

Getting to Know Board Member Dallis Basel District 5 President

Q: Tell us about your ranch?

A: I own the ranch where I grew up, near Union Center. Our son, Ryan Lamont and his wife, Shilo also run our cattle on that ranch today. They run their cattle on adjoining land. My wife, Tammy and I also run livestock on her family's land, which we own about 15 miles away.

We raise sheep and cattle. Today our cattle herd is mostly a commercial cow/calf herd, but we have some registered Red Angus. We also raise hay, oats, sorghum and millet – mostly forage crops that we can bale.

I'm at least a fourth-generation livestock producer, but probably much more than that because my mom can trace her family back almost to the Mayflower – they just kept moving West.

Q: What challenges have you faced on your operation and how have you made it through?

A: About the time our son came home, we entered a drought cycle. We had to cut back herd numbers to get through.

Pasture management and balancing our cattle and sheep numbers has been key to maximizing our pastureland. To get more production out of each acre we use intensive grazing management.

The fact that the current farm bill included livestock indemnity programs helped us since we did lose some cattle to Storm Atlas.

Currently we are working to develop a transition plan for our son. As part of that, we are all taking a ranch management course together. I took a similar course about 30 years ago and it was very helpful.

Q: How did you become involved in Farmers Union?

A: My dad, Ellis, was involved in Farmers Union most of his life. Tammy I didn't get very involved until our son came back to the ranch about 10 years ago. Now that he is here to help if we are away, we have more time to get involved.

We appreciate the way that Farmers Union is geared to small operations like ours and that the organization advocates for issues that impact us.

Q: What issues are you concerned about?

A: I think a lot about the next generation of farmers and ranchers. It's not easy getting started. This is why I feel Farmers Union educational programming is so important. It's a great way for young producers to network with other producers.

I didn't go to college, so I missed out on networking with other producers throughout the state when I was getting started. I've found that Farmers Union programming provides many great networking opportunities.

Networking with other producers is so important because it opens your eyes to what's out there. I think it is easy to get into a rut where you put up hay, feed hay, calve and fix fence – pretty soon that's all you do or think about and you forget to seek out other opportunities.

COOL is another issue that I think is very important. I feel we should be able to label the product we produce.