



Food & Agricultural Products Center

**NEWS RELEASE**

*Adding Value to Oklahoma*

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### ***FAPC to host National Value-Added Agriculture Conference***

By Ruth Bobbitt, FAPC Communications Graduate Assistant

STILLWATER, Okla.—The Robert M. Kerr Food & Agricultural Products Center will host the 10th annual National Value-Added Agriculture Conference June 1-3 at the Sheraton Hotel in Oklahoma City.

“This conference is a national ‘who’s who’ in value-added agriculture,” said Rodney Holcomb, FAPC agribusiness economist and 2008 conference chair. “Those attending the conference will be able to experience how value-added programs in other states are operated. Additionally, they’ll be able to hear from national leaders what factors will be driving value-added agribusiness ideas in the next few years.”

The conference will feature topics such as value-added and economic development provisions proposed in the next Farm Bill and organic labeling regulations and their impacts on niche meat marketers. In addition, participants will hear panel presentations from six organizations regarding their value-added programs.

Conference speakers include Ernesto Sirolli, Mark Bradley, Jeff Kistner and David Brooks. Sirolli is the founder of the Sirolli Institute, an international nonprofit organization that teaches community leaders how to establish and maintain enterprise facilitation projects in their community. Bradley serves as associate deputy administrator for the National Organic Program. As vice president of project finance for BBI International, Kistner focuses on financial structuring, placement and management for renewable energy projects. Brooks is the regional sales manager of Shawnee Milling Company and past chair of the Made in Oklahoma Coalition.

Conference participants also will have an opportunity to witness hands-on product manufacturing at the FAPC in Stillwater. The demonstrations will showcase wood products, juice products, meat snacks and barbecue sauce manufacturing.

“The conference also will feature a trade show that will highlight entrepreneurship and economic development programs from various states,” said Chuck Willoughby, FAPC business and marketing relations manager and 2008 conference co-chair.

Registration is \$125 before May 20 and \$175 thereafter. The registration fee includes conference materials, refreshments, lunch on Monday and one ticket for a banquet at the famous National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Museum. Additional dinner tickets are available for \$35 each.

To register or for more information, visit [www.agconferences.okstate.edu](http://www.agconferences.okstate.edu) or call 405-744-6489. Direct sponsorship inquiries may be directed to Holcomb at [rodney.holcomb@okstate.edu](mailto:rodney.holcomb@okstate.edu) and trade show exhibit inquiries may be directed to Willoughby at [chuck.willoughby@okstate.edu](mailto:chuck.willoughby@okstate.edu).

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