

2018 community impact report

# HELPING OUR COMMUNITIES WORK.



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## DEDICATED TO HELPING OUR COMMUNITIES WORK

Along with our dedication to serving the financing needs of rural America, Frontier Farm Credit is committed to improving the lives of those who live there.

Throughout the year, we work to enrich our communities through volunteer efforts and local contributions – focusing on four areas, including agricultural education, hunger and nutrition, young and beginning producer programs and disaster relief essential services.

In 2018, our employees volunteered more than 735 hours of time to benefit others, and our Association donated more than \$292,500 to non-profit causes and organizations.

Our volunteer time and contributions benefitted hundreds of communities and touched thousands of lives across our territory. This past year, you would have seen our team members volunteering in food pantries, teaching kids about agriculture or helping with community clean up projects. Our efforts are also evident through donations to support student scholarships, food recovery programs, curriculum development and other local needs.

The impact map in this report provides a visual reference of the many places and projects we supported in 2018. Community involvement is part of our mission – a commitment to the people we serve and the rural life we value so highly.

Along with our Board of Directors, I appreciate the passion and dedication – and am truly proud – of those working across eastern Kansas to help our communities grow and thrive.



Mark Jensen  
President and CEO



- **Employee Match** This program provided matches of up to \$150 for each employee and director contribution to causes meaningful to them.
- **Grants** Provided 63 *Working Here Fund* grants totaling \$100,960 for hunger and nutrition, ag education, rural disaster relief essential services and young and beginning producer initiatives.
- **Employee Volunteers** Frontier Farm Credit employees volunteered 735 hours for nonprofit organizations in their local communities.
- **Hunger Relief** Provided funding for food distribution to underserved counties with high percentages of food insecurity.
- **Expanded Grants** Up to \$10,000 per grant totaling \$49,500 for hunger and nutrition, ag education, rural disaster relief essential services, plus young & beginning producer initiatives.
- **Local Contributions** Each of our six offices impacted communities with funding support for local programs and initiatives.
- **Farm Risk Management Tool** Provided GrainBridge web-based farm risk management online tool and curriculum to 32 high school FFA chapters.
- **Scholarships** Awarded eight \$2,500 agriculture scholarships to Kansas State University students and four \$1,000 scholarships to community college students.
- **FFA Support** Provided FFA handbooks to 56 eastern Kansas FFA chapters.
- **Underwriting Support** Funded support for Kansas State University Center for Risk Management Education and Research.
- **Grain Bin Rescue** Donated grain bin rescue training and equipment for 9 local volunteer fire departments.

For more information about our community involvement, visit [frontierfarmcredit.com/community](http://frontierfarmcredit.com/community).

**Cutting-edge technology encourages live learning**

Farm tours are a fun and engaging way to educate youth about agriculture, but because of budget, safety and biosecurity reasons, these types of learning experiences are not always possible. That’s why Frontier Farm Credit and the Kansas Pork Association are bringing the farm to the classroom using live streaming technology to help teach elementary students about the phases of pork production.

Launched in the fall of 2016, the field trip program gives kindergarten through sixth grade students the chance to virtually visit a Kansas pig farm while experiencing live interaction with farmers facilitating the tours. Additional educational materials are also provided to participating classrooms to encourage learning beyond the live session.

In total, eight virtual field trips are offered in the spring and fall, engaging eight to ten classrooms each session. According to Kim Hanke, director of communications and youth outreach with the Kansas Pork Association, one of the most enriching aspects of the program is the question-and-answer time the students spend with the farmers.

“It’s fun to see the students’ excitement and the really insightful questions they ask as they connect with the farmers,” she says. “Some participants don’t have any prior exposure to pork production or agriculture in general, so we feel it’s important to provide this kind of interaction as part of the learning experience.”

**“It’s fun to see the students’ excitement and the really insightful questions they ask as they connect with the farmers.”**

**- Kim Hanke**

*Director of Communications and Youth Outreach - Kansas Pork Association*

Drone technology is providing a similar live learning experience for both youth and adults in Pottawatomie County. Shannon Blocker, Pottawatomie County extension agent, is leading the drone project and says she is excited to reach new audiences through the technology’s many applications.

To date, the drone has been showcased during a 4-H youth camp, displayed as an educational State Fair exhibit and demonstrated at two adult events including a yield judging contest and a rangeland field day.



“As an agriculture and natural resources extension agent, I realized I could do an effective job of combining the essential components of my role through drone technology,” says Blocker. “From teaching STEM education to direct agricultural applications, drones are a learning tool for both youth and adults. I’m looking forward to introducing new educational programming and expanding into software that will allow us to process the drone data and images ourselves.”

**Hands-on learning generates ag awareness and education**

FFA students from 32 schools within eastern Kansas are gaining budgeting, grain marketing and farm business planning skills thanks to GrainBridge, a program that provides web-based farm risk management curriculum tools at no cost to educators and students in agricultural classrooms as part of Frontier Farm Credit’s funding support.

Through the instruction of 20 interactive modules, students walk away with a better understanding of how to manage risk from pre-planning to point of sale using live market data. They also practice managing virtual farms and ranches by simulating market events and scenarios that affect profitability.



“We often hear from teachers that they love the real-world applications of the program and its relevance to what is happening in production ag today,” says GrainBridge education and outreach coordinator Jordyn Bader.

According to Bader, the experiential learning tool is making an impact outside of the classroom, too.

“We have a number of students who are transitioning what they are learning in the classroom and applying it to their family’s operation or even their own production-based project as part of their supervised agricultural experience,” says Bader.

Another educational outreach program, organized by Operation WildLife, is working to expose elementary students to the important role honeybees play as pollinators.

This spring, students in participating schools will be able to see honeybees at work in a portable observation hive while learning about their social structure, the special challenges they face and how they benefit food and agriculture systems.

“As part of our mission to provide wildlife education, we decided to branch out and do outreach education in the classroom emphasizing the primary role honeybees play as pollinators,” says Diane Johnson, executive director of Operation WildLife.

“Education starts early, and if we can make children aware of honeybees up close and personal, the more they will understand their value.”



**Providing tools and resources that ensure student success**

Frontier Farm Credit believes in the future of agriculture. That’s why the FFA handbook program was introduced to offer FFA handbooks free of charge to any chapter within the eastern Kansas communities they serve.

According to Mary Kane, Kansas FFA Association executive secretary, 56 FFA chapters – almost half of all chapters within the Frontier Farm Credit territory – benefitted from the donation.

“Thanks to Frontier Farm Credit’s generosity, a little over 1,400 FFA student handbooks were purchased,” says Kane. “Now rather than schools purchasing a set of handbooks to be used annually, each student enrolled in agricultural education can be provided with their own handbook that they can highlight and reference throughout their FFA career.”

Frontier Farm Credit also introduced the community college scholarship program in Kansas. The program supported students studying agriculture at the collegiate level by offering two \$1,000 scholarships at Allen County Community College in Iola and Highland Community College in Highland. Two students from each school were selected and recognized with the award.

“We’re very grateful to Frontier Farm Credit for introducing this scholarship,” says Aimee Thompson, director of development at Allen Community College. “Agriculture is really important in southeastern Kansas, so we appreciate being able to provide another financial opportunity to help our students succeed as they prepare for future careers in the ag industry.”

In addition to the community college scholarship program, Frontier Farm Credit also awards eight \$2,500 scholarships to students studying agriculture at Kansas State University.

**“Thanks to Frontier Farm Credit’s generosity... over 1,400 FFA student handbooks were purchased.”**

**- Mary Kane**

*Executive Secretary - Kansas FFA Association*

**Finding solutions to the root causes of hunger**

A secondary major in Global Food Systems Leadership offered at Kansas State University is preparing students to address the challenges of feeding a growing world population while exercising leadership in the areas of community engagement, sustainability, economics, entrepreneurship, policy, and food production and processing.

Established by the College of Agriculture and the Staley School of Leadership Studies in the spring of 2017, planning and curriculum development of the secondary major was made possible by a Frontier Farm Credit donation.

Today, 65 students are enrolled in the program. Dr. Mary Kay Siefers, director of Global Food Systems Leadership, says the secondary major is unique because it teaches students to use a systems thinking approach when tackling nutrition, climate change, food insecurity and other global food challenges.

“Students are given an interdisciplinary outlook of the fundamental roles people, policies and cultures play in the global food system enterprise,” she says. “Our goal is to help students prepare for a diverse range of careers that require integrated knowledge of the global food system and the leadership capacity to skillfully intervene and change the system for good.”



Young leaders like Katheryn Gregerson, a junior in food science and global food systems leadership, are already working to make a difference through an on-campus food recovery program. On average, the student-led initiative recovers between 100 to 200 pounds of food per day from the Kansas State Performance Table, the student athlete dining center. The food is then redistributed to communities within the Manhattan area that offer free meals to the hungry and homeless.

“Since 2015, our Food Recovery Network student chapter has collected over 20,000 pounds of recovered food,” says Gregerson. “It’s been cool to see the program grow and the big impact it has made for those in need.”

Another strategic way Frontier Farm Credit is working to break the hunger cycle is through a relationship with Harvesters Community Food Network mobile food pantry program.

**“Since 2015, our Food Recovery Network student chapter has collected over 20,000 pounds of recovered food.”**

**- Katheryn Gregerson**

*Junior, Food Science and Global Food Systems Leadership*

“Hunger knows no boundaries, and in rural areas, different interventions are needed to reach those who aren’t readily served through the traditional pantry model,” says Jessica Kejr, director of programs and client collaboration initiatives with Harvesters.

“Through our mobile pantry distribution efforts, we work to alleviate hunger by increasing access to healthy and nutritious food, including fresh produce, dairy products and baked goods,” she says. “And thanks to the support of organizations like Frontier Farm Credit, we are able to reach rural communities where other forms of assistance might not exist.”



**Supporting communities at the local level**

Each year, Frontier Farm Credit employees are encouraged to support their local neighborhoods and communities through volunteer efforts and donation match contributions.

Frontier Farm Credit offers an employee match program with up to a \$150 match for all employees and directors donating to a non-profit of their choice. According to Teresa Mardesen, Frontier Farm Credit community relations manager, the program continues to grow in its third year.

“The donation match program offers teammates and directors a chance to multiply the impact of the donations they make to support non-profit organizations and charities they are passionate about,” Mardesen says. “The employee match program has doubled the donation matches in the past year supporting organizations such as community foundations, 4-H clubs, the American Heart Association, Alzheimer’s Association and Habitat for Humanity.”

Paid volunteer time is also offered to all employees, and when teammates volunteer as a group, Frontier Farm Credit makes a donation to the non-profit based on the number of volunteers participating.



This year, an even greater emphasis was placed on community activities through the participation in a Community Impact Week designated and hosted by each of the Frontier Farm Credit offices. Examples of Impact Week efforts included working with organizations such as food pantries, community gardens, fairground clean-up and other local initiatives.