

# Harvesting the Rewards of Life

*Forrest Lucas and wealth well spent.*

*By Marjorie Haun.*

*“Money, pardon the expression, is like manure. It’s not worth a thing unless you spread it around, helping young things to grow.”*

*—Dolly Levi, “Hello, Dolly!”*

**F**orrest Lucas knows a little about manure, and he knows a lot about helping young things grow. To be more specific, Forrest knows how to defend young things—and old—from hostile forces, so families can grow and prosper. As the owner of Lucas Oil, Lucas Cattle, and founder of Protect the Harvest, Forrest is sometimes mischaracterized as a magnate to whom agriculture is a hobby, but that couldn’t be further from the truth. Forrest is a defender, a protector, a trucker and a true-to-life rancher who puts his mind, heart, and money into the future of American agriculture and the families who make a living off the land.

Lean and unassuming, with a country boy’s Midwestern accent, Forrest has political capital in the highest places in American government, and that capital is spent carefully and only for the best causes. As an Indiana native with some leverage and conservative leanings, Forrest knows Vice President Mike Pence well. “Pence and I are pretty close,” Forrest says. “He wanted me to be secretary of Interior, and he actually chewed me out for not taking it. But there are so many things out here that need to get done that I don’t want to get pinned down to a desk.”

## Executive Clemency

One of those “things” that Forrest needed to get done was a presidential pardon for Oregon ranchers Dwight and Steven Hammond,

and he admits that he couldn’t have gone about it the way he did if he held high federal office. Having formed a friendship with both cowboys early on, Forrest stayed in touch with them from the time they went into federal prison. According to Forrest, Dwight told him, “Mr. Lucas, if anybody’s going to get us out of here, it’s going to have to be you.”

Forrest brought the plight of the Hammonds, and their outrageous sentence on charges related to fires on their Oregon graz-

**“There was something written about ‘The Millionaire and His Jet Plane’ that really set the story off nationally. Now the story wasn’t about my plane at all, but that angle had a lot of impact on the press and got their attention.”**

ures associated with past presidents, worked intensively behind the scenes to free the imprisoned ranchers. But with his unique understanding of the implications of the Hammonds’ case to western farmers and ranchers, Forrest went to bat in a big way. “I started working on this and I got Pence to really know what was going on,” he says. “We had our lobbyist in Washington working on it, and Oregon Representative Greg Walden also talked to Pence about the Hammonds.”

Although the pardons did not come as quickly as hoped, the Trump administration listened and on July 10, 2018, the president signed an Order of Executive Clemency, freeing the father and son. On the eve of the pardons, Forrest says, “We were waiting and then I got the call, ‘Tomorrow it’s going to happen.’” Forrest flew his private plane to California, where Dwight and Steven

were released from Terminal Island, and met them the following day. Forrest describes the chain of events: “I got up at three in the morning and flew out from Indiana. We had a movie studio not too far from Terminal Island so I had some photographers come out and get pictures of us chatting at the airport.”

Forrest’s plane trip to pick up Dwight and Steven was a big, big deal for the media. “There was something written about ‘The Million-

aire and His Jet Plane’ that really set the story off nationally. Now the story wasn’t about my plane at all, but that angle had a lot of impact on the press and got their attention.” Sadly, it wasn’t until Forrest helped facilitate their freedom that the mainstream media paid any heed to the Hammonds’ ordeal. Nevertheless, it all ended with overflowing gratitude and



*The Hammonds got the benefit of Forrest’s political clout and generosity. After spending years in federal prison for accidentally burning 140 acres of federally managed brush (which improved after the burn), they were flown home in a private jet. From left: Dave Duquette of Protect the Harvest, Steve Hammond, Dwight Hammond and Forrest Lucas.*

ing allotments, to the attention of the vice president and to the conscience of President Trump himself. (See “Enemies of the State” at [www.rangemagazine.com](http://www.rangemagazine.com).)

Forrest was not alone in his quest to rectify the gross injustice heaped on the Hammonds. Others, including some of President Trump’s closest advisors and influential fig-