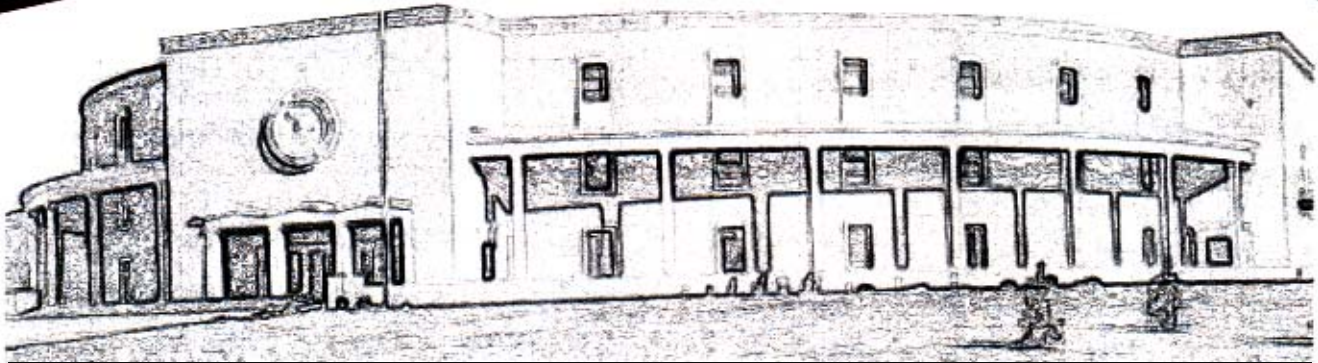


LEGISLEADER



47th Legislative Session - February 9, 2005 - Volume III

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!

Ag Fest Celebration Approaching

Ag Fest de Santa Fe will highlight the abundance and diversity of New Mexico agriculture the evening of February 17, at the Sweeney Center. This annual showcase for the state's farmers

and ranchers has become one of the most popular events during the session, drawing many lawmakers, agency personnel and staff. It is a great opportunity for agriculture proponents and Legislators to

minge in a relaxed atmosphere.

Generally, over 1000 people attend Ag Fest, which is a trade-show style event, featuring New Mexican agriculture products, food and drink.

Chief Executive To Address Farm Bureau Members

In response to a letter from N.M. Farm Bureau President, Michael White, Governor Bill Richardson has accepted an invitation to address Farm Bureau members at their annual legislative breakfast February 18, 2005.

This annual "eggs and issues" session is set for 7 a.m. at the Sweeney Convention Center 201 West Marcy Street at Grant Avenue in downtown Santa Fe. In addition to Governor Richardson,

Farm Bureau Members will be briefed by Farm Bureau's Governmental Affairs Director, Cecilia Abeyta, on legislation pending in the session that is vital to agriculture.

Upon adjournment of the breakfast Farm Bureau delegates will proceed to "the Merry Round House we call the Capitol" in the words of the late statehouse reporter, Ernie Mills.

47th Legislative Session - Jan. 18 - March 19, 2005

All Legislators - State Capitol Switchboard - (505) 986-4300.

State Land Office - (505) 827-5760.

Legislative Council Service - (505) 986-4600.

Office of the Governor (505) 476-2200.

N.M. Legislature homepage -
www.legis.state.nm.us/

N.M. Farm Bureau Website -
www.nmfb.org.

Farm Bureau Subcommittee Examining Water Legislation

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

A swath of bills having to do with water have been introduced this session, and Farm Bureau is keeping a close watch on them.

A water issues subcommittee has been formed by the New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau. The subcommittee is part of the organization's Priority Issues Committee and, with direction from last November's House of Delegates session, is charged with defining Farm Bureau's stance on some of these bills. The committee, chaired by New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau Second Vice President, Phillip Arnold, is authoring language and policy to deal with some of these issues.

One item of contention is legislation having to do with domestic wells. Several bills having to do with domestic wells have been introduced, including House Bill 285, introduced by Luciano Varela, D-Santa Fe.

This bill calls for amending and

enacting sections of chapter 72 NMSA, 1978, to enable the state engineer to regulate domestic wells in critical management areas. According to N.M. Farm and Livestock Bureau Director of Governmental Affairs, Cecilia Abeyta, under this bill, once a critical management area is established, a domestic well permit might be denied unless a water right is transferred. A critical management area is currently defined as an area that is inadequate to sustain the production of a well or where additional depletions occur, affecting compact requirements. House Bill 285 is currently in the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

"We are working on Farm Bureau policy that will address some of the complexities associated with domestic wells," said Arnold. "On one side, you have a group of our members who feel that anyone who has a piece of land should have the right to drill a domestic well on it, as part of a private property right. On the other side is a group that says we

have to protect the water rights issue. If there is enough water there to sustain an increased population, fine. But if all the water is spoken for, then all the water is spoken for and the option would be to find water rights for sale in that area."

Other water legislation Farm Bureau is keeping an eye on is strategic water reserve legislation, such as House Bill 195. This bill is also being examined by the Farm Bureau subcommittee. The bill, introduced by Joe Stell, D, Eddy and Otero, would establish a strategic water reserve to acquire and lease water for the purpose of complying with compact court decrees and the Endangered Species Act. The revenue source would be severance tax bonds. According to Stell, the main point of this legislation is to protect New Mexico on compact delivery obligations. House bill 195 passed the House Energy and Natural Resource Committee and is currently in the Senate Conservation Committee.

Other bills to Keep an Eye On

HB 78, introduced by Rep. Stewart - Would allow the Game and Fish Department to purchase and manage land and water from Game Protection Fund and Habitat Acquisition and Management Fund. A \$5 fee would be imposed on hunting and fishing licenses. FB opposes. This bill passed the House Energy and Natural Resource Committee with an amendment to exclude acquisition of land and water.

HB 87, introduced by Rep. Nunez - An appropriation of \$80,000 from the general fund to go to NMSU for the control of pecan pests. HB 87 passed the House Agriculture and Water Resources Committee and was referred to the House Appropriation and Finance Committee.

HB 91, introduced by Rep. Nunez - A personal or corporate tax credit not to exceed \$10,000 for irrigation

and water management improvements approved by local Soil and Water Conservation Districts. HB91 passed the House Agriculture and Water Committee with an amendment to allow conserved water to be put to beneficial and consumptive use.

HB 158, introduced by Mary Helen Garcia-Requires home-school students to take required standard based academic performance tests. Also requires such students who do not demonstrate “adequate yearly progress” to attend a public or private school. Can you spell “Big Brother?”

HB 189, introduced by Rep. Brian Moore-This bill would strengthen the current trespass laws and would require written permission to hunt on private land and provides for confiscation of game and fish for violations. FB supports.

HB 297, introduced by Rep. Cervantes - An appropriation to NMSU in the amount of \$750,000 from the General Fund to conduct education programs and water management research. This bill is currently in the House Agriculture Committee.

HB 445, introduced by Rep. Vaughn - Defines marriage as being between one man and one woman. Does not allow same sex marriage and imposes a \$50 fine on an individual who performs same sex marriages. This bill is currently in the House Consumer and Public Affairs Committee.

HB 711, introduced by Rep. Campos - Prohibits the Water Quality Control Commission from adopting and enforcing standards that are more stringent than federal requirements for surface waters only. This bill is currently in the House Energy and Natural Resource Committee.

SB 72, introduced by Sen. Steve Komadina-Would hold those responsible for wolf releases liable if a human and/or livestock are attacked. This bill passed the Senate Conservation Committee.

SB 77, Introduced by Sen. Ben Altamirano. Increases hunting fees. FB opposes.

SB 252, introduced by Dede Feldman-This is the ATV bill that will require helmets for 18 and under, registration fees for ATVs. Includes an ag exemption on helmets but not registration. FB supports exemptions but not the new fees.

The Farm Bureau Image

A comprehensive advertising campaign for the N.M. Farm Bureau on the state’s radio stations is now in its final stages. The ad campaign has several objectives including: Telling folks who we are, what we do and why agriculture is important in the Land of Enchantment. The spots will be in rotation on key stations during the 60-day legislative session. In Santa Fe you can hear the campaign on the 5,000 watt voice of northern New Mexico, Radio 81, KSWV or “Que Suave.” Also they’ll be on 77-KKOB, New Mexico’s 50,000 watt “blowtorch.” The theme of the campaign is “Farm Bureau....Since 1917.....A Leader In New Mexico.