

# PERSPECTIVE

April 3, 2026



## OKFB members share agriculture story during 2026 Washington, D.C., Summit

**M**ore than 50 Oklahoma Farm Bureau members descended on Washington, D.C., to share the story of agriculture during OKFB's 2026 Washington, D.C., Summit March 23-26.

Members kicked off the trip on Monday evening with a reception and a spectacular view of the Potomac River where they were joined by several legislative staffers from Oklahoma's congressional delegation.

Tuesday included a morning of briefings from industry experts from American Farm Bureau like RJ Layher, who visited with members about several top policy issues for AFBF, including a new poultry insurance pilot program, the New World Screwworm threat and the potential impacts of California's Proposition 12. AFBF's Brian Glenn gave an update on the farm bill and E15 fuel, and Dave Salmonsens gave members an agricultural trade update.

Jimmy Emmons, OKFB member and assistant chief of the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural

Resources Conservation Service, visited with members at the USDA office about his time with NRCS and some of the organization's top initiatives.

After the briefings, Farm Bureau members had the opportunity to sightsee in the nation's capital before enjoying a group dinner at Carmine's Italian Restaurant.

The third day of the trip was highlighted by visits on Capitol Hill from all seven members of Oklahoma's congressional delegation. Farm Bureau members heard updates from each lawmaker on top agriculture issues in Washington, including farm bill progress, government appropriations and spending, crop insurance and disaster relief, voter identification, the impacts of the conflict in Iran and more.

Members also had the pleasure of meeting Oklahoma's newest member of the delegation, Sen. Alan Armstrong. Armstrong, who was appointed by Gov. Kevin Stitt to fill Markwayne Mullin's unexpired Senate seat after Mullin

was appointed as Homeland Security secretary, spoke with members about his top legislative priorities only hours after being sworn in to the U.S. Senate.

The day was capped off by a once-in-a-lifetime evening tour of the U.S. Capitol by Sen. James Lankford. Lankford led members through the building and shared its rich history that has been a central part of America's history for more than 200 years.

Farm Bureau members also had the opportunity to tour the AFBF office on the last day of the trip and visit with AFBF staff about the resources the national organization has to offer state and county Farm Bureaus.

OKFB's Washington, D.C., Summit serves as the organization's annual fly-in held each spring to provide OKFB members with the opportunity to share their agricultural perspectives with Oklahoma's congressional delegation while learning more about agricultural issues working through congress and regulatory agencies.

# OKFB supports ag youth at 2026 Oklahoma Youth Expo

Oklahoma Farm Bureau supported Oklahoma's agriculture youth at the 2026 Oklahoma Youth Expo with more than \$60,000 in event sponsorships and premium sale purchases during the annual event in mid March.

OKFB proudly supported 72 4-H and FFA members at the OYE Sale of Champions held Friday, March 20, at the state fairgrounds in Oklahoma City by purchasing livestock project premiums of students who made the sale. OKFB also purchased the chalice for the grand champion steer, which was exhibited by Maddox Shout of Piedmont 4-H.

Before the start of the sale, OKFB was recognized as the 2026 OYE Sale of Champions volume buyer for purchasing the greatest number of animals at last year's sale, and OKFB President Stacy Simunek was presented with a trophy recognizing the organization's contributions.

OKFB also served as an OYE platinum sponsor for the 2026 expo and sponsored the ag mechanics and engineering contest held during the event.

In addition to the monetary support of OYE and students, the OKFB Foundation for Agriculture hosted a hog carcass contest and collected donated pigs for the foundation's Pork for Packs program, which provides protein sticks to hungry Oklahoma children in collaboration with the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma and the Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma.



## Registration open for OKFB Foundation for Agriculture's 2026 Watermelon Challenge for second-grade students

Second-grade teachers can now enroll their classrooms in a watermelon-growing contest through the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture's fifth-annual Watermelon Challenge.

The challenge tasks students with growing their very own watermelon from seeds provided by the foundation for a chance to win prizes. The challenge illustrates the hard work and effort Oklahoma farmers and ranchers undertake when growing food.

Schools participating in the challenge

will receive watermelon seed packets, an activity book and resources with lessons for each student in their classroom. After teachers work through the provided lessons, 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. To find soil temperatures in your area, visit the Oklahoma Mesonet system.

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.

The OKFB Foundation for Agriculture will recognize three winners from among students who successfully grow watermelons each with a \$100 prize.

Get all the details and register a second-grade classroom before April 17 on OKFB's website at: [okfb.news/MelonSignup26](https://okfb.news/MelonSignup26)

# Legislative update: The halfway point of session means the end for some bills, others move to opposite chamber

Oklahoma lawmakers have hit the halfway point in the 2026 legislative session with the passing of the first major chamber of origin deadline on Thursday, March 26.

## Monitored bills not making the cut

The mid-session deadline required bills to pass out of their chamber of origin in order to further advance through the legislative process, and this cutoff left several bills that Oklahoma Farm Bureau was tracking effectively dead for the rest of session.

One such bill was HB 3178 by Rep. Nick Archer, which would have allowed old farm equipment to depreciate to a value of \$0 over time, releasing property owners from paying personal property tax on the equipment after that point. The bill was heard on the House floor but lacked just two votes to pass as some lawmakers were concerned with the potential decrease in county tax revenue that would come with the measure.

HB 3617 by Rep. Mark Lawson also failed to advance after not being heard on the House floor. The measure would have established a state-level “right to repair” act, requiring agricultural equipment manufacturers to make parts and diagnostic materials available to

independent repair providers. OKFB believes the issue is best tackled at the federal level and will continue to work alongside American Farm Bureau to ensure farmers and ranchers have choices when repairing high-tech agricultural equipment.

SB 2157 by Sen. David Bullard, which sought to establish some rivers in southeast Oklahoma as scenic rivers, was not heard on the Senate floor before the chamber of origin deadline. OKFB was concerned by the bill as the scenic river designation would have made it more difficult to produce agricultural products in those river watershed areas.

## Groundwater, other bills still active

Several bills of note did pass the late-March deadline, including the trio of groundwater bills that OKFB has been tracking all session. HB 4459 by Rep. Carl Newton, SB 259 by Sen. Brent Howard, and SB 1928 by Sen. Casey Murdock all aim to place a five-year allocation on groundwater usage, and all three passed their respective chambers of origin. The bills differ slightly in reporting requirements and enforcements, and OKFB will continue to remain active in the conversation on groundwater usage in the state as these bills progress.

SB 2112 by Sen. Casey Murdock also passed the Senate floor last week. The measure would modify the designation of open pasture roads, allowing livestock to traverse pastures that contain some rural county roads.

OKFB is also monitoring HB 3173 by Rep. Nick Archer, which would allow old oil and gas wells to be repurposed into geothermal energy storage facilities. OKFB is supportive of the measure, but wants to ensure landowners are able to sign new contracts with the energy companies if such an action is taken on old wells on their property. The provision was added to the bill, and HB 3173 passed the house floor ahead of the mid-session deadline.

## Committee process begins again

With the chamber of origin deadline in the rearview mirror, the legislature will now switch gears and begin considering the remaining bills in the opposite chamber.

To stay up to date on what OKFB is doing at the state Capitol during legislative session, be sure to tune in to OKFB’s weekly public policy update each Friday at noon via Zoom. Contact your field representative for more information on how to get connected.

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## OKFB leaders attend President Trump’s National Ag Week celebration event at White House



Three Oklahoma Farm Bureau leaders helped celebrate National Agriculture Week with President Donald Trump at the White House in Washington, D.C., on Friday, March 27.

OKFB President Stacy Simunek; OKFB Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee Member and American Farm Bureau YF&R Chairman Tommy Salisbury; and OKFB Executive Director Thad Doye joined fellow agricultural leaders from around the nation as President Trump celebrated the nation’s farmers and ranchers and made several announcements concerning agricultural initiatives. The leaders also attended a pre-event “Celebrating Ag” breakfast.

During the event, Trump announced new Environmental Protection Agency guidance regarding diesel exhaust fluid system sensors that he said will make equipment more reliable while helping lower repair and maintenance costs.

Trump also urged lawmakers to reach an agreement on year-round E15 fuel sales for consumers, a policy position supported by AFBF.

Also announced was a Small Business Administration loan program for agriculture producers and others in the food production and supply chain. According to the SBA, the loans come with a 90% federal guarantee and will become available beginning May 1.

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## OKFB members attend AFBF YF&R Leadership Conference

**M**ore than 20 Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers and collegiate Farm Bureau members attended the 2026 American Farm Bureau YF&R Leadership Conference March 13-17 in Portland, Oregon.

The conference drew more than 900 YF&R and collegiate Farm Bureau members from around the country.

Members who attended the event heard from a diverse lineup of keynote speakers including former U.S. Army Ranger Keni Thomas; content creator and fourth-generation Washington apple grower Kait Thornton; and current and past AFBF YF&R chairs Tommy Salisbury, Jon Iverson and Ryan MacKay.

During the conference, Tulsa County Farm Bureau member Tommy Salisbury

officially began his two-year term as AFBF YF&R committee chair after being elected to the position during AFBF's 2026 convention in January in Anaheim, California. Salisbury had previously been appointed to the AFBF YF&R committee in early 2025. The AFBF YF&R committee is made up of 16 positions that represent all regions of the United States. Committee members are responsible for program planning including YF&R competitive events held during AFBF's annual convention and the Harvest for All program.

OKFB members also attended numerous breakout sessions throughout the conference ranging from building relationships and tackling large-scale farming to becoming a young board

member and effective communication.

Salisbury hosted several breakout sessions during the conference including sharing strategies to bring teens and young adults into YF&R and tackling the realities of large-scale farming.

OKFB Director of YF&R and Safety Burton Harmon and Ottawa County Farm Bureau member Alisen Anderson hosted a breakout session to equip YF&R members with the tools, confidence and strategic mindset needed to take on leadership roles within their county Farm Bureaus.

Attendees wrapped up the conference with a series of Oregon agriculture tours featuring the Tillamook Creamery, Organic Orchards Cider and Hudson Falls, and Triskelee Farm.