

# The Farmer-Stockman

November 2007

[www.TheFarmerStockman.com](http://www.TheFarmerStockman.com)



**Rule Co-op Gin presses into 95th season**  
Page 16



**Baking up new wheat breeds**  
Page 22



**Only 7 days to healthier calves**  
Page 38

## Peanut proud

### Key Points

- Rick Kittley's athleticism helped him go on to college.
- He chose to return to farming, mainly in peanuts.
- His sons, now in college, follow in family's athletic ability.

By J.T. SMITH

**R**ICK Kittley, like most in his family, had great athletic ability. Some of the Kittley clan at Rule, Texas, followed that path. But Rick's days as a high school and college track star are memories now, and diverse farming is the Haskell County producer's big challenge these days.

With the help of his wife, Beth, a teacher, Rick raises a combination of cotton, wheat, sorghum and peanuts.

The signs outside Rule proclaim: "Rule — Gateway to the cotton fields. If you stop, you'll stay!" But Rick, one of four brothers, would be described as a peanut producer growing some cotton, as many farmers in this region are now.

The trouble is Rick's workforce left: All three of Rick and Beth's sons are in college this year. "That makes it rough in more ways than one," Rick assures. "I used to have a lot of help. But all three of our boys grew up. Beth is still getting used to that."

Rick has no farm employees, but Beth helps in the summer when not teaching.

Of the three sons, Kyle is a senior agriculture science major at Texas Tech University in Lubbock. Kolt is a junior at West Texas A&M University in



**PEANUTS ABOUND:** Rick Kittley expects his runner variety peanuts, like these under center-pivot irrigation, to produce a good yield this fall at his Rule, Texas, farm in Haskell County. Weather permitting, Kittley, with his dog, Little P, by his side, hopes to finish harvest by Thanksgiving.

Canyon, where he plays football and plans to be a coach. Kade is a freshman at McMurry University in Abilene, where he's on the track team and also wants to become a coach.

The athleticism comes naturally. Rick's brother, Wes, of Lubbock is head track coach for Texas Tech University, and brother Danny is intramural director at Abilene Christian University. The oldest brother, Rob, lives south of Rule.

### College then farming

Attending ACU on a track scholarship, Rick graduated in 1983 with an industrial education degree. "But I came back [to Rule] and started farming," he notes. "I don't know how smart that was."

Rick says the best part of attending ACU was meeting Beth, who majored in special education. Today, the couple farm 1,000 acres, centered on peanuts.

They produce peanuts with limited irrigation water, but frequent rains this year meant less reliance on pumping.

Rick doesn't expect his best peanut crop ever, but he says it should be a respectable harvest at between 4,000 and 5,000 pounds per acre. He has exceeded 5,000 pounds in more than one growing season, but Rick is still grateful for his many blessings as Thanksgiving approaches, and he's mighty thankful for Beth.

"It's the old saying: If my wife quit teaching school, I couldn't farm," he quips.

"My teaching lets him enjoy his hobby," Beth allows.

■ Read more on Page 6.

### FARM FUTURES

2007 Management Summit  
December 11-12

Two day program/Top industry speakers

[www.farmfutures.com/seminar](http://www.farmfutures.com/seminar)