

Long hours passed down through generations

By KRISTIN PITTS
Staff Writer

Hertford farmer Michael Moore doesn't really have a set schedule. He doesn't clock in or clock out, doesn't spend his day in a cubicle, and certainly doesn't worry about a boss looking over his shoulder.

What Moore does is a little more complex than all that.

On a typical day, Moore is up by 5:30 a.m. He spends his day on his 550-acre farm, where he works until dark. Often, most notably during the narrow window in which he's allotted to plant cotton, he works backbreaking hours.

His workday is often out of his control. Most days, the weather calls the shots.

As a result, Moore can't say for certain what his day might look like two weeks from now, one week from now, or even tomorrow.

But he wouldn't have it any other way.

"A nine-to-five job just don't appeal to me. Even through the bad years, I'd still rather be farming," Moore said.

Like most area farmers,



STAFF PHOTO BY BRETT A. CLARK

Michael and Antoine Moore talk about life on a family farm at their farm in Hertford, Tuesday, Feb. 8.

Moore knows a thing or two about tough times. Although there are rewards, he says that there are plenty of risks — along with plenty of stress — that go along with living off the

land. Despite that, Moore says it's more good than bad. He watched his father go through the same ups and downs, and ultimately chose the same path for

himself. "Farming has always been in my blood," Moore said.

Moore is a third-generation farmer. His son Antoine, who works for

AgCarolina Financial during the day and works alongside Moore in his off-time, is a fourth-generation farmer.

"I don't mind getting my hands dirty," Antoine said.

"It's one of those things that has been passed down from (my dad)."

Both have come to learn that there is no downtime in farming. During the off-season, they're repairing equipment. When they're not busy outside, they're focused on the business side of things.

"There's no off season. We always have something to do on the farm," Moore said.

Antoine says that the type of skills demanded of modern day farmers has made the title itself evolve.

"You have to be more of a businessman. You have to know the economics. You have to study the weather, the markets and everything. So it's not just farming, you have to be a businessman," Antoine said.

Jared Harrell, a Perquimans County livestock agent and cattle farmer, can relate. Harrell has an array of duties, and like the Moores, operates on a full schedule.

He's up by 6 a.m. at the latest to feed his cattle. From there, he goes to work for a typical workday.


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Financial services help boost farm production

By REBECCA BUNCH
Chowan Herald

Financial services for farmers have their roots in agencies that can be traced back to the Great Depression in America.

Over the past 25 years, some, like the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Farm Bureau have continued to grow and add services for farmers.

Others, such as the USDA's Farm Loan program, have experienced only minor changes.

The FSA, established in 1933, created a loan program that provided credit, farm and home management planning, as well as technical supervision. Within the past 25 years,

the responsibilities of the FSA have been focused on five areas, according to Julie Jones, executive director of the Perquimans/Chowan FSA offices.

Those include farm loans as well as commodity, management and state operations.

"FSA places special emphasis on providing loans to beginning, minority and women farmers and ranchers," Jones said.

The farm programs include a direct and counter-cyclical payment program based on a farm's acreage and yield, as well as a price support program that offers loans to farmers.

The FSA also offers farmers the opportunity to participate in its conservation reserve program that provides farmers with an-

nual rental payments and cost-share assistance.

Through FSA's conservation reserve enhancement program, a state and federal partnership allows farmers to receive incentive payments for following conservation practices to help decrease erosion and safeguard the water supply.

The agency's disaster relief program provides farmers with assistance for losses incurred through natural disasters.

The loan component of FSA's services has changed very little over the past 25 years, according to Eddie Woodhouse, Public Affairs and Outreach Director for the North Carolina USDA Farm Service Agency.

"One positive change is that (Albemarle area) farmers and producers are benefiting from substantial increase limits in farm operating costs and farm ownership loans," Woodhouse said. The foundation for the Farm Credit Service (FCS) was laid in the Farm Loan Act passed by Congress in 1916.

According to the Farm Credit website, after much discussion, Congress agreed on setting up a co-operative credit structure that was based on 12 federal land banks. Lawmakers provided \$125 million in government seed money.

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