

2019 Deb Dalziel Woman Entrepreneurial Award

Sara Winkleman is the entrepreneur behind S&B Farmstead Distillery in Bancroft, Iowa. Sara doesn't come from a long family line of distillers, nor does she have any specialized academic knowledge or training in distilling. In fact, until a few years ago, Sara didn't really know much about the process of creating whisky. For most people it probably seemed a little bit crazy to launch a business in such a heavily regulated field, but Sara's no stranger to hard work and difficult challenges.



In 2009 Sara was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). Over three years she dealt with memory loss, vertigo, and double vision. Every day was a challenge. But gradually Sara's condition improved, and she has since been able to participate in many MS walks to raise awareness of the disease.

Throughout this challenge she has been a wife, proud mother of two, and an entrepreneur. She started her career as a hair stylist and salon owner. At home on the farm, she works alongside her husband working with their hogs and their corn crop. It was on the farm that she got the inspiration for whisky products made with Iowa corn. Sara traveled south to learn from some of the best moonshiners in the country, and her plans for a business began to form.

Sara contacted the Northwest Iowa Small business Development Center for assistance. Northwest Iowa SBDC Regional Director Michael Wampler worked with Sara on detailed financial projections and helped her develop her business model. Sara carefully studied the industry, and with the help of the SBDC launched her company in 2018.

With the help of the SBDC Sara obtained financing and successfully launched three initial whiskeys with a new bourbon coming soon. She also collaborated with local vendors to enhance tourism and served as a mentor to other new distillers attempting to launch.

