

FARM GRAM

Promoting, Protecting & Advancing Farm Interests in Marion County



A publication of the Marion County Farm Bureau

Volume 25, Issue 1



Farmers Gain Insights at Ag Business Workshop

On February 22, farmers and ranchers gathered for the Assessing Your Business & Accessing Farmland Workshop, a well-attended and engaging event designed to help producers navigate farm finances, land transactions, and business planning.

A huge thank you to our speakers: Andrea Krahmer (Oregon Agricultural Trust), Kendall Jones (BH Home Services NW Agri Investment Services), and Todd Hatley (Ag West Farm Credit). They covered topics like evaluating farm financials, creating a solid business plan, understanding the land purchase and sales process, and the importance of assembling a strong transactional team (including water rights and title experts).

Attendees walked away with practical tools to assess their farm's financial health, avoid common pitfalls in buying or selling land, and better prepare for loan applications. Whether you're looking to expand your operation or just want to sharpen your business skills, workshops like this are a great opportunity to learn from industry professionals and connect with other farmers.

Thanks again to everyone who attended and made this event a success! If you missed it, stay tuned for future educational opportunities—we're here to support the next generation of agriculture.

Renew Your Farm Bureau Membership Stay Connected; Stay Protected

Membership renewal time is here, and if you haven't already, now is the time to renew your Farm Bureau membership! For less than \$15 a month, you're helping support county, state, and national advocacy efforts that protect our ability to farm and ranch with fewer restrictions and regulations.

Farm Bureau is Oregon's largest general agriculture advocacy organization, representing all farm sizes, production methods, and commodities. Members also receive a beautiful calendar, exclusive discounts, and valuable resources to support their operations. A united voice for agriculture is more important than ever—do you know someone who should be a member?

It's easy to renew your membership and enroll in the auto-renewal program. Visit the OFB website:

www.oregonfb.org/membership or scan the qr code below to keep your membership active!



Can't find your member number? You can look it up online at: www.oregonfb.org/membnumber

Find us online anytime at: www.marioncofarm.com





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A Message from the President

Greetings!

I hope, so far, that 2025 is treating you well.

This is always the time of year when we like to provide training/workshop opportunities for our members. This year our Young Farmer and Rancher group (YF&R) put on a free workshop "Assessing your Business & Assessing Farmland" on Saturday, February 22 along with Oregon Agricultural Trust and Agri Investment Services.

On Friday, March 7, MCFB will be holding CPR/First Aid Certification Classes in English and Spanish with 2 complimentary registrations for each voting member of MCFB. We hope you take advantage of these opportunities if you are interested and please let us know if there is any other training or workshops that you'd like us to offer.

With less than 1% of Oregonians being farmers and ranchers, it is important for all of us to engage in the 2025 legislative session. There are many opportunities to engage with your legislators by contacting them in person or testifying (with written testimony, in person, or via Zoom) to share our stories.

The easiest way to keep on top of the legislation being proposed (over 3,000 bills for this session so far) and take action is to sign up for our OFB Action Alerts at www.oregonfb.org/advocacy. Some of the computer systems at OFB have changed so if you have signed up in the past but aren't currently receiving alerts or updates, please sign up again. Our OFB Governmental Affairs staff does a great job in keeping us informed and letting us know when we can help.

Information about the current legislation session can be accessed at olis.oregonlegislature.gov/. Bills can be found by number, or you can search by topic. Please contact us if you have any questions and we can help walk you through the process.

Another important push for MCFB this time of year is membership. For under \$15.00 per month, Farm Bureau members have staff on the county, state and national levels advocating to allow us to continue farming and ranching with as few new rules, restrictions, and regulations as possible. The resulting savings from the personal property tax issue (HB 4111 in 2024 – farm equipment and machinery is no longer assessed as real property) that we worked hard on last year could easily pay for your membership year after year.

A Farm Bureau membership is one of the best, if not the best, membership values around. Plus, you get a beautiful calendar and many substantial discounts. Farm Bureau is Oregon's largest general agriculture advocacy organization and represents all farm sizes, production methods, and commodities. There are still many challenges but a united voice for agriculture benefits us all. Do you know someone who should be a member, or do you have questions about your membership? Please let us know.

New members can sign up at www.oregonfb.org/membership, and you can also renew your membership at the same location.

Thank you so much for reading. I'm looking forward to Spring and hope to see you around this year. Cheers!



Dana Estensen
Marion County FB President

Dana Estensen

Marion County Farm Bureau President

Build the Future of Farming: Mentor the Next Generation

Sarah McArthur
BAF Co-Founder

Building Ag Futures (BAF) was established to address the critical need for a skilled workforce in agriculture. With the industry facing challenges such as climate change and labor shortages, BAF is working through the process to establish a BOLI-recognized apprenticeship program for Farm Managers.

Chemeketa Community College is the initial

educational partner for this project and Oregon Agricultural Trust (OAT) is lending their business expertise to provide additional support for farm mentors. Apprentices will enroll in a 2000 hour program with knowledge and standard benchmarks to complete along the way.

Deep in the planning process, BAF is looking for interested Farm Mentors and partners to lend their advice, input and review all the pieces of the BOLI application.



Our estimated timeline is to submit for BOLI approval by late fall 2025.

The best way to stay in the loop is to complete our interest forms found on our website: bafpnw.org.

Preparing Your Agricultural Business for Immigration Enforcement

Roberta Gruber, PHR
FEELDS Program Manager

As an agricultural employer, staying ahead of potential immigration enforcement actions—whether it’s an I-9 audit or an unexpected visit from ICE agents—is critical to protecting your workforce and operations.

Here’s how to be proactive and prepared. For I-9 audits, organization is the key. Federal law requires you to maintain accurate I-9 Forms for all employees, verifying their identity and work eligibility. To ensure your documents are in good shape you should review them prior to any federal inspection:

- 1) Conduct an internal audit now: check that every current employee has a completed I-9 Form and that you have one for each former employee for at least three years from hire or one-year post-termination, whichever date is later.
- 2) Review the I-9 Forms and correct errors—draw a line through mistakes, add the correct info, and initial and date changes. Only the employee (or relevant Preparer/Translator) may correct errors in Section 1.

Only the person who signed the I-9 Form in Section 2 may correct errors in Section 2. If corrections are made, attach a note to the I-9 Form explaining why changes were made. If you are unsure about a correction, contact Roberta Gruber at roberta@oregonfb.org for guidance.

3) If you receive a Notice of Inspection from ICE, you’ll have three business days to produce these records, so keep them accessible and consult an immigration attorney immediately to guide your response. Oregon law requires employers to give employees notice of a pending I-9 Form inspection. Visit the Bureau of Labor & Industries (BOLI) website for a sample template (English/Spanish) to use for this notice.

If ICE agents arrive unannounced to apprehend individuals, know your rights. They can enter public areas such as the farm office entrance or remain in the parking lot without a warrant, but private areas—such as working areas, fields, or offices—require a judicial warrant signed by a judge, not just an administrative warrant.

Politely ask to see it, and don’t consent their entry into private spaces without it. Designate a point person, such as a manager, to handle interactions with ICE agents and train them to stay calm, document everything (e.g., agent names, badge numbers, warrant details). Employers may remain silent. You may inform the agent you are not interfering with their work but you choose to remain silent when questioned about employees who may be at work. Inform your workers of their rights too—they may remain silent, too, if questioned.

Proactive preparation is essential to mitigating risks. By maintaining required records and implementing a well-planned strategy, you can minimize disruptions, safeguard your business, and ensure the continued smooth functioning of your farm, regardless of the challenges that may arise.

The Farm Employer Education & Legal Defense Service (FEELDS) provides valuable resources and expert guidance to employers on employee-related matters, including the effective management of immigration issues in agricultural settings. For further details, please contact Roberta Gruber at roberta@oregonfb.org.

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MARION COUNTY FARM BUREAU SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

- Open to High School Seniors and Undergraduates
- Multiple awards each year ranging up to \$2,500
- Receive one-year farm bureau membership

Deadline: APRIL 15

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