



FEATURE STORY

SIT, STAY, WALK, HEAL— GOOD GIRL, MARCIE!

Marcie's a very obedient chocolate lab accustomed to kids and handicapped adults, so naturally she'll walk when she's told. She'll even heel...and heal... then learn to walk again after an amputation.

Dr. Nicole Weber recognizes Marcie as a success in her own right but also as an example. "Not everyone realizes dogs can function well despite a missing limb," she says. Dr. Weber helped Marcie's family—Dalton Hubers and his parents, Nicole and Scott—understand the implications of amputation.

Primarily, Dr. Weber recommended the surgery to protect Marcie's life. The lump on the six-year-old dog's right front leg wasn't arthritis as Nicole Huber had assumed; it was a tumor.

Last October, as she viewed X-rays taken at the Pipestone Veterinary Clinic, Dr. Weber realized the cancer had not spread and could be contained by removing the leg. After the operation, though, the next steps were Marcie's responsibility.

She walks carefully on tiled floors, but once she's outdoors, "Marcie can do pretty much anything other dogs can," Nicole Hubers explains. "She plays ball and follows Dalton everywhere."

Dalton, 9, feels just as strongly about his dog as she does about him. And why not? They've been playing together since he was three—it's one of those boy-bites-dog stories. "She can still chase

the four-wheeler," Dalton reports, "a couple of times around the yard. But then she sits down."

Okay, so Marcie may notice her own handicap at times, but that actually makes her the perfect animal to interact with residents at South Dakota Achieve, an organization that "finds innovative ways for people with disabilities to achieve their dreams." Nicole works with the mentally and physically challenged, so Marcie's been trained to work as a therapy dog. Now Marcie has something in common with the people she visits, Nicole explains. "My dog has a disability, too, and they notice that."

On a warm Friday afternoon, Marcie and her family are off to the lake. "She's always loved camping. Do you think she can still swim?" they ask. Dr. Weber suggests a doggy life-jacket just to be safe but admits there's no underestimating this dog's willpower. Good girl, Marcie! ■



QUESTIONS YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO ASK THE MEAT MAN

EDITOR'S NOTE: There's never been higher awareness of public health and food safety than there is right now. Our Pipestone Vet Clinic veterinarians, along with professionals from across the nation, work to ensure the safety of our food supply on the farm through sound science and judicious antibiotic use. In this interview, Herm Meyer shares his unique perspective as a beef producer who's also seen the meat business from the retail side.

In the upper Midwest, most men like meat—at noon and suppertime, that is. Herm Meyer is the man who likes meat all day long. He devoted his entire working life to cutting meat and teaching about meat. Now he's retired but still ready to talk about, you guessed it, meat!

Herm agreed to answer questions about his life in the industry and about his favorite topic.

Q. How did you become the meat man?

Herm: As a kid I was always very interested in livestock, especially beef. When my dad passed away, we moved into New Ulm where I worked for a local meat market. After the Army, I started with Red Owl food stores as a meat cutter and eventually worked in meat-department management for that chain.

Q. There are no more Red Owl stores. Obviously you moved on.

Herm: In 1967, I helped start a meat-cutting program in Pipestone at the vocational college. I retired in 1997 after teaching a lot of great young men and women who are doing well in the meat industry.

Q. A recent news story says the neighborhood butcher is making a comeback in some areas. Is there an advantage to buying meat over the counter as opposed to in the package?

Herm: You might think one is fresher, but good management and control means there won't be any difference. The number one thing is to buy a government-inspected product and rely on the government grading system. I'd recommend buying USDA Choice or better. Stick with those grades and you'll get a good product.

Q. So some meat isn't inspected?

Herm: Right. That doesn't mean meat that is

ungraded or uninspected can't be good. If you have an eye for detecting marbling, you'll be fine. But it's much easier to rely on the government grader's trained eye.

SHOULD BUYERS CHOOSE FRESH OR FROZEN?

Q. Right now there's some wonderful beef in my freezer that I bought from a neighbor.

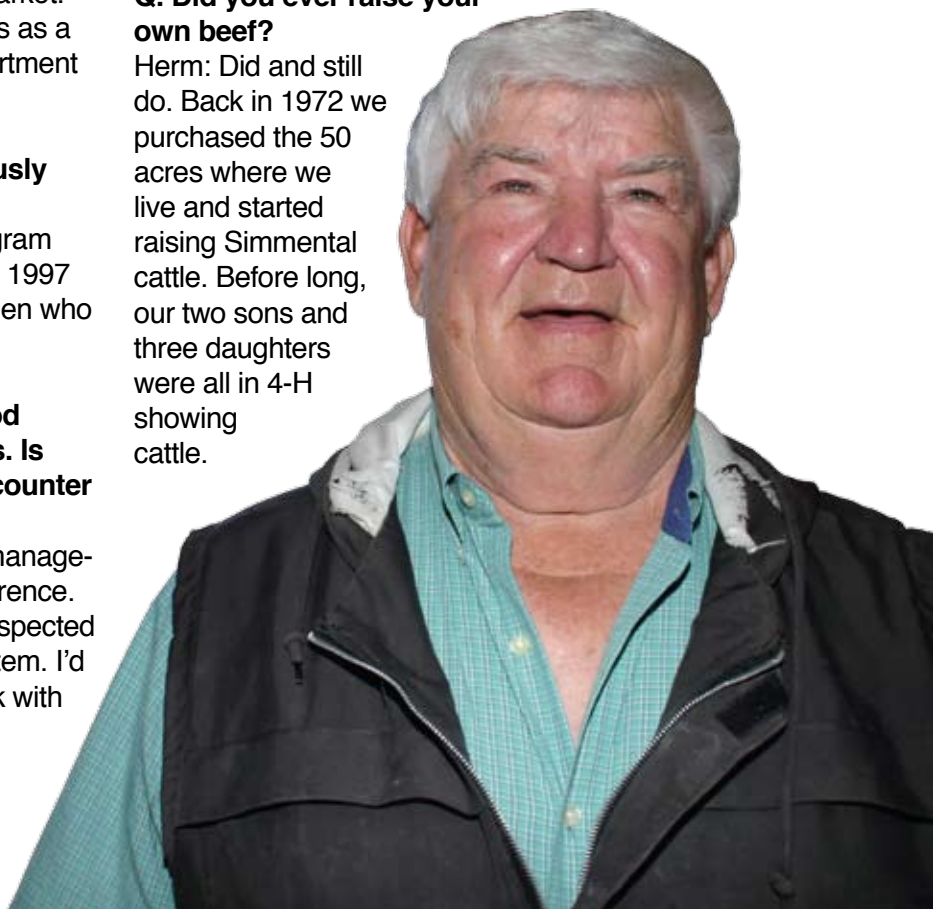
Herm: People always say you can't buy meat at the supermarket like you buy from off the farm. Then I tell them, if a producer has 100 steers and sells five that go into friends' freezers, that means the other 95 that were raised the same way and went to a supermarket are probably just as good.

Q. I recently listened to a group discussion among consumers who all seemed to believe frozen meat isn't as tasty.

Herm: You don't lose anything if frozen meat is properly handled and properly wrapped. Oh, maybe you'll lose a little moisture when the product thaws...but not much.

Q. Did you ever raise your own beef?

Herm: Did and still do. Back in 1972 we purchased the 50 acres where we live and started raising Simmental cattle. Before long, our two sons and three daughters were all in 4-H showing cattle.



Q. Were your children pretty successful in the show ring?

Herm: One son showed the grand champion female at the state fair in 1976—that was a Simmental. Our kids also participated in carcass evaluation in 4-H. We'd take 15 top steers of different breeds and compare the meat. Some people favor the taste of meat from a certain color steer, but we found no difference.

Q. Now that you're retired, are you out of the cattle business, too?

Herm: No. We're still raising Shorthorn cattle. I really enjoy working with this breed, because they're so docile and such great mothers.

Q. Did any of your children follow the family livestock tradition?

Herm: Yes. One daughter works at Pipestone Vet Clinic and one son is a meat representative for Target in California. We have another son in the insurance business, a daughter who teaches, and a daughter who's a counselor at NewLife Treatment Center.

Q. So that covers everybody right?

Herm: Everybody except my boss, Mary. All my success comes from her; she's a great listener. ■

KEEPING IT UNDER CONTROL FOR 14 YEARS

Jody De Kam remembers what Dr. G.F. Kennedy told her during her job interview, "This place is growing and you can grow with us." In her 14 years as controller, she's found that to be very true.

"In the beginning I was responsible for one financial statement. Now there are 12 to submit every month!" she marvels. In addition to compiling financial statements that allow the management team to monitor progress, Jody oversees the accounting process for both vet clinics (in Minnesota and Iowa) and all related management companies.

Essentially, she's watching how funds flow into and out of the Vet Clinic and the other businesses. It's a job that doesn't give her much opportunity to interact with customers, but she will step in if there's a question about a bill or a payment.

Though her work doesn't require that she know a lot about animal agriculture, Jody can't help but

be dazzled by what she sees and hears. "The modern pig production process just amazes me," she says. "Especially the way technology in the industry has advanced."

Otherwise, she's mostly a dog person. Meeting customer's pets is one of the job perks, Jody believes. "And the people, too, of course," she adds, explaining, "everybody I work with is great!"

Jody and her husband, Darrin, make their home in Edgerton, MN with their three children—Kaiser, 19, who just completed his first year of college; Monte, 16; and Brooklyn, 10. Gretta and Lilly, their two dogs, complete the family. Darrin and Jody are the owners of De Kam Seed and Fertilizer in Edgerton, MN.

When she's not following her kids' activities, Jody enjoys time in her flower beds and generally hanging out with the family. She holds a business degree in accounting from Rasmussen Business College. ■



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DO IT BUD'S WAY

All pets (and people) should be more like Bud. He eats right, exercises regularly, and isn't afraid to act silly with a friend named Bart.

Those healthy behaviors won Bud and his owner, Dar Eslick of Pipestone, a year's worth of Hill's Prescription Diet dog food. Last fall Dar entered Bud in the Vet Clinic's Pet-Fit Challenge and he came in second. He was also entered into the national Science Diet weight loss challenge, which is where he



won the free Science Diet.

Here's how Bud lost six pounds and increased his overall fitness. "I walk him in the morning before I go to work," Dar tells us. "Then my son, Darrell, walks him after school and again last thing at night."

There's another step in Bud's fitness program, though...involving Bart. "Before he eats, we play 'Find Bart,'" says Dar. That involves running up and down the hall with a longish, well-chewed, furry toy he likes.

When Bud lost weight, he gained

energy for other important activities. (He also likes to chase the four cats in the Eslick household. Do the cats play along, Dar? "Sometimes.")

Dar hopes Bud will live longer thanks to exercise and his controlled-feeding program. He's currently five-and-a-half years old. Dar selected him from the Sioux Falls Humane Society shelter at age one, because a foster child wanted a pet. The child eventually moved on, but the foster pet stayed to become a permanent family member. He's so well loved that he's walked three times a day and fed only as much food as is good for him. ■

ARE YOU FEEDING YOUR PET PEOPLE FOOD?

FOR A 20-POUND DOG...

- 1 oatmeal cookie equals 1 hamburger or an entire chocolate bar for you.
- 1 ounce of cheddar cheese equals 2½ hamburgers or 1½ chocolate bars for you.
- 1 hot dog equals 3 hamburgers or 2 chocolate bars for you.

FOR A 10-POUND CAT...

- 1 potato chip equals ½ a hamburger or ½ a chocolate bar for you.
- 1 ounce of cheddar cheese equals 3½ hamburgers or 4 chocolate bars for you.
- 1 cup of milk equals 4½ hamburgers and 5 chocolate bars for you.