

# OUR HERITAGE

Winter 2024



**AgHeritage**<sup>®</sup>  
Farm Credit Services



## OUR HERITAGE

Winter 2024

### Executive Leadership

Greg Cole

*President & Chief Executive Officer*

Blake Swindle

*Executive Vice President*

*& Chief Operating Officer*

Drue Ford

*Executive Vice President*

*& Chief Credit Officer*

Leslie Brown

*Senior Vice President*

*& Chief Human Capital Officer*

Drew Taylor

*Senior Vice President*

*& Chief Business Officer*

Chris Hanner

*Interim Chief Financial Officer*

### Board of Directors

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*(Southern Region) Stuttgart*

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*Vice Chairman*

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Dow Brantley

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Sandra Morgan

*(Outside Director) Stuttgart*

Rhonda Stone

*(Northern Region) Pocahontas*

Harrell Wilson

*(Southern Region) Rison*

Scott Young

*(Southern Region) Portland*



# AgHeritage®

## Farm Credit Services



# Growing a stronger rural Arkansas

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### ON THE COVER:

"Harvest" by Brice Bullard, son of Jason Bullard and grandson of Dennis Bullard.

### TO THE LEFT:

"Sunrise Over the Spread" by Brad Hutchinson

### **AGHERITAGE FARM CREDIT SERVICES**

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Little Rock, AR 72201  
1-800-444-3276  
[agheritagefcs.com](http://agheritagefcs.com)



**PROUD MEMBER OF**  
THE FARM CREDIT SYSTEM



# FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

The Farm Credit System asked Congress to swiftly enact legislation to help American farmers cope with the impact of multiple disasters and the severe downturn in the ag economy. We've urged Congress to act on two fronts before year-end — provide ad hoc funding for agricultural producers who are financially stressed and enact a five-year Farm Bill providing an enhanced safety net for farmers and ranchers.



Locally, AgHeritage board and management are meeting with Arkansas' legislative delegation to stress the importance of disaster assistance and a stronger farm safety net. Without it, many Arkansas producers could have sustainability challenges.

As a cooperative and a mission-driven lender, owned and governed by our customers, Farm Credit will continue leveraging our financial strength to support U.S. producers through this difficult time.

Though harvest was a success in terms of strong yields, low crop prices and high input costs resulted in severe losses for many producers. In fact, some in our region are in their second and third consecutive years of losses. Used equipment prices have declined but local farmland values remain stable. The Federal Reserve is beginning to decrease short-term interest rates which is a positive sign.

I want to wish you and your family a happy holiday season. We appreciate your business, and wish you the best in the coming year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Cole". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Greg Cole, President & CEO  
AgHeritage Farm Credit Services

# 2024 CUSTOMER SURVEY RESULTS

The results of the annual AgHeritage Customer Survey reveal almost universal customer satisfaction.

In order to determine how well AgHeritage is doing, an annual survey of randomly-chosen customer-owners is conducted, because there is no better group to tell us if we are meeting your needs.

This year's survey revealed an overwhelming majority (98%) of AgHeritage customer-owners are satisfied with AgHeritage as a source of financing for their agricultural operation.

Nearly every respondent (99%) also indicated their expectations were met, with two-thirds (66%) of those saying AgHeritage is exceeding what an ag lender can and should do, significantly up from 2023's number of 53%.

An impressive 97% of customer-owners said they would "definitely" or "probably" acquire another loan from AgHeritage.



Donations of \$500 were made to Future Farmers of America and to the Arkansas 4-H Foundation on behalf of the customer-owners of AgHeritage, in appreciation of you providing us with your valuable feedback.

"I want to thank our customers for completing the annual survey. It's an important tool we use to measure our customer-owners' satisfaction," AgHeritage President and CEO Greg Cole said. "We are proud of these results, because they indicate we are accomplishing our mission of providing excellent customer service to you, our customer-owners. With a goal to attain 100% satisfaction, we remain committed to improving and providing the best financial solutions possible."

The Arkansas Household Research Panel at the University of Arkansas conducted the survey.

## NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS

**\*\*\* UPDATE: A December 3, 2024 court injunction temporarily affects the enforcement of CTA filing deadlines. Customers should monitor the situation and seek legal counsel as appropriate. \*\*\***

Beginning January 1, 2024, most small business entities – including single member LLCs – must file online reports with the federal government disclosing information about the beneficial owners of the entities. This new reporting requirement, estimated to impact at least 32.6 million entities in 2024, was created by the Corporate Transparency Act (CTA).

AgHeritage customers are reminded that entities existing before January 1, 2024 have until January 1 of this coming year to file the first Beneficial Ownership Information report. Entities created or registered in 2024 must file the first report within the first 90 days. Filing is simple, secure, and free of charge. Visit [fincen.gov/boi](https://fincen.gov/boi) for more information and to file.

Visit [nationalaglawcenter.org/webinars/cta/](https://nationalaglawcenter.org/webinars/cta/) or scan the QR code below for free resources from the National Agricultural Law Center discussing the CTA and how it could apply to your farm or business.



**AgHeritage**  
**Farm Credit Services**



# JOINING FACES & SHIFTING PLACES



## **BRENNAN HODGES**

Brennan Hodges of Searcy joined the AgHeritage Credit Department at the company's Central Office in Little Rock as a Credit Officer.

Hodges holds a Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies and a Master of Business Administration, Summa Cum Laude, in Business Administration and Finance, both from Harding University. Before joining AgHeritage he most recently worked for RiverWind Bank in White County.



## **SHERRIE MCARTHUR**

Sherrie McArthur was promoted to Participation Loan Accountant in the AgHeritage Accounting Department, working from the Newport Branch Office.

A native of Swifton, she originally joined AgHeritage in (2003) and most recently served as a Senior Loan Assistant in the Newport Branch office.



## **MATTHEW MONTGOMERY**

Matthew Montgomery of Maumelle joined the AgHeritage Credit Department at the company's Central Office as a Credit Officer.

Montgomery graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Central Arkansas with a Bachelor's Degree of Business Administration, Finance. He most recently served as a Mortgage Loan Originator at Eagle Bank Mortgage.



## **ASHLEY SCOGGINS**

Ashley Scoggins of North Little Rock was promoted to Lending Services Specialist in the company's Central Office. She joined AgHeritage earlier this year in the Receptionist role.

Scoggins served as the receptionist at Great Clips before joining AgHeritage. She also has past experience in the hospitality sector.



### TYLER SHRINER

Tyler Shriner of Little Rock joined the AgHeritage Lonoke Branch as an Ag Lending Officer.

Originally from Grand Island, Nebraska, Shriner holds a Bachelor of Applied Science Degree in Agricultural Business and Management from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Before joining AgHeritage he served as a Commercial Loan Officer with Centennial Bank in Little Rock and as an Agricultural Loan Officer at Pinnacle Bank in Ogallala, Nebraska.



### CONNIE SORRELLS

Connie Sorrells joined AgHeritage as a Business Analyst, working both remotely and in the Central Office as needed.

Before joining AgHeritage, Sorrells worked for Southern Bancorp Community Partners as a Community Inclusion Lender. Prior to that, she served nearly a decade as a Specialized Loan Processor with another Farm Credit association. She also worked more than five years for a West Memphis law firm. A native of Marion, she holds a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree from Arkansas State University.

## JUNIOR BESHEARS RETIRES AFTER 30+ YEAR CAREER

Junior Beshears, VP of Lending, Batesville, retired on Thursday, October 31 following a more than 30 year career with Farm Credit.

Beshears started with Farm Credit in 1996 and joined AgHeritage in June, 1999. His coworkers — Bo Tretenburg, VP of Lending and Regional Manager; Alan Brannon, VP Ag Lending Officer; Jared Smith, Ag Lending Officer; Nanette Peifer, Sr. Loan Assistant and Lizz Crick, Loan Assistant I — along with members of the community celebrated his career with a party at the Batesville Community Center.

Enjoy your retirement, Junior, we will miss you!





# IN MEMORIAM: KENNETH LEE SUMNER 1969–2024



AgHeritage Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Kenneth Lee Sumner, of Lonoke, passed on October 22, 2024. He was born July 2, 1969 in Stuttgart to Richard and Mary Sumner. A graduate of Carlisle High School, he held a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting from University of Arkansas Little Rock, completed the Graduate School of Banking at Louisiana State University and was a Certified Public Accountant.

Ken married the love of his life, Angela Pinson Sumner, in 1995 and together they had two children. This December they would have celebrated their 29th wedding anniversary. He was an avid outdoorsman and was a member of the Arkansas Waterfowl Association. He was a member of the Lonoke Baptist church and spent 24 years helping teach Sunday School.

He was a very caring and kind man, completely devoted to his family.

Ken joined AgHeritage in August 2009, and his contributions to the company were immense and irreplaceable. We are grieving the loss of our friend and team member and his absence is significant for all of us.

Ken was predeceased by his grandparents, his father, and his sister, Martha Ann Sumner. In addition to Angela, left to cherish his memory are his mother, his son Matthew Reid Sumner, his daughter Mary Katherine King and her husband Tanner, and numerous aunts, uncles, nephews and nieces.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Ken's family and friends.





# ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS MEETING & BOARD ELECTION

AgHeritage Farm Credit Services will hold its Annual Stockholders Meeting and Board Election on April 15, 2025 at 2 p.m. Information about the meeting and the board election process will be mailed to stockholders during first quarter 2025.

As a customer-owner, you play a vital role in helping select the leadership of the Association by casting your vote in the election. Board positions up for election are indicated below.

Contact a member of the Nominating Committee or your local branch office if you have an interest in becoming a board member or serving on the Nominating Committee.



## BOARD OF DIRECTOR POSITIONS UP FOR ELECTION IN 2025

### SOUTHERN REGION

4-Year Term – Jerry Burkett

### SOUTHERN REGION

4-Year Term – Scott Young

### NORTHERN REGION

4-Year Term – Rhonda Stone

### Nominating Committee Members

Will Cox  
(870) 213-5174

Matt Hibbard  
(870) 219-1469

Clay Poole  
(870) 997-0822

Curtis Fox  
(870) 509-3300

Doug Medford  
(870) 589-0251

Robert Richardson  
(870) 820-2908

John Hamilton  
(501) 278-7253

Brandon Parker  
(501) 951-6611

Tommy Young  
(501) 412-0598



## NEW CONTACT INFO?

In order to better serve you, AgHeritage needs to know if you move or change your email address or phone number.

Please contact your branch office to update your information.



# BENCHMARK PROPERTIES UPDATE

By Drew Vance, Chief Appraiser, AgHeritage Farm Credit Services  
Appraisal Department



AgHeritage Benchmark properties are comprised of six cropland properties, one part-time farm property and one poultry (broiler) property. These benchmark properties are appraised annually (effective date of 07/01) by the AgHeritage Appraisal Department.

## CROPLAND BENCHMARK PROPERTIES

The average change over AgHeritage's six cropland benchmark properties between 07/21 and 07/22 was a strong 13.37% increase. From 07/22 to 07/23, the six cropland benchmark properties indicated a modest average appreciation of 2.74%. The most recent update (from 07/23 to 07/24) indicated an average increase of 6.12%. It should be noted that much of this increase was attributable to an 18.21% increase exhibited by the Arkansas County benchmark; the other five benchmarks indicated an average increase of 3.70%. Sales volume remains low, but all indications (up to 07/01/24) are that land values are steady to slightly increasing.

CROPLAND BENCHMARK		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Last 5 Years	
County	Primary Product	% CHANGE \$ PER UNIT Cap Rate	% CHANGE \$ PER UNIT Cap Rate	% CHANGE \$ PER UNIT Cap Rate	% CHANGE \$ PER UNIT Cap Rate	% CHANGE \$ PER UNIT Cap Rate	% CHANGE 2020 to 2024	AVERAGE
#472	- Randolph Co	Base	8.26%	3.39%	5.74%	0.00%		
200 ACRES	Rice	\$5,450	\$5,900	\$6,100	\$6,450	\$6,450	18.35%	4.35%
		2.81	2.59	2.56	2.63	2.63		
#375	- Lonoke Co	Base	5.15%	23.68%	0.00%	6.38%		
280 ACRES	Cotton	\$3,614	\$3,800	\$4,700	\$4,700	\$5,000	38.35%	8.80%
		2.94	2.84	2.35	2.49	2.47		
#487	- Monroe Co	Base	9.55%	17.89%	2.06%	8.91%		
287 ACRES	Rice	\$3,833	\$4,199	\$4,950	\$5,052	\$5,502	43.54%	9.60%
		3.27	2.99	2.45	2.91	2.67		
#490	- Lincoln Co	Base	7.14%	18.07%	5.30%	0.00%		
162 ACRES	Rice/Cotton	\$4,148	\$4,444	\$5,247	\$5,525	\$5,525	33.20%	7.63%
		3.25	2.78	2.36	2.46	2.62		
#185	- Arkansas Co	Base	4.75%	4.24%	0.00%	18.21%		
308 ACRES	Rice	\$5,114	\$5,357	\$5,584	\$5,584	\$6,601	29.08%	6.80%
		2.79	2.56	2.45	2.73	2.31		
#460	- Ashley Co	Base	9.68%	12.93%	3.33%	3.23%		
320 ACRES	Cotton	\$4,844	\$5,313	\$6,000	\$6,200	\$6,400	32.12%	7.29%
		2.90	2.72	2.46	2.45	2.86		
Cropland BM - Avg Increase/Decrease		Base	7.42%	13.37%	2.74%	6.12%	7.41%	
Cropland BM - Avg \$/Ac		\$4,501	\$4,836	\$5,430	\$5,585	\$5,913	\$5,253	

For the first time in many years, however, there is a level of uncertainty in this market. Reduced net farm income, higher interest rates, and low commodity prices are all major concerns. If net farm income continues to decline and interest rates maintain current levels, pressure will be put on farmland values. While high-quality farmland may be somewhat insulated from measurable decreases in the foreseeable future, sub-par properties may very well experience some softening if these trends continue.

## PART-TIME FARM BENCHMARK PROPERTY

The Cleburne County Benchmark (which is our part-time farm benchmark) was first introduced in 2017 and replaced a White County property that had been used as this benchmark for many years. The current part-time farm benchmark consists of 32.05 acres and buildings typical for this type property. This benchmark showed a very strong increase between 07/21 and 07/22. The change indicated from 07/22 to 07/23 was 6.09%. The most recent update yielded an increase of 2.46%. It is supportable to say that of all the property types we monitor, the one most impacted by the pandemic era were part-time farms. Demand continues to be very strong for these type properties.



PART-TIME FARM BENCHMARK		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Last 5 Years	
County	Primary Product	% CHANGE TOTAL VALUE	% CHANGE TOTAL VALUE	% CHANGE TOTAL VALUE	% CHANGE TOTAL VALUE	% CHANGE TOTAL VALUE	% CHANGE 2020 to 2024	AVERAGE
#135	- Cleburne Co Part-Time	Base \$400,000	0.00% \$400,000	43.75% \$575,000	6.09% \$610,000	2.46% \$625,000	56.25%	13.08%
32 ACRES & IMPROVEMENTS								

## POULTRY BENCHMARK PROPERTY

The Lawrence County Benchmark is the AgHeritage broiler farm benchmark property. It is situated in a competitive area, and one that has, for the last several years, experienced good demand and growth in the poultry sector. Between 07/21 to 07/22, the appreciation indicated was 6.38%. From 07/22 to 07/23 a similar appreciation of 6.67% was indicated. The most recent update (from 07/23 to 07/24) indicated a decrease of -7.50%. Macro-economic factors (pandemic, supply-chain issues, inflationary actions) have significantly influenced the market over the past three to four years. Construction costs (due to rapidly rising material costs) have increased dramatically over the past few years; these increased construction costs were the primary reason for the Benchmark's appreciation between 2022 and 2023. Up until the benchmark update for 2023, demand for poultry facilities — particularly those built within the previous four to five years — remained strong.

The 2024 benchmark report tells a somewhat different story, however. The inflation in the construction costs coupled with interest rates that, for a couple years now, have been much higher than what has been typical over the past two decades, the market for newer poultry facilities appears strained. Most would-be buyers of these type properties are contending with debt-service obligations that have risen faster and steeper than the integrator's contract pay. For the first time in many years, signs of depreciation in excess of physical depreciation can be seen on area improved sales.

POULTRY BENCHMARK		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Last 5 Years	
County	Primary Product	% CHANGE TOTAL VALUE	% CHANGE TOTAL VALUE	% CHANGE TOTAL VALUE	% CHANGE TOTAL VALUE	% CHANGE TOTAL VALUE	% CHANGE 2020 to 2024	AVERAGE
#144	- Lawrence Co Broilers	Base \$3,000,000	17.50% \$3,525,000	6.38% \$3,750,000	6.67% \$4,000,000	-7.50% \$3,700,000	23.33%	5.76%
70 ACRES & IMPROVEMENTS		11.41	9.71	9.43	9.78	10.58		

# Put down some *roots*.

*AgHeritage can help you finance your rural future.*

- LONG-TERM FIXED RATES
- ONE-TIME CLOSE CONSTRUCTION LOANS
- RURAL LAND LOANS
- LOCAL SERVICE - ALWAYS!

Sydney Belew 501-827-6963

Brandyn Frizzell 501-415-5840



**AgHeritage**  
Farm Credit Services



# CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT:

## ARVA INTELLIGENCE AT GLENNOE FARMLAND PARTNERS

By Rebecca McGraw

At the Glennoe Farmland Partners Field Site near Humphrey in Arkansas County, data is growing alongside the soybeans.

As a research farm and day-to-day row crop operation, Glennoe Farms serves as a data collection point for Arva Intelligence, which uses the information to optimize crop field value and help farmers create new revenue streams from the generation of environmental assets.

Arva Intelligence grew out of a 2016 research collaboration at Glennoe Farms between the University of Arkansas, Berkeley Lab and Oak Ridge National Laboratory, with the goal of increasing regenerative agriculture practices that benefit both the environment and farms. This includes practices that improve long-term viability of the land while maintaining or increasing crop yields. Practices that improve nutrient management, like nitrogen inhibitors, slow release fertilizers and split fertilizer applications and that enhance soil health and moisture, like conservation tillage and cover cropping, contribute to soil organic carbon uptake and reduced environmental runoff.

“We started Arva Intelligence out of all of that research and the work that we did,” said co-founder Jay McEntire. “We received initial funding from the Department of Energy to do research and start to apply machine learning to the data we were collecting. The idea is that we can improve agriculture, and make agriculture more profitable and sustainable, by using data more effectively.”

AgHeritage Director Mark Isbell, well-known for his dedication to sustainable farming practices, is a founding board member of Arva Intelligence. “I first met Jay when his previous tenant called me and said, ‘My landlord won’t stop talking about sustainability,’” Isbell said, laughing. “They said, ‘Would you please talk to him a little bit?’”

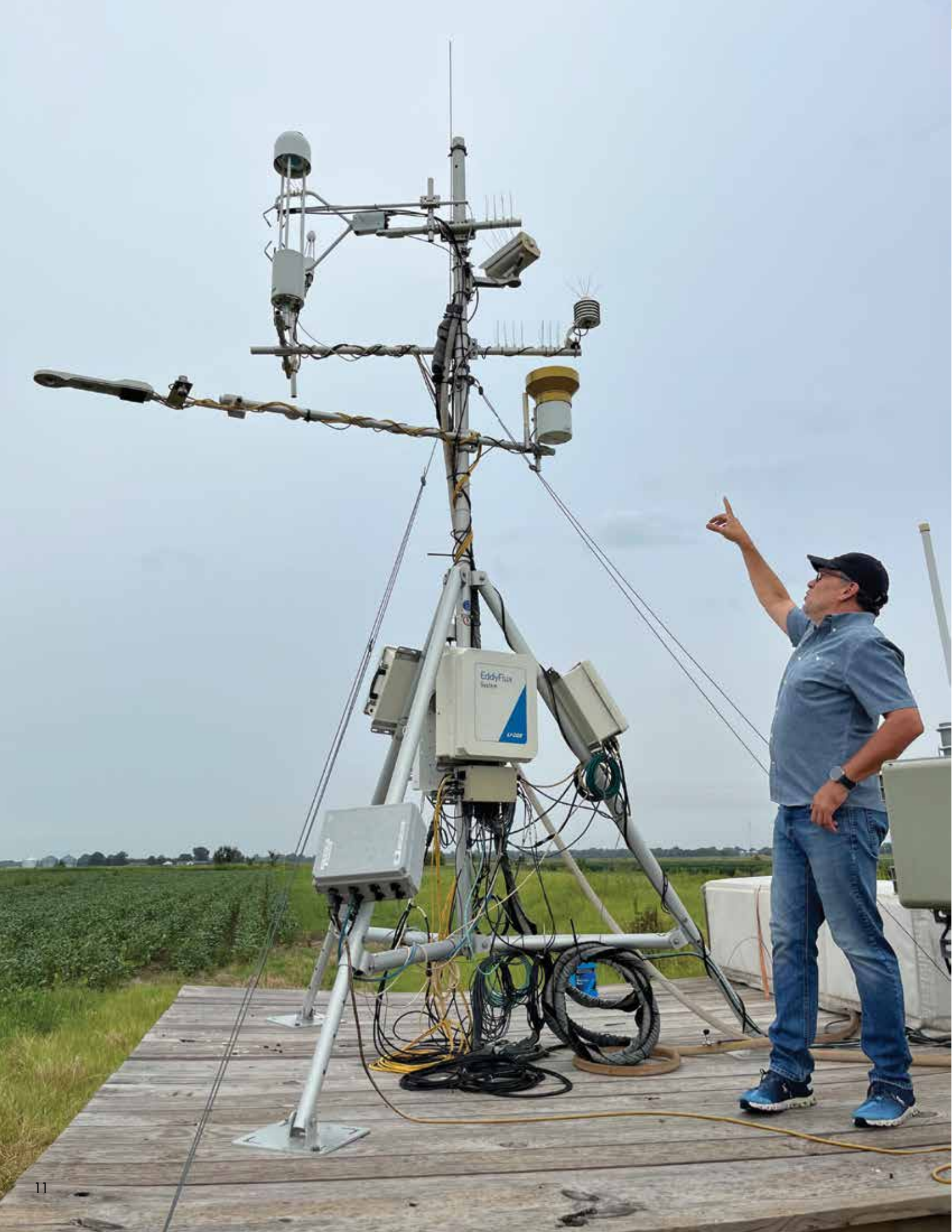
Isbell and McEntire met and discussed their overlapping interests. “My focus for Arva is to make sure that we’re able to return real value to farmers. Having grown up as a farmer and been a farmer all of my life, it’s not always easy. There are plenty of challenges out there for us, so we need all of the different opportunities that we can find. Of course we can be more













efficient, be more productive, make higher yields, but also we can find a way to monetize what we're doing when it comes to regenerative farming and sustainability. With Arva, we can find that value in the marketplace, and make sure it gets back to the farmer."

In the fields at Glenoe Farms, eddy covariance flux towers measure real-time carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) fluxes in agricultural soils and the atmosphere, providing a field-scale, quick and reliable, greenhouse gas quantification solution. The towers capture the impact of farming practices and land management decisions throughout the entire season and crop cycle, showing real-time data on the positive benefits of regenerative agriculture.

Arva Director of Environmental Assets Audrey Barrett Bixler explains how farmers can benefit. "Our two main requirements for doing projects is to make sure that the work benefits the farmer and also has a positive impact on the environment," she said.

"Environmental assets are something that are created by the work that the farmer is doing on the field. Arva's role is to ensure that farmers are getting paid for adopting these more sustainable land management practices. We measure the greenhouse gas benefits associated with, for example, a farmer implementing alternate wetting and drying in their rice fields. We also measure water reductions associated with that practice and additional biodiversity benefits."

A 10,000-acre partnership with Riceland Foods begun in 2022 expanded to 50,000 acres in 2023. Riceland Foods and Nestlé Purina have a partnership to encourage sustainable rice farming practices. The Nestlé Purina-Riceland Sustainable Rice Program rewards farmers for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and water usage. Arva Intelligence works with Riceland and other partners to provide data insights and measurement for Nestlé, Mars and Walmart programs in Arkansas.

"The work with Nestlé Purina and the Riceland farmers ensures

Nestlé can produce more sustainable dog food and cat food, using sustainability-grown rice from right here in Arkansas," Barrett Bixler said. "Arva was created to utilize data to make it easier for farmers to adopt more regenerative practices that are both benefiting the environment and also ensuring that there are not going to be any limitations or risks to their yield."

Kyle Stovesand, AgHeritage VP of Lending & Branch Manager, Stuttgart, is excited about the possibilities presented by Arva Intelligence. "We work with Glenoe Farmland Partners on everything they deal with out here on a daily basis," he said.

"Being more 'sustainable' is overwhelming to some farmers, who are just trying to make a living growing a crop and making a profit. They are experts, but at times need more support to optimize their practices based on growing demands and needs. That's where Arva can come in — in an operation with the farmer, Arva can provide them with expert analysis back on what they can do with their land as far as minimum tillage. They can evaluate the gas emissions that their rice crop produces after it's harvested or flooded, identify things they can do to minimize those emissions and gain great sustainability on their farm without a minimum worry on the farmer. The environmental assets can even put profits back into the farmer's hands."

Arva Intelligence received the 2024 Friend of the Farmer Award from Riceland Foods in early November for their work in Arkansas.

"'Arva' means 'plowed field' in Latin," Barrett Bixler said. "The mission of Arva is to enroll these farmers into as many programs as they're eligible for, so they can receive the benefits of the hard work that they're already doing on the field."

"By working with AgHeritage, an organization that understands farming and the benefits of creating environmental assets, the barriers to adopting more regenerative practices are reduced, and the farmer has more opportunities to engage in this space and also receive the financial awards that come with it."



# CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT:

## THE RIDINGER FAMILY

By Sydney Belew

For Bill and Julie Ridinger, the journey to their rural lifestyle began with family trips to Greers Ferry for water skiing and camping. Living in Sherwood, they'd pack up the boat and camper for weekend getaways with their three children, Amber, Brandie, and Cole.

On these drives, they frequently passed a particular 57-acre property on Highway 5 near Mount Vernon. "One of these days, if that property ever comes up for sale, I'm going to buy it," Bill would often say. Nearly a decade later, it finally went on the market, and Bill, who had been working in a central Arkansas body shop, seized the chance to make it theirs, envisioning it as the ideal spot to launch his own business.

Initially, the couple financed the property through a conventional bank but soon sought a local lender when their loan was sold out of state. Bill reached out to Bert Leder, VP of Lending and Branch Manager, Searcy, and with his help, they refinanced the land. Later, when it came time to build their dream home, they worked with AgHeritage again, guided by Consumer Lending Officer Sydney Belew, using AgHeritage's one-time construction-to-permanent loan option, which allowed them to keep their land and home on a single fixed rate.

"One unique aspect of AgHeritage is that we handle our own inspections throughout the construction process. Watching the build progress from the ground up and working closely with customers is incredibly rewarding," said Sydney. "Their dream was to create a beautiful home on their property, financed with a local partner who believed in their vision. AgHeritage was able to make that dream a reality."

Before building their 2,600-square-foot house, they lived in a loft within their body shop, complete with a small kitchenette, bathroom, and living space. Despite the limited space, Julie managed to host Thanksgiving dinners, cooking with only toaster ovens and a microwave. "It was seven long years in that shop, but it was worth it," she recalls, as they eventually built the home they had always dreamed of.

Their house now boasts a split floor plan with a separate living space for Julie's mother, Beverly Riggleman, who moved to Arkansas from Oregon to join them. Thoughtfully designed with custom features, the home includes travertine flooring, a high-end kitchen, and unique furnishings. Through dealers, they sourced many of these items from Texas, Mexico, and Indonesia, including











130-year-old doors from Alexandria, Egypt, for the “saloon” and a coffee table crafted from an antique logging sled.

Now settled in White County, Bill and Julie embrace the quiet and privacy of their rural lifestyle, with ample opportunities for outdoor activities like deer hunting and tending to their chickens and hay. Having their three children grown, they find fulfillment in their new chapter, close to nature and community.

They appreciate the choice they made to transition from



suburban life, eagerly planning to expand their body shop with AgHeritage’s support.

“We value having a local lender,” Julie shared. They made us feel comfortable and reassured us that everything was going to be okay, and if there was a problem they would work with us to get it figured out.”

“AgHeritage treats us like family, not just a number, and has been there to support us through every step of achieving our dreams.”













“THEIR DREAM WAS TO CREATE A BEAUTIFUL HOME ON THEIR PROPERTY, FINANCED WITH A LOCAL PARTNER WHO BELIEVED IN THEIR VISION. AGHERITAGE WAS ABLE TO MAKE THAT DREAM A REALITY.”





# CONGRATULATIONS TO AGHERITAGE CUSTOMER-OWNER 2024 FARM FAMILIES



The annual Arkansas Farm Family of the Year program begins with the selection of the top farm families in each county and the announcement of County Farm Families of the Year in May. Contending families are judged on their farm production, efficiency, management, family life and community leadership.

Over the last 77 years the program has served to give recognition and encouragement to farm families who are doing an outstanding job on their farm and in their community, to amplify the importance of agriculture in the community and state and to disseminate information on improved farm practices and management.

The Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas are proud to sponsor the Arkansas Farm Family of the Year program along with Arkansas Farm Bureau and the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas. Program Partners include the Arkansas Agriculture Department, Arkansas Department of Career Education, Arkansas Press Association, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture and the USDA's Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Rural Development.

## DEAN & KATIE JO PRICE FAMILY/DEAN PRICE FARMS

### *Arkansas County (North) Farm Family of the Year*

The Prices live near Almyra and farm corn, soybeans, and rice on about 1,200 acres. Dean said he has been working on farms since he was old enough to hold a shovel. As a student, he worked bailing hay and doing other farm work over the summer, and early in his career entered into a partnership with his father, the late Ronny Price. The couple, who have been together for "27 harvests," include in their family daughter Whitney and her fiancé Trent Moser, son Caleb and wife Carlie, and granddaughter Wrenley, 2. They are customer-owners with the AgHeritage Stuttgart branch.





## JIM & HEIDI CRAIG/JHC FARMS

### *Arkansas County (South) Farm Family of the Year*

The Craigs farm soybeans, rice and corn on 3,458 acres near DeWitt. Although not raised on a farm, in his early 20s Jim developed an interest in farming from Heidi's parents, Mark and Joyce Hargrove. Jim worked for the Hargroves after graduating from college, and what was supposed to be a temporary job led to a full-time farming career. Jim and Heidi and their children Caroline, Cannon, Kent and Mark, are active at First Baptist Church in DeWitt. They are customer-owners with the AgHeritage Stuttgart branch.



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## NATHAN & JODI HARROD/SPRING BRANCH FARMS

### *Bradley County Farm Family of the Year*

Nathan and Jodi Harrod, along with their children, Kaysen, 9, and twins Kenzley and Kouper, 7, run Spring Branch Farms, a fifth-generation partnership with Nathan's grandparents James and Barbara Johnson. They specialize in breeder hens and have 80,000 breeder chickens and 8,000 breeder roosters. Raised on his family's tomato farm, Nathan started farming poultry at age 19, and later added a litter business that has grown to 15,000 tons of litter hauled and spread annually. Nathan and Jodi's children are already very active in farming, 4-H and FFA. They are customer-owners with the AgHeritage McGehee branch.





## EDDIE & JEANIE WHITEHURST/BLACKTOP COWBOY CATTLE CO. LLC

### *Cleburne County Farm Family of the Year*

Eddie Whitehurst grew up farming with his father, Carl Whitehurst and his grandfather, Wilburn Hunt. From a young age he helped feed hogs and drive cattle, and at about age 7 began raking and baling hay, at one time baling 741 square bales in a day. The Whitehursts still live on the family farmland and run Blacktop Cowboy Cattle Company, selling their farm-raised, grain-fed, antibiotic-free beef by the quarter, half or whole, along with fresh eggs and other farmer's market goods. They are customer-owners with the AgHeritage Searcy branch.



## BRADLEY AND ALLISON DAY/BRADLEY DAY FARMS

### *Desha County Farm Family of the Year, Southeastern District Farm Family of the Year*

Bradley and Allison Day farm alongside his father, Danny Day, Jr., and his uncle, Scott Day. The Days have been farming since Bradley's great-grandfather, C.W. Day, settled in Desha County in 1940. While raised on the farm, Bradley started on his own after graduating college with 700 acres. This year, the family planted 10,000 acres, including 5,500 of cotton, 3,200 acres of soybeans, 1,000 acres of corn and 300 acres of rice. Bradley and Allison have two children, Wells, 5, and Vivian, 2. They are customer-owners with the AgHeritage McGehee branch.





## JASON CATER FAMILY/ CATER FARMS & PLANTING, LLC.

### *Drew County Farm Family of the Year*

Fifth-generation farmer Dr. Jason Cater, his wife, Sara, and sons Weston and Tanner, farm cattle, hatching eggs, sesame and pigs near Monticello, on land that some of which has been in the family since just after the Civil War ended. A trained veterinarian, Dr. Cater also inspects eggs and vaccinates pullets on contract. The family also operate 4C Trucking, hauling poultry and feed, and own the Camden Animal Hospital. The Caters have also created more than 300 acres of quail and pollinator habitat on their land, which resulted in being named the 2023/2024 Quail Forever Farmer of the Year. They are customer-owners with the AgHeritage McGehee branch.



## THANE AND ASHLEY HUYARD/DIAMOND H

### *Stone County Farm Family of the Year*

Thane and Ashley Huyard farm on 540 acres near Timbo, with 100 head of commercial cattle and 20 head of registered stock, along with pasture producing 900 round bales of hay annually. Outside of farming, Thane is an agent with Farm Bureau and Ashley is employed by ADM Animal Nutrition. The Huyards also own and operate Zotec Livestock Diagnostics, a small lab they established in 2020 to run ruminant serum pregnancy tests. Their family includes children Avril, 2, and Sage, 1. They are customer-owners with the AgHeritage Batesville branch.





# ARKANSAS CENTURY FARM PROGRAM



The Arkansas Century Farm Program recognizes Arkansas farms of 10 acres or more owned by the same family for at least 100 years. The program was established in 2012 to highlight these families' contributions to the agriculture industry and the state.

On November 7, forty-one farms were inducted into this year's cohort of Arkansas Century Farms, including the following AgHeritage customer-owners:

- M. H. Bitely Partnership Farm (established 1914) of Jefferson and Lincoln Counties

- Sebree Farms Inc. dba Fish Lake Planting Company (established 1919) of Arkansas County
- Cox, Cox and Stone Farms (established 1921) of Lawrence County
- May Farms (established 1923) of White County.

Applications for the 2025 class of inductees will open in February 2025. More information can be found at [agriculture.arkansas.gov/arkansas-department-of-agriculture-services/arkansas-century-farm-program](https://agriculture.arkansas.gov/arkansas-department-of-agriculture-services/arkansas-century-farm-program).









# CULTIVATING CONNECTIONS



The Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas met with Sen. John Boozman in a roundtable discussion on October 16 in Russellville to provide an update on local agriculture and economic conditions.

We extend our thanks to Sen. Boozman for his continued efforts to pass an improved five-year Farm Bill, which is vital in helping Arkansas producers manage rising costs, inflation and high interest rates.



Rep. Rick Crawford and AgHeritage President and CEO Greg Cole spoke to more than 150 Arkansas ag producers at an event held November 4 at the Delta Regional Airport near Colt in St. Francis County. They discussed the proposed Farmer Assistance and Revenue Mitigation (FARM) Act, which addresses the urgent need for immediate economic support for farmers facing challenges ahead of the crucial lending season for the 2025 crop year.





# GROWING PARTNERSHIPS

On October 15, Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Sen. John Boozman, Arkansas Department of Agriculture Secretary Wes Ward and staff toured farms in south and east Arkansas, including AgHeritage customer-owners Miles Farms and Isbell Farms.

We truly appreciate their support of Arkansas agriculture, and the recognition of the role Arkansas agriculture plays in the national economy.





# CONGRATULATIONS TO 2024 AGHERITAGE CALENDAR PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

GRAND PRIZE WINNER \$300: JULIE HARRIMAN



## 2025 CALENDAR PHOTO CONTEST COMING SOON

Help us fill our 2025 calendar with fresh imagery that illustrates the farming, ranching, forestry or rural lifestyle in our coverage area. You could win a cash prize!

Photos may be taken in Ashley, Arkansas, Bradley, Chicot, Cleburne, Cleveland, Desha, Drew, Fulton, Independence, Izard, Jackson, Jefferson, Lawrence, Lincoln, Lonoke, Monroe, Prairie, Pulaski, Randolph, Sharp, Stone, White and Woodruff counties.

- Planting, timber, irrigation, livestock or harvest scenes
- Action shots in fields, forests or barns
- County fairs and farmers markets
- Seasonal photos, such as holiday decorations, 4th of July events, pumpkins, winter scenes, etc.
- 4-H or FFA events

If you submit a photo that isn't selected for the calendar, we may use it in one of our various communication tools such as our stockholder magazine, annual report or social media.

**For more contest info, rules and to submit a photo visit [agheritagefcs.com/photo-contest](http://agheritagefcs.com/photo-contest)**



FIRST RUNNER UP WINNER of \$200: Joanie Smith



SECOND RUNNER UP WINNER of \$100: Joe and Madison Vandergriff





# CUSTOMER APPRECIATION

Annual AgHeritage customer appreciation events are held throughout the year by each branch. These special luncheons and dinners allow us to say thank you and visit with our customer-owners while enjoying good food and great company, and are one of the highlights of the year for us.

## LONOKE

We had a wonderful time visiting with everyone at the Lonoke Branch Customer Appreciation Luncheon at the Lonoke Community Center on July 25.



## BRINKLEY

We celebrated our Brinkley Branch customers, as well as J.C. Scemon's birthday, at the 2024 Brinkley Customer Appreciation Luncheon at the Brinkley Convention Center on August 13.





## NEWPORT

There was food, fun and door prizes galore at the Newport Customer Appreciation Luncheon, held November 1 at the Joe and Helen Harris Community Center.



## MCGEEHEE

Thank you to everyone who came to the McGehee Men's Club for the McGehee Branch Customer Appreciation Dinner on November 4.





## POCAHONTAS

Pocahontas branch customer-owners enjoyed the Pocahontas Branch Customer Appreciation Dinner on November 12 at The Studio in Walnut Ridge.



## BATESVILLE

The annual Batesville Branch Customer Appreciation Dinner was held November 14 at the Batesville Community Center.





# ARKANSAS GROWN SCHOOL GARDEN OF THE YEAR

On October 24, Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders proclaimed October to be Arkansas Farm to School Month as the winners of this year's Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year contest were announced in a ceremony held at Jacksonville Lighthouse Charter School.

School gardens are integral to farm to school efforts, providing hands-on learning opportunities focused on agriculture and nutrition. There are currently 354 school gardens across the state. The Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas provide the funding for the contest, which was initiated in 2014 to reward and incentivize school gardens across the state.

"As a proud partner of the Arkansas Grown School Garden of the Year Contest, the Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas are committed to supporting agricultural education and sustainability initiatives across our state," said AgHeritage President and CEO Greg Cole.

"These programs not only teach students the importance of agriculture in their daily lives, but also cultivate a deeper connection to the land and their communities. We believe in fostering the next generation of agricultural leaders and stewards of the land, ensuring that agriculture continues to thrive for years to come."



## THIS YEAR'S WINNERS ARE:

### Champion of School Garden Sustainability:

- Sheridan Intermediate School (Sheridan), \$1,000 award

### Best Overall School Garden:

- Conway High School (Conway), \$1,000 award

### Best Start-Up School Garden Proposal:

- Homestead Academy (Royal), \$500 award
- Camden Fairview High School (Camden), \$500 award

### Best Education-Based School Garden:

- Shirley Elementary School (Shirley), \$500 award
- Ellen Smith Elementary School (Conway), \$500 award

### Best Harvest Partnership School Garden:

- Maumelle High School (Maumelle), \$500 award
- Jacksonville Lighthouse Charter School (Jacksonville), \$500 award

### Best Community Collaboration School Garden:

- Ward Central Elementary School (Ward), \$500 award
- Batesville Preschool (Batesville), \$500 award





# AGHERITAGE IN ACTION

James "Bubba" Johnson was the winner of the drawing for an RTIC cooler from the AgHeritage booth at the Cave City Watermelon Festival in late July.



In July, Alan Brannon and Bo Tretenburg of AgHeritage and 2024 National Peanut Board Chairman Greg Baltz and Mary Neil Baltz of Pocahontas attended the 25th Annual Southern Peanut Growers Conference at the Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa in Georgia. The three-day event provided farmers with information about production, legislative issues, and marketing and promotions.

AgHeritage was honored to be a sponsor of the annual Drew County Log-a-Load for Kids on August 3. The event funds endowments for Arkansas Children's Hospital. Since 1993, loggers and the forestry community have raised nearly \$10 million for children at Log-a-Load events throughout the state.



# AGHERITAGE IN ACTION

It was our pleasure to fire up the grill and provide lunch for the youth of the White County Cattlemens Association at the Born & Bred Heifer Show on September 10.



AgHeritage fielded three teams at the Lawrence Memorial Golf Tournament on October 11.



The Sunshine Rodeo was started in 1996 so special-needs individuals could have a day of fun being a cowboy or cowgirl. Sponsoring this annual event, held this year on October 11 at CrossRoads Cowboy Church in El Paso, always lassos our hearts!







Generations of farmers, ranchers, homeowners and ag investors have relied on AgHeritage Farm Credit Services for loans and financial services.

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life you've chosen.**



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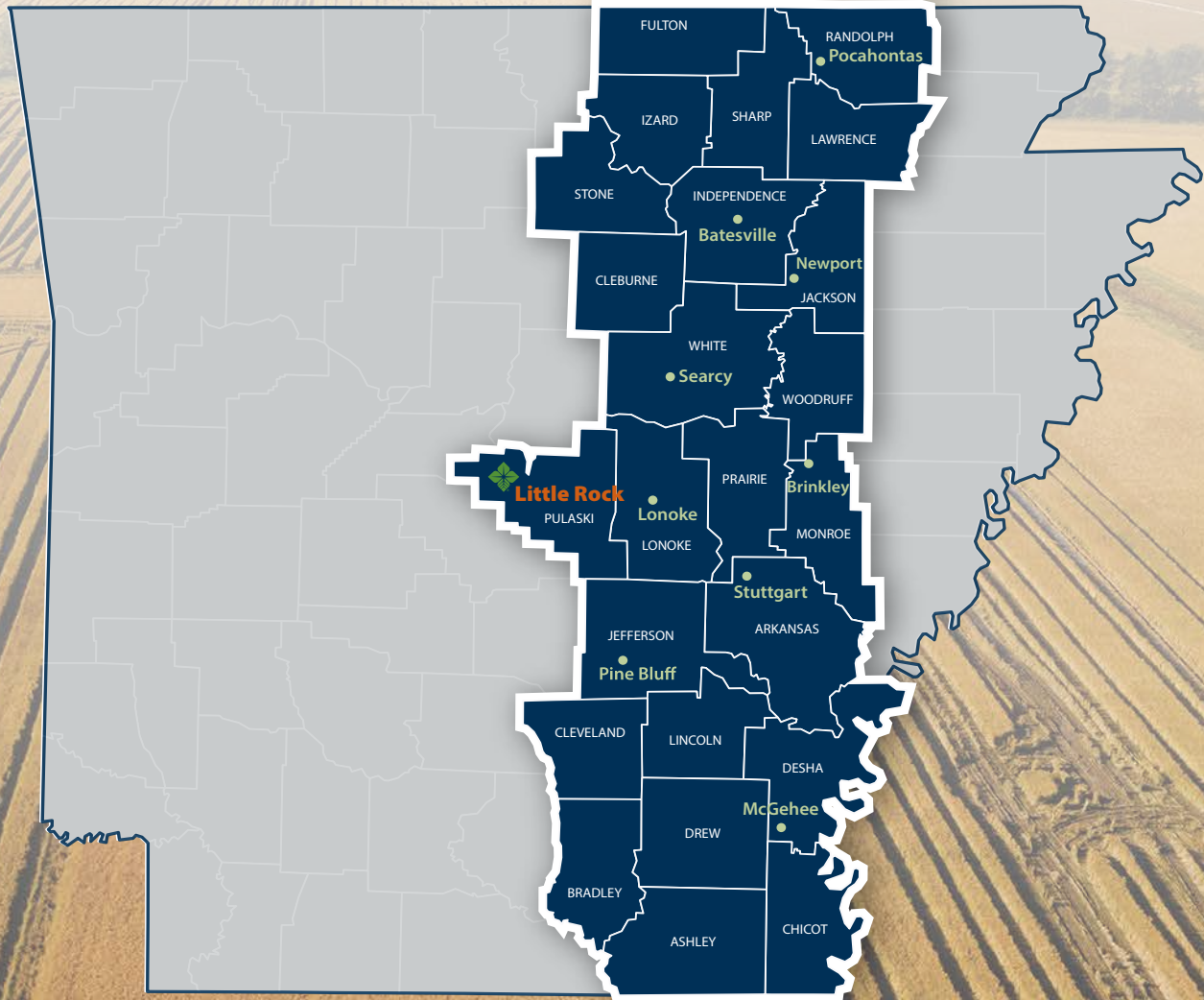
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# TERRITORY & OFFICE LOCATIONS



#### **BATESVILLE BRANCH**

1169 Batesville Blvd.  
Batesville, AR 72501  
(870) 698-9044  
(800) 572-8165

#### **LITTLE ROCK CENTRAL OFFICE**

119 East Third St, Suite 200  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
(501) 210-4000  
(800) 299-2290

#### **MCGEHEE BRANCH**

6035 Hwy 65 N  
McGehee, AR 71654  
(870) 222-5205  
(800) 689-6978

#### **PINE BLUFF BRANCH**

800 South Main Street  
Pine Bluff, AR 71601  
(870) 534-5701  
(833) 313-6877

#### **SEARCY BRANCH**

P.O. Box 9035  
2620 So. Main St.  
Searcy, AR 72143  
(501) 268-3524  
(800) 689-6977

#### **BRINKLEY BRANCH**

P.O. Box 767  
498 Broadmoor Dr.  
Brinkley, AR 72021 (870)  
734-4561  
(800) 689-1304

#### **LONOKE BRANCH**

P.O. Box 298  
1121 W. Front St.  
Lonoke, AR 72086  
(501) 676-3144  
(800) 689-1309

#### **NEWPORT BRANCH**

P.O. Box 1690  
2800 Stegall Rd.  
Newport, AR 72112  
(870) 523-5867  
(800) 698-5867

#### **POCAHONTAS BRANCH**

P.O. Box 506  
1105 Pace Rd.  
Pocahontas, AR 72455  
(870) 892-4579  
(800) 689-6976

#### **STUTTGART BRANCH**

P.O. Box 1005  
1102 E. 22nd St.  
Stuttgart, AR 72160  
(870) 673-1558  
(800) 689-1307





**AgHeritage<sup>®</sup>**  
**Farm Credit Services**

AgHeritage Farm Credit Services is a financial cooperative with owned and managed assets of approximately \$2.46 billion as of December 31, 2023. The company provides credit and related services to approximately 6,300 farmers, ranchers, and producers or harvesters of aquatic products in 24 Arkansas counties.

Branch offices are located in Batesville, Brinkley, Lonoke, McGehee, Newport, Pine Bluff, Pocahontas, Searcy and Stuttgart.



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