

FARMERS DAY  
AT THE CAPITOL  
2025



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The 95th General Assembly concluded its regular session on May 5, 2025, with a final tally of 1,652 bills filed, 1,026 of which will become law.

I'm proud to share that our team worked diligently advocating the legislative priorities of our members during the 95-day session. These efforts resulted in several major achievements, which will undoubtedly have a significant and lasting impact on Arkansas farmers, ranchers, and rural communities.



Our team's achievements include streamlining farmer and rancher sales tax identification, poultry grower protection from frivolous third-party lawsuits, strengthening right-to-farm statutes, addressing water and wastewater infrastructure funding for rural Arkansas, updating land lease agreement procedures, and expanding veterinary telehealth. Our team also assisted in other legislative efforts, including a budget increase for the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture.

The bi-annual Farmers Day at the Capitol was held on Feb. 24 and 25. The two-day event was attended by close to 200 farmers, ranchers and advocates who joined us to take part in the legislative process. Thank you for making that event successful this year.

During the session, ArFB members actively engaged with legislators by advocating for various bills, resulting in more than 2,000 emails and texts with countless phone calls and in-person conversations. This level of participation from our members was crucial to our success, and we greatly appreciate you taking the time to ensure the interests of Arkansas agriculture were represented at the State Capitol.

Arkansas Farm Bureau's advocacy efforts serve as an example of how your engagement can make a significant impact in shaping public policy. We thank you for your continued support and continuing our work to support the agriculture community in Arkansas.

Our members are grateful to the elected officials who serve Arkansas and acknowledge the many sacrifices required to offer themselves up for public service.

Stanley Hill, Vice President, Public Affairs & Government Relations



## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES:

### ✓ Farm Tax Exemptions and Clarifications

House Bill 1594 / Act 621: Rep. DeAnn Vaught (R-Horatio) & Sen. Tyler Dees (R-Siloam Springs) – Creates a farmer sales tax identification card. Clearly defines farming and outlines the conditions under which exemptions may be claimed. It emphasizes that sellers can be relieved of liability if they act in good faith. The bill also protects sellers against liability for improperly accepting exemptions.

### ✓ Arkansas Soil Nutrient Application and Poultry Litter Utilization Act Amendment

House Bill 1928 / Act 820: Rep. Matt Brown (R-Conway) & Sen. Steve Crowell (R-Magnolia) – Amends the Arkansas Soil Nutrient Application and Poultry Litter Utilization Act to enhance regulations and liability protections related to nutrient management plans.

### ✓ University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Appropriation for the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year

Senate Bill 124 / Act 899: Senate Joint Budget Committee – Appropriate funds for the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, including allocations for personal services and operational expenses.

### ✗ Crop Residue Burning Guidelines

House Bill 1045: Rep. Frances Cavenaugh (R-Walnut Ridge) – This legislation would have mandated certain requirements on an individual planning a crop residue burn and addressed the liability of an individual who has followed crop residue burn requirements. No consensus reached – bill failed.

### ✓ Veterinary Telemedicine

Senate Bill 61 / Act 18: Sen. Ricky Hill (R-Cabot) & Rep. DeAnn Vaught (R-Horatio) – Authorizes veterinary telemedicine in the state and sets certain standards.

### ✓ Rural Community Projects

Senate Bill 254 / Act 359: by Sen. Missy Irvin (R-Mountain View) & Rep. Trey Steimel (R-Pocahontas) – Amends laws related to rural community projects in Arkansas by updating the definition of "property in kind." It now includes "in-kind donations," which cover various contributions such as real or personal property, labor, equipment, materials, services and money.

### ✓ Provides an Income Tax Exemption for Certain Payments by the U.S. Department of Agriculture

Senate Bill 408 / Act 696: Sen. Blake Johnson (R-Corning) & Rep. Les Eaves (R-Searcy) – Provides an income tax exemption for certain payments made by the United States Department of Agriculture, thereby reducing their tax liability and supporting individuals affected by agricultural downturns and economic challenges stemming from recent crisis situations.



## RIGHT-TO-FARM

### LEGISLATION:

Senate Bill 290 / Act 921: Sen. Blake Johnson (R-Corning) & Rep. DeAnn Vaught (R-Hortio) – To prohibit a moratorium on the issuance of permits in watersheds and other bodies of water.

Senate Bill 290 was amended late in the session to maintain the existing moratorium within the Buffalo River Watershed without the requirement it go through the legislative approval process established by this bill.

Arkansas Farm Bureau policy does not support maintaining the existing moratoriums since those are exempted from the legislative approval process included within SB290.

However, Arkansas Farm Bureau policy supports the legislative approval process of all future moratoriums included within SB290. While SB290 conflicts with our policy, we support the process it creates to protect the rest of the state for future moratoriums.

While this is not entirely the desired outcome, we can be proud of the work we've done to ensure all future moratoriums across the state must now receive legislative approval.



## CONSTITUTIONAL

### AMENDMENTS:

The state legislature approved three constitutional amendments out of 43 filed to send to Arkansas voters for their consideration on the November 2024 ballot:

#### • The Citizens Only Voting Amendment

House Joint Resolution 1018: Rep. David Ray (R-Maumelle) & Sen. John Payton (R-Wilburn) – An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution to create the citizens only voting amendment to provide that only a citizen of the United States meeting the qualifications of an elector under the Arkansas constitution may vote in an election in this state. Providing that a person who does not meet the qualifications of an elector under the Arkansas constitution shall not be permitted to vote in any state or local election held in this state.

#### • To Amend Arkansas Constitution, Article 2, § 5, Protect the Right to Keep and Bear Arms

Senate Joint Resolution 11: Sen. John Payton (R-Wilburn) & Rep. Matt Duffield (R-Russellville) – The proposed constitutional amendment aims to enhance the protection of gun rights in Arkansas, clearly establishing the right to bear arms as a fundamental individual entitlement. This would limit the ability of state entities to impose restrictions on gun ownership and usage, thereby aligning state law more closely with a strong pro-gun stance.

#### • Economic Development In Arkansas

Senate Joint Resolution 15: Sen. Jonathan Dismang (R-Beebe) & Rep. Howard Beaty (R-Crossett) – The proposed constitutional amendment. Allows the General Assembly to establish economic development districts to promote economic development.

## OTHER AGRICULTURAL LEGISLATION:

### › Creates an Excise Tax Credit or Certain Beer and Sake Produced Using Arkansas Rice

House Bill 1491 / Act 874: Rep. Jeff Wardlaw (R-Hermitage) & Sen. Jonathan Dismang (R-Beebe) – Promotes the production of beer and sake utilizing Arkansas rice by creating a tax credit for these products. Producers who report and pay taxes on qualified beer and sake are entitled to a credit against the excise tax.



### › Updates Regulations for Terminating Oral Leases on Farmland

House Bill 1562 / Act 941: Rep. Jimmy Gazaway (R-Paragould) – Updates regulations for terminating oral leases on farmlands in Arkansas to simplify the notification process for landlords wishing to end a lease.

### › Prohibits foreign-controlled businesses from leasing land and holding interests in real property

House Bill 1680 / Act 811: Rep. DeAnn Vaught (R-Horatio) & Sen. Blake Johnson (R-Corning) – Prohibits businesses controlled by foreign parties from leasing land and restricts prohibited foreign parties from owning real property or agricultural land under certain conditions. This aims to limit foreign control over land in Arkansas.

### › Establishes the Water and Sewer Treatment Facilities Grant Program

House Bill 1681 / Act 812: Rep. DeAnn Vaught (R-Horatio), Sen. Joshua Bryant (R-Rogers) – Creates the Water and Sewer Treatment Facilities Grant Program, which is designed to enhance water and sewer infrastructure in Arkansas. 80% of the grants will support areas with populations over 1,200, while 20% will assist those with 1,200 or fewer.

### › Exempts Certain Agricultural Information from the Freedom of Information Act of 1967

House Bill 1740 / Act 585: by Rep. Kendra Moore (R-Lincoln) & Sen. Steve Crowell (R-Magnolia) – Exempts specific agricultural information from the Freedom of Information Act of 1967. This protects records such as certificates of veterinary inspection and personal information related to animal electronic identification tags from public access.

### › Allows Veterinary Technicians, Technologists and Specialists to Respond to Emergency Calls at Different Locations

Senate Bill 68 / Act 19: Sen. Ricky Hill (R-Cabot) & Rep. DeAnn Vaught (R-Horatio) – Veterinary technicians, technologists and technician specialists are permitted to go to a location other than that of the supervising veterinarian to provide services in response to an emergency call.

### › Amends the Arkansas Small Business Innovation Research Matching Grant Program

Senate Bill 218 / Act 440: Sen. Missy Irvin (R-Mt. Home) & Rep. Trey Steimel (R-Pocahontas) – Arkansas Department of Agricultural appropriation for budgetary allocations across various programs and operational needs.

### › Amends the Law Concerning Payments to the Arkansas State Fair and Livestock Show Association

Senate Bill 327 / Act 443: Sen. Steve Crowell (R-Magnolia) & Rep. Lane Jean (R-Magnolia) – Establishes consistent funding for the Arkansas State Fair and Livestock Show Association in the amount of \$887,908 for each fiscal year from 2025 – 2035.

### › Amends the Fair-Funding Program

Senate Bill 400 / Act 933: Sen. Missy Irvin (R-Mountain View) & Rep. Jon Milligan (R-Lake City) – The funding for livestock shows and fairs has been restructured to require recipients to submit an annual report and an operational plan. County fairs are now required to obtain approval from the quorum court for any use of public resources. Additionally, the plan organizes counties for the fairs and sets rules for the Four States Fair in Texarkana.

### › Authorizes the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission to Issue General Obligation Bonds for Certain Projects

Senate Bill 421 / Act 578: Sen. Bart Hester (R-Cave Springs) & Rep. Howard Beaty (R-Crossett) – Authorizes the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission to issue up to \$500 million in general obligation bonds for water management, waste disposal and pollution abatement projects.



### › Amends the Law Concerning Permits for Special Cargo

Senate Bill 496 / Act 700: Sen. Ronald Caldwell (R-Wynne) & Rep. Steve Hollowell (R-Forrest City) – Amends laws to streamline the process for obtaining permits for transporting special cargo by farm machinery haulers. Clarifies the roles and responsibilities of haulers to enhance safety measures and ensure regulatory compliance.

### › Amends the Law Concerning Levee District Collection of Assessments

Senate Bill 500 / Act 780: Sen. Jim Petty (R-Van Buren) & Rep. Brad Hall (R-Van Buren) – This legislation amends the collection procedures for levee district assessments in Arkansas, streamlining the process to align with the collection of state and county taxes. It ensures that the enforcement of delinquent taxes is more structured and formalized, potentially improving revenue collection for levee districts and stabilizing funding for their operational needs.

### › Establishes the Arkansas Rural Preceptorship Program Act

Senate Bill 504 / Act 727: Sen. Missy Irvin (R-Mountain View) & Rep. Lee Johnson (R-Greenwood) – Establishes the Arkansas Rural Preceptorship Program Act to reduce physician shortages in rural areas by enhancing medical students' exposure to rural healthcare settings. This program aims to improve access to healthcare and ensure sustainability in these underserved regions.

### › Amends the Arkansas Wood Energy Products and Forest Maintenance Income Tax Credit

Senate Bill 530 / Act 701: Sen. Breanne Davis (R-Russellville), Rep. Rick Beck (R-Center Ridge) – Amendments to the Arkansas Wood Energy Products and Forest Maintenance Income Tax Credit will strengthen the timber industry by raising investment thresholds, increasing job creation targets and adjusting tax credit percentages. These changes will take effect for tax years starting on Jan. 1, 2026.

You can find the context of all bills and acts at [www.arkleg.state.ar.us](http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us).

Scan the code for additional information on the Arkansas General Assembly

