

Republican Ag Committee Leadership Announces Release of Study Confirming Devastating Impact of Inheritance Tax Code Changes on Family Farmers and Ranchers

Tuesday, June 15, 2021 By Taylor McCarty (Thompson)
and Patrick Creamer (Boozman)

The Republican leaders of the agriculture committees in Congress are highlighting a [new study](#) that confirms Democrats' proposed changes to taxes on inherited property will have a devastating impact on the next generation of family farmers and ranchers.

Representative Glenn 'GT' Thompson, Ranking Member, House Committee on Agriculture, and **Senator John Boozman**, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, requested the **Agricultural and Food Policy Center (AFPC)** at Texas A&M University to analyze two pieces of legislation introduced in the Senate that would change the tax liabilities of family members when farm and ranch estates are passed from generation to generation.

AFPC's study confirms that if enacted, the two bills analyzed—the *Sensible Taxation and Equity Promotion (STEP) Act*, which proposes to eliminate stepped-up basis upon death of the owner and the *For the 99.5 Percent Act*, which would decrease the estate tax exemption—would have a devastating impact on the hardworking families that own and operate farms and ranches.

The STEP Act's proposed changes to stepped-up basis mirror proposals discussed by the Biden administration. If it were to be implemented, 92 of AFPC's 94 representative farms would be impacted with an average additional tax liability of more than \$720,000 per farm. Together, the two bills would raise taxes an average of \$1.4 million on 98 percent of AFPC's representative farms.

"The livelihoods of American farmers are on the chopping block with proposed changes to stepped-up basis and the estate tax. Many Democrats love to talk about taxing the richest of the rich, but in reality, their proposals would hurt Main Street far more than Wall Street, said Thompson. "The economic harm that will inevitably fall onto our farmers, ranchers, and

producers is too great a burden to gamble with, even with proposed carve-outs and exemptions. The report released today from the Agricultural and Food Policy Center underscores what the industry has known for years—new taxes on farmers are more than just an annoyance, they're a generational threat to farm families."

"The data speaks for itself and should give pause to anyone considering this approach as an option to pay for new additional federal spending. If changes of these magnitude are pursued, as some have discussed, the economic harm it will cause will have a lasting impact on rural America," Boozman said.

AFPC maintains a database of 94 representative farms in 30 different states. That data, in conjunction with a farm-level policy simulation model, allows AFPC to analyze policy changes on farms and ranches across the country.

AFPC's study is available online [here](#).

Stewarding Our Aquifer Field Day Set

Thursday, June 10, 2021

By Jim Steiert

Amidst another intensive irrigation season underway this summer a Stewarding Our Aquifer Field Day will be presented by Ogallala Commons (www.ogallalacommons.org) on **Wednesday, June 30**, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Kress, in Swisher County.

The event will provide another opportunity to learn about management practices that can reduce or stabilize groundwater depletion levels in the region, as well as assist in the transition from irrigated agriculture to rain-fed agriculture.

"As evidence is emerging that decades-long patterns of aquifer depletion are being slowed and even reversed in parts of High Plains Water District territory, it is critical for our water conservation efforts that educational tours be held to explore the management practices that are taking place in these localities—which include improving soil health, using cover crops, pasture-based agriculture, and greatly limiting or even discontinuing irrigation. It is through such efforts that we can assure a water future for the High Plains," explains Darryl Birkenfeld, Executive Director of Ogallala Commons.

A featured speaker for the event will be Barry Evans, a Kress cotton and grain farmer and minimum till practitioner for many years who irrigates only about 15

percent of his acreage and counts on rain-fed agriculture on the rest.

Doors will open at 8:30 a.m. at the meeting room at Jeff's Restaurant (500 US Highway 87) with registration and refreshments. After introductions at 9 a.m., a presentation on the principles and practices of building soil health will be given by Dr. Katie Lewis, soil scientists from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Lubbock. Immediately afterward, an overview of the work of the Texas Alliance for Water Conservation, an organization that has worked for years toward better irrigation management, will be offered by TAWC's project director, Rick Kellison, of Lockney.

Following a break, Barry Evans will give a 20-minute summary of his approach to successful dryland farming, before the group departs at 11 a.m. for a site visit to some of Mr. Evans' fields located near Kress.

At 12:15 p.m., the group will return to the meeting room at Jeff's Restaurant for a "Steak Day" lunch (served on Wednesdays at the restaurant). At 12:45, the event will conclude with remarks by ag journalist Jim Steiert of Hereford to conclude the tour at 1 p.m.

Registration for the event is \$20 per person (which includes the cost of lunch and snacks). To RSVP for the event (thereby ensuring a reliable meal count) please contact Darryl Birkenfeld, Executive Director, Ogallala Commons (darryl@ogallalacommons.org or by phone at 806-945-2255). Registration can be paid at the door on June 30.

The Field Day is sponsored by Ogallala Commons and its partners: High Plains Water District, and the Dixon Water Foundation.

AgriLife Extension County Agent Team Expands in Panhandle District

Tuesday, June 15, 2021

By Kay Ledbetter

Two new assistant county agent positions have been filled and a veteran agent has made a move in Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's District 1, headquartered out of Amarillo.

Josh Brooks, AgriLife Extension district administrator, announced the hiring of Riata Marchant as the new assistant county agent for agriculture and natural resources in Moore County and Madison Campbell as the new assistant county agent for family and community health in Hemphill County. Both started June 14.

Also, he announced Kristy Slough will transfer from Hutchinson County to Hansford County as the agriculture and natural resources agent beginning June 15.

"The reintroduction of the assistant agent position into the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service happened in 2019," Brooks said. "This will be the second set of agents who will go through this process."

He said these positions allow the agents to go into the counties and learn for one to two years before they lead their own counties.

"Riata Marchant and Madison Campbell are the two outstanding candidates for the Moore and Hemphill positions. They are focused, fun and full of energy. I can't wait to see what they get done as agents here in District 1," Brooks said.

Marchant said she is excited to join the AgriLife Extension team in Moore County.

A native of Omak, Washington, she earned her bachelor's degree in agribusiness from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma. Most recently, she served as an intern with Cargill Protein, learning the commercial side of the business. She has also worked in Oklahoma State University's soil testing lab and in the Cline Equine Center.

While I originally thought I would go into sales, I want to work with farmers and ranchers and youth, and AgriLife Extension checks off all those boxes for me," Marchant said. "I'm really excited to give back to the agriculture industry because it has been a big part of my success so far."

Campbell said she looks forward to joining the Hemphill County team

"I'm excited to expand my knowledge of AgriLife Extension and work through the many programs the agency offers to help improve the lives of the youth and adults of the community," Campbell said. "I also look forward to the opportunity to work with Tanya Holloway and learn her perspectives on family and community health."

Campbell, a native of New Braunfels, earned her bachelor's degree in animal science from Texas Tech University. Prior to taking her new position, she worked as a student assistant at Texas Tech University K-12.

Brooks said Slough's move as a tenured agent will bring stability and leadership to Hansford County.

Slough began her career with AgriLife Extension in 2003, starting first in Brazoria County and then moving to Randall County as the 4-H youth development agent. She has served the past 10 years in Hutchinson County.

She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from Texas A&M University at College Station.

Editor's Note:

"Cotton News", a weekly service of Plains Cotton Growers to the cotton industry and news media in the 42-county High Plains area, is mailed from Lubbock each Friday. Its contents are confined to news items and comments pertaining to the High Plains cotton industry which is so vital to U.S. all. Anyone interested in making comments about the contents of this column can call 806-792-4904 or Email PCG at: editor@plainscotton.org