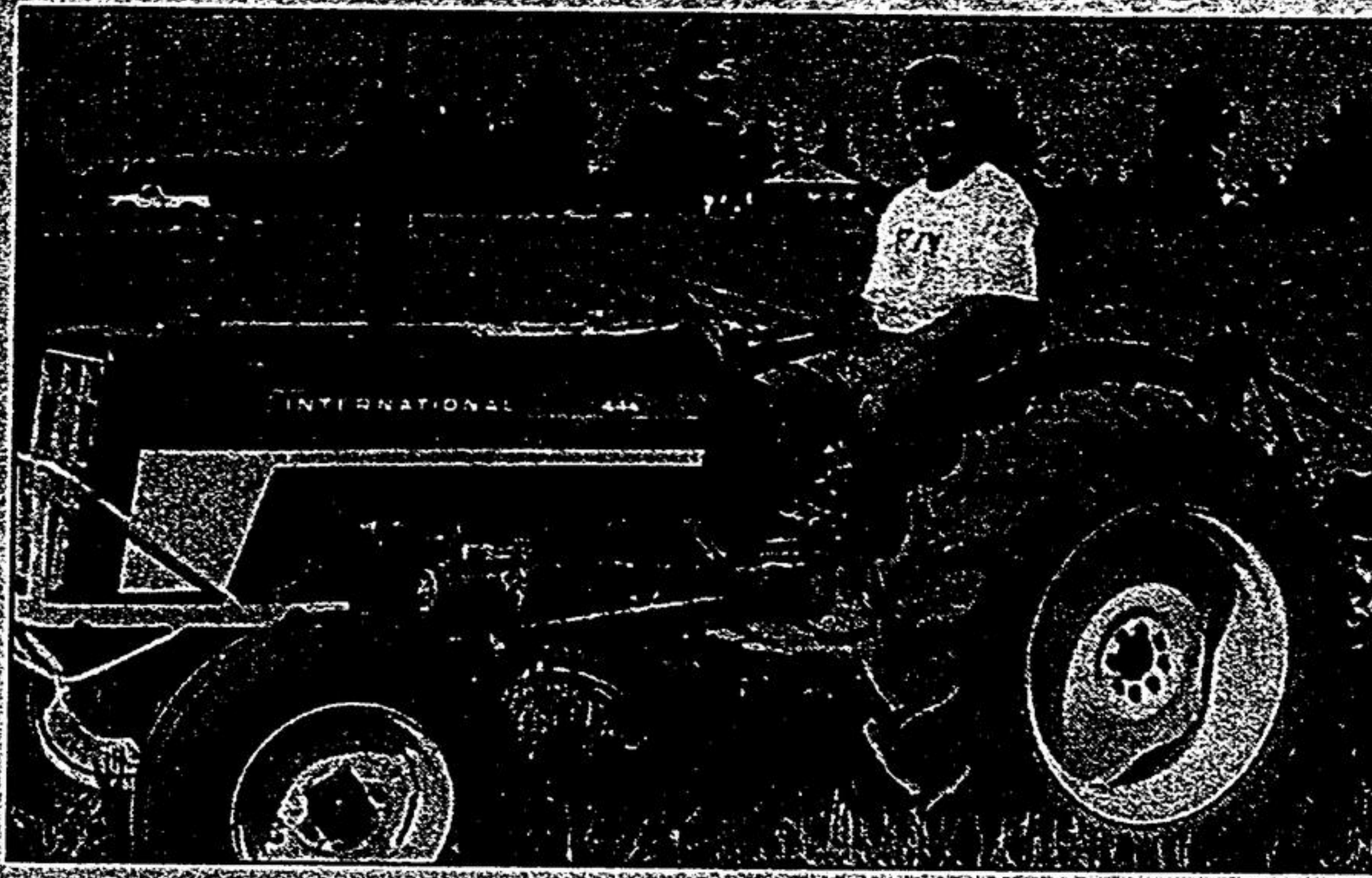


Consistency key to success for plowing champ Ken Ferguson

(From page 12)

He entered his first Ontario Plowing Championship in Barrie in 1982, picking up the reserve title. With the first two Ontario finishers entitled to contest the Canadian title, he prevailed against comers from all over the country at the national showdown in Lucan, Ont. the following summer. He then went on to compete in his first world championships in Zimbabwe the following year, placing 32nd. He would go on to place 26th and 23rd at the international event, along with his impressive 15th place finish in the 1986 global competition in Alberta.

For Ferguson, who works as a grader operator for the Markham roads department, the key to his success lies in his consistency. "You have to plow as straight as possible,



Ken Ferguson in his element.

your furrows must be identical," he said. "And you must cover all the grass and stubble on top." He also attributed his plowman's

proficiency to the fact he has used the same 1974 International 444 model tractor since he began competitive plowing, while eventually picking up a 1986 Norwegian Kverneland plow to pull behind it.

He stores the machinery on a friend's farm when he's not out practicing on the fields of relatives and friends in the Stouffville area. The importance of using familiar equipment can't be overstressed, he insisted. While he's been able to use his own machines for all provincial events, he's been forced to use equipment provided for him at the world championships due to the high cost of overseas shipping. "It can be disheartening to be out there trying to get used to a new tractor when someone pulls in with their own."

Plowing is for perfectionists, said Ferguson. The ultimate performance is always out there, but it never quite materializes.

"It's kind of like golf. Even though you come in first, you think you could have done better," like

golf, the sport is not without its frustrations, he added, with rainy days and stony fields sometimes conspiring to ruin an otherwise first rate effort.

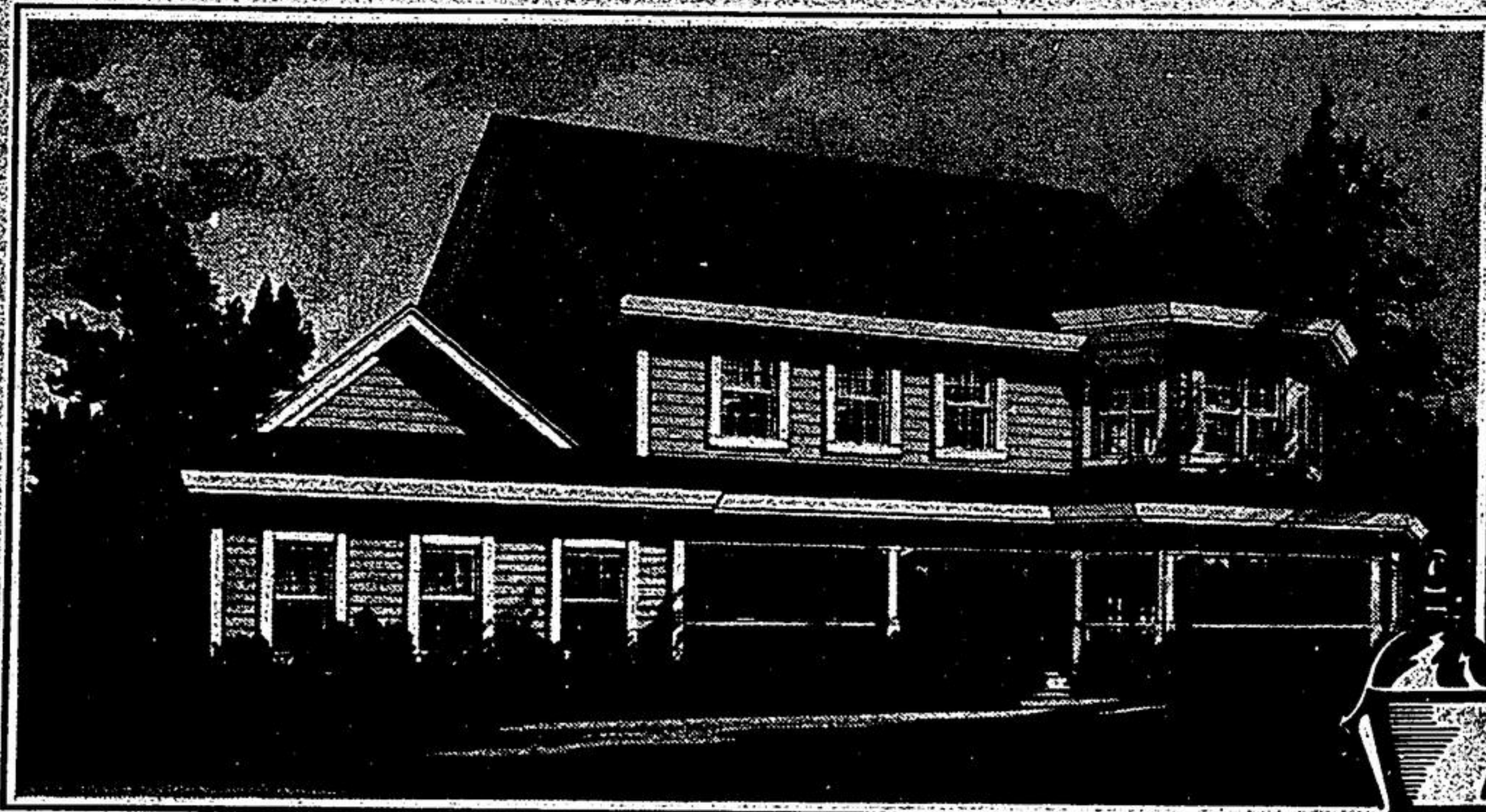
He said while it helps to be a full-time farmer if you plan to win at the provincial level, it's not essential. "The majority of contestants are farmers. But others like me are just interested in farming."

Despite his successes, Ferguson insisted winning isn't everything in the world of competitive plowing. The social aspect has become an important part for him as well. "There's lots of travel, and after a few years you look forward to seeing the same people every time out."

Ferguson has already started grooming his successors, a 17-year-old niece and a 15-year-old nephew he coaches regularly. But he said he plans to be out there himself for years to come.

"Eventually I may do a little judging. If fall came around and I couldn't get out and plow, I don't know what I'd do."

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