

Editor's Note: *This story on Grant graduate Erin (Chrisman) Goings first appeared in a recent issue of The Fence Post. It has been edited and reprinted here with permission.*

By Lindsey Salestrom

Lincoln, Neb.

The arid plains of western Nebraska have a secret they've been hiding.

Tucked away in Chase County, among a landscape made of steep-walled canyons and rolling sandhills, Erin Chrisman Goings has her ambitions literally growing around her at Canyons Edge Ranch; a new expansion of her family's farm and ranch operation. Her ambitions being lightning fast horses. Chase County might have been holding her secret as her dreams became reality, but Erin is ready to let the cat out of the bag.



Goings grew up on a farm and cow/calf operation south of Wallace, Neb. which is seven miles east of her ancestors' original homestead that was settled generations ago near Grafton.

Goings' in-laws farm and ranch further south of Grafton in Chase County which is also where Erin, her husband Billy and their four-year-old daughter Sophia manage a cow/calf operation and farm as well.

"I am fortunate that our family businesses operate in a relatively close geographic location, she said. "That makes it possible to utilize resources from our families like additional pasture and hay. The support of our combined families is really what made this farm and ranch business viable and sustainable."

Aside from the everyday farming and ranching aspects of her family's daily lives, Erin decided to expand their operation to include quarter horses.

She established Canyons Edge Ranch to make her passion for horses into a marketable enterprise.

"My dad is really the person who fueled my love for horses; he taught me most of what I know about them," she said. "My sister and I used to ride our horses to town to the grocery store for a pop and candy bar or we would just saddle up and ride in the pasture for the fun of it. That was before all of these electronic devices kids have now, and my parents didn't let us watch much TV," she added.

Goings has passed her love for horses onto her daughter Sophia, allowing her the same experience she had as a young girl. The shared love of horses from her family inspired Erin to have a breeding program that produced quality quarter horses with speed.

To establish a hearty foundation for her program, Erin purchased two stallions with sought after bloodlines and track records to prove their ability. "Streaker is a talented barrel horse with a great disposition, excellent conformation and he really loves to work. I ride him on the ranch for cattle work, and he is a very fun horse to ride," Erin says.

The foals he has sired are still too young to have proven themselves, but Erin has plans for

them to hit the arena soon.

Aside from Streaker, the Goings recently added another stallion to their program named, "Lead the Field" or known around the barn as Leader. Unfortunately, his racing career was cut short due to an injury that cracked his pelvis. Retiring to his life as a stallion, Leader still has halter quality good looks which he passes on to his offspring, in addition to speed. He is a multiple AAA producing sire and has also produced stakes race winners.

"Lead The Field foals have beautiful heads, excellent conformation, sound minds and lots of speed," Erin says. Speaking fondly of the stallion she notes, "Leader is the kind of horse that loves attention, he'll meet you at the stall and put his head in your arms; he has a charming disposition."

The diversity of standing two stallions has allowed Erin to grow her breeding program into a powerhouse production of racing quarter horses.

"Each stallion brings something great and different to the program and I am very proud to have them," Goings comments. However, she has another surprise up her sleeve that she merely hints at.

"There's a new stallion prospect on the horizon; he's young and running back at the track this year and we are excited about him as an addition to the stallion line up.

The Goings have been working to cross their talented stallions on similarly skilled mares that have proven themselves in the arena or on the track.

"In addition to the stallions, I am equally proud of the mare power we have. Nearly all of the mares are proven or are proven producers and are own daughters of legendary horses," Erin says.

The mares being bred for race track prospects include AAA racers and mares that have either placed in or won stakes.

"I can't tell you how excited I am about the mares. I spend the bulk of my time with them so I get mares with good dispositions. That is really important to me," Erin says. By putting equal emphasis on the genetics and abilities of both the stallions and broodmares the Goings have a diverse herd of horses with powerful genetics for the race track or the arena.

However, not all of Erin's experiences with horses have been as successful as her breeding program. Ten years ago she had a severe accident that still affects her today.

"I was in a very serious accident on a horse and sustained some head trauma, and since then it's been a personal goal to regain the confidence and focus to be able to compete," she explains. "I have a couple of prospects that I have kept for myself and I really enjoy riding them, and that has helped me get past the mental hurdle that was present because of that accident. I would like to begin competing again in the arena," she said.

Thankfully, her horse business has begun to help her get past the trauma of the accident.

"Foaling season will be exciting and stressful with the hopes of beautiful, healthy babies hitting the ground, which will also be during our calving season," she said. She also predicts this breeding season will be exceptionally busy, since they've added a few more mares to their herd.

Erin also does the office work for the rest of their farming and ranching business which keeps her busy balancing time between work and family. Even so, she is very grateful for her lifestyle.

"I am always eager to answer questions and talk horses, and would love to show the studs, mares, and any prospects we have to friends, neighbors and other horse enthusiasts," she says. "I really do love it, and these horses are what get me up and going every day. They are my life and I have been incredibly fortunate to have the support of my family and to have developed good relationships with my trainers, veterinarians, and other breeders in the industry;

building a strong team has proven to be every bit as important as having great horses. We are a long ways off the beaten path, but hopefully worth the drive.”