

INTERVIEW WITH MARVIN LARGE
BY JIM BARR

November 18, 2013

1 MR. BARR: This is Jim Barr. It's November 18th,
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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