

## OREGON FARM BUREAU

# Legislature ends with wins for ag

SEE OFB'S FULL REVIEW OF THE 2021 OREGON LEGISLATIVE SESSION AT [OREGONFB.ORG/2021SESSIONREVIEW](https://oregonfb.org/2021sessionreview)

The 2021 Oregon Legislative Session was a session like no other. With progressive supermajorities in both chambers and the Capitol closed to the public due to the Governor's COVID-19 executive orders, this session presented unique challenges for agriculture.

However, after six months of engagement by your OFB team, Farm Bureau members, and our partners, we are proud to report that Oregon farmers and ranchers fared well in the 2021 virtual legislative session. We secured major legislative victories and improved funding for critical natural resource programs.

With the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, the historic 2020 wildfires, the February ice storms, the statewide drought, and recent heat losses, this last year has been incredibly difficult for Oregon's agricultural community. These challenges were compounded by the consideration of policies with a deep impact on agriculture in a session where the public was unable to engage directly in the legislative process, with farmers and ranchers relegated to their computers and phones.

Despite these difficulties, our members showed up virtually, contacted their legislators, and engaged in their communities to stop harmful proposals, seek critical funding, and advocate for changes to state policy. We are grateful and proud that our members participated in the virtual session so effectively.

Thanks to member engagement, OFB was able to defeat proposals around agricultural overtime, water measurement and reporting, bans on predator management tools, bans on dairies and mink farms, harmful tax proposals, and private rights of action for enforcing state law.

OFB also negotiated positive changes to



OFB was very blessed to have significant support from the state's farmer legislators, all of whom are also Farm Bureau members. From left are Rep. Jami Cate, Rep. Vikki Breese-Iverson, Rep. Mark Owens, Rep. Bobby Levy, and Rep. Shelly Boshart Davis. Not shown is Senator Chuck Thomsen.

dozens of bills to lessen or remove impacts to agriculture, including proposals to create new wildfire-related land use regulations, expedite the siting of broadband, and make changes to agency authority.

Farm Bureau also had a significant proactive agenda, passing bills to allow croplands to join rangeland protection associations, creating workable regulations to allow rebuilding after wildfire loss and allow farmers to better utilize ag buildings, and improving our state's water data and water planning.

Despite the struggle businesses have faced this year, the legislative session ended with record state revenues and an influx of federal dollars into the state's coffers. With this budget growth, OFB secured investments in Oregon's natural resources, increasing funding for key water infrastructure, water masters, predator control, wolf compensation, water quality, funding for OSU Statewides, and a natural disaster relief fund.

Finally, the once-a-decade redistricting process that was set to occur this session was delayed as a result of the U.S. Census Bureau being unable to deliver the necessary data prior to the end of the 2021 legislative session. The Oregon Legislature

will be back in September for a special session focused on redistricting, and we will keep you posted as that process shapes up!

### OFB's Legislative Champions

With your lobbyists and the public shut out of the Capitol, OFB relied on our legislative champions more than ever. Thankfully, we have some great advocates for agriculture in Salem. These individuals worked with their colleagues to help us negotiate bills and ensure that agriculture was protected this session.

OFB was very blessed to have significant support from the state's farmer legislators, all of whom are also Farm Bureau members. We thank **Rep. Shelly Boshart Davis** (R-Albany) for her leadership on labor, transportation, and redistricting issues; **Rep. Mark Owens** (R-Burns) for his leadership on water and fire; **Rep. Vikki Breese Iverson** (R-Prineville) for her leadership on water and predator issues; **Rep. Jami Cate** (R-Lebanon) for her leadership on agriculture and crop production issues; **Rep. Bobby Levy** (R-Hermiston) for her leadership on revenue and predator issues; and **Sen. Chuck Thomsen** (R-Hood River) for his leadership on labor and business issues. Without these farmer

legislators in the building to share first-hand the impacts of proposed policy, OFB would not have been nearly as successful at stopping bad bills, securing budget support, and passing common-sense legislation.

As always, longtime OFB champion **Senator Betsy Johnson** (D-Scappoose) was a stalwart advocate for natural resources, helping stop a myriad of bad natural resource bills, supporting critical natural resource budget priorities, and being a strong voice for Oregon's farmers, ranchers, foresters, and small business owners in all discussions in Salem. Senator Johnson is a true supporter of our industry, and we are thankful to have her in Salem.

OFB also appreciates the strong leadership and support of Senate Minority Leader **Senator Fred Girod** (R-Stayton), who always takes the time to meet with OFB staff, help address our concerns, promote our priorities, and use his strong relationships to champion agriculture.

Despite being one of the busiest legislators in the building, House Minority Leader **Rep. Christine Drazan** (R-Canby) always prioritized OFB's concerns, big and small, and managed an incredibly effective strategy that helped secure big legislative victories for her caucus this session.

**Rep. Susan McLain** (D-Forest Grove) continued her track record of being a strong advocate on agricultural bills, helping OFB on critical issues and working with her Democrat colleagues to help ensure agriculture's needs were considered on key proposals.

OFB also thanks **Rep. David Brock Smith** (R-Port Orford), **Rep. Daniel Bonham** (R-The Dalles), **Senator Bill Hansell** (R-Athena), and **Senator Lynn Findley** (R-Ontario) for their strong

support and tireless work to help stop bad proposals, move forward good bills, and fight for farmers and ranchers in their districts this legislative session.

We want to thank **Rep. Brian Clem** (D-Salem), **Rep. Janeen Sollman** (D-Hillsboro), **Rep. Anna Williams** (D-Hood River), and **Senator Lee Beyer** (D-Springfield) for their support of the farmers and ranchers in their districts, their work to help address policies that were concerning to OFB, and their advocacy with their colleagues.

Finally, while we did not always agree on policy, we thank **Rep. Ken Helm** (D-Hillsboro) and **Rep. Pam Marsh** (D-Ashland) for always taking the time to meet with us, understand our concerns, and work with us on key policy proposals. While we saw some issues differently, we appreciate their commitment to listening with an open mind, running a fair process, and considering new ideas.

We also appreciate our voting and supporting **Farm Bureau members** for their support and belief in the value of our organization. This year showed us more than ever the fragile nature of our agricultural economy. Thank you for farming through the pandemic, natural disasters, and political unrest to ensure that our nation has a reliable food, foliage, and fiber supply.

To learn what happened in the Capitol with the big issues of wildfire, agricultural overtime, water, and climate change — and also how specific ag-related bills fared this session — visit [OregonFB.org/2021sessionreview](https://oregonfb.org/2021sessionreview).

**Not a Farm Bureau member?** Join today and support OFB's work on your behalf in Salem and Washington, D.C. Visit [OregonFB.org](https://oregonfb.org) or call 503.399.1701.

### Upcoming Events

Visit [OregonFB.org/events](https://oregonfb.org/events) to learn more.

**Sept. 15:** OFB Trap Shoot at the Albany Gun Club.

**Sept. 15:** Deadline for submitting images for the 2022 Oregon's Bounty Calendar Contest. Info at [OregonFB.org/calendar](https://oregonfb.org/calendar).

**Sept. 21:** Bayer OFB Golf Tourney at OGA Golf Club in Woodburn.

**Dec. 7:** Virtual pesticide applicator's training for four CORE credit hours provided by the OFB Health & Safety Committee and OR-OSHA. 8 a.m. to noon.

**Dec. 7-9:** OFB Annual Convention, Eagle Crest Resort in Redmond.

## OFB working for drought relief

Without a doubt, 2021 will end up being one of the driest — if not the driest — years in Oregon's history.

"OFB is working on solutions for our members on both the federal and state levels," said OFB VP of Public Policy Mary Anne Cooper.

On the federal side, OFB is gathering stories about gaps within the existing natural disaster relief programs and the needs of Oregon farmers and ranchers on the ground. The goal is to address those service holes in federal programs that the drought and other recent natural disasters, like the heat dome, ice storm, and wildfires, have exposed.

OFB is working with other Western states and the American Farm Bureau to begin to lobby for improvements to the federal conservation and assistance programs. Additionally, OFB is scheduling a series of meetings with Oregon's Congressional delegation this summer to bring lawmaker and media attention to the needs of Oregon's ag community.

"On the state side, the big budget reconciliation bill that passed at the end of the legislative session had \$150 million for natural disaster relief," said Cooper. "While a portion of that will likely go to the Klamath Basin — and we've been helping craft that package — we are also advocating for a strong statewide program to address some of those gaps in federal funding."



Jason, Victoria Flowers

OFB is working on the state and federal levels to get support for farm and ranch families impacted by the drought and heat.

To address the needs of farmers and ranchers on a statewide basis, OFB brought together other ag groups to develop a comprehensive natural disaster package, covering drought, heat, smoke, and ice storm damage statewide and across all commodities.

"We are each collecting data and identifying needs within our memberships with the goal of making one joint agricultural natural disaster ask of the Oregon State Legislature," said Cooper.

**If you have experienced crop loss or damage due to the drought and/or extreme heat, please document it with photos and/or videos. This will help OFB determine what agriculture's needs are when we ask the state for support.** Contact OFB's Victoria Flowers at [victoria@oregonfb.org](mailto:victoria@oregonfb.org) and share your story.