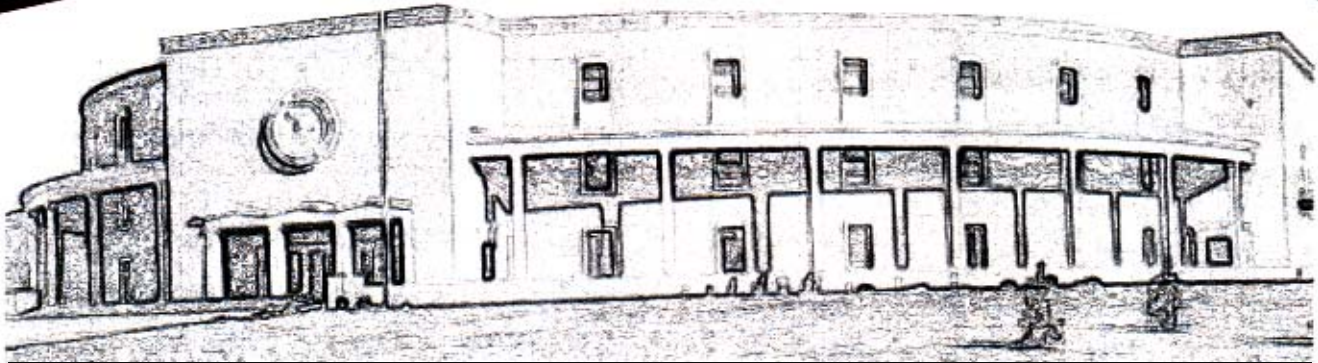


# LEGISLEADER



48th Legislative Session - February 7, 2006 - Volume II

The *Legisleader* is the official legislative newsletter of the New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau...the state's largest and oldest agricultural organization. Farm Bureau....since 1917 a leader in New Mexico!

## House Passes Bill Exempting Producers from Minimum Wage

By Christopher Coon  
Managing Editor, N.M.  
Farm and Ranch Magazine

A House Business and Industry Committee substitute for House Bill 258, passed a House vote 38-30 on Monday, Feb. 6.

The legislation calls for New Mexico's minimum wage rate to be increased from \$5.15 to \$6.75 on Jan. 1, 2007 and increased to \$7.50 on Jan. 1, 2008. Production agriculture is exempt in the current proposal.

Although the New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau is adamantly opposed to a government mandated increase in minimum wage, the production agriculture exemption is a welcomed amendment by Farm Bureau officials.

"Since we know the state minimum wage is going to be

increased no matter what, we have worked tirelessly to get production agriculture exempt from this proposal," said John Wortman, executive director of the New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau. "We believe the producer should decide how much he wants to pay in labor, not the government."

Wortman added that if this legislation becomes law, producers will have the freedom to decide whether or not they will pay more in labor to compete with other industries in terms of human resources.

"If a producer sees a need to pay more in labor to compete with other industries as far as employee quality and retention, this will allow the producer to do so at his own free will," said Wortman. "There are operations that will be able to

afford this, but there are certainly many that will not be able to afford it. Our main objective is to allow producers to make that choice for themselves."

The legislation is currently in the Senate Finance Committee where a vote is expected within the next two days.

### 48th Legislative Session -

All Legislators - State Capitol Switch board - (505) 986-4300.

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N.M. Legislature homepage -  
[www.legis.state.nm.us/](http://www.legis.state.nm.us/)

N.M. Farm Bureau Website -  
[www.nmfb.org](http://www.nmfb.org).

# Eminent Domain Legislation Stalled

Bills aimed at limiting the government's ability to seize private property under eminent domain appear to have stalled in the New Mexico State Legislature. Included in the legislation was House Joint Resolution 2, which Farm Bureau strongly supports. The resolution would have put the eminent domain issue up for statewide vote during the general election in November.

In June of 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court decided through

the *Kelo vs. City of New London case*, that local governments should be allowed to seize private property for economic development. This decision expanded the powers of eminent domain beyond traditional interpretations of the law, which included public purposes such as building highways.

"This is an issue that certainly isn't going away," said John Wortman, executive director of the New Mexico Farm and

Livestock Bureau. "We will continue to work on this issue which has the potential to severely impact private property rights, until it is curtailed."

The Senate Judiciary Committee rejected the four eminent domain bills on Friday, Feb. 3. Although drafts are still being considered, any movement of eminent domain legislation appears unlikely during the rest of this session.

## Farm Bureau Celebrates AgFest de Santa Fe

The New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau hosted its annual AgFest de Santa Fe Celebration on Feb. 2, at the La Fonda Hotel.



Over 1000 people attended the event which showcased New Mexico Agriculture and food products unique to the Land of Enchantment. AgFest is an opportunity for those in agriculture to mingle with their elected representatives in a relaxed atmosphere.



From left, Stella Montoya, a rancher in Northwestern New Mexico, her son Luis Montoya, Sen. Steve Neville, R - San Juan and Sharon Lombardi, Dairy Producers of N.M. executive director are pictured during AgFest. Neville is a past president of the San Juan County Farm and Livestock Bureau.



Jim Thornton, right, Santa Fe County Farm and Livestock Bureau president, enjoys some food provided by the New Mexico Department of Agriculture.



From left, Jackie Spence, Heather Philpot and Rep. Candy Spence Ezzell, R-Chaves, enjoy the evening at AgFest.

## Farm Bureau Hosts Annual Legislative Breakfast

In conjunction with AgFest, the New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau hosts a legislative breakfast each year.

Farm Bureau would like to thank Rep. Richard Cheney, R-San Juan, and Sen. Mary Kay Papen, D-Dona Ana, for being

the keynote speakers at the event.

Each year, Farm Bureau provides a free breakfast for all state representatives and other invited public officials at the event each year.