



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Jefferson County's Kevin Richards Earns Farm Bureau Top Hand Award**

January 27, 2017, SALEM, OREGON: Kevin Richards, a second-generation farmer and member of Jefferson County Farm Bureau, was honored with an Oregon Farm Bureau Top Hand Award during the 84th Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) Annual Meeting in Salem.

The Top Hand Award is given to a Farm Bureau member who has contributed an extraordinary amount of time, energy, and leadership on behalf of the grassroots organization over the past year.

After years spent in Washington D.C. working for American Farm Bureau – and before that, stints in the U.S. State Department and the White House – Richards returned to his family's farm in Madras in 2013.

“Juggling a new career as a full-time farmer and life as a new father, Kevin still made the time to get involved with Jefferson County Farm Bureau,” said OFB President Barry Bushue.

Richards recruited young agriculturalists to join the County Farm Bureau's Young Farmers & Ranchers (YF&R) program, and also volunteered on the state YF&R Committee.

Using communication, advocacy, and public policy skills honed in Washington, Richards took the lead for Jefferson County Farm Bureau on the contentious lawsuits involving the spotted frog and water availability for agriculture.

In the past year, he organized two tours of farms and the local irrigation district and invited lawmakers, conservation groups, and the media to attend. The tours highlighted agriculture's responsible and efficient use of water and close working relationship with the irrigation district.

Richards was also featured prominently in the No on Measure 97 campaign, sharing how the measure would have impacted his family farm. He appeared in TV commercials, online ads, and promotional materials.

“Eloquent and well-versed on many critical issues, Kevin has met with lawmakers and editorial boards, given countless media interviews, and written many letters to the editor to share Farm Bureau's perspective,” said Bushue.

He also participates in Oregon AgLink's Adopt a Farmer program, inviting classrooms to tour his farm and learn about modern production agriculture. As is his nature, he encouraged other farmers to join the program, thereby connecting hundreds more students with Oregon agriculture.

Richard's Fox Hollow Ranch is a diversified, second-generation farm growing hybrid carrot seed, mint, wheat, hay, alfalfa, and grass seed.

- See full list of awards given at the 84<sup>th</sup> OFB Annual Meeting: <http://oregonfb.org/media/press-releases/>

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\* Note to Editors: "Farm Bureau" is a registered trademark; please capitalize in all cases

Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) is a grassroots, nonpartisan, nonprofit, general farm organization representing the interests of farming and ranching families in the public and policymaking arenas. First established in Oregon in 1919, Farm Bureau is organized in all 36 counties and has 7,000 farm and ranch family members.

Oregon Farm Bureau President Barry Bushue is a third-generation farmer raising a variety of vegetables and berries at a nearly century-old farm near Boring, Oregon. He is OFB's 15th president.

