “Faith that it's going to rain, faith that the weather is going to be right for harvest.”

Gordon adds, “I think most farmers and ranchers tend to have a more spiritually based life because of their direct contact with God's creation. It's no secret, if you're going to be involved in the purebred part of agriculture, treating the public with integrity and being completely honest helps you gain a reputation that is often going to be critical to your business. That's based on principles handed down for generations. Sometimes we don't always acknowledge that, but that's what our country was founded on, those principles.”

Mark, Gordon and Roy are just a few of many Hereford breeders who are strong in faith. Farmers and ranchers across the country support local and, often, rural churches helping to keep important values alive. In the following pages we share these three men's stories but also honor all who serve the Lord. **BW**