

Young Farmer Achievement Award finalists

Mark and Kathy Justice, Carroll County



Mark and Kathy Justice pose with their two daughters – Morgan, age 4, and Emily, age 1, in their front yard. The Justices were able to start farming on their own by working with a farmer in their area who wanted to retire – an opportunity they described as “the chance of a lifetime.”

The Justices took a path to farm ownership different from than the usual way of acquiring the operation through family. Though they both grew up on farms, neither farm was large enough at the time Mark and Kathy graduated from college to support an additional family. So what they eventually did was work with a nearby farmer who wanted to retire to purchase his equipment on contract. They now farm 780 acres, producing specialty corn and soybeans.



While Kathy worked off farm in the early years of their marriage, she decided to stay home after they had their second child. The two girls accompany her quite often when she's working in the fields. Here you can see Emily, age 1, seated beside her mother on the combine's seat while 4-year-old Morgan makes herself comfortable on a cushion on the floor.

Mark Justice takes a look inside the trailer attached to his semi. The Justices grow specialty corn varieties including waxy corn and high-extractable starch corn as well as soybeans. They haul grain for their own operation and also for other farmers.

Photos by Kathleen M. Dutro