

Oklahoma

The Magazine of the
Oklahoma Farm Bureau
Summer 2020 • Vol. 73 No. 3

Country

A cut above

Combining a love for home and dedication to quality, **Keith's Butcher Shop** has become a western Oklahoma destination for custom animal processing.

Lessons learned the hard way

What we have learned so far from COVID-19

Renewing refreshed

Online membership renewal now available

A united voice

A rural perspective for Oklahoma's elections

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todays and your tomorrows. **Contact your Farm Bureau agent to
discuss what's been happening in your world.**



Oklahoma Country

Volume 73 No. 3
Summer 2020
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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



ON THE COVER

Keith's Butcher Shop, a western Oklahoma staple, combines a love for their rural community and a passion for providing its customers with high-quality custom animal processing. *Photo by Dustin Mielke.*

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Table of Contents

Oklahoma Country

Summer 2020

Columns

06 Presidentially Speaking

08 Insurance Matters

In Every Issue

10 Commodity Corner

11 Consider the Benefits

34 All Around Oklahoma

46 Noble News

48 Country Gardening

50 Country Classifieds



12 A cut above

By Brianne Schwabauer

A western Oklahoma staple for custom processing, customers from more than 100 miles away have sought out the quality associated with Keith's Butcher Shop when faced with the challenge of finding fresh protein in recent months.



20 A united voice

Many rural Oklahoma citizens are faced with unique challenges regarding healthcare, education, the economy and much more. Through the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Ag Fund, members have the opportunity to stand together to ensure a bright future for rural communities through their elected leaders.



22 Lessons learned the hard way

Though 2020 began with hope and optimism, the livelihoods of many producers have been upended over the last few months, as they watched market prices drop and grocery store prices rise. After looking back on the last several months, we analyze the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on agriculture and rural Oklahoma.



PRESIDENTIALLY SPEAKING

Blessed to play our part in changing times

By Rodd Moesel

President, Oklahoma Farm Bureau & Affiliated Companies

Farmers and ranchers have long understood it is a blessing to work the land, care for our livestock and produce food for folks both near and far.

What our world has experienced the last few months has shown just how blessed consumers are to have farmers and ranchers around our nation who work tirelessly to ensure that the first, vital step of our food supply chain stands at the ready to feed a hungry world.

From the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic that saw consumers hastily clearing store shelves of food items as uncertainty mounted all the way through recent weeks as our food system shifts to a new normal, farmers and ranchers can be proud that they have done – and continue to do – their part to ensure food remains available for consumers across our nation.

While our farmers and ranchers kept on preparing, planting and harvesting, disruptions beyond the control of agricultural producers meant consumers had to deal with temporary shortages at grocery stores, revolving availability of their favorite food items and an unpredictable shopping experience.

Naturally, a large number of questions and concerns have arisen about our food. Farmers and ranchers have been thrust into the consumer information limelight, working to assure shoppers their food is still abundant, safe and affordable – even if their local grocery store shelves may indicate a different story from time to time.

As agriculturalists, we need to constantly be learning about our entire food and fiber system. Yes, we are the experts on our own farms and ranches, but we need to expand our understanding of what happens after our products leave the end of our driveway. As our customers' concerns mount, the agricultural community must be educated and informed about our food processing and distribution system if we want to have important discussions with consumers when they ask about their food. An increasing part of our jobs to grow and raise

agricultural products will require us to learn more about how those products are transported and transformed once they leave our farm and ranch gates.


Agricultural producers can be proud of the role they have played in maintaining a sense of normalcy for consumers as we have been able to confidently proclaim that there is no shortage of food.

But even as farmers and ranchers continue to carry on a generations-long tradition of fueling our nation, farm country has been hit hard in the last few years by low commodity prices, climbing input costs and the ever-unpredictable weather. Add in trade disputes and top it off with a food supply chain overturned by a near-instant shift in consumers' behavior as society reeled in the wake of COVID-19, and we have an agriculture community that cannot seem to catch a break.

Oklahoma's farmers and ranchers are a resilient, resourceful bunch, and they have toiled on even as income drops and bills mount. And as tough as we can be, there are some challenges in life that can overcome even the most weathered Oklahoman.

That is where we, as Oklahoma agriculture, must come together to help one another as uncertainty mounts. Let's all take the time to check in on a neighbor. To pick up the phone and make that call that could make all the difference for someone. To lend a hand where we see a need. To be a friend and a neighbor wherever we can. That is what makes agriculture more than a business, more than an industry – we are a community.

And this community helps each other in times of need. We will continue to be steady, reliable, unwavering stewards of the land who work to ensure that America need not worry about empty grocery store shelves.

After all, we are blessed to be in the business of taking care of each other. 

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rodd Moesel".

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INSURANCE MATTERS

These are interesting and challenging times

By Gary Buckner

Executive Vice President and General Manager,
Oklahoma Farm Bureau Insurance

The first half of 2020 has been quite interesting for the insurance company and industry. The beginning of the year looked to be on track for what we would consider a normal year, but as with Oklahoma, things can change very quickly. Thus far, 2020 has presented us with a recession, COVID-19 crisis, a state of emergency, protests and demonstrations, and catastrophic storms. This, mixed with our normal business, has made the first half of the year a little challenging, but still successful.

As we conclude the second quarter, the challenges thus far have naturally placed some unforeseen strains on the insurance company, but none that Oklahoma Farm Bureau Insurance has not overcome. For starters, the insurance industry is considered an essential business. This designation allowed us to remain open and provide the service our members need during the turbulent storm season we experienced. Our employees, agents and county offices made this possible by being one of the only insurance companies in Oklahoma to have actual people in the damaged areas assisting members during these trying times. I am very proud of everyone's hard work and dedication!


With the additional hurdles presented, our operational view remains optimistic for the 2020 year. New business sales continue to improve, and conversely, we experienced an increase in property and auto claims. The increase in claims

is due in part to the COVID-19 crisis, along with an increase in storm activity in April. The overall financial position of the

company remains strong, with a surplus of more than \$135 million. With a solid corporate strategy in place, we should be able to improve our financial position throughout the rest of the year and meet the financial objectives we set out to accomplish.

On a separate note, I would like to recognize

the retirement of Merry Randazzo from OKFB Insurance. Merry began her career over 42 years ago, working in a county office to then excel into many different insurance roles with her final position being vice president of claims. Merry has touched the lives of many Farm Bureau members, as well as employees and agents. Her wisdom, commitment and love for our purpose will be missed.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your executive vice president and general manager. 

“With the additional hurdles presented, our operational view remains optimistic for the 2020 year.”

— Gary Buckner

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Four fast facts about our savory state steak


Before placing your next ribeye steak on the grill, known for its buttery texture and delicious flavor, below are a few fast facts to know about Oklahoma's delicious state steak.



1 | May 2, 2019, Gov. Kevin Stitt signed Senate Bill 21 into law, making the ribeye steak **Oklahoma's state steak**. Authored by **Sen. Casey Murdock**, he hoped this bill would help acknowledge one of Oklahoma's largest agricultural sectors – the beef industry.

2 | On average, adults should consume roughly **2,000** calories a day. When grilling or ordering your next six ounce ribeye, you will consume roughly 498 calories.

3 | Most commonly known as the ribeye, it can also be referred to as a Delmonico, Spencer, beauty steak, sarket steak or the Scotch fillet.

4 | So just what makes the cut so delicious and tender? The location. The ribeye is carved from an area known for its marbling – also known as intramuscular fat – which melts as it cooks, creating a juicy, tender steak filled with rich flavors. 

Sources: Oklahoma Legislature, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Harvard Medical School and Omaha Steaks.

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A Cut ABOVE

— Est. 2008 —

Combining love for his rural roots and dedication to quality, Keith's Butcher Shop has become a western Oklahoma destination for custom animal processing.

STORY BY: BRIANNE SCHWABAUER || PHOTOS BY: DUSTIN MIELKE

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"I want everyone within 100 miles to associate Keith's Butcher Shop with quality and to come here because we do the best job."

– Keith Schneberger,
owner of Keith's Butcher Shop

The concept of purchasing large quantities of beef such as a quarter, half or even a whole custom-processed animal disappeared from the mind of the general consumer more than a generation ago. Picking up a to-go order from a favorite restaurant on the way home from work or the ease of being able to swing by a supermarket meat counter to pick up cuts of meat for dinner that night has become the way a vast majority Americans purchase the beef, pork or lamb they consume.

In recent months, however, as meat counter shelves in stores and butcher shops alike lay empty – not because of a shortage of the meat supply in the United States, but simply because of a shift in demand – consumers began searching elsewhere to find the protein they needed and wanted.

For many Oklahomans, that meant buying directly from the producer or local butcher.

This is where small, family-run businesses like Keith's Butcher Shop come into play.

Located in the small western Oklahoma town of Burns Flat, Keith Schneberger, along with his staff of four, have been in overdrive the last few months.

"There have always been people buying halves and quarters (of beef), but now there are lots of new people," Keith said. "A lot of people didn't know that you could go to a local farmer or butcher shop and buy a quarter or a half. A lot of people think it comes from a package in Walmart, honestly."

As consumers were faced with empty store shelves as the COVID-19 pandemic quickly escalated, the interest in custom-processed beef purchased directly

from a farmer or rancher ballooned. Coupled with a growing curiosity of how food is grown and processed, Keith saw a surge in demand for his processing prowess.

From Keith's perspective, the recent uptick in business has been good, but it also has its downsides. Due to both the size of his staff and his facilities, Keith has to be realistic with what they are capable of doing on any given day while continuing to provide each and every customer with the quality the shop strives to achieve.

"We are probably processing a few more animals than we usually do, but we are booked out a lot farther, and that is not sitting well with a lot of people," Keith said. "A lot of people will call when they have 90 to 100 days left before their animal is ready to make an appointment. Now, that is not the case."

As of June 2020, Keith's Butcher Shop was fully booked until July 2021, oftentimes filling up an entire month on the calendar in just single day.

Keith had multiple families contact him in late spring to try and schedule a time to process their animals. In a one-month timeframe, he had close to 200 customers inquire about processing but not schedule because they just could not wait an entire year. Many of those potential customers have all been new.

Even with the challenges he and his staff have faced in the last few months, he cannot imagine doing anything else. Fifteen years ago, however, as Keith was nearing the end of his college career and weighing his options, what is known today as Keith's Butcher Shop almost never existed.

Keith, who serves as the owner and operator of Keith's Butcher Shop, first built his Burns Flat facility in 2008,



and later expanded by adding a second storefront location in Elk City that he owns and operates in conjunction with his brother.

As an Oklahoma State University student, Keith began working at the meat lab located in the Robert M. Kerr Food and Agricultural Products Center on campus. Processing different products such as beef, swine, lamb, cooked products, vegetables and even helping graduate students with their research projects, Keith was able to gain a wide array of experience in just four short years.

What started off as just a college kid needing a job quickly grew into something he enjoyed and at which he excelled.

"Prior to college, I had no desire at all for what I am doing now," Keith said, grinning, reflecting on his plans during high school. "If I would not have needed a job in college and did not know a friend – of a friend of a friend – that worked there and helped get me into the program, I would probably be doing something different today."

As a senior in college and with graduation quickly approaching, Keith knew that he had three options after graduation: return to Burns Flat and farm with his father, begin working in the oilfields or take a leap of faith and start his own business processing animals in his hometown.

While trying to decide which avenue he would pursue, three local processing businesses in western Oklahoma went out of business.

"They were just a dying breed out here," Keith said.

Soon it became clear to him what his post-college plans would entail.

Around that time, with the oilfield activity taking off in the region, Burns Flat started an economic development program to entice local businesses to the area. Already having a desire to return to rural Oklahoma where both he and his wife grew up, everything seemed to be falling into place.

With help and guidance from



his family, he set off on a new adventure, purchasing equipment from those three butcher shops that were going out of business to equip his own.

Since venturing out on his own, Keith has learned what to expect for each season, and he plans accordingly. Beef cattle fill his locker year-round, supplemented with swine in the spring and fall. As hunting season and the holidays approach, deer, turkeys and smoked meats become common items for him to

process and cure.

While Keith's may be known to most in western Oklahoma as a place to take livestock for high-quality custom processing, the shop also sells single packages of meat products to consumers who stop by the retail store. Freezers and refrigerators line the front of his shop in Burn Flat filled with packages of ground beef, bacon, sausage, hamburger patties, ribeye steaks and much more cut right there in the shop. In recent months, keeping

these cases full has presented a second challenge for Keith.

Keith possesses a custom exempt meat processing permit that allows him to offer custom processing to area farmers and ranchers. However, the retail-packaged cuts of meat he sells directly to consumers are required to come from a federally inspected facility.

Keith has faced the same level of difficulty, to a certain degree, that most grocery stores and meat counters across the nation are

facing as they try to source animal protein during a pandemic. It has been a challenge to find the exact cuts and quantities needed to fill the storefront in the last few months, and what he has been able to acquire is priced much higher than normal.

"The meat I get for retail, the price has gone through the roof," Keith said of the recent increase in meat prices nationwide.

Accustomed to purchasing exactly what he needs at a moment's notice, placing an order that is swiftly fulfilled is not the case for Keith anymore.

"For the last three weeks, I cannot

get any of that (meat)," Keith explained. "If I can, it is only one box and the price is double."

When Keith purchased a box of ribeye rolls in April, which are then cut down to the typical ribeye steaks consumers are accustomed to seeing, he had to pay \$533. This time last year, that same box of ribeye rolls was nearly half the price, raising his cost and his consumers' nearly 50%.

"If I want to make a dollar, that is what I have to charge," Keith laments. "I don't know who wants a \$30 steak and then have to go home and cook it. If I'm going to spend that much money, I'm going to go to

a nice restaurant and sit down."

For the time being, his current ground beef prices have not reached the same increase in price due to the fact he purchased a large quantity of the cuts he uses to make ground beef prior to the markup. Unfortunately, if he has to purchase more soon, he will be forced to sell ground beef for \$8 or \$9 a pound.

Even with all the challenges that seemingly came out of nowhere for Keith and employees, he still loves the business, his customers and the rural community that has become a destination for custom processing along with the Schneberger family's retail shop.

In addition to working at the butcher shop full-time, Keith can also be found out in the field with his dad or brother farming in the Burns Flat area, serving as coach of the local county 4-H club meat judging team, or being dad to his three children – Waverly, Whitten and Wren.

For Keith and his wife, Erin, most of their days are spent at the shop, making it a second home for them. As their usual customers come in and out to pick up their order or purchase a few packages of beef for dinner that night, they are often greeted with a smile and a wave by their children. If you are lucky, Waverly may even be the one to step up to the front counter to help you with your payment.

As time progresses and business begins to shift into a new normal for Keith and his family, one thing will remain constant. Just like before, his three children will continue to roam the family business, learning more each day about the shop they will eventually inherit and the quality their father expects.

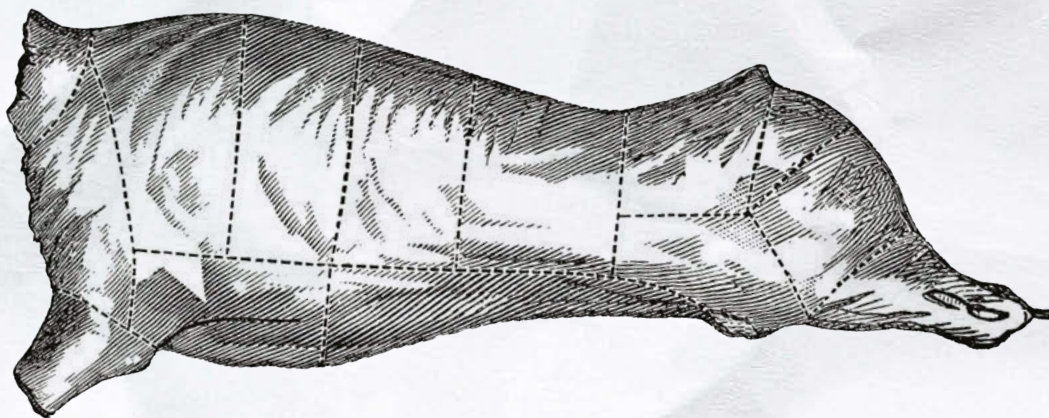
"When people ask where they should take their animal, I want them to come here," Keith said. "I want everyone within 100 miles to associate Keith's Butcher Shop with quality and to come here because we do the best job." **RS**



The Butcher's GUIDE

An order guide for your next custom processing order

No matter if it is the first time or you just need a refresher, placing a custom order of beef can be stressful. In preparation for your big investment, below is a list of items you can choose from when placing your next custom processing order.



Fore Quarter

- Chuck roast
 - Roasts average three to four pounds
- Arm roast
- Brisket
 - Option to cut in half
- Rib steak
 - Choice of rib steaks or ribeye steaks
- Club steak
- Stew meat

Hind Quarter

- T-Bone, Filet or Kansas City Strip
 - Filet and KC Strip are boneless
- Sirloin
- Round steak
 - Option to have it tenderized or cut as minute steaks
- Rump roast
- Ground beef
 - Packages can be customized to your family's need
- Hamburger Patties

Miscellaneous Items: Cuts such as the tongue, heart, liver and tail are available, if desired.

Tip: When placing your order, tell your butcher how many people are in your family. If your family is larger, it does not mean you need to have that exact number of steaks in a package. Instead of packaging six steaks together, have your steaks packaged with two or three per package to ensure they can defrost evenly.



A UNITED VOICE

With fewer Oklahomans living and working in rural communities across the state, the **Oklahoma Farm Bureau Ag Fund** helps its members stand together to ensure a bright future for rural Oklahoma.

Living in rural Oklahoma, it can easily seem as if the issues facing one's community are not recognized by state leaders and lawmakers, especially as fewer Oklahomans reside in rural areas. Farmers, ranchers and rural Oklahomans encounter unique needs and challenges related to the economy, health care, education and more – many that rely on the actions of state legislators and other elected officials.

Electing strong leaders who understand the value of rural Oklahoma and can help tackle those challenges is critical to the future of the rural way of life.

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Ag Fund, the organization's political action committee, offers Farm Bureau members the distinct ability to unite together to back candidates who will work for the betterment of agriculture and rural Oklahoma.



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WHAT IS THE AG FUND?

Funded by voluntary dues of Farm Bureau members across the state, the Ag Fund is the organization's grassroots political action committee that provides members an opportunity to financially support and endorse candidates for elected office who uphold the values of rural Oklahoma.

HOW IS SUPPORT DECIDED?

Every two years, OKFB members meet to make recommendations to the Ag Fund board of directors regarding which candidates to support financially or endorse. To help guide the decisions of the Ag Fund, candidates seeking support are invited to complete a short survey on leading agriculture and rural issues.

The Ag Fund board of directors, comprised of nine Farm Bureau members from across the state, considers the recommendations from local members to determine the candidates who receive financial support or an endorsement.


Active throughout each election cycle, the Ag Fund board meets before primary, runoff and general elections to lend support or endorsements to candidates.

WHY SHOULD I CONTRIBUTE TO OKFB'S POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE?

By donating to OKFB's political action committee, Farm Bureau members can help ensure those elected to serve in the state legislature and other elected offices value the unique perspectives of rural Oklahomans.

Though an extra few dollars in optional membership dues seems insignificant, every contribution counts. Multiplied across more than 70,000 OKFB members, a small donation can have a meaningful impact on rural representation across the state.

CAN I CONTRIBUTE MORE THAN A FEW DOLLARS?

Farm Bureau members are always welcome to make additional contributions to the organization's political action committee. Learn how to donate the political action committee by contacting OKFB public policy staff at (405) 523-2300. 

**FOLLOW THE OKFB AG FUND'S
WORK AT OKFB.NEWS/AGFUND.**





LESSONS LEARNED **THE HARD WAY**

A LOOK BACK OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS TO ANALYZE WHAT AGRICULTURE AND RURAL OKLAHOMA HAVE DISCOVERED SO FAR THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

“UNCERTAIN TIMES.”

“UNPRECEDENTED CIRCUMSTANCES.”

“THE NEW NORMAL.”

Whatever we have to say about the year 2020 to this point, we can be assured that change is certain.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken our daily lives, upending the things we once counted as certain or that we took for granted.

In agriculture, the massive disruptions to America’s food and fiber system placed farmers and ranchers in the same camp as consumers, just on the opposite ends of the supply chain. Agricultural producers watched the prices they received for their products drop, even as grocery store prices surged due to factors outside of their control.

For rural Oklahoma, it amplified the challenges our rural residents have been facing in recent years. With closing rural hospitals, drive times for critical medical services have increased from minutes to hours. Holes in reliable broadband internet access mean fewer opportunities to work remotely or access telemedicine.

While the full brunt of COVID-19 and its impacts upon society will not be fully understood for some time, Oklahoma Farm Bureau has been monitoring our changing world in the last few months to better

understand both the short-term impacts and long-term implications upon agriculture and rural Oklahoma.

As an organization dedicated to effecting change for agriculture and rural Oklahoma, it is an important time to take stock of what we have seen so far throughout this pandemic and analyze how OKFB can help ensure agriculture and rural Oklahoma will continue to grow, no matter what new realities may arise.

Already across farm country, Farm Bureau members are inquiring how we make a stronger, more resilient food system for our nation. They are wondering how we create better opportunities in our rural communities to ensure that residents across our state have access to the same quality of life that our urban friends have.

Together, we are seeking a better way forward in light of the lessons that we have learned the hard way during the last few months.

We have assembled a series of stories that highlight several of the areas in which OKFB works to create positive changes for our state. As we contemplate these lessons, we will continue to work together to create a brighter future for our state, no matter what may come.



RURAL HEALTH CARE

How far is “too far” when urgent care is required?

By Caylie Holman, Oklahoma Farm Bureau assistant director of public policy

Oklahoma farmers and ranchers have long realized the growing disparities between rural and urban access to health care. With the sudden onslaught of the novel coronavirus, which upended our society to nearly unrecognizable levels within a matter of weeks, the stark reality of the growing inequalities between rural and urban communities’ ability to access health care has arguably never been more evident.

Rural communities are not only home to large populations of elderly residents, but they also have a significant number of individuals with hypertension, heart disease, diabetes and respiratory diseases. Both the elderly and those with underlying health conditions have been placed in a high-risk category for severe illness caused by COVID-19.

Rural Oklahoma, which accounts for 34% of the state’s population, has shown a cumulative death rate of 9.6% compared to a rate of 8.78% in urban Oklahoma. Unfortunately, rural communities have also seen growing hospital closures with 128 rural hospitals in America shuttering in the last decade.

Farm Bureau members have long-held policies advocating for improved access to quality and affordable health care for rural Oklahomans through maintaining rural hospitals and incentivizing health care providers to locate to rural areas. Hospital closures not only widen the gaps in cost, provider options and service availability, but they also uproot an economic anchor in their communities.

As one of the main sources of private-sector jobs, communities that have seen hospital closures have also dealt with residents moving elsewhere for work, taking their tax dollars with them.

COVID-19, which poses a higher threat to rural populations, has revealed the critical need for a significant investment increase in rural health. Before COVID-19, rural communities nationwide saw an average mortality rate increase of 6% following a rural hospital closure, based on data from the National Bureau of Economic Research. Now, with the need to remain prepared for potential future pandemics, adequate

investment in the health care infrastructure of rural communities is imperative for the continued well-being of the rural way of life.

While rural hospitals were designed for primary care such as outpatient testing, broken bones and immunizations, patients seeking treatment for COVID-19 require intensive care, specialized drugs and ventilators. This primary care hospital model, coupled with a severe shortage of infectious disease experts and a lack of funding to combat a crisis of this level, causes great concern for rural residents who may have to travel considerable distances to access appropriate care for themselves or a sick loved one in a future pandemic.

In the months since the pandemic hit the U.S., the sudden switch to telemedicine has transcended the rural-urban divide.

While rural residents have long sought out telemedicine options when local care is not an option, urban and rural residents alike turned to telemedicine during the pandemic as the only way to access health care providers while hospitals and other medical offices were closed to nonemergency patients to conserve personal protective equipment and prepare for a possible surge in critical patients.

Farm Bureau has supported trained personnel in rural hospitals who are assisted by telemedicine options in a larger health care facility for several years. The pandemic has forced a wide scale rethinking of access to care, resulting in a major shift from brick-and-mortar health care facilities to telehealth options in both rural and urban areas. The now-realized benefit of increased flexibility in access to care will likely mean patients will not fully revert to in-person appointments in the post-COVID world.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau believes in accessible, quality care that prioritizes patient safety. Our organization remains committed to improving affordable access to health care by supporting legislation and rules that allow for eased restrictions on well-equipped providers such as nurse practitioners and certified registered nurse anesthetists.

OVERVIEW OF THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma State University Extension analyzes the economic toll of the COVID-19 impact upon Oklahoma's farmers, ranchers, consumers and rural economy.

By Amy Hagerman, Ph.D., assistant professor, Oklahoma State University department of agricultural economics and Mike Woods, Ph.D., professor emeritus, Oklahoma State University department of agricultural economics

Events of the early months of 2020 have engulfed the world in a way that challenges personal health as well as the vitality of our economic systems. In Oklahoma, though somewhat insulated as a more rural state, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) disrupted lives, directly and indirectly impacting almost every community, every business and every household. Challenges like changing consumption patterns, supply chain disruptions and rapid transition to contactless or limited contact service may persist for some time.

For rural economies, COVID-19 was another blow for communities already dealing with multiple years of low commodity prices and reduced oil and gas production as of January 2020. This makes isolating the impacts of the pandemic difficult.

Part of what makes COVID-19 unique as compared to other economic challenges, like the Great Recession 12 years ago, is how rapidly things changed. There was little warning, and no slow decline.

Within a few months, every country around the globe and every sector of the economy was being impacted. The Center for Disease Control reported 1,994,283 cases of the virus in the United States as of June 11, with 112,967 deaths reported since the start of community spread on February 23, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

During the same time period in Oklahoma, there were 7,218 reported cases with 360 deaths. Hospitalizations

for COVID-19 peaked at 562 on March 30 (as of publication deadline), and were reported at 164 on June 4, 2020, according to the Oklahoma Department of Health. This pandemic clearly has resulted in impacts felt throughout our country and state.

In agriculture, livestock sectors have had to balance supplying meat to near-empty grocery shelves with worker safety. As a result, processors and manufacturers that have consolidated packing and processing for efficiency have faced higher costs and lower rates of production. It is possible that a long-term change in meat price trends may result since protective measures may need to be in place for some time.

Some of the heaviest damages from COVID-19 occurred in the small business, tourism and food service sectors. Small businesses often had little cash on hand to weather the COVID-19 related closures and reductions in business.

Professional services like realtors and accountants may have fared better through a rapid change to telework, but one observation has never been more apparent – some rural areas do not have the same access to broadband technology that other regions of the state enjoy. If this digital divide does not improve, many rural businesses and rural families will face difficult times competing as the world likely shifts to more online activities.

Consumers may make choices moving into the future that are defined by their trust in safety standards and comfort in public interactions. It is possible that

ASSESSING THE PANDEMIC'S IMPACT ON OKLAHOMA'S ECONOMY

COVID-19 shifted consumer spending

Consumer spending on food away from home shifted from **54% of their food budget to approximately 15%.**

Raper and Peel (2020)

Impact on Oklahoma's livestock and broiler industries

By sector, estimated damages are:

Swine
\$240
million

Beef cattle
\$575
million

Broiler chickens
\$35 - 50
million

Raper and Peel (2020)

COVID-19 shifted where we buy our food

\$240 billion in nationwide restaurant revenue losses in 2020.

Willoughby, Holcomb, Graves and Johnson (2020)

COVID-19 has likely impacted crop prices

It is difficult to determine COVID-19's direct impact on Oklahoma crop prices due to several events that occurred simultaneously:

Phase 1
China Trade Deal

Reduction in gasoline demand and a price war between Saudi Arabia and Russia

Record world wheat ending stocks and near record corn, soybean, and cotton ending stocks

Hagerman and Anderson (2020)

consumer actions have changed permanently as many of us have lived virtually online during the “Safer at Home” phase. Perhaps we will return to some semblance of past consumer choices and preferences.

Oklahoma businesses of all kinds may need to invest time in online marketing platforms, digital media and finding a way to create trust relationships with customers. Sectors like tourism may see a greater influx of tourists that stay in-state this year and take advantage of outdoor amenities. Now may be the perfect time to build additional Oklahoma pride in our many natural resources.

There is a lot of discussion regarding what the new normal will look like. Business practices, consumer choices and consumer demands may no longer look like pre-COVID standards. Opportunities may arise for entrepreneurs who can help other businesses pivot to the new environment.

We do not know how long impacts will last, and the shift to an online presence and enhanced consumer safety concerns could lead businesses to something new.

Only time will tell what the new normal will be; however, we can feel confident that the basics of business development and management will continue to be valid. Having sound business plans with appropriate management practices and a firm understanding of the market and consumers will matter, perhaps now more than ever.



FOR THE FULL SERIES OF COVID-19 INDUSTRY SECTOR REPORTS AND RESOURCES FROM OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION, VISIT

EXTENSION.OKSTATE.EDU

AND CLICK ON THE “**CORONAVIRUS INFORMATION AND NEWS**” LINK.

WHAT COVID-19 REVEALED ABOUT OUR MEAT SUPPLY CHAIN

Breaking down the complex array of factors that shifted our nation's meat supply seemingly overnight, sending livestock markets and food prices, alike, into convulsions.

By Michael Nepveux, American Farm Bureau Federation economist

The self-distancing and quarantine protocols put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19 reduced economic growth, kept consumers in their homes and changed the way Americans purchase and consume food.

Food production, too, was significantly disrupted, especially at livestock processing facilities, where labor shortages and worker protection measures slowed throughput at plants around the country and even caused some facilities to shut down.

While we certainly are not over the COVID-19-induced disruptions to the economy, our food supply chain has largely adapted to continue to provide food for the country, although agricultural producers continue to feel extreme pain.

In many ways, COVID-19 has helped many Americans gain a better understanding of who grows their food and how it gets from the farm to their tables.

FOOD CONSUMPTION IN AMERICA

Before the pandemic, consumers in this country were spending more of their food dollars than ever before away from home.

Statistics from USDA's Economic Research Service show consumers spent a record \$1.7 trillion on food and beverages in 2018, up \$78 billion, or nearly 5%, from the previous year. Of that total, food purchases in grocery stores, warehouse stores or supercenters totaled \$628 billion, up \$23 billion, or nearly 3%, from 2017.

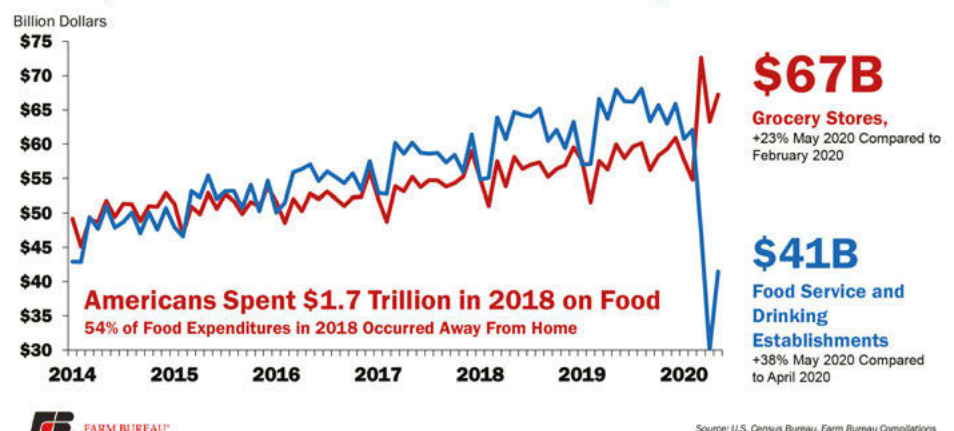
Food purchases in full-service and limited-service restaurants totaled \$678 billion – \$50 billion more than sales in grocery-type outlets and up \$39 billion, or nearly 6%, from the previous year. Food purchases in restaurants have exceeded those

of grocery-type outlets every year since 2015.

Figure 1 (below) shows consumers' dramatic response to shelter-in-place orders and dine-in restaurant closures, with the amount of money spent at food service establishments declining drastically in April. This shift had far-reaching implications that rippled through the supply chain all the way to our nation's farmers and ranchers.

Many products going through the food service demand channel are prepared or packaged in a specific way, and shifting this product from

Figure 1. Impact of COVID-19 on Grocery and Restaurant Demand
Net Expenditure Decline YoY of \$50B Mar-May



food service to retail is not a logistically simple task. One of the main challenges is that processors, who may produce curated proportioned product or specific packaging for a particular restaurant, may not be able to immediately produce case-ready meat for the grocery store.

PRESSURES ON THE SUPPLY SIDE OF THE EQUATION

Ranging from a few days to two weeks, over the past several months, dozens of livestock processing plants closed temporarily due to issues with COVID-19. In some cases, the closures were due to outbreaks among workers at the plants. In other cases, it was a struggle to keep workers, who were afraid of getting sick, coming into the plant.

Given that these facilities closed and reopened at irregular intervals, estimating impacts to the country's processing capacity is difficult.

However, we can estimate that at times over the previous few months, pork processing capacity was reduced by as much as 20% due to plant closures and beef processing capacity had been reduced by as much as 10%.

These estimates were derived from publicly available information and company announcements about packing plants and further processing facility closures. They do not factor in reductions in capacity due to slowing throughput and reduced line speeds at these facilities, which also reduce capacity.

In an effort to protect employees, processing companies implemented new policies (such as installing Plexiglas barriers between workers, spacing employees further apart, etc.) and incorporated more social distancing in their facilities, which slowed the flow of product through their lines.

Figure 2. Processing Capacity Disrupted

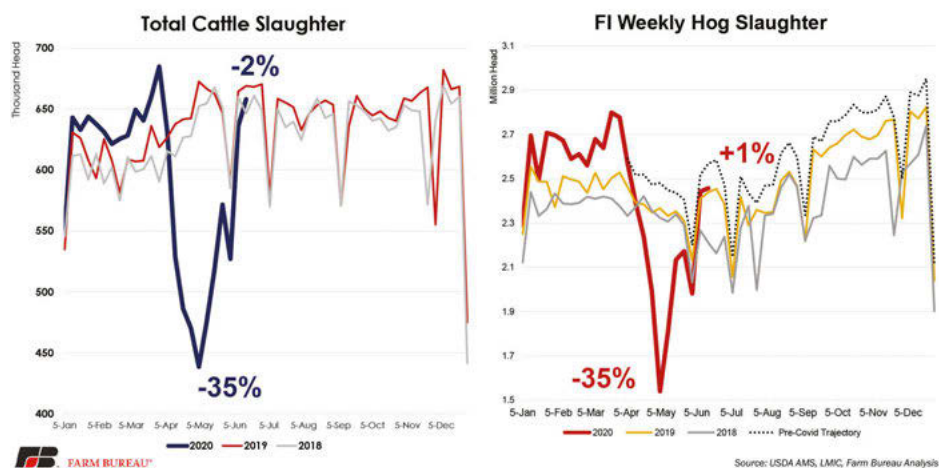
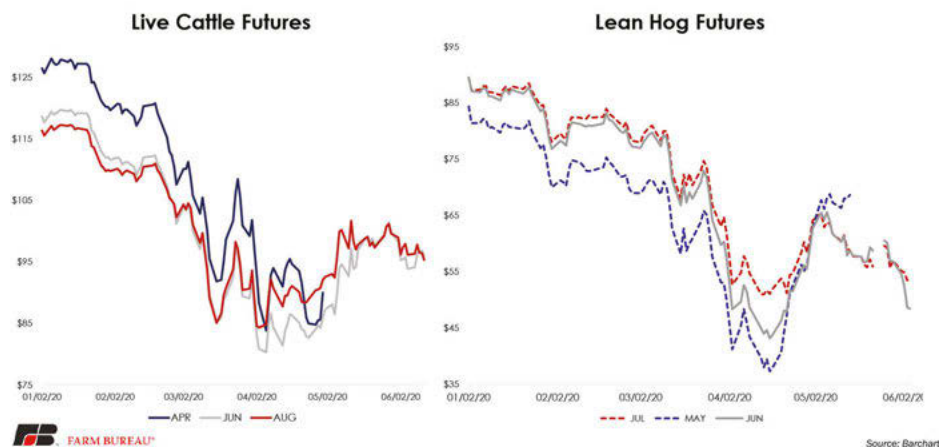


Figure 3. Futures Markets Have Been (More) Volatile



This reduction is more difficult to quantify but has the potential to have more far-reaching impacts than direct plant closures. One data point that we can use as a proxy for this difficult-to-gauge number is overall weekly slaughter of cattle and hogs.

Figure 2 (above top) shows the drastic drop in slaughter numbers for hogs and cattle. At its worst, weekly total cattle slaughter decreased by 35% from 2019, but since then it has largely recovered.

Weekly hog slaughter dropped 35% from 2019, but has already recovered

to levels above last year's. It took over a month, but for the most part, slaughter capacity has largely returned to "normal" and is above 2019 levels, if not quite to early 2020 levels.

Without the processing capacity, plants could not take delivery of animals, which drove down prices paid to producers and created backlogs throughout the system. Figure 3 (above) shows the dramatic decline in live cattle futures and the roller coaster that lean hog futures have been on.

PRESSURES ON THE DEMAND SIDE OF THE EQUATION

With limited processing capacity comes lower output of meat and poultry products, which has pushed wholesale prices way up.

The choice boxed beef cutout has surged well beyond historical levels, more than doubling in value in a matter of weeks. The composite boxed beef cutout increased by 132% from its February low to its May high.

The pork cutout also more than doubled, but for the most part remained below 2014 highs, when PEDv decimated the country's pork industry.

Something that should be mentioned here is the way beef is sold. On a typical day, a retailer is not going to be able to order more meat for delivery the next day; that is not how the system works.

The meat that retailers sell on a typical day is product the retailer started planning sales around as many as three months before. The retailer may have actually purchased the product as many as six weeks prior.

This means there is not a large

volume of “unsold for” meat in the market on a typical day, and much of the meat being processed in a plant has already been sold to a retailer.

The spike in the cutout was partly driven by a surge in demand as retailers looked to refill their meat cases, increasing competition for the small share of “unsold for” meat.

As processing facilities faced labor struggles and a real strain on supply developed, there was less and less available meat on the spot market, further driving the spike in price.

Because much of the meat delivered to grocery stores during these weeks had been sold to retailers weeks or months earlier, less of it was valued at these historic cutout prices than some think.

PUTTING SUPPLY AND DEMAND TOGETHER

As wholesale prices for meat skyrocketed and livestock prices plummeted, the live-to-cutout spread for beef widened to the degree it caught President Trump's eye.

Figure 5 (opposite page) shows the increase in the live-to-cutout spread for beef. This spread comes from the

Livestock Marketing Information Center's database of calculated gross margins on a 1,000 lbs.-of-steer basis.

These calculations are essentially the spread between inputs and outputs and do not include processing costs (energy, labor, etc.) and fixed costs.

It is tempting to look at Figure 5 and draw conclusions about packer margins, but while the live-to-cutout spread typically provides a good measure of the overall health of packer margins, the current environment makes that incredibly difficult to gauge.

Processing plants' new COVID-19 safety measures add costs that are not included in the spread. There is no way to know those costs without getting a look at the processing companies' internal information, but one can infer that the cost of protective gear, increased sick leave, increased bonuses and increased incentive pay are very high for these businesses.

Additionally, while a plant may be profitable while operating at 90%-100% capacity, that may not hold true at 50% capacity, even with record-breaking spreads.

The fixed costs associated with operating a plant come in many forms, including massive asset investment costs and large regulatory costs.

The companies normally spread those costs over many animals when operating at or near full capacity, but when capacity is reduced significantly, the ability to operate profitably declines as they spread these fixed costs out over fewer animals.

Taking into account reduced throughput and increased COVID-19-related costs, processor profitability has the potential to decline dramatically.

Figure 4. Cutout Market Upended

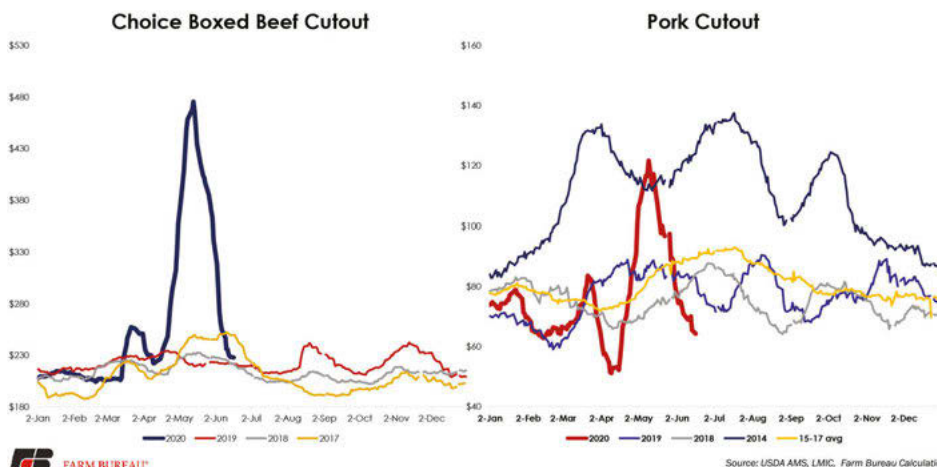
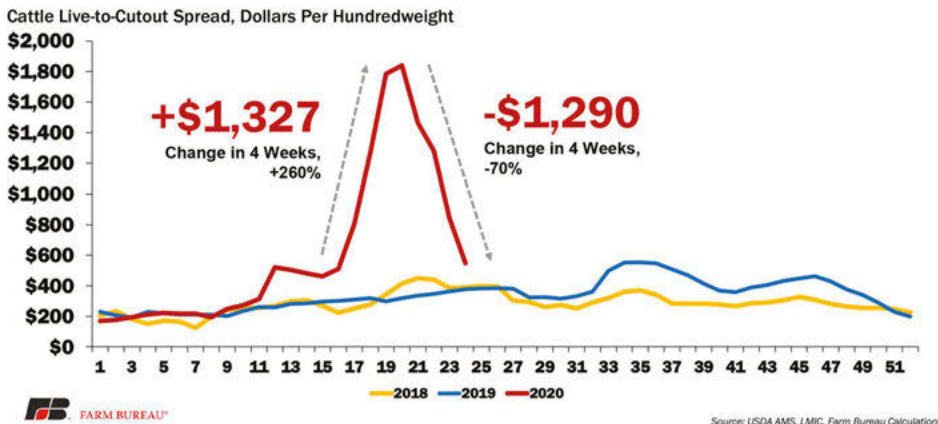


Figure 5. Rise and Fall of the Live-To-Cutout Spread Due to COVID-19 Disruption



While there is no way to know for sure how profitable some of these plants are, it is certain that the picture is much murkier than a simple cursory look at Figure 5 would tell you.

THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Major disruptions in the cattle and hog markets, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, have led to many conversations about the role of trade for livestock and meat markets.

Export markets offer an important outlet for our product, with exports comprising 11% of beef production, 16% of chicken production and 23% of pork production.

The pork industry in particular made a concerted effort to expand with an eye on export markets as the eventual consumer of that product.

In particular, the U.S. has an important trading relationship with our closest neighbors, Canada and Mexico. Over more than two decades, the cattle and hog industries in Canada, the U.S. and Mexico have evolved based on a consistent and favorable market arrangement.

Cattle trade flows play an important role across the U.S. well

beyond trade deficits and surpluses, or volumes. They provide numbers to keep feedlots full and packing plants running efficiently. They provide flexibility to adjust to market conditions along the supply chain in all three countries. In turn, these cattle become beef, and free trade agreements allow for our processing sector to ship different cuts to those countries that desire them the most.

The U.S. would be hard-pressed to consume domestically the variety meats from its own cattle supply; these byproducts would otherwise be considered waste without access to other markets that preferred these meats (the typical U.S. consumer isn't going to be found eating chicken paws, offal and other variety meats found on our animals).

Ultimately, these relationships have increased the value of the carcass in the U.S., finding consumers that value each of these cuts.

STEPS TAKEN BY AFBF

To capture value for livestock producers, American Farm Bureau is working aggressively,

particularly during the coronavirus pandemic, to make sure there is no market manipulation and that livestock producers are fairly compensated for their cattle. To that end, American Farm Bureau:

- Is in the process of convening a working group comprised of state Farm Bureau presidents to investigate the impacts of COVID-19 on livestock markets and actions taken by the packing industry during this crisis;
- Has called for investigations by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission and USDA into questionable market practices;
- Has met with both CFTC and USDA officials to convey its strong interest in a robust, aggressive investigation of any market-distorting activities;
- Is supporting the Trump Administration's initiative to have USDA investigate potential market-distorting tactics;
- Is working with governmental entities and other agricultural organizations to engage in aggressive oversight of cattle markets to ensure producers receive fair value for their livestock;
- Is strongly implementing AFBF policy as written by our producer members to capture fair value for their products; and
- Will oppose efforts that undermine producers' ability to get the best price for their products.

AFBF's initiatives are guided by the policies written by our farmer and rancher members. Those policies hold the greatest promise of delivering the most value for producers' products.



RURAL BROADBAND & INFRASTRUCTURE

Connecting Oklahoma to the world through reliable, high-speed internet and rural roads and bridges is a necessity for our livelihoods.

While schools, companies and organizations canceled events and activities as the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the U.S., educators, employees and employers alike moved their daily duties online.

From meetings to classes and from core job activities to late-night entertainment, the world was still accessible from home, as long as one did not stray too far from a Wi-Fi signal.

But unlike in the urban and suburban parts of our state where broadband internet providers are plentiful and download speeds are more limited by the age of your router than by your internet provider, many rural residents found themselves either scrambling or frustrated trying to accomplish their daily tasks due to slow internet speeds and lacking cellular data coverage.

In July 2019, the Kansas City branch of the Federal Reserve Bank issued a report ranking Oklahoma 47th in the nation for broadband connectivity among the 50 states. Additionally, 30% of Oklahoma's population was designated "underserved," with access to fewer than two wired internet providers. The Fed's report observed, "Broadband today equals electricity and telephone service in the 1930s."

According to Oklahoma State University Extension, a survey conducted in the early stages of the pandemic found that 24% of students in Oklahoma did not have internet access at home. While digital education platforms can help students continue learning though a pandemic when they are not able to come to a classroom, a lack of internet access at home in such circumstances creates an uneven playing field.

Slow or unreliable internet is annoying when your favorite video or movie endlessly buffers, but it is catastrophic when your telemedicine appointment abruptly ends due to a lack of bandwidth. Poor broadband access and cellular data service puts rural

communities at a disadvantage for educational opportunities, economic development and maintaining a similar quality of life that our urban neighbors have.

Farming and ranching is increasingly reliant upon constant, reliable data connections. Modern agriculture produces tremendous amounts of data from yields to input use to animal information, and the ability to move that data and use it effectively is an integral part of farmers' and ranchers' decision-making processes.

And while there is an increased focus on high-speed internet access in the wake of the pandemic, maintaining our roads and bridges that link our rural areas to the rest of the world continues to be a vital need.

Highway infrastructure allows our farm and ranch products to flow from fields and pastures to markets across our nation. Our rural residents rely on roadways to safely transport their families to and from jobs, schools and while running necessary errands.

A May 2020 report released by TRIP in conjunction with American Farm Bureau ranked Oklahoma second in the nation in a list of states with the highest percentage of major rural roads rated to be in "poor" condition.

While Oklahoma has made strides with the County Improvement for Roads and Bridges program, progress is still needed to ensure rural Oklahomans are well connected with markets, products and economic opportunities.

The need for improved infrastructure in rural Oklahoma continues to be an area of focus for Oklahoma Farm Bureau and AFBF. The COVID-19 pandemic has merely brought back to mind the deficiencies that our rural residents have lived with for years.

No matter if it is internet connectivity or physical connectivity, the goods, products, people and services our rural areas have to offer need access to the world to help our state and our people prosper.



MAKING IT THROUGH TOGETHER

Oklahoma's farmers and ranchers have faced tough times before, and Oklahoma agriculture will continue to work toward better days as a single, united community.

Oklahoma farmers and ranchers are not strangers to hardship. Life on the farm has nearly always been accompanied by adversity.

When the world changed seemingly overnight as fear over the COVID-19 pandemic grew, farmers and ranchers carried on with their generations-long task of producing healthy, affordable and abundant food and fiber.

As consumers both urban and rural faced uncertainty and bare shelves every time they shopped for groceries, uncertainty mounted for farmers and ranchers well beyond the usual risks that come with agriculture.

Already facing low commodity and livestock prices and reeling from several years of weather extremes, Oklahoma's agriculture community was already working through challenges and struggles.

The COVID-19 outbreak piled on even more worries.

Facing challenge after challenge in rural Oklahoma, it is easy to feel overwhelmed and hopeless. Yet it is unprecedented times like these when the heart of our rural communities have the chance to shine.

Farm Bureau members are known for using their voice to produce solutions through state and federal policy. Thanks in part to the urging of Farm Bureau members across the country, national leaders recognized the importance of federal programs for the agriculture sector including the Paycheck Protection Program and the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program that brought welcome relief to America's agricultural producers.

But good policy is not always enough. Though farmers and ranchers are known for being tough and resilient, these are difficult and unprecedented days.

Farm Bureau members can – and must – use those

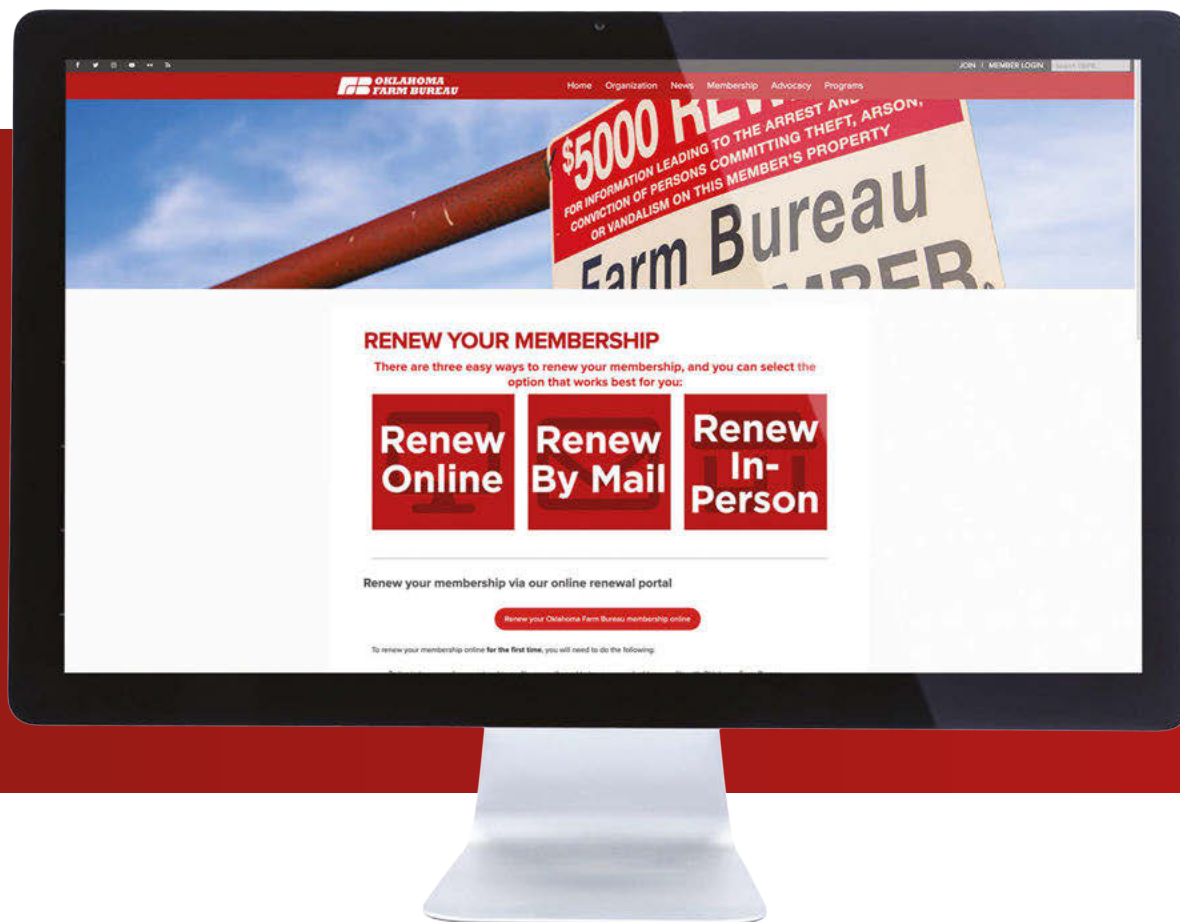
same voices throughout farm country to speak words of hope and encouragement. Whether your neighbor across the pasture, your family member down the road or your Farm Bureau friend across the state, reach out to your loved ones and ask them how they are doing. A quick conversation can make an important difference.

It is important not to underestimate the impact of a simple phone call to a fellow farmer or rancher you have not seen in a while. Nor should we discount the importance of taking the time to visit with someone who might be on your mind as our world navigates unprecedented changes.

In agriculture, we like to talk about cattle, weather, equipment and prices. However, people are the core of our industry. We feed people. We clothe people. We help people. When agriculture faces tough circumstances, it is important to focus on each other – on the people who make our industry and our rural communities great.

Getting through these times takes a focused effort. Oklahomans have known for generations that surviving – and even thriving – through challenges does not happen by accident or sheer luck. It takes effort to step out of our normal routines to take time and connect with our friends, neighbors and acquaintances for whom a simple conversation could change everything.

We all need each other to get through these challenging times. While no one knows what the future holds, the one thing we must be able to count on is one another. Farm country will get through this crisis – just as it has every other time – but it is going to take all of us working together to care for our friends and neighbors in the agricultural community. **FB**



Renewing **refreshed**

Renewing your Oklahoma Farm Bureau membership has never been easier with our new online renewal option.

The arrival of fall brings with it many important milestones for Oklahoma: cooler days, college football, fall harvest – and for Oklahoma Farm Bureau members – membership renewal. This fall, renewing your Oklahoma Farm Bureau membership will be easier than ever with our new online renewal option.

OKFB members now have access to our online membership portal to renew their membership with a credit card payment. Members will still receive paper renewal statements by mail, and county Farm Bureau offices will continue to accept membership payments. Our online renewal process is just one more convenient way for OKFB members to pay their membership dues.

Please note that a \$2 convenience fee applies to online membership renewals.

If you joined OKFB online, or if you know your username and password to log in to our online member portal, you can use those credentials to access your member profile and renew your membership.

If you do not have an email address on file, or if you are unsure if you have an email address registered with OKFB, follow the steps that appear at the top of the next page to get access to your member profile on our membership site.

Once you have an online membership profile registered with an email address and password, you can log in to your account to renew your membership and update your personal information.

Please know that our membership portal is separate from the My Insurance portal provided to members who have OKFB Insurance. A separate login is needed for each online portal.

You can always visit okfarmbureau.org/renew to see all the ways you can renew your OKFB membership.

We appreciate each and every one of our Farm Bureau members, and we hope you will continue to partner with OKFB as we work to improve the lives of all Oklahomans by supporting our state's agriculture community.

Your membership renewal notice will have a new look for our 2021 membership year!

The 2021 OKFB membership statement has been designed to make your membership dues amount easier to see and understand. Be sure to look for your county Farm Bureau's message on your statement to stay up-to-date with county Farm Bureau meetings or announcements.

Follow these easy steps to set up your online membership account:

1 Contact your county Farm Bureau office to set up your online membership account

Call or stop by your county Farm Bureau office and request that they set up an email address for your online membership account so you can renew your membership. Contact information for all county Farm Bureau offices is on our website at okfarmbureau.org/counties.

2 Request a password reset using the “forgot password” link

Once your county Farm Bureau has entered your email address and activated your online account, visit our website at okfarmbureau.org and click “Member Login” in the top right-hand corner of the site. To set up your password for the first time, click “Forgot Password?” and enter your email address you provided to your county Farm Bureau office.

3 Follow the link emailed to you to reset your password

You will receive an email message containing instructions and a link to reset your password. For security purposes, the link contained in the email address will expire after 20 minutes. Be sure to check any “Spam” or “Junk” folders to ensure the message did not get caught in any email filtering your service provider may use.

Three excellent options to make a difference

When you renew your membership dues, you have the opportunity to contribute optional dues to three important OKFB programs that work to improve the quality of life in Oklahoma, provide a voice for Farm Bureau members and defend fellow Oklahomans from overregulation.

Optional dues go above and beyond your membership dues by allowing your organization to do even more work across our state – and beyond – to help our fellow Oklahomans and ensure our rural way of life continues for generations to come.

A suggested optional dues amount will appear on your membership billing statement, but OKFB members can contribute any amount they choose to these important programs.


OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU FOUNDATION FOR AGRICULTURE

Our Foundation for Agriculture connects consumers with accurate agriculture information and helps sustain rural communities through a variety of programs. From helping place accurate agriculture books in schools to helping Oklahomans recover in times of disaster, contributions to the OKFB Foundation for Agriculture help create a brighter future for our state.

OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU LEGAL FOUNDATION

Our Legal Foundation helps support Oklahoma Farm Bureau members and rural Oklahomans by entering the legal arena to defend private property rights and regulatory overreach. The Legal Foundation also monitors litigation and regulation to ensure that farmers, ranchers and rural Oklahomans are not overly burdened with undue laws and regulations.

OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Oklahoma Farm Bureau’s political action committee is member-driven, supporting candidates for public office who understand the important contributions agriculture and rural communities make to our state. County Farm Bureau members who are familiar with their local communities and political races review candidates and decide whom to support. 

Please consider contributing to these impactful programs when you renew your OKFB membership. When we join together, Farm Bureau members can provide an even louder voice for agriculture and all Oklahomans.

Farm Bureau members appointed to state board of ag, conservation commission

Three Oklahoma Farm Bureau members from across the state have been confirmed to boards that oversee agriculture and conservation in the state.

Brent Bolen, Clay Burtrum and Gary Crawley were appointed to positions by Gov. Kevin Stitt and confirmed by the Oklahoma State Senate.

“At Oklahoma Farm Bureau, we’re proud to have members who are leaders across all sectors of the agricultural industry,” said Rodd Moesel, OKFB president. “Each of these members bring a wealth of knowledge and experience in agriculture to their positions that will serve farmers, ranchers and rural Oklahomans well.”

Brent Bolen, McCurtain County Farm Bureau vice president, will serve the southeast area of the state on the State

Board of Agriculture. Bolen is a poultry, cattle and hay producer near Idabel. He also has served on the Oklahoma Agriculture Advisory Committee and is president of the Idabel Public Schools Board of Education.

Burtrum, a Payne County Farm Bureau member, will represent northeast Oklahoma on the State Board of Agriculture. A commercial cow-calf producer from Stillwater, he has experience working with one of the nation’s largest feed yards and now owns and operates an agriculture accounting and consulting firm. He has served in leadership roles with the Oklahoma Beef Council, Oklahoma Cattlemen’s Association and National Cattlemen’s Beef Association.

OKFB District Five Director Gary Crawley of Savanna was confirmed as a member of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission. Crawley will serve a five-year term representing Area V which includes 18 conservation districts across southeast Oklahoma. He is the second generation on his family’s cattle operation located in Pittsburg County.

Other OKFB members confirmed to positions include Jackson County Farm Bureau member Mike Schulz, named a member of the Oklahoma Space Industry Development Authority, and Roger Mills County Farm Bureau President Joshua Haven as a member of the Oklahoma Mining Commission.



Brent Bolen
State Board of Agriculture



Clay Burtrum
State Board of Agriculture



Gary Crawley
Oklahoma Conservation Commission



2020 Census deadline extended, rural response lags due to hand deliveries

The 2020 Census, the U.S. Census Bureau's decennial count of the United States population, has encountered several challenges due to the coronavirus pandemic. Originally scheduled to be completed by the end of July, Americans now have until Oct. 31, 2020 to be counted in the census.

The effort launched in mid-March as households across the country received census invitations in the mail. Many rural residents – whose census packets are hand-delivered by census workers – saw delays in receiving census invitations and questionnaires as the Census Bureau put its in-person operations on hold during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Though early rural response rates were low, census participation in rural counties began to increase as the Census Bureau resumed its in-person delivery of census questionnaires in early May. As of mid-June, the Census Bureau reported 96% of its in-person census deliveries – known as update leave – had been completed.

When the operation is finished, nearly every household nationwide will have received an invitation to participate in the 2020 Census either in the mail or from a census worker.

Households can respond online at my2020census.gov, by phone at (844) 330-2020 or by completing and returning the paper form by mail. Rural Oklahomans who have not received a census invitation are encouraged to

Holman named assistant director of public policy

Caylie Holman has been named an assistant director of public policy at Oklahoma Farm Bureau.

In the new role, she will work alongside the public policy staff to advocate for Farm Bureau's grassroots policy at the state Capitol.

Holman joined the organization in 2018 as the south central field representative, where she served as a liaison between county Farm Bureau organizations and the home office.

"I've enjoyed getting to know our membership, and having the opportunity to understand how policy at the state level impacts their operations," Holman said. "It's so important for our organization to continue working to preserve our state's family farms."

Before joining Farm Bureau, Holman previously served as a legislative correspondent for Sen. James Lankford in Washington, D.C. The Tecumseh native earned a degree in communications from

Southwestern Oklahoma State University. She and her husband, Corey, live in Asher, Oklahoma, where they own a cow/calf and hay operation.



Caylie Holman

contact the U.S. Census Bureau.

The census, taken every 10 years, is the U.S. Census Bureau's count of every person living in the United States and its five territories. Census response rates can have a significant impact on rural communities as each person counted brings an estimated \$16,750 in federal

funding to their community over the next 10 years. The population counts also determine government representation as they are used in drawing congressional and state legislative districts.

For more information about being counted in the 2020 Census, visit 2020Census.gov.



Eschete, Smith, Hughbanks learn more about OKFB as summer interns

Farmers and ranchers love and cherish the way of life they enjoy in rural Oklahoma. They work tirelessly from sunup to sundown to ensure their children and grandchildren have the same opportunity to care for the land.

Just as its members commit to building up their rural communities for the future, Oklahoma Farm Bureau is working to protect the rural way of life by investing in the next generation of leaders in agriculture. In a continuous effort to accomplish the organization's mission, OKFB has welcomed three summer interns to its staff.

Cole Eschete of Bokchito, Emily Smith of Elk City and Ridge Hughbanks of Alva are each fifth-generation agriculturalists studying various majors within the Ferguson College of Agriculture at Oklahoma State University.

Though the three students' past and present involvement in agriculture do not look the same, the common denominator amongst them is an unwavering passion for Oklahoma agriculture.

Eschete grew up on his family's cattle and hay operation in Bryan County where his love for agriculture began. His

involvement expanded further when he developed a passion for showing pigs as well as the FFA. After a long career in FFA, Eschete served as the 2018-2019 Oklahoma FFA state president.

"As the little kid sitting with my dad on the tractor in the hay field, I would have never pictured my involvement with agriculture to look like what it does today," Eschete said. "I've learned that agriculture is so much more than just the family farm."

During his internship at OKFB, Eschete has assisted Farm Bureau staff with various programs and activities while gaining a better understanding of the organization's role within the agriculture industry. Eschete is currently working to earn a degree in animal science with hopes of pursuing a career in either agriculture sales or insurance.

Smith's roots run deep in Beckham County where her family farms and runs a small cattle operation. Though she grew up around agriculture, her passion was sparked at the age of nine when she began showing market lambs at the local, state and national level.

"If it weren't for my heavy involvement

showing lambs, I would not be where I am today," Smith said. "At the time, I thought I loved it because of the extensive time I spent competing in show rings across the nation, but later realized it was the people who surrounded the ring who made me love the industry so much."

Smith's favorite aspect of agriculture is the people who make up the industry.

"At the time, all I ever was focused on was the next trophy, buckle, banner or title I could earn," she said. "But now, I look back and realize through those experiences, I gained more important things such as a strong work ethic, interpersonal skills, responsibility and so much more."

During her internship at Farm Bureau, Smith has provided technical and creative support in the OKFB Communications and Public Relations Division while gaining valuable workplace experience. After graduating with a degree in agricultural communications in December 2020, she plans to pursue a master's degree within the Ferguson College of Agriculture beginning in spring 2021.

Hughbanks plays an active role in



Cole Eschete
Bokchito, Oklahoma



Emily Smith
Elk City, Oklahoma



Ridge Hughbanks
Alva, Oklahoma

his family's farm and ranch located in portions of Alfalfa County and southern Kansas, where they raise wheat, alfalfa and run a cow-calf operation.

His upbringing in agriculture has been just as much a lifestyle as an enterprise that his family has been heavily involved with for decades.

"Some of my fondest memories and the most important lessons learned during my life are attributed to being involved in agriculture," Hughbanks said. "My first 'high profile' job on the farm included having to work a 180-acre field with a 12-foot disc."

Hughbanks' involvement in agriculture reaches far outside of northwest Oklahoma where he served as the 2017-2018 Oklahoma FFA state president as well as the 2018-2019 National FFA central region vice president.

Hughbanks is a firm believer that agriculture gives his life greater meaning.

"There is something to be said about being in board rooms and have conversations with decision makers, but when you can do something with your hands and see the immediate and direct difference you are making, you walk away with an undeniable sense of fulfillment," Hughbanks said. "That has certainly been my experience and it's all attributed to my time in agriculture."

While interning at OKFB, Hughbanks has conducted research on the feasibility of expanding beef processing and packing facilities in Oklahoma. His work will help inform Farm Bureau members about the structural issues facing the animal protein industry as they develop grassroots policy in the fall. Hughbanks will also consider ways that rural Oklahomans can expand business opportunities to serve rural communities around the state.

Hughbanks will graduate with a degree in agribusiness in May 2021 with hopes of pursuing a career in law.

As the students spend time working with the grassroots organization and learning more about Oklahoma agriculture, OKFB hopes each will leave with valuable hands-on experience to better equip them in their future endeavors as leaders in agriculture and rural Oklahoma.



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OKFB's 2020 legislative review

The 2020 Oklahoma legislative session encountered many challenges including a health emergency that forced the state Capitol to close for six weeks, a state revenue failure and numerous gubernatorial vetoes. This year was difficult from start to finish, but Oklahoma Farm Bureau continued to engage lawmakers from around the state on a daily basis about our priority issues.

Despite spending fewer days in session than any legislature in Oklahoma history, a few bills did successfully complete the legislative process.

The legislation explained below can be a helpful guide for OKFB members as they prepare to discuss policy issues at August Area Meetings and develop grassroots policy throughout the fall.

Below are nine bills of that are set to become state law.

HB 1048

Rep. Danny Sterling, Tecumseh, and Sen. Julie Daniels, Bartlesville

Limits the opportunity for groundwater rights to be acquired through eminent domain. Signed by the Gov. Kevin Stitt on March 5.

HB 2008

Rep. Justin Humphrey, Lane, and Sen. David Bullard, Durant

Authorizes the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry to promulgate rules for slaughter facilities and to seek USDA approval of new standards for meat inspection. Signed by the governor on May 20.

HB 3806

Rep. Toni Hasenbeck, Elgin, and Sen. Micheal Bergstrom, Adair

Creates legal definitions for the terms “beef”, “pork”, “livestock” and “meat.” Prohibits a person advertising, offering for sale or selling meat to engage in any misleading or deceptive practices and establishes guidelines. Signed by the governor on May 19.

HB 4018

Rep. Charles McCall, Atoka, and Sen. James Leewright, Bristow

Creates a 12-member Rural Broadband Expansion Council to conduct a study of rural broadband access in Oklahoma. It requires the council to divide the state into geographic areas based on existing broadband capability, cost of service, estimated costs for improving access, likelihood of changes in access in the future, need for change in law and policy impacting the ability to access broadband services at a reasonable price. The council also is directed to study incentives or programs that would improve existing rural broadband access and establish

broadband access to areas which currently do not. Vetoed by the governor on May 19, veto overridden by the Legislature on May 22.

SB 801

Sen. John Michael Montgomery, Lawton, and Rep. Marcus McEntire, Duncan

Modifies the authority of Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists to administer anesthesia in collaboration with a medical doctor, osteopathic physician, pediatric physician or dentist. Signed by the Governor on May 7.

SB 1276

Sen. Roger Thompson, Okemah, and Rep. Kevin Wallace, Wellston

Increases from 50% up to 75% of the internship and residency training subsidy provided by the Physician Manpower Training Commission be used for the rural and medically underserved areas of the state. Signed by the governor on May 19.

SB 1785

Sen. Chuck Hall, Perry, and Rep. Garry Mize, Edmond

Creates the Oklahoma Farmers Market and Farmers Hub Act, with legal definitions for the terms “farm food”, “farm food producer”, “farmers hub”, “farmers market”, “farm-direct marketer” and “value-added processor.” It requires the market be open at least one day per week and at least four months of the year and conduct direct sales from producers to consumers. Signed by the governor on May 20.

SB 1875

Sen. Dave Rader, Tulsa, and Rep. Terry O'Donnell, Catoosa

Creates the Oil and Gas Water Recycling and Reuse Act. Clarifies that prior to extraction, groundwater – including its

constituent elements – is the property of the owner of the surface estate and is subject to the right of the mineral owner or the oil and gas lessee, to extract the water as is reasonably necessary for the exploration or extraction of hydrocarbons. Signed by the governor on May 19.

Several measures were considered by legislative committees and began to advance, but ultimately failed or were sidelined due to concerns about their impact. As OKFB members prepare to discuss and develop policy in the fall, it's important to note these unsuccessful bills that can often give a window into what will be introduced next session.

HB 1992

Rep. Jadine Nollan, Sand Springs, and Sen. Darrell Weaver, Moore

Would have created the Oklahoma Public Safety Protection District Act. This proposal would have allowed municipalities to conduct an election to consider creation of a new ad valorem tax in order to fund purchases of public safety equipment and vehicles, salaries of municipal law enforcement, fire protection and emergency medical personnel. A controversial and contentious piece of legislation that was first considered in 2019, this bill advanced out of the House of Representatives this year, but never received a hearing in the Senate and failed to advance before the May 15 deadline.

HB 2776

Rep. Lonnie Sims, Jenks, and Sen. Dave Rader, Tulsa

Would have created the Oklahoma Hazard Mitigation Assessment District Act. Similar to HB 1992, this bill would have allowed a county to conduct an election to consider creation of a new ad valorem tax in order to fund hazard mitigation or disaster recovery projects. OKFB actively

worked with a coalition to oppose this measure and it failed on the House floor by a vote of 33 to 64 on March 9.

HB 3666

Rep. Chris Kannady, Oklahoma City, and Sen. Kim David, Porter

Would have required the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry to establish rules mandating buffer zones where industrial hemp crops could not be grown and limit the number of applications for industrial hemp grower licenses. This proposal was approved by the House of Representatives, but never received a hearing in the Senate and failed to advance before the May 15 deadline.

SB 1232

Sen. Julie Daniels, Bartlesville

Would have reduced the amount of interest an oil or gas producer is required to pay mineral owners when royalty payments are not made in a timely manner and extended the time period allowed for the first royalty payment from six months to one year. This bill advanced out of the Senate Energy Committee, but never received a hearing in a subsequent committee and failed a Feb. 27 deadline.

SB 1714

Sen. Adam Pugh, Edmond, and Rep. Garry Mize, Edmond

Would have changed the name of the Home Bakery Act of 2013 to the Homemade Food Freedom Act and exempted certain homemade food products from all licensing and inspection requirements of the State Department of Health and of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry. This proposal actually passed both the House and Senate once, but due to a last minute House amendment, would have been required to pass the Senate again, causing the bill to ultimately fail a deadline on May 15.

Join OKFB's policy development process with statewide August Area Meetings

Oklahoma Farm Bureau has announced the details of the upcoming August Area Meetings, serving as the kickoff for the organization's grassroots policy development process.

In each of OKFB's nine districts, members will receive an update from each of the departments within the organization, along with a summary of the most recent legislative session. Below is a schedule of the meetings.

District One - West

August 3 at 6 p.m.
Hunny's – Guymon
102 N. Main St.

District Five

August 20 at 6 p.m.
TBD

District One - East

August 4 at 6 p.m.
Northwest Electric – Woodward
2925 Williams Ave.

District Six

August 18 at 6 p.m.
Moore Farm's Event Barn – Pryor
9353 W. 500 Rd.

District Two

August 17 at 6 p.m.
Kiowa County Farm Bureau – Hobart
801 S. Broadway Ave.

District Seven

The Home Place Country Estate – Meno
27227 E. County Road 44

District Three

August 25 at 6 p.m.
Redlands Community College
Conference Center – El Reno
1300 S. Country Club Rd.

District Eight

August 24 at 6 p.m.
Pottawatomie County Museum – Shawnee
207 N. Minnesota

District Four - East

August 10 at 6 p.m.
Casa Romo – Ardmore
120 W. Main St.

District Nine

August 6 at 6 p.m.
Creek County Fairgrounds – Kellyville
17808 OK-66

District Four - West

August 13 at 6 p.m.
Comanche County Farm Bureau – Lawton
502 S.W. 11th

**Dates are subject to change. The latest August Area Meeting dates can be found online at okfarmbureau.org.*

For more information, contact your county Farm Bureau office or your district field representative.

For questions about the organization's grassroots policy development, please contact OKFB Public Policy staff at (405) 523-2300.





If interested in
registering for the
online training,
please contact
**OKFB Safety
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(405) 523-2300.

AFBF offers free online stress management course

Following the December 2019 announcement of a new farm stress management online training course for Farm Bureau employees and members, American Farm Bureau partnered with Farm Credit and Farmers Union to launch a free online training available to the general public.

Developed by Michigan State University Extension and University of Illinois Extension, the course will help farmers, their families and neighbors identify and cope with stress. It provides participants the skills to understand the sources of stress, manage their own stress, learn the warning signs of stress and suicide, identify effective communication strategies, and connect farmers and ranchers with appropriate mental health resources.

The challenges of ongoing low commodity prices, trade wars and extreme weather events have dramatically affected farmers and ranchers for years. Add the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic disruptions and that stress multiplies. Stress among farmers and ranchers is felt throughout farm operations and seeps into cities and towns across the country.

This online course builds upon past training materials Michigan State University Extension developed beginning in 2016, and tailored for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency in 2019. Additional courses and specific training have since educated employees and members of Farm Credit, Farm Bureau and Farmers

Union nationwide.

Skills learned in this course can help people within your community such as friends, family and neighbors during stressful times.

The course is broken into three sections that highlight:

- **Managing stress:** Participants will be able to detect the signs, symptoms and effects of stress on a person while learning how to help an individual cope with that stress in a healthy manner, the common triggers of stress for farmers and ranchers, and how it can affect their family.
- **Communicating with distressed farmers:** At the completion of this section, participants will learn how to properly interact with individuals involved in agriculture, techniques to help a farmer or rancher manage a stressful situation, and how to interact not only with a producer, but their family as well.
- **Suicide awareness:** A difficult but important step in the program, participants will learn how to recognize and provide initial assistance for someone showing suicidal thoughts. Through this course, participants build both their knowledge and confidence to communicate with individuals experiencing suicidal thoughts.

Featuring engaging content, self-paced activities, voice-over slide presentations and downloadable resources, participants can help connect individuals with the resources they may need while helping to reduce the stigma around mental health.

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Eight high school seniors awarded \$1,000 YF&R scholarship

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers committee has awarded eight high school seniors a \$1,000 college scholarship.

Each year the OKFB YF&R committee presents \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors pursuing a degree in agriculture at an Oklahoma accredited institution of higher learning and is available to all OKFB members.

"Each of these scholarship recipients represents the bright future of Oklahoma agriculture and our rural communities," said Nocona Cook, OKFB YF&R chairman. "The YF&R committee could not be more proud to support these students as they blaze their own path in agriculture."

The eight scholarship recipients are:

Tori Booker
Jackson County

Erin Slagell
Blaine County

Faith Howe
Murray County

Callie Clifton
Choctaw County

Courtney Jinkens
Rogers County

Tabor Budy
Woods County

Colt Jones
Garvin County

Jaden Brunnemer
Payne County

The eight scholarship recipients have a wide variety of career aspirations and have chosen degrees across the agriculture industry including plant and soil science, agribusiness, agricultural economics, agricultural communications and animal science biotechnology. 08667681

Students plan to study at higher-education institutions across the state including Oklahoma State University, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Northeastern A&M College and Eastern Oklahoma State College.



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OKFB board members tour local nonprofit RestoreOKC

Members of the Oklahoma Farm Bureau board of directors toured RestoreOKC on May 21 to learn about the organization's mission of serving the northeastern Oklahoma City community by providing much-needed food options, along with student opportunities, for fellow Oklahomans.

As they strive to better serve their community, RestoreOKC follows three ideas to help cultivate change: growing food, growing jobs and growing friendship.

Board members learned about RestoreOKC's community garden, greenhouse, aquaculture program and market in addition to their plans to add chickens and goats. They also got to see the tractor that the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture and Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma donated to the organization a few months ago.



RestoreOKC Director Caylee Dodson shows members of the OKFB board the community garden.



OKFB state board members (left to right) Keith Kisling, Gary Crawley and David VonTungeln look over the Kubota tractor donated in partnership between the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture and Farm Credit of Western Oklahoma.



District Five Director Gary Crawley examines one of many vertical aquaculture towers used at RestoreOKC.

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF PROPOSED CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT

Hornbeck, et al. v. Orscheln Farm and Home, LLC, et al.,
Case Number 18-00941-cv-W-BP (W.D. Mo.).

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You are Settlement Class Member if you have purchased, not for resale, one of the following products sold in the United States during the stated Class Period:

Product	Size	Start Class Period	End Class Period
MileMaster 303	3/2 gal.	Jan. 23, 2017	Present
MileMaster 303	5 gal.	May 25, 2013	Present
MileMaster 303	55 gal.	May 25, 2013	Present
H-K 303	3/2 gal.	May 25, 2013	April 30, 2016
H-K 303	5 gal.	May 25, 2013	March 21, 2019
Orscheln 303	5 gal.	Sept. 3, 2014	Aug. 16, 2017
SuperTech 303	5 gal.	Feb. 17, 2016	Feb. 10, 2018

The settlement establishes a \$18,825,000.00 “Class Settlement Fund” that will be paid to Settlement Class Members as: (1) cash awards of up to 100% of the purchase price paid for the 303 Tractor Hydraulic Fluid Products and (2) reimbursement for the costs of any repairs, parts, and specific equipment damage that a Settlement Class Member claims resulted from, in whole or in part, the use of the 303 Tractor Hydraulic Fluid Products during the Class Period. You may need to submit a Claim Form to receive your award, which can be obtained at www.303settlement.com or by calling 866-742-4955. The deadline to submit a Claim Form is August 31, 2020. Class Counsel will seek an incentive payment of \$5,000.00 for each of the Class Representatives. Class Counsel will ask that the Court award up to \$5,900,000.00 in attorneys’ fees and expenses. This amount will not be paid from the Class Settlement Fund.

If you do not want to be legally bound by the Settlement, you must exclude yourself from it by August 31, 2020. If you do not exclude yourself, you will not be able to sue Defendants for any claim relating to the lawsuit. If you remain a Settlement Class Member, you may object to the settlement by August 31, 2020. The Court will hold a hearing on October 13, 2020 to consider whether to approve the Settlement and a request for attorneys’ fees and expenses. This date may be moved, canceled, or otherwise modified; see www.303settlement.com for more information. This notice only summarizes the proposed settlement. For additional information, including the precise terms and conditions of the Settlement, please see www.303settlement.com or call 866-742-4955.

A Federal Court authorized this Notice. This is not a solicitation from a lawyer.

WLC fall conference to be held Sept. 25-26

Oklahoma Farm Bureau women from across the state are invited to attend the 2020 Women's Leadership Committee Fall Conference September 25-26 at the Hilton Garden Inn, located in Edmond.

Registration details for the event will be released soon. The event is free to all OKFB women.

For more information on the WLC Fall Conference, contact Marcia Irvin at (405) 523-2300.

Kinder named to EPA Advisory Committee

Jimmy Kinder, Oklahoma Farm Bureau District Four Director and Cotton County Farm Bureau member, was recently appointed to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Committee.

Comprised of 33 individuals from a variety of sectors across the U.S., the FRRCC provides independent policy advice, information and recommendations to the EPA administrator on a range of environmental issues and policies that are of importance to agriculture and rural communities.

"One of my priorities for EPA has been to restore trust for our agency among agricultural stakeholders and rural communities," said EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler. "This committee will provide valuable input on how EPA's decisions impact rural America, and I look forward to receiving the committee's recommendations."

Kinder is a fourth-generation farmer and rancher in Cotton County. He is an early adopter of no-till production practices on his farm where he grows wheat, canola and grain sorghum and raises cattle.



Jimmy Kinder

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OKFB YF&R to host shotgun shoot Aug. 29

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee will host its second annual shotgun shoot Aug. 29 at Quail Ridge Hunting and Sporting Clays in McCloud, Oklahoma.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture, which focuses on connecting consumers of all ages with the people who produce their food and fiber.

On the day of the event, registration will begin at 8 a.m., followed by shooting at 9 a.m. Lunch will be provided to all event participants and will be served at 11:30 a.m. Prizes and door prizes will be awarded at the conclusion of the event.

The cost to enter a team of four into the contest is \$375 and an individual entry is \$100.

For those interested in becoming a sponsor, there are two levels. All sponsor information must be submitted no later than August 7.

For more information, contact Zac Swartz at (405) 523-2300.

Sponsorship Opportunities

Platinum \$750

Includes two four-person teams and a logo on the event sign.

Gold \$500

Includes one four-person team and a logo on the event sign.

Teachers learn about OKFB safety programs

A group of Oklahoma teachers participating in Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom's summer tour made a stop at Oklahoma Farm Bureau home office on June 11 to learn about the organization's safety programs available to schools across the state. The various free programs are available for local community or school gatherings including DUI prevention, fire safety, farm safety, school bus safety, bicycle safety and defensive driving courses for individuals 16-years-old and above.

During their stop, teachers had the chance to try out the DUI prevention carts and climb inside the new fire safety inflatable house.

To learn more about OKFB's safety program, contact Burton Harmon at (405) 523-2300.



Above: Teachers participating in Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom's summer tour learn more about OKFB's new fire safety inflatable house, designed to teach elementary school children what to do in case of a building fire.



Above: Two teachers take a shot at completing the DUI prevention course. Geared for high school students and young adults, participants must navigate their cart through a course while wearing goggles that impair their vision.

AgBoost member benefit offers free feature to all users

AgBoost shows ranchers the genetic profile and attributes of a single animal or the entire herd. Interested to know if an animal scores 60% in marbling, 90% in average daily gain, but only 30% in pregnancy rate? Members can now have all that information at their fingertips.

As part of the latest addition to its application, AgBoost has created a marketplace that allows individual ranchers, genetic providers and product and service providers the ability to sell online. Easily find sources for new genetics, new cattle to grow a herd, fresh beef and other products and services. In addition, the use of the herd management feature in the application is now free to all users.

“Our goal is to allow our users to use technology to benefit their individual operations,” said Sean Akadiri, founder of AgBoost. “We believe that giving producers the ability to advertise their animals, genetics, products and services online we can give them a competitive advantage.”

To learn more about AgBoost and other member benefits available, visit okfarmbureau.org.

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† A current Farm Bureau membership verification certificate must be presented to the Case IH dealer in advance of product delivery to receive the incentive discount.



* Offer available through 12/31/2020. This offer may be combined with other offers, but is not valid on prior purchases. A valid Farm Bureau® Membership Certificate is required, which may be obtained at www.fb.org/about/join. See your participating Case IH dealer for details and eligibility requirements. Not available in all states. Offer subject to change or cancellation without notice. Farm Bureau and the FB State Logo are registered service marks owned by the American Farm Bureau Federation, and are used by CNH Industrial LLC under license from the American Farm Bureau Federation. ©2020 CNH Industrial America LLC. All rights reserved. Case IH is a trademark registered in the United States and many other countries, owned by or licensed to CNH Industrial N.V., its subsidiaries or affiliates. www.caseih.com

OKFB Foundation for Ag, WLC partner to donate accurate agriculture books


The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture has joined with the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee in an effort to ensure accurate agriculture books are placed in the hands of students. Educators across the state are encouraged to apply.

The applications are limited to

Oklahoma teachers or librarians, with only one person applying per school. Teachers have the option to apply for books geared towards a particular grade level while librarians can apply for books that are appropriate for multiple grades.

Applications must be submitted no later than Sept. 18 to the OKFB office.

Awards will be presented to recipients during the OKFB Annual Meeting Nov. 5-8 in Norman.

To complete the Bushels for Books application, visit the application center at okfarmbureau.org or contact Marcia Irvin at (405) 523-2300. 

Seven components of intentional management on a ranch

By Hugh Aljoe

Noble Research Institute Director of producer relations

What is intentional management? It might be easier to describe what it is not than to describe what it is. In an attempt at “tongue-in-cheek” humor, let me describe what intentional management is not.

You might not be managing intentionally if ...

- Your record-keeping system is a shoe box or a file folder in which you keep receipts until tax time.
- Your marketing plan is to sell the largest calves each time you pen the herd, weaning the calves en route to the sale barn.
- Your winter feeding program is to provide cubes a couple of times a week to the herd without knowing the quality of the hay or standing forage on offer.
- Your stocking rate was set by what the neighbor, your granddad or your real estate agent suggested, and you don't adjust it until drought forces you to.
- You don't routinely test and analyze

your pasture soils, yet you routinely apply fertilizer.

I'm sure you can think of other examples of how we as producers too often go about “running” cattle with little forethought and planning. In favorable years, we can get by easily enough, but in unfavorable years (due to weather, markets or other issues), difficulties arise. These unanticipated surprises can be costly and often difficult to overcome. Hopefully, most of us learn from our mistakes and failures and, if we survive, can laugh at them in hindsight. The secret is to fail early, fail often, but fail cheaply — and adapt our management so that we do not repeat our mistakes.

Manage with intent

Intentional management is the active management of the collective components of an operation toward the achievement of realistic, well-defined goals. It is a holistic and forward-focused

management approach in which an operational management plan is created and used as a template to plan and prioritize activities then to monitor and measure progress toward defined production and economic objectives. Management plans need to be built to complement the resources of the operation — the land, facilities, personnel and production system(s) being operated.

Even though there is always some uncertainty within an agricultural operation, with a management plan in place, a producer has a road map to guide him or her toward a predetermined outcome or goal.

When variations in climate, markets or other surprises occur and force a change of course, having the plan in place helps guide a producer to either continue to navigate toward the original outcome or alter the course toward a new, more realistic or attainable goal, given the current circumstances.



Seven components of intentional management

There are seven key components of intentional management on a ranch:

1. First is the management plan itself, which is the compilation and integration of the other six components.
2. Second is the pasture management plan, which includes the soils, forages and water resources. The management plan is literally grounded by the pasture management plan, which forms the foundation upon which the other components rest. The pasture management plan is the first component to address in intentional management.
3. Third is the stocking rate management plan, which entails the matching of grazing livestock numbers to forage production as well as managing and adapting livestock numbers as forage production changes within and over years.
4. Fourth is the cattle management plan. The cattle management plan includes the breeding, nutrition, health and husbandry aspects of a cattle program, which ideally complements the land resources of the operation.
5. Fifth is the marketing plan, which leverages the attributes of the cattle and management for optimum economic results. Typically, this means managing the ranch resources so there is an element of flexibility within the stocking rate for retained ownership of calves or other stocker cattle enterprises as well as timing sales with favorable cattle markets and market cycles.
6. The sixth component is a good record-keeping system for ranch operations. This is a record-keeping system that allows easy tracking and monitoring of critical production and economic information. It also provides managers the ability to conduct enterprise analyses, prepare financial statements

and develop monthly and annual operational reports.

7. Seventh is a personnel management plan, which allows a manager to intentionally develop the skills and knowledge of ranch staff to build competencies and enhance their value to the operation. A personnel management plan addresses the needs of the operation, from onboarding a new employee to rewarding valued and tenured employees. It also includes performance evaluations, goal-setting sessions, training and professional improvement.

Planning brings clarity of purpose

For intentional management to be more than a concept, it takes forethought, planning and action. The biggest challenge for most producers is getting started. It is much too easy to get caught up in the day-to-day activities of running a cattle ranch or agricultural operation. It is in the intentionality of developing a management plan where clarity of purpose is achieved. This is where a manager establishes a vision of a desired future for the ranch, identifies the key management objectives to be accomplished, devises an action plan that addresses the critical aspects of each management component and integrates these components into the management plan for the ranch that the entire staff will implement.

The management plan for the current year becomes the template for the following year, with continual fine-tuning and adjustments over time while adapting to the changing industry, market conditions and climate variations that will occur. Through intentional management and use of a management plan, managers are more likely to attain their desired goals, will experience fewer surprises and are better prepared for the unexpected when it occurs. Then, instead of just laughing at mistakes of the past, we can laugh ourselves all the way to the bank.



For many producers, intentional management can serve as a roadmap to guide them their many long-term herd goals. Photo by Noble Research Institute.

Backyard barbecues and vine-ripened tomatoes equals summer

By Trisha Gedon
Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service

Whether it is a better boy, beefsteak, roma, cherry or sungold, a tomato that has been kissed by the sun and vine ripened is a taste that is hard to beat.

For some Oklahomans, cookouts at the lake, an afternoon at the pool or a vacation with the family are signs of summer's arrival. For others, it is that bright red, juicy tomato on the vine.

David Hillock, Oklahoma State University Extension consumer horticulturist, said tomatoes are one of the most popular crops grown in home gardens. There are many varieties of tomatoes from which to choose. Some produce small fruit, while others will provide large fruit, perfect for slicing for sandwiches and hamburgers.

"Tomatoes can grow in a small area, they are easy to grow, bear fruit for most of the season, and on top of all that, have many culinary uses," Hillock said. "This fruit can be grown in containers, raised beds or traditional garden plots – just be sure the spot you choose to grow them is located in full sun. Tomatoes are a great choice for those who live in apartments or condos and the only outdoor space available is a small patio or balcony. Despite limited space, tomatoes can provide everyone a chance to develop a green thumb."

For those who have more space, select a spot away from trees and shrubs, since tomatoes require plenty of sunshine and water for optimal growth. Because of the high water need, choose a spot close to a water source, but make sure the area drains well to help prevent root rot.

Hillock said tomatoes grow well in various types of soil, but prefer deep, fertile, well-drained soil that is rich in organic matter, slightly acidic with about a 6.5 pH level and low in nitrogen. Garden soil should be worked only when it is dry enough that it will not stick to the tools.

"If you need to improve your soil, do so by adding rotted manure, leaf mold, peat moss and other organic materials," he said. "Fertilizers should be added to the soil based on a soil test as you prepare it for planting."

If interested in performing a soil test, contact a local OSU Extension office for more information. Offices supply informative fact sheets to help ensure gardeners get a good soil sample.

In the absence of a soil test, consider adding a complete garden fertilizer such as 10-20-10 to the soil prior to planting and work it into the top six inches of soil. Hillock said gardeners should keep in mind that the fertilizer applied now is not enough for the entire season. A second application should be made a couple of weeks after the first ripe fruit, with a third application about a month later.

When planting tomato plants, do so on a cloudy day or in the evening. If the transplants are in peat pots, go ahead and leave them on the root ball.

"Make sure your transplant holes are three to four inches deep and about two to four feet apart in the row," he said. "If you plan to stake the plants, space rows about three feet apart as unsupported plants need three to five feet between rows. Fill the transplant holes with water

and let it soak in, and then pack the soil loosely around the plant once they are in the ground. Leave a bit of a sunken area around each plant to hold water. After planting, be sure to water each plant with a starter solution."

It is no secret how hot the Oklahoma summers can be, so Hillock suggests mulching the tomatoes for highest yields. He recommends gardeners place two to three inches of organic material, such as compost, leaves or hay around the growing plants.

"The mulch serves multiple purposes, including slowing water loss from the soil and impeding weed growth," he said. "It is important to control weeds because they compete for soil moisture and nutrients. Weeds also can serve as a place for harmful insects to reside."

Gardeners may choose to stake, cage or trellis tomato plants. If staking, placing the stake in shortly after planting will lessen root damage. As the plant grows taller, tie it loosely to the stake every 12 inches with pieces of rag or twine.

Hillock said caging is another way to train tomato plants. The cage should be 15 to 18 inches in diameter and will provide support to the vines without being tied.

"As was mentioned earlier, tomatoes require a lot of water, especially during the hottest part of the summer," Hillock said. "Plants require about two inches of water per week in July, August and September, when the heat has really kicked in. Water thoroughly once or twice a week and apply enough water to



penetrate the top 12 to 18 inches of soil. If growing tomatoes in containers, plants will need to be watered more often.”

How many plants should be planted? It depends on what the tomatoes will be used for. Hillock said for a family who is interested in only fresh fruit, three to five plants per family member is sufficient enough.

“For those planning to preserve the tomatoes, either by canning or making paste, you will need to grow anywhere from five to 10 plants per person,” Hillock said. “You can put them up whole, sliced, pureed into paste or even make some salsa. This is one way to ensure that fresh tomato taste all year long.”

Gardeners who find themselves with a little extra space in the garden may want to consider planting a couple of extra plants and donating the excess to a local food bank or other service that provides food to the less fortunate.

In the fall just before frost, do not worry if there are still a few green tomatoes on the vine. Simply remove the fruit from the vine, remove the stems and wrap each tomato in newspaper or waxed paper. Hillock said to store the tomatoes in a cool, dark area about 60 degrees Fahrenheit. As the fruits begin to turn pink, remove from the paper and ripen at 70 degrees Fahrenheit.

“You should have ripe tomatoes until Thanksgiving or Christmas using this technique,” Hillock said. “What a treat to be able to extend the fresh taste of summer through the end of the year.”



With proper care and attention to your tomato plants, they can bare fruit up until Thanksgiving or Christmas. Photos by David Hillock, OSU Cooperative Extension.

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Aliner solid-wall fold-down, sleeps 4, A/C, micro, only 1,200 pounds. \$11,650. Tuttle, OK. 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. (405) 550-0307.

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REAL ESTATE

Land for sale in Rogers Mills County – 100 acres at \$1,700/per acre. Great property – Remax Gold Buckle Realty. (580) 330-9090.



COUNTRY CLASSIFIEDS

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

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*Deadline for the next issue is Sept. 4, 2020.
The fall issue will publish in mid-October 2020.*



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