

Robert M. Kerr
Food & Agricultural Products Center

NEWS RELEASE

Adding Value to Oklahoma

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oklahoma State System of Higher Education Chancellor visits FAPC

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STILLWATER, Okla. – The Robert M. Kerr Food & Agricultural Products Center on the Oklahoma State University–Stillwater campus welcomed the Chancellor of the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education as a visitor to the center.

Chancellor Glen D. Johnson Jr. visited the FAPC to learn more about its mission and purpose, as well as the services the center provides.

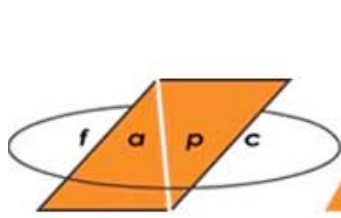
Other individuals present during the visit included Burns Hargis, OSU president; Gary Clark, OSU vice president for university relations; Gary Sherrer, assistant vice president for external affairs for OSU's Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources; Robert Westerman, assistant vice president for program support for OSU's Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources; Tommy Kramer, executive director for the Durant Industrial Authority and FAPC Industry Advisory Committee member; and J. Roy Escoubas, FAPC Director.

“The Chancellor was an early advocate of this value-added center while he served in the Oklahoma House of Representatives and as the Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives,” Escoubas said. “I believe Dr. Johnson was pleased with the work of the FAPC and with the investment made by the State of Oklahoma to establish the FAPC for economic development.”

Johnson visited with participants of FAPC's Basic Training Workshop and Beef Quality Summit, which were in session during his visit. Basic Training is a workshop for small business owners and entrepreneurial businesses that help identify certain topics that every potential food processor should consider, such as business planning, market identification and strategies, and food processing regulations. Beef Quality Summit gives producers, retailers, food service professionals, and packers information they need to improve and maintain a high standard of beef quality.

“The activities of the FAPC go hand-in-hand with what we are doing in higher education,” Johnson said. “Trainings, such as Basic Training and Beef Quality Summit, give participants the opportunity to fine tune those needed skills in the industry.”

The Chancellor also had lunch with current and former participants of Basic Training. Jim and Judy Scovil, owners of Blessetti's Gourmet Pasta Sauce, and Glen Franklin, owner of G's Chili, discussed their experience in attending Basic Training and starting their own food companies.



Following the lunch, the Chancellor toured the FAPC facilities and met with FAPC faculty and staff to discuss some of the projects performed at the center.

“I believe it is extremely important for individuals, such as Chancellor Johnson, to understand the importance of value-added processing and how the FAPC is contributing to this growing industry,” Escoubas said. “The FAPC is dedicated to processing basic value-added products to create jobs and income in Oklahoma.”

Johnson leads a state system comprised of 25 state colleges and universities, 10 constituent agencies, one higher education center and independent colleges and universities coordinated with the state system. He provides leadership on matters relating to standards for Oklahoma higher education, courses and programs of study, budget allocations for institutions, fees and tuition, and strategic planning.

Johnson said, as a former speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives and supporter of the creation of a value-added food-processing center, he attended the groundbreaking and dedication for the FAPC.

“We felt that we needed to find a way to keep the processing of food, the jobs and the dollars home in the state of Oklahoma,” he said. “They’ve shown that it can be done.”

The mission of the FAPC is to discover, develop and deliver technical and business information that will stimulate and support the growth of value-added food and agricultural products and processing in Oklahoma.

The FAPC has assisted more than 1,000 Oklahoma businesses through 3,000 technical and business projects. An economic impact study found the combined direct, indirect and induced economic contributions of FAPC client companies were \$6.3 billion and generated 52,000 jobs.

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