

# PERSPECTIVE

December 27, 2024



## Navajo Public Schools showcases new greenhouse thanks to OKFB Foundation for Agriculture grant

In southwestern Oklahoma you can find squash plants and radishes growing in the middle of December in a greenhouse found at Navajo Public Schools.

Navajo STEM teacher Tana Curry was able to purchase a 10 x 20-foot greenhouse with the help of the OKFB Foundation for Agriculture Growing with the Foundation for Agriculture Grant.

Navajo Public Schools received one of the \$10,000 Greenhouse Grants in 2023 from the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture.

“With us being a small rural school we wouldn’t be able to have this opportunity if it wasn’t for the Foundation for Agriculture Greenhouse Grant,” said Tana Curry, STEM teacher

at Navajo Public Schools.

The greenhouse is currently being used to implement hands-on learning experiences for students to grow their own produce. Their FFA chapter, tech education and STEM classes have all used the greenhouse to teach students.

“They have not had a horticulture program for about 20 years,” Curry said. “We are trying to push for a farm-to-school program, and we want the students to understand farming and growing their own vegetables.”

Curry said the school hopes to establish a full horticulture program within the next school year.

The vegetables that are currently growing in the greenhouse are lettuce, radishes, squash and a variety of

peppers. The next cycle of plants they hope to have in their greenhouse includes pollinator plants for pollinators like monarch butterflies.

The OKFB Foundation for Agriculture’s greenhouse grant program offers \$10,000 in grants each year. The grant is targeted to groups and organizations who have a hands-on impact in their local community and work to provide connections with food and agriculture through access efforts or education.

The grant program serves the foundation’s mission of connecting consumers with production agriculture and educating Oklahomans about how their food is grown and raised.





Matt Rosman



Rodd Moesel

## OKFB hosts second-annual Ag Defense fundraiser Saturday, Dec. 14 in Oklahoma City

**M**ore than 40 Oklahoma Farm Bureau members gathered at Castle Falls in Oklahoma City Saturday, Dec. 14, for the organization's annual Ag Defense Fundraiser.

The fundraiser serves as an opportunity for county Farm Bureaus and OKFB members to support the organization's efforts to defend agriculture from challenges posed by animal rights activities, environmental activists and other groups who lodge attacks on modern production agriculture practices.

The focus of the evening was the

recent efforts by a well funded in-state organization that is pushing its animal activism agenda, which included filing two bills in the 2024 Oklahoma state legislature proposing changes to sow housing in the state.

Attendees heard from Matt Rosman, who attended a meeting of the activist group and shared with fundraiser attendees the group's focus, plans and efforts to impact animal agriculture in Oklahoma. Rosman works with the Oklahoma Youth Expo, Cattlemen's Congress and in other agricultural enterprises in the state.

Fundraiser attendees also heard from Oklahoma animal agriculture leaders in a video where they detailed the challenges both in-state and out-of-state groups pose to animal agriculture.

County Farm Bureaus sponsoring the event by purchasing a table included Comanche County, Oklahoma County, Rogers County, Seminole County and Tulsa County.

The funds raised from the event will help OKFB respond to attacks on production agriculture on a variety of fronts.

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## OKFB hosts booth during the 2024 Tulsa Farm Show Dec. 12-14

**O**klahoma Farm Bureau shared the numerous programs, activities and events of the statewide organization with attendees of the Tulsa Farm Show Dec. 12-14 at the SageNet Center at Expo Square.

OKFB hosted a booth manned by OKFB staff members and insurance agents from around the Tulsa area. Staff and agents shared the benefits of a Farm Bureau membership, discussed the organization's programs and promoted OKFB Insurance with attendees.

Visitors to the booth had the opportunity to play a Plinko-style game to win giveaways and be entered to win a door prize by signing up on their phones using a QR code. Pizza was also provided to show attendees during lunchtime.

OKFB also sponsored the show, which brings together agriculturalists from around the region who visit numerous vendor booths, attend workshops and connect with fellow farmers and ranchers from around the state.



# OKFB accelerators program partners with Generation Food Rural Partners Fund



**G**eneration Food Rural Partners Fund has committed to fund Oklahoma Farm Bureau's Oklahoma Grassroots Rural & Ag Business accelerators program, with plans to invest in start-up companies based in Oklahoma.

This marks the ninth investment for GFRP, a fund managed by Big Idea Ventures, a global investment leader within the food-tech, agri-tech, and materials science sectors.

The investment is made possible by new capital commitments to the fund by OKFB, Oklahoma AgCredit, BancFirst, and the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology.

OCAST will provide matching funds for the investments made through the partnership. CoBank, one of the fund's anchor Farm Credit investors, also increased their commitment to the fund.

"We are honored that Rodd Moesel and the team at the Oklahoma Farm Bureau chose GFRP to facilitate this critical investment partnership," said

Tom Mastrobuoni, chief investment officer for Big Idea Ventures. "Accessing venture capital investment remains a struggle for start-ups not located on the coasts of the U.S. Our focus on living wage job creation in rural communities is strongly aligned with the mission of the OKFB program."

"Oklahoma Farm Bureau is excited to be a part of the partnership with Big Idea Ventures, Generation Food Rural Partners Fund and other committed Oklahoma investment partners," said OKFB President Rodd Moesel.

"This collaboration will provide capital infusions through an Oklahoma-centric, Oklahoma-guided funding opportunity into the Oklahoma Grassroots Rural & Ag Business Accelerators' startup companies and other rural businesses we work with across Oklahoma who are creating rural jobs and shaping agricultural innovation. We're grateful to Tom Mastrobuoni and the team at Big Idea Ventures for stepping into this important space with us. We hope this is an important first step to encourage

much more venture capital & other investments into the amazing innovation we see across rural Oklahoma."

"OCAST is proud to support this partnership with Generation Food Rural Partners and OKFB," said Jennifer McGrail, executive director of OCAST. "By helping local start-ups get the funding they need, the coalition is building a stronger future for Oklahoma's rural communities. The effort is all about investing in local talent and making sure innovative ideas have the backing to succeed in Oklahoma."

McGrail also added that the collaboration exemplifies OCAST's commitment to driving economic development and championing Oklahoma-based innovations.

"We believe the Fund's mission and purpose align well with the mission of the Farm Credit System and are pleased to help support the Fund's focus on Oklahoma companies," said Bill Davis, president and CEO of Oklahoma AgCredit.

## Fish and Wildlife Service propose listing for monarch butterflies

**T**he U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed to list the monarch butterfly as threatened under the Endangered Species Act stemming from a settlement reached in litigation.

The monarch covers the largest geographic area ever to have an ESA listing proposed.

OKFB will be working with AFBF and other state Farm Bureaus written to submit comments. Any members currently providing monarch habitat or

with feedback on the proposed listing should contact Marla Peek, OKFB senior director of regulatory affairs.

There will be a 90-day comment period on the proposed rule ending March 12, 2025. A final rule is expected by early December 2025. That could change depending on what action the new administration does with the rule. Keep an eye out for more information in the coming weeks.





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## OKFB participates in pork council's annual #GiveAHam Challenge



(L to R) Jacob Beck, OKFB Young Farmers & Ranchers chair; Rodd Moesel, OKFB president; David VonTungeln, OKFB Foundation for Agriculture president; and Mignon Bolay, OKFB Women's Leadership Committee chair, stand with hams they donated to the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma as part of the Oklahoma Pork Council's annual Give a Ham challenge, which connects OKFB's agriculture community with Oklahomans in need. Matti Carlile of the pork council challenged OKFB's WLC committee, which in turn challenged the YF&R committee, who challenged the OKFB Foundation for Agriculture who finally challenged the OKFB state board. Moesel on behalf of the state board passed the challenge along to National Livestock along with all 77 county Farm Bureaus.

## OKFB 2025 calendars now available

Oklahoma Farm Bureau's 2025 printed calendar is now available, and OKFB field staff are delivering copies to county Farm Bureau leaders. The calendar features photography from around the state of Oklahoma taken by the OKFB communications department and includes Farm Bureau events planned for the year.

Limited additional copies may be available. Contact your field representative for more information.

