

Deacon and Erin Heideman: Loving What You Do

If you ask Erin Hansell Heideman what she loves most about her life at Blown Away Ranch, she can't name just one thing.

"All of it, I love all of it."

For most people, starting the day at 4:45 AM to take care of household tasks before getting your three sons ready for the day, and then heading off for a full day of teaching, while partnering with your husband and his family to run a large ranch would sound overwhelming. For Erin, it is where she thrives.

"This is just where I want to be," she says. "I can't imagine living anywhere else...although the 57-mile trip to the grocery store, that stinks."

Erin is a 5th generation producer and her husband, Deacon Heideman, is the third generation farming the land his grandfather purchased in the early 1970's.

"It's been a really special transition. My husband got to work this land with his grandpa, and now my kids get to work it with theirs. It's a very, very special opportunity to get to do that."

Farming, and the ranch itself, has changed significantly over the generations. New technology, like GPS and precision farming have been gamechangers for the industry. Advancements in equipment, science, and practices have allowed Erin and Deacon to farm more efficiently, while preserving and improving the quality of the soil. With every decision they make, they are considering the long-term success and health of the land.

While wheat is their main crop, Blown Away Ranch has expanded operations beyond farming. They have transformed an old farmhouse into the Hen House, a popular Air BnB. Dozens of wind turbines scattered across their fields provide additional non-farm revenue. Finally, Hansell Haven was recently opened on the ranch, creating a unique barn venue for weddings, family parties, or other large events.

For Erin, it is important to her to share her way of life with others, and to educate people on what it really means to be a farmer. Letting people come and stay and observe how a ranch works helps spread awareness and allows Erin and Deacon to share their story in a unique way.

Through it all, Erin Hansell Heideman and Deacon Heideman know that in order to succeed as farmers, you have to really want to do it. The long days, constant changes in best practices, increasing prices and year to year changes in the weather make this work hard. But for Erin and Deacon, and so many others, there is nothing else they would rather be doing.

Erin Hansell Heideman is the 2023 Secretary/ Treasurer of Oregon Wheat Growers League and serves as the Morrow County President. Deacon Heideman serves as the Gilliam County President.