



# Veteran Marine Corps Aviator Pursues Dream of Farming

By: Taylor DiFranco, Marketing Intern



McClain uses irrigation for his premium hay.

## Is it possible to truly live your dream?

What if you have more than one dream, is it realistic to chase them all? What are you willing to do to fulfill those dreams? When Jim McClain was asked what he wanted to do during his life he stated two things: to fly and to be a cowboy. Now as a former United States Marine Corps aviator and owner of The Flying Leatherneck Ranch in Orangeburg, South Carolina, Jim McClain can rightfully claim that he is living both of his dreams.

Mr. McClain grew up working in the tobacco fields where his father was a sharecropper in Dillon County, South Carolina—an experience that ignited a growing desire to one day own his own land. After high school, Mr. McClain started his military career in the Air Force where he did a tour in Vietnam. After his time in the Air Force, Mr. McClain decided to further his education at Arizona State.

When the Marines needed pilots Mr. McClain said he “couldn’t raise his hand fast enough”.  
A l o n g

with flying in OV-10’s, A-4’s, F/A-18’s, he also served as an infantry officer commanding L3/7 and director of public affairs for 12th district and 3rd MAW. While Mr. McClain’s military career came to a close in the early 90’s, his farming career was only beginning.

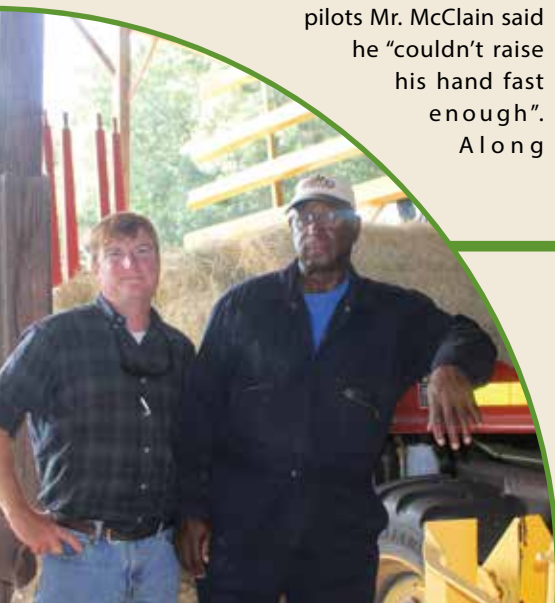
Although he thought he would never come back, in 1991 Jim and his wife Linda purchased the 600 acres in South Carolina that is now The Flying Leatherneck Ranch where he farms Coastal Bermuda hay and Black Angus cattle.

What makes Mr. McClain’s operation so unique compared to other local farmers is that he offers irrigated hay—a western farming practice influenced from his time in Arizona and California. Irrigation helps him reduce the risk of low production from lack of rainfall and allows him to produce a consistently high quality product. Another way he insures premium quality hay is by sending samples to a New York based lab specializing in equine diet chemistry analysis. Upon entering the farm it is not unlikely to see a couple of Jim’s horses grazing the land and munching on hay—the very same hay he serves his customers. “My

horses eat the same thing yours do” McClain proudly declares. Because irrigated hay is far less common in the south, McClain accredits his success in the industry to his knack for “asking a lot of questions.” He also gives due credit to his wife, Linda, for keeping the farm up and running when he is away.

Mr. McClain has a large and loyal customer base who keep him motivated to continue going above and beyond to consistently provide them with premium products. “I always strive to be the best”, McClain states. “I want to make sure nobody grows hay better than me.”

For Mr. McClain, farming is not just a job—it is his dream. A dream that he enjoys sharing with his family, especially his three grandchildren. Mr. McClain wants to share something else as well—some advice for anyone chasing their dream. First, McClain says to have a plan—a starting point. Next, know the steps you need to take, and last but definitely not the least, you have to have passion. AgSouth appreciates Jim McClain’s passion for farming over the last 25 years, his passion for his country for even longer, and his never ending pursuit of reaching his dreams.



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McClain and AgSouth Relationship Manager John Till.



AgSouth Chief Appraiser **Charlie Hyder** retired July 31 after 41 years of service. We wish Charlie the best of luck in his retirement!



AgSouth was happy to help sponsor the **2018 Annie's Project Workshop**. This is the fourth year AgSouth has partnered with the Clemson Extension and others to bring the workshop to South Carolina's beginning women farmers, many of whom are beginning an ag career after retiring from the corporate world. Congratulations to the graduating class of 2018!

Senior Information Systems Specialist **Jeff Mitchell** was named Ogeechee Technical College's 2018 Distinguished Alumni at the annual alumni reception this spring. The award is presented to an OTC alum who graduated prior to 2007, excelled in his or her chosen field, attained prominence and has had a positive effect on the local, regional or state level.



Congratulations to Marketing Director **Christy Bowen Smith** for earning the Honorary Georgia State FFA Degree. This award is the highest honor the Georgia FFA can give to a supporter. She received the award earlier this year at the 90th Annual Georgia State FFA meeting.



Congratulations to **Allen Daley**, who graduated from the Georgia Banking School this summer, a 3-year specialized program to develop leadership talents in Georgia's lending field.

# PHOTO CALENDAR WINNERS!

## Congratulations to all of the winners of our mAGnificent Photo Contest!

**Martha Ladd** of Fairfield County, S.C., took first place honors with her entry "Sunrise Serenity." **David Kennedy** of Spartanburg County, S.C. came in second with his photo "Dawn at the Farm." **Ellen Connor** of Greenville County, S.C., won third place with "For the Love of Cows."

Nine others placed in the contest, and all will be in our 2019 AgSouth calendar. To see all of the winners, visit [https://www.agsouthfc.com/News/Photo Contest.aspx](https://www.agsouthfc.com/News/Photo%20Contest.aspx).



**First Place**



**Second Place**



**Third Place**



## Congratulations to AgSouth's Intern Class of 2018!

These next generation of future leaders spent their summers working in different departments throughout our branches.

**Katelin Benkoski** / University of Georgia

**Henry Blich** / University of Georgia

**Haley Burke** / Clemson University

**Hunter Carson** / Clemson University

**Mason DeVane** / University of Georgia

**Taylor DiFranco** / Georgia Southern University

**Meagan Greene** / Georgia Southern University

**Austin Mizzell** / Clemson University

**Robert Allen Pope** / Clemson University

**Brice Shuler** / Clemson University

**Kendevon Stenhouse** / USC Upstate

## Welcome New Employees



**Chelsea Kersey**  
Loan Assistant  
Baxley



**Donna Lanier**  
Admin. Assistant (Ins.)  
Douglas



**Jaime Medlock**  
Mortgage Loan Originator  
Vidalia



**Lauren Ryal**  
Credit Analyst Trainee  
Vidalia



**Sandra Sports**  
Clerk  
Baxley



**Matthew Taylor**  
Relationship Manager  
Vidalia



**Jarret Williams**  
Loan Officer Trainee  
Baxley



**Michele Marett**  
Loan Assistant  
Madison



**Kale Powers**  
Credit Analyst  
Madison



**John Riggs**  
Loan Assistant (Mortgages)  
Statesboro



**Robert Simmons**  
Appraiser  
Madison



**Bob Mikell**  
Senior Attorney  
Statesboro Admin.

# AGSOUTH MEMBERS RECEIVED \$29 MILLION THIS YEAR FROM OUR PROFITS!

This year AgSouth Farm Credit distributed more than \$29 million IN CASH from patronage and allocated surplus to our members! Nearly \$10 million originated from 2017 profits, and more than \$19 million was revolved from 2012 allocated surplus.

FISCAL YEAR ENDING	TOTAL PATRONAGE DISTRIBUTION	CASH	ALLOCATED SURPLUS	ALLOCATED SURPLUS DISTRIBUTED	% OF INTEREST EARNED
1988-2009	\$365,182,377	\$109,743,595	\$255,438,782	\$255,438,782	24.71%
Dec. 2010	25,901,273	7,770,382	18,130,891	18,130,891	25.25%
Dec. 2011	27,482,328	8,244,698	19,237,630	19,237,630	26.97%
Dec. 2012	27,284,560	8,185,368	19,099,192	19,099,192	28.01%
Dec. 2013	28,875,377	8,662,613	20,212,764		29.30%
Dec. 2014	29,465,972	8,839,791	20,626,181		31.41%
Dec. 2015	26,454,596	7,936,379	18,518,217		27.52%
Dec. 2016	27,892,703	8,367,811	19,524,892		28.27%
Dec. 2017	31,709,492	9,512,848	22,196,644		30.88%
TOTAL	\$590,248,678	\$177,263,485	\$412,985,193	\$311,906,495	28.04% (Average since 1988)

## Want to Make Sure You Continue to Receive a Patronage Check?

- \$** Continue to borrow from AgSouth for all your farm, agribusiness, real estate and equipment needs.
- \$** Refinance loans you may have with other lenders through the cooperative you own and govern.
- \$** Tell your friends and family about AgSouth.
- \$** Use AgSouth Mortgages for your new home purchases, construction or refinances.
- \$** Use AgSouth for all of your leasing and crop insurance services.

For 30 consecutive years AgSouth has distributed profits to our members - more than \$489 million in cash to our members, proving that We Put Our Profits in Your Pocket®!

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## WHEN IT COMES TO CUSTOMER SERVICE— We Deliver



**LOANS** | We have loans tailored to meet the special needs of our farmers and rural communities.

**EXPERTISE** | We're specialists in financing land, farms and homes, and no one does it better!

**EXPERIENCE** | Farm Credit has been operating since 1916 and we know the intricacies of financing your rural lifestyle.

**PROFITS** | We return our profits to our members. Since 1988, the Association has paid out more than \$590 million in patronage.

*Call us for any financing needs you may have and continue to reap the rewards of doing business with the cooperative that delivers!*



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