



## **#FridaysOnTheFarm: Once a Farmer, Always a Farmer**

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 Friday, we're headed to Perkins, Oklahoma, where Margarita Munoz shares her story of a lifetime of dedication to farming and her journey through the ups and downs of managing a profitable cattle business.

### **Hard Work**

Before Margarita paid cash for her first 120 acres and farm equipment, she already had a storied history in farming. In 1938, Margarita was born into a farming family, helping her parents work sugar cane fields, pick bananas, and harvest corn in Michoacán, Mexico.

When she was 18, Margarita emigrated to the United States, settling down in California where she picked cotton and grapes for 14 years. Then, Margarita spent the next seven years cleaning chicken at a poultry farm.

She relocated to Oklahoma in 1977, where she moved to the dairy business and milked cows for more than a decade. And then for the next 12 years, she sold farm equipment.

Margarita became a United States citizen in April 1982, and since then, she has managed to raise a family, work non-farming full-time jobs and run a thriving cattle business, which is her primary source of income.

### **Building a Business**

Margarita started her own farm with 20 head of Brangus cows on her 120-acre operation. Now, she owns 200 head of Angus cows on 800 acres. Margarita also grows wheat and millet.

Now that she has retired from her full-time jobs, she spends her days working in her five-acre garden, cutting cedars, and tending to her cattle, crops, and hay.

"I smile every time I see a cedar tree fall down," says Margarita, because they are encroaching on



grazing lands across much of the southern Great Plains, degrading their quality for livestock and wildlife habitat.

She also knows that farming isn't easy. Last spring, the nearby Cimarron River washed away much of her fencing. And at 80, Margarita was out in the flood, moving her cows off the field.

Once the flood waters faded, she picked up debris and started rebuilding her fence. "When I build fence, which is not easy, I look back and know that I did that."

### **USDA Assistance**

Margarita has partnered with USDA's [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) for the past 13 years. Through the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#), NRCS helped her transition cropland into healthy pastures.

She added a grade stabilization structure across a drainageway to control erosion and fenced off a riparian area to keep livestock out of the waterway. Both practices help improve water quality downstream.

Margarita also had an aggressive rotational grazing system installed that moved her cattle from one side of the farm to the other, allowing the remaining side to rest to improve forage growth. In addition, she had assistance clearing cedars to help restore her grasslands.

### **More Information**

USDA offers a variety of risk management, disaster, loan, and conservation programs to help agricultural producers in the United States weather ups and downs in the market and natural disasters as well as invest in improvements to their operations. [Learn about additional programs.](#)

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