

The Made-in-Oklahoma Program

Jason Harvey, Agricultural Marketing Coordinator, Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry

A section of the Market Development division of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, & Forestry (ODAFF), the Made-In-Oklahoma (MIO) program was established to assist native companies in promoting products produced or manufactured in the state. Many people are familiar with the term "Made-In-Oklahoma," but are unaware of the benefits the program can bring to their business.

The mission of the Made-In-Oklahoma program is to: Collectively promote brand awareness, trade, and consumer loyalty for Oklahoma food products through cooperative marketing activities; enhance sales to retail and food services; and promote business retention and expansion in Oklahoma. This is accomplished through participation in various trade shows, publications and marketing efforts via the Internet.

Membership is free to all companies qualifying for the program. Companies may sign-up for membership by requesting an application from the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, & Forestry, or by completing the application form available online at www.madeinoklahoma.net. Once received, the application is reviewed by the domestic marketing staff to determine if the company meets the parameters of the program.

Madeinoklahoma.net

With consumers continuing to shop on-line more and more often, a Made-In-Oklahoma website was created to facilitate this process. The site was designed to be consumer-oriented with a link to an online shopping mall, listing companies enrolled in the program who have websites and e-commerce capabilities. Visitors may also search the database of companies alphabetically, or if they are looking

for a specific product, they may search by product. The website is a great opportunity for small companies to receive Internet exposure without the cost of building and maintaining their own web site.

Other features on the Web site include a listing of farmers' markets throughout the state, recipes, an online version of publications, and listings of upcoming events the MIO program is participating in or sponsoring. Consumers may also find a list of stores considered to be registered retailers. Registered retailers carry Made-In-Oklahoma products in their place of business.

Trade Shows

Participants in the MIO program have the opportunity to take part in various trade shows across the state on a cost-share basis. By renting large amounts of space and subleasing it back to MIO companies, ODAFF is able to pass along considerable savings to its MIO members. There are three types of shows targeted by the MIO program: consumer and wholesale trade shows and in-store demos focusing on the retail sector.

Consumer trade shows are a great opportunity for companies to get their product in front of the general public and receive direct feedback. These shows also help new companies and existing companies expanding their product line by establishing name recognition with consumers.

The largest trade show where the Made-In-Oklahoma program has a presence is the Tulsa State Fair. During the eleven-day event companies can expect more than 800,000 people to pass in front of their booths.

Wholesale trade shows provide MIO companies interested in wholesale sales with the opportunity to present their product to hundreds of potential buyers in two or

About Jason Harvey

Jason Harvey is an agricultural marketing coordinator for the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry (ODAFF). He has worked for the ODAFF since 1997.

As head of the diversified agriculture section, Jason manages the Oklahoma Grown program and oversees farmers' markets across the state. Jason helps administer the Made-in-Oklahoma program and handles the ODAFF's responsibilities for the Agriculture Linked Deposit Program. He also assists with rural economic development programs such as the Oklahoma Agriculture Enhancement and Diversification Program.

Jason attended Oklahoma State University and received bachelor's and master's degrees in agriculture education and agronomy.

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three-day exhibitions. ODAFF participates in the Wholesale Gift Show held in Oklahoma City the last weekend of July to provide exposure for MIO companies at a time when wholesale buyers begin placing large orders for the holiday season. ODAFF also participates in the Oklahoma Restaurant Association's Midsouthwest Foodservice Convention each spring. At the convention, MIO companies may market their products to restaurant and food service companies at the largest food service show in the state.

ODAFF also builds relationships with retail grocery stores to host various in-store demonstrations. Retail stores allow companies shelf space in a designated store for a pre-determined amount of time. They also allow companies to distribute samples on selected days. Store sales are tracked and if there's good movement of products, the store negotiates with the company to supply product for the store's warehouse. This is a great opportunity for companies to get their foot in the door at the retail grocery level.

Promotional Items

Companies registered in the program have the option of utilizing several promotional items made available by ODAFF. The MIO logo can be used and incorporated into any label, sign, flier, or banner a registered company may have on hand or produce. Rail strips and shelf talkers are two point-of-sale materials prominently showcasing the MIO logo and are offered free of charge. Companies may

place these by or in front of their products on grocery shelves or in their booths at trade shows to promote their products as produced or manufactured in Oklahoma.

Additionally, the MIO program offers logo stickers for placement on labels to promote a company's involvement in the program. The first roll of stickers is provided free of charge, with additional rolls sold for a nominal fee. Companies also have the option of ordering and customizing the size and color of their own stickers.

Publications

The Oklahoma Gift Basket Directory is published by the MIO program and highlights companies who produce baskets of products made in the state. Directories are displayed at visitor and information centers throughout the state and are mailed to those requesting a copy.

Serving Up Oklahoma is the semi-annual magazine published by ODAFF providing recipes, company profiles and stories from the MIO program. Each issue has a central theme with related recipes and stories, as well as a profile of a new company explaining their product line and providing a brief background. Existing companies are also featured in each issue.

Companies are given the opportunity to advertise in statewide magazines thru special cost-share promotions. The holiday issue of *Oklahoma Today* and special insert in the *Daily Oklahoman* and *Tulsa World* also offer companies statewide exposure at a minimal cost.