

CENTENNIAL FARMS SPOTLIGHT

RALPH & MARGARET HINKLEY FARM

EVART, MICHIGAN

ESTABLISHED DECEMBER 31, 1910

2016
Outstanding Centennial
Farm of the
Year



*Above: Full farm view. Right:
The Hinkley family: Ralph,
Maggie, and baby Eva.*



Ralph and Maggie Hinkley purchased a farm in Evart—a town where they were both born and raised—more than 100 years ago. Their only child, a daughter named Eva, was four years old when they moved to the property.

The farm eventually grew to have a dairy herd, beef cattle, chickens, turkeys, and pigs. Ralph was also one of the first sheep owners in the area. He had 80 acres just south of Evart, where he raised sheep to sell the wool and lambs. His grandsons and a hired man named Bill Swales worked together to catch the sheep and help shear them.

Most of the animal feed came from the farm. The main crops included hay, corn, oats, wheat, buckwheat, and potatoes. The family farmed for many years using two teams of horses. However, in 1943, they purchased a Case tractor from a local dealer, and the farm began completing tasks using modern-day tractor equipment. That tractor is still used today and is in good condition.

The family learned to use the resources around them in creative ways. In the winter, Ralph cut ice from Chippewa Lake and stored it in the icehouse located on the north side of their home. The family used it as a refrigerator all summer. Every spring, they made maple syrup. They also raised vegetables in their own garden for food.

Eva later became a teacher at a one-room schoolhouse near the farm. In 1931, she married Loren Forbes, the boy who had lived next door. Together,



*Above: 1951 Case
DC Tractor. Right:
The granary.*



they had three children: Robert, Ralph, and Patricia. They moved from Dearborn back to Ewart to help with the farm in 1944 and then took over its operation entirely when Ralph passed away a few years later.

The farm mainly functioned as a dairy farm at that time, producing milk in Grade B milk cans for the Barryton Creamery. Loren and Eva continued to raise sheep and produce maple syrup. They also started using the property for hunting.

The Forbes children left the farm when they got older but still visited and helped during weekends and summers. However, none of them were interested in taking over the operation. Loren and Eva decided to retire in 1970, so they sold their cattle stock and only returned to the farm during the summer months. They passed away just two months from each other in late 1996 and early 1997.

Patricia's son, Greg Adams, and his wife, Kathleen, operate the farm today. Greg spent every childhood summer helping his grandfather on the farm, and he still has that passion today. Greg, Kathleen, and their son, Blain, have made improvements to the farm while striving to keep its traditions alive.

Today, the farm is known as the Hinkley-Forbes-Adams farm due to it being passed through the line of women. A local farmer uses the fields to grow corn, hay, and beans. Maple syrup is still produced for family and friends, and the hunting tradition also continues. In addition, the family picks apples from trees on the farm in the fall and uses the old cider press to make apple cider. Various members of the Hinkley, Forbes, and Adams families still regularly visit the farm. ☒



*Above: The farm home before stone was applied to the outside.
Right: The house as it looks today.
Below: Eva and Loren Forbes.*



*Above: The current barn.
Right: The original barn.
Below: Current farm owners Greg, Kathy, and Blain Adams.*

