

Meet Arizona Agriculture's Dinsmore Family

By Justin Ollendick and Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau

Family and community focused, this young Yuma County couple are daily celebrating the adventures of raising a family and growing crops in our desert climate. Arizona Farm Bureau feels privileged to have this talented couple engaged in leadership roles within Farm Bureau. Plus Lara and Johnathan were recently appointed to American Farm Bureau Federation's Young Farmer and Rancher committee.

*An interview with Jonathan and Lara Dinsmore of Dinsmore Farms - Yuma, Arizona
Part of an ongoing series about Arizona farming and ranching families.*

Tell us about your farm:

Dinsmore Farms, Inc. was founded in the early 1940s and is based in Yuma, Arizona. We are a 1,500-acre vegetable, hay, and grain farm. Vegetables grown include iceberg lettuce, romaine lettuce, red and green mix lettuce, cauliflower, and broccoli. We grow many varieties that respond to specific times of our season. While Yuma is the lettuce capital of the world between the months of November and March, we experience a wide range of temperatures and weather patterns from Baja California, Mexico making it extremely difficult to manage crops at times.

The hay grown on Dinsmore Farms includes Sudan and Alfalfa. Much of our hay is exported to China and Japan. We donate stacks of hay to local organizations that work with disadvantaged youth. We also operate a custom hay business where we swath, rake, bale, and stack hay for farms across the Yuma valley.

The wheat grown on our farm is Durum. We often grow experimental plots of vegetables and wheat in cooperation with seed companies and the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension. To accomplish all of this, our land must be prepared appropriately to allow for proper growing conditions. We operate a minimum tillage program on most of our ground. Reducing tractor passes conserves fuel, emissions, and energy. Much of our farmland in the Yuma Valley is then laser leveled with GPS driven tractors to provide the flattest ground and most efficient irrigation of Colorado River water possible, a method of reducing water use.

What changes have you seen in your lifetime as it relates to farming?

The technology, firsthand, has just blown up. One of my first large-tractor jobs was listing making the beds for planting. Once we got the GPS systems in the tractors I became the one to teach our

experienced farmers how to use the technology. From then on the speed of technologies' advancements just seemed to blow up.



Why did you choose to go into agriculture? Growing up in farming gave me an opportunity to see it firsthand. I always watched my father and my grandfather tirelessly work. Looking back, I can remember their muddy boots and dirty hands and it makes me feel like it's another illustration of the hands and feet of God since they could work the soil, plant seed and see the miracle of farming take place. It's always been amazing to me. Plus, the science behind agriculture has always fascinated me too. I always tell people I get to play in the dirt for a living.

Will anyone in your family - younger generation - pursue farming and/or ranching? What generation farmer are you? Tell us about your family:

I (Jonathan) am a fourth-generation farmer born and raised in Yuma, Arizona. I am married to my beautiful wife, Lara. We have five children; 3 biological and 2 adoptive. We are also foster parents and currently have a teenager living with us. Investing in our children as well as those who are in our care temporarily is one of our passions.

Already, despite how young my kids are right now, I talk to them about agriculture and educate them about this industry. I highlight how many different avenues or careers there are in agriculture. You don't have to be working 15 hours a day on a tractor. The technology, science and legal fields are all areas that can be applied to agriculture.

Would you ever consider growing an emerging crop or changing your farm model?

In the last five years we've expanded into the hay market growing our own and custom harvesting. This endeavor has really enlightened

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Quick Facts about Biotech Crops

Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau

Lots of misinformation is floating around about biotechnology (also known as genetically modified, or GMO) crops. And in the confusion, we have a hard time explaining what's truth and what's fiction.

So, Arizona Farm Bureau provides some quick, on-the-go facts about biotech crops. We're only going to focus on plant biotechnology, though the science of life (biotechnology) shows up in a variety of fields like medicine and pharmaceuticals.

- Using the precise process of "Transgenic" biotechnology, scientists select the desired trait for a plant, such as drought tolerance, insect resistance, virus resistance or enhanced nutrition.

- Today there are 12 "transgenetically engineered" products on the market. They are:

1. Blue roses and blue carnations
2. Cotton and alfalfa
3. To eat – corn, soybeans, canola, sugar beets, sugar cane, summer squash, papaya and golden rice (not in U.S.)

- Almost 2,000 tests by independent researchers around the world demonstrate that genetically modified foods are safe to eat and peer reviewed safe for the environment.

- The World Health Organization, the National Academies of Science, the European Commission and the American Medical Association all agree there is no difference in food safety between genetically modified food crops and traditional bred food crops. So does EPA, USDA and FDA.

- *Bacillus Thuringiensis* (bT) is a natural bacteria found in the soil. It has been used as an insecticide since the 1920s and is still used on organic farms and in home gardens. The bT trait was the first insecticide used in bioengineered corn and cotton.

- In Arizona there has been a 90% reduction in use of broad-spectrum insecticides since farmers started growing bT cotton. That

is great news for the environment, especially beneficial insects!

- Since bioengineered crops are safe to eat, the only reason to put a "Contains Genetically Modified Organisms" label on food is to frighten consumers.

- If you still don't want to eat bioengineered (genetically modified) foods, you have options – organic foods and foods labeled "Non-GMO." Our local organic farmers do a great job growing fruits & vegetables for you.

- All plants and animals and ultimately foods are from genetically modified organisms. The history of genetically modifying crops, specifically food crops, has been going on for thousands of years beginning with our first moments of deliberately cultivating food. Anthropology tells us humans began crop domestication as far back as 11,000 years ago and from the beginning they used selective breeding to carry the best plants over into the next generation. This is a type of genetic modification. History then reveals that the 1700s was a breakthrough period for farmers and scientists to cross-breed plants within the same species, for example crossing a drought-resistant variety of a plant type with another. In the 1940s and 1950s breeders and researchers sought out additional means to introduce genetic variations into the gene pool of plants. By the 1980s researchers developed the more precise and controllable methods of genetic engineering, specifically transgenic (a genetic trait from one variety of species inserted into another) to create plants with desirable traits such as insect, herbicide and disease resistance. By the 1990s, the first transgenic plants were introduced to the marketplace. Every product on the market is composed of ingredients that have their origins in improved genetic modification. Granted, the more precise method of "transgenic modification" might instill concern for lack of understanding, but this method is well documented in terms of safety than all the previous methods mentioned.

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Salad with an Egg on Top

By Peggy Jo Goodfellow, Arizona Farm Bureau Federation

Tired of making and eating the same boring tossed green salad? With just a little creativity you can have beautiful, high in protein salads of the seasons throughout the year. Arizonans are fortunate that Yuma, Arizona is the “winter salad bowl to the nation.” Unlike some of the states, we benefit from garden-fresh greens, celery, broccoli and other vegetables throughout the winter months.



Plus, thanks to Hickman’s Family Farms, who produces over 6 million eggs daily, we have local farm fresh

eggs available to purchase year-round at retailers statewide.

So, this means Arizona agriculture can serve up plenty of leafy greens and high-quality protein year around. And, have you noticed? The hot new trend in salads is to top them off with egg to add that punch in protein.

Building a high-in-protein salad is easy. Simply start with a bed of your favorite greens; leafy green, romaine, spinach, red leaf, or iceberg lettuce, add your favorite vegetables, cheese, nuts or fruit and place a poached or fried egg on top.

One of my favorites is to place a perfectly poached egg on top with thin shavings of nutty Parmesan cheese, toasted walnuts, and thin slices of crusty bread with melted Parmesan. When you cut into the egg, the creamy yellow yolk luxuriously spills out onto the contrasting bed of greens. It’s a great combination of textures, colors, and flavors—it’s a meal that will wake up even the most dulled palates. This is the kind of sophisticated salad that can be served as a main dish or a first course. Best of all, it’s quick: the eggs are poached at the last minute, and the salad can be put together in under 5 minutes. Everything else can be prepared ahead of time.

Want something fancy looking but that’s quick and easy? Try this salad: In individual glass clear bowls start with sliced radishes in the bottom; next a layer of baby spinach, then grilled chicken breast; drizzle with a vinaigrette and place a fried or poached egg on top. Besides looking beautiful, it’s a great combination of textures, colors and flavors.

Ways to Save on Family Fun

By Peggy Jo Goodfellow, Arizona Farm Bureau Federation

Baby it’s cool outside! It’s the most refreshing time of the year in Arizona. Whether you’re staying in or heading out, your Arizona Farm Bureau membership can save you money on some of your favorite activities.



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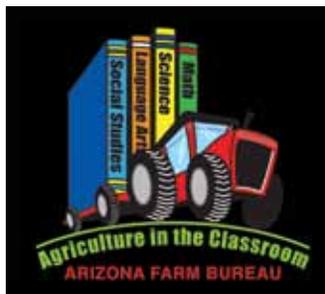
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AITC Uses Technology to Bring Farmers to the Classroom

The Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) Pen Pal Program began in October with 42 elementary and high school classrooms sending letters to Arizona Farmers and Ranchers. Throughout the month, the classrooms and producers continued their correspondence with students learning about how animals are cared for and how crops are grown. In addition to learning about agriculture, students also learned that some farmers can rollerblade, one of the more entertaining questions asked by the students. After learning a little about their matched farmer or rancher, classes were able to Skype or Face-



Time with their producers. Some producers even visited the classrooms in person! "My students had such a great experience with this program," says Sarahbeth Belvado, teacher at Jack Barnes Elementary in Queen Creek. "It was an interactive and hands-on way to meet classroom teaching standards. I have never had students so excited to write a letter."

The Pen Pal Program is a FREE program through AITC. To get involved in AITC or volunteer please contact katieaikins@azfb.org or call 480.635.3608

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Winter Farmers' Market Wrap-Up

There is no question that living in Arizona has many benefits. There is the amazing weather, the great people, the amazing outdoor adventures, and the almost year-round availability of freshly grown produce and other farm products. Our desert climate allows local farmers to operate in all four seasons which means many of our farmer's markets never close their doors at the end of the growing season since ours never ends.



Nothing beats fresh local produce during the winter months. Throughout most of the winter months look for in season produce including clementine's, carrots, sweet potatoes, lemons, and spinach. Once we enter the New Year, celery, strawberries, and garlic will also be available. March brings fresh asparagus and zucchini blossoms.

For a full list of what is in season throughout Arizona during the winter months, check the list of Arizona Produce in Season on fillyourplate.org or for a complete list of markets select Farmers' Markets.

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us on how taking risk and business management are key. Plus, if any one of the children indicate to us they'd want to be in production agriculture, we'd have to make major changes to provide the opportunity for them. So, yes, we're always willing to consider other crops and/or changes to our farm model. We're always open to new ideas. But, whatever the opportunity in agriculture might be, it also has to pencil out.

Most of our past farming has been wheat and product. So, the hay business has been our new business endeavor in the mix of opportunities in agriculture. The hay markets have been doing well so it made sense for us to diversify in this area.

What is your education/community involvement/what do you do for fun?

I am an avid sports fan and enjoy coordinating sporting events for local youth. I also enjoy hunting and fishing. For 8 years I have led a high school youth group. I earned a full scholarship to Arizona Western College playing the trumpet in the pep band and community band. I continued on to the University of Arizona In Yuma where I graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in Agriculture Systems Management.

Lara is a graduate of Northern Arizona University and is a certified teacher and Reading Specialist. She spent the early years of our marriage teaching Junior High. After our second child was born, she resigned from teaching to stay at home and raise our children. Now that they are in school, she assists in the farm office. In her free time, Lara enjoys writing on her blog, The Farmer's Wife Tells All. Lara has also spoken at adoption conferences across the country, including on a panel at Arizona Farm Bureau's Leadership Conference held every June.

What do you think you do really well? Explain.

Lara and I have a passion for family and farming. Our love for agriculture is evident and we are eager for the opportunity to share it with others. We have a commitment to serving others, including the less fortunate. We believe that as farmers we should invest in our community. These values shape our family, friendships, and farm operation. Additionally, through our time with the Arizona YF&R, we have learned that speaking in front of large groups doesn't have to be scary.

Lara added: Jonathan has competed in the American Farm Bureau Federation's YF&R discussion meet in 2012, and has applied much of what he learned to his every day farming.

What is your involvement with Arizona Farm Bureau/why are you a farm bureau member?

While serving on the Yuma County Farm Bureau board, I have served as YF&R Chair, vice president, president, and am currently membership chair. I held an Arizona Farm Bureau Board of Directors seat for four years. During that time, I visited Washington, D.C. three times to meet with my legislators and discuss policies that directly impact the agriculture industry.

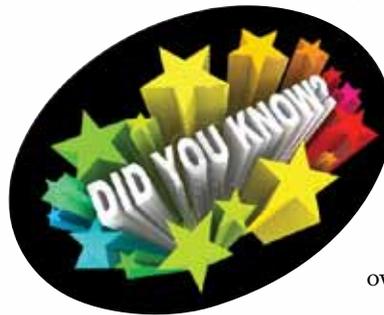
How will the next generation of farmers have to operate?

A college degree still carries weight in our industry. So, young people need to start out with that baseline. We see a college degree as commitment, diligence and the ability to complete a task. For the up and comer, they also need to establish a track record early on that whatever they start, they finish. This is about how to get into the industry.

In how to operate, the next generation may have to recognize that because of potentially serious diminishing resources they will have to work harder and act smarter.

Did you Know? More facts About Biotechnology in Agriculture

1. St Louis, MO has the largest concentration of plant scientists in the world with 650?
2. There is a 100 fold margin of safety when it comes to food? For example...your recommended daily of salt is 2g. It would take 200g to kill you.
3. With all the talk and controversy about allergies, only 35 people die each year because of peanuts?
4. Hybrid plants can have 1,000 genes in different sequences with the trait being unknown; Biotech changes 1 gene sequence and we know the location and the change it will induce.
5. The greenhouses at the U of A Farm are researching 20 varieties of tomatoes for taste, flavor and nutrition? These plants are being grown in soil not through hydroponics.



6. This last spring was the 20th Anniversary of Biotech Crops?
7. A composition study is done on every new crop that costs \$1 million? All independent companies do the different studies and work associated with the study.
8. Scientists are discovering that roots have their own language and talk to each other?
9. It takes 12-13 years of testing and data in order for a bio-tech crop to be allowed to be sold and eaten?
10. There is no nutritional difference between a biotechnology food and a non-bio tech food of the same variety?



Family Fun *Continued from page 3*

Go to the Movies: Catch the latest blockbuster movie at Harkins Theatres and save up to \$3 per ticket when you purchase a 10-count pack of tickets through Farm Bureau.

Day trip delights: There is nothing better than enjoying the great outdoors. Stroll along the numerous trails to see the wide variety of animals at the Phoenix Zoo and save \$2 on admission. If you prefer to sit back, relax and enjoy the scenery, take a ride on Verde Canyon Railroad and save 10% on train tickets. Enjoy a local Farmers' Market from fillyourplate.org. Also, check out our Arizona wineries. Go to arizonawine.org to see what's available.

Fun for Kids of all Ages: Go back in time to the old west at Knott's Berry Farm in Buena Park, California and save up to \$20. Go to Universal Studios or LEGOLAND and save when you purchase online tickets at www.azfb.org. Experience the wonders of Sea World in San Diego, California and save 20%.

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Periodicals

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Arizona Agriculture's
CHOICES

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Jonathan and Lara Dinsmore, Yuma Arizona
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