

# Field Notes



Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture

Vol. 28, #2 • Summer 2002

## Shopping for Fresh Ideas?

**F**resh ideas for farm and ranch enterprises will be featured at *Future Farms 2002: A Supermarket of Ideas*, a conference and trade show slated for Friday and Saturday, November 15-16 in Norman, Oklahoma. More than fifty speakers will present innovative ideas for sustainable crop and livestock production, for adding value and marketing farm products and for alternative farm revenue. Several intensive workshops will also be part of the lineup. A large trade show will be held adjacent to the conference.

The aim of the event is to expose agricultural producers to a broad array of alternative ideas. Producers will have a chance to talk to those who have been successful with these new approaches. The conference is being sponsored by the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture and the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture.

Early registration for the two-day event is just \$50; \$30 for one day. Student registration is \$30; one day, \$20. Discounts will be given for spouses and/or a second person from the same farm/company. (For more information on *Future Farms 2002*, turn to page 10.)

New ideas for market gardeners, home gardeners, and commercial fruit and vegetable growers will be featured at the Kerr Center *Horticulture Farm Evening Walk* on Thursday, July 11, from 6:30 p.m. until dark. Visitors will learn about the heirloom fruit and vegetable



varieties that the center has grown the last two years. The center's trials of blueberries, blackberries, table, and muscadine grapes will also be available for inspection. The event is free; presentations will be informal and include plenty of time for grower questions. (For more on what is being grown at the horticulture farm, turn to page 18).

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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 south-eastern Oklahoma town of Poteau. It was established in 1985.

**For further information contact us at:**  
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**PROGRAMS INCLUDE:**

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

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# Earth Day 2002

**K**err Center staff and trustees marked Earth Day on April 22 by planting wildflowers and trees at the Kerr Center Stewardship Ranch near Poteau.

The ranch has a number of environmentally friendly projects. Riparian areas and ponds have been fenced off to protect water quality and enhance wildlife habitat. A number of trees have also been planted to reduce erosion. In addition, bluebird boxes are set out each year (and well-used)!



Kerr Center co-founder Kay Kerr Adair plants wildflowers.



Staff members Barbara Chester and Carol Vise rake in the wildflower seed.



New trustees Dan Nagengast and John Ikerd help Jeremy Henson of Overstreet-Kerr Historical Farm plant a bald cypress.

# Farmer-to-Farmer: Producer Grant Field Events

–David Redhage

*Check out these  
free events!*

## June 29 Richard Ortez Farm, Glencoe

9-1, light lunch provided

Mr. Ortez received a producer grant in 2000. The grant examined the possibility of dry edible beans as an alternative crop for north central Oklahoma. Ortez runs the Boarding House Café in Stillwater, Oklahoma. He raises and processes the beans, and then markets them through his restaurant. Visitors will have an opportunity to view the different bean varieties growing on the farm. Ortez will explain his entire operation, from the growing to the processing and selling. To arrive at the farm, travel east on hwy 51 from Stillwater. Turn north on Hwy 108 and travel four miles. Turn east on Richard and then South on Bethel. Look for field day signs.



Dick Ortez cooks up his homegrown specialties.

## August 10 Glen Ledbetter Farm, Foss

9-12:30, light lunch served

Mr. Ledbetter received a producer grant in 2000. The purpose of the grant was to establish a pecan orchard using cover crops, municipal wastewater and drip irrigation during the establishment years. Mr. Ledbetter will discuss what worked and what didn't. After the pecan orchard talk, the field day participants will travel five miles to a grape vineyard that Glen, and his brother Leon, operate. The field day is scheduled close to harvest so participants should see grapes on the vines. Varieties being grown are Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Orange Muscat, and Gewurztraminer. Directions: Travel on I-40 to exit #53 (Burns Flat/Foss) Turn south on Hwy 44, travel for 7 miles into Burns Flat. Go 1/4 mile past only stoplight and turn left (east) onto Webb Street. Go east 1 6/10ths mile. Turn south on gravel road, follow to end of road. Look for field day signs.

## September 5 Robert Wall Farm, Perkins

4-6 pm

Robert Wall received a Kerr Center producer grant in 2000 to look more closely at multi-species grazing. He grazes lactating dairy cows, sheep, and goats; he also has free range laying hens. The goal of the program is to maintain better control of weeds through carefully managed grazing. Take Hwy 177 from Shawnee to Perkins. Just before crossing the Cimarron River turn left and go 5 1/2 miles on Country Club Road. Turn right and go 1/8 mile to a white two-story house. Watch for field day signs.

## September 12 Tribble Dairy, Ripley

3-5 pm

The Tribbles received a grant in 2000 to install a waste management system that irrigates their pastures and prolongs their grazing season. They make gourmet cheeses that they sell at Farmers' Markets. The dairy is located 1/4 mile south of Ripley, on the west side of highway 108.

# The Oklahoma Producer Grant Program: *Developing a Solid Proposal*

—Alan Ware

**T**he Kerr Center's Oklahoma Producer Grant Program will be issuing its fifth call for proposals in September, 2002. (A "call for proposals" is an invitation for Oklahoma agricultural producers to submit research or demonstration project proposals to be considered for grants). In an effort to help you make your proposal stronger, I want to review many of the common errors we have seen on grant applications and make suggestions for developing a stronger proposal.

You should first understand exactly what the grant program is set up to address. This program offers grants to farmers/ranchers for projects that promote sustainable agriculture and are innovative, unique, and experimental.

Despite this emphasis on sustainable agriculture, many proposals merely adopt or confirm longstanding conventional agricultural practices. Often proposals do not address a "point of sustainability" at all. So, before you start the application process, review all the available material and make sure your project fits the call for proposals. If it doesn't fit, it doesn't mean your project is unimportant, but simply that you may need to seek another funding source.

Other common errors include: not addressing the area of sustainability listed in the call for proposals, weak collaboration or none at all, unclear objectives, and an ineffective outreach plan.

We have seen many great ideas fail to make it on paper. So, we should first deal with getting your idea on paper as you envision it. Many times applicants will call the Kerr Center to discuss an idea for a project with one of

our specialists. The project sounds great when discussed on the telephone, but once the application is submitted we find that the project idea has not been transferred to the application. This problem has occurred many times over the past years.

The best way to prevent this error is to have someone who doesn't know about your project read your application and tell you what they understand about your project. If you hear a different idea than you intended, you should revise your application and clear up the weak spots.

The following suggestions for developing a strong producer grant proposal were adapted from the Northeast Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education

Program, which also gives grants to producers. As you write your producer grant...

## ❶ **Make sure the Oklahoma Producer Grant Program is the right granting organization for your project.**

Take a few moments to review the proposal guidelines and evaluation criteria in the Call for Proposals. We often receive a number of well-written, well-designed proposals that don't clearly address the Kerr Center's unique goals and criteria. If you have questions about the program, call Alan or David at 918-647-9123.

## ❷ **Learn about the Oklahoma Producer Grant Program.**

We have information available about past recipients and the program.

## ❸ **Involve other groups and people.** The strongest proposals clearly demonstrate that the project was planned and carried out by a variety of individuals. Many past successful grants have involved Extension Service personnel, agricultural group leaders or participants, Natural Resources Conservation Service personnel, and other farmers or ranchers.



**4 Be sure to add a detailed plan for outreach.**

It's imperative that each project communicate its results to other farmers, agricultural educators, or other appropriate audiences to help further research, education, and the implementation of sustainable agriculture. From the Kerr Center's perspective this is the most important benefit of the project: educating others.

**5 Keep the writing simple.**

Proposals with clear objectives and methods are generally the most successful. This one is hard to explain sometimes. You want to keep it simple, but you have to tell the complete story. Reviewers don't know about your project, so you have to fully explain the project in as few words as possible.

**6 Leave enough time to have someone else proofread your proposal.**

A fresh set of eyes will help you identify sections that are unclear and find typographical errors that you might not otherwise catch.

**7 Follow directions.**

Every year, proposals are disqualified prior to review because the writer failed to follow the general format directions that are clearly stated in the cover letter or failed to complete the checklist that is necessary to have your proposal accepted for review.

**8 Develop clear goals.**

Whether you are trying to solve an insect pest problem, conduct a marketing project or do something no one has even thought of yet, simple and clear goals let the reviewers know what your goals are. Then, as they read your application, they should see how you are going to reach your goals.

**9 Measure your results.**

If you measure something it will provide information that will tell you if

you have accomplished your objectives. Whether it is crop yield, milk protein content, bigger tomatoes, increased market share for a cooperative, etc., it is important to have this information for educational reasons.

**10 Set up a paired-comparison if possible.**

The best grants have a comparison plot that shows a contrast to the accepted conventional practice. It also gives people who come to learn from your project a visual tool for comparison.

**11 Develop a realistic budget.**

Carefully itemize your expenses on the budget worksheet and enter your sub-totals for funds requested. Reviewers are asked to award the grants as though the money was theirs. They want to award grants to recipients who are going to spend the money wisely.

**12 Don't try to do too much.**

Realize there is extra work in projects, so don't commit yourself to taking on several aspects to a problem. Answering one specific question well is better than answering poorly all the aspects of a problem.

In review, the most important items you can remember is to keep the writing simple, ask someone to critically review your proposal, and follow instructions to make sure your proposal makes it to the review committee.

The Kerr Center would like to be able to award grants to all the proposals received during a call for proposals, but our funding just won't allow that to happen. So, in order to better your chances, follow this advice to help guide you through the process. Remember to start early to give yourself plenty of time.

Good luck! We look forward to receiving your grant application.

# 2002 OK Producer Grant Workshop Dates and Locations

Learn about the program and how to write a successful grant proposal.

**Monday, Sept. 23 – 6:00-8:00**

Southwestern Oklahoma State University - Weatherford  
1121 N. 7th Street  
Conference Center - Sunflower Room

**Tuesday, Sept. 24 – 6:00-8:00**

Great Plains AVTS Bldg.  
300 Rm 301B  
4500 SW Lee Blvd. - Lawton

**Monday, Sept. 30 – 6:00-8:00**

Tulsa Community College  
3727 E Apache Engineering/  
Technology Bldg. Room 127

**Tuesday, Oct. 1 – 6:00-8:00**

Indian Capital Technology Center-  
Tahlequah - 240 VoTech Rd.  
in Industrial Park Complex  
west of town - GED Room

**Thursday, Oct. 24  
6:00-8:00**

Kerr Center-  
highway 271 five miles  
south of Poteau

Contact the  
Kerr Center  
for more  
information  
918-647-9123  
[www.kerrcenter.com](http://www.kerrcenter.com)



# Designing Research and Demonstration Projects: Resources

## On-Farm Research Bulletins & Reports

*A Farmer's Guide to On-Farm Research*, by Rhonda Janke, Dick Thompson, Ken McNamara and Craig Cramer. A step-by-step guide to conducting on-farm research, using real-life examples from Dick Thompson's Iowa farm. \$5 + s/h. Rodale Book Store, (800) 832-6285.

*AGSTATS*. A statistics program for simple field trials for IBM compatible computers. Send disk and return mailer, or check for \$5 made out to Oregon State University, addressed to Russ Karow, Crop Science Building 131, OSU, Corvallis, OR 97331.

*Alternative Approaches to On-Farm Research and Technology Exchange, Vol. III*, by Charles Francis, Rhonda Janke, Victoria Mundy and James King, eds. This 174-page compendium presents seven papers from a 1995 symposium on alternative research approaches as well as 14 other papers on the subject. \$10. Available from CSAS, (402) 472-0917.

*Establishing On-Farm Demonstration and Research Plots*, by John L. Havlin, John P. Shroyer and Daniel L. Devlin, Kansas State University Cooperative Extension. This eight-page report suggests guidelines for establishing on-farm demonstration or research plots, recording site characteristics and observations and evaluating results. Less than \$1, plus tax and shipping. Order from KSU Department of Ag Communications, (785) 532-1150 or view on the web at [www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/crpsl2](http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/crpsl2)

*On-Farm Testing: A Grower's Guide*, EB1706. by B. Miller, E. Adams, P. Peterson, and R. Karow, Washington State University Cooperative Extension. A 20-page guide to designing and carrying out on-farm research, including forms for record-keeping. \$1. Order from WSU Cooperative Extension Bulletin Office (509-335-2857) or view it on the web at <http://pnwsteep.wsu.edu/OFT/oftman.html>

*On-Farm Trials for Farmers Using the Randomized Complete Block Design*. (EC125), by Phil Rzewnicki. This extension bulletin walks you through design and analysis in farmers' language, with calculations that can be done with a calculator. \$2. Contact IANR Communications and Computing Services, (402) 472-2821.

*On-Farm Research Guidebook*, by Dan Anderson, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Illinois. This 23-page handbook explains basic research principles and sets forth easy-to-use guidelines for conducting simple on-farm experiments. Free. Contact Dan Anderson at (217) 333-1588; [aslan@uiuc.edu](mailto:aslan@uiuc.edu)

*The Paired Comparison: A Good Design for Farmer-Managed Trials*, by Rick Exner and Dick Thompson, Practical Farmers of Iowa. This seven-page paper offers specifics about how to conduct a paired-comparison cropping trial, featuring real-life examples and worksheets. Free. Contact Rick Exner, (515) 294-5486; [dnexner@iastate.edu](mailto:dnexner@iastate.edu)

*Planning and Conducting On-Farm Agronomic Demonstrations and Research*, by Phil Ryzniecki. An overview of how to site and set up on-farm research or demonstration studies in the field, including a worksheet to track applications. Free. Contact Marvin Hall, (814) 863-1019.

*Seeing is Believing: Encouraging Change Through On-farm Demonstrations*, by the Nutrient and Pest Management (NPM) program, University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension and UW-Madison, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. This 75-page guidebook focuses on creating successful on-farm demonstrations, which provide a wider forum for your research results. Free from NPM, (608) 265-2660.

## Market Research Resources

*How to Do Low-Cost Market Research*, by David Frigstad. This how-to book explains the importance of market research to the entrepreneur as well as the established business owner. \$19.95. Contact The Oasis Press ([www.psi-research.com/kymk.htm](http://www.psi-research.com/kymk.htm)); [psi2@magick.net](mailto:psi2@magick.net)

*Successful Marketing Research: The Complete Guide to Getting and Using Essential Information About Your Customers and Competitors*, by Edward L. Hester. A complete guide to getting and using essential information about customers and competitors. Aimed at both potential and established small business owners. \$19.95. Contact John Wiley & Sons, (800) 225-5945.

# Thoughtful Essays from OK Students

The winners of the Kerr Center's "Making a Sustainable Food System" essay contest have been decided and awards were delivered either by mail or at end-of-the-school-year award ceremonies in May.

Winners and amounts of their awards are: first place, Amy Sistrunk, Bartlesville High School, \$750; second place, Caleb Beavers, Preston High School, \$500; and honorable mentions, Katresa Brashears, Fairview High School, Andrew Puckette, Stillwater High School, and Stacey Carter, Perkins-Tryon High School, each receiving \$250.

High school juniors and seniors in both rural and urban schools were invited to participate. Students chose from eleven specific topics related to the subject, including clean water and environment; healthy development in rural areas and small towns; food security; safe, nutritious food; fair contracts and markets; and economic opportunities for farmers and/or ranchers. Detailed information packets were sent to schools around the state.

Entries were received from both large and small schools in most areas of the state. "I was very pleased with the number of contest entries. The essays were well-written and showed that the students put a great deal of thought into where their food comes from and how to make the food system more equitable socially and economically, as well as more environmentally friendly," said Anita Poole, coordinator of the contest for the Kerr Center. "Teachers told me their students put a lot of thought into the project.

"I would like to thank all of this year's participants and to commend each of them for their interest in the world around them. A great deal of thought and research goes into writing an essay, and Oklahoma students have shown that they are up to the challenge."

Essays were judged by an independent panel and were judged on: development of ideas, overall use of good writing skills, attention to details and facts, and the emotional response evoked by the essay.

A sustainable food system offers safe, nutritious food to the public while ensuring that food producers (including family farmers with small- and medium-sized farms) make an adequate profit and enjoy a good quality of life.

A sustainable food system protects natural resources and the environment for future generations, and supports healthy rural communities.

"Our goal was to include young people in a thoughtful discussion of solutions to the challenges facing

farmers and our food system," said Jim Horne, president of the Kerr Center. "Many of us wrestle with the multitude of problems in our industrialized food system. Sometimes we lose sight of how simple some of the solutions are. That's why we wanted to hear from Oklahoma's youth."

"We hope these essay writers will be able to take the lead in making the Oklahoma food system better for the state," added Poole.

In addition to hearing about solutions from the next generation, the contest was an opportunity for students to research and learn about the challenges and opportunities in agriculture today.

"Farmers and agriculture are being impacted by many external forces. We must ensure that our youth understand the nature of these impacts and bring their creativity, skills, spiritual heritage, and common sense, intelligently to bear on civilizing the forces at work," said Horne.



The Kerr Center will again sponsor an essay contest next year. Information will be available on the Kerr Center web site around Christmas.

Essays came from across Oklahoma. Winning essays will be published in future issues. Essays are also available to be read on-line at [www.kerrcenter.com](http://www.kerrcenter.com).



# OPENING AN UMBRELLA FOR FARMERS' MARKETS

– Doug Walton, President, *Oklahoma Farmers' Market Alliance*

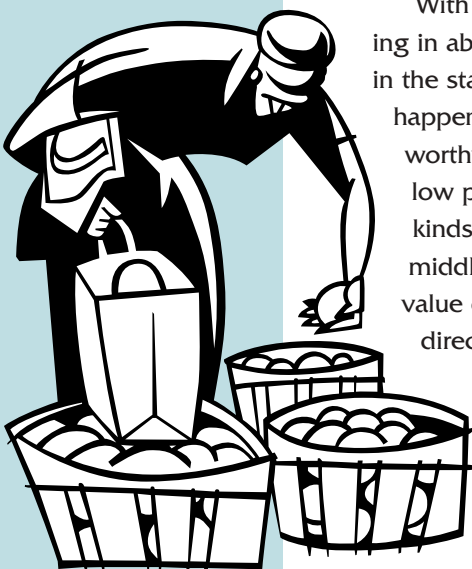
**B**y seven a.m. on any Saturday during an Oklahoma summer, hundreds of market gardeners and other food and plant producers will have loaded their wares, traveled anywhere from five to fifty miles, and set up their booths at farmers' markets throughout our state.

With well over 400 vendors participating in about twenty-five farmers' markets in the state, something must be happening that makes all these efforts worthwhile. Indeed, in these days of low prices for farm produce of all kinds, growers can eliminate the middleman and capture the full retail value of their products by selling directly to customers at farmers' markets. By doing so, food producers get the essential contact and feedback necessary to achieve and maintain their customers' satisfaction.

Meanwhile, the people

who shop at farmers' markets find fresh Oklahoma-grown and Oklahoma-made produce, plants, cut flowers, baked items, jams, canned goods, and at some markets, even meats, eggs and cheeses. Customers also have the unique opportunity to actually meet and visit with the people who grow or process their food. The relationships that develop from this interaction frequently become deep and lasting, each party becoming essential to the other.

As farmers' markets have grown in size, number and popularity over the past few years, the need both for individual markets to become better organized, and the need for greater cooperation between markets has





become apparent. In 1999, the Muskogee Farmers' Market and the newly formed Cherry Street Market in Tulsa found that they both needed to recruit more growers to meet growing demand. Together they sponsored the first Spring Farm Tour in April of that year hoping to expose potential growers to the opportunities at the two markets. When 125 people attended (on a rainy day), most of whom had never grown for a farmers' market, organizers knew they had touched a nerve of interest.

It soon became more apparent that an umbrella organization of farmers' markets would allow for better networking and sharing of ideas, while also giving farmers and their markets a more unified voice. So the Oklahoma Farmers' Market Alliance was formed in January of 2000.

The original group of three markets quickly grew to five, then to eight and now to a membership of ten farmers' markets throughout the state, representing over three hundred vendors. Through periodic newsletters and annual farm tours, the alliance provides a forum for the sharing of information between Oklahoma's farmers' markets and among producers.

In September of 2001, the alliance joined with OSU, the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, and the Kerr Center to acquire a grant from the USDA to strengthen and develop farmers' markets in Oklahoma. As this project nears its midpoint, an extensive survey of the preferences of farmers' market customers, and the experiences and needs of managers and producers is being completed.

Over three hundred customers have been quizzed at markets around the state about what they would like to buy at farmers' markets as well as their overall impressions of their market. Producers were asked a number of questions about what they grow and sell, what they need help with or would like to see changed. Managers too were surveyed about their promotion and advertising as well as the

structure and management of their markets.

The remainder of the project will entail survey analysis and the development of training manuals and workshops for market managers and producers. (See sidebar for info on a manager training workshop; a series of workshops for producers will be held next year).

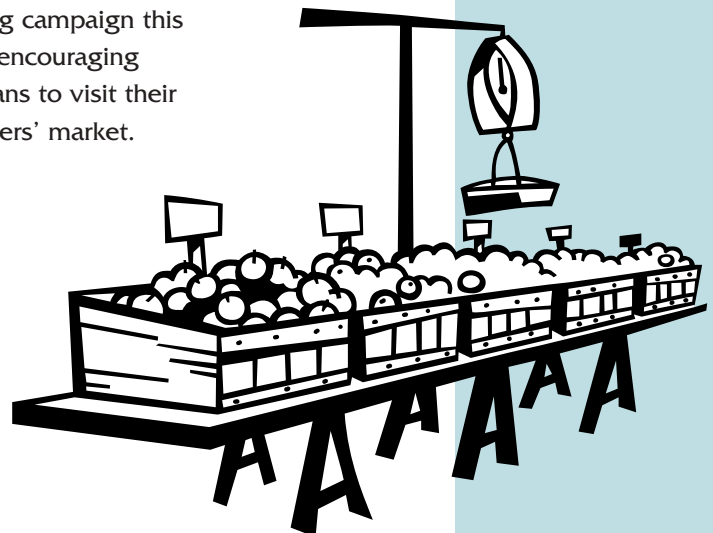
Alliance leaders were also able to play an active role in the recent creation of grants for farmers' market and specialty crop producer grants given by the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture. Earlier this spring, grants totaling over \$75,000 were awarded to seventeen different markets. These funds will be used for a wide array of projects such as advertising, signage, and shade structures, as well as for customer appreciation activities.

In addition, the alliance itself was awarded a \$5,000 grant to be partially used for completing a promotional video about Oklahoma's farmers markets. The eight-minute video will be distributed to all markets in the state and will be useful for showing the many benefits of farmers' markets to community leaders, civic organizations and prospective growers. The other half of the grant money is being used for a statewide advertising campaign this summer, encouraging Oklahomans to visit their local farmers' market.

For more information on the alliance, contact Doug Walton at 918-686-6939.

An in-depth training workshop for market managers and prospective market managers is planned as part of *Future Farms 2002* on November 15-16. Instructors will use survey results as the basis for a broad discussion of managers' experiences in promoting and managing their markets. The emphasis will be on learning what works (and doesn't work) and how to make needed changes.

> To find a farmers' market in your area go to [www.madeinoklahoma.net](http://www.madeinoklahoma.net) and click on "Oklahoma Grown" for a current listing.





# FUTURE FARMS 2002 A SUPERMARKET OF IDEAS

Friday & Saturday, November 15 & 16

NCED MARRIOTT CONFERENCE CENTER • NORMAN, OKLAHOMA

## CONFERENCE LINE-UP\*

(\*Some topics may be changed or added)

### From Field to Table

(Opportunities in Crops)

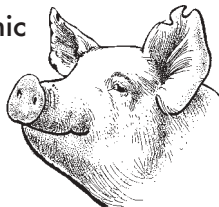
- low-till vegetables
- cut flower production
- opportunities in growing and marketing organic grains
- no-till and cover crops for peanuts, corn, and cotton
- raising certified seed
- identity-preserved grain
- cotton production in a new geographic area
- cold frame production
- innovative pecan management
- herb production in this region.



## From Pasture to Table

(New Ideas for Livestock and Poultry)

- pastured poultry
- growing and marketing natural beef
- new opportunities in aquaculture, including organic
- venison production and marketing
- high-value pork and poultry production and marketing
- the preconditioning stockers program
- advantages of rotational grazing
- cool season grasses
- integrated goat management for fiber and meat



## Preparing for the Table

(Innovative Marketing and Value-Added Ideas)

- value-added cooperatives
- the *Made in Oklahoma* program
- the Oklahoma Agriculture Diversification Program
- growing and marketing Mexican specialties
- community supported agriculture (C.S.A.)/marketing alliances
- opportunities at farmers' markets
- Marketing ethnic vegetables

## Beyond the Table

(Other Ideas for using your Land wisely and profitably)

- Trends and ideas in agri-tourism
- agri-entertainment
- the do's and don'ts of hunting leases
- fair mineral leases
- opportunities in wind energy
- the pros and cons of conservation easements
- how to finance alternative enterprises
- opportunities in recycling municipal waste
- carbon credits.

## WORKSHOPS

(four hour in-depth mini-courses)

- How to Develop and Run a Successful CSA
- Rotational Grazing Systems
- Pastured Poultry Production
- Growing and Selling Natural Beef
- Developing a Value-Added Product
- Farm Market Development and Management





# CONFERENCE SAMPLER

## FUTURE FARMS 2007

### How To Develop and Manage a Successful CSA

FRIDAY, 4:45-5:30,  
SATURDAY, 1-4 WORKSHOP

Dan Nagengast, founding member of the Rolling Prairie Farmers Alliance, will give a talk on Friday and lead an in-depth workshop on Saturday. Organized in 1994, the Rolling Prairie Alliance has developed a successful C.S.A./subscription farming business with over 300 customers in the Lawrence/Kansas City area. Nagengast will overview opportunities with CSAs in his talk. His workshop will cover in detail how to develop and run this type of innovative marketing approach, including information on pricing, sales, incorporation, and promotion.

For more on Nagengast and the alliance, go to [www.kerrcenter.com](http://www.kerrcenter.com).

### Taking that Brainstorm to the Bank: A Value-Added Success Story

FRIDAY, 9:30-10:30

What's convenient, nutritious, and guaranteed to be a favorite with the ten-and-under demographic?

Sliced peanut butter, of course, invented by Stewart Kennedy, an Oklahoman with the undoubted ability to think out of the box. Kennedy will be the keynote speaker at *Future Farms*, offering advice and inspiration to those wanting to develop a successful value-added product. Kennedy took his novel idea to food scientists at OSU's Food and Agricultural Product Research and Technology Center. Four years of experimentation went by before they succeeded in getting the "sticky" out of peanut butter. Today, Kennedy is president of Kennedy Foods in Edmond, and his plastic-wrapped peanut butter slices, P.B. Slices, are carried in more than 3,000 stores.

### New Generation Cooperatives: The Wave of the Future

FRIDAY, 11-12 AND SATURDAY, 10:30-12:15

New Generation Cooperatives— what they are and how they work— will be the subject of three sessions at *Future Farms*. Executive Director of the Oklahoma Agricultural Cooperative Council Mike Frickenschmidt will explain how value-added cooperatives work, followed by a panel discussion. In addition, Myron Bradt, president of the Value-Added Products (VAP) Cooperative in Alva, will speak about the development of this 857-member closed (limited-member) cooperative that produces frozen dough products made from hard red winter wheat.

For more information on the Oklahoma Agricultural Cooperative Council, visit [www.okagcoop.org](http://www.okagcoop.org).

### Agritourism: Opportunities Unlimited

FRIDAY, 11-12

James Maetzold is the USDA's leading expert on diversifying farms and ranches by adding nature-based and agricultural-based tourism enterprises. His office is a clearinghouse for resources on alternative enterprises for farmers and ranchers. He will cover the trends and opportunities in these areas, including the latest information on just who is traveling in rural areas, what such travelers want to experience, and how farms and rural areas can become travel-destinations.

For more information on agri-tourism, go to [www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/RESS/altenterprise](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/RESS/altenterprise)



# CONFERENCE SAMPLER

## Opportunities in Organic Grains

FRIDAY, 4-4:45

Curtis Bennett is a merchandiser for Clarkson Grain of Illinois, a company that contracts growers in twenty states for certified organic grain production. Clarkson has worked with identity-preserved grains for 26 years. The company buys corns, soybeans, wheat, Milo, as well as buckwheat, popcorn, sunflowers, and black beans for food, feed and industrial markets. Organic grains can be successfully marketed at premium prices; for example, organic soybeans (Vinton) sold for \$20/bu at the farm gate in July 2001. Bennett will address the opportunities and challenges in organic grains, including demand, markets, quality standards, storage and contracting.

For more on Clarkson Grain, go to [www.clarksongrain.com](http://www.clarksongrain.com). For more on marketing organic grains, go to ATTRA, [www.attra.org](http://www.attra.org).

## Good Natured Family Farms: Success with Natural Beef

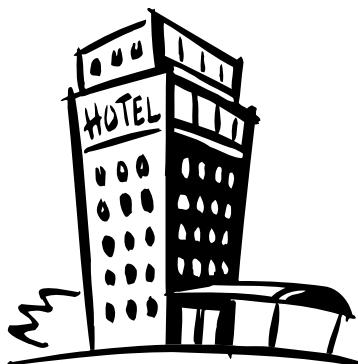
SATURDAY 9-10

Diana Endicott runs the Good Natured Cooperative: a twenty-plus member group of third- and fourth- generation family farmers and ranchers in Kansas and Missouri. The group supplies the Hen House supermarket chain with all-natural (no hormones or sub-therapeutic antibiotics) meats (beef, poultry). Cattle are grown on grass and finished on corn for four months on small, family farms, and then slaughtered and processed at a cooperative-owned, federally-inspected Kansas plant. Endicott will share how she, her husband Gary, and other co-op farmers built the business from the ground up, including organizing the co-op, buying the plant and successfully marketing their product in their region.

For more on Good Natured Farms go to [www.goodnatured.net](http://www.goodnatured.net)

## Hotel Information

Call the Kerr Center at 918.647.9123 for hotel reservations and information. Special hotel rates are available to conference attendees; call the Kerr Center by October 15 to ensure a discount.



## FUTURE FARMS 2002 ■ REGISTRATION

- Two Days – Early rate: \$50 until Oct. 15
  - Late Registration: \$60 (After Oct. 15)
  - Extra Family Member or Company Employee \$35 (Children pay student rate).
  - One day \$30
- Student Rate:  One day: \$20;  Two days: \$30

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Family Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail check or money order to Kerr Center - Future Farms  
PO Box 588, Poteau, OK 74953

# Protecting Farmland: It's A Good Thing

—Maura McDermott

**T**hirteen participants from Oklahoma and surrounding states attended the Kerr Center's "Protecting Our Farmland" workshop, May 21-23, at the Regents Conference Center in Poteau.

Those in attendance included farmers and ranchers as well as representatives from tribal and government agencies and nonprofit organizations. Experts from the Trust for Public Land (TPL) and the American Farmland Trust (AFT), two national organizations, presented an array of ideas to help those interested in preserving farms and farmland in Oklahoma move forward.

Robert Wagner and Kevin Schmidt of the AFT covered what individuals and communities gain from protecting agricultural land, and the various tools being used to help farmers and ranchers preserve their land and businesses. Participants received a thick notebook of fact sheets and other reference information.

The groups spearheading farmland protection vary according to locale. The Pennsylvania and California Farm Bureaus were among the first to speak out for farmland protection, mainly by lobbying for farmland protection programs in their states. The Colorado Cattlemen's Association has created a very successful agricultural land trust. The Michigan Farm Bureau is following in Colorado's footsteps, and also hosts an annual bus trip to the Mid-Atlantic states to provide farmers and

policymakers with real life example of how farmland protection works. The Farmers Union is also interested in the issue.

Some of the tools for farmland preservation include growth management laws, right-to-farm laws, creation of agricultural districts, differential tax assessment, agricultural protection zoning, cluster zoning, mitigation ordinances, and comprehensive planning.

Oklahoma utilizes differential tax assessment to help farmers and ranchers. These laws direct local governments to assess agricultural land at its value for agriculture, instead of its full fair market value, which is generally higher.

One of the most popular approaches to farmland protection is known as PACE—Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements, sometimes referred to as Purchase of Development Rights (PDR). Oklahoma passed its Uniform Conservation Easement Act in 1999, enabling the creation of conservation easements in the state. Before this, said Jack Blair of TPL, "the use of perpetual easement was not a viable tool."

A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement that allows a landowner to limit the type or amount of development on their



Robert Wagner

property while retaining private ownership of the land and the ability to continue to farm and live on the property.

The development rights, in the form of a conservation easement, are either donated or sold to a government entity or a private land trust. Whoever holds the easement monitors the land from time to time to make sure that no excluded development occurs.

Conservation easements and how they work was the focus on the third day of the workshop, when participants worked on assessing and preparing a conservation easement on a real piece of land. This hands-on aspect of the workshop, led by Robert Gregory and Jack Blair of the Trust for Public Land, and the Kerr Center's Jim Horne and Anita Poole, was particularly popular with participants.

Though people often grant conservation easements because they want to protect their property from unwanted development, the donation of an easement may also give the donor a significant financial advantage. These advantages may include income tax, estate tax, and property tax relief.

According to AFT, while few family farmers or ranchers die leaving a taxable estate, "estate tax liability is an important and very real issue for farmers near urban areas, where development speculation has made land prices skyrocket." (An extreme example: California's Salinas Valley where farmland prices have inflated to an incredible \$30,000 per acre fair market value). In Colorado, ski resorts are expanding and the appetite for vacation homes continues unabated, putting pressure on ranchers.

For landowners with sizable estates, making a bequest of a conservation easement to a nonprofit organization can be a practical way to reduce their estates.

Recently, 760 acres out of the 1000 acre Wyckoff Ranch in Osage County became the first conservation easement created under the 1999 Oklahoma legislation. TPL worked with owner Lydia Wyckoff. The land was under pressure from development near Skiatook Lake, and Wyckoff wanted to keep the land intact and viable for raising cattle and for hunting.

Farm organizations were once wary of perpetual agricultural conservation easements. However, "farm organizations really started to change when they realized that easements are an estate planning tool," said Wagner, AFT's assistant vice-president for regional programs.

Farm organizations are also starting to understand that selling an easement may provide cash-strapped producers with money to pay off their debts or for their retirement. About twenty states have PDR programs that help agricultural landowners by paying them for the development rights. For example, in the Texas Hill Country, development rights are 50-80 per cent of the land's value. Often money gained from selling development rights is used to help farmers stay in production.

The AFT has surveyed Vermont farmers who have sold their development rights. Debt reduction was the primary use of proceeds from the sale of development rights, followed by purchasing more land, and building or improving farm buildings. In addition, an overwhelming majority of the farmers surveyed were satisfied with the PACE program and said they would do it again.

TPL has also found that the money gained from the selling of

development rights is used to retire debt and diversify operations, as in the case of the 17,000 acre V-6 Ranch in central California. TPL purchased the development rights in 2001 for \$2.9 million. The easement was then conveyed to California Rangeland Trust, which is governed by ranchers.

As of 2001, there were twenty state level PACE/PDR programs that have protected 806,500 acres, spending \$1.2 billion. Farmland preservation efforts got a boost in the recently enacted 2002 Farm Bill. The Farmland Protection Program of the NRCS was reauthorized and expanded. The program provides matching funds to state, local, tribal and now non-



governmental organizations with existing farmland protection programs.

During the workshop, attendees were asked to identify why there is a need for farmland preservation efforts in Oklahoma. Their list included enhancement of farmer finances, including the financial needs of aging farmers, estate planning, water quality and use, balancing local fiscal responsibilities, rural economic development, access to hunting/conservation of wildlife, preserving green space around cities, and food security/local food production.

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*continued on page 16*

In many parts of the country, preserving agricultural land is seen as a way to protect the environment. There are 932 million acres of private agricultural land in the US; sixty per cent of wetlands and thirty-eight percent of woodlands are on this land.

"Developed land has far more negative long-term environmental implications and fewer opportunities to reverse the damage," said Wagner.

According to a recent article in *Progressive Farmer* magazine, "Both Austin and San Antonio are buying development rights to protect scarce water resources (including recharge of aquifers) around their city limits." Protection of the water quality of fishing lakes is another prime concern

in the Lone Star State

The "Smart Growth" philosophy drives farmland preservation in the Northeast. "Privately owned agricultural land generates more in taxes than it uses in services," said Wagner. Eighty studies around the country, half of them done by AFT, show that for every dollar of tax revenue, the cost of community services for residential development is \$1.15, while for farms it is 36 cents. Communities are beginning to recognize the strain on revenue and services that unplanned development can bring.

Unlike a city's balance sheet, "quality of life" is much harder to quantify. The desire to preserve green space around Norman was the motivating factor behind the formation two years ago of the

Norman Area Land Conservancy Trust, according to Blair of TPL. The Norman organization is currently the only land trust in Oklahoma (in contrast, there are 38 land trusts in Colorado). Organizers were concerned that Norman was being engulfed by greater Oklahoma City and was losing the farms and ranches that formed the "green space" around the city. (Some two million acres of farmland has become suburbanized in Oklahoma since 1940.)

Workshop participants agreed there is a need for more land trusts in Oklahoma. Participants also agreed that concerned individuals, organizations, communities, and government agencies should get together and discuss the next steps in protecting farmland in Oklahoma.

## Kerr Center Awarded \$119,905 SARE Grant

The Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture recently received a grant from the USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education, southern region, in the amount of \$119,905.

The grant will allow the Kerr Center to train agricultural professionals from the Southern states, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico in farm and ranchland preservation methods.

Planning for the workshops is currently underway with the assistance of a diverse advisory council.

The workshops will be held in 2003 in Oklahoma City, Memphis, and Atlanta. The participants will receive training on the tools used to preserve farm and ranchland, such as agricultural districts and conservation easements.

The Kerr Center is working closely with OSU, Langston University, American Farmland Trust and Trust for Public Lands to ensure the success of this

program. For more information, you can contact Anita Poole by email at [apoole@kerrcenter.com](mailto:apoole@kerrcenter.com) or by phone at 918-647-9123.

### For more information on farmland protection contact:

Oklahoma Field Office, Trust for Public Land  
403 South Cheyenne Suite 300  
Tulsa, OK 74103  
(918) 587-2190  
FAX (918) 587-2169  
[www.tpl.org](http://www.tpl.org)

American Farmland Trust  
1200 18th St. NW Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20036  
[www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org)



# Growing an Oklahoma Food System

—Maura McDermott

“Bringing Oklahoma food to Oklahoma tables” is the mission of the Oklahoma Food Policy Advisory Council, which held its second meeting April 5. The challenges to fulfilling that mission were discussed at length and plans were laid for several initiatives. Chief among them is increasing sales of locally produced food to state and private institutions. A survey of institutional buyers was proposed. In addition, two committees were formed – one to look at marketing, media, and consumer issues, and the other to look at research and legislative policy.

Jim Horne, president of the Kerr Center and co-chair of the council, expressed his optimism that Oklahoma can find innovative ways to link consumers directly to local farmers. He pointed to the example of Cornell University, where 40% of the food served is New York grown. Princeton, Stanford, and the University of California are other examples of institutions featuring locally grown food. Building a viable local food system is a great way to invigorate local communities, Horne said, because the profits stay in the

community rather than being exported out of state.

Geni Thomas, Casady School executive chef, and co-chair of the council, stated that one of the greatest concerns of chefs is getting a consistent supply of high quality local food. She spoke of the need to link chefs with producers. She also related her experience at the school where she has replaced high salt and fried food with more healthy entrees, including fresh vegetables. Educating students about freshness and nutrition was the key to their acceptance of the change.

## Labeling Resolution

In response to a suggestion from Oklahoma Agriculture Commissioner Dennis Howard, the council agreed to endorse a resolution in support of the country-of-origin labeling provision in the 2002 Farm Bill. The resolution stated:

WHEREAS, the Oklahoma Food Policy Advisory Council to the Oklahoma State Board of Agriculture is responsible for ensuring that the state strives to create a healthy, safe, and abundant food supply in an appropriate manner; and

WHEREAS, United States food production must be considered a national security issue in light of recent terrorist attacks;

WHEREAS, only approximately 2% of all the foreign produced food products are routinely inspected when imported into the United States; and

WHEREAS, as Oklahoma food consumers, like other consumers nationwide, are interested in knowing

where their food supply comes from; and

WHEREAS, national surveys have shown that United States food consumers when given a preference consistently choose to buy American food products when quality and price are equitable;

WHEREAS, the consumption of American food products by the American consumers strengthens the United States economy by creating more agriculture related jobs both directly and indirectly;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE OKLAHOMA FOOD POLICY COUNCIL RESPECTFULLY REQUESTS THAT CONGRESS ENACT LEGISLATION THAT REQUIRES COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELING.

THAT a copy of this Resolution be distributed to Oklahoma’s Congressional Delegation; the State Board of Agriculture; the Commissioner of Agriculture, the Governor; the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President Pro

Tempore of the State Senate.

*Note: The new Farm Bill, passed in May, calls for two years of voluntary labeling, followed by mandatory country-of-origin labeling on meats, fresh fruits and vegetables, fish and peanuts through a plan to be established by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.*



## OKLAHOMA FOOD at

[www.oklahomafood.org](http://www.oklahomafood.org) is an invaluable new resource for both farmers/ranchers wanting to sell, and people wanting to buy, locally grown food. The website was "cultivated" by Robert Waldrop, a Frederick native, now in Oklahoma City. The site contains information on vegetables, fruits, and herbs, natural beef, wineries, organic meat, eggs, cheese, Oklahoma processors, custom butchers, caterers, and Oklahoma’s farmers’ markets. To be included (it’s free) contact Waldrop at [jpeaceok@yahoo.com](mailto:jpeaceok@yahoo.com)

## Promising Fruit

Along with heirloom vegetables, the farm is investigating several small fruits. A blueberry known as *Ozarkblue* that was released from the University of Arkansas a few years ago is one variety being tried. It has shown great potential for areas south of I-40 and east of I-35. We are also looking at a variety called *Summit*. Muscadine grapes and two table grapes, *Alwood* and *Edelweiss* are part of the small fruit trial. Two blackberry varieties, *Chickasaw* (thorned) and *Arapaho* (thornless) are also being grown at the farm.

# Try a "New" Old Variety

The Kerr Center Horticulture Farm will host an evening walk on Thursday, July 11, 2002, beginning at 6:30 p.m. and continuing until dark. Visitors will see the farm's large garden of heirloom vegetables (grown organically) and trial plantings of blackberry, blueberry, table grapes and muscadine grapes. Presentations will be informal and will include plenty of time for grower questions. The event is free.

Heirloom vegetables are open pollinated varieties that were generally bred prior to the 1950's. Some were developed by individuals in their home gardens. Quite a few varieties that have been grown for over 100 years are still available, thanks to the work of organizations

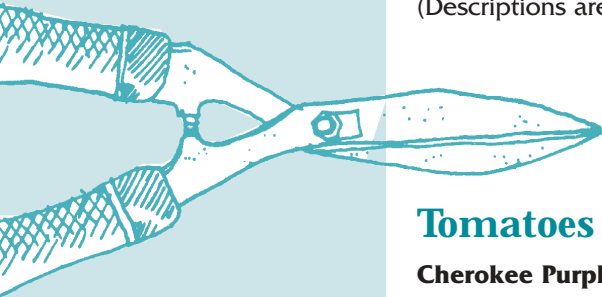
such as the Seed Savers Exchange in Decorah, Iowa ([www.seedsavers.org](http://www.seedsavers.org))

The Kerr Center has been growing heirloom varieties of tomatoes, peppers, okra, winter and summer squash, watermelon, cantaloupe, and beans for a few years. The goal is to see which varieties do well in Oklahoma. Because heirlooms often look different than standard varieties, and sometimes have superior taste, market farmers have found them to be popular with their customers. An added bonus: many have interesting names and histories.

Come and join us for an enjoyable and educational evening as we explore heirloom vegetables and small fruits.

## In the Garden...

(Descriptions are from Seed Savers Exchange Catalog)



To get there: Go about six miles south of Poteau on highway 271 (1/2 mile past Kerr Center sign). Look for field day signs.

### Tomatoes

#### **Cherokee Purple**

Unique dusky-rose color, very sweet

#### **Brandywine** (*Sudduth's Strain*)

Incredibly rich, delightfully intense tomato flavor

#### **Beam's Yellow Pear**

Ideal for salads

#### **Dr. Wyche's Yellow**

Meaty, rich tasting orange tomato

#### **Speckled Roman**

Gorgeous, few seeds, jagged orange and yellow striped flesh

#### **German Pink**

Meaty flesh, few seeds

#### **Stupice**

Early maturing, Czechoslovakian variety

#### **Gold Medal**

A gourmet's joy, yellow with streaks of red, low acid

### Peppers

#### **Black Hungarian** (hot)

Ornamental plants, mildly hot

#### **Jimmy Nardello's** (sweet)

Brought to US in 1887 from Southern Italy

#### **Buran** (sweet)

Extremely sweet Polish heirloom

#### **Quadrato Asti Giallo**

(sweet)

Large, spicy-sweet, turning from green to yellow



### Cantaloupe

#### **Planter's Jumbo**

Vigorous, '50s variety, adapted to drought or flood

#### **Amarillo Oro**

Bright yellow fruit with white flesh, from Mediterranean coast

#### **Jenny Lind**

Unusual shape, known in the Philadelphia markets before 1840.

#### **Emerald Gem**

Most popular melon of the Gilded Age, "luscious beyond description"

## Squash

### Amish Pie

From Amish farmer in the Maryland mountains

### Anna Swartz Hubbard

Extremely hard shell, good storage

### Sibley

Originally a Native American variety, reaches sweetness peak in storage

### Black Zucchini

Very popular in specialty markets in the '30s

## Watermelon

### Blacktail Mountain

Extra early, developed in Idaho

### Georgia Rattlesnake

First shipped north in 1867 and reportedly "whetted the Northern appetite for watermelon"

### Melitopolski

From the Volga River region of Russia, famous for melons

### Moon & Stars

Beautiful melon, green skin spotted with yellow "moons" and "stars"

## Beans

### Hidatsa Shield Figure

Raised by the Hidatsa tribe in the valleys of North Dakota

### Great Northern

Original seed from Son-of-a-Star, a Hidatsa

### Purple Podded Pole (snap)

Discovered in an Ozarks' garden in the '30s.

### Ideal Market (snap)

Earlier than Kentucky Wonder pole, introduced in 1914.

## Okra

### Clemson Spineless

All American Selection Winner in 1939

### Red Burgundy

Burgundy fruits, stems and leaf ribs

### Silver Queen

Long, whitish-green pods

# The Way It Was

Dennis G. Peters of Deer Creek, Oklahoma, recently donated a 1930's corn binder to the Overstreet-Kerr Historical Farm.

In the early 1930's David and Erhard Krehbiel purchased the binder at the Eberle Hardware in Deer Creek. Peters is related to the Krehbiels by marriage.

The corn binder could be pulled through the cornfield by tractor or draft team. It automatically cut and tied bundles of corn stalks. The stalks were then hauled to the barn to be chopped into silage or dried and stored for winter feed for livestock.

Overstreet Farm development manager Jim Combs has been accepting donations and loans of farm equipment used from 1890 to 1940 for a new exhibit at the historical farm. He particularly wants to acquire hay balers and grain

production equipment (John Deere, if possible).

The new exhibit will be unique in that it will help tell the story of farm life in southeast Oklahoma in the early years of the 20th century.

Due to time constraints, only easily restorable or already restored equipment will be accepted. A limited amount of funds are available to purchase equipment.

Since the Kerr Center is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization, donations of either equipment or funds for restoring equipment or developing the educational display are tax deductible. (Donors will be given a receipt to use for tax purposes). Those who donate or loan items will be acknowledged on the display itself.

Call 918.966.3282 or [okhfarm@crosstel.net](mailto:okhfarm@crosstel.net) for details



1930's Corn Binder L- Jim Combs; R- Dennis Peters

# CALENDAR

**JUNE 29, AUGUST 10,  
SEPTEMBER 5, SEPTEMBER 12:**

Producer Grant Field Days,  
statewide, see p. 3

**JULY 11:** *Horticulture Farm  
Evening Walk:* Heirloom  
Vegetables and Small Fruit  
Trials, Kerr Center, see p. 18

**AUGUST 16-17:**

*Grazing: Dollars and Cents*  
conference, Clarion, I-40 and  
Meridian, OKC. 918.647.9123  
for details.

**SEPTEMBER 5:** 2003 Producer  
Grants Call for Proposals  
released, see p. 4

**SEPTEMBER 23, 24, 30;**

**OCTOBER 1, 24:**

Producer Grant Workshops,  
statewide, see p. 5

**OCTOBER 11:**

*Farm-Fest for Kids,*  
Overstreet-Kerr Historical Farm,  
(for schools to make  
reservations call 918.966.3396  
or okhfarm@crosstel.net)

**OCTOBER 12:**

*Fall Farm-Fest* (general public),  
kerrcenter.com, 918.966.3396  
www.kerrcenter.com

**NOVEMBER. 15-16:**

*Future Farms 2002:  
A Supermarket of Ideas,*  
Norman, see p.10

**NOVEMBER 21:**

*Producer Grants*  
Application Deadline

## Pasturing For Profit: Advanced Grazing Management

**SEPTEMBER 19, 20, 21**

Kerr Center Ranch, Poteau  
Improve your grazing  
management plan. Experienced  
instructors/ranchers Kim Barker,  
Walt Davis, and Charles Griffith  
will help you tackle problems  
and institute new practices.  
Cost will be \$100 per person;  
\$50 for additional family  
member or company employee.  
To register: Call 918.647.9123  
by September 5.



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