



Robert M. Kerr
Food & Agricultural Products Center

NEWS RELEASE

Adding Value to Oklahoma

Contact: Mandy Gross | FAPC Communications | 405-744-0442 | mandy.gross@okstate.edu
Kylee Willard | FAPC Communications | 405-744-3217 | kyleew@okstate.edu

Food industry leaders meet with Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture

(Stillwater, Okla. – June 30, 2011) Oklahoma State University's Robert M. Kerr Food & Agricultural Products Center strives to be on the forefront of value-added food and agricultural information by providing opportunities for food industry leaders to meet with prominent agricultural officials.

Recently, Oklahoma food industry leaders sat down with Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture Jim Reese during an FAPC Industry Advisory Committee Meeting to discuss the importance of FAPC's mission in supporting the growth of value-added food and agricultural products and processing in Oklahoma.

"We have tons and tons and tons of raw product, but we aren't selling the processed product," Reese said. "There is so much more we can do with the commodities in the state of Oklahoma."

Reese served in the Oklahoma legislature with the late Sen. Robert M. Kerr during the establishment of the center. Kerr was one of the key leaders responsible for the creation of the state-of-the-art facility, and the FAPC was renamed in his honor in 2007.

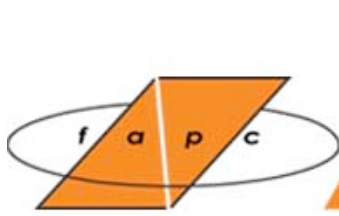
"Agriculture creates \$6 billion worth of value for the state; \$4 billion is generated by livestock and \$2 billion in raw crops," Reese said. "There is so much more that can be generated from processing. We need to increase the value of all that product."

During the meeting, the food industry representatives discussed their business roles and how the FAPC has helped their businesses.

Gary Crane, owner of Ralph's Packing Co. in Perkins, Okla., said his business has been family-owned since 1959. The company began as a fresh meat plant, but branched out into producing fully cooked products in the 90s.

Ralph's Packing Co. has been working with the FAPC since essentially the inception of the center in 1997. The company has received technical assistance on some of its products, including analytical services and validation studies, and attended several food safety trainings offered by the FAPC.

"Over the years, the FAPC has been very good to me," Crane said. "I'm probably the luckiest person to have the FAPC at my back door."



Roy Escoubas, FAPC director, said it is essential for food industry leaders, including members of the center's Industry Advisory Committee, to be able to speak directly with agricultural leaders such as Reese.

"We are honored that Secretary Reese took time out of his busy schedule to sit down with these food industry representatives," Escoubas said. "Secretary Reese truly understands the importance and the need for the FAPC, and it is great to know that we have his support."

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