

Kansas Farmers, Former Employees Help Manage Textron Aviation Grassland

When driving past the Textron Aviation Headquarters in Wichita, Kansas, you might sometimes be surprised to see haybales sitting on the property. Or, maybe you won't notice, given the surrounding Kansas prairie. Either way, the hay isn't going in any aircraft, and there aren't cattle hiding in the facilities.

Textron Aviation, which has called Kansas home since Cessna was founded in 1927 and Beechcraft in 1932, proudly works with local Kansas farmers to cut and bale hay on the company property.



Tim Brandyberry, Tim Kastner and Greg Simons are all former employees of Cessna and Beechcraft and utilize almost 1,000 acres of Textron Aviation grassland for hay production. According to the Kansas Department of Agriculture, the average size of a Kansas farm is 781 acres.

Get to know the farmers

For Brandyberry, haying is a family business.

“We had the hay business while I was working at Cessna until 2002. The business grew more and more, now all we do is hay,” said Brandyberry, owner of Honeydew Hay in Derby, Kansas.

Brandyberry, a former Cessna employee, cuts and bales about 140 acres of the Textron Aviation property. His customers range from local horse owners to those needing straw for their gardens or dog houses.

Tim and his wife Jacki



Simons began haying just over 100 acres of the Cessna campus in 1998. Simons agreed but was not sure what he was going to do with the hay, as he was not a farmer or rancher himself. After asking around and doing some research, he discovered that he could sell the bales to the state of Kansas for erosion control along roads and highways.

Simons can't just sell *any* type of hay to the state, however. The hay must be certified through the Kansas Weed-Free Forage and Mulch Program. To get certified, an inspector walks through the field before baling to mark weeds and other hazards. From there, Simons cuts around the hazards so after baling, the inspector can return to ensure the bale is not compromised. Each bale then gets a certification sticker indicating it meets state standards.

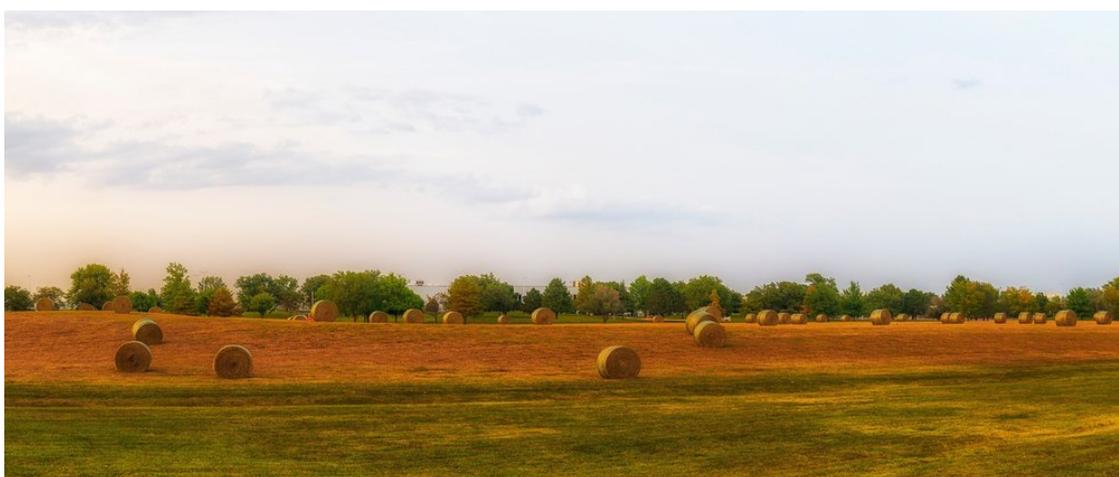
“They (Cessna) gave me a good living for 30 years and is now giving me a living of cutting grass. I love doing it.”

— Greg Simons

Simons enjoys baling the hay and has grown his business to include an additional 400 acres of the Textron Aviation land.

“It’s something I enjoy doing,” said Simons. “They (Cessna) gave me a good living for 30 years and is now giving me a living of cutting grass. I love doing it.”

Kastner, a former Beechcraft employee, operates a ranch in the Wichita area. He cuts and bales almost 350 acres and uses most of the hay himself. What he doesn't use on his operation, he donates to the local Bluestem National FFA Organization chapter, located in Leon, Kansas.





The good in grassland management

Hay is grown without chemical fertilizers, pesticides or herbicides. Grassland and vegetation prevent soil erosion by reducing water runoff and stabilizing the soil.

Research shows that natural grasslands promote biodiversity and pollination. By letting the grass grow free and only cutting for baling instead of mowing for maintenance, natural plants and flowers thrive.

Furthermore, by not maintaining the almost 1,000 acres of property as a manicured lawn, Textron Aviation avoids water waste and reduces resource inputs that go into mowing and caring for a traditional lawn.

On the other hand, if the grassland grew free without management, the overgrowth could create hazards.

“If you don’t manage your grasses, the grasses will manage you,” said Brandyberry.

An overgrowth of weeds and trees could attract rodents and other wildlife, which is dangerous to have near the active runways and manufacturing and airport facilities. Unmanaged grasses also present the threat of an uncontrolled wildfire.

Embracing responsible land management helps connect Textron Aviation with the agricultural fabric of the company’s home state and is an important part of the company’s comprehensive commitment to sustainability. Learn about how Textron is utilizing Kansas winds to power its facilities.



Textron Aviation harnesses Kansas winds with 20-year wind energy agreement



Textron Aviation