

Alabama Farm Credit Customers Named 2010 Farm-City Family Of The Year



Sam, Cassie, Sam David and Cynthia Black

Alabama Farm Credit would like to congratulate the Black family for being chosen as the 2010 Farm-City Family of the Year by the Farm-City Committee of the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce. The award, given as a part of the annual Farm-City Week, honors the contributions that the selected farm family has given back to their community.

The purpose of Farm-City Week is to encourage better understanding between rural and urban citizens. The central theme is that farm and city people depend on each other and that more can be accomplished by working together.

Sam and Cynthia Black both come from farming backgrounds in Cullman County. Sam grew up working on a breeder hen farm in high school, while Cynthia grew up working on a broiler farm. They have a wide range of farming experience, from growing and selling vegetables to dealing in livestock, such as pigs, cattle and poultry.

Unlike many farmers, Sam and Cynthia

did not inherit their farm. They started from scratch, and it was a lot of work to achieve what they have today. Anyone who has known Sam since he was a young boy will tell you he has always worked for what he's got. Back in the 1960s, Sam and his brother worked a whole summer digging sweet potatoes to pool their money to purchase a bicycle for \$28. The Blacks were taught at a young age to work hard for what you get.

You will find Sam working just as hard today on his 90-acre farm, which includes three breeder hen houses and 70 brood cows. He begins his day at 4:30 a.m., feeding chickens. From there he goes to work his full-time job at Webb Wheel Products, where he has been employed for the past 27 years. He returns home to the farm at 5:30 p.m. to finish his daily chores.

While Sam works at Webb all day, Cynthia handles the farm. She loves the farm life, because it gives her the flexibility to take care of the needs of the family and work a full-time job as well. They have two children who also help on the farm. Cassie is a sophomore at Samford University, studying pre-med, and Sam David is a student in the eighth grade at Cullman Middle School.

Cynthia says that farming is a commitment and a way of life. Any vacations have to be

planned around feeding chickens. The whole family recalls a few years ago when they planned a rushed trip to Sea World. They had to time it just right, feeding the chickens before catching a flight to Orlando, Fla., and then making it back home the next evening in time to feed the chickens again.

In June 2009, in the midst of her busy family life on the farm, Cynthia was diagnosed with breast cancer. Cynthia and the family relied on their faith in God to get them through her battle with cancer. They also had the help of family and many friends. Today Cynthia is in remission, and you will find her working in the poultry houses every day.

After 22 years of marriage, Sam and Cynthia remain very committed to their family, farm and church. Sam says, "When you're a farmer, you are the president, vice president, secretary and treasurer of your company." When you have that many roles, you have to be dedicated in order to succeed.

Alabama Farm Credit Appraiser Keith Carr, who made the first loan to the Blacks in June 1998, says, "The Blacks are great stewards of their land and have been a joy to work with over the past 12 years."

