their entire FFA chapters to the show as an annual educational experience. Some of the schools, such as Fisher and Climax, bused their entire student body to the show for a day. The progressiveness of school administrators and teachers play an important part in providing the ongoing interest in the Red River Valley Winter Shows.

Marlin O. Johnson, county extension agent and area crops and soils agent with the agricultural extension service, long-time cooperator with Winter Shows planning, chairman of a very key committee arranging the Crops and Soils seminar as well as active on other planning groups from time to time.

My first visit to the Winter Shows was back in the mid-forties as a young man growing up in Kittson County. Since 1957, I've been with the agricultural extension service here in Crookston, first as an associate agent for West Polk County, and since 1970 as regional area crops and soils agent stationed at the Northwest Station. The major interest and involvement with Winter Shows has been the crops and soils seminar. I've also from time to time provided leadership to the sunflower and some of the more specialized seminars. My interests have also been in what's happening in the sugarbeets, water resources, and potato seminars. From 1957 to 1964, I was heavily involved in youth program and special events of the shows. The first Talent Festival was sponsored by the Crookston Jr. Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with the Winter Shows.

Tom Cochran and Marlin Johnson, who were Jaycee's at the time, were co-chairman of this activity. The talent show was a success from the start and has continued annually since. It is one of the very fine youth programs supported by the Winter Shows board of managers. West Polk County was pilot project for the horse project in this end of the state. The first 4-H show was held at the Red River Valley Winter Shows in 1958. I recall about eight or nine 4-H horses that entered the show. People like the Charles Malarkeys and Vern Hagens were instrumental in getting the show off to a good start. The first year I rode herd on the 4-H horse show and after that year, it was blessed with bountiful leadership. Winter Shows meetings have brought together people from this end of the state that have a common interest in problems as well as developments in agriculture. When these meetings were started, as is true today, there was need for a regional forum for discussion and dialogue. The Winter Shows has provided this opportunity. Many developments in agriculture, whether it be in sugarbeets, sunflower, era wheat, or the dairy industry, relate back to initial meetings at the Red River Valley Winter Shows. A number of these meetings were pivotal in sanctioning what was to take place in the future. The philosophy of the Winter Shows seminars was to focus on the cutting edge of these topics that can mean significant changes to Valley agriculture. Attempts are made to bring in leading authorities and resource people. The programs are often of futuristic scope but also always carry updated information that is of value and interest to the farm producer for the current year.

The crops and soils seminar through the years has tried to focus on topics that are in the forefront of change. An example of significant change was the semi-dwarf wheats and their introduction into Valley agriculture. From the period of 1970 through 1974, semi-dwarf wheats were a part of every crops and soils seminar. Some authorities and farmers were greatly concerned that these wheats were not of sufficient quality and would be damaging to the image of Valley spring wheat production. Others were concerned about problems at harvest or control of weeds because of the short growth stature of these wheats. An overriding strength, however, of the semi-dwarf wheats are their increased yield potential and profitability to the farmer. Leading scientists and marketing experts from the University of Minnesota, the United States Department of Agriculture and industry are invited to take part in these seminars. There were sometimes heated discussion and questioning from leading farmers across the Valley area. Finally, the acreages of semi-dwarf wheats increased from less than one percent in 1970 to 90 percent in 1975. The sunflower crop was pioneered through research conducted at the Northwest Experiment Station in Minnesota. The initial educational efforts on producing sunflower crops became part of the Winter Shows seminar series. Seminars were conducted for about a ten-year period. Coming to these seminars in the early years of the sunflower industry were people that now are leaders in the development of the industry and became leaders in the development of that industry that followed. As the industry developed, it became viable on its own and at that point the Winter Shows and the Experiment Station had less direct involvement than when it was in the developmental stage. The course of the sugarbeet industry relates back heavily to the meetings at the Red River Valley Winter Shows. Key people from the Valley met and discussed the future of sugarbeets as well as the technical developments at the time. The significant beginnings that originated from the educational meetings early on should not be underestimated. For instance, the initial extension meetings for sugarbeets were paramount in those early years of the industry. Drainage and water management have been a key to the development of the Red River Basin since its development over a hundred years ago. The early meetings that took place at the Winter Shows and at the Experiment Station related to drainage. Drainage focus changed to water management in the 1950’s and 1960’s. Today the major focus is on water management for reduced flooding as well as conserving moisture for irrigation, as well as a concern for the quality of underground water. As one looks to the future, irrigation will probably become developed with a great deal of sophistication. Water resource seminars have brought together people that are concerned about water and are in a leadership position to do something about it.

Walter Ross, former member of the board of managers, retired farmer from Fisher, MN.

Walter remembers the Winter Shows as a child of 10 when his father, Fred Ross, suggested that the family get dressed up and they were going to take the team and go to the Winter Shows. It was a ten mile ride with the team and sled, with hay and blankets and warm bricks to keep the feet warm. The Winter Shows at that time was in downtown Crookston. By the time you'd heard the speakers and did a lot of visiting, it was long into the darkness of the night before the Ross family got back to their home near Fisher. Travel, at best, took time and effort. Those who were lucky enough to be located near the railroad, could get on some special trains that came