



PCCA COMMENTATOR

PLAINS COTTON COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION | WINTER 2017-18

A FAMILY AFFAIR: THE HILEMAN'S STORY
SHARING YOUR STORY – THE “WHY” BEHIND THE NEED
MEET PCCA'S NEW DIRECTOR, STEVE MOORE
THE KING OF KANSAS COTTON

COMMENTATOR

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A Family Affair: The Hileman's Story



**Sharing Your Story –
The “Why” Behind The Need**



The King of Kansas Cotton



Meet PCCA's New Director, Steve Moore

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On the cover...

With harvest in full swing, learn how you can share your story and experiences to help educate others. See related story on page 5.

Photo by Jayci Cave.

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Letter *from the* President

You have heard me say it before, but it is true more than ever—I have never been more interested in future trends than now. There's only one problem—they are hard to accurately identify. Politically, the “unconventional” rules elections and policy. Economically, we have seen the Dow-Jones index easily go through 24,000, a level thought impossible in 2009. When it comes to cotton, each new season is filled with surprises from technologies that perform in unusual ways from a historical perspective.

When trying to prepare for the future, it's helpful to look back at where the industry has been. In this issue, contributor Blair McCowen looks at **The Evolution of PCCA: Same Values, Modern**

Approach (page 14). There is value in looking at how we have changed and asking ourselves “what's next?” From my perspective, thinking about how we will deliver on our mission to future generations is a daily routine. I suspect you do the same in your farming operation.

Another topic of great interest to me in this issue is **Sharing Your Story** (page 5). In many ways, agriculture has not yet learned to do this effectively. In general, we are hesitant to talk about our stories—either because we don't think anyone would be interested or we are simply hesitant to talk about ourselves out of modesty. However, either you will tell your story or someone else will. And most of the time, your story is best heard from you in a raw, authentic form. We must remind ourselves that the audience for our stories is not merely our neighbors but those non-farm connections that all of us have in family and friends that live in cities and suburbs.

As always, please keep your thoughts and ideas coming. It is the most valuable tool we have for making PCCA what our grower-owners want it to be.

Sincerely,

Kevin Brinkley
President and Chief Executive Officer

The Hileman's Story



From left to right: Sadie, Jeannie, Randall and Aaron Hileman.

Just under two hours from the northern Texas border lies Carnegie, Oklahoma. The small town resides on the Kiowa Reservation surrounded by fields of rich soil and history. Pursuing agriculture on this land has proven successful for those who dare, including the Hileman family.

Jeannie Hileman, manager of Farmers Co-op Gin at Carnegie, has always been involved in agriculture. Born and raised on a farm, she married husband Randall at age 17. The couple has two children, Aaron and Sadie. This year marks Jeannie's 28th season at the gin and 20th season as manager.

"You know it was really crazy because I was a farm wife only," she said. "I had a couple of board members show up at my house and say, 'You know, we have hired a new manager, could you help her through a season?' Then one thing lead to another, and I really liked it. It seemed like a really good fit. I worked under two different managers, then when we got to the point that we were ginning less than a thousand bales of cotton and it seemed necessary for us to cut staff back and I became the manager."

AN EARLY START

Jeannie brought both of her children into the industry at an early age and provided them the opportunity to work with her at the gin, an action that led to both furthering their careers in the industry. Today, Sadie and Aaron are carrying on the family affair of direct involvement in production agriculture.

"Being able to have the kids work with me has been very rewarding," she said. "Of course, you know there are times that mom being the boss is not always fun. Sometimes they need to spread their wings and become their own person."

Jeannie's daughter, Sadie, began working at the gin when she was just 15 years old. Even after 12 years, the youngest Hileman says she cannot imagine going a day without seeing her mom at work.

"It is the only job I have ever had," Sadie said. "I was 15 and mom said, 'Do you want to go to work?' so I have worked at the gin my entire life. This is my 12th year working here. I don't know what I would do if I went more than a day without seeing her. We work really well together. I have strengths and she has weaknesses but then she's got the strengths and I've got the weaknesses. I think we can probably conquer the world if we tried. I really do love working with my mom."

Like Sadie, Jeannie's son Aaron began his career the same way. Today, he is the manager of Farmers Co-op Association at Mountain View, Oklahoma, which serves grain producers.

"I was 15 and dragging cotton trailers," he said. "I turned 16 during cotton harvest so that was probably in 1988. Then, I went off to college and got married and came back about 10 years ago. I kind of worked my way up to the ginner's slot after that. With mom, it better be done right and if it isn't she knows you knew better. She runs a pretty tight ship."

Jeannie says she hopes she has passed a few good traits and lessons down to her children over the years.

"I would hope that my work ethic is what I would pass down to them," she said. "You know you can get a job off of someone's reputation, but you will keep it off of your own merits. To not be afraid of a challenge. We step to the plate, and if we tell someone that we are going to do something, we do it or we do the best we can. We can't always achieve every goal, but it isn't because we haven't tried and done our best."

FIGHTING ON

Even though cotton is currently king in Oklahoma, it has not always been. At one time, Jeannie found her gin and the cotton industry working hard to survive in the land where almost anything can grow.

"This is an area, you can see it is a rich soil, an irrigated soil, and my producers out here can plant and grow anything," she said. "I mean anything, and they can have bumper crops, so we have to promote it [cotton]. In the late 90s and early 2000s, corn was a better crop, and I was competing hard. Even back when we weren't ginning that much cotton I had the support of the industry; they would help me have a meeting and promote cotton, but then they might go to the coffee shop the next day and feel sorry for me. I had one that said, 'That poor woman, she thinks cotton is coming back someday,' but we never gave up."

Life presents its own challenges just as the cotton industry does. Roughly nine years ago, Jeannie's husband Randall was in need of a lung transplant. Today, he is celebrating his eighth-year anniversary of the procedure and is doing well. At one time, however, Jeannie said the situation was not so positive.

"They told us at the time he probably had six months to live," she said. "I had to stay home and keep my job so we could keep the insurance, and he had to have a caretaker move to St. Louis with him. As soon as Sadie graduated from high school she moved up there with him."

While the struggle continued for the Hileman family, their co-op community came together to provide a much-needed source of strength and support.

"My producers had fundraisers, they would have been there for me no matter what but probably one of the hardest things I ever did was accept one. The support I had from the industry, from my producers, is really what got us through those rough times eight years ago."

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TIME FOR A CHANGE

Throughout the years and challenges of managing a gin and educating kids, Jeannie has seen many changes within the cotton industry; some within her own operation, others on a much larger scale.

"I have been through a lot," she said. "I have been through the era where the boll weevil was eating us up, and we couldn't control the weeds. My gin that should have been ginning seven or eight thousand bales was ginning 200 and 400 bales. Then we had the growing pains – last year we ginned 61,000 bales on the same gin."

Those growing pains, though challenging, have brought about good changes for the co-op. As higher crop yields have demanded more ginning power, Jeannie and her board of directors decided to build a new cotton gin in a short amount of time. In an airport in North Carolina in February, the process was set in motion.

"We had actually flown out there to look at some used equipment," Jeannie said, "and there was a plant that was for sale. It was a closed co-op. It was a pristine gin. We knew this year was going to be large and we wanted to increase our capacity at home, so we get out there and look at the plant and it is immaculate. They had blue prints, they had everything."

Time was a determining factor in the co-op's decision to improve its operations.

"We went back and had a two-hour layover and I had several board members, my ginner, my upper management, and we all sat down and I kept saying, 'No one has built a gin this fast. This can't be done. It is a two-year process and we want it done in eight months, I just don't know.'"

Nevertheless, Farmers Co-op Gin at Carnegie is on track to reach its goal of being operational by the first of the year. After the new plant becomes fully operational, Jeannie estimates it will gin 55 to 60 bales an hour.

THE CO-OP WAY

Through good times and bad, the Hilemans have been there for the co-op just as it has been there for them. Despite all each has endured, Jeannie and her family have never stopped telling the story of agriculture, whether or not cotton was prominent in Oklahoma.

"I think that in the co-op world that is kind of our job," Jeannie said. "It [agriculture] is the blood to Oklahoma and the southwest area. I feel like we are getting few, we are not the majority any longer, and it really puts a bigger load on each of us to go ahead and carry the story through."

"The others, they come and go," Aaron said. "The co-ops are here to stay. Someone is hitting a homerun with the co-op every year, and it gives you the stability of knowing that whatever type of crop you are wanting to grow here, we are going to be able to take care of it." 🌱

Sharing Your Story

By Blair McCowen

THE “WHY” BEHIND THE NEED

We want you to share your story. We need you to share your story. Please, share your story! While all of these statements are flattering, they lack explanation. What does it mean when we ask those in agriculture to share their stories? Is providing a play-by-play of farming operations enough? Do they really want to hear about my multi-generational farming family, my no-till operation, this old horse-drawn plow sitting out behind the barn that my great-grandfather used? Do people really care? Should I let people into my life in this way even if I am skeptical?

The answer to all of these questions is yes. Why we ask grower-owners to share their stories stems from one major reason: If you do not tell your story, someone else will tell it for you – possibly in the wrong way. As agriculturists, we get flustered when our industry is misrepresented or spoken poorly of in the media. So, then, why should we give those misrepresenting our industry the upper hand? Why would we not share our story in the right way first?

WHAT DOES “SHARING YOUR STORY” MEAN?

Associate Professor and Graduate Studies Coordinator for the Department of Agricultural Education and Communications at Texas Tech University, Courtney Meyers, Ph.D., has made a career out of teaching students to share their agricultural stories, as well as how to share those stories for others.

“If I am asking someone to share their story,” she said, “I am asking them to let their guard down and to provide something on a personal level that will connect to others. The most effective storytelling techniques deal with connecting with shared values, with things we know and appreciate, whether that be family, tradition, or a can-do attitude, the American spirit, whatever those things are. So, typically, when I ask someone to share their story, it is because there is something about the story that other people will resonate with or connect with and that might help them get a better understanding of a bigger picture.”

Telling others about personal experiences is a tale as old as time. From Biblical times when parables were major teaching tools to Native American cultures who did the same, there is a reason stories exist as opposed to only facts and figures.

“We can only digest so many facts and figures, but when we tell a story that is engaging, it draws people in,” Meyers said. “It might help them accept information or relate to that information and is also more memorable. While people may forget facts and figures, they will probably remember that story.”

HOW CAN I SHARE MY STORY?

Many options are available when it comes to sharing your story with others. From candid social media posts to more polished magazine stories, anything is possible. Sharing your story might indicate an action as simple as posting a farming photo to Facebook or as agreeing to sit down for a media interview.

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"In terms of what many agriculturists have to do day-in and day-out," Meyers said, "they don't have the time to invest in a strategic plan. However, they might have time to put together a Snapchat video or put something on Facebook that updates what they are doing that day. The low point of entry for social media would allow them to quickly and relatively easily build the network of people both within and outside of agriculture that are curious about what they are doing."

In essence, you can tell your story alone, or if you prefer, you can enlist someone else, a trusted source, to tell it for you. Meyers said effective interviewing methods are something agricultural communications professors work to instill in their students every day so the correct story is told to its fullest extent. This helps ensure future agricultural communicators, who may go on to work for commodity organizations and in other fields, will have the necessary skillset to accurately represent the two percent of Americans involved in the production of food and fiber. One way to identify a source worthy of sharing your story is not if, but how they listen to you.

"One of the most important roles of an agricultural communicator engaged with helping tell people's stories is listening," she said. "We often listen with the intent to reply and not with the intent to understand, so one of the things we want to develop in our students is effective interviewing techniques. That doesn't just mean the questions you ask, it means how you sit through an interview and be actively engaged and listen so that you can, when necessary, draw out additional details or additional responses."

Now that you have some options for telling others about your experiences, try not to let fear get in the way. Take a step back and do a quick self-evaluation, briefly setting humility aside. You are unique. You do have a special story – even if you think differently.

"I think it is easy to judge for ourselves whether or not our lives are interesting, and usually the answer is no because we are in the mundane existence of them," Meyers said. "However, there are many people who are very curious about what happens in agriculture, specifically on your farm or ranch that would find it fascinating because it is so different from what their day-to-day life is like."

ONE STEP AT A TIME

Now that you know why and where you can share your story, see Meyers' recommended steps to realizing you have a story to tell.

Reflect. Take a moment to reflect on your lifetime, your parents' and grandparents' lifetimes – were there any significant events? How long has your family been farming? What are some of the hardships you have faced and overcome?

"I can fondly remember many stories about my grandma and the adventures she had growing up on the farm before running water and electricity in the home," Meyers said.

She said these stories were memorable because they were about her grandmother overcoming obstacles and hardships.

As our brains can only contain so much information at a given point in time, using photos to bring back



Courtney Meyers, Ph.D.

Associate Professor and Graduate Studies Coordinator

Texas Tech University, Department of Agricultural Education and Communications

A native of Fulton, Kansas, Courtney Meyers, Ph.D., has always been part of two things: agriculture and communications. With parents who were English teachers and grandparents

who farmed soybeans and milo, she said she came into the agricultural communications profession naturally.

"I majored in agricultural communications from the time someone said, 'Do you like math or writing better?' and I picked writing," Meyers said.

While earning her bachelor's degree from the College of Agriculture at Kansas State University, Meyers worked as the communications specialist for the International Grains Program at the same institution. It was there she learned about the global aspects of agriculture and how much was possible in the field, which led her to earn her master's degree from the

University of Arkansas and later her doctorate from the University of Florida. She joined the Texas Tech faculty in the fall of 2008. Earning degrees from universities in three different states also provided the Kansas native with the opportunity to experience agriculture in different regions.

"I learned through my own experience in moving states that what was a common practice in one state in terms of agriculture was not something that another state or people in that area had needed to know," she said. "In agriculture, we face that struggle about what information do people really need to know, and then how do we provide that information."

At Texas Tech University in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, Meyers teaches web design and public relations writing, better identified as "communicating agriculture to the public", at the undergraduate level. She said she enjoys teaching students technical communications skills while helping

"We often listen with the intent to reply and not with the intent to understand."

long-forgotten memories is another valuable reflection method. As Meyers said, people love visuals.

"We have all heard the saying, 'A picture is worth a thousand words,' and there is a reason for that," she said.

Meyers suggested finding some 'then and now' pictures of your farm to "show how well your farm has been sustained over time, the stewardship, the time that you have invested in protecting your farm."

Using these photos helps you reminisce on prior experiences and tell "the heritage of your farm's story."

Find the humor. At times, light-hearted and funny stories can be just as effective as those that are more heartfelt. After all, a smile and laugh are good for the soul too.

"There might be other stories that you really enjoy because they are funny and connect with people at that humorous level," Meyers said. "We know that funny things happen in agriculture, whether it be getting a tractor stuck in some who-knows-how way, or it could have been dealing with animals, but usually humor will connect people."

Think about what others may want to know or find interesting. Take a step out of your own shoes for a moment. Think about what others may not know that comes naturally to you. Do not be afraid to let people look inside your life a little and learn from your experiences.

"Again, thinking back on the stories that my grandma would tell growing up in the Great Depression and how they were able to survive with the farm they

had – those are questions she honestly would never have talked about if we weren't nosy kids wanting to know more information," Meyers said. "So, it might be putting yourself in the role of 'What are some things people might be curious about?' and realizing you do have a story to share."

FOLLOW THROUGH

Now that you have more insight on the "why" behind the need in sharing your agricultural story, take action. Share a photo on Facebook or Instagram, write a post about your most recent comical experience on Twitter, or even make a Snapchat video. If nothing else, tell your neighbor about what happened in the field yesterday. When the waitress at the restaurant notices your dirty boots and jeans, take it as an opportunity to explain that you work to feed and clothe the nation. Opportunities for sharing your story are everywhere, you just have to recognize them.

"I would say don't over-analyze or over-critique the stories you have to share," Meyers said. "Instead, just start sharing them and see what the natural response is to those stories." 🌱

If you have a story you would like to share or know of someone with a story worthy of telling, we can help. Call the PCCA Communications Department at 806-763-8011.

them understand and realize the complex nature of agriculture and how important effective communication about it is.

"In my time as a professor, I have seen a change, rapid change, in who can become a source of information," Meyers said. "No longer do those in agriculture have to wait for, or put forth a lot of effort, to get their message across. They can become their own authors, their own editors, their own producers and provide that information online through websites or through the various social media tools we have."

Molding students into effective agricultural communicators is one way Meyers is working to combat the increasing lack of trust in science among members of society. She said what appears as non-existent trust only in agriculture is actually the absence of trust in science as a whole.

"We know that consumers have a degrading trust in science, so not just in agriculture, but in all areas," Meyers said. "That is troubling because the only way we are going to address many of the future challenges facing agriculture and the other industries is probably through increasing science and technology and engineering, so we need to address this lack of trust in scientists and this broader trend that people have degrading knowledge in science literacy. It is not just an agriculture problem, it applies to other aspects."

Meyers also has a unique perspective on agricultural communications and the ever-present need it presents to push boundaries – a fact that plays into her role as an agricultural communications educator and teaching students to reach beyond their comfort zones.

"We have become so effective and so efficient in the agricultural industry that we need fewer people directly engaged – and that is a good thing, but it has led to this generation of people who are three, four, five generations removed from the farm," she said. "That trend is not going to change. We have to and we are beginning to, over the past decade, start to re-examine the role of agricultural communications in that it may not be communicating amongst the two percent who are actively engaged, it may be helping those two percent engage with those not in agriculture." 🌱

AGVOCATING

for agriculture

BY JAYCI CAVE

The coming year has the potential to be an important one in terms of farm policy.

With Congress drafting a new farm bill, it is more important than ever to share your story and how farm policy could impact you and your family farm. More simply put, there is a greater need now for farmers to advocate for agriculture, or 'agvocate'. Agvocate for a safety net that would help protect your farm during difficult years. You have a story worth telling.

Don't worry, you are not alone in this effort. Organizations throughout agriculture and the cotton industry are working toward the same goal with some of your fellow growers. A few of these organizations are Plains Cotton Growers, Inc., the Southwest Council of Agribusiness, and the National Cotton Council of America. Learn more about each organization here and what they do for growers.



PLAINS COTTON GROWERS, INC.

This non-profit organization has been an advocating voice for cotton growers for more than 60 years. PCG is comprised of cotton growers on the Texas High Plains and includes a Board of Directors and full-time staff. Its advocacy efforts are focused on four different segments: legislation, research, promotion and service.

Legislation: Helps to develop legislative rules and programs at both the state and national level. Issues include Farm Bill, trade issues, State and Federal Agriculture Appropriations, crop insurance and conservation.

Research: Works with universities, Cotton Incorporated, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and others to improve and advance cotton on the Texas High Plains. PCG also has a producer funded Plains Cotton Improvement Program to support these research efforts.

Promotion: Promotes cotton and participates in education opportunities and events to help people understand cotton and its importance to the Texas High Plains. One example of this is the Celebrate Cotton Football Game hosted by Texas Tech University each year. This also includes interaction with international cotton buyers in collaboration with other cotton organizations.

Service: Advocates on behalf of growers at every level of government. Building relationships not only with members of Congress, but others throughout the agriculture and cotton industries who could help them serve the growers they serve.

For more information visit plainscotton.org

NATIONAL COTTON COUNCIL OF AMERICA

The National Cotton Council is the central organization for the U.S. cotton industry. The Council's mission and objectives are carried out with the help of democratically-developed policy. Policy for the organization is formulated by delegates who serve on six program committees adopting resolutions that are then refined and approved by the 35-member board. The committees represent each major area of NCC operation and include:

- Farm Program and Economic Development Committee
- Health, Safety and Environmental Quality Committee
- International Trade Policy Committee
- Packaging and Distribution Committee
- Public Relations and International Marketing Development Committee
- Research and Education Committee

NCC's Mission: To ensure the ability of all U.S. cotton industry segments to compete effectively and profitably in the raw cotton, oilseed and U.S. manufactured product markets at home and abroad.

Seven Industry Segments: Producers, ginner, warehouse, merchant, cottonseed, cooperatives, and manufacturers.

For more information visit cotton.org

SOUTHWEST COUNCIL OF AGRIBUSINESS

The Southwest Council of Agribusiness (SWCA) is a collaboration of agricultural organizations and businesses formed to advocate for strong agricultural policy. SWCA's area is in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, New Mexico and Colorado. One of the main goals of the organization is to educate the public and policy makers about the value and importance of agriculture in our economy. The SWCA is represented in Washington by former Congressman Larry Combest, and his business-partner Tom Sell.

SWCA's Mission: To represent and promote broad-based agriculture and business interests and increase economic opportunity in the Southwest region of the U.S. both now and for the future through the pursuit of good and stable agricultural policy, through information sharing and the building of relations and alliances within the area, and through the promotion of value-added agribusiness and other enterprises that capture more of the wealth created from our land, water and other natural resources for the people and communities of the region.

For more information visit southwest-council.org

Help these organizations help you. Agriculture and cotton need a voice. Whether you are a grower, gin or other agribusiness, you have a story worth telling. Get out and tell it today! 🌱



coopTM

ADVANTAGE



FARMING

Cotton farmers of the early 20th century paved the way for cooperatives to have an impact that would not only be grounded in tradition, but also a guaranteed investment in their futures. Co-ops have long been about real ownership, transparency and control – ultimately preserving the legacy of family farms, local businesses and rural communities.



GINNING

Once cotton is harvested, ginning is the next step in the process. Co-op AdvantageTM regional co-sponsors PYCO Industries, Inc., and Producers Cooperative Oil Mill (PCOM) are two key contributors to this portion of the supply chain. Both are federated co-ops, which means they are owned by the cooperative gins they serve.



WAREHOUSING

Warehouses, a key part of the cotton supply chain, maintain full control over shipping schedules, loading and delivery. Co-op Advantage regional co-sponsors Farmers Cooperative Compress (FCC) and Plains Cotton Cooperative Association are a perfect illustration of the impact of cooperatives on grower-owners. Currently, 45 cooperative gins deliver cotton to FCC facilities – no small feat for an area that produces approximately one-quarter of the nation's cotton.

For more information, visit coopadvantage.com

Many individuals and companies make up the cotton industry supply chain. Every step is imperative to its success each year. Here, learn the impact cotton cooperatives have on grower-owners at every level.



MARKETING

For every producer, the focus needs to be on doing what they do best – growing, harvesting, ginning, warehousing and shipping. Yet the bottom line is knowing market value, and that's a full-time focus. That's why, in 1953, Co-op Advantage regional co-sponsor Plains Cotton Cooperative Association (PCCA) was founded. PCCA works to serve its grower-owners, finding new strategies in technology, advocating on behalf of farm legislation and improving the total benefit of true ownership to all grower-owners along the supply chain.



SHIPPING

Textile mills around the world count on our nation's cotton crop each year; specifically the commodity from our region – spanning West Texas to Eastern New Mexico and Kansas to Oklahoma. Export is imperative to the supply chain for all cotton producers. FCC, the largest warehousing entity in the world, is charged not only with storing, but also shipping cotton worldwide. PCCA also comes into play in this level of the supply chain. The regional co-sponsor arranges the logistics to ensure all cotton they sell is delivered where it needs to be in a timely manner.



SEED PROCESSING

Last but not least along the supply chain is seed processing. Regional Co-op Advantage co-sponsor PYCO serves as the largest cottonseed processing cooperative serving the southern United States with two cottonseed oil mills located in Lubbock. PYCO markets whole cotton seed and the by-products of cottonseed processing. The marketing of these products allows PYCO's owners to enjoy access to broader markets and added value to their crop.





STORY AND PHOTO BY JAYCI CAVE

THE KING of Kansas Cotton

From left to right: Brian, Carl and Mike Seeliger.

Whether raising his family, making a living farming or organizing and building a cotton gin, when Carl Seeliger sets his mind on something, he works until he achieves it. His family has a six generation farming legacy and is proof that with hard work and determination anything is possible – including growing cotton in Kansas.

"I will tell you what, it has been a good ride," Carl said. "We lived in a house here with three little kids and we were poor. I joke you not, we counted pennies when we went out for groceries. It wasn't easy, but I decided that I was going to make a living at this if it killed me. I worked two different jobs to keep family and everything going. Because when you have a dream that you are going to try to make work, you can't be off messing around."

Carl and his son, Mike Seeliger, were the first people to grow cotton in the Cowley County area in Kansas. His journey to growing cotton started one day when Carl was waiting on his wife to meet him for lunch at the fair. He was wandering around, checking out the various booths, when one caught his eye: a cotton gin. The gin shared some information about the benefits of growing cotton.

"There was something about it that stirred me up," Carl said. "So I got home and grabbed the calculator. I could not make a liar out of the figures. I thought, bologna there is something wrong. So, the next day we were working out here

in the shop, and we can work out in the shop and very seldom have to talk because Mike knows what I am thinking. Anyway, I said, 'Mike I want you to take this brochure home with you and tell me where the figures are wrong.' He came back the next day and we were working in the shop and he never said a word. I couldn't stand it. I said, 'Where was I wrong?' He looked at me and said, 'I couldn't find anything wrong with it.' I said, 'Do you have guts enough to try it?' and that is where it all started."

The Seeliger family has raised cotton every year since 1985. After 10 years of hauling their cotton to a gin 150 miles away, Carl and Mike decided something needed to be done.

"We started growing cotton in 1985, and we were the first ones to grow cotton in this area," Mike said. "We grew it for about 10 years and proved it could work. We had a base for cotton so we could grow it, but when the government program

changed and other people wanted to get into cotton, we were hauling the cotton down west of Oklahoma City at that time. It was a long trip down there, and we knew if it was going to work in this area, we needed to have a decent gin. We got others interested in it and decided to form a cooperative. Dad was basically the ramrod behind it, and he put the gin together while I was doing the farming."

They found a gin for sale in Oklahoma and bought it. A few of them in the community tore it down and hauled it to Winfield, Kan.

"He [Mike] is as big of a part of the gin being right, maybe more so than I am," Carl said. "I worked at it, and I spent lots of time trying to find things and it wasn't easy, but I will say one thing – true cotton people will do anything for you. They will take their shirt off their back and give it to you. If they are good cotton people, and there are so many-many cotton people in Oklahoma and Texas that helped me."

Mike said they formed Southern Kansas Cotton Growers cooperative because they wanted it to be a collaboration among all the farmers in the community.

"When we started this gin in Winfield, we made it a cooperative because we didn't want it to be known as our gin," Mike said. "We got everybody in the community who had cotton involved in it and made it a community affair. They were not worried about whether the gin made a profit or not from them because it was paying back dividends to them if it made a profit."

Today, Carl is at the helm of his family's farm, working closely with Mike and his grandson, Brian Seeliger. Carl said he wanted to instill hard work and perseverance in the next generations of his family.

"We look at it as you have a job to do, and you do it," Carl said. "Don't walk and put it off until tomorrow or next week. Do it right then and just keep going. We have made a lot of mistakes. Anybody that tells you they have never made a mistake hasn't done anything. Try to learn from your mistakes, but don't quit. Stay right there and keep digging."

He also said working with his family has been the greatest joy of his life.

"He [Mike] has always been there, and I saw that he had this completely in his mind," Carl said. "When I decided to make Mike a partner, I had to give up a bunch of stuff to make him an equal partner. That is the best thing I have ever done in my life. It has worked perfect. Over the years, I can never remember him and I getting in an argument. He would know what dad's thinking, and I know what he is thinking working out here in the shop."

In recent years, Mike's son Brian has returned to the family farm to carry on the tradition.

"One day I got a call and he said, 'Dad, is there room for a big toolbox in the shop?' I said 'Sure, come on home,' and I have really enjoyed working with him since," Mike said. "He has the knowledge of a mechanic and is also good when it comes to all the new electronics, with all the GPS, it takes a programmer to program the combines or whatever you are doing." Brian said he has enjoyed working with his family each day.

"I really enjoyed growing up as a kid on the farm," Brian said. "It was always fun going and helping Dad with different things. I have always enjoyed running the old 4020 stacking hay in the summers and always loved the wheat harvest. They would throw me in the old tractor pulling the grain cart and that was fun for me. We work well together. We attack all challenges head-on, and we are still together to this day."

"Anybody that tells you they have never made a mistake hasn't done anything. Try to learn from your mistakes, but don't quit. Stay right there and keep digging."

From the time he was 20 years old, Carl did all of the wheat cutting on the family's farm. When his grandson came back home to farm he handed over the reins to him, but he still knows what the machinery should sound like when it is running properly.

"I did all the wheat cutting and milo cutting and only had two combines with cabs before I got taken off of it," Carl said. "The first time I had a cab they asked me why don't you shut the door? I said I want to listen to the combine because I could tell what was wrong with it before it happened. That is what makes your machinery work when you stay tuned to noises and different click clacks."

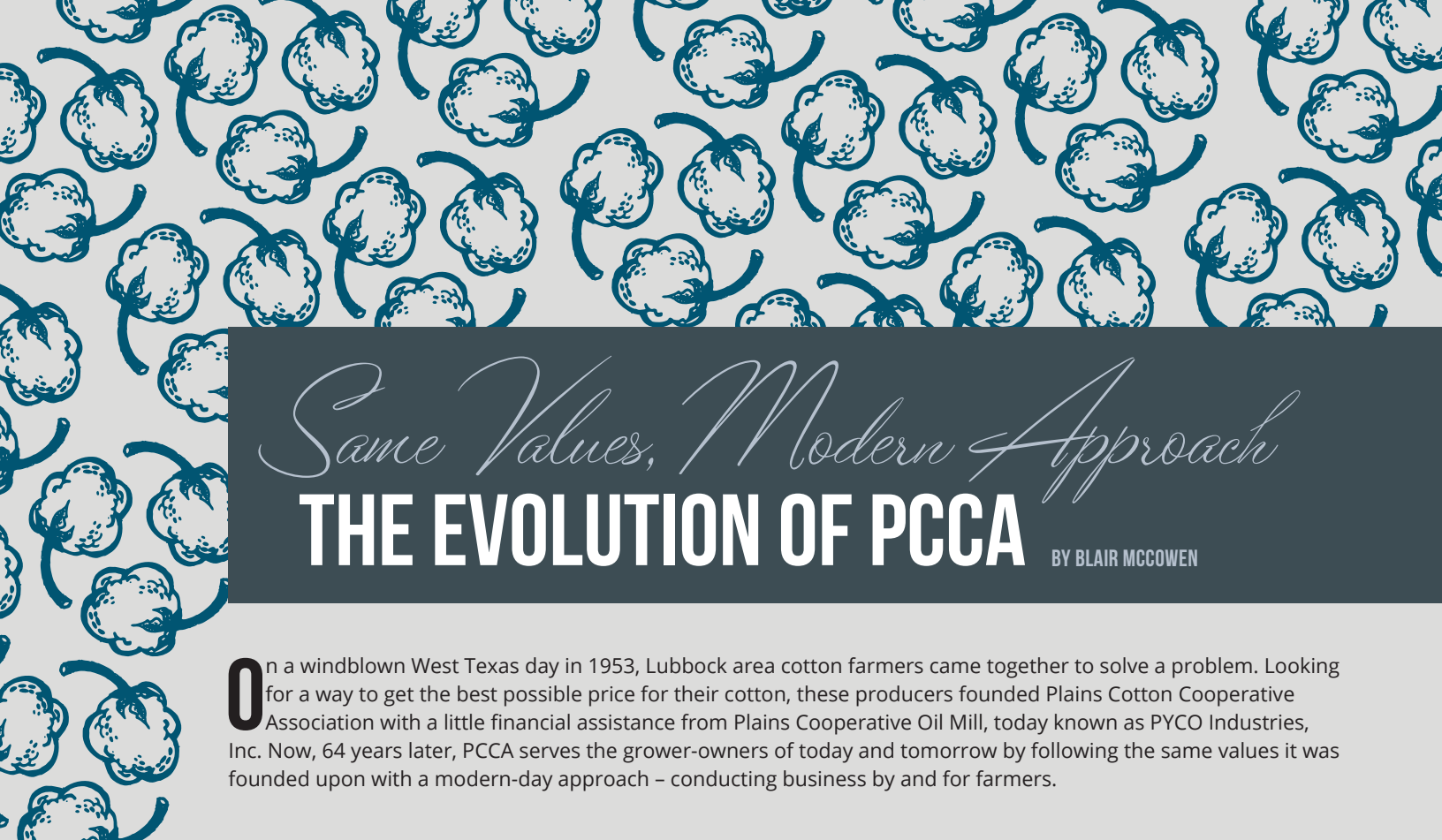
Carl said he has had his fair share of challenges over the years, but he wouldn't trade it for anything.

"I have seen a time when you went to pick up groceries and you went to pay for them and you took part of them back and put them on the shelf because you didn't have the money to pay for them," Carl said. "That is no joke. That was when the kids were small, and we didn't have enough money to pay for the groceries. The kids got first and if there was something left for you that was fine."

Carl has created a legacy that his family is proud to carry on.

"We need to be able to pass on this ground to the future generations," Mike said. "It started out years ago when we didn't know any different, we tilled everything, we would disc it, plow it, field cultivate it, then a rain would come and you would see a lot of soil leave the country with heavy rains. We went to no-till years ago and to me that is the way to go. It is a lot better for the ground, and you are controlling your runoff a lot better. It is a lot better for the biology of the soil and, hopefully, there will be something to pass on to future generations."

While Elvis Presley is known as the king of rock 'n' roll and George Strait is the king of country music, Carl Seeliger is known as the king of Kansas cotton, and of his cotton farming family. 🌾



Same Values, Modern Approach **THE EVOLUTION OF PCCA**

BY BLAIR MCCOWEN

On a windblown West Texas day in 1953, Lubbock area cotton farmers came together to solve a problem. Looking for a way to get the best possible price for their cotton, these producers founded Plains Cotton Cooperative Association with a little financial assistance from Plains Cooperative Oil Mill, today known as PYCO Industries, Inc. Now, 64 years later, PCCA serves the grower-owners of today and tomorrow by following the same values it was founded upon with a modern-day approach – conducting business by and for farmers.

NEVER DESPISE SMALL BEGINNINGS

“In 1953, PCCA began with just one division – marketing,” wrote Darryl Lindsey, former Vice President of Operations in a 1992 write up of the cooperative’s history. “Cotton marketing at that time had changed very little in the preceding 100 years. For 10 years, PCCA struggled with the low-margin nature of cotton marketing, providing a basic service but offering little financial return such as year-end dividends.”

Though PCCA had yet to uncover its potential to become a world-class cotton marketing cooperative at that time, the winds of change were beginning to stir the West Texas dust. Employees worked hard to improve the operations of the cooperative for the farmers who founded it and used its services – to keep things modern and efficient. As a result, membership expanded further into Texas and Oklahoma due to an increased interest for PCCA’s services among the cotton-growing community. Warehouses were built in the new service areas, including Altus, Oklahoma, and Sweetwater, Texas. In addition, PCCA became the first company to use a computer to process cotton sales. By 1975, TELCOT was developed by PCCA and revolutionized the cotton marketing industry, Lindsey wrote.

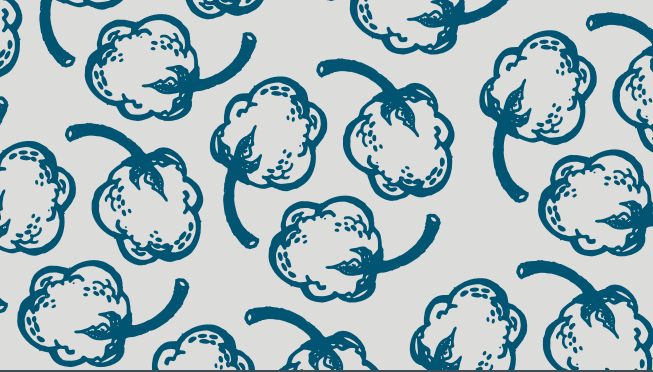
Other revolutionary developments came along in the years after, from the creation of TELMARK (1985) Electronic Warehouse Receipts (1989), and The Seam® (2001) to Member Access (2003), Module Tracking (2013), and Scale Capture (2014) services. Each new and modern development added value and stability to PCCA grower-owners’ bottom line then

and continues to do so now. The cooperative that began with one division and a few farmers has expanded its resources, talents and abilities to provide its grower-owners financial stability even during the worst of times.

A COOPERATIVE OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

Many components of PCCA have evolved since 1953, from directors, employees and departments to cutting edge technologies and more. When grower-owners’ needs change with each passing crop year, PCCA adjusts accordingly to provide the best service possible to grower-owners and gins. The PCCA Board of Directors provides grower-owners with the same opportunity to voice concerns, present solutions to problems, and oversee operations to best serve the interest of the farmer today just like in the early 1950s. Just as the board oversees the operations of PCCA employees, a Delegate Body made up of representatives from 104 cooperative gins provides input on various issues to members of the board.

Today, PCCA is composed of many moving parts. What started with just one division and a few employees has transformed into a business with 32 departments and 172 employees across areas of Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas.



PCCA DEPARTMENTS:

Warehousing
Gin Accounting
Traffic / Invoicing
Cotton Services
Accounting
Payroll
Human Resources
TELMARK
South Texas
Member Communications
Operations
Network
Applications Programming
Shipping
Administration
Information Technology
Sales
Communications
Office Support

Though it did not come easily, today PCCA is able to pay out dividends every year and provide the best cotton marketing services in the business. For the 2016-17 crop, our cooperative paid out \$21.83 million in cash dividends and stock retirements totaling \$15.51 million. Understanding where PCCA came from – where our roots are – is key to discovering where we can go next. 🌱

Evolution of PCCA

- 1953** PCCA is founded by West Texas cotton farmers in search of a better way to market their cotton.
- 1961** Becomes the first company to use a computer to process cotton sales.
- 1963** Adds cotton storage facilities in Oklahoma (Oklahoma Cotton Cooperative Association) and Texas (Rolling Plains Cooperative Compress).
- 1967** Expands trade territory to South Texas.
- 1975** Creates TELCOT – a hub for selling and purchasing cotton.
- 1985** Creates a subsidiary, TELMARK, to serve independent customers.
- 1987** Offers Pool Marketing options to growers in West Texas and Oklahoma.
- 1988** Offers Pool Marketing options to growers in South Texas.
- 1989** Develops Electronic Warehouse Receipts.
- 1996** Expands trade territory to Central Texas and Southern Kansas.
- 1997** PCCA meets the Internet:
The cooperative website, pcca.com, is created.
TELCOTnet is implemented at cooperative gins using PCCA services.
- 2001** Creates The Seam® through a joint venture for online cotton marketing.
- 2003** Celebrates Golden Anniversary.
Member Access created to instantly provide grower-owners with information on their cotton.
- 2008** Consolidates Warehouse Divisions for more seamless and efficient storage operations.
- 2011** PCCA meets the world of social media:
Today, utilizes Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.
- 2014** Creates Scale Capture for use at cooperative gins.
- 2016** Hosts First Cooperative Producer Orientation with Farmers Cooperative Compress and PYCO Industries, Inc., to educate growers on the advantages of the cooperative system.
- 2017** Introduces Marketing Text Alerts to provide grower-owners with needed information about the cotton market in an instant.
Launches The Cooperative Advantage Campaign™ with Farmers Cooperative Compress, PYCO Industries, Inc., and Producers Cooperative Oil Mill to increase awareness of the advantages cooperatives offer.
Launches new Member Access App available to Apple and Android users, putting all member access features and options at grower-owners' fingertips.

Meet PCCA'S New Director, Steve Moore

STORY AND PHOTO BY JOHN JOHNSON



Steve Moore was born in Ft. Worth and grew up in Paris, Texas. After graduating from Texas A&M University – Commerce, he taught vocational agriculture at Roxton High School near Paris for three years, never thinking he would become a farmer.

"I enjoyed teaching ag, but one day in 1982 my aunt and uncle called to tell me they were retiring from farming and offered to rent me their land between Snyder and Roscoe, Texas," Moore recalls. "I thought about it and decided to make a career change."

Moore started farming with 600 acres, picked up an additional 500 acres the next year and today raises cotton on 4,200 acres in Scurry, Fisher, Nolan and Mitchell counties in the Texas Rolling Plains. All of his production is signed into PCCA's West Texas/Oklahoma/Kansas marketing pool.

Following the passing of PCCA Director Larry Williams, PCCA Delegates in District 8 nominated Moore to represent them. He was officially elected to PCCA's Board of Directors at the cooperative's annual meeting of grower-owners on Sept. 20, 2017, in Lubbock.

Moore has served in many leadership positions during his farming career. He currently is Chairman of the Board at Central Rolling Plains Co-op Gin in Roscoe and serves on the boards of Big Country Electric Co-op, the Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council and the Scurry County Farm Bureau. He also has served on the boards of Capital Farm Credit, PYCO Industries, Inc., and Rolling Plains Cotton Growers.

"I'm very honored and excited to serve on PCCA's Board of Directors," Moore says. "I'm very familiar with the organization, and I know most of the current Board members."

Moore and his wife, Renee, have two daughters. Leslie is a teacher in Katy, Texas, and Tara is an adoption counselor in Dallas. 🐾

REMEMBERING LARRY WILLIAMS

PCCA lost a loyal and dedicated supporter with the passing of Director Larry Williams in September. Williams was elected to represent grower-owners and their co-op gins in District 8 on PCCA's Board in 2005. During his tenure on the board, he served as chairman of the Audit and Warehouse Committees and on the West Texas/Oklahoma/Kansas Marketing Pool Committee. Williams also represented PCCA and its grower-owners at many meetings of state and national organizations.

During his farming career, Williams served for 23 years on the Central Rolling Plains Co-op Gin Board of Directors and served on the boards of the 10th District Farm Credit Council and Roscoe State Bank. He also served his community as a Deacon at the First Baptist Church of Roscoe for 39 years and as a member of the Roscoe School Board for 15 years.

"Larry was one of those men that could always be depended on, especially when challenges occurred," said PCCA Chairman Eddie Smith. "I always valued his words of wisdom and support during those times."

"I learned so much from Larry," said PCCA President and CEO Kevin Brinkley. "I have never seen more dedication



Larry Williams' family pictured with resolution honoring his service to the industry. From left to right: Wes Williams, Herbert and Mary Kerby Williams, Virginia Williams and Nancy and Daylon Althoff.

or a stronger sense of responsibility. No matter how difficult the circumstances, he always showed up to do his duty. We will miss his wisdom and his knowledge but more importantly, we will miss his presence."

PCCA extends its deepest sympathy to Williams' wife, Virginia and other family members on his passing. 🐾



PCCA LAUNCHES MEMBER ACCESS APP

Earlier this year PCCA updated the look and feel of its Member Access Program. The goal of this was to make it easier to navigate and use. This program includes many important features that help make information and services readily available to PCCA's grower-owners including accessing gin account information, invoice statements, the PCCA check register, patronage statements, and more. In an effort to further increase usability, the latest change came when PCCA launched its first mobile app.

PCCA's Member Access is now available on your Apple iPhone or your Android phone. Your favorite features are now available as a true mobile app. New features include:

▶ **OFFLINE AVAILABILITY:** Your app still functions when you're in an area without cell coverage. If your gin utilizes our Module Tracking system, you can tag-in modules in areas without cell service and the data will be transmitted to the gin when coverage becomes available.

▶ **FAST ACCESS:** As a native application on your smartphone. A web browser is no longer necessary.

▶ **ACCOUNT INFORMATION:** Summary scale ticket and class information is readily available in the app. Additional information can be found on the web version of Member Access.

Visit the Apple App Store or Google Play Store today to download the **Member Access app** on your mobile device. For more information or questions, please contact your PCCA Member Services representative at 806-763-8011

MARKETING POOL

West Texas | Oklahoma | Kansas

Sign In/Sign Out Period

MARCH 1-31, 2018



PCCA's Pool Delivers

Superior Long-Term Results

Company Ownership

Expert Marketing Team

Integrated Risk Management

Cooperative Marketing Power

Global Sales Network

Reliability

