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## **Ralph's Packing to celebrate 50 years in November**

By Mandy Gross, FAPC Communications Services Manager

*(Stillwater, Okla. – Oct. 14, 2009)* Ralph's Packing Co., an Oklahoma meat company in Perkins, Okla., will celebrate 50 years of business and service starting Nov. 1, 2009.

During the celebration, Ralph's Packing will be giving away four limited edition smokers featuring the company's signature circle R brand manufactured by Roger Davidson of Horizon Manufacturing in Perry, Okla. The drawings will be held every week in November, plus Ralph's Packing will be offering in-house specials during the month.

Gary Crane, owner of Ralph's Packing, said there have been many changes for the company during the previous 50 years.

"The three biggest changes that have affected the plant included the Wholesome Meat Act in 1967, dad buying the first vacuum packaging for the company in 1974 and the HACCP regulations in 1996," Gary Crane said.

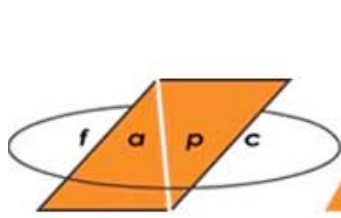
The history of how the company began is well stated on the company's Web site.

"The years of work a man puts into his profession gives him the wisdom to try new ideas and put the results in an old and tried product. In 1959, in the small town of Perkins, Okla., Ralph Crane started a small meat company with the idea of producing a product of the highest quality. He perfected a curing and smoking process that is second to none, and it has been proven by many awards, honors and recognition. His dream was to have a good product that everyone could enjoy at an affordable price. This tradition is carried on today by his family and company with outstanding results."

Both Gary Crane and his wife, Tess, take pride in running a family business. They have two daughters, Erica and Megan, which are involved in the business as well. Erica and her husband, Jason, both work at Ralph's Packing, and Megan, along with Erica and Jason, own shares in the business.

"There was a time we pushed our girls away from the business because it was just getting so hard," Tess Crane said. "It's nice it's going to continue. Ralph's has a good reputation, and it's nice to know people realize that."

Although Ralph's Packing began as a fresh meat plant, the business branched out into producing fully cooked products in the 90s. Some of the cooked products currently produced include beef jerky, smoked ribs and whole hogs.



“People want convenient products; something they can heat and eat,” Gary Crane said. “The majority of our products are fully-cooked. Almost a complete turnaround from the 60s.”

For about the last 10 years, all of the market hogs that Ralph’s uses for the whole hog product come from Oklahoma State University.

“If it wasn’t for OSU, I don’t know what we would do,” Gary Crane said. “There’s no local hog farmers around here anymore to purchase market hogs.”

That’s not the only help Ralph’s Packing gets from OSU. The company has been working with the Robert M. Kerr Food & Agricultural Products Center since essentially the inception of the center in 1997.

Gary Crane is a member of the FAPC Industry Advisory Committee, which serves as an advisory board to the center. Also, Ralph’s Packing has received technical assistance on some of its products, including analytical services and validation studies.

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

Chuck Willoughby, FAPC manager of business and marketing relations, said it has been a pleasure working with Ralph’s Packing during the years.

“Our relationship with Ralph’s goes beyond providing assistance to a processor, as well as receiving guidance from an advisory committee member,” Willoughby said. “Ralph’s is one of those companies that you can point to as an example of success when working with entrepreneurs. They exemplify that successfully running a business goes beyond skillful quality production or good salesmanship. Being forward thinking, having an entrepreneurial spirit and having a good relationship with your customers can be what sets your business apart from others.”

Ralph’s Packing products have won several championship awards from the Oklahoma-Texas Meat Processors Association and the American Association of Meat Processors.

In fact, Gary Crane and the company took top honors during the 2009 American Association of Meat Processors convention in July. Gary Crane won the Lifetime Achievement Award, which is the association’s highest honor bestowed on a member for continuing service to the meat industry, and the company was awarded grand champion hot dogs and reserve grand champion bacon.

Both Gary and Tess Crane are looking forward to 50 more years of the family business. The business is doing so well that the company has expanded by adding a new retail building that



is three times as big as the previous one and provides more room for customers and to display products.

For more information about Ralph's Packing Co. or its products, visit [www.ralphspacking.com](http://www.ralphspacking.com) or call 405-547-2464.

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