



Oklahoma
Country

WINTER 2005
THE MAGAZINE OF
THE OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU

INSIDE:

**Where The
Buffalo Roam**

**Convention
Roundup**



History Making Change... ... Change Making History.

The story of the Greater Seminole Area is literally a story of rags to riches to moderate living. During the 1920's and '30s, oil brought money into the area so that tenant and sharecropper farming could be abandoned, better homes could be built, highway systems could be developed and cultural improvements could be made; thus, the standard of living substantially changed.

But also left behind were the remnants of the boom as neglected wellsites drilled during the unregulated era became eyesores and blemishes on Seminole County's landscape. For longtime Oklahoma Farm Bureau member Syd Morgan, the abandoned wellsites left his property virtually futile.

One evening, though, after seeing an OERB commercial on television, Syd realized Oklahoma's oil and natural gas producers and royalty owners were taking responsibility for mistakes of the past. He made the call to the OERB, and within months, the abandoned wellsites became a part of Seminole County's history... in more ways than one.



Along with having the property restored, Syd's phone call also brought fame to Syd and his wife Norita, much to their surprise. The clean-up project on their property was the 1,000th site to be restored in Seminole by oil and natural gas producers and royalty owners. Now, not only does the area hold a piece of history as bringing vitality to Seminole County 80 years ago but will serve as a milestone of collaborative efforts between producers, royalty owners, and in this case, a farmer and his family.



OKLAHOMA'S OIL AND NATURAL GAS PRODUCERS AND ROYALTY OWNERS, WORKING TO MAKE ABANDONED WELLSITES HISTORY.

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Hidden number worth \$300

One member family's Oklahoma Farm Bureau membership number is hidden somewhere in this issue of *OKLAHOMA COUNTRY*, and could earn that member family \$300 since the number in the last several issues was not found.

To claim the cash prize, the member family must find its hidden membership number and contact Mike Nichols before the last day of the month Monday through

Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., at 405-523-2300.

The OFB membership number is hidden somewhere in *OKLAHOMA COUNTRY*. It must match the number on the face of your OFB 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 must match the hidden number for you to claim the cash prize.



Cover Image

**He is a lot of bull.
This big fellow is the
sire and guardian of
the Van Byars' herd.**



BY STEVE KOUPLEN
*President,
Oklahoma Farm Bureau*

As a New Year begins, we all are getting eager for spring to arrive and transition out of winter.

We find ourselves having to fill our calendars for the yearly events that will begin our year's activities.

With the new priority issues that were directed by delegates at our annual convention, we will initiate our historic legislative session – historic in the fact that for the first time in over 40 years the House of Representatives will be controlled by a different political party as well as a new speaker. We also will be dealing with the first legislature that has been impacted by term limits.

So, it is pretty evident that the landscape will be somewhat different than in the past.

Nationally, we will have a congressional delegation that has some changes as well. A new senator and a new representative will enable us to work with them as well as the rest to try and implement an energy policy for our country. This issue, as well as the possible elimination of trade barriers that our producers find in markets around the world, will continue to keep us very busy.



The real question is not so much as what we have to do but how willing you are to get involved to help achieve success. Every county Farm Bureau offers the opportunity to get involved – as well the possibilities available through our Women's Committee and Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee.

Our organization has a wonderful staff to work on issues for you, but your work and personal contact is what really separates us and our success from other organizations.

Many groups or organizations have people working for them at the capitol, but few, if any, have the involved and committed membership that truly works, spends time, and devotes countless hours meeting with, writing to or calling elected leaders like you do.

This is truly your grassroots organization and you represent the reason we have been and will continue to be the force we are for agriculture and rural Oklahoma. 004755850

There's little doubt that issues both known and unknown will be greeting us in the New Year. This isn't something new! But, you can be assured that your leaders and staff will be working hard to deal with whatever arises and with your help and encouragement we will achieve solutions and answers that we've become accustomed to.

If ever your staff or myself can be of assistance, don't hesitate to contact us!

Steve Kouplen

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As a new generation dawns, Oklahoma Farm Bureau members can be confident their interests are still our No. 1 priority. Members reap the benefits of a strong legislative voice, a dedication to preserving the family farm and a commitment to service. When the sun sets on the horizon, you can rest easy knowing Oklahoma Farm Bureau stands behind you.

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BY DARRYL SINCLAIR
*General Manager,
 Oklahoma Farm Bureau
 Mutual Insurance
 Company*

It's not your father's agency force

In May 1946 when the first auto policies were sold by Oklahoma Farm Bureau Mutual Casualty Company, the agency force was primarily made up of part time agents whose primary jobs were farming, ranching or in such agribusiness as implement dealers or feed store operators.

They were working part time to both supplement their own income and to support the fledgling company as it got its roots. In those days premiums, like other goods and services, were a fraction of what they are today.

The legacy of those first agents and Farm Bureau leaders was one of faith, honesty and ignorance. They had no experience or knowledge of the insurance business. They worked hard and if it were not for them our

company would not be the company that it is today with written premium sales expected to exceed \$260 million in 2004.

Over the years much has changed yet much has remained the same.

We still operate to some degree on faith and honesty and have the same commitment to the Farm Bureau member.

What has changed has been a continuous growth in the number and complexity of financial products sold and serviced by our agents.

In the 1950s, life products were added to the portfolio of auto and property insurance

Canadian County Farm Bureau Agent Mark Wolf – OFBMIC's Top New Agent for 2003 – reviews some forms with Crystal Tapley, a secretary in the county satellite office in Mustang.

when the Company invested in Western Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company.

Additional financial products were added over the years including fixed annuities, variable annuities, variable life insurance and mutual funds. Along the way health and long term care were added along with banking services from Farm Bureau Bank.

As a result, the agency force has evolved to be a group of very educated, highly trained, professional men and women who are experts in a wide array of financial products that go well beyond the first auto insurance policies sold in the '40s.

Last year's top all around agent – Sam Barrick of Love County – epitomizes the 21st Century Farm Bureau agent. Like the agents of 1946, Sam is involved in agriculture, running stocker cattle and maintaining membership in his county Cattlemen's Association.

Also like his predecessors, Sam is active in his local community serving on the board of directors of the local Chamber of Commerce as well as having served on his county's search and rescue team and he's an active member of the Lion's Club.


Like most of today's agency force, Sam is a college graduate with a bachelor's degree from Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

The top new agent of 2003 is also typical of today's newer agents. Mark Wolf started work already licensed to sell financial securities along with property and casualty insurance and life insurance products.

Like many of today's agents, Mark serves on his church council and also coaches his kids. Mark works out of the Mustang satellite office of Canadian County Farm Bureau.

Although today's agency force may not be your father's agency force, it certainly is one that your father would be proud of.





The giant sequoia grows for more than 2,000 years.
Unfortunately, we can't say the same.

Here's to a good life.

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Where the **Buffalo** Roam

By Mike Nichols

“Oh, give me a home where the buffalo roam. . .”

Haskell County Farm Bureau Agent Van Byars has a home atop Brooken Mountain where the buffalo roam – confined by only five-wire fences that could be found on any cattle ranch.

And, to again parrot lyrics from “Home on the Range,” as far as his small herd is concerned “the skies are not cloudy all day.”

Van, a veteran of nearly a quarter century with Farm Bureau

Insurance, is proud of his Chickasaw ancestry and appreciates the link between Native Americans and the buffalo.

“Gen. George Crook said ‘Eliminate the buffalo and you eliminate the Indian.’ It almost worked,” said Van. “The buffalo provided everything the American Indian needed.

“Guess what? Today the tribes are strong and the buffalo are returning and the Indian has learned to live in the white man’s world.”

Atop Brooken Mountain, overlooking Lake Eufaula, a small herd of buffalo enjoys the pampering provided by Van Byars. Van enjoys the arrangement just as much as the buffalo, maybe more.



Buffalo line up at the feed trough for their daily ration of cubes. Providing plenty of food to the herd keeps the animals content on their 90-acre home atop Brooken Mountain, which overlooks Lake Eufaula.