Oklahomans are making a name for themselves in the grape juice industry as one of only three producers in the United States, thanks to Redland Juice Co.

Redland Juice Co., located in Lexington, Okla., is comprised of three vineyards: Willow Pond Vineyard, owned by Jill Stichler; the Vineyard at Dripping Springs, owned by Kathy Bates; and Rock Creek Vineyard, owned by James and Rinda Skaggs.

The Center assisted Redland Juice Co. with the production of their unique juices, said William McGlynn, Center horticultural products processing specialist.

“The owners of Redland Juice Co. came to the Center in the summer of 2003 to see how we could help with the processing stage of production,” McGlynn said. “When Redland Juice came to the Center, they wanted us to help them with a processing pilot run, as well as learn about the facilities and technology needed to do this.”

Stichler attended Center workshops to familiarize herself with the rules, regulations and laws required to properly produce, distribute and market the juices.

“I would recommend the programs to anybody,” Stichler said. “The whole process was fun, and I learned so much.”

Upon deciding to utilize the resources available at the Center, Redland Juice Co. had the 2003 grape crop pressed locally, then trucked the juice to the Center.

“The grape juice underwent a two-week process, including a preliminary filtration, heat pasteurization and refrigerated storage period, followed by another filtration and pasteurization process and bottling the resulting product into gourmet wine bottles,” McGlynn said.

Stichler said the whole experience was priceless.

“We couldn’t have done it at all—not with the amount of money we had to spend—without the Center,” she said. “I don’t think we could’ve gotten the hands-on experience anywhere else, and that
A message from the director

It seems that business and technical managers face a conundrum with regard to food and agribusiness industry stability and growth in Oklahoma. There are unrealized opportunities in new business venues, in new product development and process improvement, and in better ways to develop and create incentives for increased employee productivity.

At the same time, there are almost impossible challenges in competition, regulations, labor relations, innovative marketing and operations management, and in available time to think. It takes incredible focus and perseverance to accomplish business objectives.

Recently, a business consultant friend, Jim Fitzgerald, shared with me several traits for business success in the business climate in which we work. As I read through them, I realized how appropriate these were to meet the demands of success in this food and agribusiness industry in Oklahoma. I have summarized these as:

1) Integrity: do not lose your ethical compass,
2) High Energy: health and exercise habits are vital to a high demand life,
3) Leadership: accept a higher level of responsibility,
4) People Skills: listen and be genuine,
5) Balance: personal time is imperative for best business,
6) Sense of Humor: inject lightness into your work,
7) Chemistry: find the best fit for you and your employees,
8) Intelligence: feed your mind with a sound reading plan,
9) Achievement: take time to evaluate yourself, and
10) Global Orientation: push yourself to see large opportunities.

These ideas can help us as we create business success this year. I challenge you to reference these ideas often during the year.

Don’t forget, the Food and Agricultural Products Center has a quality management team that is available to help you grow your business. Let us know how we can help.

J. Roy Escoubas, Director

The Governor’s Conference on Agriculture and Economic Growth will be held April 13-14. The conference will include a variety of agriculture-related topics ranging from value-added products to agricultural tourism.

Gov. Brad Henry and USDA Under Secretary of Agriculture Bill Hawks will be keynote speakers. Oklahoma Secretary of Tourism and Commerce Kathy Taylor and Roy Peters, Oklahoma Manufacturer’s Alliance, are also featured speakers for the conference.

“The philosophy of the conference is simple: by taking full advantage of the rural resources already in place, we can create opportunities for economic growth in areas that need additional sources of revenue and employment,” Gov. Henry said. “This is an opportunity for rural leaders and entrepreneurs to learn how to build a future for their communities.”

Gov. Henry has assigned Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture Terry Peach the task of organizing the conference.

“No one knows the difficulties facing rural Oklahoma any better than those of us involved in production agriculture,” Peach said. “The revitalization of rural Oklahoma is a challenge we must accept not only for agriculture, but for the future of our state.”

Center Director J. Roy Escoubas will be giving a presentation during the conference.

“I am honored to represent the Center at the Governor’s Conference,” Escoubas said.

He will be discussing how the Center has impacted value-added agriculture and economic growth.

Early bird registration for the conference is $45 and is due before March 30. Those registering late will be charged $60.

The conference registration fees include meals, meeting activities and materials. Participants are responsible for all room reservations and charges.

A registration form must be completed for each person. Forms can be found at www.oda.state.ok.us and should be returned with a check made payable to Governor’s Conference on Agriculture and mailed to P.O. Box 18984, Oklahoma City, OK 73118.

The conference will be held at the Cox Convention Center. Conference headquarters are at the Renaissance Hotel. For reservations, call 1-800-Hotels1 and ask for the discounted Governor’s Conference of Agriculture group rate.
Food Safety Symposium to be held May 20

The Center is making plans for the Food Safety Symposium to be held May 20, 2004. The symposium will focus on prions and toxins and will provide a unique opportunity for participants to interact with some of the nation’s leading scientists in the area of food safety.

For questions about the symposium contact Stanley Gilliland at (405) 744-6071 or seg@okstate.edu.

Economic impact of MIO companies

The Center conducted a study researching the economic impacts of the Made in Oklahoma Coalition companies to the overall economy of Oklahoma. Data for this study includes information from 18 companies for 2003.

The data reported for these 18 MIO companies showed that in 2003 processing activities were conducted in 72 facilities in Oklahoma and employed 10,032 Oklahomans. Thirteen of the 18 companies reported employing 8,942 people at $311.4 million in payroll.

These same companies reported sales totaling approximately $1.9 billion, with $1.1 billion in Oklahoma-made products being exported to other states and/or countries. Eight companies reported an anticipated growth of 300 jobs and investments more than $57.7 million in their Oklahoma operations during the next two years and projected their sales to reach $122.7 million during the same time period.

For this study, the economic impacts associated with the MIO companies were categorized as direct impacts, indirect impacts and induced impacts.

The business activities of the MIO companies directly resulted in 10,032 jobs and more than $333 million in payroll to employees. The indirect and induced impacts added another 8,628 jobs and more than $323 million in payroll.

Thus, the total economic impacts of these MIO firms were 18,660 jobs for Oklahomans and more than $656 million in payroll. The total impacts are the summation of these three economic impacts. The total economic impacts of these MIO firms were 18,660 jobs for Oklahomans and more than $656 million in payroll.

In addition, April is Made in Oklahoma month and the MIO and the Center is helping to promote Made in Oklahoma products.

“Celebrate Made in Oklahoma month this April by trying the many great products offered by our state’s food industry,” said Chuck Willoughby, Center business, planning and marketing associate.

Low-carb trend popular in U.S.

Low-carbohydrate diets have become increasingly popular in the United States, and many companies now offer low-carbohydrate breads and other products.

However, the low-carbohydrate diet is not well studied in the scientific world, and there is not enough scientific evidence in favor of the use of these diets, said Patricia Rayas-Duarte, cereal chemist for the Center.

John McDougall, an advisory board member of Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, states in a letter to the editor in the current issue of the Mayo Clinic Proceedings that low-carbohydrate diets can throw people into a metabolic state called ketosis that occurs during severe illness.

“In order to produce bread that is significantly lower in carbohydrates, but that still has the taste and feel of ‘regular’ bread, manufacturers must lower the amount of actual flour that goes into the dough,” Rayas said. “They have to increase the amount of protein, gums or fiber they add to the dough, as well as the amount of yeast.”

The difference in carbohydrate content between low-carbohydrate bread and regular bread can be up to 70 percent less carbohydrates per slice.

However, to create appealing flavor and texture, the amount of fat in each slice is increased by 57 percent.
Center Seminars and Workshops

- Basic Training, third Thursday of each month (except December)
- Research Symposium, April 19, 2004
- Non-Meat HACCP Workshop, April 28-29, 2004
- Food Industry Roundtable, May 19, 2004
- Food Safety Symposium, May 20, 2004

For more information or to register, call (405) 744-6071 or see our Web site at www.fapc.okstate.edu.

In Memory of Michael Mitchell

The Center is saddened to announce the passing of Michael Mitchell. Mitchell, member of the Center Industry Advisory Committee, passed away Jan. 31, 2004. He was 51.

Mitchell was the plant manager for the Schwan’s Bakery Inc. facility in Stilwell, Okla. Mitchell was responsible for all plant functions and overseeing 700 employees at the Stilwell plant. Mitchell worked in the food industry for 30 years and held various positions, including general laborer, supervisor, superintendent, operations manager and plant manager. Mitchell was a very hard and dedicated worker. He loved life and he loved people. Mitchell would always say, “He didn’t make his people, his people made him.”

“We couldn’t have done it at all — not with the amount of money we had to spend — without the Center.”  

Jill Stichler  
Redland Juice Co.

2004, Stichler said. Redland Juice Co. is currently in the process of expanding its operation by purchasing a 30,000-square feet building in the Lexington, Okla. area, Stichler said. The company hopes to be operational by August 2004, and when this is accomplished, other plans can be put into action.

Throughout the expansion process, Redland Juice Co. plans to continue working closely with the Center to develop a marketing plan and conduct a marketing analysis.