



Perspective

Feb. 2, 2018

Property taxes, rural healthcare among OKFB priorities in upcoming legislative session

As the 2018 legislative session begins next week, property taxes and rural healthcare are among the leading issues for Oklahoma Farm Bureau as it represents its members at the state Capitol.

Keep ad valorem taxes low

Farm Bureau members oppose any and all increases in ad valorem—or property—taxes.

Property taxes are used to fund county roads and bridges, libraries, career and technology education, county government and public schools. OKFB expects to see legislation progress to grant municipalities access to those funds.

Many cities and towns have seen a decline in sales tax revenue over the past several years, leading to a push for an expansion of property taxes in Oklahoma.

OKFB opposes expanding the use of property tax dollars, as it could lead to unlimited property tax increases.

The state's continual budget problems have led to legislation that would grant superintendents and school boards the authority to spend property taxes on operations, including teacher salaries.

Current law requires schools to spend ad valorem funds on capital improvement projects like buildings, furniture and equipment.

Farm Bureau members are proud to support local school districts but believe the burden should not fall on landowners alone.

Family farmers and ranchers already face thin margins from low commodity prices, rising input costs and varying weather. Increases in property taxes create an increasingly unstable business climate for agriculture. Reasonable property taxes allow family farmers and ranchers to continue growing high-quality and nutritious food for the nation and the world.

Preserve the ag sales tax exemptions

Ninety-eight percent of Oklahoma's farms are owned and operated by families. Protecting agriculture sales tax exemptions are crucial for the vitality of family farms in Oklahoma. Agriculture is a capital-intensive industry, requiring hundreds of thousands of dollars in equipment, seed, feed and other inputs to grow food.

Without the exemption, family farmers



and ranchers would be forced to pay taxes on equipment and inputs. Imposing sales taxes on family farmers and ranchers could force many small family farms and ranches out of business.

[See Priorities \(on next page\)](#)

OKFB YF&R to award nine \$1,000 scholarships

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee is now accepting applications for its annual \$1,000 scholarships for high school seniors who will pursue a higher degree in agriculture after graduation.

Nine \$1,000 scholarships, one from each OKFB district, will be awarded to high school seniors pursuing a career in agriculture at an Oklahoma institution of high learning as a full-time student.

Applications must be postmarked no later than March 13, 2018. Applicants must meet all of the following eligibility requirements:

- Must be a graduating high school senior.
 - Must enroll full time in an agriculture program at an accredited Oklahoma university, college or technical school.
 - Must be a member of a Farm Bureau family (father, mother or legal guardian memberships qualify; grandparents', siblings' or other relatives' memberships may not be used). Membership must remain in good standing for the duration of the scholarship.
 - Children of paid employees of Oklahoma Farm Bureau and Affiliated Companies are not eligible
- Along with the application, applicants must provide a official high school transcript, a resume with activities and honors listed, three short essays and two character reference letters.
- The application can be found on the OKFB website at www.okfarmbureau.org/ applications. For more information, contact OKFB YF&R Coordinator Zac Swartz at 405-523-2406 or zac.swartz@okfb.org.



Mason Weaver of the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma (far left) accepts a \$2,000 donation from Oklahoma County Farm Bureau Treasurer and Secretary Dennis Lambring (center) and Oklahoma County Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee Chair Sharlene Lambring. Oklahoma County Farm Bureau donated the funds to the Seeds of Hope program, which distributes garden seed to food bank clients across the state and improves access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Oklahoma County Farm Bureau donates to Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma

Members of the Oklahoma County Farm Bureau recently donated \$2,000 to the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma to help feed hungry Oklahomans.

The funds were donated to the Seeds of Hope program, which stocks partner food pantries with garden seed for the purpose of improving client access to fresh fruits and vegetables. The program distributes more than 11,000 packets of seed to food pantry clients across the state.

Seeds of Hope is a part of the food bank's Urban Harvest, an educational gardening program that grows fresh fruits and vegetables on-site at the food bank and provides gardening support to partner agencies and charitable projects throughout the state.

Learn more about the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma at www.rfbo.org.

Priorities (cont'd from page one)

Enhance rural healthcare access

Access to healthcare is crucial to maintaining and enhancing the vitality of rural communities across the state. Oklahoma ranks 49th in physician-to-patient ratio, and the lack of providers is most prevalent in rural areas.

To help improve access to healthcare in rural Oklahoma, Farm Bureau members support legislation to ease physician supervision requirements for nurse practitioners and certified registered nurse anesthetists. Farm Bureau also supports the

use of telemedicine to maintain and improve rural medical facilities.

Protect private property rights

Private property rights have always been a Farm Bureau cornerstone. This year, OKFB will advocate for landowners in rights-of-way easements, particularly in regard to oil and gas pipeline easements.

OKFB also will work to prevent any "taking" of private property rights as measures to protect military training routes are considered.

Providing landowners every opportunity to eradicate feral swine on private property is also significant for OKFB members. The invasive species wreaks havoc on Oklahoma farms and ranches and causes an estimated \$1 billion in damage to agriculture across the country.

Other priority issues include continued funding for the maintenance and construction of rural roads and bridges and continued legislative appropriations for the Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension and research programs.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Online



Celebrate Farm Bureau week! Tag us in your Facebook, Twitter and Instagram photos

As county Farm Bureaus across the state celebrate Farm Bureau Week Feb. 19-23, we want to know why you are proud to be an Oklahoma Farm Bureau member! Post your photos on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and use #OKFBWeek.



Follow Farm Bureau's legislative efforts at the state Capitol

As the 2018 legislative session kicks off next week, along with the second special session, follow Oklahoma Farm Bureau's work on behalf of farmers, ranchers and rural Oklahoma at the state Capitol. Visit the OKAgPolicy Facebook page and follow @OKAgPolicy on Twitter.



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www.okfarmbureau.org

New training required for dicamba applicators

Applicators planning to use specific dicamba herbicides labelled for the Roundup Ready Xtend Crop System™ for soybeans and cotton must complete U.S. Department of Agriculture-approved dicamba training before spraying these products this year.

“Whether you’re a certified applicator or driving the application equipment you have to be trained,” said Todd Baughman, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension summer crop weed specialist. “Even if you went through training last year, you’re still required to go through the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry approved training this year.”

The one-hour training is free of charge, although in some cases it may be offered in conjunction with a meeting or conference that has a registration fee.

Only the ODAFF, Extension and the three manufacturers—Monsanto, DuPont and BASF—are authorized to provide training. In Oklahoma, Extension and ODAFF are collaborating to offer the training.

Upcoming training dates include Feb. 7 (Shawnee; Grand Casino Hotel and Resort); Feb. 9 (Cordell; Washita County Activity Center); Feb. 13 (Enid; Chisholm Trail Expo Center); Feb. 15 (Blackwell; Blackwell Fairgrounds); Feb. 20 (Cherokee; Alfalfa County Fairgrounds); Feb. 23 (El Reno; Canadian County Fairgrounds); Feb. 26 (Warner; Connors State College); Feb. 27 (Vinita; Craig County Fairgrounds); March 5 (Kingfisher; Kingfisher County Fairgrounds); March 6 (Carnegie); and March 22 (Taloga; Dewey County Fairgrounds).

The date for the training event at the Oklahoma Panhandle Research and

Extension Center in Goodwell is to be determined.

For more information, including specific training locations and times, contact the nearest county Extension office.

Recently introduced to Oklahoma, the Xtend cropping system for cotton and soybeans allows over-the-top application of dicamba herbicides, which traditionally had not been the case until this newest technology was developed.

With that technology, three specific herbicides—XtendiMax, Engenia and FeXapan—were developed for this use that are lower volatility than the other dicamba products currently on the market.

While regulations went into effect last year with the introduction of the technology, issues with drift in several states led the Environmental Protection Agency and manufacturers to develop new regulations for 2018.

The mandatory training will cover the new regulations, including how to work with these herbicides, which are now restricted-use products with extensive recordkeeping requirements, and best management practices for applying the herbicides.

Baughman stressed the training is important not only because it familiarizes people with the new regulations, but also because the label for the three herbicides only goes through December of this year.

A version of the training will be available for Spanish speakers in February and an online edition of the training will be available later in the year.

For more details on the statewide dicamba training events, contact your county extension office.

Upcoming Training Dates

Feb. 7
Grand Casino Hotel and Resort
Shawnee

Feb. 9
Washita County Activity Center
Cordell

Feb. 13
Chisholm Trail Expo Center
Enid

Feb. 14
Blackwell Fairgrounds
Blackwell

Feb. 20
Alfalfa County Fairgrounds
Cherokee

Feb. 23
Canadian County Fairgrounds
El Reno

Feb. 26
Connors State College
Warner

Feb. 27
Craig County Fairgrounds
Vinita

March 5
Kingfisher County Fairgrounds
Kingfisher

March 22
Dewey County Fairgrounds
Taloga

For more details, contact your county extension office.

Member Benefits

Life Line Health Screening

Stay on top of your health with Life Line’s proactive health screenings. Life Line’s OKFB-member package includes five hospital-grade tests for \$135. The screening package includes carotid artery and stroke, abdominal aortic aneurysm, peripheral arterial disease, atrial fibrillation and osteoporosis. Find a list of upcoming screenings on the OKFB website. To use the discount, call 1-800-658-6115 and use code BOKF.

www.okfarmbureau.org/benefits

Calendar

State Legislature Convenes

Feb. 5 • Oklahoma City
Contact: Tasha Duncan 405-530-2681

OKFB Legislative Leadership Conference

March 5-6 • Oklahoma City
Contact: Tasha Duncan 405-530-2681

Farm Bureau Week

Feb. 19-23 • Oklahoma
Contact: Marcia Irvin 405-523-2405

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OKFB visits with members, public at KNID Agrifest in Enid



Top Left: OKFB's Todd Honer (right) visits with Farm Bureau member Tim Taggart at the KNID Agrifest on Jan. 12. The OKFB booth was sponsored by nine county Farm Bureaus in the area. Bottom Left: Members discuss the value of an OKFB membership with KNID Agrifest attendees. Top Right: Sen. Roland Pederson (right), former OKFB board member, visits with Garfield County members Judy Anglin (far left) and Desdive Milacek (center).