



# Arizona Agriculture

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## TAKING CONTROL OF THE WATER NARRATIVE ONE OFFENSIVE MOVE AT A TIME

By Stefanie Smallhouse, Arizona Farm Bureau President

**T**he Carlink Ranch sits in a little river valley in Southeastern Arizona, where we farm along the valley floor and raise cattle up in the hills of the Galiuro and Catalina Mountain ranges. The expense of growing forage crops for your own cattle is hard to pencil out much of the time and that is likely why there are not too many ranches around Arizona that include a farming operation like ours. Even though our place has included farming acreage since Andy's family started in the valley 140 years ago, the acreage has expanded over the last 50 years to offset the comings and goings of drought conditions and enhance our rest and rotation grazing system.

It was all through my husband Andy's childhood that his father would spend thousands of hours on an old cable-controlled D7 Caterpillar clearing acres and acres of overgrown and invasive mesquite thickets from the valley floor for those farms. Andy will tell you that it was probably breathing in all that diesel fuel over the years that did his dad in at an early age. It was grueling work for sure. Seeing your dad do that kind of work from sunup to sundown has a lasting impact on a kid and those farms have proven to be invaluable and likely contributed to the ranch's longevity.

Over 40 years ago, the State of Arizona began the adjudication process for the San Pedro River and in 1991 a hydrographic survey report was completed for the entire watershed. To put it simply, the adjudication is basically a process to determine who has what rights to the surface flow within the system. We are entering the 5<sup>th</sup> decade of this process. Then in 2014, the Arizona Department of Water Resources (DWR) completed the sub-flow technical report for the river system. When this happened, we suddenly found ourselves not only in a fight for our surface water rights but were informed that most of our farm wells were likely pumping sub-flow and not groundwater. This change means that the irrigation of a significant portion of our farmland is at risk, which has forced us to make some very difficult decisions over the last few years.

So, we sit at our kitchen table and look over maps. We are trying to prioritize which farms to keep and which to let go – if that is ultimately what we are forced to do. Remember, each one of those farms represents hundreds of hours of Andy's father's efforts and if they are not farmed, they will effortlessly disappear back into the messy abyss of mesquite – as if they never existed. One man's life work for the benefit of his family's future – gone. For us, and especially Andy, that might be the hardest part of this whole grueling process called adjudication.

The adjudication is just one battle in this war of attrition over water being fought against Arizona agriculture. We are entering a new era of water management in the State of Arizona – for both groundwater in rural Arizona and surface water along the Colorado River. The question we are faced with is, do we continue on defense and fight each wave as it comes at us, or do we pivot to offense and work towards long-term solutions? Arizona Farm Bureau exists to lead on this issue. But what does that mean? Sometimes leading means first to move on defense, and sometimes it means the courage to go on the offense and create solutions.

**For one, agriculture is the driving force in many rural Arizona communities and**



Stefanie Smallhouse

**irrigated agriculture is a necessity.** Even though we may not blanket the landscape, like what you would see in Central Iowa, our farming is diverse, precise, and highly productive. As Dean Burgess has described us, we are the Nutrition State. If you could only eat what is locally grown within your state – you would want to be in Arizona. To 90% of the public, access to local food is extremely important. Globally, 40% of the world's food production comes from irrigated agriculture, and nationally, 70% of land used to grow vegetables is irrigated. That number is 80% for orchard crops. All the fruits and vegetables grown in the U.S. come from only 3% of the country's crop acreage but account for 1/3 of all U.S. crop value, and in Arizona, we happen to be in the top five states for production of raw vegetables to market. Although many in the policy world like to claim, that "alfalfa should not be grown in the desert," we dwarf other states in our production of crop per drop of alfalfa, with 8 tons per acre versus the national average of around 3 tons per acre. I could go on and on about our cotton, our livestock, our wine growers, our dairymen – but you get the idea. Irrigated agriculture is essential for food production around the world, irrigated agriculture is essential for Arizona agriculture, and Arizona agriculture is important to Arizonans and our country. We must lead on this issue.

**Secondly, we have prepared for this time, and we are the stewards of these watersheds.** For the last several years we have collected the perspectives of our members and formulated poli-

cy. We have also sought out the perspective of others within and outside of our industry and now is the time to coordinate all this information and create a plan of action to move us forward into the future where agriculture thrives and builds on new opportunities with certainty. We know from years of engagement with our members that in specific areas where groundwater is declining, and use is increasing – you are worried. Although agriculture is certainly not at fault for this decline, after all, we have been in a record-breaking drought for over 20 years, and we cannot ignore the issue. Our members want to have some sense of control over this issue. You want to be proactive but also secure in your ability to continue farming into the future. In other areas of the state, where water levels are static and access is not a challenge, you want to be left alone. And along the Colorado River, where priority is precedent, you want to have a meaningful seat at the table to hold the line.

As for the resource itself – the water – conservation is ongoing. The conservation conversation is not a new one in our daily lives. As Dr. Frisvold with the University of Arizona has compiled from USDA data, in 2013 alone, Arizona growers of all crops spent \$53.3 million on new irrigation-related equipment, facilities, land improvements, and computer technology. These investments in irrigation improvements averaged \$151 per acre and \$42,000 per farm. Of the \$53.3 million – \$12.2 million were investments primarily to conserve water, while another \$1.1 million was to conserve energy. Over the last 30 years, while urban and industrial withdrawals in Arizona have risen by 68%, ag water withdrawals have fallen by 35%. For most of the state, conservation has always been a choice – not a mandate. We have chosen to conserve. **We must lead on this issue.**

See **TAKING CONTROL OF THE WATER** Page 6

## ARIZONA FARM BUREAU'S 2024 PRIORITIES

By Chad Smith, Arizona Farm Bureau Director of Government Relations

**A**fter an extraordinarily successful Annual Meeting and much debate on Arizona Farm Bureau policy, the Board of Directors met to set their 2024 Policy Priorities. Remaining focused on those issues that are paramount to Arizona agriculture while setting short-term priorities for the next year, the Arizona Farm Bureau is well prepared to lead the conversations to develop and implement sound policy that bolsters the agriculture industry.

Arizona Farm Bureau (AZFB) has identified Water, Taxes, Transportation, Trade, Labor, Farm Policy and Land Use, and Environmental Regulations as our flagship issues for 2024. These issues are those that we have historically identified as broad high-level policy areas in which Farm Bureau is well positioned to lead. AZFB will ensure our members' interests are represented at both the state and federal levels.

Our short-term policy priorities adopted by the board and those that staff will focus our efforts on include:

- **Protecting Agriculture Access to Water and Power**
  - Post-2026 consultation on the Colorado River.
  - Rural Groundwater management.
- **Farm Bill**

- Passage of the next Farm Bill.
- **Arizona Department of Agriculture**
  - Bovine Trichomoniasis.
  - Meat processing -establishing a cooperative interstate shipping agreement.
  - Agricultural Seed Standards - Addressing concerns with seed standards and seed sold in Arizona.
- **State and Federal Lands**
  - Working with the State Land Office and Governor to protect agriculture leases on state land.
  - Recreational Damage.
- **Ag Labor**
  - Work towards visa and H2A reform.
- **Ballot initiative**
  - Lead the way in promoting grassroots engagement to pass a ballot initiative. changing the way measures qualify for the ballot ensuring rural voices are heard.

Arizona Farm Bureau leadership and staff will work hard on these policy priorities in 2024 leaning on our grassroots to help shape the future of Arizona agriculture. For a complete outline of our 2024 policy priorities go to [www.azfb.org](http://www.azfb.org). 🚜



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# ARIZONA AGRICULTURE IS A MEASURE OF PRODUCTIVITY, NOT GDP

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Director of Strategic Communications

Arizona has several essential agricultural commodities. They include dairy, beef, an endless variety of vegetables, fruits, cotton, alfalfa, and more. Our Arizona climate, soil, and amazing farming and ranching help us grow and raise over 270 agricultural commodities.

Recently, individuals tried to slander the industry with the “insignificance” of Arizona agriculture by stating that we were less than 2% of the state’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This threw up a red flag for me and made me investigate.

I reached out to my favorite UArizona economist, George Frisvold, Ph.D., and Extension economic team lead. But before I share what he revealed, let’s refresh our Economics 101 course notes with a definition of GDP.

**Britannica’s definition:** “Gross domestic product (GDP) is the total market value of the goods and services produced by a country’s economy during a specified period. It includes all final goods and services — that is, those that are produced by the economic agents located in that country regardless of their ownership and that are not resold in any form. It is used throughout the world as the main measure of output and economic activity.

“In economics, the final users of goods and services are divided into three main groups: households, businesses, and the government. One way gross domestic product (GDP) is calculated — known as the expenditure approach — is by adding the expenditures made by those three groups of users. Accordingly, GDP is defined by the following formula: GDP = Consumption + Investment + Government Spending + Net Exports.”

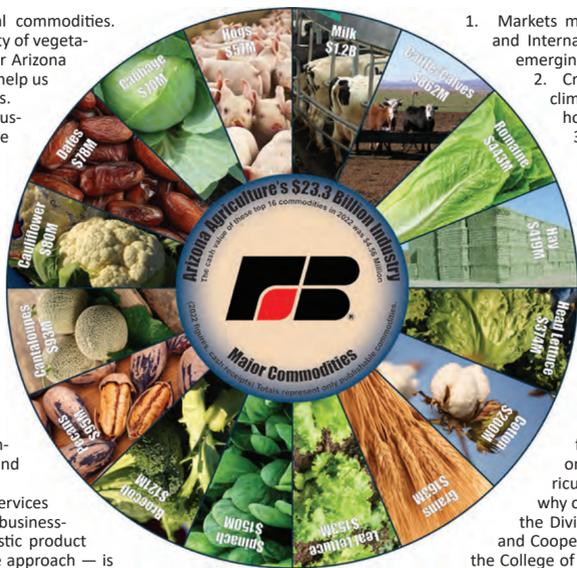
So, it’s about households, businesses, and the government’s spending. It’s whether we use a credit card, dollars, bitcoin, Zell, or Venmo to make a purchase.

Arizona’s agriculture in relationship to GDP, is low. In fact, Professor Frisvold corrected the supervisor’s quote reporting that Arizona agriculture’s GDP is less than 1%. He further said, “Anyone who cites this number misses the point: GDP is a measure of spending, not of economic benefits. What Arizona families spend on food is not the same as the benefits they derive from our Arizona-based agriculture. Because American and Arizona agricultural productivity is so high, Americans and Arizona families don’t have to spend a large share of their incomes on food.”

Instead, we need to view the overall production of Arizona’s agriculture (which includes input industries and food processing), which comes in at \$23.3 billion. Thus, keeping farming and ranching so productive becomes good for the public focused on saving money during this inflationary era and good for the state’s economy.

## WHY ARIZONA AGRICULTURE GROWS WHAT IT GROWS

Not the only ones, but three main reasons exist for why we grow or raise what we do in Arizona.



1. Markets must exist that can be local, statewide, national, and International. Without a market for a crop (especially emerging crops), the farmer can’t afford to farm.
2. Crops and livestock must be suitable to Arizona’s climate. Soybeans won’t grow here because of how hot it gets in the summer, for example.
3. And, most importantly, what we grow must be critical to Arizona’s local and international food supply chain.

Even alfalfa is critical to our local, national, and international food supply chain. Without it, we could not have a local dairy industry, without our help, other countries would not have a dairy industry either. You and I don’t eat alfalfa but Arizona’s two largest agriculture commodities, dairy, and beef, are very dependent on eating the alfalfa we grow, including horses and other livestock.

Just how essential is Arizona agriculture? One of our state’s agricultural leaders from our Land Grant university, UArizona, suggests that God forbid Arizona went into lockdown and no food could be imported into our state therefore only relying on what we grow and raise, Arizona agriculture could feed the entire state for a while. That’s why our UArizona agriculture Leader, Vice President for the Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences, and Cooperative Extension, and the Charles-Sander Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Shane Burgess calls Arizona a Nutrition State!

## FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN U.S. AG LAND: THE LATEST NUMBERS

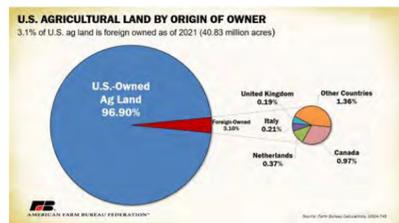
Research and information by Danny Munch, AFBF Economist

Foreign investment in U.S. agricultural land is a hot topic, and AFBF Economist Danny Munch took a substantive dive into the latest data behind it in a new Market Intel report.

As Munch noted, attention to the issue is largely fueled by media reports raising concerns about bad actors from adversarial nations purchasing land for potentially hostile purposes.

Several questions arise when considering this issue, including how much farm and ranch land is owned by foreign investors, where those investors reside, what kind of land they own, and for what purpose.

According to USDA’s latest Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) report — which is based on data from 2021 — more than 40 million acres of U.S. agricultural land are owned by foreign investors and companies. This corresponds to 1.8% of all



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The Voice of Arizona Agriculture [www.azfb.org](http://www.azfb.org)

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# THE BEST IN ARIZONA AGRICULTURE CELEBRATED

## Staff Reports

### THE BEST IN ARIZONA AGRICULTURE CELEBRATED

Arizona hosts some of America's top farmers and ranchers. The Arizona Farm Bureau annually recognizes them for their achievements. The following awards were given out during the Service to Agriculture Awards Banquet during the 102<sup>nd</sup> Arizona Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in Tempe.

### AG COMMUNICATORS OF THE YEAR: YUMA GROWERS



Arizona Farm Bureau recognizes the Yuma Center of Excellence for Desert Agriculture, Yuma County Agriculture Water Coalition, and the Yuma Fresh Vegetable Association as the 2023 Communicators of the Year.

From November through April, the Yuma growing region produces 90% of the leafy greens consumed in the United States and Canada. The ongoing drought in the West has put significant pressure on the Colorado River and its users, reducing storage levels in Lake Mead and Lake Powell to historic lows.

While federal and state agencies and elected officials engage in discussions on future water allocations, these three organizations came together last year to create and produce a high-quality video and distribute it to an interested public to share the importance of water to Yuma-area agriculture and the rest of the nation and the world.

The Yuma Ag Water video features farmers, extension specialists, and support industry representatives who highlight Yuma's unique and intricate farming system.

Done in partnership with the three organizations being recognized, Arizona Farm Bureau also featured the video on its channels. Paul Brierley and Mike Pasquinielli representing the Yuma Center of Excellence for Desert Agriculture, Yuma County Agriculture Water Coalition, and the Yuma Fresh Vegetable Association were present to receive the recognition last November.

### ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD: JEREMY WEISS



As UArizona director of the Arizona Meteorological Network (AZMET) managing the AZMET stations that provide localized weather data for Agriculture, Jeremy Weiss leads a project to help the Yuma non-attainment area for PM10 better determine sustained wind speeds across a wider area. To help us understand this, a PM10 exceedance, with an average 2-minute wind speed of 25 miles per hour or greater, could be submitted to the EPA for exclusions from the data set of exceedances. A PM10 non-attainment area is only allowed three exceedances over three years.

For context, there was only one ADEQ/EPA-approved weather station for the entire county located at the Yuma regional airport. It did not record all 25+ mph events that the AZMET stations, located throughout Yuma County, recorded. By getting the AZMET stations to record a 2-minute average for wind speeds, the potential for excluding more PM10 exceedances increased.

Ultimately, the effort could help Yuma avoid spending money on projects that would not impact the overall air quality in Yuma County. As this project proceeded, it was determined that the updates to the Yuma stations could be applied to all the AZMET stations throughout the state of Arizona. All of Arizona's counties would benefit from having AZMET stations record the average 2-minute wind speed, so Jeremy has now applied this update to all of Arizona's AZMET stations.

This project involved partnerships between the U of A, Yuma County, ADEQ, and the Yuma County Farm Bureau, which provided the vision for the project. By minimizing the impact of High Wind Events on our attainment status, which is beyond our control, there will be higher participation by the public to participate in activities that can minimize the

generation of PM10.

While it's too early to have any demonstrated achievements other than gathering the data needed to file for Exceptional Events Status since at least three years of data are required before ADEQ can apply for Yuma to be reclassified, Yuma County Farm Bureau has been working on PM10 for over 30 years. Thanks to Jeremy's efforts, we have a real opportunity to get our non-attainment status changed on a more permanent basis.

### LIFETIME SERVICE TO AGRICULTURE: MARK KILLIAN



Mark Killian's agricultural experience is broad and diverse. A fifth-generation farmer/rancher and also a native Arizonan, Killian was involved in his family's farm and ranch enterprises, overseeing 1,500 acres of farmland in Arizona. He and his wife, Nancy, own Killian Angus Ranch LLC, which produces registered Angus bulls for Arizona and New Mexico ranches. And up until recently, his family was involved in the direct marketing of Killian Premium Beef to local families.

More broadly, the Killian family has owned and operated farms and ranches in California, Kentucky, New Mexico, Colorado, and Arizona including a Thoroughbred racing and cattle farm in Kentucky. Today the family operates a Ranch Horse operation that provides ranch horses to a broad equine market.

Mark has also had several experiences and careers outside of agriculture, including as a commercial real estate broker specializing in the management and development of commercial real estate and marketing farms, ranches, and residential properties. And in the thick of all that, Mark devoted many years to serving Arizona's citizens in various capacities, including serving 14 years from 1983 to 1996 in the Arizona House of Representatives, including Speaker of the House and House Majority Leader.

Following his time in the legislature, he served as the director of the Arizona Department of Revenue from 1997 to 2002. He later served on the Arizona Board of Regents from 2010-2015. And then from 2015 until earlier this year, Mark served as the Director of the Arizona Department of Agriculture. Mark currently serves on the Board of Directors for Huma Inc., an international fertilizer company, and was recently appointed as a Senior Fellow of the Arizona State University Swette Center for Sustainable Food Systems.

As the Arizona Department of Agriculture Director (AZDA), Mark spent a lot of time on the road and traveled throughout the state to visit individual agricultural operations. He made himself accessible to his farm and ranch customers by sharing his private phone numbers and often sharing them at the end of meetings. You could count on him to answer the phone or return your voicemail.

As a farmer and rancher, Mark understands firsthand the challenges that people in agriculture face. As the AZDA Director, he was passionate about helping people and working toward positive solutions so that those in agriculture and citizens alike had access to all avenues of agriculture in Arizona.

We'll always know him as a true advocate for industry.

### LIFETIME SERVICE TO FARM BUREAU: GERALD FLAKE



Gerald Flake is a 4<sup>th</sup>-generation Arizona rancher raising cattle in Northern Arizona. He and his late wife, Arlene, were married for 59 years and raised eight children. He is a graduate of Arizona State University with a bachelor's degree in animal husbandry. Along with his ranching operation, Gerald was County Supervisor with Farmer's Home Administration USDA for 10 years, and also a Farm Supervisor with Snowflake Pig Farms for 15 years.

Gerald's service to both Navajo County Farm Bureau and Arizona Farm Bureau began in 1970. Gerald's sons, Will and Reed, are actively involved in Farm Bureau coming up through the Young Farmers and Ranchers program. Reed is currently serving as Navajo County President and as a member of the State Board.

One of Gerald's greatest achievements is his service that spans five decades serving in numerous capacities. He and Arlene were instrumental in keeping their County Farm Bureau active and functional, each serving in various leadership capacities on their county board and helping to recruit new members to join and be involved. One notable leadership position Gerald served in was that of the second vice president of the Arizona Farm Bureau. When the Second Vice President slot came open, he felt it was important to have a rancher represented in the officer team and when he couldn't get a rancher to run for the Second Vice President position, he ran himself and served three terms.

Gerald has always had a love for agriculture and felt like the Farm Bureau was the best voice he could side with to help support and protect the agricultural industry and producers. He took multiple trips to Washington D.C. and discussed issues that were critical to his ranch and the ag industry directly with legislators. Gerald has always seen the importance of staying involved in things to know what is going on within the industry. Not an unusual truth for leaders with decades of dedicated Farm Bureau service, policies Gerald introduced at a Navajo County Farm Bureau policy development meeting in his living room ended up as legislation on Capitol Hill, or simply as powerful policy in the American Farm Bureau Policy handbook. The grassroots concept and far-reaching voice are what kept him involved and driven.

### FARMER OF THE YEAR AWARD: CARRIE MAYFIELD



If you ask her, Carrie Mayfield will tell you, "My passion is to share hospitality and agriculture. I want to encourage people to make others welcome in our homes, on the road, and in our everyday lives! I want to share how our food and fiber are grown on the farm."

Her husband, Gary, and she farm in Buckeye, Arizona. They grow vegetables, cotton, alfalfa, and grain. Married for almost 38 years with 3 terrific children, and 11 grandchildren, Carrie and Gary are 3<sup>rd</sup> generation farmers.

A highlight of Carrie's efforts to engage families and the public was starting a school on the farm during the pandemic when schools across the country were shut down. As farm owners in Buckeye, the family decided to take education matters into their own hands during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Mayfields bought some supplies, hired a teacher, and went to work.

A throwback to the days of the one-room schoolhouse, two days a week, nine students of all ages were under one roof. They learned reading, writing, and arithmetic, with time set aside for things like art and cooking. Capturing the hearts during trying times for the whole nation, TV 10 News profiled the experience on their nightly news.

# FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN U.S. continued from Page 2

land in the U.S. and 3.1% of all privately held agricultural land. Canadian investors own the largest portion of foreign-held U.S. agricultural land with 31% (12.8 million acres) of the total and 0.97% of all U.S. agricultural land.

Following Canada, investors from the Netherlands, Italy, the United Kingdom and Germany own 0.37% (4.9 million acres), 0.21% (2.7 million acres), 0.19% (2.5 million acres) and 0.17% (2.3 million acres) of U.S. agricultural land, respectively.

China is ranked 18<sup>th</sup> in the ownership of U.S. ag land with less than 1% of total foreign-owned U.S. ag land, or just three-hundredths of one percent of all agricultural land



in the U.S. This reflects a total area of about a single average sized county in Ohio.

More than 52% of the reported acreage was listed under the category that includes limited liability companies, 32% was corporations (most of which Munch said were formed in the U.S.), 12% was partnerships, 2.3% was individuals and the remainder was split between trusts, estates, institutions and associations.

Of the 3,142 counties and parishes in the U.S., 79% have at least one foreign investor present. In 65% of counties, foreign investors own between 1 and 19,999 acres of land. Only 18 counties — or 0.01% of all counties — have over 200,000 acres of agricultural land held by foreign investors, the top four of which are in northern Maine with Canada-based investors.

A little over 20% of Maine's privately held agricultural land is held by foreign investors, which makes up 9% of total foreign-held ag land. Hawaii has the second-largest percentage of foreign-held U.S. agricultural land, which is 9.2% of the privately held agricultural land in the state. In Arizona, 0.46% of privately held agricultural land was owned by foreign investors in 2021.

In 2021, 48% (19.2 million acres) of reported foreign-held agricultural land was forestland, 29% (11.8 million acres) was cropland, 18% (7.3 million acres) was pastureland and 5% (1.8 million acres) was other agricultural land and non-ag land, which accounts for factors like owner or worker housing and rural roads.

These proportions vary widely depending on the state. Forestland, for instance, makes up 98% of foreign-held agricultural land in Alabama, but less than 1% of foreign-held agricultural land in Arizona. According to Munch, 34% of foreign-held agricultural land in Arizona is pastureland and 32% cropland with the remainder being other ag land.

Analyzing the quantity of reported foreign-investor-held U.S. agricultural land over time reveals a 27-million-acre increase (214%) in the four decades since AFIDA reports

were made available. This increase appears to be linked to increased global interest in renewable energy projects which has become a leading reason for purchases by foreign investors of U.S. ag land.

Between 2010 and 2021, foreign-investor-held agricultural land increased by 15.8 million acres, with cropland increasing at the highest percent (182%) with an additional 7.5 million acres, forestland increasing the highest numerically at 8.6 million acres (80%) and other ag land declining 3% or 240,000 acres.

"The vast majority of this land is owned by investors from nations considered friendly to the U.S., though data reporting limitations prevent us from accessing a precise breakdown," Munch wrote.

"Improvements to collection and enforcement would appear to be a meaningful way for consumers, farmers and policymakers alike to better understand this issue. Furthermore, understanding the sensitivities of each individual investor situation, their history, and the implications for agriculture regionally are all likely to be considerations for legislative or policy actions."

Munch breaks down foreign ownership data even further, including ownership from investors based in countries including Iran, Cuba and Russia in the full Market Intel report, available at [www.fb.org](http://www.fb.org).

In the meantime, Arizona Farm Bureau formed an ad hoc committee drawing from its ag leaders to begin work in 2024 to investigate the issue and determine what policy should come out of their work.



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# TAKING CONTROL OF THE WATER continued from Page 1

And lastly, now is the time to lead, act, and take control of the narrative. For the last several years, we have been on defense. We have fought off multiple regulatory frameworks in the legislature, and we have battled against INA petitions and AMA elections. We have countered multiple op-eds and defended our use in multiple arenas. In the last 25 years, I have sat in every type of water courtroom, from the court of public opinion in county planning meetings to the hearings of the navigability commission. I've sat at the expansive round tables of the Drought Contingency Plan, the Arizona Re-Consultation Committee, and most recently Governor Hobb's Water Policy Council. I've even sat in the hearing room of the Special Water Master to hear the defense of my own family's water use. At some point, they all feel like courtrooms because I always find myself in a position defending our use of water. I sit in rooms full of people who claim we are wasteful, greedy, and indifferent to the needs of Arizonans - making a case for our record of conservation and why using water for agriculture is the highest and best use. Think about that for a moment. As my good friend and water attorney David Brown describes it, "It's a meat grinder." And as in every battle of attrition, it's about which side wears down first. Who runs out of resources first? Who will tire and give up?

So here we are today, once again facing a choice. We have stepped away from the Governor's Council, a council where we were not being heard. Our seat at that table was clearly to provide a checkmark - a rubber stamp for a proposal we have rejected multiple times because it does not work for agriculture in rural Arizona. I think most of you know by now - I am not a rubber stamp. Arizona Farm Bureau is not a rubber stamp. We are a collection of voices, and now is the time for those voices to set the narrative!

What do I mean when I say now is the time to take control of the narrative? Although we are in the minority as individual votes - we will experience the greatest im-

pact from any new water regulations. We are the keepers of the watersheds; We have the attention of policymakers and the public; We have allies and champions in key, albeit tenuous, positions in the Statehouse; We see the landscape clearly and have solutions to offer.

What are we doing if we are not taking action in the best interest of the future generations on our farms and ranches? We can kill another proposal; we can kick the can down the road - who are we kicking the can to? What will be the circumstances they must tackle?

It is much easier to tear something down than to build something up. It is time for the Arizona Farm Bureau to pivot to offense and we are going to create a path forward. That is going to be hard. We are working with our champions in the legislature, we are seeking and taking perspective, and are developing solutions for our members that reflect who we are: We are independent but collaborative; We are diverse but share the same goals; We steward the soil and the water resources of entire landscapes, but we are also first and fifth generation family farms and ranches who persist and need security for our own futures; We are first in time, in many respects, but we are also fair of mind. There will be those who try to tear down what we create. That is the way of these things and I expect that to come from every direction. My hope is that as a member-driven organization, we can all unite behind our policy and drive this effort forward with the confidence of knowing that this is our time to lead.

Agriculture is essential to Arizona's prosperity and Arizona Farm Bureau is the Voice of Agriculture.

**Editor's Note:** This editorial was originally a speech given by President Smallhouse in November during the 102nd Arizona Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in Tempe.

## ARIZONA FARM BUREAU CELEBRATES ITS CENTURY FARMS AND RANCHES

### Staff Reports

Arizona Farm Bureau celebrated three families during its Annual Meeting in November that earned Century Farm and Ranch recognition, an evergreen program the organization will celebrate each year. We launched the Century Farm and Ranch Program to recognize those Farm Bureau members who have a Century farm or ranch. In our inaugural year and during our 100-year celebration in 2021 we recognized seven families, and in 2022 one family.

This year, Arizona Farm Bureau features three families, and they are all from the ranch side of the equation: Groseta, Klump and Ritter ranching families.

#### THE GROSETA FAMILY

The Dart W Ranch, in Yavapai County, belongs to the Groseta family and has for over 100 years. The ranch celebrated its centennial anniversary in 2022 and held an event to honor its long history in the Verde Valley.

In 1922 Pete Groseta Sr. quit working at the mine in Jerome and purchased the ranch in Middle Verde, raising cattle, sheep, chickens, turkeys, vegetable crops, and fruit trees, including alfalfa hay. In the 1920s and 1930s, their family ran cattle on the Verde River, between Cottonwood and Camp Verde.

Andy describes his grandparents and parents saying, "They were raised with a strong work ethic and that is the way they raised us." Both sets of grandparents came from Austria-Hungary through Ellis Island with only the clothes on their backs to chase the "American Dream," not speaking any English. They eventually ended up in Jerome

working in the copper mines.

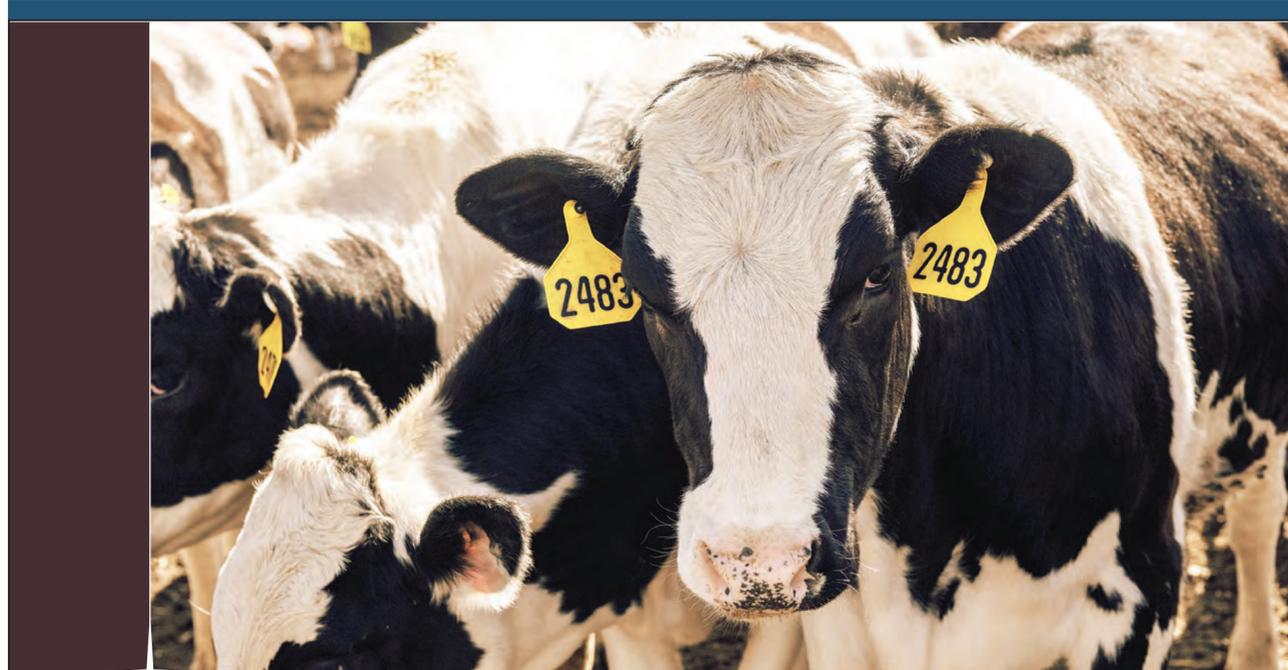


In June 2000 Andy purchased the W Dart from his parents. After graduating from the University of Arizona, he went on to teach Vocational Agriculture and FFA for eight years at Amphitheater High School in Tucson. Mary Beth is the daughter of Montana Ranchers. He and Mary Beth raised their three children Paul, Katy, and Anna at the old ranch headquarters in the Old Jordan house which was built in 1913.

Andy and Mary Beth have continued the family tradition of adding land holdings to the W Dart, and in 2003 they purchased the Aultman Pasture and are in the process of acquiring the Jerome Grazing allotment formerly known as Quail Springs Ranch.

Presently the W Dart consists of over 26,000 acres of deeded private lease, State Trust, and National Forest lands in the Verde Valley. With the addition of the Quail Springs Ranch, the ranch holdings increased to 45,000 acres of rangeland.

See **CENTURY FARMS AND RANCHES** Page 8



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## MENTOR PROTÉGÉ CAMP CLASS 3, PROFILE 1: SARAH KING AND JENNIFER KRENTZ

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Director of Strategic Communications

The CAMP mentor/protégé 2024 series begins with this first profile for Class 3 with Pima County rancher and Pima County Farm Bureau President Sarah King and NRCS employee, Jennifer Krentz. They have already met, and both have exchanged insights and appreciation for the experiences as is evident by their comments below.



Sarah King (left) and Jennifer Krentz's first meeting highlighted the coordinated work that is being accomplished through the Altar Valley Conservation Alliance.

With the launch of the Conservation Agricultural Mentoring Program (CAMP) in Arizona, in partnership with the Arizona Farm Bureau, The NRCS leadership team has been front and center in enthusiastically driving this unique mentoring partnership.

While several other states have the NRCS CAMP program, Arizona is unique in its partnership effort with the Arizona Farm Bureau.

The King Krentz partnership, along with all the mentor protégé partnerships for Class 3, works to understand Arizona agriculture and conservation opportunities, joining forces to provide firsthand experience of the conservation practices and agricultural happenings.

#### MENTOR: SARAH KING

**Talk about your first meeting.** Jen and I first met when we happened to bump into each other at an event. Our first time meeting up with the CAMP was on a brush management field trip near our ranch. Jen is easy to talk to and it's been fun to get to know her!

**Share specifics about what you got out of it as the rancher.** As an NRCS employee, Jen has a lot of knowledge about range management. Sharing knowledge and range management experience is huge and helps me with ranch management and my work for the Altar Valley Conservation Alliance. Jen also has a lot of connections and has already

facilitated knowledge sharing following our brush management workshop attendance. **For the remaining time with the program, what do you also hope to help with?** I look forward to getting to know Jen more throughout the CAMP program. I hope I can provide range management connections that help Jen in her NRCS role. And I hope I can share more about ranching and agriculture in Pima County!

#### PROTÉGÉ: JENNIFER KRENTZ

**What's been the biggest takeaway from your first gathering?** The biggest takeaway that I had from our first meeting was the incredible coordinated work that was being accomplished through the Altar Valley Conservation Alliance. We were able to look at brush management projects across several ranches, that through coordination, were creating a landscape scale effect for the area.

**How do you see this helping a broader set of NRCS employees? What's key for you?** I believe that the CAMP program helps the broader set of NRCS employees by providing them with an opportunity to better understand agriculture and the challenges and opportunities facing the industry. It also allows employees to better understand the agricultural lifestyle including business aspects, regulation, timing of operations, and the complexities of family businesses. Since I come from an agricultural background and have worked in conservation for many years, the key for me was to learn more about the area and the unique efforts, such as the Altar Valley Alliance, to collaborate on addressing resource concerns.

**Why have you felt this program has been helpful?** The area of the state that I work in has a group like the Altar Valley Alliance and the Malpai Borderlands Group. It has been helpful to see how a similar group is addressing concerns. It has also been great to be paired up with a producer who is a working ranch mom like me. It makes our conversation easy, fun and always laced with humor.

**What more do you hope to learn?** I hope to learn more about the projects within the Altar Valley Alliance. Learn more about Sarah's operation and how to better address the needs of producers like Sarah. I would also like to learn more about the challenges facing our state's agricultural producers from her perspective.



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# CENTURY FARMS AND RANCHES continued from Page 6

## THE KLUMP FAMILY

After serving in the Civil War, John Walter Klump and his partners, William Hurst, George Black, and August Kiehne drove cattle from Fredericksburg, Texas to Reserve, New Mexico in 1885. He wrote to his brother to tell him that he had moved his family there and to write to him as J. W. Wiley, and signed the letter "your brother, John Klump."



The partnership of Hurst, Black, Kiehne, and Wiley owned the "Y" Cattle Co., one of the largest ranches in New Mexico. Then, all was lost during the long drought of 1891 and 1892 and the Panic of 1893. Their ranch went into receivership and all their cattle had to be rounded up and sold in 1897.

J. W. was able to build up another herd of his own. He decided to move to a warmer climate and chose the Dos Cabezas mountain area in Arizona. He and his sons and some other cowboys

drove one thousand head of cattle from Reserve, New Mexico to Willcox in 1904. Then in 1905, the wettest year on record to this date, it rained so much that the whole area was flooded for months. By the time the rains quit, only 100 head of cattle could be found. In 1906, he brought his wife, Ruthie Belle, and most of their eleven children to property east of Willcox.

Only two years later, J.W. died of pneumonia. They were known as the Wiley family when they arrived and for many years afterward. Interestingly, most of them went back to the original last name of Klump. Over the years, Ruthie Belle and her grown children filed homesteads in the area. She remarried and was the head cook at the Mascot Mine.

J.W. and Ruthie Belle and many of the children in their large family began ranching and farming in the area, continuing the strong work ethic that started so long ago.

They even experienced a rough tragedy when their son, Roy Wiley, was shot and killed by the bartender in the Midway Saloon in Willcox in 1912.

Descendants of the four brothers, who had children, still live and work on the ranch.



The Klumps are now in the fifth generation to still be operating the ranch.

## THE RITTER FAMILY

The Ritter family's Ritter Ranch has been in their family for over 100 years. The Ritter Ranch officially began in 1913, though the family started ranching as early as 1868.

Their route to Arizona took some turns. It all began with a planned migration to California in the late 1860s from Texas, a stop in Arizona's Kirkland Valley and ultimately a

permanent home there that lasted until the present day. Yavapai County's Ritter Ranch dates to 1868 when Jacob Ritter established his headquarters ranch along the old freight road, between Prescott and Ehrenberg, about five miles Southeast of Hillside, Arizona.

The Ritter Ranch brand began as the upside down "T" and approximately 80 head of Shorthorn cattle he brought with him from California.

Originally from Illinois, Jacob Ritter's family moved to Texas while he was a boy. It was here that the family went into the cattle business near Amarillo, Texas. In 1858 he married Elizabeth Chowning of Amarillo. They were drawn to migrate further west because of the stories of fabulous wealth, especially on the West Coast in California. En route to California, they passed through Prescott and Kirkland Valley and first discovered the possibilities in Arizona. Though they made it to the West Coast they discovered they didn't like California, thus returning to Kirkland Valley. He ran his Arizona ranch until 1906 when he sold out to a syndicate and retired to live with his son, Will.

Presently the Ritters run a cow-calf operation raising American Wagyu beef, in addition to Registered Hereford Bulls.

Editor's Note: This program of Arizona Farm Bureau (AZFB) is evergreen. The organization will release the application every year and ask our Arizona farm and ranch families to apply if their family runs a century farm or ranch. Or go to azfb.org and look for the Century Farm and Ranch page under News and Resources.

## HOUSE SPEAKER SHARES HIS 2024 VISION

By Ben Toma (R-District 27), House Speaker

I want to express my gratitude to Arizona's farmers and ranchers for their ongoing support of common-sense policies at the state legislature. As we approach the upcoming legislative session, I want to reaffirm my commitment to Arizona's agricultural community, particularly in addressing crucial issues like water, border security, and energy costs in 2024 and beyond.

During the last legislative session, Republicans invested over \$360 million in projects aimed at helping fortify Arizona's water security. Notably, \$15 million was allocated to the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension for projects enhancing water efficiency for irrigated agriculture. This initiative demonstrates our dedication to sustainable water practices and the prosperity of our agricultural community.

Looking ahead, we have seen significant support from rural lawmakers, including Representatives Gail Griffin and Tim Dunn, to build on that support and increase water supplies for rural Arizona. I trust my fellow lawmakers to find the right solutions for Arizona that align with farmers' interests.

In my perspective, farmers and ranchers are the original conservationists, serving as stewards of our state's land and water resources for multiple generations to ensure a prosperous future for everyone.

While addressing critical issues such as the economy, inflation, education, and housing will be at the forefront of our legislative agenda, it is equally imperative to safeguard against harmful policies and government interventions that compromise the rural way of life.

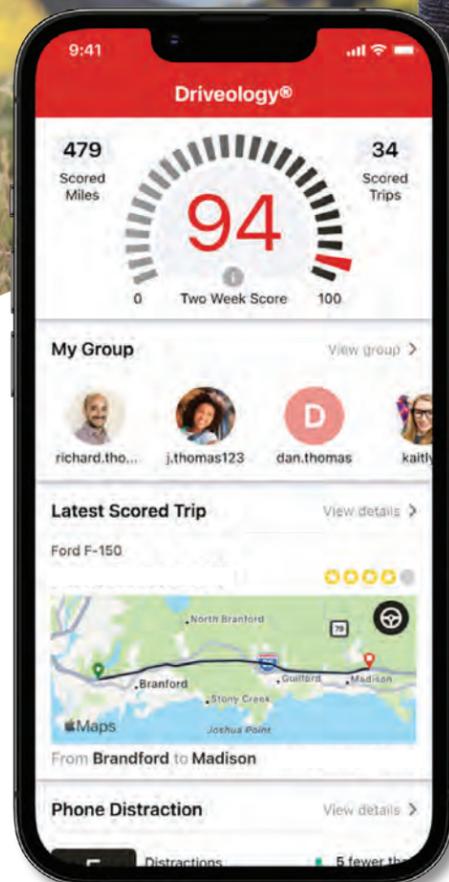
Agriculture contributes over \$23 billion in economic benefits annually to the state, yet Arizona's farmers and ranchers are confronting more threats today than any other industry. Our dairymen, cattlemen, and all other agricultural sectors, including wine, cotton, alfalfa, tree nuts, and fresh produce, are essential to ensuring the long-term health and prosperity of our state. Without these dedicated individuals and their families, Arizona would not be the thriving state it is today.

Agriculture is synonymous with family, a principle I deeply respect as a husband and father of five daughters. The majority of our state's farms and ranches are family-owned businesses, embodying the values that are fundamental to Arizona's way of life.

When I think about the challenges Arizona farmers and ranchers face, the uncertainties they navigate, and the sacrifices they make, I think about the importance of family and the legacy we leave for future generations. This includes the availability of jobs, the quality of education, and the affordability of necessities like food, energy, and housing.

Family is the driving force behind my dedication to these issues for Arizona, and I proudly consider Arizona's farmers and ranchers to be an integral part of our state's extended family.

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