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OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU

# Perspective

May 10, 2019

## Legislative Update: 2019 legislative session drawing to a close

The last major deadline has passed at the state Capitol and the battle that started with 2,800 pieces of legislation is now down to the final 400. However, it only takes one dangerous piece to cause a major problem, and this is the time of year those bad ideas strategically pop up in bills. Issues that may not survive the scrutiny of the traditional committee process will occasionally appear in May.

Our public policy team is keeping a close watch on all legislative activities until the final gavel falls in each chamber at the end of May.

Two more ag-friendly proposals supported by Oklahoma Farm Bureau have successfully advanced through the legislative process and have been signed by Gov. Kevin Stitt. SB 392 was commonly

referred to as the “fake meat” bill this year, and it added common-sense regulations to the public health and safety title of state law. Misleading or deceptive practices, such as labeling food products not derived from livestock or poultry as meat, will now be prohibited.

SB 21 by Sen. Casey Murdock and Rep. Trey Caldwell designates and adopts the ribeye steak as Oklahoma’s official state steak. This light-hearted bill was the last piece of legislation passed by the House of Representatives before their chamber of origin deadline on April 25. This occurred as the Oklahoma Farm Bureau board was meeting with Sen. Murdock in the Capitol building.

An economically important bill for much of southeast Oklahoma is HB 2303 by

Rep. Johnny Tadlock and Sen. David Bullard. This proposal would create a sales tax exemption for forestry service equipment used in logging, timber and tree farming, similar to the law for other agricultural production items. HB 2303 has passed both the House and Senate in its initial form and has moved to an appropriations conference committee for final consideration.

Both chambers and the governor’s office must now work to reach a multi-billion dollar budget agreement. Key issues under negotiation currently include whether to approve another teacher pay raise or to increase appropriations for the school funding formula and how much to invest in the state’s savings account, known as the Rainy Day Fund.

## Three OKFB leaders give advice and wisdom to FFA members during Oklahoma State FFA Convention

Three Oklahoma Farm Bureau leaders – Marty Williams, Brent Haken and Travis Schnaithman – spent time sharing wisdom and advice with the next generation of Oklahoma family farmers April 30 at the Oklahoma State FFA Convention in Oklahoma City.

The workshop was held for students hoping to return to the farm after graduation and continue their family operations. Students were able to learn about the successes and failures the three OKFB members have encountered by asking questions and listening to their stories.

The ultimate goal was to inspire the next generation of agriculturalists in rural Oklahoma to return to the farm as the average age of the American farmer continues to rise.



# New national poll shows impacts of rural economy on farmer mental health

A strong majority of farmers and farmworkers say financial issues, farm or business problems and fear of losing the farm impact farmers' mental health, according to a new national Morning Consult research poll.

Sponsored by the American Farm Bureau Federation in recognition of May as Mental Health Month, the poll surveyed rural adults and farmers/farmworkers to better understand factors affecting the mental health of farmers, availability of resources, perceptions of stigma, personal experiences with mental health challenges and other relevant issues.

"We all know how stressful farm life can be, and things are even tougher now because of the farm economy," AFBF President Zippy Duvall said. "More of us are affected, either directly or by having a friend or family member in distress. This poll proves what we already knew anecdotally: Rural America is hurting not just economically but also emotionally. Even as the rest of the economy has boomed, farmers and ranchers are in year six of a widespread commodity-price slump. We can and must do more to address farmer stress and mental health issues in rural America."

Farmers and farmworkers surveyed said financial issues (91%), farm or business problems (88%) and fear of losing the farm (87%) impact farmers' mental health.

Other factors included stress, weather, the economy, isolation and social stigma.

A strong majority of rural adults (91%) said mental health is important to them and/or their family, while 82% of farmers/farmworkers said the same. Polling found that a majority of rural adults have either personally sought care (31%) or have a family member (24%) who has sought care for a mental health condition.

Three in four rural adults (75%) said it's important to reduce stigma about mental health in the agriculture community, while two in three farmers/farmworkers (66%) said the same.

Large majorities of rural Americans polled agreed that cost, social stigma and embarrassment would make it harder for them to seek help or treatment for mental health conditions.

Highlighting the need for awareness and training, the survey showed that farmers and farmworkers are less likely than rural adults in general to be confident that they would be able to spot the warning signs of a mental health condition (55% vs. 73%).

Farm Bureau is advocating for programs that provide America's farmers and ranchers with critical support and mental health resources and is urging Congress to fund \$10 million for the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network, the level authorized in the 2018 farm bill.



# SAVE THE DATE

## YF&R *Summer Conference*

Discover northeast Oklahoma

**July 12-14**

*Friday, July 12*

Friday night cookout

*Saturday, July 13*

Farm and industry tours throughout the day followed by dinner & entertainment

*Sunday, July 14*

Morning service and speakers

*Room rates are \$89 + tax.*

*Conference ends at noon on Sunday, July 14.*

Childcare will be provided Saturday and Sunday.

Registration information to be announced soon.

## Calendar

### On the Road with Ag in the Classroom

June 4-6 • State of Oklahoma

Contact: Marcia Irvin 405-523-2405

### National Ag in the Classroom Conference

June 18-21 • Little Rock, Arkansas

Contact: Marcia Irvin 405-523-2405

### Nurse's Scholarship Application Deadline

July 1

Contact: Marcia Irvin 405-523-2405

### OKFB YF&R State Summer Conference

July 12-14 • Oklahoma City

Contact: Zac Swartz 405-523-2406

### OSU Big Three Field Days

July 16-18 • Stillwater

Contact: Zac Swartz 405-523-2406

### State High School Discussion Meet

July 16 • Stillwater

Contact: Zac Swartz 405-523-2406

# Woodward County Farm Bureau lends a hand to Nebraska farmers

Rural Oklahomans understand what it is like to face a natural disaster head-on as they have dealt with catastrophic wildfires to severe drought. But what happens when everything you own is swept away in a frigid flood in March?

Woodward County Farm Bureau has in recent years faced natural disasters and has decided to help fellow farmers, ranchers, and rural citizens of Nebraska in a time of need.

Approved unanimously in a recent county board meeting, Woodward County Farm Bureau has decided to donate \$5,000 to Nebraska's Knox County Farm Bureau with

an additional \$500 pledged by an individual county board member.

According to the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, a total of 104 cities, 81 counties, and five tribal areas have declared emergencies.

Currently, Nebraska Farm Bureau is trying to help its members put their lives and communities back together.

For more information on how you can make a difference, visit [nefbfoundation.org/ways-to-give/disaster-relief-fund](http://nefbfoundation.org/ways-to-give/disaster-relief-fund). All donations received will be distributed directly to Nebraska farmers, ranchers, and rural communities in affected areas.

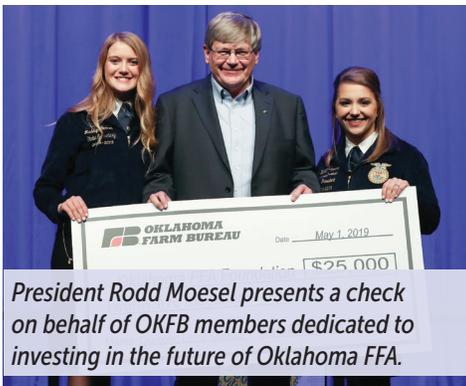


*Roads have been washed away in the flood. Photo courtesy of Nebraska Farm Bureau.*



*Farms, ranches, and rural communities have been deeply affected by widespread flooding across Nebraska. Photo courtesy of Nebraska Farm Bureau.*

## OKFB at the 2019 State FFA Convention



*President Rodd Moesel presents a check on behalf of OKFB members dedicated to investing in the future of Oklahoma FFA.*



*Executive Director Thad Doye thanked Oklahoma FFA members for their continued support of the Pork for Packs program.*

## Additional county board member training session added

An additional county board member training has been made available to all county board members in the southwest area. The meeting will be held at the Comanche County Farm Bureau

office in Lawton on May 21 at 6:30 p.m. Dinner will be provided for all attendees. **Comanche County Farm Bureau**  
502 SW 11th St., Suite B  
Lawton, OK 73501

## Four OK teachers selected for STEM professional development opportunity

Four Oklahoma teachers traveled to Kansas (May 1-3) or are preparing to leave for New York (May 21-23) for an opportunity to gain a better understanding of how science, technology, engineering and math are used daily in agriculture.

Kelleigh Dies, Piedmont Public Schools; Gayla Howell, Yukon Public School; Debra Deskin, Edmond Public Schools; and Johnnie Keel, Norman Public Schools were selected with 56 others from a total of 550 applicants for the 2019 On The Farm STEM professional development event. This opportunity is a collaboration between the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture and the Beef Checkoff.

Throughout this grant funded event, participants will have the opportunity to learn from beef cattle producers, researchers, nutritionists and veterinarians. Participants can then take that information back to their classrooms across the nation to help bring science to life and give their students a better understanding of agriculture.

For more information on this opportunity, visit [OnTheFarmSTEM.com](http://OnTheFarmSTEM.com)

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## Highlights from the 2019 FFA State Convention



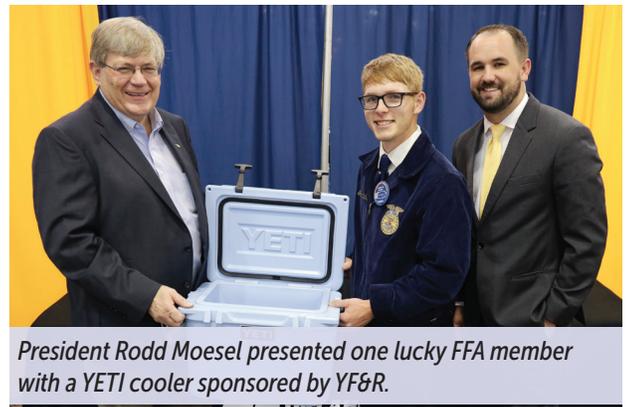
*During the career show, President Rodd Moesel took time to visit with members of Oklahoma FFA.*



*FFA members from across Oklahoma had the opportunity to stop by the OKFB booth and learn about youth programs available to them through YF&R.*



*In addition to learning about the opportunities within OKFB and YF&R, FFA members had the chance to win a YETI cooler.*



*President Rodd Moesel presented one lucky FFA member with a YETI cooler sponsored by YF&R.*