

THE RURAL SCENE

HOME EDITION



LEARN
ABOUT FINANCING
YOUR DREAM HOME

CULTIVATE
AN IMPRESSIVE
GARDEN THIS SUMMER

 **FARM CREDIT**
OF WESTERN ARKANSAS

SUMMER 2024

Enriching rural life.™

THE RURAL SCENE

PUBLISHED BY



Farm Credit of Western Arkansas is a member-owned financial cooperative providing financing and related services to farmers, ranchers, rural homeowners, agribusinesses and timber producers in 41 western Arkansas counties.

With a loan volume of \$1.9 billion, Farm Credit of Western Arkansas is a member of the 107-year-old Farm Credit System, a nationwide network of borrower-owned lending institutions providing more than \$357 billion in loans to rural America.

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ON THE COVER

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Brandon Haberer

Interest rates are top of mind for most people these days. The good news is that we currently anticipate some relief late this summer to early fall. The unfortunate news is that the date for potential cuts keeps getting pushed back as well as the quantity of cuts. This is due partially to recent signs of resilient inflationary pressures and a low unemployment rate.

For a number of years, the Federal Reserve has marked 2% as their arbitrary inflationary target. Several economists have begun arguing the number has no real basis and that a higher threshold is more realistic. I doubt that debate gets settled this round, but I would imagine it to be a topic of discussion for some time to come.

Regardless, we are currently operating in a higher rate environment which undoubtedly impacts farm and personal budgets. A handy tool in the Farm Credit toolbox is the capacity to do conversions once rates start their decline. A conversion is different from your typical refinance. By eliminating the need for updated title work and appraisals, we can save members the expense of these third-party services when rates do begin to drop.

The timeline of a conversion is preferable as well. A typical conversion can take just a couple days versus a couple of months with a refinance. Having the capability of converting to a lower rate quickly can make a big difference for your business or personal plans in the long run. The one caveat to a conversion is the loan does have to be on the books for at least 12 months.

As a cooperative, we always have our members' needs and concerns at the forefront of our business goals and decisions. If members have questions about rate conversions, I encourage them to reach out to their loan officer for guidance.

Brandon Haberer

President and CEO

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ABOUT THE RURAL SCENE

The Rural Scene is produced for members and friends of Farm Credit of Western Arkansas.

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Cody Jones

We at Farm Credit of Western Arkansas want to express our sincere gratitude for your continued support and trust in our association. As a member-owned cooperative, our mission is to provide reliable and competitive financial services to support rural areas and the agricultural community.

Our team of dedicated professionals is here to assist you in navigating the ever-changing agricultural landscape. As we move forward, we remain focused on maintaining the financial strength of our association, ensuring the availability of loan products, and providing competitive patronage refunds to our members.

Thank you for being a valued member of Farm Credit of Western Arkansas. We look forward to continuing our partnerships and serving as your trusted financial partner.

Since becoming chairman, I have always taken pride in writing my own magazine column. Lately, we have had many discussions in meetings surrounding Artificial Intelligence. I have a confession; even though I agree with the top three paragraphs I didn't really write them. I wanted to show the power of Artificial Intelligence. I asked Chat GPT to write a Farm Credit of Western Arkansas board chair magazine column for me. The three paragraphs were snippets of what it formulated.

I also asked Chat GPT to illustrate an image of the Farm Credit chairman. The picture to the right is what it came up with. Even though AI will definitely play a part of our lives going forward, the picture to the right though shows it still has a long way to go.

Now in my words: I am truly grateful for all our hardworking and dedicated members, employees, and fellow board members. I hope you all have a great summer!



Cody Jones

Chair, Board of Directors
Farm Credit of Western Arkansas

Inspired TO BUILD YOUR DREAM HOME?

FARM CREDIT OFFERS:

- ✓ Long-term fixed rates
- ✓ Local service
- ✓ No maximum acreage or loan amount

7 Cooperative Principles

Voluntary Membership

Democratic Member Control

Members' Economic Participation

Autonomy and Independence

Education, Training, and Information

Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Concern for Community

WE'RE CELEBRATING A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR FOR PATRONAGE!

\$11.7 million is going back in the hands of Western Arkansas members in 2024.



Members' Economic Participation

Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. This benefits members in proportion to the business they conduct with the cooperative rather than on the capital invested.

This spring, \$11.7 million in Patronage Cash went back in the hands of Western Arkansas members, bringing our total to more than \$174.2 million since 1997. Members share in the profits when our association has a strong capital position and earnings.

This year, we celebrated a record-breaking amount of patronage back in the hands of our members. Thank you to everyone that stopped by our Patronage Open House events to help us celebrate our biggest patronage year yet.



The Newsom Family

Home Feature



Austin and Emilie Newsom never planned to build their dream home. In June 2020, they moved into a house on the property adjoining Emilie's parents and were a happy young couple starting their life together. On February 4, 2023, the unthinkable happened.

Sirens wailed and flames engulfed their home as the couple looked on helplessly. Emilie had left to do some shopping and Austin was helping a neighbor when Emilie received a call that changed her life forever.

"Around 11:30, I got a call from my dad saying my house is on fire and I rushed home," Emilie remembers. As the fire trucks tried to extinguish the flames, it was clear that there wasn't anything left to save.



They spent the next few weeks cleaning up and trying to decide what their next steps would be. They had some important factors to consider; most importantly, Emilie was 14 weeks pregnant with their first child, Hattie.

"The emotional toll was insane," Emilie recounts. "We were pregnant and had nothing except a few clothing items Austin managed to throw out of the house. We felt 100 percent helpless and hopeless in those moments."

With the support and encouragement of their family and community, they knew that they had to keep their heads up and get to work for their daughter. "We knew we wanted to provide her with the best home to grow up in, so we just took our feelings of sadness from the loss and turned them into motivation to get back home," Emilie said.

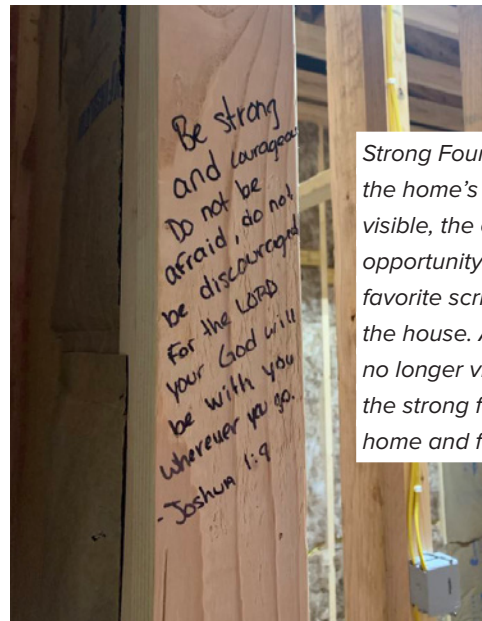
More motivated than ever, the couple got to work. In July 2023, the pad for their new home was ready. Emilie went into labor that same day. With a newborn in tow, they continued. While they utilized Sutherland's in Fort Smith to get their home in-the-dry, Emilie and Austin took over from there.

Family, friends, and their community helped them complete the entire interior of their home without a contractor. Austin, Emilie, and Hattie officially moved in March of this year. Read on to see their finished home and their journey getting there.





Making Plans – The couple never had official blueprints made for their home. They planned the layout with grid paper and colored pencils and Sutherland's of Fort Smith helped produce a 3D rendering that guided the rest of the building process.



Strong Foundation – When the home's studs were still visible, the couple took the opportunity to write their favorite scriptures throughout the house. Although they are no longer visible, they know the strong foundation their home and family is built on.



Hattie's Home – It is clear that Hattie rules this roost. Her room is filled with gifts from loved ones and the cutest vintage touches. Although she won't remember it, Hattie will grow up in a home she helped build.



From the Ground Up – Emilie and Austin documented the construction of their home from the ground up.



Helping Hands – Emilie and Austin would like to sincerely thank all the individuals that helped make their home a reality.



Fully Custom – This functional kitchen features custom cabinetry crafted by Caleb Harderson of Salus.



Each cabinet has custom-fitted pull-out drawers to store kitchen accessories.



The Little Things – After the fire, most of the Newsom’s mementos were gone. One of Emilie’s bridesmaids from her wedding offered up her bouquet and Emilie displays it proudly in the kitchen.

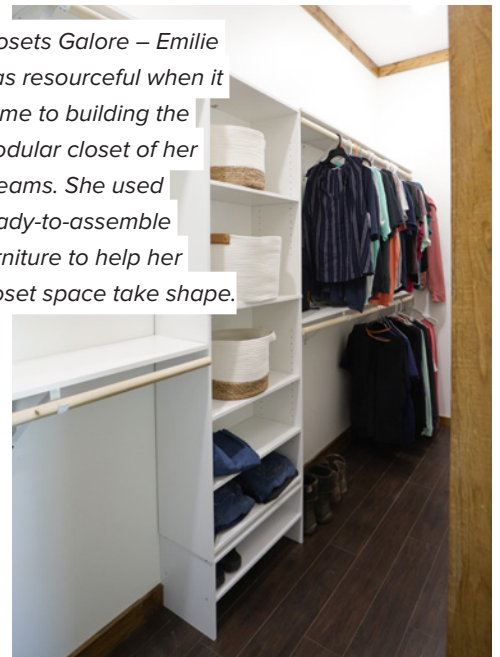
Emilie’s grandpa, or “Pop” as he is known to most, found this antique windmill for the couple that plays a tune when the vanes are wound.



Cozy Interiors – Deep-stained furniture contrasts with the bright linens and abundant natural light in the master suite.

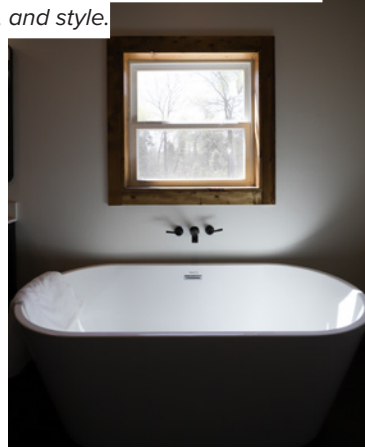


Closets Galore – Emilie was resourceful when it came to building the modular closet of her dreams. She used ready-to-assemble furniture to help her closet space take shape.





The custom nature of this home shines through in the bathroom spaces. From the rock inlay to the freestanding tub, it is made for comfort, convenience, and style.



Rustic Charm – Stained wood accents adorn this 1,800 square foot home. Emilie hand-stained over 365 tongue and groove boards for the living space ceiling alone.



Country Living – With their closest neighbors being family, the Newsoms enjoy the privacy and beauty of country life.



When searching for financing for their home, the Newsoms met with several different lenders, but Joyce Ridenour, Fort Smith loan officer, helped them realize Farm Credit was a perfect fit. “We had heard good things already,” Emilie said. “We compared Farm Credit to a couple other places, but Joyce pretty much sold us on everything.”

Their favorite aspect of their Farm Credit loan is the ability to lock in their rate long term. With fluctuating interest rates, they valued the security of a fixed-rate mortgage.

They also appreciated the opportunity for easy rate conversions without having to refinance if rates drop in the future.

When asked what advice they would pass on to other couples, Austin said, “Patience. Have patience with your partner because it’s by far the hardest thing we’ve ever had to do.” After persevering through the hardest season of their life, the Newsoms are happy at home in the dream house they never planned to build.

Tips & Tricks to Just Keep Planting!



Spring is in full swing and inspiration and hopes are high for a solid summer of gardening. Cailin Irby, farm manager at The Center for Arkansas Farms and Food, shares her tips for keeping those hopes high for providing vegetables, flowers, and herbs for family and friends all year long.

GETTING STARTED



Haven't started seeds for transplants and feeling behind? Don't fret! Many crops can be direct sown after soil temperatures are consistently warm. Root vegetables like carrots, beets, turnips, and radishes as well as lettuce mixes and baby greens like arugula and mizuna can be planted at regular intervals from spring through fall for a steady supply. Other summer crops like cucumbers, zucchini, and okra can be sown directly in the garden. Zinnias, sunflowers, and marigolds are great additions to the garden that can be direct sown, and herbs like cilantro, basil, and parsley take up little space and are easy to get started.

Tomatoes, eggplant, and peppers do better when transplanted. Check out farmers co-ops, hardware stores, or your local farmers market to find high quality transplants. If you're starting tomatoes, eggplant, or peppers from seed, start them sooner rather than later. Starting your own seeds is a great way to make sure you get the varieties you want. Use a potting mix that includes compost and be patient. These crops in particular can take a while to germinate, so place them in a sunny area and check for water often. Keep the soil moist, but let the seedlings dry out between watering. The cutoff date for transplanting these crops outside is early to mid-July. Any later and there's the risk of getting very little harvest before first frost. For details on how to grow great transplants, I recommend *The New Seed Starting Handbook* by Nancy Bubel.



EASY FERTILIZER SOURCES



Something to consider throughout the growing season is what nutrients you are giving to your garden for optimal plant health. When beginning to plant, add plenty of organic matter, like compost or worm castings, to your raised beds or native soil to create a nutrient-rich, easy to work soil surface. Giving plants a boost with organic fertilizers like alfalfa meal, azomite, and chicken feather meal when planting or transplanting will give them the nutrients to grow into healthy, strong plants. Be sure to incorporate these amendments into the soil for best effect.

For longer growing crops like tomatoes, peppers, and cucumbers that will produce for months at a time, consider side dressing with feather meal to keep plants producing for longer. Organic matter and the fertilizers mentioned can be found at farmers co-ops or ordered online. Be sure to read the label and follow rates of application for the specific size of the garden.



WATERING



Water is critical for all life, and plants are no exception. In Arkansas, we predictably have periods of little to no rain just when we hope to have a thriving garden. A garden needs approximately an inch of rain per week which, for a 100 square-foot garden, is 62 gallons (tip: use a timer and 5-gallon buckets to help you find how much time is needed to reach this level). If your garden is small enough, you can possibly hand water a few times each week to reach the amount you need but if your garden is large, you might consider adding an irrigation system.



Not sure when to water? Let your plants and soil tell you! Ideally you want to water before your plants start to wilt. The simplest test is to stick your finger in the soil about 3 inches and see if it's moist! There are more precise tools to such as moisture meters or tensiometers but this method works for most gardeners. Conserving the water that is in your soil is an important step in managing the water that you already have in your soil. Using organic mulches like straw and leaf mulch or landscape fabric will help keep your water in the soil where your plants can access it.

CREATE A HABIT FOR GARDENING



One key to a successful garden is to make tending to it part of your daily routine. Whether it be in the morning or in the evening, there's so much to observe throughout the season, both from a garden-wide perspective and at an individual plant level. Catching pests and pulling weeds early can lead to more satisfaction and less hard work in the hottest part of the season. Tending to a garden is beneficial not only in providing nutrition to loved ones, but it can be a satisfying and truly enjoyable experience.



There's never a failure, only lessons learned. Tending to a garden is an amazing opportunity to tap into resilience. Have a crop that fails? Don't give up, and just keep planting!



Cailin Irby is the Farm Manager for The Center for Arkansas Farms and Food (CAFF), a farmer training program located in Northwest Arkansas. Looking to expand your garden into a farm business? Check out learntofarm.org for more information on the educational programs CAFF has to offer.

Jason & Meghan Williams

Home Feature

When reflecting on the process of building their home, the only thing Jason and Meghan Williams would change is that they would have built it much sooner.

The couple bought their previous house in Gentry in 2013; it was just supposed to be home for three or four years. Three years turned to five, and five eventually turned to ten.

Jason has been a Benton County resident for most of his lifetime. He grew up in Gentry and his grandfather owned the local hardware store. His dad practiced law in Gentry for almost 30 years.

Meghan hails from a small town in Virginia, but the couple met by chance while attending a Christian college near Chattanooga, Tennessee. Before long, Meghan moved to Florida for nursing school and Jason attended the University of Arkansas to pursue civil engineering. After several years of long-distance, Meghan and Jason finally converged back in Gentry, Arkansas.

When it was time to build their dream home, it was no question that they would be going fully custom. Meghan had looked online exhaustively and never found the perfect plans. She drew up her dream home on the back of a napkin and took it to a drafter to help make her vision a reality.

The location of their new home was an easy choice. Down a rural dirt road outside of Gentry, Jason's family has been living and farming on the land for decades. Meghan's sister, also a Virginia native, ended up in Arkansas thanks to her husband's career and built a home next door.

The Williams kids, August (8) and Otto (5), enjoy having cousins so close by and can often be found exploring the creek or wooded areas around the property.

Overall, the Williams remarked that the building process went smoothly. They worked with a contractor to help facilitate the process while they both worked full-time jobs. "I think overall it made it a lot easier just for him to keep the process going," Jason said. "And to have somebody that could be here during the day when we couldn't be."



Jason did not have many must-haves when it came to building the home. However, his civil engineering background insisted that energy efficiency be part of the original plans. "There are things you can come back and change down the road and upgrade," Jason said. "But we wanted to make sure we put in the radiant flooring and the right insulation from the beginning."

When asked what advice the couple have for others looking to build, they had a couple tidbits of sage wisdom. First, they recommend having at least 20 percent saved up for contingency. "You just never know," Jason said. He served as the bookkeeper for the project and noted that while some projects came in under budget, some went over. Having a cushion helped ensure that they could continue construction without a hitch.

Meghan also recommends choosing your fixtures and finishings as early as possible. "When you start digging footings, you better start looking," she advises. Meghan recommends making a list of options with low, middle, and high price points. As construction continues, you can quickly make decisions about where you want to splurge and where you want to save to make sure you meet your budget in the end.

The Williams fully moved into their new home in mid-March. After 10 years of life in the city, they are enjoying the peace and quiet of country life. Read on to learn more about the Williams home.



Let's Eat – This spacious kitchen features a custom island with room for company.

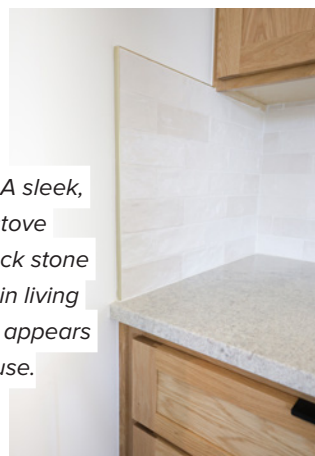


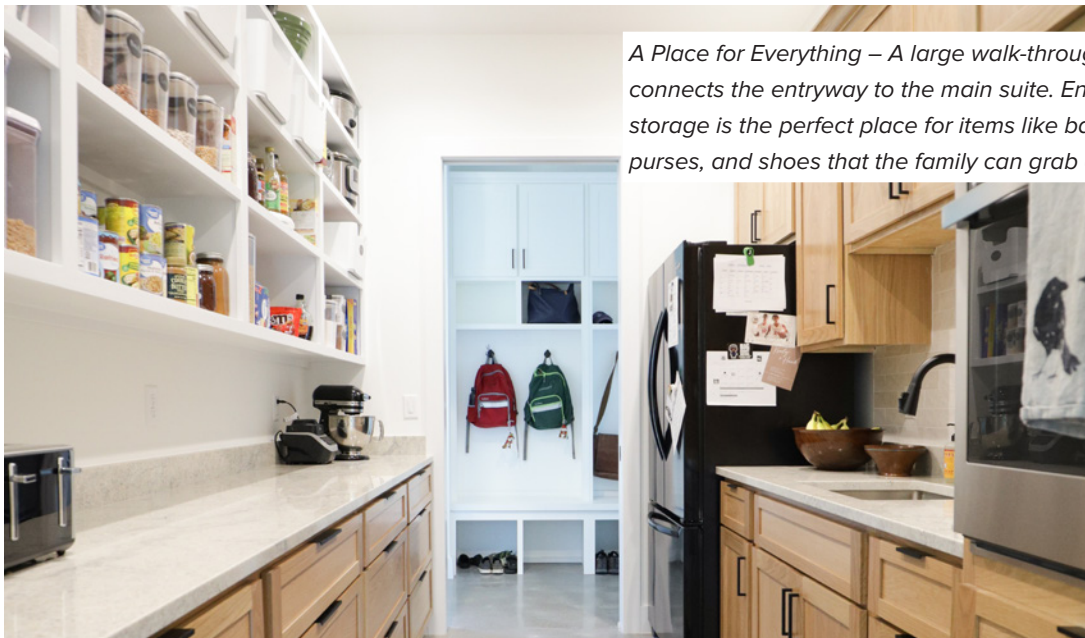
Custom Features – The pot filler faucet above the stove and coffee nook with receding doors are just a couple of the thoughtful accents in this fully custom home.

Where Classic Meets Modern – Dark fixtures throughout the home contrast with the light-stained wood and bright white walls.

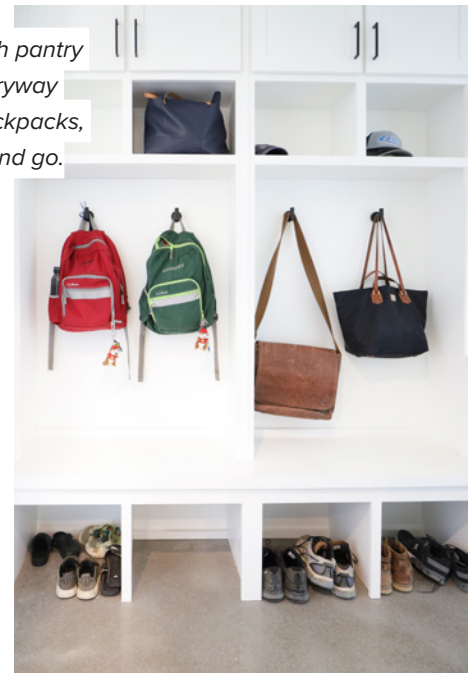


All in the Details – A sleek, all-black Harman stove punctuates the black stone fireplace in the main living area. Gold tile trim appears throughout the house.

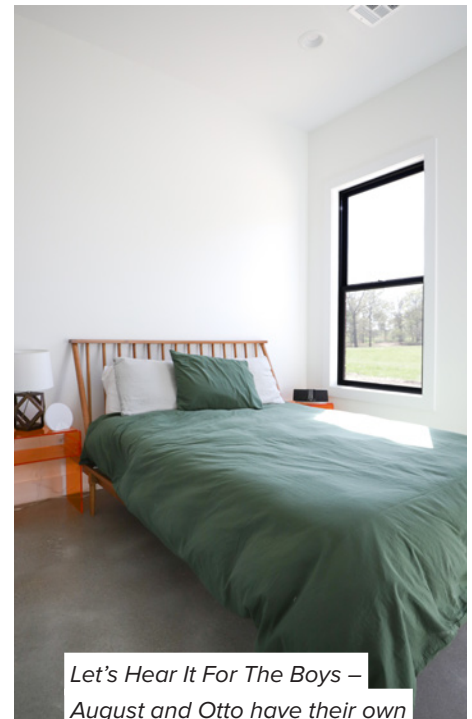
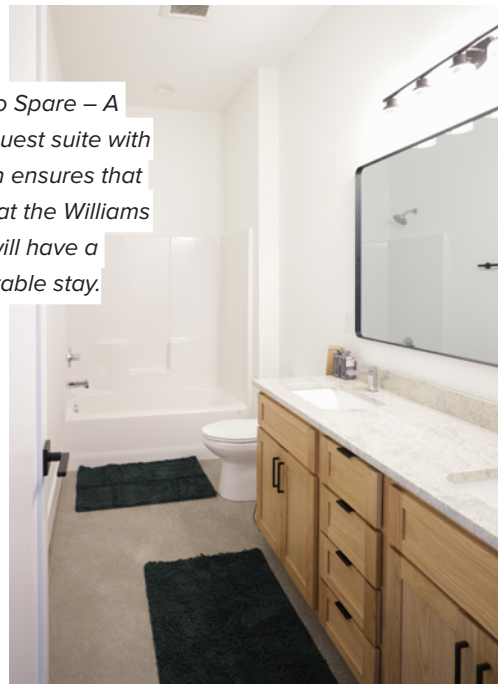




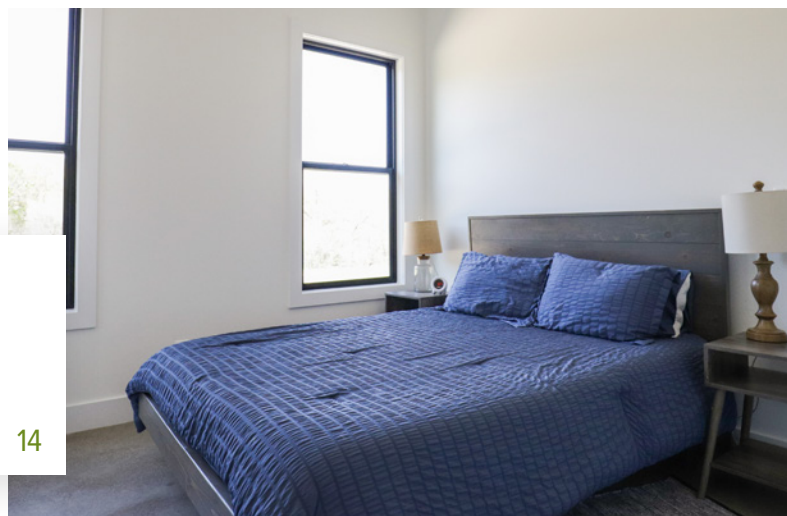
A Place for Everything – A large walk-through pantry connects the entryway to the main suite. Entryway storage is the perfect place for items like backpacks, purses, and shoes that the family can grab and go.



Room to Spare – A spare guest suite with full bath ensures that guests at the Williams home will have a comfortable stay.



Let's Hear It For The Boys – August and Otto have their own corner of the house adjoined by a Jack-and-Jill bathroom.

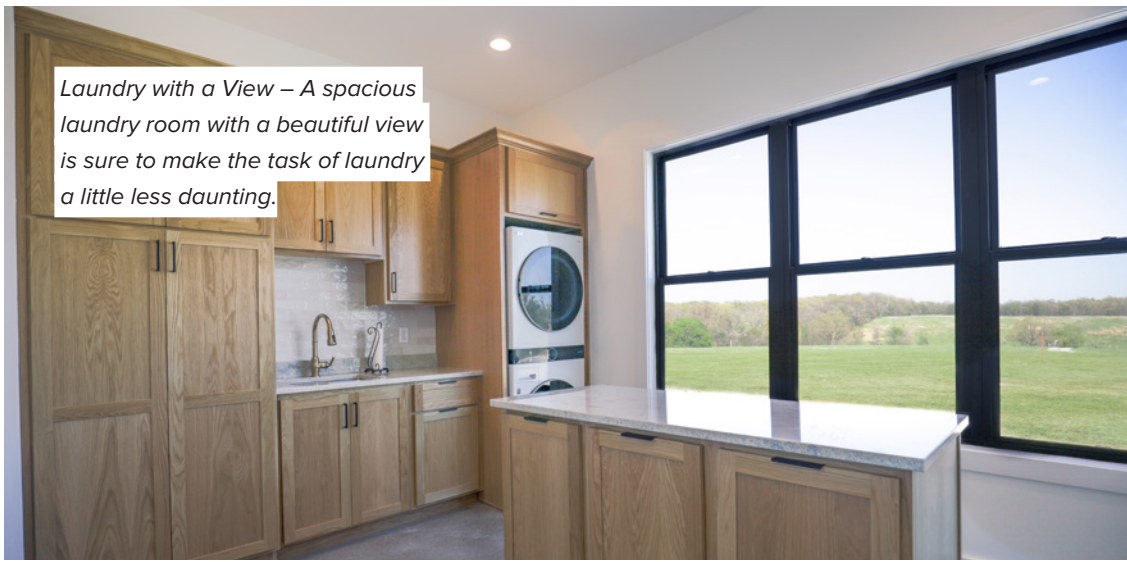




Main Suite Marvels – A large main suite has all the comforts and conveniences without compromising style.



Built In Safety – The main suite closet doubles as a safe room with a heavy-duty door to protect precious valuables.



Laundry with a View – A spacious laundry room with a beautiful view is sure to make the task of laundry a little less daunting.



Play Time – This bonus room above the garage is the perfect space for August, Otto, and other young guests to run and play.



Patio Paradise – Double sliding glass doors lead to a patio ready to host a variety of outdoor activities.



Dilynn Dodd

Vice President and Loan Officer, Consumer Lending

What home can I afford?

Many of you may be in the market to purchase a home, or you might be considering it in the near future. Whether this is your first home purchase or you are a seasoned homeowner, your first thought might be “What home can I afford?” This is a common and important question that buyers ask themselves when starting to look at property. It is also something your financial institution will consider.

There are several factors that a lender will take into account when pre-approving a future homebuyer for a loan. Here are six factors that will assist you in determining what you can afford before you pick out your perfect future home.

Down Payment

A down payment is a percentage of your home’s purchase price that you pay when you close your loan. This is often looked at as your investment in the house. The down payment for a loan is generally in the form of cash, however, down payment can come in other forms that you can discuss with your lender. Some examples of other down payment options could be other land equity, another loan, or gift money. You never want your down payment to completely liquidate you and empty out your checking or savings account.

A general rule of thumb is to have at least 20% of the purchase price for your down payment. For example, if you are buying a house for \$300,000, you will need \$60,000 for down payment and Farm Credit will finance \$240,000 towards the purchase.



LTV

Loan-to-Value (LTV) is the ratio of your loan amount versus the collateral value of the house, land, and other structures that hold value on the property. Collateral value is the purchase price or the appraised value, whichever is least. In this calculation, paper equity is not considered part of your collateral. Paper equity occurs when the value of the home is greater than the purchase price.

$$\text{Loan amount} \div \text{appraised value or purchase price (whichever is least)} = \text{loan-to-value (LTV)}$$

PITI

PITI is an acronym for Principal, Interest, Taxes, and Insurance. This will be your monthly mortgage payment (principal and interest) plus your estimated monthly real estate taxes and homeowners’ insurance all added together. Even though Farm Credit of Western Arkansas does not escrow real estate taxes and homeowners’ insurance (unless the property is in a flood zone), we still look at the total PITI calculation. The general rule is for PITI to be equal to or less than 28% of gross monthly income.

$$\text{Monthly income} \times 28\% = \text{monthly PITI}$$

DTI

Debt-to-Income (DTI) is a common ratio homebuyers will hear lenders use. For a W2 wage earner, this is calculated by analyzing all your monthly debt payments, including your PITI, into your gross income. Monthly debt payments are anything that you make a regular monthly payment on outside of your living expenses. For example: vehicles, credit cards, student loans, child support, etc. Preferred DTI ratio is 36% or lower.

$$(\text{PITI} + \text{Other Monthly Debt Payments}) \div \text{Monthly Gross Income} = \text{DTI}$$

Credit

To secure a home mortgage, you want to have established credit. Generally, the minimum credit score needed for a home mortgage is around 650 or higher. The higher the credit score, the better rate you will get on your mortgage. Credit scores are determined using five distinct factors – payment history, the amount of debt owed, length of credit history, new or recent credit and the types of credit used.

Want to learn more about credit scores? Check out our blog at farmcredit.social/creditscore

Other Expenses

When buying a new home, there are always unexpected expenses that come up outside of the loan and closing fees. Those expenses can range from deposits needed to get utilities transferred to the buyer, repairs or maintenance needed, or moving service fees. This is why Farm Credit will not allow you to completely liquidate your checking and savings accounts for the down payment on the purchase.



What Can They Afford?

Josh and Sarah's gross income is \$75,000 a year. With at least 20% down payment, they could potentially afford a home in a range of \$200,000 to \$250,000, depending on their other monthly debt payments and their loan interest rate.

Purchase price: \$230,000

Down payment calculation: \$230,000 x 20% = 46,000

Loan amount: Purchase price – down payment = \$184,000

PITI calculation:

\$75,000 gross yearly income / 12 months = \$6250 gross monthly income

Gross Monthly Income x 28% = \$1750

The couple's monthly principal, interest, taxes, and insurance payment should not exceed \$1750. Before Josh and Sarah pick out their perfect home, they also need to consider their estimated cost of taxes and insurance, monthly debt payments, and other factors listed above.

(Note: Lenders consider multiple factors and each individual situation when determining eligibility for home loans. The above example is fictitious and for illustrative purposes only.)

There are multiple factors and ratios that go into account when buying a house. As lenders, we know that the home buying process can be overwhelming and sometimes you don't know where to start. Farm Credit is here to help. Our consumer lenders are ready to give you guidance on what you can afford and walk you through the step-by-step process from pre-approval to closing. Do not hesitate to reach out to us for your dream home purchase!

Chicken Spaghetti

This recipe is a staple in the Newsom household. It was passed down from Austin's grandma, LaWanna Newsom.



Ingredients:

- 2-3 chicken breasts
- 1 box spaghetti
- 1 lb Velveeta
- 1 can Rotel tomatoes
- 1 can cream of chicken soup

Instructions:

Boil chicken breasts for 1 hour or until done. Leave skin on for a richer broth. Cook spaghetti noodles in the leftover broth. Drain spaghetti and add Velveeta, Rotel tomatoes (undrained), and cream of chicken soup. Cut chicken into small pieces, add to mixture, and stir well.



Williams Family Carrot Cake

This recipe comes from Meghan's grandmother and is served at most birthdays and holidays.

Ingredients:

Cake:

- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ½ cup Wesson oil
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 eggs
- 2 cups carrots

Icing:

- 8 oz cream cheese
- 1 stick of margarine
- 1 lb of confectioner's sugar
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup chopped nuts

Instructions:

1. To make the cake: In a large mixing bowl, combine oil, sugar, and eggs, mixing well after each egg. Gradually add in dry ingredients before adding carrots. Transfer mixture to a bundt pan at bake at 350 degrees for 55 minutes.
2. To make icing, combine cream cheese, margarine, confectioner's sugar, and vanilla. Add frosting to cake and top with chopped nuts.



Popcorn Day

Risk Assets Specialist Cathy Byrd volunteered on Popcorn Day at her local elementary school.



FFA CDE Competition

Luke, Kara, Kyle, Cory, and Clay served over 1,000 students in Prescott at an FFA CDE competition.



County Line High School Concession Stand

Heather, Alyssa, and Kathy from our Paris branch helped out in the County Line High School concession stand.



Women in Prescott Donation

Rachel Glass, consumer loan processor in Hope, donated \$500 to Women in Prescott through our Community Involvement Program.



Caddo Hills School District Career Fair

In March, Brian, Kara, and Blake from our Glenwood office attended the Caddo Hills School District career fair to visit with students about the possibilities Farm Credit has to offer.



Rotary Club Donation

Taylor Plugge donated \$500 to her local Rotary Club through our Community Involvement Program. Pictured is Taylor participating in the Rotary Readers Program, where she read to the local primary and elementary school to promote the importance of literacy and reading at a young age.

2024 Arkansas Women in Agriculture Conference

Farm Credit was well-represented at the 2024 Arkansas Women in Agriculture Conference held in Hot Springs, AR.



Lindsey Holtzclaw, director of marketing, began her term as the president of Arkansas Women in Agriculture at the 2024 conference.



Savannah Dickinson, VP of consumer markets, addressed the Arkansas Women in Ag conference on behalf of Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas.



2024 Perry McCourt Distinguished Alumna

SVP of Operations Andrea Leding was named the 2024 Perry McCourt Distinguished Alumna by Arkansas Tech Department of Agriculture & Tourism. Andrea was recognized for her steadfast commitment to Arkansas Tech University and the Department.

Ambassador of the Year

Cara Willmon was named the 2024 Farm Credit of Western Arkansas Ambassador of the Year by the Arkansas Tech University Department of Agriculture & Tourism.



Paris CDE Contest

Farm Credit served up lunch for hungry FFA members, advisors, and volunteers at the Paris CDE competition.



Spark Donates to River Valley Food 4 Kids

Our employee engagement group, Spark, recently visited River Valley Food 4 Kids to donate food gathered by employees across our territory and volunteer in the warehouse.



Girl Power to the Max Competition

Loan officers Kathy and Joyce served as judges at the Girl Power to the Max competition which encourages young women to explore high-demand construction and manufacturing careers.

Burgers for FFA Southern District CDE Contest

Farm Credit served up burgers at the FFA Southern District CDE contest.



Taylor FFA Alumni Tiger Classic

Competitors at the Taylor FFA Alumni Tiger Classic enjoyed lunch provided by Farm Credit.



97th Annual FFA Convention and Expo

Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas attended the 97th Arkansas FFA Convention and Expo in Hot Springs, AR. Farm Credit was proud to serve as the title sponsor for this year's convention.



River Valley Beef Conference

It was a beautiful day to serve up some beef at the River Valley Beef Conference.

Regional FFA CDE Contest

Farm Credit was spotted by the grill at the regional FFA CDE contest held at Arkansas Tech University.



National FFA Week

Our Fort Smith and Alma branches celebrated National FFA Week by giving an FFA jacket to one nominated member from each of their local chapters.



Mount Vernon-Enola FFA Chapter Donation

Tori Brock, customer service representative in Greenbrier, presents a community involvement donation to the Mount Vernon-Enola FFA chapter.



7 Cooperative Principles

Voluntary Membership

Democratic Member Control

Members' Economic Participation

Autonomy and Independence

Education, Training, and Information

Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Concern for Community

Education, Training & Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative. Members also inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperatives.

Kaitlyn and Jarrett grew up together but didn't begin dating until after they reconnected later in life. Once they became a couple, Kaitlyn's priorities shifted and she wanted to be closer to family. "Never in a million years did I think I would wind up back in Peter Pender. It's funny how life works sometimes. I think this is the right path for us."

The Turners found the Future Legacy Conference via social media. They filled out a brief application and were accepted for the all-expenses-paid opportunity.

When reflecting on their experience, Kaitlyn said, "It's been a wonderful conference for us; it's been super insightful. We've gotten tons of great information that we can take home and some action items that we plan to implement."

Providing resources and education to those getting started in agriculture is a priority of the Farm Credit System. The Future Legacy Young and Beginning Farmers Conference is a free educational and networking opportunity hosted biennially by Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas.

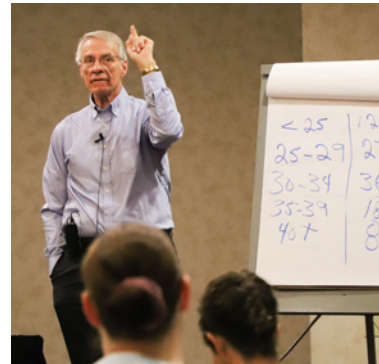
2024 Future Legacy Young, Beginning Farmer Conference

This February, over 50 attendees from around the state gathered in Little Rock, Arkansas for the Future Legacy Young and Beginning Farmers Conference hosted by Farm Credit Associations of Arkansas.

The conference kicked off with representatives from each of the Farm Credit associations highlighting the importance of young and beginning farmers.

Throughout the conference, Dr. Dave Kohl, Professor Emeritus at Virginia Tech and agriculture industry expert, shared financial planning advice and trends to watch in agriculture. Dr. Kohl provided hands-on exercises that guided attendees in future-proofing their operations.

Jarrett and Kaitlyn Turner of Peter Pender, Arkansas raise cattle and currently live on their farm in Franklin County. They were one of several young couples that attended the conference this year. "I grew up in a tiny community," Kaitlyn said. "When I went to college, I got a journalism degree and thought I would go off and do big things."

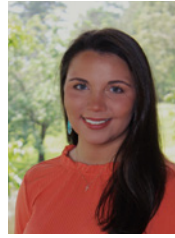


New Faces



TORI BROCK joined Farm Credit in March as a customer service representative in Greenbrier. She was born and raised in Mount Vernon, Arkansas. She lives on a hobby farm with her husband, Preston, and eighteen-month-old, Truett. Tori was involved in FFA growing up and started an FFA Foundation for her local chapter. She attended Arkansas Tech University where she earned a bachelor's degree in agriculture business. Tori brings three years of loan processing experience

and four years of title insurance expertise to Farm Credit. In her free time, she enjoys camping, fishing, hunting, and supporting her husband at team roping competitions.



TAYLOR HORTON joined Farm Credit in April as a customer service representative in Tontitown. She is a native of Sheridan, Arkansas and attended Sheridan High School. Growing up, Taylor's family had a small cow-calf operation. She attended Southern Arkansas University where she obtained a bachelor's degree in agricultural business. Taylor brings about a year of mortgage loan processing experience to Farm Credit. She currently

lives in Farmington with her husband, Carter, and golden retriever, Paisley Mae. In her free time, she enjoys walking their dog, kayaking, hunting, fishing, and just being outdoors.

Changing Places



ANNA LESTER transitioned from agriculture loan officer to VP of agriculture markets. She will continue working out of the Russellville branch.



SAVANNAH DICKINSON transitioned from consumer loan officer to VP of consumer markets. She will continue working out of the Siloam Springs branch.



TAYLOR PLUGGE transitioned from consumer loan officer to executive assistant/secretary to the board. She will begin working at our Central Office location.



SUMMER IS BETTER IN WESTERN ARKANSAS.

FARM CREDIT CAN HELP YOU FINANCE YOUR PERFECT PIECE OF RECREATIONAL PROPERTY.



ANY SIZE ACREAGE



COMPETITIVE FIXED RATES



LONG-TERM FINANCING

Enriching rural life.™

Let Farm Credit's industry-leading knowledge, competitive products, and more than 107 years of agricultural and rural financing experience help you.

- Farms of all sizes
- Livestock
- Country home and home construction
- Land
- Recreational land
- Timber tracts
- Forestry products and processing



2024 PHOTO CONTEST

Start planning for our annual photo contest! Contest deadline is **Friday, August 16th**.

Enter your best photos that tell the story of life in western Arkansas. Anyone living in our 41-county territory is eligible to enter. Photos must be taken in western Arkansas.

Two divisions are available: adult (18+) and youth (up to age 18), with cash prizes in both categories PLUS one grand-prize winner.

Grand Prize: \$500

(best overall photo from both categories)

Entry form and complete details at myaglender.com/photocontest

1st Place	\$300
2nd Place	\$200
3rd Place	\$100

Cash prizes awarded in both Youth & Adult categories.

