

Derek Klingenberg – Klingenberg Farms Studios

This is Kansas Profile. I'm Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University.

What is your creative outlet? Playing piano? Singing in the shower? Doodling on a napkin? Today we'll meet a young Kansas farmer who found a creative outlet in creating music videos to post on the Internet. In doing so, he is helping communicate about agriculture and rural life. It's today's Kansas Profile.

Derek Klingenberg is founder of Klingenberg Farms Studios near Peabody, Kansas. Derek grew up on a farm near Peabody and attended K-State where he majored in agriculture. He is musically talented, having sung in the K-State men's glee club and played trombone in the marching band.

After college, Derek married and returned to the farm. He and his brother Grant and some friends started a bluegrass singing group called the Possum Boys. It was a lot of fun, but the group disbanded when two members of the group went to seminary.

“I needed a creative outlet,” Derek said. He wrote a song about bumble bees and, for fun, decided to try making a video to go with it. He bought some software and a camera. His brother Grant helped him make the video, called Bumble Bees in the Hay, which they staged on a hayfield on their farm. “I spent maybe a year filming and editing those first videos,” Derek said. The next step was to post the video online.

These farmboys did not begin as technology whizkids. In fact, it was a time when social media were just emerging.

“We didn’t really know what YouTube was at the time,” Derek said. “I didn’t even have Internet. I had to go to my brother’s to post it online.”

But he did post it online and he got a good reaction. Derek wrote more music and tried another video called Possum in the Barn. He got Internet access and upgraded to a nicer camera and professional software, producing more videos using his self-taught skills. For example, he learned about green screens which can project a video image behind a performer. He recorded the music at a studio in Newton.

Derek continues to produce music videos focusing on those things closest to him: Family and farm. It is a homegrown operation. “My computers are in the basement of my house,” Derek said. The studio for filming is in a newly constructed Morton building which also serves as an office and machine shed for the farm.

During the 2012 Christmas season, he produced commercials for businesses in Newton. Mid-Kansas Co-op had him do a music video called White Pickup Truck, which was a parody of Toby Keith’s song Red Solo Cup.

In March 2013, Derek posted a music video called *Ranching Awesome*, which was a parody of the song by Thrift Shop. For example, instead of the line “I’ve got twenty dollars in my pocket,” it said, “I’ve got twenty thousand pounds of cow feed.”

Presented with lots of tongue-in-cheek fun, the video featured scenes of everyday life around the farm and information about beef and pasture burning. It also showed Derek’s two cute young daughters, ages five and three.

The video even included a cameo appearance from Derek’s rancher father. “We asked him to do it in front of my mom so he couldn’t turn us down,” Derek said with a smile. “My parents have really supported me on this stuff.”

The *Ranching Awesome* video soon went viral among the Kansas agricultural community, circulating on social media and, in three weeks, reaching more than 189,000 views on Youtube.

Wow.

Not bad for a video produced in a rural setting. The Klingenberg farm and studio is located between Peabody and Elbing, a rural community of 214 people. Now, that's rural. For more information, go to facebook.com/klingenbergstudios or follow Derek at twitter.com/KlingenbergFarm.

What is your creative outlet? We commend Derek Klingenberg and family for finding a creative outlet with online music videos about agriculture. While providing good, clean entertainment, they are also making a difference by creating more knowledge about farm and ranch life.

And there's more. Another parody music video about agriculture landed its producers in a New York television studio. We'll learn about that next week.

For the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development, this is Ron Wilson with Kansas Profile.