

Hatfield Shorthorns Monty Thomson

It has just been over seven years since the first Shorthorn female arrived at Monty Thomson's Hatfield farm. In these few short years, Monty Thomson has built his purebred Shorthorn operation to 80 breeding age females in 2014.

Monty grew up near the Hatfield village near Nokomis, Saskatchewan and it was this community that has given his farm a name. Monty started a purebred Clydesdale herd on his farm near Nokomis in 1992 and quickly became known for the quality horses he raised. The Hatfield name is well known in Clydesdale circles and Monty is recognized for his knowledge of Clydesdale pedigrees and is widely acclaimed as a master breeder of quality horses. He and his family also had a commercial herd of cattle on the home farm in Saskatchewan.

In 2004, Monty accepted a job opportunity that was based in Manitoba working as a feed sale representative for a major feed manufacturer. He moved to Manitoba but maintained his horses and cattle on the home farm in Saskatchewan. After a couple years of commuting, he decided that he should try to find a farm in Manitoba and started to look for a suitable place. He wanted a farm with lighter soil which was more suitable to raising Clydesdales on, rather than the heavier clay based soils common in that part of Manitoba. He found a farm near Gladstone, MB that met his requirements and he purchased it.



Gladstone is centrally situated in Manitoba about 150 km northwest of Winnipeg and 100 km northeast of Brandon. He says he likes the location because he is 15 minutes from the Trans Canada #1 highway and also only 7 minutes from the Yellowhead #16 highway. Anyone who is travelling from eastern Canada to western Canada by highway has to go within a few minutes of his door, no matter which route they are taking. Gladstone is a mixed farming area and it is also close to the Interlake region of Manitoba that has a large cattle population. It is Monty's goal to see more Shorthorns being used in some of the cattle herds in this area.

It was in 2007 that Monty was first introduced to Shorthorns and his introduction was simply by word of mouth. He says he was visiting with his cousin, Merlin Ford and had mentioned that he was thinking about establishing a herd of cattle on his new farm in Manitoba. Merlin mentioned to him that there were some good Shorthorn cattle for sale at the Erwin and Kathy Rosenkranz farm near Regina, SK. Monty stopped in at the Rosenkranz's a few days later while travelling through the area and purchased his first Shorthorn, a cow named Alta Cedar Julia Ann 35L. This young cow had a red bull calf at side sired by Wolf Willow Ranchero 4R. Monty says that after buying his first Shorthorn, he decided he should start to look for a few more as one cow was really not much to start with. Over the next few months, he not only researched Shorthorn herds but he also started visiting many Shorthorn breeders throughout western Canada.

The second female purchased for his newly established Hatfield herd was a female named JT Daisy 99K from

John Thompson, Hamiota, MB. She had a heifer calf at side sired by Goldwin Burwash 4H. Both these females bred very well for Monty and both females are still in his herd today. In the years since purchasing



JT Daisy 99K and her Muridale Bulter 73Z heifer calf

his first cow from the Thompsons, Monty has gone back several times and purchased more females. He says that the Thompson herd is his favorite place to shop for cattle, mainly because he knows that they will be functional, fertile and trouble free as they would have been removed from the herd if there were any issues in these areas. The following year, Monty went back to the Wolf Willow herd and purchased their remaining bred heifers. Other females were purchased from the Eionmor herd of Ken and Robert Morrison at Innisfail, AB, the Diamond, Frimley, and Northern herds at Okotoks, AB, from Haydocks and Benders in Saskatchewan and Birdtail and Herbourne in Manitoba.

Monty says a great opportunity arose when he was able to purchase Northern Legend 3N from the Stephensions. He had been a senior herd sire in the Diamond, Frimley and Northern herds for several years and his use was limited so Monty was able to purchase him. While he was only able to use him for one breeding season, he made a major impact in the Hatfield herd and a son and grandson are being used as herd sires today. There are some impressive

Legend daughters in the herd and his son, Hatfield Snowman 11W is a most impressive bull. The Legend bloodline has been even intensified more through the use of ACC Legend 1U, who was a son of Northern Legend 4N that



Hatfield Snowman 11W

Monty purchased from the Anwenders at Radville, SK. A son of ACC Legend 1U, named Hatfield Governor 17X, also sired some exceptional calves in the Hatfield herd. Governor 17X was also out of the first female purchased for the Hatfield herd, Alta Cedar Julia Ann 35L.

In the few short years that Monty has been associated with Shorthorn cattle, he has become a student of the breed. His knowledge of Shorthorn pedigrees and history is really quite amazing and he has also visited more Shorthorn herds than most any other breeder that I know of. He is always trying to learn something as he visits with people in the breed. He says that getting an understanding of someone's ideas and their knowledge of the breed, tells him a lot about their breeding program. Monty has visited many herds throughout Canada and tries



to visit his favorite herds often. He says that his regular visits to John and

Susan Thompson's farm has oftentimes resulted in another female purchased for his herd.

Monty has also visited many herds in the U.S. in recent years. He says he felt he had to see what was happening in American herds and the best way to do this was to take some time to see them in person. On one trip to the U.S. Midwest, he visited the Illinois herds of Gary Kaper, Leveldale Farms, Duis

Farms, and Cagwin Farms and Waukaru Farms in Indiana. He has been to Leveldale on two occasions. In 2013 Monty again travelled to the U.S. to attend the Shorthorn University that was organized by the American Shorthorn Association. While attending this event, he was able to view the herds of Dale Studer, Cyclone Trace and Sullivans in Iowa. He also says that being able to view these herds with a group of breeders from many parts of North America was a great experience.

Having the opportunity to talk with people from many different areas and different breeding programs was a great learning experience. On yet another trip to the U.S., Monty visited the Jungels and Galbreath herds in North Dakota and the Osterday herd in South Dakota. He truly believes that in order to breed better Shorthorn cattle, he must understand what the breed has to offer, not only here in Canada and the U.S., but all around the world.

I think if you were to ask any Shorthorn breeder in Manitoba they would all comment that having Monty in their province has been a great asset to the Shorthorn breed. Monty has been very active in many breed events in Manitoba and one of his main causes is in increasing the visibility of the breed throughout the province. He was one of the people responsible for reintroducing a Shorthorn show at the

Brandon Fall Show. After an absence of many years, the breed had a very successful show there in October, 2013. They are planning to make it even better in 2014. Just recently, the Shorthorn show at Carmen, MB was re-established. There had not been a Shorthorn show at Carmen since 1979 and it was through the efforts of Monty along with some other Shorthorn breeders in the area that got this show running again. Monty also noted that a daughter of his first Shorthorn female, Alta Cedar Julia Ann 35, was named the Reserve Grand Champion Female at the Carmen show.



Hatfield Cheeky Legend 5W and her Muridale Bulter 73Z heifer calf

Monty has also been a huge supporter of juniors and believes more should have the opportunity to show Shorthorns in their 4-H projects. He has helped several families get started with Shorthorn heifers for their 4-H projects and he is more than willing to give friendly advice to any junior who wants to learn. Most of the families Monty has helped in this way will tell you that they consider him to now be a family friend and a mentor to their kids. He is always willing to give the kids tips and encourages them not to be afraid to try things for themselves. Not only has Monty helped the kids in these families, he has also encouraged the parents to become more involved in the Manitoba Shorthorn Association and it was great to see these families involved in the recent Canadian Shorthorn Association annual meeting held in Manitoba. These families are

Hatfield Shorthorns

also involved in planning the upcoming Canadian Shorthorn Junior National show that will be held in Neepawa, MB from August 1-3 this year.

Monty says that one of the keys to selling Shorthorns, whether it is bulls or females, is to get the cattle producers to come to your farm to see your cattle. He says that in his experience, a very high percentage of people who come will actually end up buying his cattle. The trick seems to be getting these people to come and actually see the cattle. That is one of the reasons he feels that Shorthorn breeders need to work harder at improving the visibility of the breed at local events. That is also why he tries to exhibit his cattle at shows wherever he can. Hatfield Shorthorns have been exhibited at many Manitoba events and he tries to exhibit them each fall at Canadian Western Agribition. He feels that building a customer base takes time and a lot of patience, but if you are willing to work at it, you can develop a good market for your cattle.



I stopped in to visit Monty in May while I was in Manitoba delivering bulls. It was great to actually see the herd he has developed in such a short period of time. He has put together an excellent set of brood cows and it is quite amazing how similar in type his foundation cows are, when they have come from a variety of sources. The 2014 calf crop looked exceptional when I was there. There were several bull calves that I felt would make

excellent herd sire prospects as well as a super set of females. The calf crop this year is from several sires but it was very clear that Monty had spent considerable time in deciding how to mate each female in his herd. The first calves from his current senior herd sire, Birdtail Major 28Z were very impressive. Monty purchased this bull from Ray and Susan Armbruster, Rosburn, MB and he is sired by their herd sire Glenford Major 33U who is a son of Four Point Major. There were also some excellent calves from Waukaru Patent 0183 and Hatfield Governor 17X. The Patent bull was purchased with his dam from the 2010 Waukaru sale in Indiana in partnership with Greg and Cathy Tough, Hargrave, MB. He was one of the very first calves to be born from Waukaru Patent 6131.

Hatfield Governor 17X now heads up the new Shorthorn herd of Steve and Adrienne Vanderluis, Elm Creek, MB. The Vanderluis's are one of the families that Monty has assisted in getting Shorthorn 4-H prospects and they are now using Governor 17X in their herd. Birdtail Major 28Z has proven himself in his first calf crop and is now the senior herd sire in the Hatfield herd. Monty also purchased Eionmor Ideal 82T from the Morrison's at the time of

their herd dispersal last fall. He is a true beef Shorthorn bull and he should work well on the females Monty has. He is also using Hatfield Snowman 11W and his son Hatfield Snow Duke 50A. These two white bulls are impressive individuals that are packed full of meat along with soundness and moderate frames. HC Forage 31Z who is a son of Alta Cedar Top Dog 11T, and HC Artic Flag 306A,

a son of Mandalong Super Flag are being used on heifers this year.



Hatfield Governor 17X bull calf

As I drove out of Monty's yard, I felt a bit guilty for this being my first visit to his farm, as he had visited our farm on several occasions. I knew that

I would have to get there again, as the cattle were good and it was very plain that Monty takes great pride in showing his cattle to his visitors. It was also very obvious that Monty has a vast knowledge of Shorthorn pedigrees and it really is quite amazing for the length of time he has been involved in the breed.

The Hatfield Clydesdale herd may be smaller in numbers than in the past, at 15 brood mares, but is still an important part of the Hatfield operation. Just as Monty has done in raising quality Clydesdales, he has taken up the challenge of raising quality Shorthorns. There are few horse breeders who know Clydesdale history and pedigrees any better than Monty Thomson. I maintain that there are few Shorthorn breeders who know as much about Shorthorn pedigrees as well and Monty has gathered this vast amount of knowledge about the breed. It has been said that there are cattle



Hatfield Snow Duke 50A

breeders and cattle multipliers. Both of the groups of people have important roles in any breed. Cattle breeders are the people who don't just follow what other breeders are doing but they seek genetics that they feel will help them

design better cattle. The multipliers are the people who take the genetics developed by the breeders and multiply their numbers in the breed. Every breed needs the cattle breeders as well as the multipliers to thrive. In the few short

years that Monty Thomson has been involved with Shorthorn cattle, I think this story is premature, as there are many more chapters that will be written. Like he has done with his Clydesdales, I think Monty has already proven that he is a cattle breeder. I would urge anyone who has the opportunity to plan to visit the Hatfield operation and see the excellent quality herd of Shorthorns that Monty is putting together. I know that after your first visit, you will want to return again. I will be. ♦

