

## BOARD OF AGRICULTURE MUST CONDUCT HEARINGS ON LAND

By Shawn Ashley  
Staff Writer

■(GIT) The Oklahoma Board of Agriculture must conduct hearings for protesting landowners who present factual allegations showing that proposed feed yard operations may be a direct impact on their property, according to an attorney general's opinion released Friday.

The opinion, requested by Sen. Ben. Brown, D-Oklahoma City, says, in part, "When written comments received by landowners within the vicinity of the proposed feed yard operation present specific factual allegations showing that the proposed feed yard operation may have a direct, substantial and immediate affect upon their property or legal interest, the Board of Agriculture must hold an individual proceeding for the protesting landowner."

The opinion also says that landowners living within one-half mile of a proposed feed lot operation must receive notice when an application for a feedlot permit is received. The landowner also has the right to supply written comments to the board, protesting the permitting of the operation.

"A number of Oklahomans have raised serious concerns about the impact of hog farms and feedlot operations on their property and water sources," said Attorney General Drew Edmondson. "The law clearly states that feed yards must meet specific requirements to avoid pollution of ground and surface water and other types of pollution. As these lots are permitted for operation, there must be a careful review by the Board

of Agriculture as to the impact on property owners and other residents in the vicinity."

Edmondson urged the board to conduct the mandated hearings whenever landowners followed the prescribed procedure: Responding to the notice in writing and supplying the board with a factual representation that the location of the feed yard will cause a direct harm to them and their property.

The opinion, No. 96-76, was prepared by senior assistant attorney general Neal Leader.

## LAND COMMISSION HOLDS ROUTINE MEETING

By Shawn Ashley  
Staff Writer

■(GIT) The Commissioners of the Land held a routine meeting Tuesday, approving the appraisal of nine tracts of land for sale and authorizing the commission's general counsel to execute certificate's of purchase in the absence of its secretary.

Leasees on nine tracts of land totaling more than 600 acres had asked that their land be appraised for possible sale. Those appraisals were approved by the commission without discussion. Also approved was the appraisal for a separate tract of land which will now be subject to sale.

The commission also gave its approval to a request from the commission's secretary, Rob Johnson, to allow its general counsel to execute certificates of purchase in the absence of the secretary. The move, the commission was told, would assist its office in issuing such certificates when the secretary is not available. Certificates of purchase are similar to contracts for sale, and it is not until the purchase price of a piece of property is paid in full that a buyer receives a patent or deed to the land.

Following a brief executive session, the commission directed its staff to proceed with participation in a settle conference in the Commissioners of the Land Office v. Triton Oil Company lawsuit (CJ-95-170), currently pending in Beckham County. Specific information concerning the direction given the staff was not discussed under terms of the executive session provision of the Open Meeting Act.

*"When the mind is thinking, it is talking to itself."*

Plato

## OKLAHOMA CONSIDERS OPEN STUDIO PROJECT

By Michelle Boyd Waters  
Staff Writer

■(GIT) Oklahoma Arts Council representatives are working with the National Endowment for the Arts to put 10 local artists and local cultural organizations on the Internet through a project called Open Studio, said Nancy Huff, Arts Council public information director.

"We will know more when we return from the state arts conference in Memphis, Nov. 21-24," Huff said.

The representatives will discuss the state's eligibility to participate in the project at the conference in Memphis.

"Open Studio is a groundbreaking project that will increase cultural and arts resources on the information superhighway and make the Internet a reality for people everywhere," NEA Chairman Jane Alexander said.

The NEA is working with the Benton Foundation on the nation's first initiative to provide community access to the arts on the Internet at sites in all 50 states as well as propel the nonprofit arts online by helping them to become effective information providers on the World Wide Web.

This \$1 million initiative, called Open Studio — The Arts Online, is a collaboration between the NEA and the Benton Foundation to help nonprofit arts organizations and artists go online, increase the arts and cultural presence on the Internet, expand the online arts audience, and provide public Internet access at arts and community institutions. Open Studio is funded through an NEA Leadership Initiative award of \$500,000, which the Benton Foundation is committed to matching as part of a cooperative agreement.

"The National Endowment for the Arts was created to make the arts accessible to all people of all backgrounds in every district of the nation," Alexander said.

"This project is about ensuring a public culture," said Larry Kirkman, executive director of the Benton Foundation. "We must work to protect noncommercial public space in the digital age. Artists and arts institutions, schools, libraries, as well as other independent voices must be able to make their non-commercial imprint on American cultural life and values."

The two components of Open Studio include:

1) Free community access to the Internet.

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