KERR CENTER

Field Notes

Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture Vol. 32, #2 • Summer 2006

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Summer Events Highlight New Opportunities for Farmers and Ranchers

Two conferences and two field days this summer will highlight new opportunities for farmers and ranchers.

First up will be a field day hosted by Thad Doye. Doye farms near Lawton and will show visitors how he is turning the sunflowers he grows into biodiesel, right on the farm (see p. 4).

The Oklahoma Grazing Lands Conservation Association will host its annual *"Grazing Lands Dollar$ and Sense"* conference, Friday and Saturday, Aug. 11 and 12, at the Biltmore Hotel in Oklahoma City. The focus will be on grassfed beef and lambs.

Experts will share information on genetics, forage systems, marketing and grazing management. Teddy Gentry, of the country group *Alabama*, who raises grassfed beef on his Bent Tree Farm, will speak Friday evening (see p. 16).

On Friday, August 25, *Future Farms 2006: Farm to Table* will be held at the Clarion Conference Center in Oklahoma City. Speakers, both local and nationally known, will share their experiences selling to restaurants, schools, colleges and other institutions. Speakers will include (among others) Jim Horne of the Kerr Center, Glyen Holmes of the New North Florida Cooperative, Amish farmer David Kline, local food advocate Kamyar Enshayan, SYSCO Foods vice-president Craig Watson, as well as Oklahoma farmers, chefs and food service managers. Fit Kids Coalition chairman Stan Hupfeld is the lunch speaker (see p. 7).

As summer begins to wind down, on Sunday, September 10, our last field day of the season will be held on the organic farm of Vicki and Joe Townsend near Atoka. The Townsends' farm has been certified organic by the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry. Visitors will learn how the Townsends grow and market their crops (see p. 19).

The Kerr Center invites you to attend one of these events (presented in partnership with USDA's Risk Management Agency) and explore new production and marketing opportunities in Oklahoma!

The Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture offers progressive leadership and educational programs to all those interested in making farming and ranching environmentally friendly, socially equitable, and economically viable over the long term.

The Kerr Center is a non-profit foundation located on 4,000 acres near the southeastern Oklahoma town of Poteau. It was established in 1985.

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- Rural Development and Public Policy
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Oklahoma Creates a Farm-to-School Program

The four-year effort to establish a statewide farm-to-school program in Oklahoma reached fruition on June 7 when Governor Brad Henry signed legislation creating the Oklahoma Farm-to-School program.

Two initial bills supporting farm-to-school efforts in Oklahoma passed in the Oklahoma legislature in March. Senate Bill 1515, authored by Sen. Daisy Lawler, D-Comanche, passed unanimously March 2. House Bill 2655, authored by Rep. Susan Winchester, R-Chickasha, passed 99-1 on March 6.

The bills were consolidated into HB 2655 which was passed by the Oklahoma House on May 22 and the Oklahoma Senate on May 25, in both cases, unanimously.

One goal of farm-to-school programs is to provide, fresh, high-quality, locally-grown fruits and vegetables to school cafeterias.

Another is to get kids excited about healthy eating through nutrition lessons coordinated with the fresh fruits and vegetables served for lunch. Other effective farm-to-school activities include school gardens, Ag-in-the-Classroom activities, farm visits, and cooking classes.

Researchers have found that farm-to-school programs improve children's nutrition.

The legislation creates a farm-to-school program within the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture Food and Forestry. The program director's job would be to develop the program statewide by providing information and assistance to both farmers and school food service directors. The director would also advise state agencies on what is needed to make the program a success.

"This a win-win bill for helping our kids with better health and nutrition and for rural economic development," said Sen. Lawler. "Our initial pilot program was a resounding success and surveys of school districts throughout the state tell us they're very enthusiastic about this concept."

"Our students' diets could be drastically improved adding fresh fruits and vegetables into our school menus. Lack of healthy fruits and vegetables in a child's daily diet contributes to the massive youth obesity and juvenile diabetes epidemics in our state," said Rep. Winchester.

> "This a win-win bill for helping our kids with better health and nutrition and for rural economic development,"
>
> Senator Daisy Lawler, D-Comanche

The legislation was actively supported by the Oklahoma Fit Kids Coalition and the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy.

The Fit Kids Coalition is a grassroots association of more than 90 organizations. The organization supports efforts to fight childhood obesity in Oklahoma. The coalition has also lobbied successfully for school vending machine reform, Healthy Schools committees and more hours of physical education in the schools.

For more information on farm-to-school, visit the Kerr Center website at www.kerrcenter.com.

Students Examine Links Between Farm-to-School Program and Health

This year's Kerr Center essay contest directed the literary efforts of Oklahoma high school juniors and seniors to the topic, "Get Healthy with Oklahoma Farm-to-School."

The contest drew 113 entries from students in schools around the state. From that pool of contestants, an independent panel of judges selected four winners, to whom the Kerr Center awarded a total of $1,750 in cash prizes.

Excerpts from the winning essays are presented below. For the full text of all winning essays, see www.kerrcenter.com.

Drew Reese

FIRST PLACE

Farm-to-School

Connecting what we grow and what we eat is something Farm-to-School helps to do. It fills the gap between our harvest and our meals.

Kids have fun with this project and are pleased to participate. This process helps children better relate to how their food choices affect their own health, their family, and the local farmer.

The kids develop a better understanding of where and how their food is grown, while they help sustain the shrinking population of small farms. The program hopes to expand, to include more farmers, more Oklahoma-grown produce and more schools.

A statewide Farm-to-School program would do much for the future health of children and to revitalize Oklahoma's struggling rural communities.

Drew Reese, Nardin

Meghan Gose

FIRST RUNNER UP

Farm Fresh for Kids' Health

My grandparents grew up in an era where much of the food they ate was fresh from the farm. As a result the nutritional value of their food was much higher than the processed foods most kids eat today and the overall health of the people of their day was better.

The problem with the processed foods is that the milling process they go through removes virtually everything that's good for you, leaving only empty calories. Fresh foods still have the vitamins and minerals, which are so essential to growth and development in the human body.

The idea brought forth by the Farm-to-School Program to put produce directly from local farms onto local school lunch lines could assist greatly in changing the trend from the processed fast foods that are so prevalent on the menus of school lunchrooms today and damaging to children's health.

Meghan Gose, Thomas

Jessica Warren

HONORABLE MENTION

Get Healthy with Oklahoma Farm-to-School

The Farm-to-School program could be extremely beneficial to Oklahoma.

Most importantly, it would teach children about nutrition and provide them with an opportunity to eat healthier foods, which would help to slow down the rapidly rising obesity rates.

The Farm-to-School program would also teach kids about where the fresh fruits and vegetables that they are getting in school come from, and it would teach them about agriculture and how it affects Oklahoma's economy.

This program would be an amazing opportunity for Oklahomans. We just need to reach out and accept all of the good it can do for us.

Jessica Warren, Lamont

Brady Brewer

HONORABLE MENTION

Get Healthy with Oklahoma Farm-to-School

The old cliche that the children of today are the future of tomorrow is a perfect example of why Oklahoma public schools need the Farm-to-School program. This program has immense value and can help solve a variety of problems that plague today's society.

With obesity rates rising among school aged children, along with the sputtering economy in rural areas, this program could be a leap in the right direction for public schools, farmers, and the children who will benefit from the Farm-to-School program.

With the problem of the rising obesity rate among children and the fact that 85% of food choices in school vending machines are of poor nutritional value, the fact that the food from the program has high nutritional value is a major incentive for institutions to buy from Farm-to-School.

A person can easily see why Oklahoma and its public institutions need the Farm-to-School program. It can fight obesity in what is a very unhealthy world. It can fuel the economy, helping the small farmer become more profitable, also making the small rural community a more attractive place to raise a family.

Brady Brewer, Hunter

Homegrown Horsepower: Thad Doye's Sunflower Biodiesel

–Wylie Harris

Twenty-one years ago, Thad Doye grew a crop of sunflower seeds, pressed the oil out of them, and used it to run a Massey 65 tractor. That was for a science fair project, and it won him the district prize, as well as a scholarship to Cameron University.

Now, says the Cotton County farmer, Conservationist of the Year, and Farm Bureau field representative, high fuel prices have made the principles behind his high-school science project look like a route to greater economic sustainability.

With help from a Kerr Center Producer Grant, Thad Doye is exploring that route by growing his own fuel on the farm. For those interested in learning more, Doye is hosting a sunflower biofuels workshop, near Lawton on August 3rd.

"I'm gaining ground. I'm feeling good," says Doye. "I'm feeling better the higher fuel goes."

Thad Doye and his biodiesel refinery.

Sunflower Power

Doye must be feeling pretty good right about now. Since 2002, farm fuel costs have gone up by nearly half – a steeper increase than any other agricultural input except the interest rate on loans.

By making fuel from the seeds of sunflowers he grows himself, Thad Doye is saving pennies on every gallon.

However, his sunflower crop is doing much more for Doye's farm than just providing cheaper fuel for the tank. For one thing, the sunflowers' deep taproots help to break up the plow pan. "It plows the ground in a minimal till situation," Doye explains.

That means fewer passes across the field, so that the sunflowers are cutting his fuel consumption as well as providing a less expensive source of it. "We're getting more and more selective with how often we fire up," he says.

Doye also relies on the sunflowers as a break in his wheat rotation, to interrupt the cycle of diseases and pests in the wheat crop.

Sunflowers' drought tolerance is another major point in their favor. Doye brought in last year's crop – the first he's grown for fuel – at 1,600 pounds to the acre, on just 2 inches of rain, all of which fell within a week of planting.

"I can't grow soybeans," the country's most common biodiesel crop, he says. "It's too hot and dry." The sunflowers' performance in the face of drought stands out even more sharply in a year where limited moisture has handed the state its worst wheat crop in fifty years.

With his cattle grazing 800 acres of wheat that didn't make, Doye comments, "There's sixty years of breeding in that herd" – a legacy he'd hate to lose to drought. Here again, it's sunflowers to the rescue: "You can feed the meal to the cows as an alternate source of supplemental protein." he says, "There's no waste."

"I didn't know if they'd eat it," he chuckles. "It has a smell all its own. They

kind of turned up their noses at first, but it disappeared out of the trough."

From Flower to Fuel

Doye plants sunflower seeds at the rate of 3 to 4 pounds an acre, as soon as the soil has warmed to fifty degrees Fahrenheit. "I'm planting with a CrustBuster hoe drill," he says. "You can't get any trash through 'em, but it's easy to operate."

Because sunflowers won't grow well in grass, he uses herbicides such as Treflan and Prowl. For last year's 1,600 pound per acre crop, Doye used no nitrogen fertilizer.

For harvesting, Doye uses an 'L' Gleaner combine with milo guards. With rows spaced at 20 inches, he found that the sunflower heads grew large enough that they bound up in the combine, so he's settled on 10 inch row spacing, trading smaller heads for smoother harvesting.

Once harvested, the seeds must be pressed to extract the oil. Doye's press is of Chinese manufacture, purchased through a supplier in Kansas for about $10,000.

He's still working the kinks out of the process of pressing last year's seeds. "It'll work on this Chinese press a while, then plug it up. You have to run water through with the seed. It binds in the hulls and disappears from the oil."

What's left after the oil is pressed out of the seed is the meal that Doye feeds to his calves. The oil itself can then be refined into biodiesel.

The refining process involves combining the sunflower oil with a mixture of methanol and sodium hydroxide. Glycerin is produced as a byproduct, and can be made into soap, or a variety of other end products.

Doye demonstrates the seed press.

It's possible to refine vegetable oil into biodiesel with little more in the way of equipment than a blender and a quart jar. Doye uses a commercial refinery that fits into a corner of his garage. He bought it, with the help of a farm diversification grant from the Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, for $4,500 from a company in Midland, Texas.

"The reason I bought the refinery is that it has a methanol recovery system," Doye explains. His source of methanol is HEET, a fuel additive that is sold at most gas stations and automotive suppliers for $6 or $7 a gallon. Recovering the methanol from the refined oil essentially halves that input cost.

The cost of the sodium hydroxide is minor; five pounds sell for $17, and a single run of the refinery uses less than half a pound.

Doye's refinery is capable of producing 180 gallons of biodiesel per day. It has dual mixing tanks, so that by adding another $50 pump, he could double that capacity.

So far, he's made a successful test refining run using 90 gallons of used peanut oil from a catfish restaurant in Madill. "I'm still learning every day I do something," he says.

Saving Dollars on Inputs – and Making Energy Sense?

At a gas station just up the road from the Doyes' home, one pump dispenses a blend of 20% biodiesel (made from soybeans, not sunflowers) for $2.70 a gallon. With celebrities like Willie Nelson and Morgan Freeman opening biodiesel plants in Oklahoma and elsewhere, it and other biofuels appear to be poised on the brink of a boom.

However, Thad Doye is thinking closer to home with his sunflower biodiesel project – growing fuel for his own farm, not the nation's freeways.

August 3rd Workshop

At the workshop, visitors will be able to see an engine running on sunflower biodiesel, and look over Doye's numbers on the economics of producing and using his own fuel.

The workshop will be held rain or shine at the Hulen Church, beginning with a hamburger supper at 6 p.m. To reach the site from Highway 7 east of Lawton, take Highway 65 south for six miles, and look for the church on the east side near a bend in the road.

To reserve a hamburger, call the Kerr Center at 918.647.9123 or Oklahoma Farm Bureau at 405. 523. 2470 or Thad Doye at 580.248.0982, by Aug. 2.

"I'm big on trying to be self-sufficient," he says.

He estimates that his harvest from last year's 40 acres of sunflowers will yield about 2,500 gallons of oil. That amount of biodiesel, he says, "would get us through the summer."

With the concept proven, Doye is looking at putting a larger share of his acreage into energy crops. "I got enough seed to plant 100 acres this year, and irrigate with the fuel," he says.

By Doye's calculations, making his own fuel improves his bottom line. But does it make his farm more truly self sufficient in its energy needs? Or, put another way, can a single farm raise, press, and refine an oilseed crop using less energy than the fuel produced would contain?

Some studies say yes, asserting that biofuels contain several times more energy than that required to produce them. Others yield exactly the opposite answer – that biofuels, and sunflower biodiesel in particular, take more energy to produce than they generate.

Half a century ago, farm power had legs instead of wheels, and farms supplied most of their own energy needs, feeding their draft animals from about 20% of their acreage, on average.

Since the era of animal power, farms' energy use has expanded greatly, and tracking it has gotten more complicated.

One of the most detailed accountings of farm energy production and use was conducted over ten years at the Land Institute's Sunshine Farm in eastern Kansas. The Sunshine Farm was able to produce all the energy required for its field operations on about a quarter of its acreage. However, it only generated about 40% of its total energy needs.

No one has run that kind of detailed energy calculations for Thad Doye's farm, but the integrated aspects of his operation – minimal tillage, no irrigation or fertilizer, and the use of the sunflower meal as feed for livestock – make it potentially sustainable in energetic as well as economic terms.

Making It Work

With all those advantages, Doye is puzzled that the number of neighboring farmers growing sunflowers as a fuel crop isn't increasing as quickly as the portion of his own acreage devoted to the crop.

"It's old technology. The first diesel engine ran on vegetable oil." In technical terms, then, says Doye, "There's no reason it won't work." At the time of his high-school project, petroleum fuels were simply too cheap for growing and refining one's own fuel to be economical.

With prices climbing at the pump, Doye believes that that economic barrier is rapidly disappearing, freeing farmers to save money by making their own biofuels. A combined federal and state income tax credit of $1.20 per gallon of pure biodiesel produced, he says, makes the numbers look even more promising.

Whatever the economic potential of biofuel refining, a much greater share of its profits stays in farmers' pockets when they own the plant cooperatively, rather than selling commodity oilseeds to a privately-owned facility, according to a study by the Institute for Local Self-Reliance.

That finding matches Doye's own ruminations about the future of his sunflower crop. "If four or five guys would go together and buy their own machinery, be making their own fuel," Doye speculates, the economics of sunflower biodiesel could be even more favorable.

Still, Doye says, as a Farm Bureau field representative, ""I go to 13 different county meetings, and they're all, 'If it works….'"

According to Doye, the way to make farm-grown fuels work is to expose as many people as possible to the concept, and to the process of making them. That kind of broader exposure is precisely the point of the August 3rd field day.

"If enough people do this," he jokes wistfully, "then oil will go back down – and we won't have to mess with this stuff anymore."

Future Farms 2006:
FARM to TABLE

It's time again for Future Farms, the Kerr Center's biennial conference. The theme for 2006 is "Farm to Table."

The conference will bring together an impressive group of speakers who have experience fostering sales of locally-grown food to restaurants, schools, and institutions such as colleges. *Future Farms 2006* is scheduled for August 25, from 8:30-4:15 at the Clarion Conference Center in Oklahoma City. Early registration, by Aug. 21, is just $25.

The speakers' lineup includes farmers, chefs, local food and children's health advocates and food service/industry representatives from Oklahoma and around the nation.

Below are detailed just of a few of the speakers and their projects. For more information on speakers go online to www.kerrcenter.com.

Kamyar Enshayan, Director,
University of Northern Iowa Local Foods Project

In 1997, the University of Northern Iowa's Local Food Project began working with three institutional food buyers to help them find ways to make more of their food purchases from local farms and processors. By 2003, fifteen buyers were involved, and had spent a total of over $1 million on local foods.

In 2003, the Project launched a "Buy Fresh, Buy Local," campaign, in cooperation with the Practical Farmers of Iowa and the Food Routes Network. From 2003 to 2004, the number of local buyers grew from 15 to 23, and the total value of local food purchased in one year increased by more than double, from $225,000 to to $465,000.

The Local Food Project initially focused on Black Hawk County and the seven neighboring counties. Since the beginning of the "Buy Fresh, Buy Local," campaign, it has expanded its efforts into an additional seven counties elsewhere in Iowa.

Stan Hupfeld, CEO, Integris Health and Chairman,
Oklahoma Fit Kids Coalition

Integris Health took the lead in establishing the Oklahoma Fit Kids Coalition, a grassroots organization that seeks to improve the health and well-being of all Oklahoma kids.

With over 90 member organizations, including physicians' associations, insurance companies, school districts, government agencies, universities, and restaurant chains, the Fit Kids Coalition scored major legislative victories in 2005. The group helped to win passage of laws establishing school health and fitness advisory committees, limiting the sale of unhealthy foods in vending machines in public schools, and requiring mandatory physical fitness education in schools. In 2006, the Fit Kids Coalition advocated for the recently passed legislation establishing the Oklahoma Farm-to-School Program as well as additional resources for the Healthy and Fit Schools committees.

Glyen Holmes and Vonda Richardson,
New North Florida Farmers' Cooperative

In 1995, a group of limited-resource small farmers in the Florida panhandle formed a cooperative with the idea of marketing fresh local produce year-round to area school districts. In its first year, the New North Florida Farmers' Co-op delivered collard greens to a single nearby school district.

Since then, they have expanded the number of school districts that they supply, including some in neighboring Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. They have also diversified their produce offerings to include sweet potatoes, Southern peas, muscadine grapes, strawberries, blackberries and watermelons.

David Kline, dairyman and author of ***Great Possessions: An Amish Farmers' Journal***

David Kline and his family run a 40-cow grass-based, organic dairy near Mt. Hope, Ohio. Kline is a naturalist and writer as well as a farmer, having published two books: *Great Possessions: An Amish Farmer's Journal*, and *Scratching the Woodchuck: Nature on an Amish Farm.*

In addition to the books, Kline's articles and essays have appeared in such publications as *National Wildlife* and *Geo.* He is also an editor and publisher of *Farming* magazine, a quarterly journal that features "practical articles that strive to educate farmers about ways to increase profitability, about how a farmer uses ecologically sound farming practices and how farmers think creatively about farming in the 21st century," and offers "attractive alternatives to low-profit, high-tech farming."

Future Farms 2006 Conference

FARM to TABLE

August 25, 2006

Sponsored by:
Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture,
www.kerrcenter.com

in partnership with the
USDA Risk Management Agency,
an equal opportunity provider.

Attendees will include farmers, food service, and anyone interested in Oklahoma-grown foods.

Hotel Accommodations can be made by calling the Clarion Hotel. Ask for the *"Future Farms Conference"* before August 10 to receive the conference rate of $62.

REGISTRATION FEE:
Register by Monday, August 21
to avoid late fee and reserve lunch
Pre-Registration **$25 / $35** On-Site Registration

REGISTRATION FORM

Please Print or Type (complete a form for each person attending)

Organization/Company

Title

Mailing Address

City State Zip

Telephone Fax

Email Address

Registration Fee Enclosed:

Yes ☐ Check # _____

No ☐ Will pay at the door

Mail registration form and payment to:

Center for Local Government Technology
Oklahoma State University
200 Cordell North - Stillwater, OK 74078

For more information please call:
Kary Kiner or Rita Cavanaugh
Telephone: 405-744-6049 - Fax: 405-744-7268

Howard Sacks, Director,
Food for Thought Program, Rural Life Initiative, Kenyon College

The Food for Thought initiative aims to construct a "sustainable local market for food" in the area of Knox County, Ohio. The initiative is attempting to increase purchases of local foods by addressing all phases of the food system, including networking between farmers, large buyers, and agricultural experts; forming a local foods council; helping farmers to meet local demands for specific foods; conducting promotional campaigns; and developing educational materials.

Directed by Kenyon College's Rural Life Center, the Food for Thought initiative aims to channel the more than $120 million spent on food in Knox County each year into local sales that guarantee stable profits to farmers, healthy and tasty food to consumers, and a more sustainable farm and food system to all county residents.

Craig Watson, *Vice-President of Quality Assurance and Agriculture Sustainability,*
SYSCO Corporation

SYSCO is North America's largest supplier of meals prepared away from home, with more than 400,000 food service customers. SYSCO has recently begun throwing some if its immense weight into supporting local food. Watson, who has been with SYSCO since 1981, and has degrees in animal science and meat science, runs their sustainability program.

In New Mexico, for example, the company has set up a statewide marketing network that will allow it to buy from New Mexico farmers, and sell their products to food service businesses in that state and its neighbors. SYSCO projects that 20 to 30 % of its produce sales in New Mexico could eventually come from farmers within the state - a potential windfall for local growers.

Farmers are responsible for cleaning, sorting, and packaging their produce, as well as setting up a loading dock for pickups. The company handles the rest, including marketing, a traditional hurdle for individual farmers attempting to increase local food sales. SYSCO has similar projects underway in other states, including Alabama and Minnesota.

Jim Horne, *President and CEO,*
Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture

Under Jim Horne's leadership, the Kerr Center has become an award-winning, innovative institution-a leader in finding creative solutions to the agricultural, environmental and social challenges facing Oklahoma and the nation.

Today the Kerr Center continues its forty-year history of supporting research and educational activities for Oklahomans and people in the region. The Center also provides policy guidance to public servants on the state, regional and national levels.

In 2004, the USDA awarded the Kerr Center the first Community Food Projects grant in Oklahoma. Projects funded by the "Building a Foundation for Community Food Security in Oklahoma" grant include facilitation of farm-to-school programs, educational activities for educators, and a public information campaign on community food security in Oklahoma.

Closer to Home, a forthcoming report on Oklahoma's food system, will include policy recommendations to improve the health of Oklahomans and Oklahoma farms.

Future Farms 2006: from Farm to Table

CONFERENCE AGENDA

CONFERENCE AGENDA

8:30	**Registration/Exhibits**		
	BALLROOM - PLENARY SESSIONS		
9:00	***Welcome***		
9:30-10:30	***Farm-to-Table in Oklahoma*** - James E. Horne, *President and CEO, Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture*		
11-Noon	***Buying Fresh, Buying Local*** Kamyar Enshayan, *Director, University of Northern Iowa Local Foods Project and Program Manager, University of Northern Iowa Center for Energy and Environmental Education*		
12-1:30	***"A Taste of Oklahoma"*** lunch Luncheon Speaker: Stanley Hupfeld, *CEO, Integris Health System, and Chairman, Oklahoma Fit Kids Coalition -* *"The Obesity Crisis and Choices for Good Nutrition"*		
	BREAKOUT FARM-TO-SCHOOL	**BREAKOUT FARM-TO-INSTITUTION**	**BREAKOUT FARM-TO-RESTAURANT**
1:30-2:15	***Success with Farm-to-School*** Glyen Holmes, *Executive Director, New North Florida Farmers' Cooperative* Vonda Richardson, *Extension Marketing Specialist, Florida A&M University*	***Meeting the Demand for Local Foods*** Craig Watson, *Vice-President of Quality Assurance and Agriculture Sustainability, SYSCO Corporation*	***Small Farm Sales to Restaurants*** Connie Whitmore, *Farmer, Coyle, OK* Tim Richards, *Executive Chef, Bodean Seafood Restaurant, Tulsa*
2:30-3:15	***On the School Menu: Oklahoma-Grown*** Connie Whitmore, *Farmer, Coyle, OK, President, Oklahoma Farmers' Market Alliance* Viki Grimes, *Director, Child Nutrition Program, Stillwater Public Schools*	***Farm-to-College in Iowa*** Kamyar Enshayan, *Director, University of Northern Iowa Local Foods Project*	***Selling Poultry to Restaurants*** Mike Walters, *poultry farmer (heritage turkeys), Stilwell, OK*
3:30-4:15	***How to Do It: Farm-to-School in Oklahoma*** Stephanie Curtis, *Nutrition Education and Training Coordinator, Oklahoma State Department of Education* Chris Kirby, *Vice-chair, Oklahoma Food Policy Council* Doug Walton, *Community Foods Coordinator, Kerr Center*	***Food for Thought: Local Foods and Sustainable Agriculture*** David Kline, Amish farmer, author and editor of Farming magazine Howard Sacks, *Director, Kenyon College Food for Thought Program and Rural Life Initiative, Ohio*	***Seasonal Cuisine: Opportunities for Farmers*** Susan Bergen, Peach Crest Farm, Stratford, OK Kurt Fleischfresser, Chef and Owner, The Coach House, Oklahoma City *Topics and speakers may change.*

Oklahoma School Teachers go "A Gardening"

–Doug Walton

In late May, thirty-three elementary school teachers and two child nutrition educators attended the traveling workshop "A Gardening We Will Go," sponsored by the Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom program and the Kerr Center, with support from the USDA's Community Foods Grant Program.

They came together from across the state to see and learn about successful projects helping students and communities connect with locally-grown food, gardening, and health.

When participants were asked in pre-workshop surveys what they knew about farm-to-school programs, school gardening or sustainable agriculture, most replied in a manner such as: "nothing," "very little," "wish I had a better understanding," or "I have a lot to learn in this area."

For the next three days, the group visited family farms growing fresh produce, farmers' markets, school gardens and public demonstration gardens in northeastern and north central Oklahoma.

Along the way, teachers also heard presentations on healthy classroom snacks, plant propagation, local food systems, school gardening and Ag in the Classroom lessons and resources. They also ate several meals featuring Oklahoma-produced vegetables, fruits, meats, even breads.

Day One: The State's University and the State's Food

The workshop kicked-off with a tasty lunch in Stillwater featuring soups, salad and fresh baked bread, prepared and served by Dick Ortez, farmer and former restaurateur.

During lunch, Ortez told teachers about his commercial processing kitchen where he bakes breads and makes the salsas, jams and sauerkraut he sells at the local farmers' market. Ortez also described how he uses his home-grown whole grains (wheat, rye and sorghum) fresh-cracked in all of his breads.

The teachers next visited the Whitmore Farm in Coyle (near Stillwater), where Connie Whitmore proudly showed-off the 600 foot rows of blackberries and strawberries her son planted as a teenager, stating "these five rows have put him through college."

After getting a full tour of the 10 acre farm, the teachers helped pull and bunch sweet onions for the Whitmore's stand at the Stillwater Farmers' Market.

From Coyle, it was back to Stillwater for an Oklahoma-grown Sante Fe-style Mexican dinner, featuring ground buffalo enchiladas. The meal was prepared and catered by Leah and Bobby Aufill of Bloomin' Botanicals in Perkins. The pinto beans and chili peppers for the meal were grown by the Aufills.

Teachers scout sweet corn for insects at Whitmore Farms.

Dinner was followed by a tour of the Oklahoma Gardening television's gardens; a hands-on lesson in plant propagation with Dr. Doug Needham at the OSU instructional greenhouse; a walkthrough of the Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom website by curriculum writer and webmaster, Pat Thompson; and an overview of funding sources for school gardens by Dr. Charles Cox, Oklahoma 4-H Program Leader.

All workshop participants received a copy of the recently produced *Planning Guide for Edible School Gardens*, compiled and edited by environmental educator Susie Shields of the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The Guide is a compilation of resources addressing all aspects of planning and running a successful school garden in Oklahoma. CD copies are expected to be available from DEQ this fall.

Day Two: Going and Growing

After an early breakfast, teachers visited with farmers while shopping the Stillwater Farmers' Market. The group then took a bus ride to the Tulsa County Extension office, where they learned about the Leach School Garden in Delaware County near Jay, Oklahoma.

Barbara Denney, OSU Extension Educator in Delaware County, gave an inspiring slide show about this innovative after-school project she helped start in 2004.

"In the garden," Ms. Denney said, "kids learn where their food comes from, and they get to have fun while doing so." She told how the school cafeteria saw a doubling in the use of the salad bar after the garden began.

Ms. Denney also explained the hands-on activities she's done with the Leach students, such as bread, tortilla and dumpling making.

After getting a taste of school gardening and cooking activities, teachers went to see the garden at Eugene Field Elementary in Tulsa, a school with over 95% of its students living in nearby low-income housing projects.

Students escorted pairs of teachers as they proudly showed off their own plants and those of their classmates.

The workshop was made possible by a grant from the Community Food Projects Program of the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (grant number #2004-33800-15141). Funding for conducting workshops in 2007 is being sought.

Resources:

Jamey Allen (405-522-6768) and Mary Ann Kelsey (405-522-5513), Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom, www.agclassroom.org/ok

Dick Ortez, El Sueno Enterprises, www.elsuenoenterprises.com, 405-377-8542

Connie Whitmore, Whitmore Farms, cwhitmore@coyle.k12.ok.us, 405-466-2279

Leah and Bobby Aufill, Bloomin' Botanicals, www.bloomin-botanicals.com, 405-880-7645

Susie Shields, OK Dept. of Environmental Quality, susie.shields@deq.state.ok.us, 405-702-5166

Emily Oakley and Mike Appel, Three Springs Farm, www.three-springsfarm.com, 918-712-9571

James and Jennifer Cooper, Nuyaka Natural Farm, www.localharvest.org/farms/M10002, 918- 752-0628

Stillwater Farmers' Market, 309 N. Main, Wed. and Sat., 8a.m. – 1p.m., April through October. www.stillwaterfarmersmarket.com

Tulsa Garden Center Farmers' Market, 25th and Peoria (parking lot next to garden shed) Wednesdays, 3:30 – 6:30 p.m., May through Sept., www.cherrystreetfarmersmarket.com

A huge thanks to Jamey Allen and Mary Ann Kelsey with OK Ag in the Classroom for their invaluable leadership in putting this workshop together.

A farmer and teacher discuss new potatoes at the Stillwater Farmers' Market.

The students also shared their garden journals, where they had recorded seed germination, rates of plant and weed growth, and their own thoughts about their gardens.

Rita Combs, a second grade teacher from Chickasha said, "Geraldine was our guide. She said the garden was her favorite part of the fourth grade."

The next stop was Three Springs Farm, where Emily Oakley led an informative and passionate discussion about the three pillars of sustainability (economic, environmental and social). Emily pointed to various farming and marketing practices she and her partner Mike Appel use to increase the sustainability of their two and a half acre market farm.

The couple sells at Tulsa Farmers' Markets and through a CSA(a subscription farm; customers get a bag of produce each week during the growing season).

Emily's advice to "know your farmer like your doctor," struck Debbie Arthur, a third grade teacher from Fletcher, as particularly memorable.

After Three Springs, it was on to the Tulsa Garden Center where the teachers strolled through the rose garden and the Wednesday evening farmers' market. Everyone cooled off while listening to Laura Williams, Nutrition Educator with Tulsa Public Schools, as she demonstrated a nutrition lesson for grade-schoolers about fruits and veggies based on a story titled "Tops and Bottoms."

Ms. Williams also gave tips on conducting healthy snack tasting in the classroom.

The last stop of the day was Nuyaka Natural Farm, near Beggs, where James and Jennifer Cooper grow 12 acres of certified organic vegetables, herbs, fruits and flowers that they sell through local restaurants, a CSA and at the Tulsa Farmers' Market.

James led a tour through a few of their diversely planted fields, allowing each teacher to pull their own head of fresh garlic to take home with them.

Meanwhile, Jennifer and some fellow chefs put the final touches on a farm-fresh dinner featuring organic beef and lamb kabobs, Swiss chard wraps with pesto and grains, ratatouille with roasted fennel, spring green salad and fresh bread from the Farrell Family Bakery in Tulsa. Most ingredients, including the meats, were Oklahoma-grown, and the vegetables were grown on the Cooper Farm.

Day Three: I Can Do This!

Following another early breakfast, Stephanie Curtis, Nutrition Education Trainer with the Oklahoma Department of Education, told teachers about educational resources available for promoting healthy food choices at school and home.

The final stop of the trip was the school garden at Eisenhower Elementary in Enid. Trish Long and Roberta Nehring, the two teachers who helped create the impressive garden, described how they got started and how they use the garden as a hands-on lab to teach many school subjects.

They also suggested helpful resources and partnerships for starting and maintaining school gardens in everyone's own community. The group also had a chance to "get down and dirty," while helping thin out some mint plants, pull weeds and turn the compost.

On the bus ride back to Stillwater, teachers completed their workshop surveys and final journal entries, as they reflected on all they had seen the past three days. One teacher commented that school gardening, ag in the classroom, and farm-to-school programs "bring Oklahoma-grown agriculture into school lunches, and it brings learning good food choices into the classroom." Another said that these programs "should be in all school districts." Another declared: "I can do this!"

Lisa Hayne, a first grade teacher from Moore, wrote "I really learned more than just gardening. I am now more aware of the importance of where your food comes from, more aware of nutrition and the diverse variety of foods out there. So many kids aren't aware of these things and may never be. It's up to me to share these things with them."

Curing Our Kids:
Better Food for Better Health

– *Doug Walton*

The Leach School Garden in Delaware County is popular with kids.

It is surely a sign of the times that more and more Oklahoma children are overweight and experiencing health problems as a result.

The kids' "obesity crisis" is a problem nationwide. During the last 30 years in the United States, the percent of overweight children ages six to eleven has quadrupled, while the percent of adolescents who are overweight has increased by two and a half times.

Data collected by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) shows 16% of Oklahoma's high school-age males and six percent of females are overweight, resulting in an average of 11% for both genders. Another 14.2% are "at risk" for being overweight (see sidebar for definitions).

While Oklahoma does not currently collect statewide obesity data on children, the Texas Department of Health found an alarming 39% of fourth-graders and 37% of eighth-graders were overweight or obese.

Kids at Risk

Children and adolescents who are overweight have an increased risk for developing two serious diseases: cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Overweight kids have greater incidence of high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol and insulin levels, and arterial calcification.

In fact, results from a 30 year heart study in Louisiana showed that at least 50% of overweight schoolchildren already had two or more risk factors for heart disease.

As if the threat of heart disease isn't enough, a rapidly growing number of youth are being diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes (also known as adult-onset diabetes), a disease rarely found in children prior to the mid 80's. Obesity is a major risk factor for this type of diabetes.

Although Type-2 diabetes was extremely rare in Oklahoma children only ten years ago, fully one-third of children with newly diagnosed diabetes have Type-2, according to the Oklahoma State Department of Health. Children of Hispanic, African American or Native American ancestry are at higher risk.

The long-term health effects from early exposure to these life threatening diseases have leading health professionals extremely concerned. The likelihood of developing complications from diabetes goes up the longer one has the disease. Complications from diabetes can include greater risk of cardiovascular disease, impaired vision or blindness and kidney disease.

As if the risk of physical disorders wasn't enough, obese children and adolescents have higher incidences of social and emotional problems such as low self-esteem, anxiety and depression.

Furthermore, severely overweight children miss four times as much school as normal-weight students, and mounting evidence suggests overweight children attain lower grades.

It used to be that kids "outgrew" their "baby fat" as they matured. However, research shows overweight children and adolescents today stand a good chance of becoming overweight or obese adults.

The situation is so serious that researchers writing in the *New England Journal of Medicine* suggest obesity and its related diseases could shorten the

To learn more about many interesting farm-to-school projects across the nation visit www.farmtoschool.org/media_2005.htm.
For more on Oklahoma's farm-to-school initiative, go to www.kerrcenter.com.

Poor Diets, Poor Health, Poor Performance

Besides the numerous health risks associated with poor diets and inactivity, nutrition researchers have observed links between child nutrition, academic performance and behavioral problems.

Poor diet has been shown to adversely affect the ability to learn and can decrease motivation and attentiveness.

"Poor diet" not only refers to unhealthy eating habits, which can lead to obesity; it also describes the diets of those who lack the resources for acquiring enough food on a regular basis. In 2005, Oklahoma had the highest rate of households in the U.S. experiencing hunger.

In Oklahoma, 21% of children live in poverty; however, in many rural Oklahoma counties, the rate exceeds that, with rates above 30% in five counties: Pushmataha, McCurtain, Seminole, Choctaw and Harmon, all classified as rural.

Statewide, 54% of Oklahoma students qualify to receive free and reduced price lunches, and in many rural counties, rates are well over 65%. Improving the nutritional choices made by school kids could only help in confronting the ill effects of both obesity and hunger upon student health and school performance.

average lifespan of an entire generation – today's children – by two to five years.

The Skinny Behind the Bulge

A number of interconnected factors likely contribute to the childhood obesity problem in Oklahoma and throughout the country.

One factor frequently cited is overconsumption of fast-food. Between 1977 and 1996, children increased their intake of foods from restaurants and fast food outlets by 300%. Soft drink consumption by adolescent boys tripled over a similar timeframe.

Research published in the journal *Pediatrics* confirmed that children who eat fast foods consume more sugar-sweetened beverages, less milk, and fewer fruits and non-starchy vegetables, than children who do not.

The conclusion that could be drawn from this is that too many children are not eating balanced, nutritious meals. Other statistics back this up: Nationally, only two percent of school-aged children consume the recommended daily number of servings of all five major food groups.

In Oklahoma, only 14% of high school students eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day, well below the already low national average of 22%.

Getting Healthy with Farm-to-School

From local school boards to state capitols to Washington, a variety of people and institutions are looking for ways to improve children's nutrition. In recent years, the USDA has emphasized the importance of fresh fruits and vegetables as part of what it calls "a healthy school meal environment."

In 1997, the agency began a comprehensive effort to connect small farms to school meal programs. The 2002 National School Lunch Act encouraged institutions participating in the school lunch and breakfast programs to purchase locally grown food to the maximum extent practicable.

These efforts, often referred to as "Farm-to-School," are becoming widespread— in 400 school districts in 23 states, including some in Oklahoma.

> "...obesity and its related diseases could shorten the average lifespan of an entire generation — today's children — by two to five years"

What is farm-to-school? Farm-to-school programs feature school purchases of food (usually fresh fruits and vegetables) from local farmers. Nutrition lessons are often coordinated with the fresh produce being served in the cafeteria.

Comprehensive farm-to-school programs also include school gardens, farm/farmer visits, food tastings and cooking classes, and agriculture-related curricula, all designed to get kids empowered and excited about eating healthy food.

The overarching goal of these efforts: help kids develop healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime.

A major premise behind farm to school projects is that kids will eat more fruits and vegetables when they have easy access to a variety of high quality, fresh items such as on a school salad bar. Research is showing this to be the case for kids of all socio-economic backgrounds.

Kids respond favorably to having more fresh options, and locally-grown produce is the pick of the crop. Because it's harvested at peak ripeness and brought to the consumer in the shortest

After the Leach School Garden was put in, student use of the cafeteria salad bar doubled.

time possible, locally grown is often of the highest quality – attractive to the eye, with pleasant odor, flavor, and texture – attributes that encourage kids to dig in. The result: better nutritional health.

Research into existing farm-to-school programs is confirming that students choose significantly more servings of fruits and vegetables when given the choice of high quality, farm-fresh produce. In Los Angeles, the University of California reported the Farm-to-School Salad Bar Program increased elementary school kids' consumption of fruits and vegetables by 50%.

Practitioners of farm-to-school efforts that include gardening and/or cooking activities, contend that when the superior taste of farm-fresh items is combined with a new-found appreciation of where food comes from, a transformation often occurs within participating students.

Researchers with Oklahoma State University found that students involved with an after-school garden project at Leach School in Oklahoma increased their fruit and vegetable intake (and physical activity) while decreasing consumption of candy, desserts and chips.

A number of projects have also shown positive changes in self-esteem, attitudes toward school, social skills,
and behavior in students participating in garden-based learning programs.

Taken together, these innovative farm-to-school approaches are helping to give children (and adults) a deeper understanding of the important connections between healthy farms, healthy foods and healthy bodies.

- The combined 2003 budgets for three leading nutrition education programs at the CDC, USDA and National Cancer Institute represented less than ten percent of the annual U.S. advertising budgets for just two leading soft drinks and one top-selling candy bar.
- Twenty-five percent of all advertising by food manufacturers in 1999 was for candy, snacks and soft drinks, while only two percent was for fruits, vegetables, grains and beans.

This article is excerpted from *Closer to Home: Healthy Food, Farms and Families in Oklahoma,* a report forthcoming from the Kerr Center. Sources for this article will be included in the report and online.

Defining and Measuring Overweight and Obesity

Meeting the definition of overweight simply means having a body weight that is disproportionate to one's height. For children and adolescents, because they are still growing and their amount of body fat normally changes as they mature, overweight and obesity are measured by plotting BMI's on growth charts that adjust for age and gender, resulting in what is known as BMI-for-age.

According to the American Obesity Association, a BMI-for-age that plots between the 85th and 95th percentiles indicates overweight, while a BMI greater than or equal to the 95th percentile signifies obesity, whereas the CDC designates a BMI between the 85th and 95th percentile as "at risk for overweight" and over the 95th percentile is considered overweight. In this article we use the CDC terms.

This article is supported by the Community Food Projects Program of the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, grant #2004-33800-15141

Oklahoma Grazing Lands - A Valuable Resource…

Providing Benefits to all of Oklahoma

Privately owned grazing lands comprise over 53% of the land in Oklahoma, with rangeland comprising the majority of these acres. These lands provide many economic and environmental benefits not only to those who own them, but to all citizens of the state.

The Oklahoma Grazing Lands Conservation Association is comprised of:

- Oklahoma Farm Bureau
- Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association
- Oklahoma Farmers Union
- Oklahoma Cattlewomen's Association
- Dairy Farmers of America
- Oklahoma Sheep and Wool Commission
- Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts
- Oklahoma Grain and Stocker Producers
- Society of Range Management
- Oklahoma Forage and Grasslands Council
- Oklahoma Landowner and Tenants Association
- Intertribal Agriculture Council
- Oklahoma Land Stewardship Alliance

Oklahoma Grazing Lands Conference to be held August 11-12, 2006

The Oklahoma Grazing Lands Conservation Association (OLGCA) will host its annual "Grazing Lands Dollar$ and Sense" conference Aug. 11 and 12 at the Biltmore Hotel in Oklahoma City. Cost is $100 with discounts for family/employees. Early registration deadline is Aug. 5.

This year's conference will focus on production of grassfed meats.

Experts will share information on genetics, forage systems, marketing and grazing management. Topics will include grazing management strategies for grassfed livestock, labeling laws and the role of the dung beetle in grazing systems.

There will also be a producer panel sharing their experiences with raising grassfed beef and lambs and a roundtable discussion with all speakers on the final day.

"This will provide a great opportunity for participants to ask questions and learn from people with a lot of knowledge and experience," says Kim Barker, OLGCA chair.

This event is sponsored in part by the Kerr Center, in partnership with the Risk Management Agency.

To register, go to www.okgrazinglands.org or call 580.824.9011 or 405.742.1235

Teddy Gentry to Speak in OK

Alabama's Teddy Gentry is scheduled to speak at the *Grazing Dollar$ and Sense* conference in Oklahoma City in August.

In 1977, with his cousins Randy Owen and Jeff Cook, Gentry founded the country super-group *Alabama*.

In the early eighties Gentry returned to ranching, establishing his Bent Tree Cattle Company with 20 head of polled Herefords.

He has spent the last twenty years focused on developing a breed of cattle, the South Poll, that would thrive on grass in a hot and humid climate.

Combining the genetic traits of Hereford, Barzona, Red Angus and Senepol to make the South Poll, Bent Tree Farms has expanded its operation to over 1500 head, as well as an offshoot company, Burt's Beef, to market the meat from the ranch.

A recent addition to Gentry's growing natural food business is Burt's Meats and Natural Foods Store. Their store not only sells the beef raised on the ranch but supports other local, natural and pasture-based farmers by carrying their products.

Grazing Lands Dollar$ and Sense

"Developing Grassfed Livestock Production Systems"

AUGUST 11 & 12, 2006

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Biltmore Hotel, OKC, Oklahoma
To register, go to: www.okgrazinglands.org

FRIDAY, AUGUST 11TH

Moderator: Kim Barker, OLGCA Chair

8:00- 9:00	Registration
9:00 - 9:15	Welcome and Introductions - Kim Barker, OGLCA Chair Moderator: Kim Barker, OGLCA Chair
9:15 - 10:30	*Genetics, Cattle and Quality Meat - Building the Grassfed Animal* Gerald Frey, Bovine Engineering and Consulting, Rosebud, AR
10:30- 10:45	BREAK
10:45 - 12:00	*Building the Grassfed Animal (cont)* Gerald Frey
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch (provided) and Trade Show Moderator: Herman Mayeux, ARS, Ft. Reno
1:00 - 1:45	*Developing a Year Round Forage System in Oklahoma* Bryan Northup, Grazinglands Research Laboratory, El Reno, OK.
1:45 - 2:30	*Grass Finished Beef* Bill Phillips, Grazinglands Research Laboratory, El Reno, OK.
2:30 - 3:00	BREAK and Trade Show
3:00 - 3:30	*Labeling Laws for Grassfed Meats* Chuck Willoughby, Food and Ag Products Technology Center
3:30 - 4:00	*The Dung Beetle - Its Role in a Year Round Grazing System* Tom Royer, Asst. Professor / Extension Specialist, OSU
4:00 - 5:30	*Grazing Management Strategies for Grassfed Animals* Ron Morrow, Arkansas Beef Producer
5:30 - 7:00	Dinner on your own

FRIDAY EVENING SESSION

Moderator: Wally Olson, Rancher

7:00 - 8:30	*Genetic Traits of Grassfed Beef* Teddy Gentry, Bent Tree Farms

SATURDAY, AUGUST 12TH

Moderator: Larry Hensley, OGLCA Past Chair

8:00 - 10:00	*Production and Marketing of Grassfed Beef* Jon Taggert, Burgundy Beef, Texas
10:00 - 10:30	BREAK
10:30 - 11:30	*Making Grassfed Work* - Producer Panel Mary Penick - Kerr Center, Heritage Breeds Kim Barker - Walnut Creek Farms, Grassfed Lambs Ron Morrow - Arkansas producer, Grassfed Beef
11:30 - 12:30	LUNCH (provided) and Last Chance for Trade Show
12:30 - 2:00	Roundtable Discussions - Questions and Answers with all speakers Moderator: Walt Davis, Rancher

QUESTIONS? CALL:
Kim Barker – 580-824-9011
Steve Glasgow – 405-742-1235

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider

OGLCA Oklahoma Grazing Lands Conservation Association
A Partnership for Oklahoma's Grazing Lands

KERR CENTER

Oklahoma Farmer Speakers Bureau Comes to the Classroom

The Oklahoma Farmer Speakers Bureau is a list of farmers in the state who are available to speak to school classes and/or give tours of their farms.

The Speakers Bureau currently includes 33 farmers from Oklahoma who raise everything from buffalo to berries, and are willing to share their agricultural experiences with students.

A complete listing with contact information is available on the Kerr Center website at www.kerrcenter.com/farm_to_school/farmer_speakers.htm.

For farmers who would like to participate in the Speakers Bureau, the same site also has a link where they can sign up.

Updated *Oklahoma Food Connection* Available Now

First published in 2003, T*he Oklahoma Food Connection* is a directory of Oklahoma farms and institutions with a mutual interest in local food sales. The updated edition for 2006 is now available online.

Intended to facilitate the development of farm-to-school programs within the state of Oklahoma, the *Food Connection* also serves several other purposes at the same time.

It contains a directory of Oklahoma farms interested in selling their products locally, and lists the products that each farm sells. This section is useful not only for schools and other institutions wishing to develop farm-to-table programs, but also for individuals, families and even chefs, seeking sources of locally grown food.

The directory also contains an alphabetical list of vegetables, fruits, meats and other items and the farms that grow them.

The *Food Connection* also contains a listing of schools and other institutions interested in establishing or expanding their purchases of local food. This feature is helpful for farmers who are considering sales to local institutions, and also facilitates networking and learning between different farm-to-school initiatives within the state.

The 2006 update of *The Oklahoma Food Connection* can be accessed online at www.kerrcenter.com.

Become a Friend of the Kerr Center

Since 1965, the Kerr Center has helped Oklahoma farmers and ranchers diversify and become better stewards of their land. Now the Kerr Center is also helping people from all walks of life understand the importance of sustainable food systems.

The Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture operates on the earnings from its own endowment, grants and donations. The endowment was established in the 1960s from the estate of Senator Robert S. Kerr. (The center has no connection with the company he co-founded, the Kerr-McGee Corporation).

Each dollar contributed by Friends of the Kerr Center goes into our endowment to support our programs for years to come.

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☐	**HARVESTER**	**$200-$999**
☐	**STEWARD***	**$1000 or more**

*(receive a gift of *The Next Green Revolution: Essential Steps to a Healthy, Sustainable Agriculture*)

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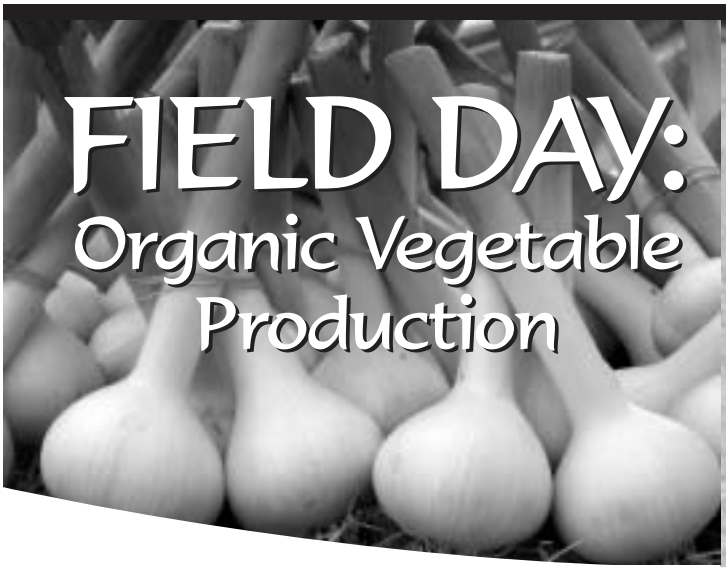

FIELD DAY: Organic Vegetable Production

This free field day will give participants a taste of what it takes to grow vegetables organically in southeastern Oklahoma. The event will be held at THE Farm in Atoka County, where Joe and Vicki Townsend grow a variety of certified organic crops.

The Townsends sell most of their produce at the Antler's Farmers' Market and through a weekly ordering arrangement, in which a list of available items is sent by email to local customers who place orders for next day delivery. Joe and Vicki also sell their Numex green and red chili peppers by mail order to customers around the country.

Field day attendees will see and learn how the Townsends use cover crops and rotations for building and maintaining soil fertility within their current four acre growing area, and as they bring new ground into production this fall. Other topics will include drip irrigation, equipment and implements, organic certification and adapting production to market demands.

Joe and Vicki will also show and discuss their large divided greenhouse under construction and discuss their innovative plans to grow onion transplants in the unheated side and early season tomatoes in the opposite side with heat.

When and Where:

Sunday, September 10, 2-5 p.m. No pre-registration required. Held rain or shine; bring a lawn chair.

THE Farm is located between Atoka and Antlers, off Hwy. 3. From the Indian Nation Turnpike, go west on Hwy. 3 for approx. 9.5 miles to Centerpoint Road (look for Centerpoint Grocery and field day signs). Go south on Centerpoint Rd. 3.5 miles (stay on pavement to the left at approx. 1.5 miles). Look for farm on east side of road.

From Atoka, go east on Hwy. 3 for 20 miles to Centerpoint Road (look for Centerpoint Grocery and field day signs). Go south on Centerpoint Road 3.5 miles (stay on pavement to the left at approx. 1.5 miles). Look for farm on east side of road.

Calendar

Don't Miss Future Farms 2006: from Farm to Table
Aug. 25, Oklahoma City

Topics to be Covered:

- Farm-to-Table in Oklahoma
- Buying Fresh, Buying Local
- The Obesity Crisis and Choices for Good Nutrition
- Success with Farm-to-School
- On the School Menu: Oklahoma-Grown
- How to Do It: Farm-to-School in Oklahoma
- Farm-to-College in Iowa
- Food for Thought: Local Foods and Sustainable Agriculture
- Meeting the Demand for Local Foods
- Small Farm Sales to Restaurants
- Selling Poultry to Restaurants
- Seasonal Cuisine: Opportunities for Farmers

Topics and speakers may change.

All this and a "Taste of Oklahoma" lunch!
Registration: $25 in advance. See p. 7 for more details

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