

#FridaysOnTheFarm: Pushing Forward to Live the Dream

Each Friday, visit local farms, ranches, forests, and resource areas through our [#FridaysOnTheFarm](#) stories. Meet farmers, producers, and landowners who are working to improve their operations with

This Friday meet Tommy Turner Jr., a new farmer who operates near Eudora, Arkansas. Many doors of opportunity opened for Tommy when he graduated college, but it was the dream of farming that called him back home.

Where the Story Begins

Growing up in southeast Arkansas, agriculture has always been a part of Tommy's life. His father worked for a local farmer and Tommy attended the University of Arkansas at Monticello, majoring in agribusiness. As a student, Tommy worked for the university as an assistant plant pathologist, gaining valuable knowledge and experience.

After graduation, he had many job opportunities and offers, but the dream of farming kept drawing him.

"It was something that I just loved to do," Tommy said. "I told myself my senior year of college if I love what I do, I'll never work a day of my life."

First Steps

Tommy returned home to Eudora. With to his previous experiences around the farm, he was aware of programs offered by USDA's [Farm Service Agency](#).

He worked with FSA through their [direct loan program](#) to purchase equipment. With a local bank, he received a line of credit through FSA [guaranteed loan program](#) to fund his operating expenses.

"Without FSA's help, I would have had a lot harder time getting started, as banks usually require down payments to buy equipment," Tommy said.

In 2017, Tommy farmed approximately 575 acres of soybeans.

"It was hard, but I loved it," he said. "I try to do better each and every day. I gained experience and learned some dos and don'ts."

Pushing Forward

After a successful first year, Tommy looked to purchase additional equipment, like a sprayer, to help with the care of his crops and lower the input costs over the long run.

"My success comes from the whole community, faith, family, and local businesses, including the banks," he said. "People pushing me to be the best I can be."



Tommy is enrolled in FSA's [Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage program](#) to prepare for potential market downturns and provide a crucial safety-net for his operation.

He also participates in the [Conservation Stewardship Program](#) through USDA's [Natural Resource Conservation Service](#). This program helps farmers and ranchers identify natural resource concerns on their farm and provide technical and financial assistance to solve those problems.

"I participate (in CSP) to do the best I can for the land I tend to, which includes conservation, fertility, and different types of land improvements," he said.

He currently leases land but aspires to purchase his own land in the future. He has since added corn into his planting rotation, with hopes of adding cotton as well.

Tommy farms full time and now with a few years under his belt, he offers up some lessons he's learned.

"Buy what you need and not what you want and eventually you'll be able to buy what you want," he said. "Watch your pennies close and your dollars will take care of themselves."

More Information

USDA offers a variety of risk management, disaster assistance, loan, and conservation programs to help agricultural producers in the United States. [Learn about additional programs](#).

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

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