

## Families That Farm Together Stay Together

“Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil, and you are...miles away from the corn field.” [-Dwight D. Eisenhower]

This is a farming community and has been for many generations. The area has grown substantially and many different types of businesses thrive here now. But, farming is still this area's major focus and many farms are still small scale family farms. One of these family farms is headed by Danny and Brenda Harazin. Danny runs a fifth generation family farm that has changed hands from father to son going back to at least his great-grandfather Frank. The Harazin Family has lived north of Bird Island, south of Bird Island, and south of Olivia, but now maintains three main properties just north of Bird Island and just south of Bird Island, both off of County Road 5. Danny is married to Brenda and they have three children and three grandchildren. Danny works with his two sons Chad and Kyle on regular basis now as they carry on the family farming tradition.

Danny grew up on his father's farm south of Bird Island milking cows and learning the in's and out's of field farming. Danny's father Jim served in the US Army as a welder when he was a young man. He participated in the Korean War and came home to continue the Harazin family farming. His father, Jim, passed on a few years ago but when someone tells you a farmer works until they truly cannot, you may be surprised how true that sentiment really is. Jim worked the field with Danny, Chad, and Kyle until just before his passing and as Danny said, “Oh he loved every minute of it.” Jim was raised doing farm work with his father, Hank, who was also raised by his father, Frank, with fields and cows as their main focus. Only in the last decade did Danny phase out dairy cows and now his son Chad raises only beef calves. Although there are no more dairy cows on any of the three homestead's, milking cows is truly where Danny's passion for farming grew from. He was raised milking the cows on his father's farm with his brother. His three sisters and mother drove the combine occasionally, helped pull hay, and took care of their horses. Danny's eyes still light up and glimmer with nostalgic giddiness when he ponders his memories with his father milking cows and running the tractors and combines. There's a feeling you get to witness when a child runs up to you after finding some incredible buried treasure of pennies or dice or crayons at the playground, and they're just gleaming with pride in their own discovery but the child is also incredibly grateful for the warm, loving feelings they experienced while bringing the pennies to show you. Now hold onto that image of the excitement and nostalgia you get to witness and now picture Danny Harazin standing in front of you and the fields him and his boys work on, just smiling away.

Kyle and Chad, similarly to Danny's happy memories, have enjoyed working the farm since they could run and lift. Kyle always loved animals and before he could really get out into the fields or driving tractors or combines he was “running all over the place helping out here and there...” Danny continued to explain to me that before they phased out dairy cows Kyle would run up to the barn and spend hours there feeding or making sure the cows were all hooked up to the milkers when Danny and Jim needed them ready. Chad went to school in Willmar for welding and worked out of town for awhile. He came back a few years ago and sister Krista lives only a few miles away from Kyle and Chad.

Danny and Brenda have all three of their children within ten minutes driving and are loving every minute they get to spend with all three and all three grandchildren as well. Danny loved milking cows, he loves working with his sons and he loves being able to work on the farm he grew up on. Danny is also very proud that he is still using the 1941 SC Case Tractor that his grandfather bought and used, was then sold to Jim, and found it's way into Danny's hands. He refurbished the small tractor (in comparison to his other tractors, but was his grandfather's largest tractor) so it can be used for hayrides around the 4th of July. But the piece of equipment that is dearest to his heart and soul, that is dedicated to farming for a lifetime, is the first Case tractor he bought on his own. The family still uses it today and on my last interview with Danny rode up the rows with his first tractor.

Family farming will remain a Harazin tradition for at least the next generation and is full of love of land, love of animals, and love of family. The Harazin's finished the fall harvest season feeling accomplished and ready for winter, like most local farmers. Next time you see Danny, ask him to tell you about the time Kyle flipped a tractor full of manure over and survived by a miracle or better yet, get him a dairy cow for Christmas with it's own barn and look for that nostalgic smile.