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March 1, 2018.

A report from the group is to be given to the legislature by ways. Landowners and looking at wildlife and habitat in the right of ways, while also address priority given to adjacent system for mowing or haying in the state highway right of consider the ease and frequency of permits or a notification conjunction with agriculture and environmental groups to transportation, agriculture and natural resources to work in Language in the bill calls the commissioners of governor in April.

permitted process was successfully signed into law by the address the issue, a bill placing a moratorium on the moving and haying in the state highway right of ways. To the Minnesota Department of Transportation regarding members across the state regarding a permitting process from At the end of 2016, MFBF began hearing concerns from

DITCH MOWING

insurance plans to members if they choose.

Another provision included in the health insurance premium state during the interim.

premium costs, but also health care availability throughout the administration will continue to work on the issue of not only

Although the credit is only a fix for 2018, legislators and the governor early in session.

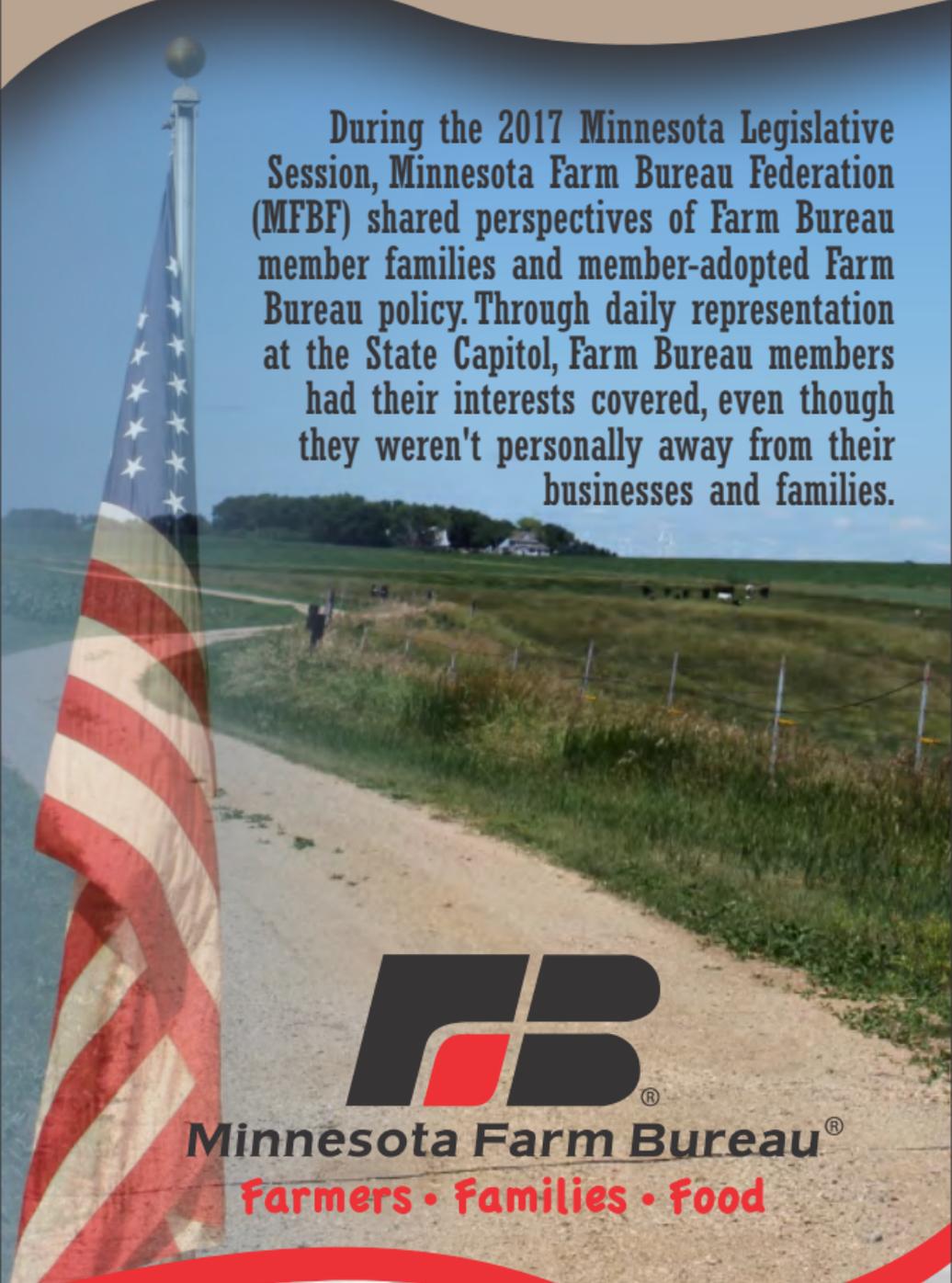
allowing for a 25 percent credit on premiums and signed by support on a health insurance premium relief bill was passed health insurance on the individual market. Strong bipartisan premium and deductible costs for members who purchased

MFBF worked hard to find a solution for the increasing

HEALTH INSURANCE

Legislative 2017 Accomplishments

During the 2017 Minnesota Legislative Session, Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) shared perspectives of Farm Bureau member families and member-adopted Farm Bureau policy. Through daily representation at the State Capitol, Farm Bureau members had their interests covered, even though they weren't personally away from their businesses and families.



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● TAX BILL

Achieving agricultural property tax relief was a significant area of focus for Farm Bureau in the 2017 Minnesota Legislative Session. This was accomplished with the passage of the omnibus tax bill during the 2017 first special session and signed by Governor Mark Dayton on May 30.

Under the provisions of the legislation, agricultural property taxpayers responsible for the agricultural portion of tax payments on school debt bonds will receive a 40 percent property tax credit, starting with the 2018 tax year. Payments from the state's general fund will cover this portion of the tax owed. For the 2018 tax year, this tax relief will tally about \$35.5 million.

Property eligible for the 40 percent agricultural tax credit includes all class 2a, 2b and 2c properties (other than property consisting of the house, garage and one acre of an agricultural homestead). Class 2a property is agricultural land consisting of parcels of property that are agricultural land and buildings. Class 2b land is rural vacant lands. Class 2c is property managed as forest lands more than 20 acres and less than 1,920 acres.

The tax bill also included a provision to assist with funding for local watersheds and counties, aimed at helping them to carry out the responsibilities for implementing and enforcing the buffer law. \$6 million in Fiscal Year (FY)18 and \$8 million in FY19 and on will assist local watersheds and counties with implementation and enforcement of buffers. To earn this money, counties or watershed districts are required to indicate to the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) that they will assume jurisdiction. The funding is provided by a formula that factors in the number of centerline miles of ditches and public water courses. Without such financial help, there were concerns that local authorities would turn to BWSR to carry out the implementation process from the state level.

● BUFFERS

Another priority for Farm Bureau's 2017 legislative agenda involved clarifying problems in the buffer law passed during the 2015 Special Session.

Minnesota Farm Bureau supported the bills in both the Senate and House, testifying before several committees in each body to express support for the clarified language. Under the changes to the buffer law:

- Language for alternative practices was strengthened to expand on the opportunities for something other than perennial buffers that meet the comparable protection standard for a specific waterway. While alternative practices are still linked to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Office Technical Guide or practices approved by the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), the law provides some local flexibility allowing approval from soil and water conservation districts on practices based on local conditions.

- Language requiring any person planting buffers or water quality protection practices to use only seed mixes verified by the MDA to prevent contamination with Palmer amaranth and other noxious weeds.

- Language allowing landowners who file a parcel-specific riparian protection compliance plan with the soil and water conservation district by November 1, 2017, shall be granted a conditional compliance waiver until July 1, 2018.

- Additional language from the Environment and Natural Resources Omnibus Bill as related to buffers appropriated \$2 million per year to counties and watershed for buffer implementation and enforcement. Coupled with the appropriations from the Tax Omnibus Bill, counties and watersheds have \$8 million in FY18 and \$10 million in FY19 and on. Additionally, \$22 million are appropriated from the Clean Water Fund to soil and water conservation districts for administrative support for buffer implementation.

● OMNIBUS AGRICULTURAL BILL

MFBF worked to include important language protecting licensed commercial and non-commercial and certified private applicators from needing to seek verification from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) prior to an application if the applicator is following instructions under the federal label. Increased training on economic thresholds and guidance to reduce the impacts of pesticides on pollinators will be added to the training manual for those who obtain a pesticide applicators license or certificate.

The bill also includes appropriations to establish a Pollinator Habitat and Research Account through the University of Minnesota. \$500,000 over the next biennium will fund research programs geared at looking at all aspects of beneficial habitat and pollinator decline in Minnesota.

The Fence Law that dates to statehood was also changed so that now only if two adjoining lands are both used in whole or in part to produce or maintain livestock for agricultural or commercial purposes and one or both owners of the land desires the land to be partly or totally fenced, the land owners or occupants shall build and maintain a partition fence between their lands in equal shares. This also pertains if the neighbor is Minnesota Department of Natural Resources land.

Other provisions include expansion of the tractor rollover protection program, increased funding for the industrial hemp program, increased funding to the MDA and to local governments for noxious and invasive weed control, increased funding for damages to crops and fences from elk, debt limit increase for Farmer-Lender mediation from \$5,000 to \$15,000, as well as establishes a wolf-livestock conflict prevention pilot program through the MDA.

