

# PERSPECTIVE

April 17, 2026



## YF&R, collegiate Farm Bureau members advocate for agriculture during day at the Capitol

**M**ore than 60 Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers and Collegiate Farm Bureau members took to the Oklahoma State Capitol Tuesday, April 7, to advocate for agriculture and learn about the lawmaking process during the group's YF&R and Collegiate Farm Bureau Day at the Capitol.

Members kicked off the event by attending an evening of fellowship Monday, April 6, at Toby Keith's I Love This Bar and Grill in Oklahoma City

where they heard from OKFB President Stacy Simunek and Senior Director of Public Policy Gage Milliman, who discussed the fundamentals of the legislative process as the group prepared to head to the Capitol the following day.

The legislative day began Tuesday with a briefing from OKFB's public policy team at the OKFB home office. Members learned about OKFB's priority legislation that was working its way through the lawmaking process.

Members then traveled to the Capitol and visited with their lawmakers and elected officials to discuss bills and issues OKFB was working on in addition to other issues the grassroots members were facing within their communities.

OKFB members closed out the event with a luncheon at the Oklahoma City Innovation Hall where they heard from OKFB Executive Director Thad Doye and YF&R Chair Allison Theis about current initiatives and upcoming YF&R events.

# Legislative update: State budget heads to governor, bills moving quickly through the legislature

As the 2026 Oklahoma legislative session moves swiftly toward its final month, the pace of activity and action has increased as legislators eye an early adjournment.

## Senate and house pass state budget

A \$12.82 billion state budget deal was struck during the first week of April, and the Oklahoma Senate passed the funding package on Tuesday, April 7, with the house quickly following suit on Thursday, April 10, putting the budget on the governor's desk for a signature.

The constitutionally required balanced budget increased funding for education, but kept most other agency funding flat.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau joined Oklahoma State University in requesting funding for a new OSU agronomy research station, which would include an agronomy discovery center. Funding for the new facility was not included in the general state budget, but a standalone bill that would provide funding for the station was introduced on Monday, April 13, as HB 4054. OKFB was advocating in support of the bill as of press time.

## Bills see changes, move quickly through process

With the state budget bill moving to Gov. Stitt's desk, OKFB-tracked bills have been moving quickly through the legislative process with several bills evolving as they work toward final legislative passage.

OKFB continues to monitor several water-related bills, and both SB 1928 by

Moore and SB 259 by Sen. Brent Howard and Rep. Carl Newton passed through house committees the week second week of April.

SB 1928 would set a five-year rolling average for groundwater usage, allowing water users to conserve their permitted groundwater use in certain years and enabling them to use more water in other years, as long as they do not exceed their allocation as averaged over a five-year period.

SB 259 would institute the same five-year average as well as specifying penalties for groundwater users who do exceed their allocation.

SB 2134 also moved quickly through its assigned house committee. The bill, authored by Sen. Casey Murdock and Rep. Rande Worthen, would create procedures for humane treatment of livestock by emergency responders, tow truck operators and other responders on the scene of an automobile accident where livestock are involved.

OKFB has been monitoring SB 2143 by Sen. Jerry Alvord and Rep. Mark Lepak, which allows county assessors to use both drone and satellite imagery to assist them in assessing property valuations of structures for tax purposes. It had been understood that the bill would allow assessors to monitor properties for new structures using the imagery, but in mid-April, OKFB learned from a bill author that they intended for county assessors to make valuation decisions based on drone or satellite imagery. OKFB will work on the bill to ensure that its language still requires county assessors to visit properties in-

person to properly assess structures for tax purposes rather than solely relying on remote imagery.

HB 3403 by Rep. Kenton Patzkowsky and Sen. Jack Stewart aims to create the Oklahoma Biosolids Land Application Research Pilot Program to assess the application of sewage water treatment byproducts to agricultural land. During its hearing in the senate energy committee, the bill was amended to decrease the study's active period from five years to three years and added a provision to enact a moratorium on the application of biosolids if the study revealed problems or concerns with the product's application on agricultural land. If passed by the senate, the bill will need to be re-approved by the house due to the addition of the amendment.

## Legislature eyes early adjournment

With the legislative passage of a state budget for the upcoming fiscal year, OKFB expects the legislature to work quickly toward an early adjournment before the technical sine die of Friday, May 29.

OKFB's public policy department has heard reports of adjournment as early as May 1 all the way through mid-May. If an early adjournment becomes reality, several legislative events, such as 4-H Day at the Capitol or Ag Day at the Capitol will fall near the very end of legislative session.

With an early adjournment in sight, OKFB expects the pace of session to pick up as legislators prepare to head home to their districts early for the 2026 campaign season.

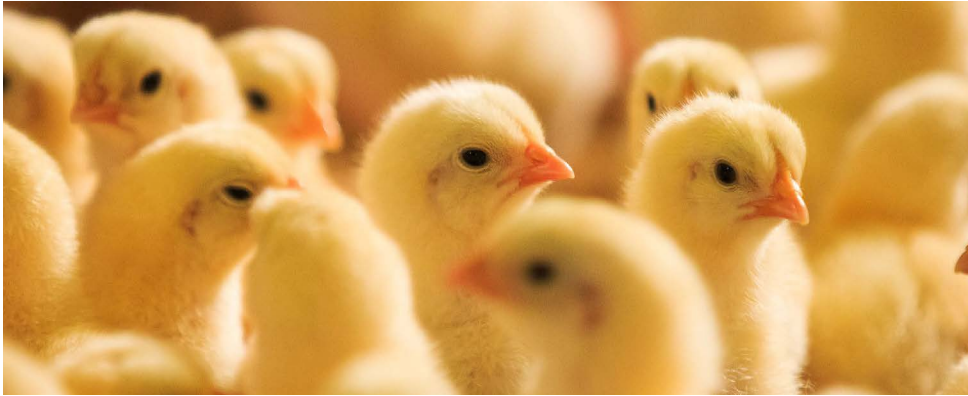


Logan County Farm Bureau members visit with Sen. Grant Green during their county's Capitol visit on Tuesday, March 31.



Rep. Ronny Johns provides an update to Pontotoc County Farm Bureau members at the state Capitol on Wednesday, April 8.

## Statement: OKFB disappointed by court's rejection of negotiated settlement in Oklahoma poultry case



Oklahoma Farm Bureau President Stacy Simunek released the following statement after the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Oklahoma rejected the state of Oklahoma's negotiated settlement with four poultry companies on April 8 that would have settled charges against Tyson Foods, Cargill, George's and Peterson Farms in the decades-old State of Oklahoma v. Tyson Foods, Inc., et al., lawsuit regarding the application of chicken litter in the Illinois River Watershed.

"Oklahoma Farm Bureau members are greatly disappointed by the U.S. District Court's rejection of the negotiated settlement between four poultry companies and the state of Oklahoma in the decades-old poultry lawsuit.

"The settlements that were negotiated in good faith and then rejected by the court would have provided a workable path forward to ensure clean water in the watershed for all Oklahomans while providing a way for our contract poultry farmers to continue their critical job of raising food.

"Our members are frustrated that the court chose to ignore the years of dedicated effort the agriculture community has undertaken since the case was originally filed as ag producers

have increased efficiency, followed state-approved nutrient management plans for poultry farms, implemented voluntary conservation methods and moved litter out of the watershed.

"Without a settlement or a path forward, these family poultry producers stand to lose their poultry contracts, and many will soon face the difficult reality of declaring bankruptcy even though they have followed every applicable law and regulation.

"OKFB will continue to advocate for the family poultry producers who have done everything asked of them yet still find themselves in the crosshairs of a court judgment that is based on information that is now more than 20 years old."

## Schulz joins OKFB as southwest field representative



**B**en Schulz has joined the Oklahoma Farm Bureau field services team as the new southwest field representative.

In his position, Schulz will serve as a liaison between 13 county Farm Bureaus in southwestern Oklahoma and the OKFB home office. He will work to connect Farm Bureau members and leaders with the organization's programs, activities and advocacy efforts while sharing news and information from southwestern Oklahoma members with the rest of the organization.

A native of Altus, Schulz is a third-generation family farmer who was born and raised helping his family grow cotton, wheat, milo and corn. He was active in both 4-H and FFA and learned about Farm Bureau at a young age through his dad, who himself worked as OKFB's southwestern field representative in the early 2000s.

"As a farmer myself, I look forward to serving the counties and members in Southwest Oklahoma to promote Farm Bureau, agriculture, and the rural way of life in our state," Schulz said.

Schulz is a graduate of both Western Oklahoma State College in Altus and Oklahoma State University in Stillwater where he earned an associate degree in agricultural science and a bachelor's degree in agribusiness, respectively. He comes to OKFB after working at a local cooperative in Altus and time spent in land surveying.

Schulz and his wife have two children and reside in Altus.



Rep. Dick Lowe chats with McClain County Farm Bureau members Wednesday, April 8.



Okmulgee County members listen to Rep. Scott Fetgatter at the Capitol on April 1.

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## OKFB Ag Fund prepares for 2026 Oklahoma election cycle

**O**klahoma Farm Bureau is gearing up for the 2026 Oklahoma election cycle with the organization's member-led OKFB Ag Fund political action committee.

OKFB's Ag Fund PAC is a state-level PAC funded and led by OKFB members to make financial contributions and endorsements to support political candidates seeking statewide and legislative elected office in Oklahoma who understand the importance of agriculture and our state's rural communities.

District Ag Fund meetings will be held the week of May 18-22 in each of the nine OKFB districts. District Ag Fund meeting locations and times will be shared with OKFB members online, in the Weekly News Roundup email and in upcoming issues of *Perspective* as soon as they are set.

The state Ag Fund board, which is an elected group of OKFB members who represent their respective Farm Bureau districts, will discuss input gathered from the district Ag Fund meetings during the May 27 state Ag Fund board meeting to make final decisions on candidates to support or endorse.

The first election of the 2026 cycle is the Oklahoma primary election on June 16. The state Ag Fund board will meet again after the primary election to decide further support for the state runoff primary election, which is set for August 25.

The PAC is funded by voluntary contributions made by OKFB members. If you would like to make a personal donation (donations cannot be made by a business and cannot be funds from county Farm Bureaus), contact OKFB's Gage Milliman at (405) 523-2300.

### Important 2026 Ag Fund dates



OKFB's grassroots Ag Fund political action committee is led by Farm Bureau members using the input they provide. Below are key dates for the PAC process and the Oklahoma election cycle.

Exact Ag Fund meeting locations will be shared online and in upcoming issues of *Perspective* as soon as they are available.

**May 18-22** • District Ag Fund meetings

**May 27** • State Ag Fund meeting

**June 16** • Oklahoma primary election

**August 25** • Oklahoma runoff primary

**November 3** • General election