

Oregon Farm Bureau Federation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Paul Kovash honored with a Farm Bureau Top Hand Award**

At the 2006 Oregon Farm Bureau State Convention in Bend, Dec. 4-8, OFB President Barry Bushue honored Paul Kovash, President of the Benton County Farm Bureau, with a Top Hand Award.

“The Top Hand Award is presented to a person whose activities have made Oregon Farm Bureau the successful grassroots organization that it is today,” said Bushue. “Paul has volunteered at both the state and county level and has dependably accomplished any task set before him.”

Within Farm Bureau, Kovash has served as Benton County President for two separate periods; once in the 1970's and currently since 2000. At the state level, he has contributed to the OFB Transportation Committee and the Marketing Subcommittee, and he also chairs the Membership and Recognition Committee and the Nomination Committee.

“One of Paul's greatest assets is his creativity in finding workable solutions to problems,” added Bushue.

A recent example was his idea for Benton County Farm Bureau to design a large display board to help promote a Slow Moving Vehicle Safety pamphlet created by the OFB Health and Safety Committee and sponsored by the Oregon Dept. of Transportation. The board, which helps educate the public of proper driving behavior around farm equipment, was completed in time to be displayed at the Benton County Fair, the Polk County Fair, and the Oregon State Fair.

Kovash also has spearheaded local service projects to help educate farmers on issues that affect them. After a change in the law regarding Farm Truck Plate regulations, he set up a countywide meeting with an ODOT representative to help Benton County Farmers wade through the new rules.

“Paul is also willing to use his free time and farm equipment to help Farm Bureau, including lending his tractor to load dumpsters for a scrap metal drive that benefited the new animal sciences pavilion at OSU,” said Bushue.

After retiring from a career as the agriculture teacher and FFA advisor at Corvallis High School, Kovash continues to help educate students by working with the Summer Ag Institute, a program founded by Oregon Farm Bureau and Oregon State University to educate teachers about the agriculture industry. For years he has hosted one of the participating SAI attendees for an overnight visit, allowing the teacher to see what it

takes to work on a real farm.

Kovash also serves on the Ag West Supply Co-op Board of Directors, has a state-appointed place on the Oregon County Fair Commission, and serves on a local watershed council and the Polk County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Paul and his wife Arlene, who earned a Distinguished Service Award at the 2006 OFB State Convention, raise cattle and hay on their farm in Monmouth.

*Editors: More high-resolution digital photos of the award presentation and honorees are available. Contact Anne Marie Moss, OFB Communication Director, [annemarie@oregonfb.org](mailto:annemarie@oregonfb.org), (503) 399-1701, ext. 313.*

*Note: In all instances, "Farm Bureau" must be capitalized.*

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#### **Other 2006 Farm Bureau members honored at the OFB state convention:**

**Katy Coba, Director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture**, was honored with the **President's Award**, in recognition of her outstanding advocacy and leadership toward the betterment of the Oregon agriculture industry.

**Jim Johnson, Land Use and Water Planning Coordinator for the Oregon Department of Agriculture**, received a **Distinguished Service Award** for his years of service, support, and dedication to Farm Bureau and the ag industry as a whole.

**Arlene Kovash of Benton County** received a **Distinguished Service Award** for her decades of representing Oregon agriculture in the political arena and her volunteer service in Farm Bureau.

**Anne Rigor of Benton County** was honored with the **Outstanding County Farm Bureau Secretary Award** for her volunteer work and commitment to the Benton County Farm Bureau.

**Dalton Straus of Jackson County** received a **Top Hand Award** for his decades of work promoting the Oregon ag industry around the state, nation, and world.

**Clifford Horning of Benton County** was honored with a **Memorial Award** for having made a significant difference to the Farm Bureau organization and agriculture during his lifetime. The award was accepted by his brother Eric Horning.

*Press releases on and photos of all honorees are available.*

#### **About Oregon Farm Bureau**

Oregon Farm Bureau traces its roots to 1919 when the Umatilla County Farm Bureau was established in the heart of the state's wheat country. Oregon Farm Bureau was formally incorporated in 1932. In 2007, OFB will celebrate its 75th anniversary. The state headquarters remained in Pendleton until 1949, when it moved to Salem.

Farm Bureau is organized in all 36 Oregon counties. Today, OFB has over 53,000 total member families, making it the largest general agricultural organization in the state. About 8,800 member families are professionally engaged in agriculture. Barry Bushue, an east Multnomah County berry and nursery producer, is OFB's 15th president.

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