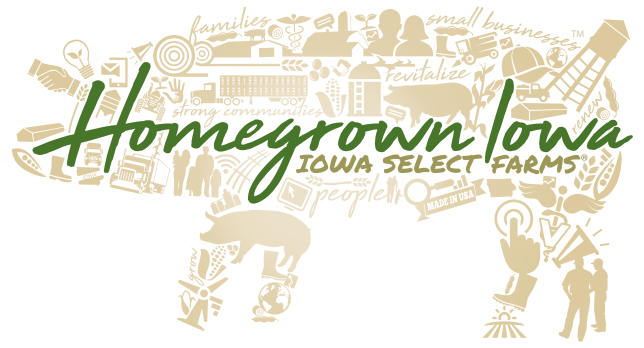


# Three new farms Twenty farm families

**\$5,506,000 ADDED ECONOMIC IMPACT TO THE STATE OF IOWA**



“ Agriculture is now, as it’s always been, the basis of civilization. The six million farms of the United States...form the basis of all other achievements of the American people, and are more fruitful than all their other resources.

—PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT

As 2018 draws to a close, we reflect on and recognize the unwavering resilience of farmers. Many in agriculture will remember this year for its uncertainty. Grain farmers were already feeling pinched after consecutive years of a depressed farm economy when tariffs on many agriculture goods were announced this summer. Tariffs on pork exports to China and Mexico and the rampant spread of African Swine Fever through China, Russia and Poland sent chills throughout the pork industry.

*Yet through it all we took the time to celebrate.* We celebrated the continued spirit of farmers across Iowa and our nation, taking special note of the passion, drive and commitment of our younger generation. Young people who see a bright future in agriculture, laying the groundwork for future generations to be able to live and thrive in rural communities.

In this issue of *Homegrown Iowa* we'll introduce you to a few of those optimistic, young farmers—Trent Hatlen, Jordan Vansice, Adam Swalla, Megan Foster and Shaun Walkup. All living in different rural Iowa communities, with different, but important, roles in pig care. And all representing communities that are benefitting from the growth of livestock.



**IOWA SELECT FARMS  
WILL GENERATE  
A TOTAL ANNUAL  
ECONOMIC OUTPUT OF  
\$1.5 BILLION  
BY 2019**





Jordan Vansice

## JORDAN VANSICE MELBOURNE, IOWA



**Jordan, his wife, Stacia and their children, Lilie and Staden live on a Century Farm in Marshall County near the town of Melbourne, Iowa. Jordan and Stacia are fifth generation farmers and recently celebrated the opening of Hog Heaven.**

Jordan and his parents used to raise pigs. His mom, Jodi, ran a farrowing house and nursery. His father, Doug, looked after the finishing. They also had a cow-calf operation. "Then 1998 came, and we knew we either needed to invest more or get out," said Jordan. "We got out."

The Vansice's made do with the income from grain and custom-feeding cattle for a neighbor. They also rented out their pasture ground to an uncle. But with the recent hard times in the grain sector, Jordan and his father met with Farm Credit Services of America to discuss options. They recommended that with these hard times they should look at a pig barn to replace commercial fertilizer costs, but also for the additional income.

His lender had information on the different options—contract production, crop fertility programs and opportunities in pig care.

Then, the Vansices started doing their research, even making pro and con lists and working the napkin math. "There is a lot of opportunity here, but we wanted to find the right one," said Jordan. "We spent a lot of time reviewing our options with the different production companies."

"Iowa Select Farms kept rising to the top of the list," said Jordan. "They are Iowa-based. They help our communities, and they do a lot for Iowa farmers—these things were really important to us. We appreciated their Foundation programs and the effort they put into every aspect of the business. We made our decision."

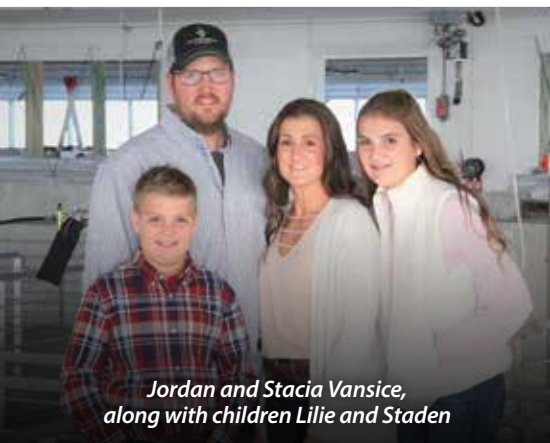
In March, they sold a small piece of their farm ground for the barn and will begin receiving manure for their cropground next fall. Jordan and his family will also chore the 4,800 head barn every day, and in return receive a steady income.

Their new barn received weaned pigs earlier in December. "My mom's excited," said Jordan. "Pigs are her favorite animal, and my wife and daughter are both animal lovers, too." Staden, his nine-year old, is ready to follow in his father's footsteps. "He's starting 4-H and FFA, and wants to help with the chores when he's old enough," said Jordan.

"I'm thankful for this opportunity," said Jordan. "I'm grateful to my grandpa and grandma and mom and dad for giving me the chance to carry this farm on. I'll never be able to tell them enough how grateful I am."

Jordan is also grateful to his neighbors, especially the closest neighbor who signed a waiver to allow the barn to be built where it was. "It means a lot to me to have their support."

## HOG HEAVEN Finisher Farm



Jordan and Stacia Vansice, along with children Lilie and Staden



Staden Vansice



Four Generations at Vansice Family Farms

## TRENT HATLEN REMBRANDT, IOWA



Over in Buena Vista county lives Trent Hatlen and his daughter, Adrian. His mom, Linda is their neighbor just across the lane. Trent got his first opportunity to raise pigs on his parents' farm, years ago. Now the 43-year-old is doing the same for his daughter, Adrian.

The Hatlen family recently cut the ribbon at Adrian's Finisher Farm, a 4,800-head finishing farm built on his Century Farm outside of Rembrandt. Trent is now a contract grower for Iowa Select Farms. He owns the barn, will benefit from the manure and take care of the pigs.

The Hatlens began raising pigs on the family's farrow-to-finish farm in the 1970s. In 1997, Trent bought the sow herd and sold wean pigs to his parents. But tough markets forced Hatlen to cut back on livestock and eventually get out of pig raising to focus solely on crops.

"Farming's been really tough the last couple years — super tough," Hatlen said. "I farm the family farm just by myself, corn and soybeans. My mom's always been super supportive and we're just kind of scratching our heads, asking 'How do I continue to keep farming?'"

While at a farm show, Trent struck up a conversation with an ag lender, who asked if he had ever looked into a contract grower arrangement. "Since that initial discussion, things have just fallen into place," he said. "It's a huge investment, but this is giving me a chance to diversify and is a great opportunity. I couldn't be more excited to be back in livestock farming."

Hatlen said the contract grower arrangement will give him a steady income while he pays off the 12-year note on the barn. He will start saving on fertilizer costs next fall, which comes with the added bonus of his ground becoming more productive with manure. "Livestock is a lifesaver for me and my family."

Trent is a single parent to his daughter, Adrian, who is a junior in high school. The farm is named in honor of Adrian, who was herself named after the eponymous character from the 1976 film "Rocky." Trent said he wanted his daughter to "go to college and experience life," but still be able to have a future in farming.

Adrian's Finisher Farm has a number of features ranging from windbreaks, to new technologies. The facility's vegetative windbreaks garnered the farm a Coalition for Support Iowa's Farmers Green Farmstead Partner designation.

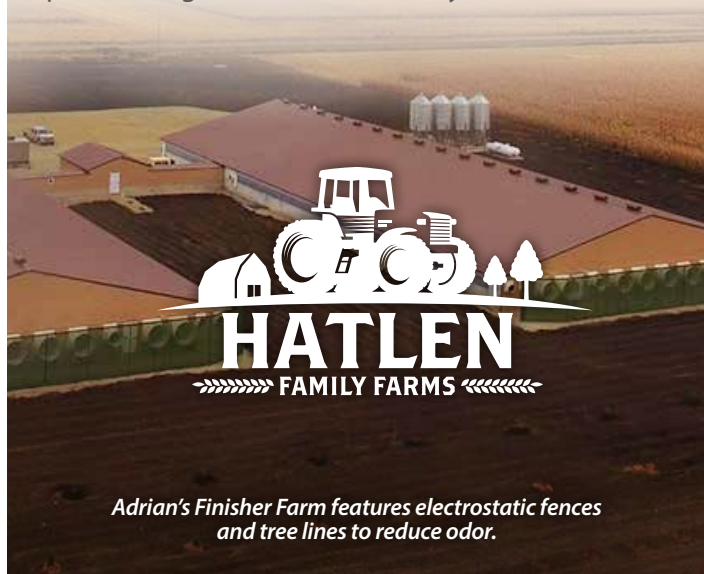
Trent worked through the Coalition's Green Farmstead Partner Program and Deboer Tree Farm in Akron to plan for trees around the farm. Trent also made the choice to reserve approximately 2 1/2 acres of land to serve as a wildflower preserve, one of the many additions he hoped would make a positive impact for neighbors and community.



Trent & Adrian Hatlen



Adrian, Linda and Trent Hatlen



Adrian's Finisher Farm features electrostatic fences and tree lines to reduce odor.



Adam, Sarah, Emrie and Ansen Swalla



## ADAM SWALLA WOODBURN, IOWA

**Down in south central Iowa, we cut a ribbon in honor of a new sow farm named after it's township, Smyrna. The opening of the farm brought together a team of farmers who will care for 7,500 sows at the new, state-of-the-art farm.**

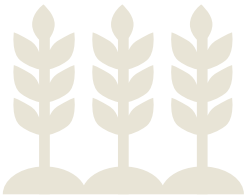
Adam Swalla is the manager of Smyrna. Eighteen people make up the Smyrna farm team, coming from the communities of Corydon, Allerton, Chariton, Russell, Derby, Woodburn, Osceola, Kellerton, Indianola and Albia.

The open house was an opportunity for Adam to bring his family to a sow farm, something that he's never been able to do in the nine years that he and his wife Sarah have been together. "Having my wife and kids here was really, really special for me," said Adam. "Not only because they finally get to see where I work, but because this farm also represents a completely new life for them, too."

Adam and Sarah, along with their three young children recently moved from Madrid down to southern Iowa, where they had the opportunity to buy Sarah's grandmother's home.

"It's the home Sarah's dad grew up in and now our kids will, too," said Adam. "We've been lucky to have family nearby willing to help us out. We're settling into our new community. We couldn't be more excited for this next chapter in our lives."

## SMYRNA Sow Farm



**IN COUNTIES WHERE LIVESTOCK GREW BY >10% ABOVE THE MEAN COUNTY INCOME GREW BY \$1 MILLION!**

Adam had previously been the manager of a sow farm near Stanhope, but got his start at Iowa Select Farms in 2006 as an intern. After graduating from Ellsworth Community College with a degree in swine management, he joined Iowa Select Farms fulltime in 2010.

It wasn't long before he was hitting his stride, leading teams of employees on breeding and farrowing farms. Always with impressive results, and a can-do attitude to match.

Adam reflected on his new farm and team, "It's high energy here and with a lot of positivity. There's so much potential, we can all feel it."



**Eighteen new jobs created in Clarke County—  
Smyrna Farm Team**

**MEGAN FOSTER**  
**ALLERTON, IOWA**



Megan Foster is the farrowing department head at Smyrna, a proud member of Adam's new farm team. She and her husband, Jeff, live in Allerton and have two small children. She started with Iowa Select Farms as an entry-level animal caretaker 18 months ago on a farm outside of Derby. She didn't have any experience in agriculture, let alone pig care.

Within six months of her start date, her supervisor, Doug Bates, approached her about the Production Leadership Program, a training and development program for employees who aspire to become a department head or manager.

Just a few months into the Production Leadership Program, construction crews broke ground at Smyrna, just a few miles down the road from her farm. Along with a new farm comes a new team, and new leadership opportunities.

Megan remembers the conversation with Doug, like it was yesterday. "He said I should apply for the farrowing department head position," said Megan. "I remember going home and writing seven pages of notes for a job I never thought I would get."

Doug thought otherwise. "When people like Megan show their passion, people tend to follow," said Doug. "From the beginning she's been a good communicator and great leader, all while absorbing the day-to-day of the farrowing department. I always tell people that anyone can do it if they want to and have the drive, and she has tremendous drive."

After an intense interview, during which Megan never used those notes, she got the job. Now she leads a team of six farmers.



Megan Foster



**AGRICULTURALLY DEPENDENT COUNTIES THAT DID NOT EXPERIENCE AN INCREASE IN LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION SUFFERED A LOSS IN COUNTY INCOME OF ALMOST \$17 MILLION DOLLARS.**



Smyrna Breeding Department



Farm manager Adam Swalla cuts the ribbon at Smyrna Sow Farm

**SHAUN WALKUP**  
**DIAGONAL, IOWA**



Shaun Walkup is the breeding department head at Smyrna. Shaun grew up on a row crop, swine and cattle farm south of Diagonal. When he was little, his parents raised feeder pigs and farrowed sows in an old farrowing shed. "I have always felt right at home around animals," reflected Shaun "I'm lucky to have found a great opportunity around my hometown."

While in high school, Shaun began working at Iowa Select Farms part time, rotating through breeding and farrowing at nearby sow and gilt development farms. He joined Iowa Select Farms fulltime after graduation; after a brief time away, he rejoined the company as an animal caretaker in January 2017, ready to make an impact.

This summer he applied for—and became—the breeding department head at Smyrna. Shaun always comes in ready to work.

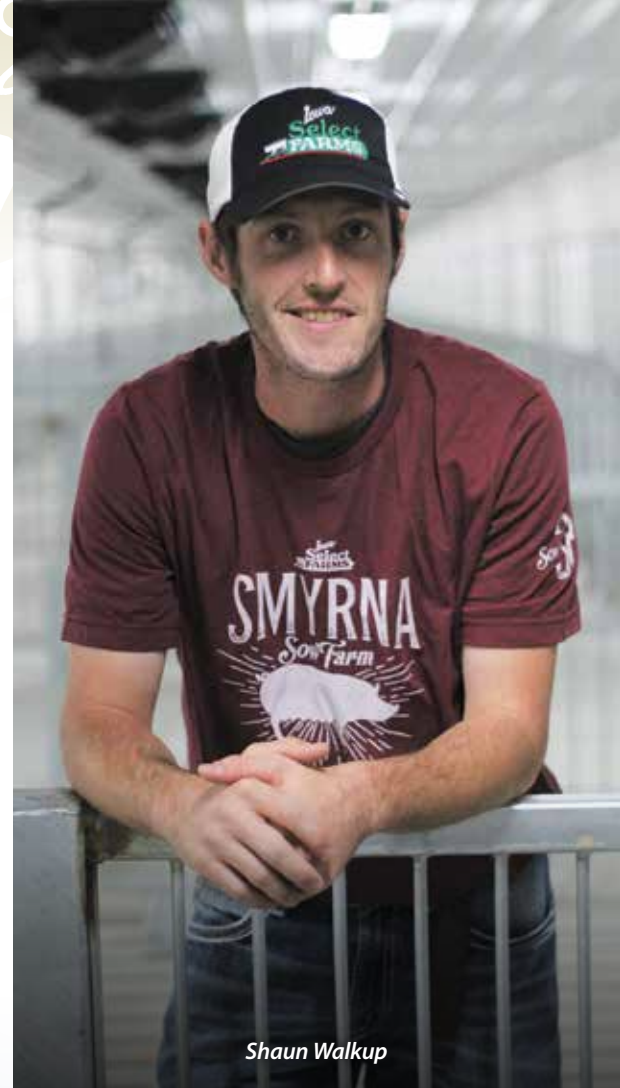
Don Hunt, a regional supervisor who recently moved his family to Derby, Iowa, says Shaun brings a lot of energy and passion to pork production. "He shows up motivated to jump in and start making progress," said Don. "Leaders like Shaun can't wait to get their teams as excited about pork production as he is, and show them the potential of what people can do."

"Looking back, I had great teachers and I am appreciative of that," said Shaun, reflecting on the managers who trained and coached him years ago. The "most influential teachers were my parents."

His dad, Robert, managed Parker Sow Farm for 16 years, and his mother, Misty, is the farrowing department head at Last Chance Sow Farm.

"My mom taught me to slow down a little, be patient and most of all be myself," said Shaun. "She's been a big influence on my life."

Maybe someday Trent and Jordan will get pigs raised on Adam, Megan and Shaun's farm. Until then, they are all united in their mission to raise healthy pigs to feed the world while cultivating deep family roots in rural Iowa. ■



Shaun Walkup



**Smyrna Sow Farm**  
Woodburn, Iowa



Each new sow farm creates 18 new jobs in rural Iowa

# COMMUNITIES GROW, THANKS TO LIVESTOCK

2018 marked the year we celebrated growth in rural Iowa. Growth of livestock farms grows jobs for Iowans living in rural areas, which in turn grows incomes and generates more business in small communities.



Livestock growth keeps families living and working in rural Iowa

<b>Smyrna Sow Farm</b>	<b>\$4,700,000 annual economic impact</b>
<b>Adrian's Finisher</b>	<b>\$403,000 annual economic impact</b>
<b>Hog Heaven Finisher</b>	<b>\$403,000 annual economic impact</b>
<b>\$5,506,000 added economic impact to the state of Iowa</b>	

Dr. Dermot Hayes, ISU Economist, says Smyrna sow farm will generate a \$4.7 million economic impact to Iowa every year. That impact begins with \$700,000 in payroll, then factors in the added corn and soybean consumption and the new business Iowa Select Farms will do with local utilities and services providers.



Iowa Select Farms directly and indirectly will employ 10,961 people by 2019.

A sow farm is a "living and breathing business," which means it needs nurturing 24/7 through usage of energy, Internet, feed and trucking. It also captures the indirect impact of what those 18 people and their families mean to local restaurants, grocery stores, gas stations and main street businesses.

While finishing farms have less economic impact compared to the larger high tech, sophisticated breeding and farrowing farms, the impact to farm families like the Vansice's and Hatlen's is significant.

Dr. Hayes says one, 4,800 finisher will generate \$403,000 in annual economic impact, factoring in the farm incomes, local business support, value of manure and increase consumption of local corn and soybeans.

"Livestock growth is a viable way to save rural areas," Hayes said. Studies show that counties with a high dependence on agriculture grew more slowly than others, but those where livestock production increased fared better." ■



Iowa Select Farms provides a primary income for 750 young farmers.



Mikey Jones with his son, Jaxton, Lucas



Jeff King,  
Rockwell City



Keely Bradley, Indianola



Trent & Adrian Hatlen, Rembrandt



Carissa Cobb Family, Corydon



Adam and Ansen Swalla,  
St. Mary



Celebrating Hog Heaven Finisher



Jordan Vansice Family, Melbourne

# Iowa Select Farms

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IOWA SELECT FARMS

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