4-H Day Camps/Fair Project Work Days

Come Join us on Wednesday July 12th and Thursday July 13th from 10am until 12pm for two days of fair project day camps.

We will be making a variety of leather work items and 4-H Posters.

There is no cost to attend.

Please call or email us to sign up.

(580) 298-5563

Annual 4-H Planning Meeting

It will be very important for ALL 4-H Club Leaders to be present at this year’s planning meeting. Tom is retiring August First.

DATE: Thursday, July 20th

Time: 11am until 1pm

We will set the calendar for the year. Be sure to consider End of Year field days, etc. for the End of Year Bash Date.

Lunch will be served Dutch oven Dishes and Home-made Ice Cream/Cobbler

4-H Dates to Remember:

July 12th and 13th
Fair Project Day Camps

July 19th - Big Three Beef Field Day
Stillwater (call to sign up)

July 20th
Annual 4-H Planning Meeting

July 31st
Tom’s retirement reception
Come and go
1-3pm

4-H enrollment September 1st
On line/4-H online.com
To the People of Pushmataha County:

For the past 12 years I have had the privilege of serving as your Extension Educator for Agriculture and 4-H Youth Development (that’s a fancy name for the “County Agent”). Many of you already know that I will be retiring on August 1 of this year. This was not an easy decision for me. But it is time. Please be as welcoming to the next person with this title as you have been to me.

During the time I have been your County Agent, you have allowed me to get to know you better. I have tried to assist you with improving your gardens, pastures, livestock health and nutrition, marketing practices, wildlife habitat, and many other aspects of living in Pushmataha County. I have identified weed and insect problems. I renewed old friendships and made new ones. I worked with all of the schools in the county, the County Fair Board, Livestock Show Committee, Turning Point Coalition, Cattleman’s Association, Deer Capitol Tourism Association, Pushmataha Development Initiative, Chamber of Commerce, and many other organizations. I met new generations of families that I knew as a kid growing up here.

While it is officially only 50% of my job, the duty that has occupied most of my time, and has also been the most rewarding, is that time spent with your kids. I tortured them with the worst jokes I could find. We left town in the wee small hours of the morning to attend a conference or compete in a contest. We looked at stars, collected insects, built birdhouses and bird feeders, clipped animal projects, judged livestock and land. We studied rocks, incubated eggs, used a paper clip and leaf in a bowl of water as a compass, used household items as invisible ink, hammered nails with a frozen banana, shattered bubble gum, used film canisters and water bottles as rockets, studied soil erosion, and in general, made science as fun as an exploding pumpkin.

I have watched these kids grow in confidence and maturity as they cooked in Dutch ovens over charcoal, gave speeches and demonstrations, performed in the County Share the Fun, competed in County and State Fairs, attended leadership conferences and State 4-H Roundup, and made friendships that stretched across many counties. They collected thousands of food items for our annual food drive, demonstrating their concern for others in their communities.

Each year, I have watched as some of our members left 4-H. Some moved away and I saw them at district and state 4-H functions. Some shifted their membership into FFA and I still got to see them regularly. Others graduated and entered the next phase of their lives: starting families, entering employment, furthering their education. Tragically, 3 left us before we were ready, and are now with their Creator. Regardless, each and every one still is and will always be one of “My Kids”.

Pushmataha County has many resources: timber, clean water, beautiful scenery, fertile soils, and wonderful people. But the youth of this county are its greatest asset. Treasure them. Fight for them. Nurture them. Help them to grow into responsible, honest and productive citizens of whatever community they choose to become part of.

Most of all, I thank you for sharing your kids with me.

Sincerely,

Tom Smith
Thank you for twelve years of dedicated service to the Pushmataha County 4-H Program. We wish you the very best in Retirement.

Happy Trails, Mr. Tom!!!
The "End of Season" Scramble
By Tom Smith

As most cattle ranchers already know, the most important factor in long-term survival in the cattle business is to get the highest pregnancy rate possible every year. Logically, those calves born earlier in the season are going to be older and heavier. And as we get toward the end of the breeding season for next year's spring calves, I know most of us have a few (or several) cows that are likely not going to get pregnant without some changes in management. These will either have to be sold for failure to produce a paycheck, be fed and pastured another year before yielding a return on the investment, or pushed back to calve next fall, 6 months late. So what can we do to increase the odds of those cows having another calf, and hopefully earlier, next year? Well, just by chance, I have a few suggestions:

First, we can have our cow herd in good flesh (Body Condition Score 5 or better) at calving time. Those cows in good condition and maintaining or gaining weight will cycle and become pregnant sooner than thinner cows or those losing weight.

We can also remove the calves for 48 hours after about 45 days of age. This has been shown to trigger thinner cows to begin cycling. It does require some management, but research has shown it does not affect weaning weights of the calves when done properly.

Using a Controlled Internal Drug Release (CIDR) in a recommended 7-day protocol as soon as 20-25 days after calving can initiate estrus and help late-calving cows re-breed to calve earlier next year. Many ranchers use these to synchronize estrus for artificial insemination, but this also works for natural breeding as well.

Exposing the cows to a bull after calving. This has been proven to reduce the length of time between calving and return to cycling. Using an altered bull, such as those utilized for heat detection for A.I., will produce the desired effect without causing pregnancy earlier than our scheduled calving season.

And finally, we can feed high levels of energy to improve body condition through the breeding season. Research shows this improves the pregnancy rate, but has limited effect on shortening the time of return to estrus if we wait to do this until the beginning of the breeding season.

Using these practices will help get more of those thinner, older, or 2-year-old cows re-bred this year, which should increase your calf crop percentage and, hopefully, your profit margin.

Pushmataha County Free Fair
September 13th-16th
KEEP YOUR NEIGHBORS FRIENDLY!
AVOID SPRAY DRIFT!

By Tom Smith

In a previous life, I served 13 years as an Inspector for the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry (ODAFF). During that time, I investigated more accusations of herbicide injury to people’s crops, gardens, fruit trees, and ornamental plants than I care to remember. I saw just how expensive that situation could be, both in terms of money and loss of friendships. And the money was not just in the form of fines and lawsuits. When we buy chemicals to kill our weeds and they end up on a neighbor’s field instead, we lose on both sides of the fence. (Speaking of fences: A barbed wire fence will not stop herbicide drift!)

I did, however, learn several techniques that will reduce the risk of your spray applications from ending up on your neighbor’s tomato plants.

Larger droplets will not drift as far as smaller droplets. Lower the pressure and select a nozzle that creates larger drops as much as possible. I realize that smaller droplets provide better coverage, and that some product labels (which are regarded as Federal Law) require certain size droplets, but follow this recommendation as much as is practical.

Lower the nozzle height. Wind speed increases as height above ground increases, so lowering the discharge height by even a few inches will decrease your risk, especially with boom sprayers.

Check wind speed and direction. You can purchase a hand-held anemometer or use the Oklahoma Mesonet system for nearby conditions. Many herbicides have wind speed restrictions on the label, and you want to be sure that the wind will not carry herbicide onto a neighbor’s sensitive crop, your garden, or your wife’s flowers.

Use formulations which are low in volatility. I have witnessed the results of applications of 2,4-D ester when there was NO wind early in the morning, and later in the day the herbicide caught a thermal inversion, lifted, drifted and descended onto a sensitive crop. In one of these cases, several acres of cotton in the middle of a quarter section of the crop were damaged, resulting in substantial loss to the farmer. Amine formulations of 2,4-D can drift on the wind, but very seldom volatilize.

Check out ODAFF’s website for sensitive crops, http://maps.oda.state.ok.us/pslvags/ to find sensitive crops in your area. Then you can be sure to spray when the wind is not blowing toward them. Be aware that this map doesn’t include all potentially susceptible crops, so get to know your neighbors.

Finally, if you do cause herbicide injury to your wife’s prize roses, do whatever is necessary. Dig them out yourself, replace them with even prettier and more plants, take her to dinner, grovel if necessary. Not that I’m speaking from experience . . .
Milk matters.

Children of every age, and adults too, need the calcium, protein and vitamin D found in milk for strong bones, teeth and muscles. Serve fat-free or low-fat (1 percent) milk or yogurt at meals and snacks. What about flavored milk? It contains added sugars. If you have trouble drinking or eating dairy because you or a family member is lactose intolerant, you may be able to consume smaller portions (about 4 ounces). Lactose-free and lower-lactose products are available, such as lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk, yogurt, and cheese, and calcium-fortified soy milk (soy beverage).

Be food safe, some tips:
- Wash hands before preparing food.
- Refrigerate dairy foods like milk, cheese and yogurt immediately.
- Avoid leaving milk or other dairy foods out on the counter for more than 2 hours.

What can you do to help your child choose dairy foods?
- They learn from watching you — choose dairy foods and your child will, too.
- Children love to be involved in preparing food. Try the recipe on the next page.

Get strong

MyActivity Pyramid (see above) reminds your child to include activities that build strong bones.

Foods with calcium, like dairy foods, help build strong bones and teeth. Activities such as walking, playing basketball, dancing, jogging or running, and jumping rope help build strong bones – young and old!

“Kids In The Kitchen “ Nutrition Day Camp : FREE

Every Tuesday in July
11th, 18th and the 25th
1:00pm until 3:00pm
OSU Extension Office located at 306 SW B Street in Antlers call 298-5563 to sign up