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# VOICES For Agriculture



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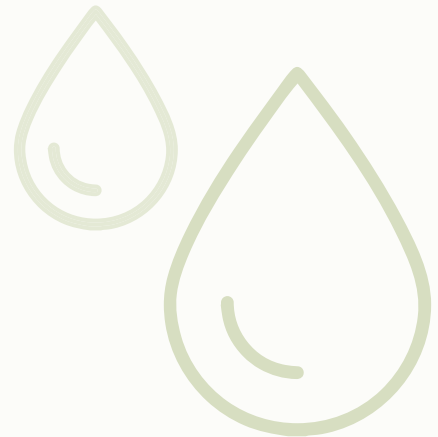


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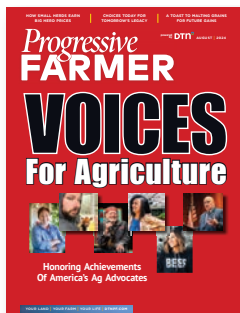
# VOICES FOR AGRICULTURE

**AUGUST 2024**

**VOL. 139 / NO. 7**

*Serving Our Readers Since 1886*

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## ON THE COVER

Advocates for agriculture come in all stripes to raise their voice in support of America's farmers and ranchers.

Our editors make their choices to recognize people who have made their mark to promote and champion agriculture.

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## PRINTED IN THE USA

The Progressive Farmer, (ISSN 0033-0760), serving families who have a vital and shared interest in American agriculture and country living, is published monthly in January, February, March, April, May, August, September, October, November, December, and a combined June/July issue, which counts as two issues in an annual subscription. Additional double issues may be published, which count as two issues. "Copyright 2024. DTN/The Progressive Farmer. All rights reserved." The Progressive Farmer® is a trademark registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Additional trademarks are Country Voices®, Pork Profit®, We'd Like To Mention®, Countryplace®, Country Place®, The Rural Sportsman®, Cornerstones™, FarmLife™. Periodicals postage paid at Birmingham, AL, and at additional mailing offices (USPS 447-300). General Editorial Office, 2204 Lakeshore Dr., Suite 415, Birmingham, AL 35209. Subscription rates in the U.S.: \$58.00 for three years, \$44.00 for two years, \$26.00 for one year. Outside the U.S.: \$33 per year. Single copy \$5.95.

Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement #40732015 GST #83187 6255 RT0001

TO CORRECT YOUR ADDRESS: Attach mailing address label from cover, along with your new address, including zip code. Send to The Progressive Farmer, P.O. Box 5010, Harlan, IA 51593-0510. Give six weeks' notice.

POSTMASTER: Send all UAA to CFS. (See DMM 707.4.12.5); NON-POSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES: The Progressive Farmer, P.O. Box 5010, Harlan, IA 51593-0510.

SUBSCRIBERS: If the Post Office alerts us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligation unless we receive a corrected address within two years.

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# Honoring Voices for Agriculture

At some point in our lives, all of us have probably met Voices for Agriculture. People who inspire us, who we admire for their dedication and commitment, who encourage us to speak out for something we believe in and serve an important role in our lives.

For me, with deep roots forever attached to the rich black soil of my family's farm, these Voices for Agriculture touch my soul and continue to give hope.

They have shown that one person can indeed make a difference as an advocate for a worthy cause. That no one is too young or too old to be a Voice for Agriculture. That a person can make a strong point over coffee at a kitchen table, on a live video made from a field or barn, as a delegate at a farm organization meeting, in a committee meeting in Congress or as a keynote speaker in a huge national or international forum. It doesn't need to be a well-known politician or a famous performer, although some of those have also become influential and welcome advocates for ag.

When our staff at DTN/*Progressive Farmer* decided to do a special section on Voices for Agriculture, our biggest challenge was to narrow down who to select. We asked editorial staff to submit a list of who they thought should be profiled and why. While some names overlapped, the list was still long and needed to be shortened several times because of space limitations, not because of the quality of the nominations. The agriculture sector can be proud that there are so many people worthy to be recognized, but it is also notable there continues to be such a need for people to speak about and be advocates of agriculture.

As we think of candidates for Voices for Agriculture—the ones we selected, the ones that we didn't this time around—a lot of terms arise on how we can describe them. Founders, leaders, protectors, defenders, influencers, servers, entertainers, lobbyists, guardians, fundraisers, preservers, savers, innovators, visionaries, dreamers, believers, volunteers, guides, teachers, educators, icons, titans, motivators, mentors, ambassadors, policymakers, stewards ... and the list goes on. For some, several terms could apply.

In this issue of *Progressive Farmer*, as well as special coverage in our other content platforms such as [dtnpf.com](http://dtnpf.com), we present some of the people who individually, or sometimes with others in an organization, have made our final list. Whether you agree or disagree with our selections, they have earned respect for their advocacy efforts, for their work on beneficial government programs and policies, for their influence on land practices, for helping with farm family finances and business planning, for assisting with programs for minorities and veterans, and for many other reasons. Ultimately, we thank them for speaking up—paving the way for future generations to be successful and proud of what they do in agriculture.

We invite you to pass along to us who you feel is worthy of recognition in future Voices for Agriculture special coverage. Send your suggestions and reasons why to [elaine.shein@dtn.com](mailto:elaine.shein@dtn.com).

For those who already serve as Voices for Agriculture in some way, we thank you. For those who are still considering becoming Voices for Agriculture, we hope the stories in this issue will inspire you, give you some ideas, as well as some useful tips.

As someone who has served in various roles myself—on an agri-business council, a state Ag in the Classroom program, and other ways—I can truthfully say those were some of the most meaningful and rewarding experiences I have had in my life. I look forward to seeing what our voices can accomplish together for the future. ///

“These Voices for Agriculture touch my soul and continue to give hope.”

*Elaine Shein*  
ASSOCIATE CONTENT MANAGER

WE'D LIKE  
TO MENTION



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Farm life is unpredictable, and so are the challenges you face. ATV/UTV insurance goes beyond accidents, offering comprehensive coverage against theft, vandalism, hitting an animal, fire, and some weather-related damage. Whether it's protecting your ATV/UTV from theft during the off-season or damage caused by unforeseen events, insurance can provide comprehensive coverage to keep you covered in many situations.

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In the unfortunate event that your ATV/UTV causes damage to someone else's property or results in an injury, liability coverage protects you financially in case you're held responsible for injuries or damages to others while riding. This ensures that you can focus on your farming activities without the stress of legal liabilities.

### Peace of mind for every season

Farming is a year-round endeavor, and your ATV/UTV plays a crucial role in every season. Whether it's plowing through snow in winter or navigating muddy fields in spring, knowing that your ATV/UTV is protected allows you to concentrate on what matters most—your crops.

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# Criteria Clarifies if Farm Is A Business or Hobby

Back in May, the U.S. Tax Court ruled that a farming operation that showed \$14 million in revenue over 16 years was a hobby and disallowed certain expenses. This got me thinking about hobby loss rules. It's been awhile since we discussed a farming business versus a hobby, so I thought it might be good to revisit.

I won't go into too much detail—the case is complex, and the ruling is long. Basically, the taxpayer lost millions in the farming operation but made millions selling the real estate. The taxpayer looked at this as one unified business. The IRS went through the hobby loss analysis and viewed the farm separate from the real estate business, and determined the farm was a hobby.

I think the takeaway is that no matter how much gross revenue a farm generates, if it consistently loses money, you run the risk of being classified as a hobby. In some farm subindustries (ranching and horse operations, for instance), the risk is greater than in others.

When determining if a farm is a business or a hobby, you need to look at the profit motive. The rule of thumb is a farm must generate a profit in three of five years (two of seven years for horse breeders). If it does not, the IRS is allowed to look at the farm in greater detail to determine if there was a profit motive or if it was, in fact, a hobby.

Treasury regulations provide a list of nine factors that should be considered when determining if there was a profit motive:

1. The manner in which the taxpayer carries on the activity
2. The expertise of the taxpayer or the taxpayer's advisers
3. The time and effort expended by the taxpayer in carrying on the activity
4. The expectation that assets used in the activity may appreciate in value
5. The success of the taxpayer in carrying on other similar activities

6. The taxpayer's history of income or loss with respect to the activity
7. The amount of occasional profits, if any
8. The financial status of the taxpayer
9. Whether elements of personal pleasure or recreation are involved

When determining if an activity has a profit motive, the IRS will take into account all the facts and circumstances. The burden of proof to show there was a profit motive is on the taxpayer. As such, it is imperative the taxpayer supports his claim of a profit motive with good records.

Just a word of caution: If deemed a hobby, back taxes associated with the disallowed expenses (plus interest and penalties) could be devastating. If you don't have a profit motive, it might be better not to deduct expenses rather than deal with the consequences. ///

## TOOLS FROM THE PAST

*This tin pendant helped its owner to reuse a tasty treat. What is it?*



**Answer:**

*This is a Peggy gum saver. Chewing gum was rare in the late 1800s. To save and reuse later, kids would open the hinged locket, place the gum on the peg and snap it closed. Likely most appropriate for little girls, the tin was named for the peg inside.*



**Rod Mauszycki**

*DTN Tax Columnist Rod Mauszycki, J.D., MBT, is a tax principal with CLA (CliftonLarsonAllen) in Minneapolis, Minnesota.*

► Read Rod's "Ask the Taxman" column at **ABOUT.DTNPF.COM/TAX**

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# WHAT'S TRENDING @ DTNPF.COM



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► Crops Editor Jason Jenkins calls soybean cyst nematode the Rodney Dangerfield of soybean pests. While some farmers may not respect SCN, it causes \$1.5 billion in damage each year. In a recent episode, Jenkins explains testing and management strategies, and how researchers are exploring a new gene to boost SCN resistance in soybean varieties.



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**Aug. 12: WASDE Report:** As harvest approaches, DTN commodity analysts will provide commentary on the latest World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates and how they may affect commodity markets.

## BLOGS & COLUMNS



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# Time for Yield Guesstimates To Begin

Every growing season has its own unique challenges that make it difficult to compare to prior years. In late February in Nebraska, I was sitting outside in 70°F temperatures one Sunday afternoon talking with relatives about the drought that much of Nebraska and the Midwest were experiencing. Kansas and Texas had already had outbreaks of wildfires. Little did we know the turn that spring was about to take.

Corn and soybean planting got off to good starts in early April, but by the end of the month, the Midwest was starting to see more rain, accompanied by severe weather, including hail and tornadoes. On April 26, the National Weather Service in Omaha issued 48 tornado warnings, the most in a single day. By late May, 98 tornadoes had been reported in Iowa, with Texas close behind at 96.

Even if your farm didn't suffer hail or storm damage in early 2024, there's a good chance you spent several days waiting to plant while wave after wave of rain went by in May. In early June, USDA reported 41% of Wisconsin, 37% of Kentucky, 34% of Minnesota and 30% of Ohio were dealing with surplus topsoil moisture. Replanting was common in several areas.

In terms of sheer planting delays, 2024 was not as bad as 2019, but the year did resemble 2022, a year that had the second slowest planting pace of the past 10 years and posted 6.4 million acres of prevented plantings. Many expressed concerns about mudding the crop in, a less-than-ideal way to start a new crop.

Now, as the calendar turns to August, many farmers will breathe easier knowing their crops made it through a rough start, but that won't be true for everyone. It is yield-guessing time again, and with that, I'd like to offer some perennial tips.

Every yield-estimating method has its pros and cons. Getting out of the truck and peeling back husks, or counting soybean pods can help you notice things you won't see from a satellite. But, even several hundred stops along the highway are just tiny samples of this country's production. As we saw in the Western Corn Belt last year, fields we look at in August can be a lot different in September.

Using sophisticated weather and satellite data are wonderful ways of getting a comprehensive look at the big picture, but the greenness of crops—or lack thereof—does not always correlate to yield. As much as we would like to compare what we know to previous years, each year is unique, and advances in seed technology continue to move the baseline for potential yields.

As a parting thought, don't confuse the fascination and fun of playing the yield-guessing game with making good risk-management decisions. The world of market factors affecting prices is much bigger than yield. The risk to prices can come in many different disguises.

After a rough start early in 2024, best wishes for a good harvest. ///



**Todd Hultman**  
Lead Analyst

► Read Todd's blog at **ABOUT.DTNPF.COM/** MARKETS

► You may email Todd at **todd.hultman@dtm.com**, or call 402-255-8489.



GETTY IMAGES



**Katie Dehlinger**

Senior Farm Business Editor

► Read Katie's business blog at  
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# The Heavy Weight of Higher Interest Rates

In 2018, an agriculture economist told me that rising interest rates were “one more brick on the load that farmers have to carry.”

I wonder how much that brick weighs now?

Many market watchers have begun to ponder if the federal funds rate will stay unchanged at 5.25 to 5.5% for the rest of the year, a far cry from earlier forecasts for sharply reduced rates in 2024. The nation's post-COVID economy is still struggling to meet the Federal Reserve's 2% inflation target. The labor market, while weaker, has surprised many with its strength.

For farmers, the weight of the brick is most obvious in operating notes. The Kansas City Federal Reserve says non-real estate farm loans at commercial banks grew by 15% from the previous year, one of the sharpest increases since the 1970s.

With forecasts for another year of surplus crops, profitability becomes a game of margin management. Farmers need higher yields, lower expenses and savvy sales to come out ahead.

Farmers with robust working capital have distinct

advantages. Not only are their expenses cheaper because they aren't paying for access to money, but they're also likely earning interest on their spare cash.

“Those who rely on short-term financing at variable interest rates to cover a majority of their operating expenses are bearing the brunt of the impact of high interest rates,” writes Jay Parsons, John Hewlett and Jeff Tranel in a University of Nebraska Center for Agricultural Profitability blog. “For those producers, now is the time to focus on controlling expenses as short-term debt can easily turn into long-term problems.”

As the calendar turns to August, and harvest nears, there are fewer expenses left for farmers to manage for the 2024 growing season. That means profit potential will rely more heavily on the markets and a farmer's chosen strategy for grain sales.

Here again, interest plays a role in the expense of storing bushels, complicating the math on how much extra you can expect to pay for storing grain until a more advantageous price arrives.

While interest is only one piece of the profitability puzzle, it's a weighty brick indeed, and one that's not likely to lessen significantly anytime soon. ///

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## Kids Crave Farm Lessons

BY *Katie Pratt*

**Ag in the Classroom may be my job, but it is a passion.**

I enjoy spending 30 minutes in a classroom engaging with students about farming and food, plants and animals. In a school year, I see more than 5,000 students, some of them once a month and others every week.

Two years ago, the third grade teachers at Jefferson Elementary asked if I'd host their students for a farm field trip. I visit these seven classrooms each month. We cover pigs, dairy cows, poinsettias, plant nutrition, grains, pumpkins and other topics that pop into conversation. Students' curiosity has no bounds.

We host groups on the farm all the time—visiting international farmers, friends of friends, classes we've adopted through the Farm Bureau's Adopt-A-Classroom program. We've hosted farm-to-table dinners as fundraisers for local organizations, but 200 students?



KATIE PRATT

My announcement at the dinner table was met with a few groans. "In May?!" "How many people?!" Thankfully, my family only grumbles for effect.

For two years now, we've hosted this third grade, their teachers and chaperones. We start at my parents' farm visiting the cattle on pasture, talking to my niece about goats and a neighbor about her chickens. On the bus ride up to my farm, they play

"Where's Agriculture?," a scavenger hunt for farm-related items that can be seen from the bus windows.

At my farm, we have lunch, crawl into tractors, explore agriculture careers, run an acre and test their plant knowledge. Two FFA chapters, 4-H members, the county Master Gardeners, Farm Bureau and others come when called to ensure the two-day field trip is a success.

Exhausted, we part at day's end with a lot of high fives. "This was the best field trip ever!" Sometimes the simple experiences are the most memorable. ///



Katie Pratt writes and spreads agriculture's message from a north-central Illinois farm. Visit [theillinoisfarmgirl.com](http://theillinoisfarmgirl.com) to follow her blog.

## When a Calf Grants Confidence

BY *Tiffany Dowell Lashmet*

**I speak for a living. I give presentations on agricultural law issues to rural landowners and agricultural producers.**

My first 4-H public speaking contest was at age 9. It's in my genes—Dad had trophies from his public speaking days on our mantle. My Nannie and my mom, both high school English teachers, helped coach kids on speech writing and presentation. In my family, public speaking was expected.

I still remember this poignant line from my first speech: "My first bottle lamb died in my arms." I mean, a kid's got the blue ribbon in the bag with a line like that.

I just assumed my own children would carry on the public speaking tradition.

But, my daughter was a painfully shy toddler and kindergartner. She would not make eye contact with others. She could not participate in cheer or T-ball because there were people looking at her. Kindergarten picture day was a nightmare, as she would only cry and suck her thumb.

Then, we bought her a mini-Hereford steer named Bullet. The next thing we knew, my daughter started to come out of her shell. She would chat with other parents and kids at the steer shows. She answered the judge's questions in the ring. She convinced our steer fitter to give her a puppy.

When it came time for Junior Nationals, my son was practicing his sales talk when my daughter announced she wanted to compete, as well. Everyone was shocked. We practiced a little two-minute speech about why the judge should buy her calf. "He's my best friend" and "he always holds his big ol' head up in the ring" were among those reasons.

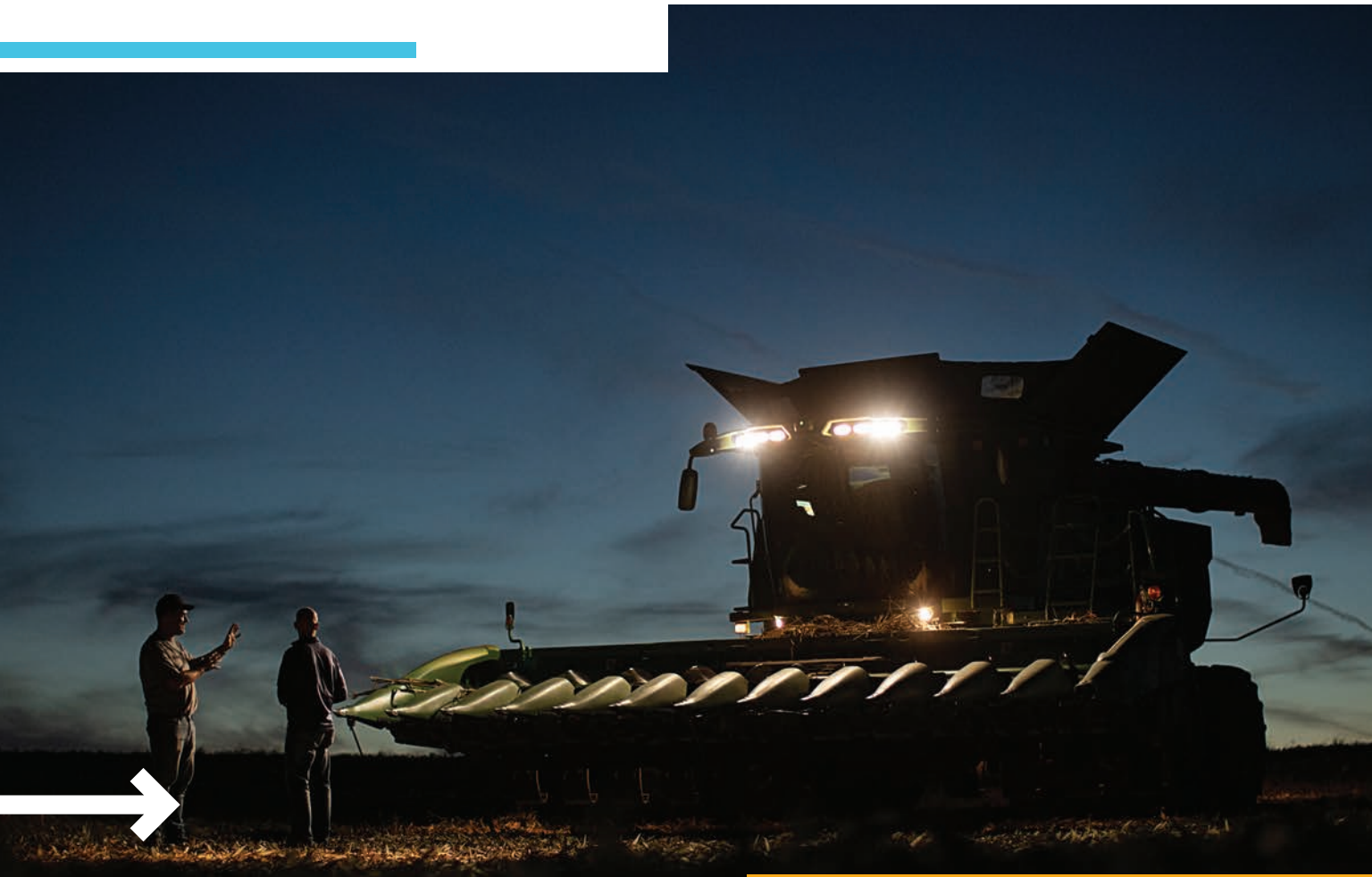
When contest day came, she marched right up and gave her sales pitch to the judge. The fourth-place banner she won was pure gold. Through Bullet, she found her courage and her voice. ///



PC LEGACY LIVESTOCK IMAGING



Tiffany Dowell Lashmet juggles family, farming, writing, livestock and a career in ag law from the Texas Panhandle. Follow her blog at [alwaysafarmkid.com](http://alwaysafarmkid.com), [alwaysafarmkid](https://www.instagram.com/alwaysafarmkid) on Instagram and [@TiffDowell](https://www.instagram.com/TiffDowell) on X.



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SHARON CARONE

**Editor's Note:**

Farmers in America often serve as Voices for Agriculture, starting from their own farms or communities, then some make an impact nationally and globally. Yet, Voices for Agriculture can be anyone. They can be farmers or nonfarmers, rural or urban people, founders or members of organizations, employees or volunteers, educators or well-known musicians. They can encourage certain farm practices, represent specific farmer groups or influence the next farm bill. They can post online from their fields or represent voters in Congress.

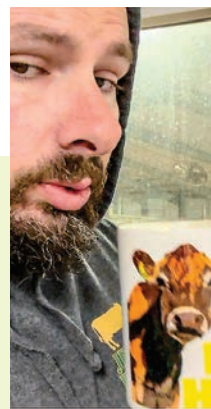
What they have in common is their commitment and passion to speak up for agriculture and farmers because they care about and believe in their critical role in the world.

*Progressive Farmer* introduces you to advocates who are making a difference by being Voices for Agriculture.

**Stories by:** Jennifer Carrico, Chris Clayton, Katie Dehlinger, Dan Miller, Susan Payne, Joel Reichenberger, Elaine Shein and Pamela Smith

# VOICES FOR AGRICULTURE

*Advocates advise on how to tell your own story.*



As Derrick Josi, a fourth-generation farmer from Tillamook, Oregon, listened to a presentation at a National Milk Producers Federation Conference in Nashville in 2016, one of the speakers said something that changed his life.

Don Schindler, who does social media and digital communications training, told Josi and other farmers why they should be online to tell their story directly to consumers. “If you’re not online, somebody else will be online telling it for you and they’re not going to get it right,” Josi recalls Schindler saying.

Josi has now become an inspiring example of how even one person—one Voice for Agriculture—can make a difference.

Two weeks after his Nashville trip, Josi started to write online about his dairy and views on agriculture. Today, the 41-year-old is known internationally. His TDF Honest Farming content includes a website, social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, a

book and even merchandise he sells. In 2023, his content reached 211 million people, he says. So far this year he has already reached 90 million people.

Oregon Aglink Executive Director Mallory Phelan says there are several reasons why Josi has been so successful, has so many followers and has had such a large impact. She points to his high engagement with his followers, his authoritative approach as he talks about dairying or agriculture and his consistency with his frequent posts on social media.

Josi answers the curious and sometimes tough questions about what farmers do and why. He says he measures his success by the amount of people who learn about the dairy industry from him and how he helps bridge the gap between farmers and nonfarmers. Josi adds he will research or contact others—such as commodity checkoff groups—to make sure he has the facts.

Phelan stresses Josi also doesn't shy away from controversial topics that other farmers might avoid. "He gets some really, really brutal messages—mean to him, to his family and people in dairy. There's a chunk of people that say 'thank goodness for Derrick', for carrying the torch."

Finding other advocates like Josi to help carry that torch is especially important today.

"We're in a moment in time right now, where people are asking, 'Hey, what are you doing as a farmer to raise the food that I need to eat and feed my family?' Let's take that opportunity and share our story, but in a way that they can understand what it is and why we do what we do," says Woodruff Public Relations Managing Supervisor Cindy Cunningham, who's a former assistant vice president of communications for the National Pork Board.

The following are some tips Josi, Cunningham and others give on how to be a more effective and successful Voice for Agriculture.

**START YOUNG.** Take part in organizations such as 4-H or FFA. Cunningham says 4-H opened her eyes to what was available for her as a career and she credits 4-H for helping her develop skills to talk about what is happening in agriculture, and why farmers do the things they do.

**GET INVOLVED.** Look for opportunities such as Ag in the Classroom, or your local Chamber of Commerce, Rotary group or Agricultural Business Council. They can help hone meeting and speaking skills, provide networking opportunities and be a forum to hear from government officials and industry executives. "The Council also seeks to be an advocate for agriculture and agricultural economic growth in this region," the Agricultural Business Council of Kansas City states on its website.

**NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK.** Cunningham says through networking, such as in National Ag Communicators of Tomorrow, you learn who you can reach out to if you have questions on how to communicate. You can also watch others as they communicate about agriculture and the different

messages they give. She adds networking is also critical to make sure that you can expand beyond what's happening in your own circle—and can understand how your message can have an impact potentially across the nation.

**DEVELOP YOUR SKILLS.** Identify what you would like to learn or skills to build. Practice your audio or video skills on your smartphone, for example. Gain confidence in public speaking by getting involved in a local Toastmasters group, your local Farm Bureau, TEPAP, or your state's LEAD program, if available. The National Association of Agricultural Educators also can help encourage and train advocates.

**BE AUTHENTIC. BE YOURSELF.** Zach Johnson, 40, known as the Millennial Farmer, is a sixth-generation farmer from Lowry, Minnesota. He uploads daily YouTube videos about his farm; he has more than 1 million followers and 300 million lifetime views since he started posting in the spring of 2016. Johnson says authenticity is important for the content he produces. "If you want to be a voice for agriculture, you have to know what suits you. Find what you're good at," Johnson says. "Be yourself. ... people will sniff it out if you're not being who you are, if you're trying to make points you don't actually believe," Johnson adds.

Josi agrees. "Don't be afraid to be yourself. Because the worst thing you can do on social media is pretend to be something you're not."

**KNOW YOUR PURPOSE.** Mitchell, South Dakota, rancher Amanda Radke, who hosts "The Heart of Rural America" podcast, says there's always room for more people to advocate for agriculture both personally and professionally. But most importantly, people who want to do this need to know their passion, purpose and reason for being in agriculture so they can then tell an authentic story. "We all have a story to tell, and some are more open to hearing it than others," she adds. "I'm not going to change who I am or what I do to make someone else happy."

**DECIDE YOUR AUDIENCE.** Determine who you want to reach and what works best for you to reach that audience.

**BE CONSISTENT.** Decide how often you want to get your message out and the quality of what you do. In social media, it can be daily videos—or short, effective videos posted three times a day.

**INVEST IN EQUIPMENT.** Smartphones, tablets, or even computers can be valuable tools, but you will need reliable, fast internet to livestream your message or upload videos. Use a good microphone, avoid the wind, record at high resolution, and watch your lighting.

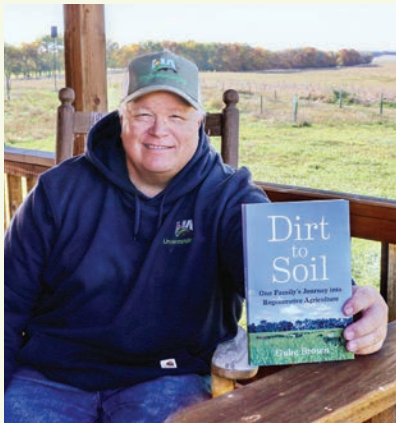
**HAVE PHOTOS, VIDEOS, PROPS.** Josi says make sure you can explain what is going on in the pictures and videos you use, whether on social media online or in a speech and powerpoint presentation. Otherwise, you end up spending a lot of time explaining the images later.

**FIND MENTORS.** Radke says she is thankful for mentors along the way who gave her opportunities to write blogs about her daily life on the ranch, and taught her to stand up for what she believed in. "We need to be fearless champions for the family farm and ranch. I look forward to doing that the rest of my life," she says.

**ASK FOR ADVICE.** "Don't be afraid to reach out to other advocates and ask for advice," Josi says. "You're gonna run into some that are not going to be friendly. But there are some really good advocates out there that are willing to answer questions."

**DECIDE HOW TO MEASURE YOUR SUCCESS.** Is it to bridge the gap with nonfarmers? Or do you want to make money or a career from being an advocate?

**DON'T GIVE UP.** "It's a hard time to be and become an advocate for a sustainable ag future, because of how much is stacked against us every day as farmers," says Michelle Hughes, 31, who advocates for young farmers in her role as the co-executive director of the National Young Farmers Coalition, based in Washington, D.C. "But now is not the time to give up or become demotivated with our dreams for the future, it's time to get creative about how we reach our goals," says Hughes. ///



DES KELLER

## Gabe Brown

### VOICE FOR REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

North Dakota's Gabe Brown went from a young farmer fearing the future after several crop failures to having his image on a movie poster wearing overalls, leaning on a shovel and wearing a Superman cape in the documentary "Common Ground."

Those disasters eventually became a blessing for Brown. A spring hailstorm forced him to seed in a forage mix to feed his cattle. Under the biomass from those crop failures, he began to see richer soil and earthworms. Soon, Brown was speaking at events such as No-till on the Plains, where other farmers listened to his message about building organic matter in the soil and reducing chemical inputs.

Everyone suddenly wanted to visit Brown's place. With 2,000 to 2,500 visitors every summer, "It was like its own full-time business just showing people around the ranch," he says.

Brown, 64, has transitioned the farm to his son, Paul, while he travels up to 275 days a year speaking to farmers and at corporate events to explain the principles of regenerative agriculture. ///

> [brownsranch.us](http://brownsranch.us)

## Solutions from the Land

### ENCOURAGING LAND-BASED SOLUTIONS

Few groups helped shape agriculture's role in renewable energy and climate policy quite like Solutions from the Land (SfL).

Ernie Shea, a former CEO of the National Association of Conservation Districts, has been the organization's guiding force since SfL was founded as the 25x'25 Alliance. 25x'25 began after the 9/11 terrorist attack, focused on increasing renewable fuels for national security; by 2009, its leaders were looking at climate change and stressed climate policy needs to ensure farmers are productive and profitable.

SfL was formed, which gauged farmers and scientists about ways to use technology to adapt to problems such as shorter planting windows and coping with new pests, as well as improving soil resiliency.

SfL leaders such as Shea, Ohio farmer Fred Yoder, Iowa farmer Ray Gaesser and former California Agriculture Secretary A.G. Kawamura, also a farmer, have been leading messengers for ag production at the annual United Nations Climate Change "Conference of the Parties" (COP) meetings. "We were probably the first people who started using the term climate-smart agriculture," Yoder explains.



CHRIS CLAYTON

Shea adds that his farmer leaders positioned climate-smart agriculture as a way for farmers globally to become more resilient. The strategy has been increasingly embraced by more environmental groups. "We've always been way out ahead because of our farmers," Shea says. "They aren't afraid to color outside the lines and go beyond where current farm organizations are. ... We take a much longer view and are trying to reposition the core function of agriculture where ag is seen as a solution to these megachallenges."

Shea sees more younger farmers looking for opportunities in developing climate-smart tools going forward. "We have a new generation of people who are bright and not just trying to get by," he says. "There are a lot of challenges, but on balance, I'm very encouraged about the future." ///

> [solutionsfromtheland.org](http://solutionsfromtheland.org)

(Left to right) Ernie Shea, A.G. Kawamura, Ray Gaesser, Fred Yoder and Howard-Yana Shapiro. Kawamura, Yoder and Shapiro are Solutions from the Land's three co-chairs. Gaesser is an SfL board member.



CHRIS CLAYTON





JOEL REICHENBERGER



JOEL REICHENBERGER

## Debbie Stabenow & Glenn "GT" Thompson

U.S. CONGRESS / AG'S FARM BILL CHAMPIONS

Debbie Stabenow and Glenn "GT" Thompson often advocate for separate sides of the same coin seeking the same outcome: stronger agricultural and rural economies.

Stabenow, 74, a Democrat from Michigan, is chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, a role she held off and on for a decade. Stabenow will retire at the end of this year after serving in the Senate since 2001.

Thompson, 64, a Republican representing Pennsylvania's 15th congressional district, chairs the House Agriculture Committee and is serving his ninth term.

Together, they hope to end 2024 with a new five-year farm bill. To do

so, they must reconcile differences about some of the biggest aspects of farm policy: commodity programs, nutrition and conservation.

Having chaired Senate Ag in both 2014 and 2018, when the last farm bills were written, Stabenow has helped improve crop insurance options for producers. "I'm also glad we are focusing on crop insurance, which includes every single crop and not just the commodity crop," Stabenow told reporters in April. "When you ask farmers the most important part of risk management for them, it's crop insurance."

In 2023, Stabenow led the effort to get \$19.5 billion in the Inflation Reduction Act for conservation practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions or sequester carbon.

Thompson got first crack at passing a farm bill out of committee in May, his plans highlighting a more robust safety net. He also shifted some nutrition funds and dollars from the Commodity Credit Corp. to boost commodity programs and crop insurance, and support research. "We should be on the leading edge of science, technology and innovation within research." ///

➤ [www.stabenow.senate.gov](http://www.stabenow.senate.gov)

➤ [thompson.house.gov](http://thompson.house.gov)

## Kip Tom

AG'S AMBASSADOR

Talking to a room full of meat-industry leaders, seventh-generation Indiana farmer Kip Tom explains the role agriculture plays as a pillar in the country's national security.

"Without food, we would not be a national power," he says.

Tom, 69, was already well-known in farming circles before he opted to run for Congress in 2016. He lost his race, but increasing his voice as a farmer landed Tom a role overseeing the influence of American food internationally while serving as the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture during the Trump administration.

Seeing the struggles of countries trying to feed themselves and the instability created by hunger left a lasting impression on him.

Talking to members of the U.S. Meat Export Federation, Tom said agriculture needs to increase crop production and re-establish a stream of domestic inputs for crops, noting too many crop-protection products are imported. There are challenges, including supply chains, labor and regulations. The country needs a national agricultural strategy.

"We have the best beef, pork, lamb and poultry in the world. The qualities are the best. And, we need to sell that quality, because I don't think anyone else can compete with us," he explained. "And, that gives us American food power." ///

➤ [tomfarms.com](http://tomfarms.com)



CHRIS CLAYTON



JOEL REICHENBERGER

## Amanda Radke

### ADDING VALUE TO RURAL LIFE

A lifelong agricultural advocate, cattle producer and voice for rural life is how Amanda Radke describes herself, even though it's much more than that.

Radke lives on a cattle ranch near Mitchell, South Dakota, with her husband, Tyler, and four children.

Growing up, she was involved in 4-H, FFA and showing cattle. In high school, she was named a National Beef Ambassador and promoted beef across the country. Now, she promotes agriculture and the rural way of life to people across the country through her “The Heart of Rural America” podcast and “The Radke Report” column, and delivers more than 50 speeches annually.

“We have to do something to save the American cattle rancher and add value to our way of life,” she says. “We must become advocates for rural America and save our main streets. It’s the best place to raise a family.”

Radke advises farmers and ranchers to know their passion, purpose and reason for being in agriculture and tell their authentic story to let others know the importance of their way of life. ///

> <https://amandaradke.com>

Amanda and her daughter Scarlett Radke (center) spoke to a group of students about careers in agriculture and read the books to elementary students at the public Ethan School, in Ethan, South Dakota.



*“We have to do something to save the American cattle rancher.”*

—AMANDA RADKE



PHOTOS COURTESY OF AMANDA RADKE



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MITCHELL FRANSEN

## Dick Wittman

### TEACHING A COMPETITIVE EDGE

Dick Wittman's spent more than 40 years advocating for financial literacy and professional management on farms.

"A lot of people don't realize the opportunity costs of not doing financial management well," he says, adding that good balance sheets and accrual-adjusted income statements can give farms a competitive edge.

Wittman began his career by developing consistent lending standards for the Farm Credit System in the 1970s and started consulting when he returned to his northern Idaho family farm in the 1980s.

He's served on the Farm Financial Standards Council and on the faculty of TEPAP (The Executive Program for Ag Producers). While he's worked directly with farms, his consulting work now focuses primarily on training educators and other consultants on how to help farmers apply professional management techniques to the family farm.

"The anxiety that exists in our industry that's self-inflicted is just unacceptable. Farmers are used to weather and prices and things they can't control," he says. Solid financial management brings certainty to a business, and that's what he finds the most rewarding. ///

> [wittmanconsulting.com](http://wittmanconsulting.com)

> [tepap.tamu.edu](http://tepap.tamu.edu)

## Ruth Hambleton

### EMPOWERING FARM WOMEN



MARU GUYLER-ALANIZ

Ruth Hambleton's passion to strengthen agricultural education for women has long roots. Her mother, Annette (Annie) Kohlhausen Fleck, successfully helped manage the family's northern-Illinois family farm at a time when the industry was traditionally male dominated.

In Hambleton's own career as a University of Illinois educator, she noticed the tools women need to become successful partners or sole proprietors in agricultural business were lacking. Using her mother's experiences as a guidepost, she developed a curriculum that includes financial skills, estate planning, lease negotiations, marketing, human resource management and more.

Annie's Project, named for her mother, started with 10 women attending a six-week workshop in 2003 in Centralia, Illinois. Since then, more than 22,000 women (and some men) have found value in the program that is now in 40 states and several countries—and is still growing. Hambleton continues to serve on the Annie's Project Board

of Directors, as new leadership guides future programming.

"We're getting the next generation ready for the next 20 years and on their terms using their technology, but mixing in our own socialization. That's what I see as my role as we transition between the way we did things in the '50s and the way we're going to do things in 2050," she says.

What cements the learning is the foundation of networking that forever links participants, who also tend to become lifelong learners, Hambleton says. ///

## ANNIE'S PROJECT

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

> [anniesproject.org](http://anniesproject.org)

*"We're getting the next generation ready."*

—RUTH HAMBLETON



BRIAN BRUNER / BRUNER PHOTO

## Farm Aid

### STANDING WITH FAMILY FARMERS

Willie Nelson, Neil Young and John Mellencamp turned their spotlight on the plight of farmers in 1985, during the depth of farming’s financial crisis. They’ve kept it there ever since, growing Farm Aid beyond concerts and helplines, although those remain major functions of the organization.

Today, the organization continues to advocate for financial fairness for family farms as well as local and regional food systems that often provide those farmers with a better pathway to profitability. While there are many definitions of a family farm, the organization works to shorten the connection between the consumer and the producer of food, while increasing the prices paid to farmers in the process.

Nelson, the now-91-year-old singer and guitar player, has testified before Congress several times, including advocating for the Agricultural Credit Act of 1987, which saved thousands of family farms from foreclosure.

“We should encourage the financial industry to be very helpful to the family farmer,” he told Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, arguing that bankers need to trust farmers to make the best decisions for their business and their soil.

*“We should encourage the financial industry to be very helpful to the family farmer.”*

—WILLIE NELSON

“I also think farm-to-markets are a great idea. Where people, instead of buying their breakfasts from 1,500 miles away on a truck, they go next door and find a farmer who can produce it for them,” he says.

Connecting concertgoers to locally produced food is one of the key ways the Farm Aid festival has grown. In 2007, it launched its HOMEGROWN Concessions initiative, where all of the food sold is sourced from farms around the concert venue. The objective is to create new business opportunities for farmers and establish ongoing relationships.

Carolyn Mugar, who has served as Farm Aid’s executive director since the first concert, says there’s more work to be done. Farm Aid has expanded its board, bringing on Dave Matthews in 2001 and Margo Price in 2021, balancing out the rising ages of the original board members.

She’s not worried about the future.

“I don’t fear what will happen, because I know they’ll figure it out just like they did with the first concert,” she says. “We’re up to being relevant. We will have to keep figuring it out just like farmers have to keep figuring it out.” ///

➤ [www.farmaid.org](http://www.farmaid.org)



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## Michelle Hughes

### HELPING YOUNG FARMERS

Seven years ago, a first-generation young hog farmer from New Haven, Connecticut, stopped farming to follow a greater purpose.

Michelle Hughes, the co-executive director of the National Young Farmers Coalition, based in Washington, D.C., now helps young farmers and desires equitable change for them through advocacy and policy work.

Hughes, 31, has held roles that spanned most departments of the Coalition and led or partnered on work honing the organization’s impact on young farmers since her start in 2017. Her early roles included supporting young farmers in roundtables ahead of the 2018 farm bill passing, in which the organization saw many wins for new, young and beginning farmers.

“Specifically, the inclusion of the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network and permanent funding for ... programs that support underserved farmers—that includes young farmers and farmers of color—were two wins we felt excited about,” Hughes says.

As equity and organizational change director, Hughes conducted a comprehensive racial equity impact assessment of the organization’s internal workflows and external programming, which identified gaps in the Coalition’s programs, policies, systems, structures and practices. This led to the organization being able to rethink and redesign how to provide services to young farmers of color.

In 2022, Hughes extended her work on internal structure reform with USDA through her appointment to the Department’s Equity Commission, Agriculture Subcommittee. Alongside several revolutionary leaders in agriculture, her work on the subcommittee attempts to address a history of discrimination at USDA by providing recommendations to the department to better serve young farmers of color. ///

> [www.youngfarmers.org](http://www.youngfarmers.org)

## Michael O’Gorman

### FARMER VETERAN COALITION FOUNDER

Even after nearly 60 years in agriculture, Michael O’Gorman ends many days with dirt-stained hands and a sweaty brow.

“I have a love affair with American agriculture,” he says, fresh from the field one evening.

O’Gorman grew his career in organic specialty crops operations, but after transforming his third company, he changed course, founding the Farmer Veteran Coalition in 2006.

Ever since, he’s helped retiring veterans set their roots in American soil. He first started assisting a half-dozen vets with small farms, but now the Coalition has nearly 50,000 members with farms big and small growing every different crop every different way. He’s worked in the fields and in the halls of the U.S. Capitol, meeting with



COURTESY OF MICHAEL O’GORMAN

retired privates and sitting presidents, all trying to help veterans find their footing.

Now in “quasi-retirement” at 76 years old, O’Gorman doesn’t see any end to his work. He’s writing a book about his experiences and hopes to continue getting his hands dirty in fields and in helping new farmers dig in. ///



SUSANNA FROHMAN





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JOHN HAYES

## Zach Johnson

### THE MILLENNIAL FARMER

Eight years ago, a sixth-generation farmer from Lowry, Minnesota, couldn't have imagined the success he would have in uploading daily YouTube videos about his farming operation.

Zach Johnson, known as the Millennial Farmer, has surpassed more than 1 million followers and 300 million lifetime views since the spring of 2016.

From his early days of educating his viewers on the benefits of biotech/transgenic crops and farm-management practices that shared a wider view of what happens daily on the farm to now with his "astronomical reach," Johnson is continuing the same mission he's had since Day 1: to become a national voice for agriculture, provide farmer-to-farmer education and facilitate a collaborative conversation between farmers and the public.

"There's always more people to reach and new practices; it's gone a lot farther and reached more people than I ever could have ever dreamed," says Johnson, 40.

He juggles a lot in his hometown: a family of his own, influential success on social media and a full-time, shared farming operation of 2,400 acres with his father.

Because of his success on social media, Johnson has been able to give back in more ways than one, starting with his Grain Bin Safety campaign, which has raised over \$100,000 since its inception. ///

> [www.mnmillennialfarmer.com](http://www.mnmillennialfarmer.com)

## P.J. Haynie III

### TELLS THE BLACK FARMER STORY

Philip J. (P.J.) Haynie III and his father, Philip J. Haynie II, work a wide swath of acreages around Reedville, the small Virginia community just across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C.

The Haynie farm reaches back to P.J.'s great-great-grandfather, Robert Haynie.

Born on Virginia's Northern Neck in 1823 a slave, later becoming a minister, Robert in 1867 bought 60 acres, founding the family business.

P.J. Haynie has extended the business 1,000 miles south to Arkansas, where this year he is producing soybeans and rice. At Pine Bluff, Arkansas, Haynie has opened Arkansas River Rice mill, the only Black-owned rice mill in the United States.

Haynie's field-borne days often bleed over into the conference rooms of industry and government. He is board chairman for the National Black Growers Council (NBGC), multigenerational

producers advocating for the best interests of Black farmers locally, statewide and nationally. NBGC sponsors summertime Model Farm Field Days, where production practices and technology are demonstrated and importantly, government programs are explained.

The council also works with the ag industry and government on issues important to Black farmers. Land ownership tops that list.

Haynie is also a member of USDA's Equity Commission.

In February 2022, USDA established the commission to develop recommendations addressing racial-equity issues in its programs and services.

These are labors of love, Haynie says of NBGC and the Equity Commission. "We are a small fraternity of Black farmers. If we don't tell our story, no one will." ///

*"We are a small fraternity of Black farmers. If we don't tell our story, no one will."*

—P.J. HAYNIE III

> [hayniefarms.com](http://hayniefarms.com)

> [nationalblackgrowerscouncil.com](http://nationalblackgrowerscouncil.com)



JIM PATRICO

## Derrick Josi INFLUENCER

Fourth-generation farmer Derrick Josi, 41, likes to share several times a day what his life is like in Tillamook, Oregon, at the Wilsonview Dairy that he runs in partnership with his wife, Jaycee, and parents, Don and Desi Josi. The family milks 850 cows but will expand to 1,100 by the end of 2024.

He shares unfiltered and honest messages to defend farming, as well as show how a dairy operates, and to explain or answer questions about ag practices or issues. They reach more than 200 million people annually through his TDF Honest Farming content on a website and social media accounts, in speeches and in a book, “An Industry Worth Fighting For.”

The majority of Josi’s audience is “definitely urban people,” he notes. They’re split 50/50 in gender; the largest age category is 25-54. He has 700,000 U.S. followers coast-to-coast. His international followers reside on several continents—with 42,000 in Canada and 20,000 in Brazil. As of the end of June 2024, he has 1.1 million followers on Facebook. “Last month, I reached 35 million people in one month,” Josi says. He has 100,000 followers on Instagram, 20,000 on social platform X, and 15,000 on YouTube.

“I used to stress all the time about algorithms,” he adds, but now he just focuses on posting his usual farm routine. “You can’t show every single thing to your audience.” But he is learning what they like. “Shorter do better than long form,” he says. For example, a 67-second video he posted June 10 reached 30.1 million views by July 1. ///



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DERRICK JOSI

*“Last month, I reached 35 million people in one month.”*

—DERRICK JOSI



> [tdfhonestfarming.com](https://tdfhonestfarming.com)

# Schools Adopt a Farmer



COURTESY OF OREGON AGLINK

*Marinus Noordam of AJ Dairy in Mount Angel, Oregon, hosts seventh-grade students on a field trip to learn about all aspects of dairy farming from raising calves to how milk is collected and processed. Here he allows the students from Victor Point School in Silverton, Oregon, to feel the gentle vacuum suction pulsation inside the shell of the milking machine before the students see how it is used on cows in the milking parlor.*

When central Oregon rancher Keith Nantz visited Scott School in northeast Portland, Oregon, a few years ago, his visit became a learning experience about agriculture that soon rounded up students' attention.

There are numerous examples of farmers and ranchers who often host on-farm tours for tourists or students. National Agriculture in the Classroom, for instance, helps various states as they develop programs to meet agricultural literacy needs in their schools.

But Oregon farmers and ranchers have a unique opportunity to become Voices for Agriculture through Oregon Aglink's Adopt a Farmer program that's capturing attention from other states and even Canada.

Nantz visited Scott School twice during the school year before hosting the sixth-grade students for a field trip to the ranch. "He brought his dog Poncho and a roping dummy to the first visit," says Oregon Aglink Executive Director Mallory Phelan. "He talked about the importance of animal husbandry, how he trains his horses and dogs and how he takes care of his cows and calves. He gave a demo showing the different whistle commands for Poncho to move about the classroom. During the second visit, rancher Keith brought a bale of hay to the class and talked all about the process of making hay that he harvests in the summer to feed his cows during the winter months."

Phelan explains Oregon Aglink, a private, non-profit organization with volunteer membership, started its Adopt a Farmer program in 2011 to connect people around agriculture. Since then, it has involved more than 25,000 students.

Oregon Aglink pairs a middle school program with a farm or ranch for the academic year. Then, the organization funds one or two field trips to the farm or ranch. This way, "the students can see, hear, touch, smell and get a taste of what life is like on the farm," notes Aglink's website. "Also, the farmer or rancher visits the classroom two to three times throughout the rest of the school year to engage students in the science behind farming, sharing his or her story of the farm and Oregon agriculture."

The experiences help students in their curriculum lessons. For example, Phelan says students from Yamhill Carlton Intermediate School walked down into a trench dug in the soil to learn about soil types and profiles while on a field trip at Bruce and Helle Ruddenklau's farm in Amity, Oregon.

Phelan has spoken to others who are interested in Oregon's program. Earlier this year she was a featured speaker at the Manitoba Swine Seminar in Canada. Some of the points she makes:

- Any size class or school can be involved.
- There's no cost to the school. Aglink covers transportation, substitute teachers, student aides, supplies, snacks and water.
- The farm or ranch is within an hour from the school; trips last two to five hours.
- Oregon Aglink coordinates the trip, plans its logistics, recruits farmers and teachers, and does the fundraising.
- The adopted farmers are all volunteers; they prioritize safety, are open to sharing, and don't criticize other farms or methods of farming.
- The teachers' responsibility is to get administration approval, schedule buses and chaperones, communicate their curriculum needs, and are asked to have an open mind about farming methods.
- The student rules are simple: "Be safe. Be respectful. Listen. Ask questions."

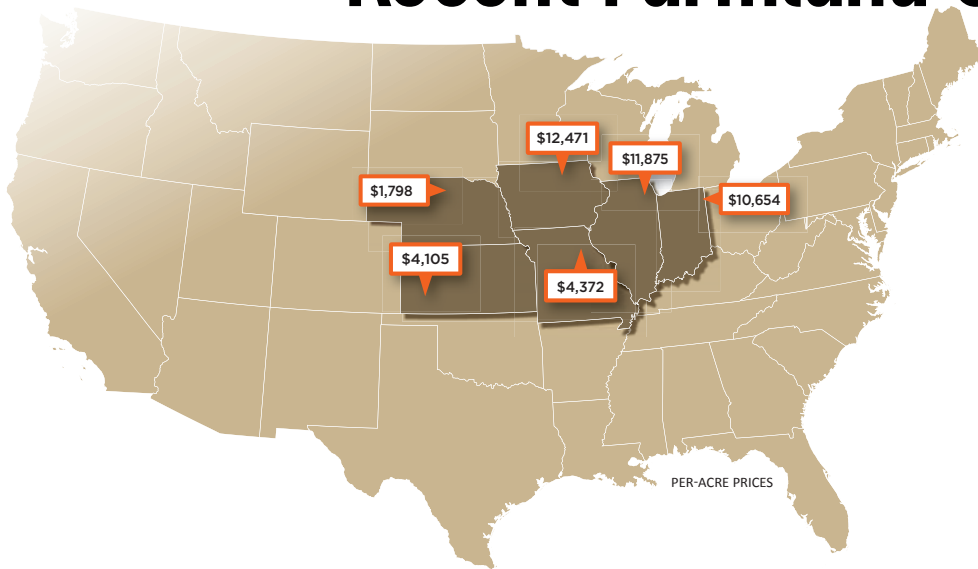
Phelan acknowledges there can be challenges such as overloaded teachers, student inattention or behavior, unpredictable schedules for farmers, farm-school proximity, bus transportation and weather.

However, as students visit the farm, they can apply what they learned in the classroom to what they see and experience on the farm. The program aims to help students be critical thinkers about agriculture, and nurture them to be curious about jobs in and around agriculture. They might even become the next Voices for Agriculture. ///

➤ <https://aglink.org/our-work/adopt-a-farmer>

➤ <https://agclassroom.org>

# Recent Farmland Sales



**ILLINOIS, DeKalb County.** A property with slightly more than 240 acres, 212 of which are tillable, sold for \$2.85 million, or \$11,875 per acre. The farm's Danabrook silt loam and Elpaso silty clay loam soils boast an average productivity index of 135.3. **Contact:** Mark Mommsen, Martin, Goodrich and Waddell; mark.mommsen@mgw.us.com, 815-756-3606  
[mgw.us.com](http://mgw.us.com)

**INDIANA, DeKalb County.** A farm with 321 acres sold at auction for \$3.42 million, or \$10,654 per acre. The property was divided into 11 tracts and consisted of 280 tillable acres and 42 acres of timber. The land was just a few miles southeast of a large grain elevator, with soils consisting mostly of Pewamo silty clay and Blount loam. Most of the land has access to county tile or open drainage ditches. **Contact:** Daniel Days or Dean Rummel, Schrader Real Estate and Auction Co. Inc.; auctions@schraderauction.com, 800-451-2709  
[www.schraderauction.com](http://www.schraderauction.com)

**IOWA, Floyd and Cerro Gordo Counties.** A 526-acre farm sold in five tracts for \$6.56 million at a simulcast auction. While the per-acre average across the sale was \$12,471, the

Floyd County tracts commanded higher prices. In that county, a 120-acre parcel sold for \$13,200 per acre; a 118-acre tract, \$13,700; and an 88-acre farm, \$11,700. In Cerro Gordo County, a 40-acre tract sold for \$9,900 per acre, while the 160-acre piece brought \$12,100 per acre. The land is leased for the 2024 season, and the cash rent will be prorated. **Contact:** Matt Mann, Iowa Land Sales; matt@IowaLandSales.com, 641-990-4016  
[www.iowalandsales.com](http://www.iowalandsales.com)

**KANSAS, Finney and Haskell Counties.** A 3,260-acre farm sold at auction for \$23.9 million. The property included 17 tracts with slightly more than 1,800 acres under center-pivot irrigation, 900 acres in dryland crop production and 550 acres in grass. One 10-acre tract included two large buildings, one of which is a shop with an indoor wash bay with drain pits, an office and a kitchen. It sold for \$8.2 million. Another 10-acre tract consisted of a state-of-the-art cattle-working facility and a small growing lot, and it sold for \$2.4 million. Excluding those two developed tracts, the remaining farmland sold for an average of \$4,105 per acre. Tracts

with irrigation averaged \$4,925 per acre, while dryland and grass tracts averaged \$1,600 per acre. **Contact:** Travis Weaver, Farm and Ranch Realty Inc.; frf@frfmail.com, 719-342-2997  
[www.farmandranchrealty.com](http://www.farmandranchrealty.com)

**MISSOURI, Shelby and Marion Counties.** Three tracts of land totaling 206 acres sold at auction for \$900,550, or an average of \$4,372 per acre. The first tract, in Shelby County, totaled 17.2 acres, with 15.13 of them tillable, and sold for \$5,500 per acre. It had an NCCPI rating of 77 with Blackoak soils. The second and third tracts were adjacent in Marion County. The second tract was primarily pasture with a 1.4-acre pond and sold for \$3,150 per acre, while the third tract sold for \$5,300 per acre. It had an NCCPI of 65 and included a mix of Leonard, Armstrong, Mexico, Gorin and Lindley soils. **Contact:** Steve Zeiger, Sullivan Auctioneers; sold@sullivanauctioneers.com, 844-847-2161  
[www.sullivanauctioneers.com](http://www.sullivanauctioneers.com)

**NEBRASKA, Rock County.** Nearly 219 acres of subirrigated pasture sold for \$393,726, or an average of \$1,798 per acre. With nearly new fences all around and a crossfence for rotational grazing, the farm includes a windmill and two tanks at the crossfence, as well as several water holes and cottonwood trees for shade. The owner rates it at 50 cow/calf pairs for five months, up to 60 pairs in the summer. **Contact:** Dave Hickey, Farmers National Co.; DHickey@FarmersNational.com, 402-336-3500  
[www.fncrealestate.com](http://www.fncrealestate.com)

*These sales figures are provided by the sources and may not be exact because of rounding.*

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# Create Your Present And Future Legacy

The word “legacy” is primarily used to describe something created in the past that is intended for future generations. For example, land acquired or inherited is often part of a farmer or rancher’s legacy. The leadership roles someone played in their community or industry can be a part of a legacy. Money passed on to children and grandchildren might be part of a legacy. One’s faith, values or reputation are less material but just as important as the tangible aspects of legacy.

There are also things you can create today that are equally powerful in terms of legacy and your impact on others. Consider the following examples.

## Small Investments In Diverse Assets

Most farm and ranch families reinvest their profits in land or other agricultural assets. But, many families also realize the importance of diversity, such as the value of multiple types of crops and livestock, or different geographic locations.

Putting a small amount of money into nonagricultural businesses—such as financial investments, including specific publicly traded stocks, or other types of businesses, including startups or venture capital funds—can grow and compound over decades. I know one family that has even put a small investment in cryptocurrency. You might not put large sums of money in these vehicles (as you could lose the funds), but over decades, they might grow to provide a sizable gift to your kids or grandkids.

## Permission To Make Necessary Changes

A less-material gift is a verbal or written statement to your family today giving them permission to make changes to the business or your assets in the future. Many recipients can feel guilty about veering from the purpose or intent of the original gift. But, circumstances, economies and business conditions change. Give your family permission to exchange some land or sell some assets; let them bring future spouses or in-laws into

business roles or decisions; or allow them to change the ownership structure to fit their vision and goals.

## A Method for Partners To Exit

One of the specific changes that may need to happen in the future is for your heirs to end their business relationship. Many partnerships arise from estate-planning practices, such as putting assets in an LLC, or from the desire to treat heirs equally with illiquid assets such as land. However, differing goals, behavioral expectations and personal circumstances may warrant an end to a partnership. Make sure that you have “buy-sell agreements” in your legal entities and that they are well-thought-out with your attorney and accountant.

## A Reason To Gather As a Family

When several family members work in the business or when children are growing up, the company serves as a focal point for communication. As time goes on, the likelihood that all your heirs will return to the business is slim. Consider giving your family a “nonbusiness” reason to gather. Several families use donor-advised funds or a private foundation to give money to those less fortunate, which also gives them a reason to spend time together. Other families create a tradition around vacations, mission trips or sporting events. The point is to find a reason to gather that isn’t dependent on knowledge of, or passion for, the business.



GETTY IMAGES

Your legacy isn’t simply the sum of your life’s investments and activities. Your legacy includes the choices you make today, which influence the trajectory of your family and business in the future. Diverse investments, permission to change, good exit strategies and a purpose for family gatherings are a few of the things you can create today that future generations will appreciate tomorrow. ///



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# Advice To Vaccinate Bulls



**Q** Do you recommend different vaccines for bulls than for cows?

Is it OK to vaccinate at the same time as we do the BSEs on bulls?

**A** Bulls should have vaccinations when they have a Breeding Soundness Exam.  
KLAYTON BREMER

**DR. McMILLAN:** I tell producers a bull is at least 25 times as important as a cow, assuming we use one bull to breed 25 cows. He could be more valuable if you use a higher cow/bull ratio, so proper care is extremely important.

Bulls and cows really need the same vaccines—IBR (infectious bovine rhinotracheitis), BVD (bovine viral diarrhea), PI3 (bovine parainfluenza), BRSV (bovine respiratory syncytial virus) and five-way Lepto (leptospirosis). Many producers like to include vibrio (vibriosis, *Campylobacter fetus*) with cows and bulls, but in my experience in our area, this is a very uncommon disease. We do not have to worry about abortion in bulls, so modified live virus (MLV) vaccines are less of a concern. MLV vaccines can lead to fever in some cases, and fever can impact fertility. So, in a perfect world, bulls should be vaccinated 60 to 90 days before turnout.

The best bull vaccination program is to give two doses of MLV IBR, BVD, PI3, BRSV and five-way Lepto three to four weeks apart before or around weaning, and a booster at 12 months. This gets them off to a good start at a young age. With a solid immunity created early, any booster given prior to turnout will be more effective and should greatly reduce the chance of fever. While I still prefer an MLV vaccine, the quality killed vaccines should also be effective in these cases.

If you are unsure of the vaccine history of a bull, give two doses of an MLV IBR, BVD, PI3, BRSV and five-way Lepto. If vibrio is a concern, this vaccine should be done close to

turnout. I believe Vibrin is the best vaccine for vibrio even if it only provides three to four months of protection.

Turning to vaccination at the time of the Breeding Soundness Exam (BSE), I am ecstatic you are doing BSEs. Many bulls are vaccinated at the same time as the BSE. I would rather have a fully vaccinated bull and cow herd than obsess over potential complications that may never occur. We do not live in that perfect world.

Vaccinations are very important in bulls, but other practices are also extremely important. No. 1 is a BSE for every bull, every year. Be sure the bull's body condition score is in the 6 to 7 range at turnout. Less than 6 can impact fertility, especially as the breeding season progresses, since most bulls will lose 1 to 2 scores. Bulls that are too fat can also be less-effective breeders. Very fat, soft bulls that "melt" when turned out can lead to a breeding disaster.

Good nutrition is critical to having a bull at peak performance at turnout, and that also means good mineral nutrition—not just a salt block. Be sure your bulls and cows have access to a high-quality loose mineral all year long. ///

## Reflections From Ken

I was talking with a colleague who had recently retired from a long career as a clinician at Mississippi State University. We had started out in the same practice, but he was a few years before me. He asked if I thought we were delivering fewer calves than when I started in the early '80s. I told him we were, and there were lots of reasons. I'm afraid after COVID, there may be people who don't call us with emergencies. There may be more problems than we hear about.

As we talked, we agreed that we feel there has been an overall decrease in dystocias. The '70s and '80s saw the arrival of Continental breeds. These bulls were much larger and sired much larger calves. At least in the South, our cows were small compared to other parts of the country and certainly to our European counterparts. This mismatch in size led to lots of problems. As EPDs have improved, all breeds have been able to focus on calving ease, and seedstock producers have made great strides in this and other areas. Many of the smaller producers have disappeared, and the younger generation seems to do a much better job of heifer selection and development, which is also aided by EPDs. Let us know what you think.

Please contact your veterinarian with questions pertaining to the health of your herd. Every operation is unique, and the information in this column does not pertain to all situations. This is not intended as medical advice but is purely for informational purposes.

These are only my thoughts and general guidelines. Please get with your veterinarian and together develop the best program for your herd.



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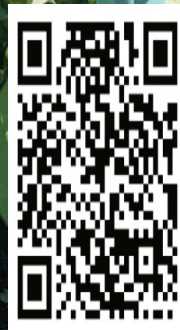


Photo of Daniels Farm Partnership  
Photo Credit: Rance Daniels



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# Compressor Danger

*Is it important to shut down and drain an air compressor each evening, and drain the water out of the tank? How does that water get in the air tank? Does it make the inside of the tank rust? Is an air compressor dangerous?*

**Steve:** Yes, it is very important to service an air compressor regularly, meaning there is no set time.

The reason there is such a loose time frame for servicing is because all climates are different as far as humidity, and compressed air comes from atmospheric air, which contains humidity. This compression creates water in the tank. Therefore, water drainage of air compressors is directly related to the area in which you live.

Some manufacturers suggest draining daily to ensure less rust is formed in the tank. In some areas, each week is sufficient. I suggest draining the tank each week, watching for collected amounts of water drained, and scheduling a drain, as needed.

An air compressor can be a very dangerous tool. Explosions, usually caused by rusty tanks, are rare, but when they occur, bodily and structural damage can result.



GETTY IMAGES

## Blowing Away

*I have a 3000 Ford diesel tractor that has started blowing a gray vapor out the pipe that runs down the side of the engine. It appears to be connected to the valve cover. Where is that smoke coming from? Is the engine about to blow? It seems to get worse after the engine warms up.*

**Steve:** What you are seeing coming out of the pipe (see photo below) is called blowby. This is a combination of

combustion gases that have leaked between the piston rings and cylinder walls, and into the crankcase area.

This blowby must be released somewhere, or it can blow out the front and/or rear seals of the engine. So, it vents back through to the top of the engine and exits through the tube on your valve cover.

All engines have some blowby. When it gets extreme, you will



STEVE THOMPSON



*Have a mechanical problem you can't resolve? Email Steve Thompson at [mechanic@progressivefarmer.com](mailto:mechanic@progressivefarmer.com)*

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see it exit the engine. Eventually, it will get so much blowby that the tube can actually drip engine oil out of it. It gets worse when the engine warms up because the viscosity of the engine oil gets thinner and is less able to seal the leak by the rings.

An engine overhaul is the fix for this engine to stop most of the blowby. Newer engines recycle the blowby back through the engine for environmental reasons.

## Slipping Away

*My tractor is a Kubota L4630 and has mechanical front-wheel drive (MFWD). It eats front tires, and I believe it's because it's on pavement a lot of the time. If I reverse the tread on the front tires, will they last longer?*

**Steve:** Yes, tires on "backwards" will last longer, especially when used often on hard surfaces. They look a little different, but in your case, you will see a difference in tread life. Also, be sure and turn off the MFWD when on hard surfaces. The front tires run a little faster than the rear tires for steering purposes, and they need room to slip when in use with the MFWD turned on. ///

## SAFETY TIP

### LOOK OUT, JACK!

*I have one of those jacks on my place that we use all the time for different things (see photo, right). I have noticed that when I turn the handle loose under load, if it has not latched and "clicked," the handle can fly up very fast. It will also do that trick when I flip the unlock mechanism that allows the jack to go down. I just wanted to tell everybody to watch out for the handle when the jack is released under load. Have you seen this problem?*



STEVE THOMPSON

**Steve:** Yes, I have. As a matter of fact, I have been grazed by the handle a couple of times, but my father-in-law actually got knocked out one day by an "uppercut" of that handle. Handle with care!

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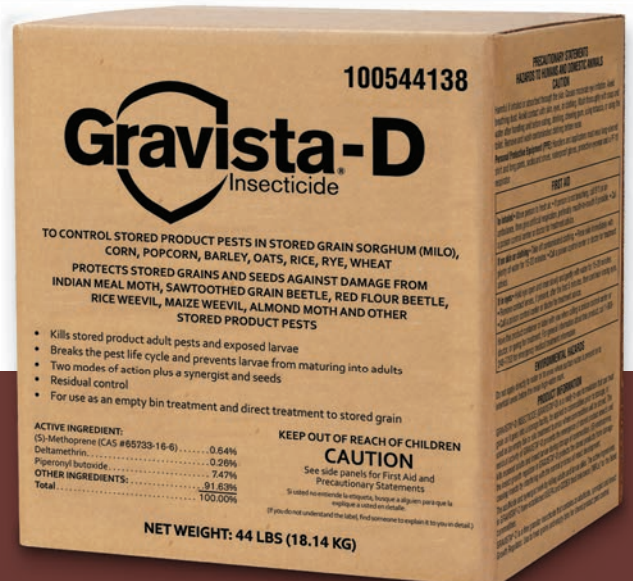
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# CALF LOTS

## Earn Premium Prices

It's hard not to envy cattle operations that can market calves in uniform truckload lots. All you have to do is sit ringside in a sale barn and compare the prices your handful of steers brought with those sold by the semi-load.

Producers in southwest Virginia are envious no more. Cattlemen, even those with smaller herds, can get big herd prices. Their secret is the Abingdon Feeder Cattle Association (AFCA), which didn't stay secret for long. After selling 500 head in its first sale in 2005, the group is now topping 100 loads a year.

Lebanon, Virginia, cattleman Zac Ketron says the reason is simple. "People who don't have a load can get load lot prices."

The process starts on the farm. First, producers wean and precondition their calves according to Virginia Quality Assurance (VQA) guidelines. This includes at least a 45-day postweaning time, when calves complete a double round of respiratory

vaccinations and clostridial vaccinations, and receive a radio-frequency identification (RFID) tag. They're dewormed and healed from castration and dehorning, if needed. The calves also learn to eat out of a feedbunk, drink from a trough and recover from the stress of leaving their mamas.

Two to three weeks before sale day, a Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) grader and a county agent go to the farm and get an estimate of the calves' weights and grades. Those calves are matched by computer with similar calves from other farms to form a truckload.

Russell County Extension agent Scott Jessee also videos the calves while on the farm then edits and uploads them to DVAuction, which puts them on its website and broadcasts the sale. The sale is held at Tri-State Livestock Market, in Abingdon, where a conference line is used to help connect buyers and sellers.

A week after the sale, producers bring their calves to Tri-State—steers on Monday and heifers on Wednesday. Each calf is weighed, graded again, sorted into truckload lots and shipped. Each calf on a truck gets the same price per cwt. Buyers get a uniform truckload, often with only a 50- to 60-pound weight spread between calves.



**Zac Ketron**

## > GROUPS HELP PRODUCERS

Ketron sees this as a real plus. Even with tight 60-day fall and spring calving seasons, he notes, “There has been a year or two when my weights would have been enough, but my calves haven’t been uniform enough for a load lot of their own.”

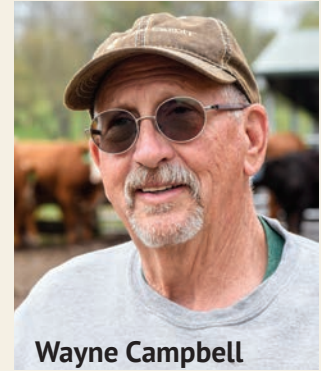
If a producer’s calves aren’t ready to sell at the same time, AFCA has seven sales spread throughout January, March, July, August, September, November and December. “We have a lot of calving seasons, spring, fall—and 365-day seasons,” Jessee says.

Participation in the AFCA isn’t a free ride by any means. If you’ve weaned calves on the farm, you know how quickly they can destroy a fence to get back to their mamas. Then there are the feed and vaccine costs. Abingdon producer Wayne Campbell figures he spends around \$200 to \$250 a head to precondition then graze them until sale time. That includes paying himself minimum wage, the expense of the health products and the cost of leased land. In return, his black baldy calves usually go from 450 to 550 pounds at weaning to 800 pounds at sale time.

Campbell likes the return on investment. Besides the increase in pounds from grazing the healthy calves, after almost 20 years of participating in AFCA, he estimates the per-head premium ranges from \$20 per head to \$100.

Jessee, who has been a leader in AFCA from the start, as well as a participant with his own calves, says the average premium for the last 20 years is closer to \$105 per head. For expenses, he explains, “If they are preconditioned in confinement, it runs around \$40 for hay and \$45 for grain. The added weight gain during backgrounding helps to offset the feed expense. Grazing helps to cheapen it even more.”

Sale fees are minimal, usually around \$25 per head. Tri-State Livestock Auction charges \$13.50 for commission, yardage and insurance, as well as clearing the transaction and loading the trucks. AFCA gets \$5 per head, which includes advertising, the electronic ▶



Wayne Campbell

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tag and DVAuction expenses. The Virginia Cattlemen's Association (VCA) collects \$4 per head, and VDACS receives \$1.75 per head.

Besides the enticing economics, participants say there is a list of reasons the sales are successful. "We all work together," Campbell explains. That includes an alphabet soup of AFCA, VDACS, VCA, Tri-State Livestock Market and the Virginia Cooperative Extension service. "If it wasn't for Scott Jessee and Phil Blevins, the county agents in Russell and Washington counties, we wouldn't have a sales association," he emphasizes.

## > A LONG HISTORY

The group also has history in its favor. AFCA was formed in the 1960s when unweaned calves were sold under the group's name. VCA, with help from VDACS, also has its successful, long-running graded in-barn, board and Tel-O-Auction sales. AFCA sells under the "board sale" category. AFCA also uses VQA health guidelines, which were developed by the Extension service and VCA.

Jessee notes Tri-State Livestock Market is a key player with its many pens to help in the sorting process. Since they also handle the money, the sales are bonded.



Scott Jessee

In addition, the Abingdon group has quality in its corner. The VDACS grader is quick to pull out calves that don't fit. "I tell them I want them to hurt my feelings here on the farm not after

I've hauled them to the sale barn. We want to sell the best," Campbell stresses.

In his case, his feelings usually stay intact. Out of his last 51 head, not one was turned down. If he does have a calf that doesn't make the grade, Campbell sells it at Tri-State's regular sale day on Fridays or takes it to a nearby buying point.

"To be a successful marketing group, the producers have to buy into it and stick with it," Jessee says. "Most producers have learned by now and know which animals work, but it doesn't happen overnight."

AFCA also helps boost the genetic quality of area commercial operations by holding a spring bull sale. The bull sale also gives its purebred members another marketing opportunity.

In Ketron's case, if he doesn't think his purebred artificially inseminated (AI) SimAngus and Angus



calves are seedstock quality, they're castrated and sold as feeders. He says the AFCA sales also add value to the heifers he doesn't keep as replacements.

One of the few downsides as far as buyers are concerned is calves have to be commingled rather than coming from a single source. "We used to have some concern, but once the buyers tried them and were successful, there hasn't been much of a problem. Some of the cattle have even gone to Canada," Jessee explains.

Buyers are also protected by guarantees. Males are guaranteed to be steers, and a rebate is given if a stag slips by. The same goes for pregnant heifers.

"The buyers really like the cattle and wait for the Abingdon sale," says VCA field representative Butch Foster, who goes with the VDACS graders to participating farms. In addition, he serves as an auctioneer for the sales. He also has his own stocker operation and gives one of the best endorsements for the group.

"I try to buy some of the cattle, but they are so expensive I can't afford them," he quips. ///

## For More Information

Abingdon Feeder Cattle Association  
Sales and DVAuction  
[afca.dvauction.com](http://afca.dvauction.com)

Virginia Cattlemen's Association, Virginia  
Quality Assurance Program  
[vacattlemen.org/marketing](http://vacattlemen.org/marketing)

Virginia Department of Agriculture  
And Consumer Services, Graded Feeder  
Cattle Sales  
[www.vdacs.virginia.gov/inspection-and-grading-livestock-marketing-graded-feeder-cattle-sales.shtml](http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/inspection-and-grading-livestock-marketing-graded-feeder-cattle-sales.shtml)



By Jennifer Carrico, @JennCattleGal

# Take Control of Flies

**F**lies can be a pest throughout the year for cow herds. Using good control methods at the right time helps with return on investment.

North Dakota State University Extension veterinarian and livestock stewardship specialist Gerald Stokka says having a good pest-management strategy is key to helping provide effective control.

“Timing and the type of pest control depends on the species of flies,” he advises.

Horn and face flies are usually seen in early summer and won't reach economic thresholds for applying control until midsummer. Horn flies are gray and look like small houseflies.

“The constant biting causes cattle pain and stress, and can reduce the cattle's weight gains by as much as 20 pounds,” Stokka adds.

Face flies look like large, dark houseflies. These are nonbiting flies that feed on animal secretions, plant nectar and manure liquids. They are responsible for infecting the eye and causing pink eye in cattle, and usually peak in late summer.

The stable fly has circular markings that distinguish them

from horn flies. These feed on blood, biting on the abdomen and legs, and are difficult to control.

There are several different kinds of fly control, and some may work better than others in certain environments. An effective and convenient way to deliver horn fly control is by feeding cattle a mineral containing an insect growth regulator (IGR), which works for all classes of cattle. When IGR is present in the manure, it prevents pupae from developing into adult flies. This should be fed 30 days before the last frost of spring through 30 days after the first frost of fall to ensure cattle are consuming the target level.

Ear tags containing insecticides that are slowly released into the animal's hair by movement can be a good option for later in the summer. Follow label directions for what age cattle can be tagged and to ensure good coverage.

Pour-ons and on-animal sprays are other control options. These are typically applied directly on the animal's back line, and the chemical is absorbed and circulates through the animal's system. These can control flies for up to 30 days before requiring another application.

Dust bags, back rubs and oilers are effective for forced-use situations. These should be placed where cattle enter frequently, such as water or feeding sites. Powder or liquid is used as an insecticide and should be checked frequently to make sure the insecticide is stocked. ///



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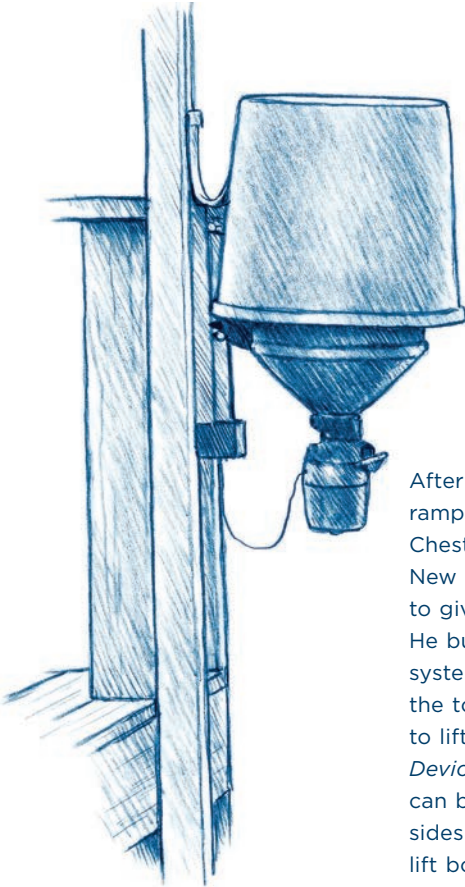


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# Handy Devices

*Easy-to-build ideas make your work easier.*

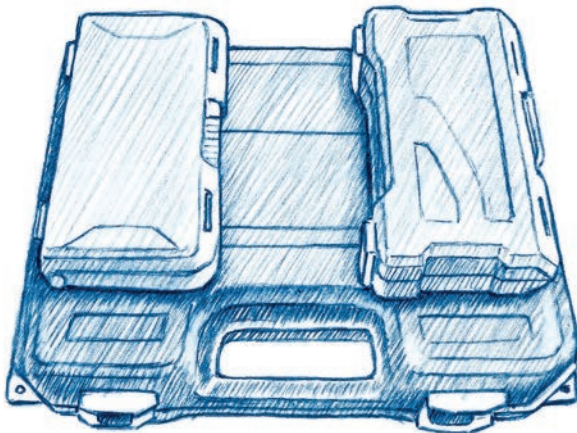
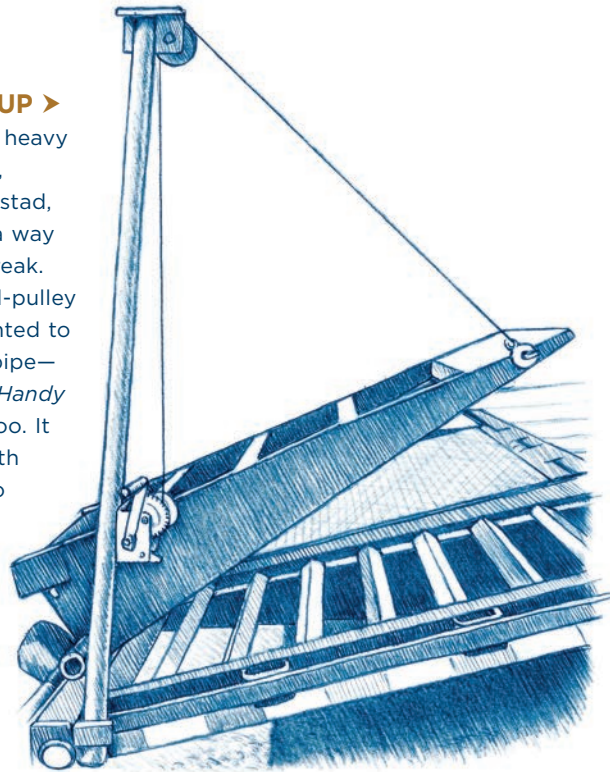


## ◀ WET FISH FEEDER

Danny Kirkland, Phenix City, Alabama, found his solar fish feeder would not distribute feed after a rain. The rain would work its way down into the feeder, getting the feed wet and clogging the feeder. Kirkland scavenged up an empty 30-gallon plastic drum and cut it to fit over the feeder and the wooden pole supporting the feeder. It is clogged no more after a rain, and the drum also works to keep the raccoons and squirrels from chewing through the cover of the feeder.

## PULL-EY IT UP ▶

After years of lifting heavy ramps on his trailers, Chester Kimber, Amistad, New Mexico, found a way to give his back a break. He built a winch-and-pulley system—pulley mounted to the top of a 5-foot pipe—to lift the ramp. His *Handy Device* is portable, too. It can be moved to both sides of the trailer to lift both ramps one after the other.



## ◀ BITS WHERE YOU WANT THEM

Bill Shahan, Willow Park, Texas, has a very simple idea that keeps his drill bits in the same vicinity with the right drill. He attaches (using pop rivets) the containers holding the bits and tips right to the cover of the drill case. Easy-peasy. Always handy.

**CASH FOR YOUR IDEAS:** Share with us your project ideas, and we'll pay you \$400 upon publication. To submit a *Handy Device*, please send a complete explanation of your idea and clear photographs or detailed drawings. We'd like to see a video, too, but that's optional. If you've published your idea on social media (X, Instagram, Facebook), send us the link. With each entry, include your name, address and telephone number. Send *Handy Device* entries to: [dan.miller@dtm.com](mailto:dan.miller@dtm.com). Sorry, but we cannot acknowledge submissions or return photographs, drawings or documentation.



# New Blood Flow Breakthrough Helps Men Enjoy Strong, Long-Lasting Intimacy – At Any Age

*Men across America are raving about a newly enhanced performance supplement that helps achieve healthy blood flow on demand*

After age 40, it's common knowledge that performance begins to decline in many men. However, a new, performance empowering pill is showing that any relatively healthy man can now enjoy long-lasting, and frequent intimacy – at any age.

This doctor-designed formula, created by leading anti-aging expert Dr. Al Sears, has already helped men overcome low and sinking libido -- and has recently undergone a potency-enhancing update – with remarkable new results.

When the first pill -- **Primal Max Black** -- was first released, it quickly became a top-selling men's performance helper, promoting intimacy across America.

It worked by supporting healthy testosterone levels. However, Dr. Sears soon realized that this isn't the only challenge men face with performance. That's when he turned his attention to blood flow.

And this became **Primal Max Red**.

## THIS PROVEN SOLUTION IS MORE MECHANICAL THAN HORMONAL

Truth is, once blood flow slows down for men, no matter how exciting it is, it won't be enough without the necessary amount...

So enjoying intimacy without healthy blood flow becomes difficult for most men.

Luckily, a Nobel prize-winning scientist discovered the simple answer to help support performance strength and confidence -- by boosting vital blood flow --

and enhancing this essential performance function.

Using this landmark Nobel Prize as its basis, **Primal Max Red** enhanced healthy blood flow for untold millions of men around the world with the use of strong nitric oxide boosters.

While **Primal Max Black** helped maintain optimal testosterone, **Primal Max Red** tackles a lesser-known challenge.

Director, Al Sears MD, who has authored over 500 scientific papers and has appeared on more than 50 media outlets including ABC News, CNN, ESPN, Discovery, Lifetime, and many more say, *“Less than optimal blood flow can be part of a huge problem that affects a lot of men. And it needed to be addressed once and for all, so men would not dwell on it. Then, once we optimized it and had a great deal of success, we set out to see if we could do even better.”*

The former formula had excellent results. However, new research showed that for even faster, anytime, anywhere results, increasing the dose of a key compound was needed.

So, one of the three nitric oxide boosters in the new **Primal Max Red**, L-Citrulline, was clinically boosted to 9000 mg, and the results were astounding. Which is no surprise considering that 5000 mg is considered a “normal amount” -- giving the new version nearly doubled the blood flow boosting power.

Men who had previously been unsure about their power and stamina were overjoyed to be back to their



**A new discovery that increases nitric oxide availability was recently proven to boost blood flow 275% - resulting in improved performance.**

old selves and to get and maintain a healthy bloodflow when they needed it.

## BETTER BLOOD FLOW, STRONGER RESULTS

The best way to promote healthy blood flow throughout the body is with the use of **Primal Max Red**. By using it, when exciting signals leave the brain, blood flows much faster like it used to.

This critical action is how men across the country are enjoying full and satisfying performance at any age. No need to bother with testosterone-boosting shots, blue pills, or shady capsules that have no effect.

**Primal Max Red** can effectively promote healthy blood flow that most men can use for maximum intimacy. This is leading to more greater capacity and satisfaction, coupled with long-lasting performance.

“There was a time when men had little control when it came to boosting their blood flow,” Dr. Sears said. “But science has come a long way in recent years. And now, with the creation of nitric oxide-boosting **Primal Max Red**,

men can perform better than ever, and enjoy intimacy at any age.”

Now for men across America, it's much easier to stay at their performance peak as they get older.

## HOW TO GET PRIMAL MAX RED (AND FREE PRIMAL MAX BLACK):

To secure free bottles of **Primal Max Black** and get the hot, new **Primal Max Red** formula, buyers should contact the Sears Health Hotline at **1-800-424-3607** TODAY. “It's not available in retail stores yet,” says Dr. Sears. “The Hotline allows us to ship directly to the customer.” Dr. Sears feels so strongly about **Primal Max**, all orders are backed by a 100% money-back guarantee. “Just send me back the bottle and any unused product within 90 days from purchase date, and I'll send you all your money back.”

Call NOW at **1-800-424-3607** to secure your supply of **Primal Max Red** and free bottles of **Primal Max Black**. Use Promo Code **PFPMAX824** when you call. Lines are frequently busy, but all calls will be answered!

# Drinkable Grains

In a field of barley swaying in a spring breeze near Shelby, North Carolina, Steve Greene is asked if he foresaw how their operation has evolved—how it recently came to grow small grains destined to become a prime ingredient for beer and distilled spirits in the region.

**A malting house has helped spur the growth of value-added crops for these regional farmers.**

His answer is quick and emphatic: “I wouldn’t have predicted anything that’s happened in the last 10 years,” says Greene, who co-owns and operates ASR Grain with his cousin, Andrew White, and uncles Randall and Phillip Greene. “Ten years ago, we were running a 225-head dairy and using a two-row planter,” he says.

White adds, “Now, we operate a grain elevator serving 220 farms, farm 4,000 acres ourselves and grow specialty crops.” Gone is the dairy, something their family started in 1948 and dissolved in 2015. “We eventually realized with the dairy we had to either go bigger or go home,” Greene says.

## > LOCALIZE SUPPLY CHAIN

Part of the shift in business for ASR Grain—now in its seventh generation—can be attributed to Riverbend Malt House, 70 minutes away in the mountain tourist mecca of Asheville. It’s here that Brent Manning shows us around the company he founded 13 years ago with Brian Simpson that takes grain—barley, rye, oats, corn and wheat—and malts it for use by regional brewing and distilling businesses.

“We didn’t want to be just another brewery in the city (at the time, Asheville had 13 breweries; there are now 40 in the area),” Manning says. “We wondered what we could do to localize the supply chain and connect farmers to this billion-dollar industry.”

Most barley used for malting in the U.S. is grown in the Northwest, from the Dakotas to Washington. Manning and Simpson wanted to carve out a slice of that business for brewers and distillers in the Southeast. They needed growers.

## > RECRUITING FARMERS

Malted grain is germinated using moisture, and then

the process is halted by drying. Malting causes enzymes to develop in the grain—enzymes required to modify the grains’ starches into various types of sugar. The modifications are crucial to the character and flavor of the resulting beverage.

ASR Grain had expertise growing small grains such as barley—after all, the family ran a dairy for nearly 70 years. They had also increased their storage capacity and, today, have more than 500,000 bushels available

at their main location. ASR’s ability to store

Sycamore Brewing’s Honeysuckle ale is made with barley from Riverbend Malt House.



Barley is germinated by raking it twice a day while spread out on the floor in a humidified room at Riverbend Malt House.

Steve Greene, Andrew White and Randall Greene, of ASR Grain





grain is important, as Riverbend has little available onsite beyond its most immediate needs.

Riverbend now works with several dozen growers from the Carolinas, Kentucky, Virginia and even Florida. The first few growers Manning and Simpson tracked down with the help of state Extension services. “Farmers are very enterprising and always looking for new markets,” he explains. “After our name got out, farmers started finding us.”

Riverbend’s existence helped jump-start an effort in southwest Virginia to promote the growing of specialty crops like barley, rye, oats, wheat and corn for brewing and distilling. The public-private entity, Appalachian Grains, is the result of brainstorming begun by Virginia’s Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy to spur economic development in a former coal-mining region. Appalachian Grains hopes to build a grain terminal to clean and store those crops by the end of 2025.

“Until there is a grain terminal in the area, it isn’t economically feasible for individual farmers to deliver the grain 300 miles away in Indiana,” says Will Payne, managing partner of Coalfield Strategies LLC, the entity in Virginia using federal grant money for Appalachian Grains. “That’s the closest facility that can clean and condition the grain before delivery to a malting facility like Riverbend,” he adds. The grain terminal is expected to cost more than \$2.5 million.

## > STARTING SLOW

In the meantime, growers are getting experience with new grains—or new versions of grains they already grew. Seth Haynes planted 15 acres of two-rowed barley in 2020 to 2023 destined for Riverbend. In addition to selling the grain for a premium, he also harvests 100 small square bales of barley straw per acre, a yield 25% better than wheat straw.

Haynes isn’t growing barley for malting this year. A combination of bad weather and higher-than-expected protein levels in his barley caused it to be rejected by the malting

ASR Grain harvests barley.



facility. He fully expects to grow the crop again in 2025.

Brent Manning, co-founder of Riverbend Malt House, works with growers from five states.

“The toughest part is growing the right quality required by the brewers,” Haynes says. “And, some of that is something you can do something about, but a lot of it is up to the good Lord, rain and the growing season.”

The same can be said for ASR Grain in North Carolina. Like the Virginia growers, ASR’s total acreage of grains to be malted isn’t large. They’ve planted about 150 acres of barley and 50 acres of oats since 2021. White says they plant the barley about Oct. 15 and try to harvest June 1.

## > VALUE-ADDED SPECIFICATIONS

If the acreages thus far aren’t large, the premiums can be. ASR’s White says they are paid \$7 to \$8 per bushel for barley and \$8 to \$9 per bushel for oats. Barley grown for livestock feed is worth \$4 to \$4.50 per bushel, he says. Oats grown for feed would bring \$4 to \$5 per bushel.

Both the barley and oats are handled at food-grade standard: crops destined for human consumption. The biggest concern, he explains, is watching for any vomitoxin levels in the grain. They also need to monitor protein levels in the growing crop for possible in-season nitrogen applications.

Beer brewers generally use two-rowed barley rather than six-rowed for its lower protein content. While the plant needs nitrogen for good growth, too much can increase protein content beyond the optimum. So, they monitor the plant and add nitrogen only when necessary in a secondary application.

ASR’s barley yields have been as high as 70 bushels per acre. White credits advances in breeding programs at Virginia Tech and North Carolina State University >



▮ *Samples of two-rowed barley being grown by ASR Grain (left). Brewers say two-rowed malt has a fuller, maltier flavor than six-rowed varieties.*



for developing varieties that can better handle Southern heat and heavier rainfalls. An added bonus, White says, is their soybean yields double-cropped after barley are better than those after wheat.

In the brewing and distilling world, both two-rowed and six-rowed barleys are used, though beer makers tend to use more two-rowed barley, while distillers prefer six-rowed. “The distillers I’ve worked with almost exclusively want six-row due to the enzymatic action to start the enzyme conversion process,” explains Drew Carter, one of the Virginia growers with specialty grain experience.

As the name suggests, two-rowed barley has two lines of grain when viewed along the axis of the stem. Six-rowed barley has six rows running around the stem. Six-rowed has more protein and enzyme content than two-rowed malted barley, and contains fewer grams of carbohydrate. Brewers say two-rowed malt has a fuller, maltier flavor, while six-rowed malt produces a grainier flavor in finished beer.

To the same extent, the status quo on whether to use two-rowed or six-rowed barley for brewing has changed, in part because of breeding efforts that have increased the durability of barley grown in the South and Southeast. Riverbend Malt House is moving to use two-rowed malt barley exclusively based on the ability of new two-

rowed varieties’ ability to grow well—and yield better—in the South. Previously, a grower such as Seth Haynes could yield 100 bushels per acre with six-rowed and might get 70 to 80 bushels per acre with a two-rowed.

Research from Virginia Tech’s Small Grains Breeding and Genetics Program produced the six-rowed Thoroughbred feed variety barley 20 years ago. Fortunately, Thoroughbred also had good qualities for malting grain and became adapted by a number of brewers and malt houses. Then, in 2020, Virginia Tech introduced Avalon, a two-rowed barley specifically bred for malting that involved crosses with Thoroughbred.

“One of our goals is to produce two-use varieties,” says Nicholas Santantonio, director of the Virginia Tech program, “that can work agronomically as livestock feed or, if handled properly, will be acceptable or even better as high-quality malt.”

## > HANDLE WITH CARE

In one large room at Riverbend Malt House, Manning demonstrates how they still use a large, three-pronged rake to hand-turn, twice a day, a several-inch-deep layer of barley on a concrete floor. This is germination, old-school-style, even though the company also has large drums that use moisture and heat to spur germination mechanically.

Some brewers, when making certain beers, like the character of the resulting beverage when the grain is germinated by hand. Either way, the barley Riverbend receives will ideally have 12% or less protein, and at least 90% (hopefully closer to 95%) of the grains should germinate when processed.

In the overall scheme of things, Riverbend would not be considered a large malting house even though it has provided products to 300 breweries and distillers to date. The main grain for Riverbend is barley, but it also malts oats, rye, wheat and commodity corn, as well as heritage varieties such as Bloody Butcher corn grain.

If there’s a caveat Manning offers, it’s that while the premiums are attention-grabbing, there is still way more small grain under cultivation in general than the malting industry can use. “This is definitely not come one, come all,” he says. “But for sure there are opportunities.”

White, at ARS Grain, says he believes their ability to store barley and oats for Riverbend and their experience growing these crops helps them. “We like that relationship. And, I enjoy seeing the finished product at our own local brewery. I enjoy a good beer.” ///

# Quaint Quiches

*Customize this easy egg base with your favorite toppings. Looking for a shortcut? Look for mini-piecrust shells in your grocer's freezer section.*

TOTAL TIME: 60 MINUTES  
MAKES: 24 QUICHES

½ cup low-fat cottage cheese  
6 large eggs  
1 teaspoon salt  
Nonstick cooking spray  
3 piecrust rounds

## > GREEK-STYLE QUICHE

½ cup frozen spinach, thawed and chopped  
½ teaspoon garlic powder  
3 tablespoons crumbled feta cheese  
6 cherry tomatoes, halved

## > BROCCOLI-CHEDDAR QUICHE

½ cup steamed broccoli florets, chopped  
⅓ cup shredded cheddar cheese

## > BACON AND GREEN ONION QUICHE

¼ cup bacon, cooked and crumbled  
⅓ cup shredded cheddar cheese  
2 tablespoons green onions, sliced

1. In a blender, combine cottage cheese, eggs and salt; mix until smooth (about 1 to 2 minutes).
2. Preheat oven to 375°F. Coat a 24-cup mini muffin tin with cooking spray.
3. Unroll piecrusts onto a lightly floured surface; using a 3-inch round cutter, make 24 circles.

4. Press each piecrust circle into the holes of the muffin tin; poke with a fork several times to vent.
5. Bake piecrusts 15 minutes or until the crusts are slightly browned; remove from oven.
6. Fill each cup with even amounts of preferred filling; fill with egg mixture until about three-quarters of the way full.
7. Bake another 15 minutes or until the tops are browned.
8. Carefully transfer quiches to a wire rack; cool before serving. ///



Recipes and Photos By  
**Rachel Johnson**  
On Instagram  
[@racheltherecipe](https://www.instagram.com/racheltherecipe)



For Materials and other Information, contact Tony Green, 205-414-4733 or tony.green@dtm.com

# Progressive FARMER

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St. Jude patient Keeton  
blood cancer  
pictured with his mom, Ginna

©2018 ALSAC/St. Jude Children's Research Hospital (34142)

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# FARM TOURS

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|  <h3 style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">BRAZIL</h3> <p style="font-size: small;">See Soybean Harvesting &amp; Planting. Talk with Farmers about logistics and operational costs. View Corn &amp; Cotton in various stages and see cattle. Tour Mato Grosso, Brazil's largest agricultural state. Visit a sugarcane ethanol plant and one of the world's largest soybean farms with 150,000+ planted acres. See the Rainforest on an Amazon River Cruise &amp; experience the world's largest waterfall - Iguassu Falls</p> <p style="text-align: center; background-color: black; color: white; padding: 2px;"><b>January • February</b></p> |  <h3 style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">CUBA</h3> <p style="font-size: small;">Travel back in time to the fun &amp; mysterious country of Cuba. This visit will help you interact with and support locals and experience their friendly hospitality first hand. Visit a commercial tobacco farm, a large vegetable farm, enjoy the famous Tropicana Show under the stars, cruise a classic convertible, and much more! Dine at great restaurants and experience this unique country.</p> <p style="text-align: center; background-color: black; color: white; padding: 2px;"><b>February</b></p> |  <h3 style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">HAWAII</h3> <p style="font-size: small; text-align: center;"><i>Island Cruise Tour</i></p> <p style="font-size: small;">Explore 5 ports on 4 islands and only unpack once! 3 days by land &amp; 7 days cruising. Visit a pineapple farm growing 300 acres of the famous Maui Gold variety, and also North America's largest coffee farm. Enjoy an authentic luau, Iolani Palace, and much more! Learn about Hawaiian culture at the Bishop Museum &amp; see Volcanoes National Park. Visit Pearl Harbor and USS Arizona Memorial. A great winter getaway!</p> <p style="text-align: center; background-color: black; color: white; padding: 2px;"><b>January • February</b></p>   |  <h3 style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">ARGENTINA<br/>CHILE - PERU</h3> <p style="font-size: small;">Explore fascinating Machu Picchu &amp; visit a table grape and citrus farm in Peru. Experience beautiful Santiago, Valparaiso and Vina del Mar in Chile. Enjoy a vineyard tour &amp; wine tasting. See the world's largest cattle auction in Buenos Aires, travel to the pampas to meet Gauchos (cowboys) at a cattle farm &amp; inspect their corn, soybean &amp; sunflower fields before they host us for a BBQ. See wild Penguins!</p> <p style="text-align: center; background-color: black; color: white; padding: 2px;"><b>January</b></p> |
|  <h3 style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">PANAMA</h3> <p style="font-size: small; text-align: center;"><i>Canal Cruise</i></p> <p style="font-size: small;">Enjoy cruising from Miami to Los Angeles with a full transit of the Panama Canal. Land Tours included at Five Ports of Call. Visit farms growing a variety of crops from macadamia nuts &amp; coffee to coconuts &amp; bananas. Walk on white sandy beaches, see the Canal Expansion Project, &amp; much more! Two weeks of fabulous food, entertainment, and sunshine!</p> <p style="text-align: center; background-color: black; color: white; padding: 2px;"><b>January</b></p> |  <h3 style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">SOUTH<br/>AFRICA</h3> <p style="font-size: small;">Travel from Johannesburg to Cape Town. Visit Pretoria, Plettenbergbay, Cape of Good Hope &amp; more! Tour corn &amp; wheat farms as well as a cow/calf operation. Experience Africa's incredible scenery and diverse wildlife in safety &amp; comfort on Six Big Game Drives and with top notch accommodations!</p> <p style="text-align: center; background-color: black; color: white; padding: 2px;"><b>February</b></p>   | <p style="font-size: small;"><i>"I am sincere about providing a great tour experience. We take you beyond the typical attractions to provide a complete cultural experience. Historic city sites, scenic country villages and real working farms. An unforgettable opportunity to converse with people like yourself from countries around the world."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">- Larry Rupiper</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: large;">Call for Free Brochures</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: x-large;">1-888-414-4177</p> <p style="font-size: small;">Find More Tours on our Website!</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: large;">www.RupiperTours.com</p> </div> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 10px;">  </div> |  |

# Teachers



PROGRESSIVE FARMER ARCHIVES

The teacher has two tasks: to lead the children to concentration and to help them in their development afterwards.

**MARIA MONTESSORI**

The dream begins with a teacher who believes in you, who tugs and pushes and leads you to the next plateau, sometimes poking you with a sharp stick called “truth.”

**DAN RATHER**

If you were successful, somebody along the line gave you some help. There was a great teacher somewhere in your life.

**BARACK OBAMA**

*“Teachers open the door.  
You enter by yourself.”*

—Chinese Proverb

There are two kinds of teachers: the kind that fill you with so much quail shot that you can’t move, and the kind that just gives you a little prod behind and you jump to the skies.

**ROBERT FROST**

Let us remember: One book, one pen, one child, and one teacher can change the world.

**MALALA YOUSAFZAI**

I touch the future. I teach.

**CHRISTA McAULIFFE**

The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

**JOHN 3:2 (KJV)**

Being a parent and being a teacher are parallel lines.

**JON HAMM**

Teaching is more than imparting knowledge; it is inspiring change.

**WILLIAM ARTHUR WARD**

Those who educate children well are more to be honored than they who produce them; for these only gave them life, those the art of living well.

**ARISTOTLE**

A good teacher isn’t someone who gives the answers out to their kids but is understanding of needs and challenges and gives tools to help other people succeed.

**JUSTIN TRUDEAU**

I like a teacher who gives you something to take home to think about besides homework.

**LILY TOMLIN**



# FIRST SHIFT

# SHIFT GEARS

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