

PERSPECTIVE

July 1, 2022



Youth attend OKFB leadership conference

Thirteen high school seniors from across the state participated in Oklahoma Farm Bureau's Oklahoma Youth Leading Agriculture conference June 14-17 in Oklahoma City.

The four-day conference, sponsored by OKFB Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee, provided students with the opportunity to tour local agricultural enterprises including American Plant Products, Oklahoma National Stockyards Company, Restore OKC and Whitmore Farms. Students volunteered at the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, learned how to share the story of agriculture with the media and completed a team-building ropes course.

Students also heard from agricultural leaders including Oklahoma Secretary

of Agriculture Blayne Arthur and Director of Continuing Education for the Oklahoma State University College of Veterinary Medicine and Beef Cattle Specialist Rosslyn Biggs.

Various agriculture industry groups shared their work to move agriculture forward including Oklahoma Pork Council Executive Director Kylee Deniz, Oklahoma Agricultural Cooperative Council President and CEO RJ Gray, Radio Oklahoma Ag Network Farm Director KC Shepard, Leadership Exchange Academy Executive Director Mike Robins and Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom Professional Development Coordinator Annie Davis.

The conference allowed students to gain more knowledge about Farm Bureau

by hearing from OKFB President Rodd Moesel, OKFB Women's Leadership Committee Chair Mignon Bolay, American Farm Bureau YF&R committee member Alisen Anderson, and OKFB Director of Membership and Foundation for Agriculture Holly Carroll.

The thirteen students were Macy Shelton, Carter County; Halle Pullen, Garvin County; Luke Tate, Grady County; Kage Collins, Johnston County; Haley Pedon, Johnston County; Weston Knowles, LeFlore County; Mason Factory, Lincoln County; Lexie Zuniga, Major County; Clarissa Smith, Okfuskee County; Mattie Morgan, Rogers County; Mason Tucker, Roger Mills County; Hunter Wilson, Texas County; and Kellen Bradford, Woods County.

Join OKFB for 2022 August Area Meetings

Oklahoma Farm Bureau encourages all members to attend one of the organization's August Area Meetings, which begins the OKFB grassroots policy development process.

These meetings will allow members to consider and discuss some of the pressing issues facing agriculture and rural Oklahoma as they prepare for the development of organizational policy for the upcoming year.

Members will have the opportunity to reflect on the work the organization does for Oklahoma agriculture, as well as receive various updates.

— Dates and times for district meetings —

District 1 • West **August 8 at 6 p.m.**

Hunny's
103 N. Main
Guymon, OK 73942

District 1 • East **August 11 at 6 p.m.**

Red Prairie Steak House
3113 N. Williams Ave
Woodward, OK 73801

District 2 **August 16 at 6 p.m.**

Western Technology Center
1000 S. Bailey St.
Hobart, OK 73651

District 3 **August 15 at 6 p.m.**

Redlands Community College
1300 S. Country Club Rd.
El Reno, OK 73036

District 4 • East **August 8 at 6 p.m.**

Casa Romo
120 W. Main St.
Ardmore, OK 73401

District 4 • West **August 9 at 6 p.m.**

Comanche County Farm Bureau
502 SW 11th St.
Lawton, OK 73501

District 5 **August 15 at 6 p.m.**

Southeast Expo Center
4500 US 270
McAlester, OK 74501

District 6 **August 18 at 6 p.m.**

Moore Farms Event Barn
9353 W. 500 Rd.
Pryor, OK 74361

District 7 **August 9 at 6 p.m.**

Crosspoint Church
2500 N. Van Buren St.
Enid, OK 73703

District 8 **August 16 at 6 p.m.**

Seminole Co. Farm Bureau
1801 W. Wrangler Blvd.
Seminole, OK 74868

District 9 **August 11 at 6 p.m.**

Creek County Fairgrounds
17808 OK 66
Kellyville, OK 74039

OKFB Generation Bridge to host three summer events

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members ages 35-50 are invited to attend the OKFB Generation Bridge Summer Series, which features three opportunities for members to gather in July and August.

OKFB's new Generation Bridge program targets OKFB members who are in the middle of their agriculture careers and want to expand their agricultural knowledge, connections and leadership experience.

The three events – July 28 in Tulsa, August 12 in Enid, and August 26 in Oklahoma City – will provide members with the opportunity to enjoy conversations, make connections and create community with like-minded producers.

Generation Bridge members will enjoy a night at the Tulsa Drillers Stadium, located in downtown Tulsa, Thursday, July 28, to reconnect and recharge with fellow Farm Bureau members.

Enid Brewing Company will host members Friday, August 12, at 6 p.m. for an evening of learning about adding value to agricultural products and the current issues facing agriculture.

Members can finish out the summer by attending the final Summer Series event at Remington Park in Oklahoma City Friday, August 26 to hear about ways to involve people in agriculture and ways to engage with consumers.

All events are free to Farm Bureau members ages 35-50. Fill out the online form to register at okfb.news/BridgeSS22.

For more information, contact Holly Carroll at (405) 523-2300 or at holly.carroll@okfb.org.



American Farm Bureau Federation is seeking input from farmers and ranchers across the western portion of the United States. Questions on the survey ask about Farm Bureau members' experiences as a result of the drought. For more information and to complete the survey, visit okfb.news/droughtsurvey.

Meek brings rural perspective to Oklahoma Broadband Governing Board

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Treasurer and District 9 Director Jim Meek was recently elected as vice-chair of the newly formed Oklahoma Broadband Governing Board.

A rancher from Okmulgee County, Meek was one of two individuals appointed to the board by Oklahoma Speaker of the House Charles McCall.

“As a third-generation rancher, Jim Meek will be an effective advocate for making sure the broadband office prioritizes Oklahoma’s unserved and underserved rural areas first,” McCall said. “I’m thrilled he is bringing his experience and the voice of the Oklahoma Farm Bureau to the table for this transformational opportunity for rural Oklahoma.”

The Oklahoma Broadband Governing Board, composed of nine members, will oversee the work of the Oklahoma Broadband Office established by the passage of the Oklahoma Broadband Expansion Act during the 2022 legislative session.

The board has a goal of serving 95% of Oklahoma with adequate broadband internet capabilities by June 28, 2028.

As a resident of rural Oklahoma, Meek recognizes the need for internet access in underserved areas of the state.

“I fully understand the difference the internet makes,” he said. “As we move forward, this is the biggest thing since electricity to hit rural Oklahoma.”

Meek said he saw firsthand the differences in broadband access during his 25-year tenure at CareerTech.

“When I was officed at Stillwater, I always had the latest and greatest technology – the best computers and the best internet service on the market,” he said. “I sat down at my desk, and I could do anything from my computer, and it would respond immediately.”

The same cannot be said for his home in rural Okmulgee County. Meek said his dial-up connection could handle

accessing his email – so long as there were no file attachments.

As more of his daily work transitioned to being done at home, he transitioned to using a satellite internet service from his local electric cooperative. Meek said the satellite worked until the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

“My satellite got almost as slow as the dial-up,” he said. “I couldn’t participate in Zoom meetings, and I couldn’t do a lot of my work when I was still working from home. I would have to get up early and drive to Stillwater to use a computer or drive over to Taft – my other office – to use a computer.”

Aside from work and daily tasks, Meek expressed the importance of quality broadband internet for the safety of rural Oklahomans.

Living just 15 miles outside of town, Meek said his house is in a cell phone dead zone. If his phone is not connected to Wi-Fi, he often cannot get reception.

“If we have a bad storm, and it knocks out our telephone service, we have no phone service at our house,” he said.

“If somebody got sick, we couldn’t get an ambulance out there. If we had an emergency, we couldn’t get a firetruck out there.”

Meek emphasized the need for the Broadband Governing Board to identify solutions to bring broadband internet to underserved areas that is both high-speed and affordable. Dial-up and satellite connections are not the answer, he said.

“Let’s use the best technology we can afford to keep it affordable for our friends in rural areas and small towns so everyone can have access to it,” he said.

Meek said access to high-speed broadband internet is critical for Oklahomans today, whether to apply for a job, access medical services, learn remotely or work from home.

“This broadband will do more to improve the lives of Oklahomans – rural, small towns, even bigger cities – than probably anything since electricity because of the versatility and things it is going to allow them to do that they haven’t been able to do,” he said.



Jim Meek (left) of Okmulgee County listens in during the first meeting of the Oklahoma Broadband Governing Board Thursday, June 16, in Oklahoma City. Meek was elected vice-chair of the board at the meeting.

Sign up!

Join alongside fellow Farm Bureau members ages 18-35 for the 2022 Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Summer Conference July 29-31 in Enid. The action-packed weekend will feature fellowship, agriculture tours, a discussion meet and much more. Learn more and register today at okfb.news/YFRConf22.

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Rogers County hosts candidate forum

Rogers County Farm Bureau alongside the Claremore Chamber of Commerce hosted a candidate forum for the Oklahoma District 2 Senate race. Farm Bureau and community members had the chance to hear from candidates including Ally Seifried, Keith Austin, Coy Jenkins and Jarrin Jackson before going to the polls on Tuesday, June 28.

Topics discussed, which were submitted by attendees, included: problems facing the district, medical marijuana laws, the McGirt ruling, how to grow the economy and workforce in the district, inflation, and the film industry in Oklahoma.

The Oklahoma 2022 election dates include the primary election on June 28, the primary runoff on August 23, and the general election on November 8.

Stay up-to-date on the happenings of the 2022 election cycle at okfb.news/vote22.



Candidates debate topics at the Oklahoma Senate District 2 Forum, hosted by Rogers County Farm Bureau. Candidates left to right: Ally Seifried, Keith Austin, Coy Jenkins, Jarrin Jackson.

Do you have an exciting county event coming up? We want to hear about it! Send photos and a brief explanation of your event to Rebekah Nash at rebekah.nash@okfb.org.