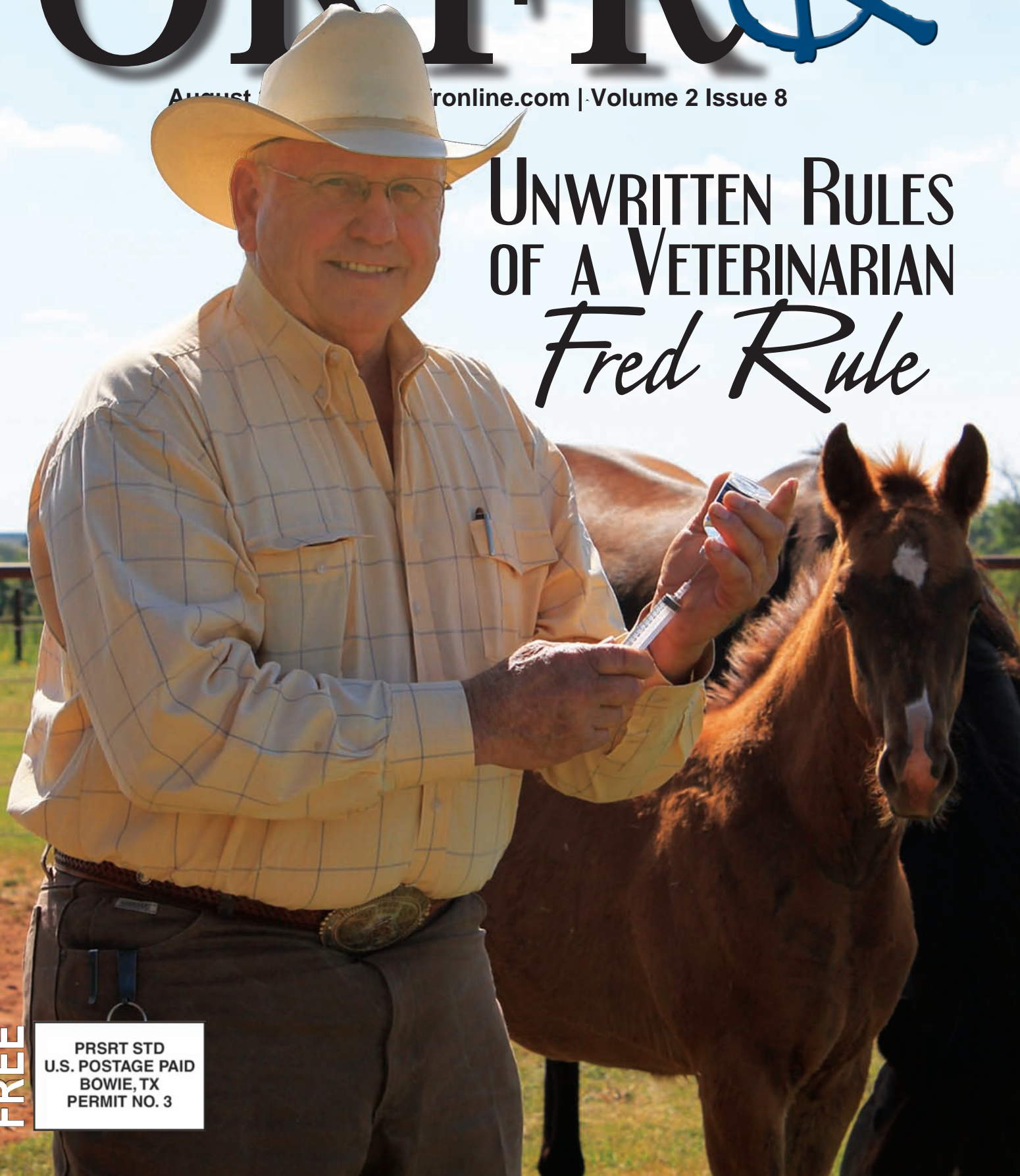


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August www.okfro.com/online.com | Volume 2 Issue 8

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The Sunday of Summer...

Hello OKFR readers, and welcome to the August issue of the Oklahoma Farm & Ranch magazine. As I sit on my back porch feeling the warm summer breeze, I am amazed by how fast the year is flying by. I am reminded of an unknown quote: "I love how summer just wraps around you like a warm blanket." While that sounds nice now, I'm sure we will be hoping and praying for a cool rain as the heat index rises well above 100 degrees Fahrenheit.



To kick off this August issue, four cases of rabies in cattle have been diagnosed in Oklahoma in the first six months of 2017. Rabies in livestock can be difficult to detect by producers. First read about this disease in "Rabies in Farm Animals" in the Farm & Ranch section.

Oklahoma junior high school cowboys and cowgirls competed in Lebanon, Tenn., for the National Junior High School Final Rodeo in June. This competition included 13 performances throughout the week. Find out how they placed in the Equine section in "National Junior High School Final Rodeo."

Next, read part one of "The Howard Ranches." Part one is about Noah Jenkins Howard, who moved to Indian Territory in 1872. His word "was as good as a bond," and he focused on preserving the land by not over-cutting trees along the Red River. Noah Howard was a successful businessman who started the family ranch that continues in Jefferson County.

This month I visited with the 2014 Zoetis PRCA Veterinarian of the Year. Fred Rule, DVM, spent more than 50 years practicing in Elk City, Okla. The veterinarian was born in 1939 and raised in Kansas. He went on to pursue his veterinary degree at Kansas State University. He always said, "Being a veterinarian was my vocation, but a cowboy is my avocation." With an interest in working with the best horses, he moved to western Oklahoma and worked with Walter Merrick, the Buetlers and more. Learn more in "Unwritten Rules of a Veterinarian."

This month we are starting a new series on the historical 101 Ranch near Ponca City, Okla. This ranch at one point was known as America's Largest Diversified Farm. The story begins with Colonel George Washington "G.W." Miller's journey from Kentucky following the Civil War. Read more in "Follow the Long, Dusty Trail."

Today, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) are used in range management. Drones are packed with technology as they are capable of both controlled and autonomous flight, global positioning guidance systems and more. Learn more in "Drones for Wildlife Management" in the Outdoors section.

If you have an event, photo or topic idea that you would like to see in Oklahoma Farm & Ranch, email editor@okfronline.com. Keep up with new OKFR updates on our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages. For more information or subscription information, visit our website www.OKFRonline.com.

Until next month,

ON THE COVER

Dr. Fred Rule has spent more than 50 years as a veterinarian in western Oklahoma. After graduating from Kansas State University in 1964, he traveled to Oklahoma to specialize in equine medicine. He and two other KSU alumni took over a practice in Elk City, Okla., in the mid-1960s. Since then, the Kansas native has seen major changes in veterinary medicine including technology. In honor of his efforts, he received the 2014 Zoetis PRCA Veterinarian of the Year award. (Photo by Laci Jones)

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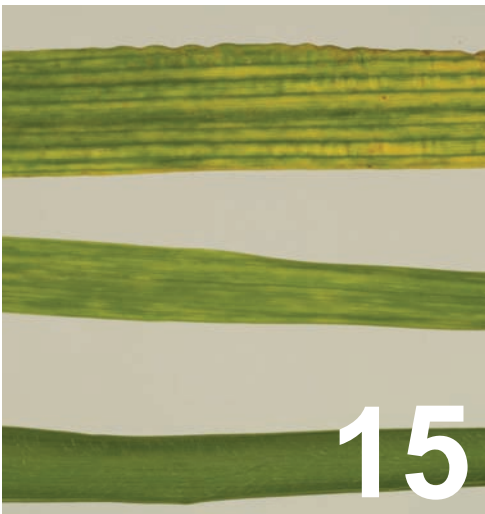
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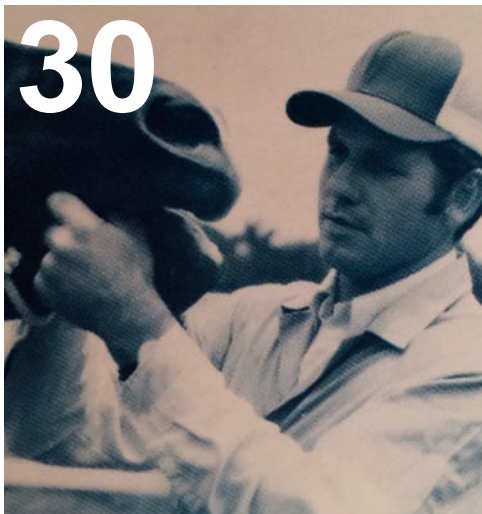
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Fred Rule

Fred Rule has been practicing veterinary medicine for 50-plus years.

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Rabies in Farm Animals

So far, four cases of rabies have been diagnosed in the state in 2017.

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Pretty Miss Norma Jean

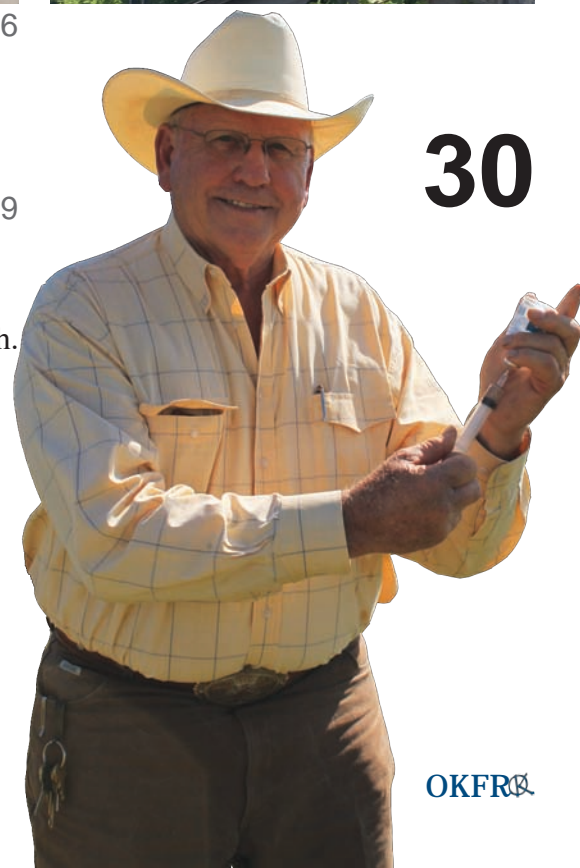
Norma Jean Beasler and her family moved to Oklahoma City in 1945.

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The 101 Ranch was once known as America's Largest Diversified Ranch.

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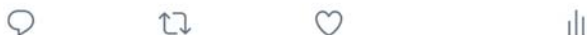
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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

OKFR welcomes 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. OKFR reserves the right to edit or reject any letters.
9. Letters must be mailed to OKFR Letter to the Editor, P.O. Box 831, Bowie, TX 76230 or emailed to editor@okfronline.com.

Rabies in Farm Animals

By Barry Whitworth, DVM

In the first half of 2017, four cases of rabies have been diagnosed in cattle in Oklahoma. When most people think of rabies, they have visions of a foaming at the mouth, snarling, aggressive dog that attacks everything in sight. However, in farm animals, this is not always the case.

Many veterinarians at some time in their career probably receive a phone call that goes something like this. “Doc, I found this cow away from the herd yesterday. I got her to the lot. She seems a little depressed. She kept straining like she was constipated. She was having trouble swallowing and was a little bloated. My neighbor and I opened her mouth, but we could not find anything. We both ran our arms down her throat, but we could not find anything. I need you come out and take a look at her.” Unfortunately, many producers have been exposed to rabies because they do not recognize that this animal was infected with the “dumb” form of rabies. Not all animals with rabies have the “furious” form of the disease.

Rabies is a virus in the genus *Lyssavirus* in the family *Rhabdoviridae*. The virus does not survive in the environment for very long. Most disinfectants will kill the virus. The disease is fatal to animals and humans. On very rare occasions, people have survived the disease. In experiments, animals have survived the disease. Surviving rabies may occur in wild animals as well.

Domestic animals are infected with the virus from wildlife reservoirs. In Oklahoma, the most common reservoir is the skunk. In the world, the estimation is that 50,000 to 60,000 people die each year of the disease. The few people who die of the disease in the United States are usually unaware that they have been exposed to the virus.

In order to be infected with the virus, an animal must come in contact with the saliva from a rabid animal. This normally occurs from a bite wound. The virus may gain entry by saliva coming in contact with a mucous membrane or a break in the skin. Aerosol transmission has been reported in laboratories and bat caves, but this is very rare.

Once in the body, the virus replicates in the

See RABIES page 11



Family milk cows are prime candidates for the rabies vaccination. (Courtesy photo)

Rabies

muscle tissue. Next, the virus enters the peripheral nerves and will be transported to the spinal cord and to the brain. Once in the brain, the virus will enter the systemic circulation, which includes the salivary glands. The timeline for all this to take place is variable. It depends on how much virus is initially transmitted to the animal and the location of the bite wound. If a large number of viruses are transmitted, the incubation time will be shorter. If the bite wound is close to the head, it will take less time for the virus to get to the brain. If the bite wound is on the foot, it may take several months for the virus to get to the brain.

The furious form of the disease is the most recognized by people. The animals with this form will be restless, wander, vocalize, drool, and attack anything in sight. These animals are not afraid of anything. Nocturnal animals with rabies are often seen in the day. They will have convulsion in the late stages of the disease. They usually die in four to eight days after showing clinical signs.


The paralytic (dumb) form of the disease

is a progressive paralysis. The throat becomes paralyzed and the animal cannot swallow or vocalize normally. Cattle might have a high pitched bellow or attempt to bellow with no sound being produced. Due to the progressive paralysis, rumination will cease, which may result in bloat. They also may appear to be straining to urinate or defecate. These animals will have problems walking and will become recumbent. This form is often mistaken for a digestive problem. Some producers may think the animal is aborting or has a urinary problem. These animals usually die in two to six days from respiratory failure.

When an animal has neurological signs, rabies should be suspected. Producers should avoid contact with the animal and contact their local veterinarian. If the veterinarian diagnosis rabies, the brain will need to be submitted to a laboratory to confirm the diagnosis.

Animals that are suspected of having rabies are not treated. The danger that the animal poses to humans is not worth the risk of treatment. Also, the disease is almost always fatal.

Rabies can be prevented by vaccination and by preventing unnecessary exposure of domestic animals to wildlife. All pets should be vaccinated. Obviously, vaccinating a large herd or flock of animals would not be cost effective. However, animals that are in constant contact with humans such as show animals or horses should be vaccinated. If a producer has a family milk cow, she would be a good candidate for vaccination. Preventing contact with wildlife is difficult, but paying close attention to sanitation should discourage wildlife from entering areas where animals are kept.

Rabid animals are dangerous. If animals have the furious form, they may attack and injure producers. Animals with the dumb form of the disease can infect unsuspecting producers. Anytime an animal is suspected of having rabies, a veterinarian should be contacted. As stated earlier, most people who die of rabies in the United States are not even aware that they have been exposed. For more information on rabies, please visit with your local veterinarian or County Extension Educator. 



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I Need Help

By Ralph Chain

I received a letter just a while back from a foundation that is receiving \$20 million to help the farmers and ranchers survive. I can't understand what the \$20 million is going to accomplish. Here is word for word what the letter said, and I need some help understanding how we are to run our ranches and our farms:

"The Oklahoma economy is heavily dependent on the extraction and use of natural resources. Predictable and increasing services of energy, food, fiber, fresh-water and clean air are needed to maintain a healthy society. This is particularly true where climatic shifts and extremes have the potential to systemically change our food production, water resources management and transportation systems.

"In Oklahoma, substantial gradients in precipitation, land cover, population and agriculture, and a diversity of Native American tribes make climate change an impending socio-ecological threat. To develop sustainable natural resource supplies that support a vibrant economy with healthy and productive citizens, we need to develop knowledge for anticipating future socio-ecological and socio-economic systems, and for adapting how we use ecosystem services in a changing climate. The recent multi-year drought throughout the Southern Great Plains has highlighted the very real risks and vulnerabilities that variability in the climate imposes on socio-ecological systems.

"The research team consists of a diverse mix of basic and social scientists, including anthropologists, ecologists, sociologists, geographers, political scientists,



Approximately \$20 million is being allocated by a foundation to help the farmers and ranchers survive. (Photo courtesy of Chain Ranch)

meteorologists, hydrologists, plant and soil scientists, computer and cyber infrastructure scientists, rangeland scientists, and agricultural, natural resource and environmental economists.

"The team's goals are to empower managers to effectively adapt socio-ecological systems to climate change and educate Oklahomans about regional environmental changes.

"The grand vision of this project is to significantly advance our understanding of how socio-economic and socio-ecological systems can adapt sustainably to increased climate variability caused by a changing climate. More specifically, the project focuses on water availability because it is a major stressor in Oklahoma as well as in semi-arid lands around

the world. To accomplish our visions, funds from the EPSCoR grant will be used to improve our research infrastructure, transforming Oklahoma's capability to be nationally competitive in the increasingly important research area of coupled human and natural systems, and other programs in NSF's crosscutting Science, Engineering and Education for Sustainability portfolio.

"Our first order of business will be to develop a first-of-its-kind, statewide, tightly coupled human and natural systems observatory with integrated measurement, modeling and prediction capabilities, and downstream decision-support systems.

"The observatory platform comprises three elements: 1.) a world-class, socio-ecological

observatory that collects key observations of human and natural systems that are currently under-sampled or not measured; 2) a socio-ecological modeling and prediction system that integrates qualitative and quantitative approaches, and systematically examines insights from both disciplinary and integrated perspectives; and 3.) a decision-support system that provides researchers, educators and practitioners the data, models, tools and scenarios to explore and understand the social and ecological impacts of decisions related to a specific need such as a statewide water portal.

"This multi-year project: 1) leverages core strengths in weather and climate, environmental sociology, high-performance computing, data assimilation, numerical

modeling, remote sensing, agriculture and terrestrial ecology; 2.) will add new faculty, capabilities and infrastructure, particularly in social and ecological sciences as well as human and natural systems research; and 3.) will make significant progress towards integrating these strengths around the themes of socio-economic and socio-ecological adaptation to climate change, with a particular focus on water availability. Research infrastructure improvements are expected to position Oklahoma researchers on a highly competitive footing for sustained research and future funding success. This use-inspired basic research will also enable researchers and extension specialists to co-produce research-infused products and tools with resource managers and policymakers.

"This is a very exciting advancement in research capacity for the state of Oklahoma. We will update you about our progress as

this project moves forward."

After reading this, I hope you can understand why I need help in understanding what all this means, and why I need help in understanding how we need to run our business. Our family had been here since 1893, more than 120 years, and we have survived so far.

I noticed they explained everything we are supposed to do, but it seems to me they left out the most important thing—praying and asking the Lord for guidance. Seems to me that He is the one who controls the weather and our destiny.

When Solomon died, about the age of 70 years old, he had everything in the world that he could possibly want, but he came to the conclusion at the end of his life to fear God and keep His commandments; that's really what counts. Seems to me like we need more of Solomon's advice as we go down through life. That's the end of my story. ☞

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WHEAT DISEASES

By Everett Brazil, III

Oklahoma wheat producers saw several diseases impact their crop in the 2016-2017 season, with Oklahoma State University researchers identifying four primary issues: leaf rust, stripe rust, wheat streak mosaic (WSM) and barley yellow dwarf (BYD). While some losses were recognized this past season, it is unclear how those diseases will impact the upcoming season, and OSU researchers are encouraging producers to scout their new crop to identify the diseases to protect against them.

Leaf rust and stripe rust impacted primarily western Oklahoma, although it was found in different areas as well.

“Leaf rust and stripe rust were spread around the state. I believe southwest Oklahoma had more stripe rust than northern Oklahoma, where northern Oklahoma had more leaf rust,” said OSU extension state pathologist, Robert Hunger, Stillwater, Okla.

Leaf rust and stripe rust are two of several rust diseases that impact wheat in the state.

Leaf rust most commonly occurs on the leaf, but can also involve the entire plant, although it is rare for the entire plant to be involved. Symptoms include brown, round or elongated lesions on affected tissues. Like leaf rust, stripe rust can also affect the entire plant, and symptoms include small, yellow-orange lesions that ultimately form stripes, giving the disease its name.

Rust diseases have the potential to impact yields.

“In the case of rust [diseases], rust will lower yields, and lower the test weights of the wheat,” Hunger said.

BYD disease was also seen within the state, and while rust

diseases are spread through fungal spores, BYD is spread through many aphid insects. The disease can be identified at the leaf tips, which feature stunting, as well as discoloration, especially with red or yellow colors. Although the disease can be found throughout the field, it is usually found in small patches.

By far, the most pervasive disease was WSM, which is spread by the WSM virus (WSMV).

“One of the more surprising [diseases] was WSM,” said David Marburger, OSU Small Grains Extension Specialist, Stillwater, Okla. “WSM was bigger for a number of producers, especially southwest Oklahoma.”

WSM symptoms are either yellow stripes on a green background or green stripes on a yellow background. Other symptoms include yellowing and leaf death.

WSM can affect fields both in the fall or spring, which can have differing effects on the crop.

“If you have the WSMV gaining entrance into the plant in the fall, there won’t be anything worth harvesting,” Hunger said. “If the infections are in the spring, there’ll be some damage, but it won’t be as significant as the damage that occurs in the fall.”

One way to control WSMV is to gain a control over grassy weeds, as well as volunteer wheat, which allows the WSMV a place to overwinter.

“[The virus] can live in a number of other grass species,” Marburger said. “A lot of that comes back to the field, in controlling volunteer wheat plants.”

Planting resistant varieties is a way to control all four diseases, and a fungicide program can also help control rust diseases, Marburger said. It is unclear how



Winter wheat infected with the barley yellow dwarf disease. (Photo courtesy of USDA-ARS)

much the diseases will impact the 2017-2018 crop, as environmental factors play the biggest role in determining pressure from all four diseases.

“It’s mostly dictated by weather, and also it depends on inocu-

lum [disease factor] blowing in from Texas, so you have to depend on Texas having a bad year, and the perfect weather conditions in Oklahoma, especially in the spring, when these diseases get going,” Hunger said. ☒

YOUR NOT-SO-AVERAGE JOE

By Corsi Martin

Beaver

If ever there was a cowboy to swing a leg over a horse in the Great State of Texas who worked hard, worked smart, and reaped the ultimate rewards for his sowing, that cowboy would be none other than the multifaceted Joe Beaver. You may recognize him today as one of rodeo history's most renowned calf ropers.

From earning eight national titles and being inducted into the Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame, to winning the All-Around Title at the NFR and receiving countless honors and nominations, this audacious cowboy is anything but your average Joe. Born and raised in the rural town of Victoria, Texas, in 1965, Joe was merely a toddler when he first began swinging a rope. With his father's encouragement and coaching, Joe took a liking to the sport of rodeo at a young age. Roping goats from a horse in his pastime as a small child, it was evident that this cowboy would eventually make a name for himself.

Of course, back in those days there weren't any electronic devices to refer to for inspirations as there are today. There was no social media to scroll through. There were no hashtags or multi-channel rodeo events on television. Inspiration came in the form of pure passion. "Back then we didn't have all the TV and Rodeo TV," Joe says. "I learned everything I knew from my dad and watching other people." The hands-on experience involved early on in Joe's life helped mold him into the surefire talent he transformed into.

At only eight years of age, Joe was already competing in rodeo events. By the time he was 10, he



Beaver began competing at the age of eight and won his first championship roping at 10. (Photo courtesy of Joe Beaver)

would win his first championship roping.

By this point, Joe's appetite for rodeo led him down the road to success, with the support of his loving family. He competed in high school rodeos and amateur ropings, but at age 15 Joe was no longer roping in youth events; he had his sights set on bigger dreams which he would pursue as a roper in the opens.

In 1985, and just 20 young years of age, Joe had not only earned the title of Calf Roping Rookie of the year, he was also named the World Champion. It should come as no surprise that, as his career developed and matured, Joe went on to qualify for the National Finals Rodeo a whopping 22 times: 18 times in the tie down roping and four times in the team

roping.

His success was not coincidental. When Joe decided that the top was where he wanted to be, the top is what he practiced for. "It has to be what you love to do; it can't just be what you want to do. It has to be your passion because there's lots of long, trying days in the practice pen," Joe says. "You don't waste any time or skip any time...It's hard work, it's dedication, but it's something you have to do."

When you have a dream as big as the NFR, there are going to be trials and hurdles, but Joe goes on to explain that the lifestyle of a traveling cowboy or cowgirl isn't for the faint of heart. Big wins come from big efforts, and Joe doesn't mind emphasizing the hard work it takes to make it big in the rodeo industry. What with so

many kids in younger generations dreaming of a rodeo career, even half as successful as Joe's, he offers words of encouragement and support to aspiring rodeo athletes. "You have to live every day, hard, and be honest with yourself," Joe says. "Give it everything you have to make it to that point, or you might as well not do it." However, roping isn't Joe's only avenue of talent or interest. He is a multifaceted horseman with an appreciation for various equine disciplines.

While he has much experience in polo cross and cutting horses from his involvement in his son's riding career, Joe might be the first tie down roper in history to admit his admiration for the sport of barrel racing. Barrel racing may See **CALLING page 17**

CALLING

seemingly not receive the recognition it deserves, but Joe appreciates the sport and enjoys observing the talent.

“You’ve really defined an equine athlete when you can make an event that tough,” Joe says. “I had some friends of mine who were running barrels 25 years ago, when it first started getting big. I’ve seen it grow and I’ve seen it materialize to where it’s such an industry now that those guys and girls 25 years ago were just on the edge of the horizon. Now it’s a business, but it’s an equine athletic sport, to me”.

Joe’s appreciation for other equine sports has made him a well-versed horseman with a wide range of experience when it comes to working with horses.

When it comes to finding a good horse or buying new prospects, bloodlines are merely words on paper to this cowboy. It just so happens that Joe is, coincidentally, partial to products of Doc Bar. Siring hundreds of foals since 1960, Doc Bar has made a name for himself as one of the most dominant sires in the cutting horse industry.

Moreover, many foals of this blood have gone on to find their calling in various equine avenues including barrel racing, roping and even jumping. “I’ll be honest, almost every really good calf horse that I ever had, except for one, went back to Doc Bar somewhere,” Joe says. “Somewhere down the line, Doc Bar was involved. But that’s not the way I buy them. I buy them like everybody else does; we buy the best ones we can find. I don’t ever look at breeding. I’m not the kind of guy who follows the blood lines.”

Joe believes that cutting horses often make phenomenal rodeo prospects. Cutting horse trainers lay the groundwork by teaching two-year-old cutters to stop, pivot, turn, and other basic manners. Assuming said cutter does not find a successful career within the National Cutting Horse Association (NCHA), there is inevitably a home for him elsewhere. More often than not, ropers and barrel racers are the first ones to get their hands on second string cutters, and Joe has always got his eyes peeled for roping prospects.

To say that Joe’s talents are that of an expert horseman would be a vast understatement. This is a man who has turned a head horse into a polo cross athlete; it doesn’t get much more diverse than that.



Beaver has earned himself eight national titles, been inducted into the Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame, won the All-Around Title at the NFR and received countless honors and nominations. (Photo courtesy of Joe Beaver)

Though he has been wildly successful in his career, Joe is one of the most humble folks west of the Mississippi. He has moved on from the hard-hitting rodeo life.

Today, he dedicates much of his time to coaching young talent in the rodeo industry, giving them the coaching needed to succeed. His passion and love for rodeo has evolved into a yearning to help others achieve their goals of becoming rodeo athletes.

For years, Joe has quietly sponsored several scholarships, contributed awards, and organized rodeos for today’s youth. He does not make a show of his philanthropy, but claims that it is something he enjoys doing for the kids. He has won more than \$5 million in his rodeo career, but credits his success to his sponsors, endorsements, and wise money management. “That’s one thing I’d tell the rodeo generation of this day: If you’re winning and making a lot of money, pay for things along the way, and one day when you wake up and it’s about done, you don’t owe anything.”

Now, Joe does a lot of TV work and commenting approximately 25 rodeos a year, in-

cluding the NFR. He also hosts private lessons and schools for individuals wanting to learn the tricks of the trade. Joe values his students to a degree of wanting them to succeed just as badly as they do. He prides himself on being a good teacher, and considers this to be his greatest of accomplishments.

“I’ve got a lot of kids who come through my school who have won a lot of money and still do,” Joe says. “The last year I competed at the NFR, I think I had three or four guys I was roping against that had been to my schools. I can make you a winner, and I think that overrules and outweighs all that I’ve won by leaps and bounds.”

Seeing that he was competing against the same students he had taught in years past, Joe realized that he would always have something that he could turn to when his rodeo days were over.

Having traveled all over the United States and places like Canada, Brazil, New Zealand, and Australia, Joe reflects on his career with humility and feels blessed to have been afforded the opportunity to travel as much as he did.

“The winning is the reward for all that you give up in your life to get to that win. I gave up a lot, socially and time-wise, to get to be where I wanted to be, but I think all the travel, all the things you see, and all the people you meet, that’s the joy of it.”

When sustaining such a lengthy career in rodeo, there are sure to be memories that last a lifetime. For Joe there just so happens to be two memories that stand out.

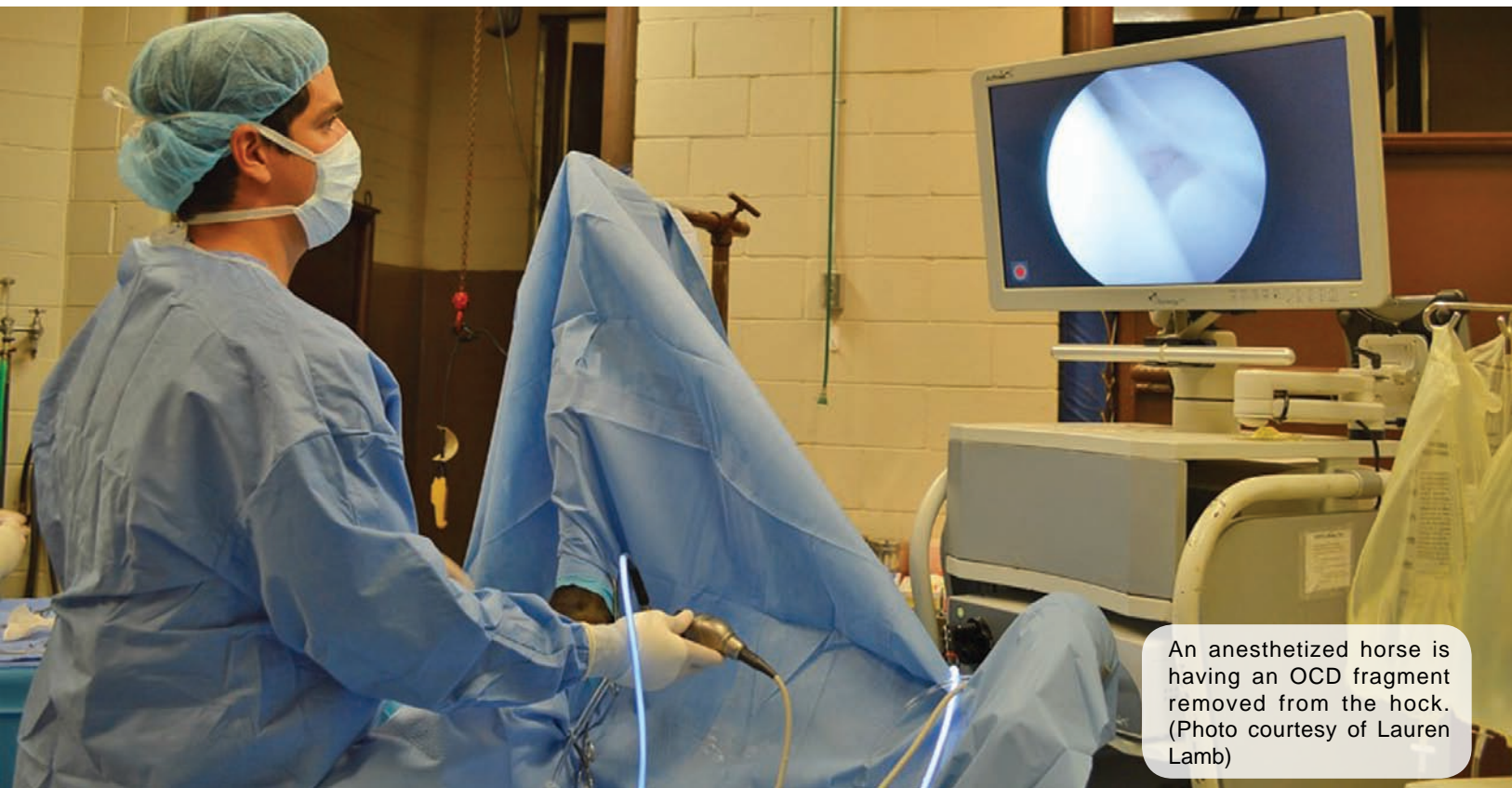
He reflects on winning the gold medal in the calf roping at the Calgary Olympics as being a highlight, followed by the time he let himself down by breaking the barrier in the ninth go-round at the NFR to lose a championship he would have won. “I’ll always remember those two things as being the coolest and the crapiest,” Joe says.

Embracing the bad with the good has been a large part of this Joe’s life. Quitting is easy, but overcoming the obstacles that are determined to weigh you down are the very mountains that harbor the greatest rewards at the top for those who are persistent enough to continue the climb.

If you would like to learn more about Joe Beaver or the services he offers, please visit www.joebeaver.com. ☞

Osteochondritis Dissecan

By Lauren Lamb, DVM



An anesthetized horse is having an OCD fragment removed from the hock. (Photo courtesy of Lauren Lamb)

Osteochondrosis is a disease in which the cartilage and subchondral bone in the joints fail to develop normally. The cartilage and subchondral bone play a major role in keeping a joint healthy and preventing the development of osteoarthritis.

When a fragment of abnormal cartilage and subchondral bone become dislodged, the disease is renamed to osteochondritis dissecan. These free floating fragments can become lodged between two opposing articular surfaces within the joint. If the osteochondritis dissecan fragment gets lodged between articular surfaces, significant damage to the cartilage can occur along with severe lameness. For the purpose of this paper, Osteochondrosis and

osteochondritis dissecan will be referred to as OCD.

OCDs are seen predominately in young horses less than two years of age. A lot of times the horse will have an OCD at the age of six months, but it is not diagnosed until the horse is put into training as a yearling or two-year-old. OCDs can be seen in all breeds of horses, but some breeds like Warmbloods and Standard-breds are more predisposed. The fetlocks, hocks and stifles are the most commonly affected joints; however, any joint can be affected. A horse with an OCD will frequently have bilateral joints affected, meaning both the left and right leg will be affected.

Despite extensive time and funds dedicated to research, the

cause of OCDs has not been defined. This is largely due to the multiple variables and risk factors that can play a role in a horse developing an OCD. The risk factors for OCDs can be broken down into environmental and genetic. Genetic factors are thought to account for 25 to 50 percent of the disease risk. Some research has shown that large body size, which can also be linked to genetics, can be a risk factor for OCDs. Environmental factors that can increase the risk of OCDs include copper deficiency, high phosphorus intake relative to calcium intake and irregular/intense exercise.

The best way to reduce the risk of your horse developing an OCD is to make sure it is being fed a well-balanced diet with sufficient

copper, low phosphorous and high calcium levels. Foals need to have daily exercise so the cartilage and subchondral bone in the joint can properly develop. They should be allowed free turnout exercise in a paddock with even footing. Forced exercise should be avoided for the first six to nine months of life. During the first few months of life, the cartilage and subchondral bone in a foal's joints are developing. This, coincidentally, is also the time when most OCD lesions develop.

Despite taking all the precautions mentioned to eliminate the environmental risk factors, some foals will still develop OCDs secondary to genetic predisposition. With that being said, you can have **See DISSECAN page 19**

Dissecan

full sibling offspring with one foal having OCDs and the other not having any OCDs. This just re-iterates the challenges faced by scientist as they attempt to fully understand the cause of OCDs.

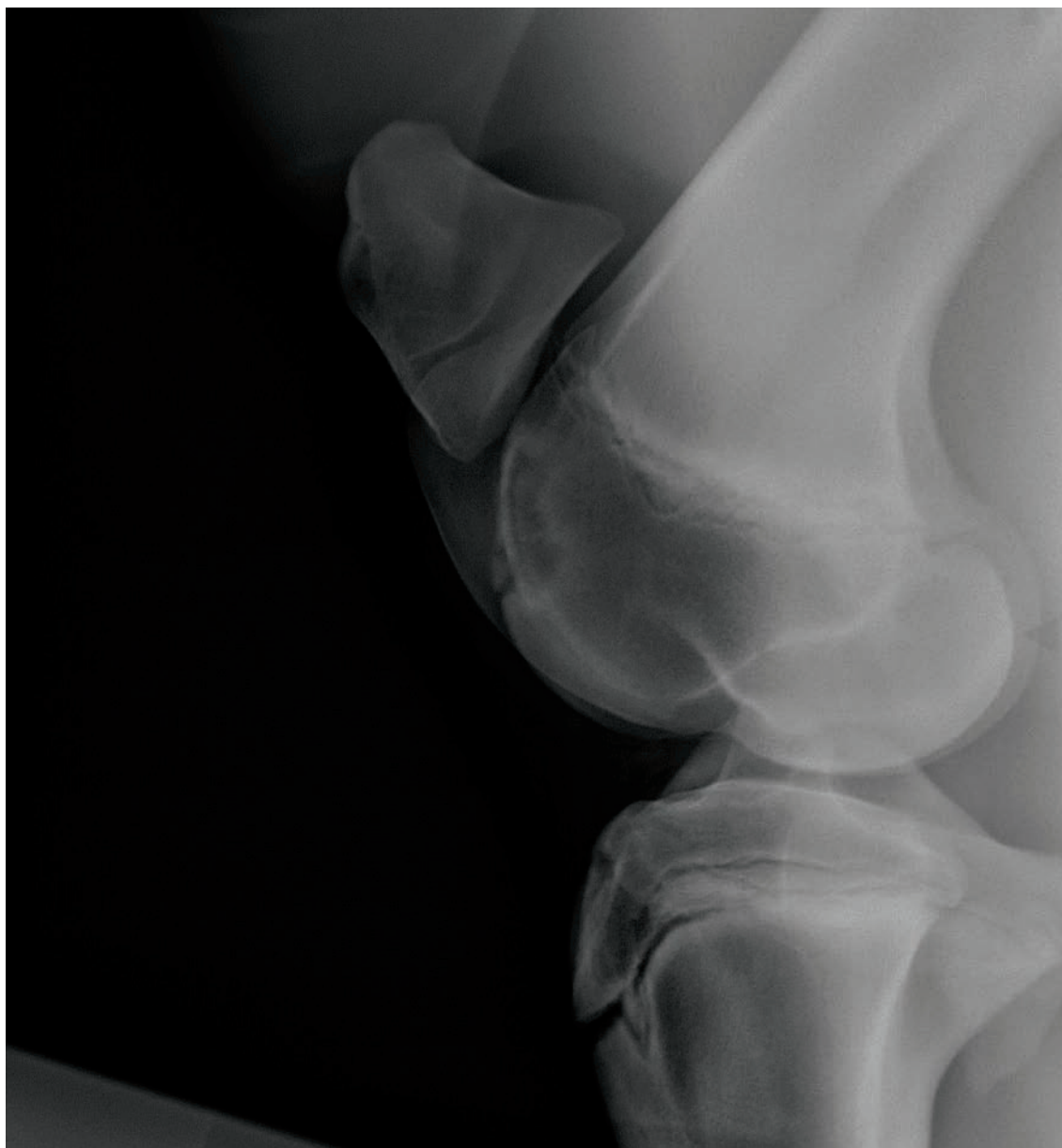
Joint effusion, excess fluid in the joint, with an OCD is the most common clinical sign. Often, this joint effusion will be seen after the foal has been exercised or turned out. The effusion may go away with stall rest, but many times it does not.

Rarely is a lameness noted, except in case with a loose fragment of cartilage and subchondral bone that gets stuck between articular surfaces. If a loose fragment gets stuck in an articular surface, the foal will usually display a severe lameness.

Radiographs are the gold standard for diagnosing an OCD. The OCD bone fragments can be easily visualized on radiographs. OCDs typically occur in the same location with certain joints, so your veterinarian will take specific radiographs to highlight these areas of the joint.

For cases that have a cartilage flap but no bone fragments, an ultrasound of the joint will be needed. An ultrasound allows your veterinarian to examine the cartilage within the joint. Radiographs only allow examination of the bone.

If an OCD is identified in a joint, the same joint of the opposite leg should also be examined, due to the high propensity for OCDs to be seen bilaterally. If an OCD is discovered in a foal at a young age (less than six months), radiographs or an ultrasound exam should be performed again when the horse is older than 11 months. OCDs in younger horse can heal spontaneously with proper exercise and nutrition; however, once the horse is 11 months of age, any OCDs that are present will be permanent.




OCD fragment on the lateral trochlear ridge of the femur. This is a large fragment on the weight bearing surface of the bone. It needs to be removed surgically. (Photo by Lauren Lamb)

Treatment for OCDs usually involves surgical removal of the loose cartilage and bone fragments. This is done under general anesthesia with an arthroscopic surgery.

Following surgery, horses will be put on a two to three-month rest and rehab plan before going back to regular exercise and training. Most horses that have an OCD fragment surgically removed have a good prognosis to return to full-athletic soundness follow-

ing surgery. Few cases have large bone fragments or extensive cartilage damage that have a guarded prognosis to return to full-athletic soundness.

In some cases, the cartilage and bone fragments may be small and in a corner of the joint that is minimally irritating. Cases like this could be managed with anti-inflammatory medication systemically and in the joint; however, the best therapy is surgical removal of the fragments.

In conclusion, OCDs are seen commonly in horses. The exact cause of OCDs at this point is unknown. Horses that have an OCD rarely have any long term soundness issues if treated appropriately. The best therapy is surgical removal of the OCD fragment when the foal is around the age of 12 months. Delaying surgical removal and putting the horse into training could increase the chances that your horse will have long term soundness issues. 

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National Junior High School Finals Rodeo

By Ddee Haynes



Oklahoma junior high school cowboys and cowgirls competed in the National Junior High School Finals Rodeo in Lebanon, Tenn. (Photo by Ddee Haynes)

On June 18-24, 2017 in Lebanon, Tenn., more than 1,100 junior high school cowgirls and cowboys from 46 states, Australia, British Columbia and Canada gathered to compete in one of the world's largest rodeos. The week included a total of 13 performances: six first round performances, six second round performances and the short round, also known as the short go.

Each contestant would compete two times, one time per round. The cowboys and cowgirls with the best average after two rounds of competition would earn their spot in the short go. Only the top 20

with the best average on two runs or two rides would qualify for the prestige of being in the final round. In timed events, the lower the average the better, while in rough stock the higher the average the better.

Events and contestants per event were as follows:

Barrel Racing – 166; Girls' Break Away Roping – 155; Boys' Break Away Roping – 145; Chute Dogging – 144; Tie Down Roping – 99; Boys' Goat Tying – 142; Girls' Goat Tying – 162; Junior Bull Riding – 112; Pole Bending – 167; Ribbon Roping – 147; Team Roping – 144; Bareback Steer Riding – 83; Saddle Bronc Steer

Riding – 74 and Rifle Shooting – 103. To keep you from doing the math, a total of 1,843 entries were made, and an additional 280 from the short-go for a total of 2,125 entries. The rifle shooting was the only event with only one round and the top 20 going back for a short round.

The first performance was on Sunday, June 18, 2017. The weather was perfect and the arena dirt was great. In the early morning hours on Monday, the rain started and it did not stop until Tuesday mid-day.

The next three performances, Monday morning and afternoon and the Tuesday morning per-

formances were run in the rain. The Tuesday evening and both Wednesday performances were dry, and the ground was great. However, the rain came back with a vengeance creating muddy, slop and, in my opinion, unfair arena conditions for the next five remaining performances. The rain finally moved out for good Saturday morning and crews were able to pull out all of the mud and replace it with dry dirt for the short round.

In 2016 the Oklahoma Junior High School Rodeo team was crowned the world champions. So going into 2017, team Oklahoma **See RODEO page 22**

Rodeo

Continued from page 21

had a reputation as the team to beat, and each member did their best to defend their championship title.

Despite the mud and all the adverse conditions, team Oklahoma showed grit, heart and a whole lot of try. The Okie kids continued to win and/or place in each performance and in each round gathering team points along the way.

As I watched from the stands along with all the other Oklahoma mothers, fathers, siblings, grandparents and friends, my heart was filled with pride for each and every Oklahoma team member. While other kids from different states slowed their horses down, dismounted a little slower, or in one instance just gave up and stopped trying, I can honestly say not once did I see an Oklahoma cowboy or cowgirl not giving 100 percent. Those kids showed their true “cowboy” colors or red, white and never run blue!

At the end of rounds one and two, Team Oklahoma had 14 members in the top 20 qualify to move into the final round, “the short-go.” The Oklahomans had one or more qualifying members in each event with the exception of barrel racing, boys’ goat tying, and rifle shooting. With good ground to work on in the short round, Oklahoma turned it on and once again proved they were the team to beat, leaving it all in the arena!

When it was all said and done, the girls’ team claimed the National Champions title, the boys’ team secured second and the Oklahoma Team overall were the Reserve Champions.

Oklahoma team members who qualified for the short round and placed as national winners were Kade Williams, third in boys’ breakaway roping; Mason Appleton, sixth and Trevor Hale, tenth in tie-down roping; Mason Appleton and Kate Kelley third, Trevor



The Oklahoma Junior High School cowboys and cowgirls who competed in the short-go round. Front row: Heston Harrison, Nicholas Lovins, Levi Sechrist, Karlie Tucker, Kenna McLemore, Chaley Hext, Laney Harper. Back row: Rodney Glenn, NJHSRA Director, Trevor Hale, Jordan Lovins, Hattie Haynes, Carli Hawkins, Kade Williams, Mason Appleton, Kate Kelley. Not pictured Caden Bunch. (Photo by Ddee Haynes)

Hale and Chaley Hext, fourth, Levi Sechrist and Carli Hawkins seventh in ribbon roping; Chaley Hext fifth and Kenna McLemore fifteenth in pole bending; brothers Jordan & Nicholas Lovins sixth in team roping; Caden Bunch, sixth in bareback steer riding; Trevor Hale, twelfth in chute dogging; Laney Harper, thirteenth, Carli Hawkins, fourteenth and Kate Kelley, sixteenth in girls’ breakaway roping; Heston Harrison, fifteenth in saddle bronc; Kate Kelley, sixth, Hattie Haynes (yes that is my youngest cowgirl) eighth, and Karlie Tucker thirteenth in girls’ goat tying; Caden Bunch twentieth in bull riding.

All-Around Cowgirls included National Champion Chaley Hext, Carli Hawkins, third and Kate Kelley, fourth. Trevor Hale was sixth in the All-Around Cowboy standings and he and his horse “Trouble with Kate” were the boys’ American Quarter Horse of the year winners.

Until next time... One proud Oklahoma rodeo mom! ☺

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Life of a Ranch Wife

By Lanna Mills

“Man's best friend.” Over the years this title has been earned by our companion, the dog. Cattle dogs, however, are more than just our companions. They are our co-workers and partners, working on the ranch alongside cowboys and ranchers to gather, move, sort and load cattle.

There are various breeds of cattle dogs, each unique in its own way. Cattle dogs come in many different sizes and colors. Some of the more common breeds used in our area are Australian Cattle Dog, Border Collie, Australian Shepherd and Catahoula.

The Australian Cattle Dog, also known as Blue or Red Heelers, originated in Australia. They are blue or red speckled in color often with tan markings. Blue heelers will often have black markings or black and tan markings. This particular breed of dog makes a great cattle dog. They are eager to learn and please. They are agile, quick, have great stamina and have an unwillingness to quit. They gained the name heeler for the way they herd and move cattle by running up behind them and nipping at their heels.

The Border Collie is known as one of the most intelligent and trainable dog breeds. It originated in the border country between Scotland and England. Its striking black and white coat along with its great intelligence has earned it a place in many movies, such as “Babe,” and television commercials. The border collies are different from other cattle dogs in the way they work. Their instinct is to “round up” the cattle and bring them to you. They use a type of pressure and release approach

along with an intimidating stare.

The Australian Shepherd, or Aussie as they're often called, is a beautiful breed with vibrant merle coat patterns in red or blue color and various eye colors.

This breed is smart, focused, loving and people oriented. This breed drives cattle by pushing them, barking, and nipping at their heels. A mini or toy version of this breed also exists. The mini and toy versions are the same loving, smart, eager to please dog, just in a smaller size.

The Catahoula, also known as Catahoula Leopard or Catahoula Cur, is the official dog of Louisiana. There this breed of dog was developed to catch wild hogs and to catch and drive cattle. This breed of dog works very well in the heat and has amazing stamina. Catahoulas work well in brush and rough terrain. They can be sent in to find stray cattle and hold them until the alerted cowboys can come to them. Catahoulas are efficient at pressuring cattle to form a herd. They are very vocal and can be aggressive if need be.

These breeds are often mixed to produce the exact qualities desired for the job at hand. Like a cowboy's horse, his dog must be well trained. It will not happen overnight; it takes time and consistency.

Dogs, like people, tend to get bored, and when they do they can get into all kinds of mischief. For this reason it is important to keep them busy. Working is what they were made for, and they greatly enjoy their jobs.

We have blue heelers. They are a part of the ranch and a part of our family. Our male dog will follow my husband many miles



The Mills' family owns blue heelers including this dog named Skeeter. (Photo by Lanna Mills)

horseback and is great at getting stubborn cattle to move. It's amazing to watch a dog weighing less than fifty pounds take on a bull weighing closer to 2,000 pounds.

As with all things on the ranch, the dogs must earn their keep, working to pay their room and board. Cattle dogs may be the easiest ranch hand to get along with.

They never ask for a day off or a pay raise.

They are pleased in their pay coming in the form of a pat on the head or a scrap of meat. Dogs have been used for years, and it's unlikely that this will ever change. The cattle dog has not only won a place in our hearts but also by our sides, working. ☞

HOWARD RANCH

Noah Howard and Wilton Howard

By Judy Wade



A scene from Noah Howard's Ranch in the early 20th century. (Photo courtesy of Dona Howard Brooks)

“The Ranching Corridor” is a name appropriately applied to Highway 70 as it traverses southern Jefferson County from east to west. Several large ranches lie adjacent to it. The Howard Ranch is one of them and has been in existence for almost 150 years.

Coming to Texas with his family in 1872, Noah Jenkins Howard was the first of the Howard family to cross over Red River from Montague, Texas, to the fertile valley known as Mud Creek in southern Indian Territory for his cattle operations. Born in 1859 in Johnson

County, Tenn., he had a high fever as a boy that left him with one leg shorter and a slight limp.

As a young man, he leased Indian land just north of Red River. He later bought that land and moved to Cornish, Indian Territory, with his bride, Nannie Taylor. He also acquired land in the Claypool area, midway between Ringling, Okla., and Waurika, Okla. Four children were born to the couple: Wilton in 1888; William Isaac “Bill” in 1890; Essie in 1891; and Leslie Otis in 1893.

Leslie was two when he pulled a pot of boiling coffee off the

stove and onto himself, eventually causing his death on Jan. 19, 1895. This tragedy brought overwhelming grief to his mother, Nannie Taylor Howard, and she died on May 23 of the same year.

Howard moved his family back to Texas, near Spanish Fort where he married Wesley Sharrock. Of their four children, only two survived to adulthood—Vera and Silas Dewey “Pig” Howard. Wesley proved to be a worthy mother to the five surviving children, but tragedy struck again in 1904. The sixteen-year-old Wilton was cleaning his gun outside the fam-

ily home when it accidentally discharged. The bullet sped through the house, killing his stepmother.

Howard continued raising his five children in the home near Spanish Fort, instilling in each of them Christian teachings. Each of them was known for their word being “as good as a bond.”

Howard was also known as an ecologist, as he did not allow over-cutting of trees along Red River. He was a loyal member of the Methodist Church and a director of the People's National Bank of Nocona. He was recognized at **See HOWARD page 27**

HOWARD

a distance by how straight he sat a horse.

Always a businessman, Howard was open to new adventures and opportunities. He had gone to south Texas to possibly invest in the rich, fertile valleys there when he was killed in an automobile accident near Mercedes in Hidalgo County on Jan. 20, 1925 at 66 years old.

Howard is buried at Liberty Chapel Cemetery near Spanish Fort. He left a priceless heritage to his family by the example of his Christian life. He began a ranching tradition still carried on by a fifth generation today.

His surviving children were as follows: Wilton married Jessie Brown, and they lived in the Cornish/Claypool, Texas, areas and had six children: Melvin, Paul, Ruth, Hazel, Don and Doris.

William Isaac "Bill" married Vera Gist. They lived in Henrietta, Texas, and had two children: Philip Vance and Nannie Catherine.

Essie married Scott Dennis. They lived in Grady, Okla., and had two children: Don and Winston "Skeeter."

Vera married Fred Salmon. They lived in Nocona, Texas, and had three children: Hoben Howard, Tommie and Fred Wilton.

S. D. "Pig" married Thelma Salmon. They lived on the home place near Spanish Fort and had no children.

Wilton Elveston Howard, oldest of Noah's children, attended school in Cornish I.T., Spanish Fort, Texas, and graduated from a Nazarene college in Bowie, Texas, with a degree in accounting. In 1910, he married Jessie Jo Brown, daughter of Joseph and Annie Brown, Jefferson County pioneers who had settled near Grady, Okla.

The couple moved to the Claypool ranch on land Wilton's father Noah had acquired and had started a ranch in the 1880s.



A photo of Wilton and Jessie Jo Brown Howard. (Photo courtesy of Dona Howard Brooks)

They had six children, and when the oldest, Melvin, was of high school age, the family moved to Cornish so the children could attend school at Ringling, Okla., since Claypool had no high school at the time.

Having been taught by his father to love and care for the land, Wilton invested in more land in Jefferson County in Claypool, Cornish and along Mud Creek. He used the 7L brand on the cattle on his ranch and the TL connected on trader cattle.

Wilton was a member of the Texas and Southwest Cattle Raisers Association and of the National Livestock Commission. He served on the Ringling School Board for many years and helped bring the vocational agriculture program into the school system. He practiced good land management and was the first in Jefferson County to use terraced plowing techniques to prevent soil erosion. He was a charter member of the Jefferson County Soil Conservation District. Wilton and wife Jessie were both members of the Ringling Methodist Church.

Wilton was known for his generosity. During the Great Depres-

sion, when government men killed his livestock to provide enough food and water for the remaining herds, he gave the animals to hungry people. One day he watched a man steal a hog from his lot.

Instead of confronting the man, he told his young son, Don, "We'll watch him. If he takes it home to feed his family, we won't do anything about it." That is what the man did, and the theft was forgotten by Wilton.

Another example of his generosity was in the '30s, during the Dust Bowl when water was scarce.

Howard owned Howard Lake south of Ringling, Okla., one of the very few sources of water in the area. He allowed fellow ranchers to water their stock there, probably saving their lives.

Wilton died after a short illness on April 8, 1949, at age 64. Jessie died July 2, 1962 at age 75. They had six children:

Lawrence Melvin was born in 1911 and died in 1979. He married Hazel Guest of Ryan, Okla. They had no children.

Wilma Ruth was born in 1915 and died in 1983. She married Ollie Ben Lester of Ryan, Okla.,

and they had one son, Joe Ben Lester.

Paul Wilton was born in 1918 and died in 1952. He married Carlene Saunders of Ardmore, Okla., and had five children: Constance Pauline Hargis, Don Randall "Randy," Kelis Goss, Linda Ann Huggard and Nancy Katherine Walker.

Winnie Hazel was born in 1920. She married Earl LeValley. They later divorced and had no children.

Donald Brown was born in 1923 and died in 2011. He married Vella Key Mathers and had four children: Jessie Kay Moore, James Wilton, Dona Lynn Brooks and Steven Donald.

Doris Ann was born in 1927 and died in 2016. She married Grover Worley. They had two children: Howard Wayne and Paul Clifton.

Ironically, both Paul and Melvin died on ranch land in farming accidents.

Next month read more about the Howard Ranch in Part Two: the Don Howard.

Resource: "Ringling, Oklahoma, 100th Anniversary Celebration" by Dona Howard Brooks. ☞



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Summer is here and there's no denying the heat outside! But I've got some options to stay as cool as possible in these warm temps. I am featuring one of my current favorites here, which I just know y'all can relate to! I mean, I laughed out loud reading this tank because I don't know how many gates I've opened and shut and I know you ladies know exactly what I'm talking about! A light weight yellow tank is the perfect option to throw on and go check cows or ride your pony. However I also paired it with this cute cactus kimono if you want to dress it up a little! Add your favorite accessories and head out for a steak dinner; but don't forget to shut the gate!

*Until next time,
Jessica Kader
1 Corinthians 16:14*

UNWRITTEN RULES OF A VETERINARIAN

Fred Rule



Rule (left) with Walter Merrick's ranch manager and son-in-law Billy Suthers in 1970. (Photo courtesy of Fred Rule)



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UNWRITTEN RULES OF A VETERINARIAN

→ → → *Fred Rule*

The phone rings. When Fred Rule, DVM, of Elk City, Okla., answered, the veterinarian of more than 50 years sprang into work-mode. The rancher on the opposite end of the phone had a horse with colic. They began talking about symptoms and scheduling future visits. The veterinarian joked, “I don’t even buy green bananas. I don’t plan that far ahead.”

The spontaneous veterinarian was born in Kansas on Dec. 29, 1939. When he was two years old, the Rule family moved 100 miles west to Ramona, Kan., with a population of 400 people. His father worked in the “implement business” for a John Deere Dealership while his mother stayed home to take care of their five children—Judy, Fred, Janet, Jim and Kim.

An ornery boy, Rule said he always carried a knife and matches. He got a “whooping” on the first day of school in Ramona because he carved his name in the desk and started a fire in the boy’s bathroom, he laughed.

Shortly after, they moved 14 miles to a larger town called Herington, Kan. It was an agricultural- and railroad-based community of 3,000 people, he added. Rule was a smart child, but he never took notes. He was also a gifted athlete particularly in football. After graduating high school, the young athlete enrolled in Kansas State University on a football scholarship. There, the tight end had a “few rude awakenings.”

“When I got up there, I found out that there were a lot of guys who were very fast and very big,” the former football player recalled.

An injury to his left knee sidelined the young athlete, and he focused on earning a bachelor’s degree. The KSU alumnus said “for some reason” he decided to become a veterinarian when he was in eighth grade. Although Rule was raised in town, he was surrounded by farming. It is not that he disliked farming, but he said he always wanted to be a cowboy and work with livestock.

“I always said being a veterinarian was my vocation, but a cowboy is my avocation,” Rule said. “Fortunately, the two have mixed well over the years.”

Rule went to high school with Jack Webb



Rule (left) worked with Walter Merrick for more than 40 years. (Photo courtesy of Fred Rule)

whose father Roy Webb raised quality rodeo horses, which peaked Rule’s interest saying, “That’s how we got in the rodeo business.”

However, his rodeo days were put on hold while he was in veterinary school at KSU. Kansas State University’s Veterinary School was among the elite in the United States at the time. During his six years in veterinary school, the student was exposed to hands-on learning.

“Kansas State was a very unusual school,” Rule began. “At that time, there was not a veterinarian in town in private practice. It was an unwritten law that they didn’t do that.”

The college provided veterinary service to all the surrounding farms and ranches. This allowed Rule and other veterinary students to be exposed to more hands-on experience before

entering the field.

“When we got out of vet school, we could go to a private practice and make them money because we knew how to do it,” he added. “We didn’t need [established veterinarians] to show us how to do a lot of things. We didn’t know how to do everything by a long way, but we could do ordinary procedures without supervision.”

After receiving his DVM in 1964, the graduate moved to Holdenville, Okla. Rule said Oklahoma was known for their high-quality horses at the time, which is what he wanted to specialize in. He worked under established veterinarian Lewis Stiles at his mixed-practice.

Continued on page 34



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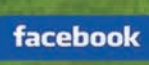


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UNWRITTEN RULES OF A VETERINARIAN

Fred Rule

Continued from page 32

After he received his veterinary degree, Rule decided to get back in the rodeo business. He obtained his Pro Rodeo Cowboy Association card in 1968, where he tried his hand as a team roper and steer wrestler. The rodeo cowboy said he mostly “contributed to the pot.”

“I’d win something every now and then,” he laughed. “I truly enjoyed it, though.”

Meanwhile, he continued to work under Stiles, but there wasn’t enough work in that practice to satisfy the young veterinarian. Rule moved to Frederick, Okla., a few months later to work with Joe Flanigan, DVM, where he found himself in a similar situation.

At the same time, one of his former KSU classmates, Garland Hinkle, was working in Elk City, Okla., in a large practice owned by Bill Lockridge. When Lockridge decided to move to the bluegrass state, Hinkle and another veterinarian took over the practice.

They needed another veterinarian, and Rule moved to western Oklahoma by the fall of 1965. A few years later, another former KSU classmate Gail Anspaugh joined the practice. They eventually bought the other veterinarian’s share of the practice and sold a third of the practice to the third KSU alumni, Anspaugh.

“We probably have been the only three-man practice in the United States who are all classmates who have been together 50 plus years,” the distinguished veterinarian added.

The former classmates later opened a second hospital in Sayre, Okla. Anspaugh specialized in cattle, sheep and pigs, Hinkle focused on both large and small ani-

mals and Rule worked with horses 90 percent of the time. They later hired another veterinarian, Jimmy Fuchs, DVM, for several years.

The veterinarian said moving to Elk City, Okla., was one of the best decisions he made. He wanted to work with good horses and his practice in western Oklahoma opened many doors for the veterinarian including the Beutlers from Elk City, Okla. Bennie and son Rhett Buetler are carrying on the Beutler tradition and are one of the premiere rodeo contract service in the United States, Rule added.

“When I came here, the Beutler Brothers Lynn, Elra and Jake were a big rodeo outfit,” he added. “If you count [Rhett Beutler’s son] Jake, I’m on the fifth generation of Beutlers producing veterinary service. The whole Beutler family are pretty good friends of ours.”

Lynn Beutler was a business man who did not refer to him by name, the veterinarian recalled. Rule recalled an incident in the late ‘60s where Beutler had a bronc that was colicking. When he arrived at the Beutler’s, the business man told the veterinarian, “I’ve got a lot of money spent on this horse.”

The veterinarian put the horse through the chute and treated him. The next day, he could see the horse was not improving, which led Rule to believe the horse had “something shutting him off” where he could not pass anything. Beutler asked the veterinarian what his options were, and Rule said there’s nothing he could do except opening him up to see if he could fix it.

“At that time, our general anesthetic wasn’t worth a flip to tell you the truth,” he added. “I ran him back through the chute,

and I took out a board on the left side down near his flank. I gave him tranquilizer, cleaned him up, blocked him and made an incision in his flank.”

The Elk City, Okla., veterinarian found a fecolith, a large, hard fecal material, in his intestine. Rule extracted the fecolith and closed the wound. The horse never missed a meal after that, he added.

“From then on till the day [Beutler] died, I was Dr. Rule,” the veterinarian laughed.

He went to Beutler Brother Rodeos nearly every weekend, where he competed as a steer wrestler then go back to work. The Elk City, Okla., resident has served as the official veterinarian for the Elk City Rodeo of Champions for more than 40 years.

At the same time, Walter Merrick American Quarter Horse Association Hall of Fame member and horse owner was “in his prime,” Rule explained. Merrick had a ranch at Crawford, Okla., later adding on in Sayre, Okla.

“Of course [Walter Merrick] produced Easy Jet, Jet Smooth and all those horses,” he said. “I had the good fortune to do all the breeding work as well as furnish veterinary service to them. It’s another family that I made good friends with.”

Rule said he had good luck as an equine veterinarian in western Oklahoma. Having Merrick as a client for about 40 years as well as other clients including thoroughbred owner Pete Maxwell allowed him the opportunity to work with the best horses.

“When I came here, this country was full of good horses and good horseman,” Rule added. “I learned more the first couple of

years I was here than I did them good.”

Rule said he has always been involved in the community from school boards to state equine organizations. In the ‘70s, the Oklahoma Horseman Association was instrumental in starting pari-mutuel racing in Oklahoma.

“I remained active in that for years. In fact, I was the president of that for several terms,” he explained. “We were involved in writing the rules of racing and putting together our excellent state-bred program.”

The goal of the organization was to represent all equine breeds. Ultimately, these breeds split off into their own organizations including the Oklahoma Quarter Horse Racing Association and the Thoroughbred Racing Association of Oklahoma, which Rule was on the board for.

After he and his first wife divorced, the Kansas native thought he would not marry again. In the late ‘80s, World Champion steer wrestler, C.R. Boucher invited Rule and fellow friend Joe Phillips to visit in remote Montana.

“Up in that country there were big ranches where they drag calves,” he said. “It was a good way to work calves and kind of enjoyable.”

Rule said they made the trip in the fall where it was very cold one morning. When he got down to the pen, a person who was bundled-up except for their eyes approached the cowboys.

“I couldn’t tell whether it was a male or female,” he explained. “They were just so bundled up and wanted to know if we wanted some coffee and yeah, we sure would take some. It was the first time I drank coffee with peeper-

mint schnapps in it at 9 o'clock in the morning."

That bundled-up person happened to be Marlene Hawks, who was raised on a large, remote ranch in east-central Montana. She later moved south to the Sooner State in 1990 and married the veterinarian the following year. They have five kids from previous marriages—Justin, Toby, Jeff, Julie and Jacquie.

In 2014, the PRCA Gold Card carrying member was named the Zoetis PRCA Veterinarian of the Year. He was nominated for this prestigious award by former NFR qualifier Larry Dawson and stock contractor Bennie Beutler. With more than 50 years spent as a veterinarian, Rule has seen many changes in the veterinary field including technology and the male to female ratio.

"I didn't get to see the best of it, technology-wise, because now the equine world has access to the same things that the human world has," Rule said.

The male to female veterinarian ratio has changed since Rule first started practicing. In an industry that was once dominated by males, today females outnumber males three-to-one in veterinary schools, he explained.

Rule also said the environment in which veterinarians practice has changed as far as the law. The distinguished veterinarian said they did not worry about liability, but he said that is changing.

"We just recently, a little over a year ago, because of health issues amongst my partners and myself, shut our hospitals down," he explained.

Rule still breeds horses with partner Jose Acosta, who worked for Merrick for 22 years. The honored veterinarian said he still enjoys practicing veterinary medicine.

He was going to quit practicing, but his clients and friends "won't let me." Rule said the area needs an equine veterinarian, and he will continue to fill that role. 🐾



Rule received his veterinary degree from Kansas State University in 1964. (Photo by Laci Jones)

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By Lacey Newlin



BANG BANG —GRILLED CHICKEN—

Total Time: 30 minutes

Servings: 4-5

Ingredients

3-4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts

Cut into bite-size pieces

Olive oil

Bang Bang Sauce Ingredients

2 tablespoons mayo

4 tablespoons sour cream

1 teaspoon dijon mustard

1/3 cup Thai sweet chili sauce


1/2 teaspoon sriracha sauce

1 teaspoon honey

Directions

In a small bowl, whisk together all the ingredients for the bang bang sauce until evenly incorporated. Put the chopped chicken breast into a larger zip-close bag.

Add half of the bang bang sauce and seal. Shake bag to fully coat and refrigerate the marinated chicken for at least 15 minutes. Preheat the grill and lightly brush with olive oil. Transfer the chicken to the hot grill and cook about 4 to 5 minutes before flipping and cooking an additional 4 to 5 minutes.

Remove from grill and plate over a bed of rice, fresh vegetables or whatever you prefer. Drizzle with sauce or use for dipping. You can also skewer the chicken as kabobs serve on the skewer with the sauce on the side. 

WHERE THE PAVED ROAD ENDS

LOVE IS IN THE AIR

BY BETH WATKINS

As the stock trailer was backing in, the ladies from the pasture began to gather near the gate. You could tell excitement was in the air. They were restless. After four months of living on their own, our mama cows were relieved to smell musk in the air. Their new Romeo had arrived.

The sound of his anticipation was just exciting the girls even more. The song “Let’s Get It On” was bellowing out of nowhere, as the door slid open, the stud muffin strutted out of the trailer, looked around and sniffed the air. I heard a few heifers gasp, but a couple of the older ladies looked at each other and went back to grazing. I guess they had seen his kind before.

He went straight to the highest point on the pond dam and began to serenade the ladies. You could tell by the smile on his face he was impressed as he checked out the blondes, the redheads and the brunettes. He started to mingle, introducing himself to each one with a little nudge from his nose. I could tell right away that this little dickens wasn’t much for romancing.

Even though I had already picked out the name Romeo, it was clear the name “Little Jimmy” was a better fit, LJ for short, and compared to the older mama cows, he was short. I’m amazed at how peaceful the herd seems to be with all these ladies and just one man.

In the two-legged world, there would be all kinds of drama! In a small town the dating pool has a limited amount of “fish” so it’s very common for a happily married couple to run into another happily married couple who at one

time may have dated each other’s counterparts.

When I first moved to our little town, I was intimidated by the fact my husband had lived here all his life, and exes that I have never laid eyes on still reside in the area. When I say exes I’m including anyone he’s ever dated, married or just took to dinner. When I married my late husband, we were very young.

He knew the boys I had dated, and I knew the few girls he had dated. But, when you marry a handsome, loving man who is 50, you know there is a plethora of females in his past. I was a little shocked to hear the statement, “I dated my wife’s cousin, once” and after seeing the look on my face, it was quickly clarified by saying, “She wasn’t my wife at the time!”

Unlike our mama cows, I have a small green jealous streak that runs real close to the surface. So you can imagine how motivated I was to learn how to cut my husband’s hair when I found out one of his very attractive exes was still his barber.

Every time we are out in public and a beautiful woman speaks to him or lets a look linger, I look him square in the eye and he knows what I’m thinking and answers my look with a chuckle and a “No, I never dated her!”

Back home, you could go to the grocery store and never run into anyone you knew. But, it wasn’t always that way. Having graduated, married, raised children and owned a business there, our life grew with the town. The small town had disappeared with my youth. During my high school years our little town was a mile



long with one stop light, where dragging Main, Friday night lights and bonfires were a way of life. It never occurred to me until I was bringing G.W. home to meet my friends that in high school, my dating pool was just as small as his was.

After 33 years of marriage, those high school friends have all settled down and are more like family now. On the road headed to Owasso, Okla., to meet my beloved family of friends, I chose this time to inform him of the history of the people he was about to meet.

As I began telling the story of how my first husband’s ex-girlfriend became his buddy’s ex-wife, how I broke up with my high school sweetheart because he was spending time with a beautiful blonde from another town, which enabled me to go out on a date with my future husband, that I

married five months later. I could tell by the smirk on G.W.’s face, I was going to have to adjust my attitude about his past.

During dinner it was clear that my new husband was accepted as part of the gang. In fact, one “brother” and G.W. hit it off like they had known each other forever, which is good because over the years his beautiful blonde wife has become one of my closest friends. It’s really just a flat out privilege for me and her to watch those two rowdy, country boys have fun.

Our knights in shining armors are really just a couple of ball cap wearing rednecks that we wouldn’t trade for anything. I guess it’s just like the feeling LJ has when all his mama cows are lying around under the shade trees and he’s watching over them from the top of the hill. Whether you’ve got four legs or just two, contentment is the word. ☞

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Views from MT. SCOTT

By Rhonda Shephard

Mount Scott, in the Wichita Mountains, stands Oklahoma's second tallest mountain at 2,464 feet. From the rocky promontories of mountains created 540 million years ago in the Cambrian period, a visitor views the best of the recreational opportunities in its shadow: Comanche Nation, Wichita National Wildlife Refuge, Medicine Park and Lake Lawtonka. After you visit this bird's eye view, come down and explore. The road to the top is located north of Lawton, Okla., and Ft. Sill.

Wichita National Wildlife Refuge

This national treasure founded in 1901 is the oldest and second largest refuge in the country. The area represents unique animals and plants, but it is rich in Native Americans, Spanish explorers, and American settler's history.

The 59,000-acre refuge provides more than 29,000 acres open to the public with the remainder private range for 1,200 species of plants, mammals, fish, and birds. Specifically, the Wichita National Wildlife Refuge has 240 species of birds and 50 species of mammals, according to the Wichita National Wildlife Refuge website. Visitors can also view bison, elk and Longhorn cattle at the refuge.

"The grasslands are dominated by little bluestem, with Indian grass, big bluestem, switchgrass, sideoats grama, hairy grama, and blue grama having a large percentage of the overall species composition," according to the Wichita National Wildlife Refuge website. "The forested areas are dominated by post oak, blackjack oak and eastern red cedar."

Special tours are available

when arranged. Photography, wildlife viewing, birdwatching, fishing, hiking, geocaching and biking list a few of the activities found on the refuge. Rock climbing is considered some of the best among visitors in the state of Oklahoma.

Hunting by lottery allow sportsman to thin the populations of elk and deer to promote healthy growths. The refuge headquarters can be reached at 580-429-3222 or via email at quinton_smith@fws.gov. The headquarters is open each day from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and is located at 32 Refuge Headquarters, Indianahoma, Okla., 73552.

Wichita National Center

Open seven days per week, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., the center provides maps of trails, brochures on activities and special exhibits. The center makes arrangements and reservations. Contact visitor centers for the full range of services, amenities and location. For general information, call 580-429-2197 and call 580-429-2197 for tour reservation.

Comanche Nation

The Comanche Nation headquarters resides in Lawton, Okla. The Nation's goal provides services and cultural preservation in language, art and traditions. The Comanche Nation offers activities and educational pursuits to learn and enjoy.

The Comanche Museum reveals the undeniable "Lord of the Plain" in a series of displays, interactive exhibits, collections and art. The visitor learns about Comanche life in history, military, and religion of the people who controlled Comancheria. Located at 791 NW Ferris Avenue in Law-

ton, the museum is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and closed Sunday. Admission into the museum is free. For additional information call 580-353-0404 or email info@comanchemuseum.com.

The nation promotes and runs three casinos including the Comanche Nation Casino, Red River Casino and Hotel, and Comanche Star Casino. Visit the Casino page for directions and amenities at www.comanchestarcasino.com or call 877-844-0228.

The Comanche Nations waterpark, 12 acres of wave pools, slides, kiddie areas, concessions, and beach area, provides the most fun under the summer sun falling on Mt. Scott. The park is open Monday through Wednesday 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Thursday through Saturday 10:30 to 8 p.m. On Sundays the water park is open 12 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Located at 501 NE Lawrie Tatum road on I -44 and Gore Avenue, it costs \$15 per person. Everybody under three years and over 65 is free. For additional information, call 580-353-6129.

Medicine Park

This unique cobblestone community, established in 1901, makes the perfect headquarters for your exploration of the views from Mt.Scott. Established as a pre-statehood playground for the rich, the small community offers a variety of lodging options. Stroll along Medicine Creek or Bath Lake, enjoy unique sculpture, shop in art galleries or find the perfect souvenir purchase.

Make plans for dining at the century old Plantation restaurant, designated watering hole of

politician and gangsters. Restored in 2008 to much of its original glamour, you almost expect a flapper to arrive in a Stutz bearcat and saunter into the main lobby. Plantation Restaurant information, call 580-529-6262 for hours and reservations.

Few towns in Oklahoma can claim a specific vibe; Medicine Park can. Stop by the Medicine Park Aquarium and Natural Science center for the best opportunity to check out the biology and marine species and extend the educational opportunities and eco-tourism. Medicine Park is located North of I-44 near Lawton, Okla. Visit www.mpmns.org/medicineparkaquo.html and www.medicinpark.com/explore for additional information.

Lake Lawtonka

This lovely Lawton community lake offers two square miles of water fun-filled opportunity. Camping, swimming, fishing, boating and skiing are available on more than 2,900 acres.

There are fully equipped and rustic tent camping if the camper desires, with showers and toilets, a gas station and marina nearby. The best information for three campgrounds, fees, and times is the City of Lawton located north of Lawton on Highway 58. For additional information, call 580-529-2663 or email mrroberts@cityof.lawton.ok.us.

As the end of summer draws near, southwestern Oklahoma has a lot to offer as far as recreation is concerned. It would take several days to map out a trip to explore this grand area. Take the time to explore the history of the Comanche Nation and take in the view from the top of Mt. Scott. ☞



(Top to bottom) Mt. Scott, featured in the background of a waterfall, is Oklahoma's second tallest mountain. Mt. Scott is located in southwest Oklahoma and is a part of the Wichita Mountains. (Courtesy photos)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AUGUST

AUGUST 1-SEPT. 16

CHISHOLM TRAIL 150TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBIT, Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center. Enid, OK 73644. Celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Chisholm Trail with an exciting new exhibit at the Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center in Enid. Step inside the J.E. and L.E. Mabree Foundation Gallery and learn about the greatest of cattle trails. Guests can also immerse themselves in the stories of the Trail as they sit around the camp fire. Visitors can enjoy a lonely cowboy's tune while standing on the former grand ole trail. Visit www.csrhc.org for more information.

AUGUST 2

SOLA SALE, Sola Livestock Market. Ada, OK 74821. Come on out every Wednesday at 9 a.m., where we will be selling calves, yearlings, bulls, pairs and cows. For additional information, visit www.solallc.com or call 580-436-5033.

AUGUST 2

ENLOW RANCH AUCTION, Enlow Ranch. Tulsa, OK 74131. Come on out to our monthly auction. Enlow auction service has more than 50 years of experience. Call 918-224-7676 for more information.

AUGUST 2-5

OLD SETTLERS' PICNIC, Humphrey Park. Velma, OK 73491. The Old Settlers' Picnic in Velma has been bringing summer fun to small town Oklahoma for over 100 years. It is known as the longest continuously running free rodeo in America. During four days of free family entertainment, everyone can enjoy the Ranch Rodeo with team roping, a steer tipping contest, a rodeo parade and much more. For more information, call 580-444-3393.



RUSH SPRINGS WATERMELON FESTIVAL

AUGUST 2-6

WORLD WIDE PAINT HORSE CONGRESS, Tulsa Expo Square. Tulsa, OK 74114. Come see horses and riders of all ages and skill levels compete in a variety of events at the World Wide Paint Horse Congress at Tulsa Expo Square. The second-largest American Paint Horse Association-approved show in the United States, this annual event brings together the most skilled Paint horses from all across the country to compete in Western, English, speed and ranch riding disciplines. Don't miss any of the riding, showmanship and pole-bending at this event that is fun for the entire family. For more information, visit www.wpphc.com.

AUGUST 3-5

SEILING IPRA & KPRA RODEO, Flying W Arena. Seiling, OK 73663. Bring the whole family out to the annual Seiling Open Rodeo for three days of exciting events. Call 580-922-1636 for more information.



WILL ROGERS & WILEY POST FLY-IN

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AUGUST 4-12

AQHYA WORLD YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP QUARTER HORSE SHOW, *Oklahoma State Fairgrounds, Oklahoma City, OK 73107*. The AQHYA World Youth Championship Quarter Horse Show arrives in Oklahoma City. This is one of the top youth events in the country. Witness as more than 1,200 horses from all 50 states and half a dozen countries compete in several equestrian events including cutting, reining, jumping and much more. The event also boasts a free trade show complete with more than 60 vendors including equestrian products, home decor and more. Visit www.aqha.com/youthworld for additional information.

AUGUST 5

PAWNEE OLD TIME SATURDAY NIGHT CRUZE-IN, *Downtown Pawnee, Pawnee, OK 74058*. The Old Time Saturday Night in Pawnee welcomes anything with wheels to its car show and exciting celebration. For more information, visit www.cityof-pawnee.com.

AUGUST 9-12

LAWTON RANGERS PRCA RODEO, *LO Ranch Arena, Lawton, OK 73501*. The Lawton Rangers PRCA Rodeo is one of the top 50 rodeos in the U.S. Over 400 of the most skilled cowboys and cowgirls in the country will compete in tie-down roping, team roping, steer wrestling, bareback bronc riding, saddle bronc riding, bull riding and barrel racing. Grab your cowboy hat and head out to the Lawton Rangers PRCA Rodeo each night to watch edge-of-your-seat rodeo action, as well as live entertainment. Admire the well-groomed horses, the high-spirited bulls and the participants who will showcase their abilities in this four-day competition. For more information, visit www.lawtonrangers.com.

AUGUST 10-12

PAWNEE BILL MEMORIAL RODEO, *Lakeside Arena, Pawnee, OK 74058*. The Pawnee Bill Memorial Rodeo is IPRA sanctioned with seven standard events including bareback bronc riding, bull riding, saddle bronc riding, calf roping, steer wrestling, cowgirl barrel racing and team roping. Come for a weekend of family entertainment and exciting rodeo action with performances held nightly. Crowd favorites at this annual event include a wild horse race, wild cow milking, wild sheep riding and bull poker. For more information visit www.cityofpawnee.com.

AUGUST 10-12

CIMARRON RIVER STAMPEDE RODEO, *Waynoka Rodeo Grounds & Downtown, Waynoka, OK 73860*. Come out for an evening of rodeo excitement at Waynoka's annual Cimarron River Stampede Rodeo. The three-day rodeo event will include bareback riding, calf roping, saddle bronc riding, team roping, bull riding, breakaway roping, steer wrestling and barrel racing. For more information, call **580-334-2698**.

AUGUST 11-12

PBR TULSA INVITATIONAL, *BOK Center, Tulsa, OK 74114*. Come on out to the PBR Tulsa Invitational on Aug. 11-12 for a fun event for the family. For tickets and more, call **405-894-4200**.

AUGUST 11-12

OKMULGEE INVITATIONAL RODEO, *Creek Nation Omniplex Arena, Okmulgee, OK 74447*. Okmulgee's Invitational Rodeo is the nation's oldest African-American rodeo, one of the state's longest running rodeos and one of the largest African-American sporting events in the nation. There will also be arts and craft booths. For more information, call **918-758-7044**.



OKLAHOMA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION RANGE ROUND UP

AUGUST 12

RUSH SPRINGS WATERMELON FESTIVAL, *Jeff Davis Park, Rush Springs, OK 73082*. Each year on the second Saturday in August, the Rush Springs Watermelon Festival celebrates the local crop of watermelons with watermelon-themed activities and plenty of old-fashioned, family friendly entertainment for all.

AUGUST 12

WILL ROGERS & WILEY POST FLY-IN, *Will Rogers Birthplace Ranch, Oologah, OK 74017*. Come watch more than 100 small aircraft fly-in and land on the 2,000-ft grass airstrip on the Will Rogers Birthplace Ranch, located just east of Oologah and bordering Oologah Lake. This event celebrates Will Rogers and Wiley Post's many contributions to aviation. Attractions include children's activities, a Cherokee storyteller, a classic car show, food vendors and free tours of the Will Rogers Birthplace home and Amish barn. Call **918-341-0719** for more information.

AUGUST 18-19

OK WESTERN HERITAGE DAYS RODEO, *Bristow Sports Complex, Bristow, OK 74010*. For a fun-filled weekend, you cannot miss out on the OK Western Heritage Days Rodeo on Aug. 18-19. Events include bareback bronc riding, bull riding, barrel racing, steer wrestling, team roping and more. This ACRA/IPRA-sanctioned event is a great rodeo to attend for all ages. For more information, call **918-297-8979**.

AUGUST 25-26

OKLAHOMA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION RANGE ROUND UP, *Lazy E Arena, Guthrie, OK 73044*. At the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association Range Round Up, 12 different ranch teams from around the state compete in six events that attempt to encompass ranch life. This exciting competition at the legendary Lazy E Arena in Guthrie, gives spectators an idea of what goes into running a full-fledged ranch. Visit www.okcattlemen.org for more information.

NIC'S GRILL

OKLAHOMA CITY

By Laci Jones

Not long ago, a friend of mine recommended a hole-in-the-wall burger joint in the heart of Oklahoma City. Many Oklahomans claim Nic's Grill burgers are the best in the state.

The burger joint was rated among the top 10 burger joints in the United States in 2015, according to TripAdvisor.

I heard the restaurant was small, but I didn't realize how quaint Nic's Grill is until I walked through the metal door on Pennsylvania Avenue. Nic's Grill seats about 17 people with some standing room. The restaurant had only two tables with chairs and the rest were barstools.

Knowing there would be a possibility of standing in line to get a taste of these famous onion burgers, I arrived thirty minutes after the doors opened on a Tuesday morning at 11 a.m. Fortunately, I did not have to wait when I found a seat at the butcher block bar.

It was cramped sitting elbow-to-elbow with the other customers, but it oddly didn't feel claustrophobic. While waiting to order, I made small talk with some of the locals. When I asked how often they eat at Nic's Grill, one of the men joked, "We don't come here often, just Monday through Friday."

Sitting at the bar gave me a front row seat to all the action at the grill. Two people were working the entire restaurant—one manning the grill while the other took care of the customers. The small grill had a large pile of onions caramelizing along with sliced jalapenos, mushrooms and bacon.

Their menu was displayed on



a television above the food preparation. Nic's Grill had a limited menu, but if you are famous for burgers, why serve anything else? Among their menu items is a chicken fried steak dinner with a chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes, gravy and a vegetable, but that meal will have to wait for another time.

I ordered their cheese and everything burger, which is exactly what it sounds like, a burger with cheese, lettuce, tomato, pickles, caramelized onions, and mustard or mayo. Diners can add extras like jalapeños, mushrooms and bacon for an additional charge. I watched the cook throw several beef patties down on the grill and heard the most beautiful sound in the world—the sizzle of meat on a flat-topped grill.

Sipping on my Dr. Pepper, I waited with anticipation as the

cook flipped the burgers and topped them with the already caramelized onions, cheese and the top bun. He turned to each of us to ask if we wanted any extras or exclusions, but I opted against anything extra. In fact, I was impressed he kept track of which burger excluded tomatoes and which had bacon.

After an eternity, which was actually only ten minutes, the waiter slid the burger basket in front of me. The caramelized onions were spilling over the burger. The burger was served with curly shoestring fries and a fork.

The fries were just as they should be—crispy, curly and salty. I shoved up my sleeves and took a bite of the giant burger. It was a delicious, greasy burger that hit the spot. The caramelized onions complimented the burger, which was crispy on the outside and juicy

in the middle. I cannot complain about the vast amount of cheese on the burger either.

Once I finished the first half of the burger, I was proud that I manhandled the giant burger when the local said, "Most people just use the fork because it's easier." While it felt odd to eat a burger with a fork, it did make it easier.

This joint is cash-only, but one of the locals said an ATM is located just across the street. They are open 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday at 1201 N. Pennsylvania Ave., Oklahoma City, OK 73107.

I can see why there is usually a line of people wrapped around the block. If you ever need to have a carb overload, Nic's Grill is the place to go. The locals are friendly and the food is amazing. Like them on Facebook at Nic's Grill or call them at 405-524-0999. ☞



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GRAND LADY OF COUNTRY MUSIC

Pretty Miss Norma Jean

By Jan Sikes

It is a documented fact that some people are born with a natural ability and desire to sing, and Norma Jean Beasler is a perfect example. She brought that ability with her when she came kicking and screaming into this world in Wellston, Okla., in 1938. She started her education in a small country schoolhouse, but around 1945, they moved to Oklahoma City.

She recalls that she began singing as a child. "Living in the country, we didn't have any entertainment so we had to make our own," Beasler said.

And those around her quickly recognized her talent. She began singing at radio stations around Oklahoma City and by the age of twelve had landed her own show on KLPR-AM after winning a talent contest.

I asked about her parents, as it struck me they must have been willing to help her launch such an early music career.

"Well, my parents didn't play much music, she replied. "My mom played a little piano. But, they loved music and supported what I wanted to do. They liked to hear me sing and wanted me to sing. They allowed me to do a lot of things a lot of parents wouldn't."

While Norma Jean's parents couldn't afford to buy her a guitar, she wanted one so badly that she sold her bicycle and bought one from Sears & Roebuck. Through her growing-up years, she admired Kitty Wells and cites her as her biggest influence. But, she attended Capitol Hill High School in Oklahoma City along with country music star Wanda Jackson. They became lifelong friends and both girls sang at KLPR.

In 1955, Beasler landed a regular spot on Red Foley's Ozark Jubilee show. This laid the foundation for her early music career. And it was Red Foley who started introducing her as Pretty Miss Norma Jean on the show. That name stuck.

While on the Ozark Jubilee, she signed with Columbia and produced some great chart records. It was on this show that she first met and performed with Porter Wagoner. From there she moved to Nashville, Tenn., hoping



Norma Jean Beasler was born in Wellston, Okla. (Courtesy photo)

to expand her career. And she wasn't disappointed.

"Porter Wagoner invited me to audition for a TV show he was about to launch," she recalled. "I passed the audition and I was a part

of the Porter Wagoner Show for seven years. I have to give a lot of credit to Porter for my success. Some of the best times of my life were when I worked with him and the band."

See LADY page 47

LADY

I had to ask if she wrote any of her own songs. She gave Porter Wagoner credit for picking great songs for her to sing and record.

“He was a master at it,” Beasler said. “He could hear a song and know if it would match my voice. We never recorded much together. Our voices didn’t blend well. We were too close to the same pitch, but he always picked my songs. So, no, I didn’t write.”

In 1963, the singer released her first single on RCA Victor, “Let’s Go All the Way.” The song peaked at number eleven on the Billboard country charts and garnered a Grammy nomination in 1965. She released an album of the same name which spawned two more Top 40 hits, “I’m a Walking Advertisement (For the Blues)” followed by “Put Your Arm Around Her.” Because of the success of the singles and her immense talent, she was invited to join the Grand Ole Opry.

And, she’s never looked back.

She later released a self-titled album on RCA that hit the country charts at number three. The first single from the album, “Go Cat Go,” became a Top 10 hit, peaking at number eight.

Two more singles were released from that album including “I Wouldn’t Buy a Used Car from Him,” written by the legendary Harlan Howard, which also made the Top Ten list. This established her as one of the most popular female country singers of the era. Fans appreciated the implicit humor in some of her recordings.

Beasler’s biggest hit came in 1966. It was an unusual recording with Bobby Bare and Liz Anderson, “The Game of Triangles,” a wife-husband-other-woman drama that hit number five on the Billboard chart and earned the trio a Grammy nomination.

Throughout her career, Beasler has done it all. She’s performed overseas in many different countries. She’s been featured at Carnegie Hall and Madison Square Garden, received a Grammy nomination and shared the stage with most of the top performers of that era. In the late ‘80s, she moved to Branson where she enjoyed performing with the Grand Ladies of the Grand Ole Opry—Jean Shepard, Jan Howard, Jeanne Pruett and Jeannie Seely, for many years. When I asked her to name one fellow artist and one achievement that stands




In the late ‘80s, Norma Jean moved to Branson, Mo., where she performed with the ladies from the Grand Ole Opry. (Courtesy photo)

out above all the rest through the years, she didn’t hesitate with a response.

“Well, I’ve always been so fond of Marty Robbins because he helped me get my first recording contract with Columbia,” the music artist explained. “He was a dear friend. Probably my most fulfilling achievement was getting asked to join the Grand Ole Opry because I’d wanted to be on it since I was 10. And, I was

there as a regular performer for many years. It was a wonderful thing. It was family. For a kid like me who grew up in Oklahoma, it was like I’d died and went to heaven.”

Over her career, she has recorded 31 albums along with singles too numerous to count. Even though she now makes her home in the small quiet town of Brady, Texas, she still considers Oklahoma her home. 

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101 Ranch

FOLLOW THE LONG, DUSTY TRAIL

By Laci Jones

Where the rubble of a great ranch near Ponca City, Okla., remains, was once the site of America's Largest Diversified Farm. Before 101 was branded on the first steer, before audience members were captivated by the 101 Ranch Wild West Show, before silent westerns were filmed, the story begins with one Kentuckian.

The patriarch of the 101 Ranch, Colonel George Washington "G.W." Miller was born in Lincoln County, Ky. in February 1841, but some historical documents detail his birth in 1842. His father, George Miller's alcohol abuse eventually led to his divorce from Almira Fish Miller. G.W., his brother Walter Miller and his mother Almira Fish Miller went to live with her parents on their plantation east of Crab Orchard, Ky.

"In his younger days, G.W. was raised on a small plantation," said Joe Glaser, secretary, treasurer and historian of the 101 Ranch Old Timers Association, Inc. "That is what he was familiar with."

He was raised by his maternal grandfather, John Fish and was raised with the values of the South. The young boy learned about growing crops, hunting animals and raising livestock, but he was particularly fascinated with mules, according to Michael Wallis in "Real Wild West."

When the Civil War began in 1861, Kentucky officially remained a neutral state, but many Kentuckians enlisted as a Union and Confederate. As a man of the South, G.W. likely fought for the Confederate Army, but "little is known of G.W. Miller's war re-

cord," according to Wallis.

After the Civil War concluded, the 24-year-old married his step-sister and second cousin Mary Anne "Molly" Carson in Louisville, Ky., on Jan. 9, 1866.

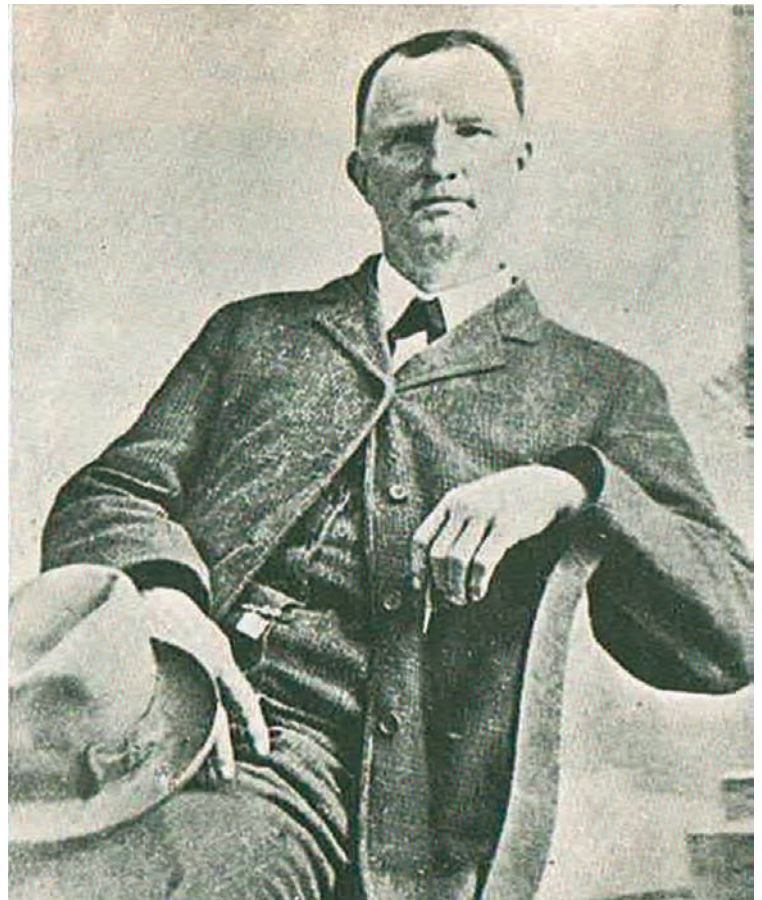
"They were perfectly matched," wrote granddaughter Alma Miller England in the book 'The 101 Ranch.' "He was a rugged Kentuckian of tall and powerful frame—every inch of him pure American. She was a wholesome motherly woman, handsome, and the perfect complement of such a man. He was good natured but of a volcanic temper while she was genial and jolly."

Their marriage began with managing his grandfather Fish's Kentucky plantation. However, G.W. found it difficult to return the plantation to its former glory during Reconstruction. At the time, many displaced Southerners were heading West to start anew.

"G.W. was very disgruntled," Glaser explained. "He didn't like carpetbaggers and their labor was gone. There was no way to raise a crop and make a living."

With opportunity for a new beginning, G.W. sold his share of the Fish plantation. He, his pregnant wife and children—Wilkes Booth Miller, who was named by the infamous John Wilkes Booth, and Joseph Carson Miller, headed to California.

The Miller family, along with a former farm hand and Molly's brother, arrived via railroad in St. Louis in 1870. They ferried across the Mississippi River, loaded in a covered wagon and headed southwest, following the Arkansas and Indian Territory border. While he originally set his



G.W. Miller was born near Crab Orchard, Ky., in 1841. (Courtesy photo)

sights on the western horizon, he saw opportunity for a large ranch in the prairie land.

"When they got to Newtonia, Mo., they stayed the winter because it was too late to head west by wagon trail," Glaser added.

Newtonia, Mo., was a town near the Indian Territory with a population of 200 people. G.W. later decided to make Newtonia their permanent residence instead of continuing their voyage to California.

Their third son, John Fish Miller was born in spring 1870, but their first son Wilkes Booth

Miller died later that year in August. He was transported and buried in the family plot near Crab Orchard, Ky.

Despite the tragedy, G.W. purchased land outside of town, where he grew corn, tobacco, oats, barley, sorghum and wheat. They opened a general store, Miller & Carson in Newtonia as another source of income. The general store and grocery was managed by Molly and her brother George Carson.

"He talked to a lot of the cowboys who had driven cattle up
See 101 page 50

from Texas and they told him all the places where they would sell cattle to him,” Glaser said.

The town was dependent on the hog market, which interested G.W. The entrepreneur learned 100 pounds of bacon or ham could be traded for a Longhorn steer in Texas. He began trading items for as many hogs as he could acquire. He butchered the hogs and cured the meat with the intention of selling the meat in Texas in the spring.

In February 1871, G.W. loaded more than 20,000 pounds of hog meat in 10 large wagons. The details of the first trip along the Chisholm Trail were written in 14-year-old James D. Rainwater’s

shook hands, G.W. got the better deal of trading 50 pounds of hog meat for a full-grown Longhorn steer.

Before leaving San Saba County, the cattle were identified by age and brand by the county recorder and county treasurer. G.W. hired more cowboys to make the drive north with 400 Longhorn steers.

While on the trail, a stampede occurred on Easter Sunday 1871 during a storm. This account was written in “The 101 Ranch” by Ellsworth Collings and Alma Miller England:

“The herd did stampede in the face of the storm and most of the horses stampeded with them, carrying their riders away. Colonel

ming when it felt its front feet touch the ground. He dismounted, and the horse caught him between his feet, almost killing him. The 30-year-old managed to grab the horse’s tail and was pulled to safety when the horse swam to shore.

The outfit continued past Okmulgee, Okla., and through Baxter Springs, Kan. The cattle were then shipped to slaughterhouses, ending their four-month cattle drive, but it would not be their last.

While the rest of the family resided in Newtonia, Mo., the cattle rancher leased “his first real cattle ranch” in 1871 from the Quapaw Indians south of Baxter Springs, Kan., near present day

trails.

However, \$2,000 worth of gold was stolen on their second drive to Texas. The following events were written in Rainwater’s diary:

“Miller showed one of the boys that much money in gold, and also he showed this same man where he hid it. Two days afterward when Miller looked for the money it was gone. We went on to San Saba, got our cattle and on the way back we again camped at the same spot where the money was stolen.

“The next morning we had a trial, the hats of all the boys were placed on the ground near a sack of shelled corn. All the boys were sent away from camp, each with a grain of corn, and returning he

“[G.W. MILLER] WAS A RUGGED KENTUCKIAN OF TALL AND POWERFUL FRAME—EVERY INCH OF HIM PURE AMERICAN. [MOLLY MILLER] WAS A WHOLESOME MOTHERLY WOMAN, HANDSOME, AND THE PERFECT COMPLEMENT OF SUCH A MAN. HE WAS GOOD NATURED BUT OF A VOLCANIC TEMPER WHILE SHE WAS GENIAL AND JOLLY.”

-Alma Miller England

diary.

The outfit traveled through Arkansas and Indian Territory—passing through the site of the Civil War’s Pea Ridge battleground. They traveled through Van Buren, Ark., Fayetteville, Ark., and Fort Smith, Ark., before entering Indian Territory.

They passed through areas that would become McAlester, Okla., and Atoka, Okla. Also crossing the Red River at Colbert’s Ferry, they continued through Sherman, Texas, Ft. Worth and Brownwood, Texas before arriving in San Saba County.

San Saba County, Texas was a haven for former Confederate soldiers, cowboys and Indians. After they arrived in central Texas, G.W. met with Riley Harkey, who was a notable cattle rancher in San Saba, Texas.

After they made a deal and

Miller, Carson and Rainwater, who was riding a trained pony, held the herd eventually and continued to do so until 11 o’clock that night, when the cattle were finally quieted down. In the morning as the cattle were leaving their beds to graze along the trail, they were counted by Colonel Miller who found not a head missing.”

For his efforts, Rainwater received a pay increase, a black and white two-year-old steer, a pair of pants and an overcoat. The newly 15-year-old said it was the “first time in my life that anyone, who wasn’t any kin to me, had given me anything.”

After they crossed the North Fork of the Canadian River in Indian Territory, G.W. had a near-death experience when the outfit crossed a deep tributary creek, according to Collings. The horse G.W. was riding stopped swim-

Miami, Okla.

“When G.W. first started, he got acquainted with a cowboy from Texas named Lee Kokernut,” Glaser added. “G.W. adopted the LK brand until he came up with the 101.”

Kokernut was a rancher originally from Gonzales, Texas. G.W. saw the LK brand on many cattle coming from Texas to Baxter Springs, Kan., and saw an opportunity for a partnership.

With this new partnership, G.W. continued to make cattle-buying trips to Texas. Instead of carrying hog meat to San Saba, Texas, G.W. carried gold, as paper money was considered worthless to the Texans after the Civil War. According to Wallis, the 101 Ranch patriarch was pleased because a \$6 steer would sell for \$3 worth of gold. Plus, gold was easier to transport across the long

was to place the grain in the hat of the man he thought guilty.


“The result was that all the corn was put in one man’s hat—we all suspected the same fellow. This man picked up his hat, looked at the corn, shook it out, put on his hat, got on his horse and rode away, and I presume he is riding yet.”

When G.W. arrived in Newtonia, Mo., after a long cattle drive, he learned his son, John Fish Miller died and was buried next to Wilkes Booth Miller in Kentucky. After the loss of his third son, his focus turned primarily on his cattle empire.

Next month, read the next article about the 101 Ranch.

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DRONES FOR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

By Russell Graves

The feeling is scary and amazing all at the same time. Within minutes of my new unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), or drone, arriving at my rural home north of Childress, Texas, I have it unboxed and ready for flight.

Using technology not even available just a few years ago, I held the remote controller in my hands while I looked at my phone that's attached to the controller. With a wireless connection, I can see on my phone what the UAV's camera sees, and while the craft is still on the ground, I'm enthralled.

Starting the drone, the props instantly whir to life. While the craft idles, I go over my mental checklist on how to make it fly. Taking a deep breath and with a bit of nervousness, I accelerated the craft.

Dust wafts from beneath it as it escapes the bounds of gravity for the first time under my control. In flying, altitude in an asset, so I accelerate the craft to climb and clear of any obstructions. Within a couple of seconds, it's 100 feet above my front yard and hovering. Looking at the drone and then back at my iPhone, I see my house and yard in a way I've never seen it before.

The way to learn to walk is to take baby steps—the same as flying a drone. My first baby step in learning to fly was to travel linearly—straight away and straight back.

As I fly, I can see my property in an intimate way that I've never seen before. Every tree and gully is clearly visible in astounding detail. I've flown over the place

in a helicopter and airplane before, but I've never been in control of the craft. The ability to fly so low and see the ground below in such intricate detail is empowering. Before long, I've flown and photographed my whole property and built a cache of photos that I can analyze once I'm done flying.

Brief History of Drones

UAV's have been around for a while and have been used since the dawn of flight. As the mechanical age matured, the military began to perfect radio controlled technologies, and UAV's were used almost exclusively for military uses. At the dawn of the 21st century, their use became more high profile as the technology advanced to the point where images were streamed from battlefield environments.

Over time their use perfected from almost strictly surveillance to more and more tactical roles as they now have the ability to be flown remotely and deploy armaments. Today, the United States Air Force flies three times as many UAV's as they do manned vehicles.

Like many technologies, drones eventually trickled into the civilian marketplace. Today, they are integrated into our society as retailers look to ways to use them for deliveries, and other uses are maturing at a fast pace. Amazing, considering just a few years ago few had considered the technology for consumer use.

Less than five years ago, all of that changed when companies like DJI and Parrot began coupling the technologies needed to make small, unmanned aerial vehicles available for the everyday consumer.



An estimated one million UAV's were sold in the United States in 2015. (Photo by Russell Graves)

Today, these small units are packed with technology. Capable of both controlled and autonomous flight, today's consumer drones pack features such as global positioning guidance systems, broadcast quality cameras, first person view, and pre-programmable flight routes.

As such, the technology is ripe for a variety of civilian uses including wildlife and land management.

Drones on the Range

Out in the sprawling mountains of far West Texas, Christopher Gill knows the value of using drones to manage and monitor his expansive Circle Ranch in Hudspeth County. Gill works aggressively to manage his arid country in order to maximize rainfall distribution across his ranch. As such, he finds a drone an invaluable tool for monitoring range conditions—especially in out of the way places that aren't easily accessible.

"We use it to monitor our rangelands and identify problems," he said. "The way country looks from a pickup looking sideways across the range looks much different than it does from 100 feet up. It's a whole different view. The drones are a great tool for looking at our country."

Gill said that he doesn't watch the footage as he's capturing it live. He maintains that the screen is too small and the ambient light is too bright for any critical assessment of his ranch. Instead, he captures the footage and reviews it later on the computer where he can study it enlarged and frame by frame if need be.

"We look at the water harvesting projects that we do on the ranch. I am constantly seeing things that surprise me," Gill said. "You may have a gully that's two and a half feet wide and twelve feet deep that you'll never see from the road."

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DRONES

Continued from page 53

We are able to see places that we can't get to and learn the way the water flows, the way a dam works or how a gully drains water. We can tell what roads are robbing water from a drainage and mitigate the problem accordingly."

The portability of drones is what Gill loves. He said that he can survey a portion of his property and then pick up the drone and move to a completely different part of the ranch. For safety reasons, he does not let the device get out of his sight while it's flying.

Gill conceded that the UAV's have their limitations and they are not a tool that can help a landowner with all of their management chores. He said that animals are hard to see and spook when they see a drone.

Therefore, doing any kind of animal census work is limiting. He also said that there is very little room for error when flying drones as they are easy to crash. Becoming a proficient pilot is a process that takes time and experience, he said.

"I'm learning," he admitted. "Your mistakes when flying drones cost a lot of money."

For those who have become proficient pilots, the use of drones opens up a whole new world of mapping technology. Users are now able to make detailed three dimensional maps of a property by using the drones and third-party cloud computing services. By preprogramming a UAV's flight route and altitude, powerful computing platforms are available to stitch the series of images together and make an extremely detailed two dimensional or three dimensional map.

Tudor Thomas is the chief technology officer for the San Diego based company called Maps Made Easy, a web based platform that provides military

grade aerial mapping technology with the consumer price point and skill set in mind.

The technology marries well with existing drones and provides a phone based application for which consumers can plan and implement their flights. Being in business as a military contractor for the past fifteen years, Thomas said that his company now makes the technology available to the average consumer, and he sees a lot of benefit for landowners.

"We view the mapping technology as a great way to document the state of a property on a given day," Thomas advised. "If you do some kind of management change to the property, using a drone and creating a hi-res map gives you a great way to monitor the results of those changes over time."

Services like Maps Made Easy and its accompanying app pair together to ensure that landowners can produce consistent quality imagery in which the rendering engines ingest to make the best possible two and three dimensional maps. It takes a lot of data to make a quality map, but Thomas said that quality data is essential for mapping.

"Besides just mapping a property, the software can do things like measure area or volume," Thomas explained. Volumetric measurements are valuable in estimating pond size or other management practices where dirt or other materials are moved and stockpiled.

Drone mapping technology can also be used for Normalized Difference Vegetation Indexes or NDVI. NDVI is a graphical index that can be used to analyze vegetation variability. While used often in agricultural crops scouting, NDVI can also be used to analyze productivity changes over time in rangelands.



Drones are often used for monitoring and identifying problems on the range. (Photo by Russell Graves)

The Rules of the Air

As much promise that UAV's bring to land managers, there are some regulatory issues that arise.

It's no secret that the rise of drone technology has brought its fair share of controversy. Privacy concerns are one such issue. Because it's relatively easy to fly autonomously, drones create a real problem for privacy because fences and obstructions create no barrier to the small, quiet aircraft.

In 2015, it's estimated that one million UAV's were sold in the United States. All these aircraft can and often do create a public safety hazard.

Because they can fly five hundred feet high or more and travel at least twenty-five miles an hour, they create a hazard to flying aircraft, buildings and people on the ground. Their encounters are numerous and well documented.

To address the unregulated drone market, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has

begun to implement rules that govern their use.

Currently, the FAA requires anyone flying a drone for commercial uses obtain an airworthiness certificate or petition for an exemption to the civil aircraft guidelines in order to operate a craft under controlled conditions. Hobby pilots can operate with an exemption or certificate but must do so under strict conditions as well and away from populated areas.

In addition, drones weighing between half a pound and 55 pounds must be included in an FAA drone registry. The registry applies to anyone who operates a drone, and those who fail to comply risk civil penalties up to \$27,500 and criminal penalties of up to \$250,000 and/or up to three years of imprisonment.

While there may be some bureaucratic hoops through which to jump, they are minor compared to the benefits that UAV's provide to the landowner or manager. ☞

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Grazing Oklahoma

Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*)

By Rob Cook, Noble Research Institute | rwcook@noble.org

Switchgrass is considered one of the “big four” grasses of the prairie. (Photos courtesy of the Noble Research Institute)

Characteristics: Switchgrass is a native, warm-season, perennial bunch grass. Mature height is about three to six feet tall. The leaves are up to 1/2-inch wide and six to 24 inches long. There is often a triangular patch of dense hairs at the leaf base.

The stems are hollow and do not branch above the base of the plant. The seed head is five to 20 inches long and can be a third to half as broad as it is long. Switchgrass has robust underground runners, or rhizomes, that allow it to form colonies. It is often a distinct bluish to bluish-green color during the growing season and reddish-orange in the dormant season.

Area of Importance: Switchgrass is a common grass that occurs on various soil types across the plains of Oklahoma and Texas. It is considered one of the “big four” grasses of the prairie. It provides good grazing for livestock, especially during the early stages of its growth.

Switchgrass provides good nesting cover for ground-nesting birds and good fawning cover for deer. The seeds are eaten by game and song birds. Forage value for deer is poor. Because of its robust rhizomes and deep roots, switchgrass is instrumental in stabilizing stream banks and riparian areas. It is also an important component for healthy rangeland in many upland sites.

Attributes: Switchgrass is considered a decreaser in response to continuous heavy grazing. It is not seen in many pastures across the Southern Great Plains because improper grazing management has resulted in the plant being grazed out of those pastures. The use of proper stocking rates and growing season rest, resulting from rotational grazing and proper grazing utilization, will allow it to persist or increase.

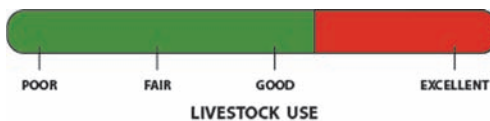
There are two cultivars that are relatively different from one another. The lowland variety that is commonly commercially available is known as Alamo switchgrass. It has a reputation as being hard to manage because it has such a large growth habit. The plants will grow in large bunches, begin to smell rank and become unpalatable if not managed correctly. Blackwell switchgrass is a smaller variety that favors uplands. It has the reputation of being easier to manage and a better grass to graze.

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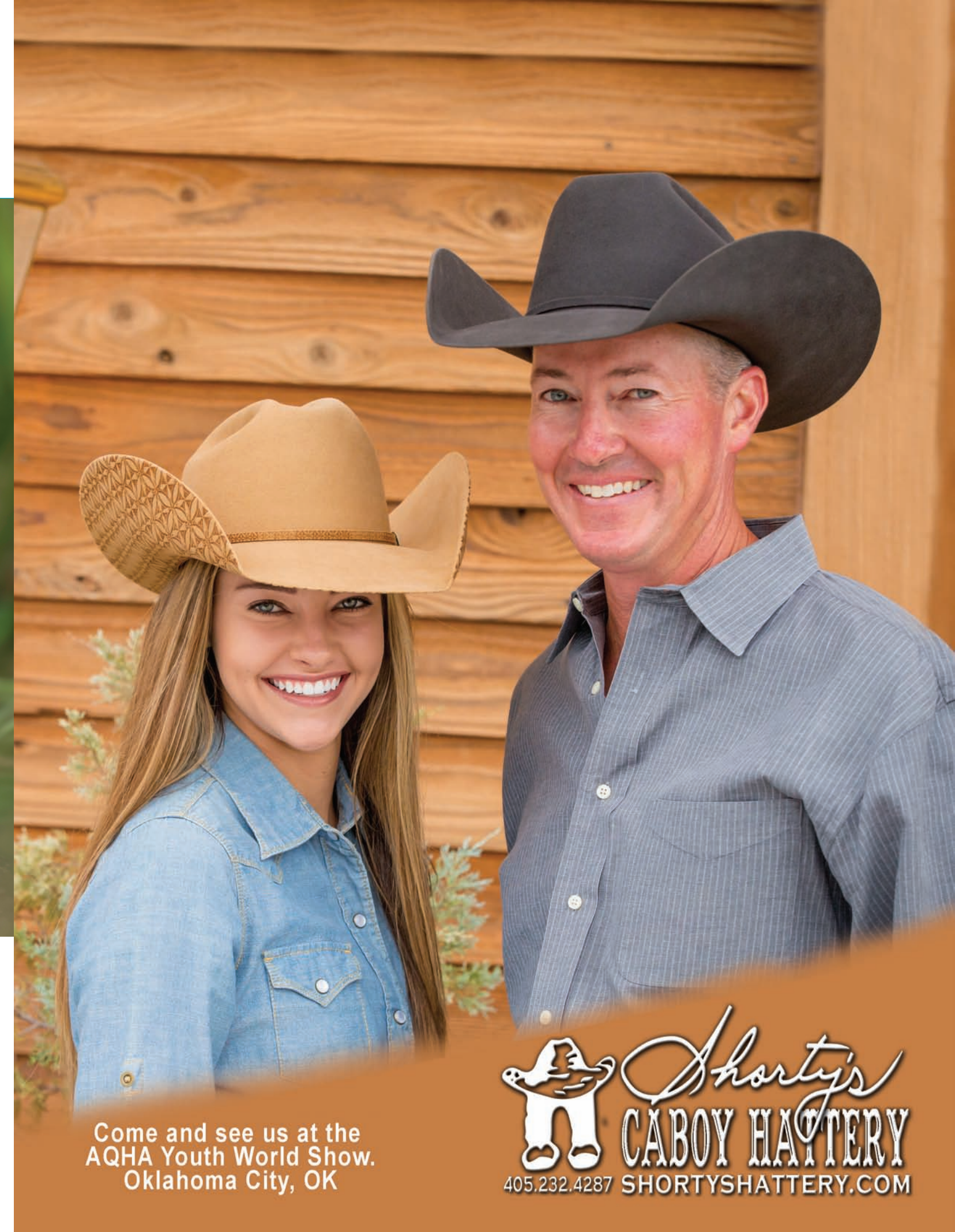
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PARTING SHOT



Into the Forest I Go...

On the same recent trip when photographer Kathie Freeman traveled from her hometown to north of Okarche, Okla., Freeman also took this photo of mushrooms. She said it was a beautiful warm day for a drive and had fun testing her new camera lens. (Photo by Kathie Freeman)



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