

= The Farm ( The Office ) =

" The Farm " is the seventeenth episode of the ninth season of the American comedy television series The Office and the 192nd overall . It originally aired on NBC on March 14 , 2013 . The episode guest stars Matt L. Jones as Dwight 's cousin Zeke , Majandra Delfino as Dwight 's sister Fannie , Blake Garrett as his nephew , and Thomas Middleditch as his brother .

The series ? presented as if it were a real documentary ? depicts the everyday lives of office employees in the Scranton , Pennsylvania , branch of the fictional Dunder Mifflin Paper Company . The episode revolves around Dwight Schrute ( Rainn Wilson ) and Oscar Martinez ( Oscar Nunez ) who attend the funeral of Dwight 's Aunt Shirley at Schrute Farms . Dwight receives his aunt 's property , and he and his siblings decide to run it . Meanwhile , Todd Packer ( David Koechner ) returns to the office to get back at them for his firing a year prior .

" The Farm " was produced to serve as a backdoor pilot for a proposed spin @-@ off series starring Wilson as Dwight , which NBC ultimately did not pick up . The episode received mostly negative reviews from television critics , with many criticizing Dwight 's farm storyline and some critics calling it a " Frankenstein episode " . The episode was viewed by 3 @.@ 54 million viewers and received a 1 @.@ 9 / 5 percent rating among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 . The episode ranked fourth in its timeslot , and it was the highest @-@ rated NBC series of the night .

= = Plot = =

Dwight Schrute ( Rainn Wilson ) receives news that his Aunt Shirley has died , and he informs the office . The only co @-@ worker he invites to the funeral is Oscar Martinez ( Oscar Nunez ) . At the funeral , Dwight 's family gathers : his brother Jeb ( Thomas Middleditch ) , his cousins Mose ( Michael Schur ) and Zeke ( Matt L. Jones ) , his sister Fannie ( Majandra Delfino ) , her son Cameron ( Blake Garrett ) , and Dwight 's uncle Heinrich ( Tom Bower ) . The family learns that Aunt Shirley has willed them her estate on the condition that they all move back to run it . Unsure about whether they should take over the farm , they all discuss the pros and cons of the situation . Eventually , Dwight convinces them to help him run the farm .

Meanwhile , Todd Packer ( David Koechner ) visits the office and announces that he wants to make amends for his past behavior . He makes rude remarks masked as apologies and hands out store @-@ bought cupcakes . Pam Halpert ( Jenna Fischer ) argues that they should not eat the cupcakes , to spite Packer . She remains adamant on this point even after Packer leaves , but once Pam goes home the remaining employees eat the cupcakes . Packer reveals to the documentary crew that he spiked the cupcakes with drugs , supposedly as revenge for getting him fired ( though none of the employees present save Nellie had anything to do with his being fired ) . He then visits Jim Halpert ( John Krasinski ) and Darryl Philbin ( Craig Robinson ) at Athlead in Philadelphia , pulling the same trick on them . In the morning , Pam returns to the office and announces she is going to eat her cupcake , only to find everyone else reeling from the aftereffects of Packer 's deed .

= = Production = =

The episode was written and directed by executive producer and former showrunner Paul Lieberstein , marking his thirteenth writing credit , sixth directorial credit and fourth dual credit . " The Farm " was the fifth episode produced , but was the seventeenth aired , as noted by its production number . It was originally supposed to act as a backdoor pilot for a spin @-@ off series starring Wilson and focusing on Dwight . As such , Wilson was initially slated to appear in only 13 episodes of The Office 's ninth season before leaving for the spin @-@ off . Paul Lieberstein , the showrunner for The Office for seasons five through eight , stepped down at the start of season nine in order to focus more energy on the potential spin @-@ off . However , upon review , the spin @-@ off was not picked up by NBC . Executive producer Greg Daniels revealed that the episode would have additional material shot so that it fits better into the season , as the original version contained " certain aspects that were appropriate for a pilot of a new show " .

The episode guest stars Majandra Delfino , Blake Garrett , Thomas Middleditch , Matt L. Jones and Tom Bower as members of Dwight 's family ; Delfino plays Dwight 's sister Fannie , Garrett plays Dwight 's nephew Cameron , Middleditch portrays Dwight 's brother Jeb , Jones portrays Dwight 's cousin Zeke , and Bower appears as Dwight 's great uncle Heinrich , in a deleted scene . Jones had previously appeared in the ninth season entry , " Junior Salesman " .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" The Farm " originally aired on NBC on March 14 , 2013 , after a four @-@ week hiatus . In its original American broadcast , the episode was viewed by an estimated 3 @. @ 54 million viewers and received a 1 @. @ 9 rating / 5 percent share . This means that it was seen by 1 @. @ 9 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds , and 5 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds watching television at the time of the broadcast . This marked a decrease in the ratings from the previous episode , " Moving On " . The Office ranked fourth in its timeslot , being beaten by an episode of the CBS police procedural Person of Interest which received a 2 @. @ 9 / 8 percent rating , an entry of the ABC series Grey 's Anatomy which received a 2 @. @ 6 / 7 percent rating , and an installment of the Fox series Glee which received a 2 @. @ 0 / 6 percent rating . Despite this , the episode was the highest @-@ rated NBC series for the night . 1 @. @ 90 million viewers watched the episode via DVR playback , bringing the total viewership to 5 @. @ 36 million viewers and a 3 @. @ 0 18 ? 49 rating .

= = = Reviews = = =

" The Farm " received mostly negative reviews from critics , many criticizing Dwight 's farm storyline and some critics calling it a " Frankenstein episode " . M. Giant of Television Without Pity awarded the episode a C. Alan Sepinwall of HitFix considered NBC 's decision not to pick the spin @-@ off for more episodes the right decision , writing that the characters and scenes were " barely sketches " and featured too much " cartoonishness " . Sepinwall also criticized the Todd Packer scenes , and only saw Dwight 's interactions with his nephew , Cameron , in a positive light . TV.com columnist Nick Campbell called the farm storyline " unnatural " compared to the episode and the series , as a whole , and wrote that the tone to the ending " didn 't match " . Despite this , he complimented the storyline for " establishing tone , characters , and direction in literally half the time usually allotted " . The A.V. Club reviewer Erik Adams complimented the episode for serving as a " breather " from the season 's long arcs , and gave good background information into Dwight 's personality . He went on to criticize the pilot 's broad humor , writing that following the scene featuring Dwight shooting a shotgun into his aunt 's casket , " it would be next to impossible for The Farm to heighten from that point " . Adams graded the episode a B.

Damon Houx of Screen Crush called the two storylines " two pieces of that [ sic ] didn 't work all that well together " , which all added to a " dull " episode . Houx complimented Koechner 's performance , calling him a " great improviser " but wrote that the whole plot was lacking . He also considered the farm plotline to be pointless and aimless , especially due to it airing in the last few episodes of the series .