

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FORESTRY

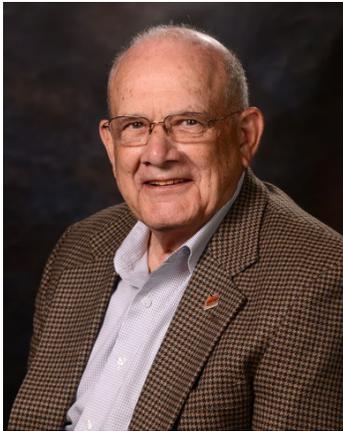
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Virgil Jurgensmeyer recognized with Governor's Outstanding Achievement in Agriculture Award



Many days the 10-year-old's fingers gripped the handles of the two-mule plow.

With few pauses, the child's legs kept pace with the plow from seven in the morning until sometimes six in the evening in the fields of central Missouri.

Virgil Jurgensmeyer, the second oldest of Joe and Clare's nine children would ready the soil for the planting of traditional crops such as corn and wheat.

Through time, he stayed with agriculture and agriculture has stayed with Jurgensmeyer, who is a major producer of mushrooms. The type of farming he does isn't the same, but the determination and tireless work ethic are as alive in the 87-year-old owner of J-M Farms of Miami, Okla. as they were in that 10 year-old child.

On Wednesday, Jurgensmeyer, a leader in agriculture as well as his community and the state of Oklahoma, was recognized with Governor Mary Fallin's Outstanding Achievement in Agriculture Award during Ag Day ceremonies at the state Capitol.

Also on Wednesday, **Anna Belle Wiedemann** received the Governor's Outstanding Public Service in Agriculture Award; **Hal Clark** received the Governor's Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Award and the Governor's Outstanding Legacy in Agriculture Award was presented posthumously to **Floyd King**.

Although Jurgensmeyer was out of the country and unable to attend, he said in a pre-recorded acceptance speech, "Without the support of my family and friends, so much of what I've been able to accomplish would not have happened, it would still be just a dream."

The company, now known as J-M Farms, Inc., was founded in 1979 and the first mushrooms were picked on March 13, 1980 and the initial delivery was made the following day to

Associated Wholesale Grocers of Springfield, Mo. At the onset, there were 40 employees and about 40,000 pounds of mushroom production per week.

Today, the company, overall, employs hundreds of Oklahomans and produces more than 27 million pounds of white button, Crimini and Portabella mushrooms annually. At Miami, they grow, harvest, pack and ship mushrooms daily. Their trucks deliver products to Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, New Mexico, Kansas, Missouri and Iowa.

J-M Farms also services the Department of Defense with fresh mushroom products, is an integrated part of Sysco and AWG food distribution systems and is a supplier to Walmart stores.

Earlier in the month while sitting at his Miami, Okla. desk, Jurgensmeyer focused not on the handles of a plow, but on two objects straight across from him that so strongly represent his passion.

“The management team in that picture up there on the wall, well those people are key people in making this place run,” Jurgensmeyer said, and then focused his eyes to the right of the photo. “That door is open all the time. Anybody can come in to see me if they need something. That door is open and I want to see them, because that’s how we learn in this businesses. What they see out in the work area is what develops this company.”

Then and now...

In 1966 Ralston Purina Corp. hired Jurgensmeyer, a U.S. Army veteran who was a former junior high school teacher and principal. By 1972, he was plant manager in the Mushroom Division of that company. In the late 1970s he looked for a good location to grow a mushroom business of his own – it would need water, natural gas, access to wheat straw, labor and major highways for transportation.

The answer was the northeastern Oklahoma community of Miami. In the fall of 1979, Virgil Jurgensmeyer, his brother Joe Jurgensmeyer and Darrell McLain founded J&M Farms, Inc., which was changed to J-M Farms, Inc. when the Jurgensmeyers purchased McClain’s interest in the company on April 15, 1982.

Jurgensmeyer and his late wife of 62 years Marge have three sons, Curtis, Terry and Pat who all play key roles in J-M Farms today. Marge passed away in 2014. Virgil and DeDe Dowling wed in February of this year.

Your table is his table...

In their business, J-M Farms not only strives to stay ahead of increasing food safety standards, but also embraces heightened product traceability practices. Within 20 minutes, the company’s system can identify who picked a box of mushrooms at what time, in what room, all the way back to the farm source of the wheat straw in their compost. This system not only improves food safety, it also identifies the source of problems that need to be corrected in the operation.

Jurgensmeyer embraces food safety. At his home, he has a walnut dining room table and an oak kitchen table, but Jurgensmeyer considers every table that a J-M Farms mushroom is served on to be his table.

Box stacked upon box carry a logo with a mushroom design containing the words, “Food Safety First, HACCP (Hazard analysis and critical control points)”, and underneath it reads, “Packed under HACCP Guidelines.”

“You bet everyone’s table is my table,” he said. “Food safety has always been very important to me.”

What else is important, Jurgensmeyer was asked. What do many people not realize about raising mushrooms?

“Most people don’t realize that in the mushroom business, the main important factor is compost, compost, compost,” he said. “You have got to build a good growing media. Really in farming it doesn’t make any difference whether it’s mushrooms, corn or wheat. Whatever that product has to grow in, it has to be good or otherwise you are not going to produce the best.”

Shining light...

Jurgensmeyer loves to shed light on his community, state and industry.

He has been called “a visionary leader and a natural mentor to Oklahoma's agricultural community, as well as the local and northeast region of the state.” He has been involved in agricultural organizations and city and state organizations for many years.

Jurgensmeyer served as a board member of the Miami Rotary Club from 1980 to 1996. During his service in 1988, the Miami Rotary Club awarded Jurgensmeyer the Paul Harris Fellow Award. He has also served as a member and secretary of the Miami Chamber of Commerce from 1981 to 1987. From 1988 to 1996, Jurgensmeyer served as a board member for the Miami Area Economic Development Board.

The former educator was involved in several local and state educational boards and foundations. He was involved in the Miami Public School Enrichment Foundation as vice chairman from 1988 to 1991. He participated on the Northeastern Oklahoma State College Advisory Board from 2000 to 2013 as a board member.

Jurgensmeyer served as the chairman and board member of the Miami Area Zoning & Planning Commission from 1988 to 2009.

Too, he served on the Task Force for the Tar Creek Superfund Site from 2003 to 2008. He currently serves on the Lead-Impacted Communities Relocation Trust Board and has been active serving since 2009.

In agriculture, Jurgensmeyer served on the State Board of Agriculture from 1988 to 2003. He is currently an active member of several advisory boards and associations. These include the

Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association with service from 1985, Oklahoma State University Dean's Advisory Board with service beginning in 1998 and the Robert M. Kerr Food & Agricultural Products Center's Industry Advisory Committee with service beginning in 1996. In 2012, Virgil was awarded the DASNR Champion Award from Oklahoma State University's Division of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources for his service to the university.

Nationally, Jurgensmeyer has been active in the Mushroom Growers Association – holding the positions of member, secretary-treasurer and president – and the Mushroom Council where he has been a member and board member.

He has received numerous awards through the years. On November 18, 1999, he was presented with a Citation of Congratulations and a Virgil Jurgensmeyer Day Proclamation. He was awarded an Outstanding Service Award from the Oklahoma House of Representatives in 1989 and an outstanding Service Award from the Oklahoma Senate Agriculture Committee in 1995. Those are just a few of the many forms of recognition Jurgensmeyer has received.

The lessons Jurgensmeyer learned on the family farm near St. Elizabeth, Mo. have literally mushroomed into the businessman and leader he is today.

In his acceptance video, Jurgensmeyer said, “Oklahoma agriculture is not a job, it’s a way of life and I feel so honored to have chosen it as my way of life. To say that I’m honored to be recognized by the Governor’s Outstanding Achievement in Agriculture is a tremendous understatement. To be honored to have my name alongside the other members of the Oklahoma Agriculture Hall of Fame is something that I could only dream about. Thank you again to everyone that made this special moment become reality.”

**Anna Belle Wiedemann,
Governor’s Outstanding Public Service in Agriculture Award**



A wheat field, a hog pen, a corner office, the floor of the State House of Representatives, an international food trade market -- these are all places that Anna Belle Wiedemann would feel comfortable in. A more diverse agriculturalist would be hard to find.

The first agricultural operation she ran with her husband, Carl, had no running water and no indoor bathroom. Today, the Slash C Ranch encompasses just under 2,000 acres that sprawl through Kingfisher and Canadian Counties. Laying hens, hogs, cattle and wheat have all contributed to the success of the ranch, but production agriculture is just the beginning of Wiedemann’s service to the agriculture industry.

After forming and then serving as president of the first Democratic Women’s Club in her county, Wiedemann was elected to the Oklahoma State House of Representatives in 1968 where she focused on agricultural issues as well as the good of all Oklahomans. She also served as the

liaison between the agriculture committee and the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture. After her stint in the House, she went to work for the Oklahoma Consumer Credit Commission and then served as the Interim County Commissioner for Canadian County.

In 1984, Wiedemann took on the role of Coordinator of International Marketing for the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry. With this position she traveled extensively promoting the state's agricultural products in markets across the world. She became the director of ODAFF's Market Development Division promoting state-branded and educational programs. In addition, she was instrumental in the growth of farmers markets in the state and heavily promoted the use of local products by restaurants. Her next ODAFF position was Director of Rural Development where she designed and implemented programs that helped improve the rural economy of the state.

Through her long-term involvement with the Oklahoma CattleWomen, Wiedemann has been a valuable asset to the beef industry. She is a faithful supporter of 4-H and FFA programs and has served on many agriculture-related boards and committees where she worked tirelessly to improve the industry in her county, state, nation and world. She is an outstanding leader and public servant for agriculture.

**Hal Clark,
Governor's Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Award**



For more than half a century, Clark has managed the Clark Ranch in far northwestern Cimarron County. Conserving the soil has been a priority that sustains this productive ranch. His pasture and rangeland management includes rotational grazing, establishing permanent vegetation and controlling erosion to protect both land and water.

Clark's education in range management coupled with his family's history with the Dust Bowl led him to become a member of the Cimarron County Conservation District board of directors in 1966. Since that time, he has dedicated over 47 years to advancing soil stewardship. He helped develop the High Plains Five States Range Camp on his ranch to teach high school students the value of taking care of the land and hundreds of students from Colorado, Texas, New Mexico, Kansas and Oklahoma have participated.

As a member of the Oklahoma Conservation Commission from 1978-1996, Clark and his fellow commissioners established the Blue Thumb project to provide statewide education on stream water health. He also served on Gov. Keating's Animal Waste and Water Quality Task Force which authorized a cost-share program to help landowners install conservation practices that improved water quality and limited soil erosion. He helped the conservation district secure no-till drills and low-energy precision application nozzles for irrigation systems to change the way farming is done in the Panhandle.

“In his 84 years, I imagine Hal has tackled just about every challenge that land has to throw at him,” said State Conservationist Gary O’Neill. He points out that Clark continues to get up to check the cows and fences with a smile on his face.

**Floyd King,
Governor’s Outstanding Legacy in Agriculture Award**



The Governor’s Outstanding Legacy in Agriculture Award was presented posthumously to King of Hydro. He was born in 1918 in “Blackjack Country” in the sandy hills of Caddo County and grew up on a farm homesteaded in 1904. While he farmed and took correspondence classes from Hills Business College in Oklahoma City, he volunteered for one year of service in the U.S. Army just nine months prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor. During his service he saved money and he and his wife, Lola, were able to purchase a small farm north of Eakly in 1945.

King worked tirelessly to persuade the Farmers Home Administration to loan him money to drill a well so he could irrigate his farm. After six years of effort, he drilled the first irrigation well in Caddo County in 1951. This revolutionary act was so successful he eventually farmed over 1,100 acres and rented an additional 600 acres. His experience with irrigation led to opening King’s Irrigation Service in 1954 which was later expanded to include agricultural machinery.

King helped Caddo County become a leader in peanut production and irrigation innovation. By 1970, his county led much of the southwest in peanut production. King was instrumental in founding organizations to work with elected officials and was responsible for the establishment of the Caddo Research Station. He was the founding president of the Caddo County Area Peanut Growers Association and the Oklahoma Peanut Commission. He was the founding Chairman of the National Peanut Growers Association and served as chairman of the Southwestern Peanut Growers Association. In addition, King was Progressive Farmer magazine’s 1976 Man of the Year in Oklahoma Agriculture.

After his death in 2013 at the age of 95, his legacy in the Oklahoma peanut industry endures with other advancements in agricultural irrigation science and techniques. The economy of Caddo County benefited from his vision and his determination.

“In all of his public affairs Mr. King was a hard-working, engaging figure of gracious honesty and abiding dignity,” said Congressman Frank Lucas. “I never had to doubt where my friend, Mr. King, stood when matters of conflict arose – it was always, relentlessly, faithfully on the side of the families that produce our country’s food supply and that carry forth the heritage of American agriculture.”

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Photo caption: Virgil Jurgensmeyer, a leader in agriculture as well as his community and the state of Oklahoma, was recognized with Governor Mary Fallin's Outstanding Achievement in Agriculture Award during Ag Day ceremonies at the state Capitol. His family received the award from Governor Fallin on his behalf during Ag Day at the state capitol on Wednesday.



Photo caption: The Governor's Outstanding Legacy in Agriculture Award was presented posthumously to Floyd King. His family received the award from Governor Mary Fallin during Ag Day at the state capitol on Wednesday.



Photo caption: Hal Clark received the Governor's Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Award from Governor Mary Fallin during Ag Day at the state capitol on Wednesday.



Photo caption: Anna Belle Wiedemann received the Governor's Outstanding Public Service in Agriculture Award from Governor Mary Fallin during Ag Day at the state capitol on Wednesday.

