

Oklahoma Country

Summer 2023
The magazine of
Oklahoma Farm Bureau



Investing *where it* matters

Ottawa County Farm Bureau member Alisen Anderson shares her passion for agriculture on the national stage

Cultivating healthy minds

OKFB members highlight resilience and strength through mental health awareness

Innovation through stewardship

An OKFB family innovates through generations of conservation

Building a bill

An Oklahoma student's Capitol Camp legislation becomes law in Oklahoma



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ON THE COVER

Photo by Dustin Mielke

Agriculture advocate and Oklahoma Farm Bureau member Alisen Anderson stands in her family's wheat field near Miami, Oklahoma.

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ABOUT OKLAHOMA COUNTRY MAGAZINE

Oklahoma Country magazine is the official magazine of Oklahoma Farm Bureau, mailed to Farm Bureau members four times a year. *Oklahoma Country* magazine shares the story of Oklahoma agriculture and our rural communities through the eyes of Farm Bureau members, programs and activities.

ABOUT OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU

Oklahoma Farm Bureau is Oklahoma's largest general farm organization, dedicated to supporting the agriculture community to improve the lives of Oklahomans. As a grassroots, member-led organization, OKFB gives a voice to family farmers and ranchers through advocacy, outreach, leadership development and supporting the future of agriculture.

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Rodd Moesel

*President
Oklahoma Farm Bureau
& Affiliated Companies*

**"We hope you will
make plans to join
us this November
as we meet as a
Farm Bureau family
to learn, grow and
update our
grassroots policies
for next year."**

Full speed ahead for Farm Bureau programs

It may be hard to believe, but 2023 marks the biggest year ever for Oklahoma Farm Bureau activities, events and programs.

After the challenges we faced in 2020 and the years since, 2023 is shaping up to be a record year for OKFB. We have been carrying out our usual advocacy and leadership efforts along with new programs we introduced in the last several years. Each program and event has been tweaked, updated and changed to make our initiatives as impactful as possible.

One way that Farm Bureau leaders and members have been making refinements to our organization is through updating our OKFB bylaws. This governing document receives periodic updates, and delegates at our convention in November will be voting on a set of proposed changes that will modernize our bylaws and bring them up to date. These changes have been crafted with input from Farm Bureau leaders and members and are included in this issue of the magazine for you to review starting on page 48.

Speaking of convention, I am so excited that our 2023 OKFB annual meeting will mark a return to downtown Oklahoma City Nov. 10-12. We will be hosting our convention at the Omni Oklahoma City Hotel, a beautiful new facility with plenty of space to host our Farm Bureau events with wonderful amenities and a great downtown location. We hope you will make plans to join us this November as we meet as a Farm Bureau family to learn, grow and update our grassroots policies for next year.

Our summer youth events are one area that we have reassessed and revamped over the last few years to ensure we are providing ample opportunities for Oklahoma's youth to grow in agriculture.

Our Oklahoma Youth Leading Agriculture conference in June connected 19 student leaders from around our state with agriculture and agribusiness leaders to expand their horizons and help them see how Farm Bureau helps agriculture across

Oklahoma. From tour stops, training sessions and connections made with fellow agriculture organizations, partners and Farm Bureau friends, OYLA has become a highlight of our summer calendar that gives us an opportunity to connect with some of our state's best 4-H and FFA members and future state leaders.

Our second-annual Capitol Camp in late June connected almost 100 4-H and FFA members with a two-day experience as they learned how state government works. These students were guided through a hands-on learning process as they crafted, proposed, discussed and voted on their own legislative ideas, just like our state legislators. To make this event even better, they discussed bills and placed their votes from the floor of the Oklahoma House of Representatives, making Capitol Camp a unique program for these students.

Our third-annual FFA Communications Conference will be held in late July. This one-day event connects FFA members with skills, knowledge and an understanding of communications principles that they can use to share their chapters' FFA stories in the coming school year. To make it even better, they also learn about the need for communicators in agriculture while learning about agricultural communications career opportunities.

Of course, that is just a small sample of the many amazing programs OKFB is providing for agriculture and our rural communities. In this magazine, you can read about our newly launched Oklahoma Grassroots Rural & Ag Business Accelerators program, a wrap-up of this year's legislative session and its impact on Farm Bureau members, and many stories from around Farm Bureau and Oklahoma agriculture.

I am proud of the many opportunities our organization creates in agriculture. I can assure you OKFB leaders, members and staff will continue to support Oklahoma's agriculture community as we work together help agriculturalists and rural Oklahomans today and for generations to come.

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Staying strong through the storms

Protecting and serving our friends and neighbors by being their trusted insurance provider has never been an easy task in Oklahoma.

The last few months have proven to be especially challenging for Oklahoma Farm Bureau Insurance as we have experienced numerous significant weather events that have impacted our customers all across the state.

Our storm season started back in February, and even as I write this in late June, waves of storms continue to roll across Oklahoma. Our insurance company experienced two catastrophe events during this period as rounds of hail, high winds, tornadoes and severe thunderstorms pummeled our state. In fact, Oklahoma experienced its first category-one hurricane-level winds June 18-19 with wind speeds reaching 99 miles per hour, affecting more than half our state.

The insurance industry around the nation is having one of its worst years since 2012, and for OKFB Insurance, specifically, while we ended May with a surplus of \$135 million, we expect that to decrease as we continue to handle the claims resulting from late-season storms.

Through all the challenges we have faced this year, I am proud of our Farm Bureau agents and adjusters working hard, long hours to handle claims, answer questions and ensure our customers are protected and taken care of. We hang our hat on our local, hometown service, and our adjusters have put their hearts into their work, even through weekends and holidays, to ensure our claims response times are quick and that the process is easy for our customers.

In addition to the storm losses we incurred, inflation continues to put pressure on the cost of all lines of business, but in particular, our auto lines. When you combine the inflation-driven price increases with the significant storm losses, we know that we must stay focused on adequate rates to protect our capital position.



Gary Buckner

*Executive Vice President
and General Manager
Oklahoma Farm Bureau
Insurance*

“Despite the adversity we have faced so far in 2023, there are many exciting changes happening at OKFB Insurance.”

I am excited to share that we are in the middle of our best sales year since 2007, thanks to our whole team from our agents to our claims professionals to our entire support and service pipeline. Our revised farm and ranch policy and our new business owners policy, or BOP, have been hugely popular with our insureds, resulting in positive growth for the company.

We have also made it easier for our customers to access and service their policies with our new email billing option for all lines of business. Customers can now pay their bills from their phones, making it easier and more convenient to stay on top of their accounts. If you haven't yet set up your paperless billing option, contact your local agent to learn more.

Even though our year has been a mix of excitement and challenges, we are staying focused on doing what we do best: serving our OKFB Insurance customers with class-leading policies, industry-leading service and policies made in and made for Oklahomans.



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***Jared and Alisen
Anderson on their
farm near Miami with
their children, Grace,
Colt and Piper.***





Investing *where it* matters

Ottawa County Farm Bureau member Alisen Anderson shares her passion for agriculture from the farm to the national stage with the American Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee.

Photos and story by Dustin Mielke

Standing in a wheat field near Miami, Oklahoma, hundreds of miles and more than two decades separate Alisen Anderson from the Indiana family farm where she was raised. The time that has passed since she left her home state for Oklahoma can be counted in more than just years. Wheat harvests, life experiences, lessons learned and lives touched are the measures of growth and change that mark the time that has lapsed since she grew up riding through fields and walking through pastures back home with her grandparents.

“My grandpa really ignited that passion for production agriculture for me,” Alisen said. “I remember being three years old on a very old Gleaner combine with no cab harvesting wheat with him. And that was one of my very earliest memories as a kid. I remember falling in love with the whole process.”

Today, Alisen and her husband, Jared, farm almost 900 acres of wheat, corn and soybeans near Miami while also ranching alongside Jared’s family. The couple’s three children mark the family’s seventh generation to grow up in agriculture.

The passion for agriculture that she learned

from hours spent on the farm with her grandparents has carried Alisen through high school, college and a career teaching agriculture at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College that she recently concluded after more than a decade in the classroom. Her passion now drives Alisen to serve fellow young agriculturalists as a member of the American Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee.

As a national YF&R leader, Alisen has the opportunity to share her excitement for agriculture with fellow agriculturalists in the early years of their own farming, ranching and agribusiness careers. From encouraging fellow Farm Bureau members to planning and hosting events for participants from across the nation, Alisen pours her heart for agriculture into fellow YF&R members not only for the love of agriculture, but most importantly for the love of people.

That focus on helping others in agriculture is part of an ongoing cycle of investing time, encouragement and assistance, which she learned – and continues to learn – from role models, peers and students from all walks of life.


(Right) Alisen speaks to fellow Young Farmers & Ranchers members from around the nation at the 2023 American Farm Bureau FUSION Conference in Florida. As an AFBF YF&R committee member, Alisen works alongside committee members to encourage young agriculturalists, plan and host events for fellow Farm Bureau members, and advocate for agriculture.



Photo by Rebekah Nash

(Right) Alisen and her three kids, Grace, Colt and Piper, sit in a pasture on the ranch the Andersons run alongside Jared's parents. The Andersons' children are the seventh generation to grow up in agriculture, carrying on a tradition and passion that was instilled in both Alisen and Jared from a young age.





“I’m so blessed by all of those students who have come through my classroom. I know they are changing the world, and that’s the best paycheck.”

Alisen admits that coming from a long line of farmers, agriculture is intertwined into every fiber of her being. While the passion she has for production agriculture and the agriculture industry was ignited by her grandfather, the flames were fanned by her high school and college agriculture education teachers.

“I had two incredible ag teachers,” Alisen said. “I was very blessed in high school by Mr. McLochlin and Mr. Wildermuth. Then I came to a little junior college called Northeastern Oklahoma A&M where I met someone named Roger Fent who further ignited that passion. I wanted to be him – and I still do.”

Alisen said she enjoyed each of Fent’s classes and even told Fent she wanted to do exactly what he was doing. A short four or five years later, Alisen was offered Fent’s position after his retirement from NEO. Alisen found herself as an instructor at the college that was instrumental in shaping her life with a new opportunity to guide and nurture agriculture students sitting in the same chairs where she once sat.


With classrooms full of young agriculturalists looking to begin a career in agriculture, Alisen poured herself into her teaching duties, becoming more than an instructor, but a mentor, friend and confidant for students walking through the door of her classroom. It was a chance to continue the cycle of investing into others that she benefited from thanks to her grandfather, her high school agriculture teachers and Fent.

“We were taught to do the job, but do it for people,” Alisen said.

“I’m so blessed by all of those students who have come through my classroom. I know they are changing the world, and that’s the best paycheck. Even though there are trials and tribulations and mountains you have to climb in education, those kids are out changing the world, and they are making life better for everyone who will go into agriculture in some way or another. They are feeding the world, they are advertising agriculture, they are marketing agriculture, and they are pushing

people to be the best that they can be.”

In her time teaching at NEO, Alisen taught students from 42 states, Canada and Mexico, sharing her passion for agriculture while helping them envision and follow their own dreams within the industry she loves.



Alisen’s involvement with Farm Bureau started similarly to her start in agriculture education: through encouragement and with the assistance of mentors.

Two longtime Ottawa County Farm Bureau leaders, Greg Leonard and James Fuser, encouraged Alisen and Jared to jump into Farm Bureau activities and programs with both feet.

“Those guys were so vital to us being integrated into the Farm Bureau family,” Alisen said. “They were the ones who pushed us to do anything and everything we could with Farm Bureau. They gave us all the resources we needed to start our own YF&R in Ottawa County and the collegiate Farm Bureau.”

As an NEO agriculture instructor, Alisen was the driving force that started the NEO Collegiate Farm Bureau chapter, and she served as chapter adviser from its inception until her recent departure from the college. Under her leadership and guidance, the NEO Collegiate Farm Bureau chapter grew to become the state’s most active and visible chapter, hosting events for students that included agriculture tours to different parts of Oklahoma and regular participation in state and national Farm Bureau events.

“I want to show my kids that it is important to give yourself to things that will better our generation,” Alisen said of her investment in the collegiate Farm Bureau program. “And that’s agriculture for me, and that’s Farm Bureau for me.”

Students that spent time at NEO as Collegiate Farm Bureau members are now serving as county Farm Bureau leaders, state

YF&R committee members and even state Farm Bureau board members in 27 states.

Alisen said she has seen the impact that Farm Bureau has made in the lives of students, herself and her husband. From expanding students' horizons through collegiate Farm Bureau to serving as the 2023 Oklahoma Farm Bureau YF&R state committee chair with her husband, Jared, Farm Bureau is one more place that Alisen has had the opportunity to invest in others while growing as a leader herself.

"When I say Farm Bureau changes lives, I truly mean it," she said.

For all the leadership qualifications, experience and credentials Alisen has acquired, and with a career spent spurring students to explore and grab hold of leadership opportunities, when an opportunity came to step into a national leadership role with Farm Bureau, she was apprehensive about moving into the spotlight herself.

"Even though I stood in front of hundreds of kids each semester and taught them everything I know about agriculture, I had very little self-confidence," Alisen said. "I think God telling people to prod me along was very important."

With some encouragement from fellow agricultural leaders and her husband, Alisen applied and was accepted to serve a two-year term

as an AFBF YF&R committee member representing Farm Bureau members across a region of states including Oklahoma.

"The people who I get to serve with are incredible, wholesome, loving Farm Bureau members who do exactly what we do, just all throughout the country," Alisen said.

As an AFBF YF&R Committee member, Alisen has traveled the country in the past 18 months, investing her time and passion for agriculture in fellow Farm Bureau members ages 18-35. From serving as a workshop presenter for Washington Farm Bureau to helping a school in Puerto Rico that serves special needs children prepare a school

garden, she has worked as an advocate for Farm Bureau and agriculture across the nation.

Alisen also serves as chair of the AFBF YF&R Leadership subcommittee, which is tasked with planning and hosting the AFBF YF&R Leadership Conference scheduled for March 8-11, 2024, in Omaha.

"Coming together as a whole committee, we get to do a lot of good team-building and a lot of good strength-building," Alisen said. "We go through training so that we can make sure we are telling the story of Farm Bureau accurately and also passionately."

Through her involvement at the national level, Alisen said she has come to see exactly how AFBF works to represent Farm Bureau members in every facet of agriculture.

"I truly know now that AFBF has our best interest at heart, especially with the people I get to work with," Alisen said. "I hope to make sure I'm not just learning what they're teaching me, but also that I'm able to bring that back to my own county and of course Oklahoma Farm Bureau as well."

"The connections we get to create with other state Farm Bureau members are incredible, but it is the camaraderie and the people who make it great."

As she stood next to her husband and children, watching a combine glide through one of the Anderson family's northeastern Oklahoma wheat fields in the early days of June, Alisen was also preparing to travel to Milwaukee for the summer AFBF YF&R committee meeting.

While the family's wheat field and a meeting room in Milwaukee may seem like different worlds, for Alisen, they are both simply platforms that she capitalizes upon to build and share her passion for agriculture.

"I can't have an excuse to not be great for agriculture," Alisen said. "I can't have an excuse to not be great for my kids or my husband or our farm and our ranch. There's not an excuse as to why we shouldn't fight for what we love and fight for what we believe in."

Through her time as an AFBF YF&R committee member, Alisen said she discovered

"I have learned that if we aren't going to fight for agriculture, who is going to?"

even more self-confidence along with a deeper understanding of agriculture. Sharing the need to tell the agriculture story and stand up for the industry she loves has been a key part of her service on the national stage.

“I have learned that if we aren’t going to fight for agriculture, who is going to?” she said.

Alisen recently wrapped up her 11-year career at NEO where she helped build leaders for agriculture and numerous other industries. Her success as a teacher, mentor and adviser to students was driven by a deep sense of duty to help students achieve their dreams – a philosophy formed by mentors throughout Alisen’s life who helped her achieve her goals. That drive to invest her time and energy in others extends to her work for Farm Bureau in Ottawa County, in Oklahoma, and now, around the nation.

“If we are not trying to build up people, if we’re not trying to make people better, than what are we here for?” Alisen asked. “I know that I am put on this earth to love people in agriculture and to teach them. However I can do that, whatever space I can do that in, I want to.”

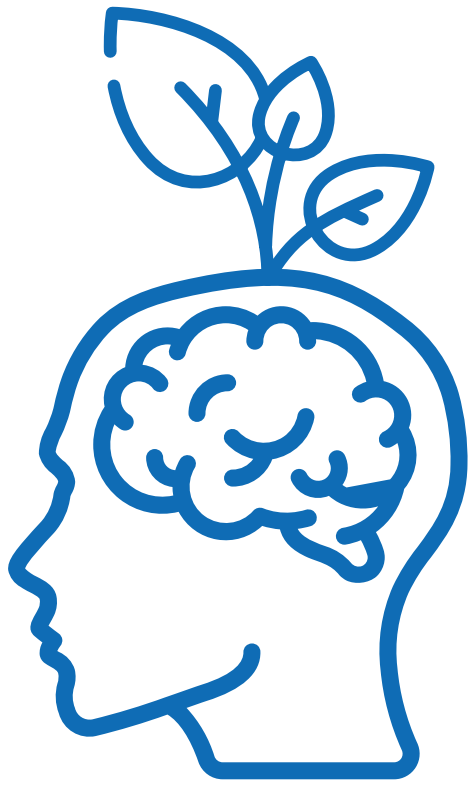
From her earliest memory of riding around Indiana wheat fields with her grandfather to standing in an Oklahoma wheat field alongside her husband and children, the time Alisen has spent between those two harvests has been focused on investing in students, fellow agriculturalists and Farm Bureau members. Alisen’s investment in what matters most – people – comes from her own sense of purpose, which is rooted in her faith.

“We are borrowing our farms, our ranches – everything that we are doing in life – we are borrowing from God,” Alisen said. “We are borrowing this land and these animals from God, and I want to make sure I’m taking care of them as best as I can.

“But also, we are here to take care of his people, and that is very precious and important to me because other people did that for me, and they showed me God’s love, and I want to do the same.” **FB**

Alisen’s term on the AFBF YF&R Committee will wrap up March 2024 after two years of service to Young Farmers & Ranchers around the country.





CULTIVATING HEALTHY MINDS

Farmers and ranchers are no strangers to the trials and tribulations that come with life in the agriculture industry. From natural disasters to unsteady market conditions, their livelihood often depends on factors well beyond their control.

While there are good years and bad years, the bad years over time can cloud the memories – and sometimes the bank accounts – of the good years.

Given these uncertain conditions, it is no wonder that many farmers and ranchers struggle with their mental health and wellbeing. A 2021 study conducted by the American Farm Bureau Federation revealed half of the 2,000 rural adults polled were experiencing more stress and mental health challenges than in 2020, including more than 60% of farmers and farm workers.

The stigma associated with mental health and wellbeing – especially within the agriculture industry – has long been a primary reason many people avoid seeking help. With a do-more mentality, many farmers and ranchers try to outwork their struggles, often to no avail.

While not easy to do, talking about and seeking professional help when feelings of hopelessness and despair set in is crucial.

In the following pages, three Oklahomans share their stories and the importance of mental wellbeing in the agriculture community to better themselves and their farms, ranches and families.

WEBINAR SERIES

Oklahoma Farm Bureau understands the importance of the mental wellbeing of all Oklahomans and is proud to introduce Cultivating Healthy Minds – a brand-new program beginning in August.

Cultivating Healthy Minds is a four-part series connecting Oklahoma's farmers, ranchers and residents with professionals and resources to help them assess mental wellbeing in friends, neighbors and themselves and to address challenges to create positive outcomes for Oklahomans of all walks of life.

Cultivating Healthy Minds features three online webinars in the months of August, September and October along with a final in-person session at the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in November.

Each webinar begins at noon, and all are open to the public. Registration is required, and there is no cost to participate.

For more information on the Cultivating Healthy Minds program, visit okfb.news/CHM23.



FRIDAY, AUGUST 11

Featuring Adrienne DeSutter
Sow Hope, Grow Hope

How to Have the Conversation will focus on the need to discuss mental health in agriculture and rural Oklahoma.



Adrienne DeSutter is part of her husband's fourth generation farm family in midwest Illinois, where they farm corn and soybeans, with a small herd of cattle and a small herd of children. With a master's degree in counseling (and a self-proclaimed Master of Farm Family Chaos), Adrienne recognized a need for mental health advocacy in agriculture and began partnering with ag businesses and organizations to promote healthy minds and prevent farmer suicide.



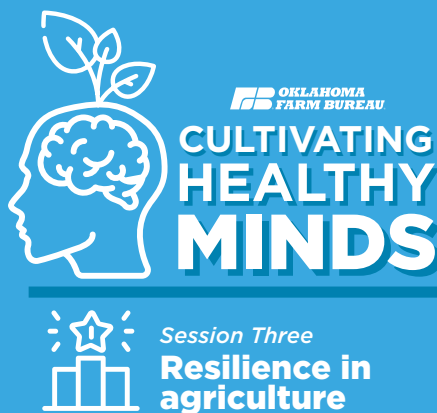
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

Featuring Dr. Christopher Graham
Carl Albert Mental Health Center

This stress management session will focus on strategies to identify and manage mental wellbeing.



Dr. Christopher Graham is a licensed clinical social worker with over 20 years of experience in the mental health field. Dr. Graham currently owns Full Harvest Counseling, where he provides individual, couples and family therapy. In addition, Dr. Graham works for the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, where he provides integrated care training, crisis intervention and program development services.



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13

Featuring Dr. Shannon Ferrell
Oklahoma State University

The final webinar topic covers how Oklahomans can continue to grow and thrive as an agriculture community.



Dr. Shannon Ferrell is a professor of agricultural economics at Oklahoma State University, where he specializes in agricultural law. He has helped audiences across North America understand the fundamental legal elements of farm business management and farm transition planning, and he has testified before Congress and the Oklahoma legislature on policy issues involving farm transitions and regulatory barriers in the transition process.



"IT IS SO IMPORTANT FOR FARMERS AND RANCHERS

to recognize that your fellow farmers and ranchers are also experiencing these symptoms from time to time."

KRISTY ARCHULETA

Having people to lean on no matter what walk of life you are on is something that can be often overlooked.

Dr. Kristy Archuleta, a professor in the University of Georgia's financial planning program, licensed marriage and family therapist and certified financial therapist, is a huge proponent of having a strong support system, especially when it comes to farming, ranching and mental wellbeing.

"Oftentimes, we think that financial health, mental health, physical health, spiritual health and whatever health you want to talk about – they are all separate things, but they are all interconnected," Kristy said.

Kristy is no stranger to the farming and ranching way of life. She grew up on a wheat, alfalfa, silage crops and cow/calf operation in northwest Oklahoma.

"It is really obvious when we think about it on a farm or ranch, where we see all of those things interacting all of the time," Kristy said. "We are working with family members every day, which can be really stressful during those intense times. We experience economic pressures and stress that are largely out of our control, and the weather is a great example of one of those stressors.

"When those factors are at play, we are experiencing economic pressure, financial stress and that is going to have an impact on our mental health. We can become depressed, or we can become anxious. Not that it is uncommon, it happens, but when it goes to a certain extent, it can become very problematic."

Just like going to the doctor to fix a broken arm, Kristy said seeking medical attention when experiencing feelings of depression, anxiety or other mental health conditions is the best thing a person can do for their farm, ranch, family and friends.

"It is so important for farmers and ranchers to recognize that your fellow farmers and ranchers are also experiencing these symptoms from time to time," Kristy said. "Whether it is feeling sad and blue, feeling hopeless or feeling anxious, everyone feels that from time to time. That is just part of being human."

However, if the symptoms have been present for more than two weeks, Kristy recommends seeking help. She not only recommends seeing a physician to explore the possibility of medication but also insists on seeking out a clinically trained therapist, as she believes the combination of the two is most effective.

"Farmers, like many other professionals, are passionate about what they do," Kristy said. "A lot of times they think if they are experiencing financial hardship they can just work harder to get better, or the other extreme can be them giving up. Neither one of those are good options.

"In the farming community, we tend to expect for others – therefore we expect for ourselves – to work harder, to do more, to take on more to make it work."

Kristy said this could cause farmers and ranchers to end up in an even worse financial, familial or mental wellbeing situation and instead stresses the importance of recognizing when it is time to seek help. Though seeking help often means seeing a medical professional, financial professionals also play an important role in a person's mental wellbeing support team.

A relatively new profession, financial therapy is a great avenue for farmers and ranchers to seek because they are proficient in connecting peoples' mental, emotional and cognitive health around money.

"If you think of your family farm as a business, you have a professional team of people helping you," Kristy said. "Hopefully, you are seeking help from someone for financial issues, which means someone who is not your tax professional. Someone who can evaluate and look at your whole business, and they can help give you business advice.

"A mental health professional should be a part of your team along with others. All of these different professionals do not really know what the other does. It is important to have all of them on your team and work together with them in coordination."

While it sometimes is not easy to access a mental health professional, Kristy encourages people to utilize technology when applicable. One just needs connection to internet or a phone with cellular data to talk to a therapist, making it easier than ever to access help.

Kristy knows there is a stigma around mental wellbeing, and she works each and every day to break down those barriers for people to feel more accepting of overcoming the challenges they are facing.

Incorporating mental wellbeing into a part of the farm and ranch health is paramount to ensuring it can be passed on for generations.

"Your family and your community will support you when you seek help," Kristy said. "Mental health is something we have never talked about, ever. It is time we talked about it."

DILLON JOHNSON

As much as one can plan for in life, twists and turns often appear in the path leading to the destination.

One Ottawa County Farm Bureau member planned a direction for his life, but a global pandemic quickly derailed his plans.

Dillon Johnson was working as a legislative assistant in Washington, D.C., before the pandemic sent him back to his family's farm and ranch outside of Afton to continue his work from home.

After coming home, Dillon soon came to the realization that the prestigious graduate program at the University of Cambridge he had been recently accepted into would be virtual for the fall 2020 semester – if not his entire time at the university – and suddenly had a hard choice to make. Because he was both working from home and helping out his dad on the farm and ranch, Dillon made the decision to transition to farming full time.

“After I got back to the farm and the honeymoon phase wore off in the first couple months of being back, I realized I had the next several years planned out, and it had taken a complete 180-degree turn,” Dillon said. “I found myself back farming, which I knew I wanted to do some day, but I did not think I would be doing it in my 20s.”

The new way of life Dillon found himself in quickly started to weigh on him as the plans he had been dreaming of for so long were now in the rearview mirror. Feelings of sadness turned into deeper feelings of depression, making it hard to get out of bed most days.

“Whenever I realized that these feelings of depression were not going to go away on their own, I thought to myself – what do people do when they are depressed?” Dillon said. “They go talk to a therapist. I looked into seeing one but quickly realized the closest clinical psychologist would either be in Joplin, Missouri, or Tulsa, which both can be an hour or more drive each way.”

Driving several hours a week to see a therapist while trying to help manage the family's wheat, soybean, corn and cattle operation was not going to work out for Dillon, so he turned to other means to overcome his feelings.

“I opened up to my family because it was the most important,” Dillon said. “Having to go to my dad, who is also my boss, and say I am really struggling was difficult.”

Like many people, opening up and admitting he was in

distress was one of the hardest parts of his mental health journey. He confided in those who mean the most to him and over time continued to share his story with more of his family and friends.

“After doing some research on the internet, the first thing I did after talking to my family was I got a notebook and started a gratitude journal,” Dillon said, recounting the beginning of his journey. “One of the first things I wrote was three things I am thankful for, and I still have this in my office.”

“These things are the good things in my life. Anyone who has dealt with depression knows when you are in the middle of it, it feels like there are no good things in your life despite knowing you are lucky in a lot of ways. I am fortunate to have a lot of things, but it is hard to see that when are in the middle of it all.”

In addition to journaling and talking with family and friends, Dillon also takes the time to care for his body by exercising. While the road to recovery has not been a quick or easy process, Dillon continues to feel more like himself every day.

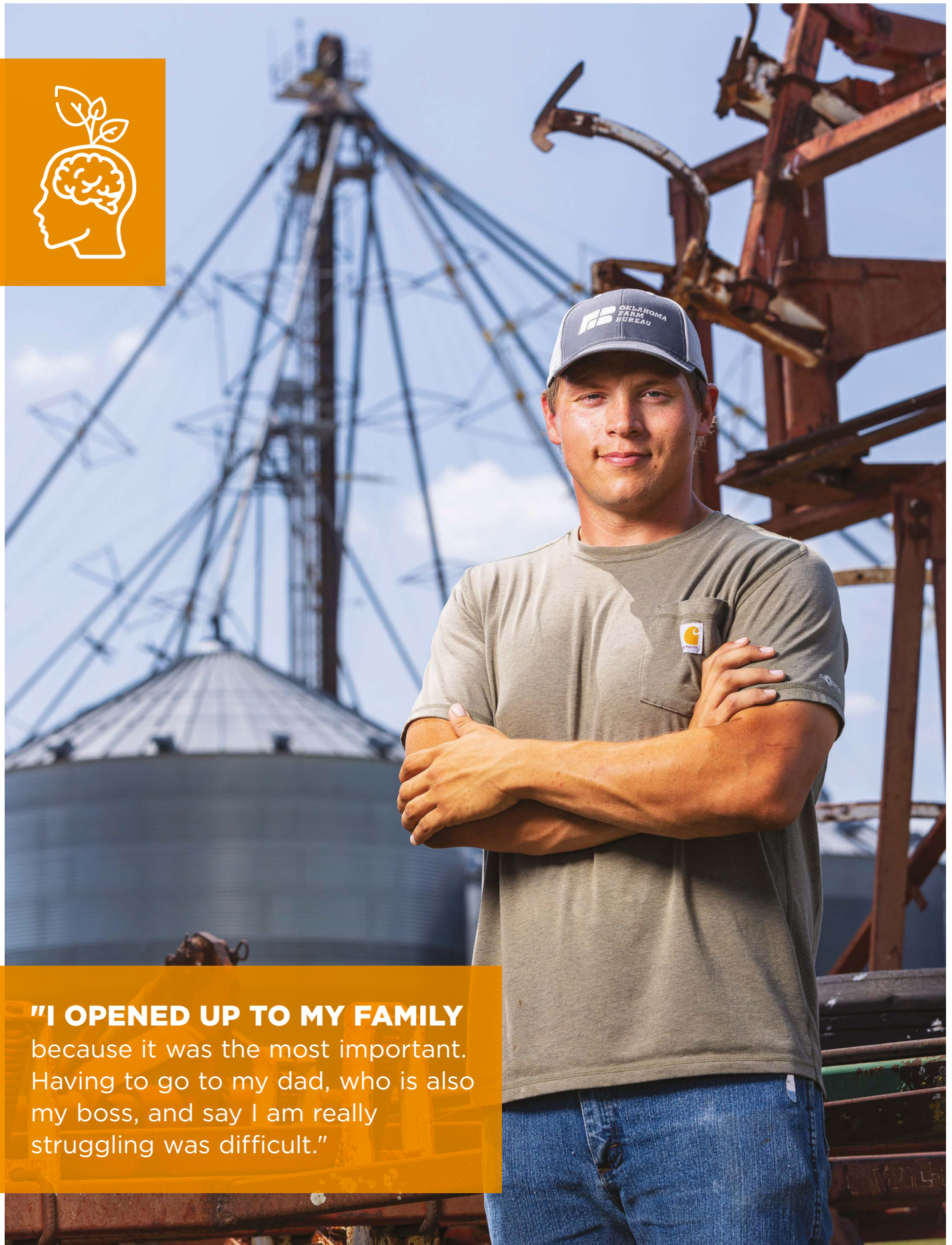
“This may not work for everyone, but I started meditating,” Dillon said. “I never thought it would be something I would be into, but the mindfulness helped me to put the voices in my head into perspective, control them and reframe that.”

Dillon first shared his struggles with his family and closest friends but now feels like he can be more open with others.

“I wish I would have talked to someone sooner, and when I talk to friends, they share the same sentiment,” Dillon said. “When you deal with it alone for so long, those thoughts of – ‘this is never going to get better’ or ‘I cannot handle this’ – are not going to go away by themselves. I am not saying you have to scream it from the corner of the street but find the most trusted person in your life.”

While Dillon did not envision himself back on the family farm at this stage in his life, he continues to care for his mental wellbeing every day.

“I think there is strength in being aware and acknowledging that I have this under control,” Dillon said. “I know that is still there, but there is power in having power over the depression.”



"I OPENED UP TO MY FAMILY

because it was the most important. Having to go to my dad, who is also my boss, and say I am really struggling was difficult."



**"WHEN I REALIZED
I NEEDED OUTSIDE HELP,**
it did not come in one flash – it
is a gradual thing that happens,
at least it was for me."

TERRY PEDERSON

Reflections in windows tend to distort the view on the inside, and while people may think they know what is on the opposite side of the glass, their view is often skewed.

To some, lifelong farmer, rancher and teacher Terry Pederson seems to have it all together.

"I discovered those were my first two loves – teaching and agriculture," she said of her life in Burlington.

Along with her and her husband's wheat, alfalfa, silage crops and cow/calf operation, Terry taught in local schools around Burlington for more than 22 years. After each long day of instruction, Terry would return to her house and seclude herself in a dark room to unwind from the day.

"It got to the point where I was depending on that more and more, and it took me years to realize that I was avoiding issues, and that was not going to solve the issues," she said. "I put off seeing a doctor for a long time because I felt 'you are stronger than that Terry. You do not need help, you can push through.' No, I could not. It took me a while to understand that."

From the outside, Terry has a successful career, farm and family, but on the inside, she was feeling something much deeper.

"I kept putting going to the doctor off because I did not want to admit that I was depressed," she said. "In and around Burlington, there are not a lot of counselors to see. I finally gave in and went to my doctor, and she immediately got me on some medication. The first kind did not work, so it was a long path to find the right medication. We have found it – it took over a year."

For some people, her doctor said finding the right medication for depression can take much longer than it did for Terry.

Recognizing the internal battle with depression would not go away on its own took a tremendous amount of courage for Terry as it often does for those struggling with mental wellness.

"When I realized I needed outside help, it did not come in one flash – it is a gradual thing that happens, at least it was for me," she said.

Medication has significantly helped Terry get closer to feeling herself again, but just like solving math equations, there can be more than one way to get to the solution.

"I am not fully back to myself yet, but I am seeing a counselor – a licensed marriage and family therapist," she

said of another outlet in managing her depression. "He has done wonders for me. I would encourage anyone who is dealing with depression to go to counseling."

Having the difficult conversations with someone trustworthy has made the long drive to see her therapist well worth it for her. Terry encourages everyone to seek professional help and to have the important conversations with those closest to them.

"In your journey, you may find yourself sometimes wondering if all of this is doing any good," Terry said. "You need to keep on the path your therapist is guiding you. You may find it takes a while. For me, it has been a year before I realized I was making progress, but it was not fast enough for me. In rural areas, you are limited to what you have available. It will be worth your time and effort to seek out those that are available to help you to be back to yourself again."

Even though Terry is getting closer to feeling herself again, she continues to see her therapist to be better for not only herself but also her family and friends. In some of her darkest times, Terry felt like she could not share what she was feeling with those closest around her because of the stigma around mental wellbeing.

"We should not be quiet about our journey," she said. "We need to share it because people – just like us – do not want to talk about it because it has always been 'hush-hush.' We do not need to do that anymore; we need to get our stories out. It is nothing to be ashamed of."

Terry is beginning to feel more comfortable sharing her story openly with others and always encourages them to seek help if they are experiencing the same feelings she was.

"We should not be ashamed of this because most people will become depressed at some point," Terry said. "It may be one event in their life that triggers it, or it might be a series of things. Do not feel like you are crazy because you are not – you have lots of company."

Terry's reflection is becoming less distorted as she continues to overcome her depression and continues to encourage others to do the same thing.

"I really encourage everyone to seek the help," Terry said. "You have to know yourself and not be afraid of what you have. The sooner you get it done, the easier it is to get out."

Innovation through stewardship

Jimmy Smith, Beckham County Farm Bureau member and third generation farmer, carries on the legacy of conservation as a cotton producer in western Oklahoma and receives the Sand County Foundation Oklahoma Leopold Conservation Award.

As the first stewards of our natural resources, farmers and ranchers have long been at the forefront of protecting one of the most crucial elements of their operations – the land. Beckham County Farm Bureau members Jimmy and Cathy Smith and their children, Calli and Spencer, have continued the family tradition of planting a rye cover crop for more than 60 years while transitioning their farming methods to no-till in 2010. The Smiths' stewardship-first mindset led the family to be recognized as the Sand County Foundation Oklahoma Leopold Conservation Award recipients in 2022.

Jimmy is the fourth generation to work the land on his family farm, which was started by his great-grandfather in 1913 in Elk City. Jimmy and his son, Spencer, work together to plant and harvest cotton and rye on the Smith Family Farm, which has grown to roughly 2,000 acres. Although Jimmy has long since improved the conservation practices

on his farm, he was not the first in his family to realize the importance of soil health.

His great-grandfather was the first to use cover crops in their early days of cotton production following the Dust Bowl years in Oklahoma.

While land stewardship and conservation practices are important, they bring their own set of unique challenges. Conventional tillage farming terminates weeds with tillage equipment but can often lead to greater soil erosion and eventually diminish the organic matter and overall soil health. Herbicide application has become a necessary addition for the Smith family after switching from conventional till. As a steward of Oklahoma's natural resources, Jimmy is quick to say he sprays the needed amount in only the most ideal weather conditions.

In an area of Oklahoma where the soil is drier and rain is less frequent compared to the rest of the state, water



Spencer (left), Jimmy, Cathy and Calli Smith are proud recipients of the Sand County Foundation Leopold Conservation Award as cotton farmers in western Oklahoma.

Story by Krista Carroll | Photos by Dustin Mielke

retention in the soil is their greatest priority.

"When we start planting, we are always chasing moisture," Spencer said. "Any bit of shade that we can have to gain a few days is more valuable than anything."

Using cover crops and no-till farming has increased the water retention rate within their soil compared to surrounding farms that do not use the same conservation practices, Jimmy said. Rainwater runoff has decreased dramatically and more of the rain soaks into the soil because of no-till farming and planting cover crops, he added.

"If we didn't plant cover crops we couldn't plant cotton year after year in the same places," Jimmy said.

In a state where the wind comes right behind the rain, wind erosion is a problem for conventional-tillage farmers, but cover crops help to keep the soil in place even in high-wind conditions, Jimmy said.

"We get a lot of wind out here," Jimmy said. "When the cover crop is there, it creates a barrier so the wind cannot hit the cotton stalk. Back in the day when we were conventional till, a windstorm would destroy the cotton and there would be no leaves left."

The Leopold Conservation Award was awarded to the Smith family in 2022, and Jimmy said the family is proud to be recognized for their conservation efforts. After looking through the list of past recipients, Jimmy realized that not many cotton farmers have received the award, which only adds honor to be selected.

Jimmy credits some of his success as a no-till cotton farmer to his involvement with the Beckham County Natural Resources Conservation Service board. He has been able to learn from farmers across the area to enhance his conservation methods. Jimmy and Spencer also host field days at their farm to educate others on their no-till

operation through their county NRCS board. The field days allow them to teach others about their operation, and the family learns how to better serve as farmers and conservationists.

As no-till cotton farmers, the Smiths realized how the remaining cotton stalks from the previous year's crop caused damage to the planter tires the following season during planting. Jimmy worked with other local farmers to create 4Ag – a company that builds sturdier planter tires that outlast the original rubber tires that manufacturers install. These new polymer-based tires withstand the cotton stems better than the traditional rubber tire.

"We were having to replace our tires every single year, which is a horrible thing to have to do," Jimmy said.


With 4Ag's plastic-based tires, the wear and tear upon the planter tires is minimal when compared to traditional planter wheels.

Innovation often includes challenges that can lead to even greater innovation. For the Smith family, that truly is the case. In southwest Oklahoma, the hot summer sun combined with dry, sandy soil, shallowly planted cotton seeds and the smooth surface of the soil caused the ground to form a thick top crust where the cotton was planted. This challenge led to the Smith family developing a planter closing wheel that covers the seed trench well but leaves the surface of the ground slightly roughed up – helping decrease the likelihood of the soil hardening after planting is complete.

The Smith family has seen the improvement of their farmland firsthand, but that is not to say the process is quick or easy. Nearly five years ago the Smiths bought a farm that had been farmed using conventional tillage, and the difference between their no-till property and the new purchase was distinct.

"It takes about four years farming how we farm to see the benefits of what we do," Spencer said. "You have to build up the organic matter and that takes time."

Although the change is not quick, the benefits to the soil health serve as a reminder that conservation-focused farming is a long term benefit, Jimmy said.

"The change doesn't happen overnight," Jimmy said. "It takes time." 





4Ag Manufacturing produces sturdier and more cost-effective planter tires.

BUILDING A B

Arapaho-Butler student Katie Edelen writes mock legislation at Oklahoma Capitol Camp to make Oklahoma a safer state for all citizens.

Story by Krista Carroll | Photos by Dustin Mielke

When Arapaho-Butler high school student Katie Edelen signed up to attend the 2022 Oklahoma Farm Bureau Capitol Camp, she was not sure what to expect from the two-day event. Ten months after she and more than 60 fellow students crafted and proposed mock legislation at the camp, a bill inspired by Edelen's Capitol Camp legislation was signed into law in the state of Oklahoma.

The bill Edelen authored at Capitol Camp aimed to create a system that would notify residents who live within a 40-mile radius of a prison in the event an inmate escapes. This "orange alert" bill was carried during the 2023 Oklahoma legislative session by Rep. Anthony Moore from Clinton.

The inspiration behind this bill came from a traumatic experience Katie's aunt faced when two escaped convicts broke into her home and kidnapped her. Although the inspiration came from a difficult time — which Edelen's aunt survived — the passage of this bill will serve as a benefit to all Oklahomans and their safety, Moore said.

"My mom and I were talking, and she helped me come up with the idea and about the alert," Edelen said. "The inspiration was my aunt Jamie's story and how she was kidnapped because inmates escaped, and she didn't know about it. I wrote it because of her."

Moore, who carried the bill this session, said it is important to propose legislation that positively influences at least one Oklahoman,

and even more importantly, to advocate for ideas that come directly from constituents.

"Any time you have ideas from constituents, they're really important because you know that's coming from someone who is in the thick of something," Moore said. "People don't call and ask for changes or new legislation about something they do not care about. You know they are passionate about it."

Edelen's grandmother was the first to reach out to Moore about the bill her granddaughter created at Capitol Camp. Upon reading the legislation, Moore knew he needed to carry the bill during the 2023 session.

"Knowing who created the bill was even more important to me because I have a relationship with them," Moore said. "When I read the bill, I thought it was a great idea and was like 'why isn't this law already?'"

As the legislative session progressed, Edelen and her parents continued to receive updates about the status of the bill, and eventually learned the bill was signed by Gov. Kevin Stitt near the end of session.

"It was awesome," Edelen said of her idea becoming law. "I did not think that was going to happen. I just thought I was going to go to this camp for a couple days and that would be it. Throughout the school year I just kept getting updates about it and then I was like 'this is actually going to happen.'"

Edelen plans to attend Northern Oklahoma College in Enid in the fall and plans to one day be an elementary

school teacher in Oklahoma. Although she sparked the idea that created a powerful piece of legislation for Oklahomans this year, Edelen is quick to turn the spotlight to the person who inspired her to create a change that will benefit all Oklahomans.


"I like to talk about my aunt's story," Edelen said. "It's not about me — it's really about helping people and telling my aunt Jamie's story."

After attending Capitol Camp, Edelen said she better understands how the legislative process works and how the little details flow in the process.

Although most of the students who attend Capitol Camp are not able to vote yet, they still have an important role in ensuring their voices are heard at the capitol, Moore said.

"I tell people all the time we represent around 39,000 people each and a lot of those people are kids that can't vote, but are still part of that 39,000," Moore said. "I think it's important for kids to know their voice matters, and their elected officials want to hear from them. We want Oklahoma to be something they can be proud of and while they can't vote yet, they still are an important piece of the puzzle."

As for the students attending Capitol Camp this year, Edelen encourages them to write bills they care about and mean something to them.

"No idea is a bad idea," Edelen said. "Good things don't happen overnight. You just have to have trust and faith in the process." 

BILL

Farm Bureau Capitol



"I think it's important for kids to know their voice matters, and their elected officials want to hear from them." — Rep. Anthony Moore

2023 Oklahoma county Farm Bureau annual meeting dates

Make plans to attend your county annual meeting
this year to provide your input on Oklahoma Farm
Bureau policies and advocacy goals

Adair County Farm Bureau

Sept. 16 at 6 p.m.

Adair County Farm Bureau
Stilwell, OK

Caddo County Farm Bureau

Sept. 16 at 6:30 p.m.

Caddo Hill Community Building
Fort Cobb Lake, Fort Cobb, OK

Alfalfa County Farm Bureau

Oct. 2 at 6 p.m.

Alfalfa County Fairgrounds, Exhibit
Building, Cherokee, OK

Canadian County Farm Bureau

Oct. 2 at 6 p.m.

Canadian County Fairgrounds,
Education Building, El Reno, OK

Atoka County Farm Bureau

Oct. 3 at 6:30 p.m.

Choctaw Community Meeting
Room, Atoka, OK

Carter County Farm Bureau

Oct. 6 at 5:30 p.m.

American Nation Bank Operation
Center, Ardmore, OK

Beaver County Farm Bureau

Oct. 3 at 6:30 p.m.

Beaver County Fairgrounds
Beaver, OK

Cherokee County Farm Bureau

Sept. 12 at 6 p.m.

Tahlequah Community Building
Tahlequah, OK

Beckham County Farm Bureau

Sept. 21 at 6:30 p.m.

Broadway Center
Sayre, OK

Choctaw County Farm Bureau

Oct. 2 at 6 p.m.

Kiamichi Technology Center
Hugo, OK

Blaine County Farm Bureau

Sept. 18 at 6:30 p.m.

General Store - Roman Nose Park
Watonga, OK

Cimarron County Farm Bureau

Sept. 13 at 7 p.m.

Senior Citizens Building
Boise City, OK

Bryan County Farm Bureau

Oct. 11 at 2 p.m.

Bryan County Farm Bureau
Durant, OK

Cleveland County Farm Bureau

Sept. 19 at 7 p.m.

Eastlake Church
Oklahoma City, OK

Every year, local Farm Bureau members in all 77 Oklahoma counties gather for food, fun and fellowship to celebrate a year of accomplishment during their county Farm Bureau annual meeting.

County Farm Bureau annual meetings are an opportunity for members to learn about the events and activities their local Farm Bureau hosted and participated in during the year in support of Oklahoma agriculture and rural communities.

In addition to Farm Bureau members, county organizations often invite local elected officials, 4-H and FFA members, and other local guests to provide Farm Bureau members with an update or to participate in the meeting.

As with many rural Oklahoma gatherings, a meal is usually provided, giving members an opportunity to gather around the table and catch up with friends and neighbors while meeting new Farm Bureau members.

Each county Farm Bureau board of directors creates a unique annual meeting agenda that fits their county's activities. The meetings often include updates about the advocacy, outreach, education and promotion activities local members undertook throughout the year. County Farm Bureaus also elect officers and vote on potential new resolution items to be voted on at the statewide resolutions meeting. Some counties invite guest speakers to share with members information about local events, community activities or even statewide advocacy updates.

If you have never attended your County Farm Bureau annual meeting, be sure to check out the following list of all 77 county Farm Bureau meeting dates or contact your county Farm Bureau office for annual meeting details.

Coal County Farm Bureau

Oct. 11 at 11 a.m.

Coalgate Methodist Fellowship Hall
Coalgate, OK

Dewey County Farm Bureau

Sept. 21 at 6 p.m.

Taloga Fair Barn
Taloga, OK

Harper County Farm Bureau

Sept. 7 at 12 p.m.

Harper County Farm Bureau
Buffalo, OK

Comanche County Farm Bureau

Sept. 26 at 6 p.m.

Great Plains Coliseum Annex
Lawton, OK

Ellis County Farm Bureau

Sept. 19 at 6 p.m.

First Baptist Church
Arnett, OK

Harmon County Farm Bureau

Sept. 11 at 6 p.m.

Harmon County Farm Bureau
Hollis, OK

Cotton County Farm Bureau

Sept. 21 at 6 p.m.

Cotton County Farm Bureau
Walters, OK

Garfield County Farm Bureau

Oct. 2 at 6:30 p.m.

Chisholm Trail Expo Center
Pavilion, Enid, OK

Haskell County Farm Bureau

Sept. 28 at 6 p.m.

Haskell County Farm Bureau
Stigler, OK

Craig County Farm Bureau

Oct. 3 at 6 p.m.

Piguet's Prime Time
Vinita, OK

Garvin County Farm Bureau

Sept. 28 at 11:30 a.m.

Garvin County Farm Bureau
Pauls Valley, OK

Hughes County Farm Bureau

Sept. 14 at 6:30 p.m.

Hughes County Expo Center
Holdenville, OK

Creek County Farm Bureau

Sept. 14 at 6 p.m.

Oklahoma Venue 66
Bristow, OK

Grady County Farm Bureau

Sept. 12 at 6 p.m.

Grady County Fairgrounds
Chickasha, OK

Jackson County Farm Bureau

Sept. 5 at 6 p.m.

Southwest Technology Center
Altus, OK

Custer County Farm Bureau

Sept. 14 at 6 p.m.

Custer County Fairgrounds
Clinton, OK

Grant County Farm Bureau

Sept. 19 at 6 p.m.

St. Mary's Parish Hall
Medford, OK

Jefferson County Farm Bureau

Oct. 10 at 7 p.m.

Circle D Cafe
Waurika, OK

Delaware County Farm Bureau

Sept. 12 at 12:30 p.m.

Delaware County Farm Bureau
Jay, OK

Greer County Farm Bureau

Sept. 20 at 1 p.m.

Greer County Farm Bureau
Mangum, OK

Johnston County Farm Bureau

Sept. 21 at 6 p.m.

Johnston County Farm Bureau
Tishomingo, OK

Kay County Farm Bureau**Oct. 12 at 6 p.m.**

The Kay Room
Blackwell, OK

Love County Farm Bureau**Sept. 23 at 6:30 p.m.**

Marietta School Cafeteria
Marietta, OK

Murray County Farm Bureau**Oct. 12 at 11 a.m.**

Murray County Farm Bureau
Davis, OK

Kingfisher County Farm Bureau**Oct. 2 at 6 p.m.**

Saints Peter and Paul Catholic
Church, Kingfisher, OK

McClain County Farm Bureau**Oct. 2 at 6:30 p.m.**

McClain County Expo Center
Purcell, OK

Muskogee County Farm Bureau**Sept. 16 at 6:30 p.m.**

Muskogee County Farm Bureau
Muskogee, OK

Kiowa County Farm Bureau**Sept. 14 at 6 p.m.**

Kiowa County Farm Bureau
Hobart, OK

McCurtain County Farm Bureau**Oct. 16 at 7 p.m.**

Kiamichi Technology Center
Idabel, OK

Noble County Farm Bureau**Oct. 9 at 6:30 p.m.**

Noble County Fairgrounds,
Women's Building, Perry, OK

Latimer County Farm Bureau**Sept. 14 at 6:30 p.m.**

Latimer County Farm Bureau
Wilburton, OK

McIntosh County Farm Bureau**Sept. 21 at 6:30 p.m.**

Checotah Community Center
Checotah, OK

Nowata County Farm Bureau**Sept. 26 at 6:30 p.m.**

Nowata County Fairgrounds
Nowata, OK

LeFlore County Farm Bureau**Oct. 2 at 6 p.m.**

Dale Cox Community Center
Poteau, OK

Major County Farm Bureau**Sept. 5 at 6:30 p.m.**

Location to be determined

Okfuskee County Farm Bureau**Sept. 19 at 6 p.m.**

Okfuskee County Fair Barn
Okemah, OK

Lincoln County Farm Bureau**Oct. 10 at 7:30 p.m.**

Lincoln County Farm Bureau
Chandler, OK

Marshall County Farm Bureau**Sept. 13 at 11 a.m.**

Marshall County Farm Bureau
Madill, OK

Oklahoma County Farm Bureau**Oct. 2 at 6 p.m.**

OSU Extension Center
Oklahoma City, OK

Logan County Farm Bureau**Sept. 18 at 6:30 p.m.**

Logan County Farm Bureau
Guthrie, OK

Mayes County Farm Bureau**Sept. 21 at 7 p.m.**

Mayes County Farm Bureau
Pryor, OK

Okmulgee County Farm Bureau**Sept. 25 at 7 p.m.**

Green Country Technology Center
Okmulgee, OK

2023 Oklahoma county Farm Bureau annual meeting dates

Osage County Farm Bureau**Oct. 3 at 6 p.m.**Osage County Farm Bureau
Hominy, OK**Pushmataha County Farm
Bureau****Sept. 15 at 7 p.m.**

First Baptist Church, Antlers, OK

Tillman County Farm Bureau**Sept. 18 at 7 p.m.**BancFirst Convention Center
Frederick, OK**Ottawa County Farm Bureau****Sept. 21 at 6 p.m.**Ottawa County Farm Bureau
Miami, OK**Roger Mills County Farm
Bureau****Oct. 5 at 6:30 p.m.**

Methodist Church, Cheyenne, OK

Tulsa County Farm Bureau**Oct. 2 at 7:30 p.m.**Tulsa County Farm Bureau
Tulsa, OK**Pawnee County Farm Bureau****Sept. 15 at 11:30 a.m.**Pawnee County Farm Bureau
Pawnee, OK**Rogers County Farm Bureau****Sept. 26 at 6:30 p.m.**Claremore Conference Center
Claremore, OK**Wagoner County Farm Bureau****Sept. 28 at 6:30 p.m.**Assembly of God Church
Coweta, OK**Payne County Farm Bureau****Sept. 14 at 6 p.m.**Payne County Expo Community
Building, Stillwater, OK**Seminole County Farm Bureau****Sept. 21 at 6:30 p.m.**Church of Christ
Seminole, OK**Washington County Farm
Bureau****Sept. 19 at 6 p.m.**

County Fairgrounds, Dewey, OK

Pittsburg County Farm Bureau**Sept. 13 at 10 a.m.**Pittsburg County Farm Bureau
McAlester, OK**Sequoyah County Farm Bureau****Sept. 21 at 12 p.m.**Sequoyah County Farm Bureau
Sallisaw, OK**Washita County Farm Bureau****Sept. 7 at 6 p.m.**Washita County Farm Bureau
Cordell, OK**Pontotoc County Farm Bureau****Sept. 26 at 6 p.m.**Agri-Plex Building
Ada, OK**Stephens County Farm Bureau****Sept. 28 at 6 p.m.**Stephens County Fairgrounds
Duncan, OK**Woods County Farm Bureau****Sept. 18 at 6 p.m.**Zion Lutheran Church
Alva, OK**Pottawatomie County Farm
Bureau****Oct. 5 at 6:30 p.m.**

Alumni Building, Tecumseh, OK

Texas County Farm Bureau**Sept. 12 at 6 p.m.**Hunny's BBQ
Guymon, OK**Woodward County Farm
Bureau****Sept. 28 at 6:30 p.m.**

Moose Lodge, Woodward, OK



Cultivating activating *accelerating*



OKFB collaborates with national and state partners to introduce the Oklahoma Grassroots Rural & Ag Business Accelerators rural development program

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members are invested in their local, rural communities. They serve on school boards, participate in local community events, support local businesses and strive to build a vibrant community for generations to come.

OKFB proudly launched the Oklahoma Grassroots Rural & Ag Business Accelerators program in May in an effort to support innovation and economic development in rural Oklahoma, amplifying our members' efforts to advance our local communities.

The Oklahoma Grassroots Rural & Ag Business Accelerators program is a collaborative rural development initiative between OKFB and our national- and state-level partners. The program supports Oklahoma-based innovators creating ideas, technologies and products to drive economic opportunities in rural Oklahoma.

The program has two separate tracks to support rural entrepreneurs developing ideas and products in Oklahoma.

The Cultivate Oklahoma pipeline, powered by our national partner AgLaunch – working with Ag Ventures Alliance, a farmer cooperative that invests in ag tech startups – focuses on innovations and technologies that have an on-farm or production agriculture application to diversify opportunities for farmers with a farmer-focused and farmer-led development program.

The Activate Oklahoma pipeline connects innovative rural Oklahoma businesses with numerous resources and assistance with a curriculum provided by Oklahoma Small Business Development Centers. The Activate Oklahoma track is designed for any rural-based business with an innovation or product that will bring economic opportunities to Oklahoma's rural communities.

Oklahoma-based innovators and businesses can apply to participate in either track. For the 2023 program year, applications closed May 19, and innovators were selected in early June. The successful applicants become part of either

the Cultivate Oklahoma or Activate Oklahoma cohort, depending on which program best suits their innovation. Each track includes a multi-day hybrid development session, which were held in late June at the OKFB home office in Oklahoma City.

After the initial bootcamp sessions for each track, cohort members will continue their development and mentorship in the following months.

When innovators complete the Activate Oklahoma pipeline, they may qualify for an opportunity to pitch their innovation, technology or venture to a collaborative investment committee representing Oklahoma Farm Bureau and Cortado Ventures for a chance to receive equity investment in their enterprise, resulting in official graduation from the program.

Ventures that complete Cultivate Oklahoma have the opportunity to be selected by a panel of Oklahoma farmers and their peers in the farmer network to participate in the AgLaunch365 accelerator.

Innovators who are selected to participate in AgLaunch365 and successfully graduate the program pitch their market-ready concepts to a committee of investment partners who evaluate the pitches and could offer equity investment in ventures that both meet the program's mission and have marketplace viability.

The Oklahoma Rural & Grassroots Accelerators program provides rural Oklahoma innovators and businesses with opportunities to develop their ideas and grow their ventures through product mentorship, business training and tailored resources.

Along with our program partners, OKFB is keeping rural Oklahoma vibrant by helping our state's hometown innovators and businesses thrive as they develop their best ideas and products. Together, we are helping ensure our rural communities are a great place for future generations of Oklahomans to grow.

Learn more about the accelerators program on our website at okfarmbureau.org/accelerator

Comparing program tracks



What is the track focus?

The **Cultivate Oklahoma** pipeline focuses on helping Oklahoma innovators who have ideas and technologies that have an on-farm or production-agriculture-focused implementation to help farmers, ranchers or production agriculture be more efficient, productive and resilient by connecting innovators with a national network of farmers who help test and incubate technologies and innovations.

The **Activate Oklahoma** pipeline is focused on helping companies and innovators in rural Oklahoma bring to life their ideas that will help create a brighter future for our rural communities through fostering innovation, creating better communities and providing job opportunities.

Who should apply?

Innovators and businesses with a product or technology that has an on-farm or production agriculture application.

Applicants must have operations, investment or impact in Oklahoma and must be located in a community with a population of 50,000 or less.

Oklahoma-based innovators and businesses with a product or technology and who are based in rural Oklahoma.

Applicants must have operations, investment or impact in Oklahoma and must be located in a community with a population of 50,000 or less.

What is the pipeline curriculum?

With help from our in-state partners, the Cultivate programming features business basics, product mentorship and a workshop to prepare cohort members to apply for the AgLaunch365 national business accelerator.

The Activate curriculum is an organized pipeline of Oklahoma-centric resources crafted and provided by our in-state program partners that features product mentors and personal mentors.

What investment opportunities exist for participants?

Innovators who are selected to participate in AgLaunch365 and successfully graduate the program pitch their market-ready concepts to a committee of investment partners who evaluate the pitches and could offer equity investment in ventures that both meet the program's mission and have marketplace viability.

Upon completion of the Activate Oklahoma pipeline, successful companies and innovators will qualify to pitch their idea to a collaborative investment committee representing Oklahoma Farm Bureau and Cortado Ventures for an opportunity to receive equity investment from a group of investment partners.

Meet our program partners



*A look inside Oklahoma Farm Bureau's work
at the state Capitol during the 2023 legislative session*

AGRICULTURAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS



The first regular session of the 59th Oklahoma legislature adjourned sine die on Friday, May 26, and the halls of the state Capitol have once again grown quiet.

Throughout the nearly four-month legislative session, Oklahoma Farm Bureau members and staff worked hard to make the voice of rural Oklahoma heard at 23rd and Lincoln. In a session overtaken largely by education funding discussions, OKFB members still saw success in several key agricultural areas.

LANDOWNER ADVOCACY

OKFB was pleased to see the passage of HB 1962 by Rep. Carl Newton and Sen. Darcy Jech. This bill allows persons between the ages of 14-17 who live on or work for a farm in Oklahoma to apply for a farm permit to operate Class D motor vehicles. Teenagers with this special driver's permit will be allowed to drive to and from the farm, drive to conduct farm-related business and drive to school.

Farm Bureau members were quick to take action and encourage their legislators to vote "yes" on HB 2053 by Rep. David Hardin and Sen. Brent Howard in late May when the Senate-amended bill returned to the House and eventually back to the Senate for secondary votes.

HB 2053 clarifies who qualifies as an interested party in a groundwater permit application protest. Those appealing a groundwater permit based solely on the industry or entity applying to use the water are no longer considered an interested party, and such claims would be considered frivolous – opening the protestor up to court sanctions.

OKLAHOMA'S FUTURE

Farm Bureau members placed a high priority on the future of rural Oklahoma and sought increased funding and expansion for the Oklahoma State University College of

Veterinary Medicine and the Oklahoma Emergency Drought Commission this year.

Rep. Kevin Wallace and Sen. Chris Kidd worked to create the Oklahoma State University Veterinary Medicine Authority Act through HB 2863. This would ensure the OSU veterinary medicine program has a dependable source of funding and a more efficient and effective way to carry out its mission and purpose through an authority similar to that of the medical schools at OSU and the University of Oklahoma.

Through HB 2863, the OSU veterinary medicine program will receive \$79 million for capital improvements and a recurring \$14 million for operations. HB 2863 made its way through both chambers but was vetoed by Gov. Kevin Stitt. The veto was overridden by the legislature on May 25.

The Oklahoma Emergency Drought Commission grew as a result of HB 1847 by Rep. John Kane and Sen. Grant Green. This measure adds two new members to the commission – one appointed by the Speaker of the House and one appointed by the Senate President Pro Tempore. The expansion of the commission now permits two commission members to meet and discuss ideas outside of official meetings without violating the Open Meetings Act.

Additionally, the Emergency Drought Commission received \$17 million to address previously unapproved applications as well as \$20 million for future projects.

Farm Bureau members also saw the passage of SB 488 by Sen. Brent Howard and Rep. Kenton Patzkowsky. This measure 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.

MEDICAL MARIJUANA

The beginning of March brought about the race to legalize recreational marijuana through State Question 820, and OKFB members stood adamantly opposed to the measure with specific policy against recreational marijuana. OKFB partnered with other state businesses and entities to form a coalition against SQ 820 and hosted a press conference at the OKFB home office in early March. The state question failed in all 77 counties after the March 7 vote, leaving medical purposes as the only marijuana use legal in the state of Oklahoma.


The state Capitol continued to see medical marijuana legislation throughout the legislative session, including HB 2095 by Rep. Jon Echols and Sen. Lonnie Paxton. HB 2095 authorizes the Oklahoma Medical Marijuana Authority to permanently revoke the license of any medical marijuana business that intentionally fails to 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.

HB 2095 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.

Since the legalization of medical marijuana in 2018, foreign ownership of land has been a top-of-mind concern for Farm Bureau members as the initial lack of regulation on the medical marijuana industry brought a storm of fly-by-night and illegal marijuana activity to rural Oklahoma. OKFB members were pleased to see the passage of SB 212 by Sen. David Bullard and Rep. Justin Humphrey, which will prohibit any non-U.S. citizen from owning land in Oklahoma as an individual or as part of a business entity or trust.

Gov. Kevin Stitt signed SB 913 by Sen. Darcy Jech and Rep. Anthony Moore into law in late April, which will require marijuana growers to submit a \$50,000 bond when applying for a license to cover any cleanup or restoration costs incurred in the case of facility abandonment. SB 913 also allows OMMA to increase the bond amount if they believe potential costs would exceed \$50,000.

With the close of the 2023 legislative session, Farm Bureau members now turn their attention to the upcoming grassroots policy development season to prepare for 2024. County Farm Bureaus across the state will gather throughout the summer and fall to begin discussing legislative priorities and crafting resolutions that have the potential to become future OKFB policy.

For more information about this year's legislative session or the upcoming policy development season, contact the OKFB public policy team at (405) 523-2300. 

To the right is a list of top legislation monitored by Oklahoma Farm Bureau in 2023.

**HB
1456**

SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

Designates State Board of Agriculture as official plant pest and disease control agency

**HB
1847**

SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

Expands Emergency Drought Commission

**HB
1921**

NOT CONSIDERED BY HOUSE

Creates hazard mitigation districts

**HB
1962**

SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

Allows Class D motor vehicle farm permits for persons ages 14-17

**HB
2053**

SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

Clarifies interested parties in groundwater permit protests

**HB
2095**

SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

Modifies medical marijuana licensing and regulation enforcement

**HB
2239**

SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

Creates Terry Peach North Canadian Watershed Restoration Act

**HB
2293**

SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

Creates Oklahoma Flood and Drought Management Task Force

**HB
2863**

VETO OVERRIDDEN

Creates OSU Veterinary Medicine Authority Act

**SB
212**

SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

Prohibits foreign ownership of land

**SB
475**

SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

Expands controlled dangerous substance licensing and registration protocol

**SB
488**

SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

Removes per-bushel limitation on Oklahoma Wheat Commission fees

**SB
913**

SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

Establishes medical marijuana bonds



Providing local, fresh food for co

An Oklahoma County resident recognized a need for a local farmers market near where her office is located, and after mounds of paperwork, grant applications and funding proposals, the dream came to fruition after five years of hard work.

When the Oklahoma County Extension office moved to the northeast side of Oklahoma City, a food desert, county director LaDonna Hines jumped into action to provide a space to purchase local food for the community members.

The Eastside Fresh Market's first season was summer 2022, and this year is the second year for the market. Vendors from across Oklahoma City and the surrounding area bring fresh fruit, vegetables, meat, honey, baked goods and more to the farmers market every Tuesday from April to October.

"Food and nutrition is very important to me, and it is also my passion," LaDonna said. "Being able to provide people an option to shop local

and fresh produce to go home and cook is so important to me, especially in this food desert."

Food deserts are classified as areas with limited access to supermarkets, grocery stores, or other sources of healthy and affordable food.

"We knew we wanted to be able to offer the SNAP and other food assistance benefits to the community members," LaDonna said. "There is a lot of paperwork and requirements that go into being able to offer these benefits and not all farmers markets offer it. We knew we needed to offer it because of the community we are in."

Not only does the farmers market accept federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, but also eligible customers can take part in the Double Up Oklahoma program, which matches dollar for dollar on purchases of fruits and vegetables up to \$20 per visit at the market.

Eligible seniors in the community can also take part in the Seniors

Farmers Market Nutrition Program – providing easier access to fruits, vegetables, honey and herbs.

The market serves as a great outlet for community members to purchase local, fresh food and equips local farmers and ranchers to sell their products directly to consumers.

"This market is also for the local farmers to sell their products," LaDonna said. "Last year, over half our vendors had never sold their products at a farmers market. It great to have a place for them to showcase their products."

The connection the customers create with the producers is a valuable aspect of the farmers market.

"We are in a really cool location because we are in the city and just to our east a bit it gets to be very rural," said Brandi Buys, farmers market manager. "It benefits both sides."

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture awards ten \$500 grants to attendees of the




OKFB Foundation for Agriculture Director Holly Carroll (right) presents Brandi Buys (left) and LaDonna Hines a \$500 farmers market grant for the Eastside Fresh Market.



Oklahoma Local Ag Summit each spring. The grants are to be used to promote a farm or farmers market in a community.

The Eastside Fresh market was selected as one of the recipients this year. LaDonna and Brandi are using the money to place advertisements on a local billboard and provide fliers to those in the community.

Because of the further reach with the additional advertising budget, not only are the vendors going to reap the benefits, but also the community will reap the benefits of having locally grown food in their neighborhood. 

Foundation for Agriculture Farmers Market Grant recipients

Blue Chair Farms
Hulbert

Daffodil Hill Farms
Big Cabin

Eastside Fresh Market
Oklahoma City

Huffman Family Farm
Choctaw

Lawton Farmers Market
Lawton

Oklahoma Heritage Farm
Ramona

Robinson Ranch, LLC
Bixby

Shortline Farms
Welling

Wild Life Ranch and
Garden Collective
Webbers Falls

Wise Choice Beef
Fairland



For more information or to become involved, visit the foundation's website at okfbfoundationforagriculture.org or contact OKFB Director of Membership and Foundation for Agriculture Holly Carroll at (405) 523-2300 or at holly.carroll@okfb.org.

RIVERSPORT Adventure Parks features activity options for all ages to ensure the most fun! To plan your adventure, visit riversportokc.org/adventures.

Travel with Farm Bureau benefits!

With summer upon us, Oklahoma Farm Bureau members can take advantage of the travel member benefits throughout the next few months. Whether you are planning a weekend getaway or beach vacation to Florida — Oklahoma Farm Bureau can help you save!

RIVERSPORT Adventure Parks

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

OKFB members save up to 30% on day passes

Schedule a visit to RIVERSPORT Adventure Parks in Oklahoma City. Members can save up to 30% off when purchasing a day pass. You and your family can try whitewater rafting, flying on the ziplines, attempt the adventure courses and even more during a visit to RIVERSPORT Adventure Parks this summer!

Medicine Park Aquarium & Natural Sciences Center

Medicine Park, Oklahoma

OKFB members receive 10% off admission

Visit the Medicine Park Aquarium and Natural Sciences Center in southwest Oklahoma where you can see over 90 native and non-native fish, reptile, amphibian and mammal species. You can hear more about Oklahoma conservation efforts to preserve important animal and plant species. The Medicine Park Aquarium and Natural Sciences Center also features a six-acre botanical garden you can tour full of native Oklahoma plants and grasses.

Orlando Vacations

Orlando, Florida

OKFB members can save up to 35% on their vacation

If you plan to travel to Orlando, Florida, this summer, being an Oklahoma Farm Bureau member is a benefit for you! Exclusive discounts are available for our members to all major theme parks, vacation homes, hotels and resorts.

Rental car bookings

OKFB members save when booking rental cars

Save up to 35% from different rental car services on your vacation this summer. OKFB members receive discounts from National Car Rental, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Avis Car Rental, Alamo Rent-A-Car and Budget Car Rental.

Hotel stays

OKFB members save on their stays

If you need to book a hotel, an Oklahoma Farm Bureau membership can help you save! OKFB members receive discounts when booking stays with Choice, IHG and Wyndham hotels.

Silver Dollar City

Branson, Missouri

OKFB members receive 10% off admission

Make a stop at Silver Dollar City in Branson or schedule a visit to the Showboat Branson Belle. As an Oklahoma Farm Bureau member, you can save 15% on these Branson attractions on your vacation.

Great Wolf Lodge resorts

Multiple locations

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August Area Meetings

Oklahoma Farm Bureau is deeply rooted in grassroots advocacy, and our August Area Meetings are one of the first steps in the annual policy development process. Gather with fellow farmers, ranchers and rural Oklahomans to share your ideas and concerns at a meeting in your district to develop organizational policy for the upcoming year. In addition, updates about the work of the organization will be shared. For more information, contact your field representative.



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District 1 — West

Aug. 14 at 6 p.m.

Hunny's BBQ
103 N. Main
Guymon, OK 73942

District 1 — East

Aug. 15 at 6 p.m.

Woodward Sale Barn, Rockin' 9 Grill & Deli, 900 Lakeview Drive
Woodward, OK 73801

District 2

Aug. 24 at 6 p.m.

Sentinel Activity Center
21450 State Hwy 55
Sentinel, OK 73664

District 3

Aug. 28 at 6 p.m.

Redlands Community College
1300 S. Country Club Road
El Reno, OK 73036

District 4 — East

Aug. 28 at 6 p.m.

Casa Romo
120 W. Main St.
Ardmore, OK 73401

District 4 — West

Aug. 29 at 6 p.m.

Comanche County Farm Bureau
502 SW 11th St.
Lawton, OK 73501

District 5

Aug. 14 at 6 p.m.

South East Expo Center
4500 West US - 270
McAlester, OK 74501

District 6

Aug. 17 at 6 p.m.

Moore Farm's Event Barn
9353 W. 500 Rd.
Pryor, OK 74361

District 7

Aug. 17 at 6 p.m.

Crosspoint Church
2500 N. Van Buren St.
Enid, OK 73703

District 8

Aug. 15 at 6 p.m.

Odell Farms
17261 US Hwy 177, Byars, OK 74826
(2 miles south of Asher on 177)

District 9

Aug. 24 at 6 p.m.

Creek County Fairgrounds
17808 OK-66
Kellyville, OK 74039

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All Around **Oklahoma**

Farm Bureau news, events and programs from around Oklahoma

County Farm Bureaus partner with OKFB to donate nearly \$20,000 to food assistance programs

Forty-six county Farm Bureaus and four county Women's Leadership Committees across the state along with Oklahoma Farm Bureau donated nearly \$20,000 to food banks, food pantries, meal assistance programs and after school programs in Oklahoma.

The OKFB Community Food Assistance Matching Program, which is in its third year, connects county Farm Bureaus with their communities through donations to local food assistance programs, and OKFB matches up to \$100 for each county donation – doubling the impact of the gift.

County Farm Bureaus that donated to local food banks include Adair, Alfalfa, Atoka, Beaver, Bryan, Caddo, Canadian, Coal, Comanche, Cotton, Craig, Creek, Ellis, Garfield, Grady, Greer, Jackson, Johnston, Kingfisher, Latimer, Leflore, Lincoln, Logan, Marshall, Mayes, McIntosh, Murray, Muskogee, Noble, Nowata, Okfuskee, Oklahoma, Okmulgee, Ottawa, Pawnee, Payne, Pottawatomie, Pushmataha, Rogers, Seminole, Stephens, Texas, Tillman, Washington, Washita and Woodward.

Comanche County WLC, Creek County WLC, Garfield County WLC and Noble County WLC also participated in the matching program.

The program serves as an opportunity for farmers and ranchers to help members of their local communities through the products our state's agriculturalists raise each and every day.

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.

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 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.

OKFB women gather for 2023 WLC Conference

Oklahoma Farm Bureau women from across the state gathered for the annual Women's Leadership Committee Conference April 21-22 at the POSTOAK Lodge in Tulsa.

The more than 90 attendees had the opportunity to attend breakout sessions, complete two community service projects, participate in a silent auction and hear from Lt. Gov. Matt Pinnell's Chief of Staff Kirby Smith and OKFB Executive Director Thad Doye.

Breakout session topics included wills and trusts, dam safety, the WLC Advocacy Program, drought recovery, making life accessible to all Oklahomans, agriculture health and wellness, integrating beef into diets, leadership development and yoga.

Farm Bureau women donated items to be included in the silent auction, which raised more than \$2,600, benefitting the Ronald McDonald House Charities. Members created more than 25 lap blankets for veterans at the Claremore Veterans Center. Additionally, members packed meals to deliver to seniors in their counties.



Tulsa County Farm Bureau women provided snack bags to attendees, welcoming them to Tulsa.

For more information about the Women's Leadership Committee or to set up a committee in your county, contact OKFB Senior Director of Women's Leadership and Safety Marcia Irvin at (405) 523-2300.

OKFB 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 OKFB district and one \$1,000 scholarship to a Collegiate Farm Bureau member.

Ottawa County Farm Bureau member Taylor Fent was 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

County Farm Bureau presidents attend AFBF Advocacy Fly-In

Two Oklahoma Farm Bureau members traveled to Washington, D.C., for the American Farm Bureau Federation Advocacy Fly-In on June 12-13. Daylin Hash from Bryan County and Jake Calvert from Cleveland County learned the importance of serving as a voice for agricultural issues. They also heard updates from AFBF staff about the 2023 farm bill progress and Waters of the United States regulations. On Tuesday, June 13, members visited Capitol Hill to meet with Oklahoma legislators to advocate for agriculture and rural Oklahoma. They met with Sen. Markwayne Mullin, Reps. Frank Lucas and Josh Brecheen and staff members for Reps. Stephanie Bice and Tom Cole.



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 on 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.

Notice of intent to amend the OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU BYLAWS

(Effective November 2017)

Pursuant to the requirements of Article 8, Section 1 and Article 2, Section 4 of the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Bylaws (Effective November 2017), notice is hereby given of the following proposed amendments to the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Bylaws.

Proposed changes to the Oklahoma Farm Bureau bylaws as of October 2022 are indicated below in **bold, underlined type**.

ARTICLE ONE: STRUCTURE

Section I - Affiliation:

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau, Inc. (referenced throughout these bylaws as “OKFB”) is an organization comprised of farm and ranch families and other persons with interest in agriculture who become members concurrently of an affiliated county Farm Bureau **(referenced throughout these bylaws as “county Farm Bureau”)**, OKFB and the American Farm Bureau Federation **(referenced throughout these bylaws as “AFBF”)**. These county, state and national Farm Bureaus are bound together by voluntary cooperative agreements which state the common objectives and the procedures by which the three shall cooperate.

Upon affiliation through the cooperative agreement, county Farm Bureaus of OKFB become affiliated members, and agree to abide by the provisions of these state bylaws and by the bylaws of the AFBF. **County Farm Bureau organizations shall not be required to pay dues or be entitled to vote, but members of county Farm Bureaus shall be required to pay dues and may be entitled to vote, in accordance with these bylaws.** Each county Farm Bureau shall furnish a copy of its bylaws and amendments to those bylaws to OKFB.

No person shall serve as an officer or director of OKFB or a county Farm Bureau who does not qualify as a voting member of OKFB as defined in these bylaws.

The county secretary or president of county Farm Bureaus shall certify with the regular annual report of officers and directors that all directors do in fact qualify as voting members of OKFB.

ARTICLE TWO: MEMBERSHIP

Section I - Qualifications:

Persons engaged in **production agriculture**, including lessees and tenants of land so used, the major portion of whose average gross income is derived from such production, may make application through a county Farm Bureau for voting membership in OKFB, and, if accepted, will upon payment of membership dues be entitled to all rights and privileges of voting membership therein. **In considering the status of an applicant, the county Farm Bureau board of directors shall count as income derived from production agriculture all monies received from sale of agricultural products produced on land owned or operated by the applicant; rental of land used in production agriculture; per diem and expenses paid to the applicant by agricultural organizations and cooperatives; income from minerals or other sources incidental to land held by the applicant for agricultural purposes; and income from pensions, annuities and social security when such were accrued and established by the applicant while engaged in production agriculture.** **OKFB voting memberships shall be on an annual basis.**

For the purpose of these bylaws the term “persons” shall include corporations, partnerships or other legal entities, and when such legal entities are actually engaged in the business of farming or ranching, they may be extended voting membership by county Farm Bureau boards of directors. In such event, the legal entity must designate, as its

NOTES

- » The primary suggested changes to this Section are made for purposes of clarity and consistency for the use throughout the bylaws.
- » These include substitution of “OKFB” for the term “organization” and “state organization”, substitution of “county Farm Bureau” for the term “county unit”, and “AFBF” when referring to the national organization American Farm Bureau Federation.
- » “OKFB Board of Directors” is used to differentiate it from county Farm Bureau boards of directors, and replaces terms such as “board of directors”, “state board” and “state board of directors” as appropriate throughout the bylaws.
- » “County Farm Bureau” is also used to replace “county” and “affiliated county unit” as appropriate throughout these bylaws.
- » Clarify that county Farm Bureau organizations (the entity itself) shall not be required to pay dues or be entitled to vote, but members of county Farm Bureaus shall be required to pay dues and may be entitled to vote, in accordance with these bylaws.
- » Factors in considering the status of an applicant for membership have been moved to the first paragraph from the current fourth paragraph, and language has been modified to be consistent with the change from “Persons engaged in production of farm products” to “Persons engaged in production agriculture”.
- » OKFB voting memberships are on an annual basis.

voting representative, an individual actively engaged in the management and/or operation of the farming or ranching enterprise. **Such a designated voting representative shall not be permitted to cast a vote as a designated voting representative and also a separate vote as an individual member. In no case shall any person be permitted to cast more than one vote per ballot issue.**

Persons, firms, organizations, boards, or associations who do not qualify as voting members may make application for associate membership through a county Farm Bureau. A county Farm Bureau board of directors may accept such as associate members if their activities are related to agriculture and/or if the applicant would, in the considered judgment of that county board of directors, strengthen OKFB. **Such associate members shall not be entitled to vote, but shall be entitled to all other rights of membership** except those denied by these bylaws and such other rights as shall be denied by the rules and regulations of a subsidiary or affiliate organization of OKFB. **Associate memberships shall be on an annual basis.**

It is the responsibility of the county Farm Bureau boards of directors to accept or reject applicants and to properly classify members as voting or associate. Such classifications shall be done annually for its entire membership and shall be kept current for new applicants. **A county Farm Bureau board of directors shall determine a member's source of income using the same criteria as used in consideration of applicants for voting membership in OKFB.** If a county Farm Bureau board of directors is in doubt as to the proper classification of a member, after considering the source of income, the county Farm Bureau board of directors shall then consider whether such member is generally recognized and considered in the community to be a farmer or rancher.

Youth who are interested in agriculture and are in the third grade through twelfth grade may apply to a county Farm Bureau for a youth alliance, which shall be on an annual basis. The dues level for a youth alliance shall be set by the OKFB Board of Directors, with all proceeds being divided equally between OKFB and the county Farm Bureau where the student makes application. A student granted a youth alliance shall not have the right to vote or hold office.

Agriculturally-related associations, businesses and/or corporations, both incorporated and unincorporated, and agriculturally-related cooperatives interested in the preservation, advancement and profitability of agriculture, may make application **to the OKFB Board of Directors** to become an agriculture alliance member. If accepted, the applicant shall upon execution of a membership agreement, be entitled to all the rights and privileges of an agriculture alliance membership. Agriculture alliance members shall not have the right to vote or hold office. Dues for agriculture alliance members shall be set annually by the **OKFB Board of Directors** and shall be payable directly to OKFB. **Agriculture alliance memberships shall be on an annual basis.**

Section II - Dues:

The annual dues for membership in OKFB shall be payable in advance, and may be paid to a county Farm Bureau acting in the capacity of fiduciary agent for OKFB, in counties where there is a county Farm Bureau.

Such county Farm Bureaus shall collect all membership dues at their expense, and shall remit at the close of each calendar month to the treasurer of OKFB the sum collected for OKFB for each member whose dues were collected during such month.

From such membership dues, OKFB shall remit to AFBF such sums as may be required for membership therein.

Effective with the membership year beginning November 1, 1995, the annual dues for membership to be transmitted to OKFB shall be fourteen dollars (\$14.00) plus the amount of dues required to be submitted to AFBF (the minimum amount of dues collected by county Farm Bureaus shall be the amount required by OKFB and AFBF). County Farm Bureaus may, in the manner provided in their county bylaws, raise or lower their county portion of dues, thereby raising or lowering the total amount of annual dues to be collected by said county.

Section III - Meetings:

The regular annual meeting of OKFB members shall be held during the first week in November of each year, or upon such other date within 30 days thereof, as may be determined by the OKFB Board of Directors. OKFB members shall be represented at such meeting by delegates selected pursuant to Section **IX** hereof.

The place of meetings shall be selected by the OKFB Board of Directors.

Special meetings of OKFB members may be called by the president with the consent of a majority of the OKFB Board of Directors; shall be called by two-thirds vote of the duly

» *A designated voting representative of a legal entity shall not be permitted to cast a vote as a representative and also a separate vote as an individual member.*

» *Associate members shall not be entitled to vote.*

» *Associate memberships are on an annual basis.*

» *In its annual classification of memberships a county Farm Bureau board of directors shall determine a member's source of income using the same criteria as used in considering applicants for voting membership.*

» *Use "youth alliance" instead of "student membership," use school grade levels third grade through twelfth grade instead of ages 14-21, and make it clear that dues levels for a youth alliance shall be set by the OKFB Board of Directors, not a county Farm Bureau board of directors.*

» *Proceeds from youth alliance dues shall be divided equally between OKFB and the county Farm Bureau where application is made.*

» *The dues level for an agricultural alliance membership shall be set by the OKFB Board of Directors, not a county Farm Bureau board of directors.*

» *Application for an agricultural alliance membership is made to the OKFB Board of Directors.*

» *Agricultural Alliance memberships are on an annual basis.*

» *Clarify that references to "the board of directors," "the directors" and "the board" all mean the OKFB Board of Directors by substituting OKFB Board of Directors for those terms.*

» *Substitute IX for 9.*

elected OKFB Board of Directors; shall be called by the president upon written request signed by a majority of the current presidents of the county Farm Bureaus; or as may otherwise be provided by law. OKFB members shall be represented at such special meeting by the delegates selected pursuant to Section IX.

In the event of circumstances making the holding of an in-person meeting of OKFB members, the OKFB Board of Directors or any standing or special committee of the OKFB Board of Directors, unlawful, impossible, unwise, impractical, imprudent, inefficient or unreasonably costly, including but not limited to the existence of a public emergency or natural disaster, such a meeting may be conducted by electronic or other remote access means ("remote meeting"). The determination of whether circumstances exist such that a remote meeting is appropriate shall be made by the OKFB Board of Directors. The body meeting remotely shall use reasonable efforts to implement remote meetings with full regard for the need to maintain reasonable accessibility for appropriate participants, including those who lack necessary technology for access. Any action that could be taken at an in-person meeting may also be taken at a remote meeting held pursuant to this clause. Any remote meeting shall be subject to the following provisions: 1) the technology used for a remote meeting shall allow appropriate participants full access to and full participation in all meeting transactions either continuously or intermittently throughout the specified time of the meeting; 2) the body meeting remotely shall implement reasonable measures to authenticate the attendance and vote of each appropriate participant; 3) participation in a remote meeting shall constitute presence for all purposes, including quorum and voting; and 4) procedural rules related to the conduct of remote meetings may be established and promulgated by the OKFB Board of Directors.

» Add "remote meetings" paragraph.

Section IV - Notice:

Notice of meetings of and to OKFB members and of all matters concerning OKFB shall be deemed to have been given 1) by placing notice thereof in writing in the U.S. mail, postage prepaid, to the last known post office address of an OKFB member, at least twenty (20) days prior to such meetings, 2) by sending notice thereof in writing to the last known email address of an OKFB member, as stated in the membership information submitted by the county Farm Bureaus to OKFB, at least twenty (20) days prior to such meetings, or 3) by placing notice thereof in writing in an official publication circulated among and distributed to OKFB members in good standing at least twenty (20) days prior to such meetings.

» Add a provision allowing notice of meeting to OKFB members by email to the last known email address for the OKFB member as stated in the membership information submitted by the county Farm Bureaus to OKFB.

» Clarify that any method of notice must be made at least twenty (20) days prior to the meetings.

Section V - Quorum:

One-third of the total of all delegates to which the county Farm Bureaus are entitled, based on the most recent report of county membership, shall constitute a quorum at any regular or special meeting of OKFB members.

Section VI - Presiding Officer:

The president, if present, shall preside at all meetings of members of OKFB.

In his absence, the next officer in due order who may be present shall preside and that order shall be as follows: vice president, treasurer and secretary.

» Eliminate "president" from the line of presiding order if the president is not present.

Section VII - District Representation:

For the purpose of providing district representation on the OKFB Board of Directors, the state shall be divided into nine districts.

Each district shall be entitled to one director.

Until redistricted, the districts shall be as follows:

District One - District One shall consist of the following counties: Cimarron, Texas, Beaver, Harper, Ellis, Woodward and Dewey.

District Two - District Two shall consist of the following counties: Roger Mills, Custer, Beckham, Washita, Greer, Kiowa, Harmon, Jackson and Tillman.

District Three - District Three shall consist of the following counties: Blaine, Kingfisher, Logan, Caddo, Canadian, Oklahoma and Grady.

District Four - District Four shall consist of the following counties: Comanche, Stephens, Cotton, Jefferson, Murray, Carter, Love, Johnston and Marshall.

District Five - District Five shall consist of the following counties: Atoka, Bryan, Pittsburg, Haskell, Latimer, Pushmataha, Choctaw, McCurtain and LeFlore.

District Six - District Six shall consist of the following counties: Nowata, Sequoyah, Craig, Ottawa, Rogers, Mayes, Delaware, Adair, Cherokee, Wagoner, McIntosh and Muskogee.

District Seven - District Seven shall consist of the following counties: Kay, Noble, Grant, Garfield, Alfalfa, Major and Woods.

District Eight - District Eight shall consist of the following counties: Cleveland, McClain, Garvin, Pottawatomie, Seminole, Pontotoc, Hughes and Coal.

District Nine - District Nine shall consist of the following counties: Osage, Washington, Pawnee, Tulsa, Payne, Creek, Lincoln, Okfuskee and Okmulgee.

Section VIII - Election of Directors and President:

At the annual meeting of OKFB members, directors shall be elected by voting delegates as hereinafter provided, and these directors shall serve from the close of the annual meeting at which the director is elected, until the close of the annual meeting at which his/her successor is chosen or until the election and acceptance of his/her qualified successor.

All elections for directors shall be by ballot, unless otherwise determined, and the voting delegates from each district shall elect the director from that district **by majority vote.**

President. The president shall be elected by a majority vote of the delegate body. The OKFB Board of Directors shall have the privilege of placing before the **delegate body** the first nomination for president, and thereafter any other delegate may place the name of any other eligible OKFB member for the election as president. **The president shall be a voting member of OKFB in good standing, who is an active farmer or rancher (active in production agriculture) and whose principal occupation is farming or ranching. No president may be an employee or independent contractor of OKFB, or an employee or independent contractor of an associated or subsidiary organization of OKFB. Former employees or independent contractors of OKFB or of an associated or subsidiary organization of OKFB shall not be eligible for election as president until three (3) years after termination of employment.**

The person so elected as president shall also automatically become a director- at-large, with all the rights, responsibilities, and privileges of a director. In the event the president so elected is then currently an OKFB director (from a district), that position of director shall automatically become vacant. If such a vacancy on the OKFB Board of Directors is created, it shall be filled immediately in the manner provided in these bylaws.

Section IX - Delegates:

The members of OKFB in each county Farm Bureau shall be represented by voting delegates at all annual or special business meetings of the OKFB members.

The voting delegates from each county Farm Bureau shall consist of the president of the county Farm Bureau **plus one** other voting delegate for each fifty (50) paid-up voting memberships, or major fraction thereof.

No county Farm Bureau may be officially represented at any meeting of OKFB unless its Uniform Cooperative Agreement is currently in full force and effect.

Voting delegates other than the president of the county Farm Bureau shall be elected from and by the voting members in good standing in such county, in connection with the annual meeting of the county Farm Bureau. **Due notice of such annual county Farm Bureau meeting shall be given to members in good standing in such county in accordance with the notice provisions set forth in Section IV of these bylaws.**

Alternates for the voting delegates may be selected by the voting members, or in such manner as such members may authorize.

Prior to the commencement of all annual or special business meetings of the OKFB members, an officer of the county Farm Bureau shall furnish proper credentials **for the voting delegates from that county.**

The president of the county Farm Bureau shall serve as a delegate during **his/her** incumbency, and other voting delegates shall serve until the election and acceptance of their duly qualified successors.

Section X - Qualification of Delegates:

All delegates must be voting OKFB members in good standing.

Section XI - Voting by Delegates:

The voting delegates from each county Farm Bureau shall represent the members of OKFB within such county and shall vote on all matters submitted for vote at the annual meeting or any special meeting of OKFB, subject to Article Two, Section VIII **relating to election of directors.**

Section XII - Expense of Delegates:

All necessary expenses of subsistence and travel incurred by **voting** delegates in attending regular or special meetings of members of OKFB **may** be paid from funds of the county Farm Bureau sending such **voting** delegates.

- » *Change title to "Election of Directors and President."*
- » *The paragraphs in this section have been re-ordered.*
- » *Clarify that the delegates from each district shall elect the director from that district by majority vote.*
- » *Substitute "before the delegate body" for "before the convention" in relation to the placement of the first nomination for president by the OKFB Board of Directors.*
- » *Add qualifications for the president - currently there are none stated. These added qualifications are similar to those stated for Directors in Article Three Section III.*

- » *Some sentences were re-phrased for clarity.*

- » *Add language as to the manner due notice of the annual county meeting must be provided to members by the county Farm Bureau.*

- » *Clarify that prior to the commencement of all annual or special meetings of OKFB members an officer of the county Farm Bureau shall furnish credentials for the voting delegates from that county.*

- » *Add his/her language.*

- » *Change wording of the clause "except as provided in Article Two, Section VII" to "subject to Article Two, Section VIII" - for clarity purposes.*

- » *Change "shall" to "may".*

Section XIII - Privilege of the Floor:

Members of OKFB in good standing shall be entitled to the privileges of the floor, subject to the rules governing procedure.

Section XIV - Determination:

In the event the qualifications or eligibility of any officer, director or delegate should be challenged or questioned, final determination of such eligibility shall rest with the OKFB Board of Directors. Before rendering its decision, the OKFB Board of Directors shall give such notice of hearing to the interested parties as the circumstances may require, shall hear all pertinent evidence presented to it, shall consider the application of the disqualification and qualification provisions of the bylaws; and its decision shall be final. If a member of the OKFB Board of Directors is the person whose eligibility or qualifications are challenged, **he/she** shall retire during the executive consideration of the evidence; and shall abstain from voting thereon.

» Add he/she language.

ARTICLE THREE: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section I - Number and Authority:

The OKFB Board of Directors (referenced throughout these bylaws as "OKFB Board of Directors"), subject to the provisions of the bylaws relating to unfilled vacancies, shall consist of one director from each district, and one director-at-large.

The OKFB Board of Directors shall have general supervision and control of the business and the affairs of OKFB and shall make all rules and regulations consistent with the law and with these bylaws for the management of OKFB and the guidance of the members, officers, employees and agents of OKFB.

The OKFB Board of Directors shall have power to employ or to authorize the employment of an executive director, who may be in active charge of the operations of OKFB, under direction of the OKFB Board of Directors, who shall determine and define **his/her** specific duties and powers and fix **his/her** compensation.

» Add his/her and he/she language.

No OKFB director shall during his/her term as director also simultaneously serve as executive director.

» Clarify that no currently serving OKFB director shall during his/her term also simultaneously serve as executive director.

There shall be one director from each district who shall serve for three (3) years, except as hereinafter provided and until due election and acceptance of **his/her** qualified successor. The director-at-large, who shall be the president, shall serve from the close of the annual meeting at which **he/she** is elected, until the close of the annual meeting at which his/her successor is chosen or until the election and acceptance of **his/her** qualified successor.

By a two-thirds vote, the OKFB Board of Directors, utilizing the overall beliefs in the policy books, may take a position on issues where there is no specific policy. All such positions on issues shall be presented for ratification to the voting delegates at the next annual meeting.

Section II - Terms and Removal:

All directors shall be elected to serve for a term of three (3) years, and until their successors shall have been duly elected and qualified to replace them. Such terms of office shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which the director is elected, until the close of the annual meeting at which his/her successor is chosen, or until the election and acceptance of his/her qualified successor. In addition, a director-at-large shall be elected in the manner provided in **Section VIII of Article Two** of these bylaws.

» Change title from "Election" to "Terms and Removal."

» Eliminate historical procedure language that is no longer needed.

An OKFB director shall be eligible to serve three (3) consecutive three-year terms, with at least a one term layoff between service. **In the event an OKFB director acts negligently or improperly in the performance of his/her duties, or does not act in accordance with a good faith, reasonable belief that his/her actions in the performance of his/her duties were in the best interests of OKFB, or for other good cause, an OKFB director may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the duly elected OKFB Board of Directors.**

» Replace "Section I of Article III" with "Section VIII of Article Two" - this is so that the correct portion of the bylaws is referenced.

» Add procedure for removal of an OKFB director or the OKFB President by a two-thirds vote of the OKFB Board of Directors, in the event an OKFB director or the OKFB President acts negligently or improperly in the performance of his/her duties, or does not act in accordance with a good faith, reasonable belief that his/her actions in the performance of his/her duties were in the best interests of OKFB, or for other good cause.

Presidents of OKFB are eligible to serve only four (4) two-year terms in succession. **In the event a president of OKFB acts negligently or improperly in the performance of his/her duties, or does not act in accordance with a good faith, reasonable belief that his/her actions in the performance of his/her duties were in the best interests of OKFB, or for other good cause, a president may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the duly elected OKFB Board of Directors.**

Section III - Qualification:

The directors must be voting members of OKFB, in good standing, and whose principal occupation is farming **or ranching**. Directors must be active farmers or ranchers (active in

» Clarify the principal occupation of a director must be farming or ranching.

production agriculture) and must live in the district they serve.

No director may be an employee or independent contractor of OKFB, or an employee or independent contractor of an associated or subsidiary organization of OKFB. Former employees or independent contractors of OKFB or of an associated or subsidiary organization of OKFB shall not be eligible for election to the OKFB Board of Directors until three (3) years after termination of employment.

Section IV- Meetings:

The OKFB Board of Directors shall meet for the election of officers and the transaction of business as soon as practicable after an annual or special election of directors has been held, and as often thereafter as may be necessary to conduct the business of OKFB as determined by the OKFB Board of Directors.

Special meetings of the OKFB Board of Directors shall be held at such time and on such notice as the directors may from time to time determine.

Section V - Quorum:

A majority of the duly elected OKFB Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum, and a majority of the directors in attendance at any meeting shall in the presence of a quorum decide its action.

In the absence of a quorum, the directors present shall adjourn to a later date, and may not transact any other business.

Section VI - Vacancies:

When an OKFB director position is vacated through death, resignation, disqualification, or otherwise, the counties in that district, as defined in Section VII of Article Two of these bylaws, shall send their allotted number of delegates to a special meeting at a central location in that district in order to elect a new director to serve out the remainder of the term.

Provided, that in the selection of a director any provision for district representation shall be adhered to.

Section VII - Compensation:

Each director shall receive necessary mileage, expenses, subsistence, and a per diem fee for OKFB Board of Directors-authorized activity, to be determined by the OKFB Board of Directors in such amount as will reasonably compensate for his/her time and services, taking into consideration the rate prevailing in other similar organizations of comparable activity and magnitude.

Section VIII - Succession:

In case of the death, resignation, withdrawal, or removal from office of the president, the vice president shall automatically become the president until the succeeding annual election. In case of the death, resignation, withdrawal, or removal from office of both the president and vice president simultaneously during a term, the OKFB Board of Directors shall elect both the president and vice president from the remaining members of the Board of Directors for the unexpired terms. In any case the president shall be the director-at-large.

Section IX - Standing and Special Committees:

The president, with the advice and approval of the OKFB Board of Directors, shall appoint all standing and special committees, and he/she shall be a member ex-officio of all such committees.

Members of special and standing committees shall be voting members in good standing of OKFB.

No standing or special committee shall have authority to take final action on any matter without approval and due concurrence of the OKFB Board of Directors.

ARTICLE FOUR: OFFICERS

Section I- Officers:

The officers of OKFB shall be a president, a vice president, a treasurer and a secretary.

Section II - Election and Removal of Vice President:

The vice president shall be elected from the members of the OKFB Board of Directors by majority ballot vote of the OKFB Board of Directors, and shall serve for a term of one year or until the election and acceptance of his/her qualified successor.

- » Clarify that no director may be an employee or independent contractor of OKFB.
- » Clarify that former employees or independent contractors of OKFB or an associated or subsidiary organization for OKFB shall not be eligible for election to the OKFB Board of Directors until three (3) years after termination of employment.

- » Add/clarify that the OKFB Board of Directors shall meet as often as may be necessary to conduct the business of OKFB as determined by the OKFB Board of Directors.

- » Change language from "may" to "shall" when referencing adjourning in the absence of a quorum.

- » Clarify that the districts are as defined in Section VII of Article Two of these bylaws.

- » Substitute "director" for "new representative" when referencing the person elected to serve out the remainder of the term.

- » Add he/she language

- » Add/clarify the circumstances under which the OKFB Board of Directors shall elect both the president and vice president for unexpired terms- this includes circumstances other than retirement, those being death, resignation, withdrawal or removal from office - and successors shall be from the remaining members of the OKFB Board of Directors.

- » Add he/she language

- » Change title to "Election and Removal of Vice President."

- » For purposes of clarity: replace "from their own number" with "from the members of the OKFB Board of Directors" and replace "shall be elected by ballot" with "by majority ballot vote of the OKFB Board of Directors."

- » Add his/her language.

Provided, the vice president may be removed from that office at any time by a two-thirds vote of the duly elected OKFB Board of Directors.

Section III - Election and Removal of Treasurer and Secretary:

The treasurer and secretary shall be elected annually **from members of the OKFB Board of Directors by majority ballot vote** by the OKFB Board of Directors and shall serve until the election and acceptance of their respective qualified successors.

Provided, they may be removed from that office at any time by a two-thirds vote of the duly elected OKFB Board of Directors.

Section IV - Duties of President:

The president shall be the chief executive officer of OKFB.

When present, he/she shall preside at all meetings of OKFB members and at all meetings of the OKFB Board of Directors.

Subject to the control of the OKFB Board of Directors, the president shall have general charge of the business of OKFB.

Section V - Duties of Vice President:

The vice president shall, in the absence of the president, exercise the powers and perform the duties of the president; otherwise, **he/she** shall have such powers and perform such duties as may be assigned to **him/her** by the OKFB Board of Directors.

Section VI - Duties of Treasurer:

The treasurer shall generally perform all duties incident to the office of treasurer, subject to the control of the OKFB Board of Directors.

Section VII - Duties of Secretary:

The secretary shall generally perform all duties incident to the office of secretary, subject to the control of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE FIVE: FINANCE

Section I - Investment of Surplus Funds:

Investment of surplus funds of OKFB, over and above its cash requirements in its operations may be made by the treasurer of OKFB, on its behalf and in its name, in United States treasury bonds and United States treasury certificates and notes.

Other investments of surplus corporate funds, within the limitations of the law, may be authorized from time to time by the OKFB Board of Directors.

Section II - Distribution of Assets:

No distribution of the property of OKFB shall be made until all debts are fully paid, and then only upon its final dissolution and surrender of organization and name and as otherwise provided by law.

Nor shall any distribution of the property of OKFB be made except by a vote of a majority of the delegates **at an annual or special meeting of OKFB.**

But this prohibition shall not operate to prevent OKFB, while acting in the capacity of agent, from receiving and/or distributing or disbursing any fund or funds.

Section III - Indemnification of Elected Directors and Elected Officers:

OKFB shall indemnify any past or current elected director or elected officer of OKFB (as defined in Articles Three and Four of these bylaws) in connection with any threatened, pending or completed claim, action, suit or proceeding of whatever nature in which such person was or is a party, or is threatened to be made a party, by reason of the fact that such person was or is an elected director or elected officer of OKFB, against all costs and expenses (including attorney's fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement, actually, reasonably and necessarily incurred, except that indemnity shall not be provided to any person who is found or adjudged or determined to have acted negligently or improperly in the performance of his/her duties, or did not act in accordance with a good faith, reasonable belief that his/her actions in the performance of his/her duties were in the best interests of OKFB. Every such person seeking indemnity must make written demand upon the OKFB Board of Directors for indemnification before seeking to enforce his/her right to such indemnity in an action against OKFB. The indemnity provided herein shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which any such person may now or hereafter otherwise be entitled pursuant to statute or otherwise.

» Add procedure for removal from office consistent with removal process for Treasurer and Secretary.

» Change title to "Election and Removal of Treasurer and Secretary."

» Clarify that they are elected from and by the OKFB Board of Directors by majority vote.

» Eliminate language regarding compensation.

» Change title to "Duties of President."

» Add he/she language.

» Clarify he/she presides at all meetings of OKFB Board of Directors when present.

» Change title to "Duties of Vice President".

» Add he/she and him/her language.

» Change title to "Duties of Treasurer."

» Change title to "Duties of Secretary."

» Add language "at an annual or special meeting of OKFB."

» Change title to "Indemnification of Elected Directors and Elected Officers."

» Reworked language of paragraph. Among changes are clarifying who is included (elected directors or elected officers of OKFB as defined by Article Three and Article Four of bylaws), inclusion of claims, eliminating language requiring court approval of a settlement or compromise (this is not a standard procedure and a court may decline to be involved in most circumstances) and adding him/her language.

ARTICLE SIX: COOPERATIVE BUSINESS SERVICES

Section I - Cooperative Business Services:

OKFB is an agricultural organization as authorized by the Internal Revenue Code, Section 501(c)(5) but is not a cooperative marketing association organized under the Oklahoma Cooperative Marketing Association Act. One of its purposes, however, as authorized by its charter, is to encourage the principle of cooperative production, handling and marketing of agricultural products among agricultural producers: And to encourage, promote, and foster cooperative buying or purchasing for the benefit of its members, to implement such purposes the OKFB Board of Directors may authorize and finance the organization of such affiliated or subsidiary corporations as it may deem proper.

- » *Change reference to Oklahoma statute from "Oklahoma Marketing Act of 1937" (which has been superceded) to "Oklahoma Cooperative Marketing Association Act", which is the proper name of the Act.*

Section II - Membership Interest:

Membership in OKFB or any other state Farm Bureau with which OKFB maintains a reciprocal agreement, shall be a prerequisite to participation in any affiliated or subsidiary organization of OKFB.

Upon termination of his/her membership in OKFB, any member shall forfeit all rights and interest in any such affiliate or subsidiary, and all such rights, interests and assets shall revert to OKFB.

- » *Add his/her language.*

ARTICLE SEVEN: SUNDRY PROVISIONS

Section I - Fiscal Year:

The fiscal year of OKFB shall begin on the first day of November and terminate on the last day of October of each calendar year.

Section II - Order of Business:

The order of business at all meetings insofar as is practicable shall be: Call to order, Roll call, Reading of the minutes, Report of the treasurer, Report of committees, Other reports, Unfinished business, New business, Election and appointments, and Adjournment.

Section III - Representation in Meetings of the American Farm Bureau Federation:

While and during such period as OKFB shall be a member of the AFBF, OKFB, by due action of its Board of Directors, conforming to the bylaws of the AFBF, shall annually elect a voting delegate or delegates to represent OKFB at regular and special meetings of the AFBF, which representative or representatives shall serve until a qualified successor or successors is elected.

Section IV - Disqualification:

The holder of a federal, state, or county public office, which office is salaried or elective, shall not be eligible or qualified to be an officer or director of OKFB **as defined in Article Three and Article Four of these bylaws**. In the event any elected officer or elected director of OKFB shall become a candidate, which is defined as the date when an elected officer or elected director files for candidacy with the Oklahoma Election Board, he/she shall be deemed thereby to be immediately **and automatically** disqualified, his/her term of office shall immediately and automatically terminate, **and he/she shall immediately be deemed removed from any position he/she occupies**. Provided however, this prohibition shall not preclude elected officers or elected directors from serving as members of local school boards nor as members of committees or commissions which pay per diem, or boards of a unit of government, and further provided, this section shall not be construed to disqualify any person as a member of a county Farm Bureau board of directors, or as a delegate to the annual OKFB convention.

- » *Clarify who is included (elected directors or elected officers of OKFB as defined by Article Three and Article Four of the bylaws).*
- » *Add other clarifying language.*
- » *Add he/she and his/her language.*
- » *Reworked portions of the Section relating to a conviction of a felony to clarify its applicability and effect.*

Any endorsement or support by elected officers or elected directors of OKFB of candidates for public office shall be as private citizens and not as representatives of OKFB.

A person finally convicted of or pleading guilty to any felony at any time shall not be eligible or qualified to be nominated as, to be elected as or to serve as an elected officer or elected director of OKFB as defined in Article Three and Article Four of these bylaws . If an elected officer or elected director of OKFB is finally convicted of or pleads guilty to a felony while serving as an elected officer or elected director of OKFB, he/she shall be immediately and automatically deemed disqualified, his/her term of office shall immediately and automatically terminate, and he/she shall immediately be deemed removed from any position he/she occupies.

Section V - OKFB Women's Leadership Committee Program:

The purpose of the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee program is to help promote

- » *Change title to "OKFB Women's Leadership Committee."*

and activate the entire Farm Bureau program, with emphasis on those activities particularly suited to the talents and interests of women.

Any woman of an OKFB family is eligible to participate in the activities of the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee. Every county Farm Bureau shall be entitled and invited to send at least one official representative to the annual conference of the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee, hereby authorized to be conducted in conjunction with the annual meeting of OKFB.

The program of the women shall be promoted and coordinated by a committee of women, appointed by the OKFB Board of Directors, who are in voting member families of OKFB, nominated at the same annual meeting to serve the same terms and from the same districts as the OKFB directors. In addition to the district committee women, there shall be a committee **chairperson**, from a voting member family, who shall serve at-large. The OKFB Women's Leadership Committee serving at that time may submit to the women's annual conference the name of one or more **women** in nomination for committee **chairperson**; nominations may also be made by an official county Farm Bureau representative from the conference floor. Official county Farm Bureau representatives in attendance shall select by majority vote by ballot, unless otherwise decided by those present, from those **women** nominated, one **woman**, whose name shall be submitted to the OKFB Board of Directors for consideration as committee **chairperson**. **The OKFB Board of Directors shall have the final decision and shall appoint the committee chairperson.** Term of office of the **chairperson** shall be two years, and she may succeed herself. In addition, the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee shall select annually, **from currently serving members of the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee,** a vice **chairperson** and a secretary.

The OKFB Women's Leadership Committee shall prepare proposed operational procedures, which shall include (1) the procedure for selection of OKFB Women's Leadership Committee members and officers; (2) the basis of annual conference presentation by county Farm Bureaus with active Women's Leadership Committee programs at the annual conference; (3) quorum requirements at the annual conference; (4) procedures by which committee vacancies shall be filled; and shall also prepare similar suggested procedures for use by county Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committees. After approval by the OKFB Board of Directors, these procedures shall be used until changed, either on the initiative of the OKFB Board of Directors, or of the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee and approved by the OKFB Board of Directors.

The **chairperson** of the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee shall be privileged to serve as a non-voting advisor at all regular or special meetings of the OKFB Board of Directors except when the OKFB Board of Directors meets in executive session. The OKFB Women's Leadership Committee shall present, for consideration of the OKFB Board of Directors, an annual program of work including a proposed budget.

The OKFB Women's Leadership Committee is authorized to cooperate with the women's program of the AFBF and to send official representatives to meetings for women sponsored by the AFBF.

The **chairperson** of the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee shall automatically be one of the state's official representatives to the annual national women's conference held in conjunction with the AFBF annual meeting. Any other representatives to which the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee may be entitled shall be selected by the various county Farm Bureaus' official representatives at the annual conference of the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee.

Section VI - **OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers Program:**

The purpose of the **OKFB** Young Farmers and Ranchers program is to promote and strengthen the entire program of Farm Bureau; to provide opportunity for training and for experience which will better equip young people as future leaders in OKFB and citizens of the United States of America.

Any individual member or person in an OKFB family who is between the age of 17 and 35 is encouraged to participate in the activities of the OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers **program.**

The statewide OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers program shall be promoted and coordinated by an OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee made up of members appointed by the OKFB Board of Directors and serving at the pleasure of the OKFB Board of Directors. The OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee shall have a **chairperson**, a vice **chairperson** and a secretary, **who must already be members of the OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee.** To be eligible to serve on the OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee, the young man or woman must be a voting member or belong

- » *Change "Chairman" to "Chairperson."*
- » *Change "person/persons" to "woman/women."*
- » *Clarify that selection of the committee chairperson is by majority vote by ballot.*
- » *Clarify that the OKFB Board of Directors shall have the final decision as to the committee chairperson and appoints the committee chairperson.*
- » *Clarify that the selection of the vice chairperson and secretary is from those already serving on the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee.*

- » *Change title to "OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers Program."*

- » *Use "chairperson" instead of "chairman."*

to a voting member family of OKFB, and must be in the age group 17 through 35 at the beginning of the period for which **he/she** is selected. A person selected to the OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee who passes **his/her** 35th birthday during a term may complete the term for which **he/she** is selected.

» Add he/she and his/her language.

The OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee is authorized to conduct an annual conference, held in conjunction with the annual meeting of OKFB. Each county Farm Bureau with active Young Farmers and Ranchers programs shall be entitled and invited to send at least one official eligible representative to that conference.

The OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee shall prepare proposed operational procedures, which shall include: (1) the number, distribution and procedure for selection of OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee members and officers; (2) the basis for annual conference representation by county Farm Bureaus **with active Young Farmers and Ranchers programs**; (3) quorum requirements for the annual conference; (4) procedures by which OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee vacancies shall be filled; and shall also prepare similar suggested procedures for use by county Young Farmers and Ranchers Committees. After approval by the OKFB Board of Directors, these procedures shall be used until changed, either on the initiative of the OKFB Board of Directors, or of the OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee, approved by the OKFB Board of Directors.

The **chairperson** of the OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee shall be privileged to serve as a non-voting advisor at all regular and special meetings of the OKFB Board of Directors except when the OKFB Board of Directors meets in executive session. The OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee shall present, for consideration of the OKFB Board of Directors, an annual program of work including a proposed budget.

The OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee is authorized to cooperate with the Young Farmers and Ranchers Program of the AFBF and to send official representatives to the meetings for young people sponsored by the AFBF.

The **chairperson** of the OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee shall automatically be one of the state's official representatives to the annual national Young Farmers and Ranchers conference held in conjunction with the annual AFBF meeting. Any other representatives to which the OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee may be entitled shall be selected in general session by official representatives of the various county Farm Bureaus at the annual OKFB Young Farmers and Ranchers conference.

ARTICLE EIGHT: AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

Section I - Amendment of Bylaws:

These bylaws may be amended, repealed or altered, in whole or in part, at any regular or special meeting of OKFB, by affirmative vote of two-thirds of the delegates, a quorum being present; but no change shall be made at said meeting without notice as hereinafter provided.

The notice provisions of **Article Two Section IV** shall apply. Such notice of proposed changes in bylaws shall include the proposed language of the amendment, the deletion or the change thereof.

» Clarify it is the notice provisions of Article Two Section IV that apply.

Whenever a change in bylaws is presented by the OKFB Board of Directors, any amendment thereto proposed to the delegate sessions must be pertinent to the specific issue involved in the proposed change, amendment or deletion.



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Fall gardens are planted in the heat of summer

By Trisha Gedon

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service

For many gardeners, the summer months are the busiest of the growing season. There's nothing quite like the taste of fresh-picked fruits and vegetables. Fortunately, harvesting garden-fresh produce can continue well into the fall.

While still enjoying the bounty of the summer garden, gardeners should decide what they want to plant and harvest in the fall garden before feeling the first chill in the air, said David Hillock, Oklahoma State University Extension consumer horticulturist.

"People who garden develop an appreciation and a desire for fresh, nutritious fruits and vegetables," Hillock said. "Some of the best quality garden vegetables in Oklahoma are grown and harvested in the fall when warm, sunny days are followed by cool, humid nights."

Like spring and summer gardening, characteristics of soil for a fall garden play a large role in gardening success. Improving soil with organic material prior to and during the gardening season is important.

Hillock said soil should absorb water readily and not form a crust when it dries out. Soil should also drain sufficiently so it doesn't become waterlogged and cause root rot.

When planting, gardeners have a couple of choices on how to get started, including direct planting seeds or using transplants. Some crops are grown more easily when seeds are started early and then transplanted into the garden.

Growing transplants under partial

shade from the summer sun, along with insect protection, is typically easier to accomplish than seeding directly into the garden, said Casey Hentges, host of OSU Agriculture's television program *Oklahoma Gardening*.

"Gardeners who want to grow their own transplants will have a larger selection of seeds to purchase as opposed to the availability of transplants at the nursery," Hentges said. "Seeds left over from the spring garden can be used in the fall garden as long as they were stored in a cool, dry location or in a refrigerator or freezer."

When choosing fall plants, gardeners need to remember some spring-planted selections typically continue production into the fall, including tomato, okra, spinach, pepper, sweet potato and cowpea. Good choices for fall gardening include broccoli, pole and lima beans, cauliflower, cilantro, Chinese cabbage, cucumber, eggplant, leaf lettuce, pumpkin, summer and winter squash, tomatillo and sweet corn.

Hentges cautions gardeners to be aware of the time it takes from planting seeds or seedlings until they mature.

"Some plants, such as radishes, mature in as little as 20 days, but other vegetables like broccoli and pumpkin can take 100 days or more before harvest," she said. "Gardeners need to make sure they have enough time between planting and harvest before winter sets in."

Obtaining a stand of plants can be


tricky due to the climatic conditions during July and August. High temperatures and high light intensity rapidly dries out the soil and can cause issues in developing a uniform stand of plants. Hillock said gardeners may need to apply special treatments such as mulch or shade over rows, along with supplemental watering, to reduce soil temperature and aid in seed germination.

"In order to germinate, viable seeds must have the proper temperature, adequate moisture and sufficient oxygen," he said. "Consider drip irrigation to make the watering process easier and more efficient."

Conditions that are favorable for seed germination also favor the growth of grass and broadleaf weed plants. These take up valuable nutrients in the soil and use available moisture, so gardeners need to mulch the soil or cultivate when the grass and weeds are very small in an effort to get rid of them.

Additionally, insect pests may inhabit the garden and damage plants within a week. Hillock suggests frequent checks and immediate protective measures be used. Hillock said in order for the control to be effective, determine what type of pests are causing damage.

"It's so satisfying growing some of the foods you serve at home. Planting a fall garden will enable families to enjoy those fresh flavors even longer," Hillock said.

Check out OSU Extension's gardening webpage for more gardening information. 



Above: Gardeners can choose to purchase transplants or grow their own from seed. Transplants can help make fall gardening get off to a good start. (Photo by Shutterstock)



Above: Planting seeds to grow your own transplants is a great way to get a head start on fall gardening. (Photo by OSU Agriculture)



Above: Lettuce is a hardy fall crop. Using drip irrigation makes the watering process easier. (Photo by Caley Mayo, OSU Agriculture)

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