

# 100 years in Campbell County

## Important to continue Campbell County farm

By **EMILY RICHARDT**  
Special to the Farm Forum

ARTAS — Mark and Kathy Bentz's farm is located high on a hill, overlooking miles of the countryside.

"I think it's the highest place anyone lives in all of the county," Marks said. "There used to be one higher, but nobody lives there anymore."

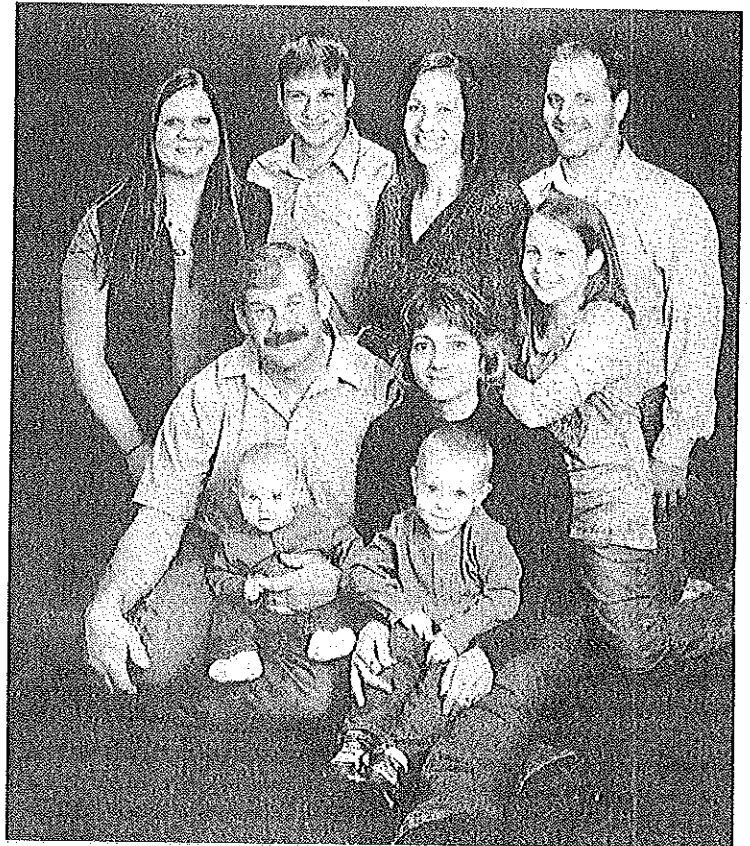
It's a view the Bentz family has been enjoying for about 30 years. But before that, Mark's ancestors enjoyed it for many, many more.

The Bentz farm is 106 years old. It was honored this year as a Century Farm

### Century Farm Mark and Kathy Bentz Artas Campbell County

at the South Dakota State Fair.

Christian Bentz immigrated from Russia to Campbell County in 1886. He settled on a farm close to where the Bentz farm now stands. The Bentz name used to be spelled without a "t" (Benz). The "t" was added when the family came to the United States.



Courtesy photo

Mark and Kathy Bentz are owners of a Century Farm in Campbell County, with their children Janine, Suzanne, Michael and Kayloni.

"The reason they came this far (up into Campbell County) is because everything along their way was homesteaded already," Mark said.

Christian died in 1907. Jakob, the only surviving child, homesteaded on the

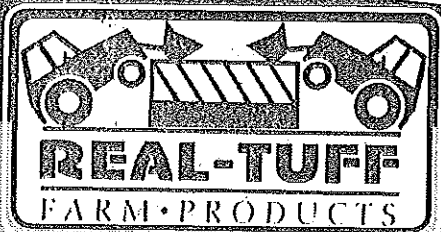
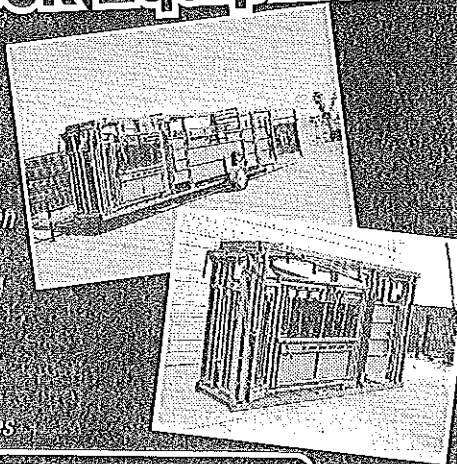
current Bentz farm in 1905. Jakob was Mark's great grandfather. After Jakob came Henry Bentz, Mark's grandfather. And after Henry, came Alfred and Anna — Mark's parents.

After high school, Mark

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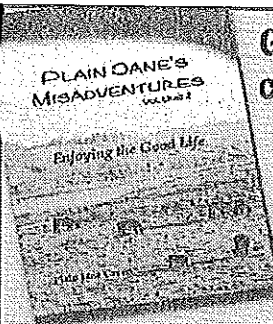
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went to school in Mitchell for two years before returning to the farm.

"I came home and asked my dad if I could start a dairy farm," the 53-year-old Mark said.

Mark borrowed the money and started milking. "Back then, the expenses weren't so high," he said. "We worked like nuts."

Mark and Kathy milked for 27 years before giving it up a few years ago. "It was hard letting the cows go," Kathy, 48, said.

Now, the family raises cattle, pigs, horses and even puppies. "I'm not a grain farmer much," Mark said.

The farm has been good to them and their four children: Janine, who is married with two children and a third on the way; Suzanne, who works for a farmer; Michael, who goes to college in Mitchell, and Kayloni, a fourth grader.

"I don't know if I'll ever live in town," Mark said.

"It's the wide-open spaces I love," added Kathy.

The Bentz farm is a piece of history.

While the old house is still standing on the property, the Bentzs live in a more modern one. The old house is used for storage and for hunters that find their way to the farm this time of year.

A few of the outbuildings still are standing, and grandpa's old threshing machine is still working, Mark said.

"It's something special to have a farm that's been in the family 100 years," he said. "I'm kind of glad it's in the family."



Courtesy photo  
Shown is the original Bentz house, built by Jakob Bentz in 1905. The house is still standing.

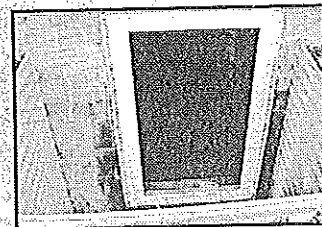
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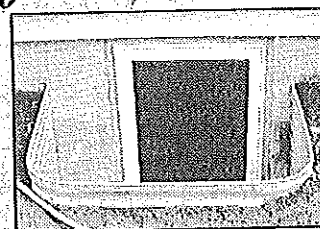
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