



2017 community impact report

HELPING OUR COMMUNITIES WORK.



DEDICATED TO HELPING OUR COMMUNITIES WORK

As a mission-driven financial cooperative, we understand that serving agriculture means more than working for those who farm and ranch. Through volunteer efforts and local contributions, we are also committed to supporting the communities we serve.

Our work in 2017 focused on hands-on learning, expanding agricultural education, cutting-edge technology, supporting agriculture and breaking the hunger cycle. We see these initiatives as critical to enriching the rural communities where our customer-owners live.

In support of this focus, our employees dedicated 420 hours to community volunteer work. Frontier Farm Credit also contributed more than \$267,000 to projects and programs that impact agriculture, including \$180,464 through our *Working Here Fund* and expanded grant programs.

In the following pages, we've highlighted a few of the projects we supported in 2017. The impact map provides a visual snapshot of our community involvement efforts.

I truly appreciate the passion and dedication of our team and members of our communities who work for the benefit of others. Along with our Board of Directors, we thank you.



Mark Jensen
President and CEO



Grain Bin Rescue Program Saves Lives

Since 2016, Frontier Farm Credit has funded grain bin rescue equipment and training for 27 rural fire departments, including 12 last year.

Dale Ekdahl, an instructor with equipment manufacturer Outstate Data, says the training is based on successful rescues and is constantly evolving. "One of the biggest misconceptions is that there's one kind of grain bin rescue scenario," Ekdahl says. "But we walk through several situations that differ based on whether the person is conscious, the position in the bin or even if multiple people are involved."

The training typically lasts up to three hours and includes area fire, police and emergency medical staff. "Everyone is so appreciative to get this training," Ekdahl says. "They almost always say, 'I hope we never have to use it.'"

But some do. Outstate Data's specially designed equipment and training has resulted in 14 successful rescues nationwide. "It's really rewarding to know this equipment and training can save lives, and it has," Ekdahl says.



Disaster Relief Employee volunteer hours and contributions supported local disaster cleanup efforts.

Employee Match This program provided matches of up to \$100 for each employee contribution to causes meaningful to them.

Employee Volunteers Frontier Farm Credit employees volunteered 420 hours for nonprofit organizations in their local communities.

Expanded Grants Up to \$10,000 per grant totaling \$56,500 for hunger and nutrition, ag education, plus young & beginning producer initiatives.

Grain Bin Rescue Donated grain bin rescue training and equipment for 12 local volunteer fire departments.

Grants Provided 77 *Working Here Fund* grants totaling \$123,964 for hunger and nutrition, ag education and young and beginning producer initiatives.

Hunger Relief Provided funding for food distribution to underserved counties with high percentages of food insecurity.

Local Contributions Each of our six offices impacted communities with funding support for local programs and initiatives.

Scholarships Awarded eight \$2,500 scholarships to junior and senior Kansas State University students.

Underwriting Support Funded support for Kansas Center of Risk Management and Education.

For more information about our community involvement, visit frontierfarmcredit.com/community.

Greenhouse Projects Offer Hands-On Entrepreneurial Learning

A new project in Madison, Kansas, is growing entrepreneurs along with fresh flowers and produce.

Using a new greenhouse funded, in part, by Frontier Farm Credit, students at the Greenwood Unified School District will learn about agriculture and business as they raise plants and flowers for sale in the community.

“It’s one thing to learn about plants by reading a book,” says Sarah Luthi, a member of the greenhouse project advisory board, “but it’s more exciting to be able to learn hands-on by actually growing the plants. We’re hoping it creates an entrepreneurial mindset among the kids that will help our community down the road.”

In addition to plant sales, students will grow fruits and vegetables that will be served in the school cafeteria. “It’s great for our students from farms, and it’s also an opportunity for our kids from town to be able to know more about where our food comes from,” Luthi says.

A new greenhouse in Bartlett will also create hands-on learning opportunities and spruce up the community, according to science teacher Melinda Littrell. Elementary students in Bartlett will plant flowers for baskets that will help beautify the downtown area and teach lessons in community service.

“Right now, all we can do is have students plant seeds in the classroom and watch them germinate,” Littrell says. “With the greenhouse, they will be able to see the entire process. It will be more ingrained in the students than something we just teach for a day or a week.”

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– Sarah Luthi

Greenhouse Project advisory board member

Agricultural Education Provides Lifelong Benefits

In Wathena, agricultural educator and FFA advisor Sheryl Cleavinger-Perry is taking a training class so the school district can offer an even stronger agricultural education program.

The Riverside school district where she teaches is implementing the Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education (CASE), which gives students rigorous tracks of study – including plant sciences and animal sciences – and culminates in an agricultural research course. In the capstone course, students design a research project that applies to a real-world problem.



“It’s teaching a process and letting the kids apply this process, which will help them in any field they pursue,” Cleavinger-Perry says. “It brings everything together to give the students an experience that will help them be successful when they graduate.”

**WORKING HERE FUND GRANT
DOLLARS HELPED SUPPORT
THESE AND OTHER PROJECTS
IN COMMUNITIES WHERE
FRONTIER FARM CREDIT
CUSTOMER-OWNERS LIVE.**

Cutting-Edge Technology Reduces Stress for Animals, People

It was the end of a long week at the county fair in Marysville, Kansas. It was time for load-out of the animals – one-by-one – after the final judging and livestock sale were complete. Everyone was tired, and some of the animals were stressed.

However, the sorting and loading process was easier last year thanks to an electronic tag reader being demonstrated by the Marshall County Research and Extension office.

“It went a lot faster and was a lot easier for everyone involved, as well as the animals,” says Anastasia Johnson, extension agent. “Instead of shuffling through pages of paper or misreading a tag that’s been in the animal for months, the electronic tag reader was a much more efficient way to identify the animal and where it was going.”

Johnson plans workshops about the tag reader for area producers and 4-H members. “We will show how this innovative technology can improve accuracy and efficiency of recordkeeping,” she says.

Providing Tools that Benefit the Next Generation

The students at Horton High School previously had a way to cut metal in shop class; it was slow, abrasive and threw sparks around the shop. That’s all changed, thanks to a new bandsaw.

“The kids love it, especially the students who had to use our old cutting method,” says Larry Pottroff, agricultural education teacher. “The new bandsaw is quicker, safer and more accurate. It’s also less costly with blade replacement.”

Pottroff says this type of equipment is important for students in an area that’s heavily focused on agriculture. “About 75 percent of the students at the high school are in the ag program. This grant gives our students access to a tool our district normally could not afford.”



A Horton High School student welds a piece of metal cut precisely with a new bandsaw.

Community Gardens Help Break the Hunger Cycle

In one of the most productive regions in the world, there are still people who don’t have enough to eat – and who don’t eat enough of the right things. A new community garden in North Lawrence is improving access to healthy foods and creating stronger family and community ties in the process.

Just Food, the Douglas County Food Bank, established the new garden last summer. It includes a shared neighborhood garden, as well as nine individual plots.

Aundrea Shafer, program director at Just Food, says the new garden allows residents to grow fresh produce and helps with their grocery budgets. “It’s super helpful in increasing vegetable consumption,” she says. “It also allows people to get their hands in the dirt and creates activities for families.”



The new garden is providing educational opportunities, too, including for a local boys group home. “A lot of those kids have never planted anything,” Shafer says. “It’s great to see them so excited about growing things.”

“It allows people to get their hands in the dirt and creates activities for families.”

- Aundrea Shafer

Just Food program director



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