

# Goodland native earns honors at Thomas County feedyard

By Miranda Reiman

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Grass & Grain

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Rachel Smith, a 1997 Goodland High School graduate, is a good hand around a feedyard. She can wash tanks and work in the mill. She knows how to doctor cattle, process arrivals and read bunks.

She puts all that experience to work at the former Thomas County Feeders, at Halford, where her actual position is full-time cattle clerk. That means she handles all of the "natural" paperwork, and deals in customer service, too.

Although she spends most of her time in the office nowadays, Smith started out doing pretty much every job in the feeding industry, and she still reads bunks once or twice a week. That's a rare skill for most cattle clerks.

Dedication to detail usually comes with the job description, but Smith goes above and beyond, perhaps because she sees a bigger purpose in her everyday work.

"It's fun talking to guys with cattle from California to Florida and hearing the differences, but we are all trying to get to the same goal," says Smith, a Goodland, native. "We are able to give them their data back and answer their questions. We help them improve their herd and it helps us all make a profit."

It's that commitment to the Certified Angus Beef LLC core philosophy, along with an exceptional work record, that earned the title, 2010 Quality Assurance Officer of the Year. The award, which dates back to 2000, is chosen from employees among nearly 70 Certified Angus Beef-licensed yards nationwide.

Smith's enthusiasm is infectious, but it's the combination of optimism and get-down-to-business that makes her extremely effective and efficient, says former manager Mike Hunter.

"She is happy-go-lucky, but when it comes to her paperwork, she is serious," he says.

That became an increasingly important part of Smith's role after the yard switched to 100 percent natural production in 2006. As cattle enter the yard, she checks their affidavits and tracks down any missing information with the producer.

"We are really good about making sure everything is signed daily and filled in as we do it," Smith says.

"We want the buyers to see it takes a lot of extra work, but we're doing it to provide the best beef we

can."

Everything is kept in order with color-coded files, lists and lots of double-checking — a system that has passed every U.S. Department of Agriculture audit to date.

The yard foreman enrolls cattle in the certified program, but Smith takes it from there. She requests packing-plant data and sends pen closeouts to the Manhattan office within days of shipping.

"I hate waiting on paperwork, so I hate making people wait for me," she says.

Although Smith seems like a natural fit for her current position, she didn't plan a career in the beef industry. Her first livestock experience came from her grandmother's farm and 4-H. Then she went to Panhandle State University in Guymon, Okla., for agronomy and got a job at nearby Texas County Feedyard.

"I started in the office there and asked to try some of the other spots," says Smith. So she was moved from processing to the vet barn to the mill and driving a feed truck. "I kind of fell in love with the beef industry because it wasn't the same thing every day," she says.

The Oklahoma experience made life easier when she moved north. "I can understand where the cowboys are coming from when they talk about the animals and where the mill guys are coming from on the feed," Smith says.

She's been at Thomas County for nine years.

"You can't have changeover in a position like hers," Hunter says. "Consistency is the key, and you can't train somebody to do everything Rachel does."

"She's not a clock-watching person," he continues. "She is here when she needs to be and doesn't leave until she's done."

That typically means coming in at 7 a.m. and posting feed and vet charges from the day before — unless it's those days she's reading bunks, when her day will start even earlier. After that Smith sorts through harvest data, matches it up with closeouts, fields customer questions, and keeps up on all the other details.

"I always love learning, so I'm talking to these guys and I learn a little bit more every day," she says. "If you stop learning, you stop growing."

That's just one more example of the attitude that makes Smith a walking definition of "good help," and a truly great guardian of quality for her yard and the Certified Angus Beef program.

## Thomas County Jail

Booked into the Thomas County jail:

- Michael Anthony Fieger, 23, Oakley, Aug. 5, probation revocation, Thomas County Sheriff's Office/Thomas County Court Services, released Aug. 19 to other agency.

- Jeffery Blaine Crowder, 40, Brewster, Aug. 11, battery, probation violation, Colby Police Department, released Aug. 17 to other agency.

- Justin Lee Horinek, 22, Goodland, Aug. 11, driving under the influence, driving with license suspended or revoked, precursor material-possession with intent to manufacture, possession of certain hallucinogenic drugs, Colby Police, released Aug. 17 on recognizance.

- Dustin Blake Rumbach, 38, Colby, Aug. 15, bond violation, Colby Police /Court Services, released Aug. 19 by court order.

- Jason Michael Schwarz, 20, Levant, Aug. 19, aggravated en-

dangering of child, hosting to minors, Sheriff's Office, released Monday on bond.

- Mitchell Wade Ohlrogge, 18, Goodland, Friday, aggravated endangering of child, endangering a child, Sheriff's Office, released Tuesday on bond.

- Curtis Mitchell Thurston, 34, West Columbia, S.C., Friday, possession of certain stimulants, Sheriff's Office/Colby Police, released same day on recognizance.

- Kevin James Morgan, 45, Bird City, Saturday, giving a worthless check (two counts), Sheriff's Of-

fice, released same day on bond.

- Jerri Lynn Brown, 41, Colby, Sunday, giving a worthless check, Sheriff's Office, released same day to other agency.

- Casey Joseph Meyer, 27, Colby, Monday, driving under the influence, possession of drug paraphernalia, Sheriff's Office/Court Services, released same day on notice to appear.

- Nicholas Eugene Slusher, 22, Colby, Tuesday, probation violation, Colby Police/Court Services, released same day to other agency.

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August 28th & 29th 2010

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10:00 a.m.

The fun begins! Explore the area, hike the horse and buffalo trails.

View the winding Sappa Creek from high above the limestone bluffs and take in the many sights such as the buffalo herd and horses.

Talk with the indians and learn about their culture and customs along with a tipi tour and children's face painting.

2:00 p.m.

Trail Ride (Horses and Wagons), Amateur Archeology

5:00 p.m.

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Free will donation to attend the event

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Trail ride/horse and wagon ride fees-

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- \$30 horse provided

Call Jr Ginther to reserve a spot on the trail ride as horses are limited. 785-322-5343.

\* Google for Directions \*

## On the Beat

COLBY POLICE

Monday

2:48 a.m. — Domestic problem in progress. Report filed.

2:54 a.m. — Possible suicidal person needing welfare check. Subject was OK.

11:14 a.m. — Five dogs at large at 150 E. Ash No. 7. Dog ran under trailer, unable to catch.

11:22 a.m. — Two subjects taking barbecue grill from 1150 S. Franklin No. 108. Subjects had permission.

4:34 p.m. — Accident at Orscheln's parking lot.

4:47 p.m. — Possible suspicious activity going on at Friendly Acres. Spoke with subject.

5:05 p.m. — Dog at large at 725 N. Sterling turned over to Colby Animal Clinic.

9:25 p.m. — Motorist assist at Oasis.

11:39 p.m. — Subject reported employee possibly used card to fuel another unknown semi at Bosselman's.

Tuesday

1:12 a.m. — Security check at the college.

5:57 a.m. — Water leak on the north side of the Wesleyan Church. PVC pipe broken; water shut off.

7:12 a.m. — Vehicle blocking driveway at 895 S. Lincoln.

9:42 a.m. — Sherman County arrest warrant served on Nicholas Slusher.

11:18 a.m. — Report of criminal damage to vehicle last night parked at Quizno's. Report filed.

11:31 p.m. — Caller reported subject pinning tires on his vehicle and kicking up rocks, hitting

her trailer at 210 N. Country Club. Spoke with reporting party.

Wednesday

12:08 a.m. — Closed door and shut off lights on Exit Pit No. 1 at Cornerstone Ag.

1:04 a.m. — Closed doors on buildings at Meadow Lake.

2:58 a.m. — Combine lights on at New Holland.

4:40 a.m. — Citizens Medical Center requested a message be delivered to customer at Motel 6.

6:34 a.m. — Water running out in alley in the 1200 block of Court Place. Draining a pool.

10:25 a.m. — Funeral block Wesleyan Church to the Beulah Cemetery.

1:08 p.m. — Very loud noise to the south of 960 E. Sixth. Not found; possibly on-going construction in the area.

2:08 p.m. — Bird in road at Riddle and U.S. 24. Removed debris.

2:53 p.m. — Roll-over injury accident at 3400 W. Fourth. Three officers assisted Sheriff's Office.

3:21 p.m. — Subject trespassing on back lot at Gavon's Electronics spoken with.

3:30 p.m. — House broken into at 390 E. Seventh. Report filed.

6:46 p.m. — Theft at Super 8. Spoke with manager; will make contact with 8-26-10.

11:11 p.m. — Request to locate subject that was to be in Colby but had not made contact with family. Unable to locate.

11:58 p.m. — Security check at Twisters.

THOMAS COUNTY SHERIFF

Monday

8:06 a.m. — Put cattle back in at

the 2300 block of K-25.

4:38 p.m. — Served arrest warrant on Darin Stithem.

4:59 p.m. — Served arrest warrants on Darin Stithem.

5:29 p.m. — Driving under the influence on traffic stop at Friendly Acres.

11:43 p.m. — Open door at Farm Implement. Everything OK; employee inside working.

Tuesday

7:43 a.m. — Cow out on U.S. 24 at west city limits. Contacted owner; cow back in.

10 a.m. — Assisted with sheriff's sale at the court house.

10:54 a.m. — Took prisoner to Thomas/Sherman County line.

11:30 a.m. — Provided traveler assistance.

2:15 p.m. — Driving while suspended/no insurance/no registration: report filed on traffic stop at Cherry and Lincoln.

2:50 p.m. — Attempted gas can theft from 505 Main, Levant. Report filed.

4:34 p.m. — Arrest warrant served on Tony A. Burley.

Wednesday

2:59 a.m. — Traveler's assistance to motorist.

12:46 p.m. — Report of many animals in inhumane environment. All OK.

2:53 p.m. — Roll-over accident at 3400 W. Fourth. Highway Patrol will take report.

6:09 p.m. — Theft of iPod at 2160 E. Fourth No. 17.

7:36 p.m. — Rexford emergency medical services reported medical alarm in Rexford and unable to make contact. Assisted.

# Must parent attend every event?

Children are typically pleased when parents attend school events, yet, for many parents, it's simply not possible to attend every event, a Kansas State University specialist said.

Supporting a child and his or her activities matters; it helps a child to know parents encourage his or her education, participation and accomplishments, said Charlotte Shoup Olsen, K-State Research and Extension family systems specialist.

Yet, helping a child understand that there are many demands on a parents' time also may be a

growth opportunity for the child, she said.

When not able to attend, explain to the child that you are sorry to miss the event, but you will look forward to hearing about it, said Olsen, who encourages parents to make sure they then make time to listen.

Allowing a child to manage on his or her own occasionally, without parents in the cheerleading section, can help a child become more self-confident, the specialist said.

Information on managing family relationships successfully is

available at county and district Extension offices and online at: [www.ksre.ksu.edu](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu).

## Bridge Club

Meadow Lake Bridge winners Tuesday were first, Gail Vacca; second, Katie Melvin; third, Sarah Jane Barrett; fourth, Elaine Ptacek; fifth, Lyle Worthy; sixth, Dave Ulmer; seventh, Joy Davis.

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