Field Notes

Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture E-Newsletter

E-Field Notes
March 2024

Even with spring bursting forth all around, we open this issue with heavy hearts over the loss of **Cattle Manager Will Lathrop**, who **passed away last week on the ranch. Please join us in remembering and celebrating his life and work.**

The **monarchs** are starting to flutter through on their northward journey, and Okies for Monarchs has a **free guide to help you tell them apart from other black-and-orange butterflies**.

If you're selling - or buying - **100% USA-raised ag products**, there are **new labels available to help you market them, or pick them out on grocery store shelves**.

Check out a **new, free webinar series on soil health and organic farming**.

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We couldn't keep doing the work we do if you didn't **donate to the Kerr Center**. **Thank you!**

In Memoriam - William (Will) Lathrop

Will Lathrop, long-time Kerr Center livestock manager, passed away on March 19th, 2024, at the Kerr Center.

Will worked for the Kerr Center for 35 years and was well respected in the community.

Will was instrumental in developing and expanding the Kerr Center's livestock program, focusing on sustainable ranching practices, including rotational grazing.

He wrote numerous publications on pasture management and led many grazing and livestock workshops. Will enjoyed passing on his experience and knowledge to those interested in improving their livestock systems.

To the staff of the Kerr Center Will was more than a co-worker, he was a friend. We will miss him.

A full obituary is available here.

Guide to Monarch Lookalikes

The spring monarch migration has started! **That orange-and-black butterfly you see fluttering past must be another monarch... or is it?**

Although their iconic color pattern is pretty distinctive, **there are other common butterflies that look similar enough to monarchs to be confused with them**. The viceroy, and, to a lesser extent, the soldier and queen, can all be mistaken for monarchs.

To help reduce the confusion, Okies for Monarchs has created a helpful **free guide to these monarch lookalikes**.

In addition to its tips on distinguishing adults of these species from one another, the guide also discusses differences in appearance in some of the larval stages, as well as host plant preferences, as additional clues. It even offers pointers on telling male and female monarchs apart.

Have a look at the guide to common monarch lookalikes, and don't fall for anything but the real deal this migration!

Home-Grown Pride - Certified!

Many U.S. farmers and ranchers raise their livestock and crops entirely on U.S. soil, but today's globalized agricultural markets can make it hard for the customer to realize that, much less select those products. **New labeling programs now make it easier for home-grown farm products to stand out on supermarket shelves, letting both growers and shoppers take pride in certified U.S.-raised foods.**

First, the **USDA** recently issued its final **"Product of USA" rule**, spelling out exactly how meat, poultry, and egg products have to be produced to qualify for that label, or one reading "Made in the USA."

For years, customers buying products bearing those labels have assumed that the animals that produced them were born, raised, and slaughtered in the United States - but that often hasn't been the case.

Up to now, meat from an animal raised outside the U.S. but slaughtered at a U.S. plant - or even slaughtered elsewhere, but packaged in the U.S. - could be labeled, "Product of USA." **The new, final rule is changed to match the common-sense perception: all stages of production have to take place in the U.S. for the product to bear that label.**

Orchestrating a similar effort in the private sector, American Farmland Trust has just launched a new certification program called "U.S. Farmed." Products with at least 95 percent of their agricultural ingredients coming from farms in the United States can qualify for the seal.

In keeping with its larger mission of protecting farmland, AFT will use the fees charged for the certification to fund programs to provide U.S. farmers and ranchers with free resources and advice to help them access, protect, and maintain U.S. agricultural land.

Anheuser-Busch is the first company to adopt the U.S. Farmed certification. The seal should be appearing soon on several of its beer brands.

Free Organic Conservation Agriculture Webinar Series

There's a treasure trove of **conservation agriculture know-how free for the taking** on the internet.

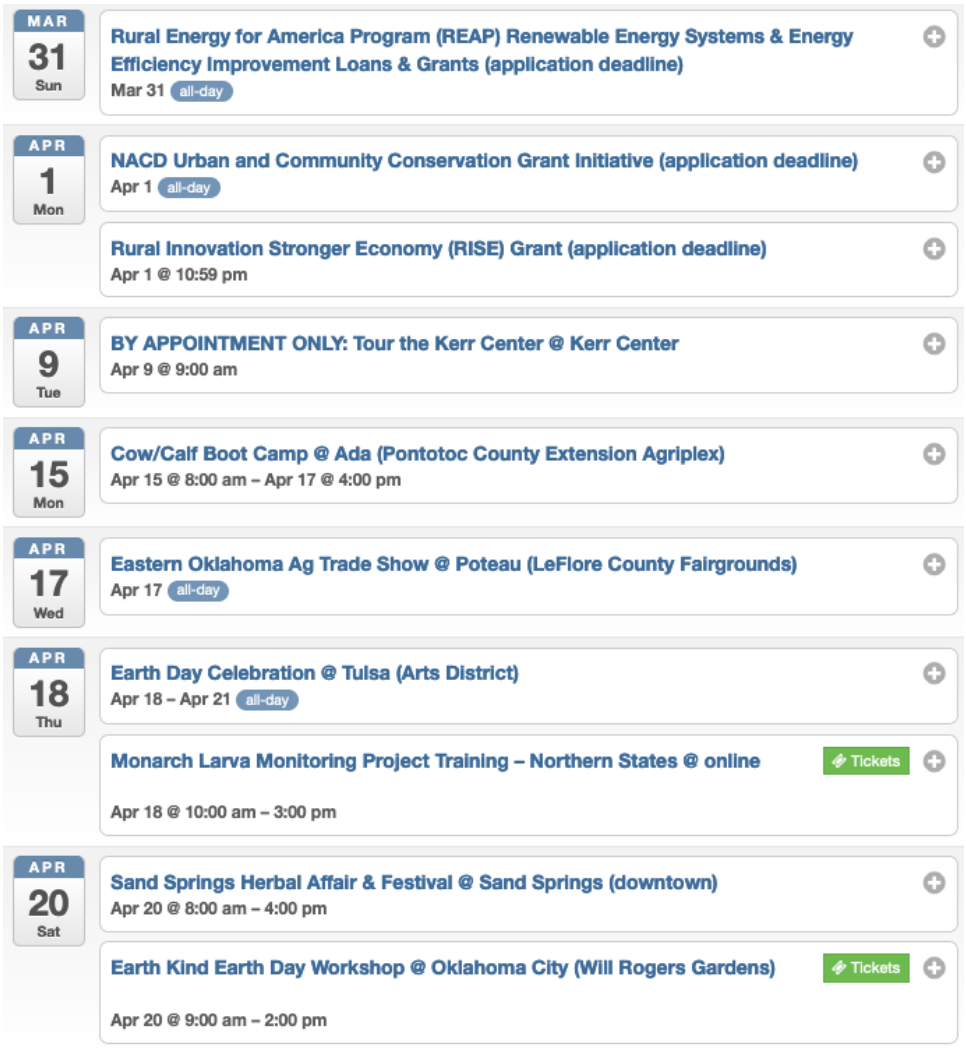
Last year, the Organic Farming Research Foundation and the USDA-NRCS teamed up to run a monthly **webinar series on soil health and organic farming**. Now, the **complete collection is available** for viewing.

Topics range from the basics of **soil health, organic farming, and USDA certification**, through **weed, water, and nutrient management**, to **plant genetics, conservation tillage, and more**.

The webinar collection is available through the **OFRF website**.

Early Spring Events: Eastern OK Ag Trade Show; Cow-Calf Boot Camp; Earth Day; Grants....

Spring is springing! The **Eastern Oklahoma Ag Trade Show** is happening April 18 in Poteau. Pontotoc County Extension is running its **Cow-Calf Boot Camp** (Apr. 15, Ada). Last but not least, the [Kerr Center is open for tours] once again, every second Tuesday starting April 9.



There's a bevy of **Earth Day-related events** just around the corner, including Tulsa's **Earth Day Celebration** (Apr. 18-21), the **Sand Springs Herbal Affair & Festival** (Apr. 20), and the **Earth Kind Earth Day Workshop** in Oklahoma City (Apr. 20).

Upcoming **grant application deadlines** include:

- **Rural Energy for America Program** (REAP; Mar. 31)
- **NACD Urban and Community Conservation Grant Initiative** (Apr. 1)
- **Rural Innovation Stronger Economy (RISE) Grant** (Apr. 1)

There are many more sustainable agriculture educational activities going on, and we're adding more to the calendar all the time. Get the latest on our 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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