

Oklahoma

Country



The Magazine of the
Oklahoma Farm Bureau
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Living legacies

Farm and ranch families share their passion and their purpose as they strive to carry on our state's best traditions.

Core values

Getting to know Congressman Kevin Hern

A new home online

OKFB's updated website has more to enjoy

Gathering to give

Reviewing OKFB's 78th annual meeting



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Oklahoma *Country*

Volume 73 No. 1
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EDITORIAL TEAM

Dustin Mielke

Vice President of Communications and Public Relations

Hannah Davis

Director of Media Relations

Brianne Schwabauer

Publications Specialist

Oklahoma Country is published four times per year in January, April, July and October by Oklahoma Farm Bureau, 2501 N. Stiles, Oklahoma City, OK 73105-3126, Telephone: (405) 523-2300.

Postmaster: Send address corrections to:
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ON THE COVER

Brian and Sarah Woods of Stephens County are one of nine families honored with the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee's Farm & Ranch Family Recognition. Read more on page 16. Photo by Dustin Mielke.

HIDDEN NUMBER WORTH \$50

One member family's Oklahoma Farm Bureau membership number is hidden somewhere in this issue of *Oklahoma Country* and could earn that member family \$50. To claim the cash prize, the member family must find its own hidden membership number and contact Brianne Schwabauer before the last day of the month, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at (405) 523-2325.

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

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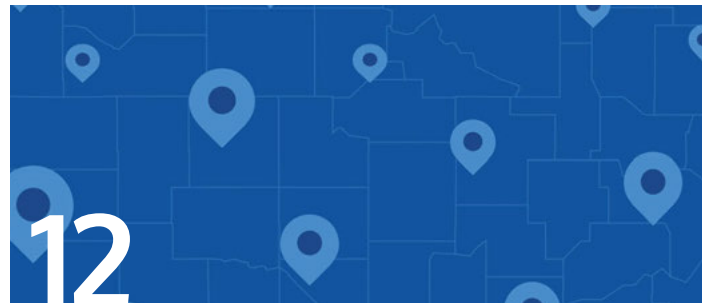
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Rural Oklahoma Counts!

As a new decade begins, the 2020 Census will have wide-sweeping implications on the citizens of rural Oklahoma from distribution of federal dollars to legislative representation.



Core Values

By Brianne Schwabauer

With a strong will to work from a young age, the lessons Rep. Kevin Hern learned on the farm were preparing him for a career he never could have imagined.



Lasting Legacies

Nine Oklahoma Farm Bureau farm and ranch families are recognized by the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee for their commitment to upholding the rural way of life.



Gathering. Growing. Giving.

A recap of award results, updated grassroots policy and more from OKFB's 78th Annual Meeting held Nov. 8-10, 2019, in Oklahoma City.



PRESIDENTIALLY SPEAKING

Census 2020: Counting our communities, forging our future

By Rodd Moesel

President, Oklahoma Farm Bureau & Affiliated Companies

Rural Oklahoma matters to Oklahoma Farm Bureau members.

It is where our family farmers and ranchers grow and raise food for our fellow Oklahomans and the world. It is where the values that drive the Oklahoma Standard are instilled in the next generation. It is where our state's residents stay connected to the land and the way of life that has built our state for the past century.

Because rural Oklahoma matters, it is time for our state's rural residents to proudly stand up and be counted in the 2020 Census.

The importance of a full and accurate count of our rural areas has never been greater. On the line are billions of dollars of federal funding and aid that will be distributed over the next 10 years, based on population. At stake is rural representation at various levels of government. Up for grabs are economic development opportunities, which often hinge upon census data as a determining factor. The impact is unmistakable: the results of the 2020 Census will play a large role in shaping the landscape for our rural communities in the decade to come.

For many of our Farm Bureau members, this will not be the first census they have participated in. However, with some of the changes in the way the 2020 Census will be conducted, the process will be different from previous counts. This is especially true in parts of rural Oklahoma where rural route addresses and P.O. boxes are a way of life.

The 2020 Census will be the first that will depend primarily upon online census submissions. Beginning in March, postcards will be mailed inviting households to complete the 2020 Census online. While some households will receive a paper questionnaire and phone responses will be accepted, the big push will be to complete the census online. Reminder postcards and follow-up paper questionnaires will be sent throughout March and April before census takers begin canvassing our state.

Our challenge as Farm Bureau members is to not only respond to the 2020 census ourselves, but also to ensure that our friends and neighbors complete the census. With an online push in 2020, we realize that an internet-based questionnaire may present some challenges to our rural residents. Of course, out in the Oklahoma countryside, not every farm, ranch or homestead is easily found by census workers. There will be obstacles in the path to achieving a full count, but OKFB is committed to help rural Oklahoma be fully and accurately counted.

“It is our time to stand up and be counted – because rural Oklahoma matters.

— Rodd Moesel

With the stakes as high as they are for the 2020 Census, it is imperative that we step up and engage in our local communities. From talking to our friends and neighbors when we see them around town to working with fellow civic groups to spread the word, this

is the time for our proven Farm Bureau grassroots engagement to shine. When we have the opportunity to participate in something as important as the census, we need to step up and be involved.

It is not enough for our rural leaders to merely stand and be counted – it is imperative that we also encourage our fellow rural Oklahomans to complete their 2020 Census questionnaire, no matter if it is online, by mail or when a census worker stops by.

By participating in the 2020 Census and helping spread the word to our friends and neighbors, rural Oklahoma will continue to have a strong impact on our state.

It is our time to stand up and be counted – because rural Oklahoma matters. 

BECOME **INVOLVED** WITH OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU IN **2020**

February

State Leadership Conference

Feb. 17-18 | Oklahoma City

YF&R Legislative Day

Feb. 17-18 | Oklahoma City

Farm Bureau Week

Feb. 17-21 | Oklahoma City

Farm City Festival

Feb. 26 | Oklahoma City

March

AFBF Young Farmers and Ranchers Conference

March 13-16 | Louisville, KY

Congressional Action Tour

March 23-27 | Washington, D.C.

April

YF&R District Scholarship Deadline

April 2 | Oklahoma City

Ag Day at the Capitol

April 14 | Oklahoma City

Oklahoma State FFA Convention

April 28-29 | Oklahoma City

May

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Commodity Tour

May 6-8 | TBD

July

Nurse's Scholarship Application Deadline

July 1 | Oklahoma City

YF&R Summer Conference

July 10-12 | Oklahoma City

OSU Big Three Fields Days

July 14-16 | Stillwater

YF&R State High School Discussion Meet

July 14 | Stillwater

August

State Farm and Ranch Family Recognition Award Deadline

Aug. 3 | Oklahoma City

YF&R Shotgun Shoot

Aug. 29 | Location TBD

September

YF&R State Fair Livestock Judging Contest

Sept. 17 | Oklahoma City

October

YF&R Achievement Award Deadline

Oct. 1 | Oklahoma City

YF&R Excellence in Agriculture Award Deadline

Oct. 1 | Oklahoma City

Women's Leadership Committee Fall Conference

Oct. 2-3 | TBD

State Resolutions Due to Home Office

Oct. 9 | Oklahoma City

Other Awards Deadline

Oct. 9 | Oklahoma City

State Resolutions Meeting

Oct. 14-15 | Oklahoma City

November

OKFB Annual Meeting

Nov. 5-8 | Norman

**Dates are subject to change and events may be added throughout the year. Visit okfarmbureau.org for the most up-to-date details.*



INSURANCE MATTERS

Onward and upward

By Gary Buckner
Executive Vice President and General Manager,
Oklahoma Farm Bureau Insurance

I am excited to report that 2019 proved to be a great year for Oklahoma Farm Bureau Insurance in many ways. We are projected to finish the year strong, albeit we weathered late storms. Ultimately, OKFB Insurance should close 2019 out with an increase in operating capital. I would like to take a moment to share with you some of the past year's achievements.


During the first quarter of 2019, we had positive profitability and growth in certain product lines. This is always encouraging before storm season. One of our biggest "atta boys"

came in February when A.M. Best, a national credit rating service organization that specializes in insurance, upgraded our financial strength rating from a B+ to a B++. This is the third time in four years that we have received a financial strength rating increase from A.M. Best. Secondly, OKFB Insurance is the only company in the country that has received three rating increases in less than 10 years. This accomplishment could not have been done without the hard work of all our employees and agents. Our service, integrity and experience has proved to not only Oklahomans but to the nation that we are among the best. We do not do what we do for accolades, but I hope you are as proud for your company as I am!

We did have a series of storms across our state during the third quarter, but ultimately, I believe this was a quieter year than some. Our claims department continued to highlight why OKFB Insurance is the best. Our adjustors and employees worked many of the claims within days of storm damage as OKFB Insurance continues to set a standard in customer service.

I am also excited to announce that we are launching a new product to our insurance services. It is called Business Owners Policy or "BOP." This product will provide more added benefits and protection for smaller businesses over and above some of our current commercial policies. We are still in the process of training our agents on the product, but we are excited to launch this

product in 2020. This will be the first new insurance product introduced to OKFB Insurance in more than 30 years.

With the holidays behind us, we look to a fresh start to a year that I am confident will be full of many more great accomplishments. 

“Our service, integrity and experience has proved to not only Oklahoma, but to the nation, that we are among the best.”

— Gary Buckner

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Oklahoma Farm Bureau's Legislative Preview: Our priorities for the 2020 Oklahoma Legislative Session

With a new governor, a new administration and many new faces in the state Legislature, 2019 was filled with excitement and optimism around what seemed like the beginning of a new era in Oklahoma. A number of new ideas on agriculture and rural issues were considered by the state Legislature, but many were put on hold for further discussion. As lawmakers return to 23rd and Lincoln in February, Oklahoma Farm Bureau expects to build upon last year's momentum on many of the organization's priorities including property taxes, rural health care, rural broadband and Extension funding.

Property Taxes

Over the past few years, the state Legislature increasingly has focused on various proposals to expand the use of ad valorem taxes in Oklahoma. Last year brought a push to create municipal public safety protection districts funded by ad valorem taxes. This year, cities and counties are both expected to aggressively promote legislation that would allow them to levy new ad valorem taxes.

As an organization of landowners, Farm Bureau members are disproportionately affected by increases in ad valorem taxes. Though Farm Bureau members value local control, the livelihoods of farmers and ranchers undoubtedly will be impacted by increases in ad valorem taxes – especially as they continue to deal with the effects of a struggling farm economy. Unlike sales taxes or income taxes, ad valorem taxes are due each and every year – whether a profit is made or not. When a farmer loses an entire crop to a wildfire or flood, ad valorem taxes are still due. When commodity prices dramatically weaken and production costs skyrocket, ad valorem taxes are still due.

OKFB will continue to be engaged in these discussions to make sure the interests of landowners, especially farmers and ranchers, are protected.

County zoning authority

Under the current legal framework in Oklahoma, counties have limited authority to create zoning rules or regulations. Yet some areas of the state have proposed to solve local problems through a countywide ordinance. OKFB expects legislation to be proposed this year to grant counties the authority to zone unincorporated areas.

A significant change to current law, Farm Bureau members are concerned this legislation would open the door for a vast expansion in government jurisdiction and potentially dangerous unintended consequences. Rural areas must not become a patchwork of burdensome rules and regulations. OKFB will work to ensure farmers and ranchers remain free to care for their land within the bounds of state laws and regulations.

Rural health care

Access to quality and affordable health care is crucial to securing the future of the rural way of life. But it is no secret that access to health care in rural Oklahoma is lacking. All 77 Oklahoma counties have areas with a shortage in primary care health care professionals, while 61 entire counties are considered primary care professional shortage areas. Many rural communities have lost their local or regional hospitals. Farmers and ranchers in some cases are forced to travel hundreds of miles to receive basic medical services.

Last year, OKFB helped advocate for legislation that would modernize regulations for nurse practitioners and certified registered nurse anesthetists practicing in rural areas, but the measures ultimately were unsuccessful. Legislation also was considered that would provide tax incentives to physicians who practice in rural areas. Because rural health care continues to be a priority for many Farm Bureau members, OKFB will stay involved and engaged in the conversations and consider any ideas to improve the quality of life in rural Oklahoma.

Rural broadband

As the calendar turns to the year 2020, a staggering 24% of Oklahomans lack access to high-speed internet, while nearly one-third of Oklahomans have fewer than two providers to choose from, according to a recent report by the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. In an era when internet access is nearly essential to everyday life, rural Oklahomans are being left behind because of a lack of affordable, reliable access to broadband.

Agricultural producers need access to high-speed internet to manage and operate a successful business, just like small businesses in urban and suburban communities. Broadband also is key to allowing farmers and ranchers to follow commodity markets, communicate with their customers and gain access to new markets around the world. OKFB will be looking to the state Legislature to consider ideas and options to bring affordable high-speed internet to all rural Oklahomans.

Roads and bridges


From shipping food and fiber across the nation and world to driving kids to school, dependable roads are vital to quality of life in rural Oklahoma. Last year, lawmakers helped restore funding to the County Improvements for Roads and Bridges Program. Throughout the legislative session, Farm Bureau will encourage the state Legislature to look for opportunities to invest in bettering county roads and bridges.

Nuisance animals

Many OKFB members have voiced concern about increasing amounts of damage to property from nuisance animals such as feral hogs, black vultures, white-tailed deer and Canada geese. These species can completely destroy fields, harm livestock and damage equipment.

Yet current state laws and regulations limit the ability of producers to defend their crops, land, equipment and other property. Farmers and ranchers must have the ability to protect their property when it is threatened by one of these species. OKFB will work with legislators and state agencies this year to find ways to free up farmers to protect their property from nuisance animals.

Cooperative Extension

The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service plays a vital role throughout Oklahoma. From providing cutting-edge research for farmers and ranchers to offering leadership development programs through 4-H, Extension is deeply valued by OKFB members. Over the past decade, Extension has faced a \$7 million decline in its state appropriations. Even after lawmakers provided additional dollars to Extension last year, an expansive funding gap still exists due to multiple years of state budget cuts. As always, Farm Bureau will seek to protect and restore funding for county extension offices to prevent consolidation and maintain services. 



To keep up with OKFB's efforts at the state Capitol, make sure to follow updates online at okfarmbureau.org and on the OKFB Facebook and Twitter pages.



Rural Oklahoma COUNTS!

Five things you need to know about the upcoming 2020 Census.

The year 2020 marks the beginning of a new decade, which means it's time for the U.S. Census Bureau to conduct its decennial count of every person living in the United States. The 2020 Census will have wide-sweeping implications for rural Oklahoma from distribution of federal dollars to legislative representation. Read more about the census below and be prepared to make sure rural Oklahoma counts!

1. The census is your opportunity to stand with Oklahoma.

Responding to the census fulfills your civic duty because the count is mandated by the U.S. Constitution. But completing the 2020 Census also is your chance to take pride in being an Oklahoman and take a stand for our great state. A complete and accurate count of our population will provide a snapshot of who we are, where we live and so much more.

2. The census benefits you, your family and your community.

The census provides a critical snapshot of our communities, including our population and where we live. Lawmakers, business owners, researchers and community leaders use the data to provide services, products and support to you and your community. Every year, billions of dollars in federal funding go to hospitals, fire departments, schools, roads and other resources based on census data. The results also

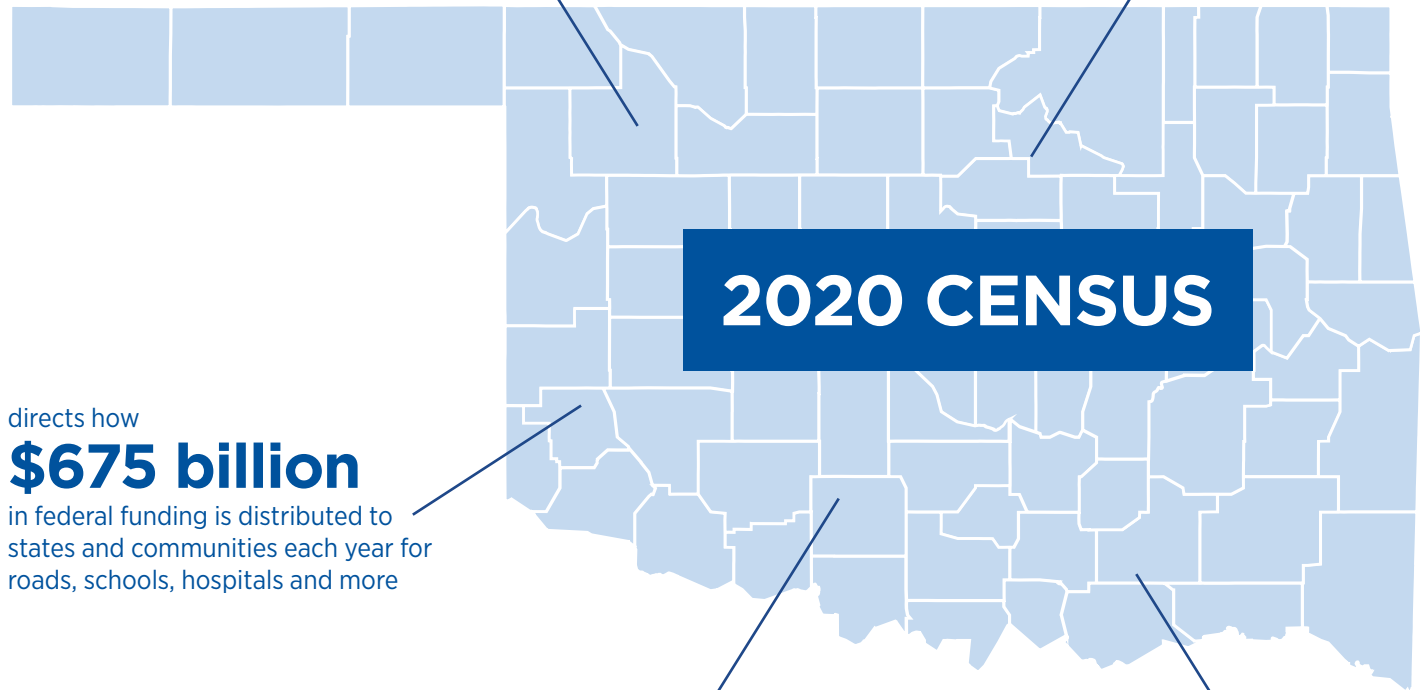
determine the number of seats Oklahoma receives in the U.S. House of Representatives and are used to draw congressional and state legislative districts.

3. Your invitation to participate in the 2020 Census will arrive this spring.

Beginning in mid-March, most households will receive a mailed invitation to respond to the census. Some households, such as those who do not receive mail at their home's physical location, will receive an in-person invitation from a census taker. This year, the Census Bureau will be encouraging responders to complete the census questionnaire online. By April 1, 2020 – also known as Census Day – every home will receive an invitation to participate in the 2020 Census. Throughout April, the Census Bureau will remind those who have not yet completed the census by sending reminder letters and postcards. Census takers will begin visiting homes in May that have not responded to the 2020 Census to ensure everyone is counted.

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annually per person counted



directs how
\$675 billion
in federal funding is distributed to
states and communities each year for
roads, schools, hospitals and more

determines population for
**legislative
districts**


can help bring
**economic
growth**
to rural communities

4. It's quick and easy to complete.

For the first time, you will be able to respond to the census online at 2020Census.gov. Though responding by phone or by mail will still be options, the Census Bureau will be encouraging participants to complete the questionnaire online. The 2020 Census contains only a handful of simple questions including age, sex, race and the number of people living in your home, including children. When completing the census, you will include everyone living in your home on April 1.

5. It's safe and secure.

All of your personal information is kept confidential by law. Under Title 13 of the U.S. Code, the U.S. Census

Bureau cannot release any information that identifies you personally. Your information is used by the Census Bureau for statistical purposes only, such as helping to inform decisions for new hospitals, schools and roads. The census will never ask for your Social Security number, bank or credit card numbers, money or donations, or anything related to political parties. Whether you respond online, by phone, by mail or if a census employee comes to your door, your information is collected, transmitted and kept secure throughout the process. 

**To learn more about the 2020 Census,
visit www.okfarmbureau.org/census.**

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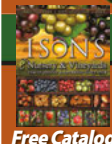
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Lasting . *Legacies*

The farm and ranch families of Oklahoma Farm Bureau



Photos and stories by Dustin Mielke, Hannah Davis and Brianne Schwabauer

Rural Oklahoma is teeming with life. To a casual observer traversing our state's rural highways, roads and paths, there may not be much activity visible from the road on any given day. But rest assured, there's a veritable buzz of activity happening on farms and ranches as the rhythms and cycles of nature play out daily.

The Oklahomans responsible for stewarding the ebbs and flows of agricultural life take their responsibility to the land and their livestock seriously. That is why we celebrate outstanding

Oklahoma farm and ranch families.

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee's Farm and Ranch Family Recognition program recognizes nine outstanding agricultural families – one from each OKFB district – who uphold the best traditions of our state's agricultural and rural heritage.

These families help make our rural communities vibrant by taking an active interest and role in towns across our state. They responsibly raise food and fiber for their fellow Oklahomans with an eye on ensuring our natural resources

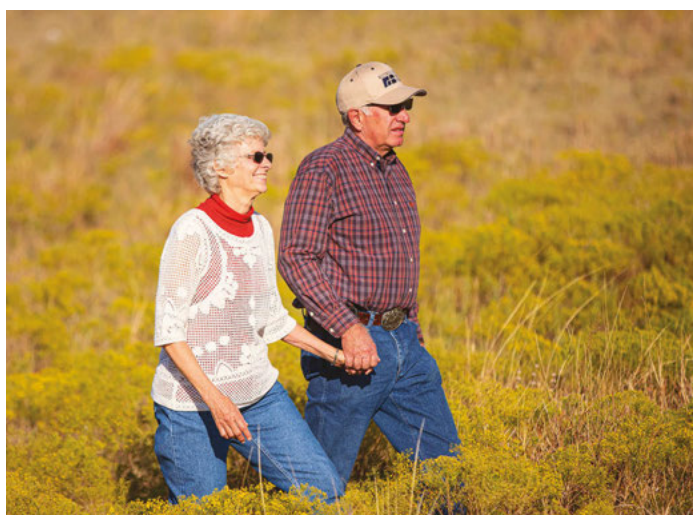
are cared for and can be passed down to future generations. They raise their families in the wide-open spaces of our state, teaching lessons that will enable their children and grandchildren to continue the tradition of shaping our world – regardless of whether they stay on the family operation or take these life lessons past the farm gate.

OKFB is proud to share the stories of these nine farm and ranch families who are the foundation of our state and our organization.



Wesley & Marilyn Crain

District One



As the wind rustles through the western Oklahoma grasses, Wesley and Marilyn Crain of Woodward County walk the same pastures their ancestors did more than 100 years ago.

Running their small herd of cattle on the land together, the Crains have committed most of their acres to growing hay or using it as forage for cattle.

“The place we live on was my grandparents’ place and it’s been in the family for 100 years,” Wesley said. “The place my son lives on was my great-great grandparents’ place, so it’s been in the family over 100 years and it’s just pretty neat to be here this long.”

Wesley established his own cattle herd at just 21, and today the ranch consists mainly of a cow/calf operation, with the calves sold as feeder calves. Together, Wesley and Marilyn make all of the day-to-day decisions as well as share the field work as they plan for the future.

“I’ve been going to a lot of the soil health meetings, and I think there’s some potential there,” Wesley said. “I’d like to try some no-till and some cover crops, and I have been doing a little bit. It’s been more of a minimum-till right now and some cover crops.”

Instilling what it means to work hard into their two boys, Derek and Jared, the Crains are now able to enjoy their young grandchildren as they play on the centennial farm.

“It was a good opportunity for them to be around the cattle and learn,” Marilyn said.

Active within the local community, Wesley serves on the Woodward County Farm Bureau board of directors, the Fargo-Gage Public Schools board of education, the Oklahoma State School Board Association board of directors and the local soil conservation board of directors. Marilyn is active with their local Boy Scouts, where she has served as a leader for many years, and remains active within their local church.

Edward &
Debbie

Crall

District Two



Passionate about improving the land and living off of its bounty, Edward and Debbie Crall have added quite a bit of diversity over the years to their traditional wheat and cattle farm near Thomas.

The Cralls' wheat, rye, grass and cattle farm in Custer County has been diversified over the years with goats, laying hens, vegetables and herbs, and honey bees.

"We moved here Memorial Day of 1979 and started raising wheat, cattle and children, and have been here ever since," Edward said.

With a deep-rooted passion for conservation instilled in him by his grandfather, Edward uses a no-till management system on his cropland along with incorporating cover crops.

His love for caring for the soil led him to accept a job with the Oklahoma Conservation Commission in 2002, where he is able to demonstrate the benefits of conservation to other farmers in the area.

"Working for the conservation commission gave me a chance to preach what I'd been practicing for years," Edward said.

Though Edward initially purchased goats to serve as a natural weed control in his pastures, Debbie soon learned to use the goats' milk to make soap to sell at craft fairs across the state. The soap also led the couple to sell eggs, honey, vegetables and herbs at the Weatherford Farmers Market, providing an opportunity to share their farm with their customers.

"You get a real relationship, and

people know where their food comes from – and – people want that," Debbie said. "They want to know where their food comes from."

From the many raised beds of herbs and vegetables to fresh eggs and honey, the couple enjoys reaping the benefits of the food grown and raised right on their farm.

"I take pride in being able to sit down at a table and say, 'Gee I grew this, I grew this, I grew this,'" Edward said. "And that's what I really enjoy about it most of all."

Sharing the fruits of their labor on the farm with others is exactly how the couple wants to spend their time.

"We just love the farm," Debbie said. "I cannot imagine living anywhere else."



Kyle &
Laura

Widney

District Three

Kyle and Laura Widney stay pretty busy with their fourth-generation wheat and cattle operation, alongside the family's livestock equipment company. But their love for the rural way of life drives them to make time to invest in their local community.

The Widneys farm wheat and Bermudagrass alongside a cow-calf operation in western Oklahoma's Blaine County. The family also owns and operates Flying W Livestock, a livestock equipment company first started by Kyle's father in 1982.

Spending most of his days at Flying W Livestock, Kyle builds custom hydraulic cattle chutes, alleys, horse chutes and other equipment for cattle producers and veterinarians throughout the United States and around the world.

"The good Lord's blessed us," Kyle said. "My dad always said it was the good Lord's business and we're just running it for him, so that's what I'm still doing."

With the family business located near the heart of Watonga, the couple deeply cares about investing in the future of their local community. Laura devoted 30 years to the students of Watonga as an educator, and Kyle continues to mentor local youth who are interested in a career in welding.

"We try to be involved, you know, as much as possible," Kyle said. "With the farm and the business, they keep us busy, but you know there's always time to help others in the community."

That same community is the one that helped raise the couple's two daughters, Ashtyn and Kamry. Though the two girls now have their own lives and careers off the farm as an accountant and a soon-to-be teacher, they continue to carry with them the values they learned being raised in rural Oklahoma.

"Having them grow up in a small, rural community and having a rural family that they can come back to – and I just think them being raised in this kind of community – they've loved it as much as we have for them," Laura said.



Brian
&
Sarah

Woods

District Four



Watching their children play in the wide outdoors amongst an expanse of grass, cattle and sky, Brian and Sarah Woods have their eyes set on the future.

The future the Woods family is planning comes from the daily care of their land and livestock – along with plentiful life lessons for their five young children: Kiersten, Hannah, Grant, Jase and Nash. But Brian and Sarah know the future requires a plan for every situation, as the couple has experienced firsthand the need for careful management and planning to ensure their children have the opportunity to return to the family's land.

On their farm and ranch, which straddles Comanche and Stephens Counties, the Woods family raises cattle, caring for their cow/calf herd and taking on stocker cattle during the winter months. In addition to their livestock, the district four farm and ranch family grows wheat, alfalfa and other forage crops to feed their herd.

The Woods family manages their land and cares for their animals using careful

planning, which includes short- and long-range planning to cover a variety of situations they might encounter farming and ranching in southwest Oklahoma.

"When you have obstacles come up you might make a decision based on emotion, a change in the market or weather," Brian said. "But if I have something written out, and I stay with that, it just helps me through it."

Sarah works in Lawton as a Certified Public Accountant, operating her own accounting and business advising firm. She said the family's careful farm management has a purpose that goes beyond typical business goals.

"As an accountant and business advisor, the goal of any business, whether it be agriculture, real estate, commercial or something else, is to generate a profit," Sarah said. "For us, that profit includes the financial profit so that we can feed and raise our family, but there's also a personal profit through which we gain satisfaction and fulfillment by contributing to the United States food supply in a responsible fashion."

The Woods family's ultimate goal

goes beyond a five-year plan as they look generations into the future for their family.

"That's what it's about for us is the next generation and making sure they understand the beauty of nature and agriculture so that they grow up to instill that in hopefully our grandkids and our great-grandkids," Sarah said.

Brian said that even through all the planning and effort the family invests in their farm and ranch, it is a simple reason that keeps them working the land.

"I always look forward to what we have to do the next day, whether it's going to be hard or hot or cost money, I enjoy every minute of it," Brian said.

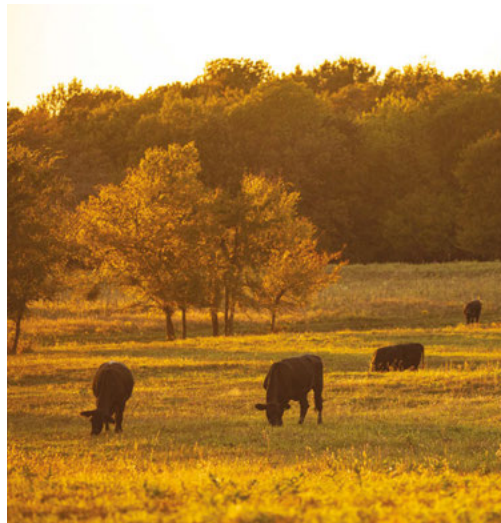
The Woods family is involved in their community in a variety of ways. In 2018, they supported the Lawton Food Bank by donating two steers to the food bank's annual food campaign. Sarah serves as treasurer of the Junior League of Lawton, secretary of the Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women in Comanche County, a member of the Downtown Kiwanis Group and is a member of Class XXX Leadership Lawton-Fort Sill.



Tony & Melissa

Edwards

District Five



As Tony Edwards drives through his Haskell County pastures checking his cattle that graze the hills and valleys the family ranches near Stigler, he is always on the lookout for wildlife. Whether it is the deer that wander the creek bottoms or if it is birds that find their way to the family's ranch, Tony enjoys watching the animals share the green pastures with his cattle.

It is no accident that wildlife crisscross and laze about the family's property. Tony takes pride in the close and careful stewardship practices the family has implemented to care for the land. To Tony, that means not only increasing the forage available for his family's cattle herd, but it also translates to managing his land's wildlife habitat and other natural resources.

"I like the grass, the timber, the creeks, the ponds – I like it all," Tony said. "You got to love it. If you don't, you won't take care of it, and if you don't take care of it you won't have anything."

Tony and his wife, Melissa, manage the family's 1,300-acre cow/calf ranch that Tony's grandfather started. They focus on productivity not only in terms of how many cattle they can raise, but the Edwards family also manages to ensure their natural resources are properly cared for.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau's District Five Farm and Ranch Family

spent years raising broiler chickens alongside their cattle herd. In recent years, however, the family stepped away from raising chickens and moved their focus to cattle.

The Edwards family controls weeds in their pastures through mowing, which Tony said promotes variety in the farm's plant life. Tony said the diversity provides plentiful grazing opportunities for their cattle while promoting habitat for wildlife in the area.

The Edwards said their three boys – Matt, Cade and Clay – learned a multitude of important lessons growing up on the farm, which will help them throughout life.

"It's not really knowing how to work, it's just knowing how to be helpful," Tony said. "If you see someone struggling, you help them. That applies out here on the place. If I'm stretching a wire and having trouble tying it, Clay steps in and helps. That's just paying attention and being helpful to others."

Melissa works off the farm as a Haskell County field appraiser, and she loves the opportunity to raise her family close to the land.

"I think it's a blessing getting to do this," Melissa said of farm life. "There's not very many families that get to do this. I enjoy it and I wouldn't want it any other way. I just enjoy what God has given us."

Kevin & Kim Doyle

District Six



Just two years ago, Kevin and Kim Doyle and their family spent their days milking a herd of dairy cattle just like they had done for the past 30 years.

Fast forward to today, and the dairy cattle have left the milking parlor, and turkeys have taken their place as the focus of the family's farming and ranching efforts. In addition to the turkeys, cattle dot the hills of the family's picturesque place. The Doyles also run a custom hay baling business, serving fellow farmers and ranchers.

Steeped in years of agriculture tradition in eastern Oklahoma's Adair County, our District Six Farm and Ranch Recognition recipients have adapted to new opportunities in agriculture to continue their family farming legacy.

Today, the Doyles raise turkeys in two modern turkey houses, which integrate computer systems and efficient LED lighting to ensure the birds have the optimal temperature, air quality and environment. The family built the barns in 2017. The impressive buildings are state-of-the-art barns that are some of the first of their kind in the area.

"It's all about keeping the bird growing at a healthy rate," Kevin said. "Overall, though, it's for the bird's health."

The turkeys the Doyle family raises are sold as Honeysuckle White whole turkeys in grocery stores, many of which are part of Thanksgiving meals. The Doyle family participated in a traceability pilot program to connect them with consumers

buying their birds. Shoppers can scan a QR code on the packaging to learn about the family that raised the bird they are buying, including the Doyles.

"We work really hard, and we're going to eat that bird, too, so we're going to take care of it like it's supposed to be taken care of," Kim said. "We're going to do all the things that you're supposed to do to keep the birds handled safely. There's a lot of hard work that goes into your Thanksgiving bird."

"Everybody wants to know where their food comes from. It does connect us with the customer and lets them see that we are a hard-working family, and we're all working together to bring them their Thanksgiving turkey."

The Doyles are proud to have raised six children on the farm: Jen, Kim, Heath, Brandon, Mackenzie and Katie.

"Just to have a good family behind you, supporting you, working with you, you'll be successful," Kevin said of working as a farm family.

The Doyle family focuses on the connection they have with consumers as they work to raise turkeys and cattle they know will go on to be featured on the tables of families far and wide.

"To walk into a grocery store like back when I milked and seeing the milk there and knowing that I helped put it there – and now it's the Thanksgiving bird – it just gives you a sense of pride that you're helping feed the world," Kevin said. "It kind of makes those bad days, you know, get a little better."



Lamoine Talbott

District Seven

Lamoine Talbott and her family have more than a century of deep roots in Garfield County. The Enid native today carries on a generations-long legacy of farming and ranching that began with her own grandfather all the way back in 1905.

Over the course of four decades, Lamoine and her husband, Jim, expanded her family's centennial farm from around 180 acres to more than 1,100 acres.

Though she lost her husband in 2008, Lamoine continues to carry on the family's legacy with her son, Jerry, as they grow wheat, soybeans, milo, alfalfa and grass alongside a cow-calf operation. Jerry also took over the family's cattle and grain hauling business originally started by his father in the mid-1980s.

After more than seven decades on the farm, Lamoine still finds great joy in working the land and caring for animals with her family. She often can be found around the farm driving tractors, hauling fertilizer tanks, fueling equipment and pretty much anything else that needs to be done.

"I just like being involved, and I like seeing the family all work together," Lamoine said.

As the third generation on her family's farm, Lamoine most enjoys watching the fourth and fifth generations – daughter-in-law Karen, daughter Patty and grandchildren Jake, Jami and Taylor – enjoy the family tradition on the farm.

"Farm life is just a good life," Lamoine said. "Even though there's the bad times and there's the rough times, just being there and being involved with my family and seeing them out enjoying the farm, that means a lot to me."



Brent & Famie

Thompson

District Eight

Focusing mainly on hay crops such as alfalfa and Bermuda grass on their 1,200 acres of Washita River bottomland, Brent and Famie Thompson's investment into on-farm storage has allowed the equine, dairy and beef cattle markets to come directly to them. A portion of that land is also used occasionally for corn, soybeans and wheat to keep their operation diversified. The Thompsons also dedicate an additional 1,800 acres to their 350 momma cows.

"We've spent a lot of time and effort looking at the fertility in our soils and also trying to figure out exactly what plants we're going to be growing, what their nutrient needs are going to be," Brent said. "We try to time those nutrient needs at the time that will be most beneficial for the plant to optimize not only productivity but also quality of the crop we're growing."

As the fourth generation to farm in Pauls Valley, the Thompsons have learned how to adapt with the changes in agriculture throughout the last 100 years and will continue to do so.

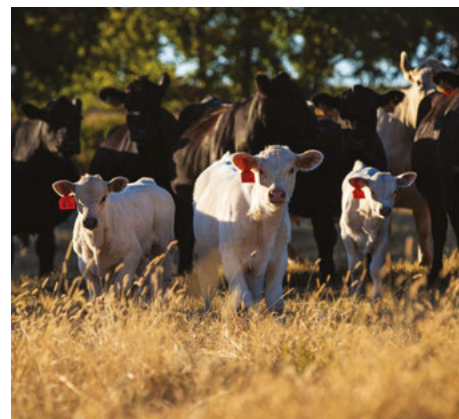
"One of the things that's been instilled in me by my dad and grandad is the importance of hard work," Brent said. "God and family comes first, and we do work a lot of hours – we put in a lot of hours – but it's very important for us to take care of the land that God has given us to be stewards over. It's extremely important to me to leave a legacy to my children, and hopefully grandchildren, that if they're interested in continuing on in the operation, that it's left in a better state than when we started."

Although she grew up in Oklahoma City, Famie cannot imagine raising their three children – Emma, Cole and Brenna – anywhere else but right there on the

family farm.

"Being around agriculture, it has opened my eyes to how important agriculture is in our nation, how important farm families and farmers are for our nation, they feed our nation," Famie said. "I mean that's what my husband and his family have done for generations."

Active within their local community, Brent is a board member of the Garvin County Cattle Producers and the Pauls Valley FFA Booster Club. Famie serves as a board member of the Pauls Valley Academic Excellence Board and volunteers with several community organizations when needed, such as at the local fair, school library or preparing meals for those in a time of need. She also volunteers regularly with the Pauls Valley FFA and is a member of the Pauls Valley FFA Booster Club.





Leon & Judy

Bailey

District Nine



Surrounded by their children and grandchildren, Leon and Judy Bailey of Okfuskee County could not imagine living any other way.

Each beginning their own cattle herd in elementary school, Leon and Judy were destined to be involved in agriculture. The pair, along with their four children and nine grandchildren, all have their own unique place within the family business in Paden and Okemah.

“Well, this down here is mainly pecans and cattle, and we’ve got about 2,500 pecan trees here at Five Star and probably 90 to 95% of them are improved varieties, mainly Stewarts,” Leon said of the family’s farm.

In addition to the pecans, the Baileys maintain a herd of roughly 300 head of cattle, along with wheat and alfalfa mainly used to supplement their grass pastures.

“We incorporate cattle with our pecan operation because we graze our pecan groves and raise hay down there for them,” Leon said.

Even though members of the Bailey family are busy with their own business ventures, many work together to harvest, crack, shell and sell the pecan crop directly to consumers at their two storefronts for six weeks beginning in mid-November, while the remainder of the crop is sold to wholesalers.

Active members of the Okfuskee County Farm Bureau, Leon is a long-time county board member while Judy is involved with the Women’s Leadership Committee.

“It’s just a really good way of life,” Judy said. “I like that we produce a good product. I just feel like it’s a privilege to be involved in agriculture.” **FB**

Join us **online**

New website. New features.

More ways to connect with Oklahoma Farm Bureau.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau is proud to share some of our favorite features of our all-new website. Launched in late 2019, the site is rebuilt with a new look, new content and some great new features to help Farm Bureau members learn what their organization is doing and how to reap all the benefits included with every OKFB membership.

While the site has many new features, here are some of the most exciting updates now on the website – and there will be more to come in the future.

To see for yourself, visit okfarmbureau.org and browse our new site. And don't forget to visit us on our social media platforms for our latest updates.

Advocacy

Our all-new Advocacy section includes information on the policy topics that Farm Bureau members care about most.

With background information on issues facing agriculture, a guide covering how OKFB policy is created and links to advocacy resources – including the ability to sign up for OKFB action alerts – the Advocacy section is a great way to learn how OKFB fights for the rights of family farmers and ranchers.

Member benefits guide

Every OKFB membership comes with a wide array of member benefits. Our member benefits page includes the full list of savings, discounts and special offers Farm Bureau members receive.

From savings on vehicles and household items to travel destinations and financial services, the member benefits guide is an easy-to-navigate directory chock full of money-saving offers. Even better, links and instructions guide members through the process of using each benefit.

Check out and bookmark the full list of benefits at okfarmbureau.org/benefits.

News

The News section of our website covers all the activities and programs OKFB members take on to help agriculture in Oklahoma.

From the latest articles covering state and county Farm Bureau events to our latest videos, check out the News section to see the many ways OKFB is engaged around our state.

We also post all our publications online in an easy-to-read online viewer for those times when you want to catch up with Farm Bureau's print publications on your phone or computer.

County directory

Have a question for your county Farm Bureau? Want to find ways to get involved with your organization locally? Our online county directory has contact information for all 77 county Farm Bureaus.

Visit okfarmbureau.org/counties to find your county Farm Bureau office. The directory includes information to contact the Farm Bureau office near you.


Become an Oklahoma Farm Bureau member online

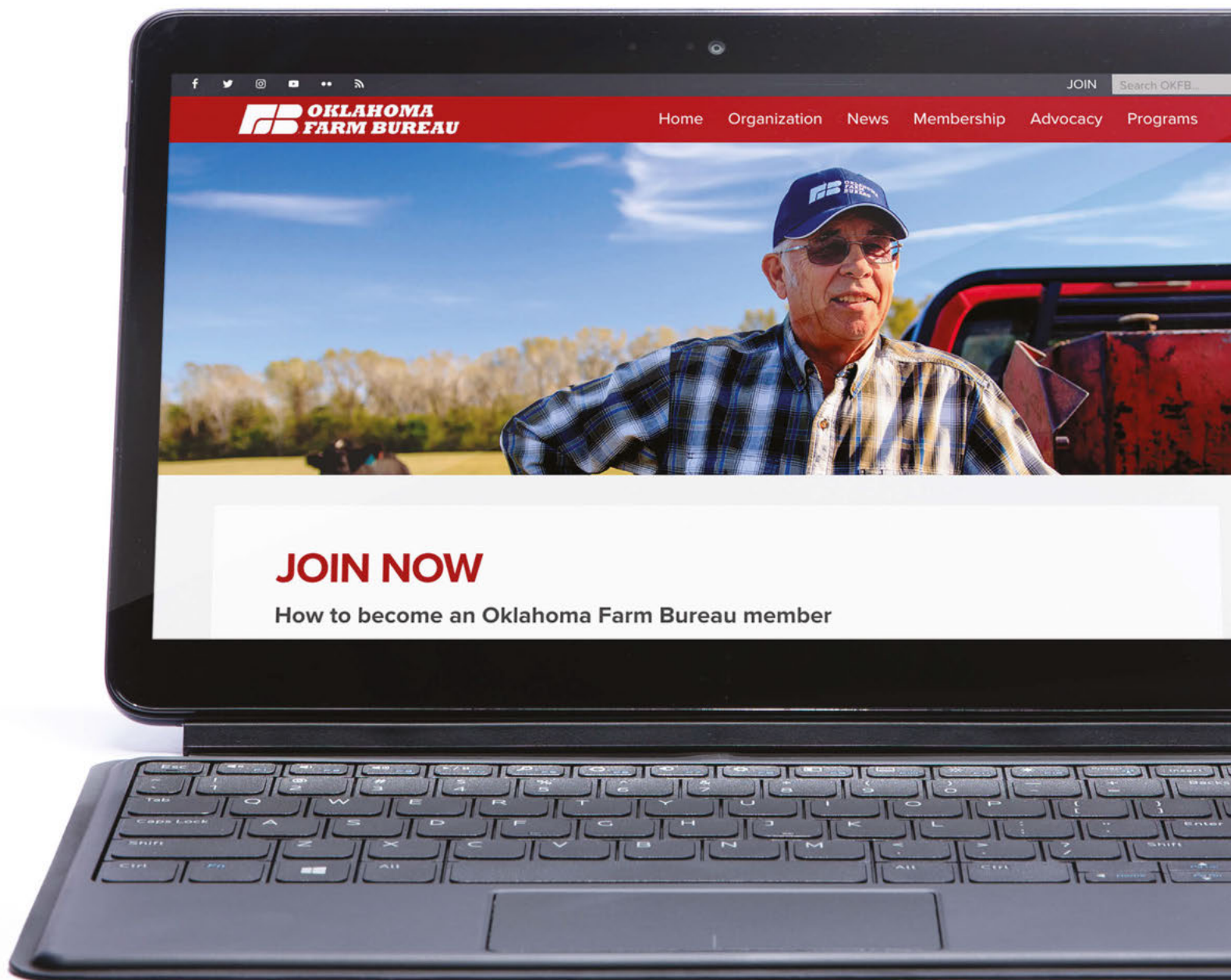
Perhaps our most exciting new feature is our online "Join Now" portal. Users can sign up for a Farm Bureau membership online and pay their initial dues with a credit card from their favorite web-connected device.

If you have a friend or neighbor who wants to support our state's family farmers and ranchers, our new online membership sign-up portal is a quick and easy way to become part of Oklahoma's largest general farm organization.

Of course, anyone can sign up to become a Farm Bureau member at their county Farm Bureau office.

No matter if you become an OKFB member online or in person, you will enjoy the same great benefits every Farm Bureau membership includes. New members can join today at okfarmbureau.org/join.

Please note: when becoming an OKFB member online and paying initial dues by credit card, a \$2 convenience fee is charged. 



Visit us online today at okfarmbureau.org.

Core VALUES

A man with light brown hair, wearing a white button-down shirt and blue jeans, is sitting in a white office chair. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. His legs are crossed at the ankles. He is wearing brown leather cowboy boots. The background is a city skyline with various buildings, including a prominent yellow building on the left. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

A young boy's drive to work hard in agriculture instilled in him the core values that would lead him to represent the constituents of Oklahoma's First Congressional District.



Farm worker. Aerospace engineer. Program developer. Swine farmer. Businessman. *Congressman.*

Not typically a combination of career paths for just one individual, but Kevin Hern is not the typical Congressman.

From baling and hauling hay in the hot and humid summers of Arkansas to picking cherries and olives throughout California's central valley, Congressman Kevin Hern knows a thing a or two about agriculture, even though today he represents constituents in Oklahoma's First Congressional District, a large percentage of whom live in one of the largest urban areas in the state, Tulsa.

A district not typically associated with close ties to agriculture, Hern stepped into office Nov. 13, 2018, with a unique set of life experiences that have helped guide him to equally represent both his urban and rural constituents.

"A lot of people don't think you can have a Congressman in an urban district that has any idea what ag is all about," Hern said.

"Long before there were urban areas, there were farmers and ranchers," Hern said. "That's what this state was certainly founded on, and it's the core of who I am."

Raised less than 100 miles from the Oklahoma state line in the rural town of Dover, Arkansas, Hern lived without indoor plumbing or electricity until the eighth grade, but he had a strong will to work for everything he had from a young age.

"It was always about winning," Hern said of his upbringing. "Could I haul more hay? Could I gather more eggs? Could I catch more chickens? Could I brand more cattle?"

Every summer until he turned 18, Hern traveled from his small hometown in Arkansas to California, Oregon or Washington to meet up with his grandfather.

"My grandfather, all the way back to when times were tough in the '40s, used to go to California to pick olives, lemons, oranges and cherries and followed the crops all the way up the West Coast," Hern said.

Far from glamorous and filled with long, hot days, Hern enjoyed the work and even thrived on it. Not knowing it at the time, the strenuous labor would shape and mold him into the adult he would later become.

"It was outdoor camping long before outdoor camping was cool," Hern said, smiling.

During his final summer working alongside his grandfather, Hern made the exhausting three-day trek from Atkins, Arkansas, to Moses Lake, Washington, on a Continental Trailways bus by himself before he had even turned 18.

"I picked cherries for about 10 days, made \$400, put the money in my sock and rode the bus back," Hern said.

As usual, upon his return to Arkansas, Hern would head straight back to work baling hay, hauling liquid fertilizer or any other work he could find in the area to fill his time for the remainder of the summer.

After attending a small college in Russellville, Arkansas, Hern relocated to Atlanta, Georgia, to pursue a career as an aerospace engineer at Rockwell. Shortly after beginning his new position, the tragedy of Jan. 28, 1986 – when seven men and women



were lost in the space shuttle Challenger accident – forever altered the aerospace industry.

With engineers being laid off left and right in the wake of the tragedy, Hern knew he needed a new career path, but what, exactly?

“I had a buddy of mine that owned McDonald’s restaurants in Little Rock and he said ‘Hey, well come over here. You’re a hard-working guy, we’ve known you for a long time, you might like this franchising world,’” Hern said.

“Quite frankly, I grew up incredibly poor and everyone I knew that owned a McDonald’s franchise were millionaires,” he said. “I thought, you know what, what the heck, maybe.”

In February of 1987, Hern began the McDonald’s franchisee training program, which he completed easily. However, he still faced an obstacle.

“I did the training really quickly, the problem was I didn’t have any money,” Hern said.

Although Hern had chosen an early career path that diverted him from agriculture, it was still a major component of who he was at his core. Raised in an area that was steeped in poultry farming tradition, he wanted to forge his own path.

“In the area we grew up in, there were a lot of chickens,” Hern said. “Tyson had moved into the hog growing business and I wanted to do something different. A lot of people had chickens. Very few people had hog farms.”

With hardly any credit, but with a history of working hard, Hern found a bank willing to take a chance on him and his wife, an opportunity that drew him back into the industry he was most passionate about. Although they had limited experience in the swine industry, the couple purchased several parcels of land neighboring one another, totaling around 160 acres, and built six barns to house nearly 3,600 pigs along with 160 head of cattle.

Life soon became a balancing act for him, between continuing with the McDonald’s trainee program and running a full-size swine operation.

“When I was working about 70 hours a week for the McDonald’s franchising program, every afternoon I’d drive 60 miles to go work on the farm that I had my brother working out on every day,” Hern said.

For 10 years, Hern worked tirelessly to save the \$100,000 needed to purchase his first McDonald’s location. In addition to owning and operating a hog farm, Hern bought and sold real estate and even used his engineering background to write a software program to help McDonald’s franchisees maintain up-to-date inventory records.

By the fall of 1996, Hern had saved enough money to officially purchase his first McDonald’s location in North Little Rock, Arkansas, on Jan. 17, 1997. After owning it for two years, he decided to sell it and purchase two different locations in Muskogee, Oklahoma. Throughout the years, Hern and his wife would eventually purchase 24 additional McDonald’s locations including restaurants in Cleveland, Skiatook and Pawhuska, eventually employing more than 1,000 people

amongst all the locations.

But today, the number of McDonald's he and his wife own has been pared down to make time for his newest endeavor representing the constituents of Oklahoma's First Congressional District.

"In Congress, you don't have a lot of time to do anything else," the congressman said, smiling.

Growing up with a strong drive to work was a main asset for Hern on the campaign trail in his district, his message resonating with the people of Bartlesville, Porter and Coweta the same way it did with the people of Tulsa, Sand Springs and Broken Arrow.

"I love to talk about the value of work," Hern said. "I ran on the notion of helping people who have ideas create businesses and put Americans to work."

Being a member of three House committees including Small Business, Natural Resources and Budget leaves very little time for concentrating on agricultural issues. Even still, he finds ways to hear from his rural constituents directly and address their concerns within the industry.

In July 2019, Hern helped bring a U.S. House Small Business Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Tax and Capital Access congressional field hearing to Tulsa, focusing on the challenges small businesses face in complying with federal regulations, including those on farms and ranches.

Tulsa County Farm Bureau member and pecan producer Chad Selman was in attendance and testified to the subcommittee about agricultural labor, and specifically, his use of the H-2A guest worker visa program. After hearing Selman's suggestions to streamline the process from a producer's point of view, Hern was able to take the input gathered



Rep. Kevin Hern speaks to Oklahoma Farm Bureau members in Norman, Oklahoma, during the 2018 Oklahoma Farm Bureau Annual Meeting just four days after being sworn in to his position in Washington, D.C.

during the hearing and share it with the correct committees in Washington, D.C., with his endorsement behind it.

More recently, Hern introduced the SCORE for Small Business Act of 2019, passing the House of Representatives with a 389-8 majority. As a businessman himself, Hern understands the challenges new entrepreneurs face. Through the SCORE act, aspiring entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to meet and learn from retired executives who offer a wealth of knowledge.


With his background in agriculture and his extensive experience in business, Hern strives to equally represent both his rural and urban constituents while in Washington, D.C., as both groups are vital for the success of not only his district, but for the state.

"I think it's important that we continue

to integrate and not let (agriculture) be so split that there's some dividing fence between rural Oklahoma and urban Oklahoma," Hern said.

Focusing not only on the America that he will live in but also on the America he is helping build for his children and grandchildren after him is what keeps Hern motivated.

"I always tell people, 'Don't forget where you came from,'" Hern said. "I came from a very rural upbringing with no indoor plumbing or running water until I was in the eighth grade, so I appreciate where I'm at today. I appreciate the opportunity this country has given me. I take nothing for granted. I don't think this country owes me anything.

"What I owe this country and the people in it are the opportunities I had." 

"What I owe this country and the people in it are the opportunities I had."

– Rep. Kevin Hern

FORWARD FOUNDATION

OKFB Foundation for Agriculture donates accurate ag books to 12 Oklahoma schools



Twelve Oklahoma educators from across the state were awarded a basket of agriculture books for their classroom or library during Oklahoma Farm Bureau's 78th Annual Meeting held Nov. 8-10 in Oklahoma City.

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

"Many students in our state have never learned what it takes for their food to get from the farm to their plate," said David VonTungeln, Foundation president. "We're thrilled to present each of these educators with accurate agriculture books to help bring the farm to classrooms and libraries across Oklahoma."

After submitting applications, the winning teachers were chosen by the WLC state committee. The books cover various agriculture topics and were picked from the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture's list.

"Agriculture plays an important role in the lives of all of our students, but


most will never experience the farm firsthand," said Mignon Bolay, OKFB WLC chair. "We're excited to once again share our way of life with the next generation of Oklahomans through our wonderful Bushels for Books program."

Educators who received books included Cassidy Callahan, Anadarko; Luci Copelin, North Rock Creek; Ronna Haney, Stuart; Debbie Stidham, Haskell; Zena Lewis, Owasso; Katrina Patton, Western Heights; Brenda Prescott, Wellston; Jennifer Riddle, Foyil; Christy Snider, Cherokee; Jessica Williams, Davis; Anna Wofford, Frederick; and Heather Wofford, Snyder. 04405375



Webbers Falls High School Agriculture Department receives \$10,000 from OKFB Foundation following severe flooding



Following severe flooding in the Webbers Falls area this spring, Webbers Falls FFA members faced another great loss. With several feet of water filling the school, including the agriculture classroom and shop, even more water filled the school barn, meaning most of their equipment had to be replaced. The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture presented a check for \$10,000 to Stephen Matthews, Webbers Falls agriculture teacher, and members of the Webbers Falls animal science class Oct. 8. 



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GATHERING GROWING GIVING

OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU 78TH ANNUAL MEETING

Okmulgee County named top county Farm Bureau



Okmulgee County Farm Bureau President and OKFB District Nine Director Jim Meek (center) accepts the John I. Taylor award, the highest award for county Farm Bureau organizations, presented by OKFB President Rodd Moesel (right) and Executive Director Thad Doye (left).

Okmulgee County Farm Bureau was presented with the 2019 Oklahoma Farm Bureau John I. Taylor Award on Saturday, Nov. 9 during the organization's 78th annual meeting in Oklahoma City. Named after OKFB's first president, the award serves as the organization's highest county honor.

Okmulgee County was honored for

excelling in the program areas of public policy, local affairs, service to members, membership, Women's Leadership Committee and Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee.

"We're very blessed in Okmulgee County that we have a very active group," said Jim Meek, Okmulgee County president. "Our Women's Leadership

Committee is dedicated to making their communities better, and in the last few years, we've got our Young Farmers and Ranchers going. We've been very blessed that we have good officers and we've had good participation."

Throughout the past year, Okmulgee County Farm Bureau focused their efforts on recruiting new members and promoting agriculture within their local community. In addition, the group hosted several membership drives at county livestock shows to encourage students and parents interested in agriculture to join Farm Bureau.

Okmulgee County members also educated area students about agriculture by sponsoring the OKFB Foundation for Agriculture commodity trailer at local schools during agriculture week, informed state legislators about the issues affecting farmers and ranchers during the OKFB Leadership Conference, and shared agriculture issues and information on its Facebook page.

"Members in Okmulgee County are always willing to do what it takes to support agriculture, both locally and in the state," Meek said. "We're just proud that we can have an impact in Oklahoma."

Sen. Boggs and Rep. Pfeiffer honored with Distinguished Service to OKFB Award

Sen. Larry Boggs of Wilburton was recognized with the Distinguished Service to Oklahoma Farm Bureau Award on Saturday, Nov. 9 during the organization's 78th annual meeting in Oklahoma City.

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

Boggs earned the award for his longtime commitment to supporting farmers and ranchers as a state senator representing Senate District 7.

"We really appreciate Sen. Boggs for his understanding of agriculture, his passion for agriculture and the job he does talking to his fellow members in the Senate on agricultural issues," said Rodd Moesel, OKFB president. "There's nothing better than having legislators who really understand agriculture themselves that are in the caucus rooms, the committee rooms and on the chamber floors."

A cow-calf producer near Wilburton, Boggs is an active member of Latimer County Farm Bureau. He served on the OKFB board of directors for eight years representing the organization's District Five before running for the state senate.

"For me, (Farm Bureau) is a great organization, and I was glad to serve at the county and at the state level both," Boggs said. "It's a great honor."

Rep. Pfeiffer was also recognized with the Distinguished Service to Oklahoma Farm Bureau Award for his commitment to supporting farmers and ranchers in north central Oklahoma in the state House of Representatives.

"Rep. Pfeiffer grew up in agriculture, so he has a thorough not just understanding of agriculture, but also a true love of agriculture," said Rodd Moesel, OKFB president. "He is a passionate spokesman for agriculture in the House, and we're very honored that he's not only a House member but he is truly one of the leaders in the state House."

An Angus cattle producer and Logan County Farm Bureau member, Pfeiffer was first elected to the Oklahoma House in 2014 to represent Garfield, Grant, Kay, Logan and Noble Counties.

"This organization is very special to



Pictured with his wife, Karla, Sen. Larry Boggs (center) is recognized with the Distinguished Service to Oklahoma Farm Bureau Award by OKFB President Rodd Moesel (left) and Executive Director Thad Doye (right).



With his family by his side, Rep. John Pfeiffer (second from right) is presented with the Distinguished Service to Oklahoma Farm Bureau Award by OKFB President Rodd Moesel (left) and Executive Director Thad Doye (right).

me," Pfeiffer said. "To be able to go up and represent my district and represent agriculture and be honored by this

organization means a whole lot to me. I'm very appreciative of it."

Okmulgee County wins OKFB Lewis H. Munn Award

Okmulgee County Farm Bureau was honored with Oklahoma Farm Bureau's Lewis H. Munn Award on Saturday, Nov. 9 during the organization's 78th Annual Meeting in Oklahoma City.

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

"In Okmulgee County, we look at how we can go into our elementary schools, junior highs and high schools and educate them about agriculture," said Jim Meek, Okmulgee County president. "But that comes about because our members, our Women's Leadership Committee and our YF&R care about the future of agriculture and about putting agriculture in a positive light in our community."

Okmulgee County Farm Bureau members planned and hosted a tractor driving competition for 4-H and FFA

members at the Okmulgee County Fall Fair. The event allowed Farm Bureau members to discuss and encourage farm safety among the participants. The county also used the event to share Farm Bureau with area students and

their parents and recruit potential new members.

The award is named after the second president of Oklahoma Farm Bureau, whose philosophy centered on building strong county programs.



OKFB President Rodd Moesel (right) and Executive Director Thad Doye (left) present Jim Meek, Okmulgee County Farm Bureau President and OKFB District Nine Director (center), with the Lewis H. Munn award.

Okmulgee County named top county YF&R



Members of the Okmulgee County Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers are honored with the OKFB YF&R Charles L. Roff Award.

The Okmulgee County Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee was honored with the 2019 Oklahoma Farm Bureau YF&R Charles L. Roff Award on Saturday, Nov. 9 during the organization's annual meeting.

Presented annually to the state's top county YF&R committee, the Charles L. Roff Award encourages YF&R members to improve their local committees

while strengthening the Farm Bureau organization.

"This just means so much to us because we really implemented a lot of things in our county and really strive to help the youth in our county and our community," said Leslie Lewis, Okmulgee County YF&R chair.

The Okmulgee County YF&R committee earned the award for its work to promote

agriculture and Farm Bureau to its local community. Throughout the year, the committee worked to support local youth by hosting a pancake breakfast at the Okmulgee County Spring Livestock Show, purchasing an animal in the Okmulgee County Premium Sale, presenting a \$500 scholarship for a graduating senior in the community and sponsoring a county tractor driving contest during the Okmulgee County Fall Fair.

The group also helped area elementary students learn about fire safety and tractor safety by hosting Oklahoma Farm Bureau's safety programs at a local school.

Many of the county YF&R committee members have been active on the state level, attending legislative meetings, YF&R conferences and OKFB conventions.

"It's bigger than our YF&R group," said Will Lewis, Okmulgee County YF&R chair. "It's our entire county. Our YF&R committee is what pushes us toward the six-star award, so it's more of the bigger picture with us."

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

Comanche County couple named OKFB's top young farmer and rancher



Cody and Kara Goodknight (second and third from right) are presented the OKFB YF&R Achievement Award by (left to right) OKFB President Rodd Moesel; YF&R Chairs Brent and Jenny Haken; and Oklahoma Pork Council Executive Director Roy Lee Lindsey.

Cody and Kara Goodknight of Chattanooga were named Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Achievement Award Winners at the 2019 Oklahoma Farm Bureau annual meeting on Saturday, Nov. 9 in Oklahoma City.

The Goodknights grow wheat, cotton, grain sorghum, sesame, soybeans, oats and hay alongside their cow/calf and stocker cattle operation.

Working in the Comanche and Tillman County fields where he grew up is the fulfillment of a lifelong dream of Cody's, who now manages the family farm.

"I knew at an early age when I was a young boy – only five or six years old – that I wanted to farm," Cody said.

Today, the couple focuses on diversity as they work to add value to their crops and livestock, allowing them to sell their products at a premium.

"I learned from my dad that to be financially successful, simply growing crops and selling on a commodity market wasn't feasible," Cody said. "We needed to use our land to raise a premium-quality crop in a niche market. He's done that with certified seed wheat over the last 30 years, and I try to do the same thing with replacement heifers. We are building up

repeat customers who are coming back year after year."

As the Goodknights work to differentiate the crops and livestock they grow and raise, they are conscious environmental stewards, working to improve their land by improving soil health. The Goodknights use no-till practices, plant cover crops and more.

"It's just very rewarding to see a product that you have started from the very beginning go through all stages of its life, whether it be a calf or whether it be a seed," Kara said. "To be able to raise that product and know that you're sending that out – you're helping feed the world – it's just a way of life. We are excited and proud of the work that we do. That's why we continue on."

As Achievement Award winners, the Goodknights received a John Deere Gator XUV courtesy of the OKFB YF&R state committee and the Oklahoma Pork Council. The Goodknights also received an expense-paid trip to Austin, Texas, for the 2020 American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting in January. The Goodknights will compete on a national level for the AFBF Young Farmers and Ranchers Achievement Award during the AFBF Annual Meeting.

County Presidential Star Awards

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

Six Star Counties

Comanche
Garfield
Okmulgee
Payne

Five Star Counties

Caddo
Creek
Kiowa
Major
Noble
Seminole
Texas
Woodward

Four Star Counties

Beaver
Kingfisher
Nowata
Oklahoma
Pontotoc
Tulsa
Washington
Washita

Three Star Counties

Alfalfa
Cherokee
Greer
Kay
Muskogee
Pottawatomie
Woods

Quota Counties

Beckham, Blaine, Canadian, Cleveland, Cotton, Custer, Dewey, Ellis, Garfield, Grady, Harmon, Haskell, Hughes, Kiowa, Logan, Love, McClain, McCurtain, Marshall, Noble, Oklahoma, Okmulgee, Payne, Pushmataha, Roger Mills, Wagoner, Washington

District Secretary of the Year

Oklahoma Farm Bureau presented its District Secretary of the Year Awards on Saturday, Nov. 9 during the organization's 78th Annual Meeting in Oklahoma City.

The District Secretary of the Year Award is presented to one county Farm Bureau secretary from each of the nine OKFB districts for their contributions to the overall success of their county

Photos are available of the District Secretary of the Year Award recipients and photos from throughout the event at [flickr.com/okfarmbureau](https://www.flickr.com/photos/okfarmbureau/).

District One

Diana Routon
Woodward County

District Two

Phyllis Martin
Custer County

District Three

Kathryn Canada
Canadian County

District Four

Marilyn Wiles
Johnston County

District Five

Rhonda Cooper
Choctaw County

District Six

Brandy Branscum
Muskogee County

District Seven

Monica Wahl
Major County

District Eight

Sheryl Harrell
Cleveland County

District Nine

Kristin Story
Okmulgee County

Dewey County member wins YF&R Discussion Meet



Chism Sander of Dewey County Farm Bureau (third from right) is named the winner of the 2019 Young Farmers and Ranchers Discussion Meet by (left to right) OKFB President Rodd Moesel; 2019 YF&R Chairs Brent and Jenny Haken; Derek Lamar of P&K Equipment; and YF&R Coordinator Zac Swartz.

Chism Sander of Dewey County Farm Bureau was named the winner of the 2019 Young Farmers and Ranchers Discussion Meet on Saturday, Nov. 9 at Oklahoma Farm Bureau's 78th Annual Meeting in Oklahoma City.

Sander competed against other participants in three rounds of debate-style discussion where performance was evaluated on the exchange of ideas and information on pre-determined topics. Participants were judged on their ability to offer constructive criticism, cooperation and communication while analyzing agricultural problems and developing solutions.

As the state discussion meet winner, Sander received a John Deere Z345M ZTrak Lawn Mower, sponsored by P&K Equipment. He also has the opportunity to compete in the national discussion meet contest at the American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting Jan. 17-22 in Austin, Texas.

"I think it's a privilege and an honor," Sander said of competing in the national event. "I know I can certainly do my best and I'm excited to represent Oklahoma. Being in YF&R has given me a new passion for the industry, and I'm excited to share that passion with other young people."

Booker receives \$1,000 scholarship for Ag in the Classroom efforts



Altus High School senior Tori Booker (center) was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship from the Oklahoma Youth Leading Agriculture scholarship challenge by the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee at the organization's annual meeting. Presenting the award was Young Farmers and Ranchers Chair Brent Haken (left) and WLC Chair Mignon Bolay (right). Using resources from Ag in the Classroom, she was able to create lesson plans for several events she planned throughout Jackson County. Booker hopes to help students better understand the food and fiber industries in Oklahoma.

Nowata County couple wins YF&R Excellence in Agriculture Award

Justin and Chrissy Maxey of Nowata County were honored with the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Excellence in Agriculture Award during the organization's annual meeting Nov. 9 in Oklahoma City.

The award is presented to young farmers and ranchers who do not derive a majority of their income from an operation for excellence in Farm Bureau and the agriculture industry.

Both growing up around agriculture, the couple purchased land and a home after graduating college and began to grow their cow-calf operation. When not working their full-time jobs at Phillips 66 and ConocoPhillips in Bartlesville, Justin and Chrissy spend nearly all of their time on the ranch with their two children, Wyatt and Audrey.

"We had a good farming and ranching foundation, but we didn't start out with a family ranch given to us or one that we were going to come back and run after college," Chrissy said. "It's nice to know that we can do that ourselves."

The northeastern Oklahomans believe in investing in local youth as Justin serves on the county spring livestock show board and Chrissy provides lessons to local kids interested in roping, riding and ranching. The Maxeys also assist local students interested in agriculture by

providing show animals.

The couple deeply values Farm Bureau, where they have served on the state YF&R committee since 2015 and attended numerous state and national conferences and conventions. The two also serve on the Nowata County Farm Bureau board of directors.

"We've had the opportunity to volunteer so much with the YF&R and it's nice to get an award for all the things

we've done," Chrissy said.

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



Chrissy and Justin Maxey (third and fourth from right) of Nowata County are receive the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Excellence in Agriculture Award from (left to right) OKFB President Rodd Moesel; Oklahoma AgCredit President and CEO Patrick Zeka; Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma President and CEO John Grunewald; and 2019 YF&R Chairs Jenny and Brent Haken.

Board, leaders elected at annual meeting

OKFB Board of Directors

Rodd Moesel *
President

James Fuser *
District Six

David VonTungeln *
District Three

Jim Meek *
District Nine

OKFB Women's Leadership Committee

Karen Krehbiel
District Three

Cindy Schoenecke *
District Nine

OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers

Nocona and Jordan Cook
Chair

Chris Hoskins
District Six

Logan and Brittany Hukill
Vice Chair

Dustin Ratliff
District Seven

Austin Jackson
At-Large

Will and Leslie Lewis
Secretary

Cody and Kara Goodknight
At-Large

* denotes re-elected

OKFB sponsors law students interested in agriculture at University of Oklahoma



OU Law students (left to right) Garrett Reed, Hammons Hepner, Allison Christian, Gatlin Squires and Ridge Howard help lead the newly-created Agricultural Law Association at the University of Oklahoma.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau has announced its support for the University of Oklahoma College of Law's Agricultural Law Association, a student-led organization established for students with an interest in agriculture and agricultural law.

"We're excited for the opportunity to invest in law students at the University

of Oklahoma who have a passion for the agriculture industry," said Rodd Moesel, OKFB president. "Many of these students have deep roots in agriculture, rural Oklahoma and Farm Bureau, so we're proud to help foster their enthusiasm to contribute to the agriculture community in their legal careers."

The ALA hosted its first meeting in

August 2019 after several students noticed an absence of a student organization that focuses on agriculture. The students worked to create a new organization focused on educating others about the agriculture industry while also providing networking opportunities within the field.

"The Agricultural Law Association is ecstatic about the opportunity to advocate for the agriculture industry and provide networking opportunities for interested students," said Allison Christian, ALA president. "There are many students from diverse backgrounds who wish to work in this industry in some facet after law school. ALA is optimistic about the level of interest at OU Law and is excited about the future of agricultural law in this state."

Programming for the organization involves monthly meetings, networking events and social events. The group hosts practitioners from different facets of the industry to discuss opportunities for students interested in a career in agricultural law.

AFBF, NFU and Farm Credit partner to better help farmers manage stress

Recognizing the high levels of stress affecting America's farmers and ranchers, Farm Credit, American Farm Bureau Federation and National Farmers Union have partnered on a program to train individuals who interact with farmers and ranchers to recognize signs of stress and offer help.

A combination of online and in-person training, this program is designed specifically for individuals who work alongside farmers and ranchers. It

provides participants with the skills to understand the sources of stress, learn the warning signs of stress and suicide, identify effective communication strategies, reduce stigma related to mental health concerns and connect farmers and ranchers with appropriate resources.

"Many of us think of farms as idyllic," said Jeff Dwyer, director of MSU Extension. "And what is portrayed is ideal, but what is not often shown is how

hard farming is on both the body and the mind."

The partnership between American Farm Bureau, National Farmers Union and Farm Credit will build on that project by further increasing farmers' access to the information and services they need to get through financial and personal emergencies. Resources may also be accessed on MSU Extension's "Managing Farm Stress" website.



WLC donates needed items to Ronald McDonald House



WLC Chair Mignon Bolay (center) and WLC member Cindy Schoenecke (right), present Charlene Fabian (left) of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Tulsa with snacks and blankets for patients and their families. The snack items were donated by OKFB members during the OKFB Annual Meeting Nov. 8-10 in Oklahoma City, while the blankets were made during the WLC Fall Conference held Sept. 28 and 29.



WLC member Karen Dodson (right) and Senior Director of Women's Leadership Committee Marcia Irvin (left), meet with Melissa Weems (center) of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Oklahoma City. In addition to snack food items, blankets were donated and were kindly made by attendees of the WLC Fall Conference.



Cindy Schoenecke and Mignon Bolay deliver carts full of snacks and blankets to be donated to children and their families at Ronald McDonald House in Tulsa.

OKFB challenged to #GiveAHam by Oklahoma Pork Council over the holidays

Oklahoma Farm Bureau was honored to participate in the Oklahoma Pork Council's challenge to #GiveAHam during the month of December.

Industry leaders, legislators and businesses alike throughout the state were challenged to donate a ham to a food bank of their choice.

OKFB President Rodd Moesel, Executive Director Thad Doye, Members of the Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee and the OKFB Foundation For Agriculture each gladly accepted the challenge to #GiveAHam. More than 30 hams were donated to the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma on their behalf.



The YF&R Committee (above), along with Oklahoma Farm Bureau and the OKFB Foundation for Agriculture were each challenged to #GiveAHam in December.

OKFB women gather for educational workshops during fall conference

Nearly 80 women from across the state gathered for the 2019 Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee Fall Conference Sept. 28 and 29 at the Hilton Garden Inn and Conference Center in Edmond.

The two-day conference featured educational workshops, exciting crafts and activities, and a trade show. Attendees also had the opportunity to hear from Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture Blayne Arthur who shared her efforts to work for farmers, ranchers and rural Oklahomans.

Through a silent auction at the event, conference participants helped raise more than \$1,500 for the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture's Bushels for Books program, which provides accurate agricultural books to classrooms and school libraries across the state.

The women also helped create blankets to donate to Ronald McDonald House Charities in Oklahoma City and Tulsa to comfort children seeking medical care.



Alfalfa County Farm Bureau member and District Seven WLC member Terri Pederson tests out a DUI cart from OKFB Safety Services.



Conference attendees help make blankets to be donated to Ronald McDonald House Charities in Tulsa and Oklahoma City during the 2019 WLC Fall Conference.

OKFB mourns loss of former OKFB director Billy Gibson

Oklahoma Farm Bureau extends its sympathies to the family of former Pontotoc County Farm Bureau board member and Oklahoma Farm Bureau Director Billy Gibson who died Nov. 9, 2019, at the age of 86.

Serving as a member of the OKFB Board of Directors from 1988 to 1997 and then again from 2003 to 2012, Gibson was influential in both Oklahoma City and Washington, D.C., as he represented the interests of farmers and ranchers across the state. With his first-hand knowledge of agriculture raising and growing cattle, pecans and hay, senators and representatives respected his input on key pieces of legislation.

A graduate of Murray State College, Oklahoma State University and the

Air Command and Staff College in Montgomery, Alabama, Gibson served in the United States Air Force for 21 years. Originally serving as a pilot during the Vietnam War, he later served as an Intelligence Research Specialist at the Pentagon.

Passionate about young Oklahomans' involvement within 4-H and FFA, Gibson was involved for many years with Pontotoc County Extension, the Pontotoc County Fair and junior livestock shows and served as an announcer at several district shows.

Gibson is survived by his brother, Kenneth 'Hoot' Gibson, two children and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



Billy Gibson

Buchanan honored for advocacy of water policy for farmers and ranchers



Jackson County Farm Bureau member Tom Buchanan was presented with the Oklahoma Water Pioneer Award Dec. 4 by Gov. Stitt at the Oklahoma Governor's Water Conference.

Jackson County Farm Bureau member and former Oklahoma Farm Bureau President Tom Buchanan was honored Dec. 4 with the Oklahoma Water Pioneer award, presented by Gov. Kevin Stitt, at the Oklahoma Governor's Water Conference in Midwest City.

A deserving recipient, Buchanan served for many years as manager of the Lugert-Altus Irrigation District in southwest Oklahoma and has been a tireless advocate of water policy for farmers and ranchers across the state.

Initiated in 1985, the Water Pioneer Award honors men and women that have made a significant contribution in the planning, development, management and conservation of Oklahoma's water resources.

Texas County member honored for conservation education efforts



Jerod McDaniel, a Texas County Farm Bureau member, was awarded the Water for 2060 Excellence Award Dec. 5 by Ken Wagner, Secretary of Energy and Environment.

Texas County Farm Bureau member Jerod McDaniel (second from right) was honored Dec. 5 with the Water for 2060 Excellence Award by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board.

The Panhandle farmer earned the award for his work with low-population corn and conservation education on social media.

Established in 2017, the Oklahoma Water for 2060 Award recognizes individuals and entities each year for their development of water saving measures in three categories including Public Water Supply, Energy/Industry and Crop Irrigation/Agriculture Production.

OKFB members share challenges in agriculture with *The Oklahoman*



Joseph Tripp



Marty Williams

In a front page story in the Sunday, Dec. 15 issue of *The Oklahoman*, two Oklahoma Farm Bureau members had the opportunity to share the variety of challenges facing Oklahoma farmers and ranchers.

Kay County member Joseph Tripp of Blackwell and Noble County member Marty Williams of Red Rock discussed the years of bad weather, depressed commodity prices and unpredictable trade disputes that have taken a toll on

farmers and ranchers across the state.

A fourth-generation farmer, Tripp raises cattle and grows wheat, soybeans and other crops throughout Kay County, Grant County and southern Kansas.

"We've cut back and we've cut back and we've cut back," Tripp said in the story. "There's only so much you can cut back on. If you can imagine, we're standing on top of a cliff and it's behind us and we're backing up and backing up, just trying to get us away from another dangerous

situation... Now our feet are at the edge of the cliff and we can't back up anymore. We can't back up financially or cut anything anymore, there's nothing left to cut. And yet we can't seem to make any money."

On top of everything he's facing, Tripp said he also deals with the responsibility of carrying on the family farm for his children and grandchildren.

"If I lose it, there's nothing for my kids or their kids or their kids," Tripp told *The Oklahoman*. "I am a steward of what we have to pass down to the next generation so they have an opportunity to be a steward for the next generation. Once it's gone, it's gone forever."

A farmer in Red Rock, Williams grows wheat, corn, soybeans, sesame, canola and milo alongside a stocker operation.

From 2010 to 2013, Williams and his wife Crystal were able to expand their family's farm and purchase additional land. But in 2015 and 2016, crop prices dropped dramatically and production costs remained high.

"All of a sudden, we couldn't pay back bills for a year, then the next year it compounded and then the next year it compounded," Williams said in the story. "By late 2017, early '18, we were just virtually broke."

Facing the possibility of bankruptcy, Williams and his wife decided instead to work on paying back their debts.

"We just decided we got into this mess, we'll get out of it," Williams said in the story. "It's going to be a long row to hoe. My banker and I and my wife, we call it basically treading water. Right now we're treading water, but things have gotten a little better."

Despite all the tough times, Williams told *The Oklahoman* he has been able to find some bright spots.

"Every time I say it can't get any worse, somehow it does, but I really honestly think we're coasting at the low and there's at least enough things out there to be cautiously optimistic for the next three or four years," he said.

To read the full story by Darla Slipke, visit okfb.news/oklahoman2.

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OKFB describes impact of low commodity prices in issue of *The Oklahoman*

Oklahoma Farm Bureau President Rodd Moesel described the dire circumstances facing many of the state's farmers and ranchers in a story in the Sunday, Dec. 15 edition of *The Oklahoman*. The story, published on the front page of the paper, explored the impact that weak commodity prices are having on agricultural producers in the state.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service predicts net farm income at \$92.5 billion, or 25% lower than in 2013. Meanwhile, total farm sector debt nationally in 2019 is expected to reach nearly \$415.5 billion.

"It is like a slow-drip water torture," Moesel said in the story. "It isn't unusual for farmers in our part of the country to have a bad year every now and then. But we are into five years in a row that commodity pricing has been about half of what it was before."

"People can't replace their equipment, they are using up the savings they had and they are dipping into their borrowing capacity, if they still have it. I am meeting more and more young farmers who are highly leveraged who are having to sell parts of their farms to keep the rest. It is not a pretty picture at the moment."

To read the full story by Jack Money, visit okfb.news/oklahoman1.

Farm Bureau members receive

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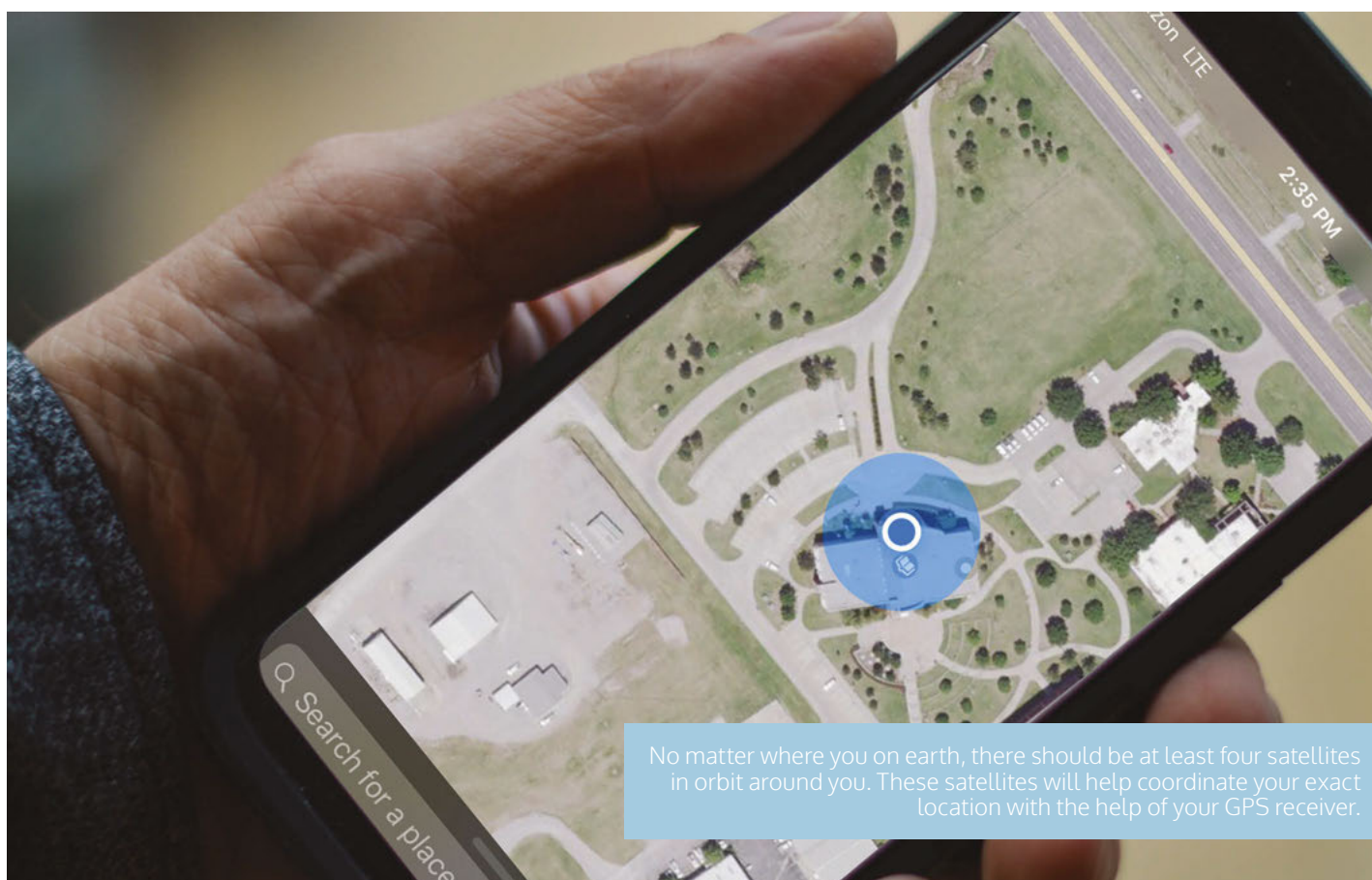
*Farm Bureau Bonus Cash is exclusively for active Farm Bureau members who are residents of the United States. This incentive is not available on Mustang Shelby® GT350®/GT350R/GT500®, Mustang Bullitt®, Ford GT and F-150 Raptor. This offer may not be used in conjunction with most other Ford Motor Company private incentives or AXZD-Plans. Some customer and purchase eligibility restrictions apply. Must be a Farm Bureau member for 30 consecutive days prior to purchase and take new retail delivery from dealer by 1/4/21. Visit FordFarmBureauAdvantage.com or see your authorized Ford Dealer for qualifications and complete details. Note to dealer: Claim in VINCENT using #37408.

How GPS works: The short answer

GPS might seem complicated, but thinking of it in terms of secret fishing holes helps clear up the confusion

By Mike Proctor

Noble Research Institute ag technology research associate



No matter where you are on earth, there should be at least four satellites in orbit around you. These satellites will help coordinate your exact location with the help of your GPS receiver.

As a youngster, I spent a lot of time with my grandpa fishing on Lake Texoma. He had dozens of secret fishing holes scattered all around the west end of the lake. These included rises, drop-offs, creek channels, points and submerged brush piles.

Grandpa's method of finding these spots again and again is probably something of a lost art today but bears a great similarity to how GPS works. Rather

than marking anything with a float or a jug like normal people — "I don't want those Texans finding 'em!" he'd say — we located landmarks on the bank and oriented ourselves based on how those landmarks lined up. We needed at least two points of reference that were close to 90 degrees from one another to get the boat positioned over the point of interest.

I instinctively understood that I was sworn to secrecy and that "They'd have

to kill me first!" to get the coordinates of these hush-hush honey holes. Imagine my confusion when, upon our return to the docks, someone asked Grandpa where we caught all those fish and he proceeded to tell them all about our secret location and how to find it. He even told Texans! Later on I made the connection that if you wanted to catch fish, my grandpa was the guy to talk to.



THE BASICS OF GPS

If you have several points with known locations and you know the distance to all of them from where you are, you can calculate your location. Well, maybe you can't, but your GPS receiver can.

The Global Positioning System consists of 24 satellites in orbit arranged so that there should be at least four satellites overhead at any location and time. Each satellite broadcasts its location and the time of that broadcast. A GPS unit receives that broadcast and identifies the satellite, its position and the time elapsed since that broadcast was sent. It then calculates its distance from the satellite based on the time it took for that broadcast to reach the GPS unit.

The receiver's location will be at that distance somewhere in a sphere around that satellite. This is not all that helpful. However, if the same process occurs with another satellite, the location can be narrowed down to two locations in space — where the spheres around the satellites intersect — and only one of those locations should be on Earth's surface. Add a third satellite, and the location becomes much more precise. With three satellites that were in a similar plane, there could still be some confusion. The point could still move perpendicular to them. If, however, we add a fourth satellite, we achieve a “3D” position — we know latitude, longitude and altitude. **IB**

MAKE YOUR OWN GPS

You can demonstrate how GPS works with the following activity.

You will need:

- A small object
- String
- Scissors
- Tape
- A flat surface, like a tabletop

Step 1: Take your object, and tie a string to it. Tape the end of the string to a tabletop. Move the object around while keeping the string tight. The object is constrained to a certain extent, but it can still go lots of places.

Step 2: Tie another string to the object. Stretch the string out, and tape the end to the table. Depending on the location of the ends relative to each other, the object's movement should be further constrained.

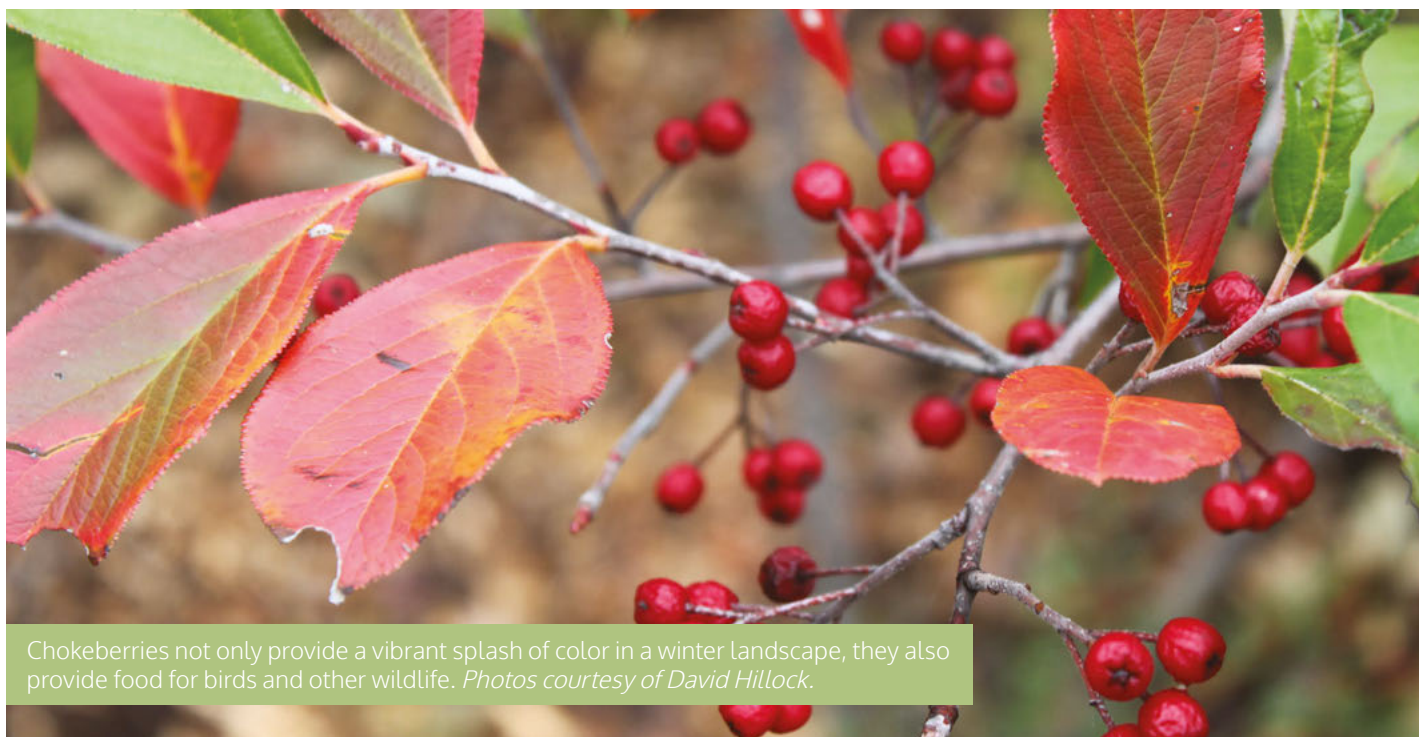
Step 3: Try a third string. Lift the object above the table's surface; it can still move that direction.

Step 4: Tie on a fourth string, and pull up on the object with the string. Once the fourth string is attached, the object should not have much opportunity for movement in any direction. The location of the object (which represents you or your GPS-equipped phone) is known relative to the point where the strings (which represent the satellites) are attached.

Make your winter landscape more interesting

By Trisha Gedon

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service



Chokeberries not only provide a vibrant splash of color in a winter landscape, they also provide food for birds and other wildlife. *Photos courtesy of David Hillock.*

Brightly colored flowers, deep green grass and leafy trees make a beautiful spring, summer and early fall landscape. But what can gardeners do to spruce up their winter landscape?

Do not despair – just because it is winter does not mean your landscape has to be blah and uninspiring, said David Hillock, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension consumer horticulturist.

“There are many varieties of shrubs and they all can play an important role in your landscape,” Hillock said. “They can be used as hedge borders, focal points, fill large areas and used to soften the

strong architectural lines of your home. In addition, shrubs screen and separate space in the garden, create garden rooms and absorb noise.”

Shrubs also can offer other characteristics that will brighten up your winter landscape. Many popular shrubs are evergreen, which can provide a backbone of color during the winter months. Some varieties of shrubs also provide excellent beauty and interest through fruit, stem form and color, bark texture, and in some cases, beautiful winter flowers.

Hillock said several species are adorned during the winter with colorful fruit,

including species such as chokeberry, cotoneaster, evergreen hollies, firethorn and viburnums.

“The native deciduous hollies make wonderful additions to the landscape,” he said. “Female forms of hollies produce the fruit. As an added bonus, they’re often loaded with bright, colorful berries most of the winter. In late winter, when the berries are fully ripe, birds will choose your yard as their favorite hangout spot. Consider planting Possumhaw holly and winterberry holly. A great cultivar of the Possumhaw holly is Warren’s Red with its bright red fruit. Be sure to plant a male form to pollinate the female to get the



best fruit display.”

If you are looking for nice stem color, check out the dogwood and Japanese kerria. The shrubby form of red osier dogwood and its cultivars provide bright red and yellow stem color, while the Japanese Kerria produces bright green stems. The red osier dogwood grows well in full sun or partial shade and the Japanese Kerria prefers shady areas in the landscape.

“Shrubs with brightly colored stems really make a statement in the landscape when Oklahoma receives snow,” Hillock said. “The colors really pop against the white snow.”

Color is not the only thing to consider for winter interest. Shrubs with unusual stem form also provide great texture in the landscape. Stems of Harry Lauder’s Walking Stick, or contorted filbert, twist and curl to create a unique texture that is especially appreciated during the winter. Fortunately for Oklahoma gardeners, this is a tough shrub and not very picky about its growing conditions, which can be quite diverse across the state.

Oakleaf hydrangea and seven-son-flower are a couple of shrubs that feature attractive bark. Oakleaf hydrangea has peeling bark in a tan-brown color. This shrub also boasts large panicles of white flowers in the summer, as well as interesting seed structures and fall color. Seven-son-flower has exfoliating bark that ranges from a shade of white to rich brown and green. As the summer season can be extremely dry, this shrub is quite drought tolerant. In addition, it also features late summer sepals that change



Producing bright green stems, the Japanese Kerria will bring some color to your garden.

from green to rose-purple.

Hillock said for those looking for winter blooming shrubs, there are many species that put on a nice show in late winter and early spring, and a couple that can bloom as early as January or February.

“If you like to have blooms in the garden, consider winter jasmine and witchhazel,” he said. “Winter jasmine is a trailing, viny shrub that grows from a central crown,” he said. “Witchhazel is a native shrub that produces small flowers with crinkly, ribbon shaped petals that are yellow and sometimes tinged with



The stems of Harry Lauder's Walking Stick can give your garden texture in your landscape during winter months

orange or red.”

Obviously, there isn’t as much gardening activity during the winter months as there is in the spring, summer and fall. However, that doesn’t mean your landscape has to be less than appealing.

“As you begin your plans for the next spring and summer garden, don’t forget about Old Man Winter,” Hillock said. “Think about what types of shrubs will add to the look of your landscape during the typical gardening season, but what also will enhance the area during the winter season.” 

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All information must be completed.

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*Deadline for the next issue is March 6.
The spring issue will publish in mid-April.*



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