

TENNESSEE FARM BUREAU FEDERATION
Public Policy Division



**Weight Limits on County Roads
Policy Development 2015**

Issue:

Farmers and loggers rely on safe and consistent roads. Amendments added to legislation in 2014 would disallow counties from lowering weight limits on county roads below the state minimum of 80,000 lbs. (10% variance). Farm and forestry trucks have historically loaded to these limits to keep transportation efficient, economical and legal. Lowering limits on roads between the farm and state highways will virtually make the state limit submissive to any others.

Questions:

1. Should counties have the ability to lower limits for farm and forestry vehicle below the state minimum?
2. Is agriculture a major economic contributor in your county?
3. Are roads in your county built sufficiently?
4. Does your county impose weight limits?

Background:

Farmers and timberland owners depend on county roads to transport their products from the land to the market and some argue rural commerce is suppressed by county road weight limits. Farmers and loggers pay hundreds of thousands of dollars every year in fuel taxes and also in property taxes.

Tennessee law allows county highway officials to lower weight limits on county roads. There is not a specific process (such as core drilling, bonding, notification, etc.) for making a weight limit determination. However, from county to county there are different administrative processes for making such a decision. There is also no law to bring consistency and predictability when transporting from county to county. County highway officials believe local governments need the ability to limit weights to protect the surface of county roads especially with reductions in state road funding used to maintain and repair county roads.

Farm Bureau Policy:

Transportation (Partial)

We oppose rural road weight restrictions that may hamper the farmer's ability to transport supplies or commodities. Farm Bureau should work to establish a clear right of farm-to-market use of rural roads.