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A CONVERSATION WITH AN ARIZONA DAIRY FARMER AND LEADER: CRAIG CABALLERO

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Director of Strategic Communications

Craig Caballero is a second-generation dairy farmer and owner of Caballero Dairy Farms in Eloy, Arizona. He grew up on his family's dairy in Gilbert, Arizona and attended college at Grand Canyon University, where he received his degree in Business.

After college, Craig played Catcher position in Minor League baseball for the Detroit Tigers and Chicago Cubs. He eventually left baseball and returned to Arizona to follow in his father's footsteps and acquired the family dairy.

With quite disparate 4-H and FFA projects, theirs dairy mine swine, the Caballeros lived just south of us in Gilbert (though most of my grade-school growing up years were in Maricopa). And, his older sister, Stephanie, and I were on the Gilbert High School girls swim team together a few years back, okay, several decades ago. Stephanie was a great diver and I stuck to the four swim strokes. Looking back, our subtle connections contribute to what defines us but often, we don't appreciate them at the time. The Caballeros, like ours, are big on family, farming and community and I celebrate their contribution to Arizona's agriculture.

Since I hung out with the beef community through Lauren Maehling in May for this ongoing conversation series, I thought it only appropriate to give the dairy industry in Arizona a platform. So, below are Craig's insights on a dynamic and changing agricultural sector in our state.

Currently, Craig is serving as the Interim CEO and Chairman of United Dairymen of Arizona. He and his wife, Heather, have four children, with Craig supporting their athletic and agricultural involvement.

Arizona Agriculture: The United Dairymen of Arizona (UDA) is 60+ years old. In your role and reflecting on its past, what do you like to share with others outside of industry about the role of UDA in Arizona and certainly the industry.

Caballero: The United Dairymen of Arizona represents so much more than just a cooperative; it's a crucial pillar of Arizona's agriculture, economic growth, and public health. We take pride in our substantial contribution, with a direct economic impact of \$4.9 billion on the national economy.

Heartfelt thanks go to our founding members, whose visionary efforts and collaboration have established a robust foundation for the future. Their foresight and teamwork deserve all the praise.

Arizona Agriculture: As one of the oldest dairy cooperatives in the country, what do you think has been the organization's sustainability as a business?

Caballero: Our longevity as one of the oldest dairy cooperatives in the country can

largely be attributed to the people at our core. The visionary founders who established our Cooperative also sowed the seeds of a strong and enduring culture. This foundation has been key in fostering a resilient and thriving business.

Coupled with this is our belief in the power of collaboration. We have built and maintained strong partnerships with a multitude of dairy brands, and these relationships are vital to our ongoing success. Working closely with these partners, we've been able to adapt, innovate, and remain a steadfast part of the industry's fabric.

Arizona Agriculture: What do you see as the biggest opportunities for the coop and our Arizona dairies? Maybe another way to ask it ... what's the next big thing that will move UDA into its next 60 or 100 years?

Caballero: The biggest opportunities for the co-op and our Arizona dairies lie in embracing innovation and sustainability. As Arizona's population expands, we face the challenge of nourishing an ever-growing number of people on diminishing agricultural land. However, this is also our chance to shine.

We can look at advancing our practices with cutting-edge technology, figuring out smarter, more water-efficient methods for farming, and developing sustainable feeds for our livestock. Embracing renewable energy sources and reducing waste are also key areas we can tap into.

Arizona Agriculture: Talk about the products UDA produces.

Caballero: The inception of our balancing plant was pivotal for UDA, catapulting our capabilities into a global sphere. By building our balancing plant our founders effectively shattered the constraints imposed by milk's natural perishability. This innovation not only diversified our product range but also expanded our market reach beyond borders.

This diversification into dry dairy ingredients has opened a world of possibilities, allowing us to supply a variety of industries worldwide. Our dry milk is critical in countless applications, from food manufacturing to nutritional products.

Current Dried Product List: Nonfat Dry Milk, Skim Milk Powder, Milk Protein Concentrate, Butter, Grade A Buttermilk Powder, Whey Protein Concentrate, Lactose, Lactoferrin

Current Fluid Product List (sold via tanker load to bottlers/processors): Fluid Milk, Grade A Condensed Buttermilk, Whey Protein Concentrate Liquid, Condensed Skim, Grade A Sweet Cream

Arizona Agriculture: Let's discuss some numbers. 20 years ago, we had nearly 100 family-owned dairies, now there are much fewer. How has that impacted milk production and what will these numbers mean for the future?



Craig Caballero is serving as the Interim CEO and Chairman of United Dairymen of Arizona. He and his wife, Heather, have four children, with Craig supporting their athletic and agricultural involvement.

REFLECTIONS ON THE 2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES FOR ARIZONA AGRICULTURE

By Daniel Harris, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Manager

The 2024 legislative session stretched well beyond its 100-day mark, lasting 160 days filled with both triumphs and turbulence for Arizona's Agricultural community. We saw dedicated efforts to tackle the pressing issues facing our farmers and ranchers, with water management being at the top of our priorities.

Throughout the session, we made significant strides in the overarching issues affecting Arizona, especially with crucial water bills that directly impact agriculture. A standout effort was SB1221, a landmark water bill aiming to amend the 1980 Groundwater Act by introducing Basin Management Areas (BMAs). This bill was designed to offer a flexible and effective approach to groundwater management, tailored to Arizona's unique agricultural needs.

Our involvement in SB1221 showcased our commitment to sustainable water management, and highlighted the proactive approach agriculture took in getting this bill to where it is today.

Despite months of hard work, consensus-building, and stakeholder engagement, SB1221 faced an unfortunate setback on the final day of the session. The absence of two House members meant the bill didn't get the necessary votes to move forward, highlighting the unpredictability of the legislative process. Regardless, as many have said in the two groups negotiating

the landmark piece of water legislation, "We've never been closer" to seeing the Groundwater management act of 1980 amended in a way that would empower and encourage rural Arizona to conserve water in a way that will benefit the economies and aquifers alike.

CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

Governor Katie Hobbs' vetoes of several key pieces of legislation, including important water policies and housing improvement bills, were significant setbacks. These vetoes stalled efforts to address interconnected issues like water management and housing development, both critical for the agricultural sector and Arizona at large.

Prolonged budget negotiations were another challenge. Despite early bipartisan efforts, delays led to last-minute, intensive meetings, affecting the timely resolution of agricultural concerns. However, the biggest disappointment was the inability to pass SB1221. This bill involved extensive collaboration and compromise, aiming to offer a science-driven, fair solution for groundwater management. Moving forward, the need for continued vigilance and advocacy for rural communities remains increasingly important.

POLITICAL LANDSCAPE AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

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WHAT’S NEW WITH MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

By Staff Reports

The Member Engagement Department at Arizona Farm Bureau is sparking all sorts of excitement that include the addition of two new people and program changes within the department. Headed by Licia Allen, director of member engagement, member leaders can expect four enhanced areas of support and programming.

- **Increased director involvement with county presidents:** Don’t be surprised to see Allen driving around your county and participating in meetings.
- **Increased involvement of outreach supporting president in executing county program of work:** The manager will work more closely with county presidents to make sure all program efforts are being carried out.
- **Increased communication processes between outreach and county boards:** Structurally, the department plans to enhance communication with county Farm Bureau leaders.
- **Increased state presence and support within county events:** Expect to see the member engagement team at your county events!

WELCOME, LICIA AND BRITTNEY TO THE ARIZONA FARM BUREAU FAMILY

Licia Allen, Director of Member Engagement

Licia brings a unique blend of experience in psychology, corporate consulting, and agriculture to her role as Director of Member Engagement at the Arizona Farm Bureau. With a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, she initially embarked on a successful career at McKinsey & Company, where she honed her strategic and analytical skills working with teams on global consulting projects. Licia spent many fulfilling years as the owner and operator of a thriving dairy farm. This hands-on experience not

only deepened her understanding of agricultural operations but also instilled a profound commitment to the farming community.

Licia leverages her diverse background to foster meaningful connections and advocate for the needs of agricultural members across the state.

Beyond her professional endeavors, Licia finds joy in her role as a dedicated mother to two teenagers, balancing her career with family life and community involvement. She continues to be a strong advocate for agricultural sustainability and rural development, embodying a commitment to enriching the farming community in Arizona and beyond.



Brittney Morse, Outreach Manager

Originally from Yuma, Brittney Morse returned as a transplant after years in Texas and South Dakota. Her academic journey took her to South Dakota State University, where she earned a bachelor’s in agricultural science and a master’s in plant science, while playing D1 college softball.

After completing her education, she moved back to Arizona in 2020 and spent the last few years teaching high school science. During her time teaching, she pursued a master’s in education leadership from GCU to expand her role as a leader.

Says Brittney, “I’m thrilled to have recently joined the Arizona Farm Bureau, where I advocate passionately for Arizona agriculture. My mission has always been to connect the agriculture community with those outside it, emphasizing the importance of knowing where our food comes from.”

Outside of work, you’ll often find her enjoying time with friends and family, exploring local farmers markets and antique stores, or attending sports events. She also loves practicing yoga and discovering new places.

Brittney joins Elizabeth Rico and Ana Otto on the Outreach Manager team supporting all Farm Bureau counties. 🚜

5 WAYS TO THINK LIKE A NEWS REPORTER AND STRATEGICALLY COMMUNICATE

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Director of Strategic Communications

For our farm and ranch Farm Bureau leaders having a microphone shoved in your face can suddenly intimidate, certainly cause one to pause. While on the national and state level, we provide resources to our leadership on working with today’s media, it doesn’t mean that you won’t feel a bit apprehensive. We’re even adding to our training toolkit by providing the Arizona Farm Bureau version of an Advocacy and Effective Communications workshop, hopefully on an annual basis.

So, why is communicating with the media so important? Well, besides the fact that the public struggles with understanding Arizona’s farming and ranching practices, Arizona Farm Bureau fields weekly calls with state and national media.

Through a highly sophisticated digital media monitoring service, Arizona Farm Bureau has captured 1,181 media mentions on the phrase “Arizona Farm Bureau” since October 1, 2023 (we’re following our fiscal year that ends September 30th). This doesn’t include the countless times Arizona Farm Bureau helps media connect with other agriculture groups especially if the media query is commodity specific (for example, if a media query is on the beef industry, we send them to the Arizona Beef Council). When the listening or reading audience of each mention is aggregated by the 1,181 mentions, so far, this fiscal year, we have garnered **2.6 billion impressions**. Total impressions for just the month of June 2024 came in at **354,929,117**. So, stay tuned for the final total after September 30th. Then, the media monitoring starts all over again for the new fiscal year.

We’re confident that our reach with media is even higher since not every reporter interviewing farm and ranch leaders about agriculture in Arizona mentions Arizona Farm Bureau (they certainly are not obligated to mention the source of their story), but instead will mention the farm or ranch name after the agriculturalist being interviewed. Our role is simply to connect.

Since it’s important to us to connect a farmer or rancher with the media as they help us tell Arizona agriculture’s story, here are five basic tips that help you think like a reporter if you ever get interviewed. These tips come from personal experience and from news reporters themselves.

1. **Put a face to your story:** News is about people. People love remarkable stories. Yes, a quote from an author, CEO, or board member can suffice, but it’s dull. Reporters look for a person who has been directly affected by the breaking news at hand. They will tell a much better and different tale. They can get to the emotion because they experienced something. It’s the connection to the audience. It’s all about the human factor.
2. **Find something new.** A good reporter will ask the question, “what’s new here?” Has something happened that we haven’t covered yet?” Look for new statistics, updates, or a fresh angle. Clue: In the word “news” is the word “new.”
3. **Answer the question.** Try to answer the question, “Who Cares?” Every time someone pitches a story, the overriding, nagging question in a reporter’s mind is, “Who cares?” Why should the reporter cover this story? When Arizona Farm Bureau writes an email pitch, press release or simply calls the editor or reporter, we make sure we can answer that question. This is about the content the reporter or blogger provides to their core demographic, their audience. Consider this powerful

See **5 WAYS TO THINK LIKE A NEWS REPORTER** Page 4

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2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION *continued from Page 1*

Control of the Arizona Capitol remains precarious, with Republicans holding a narrow 1-seat majority in both chambers. The upcoming General Election, with all 90 seats on the ballot, adds to the volatility. With divisive issues like abortion and immigration dominating public discourse, the political landscape is set to be turbulent.

The increase in measures introduced and sent to the ballot reflects a strategic response to the divided government. The border security bill is expected to be a significant issue on the November ballot, highlighting the ongoing debate over immigration and public safety. Lawmakers are cautious about ballot initiatives, emphasizing the need for careful crafting to ensure they address constituents’ concerns effectively.

Despite the session’s challenges, several critical issues remain unresolved, particularly in water policy. The inability to pass substantive water legislation underscores the need for continued efforts to address Arizona’s water challenges. Future legislative efforts will need to build on the foundation laid by SB1221 to be successful.

COMMITMENT TO ADVOCACY AND SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

Reflecting on the session, it’s clear that the agricultural community is committed to being part of the solution to Arizona’s groundwater challenges. The development of SB1221, though ultimately unsuccessful this session, demonstrated extraordinary stakeholder engagement and compromise. We at the Arizona Farm Bureau remain dedicated to staying engaged and vigilant, advocating on behalf of Arizona’s farm and ranch families.

The efforts of Senator Sine Kerr, Representatives Gail Griffin and Tim Dunn, and other stakeholders showcased a collaborative approach to addressing complex water management issues. The proposed Basin Management Areas offered a viable, science-driven framework for sustainable groundwater management, balancing conservation with agricultural needs.

LOOKING AHEAD

As we move forward, our focus remains on achieving balanced and effective governance that meets the needs of all Arizonans, particularly those in the agricultural sector. The lessons learned from this session will guide ongoing efforts to address critical issues and improve the lives of our farmers and ranchers.

In conclusion, the 2024 legislative session highlighted the complexities and challenges of state governance. Despite significant obstacles, notable progress was made, and valuable insights were gained. The Arizona Farm Bureau will continue to support and strengthen Arizona’s agricultural community, ensuring that the voices of our farmers and ranchers are heard and their needs addressed.

As always, it has been our pleasure to keep you updated on the happenings at the Arizona Capitol. We will continue to keep you informed.

LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS: A RUNDOWN OF KEY BILLS

In the realm of water legislation, several bills were introduced to address various aspects of water management and infrastructure.

Legislative Session 2024:
By the numbers

- 160 Days
- 1,663 Bills introduced
- 332 passed
- 259 Signed
- 73 Vetoed

HB2016 - Grandfathered Right; Subsequent AMA; Extension), sponsored by Rep. Gail Griffin (R), mandates that individuals claiming the right to withdraw groundwater in the Douglas Active Management Area (AMA) must file an application within 21 months of the AMA designation. This bill aims to ensure proper water rights management and

clarity for water users in the region, with an Emergency Clause emphasizing its urgency, retroactive to March 1, 2024. This bill has been signed into law.

HB2014 - Water Infrastructure; Bonds (Wells; Intention to Drill; Appropriation), also sponsored by Rep. Gail Griffin (R), proposed expanding the Arizona Water Infrastructure Finance Authority’s ability to issue bonds for various water-related projects, aiming to bolster the state’s water infrastructure. Despite its potential for long-term water sustainability, it failed to pass the House.

HB2123 - Wells; Water Measuring Devices; Prohibition, sponsored by Rep. Austin Smith (R), aimed to simplify water management regulations by prohibiting mandatory water measuring devices for wells in certain areas. However, this bill was vetoed.

SB1243 - Groundwater Sales; Online Exchange, sponsored by Sen. Justine Wadsack (R), proposed the creation of an online exchange for groundwater rights but failed after the second reading.

SB1172 - Land Division; Water; Transportation; Turf (Physical Availability Credits; Water Supply), sponsored by Sen. Thomas “T.J.” Shope (R), was a comprehensive bill addressing various water management issues, including property ownership disclosure, restrictions on potable water use in new developments, and groundwater withdrawal criteria in Active Management Areas. This bill was ultimately vetoed by the Governor.

SB1181 - Groundwater Replenishment; Member Lands; Areas, sponsored by Sen. Warren Petersen (R), dealt with groundwater replenishment obligations, allowing municipal providers to decide whether parcels of member land retain these obligations.



This bill, signed into law, marks a significant step towards effective groundwater management.

In the agriculture and environment sector, several bills have been proposed and enacted to support agricultural activities and environmental protection.

SB1065 - Cotton Research Protection Council; Continuation, sponsored by Sen. Sine Kerr (R), extends the statutory life of the Cotton Research and Protection Council until 2032, reflecting ongoing support for the cotton industry and its importance to Arizona’s agricultural economy. This bill has been signed into law.

HB2045 - Dangerous Drugs; Definition; Xylazine, sponsored by Rep. Selina Bliss (R), adds xylazine to the list of dangerous drugs while exempting veterinarians using it professionally, balancing public health concerns with support for veterinary practice. This bill has been signed into law.

HB2244 - Misrepresenting; Food Products, sponsored by Rep. Quang H. Nguyen (R), aimed to prevent the misbranding of non-meat products as meat, addressing concerns about food labeling transparency. Despite its focus on consumer protection, it failed to pass in the House.

HB2406 - Agriculture; Hemp; Regulation; Vaccination; Disclosure, sponsored by Rep. John Gillette (R), sought to regulate industrial hemp and establish criteria for labeling agricultural products related to vaccination status. However, it did not pass in the House.

HB2124 - Agricultural Operations; Water; Protection; Definition, sponsored by Rep. Austin Smith (R), aimed to protect agricultural water usage by expanding the definition of agricultural operations to include agritourism activities. The Governor’s veto message emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to water policy.

HB2865 - Natural Resource Conservation Districts; Board, sponsored by Rep. Gail Griffin (R), restructured the State Natural Resource Conservation Board, defining its membership, duties, and responsibilities, and established the Natural Resource Conservation District Fund to support conservation efforts. This bill has been signed into law.

In the area of public land use and safety legislation, various bills have been introduced to address property rights, animal welfare, and transportation issues.

HB2191 - Property; Criminal Damage), sponsored by Rep. David L. Cook (R), revised the criteria for criminal damage charges to protect livestock access to water, reflecting concern for both property rights and animal welfare. This bill has been signed into law.

SB1047 - Animal Cruelty; Failure to Treat, sponsored by Sen. Thomas “T.J.” Shope (R), aimed to expand the definition of cruel neglect, setting specific guidelines for animal care and providing exemptions for agriculture. It died awaiting final reading in the House.

SB1376 - Vehicle Loads; Restrictions, sponsored by Sen. Shawna Bolick (R), extended vehicle load restrictions to all roads, exempting agricultural vehicles from certain regulations. This practical approach to transportation issues in rural areas has been signed into law.

SB1052 - All-Terrain Vehicles; Definition, sponsored by Sen. Frank Carroll (R), proposed increasing the maximum weight limit for off-road vehicles and set conditions for enforcement and remediation programs. Despite its failure to pass, it highlighted ongoing concerns about off-road vehicle impacts and regulatory needs, with the expectation of a revised bill in the next session.

SB1055 - Off-Highway Vehicle Study Committee; Extension, sponsored by Sen. Sine Kerr (R), extended the Arizona Off-Highway Vehicle Study Committee to address off-highway vehicle issues through ongoing study and reporting. This bill has been signed into law.

SB1079 - State Land Auctions; Electronic Means, sponsored by Sen. Sine Kerr (R), proposed changes to real estate employment agreements and the division of land, including the use of electronic means for state land auctions. This bill has been signed into law.

SB1567 - Off-Highway Vehicles; Education Requirement, sponsored by Sen. Sine Kerr (R), set age and licensing requirements for operating off-highway vehicles and mandated a safety education course. This bill has been signed into law.

HCM2007 - Grand Canyon Footprints Monument; Repeal, sponsored by Rep. Leo Biasiucci (R), urges the President to revoke the Grand Canyon National Monument designation and opposes future federal land withdrawals in Arizona without state and local approval. This measure, reflecting a push for state sovereignty over land use decisions, has been filed with the Secretary of State and will be on the ballot.

SB1147 - Livestock Compensation; Appropriation, sponsored by Sen. Anthony Kern (R), appropriates \$250,000 to the Livestock Compensation Fund for FY2024-25, supporting livestock owners affected by various challenges. Despite highlighting the importance of sustaining the livestock industry, it failed awaiting the Rules Committee.

HB2471 - Rulemaking; Legislative Approval, sponsored by Rep. Cory McGarr (R), allows the legislature to reject a Governor’s Regulatory Review Council-approved rule by concurrent resolution, making the rule void if rejected. This bill failed awaiting the Rules Committee.

HB2857 - Rural Groundwater Management, sponsored by Rep. Chris Mathis (D), requires the Arizona Department of Water Resources to coordinate and establish a process for designating Rural Groundwater Management Areas. This bill, which aims to manage groundwater sustainably and protect water quality in rural areas, failed awaiting a committee vote.

5 WAYS TO THINK LIKE A NEWS REPORTER *continued from Page 2*

statement: “How does my story affect and impact their audiences?” If you can understand their audience (readers and viewers), you can probably satisfy the reporter’s “who cares.”

4. **Understand the Medium.** Some stories have great visuals and are perfect for TV, video, or print. For example, the demolition of a sporting arena is visually appealing but isn’t as impactful for radio news. Think about the elements available to you and how they can complement your words and storytelling.
5. **Give them the right tools.** Like you, news decision-makers want things to help

make their jobs easier. If a radio reporter, they need a voice or a sound bite for an on-air newscast. They don’t need a cheesy photo. It’s radio!

Bonus Tip: Just breath. When you get the call, take a deep breath, remember your prepared statement and enjoy the experience. Remember Arizona Farm Bureau will guide you along in the process.

Intimidated by the idea of the media interview but are willing to be part of our strategic communications efforts, contact Julie Murphree at juliemurphree@azfb.org and she’ll provide a toolkit of tips and keep you informed about future workshops on this area.

A DAIRY FARMER: CRAIG CABALLERO

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Caballero: Reflecting on our journey, the evolution in our membership numbers from nearly 100 family-owned dairies two decades ago to 36 today significantly underscores the changing landscape of dairy farming. Despite the reduction in the number of member dairies, it's noteworthy that we have successfully maintained our milk production levels. However, it's also true that the impact of losing any dairy today is significantly more profound on our overall production capabilities than in the past. This reality accentuates the need for strategic foresight in managing our production and processing operations to align with demand efficiently.

As we navigate this shift, it becomes imperative to adopt a more calculated approach towards milk production. Ensuring that every aspect of our operation is optimized for efficiency, sustainability, and innovation is crucial. This strategy will not only enable us to sustain our production levels but will also ensure we are well positioned to meet future demand.

Arizona Agriculture: It's not unusual for farms and ranches to go through tough years. The Dairy industry is weathering and economic storm now. How do you persevere through these tougher times?

Caballero: Over the past decade, we've navigated through what can aptly be described as one of the most volatile economic storms in our industry's history. Persevering demands resilience and a multifaceted approach to ensure sustainability and growth.

Central to weathering these challenges is the accumulation of decades of equity. This deep-rooted financial stability acts as a buffer, providing the necessary leeway to navigate through periods of economic uncertainty. It underscores the importance of prudent financial management and long-term strategic planning.

Furthermore, it is crucial to foster strong relationships with business partners and lenders who understand the dairy industry's variability comprehensively.

Additionally, embodying a certain degree of toughness, both emotionally and operationally, cannot be overstated. This resilience – being 'double tough' – equips us to face headwinds with determination.

Arizona Agriculture: There's an adage in the dairy industry that "Only five people in the world know how milk is priced in the U.S. – and four of them are dead." Milk pricing regulations in Federal Milk Marketing Orders (FMMO) are among the most complicated commodity pricing regimes across all of agriculture. On top of that our dairies in the west, certainly Arizona, are quite different than in the east and Midwest. Will we ever get to practical parity on pricing? Or how does the UDA see all of this?

Caballero: The pricing of milk within the Federal Milk Marketing Orders (FMMOs) is indeed intricate, and achieving parity across various regions, such as the contrast between dairies in the West compared to those in the East and Midwest, is a complex challenge. The United Dairymen of Arizona recognizes the nuanced nature of these regulations and the distinct characteristics of different markets.

In response to whether there will be a significant shift toward practical parity in pricing, the UDA's stance is realistic, acknowledging that the FMMO system is deeply ingrained in the milk pricing framework and is unlikely to undergo substantial changes in the near term. The organization instead focuses on its proficiency in navigating the specific dynamics of its regional market (Order 131) to effectively manage milk pricing.

Arizona Agriculture: What does the USDA and other federal agencies need to do better to support sustainable outcomes in the dairy and other agriculture industries?

Caballero: The USDA and federal agencies can take steps to more equitably support sustainable outcomes across all scales of agriculture, including the dairy industry. One such measure is to ensure that large family farms receive equal treatment to small family farms. This could mean reevaluating the structure of subsidies to avoid placing caps that disproportionately affect larger operations, which are often still family-run businesses.

By creating a more level playing field, federal agencies can help family farms of all sizes invest in sustainable practices, implement modern technologies, and remain competitive and viable in the long term. These adjustments could contribute to a more sustainable and resilient agricultural sector, regardless of farm size.

Arizona Agriculture: We could probably talk about technology improvements in the dairy business all day long. What excites you the most about potential technologies in the dairy industry?

Caballero: The array of emerging technologies in the dairy industry offers huge promise for enhancing efficiency, productivity, and sustainability. From advancements in genomics that enable selective breeding for optimal health and production traits, to artificial intelligence that monitors herd health and automates daily operations, these innovations are revolutionizing how dairy farms operate. The development of technologies that allow us to achieve more with less—less environmental impact, less labor, and less resource consumption—is particularly exciting. Looking ahead, the anticipation of how much more these technologies will evolve and be integrated into the dairy industry over the next five years really excites me.

Arizona Agriculture: At the end of the day, what's your most important message to your fellow dairy farmers? Then, when you talk to consumers what do you like to express?

Caballero: To my fellow dairy farmers, the message is clear: our unity and mutual support are more critical now than ever before. In the face of economic fluctuations, regulatory challenges, and the rapid evolution of technology and consumer demands, the strength of our community makes us resilient.

When speaking to consumers, the emphasis shifts to expressing the vital role their support and understanding play in our industry's sustainability. Our farms are integral to providing a wide array of dairy products that nourish people locally and globally. 🐄

NEW RESOURCE ON AZFB.ORG: TALK TO A FARMER/RANCHER FRIDAY VIDEOS

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Director of Strategic Communications

Do you spend time checking out the resources on Arizona Farm Bureau's website, azfb.org? You should since the website is loaded with resources in all or our areas: advocacy, communication, and agriculture education.

One of our newest pages within the "News and Resources" tab in the Videos section is the new video Talk to a Farmer Page where we are recording and featuring all our "Talk to a Farmer" Interviews.

them are regular guests). During the 25 to 40-minute live sessions with our farmers or ranchers, you'll have a chance to pose a question if you follow Arizona Farm Bureau on Instagram: [@AZfarmbureau](#).

If you would be interested in being a guest, contact us at outreach@azfb.org. 📞

TALK TO A FARMER/RANCHER FRIDAY



We now feature our Talk to a Farmer/Rancher interviews on azfb.org.

SO, WHAT IS TALK TO A FARMER/RANCHER FRIDAY PROGRAM?

As of May, Arizona Farm Bureau has now hosted the #TalkToAFarmer, #TalkToARancher live on Instagram **for five years**. The question is, "As a farmer or rancher have you ever been one of our guests on this live and in-person show?!" We'd love to have you as a guest on the show.

Through Instagram's "Live," split-screen feature, we're taking the time to visit with our Arizona farmers and ranchers from all over the state. We've interviewed Arizona farmers and ranchers in Maricopa, Casa Grande, Buckeye, Yuma, Prescott, Tucson and Marana, Willcox and Queen Creek.

Arizona Farm Bureau's Talk to a Farmer Friday program launched so our Instagram followers to our @AZfarmbureau social media account can talk to Arizona farmers and ranchers live on their farms and ranches by posting a question on the Instagram Live feed. We now have built a regular following.

A few years ago, one of our more successful runs of guests was our Arizona-based auctioneers. Our last guest in that series was Janel Rogers. Her words ring true more than ever: "You learn your craft and you keep going. And you just keep getting better. Toughening up takes a little bit of time. Kevin told me, I must keep showing up."

This year, our first series was called "The Future of Arizona Agriculture" featuring leaders in the industry and their take on what was on the horizon for our state's agriculture. Said Arizona Farm Bureau President Stefanie Smallhouse, "We don't farm in this desert climate in spite of it, we farm here because of it." To view the entire futuristic series, go to <https://www.azfb.org/News/Videos/Talk-To-A-FarmerRancher-Friday>

During the first @AZfarmbureau Instagram Live five years ago, 400+ Instagram followers logged on to view the conversation we had with farmer influencer Trevor Bales, an alfalfa and Sudan grass hay farmer from Buckeye, Arizona. Bales has already attracted quite a following with friends and fans that watch him daily on Instagram talk about Arizona farming and his family-owned and operated business, Bales Hay Sales.

Mark your calendar for every Friday morning between 10:00 and 11:00. We've already visited with more than 200 Arizona farmers and ranchers (and yes, some of

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YOUR COUNTY FARM BUREAU ANNUAL MEETINGS ARE AROUND THE CORNER

By Staff Reports

Influence Policy, Elect Leaders, and Have a Great Time

One of the annual highlights of the Farm Bureau year is your county's Annual Meeting. Members can spend time with fellow farmers and ranchers from their area, hear from a speaker or two, and work on solutions for the issues affecting Arizona agriculture. In addition, members get to elect leaders for their county Farm Bureau as well as who will represent them as delegates at the state annual convention in November.

Our Farm Bureau counties will all gather in person this year. Invites will be coming out soon. Once you receive your invite, don't forget to RSVP as your county will host a dinner and will need an accurate headcount.

The Policy Business of Your County Farm Bureau

Once a suggested solution or policy is approved by your fellow members as official Farm Bureau policy at your County Annual Meeting, you are no longer a single voice in the field. You now have the power of the Farm Bureau behind you, and that is a formidable force for getting things done.

John Boelts is 1st vice-president of the Arizona Farm Bureau and chair of the Policy Development Committee. "Farm Bureau is the Voice of Agriculture because we speak for our members. I encourage all Ag members to have their voices heard by attending their county's Annual Meeting," says Boelts.

County Annual Meeting information is available online at www.azfb.org in the Calendar of Events under the Events tab. Be sure to log in with your username and password as the information is only available to current agriculture members. 🚜

DIGGING THROUGH THE COMPLEXITIES OF OSHA'S HEAT INJURY AND ILLNESS PREVENTION PROPOSED RULE

By Chad Smith, Arizona Farm Bureau Director of Government Relations

Adding to the over 3,000 pages of regulations from the Department of Labor (DOL) in 18 months, OSHA recently released a proposed rule on heat standards. While we have been anticipating this rulemaking for several months, it comes on the heels of U.S. House appropriators discussing the FY 25 DOL appropriations, which includes measures to remove funding for implementation of several of the rules that we have recently been faced with.

These new heat standards will require employers who fall under the jurisdiction of OSHA to develop and implement a worksite heat injury and illness prevention plan (HIPP). It sets two different heat index triggers, **80 and 90 degrees**, where employers will be required to implement control measures. The proposed rule includes monitoring, training, acclimatizing employees, record keeping, and reporting. Below is the OSHA published fact sheet on the proposed rule in which Arizona Farm Bureau will be engaged.

While this proposed rule is extremely concerning and problematic, especially in states like Arizona, it will have major impacts on agriculture across the U.S. Not only will it change the way agriculture does business, but it puts the burden on employers

while also creating more liability for our farmers and ranchers.

Later this month there will be a congressional oversight hearing on the proposed rule, where Farm Bureau members will testify about the rulemaking's impact.

The rulemaking once published in the federal register will be open for public comment and we will encourage members to submit comments. To learn more or to read the draft proposed rule, go to www.osha.gov/heat-exposure/rulemaking. The webpage also features a fact sheet that can make it helpful to understand: <https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/heat-rulemaking-factsheet.pdf> 🚜



The proposed rule is extremely concerning and problematic, especially in states like Arizona, and will have major impacts on agriculture across the United States.

A NEW SCHOOL YEAR BRINGS NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO THE CLASSROOM

By Katie Aikins, Arizona Farm Bureau Director of Education

Remember when the start of a new school year brought excitement for new friends, new opportunities, and new experiences? For Ag in the Classroom (AIRC), it still does! We are excited to kick-off the new school year with resources for students and teachers across the State. Be sure to check out our returning favorites and some of the new opportunities being offered this year!

Classroom Presentations - are still being offered by the AIRC Program. You can find a complete list on our website at www.azfbaitc.org! Presentations are FREE for schools!

Pork in the Classroom

Thanks to the Arizona Pork Council (APC), pork will continue to find its way into classrooms across the state. In addition to classroom lesson plans, classrooms can also apply for a Pork in the Classroom Cooking Grant. Both Ag and culinary teachers can apply beginning in October. 🍖

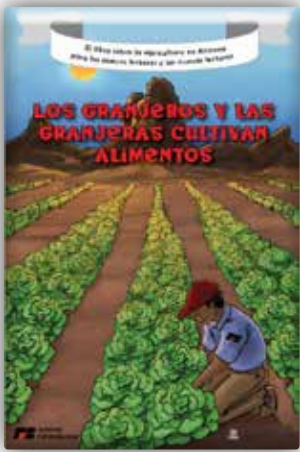


Curriculum Kits - are being updated and are ready for the classroom! These commodity-based curriculum kits are all inclusive and include not only the lessons plans but the materials to teach the lesson! Curriculum Kits can be checked out for a 2-4-week loan period and will be delivered and picked up from the school's office.

Farm Friday Fun - AIRC's very popular monthly digital curriculum is back. This year participating classrooms will receive lesson plans, videos and lesson plans on onions, citrus, broccoli, sheep, dairy, beef cattle, and more! A career profile will also be provided each month. Teachers can sign-up for this FREE digital curriculum at www.azfbaitc.org

Virtual Ag Tours - Using the Zoom platform, students and teachers will be able to take virtual tours of operations across the state and will be able to ask their questions directly to our producers! For a list of this year's virtual tours and dates visit us online. Curious about the tours we have already taken? Visit us online or on our YouTube Channel @AZFB AIRC!

Classroom Mini-Grants - AIRC will be providing 20 classroom mini-grants to teachers across the State. These \$250 mini grants are designed to allow teachers to bring in non-consumable resources that will help bolster their student's learning and understanding of agriculture. The Grant period will open September 1st and close November 1st. Grants will be awarded in December. Grant programming must be completed during the 2024-2025 School Year.



First Reader Books - Don't forget to start kids reading early! AIRC knows the importance of starting the habit of reading early. To encourage kids to read, we have a library of agricultural themed books for early readers. You can download or read online as a flip book at www.azfbaitc.org!

Agricultural Magazines - Our library of Ag Mags is available to teachers with a few additions. Dairy and Water will be joining the list of these newspaper-like resources. Haven't seen our Arizona Five Cs, Beef, Specialty Crops, or Fruit and Veggie Ag Mags yet? Check them out on our website!

Spanish Resources

AIRC is thrilled to provide several of our most popular resources in Spanish. Teachers and community members can now log on to www.azfb.org/aitc and download a Spanish version of our Arizona Five Cs Ag Mag, Arizona Specialty Crops Ag Mag, Fruit and Veggies Ag Mag, several of our First Reader Books, and online commodity videos.

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VETERAN FARMER TO BE RECOGNIZED BY AMERICAN FARM BUREAU. IT COULD BE YOU!

By Staff Reports

The Veteran Farmer Award of Excellence is a new recognition program launched by the American Farm Bureau Federation. AFBF and Farm Credit will recognize one individual who has served or is currently serving in the U.S. military and is actively involved in agriculture and their community. Applicants will be evaluated based on excellence in farming and community impact.

The award winner will receive \$10,000 plus reimbursement of up to \$5,000 in travel and other expenses incurred for the recipient and a guest to attend the American Farm Bureau Convention in San Antonio, January 25 through 27.



"This award elevates and celebrates those who have served our country and continue to do so through their involvement in agriculture and local communities," said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. "Their sacrifices make it possible for us to enjoy the freedoms we have in our country, and they should all know how much we value and appreciate them."

"Arizona, like so many states across the country, has a great tradition of honoring its veterans," said Arizona Farm Bureau Communications Director Julie Murphree. "Recognitions like this one allows us to remember our military men and women. And the farm and ranch community are where so many of these men and women can be found. To me, this veteran recognition is so appropriate, and I love that American Farm Bureau has found a way for such a special recognition."

APPLY ONLINE NOW THROUGH AUGUST 30TH

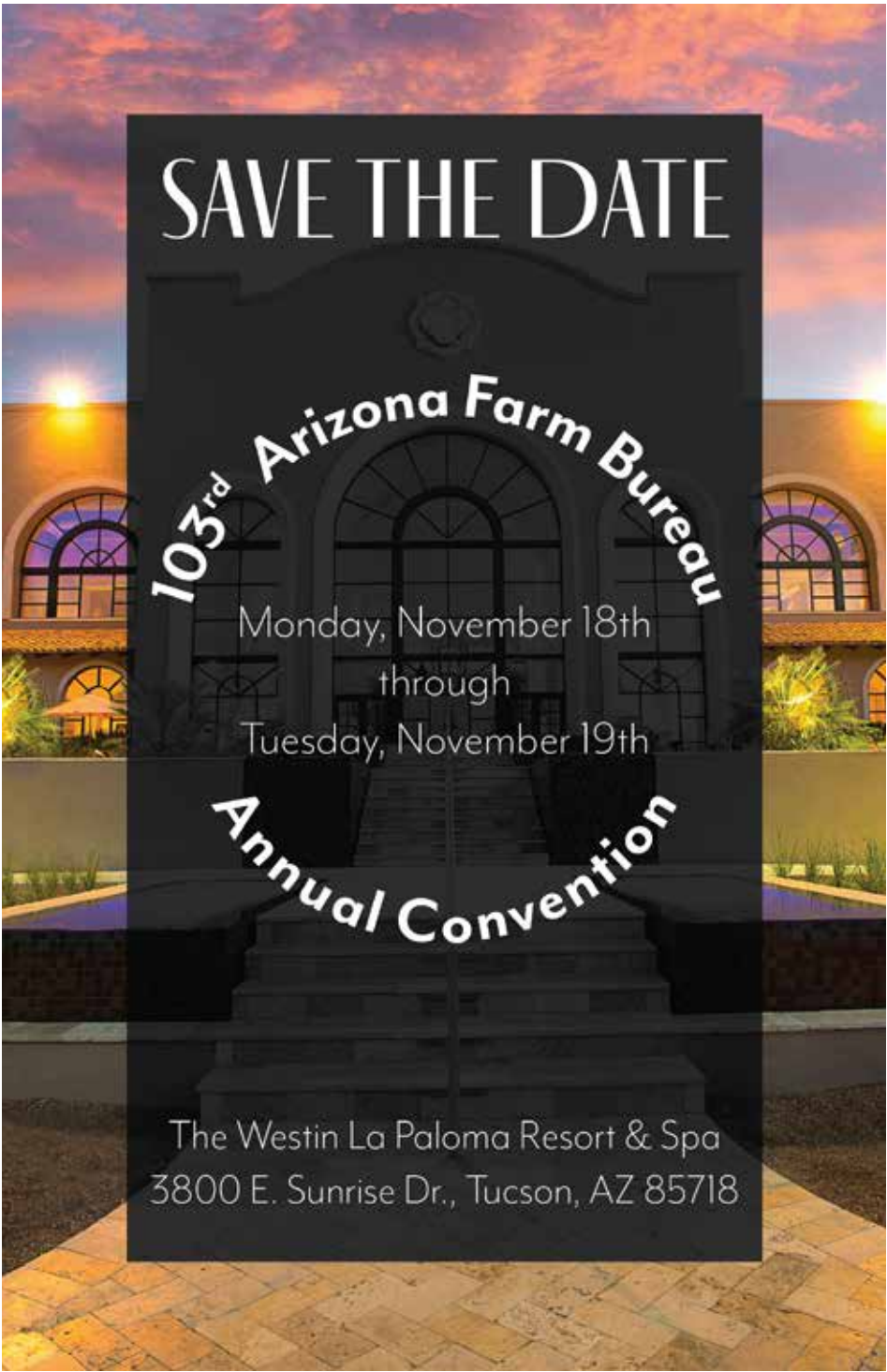
Veterans or service members may apply for the award online at <https://fb.submit-table.com/submit> through August 30. The application consists of both short-answer and essay questions covering two focus areas: how the applicant has exhibited excellence in farming or agriculture, and how the applicant has impacted his or her community in a positive way.

Applications for the award submitted on behalf of worthy recipients also will be considered; if chosen, however, the recipient must be willing to be acknowledged publicly. Farm Bureau membership is not required to apply for the award.

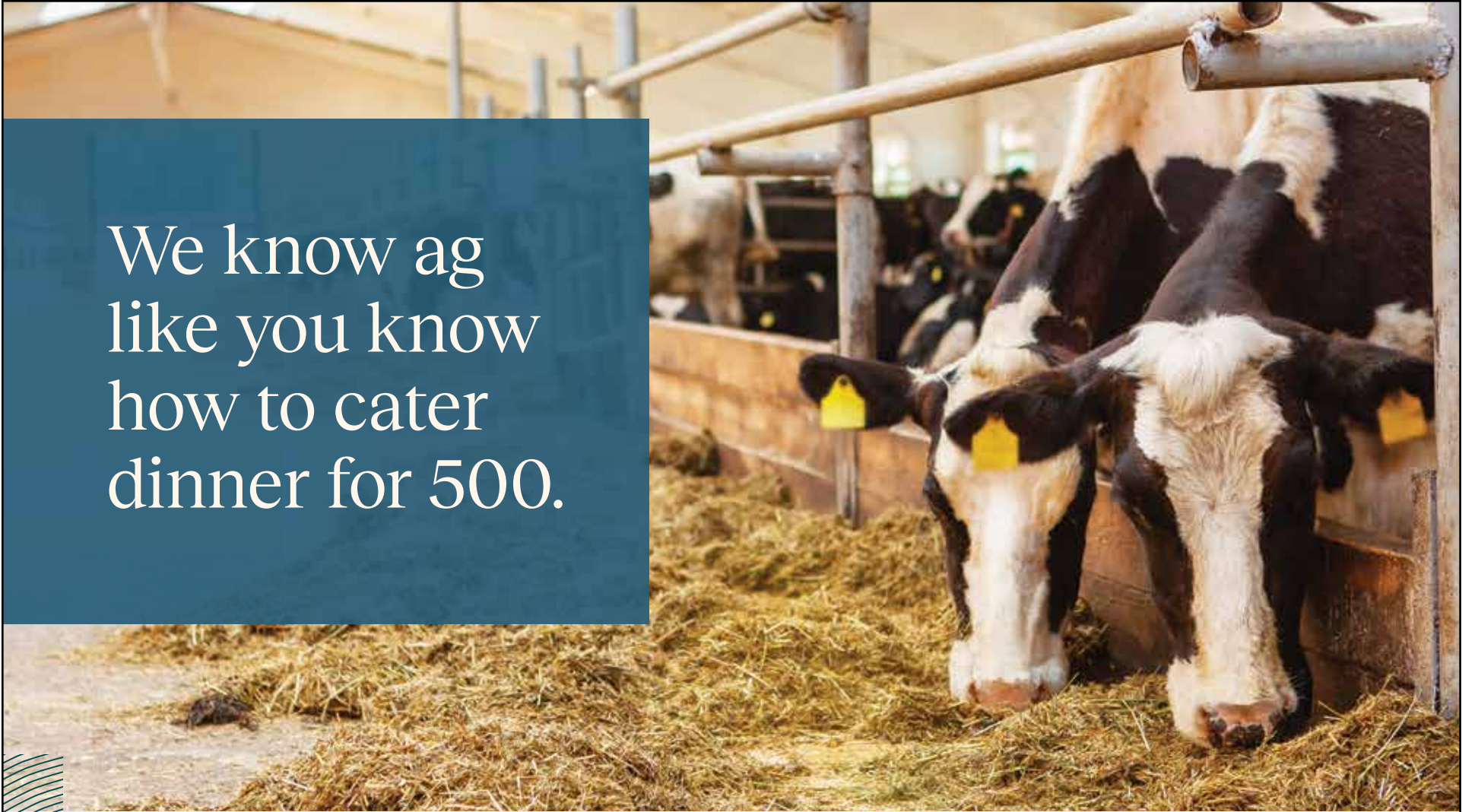
The national award recipient will be recognized by AFBF in a variety of ways and should be willing to share his or her story and represent the veteran farmer community.

The recipient of the 2024 AFBF Veteran Farmer Award of Excellence will be notified in mid-September.

See **VETERAN FARMER TO BE RECOGNIZED** Page 8



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SECOND QUARTER 2024 REGULATORY COMMENT REVIEW

By Ana Otto, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Manager

The number of regulatory comments that AZFB responded to has continued steadily into the second quarter of 2024. Below is a summary of the regulatory dockets that AZFB engaged in during this second quarter of the year, as well as several submissions made in early July.

Environmental Protection Agency - Clean Water Act Effluent Limitations Guidelines (ELG) and Standards for the Meat and Poultry Products Point Source Category – Arizona Farm Bureau’s comments were aligned with other industry stakeholders and the Meat and Poultry Products ELG Coalition and highlighted numerous concerns with the proposed rule to revise existing effluent limitation guidelines for meat and poultry processors.

Environmental Protection Agency – Paraquat Interim Registration Review Decision – Arizona Farm Bureau’s comments supported EPA’s proposal to retain the use of paraquat as a desiccant in cotton harvesting. Our comments also supported and highlighted information provided by the Arizona Pest Management Center, specific to cotton harvest and application methods. The information was provided to help EPA understand Arizona cotton production in order to retain the uses and mitigations that were included in the initial paraquat interim decision.

Bureau of Land Management – Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Utility-Scale Solar Energy – Arizona Farm Bureau responded to BLM’s Draft EIS and the five alternatives that were proposed. None of the five alternatives expressly precludes solar-energy development on BLM lands with active grazing allotments. Our comments outlined concerns about various elements of the proposal, including the elimination of the variance process, as well certain new design features that solar development projects would be subject to addressing.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (FWS) – Policy Changes and New Regulations Related to the Biological Integrity, Diversity, and Environmental Health (BIDEH) on the National Refuge System – Arizona Farm Bureau’s comments supported those prepared by the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), which urged FWS to abandon the proposal. Numerous elements of the proposal lacked sound science and would diminish effective management of refuge lands.

Environmental Protection Agency – Oxyfluorfen Amended Proposed Interim Registration Review – Arizona Farm Bureau provided comments regarding measures in the amended proposed registration review for oxyfluorfen that would negatively impact growers. These measures included revisions to broadcast application rates, application method restrictions, and spray drift buffers.

Environmental Protection Agency – Application for New use; Dicamba; Bayer

Label – Our comments highlighted the importance of dicamba for use in cotton and urged EPA to act quickly in approving a new application and to ensure label language is practicable and does not impede use of the product.

White House – President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology’s (PCAST) Request for Public Input on America’s Groundwater Challenges - The White House and PCAST seek to better understand several factors related to groundwater use in the U.S. Arizona Farm Bureau’s comments emphasized that state governments have purview over groundwater regulations and its allocation. Our comments highlighted how stakeholders within the state, in the past and currently, have worked together to craft groundwater regulations that meet the needs of the state, its communities, and its citizens. Our comments urged the federal government not to spend any more time or federal resources on the subject matter of groundwater. Instead, state governments with groundwater challenges can learn from other state leaders, relevant state agencies, and water researchers.

Environmental Protection Agency – Application for New use; Dicamba; BASF Label – This comment letter was like the letter prepared for the Bayer label noted above, reiterating the timely approval of a new application and practical label language.

For more information about a specific comment letter, contact Ana Kennedy Otto at advocacy@azfb.org.



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VETERAN FARMER TO BE RECOGNIZED

continued from Page 7

The award winner will be announced on Veterans Day, Nov. 11. Complete details, including eligibility and requirements, are available online. Applications must be received by Aug. 30 for consideration.

If you have questions or need assistance with submission, contact us at outreach@azfb.org.



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