

MN Agriculture: Robert Orsten, Turkeys and Cattle

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Day 9 of my "30 Days of MN Agriculture" is Robert Orsten from Willmar, MN. Willmar is located in west central Minnesota. Robert is a second generation turkey producer and a multi-generation farmer. Robert and his family farm raise turkey breeder hens, registered Hereford cattle, corn and soybeans. The Willmar area is one of the main areas in Minnesota for turkey production. And with Thanksgiving around the corner, how appropriate that we talk about turkeys.

Social Media Sites:

- Facebook: [R & R Family Farms](#)
- Instagram: [Orstenrob](#)
- Website: [RRFamilyFarms](#)

Tell me a little about your farm and/or business?

Robert and his brother own and operate four turkey farms. They also run about 75 Hereford cow pairs and farm about 800 acres of crops. Robert and his wife Rochelle have five kids--two girls and three boys.

Robert and Rochelle's oldest daughter graduated from college this year and is a nurse in St. Paul. Their second daughter is in college in St. Paul. their oldest son is a sophomore at SDSU studying animal science with the hopes of returning to the farm. The other two boys are still in high school and help on the far with daily chores.

Tell me a little about what you grow. Where do you sell your animals or crops?

The Orsten family farm produce hatching eggs for a local hatchery. They also see registered Hereford seed stock and also beef to local people. Corn and soybeans are sold to a local coop elevator.

If there is one thing you could change about farming it would be . . .

"If there was one thing that I could change about farming it would be the *unpredictability* sometimes it would be nice to be able to count on what the year ahead will look like."

What is one interesting fact about your farm/crops/livestock/business you would like to share.

"We get our turkeys at day one, they are hatched in Missouri and brought to Minnesota on day one. We then raise them up for 30 weeks and then they produce eggs for another 30 weeks. We are an independent contractor, meaning we own the birds the barns, the feed, all aspects of the bird lifecycle."

What do you love most about farming/business?

"One of my favorite things about farming is renewal, each new flock of birds or new crop of calves on the ground or even new sprouts of corn or beans or even green grass. I also enjoy the family aspect where my wife and kids can be around and participate in this way of life."

What is one thing you wish consumers knew about what you do or your farm/business?

"One thing I wish consumers knew was that we *care deeply* for our animals we get up every day and check and care for our animals and it is our hope that we can pass to the next generation this great responsibility of caring for animals and providing a quality product for our customers."

"This year we have jumped on the technology bandwagon, he we now have automatic egg collectors in the barns, we have feed tank scales that report directly to the Feedmill and we have cameras and alarms that communicate online."

What makes Minnesota the place to farm?

"Minnesota is a great place to raise turkeys because of the climate, the feed availability and great

people. That is why *Minnesota is number one in turkey production.*"

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Read the other people featured in my "[30 Days of MN Ag.](#)" There are others that are also participating in the 30 Days of Blogging Challenge. Feel free to check these out:

- [Janice Person aka JP Loves Cotton: A Month of Memories](#)
- [Rural Route 2 – 30 Days of Farm Girl Faith](#)
- [Prairie Californian – 30 Days of Food](#)
- [Mackinson Dairy – Women in Dairy](#)