



MAXIMILLIAN LISOWSKI | AG HERALD

LEFT: RIGIrlmeier hands off a baby ostrich to showcase their distinct look when they are chicks. After four months, they begin to show their adult plumage. **MIDDLE:** During the tour, Meseck shows off his yak herd after feeding them with grain. **RIGHT:** Shayne and Chance Wiese explain their business model and how they maintain healthy pastures. With the help of cover crops, they are able to rotate their cattle to different pastures for grazing.



LEFT: Tour-goers take turns feeding an ostrich at Irlmeier Ostrich Farms on August 3. Irlmeier said that it's safe to feed them by hand because they lack teeth. **MIDDLE:** In the middle of his farm tour, Neal Meseck displays what his yak yarn looks like. The undercoat of the yak is what is desirable for use. **RIGHT:** Dozens of cows stand in one of the Brinkman's cow pens. The cows are roofed so they remain cool in the shade.



EVOLUTION

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business into his day-job. "This is a hobby for me, but I would like to do it full-time." Irlmeier said. "Personally, I like it a lot and I think it's a pretty easy job to do."

Cattle Farming:

Ann and Steve Brinkman of Brinkman Ag Solutions welcomed attendees to their cattle farm where they explained their history and what their operation looks like.

The couple began their livestock journey with the idea to raise around 240 pigs with the space they created on their farm. They began that venture until, due to

disease, lost most of their pigs and reassessed what they should do.

Ann Brinkman explained they got into the cattle industry a little bit by accident. In 2012 Their son, Matt, bottle fed calves and bought four or five cows. To support his effort, they purchased additional cows.

The family continued caring for cattle when Matt Brinkman applied for the Iowa Beef Heifer Award program, which awarded him three purebred registered heifers. As their herd began to grow, they decided to turn their family farm to mainly cows. Now, they supplement their income by selling seed when the cow

business is slow.

The 200 cows that the Brinkmans' own are roofed, allowing the family to care for the cattle with ease.

"It's not the most pleasant to be out in the rain or snow-storm running the cows," Steve Brinkman said. "So, we decided to move our working facilities under roof."

Shayne and Chance Wiese of Wiese & Sons showcased their cattle farm with a different emphasis. Their business, which started in 1912, focuses on making Hereford Bulls as genetically strong as possible to sell while being conservative with their land use.

Between their pastures and cover crops, they are

able to support many varieties of Hereford Bulls for people to sell or breed with, all while making sure their soil stays fertile.

The Wiese family recently implemented cover crops to feed their cattle instead of grassing in their pastures so they keep their pastures in good condition.

"We're actually strip grazing our cows on it to try and give all of our pastures resting recovery," Shayne Wiese said. "It's been a little bit of a different strategy but it's been fun for us to experiment with this."

Shayne Wiese also said that they are happy to raise Herefords because they're a "breed known for docility"

which allows them to spend less time on the farm and more time with their family.

The event ended with a community tailgate available to the public where the band 2 ½ guitars performed. Yak meatballs, veggie cubs, and several types of meat were provided.

Speaking of Manning and rural Iowa, Dawn Meyer, Manning City Administrator, spoke proudly about what makes it thrive.

"A lot of people say, 'What's the secret sauce?' and I'm going to have to say stubbornness," Meyer said. "That's how trails and downtown development and everything that people said we were too small to have come about

because of stubbornness."

This year's Evolution of the Heartland event saw interest from 1,000 people from 15 different states, according to Greving. Six tours were offered to attendees when they registered: Beef Immersion, Innovation and Technology, Niche Farming, Swine Immersion, Templeton Distillery and Wine in the Heartland.

Partnered with several organizations in rural Iowa, Emerge Marketing Solutions in Manning organized this event. Greving hopes to expand its reach state-wide.

For more information about this year's tours visit www.evolutionoftheheartland.com.