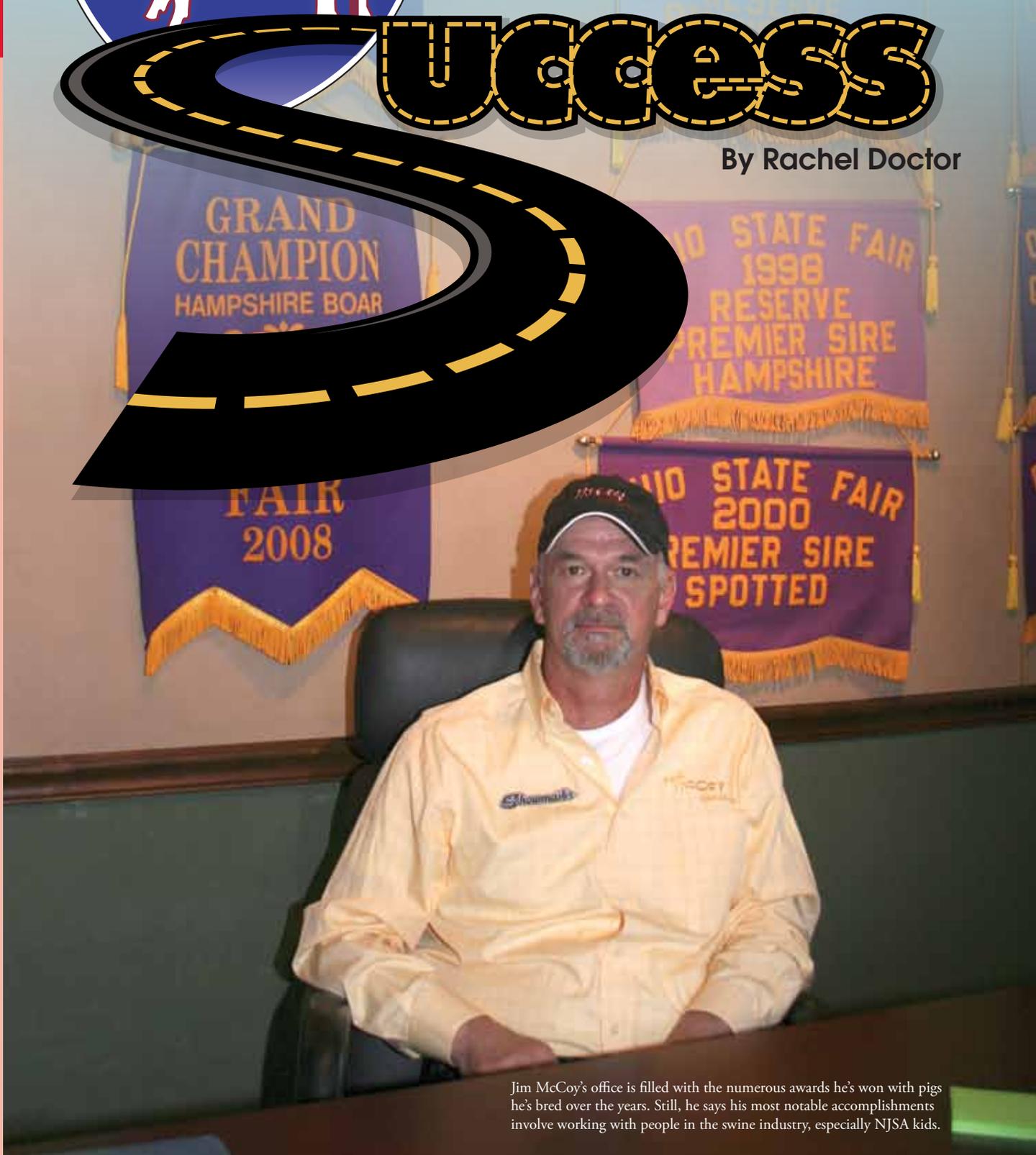


The road Jim McCoy has taken from his Bloomingburg, Ohio, farm out into the swine industry has led to success and excitement in giving back to the next generation of leaders.

# Success

By Rachel Doctor



Jim McCoy's office is filled with the numerous awards he's won with pigs he's bred over the years. Still, he says his most notable accomplishments involve working with people in the swine industry, especially NJSA kids.

For Jim McCoy, 51, of Bloomingburg, Ohio, some things never change. His passion for the swine industry, the loyalty his customers have come to know him for, and keeping his operation's focus on kids and families. But, as much as things have remained the same, much has changed, too. What started as a purebred Hampshire FFA project in 1973 has evolved into Real McCoy Genetics – McCoy's 100-sow showpig

were only one or two boar studs in the country using the technology.

"I said, 'This AI thing's OK, but I'll never do it, because I can't stand the lab work,'" he says with a laugh. "Now, I love it. Never would I have dreamed I would ever be producing showpigs."

That all changed in 1993, with the purchase of PMF2 Premier Jerry 51-2, a showpig-oriented boar with a muscled-barrow look, from Denny Shoup at

help he received from five important mentors in his life.

**Help along the way.** McCoy's father, Glenn, was just getting out of the commercial hog business as McCoy was looking to get in. He was able to adapt his dad's old buildings into ones he could use, and his dad also built him a Cargill unit when he was a senior in high school.

**“The most valuable thing my dad ever taught me was to be honest and treat other people like you want to be treated.”**

— Jim McCoy

and 50-head boar stud operation.

McCoy attributes his success and willingness to give back to the swine industry to the mentors he had growing up and the NJSA members who fuel his business.

**A passion that grew.** McCoy didn't always have a love of showpigs. During his first year of 4-H, he didn't even exhibit a pig. It was only after visiting a friend who showed pigs that his interest in a swine project began. He showed a barrow at the local county fair the next year, which led to the FFA Hampshire sow project he began his freshman year of high school.

By the time he graduated in 1976, McCoy had built his sow herd to 20 head. With the strong agricultural economy in his favor, he dove straight into pork production and began farming 500 acres with his dad and brother. When he began, his market was primarily commercial boars and market hogs.

"Back in the '70s, showpigs were a novelty," McCoy says.

He says he also dabbled in artificial insemination (AI) when there

Premier Swine Breeding Systems in Michigantown, Ind. Premier Jerry was the first boar McCoy collected semen from. Along with the boars Slander, also from Shoup, and Flex, which McCoy purchased during his high school days from Ruben Edwards of Middletown, Mo., Premier Jerry laid the foundation of showpig success for what would become Real McCoy Genetics.

"With the purchase of Premier Jerry in '93, we gradually went from 10 to 20 boars, to the 50 boars we currently maintain," he says.

Today, Real McCoy Genetics ships semen from Duroc, Hampshire, Yorkshire, Spot and crossbred boars to nearly every state in the country. During the past 15 years, they have sold to more than 4,000 customers.

Additionally, their annual open house and customer appreciation sales have grown to average more than 700 people who fill the stands to purchase showpigs.

"It's just snowballed," McCoy says. "It's been absolutely amazing."

However, McCoy is quick to attribute his early success to the

More than helping him with buildings, McCoy says his dad taught him the foundation of his business today – trust.

"The most valuable thing my dad ever taught me was to be honest and treat other people like you want to be treated," he says.

Although McCoy's dad gave him a start in hog production, he wouldn't have even signed up for high-school agricultural classes if it weren't for his local high school ag teacher, Charlie Andrews Jr.

McCoy's interests in art and multiple other subjects left him unsure of what courses to take his freshman year.

"Charlie took me on a drive that summer before I started high school and explained the ag program to me," McCoy says. "Without his encouragement to do that, I probably wouldn't be doing any of this."

Andrews and his dad, Charlie Andrews Sr., also helped him in many other ways – teaching him how to hand breed a sow and helping him land his first job judging hog shows when he was just 21. This summer will

mark McCoy's 30th year of judging shows from the smallest county fairs to his largest show yet, the 2009 San Antonio Stock Show barrow show.

Two Hampshire breeders from which McCoy purchased boars when he was getting started, Shoup and Edwards, also had faith in young McCoy.

"Denny (Shoup) allowed me to stay at his house and help with his sales," McCoy says. "He didn't treat me like a kid – he treated me like someone who was interested in being a Hampshire breeder."

"Ruben (Edwards) was one of the deepest thinkers and interesting minds there ever was," he adds.

Having had role models who played an instrumental role in his life and career, McCoy knows first-hand the importance

of mentoring. That is the main reason he volunteers an incredible amount of time, money and talent to the National Junior Swine Association (NJSA).

**Giving back to the next generation.** The NJSA is personal to McCoy. His son, Mike, 31, the manager of Real McCoy Genetics' showpig division, was on the original steering committee for the organization in 1998 and 1999. In 2000, when the NJSA was officially established, Real McCoy Genetics began as a sponsor of the organization, a new concept at the time, and has been extremely supportive of the association ever since. Their annual support has grown from \$400 the first year to \$5,000 today.

McCoy has judged numerous NJSA gilt shows and showmanship competitions, served as a chaperone and presenter at multiple NJSA National Youth Leadership Conferences, and has even helped kids unload their pigs at shows. For six years, he has served on

the NSR Youth Advisory Committee and has served one term as chairman.

"That's been one of the most enjoyable boards I've been involved with," he says. "Having a group of different constructive mindsets, all with the good of the NJSA in mind, has been great."

McCoy says giving to the NJSA only makes sense, because junior members

zation was formed in 2000.

"Jim was one of the very first people who stood behind what the NJSA is and what we stand for," she says. "Some people would say genetics are the best thing Jim has contributed to the swine industry. Even greater is what Jim's given back to the NJSA – his time and money he's invested in building the next generation of leaders."

When McCoy isn't selling Real McCoy genetics and showpigs or volunteering with the NJSA, he can be found enjoying his hobbies.

**Out of the limelight.** McCoy hasn't only been a successful innovator in the swine industry; he also has a creative side with his art.

"If I had a different occupation, I'd probably be



Jim McCoy (l) says he is proud of the accomplishments of his son, Mike (r). Mike became involved in the NJSA when it formed, and Jim says Mike's involvement motivated him to be a sponsor of the organization.

are his customers, and he truly wants those kids to succeed. He says it all goes back to the many mentors who helped him succeed in life and the pig business.

"The NJSA isn't just about pigs, and it isn't about the show ring – it's about building young people who have a passion for showing pigs and for the swine industry," McCoy says.

He says some of his most rewarding experiences in the industry have come from working with youth and from getting to know the members of the NJSA.

The NJSA leadership conferences have been one of his favorite ways to interact with kids. It's especially rewarding, he says, to watch some youth overcome their shyness and evolve to speaking in front of a crowd.

"We don't always talk about hogs," he says. "But, communication is the most important skill they will ever learn."

Jennifer Shike, NSR Director of Junior Activities, has known McCoy since before the organi-

an artist," he says. "I've always loved to draw, and I still do."

McCoy drew the Real McCoy Genetics logo, and he does all of the cosmetic work on the tomb and set of his church's Easter play each year.

While he's well-known around the Bloomingburg community and across the country for his success in the show ring, his family and his fiancée, Amanda Ivey, know him for his success outside the industry.

**The Real McCoy.** McCoy's three kids, Mike, Melissa and Melanie, see him as more than just a hog breeder. They see him as dad and grandpa to Mike's daughter, Maya, and Melissa's two girls, Mallory and Libby. McCoy will also soon take on the role of stepdad to Ivey's four-year-old son, Zander.

Melissa works as a job placement specialist for the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities in Washington Court House, Ohio, and McCoy says

his daughter is one of the most caring, level-headed people he has ever known.

Melanie, the youngest, is a special education teacher in Columbus, Ohio, and also seems to have inherited the enjoyment in helping people from her dad.

And, of course, Mike has always been involved with the farm.

“His very first word was ‘pig,’” McCoy laughs.

Mike’s interest and involvement in the industry led him to a judging scholarship at Black Hawk College – East Campus in Galva, Ill., and a judging career at Western Illinois University in Macomb, Ill.

Even when he was in college, McCoy says, Mike was meeting people, getting pigs placed and still working for the farm. In 2001, Mike returned to Bloomington, and McCoy turned the breeding herd and showpig sales over to his son.

“He’s taken the faith I had in him and made leaps and bounds with the quality and the production of the breeding herd, the consistency between litters and the ability for those hogs to go out and win for people,” McCoy says. “Since he’s come home, the showpig sector has snowballed, just like the boar stud did for me.”

McCoy has seen much success in

the show ring, including his most memorable years, raising the champion Hampshire boars at both the Ohio State Fair in 1995 and the Indiana State Fair in 2008, but he still says he couldn’t be prouder of his son.

Mike bred JM6 The Judge 20-4, an extremely influential Hampshire boar that sold for \$75,000 at the 2006 National Barrow Show® to Showtime Sires in Newark, Ill.

“There’s been nothing more gratifying than watching a hog my son put together go on to be named premier sire at multiple national conferences,” he says.

Whether it’s carving wood for a local production, carving a path for his son to follow or carving his niche into the youth swine industry, McCoy is doing so through the hard work and honesty that have defined Real McCoy Genetics through the past 36 years.

“When you buy a pig from Jim McCoy, you get a lot more than a pig – you get trust,” Shike says. “Whether or not the pig wins, just learning from and listening to one of the greatest minds in the industry can buy a lot of value.”

In a swine industry that has its up and downs – and a world that seldom slows, it’s nice to know that the faith in the next generation, love for the business and trust that comprise Jim McCoy’s swine operation will never change. **S**



**Ideal career if he weren’t a hog farmer:**  
**Artist**

**Number of states McCoy sells semen to:**  
**43**

**Years judging hog shows:**  
**30**

**Favorite NJSA activity:**  
**Judging shows and attending leadership conferences**

**Proudest accomplishment in the show ring:**  
**Showing the grand champion boar at the Ohio State Fair, and the Champion Hampshire Boar at the Indiana State Fair; watching son, Mike, show the reserve champion barrow at the county fair his final year of 4-H**

**Largest show judged:**  
**San Antonio Stock Show barrow show**

**Best advice for youth:**  
**Get involved, learn from others and have fun**



McCoy examines semen through a microscope in his lab. The lab work has been a crucial part of his success in selling semen to more than 4,000 customers during the past 15 years.