



HOW HAS ARIZONA FARMING SAVED WATER?

BY JULIE MURPHREE, ARIZONA FARM BUREAU DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

This question is probably one of the most common questions we field at Arizona Farm Bureau about Arizona agriculture. And we're happy to answer it for you and our Arizona families.

Arizona agriculture has implemented several strategies to save water, reflecting both necessity due to the state's arid climate and regulatory mandates.

The list follows.



1. Irrigation Efficiency:

a. **Drip Irrigation:**

Where feasible and applicable, farmers in Arizona have adopted drip irrigation systems, which deliver water directly to the root zone of plants, minimizing evaporation and runoff. This technology can reduce water use by up to 50% in some instances.

b. **Pivot Irrigation:** Another technology gaining more acceptance that can reduce water use 20% to 30%.

c. **Basin Irrigation with Laser leveling:** While a modern-day form of flooding, the laser-leveling of the field to ensure even water distribution, allows for as much as 30% reduction in water use.

d. **Lined Ditches:** You may not think about it, but even our irrigation canals are more efficient than they used to be. Irrigation canals lined with cement reduce water loss to evaporation and seepage by significant amounts.

2. Best Management Practices (BMPs):

a. Best Management Practices (PMPs) established by the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) which include practices like laser-leveling fields to ensure even water distribution, lining canals to reduce seepage, and using gated pipe or surge irrigation to improve water application efficiency.

3. Crop Selection and Management:

a. When a healthy market warrants it, farmers continue to shift towards growing crops that are more water-efficient or have higher economic returns per unit of water used. Additionally, deficit irrigation strategies are employed where crops receive

less water than required in a way that actually maximizes yields, optimizing water use without significantly affecting crop quality.

4. Technological Innovation:

a. Use of real-time soil moisture and weather monitoring technologies for precise irrigation scheduling. This helps in applying the right amount of water at the right time, avoiding over-irrigation.

b. Today's farmers can be found monitoring all their water applications on smartphones and laptops, making strategic adjustments based on the data.

5. Water Reuse:

a. Implementing systems to capture and reuse tailwater and other runoff, ensuring that water not used by crops is recirculated or stored for later use. For example, Arizona dairy farms growing their own alfalfa for their cattle, will use the recycled water they applied in other parts of the dairy to water their crops.

6. Conservation Tillage:

a. Practices like no-till or low-till farming reduce soil erosion and improve water retention in the soil, thus reducing the need for frequent irrigation.

7. Research and Development:

a. Arizona's land-grant university, the University of Arizona, has been a partner at the forefront of developing water-saving agricultural practices, including breeding crops that require less water and improving irrigation techniques. These efforts have contributed to agriculture's share of water use in Arizona decreasing from as high as 90% decades ago down to about 72% of the state's total water use, with significant improvements in how efficiently that water is utilized.

The farming and ranching industry continues to evolve and adopt new technologies that will allow them to grow more with less. Producers recognize that water and soil conservation will ensure a viable future for the next generation. In an ever-expanding global population with diminishing agricultural land, Arizona's farmers continue to innovate to produce more with less, ensuring that Arizona's nearly \$31 billion agriculture industry thrives. 🌾

IN THIS ISSUE

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE ABOUT THE FARM BILL, NOW YOU CAN AUTOMATICALLY RENEW YOUR FARM BUREAU MEMBERSHIP

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE ABOUT THE FARM BILL

BY JULIE MURPHREE, ARIZONA FARM BUREAU DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Congressional leaders have indicated they will extend the farm bill once more during the lame duck session, rather than updating this vital piece of legislation which is revisited every five years. Following an initial extension from the 2018 farm bill, urgent action is required to meet the current demands of farmers and all Americans. And this isn't just a concern for farmers; it affects us all.

Current economic conditions in farm and ranch country mean the farm bill is more important than ever. The American agriculture industry is currently in an economic slump.

The farm bill is a piece of legislation that significantly impacts everyday life for all Americans, far beyond just the agricultural sector. Here are several reasons why average Americans should care about this legislation:

First, Food Security and Nutrition: A substantial portion of the farm bill's budget is dedicated to nutrition programs, with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) being the largest. SNAP helps millions of low-income individuals and families afford food, directly influencing food security across the nation. In 2021, SNAP assisted an average of 41 million people monthly, acting not only as an anti-hunger initiative but also boosting local economies where benefits are spent.

I like what the deputy director of the Food and Environment Program at the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) says about the food bill. "The first thing to know about the farm bill is that its name is misleading—measured in dollars, today's farm bill is far more about food: more than three-quarters of the \$867.2 billion in federal spending authorized by the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 goes to nutrition programs operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which help low-income households put food on the table," said Karen Perry Stillerman in an article she wrote about the farm bill in 2023.

Secondly, Economic Influence: Agriculture and the food industry are major contributors to the U.S. economy, employing millions and contributing significantly to GDP. The farm bill supports rural development, including infrastructure like water systems and internet services, and can influence job creation and economic stability in rural areas. It also affects the prices and availability of food, which directly impacts all consumers.

For a sense of how significant this is, consider that in 2023, agriculture, food, and related industries contributed approximately \$1.530 trillion to the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP), which represents a 5.6% share. The direct output from America's farms contributed about \$203.5 billion, or roughly 0.7% of the GDP. However, the broader impact is larger due to sectors like food and beverage manufacturing, retail, and services that rely on agricultural inputs. These numbers come from the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Economic Research Services division.

Third, Environmental Impact: The farm bill includes provisions for conservation programs that aim to protect natural re-

sources like soil, water, and air. These programs encourage sustainable farming practices that can mitigate climate change effects, reduce pollution, and preserve biodiversity.

Fourth, Policy and Politics: The farm bill is a bipartisan effort that reflects broader political priorities, including how much support is given to different sectors of the population and how environmental concerns are balanced with agricultural productivity. Understanding the farm bill can help citizens engage more effectively with their representatives on these issues.

For the Farmer's Perspective

Representing the largest general agriculture organization, American Farm Bureau Federation President and Georgia farmer Zippy Duvall said, "It is imperative that Congress address the well-defined and fully substantiated needs of farmers just trying to hold on for another season.

"The recent hurricanes wreaked havoc on farms across the southeast, leaving some farmers with massive losses. They need disaster aid to recover and rebuild. Additionally, the projected two-year drop in net farm income of more than \$40 billion dollars demonstrates the seriousness of the overall agricultural downturn. Without a new farm bill to help farmers manage risk, Congress must act to help bridge the gap through economic relief to help farmers cope with inflation, high supply costs and decreasing commodity prices.

"The frightening financial pinch farm families across the country are experiencing is real. There is clear evidence all around us: land auctions are on the rise; equipment purchases have slumped; and lenders are warning that operating loans are in jeopardy without some assurance farmers are going to be able to repay the loans. Today, the books just aren't balancing.

"We've lost 141,000 American farms in five years and no one wants to lose more. Americans overwhelmingly want Congress to act: 78 percent say U.S. lawmakers should prioritize legislation that supports farmers and ranchers. The window is narrowing for Congressional action. The time is now. I urge lawmakers to stand with rural America."

In summary, the farm bill is not just about farmers; it's intrinsically linked to the health, economy, environment, and social fabric of the entire country. Its policies directly or indirectly affect every American's daily life through food affordability, environmental sustainability, and economic stability. 🍞



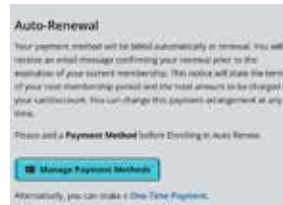
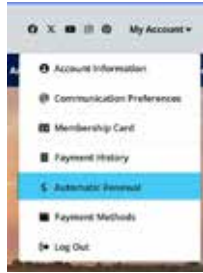
NOW YOU CAN AUTOMATICALLY RENEW YOUR FARM BUREAU MEMBERSHIP

BY STAFF REPORTS

On behalf of the Arizona Farm Bureau, we'd like to thank you for your membership. Our members are the lifeblood of our organization. Your continued support is extremely important to us and is very much appreciated.

Great news! We've made it easier than ever for you to renew your membership. Farm Bureau now offers **automatic renewal for the convenience of our members.**

Farm Bureau's **Automatic Renewal** program allows you to enjoy uninterrupted access to our exclusive discounts, programs and services while avoiding the hassle of manually renewing each year. Plus – there's no risk to enrolling. Farm Bureau will always notify you about your upcoming renewal – 30



days in advance. And, you can cancel automatic renewal at any time.

How to sign up? It's easy. First, make sure that you are logged in with your membership account. When you select the dropdown called "My Account" select the "Automatic Renewal" tab and follow the prompts from there.

Don't let your membership lapse.

Take advantage of our new **Automatic Renewal** program today.

Thank you again for your membership. We're so glad you are part of our Farm Bureau family. 🐾

Editor's Note: If you have questions or want help setting up your automatic renewal, contact Katie at 480.635.3605.

AG IN THE CLASSROOM HAS EGG-CITING NEWS!

BY KATIE AIKINS, ARIZONA FARM BUREAU DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

We all know the adage "the early bird gets the worm." Well, when it comes to Ag in the Classroom (AIRC) it is more like the early teacher gets the Poultry Kit!



We are taking reservations now for classrooms who would like to check-out our Poultry Curriculum Kit. The Curriculum Kit provides classrooms the opportunities to hatch chicks in their classrooms while learning about embryol-

ogy and life cycles. Need a incubator? No problem, it comes with the kit! Need an egg turner? No problem, it comes with the kit! Need lesson plans to do with your students? No problem, it comes with the kit! You get the point. The kit comes with everything you need except the fertilized eggs. There are only 20 kits available so be sure to reserve yours today!

As always, AZFB AIRC's Curriculum Kits are available FREE to teachers across the state. Visit us on the web at www.azfb.org (click on the tractor and books) for more information on all of the Curriculum Kits included in AIRC's inventory. Contact us at scheduleairc@azfb.org or 480.635.3617 to reserve your kit today! 🐾



FIBER IS ESSENTIAL

BY JOEL CARR, ARIZONA FARM BUREAU COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Fiber is an essential nutrient that is important to maintain our digestive health. It helps us feel full, regulates our bowel movements, and keeps our digestive system running smoothly. Unfortunately, many people don't get enough fiber in their diets, leading to constipation, bloating, and other digestive issues.

Here are some tips to help you get more fiber in your diet.

Eat more fruit and vegetables.

Fruits and vegetables are excellent sources of fiber. The best options include raspberries, pears, apples, broccoli, carrots, and sweet potatoes. Try to have at least one serving of fruits or vegetables in every meal.

Choose whole grains.

Whole grains are another great source of fiber. Instead of refined grains, opt for whole-grain bread, pasta, and rice. Some good options include quinoa, barley, and brown rice.

Include legumes in your diet.

Legumes, such as lentils, chickpeas, and black beans, are an excellent source of fiber. They are also high in protein, making them a perfect option for vegetarians and vegans.

Snack on nuts and seeds.

Nuts and seeds are a great source of fiber and healthy fats. Some good options include almonds, chia seeds, and flaxseeds. Try adding them to your oatmeal, yogurt, or smoothies.

Add a fiber supplement to your diet.

If you struggle to get enough fiber from your diet, consider adding a fiber supplement. Many different options are available, including psyllium husk, wheat dextrin, and inulin.

When on the Fill Your Plate blog, for additional articles about Fiber plug in the word "Fiber" in the search window for more information. 🐾

JOHN BOELTS APPOINTED ARIZONA FARM BUREAU PRESIDENT

BY STAFF REPORTS

During the 103 Annual Meeting of the Arizona Farm Bureau, Yuma farmer John Boelts stepped up as Arizona Farm Bureau President as Stefanie Smallhouse stepped down. President Boelts will finish out Smallhouse's last year of her current 2-year term with the option of running for election in November of 2025.

John Boelts, and his wife Alicia, farm 3,000 acres of fresh vegetables and melons, durum wheat, cotton, forage crops and seed crops along with their partners in Yuma. John has served two terms as Yuma County Farm Bureau President, four years as Arizona Farm Bureau 2nd Vice President and the last seven years serving as 1st Vice President.

President Smallhouse stepped down to pivot to family and their farm and ranch businesses going forward. Her seven years as



president led the organization through some challenging times including the ongoing water issues in Arizona and also brought focused direction and policy successes to the organization.

John and Alicia have three children, John, Matthew and Daisy.

Also in leadership, Pinal County Farm Bureau President and Farmer Richie Kennedy stepped into the First Vice Presidency position and Yavapai County Farm Bureau President and Agribusiness woman Sharla Mortimer become Second Vice President.

President Boelts' executive committee will include Graham County Farm Bureau President and Rancher Ben Menges and Cochise County Farm Bureau President and Agribusinessman Stephen Klump. This committee includes the First and Second Vice Presidents.

WATER ISN'T THE ONLY WAY TO STAY HYDRATED

BY HEIDE KENNEDY, ARIZONA FARM BUREAU COMMUNICATIONS INTERN

Have you ever tried to drink a gallon or more of water every day? I did that this summer and let me tell you, it's no easy feat at first. For me, it wasn't so much that the quantity of water was that bad, but rather remembering to actually drink it. So then, at the times that I would remember, I'd end up chugging water all at once to meet my minimum. While chugging water is one way to stay hydrated in our insanely hot Arizona summers, [we](#)

[can also get about 20% of our daily water intake from the foods that we eat.](#)

This might come as a surprise to you, (but probably not, ha!) the water content of food varies, and those with a high-water content are the ones that are very hydrating. With that in mind, you can probably think of a few examples off the top of your head. Some popular ones include:

<p>ENTERTAINMENT</p>	<p>ENTERTAINMENT</p>	<p>ENTERTAINMENT</p>	<p>PERSONAL/ BUSINESS</p>
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- Cucumbers
- Tomatoes
- Lettuce
- Spinach
- Honeydew
- Watermelon
- Cantaloupe
- Strawberries
- Peaches
- Zucchini
- Oranges
- Apples
- Celery
- Grapefruit

- Radishes
- Pineapple
- Broccoli
- Carrots

These are just a few examples. There are many more foods that have a high-water content and that help to keep you hydrated.

A little fun fact is that almost all of the foods listed nearby are ones that we produce lots of right here in Arizona! Melons especially are some that grow really well during our hot summers, which is perfect, because that's the most important time for us to get plenty of water. Another fun fact is

that [cantaloupes and watermelons clock in at a 90% water content, making them some of the best for staying hydrated!](#)

So, while you still should be drinking as much water as possible, try getting some of your water from the foods that you eat! Not only are they hydrating, but they are delicious and provide you with good nutrition too!

For more articles about hydration, and for information on Arizona grown produce, check out the Fill Your Plate website! 🍌

EVERY FRIDAY YOU CAN TALK TO AN ARIZONA FARMER OR RANCHER

BY JULIE MURPHREE, ARIZONA FARM BUREAU DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Through Instagram's "Live," split-screen feature, we're taking the time to visit with our Arizona farmers, ranchers and dairy farmers. We go all over the state.

Arizona Farm Bureau's Talk to a Farmer Friday program launched so 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.

During the first Instagram Live, 400+ Instagram followers logged on to view the conversation we had with 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 his own Instagram account talk about Arizona farming and his family owned and operated business, Bales Hay Sales.

Additionally, since last year, we've made more trips to the farms

and ranches of our guests. These personal meetings on the farms, ranches and dairies of our guests have created a deeper connection for our regular viewers of the show. Says one regular viewer, "I feel like I understand the farming and ranching in Arizona so much more partly because you go to the farms."

Last year, one of our more successful runs of guests was our Arizona-based agriculture leaders. We did a Futuristic series about Arizona agriculture that garnered thousands of views. One of our guests in that series was former President of the Arizona Farm Bureau, Stefanie Smallhouse. Her words ring true more than ever: "We don't farm in this desert state despite it, we farm in Arizona's desert climate because of it."

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. 🍌

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THE FORD F-150 IS A RELIABLE WORKHORSE

BY JOEL CARR, ARIZONA FARM BUREAU COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

In the heart of Arizona, where the landscapes are as rugged as they are beautiful, a vehicle that can handle the demands of daily tasks and rough terrain is essential. The Ford F-150 is reliable and combines functionality, durability, and innovation. Arizona Farm Bureau members can enjoy an exclusive perk. When purchasing or leasing a new F-150 Lightning, Super Duty, F-150, Ranger, or Maverick, members are eligible for a \$500 Exclusive Cash Reward.



PERFORMANCE AND POWER

Under the hood, the Ford F-150 is a powerhouse with various engine options to suit any need. From the robust 3.5-liter EcoBoost that provides the power and torque necessary for hauling and towing to the more economical 2.7-liter turbocharged engine, the F-150 is designed to perform. For those looking to merge efficiency with capability, the F-150 also offers a PowerBoost hybrid option, a first for the full-size pickup class, delivering impressive horsepower and fuel economy.

In Arizona, where conditions can vary from city roads to rural landscapes, the F-150's adaptive driving technology shines. Features such as the Pro Trailer Backup Assist and the Ford Co-Pilot360 safety technology make navigating crowded highways or towing a trailer smoother and safer, giving our staff extra confidence.

ZESTY DELIGHT: TRY OUR IRRESISTIBLE LEMON ROAST CHICKEN RECIPE

BY STAFF REPORTS

Get ready to tantalize your taste buds with this Lemon Roast Chicken recipe by Southwest Family Citrus. This recipe is sure to become one of your family's favorites. Imagine the aroma of freshly roasted chicken infused with vibrant zest of lemon, creating a dish that's bursting with flavor. Perfect for a cozy family dinner or a special occasion, this recipe is simple, delicious, and utterly irresistible.

Ingredients

- 1 Roasting chicken
- Two lemons
- 1 stick butter
- One small onion finely chopped.
- One celery stalk, chopped.
- 1/2 Cup sliced almonds.
- 2 cups fresh whole wheat breadcrumbs
- Salt and pepper to taste
- lemon wedges

Directions

Grate lemons. Squeeze the juice from them and save the lemon halves. Melt two tablespoons of the butter in a small pan and fry the onion with celery until softened. Remove from heat and stir in sliced almonds, breadcrumbs, and half

DURABILITY AND DESIGN

Durability is at the core of the F-150's design. Built with high-strength, military-grade aluminum alloy, and a sturdy steel frame, it is built to withstand the harsh Arizona climate, from the searing summer heat to the unpredictable desert terrain. Its resilience makes it an ideal companion for various activities, from recreational outings to volunteer work, supporting our staff in all their varied roles within the community.

The interior of the F-150 is no less impressive. It offers comfort and advanced features that enhance its utility and driveability. With ample cargo space and a refined cabin design, the F-150 provides a comfortable ride that does not compromise space or style. State-of-the-art infotainment options and connectivity features ensure that our staff stays connected even when away from the office or home.

Arizona Farm Bureau members can enjoy an exclusive perk. When purchasing or leasing a new F-150 Lightning, Super Duty, F-150, Ranger, or Maverick, members are eligible for a \$500 Exclusive Cash Reward. This incentive is designed to make it even more advantageous for our members to experience the durability, power, and advanced technology Ford offers, ensuring they can obtain the best possible tools for their professional and personal needs at a more accessible price. This exclusive offer underscores our commitment to providing substantial value to our members, enhancing their operational capabilities and financial flexibility. 🏠

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of the grated lemon zest. Stir in enough lemon juice to bind the mixture, then season with salt and pepper. Stuff the chicken loosely with the mixture, using 1 or 2 squeezed lemon halves to hold the stuffing in place. Cream the remaining butter

with the remaining lemon zest and lemon juice. Spoon the remaining mixture between the breast and the skin. Rub the remaining lemon butter over the skin. Baste occasionally while roasting. Serve with lemon wedges for garnish. Bake at 400 degrees for 45 minutes. 🍞

Provided by:
Southwest Family Citrus and featured on Fill Your Plate's searchable Recipe section

ENJOY WINTER LETTUCE THANKS TO YUMA, ARIZONA!

BY HEIDE KENNEDY, ARIZONA FARM BUREAU COMMUNICATIONS INTERN

Hanging in my closet is a t-shirt that reads, "Ever had a salad in December? You're welcome - Yuma, Arizona" Whenever I wear it, I sometimes get asked what that's even supposed to mean, or what salads have to do with Yuma, Arizona. It's the perfect conversation starter to have the chance to educate consumers about where their food comes from, because lettuce really does have a lot to do with Yuma!

So why is lettuce so big in Arizona during the winter? Well, thanks to our warmer climate and warmer winters, farmers can keep on growing and harvesting lettuce and other leafy greens through the cold months, whereas most other states get too cold for it to survive. Arizona lettuce is what makes it possible for people across the country to enjoy a green salad as part of their Christmas spread, or just alongside any meal this season!

Here are some cool facts about Yuma, Arizona's lettuce pro-



duction:

- [Yuma, Arizona is known as the winter lettuce capital of the world!](#)
- Yuma ships 1,000 to 1,200 truckloads of lettuce to the United States and Canada each day!
- For about 5 months of the year, [Yuma alone produces about 90% of the lettuce consumed in the United States!](#)
- Here in Arizona, we grow head, romaine, and leaf lettuce.
- About 45,000-55,000 acres of lettuce are grown in Arizona each year.

Lettuce is just one of the many crops that highlights Arizona's unique agriculture production! The Fill Your Plate blog is full of other articles about lettuce and other crops, as well as delicious recipes that use Arizona grown produce!

Just remember, the next time that you have a salad in December, remember to thank Yuma, Arizona farmers!! 🍞

NEED A SPEAKER? WE'LL CALL A FARMER FOR YOU!

BY STAFF REPORTS



With most of us being virtual meeting pros, you can now book one of our Fence Line speakers to give a virtual presentation to your group. We will come in person as well.

We ask that your group has a minimum of 25 in attendance and then give us more than one scheduled date option to accommodate our farmers and ranchers as well as Arizona Farm Bureau staff.

When was the last time you spoke to a farmer or rancher? Or, curious about the "State of Arizona Agriculture?" Our speakers are always willing to talk about the benefits of Arizona's agriculture whether it's an in-person meeting or virtually via Zoom or Microsoft Teams (our audience minimum for virtual meetings can be smaller).

Fence Line, the Arizona Farm Bureau Agriculturalist Speakers' Bureau, is a nonprofit program that educates consumers about agriculture practices, food safety, and locally grown food. Reach out to us if you're looking for an expert in Arizona agriculture.

Some of the topics that our farmers and ranchers and Farm Bureau staff are passionate about:

- Food Safety
- Buying Local

- The Economic Vitality of Arizona Agriculture
- The State of Arizona Agriculture: The Big Picture
- Farming Methods
- Misconceptions about Agriculture
- Agritourism
- Animal Care
- Protecting your Food Supply

For more information about Fence Line, call 480-635-3609 or email joelcarr@azfb.org. We can handle any topic you're interested in as it relates to Arizona agriculture! 🍞



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Arizona Agriculture's CHOICES



On his new role, as quoted by the Arizona Republic: "We have a deep bench at the Arizona Farm Bureau, a lot of great volunteer leaders from all across the state. So, I'm very excited to have the opportunity to continue working with all of them to get some of these important changes to public policy and improve the opportunities for agriculture in our great state."

JOHN BOELTS