

OKLAHOMA AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

CLASS XVI

Scribe Notes
Seminar 11
November 6 - 8, 2013

THEME: *“Northeastern Oklahoma Agriculture and Industry”*

November 6, 2013
Scribe: Chris Hitch

Port of Catoosa

We met at the management office for the port. We toured the port via bus. The port is an impressive array of loading/unloading areas for the port itself. Various firms use the port for shipping of commodities (steel, grain, etc.).

Newt Graham Lock and Dam 18

The lock and dam look reasonably well taken care of to my untrained eye. The visitor's center and offices are derelict and in need of serious repair. While no boats/barges were there to go through the lock, we were able to watch most of the process of raising the water level so a boat might be raised up to the higher elevation of the next segment of water.

Miller Amish Farm

If I were Amish, I would be fat. The food was absolutely excellent and very plentiful.

MidAmerican Industrial Park

The tour of the industrial park was interesting. It was more of a tour of Google's area and expansion than an industrial park. Not really, but it sort of felt that way. Also, it is a little disturbing that Google photographs planes if one flies too close to the main building and then harasses the pilots. I think that is crazy.

Pensacola Dam

This tour was on foot rather than a bus tour of the lock and industrial park. We started in a beautiful visitor complex and signed into their system. The tour started by inspecting the dam from the outside on top by the lake. We then proceeded to the base of the dam via a 75-year-old elevator. We toured the base of the dam where hydroelectric power was being generated. It was very enlightening.

Scott Johnson's Farm

We had a brief introduction to Holistic Management International and Sara's Grass-fed Beef by Jim Shelton. Then we toured the Johnson's headquarters where he had a number of dogs and cats. We saw how they ground hay bales and viewed their seed cleaner. The food provided by the FFA group was good, and the program the FFA teacher has put together was very impressive.

November 7, 2013
Scribe: Debbie Wedel

J-M Farms, Inc., Miami, OK – Pat Jurgensmeyer (Class XI) & Scott Engelbrecht (Class XII)

www.jmfarms.com

Virgil Jurgensmeyer, Joe Jurgensmeyer, and Darrell McLain founded J-M Farms, Inc. in the fall of 1979. Virgil and Joe purchased Darrell's interests in 1982.

The Mission Statement for J-M Farms, Inc. "is to provide the safest, best quality and most competitively priced product to our customers while doing so at the most economical cost. We recognize that our team members are our most valuable asset and everyone will strive to provide the safest working environment possible. J-M Foods and our team members place our support in the communities that we live in and strive to ensure a better way of life for all. We will achieve this mission through the long term profitability of the organization by following sound financial practices and the careful planned use of our available resources."

J-M, Inc. will produce 26- 27M pounds of mushrooms this year; 25M pounds whites and 2M pounds browns, and employee approximately 200 people. Affiliated companies bring the total employed to over 600, locally. The original production in 1979 was 2M pounds. Building expansions and changes in technology have allowed J-M Farms, Inc. to grow over 600% from its original size and growing capacity.

The compost phase is a 24-day process of the decomposition and conversion of nutrients. This phase will annually use 22,000 tons of wheat straw, 10,000 tons of chicken litter, 2000 tons of cotton seed meal, 1000 tons of gypsum, and 45 tons of urea. During compost, the compost must be cased or it will remain dormant and not produce.

The growing phase is a 49 day cycle from spawning to post crop. During this time the spawning (most critical process and the most dangerous time for something to go wrong - temps cannot go over 150 degrees or microbes will die)/spawn run, casing/setback, growing (at ½ inch in size, the mushroom will double in size every 24 hours)/harvesting, and post crop occur. All harvesting is done by hand.

There are also five satellite operations that grow mushrooms for J-M. The first was built in 2002. These operations are privately owned and encourage an entrepreneurial spirit. The annual production from these operations is 4.5M pounds each and each operation employees approximately 45 personnel.

Varieties produced are White Button and Portabella/Crimini. All mushrooms are packaged and shipped the same day they are harvested. Estimated time is 36 hours from harvest to store shelf. The mushrooms have a 12-14 day shelf life. A fleet of 20 trucks is used for customer delivery. The mushrooms are sold in ten states, including Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, New Mexico, Kansas, Missouri, and Iowa. All products produced at the satellite farms are brought back to J-M for final shipping.

To ensure the quality and food safety of the mushrooms, 8-10 audits are conducted annually. J-M has a full-time Quality Assurance Staff, a trace-back system, and they utilize the LEAN System of Management.

An Energy Efficient Audit prompted J-M to implement the recommendations of going from T5 lights to T12 and from humidity systems to using steam/cold water.

Learn more at:

www.mushroominfo.com

www.americanmushroom.org

www.mushroomcouncil.org

Dry Gulch USA, Adair, OK – Pastor Dean Schmidt (Program Director), Willie George (Senior Pastor, Church on the Move), Kirbie Anderson (Camp Director)

www.drygulchusa.com

Dry Gulch, U.S.A., which started in 1986 and sets on 250 acres, specializes in unforgettable experiences that kids will treasure forever. In this Old West town, adventure is inescapable. Children make lasting memories while enjoying go-kart races, bumper cars, horseback rides, water sports on Lake Hudson, and an exciting ride aboard an authentic steam-engine train.

Donna is the head caretaker over the 80 head of livestock and all animals are used for the annual Christmas Train and all camps during the summer. All horses will be “kid” broke. Approximately 90% of the kids that come to camp have never ridden a horse. About 25-35 kids will be taken on rides at one time. Over 600 people per week will ride the horses during the camp sessions. When needed, Donna utilizes “red light” therapy on the animals she treats. This therapy de-stresses the animal, cells start rebuilding, and healing time is decreased by 25%.

There are no chemicals used on the pastures at Dry Gulch; only Roundup around the fence lines. Twice a year enzymes that are food grade and biodegradable are used on the 130 acres of pasture.

During the summer, 5000 – 6000 kids will attend the camp sessions that run Monday through Saturday. About 150 people are hired for summer help. In the fall, Dry Gulch will host several retreats.

During the Christmas season, over 50,000 people will converge on Dry Gulch for the festivities. Daily limit is 3500 people. Tickets go on sale in November each year and are sold out in just a couple hours. Over 300 members from Church on the Move volunteer during this time. About 150-175 people at a time will ride the train for 15 minutes on the 1.5 mile track. Old fashioned Steam Engines from 1920, 1940, and 1970 pull the train. While on the train, guests enjoy the story of Christmas and the life of Jesus from creation to resurrection.

Dry Gulch features three restaurants, family events, a ropes course, retail stores, a carousel, wagon rides, and stagecoach rides. Staff will be dressed in period costume from the 1880s during the Christmas season.

We can attest to the great food in the restaurants. We enjoyed a wonderful rib eye steak with all the trimmings for lunch and were able to set outside on the deck and enjoy the beautiful weather and fall scenery.

Hibbard Farms, Adair, OK – Clay & Melissa Hibbard

Clay and Melissa Hibbard manage over 60,000 chickens that are producing eggs for a hatchery. The two houses hold 30,000 chickens each and each include 1500 roosters. The chickens come in as pullets, stay for 50 weeks, and lay an average of 270 eggs each while in the houses. Chickens are supplied by Tyson which also provides the feed.

The unique feeding system allows the hens and roosters to eat specific feed rations for their needs. When young, a “stick” is inserted horizontally thru the beak of the rooster so that he is not able to get his head in the feeder and eat from the hens feed. Rooster feed is at a higher level than the hen feed so that the hens do not eat the roosters’ rations.

The houses are set up in a unique way so that the eggs, after laying, will roll down a conveyor belt to be stacked onto crates for shipping to the hatchery.

The Hibbards provide most of the labor for the houses themselves. Due to their outstanding abilities, the Hibbards were awarded the Family Farm Environmental Excellence Award during the 2010 International Poultry Expo. Only five farms from across the United States received this award that was presented by the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association in recognition of exemplary environmental stewardship by family farmers engaged in poultry and egg production.

The Hibbards use best management practices on their farm, including a nutrient management plan for land application of litter, incineration of poultry mortality, and soil testing. Their property is very diverse, with grasses and legumes for wildlife. More than 80 acres is woodland, and 20 acres is native prairie grass, which is not farmed or grazed.

Will Rogers Birthplace Ranch, Oologah, OK – Ryan Nelson & Family, Community Service Project
www.willrogers.com/birthplace_ranch.html

On the drive to the Birthplace Ranch, Ginger Reimer pointed out “The World’s Largest Concrete Totem Pole” near Foyil.

Class members worked with Ryan Nelson and his family to brand, vaccinate, worm, and ear tag beautiful longhorn cattle that call the Birthplace Ranch home. A great time was had by all whether they were working cattle or supporting those who were. We were also allotted time to explore the Birthplace Ranch and the home in which Will Rogers was born.

Everyone enjoyed an awesome meal of pulled pork and all the trimmings, prepared by Ryan and his family.

A fun time was had by all as we surprised Scott Stinnett when his fiancé Heather Hays joined us at the ranch. Kudos go to Karen Eifert-Jones and Jennifer Jensen for setting this up. The class spent time giving Scott and Heather some great, fun, sometimes not good, and otherwise sage advice for marriage. They will be married later this month in Colorado.

Will Rogers Memorial Museum, Claremore, OK – Steve Gragert, Museum Director
www.willrogers.com

Steve Gragert was generous to open the museum for us, after hours. He conducted a very thorough tour that was enjoyed by all. We were able to browse around by ourselves and also take in several glimpses of the great black and white movies that Will Rogers made in his heyday. We also were able to listen to an extensive history lesson about the life of Will Rogers. Great museum!!

November 8, 2013
Scribe: Stacey Howeth

Claremore, Oklahoma

The day started with an optional viewing of dairy cow milking at Swan Bros. Dairy for those who wanted to get up early.

After checking out of the hotel, we began with the official tour of Swan Bros. Dairy by Harvey Swan and Diane Swan Williamson. The dairy operation began in 1923 by Harvey’s father with one cow. It has since grown to 8-9 employees and approximately 70 cows. They continue to expand their herd each year. Harvey still milks the

cows and since 1985, Diane is in charge of the cheese making. The cows are milked twice daily around 2 a.m. and 2 p.m. They go through a prep/sanitize process before entering the milking facility. The cows are provided feed and straw before and during the milking process. The herd produces around 480 gallons per day.

Swan Bros. sells around 2100 gallons of milk each week, at \$4.50/gallon. All milk is raw, as fresh and natural as possible. They sell approximately 600 lbs. of cheese each week. Some milk is pasteurized specifically for cheese production. The dairy also produces and sells heavy cream. They are open 6 days per week.

From the dairy, we walked to Nabatak Outdoors. Nabatak stands for National Bait and Tackle. It opened in 1968, became a family operation in 1979, and in 2001 moved to the current location. Their busy time is February through July. The company is comprised of three major aspects: retail shop, wholesale shop and wholesale bait. They provide delivery and transportation of the live product.

We ventured to Cappuccino Corner following the tour of Nabatak Outdoors. Our speaker was unable to attend, so we enjoyed class fellowship over coffee and breakfast. We also took the opportunity to pass out swag from our sponsors.

Then it was off to Eden Veggies in Broken Arrow. John Stinchcomb started the tour by showing us several varieties of tomatoes and offered samples to taste. Eden Veggies began in 2010 and now employs 2-3 people, depending on the time of year. They grow approximately 10-12 varieties, starting from seed. John prefers this method as it provides more control of the process. They participate in "Farm-to-School" programs in the local area. Eden Veggies picks, processes, weighs, packages, and ships onsite, touting 'pick to plate' within 24 hours.

The tour of Tulsa Stockyards was cancelled, so straight to Whispering Vines Vineyard and Winery we went. We tasted several red and white wine varieties - some traditional, some unique to Whispering Vines. Following the tasting, we discussed our session experiences through the synthesis process.