Field Notes

Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture

Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture Vol. 30, #2 • Summer 2004

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Future Farms 2004: Digging Deeper

Mark your calendars now for Future Farms, the Kerr Center's biannual conference, planned for Saturday, November 6, at the Clarion Hotel in Oklahoma City. This year's theme is "digging deeper."

Using information from the survey in the spring *Field Notes* and comments from attendees at Kerr Center events, the center plans to offer in-depth half-day workshops on selected topics.

The tentative lineup (with some confirmed instructors) includes:

- Organic Crop Production & Marketing— Instructors George Kuepper (ATTRA) and Alan Ware (Kerr Center)
- Natural/Organic/Grassfed Beef Production & Marketing— Instructors Ron Morrow (NRCS) and Ann Wells (ATTRA)
- Taking the First Step with Alternative Farm and Ranch Enterprises— Instructor James Maetzold (NRCS)
- Direct Marketing: CSA & Farmers' Markets
- Cut Flower Production & Marketing
- Herb Production & Marketing
- Agritourism

Because each topic will be offered both morning and afternoon, conference attendees will be able to attend two workshops that interest them.

The workshops will be interactive and hands-on, and provide attendees with valuable information and resources to help them be successful.

Registration and other information will be forthcoming in the fall newsletter and online at kerrcenter.com. Or call 918.647.9123.

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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918/647-9123 phone,
918/647-8712 fax
mailbox@kerrcenter.com
www.kerrcenter.com

Overstreet-Kerr Historical Farm
918/966-3396
okhfarm@crosstel.net

PROGRAMS INCLUDE:

- Oklahoma Producer Grants
- The Stewardship Farm
- Rural Development and Public Policy
- Communications/Education
- Overstreet-Kerr Historical Farm

STAFF:

James E. Horne, PhD., *President and CEO*

Simon Billy, *Stewardship Ranch Technician*

Barbara Chester, *Corporate Secretary*

Jim Combs, *Development Manager, Overstreet-Kerr Historical Farm*

Jeremy Henson, *Education Manager, Overstreet-Kerr Historical Farm*

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Scott Phillips, *Stewardship Farm Technician*

Anita Poole, *Assistant to the President/ Legal Counsel*

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Liz Speake, *Communications Assistant*

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Alan Ware, *Director, Producer Grants Program/Stewardship Farm*

Ann Ware, *Business Manager*

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Winners of Statewide Essay Contest Announced

The Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture in Poteau announced the winners of its annual essay contest for Oklahoma high school juniors and seniors on May 10. The theme of the 2004 essay contest was "Why Schools Should Serve Locally-Grown Foods?"

The first place prize of $750 went to Dakota Allison, a junior at Canton High School. The second place prize of $500 was awarded to Erin Shores, a senior at Kiowa High School. Three honorable mention prizes of $250 each went to Caroline Palmer, a senior at Salina High School; Holly Goralewicz, a senior at Okarche High School; and Chance Simpson, a junior at Timberlake High School in Kremlin.

The Kerr Center received 154 entries from around the state, which was about twice as many as the 2003 contest. Last year's contest theme was protecting farmland from unwanted development.

In their essays, students expressed concerns about student health and the need to increase economic opportunities for small farms within the state.

This is the third year for the contest. Each spring, students are invited to write a persuasive essay of 800-1000 words on a given agricultural or food system topic with current relevance to the larger society.

Winners were chosen by an independent panel. Judges looked at how well the writer developed his/her ideas, used good writing skills, paid attention to details and facts, and elicited an emotional response.

The Kerr Center is currently working with state and federal agencies on a pilot project to serve Oklahoma-grown produce this fall at a few Oklahoma schools.

Farm-to-school information and the winning essays can be accessed at www.kerrcenter.com.

Farmers: Connect to the *Oklahoma Food Connection*

The *Oklahoma Food Connection* is a directory created by the Kerr Center for use by individuals and institutions. The book is online and contains: listings of Oklahoma farms by county, lists of farms by the food crop they raise, a harvest calendar and list of crops grown, a listing of public institutions in the state interested in buying local, a section analyzing supply and demand, and a list of farmers markets and their members.

To be included or to update your listing, fill out the form and send to the Kerr Center; the form may also be filled out and submitted online at kerrcenter.com/ofpc/foodconnection.htm

County:_____ City _____

Farm Name: _____

Operator Name: _____

Address: _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____ Website _____

Certified Organic: ☐ yes ☐ no

List all produce for sale (fruits, vegetables, dairy, meats, fish, grains, nuts, honey, herbs). Be specific.

_____

_____

Oklahoma Wine Grape Production Field Day

Saturday, July 24, 2004

An educational opportunity provided by the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture, and OSU Horticulture & Landscape Architecture Dept.

MORNING SESSION

9:00 am • Registration Oklahoma Fruit Research Station

9:30 am • OSU Administration Comments

9:45 am • Move to grape plots

10:00 - 11:30 am • Grape Plot Tour
Crop Estimates
Variety Performance
Training Systems
Disease Management
Insect Management

11:30 am - noon • Travel to Woodland Park (Hane) Vineyard 3023 N. Jardot, Stillwater, OK

AFTERNOON SESSION

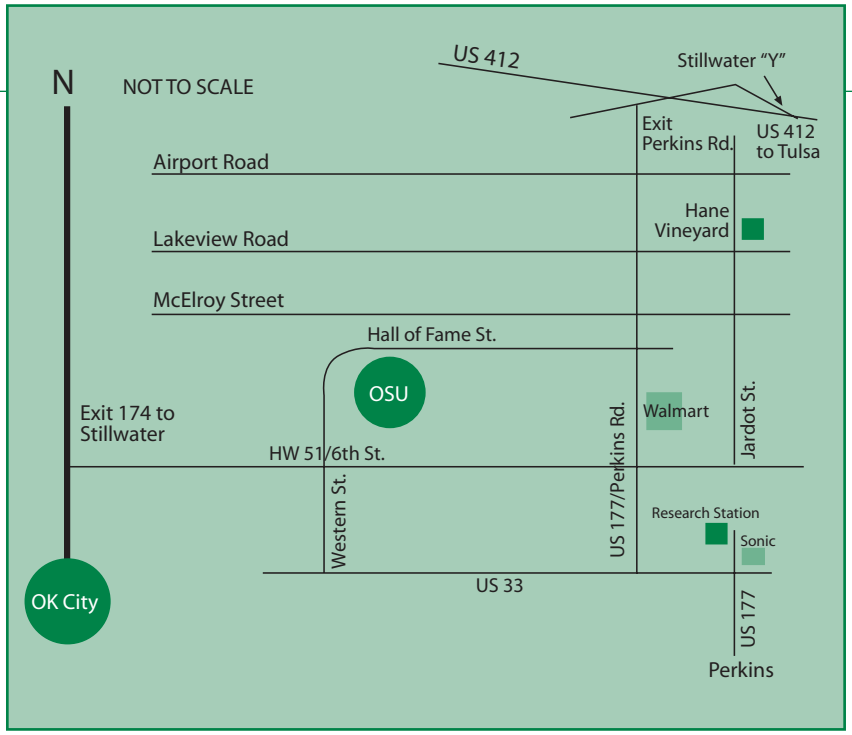
12:00 pm • Lunch
The noon meal is sponsored by Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture.

1:00 pm • Kerr Center Administration Comments

1:30 pm • Woodland Park (Hane) Vineyard Tour
Variety/Rootstock Trial
Training System
Shop Built Equipment—Farmer Adaptation
Winery

4:00 pm • Field Day Adjourns

*Speakers, times, and topics are subject to change.



Oklahoma Fruit Research Station
Perkins, OK—From US 177 & US 33 intersection with the Sonic Drive-In, 1/2 mile north, west side of road.

Woodland Park (Hane) Vineyard
3023 N. Jardot, Stillwater—From US 177 & Hwy 51 Intersection, 1 mile east to Jardot, turn North on Jardot for 2 1/2 miles, Vineyard on East side.

Registration

There is no charge for the field day, but please register for the lunch by contacting the Kerr Center, 918-647-9123, or the OSU Horticulture & Landscape Architecture Department, 405-744-5404, by July 22, 2004.

Program Participants:

Dr. Dean McCraw
Professor Emeritus, OSU, Stillwater

Dr. Phil Mulder
Extension Entomologist, OSU, Stillwater

Dr. Sharon von Broembsen
Extension Plant Pathologist, OSU, Stillwater

Dr. William McGlynn
Associate Professor, Product Processing, OSU, Stillwater

Alan Ware
Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Poteau, OK

Ivol and Jeanette Hane
Woodland Park Vineyard, Stillwater

Chris Stiegler
Payne County Extension Educator, OSU Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, Stillwater

OKLAHOMA
PRODUCER GRANT PROGRAM
The Kerr Center
FUNDING FARMER INNOVATION

Biological Control of Corn Earworm *(Heliothis zea)* in Sweet Corn *(Zea mays)*

Jesse Snyder setting out wasp eggs

PROJECT FACT SHEET

YEAR GRANT AWARDED: 2000

AREA 7: Environmentally-Safe Pest Management

PRINCIPAL COOPERATOR
Jesse Snyder
Rt. 1, Box 165
Prague, OK 74864
(405) 567-4383

OTHER COOPERATORS
Dr. Warren Roberts, Lane Agriculture Center, Oklahoma State University.
Jonathan Edelson, Lane Agriculture Center, Oklahoma State University.

PROJECT BASICS
Duration: Two years (2000-2001)
Type: Demonstration project
Grant Amount: $1,950
Location: near Prague, Oklahoma. Exit 200 (Prague-Seminole), I-40, 3 1/2 miles north to Moccasin Trail, then west 3 3/4 miles.

Farm/Ranch Profile:

Jesse Snyder farms large acreages near Prague, Oklahoma, in Pottawatomie County, in the central part of the state. His family runs a diversified operation, which includes cattle, wheat, corn, soybeans, peanuts, Milo, sweet corn, pumpkins, and more recently, goats.

Project Objectives:

At the time Snyder began the project the family had been growing sweet corn for fifteen years. He began looking for a better way to control earworms in his sweet corn crop, and he hoped parasitic wasps might provide the means to that end.

His project objectives were:

1. Demonstrate the effectiveness of parasitic wasps on corn earworms in sweet corn.
2. Increase awareness of beneficial insects for pest control among sweet corn and other produce growers
3. Produce a truly organic sweet corn.

Snyder says he believes neither of the two conventional options for control of corn earworm is satisfactory. The first, extensive use of chemicals, exposes everyone and everything involved to risks he would like to avoid. “Insecticidal control of corn earworm (Heliothis zea) in a sweet corn crop can be costly, time consuming, dangerous, dependent on the right conditions, and sometimes not all that effective, “ he explained.

The other option, doing nothing at all, usually results in an end product that is poor in quality.

Snyder suggested that if it works, biological insect control using parasitic wasps would be a great alternative for four reasons:

1) Consumers want fewer chemicals on their food.
2) Biological control should be less damaging to the environment.
3) The corn is hand picked and workers would have less pesticide exposure. Since his sweet corn operation is mostly a family enterprise, the safety of his “workers” is even more critical to him.
4) It might be more cost effective.

Project Description

The variety of corn the Snyders prefer, Kandy Korn, has a fairly open husk, and is especially susceptible to moth damage. In the year before receiving the grant, Snyder released some parasitic wasps (Trichogramma pretiosum) on a limited basis in his corn, and thought they showed promise.

The pale yellow *Trichogramma* micro-wasps (1/100th of an inch long) are the world’s most widely used commercially produced beneficial insects. The different species and strains of the wasp destroy the eggs of over 200 pest moth species. They have been used to control caterpillars in a wide variety of agricultural settings, from field, row and vegetable crops to

orchards and vineyards.

How does the wasp get the worm? First the corn earworm moth *(Heliothis zea)* lays her eggs on the corn silk. (Other names for the corn earworm are tomato fruitworm and cotton bollworm.) The resulting worms begin to eat the corn kernels at the silk end and can severely damage the ear.

However if *Trichogramma pretiosum* wasps are present, the worms never get a chance to hatch. The wasps drill through the moth eggs and deposit one to three eggs in each moth egg. When the wasp eggs hatch, the larvae eat the moth eggs from the inside, and then pupate and exit the shell of the moth eggs as adults.

Jesse Snyder and Kerr Center president Jim Horne

In year one of their grant, the Snyders worked the soil with every flush of spring weeds and prepared for planting. The corn was planted in 36-inch rows at the rate of 15,000 seeds per acre. They used cultivation and hoeing as needed for weed control.

At the end of May, when the corn reached the tassel stage, the Snyders released 40,000 wasps per acre, and then each week released 20,000 per acre until harvest (usually five weeks).

The wasps are shipped inside parasitized moth eggs glued to perforated cards that can be broken into 30 one-inch squares for distribution throughout a field. Loose eggs are available for aerial release.

Each Wednesday the Snyders received the cards. The wasps emerge from the cards in two to five days, depending on temperature, and emergence can be delayed by holding them at cooler temps (not less than 40 degrees F). By the weekend, when the wasps began hatching out, Snyder divided each card, putting each square in the crook of a leaf on corn plants throughout the patch.

Snyder then evaluated earworm damage at harvest and hosted a field day to show

COST COMPARISION

	Conventional	Year 1 Organic	Year 2 Conventional (herbicide) + *Trichogramma*+ Turkey Litter
	$/acre	$/acre	$/acre
Land rent	50.00	50.00	50.00
Equipment	35.00	35.00	35.00
Chemical fertilizer (100#N, 34#P, 34#K)	42.00	0.00	0.00
Turkey litter	0.00	100.00	100.00
Seed	53.00	53.00	53.00
Herbicide (1/2 qt. Bicep-$12 + applic. $4)	16.00	0.00	16.00
Cultivate & hoe	0.00	35.00	0.00
Insecticide *(10 applic. ASANA + applic. cost)	102.50	0.00	0.00
Wasps		50.00	50.00
Harvest	230.80	230.80	230.80
Irrigation	60.00	60.00	60.00
Total expenses	$589.30	$613.80	$594.80

* Applied at recommended rate of 8 oz./acre = $6.25 per acre, plus application cost of $4 per acre

Tiny parasitic wasp, *Trichogramma*, lays its egg in eggs of a number of moth species, such as the corn earworm (also called tomato fruitworm or cotton bollworm) egg shown here.

Another Mighty Little Wasp

Researchers at Cornell University have found beneficial wasps of the variety *Trichogramma ostriniae* can reduce damage from European corn borers *(Ostrinia nubilalis)* by half. In that study, 6% of the ears were damaged in the fields where wasps were released, while 12% of the ears were damaged in the control fields.

For more information see http://www.cips.msu.edu/ncr125/StateRpts2001NY.htm

Snyder family and friends pitch in to pick and sell corn locally.

others the results of the demonstration.

The Kerr Center grant involved one year of organic production. However, weed pressure the second year forced him to modify the system by using an herbicide.

Snyder also grew sweet corn by more conventional methods and provided a cost comparison.

Project Results

Snyder said he was pleased with the results of the demonstration and believes the *Trichogramma pretiosum* wasps could be a viable alternative to chemical control of earworms for sweet corn growers.

"The quality of the crop was as good as or better than in years past when on a very strict spray schedule," he said.

Under a strict spray schedule, he would usually receive several phone calls a season from customers to let him know they had found earworm damage. When he used the *Trichogramma*, customers were told about the wasps. No customers called to tell him about any damage. He says either there was less damage or customers expected some damage and were not surprised when they found it.

"Something I feel is important is the safety of the harvesters, as this crop is harvested by hand," he added. "The spray is very irritating and though it is a cleared product, this is a concern to me."

He also noted the difficulties of spraying for earworms during the wet season, especially for ground application of the spray.

"Something I feel is important is the safety of the harvesters, as this crop is harvested by hand," he added. "The spray is very irritating and though it is a cleared product, this is a concern to me."

"If you look at the expense chart… the parasitic wasps have a place in sweet corn production if one can get comparable results," he said. As the table shows, year two of the project was only slightly more expensive ($5.50/acre) than a strictly conventional production system. The organic system cost $24.50/acre more than a conventional system.

Snyder also pointed out that sweet corn grown conventionally with ground application of pesticide requires the grower to leave alleys consisting of four rows for the spray rig to travel down to spray for corn earworm. After satisfying himself that the wasps were working, Jesse decided to eliminate the alleys since the wasps fly over the entire area.

On a ten-acre field, this results in an additional 1 1/2 acres of harvestable sweet corn. At harvest, the pickers simply drive down selected rows to reestablish the alleys, harvesting as they go. The alleys are then used to harvest the side rows. Under Snyder's production system, this resulted in an additional $1,000 gross income over the same production area.

Snyder also notes that the cost assigned to turkey litter as fertilizer does not take into account the values of organic matter and micronutrients added to the soil.

His demonstration plot for year one of the project yielded 115.4 bushels per acre, which he sold for $9 per bushel, for a gross value of $1,038.60 per acre. Snyder notes this was not a premium price, as some people would charge more for crops that had not been treated with pesticides. Year two yielded similar results.

Resources

Rincon-Vitova Insectaries, Inc.
P.O. Box 95
Oak View Ca. 93022
(805) 643-5407

Gina Snyder, Jesse's wife, and Mary Margaret Snyder, his mother, served field day visitors fresh sweet corn from their farm.

Rita Veal (center) gave visitors growing and marketing tips:

1 - Overhead watering controls spider mites on eggplants, one of Rita's specialities.

2 - Immature loofah gourds can be fried like okra, and are a favorite of her Indian customers.

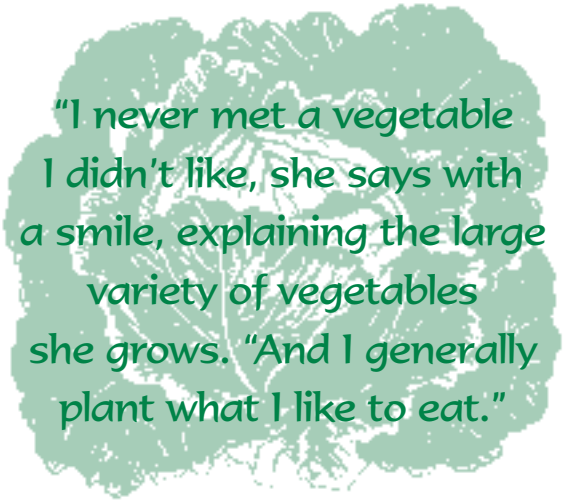
Vegetable Farm Welcomes Tour

– Maura McDermott

Putterveal Farm hosted the annual Farmers' Market Alliance farm tour on April 24. The farm is named for Rita Veal, who likes to putter. But Rita does a lot more than putter on her lush farm near Stillwater; she works from dawn 'til dusk tending 2 1/2 acres of vegetables that she then sells each week at the Stillwater Farmers' Market. Her husband Keith Mirkes and friend Johnnie Beck help out.

Hog wire hoops keep dogs and deer out of the greens and cabbage. The bales of prairie hay are used to mulch summer plantings.

Soil on the farm ranges from clay loam to sand. Rita irrigates with tanks of rainwater; her well water is too saline.



The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy Promotes Regionally Adapted Breeds

By Don Schrider, Communications Director, ALBC

The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (ALBC) is a national, non-profit, membership organization dedicated to the conservation and promotion of over 100 endangered breeds of cattle, goats, horses, asses, sheep, pigs, and poultry.

The story of the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy has many beginnings. Some would say that the story began on March 16, 1977, when a handful of concerned citizens gathered at a conference table in the Vermont Department of Agriculture's Montpelier location to sign incorporation papers for the American Minor Breeds Conservancy (the original name for the ALBC).

Others would say that the story began a few years before, when Darwin Kelsey, then head of agricultural history research at Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts, encouraged a new intern, Kristina Bielenberg, and staff member Ridgway Shinn to conduct a survey of *Milking Devon* cattle in New England.

Still others would argue that ALBC had its genesis in the ecology movement of the 1960s and 1970s. But it is certain that the organization would not have come into being but for the individual efforts of livestock farmers who had the foresight (or conservatism) to buck the trends of modern agriculture by keeping a few "old time" cattle or chickens.

Understood was the immediacy and gravity of the genetic erosion occurring in livestock at that time, both in North America and internationally, and ALBC set for itself an ambitious agenda to do something about it. From the beginning, the directors viewed ALBC as an umbrella organization, which could educate the public, conduct research on breed status, and provide technical advice to animal breeders and farmers.

They were so committed to reaching out that within two months of incorporation, on May 13, 1977, ALBC sponsored the Vermont Grasslands and Livestock Conference, bringing together beef, dairy, and sheep farmers with agronomists, livestock nutritionists, and ecologists. This does not sound like a novel idea today, but 27 years ago it was a radical initiative. No one from New England's land grant institutions or the Extension Service had ever realized that the primary agricultural crop of the Northeast was grass, and that livestock breeds well adapted to foraging were necessary to efficiently use that grass.

Today ALBC continues to conduct research on breed status and to educate the public, and still provides technical advice to animal breeders and farmers. However, the genetic erosion of America's livestock continues, as farmers are convinced of the need to match their stock with emerging trends in livestock production.

This may seem like 'good sense' farming, except when one looks back over agriculture in America for the past 50 years. Then the instability of each new trend is quite apparent. Fewer and fewer farmers maintain their own bulls for breeding, almost none maintain their own seeds for crops, and none maintain their own poultry breeds. Instead they have been encouraged to spend ever-increasing amounts of money to obtain 'improved' genetics that are supposed to boost their profitability.

What they are not told is that these improved genetics are not always well suited to the regional conditions under which they farm. For instance, the current trend in beef cattle is to supply a black steer, which can then be sold for a higher price as 'Angus Beef.' But Angus do not do well on the fescue grasses of Oklahoma, and they spend large amounts of time standing in watering holes trying to avoid flies. The Angus is a tough breed, but it was meant for a much different climate.

Regionally adapted breeds need less input of time and money to generate a profit while thriving under conditions for which they were meant. Breeds still exist that have high rates of fecundity and fertility, early maturity, ease of calving, fly tolerance, high levels of parasite resistance, high levels of disease resistance, longevity, and the ability to thrive on native forages. *Pineywoods* and *Florida Cracker* cattle are two excellent examples of breeds suited to the Southwestern U.S., including Oklahoma.

Pineywoods and *Florida Cracker* are *criollo* breeds of cattle. They have descended from stock brought to America over 500 years ago by the Spanish and turned loose to survive. Natural selection has shaped these breeds into animals that surpass the *Brahma* for heat tolerance and fertility,

while still maintaining high rates of fertility, disease resistance, and the ability to survive on native grasses or in swamp-like conditions.

If one was to maintain a purebred herd of *Pineywoods*, a few cows could be crossed to an Angus bull each year to produce market steers and heifers that would fetch the premium price while exhibiting much of the *Pineywoods'* hardiness. This is called a terminal cross. Those bred back to the *Pineywoods'* bull would be producing replacement heifers and bull calves so that a base of purebred *Pineywoods* would always be available.

There are many other examples of livestock that are regionally adapted to the Southwest. *Gulf Coast* sheep and Spanish horses are two good examples. In a day when sheep must be wormed many times a season, *Gulf Coast* sheep may not be considered trendy because they exhibit natural parasite resistance. The fact that they can survive on native forages with little care seems less significant by comparison.

American breeds of Spanish horses include the *Spanish Mustang, Spanish Barb, Florida Cracker,* and the *Choctaw* (once a native 'wild' horse in Oklahoma). These horses exhibit high levels of intelligence, hardiness, longevity, ability to thrive on native forages, dense leg bones, and very sound thick-walled hooves. As with the *criollo* cattle breeds, they were deposited here by the Spanish and have been shaped by natural selection for over 500 years. The movie *Hidalgo* revealed many of the characteristics of these breeds — inspiring their conservation.

Farming should be about adjusting what you raise and how you raise it to the land and environment you have to work with. Following trends, which are meant to work under different conditions than your own, just eats into your profits.

More Information

If you would like more information on regionally adapted breeds of livestock, or if you would like to help save rare, endangered breeds of livestock and poultry contact: ALBC, PO Box 477, Pittsboro, NC 27312, (919) 542-5704 or on the web at www.albc-usa.org.

A $30 membership includes a bi-monthly newsletter and a national breeders directory, updates on education programs and events, and special pre-publication prices on ALBC publications.

Many ALBC members also raise rare breeds. Individual breeders make up an active network of people who participate in hands-on conservation, marketing and public education.

Heritage Turkey Resource Packet Available

The ALBC has developed a guide to resources for information about the production of naturally mating "heritage" varieties of turkeys, sources of poults, and key points one should consider before raising a first flock. Request the Heritage Turkey Resource Packet by emailing albc@albc-usa.org with your names, address, phone and email address.

Pineywoods Cattle

The speckled cattle now grazing the Kerr Center pastures south of Poteau on highway 271 may look like Texas Longhorns, but they are something different, and unique.

They are *Pineywoods* cattle, a "heritage" breed of cattle, with fewer than 500 head of pure stock left in the world.

The breed developed from the cattle brought to the New World in the 1500s by the Spanish, just as the Longhorn did. But they evolved their unique characteristics in the pinewoods of Mississippi (hence the name), by just a few families, and so are unique to the United States.

About fifteen of the cattle were recently brought to the Kerr Center from the Overstreet-Kerr Historical Farm. The Farm has a larger herd and has long been active in preserving breeds of farm animals and types of poultry whose numbers are declining, but which have many important genetic characteristics which need to be preserved.

To learn more about the *Pineywoods* visit the Overstreet-Kerr Historical Farm on hwy. 59 10 miles south of Sallisaw, or the Kerr Center web site.

Back From the Brink— Success Stories from ALBC

– Donald E. Bixby, DVM,Technical Programs Director, ALBC

Editors Note: Members of the Board of Trustees and staff of the ALBC recently visited the Kerr Center and the Overstreet-Kerr Historical Farm. Kerr Center president Jim Horne is a member of the board. The center has long supported the ALBC and been active in the preservation of rare breeds.

The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy is the pioneer breed conservation organization in North America. One important conservation tool we have developed is the ALBC Conservation Priority List (CPL), which allows us to gauge progress in protecting endangered breeds of livestock and poultry (see ALBC FAQs, p. 11).

The CPL is based on a periodic census of breed populations—the first was published in the mid-1980s. Breeds are categorized based on criteria developed to evaluate a population's strengths.

It is rewarding to note that in the nearly 20 years since the first CPL, no breed has fallen to a more endangered category. In fact, many breeds have advanced to a less threatened category. As a result, ALBC has created a new category—"recovering" — for breeds that have surpassed the criteria for more endangered categories.

This general trend is no doubt the result of growing consumer recognition of concerns associated with industrial livestock agriculture. Consumers have become more thoughtful about issues concerning their health, the nutrition and safety of their food, the environmental costs of industrial agriculture, the welfare of animals and workers, and the social impact of factory farming.

With the support of its members, ALBC has been able to guide a range of successes. Some individual breeds have made progress, such as the *Milking Devon*, the state cow of Vermont, as a homestead cow; the *Dutch Belted* as a successful grass dairy producer; the *Shetland* sheep as the producer of fine colored wool; and the *Dominique* chicken as the historic American multipurpose farm chicken.

In addition, we have seen remarkable progress towards ensuring genetic diversity in two species, sheep and turkeys.

ALBC staff from Left to right: Anneke Jakes with *Slate* turkey, Chuck Bassett with *Bourbon Red* turkey, Don Bixby with *Black* turkey, Michele Brane with *Bronze* turkey, and Marjorie Bender with *Narrangansett* turkey. Photo by Mike Walters.

All the sheep breeds that produce wool of unusual color and texture, such as the *Navajo-Churro* and *Cotswold*, have progressed at the same time the national sheep flock has dramatically declined.

Much of this success can be attributed to hand spinners and hand weavers who have discovered and treasured the colors and textures of fibers from these breeds abandoned by the sheep industry.

Hair sheep have also become more popular since the USDA wool support program was abandoned. These sheep utilize their nutrients for the production of meat; none is diverted to the uneconomic production of wool.

The 1997 ALBC turkey census revealed the near extinction of traditional breeds of "naturally mating" turkeys. ALBC began to identify breeders and promote these heritage turkeys to consumers. A collaboration with the Slow Food organization led to soaring demand for this all-American bird. This led to a tripling of breeder birds in three years, and the expansion continues.

ALBC turkey work also continues. Recently, the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (Southern Region) awarded a grant to ALBC to compare an industrial strain and several traditional varieties such as *Bourbon Red*, *Black*, and *Narragansett* turkeys, all reared on range. Laboratory comparisons of immune response, disease resistance, and DNA analysis confirmed that the traditional varieties were much hardier and healthier birds for range production systems.

As people become more aware of where and how food is produced, the value of the genetic diversity offered by an array of traditional livestock and poultry breeds will become more apparent. ALBC welcomes new members to support the need for continued breed conservation as direct stewards of rare breeds, consumers of rare breed products, or supporters of the conservation efforts of the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy.

Choctaw ponies at Overstreet-Kerr Historical Farm. The farm entered into a program to help preserve the pony in December of 2002, with help from Dr. Phillip Sponenberg, DVM, PhD, the ALBC, and Bryant and Darlene Rickman. More info at kerrcenter.com.

ALBC's Conservation Efforts Include:

- Research on breed status and characteristics
- Developing breed specific strategies for conservation
- Maintaining a gene bank of rare breeds
- Strengthening the stewardship skills of breeders through various educational venues
- Educating the public through workshops, conferences, and publications.

FAQs—ALBC

What does the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (ALBC) do?

The organization protects genetic diversity in livestock and poultry species through the conservation and promotion of endangered breeds.

What is an endangered breed?

The ALBC conducts periodic censuses of breeds of traditional North American livestock (cattle, goats, horses, pigs, asses, and sheep), as well as poultry (chickens, geese, ducks and turkeys) and publishes a Conservation Priority List.

Breeds are placed in one of six categories—critical, rare, watch, study, and recovering— depending on the number of registries, global population, and other criteria. The most endangered are placed in the critical category, which for livestock means fewer than 200 annual North American registrations and estimated fewer than 2000 global population.

For poultry, critical mean fewer than 500 breeding birds in North America with five or fewer primary breeding flocks. (Because the vast majority of chicken eggs and birds end up on our tables and never pass their genes on, the ALBC focused its census efforts on breeding populations instead of total chicken population numbers.)

What breeds are on the Conservation Priority List?

The list includes uniquely American breeds such as *Mammoth Jackstock* donkeys, *Mulefoot* hogs and *Delaware* and *Buckeye* chickens. Also included are some surprising familiar names: *Guernsey* cattle, *Tennessee Fainting* goats and *Clydesdale* horses. One hundred breeds are currently on the list.

Why conserve these breeds?

Says the ALBC: "Today's industrialized agriculture values only the most productive of breeds and discards the rest." For example: In the 1920s more than sixty breeds of chickens were raised on farms across the United States. Today, one hybrid chicken, the *Cornish Rock* cross, supplies nearly all the supermarket chicken, while *White Leghorns* lay almost all the white eggs.

In the 1930s, fifteen breeds of pigs were raised for market. Today, six of these breeds are extinct. The *Hampshire, Yorkshire,* and *Duroc* pigs provide 75% of the genetics for commercial production.

This is of concern because as the ALBC points out, agriculture is constantly changing and our future needs are uncertain. A sustainable agriculture needs what these endangered breeds have to offer, traits such as thriftiness, hardiness, self-sufficiency, intelligence, easy births, good mothering ability and long lives.

Many breeds that the ALBC promotes, says Don Bixby, DVM, ALBC's technical program director, "were developed in an era when farm animals were expected to be reasonably self-sufficient with minimal input of resources."

These neglected breeds need to be preserved as treasures of our agricultural heritage and as important resources, "genetic reservoirs" for future generations to use.

Farm-Fresh Cookbooks

– Maura McDermott

Summertime. . . and the living is easy. Adding to the many pleasures of summer is the opportunity to enjoy an abundance of fresh vegetables and fruits, out of the garden or from a local farm.

But, how to fix them? If you are, like me, a member of the Minute Rice generation, you may be attracted by the tastes and health benefits of fresh fruits and vegetables, but at the same time be clueless about how to cook them.

To see just what is available to help people successfully prepare meals using locally grown produce, I recently put out a request for cookbook recommendations to the Internet list serves I belong to whose members are farmers, gardeners, or advocates/supporters of locally grown food. I was looking for collections of recipes put together, if possible, by farmers' groups or CSAs, that would be "user-friendly, with recipes for fresh vegetables (and fruits, if possible) that are simple to prepare, do not require exotic ingredients, and of course, TASTE GOOD!"

I got many suggestions, but the following were mentioned most or fit the criteria best.

Rolling Prairie Cookbook: Over 130 Recipes Celebrating Fresh Produce

by Nancy O'Connor, et al. Available: AnyBook4Less.com $14.95 plus shipping; also amazon.com (out of print, limited quantity).

The 130 original recipes were developed for members of the Rolling Prairie Farmers' Alliance CSA in Kansas and distributed each week with their produce. Includes recipes for fruits, herbs and vegetables.

—*"A must-have for any CSA member."*

—*"Wonderful, easy, delicious! This is absolutely the best guide for preparing fresh vegetables!"*

From Asparagus to Zucchini: A Guide to Farm-Fresh, Seasonal Produce

by the Madison Area CSA Coalition (MACSAC). $17.50 Inc. s&h. Order from MACSAC PO Box 7814 Madison, WI 53707-7814, info@macsac.org

The book is an alphabetical listing of 51 vegetables and herbs with historical, nutritional, storage and cooking info, with 1-3 pages of recipes for each (385 total). Includes oddballs like celeriac and Jerusalem artichokes. Also, essays on eating locally and seasonally, sustainable agriculture and helping kids appreciate (and eat) vegetables. Proceeds fund the MACSAC's outreach projects such as getting fresh local produce to low-income families.

—*"My favorite; particularly good; a vegetable resource book and good cookbook."*

Farm-Fresh Recipes: Ready to Copy Recipe Cards for Produce Marketers

by Janet Majure. 104 pgs. Available from *Growing for Market* magazine website, www.growingformarket.com. $20 plus S&H Phone: 800.307.8949

Three hundred "easy, enticing" recipes using every major type of produce grown throughout North America; for example, includes 27 recipes featuring tomatoes as well as recipes for such items as fennel and rhubarb. Includes recipes using herbs, as well as recipes including fish, chicken and beef. For those who sell produce, this book is laid out so that recipes are ready to be xeroxed and cut into cards to be handed out to customers.

Fresh Seasonal Recipes from The Happy Kitchen (La Cocina Alegre),

From The Sustainable Food Center, Austin, Texas. This cookbook grew out of a series of cooking and food-education classes targeted to people with limited incomes. Recipes in English and Spanish all use whole grains and fresh, seasonal vegetables, fruits and herbs, are low-cost, quick and easy to prepare, and use commonly found ingredients. Includes nutrition info and a seasonal weekly planning section.

Available from the center, a non-profit group that works to connect low-income people with locally and sustainably grown food. 512.236.0074 www.sustainablefoodcenter.org

More-with-Less Cookbook

by Doris Janzen Longacre, May Emma Showalter, and Mary Beth Lind. Available from the Mennonite Central Committee. Toll free 888.563.4676 http://www.morewithless.org/more/index.html

This cookbook has sold 830,000 copies since its release in 1976. It contains 500 recipes and hundreds of spiritual reflections and practical tidbits about eating more simply.

— "This book was given to me as a gift over 20 years ago. The recipes are simple, cheap and use less meat, sugar and processed foods compared to other recipes. After 18 years of constant use, I decided to get another copy. I was happy to find that it was still in print."

Several folks mentioned the cookbook that the Mennonite Central Committee is putting together now. The focus of *Simply in Season* will be recipes for "simple, nutritious and delicious dishes prepared with whole food, especially the locally grown foods available at a farmers' market near you."

They are asking individuals to contribute to the book by submitting a recipe, becoming a tester or sending a story "of finding health and wholeness by eating local and seasonal foods." http://www.morewithless.org/new/index.html or Simply in Season, PO Box 65, Harman, WV 26270 Include name, address and phone #.

Why put together this kind of cookbook? The Mennonites say this:

"Not so long ago, within the memory of many of our parents and grandparents, most fruits and vegetables on North American tables came from our own gardens or from gardens close by. Eggs, milk and meat also came from local sources. Today, the average item of food travels over a thousand miles before it lands on our tables. It's a remarkable technological accomplishment, but it has not proven to be healthy for our communities, our land or us.

"Through stories and simple "whole foods" recipes, this new MCC cookbook will explore how the food we put on our tables impacts our local and global neighbors. It will show the importance of eating local, seasonal food — and fairly traded food — and invite readers to make choices that offer security and health for our communities, for the land, for body and spirit."

Cooking with Barbara Brown

On Saturday mornings, viewers of *Oklahoma Gardening*, OSU's long-running gardening show on OETA, are invited into Barbara Brown's cool kitchen to watch her whip up something scrumptious from the garden.

Brown is a PhD and Extension food specialist. Six years worth of her recipes are online and range from the traditional sweet potato pie to the unconventional rhubarb salsa. The 170 plus recipes include Southern favorites popular in Oklahoma such as okra ("Grilled Okra") and peaches ("Peach or Nectarine Sorbet"). Each recipe includes nutrition information. Some include instructions on how to preserve those bountiful harvests.

To see recipes go to:
http://www.fcs.okstate.edu/food/food/food/cooking/

The following recently posted recipe uses an abundance of summer garden veggies:

Summer Garden Sauté

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 medium onion, finely chopped
2 medium zucchini, ends trimmed, sliced 3/8-inch thick
2 medium yellow squash, ends trimmed, sliced 3/8-inch thick
1 small red or green bell pepper, seeded, diced
1/3 cup water
3 ears sweet corn husked, 10-ounces frozen corn,
OR 1 15-ounce can whole-kernel corn, drained
1 large tomato, peeled, diced
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley

1. Melt butter in a large skillet or wok over medium heat. Add onion, zucchini, yellow squash and bell pepper. Sauté 4 to 5 minutes.
2. Add water. Cover and reduce heat. Simmer 5 minutes.
3. If using fresh corn, cut kernels from cob using a sharp knife. Stir corn into squash mixture. Add tomato, salt and pepper. Cook until vegetables are tender, about 3 minutes.
4. Sprinkle with parsley. Taste for seasoning, adjust if needed. Serve immediately.

Serves 8.

Source: Modified from original source: Pappas, L.S. (1982) *Vegetable Cookery*, HPBooks, P.O. Box 5367, Tuscon, A.Z. 85703

In its 28th year of production, *Oklahoma Gardening* airs Saturdays at 11 a.m. and Sundays at 3:30 on OETA.

The Oklahoma Food Cooperative: Rediscovering the Ties that Bind

– *Robert Waldrop*

The Oklahoma Food Cooperative was born when I decided, three years ago, to buy as much food for my household as I could from Oklahoma farmers.

Robert Waldrop
Photo: Hal Cantwell, Oklahoma Sustainability Network

I grew up on a farm in Tillman County. When we needed meat, my father would take a steer to the "ice plant" where it would be cut and processed for us. Every spring my grandfather would plant black-eyed peas. Anybody who wanted black-eyed peas could just go out and pick some. Those are the types of relationships that used to unite rural and urban Oklahomans together in one great web of life.

As I found local food sources, I started a website, www.oklahomafood.org, to share these experiences. I began writing about this on the internet and giving speeches. This led to community meetings throughout the state which brought together a group of people whose goal was to create a cooperative business that is socially just, environmentally sustainable, and economically viable.

The Oklahoma Food Cooperative is owned by its members – producers of Oklahoma foods and the customers who want to buy them. The cooperative acts as agent of the producer members as we sell their products to customer members. We act as agent of the customer members as we find products for them to buy, and organize and deliver the orders.

The cooperative stays out of the pricing decisions. Each producer sets his or her own prices, and receives 100% of the revenue from the product sale. The cooperative adds a small charge to each customer invoice to cover our expenses. We have no employees and use borrowed space, so we operate very frugally.

The first week of each month the price list is posted for that month. The second week, we order. On the third Thursday of the month, the producers come to Oklahoma City, and volunteers organize the retail orders. Thus, a producer in Kiowa County can sell to customers in Enid and Muskogee – and a customer in Tahlequah can buy directly from producers in Lawton and Ponca City.

We are therefore the "Amazing Portable Oklahoma Food Cooperative."

Once each month our network comes together to bring products from farmers and local processors all over the state and distribute them to customers. Eventually, we will go to twice a month and then to a weekly schedule. In seven monthly orders, we have sold more than 10,000 items with total gross revenues of nearly $50,000.

We market our business by presenting "All-Oklahoma Food" meals. At one recent event at my church, we served roast prime rib of buffalo from Wichita Buffalo in Hinton, new potatoes, green beans and yellow squash from PDH Farms in Okemah, artisan breads from Springhill Farm in Kiowa County, and then finished it off with Mrs. Chadwick's pound cakes from Lawton. Nobody complained about the food.

We are committed to open cooperative membership and democratic governance. Any customer or producer can join the cooperative, and all members are equal; producers and customers alike can buy and sell.

We are opposed to limiting the number of producers who can sell a particular item because we think such limits are a bad idea for the economic vitality of the organization. Just as in a supermarket, producers compete against each other for customer dollars, and that is healthy for the producers and for the customers.

Local agriculture has suffered from

being dependent upon outsiders for capital. To join our cooperative, each member household buys a capital share of $50. Self-funding by the participants via the sales of capital shares to the membership is the strongest financial base on which to rest our cooperative efforts. It enforces financial discipline (which is critical) and prevents us from getting too far ahead of ourselves and from developing excessive administrative overhead.

We believe strongly in the principles of cooperative enterprise and have structured things so that there is a close relationship between the price of a share of our cooperative and the value of our cooperative. We don't want our memberships' ownership to be nominal, but to be real. Thus, one member household — one share — one vote.

The purpose of the share price is to fund capital expenditures for equipment, software development, and other things necessary for the startup of the cooperative. Our operating funds are effectively "volunteer sweat equity and borrowed space"; any cash operating expenses are covered by the co-op charge

Participation in the Oklahoma Food Cooperative does include some challenges. Most of us are not used to buying our groceries via an internet shopping cart, and few producers take orders over the internet. Most people don't buy their food once a month, and so we have to make some adjustments in how we plan our meals and do our shopping.

But the food is worth it. The members of the Oklahoma Food Cooperative are enjoying excellent food that is healthy and nutritious. We do not feed our families mystery meat from faceless corporations. We know the producers of our food. More than one member has told me that they are also saving money. Producer members benefit from a new source of cash revenue.

Every dollar spent through the Oklahoma Food Cooperative creates economic opportunity in rural areas. We are discovering that the "ties that bind" us are not lost. With every meal, we are restoring and completing the "circle of life," re-weaving the relationships and connections that once united rural and urban Oklahomans.

Organic Feast-ival Set for July 18

The Oklahoma Certified Organic Association will hold a "Feast-ival" on July 18 from 4-8 pm at Earth Elements Farm in Lexington.

Members of the group will be on hand to talk about their farms and organic practices. An all-organic feast of food from members' farms and prepared by gourmet chefs will be the highlight of the evening. On the menu are a variety of organic meats and vegetables, as well as Vicki Townsend's green chili ice cream!

A farmers' market, a tour of April Harrington's Earth Elements herb farm, live music, games, and door prizes will add to the fun.

Tickets in advance are adults, $12, children, $6 (at the gate, adults $18, children, $9). Tickets can be purchased online through Paypal at www.earthelements.net/ocoa/feastival.html

Proceeds go to the advancement of organic agriculture in Oklahoma.

To get to Earth Elements Farm from I-35 at Norman, take exit 108A to Highway 9 East to Highway 77 South. Drive through Noble. Continue past Banner Road, to the first gravel road south of Banner. Pecan Tree Circle is the second lot on the right.

For more information contact Vicki Townsend at 580.889.2436 or thefarm@duracom.net or April Harrington at 405.872.3722.

OK Organic Certification

The Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture, Food and Forestry oversees the certified organic program in the state. To find out more call Chad Goss at 405.522.5924 or cbgoss@oda.state.ok.us.

A cost share program runs until Sept. 29, 2004 through which farmers and ranchers can recoup 75% of the cost of certification or re-certification (up to $500).

Walt Davis
Photo by Mary Logan Wolf; courtesy *Oklahoma Living*

Organic Before Organic Was Cool:

Oklahoma Rancher Raises Profits on Pasture

–Wylie Harris

Some farmers convert to organic methods in search of higher profits. For Walt Davis, things worked out the other way around. "We didn't set out to become organic," says Davis, one of a handful of Oklahoma ranchers who raises certified organic beef. "We set out to save the ranch."

It was 1974, and the cattle market had just collapsed, with prices falling by as much as seventy percent. Davis, a graduate of the animal husbandry program at Texas A&M, was following state-of-the-art management practices on his ranch in Bryan County, in southern Oklahoma east of Durant. His applications of synthetic nitrogen fertilizer and herbicides were boosting production, but the high price of those inputs left little in the way of profit.

"The first thing was to cut costs," Davis says. "We dropped the nitrogen fertilizer, expecting production to collapse." And while it did decline at first, Davis quickly found that forage legumes could make up the difference.

"Today if a fertilizer salesman showed up offering me free nitrogen 'til the end of time, I wouldn't let him on the place," he says. "Fertilizer acts like amphetamines. It revs up production so high that it removes the capacity of the soil to cope."

Where soil conditions once deteriorated steadily under close-cropped bermudagrass swards, diverse stands of grasses and forbs now hold and build the soil. As a sign of improved soil health, Davis points to the earthworm castings that have covered the ground in the wake of a two-day old rain.

Affordable nitrogen and erosion control aren't the only benefits of forage legumes. As Davis learned, the legumes also lengthen the quality-grazing period. His heavily fertilized bermudagrass had a high but short-lived peak of forage quality. "The more species we introduced, the more we flattened that forage curve, and also began to lengthen it. It's easy to increase the grazing period by sixty to ninety days just by adding species."

The idea that diversity increases productivity is hotly debated among academic ecologists, but for Davis, it's a workaday fact of life. His long list of forage legumes includes such mainstays as white clover, arrowleaf clover, alfalfa, vetch, singletary pea, button medic, and ball clover.

A network of electric fences and watering lines crisscrosses the ranch, allowing him to keep the cattle grazing wherever the mix of forage species is freshest. When one species is at its peak of production, another may just be germinating, and will offer continued grazing after the first has passed its prime.

The ranch started turning profits soon after the switch to lower inputs, but organic certification didn't come until 1989, almost as an afterthought. "After years, we realized that for all practical purposes, we were organic," says Davis. To certify, he had only to stop feeding protein cubes.

But he started receiving premium prices only in the past few years, when he arranged to sell to a meat company that retails organic, grass-finished beef. The main upturn in profitability came earlier, with the switch to lower inputs – and lower costs. That's one of many important lessons that new

ranchers – or ranchers newly converting to pasture-based systems – can take from Davis' experience.

Davis has the same advice for new and old ranchers alike. "Learn to substitute management for money, and be very dubious of anybody that's trying to sell you anything. Agriculture is the most overcapitalized industry in the U.S. We have so much money at risk every year that the potential for loss has completely outrun the potential for profit. We have got to return agriculture to a biological foundation."

Fertilizer costs are climbing sharply due to recent increases in the cost of the natural gas used in fertilizer production. Davis' "biological foundation" relies on nitrogen-fixing legumes to supply natural fertilizer for growing forages – paying less for a longer season of production. More months of forage production mean lower feed costs. The combination of greater forage diversity and intensive grazing management also diminishes weed problems, reducing – or in Davis' case, eliminating – the need for purchased herbicides.

Though this approach increases both economic and ecological viability, keeping cattle and forages synchronized in time and space isn't as simple as the conventional prescription of herbicides and fertilizer. Even after spending three decades working out the kinks, Davis has lost "nearly every legume on the place" to the past seven years' drought. To compensate, he's been reseeding 25 to 30 per cent of his land each year, instead of the usual 10 per cent.

> "Today if a fertilizer salesman showed up offering me free nitrogen 'til the end of time, I wouldn't let him on the place," he says. "Fertilizer acts like amphetamines. It revs up production so high that it removes the capacity of the soil to cope."

"It's not going to be something that everyone can tap into," says Davis. "If you're going to maintain high gains over a long period of time, you're going to have to put a lot of thought into it."

Agronomist Wes Jackson has likened the management-intensive approach to increasing the ratio of "eyes to acres." With lower entry costs and a higher requirement of human capital, it offers a natural way for more families to make a rewarding living in agriculture.

On those rewards, Davis is unequivocal: "There's no way I'd go back to conventional ranching, from the standpoint of profit or from the standpoint of quality of life."

Wylie Harris is a fellow of the Food and Society Policy Program, a national program of professional fellowships funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Otto Bremer Foundation. To read more of his articles, go to http://www.foodandsociety fellows.org/pages/ individual_fellows/ fellows-bio.cfm?people_id=47

RESOURCES

Walt Davis shares his insights into successful pasture-based ranching as a hired consultant on resource management. He can be reached at wwdranch@aol.com.

Davis reckons that anyone trying to make a living at ranching needs to read *Holistic Range Management*, by Allan Savory, and take a Holistic Management course. Books, journals and websites with information on pasture-based ranching include:

Holistic Range Management, Allan Savory. 1988. Washington, D.C.: Island Press. 558 pages.

Grass Productivity, Andre Voisin. 1993. Washington, D.C.: Island Press. 353 pages.

Pasture Profits with Stocker Cattle, Allan Nation. 1992. Jackson, Mississippi: Green Park Press. 192 pages.

Why Grassfed Is Best, Jo Robinson. 2000. Vashon, Washington: Vashon Island Press. 127 pages.

American Farmland Trust's site on grass-based farming systems: http://grassfarmer.com/

Eat Wild: The Clearinghouse for Information about Pasture-Based Farming: http://eatwild.com/

The Savory Center is an international not-for-profit organization established in 1984 to coordinate the development of Holistic Management worldwide http://www.holisticmanagement.org/

The Stockman Grass Farmer is a monthly publication for grassland farmers sharing the latest in intensive grazing technology and pasture management. Call them at 1-800-748-9808, or fill out a brief online form to receive a free sample issue. Books and audio tapes available through the web site: www.stockmangrassfarmer.com/sgf/

JOEL SALATIN is a full time farmer on 550 acres in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. A third generation alternative farmer, he returned to the farm full time in 1982 and continued refining and adding to his parents' ideas. The family farm, Polyface, Inc. (The Farm of Many Faces) has been featured in National Geographic and other magazines. The farm services roughly 400 customers with salad bar beef, pastured poultry, eggmobile eggs, pigaerator pork, forage-based rabbits, pastured turkey and forestry products through "relationship marketing." He is the author of three books, including *YOU CAN FARM: The Entrepreneur's Guide to Start and Succeed in a Farming Enterprise* and *Pastured Poultry Profit$*.

Grazing Lands Dollar$ and Cent$ Conference

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  Dr. Fred Provenza, Utah State University
  Which food animals eat and where they forage influences weight gains, reproductive performance, and the carrying capacity of pastures and rangelands. Animals are thought to prefer foods that are palatable, but what is palatability and is it merely a matter of taste? Dr. Provenza will speak about factors that drive food and habitat selection and what are the implications for management.
- **The Three Secrets for Increasing Profits**
  David Pratt, President, Ranch Management Consultants, Inc.
- **Profiting from the Cattle Cycle**
  John Lawrence - Extension Livestock Specialist and Associate Professor, Iowa State University
- **Organic Farming and Relationship Marketing**
  Joel Salatin - Organic Livestock Farmer and Speaker
- **A Big Chief Tablet and No. 2 Pencil**
  a Drought Management Strategy - Ted Alexander - Rancher, Lake City, Kansas
- **What to do When Drought Hits You**
  Marlene Moore
- **Marketing COOPs - A Success Story**
  Bob Waldrop and Kim Barker
- **The Next Generation**
  Dick Hamilton - Oklahoma Rancher
- **Keeping Success in Succession Planning**
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Registration is $100 + $50 for each additional family member or employee.
Lunches included if you register before August 4th. Make check payable to the OGLCA
Mail to: OGLCA, ATTN: Amy Wilson (OFB)2501 N. Stiles, OKC, OK 73105-3126

ALABAMA GrazefEST™ 2004

Grazefest Alabama to Feature Country Star Teddy Gentry

Kerr Center President Jim Horne Also to Speak

Talk to Teddy Gentry about beef, and the country music star from the super group Alabama is likely to deliver the kind of well-reasoned lecture about fatty acids, conjugated linoleic acids, omega-3s, and beta carotene that one would expect from a seasoned researcher.

Few realize, however, that Gentry does more than sing the praises of pasture-raised and grass-fed meat and dairy products. His Bent Tree Cattle Company is a well-respected pasture-based farm and beef company that grew from 20 Polled Herefords on 60 acres in 1980 to 1500 South Poll mama cows on hundreds of acres in Alabama and Georgia today.

Country star and rancher Teddy Gentry

Bent Tree has developed a cattle herd that thrives on grass in a hot, humid climate. The operation also incorporates rotational grazing management. An offshoot company, Burt's Beef, sells beef from the ranch. The meat is advertised as being tender without excess fat.

Gentry is a genuine country boy; he grew up on a cotton farm. He founded Alabama in 1977 with his cousins, Randy Owen and Jeff Cook. Gentry plays bass for the band that has been called the most popular country group in history.

Alabama is currently on the "The American Farewell Tour." But in between concert dates later this summer Gentry will headline *Grazefest Alabama 2004*, at the Garrett Coliseum in Montgomery, Alabama, on September 11 and 12. Grazefest will be the first national conference and festival on pasture-raised foods.

The two-day event will bring together leading experts in all fields related to the production of raising high-quality beef, poultry and pork on grass and is expected to draw thousands of regional residents interested in sampling grass-fed foods.

Day one will consist of educational seminars and presentations aimed at pasture-based farmers, educators, ag. students, chefs, and culinary students, as well as the general public. Participation is free, but advance registration is required.

Presentations will be made by researchers from Auburn University; Dr. Tilak Dhiman of the Utah State University, the nation's preeminent researcher on the biochemistry of meats; Jo Robinson, author of several critically acclaimed books about pasture-raised meat products as well as books about diet and nutrition; and other prominent members of the grass-fed industry such as Joel Salatin and Kit Pharo.

Grass-fed products from various exhibitors will be featured at a banquet on the evening of the first day. Several well-known chefs will prepare grass-fed meat dishes.

After reading Kerr Center president Jim Horne's book *The Next Green Revolution: Essential Steps to a Healthy, Sustainable Agriculture,* Gentry invited him to speak about sustainable agriculture during the banquet.

Horne sees the trend towards grass fed production as "a positive step towards sustainability."

Day two is a food festival and series of exhibits aimed at raising awareness among consumers of the health, flavor, and culinary benefits of pasture-based foods. It will be open to the public for $10. One focus will be "From Pasture to the Pit"—how to barbecue grass fed meats.

Jo Robinson, noted journalist and the author of *Pasture Perfect*, has found that pasture-based animals have higher levels of omega-3s, one of the "good fats" that have been linked with a lower risk of cardiovascular disease.

The event is being organized by the U.S. Grass Fed Society, a new nonprofit formed by Gentry and other leaders in pasture-based farming.

A positive for small-scale farmers is the potential for greater profit selling grass fed beef directly to consumers. Gentry hopes *Grazefest Alabama* will attract the next generation of farmers. "The potential market for pasture-raised meat and dairy is huge. I want to see young farmers take a strong lead in meeting that growing demand."

To register for day one and reserve space at the banquet call Kathy Lacy at 256.845.3009 or email klacy@benttreefarms.com. More information on *Grazefest Alabama* activities, exhibitors, and speakers is at www.eatingfresh.com/ef_gfa.html or www.usgrassfed.com/index.html. Deadline is September 1.

Agriculture students currently enrolled in a college or university can receive $100 scholarships if they attend both days of *Grazefest Alabama*. Contact Kathy Lacy, info above.

For more info on Bent Tree Cattle Co. go to benttreefarms.com.

CALENDAR

JULY 18

Oklahoma Certified Organic Association "Feastival," Noble, OK
See p. 15

JULY 24

Oklahoma Wine Grape Production Field Day, Perkins, OK See p. 3

AUGUST 13-14

Grazing Lands Dollar$ and Cent$, Oklahoma City, see p.18

OCTOBER 9

Fall Farm-Fest, Overstreet-Kerr Historical Farm
Call 918.966.3396 or email okhfarm@crosstel.net

NOVEMBER 6

Future Farms 2004: Digging Deeper, Oklahoma City, see p. 1.

More info on calendar items can be found at www.kerrcenter.com

Free Internet Listing Offered

The Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (SSAWG) is offering farmers and farmers' markets the opportunity to be part of the most popular and comprehensive directory of small farms on the Internet—**LocalHarvest.org**. The site is visited by thousands of people every day. Best of all, the listing is free!

To get listed, go online to localharvest.org/register.jsp and follow directions. You will be able to update your listing at any time, receive and respond to consumer messages without making your email address publicly visible, advertise your events to thousands of subscribers, and even sell your products online via the LocalHarvest stores.

The service is offered as part of a media campaign to encourage people to find sources for local food online. The campaign is a partnership of Local Harvest, SSAWG, and the USDA Risk Management Agency.

KERR CENTER

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