



LeadAR

Member **SPOTLIGHT**
Class 19

UofA
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System



Stacey Gorman

*Director of Communication
The Cotton Board*

Stacey Gorman is the Director of Communications for The Cotton Board. Gorman joined the staff of The Cotton Board in 2008 after graduating from the University of Central Arkansas with degrees in Public Relations and Writing. Stacey leads the ongoing efforts of the Cotton Board's Communications Department to keep America's cotton producers informed of the activities stemming from the Cotton Research and Promotion Program. She leads The Cotton Board's advertising, public relations, social media, digital marketing, and producer-outreach efforts. Gorman also works to support cotton importers from major brands and retailers such as Macy's, Target, Gildan, and Levi Strauss Co. to bridge the gap between cotton on the farm and the cotton they

need to bring their products to consumers. Gorman's work with The Cotton Board has resulted in myriad honors and awards, including Overall Grand Champion for the "Renew Your Faith in Cotton" advertising campaign at the 2016 National Agricultural Marketing Association awards. Gorman, a native to Southeast Arkansas, currently resides in Warren, Arkansas with her husband Brandon, son Grayson, and daughter Landry. She is active in the community of Warren and is a co-founder of the Bradley County Animal Rescue Coalition, and past board president of the Donald W. Reynolds YMCA of Warren and Bradley County.

Why did you apply to the LeadAR program? What motivated you?

Having worked in the cotton industry for over 12 years now, I feel like my knowledgebase of agricultural issues and practices is a bit narrow. I hope to gain a broader perspective of issues facing other industries, commodities, and communities. Also, my work with The Cotton Board prohibits lobbying and involvement in policy issues since we are a quasi-governmental agency. I am looking forward to deepening my understanding of the political structures, practices, and processes that affect Arkansas.

What leadership quality do you admire most in others? Why?

In my experience, the best leaders build up their team. Leaders should support team members in their respective roles with encouragement, trust, and gratitude for a job well done. My current CEO is a great example of this type of leader. He manages people's strengths for the benefit of the entire organization. In my case, he has fairly evaluated me, given me increasingly difficult assignments, and trusted me to manage those assignments, thus empowering me to become a more skilled and experienced professional.

What is something people would be surprised to learn about you? Why is this surprising?

People may be surprised to know that since 2018, I have fostered over 20 shelter dogs and gotten them socialized and ready to move on to their forever families. People have the impression that it would be "too hard to let go" of these foster dogs after letting them into your home for an extended amount of time - and while that is definitely true, people would be surprised to know how rewarding it feels to play an important role in these dog's journey from being locked in a shelter to their new wonderful life as a family's pet.

What are your top three ingredients necessary for success?

1. Strong work ethic
2. Willingness to keep learning (know you aren't the smartest person in the room)
3. A great team

What are your top three ingredients necessary for happiness?

1. Limes
 2. Salt
 3. Tequila
....oh wait, I was listing the ingredients for margaritas, which is kind of the same thing as happiness right?! Seriously, though...
1. A sense of humor
 2. A strong support system
 3. Travel

Describe your personal leadership style.

I would describe myself as a servant leader. I channel my energy into finding ways to help others. I strive to elevate and develop the people around me, by working alongside them to understand the challenges and opportunities in each situation. I like to take the time and effort needed to deeply understand a problem, but then move beyond understanding and into action by devising and implementing a path forward to solve it.

What is something you hope to gain from your LeadAR experience?

I am hopeful that involvement in this program will help me to identify areas of leadership in which I could potentially serve my community and accelerate my path to leadership within my professional career.

How can effective leadership help move the state of Arkansas forward?

Effective leadership in Arkansas could help our communities buy-in to the fact that Arkansas NEEDS to move forward.

You are stranded on a desert island. What are your three MUST HAVE items?

1. The complete Harry Potter book series.
2. Beach bag, fully stocked with snacks, sunscreen, beach towel, drinks, etc.
3. A satellite phone so I can call to be rescued when I run out of the aforementioned essentials.

What is something that was difficult for you six months ago but easy for you now?

Six months ago, I was really struggling to feel connected with those outside my "Covid-bubble." Travel restrictions and social distancing recommendations put a real damper on the way I was used to

interacting with those around me, both personally and professionally. Learning to adapt and utilize new technology has been crucial to successfully connecting with my network. Now, I find myself hosting regular video-conference style coffee dates and group work-out sessions to stay connected with my friends. Professionally, I have discovered so many new ways to reach out to the cotton-growing community that will stick with me, even after the pandemic ends.

What else do you want others to know about you?

In my role with The Cotton Board, I work with cotton producers across the country and help them understand how cotton research and promotion is helping make them more profitable. I also get to work with cotton importers from major brands and retailers such as Macy's, Target, Gildan, and Levi Strauss Co. to bridge the gap between cotton on the farm and the cotton they need to bring their products to consumers. After graduating from college at the University of Central Arkansas, I moved to Memphis, Tennessee to pursue my career in agricultural communications with The Cotton Board. However, I moved back to Arkansas a few years later due to a career opportunity for my husband. From that time, I have continued my career remotely and worked for The Cotton Board from a home-office in Warren, Arkansas. My husband Brandon and I have lived in Warren, Arkansas for over 10 years and have two children. Our son Grayson is nine, and our daughter Landry is five.