

Rebuilt Barn Captures Comforts Of Home

By Ann Bailey

When Luella and Arne Eickson send visitors out to the barn to drink their coffee, no one is offended.

This is no ordinary barn — it's a recreation and social center that features all the comforts of home. The 77-year-old red barn, on the Erickson's farm about 15 miles southeast of Roseau, Minn., attracts visitors and passersby from miles around. Foot-high white letters nailed to the front of the former cow and horse barn greet visitors with "Var Gramla Gard" — that's Swedish for "Our Old Farm."

About seven years ago, Arne planned to bulldoze the lean-to on the east side of the barn. "I figured I was going to shove it out there," he says pointing toward a field near the barn.

But Luella had other ideas — she wanted to repair and furnish the lean-to. "The house was small and I love to entertain."

"She won," he says with a smile.

A refrigerator, stove, couch, chairs, tables, a swing with room for three adults and knick-knacks furnish the lean-to. A breeze on a recent September day ruffled the bright pink and purple petunias that hang in baskets along the lean-to's edge.

Luella was still teaching kindergarten when they remodeled the barn and Arne was busy farming, so they spent many evening hours working. They did all the work themselves, except for the wiring, which they hired an electrician to do.

They hauled many loads of old hay, junk and other waste from the barn to the local landfill. "The manure was yea high," Luella says, gesturing toward a spot on the wall about 4½ feet high. They finished remodeling the lean-to by 1980.

During the summer, Luella cooks and serves all her dinners in the lean-to. "When the men come in from threshing, they love to come in here."

Luella enjoyed entertaining in the lean-to so much that she decided to expand the remodeling project to include the main part of the barn.

"She won again," Arne said. They left in place all the original hand-hewn logs and beams and the hay that was stuck between the logs for insulation. In 1982, they completed the remodeling.

"We roll back the rug when we have dances," Arne says. Every summer, they have several country-western dances for young and old. The Erickson's don't charge admission, but someone usually passes around a hat to help defray the bands' cost, he says.

Beyond the living room, is the dining area with several tables decorated with bright tablecloths. The original horse mangers are covered

with boards and carpet and used as counters.

Each former stall in the dining area has a theme. Knick-knacks and post-cards from Luella's visit to Sweden a couple of years ago decorate "The Swedish Room." A patchwork tablecloth and carpet remnants in a multitude of reds, greens and blues decorate "The Patch Room."

The Erickson's guest book is full of visitors, including a family from Africa, who have stopped by to see the barn. They have held family reunions, 4th of July celebrations, Garden Club meetings, Girl Scout meetings and rummage sales in the barn.

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**FARM
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Ag World

Editor's Note: Most of what goes into Ag World stems from story ideas sent to us by readers. This special section of FARM SHOW touches on the lighter side of farming and ranching — everything from human interest stories, to unusual hobbies, to unique things farm families are doing for fun or profit.

If you've read or heard a good Ag World type story you'd like to share with others, send it to: FARM SHOW, Box 1029, Lakeville, Minn. 55044.



Arne and Luella Erickson stand in the doorway of "The Barn".

Photo courtesy Grand Forks Herald

HIGH VANTAGE POINT HELPS HIM GUARD HIS TERRAIN

Watch Dog Inspects Company From The Roof

You can't get away with anything on the High McFarland farm in Mercer County, Ohio because perched high above the farmyard — on the house roof — is a sharp-eyed watchdog.

The conscientious beagle runs up on the roof every time a visitor pulls into the yard. It surprises passersby, who can't see that the roof runs down

to within 2 ft. of the ground at the rear of the house. The dog just jumps up at the low point and runs over the peak to the high side.

Sharp-eyed Beagle maintains his high-altitude vigil.



Photo courtesy Mabel Campbell, Farm & Dairy