



# Arizona Agriculture

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## A CONVERSATION ON GLOBAL MEAT MARKETS: RUPERT CLAXTON

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Director of Strategic Communications

I met Rupert Claxton, Meat and Livestock Director for Gira, last year at Iowa's World Pork Expo on the state's fairgrounds. Listening to his fascinating insights on global meat markets, I knew I had to ask him to participate in our conversation series of thought leaders in the agriculture sector.

Claxton has worked as a strategy consultant in the food sector since joining Gira in 2003, with a high level of specialization in global meat and livestock markets. Gira is an independent food-focused consultancy company, founded in 1979, and working globally across the livestock, meat, dairy, and bakery supply chains.

Covering one of the most challenging and complex supply chains, Claxton spends a considerable amount of time analyzing the evolving nature of international meat demand and the supply systems that provide it, as well as their internal organization. For the last 20 years, he has produced the Asian sector of the annual Gira Meat Club report, and for the last 13 managed the Gira Asian Meat Club.

Claxton's background in UK farming affords him a balanced outlook on the increasingly globalized meat industry, between the commercial drivers that control the processing industry and the complex cultural heritage that farming has evolved from.

**Arizona Agriculture: Please give us an update on world meat markets and what the future holds.**



**Says Rupert Claxton, "The one thing for me that is globally true, is that the global meat industry must build better communication with the legislators and consumers of the world, otherwise others will do it for us!"**

eral than 2023, with some cautious recovery in demand, as inflation slows, and consumers adjust to higher prices. This has been helped by a softening of feed prices.

There is little expectation of a jump in Chinese imports (price or volume) in 2024, but the Chinese economy is expected to start to improve in the second half of the year. This will support some growth, but nothing like the levels seen in 2020!

There are multiple challenges still facing the livestock sector, mostly stemming from profitability, but the potential risk of increased legislation is a key one when planning investments. Disruption from Animal disease is always an issue, and we are watching HPAI in Brazil closely, the knock-on of a commercial outbreak in central or Southern Brazil will have a global ripple.

In summary, improving, but is still fraught in the year ahead, as long as the Middle East situation doesn't spiral into a region-wide event, then inflation should normalize, and demand will recover.

**Arizona Agriculture: The world meat market, mostly due to input costs, is in a world of hurt. What else is challenging the market?**

**Claxton:** While costs in the world meat market are a challenge, they have softened from the highs of 2022, although while feed costs have fallen, they are not back to the lows we have grown accustomed to. The major issue is the challenge of passing on those higher costs to the consumer. While costs have risen in livestock and meat production, they have also risen for the consumer, reducing their disposable incomes, and leading to a push for cheaper food, including meat. This also coincides with a slow Chinese economy, which has resulted in Chinese consumers reducing their meat expenditure, and reduced import pull from China for meat. The result is a supply balance that makes increasing prices hard.

You can then factor in the increased investment needs being seen in Europe and the U.S., with a push for higher animal welfare and increased sustainability, both trends that are here to stay, and will need to be factored into future investment plans.

**Arizona Agriculture: Can you speak specifically to the pork market where you've done lots of research and analysis?**

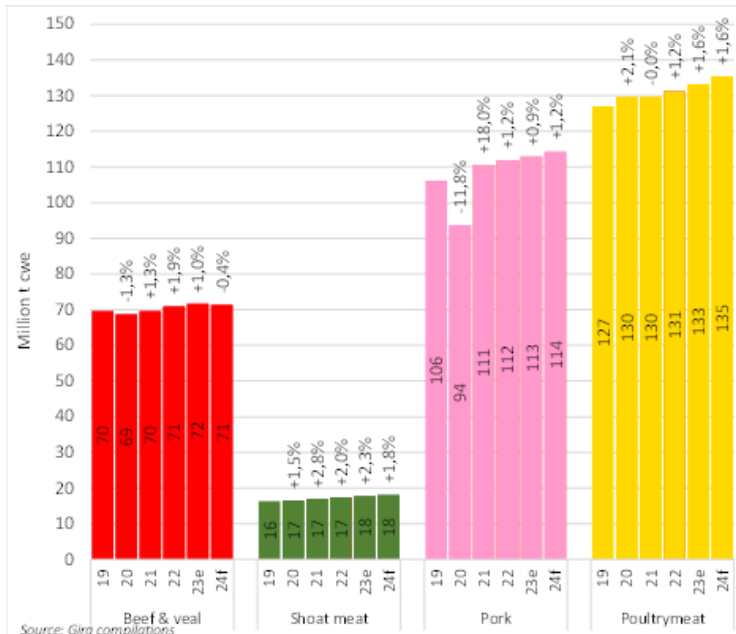
**Claxton:** We continue to do a lot of work on pork, both in the U.S., and on global markets. There are some really striking contradictions globally at the moment, and they are adding to some of the challenges in the U.S. pork industry. First up is the slower Chinese economy, and lower demand, compounded by their domestic pork production recovering from ASF (not to pre-ASF levels, but enough to satisfy the current weak market). This means import pull is limited, and Chinese buyers are paying lower prices, limiting the value to the world market, which built capacity for Chinese supply.

Then you have the European challenge, the pig cycle in Europe is out of line with the U.S., money was lost in Europe in 2021-22, and significant sow culls have taken place in 2022-23 and continue now. The result is far lower production, and higher prices, profitable at today's feed levels but not driving a rebuilding of the breeding herd. A range of issues prevent reinvestment, environmen-

ducting their meat expenditure, and reduced import pull from China for meat. The result is a supply balance that makes increasing prices hard.

See **GLOBAL MEAT MARKETS** Page 5

World Meat Production – 2019-24f



## A WIN FOR AGRICULTURE

By Chad Smith, Arizona Farm Bureau Director of Government Relations

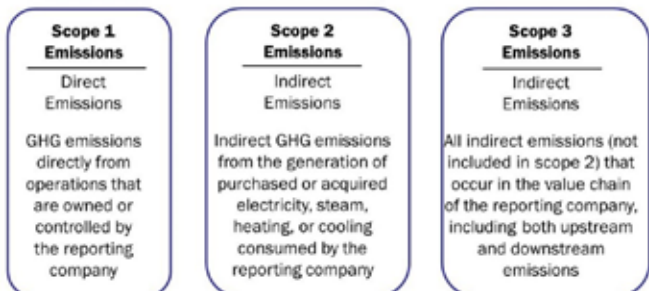
We don't often think of the Security Exchange Commission (SEC) nor deal with the agency in agriculture unless, of course, you are one of the 2,400 agriculture, food and forestry manufacturing companies that are currently registered. However, as of late, we have had to address two major concerning issues that that were before the SEC.

One was a proposal by the New York Stock Exchange to establish what they were calling a Natural Asset Company. As mentioned in a previous article, after receiving pushback from the industry they withdrew the proposal. Arizona Farm Bureau will remain vigilant in watching for future proposals that may be the same or similar.

The other rule, on which we had a huge victory was the SEC Climate Disclosure rule. This was two years in the making and the American Farm Bureau Federation led the charge, representing agriculture and advocating to mitigate the impacts of the rule to our family farms and ranches across the United States.

Many experts said this was a done deal and that the rule would be finalized as proposed within six months. American Farm Bureau leaders, staff, and attorneys would not accept such an outcome and were persistent, spending many hours working on this issue: Meeting with the SEC, engaging state Farm Bureaus and working with congressional leaders to protect agriculture from erroneous data collection and reporting.

### SCOPE 1, SCOPE 2 & SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS



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♦ Apply for our Century Farm and Ranch Program!



# BLM IN THE PROCESS OF UPDATING ITS WESTERN SOLAR PLAN

## Staff Reports

Our members with grazing BLM allotments may have seen our earlier articles about solar developments that could be installed on BLM variance lands, which, in some cases, overlapped and impacted active grazing allotments. BLM is currently in the process of updating its Western Solar Plan and has made available its Draft Utility-Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Members with BLM grazing allotments or who may ranch near BLM land are highly encouraged to review the Draft EIS and either share your concerns with Arizona Farm Bureau staff or submit your comments directly to BLM.

The current Western Solar Plan includes six states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. The updated plan would expand solar development to BLM lands in five states, including Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming. The draft EIS also includes five alternatives, with Alternative 3 identified as BLM’s preferred alternative. Each alternative makes areas open or closed to solar development proposals, as the current variance lands as a category is eliminated. Consequently, the “variance process” is also eliminated. In its place, BLM has identified a set of proposed programmatic design features that would be required for all future utility-scale solar energy projects. The design features are project requirements to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate potential impacts on various land and activities, including rangeland resources.

None of the alternatives outright prohibit the potential siting of a solar project on grazing allotments. (See Table below) Thus, as noted earlier, members are encouraged to review the Draft EIS, which can be found online at [eplanning.blm.gov](http://eplanning.blm.gov). Once there, search for “Draft Utility Scale Solar Programmatic EIS.” Under the “Documents” tab, you will find the 2023 Draft Solar PEIS Volume 1 and 2, appendices, and other documents. Volume 1 includes the description of the alternatives beginning on pages ES-8; maps noting BLM lands available for solar projects under each of the alternatives begin on

Table 5.13.1-2. Livestock Grazing Allotments—Comparison Across Alternatives

State	All BLM-Administered Land Intersecting Grazing Allotments (minus DRECP/CDCA) (acres)	No Action Alternative: Intersection of Grazing Allotments with SEZs (acres)	No Action Alternative: Intersection of Grazing Allotments with Variance Lands (acres)	Intersection of Grazing Allotments with BLM-Administered Lands Available for Application				
				Alternative 1 (acres)	Alternative 2 (acres)	Alternative 3 (acres)	Alternative 4 (acres)	Alternative 5 (acres)
Arizona	11,428,349	195,708	2,736,670	4,698,902	3,017,307	2,076,319	795,610	645,576
California	2,683,564	-	59,635	505,935	114,631	74,924	51,848	36,751
Colorado	7,742,673	22,009	116,936	2,187,990	638,184	418,239	255,196	178,103
Idaho	10,991,184	-	6,669,504	2,479,444	1,738,674	1,388,164	863,820	793,615
Montana	7,858,457	-	3,889,739	1,185,784	632,787	170,058	468,391	126,525
Nevada	43,241,134	46,202	5,955,073	16,834,373	10,861,008	5,784,300	2,034,686	1,237,424
New Mexico	12,840,123	29,716	3,861,651	6,208,856	4,791,115	2,857,977	1,683,908	1,236,673
Oregon	13,185,491	-	8,806,154	1,743,885	1,004,540	612,569	328,323	236,823
Utah	21,421,183	17,616	1,690,935	9,018,406	5,558,812	3,243,731	1,742,216	1,408,632
Washington	325,708	-	313,648	274,863	97,217	80,945	72,497	60,637
Wyoming	17,266,221	-	8,742,878	5,160,229	3,743,361	2,718,434	1,582,793	1,291,661
Westwide	148,984,087	311,251	42,842,823	50,298,666	32,197,637	19,425,660	9,879,290	7,252,420

pages ES-12. The section on Affected Environment and Rangeland Resources starts on page 4-71, and the section on Environmental Impacts and Rangeland Resources starts on page 5-145. Comments can be submitted to BLM by clicking the “Participate Now” tab. The comment period ends on April 18, 2024. You are also encouraged to contact Arizona Farm Bureau staff with comments and concerns that can be incorporated into the organization’s comment letter.

**Source:** BLM Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Utility-Scale Solar Energy Development, Volume 1: Executive Summary, Chapters 1-7

## WHAT’S NATIONAL AND LOCAL AND GREEN ALL OVER? ARIZONA LEAFY GREENS

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Director of Strategic Communications

Not long ago, I sat at a table with six close friends at Sal’s in Gilbert for classically yummy Italian food to celebrate a birthday. The first course was a crisp Caesar Salad. It was January and Arizona leafy greens production was at its productivity pinnacle.

As if on cue I announced to my table, “All this Romaine we’re chomping on comes from Yuma since it’s winter.” They smiled, happily kept eating, and nodded pleased with my habit of eagerly contributing an ag fact here and there. It’s now expected with this group of close friends.

Today Yuma farmers produce 170 million servings of lettuce per day from November to April. Wow. This does not include the large number of leafy greens also grown in Pinal and Maricopa counties. If we want our green salad in winter, which by all appearances Americans and Canadians do, we must have Arizona growing leafy greens in the winter. One Yuma farmer told me, “Julie Arizona’s winter vegetable production cannot be replicated anywhere else in the country. The perfect combination of seed, climate, available labor, infrastructure, and water allows us to do what you could never find in the dead of winter in the Midwest. If Americans want to keep eating their vegetables during winter months, they need Arizona.”

### THE LEAFY GREENS FACTS

- Arizona leafy greens farming generates approximately \$2 billion impact in Arizona each year.
- Arizona is the winter lettuce capital of the U.S. contributing 25% of lettuce production annually.
- November is “Arizona Leafy Greens Month.” It celebrates the kickoff of Arizona’s leafy greens season, with abundant growth, harvest, and shipments of Arizona-grown lettuce throughout the United States and Canada.
- Worth Repeating: Yuma farmers produce 170 million servings of lettuce per day from November to April eaten by Americans and Canadians.
- Yuma County ranks in the top 1/10th of 1% of U.S. counties in vegetable production.
- In Yuma, facilities supporting the growers and packers include 22 coolers and 10 salad plants.
- Farmers work to protect public health by participating in the Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement (LGMA) program, which cultivates food safety practices, verifies on-farm compliance, utilizes data for improvement, and empowers industry with tools to advance food safety.
- Arizona consistently produces an abundance of nutritious and safe leafy greens.
- The desert southwest is the only place in America that can grow these tender crops in the wintertime, providing a fresh, wholesome, home-grown source of veggies. As it warms up, production will shift to California.
- Daily between Thanksgiving and Easter, 1,500 to 2,000 refrigerated semi-truckloads of leafy greens leave Yuma to deliver all over America and Canada so all of us can enjoy our leafy greens even during the wintertime.
- These refrigerated truckloads of vegetables can deliver to New York in 3 to 4 days and be on someone’s salad plate at the family dinner table or high-end restaurant fresh and ready to eat.

See **ARIZONA LEAFY GREENS** Page 4

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# ARIZONA LEAFY GREENS *continued from Page 2*

- Approximately 20% of Arizona’s leafy greens are produced organically and 80% conventionally to meet consumer interest in both.
  - While Yuma County is considered America’s winter salad bowl, lots of leafy greens are coming from Arizona’s Maricopa and Pinal Counties too.
  - Eating more leafy greens is healthy for you! Leafy greens, especially the dark green ones, are packed with phytonutrients, protein, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.
  - The darker leafy greens are rich in A, C, E and K, and broccoli, Bok choy and mustards are also rich in several B vitamins.
  - Arizona’s 15 leafy greens, covered by the Arizona Leafy Greens Agreement (AZ LGMA), which assures stringent food safety practices:

1. Endive	9. Green Leaf Lettuce
2. Escarole	10. Red Leaf Lettuce
3. Spring Mix	11. Baby Leaf Lettuce
4. Cabbage	12. Spinach
5. Romaine Lettuce	13. Kale
6. Butter Lettuce	14. Chard
7. Arugula	15. Radicchio
8. Iceberg Lettuce	
  - Kale contains more Vitamin C than oranges.
  - Bok Choy, though celery-like in appearance, belongs to the cabbage family.
  - Collard greens have been studied for their ability to lower cholesterol.
  - Cabbage dates to the 1600s. Some drink juiced cabbage for stomach and intestinal issues.
  - The Vitamin K contained in dark leafy vegetables is good for protecting bones from osteoporosis and helping prevent inflammatory diseases.
  - The most appealing benefits of dark green leafy vegetables are their low calorie and carbohydrate content and their low glycemic index.
  - Romaine lettuce is one of the five lettuce types and an excellent source of folate and vitamin K.
  - Spinach is a natural hydrator with raw spinach 91% water. It’s an excellent source of vitamins A, C, and K, folate, potassium, and fiber.
- Arizona Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement provides rigorous, science-based food safety audits to the Arizona produce industry and is managed by the Arizona Leafy Greens Food Safety Committee. Arizona is the second-largest leafy green producer in the United States, exceeded only by California. Arizona Leafy Greens members represent 98% of leafy green products grown in Arizona. 🚜

# RURAL GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT: COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

By Daniel Harris, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Manager

In the heart of Arizona, where the sun shines brightly discussions surrounding water sometimes make it seem as though it is more precious than gold because, in the desert, it often is. It’s here that Senate Bill 1221, which seeks to be a landmark piece of legislation, attempts to introduce a groundbreaking approach and update to the 1980 Groundwater Act in Arizona. This bill doesn’t just aim to address the current water scarcity; it envisions a future where Arizona’s agricultural and rural communities thrive through sustainable water use for generations to come.

Senate Bill 1221 proposes the establishment of Basin Management Areas (BMAs) and Active Basin Management Areas (ABMAs), focusing on areas outside the existing Active Management Areas of the State. This initiative is a testament to a collaboration of rural water users in Arizona’s commitment to preserving its water resources while supporting the backbone of its rural economy, the \$23.3 billion industry of agriculture. The bill recognizes the urgent need for collaborative solutions in managing groundwater resources by emphasizing the importance of local involvement, allowing communities to play a significant role in the stewardship of their water supplies.

The establishment of BMAs is a step towards acknowledging and addressing the unique challenges faced by Arizona’s rural and agricultural regions. By allowing for the creation of these areas through a petition process initiated by local residents, the bill ensures that those most affected by water management decisions have a say in their future. The inclusion of a cost-benefit analysis before the designation of a BMA ensures that the economic viability of water management strategies is considered, balancing environmental sustainability with community needs.

Moreover, the legislation introduces a second-stage concept of Active Basin Management Areas, taking a more dynamic approach to water management. This includes the election of an Active Basin Management Council, comprising local residents and representatives appointed by irrigation districts. This council is tasked with adopting management plans that align with the goals of preserving groundwater for future non-irrigation uses, promoting water conservation, and ensuring equitable water distribution.

Significantly, Senate Bill 1221 also includes provisions for water conservation measures and financial support. It appropriates \$40 million in funds for water conservation in BMAs. The bill also allows water users within BMAs to apply for grants through institutions such as WIFA, further supporting efforts to reduce water consumption and enhance efficiency. These monies advance the support of voluntary conservation rather than relying only on mandatory cuts.

This proposed legislation represents a bold and innovative step towards securing Arizona’s water future. It acknowledges the complexities of groundwater management in a state where water is a lifeline. By fostering collaboration among stakeholders, emphasizing local involvement, and providing financial support for conservation efforts, Senate Bill 1221 lays the foundation for a sustainable and prosperous agricultural sector. As we navigate through this critical period of water discussions, it’s essential to think beyond the present challenges and work towards a future where Arizona’s water resources are managed wisely for generations to come. This legislation is not just about addressing today’s water scarcity; it’s about reimagining Arizona’s water management framework to ensure a resilient, sustainable, and equitable water future for all its residents. 🚜



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## GLOBAL MEAT MARKETS continued from Page 1

tal factors, aging famers, animal welfare changes and at the end of the day farm confidence. So, less EU pork, and higher European prices are set for now.

The U.S. is in the opposite position, still with too much production for a market that has faced inflationary challenges. The sharp sow cull seen in Europe hasn't happened in the U.S., although there has been some, and so the readjustment in prices has yet to happen. The U.S. industry is in a position to wait out some of the storm, but that is prolonging the pain.

There are plenty of other challenges globally for the U.S. industry to face, including a weaker Japanese market in 2023, increasing Brazilian production, and the ever-present challenge of chicken!

**Arizona Agriculture: In Europe, we've seen a lot of farmer demonstrations and protests. What's your take on this and what about future impact?**

**Claxton:** European farmers are backed into a really tight corner, huge pressure from NGOs and governments to make progress on sustainability and animal welfare, human density, making building large scale farms difficult if not impossible, manure regulations that mandate a reduction in livestock numbers in some regions, rising labor costs (if you can find it), high feed costs, very high energy costs and at the end of the day farm scales that cannot provide a competitive income.

The net result will be the loss of many small farms, and some limited scaling up through multi sight systems (not single site as you see in the U.S.). It is likely to lead to restructuring of all the downstream industry as scale is lost. And eventually there is a need for some imports to balance supply!

**Arizona Agriculture: What opportunities should American beef, poultry and pork producers be evaluating and preparing for?**

**Claxton:** The U.S. industry has a scale advantage, and access to affordable feed, giving it one of the most competitive costs of production globally, despite the current challenges. The opportunity to play a role at a global level is obvious, but should focus on being a consistent quality supplier, not trying to beat the Brazilians on cost alone. But this will have to be done while driving increased environmental credentials, both for your domestic market, and eventually for export customers, although that is some way out yet.

**Arizona Agriculture: From your global perspective, compare the European market to the U.S. market.**

**Claxton:** That's tough in a paragraph or two and is the easy subject of a report in its own right! But there are a few key points; First up is that the EU is not a single market from a meat perspective, but 27 national markets, with their own retailers and supply chain, along with a strong preference for their own national origin in raw meat, while in the U.S. you find regional variation, but the major packers are national. Europe is already prioritizing increased Animal Welfare standards, and environmental drivers are now becoming a common part of the decision-making process, while this is less mainstream in the U.S., but developing, and a look at where the EU is and is heading, would be good briefing for U.S. producers.

Both markets limit imports to protect domestic production, with quotas and tariffs as the main mechanism, but also the use of phytosanitary issues. Both have highly evolved modern supply chains, with a focus on providing choice to the consumer, and with that we see markets that are slanted towards serving the consumer, rather than the farmer and while we see in both markets a consumer detached from the farm, the Europeans have in general more focus on regional specializations in production standards, which still attract a premium, something I think is gaining interest in the U.S., although at a niche level.

**Arizona Agriculture: Can the two markets complement each other more? Where do you see opportunities?**

**Claxton:** There will always be some disagreement on production standards, the U.S. technology first approach and the Europeans slightly more conservative approach, as seen on hormones, carcass washes and beta agonists but these are distracting from the real opportunities, which largely center around carcass balance, some processed products, with regional specialization, and some of the higher welfare products.

On top of this, there is already a considerable industry based around technological development, in breeding, feed additives and farm and processing plant technology. In an industry under increasing pressure at a global level, it will be the ability to adopt the best technology and learn from the global market that will give some of the best benefits to the industry.

**Arizona Agriculture: What can European producers teach Americans and vice versa?**

**Claxton:** Some things don't translate, but as above, the development of technology has been a core transatlantic trade for decades. The next 10 years will see a steep ramp-up in sustainability regulations and requirements across the industry. There are

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opportunities to learn from how these are implemented, and the solutions the industry can present for this.

**Arizona Agriculture: How do we prepare for some of the future challenges coming down the road?**

**Claxton:** The meat industry is a continually evolving market, at all levels from farm to fork. For me, the key is to not expect to be doing the same thing in 5 years as you are today.

Be prepared to adjust your working systems. At farm level, you should talk to those around you, the Danes have a long history of learning from each other, and it's one of their core strengths today in pigs.

**Arizona Agriculture: What have I not asked that I should?**

**Claxton:** That's a pretty good list of questions, there are no certainties in the world, but we should keep an eye on the disruptor technologies around our markets. Meat alternatives will develop, but how good can they become, and what is their real cost and environmental impact? What other technology can the livestock industry embrace to improve efficiency?

The one thing for me that is globally true, is that the global meat industry must build better communication with the legislators and consumers of the world, otherwise others will do it for us! 📞

## CENTURY FARM AND RANCH FAMILIES: IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE AGAIN

### Staff Reports



The Ritter ranching family were recipients of the most recent Century Ranch recognition representing an Arizona generational ranch family in business for more than 100 years.

has now celebrated 11 families since the program started in 2021. The recognition occurs during its Annual Meeting in November earning those recognized the Century Farm and Ranch designation.

An ongoing program of the Arizona Farm Bureau (AZFB), The Century Farm and Ranch Program is committed to recognizing Arizona's farm and ranch families in business for a least 100 years. If your family's farm or ranch is eligible this year (2024), go to <https://www.azfb.org/News/Century-Farms-Ranches> to download and fill out the application listed online.

As the sun daily rises on your 2024, you look over at the horizon sipping that cup of coffee (or tea) and you might be reflecting on all the years your generational farm or ranch family has been in business. Arizona Farm Bureau wants to recognize you and your farm and ranch legacy. We're looking for those Arizona Farms and Ranches that have reached the 100-year mark or will by the end of this year!

Arizona Farm Bureau has now celebrated 11 families since the program started in 2021. The recognition occurs during its Annual Meeting in November earning those recognized the Century Farm and Ranch designation.

### APPLICATION DETAILS

The application deadline is the first Monday in July (July 1, 2024) and must be received by the Arizona Farm Bureau by that date (this is not a postmark deadline). Qualified applications received after July 1 will be considered for the 2025 Century Farm and Ranch Program, as the effort will be ongoing.

Because Arizona Farm Bureau and participating Farm Bureau counties are underwriting the cost of the program, those farm and ranch families must be current members of Arizona Farm Bureau.

### IF SELECTED, WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Once applications are received by the July 1, 2024, deadline and reviewed, AZFB will notify qualified applicants. In addition, a variety of recognitions will take place.

You'll receive a certificate from your county Farm Bureau leadership presented during their county annual meetings.

During Arizona Farm Bureau's Annual Meeting in November, you'll be recognized before your peers during an awards dinner.

Additionally, Arizona Farm Bureau will send you home with a sign recognizing your farm or ranch as a *Century Farm/Ranch*.

The history of Arizona's farms and ranches is rich, and the family's lengthy tenure in agriculture signifies a heritage of determination, innovation, and resiliency. In that spirit, AZFB will continue the Century Farm and Ranch Program to recognize and honor our Arizona family farms and ranches that have thrived for more than a century. 📞

**Editor's note:** Please return the completed application to Arizona Farm Bureau Century Farm Program to the attention of Julie Murphree at 325 South Higley Road, Gilbert, AZ 85296. Or email your application to [outreach@azfb.org](mailto:outreach@azfb.org).



# RESPONDING TO FEDERAL REGULATORY DOCKETS IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2024

By Ana Otto, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Manager

The Arizona Farm Bureau Federation (AZFB) regularly prepares regulatory comments in response to federal and state agency proposed rules, requests for information, and other agency actions. In the first quarter of 2024, there’s been a mix of AZFB’s comment letters addressing both state and federal rule proposals. Below is a summary of the regulatory dockets that AZFB has engaged in thus far in 2024.

**Securities Exchange Council – Proposed Rulemaking on Self-Regulatory Organizations; NYSE LLC; Notice of Filing of Proposed Rule Change to Amend the NYSE Listed Company Manual to Adopt Listing Standards for Natural Asset Companies** – AZFB’s comments expressed our strong opposition to the proposed rule, which would have created a definition for a Natural Asset Company, which included a description of sustainable operations. Our comments also sought clarification on certain elements of the proposal related directly to agriculture. (Note: On January 17, 2024, the SEC withdrew the proposed rule.)

**Bureau of Land Management – Temporary Closure and Restriction Orders** – BLM’s proposal included modernizing communication for temporary closures and restriction orders; however, it would also allow the Agency to issue closure and restriction orders without notice in the Federal Register, including those related to resource management strategies. AZFB’s comments aligned with those prepared by the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), urging BLM not to move forward with its proposal and to instead retain notice in the Federal Register and consider adding other forms of communication.

**U.S. Forest Service – Land Management Plan Direction for Old Growth Forest Conditions Across the National Forest System** – AZFB’s comments aligned with those prepared by the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), noting our concern with the USFS’s proposal to amend 128 land management plans in 12 months to address old growth and mature forest conditions. Because of the unique nature of different forest types across the U.S., our comments urged USFS to continue its longstanding practice of amending land management plans on a local and forest-based scale.

**Arizona State Land Department – Rulemaking Docket: Title 12-Natural Resources, Chapter 5-State Land Department, Articles 1, 7-9 and 11** – Articles 7 through 9 of Title 12 cover Special Leasing Provisions, Rights-of-Way, and Exchanges; Article 11 covers Special Use Permits. AZFB’s comments raised several concerns regarding rule revisions in Article 7 regarding the right of refusal, information requests by the State Land Department, and in Article 1, the need for a notice and appeal process.

**Environment Protection Agency – Pesticides; Review of Requirements Applicable to Treated Seed and Treated Paint Products; Request for Information and Comments** – AZFB’s comments largely explained the importance of retaining the treated articles and substance exemption that has been in place for over 35 years. This exemption applies to pesticide-treated seed, which as noted in the comment letter, is an important technology that farmers use to address certain pest and disease issues.

**Arizona Department of Water Resources – Gila Bend Basin Active Management Area Proposal** – AZFB provided comments to ADWR, noting our concern and disappointment

with the Department’s initial steps in potentially establishing an Active Management Area in the Gila Bend Basin. The comment letter highlighted the uniqueness of the Gila Bend Basin and how current AMA statutes are too restrictive. It also noted the need to consider proposed legislation addressing new AMAs in rural areas that provides a more collaborative framework for their development.

**Environment Protection Agency – Draft Endangered Species Act Biological Evaluations (BE) for the Registration Review of 11 Rodenticide** – AZFB’s comments noted our concerns with proposed mitigation measures identified in the BE for rodenticides, including placement of bait stations and certain application prohibitions. We also noted concerns and the need for further refinement of species maps that noted stricter mitigation requirements for the entire state of Arizona.

**Environment Protection Agency – Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking Regarding the Potential Development of Regulations to Reinstate the Reporting of Animal Waste Air Emissions at Farms under the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA)** – AZFB’s comments noted our opposition to reinstating animal waste air emissions under EPCRA. Our comments also stated that EPCRA was never intended to govern agricultural operations, where emissions from livestock are a naturally occurring process, as well as provided additional reasons as to why reporting animal waste air emissions to state and local emergency responders is not necessary.

**United States Department of Agriculture – Request for information on Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act FSA-153 Form Modernization and Information Collection Request** – AZFB comments supported updating and modernizing the AFIDA FSA-153 form. We also supported updates to the form that will help obtain data that provides more complete information on reportable indirect interest to help identify the ultimate beneficial owner. Our comments also recommended expanding the data collected in the form to include information about the intended crop or livestock that will be grown or raised on the property purchased or leased by a foreign entity.

Arizona Farm Bureau staff is also working on drafting comment letters due just before April, including responding to EPA’s proposed rule regarding Clean Water Act Effluent Limitations Guidelines and Standards for the Meat and Poultry Products Point Source Category.

For more information about a specific comment letter, contact Ana Kennedy Otto at [advocacy@azfb.org](mailto:advocacy@azfb.org).

## YOU CAN JOIN THE AMERICAN FARM TRAIL!

### Staff Reports

Have you ever been on a road trip and thought it would be fun to learn about local agriculture or visit a local farm as you drive across the country? Thanks to the American Farm Bureau this can now be easier than ever. The American Farm Trail app directs consumers to nearby farms, fairs, and agri-tourism destinations in their local communities and across the nation. The best part is that it is FREE to use and FREE to add your farm to the trail!

App users can use the American Farm Trail app to learn about the American farms near them by playing online games, participating in “activities,” and much more. While in the app, consumers can discover nearby agriculture operations and destinations that are open to visitors.

To see what farms are on the list or to add yours be sure to visit <https://go.farm-trailapp.com/>

## A WIN FOR AGRICULTURE continued from Page 1

other attempt to force emission reporting.

The rule was designed to require all companies that are registered with the SEC to report emissions. There were three scopes to the rule seen in the table below. The biggest concern was scope 3 which would require all indirect emissions to be reported. So, any farm, ranch, or ag operation, regardless of size, that is within the value chain of a registered company would therefore be required to report emissions to those companies registered that they do business with.

Farmers and ranchers are committed to protecting natural resources and continuously adopting climate-smart technology, but quite simply would not have been able to afford to comply should this rule of passed as originally proposed. Onerous reporting requirements would have driven agriculture operations out of the supply chain, particularly our small, family-owned farms that do business with public companies or even do business with a company that does business with a public company. According to USDA’s 2022 Census between 2017 and 2022, the number of farms declined by 141,733 with the total acreage declining by 20.1 million. Those are big numbers that should be alarming, and it is rules like this as proposed that would have only added to those numbers, pushing more agriculture out of production, and leading to more consolidation.

Farm Bureaus across the U.S. engaged their grassroots, sending nearly 20,000 messages to the SEC and Capitol Hill. Congressional leaders responded with letters and meetings with the SEC, sharing our concerns and requesting that they at a minimum remove scope 3 from the rule. Arizona Farm Bureau worked hard on this issue and was able to get Senator Sinema to support our efforts, signing onto a letter that combined with other efforts ultimately led to the final rule, released on March 7<sup>th</sup> that removed scope 3 from the rule. (See graphic with article.)

This was a huge win for agriculture and one we must celebrate. We thank Senator Sinema for her leadership on this issue and for advocating for Farmers and Ranchers. Our hats go off to the many staff at the American Farm Bureau Federation who worked on this issue over the last two years. We thank all our grassroots volunteer members who took the time to engage. This is the power of grassroots and a great example of the value of your membership.

Let’s celebrate the win with members and be Farm Bureau proud! 🚜



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\*Farm Bureau Exclusive Cash Reward is exclusively for active Farm Bureau members who are residents of the United States. \$500 Exclusive Cash Reward on the purchase or lease of an eligible new 2023/2024/2025 Ford Maverick, Ranger, F-150, Super Duty or F-150 Lightning. This incentive is not available on Ranger Raptor®, F-150 Raptor, F-650® and F-750® Super Duty. This offer may not be used in conjunction with most other Ford Motor Company private incentives or AXZD-Plans. Some customer and purchase eligibility restrictions apply. Must be a Farm Bureau member for 30 consecutive days prior to purchase or lease and take new retail delivery from an authorized Ford Dealer's stock by January 2, 2025. See your authorized Ford Dealer for qualifications and complete details. Note to dealer: Claim in VINCENT using #32286.



# MENTOR PROTÉGÉ CAMP CLASS 3, PROFILE 3: CHASE SKAARER AND SAMANTHA YAZZIE

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Director of Strategic Communications

The CAMP mentor/protégé 2024 series continues for Class 3 with rancher Chase Skaarer and NRCS employee, Samantha Yazzie. The Skaarer/Yazzie team has met more than once, and Yazzie has received some exposure to the various stages of the cattle industry.

The Conservation Agricultural Mentoring Program (CAMP) in Arizona, in partnership with the Arizona Farm Bureau, has now been at it for three years. This program, unique in its regard, has a double dose of uniqueness as the Arizona NRCS team approached the Farm Bureau to partner with them in the effort.

The Skaarer/Yazzie partnership, along with all the mentor protégé partnerships for Class 3, works to understand Arizona agriculture and conservation opportunities, joining forces to provide firsthand experience of the conservation practices and agricultural happenings.

### MENTOR: CHASE SKAARER

**Talk about your first meeting:** Samantha and I actually work together at NRCS. I am the master planner for team 8 and took Sam under my wing as a new range con. Because I am also a rancher I have been involving her in brandings, pregnancy checking, and other cattle work as well as checking waters and fixing leaks.

**What about the subsequent meetings?** I have exposed Sam to many stages of the cattle industry from calving, and seed stock production up to weaning cattle at our local feedlot. We also visited a local packing plant that sells locally sourced beef and pork.

**Share specifics about what you got out of it as the rancher:** This opportunity has given me some perspective about the experience some new employees have coming into this job. There were things I took for granted that everyone would know and now I know that is unfair of me as a rancher to put that expectation on a new NRCS employee.

**For the remaining time with the program, what do you also hope to help with?** I would like to continue to expand Sam's knowledge of how a cattle ranch operates to better prepare her to offer solid technical advice to future ranchers.

**Why do you think this program is valuable?** This program gives new employees who do not have agriculture experience the opportunity to learn what is involved in production agriculture. For example, while designing a watering system we discussed the plumbing parts that were required for the pump discharge. This led to a trip to the local hardware store and the ranch to show Samantha what was needed, why it was needed, and how it worked in the system.

### PROTÉGÉ: SAMANTHA YAZZIE

**What's been the biggest takeaway from your first gathering? Subsequent ones?** Chase and I have been working together with NRCS for over a year now. He has taught and shown me quite a lot about the agriculture industry.

**How do you see this helping a broader set of NRCS employees? What's key for you?** I think this allows NRCS employees to grab a larger and deeper perspective on the agricultural industry and the agricultural producers. A key for me is to better understand

producers and what issues they face, in terms of bettering the ranch and management and turning that issue into a resolution.

**Why have you felt this program has been helpful?** This program has been helpful because it allows me to see more of the background of what ranchers do on a day-to-day basis. In terms of when cattle need to be sold, implementing the needs for the ranch, maintaining the ranch, grass production, cattle pregnancies, water distribution, etc. This program allows me to see it from the producer's perspective.

**What more do you hope to learn?** I hope to learn as much as I can. So I can become a better and more effective planner for Arizona producers.



Samantha Yazzie joined mentor Chase Skaarer during the cattle-shipping day.



## Take Fill Your Plate with You on the Road!

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## Retain Moisture and Get Rid of Compaction

By PAUL SCHNEIDER JR., AG-USA  
**PAID ADVERTISEMENT**

Is there anything that farmers can do to retain moisture while at the same time get rid of compaction? Yes! Here is a good way to do just that.

### Put fungi to work

When I traveled to Albertville, Alabama to attend the South Poll Cattle Association meeting there, one of the speakers stated that it's best to have a ratio of 50% bacteria to 50% fungi in the soil.

In fact, fungi are key to helping us get rid of compaction and to highly structuring the soil. Structuring it magnifies the soil's ability to retain moisture.

The bad news is, fungi don't normally do well in farm land; they do better in wooded areas, where trees constantly sequester sugars to feed them. So, how can we get fungi to thrive where we farm?

Here are some key points of how to do this.

- Remove toxins and salts that inhibit beneficial fungi.

- Bring nutrient balance to the soil.
- Empower the plant to sequester large amounts of sugars in order to feed mycorrhizal fungi.

**MycorrPlus** is a product designed to do all of these things, and more. It is a bio-stimulant that can:

- Help empower microbes to gobble up toxins.
- Help flush salts from the root zone.
- Help balance soil nutrients.
- Help maximize the amount of sugars sequestered by the plant.

In short, MycorrPlus (my-core-plus) can help create a friendly environment in the soil where mycorrhizal fungi and a host of other beneficial microbes can feel at home.

### Sequester more carbon, retain more moisture

Aerobic microbes require oxygen and moisture to thrive. With the right help, they will build incredible structure into the soil, one where oxygen circulates freely and moisture is stored efficiently. Because this is the same environment needed by plants, plants love to form a partnership with mycorrhizae.

Can our microbes aerate the soil? Yes! As plants sequester sugars to feed the microbes, the microbes use the residues of these sugars as gums and glues to bind soil particles together, creating air compartments about 1/4" to 3/8" in size (see picture).

As soil is highly structured, rain will soak deeply into the soil instead of just waterlogging the surface, making it possible for a farmer to more quickly get back into the field.

In the picture, in the soil on the left, can you see the small air pockets?

- ◇ The soil on the left is what soil can look like when it has been highly structured by MycorrPlus. It is aerated and crumbly.
- In the soil on the right, the dirt is tight and clumped together.
- ◇ In highly structured soil, when it rains, water soaks down into the air pockets and is stored until it is needed.

- In tight soil, the top 6" or so of the soil becomes waterlogged and you will see water standing in the field.

When the water evaporates, it leaves the soil dry and hard.



Treated, aerated soil; Compacted soil

- ◇ In the highly structured soil, the microbes have created a moist, oxygen-rich environment where they feel right at home.

- In the soil on the right, aerobic microbes don't have enough air to survive, and anaerobic bacteria dominate the soil.

Plants like to feed the aerobic bacteria and mycorrhizal fungi, because plants have a lot to gain from doing so.

MycorrPlus is amazing. By helping to switch on carbon sequestration which feeds mycorrhizal fungi and other microbes, the soil will act like a sponge, soaking in rain and irrigation water.

Visit [www.AG-USA.net](http://www.AG-USA.net) to learn more.

Or call (888) 588-3139 and request a free information pack.

Conquer Nature by  
Cooperating with it

## MycorrPlus™

Like a center pivot for dryland farmers!  
*Reduces the need for LIME and other fertilizers*

MycorrPlus is a liquid bio-stimulant that helps remove compaction by highly structuring the soil. It creates something like an aerobic net in the soil that retains nutrients and moisture. It contains concentrated sea minerals, 20 strains of aerobic bacteria, 4 strains mycorrhizal fungi, fish, kelp, humic acids and molasses. \$22.50 to \$45/acre.



For a wealth of information, visit: [www.AG-USA.net](http://www.AG-USA.net), or call 888-588-3139 Mon. - Sat. from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. MST and request a free information packet. Organic? Use MycorrPlus-O.

AG-USA, LLC, PO Box 73019, Newnan, GA 30271 [info@ag-usa.net](mailto:info@ag-usa.net)



# YOUR BUSINESS BOTTOM LINE IN UNCERTAIN TIMES: INFORMATION THAT HELPS

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Director of Strategic Communications

Industry experts suggest that the importance of being informed on the latest industry updates, trends, legislation, regulations and more cannot be underestimated. It doesn't matter what type of farm and ranch business you run, not keeping up to date with what's new could leave your business open to all sorts of risk factors or lead to you unwittingly failing to comply with new regulations. Moreover, businesses that aren't informed of the latest industry updates also risk losing out to competitors, especially if you are a retail or direct-market farmer/rancher and serve the "end customer."

The simplest way to resolve a lack of information or education is to be looped into all the forms of communication your industry-based organization provides. At Arizona Farm Bureau this means a variety of channels for information and education. We share four strategies that ultimately support your ag business bottom line, and all are free.

## FIRST, THE LATEST STATE AND NATIONAL LEGISLATION AND REGULATION THAT COULD POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY IMPACT YOUR AG BUSINESS IS PROVIDED THROUGH ARIZONA FARM BUREAU'S "WHILE YOU WERE WORKING" NEWSLETTER.

All business owners are familiar with the need to comply with state and federal regulations, especially in agriculture. However, the biggest problem for many farm and ranch entrepreneurs is the frequent changes to these rules.

Some business owners might regard regulations as just more red tape they must comply with when they've already got enough to think about, and they might not keep up with them as they should. However, not abiding by them can have heavy financial and legal consequences, and ignorance of the rules is no defense, that is why keeping informed of any new changes is crucial to your business.

To resolve this, subscribe to the weekly (during the legislative session; biweekly when AZ Legislature is not in session) **While You Were Working**. To subscribe go to <https://www.azfb.org/Advocacy/Action-Center>. Then to the right of the page and where it says, "Sign Up for Alerts," enter your email and zip code. This automatically sets you up to begin getting the newsletter through your email. Or use the nearby QR code.



ter through your email. Or use the nearby QR code.

## SECOND, JOIN OUR WEEKLY TALK TO A FARMER/RANCHER INSTAGRAM LIVE SESSIONS TO UNDERSTAND WHAT OTHER FARMERS AND RANCHERS ARE DEALING WITH AND EVEN THE STRATEGIES THEY USE TO DEAL WITH CHALLENGES ON THE FARM OR RANCH.

Our Talk to a Farmer/Rancher segments occur **every Friday at 10:00 a.m.** on our Instagram account, @AZfarmbureau. If you have the Instagram app on your smartphone, you just need to have it opened during the 10:00 a.m. hour on Friday and watch for us to go live. You can even post questions during the live sessions.

One rancher who regularly watches our weekly show said, "I pay attention to who you mention will be your guest for that week's show and if it's someone I know I can learn from I make a point to join when you go live on Instagram. I've learned a lot so far."

We **save each show to video** and it's always on our @AZfarmbureau Instagram account. Additionally, we share the link to Facebook, so you can find the video there and watch it at your leisure if you can't make the "live" session. We are now uploading the sessions to YouTube if you are not on the social media channels.

## THIRD, TRACK GOVERNMENT GRANTS, LOANS, JOB OPENINGS AND MORE BY SUBSCRIBING TO ARIZONA FARM BUREAU'S WEEKLY AG & FB NEWS.

Simply log in to your membership account at [www.azfb.org](http://www.azfb.org) and in the "communication preferences" section select "Opt-In to Email Communication" and also "eNewsletter."

This newsletter is sent out every Thursday morning to 1,800 subscribers in the agriculture industry, members and non-members alike.

This newsletter caters to more general farm and ranch news, including information specific to the Farm Bureau, and highlights opportunities for farmers and ranchers to take advantage of an array of options related to their businesses. We often announce industry webinars that feature economic news or general industry reports.

## FOURTH, SHARE OUR ARIZONA AGRICULTURE VIDEOS WHEN YOUR NETWORK OF FAMILY AND

## FRIENDS CHALLENGES YOU ON YOUR FARM AND RANCH PRACTICES.

You've probably already experienced pushback from family and friends about the way you farm or ranch or how modern agriculture operates today. You're not alone. It's becoming common practice for the public who knows nothing about agriculture to tell us how to farm.

A recent comment by retired Arizona farmer Pat Murphree got tremendous traction recently on social media. He said, "Why do people who are not farmers know more about farming than farmers?"

Go to <https://www.azfb.org/News/Videos> to find a video that will help you explain a practice or issue within our farm and ranch industry. We have a video for **nearly every imaginable challenging topic** coming from the public including Climate Change and Agriculture water issues. If we don't, let us know, and we'll research the topic and produce an informational video!



The Ag & Farm Bureau News Newsletter is sent out every Thursday morning to 1,800 subscribers in the agriculture industry. If you're not subscribed, you may miss out on opportunities for your farm and ranch business.

Testimonies from our farm and ranch members tell us these tools add value to their business bottom line. Join their chorus. And, of course, as a farm and ranch member, you are already getting our monthly publication, [Arizona Agriculture](#). Maintain your annual membership to ensure you get the magazine without interruption.

Oh yes, we also host an annual [Webinar Wednesday series](#) that averages four to six times a year. We are working to leave no stone unturned in the quest to keep you informed and prepared to handle all the challenges you face running a business.



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You're not alone. Many people overestimate the price, but **life insurance can cost as little as a dollar a day.<sup>1</sup>** When it comes to coverage, there are options to fit your needs and budget.

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<sup>1</sup>Individual eligibility for all product promotions is subject to underwriting review and approval. Estimated premium payment is for 20-year Income Guard Term Life Plan; Standard; 30-year-old male or female; non-smoker. Amount is for demonstrative purposes only. Contact your Farm Bureau agent for a quote on your actual monthly premium payment. Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company\*/West Des Moines, IA. \*Company provider of Farm Bureau Financial Services. LI201 (2-24)