



A FAMILY TRA-DEER-TION

THE BUCKNER FAMILY

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hen a discussion comes up about a family that knows a great deal about the deer industry, one family that always comes to mind is Dee and Donna Buckner and their seven children.

Within the last month there have been many changes for this long time deer family. Dee has taken over as Manager of Operations for Rob Beckham at Spring Gap Ranch in Cross Plains, Texas. The Buckner's oldest daughter Beth has taken the job of Auction Coordinator at the Deer Breeder Corporation in Mesquite, TX, and Katie, the second to the oldest, has moved to Ohio to work for Billy and Mitzi Sage. Within two weeks of each other, the Buckners were moving all over the state of Texas and out of state to Ohio. Plus, in the middle of everyone's moving, they had Katie's college graduation. There is one thing that is certain, our industry is better off because of this family. As we know, change can bring some pretty amazing outcomes. Our industry will inevitably benefit because of this family's decision to revamp!

As stories go, you should always begin with the "Patriarch of the Family". Dee Buckner is no stranger to hard work and raising animals. He grew up farming and working on a large dairy farm that his family ran. This, combined with his time in the Animal Science department at Texas A&M, primed him with the animal husbandry skills that he has honed into a craft. He stumbled into the deer industry in 2008, when Donovan Williamson hired him to bottle-feed fawns. After many hours of sweating in the fawn barn, and learning everything he could about the deer industry, he worked his way up to 'Pen Manager' where he stayed until 2014. That year, he was blessed by Trent Turner with the opportunity to design his dream fawn barn at The Turner Ranch in Jewett, TX. With that barn, he was able to expand his fawn feeding network even further. In May of 2018, after a call from Rob Beckham, he made the move to Spring Gap Ranch to become Manager of Operations. Not only has he impacted the industry personally, but his children have also become very involved. His oldest 2 daughters, Beth and Katie, were both DBC Scholarship

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recipients while completing college degrees and now work in the industry. His younger 4 children joined the family in 2009, and have loved every minute of learning how to raise fawns and tend to the deer.

Beth also grew up raising animals in 4H and FFA. While working on her bachelor's in Animal Science at Colorado State University, she first learned about raising deer while she was involved with CWD research. After graduating, she joined her dad, Dee, at Antler Ranch and become Fawn Barn Manager. During that time, she also served as the Intern Program Coordinator for NADeFA. It took a lot of convincing to leave her 'fawn bubble', but in 2014, she went to Texas Tech to work on her Master's degree with the launch of the DBC Deer Research Program. After some nutrition and drug residue studies in a combined graduate program, she graduated in 2016 with a Master's degree in Business Administration and a minor in Animal Science and Environmental Toxicology. After leaving Lubbock, she headed to College Station to work in the Histopathology, Molecular Diagnostics, and Virology Departments at the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Lab. She soon became the unofficial "resident deer person" helping with CWD, EHD/Blue-tongue, and tissue testing. This past May, she made the move to Mesquite, TX to become the new DBC Auction Coordinator.

Beth's sister, Katie, grew up loving animals as much as her dad and sister. After a short stint in the Athletic Training program at Tarleton State, she realized how much she realized her heart lay in the deer industry. After volunteering for several years at Antler Ranch, she became a Fawn Intern for Billy and Mitzi Sage at S&S Whitetail Galore. After several years of summers in Ohio and winters in Texas, she was snagged by John Viesca at Derby~Sand~Ranch. She stayed there until she decided she wanted to pursue being an official vet tech. She went to Pennsylvania for an internship with Black Horse Animal Hospital, working with Dr. Douglas and Carlee Wagner. It was there, she caught a fire that couldn't be extinguished. She came back home to Texas and immediately began classes to complete her degree. After graduating in May, she made the permanent move back to Ohio to rejoin S&S and the Sages full-time.

If you don't know this family of deer enthusiasts, take the time to get to know them. We could all learn from their passion for the deer industry; it's contagious! We are blessed to have them as a part of this great industry, and we wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

Don't forget to stop by our upcoming convention and welcome Beth to the DBC!

