



## Mid-Session Update: Mixed Bag for Good Food and Farm Policies

### Farm-to-School Program Faces Major Cuts

The 2017 Oregon Legislative session reached its halfway mark in mid-April, and state legislators continue to grapple with a massive \$1.6 billion funding shortfall. As a result, many funding priorities and legislative proposals important for healthy local food systems and family farms are at risk.

As of the April 18 deadline for action on most legislation, a number of bills Friends of Family Farmers supported had died, while some remained in play. For a detailed recap on which of our priority bills are dead and which are still standing, read our most recent **'Muckboots in the Capitol' legislative blog post**.

In short, legislation to curb air pollution from a growing number of mega-dairies in Oregon was tabled, as was a bill to restore local control over problematic genetically engineered crops. But a few key bills are still in play, including:

**HB 2739** - legislation to hold patent-holders of genetically engineered crops financially liable when their products cause problems for farmers



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## Calendar of Events

**May 9** - [New Organic Animal Welfare Standards - Webinar](#)

**May 9** - [Living with Large Predators - Central Point](#)

**May 10-12** - [Oregon Board of Agriculture Meetings - Salem](#)

**May 15** - [Whole Farm Revenue Protection Workshop - Eugene](#)

**May 18** - [On Farm Food Safety](#)

- currently in the House Rules Committee

**HB 2085** - a bill to create a beginning farmer tax credit - currently in the House Revenue Committee

**HB 2038** - legislation to fund Oregon's Farm-to-School program at current levels for another two years - currently in the Joint Ways and Means Committee

**SB 805** - legislation to protect 2015 funding increases and maintain current service levels for OSU Extension and Ag Experiment Stations - currently in the Joint Ways and Means Committee

However, in late April, top legislative budget writers proposed a number of steep cuts if new revenue is not found. **Under the proposal, Oregon's Farm-to-School Program would receive no funding at all.** Farm-to-School, a small part of the state's overall budget, incentivizes schools across the state to buy local produce for school meal programs, providing kids with healthy, locally grown food and farmers with new sales opportunities.

Now is a critical time to raise your voice to your state legislators and urge them to maintain current funding levels for Oregon's Farm-to-School Program. **Write and call your State Legislators today. Every call and email makes a difference!**



It has been just over a year since we launched **Oregon Farm Link**, making major upgrades to our long-time and popular iFarm land-linking service. So, we thought we would take this opportunity to update you on new features and resources available now on the site.

For those who don't know, Oregon Farm Link is Oregon's premier land linking website, facilitating land leasing and ownership opportunities for new and beginning farmers across the state, while providing links to a variety of resources and a jobs page. This platform has allowed beginning farmers and ranchers to connect with landholders in the pursuit of common goals since 2009. Currently, over 900 people all over the state have joined Oregon Farm Link to list available land, seek land to start a new farm, or to post job openings at existing farms.

To help grow the next generation of family farmers, Oregon Farm Link

Training (English and Spanish) - Aurora

**May 23** - On Farm Food Safety Training (English and Spanish) - Woodburn

**May 23** - Crop Talk Farmer Networking and Farm Tours - Hood River

**May 24-25** - Forage Management Series: Harvest Management - Corvallis

**May 25** - Seed Growing Farm Tour - Little Applegate Valley

**May 30** - InFARMed: Your Daily Cheese - Portland

**June 8-9** - Produce Grower Food Safety Training - Aurora

**June 9** - Farm Practices to Support Beneficial Insects - Central Point

**June 16** - Square Dance Benefit for FoFF's Oregon Pasture Network - Scio

**June 26** - Beginning Adult Tractor Safety Class - Aurora

**June 21-23** - Youth Tractor Safety Classes - Aurora

**June 22** - Garlic Seed Growing Farm Tour - Grants Pass

**June 28-29** - Forage Management Series: Irrigation - Corvallis

**July 12** - Women's Adult Tractor Safety Class - Aurora

also includes a comprehensive list of resources to help inform the process of starting a new farm or transitioning the ownership of an existing farm. We are continually working to adapt the site to meet the needs of Oregon family farmers and have recently added **a new resource page on Family Farm Succession Planning**. Additional resource pages include:



- **Business Planning**
- **Beginning Farmer Resources**
- **Farm Financing**
- **Grants**
- **Certifications, Food Safety and Risk Management**
- **Job Postings**

As you can see, at Oregon Farm Link you can list land, find land, post a job, look for a job, and find many links for additional resources from educational to financial. Want to learn more? Do you have Oregon Farm Link land match stories to share with us? If so, we would love to hear from you! Contact us with questions, comments, or success stories at [farmlink@friendsoffamilyfarmers.org](mailto:farmlink@friendsoffamilyfarmers.org) or [503-581-7124](tel:503-581-7124).

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## Contact Us

Friends of Family Farmers  
249 Liberty St NE, Suite 212  
Salem, Oregon 97301

[503-581-7124](tel:503-581-7124)

[info@friendsoffamilyfarmers.org](mailto:info@friendsoffamilyfarmers.org)

[www.friendsoffamilyfarmers.org](http://www.friendsoffamilyfarmers.org)

***We bring together farmers and citizens to shape and support socially and environmentally responsible family-scale agriculture in Oregon.***

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