

PERSPECTIVE

January 28, 2022

2022 OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU Leadership Conference

Feb. 15 | Embassy Suites, OKC



Join OKFB for 2022 Leadership Conference Feb. 15

Oklahoma Farm Bureau members are encouraged to attend the 2022 Leadership Conference slated for Feb. 15 at the Embassy Suites Downtown Medical Center in Oklahoma City. Attendees are invited to grow their agricultural policy knowledge and connect with leaders from across the state.

This year's conference will include speakers from the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and the Oklahoma Medical Marijuana Authority. Attendees will also hear from elected officials and Harrison Pittman, director of the National Ag Law Center, who will deliver the event's keynote address. The event will conclude with a legislative reception and awards dinner featuring guitarist Edgar Cruz.

OKFB members should contact their county Farm Bureau office to register for the conference. To book a hotel room at the discounted rate, visit okfb.news/LeadConf22.

For more information about the conference, contact Steve Thompson at (405) 523-2300.

Tuesday, Feb. 15 - Tentative Agenda

10 a.m. Welcome

10:15 a.m. **Medical marijuana update:** Donnie Anderson, director of the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics

11 a.m. **Medical marijuana update:** Adria Berry, executive director of the Oklahoma Medical Marijuana Authority

11:45 a.m. Break

12 p.m. Lunch

12:30 p.m. **State appropriations and budget update:** Senator Roger Thompson and Representative Kevin Wallace

1:15 p.m. Break

1:30 p.m. Oklahoma State Auditor Cindy Byrd

2:30 p.m. Congressional staff update

3 p.m. **Keynote address:** Harrison Pittman, director of the National Ag Law Center

4 p.m. Break

5 p.m. Legislative reception

6:30 p.m. Awards dinner and music

OKFB sets priority issues ahead of 2022 legislative session

Oklahoma Farm Bureau has set the organization's top legislative priorities for the 2022 Oklahoma Legislative Session. These priority issues were brought forth and voted on by Farm Bureau members in all 77 counties.

This year's top priorities include medical marijuana, livestock and crop production, rural infrastructure, landowner advocacy and issues about Oklahoma's future.

Medical marijuana

A new priority issue for 2022, the regulation of medical marijuana is expected to take center stage in the upcoming legislative session. With the recent surge in medical marijuana operations around the state of Oklahoma, many Farm Bureau members have voiced their concerns on industry regulation and the impact it could have on production agriculture.

OKFB supports increased legal compliance and enforcement for marijuana growing operations as well as increased transparency regarding ownership of marijuana facilities in the state.

Livestock and crop production

The state of Oklahoma is facing a severe shortage in large-animal veterinarians, especially in rural areas. This is a growing concern for many Farm Bureau members raising livestock. With the state's projected budget surplus for the new fiscal year, OKFB has adopted policy to support the creation of an incentive program for large-animal veterinarians in rural areas.

For farmers around the state, the application of herbicides to crops and prescribed burning of pastureland is often necessary as stewards of their land. OKFB supports liability protection for common pasture and cropland management practices.

Feral hogs, black vultures, white-tailed deer, Canadian geese and armyworms are a few of the many invasive species found in the state of Oklahoma. They can be a danger to livestock and cause costly damage to farmland. OKFB supports aggressive measures to eradicate these and other nuisance species.

Rural infrastructure

Access to high-speed broadband internet and quality wireless phone service is crucial for Oklahomans in the most rural areas of the state. The internet and mobile phones are a major part of daily life both at home and on the farm. OKFB supports the expansion of high-speed internet and wireless phone service in rural Oklahoma.

In addition to high-speed internet and mobile phone service, rural Oklahomans face many challenges in finding quality and affordable healthcare in their communities. OKFB supports increased access to healthcare in rural Oklahoma.

OKFB also supports funding for improved maintenance to roads and bridges in these rural areas. Basic infrastructure is essential for conducting business and moving products in and out of these areas.

Landowner advocacy

OKFB has long opposed increases to ad valorem taxes in the state of Oklahoma. Property tax increases are often

considered to help increase municipal budgets, but they unfairly affect farmers and ranchers who often have a great amount of land and capital – some of which doesn't always generate a profit. OKFB supports a 60% voting threshold for all ad valorem elections and is opposed to all forms of county zoning authority. OKFB will continue its efforts in 2022 to prevent property tax increases.

Oklahoma's future

The McGirt Supreme Court decision has created an increasing amount of uncertainty across the state, especially for farmers, ranchers and landowners in eastern and south-central Oklahoma. OKFB supports working cooperatively with state, federal and tribal leaders to address the governance issues created by the McGirt decision.

The right for Oklahoma citizens to petition for a change in state law is important, but in recent years, OKFB members have expressed growing concerns about the process that is used for a proposal to appear on a statewide ballot. OKFB supports state initiative petition reform to ensure that citizens in every part of the state are included in the process, and that signatures are legitimate and verified.

OKFB has a longstanding partnership with the OSU Cooperative Extension Service, and our members work closely with their educators and specialists in all 77 counties. We continue our support for increased funding for OSU extension and ag research programs.

YF&R members invited to legislative day Feb. 16

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers committee will hold their annual legislative day Feb. 16 at the state Capitol.

Farm Bureau members ages 18-35 are invited to join their fellow YF&R members as they work to promote agriculture and rural Oklahoma at the state Capitol and learn more about Farm Bureau policy.

OKFB public policy staff will provide a policy briefing at 8:30 a.m. before members head to the capitol to visit with legislators at 9 a.m.

Members must register online by Feb. 8 at okfb.news/YFRLegDay22.

For more information about the event, contact YF&R Coordinator Zac Swartz at (405) 523-2300.



OKFB members attend 2022 AFBF Convention

More than 40 Oklahoma Farm Bureau members attended the 103rd American Farm Bureau Convention Jan. 7-12 in Atlanta, Georgia where they took part in general sessions, competed in Young Farmers and Ranchers competitive events, set grassroots policies and received national awards.

Members work to set grassroots policies for 2022

OKFB's six voting delegates discussed and voted on Farm Bureau members' grassroots policy proposals to set AFBF's 2022 policy. Cattle markets, governmental overreach and regulations and labor issues were some of leading issues voted on by members.

Resolutions concerning price discovery and competition in the cattle markets were a highlight for OKFB's delegates. Farm Bureau members from around the nation voted to oppose government mandates, which would require livestock slaughter facilities to enforce a percentage of cattle be purchased through cash bids.

Three YF&R members compete in national events

Young Farmers and Ranchers members who won OKFB's 2021 YF&R competitions represented Oklahoma in AFBF's YF&R competitive events. Okmulgee County Farm Bureau members Will and Leslie Lewis and Tim Taylor competed in the Excellence in Agriculture Award and discussion meet, respectively. River Mitchell, Comanche County Farm Bureau member, competed in the Achievement Award.

OKFB honored for excellence

AFBF awarded OKFB with a New Horizon award for one of the most innovative new Farm Bureau programs and four state awards of excellence.

OKFB earned the New Horizon Award for creating and supporting the Oklahoma Farm Bureau/Oklahoma 4-H ATV in a partnership with Oklahoma State University Extension and Oklahoma 4-H. The facility, located in Guthrie, trains Oklahomans of all ages how to safely operate ATVs through

classroom education and a hands-on training course.

The program areas in which OKFB earned awards of excellence include Advocacy, Coalitions & Partnerships, Engagement & Outreach, and Leadership & Business Development.

Members learn and engage

Farm Bureau members heard from AFBF President Zippy Duvall, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, Founder and Chairman of Afterburner Jim Murphy, and comedian Jeff Allen during the three AFBF convention general sessions. President Joe Biden also addressed members by video.

Members attended breakout sessions covering a variety of agricultural and rural topics such as succession planning, mental health, the economic outlook for agriculture, recruitment of members and agriculture policy.

AFBF is set to host the 2023 AFBF Convention Jan. 6-11, 2023, in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Learn more at annualconvention.fb.org.



OKFB President Rodd Moesel presents the Oklahoma flag during the opening session at the AFBF annual meeting.



OKFB YF&R are recognized for competing in the 2022 AFBF YF&R competitive events.



Members of the OKFB Women's Leadership Committee pack meals for the Atlanta Community Food Bank.



AFBF President Zippy Duvall presents the AFBF New Horizon Award to OKFB President Rodd Moesel.

**PUBLISHED BY
OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU**

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OKFB co-hosts first session of Candidate School

Oklahoma Farm Bureau co-hosted the first session of the 2022 Candidate School in cooperation with the Oklahoma Association of Realtors and The State Chamber January 14 in Oklahoma City.

The 21 participants learned the basics of entering a political race as they prepare to begin their campaigns for a state house or senate seat, such as how to file reports, key topics Oklahoma voters are interested in and how to conduct themselves with the media.

The next session of the two-part program will be held Feb. 16 at the state Capitol.



More than 20 candidates attend the 2022 Candidate School in Oklahoma City Jan. 14 to prepare themselves for upcoming state campaigns.



Josh Cantrell, future house district 49 candidate, asks speaker Pat McFerron a question after his presentation covering the issues of most concern to Oklahomans.

Kouplen appointed to head state FSA

Former Oklahoma Farm Bureau president Steve Kouplen was appointed to serve as the executive director of the USDA Farm Service Agency in Oklahoma Jan. 20 by President Biden.

In his new position, Kouplen will work to implement agricultural policy, administer credit and loan programs, and manage conservation, commodity, disaster, and farm marketing programs in a way that meets the needs of constituents.

In addition to serving as president of OKFB, he served as president of Okmulgee County Farm Bureau, Chairman of the Oklahoma Beef Council, and member of the board of directors for the East Central Electric Cooperative, Beggs School District, and Okmulgee County Fair Board. He is also a past member of the local Farm Service Agency Committee and the Okmulgee County Rural Water District #6.