



#FridaysOnTheFarm: Working Hard to Grow the Herd

From the kitchen table to the boardroom table, the 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, meet Emery Fox, a 26-year-old rancher in Checotah, Oklahoma, who, with the support and encouragement of her family, got in the cattle business two years ago.

"I had some money at the time, and we talked about different ways to invest," she said. "I thought it would be a good way to invest and provide a supplemental income. I don't get in over my head. This is all really new to me and it's a lot of learning."

Ranching Roots

Prior to purchasing her own herd of 12 Charolais-Red Angus cattle, Emery was introduced to agriculture on her grandfather's cattle operation. Her grandfather, Jack Pugh, has been a cattleman for 30 years and has been a source of constant support and advice for Emery.

"It's been a family thing for us," she said. "I run my cows on my grandpa's land. We get together on the weekend to go over what we've seen throughout the week. He's been a huge support and has really played a major role in me being able to survive and grow as much as I have."

She says she's been fortunate to have the support of her family and her tribe, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The cattle business is tough, and it takes a lot of work to be successful.

"We've faced challenges, with not having enough hay to make it through winter, feral hogs, flies and ticks, managing land needs, and most important for me, time," said Emery.

Growing Her Operation

With so many irons in the fire, hard work and time management are key for Emery. In addition to ranching, Emery is busy earning a degree in organizational leadership at Northeastern State University and working full-time in the housing department for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.



She hopes to eventually buy her own land and continue working alongside her grandfather.

“I love this,” Emery said. “I find it so interesting to watch the cows have their calves and watching them grow up, watching the life cycle happen.”

Growing Her Herd

Over the last two years, Emery has expanded her herd to 20 cows with [operating loans](#) from USDA’s [Farm Service Agency](#).

Operating loans are a valuable resource to start, maintain, expand, and strengthen a farm or ranch. For new agricultural producers, these loans provide an essential gateway into agricultural production by financing the operating costs.

“It’s an easy process and a way for me to get a much better interest rate than I could have otherwise,” Emery said. “If you do your research, there are plenty of programs and resources out there.”

More Information

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

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

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