

News Column

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For Release 08/14/23
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RCLA SUMMER TOUR

I dug deep in my files to find the date when the Riley County Livestock Association previously toured River Creek Farms. It was August 26, 2007 – 16 years ago.

I don't remember much about that tour, but what I think I remember is that we saw both cattle and sheep that evening, Abram and David (Joe's and Bob's youngest kids, respectively) were still in high school, and we had our picnic on the Joe and Kim Mertz's lawn under their big shade trees.

The one thing I remember clearly is Kim saying we should do this more often to motivate the guys to clean up around the farmyard. It is always nice to be invited back,...but I'm not sure they need us to motivate them to clean. I get out that way on occasion and the place is always tidier than most.

The Riley County Livestock Association – and any guests who wish to attend – will tour River Creek Farms at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday August 27. Participants will gather at Joe and Kim's residence, 7160 Zeandale Road, Manhattan, for the tour. Then we will cross the road to the Mertz's historic stone barn for supper.

Supper will be free of charge, courtesy of the Riley County Livestock Association. You can expect burgers, chips, and whatever else the RCLA board decides to prepare.

Reservations are needed by 5:00 p.m. on August 24 and can be made online at www.riley.ksu.edu, or by calling the Riley County Extension Office at 785/537-6350.

The Mertz family farming tradition dates back to 1890 in Wabaunsee and Riley counties. In 1948 Joe's dad, Harold, talked his dad into converting their commercial Hereford operation to a purebred polled Hereford seedstock business.

Joe, in turn, convinced his dad to let him A.I. their polled Hereford cows to purebred Simmental bulls in 1970. Today, they offer both Simmental and SimAngus genetics to their customers.

The most recent change at River Creek has been to bring Abram into the operation. You'll have to come to the tour to learn what his role is because I haven't run into him to ask, and he hasn't updated their website so I can find out online.

Be sure to register if you want to attend this year's RCLA Summer Tour on August 27. Register online at www.riley.ksu.edu, or call us at the Extension Office.

If you have questions, you can reach me at the Riley County Extension Office at 785/537-6350. Or, you can send e-mail to gmclure@ksu.edu.

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