



ON THE COVER

Photo by Dustin Mielke

Kent Livesay of Livesay Orchards in Porter, and Wagoner County Farm Bureau member, stands in his family's orchard with a flat of freshly picked peaches.

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ABOUT OKLAHOMA COUNTRY MAGAZINE

Oklahoma Country magazine is the official magazine of Oklahoma Farm Bureau, mailed to Farm Bureau members four times a year. Oklahoma Country magazine shares the story of Oklahoma agriculture and our rural communities through the eyes of Farm Bureau members, programs and activities.

ABOUT OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU

Oklahoma Farm Bureau is Oklahoma's largest general farm organization, dedicated to supporting the agriculture community to improve the lives of Oklahomans. As a grassroots, member-led organization, OKFB gives a voice to family farmers and ranchers through advocacy, outreach, leadership development and supporting the future of agriculture.

Oklahoma Country

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETINGS



OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU

To all members of Oklahoma Farm Bureau, Inc., and all affiliated county Farm Bureaus of Oklahoma Farm Bureau, Inc.: You are hereby notified that Oklahoma Farm Bureau, Inc., will convene its regular annual meeting of the members and the delegate body on Friday, November 10, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. at the Omni Oklahoma City Hotel, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. All affiliated county Farm Bureaus should make certain that your delegates are properly certified in attendance to represent your membership. This meeting will continue until all necessary business is transacted.

Board of Directors



OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY

Notice is hereby given that the annual meeting of the Policyholders of Oklahoma Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company will begin at 8:45 a.m. on Saturday, November 11, 2023, during the Oklahoma Farm Bureau annual meeting. A report will be submitted of the activities of the company during the past fiscal year, together with a report of the financial position of the company. Any and all other activities of the company may be presented and considered.

Board of Directors



Rodd Moesel President Oklahoma Farm Bureau & Affiliated Companies

"It is a privilege to represent our Oklahoma Farm Bureau members as our organization's president, and the friendships and connections I've made with so many of you have made my life richer."

Gearing up for another gathering of Oklahoma Farm Bureau friends

riends have a way of making life sweeter, more enjoyable and more impactful.

Over the last six years, my wife, Dona, and I have been blessed to make so many friends through Farm Bureau. It is a privilege to represent our Oklahoma Farm Bureau members as our organization's president, and the friendships and connections I've made with so many of you have made my life richer.

As I meet with OKFB members at meetings and events and over phone calls and Zoom meetings. I am continually impressed with how much our members care about agriculture and our rural communities. I've seen firsthand how Farm Bureau members are involved in their local communities, engaged in state and federal issues, and well versed in our growing agriculture industry.

Our OKFB team of staff members has also been a joy to work alongside as they bring their passion and knowledge of our industry and our issues to give a voice to our Farm Bureau members. Our professional staff go to work every day to advance our causes and support our goals, and I am grateful they have chosen Farm Bureau as the place to apply their skills and abilities.

As a Farm Bureau member for decades, a district director on the OKFB state board for seven years and now with six years as president under my belt, I am proud to see everything our organization has accomplished.

As OKFB's 82nd annual meeting approaches Nov. 10-12, I will be running for one last term as our organization's president before I reach the end of the four-term limit set by OKFB members. I hope our Farm Bureau friends will bless me with two more years at the helm of OKFB so we can continue the many amazing activities, programs and events that help make Oklahoma agriculture strong.

I am looking forward to seeing so many of

our Farm Bureau friends at this year's OKFB convention. It already appears that we will have many familiar faces at our convention along with many first-timers to our annual meeting whom I hope I will get the chance to meet as we gather to learn and grow as agriculturalists and rural Oklahomans.

We will have an amazing new venue at the Oklahoma City Omni Hotel, which will serve as a great location for our members to gather. We have a full slate of speakers lined up, including American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall and AFBF Women's Leadership Committee Chair Isabella Chism, each of whom will share a bit about our organization's national impact. Oklahoma State University's new Vice President and Dean of Agriculture Dr. Jayson Lusk will get to meet our Farm Bureau membership for the first time as we get to know Dr. Lusk in his new leadership position.

Of course, Farm Bureau members will decide our organization's grassroots policy positions for the upcoming year. We always enjoy the many ideas and proposals that come from our county Farm Bureau members, and our process for taking local ideas and implementing them around our state and nation is second to none. Your input and discussion make a tremendous difference in providing marching orders for our board and our staff as we work to advance agriculture both in Oklahoma and in Washington, D.C.

For our full list of convention speakers and the latest schedule, turn to page 28.

While our organization's events and activities certainly make a difference in our state and our nation, what truly makes Farm Bureau special are the relationships we forge and the friendships we foster with people who work tirelessly to make our organization, our industry and our way of life flourish. I'm looking forward to seeing all of you at convention in November!



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Farm Bureau and agriculture commentary from Oklahoma Farm Bureau Executive Director Thad Doye

Getting to know our Oklahoma Farm Bureau staff, the hands that serve our members



Thad Doye

Executive Director

Oklahoma Farm Bureau

s you read this issue of our *Oklahoma Country* magazine, I hope you enjoy the many stories, programs and events that fill these pages.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau has launched so many new ventures in my time with the organization that it sometimes can be hard to remember everything that we do. From foundations to leadership development programs and from advocacy efforts to our rural development initiatives, I am proud to say that our organization has capitalized on opportunities to help our state and agriculture industry grow.

However, none of this gets accomplished without both our grassroots Farm Bureau members and our dedicated staff.

Our OKFB staff takes on the day-to-day work – oftentimes behind the scenes – to represent, advocate and speak for our members, allowing our state's farmers and ranchers the ability to focus on growing and raising food knowing that their organization is working daily on

their behalf.

So often our staff members are taking care of a multitude of tasks and duties for Farm Bureau ranging from small details to important initiatives to major projects. While their work is often carried out behind the scenes and out of the limelight, the progress they work diligently to achieve for our organization speaks volumes.

I have asked our Farm Bureau staff who head up our departments and lead our programs to share with you their focus and goals they work every day to achieve. These members of our Farm Bureau team, along with their staff members and fellow Farm Bureau employees, diligently work to accomplish our policy goals, our agricultural efforts and our rural initiatives.

I'm proud of our Farm Bureau staff for playing a vital role in keeping our organization active, vibrant and working to improve the lives of Oklahomans as we support our state's agriculture community.



Dustin MielkeVice President of Communications and Public Relations

Our communications team tells the story of Farm Bureau and Oklahoma agriculture to ensure our members and the public understand the important work our OKFB members accomplish from their fields and pastures to their local, rural communities, and even across our state and our nation. We produce and coordinate a variety of communications products and opportunities for the organization, including publications, website, social media, video, photography, brochures and print materials, media relations efforts, graphic design and more.



Steve ThompsonVice President of Public Policy

The Public Policy Division represents OKFB and its members in matters relating to the state Legislature in Oklahoma City and Congress in Washington, D.C. We also maintain active involvement with state and federal agencies regarding the regulation of agriculture producers and landowners. Public policy staff members coordinate the OKFB state and national resolutions process, political action committee and Legal Foundation, and are always available and accessible to county organizations or individual members seeking information and resources.



Justin WhitmoreDirector of Field Services and North Central
Field Representative

The field staff team works as a resource for our county Farm Bureaus to answer a variety of questions on all aspects of the OKFB federation. The field staff also acts as a liaison between the state Farm Bureau and the county organizations, ensuring good communication between the 77 county Farm Bureaus and OKFB. The field staff team also assists with many of the activities and events OKFB hosts.



Marcia Irvin Senior Director of Women's Leadership Committee and Safety

I work with the Women's Leadership Committee promoting where food and fiber comes from to adults and students across the state. The OKFB WLC is heavily involved with the Oklahoma Agriculture in the Classroom program, which I work with daily. I also oversee OKFB's safety programs implementing a variety of trainings and educational events.



Holly CarrollDirector of Membership and OKFB
Foundation for Agriculture

The membership department coordinates benefits that help our OKFB members save money through discount codes and special offers. Our department also promotes Farm Bureau at trade shows and events around the state.

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture supports our state's family farmers and ranchers and works to connect all Oklahomans with their food and fiber. Through donations, we are able to offer grants, support communities that have experienced damaging storms and help regional food banks provide food for kids across the state.



Amarie Bartel Economic Development Coordinator

As the economic development coordinator, I manage the Oklahoma Grassroots Rural and Ag Business Accelerators program. The program aims to spur agricultural innovation, create off-farm jobs, and aid in a rural innovation ecosystem. Our two program tracks, Cultivate Oklahoma for on-farm innovations and Activate Oklahoma for off-farm innovations, each offer innovators from communities of 50,000 individuals or less robust business development training, mentorship and coaching, and a chance to qualify for the opportunity to pitch their innovations for consideration to receive equity investment from one of our two investment committees.



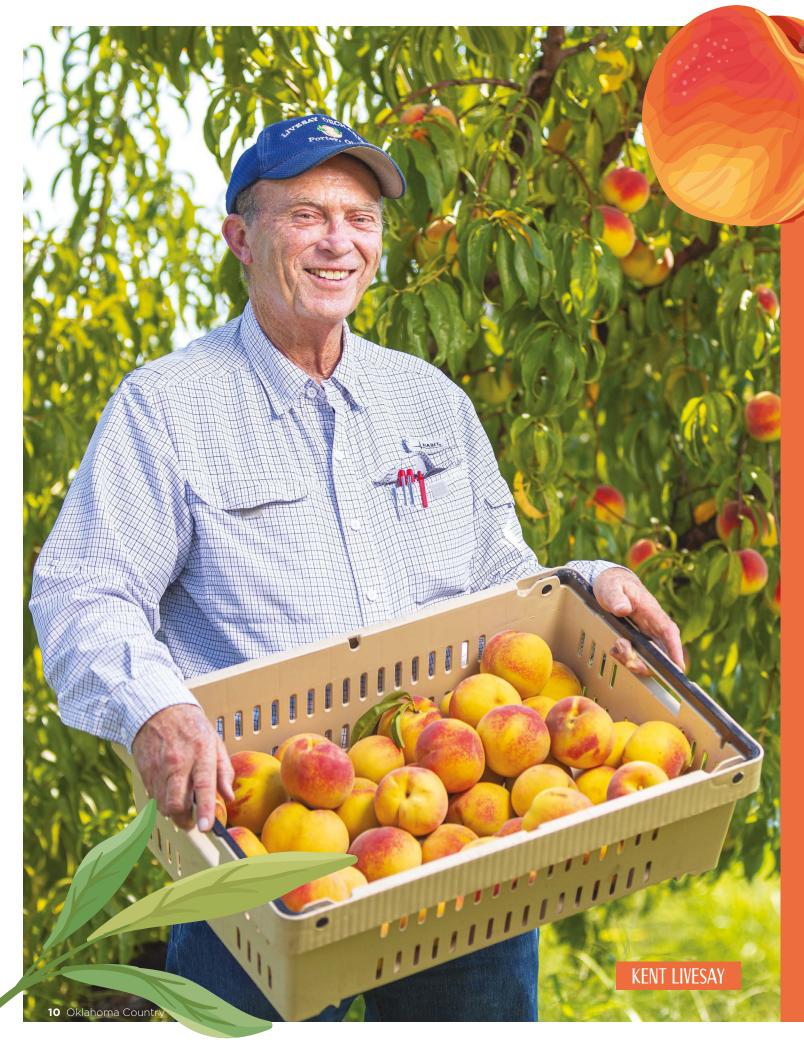
Melisa Neal Sr. Executive Assistant/Event Coordinator

I provide administrative support to OKFB's president, executive director and state board of directors. I also oversee planning and management of our organization's top events, including the OKFB annual meeting, Washington, D.C., Summit, OKFB Leadership Conference, our youth events and more. I also coordinate calendars, travel arrangements, board meetings and events, correspondence and more for our executive office and OKFB federation staff.



Zac SwartzAssistant Director of Public Policy and Young Farmers & Ranchers Coordinator

My goal as the Young Farmers & Ranchers coordinator is to recruit young agriculturalists from all across the state and work to get them active in county and state Farm Bureau activities. We strive to get young members engaged with their county Farm Bureau boards. I also plan and coordinate all YF&R activities, including summer conference, YF&R legislative day, OYLA, Collegiate Farm Bureau, State Fair Livestock Judging Contest and more.





ows and rows of peach trees stretched in every direction as Kent Livesay stood next to a tree loaded with fruit on a hot and humid August day while a harvest crew fluttered from tree to tree, picking peaches that were ready for market.

As the harvest crews scaled and descended ladders in search of perfectly ripened peaches, each carefully picked fruit signified the end of both a long, arduous growing season full of perils, and also the start of a journey to display shelves and tables to be enjoyed by families in Oklahoma and neighboring states.

Near the northeastern Oklahoma town of Porter, a place with a name synonymous with the summertime fruit thanks to the 57-year-strong Porter Peach Festival, the Livesay family has been a source of produce for the local community and beyond for just as many years as the local peach festival has been in existence.

The Livesay family has been growing peaches in northeastern Oklahoma since the mid-1960s when Kent's great-uncle purchased the farm, which he had eyed several years earlier and waited for his chance to buy it. When the farm was purchased, the previous owner had already planted orchards of peach and apple trees, making Kent's great-uncle a newly minted produce farmer after years of growing cotton and other crops in the Tulsa area. Two years later, in 1969, Kent's grandfather took over the farm, which was later passed from generation to generation.

Today, Kent, his brother, Steve, and their families - including their wives, their children and their children's spouses - raise peaches in what Kent said is Oklahoma's largest peach orchard with more than 10,000 peach trees spanning nearly 140 acres.

As if caring for an expansive peach orchard was not enough, the family

also grows apples, watermelons, pumpkins, blackberries, cantaloupe, tomatoes, squash and cucumbers, all of which they sell at their on-farm market south of Porter. In addition to the produce they grow, the Livesay family also has a large-scale corn, wheat and soybean farm and a cowherd. It all adds up to a busy growing season for the family, which employs workers to help with every aspect of the farm.

Ultimately, it is the farm-fresh peaches that are the Livesays' calling card. The juicy, summertime fruit draws folks from around the region, including Kansas and Arkansas, to get a taste of the orchard's bounty.

However, each peach's journey from tree to table is not an easy one, which keeps the Livesay family on their toes as they carefully manage the orchard year-round to ensure their customers can rely upon them for locally grown produce.



rom the road that customers drive to reach the Livesay's on-farm market, the family's orchards look like they are filled with rows and rows of near-identical peach trees. In reality, the family grows a careful selection of around 40 cultivars of peach trees, which Kent said have been selected to provide a peach harvest that stretches the full length of a long Oklahoma summer.

"We started in late May, and we have had one cultivar that sometimes we don't pick until October," Kent said of the family's harvest timeline. "The season is running a little bit early this year, so I think we'll be finished before that. The last one is not well adapted, so it varies in quality from season to season depending on the weather conditions."

Each peach cultivar will produce peaches that the Livesays will pick in a two- to three-week window before the

variety's productivity ends and the harvest crews move on to the next cultivar. When a specific cultivar's harvest window is open, crews make multiple passes through the same set of trees, picking fruit that is ready to go to market.

"Ideally, we would pick at least every three days, but if there's an overwhelming amount to harvest and we're short on labor, it might get stretched to four," Kent said. "Sometimes we might pick every other day."

The skilled workers who pick the fruit by hand are looking for several traits that make the fruit desirable for customers as they examine peaches from both the ground level and laddertop before selecting the fruit that is ready to be picked.

"They're looking for the background color of the fruit, and then you have to have some understanding of the

cultivar and what is to be expected." Kent said of the harvest crew's work. "The cultivar we are picking today was developed at Rutgers, and it mentions in the tree catalog that the peach will get about 40 percent red. It's not nearly as red as many of the others."

With a keen eye and specialized knowledge about the orchard and its produce, the harvest crews place the freshly picked fruit into baskets and flats that are transported to the Livesay family's market where they are sized, sorted and prepared for sale.

But long before any fruit is ready to be picked, and even before spring leaves begin to emerge from dormant limbs and branches, the Livesay family is making careful management decisions to ensure a bountiful crop in the year ahead.

"There's pretty much something



ABOVE

FIDEL LEDEZMA EXAMINES PEACHES IN ONE OF THE LIVESAY FAMILY'S ORCHARDS TO FIND FRUIT THAT IS READY TO BE PICKED. THE LIVESAY FAMILY'S HARVEST CREWS MAKE MULTIPLE PASSES THROUGH EACH CULTIVAR TO PICK FRUIT AT THE OPTIMAL TIME.

going on year-round," Kent said of caring for the family's peach orchards. "They're kind of a brittle tree, so as they age, you'll have some breakage of limbs, which we have to go in and remove. Every tree is pruned by hand every year, and so it takes a substantial amount of labor."

The start of the next year's peach crop begins not long after one year's harvest ends.

The Livesays start pruning their peach trees in February, which Kent said keeps trees from becoming too stressed. Drip irrigation provides ample water for the trees while maximizing efficiency. As the growing season progresses, a big peach crop will require thinning to ensure the fruit that makes it to harvest reaches the proper diameter rather than producing an undersized peach.

The Livesays also remove older peach trees from production and plant new trees to keep the family's farm reliably producing peaches. Kent said a peach tree's productive live span is around 20 years. Add to that the fact that the trees can die of various causes, and the Livesays can end up with orchards where less than 60 percent of trees they originally planted remain viable by the time they replant.

Combine this with the unpredictable Oklahoma weather, and Kent said a peach crop is never truly out of the way of danger from mother nature.

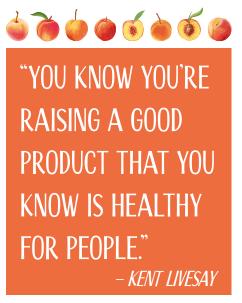
"The crop can be lost at any point in the year," Kent said. "There is no time when the fruit is not vulnerable. Last year we probably lost a little bit of fruit the week before Christmas - the trees were dormant, but the buds were still vulnerable. That's why you don't see peaches grown in climates where it gets to 20 below zero. Not only might you lose the fruit crop during

that time, but you might also have some tree damage."

The danger the weather poses is such a looming threat that Kent can rattle off the exact dates of storms, cold snaps and droughts that have caused a subpar crop in previous growing years.

Kent can tell you that freezes in 1974, 1996 and 2018 caused catastrophic losses to the peach crop, resulting in almost complete crop loss. In 2021, a freeze in late April took nearly 90% of the crop. Last year, a hailstorm on May 5 destroyed 95 percent of the orchard's fruit and damaged the remainder. While the 2023 growing season was more productive than those immediately preceding it with about 60 percent of the crop making it to harvest time, Kent said a cold snap on March 19 took away some of the productivity.

"We've had an unusually poor five-





year period prior to this," Kent said. "When you lose three (crops) in five years, it's been pretty tough."

However, Kent is thankful for the peaches they have available to harvest this year. The cold weather that put a dent in peach yields wiped out growers in northwest Arkansas. Other peach-producing areas of the southern United States are also seeing reduced yields this year.

"We're thankful to have that because a lot of growers have almost nothing," Kent said. "So the price was up this year on peaches because a lot of the eastern U.S. had a really short crop. At one time, they estimated the crop in Georgia to be four percent of normal, which is the second-largest peach producing state east of the Mississippi."

In fact, the Livesay family has been providing peaches to peach producers in northwest Arkansas so their fellow growers have something to sell at their own markets.

"I've been trying to have some peaches for them because they've been good to us when we've been short of fruit," Kent said of his peachgrowing friends in Arkansas.

Kent can recall a storm in 2016 with 100-mile-per-hour winds that wreaked havoc on the brittle-limbed trees. Constant rain in 2015 resulted in the only year he can remember where harvest crews donned rain suits and picked peaches in the rain because there were so few days of favorable weather.

Flooding can also kill peach trees. Kent explained the standing water deprives the trees' roots of oxygen.

"We lost a substantial number of trees in places in 2015," Kent said. "They'll die pretty quickly - 24 to 72 hours of being in standing water."

In addition to the dangers weather poses to the trees, their buds and the peaches themselves, Kent said weather conditions during a growing season also have an impact on the characteristics of the fruit.

"It can even change - and I don't understand this fully - it can change how well the fruit comes off the seed," Kent said. "A variety like red haven that ripens in late June or early July, some years they want to cling to the seed just a little bit and other years

they come off the seed just as easily as the freestone peaches that ripen a little bit later."

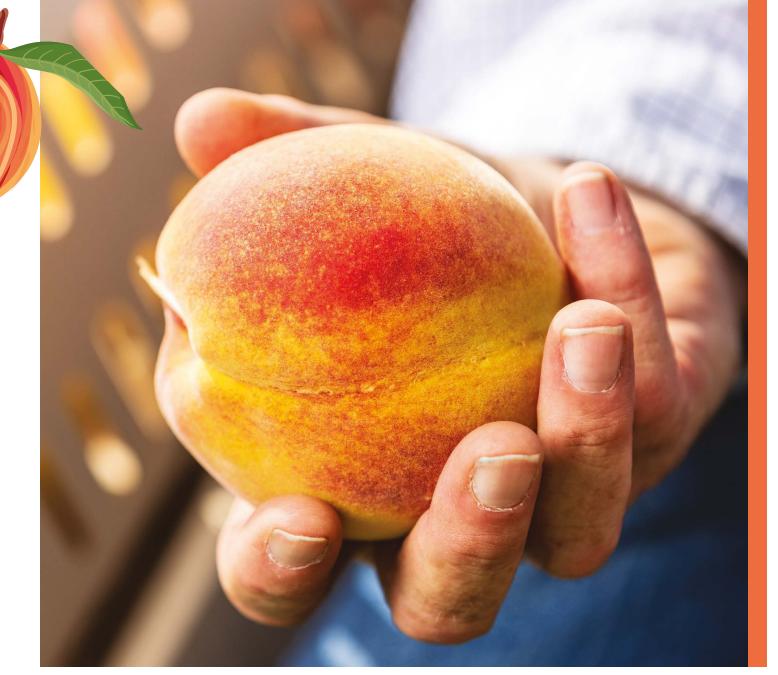
Kent also said he has witnessed the color of the fruit change depending on whether temperatures are hot or cool during the growing season.

"There's a tendency that hotter weather makes the peach redder on the inside," Kent said.

Even with decades of time spent growing peaches, Kent said he is still making discoveries about the crop and the ever-changing factors that impact the family's orchards.

"I'm always still learning myself," Kent said. "Like how did we have a crop this year when textbooks say we should have lost it? It was easily cold enough with the temperatures we were recording that it probably shouldn't have survived."

Thankfully, the 2023 crop pulled through, and Kent was able to watch as basket after basket and load after load of peaches made their way from the orchard to the Livesay family's on-farm market as the next stop on the fruit's journey to dinner tables and picnic baskets.







ABOVE

HARVEST SCENES FROM AROUND LIVESAY ORCHARDS AS HARVEST CREWS PICK PEACHES ON A MID-AUGUST DAY. HARVEST FOR THE LIVESAYS CAN START IN MAY AND STRETCH INTO LATE FALL, ENSURING PEACHES ARE AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT SUMMER.



he Livesay Orchards market lies a few miles south of Porter and not far off the Muskogee Turnpike. Here, fans of summer produce flock to the family's on-farm store to purchase watermelons, apples, cantaloupe, tomatoes, jams, canned fruit, and of course, the star of the show: peaches.

"What drives customers to come here primarily - at least throughout the summer - would be peaches," Kent said. "In the fall, it might be pumpkins, and apples, also."

Peaches that are brought to the market are sorted for size and packaged into baskets and boxes for sale at both the on-farm retail market and at other retailers in the region. Livesay Orchard peaches can be found in Tulsa-area supermarkets such as Reasor's and Homeland at various times during the growing season. Kent said that on average, about half of the family's peaches are sold at their own market and the other half are sold on the wholesale market to other retailers.

With a relatively short shelf life

once they are picked ripe, Livesay Orchard peaches move quickly from field to market, a challenge that Kent said can change quickly depending on how the growing season impacts the rhythms of harvest.

"One week you can have a shortage of peaches, and a week later you might have a surplus of something that is not easily marketable," Kent said, noting that peaches stored too long can result in a mealy texture and a loss in flavor.

Occasionally, the family will donate produce that they cannot sell in a timely fashion to the Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma, ensuring that nothing is wasted, which is a goal of the entire crew at Livesay Orchards.

"We have a very dedicated crew," Kent said. "I think they hate to see anything go to waste on the farm just as bad as I do, and I think that motivates a lot of people in agriculture to do the best they can and try to prevent waste.

"Even if you do have to donate it to the food bank and not have an

economic gain, we're glad to see somebody use the food."

Of course, what the town of Porter is known for across Oklahoma is its yearly peach festival, which was started in 1967 to celebrate the surrounding area's most famous cash crop while raising funds to support the community. Held on the third Saturday of July, the long-running event is vital to the vibrance of the community and the Livesay family.

"The Porter Peach Festival is really valuable to us for the promotion of peaches in the area, and it reminds customers of the peach crop," Kent said. "Any child can look at a graph of our sales, and they can figure out when the peach festival is. Our sales go up every week until the festival, and then decline every week after it."

The Livesay family is proud to be an integral part of the festival, supplying peaches for the celebration. The family are members of the local Lions Club, which puts on the event, with Kent himself serving as treasurer of the club until very recently.











ERN OKLAHOMA. M AROUND THE AREA.

ABOVE

PEACHES, WATERMELONS, AND PRE-PACKAGED FOOD ITEMS AWAIT CUSTOMERS AT THE LIVESAY ORCHARDS MARKET, APPLES, CANTELOUPE, BLACKBERRIES, TOMATOES, SOUASH, PUMPKINS AND OTHER SEASONAL PRODUCE CAN ALSO BE FOUND AT THE MARKET.

"We supply the peaches that are cut up for peaches and ice cream," Kent said. "And we supply the peaches that are auctioned off that businesses give generously to support civic projects in our town. We're very involved with the festival."

With the festival playing such an important role in the area's history and the Livesay family's heritage, Kent said the family focuses on having plenty of peaches during the everimportant event.

"The problem is peaches can vary by two weeks - they can be two weeks early one year and be two weeks late from what is average the next year," Kent said of the timing of the harvest. "So you can have a wide variation when the cultivar you planned on having for the peach festival maybe ripens in early August when you wanted it in mid-July. And the next year, it might ripen the first of July."

Whether it be the peach festival, the family's on-farm market or their wholesale customers, what Kent said he enjoys the most is interacting with

the customers and ensuring they have healthy food on their tables.

"I enjoy the customers and seeing the satisfied people," Kent said. "I think that's by far the biggest motivator."

Kent said he has a solid base of customers who come back year after year to buy peaches and other produce right off the family's farm. Some customers have been making their way to Livesay family's farm since Kent was a teenager, and others visit weekly to buy produce that the family both grows themselves and brings in from other local producers to ensure their customers have access to a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables.

While the Porter area has a storied history of growing peaches, the number of producers has dwindled in the past few decades, leaving the Livesays as the primary commercial grower in the area as they tend to the state's largest peach orchard.

"What I've noticed is there are more customers saying, 'Thank you for being here,' because I think they've

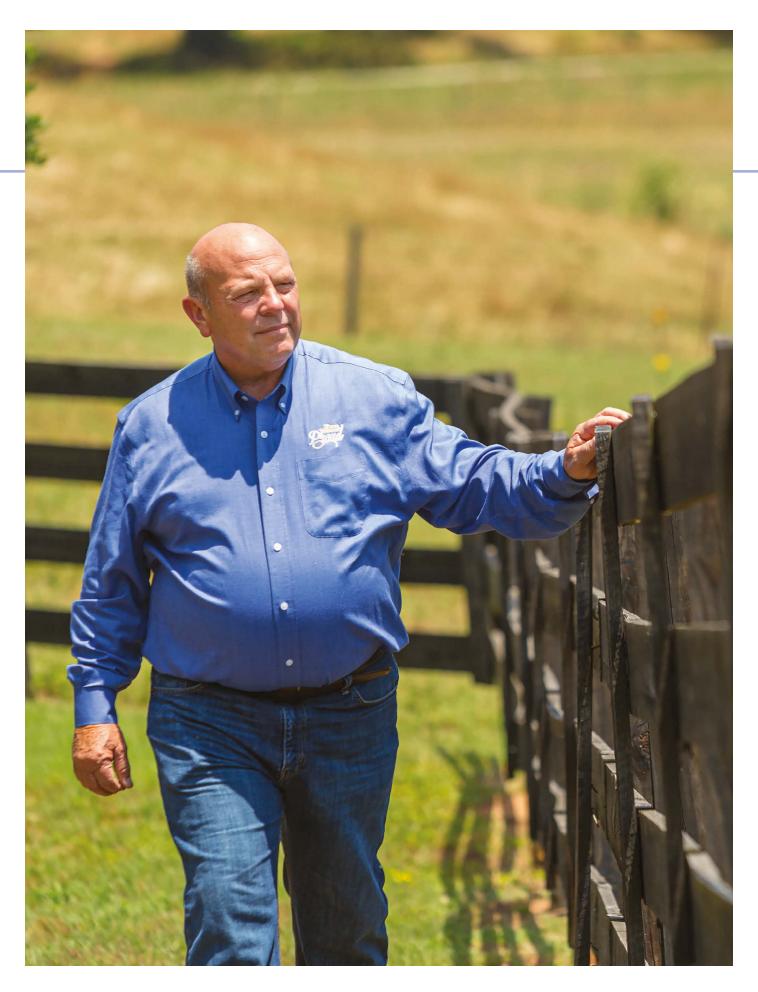
seen other large fruit and vegetable growers in the area going out of business for various reasons," Kent said.

Although the path a peach travels from tree to table is fraught with perils, Kent and the entire Livesay family and their employees are dedicated to carrying on the generations-long tradition of providing healthy fruit and vegetables to their friends, neighbors and soon-to-be friends who travel from places as far away as southern Kansas and northwest Arkansas to buy the fruits of their labor.

"You know you're raising a good product that you know is healthy for people," Kent said of his life's work.

"You can tell people appreciate us being here."

LEARN MORE ABOUT LIVESAY ORCHARDS ON THEIR WEBSITE, LIVESAYORCHARDS.COM, INCLUDING DIRECTIONS TO THE MARKET AND A FULL LIST OF AUTUMN ACTIVITIES, WHICH INCLUDE A PUMPKIN PATCH, A CORN MAZE, APPLE PICKING, GROUP AND SCHOOL TOURS, AND MORE!



Story by Rachel Havens | Photo courtesy of AFBF

edia interviews were second-nature for American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall until a reporter's question about his late wife stopped him in his tracks.

"Everyone knows I lost my wonderful wife of 42 years after a long battle with cancer," Duvall said.

After his beloved Bonnie passed in January 2020, the former Georgia Farm Bureau president did what many do after loss - he tried to move on. Duvall returned to work and attempted to stifle his grief and navigate a new normal without her.

At the time, he did not realize the effect his grief was having on his mental health.

"As most farmers do, I was locking it up inside," Duvall said. "I went back to work, and the stress of it was just building inside me."

That is when a standard media interview turned into the emotional release he did not know he needed.

"One day, a reporter asked me a question about her, and I just broke," he said. "It was like a dam with water coming through it. My emotions were all over."

Duvall said the more he talked with the reporter about Bonnie, the better he felt.

In the moment, Duvall was embarrassed for losing his composure in a professional setting. But with time, he realized how beneficial it was for his mental wellbeing.

"Looking back on it, it was the best thing that could have happened," he said. "We leave our emotions inside, and it builds up. (Eventually), something is going to give."

As the leader of the nation's largest grassroots farm organization and a lifelong farmer himself, Duvall knows the stress that comes with farming and ranching.

"As an organization, we realize we have a lot of farmers who are going through a lot of mental stress, whether it be something that has happened in their life with their family, or whether it be a financial (issue) or sustainability on their farms," Duvall said.

Because agricultural producers work in an outdoor, labor-intensive industry, it is easy for farmers and ranchers to believe they must be as tough and hardy as the heavy machinery and large animals with which they work.

"There is a time to be tough, and there is a time to not try to act like you are tough," he said.

An otherwise tough farmer and polished professional, Duvall said he came away from that conversation with the reporter feeling weak for expressing his feelings. But the response he received from his Farm Bureau family after the interview was overwhelmingly positive, with many commending his bravery.

"It is not a weakness to show your emotions," he said. "It is really a healthy thing to do. Our people across the country need healthy farmers, and not just physically. They have to be mentally healthy."

Duvall encourages his fellow farmers and ranchers going through a tough time to share their struggles with someone close to them.

"Letting someone else share the burden of the stress that you are going through helps you deal with what you are going through," he said.

In the case of the media interview, Duvall shared his burden with the reporter. But he has also been the person with whom others have shared their emotional burdens, including when a friend witnessed the loss of a colleague while at work.

"He was going through a difficult time," Duvall said of his friend. "All I did was take him for a ride in the truck and let him talk."

That simple ride in the truck helped his friend immensely in the moment and is something he still talks about.

"It is not a weakness to break down to a friend, a pastor or a professional who listens," Duvall said. "It is really a strength saying, 'I need help, I admit I need help, and I am going to find help because I want to be healthier for my family, my friends and my community."

You are not alone.

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health, visit farmstateofmind.org to access AFBF's mental wellbeing resources.

FLIPPING THE SWITCH

BY RACHEL HAVENS

STRESS IS HARD.

Dealing with stress and managing it effectively is often even harder.

Christopher Graham, director of integrated services at the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, has devoted his career to stress management and mental health.

With a diverse background in social work and counseling, Graham is no stranger to helping others deal with stress, and he knows first-hand the stigma that often surrounds mental health.

"It is not that it is taboo, but it is something that I don't think we as people talk about as much as we could," he said.

While stressors and challenges come with work and daily life, Graham knows these are often magnified in agricultural occupations, where uncontrollable variables like weather patterns and market prices have a significant impact on an operation's success or failure.

"The general responsibility of governing a business can be wildly overwhelming," Graham said. "When stressors come on top of that like a loss, or you are dealing with crops that do not come in or you are dealing with financial loss that you were not expecting, that can hit you to your core and affect you in all kinds of ways."

He explained how both biological and environmental factors influence a person's stress, and those factors begin at birth.

"How we handle stress starts when we are very young," Graham said. "Trauma that happens early on will affect us the rest of our lives."

Graham highlighted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's study on the effects of adverse childhood experiences, noting that if children experience or witness abuse, neglect, substance abuse or household dysfunction, they are more likely to die at a younger age than the national average.

"All of these things will influence a person's development, and they are huge environmental factors," Graham said.

Just as these factors play a role in a person's mental health, so does mental health play a role in physical health. Graham explained how depression, a commonly treatable condition, has become the leading cause of disability around the world.

"When a person has a mental health issue or a crisis and it goes untreated, then it leads to chronic health conditions," Graham said. "For agriculturists and farmers, it could not be more true."

Graham's statement is reflected in the suicide rate for farmers and agricultural workers, which is nearly five times higher than the national average.

"There is so much stigma about living in pain," he said, noting the stigma is often so prevalent that people do not know how to respond when someone opens up to them.

"We do not talk about these things," he said. "We do not talk about what is bothering us. We do not often easily open the conversations."

People experiencing pain and stress often take it out on their loved ones.

"We take it out on people who matter the most to us because they are the closest to us," Graham said. "They are the safest to us."

The key to managing stress is to recognize it as early as possible, he said.

"When we have stress, we have to recognize it," Graham said. "If we can recognize it early, it goes a long way in preventing it."

Graham described some of the physical effects of stress, including tension headaches, back pain, heart palpitations and indigestion. Stress can also often produce cognitive symptoms, including forgetfulness, irritability, indecisiveness and trouble concentrating.

"Even if you think you are hiding it well, I promise people notice," Graham said. "People notice when other people are in pain. We do not often talk about it, but we do see it."

Graham said the human body is hard-wired to respond to stress. Like a light switch flipped on or off, the nervous system responds to stress in one of two ways. A sympathetic response triggers a fight, flight or freeze reaction while a parasympathetic response tells the body to rest and digest.

"You can heal all kinds of physical issues by making time to flip the switch off," Graham said.

Just as it is not economical to always leave lights on in a home, the human body cannot survive without flipping the mental switch from time to time.

"When it comes to the light bill of our lives, we cannot afford it," Graham said. "We cannot afford to be fighting every single person. We cannot afford to be fighting every single issue that comes up. We have to find a way at some point in that first five seconds to flip the switch."

Flipping the switch can be accomplished through a variety of stressmanagement techniques. Graham encourages people to first take an inventory of their symptoms, then try calming strategies like meditation, deep breathing or physical exercise.

While these and other strategies can be effective, Graham acknowledged some circumstances require a more formal treatment.

"Sometimes doing all of these things is not enough," he said.

Graham strongly encourages anyone struggling with more complex mental health issues to seek professional support, noting how helpful an outside opinion can be.

"Sometimes other people will see things in ourselves that we cannot see," he said.

He recommends a number of statewide resources, including certified behavioral health clinics around the state that provide services to Oklahomans in need.

The 988 mental health line is another resource Graham recommends for Oklahomans struggling with mental health. Individuals can call or text the hotline, and they will be connected with someone to help.

Graham said the hotline is often the first step in preventing a larger, more serious mental health crisis.

More than anything, Graham underscored the fact that people struggling with mental wellbeing are not alone.

"You are not on an island," he said. "You are not alone in this journey, and you not being here is not an option. You not living your life to the fullest is not an option."

Farmers and ranchers are known for their toughness and their steadfastness. They know what it is like to reap a full harvest, and they know what it is like to survive in the leanest of years. But for Graham, managing mental health is not about survival.

"It is not enough to just survive," he said. "We want to live."

This story is adapted from Oklahoma Farm Bureau's Cultivating Healthy Minds mental wellbeing series. To learn more, visit okfb.news/CHM23.



ABOUT DR. GRAHAM

Dr. Christopher Graham is a licensed clinical social worker with more than 20 years of experience in the mental health field. Dr. Graham owns Full Harvest Counseling, where he provides individual, couples and family therapy. He is the senior pastor at Full Harvest Church, where he provides spiritual guidance and support to his congregation. In addition, Dr. Graham works for the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, where he provides integrated care training, crisis intervention and program-development services. He also provides training and consultation to other mental health professionals.

CERTIFIED COMMUNITY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CLINICS

Certified community behavioral health clinics provide a variety of mental health and substance abuse services to individuals in Oklahoma.

Some CCBHC services include:

- » Crisis services
- » Psychiatric rehabilitation
- » Care coordination
- » Outpatient services

To find a CCBHC near you, visit okfb.news/CCBHC.

988 MENTAL HEALTH LIFELINE

The 988 mental health lifeline gets Oklahomans struggling with mental health the help they need.

Anyone who calls 988 will be connected to a mental health professional who will help assess the situation. If needed, a mobile crisis team can be dispatched to be of further assistance.





TWO MEMBERS OF THE INAUG FARM BUREAU'S OKLAHOM, BUSINESS ACCELERATORS JOURNEY AS THEY CREA AGRICULTURE AND

STORIES AND PHOTOS

FAST FOAM / ACTIVATE OKLAHOMA

Itus firefighter Joe Buchanan heard the call come in around 7 p.m. for a fire in barn three at the local cotton compress back in 2018. It was just another call like one of many others he had handled before: a fire in some "hot cotton" that he envisioned his crew would easily extinguish and then head home.

"Through the years, I've been called to the compress many times, and had pretty good success – not that big of a deal," Buchanan said. "This time, we were called to barn three. It was about 7 o'clock in the evening.

"We rolled all our trucks from Altus to the compress, which is just outside of town. I called a friend at the compress just to ask him where barn three was – they have 54 barns, I believe – and I was just going to give him a little heads-up because I wasn't expecting a big fire.

"When I cleared the square in Altus, I could see the glow in the sky and the flames.



INNOVATOR

JOE BUCHANAN

COMPANY FAST FOAM

LOCATION
ALTUS, OK

PIPELINE

ACTIVATE

OKLAHOMA

INNOVATION

PORTABLE FOAM-SPRAYING FIREFICHTING UNIT DESIGNED FOR WAREHOUSE USE I was on the phone with him, and I told him to call everybody he knew, and we'll see you out there."

What started as a fire in a bale of cotton turned into an all-out battle for Buchanan and his crew as they fought against a blaze that fully engulfed the warehouse.

"We lost that barn," Buchanan said. "It was a total loss. I had the best crew in the world, I thought at the time, and I thought quite a bit of myself and my skills, and we got whipped for three hours nonstop, and it burned for three days. It was a sad situation."

Another fire at the compress in 2020 made Buchanan think there had to be a better way to protect the cotton that area farmers work so hard to produce from being so quickly and thoroughly destroyed by flames in a warehouse.

"All my friends are cotton farmers, my family farms cotton, I grew up in the cotton

CONTINUE READING ON PAGE 24



CHING AMS

CURAL CLASS OF OKLAHOMA A GRASSROOTS RURAL & AG SHARE THEIR INNOVATION ATE SOLUTIONS TO HELP RURAL OKLAHOMA.

BY DUSTIN MIELKE



AMERICAN PRIME / CULTIVATE OKLAHOMA

oge Celis watched first-hand as the effects of drought ravaged Oklahoma from 2011 through 2012.

Celis was researching drought detection at the University of Oklahoma's National Weather Center as pastures and fields turned brown and ponds dried up.

Celis said he remembers thinking at the time with all the data, information and research that is available and continually being collected that there must be a better way for farmers to anticipate, prepare and plan for severe weather events like the one he was witnessing.

In an effort to help Oklahomans weather the next drought, Celis teamed up with two fellow researchers at OU with experience and expertise in severe weather forecasting, remote sensing and biophysics. Combined with Celis' research in environmental engineering and hydrology, the team set out to develop a way to help farmers and



INNOVATOR JORGE CELIS

COMPANY **AMERICAN PRIME**

> LOCATION NOBLE, OK

PIPELINE CULTIVATE **OKLAHOMA**

INNOVATION **DATA-DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING PLATFORM FOR**

FARMERS AND RANCHERS

ranchers use data to make real-time decisions on their operations to become more efficient and effective.

American Prime Sustainable Solutions was the business the trio created to combine their research expertise with boots-on-theground knowledge agriculture producers possess. Celis serves as CEO of American Prime, and he said that while there is an immense amount of data available to farmers and ranchers, his company's goal is to provide quick, actionable items for producers to implement.

"We know that farmers are flooded with data," Celis said.

"At this stage, we are trying to better understand what would be the best and most efficient way to deliver those actionable insights. Since we know that producers have a lot of things on their plate, the last thing we want to give them is one more task. We want to be able to provide a solution that will

CONTINUE READING ON PAGE 25



FAST FOAM / ACTIVATE OKLAHOMA

field," Buchanan said. "It seemed a shame to go through that whole process just to burn the bales at the end."

In the aftermath of the fires, Buchanan contacted Plains Cotton Cooperative Association, a farmer-owned cooperative that stores and markets cotton for farmers. He toured the cooperative's warehouses, visited with managers and workers, and thought about the best way to prevent another catastrophic fire in a cotton warehouse.

Buchanan's epiphany came as he watched cotton being unloaded from trucks and carefully placed in long rows in a warehouse.

"I was leaning against a barn at Plains Cotton Cooperative trying to figure out whether to build a tiny fire truck or an all-wheel-drive," Buchanan said. "And the whole time these lift trucks were coming in and out and grabbing cotton off trucks and going back in. I realized they have 50 expert drivers with machines that are running, batteries charged, tires up ready to go."

Buchanan went to the drawing board, and along with business partner Jeff Davenport, created a portable foam-dispensing firefighting unit that can be easily lifted, moved and deployed with a forklift, lift truck or front-end loader within minutes.

Their company, Fast Foam, builds the firefighting units in Altus using tanks built in Healdton, Oklahoma, and components made in the United States.

Each unit has a tank, a firefighting-grade engine and pump, and a fog nozzle that can shoot firefighting foam 50 to 60 feet and put out a fire in minutes. Buchanan said once a Fast Foam unit is moved into position, it can be turned on and start shooting foam within 15 seconds.

"Somebody could walk off the street and figure it out," Buchanan said. "If you can start a lawnmower, you can start the unit."

Buchanan said the unit can be stored in a warehouse or an area where a fire could break out, always ready to be picked up by a skilled forklift operator and moved to the site of a fire when smoke or flames are spotted. He said the foam can be sprayed on the fire within seconds instead of minutes, extinguishing a potentially

CONTINUE READING ON PAGE 26

"ALL MY FRIENDS ARE COTTON FARMERS, MY FAMILY FARMS COTTON, I GREW UP IN THE COTTON FIELD. IT SEEMED A SHAME TO GO THROUGH THAT WHOLE PROCESS JUST TO BURN THE BALES AT THE END."

- JOE BUCHANAN



"THERE IS A LOT OF UNCERTAINTY IN FARMING, WITH AMERICAN PRIME, WE'RE TRYING TO REDUCE THAT UNCERTAINTY BY PROVIDING ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS THAT WILL ACTUALLY HELP PRODUCERS TO SAVE MONEY."

- JORGE CELIS



AMERICAN PRIME / CULTIVATE OKLAHOMA

give them those actionable insights in one minute or less."

American Prime uses data sources including weather data from a farmer's closest weather station, satellite data at multiple spatial resolutions and data that agriculture producers have gathered themselves or already possess through their record-keeping and precision agriculture systems.

For decades now, precision agriculture systems have allowed agricultural producers to gather data from their fields including yield maps, nutrient application information, seeding rate data and more, which is often combined with soil sampling and even satellite imagery. But turning that data into decisions is yet another task staring farmers and ranchers in the face.

"Collecting the data is half the battle analyzing the data is a lot of work, it's very time consuming," Celis said. "Even if you have the technical background, it's not an easy task. So we need to accomplish translating that information into something you can (read in 30 seconds)."

From there, the company inputs the gathered data into its proprietary algorithms and systems that assesses how and when agriculture producers should apply inputs such as fertilizer and herbicides to maximize productivity and efficiency. This helps producers save on input costs and make the best use of their time in the field.

"There is a lot of uncertainty in farming," Celis said. "With American Prime, we're trying to reduce that uncertainty by providing actionable insights that will actually help producers to save money."

With their data-driven platform, Celis and his partners strive to be farmer-focused at every step of the process. Celis said that he appreciates the hard work agriculture producers invest every day, and he wants to help producers across the nation make quick, effective decisions that will help them grow the best food possible.

"In my opinion, there is no one who knows that land better than that producer," Celis said. "With our technology, we get the input of the producer: 'What would you like to do? How much product would you like to apply?

CONTINUE READING ON PAGE 27







FAST FOAM / ACTIVATE OKLAHOMA

catastrophic fire long before most fire departments can respond.

The foam the unit sprays is a modern, biodegradable foam that Buchanan likens to soap. It is free from harmful chemicals and is safe enough that it does not kill grass.

"It puts out fires and puts them out quickly," Buchanan said of the unit.

With a sound idea, a patent in place and basic manufacturing capabilities, Buchanan and his business partner began building units while trying to navigate the opportunities and obstacles of getting a new endeavor off the ground.

"I can tell you as a small businessman, I was at this for a while, just me and my partner," Buchanan said. "We took a lot of black eyes, a lot of beating."

A friend told Buchanan he should contact the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, and through his inquiry, he learned about Oklahoma Farm Bureau's newly launched Oklahoma Grassroots Rural & Ag Business Accelerators program.

Buchanan applied to be part of the accelerator program's inaugural cohort, and he was accepted into the Activate Oklahoma pipeline, which provides entrepreneurs in rural Oklahoma with business resources and connections to help bring their innovations to life.

"I've learned a ton in this process," Buchanan said of Activate Oklahoma. "I've met other entrepreneurs who have made it and learned their process – that it's not all a bed of roses and you have to keep fighting. I've learned the marketing side of it, where to get funding and who can help.

"You meet people who know people who can help you, and it's really a networking idea, and it's amazing."

ABOUT ACTIVATE OKLAHOMA

ACTIVATE OKLAHOMA IS AN ACCELERATOR PROGRAM FOR **INNOVATORS IN RURAL OKLAHOMA** WHO HAVE AN INNOVATION, PRODUCT OR **ENTERPRISE THAT** WOULD BENEFIT FROM THE PROGRAM'S INTENSIVE TRAINING AND **MENTORSHIP** CONNECTIONS.

s members of the Oklahoma Grassroots Rural & Ag
Business Accelerators program's inaugural cohorts, Buchanan and
Celis have forged connections with fellow innovators, business mentors and Oklahoma business resources that have opened doors for their businesses to take the next steps toward fulfilling their visions.

As part of the Activate Oklahoma rural innovation pipeline, Buchanan

is proud that Fast Foam is making a product in rural Oklahoma.

"I love southwest Oklahoma, I love the people," Buchanan said.

"Our population is declining, but if I can bump that up – however much I can – I think it's important that we start out building this in southwest Oklahoma."

With connections forged through the accelerators program, Buchanan has visited with potential buyers for the Fast Foam firefighting units outside of the cotton industry. Commercial warehouses, insurance companies and even the U.S. military have expressed interest in using the units to protect assets from carpet to aircraft.

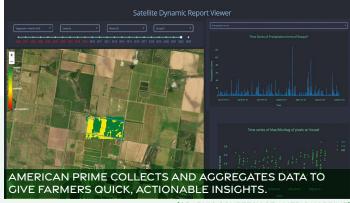
American Prime is leaning into the agriculture producer connections Oklahoma Farm Bureau and the Cultivate Oklahoma pipeline can provide as the company

GET INVOLVED: INNOVATORS



APPLICATIONS FOR THE NEXT COHORTS OF BOTH THE ACTIVATE OKLAHOMA AND CULTIVATE OKLAHOMA INNOVATION PIPELINES WILL BE OPEN FROM JANUARY I TO MARCH I, 2024. THE LINK TO THE APPLICATIONS, ALONG WITH THE QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR EACH PIPELINE, WILL BE AVAILABLE ON THE OKFB WEBSITE AT OKFARMBUREAU.ORG/ACCELERATOR.





(GRAPHIC COURTESY OF AMERICAN PRIME)

AMERICAN PRIME / CULTIVATE OKLAHOMA



ABOUT CULTIVATE OKLAHOMA

CULTIVATE OKLAHOMA IS A PRE-ACCELERATOR PROGRAM **POWERED BY** AGLAUNCH THAT **CONNECTS INNOVATORS WHO** HAVE AN AGRICULTURE-**FOCUSED** INNOVATION OR PRODUCT WITH MENTORSHIP. **BUSINESS** TRAINING AND FARMER INPUT.

When would you like to apply it?' And then, since we have all the data from previous years, it is easier for us to say, 'If we do this, you will get this. If you try these other options, you might get that."

With a farmer-focused approach and a data analytics platform in development, American Prime needed a network of Oklahoma agriculture producers and input from fellow Oklahoma-based agricultural businesses to help hone and refine the company's agricultural solutions.

Celis turned to Oklahoma Farm Bureau's Cultivate Oklahoma agriculture innovation pipeline, powered by national partner AgLaunch, to connect with a larger network of agricultural producers and learn from Oklahoma-focused business resources.

Cultivate Oklahoma serves as a preaccelerator program that aims to prepare Oklahoma innovators with agriculturefocused technologies, products and ideas for the AgLaunch365 national agriculture innovation accelerator.

"The experience has been amazing," Celis said of his time in Cultivate Oklahoma. "Even though we're set up in Oklahoma, we didn't have the experience to interact with Oklahoma producers and Oklahoma Farm Bureau, for example."

Celis attended the weeklong Cultivate Oklahoma inaugural bootcamp in the summer of 2023 along with fellow agricultural innovators, where he learned about resources that can help American Prime continue to build a platform that will help American agriculture grow into the future.

"It is great," Celis said. "Especially if you are at that stage that you have an idea, but you don't know what would be the best way to pursue it."

continues to test its solution with agriculture producers across multiple states.

"It was really nice to first feel the support and learn about the resources that Oklahoma Farm Bureau has available, and as well to build potential connections with producers who might be willing to participate with us," Celis said.

From connections with the Noble Research Institute to partnerships

with Oklahoma-based farmers and ranchers, Celis said the collection of resources he has gained access to through Cultivate Oklahoma has helped clear the way for American Prime to build their platform and help agriculture.

For both Celis and Buchanan, the Oklahoma Grassroots Rural & Ag Business Accelerators program has helped them and their dreams gain a foothold in Oklahoma for the benefit

of all Oklahomans.

"It's amazing," Buchanan said of his experience with Activate Oklahoma. "I've had three mentors. If you've got a question, they've got the answer, and you're not reading through a book trying to figure it out or watching videos trying to understand it. They talk you through on your level, they're on your team, they care about Oklahoma, and they care about people."

GET INVOLVED: FARMERS & RANCHERS



AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS WHO WANT TO HELP SPUR ON AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION IN OKLAHOMA BY BECOMING INNOVATION-TESTING PARTNERS WITH COMPANIES LIKE AMERICAN PRIME CAN REQUEST INFORMATION ABOUT THE CULTIVATE OKLAHOMA FARMER NETWORK BY COMPLETING THE ONLINE FORM FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS AVAILABLE AT OKFARMBUREAU.ORG/ACCELERATOR.



OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU MEMBERS GEAR UP TO CELEBRATE A YEAR FULL OF

GRASSROOTS ACHIEVEMENT, MEMBER SERVICE AND IMPACT FOR OKLAHOMA AGRICULTURE

klahoma Farm Bureau members will gather November 10-12 for the organization's 82nd annual meeting.

The meeting serves as the largest yearly gathering of Farm Bureau members in the state with general sessions, policy discussions, breakout sessions, awards, networking and fun with fellow farmers and ranchers.

NEW VENUE FOR CONVENTION

OKFB's annual meeting returns to Oklahoma City for the first time since 2019 with a brandnew venue.

The Omni Oklahoma City hotel will be the site for the 2023 annual meeting, offering Farm Bureau members a modern, convenient space to gather.

The Omni's meeting space is located on a single floor, meaning OKFB members are a quick elevator ride away from their guest rooms to the event area. The Omni offers a variety of in-house dining options and is located in downtown Oklahoma City with numerous dining and entertainment choices within either walking distance or accessible with a quick street car ride.

Find more information and details about the Omni Oklahoma City's amenities and dining options on the opposite page.

GRASSROOTS BUSINESS SESSIONS

Farm Bureau members will vote on the organization's grassroots policy positions during the Saturday business sessions, considering resolutions submitted by county Farm Bureaus from around the state.

OKFB members will also elect fellow Farm Bureau members to lead the organization, including the election of the OKFB president. Districts 1, 4, and 7 will caucus to elect district directors, and both Women's Leadership Committee and Young Farmers & Ranchers members will caucus to select leaders for the upcoming year. OKFB delegates will also vote on proposed changes to the organization's bylaws, the text of which were published in the last issue of Oklahoma Country magazine.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Farm Bureau members will have numerous opportunities to learn about OKFB's programs and activities while connecting with fellow Farm Bureau leaders to learn and grow.

Breakout sessions on Saturday will feature updates from OKFB members and staff along with a session focusing on mental wellness as the capstone of OKFB's Cultivating Healthy Minds program.

County Farm Bureau board members and

4ARIA BOUT OUR VEHUE OKLAHOMA CITY

MEETING • NOVEMBER 10-12

OF THE OKC

GUEST ROOMS

The 17-story Omni Oklahoma City Hotel boasts 605 guest rooms featuring elegant design with approachable comfort. Conveniently located near Scissortail Park, the Paycom Center and Bricktown, the Omni Oklahoma City offers Farm Bureau members numerous options to enjoy OKC.

county staff will have the opportunity to attend training sessions on Friday, and receptions and coffee talk sessions will allow members to visit with fellow Farm Bureau leaders and OKFB staff members to learn what the organization can do to support the future of agriculture and rural Oklahoma.

FELLOWSHIP AND AWARDS

Friday night will feature a game night for Farm Bureau members in an informal setting to enjoy the evening and try for a chance to win prizes.

The Saturday night awards banquet will recognize the efforts and achievements of Farm Bureau members, county Farm Bureaus and the Oklahoma agriculture community.

PLAN TO GATHER TOGETHER

OKFB's 2023 annual meeting will of course feature daily general sessions with speakers and updates, a trade show with vendors from across the state, a Sunday morning breakfast and worship service, YF&R competitive events, a WLC business meeting, the OKFB Ag PAC reception and more.

For a planned schedule of events and featured speakers, check out the next page.



CONVENTION SPACE

The Omni features 76,000 square feet of meeting space, allowing OKFB's 2023 convention to be conveniently located on a single floor that is an easy elevator ride away from members' guest rooms. The Omni's space is open and spacious featuring views of downtown Oklahoma City and Scissortail Park.



DINING

The Omni features numerous dining options for OKFB members to enjoy during their stay from the convenient breakfast and lunch options of Seltzer's to the casual dining offered by OKC Tap House to the elegant confines of the nationally renowned steak house, Bob's Steak & Chop House.



AMENITIES

With a welcoming lobby featuring elegant western touches and a large fireplace, a pool and terrace deck, a fitness center and spa, the Omni offers guests plenty of options to relax and enjoy their stay.



ZIPPY DUVALL

American Farm Bureau President

Zippy Duvall is the president of the country's largest farm organization, the American Farm Bureau Federation. A third-generation Georgia farmer, Duvall has served as the leader of AFBF since 2016.

FEATURED SPEAKERS





DAVID HOLT

Oklahoma City Mayor

Oklahoma City Mayor Holt will greet Oklahoma Farm Bureau members and welcome them to downtown Oklahoma City for OKFB's first annual meeting in the newly created convention space.

2023 OKFB ANNUAL MEETING PLANNED SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9 (PRE-CONVENTION)

5 p.m	High School Discussion Meet Orientation
5:15 p.m	High School Discussion Meet Round One
6 p m	High School Discussion Meet Round Two

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10

8 a.m	Credentials Committee Breakfast
8 a.m	YF&R Discussion Meet Orientation
9 a.m	Registration, Trade Show and Silent Auction Opens
9 a.m	YF&R Discussion Meet Round One
10 a.m	County Board Member Training
10 a.m	County Staff Training
10 a.m	YF&R Discussion Meet Round Two
11 a.m	Cultivating Healthy Minds Meeting & Luncheon
11:30 a.m	YF&R Discussion Meet Finals Luncheon
12 p.m	County Board Member Training Luncheon
12:15 p.m	YF&R Discussion Meet Finals
1:30 p.m	Opening General Session
3:15 p.m	Breakout: AFBF Issues Advisory Committee Reports
3:15 p.m	Breakout: Oklahoma Grassroots Rural & Ag Business Accelerators
3:15 p.m	Breakout: Cultivating Healthy Minds with Dr. Tobin Redwine
4:30 p.m	
4:30 p.m	YF&R Dinner and Caucus
5:30 p.m	
7:30 p.m	OKFB Game Night/Entertainment



DR. JAYSON LUSK

Oklahoma State University

Dr. Jayson Lusk serves as vice president and dean of OSU's Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, where he leads the agricultural education, research and extension efforts.



MAJ. ED PULIDO

U.S. Army (Retired)

Major Ed Pulido serves as an advocate for U.S. veterans, and he shares his experiences, courage and sacrifice that led him to earning numerous Army medals, including the Purple Heart.



DR. TOBIN REDWINE

Vivayic

Dr. Tobin Redwine combines his agriculture background with an academic research background to connect people with creative solutions to help them meet daily challenges and do good for others.



LADONNA GATLIN

Motivational Seaker

LaDonna Gatlin grew up performing with her brothers, the legendary Gatlin Brothers. In the mid-1970s, she decided to follow her heart, and today she inspires audiences with laughter, song and insight.

Please note: The annual meeting schedule is subject to change. The final schedule will be published in the annual meeting

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11

7:30 a.m	Credentials Committee Breakfast
7:30 a.m	Financial Committee Breakfast
7:30 a.m	Resolutions Committee Breakfast
8 a.m	Registration Opens
8:45 a.m	OKFBMIC Policyholders MeetingTrade Show and Silent Auction Opens
9 a.m	Trade Show and Silent Auction Opens
	General Session
11:30 a.m	WLC Advocacy LuncheonLunch Available from Food Trucks
12 p.m	Lunch Available from Food Trucks
12 p.m	Credentials Committee Luncheon
1 p.m	OKFB District Caucuses (Districts 1, 4 and 7)
1:30 p.m	General Session
5 p.m	
5 p.m	Farm & Ranch Family Recognition Reception
5:30 p.m	OKFB Ag PAC Reception
7 p.m	Dinner and Awards Program

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12

8:45 a m	Worship Service and Group Breakfast
7:30 a.m.	Public Policy Coffee Talk
7:30 a.m	WLC Coffee Talk
7:30 a.m.	County Presidents Coffee Talk



armers and ranchers are no strangers to the farm bill and the role it plays in the agriculture industry. With more than 2 million farms in the United States, the farm bill helps protect our nation's food supply and supports farmers and ranchers to ensure they can continue producing the safest, most abundant and most affordable food supply in the world.

But the farm bill's impact spans far beyond food security. It also supports job creation, land

conservation, risk management and addresses hunger through the SNAP benefits program.

The current farm bill, adopted in 2018, expired in September, and discussions have long been underway to update and reauthorize it for the next five years.

On these pages are American Farm Bureau's top five farm bill objectives and their impact on Oklahoma's farmers, ranchers and residents as our organization works with Congress to develop an upcoming farm bill.



Food security

A reliable supply of safe, healthy and affordable food has been the calling card of American agriculture for generations. The farm bill's numerous programs for both agriculture producers and our fellow Americans help ensure our friends and neighbors all across the nation have both access and choice when it comes to the nutritious food we all rely upon.



farms are located in Oklahoma that work daily to provide reliable food, fuel and fiber to fellow Oklahomans

1.7 millio

acres of cropland are in production in our state, which the farm bill supports through a variety of programs from supporting conservation practices to helping manage risk

Conservation

Farmers and ranchers work daily on their farms and ranches caring for the natural resources that we all enjoy and depend on. The farm bill's conservation programs provide agricultural producers with resources that help improve water quality, soil health, wildlife habitat and more.



acres in Oklahoma enrolled in the Conservation Stewardship Program, which works with agriculture producers to enhance existing conservation practices and help implement new techniques

acres in Oklahoma enrolled in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, which helps agricultural producers integrate conservation practices into working lands



Jobs

Agriculture is not only a reliable provider of food, fiber and fuel for our daily lives, but it is also an economic driver, providing careers for Oklahomans all across our state in numerous facets of agriculture and agribusiness.



jobs supported by agriculture in our state

gross receipts from sales of crops and livestock in Oklahoma



Nutrition

The farm bill helps provide nutrition assistance for our fellow Oklahomans from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to school lunch assistance programs. The nutrition title of the farm bill helps ensure people across our state can enjoy the fruits of Oklahoma agriculture's labor.



in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits used in Oklahoma

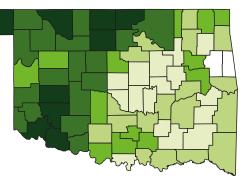
27.2 millio

meals provided to Oklahomans through SNAP

Risk management

Growing crops and raising livestock in Oklahoma is not without risk. Our state's ever-changing weather and sometimes harsh climate pose significant risk to farmers and ranchers. The risk management options outlined in the farm bill provide farmers with affordable insurance options while helping ensure Americans have a consistent and reliable food supply.

acres in Oklahoma are covered by crop insurance offered through farm bill programs **Acres protected** by farm bill crop insurance programs by county for the 2022 crop year













Four ways

Oklahoma Farm Bureau advocated for you in Washington, D.C.

alking field rows and walking the halls of Congress might seem as different as night and day, but it is all in a day's work for many Oklahoma Farm Bureau members.

Those involved in agriculture know how the business conducted and policies made in Washington, D.C., can influence farmers' and ranchers' ability to provide food, fuel and fiber for their fellow Americans, which was reason enough for OKFB members to step off the tractor and on to a plane this year to amplify the voice of agriculture and rural Oklahoma in Washington.



Major County Farm Bureau President Scott Neufeld listens in during the 2022 Issue Advisory Committee meetings Feb. 17-18, 2022, in Arlington, VA.

1 AFBF Issue Advisory Committees

OKFB sent the second-largest delegation of any state Farm Bureau to lend their subject-area expertise and help develop AFBF policy as part of the 2023 AFBF Issue Advisory Committees.

Each nominated to serve on one of 10 committees, eight Oklahoma farmers and ranchers traveled to Washington in mid-February to meet with their like-minded counterparts from Farm Bureaus across the country to discuss pertinent issues facing agriculture and make recommendations to the AFBF board of directors.

The Oklahoma delegation shared OKFB members' unique perspectives on agricultural issues, ensuring the voice of Oklahoma agriculture was heard and considered throughout the meetings.

OKFB's 2023 IAC Members

CHAD **SELMAN**

Agricultural Labor
Tulsa County

JORDAN COOK

Animal Care Washita County

TRAVIS **SCHNAITHMAN**

Budget and Economy

Garfield County

MONTE TUCKER

Energy

Roger Mills County

JOSHUA ANDERSON

Environmental Regulations & Water *Johnston County*

SCOTT NEUFELD

Farm Policy

Major County

MASON BOLAY

Market Structures
Noble County

CODY GOODKNIGHT

Technology

Tillman County



Nearly 60 Oklahoma Farm Bureau members pose in front of the United States Capitol during the OKFB Washington, D.C. Summit March 27-31.

Washington, D.C.

After a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly 60 Farm Bureau members attended OKFB's Washington, D.C. Summit - formerly known as the Congressional Action Tour - in late March.

While in Washington, Farm Bureau members advocated for agriculture through discussions with members of Oklahoma's congressional delegation, including Sens. James Lankford and Markwayne Mullin, Reps. Frank Lucas, Kevin Hern, Stephanie Bice and Josh Brecheen, and staffers from the office of Congressman Tom Cole.

The group also heard updates from a number of industry leaders, including representatives from AFBF, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, the National Governors Association and CropLife America.



Bryan County Farm Bureau President Daylin Hash (left) and Cleveland County Farm Bureau President Jake Calvert (right) pose with Congressman Frank Lucas during the American Farm Bureau Advocacy Fly-In June 12-13 in Washington, D.C.

Farm Bureau Advocacy Fly-In Daylin Hash, Bryan County Farm Bureau president, and Jake Calvert, Cleveland County

Farm Bureau president, made a quick trip to Capitol Hill in June for the American Farm

Bureau Advocacy Fly-In.

Hash and Calvert spent two days learning how to better advocate for agriculture and rural Oklahoma and attended briefings from AFBF staff on the 2023 farm bill and Waters of the United States. They also heard from members of the House and Senate agriculture committees and visited with Oklahoma's congressional delegation.



United States Senator Markwayne Mullin (right) visits with Oklahoma Farm Bureau Executive Director Thad Dove (left) and OKFB Vice President of Public Policy Steve Thompson July 12 in Washington, D.C.

Other AFBF events

To round out a jam-packed spring and summer, OKFB Executive Director Thad Doye and Vice President of Public Policy Steve Thompson joined President Rodd Moesel in July for a week of AFBF meetings in Washington. The trio divided and conquered the week, attending AFBF board meetings, an AFBF public policy conference and AFBF's annual Council of Presidents meeting.

During the public policy conference, Thompson heard from the Environmental Protection Agency on their new pesticide usage rules

and was briefed on new H2A agricultural labor guidelines from the United States Department of Labor. Thompson and his counterparts also visited with a representative from the British Embassy on international trade deals. Each of these meetings provided an opportunity to share Oklahoma agriculture's perspective on important and emerging issues, while providing Thompson with first-hand information to share with OKFB members during the organization's August Area Meetings.

AFBF's Council of Presidents meeting featured updates and comments from House Majority Leader Steve Scalise. USDA Undersecretary for Farm Production and Conservation Robert Bonnie and several members of AFBF's staff. Throughout the week, the three had the opportunity to visit with each of Oklahoma's congressional members and even caught a ride on the Senate subway to the Capitol with Sen. James Lankford.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau and its members strive to amplify the voice of agriculture and rural Oklahoma from city hall to our nation's capital. If you are interested in joining your fellow Farm Bureau members to advocate on the local, state or national level, reach out to your field representative or contact the OKFB public policy department at (405) 523-2300.



invests in the lives of young people around the state

klahoma Farm Bureau has long been a strong supporter of Oklahoma's agriculture youth.

As the next generation of leaders, our youth will lead our industry, our state and our nation into the future, and it is crucial to equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful.

This summer, OKFB hosted three events for students, with each centered on a specific focus area, including agricultural leadership, agricultural policy and agricultural communications.

These events are only a snapshot of OKFB's commitment to Oklahoma's youth and add to an ever-growing list of premium sale contributions, event sponsorships, scholarships, internship programs and more.

To learn more about our youth activities, visit okfarmbureau.org.

Oklahoma Youth Leading Agriculture

Who: Incoming high school seniors

What: Agriculture leadership conference

When: June 13-16, 2023

Oklahoma Youth Leading Agriculture is a four-day leadership conference for incoming high school seniors.

Hosted by the OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers committee, OYLA prepares young agricultural leaders for future careers in agriculture and gives them the opportunity to grow their leadership skills and learn more about Oklahoma agriculture.

This year, 19 students toured agricultural enterprises in central Oklahoma and learned from a number of industry leaders. Participants also completed a service project at the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma and built their teamwork skills on an outdoor ropes course.

Student leaders selected for OYLA are in the top of their class and plan to pursue a post-secondary education in an agricultural field.



Capitol Camp

Who: 4-H and FFA juniors and seniors

What: Mock legislature experience

When: June 27-28, 2023

Capitol Camp is a one-of-a-kind experience for high school juniors and seniors in 4-H and FFA to learn more about the legislative process and how bills become law through an immersive two-day mock legislature held at the state Capitol in Oklahoma City.

In its second year, more than 70 students wrote and developed legislation about issues important to them and had the opportunity to present and lobby their bills in committees and on the floor of the Oklahoma House of Representatives, where they elected from among themselves a governor, speaker of the House and floor leader to direct floor sessions both days.

Throughout the camp, students heard from lawmakers and leaders, including Lt. Gov. Matt Pinnell, Oklahoma House Speaker Pro Tempore Kyle Hilbert and more.



FFA Communications Conference

Who: FFA chapter officers

What: Communications bootcamp

When: July 25, 2023

The FFA Communications Conference brings together FFA members across the state every summer to learn how to effectively share their chapter activities and stories throughout the school year.

Students attending the FFA Communications Conference rotate through four workshops where they expand their skills in writing, graphic design, social media and photography. Each workshop is taught by an industry professional and involves hands-on learning as students write press releases, design graphics and create social media content in each room.

More than 120 students attended the 2023 conference in Edmond, where they heard from several speakers, including News9's Storme Jones, OKFB President Rodd Moesel and State FFA Advisor Scott Nemecek.









OKFB hosts farmhand Olympics at Oklahoma State Fair

amilies, students and friends all tried their hand at a variety of agriculture-themed activities as part of Oklahoma Farm Bureau's inaugural farmhand Olympics event at the Oklahoma State Fair Saturday, Sept. 16 from 6 - 8 p.m.

OKFB sponsored the evening of free fun for fairgoers with a relay-style competition in which teams of four competed against fellow teams for the quickest run through four activities.

The four relay stations were finding a penny in a pile of hay, escorting a balloon around a course simulating working with a show pig, roping a calf dummy and simulated cow milking.

Every team that participated received either a Farm Bureau lanyard or an OKFB backpack bag.

OKFB also provided a hay-tossing station where contestants tried their hand at throwing a small square bale over a pole at various heights. While a few bales were broken, many laughs were shared as fairgoers tried a variety of methods to launch the bale.

OKFB also held the farmhand Olympics relay event for students participating in the OKFB Young Farmers & Ranchers State Fair Livestock Judging contest on Thursday, Sept. 21. Winning teams in both junior and senior divisions won a \$500 cash prize for their FFA chapter or 4-H club.



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OKFB members gather for **Generation Bridge** summer series

klahoma Farm Bureau members ages 35 to 55 gathered for three **OKFB** Generation Bridge summer series events around the state.

Mid-career agriculturalists gathered at The Vintage Steakhouse in Morrison on July 18 for an evening of fun and fellowship. On July 25, members traveled to Elk City for family fun at Mountain Man Axe Throwing. The final event brought Farm Bureau members together for an evening at the ballpark at OKC Dodgers Stadium on Aug. 3.

OKFB's Generation Bridge program provides opportunities for Farm Bureau ages 35 to 55 to gather, fellowship and grow together.









Congresswoman Stephanie Bice visits with Farm Bureau members at the OKFB home office in Oklahoma City Tuesday, Aug. 29.



Grady County Farm Bureau member Ron Justice (left) chats with Rep. Stephanie Bice during her visit to the OKFB home office.

OKFB members receive congressional update from Congresswoman Stephanie Bice

arm Bureau members from Oklahoma's Fifth Congressional District had the opportunity to hear a congressional update from Rep. Stephanie Bice on Tuesday, Aug. 29 at the Oklahoma Farm Bureau home office in Oklahoma City.

Bice shared with members the latest activity in Washington, D.C. and discussed several of her priority focus areas, including the 2023 farm bill, budget appropriations and the FAA reauthorization.

She also visited with Farm Bureau members about the crisis at the southern border, including the prevalence of drug abuse and human trafficking. Bice explained the challenges in finding border agents and noted that several states, including Oklahoma, have sent national guard troops in an effort to assist local authorities.

Bice also spoke about her work to reduce overreach in federal rulemaking, including the passage of the REINS Act, which will require major new rules be approved by both the House and Senate.

Bice addressed current proposed regulations on household appliances like gas stoves and ceiling fans, noting the excessive overreach ultimately leaves Americans with fewer choices.

She also expressed her opposition to eliminating gas- and diesel-powered

vehicles, noting the potential effect the move would have on the agriculture industry while voicing her concern about the short lifespan of electric car batteries. Bice stated electric car batteries only last 10 to 15 years, while the average age of a car in the United States is 12 years.

Bice also touched on foreign policy, biotechnology and domestic energy independence.



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OKFB YF&R members gather for summer conference in **Oklahoma City**

ore than 50 Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers members gathered in Oklahoma City for the YF&R Summer Conference July 28-30.

Farm Bureau members ages 18 to 35 toured local agricultural facilities, competed in a discussion meet and networked with fellow farmers and ranchers during the three-day event.

Kelsey and Morgan Pfeiffer of Pfeiffer Farms shared their unique goat operation on the first stop of the tour. Pfeiffer Angus Farms - John and Gaye Pfeiffer - shared the importance of members' involvement.

Members visited Beck's Farm Equipment and Lazy E Arena in Guthrie before an evening of fun at Top Golf. YF&R Chair Alisen Anderson shared a devotion on Sunday morning.

Four YF&R members competed in the discussion meet - a committeestyle discussion - to improve their

ability to offer constructive input, cooperation and communication while analyzing agricultural problems and developing solutions.

Okmulgee County Farm Bureau member Leslie Lewis was named the winner after two rounds. She will be awarded her prizes at the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Convention in November and will compete at the 2024 American Farm Bureau Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah.





Above | Young Farmers & Ranchers committee member Jacob Beck loads his shotgun at a shooting station during the YF&R Shotgun Shoot Saturday, Aug. 27, near Guthrie.



Above | First place open division team Western Oklahoma State College



Above | First place junior division team Sand Springs

OKFB YF&R Shotgun Shoot raises more than \$15,000 for OKFB Foundation for Ag

he Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers raised \$15,595 for the OKFB Foundation for Agriculture during the 2023 YF&R Shotgun Shoot Fundraiser Saturday, Aug. 27, at Silverleaf Shotgun Sports near Guthrie.

A total of 34 teams with 136 shooters participated in the sporting-clays-style tournament across 12 stations that tested their skills mimicking real-world hunting scenarios.

Awards were given to top shooters in high school and open divisions.

The Western Oklahoma State College shooting sports team won the open competition, with team member Dillon Lopez earning the competition's top shooter award. The Sand Springs competitive shooting team won the high school division.

The winning team in the open division received \$400 for each shooter, a shotgun shell pouch and OKFB hats. The winning high school division team won shotgun shell pouches and ammunition.

Proceeds from the event were donated to the OKFB Foundation for

Agriculture, which supports Oklahoma's farming and ranching community through philanthropic efforts while providing educational resources and opportunities to increase awareness and knowledge of Oklahoma agriculture.

Title sponsors for the event were Beck's Farm Equipment, Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma, Jackson County Farm Bureau, John Vance Fleet Services, Oklahoma Farm Bureau Insurance and Vermeer.



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Twelve Oklahoma teachers receive accurate agriculture books through OKFB's Bushels for Books

welve Oklahoma teachers were recently selected to receive a bushel basket of accurate agriculture books as part of Oklahoma Farm Bureau's Bushels for Books program.

A collaboration between the OKFB Foundation for Agriculture and the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee. Bushels for Books is designed to spread agriculture literacy to children around the state through providing a selection of books that accurately portray the agriculture industry.

"As family farmers and ranchers, we are passionate about teaching others how their food gets to the dinner table," said Mignon Bolay, OKFB WLC

chair. "We greatly appreciate these educators who have made agriculture literacy a part of their curriculum."

The program is open to Pre-K through eighth-grade teachers and librarians in Oklahoma, and each teacher who applies receives an accurate agriculture book for participating.

"With less than 2% of the population involved in production agriculture, it is more important than ever that children understand where their food comes from," said David VonTungeln. **OKFB** Foundation for Agriculture president. "We hope these books provide a fun learning opportunity for our young people around the state."

2023 Bushels for **Books recipients**

Favla Rav

Guymon Public Library

Crystal Ostermann

Frederick Public Schools

Linda Deason

Windsor Hills Elementary

Anita Hawkins

Rose Witcher Learning Center

Ashley Duval

Coleman Public Schools

Tracie Garrison

Tuskahoma Public Schools

Audie Smith

Haworth Public Schools

Bobbie Hummingbird

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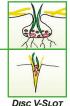
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Our Commitment to Safeguarding Your Privacy

This Joint Privacy Notice is provided to inform you of our practices and procedures regarding the sharing of nonpublic personal information. Nonpublic personal information means personally identifiable financial information about you, your family, or your household that we may obtain directly from you, that we may obtain as a result of our business dealings with you, or that we may obtain from any other source, and not publicly available.

We do not engage in the practice of disclosing your nonpublic personal information to nonaffiliated third parties other than, as necessary, to provide quality insurance services. For example, we do not sell your name, address, or telephone number to telemarketers or to direct mail solicitors. We do not engage in "listselling," and we do not offer your nonpublic personal information to publishing houses, retailers, or coupon companies. Because federal and state laws, regulations, and business practices can change at any time, we may revise this Joint Privacy Notice accordingly.

Information We May Collect & Use

During the course of reviewing your application for insurance coverage and deciding whether or not to underwrite the insurance policy for which you have applied, and, if we issue a policy for you, during the course of providing services to you as required by the policy, we collect and evaluate information from the following sources:

- Information we receive from you on applications or other forms;
- Information about your transactions with us, our affiliates, or others;
- Information we receive from consumer reporting agencies; and
- Information we receive from state or federal agencies.

It is important for us to collect and use this information to properly provide, administer, and perform services on your behalf. We could not provide optimum service to you without collecting and using this information.

Information We May Disclose

We regard all of your nonpublic information as confidential. Therefore, we do not disclose any nonpublic personal information to anyone except as permitted by law.

In the course of conducting our business dealings, we may disclose to other parties certain information we have about you. These disclosures are only made in accordance with applicable laws, and may include providers, consultants and regulatory or

governmental authorities. Furthermore, certain disclosures of information will be made to our personnel authorized to have access to your nonpublic personal information for the purpose of administering your business and providing services to you.

We may disclose the following categories of information to companies that perform services on our behalf or to other financial institutions with which we have joint marketing agreements:

- Information we received from you on applications or other forms, such as your name, address, social security number, county Farm Bureau membership number, assets, income, beneficiaries:
- Information about your transactions with us, our affiliates, or others, such as your policy coverage, premium, loss history, and payment history; and
- Information we receive from a consumer reporting agency, such as your creditworthiness and credit history.

We may disclose nonpublic personal information about you to the following types of third parties:

- Financial service providers, such as life insurers, automobile insurers, mortgage bankers, securities broker-dealers, and insurance agents;
- Nonfinancial companies, such as retailers, direct marketers, airlines, and publishers;
- Others, such as nonprofit organizations.

These entities with which we share personal information are required to maintain the confidentiality of that information. We do not authorize these parties to use or disclose your personal information for any purpose other than for the express purpose of performing work on our behalf or as required or permitted by law.

How We Maintain the Confidentiality & Security of Your Information

We carefully restrict access to nonpublic personal information to our employees, our independent contractor insurance agents, our service contract providers, and our affiliates and subsidiaries. The right of our employees, our independent contractor insurance agents, our service contract providers, and our affiliates and subsidiaries to further disclose and use the information is limited by our employee handbook, agent's contract, applicable law, and nondisclosure agreements where appropriate. We maintain physical electronic and procedural safeguards that comply with federal and state law to guard your nonpublic personal information.

Your Opt-Out Right

We reserve the right to disclose nonpublic personal information to a nonaffiliated third party. However, if you prefer that we do not disclose nonpublic personal information about you to nonaffiliated third parties, you may opt out of those disclosures, that is, you may direct us not to make those disclosures

(information sharing which is permitted by law includes sharing information with our affiliates and nonaffiliates about our transactions or experiences with you for business, administrative, and other legal purposes).

If you wish to opt-out of disclosures to nonaffiliated third parties, you may mail or fax the attached Opt-Out Notice to us.

Your opt-out form must reach us within 30 days of your receipt of our Joint Privacy Notice. Your opt-out request will take effect on the 7th day following receipt of your request, to allow for notification to all applicable affiliated or nonaffiliated third parties. If you share your account with another person, either of you may opt-out of disclosures (other than disclosures permitted by law) for both of you. Please indicate on the Opt-Out Notice form if you are opting-out for one or both of you.

Conclusion

If you have any questions or comments concerning this Joint Privacy Notice or our privacy standards and procedures, please write us at Post Office Box 53332, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73152-3332. Our functional regulator is the State of Oklahoma, Department of Insurance. If we cannot resolve your concerns or answer your questions, feel free to contact our regulator. This Joint Privacy Notice describes our privacy policy and practices in accordance with the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, 15 USC §6801, et seq., and with Oklahoma laws and regulations.

OPT-OUT NOTICE

I prefer that you do not disclose nonpublic personal information about me to nonaffiliated third parties (other than disclosures permitted by law, which include sharing information with our affiliates & Inonaffiliates about our transactions or experiences with you for business, administrative, and other legal purposes). In order for an opt-out notice to be valid, all *required information must be completed.

Clip & mail this form to: Oklahoma Farm Bureau Insurance, c/o Opt-Out Notice P.O. Box 53332, Oklahoma City, OK 73152-3332 Fax Number: 405-523-2581

*Name:
*Phone Number:
*Address:
*City:
*Email:
*Policy Number:
*Membership Number:

All Around Oklahoma

Farm Bureau news, events and programs from around Oklahoma

Join OKFB for third-annual Evening of Impact fundraising dinner

Oklahoma Farm Bureau will host the third-annual fundraising dinner for the OKFB Ag PAC, the Evening of Impact.

The 2023 event will be held **Saturday, Dec. 9**, at the Tulsa Mayo Hotel's parlor room from 6 to 9 p.m. Tickets are available for \$250 per person benefitting the OKFB Ag PAC.

The dinner will feature Ray Starling, author of the book "Farmers vs. Foodies: A Look at the Outside Forces Forging the Future of Farming and Food."

The dinner highlights the important role OKFB's political action plays in supporting elected officials who understand the important role agriculture and rural communities play for residents all across Oklahoma.

OKFB Foundation for Agriculture raises more than \$9,000 for Hawaii wildfire relief

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture, together with Farm Bureau members and rural Oklahomans, donated \$9,400 to the Hawaii Farm Bureau Foundation for wildfire relief efforts after devastating fires ravaged parts of Maui and the Big Island.

OKFB members and the public donated \$4,700 to the relief efforts, which the foundation matched dollar-for-dollar.

The funds will be used by the Hawaii Farm Bureau Foundation to help agricultural producers who were impacted by the catastrophic fires repair fences and clean up pastures, cropland, structures and equipment as the state works to rebuild from the wildfires.

OSU to host private applicators CEU class in December

Oklahoma State University will host their final private pesticide applicators' continuing education unit class on **Tuesday, Dec. 12**, during two sessions from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Pauls Valley.

The CEUs qualify for Category 1A and 10, and in-person attendance is required to receive the credit. For more information, visit okfb.news/Dec23CEU.

OKFB communications division wins AFBF award

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau communications division received a 2023 American Farm Bureau Communications Award for Best Social Media Video in OKFB's membership category. The video featured strawberry harvest near Bluejacket, reaching more than 250,000 Facebook users.

Westwood rejoins OKFB public policy division

Kinsey Westwood has returned to Oklahoma Farm Bureau as a senior public policy consultant in the public policy division.

Westwood will help implement OKFB's grassroots advocacy efforts to support Oklahoma's agriculture community. She will assist the organization's public policy efforts on the state and national levels in addition to planning and implementing advocacy-related programs.

Westwood returns to OKFB where she worked in the public policy division from 2011 to 2012, after a wide and varied career in the public policy sphere. She worked most recently at the State Chamber of Oklahoma where she served as vice president of government affairs.

Westwood is a graduate of Oklahoma State University with bachelor's and master's degrees in agricultural communications. She earned her Juris Doctor degree from the University of Oklahoma College of Law.

Okmulgee County Farm Bureau YF&R member wins state discussion meet

Okmulgee County Farm Bureau member Leslie Lewis was named the winner of the 2023 Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers discussion meet competitive event.

Lewis and three other YF&R members competed in two rounds of competition at the OKFB state YF&R conference held in July. The event simulates a panel discussion where participants are judged on their ability to foster discussion and share ideas with fellow Farm Bureau members.

As the event winner, Lewis will represent OKFB at the 2024 American Farm Bureau Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah.





OKFB Foundation for Agriculture rifle raffle tickets available for \$20 donation

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture is selling raffle tickets for a chance to win a Weatherby Vanguard S2 Sporter rifle chambered in 6.5 Creedmoor, valued at \$929

Tickets are available for a donation of \$20 each and can be purchased from OKFB field representatives or by contacting foundation Director Holly Carroll at (405) 523-2300.

The drawing for the rifle will take place at the OKFB annual meeting in Oklahoma City in early November. Ticket holders do not have to be present to win. By purchasing a ticket, the ticket holder is bound to the terms and conditions of the drawing, which are available on the reverse side of each ticket stub. The ticket purchase price is not tax deductible.

Funds raised from the raffle will support the foundation's ongoing educational and philanthropic efforts to support the agriculture community and rural Oklahoma.

OKFB welcomes Lusk as OSU's new vice president and dean of agriculture

Dr. Jayson Lusk was recently named Oklahoma State University's new vice president and dean of OSU agriculture.

OKFB President Rodd Moesel told OSU's Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources that in his new position, Lusk will play a crucial role in continuing OSU's critically important agriculture research functions.

"The opportunity for ag programs to grow on the research side is very significant," Moesel said. "Research defines the future of ag commodities and helps identify new crops and processing methods. We already have more patents and royalty income for OSU than from any other college, but there's still room to grow."

Collegiate Farm **Bureau chapters** prepare for events and activities as 2023 school year begins

Collegiate Farm Bureau members at five Oklahoma colleges and universities are kicking off another year of activities and programs.

Members of Oklahoma State University's Collegiate Farm Bureau chapter represented Farm Bureau and their collegiate chapter at the university's Roundup event on Wednesday, August 30.

Schools with active Collegiate Farm Bureau chapters are OSU, Northwestern Oklahoma State, Northeastern Oklahoma A&M. Southwestern Oklahoma State and Panhandle State.



OKFB WLC awards four **Nurse's Training Scholarships**

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee recently awarded three scholarships to students pursuing a degree in nursing.

The scholarships were awarded to Jadin Wilkinson of Buffalo. Victoria Geralds of Mangum and Lavender Cisneros of Watonga.

The scholarship is awarded to students attending an accredited college, university or trade school, and who are Oklahoma Farm Bureau members or a member of a Farm Bureau-member family.

"Our Women's Leadership committee is proud to help these three Farm Bureau members earn their nursing degrees," said Mignon Bolay, OKFB WLC chair. "Our Farm Bureau members understand how important it is to have access to quality healthcare for all Oklahomans, and we are proud of our members who serve their fellow Oklahomans in clinics and hospitals around our state."

OKFB members kick off policy development season with August Area Meetings

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members gathered for a series of 11 August Area Meetings across the state to discuss issues, challenges and opportunities facing agriculture and rural Oklahoma in preparation for the organization's grassroots policy development process.

More than 400 Farm Bureau members and guests attended the series of meetings where top issues surfaced by OKFB members included the upcoming farm bill, water rights and water infrastructure, the state's marijuana industry and more.

The ideas Farm Bureau members discussed will form the basis of resolutions that will be submitted at the county level and will be discussed and voted on at the county and state levels for possible inclusion in OKFB's 2024 policy book.





Above An elderberry plant and fruit (inset)

Growing fruits in Oklahoma isn't without risk

By Trisha Gedon

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service

any gardeners across the state are successful with growing cucumbers, zucchini and broccoli. Growing fruit, while rewarding, can pose a challenge even to the seasoned gardener.

Tree fruits such as apples, peaches, plums, cherries and pears, along with blackberries, raspberries, blueberries, grapes and strawberries as small fruits certainly are tasty, but Oklahoma soils and climate are not the most ideal for growing some of these popular species, said David Hillock, Oklahoma State University Extension consumer horticulturist.

"Our heavy soil often leads to poor root development, especially on peach and cherry trees," Hillock said. "The higher pH of the soil in central and western Oklahoma makes it difficult to grow blueberries. Humidity creates the perfect environment for diseases, which can add even more stress to the plant."

Growing fruits in Oklahoma is not impossible given the right circumstances and plant selection. Make plant selections based on the region in which you live. Diseaseresistant cultivars always should be considered to reduce the risk of disease infection. Do not forget about proper site selection, too.

Hillock said of all the common fruit. apples, pears, blackberries and some grapes seem to do the best in

Oklahoma's growing conditions with proper care.

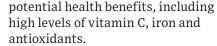
"Gardeners will still see some disease issues with apples and pears, but they tend to tolerate the climate and fluctuating temperatures in the spring. Apples and pears also do better with Oklahoma's soil conditions than do cherries, plums and peaches."

For those gardeners who tend to be adventurous, consider trying to grow some of the lesser-known fruits such as the native elderberry, sand plum, pawpaw and the jujube, also known as the Chinese date. These selections are attractive ornamentals in the landscape and do double-duty by producing edible fruit.

Sand plums, also known as Chickasaw plum, Cherokee plum or Sandhill plum, are native to Oklahoma. This delicious fruit often is used to make jams, jellies and wine. Laverne, Oklahoma, a small town in northwest Oklahoma, has been designated as the Sand Plum Capital of the state.

"Sand plum bushes also provide great cover for native bird species," he said.

Elderberries are native to Oklahoma and other parts of North America. The fruit of this lesser-known crop is often harvested from the wild and has a variety of uses, including making jams, jellies, pies, juice and wine. Elderberries have significant



fruit (inset)

Above | A Pawpaw tree and

Pawpaw is a fruit tree with a unique, tropical-looking fruit that resembles mangos, but has the flavor of a banana. Native to eastern Oklahoma, the Pawpaw tree is accustomed to the humidity. Hillock said it is typically found in low, bottom woods, wooded slopes, ravines and along streams.

The jujube, or Chinese date, is another option that not only looks good in the landscape but also provides edible fruit. It's a small to medium-sized tree with shiny green foliage in the summer that turns yellow in the fall. It normally grows anywhere from 15 feet to 30 feet tall.

"This naturally drooping tree is graceful, and because of its thorny branches that grow in a zig-zag pattern, adds a lot of visual interest in the landscape," Hillock said. "Commonly grown cultivars include Li and Lang. The tree yields fruits that are round to elongated and mature from green to red. The fruits feature a crisp flesh similar to an apple. Following maturation, the red/reddish brown fruits begin to wrinkle and take on the appearance of a date."

These lesser-known fruits can be a change of pace for gardeners and can be grown with careful planning and choosing the right fruit varieties.



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