

Leader

A Colonial Farm Credit Member Publication

2020 - Issue 2

A Message From Paul



*Paul Franklin
President,
Colonial Farm Credit*

On September 7th, we suffered a tragic loss with the passing of Jessica Hynson Cruise. Jessica was the Branch Manager of our Tappahannock office. Her leadership, strong spirit and positive energy brought joy to all of us. Our prayers and condolences go to Jessica's family. We were truly blessed to work with her.

This has been a difficult year in ways that we could not have imagined, but our team continues to work hard and work together. We continue to see positive financial results that will help our ability to deliver patronage refunds. Year to date net income (unaudited, through 9/30) is \$10.65 million and exceeds our budget. New customer activity has been very strong.

Director and nominating committee elections were held in September via mail ballot. Many of you had active roles that ensure that we have sound governance of your cooperative by serving on the nominating committee, agreeing to run for a position, and casting your ballots. Congratulations to Wayne Kirby (Hanover County), Jeff Griffith (Anne Arundel County) and Bill Henley (King and Queen County) on their election to our board of directors. Please see the list of 2021 nominating committee members below.

One of our most tenured board members, John F. (Johnny) Davis, retired this past September. Johnny served on our board for 15 years. He held many leadership roles for our cooperative, including Audit Committee Chair, and he retired as our Board Chair. Johnny's attention to detail and guidance led to decisions that will benefit us for many years to come. His leadership has been instrumental in helping us navigate through these difficult times. Johnny, we want to wish you all the best. Thank you for your service on our board of directors.

Also, after many years of service with us, Shaun Norr (Loan Processing and Closing Specialist in Mechanicsville) retired earlier this year. I want to thank Shaun for her hard work and dedication to our organization. She set the bar high with her performance and customer service. Shaun, we miss seeing you every day, but we will stay in touch!

Scholarship applications to the Colonial Agricultural Educational Foundation (CAEF) opened November 1st. The CAEF will be starting a new memorial scholarship to honor Jessica Hynson Cruise. I encourage students to mark your calendars and get started on your applications early.

Throughout the pandemic, we have remained open by appointment to serve everyone's needs. Many of our employees continue to work remotely to ensure adequate social distancing. Despite the challenges of remote work, we have made more loans this year than we made at this point last year. Our team has shown remarkable adaptability and resiliency throughout the past seven months. I am grateful to be working with a group so committed to serving our customers.

As always, if you have any new loan or loan servicing needs, do not hesitate to contact your relationship manager. While we are open by appointment, we also encourage you to use our online services, phone and email to contact us. You can check the status of our offices at any time by visiting www.colonialfarmcredit.com.

Thank you for allowing us to serve you.



Paul

Nominating Committee Members

The following members were elected to next year's Nominating Committee:

- Parran B. Briscoe and Dwight S. Forrester (district 1)
- L. Fred Browning and Bruce G. Taylor (district 2)
- Joel B. Gilman and Richard M. Watkins, Jr. (district 3)
- Daniel Edward Glenn, Jr. and Phillip E. Whitlow (district 4)
- Dixie Watts Dalton and Marvin Lewis Everett, III (district 5)
- Stephen W. Berryman and Charles H. Owen (district 6)

In Memoriam – Jessica Hynson Cruise



Colonial Farm Credit was devastated to learn of the sudden passing of Tappahannock branch manager Jessica Cruise on September 7, 2020. She is survived by her husband Justin Cruise, her son John Everett Cruise, her parents Julie and Allen Hynson, and many loving family members and friends.

Jessica grew up on Cottage Farm in Oak Grove and lived in the Northern Neck of Virginia for most of her life. She graduated from Washington and Lee High School and Virginia Tech with a Bachelor's of Science in Agriculture and Applied Economics in 2005. She began her Colonial Farm Credit career, shortly after graduation, on July 1, 2005. She was the Hughesville branch manager from October 2012 until transitioning "home" to Tappahannock branch manager in May 2014.

Jessica was loyal and kind, and a devoted wife, mother, and daughter. She was well known for working hard to make her customers, friends,

and family happy, and she was a strong advocate in the agricultural community. She enjoyed watching Virginia Tech football, assisting with her son's T-ball teams, and being with her family. Her Virginia Tech friends nicknamed her "Sunny," as she was adventuresome and lived life to the fullest, often smiling while saying, "Let's do it!" She was active in Farm Bureau and VA Young Farmers, St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Oak Grove, the Tideneck Chapter of Virginia Tech Alumni, and Sigma Alpha professional sorority.

A \$2,000 endowment in Jessica's memory is being established through the Colonial Agricultural Educational Foundation. Tax-deductible donations to support the endowment may be made in her memory by sending a check to the Colonial Agricultural Educational Foundation at 7104 Mechanicsville Turnpike, Mechanicsville, VA 23111 or dropping off a check at any Colonial Farm Credit office.

Honey River Farm



Brian Clements and Cyndi Knudson, owners of Honey River Farm in White Stone, Virginia, are winners of one of the 2020 Farmer Veteran Coalition Fellowship Fund grants. Farm Credit partners with the Farmer Veteran Coalition, an organization dedicated to mobilizing veterans to feed America by helping them embark on careers in agriculture. The Farmer Veteran Fellowship Fund is a small grant program that provides direct assistance to veterans who are beginning their careers as farmers or ranchers. They use the Fellowship Fund to purchase items that the farmer veterans themselves have identified will make a critical difference in the launch of their farm business.

Awards range from \$1,000 to

\$5,000, and more than \$1.9 million has been awarded to veterans since 2011. With their Fellowship Fund grant, Brian and Cyndi were able to purchase a bottling machine that will fill jars to exact measurements, making honey bottling more accurate, cleaner, and faster. Currently, each jar of honey is manually bottled.

Located on 13 acres on the bluffs of the Rappahannock River, Honey River Farm was officially started in 2019 with ten beehives and plans to increase to 40 hives with additional acreage in 2021. They also have hives in Virginia Beach. Honey River Farm is conveniently located next to woods and farm fields, allowing the bees to pollinate local crops. They are beginning to plant trees, such as basswood, sourwood and locust, for forage that will produce different varieties of honey. Pest control is a big part of hive management and they are committed to using all-natural control methods. This had led to all kinds of discoveries including the use of Swiffer sheets for hive beetle trapping.

Cyndi and Brian have worked hard to create a brand around Honey River and they have recently received their official trademark. From branded t-shirts with catchy phrases to custom etched travel coffee mugs, their honey has already made a name for itself. Each jar contains small batch honey, which is pulled every two weeks to ensure optimal flavor and freshness. Cyndi and Brian take their small batch honey a step further with etched glass jars and sealable wooden lids in the shape of a hexagon that has the type of honey burned into the wooden top.

Their premium honey is sold as pure honey or with the comb and they have also expanded into flavor infused and hot honeys. They are collaborating with a lavender farm in nearby Gloucester County to offer lavender-infused honey. Their honey is mainly sold at a local farm market store, and a local donut shop features their honey on its pistachio honey donut. Cyndi says, "It is a lot to manage, but the community here has been terrific, and we have sold all the honey we could make."

Brian retired in 2005 from his service in the Navy as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician and he is currently employed by the Navy as a government service employee in Virginia Beach. Both he and Cyndi are very involved in the national and local chapters of the Farmer Veteran Coalition. "Being involved in the Farmer Veteran Coalition has been very helpful for networking and asking questions about our operation," Brian said.

Cyndi previously worked in the area for Virginia Tech extension and was in Michigan for 10 years involved with a CSA and kept honey bees there. Brian and Cyndi took part in the *Heroes To Hives* program at Michigan State University which assists veterans by getting them involved with beekeeping.

The COVID pandemic has presented both challenges and opportunities for Honey River Farm. In addition to plans to expand hives, Cyndi and Brian are also in the process of adding a building that will have a woodshop and honey processing downstairs and living space upstairs. Rising construction costs during the pandemic has pushed those plans back a bit. In addition to Honey River Farm, Cyndi also works for the Christmas Tree Promotion Board, the national promotion and research organization funded by North American Christmas tree growers, and serves on the chapter re-organization committee for Farmer Veteran Coalition of Virginia.

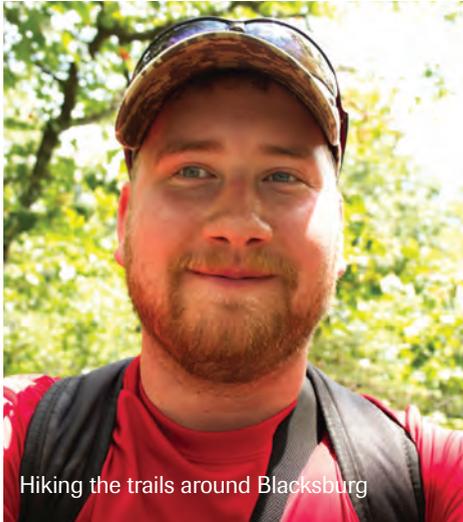
The Farmer Veteran Coalition offers many benefits to veteran farmers. Along with the Fellowship Fund grants, the FVC provides networking connections and educational opportunities across the country. However, with most conferences and meetings being virtual this year, Brian and Cyndi have found it easier to attend such things even with their busy schedules. The pandemic has also forced both of them to learn the benefits of social media sooner than expected, but they have adapted quickly to the challenge, growing a following on both Instagram and Facebook.



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@HONEYRIVERFARM**



Catching Up With A Scholarship Recipient



Hiking the trails around Blacksburg



Me with my pig during my 4-H days

Alex Fuge – Virginia Beach, VA

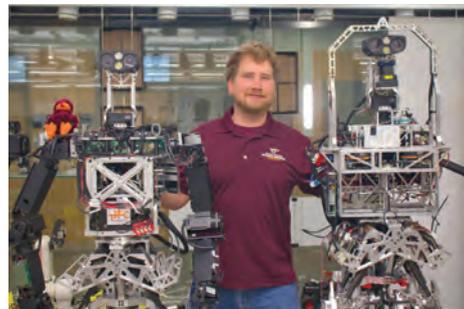
It has been my honor to be a recipient of the Colonial Agricultural Educational Foundation scholarship as I have been traversing my way through college. I first received a CAEF scholarship when I started at Tidewater Community College and again when I moved on to Virginia Tech for Mechanical Engineering. I received my Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering in 2017 and continued on to work on a Master's Degree in both Mechanical Engineering and Business Administration. I am thankful for the scholarships that I have received over the years from the Foundation as they have helped to create opportunities for me to work in more research labs and develop my skills as an engineer.

Growing up in Virginia Beach, I was an active member of the Virginia Beach 4-H Livestock Club. Through my amazing years with the club, I enjoyed both great people and animals while gaining leadership experience as president for two years. I attended 4-H Congress at Virginia Tech a couple of times throughout my years in 4-H, which during one trip I was inducted as a 4-H All-Star. While attending Congress, I knew Virginia Tech was the school for me and set my goals on attending VT no matter what.

As I moved forward with my education, my love for agriculture and all that farmers do has stuck with me and I have sought out projects that are agriculture related. My mechanical engineering capstone project was the development of a fully

autonomous seeding system that could be sold at a reasonable cost. The system was designed to be a fully autonomous seeding implement, with the farmer being able to supervise operations from a computer or tablet. Under my direction, my team developed a prototype with a system that was able to navigate a field, track what was planted, and monitor the seeds being dispensed. Our goal was to target small farms with an affordable, easy to use piece of equipment. Although our team did not place at the AgBot competition in Indiana that year, a later team brought home first place for Virginia Tech using our platform design.

I continued to work on various research projects in robotic development leading to my current project and master's thesis of creating ATHENA (All Terrain Humanoid for Emergency Navigation Assistance). ATHENA is the next generation of humanoid robot that has been developed in our lab to work in a multirole status. This robot's capabilities will allow it to work on rescue operations or doing everyday human tasks. ATHENA has the potential to drive



In the TREC lab at VT with two of my friends (THOR and ESCHER)

down the cost of humanoid robots that in the future could be used for harvesting items picked by hand, cleaning grain bins, or other odd jobs around the farm. This robot has been in development for two and a half years with the goal to bring it fully operational by the end of Spring 2021. This design emphasizes the ability for lower cost fabrication methods that corrects the reason for slower adoption of humanoid robots. I have worked as a researcher for the TREC lab for four years and currently, hold the position of head mechanical design and robot structures engineer.

As I am finishing my Mechanical Engineering program, I am working toward a master's in business administration specifically targeting business analytics. With this degree my hope is to combine the skills I have learned in engineering with the ability to take business data to drive change. With this program I have been given the opportunity to work as a consultant for NASA to help develop their training programs. The purpose of this project is to create curriculum for NASA managers and engineers who desire to learn about machine learning and artificial intelligence.

I have had many amazing opportunities and meaningful learning experiences and I am thankful for the help of the CAEF scholarships that were awarded to me and the opportunities that it has allowed me to pursue throughout my education. In the future, I may be at NASA helping to develop robots to use in space for food development or working here on earth to further automate farming to create less work for the farmer. It is my hope to automate agriculture in new ways to make things easier for those that work the hardest.



CAEF Scholarship Reminder - Applications are now open!

Visit colonialfarmcredit.com/scholarships to apply.

Applications will be open through March 1, 2021



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Are you thinking about purchasing land NOW as a safe investment, for a future home site, or vacation paradise? Give Farm Credit a call today and let us help you along the path to ownership.

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- Work with a local relationship manager during the entire process and after closing
- If building on the land, there is no deadline on when you have to start construction – we also offer owner-managed and builder – managed construction
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Colonial In The Community

Food Bank Donation



Colonial Farm Credit, Farm Credit of the Virginias, and MidAtlantic Farm Credit made a collaborative sponsorship totaling \$50,000 to the Federation of Virginia Food Banks to support their participation in the USDA's Farmer to Families Food Box Program. The Farmers to Families Food Box Program was established by the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) to support producers negatively impacted by the pandemic. More than 75 million food boxes of fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products and meat products have been distributed to food insecure families in the United States. The collaborative donation made by the three Virginia Farm Credit associations will fund the Federation of Virginia Food Banks' transportation and cold storage expenses associated with the Farmers to Families Food Box Program.

Eddie Oliver, Federation of Virginia Food Banks Executive Director, shared, "Time and again our partners at Farm Credit have stepped up to the plate and supported our work in meaningful ways. Partners like Farm Credit are essential to our work in the state. With their help and support we are able to better ensure that Virginian's have access to healthy meals year-round."

Holly Fork Farm Camp



Colonial Farm Credit provided water and door prizes for the Holly Fork Farm day camp in August where kids had four fun filled days of farm education.

State Fair Pavillion



Colonial Farm Credit, along with Farm Credit of the Virginias and MidAtlantic Farm Credit, is partnering with the State Fair of Virginia to build a modern livestock show facility at The Meadow Event Park. The 42,000-square-foot Farm Credit Pavilion will be partially enclosed and include 675 square feet of climate-controlled offices and restrooms. "We are thrilled to be able to support the State Fair of Virginia and particularly the youth that they serve," said Paul Franklin. A modified State Fair Youth Livestock Show was held in the new pavilion in October and it is expected to be completely finished by the end of November.

Hanover Vegetable Farm



Colonial Farm Credit sponsored outdoor music at Hanover Vegetable Farm this fall.



Colonial Farm Credit
7104 Mechanicsville Tnpk
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Employee News

Please join us in welcoming these employees to the Colonial Farm Credit family!



Kirby Lingenfelter

began employment on August 17, 2020 as a loan officer in our Tappahannock office. Kirby graduated Magna Cum Laude from Virginia Tech with dual Bachelor degrees in Agribusiness Management and Crop and Soil Environmental Science, with a minor in Global Food Security and Health. While at Virginia Tech, she was actively involved in Sigma Alpha (professional agricultural sorority); Ducks Unlimited (served as Vice-President and Historian); and the Clay Target Team; and

performed undergraduate research involving the effects of feeding hull-less barley on production performance and digestibility with dairy cattle. Additionally, she studied abroad in South Africa with a focus on wildlife conservation and agriculture.



Jessica Williams

began employment in our Hughesville office, on October 12, 2020 as a loan specialist. Jessica is enrolled in the College of Southern Maryland where she anticipates earning her Associates in Accounting in 2021. She resides in Charles County, Maryland, and was previously employed by Platinum Landscape and Design as a bookkeeper.



Madison Goodman

began employment on September 8, 2020 as a loan officer in our Hughesville office. Madison recently graduated from Virginia Tech with a Bachelor degree in Agribusiness Management, with a minor in Animal and Poultry Science. She was actively involved in the Agronomy Club while at Virginia Tech. She also has been active in the Hanover Livestock 4-H Club and has been a member of the Mid-Atlantic and National Red Angus Associations.



Kimberly Singleton Marsh

began employment in our Mechanicsville office as a loan specialist on November 2, 2020. Kimberly was previously employed as a loan documentation specialist at Essex Bank and she resides in King William County, Virginia.



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