

Oklahoma

Country



The Magazine of the
Oklahoma Farm Bureau
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A pollinator's future

Farm Bureau members take on **conservation efforts** to help **promote critical pollinator species.**

A healing hand on the land

One family's focus on generational stewardship

Commodity corner

Examining the power of conservation

2021 legislative wrap-up

Recapping a session of advocacy achievement



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Oklahoma Country

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ON THE COVER

With Oklahoma agriculture playing a vital role in the preservation of monarch butterflies and other pollinators, their efforts help ensure the future of pollinators for generations to come. *Photo by Dustin Mielke.*

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PRESIDENTIALLY SPEAKING

Back to business face-to-face

By Rodd Moesel

President, Oklahoma Farm Bureau & Affiliated Companies

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members, it is time. Time to gather, time to meet, time to share our ideas and time for fellowship. And it is time to do all of it in person.

I have been proud this past year to see how Farm Bureau members stepped up in new and exciting ways to make their voices heard on the issues that matter most. From calling your legislators to tuning in to our Friday public policy updates to attending our Congressional Conversations webinars and meetings with our U.S. House and Senate members, our organization has stayed involved and engaged even as we faced the unknown.

As effective as we have proven we can be in a variety of circumstances, it is time to get back to our in-person meetings, events and quality time with our Farm Bureau family. I'm especially excited to hear the perspective our members have on a host of issues and challenges facing agriculture and our rural communities. Throughout the past year there has been no shortage of topics to discuss when we meet with our rural friends and neighbors.

I know the structure and pricing issues in the beef industry have been front-and-center in our members' minds as they navigate ever-changing cattle markets. Our modern food system is large, efficient and complex, created to meet the needs of our customers, but we must ensure a level playing field for our family farmers and ranchers.

The Environmental Protection Agency's recently announced plans to repeal and replace the Navigable Waters Protection Rule is concerning to agriculture producers, especially since our industry has worked diligently to provide input and ideas that helped craft the current rule, which safeguards the environment while ensuring farmers and ranchers can continue to both produce food and care for the land. Our organization needs to once again provide input as the EPA's process moves forward.

While tax law may not be a favorite pastime of most folks, the proposed elimination of stepped-up basis would essentially be a backdoor way to tax the transfer of land and assets that our members pass along from one generation to the next.

Then there's the myriad of state-level issues OKFB continues to monitor and respond to as we make the voice of our members resonate throughout state government. As excited as we are about the success we had at the state Capitol this year, we know the issues facing farmers and ranchers never stop evolving. Farm Bureau never stops working on behalf of our members, and we must continue to use our strong voice to protect our rights and our way of life.

No matter what issues our members are passionate about, it is the very purpose of our organization to listen, discuss and work together to find progressive solutions for our industry and our communities. Please bring the discussions that you have had

at your local coffee shop or county Farm Bureau meeting to our August Area Meetings as we all share policy-based solutions to improve agriculture. If you've had ideas during this past year that you think can help make the future brighter, we need to discuss them as an organization, and I, personally, want to hear any idea that can make us better.

And in the same way we visit with our neighbors,

friends and fellow Farm Bureau members, we must not forget to continue the conversation with our elected officials, whether on the state or national level, to help them understand our challenges so we can find the best solutions.

That is what we are all about, and it is what I am most excited for as we fire up our in-person meetings and events once again: working as one industry with one voice to find the best path forward for agriculture, for our rural communities, and for our fellow Oklahomans. 

“Throughout the past year there has been no shortage of topics to discuss when we meet with our rural friends and neighbors.”

— Rodd Moesel



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OUR STORY

More than meets the eye

By Dustin Mielke
Vice President of Communications and Public Relations
Oklahoma Farm Bureau

There's something magical about summer, especially for those of us in agriculture. From wheat harvest in June to the hot, summer growing season, it is a time of reaping and a time of growth.

It is also a great time for vacations, road trips and simply cruising our state's back roads.

As we have traveled across the state to create our summer issue of *Oklahoma Country*, we have had the chance to survey fields, pastures, farmsteads, fieldwork, livestock and more. It is easy to see the big picture when passing by a farm or agricultural land: vast fields, grazing cattle, farm equipment gliding across the landscape and crops waving in the ever-present Oklahoma wind.

For all that can be seen from the road, it is easy to miss the delicate rhythms of everyday life and change happening on Oklahoma's family farms and ranches.

In this magazine issue, we have the pleasure of sharing several stories about conservation and stewardship efforts Oklahoma Farm Bureau members are undertaking to improve the land and our natural resources. From planting pollinator habitats to closely monitoring and managing land use, these stories are just a few examples of the mindset with which Oklahoma agriculturalists approach their life's work.

Agriculturalists all across our state work day in and day out as partners with the land, caring for millions of acres of farmland, prairies, woodlands and wetlands. They serve as the first line of protection for our natural resources, sustaining our modern way of life by working the land.

Today's stewards of the land are building upon generations of progress aimed at leaving the land better than ever before. Farmers and ranchers today have access to vast amounts of data, research, information and observations that help them develop new techniques and refine the ways in which they care for the land, the water and their animals.

“Today's stewards of the land are building upon generations of progress aimed at leaving the land better than ever before.”

— Dustin Mielke

It is important to note that Oklahoma agriculture's sustainability story has no end point - no period to the sentence. The methods and means our members use to responsibly produce food, fiber and fuel are always evolving. There is no finish line where farmers' and ranchers' conservation efforts are "good enough," but rather, they are constantly looking for new ways to improve their environmental stewardship. What today's agriculturalists are doing now serves as a stepping stone to the practices that future generations will implement.

Farmers and ranchers approach their relationship with the land as less of a task or a chore and more as a calling or commission to care for the resources that have been entrusted to them by our Creator. Agriculturalists are the on-the-ground experts who intimately know each field, pasture and plot on their operation. They are the hyper-local caretakers working to ensure that when their time on the land is done, the next person can continue on the tradition of stewardship.

So as you drive past a farm or ranch on your way to a vacation or during a road trip, remember, there is a lot more going on than meets the eye. You just can't see it from the road. **OFB**



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OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU'S

Legislative Review

As it took the organization's policy priorities to the state Capitol during the first session of the 58th Oklahoma Legislature, Oklahoma Farm Bureau accomplished a number of wins for its members including ensuring access to the critical agriculture sales tax exemption, preventing property tax increases on producers and protecting farms and ranches from nuisance lawsuits.

AGRICULTURAL SALES TAX EXEMPTION

In the early months of 2021, OKFB heard from numerous members who experienced difficulties in obtaining or renewing a state agricultural sales tax exemption permit. County assessors began requiring producers to present a Schedule F, or Form 1040, to qualify for the permit.

After multiple failed attempts to achieve an agreement with the Oklahoma Tax Commission, OKFB worked alongside a large coalition of agriculture groups to support **Senate Bill 422 by Rep. Dell Kerbs and Sen. Frank Simpson**. The bill - which passed unanimously - provides agricultural producers four options to prove eligibility for the exemption permit including a federal tax

form, such as a Schedule F, Form 4835 or Form 1065; a one-page business description form provided by the Oklahoma Tax Commission; a USDA Farm Service Agency Form 156EZ; or other documents to verify active agriculture production at the discretion of the tax commission. The legislation took effect on July 1, 2021.

Though the legislation will help address some of the challenges Farm Bureau members faced in securing the permit, OKFB will continue to work with the Oklahoma Tax Commission and other state leaders to ensure all agricultural producers who are eligible for the exemption can acquire a permit.



PROPERTY TAXES

Because farmers and ranchers are disproportionately impacted by ad valorem taxes, preventing increases in property taxes has been a cornerstone OKFB issue for decades. Over the past several years, the state Legislature has increasingly considered new ad valorem tax proposals and 2021 was no different.

For nearly five years, OKFB has participated in discussions on a proposal to allow municipalities to levy a new ad valorem tax to fund police, fire and ambulance services. Farm Bureau this year negotiated with legislators and other interested parties – including leaders from Oklahoma City and Tulsa – to ensure the proposed legislation protected farmers and ranchers from increases in ad valorem taxes. **Senate Bill 838 by Sen. Darrell Weaver and Rep. Jadine Nollan** passed the state Legislature and was signed by Gov. Kevin Stitt with key protections including an exemption for agriculture-zoned land and livestock, a 60% threshold for voter approval and an exemption for implements of husbandry including trailers, tractors, sprayers, tanks and ATVs.

While the passage of SB 838 enshrined into law valuable protections for Oklahoma’s agricultural producers, the bill also provided a chance for Farm Bureau to further develop relationships with its urban counterparts and create opportunities to work together on shared goals in the future.

Alongside SB 838, Farm Bureau was pleased to see the success of another piece of legislation to safeguard the use of taxpayer dollars. **Senate Bill 825 by Sen. Rob Standridge and Rep. Kevin West** prohibits communities that levy a tax approved by a vote of the people for a designated purpose – such as funding public safety – from redirecting those funds to another use without authorization by a vote of the people. The bill should prevent municipalities from assessing a tax for popular core services and then using those funds for other projects.

Lawmakers also resurfaced legislation first introduced in 2020 that would allow counties to levy a countywide ad valorem tax for the purpose of hazard mitigation. OKFB last year led a coalition that soundly defeated the bill on the House floor. Despite the outcome in the 2020 legislative session, state legislators again pushed **House Bill 2092 by Rep. Lonnie Sims and Senate Bill 189 by Sen. Dave Rader** through committees in both the House and the Senate this year. OKFB issued its first action alert of the year to ask members to contact legislators and urge a no vote on the bills. Thanks to the significant pressure applied by Farm Bureau members, neither bill received further consideration on the floor and the issue was resolved for the year. OKFB will watch closely as the 2022 legislative session approaches, as the issue is expected to emerge again.



PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

This year's legislative session brought several successes in upholding private property rights. OKFB worked closely with state legislators to revise an initially flawed proposal on trespassing and create legislation to eliminate a loophole that previously allowed entry into a garden, yard, pasture or field without permission. OKFB's work to amend **House Bill 1135 by Rep. Scott Fetgatter and Sen. Zack Taylor** essentially eliminates all posting requirements in the state's trespassing law.

Strides were also made to protect landowners from frivolous or unnecessary nuisance lawsuits while employing normal agricultural production practices. **Senate Bill 939 by Sen. Zack Taylor and Rep. John Pfeiffer** prevents municipalities from deeming any action by critical infrastructure sectors – including agriculture – a nuisance if the operations are in compliance with all applicable local, state and federal regulations.

Another recent OKFB member concern was successfully addressed in **Senate Bill 839 by Sen. Nathan Dahm and Rep. Sean Roberts**, which prohibits the installation of game or wildlife cameras by game wardens on private property without the permission of the owner or a warrant issued by a court.

REDISTRICTING

One of the state Legislature's top priorities this year – as required by the state constitution – was redrawing the state's legislative and congressional district lines following the 2020 Census. The new boundaries will be used for elections beginning in 2022.

Because of census data delays from the federal government, the state Legislature was forced to use data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015-2019 American Community Survey to meet its constitutional requirement of completing legislative redistricting within 90 legislative days after the state Legislature convenes following the last decennial census.

Both the state Senate and House created redistricting committees to carry out the process of drawing new legislative and congressional district lines, which were chaired by Sen. Lonnie Paxton and Rep. Ryan Martinez. The committees spent months compiling input from constituents at town halls across the state and from each member of the state Legislature. The redistricting committees each released their proposed district maps in April. Though many rural Oklahomans were concerned about population

shifts from rural to urban areas over the past 10 years, Farm Bureau was pleased to see rural communities retain significant representation in the newly drawn Senate and House districts.

In May, the new legislative district maps were approved as **Senate Bill 1066 and House Bill 1198 by Senate President Pro Tempore Greg Treat and Speaker of the House Charles McCall** by the state House and Senate before receiving final approval from the governor.

Once the state receives final 2020 Census data in the fall, state lawmakers will convene in a special session to complete Oklahoma's congressional redistricting process. During the special session, legislators also will have an opportunity to revise the new state legislative districts should any of them deviate more than 2.5% from the ideal district population under the final census data.

OKFB members are encouraged to participate in the state Legislature's congressional redistricting town halls to be held in July. Find more information at okfb.news/CongressRedistricting.

STATE BUDGET

Despite fears of a tumultuous fiscal year for the state, the overall appropriations and budget process resulted in a net increase of 7% in overall spending, while still depositing \$800 million into the state savings fund. The state Legislature also addressed multiple OKFB policy priorities by investing in critical programs for agriculture and rural Oklahoma.

Noteworthy funding increases included:

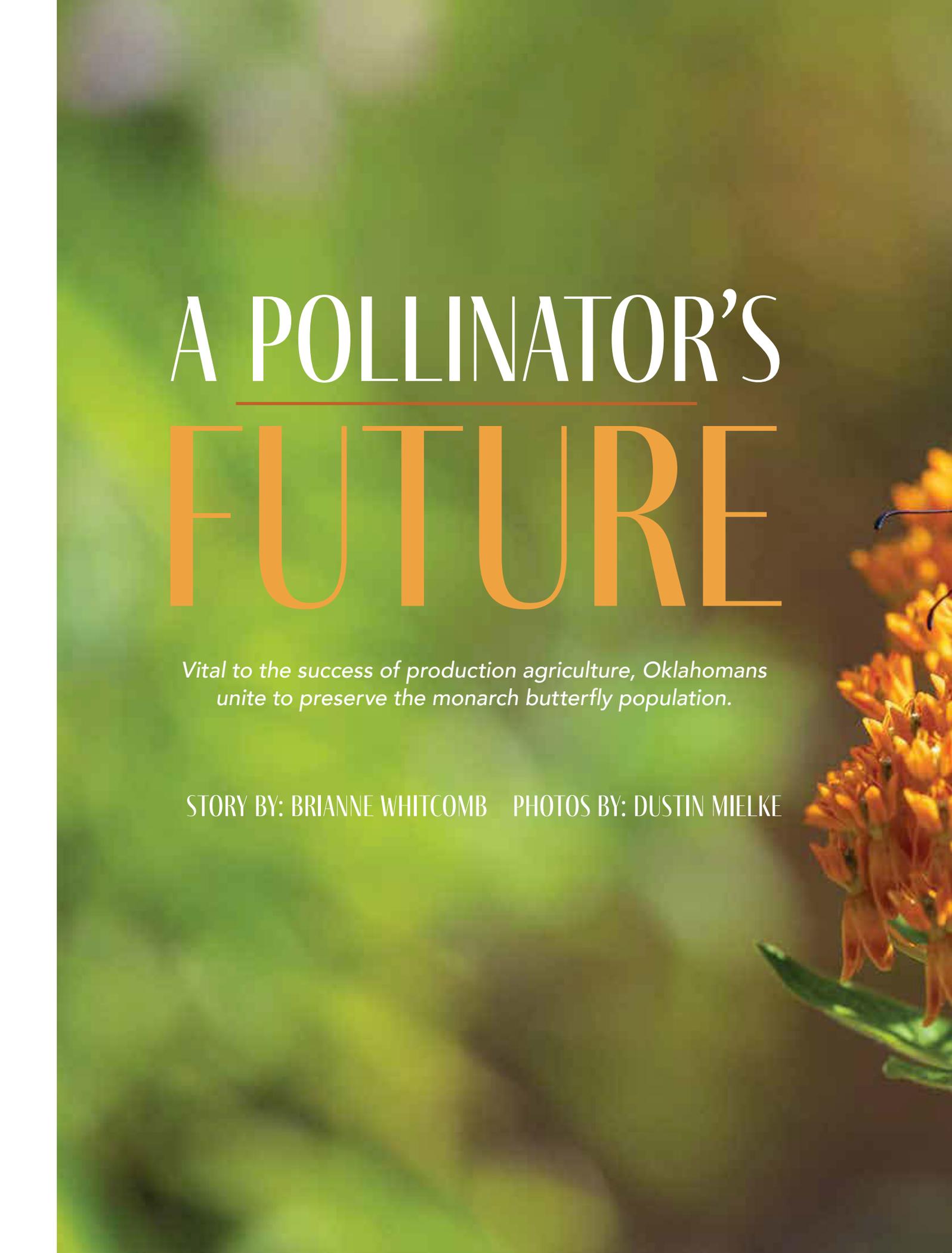
- \$42 million for a rural broadband sales tax rebate program
- \$2 million for the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
- \$1 million for the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station
- \$3 million for the Oklahoma State University College of Veterinary Medicine
- \$300,000 for Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry for additional meat processing facility inspectors



OKFB'S TOP LEGISLATION SIGNED INTO LAW

BILL	AUTHOR	SUBJECT
SB 422	Sen. Frank Simpson Rep. Dell Kerbs	Expands ag sales tax exemption proof of eligibility
SB 775	Sen. Casey Murdock Rep. Eddy Dempsey	Authorizes ODAFF to create livestock offender registry
SB 825	Sen. Robert Standridge Rep. Kevin West	Prevents redirection of tax dollars without voter approval
SB 838	Sen. Darrell Weaver Rep. Jadine Nollan	Allows cities to create public safety protection districts
SB 839	Sen. Nathan Dahm Rep. Sean Roberts	Prevents game warden cameras on private property
SB 910	Sen. Casey Murdock Rep. Carl Newton	Modifies location for public land auctions
SB 939	Sen. Zack Taylor Rep. John Pfeiffer	Prevents certain nuisance claims on critical industries
SB 959	Sen. Lonnie Paxton Rep. Kyle Hilbert	Allows governor to fill U.S. Senate vacancies
HB 1032	Sen. Adam Pugh Rep. Garry Mize	Exempts licensing requirements for certain home bakers
HB 1124	Rep. Logan Phillips Sen. James Leewright	Creates grant program for broadband expansion
HB 1135	Rep. Scott Fetgatter Sen. Zack Taylor	Eliminates posting requirements in Oklahoma trespass law
HB 1588	Rep. Eddy Dempsey Sen. George Burns	Creates sales tax exemption for commercial forestry equipment
HB 1620	Rep. Garry Mize Sen. John Montgomery	Prohibits the banning of agritourism activities
HB 2272	Rep. Josh West Sen. Casey Murdock	Requires medical marijuana entities disclose foreign interests
HB 2930	Rep. Rick West Sen. Frank Simpson	Prohibits medical marijuana entities from ag grant program
HB 2946	Rep. Kevin Wallace Sen. Roger Thompson	Provides sales tax rebate on qualifying broadband equipment
HB 2951	Rep. Kevin Wallace Sen. Roger Thompson	Creates fund to hire counsel for legal controversy with tribes

Questions? Contact the OKFB Public Policy Division at (405) 523-2300.



A POLLINATOR'S --- FUTURE

Vital to the success of production agriculture, Oklahomans unite to preserve the monarch butterfly population.

STORY BY: BRIANNE WHITCOMB PHOTOS BY: DUSTIN MIELKE



Each and every spring, tens of millions of tiny, winged creatures take flight and begin their long journey north after enjoying a mild winter in central Mexico, seeking out flower after flower as they make their way to Oklahoma.

Easily recognized by their unique patterns and shades of orange, black and white, the monarch butterfly has captured the hearts of people across the country for generations.

The species is divided into three key populations within the United States – the south Floridian, the western and the eastern – the latter two are the most widely recognized. With the Rocky Mountains serving as the dividing line between them, Oklahoma welcomes the eastern population each spring and fall as they cross the country.

Scientists, however, have seen a nearly 80% decrease in the numbers of the eastern population over the course of the last 25 years.

“One of the main theories why there’s been a decrease in population has been the reduced amount of milkweed plants in the Midwestern states, such as Iowa, Illinois, eastern Nebraska, Indiana, Minnesota and Wisconsin,” said Ray Moranz, grazing lands pollinator ecologist for the Xerces Society and a partner biologist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s Central National Technology Support Center in Fort Worth, Texas. “Those states were always the most important states for monarchs in the mid-summer months.”

Recognizing that weed management practices have improved over the years, farmers and ranchers worked diligently to control the unwanted plants and improve land care practices. The enhanced weed control unfortunately also decreased the milkweed population, which is vital to monarch reproduction as it is the only plant females will lay their eggs on and the only plant caterpillars will consume.

“Others believe there aren’t enough nectar plants blooming in Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas in the fall to feed the millions and millions of monarchs that fly through in September and October on their way to their overwintering sites in Mexico,” Moranz said.

Traditionally traveling along the I-35 corridor, monarchs can be found throughout the state from mid-March into early April and again in September and October. While many will continue their journey north, some will remain within Oklahoma to reproduce.

As they make their way into the Sooner State each spring, female monarchs carefully lay each of their nearly 300 to 400 eggs on different milkweed plants before dying a few weeks later. Roughly 30 days after each egg has been laid, the next generation will gain its brightly colored wings and begin making their own journey north.

Unfortunately, it is no easy task for an egg to fully mature into a butterfly. Moranz estimates that for every 100 eggs laid, just one will turn into a butterfly because they are unable to find enough milkweed or encounter predators such as ants, flies and wasps.

Upon their arrival in the more northern states, even into portions of southern Canada, the new offspring will lay their own eggs and generation after generation of monarch butterflies will multiply through the summer months.

Those that made the trip north from Oklahoma will die off and the following generations will rely on their instincts to begin the trip back south in August and September as the days slowly begin to shorten.

“We think adult monarch butterflies in the spring and summer live two to six weeks if they are not eaten by something,” Moranz said. “They die of old age after only a few weeks, but the ones that fly to Mexico live for as long as eight months. As the day length shortens in fall, that triggers a physiological response to turn off their reproductive hormones. When their reproductive hormones are turned off, they live longer.”





Ray Moranz, grazing lands pollinator ecologist for the Xerces Society and a partner biologist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Central National Technology Support Center in Fort Worth, Texas, examines a milkweed plant for monarch eggs and caterpillars at his home in Payne County.

Located just five miles east of Slapout, Oklahoma, Beaver County Farm Bureau member Mary Chris Barth stands in the newly created pollinator garden that was a collaborative effort amongst roughly a dozen local organizations. With the highly visible location, she hopes it will encourage others to start their own pollinator garden.



As they make their lengthy journey back to their overwintering sites in Mexico, the monarchs need a reliable supply of flowers once again in states such as Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas to continue on. In the long run, the same plants they seek out are also beneficial to all pollinators.

“What we do to help monarchs helps pollinators in general, including honeybees and bumble bees,” Moranz said. “Those pollinators help maintain the fruit and vegetable production in farms and gardens throughout the state, but they also ensure we have healthy populations of wildflowers in rangelands and improved pasture.”

In recent years, organizations across the country have been established to push communities to rally together in creating pollinator gardens and habitats. From potted plants on apartment balconies and small flower beds in suburban backyards to open pastures with cattle grazing and clusters of wildflowers around center pivots, every host and nectar plant plays a valuable role.

For a group of nearly a dozen organizations located in what is often referred to as no man’s land within Oklahoma’s Panhandle, they hope to make a difference for monarchs in their own unique way as people travel through the unincorporated community of Slapout, Oklahoma.

“The location we have chosen is on the 100th meridian,” said Mary Chris Barth, Beaver County Conservation Board vice-chair, project coordinator and Beaver County Farm Bureau board member. “The 100th meridian is where the west begins, so we have granite historic markers and roadside pull-offs. It’s just the perfect location to draw traffic and make a statement to tell our story.”

Located just five miles east of Slapout along Highway 412, the site of their first newly established pollinator garden



pays tribute to the agricultural roots of the community by incorporating antique hay rake wheels and old corner fence posts rescued from the rubble of area wildfires in recent years.

By having such a visible location, Barth hopes their project will inform and educate visitors while providing a safe place for weary travelers to stop and rest awhile. As the project progresses, they plan to incorporate plant identification tags, signs with information about monarchs, benches and trash cans. They also hope to install a sign recognizing the many donors who helped make the project possible.

“Instead of just hitting road time, we want people to understand what we are doing to protect the land and enhance our environment,” Barth said. “I hope that it will bring more plots along the way.”

As the project coordinator for the pollinator garden, Barth enlisted help from a variety of community organizations including Laverne FFA, Laverne 4-H, Overstreet 4-H, Buffalo FFA, Buffalo 4-H, the Slapout and Gate community centers, Beaver and Harper County Home and Community Education organizations, Beaver and Harper County Extension Service offices, and the Beaver and Harper County Conservation Boards to help maintain the site and even create a second location in the future.

“Conservation is very dear to me,” Barth said. “I grew up in Cimarron County and we started using limited tillage, but those were the eras of having dirt storms to the point they closed the highway down and used front-end loaders to help clear it. That is where my foundation in conservation really started.”

Her continued passion for conservation has even resulted in the creation of a youth board as part of the Beaver County Conservation District. Comprised of high school students from within Beaver County, the members participate



“BUTTERFLY PEOPLE, POLLINATOR PEOPLE AND CATTLE RANCHERS HAVE A LOT IN COMMON. WE WANT TO KEEP GRASSLAND AS GRASSLAND.”

— Ray Moranz



in a variety of fun activities all while learning about the impact they can have within their local community long-term. Each member who remains an active participant on the youth board throughout high school is eligible for a scholarship to further their education.

To help spread the word of pollinators and the importance of their habitat, pollinator gardens have also been created at local farmers markets, churches, libraries, office buildings and schools across the state.

As a supporter of monarch conservation efforts, the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Legal Foundation currently serves on the steering committee for Okies for Monarchs, a statewide group of organizations and citizens collectively working together to ensure the future of monarch butterflies. The OKFB Legal Foundation also participated in a multi-state Farm Bureau project informing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service about the many ways agriculture can benefit monarch butterflies.

Even with efforts from local communities like seen in Beaver and Harper Counties, Moranz is unsure if monarch butterflies will ever recover.

“Can it get back to the way it was in the 90s? I’m not sure, but I’m confident that we can help stop its further decrease somewhat by planting more

habitat, but also by managing the habitat we already have,” Moranz said.

To truly make a difference in the future population of monarchs, Moranz believes it will only be possible through the cooperative efforts of gardeners, local communities and producers alike.

For farmers and ranchers in particular, incorporating conservation techniques such as removing redcedar trees, applying routine prescribed burns and encouraging the growth of native plants can all have a positive influence in getting much of Oklahoma’s land back into native grass and flower species.

In recent years, Moranz has learned that a combination of redcedar tree removal, followed by a prescribed burn once the trees have dried out can result in once dormant native seeds coming back to life.

“Oklahoma has millions of acres of rangeland, and if we manage those acres a little better for the sake of pollinators while still having profitable livestock enterprises, that would be absolutely huge for monarchs and other pollinators,” Moranz said.

Not only important to pollinators, Moranz believes that wildflowers are often under-appreciated for their value to wildlife and livestock.

“There is more and more research showing that some wildflowers,

especially legumes such as purple prairie clover and Illinois bundleflower, are high in crude protein and utilized heavily by cattle,” Moranz said.

For generations, milkweed in particular was considered a nuisance by some producers and plants were destroyed out of concern for livestock. Through various studies, researchers have found that while some varieties native to the state do contain varying levels of poisonous compounds, many do not.

By remaining in contact with livestock producers in Oklahoma and Kansas on a regular basis, Moranz has learned cattle that tend to avoid milkweed varieties with higher levels of poisonous compounds.

“There’s clear research evidence that some milkweed species are very low in toxins and recently, some cattlemen and grassland biologists have reported that cattle don’t seem to mind eating those particular milkweeds.”

Moranz hopes that as more research proves the benefits of native grass and flower species within the livestock industry, more and more producers will be encouraged to make the shift in their own operations.

“Butterfly fans, pollinator conservationists and cattle ranchers have a lot in common,” Moranz said. “We want to keep grassland as grassland.” **FB**

WHAT TO PLANT IN YOUR GARDEN

When walking in to a local nursery, it can be a bit overwhelming deciding what to purchase – whether you are new to gardening or a seasoned professional. If you hope to increase the amount of monarch butterflies and other pollinators in your yard, try some of the plants listed below. Considered the top 12 host and nectar plants within Oklahoma, your yard could soon be a haven to these tiny winged creatures in all stages of their life.



PLANT	BLOOMING SEASON	HOST/NECTAR	ANNUAL/PERENNIAL
Butterfly milkweed	early bloom	host/nectar	perennial
Green antelopehorn	early bloom	host/nectar	perennial
Golden crownbeard	early bloom	nectar	annual
Eastern purple coneflower	mid-bloom	nectar	perennial
Indian blanket	mid-bloom	nectar	annual
Wild bergamont	mid-bloom	nectar	perennial
Basket-flower	mid-bloom	nectar	perennial
Maximilian sunflower	mid-bloom	nectar	perennial
Blazingstar	mid-bloom	nectar	perennial
Aromatic aster	late bloom	nectar	perennial
Showy goldenrod	late bloom	nectar	perennial
Blue sage	late bloom	nectar	perennial

*For a more in-depth list based on the western, central and eastern regions of the state, visit okfb.news/butterflygarden.

continued CONSERVATION

As the original stewards of the land, farmers and ranchers across the state continue to implement new and exciting ways to preserve their farms and ranches for future generations. These five practices are just a few of the countless ways producers work daily to ensure their land is viable for years to come.



EASTERN REDCEDAR

Considered invasive, the eastern redcedar is able to adapt to a variety of different environments, consumes large amounts of water, is a fire hazard during the dry months and is able to reseed very easily.

While the redcedar is native to Oklahoma and 36 other states, it is not indigenous to many of the areas it is now found, highlighting its ability to adapt.

By implementing a variety of routine land management practices, many producers remove eastern redcedars when they are young and easily manageable. This allows native grasses, flowers and other native trees to thrive.

If interested in removing eastern redcedar trees, contact a local Natural Resources Conservation Service field office to learn more about the cost-share programs available for removal.



PRESCRIBED BURN

Photo courtesy of Oklahoma State University

The idea of intentionally setting fire to land may sound odd to some, but the positive effects of the practice are immense.

By implementing prescribed burns on land, farmers and ranchers are able to:

- *reduce the fuel load in pastures before wildfire season*
- *improve wildlife habitats*
- *increase grassland production*
- *decrease the amount of young eastern redcedar trees*

While there are associated risks to prescribed burning, farmers and ranchers work closely with first responders, utility companies, neighbors and the Oklahoma Prescribed Burn Association to reduce risk as much as possible.

For producers interested in implementing prescribed burning on land within Oklahoma, visit ok-pba.org.



NATIVE PASTURE

From milkweed and Indian paintbrush to buffalograss and prairie clover, each and every native grass and flower plays an integral role in Oklahoma's diverse ecosystem and are already present in many pastures throughout the state. Planted beside the many native species, however, are a number of plants that are not native to our state.

Through routine measures to remove the non-native species, producers are working to make room for native plants that are better able to adapt to our climate and wildlife.

By preserving native pasture, farmers and ranchers work to ensure their lands can be:

- *utilized as grazing lands for livestock*
- *a source of food and shelter for wildlife including big game and birds*
- *a haven for pollinators such as bees, butterflies and moths*
- *potential fish habitats within streams*



NO-TILL



COVER CROPS

Photo courtesy of Oklahoma State University

Deciding whether or not to implement no-till practices on a farm is not an easy decision, yet it is one of the most common questions Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Service receives from farmers.

As the cost of farming fluctuates, no-till often intrigues producers with its ability to limit their use of fuel and reducing their labor costs while preserving natural resources.

Typically, farmers disk a crop after harvest in preparation for the next crop. When implementing no-till practices into their operation, the stubble from the previous crop is left behind.

As the stubble from the previous crop decomposes, it turns into organic matter.

Farmers that have implemented no-till practices have seen a reduction in soil erosion, increased water retention, a variety of microbial life and more nutrient-rich soil.

In a state known for its challenges with soil, like the Dust Bowl, many producers have implemented the use of cover crops.

After harvesting a crop that will leave little plant residue in the field, a cover crop is sometimes planted instead of leaving a field bare to greatly help with:

- *protecting the soil during Oklahoma's high winds*
- *prevent soil erosion*
- *increase the soil quality*
- *greatly reduce soil compaction*
- *serve as a high-quality material for grazing cattle or other livestock*

Incorporating cover crops comes with challenges, such as the cost of planting it, maintaining it and leaving fields susceptible to unwanted insects if not managed properly. Many producers however, have found the challenges are worth it. **FB**

Sources: Oklahoma Forestry Service, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service - Oklahoma, Oklahoma State University Extension, Oklahoma Prescribed Burn Association, Noble Research Institute



Beat the heat with OKFB's newest member benefit

Escape the heat this summer by visiting Oklahoma Farm Bureau's newest member benefit, RIVERSPORT OKC, a family-friendly water and adventure park.

From river rafting and surfing to kayaking and paddle boarding, Oklahoma Farm Bureau's newest member benefit, RIVERSPORT OKC, provides families with an action-packed day filled with lots of fun.

Conveniently located off Interstate 40 in the heart of Oklahoma City, RIVERSPORT OKC is filled with a variety of activities and unique experiences. Experience class two to four whitewater rafting at the nation's only urban whitewater rafting facility, catch endless waves while surfing in the heart of Oklahoma City or prepare to be splashed while tubing down rapids.

Prefer to see the view from above? Try out the SandRidge Sky Trail adventure course, an obstacle and ropes course high above the park, including an 80-foot tall zipline that allows guests to fly across 700-feet of the Oklahoma River.

OKFB members can enjoy an exclusive **30% off when purchasing a day pass**, which includes activities like whitewater rafting, surfing, water tubing, kayaking and stand-up paddle boarding, Sky Trail adventure course and more.

For more information, visit riversportokc.org. To take advantage of the OKFB discount, visit riversportokc.org/epass using access code **OKFARM** to redeem the discount. 



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A healing han

Standing on the bank of Horse Creek, Grant Victor gazed down the watershed at what he has accomplished in the past few years. In the thick, native brush, it is easy to see and hear the wildlife returning to the area where their numbers had once been dwindling.

Up the creek bank, cattle quietly grazed on lush grass in pastures that have been passed down for generations. Watching the cattle browse across the land and listening to the birds sing along the creek is one of Victor's favorite pastimes.

Chosen by his great-grandfather because of the creek cutting through it, Victor imagines what the land in Ottawa County would have looked like in 1891 when the parcel was granted to his ancestors in the original Indian land allotment. Back then, the landscape was filled with native grasses and wildlife for as far as one could see.



d on the land

story by **Rebekah Nash** photos by **Dustin Mielke**

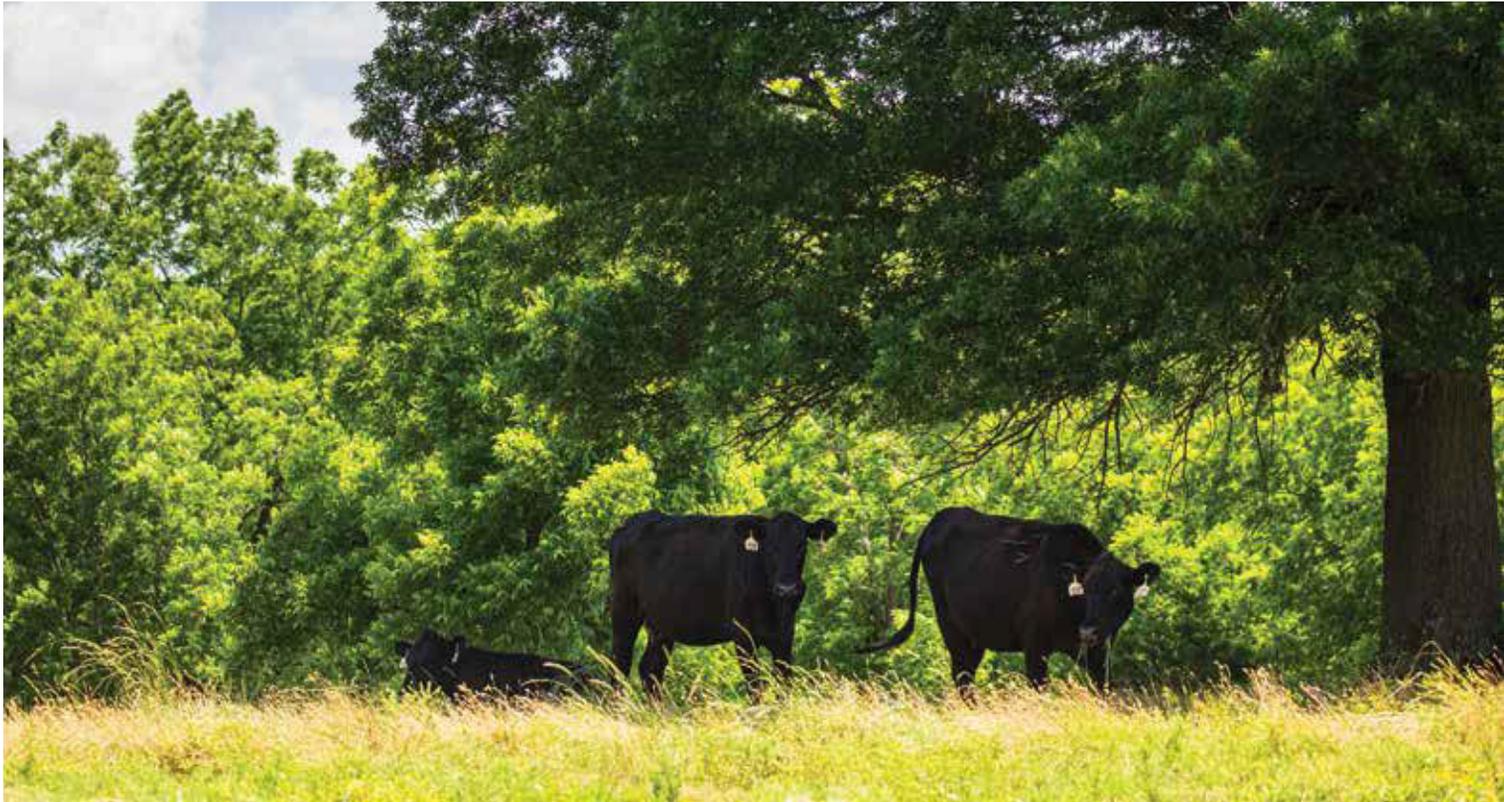
Victor recalls growing up on the very land he operates today. As a child, his grandfather taught him the ways of conservation and working in concert with the natural resources. Since then, Victor has been able to build upon those fundamentals on the farm and ranch, and he is continuing the tradition by sharing his passion with his three sons in their partnership.

“Conservation is really a passion for me,” Victor said, smiling. “I want to believe I am doing the right thing with a lasting effect.”

When he saw the banks of the creek barren with little grass left and minimal wildlife around after years of using the calm waters for the family’s cattle, Victor knew he had to change something. He took advantage of the five-year National Resources Conservation Services Regional Conservation Partnership Program, which allowed him to fence off an area a few feet away from the creek to restore the bank back to the way it was decades ago.

Grant Victor stands on the banks of Horse Creek, which runs through the Ottawa County ranch his great-grandfather first settled.

Cattle graze in one of the Victor Ranch's 60-acre pasture cells, which allow for a managed rotational grazing plan that ensures plentiful forages.



Fencing off the creek bank rehabilitated the riparian area where the nearby grasses, trees and brush bordered the gently flowing water. The increased vegetation invited back wildlife and aquatic species to the area, while keeping the cattle from entering the stream increased the water clarity.

Before the five-year partnership with NRCS ended, Victor knew returning the cattle to the previously fenced-off area would not be an option. If he were to use the area for a water source, the grass and wildlife that came around would quickly vanish, reversing all of the hard work put into reviving the area.

He recognized he would need to find a way to provide water for his cattle without using the creek, which flows into the Grand Lake O' the Cherokees. With cattle grazing and fertilizer potentially being spread close to the creek, the risk of water contamination increased.

Because Grand Lake provides tourism, electrification and other opportunities to those living across northeastern Oklahoma, he understood that allowing cattle to have direct access to the creek could be a liability.

"If something were to ever happen, I can now come back and say I have done everything I can do to prevent issues from arising," Victor said.

With a main livestock water source fenced off, Victor had to find a way to subsidize drilling wells across his ranch. He partnered with the Grand River Dam Authority to create an easement along the creek running through his property to ensure optimal water quality in the lake.

Today, a minimum of 35 feet on either side of the water is fenced off to preserve the soil, vegetation and wildlife. Victor also has more than 1,100 acres in farmland for corn and wheat near Afton, and by converting acreage each year to pasture, he is growing his herd of 800 cow/calf pairs over a period of time.

"Each year I'm taking about 100 acres out of crop production and converting it to grass," Victor said. "I hope within five years that my crop land will be down to a minimal amount."

Victor emphasized listening to the land is important, which is why he is phasing out grain production over a period of time on his operation.

Through the years, the creek has carved various paths through the Victors' land, especially when there are frequent or large rains. Through years of floods and downpours, the rainwater has wiped away fencing on multiple occasions.

Realizing the patterns of flooding along the creek, Victor



1,000-gallon water troughs are used throughout the ranch to provide fresh drinking water for cattle.



Clovers and other beneficial plants have been planted in places to help soil quality and support pollinators.



Pecan trees will help diversify the ranch's production.



decided to work with GRDA to expand the easement and move fences to a minimum of 100 feet away from the creek bed rather than the previous 35. The change, which he is currently implementing, will effectively remove areas where his cattle currently graze, but it is a trade-off he feels is worthwhile in the long run.

Riding along in the farm truck with Victor through bumpy pastures, one can see cattle grazing inside 60-acre pastures, which he refers to as cells. The cattle are moved to new cells every few weeks to allow the grass and forages time to rest. The power of photosynthesis allows the grass to regenerate a nutrition-packed food source for the cattle.

“A lot of times, I have found out that I can leave it alone, and Mother Nature can come back and heal it,” Victor said of the land. “It’s far better than anything we do.”

The grass sitting idle for weeks in between grazing allows Victor to add more cattle per acre, which results in an increased number of cattle grazing on the Victor Ranch.

Even though Victor grew his cattle herd through improved land management, the animals still needed a source of water since the main water source is fenced off.

After drilling seven wells across the entire ranch, the cattle are now able to drink from troughs made from large, recycled tires that dot the fence line, each holding nearly 1,000 gallons of water. The troughs include a system that ensures the water is fresh at all times, providing cool water in the summer while preventing freezing in the winter.

Back on the opposite side of the creek, land located near the water is being turned into a pecan grove. With 600 trees planted in long rows, Victor hopes to one day grow more than 2,500 pecan trees.

“I’m just diversifying because some years cattle are good, some years crops are good,” Victor said. “It takes patience, though. It may be eight to 10 years before the pecan trees are producing.”

As the newly planted trees are still young and a pecan crop is years away, Victor has planted clover in the grove, encouraging bees to visit the area to pollinate beneficial plants.

“Our faith teaches us a lot about the importance of stewardship and how we are supposed to take care of the land,” Victor said, while remembering why he started taking the extra steps to add back to the land he has been given.

“Conservation is really a passion for me. I want to believe I am doing the right thing with a lasting effect.”

– Grant Victor



For their dedication to conservation, the Victor family was named the 2020 Oklahoma Leopold Conservation Award Winners by the Sand County Foundation.



Many of the decisions Victor has implemented on his farm and ranch stem from rehabilitating the riparian area. As he strives to care for the land, he also aims to be a leader in conservation.

While the improved water quality and pristine creek bank are reward enough for years of conservation efforts, the Victor family has also received recognition for their ongoing stewardship. Victor Ranch earned the 2020 Oklahoma Leopold Conservation Award, sponsored in part by the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture.

“We understand programs are coming,” Victor said, about proposed federal legislation and regulations, including carbon and conservation programs. “Why not be ahead of the race?”

Through years of caring for his land and animals, Victor has seen federal proposals and programs come and go. His grandfather, father and uncle were on the forefront of conservation issues during their years on the ranch.

“I want to be in the conversation when the rules and regulations get set into place,” Victor said. “We all get upset about new regulations coming down. If we can be a part of the solution, I would be really excited.”

Victor spends a great deal of his time in meeting rooms and conference centers around the state, sharing the perspective of farmers and ranchers with lawmakers, researchers and other decision makers. He shares his experience to help them understand how farmers and ranchers are thinking as they implement changes on their operations.

Victor feels it is his calling to educate people about conservation and environmental stewardship, but he never wants to force anyone to take up the practices he is implementing.

“I don’t sit there and tell people what they should do, but I try to give them ideas of why they should start,” Victor said. “Whether I’m right or wrong, it’s something I believe in.”

Standing in the creek where Victor brings his sons and their children to fish and enjoy the landscape, he shares the importance of passing the land down for generations to come. With a passion for stewarding the land, he is protecting the dreams his great-grandfather had in 1891.

“Even though I had help from people across the state, I would not be where I am today without the help of my family,” Victor said. “I want to ensure my children and grandchildren can come back to our operation for generations to come.”

Filled with trees, grasses, cattle and wildlife, Victor will continue stewarding the land he calls his own well into the future.

Horse Creek drew Victor’s great-grandfather to settle in the area, and it sustained generations of the Victor family as they ranched alongside the flowing stream.

Today, the fourth-generation producer is proud to see the creek returning to the way it likely looked when his great-grandfather first visited, all while continuing on the agricultural tradition and raising the next generation to carry on the legacy of conservation. **FB**



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture is excited to offer more than \$16,000 in 2021 through three newly established grant programs. With more than 15 grant opportunities available for organizations and schools alike, the grants were developed with the intention to help educate consumers about their food while connecting them with producers.

From implementing agricultural literacy to experiencing food production, the grants will create opportunities for Oklahomans of all ages to learn about agriculture, gaining hands-on experience.

Ranging from \$500 to \$5,000, recipients will have the opportunity to share the story of agriculture throughout their communities in a variety of ways. Potential projects could include establishing a laying hen project, building a community garden, hosting a community event focused on agricultural education and much more.

MINI GRANT PROGRAM

Designed for 4-H clubs, FFA chapters, teachers and county Farm Bureaus, this \$500 grant was created to help establish educational programs for school-aged children or adults to improve agriculture literacy. The promotion of agriculture within your community can include supporting an Ag in the Classroom event, hosting an interactive booth at a farmer's market or community event, and much more. The mini grant is offered twice a year in March and September for a total of 10 grants awarded each year. **Applications for the first cycle must be submitted by Sept. 1.**



GROWING WITH THE FOUNDATION

Introduce students to the world of horticulture by applying for the Growing with the Foundation grant program. The recipient will receive a \$5,000 grant to help in purchasing supplies for a school greenhouse, with five additional school receiving classroom grow kits valued at \$500. By learning to grow their own food, students will be able to see sustainable models that they can implement in their own homes and neighborhood. **Applications for this grant program must be submitted by Oct. 1.**



COMMUNITY HARVEST

Youth organizations across the state looking to fight hunger are encouraged to apply for the Community Harvest grant program. Individual 4-H clubs and FFA chapters may apply for up to \$1,000 to support a service-learning project focused on developing and implementing sustainable food production that addresses hunger in the community. Projects can include developing a community garden, creating a school pantry, hosting a class for the community and much more. **Applications must be submitted by Nov. 1.**



To apply today, visit okfb.news/foundgrants21. For any questions, contact Holly Carroll at holly.carroll@agging.org.

3

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Nocona Cook

OKFB YF&R member recently appointed to state board of ag

Washita County Farm Bureau member Nocona Cook was recently confirmed as the newest member of the State Board of Agriculture.

A fifth-generation farmer, Cook was appointed by Gov. Kevin Stitt and confirmed by the state Senate to be a voice for producers in the southwest district of Oklahoma.

As a full-time producer, Cook's family farm near Cloud Chief consists of wheat, alfalfa and cotton, along with a commercial cow-calf operation and custom swathing and hay business.

He currently serves as a member of the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers committee and previously served as the OKFB YF&R chair alongside his wife, Jordan.

In addition, Cook serves on the Washita County Farm Bureau board, Washita County Cattlemen's Association board and Cordell Public Schools Board of Education. He is also the president of the Washita County Fire Association and the Cloud Chief Fire Department fire chief and EMT.

Three additional Farm Bureau members were also confirmed to statewide boards. Grady County Farm Bureau member Ron Justice was confirmed to the Oklahoma Water Resources Board, Texas County Farm Bureau member Dan Herald was named Area I Commissioner on the Oklahoma Conservation Commission, and Garfield County Farm Bureau member Brady Bond was appointed to the Oklahoma State Fire Marshall Board.



Scholten, Burns and Gholson join OKFB as summer interns for organization

Oklahoma Farm Bureau welcomed three summer interns to the organization, each of whom began May 24. Ariel Scholten, Peyton Burns and Karlee Belle Gholson has worked alongside OKFB staff to learn about the organization's grassroots efforts and gain valuable experiential knowledge.

As the communications intern, Scholten has assisted the communications and public relations department in writing news articles and feature stories, managing social media, updating the organization's website, developing print products for organizational programs, covering Farm Bureau events and more.

"Overall, I am thrilled to be combining my passion of advocating for agriculture and technical skills in an organization I have grown up in," Scholten said. "Located right down the street from the Capitol

building is such a valuable opportunity for someone in agricultural communications."

Raised on a plant nursery and cattle and sheep ranch, Scholten is a fifth-generation farmer from Sebastopol, California. In May 2022, she will graduate from Oklahoma State University with a degree in agricultural communications.

As summer interns, Burns and Gholson has assisted OKFB public policy staff by conducting research on leading issues facing Oklahoma farmers and ranchers. The pair was also involved with various organizational programs and activities while learning more about Farm Bureau's work for agriculture and rural Oklahoma.

An agribusiness and animal science junior at OSU, Burns is a native of Kingfisher, Oklahoma. His grandparents' third-generation cow-calf operation solidified his value of agriculture and

desire to pursue a career in supporting the industry.

"I am looking forward to getting to learn the ins and outs of public policy and Farm Bureau's role in ensuring that rural Americans have their rights protected," Burns said.

A fifth-generation rancher from Waurika, Oklahoma, Gholson grew up on her family's cow-calf operation. She is a member of OSU Collegiate Farm Bureau and has previously served as a page at the state Capitol and as an agriculture legislative intern. She will graduate from OSU in December 2021 with an agribusiness degree.

"I was intrigued by Oklahoma Farm Bureau and how they covered a variety of issues," Gholson said. "Seeing what the federation does as a whole for agriculture in policy and beyond will be exciting."



Ariel Scholten



Peyton Burns



Karlee Belle Gholson

Join OKFB for the 2021 August Area Meetings

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members are encouraged to attend one of the organization's 11 August Area Meetings held across the state beginning August 9.

Signifying the beginning of the organization's grassroots policy development process, the meetings provide members a chance to discuss the top agriculture and rural issues on the horizon as they prepare to draft

OKFB policy for the next year.

In addition to enhancing OKFB's policy priorities, members will have a chance to learn about the work the organization continues to do for and on behalf of farmers, ranchers and rural Oklahomans across the state.

Below find the date and time for the district meetings. For the most current information, visit okfb.news/aam21.

2021 AUGUST AREA MEETINGS

District One – West

August 16 at 6 p.m.

Gibson Baptist Assembly
E0260 Rd.
Hardesty, OK 73944

District One – East

August 17 at 6 p.m.

Building 801
801 Main St.
Woodward, OK 73801

District Two

August 24 at 6 p.m.

General Tommy Franks Museum,
Stanley Building
300 S. Washington
Hobart, OK 73651

District Three

August 23 at 6 p.m.

Redlands Community College
1300 S. Country Club Rd.
El Reno, OK 73036

District Four – West

August 12 at 6 p.m.

Comanche County Farm Bureau
502 S.W. 11th
Lawton, OK 73501

District Four – East

August 10 at 6 p.m.

Casa Romo
120 W. Main St.
Ardmore, OK 73401

District Five

August 26 at 6 p.m.

Kiamichi Technology Center
301 Kiamichi Dr.
McAlester, OK 74501

District Six

August 31 at 6 p.m.

Moore Farms Event Barn
9353 W. 500 Rd.
Pryor, OK 74361

District Seven

August 9 at 6 p.m.

Crosspoint Church
2500 N. Van Buren St.
Enid, OK 73703

District Eight

August 30 at 6 p.m.

Pontotoc Technology Center
601 W. 33rd St.
Ada, OK 74820

District Nine

August 19 at 6 p.m.

Creek County Fairgrounds
17808 OK-66
Kellyville, OK 74039

OKFB partners with McAfee & Taft to examine Oklahoma foreign-owned land law

Oklahoma Farm Bureau and Oklahoma City-based law firm McAfee & Taft created a video to provide answers on the state's foreign-owned land statutes.

The informational video was produced in response to questions about land ownership the organization received from members across the state.

Cole Marshall, an attorney at McAfee & Taft, explained the basic tenets of Oklahoma's laws on foreign ownership of land in the short video.

Marshall said the Oklahoma Constitution and state statutes prohibit any alien – or person who is not a citizen of the United States – from owning land in the state.

“There’s a general prohibition on foreign persons or corporations from other countries owning land in Oklahoma, but they can become residents by taking up residency for individuals in Oklahoma or by qualifying to do business in Oklahoma,” Marshall said.

To qualify to do business in Oklahoma, entities are required to file with the Oklahoma secretary of state and thus become subject to Oklahoma's laws.

As one of a handful of states in the country with restrictions on foreign-owned land, Marshall said Oklahoma, as compared to other states, has historically been more aggressive with respect to foreign ownership of land in the state.

“Oklahoma on the national scale, I would say, is sort of out front, if you will, on these types of rules,” Marshall said. “It’s largely because Oklahoma is an ag state. These laws were put in place to protect family farmers.”

For a more in-depth conversation with Marshall on foreign-owned land law, visit okfb.news/landlaw21.



What to expect when applying for or renewing an ag sales tax exemption permit

Over the past several months, Oklahoma Farm Bureau has heard concern from members facing new challenges obtaining an agricultural sales tax exemption permit – a crucial business tool exempting nearly all inputs used in production agriculture from sales tax.

OKFB, along with a broad coalition of statewide agriculture groups, worked to pass legislation this year to provide additional options to prove eligibility for the permit. The newly passed Senate Bill 422 went into effect July 1, 2021, and allows Oklahoma producers to provide a document from one of four categories as proof of eligibility for the exemption.

Members attempting to renew or obtain a permit should apply as usual by listing personal property used on the farm or ranch with their county assessor.

If listing property with the county assessor is considered insufficient, agriculture producers should apply for an exemption permit through the Oklahoma Tax Commission.

Producers should have the option to provide one of the following forms to prove eligibility:

- a federal tax form that shows income from agriculture, such as a Schedule F, Form 1065 or Form 4835

- a USDA Farm Service Agency Form 156EZ which can be obtained from a county FSA office
- a one-page business description form provided by the Oklahoma Tax Commission
- a separate document approved by OTC proving active agriculture production

Members who encounter difficulties in obtaining a permit this year should contact the OKFB Public Policy staff at (405) 523-2300. OKFB will continue working to ensure eligible Oklahoma farmers and ranchers retain access to the agricultural sales tax exemption.



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OKFB members visit north central Oklahoma during OKFB's ag tour

More than 50 Oklahoma Farm Bureau members explored the north central region of the state during the 2021 OKFB Ag Tour held May 5-7.

Members learned about sectors of production agriculture in the north central region of the state by visiting Diamond K Seeds, a Red Rock-based seed and agriculture chemical company; Hoffman Pecan Farm, a third-generation pecan orchard in Stillwater; Pfeiffer Farms, a show goat operation in Orlando; and Guthrie Greenhouses, a contract grower of bedding plants, vegetables and groundcovers. 00313325

Members toured several of the area's manufacturing facilities including Crownline Truck Beds, a manufacturer of steel truck beds and storm shelters; the Ditch Witch Museum, commemorating the accomplishments of Ditch Witch and original machinery; and Larry's Machine Shop, a shop specializing in gun drilling, hole boring and repairs.

The Oklahoma State University Division of Agricultural

Sciences and Natural Resources provided insights on the institution's research advancements through tours of the Totusek Arena, the Cline Equine Teaching Center, the Ferguson Family Dairy Center, the Sheep and Goat Center, the Swine Research and Education Center, the Willard Sparks Beef Center, the Purebred Beef Center and the Botanic Garden.

Members also visited other notable destinations in the area such as the Cherokee Strip Museum in Perry, a museum dedicated to communicating the history of the Cherokee Outlet; a speech from former Noble County Sheriff Charlie Hanger, the officer responsible for the arrest of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building bomber; and the Oklahoma Farm Bureau/Oklahoma 4-H ATV Training Facility in Guthrie, a program of OKFB safety services and OSU Extension to teach students about ATV safety.

Meals throughout the tour were sponsored by Noble County Farm Bureau, Bolay Farms, Payne County Farm Bureau, Oklahoma Ag Credit and Helena.



Members receive an up-close look at Larry's Machine Shop, specializing in gun drilling, hole boring and repairs in Perry.



Nowata County member Kathy Morris admires a citrus tree at the Oklahoma State University Botanic Garden.



While visiting Guthrie Greenhouses, members had a chance to learn about their business as a contract grower.

OKFB sponsors Oklahoma FFA State Convention



Oklahoma Farm Bureau President Rodd Moesel applauds FFA members for their continued efforts to lead and serve despite the challenges faced in the past year during an address at the Oklahoma FFA State Convention on April 28. OKFB is proud to continue supporting Oklahoma agricultural youth as a diamond level sponsor of the event.



OKFB YF&R to host shotgun shoot Aug. 28

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers is set to host their third annual shotgun shoot Aug. 28 at Quail Ridge Hunting and Sporting Clays in McLoud, Oklahoma.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture, which strives to connect consumers of all ages with individuals who work daily to produce their food and fiber.

Check-in 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 will be awarded at the conclusion of the event.

Space is limited to 40 teams total with an adult and high school division. The cost to enter a team of four is \$375 and an individual entry is \$100. Pre-registration is required for the event and must be submitted no later than Aug. 13.

Those interested in sponsoring the event must submit a logo and payment no later than Aug. 5.

For more information regarding registration and sponsorships, contact Zac Swartz at (405) 523-2300.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Platinum – \$750

Includes two four-person teams, a logo on the event sign and a station sponsorship

Gold – \$500

Includes one four-person team and a station sponsorship

OKFB YF&R committee awards 10 scholarships to further education in agriculture

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers committee awarded 10 college scholarships to high school and college students.

Each recipient is pursuing a degree in agriculture at an Oklahoma accredited institution of higher learning.

Nine high school seniors were awarded a \$1,000 scholarship as a part of the YF&R high school scholarship program. New for 2021, one \$1,000 college scholarship was awarded to a deserving Collegiate Farm Bureau member.

“We are proud to support agricultural youth as they transition into their respective college degree programs,” said Cody Goodknight, OKFB YF&R chair. “As the scholarship recipients embark on becoming professionals in the industry, we hope they will be involved in Collegiate Farm Bureau and Young Farmers and Ranchers.”

The nine high school scholarship recipients include:

Kale Campbell

Alfalfa County

Addison DeLeon

Beckham County

Hunter Fox

Dewey County

Kent Tripp

Kay County

Braden Burns

Kingfisher County

Sage Border

Murray County

Colby Erickson

Muskogee County

Austin Hooten

Payne County

Paisley Sturgill

Pottawatomie County

New this year, OKFB YF&R awarded their first-ever Collegiate Farm Bureau scholarship, which was awarded to Kally Whitlock, a sophomore at Northeast Oklahoma A&M. She currently serves as president of NEO A&M Collegiate Farm Bureau.

The 10 scholarship recipients have a wide variety of career aspirations and have chosen degrees across the agriculture industry including agricultural business, agricultural education, farm and ranch management, agricultural communications and animal sciences.

Recipients of the OKFB YF&R scholarships plan to study at higher-education institutions including Northern Oklahoma College and Oklahoma State University.



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OKFB WLC to host fall conference Aug. 27-28

Oklahoma Farm Bureau women from across the state are invited to attend the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee Fall Conference Aug. 27-28 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Edmond.

During the conference, attendees will have the opportunity to learn more about starting their own butterfly garden at home, discuss ways to further the WLC program in the coming year and learn how to share Oklahoma agriculture in conversation with others.

Attendees are encouraged to bring an item for the silent auction benefiting the OKFB Legal Foundation, which works to serve farmers and ranchers through engaging in public interest litigation, researching ag and rural legal issues.

To attend the conference, register online at okfb.news/WLCConfReg21 and complete the registration form by July 27. Hotel rooms are available at the Hilton Garden Inn Edmond for \$109 per night and may be reserved by contacting the hotel at (405) 285-0900. Hotel rooms must be booked before July 27 to receive the discounted rate.

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

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Bridging the Gap into 2021

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee Fall Conference 2021
August 27-28 | Edmond, OK

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee

ODAFF receives master black vulture depredation permit

Oklahoma Farm Bureau welcomes the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry master black vulture depredation permit through the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services.

Black vultures have continued to cause problems for agriculture producers as the birds prey on newborn and adult livestock. The vultures are currently protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which prohibits the take – including killing, capturing, selling, trading and transport – of migratory birds without permission from the USFWS.

Oklahoma farmers and ranchers can now obtain a sub-permit through ODAFF, which will provide producers with five legal takes of black vultures at no cost to the producer, upon completion of the sub-permit application.

Applicants must agree to follow all rules and regulations required by USFWS in the ODAFF statewide permit including:

- Adoption of non-lethal measures to deter black vulture depredation
 - Actively aim to disperse vultures through hazing with light, sound and/or devices
 - Reduce attractants, such as open garbage, dead livestock and outdoor feeding of domestic or wild animals
- The use of shotguns and “nontoxic” shot in the lethal “taking” of depredating black vultures
 - Must adhere to all state and local firearm laws and restrictions
 - Any other methods (poison, trapping, etc.) will not be authorized by the permit
 - Anyone who takes birds under this authority must follow the American Veterinary Medical Association Guidelines on Euthanasia, found on their website
- Report “takes” to ODAFF
 - Quarterly reports for new sub-permittees are due by April 30, July 31 and October 31, and a summary annual report is due by January 31

Black vulture take may not occur under any other depredation permit for a producer acting under a sub-permit. Producers wishing to implement other methods of take or take more than five black vultures must obtain their own individual depredation permit.

The application for the permit can be found on the ODAFF website at ag.ok.gov/black-vulture-sub-permittee-application.

Please direct questions to ODAFF at blackvultures@ag.ok.gov.



New testing procedure for private pesticide applicator license

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency now requires all testing for pesticide applicators to be closed book and proctored following the 2017 revision to the Code of Federal Regulations part 171.

Those who apply or supervise the use of restricted use pesticides, including agricultural producers, are required by federal law to be certified, but those who apply general use pesticides do not need a license. Private applicators are those who use or supervise the use of RUPs to produce an agricultural commodity on land that the producer or their employer either owns or rents.

The new procedure will require the exam to be taken at one of the seven PSI Services testing locations in Oklahoma, which is administered on a computer. To register and schedule to take an exam, visit www.psiexams.com or call (855) 579-4643.

The current certification cycle for private applicators is Jan. 1, 2019, to Dec. 31, 2023. Those already certified do not have to re-take the exam, but are required to receive continuing education units.

Private applicators can receive credit for courses approved for ag plant (1A), which the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry tracks. People cannot receive any CEUs during their first year of certification, but also cannot receive more than 10 CEUs per year.

For additional questions, contact Megan Parker, ODAFF Pesticide Certification & Training Administrator, at (405) 522-5972.

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OKFB joins task force to tackle issues from state's medical marijuana industry

Oklahoma Farm Bureau has joined four fellow Oklahoma agriculture groups to form a task force to develop solutions to the issues facing farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses from the exponential growth of the medical marijuana industry across Oklahoma.

The Medical Marijuana Impacts on

Oklahoma Production Agriculture Task Force – comprised of American Farmers & Ranchers, Oklahoma Agribusiness Retailers Association, Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association, Oklahoma Agricultural Cooperative Council and Oklahoma Farm Bureau – was created to focus on crafting state and federal

solutions to the increasing impacts of medical marijuana on production agriculture across Oklahoma.

“Many of our farm and ranch members have shared a variety of challenges that are facing their farms, ranches and communities due to the rapid increase in medical marijuana production in Oklahoma,” said Rodd Moesel, OKFB president. “Farm Bureau is pleased to continue working side by side with our fellow ag organizations to collaboratively find solutions that benefit farmers, ranchers and all Oklahomans.”

The task force will review the variety of challenges confronting Oklahoma agriculture and work together to provide policy recommendations to state and federal leaders.

The statewide organizations plan to engage the task force with key stakeholders including other state agriculture organizations, public and private utility providers, members of the Oklahoma Legislature and congressional delegation, and the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry. 

Iowa Farmer uses horse product to help heal an injured foot.

On September 9, 2020 Iowa farmer Dan Burck injured his left foot in a grain auger. He was rushed to University of Iowa Hospital in Iowa City, Iowa.

His hospital stay lasted 10 days and included 6 separate surgeries. In January 2021 while recuperating at home he read a story about a Minnesota woman, Liz Hershberger, who had used a horse product called Miracle Heel to help heal her severely injured foot.

Dan was hoping to find a way to speed up his healing process and contacted Stuart Labs about the product Miracle Heel. Stuart connected him with Liz Hershberger who recommended that he use Miracle Heel.

About 10 days after beginning to apply Miracle Heel to his foot, Dan did notice an improvement in the healing process.

In February, his doctors at U of I commented on how well his foot was healing.

On April 13, Dan's foot was almost completely healed except for a small, discolored area on the top of his foot. An MRI revealed a small pocket of fluid just below the sur-



face. His doctor scheduled a surgery appointment for May 6 to remove the pocket of fluid. At his pre-op appointment on May 4, the discolored area looked normal, and an MRI showed that the pocket of fluid was gone.

Dan and his wife Kris farm 800 acres of cropland and have 138 beef cows. With the help of a prosthetic insert in a specially made boot, Dan was able to return to farming in March.



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Looking to the soil for success

The journey into regenerative agriculture proves rewarding for an Oklahoma rancher

By Courtney Leeper

Noble Research Institute writer and copy editor

Russ Jackson rented his first farm as a high school junior. More than three decades later, the third-generation farmer from Mountain View, Oklahoma, notes he had only been taught to pick up a shovel and take a closer look at the soil within the last 10 years.

When he began his journey into regenerative agriculture in 2006, soil health was not on the agenda. He and his father were primarily growing wheat and stocker cattle, and they realized they needed to figure out a way to reduce costs with the price of fuel and other inputs rising and the labor pool shrinking.

The father and son decided to rotate in some additional crops, starting with canola and cotton, and then no-till. They pair had seen the two practices used in South Dakota, where Jackson's father had traveled to help harvest fields since he was a teenager. They figured if it could work in a place that received half the rainfall as their part of Oklahoma, it was worth giving it a try.

The first two years of using no-till practices were tough, Jackson recalls, but they began to see definite changes. The first was slowed erosion. They continued by pushing double crops of milo or soybeans after harvesting wheat, keeping a live root in the ground.

"It took five years to get in the right mindset and headed in the right direction," Jackson said. "But still, we weren't thinking much about soil health."

In 2014, Jackson saw that his yields had plateaued again. He heard about the No-Till on the Plains conference and, after more than a year of considering it, he decided to book a hotel room and go. He intended to find a product he could buy to improve his crop, he says. What he found was that much of the conversation was on soil health, including cover crops and backing off from fertilizer.

"It was like trying to drink out of a fire hose for someone who hadn't been around that much information since college," Jackson said.

One of the speakers was Jimmy Emmons, who farms in northwestern Oklahoma, or what Jackson calls "far from premier farm country."

"He had done all this research on what improving soil health was doing for water infiltration," Jackson said. "He had lots of data. It woke me up to the change I needed to make."

Jackson began incorporating cover crops, which he now considers part of his regular crop rotations. His goal is to never leave ground bare, one of the foundational principles of soil health, and he is always

working on tightening those rotations so that he can get the right timing down for moisture while also getting dual use out of the crops.

For example, in February 2020, a few cows grazed in a field with volunteer rye starting to sprout green growth amongst corn residue. The corn, which had been harvested for grain the previous December, was planted behind rye that had been harvested in June. Before that, the field grew cotton and then triticale. Heifers had given birth to their first calves on that triticale. And for the following June, Jackson planned to plant soybeans or cowpeas.

"I like crops that have dual purposes — grain and grazing," Jackson said. "If something fails, I like to be able to have another use for it."

Increasing soil health has enabled Jackson to gradually reduce fertilizer and chemical pesticides, which has saved him time and money. It also contributes to — and is a direct result from — rebuilding a more resilient land resource that depends on what nature already provides.

"Right now, I could order a semi-load of chemical every day. But the way the times are, I don't think it's always going to be that way," Jackson said. "It's time to plan for managing weeds and pests in a



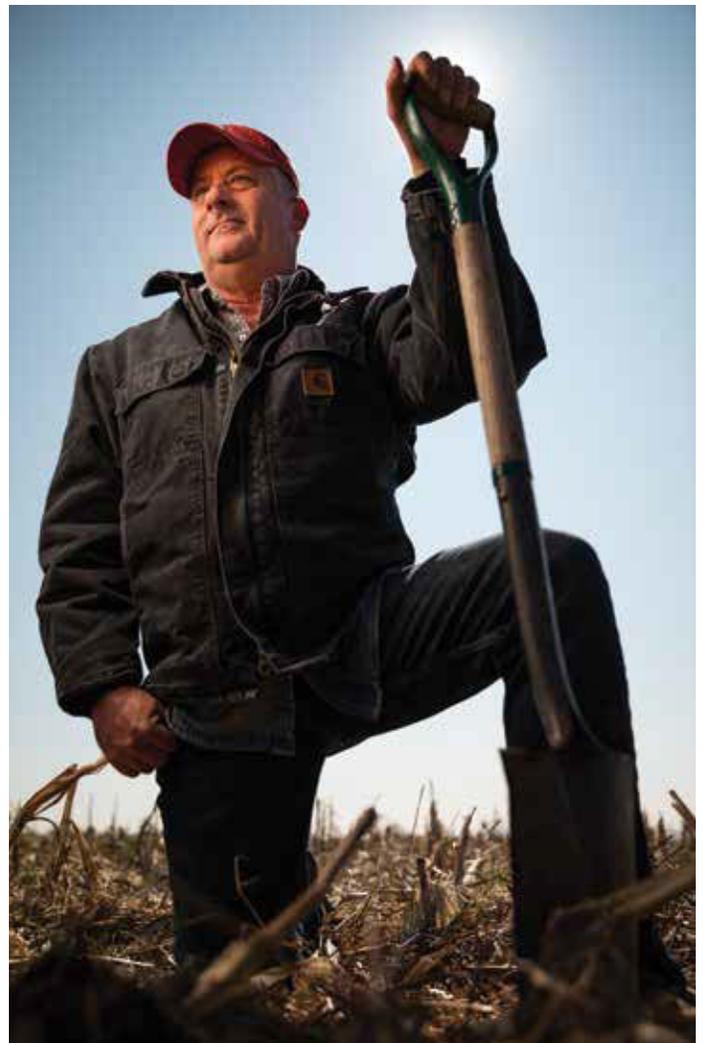
different way. That's not going to happen overnight, so we have to start somewhere."

One way Jackson believes he can manage weeds and pests is to use his cattle more strategically. He currently plants a mixture of species – often including oats, triticale, peas, turnips and radishes – in his pastures, which adds biodiversity, and he rotationally grazes cattle on the cropland covers. In the future, he plans on making rotational grazing a more prominent part of his program across both cropland and pastures. The challenge is ensuring he has enough water for cattle in smaller paddocks.

"I may have to cut back hard on cattle numbers to get to where I'm going," he said. "That's a big decision. Change doesn't get any easier."

After more than 12 years on the regenerative journey, though, the changes have resulted in a stark improvement. The soil has darkened as it stores away more carbon, and today it sticks to the roots – becoming almost as one with the plant, a sign that living associations between the two are gaining strength.

"This soil used to be compact," Jackson said, taking a shovel to the ground, which he says has become a daily addiction in the past six years. "Now it's something you might find in your flower bed. I couldn't have gotten here, though, if it weren't for searching out help and just going for it." 



Join the regenerative journey

Farmers and ranchers across the U.S. are finding regenerative agriculture to help them both improve profitability and their ability to leave the land better than they found it for future generations. Noble Research Institute has announced it will focus all its programs

on helping grazing animal producers on the regenerative ranching journey. To learn more or get started, go to www.noble.org.

Find more advice and stories from regenerative ranchers in Oklahoma by going to bit.ly/regenerative-journey.

The importance of pollinator gardens

By Trisha Gedon
Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service

Flower beds full of bright, colorful flowers or trees loaded with fruits certainly are a great way to add to the aesthetics of a home. However, these flowers and fruits would not be possible without the hard work of pollinators like bees and butterflies.

Planting a pollinator-friendly garden with a variety of flowering plants can help ensure gardeners have brightly colored landscapes from spring through fall. In addition, these flowers and shrubs provide additional benefits for a wide variety of pollinators, said David Hillock, Oklahoma State University Extension consumer horticulturist.

“Gardeners can help the pollinators by planting colorful wildflowers and native plants,” Hillock said. “These plants not only provide pollinators with nectar and pollen to feast on all season long, they also provide much-needed shelter.”

Installing a pollinator garden will attract bees, butterflies and other pollinators to the area. These insects will help the growth of vegetable gardens and other flowers in a landscape by accelerating the rate of pollination in the garden.

Hillock said gardeners can give insects a leg up by using a wide variety of plants that bloom from early spring to late fall.

“When planting these flowers, plant them in clumps, rather than single plants and be sure to include a variety of native plants as these are acclimated to Oklahoma’s climate, soil and native pollinators,” he said. “Something else to consider is planting night-blooming flowers as they are beneficial to moths and bats.”

For those who enjoy seeing butterflies in the landscape, planting larval host plants in a butterfly garden is key. Yes, the caterpillars will eat these plants, so place them where unsightly leaf damage will not spoil the look of the landscape. Keep in mind some host plants are less than ornamental, if not outright weeds.

Something else to consider is butterflies need food resources other than nectar.

“Butterflies are attracted to unsavory foodstuffs, including moist animal droppings, urine and rotting fruits,” Hillock said. “Consider putting out slices of overripe bananas, oranges and other fruits for them to feast on. Another option is a sponge in a dish of lightly salted water. Sea salt provides a broader range of micronutrients than regular table salt.”

To attract bees to landscapes, instead of sawing off a dead limb on a tree, leave it in place, as long as it isn’t a safety hazard. This



Pollinator gardens are important sources of food and shelter for pollinators such as bees and butterflies. *Photos by David Hillock.*

space will provide an essential nesting site for native bees. Consider building a bee condo by drilling holes of varying diameter about 3 inches to 5 inches deep in a piece of scrap lumber mounted to a post or under the eaves of a home.

A hummingbird feeder is also a great source of nectar for pollinators. While enjoying the hummingbirds flitting around the feeder, it also provides a great resource for pollinators. A simple mix of one part sugar with four parts water is just what they need and avoid the use of red dye, artificial sweeteners, honey or fruit juices. Place the feeder where it receives morning

sun and afternoon shade and wash the feeder in hot soapy water once or twice a week to prevent mold buildup.

Hillock cautions gardeners about the use of pesticides. If absolutely necessary, use the least-toxic material possible.

“It is vital for you to read labels carefully before purchasing, as many of these products are especially harmful to bees,” he said. “Use the product according to direction, and spray at night when bees and other pollinators are not active. Over the last couple of decades, the bee population has been gravely affected by the use of pesticides.” **EM**



This bumblebee gets a nutritious meal from a Silphium plant in the garden.

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The fall issue will publish in mid-October 2021.*



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Two beautiful spaces in Gracelawn Cemetery in Edmond. \$1,500 each OBO. Call (405) 277-3622 or (405) 517-4160.

Fence charger repair, all brands. Warranty work for all Woodstream products. Bob Hunter, Pioneer Electronics. Waukomis, OK. (580) 603-0063.

Saddle Shop – Randall. Heavy leather stitchers, works like new. Sallisaw, OK. (918) 962-2064.

Unique ink pens including bolt action, lever action and patriotic. All made with rifle casings. Many other themes. Creativebulletware.com. (918) 671-4882.

Two spaces at Resthaven Memorial Gardens – OKC in the Holy Family section. \$4,200 for both. (405) 598-9227 or (405) 432-7859.

Kelly's monuments - low prices. Henryetta, OK. (918) 652-7248.

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