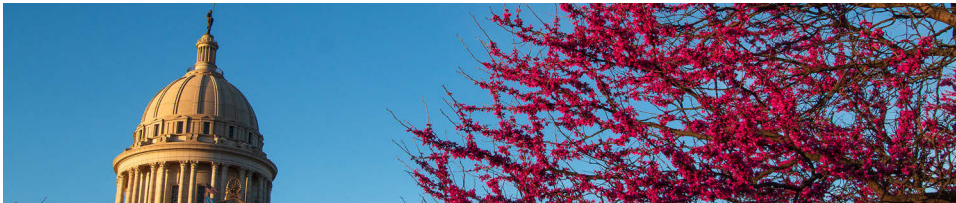


# PERSPECTIVE

March 8, 2024



## Legislative update: First major deadline passes, ag-related bills move forward

**T**he fourth week of Oklahoma's 2024 legislative session brought with it the first major deadline on Thursday, Feb. 29. Any bills that were not passed out of committee in their chamber of origin before the deadline are now considered dead for the remainder of the legislative session. With more than 3,000 bills waiting to be heard at the start of session, slightly more than half remain after last Thursday's cutoff.

OKFB has worked diligently since the beginning of legislative session on legislation dealing with water measurement and usage. The five original bills have since condensed into two: HB 3194 by Rep. Carl Newton and SB 1341 by Sen. Brent Howard.

Both pieces of legislation focus on water permitting and metering, and discussions at the state Capitol have turned to metering requirements and how the metering process would function. Only groundwater wells permitted by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board would fall under the proposed metering requirements – residential wells and other non-permitted wells would be exempt. Both bills have passed their respective committees and await full-chamber consideration.

OKFB has had a consistent voice in the water metering conversation and will continue to monitor the legislation in an effort to find a reasonable solution to fairly and equitably meter water usage for all permitted water wells, no matter

the geographic location or agricultural sector for which the water is used.

Oklahoma lawmakers also sent a tax-relief bill to Gov. Kevin Stitt's desk on Feb. 22. HB 1955, which was first heard in the House during the 2023 legislative session, was given final approval by the Senate in February to eliminate the state's portion of the sales tax on groceries. In his 2024 State of the State address, Stitt promised to sign any tax cut that comes across his desk, and he in turn gave his stamp of approval on HB 1955 early last week.

The measure will remove the 4.5% sales tax collected by the state of Oklahoma, bringing a reduced grocery bill to Oklahomans everywhere beginning in late summer. While Farm Bureau members have always been supporters of lowering taxes, OKFB members remain strongly opposed to the state turning to ad valorem taxes to recoup any lost revenue.

The next legislative deadline is Thursday, March 14, where bills must advance off the floor of their chamber of origin in order to continue moving through the legislative process, and the OKFB public policy team will continue to ensure Farm Bureau members' voices are heard at 23rd and Lincoln throughout the entire legislative session.

To stay up to date on legislation OKFB is tracking, tune in to the weekly legislative Zoom call every Friday at noon. Contact your field representative for information on how to join the call.



FOUNDATION FOR  
**AGRICULTURE**

## OKFB Foundation for Ag matching wildfire donations through March 15

**T**he Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture is collecting donations through March 15 for farmers, ranchers and rural communities affected by devastating wildfires that swept across Oklahoma in early 2024.

Donations will be matched dollar-for-dollar with the foundation, OKFB and OKFB Insurance each matching up to \$10,000 for a total donation match of up to \$30,000.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members know the road to recovery after wildfires is a long, ongoing process stretching from initial response by emergency crews to replacing lost fencing, equipment and structures.

Donations can be made online via PayPal at [okfb.news/FireRelief24](https://okfb.news/FireRelief24), or **donation checks** can be mailed to:

OKFB Foundation for Agriculture  
ATTN: Holly Carroll  
2501 N. Stiles Ave.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Donate online now through March 15:

[okfb.news/FireRelief24](https://okfb.news/FireRelief24)

# Noble County Farm Bureau member Marty Williams named 2024 Oklahoma Leopold Conservation Award winner

Noble County Farm Bureau member Marty Williams of Red Rock was named the recipient of the Oklahoma Leopold Conservation Award at the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts' Annual Meeting on Monday, Feb. 26.

He and his wife Crystal receive \$10,000 for being selected.

The award 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. Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the award recognizes farmers and forestland owners who inspire others with their dedication to environmental improvement.

Marty and his wife, Crystal, along with their three children, farm and ranch in Noble County where they build upon a strong stewardship ethic Marty's father instilled in him.

Marty uses no-till farming practices with a rotation of wheat, corn, soybeans and grain sorghum combined with cover crops, which helps retain moisture and build organic matter.

The Williams family also raises cattle and sells beef directly to consumers, enabling them to share not only their products, but also their agriculture story with customers.



Marty has taken on numerous conservation efforts to foster biodiversity and sustainability, including converting 320 acres of farmland into wetland habitat through collaboration with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, preserving habitat and providing an ecosystem for native plants and animals.

Marty's integration of state-of-the-art precision agriculture technology allows him to assess plant health in real time and apply nutrients with accuracy, ensuring that crops receive just what they need and nothing more. His farming practices and strategies have piqued the interest of agricultural experts from as far away as China.

In addition to his service in Farm Bureau and his county conservation district board, Marty also serves as a strategic advisor for the Gulch

Foundation's Rainmaker Farm, which documents the benefits of implementing regenerative practices on 160 acres of diverse crops, rotationally grazed pastures, and pollinator gardens.

"Responsible land stewardship is something all successful farmers and ranchers implement in their operations, but few understand it as deeply as Marty Williams," said David VonTungeln, Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture President. "His embodiment of agriculture's greatest traditions and his care and respect for the land and natural resources with which he has been entrusted are an example for agricultural landowners both in Oklahoma and across the country."

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture is one of several state-level sponsors of the award in Oklahoma.



Learn more:

Read the Williams family's full story and watch Marty's Leopold Award video online at [okfb.news/Leopold24](https://okfb.news/Leopold24)

## OKFB Capitol Camp applications due April 1

Oklahoma students who will be high school juniors and seniors during the 2024-2025 school year can apply now through **April 1** for OKFB's Capitol Camp youth legislative experience.

Capitol Camp is an immersive two-day legislative program held in the house chambers at the Oklahoma State Capitol.

The application and details are available online at [okfarmbureau.org/applications](https://okfarmbureau.org/applications).

## YF&R scholarship applications due April 1

Applications for OKFB's YF&R high school and collegiate scholarships are due **April 1**.

Nine \$1,000 high school scholarships - one in each OKFB district - will be awarded along with a \$1,000 collegiate scholarship for an Oklahoma Collegiate Farm Bureau member.

Full qualifications and the application link can be found on the OKFB website at [okfb.news/3Syp2rm](https://okfb.news/3Syp2rm).

## ODAFF encourages fire ant vigilance during fire relief

The Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry is asking agricultural producers to take precautions to prevent fire ant spread as donated hay moves into areas affected by wildfires.

Read OSU's fire ant article at [okfb.news/FireAntSafeguards](https://okfb.news/FireAntSafeguards).

For more information, or to inquire about an inspection, contact ODAFF's Joe Rackley at (405) 205-2709.

# WLC state conference planned for April 19-20 in OKC, registration open now through March 10

Join fellow Oklahoma Farm Bureau women during the 2024 OKFB Women's Leadership Committee Conference April 19-20 at the Embassy Suites Downtown Medical Center in Oklahoma City.

Featuring breakout sessions, keynote speakers, community service projects and fellowship, there is sure to be something for everyone.

Child care will be available for infants to 10-year-old children. Those interested in child care must complete the child care portion of the registration form.

Each participant is asked to donate one item toward the silent auction benefiting Bushels for Books, which awards Oklahoma teachers with bushel baskets of accurate agriculture books for use in their classrooms.

Participants will complete a service project Friday afternoon assembling toiletry bags for the Ronald McDonald House. Please bring travel-sized toiletries to help fill the bags, which will be provided.

## Registration

Interested members can register for the conference one of two ways. Registration must be completed by **March 10**.

- Online via the OKFB website at [okfb.news/WLCCConf24](http://okfb.news/WLCCConf24)
- By mailing a printed registration form, which can be found on the Application Center page of the OKFB website

## Cost

There is no cost to attend the WLC Conference, but attendees are responsible for booking and paying for their own hotel rooms.

## Accommodations

Overnight accommodations are available at the Embassy Suites for \$139 per night.

**Attendees must book their own hotel rooms for the conference.** Reservations can be made online with the link provided with the registration form or by phone at (405) 239-3900.

## WLC conference schedule highlights

### Friday, April 19

**4 p.m.**

Registration, silent auction open; community service begins

**6 p.m.**

Dinner

**8 p.m.**

Night tour of the OKC memorial

### Saturday, April 20

**9 a.m.**

Breakout sessions

**10 a.m.**

Breakout sessions

**11:30 a.m.**

Lunch

**1 p.m.**

Breakout sessions

**2 p.m.**

Breakout sessions

**3 p.m.**

Closing Session

For the full conference schedule, visit [okfb.news/WLCCConf24](http://okfb.news/WLCCConf24)

# County Farm Bureaus encouraged to donate food now through March 31 with Farm Bureau Cares matching program

Oklahoma Farm Bureau is proud to once again partner with County Farm Bureaus around the state to make donations to local food pantries and other community nutrition assistance programs now through March 31 with the Farm Bureau Cares: Community Food Donation Matching program.

The program encourages county Farm Bureaus to make donations of food or money to local organizations that help meet the nutritional needs of our fellow Oklahomans. OKFB matches county Farm Bureau donations up to \$100.

In 2023, more than \$20,000 was donated statewide through the program.

County Farm Bureau members are encouraged to join OKFB for our 2024 food donation matching program to show our local communities that Farm Bureau members truly care about food security in Oklahoma.

Donations must be completed and online matching forms submitted by March 31.

## How your county can participate in the Farm Bureau Cares matching program:

### 1 Decide how to donate

As a county Farm Bureau board, choose the local community nutrition assistance program to which you will donate and how you wish to make your donation: by hosting a food drive, shopping for and donating food, or by giving a monetary donation to your program of choice.

### 2 Contact your field rep

Each county Farm Bureau should contact their OKFB field representative and share with them the county's plans to make their donation.

### 3 Present your donation

Gather your county Farm Bureau board or members you would like to make the presentation, and make your donation in-person. Be sure to capture photos to share them with OKFB and even your local paper.

### 4 Complete the online matching form

Complete our online form at [okfb.news/FBCares](http://okfb.news/FBCares) and include all the necessary details to have your donation matched, up to \$100 **by March 31**. Be sure to share photos and upload any receipts if you purchased food for a donation.

### 5 Wait for your matching check

OKFB will send qualifying county Farm Bureaus a check up for to \$100 made to their selected local nutrition assistance program or organization based on the information entered into our online form.



Find the online form and learn more at [okfb.news/FBCares](http://okfb.news/FBCares)

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## OKFB members can register for Washington, D.C., Summit trip now through March 15

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members will travel to Washington, D.C., April 8-12 to advocate for agriculture issues and rural Oklahoma during OKFB's 2024 Washington, D.C., Summit.

OKFB members can register now through Friday, March 15, to travel to our nation's capital with fellow Farm Bureau members to visit with Oklahoma's congressional delegation, hear from D.C.-based industry and business leaders, and enjoy the historic sights of Washington.

OKFB is offering its members a hotel room package for the duration of the trip at \$2,200 for a single-occupancy room and \$2,800 for a double-occupancy room. The package includes a four-night hotel stay at either the Hyatt or Canopy by Hilton hotels on the Wharf in Washington, D.C.; several meals during the trip; an evening dinner cruise on the Potomac River; and an optional moonlight D.C. monument tour led by OKFB President Rodd Moesel.

See a tentative schedule in the right-hand column of this article.\*

OKFB members are responsible for booking their own airline travel. Farm Bureau members can sign up to attend the Washington, D.C., Summit by completing the online form on the OKFB website available at [okfb.news/dc24](http://okfb.news/dc24). Hotel space is limited, and rooms will be booked on a first-come, first-served basis. Registration will close if the trip fills up.

Members who have questions can contact Melisa Neal at (405) 523-2475.

*\*Please note that the agenda included here is tentative and is subject to change depending on availability of congressional delegates, staff and other speakers.*

Register online for the 2024  
Washington, D.C., Summit:

**[okfb.news/dc24](http://okfb.news/dc24)**

*Remember: OKFB members are responsible for booking their own airline travel for the trip.*

### Tentative schedule\*

**Monday, April 8**

*Travel Day*

**6 p.m.** - Congressional reception

**Tuesday, April 9**

**8 a.m.** - Group breakfast

**9 a.m.** - Industry briefings

*Lunch/afternoon on own*

**7 p.m.** - Congressional/staff dinner options available for half of group

**Wednesday, April 10**

**8:30 a.m.** - Breakfast & senate visits

*Lunch/afternoon on own*

**5:15 p.m.** - Dinner cruise boards

**Thursday, April 11**

**8:30 a.m.** - Breakfast and

Congressional visits

*Lunch/afternoon on own*

**7 p.m.** - Congressional/staff dinner options available for half of group

**9:30 p.m.** - Monument tour departs

**Friday, April 12**

Return travel day