

Oklahoma Country

SPRING 2014
THE MAGAZINE OF
THE OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU

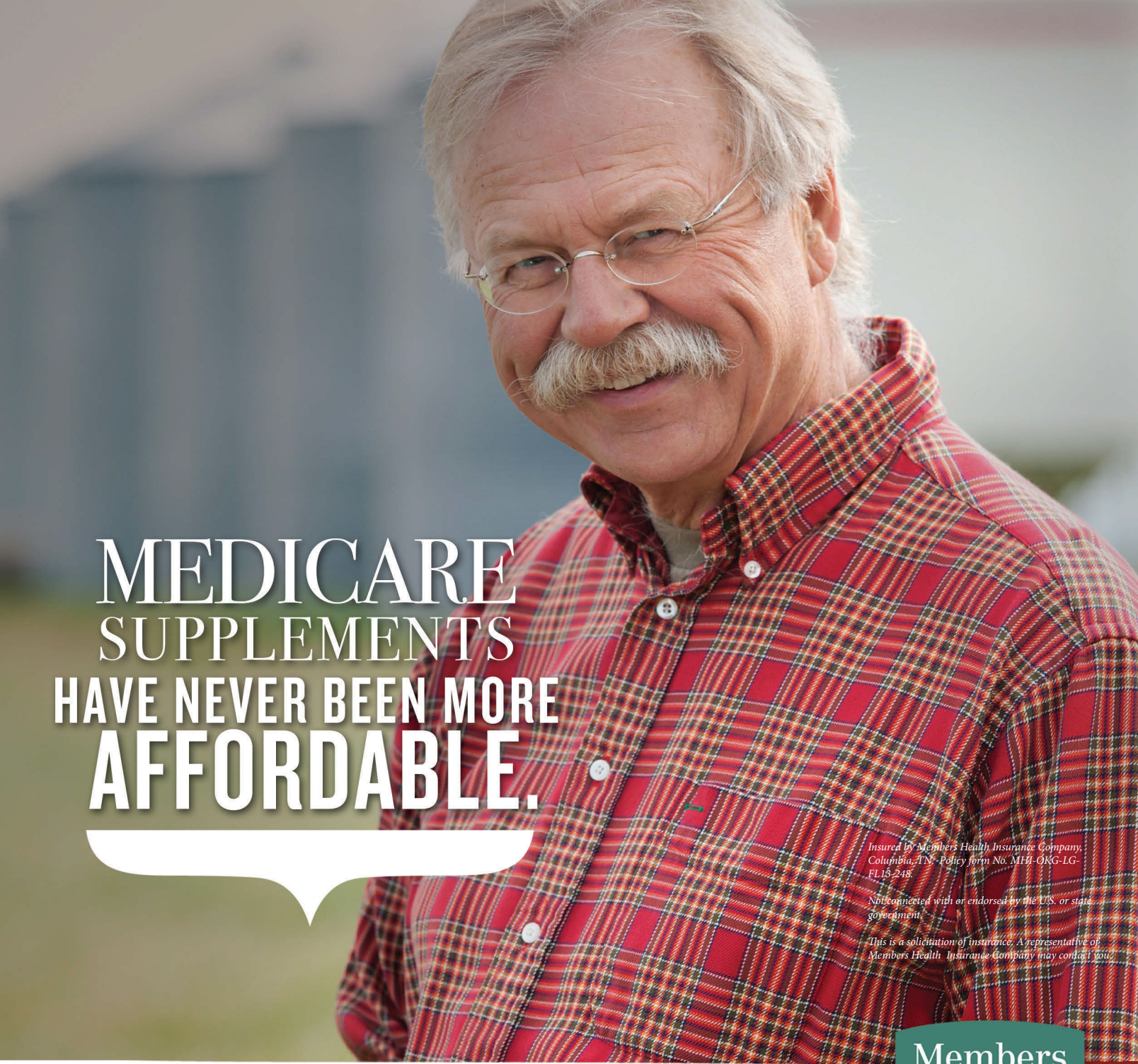


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A Conversation Worth Starting

A Page-Turning Journey

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Hidden number worth \$50!

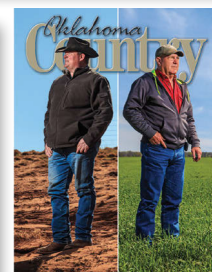
One member family's Oklahoma Farm Bureau membership number is hidden somewhere in this issue of OKLAHOMA COUNTRY, and could earn that member family \$50.

To claim the cash prize, the member family must find its own

hidden membership number and contact Karolyn Bolay before the last day of the month Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 405-523-2320.

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on the face of your individual OKFB membership card for you to claim the cash prize. The membership number that appears on your magazine's mailing label is not the hidden number, but also must match the hidden number for you to claim the cash prize.



DUSTIN MIELKE

Cover Image

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Directors Monte Tucker and James Fuser may live on opposite sides of the state, but they have a common interest in effectively utilizing the state's water supply.



TOM BUCHANAN
President
Oklahoma Farm Bureau
& Affiliated Companies

Committed to Overcoming Adversities

Springtime in Oklahoma often means a time of renewal and regrowth around the state. Baby calves hit the ground, wheat fields begin to ripen, grass starts to green and the warm weather brings all creatures – human and animal – out of their winter retreats.

But unfortunately, an ongoing and repressive drought still lingers throughout the state. From soybeans in the northeast, to cotton in the southwest, corn and wheat in the northwest, to grass pastures in the southeast, all of agriculture is suffering from the lack of rainfall.

While the dollar figure of agricultural losses over the past three years can be totaled (it is exceeding \$1.5 billion at this point), a bigger and more sinister issue is starting to come to light. The human component, the emotional drain of constant, unrelenting, drier-than-normal seasons is becoming unbearable for some. If this weather pattern persists, decisions by individuals and businesses will be primarily determined by drought and the impacted water resources of Oklahoma.

Farmers and ranchers by their very nature are the eternal optimists. With the coming of spring, renewed hope is front and center in conversations, and the learned knowledge of generations of Oklahoma's agricultural producers about the promise of spring tells us that hope is around the corner.

Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture Jim Reese has said "farming is not an indoor sport," and I whole heartily agree. Today's producers know weather will make or break even the best of them. Matt Muller and his wife Kellie of Martha, Okla., were recognized as American Farm Bureau's Young Farmers and Ranchers Achievement Award winners in 2006, so they are well aware of the need for Mother Nature's cooperation when it comes to producing a profitable product. When once asked what made him a successful farmer, Matt said "it rained at the right time."

While the drought is at the forefront of most producers' minds, it is important to remember other adversities the agricultural industry is currently facing. From special interest groups to government overreach, producers continue to battle outside forces just to sustain their livelihood. Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt has recently taken a stand against a few of the issues affecting agriculture. Mr. Pruitt has launched an investigation into solicitations and advertisements by national animal welfare organizations. The concern is these groups are giving Oklahomans the impression their donations are assisting Oklahoma animal shelters, when in fact the donations of Oklahomans may go toward unrelated efforts like lobbying in other states or at the federal level. He has also joined a multistate lawsuit against the state of California, and I encourage you to turn to page 32 to read more about his efforts to prohibit restrictive farming laws.

Furthermore, Oklahoma Farm Bureau has joined Mr. Pruitt's lawsuit against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior and is proud to support him in his fight to defend Oklahomans' private property rights.

The FWS recently listed the Lesser Prairie-Chicken as a "threatened" species under a "sue and settle"-induced deadline involving the Endangered Species Act. The premature and indefensible listing decision unduly harms landowners and business interests in Oklahoma and circumvents the statutorily required ESA procedures.

For the past several years, Oklahoma Farm Bureau has been working with the state of Oklahoma, private landowners and a coalition of the state's oil and gas, transmission, wind energy and transportation industries to protect the LPC and to avoid an ESA listing. In March 2013, FWS approved the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation's

Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for the LPC on agricultural lands, and farmers and ranchers have been working hard to implement best practices to protect the LPC on their properties.

The listing will impose unnecessary federal restrictions on agricultural producers, limiting their rights to develop their private property. We believe a partnership between private landowners and state agencies is the more appropriate avenue to not only protect the bird, but to allow Oklahomans to continue taking care of Oklahoma.

We are concerned federal agencies are routinely yielding to the demands of special interest groups whose increasingly common use of "sue and settle" tactics is fast-tracking the ESA listing process. These environmental organizations were involved in two closed-door settlements with FWS in 2011 that, among other things, truncated FWS's allotted time to complete a listing decision for the LPC, therefore preventing the state of Oklahoma and landowners from adequately implementing the CCAA and demonstrating its proven ability to protect the bird. There are more than 250 other animals going through a similar process, and we cannot allow "sue and settle" to become cliché. Our hope is that this lawsuit will put an end to the abuse and reinstate the proper procedures for ESA listing decisions. Mr. Pruitt's sensitivity to this issue and others affecting agriculture and rural Oklahoma is much appreciated.

Oklahoma always has been and always will be an agricultural state, but from a relentless drought, to a relentless stream of legal and legislative battles, producers continue to face opposition from all sides. As the state's largest general agricultural organization, Oklahoma Farm Bureau is here to stand up for producers, to help find solutions to the problems facing the industry and to protect a way of life that is vital to our state.

We ask our urban neighbors to remember their rural friends and join the many prayers from rural Oklahoma for a good, wet spring and summer.

We farm here.



We ranch here.

We live here.



We are rural Oklahoma.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members live in all 77 counties across our great state. They work both on farms and in towns. They raise their families in rural communities. They create economic value for our state. Together, Oklahoma Farm Bureau members defend private property rights, care for the land and livestock, and make Oklahoma's rural communities vibrant. We are the members of Oklahoma Farm Bureau. We are rural Oklahoma.



www.okfarmbureau.org   



By **MONICA WILKE**
Executive Director
Oklahoma Farm Bureau and Affiliated Companies

Running the Good Race

Farm Bureau Family,

It always amazes me how quickly the first few months of the year seem to race by, but it is safe to say we have hit the ground running as we make strides to improve our organization, engage members and make a difference in the state's agricultural industry.

As many of our members know, the past seven years have been challenging for our insurance company. We've had to make difficult decisions that have affected several of our valued customers. I am thrilled to report the hard times are proving their worth. For the first time since 2007, OFB MIC was recently able to add to its surplus. This is huge news, considering our state was riddled with severe weather in 2013, including two deadly F5 tornadoes in May. This surplus increase is a trend we see continuing because we have successfully changed the model of how we do business. We appreciate the continued support of our customers and look forward to building on this success.

Speaking of success, our Oklahoma Farming and Ranching Foundation was recognized earlier this year for its successful Beef for Backpacks program. The program received the American Farm Bureau Federation's New Horizon Award during the AFBF Annual Convention this past January. The Beef for Backpacks program provides protein for 13,500+ hungry students across the state each week through the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma's Food for Kids program. We are proud to be part of this extraordinary effort to help feed our state's hungry children, and we continue to expand this effort through programs like Pork for Packs and other volunteer service projects.

Projects like Beef for Backpacks are so effective because of the hardworking members who share our passion and engage with our organization to help share the agricultural story. We want to be constantly communicating with you so you have the tools you need to address issues and start conversations in your

communities. I am excited to announce the launch of Lincoln to Local, a new video series that focuses on timely legislative issues and events at the Capitol and around the state. 09166350 Be sure to visit our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/okfarmbureau to watch previous clips and stay tuned as we share new episodes on social media.

In addition to communicating with you, we strive to ensure your farming and ranching interests are being protected. We are currently in the process of reviving our Commodity Advisory Committee to identify trends and issues affecting agriculture, to help educate members about being in compliance with regulations and to develop a more robust policy development process. Todd Honer, one of our longtime field services representatives, is now leading our commodity program and is working closely with commodity groups around the state to create synergy in the agricultural industry.

As the summer approaches, I encourage you to begin thinking about the November election. With a gubernatorial race, two U.S. senate seats up for reelection and several state legislators terming out after this legislative session, 2014 promises to be an action-filled election year. Our OKAgFund will be hard at work identifying candidates who support agriculture and rural Oklahoma. If you would like more information about supporting the OKAgFund, contact our OKFB Public Policy Division.

As the state's largest general agricultural organization, we are ready to go the distance to improve the lives of rural Oklahomans. Through our efforts in the country and at the Capitol, we are leading the pack in shaping the future for the state's agricultural industry, and through our recent and ongoing successes, it is evident Oklahoma Farm Bureau is off on the right foot in 2014.

Best wishes for a safe harvest and a fun summer!

Monica A. Wilke

Oklahoma Country

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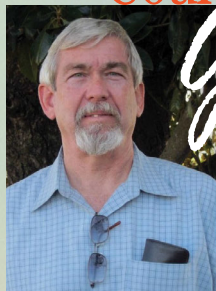
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**OKLAHOMA
FARM BUREAU**





GEORGE DRIEVER
Extension Educator, Horticulture / 4-H Youth Development
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Drought Tolerant and Perennial Plants for Color and Interest

The continuing drought conditions and water rationing have caused many people to rethink the plants they want to use to add beauty or value to their property. Perennial plants can be used to fill in permanent beds with color and greenery without the need to replant each year. Newly planted perennials have to be watered until they are established, but well-rooted perennials require minimal care while providing years of use and beauty to your yard.

There are many choices of perennials – in different sizes and textures – that include drought resistance, seasonal color, year-round interest and use as a food source. Keep in mind that you want to develop interest in each bed, so you want different textures and colors to draw the eye around the space.

The perennial plants you choose should depend on the size of the location available, the amount of light the area receives, the type of plants that will be planted in that bed, the purpose for the plant and to some extent, the soil type. All soils can be modified with organic material and pH adjustments. In general, all plants in a given bed should have the same water and light requirements to reduce the time needed to care for the bed.

There are many old-fashioned perennials that are hardy and do well. Some woody perennial examples include lilac, spirea, weigelia, forsythia and crape myrtle. There are many new cultivars of each with different color flowers or leaves. Other old-time flowering plants that are perennials from bulbs or corms include cannas, daylilies, daffodil, narcissus and crocus. All can add seasonal interest to your beds and will come back each year.

Many wildflowers and pasture plants produce beautiful flowers and/or foliage. Plants from the Euphorbia (milk weed family) can be unique and attract the monarch butterfly. One of the showiest in Oklahoma pastures is called

Snow on the Mountain. While it may become a weed in a pasture, in a garden bed, it is fairly easy to limit its spread. Other native flowers that do well in ornamental beds include joe pye weed, Indian paintbrush, Indian blanket (state wildflower), sunflower (many varieties and sizes), Mexican sunflower, poppy mallow, butterfly weed and yarrow. While many of these are annuals, they will come back each year from seed without help. There are also cultivated varieties (cultivars) of many of these plants.



Some good examples of perennial flowers that will thrive in Oklahoma include Autumn Sage 'Pink Preference,' Evening Primrose 'Comanche Campfire,' Gaura, Perennial Plumbago and Purple Cone Flower. They each have varied bloom periods, but several will bloom for extended times. There are other color varieties of each of these species, and all of these thrive in full sun.

Some shade loving perennial flowers are the toad lily, Arkansas Bluestar (*Amsonia*), Japanese anemone, Helebores, Coral Bells, Ragwort, Huecherella and Columbine. Other shade loving or partial shade shrubby plants are Winter Jasmine, Korean Spice Viburnum, Blue Muffin Viburnum, Oak-leaf Hydrangea, and Solomon's Seal. Ornamental plants that have small or less showy blooms are Hosta (many leaf colors and shapes), lamb's ear and *Liriope* (monkey grass). There are many ground cover plants such as the sedums, bugleweed and periwinkles. All are drought tolerant.

Sun-loving woody perennials with year-round interest include Beauty berry, Deciduous Holly, Diablo Ninebark, Japanese Kerria and Southern Waxmyrtle. For your southern exposure beds, don't rule out hardy succulents such as the yuccas, agaves, southwestern cacti and variations of Hens and Chicks

(*Sempervivum spp.*) There are also many varieties of Ice plant that are a showy ground cover.

Some perennials are more of interest for their foliage or textures. These include Japanese Painted Fern, Mugwort (*Artemisia*), Mexican Feather Grass, Northern Sea Oats, Mondo grass, Hakone grass and Switchgrass cultivars that have varying colors. Some even do well in part shade.

If you desire perennials that produce a crop as well as provide color, you can choose from woody shrubs such as Blueberry, Honeyberry, Jostaberry, Huckleberry or Goji berry. Vining perennials include many varieties of thorned and thornless blackberries, Tayberry, Marionberry, Boysenberry, Loganberry or Dewberry. Some of these are blackberry crosses. Black or red Chokeberry are small trees that produce edible fruit for people or birds. Paw Paw is a native small tree that grows in Oklahoma and has interesting fruit said to have a complex banana taste.



The Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, with research cooperation from the Oklahoma State University, Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, has published a booklet of annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees that are drought resistant plant selections called Oklahoma Proven. You can get a booklet free at your county extension office or go online to: <http://oklahomaproven.okstate.edu> to see all selections for the past several years. A new, free factsheet on drought tolerant plants has been published. HLA-6444 lists many different categories of plants and tells you how large the plants get, their sun preference, when they are of interest and comments on each. A new handbook on drought tolerant plant selections for Oklahoma is E-1037. This booklet includes annuals, perennials, ornamental grasses, vines, groundcover, shrubs, trees and turf grasses. It is available for \$12. You can order through your local extension office or online at <http://www.hortla.okstate.edu/market-place-online-store>.


If you like plants that add interest to your yard, are drought resistant and take little care, consider accessing any of these resources or just wander down the aisles of any plant nursery. There are perennial plants to suit every preference in color, shape and texture.

Oklahoma State University, U. S. Department of Agriculture, state and Local Government's cooperating. The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, or status as a veteran and is an equal opportunity employer.



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Oklahoma Beef Checkoff



UPDATE



Support for the Beef Checkoff at All Time High

Support for the beef checkoff, at 78 percent, is the highest recorded in the past 21 years, according to a recent survey of 1,225 beef and dairy producers nationwide.

The random survey conducted by the independent firm Aspen Media & Market Research in late December 2013 and early January 2014 found an overwhelming majority of beef and dairy producers continue to say their beef checkoff has value for them in many ways:

- Eight out of 10 producers say the beef checkoff has helped to contribute to a positive trend in beef demand.
- 71 percent of producers say the beef checkoff contributes to the profitability of their operations.
- 77 percent say the checkoff is there for them in a crisis.
- 79 percent say the checkoff represents their interests.
- Two in three beef producers believe the checkoff is well managed.

Oklahoma Beef Checkoff Dollars at Work in the Japanese Market



In 2013, the Oklahoma Beef Council (OBC) made a significant commitment to assisting with efforts to regain market share in the high-valued Japanese market with the announcement of the opening of the marketplace to beef product from cattle under 30 months of age. The following results demonstrate how we can leverage Oklahoma checkoff dollars with government and industry resources to create major impacts for US beef sales in the international arena.

With OBC funding support, USMEF conducted three U.S. beef yakiniku promotions from June through August. In total, close to 500 outlets participated in the campaigns. After the promotion period, Nippon Ham, a primary distributor for this industry, reported its total U.S. beef sales during the three months reached 3,222 mt., a

30 percent increase over the same period last year. The company attributes much of this growth to the U.S. beef promotions.

USMEF also ramped up its efforts with leading CVS chains, working to develop and promote new bento (lunch box) recipes using U.S. beef cuts such as short plate. For example, USMEF leveraged OBC support with other funding to conduct a high-visibility promotion at 9,500 outlets of Family Mart featuring 10 newly developed items using U.S. beef (e.g. bento box, rice bowl, salad, sandwich, soba noodle, sushi, soup). Family Mart reported U.S. beef short plate sales of 196 mt per month as a result, an increase of 64 percent compared to before the promotion.

It's important to remember, the international marketplace offers us the ability to maximize the value of the US beef cattle through exporting less popular beef cuts in the US to areas of the world where cultural differences in tastes put a high value on them.

Farmland, the Film Showcases Young Farmers and Ranchers

A new feature length documentary, Farmland, from Oscar®-winning filmmaker, James Moll, follows the next generation of American farmers and ranchers, all in their 20s, in various regions across the US.

Moll spent five months meeting farmers and ranchers before he settled on the six who are featured in Farmland. In order to authentically tell the story through the eyes of this next generation, Moll extensively researched the subject and looked for individuals to profile, specifically choosing from different farming and ranching production methods, various types of crops and livestock and geographic diversity.



Farmers and Ranchers- Don't forget to sign up for the Oklahoma Beef Checkoff Update, a monthly e-newsletter providing the latest in checkoff information and news at www.oklabeef.org/e-newsletter.aspx

The film, made with generous support from the U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance® (USFRA®), funded in part by the Beef Checkoff, gives viewers a firsthand glimpse into the lives of these young farmers and ranchers, their high-risk/high-reward jobs and their passion for a way of life that, more often than not, is passed down from generation to generation. To view the trailer, visit www.farmlandfilm.com. Also, please help support this film by sharing the trailer on Facebook.

Beef Checkoff Testifies at the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee Meeting

The 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee held their second public meeting in January to hear testimony regarding potential changes. Director of Nutrition Research at the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, a contractor to the Beef Checkoff Program, Clara Lau, Ph.D, spoke to the importance of lean beef in healthy diets. The Beef Checkoff submitted written comments prior to this meeting, and will continue to be engaged as the 2015 dietary guidelines discussion continues. This participation by the Beef Checkoff is important because the guidelines form the basis of Federal nutrition policy, education, outreach, and food assistance programs used by consumers, industry, nutrition educators, and health professionals. All Federal dietary guidance for the public is required to be consistent with the dietary guidelines which provide the scientific basis for the government to speak in a consistent and uniform manner.

Did You Know...817,000 Fans and Counting?

Did You Know...

The checkoff's successful "Beef. It's What's for Dinner" Facebook page is working to enhance, encourage and elevate consumers' passion for beef through an exciting new visual and



A post from Beef It's What's For Dinners facebook promotes how one ingredient can make two fun meals for the family.

“storytelling” approach. This refreshed focus aims to help consumers enjoy beef year-round by providing the checkoff's delicious and nutritious beef recipes, tips and techniques, family mealtime ideas and holiday food inspiration and keeping beef top-of-mind for consumers online 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The page has more than 817,000+ total likes, or fans. Let's make it 1,000,000.

Did You Know...

From June 1 to Dec. 31, 2013, the Beef Checkoff website, BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com continued to see significant traffic and consumer engagement. Nearly 907,000 people visited the site during the period, with most spending about two minutes and 45 seconds there - well ahead of the industry standard of just 10 to 20 seconds per site. Here's how they are getting to the site:

- 45 percent of visitors type in the website's URL to go directly to BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com
- 23 percent come from Google
- 7.5 percent come from Facebook.

Did You Know...

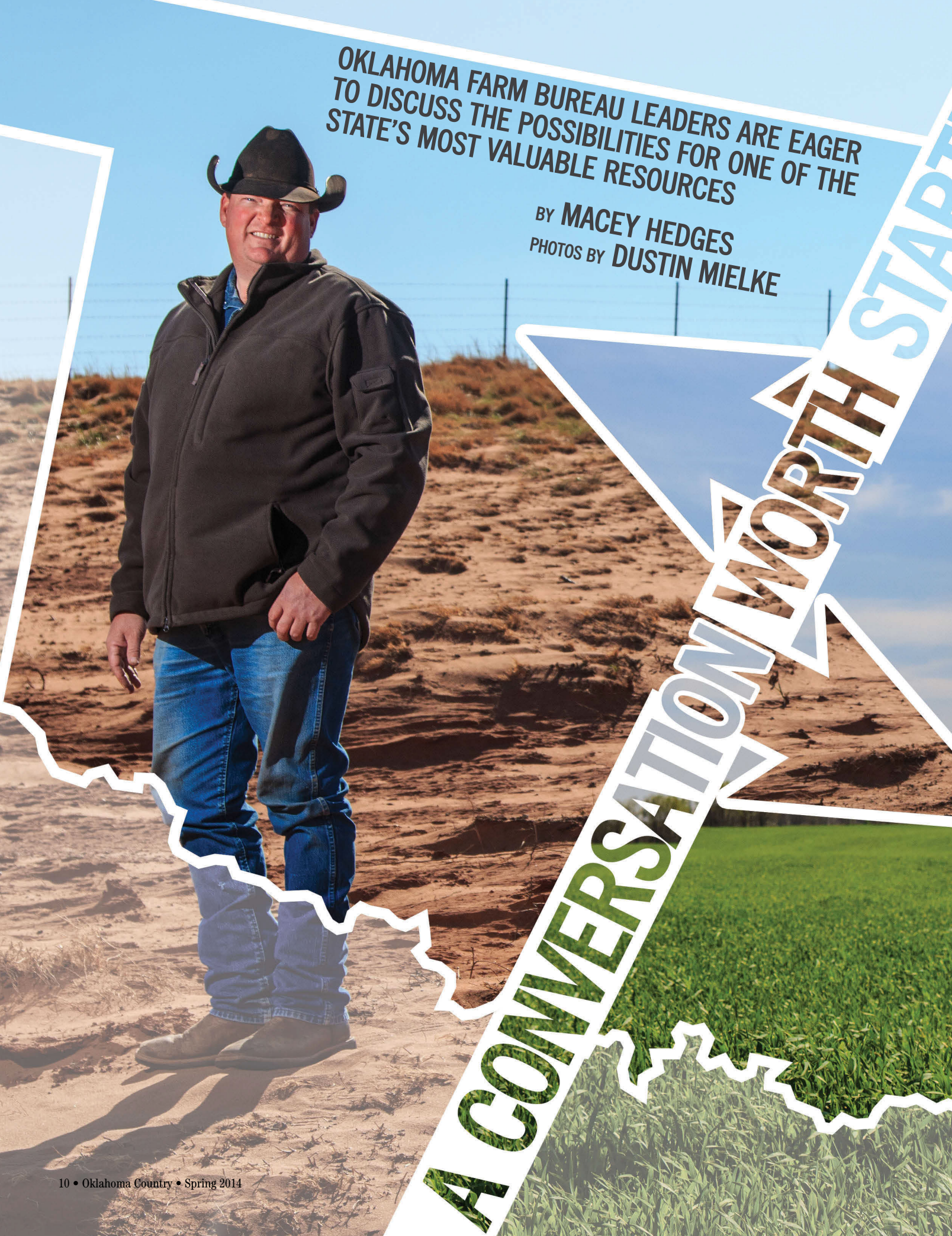
The checkoff's journey from an extensive print and radio consumer-marketing campaign to an integrated digital campaign in 2014 has begun with a data-centered approach focused on “micro-” or “geo-targeting.” This technology allows us to deliver, for example, a relevant beef solution to millennial moms in a particular geographic region who are actively looking for quick and simple weeknight meals. Promotions are taking on a variety of digital forms, including search engine optimization, Facebook advertising, display advertising and other emerging online tools. Through this process, the checkoff is working to deepen interactions and engagement with this critical consumer target - driving them to the checkoff's existing resources, like Beef. It's What's for Dinner website, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest properties to access the specific information they need at the exact moment that they need the information.



OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU LEADERS ARE EAGER TO DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITIES FOR ONE OF THE STATE'S MOST VALUABLE RESOURCES

BY MACEY HEDGES
PHOTOS BY DUSTIN MIELKE

A CONVERSATION WORTH STARTING



STARTING



MONTE TUCKER STOOD IN THE MIDDLE OF A COUNTY ROAD

near his family's farm in Roger Mills County on the state's western border. He turned a complete circle as he used his smartphone to record the effects of the raging winds whipping across his no-till wheat field. Commonly used to prevent erosion, the no-till technique was no match for the swift winds and desperately dry conditions. Tucker's video showed dirt and sand from the field blowing wildly, and the sound of sand smacking his phone was evident. He posted the video to his Facebook timeline with the caption "I guess I don't have to read Dust Bowl books anymore, I'm afraid I can now write one."

"It was just how Timothy Egan described it in his book *The Worst Hard Time*," said Tucker, who serves as the Oklahoma Farm Bureau District 2 director. "It was a beautiful sunny day with no wind, and then I saw the dirt coming from the northwest. When it hit us, it hit like a wall."

While modern agricultural practices have helped producers avoid the extreme scenarios played out in the state during the Dust Bowl days of the 1930s, there are instances where even knowledge and skill cannot overcome the persistent drought that has been affecting areas of the state for the past four years.

"My granddaddy was always right, and he once told me 'Monte, you can't do anything right when it's dry, and you can't mess up when it's wet,'" said the fourth-generation farmer and rancher. "That's the situation a lot of producers are in these days."

Tucker pointed out that not everything is blowing, but there are fields where last fall's wheat did not have enough moisture to root down, exposing nearly bare ground to the conditions.

"I can tell you Sept. 27 was the last rain we received. I have wheat that has never received moisture from the top," he said.

The Oklahoma Mesonet, a network of environmental monitoring stations across the state, shows nearby Cheyenne has received less than one inch of rainfall since the beginning of 2014 (as of April 18, 2014).



**LEFT: BLOWN SOIL DRIFTS AROUND HAY BALES ON TUCKER'S RANCH.
RIGHT: A HEIFER GRAZES ON GRASS STANDING FROM A SUMMER 2013 RAIN.**

While most of the state suffered through the drought in 2011 and 2012, recent rainfalls in central and eastern Oklahoma have brought relief from the arid conditions. Unfortunately for Tucker and his fellow western Oklahomans, the drought persists across their land, leaving a wide array of side effects in its path. A reduced drinking water supply, economic loss and emotional strain have all taken their toll on the area's people.

Tucker's farm is located in a finger of the Ogallala Aquifer, which has kept his groundwater levels steady the past few years. However, conditions are dire for several municipalities in Tucker's Farm Bureau district, including Altus, where the town's main drinking water source – Tom Steed Reservoir – is only at 26 percent capacity.

"Although our crops and grass pastures are depleted because of the drought, my community has been fortunate to at least have groundwater for drinking purposes," Tucker said. "I have friends in the Clinton, Hobart and Altus areas who are rationing water and worrying about going through another

summer on such low levels."

In addition to limiting crop and grass production, the lack of rain has caused many cattle producers to significantly reduce their herds. Tucker, who has a cow-calf operation with his father and grandmother, said his family has cut its herd in half over the past few years, which means they are only selling half as many calves as usual and only earning 50 percent of their usual income from that facet of their operation.

This is a trend seen across the state. In fact, the ongoing drought has cost Oklahoma agriculture \$1.5 billion in economic loss over the past three years.

The decrease in the number of cattle Tucker's family has to sell not only affects their bottom line, but it also has a direct impact on businesses in and around his community.

"We'll be forced to sell our remaining cows if we don't have the grass or hay to feed them this summer," Tucker said. "That's going to affect my fertilizer dealer, my feed dealer, my bank and my veterinarian. There's a whole chain of people who lose business if I'm not able to feed my animals."



TUCKER STANDS IN A WHEAT FIELD THAT HAS RECEIVED LESS THAN AN INCH OF RAIN SINCE PLANTING IN SEPTEMBER 2013.

“I SEE MY FELLOW PRODUCERS ON THE WESTERN HALF OF THE STATE SELLING OFF CATTLE, EXPERIENCING ANOTHER YEAR OF LOW CROP YIELDS OR EVEN WORRYING ABOUT DRINKING WATER SUPPLIES, AND I REALIZE WE HAVE TO START THIS PROCESS NOW BEFORE WE LOSE AN IMPORTANT SECTOR OF RURAL OKLAHOMA.”

— JAMES FUSER, AFTON, OK



Tucker said that although farmers and ranchers are usually fairly optimistic people, the past few years have been especially difficult for an aging agricultural population. Several producers who endured drought cycles in the 1980s and even further back to the 1950s made the hard decision to sell out of their operations and seek employment in other industries.

On the other hand, Tucker said there were several young farmers who had migrated back to his area to join family farms or strike out on their own, but the dismal conditions forced a lot of them to sell their cattle in 2011 and find off-farm jobs.

“Agriculture has historically been one of our top industries in the state, but if we don’t find ways to help producers in times of need, we are going to see a lot of folks who cannot afford to stay in the business,” Tucker said. “It even goes beyond just economic production; we have to find a way to maintain the rural way of life.”

Tucker’s sentiments were echoed loud and clear during the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Annual Meeting this past November when members adopted a policy to begin researching ways to

effectively use the state’s water supply.

Since then, members and staff have started traveling to meetings across the state to learn about the individual and industry water needs of each area.

“It is time Oklahomans step up to the plate and get serious about how municipalities and industries – including agriculture – are going to make sure we use this resource to the fullest potential,” said John Collison, Oklahoma Farm Bureau vice president of public policy and media relations. “We realize there are different opinions out there about this issue, and as the state’s leading voice for agriculture and rural communities, our leaders are eager to work with individuals, municipalities and industries across the state to formulate a statewide water plan.”

Collison said a 2013 U.S. Geological Survey reported 35 million acre-feet of water left the state through the river systems that year. While this number does not represent one specific region, a large amount of that water left through the eastern and southern areas of the state.

LEFT: A CALF STANDS ON NEW GREEN SPRING GROWTH ON FUSER'S FARM. RIGHT: FUSER'S WHEAT HAS RECEIVED 9 INCHES OF RAIN SINCE PLANTING.





TUCKER SAYS MIXING FEED HAS HELPED GET HIS FAMILY THROUGH THE DROUGHT, STRETCHING LIMITED HAY SUPPLIES.

“The problem is not that the state doesn’t have enough water; it just doesn’t necessarily have water when and where it is needed,” Collison said.

James Fuser, who serves as the Oklahoma Farm Bureau District 6 director, is a farmer and rancher from Ottawa County in the state’s far northeast corner. He said education is going to be a key factor in making progress on a statewide water plan.

“This is not a situation where we are talking about depleting the water resources that we rely on in the eastern half of the state,” Fuser said. “These initial conversations are more about developing ideas to use the excess water that flows out of the state and determining the feasibility of moving that water west to our fellow Oklahomans.”

Fuser said that although recent rainfall has helped alleviate the conditions his area endured in the early onset of the drought, there are times when he and his neighbors experience dry spells. A comprehensive water plan would need to have measures to protect eastern Oklahoma as well.

“Because rainfall averages are higher east of I-35 and so many of the state’s rivers run through the eastern half, our area of the state’s economic development is widely centered around water,” Fuser said. “Agriculture and recreation are two of the area’s largest industries, and we also rely on water to operate

the hydroelectric power plants producing energy that is sold throughout the United States.

“Most eastern Oklahomans just want to ensure the natural resource they have come to greatly appreciate is used responsibly.”

Fuser said he’s proud Oklahoma Farm Bureau is taking the lead in starting the conversations, but it is going to take collaboration from individuals and industries to find solutions that benefit all Oklahomans.

“I see my fellow producers on the western half of the state selling off cattle, experiencing another year of low crop yields or even worrying about drinking water supplies, and I realize we have to start this process now before we lose an important sector of rural Oklahoma,” Fuser said. “Farm Bureau members may be interested in how agriculture can benefit from a statewide water plan, but first and foremost, we are interested in improving the quality of life for all citizens.”

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Through our grassroots policy development process, Oklahoma Farm Bureau members have made researching the state’s water usage a priority. We are eager to hear your constructive comments and answer questions as we begin formulating ideas. Please contact the OKFB Public Policy Division at (405) 523-2539 to provide feedback.



FUSER STANDS IN FRONT OF HAY HE IS HAVING DIFFICULTY SELLING DUE TO THE ABUNDANT HAY SUPPLY IN THE AREA.

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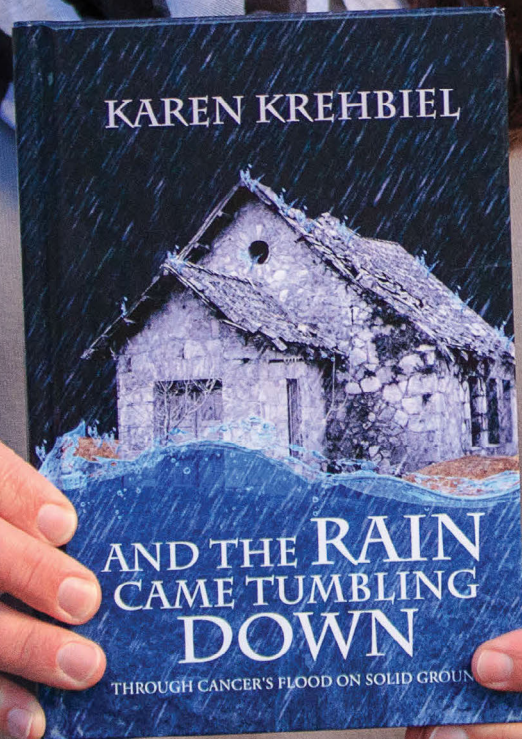
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We are proud to support **Operation Homefront** in their efforts to assist members of the military and their families.

Caddo County Farm Bureau member Karen Krehbiel hopes her book will not only honor her late husband but possibly help encourage others who are facing life struggles.



A Page-Turning Journey

*When the rains of life came tumbling down,
Karen Krehbiel had to make a choice.
In the midst of devastation, an old familiar hymn
danced through her mind.*

*By Samantha Smith
Photography by Dustin Mielke*

“The rains came down and floods came up, but the wise man’s house stood firm,” goes the old hymn.

The flood was her husband’s cancer. In September 2009, Jeff Krehbiel was diagnosed with stage four glioblastoma, an invasive form of brain cancer. After the diagnosis, the family decided to document his battle using an online CarePage account. The account was a blog of sorts aimed toward informing friends and family of Jeff’s condition.

“The night before his first brain surgery we started a CarePage account,” Karen said. “We did that for two years while he was battling brain cancer.”

The blog contained updates from Jeff, Karen and their daughter, Brittany, who was 13 at the time of her father’s diagnosis. Each would write from their own perspective, giving updates on the medical journey, life at home and the emotions associated with the battle.

“Jeff would post when he could, so when he would write he would tell about what was happening on the farm,” Karen said. “I did most of the medical posts, and Brittany wrote some stories from her perspective as a teenager and watching her dad with brain cancer and what was going on emotionally with her.”



The posts were all different, but one theme remained the same – the Krehbiel family's faith.

"It became our faith journey of how God provided for us," Karen said.

The posts documented their encounters with signs from God, Karen said. One of her favorites was the way God used pennies to let them know he was in control.

"Every penny says 'In God We Trust,'" Karen said. "I got to where I would just pick up a penny and I would tell Jeff, 'God's going to take care of us. We're going to trust in him and if we can find pennies, he's going to take care of us.'"

The pennies were a sign initially shared only between Jeff and Karen, but Karen, knowing their daughter needed some reassurance, decided to let Brittany in on the story. On a road trip to Yukon with just Karen and Brittany, she told her they were using pennies as a reminder to trust God.

What happened once they arrived was surely a sign from the heavens, Karen said. Brittany had quickly gone inside a store and when she came back out, she was smiling ear-to-ear.

"She held out her hand, opened it up and she had 12 pennies in her hand," Karen said with a laugh. "One penny would have done the trick, but God gave her 12."

The blog covered similar stories over the course of two years, including everything from Jeff's first brain surgery through his final days on Earth. The last posts told about his funeral and offered a few reflections from Karen and Brittany about their loss.

Karen said writing became a comfort for her during the troubling times.

"It became my therapy when I would write," she said. "I would start out sometimes almost mad at God for what I was having to go through and for what my family was facing. Whether or not that emotion came out in the writing, I don't know. I think sometimes it probably did.

"I would start my post by just telling medically what was going on,

but by the time I finished my post, I was at peace with God's plan. Even if I've lost Jeff earthly, I will see him again."

Readers would comment on the posts and before long, they were encouraging Karen to write a book.

"I never intended to be a writer," Karen said, "but evidently it was something God had planned."

After Jeff passed away in September 2011, she decided to compile all the blog posts and create her first book.

Karen's book, *And the Rain Came Tumbling Down: Through Cancer's Flood on Solid Ground*, was published by Tate Publishing, a family-owned, Christian-based publishing company in Mustang, Okla.



illie Peterson of Tate Publishing said Karen's book was a perfect fit for their company because they believed it was a story people would want to read.

"There's so many people who have dealt with cancer," Peterson said. "It's something that pulls on the heart. It's a story people can easily relate to."

The book hit shelves in November 2013, and while Karen never intended to publish the book, she said it serves as a precious reminder of her husband and the journey her family experienced.

"It's the last words of Jeff's. It's the last things he wrote," she said. "For me personally, it's a memento of that time and how special it was that God carried us."

Karen said she hopes her words will impact others, even if their situation is not similar to the Krehbiels.

"I think it's a story that applies to everyone," she said. "You don't have to have a husband with brain cancer for it to apply. Just know that God will carry you."

Her goal is not to sell hundreds of books but rather to reach someone who needs the encouragement.

"If my story reaches one person, then in the whole big scheme of things, it adds value to what Jeff went through," Karen said.

Karen said she has learned so much through the process. From diagnosis to death, and from blog posts to book writing, she has gained an appreciation for people around her.

"I have gained an appreciation for the medical field and everything they do," Karen said. "There's a new appreciation there for juggling all the things that single parents have to juggle, and I have a dear appreciation for the widows in our church and what they're going through."

But the most important thing she has learned can be summed up in one sentence: Tell the people you love how much you love them.

"We got two years to say goodbye, and I think some of that was just God preparing us for what was coming," Karen said. "Some people don't get the opportunity to tell their loved ones how much they love them. So hug 'em, love 'em, kiss 'em. You don't know what tomorrow is going to hold."

Even in the midst of turmoil and devastation, Karen believes the Krehbiels were led down the exact path they were meant to be on, and Jeff's battle with cancer had a purpose beyond this life.

"I'm not to the point where I'm ready to say I'm thankful for what we went through; that's still a big step for me to take," Karen said. "But I know God has a plan and he loves us enough that he would not have put Jeff through that – he wouldn't have put us through that – if he didn't have a reason. And maybe it's this book – maybe that was the reason. Maybe it's going to end up in the hands of someone it can impact."

As the floods of life began to lower, the Krehbiels found an overwhelming peace, knowing the solid rock on which they stood would remain unshaken.



To purchase a copy of *And the Rain Came Tumbling Down: Through Cancer's Flood on Solid Ground*, contact Karen at kfarms@hintonet.net or search for the book on the Tate Publishing website at www.tatepublishing.com.

Left: Karen has treasured memories of her husband and used writing as a comfort during the difficult times her family experienced.



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Consider the Benefits

OKFB Offers Home Warranty Programs For Members

By Macey Hedges



Oklahoma Farm Bureau is pleased to announce an exclusive member benefit that provides protection and peace of mind for homeowners. A variety of home warranty programs are now available through Global Home, USA, in conjunction with alliance partner Wingspan Insurance Services.

Home warranties help safeguard homeowners by covering the repair and/or replacement costs of home appliances, major systems such as heating and cooling and other components of a home not normally covered by a homeowner's insurance policy. Global Home, USA provides competitive pricing, customizable programs and a dedicated support team to help OKFB members protect their homes.

"We know what makes a project succeed. With an industry-leading reputation for delivering quality work, quick turnarounds and supplying an experienced staff for each project, we have proven our ability to produce desired results for some of the leading financial institutions in the world," said E.J. Kite of Wingspan Insurance Services. "We look forward to demonstrating those abilities and results through an exclusive home warranty product offering for Oklahoma Farm Bureau members."

Global Home, USA offers OKFB members three exclusive home warranty options:

Gold Plan: provides piece of mind with sensible coverage that fits everyone's budget.

Platinum Plan: this premium package includes all of the major home systems and appliance covered by the Gold Plan as well as those that might easily be overlooked.

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Home warranty products are available for existing homes and can help defray expenses related to aging appliances and systems. In addition, home warranties are often purchased or included during the sale of a home. Sixty-six percent of homebuyers report the failure of two major items in their home within the first year of ownership. Whether you have lived in your home for an extended period of time, or you are buying or selling a home, a warranty is a wise investment.

"Our partnership with Global Home, USA and Wingspan Insurance Services is just another

way we are striving to help members protect their property while adding value to their Oklahoma Farm Bureau membership," OKFB Executive Director Monica Wilke said.

"We are proud to offer a number of discounts and services that save money and make life easier."

For more information or to sign up for your home warranty, please contact E.J. Kite at ej.kite@wingspanadvisors.com or (214) 254-2180.



Global Home
USA

Moesel receives Governor's Outstanding Achievement Award in Agriculture

Oklahoma Farm Bureau District 3 Director Rodd Moesel of Oklahoma City received the Governor's Outstanding Achievement Award in Agriculture during a special ceremony, March 26, at the state Capitol. Moesel is the 17th Oklahoman to be inducted into the Agriculture Hall of Fame by the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry.

A native of Oklahoma City, Moesel is the president and co-owner of American Plant Products and Services Inc. American Plant Products and Services Inc. is a wholesale company that raises foliage plants and sells greenhouse structures, equipment and supplies. His knowledge of the horticulture industry is well respected throughout the state and nation and has allowed him to contribute to a variety of agriculture organizations at both the state and national level.

Moesel is extremely well-respected by his peers who have seen his dedication to the industry and to Oklahoma agriculture thrive over his lifetime.

From his initial participation in the 4-H program as a

youth where he took to heart the motto "to make the best better", Moesel has given selflessly of his time to serve on numerous boards and committees over the past 40 years, including Oklahoma Farm Bureau. A few other boards include the Oklahoma State 4-H Foundation and the Council for Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching (CARET). Moesel is also a graduate of the Oklahoma Agriculture Leadership Program - Class V and Leadership Oklahoma - Class III.

Moesel has been recognized with a multitude of other awards including the Green Industry Professional of the Year award from the Oklahoma Nursery and Landscape Association in 2013, the State Alumni Award from the Oklahoma 4-H Program in 2007, the State Distinguished Service Award from the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association in 1996, the Oklahoma State Small Business Advocate Award from the U.S. Small Business Administration in 1991 and the Oklahoma

Master Florist Award from the Oklahoma State Florist Association in 1991.

Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture Jim Reese (right) presents the Governor's Outstanding Achievement Award in Agriculture to OKFB Director Rodd Moesel during an Ag Day the Capitol ceremony, March 26.



OKFB Women's Leadership Team member Lena Henson delivers groceries to the Ronald McDonald House in Tulsa, Feb. 12, to commemorate AFBF's Our Food Link initiative.

OKFB Women's Leadership Team Chair Kitty Beavers helps prepare a dinner for families staying at the Oklahoma City Ronald McDonald House, Feb. 11.

Legislators, state officials discuss key issues during annual OKFB Leadership Conference

OKFB Women's Leadership Team celebrates Our Food Link

The OKFB Women's Leadership Team donated \$3,000 in food products to the Ronald McDonald House of Oklahoma City and the Ronald McDonald House of Tulsa, Feb. 11 and Feb. 12, as part of the new AFBF Our Food Link initiative. The members also cooked and served a meal for the families staying in the Oklahoma City location.

Our Food Link is a year-round program that county and state Farm Bureaus use to provide consumers of all ages and backgrounds with information about today's agriculture. This includes helping people connect with sources of clothing, food, shelter and energy in their communities. Activities range from outreach at supermarkets or farmers' markets to hosting interactive booths at community events, speaking with lawmakers and neighbors about food or visiting a classroom to help students understand agricultural topics.

As a grassroots organization committed to enhancing and strengthening the lives of rural Americans, supporting RMHC is a good fit because the charity helps families maintain the strength needed to care for seriously ill or injured children undergoing medical treatment, by providing them with a "home away from home." And with specialized medical care not often available in rural areas, Farm Bureau members have often found Ronald McDonald Houses to be an invaluable resource.

For more information on Our Food Link with the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Team, contact Marcia Irvin at (405) 523-2405.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members from across the state gathered at the Skirvin Hotel in downtown Oklahoma City, Feb. 17-18, for the OKFB Legislative Leadership Conference. The conference was an opportunity for OKFB members to hear from a variety of influential speakers while learning more about the issues affecting Oklahoma agriculture.

Congressman Markwayne Mullin kicked off the two-day conference with an update from Washington, D.C. He spoke about EPA overregulation, the Water Resources Development Act, immigration and the farm bill process. Mullin also shared stories about his children's involvement on their family farm and the value of the rural way of life.

OKFB Vice President of Public Policy and Media Relations John Collison discussed ideas to best utilize the state's water supply and emphasized OKFB's efforts to protect private property rights pertaining to wind energy, trespassing and unmanned aerial vehicles. Members also enjoyed a session featuring Cordon DeKock, vice president of political affairs at the Oklahoma State Chamber of Commerce, who talked about trends in Oklahoma's political outlook.

Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt was on hand to help kick off Farm Bureau Week, which ran Feb. 17-21. He spoke to members about his planned efforts to investigate the Humane Society of the United States' unethical practices of raising money under false pretenses and the need to make sure Oklahoma is using its resources to the fullest extent.

Monday night was capped off with a dinner that featured Gov. Mary Fallin and more than 75 legislators in attendance. The governor and 14 state legislators received the Oklahoma Farm Bureau 2013 Champion Award and were recognized for being the state's top agricultural advocates.

Congressman James Lankford joined members for breakfast Tuesday morning and answered questions about his experiences in Washington, D.C., and his decision to step down from the U.S. House of Representatives and run for the open Senate seat that will be vacated when Sen. Tom Coburn resigns. Also during breakfast, outgoing OKAgFund

committee members Wayne Taggart, James Fuser and Jack Sherry were recognized for their time and service.

Participants learned more about changes in the healthcare industry and Medicare Supplement plans from Anthony Kimbrough, executive director at Members Health Insurance. MHI's Medicare Supplement plans are one of the newest OKFB member benefits.

Dave Hageman with Protect the Harvest rounded out a full slate of speakers by discussing his organization's role in agricultural advocacy and protecting the rights of farmers and ranchers from animal activist groups around the country.

The 2014 OKFB Leadership Conference ended with lunch at the home office and a visit to the state Capitol to meet with elected officials.



Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture Jim Reese (second from right) visits with (from left) OKFB Director John Grundmann, Pontotoc County FB board member Randy Bryant and Oklahoma County FB board member Dennis Lambring during the 2014 Oklahoma Farm Bureau Leadership Conference.

Sen. Kim David (left), Gov. Mary Fallin and Rep. Skye McNiell each receive the 2013 OKFB Champion Award during the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Leadership Conference.

AFBF delegates set 2014 public policy positions

More than 80 Oklahoma Farm Bureau members and staff attended the American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Convention in San Antonio, Jan. 11-15.

Voting delegates to AFBF's 95th annual meeting approved resolutions that will provide the organization with authority from its grassroots members to push Congress toward the goal line on unfinished issues like the farm bill and ag labor.

"Securing victories on those issues is critical to our competitiveness as individual farmers and ranchers, and to our nation's success as a food producer," said AFBF President Bob Stallman. "Farm Bureau made progress on our priorities this past year, more so than most other organizations, and this year, our delegates have provided us direction to work with Congress to complete this agenda."

On the farm labor front, delegates reaffirmed their strong support for meaningful ag labor reforms that ensure farmers and ranchers have access to workers when they are needed. Delegates also voted to support flexibility that would allow the employment of workers by more than one farmer.

"Farmers and ranchers need a reliable supply of labor," Stallman said. "That is a simple truth. It's about availability and flexibility – neither of which have been hallmarks of the system our farmers, ranchers and growers have operated under for many years.

We must have a workable ag labor program."

A congressional farm bill action neared completion, delegates reaffirmed Farm Bureau's policy, overwhelmingly determining that the time to make changes had passed.

"Congress was still haggling over dairy policy, but for the most part, they were very close to completing a five-year farm bill as we were meeting," Stallman said. "It was a long process, but substantial reforms have been made. Crop insurance has been strengthened so that farmers can play a role in determining the level of their safety net and how much they are willing to invest for that coverage."

Specifically on dairy-related issues, delegates reaffirmed policy supporting changes to the dairy safety net, including margin insurance programs.

On another livestock-related issue, delegates maintained their

support for country of origin labeling and reiterated that it needs to be compliant with World Trade Organization rules. They also voted to support efforts to lengthen the term of grazing permits from 10 years to 20 years.

On other issues, delegates adopted new policy that supports the use of unmanned aircraft systems for commercial agricultural, forestry and other natural resource purposes.



Buchanan elected to American Farm Bureau board

Delegates at the 95th AFBF Convention elected OKFB President Tom Buchanan to represent the southern region on the AFBF board of directors, Jan. 15, in San Antonio.

Two other state Farm Bureau presidents were newly elected to the board, and 13 other state Farm Bureau presidents were re-elected to represent their regions on the AFBF board of directors.

Bob Stallman was re-elected as president for an eighth two-year term. He is a cattle and rice farmer from Columbus, Texas. In addition, Barry Bushue was re-elected to a third two-year term as AFBF vice president. Bushue is a berry and nursery plant producer from Boring, Ore., and also serves as Oregon Farm Bureau president.



They also supported the requirement for drone users to gain the consent of the landowners, if operating below navigable airspace. However, delegates opposed federal agencies' use of drones for regulatory enforcement, litigation or natural resource inventory surveys.

Delegates approved new policy supporting the protection of proprietary data collected from farmers and maintaining that such data should remain their property. Delegates also voted to support efforts to educate farmers regarding the benefits and risks of collaborative data collection systems. They also approved policy stating that farmers should be compensated if companies market their proprietary information, and that farmers should have the right to sell their proprietary data to another producer, such as in the case of a land sale. Delegates voted to oppose farmers' data being held in a clearinghouse or database by any entity subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

Delegates also reaffirmed their support for the renewable fuels standard and approved a policy supporting renewable fuels tax incentives for the production of biodiesel and cellulosic ethanol and installation of blender pumps.

At the AFBF Annual Meeting, 357 voting delegates, representing every crop and livestock sector in the United States, deliberated on policies affecting farmers' and ranchers' productivity and profitability. The policies approved at the annual meeting will guide the nation's largest farm organization throughout 2014.

Left top: OKFB President Tom Buchanan accepts the AFBF New Horizon award from AFBF President Bob Stallman during the AFBF Annual Convention in San Antonio. OKFB received the award for its involvement in the Beef for Backpacks program, which provides protein for 13,500+ hungry students across the state each week.

Left Middle: U.S Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack talks to Farm Bureau members about the efforts and initiatives the USDA is implementing. Sec. Vilsack was a keynote speaker at the AFBF Annual Convention.

Left Bottom: Cotton County FB's David and Debbie Gammill (right) with the Oklahoma Wheat Commission dish up cinnamon rolls to AFBF trade show attendees. Oklahoma Farm Bureau regularly partners with the Oklahoma Wheat Commission to serve the very popular cinnamon rolls and bread at the AFBF Annual Conventions.

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OKFB hosts legislative reception



Sen. Mike Schulz and OKFB Women's Leadership Team Chairman Kitty Beavers visit during the OKFB legislative reception, Feb. 5, at the home office. More than 90 legislators and guests attended the event.



From left to right: Denise Crosswhite Hader, legislative assistant for Rep. Lewis Moore, OKFB President Tom Buchanan, YF&R Committee member Zac Harris and Rep. Todd Russ discuss a few of the issues the legislature plans to address during the 2014 legislative session.

Mikles joins Oklahoma Farm Bureau field services staff

Brittany Mikles of Elk City is Oklahoma Farm Bureau's new southwest field representative. Mikles started her new position with OKFB Jan. 2.

"I'm excited to join the Farm Bureau team and to work closely with the dedicated members in southwest Oklahoma," Mikles said. "I really appreciate the organization's mission to protect rural Oklahoma, and I look forward to promoting Farm Bureau's continued support of Oklahoma agriculture."

The Turpin native recently graduated from Oklahoma State University with a degree in agricultural leadership. As a student, she interned with the USDA Risk Management Agency in Oklahoma City.

Mikles' family operates a farm in Texas County, raising cattle and growing wheat and milo, and has been involved in Oklahoma Farm Bureau for several years.



Brittany Mikles



Todd Honer

Honer named director of commodities and safety services

Todd Honer was recently promoted to director of commodities and safety services for Oklahoma Farm Bureau & Affiliated Companies. Honer will be responsible for enhancing OKFB's commodity and safety programs within the state as part of the organization and membership services division.

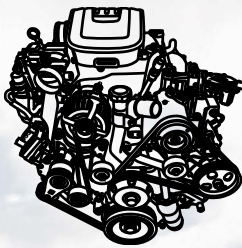
"Todd has been a tremendous asset to Oklahoma Farm Bureau for many years, and we are so excited to have him fill this new role within our organization," OKFB Executive Director Monica Wilke said.

Honer has been an OKFB field representative in northwest Oklahoma for 21 years. He was born and raised in Alva, where he met his wife of 20 years. Honer attended NEO A&M and then received his bachelor's degree in animal science and agricultural education from Oklahoma State University. During his college career, Honer represented OSU as the Spirit Rider.

When Honer is not busy with his Farm Bureau duties, he enjoys watching his three children play any kind of ball.

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YF&R members spend productive day at Capitol



OSU Collegiate YF&R members Grant Hickman (left) and Garrett Reed (right) meet with Sen. Corey Brooks, March 26, during the YF&R Legislative Day at the Capitol.



YF&R state committee members Sara and J.T. Bain visit with Sen. Larry Boggs (right), March 26, during the YF&R Legislative Day at the Capitol.

OKLAHOMA YOUTH EXPO

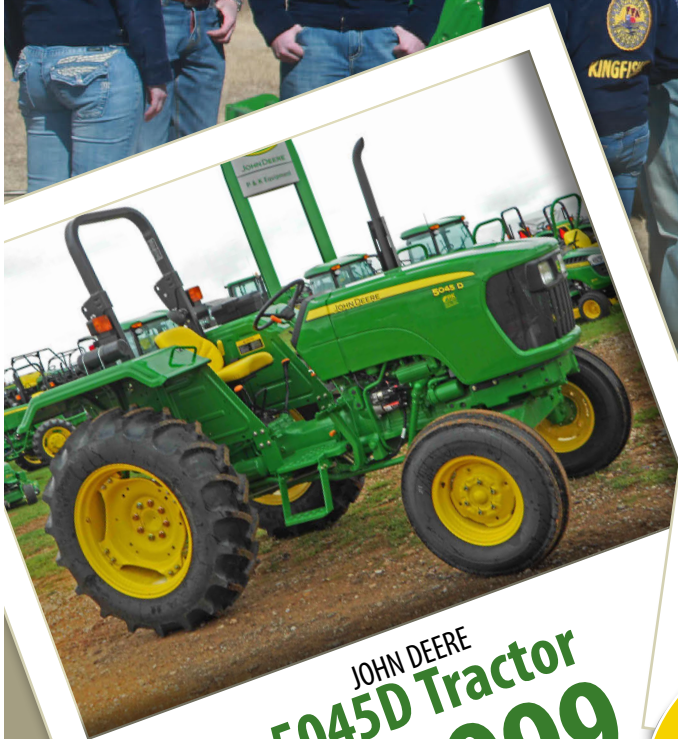


Left: OKFB President Tom Buchanan (left) accepts the 2013 OYE Volume Buyer Award from OYE Board of Director Chairman Bob Funk in recognition of last year's sale.

Below: OKFB helps purchase Chattanooga FFA's Rocky Zeller's Grand Champion Barrow during the 2014 Sale of Champions, March 21. OKFB sponsored more than \$40,000 in premiums during the sale to support Oklahoma 4-H and FFA members from across the state.



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Summey represents Oklahoma Farm Bureau at collegiate discussion meet

Oklahoma State University Collegiate Farm Bureau member Keili Summey was one of the final four competitors in the 2014 AFBF Young Farmers & Ranchers Collegiate Discussion Meet, Feb. 9, in Virginia Beach, Va. Her final question was "How can we encourage young farmers and ranchers to stay involved with farm bureau even if they don't hold an elected position?"

"Participating in the discussion meet was a great opportunity to share my thoughts on issues affecting the agricultural industry, while improving my public speaking and critical thinking skills," Summey said. "I was proud to represent the state of Oklahoma and OSU at the event and look forward to my future involvement in the Farm Bureau organization."

Summey received a \$1,250 scholarship from the CHS Foundation for her efforts. She is originally from Cave Creek, Ariz., and is currently attending Oklahoma State University and majoring in agricultural education.



Oklahoma State University Collegiate Farm Bureau member Keili Summey recites her opening personal statement during the 2014 AFBF Young Farmers & Ranchers Collegiate Discussion Meet, Feb. 9, in Virginia Beach, Va.

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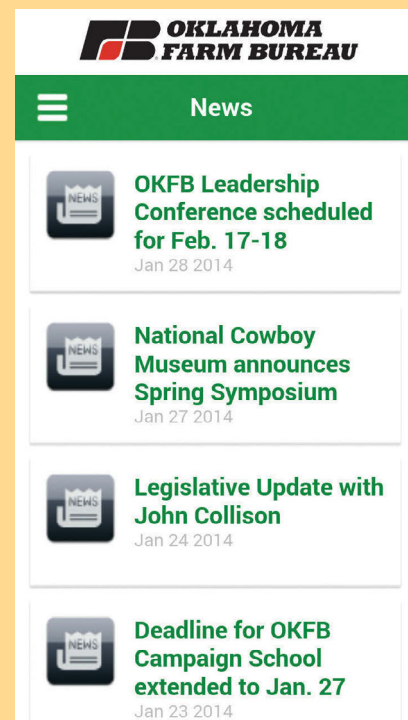
Oklahoma pork producers helped feed relief workers when disaster struck the state in May 2013

OKFB introduces new mobile app for Apple and Android

Oklahoma Farm Bureau has made it easier than ever to keep up with the latest in Oklahoma agriculture with the OKFB app. You can now listen to audio reports, read the most recent agricultural news or connect with OKFB through social media all from your Apple or Android devices.

To download the app to your mobile device, go to the Apple Store or Google Play and search for "Oklahoma Farm Bureau" or scan the QR code below to navigate directly to the app.

The app is just one way OKFB is striving to make information more accessible to members, legislators and the general public. Be sure to update the app regularly for the most recent information and features. For questions about downloading the app, please contact the OKFB communications office at (405) 523-2320.



Oklahoma joins multistate lawsuit against California over restrictive farming law

Attorney General Scott Pruitt on March 6, announced Oklahoma has joined a multistate lawsuit against California over a restrictive farming law that violates the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

In 2008, California voters approved Proposition 2, which requires egg producers in that state to comply with new regulations regarding the size of housing enclosures for egg-laying hens. Some California officials predicted the law would increase the cost of



Scott Pruitt

production for California egg producers putting them at a competitive disadvantage. To protect California producers from out-of-state competition, California lawmakers in 2010 passed a law requiring egg producers in other states like Oklahoma to comply with the regulations outlined in Proposition 2 in order to continue selling eggs in California.

The lawsuit asks the federal court to rule California's legislation violates the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution, which

prohibits states from enacting legislation regulating conduct outside its borders or protecting its own citizens from out-of-state competition. Oklahoma joined an amended version of the lawsuit in federal court in California. Other states joining the lawsuit are Missouri, Alabama, Kentucky, Iowa and Nebraska.

"With this law, California is telling farmers in our state they must operate their Oklahoma farms according to California's egg-producing regulations. That places an undue burden on Oklahoma farmers and violates the spirit of the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution which prohibits states from regulating business and industry outside their own borders," General Pruitt said. "This lawsuit is about protecting the ability of Oklahoma farmers to sell their products in all 50 states without fear of other states imposing burdensome new requirements or limits."

According to the USDA, Oklahoma produced 741 million eggs in 2012 with a value of \$90.5 million.

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OKFB members now receive a 10 percent discount off Big Iron Online Auction's standard selling service fees. Big Iron provides opportunities for buyers and sellers year-round, every week of the year, to buy or sell equipment. Big Iron's website allows visitors to access listings from anywhere in the world 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Bidders have the ability to discuss specifics about equipment with the seller or inspect the equipment themselves. With over 25 years of auction experience, Big Iron is more than just an online auction company, but a business partner to market your equipment. Find out more about Big Iron Online Auction at www.bigiron.com.




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For more information on how to donate livestock, contact Thad Doye by phone at (405) 523-2307 or by email at thad.doye@okfb.org.

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Whole Foods sponsors FAPC organic certification program

With the help of Whole Foods Market, Oklahoma State University's Robert M. Kerr Food & Agricultural Products Center is now Certified Organic through the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry.

On Nov. 19, Whole Foods Market provided 1 percent of sales, which totaled \$1,283, at its new 91st and Yale store in Tulsa to help fund FAPC's organic certification program. FAPC served as a

Community Giving Day Partner during the store's grand opening and provided the center with display space.

"We appreciate Whole Foods' generosity in funding FAPC's efforts to gain organic certification," said Chuck Willoughby, FAPC business and marketing relations manager. "It was really great to have this opportunity to visit with Whole Foods' customers and tell them about the center's efforts to assist organic producers and food businesses in Oklahoma."

Organic certification of its pilot processing facility allows FAPC to serve organic producers developing organically certified foods, and the center has a great track record helping existing and new start-up companies develop new food products.

"Because the center maintains a food manufacturing license from the Oklahoma State Department of Health, any new food products developed in the pilot plant are permitted to be sold in commerce," Willoughby



A donation from the Whole Foods Market at 91st and Yale in Tulsa was instrumental in funding FAPC's Certified Organic status.

John's Farm produces it's Fairview's Best organic dog treats in FAPC's new Certified Organic test kitchen.

said. "This opportunity to test market newly developed products gives company decision makers valuable information to determine refinement for products before undertaking a larger scale market launch."

However, without organic certification, test market product developed at FAPC using certified organic ingredients could not be labeled as organic.

"We have worked with several organically certified producers and food companies since we opened our doors in 1997," Willoughby said. "It became apparent while helping a client develop a pet treat made from organically certified ingredients that FAPC should gain certification as well." John's Farm of Fairview, Okla., became the first client to process

product that could be labeled and sold as organic since FAPC's organic certification program launched in November.

"The expertise of the FAPC staff and the state-of-the art facility is an asset for all of Oklahoma," said Kris Gosney, owner of John's Farm. "The recently received organic certification further illustrates the staff's dedication to their clients as it opens doors of

opportunity for organic product development. We are pleased to be the first client to produce a certified organic product in the FAPC kitchen. Our hope is that other producers will move into the organic market

By Mandy Gross
FAPC Communications Services Manager

with ease due to FAPC's certification."

Producing food products under organic certification requires good record keeping and the ability to prevent co-mingling of organically certified and non-certified ingredients. Special care in the handling of packaging and final products, cleaning of equipment and pest management practices is also required, which leads to additional costs.

Certification of the facility and review of each product profile also requires additional costs. The facility certification fee is \$500 annually, plus each product profile submitted requires a \$5 fee.

Because this was not planned in the current FAPC budget, the Whole Foods Market sponsorship allowed the organic certification program to be launched this budget year.

"Several of the Made in Oklahoma companies that supply Whole Foods are clients of the center," Willoughby said. "Many times FAPC has helped these clients meet Whole Foods' food safety and traceability program requirements or in some cases helped with reformulation to comply with Whole Foods' ingredients restrictions."

For more information about FAPC or its organic certification program, visit www.fapc.biz, call 405-744-6071 or email fapc@okstate.edu.

Oklahoma State University is a modern land-grant system of interdisciplinary programs that prepares students for success. OSU is America's Brightest Orange. Through leadership and service, OSU is preparing students for a bright future and building a brighter world for all. As Oklahoma's only university with a statewide presence, OSU improves the lives of people in Oklahoma, the nation and the world through integrated, high-quality teaching, research and outreach. OSU has more than 36,000 students across its five-campus system and more than 24,000 on its combined Stillwater and Tulsa campuses, with students from all 50 states and around 120 nations. Established in 1890, OSU has graduated more than 245,000 students to serve Oklahoma, the nation and the world.

Country Kitchen

CAJUN STEAK FETTUCCINE (SERVES 6)



Ingredients:

2 pounds Certified Angus Beef® sirloin steak (1 1/2-inches thick)
1 1/2 teaspoons fennel seeds, crushed
2 teaspoons dried oregano
1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon coarse kosher salt
1 pound fettuccine
2 tablespoons butter
1/4 cup garlic, minced (6 cloves)
1/2 red onion, minced
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese



Instructions:

Combine fennel seeds, oregano, red pepper flakes, paprika, pepper and salt to create an herb rub. Sprinkle both sides of steak with seasoning and rub into the surface.

Cook pasta according to package directions, drain well. Melt butter in large skillet; add garlic and red onion and simmer until tender. Add drained pasta and toss to combine. Remove from heat, sprinkle with Parmesan and toss.

Place steak on grill over medium-high heat. Grill to desired doneness. Transfer steak to cutting board and allow to rest 5 minutes. Slice across the grain into thin strips.

Top fettuccine with steak strips.

ANYTIME HAM AND CHEESE FRITTATA (SERVES 8)



Ingredients:

2 cups ham, chopped
2 cups hashbrown potatoes with peppers and onion, refrigerated or frozen
6 eggs
2 cups bread, torn into 1-inch pieces
1 cup Cheddar cheese, cubed
1/2 cup milk
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 1/2 teaspoons dry mustard
3/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper
1/4 teaspoon salt



Instructions:

In a large mixing bowl, whisk eggs, milk, dry mustard, red pepper flakes, and salt. Add bread pieces, stirring to combine; set aside.

Heat oven to 400 degrees F. In a large 10-inch ovenproof skillet, heat olive oil over medium high heat. Add potatoes and cook until golden and beginning to crisp. Add ham and cook, stirring often, for 2-3 minutes more. Push ham and potatoes to the side of the skillet; pour egg mixture into skillet, stir over heat and when the eggs begin to set up stir together, combining the ham, potatoes and eggs. Stir in cheese and place skillet in a 400 degree F oven for 10-15 minutes until cheese is melted and eggs are set.

Cut into wedges to serve.

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