



Legislative Update

February 10, 2025

The third week of the Utah Legislature's General Session flew by as the Utah Farm Bureau Federation (UFBF) remained highly engaged, actively advocating for agriculture-related legislation and ensuring that lawmakers understood the critical issues facing our farmers and ranchers. To date, lawmakers have introduced 700 bills and resolutions this session. With numerous bills moving through committees and floor debates, the week was a whirlwind of activity.

On Monday, February 3, UFBF testified on several bills of interest before the House Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Committee. One of the bills is [H.B. 342 Animal Composting Amendments](#), sponsored by [Rep. Mike Kohler](#) and [Sen. Derrin Owens](#). This bill redefines "commercial nonhazardous solid waste treatment, storage, or disposal facility" in the context of farm and ranch operations. Specifically, it clarifies that farms or ranches are not classified as commercial facilities if they compost animal mortality or offal waste from processing facilities that handle their livestock. This legislation benefits both farmers/ranchers and processing facilities by allowing farms to manage animal waste through composting while providing processors with an additional waste management option. These changes support economic viability for processing facilities and enhance food processing capacity while fostering sustainable practices for farms and ranches.

At the same hearing, UFBF also testified in support of [S.B. 33, Water Rights Recording Amendments](#), sponsored by [Sen. Evan Vickers](#) and [Rep. Rex Shipp](#). This bill would modernize the process of recording water rights addenda. Specifically, the bill allows both grantors and grantees to use facsimile or electronic signatures on water rights addenda. The bill streamlines documentation for water rights transfers with land transactions and standalone water rights conveyances. You can rewatch the hearing by clicking [here](#).

On Tuesday, UFBF testified before the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environmental Quality Appropriations Subcommittee on a request for appropriations (RFA) submitted by [Rep. Doug Owens](#) to provide \$25 Million for the LeRay McAllister Working Farm and Ranch Fund Program. UFBF testified alongside Jim Bowcutt, Director, Conservation Division, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) in support of the RFA, which if appropriated, would be used over the next five years to protect Utah's agricultural lands through conservation easements, safeguard critical farm and rangeland from development, and improve food security. Land trust partners have reported that there are at least \$50 million worth of easement opportunities in Utah and 21 landowners have registered with UDAF as interested in pursuing an easement once funding is identified. You can watch the full presentation by clicking [here](#).

On Wednesday afternoon, the House Business, Labor, and Commerce Committee met to discuss [H.B. 214, Employer Verification Amendments](#), sponsored by [Rep. Neil Walter](#). Terry Camp, VP of Public Policy, testified in opposition to this bill, which amends Utah's Private Employer Verification Act to lower the threshold for mandatory E-Verify use from employers with 150 or more employees to those with five or more employees. Additionally, it introduces criminal penalties for individuals using fraudulent or stolen

identification documents to obtain employment. UFBF testified that requiring agricultural employers to use E-Verify without assuring that a workable guest worker program is in place could have a significant, negative impact on Utah's farm production, threatening the livelihoods of many farmers and ranchers in our state. The bill was ultimately held in committee. You can rewatch the hearing [here](#).

Also on Wednesday afternoon, Wade Garrett, VP, for Advocacy and Strategic Relations, was in attendance at the Senate Transportation, Public Utilities, Energy, and Technology Committee to testify in support of [S.B. 113, Traffic Code Amendments](#), sponsored by [Sen. Scott Sandall](#) and [Rep. Scott Chew](#). This bill establishes a rebuttable presumption of driver negligence in cases involving range stock drifting onto highways near their customary ranges. This bill is valuable for Utah ranchers as it will improve ranchers' ability to recover damages when livestock are injured or killed in collisions with vehicles. You can rewatch the hearing by clicking [here](#).

On Thursday morning, UFBF, represented by Buddy Deimler, retired Specialist, Agricultural and Welding Education, State Board of Education, testified before the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environmental Quality Appropriations on two RFAs related to the Utah FFA program. The first request RFA, sponsored by [Sen. Derrin Owens](#), seeks [\\$496,500 in ongoing funding](#) to support the Utah FFA program. The funding will strengthen the program's ability to provide work-based learning, Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAEs), and essential workplace skills. The second RFA, sponsored by [Rep. Doug Owens](#), seeks [\\$120,500 in ongoing funding](#) for an FFA Utah State University teacher mentor faculty position. The funding will support a crucial role in enhancing the quality of agricultural education across Utah by providing mentorship, conducting in-services, and assisting agricultural teachers throughout the state. You can read RFA handouts prepared for the hearing [here](#) and [here](#). You can also rewatch the hearing [here](#). We also encourage you to email your legislators and express support for these RFA requests. You can find your legislator by clicking [here](#).



FFA Students with Sen. Derrin Owens & Rep. Doug Owens



FFA Students with UDAF Commissioner Craig Butters

On Friday, we hosted agricultural educators/FFA advisors for Agricultural Educator Day on the Hill. Educators attended the Rural Caucus breakfast and then spent the day at the Capitol meeting with legislators. It was a successful day, and we were grateful to have them join us.



Agricultural Educator Jason Goble with Rep. Carl Albrecht

As always, we encourage you to actively send our policy team questions or comments on topics of concern. Our 2025 Utah Farm Bureau Federation Policy Book is now online and can be found [here](#). Printed copies of the policy book will be distributed out to county Farm Bureau leaders in the coming weeks. We also encourage you to visit our website where you can view our [bill tracker](#). We also hope you will join us for our annual Day on the Hill on Friday, February 21, 2025. More information on our Day on the Hill can be found [here](#).

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