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By Audrie Furgeson May 2, 2017 Fall 2017 Issue,

Old Legacy, New Farmer



Layton and Glenn Schur look forward to working alongside each other on the farm.

As he walked out the front door of his farmhouse, he met the crisp winter morning with an eagerness that comes with a new beginning. While this farm was familiar ground to 21-year-old Layton Schur, this day was the start of something new. He may have grown up on this farm, but now he was a real farmer.

Layton's lifelong passion for agriculture has led him back to the family farming business. The young farmer said coming back to continue the traditions his father and grandfather have set before him has always been his dream.

"It's kind of like hitting the lottery," Layton said. "I feel pretty lucky to get to go back and farm with my dad."

A Farming Legacy

In 1947 Layton's grandfather, Martin Schur, began farming in Plainview Texas. With humble beginnings and years passing, the family farming operation has expanded tremendously, now farming thousands of acres in multiple counties. The family has survived ruthless crop years and 70 years later, the legacy that Layton's grandfather originally started will soon be passed to him.

Layton enjoyed his time working on the farm before leaving and going to Texas Tech University in the fall of 2013. He said the hard work instilled in him from his parents and grandparents has attributed to his success in college and will help as he takes the next step into his farming career.

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Layton Schur

"There is never a time you can run out of things to do when you grow up on a farm," Layton said. "Some kids say they always got bored. I never got the luxury. There was always a weed to be hoed, a weed to be sprayed, or something to be done. Even if you weren't doing anything in the wintertime, there was always a cow to be fed. So, growing up I got the true value of work ethic drove into me."

Layton said he realizes how financially difficult it can be to get started as a young farmer and believes this is one of the reasons the number of first-generation farmers have declined in recent years. He will be one of few from Plainview, Texas, whom will return to the farm after attending college.

"You come to college not just to throw away what you learned; it's to learn something to bring back to the farm with you," Layton said. "I hope that in my education I'll be able to bring a different twist to the farm."



The Schur family farms a variety of crops, including: cotton, corn, sorghum and wheat.

Water Conservation

Layton said his involvement in the Texas Alliance for Water Conservation (TAWC) has also opened his eyes in the way that he will utilize the water available on his farm.

“It’s a project to help agriculturalists realize that there are other alternatives rather than just turning the pivot on and letting it run,” Layton said. “The TAWC has done a good job helping me realize that there are other challenges for us besides just making a crop every year, making money to put in the bank, or losing money for that matter. They have shown me how to raise crops and how to do it efficiently with new technology.”

Glenn Schur, Layton’s father and president of the Texas Alliance for Water Conservation, said he knows Layton understands the value of water conservation and the role that it plays within their farming operation.

Layton said his family sees a future where land must be farmed without underground irrigation due to the depletion of the Ogallala Aquifer. The issue has been a concern for several years and is more of a matter of when the water runs out, not if it runs out.

“All of us pride ourselves on water conservation,” Layton said, “As a whole, we look at technology and the potential to make every drop of water count.”

Layton said technological advancement will act as a balancing element in years to come. How much water one has and how efficiently one is using it, will be the product of that crop. He said farmers investing time in learning soil and water technology practices will benefit greatly.

“The current fear for many new farmers is financially surviving,” Layton said, “and having water to nourish your crop is part of that. Not having the necessary resources to make a crop is terrifying. Maybe that’s why so many young people are having a hard time going back to the farm. There isn’t a secured pay at the end of the year. But on the other hand, if you play your cards right and manage your assets, you can still make a good life in farming.”



After graduation Layton will farm with this father, Glenn Schur, in Plainview Texas.

Heading Home

Layton leans on the wisdom of his father as he begins his farming career.

“I’m going to benefit the most from the knowledge of my father,” Layton said. “He has been very successful in the industry, and being able to use his knowledge will be enormously helpful, especially in my first crop year.”

Glenn said he is very excited to have Layton back on the farm. He looks forward to working alongside Layton and watching him in his first harvest year.

“He’s been involved in agriculture since he was a little kid,” Glenn said, “and seeing him starting to farm on his own is really exciting.”

Layton said he plans to plant a short seasonal corn crop and cotton on his newly rented farm in west Floyd County. He said he hopes to shift water around and catch a few rains in the spring to help his watering rotation. The young farmer said he specifically chose to plant cotton because of its arid characteristics and its ability to “take a beating” when it comes to drought.

“I’m going to get started with a semi-irrigated farm with less than 300 gallons a minute for a half-section of land,” he said. “That little bit of water I have is going to have to go a long way.”

The 21-year-old farmer said getting his land ready for planting season is the first step in his lifelong dream. He said, more than anything, he has pride in going back to the family farm and being able to continue their family business.

“My history is farming. It’s been developing in me since I was little. The farm means more to me than it does to the banker. The farm has always been my life.”

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