

# THE OKLAHOMA AGRICULTURAL HALL OF FAME

## RALPH CHAIN

by Jack Carson

*It was, perhaps, poetically fitting that Ralph Chain was named to the Oklahoma Agriculture Hall of Fame at the conclusion of the first Governor's Conference on Agriculture and Economic Growth, April 14, 2004.*

*His story, and the story of the Chain Ranch, read like a tome of Theodore Roosevelt's experiences as a rancher. The course he helped set for his ranch's future, on the other hand, mirrored the suggestions of the day's brightest minds regarding the future of agriculture. The Chain Ranch's beginnings date back to 1893 when Mr. Chain's grandfather bartered a shotgun and \$50 for 160 acres of sandy Oklahoma land. Hard work, faith in God and a progressive spirit helped build the ranch into more than 60,000 acres of range and cropland by the time Ralph Chain earned this honor.*

*Over the course of his stewardship, the ranch focused on practices environmentally sound and adopted farming methods conducive to producing all-natural beef. Mr. Chain discovered that these practices were not only cost-effective, but they also boosted the land's capacity to host wildlife to a level like never before. His stewardship had helped the Chain Ranch pioneer a new industry: Oklahoma agri-tourism. Sportsmen, naturalists, and others seeking the beauty of wildlife-rich western Oklahoma soon found about the wonderful treasures of the Chain Ranch. Both the ranch and countless enthusiasts soon became the beneficiaries as the Chain Ranch Sportsman's Club was created.*

*Meanwhile, the rural phone company that served his area, youth groups, and Church interests were also beneficiaries of his stewardship. Mr. Chain answered the call for leadership and service wherever he saw it. For him, the life of service to his Lord and his fellow man was a calling. Not an option. "Everything I have is on loan from God. I'm just here to take care of it," he said at his induction ceremony. This award should really go to my family and the ranch hands who have been with us for so many years.*

