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# FARM GRAM

A publication of the Marion County Farm Bureau  
Promoting, Protecting & Advancing Farm Interests in Marion County

## Leadership—The Only Safe Ship in a Storm

*John Zielinski, President*

The weather has been really nice for a few weeks here in the valley—at least that has been what Mother Nature provided. However, there have been a few major storm fronts that have moved through the state capital. We have a new Governor and the legislative session is not looking to be particularly friendly to agriculture and the business community. There are bills concerning a significantly higher minimum wage, paid sick leave, flexible work schedules, a public/private retirement fund, a low carbon fuel standard, and personal property tax rules; in addition, there are a number of bills to restrict the use of pesticides. To follow the weather analogy further, there have been a few calm days in the eye of the storm. There is a bill for a funding package of OSU Statewide (Extension Service, Ag Experiment Station, and the Forest Research Lab), and Curt Melcher (who was supported by OFB) has been selected as the new Director for Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Even if this is a stormy legislative session that may make farming more difficult for many of us, there have been some times when I have been very happy and proud to be part of the Farm Bureau family and the larger agriculture industry. These positive moments come from the farmers, ranchers, timber men, and business owners who have taken the time to testify at legislative hearings. People like Roger DeJager, Doug Kraemer, Brenda Frketich, Senator Fred Thompson, Jon Iverson, and many others. Other farmers have taken time to write their elected representatives letters about how the different proposed bills would impact their farm operations.

In the past two months I have spoken to a number of small groups about Farm Bureau, what it stands for, what it is against, and some of the perks of being a Farm Bureau member. Yes, there is a \$500 deduction for new GM vehicles, and a great Verizon phone plan; but the biggest benefit of being a Farm Bureau member is what the organization does for you in the arenas of state and local politics. We may not win every battle this year, but if Farm Bureau can sway legislation to not be too severe it could save your operation thousands of dollars and hours of paperwork.

As many of you know, farmers represent about 1 percent of the overall population, if you count only those whose primary income is from farm operations my guess is that we are only about half of 1 percent of the population. We are a small minority, making it all the more important that each and every one of us speak up as best we can to our neighbors, urban friends, and legislators. For some that may be talking to friends about how issues impact your farm, or testifying at a legislative hearing, for others it could be as easy as writing emails and letters to your legislators. OFB has made this process much easier with a new online ag advocacy section on its website. For those of you who receive this newsletter electronically, this will be easy just

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## Mark Your Calendar—MCFB Farm Tour Set for March 31

Join us for the 2015 Marion County Farm Bureau Ag Tour, Tuesday, March 31. The tour bus loads at 7:45 am at EZ Orchards in Salem. Confirmed stops include:



More stops are being added, so it promises to be a full day of education and entertainment.

**Cost: \$25.00 per person**—Tour bus transportation and lunch are included. Please register for this event by contacting the MCFB office at 503-378-0595 by March 23.

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## MCFB Scholarships Available for 2015-16 School Year

The application deadline for the Mary Petzel Scholarship and Scott Miller Memorial Scholarship is July 15, 2015. Application for both scholarships is available to any immediate member of a Marion County Farm Bureau family preparing to study at any university, four-year college, or junior college.

In 2014, the Marion County Farm Bureau awarded three \$1,000 scholarships; all three recipients were students enrolled at Oregon State University.

Applications are available online at [www.marioncofarm.com](http://www.marioncofarm.com), by contacting the MCFB Office at 503-378-0595, or by emailing MCFB staff at [jessica@marioncofarm.com](mailto:jessica@marioncofarm.com).

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## President's Message *(cont'd)*

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follow this link <http://www.oregonfb.org/advocacy/>; for those who still receive the printed version of this newsletter you can type the address into your internet browser. On this OFB web page you can choose the topics that interest you; there are some basic templates to help you formulate letters to your legislators adding and editing the words to your own style. Take a few minutes each week to stay informed about the current political issues and take the time to make your voice heard.

There will be more stormy days ahead during this legislative session; but if we all do our part to speak up, they may reduced to a weaker storm front and not a gale force storm.

## Oregon Crop Donation Tax Credit

Oregon allows a tax credit for crops donated to a gleaning cooperative, food bank, or other charitable organization engaged in the distribution of food without charge. The organization receiving the donation must have a principal or ongoing purpose of distribution of food to children or homeless, unemployed, elderly, or low income individuals. The organization must be located in Oregon and be exempt from federal income taxes under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Since the crop donation tax credit was passed in last year's legislature, we have had many farmers ask how they could use it. Here are a few simple rules for using the credit:

### **To qualify for this credit:**

- You must be in the business of growing the crop to be sold for cash
- The crop must be fit for human consumption
- The food must meet all quality and labeling standards imposed by federal, state, or local laws, even though the food may not be readily marketable due to appearance, age, freshness, grade, size, surplus, or other condition

### **Eligible crops include, but are not limited to:**

- Bedding plants that produce food
- Orchard stock intended for the production of food
- Livestock that may be processed into food for human consumption

Donated food meeting the above qualifications will meet the definition of apparently wholesome food as required for this credit.

**How much is the credit?** The credit is 15 percent of the value of the quantity of the crop donated, computed at the wholesale market price at the time of donation.

**How to claim the credit:** Keep your completed Form 150-101-240, Crop Donation Tax Credit, with your tax records to verify your donation. You can download a copy of the form at [http://www.oregon.gov/dor/PERTAX/docs/crop-donation-tax-credit\\_101-240.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/dor/PERTAX/docs/crop-donation-tax-credit_101-240.pdf).

**Carryforward:** Your credit cannot be more than your tax liability for Oregon. You can carry forward any unused credit for the next three years. If the credit is not used within three years, it is lost.

### **Legislative Action Alert!**

**House Bill 2245 has been introduced in the current legislative session to increase the Crop Donation Tax Credit from 15 percent to 25 percent. Please contact your local legislator to encourage their support of House Bill 2245.**

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## Homegrown by Heroes

In May 2014 the Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC) announced the national launch of the *Homegrown by Heroes* initiative. The initiative is a product labeling program that allows farmers, ranchers, fishermen, and the like from all 50 states and U.S. territories who have served or are still serving in any branch of the U.S. military the ability to use the Homegrown by Heroes logo on their agricultural products. Consumers and businesses purchasing agricultural products will begin to see this logo at the point-of-purchase and on business signage, enabling them to select products that support our country's farmer veterans.

To qualify for the Homegrown by Heroes label, one must have served honorably or still be serving in any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces and be at least 50 percent owner and/or operator of the farm business. Veterans of all eras are encouraged to apply. FVC is now accepting and processing Homegrown by Heroes applications, which can be completed at <http://www.hgbh.org>.





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### Important Dates

MCFB Board Meeting  
March 11, MCFB Office

MCFB Farm Tour  
March 31, E.Z. Orchards

MCFB Board Meeting  
April 8, MCFB Office

Oregon Ag Fest  
April 25-26, State Fairgrounds



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## Knowledge is Power—Stay Engaged & Stay Informed

The Oregon Farm Bureau serves as the ‘voice of Oregon agriculture’ at the state legislature, advocating on behalf of 32 county farm bureaus and more than 60,000 Oregon farm families. With an active government relations staff, OFB works to keep the agricultural community informed of proposed legislation. One useful tool is the bill tracking system provided by OFB. Instructions for accessing the bill tracking system are located on the Marion County Farm Bureau website at:

<http://www.marioncofarm.com/government-relations/>

At the state level, Oregon Farm Bureau is guided by the OFB Policy Book, a list of the organization’s official positions on topics ranging from water to wildlife, labor to land use. The policy book is what guides OFB staff and volunteer leaders in their advocacy work in the state and national legislature.

If a county Farm Bureau has an issue of concern that is missing from the policy book, it has an opportunity to present it at the OFB Annual Meeting, held every December. At this gathering, representatives from all county Farm Bureaus discuss and vote upon additions, edits, or deletions to OFB policy.

The OFB Policy Book is not a stagnant document; it is reviewed and revised annually to best meet the needs of Oregon’s diverse agriculture community. You can access the Policy Book at the OFB website at:

<http://www.oregonfb.org/policybook/>

### ***Don’t Miss Your Newsletter!***

In an effort to be careful stewards of our resources, MCFB plans to switch to e-newsletters to save money on printing and postage. Members are encouraged to forward your email address to [jessica@marioncofarm.com](mailto:jessica@marioncofarm.com).