

PERSPECTIVE

May 17, 2024



OKFB members learn about Louisiana agriculture in the heart of Cajun country during 2024 OKFB Ag Tour

More than 60 Oklahoma Farm Bureau members learned about the spicy, savory and sweet Louisiana agriculture industry during the 2024 OKFB Ag Tour May 6-9 to Vermilion Parish, Louisiana.

The tour featured two days of stops and visits to farms, agribusinesses and cultural destinations in southwest Louisiana near Lafayette.

Members arrived on Monday, May 6, with a welcome dinner and meeting with Vermilion Parish Farm Bureau members and leaders at the parish Farm Bureau office. The local Farm Bureau planned the tour stops for OKFB members with numerous visits at local Farm Bureau members' farms and ranches.

The first full day of visits kicked off on

Tuesday, May 7, with a tour of the LSU AgCenter H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station. OKFB members learned about the class-leading rice breeding program the station has developed over decades along with an overview of the Louisiana rice industry. Members toured the research farm where they saw rice in various stages of growth along with crawfish ponds where the station studies integrated rice and crawfish agricultural production programs.

Tuesday afternoon featured tours of local farms including a stop at a sugar cane field farmed by Vermilion Parish County Farm Bureau President Bryan Simon, who showed OKFB members farm equipment used in sugar cane

production along with an overview of the crop's growing season.

OKFB members heard from rancher Raymond Fontenot of Crescent Bar F who raises grass-finished beef that he sells directly to area chefs for use in their restaurants. The Duhan family showed OKFB members the heart of their haying operation where they take round hay bales and re-bale and bundle them into small square bales for sale around the region.

The evening featured a tour of L'Terre at Live Oak Plantation, a 6000-acre farm that includes managed marshlands, rice and crawfish fields, cattle and hay

Continued on next page ...

Ag Tour, continued from front page ...

production. OKFB members had the opportunity to see the marshlands from atop airboats and had the opportunity to see the alligators that call L'Terre home.

After a crawfish boil dinner, Farm Bureau members learned about alligator farming and conservation, which work hand-in-hand to preserve a wild population in the area while raising alligators commercially for a wide variety of beneficial purposes.

Wednesday, May 8, kicked off at Avery Island at the Tabasco Factory Tour and Museum where OKFB members learned about the history of Tabasco, the peppers that are raised for the internationally known hot sauce and the personal details of the McIlhenny family, who has been at the helm of the company for generations.

The next stop took members to the Louisiana Sugar Cane Cooperative, or LASUCA, in St. Martinville.

Members learned how sugar cane that is grown around the region is milled into sugar for consumers around the country and beyond. John Hebert, LASUCA ag division manager, showed OKFB members sugar cane harvesting equipment and discussed the cooperative's custom harvesting operation and shared that once sugar cane harvest begins in late fall, harvesters run, rain or shine, to keep

the coop's mill running throughout the harvest season.

OKFB members visited the Houmas House Plantation on the banks of the Mississippi River near Darrow where they toured the historic home and gardens. A tour guide walked members through the home and shared information about the property's history, its residents and the role the plantation played throughout the area's history.

The 2024 Ag Tour culminated in a visit to the Louisiana Farm Bureau headquarters in Baton Rouge where LAFB staff and leaders hosted a dinner and took OKFB members on a tour of the organization's new building. State board members Allen McClain and Richard Fortenot along with LAFB Assistant to the President Kyle McCann welcomed members to the office and shared how their organization represents Louisiana farmers and ranchers.

Throughout the tour, OKFB members enjoyed a wide variety of local food at several meals featuring crawfish, oysters, shrimp, crab and more.

The OKFB Ag Tour is an annual bus tour for OKFB members that helps expand their agricultural horizons and experience through tours and cultural experiences. The 2024 event was the first fully out-of-state Ag Tour. The 2025 tour is currently being planned for a region in Oklahoma.

Legislative update: budget work marks last weeks of session

Mid-May in the legislature brings with a focus on the state budget. It is a task even more challenging than usual after Senate President Pro Tempore Greg Treat removed appropriations chair Sen. Roger Thompson. Sen. Chuck Hall, who previously served as vice chair, assumed the role and Sen. Paul Rosino became vice chair.

Seeing a stalemate, Gov. Stitt called on all parties to work out a budget agreement through a series of meetings between him and both chambers.

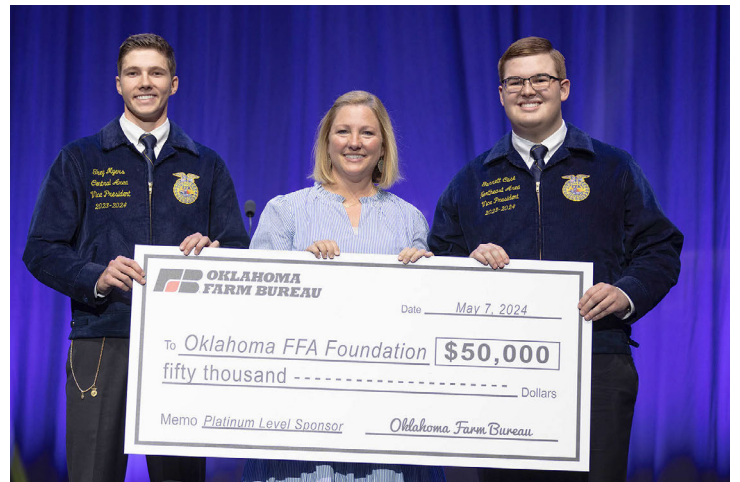
Oklahoma Farm Bureau continues to work on HB 4118 to provide liability protection for poultry growers following the law. It's currently in conference committee and not likely to move until a budget agreement is reached.

HB 1792 by Rep. Mike Osburn and Sen. Dave Rader has emerged as an item of concern. It would reduce punishments for a long list of crimes, including many agriculture-related violations. OKFB has expressed objections to the proponents and is working through alternative approaches. An effort to oppose the bill when it reaches the House floor again remains a possibility.

OKFB connects with FFA members during 2024 Oklahoma FFA Convention in Tulsa



FFA members sign up for giveaways at the OKFB career fair booth during the 2024 Oklahoma FFA Convention. OKFB connected with FFA members and shared the organization's numerous ag youth programs with convention attendees.



OKFB Director of Membership and OKFB Foundation for Agriculture Holly Carroll (center) received OKFB's platinum sponsorship recognition during the Tuesday general session of the 2024 Oklahoma FFA Convention in Tulsa.

OKFB applauds Stitt's veto of water metering bill

Gov. Kevin Stitt vetoed HB 3194 Tuesday, April 30, which would have required the installation of metering devices on all permitted groundwater wells in the state of Oklahoma. Oklahoma Farm Bureau asked the governor to veto the bill after it unexpectedly passed the Senate and was sent to the governor in the middle of stakeholder negotiations.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau President Rodd Moesel released the following statement praising the governor's veto:

"Oklahoma Farm Bureau members thank Gov. Kevin Stitt for standing up for Oklahomans' property rights today with his veto of HB 3194.

"As family farmers and ranchers who care for and rely upon our state's natural resources, Farm Bureau members recognize that groundwater is a vital private property right in Oklahoma and is essential to ensuring the security of the United States' food supply. Any changes to how those rights can be utilized should be developed through thoughtful consideration from stakeholders around the state.

"Oklahoma Farm Bureau is committed to achieving the goal of responsible water use and conservation, and we look forward to working on this shared goal with the legislature in the future."

OKFB hosts mock Demo Day for Activate Oklahoma cohort

Oklahoma Farm Bureau hosted the 2024 Activate Oklahoma cohort Monday, May 6, at the home office in Oklahoma City for a mock Demo Day as part of their programming through the Oklahoma Grassroots Rural and Ag Business Accelerators program.

The six cohort members each had five minutes to pitch their ideas to an audience of partner groups, including Oklahoma Small Business Development

Center and the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology and more. The founders answered questions from the audience for five minutes after their presentations.

The cohort members will now continue their programming, equipped with the knowledge and skills they gained through this mock pitch event as they prepare for the real Demo Day in the coming months.



Bender named finance administrator for OKFB

Whitney Bender has been named finance administrator for Oklahoma Farm Bureau.

Bender has worked for OKFB for nearly 25 years, serving most recently as ag records clerk.

In her new position, Bender will oversee the bookkeeping and accounting for the OKFB federation, including processing bill payments, handling expenses, and creating financial reports to help guide the organization's management and leadership.

"Farm Bureau has been a rewarding place to work, and I'm looking forward to serving our organization's leaders as finance administrator," Bender said. "Over the past 25 years I have enjoyed working with county Farm Bureau leaders and staff along with our OKFB federation staff, and I am excited about this next chapter helping our organization serve Oklahoma agriculture."

Bender moved into the role after Amy Wilson, who served as staff accountant, retired after 42 years of service.

Bender and her husband, Jake, live in Shawnee near their three children and granddaughter.



**PUBLISHED BY
OKLAHOMA FARM BUREAU**

Postmaster:

Send address corrections to:

Perspective
P.O. Box 53332,
Oklahoma City, OK 73152-3332

STAFF DIRECTORY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Thad Doye
(405) 523-2438

**VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND
PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Dustin Mielke
(405) 530-2640

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF MEDIA RELATIONS
AND ADVOCACY COMMUNICATIONS**

Rachel Havens
(405) 523-2346

Oklahoma Farm Bureau
2501 N. Stiles
Oklahoma City, OK 73105-3126

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 131
Okla. City, OK.

OKFB YF&R 2024 Shotgun Shoot Fundraiser set for Friday, August 9, registration now open

The Oklahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers will host their annual Shotgun Shoot Fundraiser Friday, August 9, at Silverleaf Shotgun Sports near Guthrie.

The fundraiser features a sporting-clays-style shoot with proceeds benefitting the work of the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture.

Registration is now open through Friday, August 2, on the OKFB website for sponsors, teams and individuals who will compete in one of three divisions for youth shooters, collegiate shooters and an open division.

The day will start with registration at 8 a.m. followed by a required safety meeting at 9 a.m. Shooting will start immediately following the safety meeting, and ammunition will be provided to shooters. Prizes will be awarded in the three divisions along with a prize for the overall high shooter.

Sponsorships are available at three levels including \$1000 title sponsorships, \$750 platinum

sponsorships and \$500 gold sponsorships. Title sponsors receive two four-person teams along with sponsor signs and logo recognition; platinum sponsors receive one four-person team along with sponsor signs and logo recognition; and gold sponsors receive one four-person team in addition to a sponsor sign.

Four-person teams can register for \$450 per team, and individual shooters can register for \$125 per person. Registration fees are due the day of the event.

Each registration includes a lunch, and additional lunch tickets can be purchased for \$10 each. Golf carts can be reserved for the day of the shoot for \$100 on a first-come, first-served basis.

For questions on registration or sponsorship, contact Holly Carroll at (405) 523-2300.

Register online for the
shotgun shoot today at
okfb.news/ShotgunShoot24



**OKLAHOMA
FARM BUREAU**

**SHOTGUN
SHOOT**

FUNDRAISER

Friday, August 9
Silverleaf Shotgun Sports
Guthrie, OK