

raises animals, at 76 years young

they bought the 140 acres of farm ground surrounding the farmstead.

There's been other purchases of land since then. She said they began farming two quarters of land they bought from her dad's estate on the Thomas-Rawlins County line in 1985. All the while, Betty continued to work.

She worked at Anthony's clothing store and when her application for a job at the new Walmart store came through she went to work there, and stayed for 18 years, retiring in 2006.

Betty said that after John passed away in 1988, she tried to do it all, but found the car wash to be just too much, so she sold it.

"All those years, after I got off work at Walmart, I'd come home and feed the animals and then get on the tractor and work until around midnight until what ever operation I was on, was done.

"My youngest son was a geologist living in Imperial, Neb., and he'd help me hook the tractor up to the machinery and I'd go until I was done."

Rundel said the thing she liked the least was pulling an anhydrous tank, because you never know where those things are going.

"They slosh if you go too fast, and then start swerving and if you go too slow down a hill, they'll try to out run you. I upset one once, and it scared me to death, but you do what you have to do."

Rundel doesn't look her 76 years, but is tan from hours in the sun and says she is healthy from all the fresh air and hard work. She still drives the tractor in spite of the scoldings she gets from her family.

She said that after spending a third of last year's crop on custom harvesting, she tried a new venture this year. She made the decision to own her own combine and semi truck, and after a trip to the banker to tell him how much she'd like to spend, she headed for an

auction.

"The boys made me do the bidding," she said, "and Tom said, 'Mom, you're at your limit,' but I went \$2,000 over what I'd intended to spend because it was a great combine, and when he told me I was at my limit, I just said, 'I'm going to own that combine.'"

"When I told the banker I'd gone over by \$2,000, he said he was prepared for me to go over by \$5,000, so I guess it was okay."

Rundel said her sons have told her she shouldn't be driving a combine at her age.

"Wait until milo harvest," she said. "I'm gonna be on that baby!"

She said she really likes the tractor she has now as well, but couldn't get in the cab until her sons welded on a lower step.

"Now they don't want me to run it," she said, "but I do whenever they say I can."

She still has a few animals that she hand-feeds, and a good farm dog who is lots of company and a great protector, keeping the coyotes away from the farm yard.

She also mows her beautiful flower-studded yard and the entire farm stead of about four or five acres. She said the reason she has worked so hard is because she was determined to not lose her farm, and she was willing to do what ever it took.

"I love having something to do," she said. "I feed the turkeys, the geese, the chickens and a few sheep, but decided that after last year's long winter, I wouldn't lamb out any more ewes in the snow and cold."

She pointed proudly to a sign that declared her the Farm Bureau "Farm Family of the Year," and said she had dressed seven chickens for the freezer that morning, and would probably try for Thomas County Century Farm designation next year.

There's just not a better life than being on the farm, she said.



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Rundel is proud of her Farm Family of the Year award from the Farm Bureau. She said she may try for a Century Farm designation – which recognizes farms that have been owned by the same family for 100 years or more – next year.

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