

# Lincoln County Success from the Field

## Rejuvenation of a Family Farm

### Background

In 1952, Stacy Pettit's grandparents started their 200-acre dairy farm just outside of Merrill, Wisconsin. Stacy's parents converted the property into a beef and hay operation, which they operated from 1967 until 2014, when her dad passed away. Stacy and her husband Scott purchased the property in early 2018, wanting to carry on the family tradition.

Before his passing, Stacy made promises to her dad to take care of the family farm and her mother. Keeping those promises is exactly what she's doing today!

### Program Successes

Shortly after acquiring the family farm, Stacy starting looking for guidance and direction on how to improve their property. "The farm was exhausted and we saw the potential to breathe new life into it, not only with modern beef production practices, but also guidance and financial assistance offered by the NRCS," said Stacy. She contacted Lincoln and Langlade County USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) District Conservationist, Peggy Winter in late March of 2018 to discuss the goals and concerns she had on her cropland, pasture, and forest. "Working with beginning farmers is always an exciting time because it allows us to help provide our customers the best foundational start in achieving their goals," explained Peggy.

Scott and Stacy Pettit's goal was to keep the operation manageable with time and cost savings methods, so as to not affect their full-time professions. The Pettit's worked with Focus on Energy to improve energy use efficiency on their farm. Stacy applied and was accepted for a NRCS contract under the Beginning Farmer Fund Pool in the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). In 2019, Stacy installed over 1,000 feet of permanent electric high tensile fence, 1,800 feet of livestock pipeline, a winter waterer and re-seeded 20 acres with a customized mix of grasses and legumes. The installation of these practices are now completed and Stacy is very happy with the direction her farm is heading in. "Peggy's expertise and knowledge of program offerings have been invaluable to the early success of our operation's aggressive timeline." said Stacy.



The newest arrivals for a new beginning. Photo courtesy of Stacy Pettit.

### Future Plans

Stacy is only on her first year of her EQIP contract but has plans to implement more conservation practices in the future. She explains, "It is also important to us to manage the property and to maintain the recreational opportunities we enjoy by providing wildlife habitat and managing invasive species." To achieve this goal, Scott and Stacy are working with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources biologists and foresters through their Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP). They are also using NRCS's brush management and tree/shrub planting standards through EQIP to improve wildlife habitat. Stacy worked on invasive honey suckle treatment to improve the degraded forest condition from lack of management. In 2020, Stacy and Scott are implementing their first year of rotationally grazing their own animals on their farm and will work on reforestation of a crop field. NRCS looks forward to continuing to work with Stacy and Scott.

Wisconsin Natural Resources Conservation Service

