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January 2016

Volume 1 Issue 1



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## Cheers to new beginnings!

Welcome readers to the January issue of Oklahoma Farm & Ranch magazine. The OKFR team would like to be the first to wish you a Happy New Year! We hope you have made your New Year's resolutions, and we cannot wait to see what the new year will bring.

This month I traveled to Ringling to meet with legendary cutting horse trainer, Bill Riddle. The school teacher turned cutting horse trainer is a member National Cutting Horse Association Hall of Fame. Read about how Riddle turned his passion for teaching and horses into a successful career and how his life would be different if he never rode a horse.

Located in New Cordell, the Washita County Courthouse has an incredible history. Before the courthouse was relocated from Cloud Chief, the court records were "stolen" in the middle of the night. The courthouse was destroyed by a fire a few years later, believed to be arson. The courtyard was also featured in the 2010 film *The Killer Inside Me* starring Casey Affleck, Jessica Alba and Kate Hudson.

Next read as Marty New discusses how ranchers can reduce calf mortality. Feeding bred cows at dusk will increase the number of cows calving in the daytime, where owners are better able to assist if needed.

As the winter weather arrives in the Sooner state, so will the northern bald eagle. Read how the majestic national bird was almost extinct. The George Miksch Sutton Avian Research Center and the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma Grey Snow Eagle House rehabilitate bald eagles, track migration patterns and educate the public on bald eagle conservation issues.

OKFR wishes all of our readers a happy, safe and blessed New Year. As the cold winter weather arrives, we hope this magazine will warm your hearts.

If you have an event, photo or topic idea that you would like to see in Oklahoma Farm & Ranch, send it our way at editor@okfronline.com. Keep up with new OKFR updates on our Facebook page. For more information or subscription information, visit our website [www.OKFRonline.com](http://www.OKFRonline.com).

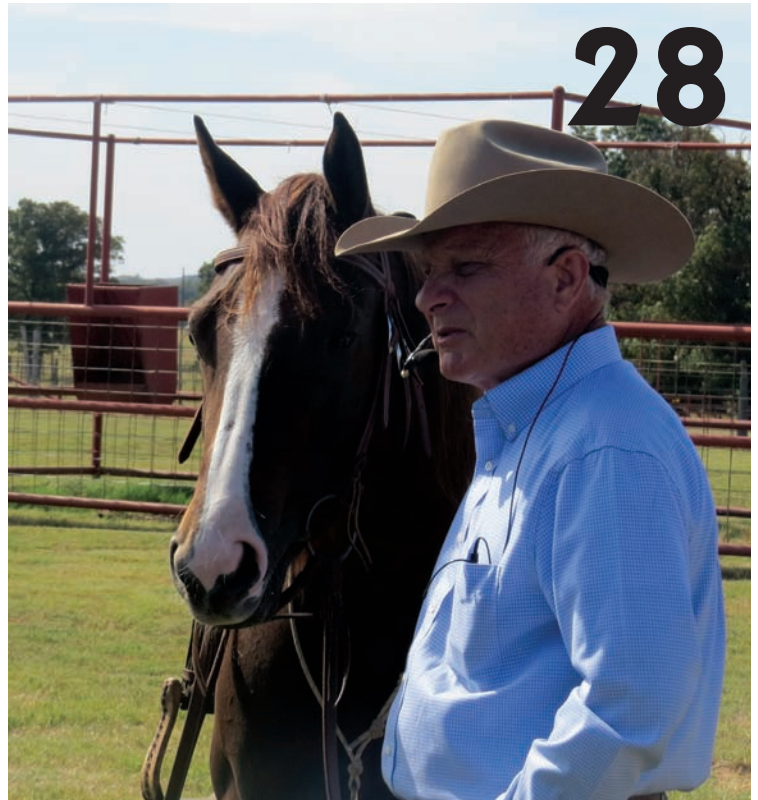
Until next month,





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# OKFR / socializing

## ON THE COVER

Bill Riddle was a school teacher for 10 years before focusing on his rodeo career. He grew up horseback, listening to old rodeo stories and the glamour of a good horse. With a career in the cutting horse industry spanning more than 30 years, Riddle has won in excess of \$4.4 million, is a member of the National Cutting Horse Association Hall of Fame and wrote the original NCHA casebook. Riddle used his school teaching experience to help others through releasing educational videos and hosting cutting horse clinics.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OKFR is now welcoming letters to the editor for its Socializing page, but some rules apply. They include:

1. 125-word limit.
2. Deadline for submission is the first Wednesday of the month.
3. Only one letter per writer per issue.
4. All letters must include a name, address and phone number. Only the name and city of residence will be published.
5. All letters will be verified by the news staff by a phone call prior to publication. If the news staff is unable to contact the writer of a letter, the letter will be held until such times as contact is made.
6. Letters containing libelous statements or those intended as advertising will not be published.
7. Letters that target previous letter writers will be edited to remove the name of such letter writers who are non-candidates or non-public figures. Letters critical of previously published guest columns may identify the writer only once, and then only to make it clear which column they are writing about.
8. NTFR reserves the right to edit or reject any letters to the editor.
9. Letters must be mailed to OKFR Letter to the Editor, P.O. Box 831, Bowie, TX 76230 or emailed to editor@okfronline.com.

## FACEBOOK WALL



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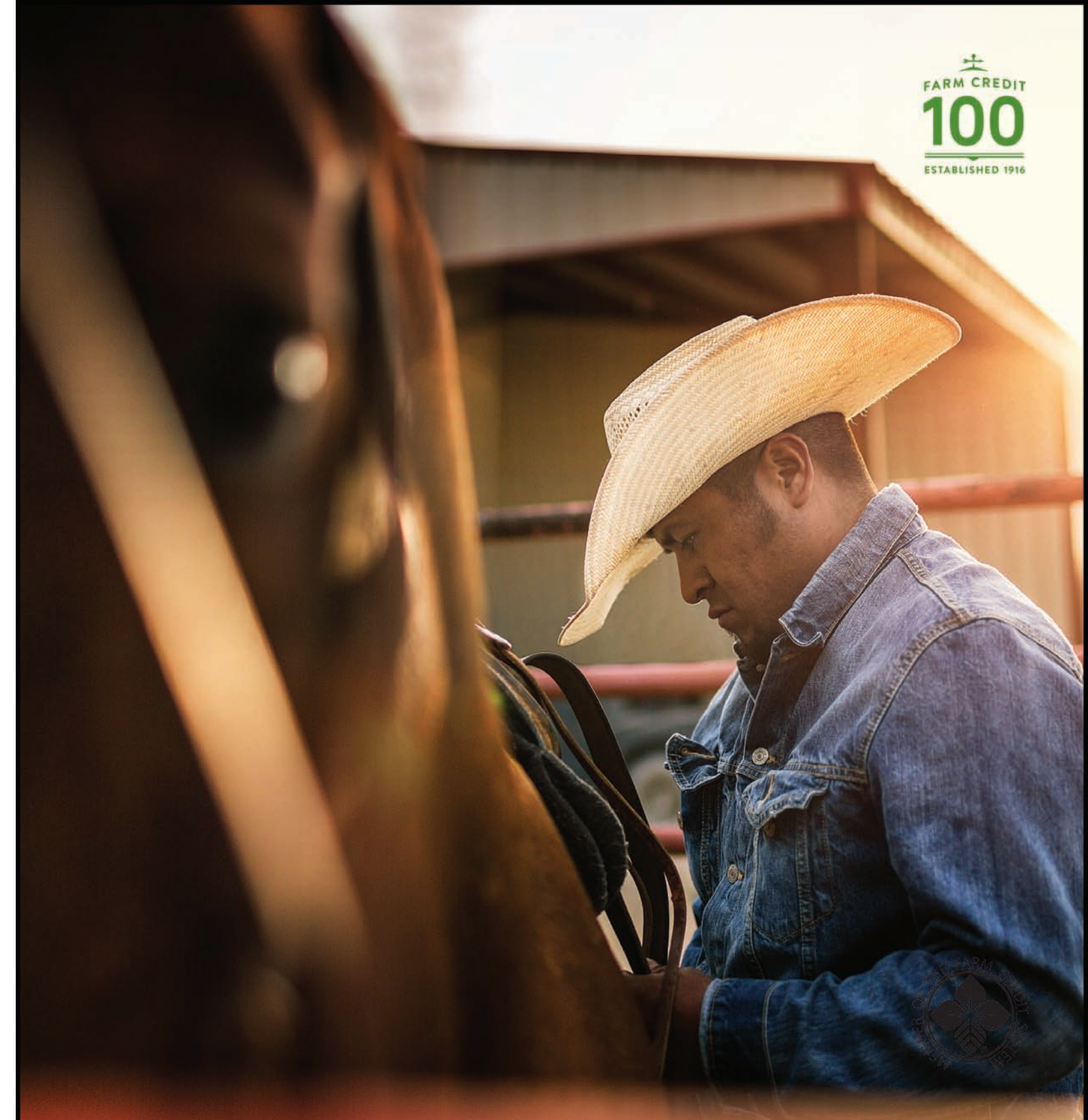
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# The Power of One Voice

Farmers and ranchers must unite to tell the real story of agriculture



In the 1943 musical “Oklahoma!” a peaceful party turns into a brawl when the lyrics, “The farmer and the cowman should be friends” are sung. Too often, real life has mimicked that film in the agriculture industry.

The beef versus chicken versus grain mindset of days gone by is still too common at a time when agriculture needs to stick together to tell our story to a consumer who is hearing a much different tale about agriculture.

From climate change to agricultural technology, consumers and media often place our industry dead center of the debate. Agriculture’s voice has been dwindling for decades as people have shifted from rural to urban living.

When President Abraham Lincoln established the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1862, 90 percent of the population farmed for a living. The 2012 Census of Agriculture showed a decrease

in the number of U.S. farmers — amounting to approximately two percent of the U.S. population. Changing demographics are shifting consumers’ views of agricultural practices.

We tend to think the message is confined outside of Oklahoma’s heartland, but our state is not immune to multi-million dollar activists’ campaigns. The anti-agriculture message is hitting home with our urban neighbors. In my office department of eight, one co-worker has sworn off meat because she “has watched too many documentaries” while another co-worker is afraid of antibiotics in meat.

“Twenty years ago, we didn’t need to worry about the consumers’ views about animal welfare because most people realized as farmers and ranchers, we did what we did for the betterment of those animals,” said Jerry Fitch, Ph.D. and Oklahoma State University

professor of animal science. Fitch co-founded an animal advocacy course at OSU in 2010.

In 2013, the course was moved into the animal science senior capstone class to teach more students to speak in front of a camera on issues affecting agriculture. In five years, more than 500 students have become “advocates” for agriculture.

“Today, we must deal with animal activists who use emotion and false statements to convince consumers we are not doing what’s best for our animals,” Fitch said. “We must tell the truth of what we do in agriculture, why we do it and let the 95 percent of consumers that are three or four generations removed from the farm know that as agriculturalists, we do things in the animal’s best interest.

We need to talk with the same voice, saying the same things and use science to back up why we See **UNITE page 11**



BY LISA BRYANT

#### PHOTO DETAILS

Today’s farming and ranching practices are producing more food on less land using fewer resources with a decreasing impact on the environment. (Courtesy photo)



# Unite

Continued from page 10

do the things we do rather than emotions, which is what animal rights groups use against us," he continued.

"Misconceptions about food spread as quickly as the flu," said Susan Allen, program manager of industry affairs for Dairy MAX. To combat false information about the dairy industry, Dairy MAX recently gathered 46 health industry leaders from Oklahoma and Texas for a two-day training at the Culinary Institute of America in San Antonio, Texas. Dietitians and physicians learned facts about dairy myths and sustainability.

The regional dairy checkoff program also formally trains dairy farmers to tell their story to media and consumers. "People want to meet farmers, and farmers have a great story to tell," Allen said.

We live in a world where we can no longer operate with a farmer versus rancher mentality. All

facets of the agricultural industry need to speak with one common, positive voice. Consumers want to know where their food comes from, and it's time we tell that wholesome story in a proactive manner. We must listen to and address consumer concerns in a relatable message that resonates with our consumers.

Today's farming and ranching practices are producing more food on less land using fewer resources with a decreasing impact on the environment. The United States produces the safest, cheapest food supply in the world.

Each of us must shout that story from the plains of Oklahoma to the world. From GMOs to animal welfare to pesticide practices, it's time to take a stand to teach consumers, media, government agencies and legislators how Oklahoma farmers and ranchers are the original stewards of this great land. ★



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# Time of Feeding Influences Calving and Body Temperature



**A**s cowherd expansion continues and first calf heifers are being placed in the herd, we need to consider how to reduce calf mortality. Supervision of first calf heifers and cows that are in need of assistance is an obvious proven method to increase calf survival.

The best and easiest time to observe the herd is within daylight hours. During this time skilled personnel are more readily available to render assistance and neonatal care to maximize the calf crop. Additionally, baby calves born in the warmer part of the day reduce cold stress and have a better chance for early colostrum consumption and ultimately survival.

The easiest and most practical method of inhibiting nighttime calving is by feeding cows at night. The physiological mechanism is unknown, but some hor-

monal effect may be involved. Rumen motility studies indicate the frequency of rumen contractions decreases a few hours before parturition. Intraruminal pressure begins to fall in the last two weeks of gestation, with a more rapid decline during calving. It has been suggested that night feeding causes intraruminal pressures to rise at night and decline in the daytime.

Data supports that feeding pregnant cows at dusk will increase the number of cows calving during the day time. In a Canadian study of 104 Hereford cows, 38.4 percent of a group fed at 8 a.m. and again at 3 p.m. delivered calves during the day. Seventy-nine percent of the cows fed at 11 a.m. and 9 p.m. calved during the day.

A British study utilizing 162 cattle on four farms compared the percentages of calves born from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. to cows fed at

different times. When cattle were fed at 9 a.m., 57 percent of the calves were born during the day, versus 79 percent with feeding at 10 p.m.

In field trials by cattlemen utilizing night feeding, 35 cows and heifers were fed once daily between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. The night feeding resulted in 74.5 percent of the calves born between 5 a.m. and 5 p.m.

In the most convincing study to date, 1,331 cows on 15 farms in Iowa were fed once daily at dusk. Eighty-five percent of the calves were born between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.

In most cases cows have unrestricted access to hay with the use of round bales. The best method of influencing the time of calving is via the time of day that the supplement is being fed.

At Oklahoma State University, **See TIME page 14**

## BY MARTY NEW

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### PHOTO DETAILS

Feeding cattle in the late afternoon or early evening has an impact on body temperature during extreme cold weather. (Photo by Laci Jones)



# Time

Continued from page 13

the switch from supplement feeding in daytime to late afternoon/early evening feeding encouraged 72 percent of the cows to calve between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. These cows had 24/7 access to round bales of grass hay. When supplement was fed during the morning hours, the ratio of night time versus day time calving was nearly even.

Cattlemen with limited numbers of cattle have reported success controlling access to the round bales. The hay is fed within a small enclosed pasture or lot near a larger pasture where the cows graze during the day. In the evening, the gate to the area where the hay is placed is opened and the cows are allowed to enter and consume hay during the night. The next morning, they are moved back to the daytime

pasture to graze until the following evening. In this manner, the nighttime feeding is accomplished with hay only.

Feeding cattle in the late afternoon or early evening also has an impact on body temperature during extreme cold weather. The energy from feed that is available to keep an animal's body warm is known as the heat increment of feeding.

Incremental heat production is at its maximum four to six hours after the feed is consumed. Therefore, feeding late in the afternoon provides higher amounts of heat from fermentation overnight when temperatures are lowest, making the most efficient use of feed supplies and meeting the cattle's energy requirements.

Depending on the size of the operation, decisions may have



The best and easiest time to observe the herd is within daylight hours when personnel are more readily available. (Photo by Laci Jones)

to be made to feed the mature cows earlier in the day, followed by feeding the first calf heifers at dusk. This will allow increased

observation time for the heifers and will also allow greater use of heat production to regulate body temperature during this time. ★

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After more than 24 years in private practice, I made a switch to education a little over a year ago. I enjoy my new job as an area food/animal quality and health specialist for eastern Okla., but at times, I miss not being around animals and their owners.

One of the things I miss the most is the relationships that I had with the farmers and ranchers who produce the food that we eat. These are some of the best people in the world, and I miss not getting to interact with them daily.

I also miss not being involved in delivery of newborn animals. Although stressful, the most enjoyable moments in practice were witnessing the birth of life. Nothing in veterinary medicine is better than watching a wet ball of fur take a big gulp of air, shake his head and gently give a cry. Unfortunately, it was the total opposite too many times. It was depressing to show up only to realize the best that I could do was to save the bull, if you get what I mean. Fortunately, most animals give birth with no assistance. For those few times during calving, lambing, farrowing and kidding season when there are problems, the following information might be helpful.

The saying “if mama ain’t happy, ain’t nobody happy” is just as true for animals as it is for my wife at my house. Cows, pigs, ewes and does need special attention, especially when bred. These animals need to be on a good health care program that should include a biosecurity program, a vaccination program, a parasite control program and a nutrition program.

Weakness in any of these areas could result in an unhealthy dam, reproductive inefficiencies and many other problems. Producers should take the time to consult with their local veterinarian and design a herd health program specifically for their operation.



Once “mama” is taken care of, producers can turn their attention to the area designated for the birthing process. Whether inside or outside, the birthing area needs to be clean, dry, easily accessible and provide protection from the elements. Birthing areas need to be as close to the producer’s residence as possible, so they can easily observe the herd or flock.

If the area is outside, the producer needs to be sure the area remains dry. Bogs, bottoms, or low areas are not good locations for a newborn. Newborns need to be cleaned and dried as soon as possible after birth, and being born in a mud hole is not a good start to life. Outside birthing areas need some kind of protection from the elements. A windbreak provides protection from the cold and wind. These areas should have deep bedding so the animals can bed down

and stay warm.

When birthing in open or range conditions, if several animals are to give birth within a short period of time, the location needs to be rotated to prevent the buildup of disease causing pathogens. Moving areas prevent babies from developing diseases such as pneumonia and diarrhea.

Lastly, sheep and goats that give birth in range conditions need protection from predators. If possible, it may be a good decision for sheep and goat producers to have animals birth indoors.

This provides a clean, dry and out-of-the-weather location for mother and baby to get acclimated to each other. It is important that indoor areas have good ventilation as well as adequate bedding. Stagnant air and ammonia built up from urine can cause respiratory issues. **See BIRTHING page 19**



**BY BARRY  
WHITWORTH**

[barry.whitworth@okstate.edu](mailto:barry.whitworth@okstate.edu)

**PHOTO DETAILS**

Nothing in veterinary medicine is better than watching a wet ball of fur take a big gulp of air, shake his head and gently give a cry. (Courtesy of Marty New)



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**KLA WIDE LOAD 545**

S: SAV Resource 1441 • MGS: SAV Net Worth 4200  
EPDs: BW 4.4, WW 63, YW 118, MILK 23, MRB .55, RE .65



**PENZ HARVESTOR 4676**

S: SAV Harvester 0338 • MGS: Rito 616 of 4B20 6807  
EPDs: BW 3.6, WW 62, YW 111, MILK 25, MRB .46, RE .43



**KLA INTERCEPT 549**

S: SAV International 2020 • MGS: Connealy Onward  
EPDs: BW 2.1, WW 61, YW 104, MILK 18, MRB .52, RE .87



**PENZ THRASHER 4654**

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# Birthing

Continued from page 16

tory problems. The soiled bedding material should be removed frequently and fresh bedding material added, so these areas do not become contaminated.

Working facilities are also an important part of any livestock operation. Routine maintenance is required to keep the jug pens, corrals, squeeze chutes, alley ways and gates in good working order. Producers do not want a problem to pop up when they are trying to catch an animal that is having trouble giving birth.

The difference between a live dam and her offspring may be determined on how quickly the fetus can be removed. Not only should the equipment be in good working order, but it is also a good investment to put in a good light source. It is no fun to stumble around in

the dark, and a good light may keep someone from being injured. Producers should remember that facilities need to keep both the animals and the producer safe.

It is unfortunate that animals often choose to go into labor at odd hours. This makes it even more important to not only have the right equipment and be able to locate it, but to make sure you know how to use the equipment and see that it is all in good working order.

Calf jacks or pullers, obstetric (OB) chains, OB handles, and head snares need not only to be in good working order but to be clean and sterile.

Some form of a disinfectant will be needed to clean and sterilize OB chains, OB handles and head snares. Obstetric lube is

important to lubricate the birth canal. Obstetric sleeves protect the producers from contact with germs or bacteria that may be in the birth canal. They also may protect the dam from being contaminated from the producer when manipulating the fetus.

Iodine aids in disease prevention when used to dip a newborn's navel cord. However, the most important supply to have on hand is a source of high quality colostrum. On occasion, a dam may reject her offspring or a dam simply may not produce enough colostrum. Colostrum is vital to the health and wellbeing of a newborn offspring.

Finally, a well written treatment protocol will aid in deciding when to intervene in difficult births. Producers should come

up with the protocol before they find themselves in the middle of a stressful difficult birth so that they don't second guess themselves. The rancher should take the time to write a document that is easy to read and understand for all the parties that may have to assist in the birthing process.

A producer should also involve their local veterinarian in the writing of this document. The veterinarian can help to advise when they should be contacted during a difficult birth. By including their veterinarian in writing the protocol, they will likely be more willing to come in case of an after-hour emergency.

I hope that you do not have any problems this spring with your livestock, but be prepared in case of an emergency! ★




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# The Working Dog



A dog is commonly referred to as “man’s best friend,” but is the saying still true for a working dog?

Randy Reed, an Oklahoma dog trainer for more than 10 years said having working dogs on the farm and ranch is helpful because of their ability to sort livestock. He said having a good working dog will make the trainer look good.

“These dogs will teach you just as much as you can teach them,” Reed said. “They are intelligent dogs, and all they want is to work and please you.”

Each dog has a different technique to herding livestock, Reed explained.

“Herding dogs were developed to do certain jobs for different types of livestock and for different types of farming,” said Susan Bennett, president of the Oklahoma Stock Dog Association.

Some dogs, known as headers, will herd livestock by putting pressure toward the stock’s head.

Other dogs, known as heelers, will nip at the heels of stock to herd them. Bennett said some dogs can be headers and heelers. Each livestock species may require a different approach, Reed said.

“Working sheep is different than working cattle,” he said. “The dogs can work the sheep with their eyes. You don’t have to be on sheep so tight, but it’s a challenge with cattle.”

For an owner, it may be a challenge to decide which dog breed is appropriate to have. The best working dog breed depends on what livestock species is worked and the owner’s preferences.

## Border Collie

Border collies are known for their herding ability, Bennett said. This breed of dog was bred for their intelligence and work ethic.

“The border collies that actually work livestock were never bred for how they looked,” she added.

Border collies typically use

their eyes to herd livestock, but they can also be sent into a pasture and gather livestock.

“If you want to pull 300 yearlings off of a wheat pasture, you can pull up to the gate send the border collies out there,” Reed said. “They will bring the cattle right to you and through the gate.”

Bennett said people need to make sure they have jobs for working dogs.

“These dogs have been bred for hundreds of years, and they have to find an outlet for that instinct,” Bennett said.

When the border collies are not working, both Bennett and Reed keep their border collies in pens.

“I can run them loose, but they will overwork the stock,” Reed said. “They are like keeping an eye on kids.”

A downside to having a border collie is some may not have a tough enough bite, Reed said.

See **WORKING** page 22



**BY LACI JONES**

editor@okfronline.com

## PHOTO DETAILS

Border collies were developed for their intelligence and work ethic rather than for their appearance. (Courtesy photo)



They may not be as aggressive as other dog breeds.

**Kelpie**

Kelpies originated from Australia and are typically short, slick-haired dogs. This breed of dog is rangier than most other breeds, Reed said.

“Kelpies’ working style is similar to border collies,” he said.

Like border collies, kelpies are a “fetch” dog, meaning they will bring the livestock back to the owner, he explained.

Bennett said the kelpies she has seen are typically more aggressive toward livestock. They have more stamina than most breeds, Reed added.

“When they go to work, they will be in a crouch position,” Reed said. “Their head is going to be down level with their shoulders. The tail is going to be dropped down behind them.”

Good border collies and kelpies have constant control, and they will have a lot of movement with their eyes, he said.

Reed said the American kelpie is close in proximity with the Australian kelpie. However, the American kelpie is weaker than the Australian kelpie.

**Australian Cattle Dog**

Developed from the native Australian dingo, the Australian cattle dog was originally bred for driving livestock, Bennett said.

She said most working dogs within this breed are heelers, which is why they are commonly referred to as blue or red heelers, depending on their color.

Australian cattle dogs are typically used in pens and corrals to move livestock, Bennett said. They were not developed to go into open areas and gather livestock.

“We would haul cattle to the sale barn,” Reed said. “There was a blue heeler that would work on



Border collies can herd livestock using the power of their eyes. (Courtesy of XP Ranch Photography)

the chute and bite the cattle and get them through there.”

However, the Australian cattle dog is not as common in the competition trials as the border collie.

Reed said there is a market for the Australian cattle dog in the state. Australian cattle dogs are in high demand, but their herding ability is still to be determined.

**Australian Shepherd**

“Back when the United States was being settled, the Australian shepherd was the farm dog to have,” Bennett said.

Bennett said Australian shepherds were bred to be farm dogs, but they have changed in recent years to become show dogs and pets.

“There are very few Australian shepherds that can now go out and

do a job,” Bennett said.

The Australian shepherd is not as popular for herding as other breeds today, Reed added.

“They are pretty dogs, but I haven’t seen any stock-oriented,” Reed said.

Reed said Australian shepherds can be trained, but he found them to be easily distracted.

**Catahoula**

Catahoulas are typically used for hunting. However, these bay-type dogs can be used to work livestock.

Reed said catahoulas and border collies have different styles of working. Unlike the border collie, this breed of dog uses their bark to move livestock, Reed said. Catahoulas will also work the outer perimeter of livestock, he said.

“Catahoulas will hunt livestock

because they can use their nose, where the border collie will do everything by the power of their eyes,” Reed said.

Reed said catahoulas would be the better working dog in a situation where the owner needed help finding livestock.

However, working livestock with a catahoula is a team effort. A catahoula dog will not fetch livestock, but they will keep livestock in a “tight wad.” The owner will have to move the cattle themselves.

**Cattlemaster**

The cattlemaster is a newer breed of working dog. They are a cross between border collie, pit bull, and kelpie, and they were bred for working cattle, according to Reed. They are more aggressive  
**See DOGS page 23**



## Dogs

Continued from page 22

and have a stronger bite.

However, when cattlemaster was bred to get more bite, they lost their natural herding ability. Reed experienced this firsthand when he trained a cattlemaster.

“There wasn’t the natural ability,” Reed said. “She was just mechanical. I could move her, but she couldn’t read a cow.”

Reed said other breeds of dogs can potentially be used as working dogs including corgis, McNab shepherds and German shepherds. However, before purchasing a new dog, the buyer should research bloodlines and breeders.

“Buy a dog that can be bred to work cattle,” Reed advised. “Go watch the parents work and research who has trained the dogs.”

It is also important to purchase a dog that has been bred to work the specific species of livestock, Bennett added. No matter what dog breed an owner chooses, imported dogs may not always make the best working dogs.

“Just because a dog is imported doesn’t mean it will be better than a dog bred right here in the United States,” Bennett said.

She said there are many more great dogs and trainers in the United States than 20 years ago. It may be helpful to seek advice from a professional to help kick-start a new program, she added.

After purchasing a working dog, it is important to spend extra money to send the dog to a trainer for 30 to 60 days, Reed said. Then, the owner should spend quality time with the dog and the trainer to learn how to work together.

Bennett said each dog may require a different type of training, which may require adjusting. She said incorporating techniques from several different trainers can help the owner and their best friend. ★



Top to bottom, It is important for livestock owners to purchase a dog that has been bred to work their specific species of livestock. When working livestock, good border collies will be in a crouch position and have constant control. (Courtesy of XP Ranch Photography)





# Do horses really choke?

Just like humans, horses may choke. Choking is a condition in which the esophagus is blocked, usually by food material. Horses with dental problems that do not grind their food properly and horses that do not take adequate time to chew are at risk (fractious horses, and horses that have to fight for their food). Dry foods may cause choke especially if the horse does not have free access to water. Pelleted/cubed feed and beet pulp are among the most common feeds that horses choke on. The risk of choke associated with dry feeds can be reduced by soaking the ration prior to feeding. Foreign objects such as wood, large chunks of apple, and blanket/lead rope pieces may also cause choke.

In horses, signs of choke are excessive salivation, coughing, constant chewing, difficulty swallowing, disinterest in food, and extending the neck and head out. Choke is a medical emergency, as horses are often not able to resolve it on their own. Resolving it promptly is important because

secondary to choke, aspiration pneumonia may develop if food material and saliva accumulate in the pharynx and spill over into the trachea and lungs.

Treatment of choke entails passing a nasogastric tube up the nose/down into the esophagus. If the tube will not pass into the stomach and hits resistance, it indicates a complete obstruction of the esophagus, while difficulty passing the tube may represent a stenosis or narrowing of the esophagus. If resistance is hit, warm water is pumped into the esophagus down the tube. Water helps soften the obstructing matter so it can pass on down the esophagus. Heavy sedation is used during this procedure to keep the horse's head low and prevent aspiration of fluid into the trachea.

If the choke is not resolved with the passing of a nasogastric tube, a video endoscope is passed down into the esophagus to assess the obstruction and small biopsy forceps can be used to pick apart/break up the obstruction. In severe cases, the horse may have to be

anesthetized and an orotracheal tube placed to prevent aspiration and allow for more vigorous flushing.

If all of these techniques do not work, an incision can be made into the esophagus to remove the obstruction; however, if surgery is performed the horse is at risk of scarring down the esophagus/stenosis, which increases the chance that the horse may choke again.

After a choke is resolved, it is important to provide the horse with anti-inflammatory (banamine or bute) to help prevent any scarring. Depending upon the duration of the choke, horses are often placed on broad-spectrum antibiotics to help prevent the onset of aspiration pneumonia. Horses should also be kept on a soft feed to allow time for the esophagus to heal.

As stated before, choking is an emergency and to give your horse the best chance at recovering it is important that a veterinarian see your horse if you suspect they are choking.\*



**BY MOLLY BELLEFEUILLE, DVM, MS**

#### PHOTO DETAILS

Choking is a medical emergency in horses, as they are often not able to resolve it on their own. (Photo by Laci Jones)





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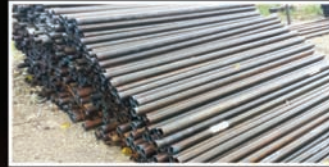
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# THE IMPORTANCE OF EQUINE VACCINATIONS

**V**accinating horses is crucial to overall health maintenance and essential to responsible ownership. It is important to protect the horses against diseases they could be exposed to whether they travel or stay at the stable or farm.

The number of diseases a horse is exposed to is directly proportional to the number of vaccinations necessary to ensure adequate protection. Horses that live a more isolated lifestyle will be exposed to a lower number of diseases and will need to only receive the core vaccinations. On the other hand, a horse that is showing and traveling is exposed to a greater number of diseases. These horses need to receive the core vaccinations plus additional vaccinations due to increased risk.

Another consideration when deciding which vaccines to administer to a horse is treatment costs versus vaccination costs and

following boosters.

A good example of this scenario would be the rabies vaccination, which is relatively cheap. A rabies vaccinated horse is not 100 percent protected from the disease. However, the risk of the horse developing the disease if exposed is significantly decreased. The flip side of the coin would be if you did not vaccinate your horse for rabies, which leaves them at significant risk of developing the disease if exposed. This is compounded by the fact that there is no treatment for a horse with rabies.

Vaccines can be divided into four large groups based on how

they are made and how they work when administered: live vaccine, modified live vaccine, recombinant vaccine and killed vaccine. They all contain antigens, parts of the disease-causing organism, that will train the immune system, but they will not cause a clinical disease in a horse.

Live and modified live vaccines are capable of inciting an immune response most like the natural occurring disease without causing the horse to develop the disease. Because they cause such a strong immune response, a booster vaccine does not need to be administered. **See VACCINATIONS page 27**



**BY LAUREN LAMB,  
DVM, MS**

#### PHOTO DETAILS

Deciding which vaccines to use depends on what vaccines are available and a local veterinarian's recommendation. (Photo by Laci Jones)





# VACCINATIONS

ministered as frequently as the recombinant and killed vaccine. It is very important to administer live and modified live vaccines as directed on the label. Failure to follow labeled directions can result in significant complications or decreased efficacy of the vaccine.

Recombinant and killed vaccines incite an immune response that is sufficient to protect the horse from disease, but less like the natural disease compared to the live and modified live vaccine. Recombinant and killed vaccines require more frequent booster vaccinations, due to the less natural response to these vaccines. Deciding which vaccines to use depends on what vaccines are available and a local veterinarian's recommendation.

All vaccines are given to a horse with the goal of the horse mounting an immune response to the vaccine. This immune response trains the horse's immune system to recognize certain characteristics of the disease-causing organism, which in most cases is a bacteria or virus. The horse's immune system can then react in a timely and aggressive manner that will rid the body of the disease. Without the prior vaccination, the horse's immune system may not react to the inciting organism in a timely manner, allowing the disease to be established in the horse.

The American Association of Equine Practitioners established guidelines and recommendations for vaccinating horses depending on the level of exposure to diseases, age and pregnancy status.

Eastern and Western Equine Encephalitis, West Nile Virus, Rabies and Tetanus are the core vaccines that each horse living in North America should receive. The core vaccines are based on the high risk of any horse living in North America being exposed



Horses that live a more isolated lifestyle will be exposed to a lower number of diseases and will need to only receive the core vaccinations. (Photo by Laci Jones)

to one of these disease. These vaccines provide a very high level of protection but not 100 percent.

Eastern Equine Encephalitis, Western Equine Encephalitis and West Nile Virus are all viruses that affect the horse's central nervous system. They cause clinical signs of dullness, depression, muscle fasciculation or ataxia. They are all spread by mosquitoes and are seen more commonly in the summer months when the mosquitoes are more prevalent.

Eastern Equine Encephalitis is more commonly seen in the eastern portions of North America and WEE is seen in the western portion of North America. West Nile Virus can be seen in all regions of North America and is the leading cause of encephalitis cases in horses. Horses that have WNV, EEE or WEE have a fair to poor prognosis.

Rabies is a virus that a horse contracts by being bit by another rabid animal. The virus migrates from the bite wound up the peripheral nerves and attacks the horse's central nervous system. As stated

before, no treatment currently exists for rabies.

Tetanus is a disease caused by a neurotoxin that is produced by *Clostridium Tetani* bacteria. This bacterium is found everywhere in the environment. Once the bacteria gains access to a wound, it will replicate and release the neurotoxin into the horse's body. If a horse contracts tetanus, there is a guarded prognosis for recovery.

Risk-based vaccines are vaccines that are administered based on the horse's level of exposure to a disease. Three commonly used vaccines in our practice are strangles, equine influenza, and equine herpes.

Strangles vaccine works against the *Streptococcus equi* subspecies *equi* bacteria and helps prevent or limit the strangles disease in a horse. It is usually administered to young horses in environments known to have the strangles bacteria present.

Equine influenza and equine herpes are both respiratory viruses that can be spread by aerosolized respiratory droplets. They are ex-

remely contagious and are seen in locations with a high number of horses from many different locations including large horse shows. Consulting a local veterinarian about which vaccines would be prudent given its level of exposure is recommended.

The frequency that a horse should be vaccinated depends on several factors including age, vaccination history and pregnancy status. In general, EEE, WEE and WNV vaccines should be administered in the spring before the mosquito season starts. Most veterinarians will administer the remainder of the core vaccines at this time. Risk-based vaccines may need to be given more frequently depending on the level of risk that the horse is exposed to.

The bottom line is, consult with your veterinarian and develop a vaccination program that works for you and your horse.

For more information on equine vaccination, visit [www.aaep.org](http://www.aaep.org). The AAEP website provides horse owners with information about core and risk-based vaccines.\*



# BILL





# RIDDLE

## If I never rode a horse

**O**n a small ranch just south of Ringling, Okla., a 71-year-old man wearing starched blue jeans, a blue checkered shirt and a cowboy hat sat in an old, wooden rocking chair on his front porch.

"Nobody gets to stay on the mountaintop for very long," Bill Riddle said with a toothpick in his mouth. "You really need to enjoy climbing up there."

Riddle, a member of the National Cutting Horse Association Hall of Fame, has spent more than 30 years training cutting horses. He said he has always been a "horse freak."

His childhood home in Odell, Texas near Vernon, Texas, always had the aura of rodeo and good horses. His oldest brother, Delbert roped from the time he was a little kid, he said.

Delbert was an exceptional calf roper, Riddle said. He was expected to become a world champion calf roper, but he was killed in WWII at Iwo Jima.

"It was devastating for my parents when he was killed in the war," Riddle said. "I was five months old at the time. So, I grew up horseback, listening to old rodeo stories and listening to all of the glamour of a good horse."

Riddle, like his older brother, started roping calves at an early age. Riddle and his younger brother, Terry began to compete in rodeos as teenagers.

"My dad would give us a schedule of what we had to get done that week," Riddle said. "If we got it done, then we would go to the rodeo that weekend. He always made the sacrifice to take us."

Riddle attended Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas. He planned on transferring to Texas Tech as a junior, but his plans changed when a group of guys formed a university rodeo team.

"Terry and I were having some degree of success at the time," Riddle said. "Those guys came to me very quickly and recruited me to come, and I didn't know a thing about it when I enrolled."

Because of a mutual love of horses, Riddle was befriended by president of the university, Travis White. White would catch Riddle in the hallway. If he wasn't going to class, White would take him back to his office to talk about everything from life to horses, he said.

"He would give me more good information about how to be a real person, how life was going to go, the importance of education and how much a guy needed to be dependent on what his plans were," Riddle said.

White was an ex-preacher with a strong moral base, he said. He was also great friends with Riddle's family and eventually preached his father's funeral. He would think like an agricultural-based guy rather than someone in academia, Riddle said.

**Continued on page 30**



# BILL RIDDLE

## If I never rode a horse

Riddle was paying his way through college by riding, breaking and training horses in addition to his rodeo scholarship. When White learned of this, he put two horses in Riddle's barn and kept them there until two months after he graduated.

"He never knew the influence he had on my life," Riddle said. "I mean, there is no way he could have ever known."

After graduation, Riddle pursued a career as a school teacher.

"I had three sisters—all school teachers," Riddle said. "When we had family get-togethers, they were always talking about school, and that was a major influence on me going into the education field."

Riddle said he and his students would have some "knock-down, drag-outs" at the beginning of each semester. However, the "gruff, tough" teacher would form a bond with those same students by the end of the semester.

"It was so much fun in the beginning of my career," Riddle said. "Those ol' tough kids that most teachers couldn't get along with would always gravitate toward me. I don't know if that's a good or bad thing, but it was fun."

Riddle said dealing with parents, kids and colleagues within his teaching career prepared him for his future in cutting horse clinics.

"Everybody says, 'We can tell you were a school teacher,'" Riddle said. "I take that as a huge compliment. A lot of people love training horses, but struggle with dealing with the public."

One day in 1976, Riddle had to make a big decision.

"I needed some information, and I started to look for my education magazines at the house," Riddle said. "When I finally found one, I had to move three horse-related magazines off the top of it."

He knew he had to make the decision between going back to school for school administration or concentrating on horses. The drug influence in his school system also affected Riddle's decision to quit teaching school.

"Their eyes would never change, and I thought, 'You know, that's tough,'" Riddle said. "I guess a better man would have bowed his back and tried to figure out a way to make it

better. It wasn't nearly as much fun for me."

Riddle went to work for Terry and his partner at the time, Joe Ayres. They were opening a training facility west of Wynnewood, Okla.

"Terry had always piddled with cutting horses," Riddle said. "He got really good at it and had a successful rodeo career, but I didn't care anything about cutting horses. I wanted to rope and bulldog."

Riddle's interest in cutting horses began when Terry showed him a copy of a check he won at a rodeo. Riddle quickly realized he could earn more money with cutting horses. While helping improve Terry's program, Riddle learned the cutting horse business.

"When I got to the point where I would ask Terry a question and I could predict his answer, then I felt like I was ready to do something else," Riddle said.

After two and a half years of working for his brother, Riddle started working for Albert Paxton in Louisiana.

"I tried to repeat what I learned at Terry's," Riddle said. "Then I began to branch out and let my personality flow into my horses."

Riddle had his first big win at the derby atop Docs Otoetta in 1981. Don Crawford, along with Dick Gaines and Paul Crumpler, were watching the finals. Crawford was building a training facility in Carrizo Springs, Texas and hired Riddle as a trainer.

"That experience really grounded me in the business," Riddle said.

Riddle also recognized a need for a judging casebook during this time. He talked to several people before gaining the attention of Dennie Dunn, who was on the national board for NCHA.

"Dennie said, 'Why don't you just write some examples so we can look at them. We don't know what you are talking about,'" Riddle said.

Riddle spent many summer afternoons writing casebook examples in 1984. A few examples turned into an entire book, he said.

"If you walked in the office, I would pitch the casebook over and say, 'read this,'" Riddle said. "If you asked what I meant by something, I would explain what I meant and then rewrite it."

Once everyone who picked up the casebook understood the interpretations, Riddle took the casebook to the NCHA office. He said the board members liked the book, but they made changes to some of the interpretations.

"I am proud of the fact that they've got the original version hanging in the office at the National Cutting Horse Association," Riddle said. "It became the basis for the monitored judging system, but I had no idea that would happen in the beginning."

In the early '80s, Riddle and other shareholders signed up for a program organized by the Super Syndicate where the winner would take home \$1 million. Each shareholder got one breeding for each share of the stallions owned by the Super Syndicate.

The colt had to be entered while the mare was carrying it, and payments were made from the time the mare became pregnant. In the spring of their four-year-old year, the organization held the Gold & Silver Stakes in Guthrie, Okla. in 1987.

Riddle made the finals on two horses—Poco Quixote Rio and Holidoc.

"I drew next to last and fourth from last," Riddle said. "When I went fourth from last, a score of 220 was winning the cutting."

"I showed Poco Quixote Rio, and I cut one cow that broke and ran really hard. 'He really went and stopped hard and did some nice stuff.'"

Riddle took the lead with a score of 221. He said the good news was there were three horses left and one of those was him atop Holidoc.

Greg Welch went next, but he did not beat Riddle's score, he said. The last run was A.J. "Curly" Tully on a Milligan mare. Tully's first cut was a nice cow, but he had trouble making the next cut.

"He kept looking for the cow and kept looking for the cow," Riddle said. "Then in a minute, I realized he spent too much time in the herd, and he can't beat me. I was leaned up against one of those plastic, brittle trashcans, and I just kind of sat down on the edge of that trashcan. That thing collapsed, and I sat down in it."

Not only has Riddle been successful, but he

**Continued on page 32**





ODELL NATIVE — Odie Riddle was born and reared in Odell and his ancestors were among containing two banhs and a newspaper. Seated with him here are Mrs. Riddle and their



**PHOTO DETAILS**

Top to bottom, Behind the scenes of Bill Riddle's new instructional video released in November 2015. Bill atop Cat Atat Cat, owned by Glenn and Debbie Drake out of Napa, Calif. A newspaper clipping of Bill Riddle (second from left) with his father, Odie; brother, Terry; and mother, Sallie. Tesla lead guitarist, Frank Hannon (left) is a friend of Bill Riddle, and he produced Riddle's instructional video titled *Controlled Fundamentals*. (Courtesy of Havey Manion)



# BILL RIDDLE

## If I never rode a horse

Continued from page 30

has helped many people through clinics. His first clinic was held in Claresholm, Alberta, Canada, in 1982. He gained a new employee, Paul Hansma who later became a NCHA Hall of Fame Horse Trainer.

"I went back the next year and did another clinic," Riddle said. "I've done clinics off and on for a long time."

Since then, Riddle has held many clinics across the United States as well as international clinics in Canada, Brazil and France. He also helped host Christian cutting camps for 10 years.

"I enjoy the people," Riddle said. "You can tell by talking to me that I enjoy it. We talk about the old days and how to train a horse."

Riddle's daughters, Havey and Kelly, both have the same passion for horses. He said Havey did not care much about horses when she was younger, but she gained an interest when she was about 14 years old. She currently lives in Aubrey, Texas at the Manion Ranch.

Kelly has worked for her father for 14 years as a barn manager.

"It's her job to make sure that all of the horses are well taken care of," Riddle said. "She does that better than just about anybody in the world. All you got to do is walk through the barn and look."

Kelly's daughter, Ali has also become successful in the cutting horse industry, he said. Ali showed her first horse when she was four and has been showing ever since.

"If you love horses, then you just want to learn how to do it well because you are never going to get over that love of horses," Riddle said.

Training is about letting a horse



Bill Riddle (left), brother, Terry, and friend with Bill's show steer. Bill and Terry were also competitive outside of the arena. (Courtesy of Havey Manion)

be as good as it can be for an extended period of time, he added.

"Every athlete has a window," Riddle said. "Every horse gets too old or gets hurt. Every trainer finally gets too old or gets hurt. You just hope that you can make that window last as long as you can."

Ian Tyson, Canadian songwriter, spent a little over a week with Riddle at a futurity six years ago. Tyson was 75 years old at the time.

"Each night we would go to dinner," Riddle said. "Almost every night Ian would look at me and say, 'Man, where did the years go?'"

Riddle said his only response was "I don't know." Riddle said time flew by because he was always looking toward the next event.

In a competitive country like the United States, it doesn't matter if you are building automobiles, playing golf or coaching football, he said. You do not have time to relax unless you are willing to retire.

"You just feel like if you don't stay hooked, then [the competitors] are going to run right by you," Riddle said. "That's not a fear. That's just a reality."

For many years, Riddle worked horses on Christmas morning because he attended shows starting on Dec. 27. Riddle said he has slowed down some since then, and he can now enjoy the holidays, birthdays and anniversaries.

"I have probably been successful for years, but it's because I haven't taken the time to think about it," Riddle said.

He said there is nothing more

gratifying than feeling a horse figure out what he is trying to teach it. Whether they were used in war, farming or even racing, horses have always been important to somebody, he said.

"If I had never ridden a horse, I never would have walked into president Travis White's office at Midwestern State University," Riddle said. "If I had never ridden a horse, I probably wouldn't know Ian Tyson..."

"If I have never ridden a horse, I would have never had the opportunity to have a relationship with Jay Novacek while he was playing for the Dallas Cowboys or with Kenny Rogers while he was pitching for the Texas Rangers.

I would have never done any of those Christian camps. What I am saying is horses open lots of doors. That's part of the inspiration." \*





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# JANUARY 15 ~ FEBRUARY 6



North Texas Chevy Dealers





# HARDY MURPHY COLISEUM



Many people consider the Hardy Murphy Coliseum in Ardmore an equine facility only. It does, indeed, host a myriad of horse-related activities each year including two Market Place horse sales, Southwest Reining Horse Association events (held here for 31 years), Arbuckle Mountain Cutting Horse Futurity, Jackson Hall Barrel Futurity, National Ranch Sorting, Jud Little Barrel Bash, World Junior Team Roping Championship, Barry Burk Junior Roping Roundup, numerous horse shows and the list goes on and on.

It is also home to a variety of non-horse events including the annual Arts and Crafts Show, Weimaraner Dog Show, Carter County Free Fair, Carter County Junior Livestock Show, Monster Truck Event, Championship Bull Fights, Sooner Kart Nationals, various concerts and a circus.

The first building was constructed in the mid 1930s by the

Works Progress Administration. The arena was 270 feet by 130 feet, and for the first 10 years was a roofless stadium known as the Municipal Exhibition Building. During a rodeo, a bull jumped the fence, charged uphill through scattering spectators and did a swan dive into the parking lot, where it had to be euthanized.

During the late 1940s, a roof was added and a better fence separated animals and spectators. It hosted a livestock show, professional rodeos, the Ringling Brothers Circus and other civic events.

In the early 1960s, the coliseum was renamed for Ardmore native, Hardy Murphy. Murphy was a rodeo performer and Wild West Show star whose show business career spanned three decades.

It could be said that horses ran in Murphy's blood. Born in 1903, grandson of a Texas horse trader, he developed his love for horses into a career of international acclaim as a horse trainer and rodeo

showman. His horses, Buck and Silver Cloud, were a big part of his show, especially well-known for pantomimes of famous scenes by western artists and sculptors, even gracing the cover of *The New Yorker* in 1944.

Murphy loved to perform and demonstrate his skills whether it be for the Royal Court in London, spectators at Madison Square Garden or children around the world. His favorite charity work was at Bellevue Hospital in New York City, performing for seriously or terminally ill children.

Murphy and Buck were top billing in Col. W.T. Johnson's rodeo in Madison Square Garden for 10 years. After retiring from the circuit, he returned to Ardmore in 1943 where he began a second career as realtor, promoter, volunteer, and part-time performer for charities and civic events. He was frequently referred to as "Southern Oklahoma's Goodwill Ambassador."

See COLISEUM page 35



BY JUDY WADE

## PHOTO DETAILS

In the early 1960s, the coliseum was renamed for Ardmore native, Hardy Murphy. Murphy was a rodeo performer and Wild West Show star whose show business career spanned three decades. (Photo by Laci Jones)



# COLISEUM

Buck was retired in 1953 in a nationally televised show during the Fort Worth International Stock Show. Both Buck and Silver Cloud are buried on the coliseum's grounds. Ardmore school closed for Buck's funeral when he died at age 34, and Gene Autry was among the 10,000 admirers of Murphy and his horses who attended the ceremony.

Murphy died in 1961 at age 58.

The Hardy Murphy Coliseum fell into a period of neglect and disrepair during the early 1970s. In the mid 1980s a group of concerned citizens organized into the Hardy Murphy Coliseum Trust and Authority and began renovating the building.

Today the sprawling complex covers 30 acres, according to Jeff Storms, manager of the Hardy Murphy Coliseum. The renovated coliseum now seats 4,000, is climate controlled, has an enclosed announcer's booth, a fully-equipped kitchen, show office, 18,000 square feet available for trade shows along with restrooms and showers.

Covered arena number two is 300 feet by 140 feet, seats 700, has windscreens, fans, restrooms and a concession stand. Covered arena number three is 250 feet by 125 feet and has recently undergone renovations including a new fence, wind screens and an extension to accommodate a roping chute.

The arena has even been used by area football teams for practice when inclement weather prevented them from using their own outdoor fields.

Several stall barns offer 510 stalls with wash bays, some of which have hot water and showers and restrooms through the facility. Bedding is available for purchase, and RV hookups are easily accessible.

Nine cattle pens, three of which

are covered, are easily accessible to hold livestock for events.

"We already have the usability and functionality to compete with moderate-sized facilities around the state," Storms said, "but, we are continually striving to make improvements."

Some in the near future hopefully include chipping and sealing the parking area, adding permanent seating to arena three and adding a warm-up area.

In addition to the graves of Buck and Silver Cloud, an historic steam locomotive, engine number 1108 sits on the coliseum grounds, commemorating a tragic event in Ardmore's history in 1915. A railroad worker was repairing a gasoline tanker car near east Main Street when a spark ignited an explosion.

Fifty people were killed, many more injured, and much of the downtown area was destroyed. A call for help went out, and engine 1108 came from Gainesville, Texas, with a full head of steam, bringing life-saving medical personnel, making the 45-mile stretch of rail in record time.

A life-size buffalo sculpture also sits at the entrance. More than 100,000 people visited Hardy Murphy Coliseum last year.

"A study showed that in 2013 the coliseum events generated a \$5.1 million impact on Ardmore. In 2014, that figure rose to \$6.3 million; and through October of this year, it has risen to over \$7 million," Storms said.

Events are held 48 weeks out of the year spanning anywhere from one to 10 days.

There is truly something for everyone to be had at some time during the year at Hardy Murphy Coliseum at 600 Lake Murray Drive.

For more information, visit [hardymurphycoliseum.com](http://hardymurphycoliseum.com), or call Jeff Storms at 580-223-2541. ★



A life-size buffalo sculpture also sits at the entrance. More than 100,000 people visited Hardy Murphy Coliseum last year. (Photo by Laci Jones)

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# First Impressions



*By Sara Honegger*

As the weather becomes cooler, your wardrobe can turn dark and dreary. Don't let a little cool air take the fun out! Throw on your boyfriend skinny jeans and add a pop of color through a flannel shirt. Finish with a fringe vest, your favorite booties and assorted jewelry. Mixing metals or fabrics adds an element of interest to your outfit that lets your personality shine through the winter weather.



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# LACEY'S

## PANTRY



### CREAMY CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP

#### Ingredients

- 2 cups dry medium egg noodles
- 1 pound can chicken breast
- 1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 1/2 cups chopped yellow onion (1 medium)
- 1 1/3 cups chopped carrots (3 carrots)
- 1 1/3 cups chopped celery (3 stalks)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 (14.5 ounce) cans low-sodium chicken broth
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/4 cup + 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 1/2 cups milk
- 1/3 cup heavy cream

#### Directions

- Prepare noodles according to directions on package and drain.
- In a large pot, heat 1 1/2 tablespoons of olive oil over medium heat. Add onion, carrot and celery and sauté until tender, about 3 to 4 minutes. Add garlic and sauté 1 minute longer. Add chicken broth, parsley and season with salt and pepper to taste. Add chicken breast and bring soup to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium, cover with lid and allow soup to cook until chicken has cooked through, about 10 to 15 minutes. Remove chicken and allow to rest for 5 minutes, then shred into small bite size pieces.
- Melt butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat, add flour and cook, stirring constantly, 1 1/2 minutes. While whisking slowly add in milk and whisk vigorously to smooth lumps. It will take a lot of whisking to smooth since this is a lighter roux, lesser ratio of butter to flour. Whisk in cream and bring mixture to a boil, stirring constantly. Pour milk mixture and chicken into soup along with cooked noodles and stir. Serve warm with fresh bread or crackers if desired.



### FRENCH SILK PIE

\*This recipe does use raw eggs.

#### Ingredients

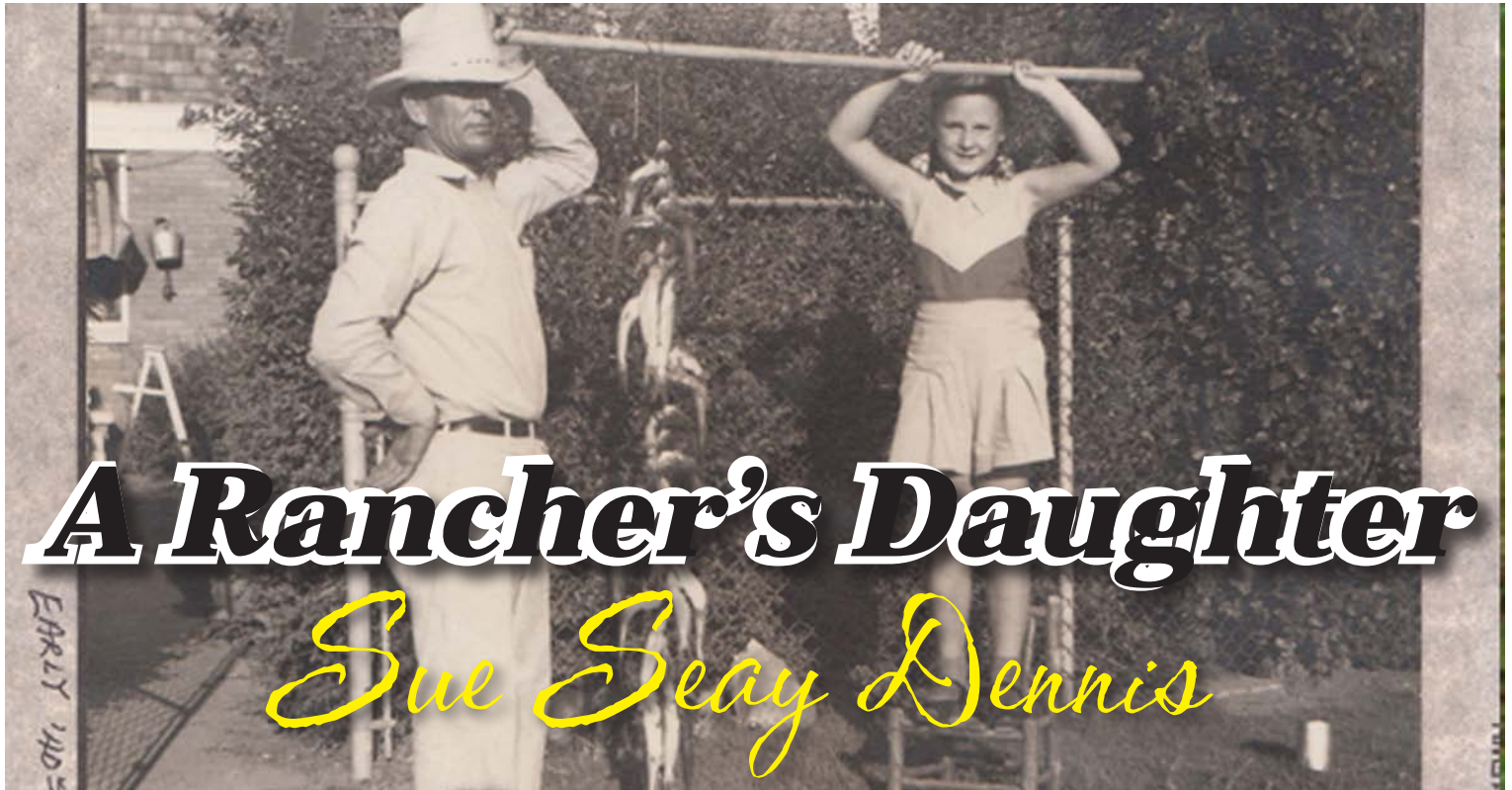
- 4 ounces bittersweet or semisweet chocolate
- 1 cup (2 sticks) salted butter, softened
- 1 1/2 cups ultrafine (or you could substitute granulated) sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 eggs, room temperature
- 1/4 teaspoons espresso powder (optional)
- 1 fully pre-baked 9-inch pie shell
- 3 cups whipped cream
- 1 chocolate bar, shaved into chocolate curls

#### Directions

- Heat chocolate in a microwave-safe bowl, stirring in 20-second intervals, until completely melted. Set aside and let cool for about 10 minutes until it is room temperature.
- Using an electric stand mixer with a paddle attachment, cream together butter and sugar on medium-high speed until fluffy, about 1 to 2 minutes. When melted chocolate has cooled, gradually add it to the butter/sugar mixture. Beat the mixture on medium-low speed until thoroughly combined. Add vanilla and beat until combined.
- Switch to the whisk attachment. Add one egg and beat for 5 minutes on medium speed. Repeat with remaining three eggs, beating the mixture for an additional 5 minutes after each egg. Pour the filling into a pre-baked pie shell in a pie plate. Use a spatula to spread out the top evenly. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours or until chilled before serving.
- Top with desired amount of whipped cream, then garnish with chocolate shavings and espresso powder.







Everyone should know their lineage: the story of how their family came to be and got to where they are today. Its worth is priceless. That is how your story can be passed down for generations so that your children know who their relatives were and what prominent things they did in their time.

Sue Seay Dennis was the only child born to Wilmer and Leary Seay. The Dennis Cattle Co. ranching heritage dates back to 1899 when Oscar, Okla., was founded. Eighteen miles southeast of Ryan, Okla., the town was named after Oscar W. Seay, a prominent pioneer rancher who helped settle the land and established a family ranch. Oscar Seay was Sue's great-grandfather.

As a third generation rancher herself, Sue wanted to do just that and be on the land. Her fondest memories included her dad. "I made every step he did! I would leave my bonnet next to his hat so he couldn't go anywhere without me," said Sue.

Wilmer was one of five chil-

dren. After his father's death, the land was divided and straws were drawn among the children. Although drawing the short straw, Wilmer was fortunate when the property he got was filled with oil wells.

Over time Wilmer accumulated more land, even buying out all his other siblings except two. Wilmer Seay was a hard-working man who was always seen with a cigar in his mouth. The rancher and oil man quit school after the third grade declaring, "He knew all he needed to know," said daughter Sue. Wilmer ranched all his life, driving cattle miles to rail cars.

Sue reminisced on her father waking extra early in the mornings, around 4 or 5 a.m. One time she asked him, "Daddy, why do you get up so early? His response, "That's when I do my best thinking!"

Sue recalls her father taking three and four-year-old, 1,400 lb. steers down to his ranch in Ringgold. Sue chuckles at the memory of her father driving his steers to Ringgold.

After the work of gathering them and starting toward Ringgold, he got all the way to the tracks in Ringgold when the train came through and scattered the entire herd. That left Wilmer searching for steers for three days. Sue said thereafter her father called the rail road every time before moving cattle.

Wilmer bought the ranch in Ringgold in 1938 from Carl Worsham's Creditors Committee. Worsham, who came from a wealthy business, banking and ranching family himself, was one of two children born to W.B. Worsham. W.B. was known as a prominent banker and rancher, even owning his own bank at one time. The property was approximately 4,000 acres.

In 1958 Sue's father deeded the Ringgold ranch to her. Since then Sue has maintained the ranch as her father did, of course with his help along the way. The ranch gained ample help when Sue married Skeeter Dennis in November of 1950. With roots in ranching See DENNIS page 41



BY JESSICA  
CRABTREE

editor@ntfronline.com

PHOTO DETAILS

Sue Seay Dennis and  
her father Wilmer Seay.  
(Courtesy photo)



# Dennis

as well, Skeeter helped round out the total acreage to approximately 30,000 acres in Oklahoma. Skeeter's father, Scott Dennis and Wilmer forged a strong working relationship that lasted their lifetimes. Sue mentioned that between the two there was never a cross word.

Sue attributed most of her ranching knowledge to her father. When asked what she took away from the man she adored most, she replied, "Honesty, caring about people and loving ranching and the land." Many memories are still shared today of Wilmer's "character."

Sue described him as being a caring man, always keeping a garden and giving fresh produce to others, a man who cared a great deal about working ranch horses, hated burs and sunflowers, sealed deals with a hand-shake and until his departure came out to the ranch daily to oversee progress.

Wilmer's granddaughter, LaDonna still enjoys thinking back to the days of riding around with her grand-dad, "We would drive around in his Cadillac in the pasture and come up on an abandon baby calf, throw it in the back and off we'd go!" Sue revealed her father was a strong Republican who told her, "You stand under the eagle, even if he \_\_\_s on you." When asked if she still heeds her father's advice, her response was, "Yes, I still vote Republican. Daddy said!" Wilmer died in 1976.

Skeeter Dennis was known for his long-time involvement in the cutting horse industry. Skeeter was a lifetime member of both the National Cutting Horse Association and the American Quarter Horse Association. Skeeter was even presented with the AQHA Legendary Breeders Award in 2011.

Sue describes her late husband

as a "handful." Together the couple had four children, Steve, LaDonna, Cindy and David. The two continued ranching with their family, building their empire of Hereford and Angus cattle up to 1,400 cow-calf pairs, 300 replacement heifers, and 50 bulls, along with steers and Longhorns.

The family also built up an impressive herd of Quarter Horses with bloodline going back to top cutting horse and reining horse sires. Skeeter died in August of 2013. Today, LaDonna oversees the horses with a total of 25 head.

Dennis Cattle Co. is a member of the AQHA Ranching Heritage Breeder Assoc., NCHA, American Hereford Association, Oklahoma Cattleman's Association and Texas Cattle Raisers Association where they've been a member of since 1931.

In 2009, Dennis Cattle Co. was given the "Excellence in Grazing" award by the Jefferson County Conservation District. Additionally, Dennis Cattle Co. offers semi-guided hunts. That includes hunts for deer, turkey, hogs and coyotes. Also, they do aerial spraying and hog hunts from helicopter.

The tall, feisty rancher's daughter still resides on the ranch today in a cabin built in a special spot near a creek where she and her father would go play in the creek and build towns, calling them old California. She now watches the sixth generation grow up on the ranch and play in those very same creeks.

Sue now has the opportunity to pass onto her great-grandkids what life was like for her growing up, life lessons and valuable advice passed down from her father and from his to him.

Priceless memories include expression lessons in Nocona when she was four or five, riding



Sue Seay Dennis at her home in Oscar, Okla. (Photo by Jessica Crabtree)

in the back of her dad's pickup to the river, tap lessons and piano lesson she begged her parents not to take, cooking for branding crews, driving across an iced tank with her dad and so much more.

Other interesting facts about Sue include, having a ticket to the Fort Worth Stock Show the last 82 years and only missing three years of it, and the fact that she wrote a cook book entitled, "Cooking in the Cabin."

Undoubtedly life on the ranch sees down times. Sue has seen it from drought to floods. She doesn't remember an actual dust bowl, but remembers bad dust storms.

She saw a time when sugar and tires were rationed and you had to have war stamps for each. She saw a time of flood that baby calves washed down the river.

She saw a time when people followed the river and oil boom,

living in small shot-gun houses.

The change she remembers most is the present drought. Sue knows of tanks on their place that were there way before her that are dry today.

The drought of the 50s holds no candle to the present in her mind. In her 84 years, Sue hasn't seen it all yet. She is an avid traveler. She has traveled to almost every state except to the north where she has no desire to visit.

As a rancher's daughter, granddaughter and wife, she has lived through it all. Above all she is a cancer survivor with an appreciation for life and a family lineage that will carry on for many generations to come.

For additional information about Dennis Cattle Co. their cattle, horses or hunting visit their website at [denniscattleco.com](http://denniscattleco.com) or [sandbhelicoptertours.com](http://sandbhelicoptertours.com). ★



# Minco Honey Festival



If given the opportunity, would you spend a day in the land of milk and honey? The excursion to this fabled destination is more feasible than one might think.

Each December, the annual Minco Honey Festival takes place in Minco, Okla., just southwest of Oklahoma City. More than 3,500 people from across the state flock to this small town to experience what the land of milk and honey has to offer.

Deana Walje, Minco Chamber Secretary, said the festival, celebrating its 25th year, encompasses much more than just honey.

"It is a very family-oriented event," Walje said. "We have a hay wagon shuttle that will take you to all the hot-spots in town, Santa Claus is here for all the kids, big and small, and there is a tractor-pull. It's the place to be."

The main focus, however, is on the town's Honey Plant. In business since 1935, Ross Honey Plant is the largest producing honey plant in the state. Owned by Jim and Glenda Ross, it can be credited as the reason the Minco Honey Festival began.

"The Minco Chamber of Commerce was searching for a unique festival," said Walje. "One of the members suggested using the Honey Plant as the focal point."

Today, Ross Honey Plant gives tours throughout the day to festival attendees. Walje notes that the tour is very detailed; they show visitors the entire honey producing process from extracting to bottling.

In addition, local honey products and gifts can be found at the Arts and Crafts Show, which takes place at Minco High School. Nearly 100 vendors attend the festival, and Made in Oklahoma products can be found in abundance.

According to the chamber, crafters have products and displays such as cedar chests, bird houses, wood and iron crafts and, of course, honey treats of all kinds. The Quilt Exhibit, located next door at Minco's First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall, displays 25 quilts handmade by Minco residents.

Walje says the Minco Chamber of Commerce loves to show off Minco's love for agriculture through the family-oriented event. Honey is the main agricultural

focus, but festival attendees can also tour local wind towers and the Great Plains Cotton Gin. Braum's Dairy, headquartered in nearby Tuttle, Okla., provides dairy samples such as milk, chocolate milk and cheese at the Minco City Hall.

The Honey Festival is truly a town-wide affair, Walje said. The local merchants are very good about participating in their own way, she added.

The Chamber of Commerce serves a pancake breakfast, complete with honey toppings, at the First Methodist Church. Local artists provide musical entertainment throughout the day and Minco eateries offer festival specials. The last stop of the Honey Festival is the Tour of Homes, a local favorite. The Tour of Homes allows attendees to visit several homes decorated for the Christmas holiday.

The Minco Honey Festival brings a sense of simplicity and fun to the town as it reminds attendees what old-fashioned family fun is all about, Walje said. It is an event to be sure to attend from here on out. ★



**BY AMANDA MARTIN**

**PHOTO DETAILS**

Local honey products and gifts can be found at the Arts and Crafts Show. (Courtesy of Jamie Ross)



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# EVENT LINEUP

## JANUARY-FEBRUARY

JAN  
02

### OKLAHOMA CITY AUTO RACERS AUCTION & SWAP MEET

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JAN  
02

### OKC LAND RUN ANTIQUE SHOW

Oklahoma State Fair Park. Oklahoma City. The OKC Land Run Antique Show on Jan. 2-3 is fun for the entire family with over 50,000 square feet of merchandise to discover

and treasures to come across in the Cox Pavilion of Oklahoma State Fair Park. More than 70 dealers will be present with everything from antiques, collectibles and furniture to jewelry, art, books and records. This is your opportunity to find that perfect decorative piece to complete your living room or pick up a gift for a loved one or yourself. For more information, call **918-619-2875**.

JAN  
07

### ARROW P EQUINE SALES

Tulsa Stockyards. Tulsa, OK. Buyers come from California to New York to pick and choose from over 200 head each month. Arrow P Equine Sales also offers a large selection of new and used saddles and tack. With an outstanding video/DVD set up, videos help buyers view their purchases. Tack starts selling at 2 p.m. Horses start selling at 6 p.m. Regular sale to follow. For more information, visit [www.arrowpequinesales.com](http://www.arrowpequinesales.com) or call **918-343-2688**.

JAN  
07

### OKLAHOMA WINTER QUILT SHOW

Cox Pavilion at the Oklahoma State Fair Park. Oklahoma City. Come to the Oklahoma Winter Quilt Show Jan. 7-9 to learn, shop and get great ideas about quilting.

This event includes numerous vendors, seminars, demonstrations, workshops, make-and-take-it projects, stage presentations, a quilt contest, a quilt display and more. Quilting experts and novices alike will enjoy this event.

JAN  
08

### KNID AGRIFEST

Chisolm Trail Expo Center, Enid, OK 73701. Come out Jan. 8-9 for northwest Oklahoma's largest farm show. The show provides informative seminars, demonstrations, activities and more.

Though this event is geared toward ranchers, farmers and producers, there is something for everyone. Browse craft vendor booths for quaint and unique items, and check out the latest in agricultural technology and products.

JAN  
22

### PBR OKLAHOMA CITY INVITATIONAL

Chesapeake Energy Arena. Oklahoma City. PBR returns to the Chesapeake Energy Arena on Jan. 22-24 in Oklahoma City. This top-tier event will feature the

top 40 bull riders in the world as they go head to head against the toughest bulls the Professional Bull Riders have to offer. Don't miss this world-class rodeo production that is jam-packed with thrills and spills, pyrotechnics and rock-n-roll music. Witness as the superstars of the PBR ride to win the coveted PBR World Championship title. For more information visit [www.pbr.com](http://www.pbr.com).

JAN  
22

### OKLAHOMA CITY BOAT SHOW

Oklahoma State Fairgrounds. Oklahoma City. The Oklahoma City Boat Show, the longest running boat show will be taking place on Jan. 22-24.

The boat show will showcase hundreds of new boat lines from ten area boat dealers. The latest models of personal watercraft and boat motors will also be on display alongside factory representatives to answer any questions. Offering a wide selection of watersport accessories including skis, wakeboards, tubes, apparel and more, vendors have many new products available. For more information visit [www.okcboatshow.com](http://www.okcboatshow.com).





JAN  
23

**AIRBORNE DEMONSTRATION TEAM OPEN HANGAR DAY**

Frederick Regional Airport, Frederick, OK 73542. Get a glimpse of U.S. military history in action at the Airborne Demonstration Team Open Hangar Day.

Visit the historic Frederick Army Airfield section of the Frederick Regional Airport for an exciting day of aviation and military-related displays. In the morning, the WWII Airborne Demonstration Team will showcase skills they've learned in jump school through authentic WWII-era training. Watch the team jumpers as they make amazing parachute jumps from a WWII-style C-47 aircraft. In addition to the day's activities, all pilots are invited to attend the fly-in, and breakfast will be available in the 1940s era mess hall. For more information visit [www.wwiadt.org](http://www.wwiadt.org).



MAD DOG DEMOLITION DERBY

JAN  
23

**MAD DOG DEMOLITION DERBY**

Claremore Expo Center, Claremore, OK 74017. Make your way to the Mad Dog Demolition Derby at the Claremore Expo Center on Jan. 23. Come see and hear one of the loudest events in Claremore full of crushed metal and smashed cars.

Ned Dirt, the racing clown will be at the derby and drivers will compete in figure eight racing on the Hornet car circle track. This event is fun for the whole family with a mini car derby for the kids and a full-size derby fit for adults. Claremore's Mad Dog event offers fast-paced action for everyone to enjoy. For more information visit [www.motorheadevents.com](http://www.motorheadevents.com).

JAN  
28

**OKLAHOMA TACKLE, HUNTING & BOAT SHOW**

Oklahoma State Fair Park, Oklahoma City, OK. Head to the Oklahoma City Fairgrounds to browse one of the largest outdoor shows in the state. The Oklahoma Tackle, Hunting & Boat Show presents hundreds of vendors featuring the latest and greatest products and services for outdoor enthusiasts.

Stroll row after row of tackle, boats, ATVs, hunting gear, apparel and more. Activities and attractions at this expo are fun for the whole family. Enjoy a fetch and fish dog jumping show, bow fishing and archery demonstrations and even a small fishing pond for children.

JAN  
29

**GREEN COUNTRY HOME & GARDEN SHOW**

Exchange Center at Tulsa Expo Square, Tulsa, OK 74112. Head to the largest free home and garden show on Jan. 29-31 in Northeast Oklahoma and have fun looking through over 150 vendors at the Green Country Home & Garden Show at the Expo Square in Tulsa. Find your inspiration for your next project and get decorating ideas from the professionals. Look at products and services ranging from roofing and cookware to spas and windows all in one place. For more information, visit [www.coxradiotulsa.com](http://www.coxradiotulsa.com).

JAN  
30

**CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL**

10:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. NCED Hotel & Conference Center, Norman, OK 73071. The Firehouse Art Center's annual Chocolate Festival, ranked third among food festivals in the United States by the Food Network, will tempt chocolate lovers with over 25,000 chocolate samples for visitors to taste. Feast on favorites such as chocolate amaretto cream cake, Godiva chocolates and chocolate fondue. Instructors will be on-hand to demonstrate and discuss children's and adult art education programs offered at the Firehouse Art Center. For additional information, please contact the Firehouse Art Center at 405-329-4523.

FEB  
06

**TULSA HERITAGE RODEO**

Tulsa Expo Center, Tulsa, OK 74114. Head to Expo Square to experience the excitement of the Tulsa Heritage Rodeo. See cowboys and cowgirls compete in rodeo events like bare back riding, ranch bronc riding, tie down roping, steer wrestling, ladies barrel racing, team roping and bull riding. Even the smallest cowpokes get in on the action with mutton busting. Don't miss this fun event.

FEB  
10

**PRAIRIE CLASSIC QUARTER HORSE SHOW**

Oklahoma State Fair Park, Oklahoma City. Grab your cowboy hat and slip on your boots for the Prairie Classic Quarter Horse Show on Feb. 10-14. Riders of all ages will compete in a wide variety of performance styles and activities including Western riding, reining, working hunter, equitation over fences and much more. Come see what these beautiful horses can do at the Super Barn in Oklahoma City.

FEB  
16

**ALBRECHT/PENZ PRESIDENT'S DAY ANGUS BULL & FEMALE SALE**

President's Day Angus Bull & Female Sale, Clay Freney Ranch, Caddo, OK. For more information, visit [www.albrechtranhangus.com](http://www.albrechtranhangus.com).



# Washita County Courthouse



The Washita County Courthouse, located in New Cordell, Okla., has a colorful history that began long before statehood. Stories abound about the location, with local residents relating details of stolen court records ending in a gun fight, a mysterious fire and most recently, a movie filmed with A-list celebrities. The city of New Cordell, commonly known as Cordell, was established in 1897 when H. D. Young, a local merchant who set up shop one and a half miles from the present location, moved his general store and post office to the new site.

Throughout the years, the courthouse has been the scene of drama and suspense. In 1899, two local homesteaders and farmers,

A. J. Johnson and James C. Harrel, donated land for the courthouse square and arranged for an election to have the county seat moved from Cloud Chief, Okla. Controversy surrounded the city as questions of legality arose after the election. Because Oklahoma was still a territory at the time, a county seat could only be established by Congress. The election was finally sanctioned by Congress in 1906. In the meantime, the original wood-frame courthouse was moved from Cloud Chief to the present location in 1900. According to local lore, a gun fight broke out when some impatient citizens moved the court records from Cloud Chief to Cordell in the middle of the night. Even now, residents recount how the county

seat was “stolen.”

In 1902, construction began on a new, wood-frame, two-story courthouse to replace the courthouse brought over from Cloud Chief. In 1909, the building was destroyed by a suspicious fire, believed to be arson. Just three nights before hearings were scheduled for cases involving a variety of whiskey charges, cattle thefts and horse thefts, a fire broke out in one of the courtrooms. The arsonist was never caught.

Solomon Andrew Layton and his firm, Donathan, Moore, Layton, Wemyss & Smith, designed the building in both 1902 and again in 1911 after the fire. Layton was also the architect for the Oklahoma State Capitol building. See **COURTHOUSE** page 47



**BY STACI MAUNEY**

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**PHOTO DETAILS**

One of the most striking features of the courthouse is the large, central dome with a four-sided clock that can be seen in all directions by those visiting downtown. (Photo by Staci Mauney)



# Courthouse

in Oklahoma City. The current building, completed in 1913, was designed in the Classical Revival style.

A recent renovation of the interior of the courthouse began in 2013 and was completed just over two years later. This renovation began during the 100 year anniversary of the courthouse. According to local retail business owner and city council member, Terry Patton, the courthouse will last for another 100 years.

One of the most striking features of the courthouse is the large, central dome with a four-sided clock that can be seen in all directions by those visiting downtown.

The Washita County Courthouse square became a major economic boon for both the city of Cordell and Washita County. Buildings sprang up around the courthouse square and surrounding area, including the city hall, an opera house, the Carnegie Public Library (now the Washita County Museum), the post office and the county jail.

The courthouse and its square contribute to the economic stability of the area. Throughout the years, the area has seen businesses such as the Frisco Railroad set up there as well as factories. The downtown area now has more service industries than retail, although several small businesses remain around the square.

Patton knows firsthand the benefits of the courthouse square location, both for his business and for the city. He has owned Cordell TV, Appliance and Furniture, located on the square, for 27 years. After taking a class in heating and air at the area vo-tech, now the Western Technology Center, he received on-the-job training from a local businessman. At the end of his training, he was hired and eventually bought the business.



The Washita County Courthouse was added to the National Registry of Historic Places in 1984, and the courthouse square district was added to the registry in 1999. (Photo by Staci Mauney)

As a member of the Cordell city council for 11 years, Patton has seen tourists from across the United States taking pictures of the courthouse and eating at local restaurants. Because Cordell is the county seat, people come from all over the county to take care of business and contribute to the local economy.

“It’s a pleasant experience owning a retail business in a small town,” Patton says. “You know your customers by their first names.”

In 2010, filming of *The Killer Inside Me*, a crime drama set in the 1950s, took place around the courthouse square. On any given

afternoon during filming, Casey Affleck, Jessica Alba, Kate Hudson and Simon Baker could be seen discussing the script with director Michael Winterbottom and producer Andrew Eaton in front of local businesses. Local residents who had been hired as extras milled about, waiting to be called for their scenes.

The courthouse square was chosen as one location for filming in Oklahoma because the historic appearance was just what was needed for the movie setting. Businesses repaired some of the facades prior to filming, and some businesses were given new names and new signage to fit with the

1950s setting.

The use of the courthouse square in the movie provided an opportunity for publicity for the city of Cordell. Media crews descended on Cordell, allowing the city – and the courthouse – to be the center of attention.

In 1984, the Washita County Courthouse was added to the National Registry of Historic Places, and the courthouse square district was added to the registry in 1999. Visitors and residents alike enjoy the benefits of the area as the iconic Washita County Courthouse is on display every day, with people coming from all over to get a glimpse of history. ★



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# Grazing Oklahoma



**N**ot to be confused with rye, ryegrass is not a cereal plant. Two ryegrass species grow in the United States—perennial ryegrass and annual ryegrass. Both annual and perennial ryegrass produce highly digestible and palatable forage, and can exceed 70 percent digestible dry matter and 20 percent crude protein when grazed and harvested at the proper growth stage.

Annual ryegrass is a cool-season forage native to southern Europe. Sometimes referred to as Italian ryegrass, this forage is bunch-type grass that can grow to a height of two to five feet. The plant has a dark green color, deep fibrous roots and waxy leaves. The ryegrass inflorescence has elongated spikes containing five to 38 spikelets arranged alternately, with four to 17 florets per

spikelet.

Perennial ryegrass is grown in the Midwestern plains while annual ryegrass is grown from Oklahoma to the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic coast. However, ryegrass grows best in the eastern part of the state.

Ryegrass is adapted to a wide variety of soil types and climates. Soil pH for optimum ryegrass production is between 6.0 and 7.0. However, ryegrass can grow at a pH of 5.0.

With adequate moisture, annual ryegrass can produce large quantities of forage, one of the most productive cool-season annual forages in Oklahoma.

Planting time for annual ryegrass is late August through early October. Seeding rates range from 20 to 30 pounds per acre when planting annual

ryegrass only. The seeding rates will be lower if ryegrass is used for overseeding. This plant does not require a prepared seedbed, making it easy to establish.

Night temperatures need to be below 75 degrees Fahrenheit for the annual ryegrass seeds to germinate. Under good conditions, germination occurs within a week to ten days after planting.

Annual ryegrass is often used to overseed into Bermuda grass. Most of the production occurs from early April through June when ryegrass is overseeded into Bermuda grass sod. However, annual ryegrass can impede on the early growth of Bermuda grass if it is not removed by mid-May by grazing or haying.

For more information on annual ryegrass and other winter forages, visit [www.noble.org](http://www.noble.org). ★



## BY LACI JONES

[editor@okfronline.com](mailto:editor@okfronline.com)

### PHOTO DETAILS

Annual ryegrass, a cool-season forage grown in eastern Oklahoma is often used to overseed Bermuda grass. (Courtesy of The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation)



# Soaring over the Great Plains



**A** national symbol and an endangered species success symbol, the bald eagle, makes its return to the Oklahoma Great Plains each winter.

Ryan VanZant, director of education at the George Miksch Sutton Avian Research Center in Bartlesville, Okla., said bald eagles are divided into two subspecies, the northern and southern bald eagle.

“Southern bald eagles are smaller by a fair amount,” VanZant explained. “When they become mature, they take up residence in the southern United States.”

The northern bald eagle mainly lives in Alaska and Canada and migrates to the southern United States, he added.

“Bald eagles are primarily fish eagles,” said Megan Judkins, assistant manager at the Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma Grey Snow Eagle House in Perkins, Okla. “When those large bodies of water start freezing over, the eagles start moving down south.”

A theory behind the migration is the northern bald eagle would follow the bison migrations and feed off of winterkill, VanZant explained.

“Nowadays, there’s obviously no bison migration,” VanZant said, “but, especially here in Oklahoma, we built these large reservoirs that don’t freeze through the winter.”

Bald eagles spend a lot of time in these reservoirs because both waterfowl and fish are available in these ice-free locations, VanZant said.

Unfortunately, bald eagle numbers declined due to a pesticide used to help combat mosquitoes called DDT, Judkins said. The bald eagle landed on the endangered species list in 1967.

“If DDT was in a female’s body, then it interfered with how calcium is deposited into the egg,” Judkins said. “It would cause the egg shells to be thin. When the bird went to incubate the eggs, the weight of the adult bird’s body

would actually crush the eggs.”

DDT was not only killing the next generation of birds, but it would kill the adult birds once it hit their critical threshold, Judkins added.

“Historically, there was an estimated 100,000 nesting pairs of bald eagles in the continental United States,” Judkins continued. “After DDT, there were 487 left.”

DDT slowly worked its way out of the ecosystem after it was banned in 1972, she added.

“The Sutton Avian Research Center started with the flagship project of restoring the bald eagle to the southern United States in the ‘80s,” VanZant said.

In 1990, there were no bald eagles nesting in Oklahoma, according to VanZant. Last year, there were more than 130 nests.

“The goal of the entire project was to have 10 pairs of eagles nesting in Oklahoma,” VanZant said. “It was a huge success.”

**See SOARING page 51**



**BY LACI JONES**

editor@okfronline.com

**PHOTO DETAILS**

Bald eagles make great predators because of their excellent eyesight, powerful wings and sharp talons. (Photo by Laci Jones)



# Soaring

However, the project conducted by the Sutton Avian Research Center stemmed from other attempts to increase the number of bald eagles in the southern United States.

First, northern bald eagles from Alaska and Canada were released in the south, he said. However, natural instinct took over and the birds flew back north. Attempts at releasing captive-bred northern bald eagles also failed.

"Those birds are still genetically wired to go live up north," VanZant said. "However, the birds that do stay often succumb to avian malaria carried by mosquitoes."

Southern bald eagles have an immunity to the mosquitoes that carry avian malaria, he added. This contributed to the idea of taking eggs from nests in Florida, where bald eagles were still relatively common.

Judkins said the Sutton Avian Research Center obtained the eggs early enough in the season where the adult birds would lay a second clutch, known as re-laying. The re-laying process did not interfere with the Florida bald eagle population, she added.

The eggs were brought back to Oklahoma to be hatched in incubators and raised for release, VanZant said.

"With raptors, when they first hatch out of their eggs, they don't have good eyesight," Judkins explained. "As their eyesight develops, they imprint on whatever is feeding them, their sibling and even their nesting site."

Judkins said the imprinting process tells the raptors where they can build their nests later and what to look for in a sexual partner.

"Humans can interfere with that process if they find an injured baby and bring it into captivity and feed it," Judkins said. "The baby is going to think they are a person,

and it's an irreversible process."

Eagles that imprint on humans will be aggressive toward them, VanZant added.

However, preventative measures are put into place to avoid imprinting on humans. VanZant said the raptors were fed through a wall with a port for a person's arm and an eagle head puppet. The bald eagles were observed through a one-way mirror, where they could not see the human form.

At six to eight weeks old, they were moved to a specially built barn enclosures to get used to flapping their wings before being placed into a hack tower at a release site.

Hack towers are built to help the eagles learn how to hunt on their own, Judkins continued. These towers provide the eagles with a source of food and water.

"Instinct takes over pretty quickly," VanZant said. "Biologists continue to feed them there until the birds learn to hunt on their own. The birds gradually come back to the tower less and less."

Although the bald eagle is no longer endangered, the Sutton Avian Research Center uses a volunteer team called the Bald Eagle Survey Team to monitor eagle nests. VanZant said the center was one of the first facilities to monitor bald eagles with a webcam. The webcams are placed in some of the most challenging conditions, he added.

The Sutton Avian Research Center also started a satellite tracking program within the last six years using satellite transmitters also known as platform terminal transmitters (PTT).

The first two eagles tracked with satellite transmitters from the Sutton Avian Research Center actually went to Houston, VanZant said. The other birds have all traveled to the northern United States and Canada during

## Bald eagle facts by the dozen

1. Bald eagles are not actually bald.
2. The "bald" in Bald Eagle comes from the word "piebald," meaning markings that are two colors.
3. Bald eagles can have up to an eight-foot wingspan.
4. Northern bald eagles are larger than southern bald eagles.
5. Each bald eagle has approximately 7,000 feathers.
6. Bald eagles can lay one to four eggs per year.
7. Bald eagles can see eight to 10 times better than humans.
8. Bald eagles can live up to 25 years or longer in the wild.
9. Bald eagles are mostly brown for the first year and slowly molt in their white head and tail feathers over five years.
10. Bald eagles have the largest nests of any bird. A bald eagle's nest in Florida weighed nearly 3 tons.
11. Female bald eagles are 1/3 larger than the males.
12. Bald eagles in Oklahoma will often build two to three nests before they pick one to use.

the hottest parts of summer and travel back to Oklahoma for the winter, he added.

"In the first five years when the eagles are not sexually active, they are making long distance movements up north," Judkins said. "Once they hit sexual maturity, they come back to their natal areas where they hatched."

Most bald eagles come back within 100 kilometers of where they hatched to breed, she added.

"The PTT tags are helping with understanding their movements," Judkins said. "In the past, they relied on a little metal band put on the legs of the birds."

VanZant said they have placed satellite transmitters on 12 juvenile eagles before they fledge. Analysts can track the eagles within three meters of their exact location, he added.

Even though the bald eagle was taken off the endangered list in 2007, conservation is still a prior-

ity. Many bald eagles are killed by power line electrocutions, habitat loss, diseases and wind towers, Judkins related.

VanZant said trace amount of lead can have serious or fatal effects on an eagle. Many hunters use lead bullets and then leave gut piles which birds may feed off of.

"If you care about eagles and you are a hunter, you can switch to non-toxic shot or put gut piles in a place where eagles are not likely to find them," he said.

Other safety measures are put into place to help protect the national bird, Judkins said.

However, illegal shootings still remain a problem for the bald eagle.

"I hope that all of our outreach education helps not only teach people that it is illegal, but to teach them the vital roles that these birds play in the environment," Judkins concluded. ★



# OKLAHOMA FARM & RANCH OKFR

**OKLAHOMA FARM & RANCH-Post Oak Media** is looking for an energetic and professionally minded person for the position of Advertising Executive for Oklahoma Farm & Ranch magazine. The right candidate for this opportunity should have reliable transportation and be self-motivated. The ideal candidate must be able to multi-task and have experience in all Microsoft office programs. Competitive base salary plus commission, expense reimbursement, paid holidays and vacation, work from home. If this sounds like the job for you, submit your resume to OKFR, P.O. Box 831, Bowie, TX 76230.





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## employment

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## hunting

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## real estate

**OSWALT HUNTING RANCH 110 ACRES-** Located on Wade Road north of Oswalt Road. Hunting and Recreation Ranch. Deer, turkey and wild hog. Water well with electricity on property. TurnerLand Company, LLC, Ringling, OK. **580-465-3571**. [www.turnerlandcompany.com](http://www.turnerlandcompany.com).

**BEAVER CREEK PECAN FARM 180 ACRES-** Jefferson County, Oklahoma. 3/4 mile of year-found Beaver Creek. 743 mature, papershell pecan trees. 60 acres wheat field, 120 bermuda. TurnerLand Company, LLC, Ringling, OK. **580-465-3571**. [www.turnerlandcompany.com](http://www.turnerlandcompany.com).

**120 ACRES +/- ACRES HIGH FENCE PASTURE-** Located NE Healdton, Oklahoma. Built to raise elk. 6 modern ponds for livestock. High fence traps and pens. Multi-use for livestock or game. TurnerLand Company, LLC, Ringling, OK. **580-465-3571**. [www.turnerlandcompany.com](http://www.turnerlandcompany.com).

**KENEFIC, OK-**Nice 2/1 near Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge. Large galley kitchen, 2 sunrooms, 2 large shops, 3 barns, 4 tanks and large pecan trees. RV parking. \$269,500. Call Tom Moore at **903-821-1232**.

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**RYAN CATTLE RANCH 95 ACRES-** Jefferson County, Oklahoma. Bermuda and native grass pasture. Two ponds and 1/4 mile of Flat Creek. Good fencing, electricity available. TurnerLand Company, LLC, Ringling, OK. **580-465-3571**. [www.turnerlandcompany.com](http://www.turnerlandcompany.com).

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**HUNTING AND RECREATION RANCH-40** acres located south of Orr, Oklahoma. 2 farm ponds, native grass with timber cover, hunting and fishing. TurnerLand Company, LLC, Ringling, OK. **580-465-3571**. [www.turnerlandcompany.com](http://www.turnerlandcompany.com).

## services

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# OKFR / parting shot



## **Look out point**

Photographer, Jacob Redway visited Express Ranches north of Yukon, Okla., in mid-November. The wind was cold and blowing vigorously, but it did not seem to faze these Herefords. The birds, however, had a more difficult time staying put. “This lookout point, which displays a placard highlighting a history of the ranch would be a great location for anyone visiting the area,” the photographer said.



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## Cowtown Classic Limousin Sale • Fort Worth, Texas January 29, 2016 • 6:00 p.m.

The sale will be held in the West Arena in the Bass-Richardson building located on the Fort Worth Stock Show grounds.

Selling 35-40 lots of registered Limousin and Lim-Flex® bulls, bred cows, pairs, and open heifers eligible for the 2017 TLA Lone Star Shoot Out.

Catalog will be available in January at [www.texas-limousin.com](http://www.texas-limousin.com).

For more information, contact Ralph Hawkins at 940-367-4633 or email [txlimo@aol.com](mailto:txlimo@aol.com).

‡ Calving ease & calf vigor

‡ More pounds to sell at weaning

‡ Feed efficiency

‡ Tested & proven docility

‡ Cow & bull longevity

‡ Carcass merit

To find out more about the Limousin Advantage, or to locate Limousin or Lim-Flex® bulls and females to fit your program, visit [www.NALF.org](http://www.NALF.org) or call 303-220-1693.





**Harry Patterson**

*President/Owner*

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**Mickey Gee**

*Outside Sales*

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*General Manager/Partner*

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