

INTERVIEW WITH MARVIN LARGE  
BY JIM BARR

November 18, 2013

1                   MR. BARR: This is Jim Barr. It's November 18<sup>th</sup>,  
2                   2013. I'm in Imperial, Nebraska, visiting with Marvin  
3                   Large. I was wondering if you'd be willing to just kind of  
4                   review some of your personal history and that sort of thing  
5                   to start with.

6                   MR. LARGE: Well, I grew up on a farm northeast of  
7                   Wauneta about ten miles, and stayed there until I got  
8                   married. Then we moved into northeast Chase County with my  
9                   wife's folks' place. And we stayed there for 40 years and  
10                  then, we've been in Imperial now about 20 years. We have  
11                  five children and they all got their starts mainly on the  
12                  ranch out there. And they're -- four of them, you might  
13                  say, are still in agriculture, and our daughter's a nurse  
14                  and they live in Gretna, Nebraska. But the other boys live  
15                  locally here, either Wauneta or Hayes Center area here. Our  
16                  oldest son's into banking, but he's also in agriculture.  
17                  You're into banking out here, you got cattle and stuff  
18                  (indiscernible). They've all remained in agriculture and  
19                  been leaders in the community, which makes us feel  
20                  (indiscernible).

21                  I guess, as far as background of things we've  
22                  done, we -- seemed like I started right out on the school  
23                  board and a lot of the other organizations and chairman, but  
24                  some of the main ones -- I sat on for quite a few years with  
25                  the NRD, Farm Credit. When they reorganized Farm Credit and

1       went to the Land Bank of the Midlands, that put four states  
2       together. I'd been serving on the North Platte Board and so  
3       I was one of the designates that went down in that  
4       organization. And after a few meetings, they named me --  
5       elected me chairman of the organization down there, which  
6       was (indiscernible). And then I was the first president of  
7       that (indiscernible) Midlands. And then at the same time, I  
8       was serving on the NRD. So, there in the '80s I went --

9               MR. BARR: You have a lot of interesting times  
10       from two different angles, at least, to --

11              MR. LARGE: Yeah, a lot of pressure, a lot of  
12       sleepless nights. But it was an education itself. I'd  
13       never -- I didn't go to college, but some of those things  
14       were a year in college. Made some mistakes, had a lot of  
15       good experiences.

16              MR. BARR: Before we get on the NRDs, do you want  
17       to reflect any on your experience in the Farm Credit during  
18       the '80s and anything on -- stood out there?

19              MR. LARGE: Well, they told me I'd -- being on  
20       Farm Credit was a lot of fun, because it was, you know,  
21       before that break. The directors, they went on trips and  
22       they went here and there. The year I went on, all that  
23       stopped.

24              (Laughter.)

25              And it was a terrible turmoil, because right off,

1       they fired all the -- if you remember, they fired all of the  
2       loan officers. And I just never did -- I never could figure  
3       that out. I don't know if this should be in the thing, but  
4       I was sitting at the meeting and I said, "Who in this world  
5       caused that to all happen, is responsible for that?" And  
6       there was Harlen sitting right beside me and he was a big  
7       shot, he was the chief officer in Omaha at that time. But  
8       we wandered through it and reorganized it, and it took a lot  
9       of time. But I think it turned out pretty good. Going  
10      through -- the toughest time was going through on the local  
11      board out here, going through all the appeal hearings. A  
12      lot of people were in trouble. And officers or the people  
13      in the offices told us that -- well, we had a, kind of had a  
14      habit. We'd listen to them at an appeal hearing, and give  
15      them a chance. And they told us that they can never come  
16      out of it. But we sat through all those and wasn't any of  
17      them ever was able to crawl out, even though we gave them  
18      more time. And of course, there was a lot of hard feelings  
19      there. But I guess it was something that had to be done. I  
20      hope we don't ever go through that again.

21                   MR. BARR: You on one of the -- you were one of  
22      the original board members of the NRD, if I understood it  
23      right?

24                   MR. LARGE: No, the --

25                   MR. BARR: Or one of the original elected boards.

1           MR. LARGE: The first -- when they organized the  
2 NRD, they used the Soil Conservation Board, mainly. And  
3 then when they had elected -- the way I remember it, when  
4 they had elected -- first elected, yeah, I was elected to  
5 that. And I could look back, but I don't even remember  
6 about 20 years ago, I don't know when that was, but that was  
7 in the early '80s when -- well, I was on it for 20 years, I  
8 guess.

9           MR. BARR: Did you -- were you on the board that  
10 hired the first manager and that sort of thing or had that  
11 been hired before you came on?

12           MR. LARGE: The manager had already been hired.  
13 Yeah, because we -- the manager that was there for years and  
14 years, Ron Milner (phonetic), was -- I don't remember there  
15 being anybody before that.

16           MR. BARR: Was he involved in some of the other  
17 activities?

18           MR. LARGE: He was working for the extension -- or  
19 the Soil Conservation at that time.

20           MR. BARR: Around here?

21           MR. LARGE: Yeah, way I remember, locally, yeah.

22           MR. BARR: What were some of the early projects  
23 and programs that you were involved with with the NRD?

24           MR. LARGE: Well, right at that time was water  
25 declines, and of course, we were the first to have any

1 allocation. And I kind of, since you talked to me about  
2 this, I tried to remember back what our first allocation  
3 was. And seemed to me like it was a compromise of 27 and 28  
4 inches.

5 MR. BARR: A year?

6 MR. LARGE: Yeah. And the guys that had alfalfa  
7 got 28 inches. And then flood irrigators got a preference  
8 for somehow. I absolutely don't remember all the details.

9 MR. BARR: How has that evolved over time in terms  
10 of the allotment?

11 MR. LARGE: Well, what is it? Down to 14 or 15  
12 now, I think. My son took over on the board after I got  
13 off.

14 MR. BARR: Sure.

15 MR. LARGE: We was talking about it the night  
16 before last, and I think he said that's what it was. But  
17 when it went to 18, you know, there was -- well, I remember  
18 it being 22 and then 21, and finally to 18. And then, of  
19 course, that put no more well drilling. And that got to be  
20 a farce -- well, not a farce, but it got to be difficult  
21 because the way it's set up, you got to have a hearing for  
22 the public and then you got to announce when you're going to  
23 do that. Well, so many of the landowners had to get their  
24 wells drilled in that rush. We didn't really stop a lot of  
25 wells. I mean, they -- anybody that had a place to put it

1 and could get it done, did it. And that was a mistake, I  
2 think, in the law. If you're going to try to control  
3 something like that, you -- it's not hardly fair not to let  
4 them know what's going to happen, but it's hard to  
5 accomplish much, you know, where they got time to go ahead  
6 and do it.

7 MR. BARR: Did you have quite a bit of controversy  
8 over implementing the first controls?

9 MR. LARGE: Well, yes, we did. We had -- you're  
10 probably familiar, but every year that we changed, was it,  
11 every year we had an information meeting, or every time we  
12 changed something, we had those public meetings and we had  
13 them in Benkelman, we had them in Imperial, we had them in  
14 Grant. And there were some of them got pretty warm, you  
15 know, and a few names called that I didn't appreciate. I  
16 was chairman at the time. But we was very fortunate that we  
17 had some very liberals and we had some very conservative  
18 guys on the board. It was kind of, you know, kind of about  
19 half and half, so it was a little hard for anybody to get  
20 carried away too far. And one of the members I respected  
21 the most, probably, on our board was Robert Ambrosic  
22 (phonetic), from -- I guess I don't know what his address  
23 was, (indiscernible) at that time, but he's gone now. He's  
24 passed away. But he was -- knew, could foresee what was  
25 going to happen and he was very conservative. And then he

1 was setting down there in the spot where all investors to  
2 come in, you know, and was just turning the wells on and  
3 letting them run and knew that they was wasting a lot of  
4 water. There was others on the board that was, too, but  
5 that was one of the directors I had a lot of high respect  
6 for was Robert. And not to take it away from several  
7 others --

8 MR. BARR: No.

9 MR. LARGE: -- but, yeah, that -- I kind of  
10 thought when I quit the board, why we had most of the  
11 problems solved. I found out since then it's only got  
12 worse.

13 MR. BARR: Had you had interaction with Kansas at  
14 that point when you left the board or was that afterwards?

15 MR. LARGE: It was -- I was on the board. And I  
16 shouldn't talk about the thing that we -- we just didn't  
17 feel we was represented right at the litigation, you know,  
18 Nebraska wasn't represented very good. The attitude was  
19 that Kansas don't have a chance, and we weren't prepared and  
20 we got the shaft, kind of, in so many words. That was our  
21 thinking out here and it's still talked about today.

22 Yeah, I was on the committee in Colorado that we  
23 tried to -- was going to bring Platte water down through  
24 here. Part of the old canal (indiscernible) in Colorado,  
25 and, boy, we did a lot of work on it, then finally found out

1       that there wasn't a lot of water. It was all appropriated.  
2       So, we was going to try to recharge the aquifer out in the  
3       western part where it was withdrawing so bad. And I don't  
4       know how many meetings I went to and I got to know Colorado  
5       people pretty well for a while there. But then they just  
6       finally told us, well, there's no water appropriated -- it's  
7       all appropriated. So then we had to back off.

8               MR. BARR: Just out of curiosity, this last summer  
9       when we had that big flood out there, had you been ready,  
10      would any of that been able to come down?

11             MR. LARGE: I imagine they'd have been glad to get  
12      rid of it.

13             MR. BARR: That probably doesn't happen that  
14      often.

15             MR. LARGE: No. Well, they tried to store some of  
16      it down east and --

17             MR. BARR: Yeah, I think they might have got a  
18      little of it down east, yeah.

19             MR. LARGE: Hopefully they did, because they'd  
20      spent some money down there to try to capture flood water.

21             MR. BARR: It was -- by the time it got to the  
22      east, it was pretty much within the banks, I think. But --

23             MR. LARGE: But still it was more than they needed  
24      for the --

25             MR. BARR: Oh, yes, certainly.

1 MR. LARGE: So, that all could have been stored if  
2 there had been a place for it.

3 MR. BARR: Did you have, as a board, have much to  
4 do with the irrigation projects and the Enders and --

5 MR. LARGE: No, that was all way before us. We --  
6 how do I want to say this? No, the NRDs really didn't  
7 have -- I would never be involved at all in the water going  
8 out of Enders, no. That was already allocated to the  
9 Frenchman-Cambridge and those districts down there.

10 MR. BARR: Was most of the irrigation in your  
11 district or was it down in the Middle Republican where they  
12 irrigated?

13 MR. LARGE: Oh, we had way more irrigation up here  
14 as far as a pump irrigation.

15 MR. BARR: Yeah.

16 MR. LARGE: If you're talking about flood --  
17 water --

18 MR. BARR: Surface water.

19 MR. LARGE: Surface water, that would all have  
20 been down --

21 MR. BARR: All in their --

22 MR. LARGE: Not all, but a good --

23 MR. BARR: Most of it, yeah.

24 MR. LARGE: Most of it was out of our -- because  
25 it kind of started into Hayes County, which is, you know, of

1 course, that's where they dug the canal to is into Hayes  
2 County before they really started using it. So, it was out  
3 of our jurisdiction.

4 MR. BARR: You mentioned the developers that came  
5 in in the '70s or '80s. What areas were they  
6 particularly -- was it pretty much all across the district  
7 or concentrated in certain areas or --

8 MR. LARGE: Well, we had a lot -- quite a few good  
9 farmers from York and then from Greeley area that come into  
10 Lamar area, the good land. But the real speculators, most  
11 of it was in Dundy County, down there in the Sandhills where  
12 they developed thousands and thousands of acres.

13 MR. BARR: What's ever happened to that?

14 MR. LARGE: Well, some of it's been let go back.  
15 I was down to there not too -- I don't know, within the last  
16 year, and I seen some pivots that had, you know, been let  
17 go, and I suppose maybe they transferred the water to better  
18 land or something. I haven't really kept up with it too  
19 close, but a lot of that land is sold and sold and traded,  
20 you know. But the horror story as was, you know, they get a  
21 realtor and he'd go to Kansas City and load up a couple  
22 investors and drive out right over here and say, now, that's  
23 the land that's for sale. That's what you'll get right down  
24 there. Well, when you're up in a plane going so many miles  
25 an hour, and some of them bought some awful big sandhills.

1 And they leveled it and it blowed and it covered up the  
2 pivots and -- before they got them all put up, it was  
3 drifted under. So, there were a lot of sad stories down in  
4 there. So, you know, a lot of it was -- and we was -- I  
5 don't know whether it was -- I can't remember now. We was  
6 talking to one of our senators to -- at Washington. He was  
7 a senator, and I can't remember who it was now. Or maybe it  
8 was even our governor. But he said, "Oh, how can we help  
9 you out there the most, you know, to stop that?" And I  
10 said, "Get rid of that investment credit." You know, they  
11 was -- it was a tax write-off is all it was. It had -- for  
12 some people it was good, but for investors, (indiscernible)  
13 and just slaughtered our land (indiscernible). So that  
14 was -- then we -- I spent several sessions in the  
15 Legislature getting them to okay our allocation and  
16 variations of the bill. And some of those guys were pretty  
17 hard. I wish I could remember the names. And we worked and  
18 worked and talked to different people. And they kept -- the  
19 council, chairman of the NRD council, he said, "You guys  
20 might as well go home. You're not going to do anything."  
21 Well, we didn't give up. We went and talked to some  
22 senators and just kept going. The next day -- oh, I wish I  
23 could think of that guy's name, but he'd just give us a bad  
24 time all the time, and then he voted for it. And somebody  
25 asked him, "Well, how come you voted for it when you've been

1           so opposed to it?" "Aw, I just wondered how serious those  
2           guys were."

3                         (Laughter.)

4                         Well, man, we -- but it pays to go down there --  
5           it did us, go down there and visit with them. I learned  
6           some things down there. I thought for a while that maybe I  
7           was wanting to be a senator.

8                         MR. BARR: Ah.

9                         MR. LARGE: You were a senator once --

10                        MR. BARR: No, I worked for one.

11                        MR. LARGE: Oh, you worked for a senator, okay. I  
12           had some notes on my tablet here. But I went in and  
13           Haberman was our senator then, and we went down to see him  
14           and there had been some guys in there giving him the  
15           go-around, you know. He was so fluttered that he couldn't  
16           even talk to us, they'd put so much pressure on him.

17                        Now, you probably don't want to record this, but  
18           it's not easy. And then walking the halls, I'd see some --  
19           what do they call them, lobbyists, that had a senator  
20           cornered, two or three lobbyists standing, cornered him, and  
21           I decided that wasn't for me.

22                        (Laughter.)

23                        MR. BARR: More fun things to do, maybe.

24                        MR. LARGE: Well, yeah, I don't think I'd have  
25           been calm enough temper to put up with that, maybe, at that

1 time, anyhow.

2 MR. BARR: Did you have other, other than dealing  
3 with the water shortage problems, did the NRD have other  
4 projects or activities that you were involved with through  
5 the years?

6 MR. LARGE: We were involved -- the NRD was  
7 involved with -- it's the Groundwater District Association  
8 that went from California to Florida. I don't know what the  
9 other name was in there. But we would go to their  
10 convention about every year. And it was eye-opening, you  
11 know. In California, they had the aquifer, the land would  
12 go and drop and then to the southeast, why, they'd have  
13 potholes fall out, and on the coast down there, they had to  
14 have their -- the water, if you pumped it out, everything  
15 would settle. And it showed us -- matter of fact, if they  
16 didn't watch what it was, the streams would start running  
17 the wrong direction. They showed a picture of a pump head  
18 down there. It was about eight feet off the ground. The  
19 pump head was up here with the casing.

20 MR. BARR: Subsidence had taken out --

21 MR. LARGE: Subsidence, yeah. And then, of  
22 course, when we started the NRD here and the allocations,  
23 Texas was already in trouble. And so, we got -- let's see,  
24 how many planes, three planes. One of them was bigger. But  
25 anyhow, there was, I don't know, I suppose there was 10-15

1 of us flew down to Texas and looked at those problems, Texas  
2 and New Mexico, I think. And that was very interesting.

3 MR. BARR: Was that at the time you were getting  
4 ready to do the legislation and that sort of thing?

5 MR. LARGE: Yeah, was trying to get people  
6 convinced that we needed something done up here and went  
7 down to talk to those people. It was right at the time that  
8 we was talking about putting controls on.

9 MR. BARR: Was there a lot of opposition to the  
10 board members in the following elections or did people  
11 pretty well accept the need to do something on this problem?

12 MR. LARGE: You know, I can't even think of  
13 anybody got beat. I suppose there was somebody that maybe  
14 gave up and quit, but, no, I think the board kind of  
15 represented the people in their area. They might not have  
16 agreed with, you know, but they -- the ones I'm thinking  
17 about kind of represented the people, you know. And it just  
18 happened to be that they -- where the opposition, a lot of  
19 it come, they didn't have enough votes that they didn't get  
20 just what we wanted. Nobody got just what we wanted. Some  
21 of us thought we needed more -- I mean, we needed to cut it  
22 more and some of them -- so it was a deal of compromise,  
23 like our U.S. Senators got to do, you know.

24 MR. BARR: Sure.

25 MR. LARGE: But as it's come down now, I just read

1 the minutes in the paper about what they're talking about,  
2 and it's a split board now. Thank goodness it's not so  
3 split that they can't do nothing.

4 MR. BARR: Yeah.

5 MR. LARGE: In McCook, see, that -- if I remember,  
6 they were half and half or so, and they just -- it was kind  
7 of a stalemate, but I'm not sure how it is now. But when  
8 you get that much, why, you have to flip and -- but I don't  
9 think it was ever quite that bad here.

10 MR. BARR: You don't have any really large cities  
11 in the area, do you?

12 MR. LARGE: No, Imperial, Grant are the two  
13 biggest ones. Well, Benkelman -- there's Benkelman and  
14 Wauneta, Imperial and Grant, I guess.

15 MR. BARR: Did you have projects in any of the  
16 towns or anything?

17 MR. LARGE: No, we didn't have the projects like  
18 some of them did on flood districts and that kind of stuff.  
19 I know over in Hayes County, they had those big flood  
20 districts. We have a ranch over in Hayes County my sons own  
21 and they have -- we've got some huge dams on the Willow  
22 there, or Blackwood, that drain away. You know, they're  
23 just -- and we didn't get involved in that too much here.  
24 Meters, we paid for a lot of meters and had a lot of work  
25 with the Conservation on a lot of education programs and

1 things like that.

2 MR. BARR: Because you mentioned Ron Milner was  
3 your first manager. Did he retire or did he pass away while  
4 he was manager?

5 MR. LARGE: No, he retired. His health got kind  
6 of, I think partly, health got kind of bad. But he was on  
7 after I retired. They've had -- this is about the third  
8 manager since Ron, now. Second or third.

9 MR. BARR: Who is the manager now?

10 MR. LARGE: Jasper Fanning.

11 MR. BARR: Oh, sure.

12 MR. LARGE: He seems to be a pretty sharp young  
13 man.

14 MR. BARR: Yeah.

15 MR. LARGE: And they've got a couple other guys  
16 that seem to know what they're doing. They got quite a load  
17 now with all this land purchases and stuff.

18 MR. BARR: Oh, the N-CORPE or whatever?

19 MR. LARGE: Yeah.

20 MR. BARR: How does that seem to be received by  
21 people in this general area?

22 MR. LARGE: Well, in this general area, I haven't  
23 heard too much about it. Where you hear about it is in the  
24 area where that water's being taken out.

25 MR. BARR: Yeah.

1           MR. LARGE: Dundy County, you know, that land goes  
2 back to dryland, so there's a tax thing there in order  
3 to -- there is too, and they've tried to kind of even that  
4 out there. I don't know what they've got done now, but  
5 there's some things they can't do. You know, they can't  
6 just up and give you -- give the county a bunch of money.  
7 There's got to be a reason for it. But they're making  
8 progress on it and, boy, it's -- you got to look out a long  
9 ways to justify that and whether it will.

10           Somebody was talking to me, I don't know who that  
11 was now, whether it was my brother or -- but anyhow, I  
12 explained to him that the consequences of not keeping Kansas  
13 happy somehow, was everybody was going to get cut no matter  
14 where they were, about everybody. And I guess they weighed  
15 the consequences of a few and the few that sold their land,  
16 they got compensated very well. But the people down there  
17 think they're going to lose some of their water, you know,  
18 that they might be available in some future year. But not,  
19 if they'd have kept watering out of it all the time, because  
20 that's not a great aquifer down there where they put that.  
21 Shale comes to the ground -- the top pretty quick down  
22 there.

23           MR. BARR: Well, after all these years of the NRD,  
24 do you have any thoughts on how it's worked out over the 40  
25 or so years that it's been in existence?

1           MR. LARGE: Well, it's been great, as far as I'm  
2 concerned, because they've been there to help us with the  
3 other programs. There also was an SCS up here, but no, it's  
4 a representative. It's a place where people can have a  
5 representative represent them. It's not just a government  
6 deal. Do you understand what I'm saying? They have a --  
7 the (indiscernible), they have a vacancy on their board  
8 that's been vacant since the last election. And they've got  
9 one, somebody that's kind of interested in that area, but he  
10 lives just across the road -- the line.

11           (Laughter.)

12           They don't know whether they --

13           MR. BARR: Have to build a house on the other side  
14 of the road.

15           MR. LARGE: He's going to have to move his  
16 mailbox, I guess.

17           MR. BARR: Any other thoughts about the NRDs that  
18 you'd like to mention or anything in terms of the water  
19 problems in this area?

20           MR. LARGE: Well, there are some things they're  
21 doing that I don't agree with, but I'm not -- I tried to  
22 justify all the turmoil we had when I was on the board by  
23 saying, "They just don't understand." Because continually,  
24 several years after we had started, we'd still hear people  
25 say, "Well, the water comes clear out of the Sandhills right

1 down through here." Well, that's not true, you know,  
2 there's about that thick a layer that it can get past the  
3 Platte, and their argument, you know, wasn't even near  
4 justified that you just can't hardly tell them that. And  
5 there was some other things that people get up and, you  
6 know, and they just -- I'd just have to say, "Forget it,  
7 they just don't understand."

8 We had one fellow that just constantly give us a  
9 bad time. So, we finally invited him in to come in and sit  
10 on some board meetings. After two board meetings, we never  
11 heard another thing from him and we never seen him. You  
12 know, they just -- unless they come and get involved and  
13 understand what's going on, why they just really don't  
14 understand, or some of them don't. Some of them don't  
15 understand.

16 I guess what I was saying is you've got to be  
17 careful how strong you get on the subject unless you  
18 understand what the subject is, you know, how serious it is  
19 or how it works.

20 MR. BARR: What do you see as the long-term  
21 prospects for agriculture in the Upper Republican?

22 MR. LARGE: Well, you tell me what Mother Nature's  
23 going to do.

24 (Laughter.)

25 MR. BARR: Yeah, that's it.

1           MR. LARGE: Well, I've seen more people get  
2 serious about allocation this last year or two than before.  
3 There -- one of my boys is -- he was telling that he was  
4 going to have to start rotating more crops. And another guy  
5 was telling me, "Well, my corn wasn't too good over there,  
6 because I was trying to get by with my allocation." And he  
7 never got any rain there, and where we got a lot of rain, it  
8 was all right. And so, I think it's finally soaked in.

9           MR. BARR: Do you see change in crops -- or some  
10 change in the crops that are grown or things like that?

11          MR. LARGE: Well, yeah, there's people that are  
12 going more wheat or beans, you know, some in a rotation or  
13 some feed. And now we're -- they're trying this drought  
14 resistant corn, you know. There's things coming on that's  
15 going to help us.

16          MR. BARR: Yeah.

17          MR. LARGE: Shorter season corn. You can get by,  
18 usually, with less water. And the yield might not be quite  
19 there, but maybe in time, it'll be there. So, there's --  
20 you don't want to just throw in the towel, because  
21 there's -- and there's land that just don't have the ability  
22 to produce that other does, and pretty soon they'll be  
23 saying, "Well, I'm going to vacate some of that, put the  
24 water I have got on some better ground."

25          MR. BARR: You've been an area that faced some of

1       these problems ahead of when some of us are going to have to  
2       face some of the similar problems, I think, and that's --

3               MR. LARGE:   Yeah, it won't be the same, but --

4               MR. BARR:   Right.

5               MR. LARGE:   There's enough history out here,  
6       enough people that's went through it, that if they would  
7       just listen, you know.  Down where you are, you get more  
8       rain and you shouldn't need as much and things like that.  
9       And there's somebody said, "Well, the whole state should get  
10      the same."  Well, you know, that's -- it's really not very  
11     practical, because if we get enough so we can even survive,  
12     you're going to waste it down there, you know.  I mean,  
13     you'd have more than you'd probably need.  You're just  
14     blessed with more rainfall down there than we are, normally.

15              MR. BARR:   Well, I don't have any other specific  
16     questions.  If you have any other thoughts you'd like to  
17     mention.

18              MR. LARGE:   Well, I don't know what you really  
19     wanted, I guess.

20              MR. BARR:   Well, we're trying to get, in addition  
21     to the overall statewide look at the NRDs, a good picture of  
22     how it's evolved in each of the NRD districts.  So, you're  
23     one of the ones that would be mentioning things for the  
24     Upper Republican, so --

25              MR. LARGE:   Well, I think it's been positive and I

1 don't hear the negative that I did when we started, of  
2 course. I just -- you know, there was a lot of flood then,  
3 and there was sprinklers with -- high pressure sprinklers.  
4 And, you know, when you started looking allocation, that  
5 flood disappeared and the high pressure sprinklers  
6 disappeared.

7 And I couldn't believe it. One time, we went on a  
8 trip up in the Sandhills or up across Nebraska and there,  
9 there was a whole alley, big old -- coming out, you know,  
10 hardly seen that low pressure. Well, as soon as you got  
11 into an allocation area, then you started to see it. So,  
12 there is -- there's things out there that can help a lot.

13 And this no-till agriculture has changed things  
14 out here. We've been no-tilling for a lot of years on  
15 dryland and now we're -- most irrigated is no-tilled,  
16 one-trippers. And the yields seem to be there or better and  
17 we're not getting near the erosion. I've had fields that  
18 you used to farm dryland and then we hardly put a -- it was  
19 so we could put a satellite on it, mainly just to raise  
20 feed. Well, before that, I had -- was eco-fallowing it all  
21 and every year I'd have to fight ditches and stuff, and  
22 since then, since we've went to eco-fallow and that, why  
23 I've never filled a ditch yet. It's just been such a  
24 change. If we'd have had this kind of system of farming  
25 when I started, you know, it would have been a lot -- this

1 dryland farming ground would have been a lot better. And  
2 that's -- the NRD, of course, have encouraged that in their  
3 soil conservation districts. But you had to get some -- an  
4 innovator in there to show that it worked. I think I -- I'm  
5 not sure, but I think I was the second one probably. Leslie  
6 Wheeler (phonetic) down in Wauneta had been doing it a  
7 couple year and I kind of watched him. He's a good friend.  
8 So, when he got done, I went and got his planter.

9 (Laughter.)

10 And I sprayed the stubble with the kids standing  
11 on the end with a marker, a flag. And I sprayed and turned  
12 around, and they'd move over. Kind of crude.

13 MR. BARR: Yeah.

14 MR. LARGE: And then the neighbors made remarks.  
15 "What is he doing?"

16 MR. BARR: Yeah.

17 MR. LARGE: The corn was covered up through the  
18 stubble. We've did a lot of things, kind of early on, like  
19 we -- there was a neighbor come and AI'd for me, but didn't  
20 ever keep it up. But we were one of the first to AI and use  
21 high tensile fence and some cross-fencing. Raised a lot of  
22 hogs, a lot of good cattle. I was a rep for 25 -- ABS rep  
23 for 25 years. Custom bred for people all over this NRD  
24 here. So I've seen it. And our pet projects from that is,  
25 I don't know you know about, but we developed portable AI

1 barns, and we sold them. We got them in 33 states and  
2 Russia and Australia.

3 MR. BARR: Could you describe them a little for --

4 MR. LARGE: Well, from our cattle herd, we started  
5 artificially breeding our cows in '77, 1977. And in the  
6 1980s, early '80s, synchronization came in. And we had  
7 bought a ranch for one of our sons and needed a lot of cows,  
8 so we bought a lot of -- a bunch of heifers to breed, take  
9 over there, and so we developed a three-stall portable. You  
10 know, it was just off of a design I'd seen where dairy had  
11 had it. And, you know, just kind of lined up. And that  
12 worked for several years, and then we become ABS rep and  
13 then we went to two -- well, before then, we went to  
14 two-stall portables, which worked better. And they worked  
15 so good, then we started to build them in our farm shop and  
16 sold them to other ABS reps. And then, a kid that was  
17 working for us at that time, his folks had had a machining  
18 business locally, down by Stratton, Miller Manufacturing.  
19 And he was building them for us. And the day that he went  
20 into -- he went to Desert Storm, because he was in the  
21 guards or something, reserves, I guess. And then we got a  
22 guy at Hayes Center to build them, and he's still building  
23 them for us. He's in McCook now. But then we've had a firm  
24 in Grant build them and I got a local built the small ones.  
25 And we've got them, like I said, 33 states and Australia and

1 Canada and we've got six of them in Russia.

2 MR. BARR: What's the name of the commercial --

3 MR. LARGE: What we call it, Large's Portable AI  
4 Barns.

5 MR. BARR: Here you got a free --

6 (Laughter.)

7 MR. LARGE: Free advertisement. Yeah, today I  
8 talked to a guy in Kansas, and I got one -- this week I  
9 shipped one to New Mexico. I got another guy coming to  
10 Kansas to get one Saturday. Usually, this is slow time of  
11 the year, but we've been running out. And we tell them --  
12 last year, my wife would tell them, well, get them ordered  
13 this next summer. We'll fill your order for you. We've had  
14 three or four that happen. They're not going to need them  
15 until next spring, but the last two years, they've called in  
16 April and May wanting that unit, and nothing there. So,  
17 it's been -- that's what -- I've turned the ranch over to  
18 the family to manage now. That's kind of what I do besides  
19 Great Western Cattle Trail and a few other things.

20 MR. BARR: Well, anything else you want to mention  
21 on --

22 MR. LARGE: That's probably --

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