

FARM GRAM



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

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MCFB Board Endorses Candidates

The Marion County Farm Bureau invited local candidates to participate in one of two candidate forums hosted by the MCFB Board of Directors.

Candidates who elected to participate provided written responses to a series of questions addressing issues such as: agriculture's contribution to the state economy, the role of state government in issues related to immigration, assistance to small businesses in responding to the new minimum wage formula and the new mandatory sick leave law, water storage projects and prioritization of water usages, land use planning, and the gross receipts ballot measure (Measure 97).

A total of six candidates were interviewed by the Board at the August and September forums. The interview process provided each candidate with an opportunity to share his or her political vision as well as address specific questions asked by the Board members.

At the conclusion of the forums, the Board elected to make the following endorsements:

- **Sherri Sprenger (R), Incumbent Candidate for House District 17**
- **Vic Gilliam (R), Incumbent Candidate for House District 18**
- **Jodi Hack (R), Incumbent Candidate for House District 19**
- **Laura Morrett (R), Candidate for House District 20**
- **Patti-Milne (R), Candidate for House District 22**
- **Bill Post (R), Incumbent Candidate for House District 25**

MCFB President John Zielinski considered the forums an educational experience for the Board and the candidates, noting "We had the unique opportunity to learn about the candidates' knowledge of agricultural issues and to educate them about the needs and challenges faced by the agricultural community in Marion County and across the state."

This year's general election is scheduled for Tuesday, October 8. Marion County Farm Bureau encourages you to make your voice heard and make your vote count!

Images courtesy of free digitalphotos.net

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I Farm I Vote — Do You?



The "I Farm I Vote" movement is designed to get farmers and other rural residents to vote and elect candidates who will make decisions that are in agriculture's best interest.

You can join Oregon's "I Farm I Vote" campaign by contacting the Oregon Farm Bureau web site at <http://oregonfb.org/ifarmivote/> or by visiting the I Farm I Vote Oregon page on [Facebook](#).

Farmers Still Struggling with Mandated Sick Leave Law

Since the passage of Senate Bill 454 (SB 454) during the 2016 Legislative Session, known as the Mandated Sick Leave Law, Oregon farmers and many other small businesses continue to get “the short end of the stick” when it comes to interpretation and rule making for the new law.

According to many small business owners, the rules originally adopted by the Bureau of Labor and Industries were very unclear and created conflict for farmers throughout Marion County and the rest of the state. At issue seems to be two particular points that have drawn the ire of the agricultural industry in particular.

Specifically, there is tremendous confusion regarding the rate of pay for piece work; BOLI departs from early interpretations of SB 454 by requiring farmers to average employees' earnings over a pay period to calculate the "regular rate of pay" for piece rate employees. Under a piece rate pay system, workers have the ability to actually earn more than the stated hourly rate based on a productivity incentive. BOLI's proposed rules run counter to this logic, mandating that employers pay a productivity incentive to employees taking their paid sick days.

In addition to the pay rate issue, there is also disagreement with how employers count the number of employees on the payroll. The counting protocol affects whether a farm is actually covered by the new law or not. SB 454 states that family members are exempt from the employee count for the purposes of qualifying for paid sick leave. However, BOLI determined that only family members working under a Sole Proprietorship are exempt; thereby exposing limited liability corporations, S-corporations, and C-corporations to interpretation difficulties.

The Oregon Farm Bureau is urging farmers across the state to write to BOLI and urge the department to further clarify its rules and clean up the language in the Rules and Regulations. You can send a letter and comment by going to the website listed below and posting your opposition to the rule. Your comments must be in no later than September 26, 2016.

<https://www.voterveice.net/BroadcastLinks/CdjF8PzM8s0UDnk80lga7g>

Oregon's Bounty—A Celebration of the Harvest

On Saturday, October 8, the Oregon State Capitol Foundation and the Capitol History Gateway will sponsor Oregon's Bounty — A Celebration of the Harvest. The celebration is scheduled to run from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, rain or shine, with numerous family-friendly events scheduled for both inside the Capitol Galleria and in the Capitol park.

Local entertainment includes live music, clogging, and square dancing. Event partners include Aurora Colony, Autumn Harvest Farm, Future Farmers of America, Heiser Farms, Oregon Farm Bureau, Oregon Dairy and Nutrition Council, Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom, and many others.

The celebration will host activities such as a free pumpkin patch (while supplies last), face painting, interactive programs, a photo booth, a tractor display, and complimentary samples of Oregon's tremendous bounty. In addition, tours of the Capitol will be available at 11:30 am and 1:30 pm; tower tours will be available at 11:00 am, noon, and 1:00 pm, weather permitting.

Admittance to the celebration is free and parking around the Capitol is also free on Saturday. More information is available on the Oregon Bounty Face Book page at <https://www.facebook.com/events/1167064703365622/> or by visiting www.oregoncapitol.com.



\$320K Awarded by Farmer Veteran Fellowship Fund

Excerpted from the Farm Veteran Coalition website

www.farmvetco.org, 9-20-2016

The Farmer Veteran Fellowship Fund announced a record \$320,000 in new awards this week. The awards, ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000 went to 140 veterans who have already launched, but are still developing, their farm businesses. The grants are paid to third-party vendors on behalf of the veterans for things such as livestock, bee supplies, well-drilling and farm equipment.

This year's grants put the total amount of purchases made on behalf of the five-year program to well above \$1,000,000. Nine experienced farmers and agriculturists selected the grantees from a record 200 applicants.

"We received an influx of highly qualified applicants to the 2016 program," said Rachel Petitt, Farmer Veteran Fellowship Manager. "Our Advisory Council had the difficult task of granting awards. Each application tells a story of bravery, inspiration and discovery as our members transition from the military to farming."

Funding for the Awards was provided by Bob Woodruff Foundation, Newman's Own Foundation, Prairie Grove Farms and Prudential Financial. In addition to these awards, the Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC) will be granting four new tractors to farmer veterans in 2016 from Kubota Tractor Corporation.

"At a time when the public is concerned about where their charitable dollars go, foundations and corporations that give to our Fellowship Fund can have a direct impact on veterans as they launch their farm businesses," said Michael O'Gorman, Executive Director of FVC.



State and Local FFA Groups Shoulder Big Load

For many folks in Oregon, thinking about Future Farmers of America (FFA) brings to mind county fairs, rodeos, farming projects and young people working hard to learn more and preserve farming in their communities. That is generally true, but there is much more to FFA than that—especially in Oregon.

Since its founding in 1928, FFA has sought to identify and train young people in agriculture. Today there are 103 FFA chapters in Oregon. This well-known organization continues to thrive in Oregon despite losing its funding from the State Department of Education in 2011.

In the spirit of survival and continuing to prosper regardless of circumstances, FFA formed a 501(c)(3) Foundation and began supporting itself through partnerships with agricultural organizations throughout the state. In fact, without the FFA Foundation, there would be no such organization here in Oregon. There would be no staff, no local chapters, and no activities for young people aspiring to feed their neighbors.

The Foundation has formed strategic partnerships in order to continue its mission of "Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, and Living to Serve". One such partnership is with Les Schwab, a statewide tire business known to nearly every Oregonian.

Working with individual Les Schwab stores throughout Oregon, the Foundation managed to collect over 663,000 pounds of food for The Hunger Initiative for distribution to families throughout Oregon in 2015. This accomplishment alone puts FFA in a new light for its efforts to help Oregonians, despite its own need to raise money for the survival of the organization.

If you would like to know more about this effort or support FFA with a contribution, visit www.oregonffa.com.



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Important Dates

October 8—Oregon's Bounty
10 am—Noon, State Capitol Building

October 12 — MCFB Board Meeting
Salem Office, 1284 Court Street

November 9 — MCFB Board Meeting
Salem Office, 1284 Court Street

November 15 — MCFB Banquet
Oregon Garden Resort, Silverton

December 6-8—Oregon Farm Bureau
Annual Meeting, Salem Convention
Center

December 14—MCFB Board Meeting
Salem Office, 1284 Court Street



MCFB to Host Annual Banquet at Oregon Garden Resort

The 2016 Marion County Annual Meeting and Banquet is scheduled for November 15 at the Oregon Garden Resort in Silverton. The program is scheduled to start at 6:30 pm with time to socialize before the dinner and business meeting begin at 7:00 pm.



The business meeting includes the bureau's annual report and election of board members. The evening's entertainment will be provided by Tom Swearingen, Oregon's Cowboy Poet. Tom has been nominated by the Western Music Association and the Academy of Western Artists as the 2016 Male Cowboy Poet of the Year.

Watch your email and the MCFB website for announcements about the menu, dinner cost, and a request for RSVPs. We hope to see you there!

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.