



#FridaysOnTheFarm: For the Love of Farms

From the kitchen table to the boardroom table, USDA brings people together across the nation for: healthier food, natural resources, and people; a stronger agricultural industry; and economic growth, jobs, and innovation.

Each Friday, meet those farmers, producers, and landowners through our [#FridaysOnTheFarm](#) stories. Visit local farms, ranches, forests, and resource areas where USDA customers and partners do right and feed everyone.

This week, we travel to Slick, Oklahoma, where 79-year-old Patricia Crenshaw has owned and operated her late father's cattle operation for the past 18 years. For Pat, farming is more than a business – it's a joyful way to contribute to her community and the overall health of her land.

A Farming Life

As a little girl, Pat remembers following her father around the farm, helping him raise peanuts, cotton and sweet sorghum for syrup. She also helped her mother milk the cows every day to sell to the milk truck.

Pat's father purchased the land back in 1945, using a former Farmers Home Administration loan that extended credit to individual farmers, low-income families, and seniors in rural areas for agriculture and rural development. Pat's father was steadfast in acquiring funding during a time when it was uncommon for African Americans to receive loans. For Pat, this land is special.

Pat attended school through segregation and integration, later graduating from Langston University in 1963 with a degree in education. She began her career at Beggs Elementary School during segregation. When the school became integrated, Pat was their first African American teacher. She has since dedicated 31 years to education.

Now retired, Pat spends all her time on the farm. Every spring, she plants a half-acre garden of corn, okra, and purple hull peas for herself and the community.

Growing Through Conservation

In 2001, Pat started managing cows and calves on her 120-acre cattle operation. She also has a meadow where she bales hay.

The Little Deep Fork Creek splits Pat's property in half. To help with water management, USDA's [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) installed 56 flood control structures above



her property. These structures protect Pat's property and allow her to manage her cattle operation more effectively than in years past.

As a child, Pat remembers how their land would often flood. Her family would lose cattle in the creek. Now, with so many USDA resources available, Pat capitalizes on the opportunity to receive technical and financial assistance to bring her visions for her farm to life.

In 2010, Pat started using USDA's [Conservation Stewardship Program](#) to enhance her grazing lands. Pat monitors key grazing areas to improve forage for her cattle and the timing of their grazing rotations. This type of monitoring helps Pat determine if her current grazing management is meeting set goals and objectives outlined in her conservation plan.

Pat also used USDA's [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) in 2013 to install 2,495 feet of fence that stops her cattle from entering the creek and improves water quality flowing downstream.

After her land suffered from drought from 2011 through 2014, Pat was able to recover her losses using the [Livestock Forage Program](#), a disaster assistance program through USDA's [Farm Service Agency](#). LFP compensates livestock producers for their grazing losses due to drought or fire.

More Information

USDA offers a variety of risk management, disaster, loan, and conservation programs to help agricultural producers build resiliency and weather ups and downs in the market. Visit farmers.gov to learn more.

For more information about USDA services, contact your local [USDA service center](#).

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