

# PERSPECTIVE

June 18, 2021

## Join OKFB for 2021 August Area Meetings

**O**klahoma Farm Bureau members are encouraged to attend one of the organization's 11 August Area Meetings held across the state beginning August 9.

Signifying the beginning of the organization's grassroots policy development process, the meetings

provide members a chance to discuss the top agriculture and rural issues on the horizon as they prepare to draft OKFB policy for the next year.

In addition to enhancing OKFB's policy priorities, members will have a chance to learn about the work the organization continues to do for and

on behalf of farmers, ranchers and rural Oklahomans across the state.

Below find the date and time for your district's meeting. For more information, visit [okfb.news/aam21](http://okfb.news/aam21) or contact your field representative.

### 2021 AUGUST AREA MEETINGS

#### **District One • West**

*August 16 at 6 p.m.*  
Gibson Baptist Assembly  
E0260 Rd.  
Hardesty, OK 73944

#### **District One • East**

*August 17 at 6 p.m.*  
Building 801  
801 Main St.  
Woodward, OK 73801

#### **District Two**

*August 24 at 6 p.m.*  
General Tommy Franks Museum,  
Stanley Building  
300 S. Washington  
Hobart, OK 73651

#### **District Three**

*August 23 at 6 p.m.*  
Redlands Community College  
1300 S. Country Club Rd.  
El Reno, OK 73036

#### **District Four • West**

*August 12 at 6 p.m.*  
Comanche County Farm Bureau  
502 SW 11th  
Lawton, OK 73501

#### **District Four • East**

*August 10 at 6 p.m.*  
Casa Romo  
120 W. Main St.  
Ardmore, OK 73401

#### **District Five**

*August 26 at 6 p.m.*  
Kiamichi Technology Center  
301 Kiamichi Dr.  
McAlester, OK 74501

#### **District Six**

*August 31 at 6 p.m.*  
Moore Farm's Event Barn  
9353 W. 500 Rd.  
Pryor, OK 74361

#### **District Seven**

*August 9 at 6 p.m.*  
Crosspoint Church  
2500 N. Van Buren St.  
Enid, OK 73703

#### **District Eight**

*August 30 at 6 p.m.*  
Pontotoc Technology Center  
601 W. 33rd St.  
Ada, OK 74820

#### **District Nine**

*August 19 at 6 p.m.*  
Creek County Fairgrounds  
17808 OK-66  
Kellyville, OK 74039

For the most up-to-date details about the upcoming August Area Meetings, visit [okfb.news/aam21](http://okfb.news/aam21).

## Deadline approaching for YF&R Conference registration

**F**arm Bureau members ages 18 to 35 are invited to attend the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Summer Conference to be held July 30-31 in Broken Bow.

The two-day conference will offer YF&R members the

chance to meet farmers and ranchers from across the state, tour local agricultural facilities and learn more about YF&R leadership opportunities and programs.

For more information or to register for the event, visit [okfb.news/YFRSummer21](http://okfb.news/YFRSummer21).

## Rep. Lucas shares insight on cattle market, tax proposals

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members had an opportunity to hear from Rep. Frank Lucas about several issues impacting farmers and ranchers in the nation's capital during an interview at a recent meeting in Weatherford.

Though many discussions on Capitol Hill impact Oklahoma agricultural producers, Lucas focused on the ongoing investigation into potential manipulation in beef markets and current capital gains tax proposals.

As numerous beef producers in Oklahoma and across the country have become increasingly concerned by the disparity between the price of live cattle and the price of retail beef, Lucas said he is anxiously awaiting the outcome of an investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice.

"That's not a civil investigation; that's a criminal investigation," Lucas said. "The wheels of the law move slowly, unfortunately."

Though he is eager to gain answers from the Justice Department, Lucas said a complete and thorough investigation is necessary because of the significance of the results.

"Am I impatient with the Department of Justice? Absolutely," Lucas said. "But they need to do a thorough job because what comes out of

that could potentially either send someone to jail or provide us with the justification to make perhaps some dramatic changes in federal law. So it's got to be done right.

"If there's something there, (the DOJ should) determine it, prove it, pursue it in court or provide us the information and we'll respond with changing the legislation."

As a cattle producer himself, Lucas said many of the proposals to fund the Biden Administration's infrastructure package are troubling to capital-intensive industries like agriculture.

Lucas said one of his greatest accomplishments in Congress has been removing the inheritance tax to help family farms and ranches preserve their operations for the next generation, but current proposals to eliminate stepped-up basis in capital gains taxes would essentially reinstate the so-called death tax.

"If you tax the change in value from one generation to the next, through capital gains or eliminating the basis, you're in effect having a death tax again," he said. "That's what we voted to get rid of years ago and what we cannot go back to."

The Third Congressional District representative said Oklahoma farmers and ranchers have to stand together to work against these policies.

"It's a fight we're going to fight, and we all have to fight together," Lucas said.

## Reversal of Navigable Waters Protection Ruling a blow to agriculture

American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall recently commented on the Environmental Protection Agency's announcement of its intention to reverse the Navigable Waters Protection Rule:

"The American Farm Bureau Federation is extremely disappointed in the Environmental Protection Agency's announcement of its intention to reverse the environmentally conscious Navigable Waters Protection Rule, which finally brought clarity and certainty to clean water efforts. Farmers and ranchers care about clean water and preserving the land, and they support the Navigable Waters Protection Rule.

"Administrator Regan recently recognized the flaws in the 2015 Waters of the U.S. Rule and pledged not to return to those overreaching regulations. We are deeply concerned that the EPA plans to reverse the Navigable Waters Protection Rule, which puts the future of responsible protections at risk. We expected extensive outreach, but today's announcement fails to recognize the concerns of farmers and ranchers.

"This is an important moment for Administrator Regan and will be pivotal to his ability to earn the trust of farmers on this and other administration priorities. He must keep his word to recognize the efforts of agriculture and not return to flawed, overly complicated and excessive regulations.

"We call on EPA to respect the statute, recognize the burden that overreaching regulation places on farmers and ranchers, and not write the term 'navigable' out of the Clean Water Act. On this issue, and particularly prior converted croplands and ephemerals, we also urge Secretary Vilsack to ensure that we don't return to the regulatory land grab that was the 2015 WOTUS Rule.

"Clean water and clarity are paramount, and that is why farmers shouldn't need a team of lawyers and consultants to farm."



To view the full interview with Rep. Lucas, visit [okfb.news/3vUsDSV](https://okfb.news/3vUsDSV).





# 2021 Legislative Review

**Coming on the heels of a long and difficult year,** the first session of the 58th Oklahoma Legislature brought with it many challenges as Oklahoma Farm Bureau worked to advocate for farmers, ranchers and rural Oklahomans at the state Capitol in the face of limitations from the lingering pandemic. As it took the organization's policy priorities to 23rd and Lincoln, OKFB accomplished a number of wins for Farm Bureau members including ensuring access to the critical agriculture sales tax exemption, preventing property tax increases on producers, protecting farms and ranches from nuisance lawsuits and much more.





## Property taxes

Because farmers and ranchers are disproportionately impacted by ad valorem taxes, preventing increases in property taxes has been a cornerstone OKFB issue for decades. Over the past several years, the state Legislature has increasingly considered new ad valorem tax proposals and 2021 was no different.

For nearly five years, OKFB has participated in discussions on a proposal to allow municipalities to levy a new ad valorem tax to fund police, fire and ambulance services. Farm Bureau this year negotiated with legislators and other interested parties – including leaders from Oklahoma City and Tulsa – to ensure the proposed legislation protected farmers and ranchers from increases in ad valorem taxes. **Senate Bill 838 by Sen. Darrell Weaver and Rep. Jadine Nollan** passed the state Legislature and was signed by Gov. Kevin Stitt with key protections including an exemption for agriculture-zoned land and livestock, a 60% threshold for voter approval and an exemption for implements of husbandry including trailers, tractors, sprayers, tanks and ATVs.

While the passage of SB 838 enshrined into law valuable protections for Oklahoma's agricultural producers, the bill also provided a chance for Farm Bureau to further develop its relationships with its urban counterparts and create opportunities to work together on shared goals in the future.

Alongside SB 838, Farm Bureau was pleased to see the success

of another piece of legislation that would safeguard the use of taxpayer dollars. **Senate Bill 825 by Sen. Rob Standridge and Rep. Kevin West** prohibits communities that levy a tax approved by a vote of the people for a designated purpose – such as funding public safety – from redirecting those funds to another use without authorization by a vote of the people. The bill should prohibit municipalities from assessing a tax for popular core services and then using those funds for other projects.

Lawmakers also resurfaced legislation first introduced in 2020 that would allow counties to levy a countywide ad valorem tax for the purpose of hazard mitigation. OKFB last year led a coalition that soundly defeated the bill on the House floor. Despite the outcome in the 2020 legislative session, state legislators again pushed **House Bill 2092 by Rep. Lonnie Sims and Senate Bill 189 by Sen. Dave Rader** through committees in both the House and the Senate this year. OKFB issued its first action alert of the year to ask members to contact legislators and urge a no vote on the bills. Thanks to the significant pressure applied by our members, neither bill received further consideration on the floor and the issue was resolved for the year. OKFB will watch closely as we progress toward the 2022 legislative session, as the issue is expected to emerge again.

## Agricultural sales tax exemption

In the early months of 2021, OKFB heard from numerous members who experienced difficulties in obtaining or renewing a state agricultural sales tax exemption permit. County assessors began requiring producers to present a Schedule F, or Form 1040, to qualify for the permit.

After multiple failed attempts to achieve an agreement with the Oklahoma Tax Commission, OKFB worked alongside a large coalition of agriculture groups to support **Senate Bill 422 by Rep. Dell Kerbs and Sen. Frank Simpson**. The bill – which passed unanimously – provides agricultural producers four options to prove eligibility for the exemption permit including a federal tax form, such as a Schedule F, Form 4835 or Form 1065; a one-page business description form provided by the Oklahoma Tax Commission; a USDA Farm Service Agency Form 156EZ; or other documents to verify active agriculture production at the discretion of the tax commission. The legislation takes effect beginning July 1, 2021.

Though the legislation will help address some of the challenges Farm Bureau members faced in securing the permit, OKFB will continue to work with the Oklahoma Tax Commission and other state leaders to ensure all agricultural producers who are eligible for the exemption can acquire a permit.







## Private property rights

This year's legislative session brought several successes in upholding private property rights. OKFB worked closely with state legislators to revise an initially flawed proposal on trespassing and create legislation to eliminate a loophole that previously allowed entry into a garden, yard, pasture or field without permission. OKFB's work to amend **House Bill 1135 by Rep. Scott Fetgatter and Sen. Zack Taylor** essentially eliminates all posting requirements in the state's trespassing law.

Strides were also made to protect landowners from frivolous or unnecessary nuisance lawsuits while employing normal agricultural production practices. **Senate Bill 939 by Sen. Zack Taylor and Rep. John Pfeiffer** prevents municipalities from deeming any action by critical infrastructure sectors – including agriculture – a nuisance if the operations are in compliance with all applicable local, state and federal regulations.

Another recent OKFB member concern was successfully addressed in **Senate Bill 839 by Sen. Nathan Dahm and Rep. Sean Roberts**, which prohibits the installation of game or wildlife cameras by game wardens on private property without the permission of the owner or a warrant issued by a court.

## State budget

Despite fears of a tumultuous fiscal year for the state, the overall appropriations and budget process resulted in a net increase of 7% in overall spending, while still depositing \$800 million into the state savings fund. The state Legislature also addressed multiple OKFB priorities by investing in critical programs and needs for agriculture for rural Oklahoma.

Noteworthy funding increases included:

- \$42 million for a rural broadband sales tax rebate program
- \$2 million for the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
- \$1 million for the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station
- \$3 million for the Oklahoma State University College of Veterinary Medicine
- \$300,000 for Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry for additional meat processing facility inspectors

## Redistricting

One of the state Legislature's top priorities this year – as required by the state constitution – was redrawing the state's legislative and congressional district lines following the 2020 Census. The new boundaries will be used for elections beginning in 2022.

Because of census data delays from the federal government, the state Legislature was forced to use data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015-2019 American Community Survey to meet its constitutional requirement of completing legislative redistricting within 90 legislative days after the state Legislature convenes following the last decennial census.

Both the state Senate and House created redistricting committees to carry out the process of drawing new legislative and congressional district lines, which were chaired by Sen. Lonnie Paxton and Rep. Ryan Martinez. The committees spent months compiling input from constituents at town halls across the state and from each member of the state Legislature. The redistricting committees each released their proposed district maps in April. Though many rural Oklahomans were concerned about population shifts from rural to urban areas over the past 10 years, Farm Bureau was pleased to see rural communities retain significant representation in the newly drawn Senate and House districts.

In May, the new legislative district maps were approved as **Senate Bill 1066** and **House Bill 1198 by Senate President Pro Tempore Greg Treat and Speaker of the House Charles McCall** by both the Senate and House before receiving final approval from the governor.

Once the state receives final 2020 Census data in the fall, state lawmakers will convene in a special session to complete Oklahoma's congressional redistricting process. During the special session, state legislators also will evaluate final census data to determine if the newly drawn legislative districts meet the 5% population deviation standard as set by the redistricting committees.

OKFB members are encouraged to participate in the state Legislature's congressional redistricting town halls to be held in July. Find more at [okfb.news/CongressRedistricting](https://okfb.news/CongressRedistricting).



# OKFB-MONITORED LEGISLATION

BILL	AUTHOR	SUBJECT	STATUS
SB 422	Sen. Frank Simpson Rep. Dell Kerbs	Expands ag sales tax exemption proof of eligibility	Signed by governor
SB 775	Sen. Casey Murdock Rep. Eddy Dempsey	Authorizes ODAFF to create livestock offender registry	Signed by governor
SB 825	Sen. Robert Standridge Rep. Kevin West	Prevents redirect tax dollars without voter approval	Signed by governor
SB 838	Sen. Darrell Weaver Rep. Jadine Nollan	Allows cities to create public safety protection districts	Signed by governor
SB 839	Sen. Nathan Dahm Rep. Sean Roberts	Prevents game warden cameras on private property	Signed by governor
SB 910	Sen. Casey Murdock Rep. Carl Newton	Modifies location for public land auctions	Signed by governor
SB 939	Sen. Zack Taylor Rep. John Pfeiffer	Prevents certain nuisance claims on critical industries	Signed by governor
SB 959	Sen. Lonnie Paxton Rep. Kyle Hilbert	Allows governor to fill U.S. Senate vacancies	Signed by governor
HB 1032	Sen. Adam Pugh Rep. Garry Mize	Exempts licensing requirements for certain home bakers	Signed by governor
HB 1124	Sen. James Leewright Rep. Logan Phillips	Creates grant program for broadband expansion	Signed by governor
HB 1135	Sen. Zack Taylor Rep. Scott Fetgatter	Eliminates posting requirements in Oklahoma trespass law	Signed by governor
HB 1588	Sen. George Burns Rep. Eddy Dempsey	Creates sales tax exemption for commercial forestry equipment	Signed by governor
HB 1620	Sen. John Montgomery Rep. Garry Mize	Prohibits the banning of agritourism activities	Signed by governor
HB 2272	Sen. Casey Murdock Rep. Josh West	Requires medical marijuana entities disclose foreign interests	Signed by governor
HB 2930	Sen. Frank Simpson Rep. Rick West	Prohibits medical marijuana entities from ag grant program	Signed by governor
HB 2946	Sen. Roger Thompson Rep. Kevin Wallace	Provides sales tax rebate on qualifying broadband equipment	Signed by governor
HB 2951	Sen. Roger Thompson Rep. Kevin Wallace	Creates fund to hire counsel for legal controversy with tribes	Signed by governor



We are rural Oklahoma.®

2501 N. Stiles Ave. • Oklahoma City, OK 73105  
(405) 523-2300 • [www.okfarmbureau.org](http://www.okfarmbureau.org)



# Scholten, Burns and Gholson join OKFB as summer interns

Oklahoma Farm Bureau is excited to welcome three new summer interns to the organization, each of whom began May 24. Ariel Scholten, Peyton Burns and Karlee Belle Gholson will work alongside OKFB staff to learn about the organization's grassroots efforts and gain valuable experiential knowledge.

As the communications intern, Scholten will assist the communications and public relations department in writing news articles and feature stories, managing social media, updating the organization's website, developing print products for organizational programs and more.

"Overall, I am thrilled to be combining my passion of advocating for agriculture and technical skills in an organization I have grown up in," Scholten said. "Right down the street from the Capitol building is such a vital opportunity for agricultural communications."

Raised on a plant nursery and a cattle and sheep ranch, Scholten is a fourth-generation farmer from Sebastopol, California. She will graduate from Oklahoma State University with a degree in agricultural communications in May 2022.

As summer interns, Burns and Gholson will assist the public policy staff by conducting research on leading issues

facing Oklahoma farmers and ranchers. The pair also will be involved with various organizational programs and activities while learning more about Farm Bureau's work for agriculture and rural Oklahoma.

An agribusiness and animal science junior at OSU, Burns is a native of Kingfisher, Oklahoma. There, his grandparents run a third-generation cow-calf operation that helped solidify his value of agriculture and desire to pursue a career in supporting the industry.

"I am looking forward to getting to learning the ins and outs of public policy and Farm Bureau's role in ensuring that rural Americans have their rights protected," Burns said.

A fifth-generation rancher from Waurika, Oklahoma, Gholson grew up on her family's cow-calf operation. She is a member of OSU Collegiate Farm Bureau and has previously served as a page at the state Capitol and as an agriculture legislative intern. She will graduate OSU in December 2021 with an agribusiness degree.

"I was intrigued by Oklahoma Farm Bureau and how they covered a variety of issues," Gholson said. "Seeing what the federation does as a whole for agriculture in policy and beyond will be exciting."



Ariel Scholten



Peyton Burns



Karlee Belle Gholson

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## What to expect when applying for or renewing an ag sales tax exemption permit

Over the past several months, Oklahoma Farm Bureau has heard concerns from members facing new challenges obtaining an agricultural sales tax exemption permit – a crucial business tool exempting nearly all inputs used in production agriculture from sales tax.

OKFB members attempting to renew or obtain a permit this year should apply as usual by listing personal property used in the farm or ranch with their county assessor.

Producers should have the option to provide one of the following forms to prove eligibility:

- a federal tax form that shows income from agriculture,

- such as a Schedule F, Form 1065 or Form 4835
- a U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency Form 156EZ, which can be obtained from your county FSA office
- a one-page business description form provided by the Oklahoma Tax Commission
- or a separate document approved by OTC that proves active agriculture production

Any OKFB member who encounters difficulties should contact the OKFB Public Policy staff at (405) 523-2300. For the full length article, visit [okfb.news/ag-salesexempt21](https://okfb.news/ag-salesexempt21).

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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  
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**DIRECTOR OF MEDIA RELATIONS**

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**PUBLICATIONS SPECIALIST**

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**COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST**

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

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## Register today for OSU Extension Women in Ag Conference Aug. 5-6

**W**omen associated with agriculture are encouraged to attend the Oklahoma State University Extension Women in Agriculture and Small Business Conference to be held August 5-6 in Oklahoma City.

Those in attendance will learn about risk management education in the areas of production, marketing, financial, legal and human risks inherent to women owned operations.

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture and the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee are proud to be sponsors of the event and work to support women within agriculture throughout the state.

To register for the event and learn more about the conference, visit [okfb.news/OSUwia21](https://okfb.news/OSUwia21).



## Tracking Oklahoma's 2021 wheat harvest progress



Weather challenges across Oklahoma have been impacting wheat harvest for many of our state's producers, including this Jackson County farm family who has been interrupted by weather. Share photos of your 2021 harvest progress with us. We would love to highlight your family's achievement! Send photos to [news@okfb.org](mailto:news@okfb.org).