

MN Agriculture: Craig and Ashley Kohls, All Things Cattle

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Day 19 of my "30 Days of MN Agriculture" is Craig and Ashley Kohls. The Kohls live in Hutchinson, MN. Hutchinson is west of the twin city metro area. Ashley is the executive director for Minnesota Cattlemen Association. The Kohls are fourth generation farmers and very proud of that. They are particularly proud of the fact they use conservation practices, such as strip tilling, to help preserve their resources.

Social Media Sites:

Facebook: [Kohls Land and Cattle](#)

Twitter: @Kohlsbeef

Tell me a little about your farm and/or business?

"We are a 4th generation family farm. We purchased the farm we live on in 2004. Previous to 2004 Craig had been renting the feedlot and sheds. We fed cattle in the single feedlot shed until 2009 when we built our first monoslope barn. In 2010 we started calving short term cows on corn stalks to expand the farm and allow Ashley to stay home with our first child. In 2012 we added on to our monoslope barn to have a place to calve cows in the winter, rather than calving on cornstalks. In addition to the cattle, we are a partner with Craig's dad and uncle to farm crops, which include mostly corn and soybeans."

How long have you farmed or been in business?

"If you ask Craig, he'll tell you that he's been farming since birth! We have been farming as a couple since we purchased our farm in 2004, we've been married for 10 years."

Tell me a little about what you grown/raise/produce or service provided.

"We mainly focus on finishing fed cattle. This is the final phase of growing beef animals before they go to market. We've found a way to become really good at finishing market heifers and very rarely feed steers in our facility. We also calve out "short term" cows. This is where we purchase bred aged cows that no longer have a place on their current ranch for various reasons, mostly because they are not able to graze any longer due to flat, or smooth, teeth. Beef is our number one business, but we wouldn't succeed in that arena if we were not able to raise high quality feed for our critters. So, we do raise corn to feed our animals and soybeans to add diversification to our farm. We also provide our family, friends and neighbors the opportunity to purchase freezer beef for their families."

Where do you sell or provide services to? Who is your end consumer?

"For the most part, we work with companies like Triple J Family Farms in Buffalo Lake, MN and Tyson Fresh Meats in Dakota Dunes, SD to market our finished beef animals. We also sell halves and quarters of beef to family, friends and neighbors."

What makes your farm/business unique or special? What are you proud of?

"We are *proud* of the fact that our farm is the product of 4 generations of family efforts. We also take pride in the way we work to conserve and protect our crop ground. We utilize strip tilling as our method of preparing our seed bed for next year's crop. This allows us to keep the majority of the current crop year's residue on the field to minimize soil erosion and maximize water retention."

Why do you grow/raise/produce? What went into your decision to do what you do?

"Craig and I focus on raising beef because it's a way for us to work into the family farm without having to secure land. We hope to eventually farm more acres as Craig's dad decides to retire."

If there is one thing you could change about farming it would be . . .

"Our feed storage facility. We've had to retrofit how we store our feed and have big ideas of how to improve it! We have goals to consolidate our feed storage and build facilities to better house our

feed in the future."

What do you love most about farming/business?

"We love farming because it allows us to *work together as a family* in a way most people don't get to experience. We have generations 3, 4 & 5 working towards common goal of providing safe, healthy and wholesome food for fellow Minnesotan's to feed their families. We're pretty blessed to not only have the opportunity, but to be able to include our kids (5th generation) in the experience!"

What is one thing you wish consumers knew about what you do or your farm/business?

"I'd like to think that most consumers already know this – but we care whole-heartedly about our animals. We work Every. Single. Day. To care for them and ensure they are fed well and healthy! We also work hard to ensure the soil we grow our crops in is healthy. We work closely with a crop consultant to take soil samples and build management plans to ensure that whatever nutrients our crops utilize from the soil is replenished for next years crop!"

What is your favorite Minnesota location?

"Our family loves to fish (though we are not typically very successful). We are blessed to be surrounded by 4 very beautiful lakes that our kids spend many summer hours fishing and/or swimming in. It's hard for me to fathom that those who don't understand what we do believe we purposefully pollute these natural resources. Our family enjoys them almost daily in the summer and we would never want that to change!"

More pictures:

Read the other people featured in my "[30 Days of MN Ag.](#)"

There are others that are also participating in the 30 Days of Blogging Challenge. Feel free to check these out:

- [Janice Person aka JP Loves Cotton: A Month of Memories](#)

Minnesota Farm Living

Connecting Consumers with those who grow your food

<http://www.mnfarmliving.com>

- [Rural Route 2 – 30 Days of Farm Girl Faith](#)
- [Prairie Californian – 30 Days of Food](#)
- [Mackinson Dairy – Women in Dairy](#)