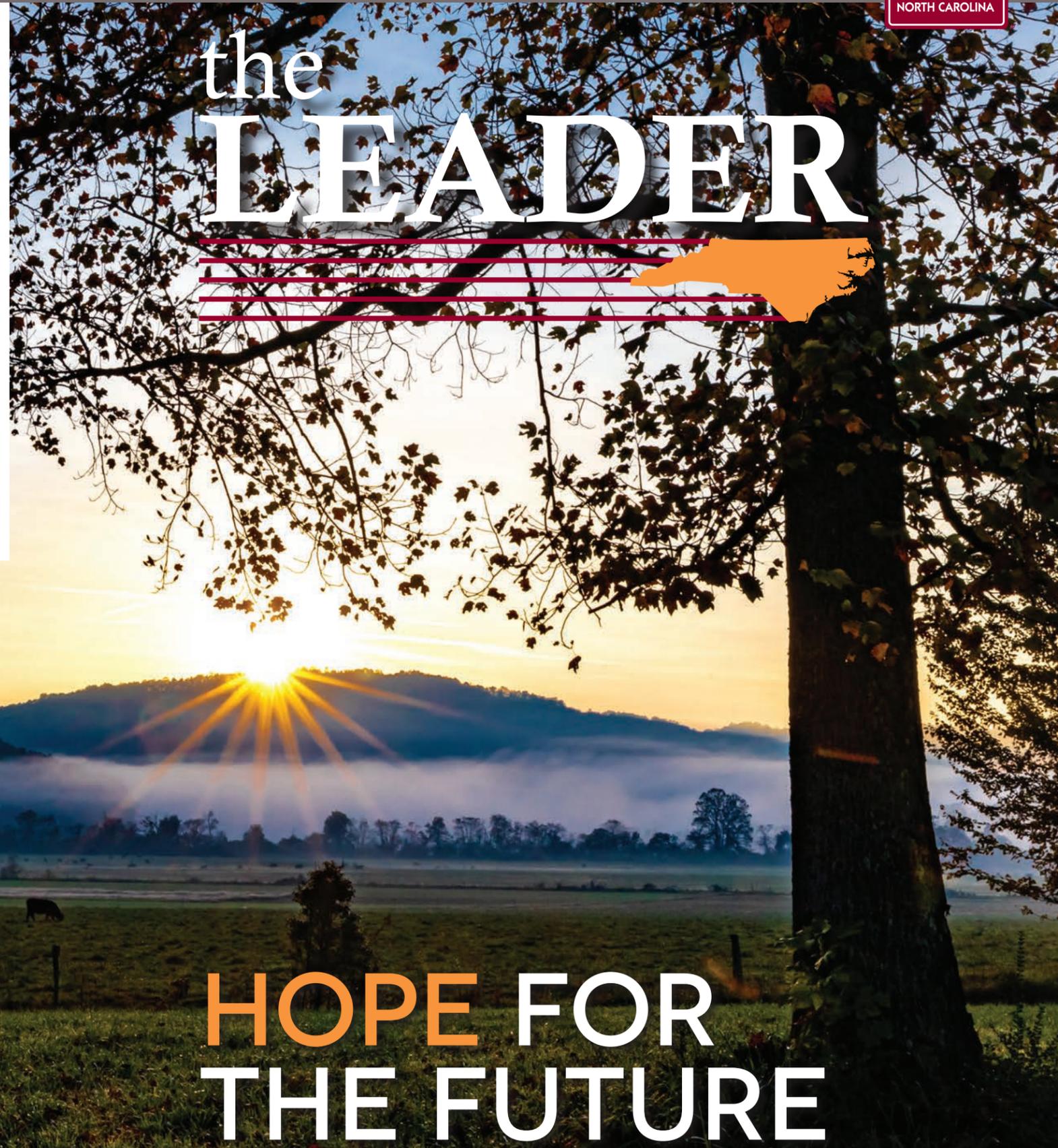




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# the **LEADER**

## **HOPE FOR THE FUTURE**

*Our organization was built upon a foundation of strong faith, a spirit of family, and a passion for farming that will continue to move us forward. Lorenda Overman said, "There's a lot of worries, but our son and son-in-law are young and they're bright and they're working hard. Harrell has always said 'hard work will get you through anything.' So we're gonna make it – we're gonna make it."*

*I think Lorenda is right. We are going to make it.*

## **HOPE FOR THE FUTURE**

# HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

During our 85th Annual Convention last month, we showcased the work that so many of you have done over the past year despite these strange and challenging times. These farmers and their stories, along with the hundreds just like them across our state, give me hope for the future and confidence that Farm Bureau and agriculture will continue to grow stronger as we move forward together. So I want to take this opportunity to highlight some of those people and their encouraging messages that give me hope for a better 2021.

Check out our YouTube channel for complete interviews and more! Visit [youtube.com/ncfarmbureau](https://youtube.com/ncfarmbureau)

Sixth-generation farmers Lorenda and Harrell Overman own and operate Overman Farms in Wayne County, a diversified family farm including hogs, soybeans, corn, wheat, cows, and hay. Lorenda is a member of the Women's Committee for the Wayne County Farm Bureau, the current past chair for the NC Farm Bureau State Women's Committee, and serves as a member of the American Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee.



~ Lorenda Overman

“ I am so proud of the way agriculture has stepped up during the pandemic to tell their story.

I feel like over the years I've created a relationship [with lawmakers] and they understand. They may not always vote the way that I would want them to vote but I think they get it, and I'm grateful for that. I'm really grateful for that relationship.

Kamal Bell is a teacher and owner of Sankofa Farms in Orange County. In addition to the working farm, Bell also founded and runs Sankofa Farms Agricultural Academy, a year-round intensive S.T.E.M. based program that seeks to educate students on the existing problems within agriculture, improve the perception of S.T.E.M. and agriculturally related professions, increase the dollars earned, improve career readiness skills, and improve school performance for attendees.



~ Kamal Bell

“ The farm is a platform, so it's not just an agricultural space, it has so many different utilities. You can learn new skills on the farm.

With programs like what we're doing educating the youth, they don't necessarily have to go in to farming, but they have an appreciation for the farm and what it can do for them.

A migrant worker in the 80's, Martha Calderon and her family began sharecropping in the early 90's before establishing their two businesses, Calderon Produce and Calderon Peppers, in Catawba County. Martha has also been instrumental in helping other Hispanic women farmers by sharing her knowledge and experience.



~ Martha Calderon

“ We wanted to help the other farmers grow their product and make sure they [get paid fair value]. We talk about [different] seeds, plants, if there are any disaster declarations.

I think that sometimes people are disconnected from their food source and that is why sometimes farmers struggle. Making sure the community is aware of where their food comes from [is important].



~ Davon Goodwin

Davon Goodwin, a US Army vet, owns and operates O.T.L. Farms, a pick-your-own farm in Scotland County, where he grows muscadine grapes and heritage

breed livestock. Goodwin got his start with the help of the Farmer Veteran Coalition. He is also the manager of the Sandhills AGInnovation Center food hub and is the board president of the National Young Farmers Coalition.

“ I got injured in Afghanistan in 2010 when my vehicle hit a roadside bomb. After the injury I kind of felt like I wasn't serving anymore because my Army career ended on somebody else's terms. And so, kind of filling that commitment is farming, and being able to give back to my community fresh fruits and vegetables and being able to serve them in a different manner.

Military service and agriculture goes hand-in-hand: it's the same discipline, the same persistence, the same commitment to your community.



~ Brandon Batten

Brandon Batten is the 2020 NCFB Achievement Award winner. Brandon is a sixth-generation farmer from Johnston County. He's a partner on his family farm, Triple B Farms Inc., where he helps farm flue-cured tobacco, corn, soybeans, wheat, Bermuda hay and raises 40 head of Angus-mix beef cattle.

James Lamb is the 2020 NC Farmer of the Year. After an education at NCSU, James returned to the farm of his childhood, where he raises pigs for a living and raises kids within view of Grandma's farmhouse. James' mother, wife and teenage daughters join him in running Lamb Family Farms in Sampson County. A third-generation farmer, James assumed the farm's management role at age 16, when his dad died in an automobile accident.



~ Travis & Sarah Covington

Sarah and Travis Covington are the 2020 YF&R Excellence in Ag Award winners. They purchased the farm Travis grew up on in Alamance County from Travis' grandfather's estate and have transitioned it from a dairy operation to a holistic grazing beef operation.

Farming's always been in my blood. I've never wanted to do anything else other than run cattle.

There's some days where everything goes wrong. And then we get into calving season and for three months in a row it's Christmas morning every day when I come to the farm – do we have new babies, do we have new life being created?

~ Travis

I work in a very high stress and highly demanding job, and it's wonderful to be able to come out here after work and start working with my calves, and I feel like I'm actually accomplishing things.

Farming is a lot of work, and a lot of stress, and a lot of money, but we could not imagine doing anything else. ~ Sarah

“ My grandpa told me if I wanted to farm he would try to help me but I had to get an education first. Ag engineering is all about solving problems and that's what a modern farmer does – solve problems and try to figure out how to stay viable and profitable in these challenging times that we're facing right now.

“ Having that extended family unit was something I valued. The genuine love for farming came from my father and following in his footsteps, wanting to be like him. He was kind of my hero growing up.



~ James Lamb