

Rohrer Family Find Century Farm

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Roger said that tobacco is a defensive issue with the health and tax issues that entangle it, and the future of tobacco is unclear.

The additional land is crop farmed by his father and brother.

As a banker, Roger tries to predict trends and protect his own financial future as well. For this reason, he has encouraged Kandy to develop her quilt business.

"Per hour, she can make almost as much as I make raising tobacco," he said.

Kandy said that she made her first quilt when she was 12 years old, but it wasn't until after the couple married and she made their own quilt that she decided to go into the business.

For many years, Roger's mother has operated Maple Lane Farm Bed and Breakfast and his aunt also has a bed and breakfast. These two display Kandy's quilts and so does a local consignment shop. It is through these and by word of mouth that Kandy has been able to sell quilts.

She does only Log Cabin designs in the diamond and in the star pattern.

"My quilt business is a commercial venture and that is to market a nice looking quilt at a reasonable price," she said.

For her, intricate, time consuming patterns are not financially profitable.

She stocks up on quilts during the winter months. In April and May she accumulates a large inventory that is sometimes a bit scary to her since she is not sure if she will be able to sell all of the quilts. But Roger advises her to keep making quilts as fast as she can until the first year that she doesn't sell out. So far, her quilts are all sold by December of each year.

Kandy uses the same sewing machine on which she sewed her first quilt.

"Much of her success in the quilt business stems from her natural ability to match colors," her husband said.

Roger said that after high school, he attended Penn State College of Agriculture but did not graduate from it.

"I was one of those guys who probably should have waited a few years to go to college because I had no objective or specific idea of what I wanted to do with my life," he said.

After Roger quit college, he worked in agricultural building construction for several years.

In 1974, Roger was hired as a field representative trainee for Lancaster Farm Credit Services. That was the job that propelled him to his life's vocation.

He held various positions with Farm Credit, participated in their training program, took night courses at F&M College, and at Corestates Hamilton Bank.

"Being an ag lender is about as close to farming as you can get without actually farming," Roger said.

In 1976, Roger married. That same year, his dad quit raising tobacco to increase his dairy herd. Roger decided to take over the tobacco field, which was one acre at that point.

Kandy, who earned a degree in elementary education, said that she was not from an agricultural background, but from the beginning of their marriage was outside pulling tobacco plants. She said that she had no trouble adjusting to the work, but the hours were another story.

"When I grew up, Saturday was a day off. But on the farm, it is just another work day and sometimes even a bigger one that Monday through Friday."

She did put her foot down one year after Roger had almost single-handedly stripped seven acres of tobacco by himself, which meant he worked every day and Saturday to 10 p.m.

"Something has got to change," Kandy told him. Roger, who by this time, was not enjoying those hours anymore, agreed. He hired a retired farmer to help strip. Now, that the children are older, they are helping more with the stripping.

The biggest obstacle for Kandy is that both the tobacco and quilt business are demanding at the same time — the tourist season. She often needs to rush in from the tobacco fields to dress up so that she can show a prospective customer a quilt. She keeps plenty of sample material on hand so that customers can choose their own patterns but will also assist customers in selecting their own fabrics from a store.

Gardening, canning, and freezing are all ways in which the family works together to maintain what Roger said he was taught — be as thrifty as you can and work hard.

Other thriftiness is evident by having venison as the family's main staple and by heating the house with firewood from woodland on the property.

The oldest son Todd, who is 12, is in FFA and the only boy in the class who is from the farm. He recently shot a 6-point buck and much prefers spending time hunting on the farm rather than participating in sports at the school. His siblings, Mark, 11, and Ashlee, 7, share his love for the outdoors.

"Give a boy a farm with both free time and work time and it's the best environment for him to grow up," said Roger. The highlight of Roger's life, he said, was to see his



This is Roger's trophy room where he relaxes between farming and banking responsibilities. His 12-year-old son Todd, who shot a buck on the first day of hunting season, is eager to contribute his share to the trophy display.

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