

HAVE A MADE IN OKLAHOMA CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR

Oklahomans have an opportunity to give themselves and their state a truly helpful economic stimulus package for the holidays if they choose Made in Oklahoma gifts for friends and family. Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture, Terry Peach, says giving gifts of gourmet foods and specialty gift baskets made locally will be appreciated and support our economy.

“This year as we make our Christmas shopping lists I hope everyone will give consideration to where the gifts they are purchasing was made or packaged,” he said. “It is imperative that we renew our commitment to supporting Oklahoma producers, processors and retailers.”

The Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry maintains a Made in Oklahoma Gift Basket Directory on the MIO website at www.madeinoklahoma.net. Other MIO products are also located on the site.

“One of the things I really like about shopping the MIO companies is that I can have my gifts shipped directly to people who live out of town,” said MIO coordinator, Julie Fitzgerald. “That really saves a lot of time when you are rushing around getting ready for the holidays and gives you more time to socialize with family and friends.

“More free time is one of the nicest gifts we can give ourselves this time of year,” she adds. “It really helps us slow down and remember the reasons we celebrate the holidays.”

MIO gifts are also much more practical than many other traditional seasonal gifts such as ties or seasonal decorations—virtually all made in China. Even the gourmet or luxury items have a practical side if you think about it.

“There are some things such as gourmet cheeses, wines and fancy scented candles that we really would like to have but seldom allow ourselves to splurge and purchase,” Fitzgerald said. “When you receive something like these items it is a special pleasure because you don’t have to feel guilty about treating yourself. Food and other consumables are a necessity but gourmet Oklahoma products are a real treat.”

Fitzgerald and Secretary Peach also agree that MIO gifts generally show more thought and consideration than something purchased at a mall or one of the so-called big box stores.

“Something like a gift basket or a gift of Oklahoma wine paired with a locally produced cheese or other product is just a far more personal gift than most other items,” Peach said. “In a sense it is also a gift back to our state in terms of supporting our local economies by using our resources and keeping our dollars here at home.”

For those who can’t bear the thought of anything but a natural Christmas tree, ODAFF reminds you that there are plenty of Oklahoma Christmas tree growers throughout the state. Many are located on the website www.okchristmastrees.com.

The website also provides information about how to recycle your tree after the holidays. For those without internet access written inquiries can be made to the Made in Oklahoma Program, Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, 2800 N. Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73105. You may also call the Market Development Division at 1-800-580-6543 for more information.