

PERSPECTIVE

April 5, 2024



OKFB women gather at Oklahoma Capitol for annual Farm City Festival legislative event

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee shared the agriculture story with legislators during the group's annual Farm City Festival at the Oklahoma State Capitol Wednesday, March 27.

WLC members prepared and served lunch in the second-floor rotunda of the Capitol for legislators, their staff and Capitol employees to thank them for supporting policies that enable Oklahoma farmers and ranchers to continue providing food, fuel and fiber for a growing world.

"Our Farm City Festival is a

tradition," said Mignon Bolay, OKFB WLC chairman. "It is a tradition for the Farm Bureau women to come to the Capitol and thank our legislators and their assistants and feed the employees. It's a great day to come and celebrate agriculture with them and say, "Thank you."

The meal featured made-in-Oklahoma foods and included home-baked desserts provided by county Farm Bureau members. The main feature of the meal was a sausage from Stigler-based Mountain View Meats. OKFB District Three Board Member David VonTungeln

baked fresh bread that was served to each visitor.

The meal was served to legislators, staff and guests by nine members of the state WLC committee along with 30 county WLC members from around the state. The Farm Bureau women took the opportunity to visit with legislators and share the important role agriculture plays in Oklahoma and how Farm Bureau supports family farmers and ranchers.

"It's an honor to be able to do this and represent agriculture, our women's committee and our Farm Bureau women around the state," Bolay said.

Legislative update: OKFB members advocate for poultry litter bill, water legislation moving, 4-H bill signed into law

The second half of the 2024 legislative session has arrived as lawmakers flip their calendars to April. With eyes on the final gavel, the Oklahoma legislature will work to consider remaining bills before adjourning sine die at the end of May.

For Oklahoma Farm Bureau members, this session has been one highlighted by two main issues: water and poultry. OKFB has worked diligently to elevate the voice of farmers, ranchers and rural Oklahoma in the ongoing conversation on both issues.

Poultry legislation

OKFB has monitored HB 4118 by Rep. David Hardin and Sen. Brent Howard since its inception. The measure seeks to protect poultry growers who follow state-approved nutrient management plans for the dispersal and disposal of poultry litter from frivolous lawsuits. The legislation has seen strong voices emerge on both sides of the issue, and OKFB has worked tirelessly to ensure agricultural producers who are following the law are offered protection from litigation and liability.

Farm Bureau members were called to action earlier this year and again in late March to make their voices heard on HB 4118 ahead of the legislation being heard in the senate agriculture committee on Monday, April 1. OKFB is pleased to share that the measure passed out of

committee with a vote of 8-1 and awaits consideration by the full senate.

While HB 4118 protects law-abiding producers, the Oklahoma Senate also took action to penalize those found to be out of compliance with poultry waste management programs through SB 1424, which increases the fines for violating nutrient management plans from \$200 to a maximum of \$10,000. SB 1424 passed the senate and is currently under consideration by the Oklahoma House.

Groundwater metering

Farm Bureau members have taken a keen interest in the prominent groundwater discussions at the state Capitol through HB 3194 by Rep. Carl Newton and SB 1341 by Sen. Brent Howard. OKFB has worked with the lawmakers and other stakeholders to find a solution to ensure fair and equitable use of Oklahoma's groundwater among agricultural producers from every corner of the state.

Stakeholders are currently working to identify an accurate means of measuring water use to ensure the valuable resource is being properly stewarded. With a state as geographically diverse as Oklahoma, finding a method that encompasses the state's different water basins and irrigation systems is far from simple, and OKFB expects the conversation will continue well beyond the 2024 legislative session.

4-H excused absences

Legislators at the state Capitol and Gov. Kevin Stitt showed their support of Oklahoma's agriculture youth through the passage of HB 1006 by Rep. Rick West at the end of March. The bill, now signed into law, will grant excused absences to students who miss school for approved 4-H activities. The measure circulated the state Capitol without solid traction for the last few legislative sessions, and OKFB members are proud to see it reach the finish line in 2024.

Feral hog tax credits

OKFB members know the many implications of nuisance species, including those involving feral hogs. HB 3504, authored by Reps. Nick Archer and Chris Sneed, will create a tax credit for landowners managing feral hog populations in the state of Oklahoma.

As proposed, the tax credit will allow landowners who own more than 20 acres to claim up to 70% of the amount spent in managing feral hog populations. This tax credit is limited to \$15,000 every five years and is not claimable by any individuals offering feral hog hunts on a commercial basis. HB 3504 passed the house and was referred to the senate, where it was heard and passed in the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Rural Affairs. The measure currently awaits consideration by the Senate Finance Committee.

OKFB Foundation for Ag Watermelon Challenge sign-ups open through April 19

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

During the challenge, students will grow their 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 and raising 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.

Teachers can sign up their second-grade classroom before April 19 online at okfb.news/MelonSignup24. The packets will be sent upon receiving registration information.

The foundation will recognize three winners from among students who successfully grow watermelons each with a \$100 prize. Photo submissions of students' fully grown watermelon should be emailed to Holly Carroll at holly.carroll@aggiving.org by September 15 to be considered for prizes.

OKFB supports ag youth at 2024 OYE Sale of Champions

Oklahoma Farm Bureau supported Oklahoma agriculture youth at the 2024 Oklahoma Youth Expo Sale of Champions on Friday, March 22, where OKFB purchased premiums for 66 exhibitors.

OKFB contributed a total of \$45,000 in premiums and add-on premiums during the Friday-night sale. OKFB also purchased the chalice for the grand champion steer, which was exhibited by Ruby Bell of Bristow FFA.

OKFB partnered with fellow agriculture and rural organizations and businesses to purchase premiums of cattle, hogs, sheep and goats exhibited by Oklahoma 4-H and FFA members at the annual youth livestock show.

The sale serves as an opportunity for winning OYE exhibitors to be rewarded for the hard work and dedication they invest into their animals as they develop animal care skills that agriculturalists across our state use every day.

OKFB was also honored during the sale as the 2023 volume buyer award after purchasing the largest number of exhibitor premiums during last year's Sale of Champions.

In addition to the sale, OKFB was a platinum event sponsor of OYE, bringing OKFB's total support of the 2024 event to more than \$65,000.

The 2024 OYE Sale of Champions awarded a total of \$1.5 million to 4-H and FFA exhibitors, with a total of 211 students qualifying for the sale.



OKFB purchased the grand champion steer chalice, shown by Ruby Bell of Bristow FFA.



OKFB was honored with the 2023 OYE volume buyer award before the 2024 sale.



OKFB purchased the premium for Payten Kienholz of Tonkawa FFA's reserve breed champion spot.



Connor Sneary of Alva FFA stands with his reserve breed champion shorthorn, for which OKFB purchased the premium.



Taylor Glover of Elgin FFA showed the bronze medallion market goat, purchased in part by OKFB.

Leopold Conservation Award applications available

Applications for the 2024 Oklahoma Leopold Conservation Award are now open through July 12.

The \$10,000 award, sponsored in part by the OKFB Foundation for Agriculture along with fellow Oklahoma ag organizations, honors farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners who go above and beyond in their management of soil health, water quality and wildlife habitat on working land.

Find the application online at okfb.news/ApplyLCA24.

Okmulgee County YF&R to host leadership summit

Okmulgee County Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers are hosting a YF&R leadership summit **May 3 and 4 in Okmulgee** for fellow YF&R members from around the state.

The event will feature YF&R members from around Oklahoma who will share their personal experience and provide tips on fostering involvement and engagement in YF&R.

To register, contact Kristin Story at (918) 756-7284 or at kristin.story@okfb.com.

Perspective newsletter mailing list changes

Oklahoma Farm Bureau has updated its mailing label system used to mail publications to Farm Bureau members.

If you are receiving duplicate copies of *Perspective* at your address, or if you are receiving a copy that you do not wish to receive, **contact Dustin Mielke** at dustin.mielke@okfb.org.

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OWRB to host third round of stakeholder input meetings in April and May



The Oklahoma Water Resources Board is set to host the third round of stakeholder input meetings in April and May. As the largest user of water in Oklahoma, it is crucial for agriculture to have a voice in these meetings.

The stakeholder meetings will center on the impending updates to Oklahoma's Comprehensive Water Plan with discussions on water policy, future water supply and demand, water challenges and more.

Registration is not required to attend the in-person meetings. Each in-person meeting will be held from 1 – 4 p.m.

For more information on the planned meetings, visit the OWRB website at oklahoma.gov/owrb/water-planning.

April 15

Quartz Mountain State Park Lodge
22469 Lodge Rd., Lone Wolf
Present data on the West Central, Southwest, Beaver-Cache, and Lower Washita Planning Regions

April 16

Choctaw Nation: Antlers Community Center
SW 2nd St., Antlers, OK 74523
Present data on the Blue-Boggy and Southeast OCWP Planning Regions

April 18

High Plains Technology Center
3921 34th St., Woodward
Present data on Panhandle OCWP Planning Region

April 19

Oklahoma State University - Tulsa
700 N Greenwood Ave., Tulsa,
Present data on the Middle Arkansas, Grand, Eufaula, and Lower Arkansas OCWP Planning Regions

May 3

Aloft Hotel
209 N Walnut Ave, Oklahoma City
Present data on the Upper Arkansas and Central OCWP Planning Regions

Virtual meeting - April 22

A virtual meeting will be held online on Monday, April 22 from 10 a.m. to noon. A link to the virtual meeting is available on the OWRB's water planning web page.