

Farmers and ranchers from across the state were kicking tires and checking out new technologies at this year's Husker Harvest Days show, but more than 1,000 of them had a Nebraska Farm Bureau anti-Cap and Trade sticker expressing their opposition to the legislation.

"I'm worried about Cap and Trade and the affects it is going to have on fuel prices and electricity. It's kind of scary," said Ed Runty, a farmer and member of the Saline County Farm Bureau.

Cap and Trade was definitely on the minds of farmers and ranchers visiting Husker Harvest Days.

"Many people stopped by the Nebraska Farm Bureau booth to send messages to Nebraska's U.S. senators about the devastating impact cap and trade legislation would have on Nebraska agriculture," Keith Olsen, president of Nebraska Farm Bureau said.

Farm Bureau's staff collected more than 250 cards asking Nebraska's two U.S. senators to continue to oppose the climate change bill.

They also sent a number of direct email messages to the state's congressional delegation using the FB-ACT system, said Jordan Dux, Farm Bureau's national affairs coordinator.

"We want Senators Mike Johanns, R-Neb., and Ben Nelson, D-Neb., to take a brand new look at the legislation and avoid the mistakes in the House's flawed bill," Dux said.

Dustin Ladenburger, a young cattle producer from Hitchcock County Farm Bureau, agrees that the Cap and Trade legislation in the House bill should have everyone worried.

"I have a list of concerns and the largest is Cap and Trade. It would increase the cost to produce our crops and ultimately affect the general public by raising energy cost, which would literally raise the cost of just about everything consumers buy," Ladenburger said.

Those who support the legislation say producers will greatly benefit from the sale of carbon credits. But Joel Lamplot who farms near Thurston and is a member of Thurston County Farm Bureau is skeptical.

"My fertilizer and fuel costs will go up and the sale of carbon credits will do little to off-set that increase," Lamplot said.

"Many of Nebraska's farmers are not able to practice no-till farming or afford to set land aside to plant trees to capture carbon.

Not every cattle or hog producer can afford to capture methane through expensive methane digesters," Olsen said.

According to Farm Bureau, any piece of climate change legislation should have these principals: Benefits must outweigh costs, "plug the hole" created by lost energy sources, ensure global participation in climate change policies, no cap on agriculture, no Clean Air Act regulations of greenhouse gasses, no carbon tax and give USDA a leadership role.

"Farmers and ranchers are dependent on abundant and affordable energy, not only for operation of vehicles but also for production essentials such as fertilizers, irrigation and crop protection tools. Raising production costs while lowering farm income will affect producers of all crops and livestock commodities. All of agriculture is impacted by the climate change bill," Dux said.