



The barn, more than a century old, has housed livestock since the beginning and Hereford cattle shortly after the Wymans took ownership in 1983.

Hereford breeder Sharon Wyman preserves a historic barn that has housed cattle for more than 100 years.

by Kayla M. Wilkins

More than 100 years of production agriculture has taken place upon its sturdy stone foundation. There have been sounds of livestock and sights of hard working ranchers in and out of its big, red doors since the beginning.

A number of memories have been made within the paint-chipped walls of the iconic barn that sits in the countryside in northern Michigan. If those walls could talk, one could listen for hours about the rich history of livestock production but, more specifically, about the Hereford cattle that have been raised within its mighty structure. Over the years, the barn has been home to countless prize-winning

Her Barn, Her Story



Sharon and her family received the 2016 Barn of the Year award at the Michigan Barn Preservation Network's award ceremony.

Herefords that were exhibited across the country, bringing back awards now hanging across its weathered beams.

This historic barn has witnessed many successes, but one of the most recent accomplishments is a bit different from the rest. In May, Sharon Wyman's barn, which resides on Pleasant View Ranch between Alpena and Posen, Mich., was recognized by the Michigan Barn Preservation Network Awards Committee as the Barn of the Year in the continued family or private agricultural use category.

What an honor

The Michigan Barn Preservation Network provides opportunity for agricultural history enthusiasts across the state to participate in the Barn of the Year contest, where judges score participants' restored barns based upon the barns' integrity, uniqueness and merit.

The program has been active for more than 20 years and continues to grow with entries flooding in yearly. Jerry Damon, chairman of the award committee, says every barn has a story to tell, but it is the ones that bring something extra to the table that go on to be recognized with high honors.

In the case of the Pleasant View Ranch barn, Damon notes not only was there a compelling story of rich history but it was refreshing for judges to see a barn still actively hosting production agriculture.

"It is fun when you have an active farm from a judge's standpoint," Damon says. "You get to look at the barn for what it was originally built for."

Maintaining the originality of the structure has always been important to the Wyman family. When Sharon and her late husband purchased the property in 1983, they knew the barn would require some extra care along the way, but they also knew it was worth the added effort.



The barn is still home to Hereford cattle today.

"This old northern Michigan gem has been serving its original purpose of housing cattle for over 100 years," Sharon says. "We have done our best to preserve this part of Michigan's heritage."

The Hereford history

The Hereford tradition runs deep for Sharon and her operation. Two short years after purchasing the barn, the Wymans began filling it with Hereford show heifers and not much has changed since.

"The Herefords are a really big deal in this," Sharon says. "The barn is the heart of the whole ranch and how we run this place."

She reflects on the moment when their first heifer stepped foot into the barn and the excitement she felt. Her passion and excitement only grew after much success over the years.

Sharon, her husband and two sons exhibited cattle in their home state and across the country at the National Western Stock Show in Denver and the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville. In addition, they began developing their own herd, growing it to 100 head during the farm's prime.

continued on page 144...



"This old northern Michigan gem has been serving its original purpose of housing cattle for over 100 years. We have done our best to preserve this part of Michigan's heritage."

— Sharon Wyman

The most recent addition to Pleasant View Ranch is MSU Queen 48W, a heifer purchased at the Michigan State University sale a few years ago. The Queen, as Sharon affectionately calls her, made impressions, bringing home numerous division banners and being selected the supreme heifer at the Upper Peninsula State Fair in Michigan in 2014.

“She was cow/calf champion and went on to be supreme champion over all breeds because, like the judge said, ‘it is unique to have a cow/calf champion be supreme, but when a cow can raise a calf like that, she is doing what she is supposed to be doing,’” Sharon says.

Shortly after these times of excitement and joy, came grieving. Tom Wyman, Sharon’s husband, unexpectedly passed away, and Sharon says she strongly considered selling everything because the burden of the cattle operation would be too demanding for a single woman to bear.

However, the idea did not linger long as she was encouraged by a longtime friend to keep a few cows and shift her attention and passion to the cattle operation.

“He said, ‘You need to hold on to The Queen,’” Sharon says, “I was reluctant, but that was probably the best advice I had at the time because it gave me a purpose to go on where I had a project to work at and something to do. Cattle then became more fun than work.”

Sharon says when she thinks back to the moment she decided to keep the cows and do some maintenance on the barn, she is grateful every day for the outcome.

“When Tom passed, I took a look at this barn and thought ‘boy if I don’t do this now, I never will,’” she says. “It really had to get done. It was something we had always talked about, so I went ahead and did it.”



Pleasant View Ranch has been raising Hereford cattle since 1985.

Today, Sharon owns 12 head of Herefords and has seeded some of the pastures to hay to feed her cattle and to sell locally. She says managing the operation can sometimes be challenging, but she has been blessed with a wonderful community in which everyone is more than willing to help one another.



The barn’s sturdy walls provide a warm place for livestock in the harsh winter months.

She says her passion for raising Herefords, in her more than century-old barn, will never die.

“I love the Hereford people and the enthusiasm,” she says. “That is what is so fun about it. It is great. I absolutely love it.”

Generations to come

For Sharon this award represents much more than a plaque on her wall. Similar to many rural families, the Wymans spent more time together in the barn than anywhere else.

“I actually think my husband, family and I had more conversations in the barn than at the dinner table,” she says. “That says it all. There was a lot surrounding that barn.”

As Sharon’s thoughts carry her into the future, she says she hopes her sons and grandchildren can carry the same love for the property and the cattle there. The thought of her grandchildren one day showing Herefords raised in the same barn they have used for all these years and building lifelong memories never ceases to excite her.

She says among her favorite family memories are those of late nights waiting for cows to calve in the barn, and those moments are something she will forever cherish.

“There were tears, there were laughs, it was all about the communication in the walls of that barn,” Sharon says. “If family, friends and neighbors can get together and conversations can be had, that is just what life is all about. The joys and the grieving times, too. It is all part of life and that is what the barn represents to me. All the hard work that went into that is just all part of the passion we have had for it. It is the day-to-day. It is knowing when you wake up each day and look out your window, you will see that great big barn.” **HW**