For 100 years five generations of the Buckner family has cared for the land and livestock and sold milk on their farm in Fair Grove, Mo. It all started when William Franklin Bucker and wife, Tina, purchased 60 acres in 1914. During William’s lifetime he increased the farm size to 160 acres. William passed away in the farmhouse on July 15, 1966, at 76 years old.

William passed on his love and knowledge for the farm to grandson, Charles Buckner. After Charles’ mom passed away when he was just three weeks old, Charles went to live with his grandparents. Charles along with his aunt, Mary Buckner Smith, were raised on the dairy farm helping with everything from hauling hay to milking.

The original milk barn, which still stands on the Buckner farm, had 19 stanchions. Each cow had a designated stanchion and was trained to enter the barn and go to their spot. The homemade milk stool that Charles once used still hangs in the old barn. Charles shared, “We didn’t get electricity until 1957 when I was a junior in high school so we would milk by lantern.”

Charles married Katherine on September 30, 1961, and together they have four children, Tammy Lynn, Janet, William and Sherry. The couple has 10 grandchildren. “When we first married we milked 13 cows by hand,” recalled Katherine.

During high school Charles was a member of the Fair Grove FFA, at tradition that has carried on with his children and grandchildren.

Charles purchased the farm from his grandfather in 1964 and were milking 35 head. That same year they installed a pipeline milker and used a 300 gallon tank. In order to start selling Grade A milk they built a new barn in 1969 and installed a 1,000 gallon tank. Then in 2000, they upgraded again and installed a 2,000 gallon tank to accommodate their growing herd.

“We went from producing three, 10 gallon cans of cream per day to producing 7,000 pounds of milk per day,” said Charles.

Tammy added, “We put in four weigh jars in 1986 and then put in another four several years later.”

In the 1980s the Buckners raised registered Holstein cows. Today 1/3 of their herd is Holstein, 1/3 is Jersey and 1/3 is crossbred. They continued to increase their herd size and today milk 150 and also run 100 head of stock cows. Charles eventually purchased more land and now owns 400 acres and rents an additional 800 acres. Five years ago the family started raising heifers on a contract bases and raise 200-300 heifers each year.

William and Tammy currently help Charles and Katherine manage the farm. “Tammy is my right hand and William is my left,” stated Charles proudly. Janet occasionally helps on the farm and Sherry lives on a farm Charles once owned in Dallas County.

Staying active in the industry Charles is the DFA Chairman of District 420, which lies in Greene and Christian Counties. He has been a DFA voting delegate for the past 10 years. He has also been on the Greene County Farm Bureau board for the past 40 years.