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## Beshear speaks to farmers

Explains his position on budget issues for agriculture

By **GINA KINSLOW**  
 Glasgow Daily Times

GLASGOW — Barren County farmers were pleased to learn Tuesday night that Gov. Steve Beshear supports the funding of agriculture-related projects.

Beshear, who was the guest of honor at the Barren County Cattleman's Association meeting at the National Guard Armory, spoke to farmers about how agriculture fits into the state's economic picture.

Beshear pointed out that in his version of the state's budget, he had proposed to place 50 percent of the tobacco settlement money in the agriculture development fund so that it could be used as a means of increasing farm income.

Doing so meant he had less money for other ag-related projects.

"I couldn't propose every project that I think is needed by the farm community in this state, but we did propose to fund the UK Diagnostic Lab, which is needed, and we proposed to fund it out of general fund dollars," he said.

Money for UK's Diagnostic Lab is in the state's budget, however, funding came from the master tobacco settlement, and according to Beshear, the General Assembly is taking debt service to pay for it.

"To me, it's a matter of priorities," he said. "It's a matter of what you think is most important to the people of our state, and to me, it is vitally important that we preserve that master settlement money to spend it where it is supposed to be spent — to help diversify the agriculture economy in this state and to increase net farm income."

Roger Payne, of Glasgow, said he thought Beshear was trying to do some good things for agriculture.

"I think he was trying to spend this tobacco money well, if we can get most of it pulled back down here where it needs to be," he said.

Bruce Layne, director of the Barren County Cattleman's Association, said he thought the governor was "right on target."

"I appreciated all the things he said supporting agriculture and Barren County, and understanding how much we need this agricultural industry as an anchor ... in American society to provide jobs," he said. "We are in a minority politically in America. People don't understand that agriculture provides jobs through John Deere and the laboratories of Pioneer Seed Corn, the Ford Motor Company and Dodge trucks."

"We are the first stewards of the land and we are the first conservationists and it's for everybody's benefit that we do a good job with it," Layne said.

Abby Jones, vice president of Barren County High School's FFA Chapter, stole a few minutes to talk to Beshear about the Kentucky FFA Leadership Training Center.

"I told him, 'I know that there are priorities, and healthcare and stuff is important, but building your leaders for today is also a very important thing and that leadership center makes a huge impact on so many kids,'" she said. "I think so many people look over that and don't realize it. There are three organizations — FFA, FBLA and FCCLA — that all attend camp there. They are dire in need of some new facilities, because it is getting so



### Photos



Gov. Steve Beshear, center, was on hand Tuesday night for the Barren County Cattleman's Association meeting at the National Guard Armory in Glasgow. He speaks with Valerie Stokes, of Glasgow. Rep. Johnny Bell, D-Glasgow, left, looks on. Beshear spoke to farmers about the state budget and what funding will be available for agriculture-related projects.  
**GINA KINSLOW/Glasgow Daily Times** (Click for larger image)

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run down because it is used so much."

Jones said Beshear assured her there would be funding in the state's budget for the leadership center.

"That was my main thing here tonight was to promote FFA and make him realize how important it is," she said.

Beshear also talked about the budget in general.

He proposed \$18 million be set aside to replace the Glasgow State Nursing Facility on State Avenue.

"The place is about to fall down. It is time that we replace it," he said. "Unfortunately, while I proposed it and Johnny Bell has supported it, it's not in that budget. But I can tell you this, it may not end up in there, but we're not done yet. There's two more days up there next week and we are going to do everything we can to make sure that facility is funded."

The facility provides the Glasgow-Barren County area with more than 100 jobs, something Bell said the community couldn't stand to lose. That's why Bell said he voted against the budget.

"As you all know, we've lost a lot of jobs in the last eight to 10 years. We've got to bring that to a halt and I felt like it was time to take a stand on that when we had the possibility of losing 150 to 160 jobs," Bell said. "We need to make sure everyone across the state knows that we are disappointed that they want to attempt to take 150 jobs from this area."



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