

Oklahoma

Country



The Magazine of the
Oklahoma Farm Bureau
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Protect our farms

Why family farmers across Oklahoma support **SO 777** – the Right to Farm amendment – for the future of their families *and* yours.

Too hungry to learn

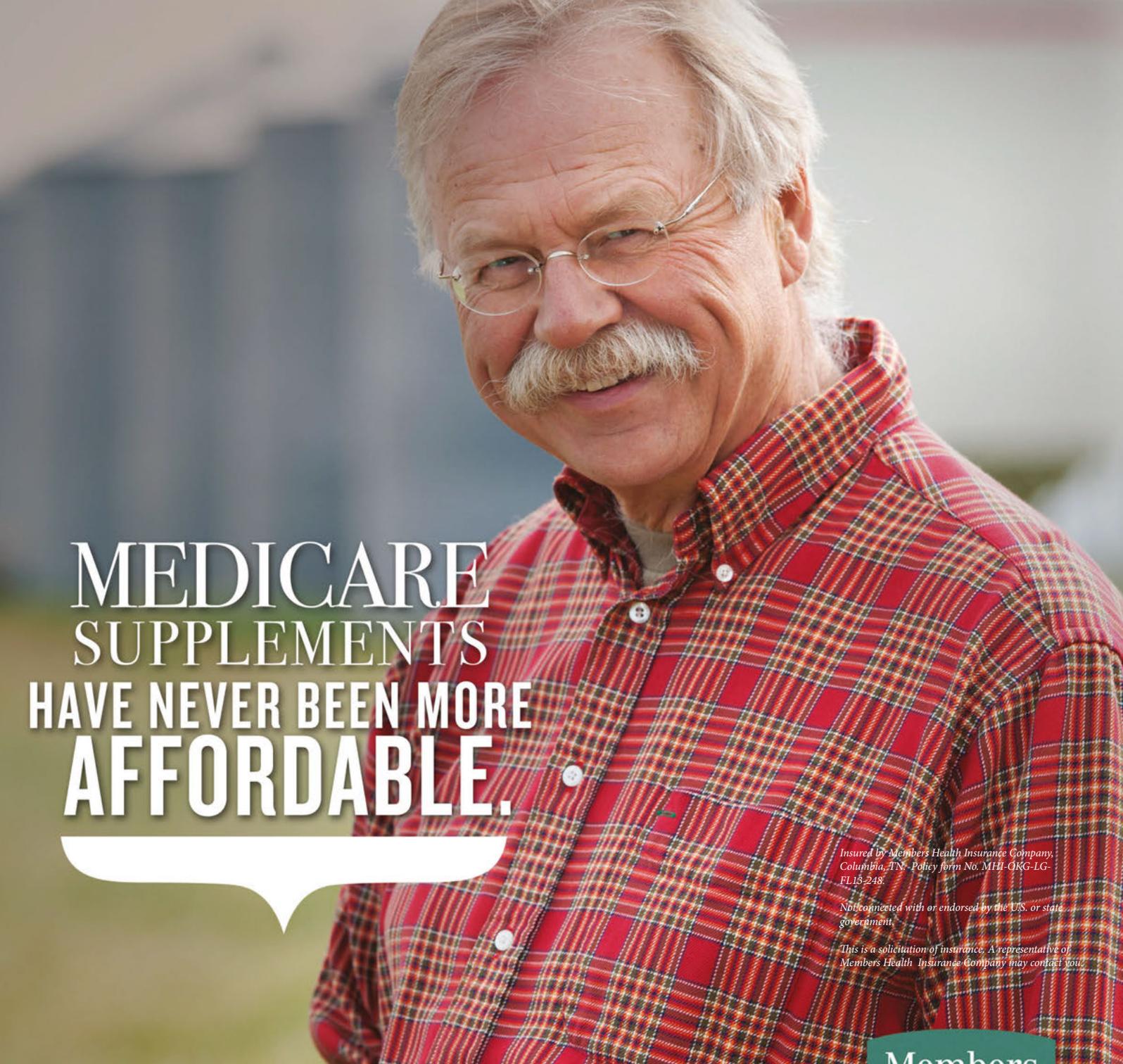
The need to protect consumer choice for our kids

Commodity corner

Sweet insight on our state vegetable

Consider the benefits

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Oklahoma Country

Summer 2016
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Photo by Dustin Mielke

ON THE COVER

Pottawatomie County farmers Brandon and Carra Crow stand with their son, Owen, among rows of sweet corn and a variety of other vegetables and fruits the family grows on their farm.

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 Clarissa Walton before the last day of the month, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 405-523-2530.

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By Hannah Nemecek

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By Clarissa Walton

Two Oklahoma school teachers paint a common picture of child hunger in their classrooms.

PRESIDENTIALLY SPEAKING



A legacy worth protecting

By Tom Buchanan

President, Oklahoma Farm Bureau & Affiliated Companies

Farmers and ranchers understand seasons better than most. Our crops and livestock live and die by the cyclical force of the seasons. Even the most cautious farmer can be victimized by the extremes that weather patterns can bring. The possibility of hail, floods, drought and early to late freezes all call for contingency policies on the farm.

In Oklahoma, we are faced with an extreme threat of a new sort. We have witnessed outside environmental groups threaten farms and ranches in other states across the nation. Their scare tactics play on the public's emotions leading to knee-jerk legislation and regulations that not only threaten the livelihoods of farmers and ranchers but also ultimately the consumer.

These groups erroneously paint a picture of farmers and ranchers as being irresponsible stewards of the land and the animals to which they tend. It's worth noting that when burdensome regulations are placed upon a farming operation, it will greatly increase the cost of farming or ranching and possibly push family farms out of business, resulting in higher prices for consumers and taking away freedom of choice at the grocery store.

During the 2015 legislative session, Oklahoma Farm Bureau helped plant a seed of protection in the form of legislation known as the Right to Farm. It passed overwhelmingly in both the house and senate, and now Oklahomans will have an opportunity to take a bold step in protecting our way of life in Oklahoma.

Our farmers and ranchers have been thoughtful protectors of our land for generations. They implement practices that conserve fertile soils, ensure healthy lives for their animals, and find ways to produce more with less. The opposition have deep pockets flowing into Oklahoma from Washington D.C.-based groups. As Oklahoma Farm Bureau, it is our responsibility

to take a proactive step in protecting those who produce food, fiber, and fuel for not only Oklahomans but for our nation.

In the coming months, the opposition will claim that Right to Farm will negate property rights and city codes; they will say that corporate farming will have a blank check to do what they will. They will claim that farmers will have the ability to dictate water practices and uses. These claims are all absolutely false.

Our Attorney General, Scott Pruitt, wrote careful language in this constitutional amendment to protect Oklahomans in the form of the phrase "compelling state interest." Do not be fooled by the legalese jargon that the opposition will quote. The phrase

simply protects the health, welfare, and well-being of Oklahomans. If an operation or practice threatens the health, welfare, or well-being of a citizen, it would be carefully considered and reviewed.

I strongly encourage our members to continue raising awareness about the urgency of Right to Farm. Talk with a farmer or rancher. It is worth noting that Right to Farm will protect all farming operations of all sizes. Even our urban farmers who have one- and four-acre farms will have protection to choose their farming practices within the confines of the current laws and regulations.

A new season is upon Oklahoma. We as Oklahoma Farm Bureau have

planted seeds of protection, tended it through a legislative session and now are looking to a November harvest with a watchful eye. Vote yes to State Question 777 on November 8, 2016, and help ensure Oklahoma's agricultural legacy will thrive and flourish for generations to come. 

“As Oklahoma Farm Bureau, it is our responsibility to take a proactive step in protecting those who produce food, fiber and fuel for not only Oklahomans but for our nation.”

— Tom Buchanan

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Buchanan', with a stylized flourish at the end.



INSURANCE MATTERS

Members first

By Gary Buckner
Executive Vice President and General Manager
Oklahoma Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company

Twenty years go by in just a blink of an eye. I can say that with firsthand experience because I have had the wonderful opportunity to serve our members for more than 20 years. Yet, in the six short months I have served as executive vice president and general manager for Oklahoma Farm Bureau and Affiliated Companies, I have witnessed several exciting changes and initiatives for a company with such a storied past.

These changes revolve around our main focus: our members. We want to continue to bring the highest value and service to our members. We want to bring insurance products that will not only protect you in times of disaster, but also in times of new beginnings, like a new car or home. Being an OKFB member is an elite status and our goal is for our products to reflect that status. Many of these changes will not necessarily be seen instantly, but are changes that are preparing Oklahoma Farm Bureau for some of its brightest days to come.

However, some changes will be visible. Soon, we will roll out a new website with many new helpful features, such as new payment methods, an agent locator and the ability to pay member dues. In addition to offering a fresh design to make navigation easier, these features will ultimately make our members' online experience quicker and more efficient.

Our claims department continues to set the bar for excellence. OKFB Vice President of Claims Merry Randazzo believes the golden rule is paramount when helping our members during the

claims process. Our own insurance commissioner has shared on various occasions that Oklahoma Farm Bureau sets the "gold standard" for claims service.

OKFB agents are the boots-on-the-ground support in your communities. We're the largest domestic insurance company in the state of Oklahoma, devotedly serving our members

in all 77 counties. I was proud to learn that in a recent survey, 55 percent of our members said the relationship with their agents is the most important when buying insurance. This feedback speaks volumes of our agency force of more than 165 agents and their dedication to providing the standard in insurance services. Our members also told us that more than 70 percent have been members with OKFB for at least 11

years and more than half of our respondents would recommend OKFB insurance to others. Responses such as these will help further shape changes and initiatives for OKFB as we continue to grow.

I'm excited to continue dedicatedly serving our members in my new role, and look forward to embarking on a new era for Oklahoma Farm Bureau. 

“We want to continue to bring the highest value and service to our members. We want to bring insurance products that will not only protect you in times of disaster, but also in times of new beginnings, like a new car or home.”

— Gary Buckner

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BRAND NEWS

New voices

By Becky Samples
Vice President of Strategic Corporate Communications
Oklahoma Farm Bureau & Affiliated Companies

As you may have read in our “Insurance Matters” column, there have been many changes at Oklahoma Farm Bureau. Many are changes that you can’t see, but are foundational initiatives to continue to strengthen our federation and insurance companies. There are also new names and faces that you might have already noticed in reading *Oklahoma Country*, on our website, or through social media.

I stepped into the role of vice president of communications for Oklahoma Farm Bureau and Affiliated Companies in January and made strengthening our communications team a priority so that we may better serve our members in our rural and urban areas. Dustin Mielke continues to be our stalwart communications director. In his tenure, Dustin has cultivated lasting and meaningful relationships with members. His eye behind the lens has shed light on farming and ranching to audiences who don’t often readily see the agriculture’s impact. I am excited that Dustin’s unique storytelling abilities will have more opportunities to share local member stories across our state.

In May, Clarissa Walton joined our communications team as a communications specialist. Clarissa is a third-generation OKFB member who proudly communicates important member news through several media outlets. Several of the stories, including one of our feature stories about food insecurity in Oklahoma, was authored by Clarissa.

Shortly after Clarissa joined OKFB, Jeff Canton came on board as our brand specialist. Jeff’s graphic design talents help tell our members’ stories through graphics and pictures where words cannot easily communicate.

Why are these changes important to our members? Simply to better tell OKFB’s story to not only our rural population, but also our urban areas. OKFB not only protects our members when disaster strikes, but also protects the livelihoods of our farming and ranching members, which ultimately allows all Oklahomans to enjoy safe, affordable and healthy food, fiber, and fuel.

Our team will be working in the coming months with our Public Policy Division to spread awareness about State Question

777, or the Right to Farm, which will appear on the general election ballot in November. This ballot initiative is the result of a proactive step that our Oklahoma family farmers and ranchers are taking to protect agriculture and to continue to feed Oklahomans and our nation.

It is important to protect agriculture from outside animal rights and environmental activists who threaten the livelihoods of many of our members. This land is our land and our Oklahoman farmers have been cultivating it for many generations. We believe in thoughtful regulations that protect

the land and the animals, but now we are threatened with thoughtless, emotion-based tactics. You will hear language about corporate farming that is simply not true. More than 98 percent of farms and ranches in Oklahoma are family owned and operated. Moreover, as you will read in our feature story, food insecurity is a very real issue here in Oklahoma. I urge you to learn more about Right to Farm and vote yes on November 8, 2016.

Beyond our work in support of Right to Farm, our team is busily working on several projects. This November’s state convention marks the kick-off for our 75th anniversary year, and our team will be working on several initiatives in preparation for the celebration. We’re also working with our Information Systems Department to redesign both the insurance and federation websites. We have a great communications team and I am confident that our members will soon reap the benefits of their expertise.

I look forward to leading our communications staff in our primary objective: to continue to strengthen Oklahoma Farm Bureau and Affiliated Companies as the voice of agriculture for generations to come. 

“Why are these changes important to our members? Simply to better tell OKFB’s story to not only our rural population but also our urban areas.”

— Becky Samples



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COMMODITY CORNER

Watermelon

Did you know watermelon is Oklahoma's state vegetable?

In 2015, Oklahoma produced

**13,500
lbs**

of fresh-market
watermelons per acre



There are more than

300

varieties of

WATERMELON

including yellow and orange

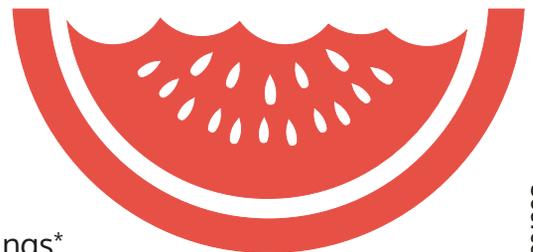


Oklahoma's five-year average production for watermelon is

34.7 MILLION lbs

which is equal to

102.8 MILLION servings*



Source: USDA NASS

**FUN
FACT**

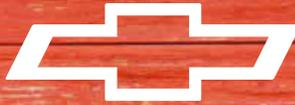
Every year since 1948, Rush Springs has hosted one of the most popular festivals in the state. The Rush Springs Watermelon Festival includes activities such as watermelon exhibits, stage shows, a tiny tots contest, a free watermelon feed, a carnival and arts and crafts fair. Each year, a watermelon queen is chosen to travel Oklahoma and north Texas promoting the festival. Rush Springs estimates about 30,000 visitors attend the festival each year. More than 50,000 pounds of watermelons are purchased from melon growers in the area. In 2012, Mike and Mily Miller set the all-time record of largest watermelon with a 214 pound melon, which equals 634 servings*! Want to see it for yourself? Attend this year's festival Aug. 13.

*- a serving is 1-cup diced or 5.4 oz

Want a unique way to serve watermelon? Check out the Watermelon Rind Pickles recipe in the Country Kitchen section (p. 50), featured by the National Watermelon Promotion Board.



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¹ Offer available through 4/1/17. Available on qualified 2015 and 2016 Chevrolet vehicles. This offer is not available with some other offers. Only customers who have been active members of an eligible Farm Bureau for a minimum of 30 days will be eligible to receive a certificate. Customers can obtain certificates at www.fbverify.com/gm. Farm Bureau and the FB logo are registered service marks of the American Farm Bureau Federation and are used herein under license by General Motors. ² Dependability based on longevity: 1987–April 2013 full-size pickup registrations.



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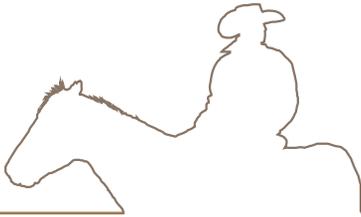
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Glimmers of hope, despite all the gloom

From February through May, the entire state of Oklahoma seemed to have a cloud of doom hanging over its head. With a \$1.3 billion budget shortfall and a downed economy, positivity was hard to find at the state Capitol and throughout the state.

Fortunately, the second session of the 55th Oklahoma Legislature brought a few glimmers of hope for farmers and ranchers. As state legislators examined every inch of the state budget, they stayed away from sales tax exemptions on agricultural inputs. Agriculture chalked up several wins during a legislative session that saw gridlock amongst contentious issues and revenue shortfalls.

Aquifer storage and recovery

As farmers and ranchers know all too well, an adequate supply of water can make or break the agriculture industry. State legislators this year took another step to help prepare Oklahoma for future droughts by passing SB 1219.

The bill, authored by Sen. Eddie Fields and Rep. John Pfeiffer, allows the Oklahoma Water Resources Board to create rules for aquifer storage and recovery. Utilized across the country, the technology captures excess water and pumps it back into underground aquifers for use at a later time. Many Oklahoma farmers and ranchers, especially in the panhandle, rely on groundwater to irrigate crops. The ability to restore those aquifers in periods of heavy rain will prove invaluable.

Commercial driver's licenses for H-2A workers

Last year, a Federal Motor Carriers Administration rule change prohibited the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety from issuing non-domiciled commercial driver's licenses. Temporary agricultural workers on an H-2A visa would not have access to a CDL, which would have hindered their ability to harvest crops.

SB 1018, authored by Sen. Mike Schulz and Rep. Harold Wright, allows DPS to again issue non-domiciled CDLs, allowing the H-2A workers to drive trucks and help farmers get crops to the market.

Cattle theft penalties

Cattle theft has a huge impact on farmers and ranchers across Oklahoma. But current state statutes addressing cattle theft were originally written in the 1930s, and had not recently been updated to align with the increase in cattle prices.

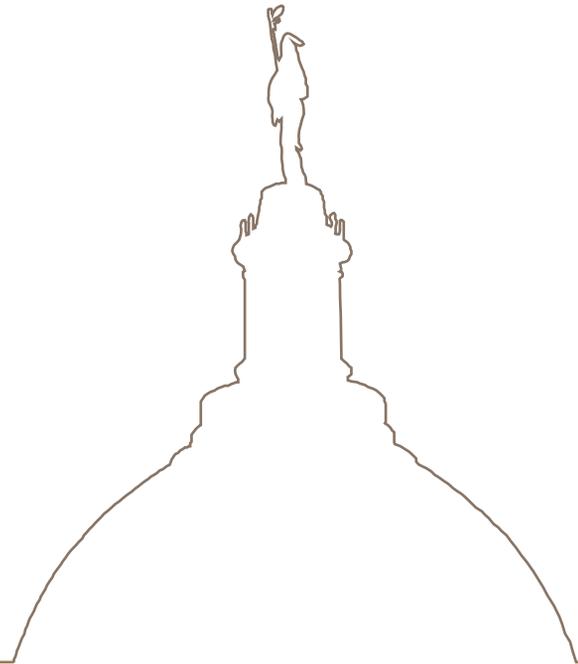
Rep. John Pfeiffer, a cattle rancher himself, authored and passed HB 2504 alongside Sen. Ron Justice to update those state statutes to fit today's market. The bill increases the fine for cattle theft to three times the value of the animals stolen, up to \$500,000. In addition, each animal stolen will constitute a separate offense.

Feral hogs

A bill that would have allowed landowners to remove feral hogs any time of day without a permit passed the House and Senate, but was vetoed by Gov. Mary Fallin. In the place of SB 1142, Fallin issued an executive order requiring the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation to expedite the issuance of permits, and also develop rules that:

- allow landowners to remove feral hogs on their property at night with the use of night-vision equipment, off-road vehicles, and handheld or vehicle-mounted headlights;
- require private landowners to provide advance notice to game wardens when attempting to remove feral swine;
- and explain how to access information on feral hog eradication.

Located in all 77 Oklahoma counties, feral hogs are an invasive species causing millions of dollars in damage to farms, ranches, public and private property, ecosystems, and motorists.



Courtesy of OKAgPolicy

For more information, contact:

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Right to Farm

This issue of *Oklahoma Country* heavily focuses on the upcoming State Question 777, or the Right to Farm. If passed by Oklahoma voters in November, the measure will give all Oklahoma farmers and ranchers the constitutional right to farm and ranch.

A few years ago, OKFB members made Right to Farm a priority after seeing other states around the country pass legislation that restricts the agricultural industry. OKFB took it to the state Capitol and passed it as HJR 1012 during the 2015 legislative session, bringing Right to Farm to a vote of the people Nov. 8, 2016.

The future of Oklahoma agriculture – the state’s second-leading industry – largely depends on the outcome of SQ 777. Oklahomans should dictate the state’s agriculture practices, not radical activist groups. OKFB is committed to educating fellow Oklahomans about the importance of the Right to Farm, and won’t stop until the election is over. Help us protect our farmers and ranchers: vote YES on SQ 777! Have questions? Feel free to give the OKFB Public Policy team a call.

Elections

Each and every year, Oklahomans become further removed from the farm and so do lawmakers. The individuals elected to office have the potential to impact Oklahoma’s farms, ranches and its future. Electing individuals that will support the priorities of the agricultural industry is vital, so make sure to do research before heading to the polls. And then most importantly? Go to the polls! Every voice matters, so go vote and make yours heard.

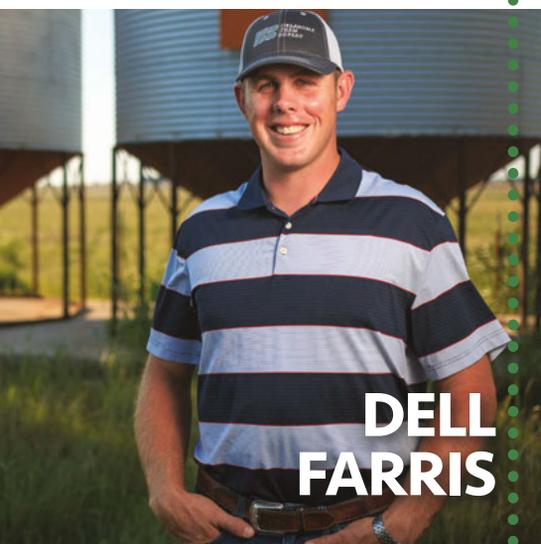
The OKAgFund, OKFB’s political action committee, has researched all candidates for state offices. To learn more about the candidates, contact the Public Policy team. 



**CARRA AND
OWEN CROW**



**BRITTANY
KREHBIEL**



**DELL
FARRIS**



**BRANDON
CROW**



“
AROUND HERE,
THE LAND AND THE CATTLE COME
FIRST AND WE COME SECOND.
.....

I WAS GRILLED AT A YOUNG AGE THAT
IF YOU TAKE CARE OF THE LAND AND
TAKE CARE OF THE CATTLE,
THEY’LL TAKE CARE OF YOU.
”

- Dell Farris

nitrogen is in the soil, or how much potassium I need to add to the soil,” Krehbiel said. “Being able to make that decision here on the farm protects my ability to put seeds in the ground next year.”

PROTECT NEW TECHNOLOGY

Some of those decisions on the farm include using ever-advancing technologies, which make farmers and ranchers more efficient and environmentally-friendly today than they’ve ever been, Farris said.

“In the last 30 years, with technology and improvements, we’re probably the greenest industry in the state,” Farris said.

In running a smaller farm, Brandon Crow said he relies on genetically modified crops to increase yields, reduce pesticide use, and save money.

“As small farmers, genetically modified crops help us,” he said. “We use less diesel because we’re making fewer trips around the field, and it keeps us from using more pesticides.”

Along with farmers, Carra Crow said consumers also benefit from genetically modified crops. For example, the Crows’ genetically modified corn crop contains a natural protein that kills corn earworms.

“Genetically modified corn provides our consumer with a better-quality product,” she said. “Nobody wants to eat a corn earworm, or eat an ear where there’s only a few rows of corn because a corn earworm has eaten the rest.”

SQ 777 will protect technology today, as well as technology invented in the future, Krehbiel said.

“A lot of the technology I’m going to use in 20 years hasn’t even been dreamed up,” she said. “Without 777, it never will be dreamed up because it’ll be illegal. That’s not a good option for farmers or consumers, because you’re cheating yourself out of food.”

With the global population expected to reach 9 billion people by 2050, Krehbiel said farmers also will rely on technology to provide enough food for the world.

Banning technology, like genetically modified crops, will take food off tables, Krehbiel said.

“By taking away bushels that are produced, you’re taking away a loaf of bread from somebody who really needs it, somebody who’s hungry, somebody who doesn’t have enough food at home,” Krehbiel said. “Ultimately, you’re changing the lives of hungry kids all over this country and all over the world.”

Limiting new technology not only restricts the family farmer, but also determines the food the consumer finds at the grocery store and in restaurants, Krehbiel said.

PROTECT CONSUMER CHOICE

In 2008, California voters approved a ballot initiative mandating all eggs produced and sold in the state to be cage-free. The measure forced the price of eggs in the state to skyrocket, Krehbiel said.

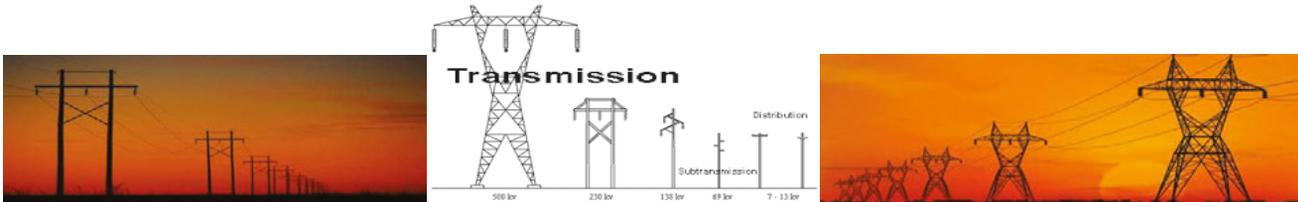
“I’m not against cage-free, I’m not against GMO-free, and I’m not against organic because somewhere there’s a farmer that’s growing them and they need a job just like I do,” Krehbiel said. “But at the same time, you have to have another option because



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Embrace Diversity – Support Choice: Food Affordability

By Amanda Rosholt

Director of Fundraising and Public Relations for the Oklahoma Farming and Ranching Foundation

A recent study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service set out to determine what price premiums consumers are paying for organic foods and whether those premiums are declining over time. Its conclusion? All organic products studied were more costly than their nonorganic counterparts, and the premium was more than 20 percent for every product studied except spinach. Price premiums for organic products in the study ranged from 7 percent for fresh spinach to 82 percent for eggs.

According to the Nutrition Business Journal, total sales for organic food were just under \$11.5 billion in 2004, climbing to an estimated \$35 billion in 2014. It is a growing market in which Oklahoma farmers and ranchers are free to choose to participate.

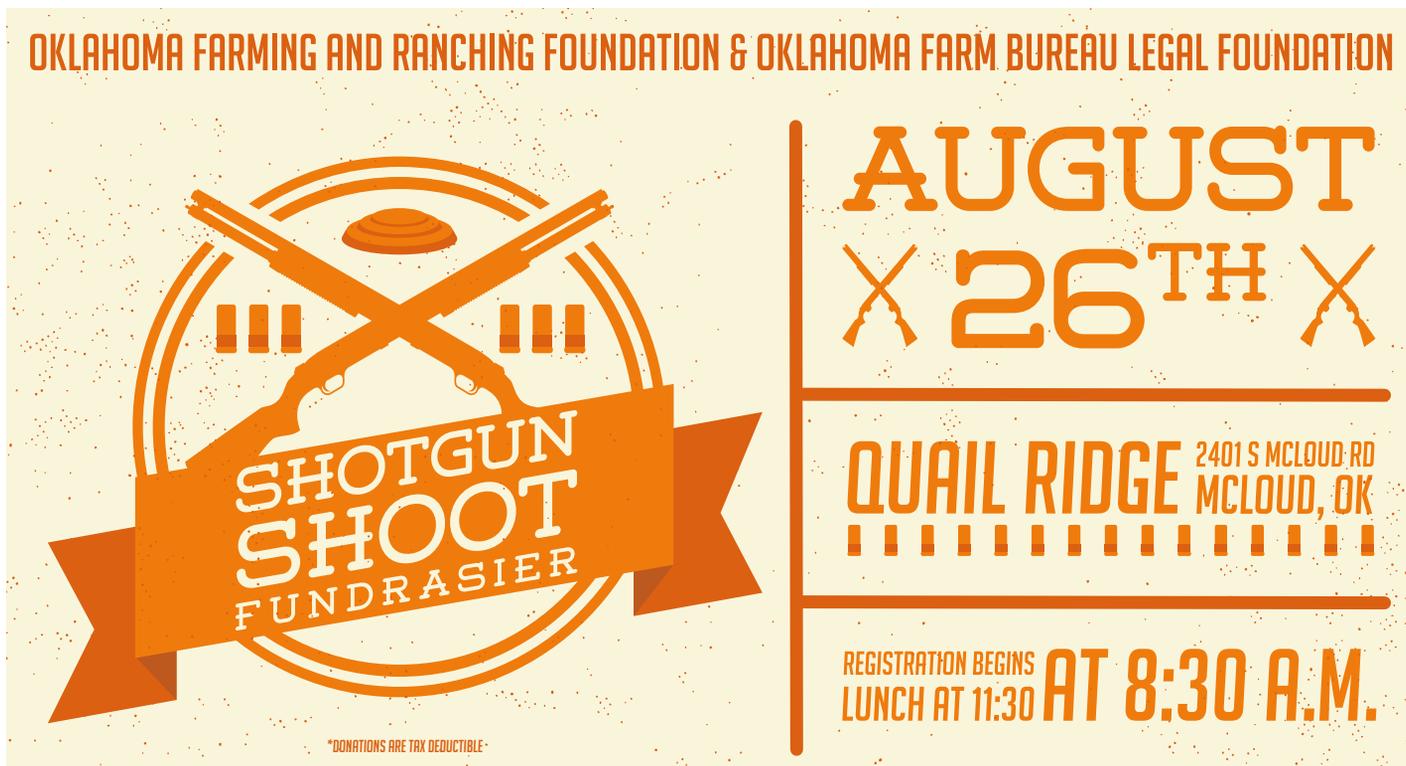
Many consumers have an opportunity to vote with their dollar by purchasing organic or traditionally-grown food products according to their taste and personal preference. However, we cannot ignore the ones who don't. The concern lies in the fact that one in six Oklahomans are food insecure or unsure from where their next meal will come. Many others choose not to pay a premium for food products that differ only

in the methods used to produce them.

"There isn't much difference between organic and conventional foods if you're an adult and making a decision based solely on your health," said Dena Bravata, MD, MS, and senior author of a paper comparing the nutrition of organic and non-organic foods, published in the Annals of Internal Medicine.

California's Proposition 2 and Vermont's GMO labeling law provide two current examples of legislatures taking steps to limit food choice in other states. At the same time, we have seen retailers begin to limit choices as well. In mid-March, Whole Foods, a well-recognized natural and organic food retailer, announced it will begin replacing faster-growing poultry breeds with slower-growing varieties. The shift is expected to increase the broiler time to market by 23 percent – a cost that could not be absorbed by most producers and will ultimately be passed on to consumers.

Keeping low-cost food options available is more than a matter of convenience. Providing affordable options for all Oklahomans is a moral obligation that farmers and ranchers in our state take very seriously. 



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"I will never lose sight of the impact that agriculture has on the landscape of the American economy," said John Grunewald, president and CEO of Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma. "Our organization is committed to protecting and promoting production agriculture and our partnership with the foundation is an important step in that direction."

"We are so grateful for Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma's continued support of this foundation and its programs. As one of our founding members, Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma has demonstrated their ongoing commitment to serving agriculturalists and rural Oklahomans," said Jeremy Rich, foundation president. "John Grunewald provides outstanding leadership as treasurer of the Oklahoma Farming and Ranching Foundation Board of Directors on behalf of Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma."

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TOO
hungry

Pederson, a farmer and sixth-grade teacher, has a front-row seat when it comes to child hunger in her classroom.

Magnificent fields filled with golden wheat ready for harvest wave in the Oklahoma wind. Just a few miles away, there is a picturesque scene of a cattle herd grazing on green pasture as streaks of yellow, pink and red light up the sky just minutes before sunset.

Yet among those fields laden with nourishment, one out of every four children struggles with food insecurity every day. In fact, Oklahoma is considered one of the hungriest states in the nation, even though our state produces 3.22 billion pounds of meat and 933 million eggs, annually. While Oklahoma is ranked as one of the highest producing states in the nation of winter wheat, pecans, rye, grain sorghum and peanuts, tens of thousands of children go to bed hungry each night.

In the small northern Oklahoma town of Burlington, which sits surrounded by miles of crop-producing fields, Terry Pederson sees first-hand the struggle of childhood hunger in her rural school district. As a sixth-grade teacher at Burlington Public Schools, she has witnessed the food insecurity problem grow in the small community over the years.

"You used to see it occasionally, but nothing like today," Pederson said.

Even though child hunger is not as prominent in her area as some urban areas, Pederson said families who

struggle to provide food for their children are faced with limited resources to obtain adequate nutrition.

"It's a big problem if anyone has to deal with that," she said.

Studies show the effects of long-term hunger in children increases their risk of homelessness, chronic health problems, psychiatric distress, behavior issues and low self-esteem. With her years of teaching experience, Pederson can easily recognize the signs of food insecurity in students.

"Those are the kids that, as soon as they get off the bus, they're in the cafeteria and they are there until they have to be in class," she said.

Pederson has experienced the negative effect of food insecurity on young children in their classroom performance.

"We know there's so much more potential in our students than they produce, but they're hungry and sometimes their nutritional needs are not being met," she said. "Mondays are usually a real struggle. You can see in their athletics, those particular kids, they lag behind a little bit because they aren't as strong."

In addition to a child's personal challenges, teaching also can be significantly more difficult because

certain students have a difficult time focusing on class material.

"If a kid is hungry, he's thinking, 'Am I going to get supper tonight?'" Pederson said. "He's not thinking about his work."

A strong farm economy and good oil prices in years past have helped pump

income into small, rural towns and school districts, providing more financial resources and opportunities for area families. However, with the recent oil and gas downturn, coupled with softening farm commodity and cattle prices, rural

hunger is an ever-looming reality for more families.

When Pederson is not teaching in the classroom, she is out in the field helping on her family's farm. Because she has direct contact with agriculture, she has a unique perspective on food insecurity.

"As a farmer and a teacher, I see how the food we produce on the farm can feed hungry children in Oklahoma and around the world," Pederson said.

Every harvest, she thinks about the irony of having bountiful crops and livestock surrounding families who are unable to afford food.

"Here we've got this protein and yet we've got kids and families who struggle," she said. "We're producing food and trying to produce food that's inexpensive for them. Where else in the world are you going to find cheaper food? And yet

"We know there's so much more potential in our students than they produce, but they're hungry and sometimes their nutritional needs are not being met."
— Terry Pederson

to learn

TWO OKLAHOMA SCHOOL TEACHERS PAINT A COMMON PICTURE OF CHILD HUNGER IN THE CLASSROOM.

story by clarissa walton | photos by dustin mielke



Julie McQueen, a kindergarten teacher at Western Heights Public Schools, has a passion for helping food-insecure students.

there's still people who can't afford to feed their families good nutritious food every meal."

About 144 miles away, the waving fields of wheat give way to the urban corridors surrounding downtown Oklahoma City. The grim reality of food insecurity becomes more visible at schools like Western Heights Public Schools, an independent school district located on the southwest side of Oklahoma City.

Julie McQueen, a kindergarten teacher at one of the elementary schools, is a witness to the significant toll food insecurity takes on her students. Ninety-nine percent of the 3,600 students at Western Heights receive free or reduced-price lunches.

"For most of the students, breakfast and lunch are the only meals they can count on for that day," McQueen said.

Food is rarely taken for granted in her class, she said.

"It's one of those hierarchy of needs," McQueen said. "You've got to be fed, you've got to have shelter, and you've got to feel safe."

The teachers at Western Heights, including McQueen, do their best to care for the children by generously offering whatever they can to those in need.

"If they come in hungry, even if we've got our morning work going on, that's not their fault they missed breakfast," she said. "So I let them take time off their morning work to have some crackers or some fruit gummies, or anything else on hand."

Food insecurity frequently affects the academic and athletic performance of McQueen's students, much like those Pederson has seen in rural Oklahoma.

"How well are you going to do anything else if you're hungry?" McQueen said. "I mean, I'm not impoverished by any means, but when I get hungry, I might get cranky or get a headache, and I'm not going to perform well in anything else I'm doing."

When students come to school hungry, creating an effective teaching environment becomes more challenging.

"They have another priority on their mind first," she said. "Before they sit and listen to me, they'd rather not be hungry."

After teaching for 20 years, McQueen is saddened by just thinking about what

these students are experiencing.

"At least I know they're in good hands when they're with me," she said. "That's all I can be in control of."

One of the most contributing factors in child hunger is the parents' ability to afford nutritional food. Restrictive agricultural legislation has already increased food prices in some states.

For example, the price of eggs skyrocketed upon the approval of Proposition Two in California,

which created new requirements for livestock housing and resulted in fewer egg producers who were able to sell eggs in the state. In fact, the increased price was 35 times higher than the overall inflation rate, according to a study from Cornell University.

Farmers are concerned similar legislation may appear in Oklahoma and only add to the state's food insecurity problem, Pederson said.

"It's real important for food costs to remain low enough for all families to be able to feed their families," Pederson said. "We've got to take care of our kids

“It's one of those hierarchy of needs. You've got to be fed, you've got to have shelter and you've got to feel safe.”
— Julie McQueen

because that's our future. They're the ones who will be taking care of us."

Pederson said if the price of eggs increased, families in her area would feel the impact.

"For kids, that's a good, inexpensive source of protein," she said. "What is one of the most important things for them to have besides calcium? Protein."

That is one of the reasons why farmers need protection from regulations developed by outside sources. State Question 777, or the Right to Farm amendment, provides that protection.

"The more (agricultural) regulations you put in, the higher those costs go," Pederson said. "We can't do that to our kids to satisfy the whim of people who don't understand."

Pederson said choice was the main concern in her mind. Although some people have the freedom of choosing organic products, other families simply cannot afford the elevated prices such products command.

"If I want to buy organic, I need to have that choice," Pederson said. "But if I don't want to buy organic, I need that choice, too."

Even today, some farmers are struggling to survive under restrictive legislation and the overwhelming workload, she said.

"People don't want to come back to farm," Pederson said. "They want to do something that's not as stressful and doesn't take as many hours."

The importance of farmers is obvious to McQueen, who sees the need for access to affordable food for her students in urban Oklahoma City.

"I don't know where we'd be without farmers," McQueen said.

For Pederson, farming is much more than just a business. Her family grows and raises food with the realization that their actions in rural Alfalfa County reach dinner plates around the state and beyond.

"There's a lot of heart that goes into agriculture," she said. "It's probably, for most farmers, why they farm. There is that responsibility of taking care of the land so future generations have the capability of feeding their families and the world." 

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Science shows students the importance of agriculture

Microscopes, plants, a drone and eighth-graders filled the Hardy Murphy Coliseum arena.

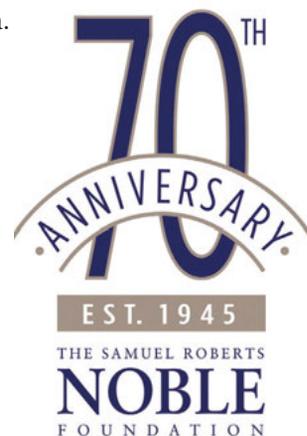
As one group of eighth-graders squeezed a spongy strip of wet grass, learning how plants help filter water resources and slow down flooding and drought, another touched a sheep's four-chambered stomach while learning how ruminant animals, like sheep and cattle, convert grass to muscle. Later, the students huddled around microscopes to see the microbes that live inside a cow's rumen and make this conversion possible.

"It was interesting to see all the microbes from the cow's stomach," said Jentri Rayburn, an eighth-grader at Plainview Middle School. "I'm around cows a lot, so it was cool to see what's inside them."

The hands-on lessons were part of the annual Science in Ag Day, an educational event sponsored by Noble Academy, the youth education and outreach program of The Samuel Roberts

Noble Foundation in Ardmore, Okla. The event, held May 4-5, 2016, was designed to connect students with agriculture and its importance to nearly every facet of society from food to the economy, while emphasizing the role of science and demonstrating the importance of proper management of natural resources.

"One hundred years ago, 40 percent of the United States workforce was employed in agriculture. Today, that number is





less than 2 percent,” said Frank Hardin, Ph.D., Noble Academy educational outreach manager. “As each generation passes, we’re appreciating agriculture less. Educating our youth, especially concerning food production, is critical for our future.”

Throughout the two-day event, about 270 eighth-graders from Ardmore, Dickson, Oak Hall Episcopal and Plainview schools rotated among eight interactive lessons. The lessons were taught by Noble Foundation agricultural consultants, researchers and educators specializing in each topic. Each lesson discussed the practical agriculture connection as well as the science behind it.

“It’s incredible how much science is in agriculture,” Hardin said, “but sometimes it’s not obvious. We want to help make these connections for students by emphasizing the science behind agricultural practices, like plant breeding, and teaching them the science behind agricultural processes, like how strawberry plants grow.”

A quadcopter buzzed overhead as part of a lesson on how unmanned aerial vehicles can be used to collect information about crop health and growth. Across the arena, students line up to plant their own strawberry plant to take home after learning the science behind vegetative reproduction in plants.

“One hundred years ago, 40 percent of the United States workforce was employed in agriculture. Today, that number is less than 2 percent.”

— Frank Hardin, Ph.D.
Noble Academy’s educational outreach manager

Others played the role of plant breeders and learned how to produce higher-yielding, more disease- and pest-resistant plants. Students also learned about wildlife habitat, the multitude of ways agriculture shows up at a picnic from the food

to the plastics, and polymers. “Not only are they learning science, it gives the students a lot of ideas about job opportunities they didn’t know existed,” said Cynthia Hamilton, Plainview Middle School counselor. “And for those who are familiar with the opportunities, it reaffirms to them that yes, this is cool and something they might want to do in the future.”

For Oak Hall students, the day even brought their latest science unit on soil erosion to life.

“It was great for them to get to see how plants help prevent erosion first-hand,” said Melanie Williams, Oak Hall Episcopal School eighth-grade science teacher.

One Oak Hall student, Zachary Bramlett, named the soil health station as his favorite.

“What they learn here will aid them in their science classes later on in high school,” said Jacque Jones, Plainview Middle School eighth grade science teacher. “It’s valuable for them, and it’s great to see them having fun while they’re learning.” 



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OKFB breaks ground on 75th Anniversary Commemorative Courtyard



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Above: OKFB President Tom Buchanan, Executive Director Monica Wilke and Executive Vice President and General Manager Gary Buckner join the nine members of the OKFB state board in the OKFB 75th Anniversary Commemorative Courtyard groundbreaking ceremony. Pictured from left: James Fuser, district 6; Rodd Moesel, district 3; John Grundmann, district 8; Phyllis Holcomb, district 9; Monica Wilke; Tom Buchanan; Gary Buckner; Gary Crawley, district 5; Monte Tucker, district 2; Alan Jett, district 1; Keith Kisling, district 7; and Jimmy Wayne Kinder, district 4.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau broke ground to mark the beginning of the construction of the OKFB 75th Anniversary Commemorative Courtyard May 11.

The courtyard, which will be installed at the OKFB home office in Oklahoma City, will commemorate 75 years of Oklahoma Farm Bureau while highlighting the county Farm Bureaus.

The Oklahoma Farming and Ranching Foundation is offering personalized brick pavers to individuals and businesses for a \$100

donation. The pavers will provide the foundation for the courtyard. The outdoor space will also include a pillar that will contain soil from each of the 77 Oklahoma counties. The theme for the courtyard is “Bringing generations together by honoring the past and paving the way for the future.”

Ceremony attendees included President Tom Buchanan, Executive Director Monica Wilke, Executive Vice President and General Manager Gary Buckner, and the nine state board of directors.

If you would like to order a brick paver, fill out the form on the left and send to the Oklahoma Farming and Ranching Foundation. For more information about ordering brick pavers, visit www.okfarmingandranchingfoundation.org or contact Amanda Rosholt at 405-202-1463.



OKFB women donate to Tulsa Ronald McDonald House as part of Our Food Link Program

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women’s Leadership Committee donated a gift basket of snacks and gift cards to the Ronald McDonald House in Tulsa on Tuesday, March 15.

Farm Bureau women donated the items to help families who have children receiving care at local hospitals during their stay at the Tulsa Ronald McDonald house. The donation is part of the WLC’s Our Food Link activities for the year, which seeks to connect consumers with the food Oklahoma farmers and ranchers grow and raise.

“This donation puts Oklahoma Farm Bureau in front of people from across our state and connects them with where their food comes from,” said Lena Henson, OKFB WLC vice chairman. “Farmers and ranchers enjoy producing food, and this is a great opportunity to connect with our consumers while helping families during times of need.”

The donation included gift cards to Braum’s and local restaurants. A variety of snack items gave families the ability to grab food items on their way to and from

nearby hospitals.

Jean Ann Hankins, executive director of the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Tulsa, said the donation of snacks and gift cards provides foods that the house otherwise would not be able to offer to residents.

“This is something that we look forward to annually,” Hankins said. “I love the variety of it because we can use it exactly how we need it and that is to provide items for our families that other groups do not donate, such as fresh produce, milk and eggs from Braum’s and the other gift certificates that we can use.”

The OKFB WLC will make a similar donation to the Oklahoma City Ronald McDonald House for families with children receiving medical care in the Oklahoma City area.

The Ronald McDonald House Charities provide a “home away from home” for families with children receiving medical care at local hospitals, providing peace of mind as families navigate medical appointments, decisions and procedures.

Our Food Link is a year-round program that county and state Farm Bureaus across the nation use to reach consumers of all ages and backgrounds with information about today’s agriculture.



Marcia Irvin (right), OKFB WLC coordinator, and Lena Henson (middle), OKFB WLC vice chairman, present a donation of snacks and gift cards to Jean Ann Hankins, executive director of the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Tulsa.

OKFB YF&R announce winners of 2016 YF&R scholarships

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers selected ten Oklahoma high school students to receive \$1000 scholarships to study agriculture in Oklahoma.

“We are always excited to see great young student leaders who want to make an impact in agriculture,” said Josh Emerson, OKFB YF&R state chairman. “As fellow young agriculturalists, the YF&R state committee is proud to support these students as they take the next step in their agricultural education journey.”

The ten students receiving 2016 YF&R scholarships are:

- Logan Holt, Shattuck, district one

- Kade Horton, Hollis, district two
- Jaryn Frey, Kingfisher, district three
- Victoria Chapman, Manville, district four
- Riley Mussett, Idabel, district five
- Dustin Kunzel, Bluejacket, district six
- Colton Budy, Alva, district seven
- Blake Kennedy, Tecumseh, district eight
- Ethan Smith, Chandler, district nine
- Layne Kislind, Enid, at-large scholarship recipient

The ten students receiving scholarships have a wide variety of agricultural career interests and are choosing degrees spanning the agriculture spectrum,

including agribusiness, agricultural education, biosystems engineering, agriculture pre-law and agricultural communications.

Students plan to study at a variety of Oklahoma higher-education institutions, including Conners State College, Oklahoma State University, Seminole State College, and Western Oklahoma State College.

The OKFB YF&R award \$1000 scholarships each year to graduating high school seniors who plan to study agriculture at an Oklahoma institution of higher learning. An applicant’s family must be a voting member of Farm Bureau.

OKFB members advocate for rural Oklahoma in nation's capital

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members representing all nine OKFB districts took Capitol Hill last week for the organization's annual Congressional Action Tour to Washington, D.C.

The trip was an opportunity for OKFB members to share concerns and issues in agriculture with Oklahoma's Congressional delegation.

"Oklahoma's congressional leaders need to hear from our members," said Tom Buchanan, OKFB president. "This

year's trip provided another opportunity to increase Farm Bureau's presence on Capitol Hill."

Members learned about federal issues from Sen. Jim Inhofe, Sen. James Lankford, Rep. Frank Lucas, Rep. Tom Cole, Rep. Steve Russell and Rep. Markwayne Mullin during various visits to Capitol Hill. The trip also included a visit to American Farm Bureau Federation headquarters for an update on important federal issues.

The OKFB group attended a Senate Environment and Public Works subcommittee hearing featuring a testimony from Buchanan. He informed the subcommittee of the Environmental Protection Agency's impact on farmers and ranchers. Learn more about the hearing [here](#).

Members also visited George Washington's Mount Vernon, Gristmill and Distillery.



Left: OKFB members tour the American Farm Bureau Federation offices after congressional and regulatory briefings. Below: Rep. Tom Cole speaks to OKFB members about the appropriations process and more.



Above left: Rep. Frank Lucas shares with OKFB members farm bill implementation and challenges. Above right: AFBF President Zippy Duvall speaks to OKFB members during their visit.





Top left: OKFB members meet at the American Farm Bureau office for regulatory updates and briefings.
Left: OKFB members visit with Sen. Jim Inhofe during a legislative reception in D. C.
Above: Sen. James Lankford shares with OKFB members news about his latest efforts in the U.S. Senate, including the U.S. Supreme Court Nomination process, trade issues and more.



Above: OKFB President Tom Buchanan testifies before a hearing of the Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Superfund, Waste Management and Regulatory Oversight.



OKFB members visit northwest Oklahoma during 2016 Commodity Tour

OKFB members explored Oklahoma's "Red Carpet Country" around Woodward May 4-6 to learn more about the area's diverse agricultural industry and history during the 2016 OKFB Commodity Tour.

The first stop on the tour was Plymouth Valley Cellars in Fairview, Okla. Dennis and Elaine Flaming, 2006 OKFB Farm Family of the Year, raise nine varieties of grapes on 4.5 acres. OKFB members learned about the winery's production practices, water usage and pesticide application. The Flamings produce approximately two bottles of wine from each plant and sells about 6,000 bottles of wine annually.

During lunch at the Sale Barn Café in Woodward, Duane Mote spoke to members about Superior Livestock Auction. OKFB members then toured the Woodward Sale Barn. Owner Jerry Nine spoke with members about the history of the sale barn and his streamlined livestock auction process.

"Always do your best, be honest, and don't worry about it," Nine said when asked about his success with the sale barn.

The next stop on the tour was Cudd Quarter Horses in Woodward. Renee

Cudd, owner, explained the history of the ranch and her marketing techniques. Founded on the stud "Goldseeker Bars," the program is centered on the production of fast, athletic, and intelligent horses. The ranch is known nationwide for Cudd's high quality horses.

Next, members had the opportunity to learn more about Wes Sander's longhorn steers. As part of the Chain Ranch, the longhorn steers attend several parades across the U.S. The Chain Ranch includes a series of ranches in Woodward, Oklahoma; Medicine Lodge, Kansas; Sharon, Kansas; and Kiowa, Kansas.

The day ended with a tour of a farm owned by Mervin Compton, Woodward County Farm Bureau board member president. Woodward County Farm

Bureau sponsored a shrimp boil for members at Compton's farm.

Day two kicked off at CF Industries' Woodward Complex, located on 456 acres west of Woodward.

Members learned about

the production of anhydrous ammonia, urea ammonium nitrate solutions, urea liquor and diesel exhaust fluid. The annual capacity of the Woodward Complex is up to 1.325 million tons of

nitrogen products for agricultural and industrial use. During the tour of the facility, members also learned about CF Industries' transportation methods.

After lunch, a tour of the Cargill Salt Plant in Fairview, Oklahoma, offered a look into the production of salt. Members were guided through the solar evaporation process, which allows salt water captured in shallow ponds to naturally evaporate by means of the sun and wind.

Members traveled to Maddux Charolais Ranch to tour the history of farm machinery presented in 1/16-scale replicas collected by Elmer Maddux. 00402674 Members looked at more than 2,500 pieces that represented 100 years of history.

John Grunewald, president and CEO of Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma, greeted members at the Woodward Convention Center for dinner. The day ended with a group picture on the convention center's balcony.

The final day began with a tour of the Southern Plains Research Station located on 280 acres on the southwest edge of Woodward. Members learned about the quality of experimental and available pasture and range forages. A visit to prescribed burning sites allowed members to observe recent research trials.

“Always do your best, be honest, and don't worry about it.”

— Jerry Nine
Woodward Sale Barn



Plymouth Valley Cellars



Mervin Compton Farm



Wes Sander's Longhorn Steers



CF Industries



Woodward Sale Barn



Southern Plains Research Station



Maddux Charolais Ranch



Southern Plains Research Station



Mervin Compton Farm



Cudd Quarter Horses

OKFB YF&R hosts annual Golf Classic in Watonga, Okla.

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers hosted its annual Golf Classic May 6 at Roman Nose Golf Course in Watonga, Okla., raising \$7,777 for State Question 777.

The event is an annual scramble-style golf tournament that is open to all golfers. Congratulations to the BancFirst team, the winners of the 2016 YF&R Golf Classic!

To see additional photos, visit the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Flickr gallery at flickr.com/okfarmbureau.



Canton joins OKFB communications

Oklahoma Farm Bureau and Affiliated Companies is pleased to welcome Jeffrey Canton. Jeff has joined the Strategic Corporate Communications Department as the brand specialist.

Canton, a native of Washington D.C., graduated from the Art Institute of Washington with a bachelor's degree in graphic design. Canton brings a wealth of experience in design and branding having worked with several companies, such as Food Marketing Institute, The Arlington Alexandria Coalition for the Homeless, the Bridge to Freedom Foundation, and most recently Petra Industries.

"We are excited to harness Jeff's graphic design expertise as we continue to develop new marketing strategies for our insurance products as well as our various other member benefits," said

Becky Samples, OKFB vice president of strategic communications. "He brings a fresh perspective in which I am confident will drive our brand to the next level."

Canton will be responsible for layout and design of the company's marketing materials, external communication design, advertising design, and other various OKFB collateral.

"I believe that developing a brand is vital for a company's success and I'm excited to be a part of the Farm Bureau's next chapter," Canton said. "I love ideas; building them, cultivating them, and watching them come to fruition. I plan to use my skills to make creative and innovative designs that will help OKFB."

Canton now lives in Oklahoma City with his loving wife Ann and two beautiful daughters Juliana and Adalynn.



Beall promoted to director of membership



Oklahoma Farm Bureau recently promoted Kelli Beall to director of membership. In her new role, Kelli will work with the organization and membership services department to provide members with current information about services and benefits, in addition to recruiting new member benefits.

Previously, Beall served in the membership department where she had the opportunity to work closely with OKFB county secretaries assisting with membership activities in OKFB's 77 counties. Prior to that, she served in

the communications division where she handled website updates, press release distribution, and assisted in the radio studio. Beall is in her 21st year with Oklahoma Farm Bureau.

"Working with membership and the county secretaries is what makes my job so enjoyable," Beall said. "It can be hectic at times, but I try to remember that our members are the reason I am here. I owe it to them to do the best job possible."

Beall resides in Harrah, Okla., with her husband, Lonnie, and their daughter, Allison. Favorite family activities include ATV riding and camping.

Walton joins OKFB communications

Oklahoma Farm Bureau and Affiliated Companies is pleased to welcome Clarissa Walton to the Strategic Corporate Communications department as the communications specialist.

Walton, a native of Amber, Okla., graduated from Oklahoma State University with a bachelor's degree in animal science and a master's degree in agricultural communications. After writing her thesis on the organization's Oklahoma Country magazine, Walton knew the Oklahoma Farm Bureau was a perfect fit.

"I am excited to serve farmers and ranchers every day through Oklahoma Farm Bureau," Walton said. "I feel very privileged to be working with such a wonderful group of people who are passionate about Oklahoma agriculture."

Walton grew up on an Angus cattle farm in Chickasha, Okla. Her passion for the agricultural industry began with her involvement with livestock and FFA. As the daughter of an OKFB county board member, Walton learned the importance of the OKFB's mission to serve Oklahoma farmers and ranchers at an early age.

"The communication gap between farmers and consumers continues to be a major issue," Walton said. "I plan to use my skills and talents to help bridge that gap and advocate on the behalf of farmers and ranchers in Oklahoma."



Walton will oversee the production of Oklahoma Country magazine and the organization's Perspective newsletter along with assisting the communications department with various tasks.

"Clarissa is a third generation Oklahoma Farm Bureau member, and I know her passion and dedication to our organization will shine through her work," said Becky Samples, OKFB vice president of strategic communications. "She embodies the values OKFB represents and I am excited to have her on our team as we continue to serve our membership and spread awareness and education about the role farming and ranching plays in the lives of all Oklahomans and beyond."

OKFB names its 2015 Champion Award recipients

Twelve state leaders and legislators were honored March 7, 2016, with the 2015 Oklahoma Farm Bureau Champion Award for their support of agriculture and rural Oklahoma.

The award was presented to state leaders who demonstrated an exceptional commitment to protecting agriculture and rural Oklahoma in the 2015 legislative session.

"As the state's largest general farm organization, Oklahoma Farm Bureau is dedicated to preserving the livelihood of Oklahoma's farmers and ranchers," said Tom Buchanan, OKFB president. "We're honored to recognize these state leaders for their support of agriculture in 2015."

The 12 state leaders receiving the award include Attorney General Scott Pruitt; Rep. Scott Biggs, Chickasha; Rep. James Leewright, Bristow; Rep. Charles McCall, Atoka; Rep. Tom Newell, Seminole; Rep. Charles Ortega, Altus; Rep. Roger Thompson, Okemah; Sen. Don Barrington, Lawton; Sen. Brian Bingman, Sapulpa; Sen. Ron Justice, Chickasha; Sen. Mike Schulz, Altus; and Sen. Jason Smalley, Stroud.

Yates named OKFB director of field operations



The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Public Policy Division recently named Mark Yates its director of field operations.

In the new position, Yates will serve as the face of Oklahoma Farm Bureau at various community and civic organizations and events. He will work to educate urban citizens on the importance and impact of agriculture in Oklahoma.

"Oklahomans need to know the importance of agriculture in their every day lives," Yates said. "I'm excited to serve as another voice representing agriculture and Farm Bureau."

To educate urban citizens, Yates will become a fixture in larger Oklahoma cities including Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Norman, Lawton, Stillwater and more.

"Urban citizens really need to hear the perspective of farmers and ranchers," said John Collison, OKFB vice president of public policy. "Mark gives OKFB an extraordinary opportunity to join the larger, statewide conversation."

A native of Pauls Valley, Okla., Yates received a bachelor's degree in history education from East Central University. He also holds a master's degree in secondary administration.

After 11 years in education, Yates said he looks forward to traveling and representing Farm Bureau across the state.

Yates resides in Edmond, Okla., with his wife Stacy and 18-month-old daughter Londyn.

OKFB women hold second-annual safety day

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee hosted its second-annual safety day June 3 at the OKFB home office in Oklahoma City.

More than 60 students in grades 5-9 from around the state attended the one-day event, learning safe practices and habits both on the farm and off.

"Our women's committee is proud to host this event because we know these students are involved in so many activities during the summer months," said Kitty Beavers, OKFB WLC state chairman. "We know the lessons that Farm Bureau's safety staff

and our partners teach stick with our students because the kids get to actively participate in the event."

OKFB staff presented lessons on fire safety, DUI prevention, ATV safety and tractor safety. Safety staff from OG&E taught students the need to be aware of electrical lines and infrastructure, and the Oklahoma County Sheriff's office demonstrated the importance of seatbelt use with the department's rollover prevention cage.

During each session, students learned safety techniques through hands-on activities and live demonstrations.

The OKFB WLC hosts their annual safety day early in the summer in an effort to help students be safety aware during their summer activities and beyond.



Top: Students observe a vehicle rollover simulation put on by the OKC Police Department. This device simulates a 25-30 mph rollover accident and illustrates how the crash can affect the human body when seat belts are used and when seat belts are not used. Above left: Zac Swartz, OKFB safety specialist, assists with the OKFB fire safety trailer that allows students to learn to crawl out of a smoke simulated area, feeling their way around heated doors. Above middle: Students attempt to walk in a straight line wearing goggles that simulates a blood alcohol concentration of 0.17 to 0.2. Above right: Safety staff from OG&E illustrate the dangers of electricity.

Monte Tucker of Sweetwater, OK, joins board of the Oklahoma Beef Council

The Oklahoma Beef Council is pleased to announce Monte Tucker, a fourth-generation farmer and rancher from Sweetwater, Okla., has joined its board of directors representing Oklahoma Farm Bureau.

Tucker ranches full-time with his wife, Danielle, their two sons Mason and Reed, his parents and 93-year-old grandmother. His family farming and ranching operation consists of wheat, native and improved grasses, stocker cattle, replacement females, a commercial cow-calf operation with ownership from birth to rail, and a small custom feeding

operation where he sells beef direct to customers. He is a graduate of Oklahoma State University with a degree in animal science.

Tucker is active in his community and serves as president of the Roger Mills County Farm Bureau. He is currently serving his second term as a member of the state board of directors of Oklahoma Farm Bureau. He and his family are active members of the Sayre First Baptist Church.

According to Tucker, "I look forward to serving on the board of directors of the Oklahoma Beef Council. It's an honor

to represent beef producers and I take seriously the responsibility to invest Oklahoma beef checkoff dollars in an effective and judicious manner."

Tucker says his overall philosophy acknowledges the important role of agriculture in society. "As a rancher, I simply create a living for my family and a benefit to my community by converting God-given renewable natural resources into consumable products," he says. "In cowboy words, I turn sunshine, sandburs and scenery into rib-eye steaks!"



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Ag in the Classroom tours eastern Oklahoma

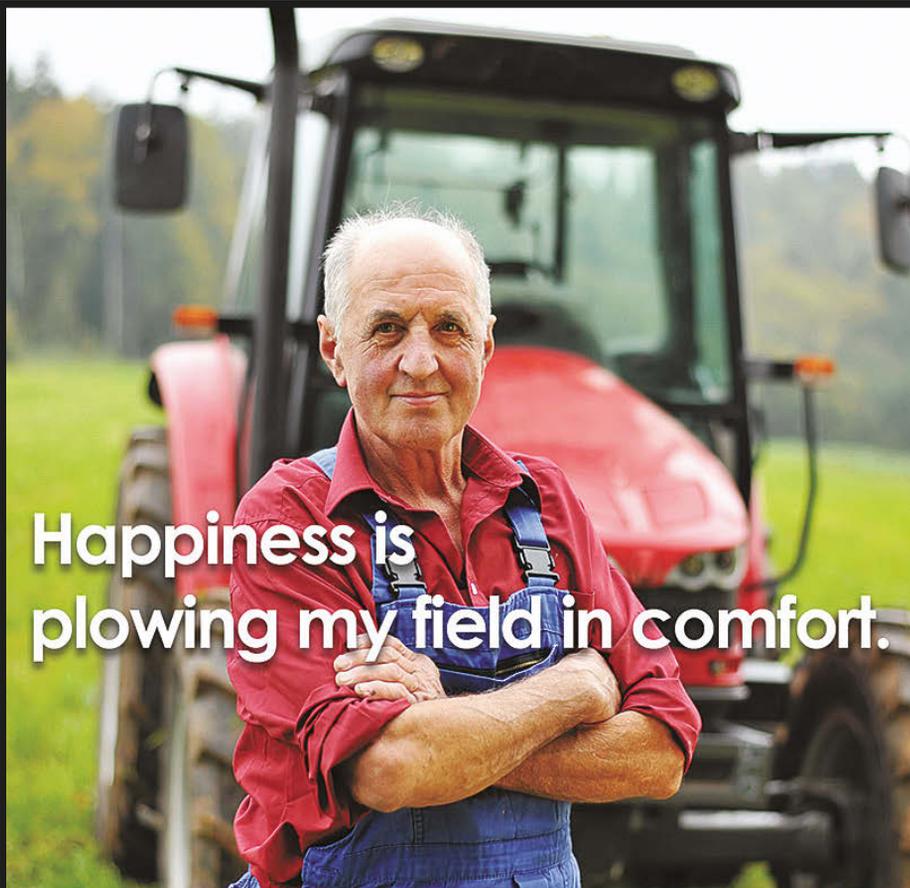
The Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom traveled to eastern Oklahoma for this year's On the Road tour, June 14-16.

On the tour, Oklahoma Farm Bureau joined teachers from around the state to learn more about agriculture and its impact in Oklahoma.

The tour began with a stop at Dismukes' Cattle Ranch in Checotah, where educators learned about the health benefits of eating beef. The group then traveled to the Greenleaf Nursery in Park Hill to tour their greenhouses. Educators learned the nursery covers 570 acres of land. The next stop included Mountain View Meats in Stilwell, which makes more than 11 million sausage/hotlinks each year. Educators learned about the sausage production process and toured the facilities. The tour continued to Spring Valley Dairy in Stilwell where teachers learned about feeding cattle and the milking process. The last stop of the day was to Maple Creek Berry Farm in Poteau where they picked blueberries and learned about Oklahoma's specialty crops.

The first two stops on the second day of the tour included Hal's Beef Jerk in Poteau, Don Sebo's Cattle Ranch and Sod Farm in Keota. Next, the group toured Spiro Mounds Museum while learning about Oklahoma history, followed by a stop at Wild Things Farm in Pocola to learn about specialty crops.

The final day of the tour continued at Cal2Homa Christmas Tree Farm in Gore where they trimmed a Christmas tree, which is an Oklahoma specialty crop. Next, they traveled to AgriTech, Inc. at Webbers Falls to learn about aerial spraying and the Oklahoma Mesonet. Then, teachers learned about agricultural GPS systems at Sloan Farms. The final stop was a mock cattle sale at the Holdenville Sale Barn.



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Farm Bureau women award AITC teacher of the year with a trip to Arizona

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee presented Amber Bales, Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom's 2016 teacher of the year, with a sponsorship for Bales to attend the national AITC conference to be held June 20-24 in Arizona.

Kitty Beavers, OKFB WLC chairman, along with Marcia Irvin, WLC coordinator, presented the award during Ag Day at the Capitol Wednesday, March 30 in Oklahoma City. The national AITC conference provides educators and program coordinators with ideas and techniques on integrating farm and food lessons into their daily lesson plans.

Bales, a third-grade teacher at Morrison Elementary with more than 19 years of teaching experience, infuses her curriculum with agricultural knowledge and lessons. After being named an ATIC teacher of the year runner-up last year, she embarked on a year of growth in hopes to claim the prize in 2016. During her year of self-improvement and discovery, Bales said she grew as a teacher.

"I learned a lot about myself, including the passion I had for agriculture, more ways to integrate agriculture and technology and was given new opportunities to share my agricultural experiences," Bales said.

Bales will speak at Oklahoma's summer AITC conference and serve as an inspiration for other teachers who use the AITC curriculum to bring agriculture inside the classroom. She will help them learn how to use lessons like sprouting bean seeds, learning why purple vegetables and fruits are so good for your health, protecting pollinators and researching buffalo facts.

The OKFB WLC is proud to support the Ag in the Classroom program on many levels, helping Oklahoma educators learn more about agriculture and how to incorporate farming and food into their daily classroom activities.

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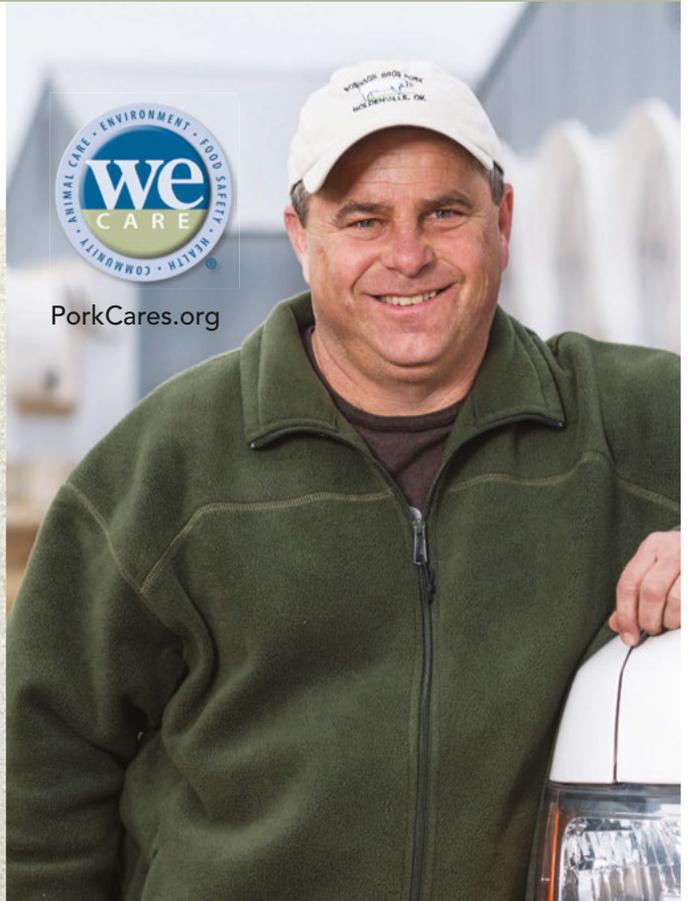
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OKFB at Oklahoma FFA Convention



OKFB Executive Director Monica Wilke presents OKFB's platinum-level title sponsorship check to Oklahoma FFA state officers during a general session of the Oklahoma State FFA Convention on April 27.



OKFB's Young Farmers & Ranchers committee hosts a booth for FFA members during the two-day convention. Students lined up for a free caricature drawing of themselves and enter to win prizes.



Wilke brings greetings on behalf of OKFB to FFA members, calling the students one of the organization's wisest investments.

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As part of the YF&R competitions, winners in the Achievement Award, Discussion Meet and Excellence in Ag areas will receive their choice of a **2017 Chevrolet Silverado** or **GMC Sierra truck**, courtesy of Chevrolet. Three national finalists in each competition will receive a **Case IH Farmall 50A tractor**, courtesy of Case IH, as well as a **\$2,500 cash prize** and **\$500 in STIHL merchandise**.

For more information about YF&R competitive events contact your state Farm Bureau or contact AFBF at yfr@fb.org or 202-406-3600.

COUNTRY GARDENING



Photo courtesy of Martien van Gaalen/Shutterstock.com.



Photo by David Hillock, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension



Photo courtesy of Martien van Gaalen/Shutterstock.com.



Low tunnels can help extend growing season

By Trisha Gedon

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service

For many people, there is not anything tastier than a vine-ripened tomato or fresh herbs picked right off the plant. Right now, gardeners across Oklahoma are enjoying fruits of their labor from their gardens.

However, once the weather cools down, it seems the fresh taste of summer goes away. And for those who have gone all winter without that fresh summer taste, it seemingly takes forever for the weather to warm up enough to start planting in the spring. Fortunately, there is a way for gardening enthusiasts to extend the taste of summer into the fall and early winter months or get a head start on spring planting.

David Hillock, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension consumer horticulturist, said low tunnels, or quick hoops, are essentially miniature greenhouses and can be used to grow vegetables, herbs, strawberries, and even cut flowers, into the winter months. They also can be used to get an early start on summer crops in the spring.

“Some vegetables to consider for low tunnels in the winter include brassica greens such as collard, kale, turnip and mustard,” Hillock said. “If you want to get an early start on your spring gardening, warm season crops such as tomato, pepper, eggplant and cucurbits can be planted earlier than with traditional gardening.”

In addition, gardeners can construct their low tunnels to cover an entire garden bed or specific parts or rows of a garden.

You can use three basic types of materials to create the hoops, including PVC, electrical conduit and wire. There are advantages and disadvantages to all three. PVC is less expensive and easier to bend into the hoops, but the material tends to break down over time from UV exposure.

Metal frames are more expensive and need to be bent into shape, but the hoops themselves anchor directly into the ground, therefore eliminating the need for additional staking materials. The least expensive material is a 9-gauge to 12-gauge

wire bent into hoops. This material is useful for creating very low tunnels for crops such as spinach or lettuce. The good thing about making your own hoops is you can make them any size. Larger hoops allow for taller plantings, such as tomatoes.

Hillock said the spacing of the hoops will depend on wind protection of the planting site, and possibly the snow load. Spacing of 5 feet to 8 feet is adequate for PVC and metal hoops.

“Once your hoops are installed, cover the row with plastic.

It comes in varying thicknesses with different light transmission qualities,” he said. “Be sure you get it tight enough to keep it from lifting in the wind. Secure the edges of the plastic with bricks or sandbags.”

Do not forget about being able to access your garden after constructing the low tunnel. Easy access is important. This also is important for easy venting on warm days.

In most cases, keeping the low tunnels warm is not an issue. The tunnel itself will provide your plants all the protection they need from the cold weather. However, gardeners can place plastic milk jugs of water in the tunnel. As the sun shines during the day, the water will heat in the jugs. Then, during the night, the heat from the water bottles will help keep the temperature warmer inside the tunnel.

Avoid letting the tunnels get too hot on sunny days. Fortunately, low tunnels are easy to ventilate by simply removing the weights holding down the plastic and pulling up the plastic a bit to allow air to flow through. If the weather is especially warm, removing the plastic all together may be in order. Just make sure to put it back in the evening.

“Extending your growing season is relatively easy and inexpensive to do,” Hillock said. “For the most part, the materials are reusable from year to year. For those who want the fresh taste of a bountiful summer garden, build a simple low tunnel and you can start gardening earlier in the season and later into the year. Depending on Oklahoma’s weather, you may be able to put fresh produce on your Thanksgiving table.”

““ Extending your growing season is relatively easy and inexpensive to do.

— David Hillock

OSU Cooperative Extension
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COUNTRY CLASSIFIEDS

Each OKFB member family is limited to one free classified ad per issue. No call-in ads will be accepted. The length of the ad cannot exceed the number of lines on this form. Ads run one time. We reserve the right not to publish submitted ads. Return to Country Classifieds, 2501 N. Stiles, Oklahoma City, OK 73105.

All information must be completed.

Name _____

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Address _____

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Phone _____

Please type or print legibly.

Deadline for the next issue is Aug. 31, 2016.



MISCELLANEOUS

For sale: Cable Tool Drill Rig with three sets of tools. Call 918-327-0860.

For sale: standing granddaughter striking clock. Over 50 years old. Works. Make offer. Call 918-762-3120.

Pocket constitution \$4 PPD. 36" Shofar \$105. Discount postage stamps. 405-380-2438.

Crockery for sale: 10-gal. pickle "barrel," 3-gal. butter churn, 1-gal container, lidded pitcher. Call Bill at 918-762-9970.

Stanley Home Products - Fuller Brush: Full line of cleaning and personal items. Brooms, mops, brushes, degreasers, germicides, lotions, hair brushes, and many others. If interested, please call 580-497-2249.

Wynn Tree Trimming. Tree trimming, tree removal, stump removal. Free estimates. Serving Kay County since 1980. Call 580-363-7922 or 580-670-1277.

Solid wood computer desk \$15.00. Almond marble bath tub, make offer. 405-598-1202.

AKC Registered English Bulldog pups. Should be ready in May for pickup. Call Nancy: 918-273-1027.

Hay for sale. 4x5 net wrap mixed grass. Good quality. Call Chad 918-647-7932. \$30.00 per bale. Delivery available.

For sale: grass hay. Large round bales. 580-234-3027.

Ionics Total House Water Conditioner, completely automatic salt system. \$995.00 Call 918-687-7347.

8MM Film & Tape, VHS Slides Transferred to DVD. 30 years experience. Call Alan at 405-275-6884.

WANTED

2 lots for sale at Floral Haven Lakeview addition 113-A Lot 3-4. Normally sell at \$2,700 will take \$800 each. Call 918-373-1232.

For rent: DWMH on 5 acres. 2 bed/2 bath. Cashion School and gas. Own water. CEC electric. Call 405-341-8701 for more info.

Log home - 10 acres, 3 bedrooms, office, 2 baths. 2700 square feet. Large shop, hay barn, 24 ft. above ground pool. Ft. Cobb, OK. \$225,000. Call 405-643-2300.

Habor Point off I-40 Exit 255 behind KOA Camp Ground, Lot 2. 29,511 square feet. 0.6775 acres. \$15,000.00. Call 918-721-8384.

5 ac., 3300 square feet, 2 1/2 Bath, 3 or 4 BDR. Full basement, shop or garage. New roof, new flooring. Henryetta, OK. 918-728-1381.

For sale by owner. 300+ acre cattle ranch, Southeastern Oklahoma. Serious buyers only. Call 580-513-7158.

REAL ESTATE

WANTED: remote acreage with woods, rocks, creek, pond, or river. Prefer Osage, Washington or Nowata County. 5 to 20 acres with road access. Call 918-645-1748.

WANTED: tractors, dead or alive. 1935-2016 models, 2 or 4WD. Any brand. 405-641-7728.

WANTED: Railroad locks, keys, lanterns, signs, badges and miscellaneous - especially Oklahoma railroads. 580-399-8866.

WANTED: Polytech or Norinco or any other preban AK-47 made in China. 918-688-6393.

WANTED: Long-time collector will pay more for your gold and silver coins. 405-519-0934.

Beef for Backpacks

The Beef for Backpacks and Pork for Packs programs use donated cattle and hogs to produce nutritious beef and pork sticks for the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma and the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma's Food for Kids program.

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.

Pork for Packs

Oklahoma's RIGHT to Farm



State Question 777, Oklahoma's Right to Farm, is a state constitutional amendment to protect Oklahoma's family farmers and ranchers from unreasonable government interference and attacks by out-of-state special interests. The amendment will appear on the Nov. 8, 2016, general election ballot. If approved by voters, farmers and ranchers will have additional constitutional protections they currently lack and need. For more information about the amendment, visit www.OklahomaRightToFarm.com.

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Watermelon Rind Pickles

From the kitchen of: Dave Wooley, featured on the National Watermelon Promotion Board website

Ingredients

4 cups water
1 tablespoon coarse salt
2 cups peeled watermelon rind (leave a thin layer of pink), cut into 1 x 1/2 x 2 inch pieces
3/4 cups granulated sugar
1 each of all spice berries
1/2 cup cider vinegar
4 peppercorns
4 whole cloves
1/2 teaspoon pickling spice
1 long slice of fresh ginger root
1/4 teaspoon celery seeds

Preparation/Cooking

In large pot, bring water and salt to boil over medium high heat. Add rind pieces and boil until tender, about 5 minutes. Strain. Transfer rinds to a large metal bowl.

In saucepan, combine sugar, cider vinegar, peppercorns, cloves, pickling spice and ginger root. Bring to a boil over medium high heat, stirring until sugar dissolves. Simmer for 15 minutes, until slightly reduced.

Pour over watermelon rinds in bowl. Place plate over top to keep rinds submerged in liquid. Cover and refrigerate for one day. Transfer to a glass jar and keep sealed in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.



For more great ways recipes like Watermelon Jerky, Watermelon Soda Floats, and Ancient Grain Salad, visit www.watermelon.org/Recipes.

If you are a Farm Bureau member and want to see your recipes featured in *Oklahoma Country*, send a full list of ingredients along with preparation and cooking instructions to Clarissa.Walton@okfb.org or mail a hard copy to Oklahoma Country Recipes, 2501 N. Stiles Ave., Oklahoma City, OK 73105.

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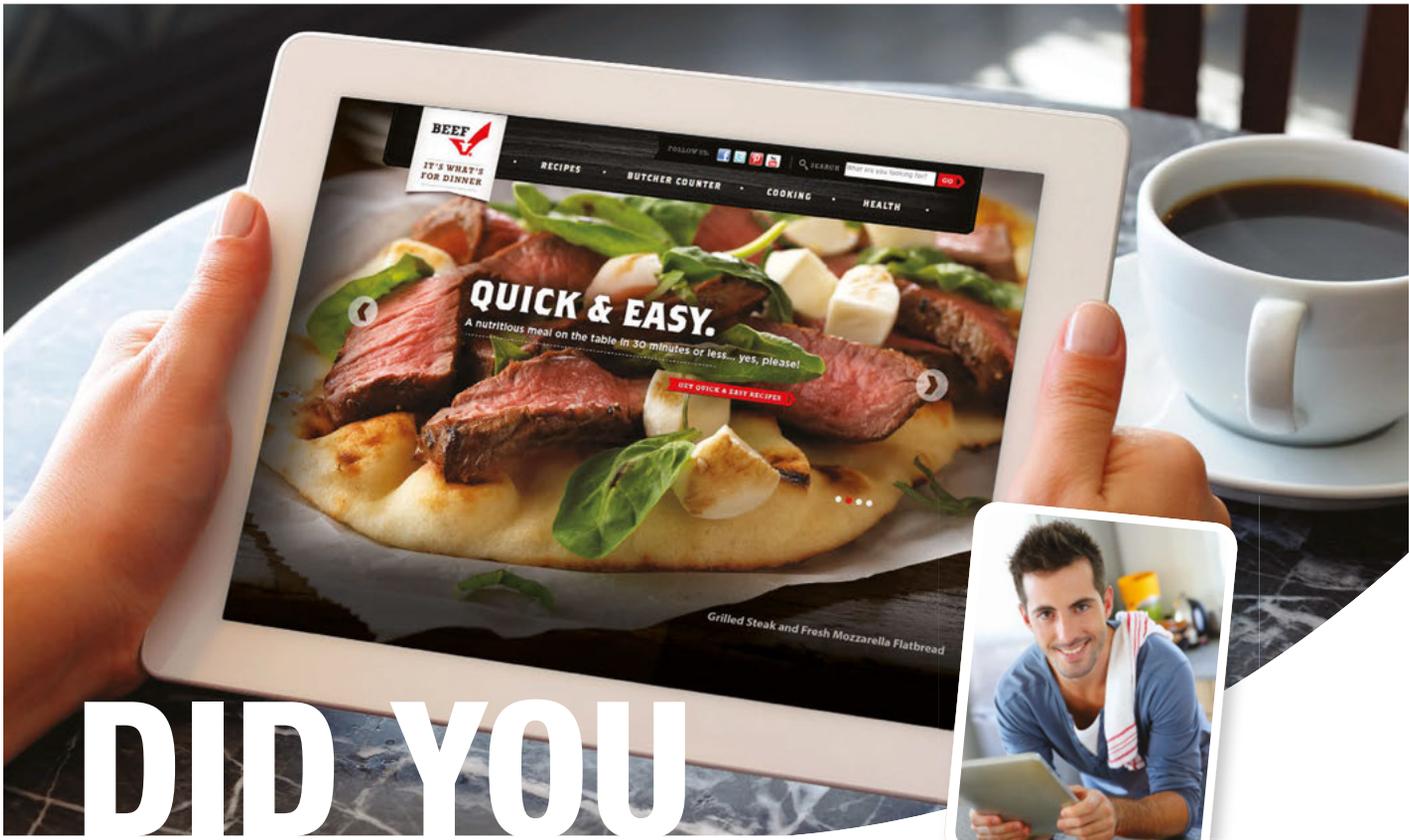
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