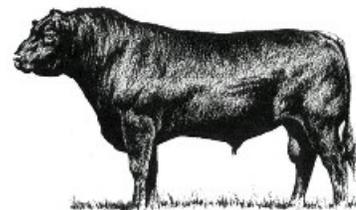


Blythe Angus

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February 15, 2019

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the Kansas House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development,

I am writing as a landowner, cattle rancher and constituent to speak in support of House Bill 2167. Blythe Family Farms, LLC is owned and operated by my husband Duane Blythe and me, along with our five grown children, who are all shareholders. Agriculture is at a difficult point in the economic cycle. With low profit margins and high input expenses, along with the long hours and physical strength required, many young people are choosing not to farm. Keeping this in mind, we encouraged our kids to attend college with the goal of broadening their knowledge and bringing new resources home to the ranch, if they choose to return.

Our oldest son, Trenton, graduated in May 2016 with a degree in Wildlife and Outdoor Enterprise Management—a degree specifically created to teach individuals the skills they need to open their own hunting enterprise. Through the years, we have been focused on conservation and many of our improvements to pasture and crop ground have been done with wildlife in mind. In addition, we have learned that what is good for cattle, is also good for wildlife. We have an abundance of deer, turkeys and game birds on our land. Trenton has always enjoyed hunting and today he has a fully licensed, viable outfitting service called Level Creek Outfitters in operation and holds the permits to raise pheasant and run Controlled Shooting hunts. We hope that this business will provide him the additional income he needs to supplement his income from our ranch. I have attached a copy of the information from Kansas State University outlining the major. Currently Trenton is raising pheasant and running Controlled Shooting hunts, and he plans to one day expand to deer and turkey hunts.

Often hunting outfitters are criticized as they are making money off the hunting privileges. But I believe that by making available the transferrable landowner deer tags, you are encouraging investment in the deer habitat and increasing management. It is people like my son that are helping keep Kansas farm ground and pasture in local private hands. They pay the landowner a lease fee and help manage for wildlife, so that the landowner may not feel the need to sell small tracts of land to out-of-state hunting investors. Too many parcels of land in our area have sold to people from far away with hunting interests. They visit the property infrequently, manage it for wildlife only, allowing cedar trees to grow up, planting a few crops to draw the animals and frankly create a fire hazard and remove the land from production. It is frustrating to be their neighbor! Hopefully my son can negotiate with local landowners to provide them some management assistance as well as a lease fee, in return for hunting access and transferrable deer tags, thereby keeping the land in family hands.

Sustainability has become a buzzword in recent times, but it has always been in the hearts of farmers and ranchers. We work every day to make the land better, improve soil health,

increase efficiency of our livestock and protect the watersheds. At the same time, we have managed wildlife populations to minimize damage to the crops and land, as well as keep the wildlife herd healthy. By managing the wildlife population through hunting and other management strategies, farmers and ranchers are the boots on the ground providing wildlife management practices with support from the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks & Tourism to keep these populations under control.

The bottom line for us is that in order to be able to support our family and allow them to be operators on the family land and of the family business, we must be able to provide new opportunities for income to them. The goal that my husband and I have ultimately is to pass on this land that was purchased in 1890 by John Randolph Blythe, owned and improved by four generations, to the fifth generation—our children. Our hope is that the land will stay together in their ownership to pass on to subsequent generations. But in order to do that, we must be willing to think creatively on income sources and take advantage of opportunities.

I believe that HB 2167 is important to having the ability to expand our income options, and therefore the ability to support the sustainability of family farms in Kansas. The farmers and ranchers of Kansas are excellent caretakers of the land and the reason we have a wildlife population is because of their generations of work in partnership with the KDWPT. Also, hunting enterprises provide additional income to farm families, allowing young people to move back to rural areas and be involved in daily operations of their family farms. Ultimately, that means more farms will stay together, maintain their land in production, and increase the sustainability of rural Kansas. I support HB 2167. If you have any questions or would like to discuss my position on this bill, please feel free to contact me at the above email or phone numbers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah K. Lyons-Blythe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Deborah K. Lyons-Blythe



WILDLIFE AND OUTDOOR ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT



Interests

- Exploring Nature
- Wildlife
- Camping
- Hunting
- Fishing
- Hiking

Skills

- Effective Communication
- Outdoor Skills
- Problem Solving
- Critical Thinking
- Management Skills

Possible Careers

- Hunting Preserves
- Gamebird Production Companies
- Outfitter Companies
- Guide Service Companies
- Shooting Sports Facilities
- Fishing & Hunting Resorts
- Outdoor Adventure Companies

What is Wildlife and Outdoor Enterprise Management?

This four-year university program is the first Bachelors of Science (BS) Degree to be created to train professional operational managers for hunting/shooting preserves and resorts, game bird production companies, fishing resorts and outdoor experience companies (i.e., trail riding, nature study, bird watching, back country hiking/camping, etc.).

While our students take courses in wildlife and fisheries management, this program is not a traditional wildlife and fisheries biology program of study. To create professional managers, this program incorporates a series of business, hospitality management, natural resources, wildlife and fisheries management courses with "in-the-field" outdoor skills courses. This program was designed with input from working professionals from across the United States.



ENVISION YOURSELF AS A WOEM STUDENT

Selective Admissions

Admission into our program is selective and based on past academic performance and experience. Students must be accepted at KSU first then apply for admission into the WOEM program in the spring. Typically, we select ~25 students each spring to begin classes in the fall semester.

Student Activities

Because of our selective cohort admission process, students in our program form a tight-knit community. Students can participate in our WOEM Club, the KSU Shooting Sports Club, the KSU Fly Fishing Club, KSU's chapter of The Wildlife Society, and many other campus-sponsored programs.

Entrepreneurship

Our program does not lead to a typical wildlife management degree. Although our students receive a strong foundation in wildlife management courses, they are more focused on leading successful outdoor recreation businesses when they leave KSU. By incorporating courses that lead to a minor in business, our curriculum is specifically designed to train students to become successful entrepreneurs.

Internships



Students in our WOEM program must complete an internship. These can vary widely in focus and geography. Past internships have included guiding exotic hunts in New Zealand, fly fishing services in Georgia, shotgun sports services in Kansas and elsewhere, and managing big-game ranches in Texas.

Contact Us

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Connect on social media

K-State Horticulture & Natural Resources

Visit Campus

<http://www.k-state.edu/admissions/visit/>

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Updated April 2017

“ The Wildlife and Outdoor Enterprise Management program and Kansas State is ideal for those who aspire to have a career in the hunting, fishing or wildlife industry. The wide range of curriculum and internship opportunities allows those to choose the particular outdoor industry they desire to pursue. ”

MARY STARR

Wildlife & Outdoor Enterprise Management student



TAYLOR BIVINS

Wildlife & Outdoor Enterprise Management student

“ Graduating from the WOEM program at Kansas State University is nothing but unique and special. Winning the National Championship of bass fishing is also just as extraordinary. I will forever cherish and remember both of these accomplishments. ”