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Support Oregon ag: Join Farm Bureau

Whatever kind of farm or ranch you have, public policy is part of your life. From taxes to transportation, water to land use, EPA to ODA, nearly every area of law and regulation impacts your business.

Farm Bureau was founded by farmers and ranchers nearly 100 years ago with this simple notion: We have a stronger voice when we speak together. Joining with nearly 7,000 farm and ranch family members across Oregon, there is no more effective way to amplify your voice in the legislative arena than Farm Bureau.

“Our farms may be of different sizes and we may use different methods, but we are all directly impacted by the rules and regulations that come out of Salem and Washington D.C.,” said Barry Bushue, Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) president.

“Our common goal, what makes us all part of the Farm Bureau family, is to keep Oregon agriculture strong, vital, and viable now and for future generations,” he said.

While some of the policy issues have changed, the need for Farm Bureau has not. In fact it has become all the more critical that agriculture is well represented and strongly engaged at the state capitol as Oregon’s urban-based population continues to climb.



On March 28, Governor Brown, Oregon Dairy Princesses, Senator Betsy Johnson, Tillamook Farm Bureau and Oregon Dairy Farmers Association member Chad Allen, Rep. Deborah Boone, and Rep. Dave Gombert attended a special signing ceremony for SB 1517, a bill proposed by OFB and the dairy association in 2016. The bill gives Tillamook County and local farmers more say on the development of wetland restoration projects in that county. This is the first program of its kind in the nation! You can help Farm Bureau’s work at the legislature by responding to action alerts at oregonfb.org/advocacy.

Among the many bills Farm Bureau is working on this state session, OFB has fought legislation that would:

- End the farm use and homesite assessments and personal property tax exemption for farm equipment in 2024.
- Remove pesticides from right-to-farm protection and expose farmers to frivolous lawsuits.
- Impose a \$100 tax on water rights, and require farmers outside irrigation districts to install expensive measuring devices on all water diversions.
- Prohibit the use of antibiotics for disease prevention and require public reporting of antibiotics used on the farm.
- Require the Dept. of Environmental Quality to

adopt a new, expensive, unnecessary regulatory program for air quality for Oregon dairies.

- Bring California’s diesel retrofit and replacement mandate to Oregon.
- Place predictable/flexible scheduling requirements on Oregon businesses.

Farm Bureau has supported bills that would:

- Fix Oregon’s Sick Time law to exempt business owners and their family members from the employee count for the purposes of qualifying for paid vs. unpaid sick time.
- Create voluntary Family Leave Savings Accounts to pay wages lost due to family or medical leave.
- Ensure that Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board contractors

On March 1, Clackamas County Farm Bureau President Jon Iverson testified against HB 2859, which would’ve ended the farm use and homesite assessments and personal property tax exemption for farm equipment in 2024. Hundreds of farmers, ranchers, and foresters came to the capitol to oppose the bill and were successful in having that section removed by the House Committee on Revenue. It was a great testament to the grassroots power of Oregon agriculture!



are insured in case of flooding or other impacts on neighboring landowners.

- Create the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program to provide a new set of tools for landowners in Oregon to support working farms and ranches, while also providing incentives and support for conservation benefits on those lands.
- Tie the exclusion threshold for filing an estate tax return to inflation and raise the exclusion threshold to \$5.49 million, which is the current federal exclusion threshold.
- Provide funding for FFA; Oregon State University statewides; essential Oregon Dept. of Agriculture programs; and Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife predator control, wolf management, and sage grouse programs.
- Create the Agricultural Workforce Housing Operations Tax Credit to provide equity for the construction and rehabilitation of on-farm housing.

OFB is also at the table on talks about revisions to the Oregon Wolf

Conservation & Management Plan to ensure it contains changes livestock producers need and maintains programs that help ranchers protect their animals from wolf depredation.

Get involved and make a difference this legislative session by responding to OFB’s action alerts. See current action items and sign up to receive them via email at oregonfb.org/advocacy. OFB’s online advocacy system makes contacting legislators quick and easy. They need to hear from more farmers and ranchers about how proposed laws would play out in rural areas.

Interested in meeting with a lawmaker, submitting comments, or testifying at a committee hearing on an issue you’re passionate about? Contact Jenny Dresler, OFB director of state public policy, at jenny@oregonfb.org.

You can support OFB’s efforts by joining Farm Bureau as a voting or supporting member. Learn how at oregonfb.org or contact us at 503.399.1701.

Meet Bryan Harper of Lane County Farm Bureau

In March, fifth-generation hazelnut farmer Bryan Harper was elected the new president of Lane County Farm Bureau — and this month he graces the cover of OFB’s *Oregon’s Bounty* magazine, which is sent to over 66,000 households across the state.

The magazine and *Oregon’s Bounty* online at oregonfb.org feature the state’s biggest and best guide to farm stands, u-picks, and on-farm festivals. The 300 farms listed are owned exclusively by voting and supporting Farm Bureau members.

In this issue, Harper shares the story of how

he’s carrying on his family’s proud tradition of farming — and of being involved in Farm Bureau.

“My grandpa, Tom Harper, was the first president of Lane County Farm Bureau. It’s pretty cool that I get to carry on that tradition,” said Harper.

“Farm Bureau is important because it takes everybody in agriculture standing up together to have a strong voice in the legislature,” he said. “Where else do you have integrated work between people in cattle, dairy, seed crops, and hazelnuts?”

“There are a lot of issues that affect all of



us. It’s pretty cool getting everyone together to have conversations and help each other out.”

Read Harper’s story and check out the *Oregon’s Bounty* searchable guide at oregonfb.org.

Farm Bureau lawsuit protects farmers’ privacy

Good news on the legal and personal privacy front: American Farm Bureau and the National Pork Producers Council have closed the final chapter of their lawsuit challenging the Environmental Protection Agency’s release of farmer and rancher personal information when the agency responds to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

On March 27, a federal judge approved a

settlement that secures the private information of thousands of livestock and poultry farmers in 36 states, including Oregon.

Before the lawsuit, EPA had released spreadsheets of detailed, personal information about farm and ranch families, including phone numbers, email addresses, and GPS coordinates of homes in response to three FOIA requests. Those personal details will now be removed before

the agency releases any information about ag operations in the future.

“Nobody has invested more effort into protecting farm and ranch family information than Farm Bureau,” said OFB President Barry Bushue.

“OFB has worked at the state and national levels to be sure that producers have a say in who gets their information and how it’s used. This is a big step forward in privacy protection.”

Farm Bureau membership pays

With Farm Bureau membership comes great savings with premier companies like **Grainger, GM/Chevy/Buick, Case-IH, CAT, Choice and Wyndham Hotels, Avis and Budget**, and many more. It’s easy to recoup much more than the cost of annual dues with these generous member benefit programs.

The newest offering is with **Supervised Fuels**, a division of **Mid-Columbia Producers Inc.** Qualified voting and supporting Farm Bureau members can access wholesale fuel pricing at **Pacific Pride** and **CFN** card-lock stations statewide.

Also new is a program with the **AirMedCare Network** of preeminent air ambulance providers. Farm Bureau members can join for a reduced rate of \$55 per year.

Learn about all of Farm Bureau’s member benefit programs at oregonfb.org or call OFB at 503.399.1701.

