

Written Profile



Farm: Paustian Enterprises, Ltd
Location: Walcott, Iowa
Date of Origination: 1856
Industry Sector(s): Corn, Hogs

Outspoken advocates for the value of the family farm, the Paustians bring over a century of farming credibility to the discussion table. Their passion for enriching the sustainability of their land while providing for others, has allowed the farming operation to remain a family business for over 150 years. The Paustian family exemplifies **Agriculture's Lasting Heritage**.

In 1856 Frederick Paustian, a German bricklayer, began raising hogs and cattle in Eastern Iowa. Today, Paustian Enterprises, Ltd. encompasses over 1,200 acres of continuous corn and manages a 900 sow farrow-to-finish swine herd that markets 22,000 hogs each year. While much has changed, the family tradition runs deep. Brothers Kent and Ross Paustian, as well as Kent's wife Marcia and son Mike, now manage the operation. They represent the fifth and sixth generations of Paustians to farm the land, respectively.

Keeping the farm in the family has been an intentional effort from the start. "Our parents made a lot of sacrifices to make it possible for Ross and I to come back to the farm," explains Kent. It was only then that the farm began to generate enough funds to bring in extended family. Keeping the farm sustainable involves continually addressing key questions: How will we transition to the next generation? How will we treat all family members fairly and keep the farm together as a unit? While not easy to answer, focusing on the solution keeps the Paustians moving forward.

The Paustians are not only passionate about taking care of their family, but taking care of the land as well. "Farming has come a long way in addressing conservation issues," the Paustians share proudly. They hope the consumers see that, "it is better for consumers and the environment to keep family farms in business. Families are invested in the land. They live and work on it. They want it to be there for their children."

Farming today is not without its challenges. Increased government regulation and limited trade challenge the family farm structure. "Farmers in the United States are probably the most productive farmers in the world. We can out-produce anyone. But this doesn't matter if we can't get our product into other markets" explain the Paustians. They look to Farm Bureau to voice their concerns in the political arena. "Farming is unique. It is large and spread out over many entities. It requires organization for our voices to be heard," explains Mike. Farm Bureau offers this unified voice. Mike is currently on the local county Farm Bureau board. Ross currently serves in the Iowa State Legislature representing House District 84 and is the past president of the Scott County Farm Bureau.

We are thankful for the investment the Paustians make in our nation and applaud their contribution to **Agriculture's Lasting Heritage**. And if you happen to find yourself traveling near Walcott, Iowa you may see an old brick farmhouse built by Fredrick Paustian in the 1860's. That's where Kent and his family live today.

