



Karl and Betty Zeitz: Yodel Valley Farm *From Luxury Cars to Lawn Tractors*

Karl Zeitz knows a good engine when he sees one. A German-born mechanic who once owned a Mercedes Benz repair shop in Mountain Brook, Karl understands the intricacies of a high performance engine. When he and wife Betty decided to buy a farm in Calera in 1972, it seemed only fitting that they purchase a German-made tractor. Yet, after the manufacturer was bought by another international company, they began their search for another brand.

It was at the Southeastern Expo in Moultrie, GA where they got a first-hand look at the many tractors available. They eventually made their way to Cahaba Tractor to take a test drive and the rest, they say, is history. "We fell in love with Cahaba Tractor and we fell in love with Kubota," stated Betty. Karl was impressed with the Kubota's reputation for reliability and the "mechanical superiority" of the engine. So, they purchased the Kubota 82hp tractor for Betty and an RTV with a dump bed for Karl.

The following year, they purchased a 22hp lawn tractor with a front loader and belly mower. Soon they realized that they needed more power, so they sold the 22hp and purchased a 30hp lawn tractor. It has been Karl's baby ever since. "Karl can make that tractor do anything he wants it to," Betty stated emphatically. "It works great." With 350 acres of land, these cattle ranchers need all the horsepower they can get.

Yodel Valley Farm raises registered black angus cattle, as well as a bull named Rambo and a mule named Jim. Hay for feed is also produced on the farm. The Zeitz's work with a local processing plant to sell the popular meat to consumers.

So, just how did this luxury car mechanic choose farming? Betty proudly admits that the farm was her idea. She grew up on a milking farm and always wanted to own land. When they purchased Yodel Valley Farm, aptly named from Karl's melodic yodeling atop the highest point on the farm, they decided to raise cattle. All Betty had to do was learn the beef business. It helps that Karl can handle any mechanical problems, although there is not much work that needs to be done on the Kubotas. If they should ever have a problem, they know right where to turn.

"Cahaba Tractor has always gone above and beyond to help all of their customers," Betty and

Karl stated. As a result, these satisfied customers aren't going anywhere else. "We keep going back," added Betty. "Obviously, we like Cahaba Tractor."

The friendship that has developed over the years with the staff at Cahaba Tractor has opened the door for the Zeitz's to get to know some of the staff on a more personal level. Betty, an accomplished poet, self-published a book of poetry that was purchased by several Cahaba Tractor employees. She soon learned a little known fact that Carl Gamble, Service Manager, enjoys writing Christian poetry.

In their pursuit of finding the right tractor, Karl and Betty not only found a superior product, but a great company and lifelong friendships, as well.