

PERSPECTIVE

April 23, 2021

Legislative update: Progress on ag sales tax exemption, nuisance, trespass bills

Over the past few weeks, Oklahoma Farm Bureau has seen a great amount of progress on a number of bills including legislation regarding the agriculture sales tax exemption and nuisance claims.

Since early on in the legislative session, Farm Bureau has tracked HB 1682 by Rep. Jim Grego and Sen. Mark Allen, which would have prohibited the requirement of a Schedule F form to determine eligibility for the state agriculture sales tax exemption. Though the bill did not pass out of committee, legislation with new language regarding eligibility for the exemption advanced instead. SB 422 by Sen. Frank Simpson and Rep. Dell Kerbs would provide three options for applicants to prove eligibility for the agriculture sales tax exemption permit including providing a Schedule F or other equivalent form, a three-year business plan, or a farm exemption tax form provided by the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry.

After hearing concerns from members about difficulties securing the exemption permit, OKFB leaders and staff have been working with state legislators and the Oklahoma Tax Commission to find solutions that ensure farmers and ranchers will retain access to the critical ag sales tax exemption. While Farm Bureau understands the need to verify that individuals utilizing the exemption are producing agriculture products for the purpose of sale, the use of a

Schedule F alone to prove eligibility is too narrow in scope and would exclude producers with legitimate reason to obtain an exemption card. The new language in SB 422 would provide producers with three options to show eligibility and would allow beginning farmers, as well as producers who do not file a Schedule F, to be eligible for the ag sales tax exemption.

SB 939 by Sen. Zack Taylor and Rep. John Pfeiffer – which prohibits critical infrastructure industries like agriculture from being deemed a nuisance when in compliance with all laws, guidelines and rules – narrowly passed its committee by a 5 to 4 vote. While farmers and ranchers strive to be good neighbors, Farm Bureau members believe the ability to use proven production practices – within the confines of the law – must be protected. While Oklahoma has largely avoided frivolous nuisance lawsuits, several agriculture states have not been so fortunate. SB 939 is preemptive legislation to help ensure vital sectors of Oklahoma’s economy can operate in the most needed capacities rather than fighting senseless lawsuits when they are operating within all laws and regulations. Farm Bureau members should let their legislators know how important the protection offered by SB 939 would be to the agriculture industry.

For the latest information from public policy, visit okfarmbureau.org/news.

NEO Collegiate Farm Bureau members speak with legislators at the state Capitol

Northwestern Oklahoma A&M Collegiate Farm Bureau students had the opportunity to learn more about the work of the state Legislature and agricultural policy during a visit to the state Capitol April 14. The group talked with a number of legislators including Rep. Steve Bashore, Rep. Josh West, Rep. Rusty Cornwell, Rep. Judd Strom and Rep. Trey Caldwell. The students were even recognized by House members on the chamber floor before joining a legislative reception held at the OKFB home office.



NEO A&M Collegiate Farm Bureau students pose for a photo with Rep. Steve Bashore, center, during their visit to the state Capitol April 14.

OKFB to host online congressional meetings

Hear directly from Oklahoma's legislative leaders as they discuss a variety of topics with Oklahoma Farm Bureau members.

OKFB members are encouraged to participate in an upcoming series of online meetings with Oklahoma's congressional delegation to learn more about the leading issues facing agriculture and rural Oklahoma in the nation's capital.

The Zoom meetings will serve as an opportunity to engage with Oklahoma's members of Congress while the ongoing impacts of the pandemic prevent Farm Bureau members from traveling to Washington, D.C.

Further details and additional meetings with Oklahoma's members of Congress will be announced in the coming weeks.



Rep. Tom Cole

Thursday, April 29 • 2:30 p.m.

Join by phone

Call *ONE* of the following numbers:
1-408-638-0968, 1-669-900-6833,
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Webinar ID: 983 8459 2870

Passcode: 747040

Join by Zoom app

okfb.news/RepCole21



Rep. Markwayne Mullin

Wednesday, May 12 • 4 p.m.

Join by phone

Call *ONE* of the following numbers:
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1-253-215-8782

Webinar ID: 972 9181 8302

Passcode: 762238

Join by Zoom app

okfb.news/RepMullin21

OKFB hosts legislative reception

Oklahoma Farm Bureau hosted a legislative reception at the OKFB home office April 14 where a number of state leaders, legislators and OKFB leaders from across the state were in attendance. The event served as an opportunity for members to visit with their lawmakers to share our organization's policy priorities and how the implications of certain policies affect them.



OKFB President Rodd Moesel and OKFB WLC chair Mignon Bolay speak with Sen. Kay Floyd April 14.



Secretary of Agriculture Blayne Arthur speaks with OKFB board member Kerry Givens.



Senate Pro Tempore Greg Treat speaks with OKFB President Rodd Moesel during the reception.



House members Logan Phillips, Trey Caldwell and Judd Strom speak with OKFB board member Jim Meek.

Spring issue of Oklahoma Country reaching mailboxes

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members across the state are receiving their spring issue of Oklahoma Country, OKFB's quarterly publication, in their mailboxes.

This issue features the Johnson family and their mission to spread kindness within their community, one Oklahoma ranchers' story about facing the February storm and OKFB's six field representatives.



Heeding the call
Participants pass forward through winter storms

Lincoln to local
Learning about Oklahoma's redistricting process

Your local connection
Meet OKFB's team of field representatives

More than \$20,000 donated through OKFB's Community Food Assistance Matching Program

Throughout the months of February and March, more than \$20,000 was donated to food banks, food pantries and other food assistance programs by 40 county Farm Bureaus and county Women's Leadership Committees as a part of Oklahoma Farm Bureau's Community Food Assistance Matching Program.

The program was designed to better connect county Farm Bureaus to their communities through donations to local food assistance programs, which OKFB matched up to \$100.

"We are proud so many counties across Oklahoma donated to food assistance programs," said Rodd Moesel, OKFB president. "Farmers and ranchers grow the food, fuel and fiber we all need, and they continue to step up when people in their communities need assistance the most."

Thirty-five county Farm Bureaus donated to local food assistance organizations including Caddo, Canadian, Cherokee, Comanche, Cotton, Craig, Creek, Custer, Garfield, Grant, Greer, Haskell, Jackson, Johnston, Kay, Latimer, LeFlore, Lincoln, Logan, McIntosh, Murray, Noble, Okfuskee, Oklahoma, Okmulgee, Osage, Ottawa, Payne, Pontotoc, Pottawatomie, Pushmataha, Rogers, Seminole, Texas, Tillman, Washington and Woodward.

Four county WLC's also donated to the program including Canadian County WLC, Comanche County WLC, Garfield County WLC and Ottawa County WLC.

In addition, the OKFB WLC also contributed to two state-level food assistance organizations.

To view photos from the county donations, visit okfb.news/CFAMPdonations.

OKFB Foundation for Agriculture launches watermelon challenge for students

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture is encouraging second-grade students across Oklahoma to participate in its watermelon challenge.

The challenge is designed to educate students and families about the hard work farmers and ranchers in put into growing food.

"We are really proud to help young students encounter agriculture through this hands-on experience in the garden," said David VonTungeln, OKFB Foundation for Agriculture president. "So many of our students today don't have the opportunity to witness firsthand how our food and fiber is grown. We hope this challenge offers students and families a small glimpse into just what it takes to grow food for the world."

Schools participating in the challenge will receive 30 seed packets, an activity book and educational resources for lessons.

After lessons with their teacher, students and their families are

encouraged to plant the watermelon seeds at home.

Watermelon seeds can be planted late-April to mid-May, but the soil temperature must be 70 degrees for the seeds to germinate. To find soil temperatures, visit the Oklahoma Mesonet website at mesonet.org.

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 in OKFB's challenge.

Each participant will receive a certificate, and the OKFB Foundation for Agriculture will select three winners who will receive a \$100 prize. Submissions should be sent to Holly Carroll at holly.carroll@agiving.org.

Second-grade teachers can sign up their classroom before **May 4** by emailing their school address and contact information Holly Carroll at holly.carroll@agiving.org. The packets will be sent upon receiving registration information.

Mayes, Rogers counties host dinner with local legislators



Rep. Mark Lepak, right, speaks with Farm Bureau members from Mayes and Rogers counties April 15 in Pryor. Also in attendance, from left to right, Sen. Marty Quinn, Sen. Blake Stephens and Sen. Michael Bergstrom. Not pictured are Sen. Julie Daniels and Rep. Tom Gann. Topics of concern for members included the impact of the McGirt decision, the agricultural sales tax exemption, state law on foreign ownership of land and more.

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REMINDER: Deadline approaching for OYLA applications

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee is accepting applications for its Oklahoma Youth Leading Agriculture program, a five-day summer conference for high school students completing their junior year in 2021.

OYLA will be held June 14-18, 2021, in Oklahoma City at the OKFB home office and the surrounding area.

Applications must be completed and postmarked to Oklahoma Farm Bureau, Attn: Zac Swartz, YF&R Coordinator, 2501 N. Stiles, Oklahoma City, OK 73105 or emailed to Zac Swartz at zac.swartz@okfb.org by **May 3, 2021**.

For more information, contact OKFB YF&R Coordinator Zac Swartz at (405) 523-2300.

Applications may be downloaded at
okfarmbureau.org/applications.

District Seven members gather with local legislators



Rep. Carl Newton, right, answers questions from District Seven Oklahoma Farm Bureau members regarding bills at the state Capitol, along with Sen. Roland Pederson, left, April 15. Issues discussed by members during the meeting included the agricultural sales tax exemption, state law on foreign ownership of land and much more.