



As the sights and sounds of the Washington County Fair filled the air, with livestock shows, homemade pies, tractor pulls, and proud 4-H displays, we were reminded of the deep roots agriculture has in our communities. This time of year is a celebration of rural life, family traditions, and the hard work of farmers who dedicate their lives to feeding and sustaining us all. It's also a meaningful time to reflect on the legacy of agriculture and how farmers can support the future of rural communities by giving back through their local community foundation.

Farmers are more than producers. They're leaders, innovators, and stewards of the land. The values they uphold, such as resilience, commitment, and care for the community, align closely with the mission of local foundations working to strengthen our towns, schools, and agricultural programs. At the heart of every fair, every rural classroom, and every community meal is the work of agriculture. We thank our farmers not only for what they grow, but for the way they grounded our communities with their values and leadership.

With the county fair season now behind us, it is a fitting time to consider how farmers can invest in the future of agriculture. Community foundations are uniquely positioned to help donors turn their generosity into lasting impact by supporting everything from youth in agriculture to conservation, education, and rural living.

When farmers give, they're not only supporting the programs that shaped them, but they're ensuring those programs are here for the next generation. Farmers can give back through gifts of grain or livestock, providing powerful tax benefits while supporting causes close to home, such as FFA, 4-H, or scholarships for ag students. Farmland gifts are another possibility and can create a charitable fund to support rural needs far into the future, as well as establishing an endowment for agriculture. Creating a named fund through a community foundation allows farmers to support ag education, local food systems, or rural youth, with a fund that grows and gives year after year.

Though the fair has come and gone, the spirit of community and celebration of agriculture it embodies remains. Let's continue to honor the role farmers play in shaping our future. Their hard work sustains more than just crops and livestock, it sustains our communities.



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