

A Strong Family; A Strong Team
Profile on Jake Lindsay, Morrow County President

Jake Lindsay first started helping on the family farm when he was five years old. “I was more in the way than helpful,” Jake laughs. He carries on to state that he knows that early integration into farm activities set his pathway to success as the fifth generation involved with Turner Ranch in Morrow County.

There is a great deal of tenacity built into surviving as a farm operation over five generations. In 1854 Jake’s great great grandfather took a horse and wagon from Portland, purchasing 300 acres to start a sheep farm. By the second generation, following a decline in the price for sheep, the family had moved into grain production. Around 1970, the third generation added irrigation and passed the farm along to the fourth generation. Now, Jake becomes the fifth generation. “I never saw myself coming back for the longest time” states Jake. However, the pull was strong and in June of 2021, he came back to Morrow County to farm full-time. The family farm includes his mother as the accountant, father in the ‘big picture’ role and Jake in the day-to-day operations, along with two other employees. “It is a strong team and hard to replicate.”

The team has been built with intention, which includes Jake’s involvement. At twelve years old, he was spending summers supporting harvest operations, beginning as a bankout (grain cart) operator before moving onto combine operator, which he has done now for more than a decade. He left to obtain his degree in ag business management from Oregon State University. The courses were heavily economic and business side focused, which Jake noted was important. “Dad helped teach me the farming side of the operations and from OSU, I was able to connect that work back into the business management aspects that I needed to learn.” He navigated his coursework at OSU during the pandemic, adapting to online requirements to successfully earn his degree.

Returning to the farm, Jake notes that a lot has changed, even during the short time he has returned to Morrow County. They have tried new crops and used new technologies to enhance efficiency. He is anxious to continue to learn and adapt, which was one of his reasons to get involved with the League. “There is a lot that the League does for farmers that is unnoticed or underappreciated,” he states. He hopes to help share information, noting “I’ve looked at farming through the lens of his own farm, but I see engagement with the League as an opportunity to learn from others and share my experiences.” As such, Jake joined as the new Morrow County President for the Oregon Wheat Growers League and is excited to be part of driving the organization forward.

He recognizes he does so while farmers are facing a lot of challenges and headwinds. Among those, Jake says: “It’s hard not to mention price. The cost of inputs goes up every day. The cost of equipment goes up every day. So we have to focus on how we can do better in an environment that is harder and harder to survive in.” Even though he has been back to the farm only a few years now, he has seen some of the most volatile years since he returned to the farm: both record years for the farm and their worst production. He has learned how to stretch a dollar through two to three years, working to get through a rebound to a better crop and market year. Yet he still looks forward to the future. For the legacy he hopes to leave he describes it as “Pretty simple, I want to leave the farm in a better place than I found it. I want to continue it on. I am appreciative of the farm and what it gave to me.”