

Featured Customer

State: Oklahoma

Featured Customer: The Austin Family

Date: February 2008



Meet the Austins

Canadian County, Oklahoma

Leaving the land in better shape than when he found it

Full-time farmer and rancher Frank Austin operates his farm/ranch on a simple philosophy when it comes conservation. He wants to leave the land in better shape than when he found it.

Frank Austin and his wife, June, operate Canyon View Farms, located south of Geary, Oklahoma, in Canadian County. Their 1240 acre operation consists of 140 acres of cropland and 1,100 of grassland. Some of the land was acquired by his grandfather when he moved here from Tennessee in the late 1800's. More land was acquired by Austin's parents and he added more acres to his operation over the years.

When Austin acquires a farm he has always gone to the Natural Resources Conservation Service for help in developing a conservation plan. Austin says "Each farm I acquire is a 5 to 10 year project."



Over the years, Austin has utilized federal assisted programs to improve his farm. He has had several Great Plains Conservation Program (GPCP) contracts, a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract, and just completed an Environmental Quality Incentive Program contract.

Duane Crider, District Conservationist, El Reno Field Service Center stated, "I have worked with Frank for many years going back to the GPCP days." He said, "Frank loves the challenge of acquiring some property in bad shape, neglected, with low production capability, and turning it into a place he is proud to own. His conservation record will speak for itself."

Austin has installed many conservation practices over the year, such as converting 450 acres of cropland to grass (native and introduced), terraces, waterways, grade stabilization structures, ponds, diversion terraces, gully shaping, critical area treatment, and rotational grazing. "On every one of my farms the water is controlled by a series of terraces and grade stabilization structures, before it leaves the farm. So, when the water runs off it is controlled to reduce flooding and erosion. That way the silt and everything stays on the farm, Austin said."

His contributions to conservation don't just include efforts on his farm, but extend beyond to the Central North Canadian River Conservation District where he served on the district board for twenty one years, and ten years as the district board chairman. He served as the Area I Director for the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts for three terms.

The Austin's fifty plus years of conservation have been recognized by being name the Farm Family of the Year in Canadian County in 2001. They were recognized for their benefits to the environment by being one of seven finalists for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association Environmental Stewardship Award in 2003.

At the age of 70, Frank continues to be an advocate for conservation. He is willing to tell his story to anyone willing to listen for a few minutes. He is a strong believer in protecting the environment and preserving the land for generations to come. The value of the conservation practices he has applied is the real untold story.

CONSERVATION

Our Purpose.
Our Passion.

Media contact: Terri Daniel, terri.daniel@ok.usda.gov, 405-742-6244

Find out more on the web at www.nrcs.usda.gov or www.nrcs.usda.gov/ourpurpose