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OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU

# Perspective

August 2, 2019

## Tulsa County member pushes for H-2A reforms at field hearing

**C**had Selman, a Tulsa County Farm Bureau member and pecan producer, recently shared his concerns about agricultural labor during a congressional field hearing with Congressman Kevin Hern on July 22 in Tulsa.

The hearing, hosted by U.S. House Small Business Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Tax and Capital Access Republican Ranking Member Kevin Hern and Chair Andy Kim, aimed to highlight the challenges small businesses – including farms and ranches – face in trying to comply with federal regulations.

Selman emphasized the U.S. Department of Labor’s recently proposed rules to modernize the H-2A program, which is used by farmers and ranchers to secure reliable and skilled farm workers from foreign countries. The new proposed rules

would streamline and simplify the H-2A application process.

“We need revision of the H-2A program to remove those things that don’t make sense and that are overly burdensome,” Selman said during his testimony at the hearing. “The process should be simpler so it’s better for me as the producer and better for them as the workers.”

Selman is forced to hire independent contractors each year to file H-2A paperwork because completing it himself would be a full-time job and hinder his responsibilities on the farm. In some years, he said the complicated process of receiving workers through H-2A has cost him significantly in both crops and money.

“One of the most challenging aspects of my business is having the right number of workers when I need them,” he said.

Encouraged by the Department of Labor’s recent proposals, Selman offered a couple of suggestions to improve the H-2A program including approving guest workers’ visas for five years and allowing workers to come and go as work is needed.

“What we will do is take this (Selman’s written and oral testimony) back and help distribute it to the right committee with our endorsements behind it, and use it to create bills,” Hern said.

Selman was joined at the hearing by other industry leaders such as Christopher Jordan, president of Farmers State Bank in Stigler; Howard “Bud” Grounds, director of regulatory affairs for the Petroleum Alliance of Oklahoma; and Elizabeth Osburn, senior vice president of government affairs for the Tulsa Regional Chamber.



Above: Chad Selman, Tulsa County Farm Bureau member and pecan producer, presents his testimony at the congressional field hearing.



Above: Howard “Bud” Grounds, Christopher Jordan and Chad Selman listening to the opening remarks from Rep. Andy Kim.



Above: Rep. Kevin Hern gives his opening remarks at the hearing.



Above: Selman answers questions about the H-2A program.



Above: To create new legislation, Rep. Kim and Rep. Kern will use Selman’s testimony.

# Women's Leadership Committee awards Nurse's Training Scholarships

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee awarded four \$500 scholarships to nursing students.

Joyce Taylor of Creek County, Jordan Roper of Custer County, Kylee Campbell of Alfalfa County and April Hale of Okmulgee County are the recipients of the scholarship.

The WLC recognizes the significant role nurses play in ensuring a high quality of life for all Oklahomans, especially those in rural areas. With the cost of education rising yearly, the committee is proud to provide four students with scholarships to aid in their pursuit of a career in nursing.

"Our committee is passionate about investing in quality health care professionals in rural Oklahoma," said Mignon Bolay, OKFB WLC chair. "We are proud to support these outstanding nursing students who will work to serve the needs of rural residents across our state."

The WLC awards scholarships annually to students studying nursing at an accredited college, university or trade school. The students also must be an OKFB member or be a member of a Farm Bureau-member family.

The OKFB WLC promotes the

importance of family and health, safety and crime prevention, state and national agricultural issues, voter awareness and citizenship, Agriculture in the Classroom and much more. To learn more about the program, visit [okfarmbureau.org/women](http://okfarmbureau.org/women).



## Nurse's Training Scholarship



# Oklahoma State University hosts Big 3 Field Days, OKFB proud sponsor

Oklahoma State University hosted the annual Big 3 Field Days July 16-18 at the Totusek Arena in Stillwater.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau is a proud title sponsor of the event providing the winners of each age group with a plaque or banner for each species winner and presenting the sweepstakes winners a plaque or banner.

4-H and FFA members from across the state spent three days carefully evaluating cattle, swine, sheep and goats.

While in Stillwater, participants also had the chance to tour the campus and agricultural businesses around Stillwater including Oklahoma Animal & Disease Diagnostic Laboratory, Robert M. Kerr Food & Agriculture Products Center, Gallagher Iba Arena and Heritage Hall, OSU Athletic Facilities, Reproduction Enterprises, Inc., and OSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital.



Above: Sweepstakes winners posed with Leslie Lewis, YF&R committee member. For a full list of winners, visit [www.judgingcard.com](http://www.judgingcard.com).

## Calendar

### YF&R State Fair Livestock Judging Contest

September 12 • Oklahoma City  
Contact: Zac Swartz, 405-523-2406

### YF&R Shotgun Shoot

September 21 • McCloud  
Contact: Zac Swartz, 405-523-2406

### Women's Leadership Committee Fall Conference

September 27-28 • Oklahoma City  
Contact: Marcia Irvin, 405-523-2405

For a full list of August Area Meetings, visit [okfb.news/aam19](http://okfb.news/aam19).

# Amber-Pocasset student wins YF&R High School Discussion Meet

Jackson Caves from Amber-Pocasset was named the winner of the 2019 Oklahoma Farm Bureau High School Discussion Meet held July 16 in Stillwater.

Held in conjunction with the Oklahoma State University Big Three Field Days, 11 students from across the state competed in the event. Through the discussion meet, participants gain valuable experience in basic discussion skills while developing an understanding of agricultural issues that the industry is currently facing.

Cassidy Baughman of Ardmore placed second in the contest, followed by Ryan Clark of Henryetta placing third and Sydney Williams of Calera placing fourth.

“Through this discussion meet, we hope the skills these students gain in preparing and participating in the event will serve as a valuable opportunity no matter their path,” said Brent Haken, YF&R chair. “We as the YF&R committee are honored to do what we can in preparing the next generation of agriculturalists.”

The event participants competed in two rounds of discussion before being narrowed to the final four. As top four finalists, the

students earned \$1,500, \$1,000, \$500 and \$250 college scholarships.

A discussion meet for YF&R members is held during the OKFB state convention in November. The winner of the contest wins some great prizes and an expense-paid trip to the American Farm Bureau convention to compete in the national contest. More information about the contest will be available at a later date.

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers program allows members between the ages of 18 and 35 to develop leadership skills, be involved in their local communities, compete in contests to win valuable prizes and develop

long lasting friendships with people from across the state and country. To learn more about OKFB's YF&R program, visit [okfarmbureau.org/yfr](http://okfarmbureau.org/yfr).



Above: Sydney Williams discusses her views during the final round of the high school discussion meet.



Left: Jackson Caves, first place; Cassidy Baughman, second place; Ryan Clark, third place; and Sydney Williams, fourth place; are congratulated for their work at the high school discussion meet by Ethan Mock, YF&R committee member (left), and Brent Haken, YF&R chair (right). The winners will each receive a scholarship during OKFB's state convention held in November.

## 2019 summer issue of Oklahoma Country available

The summer issue of Oklahoma Farm Bureau's quarterly publication, *Oklahoma Country*, has reached mailboxes and is available to read online on the publications page at [okfarmbureau.org](http://okfarmbureau.org). Learn about the first female to serve as general manager of the Oklahoma National Stockyards Company, people recovering from spring flooding, and new member benefit.



## District 7 August Area Meeting location update

Notice: The District 7 August Area Meeting will be held Aug. 19 at 6 p.m. at the Stride Bank Center, formerly the Central National Bank Center, in Enid. Join OKFB members to begin the grassroots policy development process.

For the full calendar of August Area Meetings, visit [okfb.news/aam19](http://okfb.news/aam19).

## Member Benefits

### Choice Hotels

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members can save up to 20% off their next stay at thousands of Choice Hotel locations when they call in advance. Choice Hotels include Comfort Inn, Comfort Suites, Quality, Sleep Inn, Clarion,

Cambria Hotel, MainStay Suites, Suburban, Econo Lodge and Rodeway Inn.

To obtain the special rate ID, look on the back of your membership card, contact your county office, or contact Kelli Beall at 405-523-2470.

To book your next stay at a Choice Hotels location, visit [www.choicehotels.com](http://www.choicehotels.com) or call 1-800-4CHOICE.

[www.okfarmbureau.org/benefits](http://www.okfarmbureau.org/benefits)

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## New data highlights continuing need to fight opioid addiction in rural communities

**N**ew data from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration shows that rural communities have the highest death rates nationwide from opioid prescriptions, more than three times the national average.

A previously unreleased database from DEA tracking prescription painkillers showed that the highest per-capita opioid death rates from 2006 to 2012 were in rural communities in West Virginia, Kentucky and Virginia, with more than three times the national average of 4.6 deaths per 100,000 residents. Thirteen of those counties had an opioid death rate more than eight times the national rate.

“We have seen firsthand the destructive force of opioids in rural communities, and our research shows that three out of four farmers have been impacted,” said Zippy Duvall, president of the American Farm Bureau. “That’s why we stepped up to address this crisis. We stand with the families and communities that have been affected, and we continue the fight against opioid addiction in our partnership with

National Farmers Union through our Farm Town Strong campaign. If someone you know is struggling, it’s important for them to know that there is hope.”

Roger Johnson, president of National Farmers Union, said, “The new data released by DEA highlights what we already know about the impact of opioids on farm country: Rural areas are being disproportionately impacted by opioid addiction. This is an issue we’ve been all aware of for too long, and we have mobilized resources and partnerships over the past two years to help address this crisis. We are Farm Town Strong, and we will continue to work together to address the serious issues identified in today’s news.”

The American Farm Bureau and National Farmers Union, in conjunction with USDA Rural Development, launched the Farm Town Strong campaign in January 2018 to provide information and resources to help those struggling with opioid addiction. For more information, and to find help, please visit [farmtownstrong.org](http://farmtownstrong.org).

## JOIN US!

For the inaugural  
**YF&R  
SHOTGUN SHOOT**

Sept. 21 | Quail Ridge  
McCloud, OK

### Schedule of Events

8 a.m. – Registration  
9 a.m. – Shooting begins  
11:30 a.m. – Lunch served

Proceeds will benefit the  
Oklahoma Farm Bureau  
Foundation for Agriculture.

Questions? Contact Zac Swartz at  
405-523-2300 or  
[Zac.Swartz@okfb.org](mailto:Zac.Swartz@okfb.org).