



## THE WEEKEND ESCAPE TO THE FARM

Friday afternoons must be Jacob Gilmore's favorite time of the week. It's when he leaves his full-time corporate job to spend days of uninterrupted enjoyment doing what he loves best: farming.

"My dad bought his first cow when I was in the third grade, and by the time I graduated high school, I was in love with farm life," Jacob says.

Back then, the family had just moved to Molino, a small town north of Pensacola in Escambia County. Jacob quickly got involved in 4-H and FFA, showing his first steer in 1994, and has worked alongside his parents, expanding their farm and herd ever since. With an expansion in mind, they leased an additional 408-acre farm for several years before purchasing it in 2008.

Today, Gizmo Angus Farm is a 100-cow/calf herd of registered Angus cattle pastured on nearly 450 acres. The Gilmores typically retain most of their heifers, selling a few at the spring sales each year. They also sell select groups of cows or bulls to commercial cattlemen via private treaty. The decision on which animals to keep and which to sell comes down to genetics, which Jacob says his mother has down pat.

"My mother is the mastermind behind our herd's genetics, carefully planning our breeding schedule, and then Dad and I, along with our farms hands do the work of artificial insemination and embryo transfer," he says. "As a result, we have some of the best genetics in the country."

Running a registered Angus herd takes a lot of measuring and reporting. While Jacob is justifiably proud of the quality of the herd he and his parents have built, the paperwork is growing onerous. To ease the burden, in 2021, he began expanding and diversifying





into commercial Angus rather than registered, which requires much less paperwork but has an equally vibrant market.

“We introduced direct-to-consumer sales of freezer beef for our commercial cattle last year, and we put any of the cows that don’t breed into the beef business,” he says.

This isn’t the first new development Jacob spearheaded at the family’s farm. In 2018, he built a new barn, financed by Farm Credit of Northwest Florida, to house a farm office and the show animals his 11-year-old twin daughters raise. He and his wife, Carla, purchased the lodge his parents and their previous partner had built on the land, wanting their children to grow up in the farming lifestyle.

“Most lenders wouldn’t even consider funding a barn, but Farm Credit was able and eager to help me, and they were super easy to work with,” Jacob says. “Now our girls are learning big lessons: they’ve developed a strong work ethic, checking on their animals every morning and night, and know they’ll earn money when they sell. They understand the process.”

They’re also learning about some of the challenges raising livestock presents, including rising feed and fertilizer prices and the impact weather has on hay production on their acreage.

Although Jacob loves his farming weekends, come Monday morning he’s back to work at the family’s other enterprise: as vice president of finance and purchasing for Gilmore, a paper management company

founded by his grandfather in 1955. Others sought this business acumen when they asked Jacob to run for Farm Credit’s Board of Directors.

My brother and I hired a general manager a few years ago, so I had some extra time and thought that serving on the board would be a learning experience for me, and that I’d be able to contribute my business and farming background,” he says.

“We have a strong board that’s in tune with what’s happening in the district, and our new CEO John Gregory is doing an amazing job streamlining our organization,” Jacob says. “It’s fascinating to see the path Farm Credit is on.”

In addition to his role on Farm Credit’s board, Jacob serves on the Escambia County 4-H Foundation Board and is a member of the Escambia County Farm Bureau. He previously served on the state leadership board of the Escambia and Santa Rosa County Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee.

