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2024






**Outstanding Farm Bureau Youth
Handbook**

KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU FEDERATION



Kentucky Farm Bureau

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Effective Presentations



Kentucky Farm Bureau Outstanding Youth Contest

Public Speaking

The fear of speaking in public is the #1 fear of all fears. The fear of dying is #7! Over 41% of people have some fear or anxiety dealing with speaking in front of groups. People who have this fear can experience all kinds of symptoms: Sweaty palms, accelerated heart rate, memory loss and even difficulty in breathing. Some of the world's most famous presenters have freely admitted to nervousness and stage fright. Mark Twain said it best, "There are two types of speakers: those that are nervous and those that are liars".

Everyone, even experienced speakers, has some anxiety when speaking in front of a group of people. The best way to deal with this anxiety is to first acknowledge that this fear is perfectly normal and you are not alone. To reduce your fear, you need to make sure you properly and thoroughly prepare yourself before you speak. Proper preparation and rehearsal can help to reduce this fear by about 75%. Proper breathing techniques can further reduce this fear by another 15%. Your mental state accounts for the remaining 10%.

Below are just a few suggestions you should use to overcome your speaking anxiety. The first and most important of all is preparation. Think of it as the 9 P's:

Prior Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance of the Person Putting on the Presentation.

Nothing will relax you more than to know you are properly prepared. Below are 10 steps you can take to reduce your speech anxiety.

1. **Know the room** - Become familiar with the place in which you will speak. Arrive early and walk around the room including the speaking area. Stand at the lectern and speak into the microphone. Walk around where the audience will be seated. Walk from where you will be seated to the place where you will be speaking.
 2. **Know the Audience** - If possible, greet some of the audience as they arrive and chat with them. It is easier to speak to a group of friends than to a group of strangers.
 3. **Know Your Material** - If you are not familiar with your material or are uncomfortable with it, your nervousness will increase. Practice your speech or presentation and revise it until you can present it with ease.
 4. **Learn How to Relax** - You can ease tension by doing exercises. Sit comfortable with your back straight. Breathe in slowly, hold your breath for 4 to 5 seconds, and then slowly exhale. To relax your facial muscles, open your mouth and eyes wide, then close them tightly.
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Public Speaking Continued

5. **Visualize Yourself Speaking** - Imagine yourself walking confidently to the lectern as the audience applauds. Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear and assured. When you visualize yourself as successful, you will be successful.
6. **Realize People Want You To Succeed** - All audiences want speakers to be interesting, stimulating, informative and entertaining. They want you to succeed - not fail.
7. **Don't apologize For Being Nervous** - Most of the time your nervousness does not show at all. If you don't say anything about it, nobody will notice. If you mention your nervousness or apologize for any problems you think you have with your speech, you'll only be calling attention to it.
8. **Concentrate on Your Message - not the medium** - Your nervous feelings will dissipate if you focus your attention away from your anxieties and concentrate on your message and your audience, not yourself.
9. **Turn Nervousness into Positive Energy** - The same nervous energy that causes stage fright can be an asset to you. Harness it, and transform it into vitality and enthusiasm.
10. **Gain Experience** - Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking. Most beginning speakers find their anxieties decrease after each speech they give.

Remember, "He who fails to prepare is preparing for failure - so Prepare, Prepare, Prepare"

The more you know about your speaking environment and your audience, the more relaxed you will be when delivering your speech. Many speakers; however, often overlook the need to include any kind of audience analysis as part of their speech preparation. Proper audience analysis will assure that you give the right speech to the right audience. Using the word "A-U-D-I-E-N-C-E" as an acronym, I have defined some general audience analysis categories that these surveys should include.

- A**nalysis - Who are they? How many will be there?
- U**nderstanding - What is their knowledge of the subject?
- D**emographics - What is their age, sex, educational background?
- I**nterest - Why are they there? Who asked them to be there?
- E**nvironment - Where will I stand? Can they all see & hear me?
- N**eeds - What are their needs? What are your needs as the speaker?
- C**ustomized - What specific needs do you need to address?
- E**xpectations - What do they expect to learn or hear from you?

Develop specific questions, which fit into each of these eight categories and ask the client or audience to tell you what they want. Essentially, ask them what they need and give it to them.



Kentucky Farm Bureau Outstanding Youth Contest

20 Mistakes Speakers Make and How to Avoid Them

- 1) **Trying to convince an audience you have a sense of humor when all the evidence says otherwise.** If you're not funny, don't try to tell a joke. Some speakers can't even read a story so that other people will laugh. Some speakers think telling a joke is a prerequisite for getting the audience to relax and listen to their message. But if the speaker is relaxed and confident, the audience will be relaxed and attentive.
 - 2) **Thinking spontaneous remarks are better than any prepared speech.** "Spontaneity" is one of the rarest things on earth. Mark Twain once said it takes three weeks to prepare a good ad-lib speech. A speech needs to be outlined, then written, then re-written and then practiced many times before it will be a good one.
 - 3) **Exceeding the time allotted for your speech.** The audience knows how much time your speech is supposed to take and will lose interest quickly in a speaker that exceeds that limit. Make it a point of pride to finish a minute or two under your allotted time.
 - 4) **Failing to research the audience before a speech.** A speech must be geared toward the audience, or the message will never be received. Ask lots of questions about the audience, what kind of speech they will be expecting, what kind of group this is, how many people will be attending, and will they want a question-and-answer period. Conducting a thorough audience analysis is vital before you begin to prepare any speech.
 - 5) **Failing to research the physical location in advance of a speech.** If you don't check every detail of the place you're speaking in, disaster can be the result. Find out the size and shape of the lectern or podium. Will there be a microphone available and how does it operate? Have arrangements been made for any audiovisuals you want to use? How big is the room? Is there a glass of water at hand for each speaker? Conducting a thorough study of the room where you will speak will make you much more comfortable, while avoiding any distracting annoyances once you get started.
 - 6) **Not rehearsing the speech many times in advance.** Rehearse in front of a video camera or into a tape recorder. Or ask a family member or business associate to listen to your speech and provide helpful suggestions on speech content and delivery.
 - 7) **Fidgeting, slouching and leaning on the podium.** Body language tells the audience more about you than your words. Establish and maintain good eye contact. Plant your feet shoulder width apart and stand tall. Use gestures when appropriate and rest your hands on the podium at other times.
 - 8) **Writing an essay to be read instead of a speech.** This is a speech, not an English composition. Many a good sentence will make sense when a person reads it, but not when that sentence is spoken. Read through your speech out loud several times, to make sure you've used simple words and short sentences.
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Kentucky Farm Bureau Outstanding Youth Contest

20 Mistakes Speakers Make and How to Avoid Them Continued

- 9) **Failing to find an effective opening for your speech.** A speaker must establish some common ground with the audience very quickly. Talk about a common tie with the audience. Tell a heartwarming or funny story that gets their attention. Give a sincere compliment to the group. Boldly state your theme in a simple and memorable way.
 - 10) **Flooding the audience with statistics, especially early in the speech.** Limit yourself to the most compelling statistics and then illustrate the statistic with a forceful analogy. Statistics are difficult to visualize and can numb your audience if overused.
 - 11) **Failure to make the main points of your speech stand out.** If the audience doesn't go home with the two or three main ideas you worked so hard to deliver to them, then you've failed. There is one surefire method for making your main points clear. Label them with numbers or tag them with strong words. Then repeat the points several times, in several ways, throughout the speech.
 - 12) **Going on to long after you say, "In conclusion..."** If you talk much more than 30 seconds to a minute after you use that phrase, you will seriously compromise all the good you've accomplished up to that point, no matter how good your speech has been.
 - 13) **Using dull and sloppy visual aids.** If you add visual aids to your speech, they should be bright, colorful and easy to see and understand from the back row of the audience. Before you speak, have a friend or colleague stand in the back of the room and watch while you deliver that part of your speech. If the object cannot be seen clearly, trash it.
 - 14) **Failing to test all electrical equipment before the crowd arrives.** Light bulbs burn out on projectors, overheads do not focus properly and screens are not positioned correctly, unless you take the time to check all these in advance.
 - 15) **Dimming the lights more than necessary when showing slides.** Do not darken the room unless absolutely necessary. If you do, people will not be able to take notes and they may begin to get drowsy, especially if you are speaking after a meal.
 - 16) **Beginning the speech too quickly - or beginning it too late.** If you launch into the important part of your speech from the very first sentence, the audience may not have settled down. You must give them time to relax, to sit back and decide what kind of person you are. On the other hand, do not use too many jokes, stories, or personal references and lose their interest before you get into the reason for your speech.
 - 17) **Changing the topic of your speech at the podium.** You have seen it before. The speaker holds up the program flyer and pokes fun at the topic as listed. Then the speaker announces he or she has decided to talk about a slightly different subject. Do not do it. If you must change your speech's emphasis, do so without tipping your hand.
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Kentucky Farm Bureau Outstanding Youth Contest

20 Mistakes Speakers Make and How to Avoid Them Continued

- 18) **Failing to repeat the question during Q&A period.** Not everyone in the audience will be able to hear the question. Always repeat the questions so everyone in the room will know what is being discussed. And then address the answer to the entire room, not just to the person asking the questions.

- 19) **Speaking too slowly - or too fast.** Too often the speaker who speaks slowly to give emphasis and clarity to his own ideas succeeds only in boring the audience. Instead, practice pronouncing your words more distinctly while you speak at a normal speed. The reverse is the speaker who gets caught in the trap of speaking too quickly. Vary the speed of you delivery.

- 20) **Passing out material while you are speaking.** It is a sure way to lose the attention of your audience. If you have an outline that you want the audience to follow while you speak, have it handed out in advance of you introduction. A better plan is to have anything you want the audience to have in printed form distributed at the back of the room as they leave.

*The three secrets to success in public speaking -
be sincere, be brief, and be seated!*



Kentucky Farm Bureau Outstanding Youth Contest

Possible Speech Topics & Titles

- Farm Bureau: What is its mission?
 - Why is it important for farmers to take an active role in the political process?
 - What is the greatest issue facing Kentucky agriculture?
 - What role does Kentucky Farm Bureau play in strengthening Kentucky agriculture?
 - How have women made a difference in American agriculture over the past 100 years?
 - How can educational programs improve the public perception of agriculture?
 - Why is agricultural literacy important?
 - How has technology advanced American agriculture?
 - Agriculture: A True Friend to the Environment and Wildlife
 - Is a sound agricultural economy a matter of national security and defense?
 - What are some of the benefits of bio-engineered or genetically-modified crops?
 - Agriculture: Your Life Support System! How does agriculture impact your life?
 - Why are farmers considered the first environmentalist?
 - Agriculture: Food, Fiber and Fuel - Meeting Your Needs!
 - How is the global market affecting Kentucky agriculture?
 - How does Farm Bureau create its policy? Why is this important?
 - The Real Value of American Agriculture! The average family only spends 10% of their income on food.
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Acing The Interview



Kentucky Farm Bureau Outstanding Youth Contest

Acing an Interview

- 1) Dress appropriately and professionally.
 - a. Much of another person's perception of you is based on how you look.
 - b. Women's Interview Attire
 - Solid color, conservative suit
 - Coordinated blouse
 - Moderate shoes
 - Limited jewelry
 - Neat, professional hairstyle
 - Tan or light hosiery
 - Sparse make-up & perfume
 - Manicured nails
 - c. Men's Interview Attire
 - Solid color, conservative suit
 - White long sleeve shirt
 - Conservative tie
 - Dark socks, professional shoes
 - Very limited jewelry
 - Neat, professional hairstyle
 - Go easy on the aftershave
 - Neatly trimmed nails
 - 2) Plan to arrive at least fifteen minutes before the interview. That will help reduce your stress level, and you will ensure that traffic or other delays don't make you late.
 - 3) Greet your interviewer by name, with a firm handshake and a smile. Until your interviewer tells you otherwise, use the more formal "Mr. (Smith)" or "Ms. (Johnson)."
 - 4) Wait for the interviewer to sit down or invite you to sit down before seating yourself.
 - 5) Be prepared to speak in concise terms about relevant experiences that reflect positively on your skills and your character.
 - 6) Do not chew gum.
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Kentucky Farm Bureau Outstanding Youth Contest

Acing an Interview Continued

- 7) Sit comfortably, maintain good body posture.

- 8) Listen carefully to what the interviewer is saying. Take a few seconds to think about a difficult question before responding.
 - a. Responding quickly may convey that you're impulsive and don't take time to think about your decisions.
 - b. Don't be afraid of silence during the interview - it's better to think about a question for a few moments, rather than jumping in with an answer that's off-target or long and rambling.
 - c. If the question seems ambiguous or you need more clarification, ask the interviewer to elaborate or restate the question. (But don't use this as a ruse to gain more time.)
 - d. Don't display defensiveness when a tough question has you stumped.

- 9) Don't make up answers to questions you don't know. Your interviewer will conclude that you will do the same thing in the work place.

- 10) Enthusiasm is vital! Demonstrate your interest in the contest, organization, job or company.

- 11) Keep the interviewer's attention.
 - a. You can apply the same principles that work in public speaking - vary the tone and tempo of your voice; take your nervous energy and translate that into enthusiasm; maintain eye contact with the interviewer.
 - b. Try to match the interviewer's energy level. People like to select or hire others like themselves.

- 12) Conclude your interview with good eye and a firm handshake. Thank the interviewer for their time.

Farm Bureau

101



Kentucky Farm Bureau

Basic Concepts & Functions

Mission Statement

Kentucky Farm Bureau is a grassroots organization dedicated to serving our membership family and their communities. As the voice of Agriculture, we identify problems, develop solutions, promote economic success, and enhance the quality of life for all.

Scope of Farm Bureau

Kentucky Farm Bureau, founded in 1919, is a federation of the 120 county Farm Bureaus in the state.

The American Farm Bureau is made up of 50 states and Puerto Rico, which nationwide boasts over 6 million family memberships. The AFBF office is located in Washington, DC.

Farm Bureau Defined

Farm Bureau is a voluntary, bi-partisan, dues-paying organization of farmers working together to accomplish as a group those things they cannot accomplish as individuals. Membership is on a family basis and the organization provides programs and services in which each member of the family has the opportunity to participate and serve.

Voluntary

No one is forced to join Farm Bureau. Rather, farmers voluntarily join to be a part of the organization and to participate in its many valuable programs.

Bi-Partisan

Farm Bureau is not officially connected with any branch or department of government. While the organization must interact constantly with officials of government on matters affecting agriculture, its policy is to do so on a non-partisan basis.

Dues-Paying

Members pay dues to support the organization. Farm Bureau receives no operating funds from any private or governmental source.

Structure of Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation

Kentucky Farm Bureau is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of 26 members, elected from their respective districts, plus 7 Directors-at-Large. Its officers are elected by the membership and serve as officers of the Insurance Board and other affiliated companies.

Farm Bureau is the world's largest, most respected, and most effective farm organization and possesses a solid record of achievement in the history of American agriculture. It is an organization which, upon its record, has earned the membership and enthusiastic support of every farmer in Kentucky and in the nation.



Kentucky Farm Bureau

Programs & Services

Farm Bureau on all levels, conducts programs which are beneficial to agriculture in general, and farmers in particular. A wide variety of services is offered to dues-paying Farm Bureau members in Kentucky. Some apply only to farmers, others to all members regardless of occupation.

Women's Program

The Kentucky Farm Bureau Women's Program provides opportunities for educational and leadership development, enabling farm women to become active participating members of Farm Bureau. It is designed to utilize the talents of women throughout the state for the purpose of implementing Farm Bureau goals and objectives. These activities also include all agricultural literacy efforts.

Agriculture in the Classroom

Kentucky Farm Bureau continues to effectively reach students and teachers through various activities and events such as Ag Day's, Agricultural Literacy Programs and Regional Teacher Workshops. Thousands of students each year have the opportunity to learn how Kentucky agriculture positively impacts their lives economically, environmentally and socially.

Youth Activities

School-age youth find opportunities for recognition through the Outstanding Farm Bureau Youth contest and talent competition at the county, district, and state levels. An Institute for Future Agricultural Leaders (IFAL) is held on two Kentucky university campuses each summer, emphasizing leadership and agriculture careers for top students who have just completed the 11th grade.

Young Farmers

An Outstanding Young Farm Family contest, an Excellence in Agriculture Contest and an annual Discussion Meet are all designed to recognize successful and talented young farmers. County and state committees offer leadership opportunities for farmers 35 years of age and under.

Scholarships

Thousands of dollars in college aid grants are awarded annually to deserving Kentucky high school seniors from Farm Bureau families by the Kentucky Farm Bureau Education Foundation.

Information & Public Relations

A dedicated communications team is charged with informing Farm Bureau members and the general public about the program, products and services of Kentucky Farm Bureau, and informing the public of important agricultural issues. This is primarily accomplished through various news releases and media correspondence; a magazine entitled, Kentucky Farm Bureau News, published 10 times a year; daily and weekly radio programs; a monthly video report; and a weekly television program, Bluegrass and Backroads.

Farm Bureau Bank

The internet bank located in San Antonio offers credit cards, checking accounts, money market accounts, CDs, auto loans and home mortgage loans at competitive rates.

Governmental Affairs

Full-time lobbyists are on duty anytime the state legislature, Congress or regulatory agencies act on matters affecting agriculture. Policies are formulated through an annual process that measures grassroots sentiment on important issues. Measure-the-Candidate programs check candidates' views and compare them with Farm Bureau policies.

Commodity Interests

A team of commodity specialists help represent the interests of Farm Bureau's farmer members in an attempt to increase net farm income. This team works with the various commodity committees of Farm Bureau and acts as a liaison with other commodity organizations or groups interested in the state's agricultural industry.

Insurance

Agents in all 120 counties offer a full line of insurance services to Farm Bureau members. Kentucky Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company now carries the highest rating given for soundness and safety by the nation's top insurance rating service.

Buying Services

Price discounts for Farm Bureau members have been negotiated on a variety of products and services. The discounts cover products from eyeglasses to prescription medicines, state park lodging and car rentals, among others. A group purchasing program for bulk shipments of farm chemicals and fruit is offered once a year as well.

Farm Bureau Priority Issues



2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau State Priority Issues

AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Maintain allocating 50% of the Master Settlement Agreement funds to the Agricultural Development Board, and funds be spent for the purpose of improving the net farm income of individual farmers in production agriculture.

The legislature should be commended for their support of maintaining 50% of the Master Settlement Agreement funds to agriculture. In previous sessions, the General Assembly showed their commitment to the agriculture community by doing so.

Agriculture has taken advantage of the opportunity granted by the Kentucky General Assembly. Agricultural development funds have been utilized to fund innovative projects that have increased net farm income and affected tobacco farmers, tobacco-impacted communities, and agriculture across the state through stimulating markets for Kentucky agricultural products, finding new ways to add value to Kentucky agricultural products, and exploring new opportunities for Kentucky farms and farm products.

The Kentucky Agricultural Development Board has funded a wide variety of projects to diversify Kentucky agriculture, including an ethanol plant, bio-diesel facility, farmers markets, agri-tourism projects, and processing facilities. In addition, there is the opportunity for farmers to diversify their farming operation by participating in County Agriculture Investment Programs, which offer farmers several investment areas from forestry to aquaculture to livestock.

Communities across Kentucky continue to benefit from the funds allocated to agriculture. When profitable, farmers are the major economic stimulus for rural communities. In fact, Kentucky's farm receipts were estimated to approach a record high of \$8 billion last year. Investing funds in Kentucky farmers has helped led to continued increases in net farm income. This is testimony that the General Assembly investment in agriculture is paying dividends to Kentucky's overall economy. Agriculture's portion of the Master Settlement Agreement is not just an investment in Kentucky's farmers; it is an investment in Kentucky's future as a whole. As producers look to the future to diversify their farming operations, tobacco funds will prove to be essential now more than ever to achieve this goal.

Kentucky Farm Bureau encourages the legislature to again show their commitment to agriculture and appropriate 50% of the Master Settlement Funds for farm-based initiatives.

Farm Bureau Policy:

"We support more dollars of Ag Development Funds be spent for the purpose of improving the net farm income of individual farmers in production agriculture."

"We recommend no changes in the Master Settlement Agreement and encourage the state of Kentucky to leave the settlement "as is"."

Status After 2024 Regular Session:

The Master Settlement Agreement funding formula was maintained - Success

April 2024



2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau State Priority Issues

AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Support continued funding of the Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost-Share Program.

In 2022, the Kentucky General Assembly allocated \$2.5 million in both FY23 and FY24 to the Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost-Share Program, from Master Settlement Agreement Funds, to assist landowners in installing best management practices. These best management practices are required to meet the goals of pollution reduction from agriculture and silviculture activities as stated in the federal Clean Water Act and the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act (KAWQA). Through the Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost-Share Program, the public will share in the cost of protecting our natural resources.

The KAWQA requires that all agriculture and silviculture landowners fully implement their individual water quality plans. We commend the General Assembly for appropriating \$2.5 million in each fiscal year and would encourage restoration of the Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost-Share program back to its \$9 million annual appropriation.

Finally, we commend the General Assembly for also appropriating \$1.8 million over the biennium in direct aid to local conservation districts to fund technical personnel and offices in all 120 counties who provide assistance to landowners through their local conservation district in implementing their Ag Water Quality Plans.

Farm Bureau Policy:

“We support continuation of General Fund dollars and Kentucky Department of Agriculture dollars to the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost-Share Program administered by the DOC through local conservation districts to help farmers install Best Management Practices (BMPs) to meet the requirements of the Kentucky Agriculture Water Quality Act (KAWQA).”

“We support conservation districts’ efforts to increase funding to state cost-share back to \$9 million each year in the state budget.”

Status After 2024 Regular Session:

Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost-Share Program funds were decreased to \$2,000,000 each fiscal year, but the direct aid was increased. Funding still in place. - Success

April 2024



2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau State Priority Issues

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Seek effective wildlife management that will reduce the wildlife population in an effort to alleviate continued crop and livestock losses, automobile accidents, human injuries, and loss of life.

Action is needed to control the growing wildlife population in the state. As the number of wildlife increases, so does the areas in which they inhabit. We believe that all means of controlling wildlife should be considered, including increasing the hunting seasons, increasing limits on the number of wildlife that can be taken, and other such initiatives.

There has been a significant increase in property and crop damage caused by the growing black bear population in Eastern Kentucky. Many people do not realize that virtually everyone is adversely affected by the actions of wildlife at one time or another. Every consumer pays more for commodities when supplies are decreased or damaged by wildlife.

In Kentucky, state transportation officials report there were a total of 3,084 highway crashes involving deer reported to police in 2022, up about 100 from 2021 numbers. Among these incidents, there were four reported fatalities and 20 serious injuries due to deer collisions in 2022. Deer are among the leading causes of human deaths from traffic collisions in the United States, contributing to approximately 200 deaths on America's highways annually.

Kentucky ranks 18th in the country for the most deer collisions, the odds drivers will hit a deer in Kentucky are 1 out of 91, well above the national odds of 1 in 116.

According to data from USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, more than half of U.S. farmers experience economic loss from wildlife damage. Wildlife causes an estimated \$1.5 billion in damages to crops and livestock each year.

Farm Bureau Policy:

"We support effective wildlife management that will reduce the wildlife population in an effort to alleviate continued crop loss, automobile accidents, human injuries, and loss of life."

"We recommend that the state establish procedures for controlling wildlife pests such as beaver, black bear, deer, turkey, coyote, raccoon, etc., which are proving to be destructive in certain areas of the state."

"We encourage more liberal deer, elk, turkey, duck, geese, and black bear hunting seasons to control rapidly expanding populations."

Status After 2024 Regular Session:

There was no significant legislation passed in the 2024 regular session.

April 2024



2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau State Priority Issues

REGULATORY REFORM

Oppose any agency exceeding legislative intent in the implementation of regulations.

When legislation establishes a need for regulations, Kentucky Farm Bureau policy supports reasonable regulations which reflect the intent of the General Assembly. It is extremely important that agencies writing and promulgating regulations comply with the intent of the legislation.

Kentucky Farm Bureau commends the Kentucky General Assembly and their Administrative Regulations committee, which provides the needed oversight to each regulation submitted by state agencies to ensure they comply with current statute and legislative intent.

Kentucky Farm Bureau has long opposed local regulations being more stringent than state regulations and state regulations being more stringent than federal level regulations. When layers of different regulations are promulgated, it can hinder individuals and businesses from operating effectively and efficiently.

We look forward to working with regulatory agencies to offer input on regulations affecting agriculture and rural Kentucky communities while staying true to the legislative intent for which the need for the regulation was established.

Farm Bureau Policy:

"We support legislative oversight of state regulations and executive orders."

"We oppose any local ordinance that is more restrictive than state regulations governing agricultural operations."

"We oppose state regulations or fees that are more stringent than federal."

"Any new regulation should not restrict expansion or sale of existing agricultural operations."

Status After 2024 Regular Session:

There was no significant legislation passed in the 2024 regular session.

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2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau State Priority Issues

PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

Oppose the power of eminent domain being used to take private property for private use.

Kentucky Farm Bureau opposes the power of eminent domain being used to take private property for private use. We support property owners having the right to choose whether to allow private entities to negotiate easements on or through their land. We believe that the power of eminent domain should only be exercised as a last resort and that it should only be used for public use projects.

The U.S. Constitution has long protected property owners from the threat of taking of private property for monetary or commercial gain. While Kentucky Farm Bureau realizes that growth is inevitable, care must be taken to not violate the property rights of Kentuckians. As Kentucky's infrastructure grows, we realize that in certain instances the use of eminent domain is necessary, but we believe that property owners should grant permission before any entity gains access to or through private land. Additionally, property owners should be fully and fairly compensated for property taken for regional planning, eminent domain, and smart growth initiatives.

Farm Bureau Policy:

"We oppose the power of eminent domain being used to take private property for private use."

"We support protection of private property rights from eminent domain actions for any reason other than public use."

"We favor repeal of the law which gives the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources the right of eminent domain."

"We oppose any legislation that would allow public access to or through private property without permission of the property owner or authorized agent."

"We oppose scientific or archeological activity being conducted on private land without written permission from, and compensation to, the landowner".

Status After 2024 Regular Session:

Harmful language was removed from a bill prior to its passage. Removal of this language preserved private property rights and protected citizens from the use of eminent domain. - Success

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2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau State Priority Issues

FORESTRY

Support forestry initiatives that enhance the economy and create opportunities for woodland owners.

Forestry is a major part of the agriculture landscape in Kentucky. Kentucky plays a pivotal role in providing forest products to the U.S. and beyond and has a \$13.9 billion in total economic contribution to the economy with nearly 53,000 jobs overall in the forest industry.

We must continue to assist our tree farmers and the forest industry by protecting these landowners from trespassing and timber theft.

Kentucky Farm Bureau supported a joint resolution in the 2022 session which directed the Department of Revenue and the University of Kentucky's Department of Forestry and Natural Resources to recommend equitable property tax assessment procedures for well-managed forests. Kentucky Farm Bureau will seek opportunities during the 2024 session of the Kentucky General Assembly to add to these efforts by supporting legislation which will further assist woodland owners.

Kentucky Farm Bureau recognizes that timber is an agriculture commodity and should be treated as such when transporting timber products to market.

Farm Bureau Policy:

"We recommend that the DOF increase the number of state foresters in order to reduce the waiting time for forester assistance and increase services provided, with an emphasis in the Appalachian region of Eastern Kentucky for landowner assistance".

"We recommend that the CED intensify its efforts in marketing Kentucky forest products and increasing wood utilization."

"We support any purchaser of forestry products to record the name, address, and obtain a copy of a photo ID of individuals selling forestry products."

"We encourage local prosecutors to recognize theft of timber and other non-timber forest products is not a trespass issue, but a criminal activity, and existing theft laws should be enforced."

Status After 2024 Regular Session:

There was no significant legislation passed in the 2024 regular session.

April 2024



2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau State Priority Issues

AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Support an efficient, well-administered and adequately financed Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

Adequate funding for the Kentucky Department of Agriculture is critical in order to maintain profitable and productive farms. Farmers and consumers depend on the Department of Agriculture for all types of services.

As global markets change, helping Kentucky farmers to market their products has become valuable. Most farmers do not always have the resources necessary to successfully market their products on an individual basis. As a result, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture has become a leader in the marketing of Kentucky's agricultural products. Programs like Kentucky Proud, Appalachia Proud, and Homegrown by Hero's have encouraged consumers to buy Kentucky products, keeping money in the state, and making Kentucky farms more profitable. We support continued funding for all of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's marketing programs because they help increase net farm income.

In addition to assisting farmers market their products, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture performs many other duties. The Office of the State Veterinarian is charged with keeping Kentucky's livestock and poultry free of disease. The Department also assists with local agricultural fairs, tests hay quality, administers the grain insurance law, promotes farm and home safety, and plays many other important roles in Kentucky agriculture.

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture is also instrumental in bringing awareness to rural mental health in the Commonwealth through a newly developed program, Raising Hope. Kentucky Farm Bureau has worked with the General Assembly in multiple sessions to secure funding to help address the growing need to identify and manage mental health issues in rural Kentucky.

The Department's regulatory arm checks motor fuel pumps and price scanners for accuracy, inspects amusement rides, regulates the pesticide industry in Kentucky, tests commercial scales and performs numerous other duties. The Department of Agriculture is the state's second largest regulatory body and performs numerous inspections daily to ensure consumer protection and safety.

Given the tremendous responsibilities the Kentucky Department of Agriculture has, it is of vital importance to not only farmers, but all the citizens of Kentucky, that they receive sufficient funding to carry out these duties.

Farm Bureau Policy:

“We support an efficient, well-administered and adequately financed Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA). We support the KDA be primarily financed by dedicated sources of revenue, and recommend an increase in the budget’s baseline to bring the marketing and promotion budget in line with other states.”

“We support the KDA Raising Hope Program.”

Status After 2024 Regular Session:

Funding for the Kentucky Department of Agriculture was maintained – Success

April 2024

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2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau State Priority Issues

TAXATION

Kentucky's tax code should be reformed based on sound economic principles to create a more competitive business climate.

The Kentucky General Assembly took another step towards modernizing the state's tax code in the last budget session. The sales and use tax base was expanded to include certain services, many of which were considered consumer choice activities. Many products that are considered a necessity like food, pharmaceuticals, and agricultural inputs remain exempt from the sales and use tax. The legislation did include another sales and use tax exemption for agriculture by removing the sales and use tax on drugs and over-the-counter drugs that are purchased by a person regularly engaged in the business of farming and used in the treatment of cattle, sheep, goats, swine, poultry, ratite birds, llamas, alpacas, buffalo, aquatic organisms, or cervids.

The bill also put into place a mechanism to lower the states individual income tax moving forward. Any further tax reform efforts should be based on sound economic principles to ensure the longevity of such reforms.

Kentucky Farm Bureau believes that Kentucky's tax policy, in addition to being based on sound economic principles, should be based on public need and Kentucky taxes should be apportioned equitably among its citizens.

Kentucky Farm Bureau believes that the General Assembly should continue to consider further reforms to Kentucky's tax code to make our state more competitive. Kentucky implemented tax reform policies in 2018 and 2022 to help make the state more business-friendly, and further reform should continue to push Kentucky in that direction.

Farm Bureau Policy:

"Kentucky's tax policies should be based on public need and sound economic principles. Kentucky taxes should be apportioned equitably among the citizens."

Status After 2024 Regular Session:

No major tax reform legislation was addressed in the 2024 Session. Therefore, no harmful changes to taxation on property owners or agriculture inputs - Success

April 2024



2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau State Priority Issues

TAXATION

Strongly oppose freezing the state real property tax rate.

Support the provisions of House Bill 44 (KRS 132.010). Revenue from property taxes should continue to be limited to 4% plus new growth. Proposals to exceed 4% should automatically go to the voters.

Kentucky Farm Bureau stands willing to work with the legislature in establishing appropriate ways to stabilize Kentucky's revenue system, we do not believe that raising property taxes is the answer. Many farmers and landowners simply cannot survive an increased tax burden.

We are opposed to freezing the tax rate and want to caution that implementing a rate freeze does not freeze property taxes. Locking in the tax rate will allow tax bills to rise beyond 4 percent per year, driven by the increase in property assessments. Freezing Kentucky's property tax rate is a tax increase not a tax decrease. Property owners, both rural and urban, deserve to retain protection from outrageous increases in tax burdens on existing homes, farms, and businesses.

Since 1979 the tax rate has dropped from 31 cents to the current level of 11.5 cents however, revenue the state has collected from property taxes has increased each year. We also recognize the impact property taxes have on government programs in this state. We believe that funding any level of government solely through property taxes is not in the best interest of Kentucky and we support HB 44 (KRS 132.010) as it was enacted in 1979. Our organization worked hard in the 1979 special session to bring about the protections in HB 44, and has been a strong supporter since its enactment.

Farm Bureau Policy:

"We strongly oppose freezing the state real property tax rate."

"We recommend that local officials' authority to increase revenue from property taxes be confined to 4 percent plus new growth. Any proposal to increase revenue more than that formula should automatically be decided by a voter referendum."

Status After 2024 Regular Session:

Provisions of House Bill 44 (KRS 132.010) were maintained – Success

April 2024



2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau State Priority Issues

TAXATION

Maintain Kentucky's sales tax exemptions for production agriculture and establish a process for obtaining a wallet-sized sales tax exemption card.

Kentucky Farm Bureau is well aware that the General Assembly will continue to face tough decisions during the 2024 session, which could include more updates to Kentucky's tax code.

All of Kentucky's seven surrounding states have some form of agricultural sales and use tax exemption. Removing this exemption for farmers in Kentucky would put them at a tremendous disadvantage as well as devastate the agricultural supply industry in our state. Farmers are also unable to pass along their cost of production to the marketplace.

Removal of the current agricultural sales and use tax exemption would also result in an immediate six percent increase in the cost of production and would force many producers out of business. Another consequence of removing the current sales and use tax exemption would be on Kentucky's agri-business industry. Like farmers, this would put the agri-business industry at a competitive disadvantage.

It is critical the General Assembly maintain the current agricultural sales and use tax exemption to ensure that Kentucky agriculture remains competitive and remains a vital part of Kentucky's economy.

Farm Bureau Policy:

"We recommend that all farm production items and services including equipment, veterinary medicine and vaccines, electricity, water, sawdust and wood shavings, all livestock and poultry bedding, LP gas, natural gas, and tobacco production supplies be exempt from sales and use tax."

"Agriculture cannot pass along its increases in production expenses; therefore to keep our agriculture community viable, we need to keep our Kentucky agriculture sales tax exemption intact."

"We recommend production items and services associated with the equine industry be exempt from the sales and use tax."

Status After 2024 Regular Session:

Agriculture tax exemptions were maintained from the state sales and use tax – Success

April 2024



2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau State Priority Issues

HIGHWAYS, ROADS AND BRIDGES

Support the rural secondary and county road aid programs and continuation of the 22.2% allocation of the state gasoline tax revenue for rural roads.

Kentucky's rural secondary and county roads are a critical piece of Kentucky's overall infrastructure. They are crucial for farmers to transport their products from farm to market and to attract new industries and economic opportunities to rural Kentucky.

Any reduction to the rural, secondary, and county road funds would jeopardize the safety of citizens who travel these roads every day. The Commonwealth must maintain a viable infrastructure in rural Kentucky to enhance road safety, commerce, tourism, and our overall economy.

Kentucky Farm Bureau reaffirms its commitment to protect the integrity of the road fund distribution formula. Maintaining farm to market roads is vital to Kentucky's agriculture economy and rural Kentucky. Kentucky Farm Bureau believes the current road fund formula should not be altered, unless it is to increase the 22.2% rural road fund allocation. Rural roads are a very important investment not only to Kentucky agriculture, but to all citizens of the Commonwealth.

Farm Bureau Policy:

"We recommend continuation of the 22.2 percent allocation of the state gasoline tax revenue for rural roads, and increasing county road aid funds to the point that all rural roads can have a hard surface."

"We support creation of a fair and equitable use-based tax for electric vehicles, proceeds for which shall be used for the Kentucky Road Fund."

"We support revenue options that ensure adequate financing for transportation infrastructure maintenance which take into account increased construction costs, improved fuel efficiency, and electric vehicles which currently pay no fuel tax."

"We support legislation that clearly defines the right of farmers to transport their products to market and to move their equipment by the most economically feasible method."

Status After 2024 Regular Session:

The Rural and Secondary Road Fund Formula was maintained - Success

April 2024



2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau State Priority Issues

ENERGY

Support a decommissioning bond on all commercial solar projects. These bonds should be reviewed at least every three years.

Support oversight of ownership and control for energy infrastructure.

Solar energy generation facilities, or solar farms, have been increasing in numbers in Kentucky. Some, if not all, of these facilities have been constructed on productive farmland. It requires seven to ten acres of land to produce one mega-watt of energy with solar panels.

According to a 2021 U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) study, solar energy may rise from 4% of our nation's total energy production to 45% by 2050. According to the same DOE study, increasing solar generation to 45% could require nearly 10.4 million acres by 2050, with 90% expected to be sited in rural communities.

Kentucky has both utility-scale (1 megawatt or larger) and small-scale (less than 1 megawatt) customer-sited solar power generation facilities, which together accounted for 0.2% of the state's total electricity generation in 2022. The state's largest utility-scale solar photovoltaic (PV) generating facility is a 50-megawatt solar farm that came online in late 2022 south of Lexington. A 55-megawatt solar farm is scheduled to come online in 2023 or 2024.

Projected Kentucky solar projects could eventually produce more than 3,000 mega-watts of power, which would require between 21,000-30,000 acres of land.

Farm Bureau Policy:

" We support a decommissioning bond on all commercial solar projects. These bonds should be reviewed at least every three years to ensure there is sufficient revenue to return the agriculture land back to its original use."

"We support oversight of ownership and control for energy infrastructure."

Status After 2024 Regular Session:

No changes were made to the solar bill from the 2023 session - Success

April 2024



2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau State Priority Issues

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

Support lowering the acreage requirement for establishing an agricultural district.

The Agricultural District and Conservation Act was passed by the Kentucky General Assembly in 1982 to help preserve prime farmland from being annexed and developed for nonagricultural usage.

Kentucky has been a national leader in protecting prime farmland, but minimal changes have been made to the Agricultural District and Conservation Act since its inception. Dating back several decades the Act has required a landowner or group of landowners to have at least 250 contiguous acres in active agricultural production to form an agricultural district. The pressure of urbanization and development has made it increasingly more difficult to obtain 250 contiguous acres. The average farm size in Kentucky is 171 acres, significantly less than the 250-acre requirement to participate in the agricultural district program.

As of 2023, there are 566 certified agricultural districts consisting of approximately 455,267 acres in 80 of Kentucky's 120 counties. Lowering the acreage requirement to form an agricultural district would allow more landowners the opportunity to participate.

The agricultural district program plays a vital role in protecting farmland across the Commonwealth. The program maintains private property rights and gives landowners the ability to withdraw from a district if they so choose.

Lowering the acreage requirement to form an agricultural district can help ensure Kentucky remains at the forefront of protecting farmland.

Farm Bureau Policy:

"We support agricultural districts and recommend the Agricultural District and Conservation Act expand its protections for agricultural lands, as it relates to sewer line extensions."

"We support lessening the acreage requirement for agricultural districts from 250 acres to 25 acres."

Status After 2024 Regular Session:

Legislation was passed lowering the acreage requirement for establishing an agricultural district from 250 to 50 acres – Success

April 2024



2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau State Priority Issues

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Support funding for the broadband deployment fund.

Support efforts and incentives to improve and provide all telecommunications in rural Kentucky.

Rural Kentucky's internet speed and accessibility have been slow to catch up with the rest of the state. Increased broadband service would greatly assist with agriculture, agri-tourism, education, economic development, health care, public safety and many other areas.

Enhanced communications and technology are essential for economic success and growth for agriculture and large and small businesses in rural Kentucky. Technology would allow businesses in rural Kentucky to communicate with customers around the world.

Incentives to provide affordable broadband and high-speed internet service to all rural areas of Kentucky must continue. The General Assembly passed House Bill 362 in the 2020 session that modernized the Broadband Deployment Fund. During the 2021 session, there was \$250 million appropriated to the fund. Updates were made in the 2022 session to allow for rural electric cooperatives to also participate in the deployment of broadband, helping to serve customers in rural areas of the Commonwealth. These dollars into the Broadband Deployment Fund will also lead to large private investment to build broadband networks in unserved areas of the Commonwealth.

It is critical the General Assembly continue to support the Broadband Deployment Fund and ensure that government agencies overseeing the expansion prioritize unserved areas of the Commonwealth.

Farm Bureau Policy:

"We support all efforts and incentives to improve and provide all telecommunications in rural Kentucky."

" We are encouraged by the progress that has been made and the attention that has been given to increasing affordable broadband and high speed internet in all rural areas, and we urge continuation of this effort because there is an urgent need."

Status After 2024 Regular Session:

Legislation was passed appropriating over \$1 billion to broadband through the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program - Success

April 2024



2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau State Priority Issues

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Support efforts that will retain and attract new business and industry to rural areas of Kentucky.

Support increased funding for Kentucky riverports to upgrade their agricultural infrastructure.

Kentucky Farm Bureau realizes the need for economic development investments to be made in rural Kentucky to create new, good paying jobs. Without job creation in rural areas of the Commonwealth there will continue to be a population migration toward urban areas with attractive job opportunities.

The Kentucky Rural Jobs Tax Credit Act was introduced in previous sessions to encourage companies to investment in rural areas of Kentucky. Providing economic development incentives for companies to invest in infrastructure in rural Kentucky would ultimately lead to job creation that would stimulate rural economies.

Agriculture production and agribusinesses play a vital role in the strength of a rural community and Kentucky Farm Bureau encourages its members to be active on local economic development boards.

It is also critical to have capable reliable broadband and telecommunication infrastructure to attract businesses to rural Kentucky. As part of rural development, rural broadband and telecommunication infrastructure improvements must be implemented.

Kentucky is fortunate to have miles of navigable waterways and is ideally situated for increased investments in the inland waterway riverport system. Riverport infrastructure investment in Kentucky has lagged behind surrounding states. Riverports not only benefit agriculture directly but also leads to increased economic activity. It is projected that for every dollar invested in Kentucky's public riverports, the Commonwealth can anticipate between \$2.40 and \$5.30 in return to the national economy.

Farm Bureau Policy:

"We support rural economic development efforts to attract new agricultural biotechnology and processing plants and expand existing local industry, including production agriculture, that compliments and adds value to Kentucky-produced agricultural commodities."

“We urge the CED to develop incentives and programs for the establishment of agribusinesses based on job generation, economic impact and/or the use of Kentucky-produced agricultural commodities.”

“We support agricultural leadership in all areas of economic development to strengthen rural communities.”

“We support all efforts and incentives to improve and provide all telecommunications in rural Kentucky.”

“We support an increase in the Kentucky Riverport Improvement Program and/or adequate funding to maintain riverports and create new riverports.”

Status After 2024 Regular Session:

Legislation was passed investing \$15 million in Kentucky’s public riverport industry - Success

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2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau State Priority Issues

WATER RESOURCES

Support the Kentucky Water Resources Board and advocate a coordinated effort to manage water resource projects across the Commonwealth.

Since the passage of the 2016 legislation, which created the Kentucky Water Resources Board, the board has been conducting research and developing recommendations to enhance the quantity of water resources accessible for agricultural production in the state. They also researched emerging water resource issues, including the adequacy of water supplies available for agricultural production and in our rural communities.

The board has examined potential actions to address deficiencies in water supplies and make recommendations for developing new and reliable water sources for key areas of farm production in Kentucky.

The next and most crucial stage of this initiative is to identify and secure the necessary state and/or federal funding to create more on-farm water demonstration projects. The board has seen some state investment through the Agriculture Development Fund and a dedicated source of revenue specifically for on-farm water quantity management projects.

While Kentucky has vast amounts of natural resources, agriculture and our rural communities are one drought away from causing a dramatic impact on our ability to produce crops. Investments into water quantity projects should remain a priority in the Commonwealth.

Farm Bureau Policy:

“We support the Kentucky Water Resources Board and its coordinated effort to manage water resource projects and programs.”

“We support increased monitoring of Kentucky’s water resources to observe both quantity and quality of these resources.”

“We recommend the Kentucky Drought Mitigation and Response Plan be updated to include a specific “Agriculture Drought Mitigation” section.”

“We support the use of peer-reviewed, sound science, as the basis for any regulatory decision.”

“We encourage the Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission, local conservation districts and Kentucky Farm Bureau to participate in developing water quality regulations. We request state government engage the agricultural industry in the process of developing water quality regulations to include, but not limited to Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs).”

Status After 2024 Regular Session:

There was no significant water resources legislation introduced in 2024.

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2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau National Priority Issues

ENERGY

Support increasing production of domestic fuels and fertilizer to ensure availability and affordability.

Federal policies have a tremendous impact on the domestic production of fuels and fertilizers that are essential to farm production. Farmers rely on diesel fuel and fertilizer to successfully supply the world with food, fuel, and fiber.

In March 2022, President Biden announced that his administration would release 1 million barrels of oil per day from the United States (U.S.) oil reserve for the next 180 days from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR). The release was stated to aid in combating rising oil prices after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In November 2022, when the planned release was complete, the SPR was at its lowest level since 1984. Beginning in early 2023, the process of returning 9 million barrels to the SPR was initiated. It was not until December of 2023 that the Administration announced plans to speed up the return of an additional 4 million barrels to the SPR, which is to be completed by the end of February 2024.

Diesel fuel is made from crude oil and biomass. Cutting the domestic oil reserve would lead to less domestic supply of crude oil for oil refiners to process into diesel fuel. U.S. petroleum refineries produce an average of 11 to 12 gallons of diesel fuel from each 42-gallon barrel of crude oil. Since late 2022, when the reserves were at their lowest level in decades and diesel prices were nearly 50% higher than they were the previous year, prices have slowly begun leveling out overall.

Currently, many fertilizers are imported from foreign countries, many of which are not allies of the United States. In 2021, the United States imported \$9.94 billion in fertilizers, becoming the 2nd largest importer in the world. The United States imports fertilizers primarily from: Canada (\$3.8 billion), Russia (\$1.04 billion), Qatar (\$436 million), Jordan (\$601 million), and Saudi Arabia (\$634 million). The ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine is continuing to drive fertilizer prices higher for farmers.

The United States Department of Agriculture announced in 2022 that they are making \$500 million in grants available to increase American-made fertilizer production to spur competition and combat price hikes on U.S. farmers, a positive step in the right direction. In October of 2023, Secretary Vilsack touted the success of the program and announced \$52.6 million was being awarded to 17 new projects through the Fertilizer Production Expansion Program.

KFB Policy

"We support government and industry working together to develop all possible sources of energy to alter United States dependence on other nations for energy resources."

AFBF Policy

"The U.S. should be focused on energy independence."

"We support a gradual increase in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve."

"We support:

- ***The increased domestic production of agricultural chemicals and fertilizers and streamlining regulatory approval."***

"We strongly oppose any U.S. participation in any agreement that would:

- ***Increase costs for fuel, fertilizers and agricultural chemicals."***

"We oppose:

- ***Tariffs on fertilizer imports, including the antidumping duties placed on solid urea imports."***

Status Update:

On April 19, the EPA issued an emergency fuel waiver for E-15 sales ahead of the summer driving season. On April 30, the Biden Administration announced plans for sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) and tax credits for SAF producers.

April 2024



2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau National Priority Issues

HEALTH CARE

Support changes to current health care law that will stabilize the market, encourage competition that will reduce health care costs and increase consumer choice.

For many farm families, health insurance is the largest monthly payment. Over the past few years, the lack of competition among providers has continued to drive up premiums. Efforts to address health care on a national level have been unsuccessful in delivering quality health care coverage at reasonable costs to Kentuckians.

At the Federal level, health care reform was sought by Congress through the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Affordable Care Act), which was signed into law on March 23, 2010, by President Obama. The stated goal of the Affordable Care Act was to make affordable health care insurance available to all Americans, but the issue of health care costs was not addressed and still persists.

The 115th Congress made several unsuccessful efforts to “repeal and replace” the Affordable Care Act and address health care costs. One particular reform of interest to Farm Bureau was the effort to repeal the Health Insurance Tax (HIT). This tax was levied on health insurance companies and then directly passed on to individuals and small businesses who purchase their own insurance. The 116th Congress passed legislation in 2019 to permanently repeal the HIT. Without repeal, it was estimated that the tax would have added \$16 billion to the cost of coverage for individuals, small businesses, families, and Medicare Advantage seniors in 2020.

Kentucky Farm Bureau’s goal remains the same – to improve the health insurance market in Kentucky by seeking ways to encourage competition that will improve the health care system and reduce health insurance costs.

KFB Policy:

“We support changes in Kentucky’s health insurance laws that will stabilize the market, encourage competition and increase consumer choice.”

“We support comprehensive affordable health care for all United States citizens.”

“We support:

(1) Every possible effort to affect cost management while providing accessible high quality health care;”

AFBF Policy

“We believe that health care is primarily the responsibility of the individual. We support efforts to improve health care delivery and foster health care competition.”

“We support federal tax policies that encourage individuals to prepare for future health care needs.”

Status Update:

No significant action has been taken so far this session of Congress.

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2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau National Priority Issues

WILDLIFE ISSUES

Support a producer's right to protect livestock and property against nuisance wildlife predation.

Support a nationwide depredation order, or safe harbor provision, to take black vultures.

In recent years, the black vulture, also known as the black buzzard, has become an increasingly significant problem for livestock producers across Kentucky. Unlike the red-headed turkey vulture, the black vulture is a predatory creature. Many livestock producers have experienced significant losses of newborn calves, and even cows, to aggressive packs of black vultures. Unfortunately, options to protect livestock from predation are currently limited because both species of vultures are protected.

The American black vulture receives special legal protections under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 in the United States, by the Convention for the Protection of Migratory Birds in Canada, and by the Convention for the Protection of Migratory Birds and Game Mammals in Mexico. In the United States, it is illegal to pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, or possess black vultures. A violation of the law is punishable by a fine of up to \$15,000, imprisonment of up to six months, or both. As a result of this law, black vulture populations have steadily increased in the U.S. over the last half-century according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey. The estimated global breeding population of this very wide-ranging bird is approximately 20 million.

In 2015, Kentucky Farm Bureau received a statewide depredation permit for black vultures from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS), allowing the issuance of individual Livestock Protection Sub-Permits to producers who are experiencing livestock losses due to predation associated with black vultures. Kentucky Farm Bureau's current permit allows for up to 1,500 "takes" of problem black vultures, with a maximum of 3 takes per approved applicant.

It is highly unlikely that the treaty will be opened to allow for the delisting of the black vulture, but Congressional leaders have worked on alternative ways to allow for protection of livestock and property from black vulture depredation. Wildlife conservation legislation passed in 2020 authorized the USFWS to issue permits for farmers to take black vultures to prevent damage to livestock and authorizes funding to assist producers with carrying out proactive and nonlethal activities to reduce the risk of livestock loss. If you experience losses of

livestock from black vulture attacks you can document that loss and submit it to your local Farm Service Agency representative to receive an indemnification payment for the animal affected.

KFB Policy:

"We encourage a more readily available permit process for nuisance wildlife such as the American black vulture."

"We support removal of the black vulture from protected status and elimination of permit fees."

AFBF Policy:

"Controlling wildlife damage is a critical factor in maintaining the success of American agriculture. Toward that goal we support:

- Legislation which would require the control of wildlife including endangered species or provide depredation permits for farmers who suffer losses from wildlife;***
- A state-by-state depredation order for the taking of predatory black vultures;***
- Black vulture permits being issued for a duration of five years at no charge to the requesting landowner or operator."***

"We support:

- Removal of resident Canada geese, black vultures sandhill cranes, crows, ravens, cormorants and barn swallows from protection under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act;"***

Status Update:

KFB's Livestock Depredation Permit was renewed through March 2025. Since last month's renewal, KFB has already issued 24 sub-permits, which is well ahead of last year.

April 2024



2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau National Priority Issues

FISCAL POLICY

In order to protect the future integrity of our nation's economy it is in our best interest to address budget deficits, which erode our ability to remain fiscally stable with the goal of reaching a balanced budget.

Federal tax code should be reformed based on sound economic principles to create a more competitive business climate.

Oppose elimination of the stepped-up basis and lowering of the current exemption for federal estate taxes.

The federal debt is the total amount of money that the federal government owes, either to its investors or to itself. As of January 2024, the total federal debt was \$34.14 trillion dollars. One measure of a country's economic health is the level of the country's debt compared to its gross domestic product, a debt-to-revenue ratio. The Congressional Budget Office predicts that continuing down the present path will increase this same ratio to 180 percent in 2050, which is above and beyond what most market watchers view as sustainable.

Rising federal debt can have an adverse affect on consumers. The most immediate impact is contemplation of raising taxes, reducing spending, or a combination of the two to rein in the debt. Generally, the federal debt is financed through the sale of U.S. Treasury bonds. As interest rates inch up to attract Treasury bond investors, so will rates for consumers. In the short term, the Federal Reserve is also buying up Treasury bonds. Eventually this can lead to much higher rates of inflation as well.

In 2023 consumers, particularly farmers, continued seeing the effects of inflation. As farmers begin the 2024 growing season, increased prices and availability of products are continuing to be a major concern.

Increasing federal debt also impacts economic growth. Government spending currently accounts for around a fifth of economic activity in the U.S., therefore if a greater portion of government spending goes to pay higher interest costs, then fewer dollars remain to build roads, continue federal programs at present levels, or provide tax incentives to spur business growth.

The federal tax code is extensive, and very complicated. Congress passed tax reform legislation during the 115th Congress, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which included key provisions for farmers like the continuation of immediate expensing, business interest deduction and cash accounting. The estate tax exemption increased to \$11 million per individual and is indexed for inflation. Also addressed were corporate and individual tax rates and deductions with the goal to simplify current tax code. Many of these provisions, however, are set to expire in 2025 unless Congress take action. The House of Representatives recently passed a bill addressing some of these provisions, but the Senate has yet to consider it.

Due to increased federal spending over the past few years, there has been significant discussions to increase taxes which would have an extremely negative effect on farm families. Congress has debated eliminating the stepped-up basis exemption, lowering the current estate tax exemption, eliminating certain expensing deductions commonly used in agriculture, and increasing the capital gains rate among other tax increases. However, Farm Bureau led the way to defeat these harmful tax changes and was successful through the 117th congress.

Kentucky Farm Bureau believes that tax policy, in addition to being based on public need and economic principles with state and Federal taxes, should be apportioned equitably among its citizens.

KFB Policy:

“Kentucky’s tax policies should be based on public need and sound economic principles. Kentucky taxes should be apportioned equitably among the citizens.”

AFBF Policy:

“In order to protect the future integrity of our nation’s economy it is in our best interest to address budget deficits, which erode our ability to remain fiscally stable. We support a Constitutional amendment requiring a balanced federal budget.”

“Tax policy should be designed to encourage private initiative, domestic economic growth, equity and simplicity.”

Status Update:

The majority of the 2024 Congressional calendar has been consumed with funding battles and potential government shutdowns. While the remainder of the 2024 fiscal year is now funded, the fiscal year ends in September and Congress will be faced with the same problem yet again. Regarding the tax provisions from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that are set to expire in 2025, the House of Representatives recently passed a bill addressing some of these provisions, but the Senate has yet to consider it.

April 2024



2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau National Priority Issues

TRADE

Support fair and open multilateral trade agreements that will open new markets and expand existing markets for U.S. agricultural products.

International trade is an integral part of the modern world economy and critical for agriculture. In fiscal year 2023, U.S. agricultural exports amounted to approximately \$179 billion, while imports were roughly \$195 billion. Fiscal year 2024 exports are projected to be \$169.5 billion. According to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, Kentucky is the United States' 20th largest agriculture exporting state, with roughly \$2.1 billion in domestic agriculture exports in 2017. It is critical that sound, multilateral international trade agreements are drafted that will help farmers compete globally on a level playing field and have access to the world's consumers. To expand access to international markets, it is imperative that we work to reduce and eliminate international barriers to trade.

United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)

- Canada and Mexico are two of our nation's largest trading partners and are top export markets for Kentucky goods.
- In 2022, Kentucky exported \$281 million in agricultural and related products to Canada.
- The USMCA, as confirmed by the United States International Trade Commission, will have a positive impact on the agriculture sector and is expected to increase agricultural and food exports by \$2.2 billion.
- In January 2020, President Trump signed the USMCA implementing legislation and the agreement took effect July 1, 2020.
- Over the past year, the USTR has been in consultations with Mexico to resolve disputes over imports of bio-tech corn from the U.S.

Japan

- Japan is our nation's fourth-largest agriculture export market.
- The U.S. and Japan reached an agreement on agricultural and industrial tariffs that took effect January 1, 2020.
- U.S. total exports of agricultural products to Japan totaled \$14.2 billion in 2021 – a 22% increase over 2020. According to the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, the United States is the largest supplier of food and agricultural products to Japan, with a 24% share of imports. Japan is the largest export market for U.S. beef and pork, valued at \$5 billion combined, and the second largest market for U.S. corn, valued at \$3 billion.

China

- China is the third largest trading partner of the U.S.
- In 2022, the U.S. exported \$17.9 billion in soybeans and \$5.3 billion in corn to China.

KFB Policy:

“We will continue to investigate the market potential for Kentucky livestock and livestock products.”

AFBF Policy:

“We are strong advocates of fair and open world trade.”

“Aggressive efforts must be made at all levels to open new markets and expand existing markets for U.S. agricultural products.”

Status Update:

In 2023, Mexico banned biotech corn imports from the U.S. After months of failed negotiations, the U.S. filed a formal complaint and requested a panel under the USMCA. Both the U.S. and Mexico will present their arguments to the panel in June, with the panel’s final decision expected in November 2024.

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2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau National Priority Issues

NATIONAL FARM POLICY

Federal crop insurance programs should be maintained at current levels to provide an effective safety net for agriculture.

Support crop insurance initiatives to maintain the integrity of crop insurance.

Support NRCS assistance for the development of additional water resources for irrigation and livestock use.

Support modifying USDA Rural Development broadband programs to increase access to broadband service that meets or exceeds FCC standards.

The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill) was enacted on December 20, 2018, and provided authorization for services and programs impacting every American and millions of people across the world. The 2018 Farm Bill expired on September 30, 2023. In November, a one-year extension was authorized by Congress, ensuring its programs remain in effect for 2024.

The 2018 Farm Bill provided improvements to the farm safety net while maintaining crop insurance and improving commodity programs to help farmers survive major natural disasters or market factors. Crop insurance policies protect farmers against losses due to naturally occurring events, such as drought, wind, or excessive moisture. The Conservation Reserve Program, designed to idle highly erodible lands from production, was given the ability to be expanded to 27 million acres, an increase of 3 million acres over previous years. Including 2023 signups, the amount of acres enrolled in CRP totaled 24.8 million as of October 2023. It also included provisions to increase the grassland acre floor to 2 million acres and provided more flexibility for grazing. The commitment to working lands conservation continued with increased funding for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

The 2018 Farm Bill also provided investments in rural broadband services. Access to rural broadband services continues to be an issue for many rural Kentuckians. Rural broadband is essential for farmers to follow commodity markets, communicate with their customers, gain access to new markets around the world, and is increasingly necessary for regulatory compliance; thus, making it extremely important to rural communities. To thrive, rural areas need access to health care, government services, and educational and business opportunities. For many rural communities, access can only be gained by using broadband

services with sophisticated technologies that require high-speed connections. The USDA's Rural Utilities Service and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) are the primary federal agencies with major broadband funding streams. In recent years, the federal government has emphasized the importance of expanding broadband coverage in rural areas. In 2018, Congress provided the USDA with \$600 million to expand broadband infrastructure in rural communities.

This investment led to the USDA's announcement of rules for the ReConnect Program which provides 100 percent loans, 100 percent grants, and loan-grant combinations to eligible entities. Congress has continued to invest in the program with annual appropriations. In November 2023, the Biden Administration announced a \$5 billion investment in rural communities, including \$274 million for ReConnect.

KFB Policy:

"We support the availability of crop insurance for all forage crops and pasture."

"We support a two-tiered crop insurance program for tobacco; with the base rate being available for all tobacco with a second tier buy-up level for tobacco grown under contract."

"We support any tobacco graded as no value and receiving an insurance adjustment being required to be destroyed and destruction witnessed by a representative of the insurance company."

"We support the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) modifying existing cost-share programs to allow for Natural Resources Conservation Service technical assistance in assessing the long-term availability of water resources and the planning and development of new on-farm water supplies and irrigation systems."

"We support all efforts and incentives to improve and provide all telecommunications in rural Kentucky."

AFBF Policy:

"We support:

- ***The availability of commodity insurance designed for agricultural producers of all crops, aquaculture, livestock and poultry in the country;"***

"We support:

- ***Annual reviews to ensure proper premium ratings that are actuarially sound by crop, county and state;"***

"We support:

- ***Continuation of the federal government financial support, at a percent not less than current levels, for the program with the private sector continuing to serve as the primary deliverer of insurance;"***

"We support:

- ***Legislation which strongly addresses crop insurance fraud;"***

"We support:

- ***Increasing high speed internet access in rural areas through any source, including wireless, by using a combination of tax incentives, grants and/or regulations. Networks should meet and exceed the FCC's definition for broadband;"***

Status Update:

Chairman G.T. Thompson of the House Agriculture Committee has stated he plans to bring a new farm bill to committee by Memorial Day. It is unclear, however, if the bill is approved by committee, whether it will be considered by the full House of Representatives and sent to the Senate for consideration prior to the extension's expiration this September.

April 2024

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2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau National Priority Issues

INFRASTRUCTURE

Support maintenance and improvement of transportation infrastructure, including rural highways, lock and dam systems, riverports, and railroads.

Support the timely reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act.

Rural infrastructure is essential to local communities and provides critical links to global markets for agriculture and other industries. Farmers depend on highways, railways, and waterways to ship food, fuel, and fiber across the country and around the world.

Transportation infrastructure improvement is the most apparent need in rural communities. Highways, bridges, railways, locks and dams, harbors, and port facilities all need major investments if we are to maintain our competitive edge in efficiently transporting our agricultural products to market.

Highways

The U.S. highway system is funded through a multi-year highway bill, most recently the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). The IIJA authorizes \$1.2 trillion through fiscal year 2026 in roads, bridges, locks and dams, ports, railways, public transportation systems, broadband, and other infrastructure projects. \$350 billion of IIJA funding is marked specifically for Federal highway programs, most of which will be distributed to states through formula funding. The HTF historically funded all federal highway programs, as well as 80% of the public transportation programs, with fuel, truck, and tire taxes. Last raised in 1993, the excise tax on fuel (gas tax) – 18.4 cents per gallon on gasoline and 24.4 cents per gallon on diesel fuel – accounts for approximately 90% of the HTF. While increases in fuel consumption since 1993 had been maintaining the HTF, after the recession starting in 2007, a greater propensity for fuel efficiency and an increasing demand for electronic vehicles (EVs) has stymied the revenue growth of the HTF, leading to consistent overspending.

Waterways

U.S. inland waterways and ports benefit from two major sources of funds- the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF) and the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF). However, unlike federal funding provided for highways and municipal water infrastructure, federal funds distributed to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is not dispersed through a formula to states or competitive grant programs. The IWTF, which covers part of the construction and major rehabilitation costs for national inland waterways, is funded through a 29 cent-per-gallon tax on barge fuel. The HMTF is also utilized to help fund the USACE's operations and maintenance activities, but from a direct tax of \$1.25 per \$1,000 of cargo moving through coastal and Great Lakes ports. While both funding streams are funded partially through user

taxes, the other half is from the General Fund of the Treasury and appropriated by Congress. Public spending on water transportation in 2017 equaled \$10.2 billion, up \$3.5 billion from 30 years ago. Congress reauthorizes the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), which provides direction and reforms to the Corps and provides federal investments in water resources infrastructure, every two years. In December 2022, Congress passed the WRDA, combined with Department of Defense spending, which was signed into law on December 23. The \$37.8 billion authorization will fund 30 new or modified USACE programs, including storm protection, harbor dredging, and addition civil works projects across the country. WRDA is once again up for reauthorization this year and will provide an opportunity to secure much needed funding for Kentucky's inland waterways and riverports.

Railways

Short line railroads are first-and-last mile carriers that connect small towns, farms, and factories to the national rail network, creating jobs and stimulating economic growth in thousands of local communities. These railroads operate nearly 29% of the national railroad network. Farm Bureau has been a strong supporter of the Short Line "45G" Rehabilitation Tax Credit which was enacted by Congress in 2005. The 50% short line rail tax credit was enacted to encourage infrastructure repairs and upgrades by regional and short line railroads. In December 2020, Congress passed legislation to make this tax credit permanent at the 50% level for 2020, 2021, and 2022 and then at the 40% level beginning in 2023.

KFB Policy:

"We support revenue options that ensure adequate financing for transportation infrastructure maintenance which take into account increased construction costs, improved fuel efficiency, and electric vehicles which currently pay no fuel tax."

AFBF Policy:

"We support more allocation of funds for the maintenance and improvement of our transportation infrastructure, including:

- ***The lock and dam system and waterways;***
- ***Rural highways;***
- ***Railroad systems;***
- ***Farm-to-market roads;***
- ***Pipelines; and***
- ***General aviation airports"***

"We should undertake a comprehensive effort to assure U.S. producer competitiveness. Competitiveness issues should include biotech seed cost, agricultural research, U.S. transportation infrastructure, U.S. farm bill structure and funding, exchange rates, climate-related regulations and other factors relevant to agricultural global competitiveness."

"We support:

- ***Policies and actions that enhance and maintain a competitive domestic processing (value-added) industry and infrastructure for U.S. produced agricultural commodities;"***

Status Update:

No significant action has been taken so far this session of Congress.

April 2024



2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau National Priority Issues

REGULATORY REFORM

Support a thorough regulatory review to ensure regulations do not impose an undue economic burden on any segment of society and ensure the regulatory process is transparent and results are achievable.

All regulations should be based on sound, peer-reviewed scientific data that can be replicated.

Support congressional oversight of federal agency regulatory actions to ensure rules and regulations do not exceed the intent and authority of federal law.

Farmers are faced with many requirements through the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, the Food Safety Modernization Act, and other laws. In many cases these requirements are the result of federal regulations and court decisions.

The Administrative Procedure Act (APA) which governs how regulations are set forth, has not substantially changed since its inception in 1946, meanwhile the federal government has expanded significantly. When the APA was signed into law, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, the Endangered Species Act, Medicare, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and the Affordable Care Act did not exist. Yet, all these laws led to regulations that affect Americans every day.

Overreach by federal agencies beyond Congressional intent remains a concern on a number of fronts. To address this overreach, the Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny Act (REINS Act), has been introduced in multiple congresses. It would require that any major rule proposed by the Executive Branch be approved by Congress before the rule can become final. A major rule, as defined by the Office of Management and Budget, is one that has an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million or more.

Of particular interest to the agriculture community has been efforts to repeal the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the United States Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) 2015 rule that vastly expanded the definition of "waters of the United States" or WOTUS. Under the 2015 Clean Water Rule, virtually any area retaining water for any period of time, or land feature with a visible high water mark, evidence of a flow pattern or even a characteristic only visible on aerial photographs, soil surveys or other interpretive methods,

could be deemed to be under federal jurisdiction and require normal field activities to be permitted. After several years of working to repeal and replace the rule, in September 2019 the EPA and USACE announced a final rule rescinding it. The Navigable Waters Protection Rule was published in April 2020 and provided a new revised definition of WOTUS, which established four categories of jurisdictional waters subject to federal regulatory authority under the Clean Water Act. It also provided specific exclusions for water features that traditionally have not been regulated. The final rule became effective in 49 states on June 22, 2020. President Joe Biden, however, instructed the EPA to repeal and replace the 2020 Navigable Waters Protection Rule and on January 18, 2023, the EPA published the final "Revised Definition of 'Waters of the United States,'" which will go into effect on March 20, 2023. The rule harkens back to the broad and ambiguous 2015 Clean Water Rule.

In May of 2023, the Supreme Court dealt a massive blow to the revised WOTUS definition in the case of *Sackett v. EPA*. In a unanimous decision, the Court held that the Clean Water Act only covers wetlands that have a "continuous surface connection" with waters of the United States, meaning relatively permanent bodies of water connected to traditional interstate navigable waters. As a result, the EPA issued a ministerial change to bring the 2023 rule into compliance with the Court's decision. While it is likely some litigation will result from the ministerial change, the *Sackett* decision is a huge win for American agriculture.

KFB Policy:

"We support the use of peer-reviewed, sound science, as the basis for any regulatory decision."

"We support reasonable environmental protection programs that are based on sound science."

"We oppose the enactment of regulations that go beyond the intent and authority of state and federal laws."

"We oppose climate change legislation that establishes mandatory cap and trade provisions which would lead to higher energy costs and negative impacts on the agricultural economy."

AFBF Policy:

"We support:

- Regulations promulgated as a result of congressional action being reviewed by the congressional committee of jurisdiction prior to implementation to ensure that the legislative intent is being followed;"***

"All federal agencies shall be held to the strictest interpretation of law when setting regulations. No federal agency shall be allowed to legislate through their regulatory power."

"Regulations should be based on sound scientific data that can be replicated and peer reviewed;"

"We believe:

- That Congress should provide for strong congressional oversight of regulatory and significant agency actions as well as a willingness to override unacceptable agency actions."***

Status Update:

In March, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) issued its final rule on Mandatory Climate Disclosures. In a win for agriculture, scope 3 emissions – indirect greenhouse gas emission from both the upstream and downstream in a company's value chain – were excluded from the rule.

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2024 Kentucky Farm Bureau National Priority Issues

IMMIGRATION AND FARM LABOR REFORM

Support immigration reform that restructures the H-2A program to make it more streamlined, reliable, and economical, in addition to limiting legal liability for farmers.

American agriculture has consistently experienced difficulties in finding and retaining adequate labor to produce the food, fiber, and fuel our growing population needs. Often times it is difficult to locate domestic workers willing to perform the labor-intensive work agricultural jobs require, consequently many farmers must navigate the bureaucratic H-2A program.

Currently, farmers interested in utilizing the H-2A program must (1) demonstrate they are unable to secure U.S. workers, (2) pay for H-2A workers' housing and transportation, and (3) pay H-2A workers the highest of the federal or applicable state minimum wage rate, the applicable prevailing wage rate, or the adverse effect wage rate (AEWR). Moreover, the program is excessively bureaucratic, requiring subsequent approval by multiple governmental agencies, including the Department of Labor (DOL), Department of Homeland Security, State Department, and the State Employment Agency. While the H-2A program is burdensome, costly, and limited to seasonal work, demand for temporary agriculture labor has grown significantly over the past few years. According to the Department of Labor (DOL), the number of H-2A positions certified from 2013 to 2022 increased from less than 100,000 to nearly 372,000, respectively.

Several attempts to update the H-2A program have been made through regulatory changes in previous years. However, regulations are subject to change when there is a Presidential administrative change and without congressional approval.

In November 2020, the DOL issued a final rule to update the methodology for calculating the AEWR and froze the 2020 AEWR pay rates for most H-2A workers for two years. This rule was set to take effect December 21, 2020; however, it was challenged in court and on December 23, 2020, a judge granted a preliminary injunction preventing the new methodology from going into effect. Due to this injunction, rates increased in 2021, 2022, 2023 and will again increase for the 2024 growing season. In February of 2023, the DOL's latest AEWR rule went into effect, changing the methodology for AEWR calculation, resulting in even higher rates for agriculture employers.

Farm Bureau will continue to seek every opportunity to provide a stable, legal supply of workers for U.S. agriculture.

KFB Policy:

“We encourage the development of a standardized, expedited system within the United States consulate’s offices for processing and verification of H-2A workers.”

“We strongly urge the United States Department of Labor (U.S. DOL) to approve joint contracts among farmers for the H-2A program.”

“We support a meaningful temporary agricultural guest-worker program and encourage the following reforms:

- (1) A new agriculture visa that is portable (at-will) or by contract and that also deals with ag sectors, including livestock, that need year-round workers;***
- (2) Required reimbursement paid at the 50 percent point of the contract;***
- (3) A streamlined system to receive workers;***
- (4) The use of the Agricultural Prevailing Wage Rate instead of the AEW; and***
- (5) Staggered dates of worker entry under a single contract.”***

AFBF Policy:

“We support:

- An uncapped agricultural worker visa program that is open to all segments of agriculture and flexible enough to provide for the differing needs of farmers and ranchers.”***

“We support:

- A significant cap increase or abolishment of the 66,000 annual cap on H-2B visas to assist agricultural processors that use the H-2B visa program.”***

“We support a worker program that:

- The United States Department of Labor (DOL) resurveying the average labor wage for agricultural workers in order to more accurately reflect the local pay rates (domestic versus H-2A) and ease the financial strain on agricultural producers due to an overinflated Adverse Effect Wage Rate required by H-2A provisions;”***

“We support:

- The reform of existing migrant labor laws to promote greater access to an agricultural workforce;”***

“We support immigration reform including streamlining the H-2A and H-2B process, to prioritize making a national immigration policy that is farmer friendly providing a legal agricultural workforce that would benefit producers, farm workers and the American consumer.”

“We support improved training for employers to understand and better use the H-2A program, and provide better information for new users to the program.”

Status Update:

The House of Representative's Committee on Agriculture's bipartisan Farm Labor Working Group recently issued its report, which pointed to increases in the AEWR causing significant hardship to agricultural producers. While the Ag Committee does not have jurisdiction over farm labor laws, they have shared their report with the House Judiciary Committee in hopes the report's findings will be incorporated into future legislation.

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Contest Application and Score Sheets

District # _____

Check One: Male
 Female

KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU OUTSTANDING FARM BUREAU YOUTH CONTEST APPLICATION

Name _____
(First) (Middle) (Last)

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone () _____ E-Mail _____

Date of Birth _____ Age _____ Current Grade Level _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Name _____

Kentucky Farm Bureau Membership is in the name of _____

Membership Number _____ Membership County _____

Signed _____
(Contestant)

Signed _____
(County Farm Bureau President or County Women's Chair)

Attach the following to this application:

- **A one-page typed or handwritten listing of applicant's extra-curricular activities, special interests and/or leadership experience.**
- **A school transcript of grades for the past two years. The transcript must be certified by a school official.**
- **A current photo (no larger than 4x6).**

Note: Please send contest applications to the district women's chair as soon as possible following your county contest.

KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU OUTSTANDING FARM BUREAU YOUTH CONTEST RULES

The purpose of the Outstanding Farm Bureau Youth Contest is to promote youth involvement in county Farm Bureau activities and to recognize leadership, achievements and awards in their schools and communities.

1. Children of all Kentucky Farm Bureau members are eligible to participate and must enter the contest in the county where the membership is paid. Contestants may only enter the contest in one county each year.
2. Contestants must be 14-years old at the time of the county contest, but not have reached 19-years old by January 1 of the following year.
3. A contestant who is married before the state contest is ineligible to enter.
4. Prior first place state winners are ineligible to enter.
5. Contestant dress for county and district level competitions is business attire (**no jeans**). For the state contest, females should wear business attire (suits, slacks, or skirts) and the males should wear suits (coat and tie). Youth organizational attire (i.e. FFA, 4-H, and FCCLA) is acceptable on all levels: county, district, and state.
6. The contestant's school grades for the past two years, certified by a school official, must be attached, along with a one-page extra-curricular activities listing, to the application form.
7. If for any reason the county or district winner is disqualified or cannot participate, the first runner-up will represent that county or district. All district winners are expected to attend the state annual meeting unless an emergency occurs.
8. The contest will consist of a personal interview (not to exceed seven minutes). During the personal interview, contestants will be asked about school activities, special interests, and career goals. The personal interview is followed by the on-stage portion of the competition. The on-stage portion consists of a two-minute prepared speech given by the contestant on a topic relating to Farm Bureau or agriculture. The contestant will be penalized a total of five points if the prepared speech exceeds two minutes.
9. The state Outstanding Farm Bureau Youth Contest is held during the Kentucky Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in Louisville in early December.

**OUTSTANDING FARM BUREAU YOUTH CONTEST
PERSONAL INTERVIEW SCORE SHEET**

FEMALE ONLY



50 Points Total

Contestant Number		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. General Knowledge (Activities & Achievements)	20											
2. Conversational Ability & Attitude	15											
3. Grades	10											
4. General Appearance	5											
TOTAL OF ABOVE	50											

Note: The contestant's school grades for the past two years, certified by a school official, must be attached to the application, along with a one-page listing of extra-curricular activities. Do not exceed seven minutes for each contestant's personal interview.

Revised: 5/20/2019

**OUTSTANDING FARM BUREAU YOUTH CONTEST
ON-STAGE/PREPARED SPEECH SCORE SHEET**



FEMALE ONLY

50 Points Total

Contestant Number		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. General Appearance	5											
2. Personality & Poise	5											
3. Content of Speech	20											
4. Delivery of Speech	20											
TOTAL OF ABOVE	50											

Note: The on-stage portion of the competition will consist of a two-minute prepared speech given by the contestant on Farm Bureau or agriculture. The contestant will be penalized a total of 5 points if the prepared speech exceeds two minutes.

Revised: 5/20/2019

**OUTSTANDING FARM BUREAU YOUTH CONTEST
PERSONAL INTERVIEW SCORE SHEET**



MALE ONLY

50 Points Total

Contestant Number		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. General Knowledge (Activities & Achievements)	20											
2. Conversational Ability & Attitude	15											
3. Grades	10											
4. General Appearance	5											
TOTAL OF ABOVE	50											

Note: The contestant's school grades for the past two years, certified by a school official, must be attached to the application, along with a one-page listing of extra-curricular activities. Do not exceed seven minutes for each contestant's personal interview.

Revised: 5/20/2019

**OUTSTANDING FARM BUREAU YOUTH CONTEST
ON-STAGE/PREPARED SPEECH SCORE SHEET**



MALE ONLY

50 Points Total

Contestant Number		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. General Appearance	5											
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3. Content of Speech	20											
4. Delivery of Speech	20											
TOTAL OF ABOVE	50											

Note: The on-stage portion of the competition will consist of a two-minute prepared speech given by the contestant on Farm Bureau or agriculture. The contestant will be penalized a total of 5 points if the prepared speech exceeds two minutes.

Revised: 5/20/2019