

# LANDSCAPES™

a portrait of living & working in rural America

winter 2019



 *Louisiana*  
LAND BANK

For more information, contact  
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Part of the Farm Credit System

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## The Future Is Bright



One could become very bearish about the future of agriculture if focusing only on the immediate issues with trade and commodities, the limited availability of skilled labor or the current cost of production and capital replacement. Obviously, these short-term challenges are extremely stressful, but we at Louisiana Land Bank, ACA, believe the long-term future of agriculture provides great opportunity.

In fact, while many lending institutions are pulling their resources away from the agriculture sector and seeking other niches in their markets, we at Louisiana Land Bank understand this is the time that we must demonstrate our greatest confidence in our stockholder-producers and our industry.

I am consistently inspired by the youngest of our generation. When you visit with these producers and our loan officers who serve them, they see opportunity and a bright future. They are not naive. They see the significant challenges of our current economic and political climate.

However, they embrace and employ many of the newest technological advancements to address production costs and labor issues. Louisiana Land Bank will be the obvious choice for financing these advancements, whether its improvements in the land, irrigation, grain facilities, equipment or artificial intelligence.

Our association is investing even more resources in the future generation with a focus on the recently formed Young Producers Group. In February 2020, we will host nationally renowned speaker Dr. David Kohl of Virginia Tech, who will address financial management, and Richard Brock of Brock Associates to discuss commodity marketing with our ever-expanding group of young producers. Connecting with the next generation of leaders is one of our association's highest priorities.

Speaking of our commitment to the future, Louisiana Land Bank will be implementing a whole new technology platform called FarmView. This new platform is designed to be fully integrated and replace our existing systems.

We anticipate this integration will provide our lending teams efficiencies in serving you and will enhance customer-facing systems to give stockholders more direct access to their loan information from their own mobile device.

In the current environment, it is important to have a lender that understands the challenges and needs of your operation. At Louisiana Land Bank, supporting agriculture and enhancing rural America is what we do. Since being chartered more than 100 years ago, we have served our stockholders through many economic cycles and changes.

Your Louisiana Land Bank is investing today to serve and support our stockholders for the next century. We see a bright future for Louisiana agriculture. As a lender, we desire to be the industry leader in financing your needs in the best of times, as well as during times that seem a little less certain.

Sincerely,

F. Stephen Austin  
Chief Executive Officer

## STOCKHOLDERS RECEIVE YOUNG FARMER & RANCHER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Louisiana Land Bank stockholders Adam and Megan Caughern received the 2019 Young Farmer & Rancher Achievement Award during the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation Conference in June.

Residents of Gilliam, Louisiana, the Caugherns grow and sell hay, in addition to custom harvesting and spraying. They also truck cotton, ship grain and raise their own beef cattle.



Customers Adam and Megan Caughern, second and third from right, receive the 2019 Young Farmer & Rancher (YF&R) Achievement Award at the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation (LFBF) Conference. On stage with the couple are, from left: Blaine Briggs, LFB Mutual Insurance Company executive vice president and state manager; Duff Wallace, Southern Farm Bureau Casualty Insurance Company president and CEO; Matt Gravois, LFBF YF&R chair; and Ronnie Anderson, LFBF president.



## LAND BANK PRESENTS \$7,500 YOUNG FARMER AWARD

CEO Stephen Austin, second from right, holds a \$7,500 check that he presented to Young Farmer & Rancher Excellence in Agriculture award recipient Hannah Devall at the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation (LFBF) convention in June. With him, from left, are: Michael G. Melancon, president of Louisiana Sugar Cane Cooperative; Matt Gravois, LFBF Young Farmers & Ranchers state chair; and Ronnie Anderson, LFBF president.

## LOUISIANA LAND BANK MENTORS LOUISIANA TECH STUDENT

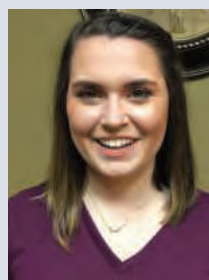


Louisiana Tech University senior Jessa Young spent her summer as an intern in the Arcadia branch office. After her internship, Jessa graduated from Louisiana Tech in August with a degree in ag business

and a minor in plant science.

“Working for Louisiana Land Bank this summer has really opened my eyes to the workforce and what it is like to work in an office setting,” Jessa says.

## CHELSEA HAYWARD JOINS LAND BANK TEAM AS ACCOUNTANT I



Chelsea Hayward joined the Land Bank as an accountant I in the Monroe corporate office. Chelsea graduated from Louisiana Tech University with a degree in accounting and recently received her MBA.

She resides in Monroe. In her spare time she enjoys spending time with her husband and three dogs.

## CENTURY FARM PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

In June, the Louisiana Century Farm Program — of which the Land Bank is a sponsor — honored longtime farming families who have owned and farmed the same land for at least 100 years. Land Bank CEO Stephen Austin, at right, congratulates the 2019 Century Farm Award winners.



# LAND BANK ATTENDS FARM CREDIT WEEK IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Louisiana Land Bank CEO, directors and customers traveled to Washington, D.C., in July to discuss Farm Credit's impact on agriculture and rural America. Below, Land Bank Board Chairman Mark Morgan, left, and CEO Stephen Austin, right, meet with Rep. Ralph Abraham while on Capitol Hill.

Other bank representatives at the Farm Credit Fly-In included directors Cullen Kovac and Grady Coburn and stockholder Jack Dailey. The group also met with Rep. Mike Johnson.



# DIRECTORS RE-ELECTED TO LAND BANK BOARD

Louisiana Land Bank stockholders completed the 2019 election for the association's board of directors. Re-elected were John F. Earles of Bunkie, representing the Opelousas branch area, and William Benjamin "Ben" Guthrie from St. Joseph, representing the Winnsboro branch area. John L. Van Mol Jr. of Alexandria was newly elected to serve the Alexandria branch area.



**John F. Earles** has been a board member since 2010. He farms with his son on Triple E Farms and Townsend Farms, farming operations that include 11,600 total acres. They produce sugarcane, soybeans, rice, milo, wheat, beef cattle, pasture, crawfish and timber. Earles also owns and operates Triple E Land Grading, Bunkie Flying Service, Tri-Rock, Cenla Fuels and Express Car Wash.



**Ben Guthrie** served as an interim board member since January 2019. He is the general manager/secretary-treasurer for Panola Company, LTD and the managing partner for Balmoral Farming Partnership and Island Farming Partnership. They produce corn, cotton, soybeans and cattle on 15,000 acres in the Louisiana delta. He serves on the boards of Panola Company, LTD, the Louisiana Boll Weevil Eradication Commission and the Louisiana Agricultural Corporation Self Insured Fund. Guthrie is also a member of the National Cotton Council.



**John L. Van Mol Jr.** is the owner and managing partner of Leverton Farms, LLC, a 3,000-acre operation, producing sugarcane, corn and soybeans in central Louisiana. He has farmed for 36 years. Van Mol also is chairman of the board of managers of Lagniappe Cotton Gin in Hamburg, Louisiana, and is serving his second elected term on the USDA Farm Services Agency County Committee and Advisory Board for Rapides Parish.

The Louisiana Land Bank Board of Directors re-elected J. Mark Morgan of Benton to serve as board chairman and Cullen Kovac of Oak Grove to serve as board vice chairman.



*J. Mark Morgan*



*Cullen Kovac*



# MAKING IT ALL WORK

Louisiana Family Makes Juggling Farm and Multiple Ag Businesses Look Easy

*Wade and Kellie Thames, right, are pictured in a cotton field with their family. From left are son Zach, daughter Victoria, daughter-in-law Kylee and son Massey.*



**A**sk anyone living east of the Ouachita River in Louisiana about Wade and Kellie Thames, and more than likely they know the couple.

After all, the Louisiana Land Bank customers are part of a close-knit family that offers ag-related services to rural northeastern Louisiana. From farm irrigation to land leveling to real estate appraisals, they do it all. In addition, they run a successful farm with 1,200 acres of soybeans, corn and cotton in Rayville.

The family's other businesses include three NAPA auto parts and supply stores, a real estate brokerage and rental properties.

## SUCCESS OUT OF ADVERSITY

The decision to build and grow their other businesses came after a very bad corn crop.

"1998 was the worst year for farming," says Wade. "We farmed around 5,200 acres then. That year all the corn had aflatoxin, and we hardly got anything for it.

"It broke us. It took many years for us to recover. After that, we diversified and started our other businesses."

The couple, along with Kellie's parents, Alvin and Sherry Hough, and her brother Todd, own all the different companies. The Thames' son, Massey, 22, also has joined the farm and the other family businesses.

Balancing the farm and their other ventures seems like a hard job, but Kellie says, "We all work together to make it work and be profitable. Each person is responsible for a certain aspect of the businesses."



*Massey Thames, left, and his father, Wade, are pictured with their drilling rig.*

## PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LAND BANK

Kellie's parents started doing business with Louisiana Land Bank in the 1980s. Kellie and Wade followed their example and became Land Bank customers in 2013.

"We have a very trusting and comfortable relationship with Louisiana Land Bank," says Kellie. "We can call them for any of our needs, and they'll be here to help."

"The family is the epitome of a family business and is well-known and respected in northeast Louisiana," says Jarrod Sellar, their loan officer. "I feel blessed to have a relationship with Wade and Kellie — one that goes beyond business."

Louisiana Land Bank is proud to partner with this resourceful couple and their family and help them with their financing needs.