



Generations of Conservation: The Hindman Family's Award-Winning Efforts



Bonny Bell Farms and Hindman Cattle Company have a long history of working with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Crawford County Conservation District to integrate conservation into their farm. The agricultural operations are led by Luke Hindman, who is quick to acknowledge that the entire family pulls together to make the whole farm successful.

In an old blue United States Department of Agriculture-Soil Conservation Service (USDA-SCS) Conservation Plan folder, one can find the 1963 Conservation Agreement between the Crawford County Soil Conservation District and Luke's grandparents, John and Helen Hindman. They implemented contour farming, crop rotations, and grassed waterways to support their dairy operation.

Under the management of his parents, Dennis and Donlee Hindman, the operation transitioned to cash crops along with a beef cow/calf and feeder/finishing enterprise. With help from Luke and his sister Jodi, they reduced tillage operations to improve soil health and protected streams and wetlands from cattle access to enhance water quality. They also installed alternate water sources, developed springs, stabilized stream crossings, and built fences to support conservation efforts.

Additional work with NRCS included an Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contract for a roofed heavy-use area and nutrient management implementation.



Most recently, the Hindman family enhanced their nutrient management strategy by installing a roofed waste storage facility through the Crawford County Conservation District's Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP). The facility allows nutrients to be stored until spreading during optimal times.

Luke applies his education in Agricultural Diesel Technology and Ag Business to daily farm operations. His wife, Courtney, brings expertise in agronomy and marketing, strengthening the family business. The farm is well known in the Linesville area for its thriving seasonal sales of sweet corn and pumpkins.

The recently installed roofed stacking area helps store and distribute nutrients efficiently, complementing other nutrient sources for cropland. The farm continues to use minimum tillage with a corn, soybean, and wheat rotation. They also experiment with cover crops such as oats, peas, and tillage radish. Advanced soil testing

through grid sampling allows for more precise nutrient recommendations.

Luke views these conservation practices as essential to keeping the farm viable for future generations. He and Courtney have three children, and he is committed to enhancing soil and water quality for them. Luke sees improving the farm and its conservation efforts as a personal promise to himself to always do better.

He is actively pursuing farmland preservation to ensure the next generation inherits a productive farm with healthy soil and clean water. While he hopes his children will continue the legacy, he takes comfort in knowing the land will be protected for whoever becomes the next farm operator.

Bonny Bell Farms and Hindman Cattle Company were recently recognized as the Outstanding Conservation Farmers of the Year by the Crawford County Conservation District.