

News From Your County Agent
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Finally rainfall was reported in some parts of Zavala county last week. For those who were fortunate to receive some of this rain count yourself lucky and those that didn't keep hoping for some to come your way soon. Some folks reported half an inch while others reported 2 plus inches. At least these scattered rain showers was a good way to say good bye to July and welcome August which on average brings us better chances of rainfall to our area. Greetings to all of you and thank you so much for reading this week.

Tax Break for 4-H and FFA Members Announced

Iowa U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst wants to find ways to get more young people interested and involved in agriculture. In mid-April she and Kansas Sen. Jerry Moran introduced legislation that would make the first \$5,000 of income earned by students on Ag projects through 4-H or FFA tax free. The students would have to be 18 years old or younger. The bill is S-2774, the Agriculture Students EARN Act. EARN stands for Encourage, Acknowledge, Reward, Nurture. By offering this proposed federal tax change, the senators hope to get it passed and signed into law as an incentive to ultimately get more young people to return to live and work in rural communities.

Ernst, a former member of 4-H, said: "We must encourage our youth to get involved and learn more about modern agriculture. A student who doesn't come from a farming background may not realize the Ag industry has a demand for everything from food scientists to design engineers; agronomists to drone pilots."

The EARN Act, will promote youth involvement in programs that serve as an introduction to careers in agriculture. Alleviating some of the tax burden these hardworking students face on the income they earn from 4-H or FFA projects is a step in the right direction to help bridge the generational gap, and ensure our youth are ready to take the reins when their time comes.

Ag projects completed by students under the supervision of 4-H clubs may include showing animals at local and state fairs, growing and harvesting crops, building Ag mechanics projects, and many other possibilities. The projects encourage personal growth and responsibility, while also providing opportunity for students to generate modest revenues. The money earned by a student is often used to finance future Ag projects, deposited in savings, or used to fund a college education. The bill S-2774 would protect students involved in 4-H and FFA and the money they earn from the IRS by lowering or eliminating the tax burden on the students.

According to the latest official U.S. Ag Census, the average age of the U.S. farmer is over 58 years old and trending upward. By lowering the tax burden on projects, S-2774 would encourage more students to complete Ag projects under 4-H and FFA. The hands-on experience that supervised Ag projects provide aims to inspire a new generation of farmers and ranchers to meet the food and fiber needs of the United States and the world. Supporters of the legislation include the National FFA Organization, National 4-H Council, American Farm Bureau, National Farmers Union, and National Young Farmers Coalition.