

# Leader

An ArborOne Farm Credit Member Publication

Winter 2011

## A Time of Change



Jack W. Shuler

With nearly 40 years of employment with the Farm Credit System, I have decided to retire at the end of this year. I have been extremely fortunate to have had such a fabulous career serving local agriculture and rural America.

When I began working with the Farm Credit System, I certainly had no idea what a great decision I had made and that my working years would be almost entirely with one organization. I relocated to Florence in 1987 having worked in Columbia, Aiken,

Anderson, and Walterboro in South Carolina and two years in south Georgia.

The past 24 years in Florence have allowed me to know most of the Pee Dee area farmers and the communities in which you live. I am indebted to all of you for a wonderful, fulfilling career. I hope the service, the loans, and the patronage offered by your association have been helpful to you, allowing you to make your dreams a reality.

I want to thank the current board and past boards of ArborOne and the predecessor, Pee Dee Farm Credit, first for hiring me and then for your support as we worked through many issues the past years. Your guidance and direction have molded the successful, independent culture and operating philosophy we have at ArborOne.

To the employees, current and past, you are the best! As evidenced by consistently being named a "Best Place to Work" in South Carolina, you exemplify the meaning of exceptional customer service. Your dedication to exceeding the expectations of our owners speaks volumes. I am proud of ArborOne and my chest swells when I hear about your good work as I travel the state. Thank you employees of ArborOne for all you do for our association and owner-borrowers.

The board has followed our long placed succession plan and named Kathy Heustess as my successor. I hired Kathy in 1989 as controller in our operations/accounting area. It was easy early on to recognize her talent and ability. She rapidly moved to the position of Chief Financial Officer and for the past four years served as Chief Operation Officer, responsible for the daily operation of the association. Kathy is a native of Horry County, reared on a tobacco farm, received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Francis Marion University and has a Certified Public Account (CPA) designation in South Carolina.

Please join me in congratulating Kathy in her new duties as President and Chief Executive Officer of ArborOne.

Again I say, thanks to all of you for a great career at a great organization.

Jack W. Shuler  
Chief Executive Officer



Kathy Heustess

With any change there is inherently a measure of apprehension. The ArborOne board of directors and CEO Jack Shuler were bold and steadfast, while thoughtful, in their succession planning. I appreciate their commitment to ArborOne's well-being, independence, adherence to our cooperative principles and dedication to a succession plan that works! ArborOne is an extraordinary company. We are made up of owners and customers who are the backbone of America and employees who truly believe that what they do every day improves the lives of our customers. We are dedicated to serving you, by remaining independent and providing credit at competitive rates so that local farming needs can be provided for by local people who understand who you are and what you do. With these clear goals, we will continue to be good stewards of your company and capital.

Please join me in wishing a long, healthy and happy retirement to Jack Shuler, my boss of 22 years, who had faith in me from day one and throughout our entire working relationship. I owe much of my career's success to his constant belief and "push."

We now look forward to a new era at ArborOne, nothing fancy, just sticking to the basics! The economy will rebound over time and as farmers you all know that "risk" is a part of life. We recently provided a twelve month leadership training course to a group of employees; one of their projects was to research and prepare a presentation of the history of Farm Credit. The goal being that they would gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for Farm Credit's heritage, which they did. What I realized was that Farm Credit is just as vital a part of providing credit for agriculture today as when it was created by Congress 95 years ago! I will close with a story the group shared as told by Ronald Reagan while signing the Agricultural Credit Act of 1987. The story goes, while out in Las Vegas addressing the annual Farm Bureau meeting Reagan recalled, "...on my way into the hall, a fellow, one of the regular visitors in Las Vegas, asked me what was a bunch of farmers doing in a place like Las Vegas. And I couldn't resist. I said, 'Buster, they're in a business that makes a Las Vegas crap table look like a guaranteed annual income.'" Indeed, farmers know about risk!

As always, we remain ready to serve you. If you have any questions or issues, I am here, as are 51 other well-equipped and ready-to-serve fellow employees. We realize it's about you! I look forward to seeing and getting to know many more of you in the future.

Sincerely,

Kathy Heustess  
President

Leader is published for stockholders, directors and friends of ArborOne Farm Credit.

Address changes, questions, comments or requests for copies of the association's financial reports should be directed to ArborOne, ACA at 1-800-741-7332 or P.O. Box 3699, Florence, SC 29502. Contact us by e-mail: mdickson@arborone.com. Our quarterly financial statement can also be obtained from our Web site, www.ArborOne.com.

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# Step Up and Be a Leader

By Dr. David M. Kohl



Dr. David M. Kohl

While listening to side conversations traveling through airports, discussion at producer seminars, and at the community church picnic, everyone is asking, “Where has the leadership gone?” Whether you flip on

follow the soap opera politics playing out at all levels, leadership is being questioned.

Society and the world have become more fragmented by information and technology, which tends to create a loss of focus. In a world where economic volatility and speed of change are accelerating, the opportunities for success are plentiful; however, the opportunities for failure are also abundant. Proactive, strong leadership is essential to maintain focus.

## Leaders at All Levels

Leadership can be demonstrated in many forms at all levels given the situation or timing of an event. For some, leadership is shown by providing guidance to a 4-H project or FFA event, supporting the local rescue squad, or coaching a football or basketball league. Serving on church, community, or agricultural boards, or representing your industry locally, regionally, or nationally can be a context for leadership. Often an unusual event or emergency brings out the best leadership qualities of everyday normal people. However, for many the day-to-day interaction with family, employees, suppliers, and the community shows evidence of leadership and focus on success.

Great leadership is built on the art of communicating a vision, core value, or principle. Moreover, it involves inspiring a person or group of people with common values and ideals to create and pursue within their personal skill sets.

## The “Why” Connection

The foundation of great leadership is the “why” connection. I recently watched a video of Simon Sinek on the *TEDTalks* YouTube Channel in which he explained how leaders inspire action through the power of “why” (<http://youtu.be/qp0HIE3Sfl4>). The main idea of his message was that people connect with you when they believe what you believe, or have a similar purpose, motivation, or “why.” After sharing this video at a strategic planning conference of an agricultural cooperative, I asked the group a simple question. Why do you work for this particular agricultural cooperative? Many in the group thought responses would be picking up a paycheck or providing for the family.

To everyone’s surprise, we received a different set of responses. Many felt that it was empowering to work with farms engaged in producing food, fiber and fuel for a growing world population. Others stated they enjoyed having coworkers with similar beliefs and a work environment that is like family. Some stated their lives are enriched by the challenge and fun of helping agricultural producers solve problems. One person stated that he enjoys working in this business because the people are more important than the quarterly financial bottom line. The special relationships that they have with their customers rank much higher than a paycheck.

One quality that all great leaders possess is the ability to connect with people by establishing a common purpose.



The leadership of this management team suddenly realized that the connection between employees and customers who have very similar “whys” set them beyond the status quo of the competition. Knowing the “whys” took them to another level. As a matter of fact, this organization now has established a “why statement” that speaks from the heart and goes beyond the traditional mission, vision, and core values. The same can apply to your situation whether it is work, family, or a community setting. Effective leaders are able to connect with people who have a similar purpose, cause or belief.

## Key Elements of Leadership

Over the years I have been in a position to examine many outstanding leaders while involved in athletics, teaching, and facilitating numerous agricultural groups. The following list, though not exhaustive, provides key elements of leadership that I have observed.

- Building a team on a single purpose, vision, and focus
- Knowing how to gain commitment of others with goals and actions
- Creating an environment of empowerment
- Thinking and acting independently and creatively, but also gaining consensus with balanced input

- Remaining believable and positive, while understanding the capabilities of others
- Praising, reinforcing, critiquing, and sometimes working through others as agents of change
- Making others better, lifting, and enriching lives

Many great leaders never forget their roots; they are humble and always remember the people who got them where they are today. Good leaders tend to be superior listeners and observers of people’s verbal and nonverbal communication.

They know how to motivate others and realize that each individual is unique, having special experiences and talents that, if unlocked, can make them blossom. Outstanding leaders never forget that change starts bottom-up, not top-down, and they value people and input from the front lines.

What is fun to observe about great leaders is some are fiery like Bob Knight, while others are quiet and subtle, but passionate. One quality that all great leaders possess is the ability to connect with people by establishing a common purpose. Sometimes leaders can be subservient, or engaged with people in an activity side-by-side, “walking the talk.” However, they are keen on the art of connecting with the minds and the hearts of others to further a common cause with balance and common sense.

Agriculture and rural America have many of the old-time values that have made America great. It is up to all of us to be advocates for our industry and cultivate an environment that sets us beyond the status quo. Being leaders by connecting and communicating the “whys” from our day-to-day tasks on farms to working with families, employees, consumers, and stakeholders in our industry is imperative to lead the industry forward. Agriculture has been and will always be the foundation of the pyramid of success of our country. Are you ready to step up and be a leader? ☺

## South Carolina Farmer Wins Regional Conservation Award

The American Soybean Association (ASA) is pleased to announce that E. Cullen Bryant of Bryant Farms in Dillon, SC, has won the 2012 South Region Conservation Legacy Award. Bryant will be presented with an award on March 2, 2012, at the ASA Awards Banquet at Commodity Classic in Nashville, TN.

The Conservation Legacy Awards Program is a national program designed to recognize outstanding environmental and conservation achievements by US soybean farmers. Selection is based on each farmer's environmental and economic efforts on their farm. Judges look for dedication to the land through cropland management practices, farmstead protection, and conservation and environmental management. There are three regional winners, from which a national winner will be chosen and announced at the Awards Banquet in March 2012.

Bryant Farms is an innovative entity dedicated to addressing resource concerns that improve and/or compliment the farm conservation objectives including soil retention; reducing or eliminating nutrient contaminants reaching our streams and rivers; improving the forest by reducing or containing wildfires and wildlife habitat improvements concentrating on improving the quail population. Bryant is a strong supporter and participant in the Conservation Reserve Program, the Environmental Quality Incentive Program and the Conservation Stewardship Program.

For Bryant's farming operation, "Conservation is all about being sustainable, both economically and environmentally, so we are able to pass on the natural riches God has blessed us with to future generations." Bryant Farms is active in its community, hosting several educational activities including South Carolina Farm Bureau Ag in the Classroom Summer Teacher Institute and Farm City Week. Bryant Farms also plants a garden to support the local food bank and has helped develop a garden for the Master Gardener Program.

Along with the American Soybean Association, the Conservation Legacy Awards Program is co-sponsored by the United Soybean Board, BASF, Monsanto and the Corn & Soybean Digest.

ArborOne Farm Credit congratulates Cullen Bryant for the well-deserved award! ☺



## ArborOne couple attends 2011 Cooperative Education Conference for Couples

Catherine and Matthew Johnson of Galivants Ferry, SC, had the opportunity to network with cooperative leaders from several southern states while attending the 2011 Cooperative Education Conference for Couples, held August 5-7 at Pawleys Plantation Golf & Country Club in Pawleys Island, S.C. A total of thirty-one couples from Georgia, North and South Carolina and Virginia attended the Conference.

The conference provides an opportunity for future community leaders to learn more about the cooperative way of doing business. The information they receive at the conference can help prepare them to serve on advisory councils or boards of directors of their local cooperatives.

General session and break-out session presenters were from across the states represented. Craig Scroggs with USDA - Rural Development, Georgia, led a session on cooperative basics; Van McCall with AgSouth Farm Credit Bank and McCall Ministries served as the keynote speaker at the opening session and presented a seminar on personal financial planning; and Debbie Turbeville, USDA - Rural



Development, South Carolina, moderated Board Case Studies, a session where attendees discussed and made decisions for issues faced by real cooperative boards.

This year's break-out sessions included presentations from Farm Credit, Dairy Farmers of America, Southern States Cooperative, and electric cooperatives.

Sponsored by ArborOne Farm Credit, the Johnsons have a turf, mulch and timber operation in Galivants Ferry, SC. ☺

## Association News



In honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, ArborOne employees could pay \$20 and wear jeans every Friday in October. We also had pink t-shirts made "Supporting the Cause!" More than \$500 was raised for the Susan G. Komen Institute for Cancer Research.

Best Places <sup>in SC</sup> to WORK 2011

Once again, we were named one of the "Best Places to Work in SC" and had the honor of being the "Best" place to work in the Pee Dee.

### Aim-At-Ag Sporting Clays Tournament

ArborOne's Talent Management Group put together a wildly successful sporting clays fundraiser for FFA and 4-H of South Carolina. Shooters came from across the state—representing 35 different cities—to participate. Over \$19,000 was raised that will be split between these two statewide organizations.

#### Class A

- 1st Pel Bradford (high overall score 92)
- 2nd Henry McFadden
- 3rd Rick Meyers

#### Class B

- 1st Carlile Timmons
- 2nd Brett Oltremari
- 3rd John Kirby

#### Class C

- 1st Drew Floyd
- 2nd Paul Phillips
- 3rd Pat Brown

#### Winning youth team:

Team 3 - Huston Hamer, Adam Wiley, and Cody Gasque.

#### Youth Individual:

- 1st Matthew Rountree (score 87)
- 2nd Cody Gasque (score 83)
- 3rd Adam Willey (score 77)



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## Holidays

*ArborOne Farm Credit Offices are Closed*

Christmas	December 26
New Year's Day	January 2
Martin Luther King Day	January 16
Presidents' Day	February 20

## Save the Date ...

Mark your calendar now for the 2012 Commodity Marketing & Risk Management Meeting, Thursday, January 12, 2012, at the Pee Dee Research & Education Center (Clemson Extension) on Pocket Road in Florence. We are pleased to offer agribusiness producers and farmers another interesting program examining a variety of important issues that impact your family's farming future. This program is free and a sponsored lunch is provided. Registration begins at 8:30am (coffee & donuts) and the opening session at 9:00. This will be a great opportunity to hear a diverse group of agribusiness professionals address the main issues affecting your business. Be watching for an agenda on our website, [www.ArborOne.com](http://www.ArborOne.com). This event is brought to you by: ArborOne Farm Credit, Nationwide Agribusiness – McLean – Marechal Insurance, Palmetto Grain Brokerage and Clemson Cooperative Extension.

## Think Gators Only Live in Florida?



*David and Druann Freeman had a great alligator season. Druann's gator, above, was the "small" one; David's, on the right, was 12 feet long and weighed between 600-700 lbs!*



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