Field Notes

Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture E-Newsletter

E-Field Notes
June 2022

Happy summer! Temperature-wise, it may have felt like the season's been well underway for a while now, but with the summer solstice just past, it's officially only just begun.

What's the most prominent sign of summer for you? Is it the dragonflies flitting above the ponds? It turns out that **the Kerr Ranch was the first place in Oklahoma where dragonfly species were recorded**. The state wildlife department paid us a visit recently to commemorate the event. David Redhage talks about it in this month's president's note.

Maybe you really mark summer's arrival by the weeds popping up in the pastures. Don't reach for the sprayer just yet, though! First, have a look at a **new interactive guide to non-chemical weed management options**.

Is it the sight of cattle on fresh forage that tells you summer's underway, or fields of ripening wheat? The cattle-wheat combination is a common one across the southern plains - but there are many other **profitable and ecologically beneficial ways of integrating crops and livestock**. A **new infographic** paints the picture.

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Perhaps it's trips to your local farmers market that really tell you summer has begun. You can once again **vote for your favorite farmers' market** in a contest for **prizes** in the **American Farmers' Market Celebration**.

Please join us in welcoming **Kim McDonald, the Kerr Center's new Bookkeeper/Accountant**!

No matter how you register the start of summer, we register it as a welcome sign of your support when you **donate to the Kerr Center**. **Thanks!**

President's Note: Dragonflies

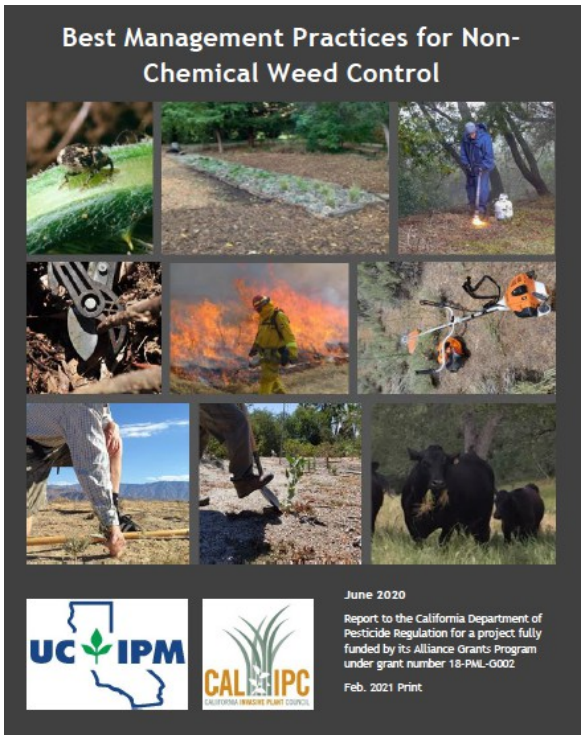
I recently learned a location on **the Kerr Center Ranch was the first place dragonfly species were documented in Oklahoma**, in 1907.

The book ***Dragonflies at a Biogeographical Crossroads - The Odonata of Oklahoma and Complexities Beyond its Borders***, by Brenda D. Smith and Michael A. Patten, thoroughly covers the topic of dragonflies in Oklahoma.

As you might notice by the title (and size, at 726 pages), the book is more academic and is not really suited for field use. However, if you want a thorough coverage of Oklahoma dragonflies, this book does it.

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife dropped by to commemorate the 1907 event at Cavanal Lake for an article on the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife's website - **have a look**!

Managing Wildland Weeds without Herbicides



By now we're all aware of the many **downsides of using synthetic herbicides**. However, most of us are also all too familiar with the **temptation to reach for the quick and easy fix** - even when we know we're likely just **making the problem worse** farther down the line.

A **new pair of resources** aims to help land managers avoid that temptation by presenting the **full range of weed management options in an on-the-go format**.

One is a **free downloadable manual**, Best Management Practices for Non-Chemical Weed Control. The other, based on the information in the manual, is an **interactive website** called **WeedCUT**, for **Weed Control User Tool**.

Both the manual and the website were developed by the California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) and the University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program (UC IPM).

The **manual** covers **21 non-herbicide weed control techniques**, ranging from scuffle hoes to hydraulic tree spades, with chainsaws, girdling, flaming, steaming, and many others along the way. It even discusses **training grazing animals to consume weeds**. Even the most hardened weed warriors may find a new trick or two to try.

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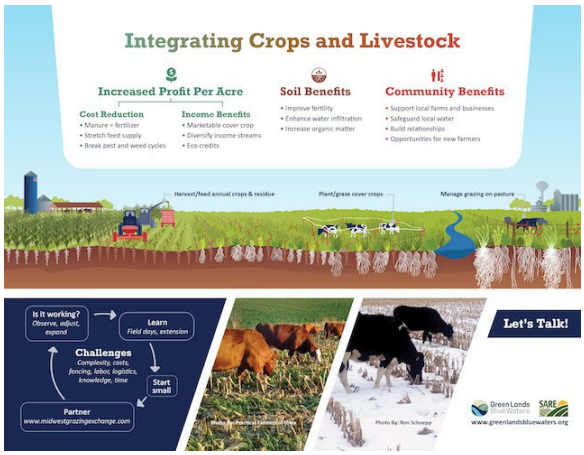
Match Made in Heaven: Livestock + Crops



Once upon a time, most livestock animals were raised on the same farms where the cash crops were grown. Manure could be collected and transferred a short distance to fertilize the fields.

Over time, as the livestock industry consolidated, the number of farms with both crops and livestock shrank, and **what was once an on-farm fertilizer source increasingly became a pollution hazard**. Farms wishing to reap the benefits of organic fertilizer often **have to buy the manure and have it trucked in over long distances**. Entire industries have sprung up around this practice.

Nowadays, the pendulum may be starting to swing back the other way. With prices for synthetic fertilizers spiking, farmers are looking for alternatives - and are increasingly recognizing the benefits of integrating crops and livestock on the same acreage. Green Lands Blue Waters recently published an infographic **that sums these up**.

The infographic pictures three main modes of integrating crops and livestock: managing livestock on pasture, grazing cover crops, and raising crops to feed livestock. It summarizes the benefits of the practice in three categories: **increased profit per acre, soil benefits, and community benefits**.

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2022 America's Farmers Market Celebration

How would you like to **help your favorite farmers market win thousands of dollars** to help it make itself even better? By voting online during the **America's Farmers Market Celebration**, you can!

From June 20 to September 19, 2022, the 14th annual America's Farmers Market Celebration (AFMC) "showcases the essential markets across the nation making a difference for farmers, ranchers, and communities," according to the event website.

Throughout the celebration, market shoppers and supporters can **vote** for their favorite market at markets.farmland.org. Votes are tallied to find the top markets in each region of the country. In addition, the AFMC recognizes an overall "People's Choice" winner as the market with the most votes nationwide.

The organizations hosting the AFMC – American Farmland Trust and Farmers Market Coalition – "believe that every farmers market in America is special in its own way. Big or small, in cities or rural towns, **farmers markets nourish their communities** while helping local farmers, food makers, and artisans thrive."

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Kerr Center Welcomes Bookkeeper/Accountant Kim McDonald

The Kerr Center welcomes Kim McDonald as our new Bookkeeper/Accountant. After growing up in a small town in Arkansas, Kim moved to Corpus Christi, Texas, and lived there for four years. Missing the small-town feel, she moved back to Arkansas in 2015, and then moved to Poteau in 2018, where she enjoys the beauty of the area.

Kim has worked in an office environment since 1992. She has a wide range of office experience, from car lots to lumber mills to flower shops. She enjoys working with numbers, which has helped her through the years to study and learn bookkeeping and accounting. With each place that she has worked, she has learned more and more.

One of Kim's favorite things to do is to learn new things. She is excited that she has joined the Kerr Center and looks forward to many years here and leaning about the ranch, gardening, and the elderberries.

When not at work, Kim enjoys church, reading, going to thrift stores, and spending time with her husband and her family, including her two fur babies, her cats.

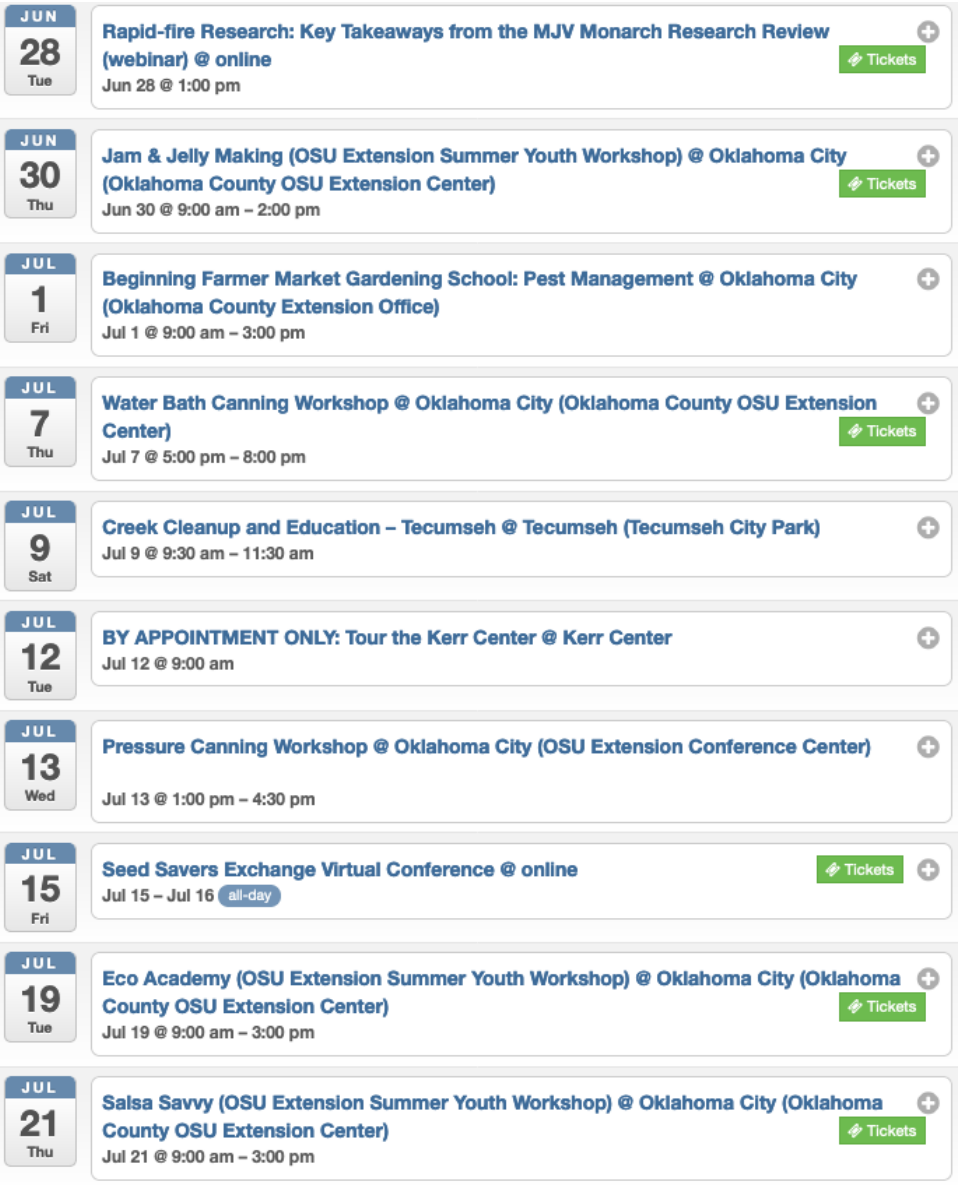
Welcome, Kim!

Early Summer Events: Monarch Research, Youth Extension Workshops, Pest Management, Canning, Seed Savers....

Get the **latest in monarch research** in a free Monarch Joint Venture webinar (June 28). Elsewhere in the virtual world, catch **Seed Savers Exchange's annual conference** online (July 15-16).

Pitch in while learning about water quality with Blue Thumb's **creek cleanup and education** in Tecumseh (July 9).

Oklahoma County Extension is offering workshops on **both water bath** (July 7) **and pressure canning** (July 13). In addition, they are running a series of **summer youth workshops** on a variety of topics including **jams & jellies** (June 30) and **salsa** (July 21), as well as an **Eco Academy** (July 19). The topic of this month's **Beginning Farmer Market Gardening School** is **pest management** (July 1).



The Kerr Center's tour season is also open, by appointment only. **Come visit us!**

Full details on these and other sustainable agriculture learning opportunities, as always, can be found on the Kerr Center's online **events calendar**.

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

Support the Kerr Center

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

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