

2018 community impact report

# HELPING OUR COMMUNITIES WORK.



Farm Credit Services  
of America

AGRICULTURE WORKS HERE..



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of America



## DEDICATED TO HELPING OUR COMMUNITIES WORK

Along with our dedication to serving the financing needs of rural America, Farm Credit Services of America is committed to improving the lives of those who live there.

Throughout the year, we work to enrich our communities through volunteer efforts and local contributions – focusing on four areas, including agricultural education, hunger and nutrition, young and beginning producer programs, disaster relief and essential services.

In 2018, our employees volunteered more than 8,700 hours of time to benefit others, and our Association donated more than \$3.5 million to non-profit causes and organizations.

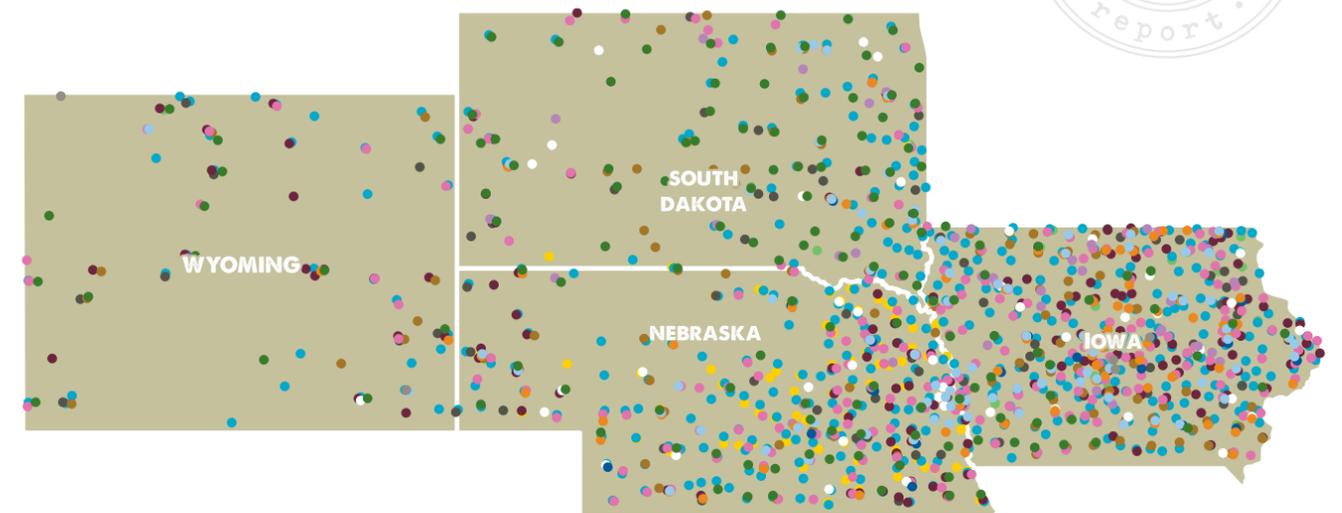
Our volunteer time and contributions benefitted hundreds of communities and impacted thousands of lives across our states. This past year, you would have seen our team members volunteering in food banks, cleaning up tornado damage or teaching kids about agriculture. Our efforts are also evident through donations to support student scholarships, women in agriculture, community gardens and other local needs.

The impact map in this report provides a visual reference of the many places and projects we supported in 2018. Community involvement is part of our mission – a commitment to the people we serve and the rural life we value so highly.

Along with our Board of Directors, I appreciate the passion and dedication – and am truly proud – of those working across our four-state area to help our communities grow and thrive.



Mark Jensen  
President and CEO



- **4-H Stall Cards** More than 60,000 stall cards provided to livestock exhibitors.
- **Disaster Relief** Employee volunteer hours and contributions supported local disaster cleanup efforts.
- **Employee Match** This program provided matches of up to \$150 for each employee and director contribution to causes that were meaningful to them, totaling \$30,911.
- **Employee Volunteers** FCSAmerica employees volunteered 8,748 hours for nonprofit organizations in their local communities.
- **Expanded Grants** Up to \$10,000 per grant totaling \$194,750 for hunger and nutrition, ag education, rural disaster/essential services plus young and beginning producer initiatives.
- **Farm Risk Management Tool** Provided GrainBridge web-based farm risk management online tool and curriculum to 425 high school FFA chapters.
- **FFA Support** FFA handbook funding.
- **Grain Bin Rescue** Donated grain bin rescue equipment and training for 45 fire departments.
- **Grants** Provided 311 *Working Here Fund* grants totaling \$485,955 for hunger and nutrition, ag education and young and beginning producer initiatives.
- **Hunger Relief** Provided funding and employee volunteers for mobile pantries, food rescue and food distribution to underserved counties with high percentages of food insecurity.
- **Local Contributions** Each of our 42 offices impacted communities with funding support for local programs and initiatives.
- **Scholarships** Awarded 32 \$2,500 land-grant university and 48 \$1,000 community college scholarships to students pursuing a career in agriculture.
- **The Big Garden** New community gardens harvested produce and taught children to grow food.
- **Underwriting Support** Funded support for Raising Nebraska, South Dakota Ag Foundation, South Dakota State University Precision Ag Facility, Wyoming Ag in the Classroom Stewardship Project, Beef SD, Ag in the Classroom (Iowa, South Dakota, Wyoming, Nebraska), Whispering Roots and the Agribusiness Association of Iowa (AAI) Future Leader Program.
- **Women In Ag** Funded 45 courses on farm business management, livestock management and succession planning, and FarmHer.

For more information about our community involvement, visit [fcsamerica.com/community](http://fcsamerica.com/community).

### New precision ag center keeps ag students on cutting-edge

A 129,000 square foot learning center will soon serve as the precision ag hub on campus for students, faculty and researchers at South Dakota State University (SDSU).

In 2015, SDSU became first-in-the nation to offer a Bachelor of Science degree in precision agriculture, a program designed to develop the next generation of college graduates who are well equipped to work with precision agriculture tools and data analytics to make crop production recommendations.



The new Raven Precision Agriculture Center will support research, teaching and innovation from the entire spectrum of precision agriculture by enabling collaboration among the many precision ag disciplines including agronomy, engineering, plant sciences and more.

“The construction of the facility is a progression of SDSU’s efforts to fulfill the goal of becoming the preeminent precision ag four-year university in the country,” says Mike Barber, SDSU Foundation development director for the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences.

“FCSAmerica really led the way by supporting the project early on and recognizing the tremendous value the facility will bring to agriculture in helping tackle the data and technology challenges farmers are facing.”



Raven Precision Agriculture Center

### Engaging learners in hunger and nutrition education

Efforts to break the hunger cycle include increasing access and education for nutritious food in food insecure areas. A partnership between the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and FCSAmerica allows Nutrition and Health Sciences (NHS) Extension faculty to continue providing statewide educational programs aimed at influencing daily life in the areas of food access for adults and youth.

The funds help cover the costs needed to establish and maintain community gardens in eight locations throughout the state including Omaha, Lincoln, South Sioux City, Grand Island, North Platte, Lexington, Sidney and Scottsbluff, says Lisa Franzen-Castle, an associate professor and extension nutrition specialist with the Nutrition and Health Sciences Department at UNL.

“Our goal is to address hunger issues and improve access to affordable, nutritious and safe foods...”

#### - Lisa Franzen-Castle

Associate Professor and Extension Nutrition Specialist, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

“The funds recently contributed by FCSAmerica will also be used to purchase equipment and food to showcase how to prepare a variety of healthy foods in food insecure areas,” according to Franzen-Castle.

“Our goal is to address hunger issues and improve access to affordable, nutritious and safe foods,” she says. “We work with communities, consumers, producers and partners to reduce barriers and help Nebraskans find, afford, choose and use healthful foods. These practices enhance rural economies, meet increased consumer demands and strengthen local agriculture markets.”

### Livestock and food production promote hands-on learning

Last spring, kindergarten and first grade students in eastern Iowa had the opportunity to explore the early phases of poultry production by participating in a school hatching program facilitated by ISU Extension & Outreach – Linn County and the Linn County Farm Bureau.

Grant proceeds from FCSAmerica were used to supply participating schools with classroom materials and hatching kits that included an automated incubator, cage, heat lamp and cross-curricular lessons and activities.



“During the 21-day incubation period, the students were really engaged with the lessons as they learned about the egg-to-chick life cycle and counted down to hatching day,” says Amy Schmitt, Linn County youth outreach educator. “They also identified the basic needs to grow a chick by monitoring the incubator’s temperature and humidity and practiced proper animal care once the chicks had hatched.”

In Letts, Iowa, a similar project is exposing members of the Louisa-Muscatine FFA chapter to the economics and environmental considerations of commercial fish production.

The students recently assembled and installed a 300-gallon aquaculture tank in the school greenhouse. Adam Crews, Louisa-Muscatine agricultural teacher and FFA adviser, says the students have been busy preparing the unit to be stocked with its first supply of blue tilapia.

“Our class tests and studies water quality in aquatic environments, so it has been great to introduce a new hands-on opportunity for the students to monitor pH, nitrates and other water quality indicators while teaching them about the skills needed to pursue a career in commercial fish production,” he says. “Once the fish arrive, they will continue managing water quality and nutrient levels and they will also be responsible for feeding the fish and harvesting them when they reach maturity.”

Aquaculture-based curriculum has been making a splash among classrooms in Nebraska, too.

As part of the Norfolk FFA Grow, Show and Know project, students are gaining hands-on experience raising tilapia, broiler chickens as well as hydroponic and aquaponic lettuce.

Students are also responsible for processing, packaging and providing nutritional information about the products before they are delivered to the Norfolk Rescue Mission.



“The project has been an enjoyable way for students to learn about the science behind food production,” says Jonathon Anderson, Norfolk FFA agricultural teacher and advisor. “And the donations made to the local mission have really opened their eyes to the realities of homelessness and poverty.”

**Striking out hunger in the heartland**

In the heartland, hunger and food insecurity exist in urban and rural communities alike. And, because children of food insecure households are often not responsible for making primary food purchase decisions, they can be at greater risk for a variety of negative health outcomes.

Building on its community garden model in Iowa, Nebraska and Kansas, The Big Garden Farm to School program installs edible school gardens and brings educators into the classroom to teach students to grow, cook and preserve their own food.

During the growing season, food produced in the school garden is used for snacks and distributed to families for use at home.

“Children living in poverty often feel they don’t have much control or agency over their life, but in the garden, they take enormous pride in growing their food and realize that there are parts of their life where their actions can have a really positive influence,” says Nathan Morgan, The Big Garden executive director.



“We are grateful to FCSAmerica for their support that has allowed us to install new gardens and expand our efforts at sites participating in the Farm to School program,” he says. “The financial contributions and scores of volunteers who have worked at the community gardens and in our greenhouses have really been a game changer in helping us address the systemic nature of hunger in our communities.”

Another charitable program FCSAmerica contributed to is the Food Bank for the Heartland’s mobile pantry program.

Since 2013, FCSAmerica has sponsored mobile pantries in rural communities within the Food Bank for the Heartland’s service area. In 2018, FCSAmerica funded 16 mobile pantries throughout Nebraska and western Iowa and provided hundreds of volunteers to assist with food distribution.



“Our mobile pantry program delivers food directly to communities that have a high need but limited food resources. The one-day distribution is free to individuals and families and includes a variety of shelf-stable products along with perishable items, such as fresh produce and bakery items,” says Angie Grote, communications manager at Food Bank for the Heartland.

“This year we were able to distribute approximately 3.1 million pounds of food through the mobile pantry program, assisting an average of 3,950 households each month thanks, in part, to FCSAmerica’s extraordinary partnership.”

FCSAmerica has also supported food security initiatives addressing the most food insecure areas throughout our four states.

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**- Angie Grote**

*Communications Manager, Food Bank for the Heartland*

**Encouraging, inspiring, empowering the future of agriculture**

The future of agriculture depends on the next generation of farmer leaders. Today, leadership conferences like the Grow by FarmHer events are helping young women recognize and pursue careers in the ag industry.

Geared for young women ages 16-22, Grow by FarmHer inspires a sense of community by connecting participants with peers who share their dreams, passion and drive.

During the fall tour to South Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa, Grow by FarmHer attracted 580 attendees and advisors across the Midwest.



“At FarmHer, part of our mission is to inspire, educate, and empower young women who are excited about their future in agriculture,” says Carly Cummings, FarmHer events and merchandise manager.



“Made possible by the generosity of our supporters, including FCSAmerica, the Grow by FarmHer events not only promote ag industry awareness, they create an environment where young women can make meaningful connections with professionals, business leaders and future employers.”

**Supporting local communities through good times and bad**

In July, a band of tornado-producing storms swept through central Iowa, leaving a path of destruction in its wake. Pella and Bondurant were among the impacted areas, and a state of emergency was declared in Marshalltown after 800 buildings, including 89 homes, sustained major damage.

Donations to the American Red Cross in the aftermath of the tornadoes helped mobilize the workers and volunteers needed to deliver relief and hope on the daunting road to recovery. Thanks in part to FCSAmerica, more than 20,900 meals and snacks were served, more than 270 overnight shelter stays were provided and nearly 40,450 relief items were distributed.

An emergency call for aid was answered by FCSAmerica again in September when residents in western Wyoming were impacted by the Roosevelt wildfire that destroyed more than 61,500 acres and 55 structures.

According to Mindi Crabb, member of the Pinedale Lions Club and Roosevelt Fire Recovery Fundraising Campaign volunteer, the funds were used to help address the most urgent needs of wildfire victims, especially uninsured or underinsured full-time residents who lost their homes.

“In addition to helping pay some of the more immediate bills and helping cover evacuation costs, the donations made provided emotional support and relief to those displaced,” she says. “Wyoming has a strong tradition of helping its own and the community really stepped up to help those in need.”

Paid volunteer time is also offered to all employees, and when teammates volunteer as a group, FCSAmerica makes a donation to the non-profit. In 2018, FCSAmerica volunteered 8,748 hours and donated \$171,250 to non-profit organizations through the volunteer program.

This year, an even greater emphasis was placed on community-involvement-focused activities through the participation in a Community Impact Week designated and hosted by each of the FCSAmerica offices. Examples of Impact Week efforts included working with food banks, mobile pantries, community clean-up projects, agricultural organizations, Habitat for Humanity and other local initiatives.