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OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU

# Perspective

May 12, 2017

## OKFB members visit south-central Oklahoma during commodity tour

**O**klahoma Farm Bureau members traveled to the heart of the Arbuckles in central Oklahoma during the 2017 OKFB Commodity Tour May 3-5.

Nearly 60 farmers and ranchers from across the state participated in the three-day tour, which focused on agriculture in south-central Oklahoma.

The tour first visited Valley View Pecans, a Shawnee-based company owned and operated by an OKFB family: John, Janice and Josh Grundmann. In addition to processing small and large batches of

pecans, the company's gift shop offers a wide variety of delicious pecan treats.

Next, members visited Leroy O'Dell's farm located just south of Asher. O'Dell gave an overview of the family's history and information about their show cattle business, followed by a brisket lunch sponsored by the O'Dells. Across the road, Leroy's son Brett led members on a tour of his farm where he sells registered Angus bulls.

Next, members traveled a few minutes down the road to Big Creek Events, founded in 2015 by the Bond family. Several types

of events are held at the center, including weddings, parties, corporate events, receptions and more. Members had the opportunity to tour the beautiful interior of the main building as Darren Bond, the building designer, explained the purpose of the design: to inspire creativity and celebrate beauty and art.

After visiting the Artesian Hotel located in Sulphur, members browsed through unique and local shops before visiting the Rusty Nail Winery for dinner. Wes Hilliard, former

*(Continued on next page)*



*OKFB members listen as Josh Grundmann demonstrates how pecans are processed.*



*Brett O'Dell explains the day-to-day operations of the farm to OKFB members.*



*Rep. Wes Hilliard welcomes OKFB members at the Rusty Nail Winery.*



*More than 50 OKFB members from across the state visited south-central Oklahoma during the 2017 OKFB Commodity Tour, an annual three-day event.*

## Commodity Tour *(Continued from previous page)*

representative of Oklahoma House District 22, welcomed OKFB members to the area as they enjoyed a steak dinner sponsored by Murray County.

The second day kicked off with a tour of Oklahoma Steel and Wire, a family-owned-and-operated manufacturing facility located in Madill. Founded in 1979, the company produces a variety of wire products, including horse panels, field fence, barbed wire, poultry netting and more.

Next, members traveled to the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation's Red River Farm located in Love County. After a welcome lunch, the group heard about the future of sustainable beef, systems-based beef management, and the foundation's Center for Advanced Agricultural Systems and Technology. Members also enjoyed a question-and-answer session about upcoming trends and research development for cattle in Oklahoma.

The last stop for the day was a crawfish farm owned by Sam Barrick, an Oklahoma Farm Bureau Insurance agent in Love County. For dinner, Barrick sponsored a crawfish boil with shrimp and vegetables.

Friday morning began by driving through

the Chickasaw National Recreation Area, located in the foothills of the Arbuckle Mountains near Sulphur. During the tour, the group enjoyed a short video about the history of the area as well as information about the native wildlife. Members also had the chance to taste water from the famed Vendome Well, which produces small amounts of hydrogen sulfide gas, often described as a "rotten egg" smell.

The final stop of the tour was the Chickasaw Cultural Center, a state-of-the-art facility featuring exhibits and artifacts for visitors to learn about Native American culture and history. Members toured the Chikasha Poya Exhibit Center, including the inspiring Spirit Forest and interactive demonstrations. Afterward, the group was served a traditional American Indian meal consisting of Indian tacos; *pishofa*, a traditional Chickasaw corn soup; and grape dumplings, a classic dessert.

The OKFB Commodity Tour is an annual event that provides opportunities for OKFB members to learn more about agriculture in Oklahoma, broadening their horizons and offering ideas to improve their own agricultural operations.



*Evan Whitley, manager of the Noble Foundation's Center for Advanced Agricultural Systems and Technologies, speaks to OKFB members about systems-based beef management.*



*Sam Barrick explains his interest in crawfish and an overview of how his crawfish are raised.*

## GM member benefit ending May 31, 2017

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members have a limited time to save on a Chevrolet, Buick or GMC vehicle purchase before the company's member benefit ends on May 31, 2017.

This OKFB member benefit allows Farm Bureau members to receive \$500 FB Bonus cash toward the purchase or lease of most new Chevrolet, Buick and GMC vehicles with a Farm Bureau discount certificate.

To redeem, print a discount certificate and present it to your local dealer. To print your certificate, visit [okfarmbureau.org/benefits](http://okfarmbureau.org/benefits) and click the link located under GM Discount. The certificate must be presented to the dealership prior to purchase and is good for 60 days after issuance.

FB Bonus Cash is stackable with one private offer and with most other dealer and GM incentives to maximize member

savings. To qualify for the offer, an individual must be a current Farm Bureau member for at least 30 days prior to the date of delivery of the selected vehicle.

Farm Bureau members must make their purchases **on or before May 31, 2017**.

For full details and program eligibility guidelines, contact the OKFB Organization and Membership Division by calling (405) 530-2696.

## Oklahoma Farm Bureau Online

Don't forget to submit Youth Safety Day applications by May 24

Do you know any students grades 5-9? Make sure to invite them to the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee's Youth Safety Day to be held June 2! Applications must be received by Wednesday, May 24, and can be found at [okfarmbureau.org/applications](http://okfarmbureau.org/applications).

Want more commodity tour photos?

Additional photos from the 2017 OKFB Commodity Tour have been uploaded to the OKFB Flickr page. Each stop of the south-central tour has been captured for you to see. To view, download, print and/or share the photos, go to [flickr.com/photos/okfarmbureau/albums](http://flickr.com/photos/okfarmbureau/albums).



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

# Oklahoma Farm Bureau supports agriculture youth at Oklahoma State FFA convention sponsor

Oklahoma Farm Bureau was proud to support Oklahoma's agricultural youth as a title sponsor of the Oklahoma FFA Association's 91st State FFA Convention and Career Show May 2-3 in downtown Oklahoma City.

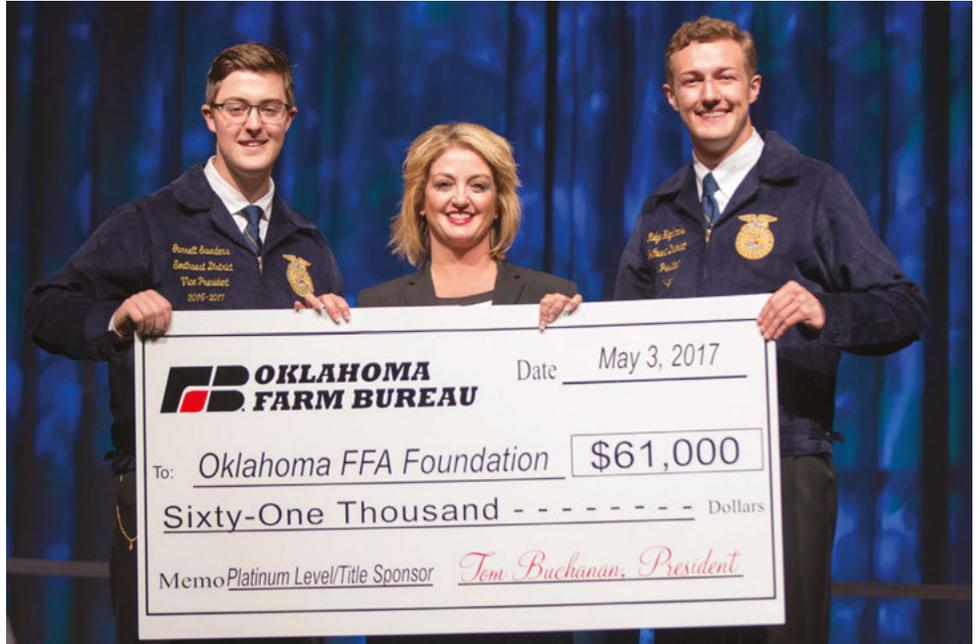
With more than 10,000 FFA members, advisers and guests in attendance, the two-day convention featured member and chapter award presentations, leadership and career development workshops, a career show and more.

"Investing in our state's young people is one of Oklahoma Farm Bureau's most important endeavors," said Monica Wilke, OKFB executive director. "As a former member, I've both experienced and witnessed the positive impact FFA has on students."

A longtime supporter of Oklahoma FFA, OKFB believes in the organization's commitment to preparing and cultivating the state's next generation of leaders.

"Farm Bureau is always looking to recruit leaders who know how to serve," Wilke said, speaking to FFA members. "When asked to support Oklahoma FFA, our answer always will unequivocally be yes."

FFA is a national organization dedicated to youth leadership development through agricultural education. The Oklahoma FFA Association has 357 chapters with more than 27,000 high school members. Learn more about Oklahoma FFA at [www.okffa.org](http://www.okffa.org).



*Top: OKFB Executive Director Monica Wilke presents OKFB's platinum-level title sponsorship check to Oklahoma FFA state officers during a general session of the Oklahoma State FFA Convention on May 3. Above left: Members of the OKFB YF&R manned the Farm Bureau booth at the trade show during the Oklahoma State FFA Convention. Above right: Several FFA members entered the OKFB YF&R's iPad giveaway by visiting the Farm Bureau booth. The lucky winner chosen at random was Kacy Holland of the Harrah FFA Chapter.*

## Member Benefits

### Orlando Vacations

Looking for a fun and exciting vacation for the family? Orlando Vacations makes it easy to decide on a destination! With OKFB member discounts for all major theme park tickets, vacation homes, hotels and resorts, Orlando Vacations could save you up to 35 percent on your next vacation. To receive your discount, visit [okfarmbureau.org/benefits](http://okfarmbureau.org/benefits), click the link under Orlando Vacations, and use the username OKFB.

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

## Calendar

### Oklahoma Legislature Adjourns

May 26 • Oklahoma State Capitol  
Contact: Tasha Duncan (405) 530-2681

### OKFB Youth Safety Day

June 2 • OKFB Home Office  
Contact: Marcia Irvin (405) 523-2405

### On the Road with Ag in the Classroom

June 13-15 • State of Oklahoma  
Contact: Marcia Irvin (405) 523-2405

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## OKFB, Oklahoma Farming and Ranching Foundation partner with FFA to feed hungry Oklahomans

Every year, Oklahoma Farm Bureau and the Oklahoma Farming and Ranching Foundation partner with FFA chapters and Oklahoma Food Banks to help fight childhood hunger in Oklahoma. Through the Oklahoma FFA's Hunger Challenge program, FFA members across the state are encouraged to donate livestock to provide protein sticks for the Oklahoma Food Bank's Food for Kids backpack program.

A total of 226 FFA chapters donated to the Hunger Challenge this year, providing 1,015,764 protein sticks for the backpack program. Donations were raised at the 2016 Tulsa State Fair and Oklahoma Youth Expo in March.

"Agriculture is the state's second-leading industry, so it's staggering to see hunger

remain in our state," said Monica Wilke, OKFB executive director. "As the state's largest general farm organization, feeding every Oklahoman is our responsibility. We're honored to partner with Oklahoma FFA chapters in working toward a hunger-free Oklahoma."

The Beef for Backpacks and Pork for Packs – a collaboration between local farmers, manufacturers and processors – provide protein sticks for the Food for Kids backpack program.

This program supplies chronically hungry elementary school children with a backpack full of kid-friendly, non-perishable and nutritious food every Friday to sustain them over weekends and school holidays. Last year, 29,000 elementary school children

received food during the school year through this program.

"No child should have to go without food. We are so thankful to the hundreds of FFA members across the state who joined us in fighting hunger in Oklahoma," said Jeremy Rich, Oklahoma Farming and Ranching Foundation president. "Thanks to the sacrifices of these students, we are working to help end hunger in Oklahoma."

The Oklahoma Food Banks always need additional assistance with its backpack program. To donate to Beef for Backpacks or Pork for Packs, contact the Oklahoma Farming and Ranching Foundation at (405) 202-1463 or visit the foundation's website at [okfarmingandranchingfoundation.org](http://okfarmingandranchingfoundation.org).

## Oklahoma Youth Leading Agriculture Conference applications due May 26

Applications for the Young Farmers & Ranchers' Oklahoma Youth Leading Agriculture Conference scheduled for June 14-16 are now available on the OKFB website at [okfarmbureau.org/applications](http://okfarmbureau.org/applications). OYLA is a three-day camp for incoming high school seniors designed to increase their agricultural knowledge and leadership skills. All applications **must be postmarked by May 26** to Zac Swartz, 2501 N. Stiles, Oklahoma City, OK 73105, or emailed to [Zac.Swartz@okfb.org](mailto:Zac.Swartz@okfb.org).

# OKAGPOLICY

today



*A center pivot irrigates a field of corn in Texas County. As the state's No. 1 water users, farmers and ranchers must take action to develop water for all Oklahomans into the future.*

## Can water solve Oklahoma's budget problem?

**F**or the past three consecutive years, Oklahoma lawmakers have been forced to grapple with a budget shortfall. An annual state income tax cut trigger, coupled with a decline in oil prices and a lack of state budget cuts, have been attributed to causing the state's current budget situation.

Many have called for the state to diversify its economy, alleging Oklahoma is too reliant on the oil and gas industry. What if water could help expand the state economy?

Water is the lifeblood of human existence. As the world's most precious commodity, water one day could be worth more than oil. But the state currently allows millions of acre

feet to flow out of its borders every year. In fact, an average of 35 million acre feet left the state each year over the past decade—more than 17 times the state's annual water use.

Oklahoma has an abundant supply of water at its fingertips, yet chooses to do nothing with it. Doused by heavy rainfall last week, Oklahoma saw much of its drought diminished. But as farmers and ranchers know all too well, drought is cyclical. There will come a day when the rain does not fall. What then?

Instead of waiting for rain, Oklahoma must take advantage of its rich water supply now. With a robust water infrastructure system, the state can make sure water is where it is

needed, when it is needed.

Imagine the possibilities for the state if water was never a concern. Every Oklahoman has access to clean drinking water. Family farmers and ranchers produce more plentiful, healthy and affordable food than ever before. More goods and commodities are transported by the state's inland waterways. The oil and gas industry continues to grow. And new business is attracted by water.

As the value of water continues to escalate, Oklahoma can emerge as a leader in the nation in water infrastructure. Farm Bureau members today are ready to work toward a bright economic future for the state. Let's develop Oklahoma water!

# American Farm Bureau Federation responds to President Trump's tax reform proposal

**P**resident Donald Trump recently released his plan to reform the federal tax code, which included among other things a repeal of the federal estate tax and a limit to the capital gains tax. Below, find AFBF President Zippy Duvall's response. "Farmers and ranchers need a tax code that promotes the business of farming and ranching and recognizes the unique financial challenges we face. Farm Bureau welcomes a pro-business approach to tax reform, but any tax reform proposal must treat all businesses fairly. Most farm and ranch businesses don't operate like large corporations: they are small, family-run businesses that depend

on deductions and provisions that give them the flexibility they need to keep their businesses running in all seasons.

"Lower tax rates will go a long way in helping farmers and ranchers. But the future of other important provisions for agriculture—like immediate expensing, the deduction for interest expense, cash accounting and like-kind exchanges—is still unclear to us. Farmers run their businesses in a world of uncertainty—from unpredictable markets to uncertain weather and disease outbreaks. The tax code should not add to the challenges of growing our nation's

food, fuel and fiber. We are ready to work with the administration and Congress to address all of agriculture's needs in the tax code.

"Farm Bureau is pleased to see President Trump's plan will immediately take on one of our top concerns, the estate tax. Eliminating the estate tax will free farmers to invest in the future of their family businesses rather than selling off their land and legacy when a family member dies. Farmers and ranchers have already benefitted from congressional action to reduce this burden, and we're ready to bury the death tax once and for all."



## Property tax increase measure stalled, but not for long

**A** measure advanced through the state legislature this year allowing municipalities to access ad valorem taxes for operations for the first time in state history.

HB 1374, which passed through the House and two Senate committees, gives cities and towns the ability to increase property taxes to fund public safety districts, including salaries and equipment. Without a doubt, the measure is a tax increase.

Thanks to rural leadership, HB 1374 was stalled in the state Senate—but only for this year. The bill is still alive and make no mistake will be considered again in next year's legislative session.

Though some may label HB 1374 a classic rural-versus-urban issue, Oklahoma Farm Bureau members believe the bill reveals the state legislature's willingness grow government and tax its citizens. Rather than asking property owners to fit the bill for a municipality, state legislators should instead request municipalities to reevaluate

spending habits. Oklahoma citizens are forced to re-adjust their own spending habits when budgets grow tight. Shouldn't state and local governments do the same?

Family farmers and ranchers certainly take great pride in supporting their local communities. Yet, property taxes are meant to fund tangible assets not day-to-day operations.

Just last week, Tulsa mayor G.T. Bynum wrote in an editorial calling on state legislators to allow the city to fund school operations with increased property taxes. First it's public safety, now it's schools. Once the door is opened, cities and towns will not stop working for more property tax dollars.

Farm Bureau members are ready and willing to continue the fight. With its longstanding policy from members, Oklahoma Farm Bureau is committed to keeping property taxes low to ensure farmers and ranchers can continue producing safest and affordable food for the world.

# Alfalfa, Garfield, Grant, Major and Woods County Farm Bureaus host joint legislative dinner



*Top Left: Speaking to Farm Bureau members at the five-county legislative dinner May 4, former OKFB state board member Sen. Roland Pederson says a lack of family values is the underlying problem facing Oklahoma. Top Right: Bryson Panas (third from left) of Sen. Jim Inhofe's office discusses the U.S. House vote to repeal the Affordable Care Act with Farm Bureau members. Bottom Left: Farm Bureau members share their concerns over the state budget with OKFB's Mark Yates. Bottom Right: Sen. Carl Newton explains to Farm Bureau members the difficulty of passing revenue-raising measures.*

# THANK YOU

**to all county Farm Bureaus that hosted a legislative event this year!**

Alfalfa • Caddo • Craig • Delaware • Garfield • Grady • Grant • Greer • Jackson  
Kiowa • Major • Mayes • Muskogee • Ottawa • Pontotoc • Rogers • Washita • Woods

Developing and maintaining a relationship with state legislators is a vital part of Oklahoma Farm Bureau's work in advocating for agriculture and rural Oklahoma. A special thanks to all the counties that hosted legislators throughout the legislative session!



# Regulations, farmers and the law

By American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall. Published on The Hill.

**T**he Regulatory Accountability Act, a bipartisan measure introduced by Sens.

Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.), would restore reason to our nation’s regulatory process. Regardless of what anyone believes about a specific issue—safety, health or the environment—the underlying regulatory system should be open, transparent and fair. Today, it isn’t.

Regulatory reform is a priority for America’s farmers and ranchers, who, in spite of documented environmental improvement, are under siege by federal regulations that have exploded in scope and severity, often in defiance of law. Farmers and ranchers are vulnerable to this regulatory overreach because our work is so connected to natural resources.

Regulations are necessary, of course, to public health, environmental quality and even market fairness. But, when regulatory actions ignore or surpass the laws on which they are based, the results can be disastrous.

Overreaching bureaucrats tell farmers they can’t plow dry fields. They designate dry ditches as navigable waterways. They classify whole crops such as corn, soybean and wheat as “chemical hazards.”

Today, even in light of a reform-minded administration and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt’s “Back to Basics” agenda, federal regulators would be similarly able to skirt the law to wield inordinate power. Agencies have repeatedly plowed

through the legal constraints placed on them by Congress.

Under an explicit provision in law (7 USC 136w), the EPA administrator was bound by statute to furnish to the secretary of Agriculture and congressional committees a copy of “the final form” of a FIFRA regulation before approving it for publication in the Federal Register. EPA did submit a regulation, just not the final one it sent for publication. Regulators said they did not agree that the earlier version of the regulation had “to be identical to the final version codified in the Code of Federal Regulations.”

The only possible conclusion? The EPA believed it could unilaterally disregard Congress’ preconditions on the agency’s power to regulate.

This was hardly an isolated incident. After the Government Accountability Office found that EPA violated the law by engaging in covert propaganda in support of the Waters of the U.S. rule, the agency had a similar reaction. “We will pay attention to what the GAO has said,” former EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy told the House Agriculture Committee. “We just disagree that it was a problem.”

In the WOTUS rule, EPA also misread the Supreme Court ruling in Rapanos. The agency stretched the statutory language of the Clean Water Act and ignored the vital role Congress reserved in law for states to protect our waters. Is it any wonder that more than 30 states sued the agency?

Against this backdrop, late last year the American Farm Bureau

Federation and 52 other agricultural organizations asked Congress to work in a bipartisan fashion to reform the rulemaking process. We laid out our rallying principles—more transparency, the use of sound science, accountability in agencies’ use of economic and supporting data and a level playing field for all stakeholders—in a white paper that can be found at [bit.ly/AFBFRegReform](http://bit.ly/AFBFRegReform).

However, first and foremost, we want regulatory reform to be bipartisan.

Over the last four decades, presidents from both parties—Carter, Reagan, Clinton and Obama—have issued executive orders establishing how agencies should conduct rulemaking. Costs, benefits,

transparency and federalism all figured prominently in efforts to fix an increasingly unaccountable bureaucracy. Articulated by presidents of such differing viewpoints as Ronald Reagan and Barack Obama, the orders signal bipartisan recognition of a serious problem.

A regulatory process that is fair, open and transparent for all will better protect our environment, our safety and our public health. Reform also will strengthen the American principle as espoused by another president, John Adams, that the United States is a nation of laws rather than men – or in today’s case, rather than a nation of overzealous regulators who shrug off the law.

**“ A regulatory process that is fair, open and transparent for all will better protect our environment, our safety and our public health. ”**

## TAKE ACTION!

Urge Sens. Jim Inhofe and James Lankford to support regulatory reform by visiting [fb.org/issues/regulatory-reform/agriculture-and-regulatory-reform/](http://fb.org/issues/regulatory-reform/agriculture-and-regulatory-reform/)