

USHER LAND & TIMBER, INC.

E. T. Usher, Sr. began working in the turpentine business in North Florida in the early 1900s. E. T. "Etter" Usher, Jr. operated a logging business in the same area from the late 1940s. After his marriage to Helen Hiers, they began acquiring acreage for a "farm" and began running some cows. Tommy Usher (E. T. Usher III) joined his father in 1984 after graduating from Florida Southern College and the business was operated in the name of E. T. Usher Company, Inc.

Tommy was killed in a boating accident in 1989. Lynetta Usher Griner, a practicing attorney, and her husband, Ken Griner, a General Motors automobile dealer, began working in the Usher family business at that time.

Usher Land & Timber, Inc. had been incorporated in 1987 but was not operating any business. Etter Usher wished to be less active in the logging and cattle business, so it was sold to Usher Land & Timber, Inc. Ken and Lynetta have operated the business under that name since 1992. Sadly, Etter passed away August 7, 2015 at the age of 88. Helen died shortly thereafter on April 1, 2016.

The company currently has about 36 employees. Four logging crews (12 employees) and 10 truck drivers, along with 4 office employees, and 3 mechanics, deliver approximately 200 loads of various wood products to six different mills in North Florida. Three full time employees are assigned to the farm. Usher Land & Timber offers its employees a modified health insurance program and a pre-tax retirement program where the company contributes up to 3% to match an employee's contribution. Some of Usher Land and Timber's employees have worked for the company many, many years. In December of 2009, one employee retired after 53 years with the family! The two mechanics who run the company's shop are brothers. Four of the employees were childhood friends of Tommy Usher.

Seven employees of Usher Land & Timber, Inc. are certified Master Loggers. They have completed a course administered by the Florida Forestry Association and attend continuing education classes to maintain their certificates.

Usher Land & Timber, Inc. encourages its employees to be active in the community. Ken Griner serves on the Forestry Advisory Committee of Florida Farm Bureau. He is past state chairman and current district chairman of the Log a Load for Kids campaign that benefits the Children's Miracle Network at Shands Hospital in Gainesville, Florida. Ken also serves on the Executive Committee of the Florida Cattlemen's Association and is in line to become President in 2017. He was recognized as the Outstanding Rancher & Leader by Farm Credit of Florida and the Florida Cattlemen's Association in June of 2016.

Lynetta Griner is on the Board of Directors for the Florida Forestry Association and in September of 2012 became the first woman President of the 90 year old organization! Lynetta was appointed by Governor Jeb Bush to the Florida Forever Advisory Council and since 2008 has served as the Agricultural Appointee to the Acquisition and Restoration Council. She has served on the Suwannee River Water Management District Governing Board for 14 years (as Chairman for 10 of those years), as President of Friends of Fanning, Inc., a Citizen Support Organization that benefits Fanning Springs State Park, and as President and director of the Chiefland Chamber of Commerce. She is currently very active in supporting Haven Hospice of the Tri-Counties in its fundraising efforts. Lynetta also serves on the Board of Directors of Drummond Community Bank and on the Board of Trustees of the Florida Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. In 2013 Lynetta was named Woman of the Year in Agriculture for the State of Florida by Commissioner Adam Putnam. Ken and Lynetta are both charter members of the Suwannee Valley Rotary Club.

In 2001, Usher Land & Timber, Inc. was named the Logger of the Year by the Florida Forestry Association and the Southeastern Wood Producers Association. The award is given to a logger who manages his operations in compliance with forestry best management practices, maintains safe highway and woods operations, uses logging personnel and equipment effectively, develops unique business practices and practices exemplary business ethics. The company has also received recognition for its

harvest operations from landowners, timber companies and risk control consultants. The company tries to honor its employees from time to time and inform them of any recognition and/or constructive criticisms it has received. In 2002, Usher Land & Timber, Inc. was named Southeast Logger of the Year and in 2003, NATIONAL LOGGER OF THE YEAR!!!

In 2013, Usher Farm was honored as a CARES operation. The Suwannee River Partnership is a coalition of state, federal and regional agencies, local governments and private industry representatives working together to reduce nitrate levels in the surface waters and groundwater within the basins, or watersheds, of North Central Florida. The CARES (County Alliance for Responsible Environmental Stewardship) program assists farmers and ranchers in protecting the environment by providing technical assistance and cost-share funding to implement best management practices that protect and conserve Florida's important natural resources. The family timberlands have also been recognized by the Florida Audubon with its Sustainable Forestry Award.

Safety is a priority for Usher Land & Timber. The safety director, Kelly Hansen, conducts monthly safety meetings on various topics. She sometimes brings in speakers such as law enforcement officers or forestry fire control personnel to emphasize different issues involved in the business. All employees receive First Aid training and CPR training every two years by certified teachers. Kelly conducts surprise safety inspections from time to time to insure that all safety equipment is available and properly used. A vehicle inspection requirement has been initiated and forms to document the inspection that is completed by each log truck driver each day before beginning his work must be submitted each week. Similar forms are used by the crew leaders and signed by each crew member to document proper maintenance on the logging equipment.

Usher Land & Timber began using strobe lights and flashing cab lights on its trucks and trailers before they were required in Florida. Weight scales are maintained at the company office to insure that the loaded log trucks are not overweight and thus unsafe for our highways. Spare trucks, trailers and logging equipment are available so that unsafe or malfunctioning equipment is promptly taken out of service until repaired.

Another tool that Usher Land & Timber employs to insure safety is its pay system. Many in the logging industry utilize some sort of production based pay. Usher Land and Timber pays its employees strictly by the hour. It is believed that employees who are paid by the hour are more inclined to take their time and be safe than those who are worried about production.

Usher Land & Timber adopted a drug policy many years ago. All new employees are tested and random drug tests are conducted by Kelly, the safety director.

As implied earlier, Usher Land & Timber does not have a lot of employee turnover, but we do have some. Employee training is critical in any organization. At Usher Land & Timber we try to hire quality people and train them according to their ability. Regardless of ability or experience, every new employee serves as an "apprentice" to an experienced employee until both people agree that the new employee is ready. "Ready" would mean that he is capable and fully aware of all our procedures. During this time the employee/trainee is paid his full hourly rate so that there is no incentive to rush or misstate anyone's ability or comfort level.

Maintenance of the trucks, trailers and logging equipment is handled by the in house shop crew. The two "Fisher men" (because their last name is Fisher) have 64 years (as of 2016) of combined maintenance experience, ALL Usher Land & Timber. The only jobs that are not performed by the Fishers are radiator/air conditioning repair and injection pump repair.

Our ability to accomplish so much mechanical work in house has a tremendous impact on our financial success. By repairing equipment internally we are able to save money, not only on the cost of repair but also on down time for the equipment. The equipment is repaired on our schedule and not dependent on someone else's schedule. The quality of our internal repair work is superior to any work that could be performed by an outside source. That in itself is a savings for Usher Land & Timber.

Usher Land & Timber cattle operations are managed by Ken and Korey Griner. The company participates in all phases of the cattle industry...from conception to consumption. The Cow/Calf operation currently has about 850 "momma" cows and an additional 100+ replacement heifers in inventory. It also participates in the Seedstock Industry and has 125+ cows and heifers in inventory as well as approximately 100 head of "re-cip" cows to complement the embryo transfer program. Historically, the company has participated in the Stocker Industry, owning and growing 2000+ calves in Florida and Kansas. Usher Land & Timber is part of a retail branded beef program called "**Florida Cattle Ranchers**."

In the commercial cow business, Ken and Korey work very hard to produce superior calves that the consumer will want (in terms of quality and tenderness). They "chase" particular genetics in what cows are kept, what heifers are retained, what bulls are purchased and how they are used, and the use of artificial insemination and embryo transfer technology. Through the years they have worked tirelessly to try and grow a cow that can thrive in the North Florida environment. Consequently, the cow grown is now considered to be a "Baseliner Max".....in other words, an animal that is 1/2 Charolais, and 1/2 UltraBlack. Electronic identification devices are used on every animal in the Cow/Calf program. Meticulous records are kept and retained on all animals and that helps to grow and sustain the business.

In the Seedstock business, Usher Land & Timber partners with 3 others (Chris Hardee of Hardee Farms, Charles Crochet of Crochet Cattle Co., and Lee Leachman) in a program named "**Profit Driven Genetics**." That effort takes all the knowledge and experience of each partner to grow an animal that not only thrives in the Florida climate (the Baseline and Baseline Max) but that also incorporates all the performance possible to make it easier for local cattlemen and women to prosper. This program uses Angus, Brangus, UltraBlack and Charolais genetics to help build this exceptional animal. Ken and Korey are very excited about the future of Profit Driven Genetics and the impact it will have on the company's herd and also the herds of neighbors and friends.

Florida Cattle Ranchers is a really exciting new venture for Usher Land & Timber. Thirteen Florida cattlemen and their families got together to form this new entity. The guiding mission is to create Beef sold in Florida that is truly "Fresh from Florida." From conception to consumption, the cattle is all Florida born and raised. The goal is to give the consumer everything he/she wants from the standpoint of quality, tenderness, value, traceability, you name it. This concept will help reduce the stress on cattle, it will reduce negative impacts on the environment, and will contribute to better safety on the highways since Florida cattle will no longer have to be trucked to the Midwest to be grown and finished. This will support farmers in Florida and help strengthen their market, helping to keep Florida GREEN! Look for great things to come from this venture coming to a grocery store near you soon!!!

Best Management Practices are important in both the forestry division and the cattle division. Forestry BMP's for Water Quality were implemented in the early 1980's. Statewide, Florida enjoys a 98.9% compliance rate! In 2001, Cow/Calf BMP's for Water Quality were implemented. Usher Land & Timber employs these BMP's on a daily basis.

Usher produces 3 things every single day that are important to mankind.....food, oxygen and water. Food is produced through the cattle and farming operations. Oxygen and water, along with sequestering carbon dioxide and providing wildlife habitat, are produced through the timber crops and best management practices. Ken and Lynetta feel that it's inspiring to get up every day and to think that the things they are doing are going to contribute to society being a better place. Their workplace is beyond beautiful, in their opinion, and that in itself makes it rewarding. They operate a family business so they get to work with family and friends who are like family. It just doesn't get any better than that!

Ken and Lynetta often refer to themselves as "generational landowners" or "generational loggers" and those titles inherently mean that they have a responsibility to be good stewards of the land for the next generation. They understand that they don't really "possess" the land but have been given the use of it for a time. Someone else will eventually use and manage that same land. As timber growers and producers, as ranchers and farmers, they know more than anyone else the importance of the land and the importance of using the natural resources in a sustainable and responsible manner so that they can continue the work

started by Etter and Helen and leave the family's special place, Usher Farm, in a better state than when they came to it.

Ken and Lynetta are proud of Usher Land & Timber. They are proud of the heritage it represents and the employees who have made it the company it is today. Former employees frequently stop by to visit, reminisce and get a new company hat. It's truly a family operation!!

Revised 12/05/16.