FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Dec. 22, 2019
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Polk County’s Dean Freeborn Inducted into Oregon Farm Bureau Hall of Fame

OFB Board member Dean Freeborn, member of Polk County Farm Bureau, was inducted into the Oregon Farm Bureau Hall of Fame on Dec. 12, 2019 during the 87th Oregon Farm Bureau Convention at the Salishan Resort in Gleneden Beach.

The Hall of Fame, established in 1996, is the highest honor given by Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB). To be eligible, candidates must be nominated by their County Farm Bureau and have at least 35 years of active involvement in the organization. Freeborn is the 36th member to be inducted into the elite OFB Hall of Fame.

“For his decades of service, leadership, passion, and unwavering belief in Farm Bureau, we are very proud to induct Dean Freeborn of Polk County Farm Bureau into the OFB Hall of Fame,” said outgoing OFB President Waterman.

“One of the most telling things about Dean’s commitment to Farm Bureau, and agriculture in general, is if an issue is brought up – whether if affects Dean and his operation directly or not – he will go to bat for you with the same level of passion because he believes so strongly in supporting Oregon agriculture as a whole,” said outgoing OFB President Waterman.

Freeborn joined Farm Bureau in 1973 and hails from a proud multigenerational Farm Bureau family, becoming active at an early age while attending Farm Bureau meetings and functions with his father Alvan. Today, the tradition continues with his daughters Jenny Freeborn and Kathy Freeborn Hadley, who are both very active volunteer leaders.

In his 20s, Freeborn rose through the ranks to become president of Polk County Farm Bureau and participated in the OFB’s Young Farmers & Ranchers Program.

In 1990, Freeborn was elected to represent Polk and Yamhill Counties on the OFB Board of Directors. Aside from a few years off in the early 2000s, he has served on the state board ever since.

Freeborn has shared his knowledge, experience, and perspective on many OFB Issue Advisory Committees, including Government Affairs, Livestock, Goose Depredation, and Ag Production.

He has been a strong, effective advocate for agriculture at the state capitol, working closely with OFB staff and other ag groups, testifying before legislative committees, and cultivating relationships with many state lawmakers over the years.
Freeborn has a long history of proactively reaching out to elected officials, helping them learn about agricultural issues, and sharing the farmer’s perspective. He has given countless tours for lawmakers, community leaders, and others on his family farm in Rickreall and the surrounding area.

“Several times, legislators have commented on how much they appreciate Dean because he cuts to the chase and doesn’t sugarcoat his message. You know what’s on his mind and what he’s advocating for,” said outgoing OFB President Sharon Waterman.

Beyond Farm Bureau, Freeborn has served on state commodity commissions, on the board for Ag West Supply, and as an OFB rep on the board for Oregonians for Food & Shelter.

He’s participated in many other industry groups, including Oregon Cattlemen’s Association, the Wheat League, and the Ryegrass Growers Association.

Freeborn has lived in Polk County his entire life. His parents moved to Oregon from Kansas, and in 1964, they purchased the main farm in Rickreall, which he still runs today.

Today, his diversified farm raises several species of grass seed, wheat, oats, alfalfa, canola, turnips, forage crops, and beef cattle. He runs the family farm primarily with his daughter Kathy, along with help from his wife Andrena, daughter Jenny, and son-in-law Troy Hadley.

“Dean’s newest, and possibly most enjoyed helpers are his grandsons Grant and Cody. Grant is often out in the field with grandpa, learning how to drive tractor and combine already,” said outgoing OFB President Waterman.

“Dean does not have employees, so on any given day, he could be out spot-spraying, blowing off equipment, dumping trucks, or driving tractor – and we doubt he’d have it any other way,” said outgoing OFB President Waterman.

PHOTO 1: OFB Board member Dean Freeborn (center right) of Polk County Farm Bureau, joined on stage by his grandson Grant Hadley, was inducted into the OFB Hall of Fame, the organization's highest honor, on Dec. 12, by outgoing OFB President Sharon Waterman and EVP Dave Dillon (far right).

PHOTO 2: OFB Board member Dean Freeborn of Polk County Farm Bureau was inducted into the prestigious Oregon Farm Bureau Hall of Fame on Dec. 12, 2019 during 87th Oregon Farm Bureau Convention.


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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 at the county level in 1919 and the state level in 1932, Farm Bureau is organized in all 36 counties.

Oregon Farm Bureau President Barb Iverson, elected on Dec. 12, 2019, comes from a
multigenerational family farm from Woodburn, raising industrial hemp, grass seed, squash, vetch seed, hazelnuts, wine and table grapes, and operating the Wooden Shoe Tulip Festival, which attracts over 160,000 visitors each year.