

New cattle methods to be featured at O'Brien Field Day

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HEPLER -- How do calm cattle, cow chips and clean water relate to each other? Best management practices relating to those three topics are highlighted on a field day hosted by O'Brien Cattle Company.

The field day begins at 4 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 18 at the O'Brien Cattle Company pens located at 724 Calvary Road, north of Hepler in Bourbon County.

The tour highlights the O'Brien Cattle Company's working pens, which were designed and constructed according to low-stress handling guidelines, and the use of grass-based feeding sites, which help distribute manure unlike confined feedlots. Other features include the protective measures for riparian areas and alternative watering sites for the cattle.

"Good cattle managers can be recognized in several ways--such as low-stress handling that keeps livestock calm and healthy; grazing management that produces cow chips flat enough to toss when dried, and clean, fresh water for their animals and downstream neighbors," said Dale Kirkham, Clean Water Farms Project field organizer with the Kansas Rural Center. "All of these and more are used by the O'Brien family to make their cattle program efficient and productive."

Featured speakers on the field day include: Kerry O'Brien and Jason Sutterby of the O'Brien Cattle Company; Gary Kilgore, K-State Professor Emeritus; Dale Kirkham, KRC Clean Water Farms Project field organizer, and Herschel George, K-State Research and Extension Watershed Specialist.

The tour of O'Brien's cattle operation is sponsored by Marmaton WRAPS; K-State Research and Extension; Bourbon County Conservation District, and the Kansas Rural Center (KRC).

For more information on the tour, contact Herschel George at (785) 229-3520, Dale Kirkham at (620) 583-5247 or see the KRC website at www.kansasruralcenter.org. The field day will conclude at approximately 8 p.m. and includes a free evening meal, sponsored by Producers Co-op of Girard and Marmaton WRAPS. To reserve a place on the field day as well as a meal, call Kara at (620) 756-1000.

Driving directions to the field day location are: three miles north of Hepler on K-3 then 1/2 mile west. Or go one mile south of the intersection of Kansas Highways 3 and 39 then 1/2 mile west.

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