

2015

Nicole Fansler

Nicole is a 7th generation farmer in Hardy county where she owns and operates Nicole Fansler Livestock & Flat Hill Poultry. Nikki is a licensed livestock dealer and she has a feeder cattle order buying business where she buys calves that have been weaned and backgrounded to send to Midwestern feedlots. Nicole enjoys helping local farmers by promoting West Virginia feeder cattle through her order buying business. She has also been a licensed weighmaster through the WV Department of Agriculture for over 20 years and has been employed at several livestock auction markets throughout the years.

Nicole's interest and involvement in the livestock industry began at a very young age when her grandfather gave her a cow in order to start her herd when she was four years old. Currently she has 80 crossbred commercial cows and 20 replacement heifers. Through education and advice from livestock experts, she has been able to improve her herd using EPS, performance tested bulls and carcass data. Nikki also backgrounds several loads of stocker cattle throughout the year, and she assists her parents with their stocker/backgrounding operation, cowherd and farming operation.

As an FFA project in high school, Nicole raised poultry under contract. Upon graduating college, she built two chicken houses with a combined flock capacity of 64,000 birds and currently raises broilers for George's Poultry.

Nicole has been able to continue to expand her farm and livestock business. Nicole also coaches livestock and poultry judging teams, assists with the local FFA Ham, Bacon and Egg Sale, as well as fundraising events for FFA and 4-H clubs.

Nicole believes, "The future of agriculture lies within the hands of our youth. We need to teach and encourage the next generation of agricultural stewards."

Nicole lives in Mathias with her two children, Jackie and Jacob, and her fiancé John.

Jennifer "Tootie" Hill Jones

Both sides of Tootie's family are deeply rooted in agriculture and have made significant contributions to farming and cattle in West Virginia and beyond. Family beef and dairy operations provided her adolescent education and inspired what she has followed her entire life. From the back of a horse, she has studied and worked on ranches in North America, South America, Europe and the far West Indies learning about land, grazing, cattle, meat and the culture of that life. This helped develop her understanding of genetic origin, forages, unique qualities and a great zeal for cultural food influences. An education dotted in forestry, geology, pre-veterinary, bovine and equine reproduction, theology, marketing and training as a wilderness guide, she found her heartfelt commitment high on a Utah mountain. She came home and has passed that education forward by supporting and redeveloping farming, food and cultural economy "to my people of the Appalachia."

Tootie owns and manages Swift Level Farm and Swift Level Land and Cattle. She is absolutely committed and passionate in her efforts to regenerate fertile soil, lush and abundant forages and to produce healthy, slaughter steers that are finished on "all grass," which she markets to many restaurants and homes across the country.

Due to her efforts with conservation practices on the farm, Swift Level was awarded the 2014 Greenbrier District Conservation Farm and was runner-up for the WV State Conservation Farm of the Year.

Tootie's commitment to agriculture is very noticeable as she works with and is a member of several agriculture organizations throughout the area, such as the Greenbrier Valley Pasture Network, WV Food and Farm Coalition, WVDA Rural Rehab Loan Committee, the NC Choices Women in the Meat Business and many others.

Tootie operates Swift Level Farm with her two children, Rece and Everett, both are very involved running the diverse seasonal event schedule, the farm dinners and tours, educational programs and many fundraising events. According to Tootie, "I couldn't do this without them!" And there is now a new generation at Swift Level making it a 5th generation farm.

Sherrie Hutchinson

Sherrie received her BS in Botany from Marshall University and then a MS in Forestry Protection from Duke University. Upon graduation, she worked as a part-time summer employee in the WVDA's Plant Pest Control Division as a laboratory technician.

During Sherrie's 35 and a half years at the WV Department of Agriculture, she worked several jobs from sorting insect trap collections as a laboratory technician, recommending control measures for pest problems as a plant pest biologist, conducting insect surveys for native and non-native forest pests as a forest entomologist, planning and assisting with native and non-native insect and disease surveys for forest and agricultural crops, conducting division programs and personnel management. Sherrie worked in many sections of the WVDA Plant Industries Division; Pest Identification Lab, Forest Health Protection Program, Agriculture Pest Survey Program and ended her career with the WVDA as the Director of Plant Industries Division in October 2013.

Sherrie is happiest when she is outdoors and considers herself blessed that she was able to spend a lot of time doing field work conducting insect and disease surveys all over the state. Some of these surveys included emerald ash borer, oak leaf tier, beech bark disease, soybean rust and others. She also coordinated and conducted biological control releases for emerald ash borer.

The farm now provides for her family via their bees, chickens, ducks, vegetable garden and wood lot where they cut firewood for winter use. Sherrie is an avid gardener and does a lot of canning with her sister. Sherrie often says she gets antsy by springtime and starts vegetable plants from seeds in order to get plants out as early as she can to start grubbing around in the garden.

She resides in Ripley with her husband, Hutch, who also worked at the WVDA. They have four children which they raised on their farm, Hutch & Sons Apiary.

Margaret Woodworth

Margaret's love for agriculture began with her upbringing on a beef farm in Randolph County. She earned her BS in Agriculture from WVU and then worked for Farmers Home Administration in Washington, D.C. as an employee development specialist, and special assistant to the associate administrator. After leaving Farmers Home, Margaret helped form the Farm Credit System Assistance Board. In 1991, missing the rural life of West Virginia, she transferred back home and joined the WV Farmers Home Administration Team as a Program Analyst in Morgantown. After getting married to Rick and moving to Burlington, she began working as an assistant county supervisor while continuing many of her duties as Program Analyst until she left the agency in 1996.

After her move back to the farm and having her first child, Margaret ended up becoming "the new farm hand." From that point on, things began to really grow. She and Rick moved the "Produce Stand" to the store's current location and sold their beef along with produce. In 2001, a deli and grill was added, and in 2002, the processing

facility. In 2006, the store grew with the addition of the restaurant and larger retail meat cases. Off-premise catering adds another dimension to the business. In 2010, construction was completed on the USDA-inspected slaughter facility.

The farm has continued to raise its cow numbers. Currently, they have 450-head of cattle consisting of cow/calf pairs, replacement heifers, market/feedlot cattle, feeder calves and bulls. In addition to their own farm, they rent three additional farms.

Flying W Farms produce is sold in their store, The Mountain Fresh Producers Farmer Market and they also have wholesale customers.

Margaret has continually been involved and supported 4-H and FFA programs where children are taught to strive in the agricultural arena, strongly believing in supporting our future agricultural leaders.

Margaret lives in Burlington with her husband, Rick, and their three children, Jessica, Will and Don. They are a fifth generation family farm with focuses on sustainability, food safety and seasonality.