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Contact: Anne Marie Moss, annemarie@oregonfb.org, 503.399.1701, ext. 313

Oregon farmer Angi Bailey selected for prestigious national ag advocacy program

Oregon’s Angi Bailey, a second-generation nursery owner and board member of Multnomah County Farm Bureau, was one of only 10 farm and ranch leaders selected from across the country to participate in the American Farm Bureau Federation’s (AFBF) Partners in Advocacy Leadership (PAL) class.

The PAL curriculum is a high-level, executive training program that prepares participants to represent agriculture in the media, in public speaking, in congressional testimony, and other advocacy arenas. Program graduates emerge with the experience and confidence — in everything from legislative policymaking and issues management to social media and media relations — to effectively communicate about important issues impacting farm and ranch families.

“We’re very proud that Angi was selected from a national pool of candidates for the prestigious PAL program,” said Dave Dillon, Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) executive vice president.

“Angi has embraced her role as a grassroots leader in Farm Bureau, which as a general agriculture organization represents the diversity of Oregon agriculture and its 250 recognized commodities. While the public policy issues that directly affect her ornamental tree farm are relatively narrow, Angi has advocated for Oregon families who raise cattle, wheat, timber, dairy cows, and other products with a rare passion, as if the issues that impact her neighbors were challenging her own operation’s ability to survive and thrive,” said Dillon. “She’s a dedicated, effective advocate for all of Oregon’s hard-working farm and ranch families.”

Bailey grew up on a nursery in Gresham established by her mom Verna Jean Hale. As a young adult she left the farm, but returned in 2005 to take over the family business. In a new role as a farm owner, she was surprised by how much public perception of modern agriculture had changed over the years.

“When I came back to the farm, it was striking to see a very distinct rural-urban divide. That’s really what inspired me to become an advocate for agriculture,” said Bailey.
“I hear the questions my friends as moms and as consumers ask about food production and agriculture, and then I see the farm and ranch families who are working so hard to raise safe, high-quality food and fiber. Most people don’t really understand what it takes to run a farm, manage a successful business, and feed a nation. There’s a disconnect there. I want to help close that gap.”

In her role as an “agvocate,” Bailey has testified before state legislative committees in Salem, met with federal agency reps and Oregon’s congressional delegation in Washington D.C., given numerous media interviews, appeared in a national campaign promoting the need for immigration reform, and used social media to share her perspective as a family farmer. She’s worked on ag-related issues as diverse as labor, taxes, water, biotechnology, and responsible pesticide use.

Within Farm Bureau, Bailey has served on the Multnomah County Farm Bureau board of directors, as a state Farm Bureau board member and officer, as an AFBF voting delegate, AFBF conference participant, member and chair of various AFBF commodity/issue advisory committees, and completed the invitation-only AFBF Communications Boot Camp in Washington D.C.

Bailey also works with Oregonians for Food & Shelter as its grassroots coordinator.

AFBF’s PAL program begins in June with a training in New York City. In September, the group will travel to Washington D.C. A total of four intensive training sessions will take place over a two-year period, and participants will have assignments to help them put what they’ve learned into practice.

Bailey is determined to immediately put her newly honed communication skills to use as a spokesperson for Oregon agriculture, and she hopes to share what she’s learned with fellow Farm Bureau members.

Said Bailey, “I’m very committed to Oregon’s natural resources community. I feel this opportunity will make me a better, stronger advocate for our state’s proud farmers, ranchers, and foresters.”

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* Note to Editors: “Farm Bureau” is a registered trademark; please capitalize in all cases.

The state’s largest general farm organization, Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) is a grassroots, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization representing the interests of the state’s farmers and ranchers in the public and policymaking arenas. First established in Oregon in 1919, Farm Bureau is organized in all 36 counties and has nearly 7,000 member families that are professionally engaged in agriculture.

Oregon Farm Bureau President Barry Bushue is a third-generation farmer raising pumpkins, u-pick produce, and flowering baskets at a nearly century-old farm near Boring, Oregon. He is OFB’s 15th president.