

# Farm Credit Mid-America honors Indiana farm family with Forward Thinker Award

*Montgomery County couple recognized for innovative agritourism and strategic farm growth*

LOUISVILLE, KY, UNITED STATES, February 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Farm Credit Mid-America](#) has named [Matt and Rachel Stine](#) of Montgomery County, Indiana, as recipients of its most recent Forward Thinker Award. The award recognizes young agricultural producers who demonstrate innovation, sound financial management and a forward-looking vision for the future of agriculture.

The Stines are Purdue University agriculture graduates who have transformed their family farm into a diversified, multi-enterprise business anchored in agritourism and education. At the heart of their operation is Oak Hill Tree Farm, a u-cut Christmas tree farm with more than 20,000 trees that serves as a gathering place for families and a bridge between agriculture and the local community.

“Our farm is more than a business. It is a connector,” said Rachel. “We want people to understand where their food comes from, experience agriculture firsthand and build memories here.”

To manage the long production cycles and capital demands associated with Christmas tree farming, the Stines balanced their operation by adding seasonal pumpkin sales while significantly expanding their grain enterprise. With support from Farm Credit Mid-America, they grew their row-crop acreage from 30 acres to more than 1,400 acres, helping solidify year-round cash flow and long-term financial sustainability.



Matt and Rachel Stine are the recipients of Farm Credit Mid-America's 2025 Forward Thinker Award





Our farm is more than a business. It is a place where people connect with agriculture.”

*Rachel Stine*

A key driver of their success has been participation in [Growing Forward](#), Farm Credit Mid-America’s multi-year education and support program for young, beginning and small farmers. Through the program, which hosts annual conferences called Know to Grow, the Stines strengthened their financial management skills, improved working capital strategies and enhanced long-term planning.

“The education was transformational,” Rachel said. “I went from basic personal budgeting to managing complex business bookkeeping and truly understanding working capital. That knowledge changed how we make decisions.”

The Stines credit their relationship with Farm Credit Mid-America and its team members as a true partnership built on open communication and shared goals.

“Having a lender who understands agriculture and treats you like a partner makes all the difference,” Matt said. “It gave us the confidence to plan, grow and take the long view.”

The Forward Thinker Award is made possible through Growing Forward, which provides continuing education focused on financial management, strategic planning and long-term success. Award recipients are recognized at a Know to Grow conference and receive \$5,000 and a personalized plaque.

Applications for the next Forward Thinker Award will open in late 2026. Applicants must be customers of Farm Credit Mid-America and either be enrolled in or graduates of the Growing Forward program.

Growing Forward is one of many cooperative benefits available to Farm Credit Mid-America customers and reflects the cooperative principles that guide the organization and provide value beyond traditional lending.

Charissa O'Daniel  
Farm Credit Mid-America  
+1 502-299-2093

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[YouTube](#)

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.