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OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU *Perspective*

April 29, 2016

OKFB members advocate for ag in Washington



Congressional Action Tour attendees gather for a group photo on the American Farm Bureau office roof during OKFB's annual trip to advocate for agriculture April 10-14.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members representing all nine OKFB districts took Capitol Hill April 10-14 for the OKFB's annual Congressional Action Tour to Washington, D.C. The trip was an opportunity for OKFB members to share concerns and issues in agriculture with Oklahoma's Congressional delegation.

"Oklahoma's Congressional leaders need to hear from our members," said Tom Buchanan, OKFB president. "This year's trip provided another opportunity to increase Farm Bureau's presence on Capitol Hill."

Members learned about federal issues from Sen. Jim Inhofe, Sen. James Lankford, Rep. Frank Lucas, Rep. Tom Cole, Rep. Steve Russell and Rep. Markwayne Mullin during

Continued on page two

Three wins for agriculture

By John Collison
OKFB Vice President of Public Policy

As we close out another month and enter into the final weeks of the legislative session, I'm happy to report some successes amidst the gloom-and-doom of the state Capitol. Last Thursday was the deadline for all Senate bills to make it out of the House and all House bills to make it out of the Senate.

Last week, we worked closely with Rep. Sean Roberts on a bill to remove all restrictions on removing feral hogs. SB 1142, which passed the House by a vote of 67-13, allows persons to remove feral hogs 24/7, 365 days a year, without any permit or license from the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. Although shooting alone will not erad-



Continued on page three

Buchanan shares WOTUS woes with U.S. Senate subcommittee

Oklahoma Farm Bureau President Tom Buchanan urged Congress to hold the Environmental Protection Agency accountable for its burdensome regulations and aggressive tactics against U.S. farmers and ranchers during a senate subcommittee hearing Tuesday, April 12.

In testifying before the Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Superfund, Waste Management and Regulatory Oversight, Buchanan explained how Oklahoma's farmers and ranchers are

affected by the EPA's regulations, especially its Waters of the United States rule.

"After carefully studying the proposed rule, we at Farm Bureau concluded that the rule's vague and broad language would define 'waters of the United States' to include countless land areas that are common in and around farm fields and ranches across the countryside. These are areas that don't look a bit like water," Buchanan said in his testimony.

Continued on page two



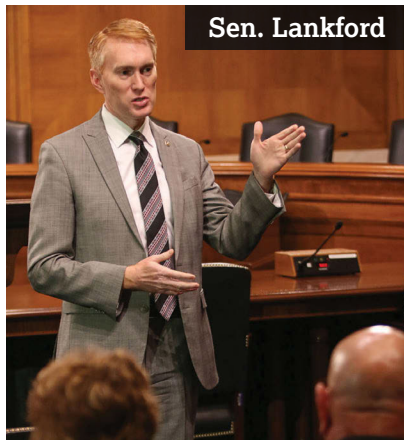
Congressional Action Tour

(Continued from page one)

various visits to Capitol Hill. The trip also included a visit to American Farm Bureau Federation headquarters for an update on federal issues.

The OKFB group attended a Senate Environment and Public Works subcommittee hearing featuring a testimony from Buchanan. He informed the subcommittee of the Environmental Protection Agency's impact on farmers and ranchers. Learn more about the hearing [here](#).

Members also visited George Washington's Mount Vernon, Gristmill and Distillery outside of Washington, D.C.



Buchanan testifies on WOTUS (Continued from page one)

"They look like land, and they are farmed, but by defining them as 'waters of the U.S.' the rule would make it illegal to farm, build a fence, cut trees, build a house, or do most anything else there without first asking permission of the federal government and navigating a costly and complex permitting regime," he said.

Buchanan also highlighted EPA's misleading advocacy for its own rule, using public relations and social media

campaigns to garner support.

"Regardless of whether you supported, opposed or never heard of the waters rule, I hope many of you would agree that this is not how rulemaking should be conducted," Buchanan said.

Regulations like WOTUS hinder the American farmer's ability to produce food and fiber for the world, Buchanan said.

"We have the ultimate regulator, and that's the American consumer," Buchanan

said. "Regulations will do nothing but handcuff us and handicap us. The American public today enjoys the most abundant, the highest quality and the most affordable food sources they've ever had. That's a result of American agriculture meeting the need of the market."

Buchanan ended his comments by thanking Sen. Jim Inhofe, chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, for his tireless efforts to support Oklahoma farmers and ranchers.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau Online



Congressional Action Tour photos on flickr

See more photos from our time in Washington, D.C. with Oklahoma's congressional delegation. Our flickr photo album showcases the highlights of our time in the nation's capital. Find the album at flickr.com/okfarmbureau.



Buchanan recaps committee hearing

OKFB President Tom Buchanan visited with American Farm Bureau's *Newsline* program about his message to the EPW subcommittee about the Environmental Protection Agency's deceptive tactics to push for approval of the Waters of the U.S. rule Listen to the program at <http://www.fb.org/newsroom/newsclip/041316>.



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Legislative wrap-up

(continued from page one)

icate the invasive species in Oklahoma, we see any step toward removing feral hogs as progress. The measure will now head back to the Senate for consideration.

A bill to allow the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety to issue commercial driver's licenses to H2A workers was sent to the governor's desk last week. SB 1018, by Sen. Mike Schulz and Rep. Harold Wright, will help the many farmers who rely on H2A temporary agricultural workers to harvest crops. We've watched the bill progress throughout the session and are encouraged to see it make it to the governor's desk.

Gov. Mary Fallin last week signed the aquifer recharge bill, or SB 1219 by Sen. Eddie Fields and Rep. John Pfeiffer. As

we shared with you in the past, the bill allows the Oklahoma Water Resources Board to create and implement rules for aquifer storage and recovery, giving our state an opportunity to replenish our much-needed aquifers. Many of our reservoirs in Oklahoma lose valuable water to evaporation; by storing the water underground, we not only can refill the aquifers, but also can prevent contamination and evaporation of that water. We were very pleased to see the governor sign the bill and look forward to it furthering our state's water development.

Although the session will be wrapping up in a matter of weeks, we're looking ahead to the upcoming state primary elections. A number of rural

seats will open at the end of this session; it's vital that we elect candidates who understand the value and significance of rural Oklahoma. OKAgFund district meetings will be held May 9-10, and the new OKAgFund board will meet at the home office May 13 to consider candidate recommendations from the county Farm Bureaus. If you are interested in attending your county's meeting, please contact your county Farm Bureau office.



Cleveland, Oklahoma and Seminole County Farm Bureau Capitol visit



Seminole County Farm Bureau Vice President Syd Morgan (black jacket) visits with Rep. Tom Newell during a multi-county Capitol visit Tuesday, April 19.



Rep. Lewis Moore speaks to members of Cleveland, Oklahoma and Seminole County Farm Bureaus during a capitol visit luncheon on Tuesday, April 19.

Member Benefits

Alamo, Avis, Enterprise, Hertz, National car rentals
Going somewhere? If you're planning a trip or just need a lift somewhere, an OKFB membership provides discounts on car rentals through Alamo, Avis, Enterprise, Hertz, and National. Visit our member benefits page below for all the details, codes and contact information you need to get rolling.

www.okfarmbureau.org/benefits

Calendar

OKFB Commodity Tour

May 4 – 6 • Woodward Area
Contact: Marcia Irvin (405) 523-2405

YF&R Golf Tournament

May 6 • Roman Nose Golf Course, Watonga
Contact: Holly Carroll (405) 523-2307

State Legislature Adjourns

May 27 • Oklahoma State Capitol, Oklahoma City
Contact: Tasha Duncan (405) 530-2681

Published by Oklahoma Farm Bureau
Postmaster: Send address corrections to:
Perspective, P.O. B. 53332, OKC, OK 73152-3332

STAFF DIRECTORY

Executive Director

Monica Wilke 405-523-2303

VP of Strategic Corporate Communications

Becky Samples 405-523-2528

VP of Public Policy

John Collison 405-523-2539

Director of Corporate Communications

Dustin Mielke 405-530-2640

Director of Public Policy Communications

Hannah Nemecek 405-523-2346

Oklahoma Farm Bureau
2501 N. Stiles
Oklahoma City, OK 73105-3126

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Feral hog control bill passes house

Oklahoma could be one step closer to eradicating feral hogs under a bill passed Thursday, April 21, by the Oklahoma House of Representatives.

SB 1142, by Rep. Sean Roberts, would remove all restrictions on hunting feral hogs, meaning the animals could be hunted day or night, 365 days a year, and without a permit or license.

"They are 300-pound rats," Roberts said, discussing the bill on the House floor. "They are an invasive species and need to be taken out. By removing the restrictions, if it helps reduce (the population) even a little bit, then we need to do it."

Feral hogs are a non-native invasive species found in all 77 Oklahoma counties. More than 70 percent must be removed

each year to control the population, according to the Noble Foundation. The hogs cause damage to farms, ranches, ecosystems and land statewide and cost farmers and ranchers an estimated \$1.5 billion each year.

After passing by a vote of 67-13, the measure now heads back to the Senate for approval.

State Question 777 corner

The latest news on Oklahoma's Right to Farm amendment, SQ 777, which will appear on the general election ballot on November 8, 2016.

Why do environmentalists just yell? from OKAgPolicy.org

Agriculture is under attack. We've seen radical animal rights and environmental activists go after farmers and ranchers across the nation. Now, they're in Oklahoma.

Ninety-eight percent of Oklahoma's nearly 80,000 farms are family-owned. These family farmers work hard each and every day to produce the safest, highest-quality and most affordable food supply for our state, our nation and our world.

In the 1960s, the average farmer only fed about 55 people; today, the average farmer feeds 160 people. If the environmentalists have their way, our farms will look a lot more like 1960 rather than 2016.

New technology allows farmers to grow more food on less land, use fewer fertilizers and pesticides, and reduce their environmental footprints. Environmentalists claim our farmers and ranchers abuse animals and pollute the environment. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Farmers and ranchers care for their land,

their water and their natural resources. They understand their actions today affect not only their own livelihoods, but also the livelihoods of their children and grandchildren in the future.

But instead of thanking farmers and agricultural innovators for producing more food for our growing population, environmentalists just yell. Rather than working alongside farmers and ranchers to solve problems, environmentalists shout "No!" to scientifically-sound technologies and practices. They throw out lies to mislead the public and confuse consumers. They demonize the hard work of Oklahoma's family farmers and ranchers.

Along with the state's leading agriculture groups, Oklahoma Farm Bureau is taking a proactive step to protect family farmers with State Question 777, or the Right to Farm.

Despite the claims of radical activist groups, Right to Farm has nothing to do with cockfighting, puppy mills, or water quality. Right to Farm protects the ability

Oklahoma's RIGHT to Farm



of Oklahoma family farmers and ranchers to continue producing safe, healthy and affordable food.

The fact of the matter is this: one in four children in Oklahoma struggles with hunger. More than 650,000 Oklahomans lack reliable access to a healthy food supply. We absolutely cannot afford to take food off the table. At some point, we must realize hungry Oklahomans are more important than making ourselves feel better.

When given the freedom to use technological advancements along with reasonable regulations from the government, farmers and ranchers can continue doing what they do best: putting food on our tables. Let's not tie the hands of our family farms and ranches. Vote YES on State Question 777!