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OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU *Perspective*

March 4, 2016

Where's the plan? A lack of leadership at 23rd and Lincoln

By John Collison
OKFB Vice President of Public Policy

Well folks, we're a month into the legislative session and Oklahoma is still no better off than when we first started. Our state is not only facing a severe budget shortfall, but also a lack of leadership at 23rd and Lincoln. Over the past month, we've seen bills that cover a wide range of topics, but very few that deal with the real issue.



We have seen a number of bills dealing with education fail early on, and for now we're OK with that. We have got to stop thinking all education fixes should come from a legislator. What we really need is a plan for the future. A plan and road map

that addresses where we as a state want to be in five, 10 or 20 years. Without a vision from our state's leaders, legislators are picking and choosing bills rather than laying out a plan to lead Oklahoma into the next few decades. A short-term solution will not fix the ongoing problems in our state!

Last week, we saw the deadline for bills to pass through committee. Outside of the doom and gloom, the state Capitol has seen some good things emerge for agriculture and rural Oklahoma.

Water is always a top priority for OKFB, and this year is no different. We saw a number of bills killed this past month that would have hindered our ability to move Oklahoma forward by developing our water. As always, we'll continue our work to provide Oklahoma with plenty of water for the future.

Legislators in both the House and the Senate are working on bills to again allow H2A agricultural workers to get a commercial driver's license. This bill is crucial to our industry; agricultural workers must have this ability in order to assist with wheat harvest. Thank you to Sen. Mike Schulz and Rep. Harold Wright for their work on the bills.

The fundraising tactics of animal rights organizations could be restricted with a bill by Rep. Brian Renegar and Sen. Larry Boggs. The bill would prevent animal rights organizations from using money raised in Oklahoma for out-of-state expenses or for political purposes. It already has faced much scrutiny and controversy, but will be extremely helpful in protecting not only

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FFA state officers visit OKFB home office during FFA Week tour

Oklahoma Farm Bureau proudly hosted four members of the Oklahoma FFA State Officer Team at the OKFB home office on February 25 during FFA Week.

The team visited with OKFB Executive Director Monica Wilke about the organization and its member-driven purpose. OKFB's Vice President of Public Policy John Collison spent time discussing the organization's public policy work on water, feral hogs and State Question 777 and how the young agricultural leaders can provide direction for Oklahoma's future.



Above (Left to Right): Monica Wilke, OKFB executive director, Brooks McKinney, OK FFA southeast district VP, Kaley Horn, OK FFA central district VP, Drake Boyce, OK FFA president, Markel Harris, OK FFA northeast district VP, and John Collison, OKFB vice president of public policy.

Where's the plan? *(Continued from page one)*

farmers and ranchers, but also Oklahomans, from these organizations and their deceptive fundraising tactics.

We've also been actively engaging with the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry in developing rules for feral swine.

The agency's proposed rules do not go far enough to completely eradicate this invasive species in our state. Do you know why the

Department of Wildlife doesn't regulate feral swine? Because it is an invasive species! It doesn't belong in our state and should be totally eliminated. We'll continue to push ODAFF for further action until the species is eradicated in Oklahoma.

As the session continues, don't forget that your voice matters! Follow along with OKAgPolicy as we educate and inform you of issues

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— John Collison

that affect you. We work each and every day to protect farmers and ranchers, but without your voice, our work only goes so far. Call your legislators and schedule a visit to come see them. It matters! If you're interested in more details, make sure to visit www.okagpolicy.org or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

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Kay County FB members make their way to the Oklahoma State Capitol



Kay County members discuss a variety of legislative issues with Rep. John Pfeiffer of Orlando in his office during Kay County's Capitol visit on Feb. 17. The group had a wide array of issues to discuss, including education and school land use.



Sen. Eddie Fields meets with Kay County Farm Bureau members during their legislative visit on Wednesday, Feb. 17.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Online

YouTube Lincoln to Local video series returns
Our legislative video series is back for the 2016 Oklahoma legislative session. Visit OKAgPolicy.org and click on the Lincoln to Local page under News in the main navigation to view all the videos produced for the 2016 session. New videos are uploaded regularly to keep OKFB members informed about legislative and policy news.

YouTube Rep. Biggs' statement on HSUS
Oklahoma Rep. Scott Biggs and Rep. Brian Renegar addressed the house floor in February to discuss accusations lobbed at them by the Humane Society of the United States. We have uploaded Biggs' and Renegar's statement to YouTube at <https://youtu.be/7LqIDyT0srM>.



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OKFB members #TakeTheHill during AFBF Advocacy Conference

Right: Sen. James Lankford (left) visits with Keff Feltz of Jackson County (center) and Adam Bohl of Comanche County during American Farm Bureau's advocacy conference in Washington, D.C. Feb. 22-25.

Feltz and Bohl also met with Sen. Inhofe, Rep. Cole and Rep. Lucas, discussing Sen. Roberts' biotech labeling bill. They also spent time with Farm Bureau members from around the country learning about emerging agricultural issues and how they can speak up for agriculture.



Beall promoted to director of membership

Oklahoma Farm Bureau recently promoted Kelli Beall to director of membership. In her new role, Kelli will work with the organization and membership services department to provide members with current information about services and benefits, in addition to recruiting new member benefits.

Previously, Beall served in the membership department where she had the opportunity to work closely with OKFB county secretaries assisting with membership activities in OKFB's 77 counties. Prior to that, she served in the communications division where she

handled website updates, press release distribution and assisted in the radio studio. Beall is in her 21st year with Oklahoma Farm Bureau.

"Working with membership and the county secretaries is what makes my job so enjoyable," Beall said. "It can be hectic at times, but I try to remember that our members are the reason I am here. I owe it to them to do the best job possible."

Beall resides in Harrah, Oklahoma, with her husband, Lonnie, and their daughter, Allison. Favorite family activities include ATV riding and camping.



Member Benefits

Gold Buckle Construction

Gold Buckle Construction offers Oklahoma Farm Bureau members a 10% discount on construction services. Gold Buckle provides a variety of construction services and products such as metal buildings, sheds, welding, pasture fencing, game fencing, pipe fencing, pipe and cable fencing, continuous fencing, chain link fencing, privacy fencing, metal roofing and custom projects. For more information about Gold Buckle Construction, call Dusty Gracia at (580) 309-0988.

www.okfarmbureau.org/benefits

Calendar

Ag Day at the Capitol

March 30 – Oklahoma City
Contact: Marcia Irvin 405-523-2405

YF&R District Scholarship Deadline

April 1
Contact: Holly Carroll 405-523-2307

Congressional Action Tour

April 10 – 14 • Washington, D.C.
Contact: Tasha Duncan 405-530-2681

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Tucker joins Oklahoma Beef Council board representing OKFB

The Oklahoma Beef Council announced Monte Tucker, a fourth-generation farmer and rancher from Sweetwater, Okla., joined its board of directors representing Oklahoma Farm Bureau.

Tucker ranches full-time with his wife, Danielle, their two sons, Mason and Reed, his parents and 93-year-old grandmother. His family farming and ranching operation consists of wheat, native and improved grasses, stocker cattle, replacement females, a commercial cow-calf operation with ownership from birth to rail, and a small custom feeding operation where he sells beef directly to customers. He is a graduate of Oklahoma State University with a degree in animal science.

Tucker is active in his community and serves as President of the Roger Mills County Farm Bureau. He is currently

servicing his second term as a member of the state board of directors of Oklahoma Farm Bureau. He and his family are active members of the Sayre First Baptist Church.

"I look forward to serving on the board of directors of the Oklahoma Beef Council," Tucker said. "It's an honor to represent beef producers, and I take seriously the responsibility to invest Oklahoma beef checkoff dollars in an effective and judicious manner."

Tucker said his overall philosophy acknowledges the important role of agriculture in society.

"As a rancher, I simply create a living for my family and a benefit to my community by converting God-given renewable natural resources into consumable products," he said. "In cowboy words, I turn sunshine, sandburs and scenery into rib-eye steaks!"



Burtrum honored for service to Oklahoma Beef Council board

(Left to right): Heather Buckmaster, Oklahoma Beef Council Executive Director, and Tom Fanning, incoming Oklahoma Beef Council Chairman, present Payne County Farm Bureau member Clay Burtrum of Stillwater with recognition for his years of outstanding service on the Oklahoma Beef Council, including his time spent as chairman.

Congressional Action Tour deadline March 10

The deadline to sign up for Oklahoma Farm Bureau's Congressional Action Tour trip to Washington, D.C., is March 10.

We hope you make plans to join us as we visit Oklahoma's congressional delegation to discuss important agricultural issues in our nation's capital.

Registration materials will be sent to County Farm Bureau offices and details will be on the OKFB website as soon as they are available.