

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.

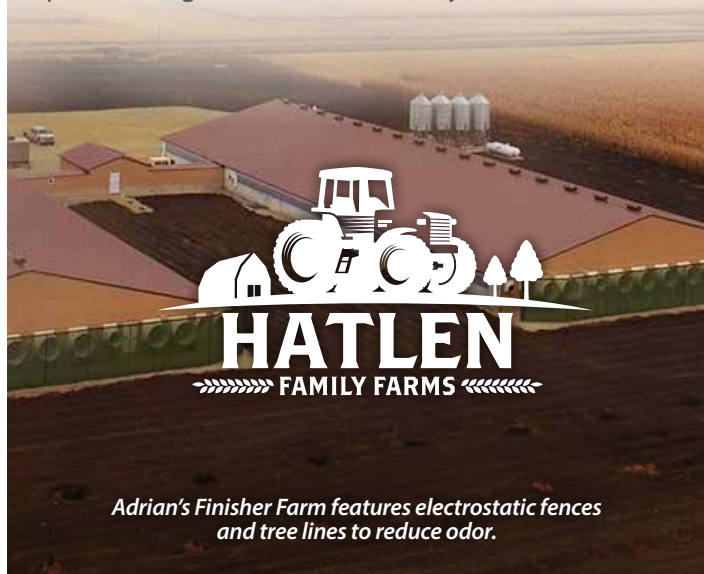
Trent worked through the Coalition's Green Farmstead Partner Program and Deboer Tree Farm in Akron to plan for trees around the farm. Trent also made the choice to reserve approximately 2 1/2 acres of land to serve as a wildflower preserve, one of the many additions he hoped would make a positive impact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