

# CONSERVATION PROFILES

*“The Barenthsens believe in marketing their greatest resource, their grass, through their cattle. This basic philosophy has helped them set the standard for how they manage their grass, farmland, water resources and cattle.”*

*Tracey Koester,  
ND Stockmen’s Assoc.*



*Kayla, Aleah, Emily, Kathy and Mark Barenthsen, and Jessica and Jeremy Bullinger  
North Dakota*

## *Dakota Family Pairs Profits with Resources*

You might think that January in northern North Dakota would be a good time for the folks at Barenthsens Farm to take a well-deserved rest. Instead it is an active time. Mark and Kathy Barenthsen hold their annual bull auction of certified Red Angus sires—and they also do something else: schedule an annual assessment, planning and goal setting session.

Some of those goals—a quality, productive, family-oriented life—have probably changed little in the four generations on the farm. But Mark and Kathy have realized several goals that are uniquely their own.

For instance they have worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) on two major projects with broad, mutual benefits for the environment and the farm. In 1993 FWS worked with the Barenthsens to place a dam and wildlife pond on their property. The dam captures sediment and provides habitat for many waterfowl species. The farm also gets a reliable watering source for cattle and irrigated hayland.

Another FWS project is a 700-acre wetland and grassland easement. It allows grazing but not draining or burning—provisions Mark felt made sense on the hilly, rocky land. Pairing the easement compensation with a grant from NRCS, Mark fenced the land into four cells through which cattle rotate according to a prescribed grazing plan. Highly erosive land was seeded to control erosion and provide forage.

**For more information:**  
[www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov)  
[www.beef.org](http://www.beef.org)

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Mark uses conservation tillage on 2,100 acres and seeds durum wheat, barley, flax and peas with 1,300 acres in no-till.

In 1995, Emily Barenthsen planted trees on the farm to create a haven for wildlife in an award-winning 4-H project. She worked with NRCS to plant Colorado Blue Spruce and buffaloberry. Many species of wildlife find shelter in these and in the farm's 30,000 feet of shelterbelts planted to pine, elm, ash, poplar, chokecherry and more. Wildlife that use the grasslands, trees, natural potholes and dugouts on the farm include white-tailed deer, Canada geese, grouse, partridge, ducks, hawks, coyotes and fox.

Whether it is in improving their herd's genetics, managing their grassland or adjusting crops and tillage methods, the Barenthsens believe that greater sustainability of the land and greater profitability from the land go hand in hand.



## CONSERVATION AT A GLANCE

### Key Practices:

- Cross fencing
- Water developments
- 30,000 feet of tree shelterbelts
- Conservation tillage
- Prescribed grazing

### Programs Used:

- NRCS/SCD Technical Assistance
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Grassland Easement

