

The Story Farm

How Hogs, Dogs, and Dirt
Taught a POW's Family to Live

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*Families from the
Beginning*

Sometimes you need to change your plans. One of the standard practices in the pure-bred hog breeder's community was to give herd sires striking names to impress potential buyers of their offspring. This practice meant that the Duroc registry listed herd sires with names like "Man of War," "Othello," or "Ranger." Although Augie thought some of the names were ridiculous, he generally called the boars he purchased by the name given by the breeder or by the boar's sire's name. His farrowing sheet, a piece of notebook paper with columns drawn in pencil, had a "Sire" column that listed names like Benefit, Box, Rock, and Safe. When he started to use boars raised on his farm as herd sires, he decided against trying to come up with fancy names and picked a simple naming system that would tell him both the name of a litter's sire, but also the sire's sire. This practice allowed him to make genetic-based breeding decisions at a glance. His plan was to use the first two letters of the boar's sire's name followed by the boar's registered litter and pig number, which are notched in the pig's ears using a standard base-3 system.

One of Augie's first home-grown herd sires was a son of a purchased boar named Rebel. The son was piglet #8 of litter #47 that farrowing season, so Augie used Re47-8 to record the sire on his farrowing sheet. The system worked well for that boar, but the next home-grown sire had the first two initials of his father (Heavy) and litter #11, pig #4. Augie did not realize how this looked on his farrowing sheet until someone pointed out that he had a bunch of litters from He11-4. It was okay on his farrowing sheet, but the same name was also in print on the official breed registrations of those offspring, which was not the kind of name Augie wanted on a public document.

Augie changed his plan to combine the name of the sire with the name of the dam's sire. So another of Rebel's sons was farrowed by a daughter of Throne and is listed as Reone on

the farrowing sheet. Augie used this naming plan for the rest of his home-grown herd sires, which eventually resulted in the name of Cren (Cruise x Big Ben), later known as Gentle Cren, the World's Largest Hog.

Planning is a key skill in any business, not just farming. The plans we make may not all come to fruition the way we expect, but having a plan to follow maintains momentum and reduces confusion in decision-making. Make strong plans but be flexible enough to adjust your plans when necessary, especially if the plan you are following gives an undesirable result.

*A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.
Proverbs 16:9 NKJV*