

CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANTS (CIG) VETERAN FARMER CASE STUDY



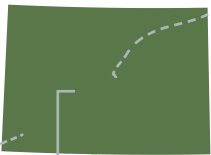
Ben Schole

“ I always had a calling to be a farmer. ”

BEN'S STORY



Enlisted in the U.S. Army from 1968 to 1971.



Used the G.I. Bill to further his education at Colorado State University.

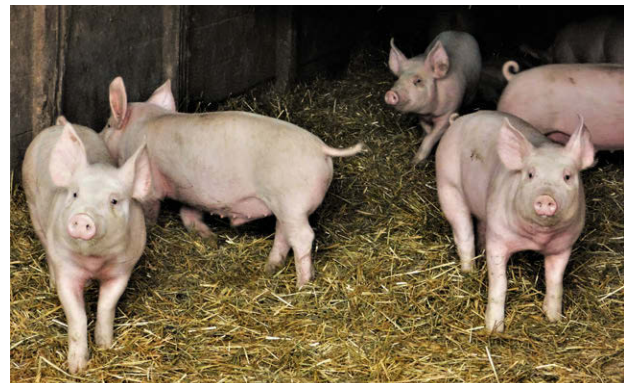


Worked at Nebraska Game and Parks Commission as a wildlife habitat manager for a decade before returning to the family farm.

GENERATIONS OF FARMERS

“ I always knew I wanted to come back. My father retired from farming when he was 73 years old, which gave me the chance to return in 1983. I've been farming this land for 35 years, and today, my two sons and their families work the land with me. ”

“ Having a land ethic is very important. More and more farmers are learning that what they do to grow crops and livestock affects soil life, ground and surface water, air quality and total land health. ”



CONSERVATION PRACTICES

- Has utilized Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wetlands CRP, and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).
- Uses cover crops including turnips, radishes, and oats, and is re-establishing wind breaks; composting hog's bedding; and doing split-application of fertilizers.



“ Our recreation is connected to our farm—we enjoy the land and where we live. ”

-Ben on the importance of wildlife and hunting

ADVICE FOR BEGINNING VETERAN FARMERS



“ Find your passion and a mentor. Start small and grow gradually—there is a learning curve. If anything can go wrong, it will. And, bring an enterprise into the farming operation instead of just saying ‘we need more acres.’ ”



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