

Joe & Cathy Broeckelman – The Satisfiers

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

"We had lots of happy taste testers." That type of help in the kitchen, plus an old family recipe and an entrepreneurial spirit, has helped one family develop a remarkable business in rural Kansas. Their products are used year-round, including as customer appreciation gifts during the holidays. This is a special holiday edition of Kansas Profile.

Joe and Cathy Broeckelman are pork producers and founders and owners of a cookie dough business called The Satisfiers. Joe grew up on a farm, attended Colby Community College and K-State, met and married Cathy, and began a family farm near Selden. They had a big family: Eight children who are now raising 25 grandkids and three great-grandchildren.

"All eight were valedictorians or co-valedictorians of their classes," Joe said proudly.

The Broeckelmans maximize the value of their hog production with niche marketing. "We market all of our pork privately," Joe said. Rather than shipping generic hogs to a sale barn, Joe sells some as feeder pigs and grows out the rest, to have the meat processed and sold as individual cuts of meat. "We raise hogs to taste good and grow good," Joe said.

In addition to pork sausage, ham, pork chops, and bacon, they sell quarter-pound porkburger patties, brats, summer sausage, snack sticks and more. They also help non-profit groups market their production. "We work with schools so they can do fundraisers selling our products," Cathy said.

Over time, when the kids were still young, the Broeckelmans diversified their business. "I made cookies one day, and Joe said those were so good that we should sell them," Cathy said. One night they both woke up, saying "Let's sell frozen dough." "We feel that this idea was given to us by God through the Holy Spirit," Joe said.

The Broeckelmans mixed up a batch of dough from the family recipe and tried different flavors. With eight children, they had plenty of willing volunteers to taste the samples. "We had lots of happy taste testers," Cathy said. Then they tried it out on friends and neighbors. The response was so enthusiastic that it became a business.

But what should the business be named? "We were talking to the kids about this, and we said, 'Let's go to the Bible,'" Joe said. They came upon a verse in Proverbs which spoke of heavenly satisfaction, which was the reaction they wanted from their customers. They named their products The Satisfiers.

Today, the Satisfiers includes a line of homemade food products based on the cookie dough. There are nine flavors: Chocolate chip, M&M, Reeses, peanut & chocolate chip, peanut butter, butterscotch chip with pecans, sugar, oatmeal with butterscotch chips, and oatmeal with chopped raisins. The dough is marketed in two or four pound tubs.

Another popular product is hand-dipped nut clusters. Some businesses order these during the holidays to give to their customers as appreciation gifts.

Imagine a gift package containing hand-dipped chocolate nut clusters. That would tell me I'm on Santa's good list. A biscuit and pancake mix has also been added to the product line.

With the kids grown, two women now assist Joe and Cathy with production. The products are marketed through area grocery stores and local meat lockers in western Kansas and Nebraska. The Dillons store in Colby carries their products, for example, along with many locally owned stores.

"This has been a good family project. We think there are other couples who could benefit from this idea," Joe said. It's a creative way to generate value on a family farm in rural Kansas. The Broeckelman farm is located near the rural community of Selden, population 219 people. Now, that's rural.

For more information, search for The Satisfiers on Facebook.

"Lots of happy taste testers" made for an excellent family project by the Broeckelman family. "This has helped our kids learn to work and to think," Cathy said. We commend Joe and Cathy Broeckelman and all their family for making a difference with entrepreneurship and creativity. That is helping this rural family get a taste of success.

"The Broeckelman family would like to wish everyone a very merry Christmas," Joe said.

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