

FLASH

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Beef 4 Battle sends beef sticks to troops in Afghanistan

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Oklahoma State University's Robert M. Kerr Food & Agricultural Products Center is participating in a project that sends shelf-stable beef sticks to the troops in Afghanistan.

George Huggins, a retired engineer and World War II veteran, had the idea to provide something nutritious to eat that was made for the men and women from the Oklahoma National Guard unit who are deployed in Afghanistan.

"I recall my days in the military when something good to eat was not readily available," Huggins said. "There were times when every soldier would have welcomed good meals or even snacks. These beef sticks sent to the troops would be placed in their backpacks to eat while on patrols in the region, which can last from one to five days."

Although Huggins had the idea, he wanted the support of the FAPC to help move the project forward and solicited help from Jim Brooks, FAPC manager of business and marketing services.

After researching the history of the 45th Infantry Division and its many calls to combat, Brooks suggested the name of Beef 4 Battle for the project, and Huggins agreed it was an appropriate name for the beef sticks.

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Jim Brooks

FAPC Business and Marketing Services Manager

After the name was selected, a Beef 4 Battle Coalition was formed that included Thad Doye with the Oklahoma Farm Bureau; Brooks with the FAPC; Burt Buitenhuis, owner of Chickasha Meat Co.; Larry Schwab with Schwab Meat Co.; and Huggins.

The Coalition established a fund for donations through the Farm Bureau's Oklahoma Farm Foundation, where farmers and ranchers can donate cattle for the beef sticks or monetary contributions can be made to support the manufacturing and shipping costs for the project.

Mandy Gross, FAPC communications services manager, designed the original graphics for the Beef 4 Battle logo that included the Thunderbird logo of the 45th Infantry Division and the state outline of Oklahoma.

"What makes this project so special is not only supporting our deployed troops, but also it is a totally Oklahoma-based effort," Brooks said. "The donated cattle are from Oklahoma farmers and ranchers, the cattle are harvested at Chickasha Meat Co., the

beef sticks are produced at Schwab's Meat Co., the FAPC has provided Schwab's with the formulations for shelf-stable meats, as well as performed analysis for moisture, protein, pH and water activity to ensure the beef sticks meet USDA regulatory requirements for a shelf-stable product."

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau held a press conference on Nov. 15 at the Davis Family Farm near Guthrie to announce the Beef 4 Battle Coalition and the project of sending beef sticks to the troops in Afghanistan.

Lt. Gov. Todd Lamb, Maj. Gen. Myles Deering of the Oklahoma National Guard and Secretary of Agriculture Jim Reese spoke at the event.

The first shipment of Beef 4 Battle beef sticks was sent from the Blanchard Post Office on Nov. 23 to arrive for Christmas.

For more information about the Beef 4 Battle Coalition or to donate, call Doye at 405-523-2307. Financial contributions also can be mailed to the Beef 4 Battle Coalition at 2501 N. Stiles, Oklahoma City, OK 73105.