



1992 Outstanding Farmer Joe-Joe Ford raises a 50-head herd of beef cattle and, with son Mike, tobacco, soybeans, corn, wheat and hay on leased runs a 40-sow feeder pig operation that produces acreage and on his own Calvary farm. He has about 400 pigs annually. (Photo by Ilona Burdette)

Down on the farm...Joe-Joe Ford named 'outstanding' for 1992

TERRY WARD

Special writer

The scent of wood smoke wreathes comfortably around the clean, sturdy lines of the 182-year-old brick farmhouse that dominates the 200 acres his great-great-great-grandfather bought in 1797 for 175 pounds.

The land has been in the family since then.

When the state celebrated its bicentennial last year, Governor Jones recognized the place as a Sesquicentennial Farm. Another five years and it would have qualified as a Bicentennial Farm.

Joseph Spalding Ford Jr., honored last month as Marion County's 1992 Outstanding Farmer, is at home here on Lover's Lane in Calvary.

His boyhood was spent in the farm's white frame tenant house, where he lived with his six brothers and four sisters. Of 11 children, "I was the middle one," he said.

The pastor at Calvary's Holy Name of Mary Catholic Church, Father C.L. Smith, dubbed him "Joe-Joe," a name that stuck.

His sister Kathy Young recalled that after he had learned to operate the tractor, Ford "was curious to see how gasoline would make his younger brother run—by pumping

gas from the farm tank into his brother's mouth and filling him up, too." There weren't any lasting ill effects.

After graduating from St. Charles High School in 1962, Ford farmed with his father on the home place for a year before beginning a nine-year hitch working for neighbor Lawrence Bickett.

In 1964 he married Linda Bland. Two of their children, 27-year-old Mike and 23-year-old Troy, live at home. Mike helps his father work the family farm and Troy milks a 100-head dairy herd for a neighbor. Daughter Julie works

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Mattingly-Ford.

Miss Mary Elizabeth Mattingly and Joseph Spalding Ford, a well known young couple of the Calvary community, were united in marriage Wednesday morning at Holy Mary's church at Calvary. The ceremony which took place in the presence of quite a number of relatives and friends was performed by Rev. J. A. Hogarty, pastor of St. Augustine's church.

Both the bride and groom have many friends in the section where they live. She is a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ben S. Mattingly and is 19 years old. He is 21 years old and is a son of Mr. Emmet Ford. He is a successful young farmer.

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Nov 27 Ford-Spalding. 1934

The wedding of Miss Jane Elizabeth Ford and Preston Spalding was solemnized at 7:00 o'clock Tuesday morning at a Nuptial High Mass at Holy Mary's Church at Calvary, the pastor, Rev. J. P. Welsh, performing the ceremony in the presence of a large number of relatives and friends of the contracting parties.

The bridesmaid was Miss Roberta Ford of this city, sister of the bride, and Curtis Jarboe was the best man.

The bride was becomingly attired in a brown crepe dress trimmed in satin with brown hat and other accessories to match. Her flowers were an arm bouquet of yellow chrysanthemums. The bridesmaid wore a green crepe dress with green and black accessories. She carried an arm bouquet of bronze chrysanthemums.

After the ceremony a breakfast was served at the home of the bride. Later Mr. and Mrs. Spalding left on a short bridal trip. They will make their home with the groom's mother.

Mrs. Spalding is a daughter of Mrs. Susan Ford and is a young woman of many lovable traits. She attended school at Calvary and is a graduate of St. Charles High School at St. Mary. Mr. Spalding is a son of Mrs. Alice Spalding and also attended school at Calvary. He is a highly regarded young man and is engaged in farming.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Spalding are well known and popular in the county and have many friends who extend congratulations and best wishes.

Ford

FORD

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in Elizabethtown as a medical records technician.

He and Linda built a new house and moved back to the home place in 1972.

In 1980 he and Linda bought the family farm from his father Jodie Ford. Joe-Joe was the only one of the 11 children that went into full-time farming.

That year Linda, who has worked at Jane & Linda Sportswear the past 26 years, started keeping a journal of every day's happenings. She writes it all down, whether it's planting corn, cutting tobacco, or just "loafing with Joe Denny or loafing with Eddie Lee."

Linda said her husband often refers to the spiral-bound notebooks to see when the plowing or planting took place last year.

Already the fields are plowed for this spring's planting. The tobacco beds for the 30,000-pound crop are already sowed. Close to an acre of ground has been broken for the garden.

"I like to get it done early," Ford said.

"It doesn't seem like manual work at all," he said. "Daddy made us hoe the corn and the garden, clean the fence rows. Now we've got tractors."

Ford has a fleet of six tractors, including the 15-horsepower Farmall B that his father bought when Joe-Joe was only two years old. While he was leaning over in the high chair to look out the window at the new tractor, young Ford fell out and broke his arm.

"Daddy went from a team of mules to that tractor," he said. Ford said his mother has asked him not to sell the machine, an antique but still in service for raking hay.

Ford spent last Friday with sev-

eral friends from Calvary at the Kentucky Farm Machinery Show at the state fairgrounds. He planned to go back Saturday for the tractor pull. Buying equipment is a social activity for Joe-Joe and Linda and their friends.

"Tell about the time three couples sat in the van freezing while you bought a tractor at an auction in Indiana," said Linda.

Ford grinned. "We left here early, and I had bought it by dinner time. When I had it a ride home, we went to Nashville (Ind.) and partied."

Linda smiled. "We enjoy life."

Ford gets the work done. In addition to the tobacco, he raises 200 acres of soybeans, 60 acres of corn and 12 acres of wheat. Much of the crop production is done on leased acreage.

On the home place, 84 acres are in hay and pasture. Ford has a 50-head herd of beef cattle and produces 40 to 50 head of feeder calves each year. He and his son Mike are partners in a 40-sow

feeder pig operation that produces about 400 pigs annually.

"In summer they go like there's no tomorrow," said Linda. "He always goes back to do something after supper."

"It's always kept the bills paid," Ford said, and grinned.

"He loves every minute of it," Linda retorted. "He'd never be satisfied to just sit. He'll be at it as long as he's able."

"Come Saturday at dinner, we shut down," he said. Along with three other couples, they go out for dinner or dancing.

He never got into dairying. "It burned me out milking one cow" by hand at Lawrence Bickett's farm.

For six weeks every summer Ford stays busy six days a week with his custom spraying operation, closely regulated by governmental agencies because of the powerful chemicals used. "Linda is the bookkeeper," said Ford.

The rest of the business is a

one-man operation.

After his father's death in 1990, he and Linda decided to renovate the old home place.

"We started before Christmas," said Ford. "I told (carpenter) Joe Payne I wanted to move in before corn planting."

They made the deadline. "We moved on Sunday and I planted corn that Monday."

The old porch was torn away and a new, much larger kitchen was built. The cherry cabinets were fashioned by neighbor Jerry Hughes from wood cut on the place several years earlier. The bathroom vanity was made from walnut grown on the farm.

The old windows were all replaced. A new outdoor wood furnace was installed. The roof got a new coat of red paint.

Floors on the first floor were sanded to display the beauty of the original wide poplar and ash boards.

It took professional paperhangers 29 hours to paper the hallway

with its two flights of stairs leading to the attic.

Linda took six weeks off from work to finish the project, stripping several layers of paper from the walls, down to the plaster and lathes.

"I didn't know what I was getting into," she said. In addition, she sewed all the curtains for the massive windows.

Bringing out a photograph of the house in the early 1900s, Ford beamed.

"It looks a whole lot better than it did 100 years ago," he said. "It's good for another 100 years."

In Joe-Joe and Linda's bedroom is an iron baby bed, recently rescued from 25 years of obscurity in a barn where tractors sometimes ran over it.

Along with his brothers and sisters, Ford once slept in the bed, years earlier, Linda's uncle, Houston Mattingly, also used it—appropriate enough for a two-century old family farm.