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Friday, Jan. 20, 2012

Farm Bureau Calendar

Jan. 27 & 28

[Young Farmers and Ranchers Conference](#)
Chief Motel & Christian Church, McCook

Feb. 9 & 10

[NEFB Legislative Conference](#)
Embassy Suites, Lincoln

Feb. 15 & 16

[Governor's Ag Conference](#)
Kearney

[On Farm Bureau's Blog](#)

[Meet Andy and Laura DeVries](#)



Republican Senate Forum Set for NEFB Legislative Conference, Feb. 9 and 10

Nebraska Farm Bureau will hold its 2012 Legislative Conference on Feb. 9 and 10 at the Embassy Suites in Downtown Lincoln. The conference gives Farm Bureau members the opportunity to hear about current federal and state legislation and other issues affecting the profitability and viability of farming and ranching. The agenda includes a Republican Senate Forum, with Jon Bruning, Deb Fischer and Don Stenberg confirmed to participate.

Other speakers include Jason Henderson, a vice president of the Federal Reserve Bank, to discuss Nebraska's economic outlook; Roberto Lenton, the new executive director of the Water for Food Institute at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Gov. Dave Heinemann; Susan Littlefield of Three Eagles Communication on challenges facing agriculture; and inspirational speaker Matt Rush of the New Mexico Farm Bureau. To learn more and to register for the conference visit www.nefb.org

Request a Legislative Update for Your County FB Meeting

Want to keep your County Farm Bureau Board up to date with the latest ag news from the Nebraska Legislature? NEFB Governmental Relations staffers are available to give you a telephone update during your board meeting. Contact Whittney Kelley at 402/421-4760 or whittneyk@nefb.org to schedule a call. You'll get a 10-minute summary of the latest at the Capitol, and you'll also be able to give feedback to Farm Bureau's lobbyists on pending legislative issues.



You can also follow any bill in the legislature on the Unicameral's website at www.nebraskalegislature.gov. The website gives you access to information on senators, bills, committees and hearing schedules. You can also watch floor debate and legislative hearings.

Bill Introductions Complete; Senators To Consider New, Carryover Bills, CAs

Bill introductions for the 2012 session of the Nebraska Legislature ended Thursday. Senators introduced 468 bills and a handful of constitutional amendments for consideration. These bills are in addition to bills carried over from last year's session. Each of the introduced bills will have a hearing in front of one of the legislative committees. The committees then decide whether the bill will be advanced to the full legislature for consideration. These are a few of the many bills Nebraska Farm Bureau is following:

Number	Introducer	Title
LB 884	Sullivan	Create the Agricultural Literacy Task Force
LB 905	Carlson	Change the Nebraska Wheat Resources Act
LB 907	Carlson	Change provision relating to tractor permitting and sales tax exemption
LB 986	Dubas	Exempt agricultural machinery repair parts from sales tax
LB 1057	Carlson	Change the Nebraska Corn Resources Act
LB 1061	Heidemann	Change provisions related to the valuation of land for school taxes
LB 1066	Hansen	Appropriate funds for planning and design of a vet diagnostic lab

Legislation Would Make Changes to Wheat, Corn Checkoffs and Authorities

The legislature will consider changes to the state's commodity promotion programs under two bills introduced by Sen. Tom Carlson of Holdrege, the Agriculture Committee chair. LB 905, introduced on behalf of the Wheat Growers, would modify the wheat checkoff program to convert the program from a "per bushel" excise tax to a "percent of value" excise tax. The bill would establish an excise tax of five-tenths percent of the net market value of wheat and provide the Nebraska Wheat Board the authority to increase the rate to seventy-five hundredths percent after a public hearing outlining the reason for the change. The bill also would allow the board to accept gifts, grants, contributions and the payment of license fees or royalties.

(Continued)

Changes to Checkoffs (Continued)

LB 1057 sets the corn excise tax at five-tenths cents per bushel (the current rate is twenty-five hundredths) and allows the checkoff board to increase the rate to one cent. Increases in the rate must be approved by seven of the eight checkoff board members and can only be considered by the board after it holds a public meeting in each of the board districts. The bill also contains language allowing the board to accept other monies similar to the wheat proposal.

Farm Bureau Offers EPA Alternative on Proposed CAFO Rule

Nebraska Farm Bureau submitted comments this week to EPA on its proposed Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation reporting rule. The EPA proposal contained three options, two of which would require providing EPA detailed information on farm owners and precise locations.

Option 1 would require all CAFOs to provide the information, while Option 2 would require all CAFOs within a “focus watershed” to provide the information. NEFB strongly urged EPA to reject the proposed Options 1 and 2, and, instead, pursue the important goal of improving, protecting and maintaining water quality by relying on information already publicly and easily available, and using partnerships to target its outreach and compliance assistance efforts. Farm Bureau believes this alternative approach would avoid unlawfully subjecting thousands of non-discharging livestock and poultry operations to blanket and indiscriminate Section 308 reporting requirements. The alternative approach would also avoid safety, welfare and national biosecurity issues if EPA does not create a central repository of the information it collects.

Study Finds LightSquared’s Modified Operations Still Interfere with GPS

Late last week, a key federal committee charged with testing the LightSquared network said there would be significant interference with GPS from LightSquared, a mobile broadband carrier. The National Space-Based Positioning, Navigation and Timing Executive Committee (PNT ExComm), made up of nine federal agencies, unanimously agreed that none of LightSquared’s proposals to combat GPS interference would work.

Functioning under a waiver from the Federal Communications Commission since last year, LightSquared has been operating on weaker satellite signal frequencies, under an agreement that GPS interference issues be worked out prior to a final launch. But after testing earlier last year and then again in November after LightSquared modified its proposal, the PNT ExComm concluded that neither the original nor modified proposals would work.

Farm Bureau told Congress last fall that any costs for resolving this issue should not be passed along to farmers and ranchers through higher GPS or equipment costs.

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