



## Oklahoma agricultural groups voice support of horse processing legislation

During a March 13 press conference at the state Capitol, a coalition of Oklahoma agriculture and wildlife groups announced their strong support for horse processing legislation now working its way through the Oklahoma legislature.

The coalition is organized and led by Oklahoma Farm Bureau, the state's largest general farm organization.

"Oklahoma livestock and wildlife producers respect and care for animals," said OFB President Mike Spradling. "This legislation provides a humane solution to the challenge of abandoned, abused and otherwise neglected horses."

In a joint statement, the groups said they

support HB 1999 by Rep. Skye McNeil and Sen. Eddie Fields and SB 375 by Sen. Mark Allen and Rep. John Enns. These bills will allow horse processing within the state of Oklahoma; however, horsemeat for human consumption may be sold only on the international market.

Horses are defined as livestock under Oklahoma law. Horse processing is already happening, but the U.S. horses are being shipped to Canada or Mexico. A General Accounting Office analysis showed U.S. horses intended for slaughter in Canada or Mexico travel significantly greater distances to reach their final destination, where they are not covered by humane slaughter protections.

The American Association of Equine Practitioners recognizes the processing of unwanted horses is currently a necessary aspect of the equine industry, as it provides a humane alternative to allowing the horse to continue a life of discomfort and pain and possibly inadequate care or abandonment.

In addition to Oklahoma Farm Bureau, the coalition includes American Farmers and Ranchers, Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association, Oklahoma Pork Council, Livestock Marketing Association, The Poultry Federation, Whitetails of Oklahoma, Oklahoma Wildlife Management Association and Oklahoma Cotton Council.

*RIGHT – Speaker T.W. Shannon tells press conference attendees that Oklahomans will not be intimidated by outside interest groups, as he shows his support for Oklahoma agriculture.*

*BELOW – Rep. Skye McNeil, author of HB 1999, explains the need for horse processing facilities in Oklahoma.*



## 2013 Oklahoma Pork Congress



OFB Director Phyllis Holcomb (left) visits with Ofuskee County Farm Bureau member Karen Brewer during the 2013 Oklahoma Pork Congress, March 15, at the Reed Center in Midwest City.

# MEMBER BENEFITS

• **National Car Rental and Hertz** – Offer members special discounts on auto rental rates. For information or reservations call: **National Car Rental** at 1-800-CAR-RENT and use the National/OFB recap #5504661 to make reservations. **Hertz Rent A Car** at 1-800-654-3131 and use the Hertz/OFB recap #314386 to make reservations.

OFB highlights a benefit in each issue of *Perspective* as a reminder of the savings available to OFB members. Find a complete list of savings online at [okfarmbureau.org](http://okfarmbureau.org).

# OFB CALENDAR

**Ag Day at the Capitol**  
April 4 • OKC

Contact: Karolyn Bolay, (405) 523-2320

**YF&R Leadership Conference**

April 4-7 • Yukon

Contact: Holly Carroll, (405) 301-6610

**OFB Congressional Action Tour**

April 14 - 18 • Washington, D.C.

Contact: Sara Drozdowski, (405) 530-2681

# OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU

## Legislative Update

By John Collison  
OFB Vice President of Public Policy and Media Relations

As horse slaughter bills continue to advance through the legislature, it is important to continue the conversation about the attack from out-of-state radicals who want to affect the way we live and work. Two weeks ago, I came to you about these horse slaughter bills and what effect they have on our way of life. I come to you again today with the same issue. Hundreds of you showed up at the state Capitol in support of our rally on this issue. We thank each of you who took time out of your busy schedules to show the legislature and the governor that you do care about your rights. Your work is not over. Please call the governor's office at (405) 521-2342 and let her know this issue is important to you.

I want to share with you a statement that we sent out last week that you may find interesting. Here is how we feel the issue affects us as an organization:

*At Oklahoma Farm Bureau, we take our right to perform our duties as agriculturists in today's society very seriously. The Oklahoma Farm Bureau membership, totaling more than 100,000, has spoken and stands behind our way of life and the way we conduct our business. Horse harvesting is an integral part and practice of agriculture, and we see it as a useful tool.*

*We at Oklahoma Farm Bureau hold the horse as one of the most important creatures we have been given command to care for. The horse has served us honorably for many years through work, war, harvest and recreation, and we are glad to call him a friend. We hold this animal in such high regard that we find it necessary to find a dignified and useful end when its service is no longer required. We also believe that this is America and that each individual has the right to choose what they do with their animal when it has reached its end.*

*There is no individual in this country who understands better the circle of life than the person who lives and works on the farm or ranch each day and cares for his or her animals. We at Oklahoma Farm Bureau commend each and every individual for making the decisions they do and caring for their livestock the best way they know how.*

Ladies and gentleman, unfortunately this will not be the last time we have to stand up to out-of-state interests. HSUS and other organizations have made it their sole purpose to end the practices we call agriculture. They live, breathe and fight each and every day to make sure their goals are accomplished. I asked you last time: will you fight? By the looks of what we saw at the Capitol the answer is yes. I ask this week: how long will you be willing?



John Collison

# Oklahoma Farm Bureau Online

The screenshot shows the Oklahoma Farm Bureau website with various sections: NEWS, FARM BUREAU PARTNERS WITH GOVERNOR'S FOOD DRIVE, MORE FROM FARM BUREAU, YF&R Committee from State Fair Livestock Judging Contest, Oklahoma Farm Bureau Harvest Watch blog, Livestock producers help feed hungry children, Beef for Backpacks, and PRODUCE FORWARD... WITH SUSTAINABLE. There are also sections for CALENDAR, FOUNDATIONS, and a Facebook link.

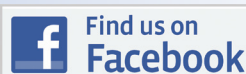
Monitor the latest Farm Bureau and agricultural news and information online at [okfarmbureau.org](http://okfarmbureau.org).

Currently online:

• **Agricultural News** – Oklahoma Farm Bureau features a new agriculture-related story every day on its site. Read about both AFBF and state Farm Bureau news by visiting the homepage.

• **Legislative Update** – The Oklahoma State Legislature is in full swing. See the OFB homepage for a link to the public policy division's latest legislative update and bill tracking site.

[www.okfarmbureau.org](http://www.okfarmbureau.org)



## OFB members host legislative dinners



LEFT – Sen. Mike Schulz addresses Farm Bureau members from Kiowa and Washita Counties during a legislative dinner at the Kiowa County Farm Bureau office, March 14. Sen. Schulz discussed the current horse processing legislation, a possible appropriation for the OSU Medical Center in Tulsa and the state's water and budget issues. He also answered questions about the pending Oklahoma Youth Expo lawsuit.

RIGHT – Mike Junk, a field representative for Sen. Jim Inhofe, visits with Mayes County and Rogers County Farm Bureau members during a legislative dinner at Moore's Fish Farm, March 14, near Inola.



## Nominate your "America's Farmer Mom of the Year"

Monsanto's search for America's Farmers Mom of the Year is back for a fourth year to acknowledge the contributions of more than a million female farm operators in the United States.

Anyone can nominate their favorite farm mom by visiting [www.americasfarmers.com](http://www.americasfarmers.com) before April 23 and submitting a brief essay explaining how she contributes to her family, farm, community and agriculture.

"The number of female farm operators has grown exponentially over the past decade, and farm moms play a significant role not only on their farms and in their communities, but also to the American food supply and economy," said Lisa Safarian, U.S. Row Crops Lead, Monsanto. "The America's Farmers Mom of the Year contest is one small tribute to the amazing women who balance the responsibilities of family, home and farm, often while volunteering or working in their community and promoting agriculture as well."

Complete eligibility requirements and official rules for America's Farmers Mom of the Year can be obtained online at [www.americasfarmers.com](http://www.americasfarmers.com).

## Inhofe co-authors bill to ease farmers' regulatory burden

A bill to amend EPA regulations on above ground fuel and oil storage tanks was introduced March 8 by a bipartisan group of U.S. senators, including Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-OK. The bill is co-sponsored by Sen. Mark Pryor, D-AR, Sen. Deb Fischer, R-NE, Sen. John Boozman, R-AR, Sen. Thad Cochran, R-MS, and Sen. Mike Johanns, R-NE.

The major focus of the amendment to the Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure rule exempts farmers from EPA rules intended for oil and gas refineries. The exemption would apply to farmers who have total fuel storage capacity not exceeding 42,000 gallons with no individual tank to exceed 10,000 gallons.

"As I have been saying for years, the EPA is doing everything it can to regulate Americans out of business, and he (Obama) has his sights on the agriculture industry as well," said Inhofe. "It is unnecessary to force farmers to comply with oil spill regulations that were designed for refineries. Our

common-sense legislation makes an exemption from the SPCC rule to any farmer who has less than 42,000 total gallons of oil storage capacity and no single tank larger than 10,000 gallons. This will exempt the vast majority of farmers from having to fill out volumes of paperwork, spend significant sums to buy new storage equipment, and protect them from the aggressive enforcement actions of the EPA. I am proud to work with Sen. Pryor on this issue."

Many agricultural producers today use large fuel storage tanks for convenient refilling of their tractors, combines and other farm equipment. Fuel tanks on modern four-wheel drive tractors can hold as much as 200 gallons. The large storage tanks allow farmers to save money by purchasing fuel in bulk quantities.

"The proposed legislation would prevent farmers from being required to hire professional engineers to develop complex spill control plans," said Jimmy Wayne Kinder, a Walters, Okla., farmer. "Obviously we

do not pose the same environmental risk as a large refinery."

"We applaud Sen. Inhofe and his colleagues for working to ease the regulatory burden on farmers and ranchers," said Mike Spradling, president of the Oklahoma Farm Bureau. "EPA regulations and the SPCC rule in particular, are something Oklahoma producers have been concerned about for a long time. We believe that the exemption being sought by Sen. Inhofe and his colleagues is exactly what Oklahoma's farmers need."



U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe

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## ‘Threatened’ listing not needed for Lesser Prairie-Chicken

The Lesser Prairie-Chicken, a species of grouse found in Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas should not be added to the “threatened” list under the Endangered Species Act, the American Farm Bureau Federation told the Fish and Wildlife Service. FWS can reasonably and responsibly withdraw its proposal to list the bird as threatened while continuing to meet its legal obligations to protect it under the ESA, according to AFBF.

A number of interested parties in both the public and private sector, including the Lesser Prairie-Chicken Working Group, farmers and ranchers, oil and gas companies, environmental organizations and conservation groups are working collaboratively to protect the species without having to resort to an ESA listing, AFBF noted in written comments submitted to FWS.

“We believe such an approach will be far more effective and meaningful than the regulatory measures proposed by FWS,” AFBF stated.

Thousands of farmers and ranchers could be affected if the Lesser Prairie-Chicken is listed as threatened, although exactly how that plays out would vary from state to state. For example, conditions in Kansas have provided ample habitat and birds in the state are thriving compared to other parts of its historic range. A one-size-fits-all approach, which FWS is considering, could negatively affect farmers in Kansas and other states, where such strictures might be unnecessary.

AFBF is urging a voluntary, range-wide conservation plan to protect the species, one that draws upon federal, state and private resources and can be adapted to conditions

in various locations.

A similar approach was successfully adopted in protecting the Dunes Sagebrush Lizard, noted AFBF.

For any range-wide plan to be effective, it must be flexible and encourage participation by landowners, AFBF stated. In addition, the program adopted should: be responsive to the needs and concerns of private landowners while providing a wide array of incentives; incorporate working landscapes (not set-aside land); remove regulatory burdens; and assure that land covered by voluntary conservation agreements is not designated as critical habitat.

AFBF also urged FWS to re-open the comment period on its plan to list the Lesser Prairie-Chicken as threatened, once a range-wide conservation plan developed by the working group is available.

## OFB seeks high school students for fellowship program

The OFB Fellowship Program provides high school students the opportunity to experience first-hand the work performed at Oklahoma Farm Bureau - in and out of the office. Students will have the opportunity to visit the Capitol, speak with representatives and senators, lobby for farming and ranching bills, update membership services for members, research current legislative bills and create new avenues to increase OFB membership.

Students will be asked to work two to three designated days during May 2013.

Fellowship participants will be working with the OFB public policy division and under the supervision of Chris Kidd, vice president of organization and membership.

Applications are available under the “Programs” tab on the OFB website at [www.okfarmbureau.org](http://www.okfarmbureau.org) and must be post-marked by April 19, 2013.

For more information about the OFB Fellowship Program, contact Chris Kidd at (405) 523-2402 or [chris.kidd@okfb.org](mailto:chris.kidd@okfb.org).

## Farm City Festival is set for April 23

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Leadership Team (formerly the Women’s Committee) will host its annual Farm City Festival at the state Capitol April 23. The luncheon promotes agricultural and commodity awareness to Oklahoma legislators and their staffs.

To learn more about Farm City Festival, call OFB Leadership Team Director Marcia Irvin at (405) 523-2405.