

PERSPECTIVE

May 19, 2023



Legislative update: four bills signed by Governor Stitt

The first two weeks of May did not see many bills making progress at the state Capitol due to the continuing logjam over education funding. The House and Senate spent more time behind closed doors in caucus meetings than on their respective chamber floors. The key sticking point centers around rural public schools and whether they should receive more of the proposed additional per pupil funding than their urban counterparts.

Gov. Kevin Stitt and House Republicans have held firm that rural public schools should be a priority consideration of the spending packages due to the vast majority of the proposed private school tax credit funding would be utilized in urban areas. Senate Republicans along with House and Senate Democrats continue to hold the position that proposed additional public-school funding should be distributed equally per pupil for both rural and urban areas.

Four bills of interest to Farm Bureau

were signed into law so far this month by the Governor including:

- **SB 488 by Sen. Brent Howard and Rep. Kenton Patzkowsky** requires the Oklahoma Wheat Commission to assess a fee upon all wheat sold by Oklahoma producers through commercial channels. The bill will effectively remove the current two cent per bushel checkoff assessment from Oklahoma Statute and allow the OWC to determine the amount in the future.
- **SB 648 by Sen. Micheal Bergstrom and Rep. David Hardin** will delete the current agricultural sales tax exemption requirement for obtaining a permit to hunt nuisance or damage creating wildlife species at night allowing farmers and to further protect their assets.
- **HB 1962 by Rep. Carl Newton and Sen. Darcy Jech** allows any person who is less than 17 years of age but is at least 14 years of age and who lives on a farm in Oklahoma or is

employed for compensation on a farm in Oklahoma to apply for a farm permit to operate any Class D motor vehicle.

- **HB 2095 by Rep. Jon Echols and Sen. Lonnie Paxton** authorizes the Oklahoma Medical Marijuana Authority to permanently revoke the license of any medical marijuana business that intentionally does not pay excise tax on their sales. Additionally, it authorizes OMMA to enter into cooperative agreements with the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics, Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation and Oklahoma Attorney General to investigate and enforce violations of the law. The bill also grants the powers and authority of a peace officer to OBN, OSBI and OAG when enforcing medical marijuana laws, makes it unlawful for a medical marijuana grower to employ undocumented immigrants and limits medical marijuana grower licenses to one per property.

OKFB members attend Ag Tour in southwestern Arkansas

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members spent three days learning about Arkansas agriculture May 3-5 during OKFB's Ag Tour 2023.

The group kicked off the trip with a tour of Parks Brothers Farms in Van Buren, Arkansas, to learn about the farm's nursery operation. Members heard from third-generation agriculturist and owner Jason Parks.

The next stop was at the Fort Smith National Historic Site in Fort Smith. Members heard about the history of the fort and the instrumental role it played in Oklahoma history going back to our state's time as a territory.

Kicking off an exciting second day, the group visited Infinity Farm in Hagersville, Arkansas. Infinity Farm is a turkey farm partially powered by solar energy. Theron and Jeanie Rowbotham shared their experience in the poultry industry and discussed the inclusion of

solar energy in their operation in 2019.

At the University of Arkansas Fruit Research Station in Johnson County, members heard about the various fruit research being conducted. The station's research is centered on a variety of fruits including peaches, blackberries, strawberries and muscadines.

Next, members visited and toured the Bacchus Family Adventure Farm in Lamar. There, members were able to learn about the Arkansas agritourism industry and discuss the differences between Oklahoma and Arkansas agritourism. Members also interacted with both the farm and exotic animals featured on the farm.

For the last stop of the day, the group toured Post Winery in Altus, Arkansas. Members experienced the winemaking process from start to finish and even participated in an evening wine tasting.

To kick off the last day of the tour,

members toured the Spiro Mounds Archaeological Center in Spiro, Oklahoma. Members viewed the mounds, visited the museum full of historical artifacts and learned the importance of the Spiro people to Oklahoma history.

The final stop was at 33 Processing in Spiro, Oklahoma, which is an industrial hemp facility that creates hemp products from planting to final product. Members toured the production facility where the hemp is processed to create a bioplastic product. Bioplastics are more biodegradable and an alternative to traditional plastic products. Members also asked questions to learn more about the growing process of hemp and the bioplastic creation process.

OKFB's ag tour is a yearly program that connects the organization's members with agriculture, industry and attractions in a specific region of Oklahoma or nearby states.



OKFB members toured several greenhouses at Parks Brothers Farms and asked about their production practices.



More than 50 Ag Tour attendees pose for a photo at the University of Arkansas Fruit Research Station.

More than \$13,000 and 300 hogs donated to Pork for Packs program

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture recognized more than 140 Oklahoma FFA chapters for donating to the foundation's Pork for Packs program as a part of the 2022-2023 Oklahoma FFA Hunger Challenge during FFA's convention.

A total of \$13,297 and 310 hogs were donated to the program throughout the school year.

Pork for Packs – a collaboration between the OKFB Foundation for Agriculture, the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma and the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma – provides protein sticks for chronically hungry children in Oklahoma. The protein sticks are included in food-filled backpacks given to students to eat during weekends and holidays, when meals at school are not available.

The monetary and in-kind donations were able to produce 496,000 protein sticks for hungry children across Oklahoma.

The FFA Hunger Challenge encourages students to donate their animals to the program during the Tulsa State Fair and the Oklahoma Youth Expo. Chapters can also make cash contributions through adding a quarter to the price of each fundraising product sold throughout the year.

This year, Kellyville FFA – one of 144 participating chapters – was recognized as the FFA chapter with the highest monetary contribution, donating \$1,600 to the program.

For more information about Pork for Packs or the FFA Hunger Challenge, contact Holly Carroll at (405) 523-2300.

Beckham County Farm Bureau hosts legislative dinner

Members of Beckham County Farm Bureau had the chance to meet with their legislators at the annual legislative meeting in Sayre on Thursday, May 4. Sen. Brent Howard and Rep. Nick Archer covered a variety of topics including medical marijuana legislation and the state budget.



Sen. Brent Howard and Rep. Nick Archer answer questions about current legislation affecting Oklahoma agriculture.

YF&R awards ten \$1,000 scholarships

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers committee awarded nine \$1,000 scholarships to a high school senior from each Oklahoma Farm Bureau district and one \$1,000 scholarship to a Collegiate Farm Bureau member.

Scholarships are awarded to students who plan to pursue a degree in an agriculture-related field at an Oklahoma college or university and have a desire to contribute to agriculture and rural Oklahoma.

Ottawa County Farm Bureau member **Taylor Fent** is the recipient of the \$1,000 Collegiate Farm Bureau scholarship. She is currently attending Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College studying animal science.

The nine high school scholarship recipients are:

- Brant Failes, Alfalfa County
- Richard Garrett Brame, Atoka County
- Bailey Boyd, Beaver County
- Rylee Glazier, Blaine County
- Kylee Dodd, Comanche County
- Mallory Sager, Garvin County
- Jana Stacy, Muskogee County
- Clarissa Smith, Okfuskee County
- Mason Tucker, Roger Mills County

The recipients have a variety of career ambitions and plan to study several different degree programs across the agriculture sector including agricultural business, agricultural communications, agricultural education and biology.

Students plan to study at institutions including Murray State College, Northeastern State University, Northern Oklahoma College, Northwestern Oklahoma State University and Oklahoma State University.

OKFB YF&R award applications open

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers recognize members each year for their achievements through several awards, and applications for these awards are now open.

The YF&R committee is opening applications for the YF&R Achievement Award and YF&R Excellence in Agriculture Award. This year, the committee will select two winners for both award areas in 2023 – one to compete at the 2024 American Farm Bureau Convention and one to compete at the 2025 American Farm Bureau Convention – to give the state winners ample time to prepare for the AFBF award competitions.

Applications for the 2024 competition year are due July 14 and applicants will compete during the 2023 YF&R Summer Conference July 28-30 in Oklahoma City. Applications for the 2025 competition year are due October 10 and applicants will compete during the 2023 OKFB Annual Meeting Nov. 10-12 in Oklahoma City.

YF&R Achievement Award

The YF&R Achievement Award is presented to OKFB's top young farmer and rancher and is based on his or her efforts in production agriculture and leadership achievement.

Applicants must be Farm Bureau members between the ages of 18 and 35 who are actively engaged in production agriculture and receive a majority of his or her income from production agriculture.

The winners will be announced at the OKFB Annual Meeting on Saturday, Nov. 11 in Oklahoma City. The Achievement Award winner will receive a prize package and a trip to the 2024 or 2025 AFBF Annual Meeting in January to compete on the national level.

YF&R Excellence in Agriculture Award

The Excellence in Agriculture Award recognizes YF&R members who are actively engaged in agriculture but have not received a majority of their income from production agriculture

in the past three years. Applicants are evaluated on their knowledge of agricultural issues, leadership experiences and achievements, and their ability to communicate their agriculture story. Applicants must be Farm Bureau members between the ages of 18 and 35 who have not derived a majority of his or her income from production agriculture in the past three years. The Excellence in Agriculture Award also will be presented at the OKFB Annual Meeting in November. The winner will receive a prize package and a trip to the 2024 or 2025 AFBF Annual Meeting in January.

Visit the OKFB application center at okfarmbureau.org/applications to apply today. For more information about awards program and new process, contact OKFB YF&R Coordinator Zac Swartz at (405) 523-2300.

Visit okfarmbureau.org/applications to apply today!

Upcoming OKFB Events & Reminders

Register for the 2023 Amplify FFA Communications Conference
Payment due July 7

Submit Community Food Assistance Matching Program Form
Form due May 31

Submit 2023 OKFB Bushels for Books application
Application due June 15

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Oklahoma Broadband Office launches 17-stop “Let’s Get Digital” listening tour

The Oklahoma Broadband Office kicked off their 17-stop statewide “Let’s Get Digital” broadband listening tour on Monday, May 8. The tour has eleven remaining stops on the tour in communities across Oklahoma. The purpose of the tour is to gather public input on local internet needs. The feedback collected will then be used to develop a five-year plan to better connect the entire state to internet service. Oklahoma Farm Bureau members are encouraged to attend a local meeting to provide their internet needs to the tour leaders. Learn more about the broadband office by visiting their website at oklahoma.gov/broadband.

Remaining listening tour stops:

May 22 at 9:30 a.m. — Oklahoma City
Ronald J. Norick Downtown Library
300 Park Ave., Oklahoma City

June 6 at 4:30 p.m. — Sallisaw
People, Inc.
205 S. J.T. Stites St., Sallisaw

June 20 at 4:30 p.m. — Okmulgee
OSU-IT
1804 N. 4th St., Okmulgee

May 23 at 4:30 p.m. — Durant
Don W. Reynolds Community Center
1515 W. Main, Durant

June 8 at 4:30 p.m. — Sulphur
Parker Memorial Library
500 W. Broadway, Sulphur

June 22 at 4:30 p.m. — Goodwell
Panhandle State University
323 Eagle Blvd., Goodwell

May 26 at 4:30 p.m. — Chickasha
Chickasha Public Library
527 W. Iowa Ave., Chickasha

June 9 at 4:30 p.m. — Lawton
Lawton Public Library
110 SW 4th St., Lawton

June 23 at 4:30 p.m. — Woodward
Woodward Conference Center
3401 Centennial Ln., Woodward

June 2 at 4:30 p.m. — Altus
Altus Public Library
421 N. Hudson, Altus

June 13 at 4:30 p.m. — Ada
Ada Public Library
124 S. Rennie, Ada



OKLAHOMA
Broadband Office