

SAGE SPREE

Sage Spree is Alabama's 2015 Farmer of the Year. Sage's ancestors were the first to settle Greene County, Alabama, in 1814, and they have been involved in farming and agriculture in the area since that time. Sage's family farm consists of 5,000 acres, mostly in the Boligee area. They have 450 acres of food fish ponds plus acreage devoted to cattle, row crops and timber. The Spree family has been involved in catfish production for 45 years. Sage has been helping on the farm from the time he could walk. He attended the University of Alabama on a football scholarship, where he was a three-year letterman, and graduated with a degree in public relations and business. Sage is married to Anne Kimball, and they have one daughter, Saylor.

GREG MOYERS

Greg Moyers is Arkansas' 2015 Farmer of the Year. Greg grew up in Portland, Arkansas, and graduated from Montrose Academy. Greg's father, Tommy, took an interest in raising catfish after many years of running the family logging business. Greg, his brother Trey and his father decided to form Moyers Fish Farm in 2000. The farm consisted of conventional ponds, until split pond raceways were introduced to the farm in 2009. Moyers Fish Farm was one of the first in Arkansas to use this system of raising catfish. Greg farms 200 acres of water with 75% of the ponds being raceways. Greg and his wife, Meagan, are parents to Garrett and Ava. Greg currently serves as secretary for the Catfish Farmers of Arkansas. After farming catfish for 14 years, Greg is anxious to see what the future holds as he continues his career of raising catfish.

JON COOPER

Jon Cooper is Mississippi's 2015 Farmer of the Year. Jon graduated from Mississippi State University in 1989 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Fishery Biology with an Aquaculture option. While at MSU, he worked for the MSU Aquaculture Research Farm, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and belonged to the National Hunting and Fishing Day Committee. Jon became the Chief Operations Officer of Tackett Fish Farms in 1990. During this time, he owned and operated a farm of 300 acres, C&C Fish Farms. Jon has served on the Board of Directors for Catfish Farmers of Mississippi as well as the Catfish Bargaining Association. For the past 25 years, Jon has managed thousands of acres of catfish ponds for Tackett Fish Farms. Tackett Fish Farms is involved in food fish, brood fish and fingerling production. He and his wife, Amy, have two children, daughter Alexis, and son JAC.

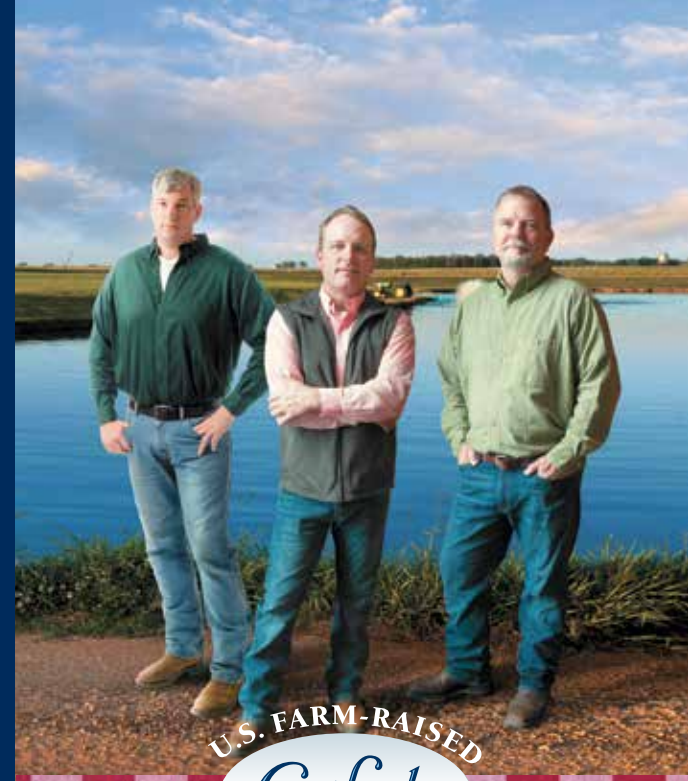
Farmers of the Year are chosen annually from a large field of many deserving catfish producers in the U.S. Farm-Raised Catfish Industry. Although it is a difficult task to select just one farmer from each of the top three catfish-producing states, those who are selected embody the spirit of the American farmer. All have made significant contributions to the U.S. Farm-Raised Catfish Industry.

Every year, The Catfish Institute (TCI) utilizes these individuals in various advertising campaigns. Each farmer is an important part of promoting U.S. Farm-Raised Catfish and raising public awareness of the quality and benefits of eating U.S. Farm-Raised Catfish. Roger Barlow, President of TCI said, "We want to provide a connection between the farm-raised catfish that people know and love and the hundreds of family farms that dot the southern United States where these fish are grown. The Catfish Farmers of the Year are the face of the **American farmer** producing an **American product** for the **American consumer**."



THE CATFISH INSTITUTE

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FARMERS OF THE YEAR

*Favorite
Recipes*

Kee's Kat Kakes

SAGE SPREE



SERVES 6-8

Catfish Gumbo

JON COOPER



SERVES 6-8

Catfish Parmesan

GREG MOYERS



SERVES 4

8 U.S. Farm-Raised Catfish Fillets
1 cup chicken broth
1 cup Miracle Whip
1 egg, beaten
1 cup each, finely diced green and red bell peppers
1 cup diced green onion, white and green parts
1 cup finely diced celery, ribs and leaves
2 cups finely crushed Ritz crackers
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon pepper
1 tablespoon onion powder
2 tablespoons Old Bay seasoning
¼ cup vegetable oil for frying



PLACE catfish fillets in an electric skillet with sides. **ADD** broth and cook on high until fish flakes easily, about 6 minutes. **DRAIN** fish. **FLAKE** cooked fish into large bowl and add Miracle Whip. **ADD** egg, diced vegetables and stir. **ADD** cracker crumbs and seasonings, then **MIX** well. **FORM** into patties and fry in hot oil, turning as needed, until desired browning is achieved on both sides. **SERVE** with tartar sauce or remoulade.

6 U.S. Farm-Raised Catfish Fillets, cubed
½ cup vegetable oil
½ cup flour
4 garlic cloves, minced
2 cups chopped onions
1 cup chopped celery
1 cup chopped green bell pepper
10 ounces frozen cut okra (optional)
1 (16-ounce) can chopped tomatoes, with liquid
5 cups chicken stock
½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon salt
2 bay leaves
1 pound sliced smoked sausage, Andouille or other pepper



In a large stock pot over medium heat, **COMBINE** oil and flour to make a roux, browning slowly and stirring frequently. **COOK** for about 30 minutes until it is a rich, milk chocolate color. When roux is just right, **ADD** garlic, onions, celery and green bell pepper, stirring vigorously. **COOK** 2 to 3 minutes. Reduce heat to low and cook 15 to 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. **ADD** remaining ingredients and simmer for 1 hour or more. **STIR** once in a while. **SERVE** with rice. Makes 3 quarts.

4 U.S. Farm-Raised Catfish Fillets
¾ cup Parmesan cheese, finely grated
¾ cup Japanese bread crumbs (panko)
3 tablespoons unsalted butter brought to room temperature
3 tablespoons mayonnaise
3 green onions, thinly sliced (green tops only)
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
½ teaspoon hot pepper sauce
1 ½ tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice (about ½ lemon)
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
Salt and pepper to taste



PREHEAT oven to 425° F. In a medium bowl, **MIX** together cheese, bread crumbs, butter, mayonnaise, green onions, Worcestershire, hot pepper sauce, lemon juice and parsley. **SEASON** with salt and pepper to taste. (Mixture can be made up to 24 hours ahead of time and refrigerated.) **PAT** catfish fillets dry with paper towels. **SEASON** generously with salt and pepper, and **PLACE** fillets on lightly greased cookie sheet. **COVER** each fillet with approximately 3 tablespoons cheese mixture and place in oven until bubbly and almost cooked through – about 8 to 10 minutes. Before removing from oven, **PLACE** fillets under broiler for 2 to 3 minutes to brown and crisp the tops. When done, fish should easily flake with a fork. **SERVE** immediately.

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