

# **PCCA COMMENTATOR**

PLAINS COTTON COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION | SPRING 2019

## **Let's Talk Cover Crops**

**LEAVING THE LAND BETTER  
FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**



**COMMITMENT, SERVICE, AND LEADERSHIP: THE 2019 TACC AWARD WINNERS**

**BANKHEAD FAMILY: GROUNDED IN FAITH AND CONSERVATION**

**A FARMER AND RANCHER OUTSTANDING IN HIS FIELD: JUSTIN HANNSZ**

**SUSTAINABILITY: IT STARTS AT THE FARM**



# COMMENTATOR

VOLUME 49, NO 2 | SPRING 2019



**Commitment, Service, and Leadership:  
The 2019 TACC Award Winners**



**Bankhead Family: Grounded in Faith  
and Conservation**



**A Farmer and Rancher Outstanding  
in His Field: Justin Hannsz**



**Sustainability: It Starts At The Farm**

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*The Bankhead family utilizes a unique blend of cover crops to improve sustainability and profitability. See related story on page 8. Photo by Jayci Cave.*

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## Letter *from the* President



As I read through the pages of this issue, the challenges and triumphs of being a farmer are highlighted through stories about how you handle conditions related to weather, soil health, markets and the politics of international trade.

PCCA's grower-owners have always tackled problems with persistence and ingenuity mixed with blood, sweat and tears. As a company, we take inspiration from this model as we continue to develop PCCA into the marketing and supply chain company of the future.

As we have experienced throughout the past year, the best laid plans are frequently affected by competition and externalities such as a trade war. But like our grower-owners, we strive to improvise, adapt and overcome.

We invite you, our grower-owners, to participate in this work. We welcome your ideas about how to ensure that PCCA is your preferred marketing company. The reasons for cooperating in ginning, cottonseed processing, warehousing and marketing are just as evident today as they were when PCCA was founded in 1953. We're stronger when we work together to protect and add to the value of our production.

Finally, let me reiterate that we are here for you—our door is always open. Please feel free to contact me personally by calling (806) 763-8011. I welcome a conversation with you.

Sincerely yours,

Kevin Brinkley  
President and Chief Executive Officer



# Commitment, Service, and Leadership

At the Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council Annual Joint Cooperative Meeting in March, four individuals were honored for their commitment, service, and leadership to cooperatives. Each year, TACC recognizes those who have gone above and beyond to not only better the people and places they come into direct contact with over their careers, but also to note how their contributions have rippled outward, changing and bettering the world of co-ops.

## THE 2019 TACC AWARD WINNERS

Story By Blair McGowen | Photos by Jayci Cave



### Cooperator of the Year: Eddie Smith

PCCA Board Chairman Eddie Smith received the TACC Cooperator of the Year Award. Credited with exceptional service and leadership that has placed him on many guiding committees and on the frontlines of the cotton industry, Smith is well respected among his peers.

Smith started farming after graduating with his bachelor's degree in agricultural economics from Texas Tech University. Since then, his drive and desire to serve the industry has been unwavering. He has served on the PCCA Board of Directors since 1986, and in 2004 was unanimously elected chairman.

"His commitment to the cooperative system is woven into his entire operation. He is a vocal proponent of cooperative ownership not just because it makes business sense, but also

because it is good for rural communities," said PCCA President and CEO Kevin Brinkley. "His tenure on the Board of Directors at PCCA has coincided with remarkable innovations, dramatic changes, and policy debates on national and international levels. Through it all, Eddie's foresight and leadership helped guide the cooperative through good times and bad while building a level of trust among PCCA members and fellow directors."

Smith also has served the industry in other capacities: locally, he is a director of Floydada Cooperative Gin and a deacon at the Floydada Baptist Church. Nationally, he has served as Treasurer, Secretary and Vice Chairman of Cotton Incorporated, and completed the National Cotton Council's Cotton Leadership Program in 1991. In 2010, he was elected Chairman of the National Cotton Council and has also sat on numerous NCC committees such as the Environmental Task Force. He is currently a delegate to the Council. Smith also has been a member of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives' Blue-Ribbon



### Distinguished Service Award: Ronnie Gilbert

Considered a wealth of knowledge about marketing and trading cottonseed and cottonseed oil among his peers, Ronnie Gilbert has served both cotton producers and the land of the free in his lifetime. After he served on active duty in the U.S. Naval Reserves in the early '70s during the Vietnam War, he returned to his hometown of Lubbock, Texas, to attend Texas Tech University and graduated with his bachelor's degree in business administration in 1975.

Gilbert's career began shortly after graduating from college in 1975. He accepted a position at Lubbock Cotton Oil as a Controller, being promoted to Office Manager and then Sales Manager during his time there. Then, in 1984, he took a position in sales at Plains Cooperative Oil Mill, kickstarting his career in the cooperative industry. In 1990, Gilbert moved to Yazoo Valley Oil

Mill in Greenwood, Mississippi, where he became Sales Manager. In 1998, he was named President of Soy-Cot sales in Des Plaines, Illinois. In 2002 Gilbert returned to Lubbock to serve as Vice President of Oil Sales at PYCO Industries, Inc., and was later promoted to Senior Vice President of Marketing in 2015, where he remained until his retirement in September 2018.

While serving the cotton industry across the country, Gilbert also served many industry organizations. In 2010, he was elected President of the National Cottonseed Products Association, and was a member of the Old Guard in 2007. He also has been a director and board member for NCC and TACC. Gilbert served on the advisory board of the Larry Combest Chair of Agricultural Competitiveness at Texas Tech, and is a former member of the board of directors for the Bayer Museum of Agriculture in Lubbock.

"I have had the privilege of knowing Ronnie for many years and can say without hesitation that he is very deserving of this award," said Robert Lacy, President and CEO of PYCO Industries, Inc. "He has spent 20 years of his career marketing cottonseed oil and is considered to have more knowledge about trading cottonseed oil than anyone else in the United States."

Gilbert and his wife, Kenan, currently reside in Lubbock and have four children and four grandchildren.

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Farm Bill Committee, and served as NCFC's Vice Chairman of the Trade Working Group. On a legislative front, Smith testified before the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry in 2006 concerning the importance of maintaining existing farm policy. He is also a director for the Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council.

Smith has received many awards in pursuing the life he loves, including the 1998 Southwest High Cotton Award from Farm Press Magazine, the 2004 Gerald W. Thomas Award for Outstanding Agriculturist from Texas Tech University, the 2011 Distinguished Alumnus by Texas Tech's College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, the 2013 Cotton Growers Achievement Award from Cotton Grower Magazine, and the 2007 NCFC Director of the Year Award.

Smith and his wife JenniSue have a son, Eric, daughter-in-law, Leigh, and two grandsons, Ethan and Logan. Today, he farms cotton and grain and raises cattle in partnership with his father, Ed, and son near Floydada, Texas.



## Distinguished Service Award: Rick King

When someone thinks of the National Cotton Council in West Texas, one of the names and faces that comes to mind is that of Rick King – a friend to cotton farmers and gin managers alike who has always been a strong voice and steady hand for the Texas cotton industry.

A Post, Texas, native, King attended Western Texas College in Snyder, Texas, before transferring to Texas Tech University in Lubbock to earn his bachelor's degree in agricultural education. After working as a student teacher at Lubbock Cooper High School in vocational agriculture, he went to work for NCC in 1979. To date, he has served the Council for 40 years and is currently a Member Services Representative.

Known for his ability to relate to agriculturists and persuasive charisma, King's talent for connecting with people allowed him to serve beyond the cotton industry and into rural communities. He served as the President of the Old Timers Rodeo Association in 1986 and 1995 and was recognized for his service and dedication to the organization. King also helped start the rodeo team at Texas Tech by helping raise \$250,000. In 1999, he received a Special Service Award from Slaton FFA. In December 2012, King was awarded lifetime membership to the Texas Cotton Ginners Association.

"Rick blends well with people from the country and he understands agriculture, especially federal farm programs and the cotton title of those programs," said Tony Williams of the Texas Cotton Ginners Association. "In delivering remarks to a group, he is very convincing. I always say he has a certain charisma about him. If I had a dollar for every mile Rick and I have ridden together, I would be a blessed man – but I am anyway as I can call Rick King my friend."

Rick and his wife, Debbie, live in Lubbock and have four sons and seven grandchildren.



## Cooperative Ginner of the Year: Ed Landry

Lubbock native Ed Landry has been noted to have set the gold standard for gin management. Though hailing from the High Plains of Texas, Landry was awarded the TACC Cooperative Ginner of the Year Award for his leadership in the cotton industry in the Rio Grande Valley.

Landry also has served more than just the cotton industry. After joining the Air Force in 1973, he was stationed in South Korea, Japan, Illinois, and New Mexico throughout his service. Landry found himself in South Texas after leaving the Air Force and going to work for his uncle's Ford dealership in Raymondville, Texas, where his experience as a statistician from the military greatly served him in computerizing their parts department.

After marrying his wife Linda in 1982, the Landrys relocated to Paducah, Texas, to run a grocery store for his father. After it sold, it was back to South Texas to run another grocery store in Harlingen. Then in 1985, Landry accepted a position to run the general store for La Feria Co-op Gin and has been there since.

In his community, Landry has served on the first bale committee for the first bale auction, a scholarship program for students working to pursue degrees in agriculture. He and his wife are also supporters of the Algodon Club, which creates interest in the cotton industry through social activities, media publicity, and scholarships.

Landry and his wife live in South Texas, and their three children and two grandchildren live in the surrounding areas. 🌱



## Dahlen Hancock Receives Farm Press and Cotton Board Award

### FOR GROWERS AROUND THE GLOBE, SUSTAINABILITY CONCERNING THEIR FARM OPERATIONS IS NON-NEGOTIABLE.

Recognizing that fact for growers in the Cotton Belt is the High Cotton Award, formed by Farm Press and the Cotton Board in 1994. The award highlights the effort of farmers from different regions of the Cotton Belt to produce quality fiber and maintain profitable operations while also implementing innovative farming practices, the same criteria on which they are evaluated to receive the award.

PCCA Director Dahlen Hancock recently was named the High Cotton Award winner for the Southwest region of the Cotton Belt in the 25th class of honorees. In addition to growing cotton near New Home, Texas, with his two sons, Hancock also serves the industry beyond his local operation. He currently sits on the boards of the National Cotton Council, Cotton Council International, and the PCCA Board of Directors, Delegate Body, and Marketing Pool Committee. Over the course of his career, he also has been able to travel to 12 different countries where he has met with merchants and textile mills, providing them with a valuable producer's perspective on the fiber they consume.

In his operation, Hancock works to push the envelope in new farming techniques while also keeping in mind the lessons his father and grandfather taught him. From crop rotations and no-till to cover crops, irrigation and some conventional farming, Hancock's operation is as diverse as it is successful. Keeping his eye on the ever-changing conditions of the High Plains of Texas allows him to make modifications where needed, always remembering that the land belongs not to those who currently farm it, but to those who will be coming into this way of life in the future.

PCCA extends profound congratulations to Dahlen Hancock and his family on this notable achievement and thanks him for his service to the cooperative and the cotton industry. 🌱



# TALKING TRADE POLICY

By Jayci Cave

## Impact on U.S. Cotton Growers

**Of all the factors that can affect growers' income, perhaps none is more important than international trade policy and the impact it has on U.S. exports.**

Approximately 95 percent of U.S. cotton moves into international channels either as raw fiber or as cotton yarn and fabric manufactured by U.S. textile mills, and during the last five years the value of U.S. cotton exports has averaged approximately \$4.9 billion per year. In particular, cotton produced in Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas is almost entirely exported in raw form.

"Because of the volume and variety of cotton grown in the Southwest region of the U.S., mills from all over the world look to source bales from our area," said Kevin Brinkley, PCCA President and CEO. "That means the success of U.S. trade directly impacts every grower in the region. That's why the issue receives a high level of focus from producer and marketing organizations."

National Cotton Council President and CEO, Gary Adams, said trade agreements establish the rules that govern international commerce, and it is important to establish agreements that provide a balanced trading environment and do not create unnecessary barriers. He also said trade policy can directly impact U.S. cotton growers by affecting prices as well as demand for cotton.

"Trade policy has a direct impact on the bottom line of U.S. cotton growers because trade policies affect the demand for U.S. cotton, and thus affect prices that growers receive for their product," Adams said. "The impacts can manifest themselves in several ways. For example, there can be trade barriers erected that limit access to international markets. Trade policies that offer preferential access to competitors such as West African or Central Asian countries also harm U.S. cotton growers.

Also, trade policies for cotton textile products can have significant impacts on the U.S. textile industry – which is the U.S. cotton grower's most reliable and steady demand base."

Adams said it is important for cotton growers to stay informed about the trade policy landscape and work closely with merchandisers to make marketing decisions.

"Ideally, trade policy would not affect the near-term decision that growers must make regarding their marketing," Adams said. "Growers should be free to make marketing decisions in response to the market itself rather than to trade distorting actions by foreign governments. In other words, trade policies should be well-established and understood. Trade policies are designed to add certainty, rather than create uncertainty. Unfortunately, that is not always the case, and we have seen trade policies that have a definite impact on markets and marketing decisions."

Cotton and cotton textiles are included in all of the major multilateral and bilateral trade agreements of which the U.S. is a signatory country, Adams said. These include the Uruguay Round Agreement that established the WTO, the North American Free Trade Agreement and the CAFTA-DR FTA.

"Fortunately, the recent renegotiations of NAFTA and the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement did not have any detrimental impacts on cotton growers," Adams said. "The duty-free, quota-free access under those agreements was continued in the renegotiated agreement. Now, it is important for Congress to ratify the new USMCA."

USMCA, overall, is preserving the current benefits of NAFTA as it encourages continued regional integration of the cotton and textile supply chain, Adams said.

"Perhaps the most important feature of USMCA is the preservation of NAFTA's market access benefits for U.S. cotton and cotton products," Adams said. "Importantly, USMCA establishes a new, separate textile chapter, reflecting the scale and significance of regional textile and apparel trade, and incorporates NAFTA's yarn-forward rule of origin. The textile chapter would also strengthen customs enforcement, which is particularly important to the sector."

Adams said over the last year the trade negotiations between the U.S. and China have negatively affected cotton prices.

"U.S. cotton growers continue to feel the direct impacts of the ongoing trade tensions between the United States and China. In the summer of 2018, prior to the imposition of tariffs, cotton futures were trading in the low 90's," Adams said. "In the months since tariffs have been applied, futures have fallen into the low to mid-70s." The imposition of tariffs has also impacted China's imports of U.S. cotton.

"Prior to the imposition of tariffs, China was expected to import between 3.0 and 3.5 million bales of cotton," Adams said. "However, with tariffs in place, the U.S. had shipped only 700,000 bales of cotton from August through early March."

Not only does the export market help support U.S. farmers, but all of the U.S. cotton industry as well.

"While good trade policy is essential, it's critical that we combine it with effective export promotion like the programs carried out by Cotton Council International. If we can eliminate or at least minimize trade friction while simultaneously educating international mills about the high quality of U.S. fiber, that's a winning combination for our growers," added Brinkley.

As trade negotiations continue, the topic will remain at the front of everyone's minds. Adams said the National Cotton Council will continue to advocate on behalf of U.S. cotton producers. 🌱



# BANKHEAD FAMILY

## Grounded in Faith and Conservation

**“The important thing to us is not how long we have been here, but the fact that we have been able to stay here because we have adapted to changing farming practices and conditions.”**

Randall Bankhead is the fourth generation of his family to farm near Champion, Texas, since they came to West Texas in 1906. Today he still resides on the same land his ancestors did, and for him, farming goes beyond just caring for the cotton plants themselves. He and his family have a passion for caring for the land and soil to ensure that they truly are leaving it better than they found it.

Randall and his wife, Mary, have two children, Scott and Laura. Laura is married to Chase Schuchard and they have one son, Troy, with another on the way. Mary said farming was in Randall's blood and was what he was determined to do. Randall hoped to someday get the opportunity to pass it on to the next generation of his family.

“When Randall finished college and came back home there really wasn't a way to join his family's operation. We knew we had to start on our own,” Mary said. “It was hard, but we had lots of support and encouragement from his family. There wasn't any alternative. Randall really didn't want to consider a plan B so slowly and surely we have grown and been blessed in our efforts. After our children went off to college and chose careers off of the farm we began to consider the future of our family farm. We really wanted to pass our love for farming and the land to the next generation. When Chase and Laura decided to come back and be part of the operation it really was an answer to a prayer. Their return has been a rejuvenation to the operation in many ways.”

Today, Randall works closely with Mary and son-in-law, Chase, to manage almost 5,000 acres of land.

By Jayci Cave

Chase Schuchard, Mary and Randall Bankhead



“I started farming on my own in 1984 and at that time everything was conventional tillage,” Randall said. “In the last five years I have started to realize there is more of an agronomic problem in farming instead of a mechanical problem. Meaning in 1984 all we had was a plow, contour farming and terraces, and that is how we controlled erosion.”

Since then, his operation has evolved to be more focused on conservation practices that still prevent soil erosion, but also conserve water and improve the health of the soil itself. Randall said when they started implementing no-till practices, he didn't realize that that was only the tip of the iceberg to what conservation farming could accomplish.

“We have been pretty much no-till to extremely minimum till for 15 years,” Randall said. “But we got to the point that we didn't think no-till was getting us where we wanted to be, so we started introducing crop rotations with wheat and a little corn. That still didn't get us the results we wanted. Then two or three years ago we got really interested in trying cover crops and that has made the biggest change in our farming operation in recent years. It put the fun back in farming when we started doing cover crops along with the no till. It has made farming exciting again.”

Randall said they originally started planting cover crops to reduce the need to run a sand fighter or have to replant crops in the spring.

“That in itself is a good enough reason to do cover crops,” Randall said. “But then I guess we started learning about how cover crops along with no-till were working well with erosion, and how much life was added to the soil along with all the additional benefits that came with it. No longer do we look at soil as just a medium to grow cotton in, it is a living thing.”

One thing about conservation farming that Randall said has been a challenge is the fact that no-till and cover crop farming are much more management intense.

“It is more management intense because you are looking at six months, a year and a year and a half down the road in everything you do,” Randall said, “while adapting your management decisions according to the changes in weather conditions.”

While he does not do this for the recognition, Randall's dedication to conservation and soil health earned him the honor of being named the 2018 Texas Soil and Water Conservation Board Outstanding Conservation Farmer.

“It is very humbling to receive this award. My intent was not recognition, but a better farming practice,” Randall said. “I am doing this because I think it is the right thing to do for the soil and the environment. The timing for implementing this new practice is right because of technology

**“No longer do we look at soil as just a medium to grow cotton in, it is a living thing.”**

*Continued on page 10...*





PHOTO BY JAYCI CAVE

Chase and Randall examining the health of their soil beneath the diverse cover crop they planted.

"I am pretty passionate about my farming operation," Randall said, "and it is nice to see that my ginner and the marketing people are just as passionate about what they do. It is just a good relationship when everybody cares about their segment and when you put it all together, it is a nice fit."

Chase and Randall also feel strongly about the importance of farmers sharing their story. Chase said there is a misconception that all farms are big corporations and not family owned, which can lead to negative views of the industry.

"I think it is important for farmers to share their story," Chase said. "Farming is and always will be family-owned businesses. When people understand that, they come around and are more accepting of farming."

Randall echoed Chase's comment and further emphasized the need to shift the public's perception of agriculture.

"We know we have to take care of the land, and the land is going to take care of us in return," Randall said. "If we can tell that story to the general public out there, they will know that it is in our best interest to take care of the land and to be good stewards of the environment, the soil, the water, and everything we have been left in charge of at this moment in time."

While caring for the land is a top priority, above all else Randall and Mary try to stay grounded in their faith.

"It is important that we try to keep God in our operation, and doing that means doing things that glorify Jesus," Randall said. "We want to be good neighbors. We want to be good community members. We want to take good care of our landlords, and we just want to be good stewards of the land. It is rewarding to realize that we are caring for God's creation, and we want to leave it in good shape." 🌱

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and new research that is available to us. We are directing our farming operation to sustainable production and regeneration of the soil.

"You've heard the old cliché that you want to leave the land in better shape than you found it for future generations, and that's really true," Randall said. "That's really what our goal is. It goes back to the fact that we will be more cost effective and efficient farmers going forward if our focus shifts to soil health. We will be able to sustain this much longer, and it really is good for the land."

While they do not yet know exactly how much increasing the health of the soil can improve their production, Chase said he is excited and curious to see what the future could hold.

"This land has been plowed for 100 years. It is kind of at a production level of a bare minimum," Chase said. "From a production perspective, we don't really know how good it could be. I think it will be interesting doing this over a span of 15 or 20 years and increasing infiltration rates, organic matter and fertility – what could dryland do if it had optimal conditions?"

Another important part of their operation is who Randall, Mary and Chase choose to do business with. They are members of their local co-op gin, Central Rolling Plains Co-op, as well as regional co-ops PCCA and PYCO Industries. Randall said the main reasons he chooses to be members of cooperatives are ownership and transparency.

"The number one reason I choose to be a co-op member is I get to retain ownership in my cotton through more segments of the cotton process, like the warehouse, the crushing of the oilseed and the marketing. It is just the smart thing to do because you get to share in the profits, if there are profits, and there usually are, and there are dividends later on," Randall said. "That's a big plus. The second reason is transparency. I love the fact that it is a co-op, it's open for everyone to see, and we all get the same fair price for our cotton regardless of if you are a small or a large farmer, you're a land owner that's got 50 acres or 500 acres. Everyone gets the same treatment, and it is fair."

Another reason Randall said he enjoys doing business with co-ops is the people who make up the businesses.

## KEEPING IT GROUNDED

### Let's Talk Cover Crops

#### HOW ARE COVER CROPS INCORPORATED INTO YOUR OPERATION?

**Randall** - One practice that we have started is after we get our wheat harvested in June, we will come back in August and plant this diverse cover crop that will stay green and growing all through the fall and winter. It will eventually winter kill about February. This past year, it was actually wet, and we weren't able to get our cotton harvested in a timely manner so we didn't get the wheat planted. So this year what we are going to do is go in here in April or May and plant our diverse cover crop on those acres that should have been in wheat and just build up our soil getting ready for our cotton crop in 2020. We obviously don't have cotton on every acre, but when we do plant cotton we want to make a crop. So that's why we can justify the rotation and the soil health principles and practices. It's because when we do plant an expensive cotton crop, we actually want to make a crop. That's kind of how we evolved and right now if we aren't going to have cotton on the ground, we are going to have a cover crop growing on it. The ultimate goal with cover crops is to increase your organic matter. If you increase your organic matter you've done so many things. We plant 8, 10, 12 different species when we plant a cover crop. This is a unique mixture which contains legumes, radishes, forage sorghum, sunflowers, spring oats and other species to help them improve the soil and reach their goals.

#### HOW DO YOU INCREASE SOIL HEALTH?

**Randall** - One thing that I have learned from cover crops is the key is to keep a living, breathing root in the soil as many months of the year as you possibly can. That will increase your soil life and your soil health. As long as the root is living, the plant is taking carbon out of the atmosphere and putting it into the soil, which is the ultimate goal. If 70 percent of farmers were using cover crops, we would produce a carbon neutral footprint, meaning cover crops would take as much carbon out of the atmosphere as fossil fuels are putting into the atmosphere. Fifteen years ago our organic matter in this area was .5 percent to 1 percent in the sand and 1.5 percent in our blacklands. We are doing soil samples now, and we are up a little over 2 percent in the sand and 3 percent in our blacklands through cover crops, rotation and no till. That's huge. That's our goal to increase organic matter, because it is the holy grail.

#### WHAT BENEFITS DO YOU SEE FROM COVER CROPS?

**Mary** - First of all your soil can hold that moisture. If it is holding the moisture, it isn't running off.

**Randall** - For every one percent you increase organic matter in the soil, you increase water holding capacity by one acre-inch of water.

**Chase** - The runoff water coming out is a lot cleaner and doesn't have all the soil and sediment in it.

**Randall** - Everybody thinks when you start doing cover crops that your weeds are going to get crazy. It is actually just the opposite. If you get a good cover crop out there you can forget about chemicals, herbicides and stuff because the cover crop will choke all the weeds out. So you know our goal this year is when we plant our cover crop in April, if we can get up a good stand we won't have to touch that land again until late fall. Then it will just be a couple of burn downs with a sprayer.

#### HOW DOES CONSERVATION FARMING AFFECT YOUR WATER MANAGEMENT?

**Randall** - A typical tilled field will have an infiltration rate of a half inch to one inch per hour. We are having an infiltration rate of five and six inches per hour. So, when you get a big rain event we are going to capture all the moisture and keep it for July, August, or September when it is so dry. When you increase your organic matter, the soil holds more water. We have increased our organic matter and this is really something I am really proud of, over one percent to 1.5 percent, which means that come July and August we will have an extra inch to inch and a half of moisture available to our crop just because we have better organic matter and healthier soils. At the end of the day that's what's going to keep us in business. What happens is you'll be at a moisture deficit in the winter and through the spring. Maybe three inches of moisture deficit as opposed to a plowed field, but when it starts raining and it usually does in April and May, you'll recover that because of the infiltration rate is so much better. Then if you continue to get rain you just start piling on and keeping it.

#### WHY ARE COVER CROPS MANAGEMENT INTENSE?

**Mary** - Randall made this quote to me before: "Farming with the cover crops can make a good farmer better and it can make a bad farmer worse." It really does come down to management.

**Randall** - I heard that once and that is such a true statement. It is another tool in our toolbox that can really make you a better farmer, but if your timing is wrong and you don't terminate correctly or miss a step, there's a lot of things that can happen and you will have a worse crop. So, it is a challenge and we are still learning. I think on that quote of a good farmer better and a bad farmer worse, Chase and I are somewhere in the middle. We are trying to figure out where we fit in that. That's really being honest. Sometimes we do good things and then sometimes we mess up.

**Chase** - When we plant our cover crops to keep the sand from blowing there is a fine line between spraying it too early and not having enough to block the sand and spraying it too late and running out of moisture.



# Justin Hannsz A FARMER AND RANCHER OUTSTANDING IN HIS FIELD

PHOTO AND STORY  
BY BLAIR MCCOWEN



## Farming and ranching are two things that run deep in the Hannsz family.

Justin Hannsz was born and bred into production agriculture with his farmer-grandfather teaching him how to make it in this way of life. Hannsz said his grandfather taught him valuable lessons that led to the development of his diversified operation, which recently caught the eye of many across the state.

"My grandad was kind of my idol," Hannsz said. "He taught me a lot of valuable lessons. One of the most important was patience, along with honesty and integrity. With two sons there are times that your patience runs thin, but my grandad taught me that it's just better to take a breath and think about things. There's not that much in the grand scheme of things worth getting riled up about. Then as far as farming and ranching, he taught me to just put everything you have in it and to get out there and work."

Justin and his wife, Lindsay, have two boys, J. and Brazos, and a daughter, Hadley. Being raised on the farm himself, Hannsz said he and his wife always wanted to raise their family on the farm, too.

"The best thing I think about my family is we all enjoy what we do so much," he said. "The kids don't want to be anywhere but out in the pasture or out in the field with me, and my wife is a great help. We all really love what we do."

Raising kids, crops, and cattle on his diverse operation that spans 140 miles, Hannsz has been successful in pursuing multiple avenues that have added value to his family business.

"I think it is really good to be diversified," he said. "This year it is going to be really good to have income with cattle, and in past years it has been the opposite situation, so I think the more diversified you can be in agriculture these days especially, the more successful you are going to be."

The Hannsz operation includes raising commercial Red Angus cattle in Erath and Haskell Counties, as well as growing cotton, wheat, mung beans and grain sorghum on 2,000 acres in Haskell County. In addition to his operation, Hannsz also manages a wildlife ranch close to Stephenville, Texas. This diversified success recently allowed Justin and Lindsay to earn the 2018 Texas Farm Bureau Outstanding Young Farmer and Rancher award, where they received a new Ford Super Duty pickup, courtesy of Texas Farm Bureau Insurance, and \$5,000 cash, courtesy of Farm Credit.

"I have known about the contest for a long time, but I didn't ever really think it was my thing," Hannsz humbly said. "I had a state director who kind of stayed on top of me year after year to enter so finally this year we entered, and we were glad we did."

According to Texas Farm Bureau, the contest recognizes producers ages 18-35 for their commitment to Texas agriculture. Hannsz said there was no specific rubric for the contest that he was aware of other than the operation being examined as a whole, and that the other competitors had great operations as well. He attributes his good fortune to the fact that because of his diversity, he is able to stand out among the rest.

"They look at where you came from and how you got started and how much growth you have had," he said. "They look at all aspects and kind of sum it up. The two finalists were actually really good friends of ours, then there were winners from every district in the state and they were all really good operations. I wouldn't say that we are better than any of them. I think some things that make us a little different are we are pretty diverse, we have a pretty substantial cattle operation, and then the farming operation. Also, the fact that we are as spread out as we are, we do what we have to do to make things work. We also built our operation ourselves and didn't inherit anything from anyone."

Even though the award is large in stature, Hannsz kept his humility and grace true when discussing his accomplishments.

"It means a lot," he said. "It's not something that I am comfortable – I'm not one to go out and brag and tell everybody about myself. It was just gratifying to be recognized."

At the state level, Hannsz is involved heavily with Farm Bureau, having served three years on the Young Farmer and Rancher committee for the state of Texas. He is also currently in the Farm Bureau leadership development program, AgLead. Locally, Hannsz serves as the Vice President of Haskell Co-op Gin, and is a PCCA grower-owner and past attendee of the Cooperative Producer Orientation. He also said he enjoys the benefits being a member of local and regional cooperatives provides.

"The advantage of doing business with co-ops is you get to go together with your neighbors and farmers from across this region and pool all of your resources," Hannsz said, "and we have a large influence over the markets and more power than we do individually."

Even though Hannsz wears many hats: father, husband, farmer, rancher, leader, and more, he always finds a way to make sure the things he is doing today add value and preserve a legacy for the next generation.

"It is important especially to me because I have another generation coming," he said. "It sounds cliché and you hear it all the time, but I want to leave it in better shape for them than when I got it. Hopefully, they aren't the last of them. Hopefully, there's more to come after them."

Hannsz said when he thinks about sustainability, the word has multiple definitions.

"There is the obvious sustainability with your farming practices, and there is a lot of definitions for that," he said. "I think it depends on the person. Sustainability can also mean being able to keep your family going because farming and ranching is not an easy thing. So, there is sustainability for the future, other than just the sustainable farming people think of."



PHOTO COURTESY OF TEXAS FARM BUREAU

To make sure that the future of agriculture has the ability to succeed, Hannsz continually implements sustainable farming practices into his operation and has recently started experimenting with no-till, cover crops and integrated pest management.

"I have just started messing with no-till a little bit," Hannsz said. "I am actually going to have about 450 acres of no-till cotton this year. Cover crops, reduced tillage, all of those things together, but as far as the cover crops and no-till, the biggest benefit that has been really apparent this year is that we have had record rainfalls and the cover crops have really held the soil in place. I haven't seen near as many washes as you would expect with the amount of rainfall we've had."

Even with an already diverse operation, Hannsz pushes the envelope with new farming techniques to add value to his family business. Taking with him the lessons and passion his grandfather instilled in him, Hannsz and his family stand at the brink of greatness in farming and ranching, but there is something he said he wishes everyone, in agriculture or not, would take to heart.

"We are not unlike the rest of the farmers and ranchers from our generation," Hannsz said. "I think all of this has to be able to adapt. You have to put in a lot of hours and make sacrifices and change with the times – and times are definitely changing. You just have to be able to make it work. I think the main thing is farmers and ranchers are eating what we produce. We are clothing ourselves with the fiber we produce. We are very mindful of what we put on our crops and how we produce them. We wouldn't give anything to the consumer that we wouldn't give ourselves." 🌱



# SUSTAINABILITY

*it starts at the farm*

## EVERY FARM AND EVERY FARMER FACE DIFFERENT SITUATIONS AND CHALLENGES EACH YEAR.

Different locations, operations, soil types, weather conditions and other factors influence the decisions made on the farm every day. However, all farmers share a common goal – to make a living and provide for their families and the growing population today, while working to ensure future generations will be able to do the same tomorrow.

This concept of sustainability can take on many different forms at each level of the cotton supply chain, but it all starts at the farm level. This could be specific farming practices that help conserve natural resources or it could be actions which help ensure the business will be able to continue for many years to come. Economical sustainability goes hand-in-hand with the production decisions made every day. The goal of each should be long-term profitability.

What steps do I need to take to get the land ready? What type of seed should I plant? Is no-till a viable option in my operation? Should I plant a cover crop? If so, which cover crop is best suited for my operation? Will there be enough moisture to sustain the crop? What type of fertilizer should I apply? What type of equipment will I need? These are just a few of the questions farmers may be contemplating going into a crop season. Each of these decisions could also impact the profitability of the operation both this year and down the road.

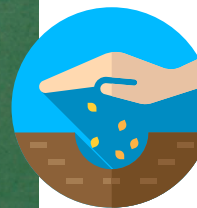
What is sustainable for one farmer may not be suited for another. It is important to research and understand which options are viable for you and which may not work in your situation. How exactly can sustainable farming practices fit into your operation?

STORY BY JAYCI CAVE AND BLAIR MCCOWEN  
PHOTO BY JAYCI CAVE

There are many ways sustainable farming can positively affect a farming operation, from increasing organic matter in the soil to providing opportunities for monetary savings. At first glance, sustainable farming might appear as quite an undertaking. Upon further investigation, however, the return on investment concerning money, time and effort is one that presents possibilities and combinations to help make your operation more successful. The following farming practices provide a glimpse into how certain sustainable practices can benefit your operation.



**NO-TILL OR MINIMUM-TILL** According to USDA, farmers practicing conventional tillage use roughly six gallons of diesel per acre per year. Those who implement no-till or minimum-till practices typically use around two gallons per acre per year. In addition, labor costs and time can be cut with fewer people, equipment, and monetary resources being required following the initial investment to switch from conventional to no-till farming. Essentially, the land begins to care for itself in a no-till operation. When acres are allowed to “rest” and are uninterrupted by plows, the soil’s health can be improved along with its capacity to hold and distribute water, leading to the potential of increased yields particularly on rain-fed fields. No or minimum-till farming methods also help control erosion as the bare soil is not left to the mercy of wind and rain.



**COVER CROPS** Much like the advantages of no-till or minimum-till farming, cover crops help protect the land that is left open after growing seasons and harvest have concluded. USDA attributes cover crops to be a leading contributor to increase the soil’s organic matter, which can lead to growing healthier crops if implemented consistently over time. In addition, cover crops assist the soil in water absorption, prevent runoff, and allow the soil to hold onto moisture during dryer months of the year. Where cotton is specifically concerned, farmers like Randall Bankhead have reported increased yields and a reduction in soil erosion (read his story on page 8). There are also a variety of cover crops to choose from that can add different vital nutrients back into the soil. Combining cover crops with minimum or no-till practices also can reduce the need for herbicides and insecticides.



**CONTOUR FARMING** Going with the flow of the land is what contour farming does best. Taking advantage of the hills and curves already present in the field allows agriculturists to preserve the soil’s ability to naturally care for itself. USDA credits contour farming to keeping nutrient-rich topsoil in place on fields, as well as reducing runoff and increasing water infiltration. Building up terraces, ridges and field borders can help keep water from pooling or creating ponds in the field during a significant rainfall event, possibly drowning crops that are already in the ground. While contour farming does take extra time concerning preparation to build up the land appropriately, it could be a sustainable practice that could benefit a crop.



**CROP ROTATIONS** While crop rotations are not among the newest of sustainable farming practices, they are some of the most tried and true. Some crops are planted to restore nutrients to the soil while others are planted to hold down the soil during seasons when the main crop is not being grown. USDA states that rotating crops can also help break up weed, insect and disease cycles, leading to less need for herbicide and insecticide applications, subsequently reducing labor costs and saving time. Crop rotations also can help with moisture conservation, especially when implemented with no-till or minimum-till practices. USDA also states that monetary risk can be reduced with crop rotations due to the possibility of harvesting more than one type of crop, leading to additional operational income. Crop rotations also help increase the organic matter and overall health of the soil while adding diversity to an operation.

While the previously described farming practices provide a variety of options for your operation, perhaps the seemingly elusive step toward new growth is already there – simply entertaining the thought of “how can I improve my operation, even in the smallest way?” is a step toward improved sustainability starting at your farm, and farms across the nation. 🌱



# POPULAR SERVICE Turns 15

BY JOHN JOHNSON

A groundbreaking new program was created and introduced by PCCA 15 years ago, and it has become one of the most popular services among the co-op's grower-owners and gin personnel. Member Access was created based on increased use of the Internet in agriculture and to provide grower-owners daily access to all of their PCCA accounts when making pivotal business decisions.

At that time, the service also provided information regarding their gin accounts, scale tickets and ginning summaries as well as USDA classing data. In the ensuing 15 years, a number of enhancements were added, some at the suggestion of grower-owners.

In the beginning, Member Access was only available from 5:00 a.m. to midnight Central Time by accessing PCCA's website from a home computer. Today it is available 24-7 and on mobile devices, too, making it more efficient and easier to navigate. Mobile Member Access was designed to respond to a variety of screen sizes no matter the device on which it is viewed.

In late 2017, PCCA launched its first mobile Member Access app for Apple iPhone and Android phones. The mobile app continues to evolve and allows PCCA to develop solutions for grower-owners not available otherwise. The app can be downloaded from the Apple store or Google play store. Currently, 1,134 grower-owners are using the app.

Marketing text alerts now make information available for futures prices (cotton, corn, feeder cattle, Kansas City wheat, live cattle, soybeans, Chicago wheat and crude oil), classing data, scale tickets and USDA reports such as export sales and shipments and supply/demand estimates. Member Access also gives grower-owners a chance to sign PCCA documents electronically, if initiated by their gin, and provides direct deposit for checks if there are no lienholders.

"We currently have 6,079 Member Access users," said Debbie Bolding, PCCA's AP Systems/Analyst Manager. "From July 1, 2018, through March 18, 2019, we sent 640,790 text messages to those users, so it is obvious they like receiving the information we provide."

PCCA grower-owners also can use Member Access to retrieve production data for their crop insurance agents, for filing Farm Service Agency reports and to apply for Market Facilitation Payments. The service also is helpful during tax filing season.

"If their gin uses PCCA's Module Tracking service, our grower-owners can turn in modules even in the middle of the night," said PCCA's Director of Cotton Services and Gin Accounting Steven White, "therefore, harvest and tax seasons are when Member Access is used most. It is one of the most popular innovations PCCA has introduced." Other information available via the service includes current news and sports scores.

Grower-owners not currently signed up for Member Access can do so by visiting the Member Access page under the Member Services tab on PCCA's website or by downloading the app. Once signed up, they can use the same login on their mobile device. All information regarding their PCCA accounts is secure and confidential. 🌱

# Back to Basics:

## How Co-ops Add Value to Your Operation

Just what do co-ops offer to those across the supply chain, and how do they add value to your operation? The answer is simple. Local and regional cooperatives create additional value every step of the way. The economic impacts of cooperatives preserve the legacy of family farms, local businesses and rural communities. Cooperative ginning, warehousing, marketing and cottonseed processing benefit your bottom line and preserve a proven, successful business model. Co-ops give a voice to growers who have a long-term commitment to farming.

### AT THE CORE OF BEING A GROWER-OWNER, THERE ARE SEVEN VERY DISTINCT BENEFITS:

- ▶ **REAL OWNERSHIP** The cooperative system provides you with true ownership of the business in which you participate, whether the local gin or regional marketing, warehousing or cottonseed-processing cooperatives. The grower-owners of each cooperative elect a board of directors, making sure your business is run the way you see fit.
- ▶ **ADDED VALUE** As a user and owner at each level of the supply chain, or each level of the cooperative system, more value is added to your crop than would be otherwise. You receive dividends from the gin as well as from the warehousing, marketing and cottonseed-processing cooperatives.
- ▶ **COOPERATION, NOT COMPETITION** When you join a cooperative, it competes in the market on your behalf. By working cooperatively with other grower-owners, your cooperative has a more prominent presence in the marketplace, thus providing you with the best possible value for your crop while minimizing your risk along the way.
- ▶ **VERTICAL INTEGRATION** Through true cooperation and participation at every level of the supply chain, you and your crop will be vertically integrated and receive dividends from each level. As a grower-owner, you have a stake in each step your cotton takes to get to its final destination. This model makes money for you, not from you.
- ▶ **RURAL STRENGTH** True cooperatives ensure that your money stays local. The money that goes into the operations of the cooperative is distributed to grower-owners through dividends that go back into the farming operation and into other local businesses you patronize. Rural communities benefit from this economic cycle and are consistently strengthened.
- ▶ **SUPPORT** The purpose of true cooperation is to provide grower-owners with the tools they need to keep their farming operations viable and profitable. Whether it is the dividends that help carry through a tough year or opposing detrimental farm legislation and regulations, cooperatives stand up for and protect their grower-owners.
- ▶ **DECISION-MAKING** Each cooperative, no matter the field – ginning, marketing, warehousing or cottonseed processing – has experts available at all times to make the best possible decisions about how to maximize the value of your crop.

**Bottom line:** Being part of local and regional cooperatives offer grower-owners reduced risk, more total value, better control – and ultimately – peace of mind.

**That is The Co-op Advantage®.**



Are you interested in learning more about the benefits of doing business with a cooperative? Visit [coopadvantage.com](http://coopadvantage.com) today to learn more!





PCCA follows the *seven cooperative principles* to best serve its grower-owners.

*Build It Together*

Open and Voluntary Membership

*Make The Decisions*

Member Controlled

*Make It Grow*

Economic Participation and Ownership

*Control Own Destiny*

Autonomy and Independence

*Help Each Other Improve*

Education, Training and Information

*Assist Other Co-ops*

Cooperation Among Cooperatives

*Invest In Their Community*

Concern for Community



**PCCA's Mission**

*To ensure the long-term profitability of our grower-owners through value-added marketing programs and through services to their gins.*