



# FARMERS

## **FARMERS INDUSTRIAL**

### **An Evolution of Success Built on the American Dream**

*"Time is the friend of the wonderful company,  
and the enemy of the mediocre."*

— Warren Buffett

Time has certainly been a friend to FARMERS Industrial. Since 1920, time has served as a transformative foundation as two young entrepreneurs turned an opportunity into what is now recognized as the Partner of Choice in the Industrial Fabrication and Field Services sectors. Here's their story...



## The Farmer Family Journey

Achieving that reputation as a Partner of Choice began on the shores of Galveston in 1920 when the Farmer brothers saw an opportunity along America's Gulf Coast and ran with it. Their company, Farmer's Marine Copper Works, grew steadily throughout the 21st Century, changing its name to Farmers Alloy as it became a trusted fabricating and alloy company for various industries around the globe. Later named FARMERS Industrial, the company continues the legacy of its founders today.

Leslie Farmer, Sr., a young Englishman, is the genesis of Farmer's Marine Copper Works. Born in 1891, he grew up in southern England. From a young age, he worked as a coppersmith apprentice in the Queen's Island Shipyard, where the infamous Titanic was built. His dream was born there: Owning a company in the United States!

In the early 1900s, time became Les' friend. A worksite accident blinded him in his right eye, forcing him to leave his job. This recovery period allowed Les to devote himself to realizing his dream of owning a company in the USA. Les moved swiftly, arriving in America to work as a coppersmith in the shipyards of Boston and Toronto and his reputation as a skilled professional grew over time.

Meanwhile, back home, Les' brother, Sydney, was injured in World War I and spent 13 months in the hospital, where he dwindled to 87 pounds. Les offered hope by promising Sydney that if he could regain his health, Les would pay for his passage to the USA, and they could start that business together. It worked!

## Galveston Becomes Home Base

Les and Syd reunited and worked together, repairing ships in a Boston shipyard while they planned how to start their company.

A co-worker suggested they consider Galveston, Texas, due to its rapid growth and reputation as the hub of trade for the entire country. "It's the Wall Street of the South," was all Les needed to hear. The brothers set out for Galveston.

In 1920, Les and Syd founded Farmer's Marine Copper Works, Ltd., a marine repair shop catering to ships of all sizes based on Galveston's famed Strand Avenue. "Farmer's Marine Copper Works" was the ideal name, as it precisely explained their core product - copper - which is a vital component in the marine piping industry.

The beginnings were humble. The brothers delivered their first pipe on the back of a streetcar. But Les and Syd knew that time was their friend and that, eventually, prosperous times would come. They were right.

FMCW grew by anticipating changing client needs and industry advancements and then evolving their product offerings to match. Services expanded to petrochemical fabrication and maintenance. As time passed, customers began to buy raw metal goods and finished products. In response, FMCW pivoted again, opened two metal service centers, and continued to achieve growth in the fabrication industry.



Video:  
Establishing a  
Legacy in Galveston

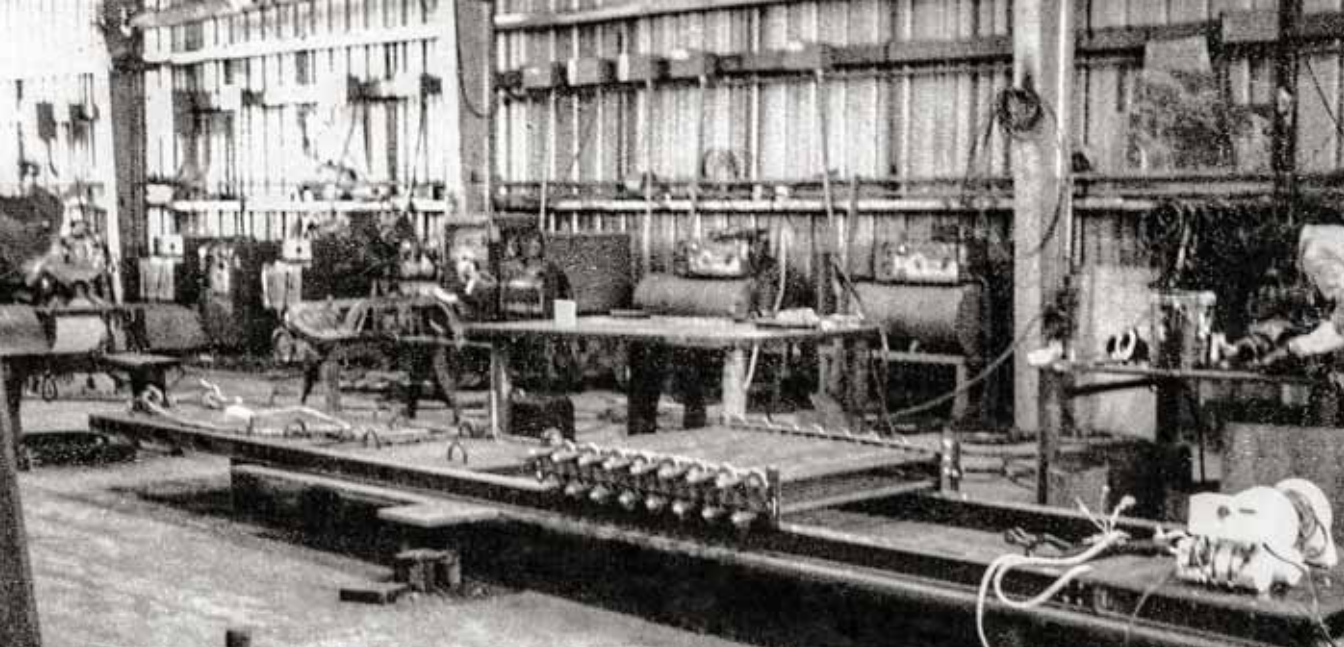


Video:  
Operating in the Wall  
Street of the South



Video:  
Galveston's Strand  
Avenue Trolley





## Harnessing Success Across the Decades

The 1940s brought World War II, and Farmers Marine Copper Works played a critical role in America's military efforts. Contracts included fitting Naval ships and PT boats and building the piping needed to get the vessels into active duty.

War efforts became personal for Les when his son, Les Jr., was drafted into the Navy. He inherited his dad's talent, and Les Jr. quickly became known for his technical expertise in repairing wounded ships in the Pacific Ocean.

Les Jr.'s reputation played a key role in propelling his dad and uncle's company to its status as one of the world's finest marine copper works operations. FMCW's sustained success was achieved through the steady expansion of its customer base, productive offerings, and recognition of staff expertise by professionals around the globe.

In the '50s, FMCW created a new metals distribution division under the lead of Les Jr.'s, son, Bruce Farmer, Sr. The '60s continued the company's steady growth, especially as plastics stormed the industry. It didn't take long for the Farmers name to be at the forefront of this booming industry.

By the '70s, the company's metals distribution services became a vibrant part and independent entity of the FMCW business. Bruce Farmer Sr. and his four sons ran this new service. Client demand and the ravages of weather along Galveston's coastline prompted FMCW to set up shop in a sprawling Galveston airport hangar.



Video:  
Galveston Original  
Shop - Attic



Video:  
Galveston Original  
Shop - Receiving







## Staking a Claim to History

Les Farmer Jr. was a brilliant engineer graduate from Texas A&M who joined the family business and focused on plastics and the polyethylene industry. MJ Bertini also worked at FMCW and sat face-to-face with Les Jr. behind their green metal desks in their Galveston offices, plotting and planning the best possible products and solutions for their clients.

The Farmer-Bertini team advanced polyethylene's capabilities and applications, and polyethylene's popularity soared. They also advanced Autofrettage – the process of pre-stressing a thick-walled tube and concrete, which increases the longevity of the high-pressure polyethylene pipeline – to strengthen and improve the durability of thick, cylindrical, and spherical pressure vessels.

Their work propelled Farmer's Marine Copper Works to be the recognized experts in polyethylene. Major corporations such as DOW, Fluor, and Union Carbide came knocking.

Fluor Corporation executive J. Robert (Bob) Fluor befriended the Farmer family and would stay at their home when he visited Galveston. He shared the belief that plastics were the future and engaged FMCW to provide their expertise in polyethylene and Autofrettage for Fluor's operations.



Video:  
The Groundbreaking Work  
of Farmer and Bertini

## Passing the Torch

Tom Farmer is Les Jr's son. He learned from his grandfather, Les Sr., and his father when he worked in the shop every summer. Eventually, he worked his way up to become company president.

In 1975, the **DuPont** Eleutherin Mills gunpowder factory in Delaware had an accident. During the incident investigation, a metallurgist found pieces of metal stuck together from the blast, and Explosion Bonding was discovered. Tom Farmer studied the phenomenon further and found that fastening two metals together with a detonator would cause one metal to bond permanently to the other.

"We were facing issues with corrosion, so we used explosive bond titanium over copper to prevent the chlorine from attacking the copper," Tom Farmer said.



Video:  
Shop Talk - Poly  
Auto QC



Video:  
DuPont





## Shooting for the Stars

In the 1980s, an official from the University of Texas Center for Electromechanics visited FMCW. He brought a stack of blueprints for a top-secret project. "They requested that we study the prints and give our assessment." So, while the University representative read a magazine (he was not allowed to leave the prints), the FARMERS team got to work on the challenge and established a solution.

The plans showed a big cylinder made of heavy electrolytic, tough-pitch copper. It consisted of several baffles, copper discs, and thick-walled copper. It was made to store a lot of electrical energy using a compulsator. The plan was to silver braze it by taking silver sauder and putting it in a copper cylinder. The challenge was, sauder melts at 1200 degrees, but when heated to the needed 1253 degrees, the expansion of the cylinder was five times greater, meaning the steel would have also grown five times greater than the discs inside. The result: The piece would lose the capillary action needed to accomplish the silver joint and fail.

The FARMERS team adjusted the premise and drew their design to use a furnace braze with the silver sauder. The team mocked it up and sent it to the University for review.

"Next thing I know, we have an order from President Reagan, who classified the work as defense priority number 1 for the **Star Wars Missile Defense Program**. The President ordered that no job would come before this job. Not even emergencies from other clients," Tom Farmer said.

FMCW built many then top-secret items for the Star Wars program, including power units for rail guns that could shoot down missiles, satellites that could be placed without a rocket, and a space shuttle vacuum system to test the exterior tiles' adhesion.

"America was not shy in boasting about its Missile Defense capabilities. In this same period, President Reagan gave the memorable directive to "tear down that wall" shortly after that meeting with Gorbachev. FARMERS is very proud of its support of the Star Wars program, no matter how small.





In 1998, Farmers Marine Copper Works became the Partner of Choice for **NASA**, and built several items for the space program, including tools on the space shuttle and a replica International Space Station mockup that would be submerged in a pool at the NASA facility to mimic zero gravity, allowing astronauts to practice their eventual work in space.

“Nothing was complicated to create, but everything needed to be dimensionally accurate. We hosted inspectors at our shop regularly to ensure high-quality levels of control,” Tom Farmer said.

1998 also saw another evolution of the Farmers’ operations. The family purchased another plant in Texas City to increase its service to clients.



Video:  
The National Star  
Wars Project

## Fueling Innovation

When **Monsanto Bayer** experienced challenges with its chemical reactor design, they called FMCW to evaluate. They found that the current design allowed parts to fold in half, causing the unit to shut down. The FMCW team fixed the issue by modifying the design and adding expansion joints.

**British Petroleum** also came knocking on the FMCW door with a challenge concerning the construction of four mega, 60-foot towers. Teamwork between the two companies led to a new design relative to titanium and pressure. This modification produced excellent long-term results and the FARMERS reputation continued to grow beyond the continental USA.

“I asked how they would protect the titanium lining during the welding because if the temperature rises above 400 degrees, the titanium will oxidize and become contaminated,” Tom Farmer said. BP purged the titanium, achieved safe welds and became another satisfied client.

The company’s reputation became known around the globe. Les Farmer, Jr. posted a world map in his office with thumbtacks marking their project locations.



Video:  
Dow





## Branding to Keep Pace with Success

In 2005, Tom Farmer studied how much evolution his company navigated to keep pace with industry advancements. He found that the name "Farmer's Marine Copper Works" no longer represented the full range of the company's services. Marine piping and fabrication remained, but the Farmer's reputation soared as an alloy fabricator for the petrochemical industry. The name Farmers Alloy was born, and business continued to boom.

"Tom has imparted much of his knowledge to many people here," said Doug Polzin, Operations Manager and a nearly two-decade veteran at Farmers. "He has instilled in me much of his technical and business sense."



Video:  
The Headquarter  
Journey

In 2024, the Farmer family completed its latest regeneration by adding veteran David Clem to the leadership team as President and CEO. Clem's goal: Enhance the Farmer family legacy and leverage his experiences and network to expand the company's footprint and services.

The vision and mission of Farmer's Marine Copper Works and Farmers Alloy remain, but as industries continue to evolve, so does FARMERS. We rebranded as FARMERS to represent all subsidiaries of the decades-old, highly respected American success story that started with the resilience of two ambitious visionaries.

"Since that first trolley-car delivery in 1920, FARMERS has earned the reputation as a trusted Partner of Choice to a long list of companies of all sizes. FARMERS' success is the product of evolving to meet the needs of our employees, adapting to current market dynamics, preparing for new markets, and consistently serving customers – all priorities that have been and always will be embedded in every step of our operations," Clem said.



# FARMERS

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## THE FARMERS EVOLUTION

- 1920 Establishes Farmer's Marine Copper Works in Galveston at 1908 Strand Avenue
- 1970 Opens new FMCW location at Galveston Airport hangar facility
- 1980 Farmer's Copper opens in Galveston
- 1998 Establishes new FMCW location in Texas City
- 2004 Sells airport hangar facility
- 2005 Changes company name to Farmer's Alloy and opens a new location in LaMarque, TX
- 2008 Farmer's Copper moves to former Sam's Warehouse in Texas City for copper services
- 2020 Farmers Alloy and FMCW consolidate operations into one shop at the current 210 Banana Street, La Marque, TX
- 2024 Rebrands as FARMERS. The new FARMERS logo features a salute to the company's storied legacy. The copper color in the 'E' reflects the company's original name: Farmer's Marine Copper Works. Thus, FARMERS will Stay True, and Forge Ahead as our industry evolves.



What Does Today's  
FARMERS Look Like?