

Longtime farmer thrilled to be a 'calendar girl' at 85

By **TED BROWN**
Staff Writer

Last year, longtime beef farmer Sandy Grant of Halton Hills was chosen to represent the beef breeders of Halton and Peel, for the month of August, on the 2012 Faces of Farming calendar, published by the Farm Care Foundation.

The 85-year-old Grant was sponsored by Canada Beef Inc, and was contacted last summer by Kelly Daynard, communications manager for Farm and Food Care Ontario, telling her she'd been nominated for the honour.

"I was a bit surprised, shocked almost," said the Fifth Line resident.

"I never expected to be photographed as a 'calendar girl,'" joked Grant, "especially at my age."

Grant was notified that she'd been chosen last July, and in early August, she was visited by a photographer, complete with a makeup person.

"At first I didn't want to do it (be photographed)," said Grant, "but Kelly (Daynard) could be very persuasive. I spent a half hour having my makeup done, and I think the photographer shot around 250 photos of me."

The energetic mother of nine and grandmother of 14 moved from the city to her Halton Hills farm in 1971 with her family, and has had animals ever since. She admits the neighbours did not know

what to think of her and her husband at first, but as time went on, relationships were formed and friends made.

"I always thought it would be nice to live on a farm. After years of having horses and ponies, I wanted to try something different so I bought my first four heifers in the early 1980s," said Grant.

Now those four heifers have grown to a herd of more than 30, and since she only owns 14 acres, she must rent pastureland from her neighbours, to be able to feed them.

"I don't drive a tractor, said Grant, "so one of my neighbours comes in with his tractor to move (round) bales for me so I can feed the cattle in the winter. In the summer, they are on pasture."

Running a cow-calf operation takes a great deal of talent and planning, as Grant has to organize the breeding of her cattle, then be around when the calves are born, to make sure the cows and calves don't have any complications.

Grant's cows calve in the spring while on pasture. When the time comes for her calves to be sold, Grant goes to the sale and watches, wishing she could get feedback from the buyers on how the calves do after leaving her farm.

"You get attached to those animals," said Grant.

Not only is Grant attached to her cattle, also to the land and the lifestyle. She



Sandy Grant with her cattle on her Fifth Line farm. The 85-year-old has been raising beef cattle on her 14-acre farm for years. (Below) As a calendar girl (August) for the 2012 Faces of Farming calendar.

Top photo by Ted Brown

refers to herself as "an old lady trying to live out a dream," and is quite happy farming.

"I like being in the country. I'm the luckiest person in the world because I have trees and fields around me. I like the land and my cows," says Grant.

Grant doesn't stop at just running her cow-calf operation. She's also the secretary of the Peel-Halton Cattleman's Association (since 1985), and sits on Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee (HAAC), a group that gives input to help set agricultural policy for staff and council at the Regional level. She is also a director on the Halton Federation of Agriculture, and is a volunteer canvasser for cancer.



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