

Next Gen Program Recipient: Rocky Spring Farm



When most families sell their farm, it is rare to have an opportunity to buy it back. However, Scott Shank and his family were given that chance in 2017, after applying to MARBIDCO's Next Generation Farm Acquisition Program.

From a young age, Scott and his brother Tom worked on the family farm with their mother and father, making hay, feeding calves, and running equipment. But neither Scott nor his brother planned on becoming farmers, and both found alternative career paths. However, in 2009, their father passed away unexpectedly.

"My mother sold the farm to a local businessman – and he said he would always be willing to sell it back to us," said Scott. At the same time, Tom decided that he wanted to rent the farm and continue to work and live on the property.

"I said 'You're crazy - you want to be a farmer?'" said Scott. "Then one day I was on Facebook and saw an ad from MARBIDCO through a friend in Farm Bureau. I went ahead and called my county representative, and he said you actually qualify for this really well."

Scott then began the application process for the Next Generation Farm Acquisition Program. With Tom, his sister, and his wife working together they were able to complete the application, and in April 2018, they bought the farm back.

"I think the Next Gen program is great," said Scott. "For me, it hit a niche that some of the other programs didn't for other farms to preserve farm ground. We couldn't get into the local farmland preservation program because we are too close to the town line."

Today, the Shanks have 70 acres of tillable land and a corn and soybean rotation. Scott lives beside the farm in the home he grew up in, along with his wife and two kids. "Our goal is to sustain the family farm and keep it in the family forever," said Scott, reflecting on his and his brother's intentions.