

Farm Prosperity Rooted in Vibrant Rural Communities

TJ Hansell Profile

Tyler (TJ) Hansell, a fifth-generation farmer rooted in the agricultural legacy of Hermiston, Oregon, carries a rich family history that spans several generations. Born into the dynamic world of farming, TJ's legacy begins with his grandfather, Bill, and his uncle, Stafford, who started a hog ranch in Hermiston on land acquired from the decommissioned town of Ordinance. This strategic move transformed their modest hog operation into one of the largest privately-owned enterprises.

The Hansell legacy extends beyond Hermiston, reaching back to TJ's great-great-grandfather, a horse trader who settled in Athena after meeting his future wife during his travels. The family name, Hansell, became synonymous with farming in Athena, and through generations, they have cultivated a lasting connection to the land.

Growing up, TJ's father managed both the farm in Athena and in Hermiston after the property was split between TJ's grandfather and his brother in 1977. The commitment to farming crossed the generations. From a young age, TJ and his brothers were involved in the daily operations of the farm, starting with the task of pulling rye- a weed that has a similar composition to wheat and had to be removed by walking the fields. The hands-on experience and a deep-rooted connection to the land have been integral to TJ's identity, shaping him into a dedicated steward of the family's agricultural heritage.

The family's commitment to farming was underscored by the requirement for the next generation to attain a college degree before returning to the farm. TJ pursued a degree in history at Washington State University, with an agricultural economics minor. This combination has proven instrumental in navigating the complexities of data analysis and decision-making within agriculture.

In 2008, TJ's father passed away, leaving behind the management of the family farm. Despite their youth, TJ and his siblings took the reins of the operation, guided by the training and advice imparted by their father. Through a blend of strategic decisions and support from family and friends, the Hansell siblings successfully steered the farm through challenges. Today, TJ, along with his brothers, oversees the Hermiston property, focusing on an irrigated farm with crop variations every year. Cognizant of the volatility in input prices, they have adjusted their strategy to include risk-averse practices, opting to cultivate alfalfa and silage corn while renting out land for higher cash crops. These strategic decisions have helped ensure continued prosperity.

Prosperity for the farm requires a strong community, though, so TJ also focuses on community service as one way to ensure their rural communities remain vibrant places to raise their families. It is another long-standing family tradition: TJ's father was instrumental in creating Farmers Ending Hunger, an organization that connects the generosity of farm products in the state with those facing food insecurity. Hansell Farms was a key contributor to the organization in its first years and has donated every year since its inception.

That service is not restricted to their local community, as TJ has continually expanded his role within statewide and national organizations. In 2021, he was appointed to a producer position on the Oregon Wheat Commission. He quickly integrated into a leadership role at the Commission where he serves as Chair and currently represents the Commission on both the U.S. Wheat Associates Board of Directors and the Pacific Northwest Wheat Quality Council. It is a role he accepted with great care. “I am committed to serving my state, my community and my profession,” states TJ. “As a farmer and landowner, I appreciate the importance of being a good steward of the land and of preserving the natural resources of our great state.”

The fifth generation in a line of resilient and innovative farmers, TJ Hansell stands at the forefront of a legacy that continues to thrive, adapting to the challenges of modern agriculture, while preserving the values and traditions passed down through generations.