

Farmer-Stockman has new look, new owner

In its 75th year of publication, the Farmer-Stockman has turned another page; serving Southwest readers still main goal

By Ernest Shiner

A NEW CHAPTER in its long history of service to Texas agriculture is beginning for the Texas Farmer-Stockman.

With this issue, the farm magazine that has served Southwest agriculture for 75 years has a new, more convenient size, a new owner, new management, a new look and a new dedication to its readers.

On May 1 the Texas Farmer-Stockman and the Oklahoma Farmer-Stockman were acquired by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publications. The magazines are now part of the Nebraska Farmer Company, which is owned by HBJ. They will continue to be published as separate magazines for Oklahoma and Texas with individual state editors and news bureaus.

In addition to Nebraska, HBJ publishes farm magazines in Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Ohio, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

Robert Fensler, president and publisher of the Nebraska Farmer Company publications, will be publisher of the Texas and Oklahoma magazines. Bob Bishop is editorial director of the four publications which now are part of Nebraska Farmer Company. Jim Kanter, also in Lincoln, is advertising director of the four magazines.

The Farmer-Stockman publications will continue to be locally edited and written. Oklahoma Editor Ernest A. Shiner, assisted by Associate Editor Dan Crummett, will maintain offices in Oklahoma City. Texas Editor Charles Taylor will headquarter in Dallas, assisted by Associate Editor Jim Steiert, located at Hereford.

Since 1911, when E. K. Gaylord first established the Farmer-Stockman as a publication of the Oklahoma Publishing Company in Oklahoma City, the magazine has been a leader in the region's agriculture.

E. K. Gaylord directed activities of

the Farmer-Stockman for more than 70 years until his death in 1974. His son, Edward L. Gaylord, has been instrumental in the development of the magazines from the time he joined the Oklahoma Publishing Company following WW II service.

The Farmer-Stockman has been under the ownership and direction of the Gaylords and the Oklahoma Publishing Company continuously except for a brief period beginning in 1973. At that time ownership was transferred to a group of long-time employees and the Farmer-Stockman Publishing Company was established as a Texas corporation. In 1977 the Gaylords assumed majority ownership of that company and control of the Farmer-Stockman magazines.

The history of the Farmer-Stockman is part of the history of agriculture in the Southwest.

The Oklahoma Farmer-Stockman was founded in September 1911, as the successor to the Weekly Oklahoman, which had been started in July 1894 and which was owned by the Oklahoma Publishing Company.

In December 1913, Carl C. Williams was named editor of the Oklahoma Farmer-Stockman, moving to Oklahoma from Colorado where he had edited Scientific Farming. His wife, Mabel Bates Williams, joined the staff as editor of what was called the "Domestic Science Department."

During his editorship, Carl Williams proved to be an outstanding leader of farmers. He helped to organize the Oklahoma Cotton Co-Operative Marketing Association, first of its kind in the nation. He also directed the selection of "Oklahoma Master Farmers" from 1926 through 1930, a project that built much goodwill for the publication.

Williams was active in promoting the advent of farm mechanization,

sponsoring tractor shows, farm institutes, exhibit trains and other educational events.

National recognition for his work in cotton marketing brought about Williams' appointment by President Herbert Hoover in 1929 as a member of the Federal Farm Board, set up to stabilize farm prices. Williams took a leave of absence to serve on the board and when his term expired in 1933 he retired to Ft. Pierce, Fla., where he died on June 7, 1953.

During Williams' tenure as editor, Clarence Roberts, county agent at Enid, was hired.

When prices crashed in the early 1930's, Roberts stumped the state to organize the Oklahoma Live Stock Marketing Association and its affiliate, the National Live Stock Credit Corporation. The publication invested several thousand dollars to help get them started, a loan which was repaid as they developed into large, soundly financed institutions.

Roberts also took the lead in getting the Oklahoma Farm Bureau organization going. His efforts resulted in chartering of the Oklahoma Farm Bureau in February 1942, a few months before his death. Roberts also helped organize the Oklahoma Crop Improvement Association.

On Roberts' death in 1942, Ferdie J. Deering, who had joined the staff in 1937, was named acting editor and in August 1943 was appointed editor.

At that time, a bearded farm magazine writer from Texas, T. C. Richardson, was named associate editor. Known as the "Rambling Longhorn," Richardson diligently set about expanding the coverage and influence of the Farmer-Stockman into the far corners of Texas.

Although he was 66 years old when he joined the Texas Farmer-Stockman, he turned in 13 productive years before he died "with his boots on," doing the work and meeting the people that he loved most.

As editor, Deering helped to organize and served as president of the Sirloin Club of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma City Farm Club. He also chaired the Oklahoma State University advisory committee and was one of the incorporators of the Oklahoma Wheat Research Institute. In 1955, he served on a committee that established the National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center at Oklahoma City.

Deering was president of the Amer-



Edward L. Gaylord, left, and his father E. K. Gaylord, founded and developed the Farmer-Stockman. Photo was made just before the elder Gaylord's death in 1974.

ican Agricultural Editors Association in 1951.

Working with Oklahoma State University, he helped to organize the first flying farmer group in the nation as the Oklahoma Flying Farmers in 1943 and 1944. Later he helped organize the Texas Flying Farmers.

Deering also launched the Rural Neighborhood Progress Contest as a project of the publications in 1947.

Sam Whitlow joined the Texas Farmer-Stockman staff in 1951. He established himself as a leader of Texas agriculture, attested to by numerous awards and acclaim.

Beginning in 1968 Whitlow was assisted by Charles Taylor, associate editor, a native of Timpson, Tex., in Shelby County. Upon Whitlow's retirement in 1970 Taylor became editor of the Texas Farmer-Stockman.

Taylor has had a distinguished career as editor. One outstanding achievement was his winning the annual "Oscars in Agriculture" award in 1979, the most prestigious writing award in agricultural journalism. He is a member of the American Agricultural Editors Association, a past president of the Dallas Ag Club and a member of other agricultural and journalistic groups.

Ernest Shiner, a native Oklahoman who joined the staff in 1952, is editor

of the Oklahoma Farmer-Stockman. Among his contributions has been leadership in establishing and carrying on the Oklahoma Farm Show, held annually at the fairgrounds in Oklahoma City. He is a past president of the American Agricultural Editors Association, Oklahoma City Farm Club, member of the Livestock and Agriculture committees of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, and is an active member of several other agricultural organizations in the state. He has received numerous awards from agricultural groups in Oklahoma, including the Honorary State Farmer degree conferred by the Future Farmers of America.

The continuous goal of the Farmer-Stockman over the years has been to keep up with the times and to inform readers of changes ahead in agriculture. During its early years it published this statement of purpose on the front cover of each issue:

*Edited to help rural families
grow better crops, improve their
livestock, enjoy modern
equipment, and achieve finer
living.*

As the Farmer-Stockman moves toward the 21st century, this goal appears to be as appropriate as when it first appeared, even though farms and farmers will be much different.#

Farmer-Stockman sold to Nebraska Farmer

THE FARMER-STOCKMAN Publishing Company has been sold to the Nebraska Farmer Publishing Company, Edward L. Gaylord, president of Oklahoma Publishing Company, has announced.

The new owners, a division of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., a major U.S. publisher with headquarters in Orlando, Fla., will continue to publish the Oklahoma Farmer-Stockman and the Texas Farmer-Stockman.

While the magazines will be published monthly in a new format, editors and writers of both magazines will continue to be based in Texas and Oklahoma.

"Subscribers to The Farmer-Stockman need not be apprehensive about receiving a useful, reliable farm publication," Gaylord said. The change is effective with the current June issue.

Nebraska Farmer Publishing Company publishes Nebraska Farmer and Colorado Rancher & Farmer magazines. Robert Fensler of Lincoln is president-publisher. Like the Farmer-Stockman publications, these magazines have a long record of service to agriculture and agribusiness.

"We are confident that Nebraska Farmer Publishing Company will continue high traditions of service to agriculture that the Farmer-Stockman has followed and we wish them success in helping agriculture to regain a sound economic position as one of our nation's largest and most essential industries," Gaylord said.

"We plan to continue the tradition of fine service rendered to the farmers

and ranchers of the Southwest by these fine publications," said Fensler. "Our Nebraska Farmer publication was founded in 1859. We started publishing Colorado Rancher & Farmer in 1947 to



Robert Fensler

serve the rural readers of that state."

At the time of the sale, Oklahoma Publishing Company was principal owner of the Farmer-Stockman Publishing Company, with minority stock held by several present and former employees.#