Randy and Sara Mikshowsky

W1324 State Road 33

Bangor, WI 54614

P: 608-797-0989

E: randymiks@gmail.com saramiks@aol.com

Nick Smetana

212 6th Street North, Room 1300

La Crosse, WI 54601

P: 608-386-0631

E: nsmetana@lacrossecounty.org

1. Randy Mikshowsky grew up on his family's dairy farm in Newberg Corners, Wisconsin. His parents, Ralph and Evelyn had four children; one daughter followed by three sons, with Randy being the eldest of the three boys. As early as his memory serves him, he started milking cows. Graduating high school in 1974, he narrowly missed the Vietnam War Draft before conscription was terminated in 1973. In the late 1970's, he met his future wife, Sara Schams, from St. Joseph, WI. The two were wed in 1981 and have three daughters together. Randy took on the role of farm manager in 1980 before purchasing the home farm in 1990 from his parents. He's added 3 additional farms to the operation since 1990 and continues to run the farm today. Recently, after ~55 years of milking, Randy sold his dairy cows and transitioned to 50 head of Black Angus. Throughout the years, Sara worked for Heileman's Brewing Company before retiring. In retirement, she's a volunteer photographer for St. Joseph Church and assists with modern cemetery records. Sara has played a pivotal role on the farm over the years as the gatekeeper to all of Randy's new ideas. The Family won the award for La Crosse County Conservation Farm of the year in 1990. At the 2024 Wisconsin State Fair, the farm was honored with the Sesquicentennial Farm Award.

2. Conservation has long been the approach for the Mikshowsky's for the better part of 50 years. The home farm was contour stripped in 1965 which still grip the hillsides today. The eye for conservation was certainly passed down to Randy which he simply puts as "I don't like to see ditches" and "once you lose your soil, it's gone for forever". In the 1990's, Randy completed several waterway projects without funding or technical assistance from NRCS or the LCD. His Brother-In-Law worked for St. Joseph Equipment and had access to a bulldozer to remedy any gully or rill erosion that developed. Since 2020, between the home farm and rented ground, the Mikshowsky's have worked with the LCD and NRCS to complete 5 Grade Stabilizations and 3 Lined

Waterway Projects. In addition to the structural practices, they've recently placed 18 acres of highly erodible ground into CRP, 2.5 acres of which is in a pollinator planting. Randy runs a Corn-Bean-Hay rotation and is a true no-till operator, leaving residue and planting cover crops following harvest every year. He believes every effort to keep the soil in place will help, including something as simple as grassing end rows, which he often does. In addition to the in-field conservation, the Mikshowsky's added Solar to the Farmstead in 2022 through a local grant. The panels provide power to house, barn and shop, reducing their energy footprint and significantly cutting down on their electric bill. In total, the Mikshowsky's have invested over $100,000 of their own funds to put conservation on the ground.

3. The Mikshowsky Farm has been the leading farm in La Crosse County for many years because of their conservation efforts. Their innovative techniques such as implementing a solar grid, contour strips, structural practices, CRP, and renovating headlands into perennial vegetation make them billboard for conservation. In recent years, their Farm has been highlighted even more than usual because it's at the head of the Bostwick Watershed, which is currently in phase 2 of a TRM Grant through the DNR. The Mikshowsky's involvement with numerous local government agencies show their desire to continue conservation on the Farm into the future and they're hopeful to keep it in the family. The challenges of farming in the heart of the Driftless Region is something Randy has embraced throughout the years. Their whole farm approach to conservation is an all-encompassing model to be followed by all producers in La Crosse County and throughout the State of Wisconsin.

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