

The Sharps of Lacombe...

The Sharp family's history with the Shorthorn breed in Canada goes back to 1884, when William and James Sharp bred their first Shorthorn cattle in Sussex county, near Guelph, Ontario. Just prior to this, they had immigrated to Canada, with their father, from Aberdeenshire, Scotland. In 1886, twelve years after they bred their first Shorthorns, they packed up their belongings and moved to Lacombe, Alberta. The two brothers produced their Shorthorns under the name Craigievar for many years. Later, Hugh and Bert Sharp, who were from the second generation of Sharp's at Lacombe, decided to get separate farms, so Hugh purchased another farm. This farm took the name Balgerran, and that is the farm owned today by Graham's parents, Bob and Marilyn Sharp.

This article features Graham and Cheryl Sharp and their family and their Double Star Shorthorns at Lacombe, Alberta. Not only is there a Shorthorn connection on Graham's side of the family, but Cheryl also comes from a family who raised Shorthorn cattle. Graham and Cheryl can attribute their meeting and their marriage to Shorthorn cattle as well. They first met in 1988 at the Canadian National Junior Show in Summerside, Prince Edward Island. Cheryl was the Ontario Shorthorn Lassie that year. Her parents, Bob and Doreen Skuce, operated Riverside Shorthorns at Omeme, Ontario. Graham also attended this show, as the President of the Canadian Junior Shorthorn Association, and as they say, the rest is history. Their daughters,



Graham,
Cheryl,
Kayla
& Riley
Sharp

Riley and Kayla are also following the family tradition as they both own their own Shorthorns which makes them the sixth generation of the Sharp family who have raised Shorthorns in Canada. Riley is now 13 and Kayla is 10 years old.

It is hard to get a true picture of the Shorthorn heritage of the Sharp family unless we take a look back.

After moving to Alberta, William and James Sharp consigned their first Shorthorn bulls to the 1902 Calgary Bull Sale. Since then, over 400 bulls owned by the Sharp's have sold through the Calgary sale. Graham points out that his family still has the Rose Bowl that was won in 1903 for the Best Two Year Old bull at the Calgary Bull Sale. Another highlight was the Sharp's winning Grand Champion Bull at the 1973 Calgary Bull Sale with Balgerran Majestic.

The Lacombe Bull Sale was established in 1909, and the Sharp's consigned bulls to this sale. In 2009, when the Lacombe Bull Sale celebrated 100 years, Riley and Kayla

Sharp both had bulls consigned to the sale. They were the 5th generation of the Sharp family to consign bulls in this sale. In the 100 years of the Lacombe Bull Sale, the Sharp families have consigned bulls almost every year.

Graham and Cheryl moved to their present farm in the spring of 2005. This farm is located 13 miles southeast of Lacombe, and it is just one mile from the original Sharp homestead. Their farm is 3 miles from Balgerran Farms where Graham was raised.

Graham graduated from Olds College, Olds, AB where he majored in Ag Business. He started working at TD Canada Trust immediately following graduation in 1987, as an Ag Loans Manager, and he retired from this position after 22½ years in October 2009. He says that because of his career, he had to limit the number of cows he could run, but since his retirement their cow numbers have started to increase slightly. They presently calve out 70 purebred Shorthorn cows.



125 Years of Shorthorn Heritage in Canada.

by Grant Alexander

Double Star has consigned and shown their Shorthorns at numerous events over the years. They have consigned bulls to the Calgary Bull Sale, Lacombe Bull Sale, and the Sharp families "5 Star Bull Sale" held at Clyde, AB. They were also regular contributors to the All Star Classic and Back to Basics production sales as well as having regular consignments to Farmfair International and Canadian Western Agribition. They have also exhibited their cattle at numerous shows throughout Western Canada for many years. Graham says they are very pleased and excited to be guest consignors in 2011, in the long standing 4's Company Sale at Camrose, AB.



Bull calf sired by Saskvalley Ripper 260R

Graham and Cheryl have also been very involved in many beef industry activities, and numerous boards and associations. They are also very active in numerous community events. Graham and Cheryl were 4-H leaders of the East Lacombe 4-H Beef club for 6 years. This is the oldest 4-H club in Alberta that is still operating, and they held their 90th anniversary in 2009. Riley and Kayla are both members of this club. In 2009, Riley exhibited the Grand Champion Carcass steer at the Lacombe County 4-H show with a purebred Shorthorn steer sired by Alta Cedar Signature 41S.



GVR Enforcer 110L bred heifer

Graham has been a director of the Alberta Shorthorn Association for more years than he can remember. He served as President of this association in 1996-97. He has served as Junior Coordinator for many years for the Alberta Shorthorn Association

and has helped plan several National Junior Shorthorn shows. He was very involved in organizing the 1994 National Junior show in Red Deer which included a sale held in the ballroom of the Black Knight Inn. Graham says he has been involved in Junior Shorthorn activities basically since 1980 to the present, in one form or another. He started out showing his heifers at the Alberta Junior Show in 1980, which was held in conjunction with the Alberta Shorthorn Field Day at members farms in those days. Now their two daughters are actively involved

in junior activities so their involvement continues. He also mentions that the Sharp family hosted the Alberta Junior Shorthorn show at their Balgerran Farm, in 1984, in conjunction with their 100th Anniversary of Shorthorns celebration. Graham has also served for several years on the board of the Lacombe Agricultural

Society who organizes the annual Lacombe Bull Sale.

Involvement in community and livestock organizations comes to the Sharp family almost as second nature, as they have been very involved in Shorthorn and numerous other industry organizations for generations. Many who read this, will remember Graham's father, Bob Sharp, who spent 9 years on the Canadian Shorthorn Association board, and is a Past President of this organization. He served as President of the CSA in 1972 and 1973. Bob was the third generation of the Sharp family to sit on the CSA board. Graham's mother, Marilyn has also had a very noteworthy

history serving on numerous agricultural and community organizations. Marilyn was awarded a Nuffield scholarship in 1986 which

allowed her to do extensive travelling through Europe studying agriculture in several countries. She also served on the Alberta Cattle Commission Board and chaired their annual meetings on three occasions. She was very active with beef education and promotion while with the ACC. Marilyn also spent nine years on the board of Canadian Western Agribition and was the President of this organization in 1993 and 1994. Marilyn has also been a director of the Alberta Beef Producers, and has also been a member of the Alberta Ag and Food Council. She has also been very active in the Beef Information Center (BIC). Marilyn was awarded the Alberta Centennial Metal in 2005 for her volunteerism and contributions to agriculture and her community. Bob and Marilyn have been very active in their community for decades including being one of the original shareholders in Quality Feeds, a locally owned feed mill which was later sold to Feed Rite.

When asked about herd sires that have influenced their herd, Graham is quick to point out that they have probably had more herd bulls than most people have, as they went through a span of several years when



Saskvalley Ripper 260R

they seemed to kill them as fast as they owned them. Some herd sires have stood out over the years though and have left an impact on their herd. Diamond Hubback 33H, by Diamond Fame 21F, was a herd sire that left many daughters that were easy fleshing, good uddered and



Ripper sired heifer

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trouble free. GFS Red Cloud 9043 was purchased in Denver in 2000, out of the pen of bulls exhibited by Good Family Shorthorns from Kansas. Graham says they saw his sire JG Red Cloud the previous year in the Denver show and absolutely loved him, and seeing that there was no semen available



Double Star BO Rose 21G

in Canada, they decided to purchase a son of him. 9043 worked well on the Hubback daughters, and slightly increased their frame size. In 2003, they returned to the Denver show and they purchased GVR Enforcer 110L in partnership with Norris Sheppard, Ohaton, AB. This bull was the People's Choice Champion in the Denver sale and he was purchased from the Green Valley herd of the late Don Hoyt, Basin, Wyoming. Enforcer was a tremendous sire who added tremendous performance and growth to his calves. His daughters have excellent udders and milk extremely well. Enforcer was used for several years in both herds and his last calf crop arrived in 2010.

In 2004, Graham and Cheryl purchased KMS Canasta 8114 39P for \$8000 for 1/2 interest in the sale at Canadian Western Agribition from the Songer family, Rocky Mountain House, AB. He was a two time Grand Champion at Agribition in 2004 and 2005. He was also a top 10 finalist in the Beef Supreme show at the 2005 Agribition show. Canasta was a son of WHR Sonny 8114 and he bred very well in their herd, and added thickness and style to his calves. Unfortunately, his use was limited as he was lost to a broken leg on pasture in 2006.

The present herd sires at Double Star include Saskvalley Ripper 260R, by Saskvalley Navajo 152M, who was purchased from Saskvalley Stock Farm, Rosthern, SK.

Ripper has worked especially well on their Red Cloud and Enforcer daughters as he has downsized the frame a little without sacrificing performance and his daughters are easy fleshing females that can maintain their condition year round. Also seeing use presently is Alta Cedar Signature 41S by Alta Cedar Signature 119N. 41S is a solid red bull who is siring strong topped, growth calves.



Muridale Lu 83N

Graham says that they have two main cow families that have stood the test of time. The Rose cow family was started from a female named Butterfield Rose 50C, a female that was purchased from Philip Butterfield, Monarch, AB. The second cow line that has had a major influence in their herd is the Trudy cow family. The Trudy line started from one of Graham's first females which came from his family's Balgerran herd. He says his cows have to be able to hold their condition whether they are on pasture or on swath grazing in the winter. Their cows spend a substantial part of the winters, either on winter grazing of hay land or on swath grazing. He says they have been swath grazing their cows for many years, long before it was a generally accepted practice. One year in the late 60s, winter arrived very early and an unharvested oat crop was salvaged by swath grazing it as it could not be harvested. It worked so well that the Sharp's have continued this practice every year since.

Today, the Sharps continue to market their bulls through the Lacombe Bull Sale and by private treaty out of their yard. Females are marketed through sales, and also privately from the farm. Graham says that Shorthorn females have always been an easy sell privately from the farm, and that they prefer this method of selling as it gives them some control over the price received. For the last 6 years, they have sold their steers directly to a local feedlot, Zuidhof Feeders, and since they started to feed these steers, they have become a bull customer and have purchased bulls for their own cow herd the past three years.

The Shorthorn blood runs deep through the veins of Graham, Cheryl and their daughters Riley and Kayla. They raise Shorthorns because they like them, but also because they work in their environment. I would suggest that you should plan a visit to see the Shorthorns at Double Star. I know that I



Riley's Grand Champion Carcass Steer

am definitely planning to do this, on my next trip through central Alberta. Not only will you meet a great family who work together, but you will see some excellent Shorthorns as well. I guarantee you will have an enjoyable time and you will have new friends (if they weren't before) when you leave. I would also say that the Shorthorn breed in Canada should be very thankful for the dedication and commitment the Sharp families have given for over 125 years of breed history in this country.... And I expect it isn't over yet! ♦