

Conservation SHOWCASE



Fresh Grass Every Day at the Flashinski Farm

The day is sunny and bright with a beautiful blue sky and the leaves on the trees are just beginning to turn to the glorious hues of fall. As we walk to the pasture, an eagle is spotted soaring overhead. We scare up a flock of killdeer that are gathering for the fall migration. Heather tells me that bobolink have been seen on her farm along with sandhill cranes, Canada geese, deer and other wildlife. The Hereford/Devon cross cattle are busy eating the fresh grass in one of the paddocks on this rotational grazing farm.

Heather and Mark Flashinski bought this 80-acre farm in Cadott, WI in 2006. As new owners, Mark and Heather had new plans and goals for their acreage to address their natural resource concerns on the farm. They wanted to revitalize the woods on the property and create more wildlife habitat. What was permanent pasture, is now productive pasture through planting native legumes and managed rotational grazing. Working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is an important part of their plan.

Tammy Lindsay, District Conservationist and the staff from the NRCS Chippewa Falls Service Center developed a conservation plan with them. Managed



Heather Flashinski and her daughter Helayna take their daily walk to the pasture to check on their cattle.

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rotational grazing is the primary conservation practice and the foundation for making additional enhancements to their farm through the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

CSP is a voluntary program. Landowners agree to undertake additional conservation activities and improve, maintain and manage existing conservation practices.

“When I learned about all the practices suggested through CSP, I wanted to do all of them because there are so many great things for the environment,” Heather said. “But we concentrated on only a few for now.” One of the CSP conservation enhancements includes improving pasture by planting a mix including legumes, which increase forage quality and improves soil fertility. Another enhancement includes monitoring the key grazing areas on the farm to improve grazing management. By monitoring plant productivity and measuring forage heights determinations can be made for grazing land management systems.

An enhancement to establish a windbreak creates new wildlife habitat, and provides a shelter for many animal species.

It took a lot of time and effort for the farm to become what is now a beautiful grass farm. Heather says that “NRCS is easy to work with and they are willing to share their expertise.” Today Farm Sweet Farm provides direct-from-the-farm grass-fed beef and other naturally grown foods that are good for one’s health and for the environment.

