

PERSPECTIVE

January 13, 2023



OKFB members gathered for a group breakfast Monday, Jan. 9, during the AFBF convention.



OKFB President Rodd Moesel presents the Oklahoma state flag during the opening general session of the 2023 AFBF convention on Sunday, Jan. 8.



OKFB District 7 Director Stacy Simunek (right) visits with AFBF President Zippy Duvall at the trade show during the 2023 AFBF convention.



OKFB Young Farmers & Ranchers members competed in the YF&R Achievement Award, YF&R Discussion Meet and YF&R Excellence in Agriculture award competitions.

OKFB members attend 2023 AFBF convention in Puerto Rico

Nearly 80 Oklahoma Farm Bureau members traveled to San Juan, Puerto Rico, Jan. 6-10 for the 2023 American Farm Bureau convention.

OKFB members attended general

sessions, educational breakout sessions, the trade show, women's leadership and YF&R meetings, Puerto Rico tours, and much more during the convention.

Full convention coverage will be

shared in the next issue of *Perspective*, but for more convention news, photos, and information, visit the OKFB website at okfarmbureau.org, or visit OKFB on Facebook or Twitter @okfarmbureau.

Reminder: Generation Bridge event coming up Jan. 27-28 in OKC

Farm Bureau members ages 35-55 are invited to attend the second-annual OKFB Generation Bridge Winter Conference Jan. 27-28 at the Hilton Garden Inn and Conference Center in Edmond.

The event will feature speakers and presenters on topics that will help members improve their agricultural operations and grow in Farm Bureau and Oklahoma agriculture.

Attendees must register online at okfb.news/BridgeConf23 as soon as possible. Hotel rooms are available at the Hilton Garden Inn in Edmond for \$114 per night and can be booked by calling the hotel directly at (405) 285-0900.



As another legislative session kicks off in the coming weeks, Oklahoma Farm Bureau members have set the organization's 2023 legislative priorities to guide Farm Bureau's work at the state Capitol.

This year's top priorities are broken down into four primary focus areas, including rural infrastructure, Oklahoma's future, landowner advocacy and marijuana.

RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

High-speed broadband internet and wireless cell phone service has become a necessity in modern society but is hard to come by in many parts of rural Oklahoma. The expansion of these services is integral to the continued vibrance of rural communities in Oklahoma.

Access to quality and affordable **healthcare** is crucial for all Oklahomans, especially those in rural areas. Whether it is the preservation of rural hospitals or the expansion of rural telehealth services, OKFB has long supported the advancement of rural healthcare.

OKFB supports funding for improved maintenance to **roads and bridges** in Oklahoma to ensure residents can safely travel to and from their homes and companies can conduct business and transport products.

Oklahoma is no stranger to wildfire, and OKFB supports increased resources for **rural fire departments** and the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry's Forestry Services Division to manage wildfire across the state.

OKLAHOMA'S FUTURE

Farm Bureau members take pride in civic engagement and participating in local, state and national elections. In recent years, OKFB members have become increasingly concerned with the requirements for a proposal to appear on a statewide ballot and strongly support state **initiative petition reform** to ensure the integrity of the petition process is upheld.

OKFB has long supported the efforts of land-grant universities and advocates for **increased funding for Oklahoma State University Extension**, agricultural research and the OSU College of Veterinary Medicine.

With Oklahoma's unpredictable weather patterns,

assistance in years of drought is invaluable for farmers and ranchers. Farm Bureau members appreciate the state legislature's recognition of this important issue and support the continuation and development of the **Oklahoma Emergency Drought Commission**.

LANDOWNER ADVOCACY

Farm Bureau members oppose all forms of **county zoning authority** and oppose new or increased **ad valorem taxes** as property taxes unfairly burden farmers and ranchers who often have a large amount of land and capital that does not always generate a profit.

OKFB also supports landowners' rights to protect livestock and property from **wildlife depredation**. Current laws make it difficult or impossible for farmers and ranchers to take action to protect their animals and property from invasive and dangerous species of wildlife like the black-headed vulture.

MARIJUANA

Oklahoma's marijuana industry took the state by storm after medical marijuana usage was legalized in 2018. The industry has had an unprecedented impact on rural Oklahoma as marijuana grow facilities emerged by the thousands, placing a significant strain on rural Oklahoma's utility providers and causing uncertainty with neighboring agricultural operations when it comes to basic practices like herbicide application.

As a special election approaches in March 2023 to potentially legalize recreational marijuana use, OKFB stands strongly opposed. Farm Bureau members support the **continued enforcement and compliance** efforts of the Oklahoma Medical Marijuana Authority and support increased transparency in medical marijuana businesses.

To learn more about OKFB's top issues, visit okfarmbureau.org/advocacy/issues

OKFB names Bartel economic development coordinator

Oklahoma Farm Bureau recently named Amarie Bartel as the organization's new economic development coordinator.

Bartel will work to expand OKFB's economic development efforts in rural Oklahoma, working with rural small business owners and entrepreneurs to help them grow their ideas and businesses through a variety of programs and resources.

"I'm really excited to act as part of a change agent for rural small business owners and agricultural innovators so that they can have prosperity in their future endeavors and feel like somebody in our state is in their corner cheering for them as they work to make their own dreams come true," Bartel said.

Bartel joins OKFB from the Oklahoma National Stockyards with an array of experiences in both agriculture and economic development.

"That is where I really realized I had a love for the people in the agriculture industry and that I loved essentially getting to be a professional problem-solver and boots on the ground for our state's producers," she said.

Bartel said she is looking forward to working with the state's largest general farm organization in her new role.

"I'm really attracted to the way Oklahoma Farm Bureau stands with and behind our state's agricultural producers and agricultural innovators," she said. "Sometimes it seems as though agriculture is many pieces of a puzzle, but at Farm Bureau, it seems like we bring all the pieces together."

Originally from Cushing, Bartel earned her bachelor's degree in agricultural communications and agricultural business from Oklahoma State University.



Amarie Bartel

AFBF: New water rule will create more confusion for farmers



American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall released the following comments on Friday, Dec. 30, regarding the Environmental Protection Agency's issuance of yet another Waters of the United States Rule, which will replace the Navigable Waters Protection Rule.

"AFBF is extremely disappointed in the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers' new Waters of the United States Rule. Farmers and ranchers share the goal of protecting the nation's waterways, but they deserve rules that don't require a team of attorneys and consultants

to identify 'navigable waters' on their land. EPA has doubled down on the old significant nexus test, creating more complicated regulations that will impose a quagmire of regulatory uncertainty on large areas of private farmland miles from the nearest navigable water.

"Even more puzzling is the administration's insistence on moving forward with a new rule while the Supreme Court is about to issue a decision on the scope of the Clean Water Act. A ruling in the Sackett case could send WOTUS back to the drawing board, so it makes no sense for EPA to issue a

rule that will only cause more disruption and uncertainty.

"We appreciate the agencies' attempt to provide needed clarifications of the prior converted cropland exclusion and exemptions for irrigation ditches and stock ponds, but the overall rule is still unworkable for America's farm families. The back and forth over water regulations threatens the progress made to responsibly manage natural resources and will make it more difficult for farmers and ranchers to ensure food security for families at home and abroad."

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Postmaster:

Send address corrections to:

Perspective
P.O. Box 53332,
Oklahoma City, OK 73152-3332

STAFF DIRECTORY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Thad Doye
(405) 523-2438

**VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND
PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Dustin Mielke
(405) 530-2640

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF MEDIA RELATIONS
AND ADVOCACY COMMUNICATIONS**

Rachel Havens
(405) 523-2346

COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

Rebekah Nash
(405) 523-2457

Oklahoma Farm Bureau
2501 N. Stiles
Oklahoma City, OK 73105-3126

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Comanche County Farm Bureau hosts legislative dinner Dec. 29 in Lawton



Comanche County Farm Bureau members, guests and area legislators gathered for the county's annual legislative dinner on Thursday, Dec. 29 in Lawton.

The group heard from five legislators and other guests during the dinner. Farm Bureau members discussed recreational marijuana, education, mental health facilities, economic development opportunities and other issues with their state legislators as the Oklahoma State Legislature prepares to convene Monday, Feb. 6.

Legislators in attendance were Rep. Trey Caldwell, HD 63; Rep. Rande Worthen, HD 64; Rep. Daniel Pae, HD 62; Rep. Toni Hasenbeck, HD 65; and Sen. John Michael Montgomery, SD 32.