

# Oklahoma



The Magazine of the  
Oklahoma Farm Bureau  
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*country*



## Heralding *our* heritage

Nine Oklahoma farm and ranch families keep the tradition of family farming alive and growing.

### Commodity Corner


Gaining a farmer's perspective on trade

### Lincoln to Local

Talking rural issues with Gov. Kevin Stitt

### Stronger. Together.

Reviewing OKFB's 77th annual meeting



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# Oklahoma Country

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## ON THE COVER

Russell and Jimmi Kriz of Comanche County are one of nine families honored with the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee's Farm & Ranch Family Recognition. Read more on page 15.

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## HIDDEN NUMBER WORTH \$50

One member family's Oklahoma Farm Bureau membership number is hidden somewhere in this issue of *Oklahoma Country* and could earn that member family \$50. To claim the cash prize, the member family must find its own hidden membership number and contact Brianne Schwabauer before the last day of the month, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at (405) 523-2346.

The OKFB membership number hidden somewhere in *Oklahoma Country* must match the number on the face of your individual OKFB membership card for you to claim the cash prize. The membership number that appears on your magazine's mailing label is not the hidden number, but also must match the hidden number for you to claim the cash prize.

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# PRESIDENTIALLY SPEAKING

## Local grassroots action, far-reaching impact

By Rodd Moesel

President, Oklahoma Farm Bureau & Affiliated Companies

If you want to see the deep impact your Oklahoma Farm Bureau membership makes, look all the way over to Washington, D.C.

We know the important, local projects our OKFB members take on in our rural communities and counties. And it's easy to see the efforts our members make across our state - many of them are shared in this very magazine. But it is sometimes easy to forget our membership activities carry weight in the halls of Congress and throughout our federal government.

Take, for instance, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Water Rule.

Farm Bureau members across the nation worked for years to help the EPA understand that the proposed Waters of the U.S. rule update would have huge, detrimental consequences for agriculture. Throughout comment periods, Farm Bureau members made their voice heard. Our professional staff at American Farm Bureau carried our grassroots policy to federal agencies to ensure agriculture's perspective was considered. In a final push to repeal the old rule, OKFB members completed comment cards at our August Area Meetings, sharing their personal stories about how the flawed WOTUS rule would harm our state.

Now, thanks to Farm Bureau members, the EPA has introduced a new clean water rule. Once again, Farm Bureau members will be able to make their voices heard through a public comment period on the newly proposed regulations. I encourage all members to get informed and offer comments on this very important rulemaking process.

After years of work and following months of anticipation, our country now has a new farm bill. This essential legislation ensures our family farmers and ranchers can plan for the future and provides food security for all Americans. Once again, Farm Bureau members played an important role in shaping and passing the farm bill.

Our efforts started years ago, with ideas proposed in local counties that made their way to the AFBF policy book. Farm

Bureau members stepped up to the plate and worked with their congressmen to share the impact the farm bill has across our nation. And now our members have helped push the bill across the finish line. While no legislation is likely to be perfect, being informed and engaged in the process ensures that our ideas are

considered, and many times included, in important laws such as this.

Even with a new farm bill in place, this is not the time to head back to the farm or ranch and "wait for the next one." Ensuring a future for Oklahoma requires vigilance and action. After all, there is no "off season" in our line of work.

Shifting our focus from


Washington, D.C., to our own state Capitol, we have a large number of new legislators entering our state House and Senate chambers this coming session. Fifty-seven out of 149 legislators will start their first legislative session in February. With these legislators' excitement and energy comes our responsibility to show them the impact agriculture makes in our state.

I encourage every county Farm Bureau to reach out to their legislators - veteran or newcomer - to help educate and inform them about the importance of agriculture in Oklahoma. Whether it be a legislative dinner, an invitation to visit your farm or a county Farm Bureau legislative visit to Oklahoma City, OKFB members need to serve as a resource for our legislators, helping them understand agricultural and rural issues.

Farm Bureau has certainly accomplished big things. And together, our members will accomplish much more. It will take work and it will take effort. But this way of life that we love is worth every moment, every phone call and every visit.

“Ensuring a future for Oklahoma requires vigilance and action. After all, there is no ‘off season’ in our line of work.”

— Rodd Moesel



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# INSURANCE MATTERS

## Looking back, looking forward

By Gary Buckner  
General Manager, Oklahoma Farm Bureau Insurance

As we at Oklahoma Farm Bureau Insurance look to a new year with new goals, I want to take a moment to share some exciting accomplishments of 2018.

As the largest domestic insurance company in Oklahoma, we continue to add to our membership with a 2018 projected net operating gain of \$9 million, leading us to end our fiscal year with surplus of \$120 million. We had a fairly quiet storm year, although wildfires and a late storm in November did bring some costly claims.

Operationally, I'm excited to add new capabilities and technologies to better serve our members and attract new members. We continue to make improvements to our website, and I anticipate the next time I report to you, we will have the ability to provide you with a quote for auto insurance with just a few clicks of the mouse or a few taps on your smart phone. We hope to add these capabilities as smoothly as possible, and we do appreciate your patience.

Lastly, every year at our home office, we partner with the Salvation Army of Central Oklahoma Area Command to adopt

and buy gifts for their annual Angel Tree program. This year our home office employees adopted 38 angels. I'm continually blown away by the generosity of my colleagues and once again

reminded how proud I am to work for this company and organization.

During this holiday season, we had our second-annual Christmas tree decorating contest. Each department at our home office had the opportunity to decorate a tree with a unique style of their choosing. All in the spirit of fun and games, it is still fun to see the neat ways each department brought a little Christmas joy to our offices.

I look forward to reporting more exciting initiatives at Oklahoma Farm Bureau Insurance. I wish each of you a wonderful year to come.

To see pictures of our Angel Tree and all the Christmas trees at our home office, check out Oklahoma Farm Bureau Insurance on Facebook.

“I'm excited to add new capabilities and technologies to better serve our members and attract new members.”

— Gary Buckner



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## American agriculture can't afford to lose out on trade

By Hope Pjesky

Grappling with uncertain foreign export markets, Alfalfa County Farm Bureau member and Oklahoma farmer Hope Pjesky explains Oklahoma agriculture's need for international trade.

**A**s a farmer, it saddens me the way anti-trade rhetoric has escalated in the media and political climate over the last few years.

Overlooking the benefits, people are too often quick to write off free trade agreements. They seem to forget the basic economic principle of comparative advantage, which allows people to do what they are best at and trade with others for the goods and services they lack. When this principle is followed, everyone benefits from access to the best and most affordable products and services.

International trade is incredibly important to hundreds of thousands of American farm and ranch families, including mine. Using knowledge and innovation, American farmers and ranchers have become very efficient at growing a diverse and abundant supply of food, fiber and fuel. Our productivity provides American consumers with more nutritious food choices at lower prices than any other country in the world. But some of the products we take for granted in our grocery stores wouldn't be available without trade, due to the limits of our local climates and growing seasons. For example, tropical products such as coffee, cocoa and bananas cannot be produced in the continental U.S.

American farmers and ranchers are so efficient, in part, because we specialize in growing crops and raising livestock that are best suited to our land and climate. This efficiency allows us to grow an abundance of certain agricultural products to sell to markets around the world. And that's vital to keeping agriculture and the jobs it supports on American soil alive and

well. With 95.6 percent of the world's consumers living outside the U.S., family farmers like me depend on international trade to make our businesses sustainable.

On our farm in Oklahoma, we produce wheat and beef for consumers in the U.S. and abroad. Our climate is challenging for growing most crops, but the crop best suited to our region is hard red winter wheat, the type of wheat used in the bread that Americans eat every day. American family farmers depend on international markets to keep us in business, however, as demand is not high enough in the U.S. alone. Each year between

50 and 60 percent of the hard red winter wheat grown in the U.S. is exported to many countries around the world, including Mexico, Japan, the Philippines, China, Nigeria and South Korea.

In spite of our nation's love affair with red meat, valuable beef would be tossed out if our farm sold only to domestic customers. Access to markets in other countries that use different cuts of beef than American consumers not only adds value—between \$250 and \$300 for each calf—but also reduces food waste. For

example, there isn't much demand for beef short ribs, tongue or internal organ meat in the U.S., but in South Korea short ribs are in high demand. In Mexico, tongue tacos are a favorite, and consumers in many countries around the world welcome internal organ meats on their dinner plates. Without trade our Oklahoma farm couldn't make a living just producing the beef Americans enjoy.

Next time you hear that trade is bad for American businesses, take a moment to consider the safe, affordable food you enjoy every day, and imagine for a moment what your shopping cart and dinner table might look like if a lack of trade opportunities forced American farms out of business. **FB**

“With 96.5 percent of the world's consumers living outside the U.S., family farmers like me depend on international trade to make our businesses sustainable.”

— Hope Pjesky

**LEFLORE COUNTY FARM BUREAU**

**MEETING NOTICE**

Leflore County Farm Bureau members will meet to vote on a bylaw change on **Tuesday, Feb. 19** at **6:30 p.m.** at the Leflore County Farm Bureau office, 2007 N. Broadway in Poteau, Oklahoma.

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## Q&A with Gov. Kevin Stitt

As he took office in early January, Gov. Kevin Stitt shared his goals for and thoughts on agriculture and rural Oklahoma with Farm Bureau members.



**Q:** What are some of the biggest threats to the livelihoods of Oklahoma's farmers and ranchers? How do you plan to address those threats as governor?

I believe Oklahoma must set policy and communicate a vision that opens more doors for our agriculture industry to compete both in the national and international marketplace, that helps expand access to capital, and that ensures core needs are being

met to help support those living in the rural portions of our state. I believe those core needs include access to healthcare, quality roads and bridges to move your product to market, and updated infrastructure for access to water and wastewater needs. As governor, I will also work with Secretary of Agriculture Blayne Arthur to minimize overregulation of farmers and ranchers, work to preserve the agriculture sales tax exemption and protect private property rights and landowners' rights.

**Q:** Over the past several years, rural Oklahomans have been forced to drive farther and farther for critical health services with the closures of many rural hospitals. How can you ensure rural Oklahomans have access to quality healthcare?

I believe we must improve access to rural healthcare by cutting government red tape, reviewing ways to give healthcare professionals more flexibility, and recruiting doctors and nurses to rural areas. This includes putting an increased focus on STEM education in Oklahoma's rural schools and recruiting students from rural areas to pursue a degree in the medical field by encouraging initiatives such as the Blue Coat to White Coat program in our state. We must also adjust and pursue innovative medical care options, such as the telemedicine networks we are seeing in hospitals like Fairview Regional Medical Center. My administration will audit Medicaid to ensure the program is being run effectively and efficiently and look at ways to improve reimbursement rates so that it matches the rates of our neighboring states. This will provide additional financial support to Oklahoma's rural hospitals, nursing homes and other healthcare entities.

**Q:** We want to provide our children and grandchildren with promising opportunities to return to rural Oklahoma. How can we keep some of our state's best and brightest in rural Oklahoma?

This is a very important question, and one of the reasons why I chose Blayne Arthur as my next Secretary of Agriculture. Blayne was raised in rural Oklahoma on a farming and ranching operation outside of Chickasha, and she and her husband have chosen to now raise their two young kids with a similar upbringing outside




of Stillwater. As a young entrepreneur, mom of children in public schools, rancher, and public servant, her story is an inspiration for our youth today as they consider their fields of study and areas of interest. We must continue to promote youth organizations like FFA, 4-H and the Oklahoma Youth Expo, and also support and promote organizations like Oklahoma Farm Bureau's Young Farmers and Ranchers that help connect our young adults across the state, spur them on professionally, and generate conversation and ongoing education about the future of farming and innovation.

**Q:** In your campaign for governor, you spent time in both rural and urban areas of our state. On which issues can rural and urban Oklahomans come together?

During my time on the campaign trail, it became clear that Oklahomans want a government that is accountable and transparent. As governor, I will audit all agencies and put Oklahoma's checkbook online to ensure we are providing taxpayers with a more efficient and effective government. I also believe we can agree that a strong infrastructure system is vital to our state's success. One of my goals is to be top ten in infrastructure. This includes making sure county officials have the resources they need to complete rural infrastructure projects. In order to do this, my administration will work with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation to modernize and streamline regulations and increase accountability and consistency agencywide. We will then focus on repairing and providing necessary resources to improve Oklahoma's infrastructure as a whole.

**Q:** How can Farm Bureau members support your administration in strengthening the agriculture industry and rural Oklahoma?

I encourage all Farm Bureau members to continue to be involved in the grassroots policy development process and take a seat at the table. In order to accomplish efficient and effective change, we must have differing voices in order to challenge each other and work out solutions. I look forward to working with Farm Bureau as we continue to pursue Oklahoma's turnaround. 

## Help Farm Bureau advocate for agriculture and rural Oklahoma!

### Visit your legislators.

Now, more than ever, the voice of Farm Bureau members is needed as the 2019 legislative session begins on Feb. 4. With more than 40 percent of the Oklahoma Legislature made up of new legislators, it's vital that farmers, ranchers and rural Oklahomans visit their lawmakers at the state Capitol and share their opinions on issues that will affect their livelihoods.

### Attend a county Farm Bureau legislative event.

Throughout the legislative session, county Farm Bureaus across the state will host legislators at local meetings for updates on legislation and to share OKFB values and policies with their representatives and senators. Contact your county Farm Bureau office to learn more.

### Sign up for OKFB legislative action alerts.

Use your voice when it matters the most. Sign up to receive notifications from OKFB when lawmakers need to hear from you on important agriculture or rural issues. Text "OKFB77" to 52886 to receive a link to a sign-up form. Message and data rates may apply.

### Need more information?

To learn how to get engaged and involved in the legislative process, contact the OKFB Public Policy Division at (405) 530-2681.




## Updated Grainger benefit helps Farm Bureau members save on the supplies they need

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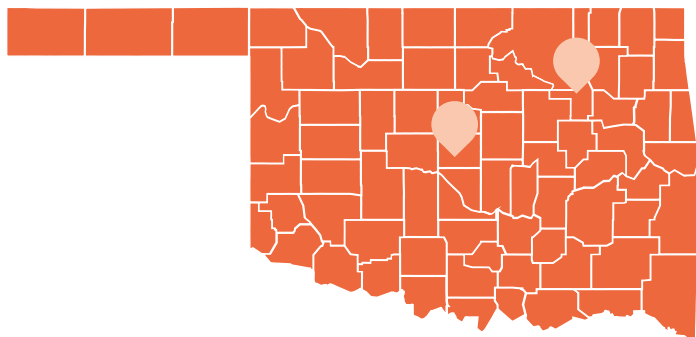
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Manufacturing: Welding  
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stories and photos by *Dustin Mielke*

# Heritage

*the farm and ranch families of Oklahoma Farm Bureau*

Oklahoma's farm and ranch families grow and raise food, fiber and fuel for a growing world."

It is a saying we love to repeat. After all, Oklahoma's agriculturalists help feed and clothe us as they make our modern lives possible.

But in the rural communities spread throughout our state - from the shortgrass prairies of the panhandle to the stands of loblolly pines in the southeast - the impact our farm and ranch families make goes even further.

They are active members of their communities, serving in local schools and churches. They help their neighbors in times of need. They care for and tend to the vast expanses of rural Oklahoma. They make our state vibrant.

To celebrate the great rural heritage sustained by our farm and ranch families, the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee honored nine outstanding farm and ranch families - one from each OKFB district - with its 2018 Farm & Ranch Family Recognition.

Each family was honored at OKFB's 2018 state convention in November with a photo presentation, and each family received a special sign commemorating their recognition along with a cash award.

The stories of each family are featured on the following pages. And yes, these families grow food for a growing world. But they also make rural Oklahoma a great place to live, grow and thrive.



# the Bryants

dewey county || district one

Up and down the hills of Dewey County roam some cattle that look a little different than the average bovine you'll find in Oklahoma.

Robin and Terry Bryant have raised longhorn cattle near Camargo for years. But on one cross-country trip to purchase more longhorns for the family's herd, Terry called Robin with news that he would be bringing home some cattle that were a little different.

"(Terry) and his mom went up to Ohio

to get longhorns, and he saw the BueLingos up there," Robin said. "Terry really liked them. He told me, 'Robin, I'm bringing home a different color cattle,' and I said, 'Okaaaayyy...' "So when he brought them home, yep, he brought home some different color cattle, alright."

The unique BueLingo cattle sport a wide, vertical stripe of white sandwiched between more traditional cattle colors of black, red or silver. The unique animals draw a bit of attention from passers-by.

"It's amazing how many just stop and take pictures," Robin said. "I looked out there one day and there were three vehicles just stopped out here, taking pictures of the cattle."

The Bryants are proud to raise the BueLingo breed, which Terry said bring a premium when it comes time to sell them.

"Most of the time our BueLingos will go directly to a feed yard up in Kansas," Terry said. "They do better in the feed yard, and we get top-dollar price out of them that way."





Beyond the family's cattle herd, Terry has built fence full-time for the past 25 years. After initially moving away from the family ranch and working pipeline jobs, he was proud to return home to help local farmers and ranchers and to continue the family legacy of ranching.

"I was never too impressed with building fence when I was younger because that's what I always had to do when I was grounded," Terry said.

However, after returning to the ranch,

Terry found fencebuilding gave him an opportunity to not only earn a living but also to help fellow farmers and ranchers.

"I just love being able to help the farmers to get their fences where maybe it will last as long as some of the others or longer than what they have had and help improve the land," Terry said.

When a series of devastating springtime wildfires swept through Dewey County, threatening the Bryants' cattle and land, the family helped their local community

battle and get through the fires, and Terry worked tirelessly with the local rural water district to get water back to rural residents as quickly as possible.

As members of their rural community and as ranchers, the Bryant family works hard to help make Dewey County a great place to be.

"I love being a caretaker of this place," Terry said. "I'm blessed to get to do it."



# the Johnsons

kiowa county || district two

There are many rich agricultural traditions in our state. For generations, farm and ranch families have passed on legacies of growing crops or raising livestock.

For Brian and Misty Johnson of Gotebo, that tradition is one of hard work, focusing on family and raising sheep in southwestern Oklahoma.

“The sheep are the tradition in our family,” Brian said. “I am a third-generation sheep farmer and we sell sheep all over the United States.

“I call it kind of an addiction. It gets in your blood: the pedigrees, just going over studying the genetic side of it, being able to make the matings. It’s an ongoing, revolving process where you’re striving to produce that perfect animal.”

Brian and Misty, along with their children, Trevor Johnson, Trenton Julian, Kamden Urban and Kailen Urban, raise sheep and cattle and grow wheat, milo

and oats. However, it’s the sheep that the family focuses on as they strive to produce high-quality show lambs they sell across the country through word-of-mouth and intensive online marketing.

The family works together to improve their flock, their herd and their land. The Johnsons’ oldest son, Trevor, recently returned to the farm full-time as the family continues to build upon generations of knowledge and experience.

“That’s what is nice for me on the farming side is for all of our family to be together,” Misty said. “We work hard together, but we also play hard together. We spend a lot of time together, and that makes it possible when we’re all here on the same place.”

Besides their agricultural endeavors, the Johnson family has been able to raise funds to help people in need in their local community through several t-shirt sales every year. Their efforts to help fellow Oklahomans in need is done in

remembrance of their son, Tucker, who was tragically killed in an accident in 2011.

“In Tucker’s Memory, we started really just to find a way to repay all the kindness that we received through that hard, dark time of ours,” Misty said. “We initially started a t-shirt sale to raise some money to buy one piece to go on the playground at his elementary school. That just snowballed, and thousands of t-shirts later, we actually built an entire new playground.”

The family has continued selling shirts emblazoned with a message of “Be Kind,” donating the proceeds to people and organizations in need.

It all goes back to the focus on family the Johnsons live out.

“That means everything to us,” Brian said. “The family comes first. The business side – yes, you have to get done what you’re going to do, but family is first. And that’s just how we are.”





*the*  
**Kings**  
*caddo county || district three*



What do you see when you venture out on the farm or ranch? Or when you take a drive through rural Oklahoma?

Lonnie King sees beyond the crops standing in the field or the livestock grazing in the pastures. He sees a connection to the land, and even more importantly, a purpose that goes beyond this life.

“We’re all just stewards of what the Lord has placed in our lives, and it’s just taking care of what he’s blessed us with and passing it on,” Lonnie said.

Lonnie and Sharon King grow wheat, soybeans, grass and other forages alongside their cow/calf herd in Caddo County. Lonnie has spent a lifetime in agriculture after he was raised on the farm, and he is proud of the care he has poured into the family’s land and animals.

“I think I always knew I wanted to farm, growing up on the farm and being a

part of it,” Lonnie said. “I enjoy trying to improve the land. I had an uncle one time who said that he wanted to leave the land better than he found it. And that’s what I want to do.

“The land has been good to me, and I want to make sure it’s good to whoever comes along after me.”

The Kings care for their land, in part, by judiciously using irrigation to apply water to almost all of their acres. Careful monitoring of irrigation ensures maximum productivity while conserving natural resources.

“Weather is erratic in western Oklahoma – we all know that,” Lonnie said. “My dad was in the irrigation business, and his motto was – I don’t know his motto, but it was on his business cards – I don’t know where it came from. It said, ‘Profit grows where water flows.’ It worked for him, it worked for a lot of people.”

After raising their own children on the family farm, Sharon said it is a blessing to see their grandchildren visit the farm and learn the same lessons in the same place she raised her children.

“They think it’s the most wonderful thing in the world, and so that makes you feel good,” Sharon said of her grandchildren’s love of the farm. “When they come and want to go with papa to feed cattle or check crops, they enjoy it, and it’s a blessing being able to raise family on the farm.”

Working on and caring for the land is more than just a job for Lonnie, who said farming gives him a chance to see the work of God on a daily basis.

“I think people who are close to the land have a big advantage over people who aren’t,” Lonnie said. “When I go out, I see the Lord in everything, and it’s a spiritual thing.”





the

# Krizes

comanche county || district four

It is an age-old question: “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Russell Kriz has never wavered in his answer.

“I could have told you when I was 8 years old that’s what I was going to do,” Russell said of farming. “And that’s what we’re doing. I don’t know why, it’s just how we’re bred, I guess.”

Russell and Jimmi Kriz farm 1,500 acres of wheat, cotton and forage in Comanche County. They also have a cow/calf herd, and they graze stocker cattle on wheat pasture as conditions allow.

Russell started out farming on his own with a few hundred acres, and with hard work and dedication in the tradition of generations of his family who farmed in the area before him, the farm has grown to what it is today.

“I can remember a time when I had about 200 acres and 15 cows.”

For Russell, it was time around his grandparents’ farm that instilled in him a love for agriculture. Spend just a little time with Russell, and it is easy to see his passion for agriculture – a passion that he is now proud to share with his children.

“My favorite part is the cattle,” Russell said of his operation. “My favorite part of the year is when we’re getting calves – I don’t know, that’s just what I like.”

The Kriz family farms down the road from Russell’s extended family, and they are raising the sixth generation with their four children, Mavrik, Makynzi, Rustan and Riffin.

Jimmi works off the farm as a loan processor for a mortgage company, and

while she did not grow up with a farming background, she is excited to see her children grow up around agriculture.

“I like to see the kids, their excitement in it,” Jimmi said of farm life. “They love the cows, and of course, the boys are obsessed with the bulls. They ask a million questions, and I like that. They’re very detailed – they want to know the specifics. They idolize their dad and they want to grow with it.”

“Russell is obviously very passionate about it, and I hope the kids are, too. It’s tradition. It’s not common these days for people to stay in it. I want them to have that pride like Russell does.”

And Russell agrees.

“I’m proud that we’re still here, carrying on a family tradition,” he said.





# the Cooper

luflore county || distr







ict five



*J*estled down in the hills of southwestern Oklahoma, Jeff and Holly Cooper have built a life raising cattle and a family focused on their love for the outdoors, the land and for nature in southeast Oklahoma.

The Coopers have a herd of 100 Braford cows that Jeff said are well suited for the land and the climate of LeFlore County. The family focuses on carefully managing their herd and being good stewards of the natural resources on the family's ranch.

"I feel that if I do my job of providing the care, the grass, the fresh water, that I maximize their potential, my potential and the land's potential," Jeff said.

The Coopers manage their land using rotational grazing and focusing on daily hands-on animal care with the goal of minimizing their footprint on the land.

"It's all about a balance in my opinion," Jeff said. "We've got to keep a good balance for the land, and for us, and for the animals. And if we maintain that balance, it has worked really well for us."

"I'm an animal lover," Holly said. "With these cattle, I have special ones that I name, and they're my babies, and we like to go see them."

Jeff and Holly raised three daughters - Kennedy, Skyler and Kaitlin - sharing their love for nature and the rural

lifestyle. Now they have the opportunity to see grandchildren return and spend time with the cattle and with nature.

"That's one thing I've always thought with the farm life, that it's a lot nicer having a big family like that," Holly said.

In addition to their ranching, Jeff works as a real-estate agent and operates a scrapyard. Holly retired from a 20-year career in nursing and now is a photographer in the Poteau community.

Through all their endeavors, Jeff said the family's ranch allows them to combine their passions around agriculture.

"We just enjoy the outdoors that God has made for us all," Jeff said. "It's a way to enjoy the seasons because you're outdoors a lot taking care of the place, trying to be a good steward of what you're blessed with. To me, it's trying to be a good manager for the cattle and for the wildlife and for the property."

As they have built their operation as a family, Jeff and Holly are proud of the life lessons of hard work they have been able to provide for their children. For Jeff, the attraction of ranching as a family is pretty easy to sum up.

"It's just fresh air: getting up every morning and going outside and looking at the world, raising my kids and my grandkids," he said.



You can measure a ranch in terms of cattle, land or location. But for Bart and Kelly Wiedel, their measure of success has less to do with what you can see from the road and more to do with the amount of hard work and dedication they invest together as a family.

Bart and Kelly run the BK Wiedel & Sons ranch in Muskogee County where they have a cow/calf herd and diligently focus on improving the land and caring for their animals.

The couple raised three children on the family ranch, and today they work alongside their two adult sons running a haying business to supplement their ranching income. Along with their daughter, Lacy Miller, and their son- and daughters-in-law, Bart and Kelly have quite a crew with a love for agriculture.

“It means everything in the world to us to have our children work with us on the ranch,” Bart said. “They work hard,

and that’s what it takes to be involved in agriculture: a lot of hard work.”

The Wiedel family puts in the hours as they care for 800 momma cows, bale thousands of round bales of hay each year and even work as fabricators as they build and repair equipment for fellow farmers and ranchers in the area.

“We try to stay as diversified as we can and do as many things as we can,” Bart said. “My dad always said, ‘You can’t just do one thing,’ because when the cattle prices go down, the haying helps us make it through when there’s tough times. Sometimes haying’s not good, but cattle prices are good.”

The Wiedels are focused on closely managing their cattle herd. From monitoring the pastures their cattle graze in and applying timely herbicide applications with GPS guidance to carefully watching animal health and judiciously administering treatments

when needed, the Wiedel family focuses on caring for the animals that enable their livelihood.

Bart’s commitment to caring for his cattle drove him so far as to develop a custom protein supplement for his cattle. Based on soybeans, the feed provides the protein the family’s cattle need to thrive.

“The cows love it, and they do good on it,” Bart said.

Kelly herself is a farm girl, raised in both Illinois and Oklahoma, and she takes joy in seeing her grandkids getting to grow up around agriculture.

“I like watching the grandkids get out there and be around the cows, being around the horses and wanting to go with papa to feed cows,” Kelly said.

For the Wiedel family, whether it’s haying, fabricating or working cows, they get the work done the one way they know how: as a family.





How far would you go to do something you love? Scott Armbruster knows the answer to that question.

Raised on a farm near Burlington, Scott learned to love raising crops and animals from a young age. However, as the tough farm economy of the 1980s took hold, Scott found employment in the Dallas metro area and moved away from the family operation.

In the late 1990s, Scott started farming full time while still living in the Dallas area. After several years of making the nearly six-hour trip from Dallas to the farm to help his father during critical times of the year, the family decided to

move to Alfalfa County after finding a job for his wife, Allison, in nearby Alva.

“I basically thought that if we don’t try, we’ll never know,” Scott said of his decision to return to the farm full-time. “I worked a job and there wasn’t a lot of job satisfaction there, and here it’s all by your own hands.”

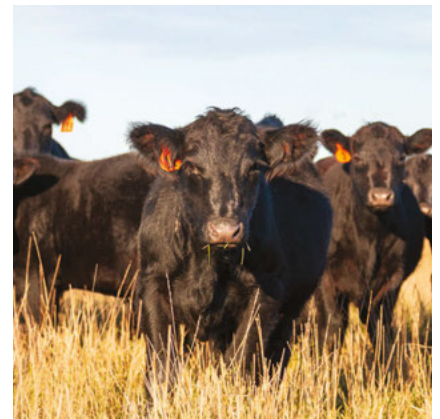
Today, Scott and Allison farm in Alfalfa County just south of Burlington. The family has 1,200 acres where they grow alfalfa, wheat, soybeans and milo and care for a cow/calf herd. Perhaps most importantly, the couple raised four children on the farm, where Scott is the fourth generation to care for the land.

“It’s a family thing,” Scott said. “It’s

hard to describe to somebody, really, what farming is. It’s a job, like anything else – there’s good days and bad days. But we’ve enjoyed it.”

The couple’s four children, Sarah, Ashley, Heather and Jonathan, all helped out on the farm and showed livestock as they were growing up. Today, Scott and Allison have children who have returned to the area to plant their own roots, and their son, Jonathan, is considering a return the farm himself as the fifth generation of Armbrusters to care for the family’s land.

Allison, who is originally from the Dallas area, said she quickly came to love the rural way of life.



“It was quite a different way of life,” Allison said of the family’s move. “I wouldn’t do anything different, it’s been good. It’s been a good place to raise our kids. I wouldn’t take anything back - I would do it all over again the same way.”

Today, Allison works off the farm as a radiological technologist, and the family has never looked back since their move back to Burlington.

“You make your happiness wherever you’re at,” Scott said. “I think I’m most happy here, and I can’t imagine going somewhere else and doing something else.”



# the Bryants

*pontotoc county || district eight*



As Carrel Bryant looks across the pecan orchard spread along the river valley below, he can point to impressive, towering trees and tell you which ones have a remarkable ability to produce pecans.

He should know, as he has lived on the family farm since he was one-and-a-half years old. Even back then, some of the large pecan trees standing on the family's land today were large trees when Carrel began living on the place.

"We've got - I'm thinking - around 4,000 trees on our place now," Carrel said. "Some of them young trees, some of them are a lot older than me; they were big trees whenever I was a little boy."

Today, Carrel and Louise Bryant have a comprehensive pecan operation that they run with their two adult children, Randy and Lisa. The family also raises cattle and grows hay on their farm in Pontotoc County near the town of Francis.

The Bryants focus, however, on the

family's pecan operation.

The family harvests, sorts, cleans and cracks pecans they grow on their family farm. They also purchase pecans in lots of all sizes from fellow farmers and local community members.

"We'll buy just a little bag - a Walmart bag - full of pecans, or we'll buy semi loads," Carrel said. "I like to buy the small amounts."

The Bryant family also does custom pecan cleaning and cracking for farmers.

"We have one of the best cracking set-ups I think you'll find anywhere," Carrel said. "My son and I made the cracking operation, set it up ourselves, and I think we have an awful good cracking operation. We have people from many miles - even from down in Texas, two- or three-hour drive to get here in Oklahoma - to come get us to crack pecans."

The Bryants sell their pecans to wholesalers and to local customers at their retail shop located on their farm near

Francis, which features pecan products and Amish goods.

"We just love it," Carrel said of the family's retail store. "I love to have the people come in, my friends, and visit with me. I love to visit with people."

"We also have a website and ship our products coast-to-coast," Louise said.

The family also raises around 100 cows, with Hereford cattle being the base of their herd. Crossbreeding with Angus cattle produces animals that Carrel said are desirable at the sale barn.

"That's one of the best sellers you can get," Carrel said. "I've topped the market several times at Oklahoma City."

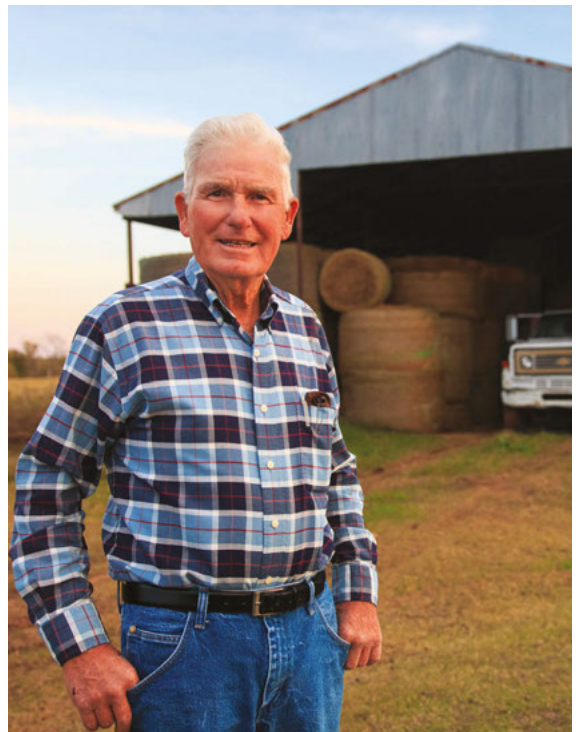
Carrel and Louise both had careers in education, teaching in the Byng Public School system. Every member of the Bryant family has been active in 4-H, and the family is proud of their lifelong dedication to agriculture.

"We just enjoy the farm life," Carrel said.



*the*  
**Herrmanns**

*lincoln county || district nine*





To get the grand tour of the area where Arnold and Roselle Herrmann have spent their life farming and ranching, you don't have to drive far from the couple's farmhouse.

"I was born two miles from here, and I was raised a mile and a quarter from here," Roselle said, sitting in the family's farmhouse living room. "Arnold was born a quarter of a mile back north of here. All of our land is within a three-mile radius, and it's all home land - from our families."

Arnold and Roselle have spent a lifetime in the area where both their families have farmed for generations. And now they have had the opportunity to raise their families around agriculture in Lincoln County, including grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The Herrmanns spent more than three

decades in the dairy business milking registered Holstein cattle.

"We milked up to 100 to 125 head of cattle," Arnold said. "I tell people when I make speeches or anything, 'About all I have I owe to udders.'"

After selling the dairy herd in 2000, the family increased their number of beef cattle, and today Arnold and Roselle run around 150 cows on bermuda grass pasture and wheat in partnership with their son, Arnold, Jr., and their son-in-law, Kenneth.


In fact, having family so close is a highlight of the central Oklahoma couple's time in agriculture.

"We've got wonderful grandkids and kids," Roselle said. "They're close to us, and we're so happy - feel so blessed - that they are."

As you would imagine, after spending

a lifetime in Lincoln County, the Herrmanns have served as integral members of their community. Arnold spent 55 years on the Lincoln County Farm Bureau board, and Roselle serves as vice-chair of the Lincoln County Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee. Arnold is a member of the local cemetery board and the couple has supported county fairs and youth in 4-H and FFA.

The Herrmanns are proud of their legacy in agriculture they have carved out in Lincoln County.

"It's just the accomplishment of doing something close to the earth that we feel like is beneficial to us and to other people," Roselle said. "And we really like it because it keeps our family together. That's the thing probably we're the most proud of." 



# FORWARD FOUNDATION



Tammy Coffee  
Oklahoma City YMCA



Dawn Meurant  
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Barbara Pemberton  
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Thorma Jackson  
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Haley Curfman  
Blackwell

## OKFB Foundation for Agriculture donates accurate agriculture books to 14 Oklahoma educators

**F**ourteen Oklahoma educators from across the state were awarded a bushel of agriculture books for their schools during Oklahoma Farm Bureau's 77th Annual Meeting held Nov. 16-18 in Norman, Oklahoma.

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture, alongside the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee, sponsored this year's Bushels for Books program. The program takes donated bushels of any commodity crop, as well as monetary donations from farmers and ranchers, and provides bushel baskets of agriculture books to Oklahoma educators.

"Agriculture is one of Oklahoma's leading industries, but few truly understand what it takes to produce our food, fiber

and fuel," said David VonTungeln, OKFB Foundation for Agriculture president. "We're thrilled to help our state's educators teach the next generation about Oklahoma farmers and ranchers."

Applications were accepted from teachers across the state, and winners were chosen by the WLC state board. The books cover various agriculture topics and were picked from the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture's list.

"It's so important for all of our students to learn about agriculture," said Kitty Beavers, 2018 OKFB WLC chair. "Many of our schools don't have any books about agriculture in their libraries. We're pleased to help present these books to educators who help teach our children

about the important role agriculture plays in their everyday lives."

Educators receiving books include Kellie Badley, Laverne; Rhonda Cotton, Lawton; Tammy Coffee, Oklahoma City YMCA; Haley Curfman, Blackwell; Lynn Ferrari, Canute; Celicia Hamilton, Porter; Thorma Jackson, Bray-Doyle; Amanda Jones, Timberlake; Mary Lassiter, Enid; Elizabeth Martin, Ponca City; Dawn Meurant, Indiahoma; Barbara Pemberton, Frontier; Christie Puckett, Maysville; and Megan Sowers, Sand Springs.

For more information on the Bushels for Books program, please visit [www.OKFBFoundationForAgriculture.org/Bushels-For-Books/](http://www.OKFBFoundationForAgriculture.org/Bushels-For-Books/).



## Garfield County Farm Bureau donates \$15,000 for trailer



Garfield County Farm Bureau members, alongside OKFB Executive Director Thad Doye (far left), pose for a photo with the donated livestock trailer. The trailer will be used to transport animals donated to the Pork for Packs and Beef for Backpacks programs.

**G**arfield County Farm Bureau recently donated \$15,000 to the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture to provide a new livestock trailer for the foundation's Pork for Packs and Beef for Backpacks programs. The trailer was unveiled at OKFB's 77th annual meeting held Nov. 16-18 in Norman, Oklahoma.

A partnership between the OKFB Foundation for Agriculture, Oklahoma FFA Association, Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma and other agricultural organizations, the Pork for Packs and Beef for Backpacks programs use donated hogs and cattle to produce protein sticks for the food bank's Food for Kids program.

The Food for Kids program provides backpacks filled with non-perishable, kid-friendly food to eat on weekends and school holidays. Learn more by visiting the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma's website at [www.rfbo.org](http://www.rfbo.org).

## OKFB members raise more than \$10,000 in foundation silent auction

**O**klahoma Farm Bureau members raised more than \$10,000 for the OKFB Foundation for Agriculture in a silent auction held during the organization's annual meeting held Nov. 16-18.

OKFB members and staff from across the state donated and bid on a variety of items in the auction.

The money raised will help fund programs including Bushels for Books, Beef for Backpacks and Pork for Packs programs, and the Grown for You commodity trailer.


## Carroll named OKFB foundation director

**T**he Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture has named Holly Carroll its foundation director. In the position, Carroll will coordinate foundation programs, represent the foundation at statewide events and activities, and build statewide awareness of agriculture and the foundation.

"I'm excited to work with other farmers and ranchers across the state who are passionate about their industry to educate and promote agriculture to all of Oklahoma," Carroll said.

Carroll previously served Oklahoma Farm Bureau as a field representative and the Young Farmers and Ranchers coordinator. She grew up on a beef and



tobacco farm in central Kentucky, and earned a degree in agricultural education from Western Kentucky University before moving to Oklahoma. 

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OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU'S 77<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING  
NOVEMBER 16-18, 2018

# 77

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Alfalfa County Farm Bureau President Ryan Pjesky (center) accepts OKFB's John I. Taylor Award from OKFB President Rodd Moesel (right) and Executive Director Thad Doye (left) during the annual meeting awards banquet.

## Alfalfa County named top county Farm Bureau

**A**lfalfa County Farm Bureau was presented with the 2018 Oklahoma Farm Bureau John I. Taylor Award on Saturday, Nov. 17 during the organization's 77th annual meeting in Norman, Oklahoma.

Named after OKFB's first president, the award serves as the organization's highest county honor.

"(Winning is) a really big deal, because we try to do everything we're supposed to be doing as a county Farm Bureau," said Ryan Pjesky, Alfalfa County Farm Bureau president. "It's good to be rewarded for the hard work and effort of all the members and the board members that participated."

Alfalfa County was honored for excelling in the program areas of public

policy, local affairs, service to members, Women's Leadership Committee and Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee.

"Every county is the county branch of the biggest voice for agriculture and rural issues in the state of Oklahoma," Pjesky said. "Having a strong county Farm Bureau just gives a contact point or touchstone for people at a more local area to let them know what's going on."

The county served its members and the community by sponsoring a farm safety poster and essay contest for area students, hosting a meet-the-candidate forum for various offices, honoring local emergency medical services personnel at its annual meeting, promoting programs and events on a Facebook page, and engaging in a variety of other community activities.

## Texas County Farm Bureau wins Lewis H. Munn Award



Texas County Farm Bureau President Leon Richards (left) accepts the Lewis H. Munn Award from OKFB President Rodd Moesel during the awards banquet on Nov. 17. The award recognized the county's efforts to provide safety programs to the community.

**T**exas County Farm Bureau was honored with Oklahoma Farm Bureau's Lewis H. Munn Award on Nov. 17 during OKFB's 77th Annual Meeting.

Also known as the Farm Bureau Builders Award, the award is presented each year to the county that conducts the strongest program in a chosen area. This year, the program area was safety.

"It was a total surprise," said Leon Richards, Texas County Farm Bureau president, of winning the award. "We worked very hard at it. Particularly our county secretary, Cheslea, really worked on scheduling the safety people to come out. We sure appreciate and thank her for all the hard work she's done."

Texas County hosted a variety of safety trainings this year for its members and the community, including fire safety, school bus safety, bicycle safety and DUI prevention.

"Hopefully, if it saves just one life, it'll be worth all the work that goes into it," Richards said.

## Grunewald receives Distinguished Service to OKFB Award

**J**ohn Grunewald was recognized with the Distinguished Service to Oklahoma Farm Bureau Award on Saturday, Nov. 17 during the organization's 77th annual meeting in Norman, Oklahoma.

The award honors individuals who have made outstanding contributions to agriculture and Farm Bureau.

"It's a great honor to be presented this by such a great organization," Grunewald said of the award. "Farm Bureau does so many great things around the state of Oklahoma for farmers and ranchers and rural communities."

Nominated by Woodward County Farm Bureau members, Grunewald earned the award for his longtime commitment to supporting farmers and ranchers across western Oklahoma as president and CEO of Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma.

"John has been outstanding at leadership in many areas of agriculture all over western Oklahoma," said Eldon Merklin, Woodward County Farm Bureau president. "Farm Credit is very well rounded in helping not only Farm Bureau but all the ag groups in Oklahoma."

Under Grunewald's leadership, Merklin said Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma has played an integral role in supporting youth in agriculture and rural Oklahoma.

"Farm Credit has been very supportive of 4-H and FFA programs throughout western Oklahoma," Merklin said. "He's



John Grunewald (left), Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma president and CEO, receives the 2018 Distinguished Service to OKFB Award from OKFB President Rodd Moesel during the annual meeting awards program.

been an influence to many young people through all of the awards and things he has presented and Farm Credit has supported throughout the year."

Preparing the next generation of farmers and ranchers is a priority for Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma, Grunewald said.

"We just believe in the future of agriculture and are very optimistic about the next generation that's coming on,"

Grunewald said.

He serves on the board of directors for the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture, which works to share the work of farmers and ranchers throughout Oklahoma. He also has helped sponsor many OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers award programs in his role at Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma.

## County Presidential Star Awards

Each year, OKFB recognizes the county Farm Bureaus that have excelled in program areas such as membership, public policy, local affairs, service to members, Women's Leadership Committee and Young Farmers and Ranchers with a Presidential Star Award.

### Six Star Presidential Award

Alfalfa  
Comanche  
Garfield  
Noble  
Okmulgee  
Payne

### Five Star Presidential Award

Caddo  
Creek  
Kiowa  
LeFlore  
Nowata  
Okfuskee  
Texas  
Stephens

### Four Star Presidential Award

Cherokee  
Kingfisher  
Love  
Major  
Muskogee  
Oklahoma  
Pittsburg  
Pontotoc  
Pottawatomie  
Tulsa  
Washington  
Woods

### Three Star Presidential Award

Canadian  
Haskell  
Latimer  
Lincoln  
Ottawa  
Rogers



Nocona and Jordan Cook are presented with the 2018 OKFB YF&R Achievement Award by OKFB Executive Director Thad Doye (left) and YF&R Coordinator Zac Swartz (right) at the organization's awards banquet on Nov. 17 at the 2018 OKFB annual meeting

## Washita County couple named OKFB's top young farmers and ranchers

Nocona and Jordan Cook were named Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Achievement Award winners at the organization's 2018 annual meeting on Saturday, Nov. 17 in Norman.

The Cooks received the recognition for their dedication as young agriculturalists, raising cattle and growing wheat, hay, cotton and other crops in western Oklahoma's Washita County.

Both Nocona and Jordan were raised in Washita County – Nocona on the east side near the town of Cloud Chief and Jordan on the west side near Burns Flat. Today, they live in Cordell and each morning, drive separate directions to work on the land and with the cattle they grew up around.

"Every morning I go one way and she goes the other," Nocona said. "Then we swap back and forth. If they're really busy I'll come over and help them, and if I'm really busy during wheat harvest, she comes over and helps us. It's kind of a unique situation."

Nocona works alongside his family as the fifth generation on the land, raising wheat, alfalfa, cotton, millet and other crops in addition to running a commercial cow herd. He also raises stocker cattle on wheat pasture during winter months. Nocona is working to diversify the family farm to care for the land and create new opportunities in agriculture.

"It's something that I'm really proud of to take something that's been so successful for so many years and make it my own

operation and keep it successful by trying other things and growing other crops," Nocona said.

Jordan is a third-generation breeding stock producer with a registered Angus cattle herd raising high-quality animals her family sells at their annual production sale. Jordan focuses on data-driven animal care measuring a variety of traits through feed efficiency testing, DNA testing, ultrasound scans and blood testing.

"My mom puts it, 'You can't open new doors with an old key,'" Jordan said. "We do the DNA testing on the bulls. That's really helped advance our operation."

Her family also tracks their cattle's performance from the feedlot to harvest to ensure the genetic advances of the cattle translates to quality beef for consumers.

Though both Nocona and Jordan had the choice to move away from agriculture after college, neither could imagine doing anything else or raising their two boys, Denton and Baylor, any other way.

"It's just something that you grow up with and you have a passion for," Nocona said. "I knew from the time I was big enough to know what was going on that that's what I wanted to do for a living."

As Achievement Award winners, the Cooks received a John Deere XUV 560E courtesy of the OKFB YF&R state committee and a trip to compete for the American Farm Bureau Federation YF&R Achievement Award at the 2019 AFBF Annual Meeting.

## Anderson wins YF&R Excellence in Agriculture Award

Joshua Anderson of Mannsville was honored with the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Excellence in Agriculture Award on Saturday, Nov. 17 at the organization's annual meeting in Norman.

Anderson is a third-generation farmer and rancher who raises beef cattle, grows forage crops, and manages natural resources on land first owned by his grandfather and father.

"I was born and raised on a farm, so the passion for agriculture was instilled early on through our family farm," he said.

The Johnston County native uses his knowledge and experience in agriculture every day in his off-farm job as a Noble Research Institute research associate where he helps develop drought-tolerant and disease-resistant varieties of wheat, rye, oats and triticale for livestock producers to use as grazing forages.

"I love research and extension. I've had that desire all through college, and to be able to come back home and work for a company that is passionate about research, extension and providing consultation to producers is very meaningful for me," Anderson said. "Being able to give back to those who produce our food and fiber is an awesome feeling."



Josh Anderson of Johnston County Farm Bureau (center) receives the 2018 OKFB YF&R Excellence in Agriculture Award from 2018 YF&R Chairs Brent and Jennifer Howard (right), OKFB Executive Director Thad Doye (left), and Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma President and CEO John Grunewald during the organization's annual meeting awards banquet. Anderson received as a prize a Polaris Sportsman 450 ATV courtesy of Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma and Oklahoma AgCredit.

Anderson represents a portion of south central Oklahoma on the OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers state committee and on the OKAgFund, OKFB's political action committee, board of directors. He also serves on the Johnston County Farm Bureau board of directors.

He is active in his local church, serves as a local volunteer fireman, and is a member

of numerous agriculture, community and professional organizations.

As the winner, Anderson received a Polaris Sportsman 450 ATV, courtesy of Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma and Oklahoma AgCredit. He also earned a trip to the American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting in January to compete for the AFBF Excellence in Agriculture Award.

## Williams named OKFB Journalist of the Year



Caitlin Williams of KSWO-TV in Lawton (right) accepts the OKFB Journalist of the Year award from OKFB President Rodd Moesel during the organization's awards banquet on Saturday, Nov. 17, at the 2018 OKFB annual meeting in Norman. Williams was recognized for her coverage of local agriculture issues and for focusing on the activities of agricultural youth in 4-H and FFA.

## District Secretary of the Year Awards

This year, OKFB honored the top county secretary in each Farm Bureau district. Each received a plaque and a check.

<b>District One</b> Cheslea Collins Texas County	<b>District Five</b> Penni McCasland Latimer County
<b>District Two</b> Krystal Hill Kiowa County	<b>District Six</b> Shelly Blevins Delaware County
<b>District Three</b> Toni Bender Kingfisher County	<b>District Seven</b> Stephanie Ratliff Noble County
<b>District Four</b> Michelle Chaffin Comanche County	<b>District Eight</b> Shirley Barrett Pontotoc County
<b>District Nine</b> Brenda McCollough Washington County	



OKFB President Rodd Moesel (left) and Vice President Gary Crawley preside over the resolutions session during the organization's 77th annual meeting in Norman, Oklahoma. Farm Bureau members from across the state gathered to set OKFB policy for the next year.

## Farm Bureau members set policy for 2019

**E**xtension services, the agriculture sales tax exemption and feral hogs were issues prioritized by Oklahoma Farm Bureau members as they worked to set the organization's 2019 policy on Nov. 17 during the OKFB annual meeting in Norman, Oklahoma.

All 77 county Farm Bureaus submitted resolutions to the OKFB policy book, which were reviewed by a statewide committee and voted on by the delegate body during the annual meeting. The policy sets the organization's direction for the next year.

"It's not just the power of our public policy staff, it's not just the power of our board," OKFB President Rodd Moesel said of the organization's grassroots policy. "It's the power of our members in all 77 counties meeting today and all of our members speaking out on these issues.

"The policy may have started in Grant County, it may have started in Pontotoc County or it may have started in Jackson County, but it ends up here (at the OKFB annual meeting) when all 77 counties take action and vote and set the agenda for the next year."

Farm Bureau members voted to prioritize maintaining at least one cooperative extension office, with a 4-H educator, in each county. The policy

also supports a multi-county model for extension specialists. Funding for cooperative extension, which provides cutting-edge research to farmers and ranchers, has dwindled as the state grappled with budget shortfalls over the past few years.

"The extension service is near and dear to many Farm Bureau hearts," Moesel said. "We made it a priority issue to support not only keeping that one 4-H agent in every county, but also rebuilding the extension system with area agents that might serve several counties as an agronomy or horticulture or rural development expert.

"As our state's blessed with extra income, the extension service – which has been one of the things that's been punished in the last few years – is something we're anxious to see restored and rebuilt," he said.

Members also voted to reaffirm OKFB's support for the sales tax exemption on agricultural production inputs, which was fought for by OKFB for nearly 30 years.

"All 50 states offer an exemption on the inputs that go into ag production just like they do the manufacturing companies," Moesel said. "If suddenly we removed that ag exemption in Oklahoma, we would immediately – depending on the local,

city and county – be at a 7 to 10 percent disadvantage compared to competing with farmers in Texas, Kansas and New Mexico.

"The sales tax system was designed only to tax at the point of last sale, so the items we produce are ultimately taxed when they're sold as cereal or as hamburger or as potted plants, but they shouldn't be taxed on the inputs that go into producing those products."

With feral hogs plaguing Oklahoma farmers and ranchers for years, Farm Bureau members bolstered the organization's call for complete eradication of the invasive species by any means possible. Many producers are working proactively to reduce the population on private land, but OKFB members voted to urge municipal, state and federal agencies to also eradicate feral hogs on public lands.

"It's clear from the voice of the Farm Bureau voters that they don't see the feral hog problem getting reduced, they see it even becoming more serious," Moesel said.

Members also voted to oppose mandatory Country of Origin Labeling, urge cell-cultured food products to be labeled properly, encourage federally-funded research on industrial hemp production, and affirm support for free and fair international trade.





The Comanche County Farm Bureau YF&R committee receive the 2018 OKFB Charles L. Roff Award from OKFB Executive Director Thad Doye (left) and 2018 OKFB YF&R Chairs Brent and Jennifer Howard (right) during the organization's annual meeting in Norman.

## Comanche County honored as OKFB's top county YF&R

The Comanche County Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers committee was honored with the 2018 Oklahoma Farm Bureau YF&R Charles L. Roff Award at the OKFB annual meeting.

The award encourages county YF&R groups to improve local committees and activity participation while strengthening the Farm Bureau organization.

"We're just excited to be part of Farm Bureau organization," said Cody Goodknight, Comanche County YF&R chair. "We love being a part of the group

where we get to support what we do every day for living. We challenge other young farmers and ranchers to get involved and be passionate about what you do."

The county earned the award for its work to share agriculture with its surrounding communities, along with its efforts to provide educational and leadership development opportunities for members.

The county received a traveling plaque in recognition for their outstanding committee involvement.

## Jumper wins YF&R Discussion Meet



Emma Jumper of Payne County (second from right) is recognized as the 2018 OKFB YF&R Discussion Meet winner by (left to right) OKFB Executive Director Thad Doye; 2018 YF&R Chairs Jennifer and Brent Howard; Erica Keen of P&K Equipment; and (far right) YF&R Coordinator Zac Swartz at the organization's annual meeting in November. As the winner, Jumper received a John Deere Z345R lawn mower sponsored by P&K Equipment. She also competed in the American Farm Bureau Federation YF&R Discussion Meet at the 2019 AFBF Annual Meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana, in January.

# Board, leaders elected at annual meeting

## OKFB Board of Directors

Monte Tucker\*  
District Two

Gary Crawley\*  
District Five

John Grundmann\*  
District Eight

## OKFB Women's Leadership Committee

Mignon Bolay  
Chair

Paula Sawatzky\*  
District Two

Arlene LeMaster  
District Five

Terry Pederson  
District Seven

Jan Long  
District Eight

## OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers

Brent and Jenny Haken  
Chair

Justin and Chrissy Maxey  
Vice Chair

Logan and Brittany Hukill  
Secretary

Nocona and Jordan Cook  
District Two

Corey Holman  
District Eight

Chism Sander  
At-Large

Will and Leslie Lewis  
At-Large

Ethan and Roxane Mock  
At-Large

\*denotes re-elected

## 2018 farm bill passes Congress with support of entire Oklahoma congressional delegation

The 2018 farm bill received Congress' final stamp of approval in December after weeks of negotiations between the two chambers. The House easily passed the farm bill conference report on Dec. 12, just a day after the Senate approved the legislation.

The bipartisan, bicameral five-year legislation encompasses a broad array of agriculture, nutrition, conservation and forestry policy.

"Oklahoma family farmers and ranchers today rest a little easier thanks to Congress' action in passing the 2018 farm bill this week, even as our state's agricultural producers face the constant threats of a challenging farm economy, ever-changing weather and an unpredictable trade environment," OKFB President Rodd Moesel said after the legislation's approval.

"The bill delivers provisions to support Oklahoma agricultural producers including risk management tools, international market development programs, and conservation and environmental stewardship programs.

Additionally, the bill brings funding for cutting-edge agricultural research and extension, investments in rural Oklahoma and nutrition programs for low-income children, families and seniors."

The House and Senate each passed differing versions of the farm bill earlier in the year, sending the legislation to a conference committee between the two chambers. House and Senate agriculture committee leaders announced a final deal on Nov. 29 after months of negotiations.

"All Oklahomans need the assurances that come from this bill, from the family farmers and ranchers producing our nation's food and fiber to the everyday

families working to put food on the table," Moesel said. "We understand no bill is perfect, but the 2018 farm bill does a great job of addressing the realities facing today's family farmers and ranchers. We sincerely appreciate the tireless work and effort by House and Senate ag leaders

and their committees in delivering a farm bill before the end of the year."

All seven members of Oklahoma's congressional delegation voted in favor

of the bill, including Sens. Jim Inhofe and James Lankford and Reps. Kevin Hern, Markwayne Mullin, Frank Lucas, Tom Cole and Steve Russell.

To learn more about the 2018 farm bill and its policies, visit [fb.org/farmbill](http://fb.org/farmbill).

“All Oklahomans need the assurances that come from this (farm) bill.”

— Rodd Moesel



## Texas County member honored with state water conservation award

Red Fischer, a Texas County Farm Bureau member, recently was honored with the Oklahoma Water Resources Board's Water for 2060 Excellence Award at the Governor's Water Conference held Dec. 7-8 in Midwest City.

The panhandle farmer was recognized for significantly reducing water use for irrigation by as much as 40 percent with innovative technologies, data analysis and enhancements.

Fischer and his family grow wheat,

milo and corn on a farm just west of Hooker. Over the past several decades, the farm has shifted toward using new technology to improve irrigation practices and ultimately make better use of the water they draw from the aquifer.

Established to support Oklahoma's Water for 2060 Act, the awards recognize individuals or entities that have developed outstanding water saving measures. Learn more at [owrb.ok.gov](http://owrb.ok.gov).



## Kisling earns \$1,000 scholarship for Ag in the Classroom work



Chisholm High School senior Bree Kisling was awarded a \$1,000 college scholarship from the Oklahoma Youth Leading Agriculture Ag in the Classroom Scholarship Challenge by the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee at the organization's annual meeting. She earned the award for teaching students in her community about Oklahoma agriculture.

## OKFB praises Stitt's Secretary of Ag nominee

**G**ov. Kevin Stitt in mid-December announced his nomination of Blayne Arthur as the next Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture.

"Oklahoma Farm Bureau is delighted to endorse and support Blayne Arthur as Gov. Stitt's nominee for Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture," said Rodd Moesel, OKFB president. "Blayne is a well-known leader with a proven track record. We are looking forward to the perspective and leadership we know she will bring with her to this important position."

A Payne County Farm Bureau member, Arthur most recently served as Oklahoma 4-H Foundation executive director. She previously served as deputy commissioner of agriculture from 2012 to 2016. Alongside her husband and children, Arthur runs a cattle business providing show cattle for FFA and 4-H members.

"We're excited to have someone who is directly involved in agricultural production and who works tirelessly to tell our industry's story," Moesel said. "We trust Blayne will be a champion for agriculture and rural Oklahoma and we look forward to working with her to ensure the future success of Oklahoma agriculture."

Arthur's nomination to secretary of agriculture will require confirmation by the State Senate. Upon confirmation, she will become the first female to serve in the role.

## More than 80 percent of OKAgFund-supported candidates elected

**T**he OKAgFund, Oklahoma Farm Bureau's political action committee, achieved an 84 percent success rate in supporting candidates who were successful in the Nov. 6 general election.

The committee was 100 percent successful in backing statewide candidates who were elected including Gov. Kevin Stitt, Lt. Gov. Matt Pinnell and Attorney General Mike Hunter.

"We are excited about the opportunity to work with new Gov. Kevin Stitt and Lt. Gov. Matt Pinnell," said Rodd Moesel, OKFB president. "These bright, capable new leaders have proven already that they are good listeners and are very interested in rural Oklahoma. We hope to work with them as they solidify their visions and develop their plan of action for our great state. We believe they

will work to understand the needs of agriculture and rural Oklahoma and work with us to grow all of Oklahoma."

In the 2018 election season, the OKAgFund gave \$132,750 to support a total of 114 candidates. The committee also endorsed 33 total candidates.

A grassroots committee comprised of OKFB members from around the state, the OKAgFund identifies candidates who demonstrate beliefs and actions that are consistent with the organization's policies, regardless of political affiliation.

The OKAgFund is supported by voluntary contributions from OKFB members across the state as an optional portion of their membership dues.

Find a list of OKAgFund-supported candidates who were successful in the 2018 general election on the OKFB website at [www.okfarmbureau.org](http://www.okfarmbureau.org).





Left: Made In Oklahoma Marketing Coordinator Julie Sears shares about her work to promote local products during the WLC fall conference held Sept. 28-29 in Edmond. Right: Okfuskee County Farm Bureau women pose for a photo during the conference.

## WLC celebrates “Made in Oklahoma” at fall conference

**M**ore than 70 Farm Bureau women gathered at the 2018 Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women’s Leadership Committee Fall Conference held Sept. 28-29 in Edmond, Oklahoma.

With a “Made in Oklahoma” theme, the conference helped celebrate the food and fiber that is grown, raised and produced in Oklahoma.

Julie Sears, a marketing coordinator for the Made in Oklahoma Coalition, shared with Farm Bureau women about MIO’s

work to promote local products at a lunch during the conference.

In educational workshops, conference attendees learned how to incorporate agritourism activities on their farms and ranches from Oklahoma Agritourism’s Meriruth Cohenour and heard a legislative, election and state question update from OKFB public policy staff. The women also received guidance on using social media to promote county women’s committee work from the OKFB

communications department, along with active shooter training from OKFB’s safety services team.

Throughout the conference, women bid on silent auction items benefitting the WLC’s annual nurse’s scholarship program. The auction items were donated by county Farm Bureau women’s leadership committees.

The two-day event also featured a trade show and various Oklahoma-themed door prizes and gifts.

## Farm Bureau praises EPA’s Clean Water Rule proposal

**S**tate Farm Bureau presidents from across the nation, including Oklahoma Farm Bureau President Rodd Moesel, in December witnessed the signing of the proposed Clean Water Rule at the Environmental Protection Agency headquarters in Washington, D.C. The rule will replace the 2015 Waters of the U.S. Rule, which vastly expanded federal regulatory authority on private land.

“Farmers and ranchers work every day to protect our nation’s waterways and drinking water,” said Zippy Duvall, American Farm Bureau Federation president. “For more than five years, we have advocated for a new water rule that protects clean water and provides clear rules for people and communities to follow. This new rule will empower farmers and ranchers to comply with

the law, protect our water resources and productively work their land without having to hire an army of lawyers and consultants.”

The proposal is the second step in a two-step process to review and revise the definition of “waters of the United States,” consistent with a February 2017 executive order by President Trump.

The new rule provides a straightforward definition that would result in significant cost savings, protect the nation’s navigable waters, help sustain economic growth, and reduce barriers to business development.

“We want to protect land and water in the communities where we live and work,” Duvall said. “Clean water is our way of life. Preserving our land and protecting our water means healthy

places to live, work and play. We believe this new Clean Water Rule is rooted in common-sense. It will protect our nation’s water resources and allow farmers to farm.”

The agencies will take comment on the proposal for 60 days after publication in the Federal Register. 00301706

“We appreciate the months of hard work that the administration, especially the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers, invested in making sure the new Clean Water Rule was done right,” Duvall said. “Unlike the 2015 WOTUS rule, this new rule protects our resources, respects the law and provides greater clarity so the agencies and the public can identify regulated federal waterways.”

Read more about the new Clean Water Rule at [www.fb.org](http://www.fb.org).



## Schwabauer named OKFB publications specialist

Oklahoma Farm Bureau has hired Brianne Schwabauer as publications specialist.

In the position, she will assist with both design and production of OKFB's written publications, lay out print marketing materials, take photos, produce graphic designs for visual aids, and provide additional support for written content.

"Growing up in the Farm Bureau organization, I've seen first-hand what it can do for not only members, but their families as well," Schwabauer said. "I'm looking forward to being a part of that and sharing the unique stories of Oklahoma Farm Bureau members."

Schwabauer joins the OKFB staff after serving as the communications coordinator for American Farmers & Ranchers where she gained experience in photography, feature writing, social media, website management, and print publications.

Originally from Moorpark, California, Schwabauer earned her bachelor's degree in agricultural communications from Oklahoma State University.



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## The STEM of agriculture

Students gain a greater understanding of the science, technology, engineering and math components of agriculture through tours, competitions and empowered teachers.



Students become scientists for the day as part of hands-on lessons developed by Noble's youth education outreach program. Photo by Noble Research Institute.

It was like Sierra Walker had returned home when she first stepped into the agriculture classroom — her new teaching domain — at Alva High School in 2015.

For three of the four years since she graduated with an agricultural education degree, Walker had been exploring the real-world classroom.

She had traveled to Canadian farms while earning a master's in international agriculture, managed a Red Angus cow herd and worked for the nation's largest cattle feeder.

In 2014, Walker moved to Alva, Oklahoma, and took a job as the local high school's chemistry teacher. But she could not deny the pull of agriculture.

In addition to chemistry, Walker taught one hour of environmental science. She talked about the Dust Bowl and how people in agriculture had learned to be better land stewards because of it. Her students discovered ways farmers and ranchers protect wildlife habitat, reduce waste and conserve natural resources.

One day, a student stopped her after class and said he was learning more about agriculture in her class than in his agriculture classes.

His words sparked within her the same flame that inspired her to pursue her undergraduate degree.

"There's an incredible amount of science and math behind everything we do in agriculture, yet we don't always recognize it in the classroom," the Oklahoma educator said. "I originally set out to become an agriculture teacher to help bridge that gap."

Teaching science wasn't enough, Walker quickly realized. She wanted to teach agricultural science. When a position opened, she jumped at the opportunity.



## Sparked Curiosity

Walker was preparing for her first year of teaching agriculture when she learned of the Noble Research Institute.

She had received an email from state FFA staff saying the organization was offering a workshop to help teachers prepare their students for Agriscience Fair, a competition that encourages FFA members to use the scientific method to explore agriculture.

That summer, Walker drove four hours south to the Noble Research Institute's campus in Ardmore to soak up as much as she could about the competition, which Noble helps sponsor in Oklahoma. During the next two days, Frank Hardin, Ph.D., and Jenn Scott, from Noble's youth-focused Noble Learning education team, offered ideas on how to get students thinking about projects. They showed experiments to the teachers and introduced them to the real-world research taking place on campus.

"It was an amazing experience," Walker said. "I loved everything they were doing. I loved seeing the research. I loved the way they gave us information to take back to the classroom by sparking our curiosity, too. I've been hooked on Noble ever since."

## Connecting Concepts

Walker returned home determined to involve her students in another of the programs she had discovered during the workshop: the Oklahoma Envirothon, a team-based competition that combines in-class curriculum with field experiences to engage students in learning about natural resources.

That fall, Walker organized her first group of students to compete. The next year, her students asked to start

preparing for the March competition as soon as school started, she said.

Walker also brings her students to the Noble Research Institute to connect the concepts they learn in class to real-world applications.

Walker may show her wildlife classes a video of BoarBuster capturing feral hogs. But, she said, the students gain a new level of excitement when they see the trap deploy in real-time during a conversation with Josh Gaskamp, a wildlife consultant who contributed to the research behind the trap.

Students familiar with raising livestock see a different aspect of agriculture when they meet Carolyn Young, Ph.D., a scientist who works with fungi to improve grasses consumed by cattle. Young leads them in observing fungi beneath the microscope and learning how to pipette genetic materials into gels and see DNA after successful completion of such an experiment.

"I love that Noble gets the kids involved in many of the areas they're working in," Walker said. "The kids get to see actual research that is happening and interact with the people who are doing it. They get to see that 'Hey, that's a job that I could do.'"

## For Teachers and Students

During Walker's most recent visit to the Noble Research Institute, the teacher became a student.

In 2007, the National Council for Agricultural Education started Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education, or CASE, to enhance the rigor and relevance of agricultural course work. CASE Institutes are held throughout the country to train teachers in high-level, hands-on agricultural-

themed curriculum that integrates science and math.

In 2016, the Noble Research Institute and Oklahoma State University brought the first CASE Institute, a course in plant science, to Oklahoma.

"We brought CASE to Oklahoma because it empowers agriculture teachers," said Hardin, youth education outreach manager. "We recognize that today's students are the future for agriculture and our society, and we want to do everything we can to help teachers cultivate critical thinkers who understand and appreciate agriculture and science's role in it."

Noble hosted another CASE Institute in the summer of 2018. Walker was among the 12 teachers from across the country, from as far as Hawaii, who attended.

For 10 days, the teachers donned white laboratory coats and immersed themselves in lessons they could teach their own students.

They learned about soil and the microorganisms in it, pH levels and fertilizers, greenhouse and field production, commercial and at-home agriculture, plant reproduction, and photosynthesis. At each step, the curriculum introduced a new activity to promote deeper understanding. Activities drew the teachers-turned-pupils into projects and problems similar to those that plant scientists might face.

"Looking back, it was one of the best things I've ever done," Walker said. "The CASE curriculum brings out the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) of agriculture. It's just another way that Noble has been a great resource to me."



## Reuse live Christmas tree as food, shelter for birds

By Trisha Gedon  
Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service

**T**he holidays may be over, but that doesn't mean you can't continue getting some enjoyment out of your Christmas tree.

Many families keep their decorations up in the home for a while after the holidays, even after all the gifts have been opened, the leftovers have been eaten and guests have returned to their own home. A Christmas tree can certainly add a festive flair to any room with its twinkling lights and sparkling ornaments. Fortunately, there's a way to get more use out of it, said David Hillock, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension consumer horticulturist.

"When the weather is chilly, birds and

other small wildlife need a place to get out of the cold and wind," Hillock said. "Unfortunately, deciduous trees don't have leaves this time of year and birds may have a hard time finding shelter. This is where your old Christmas tree can come in handy. Instead of hauling the tree to the landfill, put it in your yard, instead. You'll be providing birds a place to hide from the cold and the tree will add a splash of color to your landscape. The dense needles will provide protection from rain, snow and wind."

You can keep the tree in the tree stand, place it in a large bucket of soil or even dig a hole in your yard in which to place the tree.

The tree can serve double duty in the yard. Not only will it be a great source of shelter, it also can be a source of food. If you made strings of cranberries or popcorn for decorations, leave them on the tree when you take it outside.

"Spend a relaxing afternoon with your family after the holidays and make some edible ornaments for the tree-turned-bird-feeder in your yard," Hillock said. "String red and green grapes on a pipe cleaner. These are bright and colorful and will look like miniature wreaths hanging on the tree. Something else that's fun for kids of all ages is spreading peanut butter on pinecones, then rolling them in bird seed. These will look great





Using items from your pantry, homeowners can help provide a wonderful feast for the birds that call your landscape home for the winter months. Photos by Kane Kinion, Agricultural Communications Services.

on the tree, too.”

Other options include slicing apples to hang on the tree. Simply attach them to the tree using regular ornament hooks or yarn. After eating the apples, birds can use the yarn for nesting material. Spread peanut butter on saltine crackers and sprinkle with bird seed. You can even take a large piece of orange peel and run pipe cleaners through each end to form a make-shift bowl. Fill it with black oil sunflower seeds and attach it to the tree.

“Let your imagination go wild when it comes to bird food options on the tree,” he said. “Consider dried chopped fruit in mesh bags, suet or even stale sliced bread. If you happen to grow sunflowers, hang


the whole sunflower head on the tree. You’ll soon see chickadees, sparrows, cardinals and a host of other birds arrive for the smorgasbord you’ve provided, as well as for a cozy shelter from the weather.”

If you’d rather not turn the tree into a bird feeder, check with your community about a tree recycling program. Trees are collected and turned into mulch for plants in community parks and gardens.

If you enjoyed seeing the birds around the old Christmas tree, when spring arrives, consider planting a few evergreens such as cherry laurel, wax myrtle, holly, cedar or pine to provide more permanent protection for the bird

population in years to come.

Adding evergreens to your backyard also gives birds a place to duck for cover from predators such as hawks. An added bonus is some of these evergreens provide berries, which are a much-needed food source when other foods are hard to find. However, you can still add food sources to these new trees in your landscape.

“Christmas trees bring a lot of joy to families and it’s a shame this joy is relatively short-lived,” Hillock said. “Recycling your tree into a bird feeder is just one way to extend that joy and happiness a little longer.” 

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## WANTED

Wanted: Railroad items from the (MV) Midland Valley, (KO&G) Kansas, Oklahoma & Gulf, the Frisco, the (OC&AA) Oklahoma City, Ada and Atoka Railroads, and the Oklahoma Railway Company. Also crocks from Ada Pottery Company, advertising reflectors for cotton gins and elevators. 580-399-8866.

Wanted: JD MC Crawler complete with blade. Preferably the one, (410) C maybe, sold to someone in southeast part of Oklahoma, from Fort Gibson, OK in 1959. 918-680-0876.

Dead or rough or burnt tractors. 1960-2019. Any kind, 2 or 4WD. 405-641-7728. 



## COUNTRY CLASSIFIEDS

Each OKFB member family is limited to one free classified ad per issue. No call-in ads will be accepted. The length of the ad cannot exceed the number of lines on this form. Ads run one time. We reserve the right not to publish submitted ads. Return to Country Classifieds, 2501 N. Stiles, Oklahoma City, OK 73105.

*All information must be completed.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone \_\_\_\_\_

*Please type or print legibly.*

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*Deadline for the next issue is March 4, 2019.  
The spring issue will publish in mid-April 2019.*

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