

*February 7, 2015*

*To my future generations:*

*The farm at this time is known as Fork Tail Farms. It is located at 1044 F 66 County Road, Avoca Iowa. The history of*this*farm begins when Ernest, Leona and Darrell Mohr moved to it as renters in 1955. The history of how much farming meant to Leona and Ernest goes back to the farms they were raised on. I have gained this information and insight by being the daughter-in-law to the two of them.*

*Leona (Krems) was in the middle of eight children raised on a farm near Big Springs Nebraska. Her mother raised an enterprising daughter who could garden, preserve and cook delicious meals on what was raised.  She also went to school to be a beautician.*

*Ernest was the second in his family of four siblings. He began farming “in ernest” at the age of eleven when his father unexpectedly died. The Mohr Farm he was raised on was south of Avoca. His mother and her children were able to keep this farm when many were losing theirs.*

*After marriage, Ernest and Leona faced a great change at the will of the U.S. Army. Our country was at war (W.W.II), and Ernest was drafted. He served in the 20th Armored Division. His unit was one of the armies credited with liberating the concentration camp of Dachau. Leona followed Ernest when he was state side, working as a beautician. At this point I might enter, that Ernest chose to drive a gas truck for the Division. His thinking was that he did not want to come home maimed and not be able to farm. He knew if his truck was hit there would not be a survivor.*

*Upon his return, the home farm that he thought he would live on was then occupied by his younger brother Melvin, who was married with twin sons. His mother at the time decided this was the choice she needed to make. Ernest then began farming with Melvin always on rented land near the home place. In 1955, however, he made a move north of Avoca. I know your Dad will tell you in his letter what that farm looked like at the time and the amount of work and fierce will it took to make it better.*

*When I think of the farm as I found it upon marriage to Darrell, I remember that Ernest had hogs and cattle. This is in 1973. A beautiful golden retriever dog named “Goldie” resided there too. Ernest not only farmed that place but rented other land. The place was always well kept on the outside as well as on the in. The lovely blue grass lawn stands out in my mind with the trees that bordered on the west and north.*

*Leona’s garden was a marvel. I especially remember fresh peas and how she would make this delightful dish of new potatoes creamed with fresh peas. Her strawberries were the best ever. When it came time to put up sweet corn she had us all at a station to keep the process moving smoothly. There is one incident that at the time I looked at it in disdain. Now I see her methods of “waste not, want not.” I was pregnant with Darren and Leona remarked that before we left she would like Darrell to help her get the squab down at the barn.  This silly “town girl” thought we must be getting some vegetable. Darrell knocked down some nests of pigeons and right there she took off their heads and de-feathered them to prepare them to cook. I went around the barn and threw-up. As I said I thought it was disgusting at the time, but now look upon it as being raised to be resourceful.*

*Ernest’s work was also his recreation. When they built a golf course in Avoca, he remarked that he did not need to swing a club. He could get the same exercise with a scythe swinging at weeds.*

*Hopefully in the future, there will always be living on this land someone who would work it, fulfilling the idea of farming with pride. I would want them to conserve, improve soil and water quality. I would want them to keep themselves educated on healthy farm practices, so that, even another 30 years down the road, this land is beneficial not only to the owners and those they serve but to the agricultural community.*

*I would want my immediate heirs to receive to the best of my ability equal economic value. Harmony in the family is important as well as all recognizing the value of this farm.*

*Right now, Amber, Jeremy and children are living in the farmhouse and using the acreage and buildings for a poultry and vegetable farm business. They are renting the house from the trust. If in the future they would want to expand their business and add more land to it, I would hope our other children (Darren and Laura) would be supportive. Amber has told me that she might be living there but she sees it as the” Mohr Farm” and her siblings can be a part of it at anytime.*

*I am an in-law, but I do understand the history of this farm and I always hope for its bright future.*

***--Mary Christine Mohr***