

**OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
FOOD AND FORESTRY**

2800 N. Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, OK 73105-4912

PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 26, 2016

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Julie A. Sears, Made in Oklahoma Program Coordinator,
Julie.Sears@ag.ok.gov, (405) 740-0794

**Cookshack electric smoker to be given away
at Made in Oklahoma Program booth**

TULSA – The Made in Oklahoma (MIO) program is one way of saying “this product is made by your neighbors and enjoyed by you and so many of your other neighbors.”

Oklahoma is a 77-county neighborhood with so many talented individuals who produce as well as market and sell products proudly labeled Made in Oklahoma. Also, many of these products are shared with our neighbors throughout the United States and internationally.

At the 2016 Tulsa State Fair there this is an additional reason to stop by and learn more about Made in Oklahoma products.

“This year, we will be giving away one Cookshack electric smoker in the Made in Oklahoma booth at the Tulsa State Fair,” said Julie Sears, a Made in Oklahoma Program Coordinator with the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry

(ODAFF). “We are encouraging fairgoers to stop by and see and purchase MIO products, and also to sign up for the opportunity to make this Cookshack electric smoker theirs, just by visiting the Tulsa State Fair.”

The Tulsa State Fair opens Thursday (Sept. 29) and continues through Oct. 9. The Tulsa State Fair is located one block west of 21st Street and Yale Avenue. The MIO Program assists Oklahoma agribusinesses in promoting agricultural products that are grown, processed and manufactured in the state of Oklahoma to specialty retail outlets.

Annually held on the fourth Thursday after Labor Day, the Tulsa State Fair is based upon heritage, family values and quality entertainment for all ages. It was first organized in 1903 as the “Tulsa County Free Fair” and developed into the Tulsa State Fair of today. With the goal of providing an educational and entertaining experience to the community, it has over 100 years of history and continues to stand out.

As for this year’s special item to be given away in the Made in Oklahoma booth, Cookshack was started in the early 1960's by Gene and Judy Ellis of Ponca City. Gene Ellis was an inventor and entrepreneur who loved barbecue and wanted to find "a better way" to produce great barbecue. The two collaborated on the recipes that became the formulas for our Spicy Barbecue Sauce and dry spice blends.

Mr. and Mrs. Ellis ran the company until their deaths in 1985, when their son and daughter, Mark Ellis and Donna Ellis Johnson, took the helm. In 1992, Stuart Powell stepped in as General Manager. Sales have climbed steadily since the company's beginning and they employ about 50 people in the factory in Ponca City, OK.

Cookshack has been manufacturing Smokers for more than five decades in Ponca City.

The company communicates their knowledge to restaurants, professional competitors, and back-yard barbecue enthusiasts by means of focused marketing initiatives and accessible staff.

“MIO products are always popular and part of the reason is because they do come from right here in Oklahoma and are made by someone you might know or now have an opportunity to get to know,” Sears said.

For more information about the MIO, please contact: Julie A. Sears, Made in Oklahoma Program Coordinator with the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, julie.sears@ag.ok.gov .

###

Photo caption (good for either photo): Made in Oklahoma products are always popular at the Tulsa State Fair. Shown is a photo from the 2015 Tulsa State Fair.