

YF&R's Day at the Capitol

By Bonnie Jones

PHOENIX – On April 13th Young Farmer & Rancher Program members gathered to visit State legislators to discuss issues facing agriculture and show support for the ranchers along the international border.

Members had the opportunity to speak one-on-one with Department of Agriculture Director Butler, Representatives Pratt (R-23), Brown (D-5), and Konopnicki (R-5), along with Senators Garcia (D-27), Alvarez (D-25), and S. Allen (R-5).

“It’s best to be proactive rather than reactive in educating the public about the life sustaining industry of agriculture,” says Marcos Moore, Yuma County YF&R member and business owner. “This is why we work closely with legislators. It’s important that we develop trust and respect so we may be the ones policy makers go to when they need reliable information and facts.”

One hot topic addressed was fees and State agency funding. “We understand that fees are a part of doing business, but we need assurances that those fees will remain with the agencies we rely upon to conduct our business,” says State YF&R Chair Marguerite Tan. Several legislators agreed and expressed frustration with current leadership at the Capitol. “It makes it hard to justify raising fees when the House Appropriations Chairman (Kavanagh) won’t guarantee not sweeping those monies into the general fund,” stated Rep. Konopnicki.



YF&R Chair Marguerite Tan, Senator Manny Alvarez and YF&R Member Marcos Moore discussed the Ag Transportation Bill.

The Ag Transportation Bill (HB 2258) also drew discussion, and YF&R-ers were able to clear up some of the confusion. “This bill just ensures that we’re on the same page with law enforcement when trying to move our products,” State YF&R Chair Marguerite Tan said. “Some legislators have been confused by the difference between implements of husbandry and farm-plate vehicles, and hopefully we answered their questions and gained support for the bill.”

Members also showed support for ranchers on the border during Arizona Cattle Growers’ press conference and a special Senate hearing on the border security issue in the wake of rancher Rob Krentz’s murder. The ranchers presented an 18-point plan to secure the border.

Additionally, lobbyists Jake Shuler and Philip Bashaw gave members an inside look at the workings of the Capitol. Members also enjoyed an introduction in the House by Rep. Konopnicki.