

Oklahoma



The Magazine of the
Oklahoma Farm Bureau
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Country

Feeling the pinch

Oklahoma farmers and ranchers balance **rising input costs, uncertain weather** and **shifting world events** to continue growing **food and fiber** we can depend upon

Servant leadership

Meet OKFB's newest state directors

Boots on the ground

OKFB's field reps spread advocacy efforts

Oklahoma staycations

Three member benefits for summer trips

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Oklahoma Country

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ON THE COVER

Clint Wilcox fuels up his sprayer with diesel on his family's farm near Fairview, Oklahoma. Wilcox, like many farmers, is facing escalating input costs as the spring growing season arrives. *Photo by Dustin Mielke.*

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PRESIDENTIALLY SPEAKING

Interconnected through both good and challenging times

By Rodd Moesel

President, Oklahoma Farm Bureau & Affiliated Companies

I am always amazed how interconnected and intertwined our world is. For being such a big place with so many people, it is fascinating to see how one change can ripple throughout our modern lives.

Our farm and ranch members can tell you firsthand just how our interconnected world can bring changes both big and small, both positive and challenging.

Family farmers and ranchers have been seeing higher commodity prices for the products we enjoy here in Oklahoma, which helps lift spirits in farm country.

The rise in prices for the products we sell are being vastly overshadowed by inflationary pressures on our agricultural inputs. Producers are facing rising costs for fuel, fertilizer, pesticides, equipment and everyday necessities. These are all costs that must be paid before a single seed can be planted – much less harvested. In this issue of *Oklahoma Country* magazine, we feature the story of two Farm Bureau members who are dealing with higher input costs and increasing uncertainty on their own family farms.

If the chaotic past few years of supply chain issues driven by COVID disruptions did not present enough challenge already, the world is now dealing with the fallout from the brutal invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces. First and foremost, our hearts go out to the Ukrainian people who are facing a myriad of humanitarian crises due to the unjustifiable war. We realize that some of those improved commodity prices mentioned earlier have come at the cost of Ukrainian farmers' livelihoods as interrupted planting of spring-planted crops and an uncertain ability to harvest crops later this year lit a fire under world wheat prices.

In our interconnected world, these actions halfway around the globe have implications back on Oklahoma farms and ranches. Around 30% of the world's wheat is grown in the

breadbasket region that includes Ukraine and Russia. While the world needs Oklahoma wheat now more than any time in recent history, Oklahoma farmers and ranchers are facing persistent drought conditions. We all hope that late springtime rains will help salvage what is left of the state's wheat crop so Oklahoma farmers and ranchers do not have to sit on the sidelines and see

good prices for their wheat with nothing to sell due to drought.

With so many factors at play, Oklahoma agriculturalists need to be flexible in our production and management decisions to adapt and overcome the ever-shifting sands we face.

Here at Oklahoma Farm Bureau, our public policy team is actively monitoring and working on

issues related to supply chain shortages as they share the plight of Oklahoma agriculture with elected and government officials both here in our state and across the nation. Our communications team will work to provide timely information to help us make the best decisions possible in these interesting and challenging times.

As we work to find the best path forward for our farms, ranches, communities and our state, I think it is important to stay interconnected with one another in our agricultural community. By sharing ideas, opportunities, struggles and challenges, we can help one another adapt, overcome and grow through these challenges and be better prepared to face the opportunities the future will inevitably bring. **FB**

“As we work to find the best path forward for our farms, ranches, communities and our state, I think it is important to stay interconnected with one another in our agricultural community.”

— Rodd Moesel



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EXECUTIVE OUTLOOK

Thrown for a new loop in the supply chain

By Thad Doye

Executive Director, Oklahoma Farm Bureau

Like most farmers, I enjoy a good farm show. It is a great chance to catch up with friends, check in with companies we do business with, and see the latest and greatest products and ideas that could improve your farm or ranch – or at least make life easier.

At one particular farm show I visited earlier this year, the message from most of the vendors was not “How many do you want today,” or “I can get that for you.” Rather, the phrase, “We might be able to get that,” was quite common.

That seems to be the way it is in farm country right now, no matter if you are looking to purchase a major piece of equipment or a small tool or consumable item that we never think twice about being able to find on a local store shelf. These are the same issues that consumers – our own customers – are facing every time they walk into a grocery store to purchase the food products that they depend upon.

The supply chain issues that all Americans, from rural to urban, have been dealing with over the past months are increasingly creating uncertainties for family agriculture.

We have heard from farmers who cannot get a hard delivery date for tractors, combines or sprayers. We have heard about local co-ops last season who did not always have farm diesel available at the pump. On our family farm, we are trying to make sure we have the right amount of net wrap for our hay bales for the coming year at a decent price – a search that sends us making phone calls far and wide to locate a good deal or the right quantity.

In a country where we are used to having almost anything we want available at our fingertips – oftentimes with fast delivery to our own homes – the adjustment to waiting for supplies and inputs without a certain delivery date is just one more stress and strain on family farmers and ranchers.

But this is not our first rodeo, as they say.


Agriculture is no stranger to uncertainty. From commodity

price swings to Oklahoma’s erratic weather, farming and ranching has never been a sure deal. Agriculturalists learn to adapt, adjust and work with the cards we are dealt.

And you can be sure that Oklahoma Farm Bureau is tracking

these concerns and problems and working alongside our elected and government officials to help them understand the volatility that agriculture faces every day – and especially so right now.

While we do not know how long the struggle to find farm inputs will last, anyone who has been involved in agriculture more than one or two seasons knows this too shall pass.

These are the sort of times where we once again take the hand we are dealt, work to navigate the ever-changing supply chain, and learn and grow to be better producers, better businessmen and businesswomen, and continue the family tradition on the family farm. 

“Agriculturalists learn to adapt, adjust and work with the cards we are dealt.”

— Thad Doye



INSURANCE MATTERS

Quality results

By Gary Buckner

Executive Vice President and General Manager,
Oklahoma Farm Bureau Insurance

As projected in the annual policyholders meeting, we began 2021 with a surplus of \$151 million, which included the outstanding surplus loan of \$12.8 million as well as conservative business goals for the year.

As the year progressed, our storm season began sooner than normal with the historic “Uri” ice event in February and came to a late end in October with a catastrophic hail event.

The time in between seemed to disappear more quickly each day as all employees and agents were busy assisting members and counties with the challenges presented by the economy. At one point in the year, the cost of goods sold was changing faster than we could assess the claims being presented.

In total, the 2021 storm season produced roughly \$45 million in losses, and we anticipate this number to grow in 2022 as we continue to work through inflation issues.

In addition to an unusual storm season and challenges in the construction environment, we witnessed the escalating cost of auto repairs, auto replacements and injuries sustained in auto accidents. Through experience and time, it became evident that neither Oklahoma Farm Bureau Insurance nor the insurance industry could attribute these cost increases to any one factor. Overall auto claims recorded an unprecedented record high in severity with some aspects increasing above 30%.

Even with all the challenges presented last year, we were still able to do what we strive to do best: provide exceptional service, honor our financial promises and improve our company’s financial outlook for its continued success.

So, as we close the book on 2021, I’m thankful to report that despite the hurdles, OKFB Insurance was still able to produce solid results. We ended 2021 with a policyholder surplus of


\$166 million while retiring \$9 million of surplus notes, which is a record-high surplus. Our agents played a critical role in this endeavor by producing a much-welcomed policy count increase – a first since 2007. All in all, everyone’s commitment to OKFB Insurance not only brought 2021 together but pushed us further ahead in our recovery.

If you reflect over the past six years, we have improved our capital position by 77% while paying off \$31 million in debt. It is amazing what we can accomplish when we communicate and work together.

I am also pleased to report that our hard work and stamina has been recognized by a globally respected entity in the insurance industry. OKFB

Insurance received an upgraded long-term credit rating of bbb+ (good) from A.M. Best, a credit rating service that specializes in insurance. I am especially proud that OKFB Insurance is the first U.S. company to get four full upgrades and two outlook changes in less than 10 years.

As we try to predict what 2022 will bring our way, our ultimate focus will be protecting our capital position. Whether it be storms, COVID or increasing inflation, we will do whatever it takes to keep moving the company forward and take care of our members.

I appreciate your continued support of our great company and thank you for allowing me to serve as your Executive Vice President and General Manager. 

— Gary Buckner

“Whether it be storms, COVID or increasing inflation, we will do whatever it takes to keep moving the company forward and take care of our members.”



Spreading the word on fertilizer

Farmers and ranchers manage their soil and plant health, and fertilizers are an important tool used to ensure proper plant nutrition


Proper nutrition plays a vital role in supporting life of all kinds, and agricultural producers fertilize their crops to promote plant health, growth and production.

Plant nutrients are categorized as either macronutrients or micronutrients. Macronutrients are the main focus for farmers and ranchers since they are the main nutrients needed by plants, and are therefore the key components of most fertilizers used in agricultural production.

The plant macronutrients are nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium. When applying fertilizers, farmers look at the three macronutrient values – abbreviated as N, P and K – which are often listed as three separate numerical values separated by dashes, such as 11-52-0. These numbers represent the percentage of N, P and K, respectively, contained in a fertilizer.

Farmers assess the amount of nutrients already in their soil by taking soil samples and having laboratory analyses performed, which allows them to apply just the right amount of fertilizer on their fields to achieve their target yields.

Agricultural producers also often partner with agronomists, crop scientists who help farmers develop nutrient and crop plans to be as efficient as possible.

Farmers know the important role nutrients play in crop production, and they work to ensure plants have the nutrition they need while applying just the right amount of fertilizer to protect our natural resources. Proper plant nutrient management helps Oklahoma farmers maintain soil health while efficiently producing the everyday products we all rely upon. 

N

Nitrogen

Nitrogen supports the green, vegetative growth in plants and drives crop yields.

Top global producers

Global production share of nitrogen

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| 1. China | 24.6% |
| 2. United States | 11.6% |
| 3. India | 11.3% |

Common farm fertilizers

Listed with N-P-K values

Anhydrous Ammonia (82-0-0)
Urea (46-0-0)
UAN (32-0-0)

P

Phosphorous

Phosphorus supports healthy root systems and helps crops mature and produce seed.

Top global producers

Global production share of phosphate

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| 1. China | 37.7% |
| 2. United States | 9.9% |
| 3. India | 9.8% |

Common farm fertilizers

Listed with N-P-K values

DAP (18-46-0)
MAP (11-52-0)

K

Potassium

Potassium supports a variety of plant functions and helps with efficient water use.

Top global producers

Global production share of potash potassium

| | |
|------------|--------------|
| 1. Canada | 31.9% |
| 2. Belarus | 16.5% |
| 3. Russia | 16.1% |

Common farm fertilizers

Listed with N-P-K values

Potash (0-0-60)

Did you know?

Compared to fertilizers that farmers use, common fertilizers gardeners and homeowners purchase have N-P-K values such as 24-8-16, 10-5-15 or even 1-1-1 for some indoor plants. The N-P-K values of dry cattle manure varies greatly, but is generally in the range of 1-1-1.

Sources: American Farm Bureau Federation, Oklahoma State University Extension and Noble Research Institute

Keeping it local with Oklahoma staycations

An Oklahoma Farm Bureau membership offers discounts on attractions that are just a drive away

Not all summer vacation plans require long trips. Oklahomans have access to a myriad of attractions and getaways close to home. From exploring our state parks to stopping by roadside attractions, our state has always offered travelers an assortment of fun and relaxation.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members have access to discounts across our state and just over our borders for those whose summer travel and vacation plans include being a tourist or an explorer in our own backyard.

Details on how to access these exclusive savings and discounts can be found on OKFB's member benefits page at okfarmbureau.org/benefits.

RIVERSPORT Adventure Park | Oklahoma City

OKFB members receive up to 30% on day passes

Located in Oklahoma City's Boathouse District, RIVERSPORT Adventure Parks offers whitewater rafting, kayaking, ziplines, a bike park, climbing walls, adventure courses and much more.

RIVERSPORT adventure park is home to the RIVERSPORT Rapids, a whitewater rafting and kayaking center that can create class II-IV rapids to provide an afternoon of fun for the family or a challenge for experienced kayakers and rafters. Please know that some activities require a reservation.

Purchase your passes at riversportokc.org/epass and use the code **OKFARM**.

Medicine Park Aquarium & Natural Sciences Center

OKFB members receive 10% off admission

The Medicine Park Aquarium & Natural Sciences Center features more than 100 exhibits in southwest Oklahoma to connect visitors with fish, reptile, amphibian and mammal species.

The center provides interactive Critter Chats and feeding shows during the day, and visitors can purchase food cups to feed turtles and quail, providing an interactive way to learn about wildlife conservation.

Present your OKFB membership card to receive the discount. Learn more at mpmns.org.

Silver Dollar City | Branson, Missouri

OKFB members receive 15% off Branson attractions


If your summer plans include a short hop across state lines, three family-friendly attractions await in Branson, Missouri.



Silver Dollar City, White Water and the Showboat Branson Belle each provide thrills and fun for the whole family.

Visitors can enjoy the attractions of a theme park, the cool fun of one of America's best outdoor water parks or a relaxing cruise, meal and show on Table Rock Lake.

Visit okfb.news/SDC to use the discount, and learn more at silverdollarcity.com.

And don't forget – if your travels require an overnight stay, OKFB members receive discounts on Choice, IHG and Wyndham hotels. 

To use any of these benefits or to learn more about all the benefits an OKFB membership provides, use the brochure included with your membership renewal packet or visit okfarmbureau.org/benefits.



Skills for the future

OKFB Foundation for Agriculture grant recipient Goodwell Public Schools uses a greenhouse to teach students valuable life skills

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture launched three grant programs in the fall of 2021 and awarded more than \$16,000 to schools, farmers markets and county Farm Bureaus.

Goodwell Public Schools received one of the Growing with the Foundation grants. The Texas County school received \$5,000 to build a greenhouse to introduce students to the horticulture industry and to educate them about the hard work farmers and ranchers undertake to grow food.

“Our world is a greenhouse, and what better way to teach about our world than through an actual greenhouse?” said Nedra Sandels, a special education teacher and director at Goodwell Public Schools.

High school students with the help of teachers constructed the 8-by-10-foot German-engineered greenhouse, which Sandels expects to stand up to brutal wind gusts. Sunshade cloth was added to protect delicate seedling leaves.

Sandels said a variety of plants will be grown in the structure including vegetables, herbs, trees and more.

The greenhouse was constructed in the community garden in Goodwell. Before building the greenhouse, the community garden included raised garden beds used by FFA students and other classes at the school.

Sandels said the greenhouse will provide more opportunities for students to learn about growing their own food.

The school plans to partner with different organizations including Panhandle State University. College students studying

to become educators will have the opportunity to work with Goodwell teachers to learn about teaching in a greenhouse.

Sandels teaches pre-K through 12th grade, and she will use the greenhouse in her lessons to teach about agriculture with a hands-on approach. Sandels, along with agriculture and science teachers, will provide students with a wealth of knowledge about horticulture.

“For our special-needs students, it is a great avenue to introduce them to agriculture through hands-on learning,” Sandels said. “We will also talk about health and food supply with students.”

She said hands-on learning in the greenhouse will give her students employable skills for the future.

“We can have some great breakthroughs just a greenhouse away,” Sandels said.

Other grant winners include Aline-Cleo Public Schools; Caddo County Farm Bureau Women’s Leadership Committee; Chattanooga FFA; Fredrick Elementary Girls Leading Agriculture, Math and Science; Kiowa FFA; Lawton Farmers Market Institute; Major County Extension; Morrison FFA; Oklahoma 4-H Ag Literacy Program; Oklahoma School for the Blind; Okmulgee 4-H County Club; Orvis Risner Elementary School; Payne County 4-H; Payne County Farm Bureau; Perkins-Tryon Elementary; Poteau FFA; Preston 4-H Club; Quapaw FFA; Ravia School; and Yukon Public Schools.

OKFB hosts second-annual Watermelon Challenge

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture is hosting its second-annual Watermelon Challenge to educate Oklahoma second-grade students and families about agriculture and the work it takes to grow our food.

During the challenge, students grow their very own watermelon from seed to melon for a chance to win prizes.

Schools participating in the challenge will receive 30 seed packets, an activity book and lesson plan resources.


After lessons with their teacher, students and their families are

encouraged to plant the watermelon seeds at home.

Watermelon seeds can be planted from late-April to mid-May, but the soil temperature must be 70 degrees for the seeds to germinate. Visit the Oklahoma Mesonet system to find soil temperatures in your area.

Oklahoma’s state vegetable requires a long growing season of 80 days. After students harvest the melon, they will need to submit a photo of themselves holding it to complete the challenge.

OKFB Foundation for Agriculture

will select three winners who will each receive a \$100 prize. Submissions should be emailed to Holly Carroll at holly.carroll@aggiving.org. 

Teachers may sign up before **May 5** by emailing Holly Carroll at holly.carroll@aggiving.org with their school address and contact information. Packets will be sent upon receiving registration.

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JUSTIN WHITMORE

Director of Field Services and North Central Field Representative

KATIE WILKINSON

South Central Field Representative

BOOTS ON THE GROUND

The hustle and bustle of the state Capitol is something the Oklahoma Farm Bureau public policy team experiences almost every day. From the first Monday in February to the last Friday in May, the halls of Oklahoma's legislative epicenter are filled with lawmakers, legislative staff, lobbyists and visitors taking part in the legislative process. This year, the OKFB public policy team is joined at the Capitol by some familiar faces: the OKFB field services team.

The OKFB field representatives spend much of their time traversing the state of Oklahoma, serving as a connection between county Farm Bureau members and the state organization. They regularly visit with members and attend meetings and events in their respective regions.

"A lot of times, we are the first point of contact with members on a given issue," said Justin Whitmore, OKFB director of field services and north central field representative.

That point of contact is strengthened through the field representatives' work at the state Capitol.

"Through spending time at the Capitol, we are able to take firsthand stories back to the counties," Whitmore said. "If we have a county board meeting that night, we can tell them exactly what happened at the Capitol that day."

Katie Wilkinson, the OKFB south central field representative, said time at the Capitol helps her better explain important issues when visiting with members in her area.

"It is a great opportunity for me to gain knowledge about the legislative process and be better equipped to answer questions my members may have," she said.

Wilkinson said being at the Capitol makes it easier for her members to reach out with an issue.

"If members know their field representative is at the Capitol, they might feel more comfortable asking questions or sharing their concerns," she said.

The field representatives also bring a grassroots perspective when spending time at the state Capitol.

"Because we are not lobbyists, we often view issues the same way our members would see them," Whitmore said.


The grassroots perspective is especially important when Farm Bureau members cannot make it to the Capitol themselves. With members from every corner of the state, it is not always feasible to step away from responsibilities on the farm to make the trip to Oklahoma City.

This is where the field representatives can help.

“The field representatives help relay information directly to and from the counties,” Wilkinson said. “If we have a member with concerns they would like to voice to their legislator, we can take that back to the public policy team or speak to their legislator directly.”

Each field representative visits the Capitol on a biweekly rotation, helping the public policy team by attending committee meetings, listening in the gallery during floor sessions, assisting with OKFB events at the Capitol and meeting legislators from the areas they serve.

Whitmore said the field representatives began establishing a regular presence at the Capitol in early 2020 but were sidelined by the COVID-19 pandemic. With COVID restrictions lifted for the 2022 legislative session, his team has returned to the Capitol in full force.

“Most of the time we are not in the legislative world enough to be able to speak off the cuff on every issue,” he said. “Being at the Capitol this year has stepped up our knowledge of the issues most important to our members.” 



Representative Anthony Moore (left) visits with OKFB South Central Field Representative Katie Wilkinson and OKFB Assistant Director of Public Policy Zac Swartz (right) in the halls of the state Capitol.

To find or reach out to your OKFB field representative, visit okfarmbureau.org or call (405) 523-2300.



Kay County Farm Bureau members Gary Scott (left) and Garrett Haskins (center) discuss important agricultural issues with Justin Whitmore, OKFB director of field services and north central field representative, in the rotunda of the state Capitol.



FEELING THE PINCH

BY REBEKAH NASH

PHOTOS BY DUSTIN MIELKE

Facing skyrocketing fertilizer and fuel prices, Oklahoma farmers and ranchers strive to build upon their agricultural heritage with the pressures of input prices, drought and world events weighing on their minds – and their pocketbooks.

Every time Clint Wilcox jumps into the cab of a tractor, a sprayer or a combine on his farm, he is taking the next step in a long line of decision-making he has painstakingly planned.

With each pass in the field – whether it be to plant, to fertilize or to harvest – he is carefully balancing natural resources, time and inputs that he hopes will produce a crop he and his family can be proud of.

And just like everyday Americans have seen inflation and supply chain shortages hit their pocketbooks as they buy even just the basic necessities daily life requires, farmers and ranchers like Wilcox are facing skyrocketing prices for fertilizer, fuel and equipment – all of which must be purchased before a single seed can be planted.

Wilcox, a wheat, cotton, milo and cattle producer near Fairview, like many producers across the country, has been spending his time analyzing costs of operation and returns on investment for his farm and ranch.

“You can’t starve a profit out of anything,” Wilcox said. “It’s true in this industry and any other industry – without investment, businesses do not go anywhere.”

After a seed is planted into the soil, it has to overcome a lot of time, weather and world events before making its way through the combine and to the grain elevator.

One of the major inputs farmers use on their operations is fertilizer, which now comes with an increasingly hefty price tag.

“Fertilizer has jumped dramatically in the past year or year and a half,” said Keeff Felty, a wheat and cotton farmer near Altus. “Depending on when and how you purchased it, the cost of fertilizer has definitely tripled.”

Wilcox recalled the outlook of prices a year ago for urea ammonium nitrate, a common liquid fertilizer applied to fields to increase the nitrogen levels in soil.

His operation applies 28% UAN to the fields, and in February 2021, he could buy a load transported to his farm for \$145 per ton.



Clint Wilcox, Fairview, Oklahoma



“WITHOUT THE LAND
you basically have nothing to work
with. Everything else farmers and
ranchers do is just expensive toys
if you do not have the land for
production. All of the growth for
crops comes from the soil. ”

- KEEFF FELTY



Keeff Felty extends the booms on the sprayer he uses to apply liquid nitrogen fertilizer on his farm near Altus. Prices have dramatically risen for both the fertilizer he applies and the diesel that fuels the sprayer.

Then after winter storms last year, the price jumped to \$300 a ton for the same load. However, farmers found it difficult to find fertilizer because fertilizer plants elected to sell their natural gas – a key input of nitrogen fertilizer production – for home and business heating during the extended cold snap.

“At this point, I think depending on which supplier you talk to prices are anywhere from \$545 to \$600 a ton,” Wilcox said. “It has taken a big increase, and those prices are just for your nitrogen fertilizer.”

Felty follows a simple calculation when deciding how much nitrogen to add to his wheat crop. For every bushel of wheat, he adds two pounds of fertilizer to the soil.

“I do split applications of fertilizer for the macronutrients,” Felty said. “There are certain times the plant really needs it, and there are other times it does not have such a demand for fertility, especially nitrogen.”

Nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium are the three key nutrients all crops require to grow, and these macronutrients must be added to the soil to ensure a healthy crop can flourish.

Both the phosphorus and potassium fertilizers Wilcox typically applies have more than doubled in price in the past year, he said.

While prices for fertilizer are high right now, Wilcox has been able to avoid some of the major costs associated with applying fertilizer by investing in another resource for his farm – storage.

“Because we have bought fertilizer cheap compared to

the current market, we know that we have cheap fertilizer sitting in the tanks that we can use on the next crop cycle and not have to buy the high-dollar stuff if we would just save it,” Wilcox said. “Just because we have bought lower-price fertilizer does not make it easier.

“I think the point we are at right now is the producers who bought in advance in the past ten months have made good decisions. The issue is even those producers are going to take part in purchasing extremely high input prices here in the next six months.”

Felty and Wilcox have each purchased fertilizer throughout the previous months to have a supply on-hand to make it through the current growing season for both their wheat and cotton crops.

Wilcox said taking the extra 30 minutes to call around to find the lowest price for a nitrogen-sulfur blend fertilizer was well worth the effort.

“I had two bids that were \$66 a ton higher than my lowest bid,” Wilcox said. “One of the \$66 bids would have been my first call, and if I would have decided to just wing it, \$66 more a ton for 25 tons would have cost me an additional \$1,650 more for just one load.

“If someone had a running total of how much they saved each year comparing prices and contracting in advance, it is crazy how many dollars someone could save.”

Once the fertilizer is purchased, farmers still need to apply the fertilizer to their land, requiring yet another input: off-road diesel.



Consumers are feeling the pinch at the pump when purchasing 20 gallons or less of fuel for their vehicles to get around town. On the other hand, farmers and ranchers must dig deep into their pockets to purchase hundreds or thousands of gallons of diesel at a time.

Farm equipment requires large amounts of fuel to make hundreds of passes through fields. Whether it be planting seeds, spraying fertilizer or chemical or harvesting a crop, each pass through a field is essential to the success of the growing season.

Felty uses a mobile fuel tank to fill his tractors and cotton picker because he said it fits his farm better than a large stationary tank.

"Fuel use is cyclical with crop production," Felty said. "We have been in a time period where we are not using a lot of fuel. So far this year, we have not gotten back into a high-use time frame, so the price increase from last fall is going to be noticeable because diesel has nearly doubled."

Wilcox's operation requires the opposite end of the spectrum – he has a stationary bulk fuel tank, which can hold enough diesel to last the family a full planting or harvest season. Even though he is not planting or harvesting a crop right now, he continues to apply fertilizer as needed.

He has been able to work with a local supplier to contract his diesel purchases two years in advance. While current prices are around \$5 at a fueling station, some producers were able to save money because they contracted fuel when it was less than \$2 per gallon.

"Yes, fuel is a large expense for our operation, but it is not anywhere near my largest expense," Wilcox said.

For many producers, diesel costs look minor to the cost of fertilizer.

Producers understand the additional costs added in the input column each time fertilizer is applied, so why not ease up on the inputs in effort to save money?

Felty compares adding fertilizer to the soil to stocking a refrigerator with food.

"If the refrigerator is empty, you are going to be hungry, and you are not going to flourish or be able to accomplish anything," Felty said. "It is the same way for the plant. You cannot continually take nourishment away from the soil. You have to give back at some point."

Just as it costs money to fill a house with food, raising a quality crop also has a cost.

While applying fertilizer increases yields for crops, environmentally there are great returns stemming from the practice. Farmers and ranchers press on as the original conservationists, and fertilizer helps them in this mission.

"A thick, lush healthy crop holds our soil in place, and the residue left from that crop holds our soil in place and builds more organic matter, which naturally in the future holds more nutrients and moisture in place," Wilcox said. "It protects our watersheds because of less erosion."

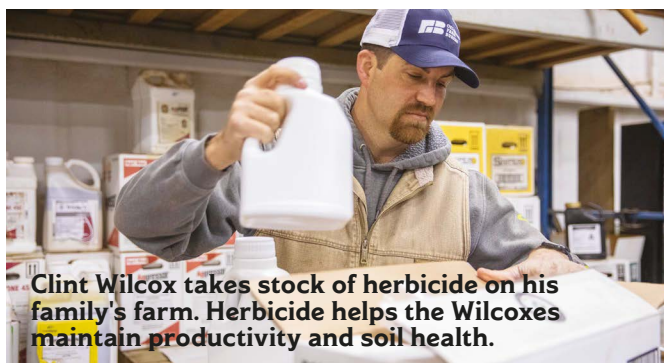
Previously, fields were cultivated after harvesting a crop, but Oklahoma's wind and rainfall can blow and wash away tilled fields, especially precious topsoil. To protect the soil, some farmers, such as Wilcox and Felty, have changed to minimal- or no-till operations.

"Without the land, you basically have nothing to work with," Felty said. "Everything else farmers and ranchers do is just expensive toys if you do not have the land for production. All of the growth for crops comes from the soil."

Adding fertilizer to the soil does not mean anything



Keff Felty stands in a shop he uses to store fuel, fertilizer, herbicides and machinery. Prices on all these farm inputs have increased, and some necessities of crop production are hard to come by due to supply chain issues.



Clint Wilcox takes stock of herbicide on his family's farm. Herbicide helps the Wilcoxes maintain productivity and soil health.



The Wilcox family's fertilizer storage capacity helps them plan around price fluctuations.



Clint Wilcox fills his sprayer with diesel fuel from a bulk tank on his family's farm. On-farm fuel storage allows Wilcox to purchase fuel while prices are low, helping him control input costs.



“YOU CAN'T STARVE A PROFIT
out of anything. It's true in this industry and any
other industry – without investment, businesses
do not go anywhere. ”

-CLINT WILCOX

if the weather does not cooperate. Farmers select crops that will give them the best chance of producing a solid crop, but yields are still highly dependent on the amount of rain that falls during the growing season.

“This year, we are really dry,” Felty said.

He sprayed some pre-plant fertilizer over the summer before planting his wheat in the fall, but he is not going to add any more because of the drought that the entire state – and especially western Oklahoma – is facing.

All producers share the same sentiment – their fields and pastures need multiple accumulating rainfalls now through the end of the growing season in order to produce a crop worth anything.

No one can predict the weather past a few days, let alone months, which adds another level of uncertainty to farming and ranching. Producers have to make costly decisions months – even years – in advance.

Wilcox said he is considering contracting next year's fertilizer and fuel to capitalize on current prices, but the uncertainty continues. The current wheat crop does not look promising.

He and many other producers are having a hard time coming to grips with purchasing fertilizer for next year when the current crop is still in early growth stages.

“We are getting so far up on prices you do not know when everything may fall off the cliff,” Wilcox said. “If you buy or contract wrong, it is hard to want to lock in this \$10 per bushel wheat in with what is going on in the world. If you are buying fertilizer at today's prices for next year, you better have done something to protect next year's price of wheat.”

Because agriculture is a global market, the Russian invasion of Ukraine adds a level of reservation for purchasing inputs too far into the future.

“Right now, in the environment that we are in, how

do you know what a good profit is?” Wilcox said.

“The issue becomes how do you know how much profit you need from this crop to ensure you can put the next one in?”

He said before the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine began, he thought he knew what a good value of wheat totaled to, but the roller coaster of prices for commodities and inputs pressures a person spend a bit more time making calculated decisions.

No matter what is going on in the world, Felty carries on making sound decisions for the long-term success of his farm, even if that means long hours sitting at the table compiling the best quotes to make the operation run smoothly.

Crop rotations, nutrient management, marketing commodities and a long list of other considerations are just the tip of the iceberg when making decisions to grow a good crop.

Farming and ranching requires endless hours of hard work, yet it is rewarding to see the product of the soil.


“The good that comes from walking a lush, beautiful field cannot be compared to anything,” Wilcox said.

“There is nothing like it when you planted the seed, and you have made the decisions from day one.

“A well-taken-care-of crop when the weather is in your favor is beautiful. There are times when I have a hard time getting anything done because all I want to do is drive around and look at fields.”

Despite the challenges agriculturalists face, they still strive to produce the safest and most affordable food, fiber and fuel for all Oklahomans and the world.

“There are good years and bad years, but the good years outweigh the bad years for me,” Wilcox said.

“Behind my family, growing a good crop is the most important thing in my life.” 



Mike Clark

Servant leadership

Farm Bureau members step up to represent members in their district.

story by Rebekah Nash | photos by Dustin Mielke



Mike Leverett

From the very beginning, Oklahoma farmers and ranchers have been the core of Oklahoma Farm Bureau – from the grassroots on up to our leaders – who put in countless hours of work to ensure our organization and our rural way of life will continue to grow for generations to come.

Farm Bureau has a long history of strong leaders for agriculture, but what makes OKFB's leaders special is their servant leadership.

Leading by example and being the first to put in additional work, Mike Clark and Mike Leverett rose to the occasion to represent District 5 and District 8, respectively, on the OKFB Board of Directors alongside seven other directors and the president.

Clark and Leverett were both elected by farmers and ranchers from their districts at the 2021 OKFB Annual Meeting. As farmers and ranchers themselves, Clark and Leverett know the triumphs and tribulations producers face every day.

Meet OKFB's two newest board members in the following pages.



MIKE CLARK

District Five



As a first-generation farmer and rancher in LeFlore County, Mike Clark has a wide variety of agricultural experience from row crops to broiler chickens, but now his family's operation is focused on growing quality hay for fellow producers in the area while also managing a small cow/calf herd.

Clark grew his passion for agriculture through a job in his youth working for a farmer, and he knew raising his own children on the farm was the best thing for him and his wife, April, even if they did not end up with a career in agriculture.

"I have always said that I want my children to stay here and farm with me," Clark said. "But if they decided to leave, that's okay, too. It is my passion, and it does not have to be theirs. Both my daughter and son have been able to learn quality life skills on our place.

"Now, my son, Aaron, helps me on our operation, and he loves it. It has worked out really well for us, but agriculture is a tough business. It seems to be getting tougher every day."

Though many factors make the industry complex, Clark knew legislation gets signed into place affecting farmers and ranchers, either positively or negatively. He understood the importance of knowing the many factors that influence and affect agriculture, which is one of the primary reasons he became a Farm Bureau member.

"I do not think people realize the scope of what Farm Bureau does or how big the organization really is," Clark said. "If it was not for the federation, there would be a lot of laws passed that would hurt agriculture."

Clark knows Farm Bureau is a true grassroots organization, where members discuss, create and implement policy based on what they are facing on their farms, ranches and communities every day.

He wants to ensure the voice of farmers and ranchers is heard throughout the entire legislative process. While not everything may be decided in farmers' and ranchers' favor, Clark knows that producers should have a seat at the table to discuss the policies that may be put into place.

"Not all farms and ranches are the same, and not all counties face the same issues," Clark said. "It is hard to help someone if you do not know what is going on, so I encourage everyone to reach out to me for help.

"I would like to think I know who to reach out to find an answer to a member's question, and we will work to find an answer."

From serving on the LeFlore County Farm Bureau board and the OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee, Clark said he wants to take on leadership roles both locally and on the state level. He wants to ensure everyone in District 5 is represented when making decisions affecting all Farm Bureau members.



Starting around the age of 8 years old, Mike Leverett knew he wanted to be involved in agriculture after receiving six Hereford cows along with 80 acres covered in native grasses and mesquite trees in Jackson County. As he got older, Leverett continued to expand his farm and ranch with the help of his parents, and also got into the business of custom-cutting wheat.

As he grew his operation during college and beyond, Leverett scaled down his farm and ranch to cow/calf pairs and baling hay to focus on his conservation efforts to ensure the land can continue to produce the grasses needed to feed his cattle.

He transitioned to McClain County after beginning a career with the United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency, where he quickly learned the role Farm Bureau plays in rural communities, especially for farmers and ranchers.

Leverett has been a Farm Bureau member for nearly 40 years, and has served on the McClain County Farm Bureau Board of Directors for 27 years. The opportunity to serve on the OKFB Board of Directors came at the perfect time for Leverett.

“I worked with producers for over 30 years through my FSA job, and I still wanted to help farmers and ranchers even though I am retired from FSA,” Leverett said.

While Leverett has been involved in the grassroots organization for decades, he feels there is still a lot to learn while continuing to build the organization, especially bringing in more young farmers and ranchers.

He once asked producers around his area if they knew of any young farmers or ranchers that could get involved in Farm Bureau and OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers.

“Young? We do not have any young producers around here,” Leverett said was the typical answer he received.

After probing a bit more, his neighbors would mention a few people they knew to invite to a county event or board meeting to introduce them to the world of Farm Bureau.

“I want to encourage all counties to continue getting the younger generations involved,” Leverett said. “I want them to be aware that Farm Bureau is not just insurance. The organization gives them a platform to voice their opinion and make a difference, not only in their community, but also across the state.

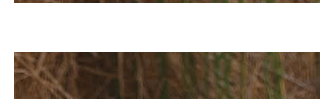
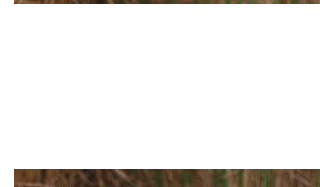
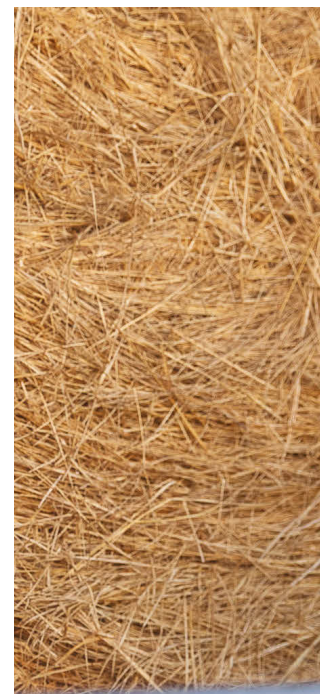
“I have found out over the years that when Farm Bureau has something to say on the state or national level, the legislature listens.”

He knows the effectiveness of discussions between farmers and ranchers to spark new ideas.

“I am like any other farmer – I walk out the back door, and I put my head down,” Leverett said. “I may not see anyone that day.”

He encourages people to get out of their day-to-day routine and share what they are experiencing, so those in leadership positions, like himself, can try to find a solution.

“It takes us all if we are willing to do it, and I am willing to do it,” Leverett said. **FB**





MIKE LEVERETT

District Eight

ALL AROUND OKLAHOMA



Payne County Farm Bureau member Roy Stovall (left) competes in the preliminary round of the AFBF Collegiate Farm Bureau Discussion Meet during the 2022 AFBF YF&R Leadership Conference held Feb. 25-28 in Louisville, Kentucky.

OKFB members attend AFBF YF&R Leadership Conference

Nearly 20 Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers attended the American Farm Bureau YF&R Leadership Conference Feb. 25-28 in Louisville, Kentucky.

YF&R members from all 50 states and Puerto Rico gathered to build their leadership skills, connect with like-minded agriculturalists, grow their knowledge of agriculture and learn about Kentucky's agriculture industry.

Ottawa County Farm Bureau member Alisen Anderson was appointed to serve a two-year term on the AFBF YF&R committee, where she will assist in the coordination of YF&R events, competitive events and the Harvest for All program. She started her two years of service at the conference.

The AFBF Collegiate Farm Bureau Discussion Meet was held during the conference, where Payne County Farm Bureau member Roy Stovall participated in the panel-style discussion exchanging ideas and information on pre-determined topics. Stovall advanced to the Sweet Sixteen round of competition after two preliminary rounds.

Members at the conference heard from various keynote speakers, including Delatorro McNeal, who shared how members can be better leaders in their counties and state organizations; Braxton Nielson, who encouraged attendees by telling his story and how he overcame hardships; and AFBF President Zippy Duvall, who reminded the young producers of the impact Farm Bureau has on all levels.

Breakout session topics featured economic outlooks, retirement planning, membership engagement, cattle profitability, seed technology, agriculture literacy and much more. YF&R members toured local farms, ranches and businesses to gain perspective on agriculture in Kentucky.

The 2023 Farm Bureau FUSION Conference will be held March 3-6, 2023, in Jacksonville, Florida, where members of the Young Farmers and Ranchers, Women's Leadership and Promotion and Education programs will gather.



Josh Emerson of McIntosh County asks a question during OKFB's inaugural Generation Bridge Conference in Oklahoma City January 29.



Amy Harris of Kiowa County shares ideas for the future of agriculture during the Generation Bridge Conference in Oklahoma City January 29.



Attorneys from Oklahoma City-based law firm McAfee and Taft share legal resources for agriculture producers during OKFB's Generation Bridge conference.

OKFB holds first-ever Generation Bridge Conference

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members ages 35-50 gathered for the inaugural Generation Bridge conference Jan. 28-29 in Oklahoma City.

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

The two-day event featured presentations on a wide array of agriculture topics, providing opportunities for conference attendees to

discuss ideas and share their experiences.

The event kicked off at Cattlemen's Steakhouse event center on Friday, Jan. 28, where featured speakers included Kelli Payne, president of the Oklahoma National Stockyards Company; Chris Carroll, vice president and credit officer with National Livestock Credit Corporation; and Rodd Moesel, OKFB president.

The second day featured updates from OKFB staff on legislative and policy issues along with a communications training session. Attorneys with OKC-based law firm McAfee and Taft shared information

on legal issues and services the firm's agriculture and equine industry group offers to their clients.

The conference concluded with an open discussion and idea-sharing session for the approximately 25 attendees to discuss ideas, goals and direction for the Generation Bridge program.

In the weeks following the conference, OKFB formed an advisory committee of members ages 35-50 to meet periodically to plan events and programs as they direct the future work of Generation Bridge.



Caddo County Farm Bureau member Karen Dodson (right) takes notes during a presentation in the budget and economy meeting.



Scott Neufeld of Major County (right) listens to a fellow Farm Bureau member's perspective in the farm policy meeting.

Oklahoma farmers and ranchers bring perspectives to Washington, D.C.

Seven Farm Bureau members represented Oklahoma at the American Farm Bureau Federation's Issue Advisory Committee meetings Feb. 17-18 in Arlington, Virginia.

The IAC meetings bring together Farm Bureau members from across the country to discuss pertinent issues facing agriculture including energy, environmental regulations, agricultural labor, organic and direct marketing, technology, animal care, farm policy, water, budget and economy, federal land, food safety and market structures.

Karen Dodson of Caddo County served on the budget and economy committee. A longtime farmer and certified public accountant, Dodson brought a wealth of knowledge to her committee.

Dodson said top areas of discussion in her committee were income taxes, interest rates and the upcoming farm bill.

"These committees – other than the grassroots – are the only input to changing current policy and what we stand for and support," she said.

Josh Anderson of Johnston County served on the environmental regulations committee, which discussed the effects of regulations handed down from the Environmental Protection Agency. The restriction on Enlist herbicides at the beginning of 2022 was a major topic of conversation.

Anderson said he enjoyed serving on the committee and knows he can bring what he learned back home to help the grassroots policymaking process.

"It's a good way to see the issues that are happening in the country as a whole, and it gives us some good insight looking forward in how we can protect Oklahomans," he said.

For Cody Goodknight of Comanche County, serving on the technology committee hit close to home, especially when discussing rural broadband. As a farmer in rural southwest Oklahoma, broadband access is a necessity as machinery gets more advanced and often needs a wireless data connection.

"It's not just (needed) where people live," he said. "We are operating machinery and doing a lot of work in the field. We don't want to have to go back to the house to hook up to a cable connection."

Goodknight said serving on the committee helps him stay up to date with current issues in the agriculture industry.

"I like being part of a solution to a problem," he said. "These are issues that we face on a day-to-day basis, and if I can gather that information from across the nation with other Farm Bureau members and figure out a solution to a common problem, it's interesting, challenging and rewarding to me."

Scott Neufeld of Major County said the new farm bill was the primary conversation in the farm policy committee, with climate-smart practices at the forefront.

"I've heard of climate change and climate implications, but climate-smart is the new buzzword," he said. "What will we be doing in the new farm bill that will be climate-smart?"

Chad Budy of Woods County said solar energy was the primary topic for the energy committee, unlike years past when wind energy discussion was the focus.

Budy formerly leased out some of his land for wind energy, but the endeavor was short-lived when he found out his property was in a military flight zone. He now thinks that land might be a good candidate for solar energy.

"The (solar) industry has come a long way," Budy said. "I think it could be a potential asset for us."

Jordan Cook, a seedstock producer in Washita County, served on the animal care committee. She said major topics in her committee were animal diseases, gene editing and California's Proposition 12.

"It's very interesting to see what's going on in different states, and especially with the animal care committee, just all the different things out there that living in Oklahoma we're not really aware of," she said.

Chad Selman of Tulsa County joined the agricultural labor committee virtually this year. He said his committee focused heavily on H2A labor, discussing what works well and what does not. They also discussed overtime pay, housing for agricultural workers and the ability for workers' spouses to join them while in the United States.

Each OKFB member was nominated to their respective committee by OKFB president Rodd Moesel. They serve a two-year term with a maximum of four years total. In addition to the annual in-person meeting, committees meet regularly via conference call or Zoom to continue their discussion and make recommendations to the AFBF Board of Directors.

OKFB YF&R awards \$10,000 in scholarships

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers committee awarded nine \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors and one \$1,000 scholarship to a Collegiate Farm Bureau member.

Each recipient is pursuing a degree at an institution of higher learning with hopes to contribute to agriculture and rural Oklahoma.

"The YF&R scholarship program is an exciting way to invest in the newest generation of agriculturalists in our industry," said Brittany Hukill, OKFB YF&R chair. "Our committee looks forward to seeing how each of these students uses this investment to grow in agriculture and represent our state well in their careers."

Woods County Farm Bureau member **Josey Myers** received the Collegiate Farm Bureau scholarship. She is attending Northwestern Oklahoma State University where she is studying agricultural education.

The high school scholarships were awarded to:

- **Michael Wakefield**, Beaver County
- **Haley Combs**, Garfield County
- **Blake Janssen**, Grady County
- **Bailee Black**, Hughes County
- **Autumn Bolen**, McCurtain County
- **Gage Watson**, Murray County
- **Brooke Costello**, Rogers County
- **Kara Kitch**, Tulsa County
- **McKenna Wedel**, Washita County

The nine scholarship recipients, one from each OKFB district, have a variety of career aspirations and have chosen degrees across the agriculture industry including agricultural business, agricultural education, animal sciences, agricultural engineering and agricultural communications.

Students plan to study at higher-education institutions including Northern Oklahoma College, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma State University, Redlands Community College and Southwest Oklahoma State University.

Farm Bureau members celebrate Ag Day at the Capitol



OKFB Women's Leadership Committee Chair Mignon Bolay (left) visits with guests during Ag Day at the Capitol March 24.

The Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry hosted Ag Day at the Capitol March 24 at the state Capitol.

The annual event celebrates the impact agriculture has in Oklahoma while highlighting the many commodities grown across the state.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members, along with other agriculture organizations and Made in Oklahoma producers, shared the story of agriculture with legislators and guests.

Kay County Farm Bureau member Don Schieber was honored with the 2022 Governor's Outstanding Achievement Award in Agriculture. The Ponca City native is a past Kay County board member.

The OKFB Women's Leadership Committee provided prizes to teachers and students honored by Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom, including the 2022 Ag in the Classroom Teacher of the Year, Teresa Brunnemer.

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OKFB hosts successful leadership conference

More than 100 Oklahoma Farm Bureau members, guests and legislators gathered for OKFB's State Leadership Conference Feb. 15 in Oklahoma City.

The event kicked off with Donnie Anderson, director of the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics, giving an update on medical marijuana in Oklahoma and explaining the challenges the booming industry has posed.

Anderson shared with OKFB members the growth OBN has seen in the industry's illegal activity, citing cheaper land prices, inexpensive licensing fees and no limits on the number of dispensaries. Oklahoma has 2,300 marijuana dispensaries, while states like Oregon, Colorado and California have a fraction of that with 560, 520 and 261, respectively.

Oklahoma has also issued 382,069 medical marijuana cards – almost 10% of the state's nearly 4 million people, Anderson said.

He also stressed the impacts marijuana operations have on the land, the environment and the surrounding community. Top environmental impacts he cited are mold, waste and improper disposal, electricity hazards, excessive water usage and strains on the power grid. Other impacts include suspicious land sales, public safety and law enforcement safety.

Farm Bureau members also had the chance to hear from Adria Berry, executive director of the Oklahoma Medical Marijuana Authority. Six months into her role at OMMA, Berry said she is optimistic about the direction her organization is taking.

Oklahoma's medical marijuana industry began with the passage of State Question 788 in June 2018 and now has more than 8,300 growers in the state, Berry said.

Like Anderson, Berry attributed the unprecedented growth to the absence of licensing caps and lack of qualifying conditions to obtain a medical marijuana card.

She encouraged OKFB members to be a part of the solution and communicate with her organization if they notice suspicious activity.

Over lunch, Sen. Roger Thompson and Rep. Kevin Wallace visited with attendees to give a state appropriations and budget update.

They spoke on the proposed grocery tax elimination and the importance of increasing the state's savings. They also discussed expanding rural broadband, improving roads and bridges and the importance of the Oklahoma State University extension service.

Oklahoma State Auditor Cindy Byrd kicked off the afternoon speaker lineup, discussing her role as state auditor and the many types of audits she performs.

Byrd explained the role ad valorem taxes play in funding public schools and shared the details of the investigative audit of Epic Charter Schools. She also encouraged OKFB members to be involved in county government and volunteer to sit on county boards.

Farm Bureau members heard from staff representing Oklahoma's congressional delegation, including individuals from the offices of Sen. Jim Inhofe, Sen. James Lankford and Rep. Frank Lucas. They visited with OKFB members about the upcoming farm bill, challenges with Waters of the United States and the then-growing tension between Russia and Ukraine.

Harrison Pittman, director of the National Ag Law Center, gave the evening's keynote address, stressing the importance of understanding agriculture before understanding agricultural law. Pittman explained the factors that influence agricultural law, including consumer influence, interdependence on foreign countries and tactical changes.

He also spoke on the future of agricultural law, citing challenges like increased foreign ownership of agricultural land and urban encroachment on rural areas.

The evening wrapped up with a reception and dinner to honor state legislators and recognize the 10 legislators who received the 2021 OKFB Champion Award. Champion award winners for the 2021 legislative session included House Speaker Charles McCall, Rep. Ryan Martinez, Rep. Dell Kerbs, Rep. Carl Newton, Rep. John Pfeiffer, Sen. Greg Treat, Sen. Darcy Jech, Sen. Lonnie Paxton, Sen. Frank Simpson and Sen. Zack Taylor.

EPA clears use of Enlist products in all Oklahoma counties

The United States Environmental Protection Agency released a statement on March 29 expanding the use of Enlist herbicide products to an additional 134 counties across the U.S., including the 46 previously restricted counties in Oklahoma.

Thought to pose a threat to the American Burying Beetle, the EPA prohibited the use of Corteva's Enlist product line in a number of counties across the country in early 2022 with Oklahoma seeing the highest impact of any state.

On March 28, Rep. Frank Lucas voiced his frustration with the EPA's restrictions in a press release, urging EPA administrator Michael Regan to reconsider the decision. Oklahoma Farm Bureau appreciates Rep. Lucas' steadfast commitment to agriculture and the farmers and ranchers in rural Oklahoma.

The Enlist products – developed for use on soybeans, corn and cotton – are now approved for use in all 77 counties in Oklahoma for the 2022 growing season. This decision by the EPA allows farmers and ranchers to utilize any Enlist-compatible seeds already purchased, relieving them of the burden of finding a substitute for the upcoming season.

For more information on the EPA's approval of Enlist One and Enlist Duo, visit okfb.news/Enlist.



OKFB supports ag youth at the 2022 OYE Sale of Champions

Oklahoma Farm Bureau purchased more than \$45,000 in livestock premiums to support agriculture youth and their livestock projects at the 2022 Oklahoma Youth Expo Sale of Champions March 18 at the Oklahoma State Fairgrounds.

OKFB purchased 65 premiums – alongside other agricultural groups and individuals – out of the 212 animals sold, including a portion of the grand champion market barrow, shown by Cade Rea of Hydro-Eakly FFA.

OKFB was also recognized as the OYE volume buyer for 2021, having purchased more premiums than any other buyer in the sale.

Additionally, OKFB purchased the chalice for the grand champion market steer, shown by Sadie Wynn of Newcastle 4-H.

OKFB contributed a total of \$65,000 to the Oklahoma Youth Expo through livestock premiums, event sponsorship and more.



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OKFB WLC shares Oklahoma agriculture with legislators at Farm City Festival

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee visited with legislators and served lunch to more than 250 people at the state Capitol March 9 during the committee's 2022 Farm City Festival.

Farm City Festival is one of the most anticipated events of the year for the WLC committee. It is an opportunity for the women of Farm Bureau to connect and share Oklahoma agriculture with elected officials.

"Our main purpose is to just to come and thank them and let them know how much we appreciate what they do for us," said Mignon Bolay, OKFB WLC chair.

WLC members used the opportunity to hand out accurate agriculture fact booklets to legislators and staff to connect the meal with agricultural products grown on Oklahoma farms and ranches.



Rep. Brian Hill poses for a photo with WLC members (L to R) Karen Dodson, Robin Bryant and Mignon Bolay during Farm City Festival on March 9 at the state Capitol.



Sen. Michael Bergstrom gets a plate of food while visiting with WLC members during Farm City Festival. The committee provided meals to more than 250 people at the event.



WLC member Kelly Blair shares agriculture information with Sen. Frank Simpson.

Collegiate Farm Bureau members visit the state Capitol

More than 30 Collegiate Farm Bureau members visited the state Capitol on March 24 for Collegiate Farm Bureau Day at the Capitol.

Students from Oklahoma State University, Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College, Southwestern Oklahoma State University and Northwestern Oklahoma State University met with legislators, heard from Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture Blayne Arthur, participated in Ag Day at the Capitol events and heard from fellow agriculture organizations.

The group kicked off the event on March 23 with an evening in Oklahoma City as they toured the Oklahoma National Stockyards and completed a community service project at the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma.



Collegiate Farm Bureau members from several Oklahoma colleges and universities pose for a photo with Lt. Gov. Matt Pinnell during their visit to the state Capitol March 24.

OKFB members recognized with Leopold Conservation Award for their commitment to revitalize ranch

The Lazy KT Ranch of Freedom has been selected as the recipient of the 2021 Oklahoma Leopold Conservation Award. Owned and operated by Farm Bureau member Katie Blunk and her family, Lazy KT Ranch is in Woods County in the northwestern part of the state.

Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the prestigious award recognizes farmers, ranchers and forestland owners who inspire others with their dedication to land, water and wildlife habitat resources in their care.

“The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture is honored to help recognize Dr. Katie Blunk and her family for the work they do to care for the land and resources entrusted to them,” said David VonTungeln, OKFB Foundation for Agriculture president. “The Lazy KT Ranch is a great testimony to the effects of modern conservation practices and the importance of responsible land stewardship.”

Lazy KT Ranch’s story is one of resilience. A mother and daughter’s land ethic has revived the native grasslands of a ranch located a few miles east of the Dust Bowl’s epicenter.

As a child, Rose Kline Blunk took shelter at a neighbor’s home on Black Sunday. The bank took her family’s cattle as they struggled through the Great Depression. During a severe drought in the 1950s, she vividly remembers the sky turning gray and the wind feeling like a sandblaster. Since then, the importance of caring for the land has never left her.

Rose’s daughter, Katie Blunk, grew up on the Blunk family ranch. Her time with horses, cattle and dogs influenced her decision to become a veterinarian. When Katie’s father died in 1995, Rose inherited what would later become Lazy KT Ranch.

Drought, cedar trees and over-grazing had ravaged the ranch’s landscape. Although Rose was overwhelmed by its decline, she shouldered the task of preserving the land for the next generation. She cut cedar trees and brought prescribed fire management to the ranch with the financial and technical assistance of the local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office.

In 2012, after retiring from her veterinary medicine career in Nevada, Katie came home to her ranching roots with her husband, Michael Horntvedt. She embarked on her life’s next journey, an immersion into conservation and cattle ranching. A decade later, the Lazy KT Ranch is thriving from an ecological and business perspective.

To reduce erosion and protect water quality and quantity, the family fenced off riparian areas, built ponds and installed pipelines and water storage and solar powered watering systems.

Katie said the best and most economical conservation tool for their ranch is the strategic application of prescribed fire and grazing. This combination has restored the prairie ecosystem while producing quality forage for cattle and habitat for wildlife.

Wildflowers and native grasses have also been seeded across the ranch’s 1,525 acres to provide habitat for native pollinators, Monarch butterflies and lesser prairie chickens.

The reemergence of the prairie, wildlife and cattle to the Lazy KT Ranch are all testaments to the landscape’s recovery, regenerative ranching practices and the land ethic of its stewards.

OKFB to host inaugural Youth Legislative Experience

Oklahoma Farm Bureau is set to host the first-ever Youth Legislative Experience July 12-13, 2022, at the state Capitol in Oklahoma City.

The Youth Legislative Experience will bring together high school juniors and seniors from 4-H and FFA to learn about the Oklahoma legislative process and how a bill becomes a law. Students will have the opportunity to write and discuss a piece of legislation about an issue important to them as part of a mock legislature.

Attendees will also have the opportunity to visit with current and former state lawmakers, as well as leaders from 4-H, FFA and OKFB.



Cost for the event is \$50 and will cover meals and lodging. Interested students should contact their agricultural education teacher or Extension educator before **June 1, 2022** to apply.

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2022 Ag in the Classroom Teacher of the Year announced

Teresa Brunnermer, a teacher at Morrison Elementary School, was recognized as the 2022 Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom Teacher of the Year for her continued efforts to share agriculture with her students.

“When you see Teresa in her classroom, it is obvious she has a passion for teaching her young students about agriculture,” said Emily Ague, state AITC coordinator. “Her students are excited and eager to learn.”

Brunnermer has taught at Morrison Public Schools for 24 years. In that time, she has attended workshops, On the Road with Ag in the Classroom road trips and has attended and presented at the state and national Ag in the Classroom conferences.

“Agriculture is so ingrained in me that I wouldn’t know of any other way to teach,” said Brunnermer. “Every year I strive to include more Ag in the Classroom lessons and resources and am hoping I am not only educating the children in my classroom, but also their families.”

She has won several awards, including Morrison Teacher of the Year. She also serves on the Scholastic Book Clubs Teachers Advisory Board and is president of the Cimarron Reading Council. She has also written and received many grants to improve the quality of her classroom.

Teacher of the Year sponsors include Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women’s Leadership Committee, Oklahoma Ag Credit, Oklahoma Beef Council and the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry. 09804407

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County Farm Bureaus visit Oklahoma's Capitol

The state Capitol has been abuzz with visitors since the beginning of the legislative session in February, including many Farm Bureau members from around the state who have made the trek to Oklahoma City to visit with their legislators.

Members first received a legislative update from the OKFB public policy team, then ventured to the Capitol to visit with elected officials about issues important to them and how specific legislation could affect their agricultural operations.

In addition to speaking with lawmakers, OKFB members who visited the Capitol had the opportunity to see the newly opened Oklahoma State Capitol Museum.

If you or your county would like to visit the Capitol and speak with your legislators, contact your field representative or the public policy team at (405) 523-2300.



Noble County Farm Bureau members visit with Rep. Ty Burns (right) during their visit to the state Capitol on March 23.



Woodward County Farm Bureau board members Wes Crain (left) and Eldon Merklin (center) visit with Sen. Casey Murdock at the state Capitol March 29.



Sen. Roland Pederson (right) speaks with members of Garfield and Kay County Farm Bureau at the Oklahoma State Capitol on March 30.

OKFB thanks Inhofe for commitment to agriculture

On Feb. 25, Sen. Jim Inhofe announced his retirement from the United States Senate after more than 50 years in public office. Oklahoma Farm Bureau president Rodd Moesel issued the following statement after Sen. Inhofe's press conference:

"Sen. Inhofe has been a tireless advocate for agriculture and a stalwart partner with Oklahoma Farm Bureau for decades. Farm Bureau members are saddened to learn he will be leaving the U.S. Senate, but he leaves an enduring legacy. We appreciate all he has done to support agriculture and rural America in our nation's capital.

"Sen. Inhofe championed numerous issues that had a positive impact on agriculture and our rural communities from infrastructure development to preventing regulatory overreach. His tireless efforts on the Waters of the United States ruling were second to none. We appreciate his dedication to upholding freedom and ensuring prosperity in Oklahoma.

"As a recipient of both the American Farm Bureau Golden Plow award and AFBF's Distinguished Service Award, Sen. Inhofe's accomplishments for farmers and ranchers are known nationwide.



"Oklahoma Farm Bureau sends heartfelt thanks to Sen. Inhofe for his outstanding service to agriculture, our state and our country. We wish him and his wife, Kay, a happy and well-deserved retirement after he completes his service in the Senate at the end of 2022."



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AFBF welcomes SCOTUS decision to hear Prop 12 case

American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall issued the following statement on the U.S. Supreme Court decision to hear the case against California's Proposition 12 filed by AFBF and the National Pork Producers Council.

The state law seeks to ban the sale of pork from hogs that don't meet the state's arbitrary production standards, even if

the pork was raised on farms outside of California.

"AFBF is pleased with the Supreme Court's decision to consider the constitutionality of California's law imposing arbitrary requirements on farmers well outside its borders. We share California's goal of ensuring animals are well cared for, but Prop


12 fails to advance that goal. We look forward to presenting the facts to the Court, including how Prop 12 hamstring farmers' efforts to provide a safe environment for their animals, while harming small family farms and raising pork prices across the country. One state's misguided law should not dictate farming practices for an entire nation."

Oklahoma Leopold Conservation Award seeks nominees

Know an Oklahoma rancher, farmer or forestland owner who goes above and beyond in the care and management of natural resources? Nominate them for the 2022 Oklahoma Leopold Conservation Award.

Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the award recognizes those who inspire others with their dedication to land, water and wildlife habitat management on private, working land. In his influential 1949 book, "A Sand County Almanac," Leopold called for an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage.

Nominations may be submitted on behalf of a landowner, or landowners may apply themselves. Applications are reviewed by an independent panel of agricultural and conservation leaders. The application can be found at okfb.news/leopold22.

The application deadline date is August 15, 2022. Applications must be emailed to award@sandcountyfoundation.org. 



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Iowa Farmer Uses Horse Product To Help Heal His Injured Foot

On September 9, 2020, Iowa farmer Dan Burck injured his left foot in a grain auger. He was rushed to University of Iowa Hospital in Iowa City.

His hospital stay lasted 10 days and included 6 separate surgeries.

In January 2021, while recuperating at home, he read a story about a Minnesota woman, Liz Hershberger, who had used a horse product called Miracle Heel to help heal her severely injured foot.

Dan was hoping to find a way to speed up his healing process and contacted Stuart Labs about the product Miracle Heel. Stuart connected him with Liz Hershberger who recommended that he use Miracle Heel.

About 10 days after beginning to apply Miracle Heel to his foot, Dan noticed an improvement in the healing process.



In February, his doctors at U of I commented on how well his foot was healing.

On April 13, Dan's foot was almost completely healed except for a small, discolored area on the top of his foot. An MRI revealed a small pocket of fluid just below the surface. His doctor scheduled a surgery appointment for May 6 to remove the pocket of fluid. At his pre-op appointment on May 4, the discolored area looked normal, and an MRI showed that the pocket of fluid was gone.

Dan and his wife Kris farm 800 acres of cropland and have 138 beef cows. With the help of a prosthetic insert in a specially made boot, Dan was able to return to farming in March.

Steuart's Pain Formula uses a unique blend of safe, natural pain fighters to help you reclaim your life and get back to the things you love. No burning or irritation (menthol and capsaicin-free); leaves no odor or residue; stops pain fast. And promotes healing, with no side-effects.

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Ben M.: After suffering a set of injuries over the last 20 years ranging from a traumatic fall to frostbite and amputation, I've been in constant pain for years. However, the products offered by Steuart Labs have been unique.



As a military medic I experienced a traumatic back injury when I fell out of a rescue chopper. I have had severe back pain since that incident in 2004. After 3 days of using Steuart's Pain Formula, I experienced significant relief, plus I have cut my use of NSAID pain drugs. I had calluses on my feet that were very painful. I started using Steuart's Foot Cream twice daily and noticed relief in 12 hours. Slowly, the calluses are disappearing. I experienced frostbite in a North Dakota blizzard in January 2020. As a result of the frostbite, I lost several fingers. With Steuart's I was able to reduce the pain and improve my skin health at the amputation sites.

These products work, don't sell yourself short. Try them immediately.

Doug Billings, Political Podcaster, "The Right Side with Doug Billings":

I applied Steuart's Pain Formula to areas of pain and bruising resulting from an abdominal surgery. *This stuff works.* I got almost immediate pain relief, and the bruising was mostly healed in 2 days.

"I am getting emails from listeners to my podcast praising this product."

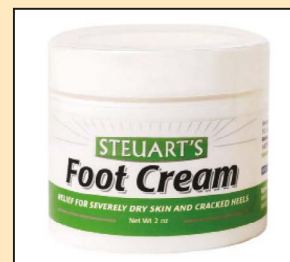


Email from Beth Yates: Hey Doug (www.DougBillings.us), Thank you so much for recommending Steuart's Pain Relief Cream on your show. I ordered some right away - it was shipped out the same day and it arrived today. I've been having some major lower back/hip pain lately. One application and the pain eased tremendously, making it easier for me to do my daily tasks. I love your show and your enthusiasm. God Bless You!



5 oz Pain Formula sells for \$34.90, plus shipping.

16 oz Miracle Heel sells for \$24.50. Postage is free if ordered with Pain Formula.



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Contact: Gary Steuart, Steuart Laboratories, P.O. Box 306, Mabel, Minn. 55954 (ph 877 210-9664; www.steuartlaboratories.com).

Not all insects are a threat in the garden

By Trisha Gedon
Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service



Ladybugs are a great addition to the garden because they eat aphids, which can cause a lot of plant damage. *Photo by Todd Johnson, OSU Agricultural Communications Services.*

When gardeners see insects in the garden, they often fear these multilegged creatures will chew and chomp their way through the landscape and leave a trail of destruction in their wake.

While there are some insects capable of such damage in a garden – including aphids, cutworms and caterpillars – many insects are actually beneficial and are found anywhere from below the soil surface to the tree canopy, said David Hillock, Oklahoma State University Extension consumer horticulturist.

“Gardeners obviously don’t want to offer insects a delicious salad bar, but before applying insecticides at the first sign of insects or arthropods, take the time to find out exactly what insects are calling your garden and landscape home,” Hillock said. “Most of the insects found in the landscape aren’t going to harm your plants. In fact, most of them are predators and serve a variety of important functions in the garden, such as pollinating plants or eating the insects that cause damage.”

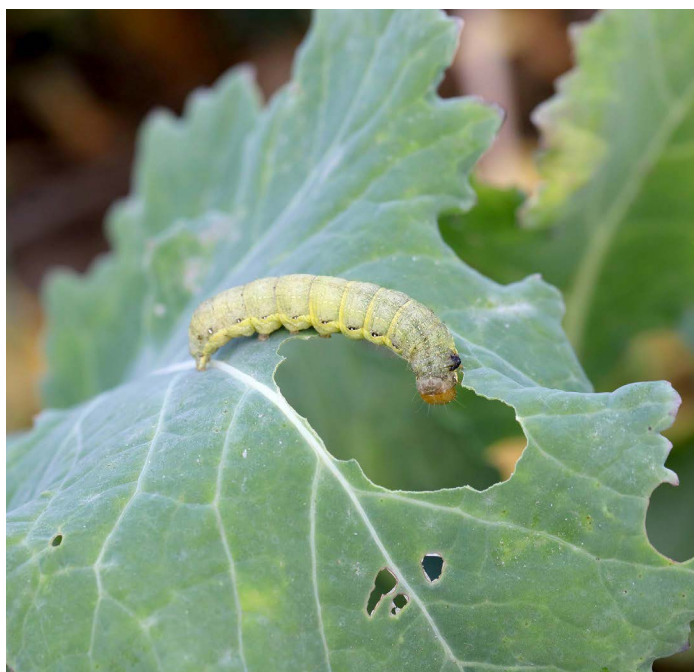
Species such as flies, bees, butterflies

and moths help gardens grow by pollinating crops. Other beneficial insects are predators, including the easily recognizable lady beetle, also known as a ladybug. Both adult and larval lady beetles feed on small, soft-bodied insects. The well-known red and orange species feed primarily on aphids.

Other predatory insects include the green lacewing, damsel bug, praying mantis, syrphid fly, bigeyed bug, assassin bug, spined soldier bug, paper wasp, cicada killer, minute pirate bug and even some species of spiders.



Below: Caterpillars can do irreparable damage to your home garden. Photo courtesy of Shutterstock.



Above: Butterflies are essential pollinators and are attracted to a variety of plants. Photo by Todd Johnson, OSU Agricultural Communications Services.

Parasitic insects are organisms that live and feed in or on a larger host insect and are good to have in the garden. Some of those species include trichogrammatid wasp, tachinid fly and braconid wasp.

"A successful garden and landscape depend on the insect world," Hillock said. "Attracting beneficial insects to the garden can help reduce pest pressure, help build healthy soil and improve yields."

Some great plant options for attracting beneficial insects include carrots, celery, fennel, parsnips, legumes, broccoli and mustard greens. Also consider selections from the aster family, including goldenrod, signet marigold, sunflower, coneflower and zinnias; and selections from the verbena family, including garden favorites, such as verbena and lantana.

What can a gardener do to try to eliminate the insects that cause damage

to their plants but still protect the beneficial insects in the garden?

Kevin Shelton, OSU Extension associate specialist and coordinator of OSU's Pesticide Safety Education Program, said one way to remove those pests from the garden is to pick them off by hand and squash them.


"Hand picking is a viable option to help control detrimental insects," Shelton said. "While it may be time consuming, it's a safe way to get rid of the pests while protecting the insects that are good to have around. It really can be satisfying squishing those pests."

Direct spray or targeted applications is another option as is wrapping the stem of the plant in foil to cut down on insects chewing on the plant. A fine mesh draped around the plants can not only keep away the pests, but also keeps the beneficial insects at bay. Shelton also recommended looking for pests, such as the tomato

worm, just as soon as chewed leaves are visible. Treating these pests as soon as possible will reduce plant damage in the future.

When opting for the chemical control route, select products that have little or no residual activity. Although the beneficial insects present at the time of application will be killed, new ones coming into the garden later will not be affected.

"If gardeners have the space, a good alternative is to plant a small trap garden," he said. "This is a garden where gardeners hope the pests will migrate. This hopefully will keep the majority of the bad insects away from your main garden areas. It also makes it easier to treat for those pests in the main garden space."

OSU Extension offers additional gardening and insect/pest information online at extension.okstate.edu. 

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COUNTRY CLASSIFIEDS

Each OKFB member family is limited to one free classified ad per issue. No call-in ads will be accepted. The length of the ad cannot exceed the number of lines on this form. Ads run one time. We reserve the right not to publish submitted ads. Return to Country Classifieds, 2501 N. Stiles, Oklahoma City, OK 73105.

All information must be completed.

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Please type or print legibly.

*Deadline for the next issue is June 10, 2022.
The summer issue will publish in mid-July 2022.*



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1936 Plymouth pickup, 1934 Ford two-door sedan, other odd items. (918) 649-7131.

1996 GMC 2500 Sierra SLE extended cab, 6.5 turbo diesel, five-speed manual transmission, service records from day one. One owner. (405) 779-8929.

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Oklahoma Joe trailer mount smoker. Propane starter. Cooks greater than 100 pounds. \$4,000 firm. (918) 341-8108.

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Hybrid striped bass fingerlings. 3-5" – \$3.99 each (minimum of 100) or 5-7" – \$5.99 each (minimum of 75). Call or text "FISH" to (580) 919-5110. Free delivery across Oklahoma.

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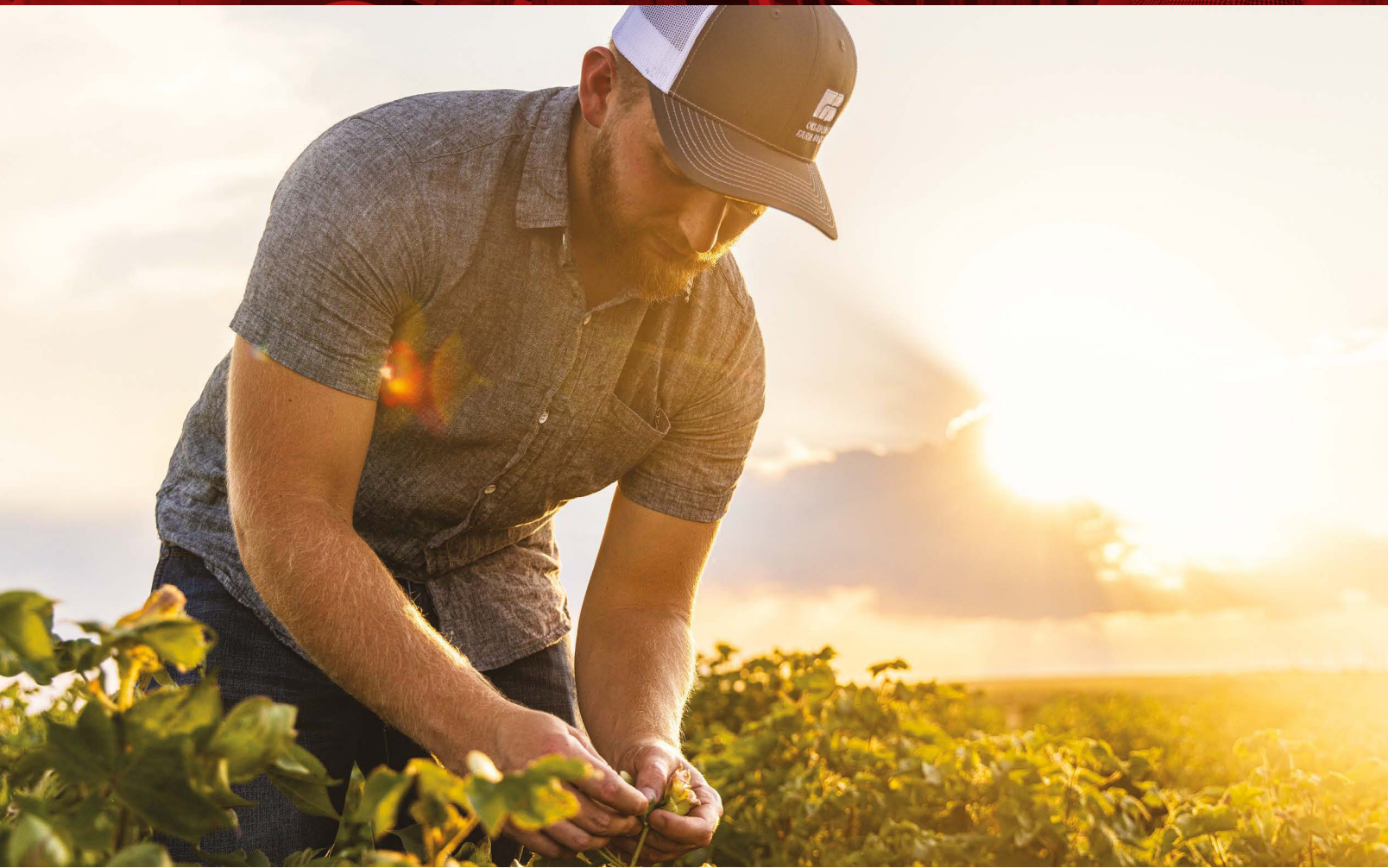
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