The Bedfords

Elle K. Johnson

Mansfield High School

Keith & Dayna Bedford are partners in Bedford Farms located in Muldrow, Oklahoma. Keith was raised in Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas on ranches and farms. Dayna grew up on a farm in the panhandle of Texas. They met in Dayna’s hometown in Texas after Keith’s family moved there from Oklahoma. Agriculture and farming runs deep in their blood. In 1984, the Bedfords got married and they began working with Keith's dad. Soon, his brother Lee joined the operation. In 1988, Keith, Dayna, Lee and Lee’s wife, Carol, formed Bedford Farms. Bedfords Farm is in the Arkansas River Valley. They grow soybeans because they work well as a rotational crop with wheat and corn and there is a market for them in our area. Their work with soybeans allows them to give back to the world by feeding the world, providing food and cover for local wildlife, letting them be good stewards of the land, and providing them with income to provide for our family. The Bedfords are also able to make donations to charities in our community thanks to their soybean production.

My experience at Bedford Farms was a great time and very eye opening. Not only are the Bedfords some of the nicest, most welcoming people I have met, but they are also some of the most hardworking. There is no down season for the Bedfords. As soon as once crop is done, the next is planted. Their crop rotation system and the no till method they implement allows them to put different nutrients back into their soil after each crop. However, this means the Bedfords constantly have a crop out in the field year round. When flooding or other unfortunate weather occurs, the Bedfords must quickly evaluate and decide how to most efficiently react to the situation. When I visited the farm, the soybeans had been planted and we're starting to sprout up out of the ground. Keith showed me all of their fields along the river bottoms and explained how they prepare the land, plant the seeds, nurture the growing crop, harvest the mature plant, and then sell their crops. Their crops go to mills and feed plants. The different varieties of plants go to different places. Soybeans are a very versatile plant and have many uses throughout the world. “No Farms, No Food” is a common slogan promoting farming but, truly, it sells farming short. Farms produce not only food but clothing and numerous synthetic materials, jobs, and many other important pieces of the American culture and economy. The Bedfords, much like other farmers, are brave, fierce people.

The Bedfords have raised three very successful children while also running the farm. Farming can be unpredictable as prices and the weather change from day to day, but the Bedfords have persevered through times of adversity. Hard work and dedication to their farm has helped them overcome misfortunes and setbacks. The Bedfords welcomed me to their farm with open arms and answered all of my questions with passion and enthusiasm. Farming is their life and it truly is in their blood. The Bedfords love giving back to society and the earth through soybean farming and their other crops. If you ever get the chance to stop by Bedford Farms along the Arkansas River bottoms in Muldrow, Oklahoma, do not hesitate to take it. It is a beautiful place full of love and passion for farming and humanity.

