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Polk County Farm Bureau's Hadley wins OFB Discussion Meet

Kathy Hadley of Polk County Farm Bureau was the winner of the 2015 Young Farmers & Ranchers (YF&R) Discussion Meet, held during the 83rd Oregon Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in Sunriver, Dec. 8-10, 2015.

The annual Discussion Meet is open to Farm Bureau members between the ages of 18 and 35 and is designed to showcase effective communication within a group, much like the meetings that are the backbone of Farm Bureau's grassroots policymaking process.

"I competed in FFA speaking events throughout high school, so participating in Farm Bureau's Discussion Meet was a natural fit," said Hadley. "The thing I appreciate about the discussion meet is that it's similar to what you experience in industry meetings. The communication skills we're fine-tuning are very realistic and applicable."

As winner of the meet, Hadley will represent Oregon at the national YF&R Discussion Meet, held during the American Farm Bureau Annual Convention in Orlando, Jan. 8-13, 2016.

Also during the OFB Annual Meeting in December, Hadley officially retired from her post as chair of the OFB Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee and as YF&R rep on the OFB Board of Directors. She was given a special award for her two years of service in this capacity.

Along with offering a variety of educational and social activities, YF&R helps young Farm Bureau members develop leadership and communication skills. Members also put those skills to use to make a difference for agriculture in the state and national legislature.

Hadley's achievements as YF&R Chair include spearheading efforts to organize a successful communication skills workshop for Farm Bureau members, organizing an agriculture tour to Southeast Oregon, coordinating numerous outreach events to FFA groups including organizing the state FFA Tractor Driving Contest, working towards establishing local YF&R groups, and hosting many fun social events for YF&R members.

"In her role as YF&R chair, Kathy has done yeoman's work in building a strong, diverse, and growing Young Farmers & Ranchers program that is something all Farm Bureau members should admire and be proud of," said OFB President Barry Bushue. "She has been a great voice on the OFB Board of Directors, and I hope to see her in other state Farm Bureau leadership roles for many years to come."

"I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to lead and help develop the YF&R program in the state, and hope the program continues to grow," said Hadley. "I have made what will undoubtedly be lifelong

friendships with other young farmers around the state. As diverse as our state is, it's pretty fun having connections all over, and knowing that even though we may raise different crops, we deal with the same issues and challenges," she said.

"Farm Bureau's YF&R program is a great fit for young people in agriculture as they transition out of FFA and college, but still want to be involved in social, educational, and service-type activities," said Hadley.

Hadley is a 3rd-generation farmer raising seed crops, grain, cattle, and hay in Polk County.

PHOTO CAPTION: Polk County Farm Bureau's Kathy Hadley (middle), winner of the 2015 Young Farmers & Ranchers Discussion Meet, received an award for her two years of service as YF&R chair from OFB President Barry Bushue (right) and OFB Executive Vice President Dave Dillon (left) during the 83rd OFB Annual Meeting in Sunriver, Dec. 8-10, 2015.

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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 family 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 7,500 member families that are professionally engaged in agriculture. Barry Bushue, an east Multnomah County berry and nursery stock producer, is OFB's 15th president and also serves as vice president of American Farm Bureau.

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