



The Schutz family farms the same land in White Hall as their German ancestors did in the 1850s. Today, the fifth, sixth and seventh generations of Schutzes grow corn and care for cattle and hogs. The family includes, from left to right, Chad Schutz; his oldest daughter, Lana; his wife, Stacy; his younger daughter, Bridget; his father, Kenny; his sister-in-law, Jackie, and her infant daughter, Taylor; and his brother, Brock. (Photo by Michael Conti/Illinois Partners, ilfbpartners.com)

Family Farms Not Defined by Size or Structure

Farm families own and operate more than 94 percent of Illinois farms. Farms vary from small to large operations as do other family businesses.

Some family farms comprise a small number of acres compared to others that are large and specialized. Farms may differ in size and scale, but one is not inherently better than the other.

Some family farms must support two or three generations of family members, while others provide a livelihood for a single family. Family members provide most of the labor and management.

Oftentimes, family farms have been passed from generation to generation by people who have a deep passion for raising animals, growing crops and carrying on their family tradition.

Don't confuse the term family farm with a business model. Farming is a small business. Farmers may form partnerships or incorporate their farms for tax and business purposes, but farm families own the business.

Illinois family farms raise diverse livestock and crops, but most of the land is planted in grains and oilseeds.

