



THE RURAL SCENE



BEGINNING FARMERS
DRIVEN BY PASSION
AND DETERMINATION



FARM CREDIT
OF WESTERN ARKANSAS

SUMMER 2022

Enriching rural life.™

THE RURAL SCENE

PUBLISHED BY



Farm Credit of Western Arkansas is a customer-owned financial cooperative providing financing and related services to farmers, ranchers, rural homeowners, agribusinesses and timber producers in 41 western Arkansas counties.

With a loan volume of \$1.5 billion, Farm Credit of Western Arkansas is a member of the 106-year-old Farm Credit System, a nationwide network of borrower-owned lending institutions providing more than \$317 billion in loans to rural America.



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Brandon Haberer

It doesn't seem that normal years come along with any frequency any longer. Just about the time I think we have one crisis behind us, we seem to step into another.

No doubt the country was already experiencing inflationary pressures. When coupled with the war in Ukraine, trends become even more pronounced.

The news has aptly covered how Federal Reserve members have been vocal regarding their expectations for interest rate hikes. March saw the Federal Reserve increase rates by .25% for the first time since 2018. There are expectations for as many as seven interest rate hikes in 2022, alone, with the potential for future increases to be even more aggressive than the .25% we experienced in late March (the time of this article).

Together, our senior management team and board of directors are working closely to address member needs as events unfold. Currently, we're pulling out all the stops at every level to communicate Farm Credit's long-term, fixed interest rate options – something few (if any) other lenders are offering right now. Farm Credit is committed to long-term, fixed rates because member needs are our priority. It's the cooperative business model we operate under.

The guaranteed upward movement of interest rates expected this year makes locking-in a long-term fixed rate

something to seriously consider. The past several years' variable rates, balloon rates, and adjustable rates have all been attractive options, but it may be time to heed the warnings in regard to rising rates and analyze your long-term financial needs. Many borrowers, and even some lenders, haven't experienced high interest rates and, truth be told, our perception of what constitutes a high rate has changed over time. Today's interest rates, by all historical standards, are still considered low. No doubt the result of raising rates will be changing consumer sentiment and psychological borrowing impacts.

The beauty of taking the safe path, today, with Farm Credit, and locking-in your long-term rate is that our rate options allow for easy conversions. This is unique to Farm Credit and not found in the banking world. Essentially, down the road when rates begin to drop, Farm Credit can simply adjust your fixed rate downward without the need to refinance, re-apply, or update your appraisal or title work. Plus, we will still throw in Patronage Cash....***your share of the annual profits.***

Know that your Farm Credit association is attuned to changing trends and monitoring economic changes closely. As always, your local lending staff is poised to assist you as you position your operation to weather the coming economic corrections.

Brandon Haberer

President and CEO

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ABOUT THE RURAL SCENE

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Cody Jones

How exciting to mark the 25th consecutive year of handing out patronage checks to our valuable members!

While I remember the surprise I felt when I opened my first patronage check as a new member, it didn't really hit home until our operation began showing a profit and our taxes increased every year. The February timing for Patronage Cash has been a

great help for us in paying our taxes. It really has made a difference! I remember thinking early on that, "Wow, Farm Credit must truly care about us and our farm."

As your Board Chairperson, I can affirm that, YES, Farm Credit of Western Arkansas cares about your success to the tune of a record \$11.5 million dollars in patronage this year. More than \$150 million has gone back into Western Arkansas members' hands since 1996.

That's a proud tradition that the association remains committed to. It's especially impressive considering the past two years and the challenges of the global pandemic. Employees have continued to work hard, members have continued to trust Farm Credit, and our association has remained strong. At all levels, great decisions are being made that keep our association moving in the right direction.

I feel that most farming operations across the state have done fairly well during the uncertainty of the pandemic. The challenges of rising inflation, global conflicts, and supply chain issues will certainly make farming more challenging in the next few years, though. Regardless, Farm Credit of Western Arkansas members have the advantage of an understanding lending partner in their corner. If your financial situation becomes stressed, please reach out to your local lending staff for assistance.

Finally, I had the privilege of attending Farm Credit's statewide Young, Beginning Farmers Conference in February. It was great to interact with 72 young farmers from across the state. From part-time cattle and poultry operations to large-scale row crop farms, the future of Arkansas agriculture looks bright! The next young farmers conference will be in February of 2024. I encourage you to consider attending. Watch for details beginning in late 2023.

I am honored to be serving on the board of an association that is making a difference for western Arkansas farmers and agriculture. As a farmer myself, I know how hard the job is. Perhaps like you, I also find it very rewarding to help feed the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cody Jones'.

Cody Jones

Chair, Board of Directors
Farm Credit of Western Arkansas

TURN YOUR HOME DREAMS INTO REALITY



LONG-TERM, FIXED INTEREST RATES | ALL LOANS STAY IN-HOUSE
CONSTRUCTION LOANS WITH ONE TIME CLOSING





Becoming Farmers. *Living their dreams.*

Insights and tips from two young western Arkansas couples who turned passion and determination into successful farming operations.

Two farmers who seem different at first glance, have more in common than you might think.

One, a full-time rice and soybean farmer with 1,000 leased acres along the Fourche LaFave River in the Perry County Bottoms. The other a part-time farmer with a 35-head cow-calf operation on 110 leased acres near Greenbrier.

Just 40 miles from one another, the two share remarkably similar dreams and journeys.

Brandon Freyaldenhoven, age 29, and **Clay Gustafson**, age 31, knew from early ages they wanted to be farmers. There was no dissuading them. The obstacle for each was how to enter farming when they were starting with nothing but passion and determination.

Both leaned on hard work to make it happen. They worked through the issues of land availability and start-up costs in similar ways. The two men, and their supportive wives, are stellar examples of how to make farming a reality in your twenties.

Interestingly, when asked separately to identify what they think it takes to make it as a young, beginning farmer, they shared almost identical lists.

Their joint recommendations may very well be the secret sauce that so many want-to-be farmers are looking for today.



"Don't know how anyone can farm without faith." – Clay

What Brandon and Clay say it takes to be a successful young, beginning western Arkansas farmer:

- A passion for agriculture
- A strong work ethic
- Willingness to start with leased land
- Conservative management
- Discipline to grow the operation slowly
- Valuable mentors
- Separate farm and family budgets
- Off-farm income in the beginning (a spouse working off-farm is a plus for regular income and health insurance benefits)

A passion for agriculture

Neither Brandon nor Clay was raised on a farm, but both had farm experiences that defined them in early childhood. They each spent time with a grandfather who farmed and fostered their interest in agriculture.

For Brandon, it was his grandfather Conrad Gunther, Sr. who grew soybeans and raised cows in Toad Suck, AR. Brandon was raised in Houston, AR and still lives there with wife, Katie, and daughters Kennedy (age 6) and Addie (age 19 months).

"From age three or four, I always knew I wanted to be a farmer," Brandon shared.

"There was an open invitation for me to visit the farm anytime and my mother spent a lot of time driving me there and back so I could just hang out with him."

Pointing to his grandfather's extreme patience and watch-and-learn teaching style, Brandon remembers being allowed to learn and take on farm responsibilities.

"It was all about the tractors for me," he smiled. "I was seven or eight the first time I cut wheat solo during harvest. That was a big deal."

By the time Brandon was a teen, he was learning to maintain and repair his grandfather's tractors. He became skilled enough that he took over that job, becoming the primary mechanic on the farm. He points to that skill as a key to his operation's success today.

"With the tight profit margin we operate under, you really have to be able to work on your own equipment," Brandon explained.

"My grandfather quietly reversed the roles. I believe he was preparing me."

While Conrad passed away a few years ago, Brandon's mother often reminds him that PaPa would be proud of his choice and accomplishments.

Like Brandon, Clay Gustafson's grandfather, John Peterson, welcomed him on the farm. While time on his grandfather's farm was limited because it was in South Dakota and Clay was raised in Greenbrier, he has early childhood memories of walking the hog barn.

"I was born a farmer, it consumes you," Clay explained.

A strong work ethic

"I always worked on farms growing up, that was my job of choice in high school," said Clay who graduated from Greenbrier High School.

"I've also always understood that I'd need to have a full-time, off-farm job in order to get started in farming," he added.

Clay is a full-time Pipeline Systems Operator for a gas company. He tends the farm and his cattle in his free time. His wife, Chalet, assists with the cattle and farm, as well, and works as a full-time labor and delivery nurse.

The couple are able to coordinate their work schedules to share childcare responsibilities for their 19-month-old daughter, Jordan.

When asked about his work ethic, Brandon points to workdays that began at 6:00 AM and went, unquestioned, until the job was done on his grandpa's farm. Subsequent farm jobs through high school cemented Brandon's understanding of the effort required.

"Farming gives you incredible freedom, but that doesn't mean you have unlimited days off," he smiled and explained.

"You've got to work hard if you're going to be successful."

Leasing Land

Without the benefit of established family farms passed on to them, both men had to find another path into agriculture. Leasing land was the ticket for both.

"I won't lie," Brandon said. "I had to pay my dues in the beginning with renting land that others didn't want."

Clay's experience was similar as he searched for leasable land.

"You can't be picky. The land I'm leasing is 17 miles from the house," he shared.

Brandon was fortunate to farm his first 80 acres with his grandfather nearby. Learning what and how to do things from his grandfather before he passed was valuable, he said.

He raised soybeans on those 80 acres for four

years while working a full-time, off-farm construction job. He added another 150 leased acres when he had the opportunity.

In 2018, he leased an additional 800 acres. That property is irrigated, allowing him to grow both rice and soybeans.

He further explained that what you do with the land you lease is what builds your reputation and paves the way for additional opportunities.

"It's a small town. People talk. If you're successful, people know. If you're not, people know. Your reputation is everything," he explained.

The 800 acres of irrigated land is owned by people who knew his grandfather. Knowing his grandfather meant they also knew him and, most importantly, knew of his character and strong work ethic.

Brandon points to leasing land as a solution for being able to purchase used equipment in his twenties. He put his money toward equipment with plans to have it paid for by his early thirties. He said the goal in his thirties is to begin purchasing land so that he can have it paid for by retirement age.

Clay also explained that leasing his first 110 acres in 2018 made financial sense.

"I believe in treating leased land like you own it," he shared.

Clay and Chalet spent considerable time fixing fencing and clearing areas. The landowner has been impressed and told Clay he's the best renter he's ever had. That reputation has paid off, with another landowner offering a 35-acre lease soon after. Clay grows hay for his herd on the additional lease.

"People notice what you do and that, good or bad, builds your reputation," he advised.

"Technology pays for itself. The GPS accuracy within the cab eliminates going over the same acreage twice, saving money on seed, chemicals and fertilizer."
– Brandon



Conservative management Discipline to grow the operation slowly

"The best advice I've received came from my grandfather," Brandon shared.

"Don't grow too fast and use the good years to survive the bad years."

Brandon follows that advice.

Starting with 80 acres and farming it while working full-time in construction allowed him to scale up slowly. He says it also allowed him the capital to purchase equipment and time to hone his skills while looking for more land to lease.

He knew he had to leave the security of the full-time construction job when he leased the additional 800 acres, though.

"It was the scariest thing I've done in farming," he explained.

"With 1,000 acres, I had to be on the farm full-time from April through November, so I had to take the leap. I also had to go to Farm Credit and get that first operating loan. It was overwhelming, but at the same time it was my dream and what I'd worked toward," he explained.

He credits encouraging parents, good timing and a good opportunity for his transition to full-time farming.

"We had good weather and a good crop that first year I farmed all 1,000 acres," he continued.

"That wasn't the case the second year, though. We saw significant flooding in the spring of 2019. We'd put some money back from the first year, and we needed it."

For Clay, it is similar management advice from a farming friend that influences he and Chalet's financial decisions.

"It comes down to WANTS and NEEDS," Clay explained.

"Buy what you need, not what you want, is the advice we got from Angela Mahan of Rabbit Ridge Farms. That's stuck with us and it's what we always come back to. We're slow to spend and we think through purchases both on the farm, and personally."

He nodded toward his pick-up truck and explained that while he'd really like a feed truck, his farm truck suffices.

"Sure, I'd love to have a four-wheel-drive cab tractor, but this two-wheel-drive, open station gets the job done," he added.

Separate farm and family budgets Off-farm income and benefits

Chalet Gustafson and Katie Freyaldenhoven both embrace the rural lifestyle and partner with their husbands on the farm. Both also have full-time off-farm careers in the healthcare field.

Maintaining separate household and farm budgets is key for both families.

"Having a partner work off-farm supplies reliable family income and health insurance which is a huge plus," Brandon explained. "We know we can live on her income, if needed, and that is important peace of mind."

For Clay and Chalet, their off-farm jobs are key to building the farm. They see their operation as a long-term investment. Clay points to the separation of family and farm incomes as the best way to understand exactly how the farm business is doing.

"We're also reinvesting the farm income right now," added Chalet who was raised on a farm with cattle and horses near Heber Springs.

"You can't be afraid of hard work if you want to farm." – Brandon

“We can live on our off-farm income which is allowing us to grow the farm and build equity.”

Valuable mentors

“I can’t stress the importance of mentors, enough,” Clay elaborated.

“I met Nathan Perry when I purchased a bull from him. He’s a full-time farmer and experienced cattle person. He has become someone I can call with questions.”

“Randy Hayes of Blackwell is another friend and mentor.”

“These guys are great because they’re full-time farmers who don’t sugarcoat things. They let me ask questions and learn from their experience which is huge because, like me, they both started from nothing.”

“These men have taught me that you can’t be a successful farmer without being a good manager,” Clay said.

Like Clay, Brandon has found valuable support in his local ag community and relies heavily on strong mentors.

“Two of my grandfather’s close friends farm nearby and I feel fortunate that I can call them anytime with questions or to ask for help,” Brandon explained.

“Their experience is priceless.”

Young farmer advantages

These men agree that investing hard work in farming in your twenties has significant rewards.

A head start in building an operation and building equity are young farmer advantages, according to Brandon.

“I look around and realize I’m ahead of the game compared to people my age just starting to farm,” he explained.

Clay agrees that time is an advantage for young farmers.



“There’s no way we could have jumped right into the farm we wanted, it’s taken time to build it and it’s taken our full-time jobs in our twenties to finance a lot of it,” Clay explained.

Experience gained in their twenties is making them stronger farmers moving forward.

Farm Credit’s role

“The good Lord, a good wife and a good banker,” Clay quipped when asked for the secret to his success as a beginning farmer.

Both farmers found Farm Credit’s assistance beneficial.

Clay has worked with lending staff in the Greenbrier office since 2018 to finance a tractor, catch pen, cattle and working capital.

“Financing is a tool and I appreciate that Farm Credit has trusted my vision and my plan,” he said.

“It’s great to see young people wanting to get into farming and doing it successfully,” said Mandy Allen who assumed the responsibilities of Greenbrier Loan Officer on March 1.

“Managing finances conservatively and taking time to grow an operation, like Clay and Chalet are doing, are the things Farm Credit suggests to all beginning farmers.”

“My first Farm Credit loan was in 2018 and then cattle prices took a nose-dive in 2019 when my first payment came due. I was able to make my payment, but I learned a lot along the way. The Greenbrier staff has been supportive,” Clay added.

Friends encouraged Brandon to talk to Hank DeSalvo at Farm Credit’s Morrilton office when he was looking for his first operating loan.

“I have friends who sent me to Farm Credit and told me to talk to Hank,” he said. “He made it easy from the beginning and Farm Credit has been a good fit for my goals.”

“It was hard to believe the mature young man sitting across from me with a comprehensive business plan was only 25 years old,” remembered Morrilton Vice President and Branch Manager Hank DeSalvo.

“His work ethic was evident, and he’d proven himself by working on farms as a teen and learning from his grandfather.”

“He came in with a farming plan and detailed budget. He knew how much he needed to borrow and why, and he had a repayment strategy.”

“He manages risk by carrying a slightly higher percentage of crop insurance than the average farmer.”

Hank adds that Brandon taking advice from the county extension agent over the years has also demonstrated his maturity and commitment to success.

Their next steps

The Gustafsons reiterate that they have plans to diversify their farm so that Clay might, at some point in the future, farm full-time.

The Freyaldenhovens are in the middle of spring planting at the time of this article. A busy 30-days for their family with hopes that rain will hold off and temperatures will cooperate.

Long-term, Brandon and Katie say their sights are set on preparing the business to purchase land in the next several years. As a row crop farmer, Brandon shared that owning land free and clear is his retirement plan.

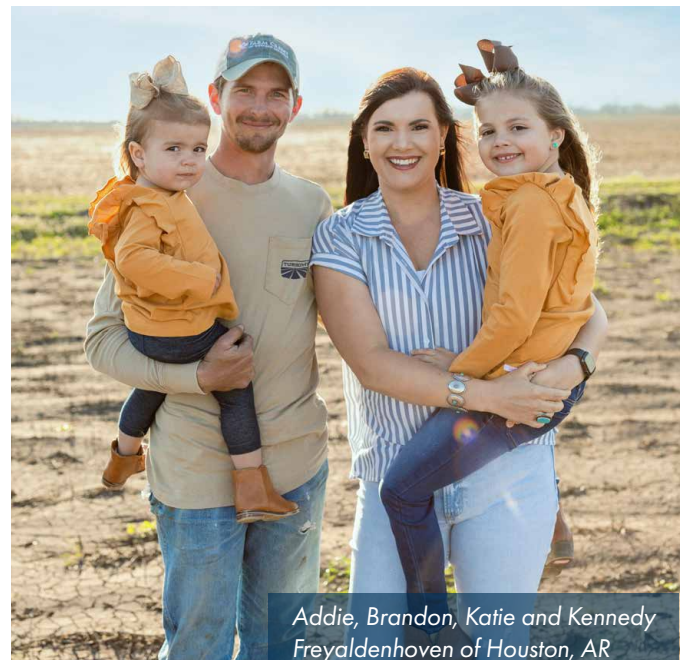
At a time when entering farming without family assistance is a challenge, the Gustafsons and Freyaldenhovens are proving it can still be done successfully in western Arkansas.

Story by Jill Robertson

Photos by Lindsey Holtzclaw & Jill Robertson



Clay, Chalet and Jordan Gustafson
of Bee Branch, AR



Addie, Brandon, Katie and Kennedy
Freyaldenhoven of Houston, AR

HOW DOES A YOUNG PERSON GET STARTED IN FARMING TODAY?

In today's climate of increasing land prices, escalating equipment and operating costs and uncertain cattle, poultry, and commodity prices, just how do young farmers get started?

Farm Credit understands these challenges and agrees that the barriers for entering farming may be as difficult as they've ever been.

Our mission is to support agriculture. We want to help connect those wanting to farm with ways to do it successfully.

To support beginning farmers, we're committed to:

Special young, beginning farmer loan considerations

We look at your situation and can often tailor loan terms to assist you with getting started.

A special Young, Beginning POULTRY Farmer Program

Specifically assists new poultry producers with buying or building poultry houses.

Providing training and educational opportunities

Free Young, Beginning Farmer Conference hosted biennially. Offers new producers access to valuable information, tools and peer networking.

Support from local lending staff with basic direction in creating business plans, budgeting, and other operational aids.

Supporting programs designed to help new farmers access land and mentoring.

Developing support and/or partnership opportunities with the Northwest Arkansas Land Trust, and affiliated young farmer support organizations.

7 Cooperative Principles

Voluntary Membership

Democratic Member Control

Members' Economic Participation

Autonomy and Independence

Education, Training, and Information

Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Concern for Community



Members' Economic Participation

Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. This benefits members in proportion to the business they conduct with the cooperative rather than on the capital invested.

25th consecutive year of Patronage Cash!

**\$151.5+
MILLION
to Western
Arkansas
members
since 1997**

In late February, Western Arkansas members shared \$11.5 MILLION in 2021 association profits. More than \$151 MILLION in Patronage Cash has now gone to members since the association began distributing patronage 25 years ago. A proud milestone for the association.

Members sharing in the association's profits is a cornerstone of Farm Credit's cooperative business model. While the risk of Covid necessitated another year of mailed checks, we highly anticipate hosting patronage events at local offices next year. Employees are eager to resume celebrating this unique benefit with members in person.



2022 Future Legacy Young, Beginning Farmer Conference

In late February, 72 young, beginning farmers from across the state enjoyed an interactive learning conference hosted by the Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas.

From part-time cattle farmers to full-time poultry producers and large-scale Eastern Arkansas rice producers, the conference created an opportunity for farmers to network, compare challenges, and learn from one another.

Nationally recognized as one of the premiere authorities on ag economics and young farmers, Dr. David Kohl facilitated the two-day event. Dr. Kohl shared business tools that producers could immediately apply to their operation.

The next conference will be in February of 2024.

From left to right, top row: A farm-to-table dinner at a local winery gave attendees ample time to meet fellow producers, Arkansas Secretary of Agriculture Wes Ward addressed the group, Western Arkansas CEO Brandon Haberer (right) mingled with participants. Bottom row: Dr. Kohl challenged attendees to apply business principles to their own operations.

7 Cooperative Principles

Voluntary Membership

Democratic Member Control

Members' Economic Participation

Autonomy and Independence

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Cooperation Among Cooperatives

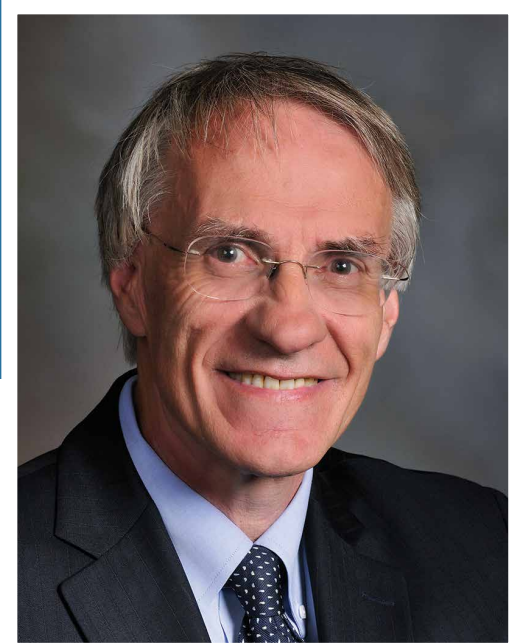
Concern for Community

COOPERATIVE SCENE

Education, Training & Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative. Members also inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperatives.





The Short and Long-term Views from the Road

Thank goodness for longer days and the optimism spring brings. My engagement with producers, lenders, and agribusiness leaders throughout the winter resulted in some interesting short and long-term perspectives.

Some producers have quietly shared their operations are making money. They are almost embarrassed to disclose information about their “secret sauce.”

Applying the “Little Bit Better” Principle

These profitable operations are producing yields 5-10 bushels per acre more than their peers and are disciplined at controlling costs. They market some of their crops at planting – often when prices are above cost of production – and don’t wait for a potential home run during harvest.

Capital and asset efficiency are a high priority. They reduce non-income producing assets – like machinery or land – that are no longer economical. They make necessary cuts in human assets which sometimes includes unproductive family labor.



Analyzing Budgets & Diversifying Income Streams

One factor affecting cash flow and profitability is the family living budget. One producer indicated it was just as important as farm business budgeting. With multiple generations taking withdrawals from the business and increased healthcare premiums and other costs, the difference maker is often the personal side of business finances.

The side-gig economy is alive and well, specifically among the younger generation. Multitasking, fully utilizing one's skill base, and networking can provide multiple streams of revenue not seen in traditional agriculture. One Upper Midwest producer indicated his son used his talents and passion to develop a successful towing company. He chuckled when he recalled a recent four-day period of inclement weather that netted his son a larger profit than the farm generated over an entire quarter. This towing company is a great example of a diversified source of income.

Managing What You Can Control

Tweets and headlines are an everyday occurrence and create tremendous volatility in crop prices, input costs, and emotions. Focus on the factors of the business you can control. And manage around the uncontrollable variables. The key to good management is knowing your cost of production, break even points, and executing on small windows of opportunity.



Dr. Kohl is Professor Emeritus of Agricultural Finance and Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.



Thank you for spreading the word about Farm Credit!

Members are the best advertising tool we have!

It's human nature to trust people we know. That's why referrals are effective. Perspective customers are quick to trust a friend or family member who explains their own Farm Credit experience. Members referring others to Farm Credit is the most effective way of growing and strengthening the association.

Do you know someone who might benefit from Farm Credit's advantages?

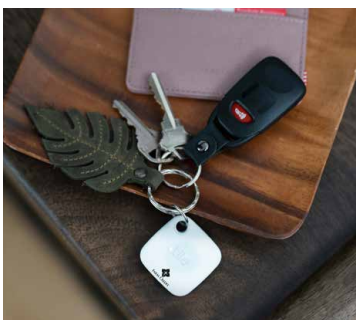
- **Long-term, fixed interest rates.** (This is a big advantage in today's changing interest rate environment.)
- **Financing homes on any size acreage in the country** (loans stay with Farm Credit).
- **Patronage Cash.** Members share in the profits when the association has a good year.
- **Local service from folks you know and trust.**
- **Employees who understand agriculture and are involved in your local community.**
- **Special Loan Programs for...**
 - Military veterans
 - Local EMTs, fire & police personnel
 - Producers selling direct to customers
 - Young, beginning poultry producers

How It Works

It's simple.

1. **Encourage a friend to talk to Farm Credit about their financing needs.**
2. **When they close a loan with us, we ask who referred them.**
3. **Pick the gift you'd like!**

Refer as many people as you like... you'll be helping your Farm Credit grow!



Electronic key/phone finder fob



Garment Bag



Umbrella

Mena FFA Auction

The Mena branch office donated a \$500 vacation package to the annual Mena FFA Dinner and Auction. The April 30 event raised funds for local FFA events, scholarships, travel and misc. needs.



Youth Loan Program

Farm Credit offers youth loans to help finance livestock projects for FFA and 4-H members. Youth loan member Tatum was proud to visit loan officer Caleigh Watlington in the Magnolia branch to pay off her loan in full. We're proud of Tatum's dedication towards her livestock project and look forward to seeing her future successes. *Youth Loans have a nominal interest rate that covers Farm Credit's cost of funding, only. Farm Credit does not make a profit on youth loans.

Arkansas Cattlemen's Leadership Course

Regional Financial Services Specialist Ashlyn Hanson is a graduate of the 2021 Arkansas Cattlemen's Leadership Course. The year-long program offered by the Arkansas Cattlemen's Association instills principles of leadership and advocacy within the beef industry and promotes the involvement of young producers within the state.



FFA Field Day

A group of employees cooked for over 1,100 FFA members during Career Development Event Field Day in Logan County in March.

National Acts of Kindness Day

In honor of National Random Acts of Kindness Day, the Magnolia branch treated local healthcare heroes to coffee from Mule Kick. We're grateful for all those who work to keep our communities healthy and safe.



Camp Couchdale Donation

The Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas are proud to honor Arkansas ag legend Marion Fletcher with a \$50,000 commitment to assist with the renovation of the Marion D. Fletcher Leadership Center at Camp Couchdale. In February, the associations presented the first \$10,000 installment to the Arkansas FFA Foundation.



Arkansas 4-H and FFA Foundation Donations

Farm Credit of Western Arkansas promised to donate \$10 for every eligible ballot received in the fall director election and we delivered! We were proud to donate \$6,990, split evenly between the Arkansas FFA Foundation and The Arkansas 4-H Foundation.



\$1,000 Donation to MANNRS

The Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas donated \$1,000 to MANNRS (Minorities in Ag, Natural Resources & Related Services) in November. The funds will assist the group with travel and competition expenses.

Show and Tell – BEES!

Russellville Vice President and Branch Manager – and BEEKEEPER – Anna Lester led a short bee-keeping lesson for eager students at her son Cade's daycare. It's never too early to start ag-in-the-classroom!



FFA Calf Raffle & Pizza Party

The Harrison branch office continued its long-running tradition of assisting area FFA programs with fundraising by sponsoring a calf for the schools to raffle off. 14 area high schools participated, selling tickets for \$1 and keeping 100% of the money for their FFA organization. **A record \$61,855 was raised this year by participating chapters.** Gayle Hickman won the calf and purchased her winning ticket from Mountain Home FFA member Birley Hickman. To make the fundraising fun for the students, Farm Credit also hosts pizza parties for the chapters with the top ticket sales.



Arkansas Women in Agriculture

Since its start in 2005, Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas has been a proud supporter of Arkansas Women in Agriculture (AWIA). AWIA is a private non-profit whose main goals are to provide educational programming and a network of support for women involved in agriculture throughout the state of Arkansas.

In March, AWIA held its 16th Annual Arkansas Women in Agriculture Conference in Little Rock. Over 170 women in ag from across the state gathered to hear from keynote speakers, attend educational workshops, and build lasting friendships.

Farm Credit of Western Arkansas Magnolia Loan Officer Caleigh Watlington and Communications Specialist Lindsey Holtzclaw both serve on the AWIA board of directors. The two also received a \$500 donation towards AWIA in honor of their volunteer efforts.



Western AR employees Caleigh Watlington and Lindsey Holtzclaw serve on the AR Women in Ag board.



The Arkansas Women in Agriculture Conference gave women the chance to connect with vendors like Farm Credit who offer services that can benefit their operations.



The 2022 AWIA Conference featured two keynote speakers – Lesley Kelley who spoke on the importance of mental health on the farm and Courtney DeHoff (pictured) who inspired attendees to embrace their uniqueness when sharing the story of agriculture.

Hands-on educational workshops gave participants a chance to learn topics like cooking with Arkansas beef, beekeeping 101, succession planning, legislative updates, and more.



Community Connections

We value the contributions our employees make through volunteer work and leadership in their local communities. To foster these connections and honor employee commitment, we donate up to \$500/employee annually, to qualifying non-profit organizations.



Human Resources Coordinator **Carol Parker** of the Central Office in Russellville is serving her 16th year on the Pope County 4-H Board. As a board member, she is also serving on the Pope County Youth Expansion Committee this year. This spring she is leading a session of the Get Real program that teaches youth about gross vs. net pay, balancing a checkbook and debit card transactions. Carol's volunteer leadership earned the Pope County 4-H Association \$500.



JUNIOR LEAGUE OF TEXARKANA

Texarkana Financial Services Specialist **Cheyenne Harris** has earned the Junior League of Texarkana a \$500 donation for her volunteer leadership with the organization. Her major role this year will be organizing a new fundraising event to support the things the group does to support women and children in the community.



For 14 years, Ozark Financial Services Specialist **Rosemary Hall** has volunteered leadership for her local Shop with a Cop program. Youth partner with a Franklin County officer and shop in December. Farm Credit's Community Involvement program donated \$500 to the organization in honor of Rosemary's work in 2021.

ASK ABOUT OUR POULTRY LOAN PROGRAM

ASSISTING YOUNG, BEGINNING
AND/OR SMALL PRODUCERS

Want to be a poultry farmer but need a little assistance with the large initial investment? **We know it's hard to get into farming and we want to help.**

You may qualify for one or more special loan considerations.

- Relaxed down-payment requirements
- Discounted appraisal and loan origination fees
- Competitive long-term, fixed interest rates



FARM CREDIT
OF WESTERN ARKANSAS



COMMITTED TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF FARMERS:

YOUNG FARMERS
35 YEARS OLD OR YOUNGER

BEGINNING FARMERS
FARMING 10 YEARS OR LESS

SMALL FARMERS
LESS THAN \$250K IN GROSS FARM INCOME

New Faces



CORY DICE joined Farm Credit as a Loan Officer in Hope in November. He is a life-long Nevada county resident and also a poultry and cattle farmer. He and wife Kelley have two sons, Caden (age 17) and Chase (age 13).

KYLE TAYLOR joined Farm Credit in early January as a Loan Officer Trainee in the Huntsville office. A Huntsville native, he was raised on a 900-acre cattle and timber operation. A 2005 graduate of Arkansas Tech University with an ag-business degree, he brings nine years of ag insurance experience to his position. He and wife Lori have a son, Kaden, who is 12 years old. In his free time, you'll find Kyle camping, fishing and coaching baseball.



TAYLOR PLUGGE assumed Loan Officer Trainee responsibilities in the Clarksville branch in January. A native of Johnson County, she lives near Clarksville with her fiancé Aaron and their six-year-old son Addison. Raised on a turkey, row crop and cattle farm, she most recently worked in admissions and student life at The University of the Ozarks. She has a degree in economics from The University of the Ozarks and she enjoys camping and trail riding in her free time.

MONTANA BURRIS joined Farm Credit as a Financial Services Specialist for the Ozark and Paris offices in early January. She was raised on a broiler and cattle farm in Logan County and most recently worked as a student intern and Accounts Receivable Specialist with ArcBest. She will be graduating with a degree in Business Administration in December.



DEVIN SIMPSON joined the Farm Credit team in late February and is a Financial Services Specialist in the Benton office. From Gurdon, he is a 2016 graduate of Henderson State University with an undergraduate degree in business and a master's degree in supply chain management. He's familiar with cow/calf and timber operations through his parents and grandparents who farm. He brings both title company and banking experience to his new position.



MANDY ALLEN began her responsibilities as Loan Officer in Greenbrier on March 1. A long-time Texarkana, TX resident, she moved to the Greenbrier area in 2008 with son Connor (age 18) and Lauren (age 15). She has 10 years of banking experience and attended Texas A & M University – Texarkana.

BILL SINKS started in the newly-created Chief Information Officer role in early April. He will be working in the Central Office in Russellville through the summer, then working from the Greenbrier office. With 20 years of experience in information technology, he earned a bachelor's degree in technology from Ferris State University. A Michigan native, he brings ten years of experience with Greenstone Farm Credit Services. He, wife Darcy and children Steve (age 15) and Sydney (age 13) enjoy hiking and camping together.



KARA RICHARDSON started her Loan Officer duties in Glenwood in late March. Raised in agriculture, her parents have a cow/calf operation and her grandparents have broiler houses. She earned an undergraduate business degree from Southern Arkansas University and completed her MBA, also from SAU, in 2020.

Changing Places

SUZANNE SCOWDEN has moved from Financial Services Specialist to Training Coordinator and will remain in the Alma branch office.



DANIELLE SCOTT has transitioned from Regional FSS to Nashville Financial Services Specialist and will work full time in the Nashville branch office.

Enriching rural life.™

Let Farm Credit's industry-leading knowledge, competitive products, and more than 106 years of agricultural and rural financing experience help you.

- Farms of all sizes
- Livestock
- Country home and home construction
- Land
- Recreational land
- Timber tracts
- Forestry products and processing



2022 Photo Contest

Start planning for our annual photo contest! Contest deadline is **Monday, August 1**.

Enter shots that tell the story of what it's like to live in western Arkansas. Anyone living in our 41-county Western Arkansas territory may enter. Photos must be taken in western Arkansas, as well.

Two divisions – adult and youth (up to age 18), with cash prizes in both categories PLUS one grand-prize winner.

Grand Prize \$500
(best overall photo from both categories)

Entry form and
complete details at
myaglender.com

1 st Place	\$300
2 nd Place	\$200
3 rd Place	\$100

Cash prizes in both Youth & Adult categories.

Jami Linder submitted this photo last year and it was featured in our annual calendar.