



ADVOCACY IN ACTION

OFBF Advocacy in Action Report May 3rd, 2024

Federal Updates:

Capitol Hill- In April, Board President Bill Patterson, Board Vice President Cy Prettyman, Executive Vice-President Adam Sharp, and newly elected Board Treasurer Adele Flynn met with multiple members of the Ohio Congressional Delegation and their staff to discuss the current status of Ohio's Agriculture Industry and the issues impacting it nationally.

The three main issues discussed were the development pressures placed on farmland across Ohio, preservation of the 2017 Job and Tax Act which is set to expire at the end of 2025, and a long-term Farm Bill that provides stability within the industry. Ohio along with its state and national partners are pushing these initiatives forward to give operations certainty during a time when profits are down and input costs are up.

2024 Farm Bill- On Wednesday both the House and the Senate Agriculture Committee Chairs released title-by-title overviews for their versions of the 2024 Farm Bill. Both chairs and their staff put a significant amount of time into these most recent versions with the hope of achieving bipartisan support. While this progress is welcomed by the agricultural industry, there are expected to be many differences between the two committees' versions once the bill language is distributed. House Chairman "GT" Thompson and Senate Chairwoman Stabenow have committed to engaging their colleagues over the coming weeks to gain the bi-partisan support necessary to have a bill passed before the 2018 Farm Bill extension expires on September 30th. OFBF will work with AFBF and Ohio's congressional delegation as discussions surrounding the Farm Bill continue.

Corporate Transparency Act- On Monday OFBF signed on to a [letter](#) with 97 other trade organizations strongly supporting Ohio Congressman Warren Davidson's introduction of the "Repealing Big Brother Overreach Act" which would put an end to the Corporate Transparency Act. Currently, federal law requires companies to report information to the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCen) about the individuals who own or control the business. Failure to comply with this law would result in significant daily fines until compliance is met. This has been a concern for small businesses nationally and OFBF looks forward to working with Congressman Davidson as he pursues this legislation. Senator Tuberville (R-AL) is also expected to introduce companion legislation in the Senate early next week.

E15/Unleaded 88- After years of discussion and multiple waiver requests, a recently adopted rule by the US EPA will allow Midwestern states to sell higher ethanol blends of fuels in 2025 and beyond without having to apply for yearly waivers. Ohio had previously obtained a waiver for the summer of 2023 and just obtained a waiver for 2024 to allow retailers to sell higher ethanol blends such as E15/Unleaded 88, but this decision helps give clarity on this issue for the future. While this is a welcome decision from the US EPA, OFBF still believes in the need to pass legislation that would codify year-round sales across the Midwest and prevent bureaucrats from reversing course.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)- On Monday the USDA issued a Federal Order in an effort to limit the spread of HPAI in dairy cattle. In summary, this order is composed of two parts which require mandatory testing for interstate movement of dairy cattle and mandatory reporting for any laboratories or state veterinarians who have a positive test. OFBF has been in regular contact with USDA, APHIS, AFBF, and ODA as the situation continues to evolve. If you would like more information on this issue both ODA, USDA, and FDA have websites established to provide guidance to those industry sectors impacted. These links are included below:

- Ohio Department of Agriculture's Division of Animal Help
 - [HPAI/Dairy Cattle](#)
- United States Department of Agriculture/Food and Drug Administration
 - [USDA HPAI Webpage](#)
 - [FDA Milk Safety FAQ](#)
 - [USDA Livestock Testing Guidance](#)

Late Wednesday, the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service finalized testing 30 samples of retail ground beef from several states where HPAI has been detected and all samples tested negative. These results give the agency confidence that the beef supply is safe. USDA is also still testing retail milk in 38 states and the results continue to show that pasteurization is effective in neutralizing the virus.

State Updates:

Foreign Ownership- OFBF recently testified as a proponent in both the House and the Senate on legislation that would bar foreign ownership of land near critical infrastructure. Both the House Civil Justice Committee and the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee had bills before them (HB 212, SB 226) on this issue. A ban on foreign ownership of agricultural land is already in effect, but OFBF testified on this most recent version of the legislation as well. Foreign ownership of ag land is only one piece of the greater land use conversation where OFBF is going to engage with the General Assembly given the pressures on farmland within Ohio.

E-Verify-OFBF has had discussions with the bill sponsors who introduced a bill that would require any employer with 75+ employees, across all employment statuses, to use the federal E-Verify system during the hiring process to ensure potential employees are legally able to work. While OFBF recognizes the current immigration issues nationally, this legislation has no

ag-exemption or exemption for temporary workers who have been permitted to work under the H-2A program administered by the US State Department. OFBF will continue discussing this bill with members of the GA, as AFBF policy states we are opposed to mandatory E-Verify until there is a more sustainable H2A program that allows Ohio producers access to the number of employees needed for seasonal work.

Property Taxation- On April 24th, the Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform met and discussed mainly how property taxes affect the Fair School Funding Plan that was adopted in 2019. Testimony was given by representatives of Ohio School Superintendents and School Treasurers and a retired tax researcher from the Ohio Dept. of Taxation. They stressed that any changes to Ohio's property tax system may affect the new plan, which is still being implemented even though it was passed nearly 5 years ago. The committee also met on May 1st, hearing testimony from many local government groups, including the Ohio Township Association, County Commissioners Association of Ohio, Ohio Municipal League, and the Ohio Mayors Association. Testimony and questions centered mainly around the deterioration of local government funding from the state level and the effectiveness of property taxes as a funding source for local government. There was also a lot of discussion around Tax Increment Financing (TIFs) that local governments use to help attract businesses to their area, how effective those are, and whether different levels of local government should collaborate more on these. OFBF will continue to monitor this committee as they continue to gather information for the report that is due before the end of the year. Ohio Farm Bureau staff offered testimony to this committee regarding the CAUV system in February.

Ag Sales Tax Exemption- The House Ways and Means Committee recently voted out HB 347, which would add a specific list of vehicles/equipment to be eligible for the Ag Sales Tax Exemption. OFBF testified in support of the bill, which would add smaller tractors, trailers, and UTVs/ATVs to name a few, to be eligible for the exemption if the purchaser has filed Schedule F's with the IRS in the most recent three tax years, essentially proving farm income and that the goods purchased would be for agricultural use. The legislation was offered by Rep. Don Jones, was voted out of committee unanimously, and now heads to the House Floor.

GLRI- The Great Lake Restoration Initiative is up for reauthorization with the federal government, and Ohio legislators introduced a House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) to ask Congress to reauthorize those funds. The Blanchard Demo Farms are in part funded by GLRI dollars, so OFBF staff offered testimony in support of HCR 14 and continued funding to the four areas that have the federal impairment designation. The US Senate's Environment and Public Works Committee signed off on legislation this week that would increase and extend funding through 2031. The bill now heads to the Senate for a full vote.

Feral Swine- HB 503 was introduced and referred to the agriculture committee for a hearing. It is a year-long project of the Ohio pork industry to close the loopholes that currently allow feral swine to exist in certain instances in Ohio, including allowing feral swine/wild boar to be released in hunting preserves for recreational hunting. This bill further expands clarifications on feral swine as a nuisance species in Ohio and establishes penalties for anyone knowingly possessing, breeding, releasing, or hunting feral swine, while clarifying a property owner may

eradicate a feral swine if discovered on their property, as long as they subsequently notify the division of wildlife of such actions within 24 hours. Feral swine/wild boars continue to be a biosecurity threat to commercial swine facilities, among other segments,

Career Tech Licensure- OFBF recently testified on a measure that would make it easier for those in the industry looking to become career tech educators. HB 432 would allow those looking to apply for alternative career tech educator licenses to be applicants themselves, rather than having a school district that offers them employment to be the only applicant, which allows those individuals to be able to work at any school if they receive the licensure, rather than only one that has offered them employment. The Ohio Association of Agricultural Educators also testified in support of the bill citing how this could help alleviate the shortage of career-tech educators in the state.

Carbon Capture: OFBF is monitoring two pieces of legislation that concern carbon capture within our state. SB 200 and HB 358 will look to create regulations in our state in the process of carbon capture, which is currently occurring in the state, but under federal oversight. Full language for these bills has not yet been introduced, but they will look to give Ohio “primacy,” which essentially means our state will regulate these projects in addition to the federal government, rather than just federal. As more information becomes available, we will share what we learn and monitor potential landowner effects of the legislation.

H2Ohio Update: Statewide enrollment for row-crop producers who farm in Ohio’s 64 counties outside of northwest Ohio’s Western Lake Erie Basin is open for those producers. The Ohio Department of Agriculture will enroll 500,000 acres into the program for a two-week sign-up period, which opened Monday, April 22, 2024, and will run through Monday, May 6, 2024, with enrollment available on a first-come, first-served basis. To apply, farmers should contact their local soil and water office for further details on that process.

<https://agri.ohio.gov/divisions/soil-and-water-conservation/find-a-local-swcd>

In addition to H2Ohio’s expansion, the Licking River floodplain project will restore 90 acres of retired farmland along the Licking River in partnership between H2Ohio and Intel. Once restored, the floodplain wetland will capture phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment in flood waters and prevent them from contaminating the Licking River, which flows into the Dillon Lake Reservoir, and eventually into the Ohio River.

Sunset Review Committee: Every five years a joint committee of senators and representatives, along with three gubernatorial appointees, review boards, and commissions within different divisions. Currently, the committee is reviewing 14 such groups within ODA, including Livestock Care Standards, Commercial Dog Breeders, and Milk Sanitation. ODA recommended reauthorization for 13 of the 14 boards, with the hemp-focused board being recommended to be sunset. The committee will review all information presented to them, along with their own internal processes and information gathering, and establish a final recommendation.

HD 32 Vacancy/Dem Leadership Update: On Wednesday 4/24, the Ohio House filled a vacant house seat and a vacated leadership position. Jack Daniels of New Franklin Ohio was

appointed to HD 32, which was left vacant after the resignation of Bob Young last fall. Daniels is a trucking company owner who also has experience in the insurance industry. Also, Rep. Dani Isaacsohn (D-Cincinnati) was elected to serve as Minority Whip, after the resignation of former Rep. Jessica Miranda (D-Cincinnati) who was appointed to be Hamilton County Auditor.