



AUSTIN NEWSLETTER

Texas Farm Bureau's Weekly Newsletter for the 89th Legislature

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Every Friday, this newsletter will keep you up to speed on some of the legislation important to Texas Farm Bureau members that Austin staff are following. Please do not hesitate to contact the appropriate staff with any questions.

Agriculture

HB 43: Relating to the Texas Agricultural Finance Authority and to a study and report on plant diseases and pest outbreaks.

[Kitzman, Stan](#)

Summary:

Texas agriculture is in crisis. Years of natural disasters, soaring input costs, and low commodity prices have forced over 17,000 Texas farmers and ranchers out of business in just five years. Last year, Texas led the nation in disaster losses at \$3.49 billion. The livelihoods of thousands more are at risk. HB 43 is a Texas-based effort aimed at trying to help farmers and ranchers.

Proposed Changes:

HB 43 makes needed improvements to the current Texas Agricultural Finance Authority programs.

Farmer Grant Program

- Removes the current age restrictions.
- Changes the fund matching burden on the farmer from dollar for dollar to 10% of the amount received.
- Extends assistance to a farmer or agricultural business to receive the grant.
- Increases the maximum amount allocated from \$20,000 to \$500,000.

Expanding the Farmer Interest Rate Reduction Program

- Removes the current age restrictions.
- Increases the maximum loan amount from \$500,000 to \$1 million.
- It would change the maximum interest rate a lender could charge above the state-set deposit rate from 4% to 1%. This effectively means at current interest rates, a farmer would pay more principal than interest on a loan.

Current Status:

HB 43 was heard in the House Livestock & Agriculture Committee on April 1.

[Texas Farm Bureau President Russell Boening testified in support of HB 43](#), emphasizing the need for economic support for Texas farmers and ranchers.

President Boening made clear to the committee that the economic state of Texas agriculture needs to be addressed. "The financial impact on Texas agriculture has been staggering. In 2022, losses amounted to \$6.4 billion, followed by \$4.8 billion in 2023, and \$3.4 billion in 2024. Those losses led the nation. These catastrophic losses highlight the urgent need for support and intervention from the Texas Legislature to help Texas agriculture not only survive, but to thrive."

County leaders also testified: Morgan Hodges (Sterling-Coke CFB), Giovana Benitez (Hidalgo CFB), Emilee Haubner (Lampasas CFB), and Rodney Schronk (Hill CFB).

TFB supports HB 43.

TFB 2025 Policy: Banking and Credit Section 174, Page 116, Lines 30-35.



Foreign Ownership

HB 119 & SB 1845: Relating to the registration as a lobbyist of persons who engage in certain lobbying activities on behalf of a foreign adversary and to prohibitions on the receipt of compensation related to those lobbying activities.

[Gerdes, Stan](#) / [Hughes, Bryan](#)

Summary:

HB 119 creates new guidelines for a person who lobbies on behalf of a foreign entity. A registered lobbyist would be prohibited from communicating or influencing political or public policy, or interests on behalf of a foreign adversarial country/entity. A lobbyist would also be prohibited from receiving any direct, indirect, intangible, or in-kind compensation from a foreign adversarial country.

Current Status:

SB 1845 was heard in Senate State Affairs on March 31, and HB 119 was heard in the House Committee on Homeland Security, Public Safety & Veterans' Affairs on April 2. Texas Farm Bureau registered in support for both bills.

TFB supports HB 119 and SB 1845.

TFB 2025 Policy: Texas Legislature Section 168, Page 106, Lines 79-83.

SB 1245: Relating to the taking of certain aoudad sheep by using a helicopter.
[Blanco, Cesar](#)

Summary:

SB 1245 would allow the use of helicopters for the taking of aoudad sheep. The legislation provides a new strategy for landowners who are impacted by the depredating aoudad sheep population in the western region of Texas.

Current Status:

SB 1245 was laid out in Senate Water, Agriculture, & Rural Affairs on March 31. Texas Farm Bureau registered in support of the bill. It was voted out of committee with a 9-0 vote and is expected to be taken up for a vote on the Senate floor soon.

TFB supports SB 1245.

TFB 2025 Policy: Animal Species Generally Section 121, Page 19, Lines 1-6, Page 20, Lines 61-64.

Update on Previously Reported Bills

SB 7: Relating to the oversight and financing of certain water infrastructure matters under the jurisdiction of the Texas Water Development Board.
[Perry, Charles](#)

SB 7 was summarized in a previous edition of the [Austin Newsletter](#).

Update:

SB 7 was voted out of the Senate with a 31-0 vote. It will now go to the House of Representatives.

TFB supports SB 7.

TFB 2025 Policy: Surface Water Section 155: Page 78, Lines 17-21, Page 79, Lines 23-27, Page 80, Lines 126-130, Page 81, Lines 175-183 Water Management Section 156: Page 83, Lines 23-29, Page 84, Lines 39-40, Page 84, Lines 56-59, Page 84, Lines 71-76, Page 85, Lines 110-111, Page 85, Lines 139-141, Page 86, Lines 180-182.

HB 2018: Relating to the Texas Farm and Ranch Lands Conservation Program.
[Ashby, Trent](#)

HB 2018 was summarized in a previous edition of the [Austin Newsletter](#).

Update:

HB 2018 was heard in the House Committee on Culture, Tourism & Recreation on March 27. Texas Farm Bureau testified in support of HB 2018. As is customary, the bill was left pending.

TFB supports HB 2018.

TFB 2025 Policy: Real Property Section 151, Page 63, Lines 16-2

SB 1035 & HB 1964: Relating to equitable relief from the enforcement of certain governmental requirements that affect agricultural operations.
[Sparks, Kevin](#) / [Spiller, David](#)

These bills were summarized in a previous edition of the [Austin Newsletter](#).

Update:

SB 1035 was heard in Senate Water, Agriculture & Rural Affairs on March 31. The bill was voted out with an 8-1 vote. HB 1964 was also voted out of the House Livestock & Agriculture Committee with a 7-0 vote on March 27. Texas Farm Bureau testified in support of both bills.

TFB supports SB 1035 and HB 1964.

TFB 2025 Policy: Real Property Rights Section 151, Page 63, Lines 30-33.

SB 532: Relating to grant amounts under the Young Farmer Grant Program.
[Sparks, Kevin](#)

SB 532 was summarized in a previous edition of the [Austin Newsletter](#).

Update:

SB 532 was heard in Senate Water, Agriculture and Rural Affairs on March 31, was voted out of committee with a vote of 9-0, and recommended for local and uncontested calendar. Texas Farm Bureau registered in support of the bill.

TFB supports SB 532.

TFB 2025 Policy: Banking and Credit Section 174, Page 116, Lines 30-35.

Texas Farm Bureau State Legislative Team

Austin Office Phone: 512-472-8288

Regan Beck, Director of Government Affairs

Email: rbeck@txfb.org

Billy Howe, Association Director of Government Affairs

Issue Areas: Natural Resources, Environmental Regulations, Ethics & Elections, & Appropriations

Email: bhowe@txfb.org

Charlie Leal, State Legislative Director

Issue Areas: Right to Farm, Utility Regulation, Transportation Infrastructure, Trucking Regulations, Liability, & Appropriations

Email: cleal@txfb.org

Blake Roach, Associate Legislative Director

Issue Areas: Foreign Ownership, Property Rights/Land Use Regulation, Energy Regulation, Eminent Domain, Wildlife, Criminal Justice, & Appropriations

Email: broach@txfb.org

Drew Fuller, Associate Legislative Director

Issue Areas: Agriculture, Taxes, Rural Affairs, Labor, & Appropriations

Email: dfuller@txfb.org

Janelle Aello, Legislative Assistant

Email: jaello@txfb.org

Kaitlyn Cloud, Legislative Intern

Email: kcloud@txfb.org

