



**Southern Ohio Agricultural &
Community Development
Foundation**

Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Report

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The Southern Ohio Agricultural & Community Development Foundation (SOACDF) is an organization created by the 123rd General Assembly under the Amended Sub. S.B. 192. The Foundation is charged by the Ohio Legislature with providing agricultural and economic assistance to southern Ohio's tobacco counties. The emphasis of these efforts is to replace the production of tobacco in southern Ohio with other agricultural products as well as to mitigate the adverse economic impact of reduced tobacco production in the region.

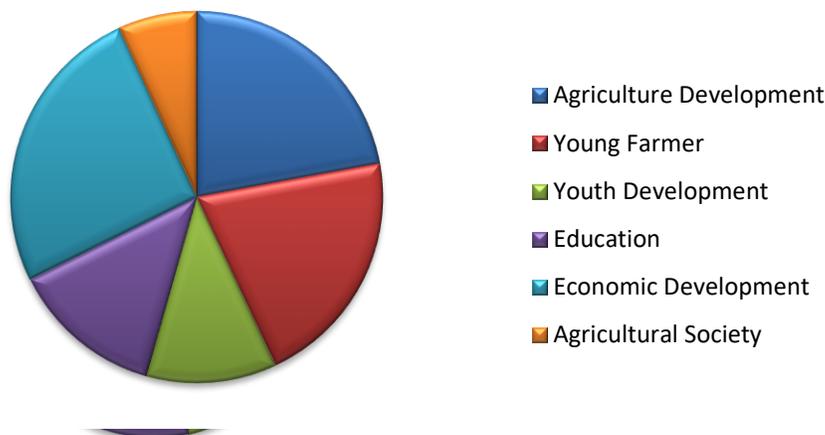
In Fiscal year 2020, the Southern Ohio Agricultural & Community Development Foundation's efforts have resulted in total direct investments exceeding \$1 million for the twenty-two traditional tobacco producing counties of southern Ohio.

Three primary program areas have been identified to improve farming profitability, strengthen local economic development efforts and provide educational assistance within the twenty-two counties of southern Ohio where the Foundation operates. These program investments are designed as follows:

- **Educational Assistance** – To provide educational assistance to farmers and their eligible dependents.
 - **Educational Excellence**- To recognize outstanding achievement among college upperclassmen.
- **Economic Development**- To make strategic investments in communities by incentivizing companies to create and retain jobs.
- **Agricultural Development** – To increase the variety, quantity and value of agricultural products other than tobacco.
 - **Young Farmer** – Producers between the ages of 20 – 38 who reside in the 22 counties the Foundation serves.
 - **Agricultural Society Grant**- To cost-share with the agricultural societies in the major tobacco counties for the purpose of improving facilities that will promote youth education and agriculture.
- **Youth Development**- To enhance the education and development of youth with a lasting impact on the area the Foundation serves. This grant meant for the purpose of reconstruction of existing buildings, remodel or upgrades to facilities and/or construction of new structure at the Canters Cave facility located in Jackson County, Ohio.

The SOACDF directly invested more than \$1 million into the state's economy through these programs. These investments were matched by approximately \$3.7 million in cost-share investments by recipients of these awards by SOACDF. The following chart shows how these investments were made.

Grants



Educational Assistance Program

More than \$145,000 invested in educational assistance for 62 applicants.

For the academic year 2019-2020 the SOACDF administered the Educational Assistance Program. More than \$145,000 was invested in degree programs for individuals who have a current Farm Service Number on record with the Farm Service Agency as of July 1, 2018 and reside in the 22 counties the Foundation serves OR Tobacco quota owners, quota owners/growers, or grower/tenants of Farm Service Agency (FSA) record in any single crop year from 1997 through 2004 and their immediate family dependents whose permanent address is within the State of Ohio.

The Educational Assistance Program assists farmers who have suffered the economic impact of reductions in the demand for burley tobacco. Through educational assistance, these farmers and their dependents are able to acquire the skills necessary to transition to new or supplemental income generating occupations. The program provides up to \$2,000 in educational assistance per person each year for eligible individuals.

Educational Excellence Program

Again, for the 2020-2021 school year the Southern Ohio Agricultural and Community Development Foundation offered the Educational Excellence Competitive Grant program. This program for undergraduate students pursuing a Bachelor's degree awards a one-time grant of up to \$10,000 towards the cost of tuition, on campus room and board and books. In FY21, thirteen of these grants were awarded for the upcoming school year.

*Due to Covid-19, no award luncheon was held for recipients. Below are the 2020-2021 Educational Excellence awardees.

Elise Bezold, Brown County
Lana Grover, Highland County
Alaina Harover, Adams County
Josie Jones, Gallia County
Grace McDowell, Adams County
Ethan Neal, Brown County

Marissa Risner, Scioto County
Kara Saunders, Lawrence County
McKenna Schaefer, Highland County
Honor Walker, Highland County
Darrington White, Adams County
Laura Wood, Brown County

Economic Development Program

*Total investments exceeding \$560,000 supported 6 economic development program awards.
These projects created or retained approximately 105 new jobs.*

The Economic Development program provides grants for projects that will create, retain or expand job opportunities for residents in the traditional tobacco producing counties in southern Ohio. The SOACDF approved three projects that were awarded in total \$210,000 by cost-sharing up to 35% of a total projects cost. In fact, in FY20 an additional \$3 million dollars were invested by applicants as their cost share component for the economic development project. These investments are used for capital improvements and equipment acquisition that foster job creation and retention.



RxQ Compounding, Athens County



INTERMOUNTAIN ELECTRONICS, Lawrence County

Young Farmer Program

In Fiscal Year 20, total investments exceeding \$225,000 supported 10 Young Farmer program awards in 6 different counties.

The Young Farmer Program is designed to help young producers grow their agricultural enterprises. This program promotes projects that are innovative, progressive, utilize technology and incorporate conservation practices. Eligible applicants must reside and the project must be completed within the 22 counties the Foundation currently serves. Applicants must be between the ages of 20 and 38 as of August 1st 2019.

The SOACDF invested more than \$225,000 that was cost shared up to a maximum of 50% and leveraged an additional \$515,000 for the total investment of more than \$740,000 in the twenty-two traditional tobacco producing counties of Ohio.



Landry Faulconer, Highland County



Luke Vollborn, Gallia County



Dan Wells, Ross County

Agricultural Development Program

In fiscal year 2020 total investments of more than \$240,000 supported 14 Agricultural Development awards.

The Agricultural Development program assists farmers by increasing the variety, quantity and value of agricultural products other than tobacco. This cost share program provides up to \$25,000 matching funds for capital investments necessary for diversification and development.

The SOACDF invested more than \$240,000 that was cost shared up to a maximum of 50% and leveraged an additional \$282,000 for a total investment more than \$550,000 in the twenty-two traditional tobacco producing counties of Ohio. These investments occur in four general categories:

- Expansion and revitalization of an existing agriculture enterprise.
- Diversification into a new agricultural enterprise.
- Commercial agribusiness.
- Marketing/ processing of value added agriculture.



Merrill Howland, Scioto County



Robert King, Brown County

Because the agricultural development program is such a highly competitive process less than half of the applications were funded. Project applications are reviewed and ranked by a committee based on a formula of cost-share funds committed and the quality of the business plan for the proposed project.

The SOACDF collaborates with the Ohio State University South Centers Business Development Network to provide confidential one-on-one business planning assistance as well as training events to assist applicants in their efforts related to development. In 2019-2020 the Ohio State University staff provided one-on-one assistance to 42 farmers in the development of their business plan, marketing feasibility, and financial analysis.



Nathan Brown, Highland County



Dustin Hauke, Brown County



Greg Raines, Adams County



Seth Michael, Highland County



Samuel Shawver, Gallia County

Agricultural Society Program

In Fiscal Year 20, investments totaled \$75,000 in support of the Agricultural Society program.

The Agricultural Society Program is designed for the purpose of investing in agriculture, youth development and local communities. This program was offered to the major counties the Foundation serves to help invest in the long-term education of youth and those involved with agriculture and youth development.

The SOACDF agricultural society grant is a two-year process for completion with 50% of funds issued upon execution of the signed grant agreement and the final 50% issued when the project is completed. In FY 20, SOACDF has currently issued \$75,000 to county agricultural societies to help with permanent improvements to county fairgrounds.



Clermont County Ag Society



Pike County Ag Society

Youth Development Program

In Fiscal Year 20, investments totaled \$250,000 in support of the Canters Cave 4-H program that supports the nine major counties and surrounding areas the Foundation serves.

The Youth Development Program is designed for the purpose of investing in youth development and local communities. This program was offered to Canters Cave 4-H Camp which offers services to the nine major counties and the surrounding areas the Foundation serves to help invest in the long term education of youth and those involved with youth development.



During FY20, the Foundation issued funds for a total award grant of \$250,000 to be awarded to Canters Cave 4-H Camp. The Foundation issued 50% of this award during FY20 to help with the remodel of current structures, renovation of the Harrison Powell Lodge by adding HVAC system and the building of a new sleeping cabin along with restrooms.