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# Oklahoma Farm Bureau *Perspective*

Aug. 21, 2015

## AFBF: Maps show massive increase in EPA authority, regulatory uncertainty for everyone else

A series of maps released Aug. 12 by the American Farm Bureau Federation show how the EPA will radically expand its jurisdiction over land use if its controversial Waters of the United States rule takes effect as expected August 28. That expansion comes even as major parts of the rule remain largely incomprehensible to experts and laypeople, alike.

The maps, prepared by Geosyntec Consulting, show the dramatic expansion of EPA's regulatory reach, stretching across wide swaths of land in Pennsylvania,

Virginia and Montana. In Pennsylvania, for example, 99 percent of the state's total acreage is subject to EPA scrutiny. Landowners have no reliable way to know which of the water and land within that area will be regulated, yet they must still conform their activities to the new law.

"Farmers face enforcement action and severe penalties under EPA's new rule for using the same safe, scientifically sound and federally approved crop protection tools they've used for years," AFBF President Bob Stallman said. "This rule creates a

new set of tools for harassing farmers in court, and does it all with language that is disturbingly vague and subject to abuse by future regulators. It's worth saying again: The EPA needs to withdraw this rule and start over."

AFBF has supplied maps for Montana, Pennsylvania and Virginia, with maps for Missouri, New York, Oklahoma and Wisconsin being prepared.

For more information and links to the maps, visit AFBF's website at [www.fb.org](http://www.fb.org).

## August Area Meetings



At the District 4 August Area Meeting on Aug. 13, Stephens County Farm Bureau Board Member Charley Beavers (second from left) presents OKFB President Tom Buchanan with a \$10,000 check for the State Question 777 campaign on behalf of the Stephens County Farm Bureau. Members also discussed policy ideas and this year's legislative session.



OKFB President Tom Buchanan discusses State Question 777 and other agricultural policy issues with members at the District 7 August Area Meeting in Enid on Aug. 11.

# Handling difficult conversations about agriculture



By Sam Knipp  
OKFB Director of Corporate Communications

**H**ow do you handle a difficult or challenging question about agriculture?

Today it seems everyone wants to know where their food comes from and how it is produced. That's okay, but it sometimes can lead to challenging questions such as, "Why do farmers plant so many GMO crops? Is it true they beat their animals? Why do farmers use so much water to grow things that we can't eat, such as cotton or grain sorghum? Is it true that chickens grow their legs and wings back?"

I recently trained a group of agricultural recruiters on answering uncomfortable questions about agriculture during the 2015 AgCareers.com Ag & Food HR Roundtable. The audience consisted mostly of staff for agriculture colleges, seed companies and other businesses seeking employees to work in the agriculture industry. Basically it boils down to telling the truth, in plain language, how and why we produce food. Sounds simple enough, right? Unfortunately, agriculture is a science and it would seem that many people don't understand science. Their eyes glaze over when you talk about using no-till methods, livestock antibiotics, auto-steer tractors, and Round Up-ready soybeans. Non-agriculture folks have a hard time grasping the concept of how many bushels of wheat are produced on a quarter section of land, and how many loaves of bread result from that production.

We should always be prepared with our short sound bite answer when we introduce

ourselves and explain what we do for a living. Picture a "mental bumper sticker" or "key message" you want to convey about agriculture. For example, if you are in the animal agriculture business, your message could be, "Beef has zip, (zinc, iron and protein) and is a nutrient dense food." Or, "We treat our animals in a safe, humane manner. Often we put the animals' needs before our own."

How about this one: "GMO crops are grown on most of our land today because it has proven to be a safe, effective and profitable way to feed a hungry world."

Okay, but I only buy hormone-free milk because I want the best for my children. Your response would be, "All milk contains hormones. Our milk is a safe, nutritious food. If you see milk advertised as 'hormone-free,' consider it a marketing gimmick."

I often use politicians as a perfect example of how to handle difficult questions. When a politician states he is against raising taxes, this becomes his mantra or bumper sticker. You could ask him any question and you would always get the same response: no new taxes.

California today is suffering from a terrible drought, and agriculture often receives the blame for using 80 percent of the water. When I hear this statement,

the first thing I want to do is correct that 80 percent number. The true figure for California water use is 50 percent for the environment, 40 percent for farming and 10 percent for urban and suburban. The 80 percent figure that gets bandied about is only accurate if you ignore the water dedicated to environmental purposes (a big and telling "if"). Here's your bumper

sticker: Farmers are investing millions of dollars in high efficient, water conserving methods. Farmers are producing more food on less water and land

**“ Basically, it boils down to telling the truth, in plain language, how and why we produce our food. ”**

— Sam Knipp

than 30 years ago.

Here are some other short, concise messages you can use:

- Consumers spend about 10 percent of disposable income on food in this country.
- Food borne illnesses can often be avoided by proper food preparation techniques.
- It takes only about six weeks for the average consumer to pay their grocery bill for the entire year.
- Farmers receive less than 20 cents of every consumer's food dollar.

If we don't successfully handle these difficult questions about agriculture now, it will become increasingly more difficult to grow food in an environment overgrown with needless regulations.

## Oklahoma Farm Bureau Online



**Congressmen host town hall meetings**

Check the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Facebook page to see the dates, times and locations for town hall meetings across the state. The meetings give Oklahomans an opportunity to discuss current issues and legislation in Washington.



**#okfb15**

As the Oklahoma Farm Bureau grassroots policy development process begins, keep up with the action by following @okfb on Twitter. Want to contribute to the conversation? Use #okfb15 when tweeting.



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*The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee members visit with attendees of the Oklahoma Women in Ag and Small Business conference Aug. 6 and 7. As they passed out gifts and Farm Bureau information, the WLC members explained the committee's efforts to promote agriculture and rural Oklahoma.*

## YF&R release Oklahoma State Fair livestock judging contest details

**T**he 2015 Oklahoma State Fair livestock judging contest, sponsored by Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers, will be held Sept. 17 at 1 p.m. in Barn 3 at Oklahoma State Fair Park.

The contest will consist of market beef, goats, sheep and swine and/or breeding classes. 4-H juniors include ages nine through 14 and FFA juniors include grades eight, nine and 10.

An entry fee of \$5 per individual contestant or \$20 per team must be paid at registration, beginning at 12 p.m. on the day of the contest.

The high team members of each division, along with the high individual, will be presented with a jacket. Plaques will be awarded to the first-, second- and third-place individuals and second- and third-place teams.

To compete in the contest without paying State Fair admission, contestants must submit the school and participant names to [AgClerk@okstatefair.com](mailto:AgClerk@okstatefair.com) by Sept. 5.

For more information, contact Holly Carroll at 405-523-2307.

## Member Benefits

### IHG

A new member benefit partner, InterContinental Hotel Group offers OKFB members a 10 percent discount at more than 1,400 participating IHG brand hotels across the country.

To learn how to access savings, visit the OKFB Member Benefits page on our website.

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

## Calendar

### YF&R State Fair Livestock Judging

Sept. 18

Contact: Holly Carroll 405-523-2307

### Resolutions Deadline

Oct. 9

Contact: Tasha Duncan 405-530-2681

### OKFB Awards Deadline

Oct. 13

Contact: Marcia Irvin 405-523-2405

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State Rep. John Michael Montgomery, representing House District 36, submits paperwork to become a Comanche County Farm Bureau member at a membership drive in Lawton on Aug. 3.

At the event, Comanche County Farm Bureau informed attendees of the history of the organization and the benefits of Farm Bureau membership including member benefit savings, legislative support, leadership development and more.

## OFB MIC now offers members online account information

In a fast-paced, need-it-now world, consumers are becoming more independent and need important records and information at a click of the mouse or swipe of a smartphone. Oklahoma Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co. now offers its members an OKFB Insured Portal.

The online tool allows members to check membership status and print documents related to policies including declarations, invoices, security verification forms and more. Members also may view policy details, payment history and claims history.

With the OKFB Insured Portal, users also can make premium payments with a debit, checking, or savings account.

To access the tool, visit [www.okfarminsurance.com](http://www.okfarminsurance.com) and click, "Login to my Insurance." If not a registered user, click on the link, "Sign up for a new account," enter policy number and have one of the three criteria handy: zip code,

premium amount, phone number, last billed amount, date of birth or driver's license.

A policy declaration or invoice will contain enough information to set up an account.

Need technical support? Call the OKFB Help Desk at 405-530-2600 or email [support@okfb.com](mailto:support@okfb.com).



Policy #	Due	Balance	DEL
F#M00002805	261.25	763.75	X
F#M00002805	28.79	28.79	X
M#00002652	0.00	0.00	X
M#00002803	801.50	1,179.50	X
M#00002585	374.43	374.43	X

Policy Number	Member Number	EffectiveDate	Expire
CF#00002805	09930333	02/09/2015	

Billing Information	
Total Premium	\$1,005.00
Total Balance	\$763.75 *
Current Amount Due	\$261.25

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