Field Notes

Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture E-Newsletter

E-Field Notes
March 2017

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With gardening season now in full swing, **David Redhage responds to the final book of the late "contrary farmer," Gene Logsdon** - a **letter to young farmers** on "new garden farms."

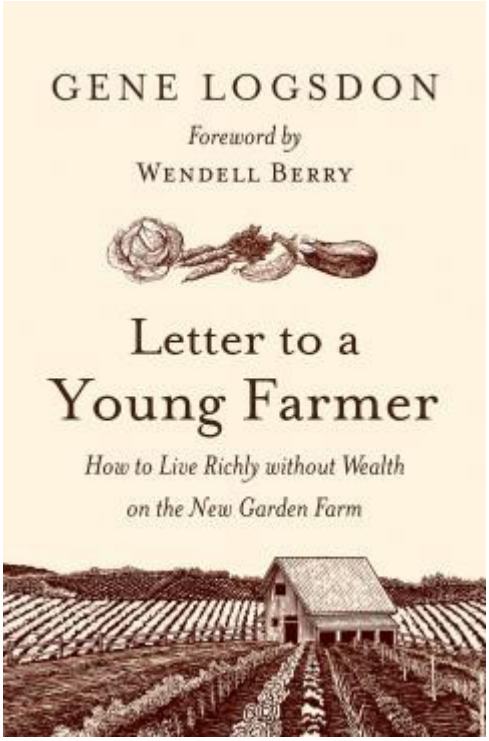
In the same vein, we hope a look back over the many **heirloom vegetable variety trial reports** we've published may be helpful.

Before many pollinator plants can blossom, their habitats must literally burst into flame - which is why the Kerr Center recently conducted a **prescribed burn on native prairie**.

Every year, cow-calf operators have to decide **which heifers to keep as replacements**. It's a challenging management task - and the Kerr Center offers a report to assist in it.

As always, **if you value our work, please consider supporting it**!

President's Note: A New Book Entitled *Letter to a Young Farmer*



There are many books published about sustainable agriculture. One author I have always enjoyed reading is Gene Logsdon. I have most of his books. He has written on many subjects related to agricultural production.

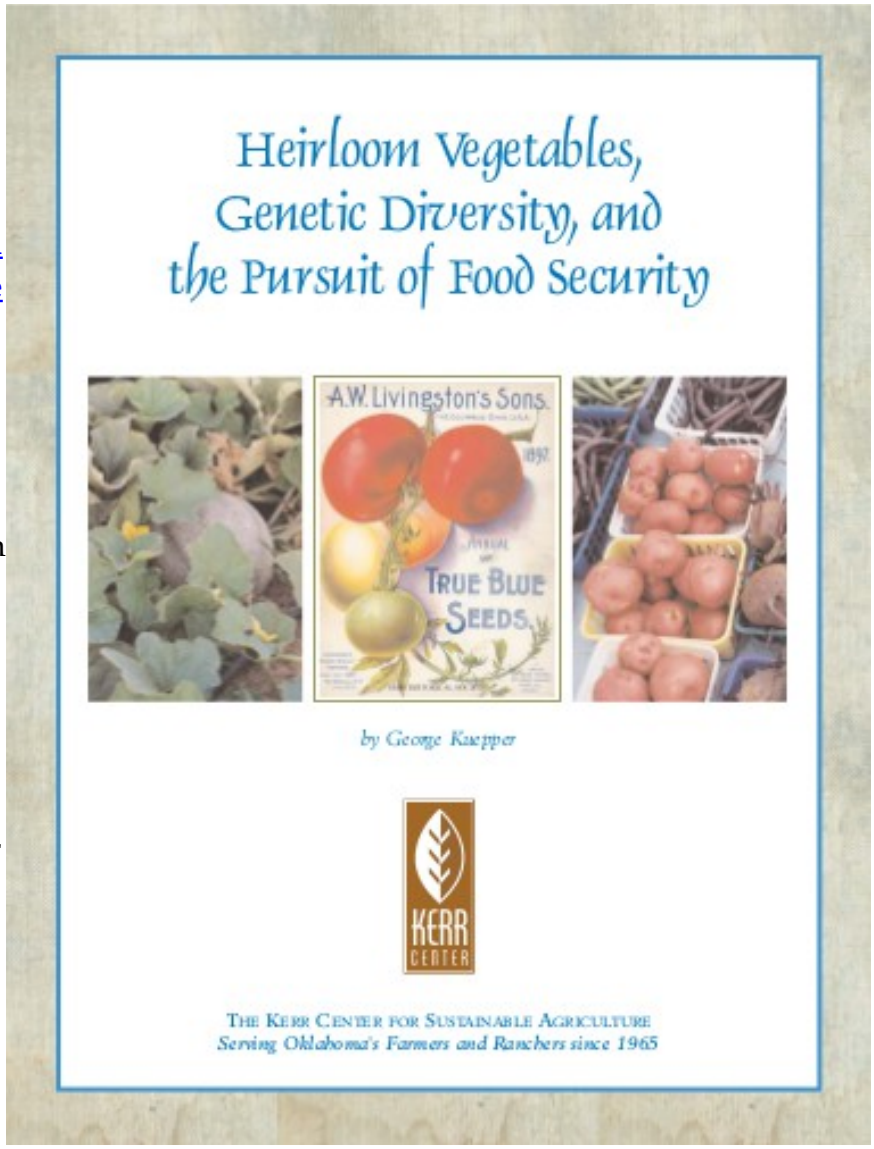
I think one reason I have enjoyed his writing is because I find myself agreeing with him on some points and not agreeing on others. While this may sound contradictory, understand that authors who write this way make you think. I find myself mentally debating why I agree and disagree with different points. Call it mental gymnastics.

Gene Logsdon wrote a **blog** for several years. I have it bookmarked on my computer. I hadn't looked at it for a while, and recently I learned that Gene died in 2016, a few weeks after finishing his last book.

The book, published in February 2017, is titled ***Letter to a Young Farmer***. It is a collection of essays about different aspects of agriculture from Gene's contrary farmer point of view. I particularly enjoyed Chapter Five, on "The Barns at the Center of the Garden Farm Universe." This chapter I agree with.

Continue reading....

Heirloom Variety Trials



Starting in 2008, the Kerr Center conducted **trials of heirloom varieties of vegetables and sorghum**. Every trial's results were recorded and published, and **every heirloom variety trial report is available free from the Kerr Center website**.

Heirloom varieties are sometimes considered "old-fashioned." They are non-hybrid cultivars, meaning their seed can be saved and replanted to grow plants similar to the parents.

Some are developed in specific locations, and are well adapted to specific climates. Some have greater disease resistance and/or better flavor, and they often offer a greater variety of colors and shapes.

The Kerr Center's **organic farming library** includes an overview of **heirloom varieties' importance for sustainable agriculture**.

Native Prairie Prescribed Burn

March fires bring April flowers - if the rains are right! This spring the Kerr Center conducted a **prescribed burn of an eight-acre native prairie**, which is part of a larger 40 acre pasture. We burn this prairie every two to three years.

We are attempting to **restore the prairie**, which had been hayed and grazed yearly under the previous owner. The site is used for **grazing and as pollinator habitat**. We have **collected native flower seed** on the location.

The **first year or two after burning, the wildflowers put on a show**, and the prairie gradually reverts back to being dominated by grass. If we have a few rains, the spring wildflowers should be amazing from mid-April through summer. We plan on posting pictures as it happens!

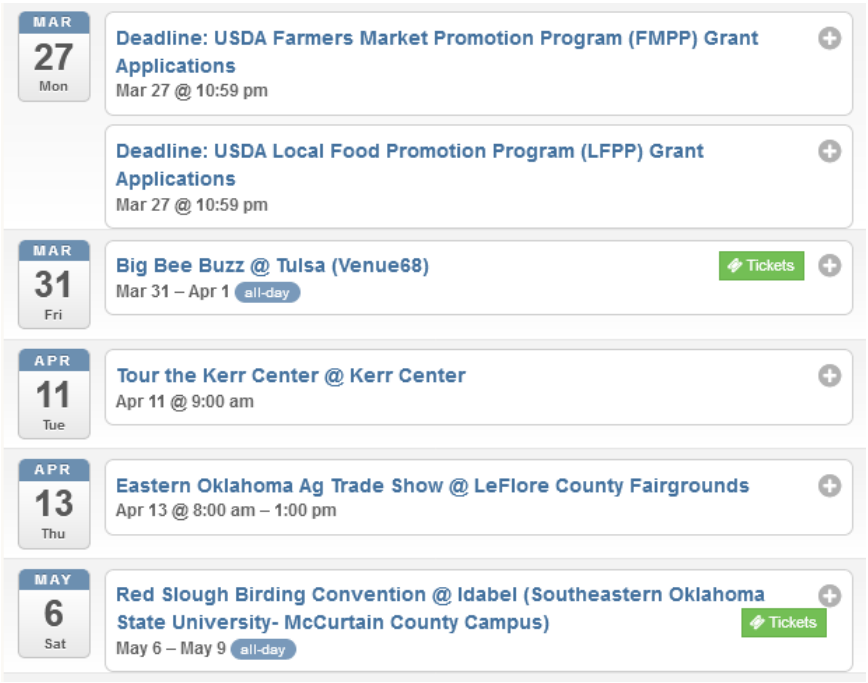
Heifer Management

Raising enough **quality replacement heifers** from within the herd can be one of the most challenging aspects of a cow-calf operation.

A Kerr Center report, "**Heifer Management**," covers heifer selection and nutrition, early puberty, target weight concept, proper feeding, breeding, calving difficulty, and bull selection.

Like all other publications in the Kerr Center's **livestock library**, "Heifer Management" is **available free online**.

Early Spring Events: Big Bee Buzz, Eastern OK Ag Trade Show



The Northeast Oklahoma Beekeepers Association's annual **Big Bee Buzz** (Mar. 31 - Tulsa) is just around the corner, and the **Eastern Oklahoma Ag Trade Show** (Apr. 13 - Poteau) is coming up quickly.

The Kerr Center's online **events calendar** provides full details on these and many other upcoming sustainable agriculture events around the state and region. It also serves as a reminder for the dates of **monthly Kerr Center tours**, which run all year round, every second Tuesday by appointment.

Don't forget that you can also use our online calendar to **keep yourself and your friends up to date** on these and other upcoming events, including our tours:
- **Subscribe to our feed** and receive **updates to your personal calendar** (Outlook, Google+, etc.) as they are made.
- **Share events on the calendar** via a number of **different social media sites**, including Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest.

Support the Kerr Center

Since 1965 the Kerr Center has been reaching out to folks in Oklahoma and beyond. Today, the Friends of the Kerr Center help us continue this vital work! If you enjoy reading this newsletter or visiting our website, please consider making a gift to the Kerr Center today!

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