

PERSPECTIVE

March 20, 2026



OKFB hosts round table discussion with Rep. Stephanie Bice

Congresswoman Stephanie Bice visited with Oklahoma Farm Bureau members in a round table discussion Tuesday, March 10, at the OKFB home office in Oklahoma City.

Bice gave members an update on the latest happenings in Washington, D.C., including the progress being made on the Farm Bill as it passed the House Agriculture Committee in the first week of March.

She also visited with members about the military conflict in the Middle East, explaining the United States' involvement and her hope that resolutions will be reached quickly.

Members shared with her the effects of the conflict being felt stateside by

the agriculture industry, including the nearly instantaneous spike in fertilizer prices that came at a critical time in the growing season.

Farm Bureau members in attendance also shared the need for better commodity markets as farmers are feeling the pinch of ever-increasing input prices paired with commodity prices the same as they were 50 years ago.

Bice addressed a few additional issues, including renewable energy challenges, the quickly growing presence of data centers in the state of Oklahoma, Sen. Markwayne Mullin's appointment to the position of Homeland Security Secretary, and her thoughts on Mullin's vacant Senate seat.

Register today for annual women's conference April 24-25 in Norman



The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee will host its annual conference April 24-25 in Norman where Farm Bureau women from around the state will gather to learn about agriculture and sharing the farm and ranch story.

The event will begin 11:30 a.m. on Friday, April 24, with tours in the Norman area. General conference registration will begin at 4:30 p.m., and attendees will gather for a dinner followed by advocacy workshops.

Saturday's events will begin at 7:30 a.m. with a breakfast, and activities throughout the day will include sessions on farm profitability, storytelling and social media, wellness, leadership in agriculture and more. The conference will adjourn at 3:30 p.m. on Saturday.

The Embassy Suites Norman Hotel & Conference Center will serve as the event hotel, and attendees will need to book their own rooms at the special room rate of \$159 per night.

See all the details and register for the 2026 WLC conference by April 2 on the OKFB website at

okfb.news/wlc26conf

A link to book your own hotel room will be provided after submitting your registration.

OKFB YF&R and Collegiate Day at the Capitol set for April 7

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers members and Collegiate Farm Bureau members will advocate for agriculture at the Oklahoma State Capitol in Oklahoma City Tuesday, April 7, during OKFB's YF&R and Collegiate Day at the Capitol.

The event is an opportunity for young agriculturalists to learn about the issues Oklahoma's legislature is considering that have policy implications for Oklahoma agriculture and our state's rural communities.

The event will begin with an optional evening of fellowship at Toby Keith's in Oklahoma City Monday, April 6, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

The legislative day will kick off at 8:30 a.m. with a briefing from OKFB's public policy staff at the OKFB home office in Oklahoma City. Event attendees will then travel to the Oklahoma State Capitol to visit with lawmakers and elected officials about OKFB's priority legislation and other issues the grassroots Farm Bureau members are facing.

YF&R and Collegiate Farm Bureau members can register online by Friday, March 27, to attend the event using the form online at the link below. Hotel rooms at the Embassy Suites Downtown Oklahoma City Medical Center are available and can be requested when registering for the event. The deadline to request a hotel room is Friday, March 20.

Register online at:

okfb.news/yfrcapday26

OKFB YF&R committee collects more than 2,000 pounds of food with Fill the Sack food drive

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers committee gathered more than 2,000 pounds of food plus cash donations to help feed Oklahomans facing food insecurity through the committee's Fill the Sack food drive.

The food drive collected a total of 2,131 pounds of food items along with \$1,660 in cash contributions that were donated to local food assistance programs across the state and to the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma in Oklahoma City.

"As young agriculturalists, we understand firsthand the dedication and hard work it takes to produce food for our communities," said Allison Theis, OKFB YF&R chair. "OKFB's Young Farmers & Ranchers food drive isn't just

about donations — it's about neighbors helping neighbors. We're proud to step up and ensure families across Oklahoma have access to the nourishment they deserve. Fighting food insecurity starts with leadership, and we're committed to being part of that solution."

County Farm Bureau offices served as collection points for local Farm Bureau and community members to donate food or money. More than 25 county Farm Bureaus directly contributed donations to the food drive along with the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee and Farm Bureau staff.

The food drive ran from January through mid-February with the OKFB Leadership Conference on Feb. 17 serving as the main collection point for county Farm Bureau donations.

OKFB congratulates Sen. Mullin, thanks him for service in U.S. Senate

Oklahoma Farm Bureau President Stacy Simunek issued the following statement after President Donald Trump announced the selection of U.S. Sen. Markwayne Mullin to serve as Homeland Security Secretary on March 2:

"Oklahoma Farm Bureau members extend a warm and well-deserved congratulations to Oklahoma Sen. Markwayne Mullin on his selection as the U.S. Homeland Security Secretary.

"Throughout his time in Congress, Sen. Mullin has been a steadfast advocate for rural Oklahoma and our family farmers and ranchers. As both a senator and house member, he has served as a resource for our members and a friend of our organization through both challenging times and exciting changes.

"We appreciate Sen. Mullin's service to our state, and we know he will be a steadfast leader at Homeland Security as he oversees efforts that will help protect our rural communities, our state and our nation."

WLC Nurse's Training Scholarship applications due July 10

Applications for the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee's Nurse's Scholarship is open now until July 10, 2026.

The annual scholarship program awards three \$500 scholarships to students studying in a nursing program at an accredited college, university, vo-tech or trade school. Applicants must be Oklahoma Farm Bureau members or a member of a Farm Bureau family.

The WLC understands the important role nurses and health care professionals play in ensuring a high quality life for all residents across our state, and especially rural residents. With the cost of education increasing yearly, the committee is proud to award three students with scholarship funds to help pursue their dreams in nursing.

Applicants can apply for the scholarship by completing the online

form available below. The application includes contact information and several open-ended questions, and a proof of enrollment and transcript must also be submitted in either PDF or jpeg format. Applications must be submitted online by July 10, 2026.

Find and complete the nurse's scholarship online application at okfb.news/NursesApp26

Legislative Update: Groundwater legislation, noxious weed updates at the forefront after first major committee deadline of 2026 session

The Oklahoma legislature cleared the first major deadline in early March, passing countless bills from committee over the first month of the 2026 legislative session. These bills that passed out of their respective committees now head to the floor of their chamber of origin. With spring break putting a pause on most legislative progress this week, that leaves about one week for legislators to get their bills heard before the next major deadline.

OKFB has been tracking a trio of water bills that have carried over from last year, including SB 1928 by Sen. Casey Murdock. This measure would create a five-year allocation for groundwater usage, which is something OKFB members and other stakeholders can all agree on.

Similarly, SB 259 by Sen. Brent Howard proposes the same process as SB 1928 but gives responsibility to the Oklahoma Water Resources Board to enforce the reporting and impose penalties for overages. Both bills passed committee with the title off, so they will undergo more work in the coming weeks.

HB 4459 by Rep. Carl Newton is a similar bill on the House side, and it has also received support by all stakeholders in the groundwater discussion. HB 4459

passed the House with the title off and heads to the Senate as a work in progress.

OKFB is also tracking HB 3405 by Rep. Kenton Patzkowsky, which would add poison hemlock and kudzu to Oklahoma's list of noxious weeds. The measure would allow counties and the state to control these species on rights of way and highways without penalty to prevent the spread onto private property. The bill passed the House and is headed to the Senate for consideration.

Burn bans have re-emerged for the second time this session as HB 3406 by Rep. Mike Kelley passed the House floor last week. The bill updates burn ban laws, giving county commissioners the power to implement burn bans and includes provisions to remove them if weather conditions become more favorable. OKFB has followed the bill since legislative session began in February and is pleased to see it head to the Senate.

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.

OKFB, foundation for agriculture offer large-animal vet scholarship



Applications are now available for the Oklahoma Farm Bureau and OKFB Foundation for Agriculture large-animal veterinarian scholarship. This scholarship began as an effort to help create a pipeline of veterinarians who can provide essential services to farmers and ranchers.

One scholarship will be awarded in the amount of \$15,000 to a student who is studying veterinary medicine at Oklahoma State University with the intent of working as a large-animal veterinarian in Oklahoma.

"Farmers and ranchers across Oklahoma know how important large animal veterinarians are to the health and care of their livestock," said OKFB Foundation for Agriculture President Kerry Givens. "With a shortage of these professionals in rural areas, Oklahoma Farm Bureau and the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture are proud to support a student who will soon serve a rural community and provide vital veterinary care."

Students who apply will be required to sign a letter of intent to provide large-animal veterinary services or to practice in a veterinary resource shortage area. Also required with the application are biographical and personal statements along with supporting letters from public officials and/or state agencies.

The deadline for scholarship submissions is **April 3, 2026**. To be eligible for the scholarship, the student must be a U.S. citizen, be enrolled at the Oklahoma State University College of Veterinary Medicine, be eligible for Oklahoma licensure as a veterinarian and intend to practice in a veterinary resource shortage area.

Find and complete the scholarship application online at okfb.news/vetscholarship26

County Farm Bureaus travel to OKC for Capitol visits to lobby on OKFB issues



(Above) Grady County Farm Bureau members visit with Rep. Brad Boles during a Capitol visit on Wednesday, March 4.



(Above) Sen. Roland Pederson visits with Kay County Farm Bureau members at the Oklahoma Capitol on Wednesday, March 11.

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OKFB launches Rural Growth Challenge for county Farm Bureau leaders to connect rural businesses with resources

Oklahoma Farm Bureau's economic development department has launched the inaugural Rural Growth Challenge, a business lead-gathering contest for county Farm Bureau members to identify local, rural businesses that could benefit from OKFB's business development programming.

The challenge rewards county Farm Bureaus with quarterly prizes and recognition throughout 2026 for gathering and submitting the names and basic details of businesses in their own local communities that could use business support services or have an innovative idea or product they would like to bring to market.

To qualify for the contest, a submitted lead must be a rural Oklahoma business located in a community with a population of 50,000 or less. Ideally-qualified businesses might be seeking growth, needing technical assistance with business operations, have a high potential for scaling their operations or

have an innovative or novel concept or product.

OKFB's economic development team will use the information submitted to contact rural Oklahoma businesses to connect them with business support resources, business mentors or experts, and share opportunities to participate in OKFB's economic development programming, including the Oklahoma Grassroots Rural & Ag Business Accelerators program.

Rural Growth Challenge email updates will be sent throughout the year to county Farm Bureau leaders and will include program updates and recognition for participating counties.

County Farm Bureau members can submit their leads one of three ways: by completing the online form available at okfb.news/rgchallenge, sharing a lead with their OKFB field representative or by emailing leads directly to OKFB's economic development team using links in update emails that will be sent to county Farm Bureau leaders.

How to identify leads for the Rural Growth Challenge

Help us **connect with rural entrepreneurs** located in communities with a population of 50,000 or less who:

- **Run a small business** and are seeking support for growth, expansion or market acceleration
- **Could benefit from technical assistance** such as business planning, financial literacy resources or marketing
- **Has business potential** to grow or scale their business and shows large opportunities for growth
- **Could be a strong candidate** for OKFB's rural business accelerator program, including mentorship, training and strategic support
- **Could be innovative** and have an exciting new idea or an improvement on a traditional idea or concept