

CENTENNIAL FARMS SPOTLIGHTS

INER F. HANSEN FARM

TRUFANT • ESTABLISHED MARCH 9, 1910

The Iner F. Hansen Farm was established on March 9, 1910, in Trufant, Michigan. Both children of Danish immigrants, Iner Hansen and Lethia Johnson were married in 1924. Three years later, they had their first and only child, a son named Lee, who was brought up helping his parents run the family's dairy farm. The family residence received electricity and plumbing in the 1930s, and the original dairy barn was struck by lightning and rebuilt in 1936.

Lee and his fiancée, Nata Lou, both attended what is now Michigan State University (MSU), graduating on the same day and getting married later that evening in 1951. Lee continued to work on the farm with the help of his wife—who also worked as a teacher. The couple had three children: Jeffrey, Sue Ellen, and Brian. The farm began to modernize as the family purchased advanced tractors and automated milking machines.

In 1971, Iner passed away, leaving the farm to Lee. Shortly after, Lee and his son Jeff converted the dairy farm into a cash crop farm, with the last of the cows being sold in 1981. Jeff graduated from MSU with a master's degree in agricultural economics and married his wife, Melissa, in 1982. In 1983, Jeff and Lee formed Pine Flat Farms. Jeff and Melissa have two sons, Daniel and Timothy, who grew up helping on the family farm and listening to the family motto—"Hansens never quit!" ☒



Different angles of a barn on the Hansen Centennial Farm.



This Centennial Farm designation is sponsored by



WILLIAM AND MARY VANDER HULST

ZEELAND • ESTABLISHED MARCH 14, 1918

The William and Mary Vander Hulst Farm was founded on March 14, 1918, in Zeeland, Michigan. After purchasing the original 60-acre farm in Ottawa County, William and Mary Vander Hulst arrived by horse and wagon with their belongings and two daughters, Frances and Albertha. William grew crops—such as wheat and corn—while raising horses, Holstein cows, pigs, goats, and chickens.

The Vander Hulsts also had a garden, which became especially important during the Great Depression. Relatives in need were able to come to the farm and, in exchange for a day's work, receive necessities, such as milk, eggs, and produce. The Vander Hulsts had generous spirits, taking in a neighboring farming family of eight during the winter of 1936 after a fire claimed that family's house.

William passed away in 1961. Prior to Mary's passing in 1963, Sharon, their granddaughter, bought the farm. Sharon and her husband, Ken, resided on the farm and reared four children. The farm was converted to a cash-cropping operation in the 1990s, growing wheat, corn, and soybeans. One son, Mark, and grandson, Jacob, currently farm full-time. A granddaughter, Kim, studied agricultural industries at MSU.

The farm has changed drastically since William and Mary arrived in their horse and buggy, with modern tractors and other equipment improving farming for the family. Six generations of the Vander Hulsts have lived in the house on the farm, and they are proud to continue owning the land today. ☒



Historical views of the Vander Hulst homestead.