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OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU

Perspective

Dec. 21, 2018



2018 farm bill passes Congress with support of entire Oklahoma congressional delegation

The 2018 farm bill received Congress' final stamp of approval last week, after weeks of negotiations between the two chambers. The House easily approved the farm bill conference report on Dec. 12, just a day after the Senate passed the legislation.

The bipartisan, bicameral five-year legislation encompasses a broad array of agriculture, nutrition, conservation and forestry policy.

"Oklahoma family farmers and ranchers today rest a little easier thanks to Congress' action in passing the 2018 farm bill this week, even as our state's agricultural producers face the constant threats of a challenging farm economy, ever-changing weather and an unpredictable trade environment," OKFB President Rodd Moesel said after the legislation's approval.

"The bill delivers provisions to support Oklahoma agricultural producers including risk management tools, international market development programs, and conservation and environmental stewardship programs. Additionally, the bill brings funding for cutting-edge agricultural research and extension, investments in rural Oklahoma and nutrition programs for low-income children, families and seniors."

The House and Senate each passed differing versions of the farm bill earlier in the year, sending the legislation to a conference committee between the two chambers. House and Senate agriculture committee leaders announced a final deal on Nov. 29 following several months of negotiations.

"All Oklahomans need the assurances that come from this bill, from the family farmers and ranchers producing our nation's food and fiber to the everyday families working to put food on the table," Moesel said. "We understand no bill is perfect, but the 2018 farm bill does a great job of addressing the realities facing today's family farmers and ranchers. We sincerely appreciate the tireless work and effort by House and Senate ag leaders and their committees in delivering a farm bill before the end of the year."

All seven members of Oklahoma's congressional delegation voted in favor of the bill, including Sens. Jim Inhofe and James Lankford and Reps. Kevin Hern, Markwayne Mullin, Frank Lucas, Tom Cole and Steve Russell.

To learn more about the 2018 farm bill and its policies, visit fb.org/farmbill.

OKFB praises Stitt's Secretary of Ag nominee

Gov.-Elect Kevin Stitt last week announced his nomination of Blayne Arthur as the next Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture.

"Oklahoma Farm Bureau is delighted to endorse and support Blayne Arthur as Gov.-elect Stitt's nominee for Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture," said Rodd Moesel, OKFB president. "Blayne is a well-known leader with a proven track record. We are looking forward to the perspective and leadership we know she will bring with her to this important position."

A Payne County Farm Bureau member, Arthur currently serves as the executive director of the Oklahoma 4-H Foundation. She previously served as deputy commissioner of agriculture from 2012 to 2016. Alongside her husband and two children, Arthur runs a cattle business providing show cattle for FFA and 4-H members.

"We're excited to have someone who is directly involved in agricultural production and who works tirelessly to tell our industry's story," Moesel said. "We trust Blayne will be a champion for agriculture and rural Oklahoma and we look forward to working with her to ensure the future success of Oklahoma agriculture."

Arthur's nomination to secretary of agriculture will require confirmation by the State Senate. Upon confirmation, she will become the first female to serve in the role.

Farm Bureau applauds new Clean Water Rule proposal signed by EPA

State Farm Bureau presidents from across the nation, including Oklahoma Farm Bureau President Rodd Moesel, last week witnessed the signing of the proposed Clean Water Rule at the Environmental Protection Agency headquarters in Washington, D.C. The rule will replace the 2015 Waters of the U.S. Rule, which vastly expanded federal regulatory authority on private land.

“Farmers and ranchers work every day to protect our nation’s waterways and drinking water,” said Zippy Duvall, American Farm Bureau Federation president.

“For more than five years, we have advocated for a new water rule that protects clean water and provides clear rules for people and communities to follow.

“This new rule will empower farmers and ranchers to comply with the law, protect our water resources and productively work their land without having to hire an army of lawyers and consultants.”

The proposal is the second step in a two-step process to review and revise the definition of “waters of the United States,” consistent with a February 2017 executive order by President Trump. The new rule provides a straightforward definition that would result in significant cost savings, protect the nation’s navigable waters, help sustain economic growth, and reduce barriers to business development.

“We want to protect land and water in the communities where we live and work,”

Duvall said. “Clean water is our way of life. Preserving our land and protecting our water means healthy places to live, work and play. We believe this new Clean Water Rule is rooted in common-sense. It will protect our nation’s water resources and allow farmers to farm.”

The agencies will take comment on the proposal for 60 days after publication in the Federal Register.

“We appreciate the months of hard work that the administration, especially the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers, invested in making sure the new Clean Water Rule was done right,” Duvall said. “Unlike the 2015 WOTUS rule, this new rule protects our resources, respects the law and provides greater clarity so the agencies and the public can identify regulated federal waterways. We will further analyze this new rule in the coming days and will suggest further refinements during the comment period.”

To read more about the new Clean Water Rule, visit fb.org/issues/regulatory-reform.

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— Zippy Duvall

Reserve OKFB Leadership Conference hotel rooms by Jan. 16

Oklahoma Farm Bureau leaders from across the state will gather in Oklahoma City Feb. 18-19 for the organization’s annual OKFB Leadership Conference.

Held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in downtown Oklahoma City, the two-day conference will feature state and federal agricultural policy updates, organizational updates, a reception with state leaders and lawmakers, a visit to the state Capitol and more.

Please contact your county Farm Bureau secretary to RSVP for the conference and to reserve a hotel room by no later than Jan. 16. For more information, please contact OKFB Public Policy Coordinator Emmy Karns at (405) 523-2300. More details will be released as they become available.

OKFB hosts training for new county Farm Bureau board members



OKFB President Rodd Moesel encourages newly chosen county Farm Bureau leaders in their new roles during county Farm Bureau board member training held Dec. 3 at the OKFB home office. The group spent the day learning more about serving on the county board from a variety of OKFB leaders and staff.

OKFB board meets with energy and environment secretary nominee



Right: The OKFB board of directors poses for a photo with Gov.-Elect Kevin Stitt's nominee for Secretary of Energy and Environment Kenneth Wagner (fifth from left) during a recent board meeting at the OKFB home office in Oklahoma City. Left: In visiting with the OKFB board of directors, Wagner emphasized his plan to maintain a close relationship with Oklahoma's farmers and ranchers in his new role.

Texas County Farm Bureau member honored for water conservation efforts

Fred Fischer, a Texas County Farm Bureau member, recently was honored with the Oklahoma Water Resources Board's Water for 2060 Excellence Award at the Governor's Water Conference held Dec. 7-8 in Midwest City.

The panhandle farmer was honored for significantly reducing water use for irrigation by as much as 40 percent with innovative technologies, data analysis and enhancements.

Fischer and his family grow wheat, milo and corn on a farm just west of Hooker. Over the past several decades, the farm has been a part of a shift toward using new technology to improve irrigation practices and ultimately make better use of the water they draw from the aquifer.

Established to support Oklahoma's Water for 2060 Act, the awards recognize individuals or entities that have developed outstanding water saving measures.

"If Oklahoma is to achieve the goal



Texas County Farm Bureau member Fred Fischer (left) accepts a 2018 Oklahoma Water Resources Board Water for 2060 Excellence Award from OWRB Executive Director Julie Cunningham on Dec. 7 during the Governor's Water Conference in Midwest City. The Panhandle farmer was recognized for his work to significantly reduce water usage for irrigation using the latest technologies.

established under the Water for 2060 Act, to use no more fresh water in 2060 than we were using in 2010 while preserving our population growth and economic development goals, it will take public and private innovation and leadership in water

conservation, efficiency, and reclamation efforts of the type demonstrated by our Water for 2060 Excellence Award winners," said OWRB Executive Director Julie Cunningham.

Learn more at www.owrb.ok.gov.

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