

OREGON FARM BUREAU

Priorities for 2018 short session

The 2018 Oregon Legislative Session starts on Feb. 5. From the first gavel drop, Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) Government Affairs staff will be at the capitol representing the interests of Farm Bureau members and advocating for the needs of Oregon agriculture.

OFB Director of State Public Policy Jenny Dresler gives an overview of Farm Bureau's top priorities for this short session, which will last no more than 35 days.

Support use of mobile handheld devices for safety reasons

A move by the 2017 Oregon Legislature to protect motorists ended up with a surprise for farmers and ranchers.

Legislation to crack down on distracted driving eliminated an appeals court ruling that gave farmers the ability to use cellphones and two-way radios for work-related communication while operating a motor vehicle. "There's a national movement to address the problem of distracted driving. However, Oregon's bill risks the safety of operators who must move heavy equipment between fields or along public roadways," said Dresler.

OFB will work with lawmakers and other industry groups to fix this issue and allow for the limited use of radio and handheld mobile devices when engaged in activities that could pose a safety risk for the driver.

Support making bovine manure tax credit workable

In the 2017 legislative session, OFB joined the



Outgoing Clackamas County Farm Bureau President Jon Iverson testified in opposition to a bill during the 2017 Oregon Legislative Session. OFB needs farmers and ranchers to share their stories at the capitol! Email jenny@oregonfb.org to get involved.

Oregon Dairy Farmers Assn. in supporting the restructuring of the bovine manure tax credit.

The bill capped the credit at \$10 million per biennium and moved the certification of the tax credit from the Dept. of Energy to the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture.

Unfortunately, the bill passed with a wording error that makes it unworkable.

"Due to this drafting error, farmers cannot actually apply for or receive the credit for their manure digesters," said Dresler.

OFB supports a technical fix to the 2017 bill so farmers can use the credit to offset biomass generation costs.

Support expanding seed contract protections to growers

Initially brought forward by a specialty seed grower in 2016, OFB supports efforts to expand the grass seed slow-pay, no-pay contracting protections to include all seed growers.

"Legislation was developed by a broad workgroup over the past year," said Dresler. "The OFB

House of Delegates passed a similar policy in 2016."

Oppose cap-and-trade

OFB and other ag organizations urge lawmakers to oppose a cap-and-trade proposal modeled after California's program.

In a nutshell, "cap-and-trade" means setting a statewide limit on greenhouse gas emissions — and requiring the largest carbon-producing companies to purchase or trade credits for the right to release emissions beyond that limit.

But Oregon is already one of the "cleanest" economies in the country, representing less than 1 percent of the total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.

"Imposing California's cap-and-trade program on Oregon will not decrease global greenhouse gas emissions. But it will very likely raise costs for farm and ranch families," said Dresler.

For example, if the proposal passes, it's projected to immediately drive up the cost of gas by \$0.16 per gallon. When fuel prices increase,

so does the cost of ag production, transportation, and distribution.

Farmers and ranchers would also be faced indirect, pass-along costs appearing in higher rates for inputs like fertilizer, equipment, and electricity.

"Cap-and-trade will reduce our competitiveness by levying a new layer of costs onto Oregon ag producers that our counterparts in other states and parts of the world don't have," said Dresler.



OFB's Government Affairs team of Jenny Dresler (left), director of state public policy, and Mary Anne Cooper (right), public policy counsel, do an excellent job of representing Farm Bureau members at the state capitol and with state agencies.

Century Farm & Ranch apps open

Oregon boasts one of the oldest agricultural heritage recognition programs in the nation. The award-winning Oregon Century Farm & Ranch program, administered by the OFB Foundation for Education, honors farms and ranches that have remained within the same family and operational for at least 100 years.



"There's also Sesquicentennial status for those families who've reached the 150-year mark," said Andréa Kuenzi, program coordinator.

Applications are available at centuryfarm.oregonfb.org. The deadline to apply is May 1.

Comment on Ag Worker Protection Standard rulemaking by Jan. 31

Farmers have until Jan. 31 to comment on proposed new state regulations that would apply to the application of pesticides in farm settings.

At issue is Application Exclusion Zones (AEZ), the designated area around pesticide application equipment where individuals are not allowed when application is taking place.

Oregon Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) had

proposed allowing for a "shelter in place" alternative to the AEZ for certain applications near housing. However, the agency was pressured to rewrite this rule.

Meanwhile, the Environmental Protection Agency has also announced plans to reopen rulemaking for the federal AEZ requirements.

This could result in the tightest regulations in the U.S. Comment at oregonfb.org/advocacy.

Farm Bureau leaders honored

Congratulations to Jenny Freeborn, chair of the OFB Young Farmers & Ranchers (YF&R) Committee, who was the runner-up at the National YF&R Discussion Meet, which took place at the American Farm Bureau Convention in Nashville, Jan. 5-10.

During the 85th Oregon Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in Pendleton last month, OFB recognized volunteer leaders for extraordinary dedication, effectiveness, and service to Farm Bureau and Oregon agriculture. Congratulations to all honorees!



OFB Hall of Fame inductees Sharon and Charlie Waterman (center) of Coos-Curry County Farm Bureau, with OFB President Barry Bushue (left) and EVP Dave Dillon.

Hall of Fame (OFB's highest honor, requiring a minimum of 35 years of active Farm Bureau membership): OFB 1st VP Sharon and Charlie Waterman of Coos-Curry County Farm Bureau

Distinguished Service Award: Joe Steere of Lincoln County Farm Bureau

Service to Agriculture

Award: Lincoln County Farm Bureau

County Farm Bureau Action Award: Jefferson County Farm Bureau

Outstanding County Farm Bureau Secretary: Gabrielle Johnson of Harney County Farm Bureau

Learn more about each honoree at oregonfb.org.



Joe Steere of Lincoln County Farm Bureau received the 2017 OFB Distinguished Service Award.

OFB Calendar

For more information, visit oregonfb.org or call 503.399.1701.



Feb. 5: Farm Bureau Reception at the Oregon State Capitol, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Farmers, ranchers, lawmakers, and the general public are invited to a reception in the Capitol Galleria hosted by the OFB Women's Advisory Council.

March 15: Deadline for the OFB Foundation for Education Memorial Scholarship and Associate Member Scholarship funded by COUNTRY Financial.

May 1: Century & Sesquicentennial Farm & Ranch application deadline.