

## Paul Friedrichs – United Fly Control

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

Bangkok, Thailand. A German businessman is building a home and wants mosquito control. He is buying an insect control system from an entrepreneur halfway around the globe. It's today's Kansas Profile.

Paul Friedrichs is the owner of United Mosquito and Fly Control in Mission, Kansas. He is the entrepreneur who took his system to Bangkok.

Paul credits much of his success to his rural upbringing. He grew up on a dairy farm near the unincorporated community of Bremen, Kansas, with a population of perhaps 60 people. Now, that's rural.

"We grew up among German Lutheran dairy farmers," Paul said. "It was a very close-knit community. It's the kind of place where everybody has known everybody for seven generations and everybody has the hymnal memorized."

Paul's family, friends and neighbors provided a strong support system for him and his brother and two sisters. During his first eight years of schooling, he was in a class of five at the local Lutheran country grade school. He went on to Marysville High School and then K-State where he studied agricultural economics. Paul credits 4-H, FFA, and the K-State College of Agriculture for providing him tremendous opportunities.

"I wanted to travel internationally," Paul said. Through FFA, he went to Russia and Hungary. He worked on an agricultural exchange student program between K-State and a university in Mexico, and then earned a Rotary Ambassadorial scholarship which paid for his post-graduate degree from the London School of Economics.

"It was a tremendous experience and the Rotarians were wonderful," Paul said. After returning to Kansas, he worked as an international trade consultant for a time and did contract sales for an agronomic mineral company. He eventually moved to Kansas City, where he met and married his wife Liz. He was also approached about another business opportunity: United Mosquito and Fly Control. Ultimately, Paul bought the business.

"The broker said, 'Oh, you're an ag guy, so you'll know all about this.' Then I found out this business served the equine industry, and we never had horses growing up on the farm," Paul said. "I had no clue." But Paul took to the business and has grown it ever since.

Today, United Mosquito and Fly Control has two primary business components: Fly control for equine and livestock operations, and mosquito control for residential applications. "This is a top of the line system and many of our customers are horse owners," Paul said.

"We have an automated spray system that is installed in barns and it really works well," Paul said. This system saves labor and provides great relief for horses.

It uses a natural insecticide that is derived from a special variety of the chrysanthemum flower. Organic options are also available.

The mosquito control system similarly allows a person to be out on their deck, for example, without the hassle and worry of biting mosquitos. United Mosquito and Fly Control serves customers around Kansas City from Omaha to Springfield, Missouri and Columbia, Missouri to Manhattan – and beyond.

“A German businessman with factories around the world was building a home in Bangkok,” Paul said. “He contacted us and eventually contracted to buy our system. I was able to take my dad and he helped me install the system over there,” Paul said.

“My dad’s a typical former dairy farmer,” Paul said. “Ask him to take two week’s vacation to go overseas and he’ll say ‘no way.’ But tell him you need him to help you build this system overseas, and he’s willing to help.”

Paul is also renting and farming ground on the edge of urban Kansas City, where investors have purchased land for future growth and development. He has continued to grow the United Mosquito and Fly Control business in the Kansas City area. For more information, go to [www.unitedkc.com](http://www.unitedkc.com).

It’s time to leave Bangkok, where an entrepreneur who is originally from rural Kansas is installing a mosquito control system from far around the globe. We salute Paul Friedrichs and others involved with United Mosquito and Fly Control for making a difference with entrepreneurship. They’re helping create a better quality of life, as well as happier horses.

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