

2022 Proposed Resolutions

Submitted by the Policy Development Committee to the Michigan Farm Bureau Annual Meeting Delegates

Delegate sessions will start with recommended amendments to American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) policies, then state policies, and finish with Michigan Farm Bureau policies.

To help prepare and plan for discussion on issues receiving significant input from county Farm Bureaus, the following policies are scheduled at the identified delegate session time and will be presented in the order listed. Any listed policy not covered in the suggested time slot will be covered during the next scheduled session.

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Policy Discussion Schedule

AFBF

#238 NATIONAL DAIRY PROGRAM

(amendment at line 1.1.1.3)

1. Federal Milk Marketing Orders (FMMOs)

1.1. *Price Discovery*

1.1.1. We support:

- 1.1.1.1. A market-oriented national dairy program that allows U.S. producers to compete in a world market based on fair and open trade policies;
- 1.1.1.2. Any changes needed to facilitate the long-term market development of value-added products;
- 1.1.1.3. **A competitive pay price for farmers;**
- 1.1.1.4. An expanded role for markets and private enterprise in establishing prices for all classes of milk;
- 1.1.1.5. Improving price discovery through mandatory daily electronic reporting of most dairy products, including reporting and auditing of prices and inventories, including high-value dairy products as well as prices paid for milk and milk components. Consideration should be given to including different product specifications and products sold under terms of a forward contract;
- 1.1.1.6. Improvements in milk price formulas to eliminate adverse impacts such as the wide block barrel spread, whey price inversion or other price misalignments;
- 1.1.1.7. Removing barrel cheese from CME Spot markets;
- 1.1.1.8. Revisions made by USDA to the National Dairy Product Sales Report being prominently featured in the price release, including an analysis of the farm-level price impact of the revision;
- 1.1.1.9. All milk processors providing farms with a minimum of 60 days' notice before any changes can go into effect for premium structure or required fees. Processors must provide at least 90 days' notice before termination of service; and
- 1.1.1.10. The separation of modifications to mandatory price reporting from modification to end-product pricing formulas and minimum price enforcements.

1.2. *Changes in FMMOs*

1.2.1. We support:

- 1.2.1.1. Modifications in the FMMO structure, formulas and price classes used to compute milk prices in order to better reflect current market conditions and enhance transparency and take into account the regional differences in the cost of milk production and incorporate multiple component pricing into all classes of milk; an economic analysis prior to any major revisions to the number of milk classes or Federal Milk Marketing Orders. This analysis should include economic impacts to the dairy industry and farmer income;
- 1.2.1.2. Changes to the FMMO program to reduce or eliminate negative Producer Price Differentials (PPD) and reduce the economic incentives to de-pool milk including but not limited to modifications to the Class I milk pricing formula, adjustments to pool qualification criteria and stricter limitations on producer milk receipts in months following the de-pooling of milk;
- 1.2.1.3. A more transparent and consistent format for processors to use on milk checks to producers including listing percentage of pooled and de-pooled milk by each processor and PPD calculations;
- 1.2.1.4. A review and audit of the PPD on milk;
- 1.2.1.5. USDA commissioning a study of the feasibility and impacts to change to a two-class pricing system instead of the four-class system;

- 1.2.1.6. USDA publishing resources that show how each FMMO operates and differs by region relative to pooling and de-pooling of milk;
- 1.2.1.7. Modifying the FMMO system to encourage the production of milk protein concentrates in the United States;
- 1.2.1.8. The producer/handler exemption being limited in all Federal Milk Marketing Orders to 3 million pounds per month to protect other pool producer members from unfair competition, but do not support its elimination;
- 1.2.1.9. USDA to immediately promulgate regulations on the pricing of domestically produced MPCs;
- 1.2.1.10. Eliminating transportation credits;
- 1.2.1.11. A minimum 10 delivery days per month in FMMOs;
- 1.2.1.12. Revisions to the FMMO, including fluid milk pricing, progress through the normal channels at USDA that will provide thorough economic analysis and public hearings for producers to be engaged, rather than through legislative override;
- 1.2.1.13. Revisions to the FMMO System to increase touch-base days required by milk handlers, producers and sellers outside an order;
- 1.2.1.14. Dairy farmers being able to vote independently and confidentially during an FMMO approval or referendum process;
- 1.2.1.15. Eliminating provisions on a "no" vote on a referendum causing elimination of the entire FMMO;
- 1.2.1.16. Modifying the referendum approval threshold to require a two-thirds majority of the voting producers and two-thirds majority of the voting milk volume to amend or issue an FMMO;
- 1.2.1.17. An economic analysis of the impact of make allowances and modifying make allowances on dairy commodity production, dairy farmer income, dairy cooperative income and dairy processor income. Such analysis shall consider the impact of modifying make allowances as follows:
 - (i) Make them a function of the commodity value; and
 - (ii) A cap based on the value of wholesale dairy commodities or classified milk prices.
- 1.2.1.18. USDA developing an improved method to determine the Class I milk mover base price that is not reliant solely on manufacturing dairy products, better reflects local market conditions, provides more appropriate economic incentives to fluid milk producers and processors, recognizes the costs in servicing a fluid milk market and continues to ensure fluid milk consumers have a quality and adequate supply of fresh fluid milk. Until an improved method is developed, we support going back to the "higher of" the class III or class IV plus 74 cents in price calculating the monthly FMMO Class I mover;
- 1.2.1.19. Locking the block barrel spread to no more than \$0.035;
- 1.2.1.20. Federal milk marketing orders 5 and 7. should be based on multiple component pricing instead of skim/fat pricing;
- 1.2.1.21. Flexible Class I location differentials that are adjusted for seasonality. We support more frequent evaluation of Class I location differentials. We support an update to Class I location differentials that includes higher differentials in surplus milk production regions to limit milk moving into deficit regions of the U.S.;
- 1.2.1.22. Class I beverage milk pricing and pooling provisions including all beverage-style products using milk or dairy products as an ingredient;
- 1.2.1.23. Changing the Federal Order to increase butter fat in butter from 80% to 82%.; and
- 1.2.1.24. A change to bloc voting that would require cooperatives to give notice to members of their intended vote and the member's right to opt out of that vote and vote independently and confidentially.

- 1.2.2. We oppose make allowances being indexed for factors such as inflation, labor or energy.

2. Labeling and Standards of Identity

2.1. We Support:

- 2.1.1. Plain and flavored whole milk be required to contain a minimum of 3.5 percent butterfat;
- 2.1.2. Banning the sale of artificial or imitation dairy products not labeled imitation;
- 2.1.3. Labeling a product cheese only when it is produced from natural milk products;
- 2.1.4. A definition of milk protein concentrate (MPC) and a standard of identity that will define appropriate use of these components as well as a means of enforcement;
- 2.1.5. The FDA allowing milk to be labeled by its fat-free content instead of total fat content;
- 2.1.6. FDA updating their standards of identity to recognize current technology in milk processing; and
- 2.1.7. The removal of the rBST-free label from all milk products.

2.2. We oppose the FDA changing the definition of milk.

3. Milk in Schools

3.1. We support:

- 3.1.1. The placing of milk dispensing equipment in public schools; and
- 3.1.2. Whole milk being promoted and advanced through the special milk program through the schools, welfare groups and the U.S. military.

3.2. We oppose any regulations or legislation that will ban or limit flavored milk in schools.

4. Trade

4.1. We support:

- 4.1.1. Legislation that treats imports of milk protein concentrates, ultra-filtered milk and casein equivalent to and consistent with the importation of similar dairy products;
- 4.1.2. Regulations which provide for and require the inspection of all imported dairy products at the port of entry;
- 4.1.3. An increased effort by the dairy industry to develop domestic and foreign markets;
- 4.1.4. The use of Cooperatives Working Together (CWT) and urge participation by all dairy producers;
- 4.1.5. The concept of expanding the Export Assistance Program of CWT; and
- 4.1.6. Modifications to milk pricing regulations that facilitate enhanced export opportunities.

5. Dairy: General

5.1. We support:

- 5.1.1. Efforts to manage milk supply which account for the regional differences in fluid milk demand and supply;
- 5.1.2. Implementation of the California standards for solids-non-fat in fluid milk at the national level including butterfat;
- 5.1.3. A national program for dairy product promotion, research and nutrition education and the U.S. Dairy Export Council;
- 5.1.4. USDA moving more aggressively on the collection of promotion fees on all U.S. and imported dairy products including milk protein concentrates;
- 5.1.5. A national dairy plant security program to enhance a producer's ability to recover losses due to the financial failure of milk handlers or cooperatives. All those procuring milk from producers should be included in the program;
- 5.1.6. Producers having a priority lien on their milk;
- 5.1.7. Research to determine a "no-effect" level for any antibiotics and aflatoxins in milk according to Food and Drug Administration (FDA) standards;
- 5.1.8. Uniform testing procedures for antibiotics and aflatoxins that detect levels according to FDA standards;
- 5.1.9. The enrollment of all dairy producers in the Milk and Dairy Beef Quality Assurance Program and their participation in the National Dairy Farmers Assuring Responsible Management program;

- 5.1.10. Inspectors being required to contact the farmer/farm manager upon arrival at the farm;
- 5.1.11. A state or local inspector accompanying all U.S. Department of Health and Human Services inspectors. Producers should receive a full report and explanation upon completion of the inspection, which includes: deficiencies, items inspected, equipment disassembled for inspection and overall score;
- 5.1.12. Only pasteurized fluid milk being sold or distributed for human consumption;
- 5.1.13. Clearly defined, concise rules and regulations by FDA for automated milking installation systems;
- 5.1.14. Eliminating sequestration on Dairy Margin Coverage program payments;
- 5.1.15. The use of dairy checkoff dollars for research on non-food uses of dairy products;
- 5.1.16. A flexible farmer- and industry-driven milk management system;
- 5.1.17. All dairy payments to farmers from USDA being made through FSA and not through milk co-ops and handlers;
- 5.1.18. USDA developing annual reports for the dairy industry on the following topics, including but not limited to:
 - 5.1.18.1. Economic analysis of the dairy industry;
 - 5.1.18.2. Impact of make allowances and proposed recommendations for make allowance costs;
 - 5.1.18.3. Impact of make allowances and proposed recommendations for make allowance costs;
 - 5.1.18.4. Mandatory price reporting;
 - 5.1.18.5. Alternative price options for the dairy industry;
 - 5.1.18.6. Alternative class recommendations for the dairy industry;
 - 5.1.18.7. An analysis of export prices and markets and their true reflection of prices paid to dairy farmers; and
- 5.1.19. Educational and training materials on an ongoing and annual basis for dairy farmers, processors and handlers as required by the pandemic assistance relief program.
- 5.2. We oppose:
 - 5.2.1. A mandatory federal quota system; and
 - 5.2.2. Creation of a mandatory fund financed by a checkoff on dairy farmers to guarantee milk checks. ♦

AFBF

#239 NATIONAL FARM POLICY

(amendments at lines 9.2.2.3, 9.2.3.4.2.6, 10.2.42)

1. Agriculture is strategically important to the survival of the United States. Our nation's economy, energy, environment and national security are dependent upon the viability of the agricultural industry. Agriculture must be treated as a strategic resource by our nation and reflected as such in local, state and national government policies.
2. We support a consistent, long-term, market-oriented farm policy that will:
 - 2.1. Rely less on government and increasingly more on the market as well as providing more options for insurance and revenue assurance products that are more equitable for all commodities in all production regions of the country against adverse market fluctuations and weather-related hazards;
 - 2.2. Support farmers during times of market disruption based on gross revenue and cost of production;
 - 2.3. Allow farmers to take maximum advantage of market opportunities at home and abroad without government interference;
 - 2.4. Encourage production decisions based on market demand;
 - 2.5. Develop risk management tools to deal with the inherent fluctuations in revenue and income associated with farming;
 - 2.6. Provide strong and effective safety net/risk management programs that do not guarantee a profit, but instead protects producers from catastrophic occurrences while minimizing the potential for farm programs affecting production decisions;
 - 2.7. Is compliant with the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements;

- 2.8. Reduce complexity while allowing producers increased flexibility to plant in response to market demand; and
- 2.9. Increase efforts to encourage processing and marketing opportunities for direct-to-market producers. Infrastructure, workforce development and local processing capacity need to be expanded as this market demand has increased exponentially.
3. We oppose:
 - 3.1. New mandatory government supply management programs and acreage reduction programs, excluding the Conservation Reserve Program and conservation easements, for marketing loan commodities under the current farm program;
 - 3.2. A farmer-owned reserve or any federally controlled grain reserve with the exception of the existing, capped emergency commodity reserve;
 - 3.3. Income means testing. However, if such programs are implemented, they must be based on net income rather than gross income;
 - 3.4. Payment limitations; and
 - 3.5. Targeting of benefits being applied to farm program payment eligibility.
4. U.S. policies affecting agriculture should be designed to:
 - 4.1. Ensure that U.S. consumers have access to a stable, ample, safe and nutritious food supply;
 - 4.2. Minimize domestic and world hunger and nutrition deficiencies;
 - 4.3. Create and sustain a long-term, competitive and profitable agricultural industry;
 - 4.4. Reduce regulatory burdens on farmers and ranchers;
 - 4.5. Provide a tax structure that is fair and equitable to present and future generations of farmers;
 - 4.6. Continue to improve the environment through expanded incentives to encourage voluntary soil conservation, water and air quality programs, and advanced technological and biotechnological procedures that are based on sound science and are economically feasible;
 - 4.7. Enhance U.S. agriculture's access and competitiveness in the world market;
 - 4.8. Improve the quality of rural life and increase rural economic development;
 - 4.9. Improve Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) to decrease county yield disparity;
 - 4.10. Prioritize Risk Management Agency (RMA) yield data as the primary source of yield data for National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) surveys and future government programs similar to ARC-County as long as RMA data at the farm level is protected from the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA);
 - 4.11. Compensate farmers for their positive impact on habitat, wildlife and the environment;
 - 4.12. Recognize the regional and commodity-based differences that exist in U.S. production agriculture and provide programs that meet these needs, while recognizing the need to be internationally competitive; and
 - 4.13. Be implemented in a way that minimizes the negative effects on non-program crops and livestock production and ensure that accepted conservation practices such as cover crops do not impact compliance or payment eligibility. Statements of support for individual commodity programs and provisions shall adhere to these general principles of farm programs, regulatory, international trade, and tax provisions.
5. Improving net farm income, enhancing the economic opportunity for farmers, preserving property rights and conserving the environment are our most important goals.
6. We should undertake a comprehensive effort to assure U.S. producer competitiveness. Competitiveness issues should include biotech seed cost, agricultural research, U.S. transportation infrastructure, U.S. farm bill structure and funding, exchange rates and other factors relevant to agricultural global competitiveness.
7. We support the development of a protocol plan to ensure better stability of farm commodities and infrastructure in times of national emergencies to prevent income loss and to enable the reliable distribution of food.

8. We support including the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) improvements in the next farm bill.
9. **Farm Bill Principles:**
 - 9.1. We support the following principles to guide development of programs in the next farm bill:
 - 9.1.1. Protecting current Farm Bill program spending;
 - 9.1.2. Maintaining a unified farm bill which includes nutrition programs and farm programs together;
 - 9.1.3. Any changes to current farm legislation be an amendment to the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 or the Agricultural Act of 1949; and
 - 9.1.4. Risk management tools which include both federal crop insurance and commodity programs as top funding priorities.
 - 9.2. **Other Principles:**
 - 9.2.1. **Commodity Programs:**
 - 9.2.1.1. We support:
 - 9.2.1.1.1. Continuation of a counter-cyclical program like the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program and a revenue program like the ARC program, including using RMA data as the primary source to determine a more accurate county yield as long as RMA data at the farm level data is protected from FOIA. If ARC-County is continued, we support changes to make the program more effective and fairer to all farmers;
 - 9.2.1.1.2. If existing programs continue, the opportunity for farmers to re-elect and/or re-enroll;
 - 9.2.1.1.3. Basing Title I payments on historic, rather than planted, acres;
 - 9.2.1.1.4. Modifying "Actively Engaged" rules to more broadly define "family" by including non-lineal familial relationships such as first or second cousins. The family farm exemption from the management restriction and recordkeeping requirements should remain in place;
 - 9.2.1.1.5. Developing farm savings accounts as a risk management option for all producers;
 - 9.2.1.1.6. The current provisions for the peanut program in the 2018 farm bill;
 - 9.2.1.1.7. Individual farm program payments for any actively engaged farmer regardless of the farm's organizational structure;
 - 9.2.1.1.8. A flexible, renewable one-year program that incentivizes specified nutrient loss reduction or management practices on land currently in production with an emphasis on improving water quality;
 - 9.2.1.1.9. A reference price increase for all Title I commodities;
 - 9.2.1.1.10. Unassigned, former generic base acres being redistributed to update crop base on the same farm;
 - 9.2.1.1.11. Increased commodity loan rates;
 - 9.2.1.1.12. Classifying program crop base acres that are being utilized in renewable energy projects as "conservation," the same as CRP with program crop base acres maintained and no ARC/PLC paid. When the renewable energy project is decommissioned and the idled base acres restored for agricultural production, farm program support and the payment base can be reactivated to transition the base acres from renewable energy production back into program crop production; and
 - 9.2.1.1.13. Inflation-adjusted farm program payment limits.
 - 9.2.2. **Risk Management Programs**
 - 9.2.2.1. The availability of crop yield and/or revenue insurance at current subsidy levels for all producers of all crops, aquaculture, livestock and poultry in the country; and
 - 9.2.2.2. Changes in the Livestock Forage Program to allow contiguous counties also be declared eligible for disaster

assistance, and for increasing the number of weather stations in a county.

9.2.2.3. Enhancements to Whole Farm Revenue Protection insurance that provide a more appropriate level of affordable coverage and safety net for diversified farming systems along with reducing the amount of paperwork required.

9.2.3. **Dairy:**

- 9.2.3.1. Further development and availability of the new Dairy Revenue Protection insurance product and the ability for producers to use it in conjunction with the Dairy Livestock Gross Margin (LGM) program and a commodity title dairy safety net;
- 9.2.3.2. Expansion of RMA risk management programs for dairy producers, with the inclusion of milk as a defined commodity;
- 9.2.3.3. All federal insurance programs related to the dairy industry taking into consideration negative Producer Price Differentials (PPDs) to ensure that farmers actually receive the margin that they insured;
- 9.2.3.4. Require a commodity title dairy safety net program that:
 - 9.2.3.4.1. Gives farmers an option to select either a program that provides protection against a decline in milk price or a decline in milk margin;
 - 9.2.3.4.2. Includes significant enhancements to any gross margin program to effectively support dairy farmers, including:
 - 9.2.3.4.2.1. Adjusting the program trigger to function monthly;
 - 9.2.3.4.2.2. Increasing Tier 1 coverage from 5 million pounds of milk up to 10 million pounds of milk for all dairy producers;
 - 9.2.3.4.2.3. Making tier levels more affordable;
 - 9.2.3.4.2.4. Increasing the catastrophic margin level from \$4.00 to \$5.00 and maintaining the ability to buy up to \$8.00 margin coverage;
 - 9.2.3.4.2.5. Making strategic adjustments to the feed formula;
 - 9.2.3.4.2.6. ~~Allowing enrolled farms the option to use a three-year rolling production average or current production for payment calculations; and~~
 - 9.2.3.4.2.7. Using the regional or state level all milk and feed price rather than national level price estimates in the calculation of margin over feed cost for the purpose of calculating DMC program payouts.

9.2.4. **Conservation:**

- 9.2.4.4. Maintaining funding for federal conservation programs which maintain environmental benefits;
- 9.2.4.5. Working lands conservation programs over retirement lands programs;
- 9.2.4.6. Maintaining the current prioritization of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding being targeted to livestock producers;
- 9.2.4.7. Calculation of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) rental rates being re-examined annually at enrollment to ensure they mirror, but do not exceed, the rental rates of comparable land in the immediate area;

- 9.2.4.8. Marginal and highly erodible land returning as the main focus of the CRP. The current limit of 24 million acres in the CRP should continue;
 - 9.2.4.9. Improvements to the State Technical Committees to make them more ag friendly by encouraging producers' participation and input;
 - 9.2.4.10. Limits the size of pollinator tracts with an emphasis on smaller parcels and cap pollinator rates;
 - 9.2.4.11. A path to eligibility for farms that have not previously been in compliance;
 - 9.2.4.12. Requiring continual sign-up periods to allow for projects to come online throughout the year.
 - 9.2.4.13. Increasing Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) funding;
 - 9.2.4.14. Increasing the ceiling on the eligible federal share for ACEP conservation easement to 80 percent of the easement value;
 - 9.2.4.15. Requiring continual sign-up periods to allow for projects to come online throughout the year; and
 - 9.2.4.16. Allowing for ACEP-Agricultural Land Easement funds to be used to cover transaction costs incurred by landowners and eligible entities facilitating the transaction as well as project start-up costs.
- 9.2.5. Specialty Crops:**
- 9.2.5.4. Incorporating all types of domestic fruits and vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned and dried) into the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program providing an affordable option for increasing the variety available year-round for low income school children and more market opportunities for producers. Priority must be given to fresh and locally grown product when available notwithstanding price;
 - 9.2.5.5. Maintaining adequate funding for the specialty crop industry with emphasis on fundamental research, marketing and promotions, and pest management programs;
 - 9.2.5.6. The USDA giving more consideration to specialty crop growers when considering planting history for various programs; and
 - 9.2.5.7. Requiring RMA to include all counties that produce wild and cultivated blueberries to be covered under the federal crop insurance program.
- 9.2.6. Livestock:**
- 9.2.6.4. The exploration of new risk management tools for livestock producers;
 - 9.2.6.5. The Risk Management Agency continually working to improve the livestock and other risk management programs; and
 - 9.2.6.6. We support the expansion of the Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) program and increasing of the subsidy rate to similar support levels of other commodity risk management programs.
- 9.2.7. Energy:**
- 9.2.7.4. Adequate funding for the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP).
- 9.2.8. Rural Development:**
- 9.2.8.4. Streamlining programs and a more transparent and efficient grant and loan approval process for rural development programs that includes the timely approval of applications and a more effective priority-setting process so that federal funds are expended on projects with the greatest economic potential; and
 - 9.2.8.5. Modifying the broadband programs to increase utilization of loans and grants in rural/underserved communities. We support adequate funding for improvements in USDA's Community Connect, Distance Learning and Telemedicine, and Rural Gigabit Network pilot programs.
- 9.2.9. Trade:**
- 9.2.9.4. Increased funding for the Foreign Market Development (FMD) program and Market Assistance Program (MAP).

9.2.10. **Credit:**

- 9.2.10.4. Increasing the amount of funding authorized for the Farm Service Agency loan guarantee programs and raising the current caps on individual amounts a farmer may be granted;
- 9.2.10.5. A floating conservation-oriented commodity loan program that increases loan prices, addresses conservation goals and satisfies the credit needs of beginning farmers; and
- 9.2.10.6. More streamlined and minimized application requirements for young and beginning farmer guarantee programs to be more aligned with agricultural lenders.

9.2.11. **Research:**

- 9.2.11.4. Funding for agricultural research and education.

9.2.12. **Acreage Crop Reporting Streamlining Initiative (ACRSI):**

- 9.2.12.4. Simplifying procedures, reducing paperwork requirements and streamlining interactions between the Farm Service Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Agricultural Statistics Service and the Risk Management Agency; and
- 9.2.12.5. Congress creating Farm Bill language directing USDA to adopt better data integration and analysis practices from farmer driven data to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of farm programs, crop insurance, and conservation programs while supporting producer profitability and environmental performance on working lands.

10. **General Issues**

10.2. We support:

- 10.2.3. Giving farmers the ability to sign up once for the duration of the farm bill, assuming there are no changes to the farming operations;
- 10.2.4. Allowing farms with fewer than 10 base acres to be eligible to receive farm program payments;
- 10.2.5. Requiring compliance by the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) with all federal rule-making notification procedures;
- 10.2.6. Farm Service Agency (FSA) evaluating the drought criteria used for drought compensation;
- 10.2.7. Providing timely notification to producers of all program requirements;
- 10.2.8. Providing payment notification information that match 1099 tax forms with descriptions that clearly reflect the source of the payment;
- 10.2.9. Implementation in such a manner as to minimize the disruptions to landlord-tenant relationships. We support efforts to provide the state FSA Committee authority to determine eligibility requirements for farm program benefits;
- 10.2.10. The elimination of any USDA requirement to report the specific cash rental amounts between a landlord and a tenant in an effort to protect a farmer's right to privacy. We do, however, support the requirement to report the type of lease agreement;
- 10.2.11. Requiring FSA to constantly review and make public the formula used to set posted county prices (PCPs) to ensure they accurately reflect market conditions at the county level and that the differential between the cash price and PCP does not penalize producers or county elevators. The formula for calculating the terminal price, differential, and the PCP should be public information to allow producers the opportunity to maximize program benefits;
- 10.2.12. Providing the secretary of agriculture discretionary authority to provide assistance to producers during times of economic disaster;
- 10.2.13. Allowing for verification of actual physical measurement if computer measuring or Global Positioning System (GPS) measurements of farm acres results in different acreage measurements than has been the historical case. The cost incurred for such measurement should be borne by the party in error;

- 10.2.14. Allowing a single sign up that covers all programs for a crop year;
- 10.2.15. Uniform deadlines for FSA and RMA acreage reporting;
- 10.2.16. Programmatic and systemic efficiencies that eliminate the need for repeated farmer visits to county FSA offices;
- 10.2.17. Changing FSA regulations to not require farms that are owned and operated by the same individual, but not contiguous, be reconstituted into one farm;
- 10.2.18. Individuals directly involved in family farming operations not having payment eligibility adversely affected by farm business loans secured by cross collateralization, (same assets pledged for multiple producer loans);
- 10.2.19. The establishment of a reasonable time limitation on USDA's ability to alter or reverse an FSA compliance determination so that no producer enrolled in a farm program may be penalized in a subsequent crop year;
- 10.2.20. Allowing either a conservation compliance plan or a confined animal feeding operation permit to meet eligibility requirements for farms which require a conservation compliance plan for eligibility for certain USDA farm programs;
- 10.2.21. Funding sources to assist farmers in complying with livestock regulations;
- 10.2.22. The FSA facility loan program to include all commodity storage;
- 10.2.23. Allowing tenants with multiple landlords to treat each farm as a separate entity for compliance with the farm bill;
- 10.2.24. Action by a landlord not placing any tenant farm program payments in jeopardy. The tenant should be able to maintain eligibility for all farms;
- 10.2.25. Consolidation of the power of attorney form to enable the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the FSA and the Risk Management Agency (RMA) to honor one power of attorney form;
- 10.2.26. Producers being able to use Federal Crop Insurance records for proving yield for base and yield updates;
- 10.2.27. Allowing grain bag storage systems as storage for USDA commodity loan purposes;
- 10.2.28. Efforts to harmonize methods of property descriptions between FSA, Crop Insurance and the RMA to streamline information sharing between the two agencies and to develop a common method to establish crop yields for the various programs, as well as exempting farm operations that utilize crop insurance from filling out NASS surveys;
- 10.2.29. Defining "specialty crops" as any fruit, vegetable, nut or non-program crop grown for consumption and sales;
- 10.2.30. Funding to support the specialty crop industry through the following prioritized funding options:
 - 10.2.30.4. Per state competitive grant program to enhance grower directed research and extension programs;
 - 10.2.30.5. Expanded crop insurance;
 - 10.2.30.6. Dedicated funding for specialty crop growers in working lands programs; and
 - 10.2.30.7. USDA commodity purchases;
- 10.2.31. The recognition of horticulture, Christmas trees, sod and equine as agriculture enterprises eligible for government assistance through disaster programs, crop insurance and conservation programs;
- 10.2.32. Removal of matching fund requirements for public grants and loans intended to help small farmers. In the interim, in-kind contributions like labor should be allowed to be applied to matching fund considerations;
- 10.2.33. Use of producer-generated GPS data be allowed to supplement FSA and crop insurance purposes;
- 10.2.34. Native pollinator conservation efforts in farm policy legislation;
- 10.2.35. Cotton intercropped with cucurbit crops be counted toward base acres;

- 10.2.36. USDA requiring mandatory monthly reporting of rice stocks and rice production;
- 10.2.37. Requiring the FSA Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) Statement be signed and effective for more than one year or up to the full length of each Farm Bill period. Each individual entity should be responsible for reporting changes to conditions of approved status. AGI should be subject to random verification;
- 10.2.38. The Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) be combined with the FMNP Senior program that is already part of the Farm Bill;
- 10.2.39. A cottonseed and/or cotton lint farm program that provides an option for generic base acres to be reallocated to a new cotton farm program. In the process of reallocation, generic base acres that have been in agricultural use but not planted to an ARC/PLC crop must be allowed to maintain their base acres. If cottonseed and/or cotton lint are not included as Title I farm program commodities, we support annual appropriations for a ginning assistance program;
- 10.2.40. Cotton producers being eligible for Title I programs and STAX at the same time;
- 10.2.41. Base acres and yields being adjusted yearly, on a voluntary basis, using a five-year average.
- 10.2.42. Allowing dairy farms to update their historical production numbers on a rolling five-year average A rolling three-year average production history to be utilized in risk management and DMC, similar to other FSA programs. Until this is achieved, we support supplemental DMC history production changes;
- 10.2.43. The use of commodity certificates for repaying loans for all program commodities;
- 10.2.44. A 90-day lock-in period for marketing loan gains for all commodities;
- 10.2.45. Maintaining the ARC-Individual program;
- 10.2.46. Collaborating with USDA on how the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) funds can be better spread among numerous entities and an appeals process for grants that have been awarded;
- 10.2.47. The current use of SCBGP funds for market promotion and research and not for implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). The FSMA congressional mandate must be funded through the Food and Drug Administration budget;
- 10.2.48. The exemption of growers from the registration and reporting requirements associated with the System for Award Management;
- 10.2.49. Eliminating the reporting requirement for non-program grass waterways/fallow areas that are baled for forage;
- 10.2.50. Continuation of the Good Neighbor Authority (forestry) program;
- 10.2.51. The use of a longer deadline period for conservation compliance first time farmer exceptions;
- 10.2.52. When farm program benefits are denied due to an alleged violation and the enforcement action is decided in the respondent's favor, we support changes in the law to require the government agency to be responsible to pay the respondent's legal fees and any denied benefits for the unsubstantiated claim;
- 10.2.53. Allowing in-kind contributions like labor to be applied to matching fund considerations;
- 10.2.54. Allowing consideration of off-farm income toward the calculation of loan paybacks in the same way that they are now used for grant eligibility;

- 10.2.55. Eliminating the cultural resources requirements on the FSA-850 Environmental Screening Worksheet;
 - 10.2.56. The FSA 578 form designating which acres/farms are enrolled in PLC and ARC;
 - 10.2.57. Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) and Stacked Income Protection Program (STAX) indemnity payments be paid earlier;
 - 10.2.58. An additional category for alfalfa in producer's FSA base acres;
 - 10.2.59. An increase in funding for USDA NRCS EQIP's hoop house grant program;
 - 10.2.60. The creation of a grassland savanna program that prioritizes the importance of the Coastal Flatwoods longleaf pine ecosystem as both a timberland and grassland for the purposes of NRCS program participation;
 - 10.2.61. Referencing new farm bills with terminology that recognizes the relationship between farm, food and nutrition;
 - 10.2.62. Maintaining the integrity and intent of all USDA programs through rigorous oversight; and
 - 10.2.63. Increased funding for USDA programs with specific attention to easing access for farm families and those inheriting family farms as well as to increasing the racial diversity of farmland ownership.
 - 10.2.64. If a producer has an on-call contract on an eligible commodity that has unpriced production at the time a Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP) becomes available, the unpriced amount should be eligible for the LDP;
 - 10.2.65. Stable and adequate federal funding for the National Agricultural Law Center to maintain its mission as the nation's leading source of agriculture in food law research and information;
 - 10.2.66. The simplification of the farm bill; and
 - 10.2.67. The inclusion of a block grant program that would allow food banks and food access networks to directly purchase specialty crops from farmers.
- 10.3. We oppose:
- 10.3.3. Producers becoming ineligible for participation in any USDA program due to their participation in federal or state water projects;
 - 10.3.4. Compliance status of one farm affecting the ability to receive benefits on another farm;
 - 10.3.5. The extension of the CCC commodity loans beyond the current term;
 - 10.3.6. The system of anonymous reporting of operator violations to the FSA and NRCS;
 - 10.3.7. The use of conservation programs by entities unrelated to agriculture; and
 - 10.3.8. Penalties for farm program violations being applied to the entire farm operation instead of the portion of the farm in question. ♦

AFBF

#547 WATER QUALITY

(amendments at lines 7.2.1 and 7.2.3)

1. *Agricultural Point Sources/Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations*

- 1.1. Any new rules, regulations or enforcement of the Clean Water Act (CWA) as applied to concentrated animal feeding operations must:
 - 1.1.1. Take into consideration the unique climate and topography of each state;
 - 1.1.2. Preserve the 25-year 24-hour storm permit exemption;
 - 1.1.3. Not extend point source regulations to nonpoint sources such as farm and ranch fields and pastures;
 - 1.1.4. Clarify the definition of process wastewater to exclude water mixed with minute amounts of feedstuffs or dust around animal buildings;
 - 1.1.5. Allow individual states to retain control of implementation of CWA regulations and compliance monitoring; and

- 1.1.6. Trigger enforcement only by an actual illegal discharge into the waters of the United States.
- 1.2. We support:
 - 1.2.1. Use of voluntary best management practices be included in Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) nutrient management plans;
 - 1.2.2. Development and use of alternative technology for livestock feeding operations including vegetative treatment areas;
 - 1.2.3. Cost-share programs to offset the cost of building and maintaining lagoons and other waste management systems when farmers are required to build such systems by state and federal regulations;
 - 1.2.4. Laws or regulations absolving farmers from liability claims of environmental pollution when building, managing or operating livestock facilities according to the federal CAFO rules;
 - 1.2.5. Allowing agriculture producers to use herbicides according to label instructions for moss and plant control in canals and ditches without having to obtain a permit;
 - 1.2.6. Manure that has been spread by tank truck, irrigation or spreader at normal agronomic rates should not be considered point source pollution under the provisions of the CWA. The accidental or unintentional discharge of manure should not be considered point-source pollution under the provisions of the CWA;
 - 1.2.7. Any Animal Feeding Operation (AFO) that creates no waste water discharge be exempt from classification as a point source; and
 - 1.2.8. The current qualitative guidance is insufficient to assure that EPA decisions regarding permitting will be fairly and evenly applied.
- 1.3. We oppose:
 - 1.3.1. Reducing the present federal guidelines for CAFOs to less than 1,000 animal units;
 - 1.3.2. Revisions to EPA regulations pertaining to the designation of CAFOs;
 - 1.3.3. Co-permitting for livestock operations;
 - 1.3.4. Requiring AFOs with fewer than 1,000 animal units to develop an environmental management system (EMS) as a condition to avoid an National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit;
 - 1.3.5. Livestock producers being held responsible for pollution derived from animal nutrients after ownership of the manure has been transferred to another party and removed from the producer's control;
 - 1.3.6. The number of animal units kept in confinement being the sole determining factor in defining a concentrated animal feeding operation;
 - 1.3.7. Mandatory NPDES permits on farms and animal operations that do not discharge;
 - 1.3.8. Efforts to classify a dry litter AFO as a CAFO; and
 - 1.3.9. Any mechanized system or conveyance used to distribute water, and organic or inorganic compounds to agricultural land be designated as point-source.
2. **Regional Water Quality Initiatives and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL)**
 - 2.1. TMDLs should be scientifically valid, achievable, and economically feasible. If existing state water quality standards do not allow for achievable and economically feasible TMDLs, those standards should be revised. The CWA grants sole authority to states to determine whether, when and how to implement TMDLs. We oppose efforts by EPA to approve, demand or direct state implementation plans either directly or through threats of federal backstops.
 - 2.2. We support voluntary best management practices (BMPs) in the development of implementation plans.
 - 2.3. We recommend that water quality monitoring in local watersheds be used to replace theoretical data in the Chesapeake Bay Model. Funds should be allocated to assist with water quality monitoring.

3. Clean Water Act (CWA) Framework and Agricultural Water Quality Programs

- 3.1. CWA regulates the "discharge of pollutants." We oppose changing the wording, meaning or definition of navigable waters in the CWA, the removal of the term "navigable waters" from the CWA and any attempt to broaden the reach of the CWA. Federal CWA jurisdiction should be limited to navigable streams and flowing waterways that have continuous flow 365 days a year. The Act's framework should:
 - 3.1.1. Maintain state primacy over local land and water decisions;
 - 3.1.2. Maintain state authority to allocate quantities of water within its jurisdiction and groundwater;
 - 3.1.3. Promote a clear distinction between which waters are subject to federal jurisdiction and which waters are subject to state jurisdiction;
 - 3.1.4. Maintain existing statutory and regulatory exemptions for prior converted croplands and waste treatment systems; and
 - 3.1.5. Ensure that privately owned bodies of water, used exclusively for farm use, not be regulated.
- 3.2. We support the concept of cleaning up our nation's water; however, the goal of zero water pollution should be substantially modified. The current focus of the CWA should remain that of achieving fishable and swimmable standards. CWA and Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) regulations should not infringe on property rights, should not result in unfunded mandates for state and local governments and should be subject to cost/benefit and risk assessment analysis. Reauthorization of the federal CWA and CZMA should not alter federal or state water rights and water allocation systems and should encourage state control over these programs.
- 3.3. We believe the CWA and the CZMA should allow state flexibility to develop programs to protect water quality as long as they are no more restrictive than federal mandates. The authority for determining impaired waters, establishing standards and criteria, and developing and implementing appropriate response programs and plans should remain with the states with input from farmer representation. Funding should be expanded for research in new technologies and methods that will enable producers to achieve effective environmental stewardship.
- 3.4. The pursuit of pollution abatement should be only one of the many factors considered in the development of national water policies. Other factors, including the cost of pollution abatement, the needs of agriculture, the needs for growth and the presence of naturally occurring pollutants, must also be considered.
- 3.5. The federal government and its agencies should not require a NPDES permit for interbasin water transfers or require water treatment on interbasin transfers.
- 3.6. The CWA does not stand alone in protecting America's waters from pollution. Other ongoing programs at the federal, state, and local level combine to provide an effective foundation for water quality protection and must be funded fully, coordinated with and not superseded by the federal government.
- 3.7. We oppose expanding federally regulated waters by rewriting the 2020 Navigable Waters Protection Rule.
- 3.8. The attainment of water quality standards established by federal action under the CWA should take into consideration the particular and difficult problems caused by naturally occurring pollutants. Solving these difficult problems should not come at the expense of the established users of water.
- 3.9. We support:
 - 3.9.1. The reauthorization of section 117 of the CWA without expansion of federal authority;
 - 3.9.2. Efforts to establish, in rules, a definition and threshold for the level of scientifically valid data necessary to accurately assign a water body's classification, and to determine a water body's quality as it relates to its ability to meet its

- assigned beneficial uses; Such definition should, at a minimum, include the following:
- 3.9.2.1. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards based on sound science and native baseline levels;
 - 3.9.2.2. Data that includes, but is not limited to, the historical, geological and hydrological capability of a water body to meet beneficial uses; and
 - 3.9.2.3. The chemical, physical and biological data collected under an approved sampling and analysis plan. This plan should, at a minimum, specify monitoring location, dates and quality control/quality assurance;
- 3.9.3. That baseline determinations of pollution be taken into account when nonpoint source pollution studies and policies are formulated;
 - 3.9.4. Requiring that data generated by any water quality monitoring program, including development of standards and designated uses, be gathered and analyzed in a manner that meets the highest level of EPA Quality Control and Quality Assurance protocols;
 - 3.9.5. The monitoring and standards of water quality being administered on a state level;
 - 3.9.6. Adequate federal funding for United States Geological Survey (USGS) stream gauging program;
 - 3.9.7. EPA conducting a federally funded cost/benefit analysis and risk assessment before imposing any additional regulatory proposal;
 - 3.9.8. Amendments to the federal CWA and CZMA to provide that nonpoint sources be dealt with using voluntary Best Management Practices (BMP) or accepted agricultural practices, based on technically and economically feasible control measures; and
- 3.10. Only state level management of runoff from agricultural nonpoint source related activities. The EPA should recognize states with comprehensive livestock waste management programs as "functionally equivalent" to the federal program under the CWA. The EPA should not grant authority to tribes to regulate water quality standards.
 - 3.11. The CWA should not expand water quality standards to include the broad category of biological diversity.
 - 3.12. Tax credits, low-interest loans, grants and preferential tax treatment should be made available to aid and encourage farmers to implement BMP or accepted agricultural practices. The use of BMP or accepted agricultural practices by the farmer or rancher should be conclusive proof of compliance and prevent prosecution under the CWA.
 - 3.13. Surface and groundwater quality problems, originating at facilities owned, controlled or operated by the federal government, have often deteriorated to the point that positive action must be taken to remediate the problem. To protect our health, land, water and natural resources, federal facilities that have contaminated water affecting private landowners must take the following steps:
 - 3.13.1. Whenever deemed necessary, a professional mediator, with no vested interest, should be engaged to facilitate interactions among the landowners, contractors and responsible federal government agency. The mediator must have access to technical and legal consultants to assist with decision making. The main objective of the mediator is to bring accountability to the remediation process;
 - 3.13.2. Allow only the most affected parties to determine which agency would facilitate the process; and
 - 3.13.3. Cost of the mediation would be the responsibility of the federal agency responsible for the contaminating facility.
4. **Ground Water/Drinking Water**
 - 4.1. We support:
 - 4.1.1. The use of Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCL) in establishing drinking water standards for pesticides and urge that EPA expedite the standard setting process;

- 4.1.2. EPA action based on statistically significant trends that will serve as a warning that the MCL is being approached;
 - 4.1.3. Action to prevent reaching the MCL;
 - 4.1.4. EPA work with appropriate federal and state agencies and institutions to best determine environmentally vulnerable areas when considering pesticide registration amendments and use prohibitions;
 - 4.1.5. USDA as the primary federal agency to development and implementation of any federal groundwater policy or program affecting agriculture. Groundwater policy should be based on adequate scientific research;
 - 4.1.6. National legislation to ban Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether (MTBE) because of water quality concerns raised in scientific studies;
 - 4.1.7. State governments be given primary authority and responsibility to respond to agriculturally contaminated groundwater with site specific recommendations to the producer to mitigate contamination. Such a response should involve coordinating all appropriate and necessary resources available to the state to make the determination. The state agriculture departments, where possible, should serve as a lead agency;
 - 4.1.8. That regulations adopted to prevent pesticide contamination take into account the geological differences of our nation as well as regional agricultural practices, thus allowing the most economical and practical method of contamination prevention;
 - 4.1.9. EPA and state government authority to require chemical registrants to conduct groundwater monitoring programs in support of their products and as a condition for registration or reregistration. Monitoring must be tied to the development of groundwater standards;
 - 4.1.10. Emphasis be placed on the protection of current and potential potable groundwater. Recognition should be that all groundwater cannot be expected to be potable and should not be subject to the same degree of protection;
 - 4.1.11. The replacement of salt as a deicer on roads, bridges and highways with the alternative products calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) and other agriculturally based products;
 - 4.1.12. We encourage the inclusion of environmental concerns as well as damage to road surfaces, bridges and vehicles as a part of overall cost considerations when comparing salt to CMA as a deicing agent;
 - 4.1.13. Increased research by USDA, in the use of computer modeling, to predict pesticide migration. Cooperative Extension Service offices and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) District offices should develop capability to assist agricultural producers in making site specific use decisions;
 - 4.1.14. Liability for groundwater contamination caused by pesticides be based on levels supported by competent, scientific evidence that show actual harm to human health;
 - 4.1.15. The federal government underwrite groundwater liability insurance much in the same manner that it currently underwrites floodplain insurance; and
 - 4.1.16. Re-evaluation of P.L. 83-566 (NRCS small watershed program) and its emphasis on flood control projects and consideration of its use in the water quality of watersheds and public water supplies.
- 4.2. We oppose:
- 4.2.1. EPA arbitrarily lowering maximum arsenic levels in rural water systems because a lower level will substantially increase the costs to rural water users;
 - 4.2.2. Legislation that would regulate the sale and use of nitrogen fertilizers;
 - 4.2.3. The enactment of federal legislation that would place either civil or criminal liability on farmers and ranchers for following generally accepted agricultural practices, including label instructions;

- 4.2.4. Linking farm program benefits with well testing and groundwater contamination concerns; and
 - 4.2.5. State or federal legislation that would place a presumption of liability upon farmers or ranchers for pollution of public or private water supplies near agricultural operations.
5. **Nonpoint Source Management**
- 5.1. Locally administered programs are better able to achieve the goals of the CWA. The CWA does not give EPA authority over nonpoint source pollution controls. This authority lies with individual states.
 - 5.2. Any watershed management plan should include among its goals and objectives the preservation of agricultural productivity and the livelihood of farm families in the watershed.
 - 5.3. We support:
 - 5.3.1. Nonpoint source programs that emphasize a voluntary, incentive-based approach;
 - 5.3.2. Federal assistance to administer a state-developed voluntary assurance program to assist farms and agricultural producers with conservation efforts;
 - 5.3.3. Efforts to address nonpoint runoff and improving water quality that target impaired watersheds using a "worst case first" approach;
 - 5.3.4. Federal funding levels adequate to develop site-specific information, technical assistance, cost-sharing for local programs, and upgrading septic systems;
 - 5.3.5. BMP or accepted agricultural practices that are developed locally with producer involvement and financially practical for landowners to voluntarily apply;
 - 5.3.6. Farmers and ranchers retaining the right to modify their nutrient management plans at any time based on changes in their farming/ranching operations;
 - 5.3.7. Research efforts to clarify the cause or causes of pfiesteria;
 - 5.3.8. States having the right to review 208 Plans (drainage districts) which are voluntary in their applications;
 - 5.3.9. The promotion of management practices to improve water quality should depend on what is challenging the integrity of the water body. Specific management practices should not be promoted over others as a guaranteed solution;
 - 5.3.10. Grants and loans with reduced interest rates for nutrient management storage systems and related equipment;
 - 5.3.11. Efforts to control the phosphorous content of runoff from all contributors;
 - 5.3.12. A requirement that TMDL allocations be redone when science indicates that the existing allocations are incorrect;
 - 5.3.13. State and federal regulatory agencies balancing wetland mitigation requirements with the need for optimized tile drainage for food, fiber and fuel production;
 - 5.3.14. BMP or accepted agricultural practices as an alternative to numerical standards to more effectively address the point and nonpoint sources of pollution that greatly vary in a regional watershed;
 - 5.3.15. That pollution permit trading in any reauthorization of the CWA as one approach to implement the act's requirements; and
 - 5.3.16. The general guidelines of pollution permit trading but allow local entities to determine the management system which best fits its needs. These general guidelines should:
 - 5.3.16.1. Have a goal of water quality improvement;
 - 5.3.16.2. Set environmental goals and constraints that cannot be changed arbitrarily by any member of the system;
 - 5.3.16.3. Identify and establish a credible monitoring system which:
 - 5.3.16.3.1. Maintains a set of baseline data obtained on a case-by-case basis;
 - 5.3.16.3.2. Manages transactions; and
 - 5.3.16.3.3. Monitors environmental conditions and activities across permit traders;

- 5.3.16.4. Allow farmers who achieve reductions beyond the permit's requirements to "bank" their reductions for future trading.
- 5.4. We oppose:
- 5.4.1. EPA efforts to gain greater regulatory authority by including nonpoint source pollution controls under the federal storm water discharge permit program;
 - 5.4.2. Any attempts by EPA to dictate specific practices and regulations to control nonpoint source pollution;
 - 5.4.3. Limits on agricultural cost programs;
 - 5.4.4. Altering approved nutrient management plans;
 - 5.4.5. Any enforceable mechanisms to address nonpoint source pollution. Enforceable programs should be developed and implemented by the states;
 - 5.4.6. Using regulations to address agricultural, nonpoint source issues related to TMDLs of pollutants in streams;
 - 5.4.7. Mandatory requirements to carry out the nonpoint source management programs;
 - 5.4.8. Mandated fencing of streams and riparian areas;
 - 5.4.9. EPA's efforts to revoke the administrative exemption for silviculture from the NPDES permitting process;
 - 5.4.10. Mandatory financial assurance (bonding) for nutrient management facilities associated with AFOs or CAFOs;
 - 5.4.11. Designating water flow from farm fields or drainage tile as point sources of pollution under the CWA;
 - 5.4.12. The current CAFOs requirement to maintain a daily water inspection log;
 - 5.4.13. CWA permits for the lawful use of pesticides;
 - 5.4.14. EPA requiring NPDES permits on forest roads for timber harvesting; and
 - 5.4.15. Federal regulation or control of runoff water into non-navigable streams.
6. ***Gulf of Mexico Program***
- 6.1. We support the right of states to develop a volunteer plan of action to address the agricultural nonpoint source portion of the EPA's Gulf of Mexico program. We believe the program's goals and objectives can best be administered at the local level through soil and water conservation organizations and farm groups.
 - 6.2. Any policies made regarding the Gulf of Mexico hypoxia area must be backed by sound scientific research and give proper consideration to impacts on agriculture production.
7. ***Chemical Contaminants***
- 7.1. Landowners, producers or their lenders shall not be held liable for the cost of chemical contaminants cleanups, such as perchlorate and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), caused by actions over which the producer, landowner or lender had no management oversight or control of decision-making.
 - 7.2. We support:
 - 7.2.1. Funding for research and collaboration between agencies, universities, and the private sector in order to evaluate the health risks and strategies for mitigating risks associated with chemical contaminants in water and food; and
 - 7.2.2. Using the best available science and appropriate risk assessment for the establishment of health goals or regulatory standards and recommend the science and risk assessment used are sound and correct.

7.2.3. Farmers being made financially whole following the condemnation of any crops, livestock, land or other property resulting from contaminants caused by actions over which the producer, landowner or lender had no management oversight or control of decision-making.

7.3. We oppose any legislation or administrative decision that releases the federal government (i.e., the Department of Defense) and their contractors and subcontractors from liability associated with pollution of their land, water, crops, livestock or products by chemical contaminants.

8. **Lake Erie Basin**

8.1 We support the formation of a multi-state task force to study the sources, causes and solutions for harmful algae blooms. ♦

STATE

#83 NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION AND WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

1 Farmers, along with other rural and urban
2 residents, are concerned about nonpoint source
3 pollution of Michigan's surface and groundwater.
4 Protecting surface and groundwater from
5 contamination is a priority and we recognize
6 agriculture shares the responsibility with many others.

7 Nonpoint source pollution prevention programs
8 implemented by state and federal agencies should
9 reflect a coordinated, integrated and consistent
10 management approach. The Michigan Department of
11 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) should
12 coordinate all agricultural nonpoint source pollution
13 programs.

14 Michigan's conservation districts are an important
15 component of MDARD's nonpoint source pollution
16 programs. These voluntary programs are best
17 administered by locally elected conservation district
18 boards who understand their community's needs and
19 problems.

20 Agriculture should lead watershed management,
21 or the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will
22 make efforts to place permits on the industry. We
23 encourage full representation of agricultural interests
24 in watershed initiative projects funded through the
25 Clean Water Act. Any management practices
26 prescribed by the project should be voluntary rather
27 than mandatory. Municipalities share the same
28 responsibilities to our environment and should be
29 held to the same standards and penalties as private
30 individuals.

31 We support:

32 ***Fertilizer and Nutrient Management***

- 33 • All fertilizer retailers becoming certified in the 4R
34 (Right fertilizer source, Right rate, Right time,
35 Right place) Nutrient Stewardship Program
36 and/or similar fertilizer management efforts.
- 37 • Michigan Farm Bureau coordinating with
38 neighboring states and Canada where a
39 watershed is shared to reduce nutrient loading
40 issues.
- 41 • University, state and federal programs promptly
42 updating guidelines when nutrient research is
43 completed, so farmers have time to implement
44 them.
- 45 • Additional research on dissolved phosphorus.
- 46 • Continued education on appropriate phosphorus
47 and other nutrient use.
- 48 • Biosolid applications being consistent with the
49 guidelines in the Michigan Water Environment
50 Association's Land Application of Biosolids in
51 Michigan Management Recommendations.
- 52 • The current regulated use of biosolids as a
53 source of nutrients on farmland as allowed in the
54 Right to Farm Act.

55 ***Conservation and Pollution Prevention Programs***

- 56 • The farm bill providing opportunities for farmers to
57 address conservation programs on farms.
- 58 • The continued refining of conservation program
59 delivery to ensure the process is transparent,
60 consistent and simple to participating farmers.
61 We appreciate newly available technical and
62 financial assistance to address on-farm above-
63 ground fuel tanks and liquid fertilizer storage.
- 64 • Developing nutrient management plans for all
65 farms.
- 66 • Continuing the cost-share provided to producers
67 for conservation practices.
- 68 • A state-funded cover crop and filter strip cost-
69 share program.
- 70 • The Clean Sweep Program with MDARD
71 accepting responsibility for future liability for
72 chemicals collected.
- 73 • Legislation clarifying forest management
74 practices are not point sources of pollution.
- 75 • Developing baseline environmental standards for
76 agriculture in line with current production
77 standards and methods.
- 78 • Coordinated efforts to expedite soil stabilization
79 permits.
- 80 • Scientific, site-specific testing protocols and/or
81 landowner consent prior to the Michigan
82 ~~Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and~~

- 83 ~~Energy (MDEGLE)~~ state and federal agencies
84 determining an area is contaminated, with testing
85 costs, loss of land value, and indemnification
86 being the responsibility of the state and/or federal
87 government if the contamination is not the fault of
88 the landowner.
- 89 • The acting agency being held liable for current
90 and future losses and expenses; including but not
91 limited to, loss of value of commodities, loss of
92 land, loss of business, etc. and for complete
93 indemnification of everything a farm loses when
94 the agency decides a farm's soil, water, crops, or
95 livestock is contaminated, when the
96 contamination is not the landowner's fault.
 - 97 • Using sound science to determine the level of
98 impact of emerging contaminant issues. Before
99 any new regulations are developed the financial
100 impact and liability to the affected community
101 must be determined.
 - 102 • MDARD, working in cooperation with MDEGLE
103 and local governments, overseeing the disposal
104 of moderately contaminated watershed sediments
105 on farm lands containing greater levels of the
106 identified contaminants.
 - 107 • Legislation providing liability protection to
108 farmers who follow the label directions, pertinent
109 regulations, and Generally Accepted Agricultural
110 and Management Practices (GAAMPs) for
111 fertilizers and pesticides.
 - 112 • MFB being involved in fiscally responsible
113 strategies to fund voluntary conservation
114 practices.
 - 115 • The existing Soil and Sedimentation Control Act
116 exemption for plowing, tilling and other
117 agricultural and land improvement activities.
 - 118 • Eliminating the acreage cap for Michigan's
119 Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.
 - 120 • Establishing a statewide septic task force
121 consisting of agricultural, rural, urban and
122 statewide geographic representatives
123 responsible for developing:
 - 124 ▪ A set of state septic system standards
125 including maintenance and time of sale
126 inspections that supersede local ordinances.
 - 127 ▪ Fair and uniform implementation and
128 enforcement across Michigan by local health
129 departments.
 - 130 ▪ General public education to increase the
131 understanding of properly constructed and
132 working septic systems.

- 133 ▪ A standard for inspections and state
- 134 certification of inspectors.
- 135 ▪ Proactive government programs to replace
- 136 failing or noncompliant septic systems.

137 ***Water Quality and Watershed Management***

- 138 • Use of the Saginaw Bay Optimization Model.
- 139 • The Lake Erie Domestic Action Plan.
- 140 • Streamlining the process of allocating funds to
- 141 improve water quality at the farm level.
- 142 • The use of sound science to determine water
- 143 quality.
- 144 • MFB taking a leadership role in developing
- 145 protocols for water quality monitoring.
- 146 • An unbiased study to determine contributors
- 147 negatively impacting water quality before
- 148 additional regulations are imposed upon
- 149 agriculture.
- 150 • Farm Bureau members participating in voluntary
- 151 water quality monitoring programs, in which
- 152 results are kept confidential.
- 153 • Farmer representation on local boards and
- 154 commissions making decisions on
- 155 environmental policies such as land use and
- 156 watershed planning.
- 157 • Encouraging state and local governments to
- 158 utilize buffer strips around government owned
- 159 buildings and parking areas.

160 We oppose:

- 161 • Water quality monitoring of ditches and streams
- 162 selectively performed to incriminate individuals
- 163 and not performed by certified individuals in
- 164 accordance with MDEGLE protocols.
- 165 • Any fertilizer and pesticide use regulation by local
- 166 government more restrictive than MDARD and
- 167 EPA regulations.
- 168 • Farmers being presumed to cause pollution of
- 169 public or private water supplies near agricultural
- 170 operations.
- 171 • Additional environmental permits for agricultural
- 172 non-point source pollution.
- 173 • Restricting phosphorus for agricultural use if
- 174 producers follow GAAMPs or soil testing by a
- 175 certified lab.
- 176 • Giving legal standing or rights to natural
- 177 resources and bodies of water. ♦

STATE

NEW - CANNABIS PRODUCTION

- 1 We support Michigan Farm Bureau appointing an ad hoc
- 2 cannabis task force to develop policy recommendations and
- 3 potential action for consideration by MFB leadership and
- 4 members. Task force members should include but not be
- 5 limited to active MFB members, those involved in cannabis
- 6 production and landowners who have rented their land for
- 7 cannabis production. ◆

AFBF

#158 NARCOTICS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

(amendment at line 3.3)

1. We encourage vigorous educational efforts to inform youth, parents and others concerning the harmful effects of substance abuse.
2. We support:
 - 2.1. Effective enforcement of present laws and enactment of new legislation to prevent the illegal production, importation, manufacture or distribution of illegal drugs, and related paraphernalia;
 - 2.2. The Drug Enforcement Administration changing the cannabis classification from a schedule 1 drug to a schedule 2 classification for the sole purpose of doing clinical studies on the effect on humans;
 - 2.3. Law enforcement notifying the landowner or managing agency when aware of trespass marijuana or illegal drug manufacturing sites on private agricultural/resource properties or public lands (e.g., U.S. Forest Service/Bureau of Land Management);
 - 2.4. Funding and cleanup of damage caused by trespass marijuana or illegal drug manufacturing sites, with that effort coordinated among government and private entities;
 - 2.5. Efforts to prevent prescription drug abuse;
 - 2.6. Establishing a standardized, nationwide controlled substance monitoring database for medical professionals to utilize and monitor when prescribing or dispensing controlled substances to their patients. This database should allow collection of information regarding controlled substances accessible by prescribers, pharmacies and all medical professionals in all states when the prescribing, dispensing or monitoring of patients is necessary;
 - 2.7. Stiffer penalties for drug pushers, money launderers and repeat users, with no plea bargaining;
 - 2.8. Mandatory drug testing for public health and safety reasons in order to qualify for federal welfare programs;
 - 2.9. Individuals on unemployment in excess of six months being subject to random drug tests and if the test is failed the individual no longer can receive unemployment benefits; and
 - 2.10. The removal of pain as the fifth vital sign in evaluations conducted by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations when grading hospitals for financial reimbursement.
3. We oppose:
 - 3.1. Depositing proceeds from property collected from confiscation and impoundment procedures into the general fund. These funds should be used for drug programs and cleanup costs;
 - 3.2. Innocent landowners being held liable or penalized when illegal drugs are found on their property; and
 - 3.3. ~~The legalization of the recreational use of marijuana.~~ ◆

STATE

#42 MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

1 In 1855, the Michigan Legislature passed Act 130
2 which provided for the establishment of the
3 Agricultural College of the State of Michigan. Michigan
4 Agricultural College was the first college in the United
5 States to offer agriculture courses for credit. Today,
6 Michigan State University (MSU) is recognized as a
7 leader in higher learning and agricultural research,
8 extension and youth development. To maintain this
9 status, we support the following:

- 10 • State funding for MSU placing it in a comparable
11 academic and financial status with other
12 distinguished land grant research universities.
- 13 • MSU to publish a strategic plan for the future of
14 the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
15 (CANR) that meets the needs of students and
16 farmers in Michigan.
- 17 • The CANR and the College of Veterinary
18 Medicine (CVM) have historically provided a
19 strong foundation for educating generations of
20 individuals involved in agriculture in Michigan, the
21 nation and worldwide. We continue to support
22 these colleges and urge them to work closely with
23 stakeholders, including producers, to address the
24 research, resource, and information needs of the
25 agriculture industry, as well as the curriculum
26 focus of agricultural job providers.
- 27 • Programs such as the Production Medicine
28 Scholars program and incentives to encourage a
29 higher rate of CVM graduates to address the
30 shortage of large animal veterinarians practicing in
31 Michigan.
- 32 • The agriscience education program, including a
33 master's degree program, and a renewed effort to
34 increase the number of graduates who are
35 accredited to teach agricultural education in
36 Michigan.
- 37 • Re-establishing the Agriculture and Natural Resources
38 Communications Program.
- 39 • Programs and policies encouraging increased
40 enrollment of students in agricultural degree programs.
- 41 • Increased incorporation of agricultural literacy
42 into programs preparing elementary and
43 secondary teachers in other degree areas.
- 44 • Michigan Farm Bureau working with MSU to
45 explore the development of an Agriculture 101
46 course for all students.
- 47 • In recognition of the challenges of managing
48 farm stress, MSU should consider exploring
49 continuing education in farm stress and rural

50 mental health for professionals working in
51 mental health and public service.

- 52 • ~~[Relocated in policy] MFB to continue to meet~~
53 ~~with the leadership of MSU to discuss the critical~~
54 ~~importance of the land grant mission to Michigan~~
55 ~~agriculture. MFB must continue to partner with~~
56 ~~other agriculture industry leaders to work with~~
57 ~~leadership at MSU to reevaluate their~~
58 ~~educational and outreach programs and refocus~~
59 ~~their efforts on core programs directly or~~
60 ~~indirectly related to agriculture.~~
- 61 • MSU continuing to share financial information
62 regarding investments in agricultural programming
63 at the University and within AgBioResearch and
64 Extension programs in order to facilitate
65 stakeholder partnerships.
- 66 • Students' ability to apply directly to the CANR and
67 CVM, not the University as a whole.
- 68 • CANR and CVM expanding their recruitment
69 efforts within the state, including efforts to work
70 through existing organizations to promote
71 educational and career opportunities, and
72 encouraging students to apply in the spring of
73 their junior year of high school.
- 74 • The two-year agricultural technology program which
75 provides a valuable service to Michigan agriculture
76 and should be recognized as a highlight of the
77 CANR.
- 78 • Improvements to the MSU ag-tech program to
79 better serve the needs of students, employers,
80 businesses, industry and consumers.
- 81 • Ag-tech credits being allowed to fully transfer into
82 four-year programs at MSU.
- 83 • Continued expansion of partnerships with
84 community colleges and other four-year
85 institutions throughout the state to increase
86 development of these career tracks offered by
87 the CANR.
- 88 • A more realistic financial performance
89 requirement from the university administration
90 for the farms based upon the realities of the
91 real-world farming business while working in the
92 university setting.

93 **Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) and**
94 **AgBioResearch (ABR)**

95 MSUE and ABR must work closely with
96 production agriculture, agribusiness and other
97 research entities to conduct, research, and
98 disseminate the results. This outreach should focus
99 on prioritized industry needs.

100 We support:

- 101 • Increasing state and federal funding for MSUE
102 and ABR, to maintain historical high standards of
103 agricultural research and outreach programs.
- 104 • Funding for Project GREEN, including
105 additional funding for three to five-year projects.
- 106 • A re-emphasis and expedited hiring process for
107 filling extension educator and specialist
108 positions and research-related faculty positions.
109 This should address the emerging needs and
110 priority issues of the production agriculture
111 industry.
- 112 • Public posting of administrative level positions
113 to find the most qualified candidates.
- 114 • The research/extension specialist program on
115 and off campus. These positions have provided
116 direct contact with stakeholders who provide
117 direction for field-applied research.
- 118 • A focus on core agricultural programs.
- 119 • MSUE considering years of applied career
120 experience in lieu of a master's/bachelor's degree
121 as an alternate avenue to recruit top-tier applicants
122 into MSUE educator and 4-H program
123 coordinator/instructor positions.
- 124 • Michigan 4-H youth programs and encourage
125 MFB and county Farm Bureaus to assist in
126 state and local 4-H activities. We recognize the
127 educational efforts and impact of youth
128 experiences in animal projects and plant
129 science projects.
- 130 • Extension plans for 4-H staffing and programming
131 involving volunteer stakeholders as they are critical
132 to program success.
- 133 • MFB continuing its partnership with the 4-H
134 Capitol Experience. The partnership will
135 encourage students to participate in a high-
136 quality youth leadership experience, with
137 continued support from county Farm Bureaus.
- 138 • The formation of an advisory board of MFB
139 members to guide extension agricultural staffing
140 plans and programs.

141 **University and Industry Collaboration**

142 To strengthen relationships between MSU and
143 Farm Bureau, we encourage:

- 144 • Partnering with county Farm Bureaus to promote
145 MSU CANR to prospective students.
- 146 • Targeted recruitment toward the agriculture
147 community and the best and brightest 4-H and
148 FFA students.
- 149 • Attendance and participation between county
150 Farm Bureaus and MSU staff/faculty at
151 respective activities.

- 152 • County and regional extension personnel
- 153 attending county Farm Bureau board meetings
- 154 on a regular basis.
- 155 • Fostering relationships between Ag Tech
- 156 programs at MSU and community colleges with
- 157 county Farm Bureaus.
- 158 • Promotion and support of Collegiate Farm
- 159 Bureau activities at MSU and community college
- 160 Ag Tech programs by county Farm Bureaus and
- 161 MFB.
- 162 • Agriculture representation on the MSU Board of
- 163 Trustees.
- 164 • Greater Farm Bureau and farmer representation
- 165 on the MSUE/ABR stakeholder council, CANR,
- 166 and department stakeholder advisory
- 167 committees.
- 168 • An emphasis on filling on and off-campus vacant
- 169 teaching positions in a timely manner.
- 170 • **[Relocated text]** MFB to continue to meet with
- 171 the leadership of MSU to discuss the critical
- 172 importance of the land grant mission to Michigan
- 173 agriculture. MFB must continue to partner with
- 174 other agriculture industry leaders to work with
- 175 leadership at MSU to reevaluate their
- 176 educational and outreach programs and refocus
- 177 their efforts on core programs directly or
- 178 indirectly related to agriculture. ♦

STATE

#71 AGRICULTURAL DRAINAGE

1 Michigan farmland is enhanced by an adequate
2 and well-managed drain system. Over half of
3 Michigan's farmland requires drainage to produce
4 food, feed and fiber.

5 We support:

- 6 • Members obtaining and recording drainage
7 easements for all private drains crossing
8 neighboring properties.
- 9 • Requiring an individual or entity who breaks or
10 damages a properly functioning tile and properly
11 marked tile outlet to be responsible for returning
12 the tile to operational condition within 30 days.
- 13 • Legislation revoking the 1982 Michigan
14 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and
15 Energy (MDEGLE) Rule 8 under Part 31 Rules
16 for Inland Lakes and Streams, designating
17 several drains as mainstream portions of eleven
18 natural water courses. If the rule is not revoked,
19 MDEGLE should be responsible to pay for all
20 maintenance costs of the waterways according
21 to the County Drain standards.
- 22 • Landowners taking a proactive role and/or being
23 notified and involved with their drain/water
24 resources commissioners in routine drain
25 maintenance and emergency repairs.
- 26 • Drain/water resources commissioners offering
27 incentives or credits for landowners who
28 properly maintain drains located on their
29 property.
- 30 • Landowners voluntarily contributing to county
31 drain maintenance through appropriate soil
32 conservation practices working with Natural
33 Resources Conservation Service and county
34 drain/water resources commissioners.
- 35 • Michigan Farm Bureau promoting to its members
36 the video, "The Importance of Michigan Drain
37 Commissioners," created by the Michigan
38 Association of County Drain Commissioners.
- 39 • MFB providing farmers and members with a
40 better understanding of the Drain Code of 1956
41 by creating an educational series available to
42 the general public.

43 The Michigan Drain Code is the legal vehicle for
44 landowners to organize to solve mutual drainage
45 problems for their benefit. Urbanization, agriculture
46 and technology have increased the need for water
47 resource management. Institutional structures such
48 as the Michigan Drain Code, Subdivision Control Act,
49 and Wetlands Protection Act, lack the necessary

- 50 uniformity to provide water management standards
51 that meet today's demands and tomorrow's needs.
52 We support the following provisions in the Drain Code:
53 • The authority for administering the Drain Code
54 should be maintained within the Michigan
55 Department of Agriculture and Rural
56 Development and the office of the drain/water
57 resources commissioner at the local level.
58 • If existing ditches are moved at the request of the
59 county/county road commission, the additional
60 cost should be the responsibility of the
61 county/county road commission's project.
62 • Current exemptions for drain maintenance within
63 state statute are appropriate and should be
64 maintained.

65 Revisions to the Drain Code that benefit agriculture are
66 necessary to address the following concerns.

67 We support:

- 68 • The concept of watershed management plan
69 development with collaboration between drain/water
70 resources commissioners, township and municipal
71 officials, landowners, and conservation districts, and/or
72 NRCS, and Army Corps of Engineers that improves
73 county drain function.
74 • The limited use of eminent domain to take private
75 property for projects in watershed or drainage district
76 management plans.
77 • Increasing the limit on drainage maintenance
78 assessments (such as \$10,000 per mile), and
79 payback time, to allow drain work to be done
80 more efficiently and at a lower cost.
81 • Elimination of the current exemption allowing
82 non-elected drain/water resources
83 commissioners.
84 • All land in a drainage district being assessed
85 according to benefits derived, including public
86 lands.
87 • Requiring that special assessment notices
88 include the estimated percentage and dollar
89 amounts apportioned to the recipient's land, the
90 estimated annual total of all project
91 assessments, and the estimated project
92 assessment duration.
93 • Keeping records of public drain work in a
94 manner so the public can view them and
95 understand the scope of work completed and the
96 cost associated with the types and dates of
97 maintenance performed on a drain.
98 • Drain/water resources commissioners providing
99 notice of timing and duration of scheduled drain
100 maintenance projects to affected landowners.

- 101 • Requiring performance bonds on work done on
102 intercounty drains where project construction costs
103 exceed \$100,000.
 - 104 • Clarification that no drainage district should be
105 extended or established for the purpose of
106 removing sediment from man-made reservoirs on
107 rivers or drains.
 - 108 • The drain/water resources commissioner directing
109 the deployment of drain sediments, both organic
110 and inorganic, to adjacent land as required to
111 minimize sediment return to the drain.
 - 112 • The county drain/water resources commissioner
113 being responsible for removing blockage of a
114 natural watercourse if it affects the function of a
115 county drain.
 - 116 • The use of current technology.
 - 117 • For all new construction, a description of the
118 work to be performed being provided to owners
119 of property abutting the drain at least 10 days
120 prior to the start of construction to ensure
121 appropriate planning to handle increased storm
122 water due to development. Alternatives to storm
123 water retention ponds should be considered.
- 124 We oppose:
- 125 • Changes to rules developed under the Inland
126 Lakes and Streams Act causing increased
127 regulatory burdens to farmers, drain/water
128 resources commissioners, or road
129 commissioners.
 - 130 • Requiring all ditches to be two-stage ditches
131 and/or requiring additional engineering or
132 planning on every new or established drain.
 - 133 • State funding being used to purchase farmland to
134 construct retention wetlands for private benefit.
 - 135 • MDEGLE's implementation of rules and policies
136 that exceed their federal mandate and are not
137 supported by scientific evidence.
 - 138 • The implementation of structures affecting the flow in
139 waterways which negatively impacts agriculture. ◆

STATE #81 LAND USE

1 Local land use planning in Michigan is essential
2 for the long-term viability of all communities. We must
3 all work together to plan the proper utilization of land
4 for the long-term. Any plan to address land uses in
5 Michigan must consider and protect the rights of
6 private property owners.
7 We support:

- 8 • Requiring agriculture to be included in
9 community master plans, county economic
10 development plans and all aspects of local
11 planning and zoning.
- 12 • Regional cooperation between municipalities,
13 counties and townships.
- 14 • Requiring the county road commission and
15 drain/water resources commission to
16 collaborate with the county planning
17 commission when developing the county's
18 master plan and setting long-term plans.
- 19 • Intra-jurisdictional coordination between all public
20 entities in a community, including fire districts,
21 emergency medical services, water and sewer
22 authorities, school district, solid waste
23 management.
- 24 • Encouraging the use of current infrastructure.
- 25 • Transportation development projects
26 incorporating local land use planning and
27 minimizing impacts to farmland. Transportation
28 infrastructure placement is a primary influence on
29 land development patterns.
- 30 • Enabling local communities to use the statutory
31 authority of "concurrency" when negotiating new
32 development approval. Concurrency establishes a
33 pay-as you-go approach which ensures public
34 facilities and services are available at the same
35 time as the impacts of development.
- 36 • Michigan State University and the Michigan
37 Department of Agriculture and Rural
38 Development (MDARD) providing technical
39 assistance, education and research to local
40 officials and property owners.
- 41 • Encouraging local communities to utilize
42 existing zoning tools when appropriate to help
43 protect farmland and farm operations by
44 including cluster housing, buffer areas, fencing,
45 planted tree setbacks, and site density zoning.
- 46 • Encouraging farmers and county Farm Bureaus
47 to work with local governments to establish
48 zoning standards for commercial solar
49 operations.
- 50 • The sale of state and federally owned land
51 suitable for residential or industrial use to
52 preserve farmland and increase local revenue.
53 This development should only be considered on
54 vacant sites with existing or nearby utilities fitting
55 the local land use plan.
- 56 • Local governments considering alternatives to
57 minimize adverse impacts to farms within one
58 mile of where land is divided.

- 59 • Encouraging local units of government to utilize
60 brownfield redevelopment authorities.
- 61 • Amending the Land Division Act to:
 - 62 ▪ Change the platting process to reduce cost,
63 time and bureaucracy.
 - 64 ▪ Create density in communities by revisiting
65 the 10-year redivision requirement.
 - 66 ▪ Allow local units of government to utilize the
67 entire Zoning Enabling Act to locally govern
68 the Land Division Act.
 - 69 ▪ Require site condominiums, manufactured
70 housing developments and mobile home
71 parks to comply with land division and/or the
72 platting process in the Land Division Act.
- 73 • When agricultural land is within a governmental
74 unit, a representative of production agriculture
75 being appointed to the planning commissions and
76 zoning boards.
- 77 • Members becoming actively involved in land use
78 planning and zoning.
- 79 • Individuals appointed to councils, commissions
80 and boards created by government, state
81 legislators, and MDARD to represent agricultural
82 interests being, or having been, directly involved
83 in the agriculture industry.
- 84 • Legislation being enacted to prevent farmland
85 from being annexed to a municipality without a
86 vote of the people in the affected area. Upon
87 approval of the people in the affected area, an
88 annexation proposal should then be approved
89 by a vote of the residents of the appropriate
90 units of government.
- 91 • Requiring consent of landowners for annexation
92 proposals. Changing the use of property must
93 consider and protect the rights of private property
94 owners.
- 95 • Property enrolled in farmland preservation
96 programs having concurrent approval for
97 annexation or public use by the contracted
98 parties, including land owners.
- 99 • The development and uniformity of Geographic
100 Information Systems and we encourage use by
101 local units of government in land use planning.
- 102 • Michigan Farm Bureau assisting county Farm
103 Bureaus with model zoning ordinances pertaining
104 to agriculture.
- 105 • Legislation and zoning to enable energy
106 production on farms, including the sale or use of
107 the generated electricity. Specific zoning for the
108 production of alternative energy should use
109 sound science and adopt state siting guidelines.

- 110 • Legislation pre-empting local height restrictions.
111 • The Michigan Department of Natural Resources
112 (MDNR) continuing and expanding the bidding,
113 renting, and/or sale of state land for agricultural
114 use.

115 In areas where trails run through production
116 agriculture and other private lands, the authority
117 responsible for the trail should build and maintain
118 fences to keep trail users on the trail and install
119 gates so that property owners have access to both
120 sides of their property if the trail divides the property.
121 All users of the trails shall stop or yield at all
122 crossings, regardless of whether public or private.

123 We oppose:

- 124 • Rezoning agricultural zones if the use has not
125 changed and the landowners have not requested
126 the zoning change.
127 • Limitations being placed on state lands for
128 recreational purposes unless there is sound
129 scientific justification or funding restrictions. If
130 limitations are proposed, then justification should
131 be in writing and public hearings conducted. When
132 the MDNR proposes public land use changes, it is
133 imperative that those impacted are involved in the
134 decision-making process.
135 • Restrictions on leases of state-owned
136 agricultural land exceeding Generally Accepted
137 Agricultural and Management Practices. ◆

STATE #91 WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

1 Wildlife is an important part of Michigan's outdoor
2 heritage and economy. Sound biological science
3 must be monitor and test for disease transmission.

4 Michigan Farm Bureau will work with the Michigan
5 used to manage all wildlife populations to maintain
6 proper balance in numbers, reduce damage to
7 property, and control, Department of Natural
8 Resources (MDNR) and other stakeholders to
9 achieve disease management goals, ecological
10 balance, and strategies to establish and not exceed
11 carrying capacity of the land. The MDNR should
12 increase habitat management on public lands,
13 helping both the hunting and farming communities.

14 We urge the MDNR to finalize its plan for citizen
15 advisory councils in the Lower Peninsula. Two citizens
16 advisory councils have been created in the Upper
17 Peninsula. These advisory councils have provided an
18 excellent forum for interaction between stakeholders

19 and individual citizens resulting in better resource
20 management with increased transparency.

21 We support:

22 ***Hunting and Trapping***

- 23 • Hunting and trapping being protected as the
24 primary tools for wildlife management.
- 25 • Competitive license fees to encourage resident
26 and nonresident hunting and fishing opportunities.
- 27 • The MDNR reviewing management units for all
28 wildlife and considering reconfigurations based
29 on biogeographic areas.
- 30 • The MDNR simplifying, revising, and extending
31 or creating hunting seasons to provide the most
32 flexibility to hunters to improve success and
33 effectively manage populations.
- 34 • Programs and methods to help control problem
35 species, including earn-a-buck and other doe
36 management techniques.
- 37 • Allowing the sale of wild game meat.
- 38 • Other financial incentives to harvest more
39 problem species.
- 40 • The MFB Wildlife Action Team report which
41 encourages:
 - 42 ▪ Farmer participation at Natural Resources
43 Commission (NRC) meetings.
 - 44 ▪ Managing wildlife populations with a regional
45 quota-based system to support a balanced
46 wildlife population based on the carrying
47 capacity of each region of the state. When
48 quotas are not achieved, additional hunting
49 seasons should be made available or existing
50 seasons extended.
- 51 • Agency culling/harvest to reduce overpopulation.
- 52 • The Michigan Wildlife Management Education
53 Fund, which is financed by a fee on hunting and
54 fishing licenses and used to educate the public on
55 natural resource issues.

56 ***Endangered Species and Depredation***

- 57 • The MDNR being the lead agency to advocate
58 Michigan's authority to manage federally protected
59 species.
- 60 • The American Farm Bureau Federation supporting
61 increasing states' rights to manage federally
62 protected species.
- 63 • Standardized procedures for reporting,
64 investigating and indemnifying depredation at
65 fair market value. A notarized statement of loss
66 should be enough proof for reimbursement
67 when there is no evidence beyond an animal of
68 appropriate size missing.

- 69 • Encouraging farmers to consider alternative
70 methods for controlling loss, which may include
71 lease options. If control methods are ineffective,
72 farmers should have the authority to manage
73 nuisance/destructive species on their land,
74 including utilizing services from programs such
75 as USDA Wildlife Services.

76 ***Population Health and Disease Management***

- 77 • Basing the decision to allow baiting and feeding
78 on veterinary/animal health science.
- 79 • Artificial baiting.
- 80 • Considering strengthening fines and penalties for
81 illegal feeding of wildlife, similar to those for
82 poaching.
- 83 • Making wildlife control permits low-cost or free
84 and easily accessible based on damage, and
85 allowing landowners to use the appropriate
86 firearm for the land's zone, regardless of the
87 hunting season. Controlling species, regardless of
88 sex, on farmland is necessary to produce a viable
89 product.
- 90 • Increased use of technology, including QR
91 codes, electronic data reporting and unbiased
92 surveys, along with voluntary check stations for
93 wildlife to provide better population data and
94 control wildlife disease in Michigan. Reporting
95 options should be accessible by mail, online, or
96 by phone within 30 days of harvest. In cases of
97 diseased animals, replacement tags should be
98 issued.
- 99 • Legislation requiring the MDNR to publish an
100 annual report on county or regional analysis of
101 whitetail deer herd populations. This report
102 should include the risk of herds contracting
103 diseases such as Chronic Wasting Disease
104 (CWD) and Bovine Tuberculosis (TB), and
105 recommendations for proactive herd
106 management to reduce risks of contracting such
107 diseases.
- 108 • MFB providing resources to help farmers
109 address wildlife conflict.
- 110 • The MDNR strictly enforcing disease control
111 laws and regulations.
- 112 • MFB assisting members reporting lax and
113 inconsistent enforcement activities with
114 communications with the NRC, legislators, and
115 administration officials.
- 116 • Legislative oversight and audits of MDNR
117 enforcement consistency.
- 118 • Legislation that allows an individual to transport
119 and possess a loaded firearm in or on any vehicle

120 while on private land with the permission of the
121 landowner.

122 We oppose:

- 123 • Feeding free-ranging deer.
- 124 • Hunting regulations with adverse effects on
125 agriculture, including mandatory antler point
126 restrictions.
- 127 • Translocating untested terrestrial wildlife species
128 with known infected populations from one area
129 of the state to the other, which could increase
130 the risk of spreading infectious and contagious
131 diseases such as CWD and TB. ♦

Recommendations on AFBF Policies

#135 AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE

(amendment at line 16.14)

1. We support requiring that Department of Labor (DOL) employees notify farm owners/operators upon their arrival and prior to any inspection or questioning of employees.
2. We should work with agricultural employers in the various states and regions to:
 - 2.1. Improve farm labor-management relations; and
 - 2.2. Increase productivity of the agricultural workforce.
3. We uphold the right of farm workers to decline union membership based on their own convictions.
4. Each state should have the right to decide whether agricultural employment should be brought under the National Labor Relations Act and we favor legislation to provide such an option.
5. Where federal regulations require new or remodeled housing for migrant farm workers, low-interest financing should be made available. To encourage the construction of affordable farm worker housing, provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) should be modified so that only a reasonable percentage of such a housing project must be made accessible to the mobility impaired. The federal, state and county agencies which enforce employee housing laws should designate among themselves the one agency to be the lead and exclusive agency to enforce those laws in each county; preferably, that agency should be the most local one.
6. In a closely held corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, limited liability company, or any other business entity, members of the family/families should be exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSPA), unemployment compensation laws and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).
7. When a farmer is engaged in the processing, handling, packing or storing of perishable products grown on his own farm and the perishable products of other farmers, the operation should be classified as "agriculture," provided that a minimum of 50 percent of the total output of such processing plant is grown on his own farm.
8. We ask the DOL to change its interpretations so as to clarify that persons employed on farms year-round by the same employer are not considered to be seasonal employees under MSPA.
9. We support maximum transparency in the investigation practices by the DOL, including but not limited to full disclosure of DOL policies, guidelines and operating procedures such as those found in their Field Operations Handbook:
 - 9.1. When DOL notifies a producer of alleged wage and hour violations the department must inform the producer;
 - 9.1.1. That DOL's requests are strictly voluntary;
 - 9.1.2. Of its legal authority in an accurate manner;
 - 9.1.3. Of the producer's rights; and
 - 9.1.4. With all information DOL relied on to determine the alleged violations.
 - 9.2. DOL may only cite the producer for violations that investigators have personally observed and can prove to the appropriate legal standard;
 - 9.3. Producers should not be cited for alleged violations based on an investigator's subjective belief or conjecture or based on DOL statistics;
 - 9.4. DOL should seek "hot goods" orders only when a producer has demonstrated repeated and willful violations along with a lack of cooperation. In these cases, the federal government must not contact the producer's customers unless the department has already secured the necessary court orders; and
 - 9.5. We call for the repeal of DOL's authority to seek and secure "hot goods" orders on perishable commodities.
10. We recommend that, when a complaint has been registered with the Federal Wage and Hour Division, the investigators be required to list the complaint with the farmer along with the name of the persons registering

- the complaint; and that the investigation be limited to the area of the complaint.
11. We call for repeal or major revision of the private right of action under Section 504 of the MSPA. However, we will continue to assist in the defense of the term "intentional" in that section to mean a conscious or deliberate act.
 12. We encourage agencies that perform agricultural employee housing inspections, including the DOL wage and hour division, to work with growers in providing safe housing, or camps, and to allow them to correct problem areas in a timely manner before imposing fines.
 13. We recommend that once agricultural employee housing is inspected and licensed by the appropriate state agency and then occupied, the DOL may not enter the dwellings without the employee's permission and proper notification to the owner of the farm.
 14. Fine structures should be published and available for public review:
 - 14.1. Rationale for specific fines or assessments should be immediately communicated to a producer along with the code section of the alleged violation and the reason for the issuance of the citation.
 15. Federal requirements for employers reporting newly hired employees should be changed to exclude reporting temporary and day-by-day employees.
 16. We support:
 - 16.1. The standardization of the definition of agriculture and agricultural employment for all state/federal labor-related legislation to include the work activity described by the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS), code 11. The NAICS code reflects modern agriculture practices and is now used by the agricultural census and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health because the description more accurately reflects current agricultural organizational structures;
 - 16.2. Retention of the present family farm exemption from the child labor provisions of the FLSA regardless of business structure where members of the family/families are owners, including a closely held corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, limited liability company or any other business entity;
 - 16.3. Deleting the language "or causes to be used" from the vehicle safety obligations section of MSPA (Section 500.100a);
 - 16.4. Enforcement of federal child labor laws designed to prevent underage children from working in all industries. We support existing FLSA provisions, which specify and provide opportunities for young people of the proper age to perform certain agriculture jobs;
 - 16.5. The family farm exemption in MSPA and oppose any efforts to restrict its application;
 - 16.6. Changes in the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) so posting of field entrances does not unduly alarm consumers about the use of crop protection products. We request significant research and data can be provided resolving serious flaws with the present regulation;
 - 16.7. EPA withdrawing the WPS of November 2015 in favor of the previous WPS rule;
 - 16.8. Changes to employee protections under the WPS should be based on current scientifically or medically substantiated data and reflect current pesticide labeling;
 - 16.9. Eliminating from the WPS the existing provision granting "designated representatives" access to farm-specific pesticide data. Any access to such data by "designated representatives" should be restricted to matters related to the health, safety or exposure of the employee who authorized access and the "designated representative" should not be allowed to disclose the data to anyone other than the employee;
 - 16.10. The freedom to use farm labor contractors in the recruitment and management of migrant seasonal and day haul agricultural employees. The labor contractor should be recognized as the sole employer of said workforce;
 - 16.11. Allowing the use of housing that meets Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) standards for qualified seasonal and agricultural visa workers;

- 16.12. Increased funding to continue and expand the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Program;
- 16.13. Employers and employees being free to negotiate piece rate or any other performance- and/or seniority-based wage system as long as the worker and employer negotiate a performance and/or seniority-based wage, that wage shall include time spent during rest breaks, moving from job to job, clean up and any other nonproductive time; and
- 16.14. Improved programs for agricultural ~~guest~~ workers that assist in finding, hiring and retaining an adequate, legal and cost-competitive labor supply.
- 17. We oppose:
 - 17.1. A national agricultural labor board;
 - 17.2. The expansion of the Agricultural Hazardous Occupations Orders by the DOL;
 - 17.3. Unauthorized entry into any facilities including, but not limited to, employee housing units, barns, accessory buildings, and fields by agents of the U.S. government;
 - 17.4. Requiring employers to pay employee travel and related expenses from the employee's permanent residence to the employer's place of business, except as may be required under a temporary foreign worker program in which the farmer is voluntarily participating;
 - 17.5. Any regulations requiring farmers to pay wages to farm employees during travel time from their residence to place of work; and
 - 17.6. Any policy/federal mandate that requires the agricultural industry to pay more than what any other general industry is required to pay – the state or federal minimum wage. The existing minimum wages set a floor that works for every other industry in the country and that does not preclude any employer from paying higher wages, as most currently do. Agriculture should not be held to a higher standard than every other business in America. ◆

#137 IMMIGRATION
(amendment at line 1.8.18)

- 1. **General Immigration**
 - 1.1. Effective enforcement of all immigration laws and border security is a responsibility of the federal government.
 - 1.2. U.S. immigration policy must recognize that agriculture relies on immigrant labor as the jobs are arduous, often seasonal and migratory.
 - 1.3. We must confront the problem of illegal immigration directly and comprehensively, but traditional law enforcement and immigration measures alone will not suffice. We support enforcement of immigration laws to deter the employment of unauthorized workers.
 - 1.4. We support an uncapped agricultural worker visa program that is open to all segments of agriculture and flexible enough to provide for the differing needs of farmers and ranchers.
 - 1.5. We support a significant cap increase or abolishment of the 66,000 annual cap on H-2B visas to assist agricultural processors that use the H-2B visa program.
 - 1.6. An H-2B returning worker exemption, seasonal cap waivers, executive orders or actions by the secretary of Homeland Security will be sought and supported until such time that the annual cap is completely abolished.
 - 1.7. Any federal mandate on employers to implement E-Verify must:
 - 1.7.1. Include an employment eligibility verification system which is simple, conclusive and timely;
 - 1.7.2. Provide an affirmative defense for employers acting in good faith;
 - 1.7.3. Allow for status adjustment of workers not authorized prior to implementation; and
 - 1.7.4. Be preceded by full implementation of a usable agricultural worker program.

- 1.8. We support:
 - 1.8.1. The reform of existing migrant labor laws to promote greater access to an agricultural workforce;
 - 1.8.2. Legislation at the federal level to exempt farmworkers from time-and-a half or double-time requirements;
 - 1.8.3. Permitting experienced visa and undocumented agricultural workers who are employed in agriculture prior to bill introduction the opportunity to earn permanent legal status, provided the process for applying for such status:
 - 1.8.3.1. Provides a waiver from inadmissibility;
 - 1.8.3.2. Offers these workers sufficient incentives to come forward, including extending protected status to their spouses and minor children who are present in the United States, but does not provide them with an unfair advantage over other applicants;
 - 1.8.3.3. Does not penalize the employer when a worker comes forward;
 - 1.8.3.4. Enables agricultural employers to retain their experienced workforce while transitioning into a new worker program;
 - 1.8.3.5. Deters future illegal immigration and otherwise improves homeland security; and
 - 1.8.3.6. Offers an incentive to workers who obtain permanent legal status through agriculture to stay in agriculture.
 - 1.8.4. Replacement of work authorization documents with tamper-resistant, machine-readable documents that include biometric identifiers;
 - 1.8.5. Legislation to strengthen the present immigration and naturalization laws of the United States and to especially address the following subjects:
 - 1.8.5.1. Political asylum rules should be more narrowly defined to exclude frivolous requests and to provide for a more expedient determination as to the legitimacy of the request;
 - 1.8.5.2. Undocumented or unauthorized persons should not be eligible for any of our social welfare programs, including housing, fuel, education and health benefits;
 - 1.8.5.3. Any foreign national testing positive for a communicable disease should not be admitted into the United States; and
 - 1.8.5.4. Non-citizens convicted of a felony should be deported immediately after serving any prison time imposed on them.
 - 1.8.6. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) conducting its enforcement activities with respect to civil rights, in a humane manner and with minimal disruption to agricultural business;
 - 1.8.7. Just compensation to owners for any damages done to property or business during DHS enforcement activities;
 - 1.8.8. Preventing workers found to be undocumented or unauthorized persons from continuing to occupy grower's housing unless provided with immediate work authorization;
 - 1.8.9. Action to provide for the unification of immediate families under the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), so that the act or the regulations do not require the breakup of immediate families;
 - 1.8.10. Repealing of the employer sanctions clause. Employers should not be held liable for determining the legal or illegal status of employees;
 - 1.8.11. A safe harbor provision for employers who have formally hired or are hiring workers who are permitted under Deferred Action against Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and future related executive action;
 - 1.8.12. Federal agencies being liable for any and all costs related to illegal immigration incurred by state, county

- and municipal governments including detaining an illegal immigrant while awaiting processing and/or deportation and costs incurred by individuals for personal and property damages;
- 1.8.13. DHS developing clear, legal guidelines for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and for U.S. Border Patrol when entering private property and advising employers of such guidelines;
 - 1.8.14. ICE being required to contact employers immediately following farm enforcement measures when employees are taken from businesses so that employers and families are informed;
 - 1.8.15. The U.S. State Department increasing funding and personnel to handle the peak period for visa demand thus reducing worker delays;
 - 1.8.16. The development of a special visa, green card or citizenship for farmers immigrating, or those who have immigrated to the U.S. Specifically, we recommend changes to existing laws and E2 visa requirements to better reflect and support farm family businesses;
 - 1.8.17. Unaccompanied minors who enter the United States illegally should be treated under the same laws as adults entering the country illegally;
 - 1.8.18. **The United States Department of Labor (DOL) resurveying the average labor wage for agricultural workers and the quantity of domestic worker applicants in order to more accurately reflect the local pay rates and ease the financial strain on agricultural producers due to an overinflated Adverse Effect Wage Rate required by H-2A provisions;**
 - 1.8.19. Applying the Adverse Effect Wage Rate at the time of contract signing for the life of the contract;
 - 1.8.20. Legislation requiring that the H-2A program Adverse Effect Wage Rate should only take effect when there is evidence of a significant effect on local employment;
 - 1.8.21. The denial of federal funds to sanctuary cities;
 - 1.8.22. An arbitration process to allow Adverse Effect Wage Rate challenges; and
 - 1.8.23. A physical visit to the consulate of a worker's home country be used to satisfy a "touch back," which is part of a status adjustment process.
- 1.9. We oppose:
 - 1.9.1. Any efforts to repeal the open agricultural field search warrant provision of IRCA;
 - 1.9.2. The counting of undocumented or unauthorized persons in the U.S. Census relative to redistricting; and
 - 1.9.3. Sanctuary counties, cities and states.
2. **Agricultural Visa Program**
 - 2.1. We support improvements to the H-2A program to make it more effective, affordable and broadened to provide visa workers for both seasonal and year-round agriculture without a visa cap;
 - 2.2. We support establishing an agricultural visa that is portable (at will) or by contract and that also deals with ag sectors that need year-round workers.
 - 2.3. We support immigration reform to prioritize making a national immigration policy that is farmer friendly providing a legal agricultural workforce that would benefit producers, farm workers and the American consumer
 - 2.4. Regarding immigration reform legislation that adjusts the status of undocumented agricultural workers, we support that any farmer who made investments to hire their legal workforce through participation in federal guest worker programs shall be permitted to continue to participate in the federal guest worker programs without having to give a hiring preference to a newly

- legalized worker over any worker with a federal guestworker visa or seeking to obtain a federal guest worker visa unless the newly legalized worker has obtained a green card.
- 2.5. We support an agricultural worker program with requirements and fees that are not more stringent for one sector of agriculture than another.
 - 2.6. We support amending the Migrant and Seasonal Worker Protection Act (MSPA) and the H-2A Act to require that court jurisdiction fall with the state and/or country where the alleged violation occurred.
 - 2.7. We recommend that DOL work quickly and judiciously to provide guidance to state labor departments and settle disputes regarding the H-2A Program to make it very clear that the federal government has oversight and final determination in all areas of the H-2A Program.
 - 2.8. We support improved training for employers to understand and better use the H-2A program, and provide better information for new users to the program.
 - 2.9. The DOL should provide appropriate oversight for state labor departments to ensure that H-2A applications are processed at the state level in a timely and impartial manner.
 - 2.10. We recommend that resident aliens with work permits be allowed to work on as many different farms as needed each year, i.e., they should not be restricted to one farm or one employer, but some may be limited to the agricultural sector for a temporary period of time.
 - 2.11. A state employment agency should be required to verify employment eligibility before making any referral to an employer.
 - 2.12. We support changes to policy in order to reduce the H-2A waiting period because of lack of local labor interest and to eliminate the newspaper advertising requirement.
 - 2.13. We support actions to limit abscondments of H-2A workers by requiring those who file a transfer petition to get the approval of the current H-2A employer before the transfer petition can be approved. In the event a transfer petition(s) is secured without the current H-2A employer's approval, the transferring H-2A employer would be required to repay the transportation, border crossing and visa fees paid by the original petitioning H-2A employer.
 - 2.14. We support that H-2A employers who lose their H-2A employees to transfer or abscondment have their H-2A visa(s) immediately returned so they can replace their H-2A workers.
 - 2.15. We support modifying the definition of agricultural labor or services, pursuant to 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(H)(ii)(a), as defined as agricultural labor and applied in Sec. 3121(g) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 at U.S.C. 3121(g); and agriculture as defined and applied in Sec. 3(f) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (FLSA) at 29 U.S.C 203(f) and any other applicable rules/regulations that the definition of agriculture and agricultural labor or services include the transportation of raw, unprocessed crops from the field following harvest to the mill, processor, packing house, elevator or first point of sale.
 - 2.16. We support modifications that define farm labor contractors who transport a farmer's crop from the field to the mill, processor, elevator, packing house or first point of sale as agriculture, agricultural labor and/or an agricultural service that is part of the crop harvest for farmers and meet the H-2A eligibility criteria to apply and petition for H-2A visa workers.
 - 2.17. We support a worker program that:
 - 2.17.1. Classifies H-2A workers who seasonally operate trucks during harvest as Agricultural Equipment Operators;
 - 2.17.2. Addresses agriculture's unique needs, which may change suddenly with weather, global market realities, contract enforceability or other variables beyond the grower's control;
 - 2.17.3. Is simplified and cost-competitive to make their employment more feasible for perishable crops;

- 2.17.4. Provides workers, including commercial fishing and fish dock workers, with a visa that lasts at least three years and is renewable multiple times;
 - 2.17.5. Offers an opportunity, and provides a waiver from inadmissibility, to interested agricultural workers who were unlawfully present and working in agriculture prior to introduction of legislation but are otherwise admissible under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA);
 - 2.17.6. Allows the worker to maintain their current residency while obtaining a work visa without a requirement of returning to their country of origin;
 - 2.17.7. Eliminates excessive or duplicative bureaucracy and unnecessary red tape;
 - 2.17.8. Reduces domestic recruitment costs;
 - 2.17.9. Allows U.S. farmers to hire qualified migratory and domestic workers;
 - 2.17.10. Includes appropriate provisions for foreign commuter workers who return to a residence in their home country nightly or weekly;
 - 2.17.11. Establishes an ombudsman to resolve disputes among immigration service, employers and workers;
 - 2.17.12. Includes timely certification determination to ensure employers adequate time to bring workers to a job site;
 - 2.17.13. Includes the broadest possible definition of agriculture;
 - 2.17.14. Provides the option of a housing allowance, in lieu of housing;
 - 2.17.15. Provides for an exemption from any contract employment guarantee in the case of a freeze or other emergency catastrophic event;
 - 2.17.16. Is administered by USDA;
 - 2.17.17. Allows cooperating farmers to make a joint application for workers. These workers would be allowed to move from one cooperating farm to another during the workers' contract period, without shared liability;
 - 2.17.18. Includes data from current and previous H-2A employers in the H-2A prevailing practices survey;
 - 2.17.19. Automatically increases the number of available visas (to avoid crop losses) if the visa limit is reached, should a future agricultural visa program cap the number of available visas;
 - 2.17.20. Includes forestry;
 - 2.17.21. Provides an online format to expedite the exchange of information between the producer and government agencies;
 - 2.17.22. Includes work requirements for able-bodied adults on government assistance;
 - 2.17.23. Allows for rehiring of past employees without having to refile and resubmit paperwork to four agencies;
 - 2.17.24. Allows H-2A workers to get visas for multiple years without refiling them;
 - 2.17.25. Streamlines the H-2A application process in order to make the availability of workers more accessible and timelier for agricultural labor needs;
 - 2.17.26. A process for timely replacement of H-2A workers due to health reasons or loss of approved worker; and
 - 2.17.27. Includes dairy parlor and animal care employees in the H-2A program.
- 2.18. We oppose:
- 2.18.1. Requiring agricultural producers who participate in federal guest worker programs to pay wage rates higher than their state minimum wage or 10% above the federal minimum wage;
 - 2.18.2. Requiring employers to pay local youth workers the same wages as an H-2A or visa worker under a new agricultural visa program for doing the same job;
 - 2.18.3. Requiring housing or transportation, or the hiring of domestic workers after the contract period has begun;

housing or transportation may be encouraged with tax credits;

- 2.18.4. Requiring to pay such cost until at least half of the contract period is complete and unless the costs primarily benefit the employer;
- 2.18.5. Limiting the number of temporary worker visas, or guaranteeing payment of any fraction of a worker's pay for work that has not been performed;
- 2.18.6. Expanding the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act to employers of agricultural temporary workers or otherwise providing those workers with a private right of action, whether expressed or implied, in state or federal court;
- 2.18.7. Applying any labor law that does not currently apply to H-2A visa workers;
- 2.18.8. A requirement that agricultural visa workers be required to purchase health insurance; and
- 2.18.9. Separate hourly wage rates for specific tasks in H-2A contracts. ♦

#146 CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (amendment at line 2.8)

1. State and local groups should retain primary responsibility for career programs and technical education programs.
2. We support:
 - 2.1. Career and technical education and post-high school job training and retraining for youth and adults seeking jobs in farming, ranching and logging;
 - 2.2. The eligibility of farmers and ranchers to participate in existing government-funded retraining programs;
 - 2.3. Federal funding at current or higher levels for career and technical education;
 - 2.4. Expansion of farm business management education and production and financial benchmarking programs as part of adult education;
 - 2.5. Career and technical education in the G.I. Bill, including an agriculture internship option;
 - 2.6. Continued federal funding and appropriations for agricultural education within public schools via the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act; and
 - 2.7. The designation of career technical educators as hard-to-fill positions.
 - 2.8. Maintaining the integrity of the name agriculture in the national career cluster titles. ♦

#165 UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (amendment at line 1.7)

1. We support:
 - 1.1. The safe and responsible use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) and associated technologies for agricultural purposes;
 - 1.2. Requiring the operator of the UAS to gain the written consent of the landowner and/or farm operator if the UAS will be surveying or gathering data above private property;
 - 1.3. Property owners being allowed to confiscate UAS found illegally operating inside their barns or covered structures;
 - 1.4. Allowing landlords and tenants to fly over their fields for any reason without being considered commercial activity;
 - 1.5. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) maintaining reasonable certification and safety training requirements for the operation of UAS, including operational limitations, operational certification and responsibility, aircraft requirements and model aircraft exceptions;
 - 1.6. The use of safety features to notify manned aircraft that a UAS is in the vicinity;

- 1.7. The agricultural/forestry use of UAS going beyond visual line of sight as long as they are controlled by “sense and avoid” technology; and
- 1.8. The limited use of UAS for night-time flying per FAA guidelines.
2. We oppose a federal, state or local agency using UAS for the purpose of regulatory enforcement, litigation and as a sole source for natural resource inventories used in planning efforts. ♦

#209 SUGAR

(amendments at lines 1.2, 1.4, 1.6, 1.8)

1. We support:
 - 1.1. A program to protect the interests of domestic sugar producers and recommend that any appropriate legislation should include provisions that ensure a strong and economically viable domestic sugar industry;
 - 1.2. ~~Retention of~~ Increasing the current loan rate as a minimum to offset inflationary pressures;
 - 1.3. Elimination of the marketing assessment fee(s) or loan forfeiture penalties;
 - 1.4. Increased funding for research and development funding for bio-based energy and bio-based products utilizing sugar crops;
 - 1.5. USDA publishing monthly USDA-validated reports on Mexico sugar consumption, production, processing, exports, imports, and non-food use, similar to reports available in the United States;
 - 1.6. Maintaining Improving the current 2014 sugar provisions in the next farm bill to better support the domestic sugar industry and to insure a stable domestic sugar supply;
 - 1.7. Domestic allocations should be distributed to sugar from domestically produced cane or beets to their respective sectors before increasing import allocations; and
 - 1.8. ~~Research of bio-based products, such as sugar beet co-products for use as a road de-icer.~~
2. We encourage both the U.S. and Mexico to continue discussions to develop a workable sugar program. ♦

#225 RISK MANAGEMENT/CROP INSURANCE

(amendment at line 1.2.85)

1. ***Crop/Revenue Insurance***
 - 1.1. USDA should not change compliance policy pertaining to conservation plans without an open comment period.
 - 1.2. We support:
 - 1.2.1. The availability of commodity insurance designed for agricultural producers of all crops, aquaculture, livestock and poultry in the country;
 - 1.2.2. Taking all necessary steps to include furrow-irrigated rice in the traditional crop insurance program;
 - 1.2.3. The development of new risk management programs to supplement or be an alternative to current crop and future livestock insurance programs;
 - 1.2.4. More equitable crop insurance costs across the country and counties. Insurance premiums should reflect the risk on the farm and not have wide premium differences across county lines;
 - 1.2.5. Annual reviews to ensure proper premium ratings that are actuarially sound by crop, county and state;
 - 1.2.6. Continuation of the federal government financial support, at a percent not less than current levels, for the program with the private sector continuing to serve as the primary deliverer of insurance;

- 1.2.7. Continuation of everyone being eligible for the program, regardless of size of the operation or payments;
- 1.2.8. Improved risk management education programs;
- 1.2.9. Providing producers of all crops options for various insurance products that accurately reflect individual risk considerations regardless of end-market designation when making crop insurance purchasing decisions;
- 1.2.10. The ability of an insurance provider to bring new technology and innovation to the crop insurance industry;
- 1.2.11. Requiring clear delineation during the sales and billing processes to distinguish between federal crop insurance policies and private company add-on products;
- 1.2.12. Development of crop revenue policies that provide coverage for all grain quality discounts, including unmarketable grain and grain damaged by acts of nature, for producers that follow good farming practices determined by the Risk Management Agency (RMA). Discount factors must be comparable to the level of discounts experienced by producers in the market;
- 1.2.13. The notification of an option of a federal grade should be given on grain when it is sold or delivered;
- 1.2.14. Loss calculations utilizing quality standards recognized in the marketplace;
- 1.2.15. Actual Production History (APH) not being affected when a crop is unable to be planted and prevented planting payments are accepted;
- 1.2.16. Animal depredation claims not counting against APH;
- 1.2.17. APH reflecting actual yield with no reduction for quality losses;
- 1.2.18. Alteration of crop insurance grain quality adjustments to reflect USDA grain inspection standards. When verifying crop quality loss adjustments, sampling and inspection conducted by state or federally licensed elevators grading to a "marketable" quality product should be accepted proof of loss;
- 1.2.19. Revising loss adjustment procedures for aflatoxin/vomitoxin by multiplying the Quality Adjustment Factor (QAF) by the crop insurance price instead of bushels delivered;
- 1.2.20. Updating planting dates and replanting dates to better reflect variety maturity, growing season length, Land Grant University or processor recommendations, geographic areas and weather conditions. We also support flexibility to allow the secretary of agriculture to adjust planting and harvest dates, with loss protection for changing those dates provided to private companies. All crop acreage reporting dates should be a minimum of 30 days after the actual planting date;
- 1.2.21. Payment reduction of 65 percent for haying and grazing a cover crop before October 1st on prevented planting acres;
- 1.2.22. Changes to RMA qualifications of a beginning farmer from 5 years to coincide with Farm Service Agency (FSA) qualification of 10 years;
- 1.2.23. Special provisions for seed crops requiring pollinator rows for seed production;
- 1.2.24. Removing mandatory harvest requirements from federal crop insurance claim provisions;
- 1.2.25. Planting and harvesting technologies being accepted for compliance for crop insurance unit designation;
- 1.2.26. Coordination of rules between the RMA and the FSA to allow for proper differentiation between irrigated and non-irrigated tracts within a farm;
- 1.2.27. Federal crop insurance recognizing FSA figures and maps;
- 1.2.28. Changes to RMA standards that allow more than one tract, in lieu of more than one FSA farm serial number, to qualify for Enterprise Units;
- 1.2.29. A crop insurance program that offers replant benefits that accurately reflect the actual cost of replanting the damaged crop every time and would be paid to the landowner and/or

- tenant in proportion to the planting cost incurred rather than crop share;
- 1.2.30. Simplifying application, reporting and claim procedures by promoting flexibility in the process and communication between agents, adjusters, FSA and others;
 - 1.2.31. A program that requires clear and consistent interpretation and implementation of all federal crop insurance provisions, especially Prevented Planting provisions, including better clarification of the 20/20 rule;
 - 1.2.32. Allowing acreage reporting revisions based on accurate FSA certification;
 - 1.2.33. Timely adjustment and payment of claims;
 - 1.2.34. RMA requiring approved insurance providers (AIP) to compensate a producer in the amount of 18 percent Annual Percentage Rate (APR), should the company not settle a claim within 60 days;
 - 1.2.35. The APH staying with the land;
 - 1.2.36. Requiring RMA claim guidelines to take into consideration economic justification when Best Management Practices are used to determine treatment thresholds and timeliness of applications;
 - 1.2.37. Having RMA change the test weight "reduction in value" discount in corn back to original regional levels;
 - 1.2.38. The exclusion of crop losses caused by other parties' negligence in the calculation of APHs;
 - 1.2.39. Farm owner/operator choice to combine or separate farms, tracts or fields rather than being designated as a single farm unit;
 - 1.2.40. The structuring of crop insurance policies so that premiums do not continue to increase for producers whose APH yields are lowered due to multi-year losses;
 - 1.2.41. Allowing new producers and/or beginning farmers to use county RMA averages instead of the T-yield when establishing yield for federal crop insurance;
 - 1.2.42. Adjusting crops at or below harvest cost to be considered a zero level of production;
 - 1.2.43. The removal of "production to count" from all crop insurance policies;
 - 1.2.44. USDA developing standard production evidence procedures for both FSA and crop insurance purposes;
 - 1.2.45. Making Area Risk Protection Insurance (ARPI) policies available in all counties;
 - 1.2.46. Requiring USDA to release the individual county final yield averages needed for ARPI policies one month prior to the deadline for the crop insurance sales closing date for the federal crop insurance program;
 - 1.2.47. Using actual production yields rather than NASS survey yields to calculate ARPI insurance policies;
 - 1.2.48. Requiring crop insurance agents to receive training and pass a written examination on each specific crop they wish to be certified to sell;
 - 1.2.49. Abolishing or modifying the "one-in-three" rule that requires a farmer to plant and harvest a particular program crop at least one out of three years in a field in order for that crop to be eligible for crop insurance;
 - 1.2.50. Exempting a year that is declared a disaster from the "one-in-three" calculation;
 - 1.2.51. A crop insurance policy provision to provide coverage due to regulation of a quarantined disease;
 - 1.2.52. County trend yield adjustments for all insurable commodities at least every 10 years;
 - 1.2.53. Provisions that allow increasing APH when adopting new technologies such as drip irrigation;
 - 1.2.54. Allowing harvested apples and peaches, regardless of the intended use, to be counted toward yield and APH;
 - 1.2.55. Reducing the legal weight for one bushel of apples from 42 pounds to 40 pounds for all states as defined in USDA's Apple Crop Insurance Provisions;
 - 1.2.56. Elimination of the "staged production guarantee";

- 1.2.57. Making permanent the emergency rule allowing winter cover crops to be harvested in the spring without jeopardizing crop insurance eligibility for the primary crop planted after the winter crop is harvested;
- 1.2.58. Adopting conservation practices to control soil and nutrient loss on acres that are eligible to receive prevented planting payments;
- 1.2.59. Requiring crop insurance premium due dates to be set based on harvest zone times and due when crops are harvested, not before;
- 1.2.60. A producer receiving an APH based on the settlement yield when a canning field is "passed" for harvest;
- 1.2.61. Producers who rotate crops being allowed to qualify for county average when calculating yields for the purpose of federal crop insurance on acres producing crops historically grown in their geographic area;
- 1.2.62. Allowing farmers to separately insure by practice, such as double cropping, irrigation/non-irrigation, or organic/non-organic as part of either a basic or an enterprise unit so that neither crop's claim calculation impacts the other;
- 1.2.63. The use of separate measurements to calculate a loss between organic and transitional crops. USDA should provide specific language that crop insurance agents, companies and adjusters can use as a standard for correctly handling a crop insurance claim when both organic and transitional acreage is involved;
- 1.2.64. A farmer receiving a portion of their claim (50-75 percent) when the toxin level qualifies the grain as a total loss and the farmer is eligible for a claim. The balance of the money should be paid when the grain is completely disposed;
- 1.2.65. A crop insurance program which allows the use of all elevator quality factors conducted by certified graders using certified testing equipment. These factors include moisture, foreign material, test weight, damage, alpha-amylase enzyme and mycotoxins;
- 1.2.66. Rule changes that would allow farmers to recover commodity losses under the crop insurance program if they have been adversely affected by erroneous information given out by FDA and USDA;
- 1.2.67. Legislation which strongly addresses crop insurance fraud;
- 1.2.68. Allowing counties to use more than one National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration-approved rainfall recording station, such as municipal airports and municipal wastewater treatment facilities, for the purpose of determining Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) drought payments;
- 1.2.69. The Pasture, Rangeland and Forestry (PRF) program being based on smaller rainfall index quadrants to give each farm an accurate assessment;
- 1.2.70. Specialty crop insurance products being made available to commodity specific producers who request coverage provided a survey be conducted of the relevant industry;
- 1.2.71. A study on an insurance premium discount for producers who use new technologies that protect against yield loss;
- 1.2.72. Payment of crop insurance claims for crop losses caused when authorities intentionally breach a levee or open a federal control structure;
- 1.2.73. The continuing availability of crop insurance for tobacco including fields with an acceptable crop rotation management plan;
- 1.2.74. Fields used for crop rotation, including forage crops, being exempt from the sodbuster regulation for crop insurance;
- 1.2.75. Maintaining up-to-date federal rate maps to reflect flood and other risks as accurately as possible;
- 1.2.76. Development of a crop revenue policy for limited irrigated crops;
- 1.2.77. A re-evaluation of irrigated T-yields to ensure they are more in line with water use;

- 1.2.78. Changing the tolerance for production yield for rice from one pound per acre to one one-hundredweight (cwt) per acre;
- 1.2.79. A crop insurance program that covers a crop until the time of the crop's normal harvest time, and the policy includes provisions for abnormally late harvest due to adverse weather events;
- 1.2.80. The ability of all states to insure individual blocks of grape varieties;
- 1.2.81. The current legislatively approved farmer premium discount schedule;
- 1.2.82. Acres planted to cover crops managed to promote soil health be considered "fallow" for the following year's crop including fall planted crops;
- 1.2.83. Creation of a stakeholder advisory committee within each RMA regional office. These committees should be composed of producers, Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs), agents, adjusters and regional agronomists to advise policy makers as to possible effect of procedure;
- 1.2.84. Maintaining a revenue-based policy with the opportunity to use the Harvest Price Option;
- 1.2.85. Continuation of the Whole Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) as a pilot program. ~~Premiums should be based on the amount of risk. Coverage should be based on a five-year Olympic average. The current \$1 million eligibility cap for animals and animal products, as well as nursery and greenhouse production, should be increased. The minimum qualifying requirements for the 80 and 85 percent coverage level should be reduced from three to two commodities;~~
- 1.2.86. State-listed noxious weed control requirements be enforced on fields with prevented planting;
- 1.2.87. Development of special crop insurance products to compensate farmers for wildlife damage;
- 1.2.88. Encouraging the RMA to establish a county base value of no less than the most recent NASS pasture cash rental rate for each county and also the formula for determining the county base value plus the sites for rainfall determinations for a grid to be more transparent;
- 1.2.89. RMA being transparent in the precipitation data collection process for pasture, rangeland and forage policies and held accountable for meeting payment deadlines.
- 1.2.90. One insurance premium per farm number, even if one farm number is in multiple counties;
- 1.2.91. Adding row rice as a covered commodity with the RMA;
- 1.2.92. Moving the haying, grazing and chopping date of prevented planting acres planted to a cover crop from November 1 to a date set regionally by the RMA. If prevented planting acres planted to a cover crop are hayed, grazed or chopped after a regionally set date, there shall be no reduction in the insured's prevented planting payment;
- 1.2.93. The U.S. government, as part of the private-government partnership with National Crop Insurance Services (NCIS), requiring the NCIS board of directors to include at least one active farmer from each of the five major geographical regions of the United States;
- 1.2.94. Amending the USDA-RMA crop insurance basic policy provisions to allow prior converted crop acres to be eligible for prevented planting coverage/claim if the acres were unable to be planted in one of the two previous years due to an U.S. Army Corps of Engineers cease and desist order or other governmental restriction(s) that stopped the farm acreage from being planted, thereby making the farm

- acreage eligible for prevented planting after the restrictive order is lifted;
- 1.2.95. Allowing a producer who elects to include a Harvest Price Option (HPO) to receive the harvest price if it is higher on prevented plant acres;
- 1.2.96. The development of a crop insurance product for specialty crops that:
 - 1.2.96.1. Allows for the sale of specialty crops originally intended for the fresh market that do not meet quality standards into other marketing channels;
 - 1.2.96.2. Indemnifies growers based on the price differential between fresh markets and the alternative marketing channel; and
 - 1.2.96.3. Does not require the specialty crop to be destroyed to qualify for crop insurance or disaster assistance coverage;
- 1.2.97. RMA's Hurricane Insurance Protection – Wind Index policy indemnifying policyholders in all counties that have sustained hurricane-force winds. Counties adjacent to counties that have sustained hurricane-force winds should also be eligible for an indemnity. Counties and adjacent counties should be eligible for HIP-WI even if a hurricane does not make landfall in the U.S., so long as hurricane-force winds were experienced;
- 1.2.98. Hay and forage producers' access to effective risk management tools that address the full scope of hay production including loss from weather and pests;
- 1.2.99. Making permanent the per-acre cover crop discount on crop insurance premiums;
- 1.2.100. Allowing producers the opportunity to purchase multiple replant coverage for their crops;
- 1.2.101. A wheat crop insurance option to insure for flour grade or feed grade; and
- 1.2.102. The expansion of RMA's Hurricane Insurance Protection policy to also include a rainfall index that would indemnify policyholders in a county or adjacent counties that have hurricane-related sustained rainfall above a historical index level.
- 1.3. We oppose:
 - 1.3.1. The public release of crop insurance indemnity payments made to individual producers;
 - 1.3.2. Requiring irrigation after crop failure has occurred;
 - 1.3.3. The double selling of tobacco pounds through the use of both the open market and contracts when federal tobacco crop insurance claims are sought. The acreage for tobacco crops on which insurance is paid should be verified to be destroyed and not allowed to be marketed;
 - 1.3.4. Crop insurance that includes an automatic harvest deduction rather than a calculation by a crop adjuster only for grape producers;
 - 1.3.5. RMA announcing special provision changes so late in the season that it negatively affects producers who have already made plans and rental agreements for the next year's particular crop;
 - 1.3.6. Caps or limits being applied to crop insurance premium assistance to producers;
 - 1.3.7. Means testing and payment limitations for crop insurance;
 - 1.3.8. Federal crop insurance premium prices based on specific conservation practices; and
 - 1.3.9. Farmers being charged a farm visit fee to verify that a cover crop that includes a fruit and/or vegetable was not harvested as a fruit or vegetable.

2. **Disaster Programs**

- 2.1. We support:
 - 2.1.1. Programs for livestock and tree producers, which include the Livestock Forage Program (LFP), the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP), the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), the Tree Assistance Program (TAP), and the

- Emergency Haying and Grazing of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) authorities, and other programs to provide assistance to livestock producers during crises or natural disasters;
- 2.1.2. The creation of voluntary risk management products for contracted poultry growers to assist them financially during disease outbreaks or interruption in the supply of birds;
 - 2.1.3. A federal flood insurance program for grain stored on farms;
 - 2.1.4. The Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program + payment calculations being based on gross income and not net income.
 - 2.1.5. Disaster assistance for catastrophic natural disasters that:
 - 2.1.5.1. Provides assistance for quantity and quality losses;
 - 2.1.5.2. Covers all affected segments of agriculture;
 - 2.1.5.3. Does not exclude declared types of natural disasters;
 - 2.1.5.4. Provides timely delivery of assistance;
 - 2.1.5.5. Requires recipients to have crop insurance, NAP coverage or a Whole Farm Revenue Protection Policy, if it is available for their commodity; and
 - 2.1.5.6. Allows for specialty crops intended for fresh market but no longer meeting fresh market quality standards to be sent to an alternative market, not be destroyed, and still qualify for disaster assistance for the price differential.
 - 2.1.6. Not penalizing producers who have purchased higher levels of crop insurance, stacked income protection (STAX) and wind & hail coverage;
 - 2.1.7. The availability of disaster assistance payments for producers who are victims of bioterrorism;
 - 2.1.8. Disaster payment determinations based on best available data;
 - 2.1.9. Allocation of disaster assistance by Congress without regard to existing farm program payments;
 - 2.1.10. The ability of a producer to receive disaster assistance in the year of the disaster even if harvest is scheduled for the following year;
 - 2.1.11. Disaster coverage for crop losses due to governmental restrictions or pest infestations, or cyber-attacks;
 - 2.1.12. USDA Emergency Loan interest rates being set lower than other USDA loan rates;
 - 2.1.13. Producers who have paid the maximum NAP fee of \$750.00 for three specified crops in a county being considered in compliance for disaster-related programs and the statement "or any other" crop being included in the policy. The NAP premium should be pro-rated to reflect appropriate percentages of crop ownership as stated in the rental agreement;
 - 2.1.14. Efforts to streamline the FSA NAP insurance program record keeping requirements for multi-crop farms;
 - 2.1.15. Acres planted for conservation programs designed to promote soil health that are destroyed by the crop insurance deadline should be considered "fallow" for the following year's crop, including fall planted crops;
 - 2.1.16. NAP coverage for all instances of double crops be permitted unless a certified crop advisor determines the practice is not a Best Management Practice;
 - 2.1.17. Increased funding for livestock disaster assistance programs, such as ELAP. We recommend that poultry disaster assistance be authorized for growers, including contract growers, and implemented by USDA to cover Avian Flu production/revenue losses and associated disposal and clean-up costs;
 - 2.1.18. Legislation that would give tax relief to private timberland and nut tree owners damaged by natural disaster;
 - 2.1.19. USDA classifying forestry as a recognized commodity so that private land producers can participate in disaster relief programs in the event of a natural disaster; and

- 2.1.20. An excessive moisture program for hay and cattle, similar to the NAP insurance program that covers drought loss.
- 2.2. We oppose livestock producers losing the ability to obtain both PRF and LFP and continual funding of USDA disaster programs.
- 3. Business Interruption**
 - 3.1. We support USDA providing business interruption payments and the availability of private business interruption insurance to help manage the risks for disease outbreak, natural disaster or market destruction.
- 4. Crop insurance audits undertaken by approved insurance providers can result in claims of over-payments to insureds. Crop insurance policies should be clear that in instances in which providers have a claim against an insured, it is the provider's responsibility to initiate arbitration and mediation. Claims against crop insurance insureds should be made within a reasonable time of the alleged overpayment.
- 5. We support developing a feasible field- or farm-specific insurance product under RMA to provide accurate weather events data using the newest technology and radar-based precipitation. ♦

#237 NATIONAL CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

(amendments at lines 1.12.4, 1.12.5, 1.12.6)

- 1. We support improving the environment by enhancing conservation, wise use and productivity of our natural resources through private ownership, individual freedom and market-oriented approaches as our most important conservation and environmental goal and a consistent long-term national conservation and environmental policy should be pursued that would:
 - 1.1. Recognize the importance of improving agricultural productivity, while maintaining a productive natural resource base;
 - 1.2. Ensure individual freedoms including the right to own and use private property;
 - 1.3. Balance economic and social costs with real environmental benefits;
 - 1.4. Encourage voluntary, local and incentive-based approaches that rely on market solutions and/or performance-based approaches in which outcomes are well-defined, identifiable, verifiable and realistic;
 - 1.5. Focus conservation programs and dollars on soil and water conservation and protection;
 - 1.6. Base decisions on sound, scientific principles and peer-reviewed science;
 - 1.7. Recognize that education and technical assistance are key components needed to achieve conservation and environmental goals and objectives;
 - 1.8. Recognize farmers and ranchers as stewards to the land and protectors of the environment;
 - 1.9. Minimize potential loss of acres from fencing restrictions adjoining waterways, creeks, ponds and lakes;
 - 1.10. Compensate farmers and ranchers at fair market value for environmental or regulatory costs that contribute to the public good;
 - 1.11. Increase in a timely manner the costshare values for conservation programs through NRCS to better align the programs with current cost of materials; and
 - 1.12. Minimize government intervention in agricultural production and private resource management by:
 - 1.12.1. Allowing local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) personnel working directly with farmers in coordinating the repair of damage (from normal farming practices) to fields with a highly erodible land (HEL) designation. NRCS should consider field condition limitations before imposing penalties for non-compliance;
 - 1.12.2. Providing greater flexibility for farmers in receiving technical assistance from government agencies for conservation practices and programs to help farmers and landowners comply with federal environmental regulations;
 - 1.12.3. The current assistance cap for organic producers;

- 1.12.4. Limiting USDA to 30 days from the date the determination is requested to make wetland determinations;
 - 1.12.5. USDA submitting a report of findings of onsite wetland determinations to the farmer/landowner within 60 days of onsite inspection;
 - 1.12.6. Limiting USDA to a maximum of 90 days for each appeals decision following the hearing; if no determination is made, then the farmer shall utilize their own third-party expert determination without penalty;
 - 1.12.7. Allow for the removal of fencerows and stumps without restrictions from HEL and wetland conservation (WC) provisions;
 - 1.12.8. Improving transparency and due process in USDA's wetland determination appeals; and
 - 1.12.9. Requiring input by the agency before finalizing guidance on wetland definitions, determinations, appeal procedures and the use of new technologies.
2. We oppose:
 - 2.1. Zero pollution tolerances because they are technically impossible;
 - 2.2. Federal pre-emption of state water laws;
 - 2.3. The use of federal conservation funds for conservation practices on land that is in the process of being developed for non-agricultural use; and
 - 2.4. Any actions that limit tillage methods.
 - 2.5. Mandates on farmers or private landowners;
 3. Watershed and stream management fees by the Fish and Wildlife Service should not infringe on a producer's ability to build ponds, till soils or obtain technical assistance. Good faith efforts and adherence to generally accepted farming practices or NRCS approved conservation practices should provide immunity from civil and criminal prosecution under environmental statutes.
 4. **Conservation and Environmental Program Implementation**
 - 4.1. Conservation programs should be implemented in a manner that achieves adequate program participation while minimizing the undue loss of productive farmland that may artificially inflate local farmland and/or rental values.
 - 4.2. Federal conservation programs should fund the building of structures such as poultry litter stack houses and composting facilities. The eligibility requirements for this program should be revised to allow more producers to qualify for the program.
 - 4.3. In years when crop protectants are in short supply, RMA, NRCS and FSA should allow the use of tillage to control weeds without losing conservation compliance.
 - 4.4. NRCS conservation and environmental programs should:
 - 4.4.1. Be controlled and directed locally by farmer committees elected by farmers, and made available to all agricultural producers. The existing prohibition against funding or reimbursement of existing conservation structures should be removed. Funding should be equally available for repair and replacement of existing conservation structures;
 - 4.4.2. Provide that 80 percent of all USDA conservation funds be targeted for local county use;
 - 4.4.3. Be voluntary, flexible, site-specific and targeted at specific environmental goals and objectives;
 - 4.4.4. Allow for the flexibility that if a farmer achieves the conservation standard of T, they are eligible to receive increased technical assistance funding;
 - 4.4.5. Make cover crop incentives eligible to all farmers (regardless of cover crop history) with priority given to acres that provide the most benefit or to first time applicants;
 - 4.4.6. Allow farmers to repair erosion to their fields without permission;

- 4.4.7. Have consistent stream buffer compliance requirements nationwide, regardless of related state standards;
 - 4.4.8. Require that all information obtained by government agencies on specific individuals or farms be kept confidential and not made available for public information;
 - 4.4.9. Require only the minimal amount of planning necessary to ensure success taking into account agronomic and economic factors as well as environmental considerations;
 - 4.4.10. Provide cost share, tax credits or be based on other positive economic incentives; or provide compensation when an individual's use of property is restricted for the benefit of the public;
 - 4.4.11. Promote broad awareness through demonstration projects, information dissemination, education and technical assistance;
 - 4.4.12. Allow all entities to receive conservation payments as direct deposits, not as System of Award Management (SAM) payments; and
 - 4.4.13. Provide financial and technical support for safe and effective prescribed burning.
- 4.5. We support:
- 4.5.1. In determining Conservation Compliance:
 - 4.5.1.1. County FSA committees must be involved in good faith determinations and penalties assessed;
 - 4.5.1.2. County FSA committees should receive NRCS technical concurrence before reducing conservation compliance good faith penalties;
 - 4.5.1.3. Federal and/or state endangered species reviews or regulations should not be incorporated;
 - 4.5.1.4. Farmers should not be held responsible for weather impacts that cause non-compliance but should achieve compliance in a timely manner;
 - 4.5.1.5. Graduated payment reductions should also apply to wetland violations; and
 - 4.5.1.6. The effect of practices in place on adjacent properties should be considered;
 - 4.5.2. Adequate funding for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for fencing, fresh water and other livestock programs. Funds should be prioritized and distributed on the local level. NRCS should create geographical regions within states to determine cost tables for EQIP. The primary emphasis should be water quality, soil conservation, on-farm alternative energy systems, manure treatment and processing and animal feeding operation requirements with secondary consideration given to innovative practices and wildlife;
 - 4.5.3. Changing NRCS policy to allow an appropriate extension of EQIP contracts in areas that have been designated federal disaster declarations (Secretarial or Presidential);
 - 4.5.4. EQIP funding for Wildlife Risk Mitigation plans;
 - 4.5.5. USDA/NRCS amending its policy to include boundary fencing, as it refers to feral hog control, as an Eligible Conservation Practice and Activity;
 - 4.5.6. The use of long-term agreements to maximize the effectiveness of program benefits for existing programs;
 - 4.5.7. USDA funding for Soil and Water Conservation Districts to help implement conservation practices;
 - 4.5.8. Funding for cost-share programs, including: consultant fees, the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, technical assistance, soil mapping and publication of soil survey information. Once a cost-sharing practice is completed and approved by the Farm Service Agency, payments should be made to the participant within 30 days;
 - 4.5.9. Expanding the current NRCS practice of providing 30 percent of conservation practice payments up front, to all farmers;
 - 4.5.10. Allowing an exemption to the NRCS manual for EQIP money to be used for streambank stabilization practices prior to the adjacent land's expiration in a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract or a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) contract;

- 4.5.11. Greater efforts to advance new technologies with the use of EQIP and CREP funds to better utilize animal-generated nutrients;
- 4.5.12. Funding to ensure that landowners are adequately compensated whenever property is used for purposes intended to achieve mandated natural resource goals;
- 4.5.13. Conservation priority areas shall only be established after consultation with local conservation district boards and producers. Federal funding for cost-share under the EQIP should be available for short-term conservation projects previously funded under the agricultural conservation program and be expanded to include cost sharing for on-farm dam building and other projects for water conservation to be used for livestock and irrigation;
- 4.5.14. A technical certification process and sufficient funding for private sector conservation technicians in which certified technicians would be able to develop and revise conservation plans, provide all required plans and services to farmers within six months of request and install and certify conservation practices. Farmers should be able to work with their NRCS district conservationist to develop the conservation plan required by the 2002 farm bill and not be required to hire the service of a technical service provider (TSP). We urge NRCS to streamline the Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) process and TSP certification;
- 4.5.15. Development of market-based incentives, pollution permit trading as alternatives to government prescriptions;
- 4.5.16. Preparation of a list identifying existing state and federal environmental regulations/requirements which impact agriculture;
- 4.5.17. Legislative protection for landowners from liability resulting from malfunctions of terraces, structures or other mandates of government regulations;
- 4.5.18. Tree planting as a permanent and economical soil conservation practice that protects marginal, fragile or highly erodible land. In areas along streams and rivers where trees present a hazard of creating debris after a flooding event, NRCS should instead prioritize usage of reed canary grass, tall fescue or other water-tolerant perennial grasses;
- 4.5.19. Funding and maintaining the Forest Land Enhancement Program;
- 4.5.20. Funding for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) with greater accessibility to farmers;
- 4.5.21. Annual open enrollment for the CSP with shortened contracts if funding for the program cannot fully accommodate all applicants;
- 4.5.22. A farmer being allowed to opt out of CSP requirements without penalty if the contract is not fully funded;
- 4.5.23. CSP eligibility based on best management practices including IPM;
- 4.5.24. Enrollment in conservation programs without a requirement to re-seed existing perennial non-noxious cover to meet diversity goals;
- 4.5.25. Grassland and farmland protection programs;
- 4.5.26. Funding for rehabilitation and maintenance for flood prevention sites through low interest loans and grants;
- 4.5.27. The commercial use of un-manned air systems for natural resource management;
- 4.5.28. That two-stage ditches and land used for their construction be eligible for conservation program funding;
- 4.5.29. EQIP projects (contracts) for alternative mortality disposal facilities (composting sheds and/or mechanical composters) be eligible for approval/funding as soon as livestock placement commitments are proven and construction has begun;
- 4.5.30. An exemption from the current three-year payment limit for the same practice under EQIP for practices that benefit wildlife and have a continual cost to the farmer or rancher implementing them;

- 4.5.31. Allowing advance payments to all producers who participate in conservation programs with NRCS; and
- 4.5.32. Stream bank and streambed erosion sources being considered as a separate category from point sources and nonpoint sources in watershed plans and programming.
- 4.6. We recommend NRCS guidelines and approval processes for building farm ponds should be the accepted standard without intervention by other government agencies.
- 4.7. We recommend the federal guidelines on building of farm and ranch ponds be relaxed to allow for the construction of more ponds. We recommend more cost-sharing for pond construction.
- 4.8. We recommend that distribution of federal funds be simplified and more accessible; moreover, funds should be distributed by county or state entities, when possible.
- 4.9. We recommend NRCS remaining under USDA and acting as a non-regulatory mediator on behalf of producers in environmental compliance issues with regulatory agencies.
- 4.10. We believe farmers should only be required to complete practices related to an EQIP funded project, not all practices in a CNMP, to be in compliance with an EQIP contract. ♦

#336 AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS (amendment at line 7.1)

1. Agricultural chemicals are important in continuing to supply consumers with an abundant, safe, nutritious, high quality and reasonably priced food supply. We are committed to continuing the use of agricultural chemicals in a safe and judicious manner so as to protect the health and safety of producers, our employees, our families, our communities and the environment.
2. We encourage people using pesticides for nonagricultural purposes to become better educated on the safe application of these products.
3. We support access to critical pesticides used for crop and livestock production, along with increased funding for research on alternative crop and livestock protection tools. We request the EPA, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and USDA increase cooperation and expedite registration of additional new crop protection tools and traits.
4. We will work with and encourage the agricultural chemical industry through its advertising to present a positive and professional image of farmers and agriculture to the general public.
5. We encourage state control of container disposal and recycling programs.
6. We encourage land grant university research on both the use of old and the development of new chemicals for the control of resistant weeds.
7. **Regulation**
 - 7.1. We believe implementation and defense of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) should be based on credible scientific information in order to benefit farmers, the environment and the public and should be the sole federal regulatory authority over pesticides.
 - 7.2. We recommend that state and local law not be able to prevent the use of pesticide and herbicide products that have EPA approval.
 - 7.3. The United States, Canada and Mexico should harmonize registration guidelines, labeling requirements and accept registration material for agricultural pesticides from those countries.
 - 7.4. We encourage testing of pesticides based on realistic levels of exposure or consumption.
 - 7.5. We believe that when a pesticide product receives an emergency use exemption under Section 18 of FIFRA, the state administering the pesticide provisions where the exemption was

- issued be authorized to re-issue that emergency use until a full FIFRA assessment is completed.
- 7.6. We urge that risk/benefits be considered when the EPA or other agencies make a determination to restrict or cancel pesticides or agrichemicals.
 - 7.7. We support a land grant university peer review of the two EPA models that analyze areas where endangered species could be affected and risk factors to endangered species affected by pesticides.
 - 7.8. EPA should consider actual use data in its risk assessment process to support pesticide registrations and avoid decisions based on worst case assumptions. EPA should not assume that farmers apply pesticides at the maximum dosage rates or frequency of application as the label will allow.
 - 7.9. USDA and EPA should work cooperatively to find alternatives for pesticides that, as a result of regulatory action, have lost registrations and uses. We encourage the development of voluntary Pest Management Strategic Plans.
 - 7.10. We also request re-evaluation of previously canceled pesticides based on current scientific data.
 - 7.11. We recommend EPA be required to allow for use of agricultural pesticides and herbicides canceled during a growing season to be used for the remainder of the growing season, except for acute and unforeseen risks to human or livestock health.
 - 7.12. USDA should expand its scientific capabilities to better serve as a full partner with EPA in pesticide regulatory activities. EPA should be required to strengthen and take more seriously its required consultation with USDA.
 - 7.13. EPA should be able to contract with USDA to perform the testing for pesticide residues.
 - 7.14. Pesticide manufacturers and formulators should be held responsible for the safety and efficacy of crop protection products, if the chemical is used in accordance with the label.
 - 7.15. Atrazine, acetachlor, glyphosate and simazine are effective, economical crop protection chemicals that must continue to be available to farmers.
 - 7.16. Provisions for experimental use, emergency exemptions and state special use registration are particularly important until federal registration is completed.
 - 7.17. We support:
 - 7.17.1. Legislation that would limit authority for pesticide regulation solely to federal and state governments;
 - 7.17.2. Adoption of a negligible risk standard;
 - 7.17.3. The right to import U.S.-approved pesticides from other countries;
 - 7.17.4. The continued use of agricultural chemicals which currently have no viable alternatives, such as methyl bromide. We encourage research funded through state and federal agencies to find alternatives for methyl bromide that are economically viable, of equal performance and sensitive to the exposure needs of individual crops. Until a viable alternative is found, we support the use of a fair, science-based process for Critical Use Exemptions. The process should contain a reliable, consistent set of standards equitable to all parties involved;
 - 7.17.5. Clean Air Act amendments to allow U.S. producers to have access to methyl bromide consistent with phase-out dates for non-industrialized countries as outlined in the Montreal Protocol;
 - 7.17.6. Continuation of the Pesticide Data Program which provides pesticide residue information in food products for use by EPA in setting tolerance standards and registering pesticides;
 - 7.17.7. We recognize the ecological importance of pollinators and the necessity to judiciously utilize crop protection products to protect against loss of crop yield. We support the coexistence of crops and pollinators and urge that any pollinator risk assessment required for registration or

- regulation of crop protection products be based on field-relevant, sound scientific data;
- 7.17.8. The concept of state management plans. However, we oppose the proposed EPA state management plan rule which fails to recognize effective state programs and imposes federal requirements to maintain uses of important crop protection tools;
 - 7.17.9. The continued use of the neonicotinoid pesticide group for agricultural and horticultural crops;
 - 7.17.10. If a crop protection product has gone through a review three times or more, the time frame between reviews should be doubled;
 - 7.17.11. Consistent funding and streamlining of the pesticide review process within EPA to expedite registration;
 - 7.17.12. Development of new crop protection technologies that benefit specialty growers and row-crop farmers alike, while minimizing effects on other plant habitat and the environment;
 - 7.17.13. EPA's policy that allows the expeditious use of existing stocks of pesticide products whose registrations have been amended, canceled, or suspended; and
 - 7.17.14. Allowing producers to finish the growing season under the same regulatory conditions that they made planting decisions under.
- 7.18. We oppose:
- 7.18.1. Any legal action made against the federal government based on excessively broad interpretations of environmental laws, which restrict or limit the safe and proper use of agricultural chemicals. Actions impacting a limited geographical region may set harmful and nationally recognized legal and regulatory precedent;
 - 7.18.2. Any regulation that would require a permit prior to application of a chemical for crop protection;
 - 7.18.3. Any requirement that applicators be required to notify all neighbors prior to any pesticide/fertilizer application and/or fumigant buffer zone limitations proposed by the EPA;
 - 7.18.4. Any curtailment of the safe and proper use of agricultural chemicals unless research and scientific data determine that injury to health and well-being would result;
 - 7.18.5. The inclusion of the Private Right of Action provision in the language of FIFRA;
 - 7.18.6. Any reduction to the quantity of methyl bromide requested by methyl bromide users for nomination as Critical Use Exemptions to the Parties of the Montreal Protocol, and we oppose any reduction by the EPA in the amount of Critical Use Exemptions authorized by the Parties of the Montreal Protocol;
 - 7.18.7. Any additional EPA regulation of seed treatments for planting; and
 - 7.18.8. EPA restricting the sale and/or movement of agricultural products that have been legally treated with certain pesticides.
- 8. Labeling and Handling**
- 8.1. We recommend the agricultural chemical industry and agricultural producers work with the appropriate agencies to develop and use reusable, returnable and soluble pesticide containers and an economically and logistically feasible plan to dispose of containers.
 - 8.2. We recommend that compliance with federally approved label instructions absolve farmers from liability claims for health issues, environmental pollution and from paying the cost of cleaning up environmental contamination.
 - 8.3. We recommend that EPA financially support continued education on the proper use and handling of agricultural protectants.
 - 8.4. We recommend that farmers triple rinse or pressure rinse containers and to return them for recycling in areas where such programs are currently available.

- 8.5. We recommend establishment of an industry standard for voluntary field marking that signifies the traits planted in the field.
- 8.6. We support:
 - 8.6.1. Clarification of the current label on 2,4-D to allow its continued use as part of no-till systems;
 - 8.6.2. The use of vegetable oils as the base or carrier for pesticides;
 - 8.6.3. EPA cooperating in sponsoring amnesty programs for proper disposal of hazardous chemicals and discontinued chemicals;
 - 8.6.4. A permanent labeling system covering product name, date of manufacture, effective life and proper storage requirements being required to avoid the use of ineffective pesticides;
 - 8.6.5. EPA reconsidering labeling for pesticide application wind speeds in view of advancements in engineering and technology such as wind guards and low drift spray tips;
 - 8.6.6. The development and immediate use of uniform, permanent international symbols on agricultural chemical containers to ensure proper handling;
 - 8.6.7. Printing the EPA registration number and re-entry interval of each pesticide active ingredient in legible type size directly below its name;
 - 8.6.8. Periodic upgrading of EPA/state pesticide applicator training to ensure a sound and effective source of training, information and certification on the proper handling and safe use of pesticides;
 - 8.6.9. The development of more effective equipment for farm applications;
 - 8.6.10. The safe use of pesticides and practices which will ensure the safety of handlers, applicators and agricultural workers; and
 - 8.6.11. A list available online of all label changes.
- 8.7. We oppose:
 - 8.7.1. Politically mandated buffer zones;
 - 8.7.2. EPA's attempt to shorten the permit certification timeline for pesticide applicator licensing and increase testing standards to make it more difficult for farmers to obtain a pesticide applicator license; and
 - 8.7.3. EPA revocation of approved chemicals based on applicator error.
9. **Data and Record-keeping**
 - 9.1. We support:
 - 9.1.1. Uniform pesticide record-keeping and statistically valid reporting for use in evaluating and maintaining pesticide registrations. The enforcement of record-keeping for restricted use farm chemicals should be done at the state level and in a manner that educates and is helpful to the producer rather than punitive;
 - 9.1.2. The voluntary collection of actual residue data from farm and orchard products to establish use patterns of the agricultural chemicals used in crop production. This data should be used in the pesticide registration, reregistration, cancellation and special review process only; and
 - 9.1.3. Increased funding for the USDA to increase credible information on pesticide use collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).
10. **Specialty (Minor) Crop Chemicals**
 - 10.1. We urge Congress and the appropriate agencies to address the cost of label registration and reregistration for chemicals to be used on minor use crops and to provide methods of label clearance for them. Reregistration of specialty use chemicals should not be required unless research by qualified specialists demonstrates a need to change the registration.
 - 10.2. To expedite specialty crop pesticide registrations, we urge that chemicals cleared for application on edible food crops be additionally registered, with agreement of the manufacturer, for like applications of that same crop when planted for nonfood

uses. If a chemical is cleared for control of a specific pest on an edible food crop, it should also be cleared for pest control on nonfood crops.

- 10.3. We support:
 - 10.3.1. A dedicated funding source to support research into specialty crops and their existing and emerging pest threats for new pesticide development and expanding current label registrations;
 - 10.3.2. Legislative solutions to ensure availability of specialty crop use pesticides. These solutions shall include, but not be limited to, expanded Interregional Research Project #4 (IR-4) activities, tax credits to registrants who maintain these uses and reduced third-party registration liability;
 - 10.3.3. Encouraging the EPA to re-register Monosodium Methanearsonate;
 - 10.3.4. The use of Canadian data by the EPA for the registration of chemicals for use on minor oilseed crops; and
 - 10.3.5. Aerial application of agricultural chemicals is a safe and effective tool for farmers, and we oppose any efforts to limit or restrict this application method.
- 10.4. We oppose any farmer, landowner or chemical dealer liability when anhydrous ammonia, ammonium nitrate or any other legitimate farm chemical is stolen from a farm premise.
- 10.5. We support a Rebuttable Presumption Against Registration assessment of pesticide uses prior to any cancellation actions, a review of EPA decisions by a qualified scientific committee and increased USDA input into agricultural pesticide regulatory decisions. ♦

#340 FOOD QUALITY AND SAFETY

(amendment at line 19.2.6)

1. The American food supply is the safest, most abundant and affordable in the world. Agricultural chemicals and other technological advances play a major role in maintaining both the quality and quantity of our food supply.
2. We will monitor initiatives to improve and streamline food safety to ensure that policies and procedures are in place that build trust and reliability in U.S. agriculture.
3. We believe food safety issues at the producer level should be handled through "quality assurance programs."
4. We encourage the education of all food handlers and consumers on the proper preparation, cooking and serving of all food products and on sanitary practices as part of state licensing procedures.
5. Ensuring a safe, secure food supply is a critical concern when establishing domestic and international policy. We should continue to communicate accurate, timely information on food safety issues to the mainstream media and the general public. Our goal is to improve awareness and understanding of agriculture's commitment to providing a safe, high quality food supply at a reasonable price to the public.
6. We encourage food regulatory agencies to research and develop expedient and efficient processes to trace food contamination outbreaks, which result in economic losses and a lack of consumer trust. Any system should be non-intrusive and economically feasible.
 - 6.1. No food safety agency should release business names to the public during or after an investigation, until a thorough investigation of the producer, harvester, shipper or marketer has been conducted, and the entity to be named publicly has been informed such a publication is to be made. Entities who cannot sell goods into the public marketplace should never be named publicly unless it can be proven that they adulterated the food or product through negligence; and
 - 6.2. In the interest of improving cooperation during investigations and in an effort to obtain better information for consumers and industry alike, FDA should significantly revise their practices during investigations to improve the speed and accuracy with which they conduct their efforts. Additionally, FDA's authority to name individuals, businesses or brands should be greatly reduced, and Congress should enact legislation that grants legal recourse to

- anyone adversely affected by FDA's action, instead of on a case-by-case basis requiring congressional actions for every situation;
7. We urge USDA and FDA to require the food industry to stop relying on third-party groups and the European Union as authorities for acceptable levels of pesticide residues in food.
 8. We support:
 - 8.1. The consideration of both the risks and the benefits of pesticides in the evaluation of chemical products;
 - 8.2. Voluntary guidelines rather than federal or state mandates;
 - 8.3. The establishment and promotion of sound scientific research criteria which ensure the safety of food additives;
 - 8.4. Legislative and regulatory decisions concerning food irradiation (cold pasteurization) based on valid research;
 - 8.5. Utilization of USDA-approved technologies, such as cold pasteurization and high pressure processing to eliminate E. coli and other pathogens from our food supply;
 - 8.6. The use of modern technology in the processing and the handling of food to assure food safety and to promote consumer confidence in the food supply. More research should be conducted by agricultural colleges into inspection methods to eliminate the risk of pathogens in food;
 - 8.7. Immediate actions by USDA and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to raise the priority of and resources devoted to federal safety and inspection services that do not unduly burden domestic farmers or ranchers;
 - 8.8. Protection of our food supply by requiring that imported food products be subjected to the same high safety standards and testing as food products produced in the United States;
 - 8.9. Funding appropriate inspection services that do not unduly burden domestic farmers or ranchers at a level permitting effective inspection of imported and domestic food products;
 - 8.10. Legislation to require federal agencies to prepare, in advance of final rule-making, agricultural cost/benefit statements on proposed regulations having a significant impact on agricultural producers;
 - 8.11. Cooperative efforts with food processors, chemical companies, government agencies, scientists and others to provide factual information on the safety of our food supply;
 - 8.12. Open communication with willing consumer groups;
 - 8.13. Provisions to allow the transport and storage of fresh eggs based on current USDA standards of 45 degrees Fahrenheit or less, but oppose the mandatory pasteurization of fresh eggs;
 - 8.14. State efforts to ensure the quality and integrity of unpasteurized fruit juices;
 - 8.15. Promoting science-based, voluntary commodity quality assurance programs;
 - 8.16. Additional research on food safety technology advances;
 - 8.17. USDA and FDA removing E. coli as an adulterant;
 - 8.18. The right of private industry or farmers to meet quality demands exceeding U.S. Government standards for products they produce;
 - 8.19. The ability of cheese makers to use wood planks during production to age their cheese;
 - 8.20. The health benefits of animal fat being included with meat promotions;
 - 8.21. The use of preservatives in the meat of farm-bred exotic animals;
 - 8.22. Increased education efforts among producers on the prevention of all pathogens within the food and agricultural industry;
 - 8.23. The burden of proof to be on the complainant to prove negligence on an operation in compliance with applicable food safety regulations;
 - 8.24. FDA educating the food services industry on the dangers of the mammal meat food allergy, Alpha-gal;
 - 8.25. Inspectors for federal food safety and security programs being required to present valid identification and upon departure leave notification of who was present;
 - 8.26. Funding to assist in the implementation of food safety regulations coming from those mandating the regulations;
 - 8.27. Increased testing (to at least 10% of the total imports) by Customs and Border Patrol on imported honey to detect adulteration and country of origin. Furthermore, we support that any evidence of

- violation of U.S. trade and food safety laws, related to honey imports, be referred to appropriate U.S. authorities for law enforcement action;
- 8.28. Clarification and standardization of food expiration terms (i.e., best by, sell by, use by) to reduce needless food waste; and
 - 8.29. FDA ensuring the final rule for food safety traceability easily integrates with a farm's existing food safety protocols.
9. We oppose FDA regulations of unpasteurized fruit juices.
 10. We support efforts to develop food safety practices to help prevent microbial contamination of fresh produce. The guidelines must:
 - 10.1. Be based on sound science and risk;
 - 10.2. Provide flexibility to accommodate the great diversity of the fresh produce industry including those in geographically challenged areas;
 - 10.3. Be practical to implement;
 - 10.4. Be consistent with existing state and federal regulations and guidelines;
 - 10.5. Support Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP) standards;
 - 10.6. Be implemented in a manner that will not impair our ability to export produce items;
 - 10.7. Provide adequate resources to carry out a standardized education program for the industry and consumers;
 - 10.8. Be tailored to the size, type and capacity of the farm;
 - 10.9. Include a provision that only covered agricultural products should count toward its gross sales threshold, when an operation is subject to the Food Safety Modernization Act; and
 - 10.10. Allow for animal manure application that is flexible enough for utilization, food production and food safety.
 11. Any food safety legislation or regulatory actions should adhere to the following principles:
 - 11.1. Increases in federal or state funding should not come in the form of fees or fines to farmers unless these fees are in the form of industry assessments under a marketing agreement order;
 - 11.2. Any additional mandated regulatory requirements should not financially impact producers. An indemnification program should be instituted to properly compensate farmers for losses (including the market value of monetary losses, damages, legal fees and out-of-pocket expenditures) when the government issues an inaccurate or unwarranted food safety response action (such as a food safety warning or recall);
 - 11.3. Take the form of voluntary guidelines rather than federal or state mandates;
 - 11.4. Any punitive action should require that a party acted with negligence or malice, rather than impose a strict liability standard; and
 - 11.5. Any fees or fines to domestic farmers should not be assessed unless these fees are in the form of industry assessments under a marketing agreement order.
 12. USDA should be designated as the lead agency in the development and administration of food safety guidelines and should serve as the sole federal agency responsible for food inspection and safety. Until then, USDA and FDA should work more collaboratively with FSMA guidelines to benefit producers. We support having employees from state agencies act as authorized agents of FDA to conduct required federally authorized inspections mandated under FSMA.
 13. We oppose the establishment of mandates compelling domestic farmers to hire a third party to comply with federal or state food safety laws.
 14. In the event Congress grants FDA food safety authority, FDA should coordinate with USDA in the development and administration of any food safety guidelines related to fresh produce or other agricultural production. FDA should not have on-farm authorities unless a food safety-related cause is indicated by sound science. Any recordkeeping requirements must be accompanied by assurance that information accessed by Federal or state government authorities in regards to food safety protocols will remain confidential. The guidelines must exempt farms engaged in direct sales to consumers from FDA oversight for sale of fruits and vegetables.

15. Following the initial publication of a proposed rule on food safety regulations, a food safety agency should allow a second public comment to allow stakeholder review of any revisions before the final rule is promulgated.
16. Those making public health decisions that result in product recalls, product seizures or destruction of perishable goods must be held accountable when such decisions prove erroneous or are unwarranted. Such entities must be required to compensate or indemnify individuals and companies for the monetary losses that occur.
17. We oppose incorporating water quality standards that require recreational water standards for agricultural water.
18. In accordance with the Food Safety Modernization Act, all “kill-step” facilities should be considered a qualified end-user.
19. Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)
 - 19.1. GAPs are a set of recommendations that can help improve the quality and safety of the produce grown.
 - 19.2. We support:
 - 19.2.1. All government agencies following food safety and security protocol on farm operations;
 - 19.2.2. All GAP auditors complying with the same rules;
 - 19.2.3. Training for all auditors being consistent and uniform for both private and USDA auditors;
 - 19.2.4. GAP certification should have requirements reviewed by industry and science groups;
 - 19.2.5. USDA having a program to certify private organic (NOP) and state organic inspectors to cross-train as GAP inspectors, thus allowing both inspections to take place on the same trip;
 - 19.2.6. **Efforts to harmonize food safety audits with what is required under the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) to reduce duplication and allow state/federal government agencies to accept comparable third-party audits in lieu of a FSMA inspection; and**
 - 19.2.7. USDA accepting Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) equivalent audits in lieu of a standard USDA GAP audit for government purchases.
20. Meat Processing:
 - 20.1. We Support:
 - 20.1.1. Reviewing and reforming meat processing laws to allow for more flexibility for very small, small and medium-sized meat processing facilities without jeopardizing food safety;
 - 20.1.2. Exploring means of providing more flexibility regarding inspectors for processing facilities including the use of more technology; and
 - 20.1.3. Enhancing and targeting federal assistance for very small, small, and medium-sized meat processors.
 - 20.2. We oppose:
 - 20.2.1. Expanding GAP programs beyond unprocessed ready-to-eat fruits and vegetables; and
 - 20.2.2. The FDA classifying ethanol by-products, spent grain and other animal feed as food stuffs under FSMA. ♦

#404 RENEWABLE FUELS (amendment at line 1.1)

1. We support:
 - 1.1. Full research and development for the increased production of all forms of renewable energy from agricultural/forestry resources including solutions to help producers effectively manage soil and water conservation issues and control invasive species;

- 1.2. Private and public efforts to develop and promote new uses for agricultural products;
- 1.3. Research into the viability and economic potential of agricultural products and commodities used for energy generation;
- 1.4. Production and use of agricultural based fuels;
- 1.5. Research and demonstration programs that use renewable fuel as a fuel for fuel cell engine development;
- 1.6. The Renewable Fuels Standard 2 (RFS2) as passed in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, and that Congress maintain administrative control over renewable volume obligations after 2022; and
- 1.7. The availability of multi-grade non-ethanol gasoline for small engine, marine and boutique uses, and all agricultural uses.

2. Biofuels

- 2.1. We support:
 - 2.1.1. The establishment and enforcement of national quality standards for renewable fuels and related co-products. Biodiesel shall be defined by meeting the specifications of the American Society of Testing and Materials 6751 or its properly designated successor;
 - 2.1.2. Diesel as a biodiesel or renewable diesel blend and gasoline as a renewable fuel blend;
 - 2.1.3. Efforts to educate consumers and industry on the benefits of biofuel blends higher than ten percent;
 - 2.1.4. Legislation requiring the production of clear gasoline that would accommodate year-round blending with ethanol in all fuels;
 - 2.1.5. Research for the development of alternative denaturing options, in an attempt to make the denaturing of renewable fuel more economical;
 - 2.1.6. Including biodiesel and renewable diesel in all the Department of Energy's (DOE) policies and materials regarding alternative and renewable fuels;
 - 2.1.7. Legislative and regulatory approval for an increased octane fuel standard utilizing higher blends of ethanol to help automobile manufacturers meet fuel efficiency standards and reduce their carbon footprint;
 - 2.1.8. Standardization of all new gasoline dispensers to be Underwriters Laboratories (UL) certified for a minimum of E-30;
 - 2.1.9. The continuation of programs such as the Renewable Fuel Standard as legislated to promote increased sales and higher blends of biofuels;
 - 2.1.10. A national standard for the labeling and identification of biofuel products;
 - 2.1.11. U.S. Department of Defense adoption and use of renewable fuels; and
 - 2.1.12. Efforts to expand the use of renewable fuel in commercial aviation, maritime, and other large-volume users.
- 2.2. We oppose:
 - 2.2.1. Attempts to defund, repeal or rollback implementation of the RFS2; and
 - 2.2.2. Small Refinery Exemption waivers under the RFS and support the reallocation of waived gallons as originally mandated under the RFS2.

3. Biomass

- 3.1. We support:
 - 3.1.1. Defining biomass to include all forms of plant fiber harvested from all lands, public and private;
 - 3.1.2. Harvesting of lowland and riparian areas for biomass use except lands enrolled in retirement programs;
 - 3.1.3. Increasing the establishment, production and utilization of eligible biomass energy crops through the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP); and
 - 3.1.4. Retaining and developing policies which support the biomass fuels industry.
- 3.2. We oppose declaring any potential biomass crop ineligible for use in any biomass energy incentive program simply because it is non-native.

4. Co-products

- 4.1. We support:
 - 4.1.1. Continued research and education into ruminant and non-ruminant feed utilization of renewable fuel co-products;
 - 4.1.2. Renewable fuel producers be encouraged and offered incentives to use recycled effluent water produced by local municipal wastewater treatment facilities in the production process; and
 - 4.1.3. Adding price reporting for corn and its co-products, including dry distillers grains (DDGs), to the U.S. Census Bureau Current Industrial Reports as well as to the Bureau's domestic and international market reports.

5. Emissions

- 5.1. We support:
 - 5.1.1. Oxygenate standards unless there are enhancements of laws and regulations (anti-backsliding) that preserve the improvements in air quality that renewable fuel provides as a fuel;
 - 5.1.2. Promoting, using and expanding renewable fuel as an octane or cetane enhancer, fuel source, or lubricity agent to improve air quality. Our goal is to expand the use of renewable fuels;
 - 5.1.3. Continuing tests on E diesel to prove the viability of an ethanol additive to lower the particulates in diesel engine emissions;
 - 5.1.4. Amending the Clean Air Act to hold states harmless for emission levels resulting from emergency waivers granted by EPA;
 - 5.1.5. Designating the cost of purchasing biodiesel and renewable diesel as an allowable expense in the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality program;
 - 5.1.6. Changing tests for low-sulfur fuel to be based on levels of sulfur rather than testing for red dye;
 - 5.1.7. Using biodiesel and renewable diesel to meet up to 100 percent of an affected utility or government fleet emission reduction requirements under the Energy Policy Act of 1992; and
 - 5.1.8. Accommodation issues surrounding Reid Vapor Pressure to ensure ethanol volumes can continue to expand.
- 5.2. We are opposed to states being exempt from the oxygenate requirements of the Clean Air Act.

6. Engines and Vehicles

- 6.1. We support:
 - 6.1.1. Research for better performing engines that run on renewable fuels;
 - 6.1.2. Legislation to require all new gasoline-powered vehicles be flex-fuel;
 - 6.1.3. Industry standards that would require all vehicles capable of burning E85 fuel to be equipped with a yellow gas cap to distinguish this capability; and
 - 6.1.4. Using renewable fuels in all federal vehicles where available.
- 6.2. We oppose efforts to ban internal combustion engines.

7. Infrastructure

- 7.1. We support:
 - 7.1.1. Timely certification by UL of dispensing equipment for all renewable fuel products, including all storage tanks and pumping equipment;
 - 7.1.2. All diesel engine manufacturers adopting biodiesel and renewable diesel as an alternative for complying with EPA emission control standards;
 - 7.1.3. Streamlining and expediting the process for issuing permits for the construction and operation of refineries for the production of renewable fuels and coal gasification;
 - 7.1.4. Distributing renewable fuels via pipelines or other cost effective means;
 - 7.1.5. Color coding fuel pumps to indicate blends of liquid energy; and

- 7.1.6. Reporting and publishing of renewable fuel production and renewable fuel plant construction on a timely basis by an entity such as the DOE. ♦

#418 FISCAL POLICY

(amendment at 11.2)

1. In order to protect the future integrity of our nation's economy it is in our best interest to address budget deficits, which erode our ability to remain fiscally stable. We support a Constitutional amendment requiring a balanced federal budget.
2. We support the concept of sequestration as a possible tool to achieve a balanced budget. However, we believe no programs should be exempt from cuts.
3. We believe Congress should retain control of the national debt as delineated in Article 1 Section 8 of the Constitution and that the debt ceiling should only be increased by a two-thirds vote of both the House and Senate.
4. All of our elected Representatives should be involved directly in any debt debate, and the debate should be held in an open forum.
5. Government economic policies should be designed to encourage economic stability, to increase productivity, to improve our competitive advantage in the international market and to promote a high level of economic prosperity.
6. The definition of "spending cut" should be an actual reduction in dollars spent and the definition of "budget cut" should be an actual reduction in dollars budgeted.
7. The federal deficit should be reduced each year. Social Security, Medicare / Medicaid, tax policy and government spending all require adjustments to achieve a balanced budget. Spending restraint should be prioritized over increasing taxes.
8. Federal expenditures on government services and entitlements must be reduced. All departments of the government should be examined for cuts in spending, including cost-of-living adjustments.
9. We believe:
 - 9.1. In open disclosure of government spending at all levels;
 - 9.2. All government agencies should be required to return unspent money to the Department of the Treasury without a penalty;
 - 9.3. Agencies and programs that are not reauthorized by Congress should not be funded;
 - 9.4. All new federal programs should sunset;
 - 9.5. Dedicated trust funds should be used for their intended purpose and not be used to mask the size of the federal deficit;
 - 9.6. Federal budget surpluses should be used to reduce the federal debt;
 - 9.7. Any tax increases should be used to balance the budget and should sunset once this goal is accomplished. Tax increases should not be utilized to create an opportunity to spend money on new programs;
 - 9.8. The economic benefits of proposed tax code changes should be recognized and dynamic scoring should be used to determine their impact on federal revenue;
 - 9.9. Federal mandates to state and local governments and agricultural producers must provide complete and continuous funding or be eliminated; and
 - 9.10. Equal rights should be exercised in the distribution of state and federal aid to any entity and oppose the distribution of aid based on race, gender or religious belief.
10. We support:
 - 10.1. The continued use of physical currency and recommend the U.S. government continue to produce a sufficient supply of coin and paper currency; and
 - 10.2. The reinstatement of the Glass-Steagall Act that would limit activities and affiliations between commercial banks and security firms.

11. We oppose:
 - 11.1. Awarding federal monies to citizen action groups;
 - 11.2. The concept of environmental, social, and governance standards.
 - 11.3. Government-mandated redistribution of wealth;
 - 11.4. Federal funding for the National Endowment for the Arts;
 - 11.5. Withholding funds to force compliance with federal programs;
 - 11.6. The federal government bailing out states and cities that are in financial trouble;
 - 11.7. Changing the budget status of programs to mask federal spending or taxation;
 - 11.8. The United States Congress passing stimulus packages that include policies related to the "Green New Deal" and would establish new social welfare programs. Such legislation would require tax increases to offset the spending and create new regulations, both of which would negatively impact farm families;
 - 11.9. The monitoring and reporting of bank accounts and financial transactions to the Internal Revenue Service;
 - 11.10. Governmental programs, mandates or initiatives to create a cashless society; and
 - 11.11. A universal basic income.
12. **The Federal Reserve**
 - 12.1. The Federal Reserve System should be audited annually and the results of the audit should be made public in a timely manner. The Reserve should have an independent board of governors with production agriculture represented on the Board; and
 - 12.2. We oppose the Federal Reserve buying up United States government debt. ◆

#421 MONOPOLY

(amendment at line 3)

1. Monopoly power is a threat to our competitive enterprise system and the individual freedom of every American.
2. Consolidation and the subsequent concentration within the U.S. agricultural sector is having adverse economic impacts on farmers and ranchers. Congress should review existing statutes, develop legislation where necessary and strengthen enforcement activities to ensure proposed agribusiness mergers and vertical integration arrangements do not hamper producers' access to inputs, markets and transportation.
 - 2.1. We support the federal government investigating all agricultural monopolies and vigorously enforcing the Packers and Stockyards Act.
3. We recommend the federal government ~~look into~~ investigate the monopolistic and price gouging practices of importers and domestic companies formulating fertilizer and nitrogen products of crop input markets and crop protection products.
4. The following changes should be made to further protect the sellers of commodities from anti-competitive behavior:
 - 4.1. Department of Justice (DOJ) should ensure that proposed cooperative and/or vertical integration arrangements continue to maintain independent producers' access to markets;
 - 4.2. USDA should be given authority to review and provide recommendations to DOJ on agribusiness mergers and acquisitions;
 - 4.3. USDA should be empowered to investigate mergers, consolidation or concentration of agricultural input suppliers, processors and retailers for antitrust or anti-competitive activities;
 - 4.4. DOJ should investigate competitive markets and price discovery when purchasers of agricultural products and providers of resources to agricultural producers secure a 25 percent (or greater) share of its markets;

- 4.5. DOJ should have broader regulatory authority to include regulation of anti-competitive monopsonistic business behavior to protect agricultural producers as well as consumers;
- 4.6. Producers impacted by unfair marketing practices should be compensated when harmed by monopolistic practice;
- 4.7. USDA and DOJ should jointly provide clarification of farmer cooperatives' rights to encourage the development of cooperatives and producer bargaining associations;
- 4.8. USDA oversight of the Packers and Stockyards Act should be enhanced. Specifically, Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyard Administration (GIPSA) investigations need to include more legal expertise within USDA to enhance their anti-competitive analysis on mergers;
- 4.9. DOJ, GIPSA and other appropriate agencies should investigate any anti-competitive implications agribusiness mergers and/or acquisitions may cause. These investigations should consider regional monopolistic powers and abuses; and
- 4.10. Individuals and companies who attempt to control commodity prices and agricultural production in violation of antitrust and monopoly laws should be swiftly prosecuted.
5. The continued use and expansion of production contracts is appropriate as long as producers have equal input in the process of negotiating the contract and companies owning critical genetics do not obtain too much market power.
6. We oppose non-compete clauses between equipment dealerships which do not allow competitive pricing between regions, thus creating a monopoly in the equipment market. ♦

#460 PERISHABLE PRODUCTS (amendment at line 2)

1. The Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA) regulations should be amended to provide growers with more effective provisions for enforcing prompt pay.
2. We support a provision that gives first priority to unpaid producers in the event of a purchaser default.
3. PACA should be amended to provide coverage of sod, perishable greenhouse products, ornamental plants, cut flowers and Christmas trees.
4. We oppose any governmental agency delaying the marketing of perishable products for the purpose of collecting a penalty without having probable cause of a health risk. ♦

#528 SODBUSTER AND SWAMPBUSTER (amendments at lines 1.7, 1.10, 1.12, 12, 3)

1. The regulatory provisions under the sodbuster and swampbuster subtitle should be directed to the original conservation goals of not plowing out fragile grasslands and wetlands. Unless the regulations can be revised to be consistent with these goals, we support:
 - 1.1. Legislation to repeal the current sodbuster and swampbuster regulations. Implementation of sodbuster regulations should not differentiate between persons holding or not holding conservation reserve program contracts;
 - 1.2. Allowing the secretary to waive penalties if converted wetlands would have a minimal effect on the biological and hydrological value of a wetland;
 - 1.3. Local Farm Service Agency (FSA) committees determining the reasonable minimum size;
 - 1.4. Vegetative crops grown as rotation crops, including hay should be exempt from the sodbuster provisions;
 - 1.5. A statute of limitations of two years for FSA and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for wetlands violations. The standard for determining fines for such violations, the prosecution to be performed, and the penalties assessed

- should be completed in a timely manner (one year or less). Penalties should only apply to future crop years on noncompliant tracts and landlords and tenants should be allowed an opportunity to mitigate before penalties are applied for actions taken in good faith;
- 1.6. Farmers being allowed to maintain and improve existing drainage systems. FSA should only withhold payments on disputed converted acres and not the entire farm. When a dispute over converted acres does occur, county and state FSA committees shall have the authority to negotiate a reasonable settlement. Farms not enrolled in federal FSA programs should not be required to meet swampbuster and sodbuster requirements. FSA, NRCS and the Army Corps of Engineers should help, not hinder, efforts to tile fields, thus improving overall water quality;
 - 1.7. Minimizing the impact of previous landowner violations on new landowners use of the tracts;
 - 1.8. Drainage districts that maintain drainage structures being allowed to upgrade those structures, especially those at or near the end of their life expectancy, without subjecting landowners to wetland violations or any additional federal permits;
 - 1.9. The timely issuance of wetland determinations by qualified NRCS staff;
 - 1.10. **[Relocated in policy] A unified method of wetland determinations by NRCS for all agencies;**
 - 1.11. Amending 7CFR 614.6(b) to allow NRCS to notify participants of preliminary technical decisions of the Food Security Act of 1985 to be sent regular mail for non-adverse decisions; and
 - 1.12. Until repeal, we support overhauling the rules for sodbuster and swampbuster, including but not limited to the following:
 - 1.12.1. If an area of a farm produces a crop on a wetter than normal year, it should be exempt from a wetland classification and labeled non-wetland;
 - 1.12.2. All areas where any form of artificial drainage has been used prior to the 1985 swampbuster rules and the intent was to make crop production possible, that those areas be labeled non-wetland or prior converted wetland;
 - 1.12.3. Establish a requirement to meet hydrology criteria for a wetland be raised from the current 50 percent to 66.67 percent of the time on normal year aerial photography;
 - 1.12.4. Limiting the penalty and/or crop insurance subsidy loss for the violation of rules dealing with highly erodible land, wetlands and other conservation compliance standards to the individual FSA tract number where the violation occurred rather than the farmer's entire operation;
 - 1.12.5. Using a normal year rainfall base map for identifying possible wetland locations and sizing. If they do not appear on the base map, they are not a wetland;
 - 1.12.6. Using site specific rainfall data;
 - 1.12.7. Including in the 2018 farm bill, field areas labeled prior converted should be qualified for tile installation to improve soil health and to prevent the proliferation of invasive weed patches;
 - 1.12.8. All wetland determinations and field surveys done by certified private wetland specialists should be final and not subject to additional review by NRCS;
 - 1.12.9. Mitigation based on a functional capacity standard, but not to exceed an acre-for-acre requirement;
 - 1.12.10. Sever the requirement of conservation compliance in regard to crop insurance subsidies if sufficient progress in implementing the preceding objectives cannot be met; and
 - 1.12.11. Requiring USDA to provide education and training to farmers, landowners and the general public regarding the policy and procedure of wetland delineations, determinations and appeals.

- 1.12.12. Requiring USDA to determine a minimum acreage criteria for automatic minimal effect designation.
2. We support repeal of Swampbuster.
3. **[Relocated Text]** We support a unified method of wetland determinations by NRCS for all agencies.
4. We oppose farm program incentives that encourage producers to bring fragile lands under cultivation. Fragile lands are defined as those lands that NRCS deems to be subject to excessive rates of wind and water erosion. ♦

#536 PROPRIETARY DATA (amendment at line 2.14)

1. Proprietary data collected from farming and agricultural operations is valuable, should remain the property of the farmer, and warrants protection.
2. We support:
 - 2.1. Farm equipment owners and individual service technicians having access to diagnostic tools, equipment, procedures, service, and technical information necessary at a fair and reasonable price;
 - 2.2. Efforts to better educate farmers and ranchers regarding new technology or equipment that may receive, record, transmit, share and/or sell their farming and production data;
 - 2.3. Requiring anyone who is collecting, storing, and analyzing proprietary data, including photographs, to provide full disclosure of their intended use of the data;
 - 2.4. Formation of standardized protocols regarding privacy and terms of conditions to ensure a standard definition of all components within the contract. We should be an active participant in developing these protocols;
 - 2.5. Compensation to farmers whose proprietary data is shared with third parties that offer products, services or analyses benefitting from that data;
 - 2.6. Multiple participation options being included in all contracts;
 - 2.7. All proprietary information between the farmer and the company remaining between the two entities. This would not preclude a farmer from sharing data with whomever he/she chooses (e.g., a consultant);
 - 2.8. Ensuring proprietary data are stored at an entity that is not subject to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, utilizing all safeguards, including encryption, to protect the data;
 - 2.9. The farmer's right to enter into agreement and their rights to sell their proprietary data to another producer (e.g., in a land sale);
 - 2.10. Private companies entering into agreements which would allow for the compatibility/updating of equipment and updating of software;
 - 2.11. The right of a farmer to have access to their own data, regardless of when it was shared with a company;
 - 2.12. Language in user agreement contracts to allow producers to remove their data from the company's database and revoke that company's ability to sell or use that data in the future;
 - 2.13. Programs to increase producers' awareness on how their data is being managed, secured, protected or used;
 - 2.14. Government and ag-tech providers (ATP) assuming liability of all data breaches;
 - 2.15. ATPs clearly explaining the definition of the terms "affiliate," "business partner" and "third party" and in all precision ag contracts;
 - 2.16. Farmers having the ability to control when and where they utilize precision ag technology, i.e., field-to-field kill switch; and
 - 2.17. The development and use of independent, third-party evaluation of the variables used by ATPs in their privacy policies and user agreements.
3. We oppose any federal agency or FOIA-eligible entity from serving as a data clearinghouse for all proprietary data or aggregated data collected by private companies. ♦

#549 WATERWAYS

(amendment at line 12.25)

1. Public policy should encourage expansion of inland water transportation since it represents the most energy-efficient mode.
2. Such public policy should include encouragement of a high degree of cooperation among all modes of transportation to provide the adaptability of equipment that will allow rapid and inexpensive exchange from one mode to the other. This must also include encouragement of multimodal rates and elimination of any discriminatory rate-making.
3. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) or any federal or state agencies should pursue alternative means to address endangered species concerns such as establishment of voluntary critical habitats.
4. Action should be taken to repair and maintain locks and dams on waterways for present and future commercial traffic.
5. Well-maintained levees are essential not only because they allow some of our most productive land to be utilized in farm production, but also to prevent the ravages of flooding from destroying roads, bridges, railroads, homes and businesses. When levees are destroyed by extraordinary rainfall, it can cause severe economic hardship to farmers, rural businesses and entire rural communities.
6. Federal and state government agencies should be committed to assisting with the timely repair and maintenance of levees on the main rivers and their tributaries. After a disaster occurs, repairs should be made in "emergency" mode. Those levees that are purposely destroyed by the Corps should be fully restored prior to the next normal high water season.
7. If the federal government's river management results in flooding, the Corps should be financially responsible for damages resulting from Corps managed projects.
8. We recommend the following actions to ease the flood burden:
 - 8.1. Nonfederal, non-qualifying levees should be allowed the opportunity to enter into the Corps' cost-share program;
 - 8.2. Adequate funds should be made available to all appropriate agencies to assist in the repair of levees on the main rivers and their tributaries and to assist in sand and debris removal and to provide voluntary nonlevee alternatives such as emergency wetlands reserve programs;
 - 8.3. Wetlands, endangered species and other environmental restrictions should be modified to allow a common sense approach to the removal of trees and brush, the use of river dredges and location of borrow areas to repair damaged levees;
 - 8.4. The federal government and the Corps should repair, maintain and upgrade the upper levee systems to the same standards as the lower Mississippi flood control district to guarantee the continuation of commerce on the navigable waters of rivers affected by flood damage and the continued protection of personal property by the levee system;
 - 8.5. A uniform federal floodplain standard (also adopted by the states) allowing a one-foot rise in floodwater height for flood protection projects on major rivers and other bodies of water bordering two or more adjoining states;
 - 8.6. The cleaning of all floodways by the International Boundary and Water Commission, to include those inside the wildlife corridor, to permit maximum movement of flood water in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, Colorado and New Mexico; and
 - 8.7. Landowners should be compensated for all lost property value if damaged levees along any navigable waterway under the jurisdiction of the Corps are not repaired.
9. Landowners should have the opportunity to bid their land into the Emergency Wetlands Reserve Program or use private funds to repair their levees.
10. We are concerned about the Corps' proposal to release large amounts of water from the Gavins Point Dam.
11. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) should return to its original goals of flood control, electric production and navigation. TVA should give its

highest priority to agricultural operations within a floodplain when establishing water level fluctuation plans.

12. We support:

- 12.1. Educating the general public in regards to the economic importance of the Mississippi River and other waterways used in transporting agricultural commodities and farm inputs;
- 12.2. Reauthorization of the Inland Waterway Trust Fund;
- 12.3. Legislation to permit utilization of water from river navigation projects for agricultural purposes;
- 12.4. Prioritizing the Corps' funds for updating locks and dams and cleaning of channels in the Mississippi River and Great Lakes water system to accommodate new, larger vessels and navigate low water levels;
 - 12.4.1. Including dredging of the lower Mississippi River to accommodate post-Panamax ships.
- 12.5. User fees and fuel taxes received from barge operators on the Mississippi River being used only for repair, upkeep and improvements to the Mississippi lock and dam system;
- 12.6. Increasing the operation and maintenance budget to maintain navigation, recreation and flood control;
- 12.7. Representation on the Mississippi River Commission to include at least one member from the Upper Mississippi River area;
- 12.8. Lengthening to 1200 feet the locks on the Mississippi River at least below Keokuk and below Peoria on the Illinois River;
- 12.9. A Midwestern, multistate effort to review results of existing river and related studies and identify impacts of associated state and federal regulations. Based on that review, we will support a comprehensive plan for the Upper Mississippi River and its navigable tributaries that serves agriculture, industry, transportation, recreation, and the environment developed by the Corps using the risk-informed decision framework in the analysis of the benefit cost ratio;
- 12.10. Maintaining channel depth of 45 feet on the lower Columbia River from the port of Portland to the Pacific Ocean. This would ensure year-round and timely shipping and allow the new Panamax class of ships to call on all ports on the lower Columbia;
- 12.11. A mutually acceptable revision to the Missouri River Master Water Control Manual that protects against proposals that would regulate the river's flow to the detriment of waterway navigation and/or its flood control system;
- 12.12. Requiring government agencies to send notification about new streambank initiatives to landowners whose property is adjacent to and may be impacted by those initiatives;
- 12.13. Using hydrology studies and other pertinent information developed within the Comprehensive Plan to expedite the permitting process for flood control projects within the scope of the Plan. A timeline should be developed to establish target beginning and completion dates for each project within the Comprehensive Plan to help move those projects along in a more efficient and timely manner;
- 12.14. Efforts to change state and federal regulations so that drainage and levee districts may restore a levee to its highest approved flood frequency design and/or profile without being limited by water level mitigation requirements;
- 12.15. Securing federal and state funds for major capital items to repair levees and associated systems on major rivers. Money appropriated for projects should be used by that project. Routine maintenance and capital items should continue to be the responsibility of the local districts;
- 12.16. A review of the cost effectiveness of the National Levee Safety Program Act of 2007 and support eliminating the duplication of levee inspections with resulting cost savings used for levee improvements;
- 12.17. Encouraging the Mississippi River Commission to use its authority to promote improvements to navigation, economic development, flood control, recreation, and environment within the upper and lower Mississippi River basin;

- 12.18. Efforts to remove silt from rivers and to allow the use of that material behind the levee for strengthening the levee system;
 - 12.19. Encouraging members of Congress to become actively involved in the Mississippi River Congressional Caucus;
 - 12.20. The Maritime Administration's Marine Highway Program and designation of Marine Highway corridors on major waterways including the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers;
 - 12.21. Federal funding of Marine Highway grants to promote economic growth and enhance the efficiency of our surface transportation system;
 - 12.22. Additional funds being allocated to the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF), and funds which have been diverted be spent for their intended purposes. We support 100 percent of the monies paid into the HMTF being spent for the maintenance projects of all harbors and channels;
 - 12.23. The immediate and total repeal of the 2015 Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule; and
 - 12.24. The continued existence and original intended uses of all dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers.
 - 12.25. A study by the International Joint Commission on water level management of the Great Lakes.
13. We oppose:
- 13.1. Any plans by the Corps or any federal or state agencies that would alter the flow levels of the Missouri or any river and would adversely affect domestic water supplies, drainage, irrigation and transportation, that would cause traffic bottlenecks on the Missouri or any navigable river and take private property without compensation;
 - 13.2. The dumping or designed erosion of soil into waterways;
 - 13.3. EPA using the guidance document which would effectively remove the word "navigable" from the Clean Water Act; and
 - 13.4. Any proposed increase in the water level of Lake Ontario over 247 feet above sea level. ♦

#462 ROLE OF USDA

(amendment at lines 11 and 16.3.17)

1. Agriculture should remain the primary responsibility of USDA. Food and fiber consumers will be better served by healthy, profitable production agriculture than by consumer advocacy within USDA.
2. USDA should be an advocate for agriculture with emphasis on production agriculture and the processing and marketing of agricultural products and promoting the use of domestically produced food and fiber by all branches of the U.S. government and military services.
3. Leadership at USDA should be vested in appointed people who are competent, have background and experience in agriculture and have evidenced a knowledge and concern for the welfare of agricultural producers.
4. The Undersecretary of Natural Resources and the Environment should be an effective advocate for agriculture on environmental issues.
5. We support the secretary of agriculture and the U.S. Trade Representative being included in the National Security Council.
6. We support long-term funding of the USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) and local Farm Service Agencies (FSA).
7. Review criteria for USDA office closure decisions should include miles driven between offices, workload, local input, and inter-agency efficiency.
8. We support adding the Secretary of Agriculture to the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States.
9. We support restructuring federal agriculture policy and programs so that all agricultural producers, regardless of the population density of the area in which their farm is located, be eligible for a broader swath of federal grant funding.
10. We recommend that all USDA programs eliminate the term and classification "socially disadvantaged."
11. We support immediate evaluation of current USDA staffing, compensation, and training at the county level with the outcome being an adequate, streamlined, and talented staff that meets the programmatic needs of the applicant.
12. USDA should be:
 - 12.1. A monitor of domestic and foreign agricultural affairs;
 - 12.2. An accurate source of agricultural data and research; and
 - 12.3. An agricultural policy adviser to other departments of the federal government;
13. We support USDA programs that:
 - 13.1. Help farmers obtain needed crop and market information, research, educational assistance and credit;
 - 13.2. Provide workable grades and standards and safeguard product quality through inspection services;
 - 13.3. Help farmers eradicate or control plant and animal pests and diseases;
 - 13.4. Encourage conservation of land and water resources by maintaining land in private ownership. USDA programs should not be used to facilitate the transfer of private farms and ranches to public lands;
 - 13.5. Assure reliable, unfettered transportation for agricultural commodities;
 - 13.6. Strengthen farmers' power to bargain for a price; and
 - 13.7. Provide comparable services to administer all commodity programs.
14. USDA should:
 - 14.1. Continue to be a full Cabinet-level department and shall not be renamed or consolidated with any other department or agency of government;
 - 14.2. Retain various food assistance and nutrition programs, both domestic and foreign;
 - 14.3. Use U.S. agricultural commodities for domestic food programs. Priority should be given to locally sourced products when possible;
 - 14.4. Not limit or restrict USDA purchases due to the violation of immigration regulations;

- 14.5. Limit importers from purchasing products from foreign countries and reselling them under the provision of Section 32;
- 14.6. Extend the "Buy American" provision to other noncontiguous states or territories including Alaska, Hawaii, Guam and Puerto Rico;
- 14.7. Continue the Women, Infants and Children's (WIC) program, the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program but farmers should not be assessed for funding of these type of programs;
- 14.8. Use Farm Service Agency (FSA) data and assistance for premise ID registration;
- 14.9. Use the land grant colleges for agriculture-oriented research;
- 14.10. Continue efforts to resolve problems involving environmental and animal care issues;
- 14.11. Maintain an efficient and cost-effective services delivery system, including electronic filing;
- 14.12. Maintain FSA jurisdiction over the administration of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and cost-share programs;
- 14.13. Change in FSA regulations to allow other forms of verification for production evidence;
- 14.14. Upgrade computer technology and appropriate software to allow the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), FSA, RMA, and National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to utilize and share the same farm program enrollment information and production, and reduce duplicate reporting and surveys, provided appropriate privacy disclosures and safeguards are utilized;
- 14.15. Encourage "one-stop shopping." All farm program agencies, where feasible, should be located in the same building;
- 14.16. Appoint one or more farmers on any agriculturally related government board;
- 14.17. Require federal agencies to keep all documentation of all historical field maps or aerial maps supporting determination and supply onsite documentation of new determination to farmers;
- 14.18. Accredite and license commercial dog breeders;
- 14.19. Further support the Foreign Agriculture Service;
- 14.20. Make Beginning Farmer Program eligibility requirements consistent through all USDA agencies, expand the definition of young and beginning farmer and extend the time frame to 15 years for FSA programs;
- 14.21. Provide financial assistance through Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Agricultural Research Services (ARS) to maintain New York's Golden Nematode Quarantine Facility and Research Program;
- 14.22. Allow for a System for Award Management (SAM) number to be valid for the length of the USDA project for the individual producer;
- 14.23. Co-location of USDA and Soil and Water Conservation Districts when possible; and
- 14.24. Provide notifications of job positions (openings) within FSA and NRCS as soon as the job becomes available or notification of a transfer, retirement, termination or resignation. Finding qualified applicants should be a priority without a waiting period or other unnecessary delays;
- 14.25. Allow local FSA applicants to apply for job positions in a desired territory based on rank and time served in location;
- 14.26. Continue the release of crop condition reports as they are useful to agricultural producers and should maintain their current release schedule;
- 14.27. Compensate the farmer for legal fees and civil damages when the farmer wins an appeal as a result of incorrect decisions;
- 14.28. Be required to provide the entire record or decisional documentation to the farmer at the time of the alleged compliance violation and/or at the time of an adverse determination;
- 14.29. Accept evidence provided by the farmer as true, absent substantial evidence to the contrary;
- 14.30. Employ and make available county personnel based on workload, acreage and number of farms;

- 14.31. Be allowed to hire temporary employees on a contracted basis to assist during special farm program sign-up periods, including retired employees without impacting their pension;
 - 14.32. Continue to make forms and processes more streamlined and available for online access; and
 - 14.33. Make farm number reconstitutions voluntary and should allow, at a minimum, a one-time opportunity to reverse previously mandated changes for those farms that have already been reconstituted.
15. We oppose:
- 15.1. Requiring farm trusts to provide the total trust instrument because the individual's last will and testament should be confidential;
 - 15.2. Making FSA county executive directors and program assistants employees of the federal government;
 - 15.3. The transfer of any USDA program to another department or agency;
 - 15.4. Announcing crop estimates until certified acres are known; and
 - 15.5. The Department of Homeland Security or USDA-prescribed homeland security practices being mandated on farms unless such measures are completely funded.
16. **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**
- 16.1. NRCS should remain within USDA and provide technical assistance and education. There should be no fees or charges to the land user for this service. Funding for conservation programs should be administered by FSA.
 - 16.2. State and county committees will preside over the NRCS in the same capacity as they do with the FSA.
 - 16.3. NRCS should:
 - 16.3.1. Act as a non-regulatory mediator of environmental compliance issues with regulatory agencies, on behalf of producers;
 - 16.3.2. Use funding only for agricultural purposes;
 - 16.3.3. Place a high priority on providing quality, technical and scientific natural resources expertise;
 - 16.3.4. Have adequate funds for technical assistance that are not tied directly to conservation programs;
 - 16.3.5. Ensure local farmer input on NRCS personnel decisions and direction of natural resource programs through conservation districts is maintained for the benefit of producers;
 - 16.3.6. Accept state licenses as proof of qualifications, without further testing or requirements, to be a Technical Service Provider;
 - 16.3.7. Amend NRCS regulation to count perennial crops, such as orchards, vineyards or sod, as prior converted land when the crop is removed;
 - 16.3.8. Inform landowners and tenants when NRCS officials are considering changing or altering wetland status on any portion of their holdings;
 - 16.3.9. Honor wetland determinations made prior to 1990;
 - 16.3.10. Modify existing cost-share programs to allow for NRCS technical assistance in assessing the long-term availability of water resources and the planning and development of new on-farm water supplies and irrigation systems;
 - 16.3.11. Recognize regional seasonality of farm commodities when determining program sign-up dates;
 - 16.3.12. Allow an accredited third party or NRCS staff to complete on-site determinations to ensure timely determinations;
 - 16.3.13. Focus exclusively on agriculture services and cease bringing in influences from non-agriculture groups;
 - 16.3.14. Allow qualified third parties, as well as NRCS staff, to complete reviews for conservation practices;
 - 16.3.15. Allow the farmer and his counsel to call NRCS technical staff as witnesses in appeals; and
 - 16.3.16. Be required to provide cost-share funds for contracted conservation practices that fail, through no fault of the producer, within the lifespan of the practice.

16.3.17. Have a single committee that oversees NRCS/FSA at the county and state level.

16.4. NRCS should not:

- 16.4.1. Become a regulatory agency, serve in a policing capacity or be combined through USDA reorganization with an agency that has regulatory functions;
- 16.4.2. Negotiate Memorandums of Agreement or Memorandums of Understanding with federal regulatory agencies that would give NRCS the power to develop, implement, or police those agencies' regulations on agricultural land;
- 16.4.3. Have the authority to rescind its position in the appeals process; and
- 16.4.4. Require partnerships, limited liability corporations and other farm entities to register on the Standardized Award Management Service site. ♦

Recommendations on State Policies

#1 AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY COMMISSIONS

1 We support and will defend the Michigan
2 Agricultural Commodities Marketing Act (PA 232 of
3 1965), and other agricultural commodity
4 commissions, as authorized by law.

5 Michigan Farm Bureau will consider supporting
6 commodity groups' proposals that meet existing
7 Farm Bureau policy and will be beneficial to
8 producers, including the extension of referendums
9 up to ten years. We encourage Farm Bureau
10 members to be involved in their commodity
11 organizations. ◆

#2 AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION AND VALUE – ADDED INITIATIVES

1 Structural changes in the agricultural processing
2 industry have affected many traditional supply/demand
3 relationships between producers and their buyers.
4 Value-added initiatives allow for opportunities to deal
5 with these changes and keep the agricultural industry
6 profitable.

7 We support:

- 8 • Individual and cooperative efforts by producers to
9 improve income with processing and marketing
10 methods which add value to farm products while
11 maintaining food safety.
- 12 • The Michigan State University Product Center, their
13 objectives and ongoing efforts.
- 14 • The coordination and formation of producer alliances
15 and cooperatives.
- 16 • Efforts to maintain and build a strong agricultural
17 processing industry in the state. To achieve this goal, we
18 recommend existing and prospective processors be
19 given more incentives to stay or build in Michigan,
20 including but not limited to industrial facility exemption
21 options, tax breaks and regulatory reform/relief, and
22 ample access to necessary inputs such as investment
23 capital, labor, energy and farm products.
- 24 • A closer working relationship and more collaboration
25 between Michigan Farm Bureau and the Michigan
26 Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), including
27 quarterly meetings between MFB and MEDC staff and
28 leadership.
- 29 • Agricultural representation on the MEDC to better
30 serve the needs of agriculture and the food industry.
31 We support Michigan Department of Agriculture and
32 Rural Development authority and/or oversight over the

- 33 granting of MEDC funds for agricultural development
34 activity.
- 35 • The use of Michigan MarketMaker
36 (<https://mi.foodmarketmaker.com>), an Internet marketplace
37 for farmers to feature Michigan-based commodities and
38 value-added products.
 - 39 • A coordinated effort between the agriculture industry and
40 controllers of publicly owned lands (e.g., county parks,
41 rest areas, car pool lots, parking lots) to facilitate
42 farmers' marketing of Michigan-grown products to
43 consumers at these locations.
 - 44 • Tax incentives and an infrastructure to grow
45 Michigan's food processing capabilities.
 - 46 • The establishment of a State of Michigan low interest
47 loan program to fund qualified value-added ventures.
 - 48 • The Right to Process Act, including protections for
49 agricultural processors and cooperatives.
 - 50 • Continued monitoring of the Michigan Cottage Food
51 Law to ensure it maintains its original intent.
 - 52 • The production of hops, malting barley and associated
53 crops as part of a viable and expanding brewing industry
54 in Michigan.
 - 55 • The concept of a farm brewery license that will allow
56 farm breweries in Michigan to operate in a similar
57 fashion to Michigan farm wineries.
 - 58 • The use of one-time start-up grants for "food hub
59 type" endeavors, not recurring funding.
 - 60 • Encouraging institutions to purchase more food from
61 local sources.
 - 62 • Additional research and development for value-added
63 opportunities.
 - 64 • The use of grant programs for industry segments that
65 typically find it difficult to secure loans due to being
66 perceived as high-risk ventures.
 - 67 • All government agencies cooperating with one another to
68 expedite innovative agricultural initiatives.
 - 69 • Annual funding of an ag innovation value-added
70 initiative fund.
 - 71 • Funding for development of automation and robotics
72 for Michigan agriculture. ◆

#3 ANIMAL CARE

1 Livestock production and the way farm animals are
2 raised have changed significantly. No one has greater
3 concern for the care and welfare of farm animals than
4 the farmers who raise them.

5 We urge Farm Bureau members to respond
6 knowledgeably to misleading information on animal care.
7 We urge members to understand the difference between
8 organizations that support sound science and animal

9 care versus those that are promoting animal rights and
10 attempting to eliminate or greatly restrict livestock
11 production in the United States. Members should
12 continue to tell the success story of modern animal
13 agriculture wherever the opportunity is found. A number
14 of laws now exist for safeguarding the proper care of
15 livestock and, if properly enforced, will provide the
16 necessary protection livestock need.

17 The livestock and dairy industry in Michigan is an
18 integral part of our agricultural economy and needs
19 access to private property rights and privacy laws.
20 Laws appearing to limit free speech or give the
21 perception that agriculture has something to hide may
22 not be the appropriate way to deal with certain issues
23 impacting the industry. We strongly support
24 transparency by all people involved.

25 We believe persons who witness animal care
26 practices that are not in compliance with the Care of
27 Farm Animals Generally Accepted Agricultural and
28 Management Practices (GAAMPs) and are believed to
29 be animal cruelty, should report those findings in a
30 timely manner to the appropriate authorities so proper
31 action may be taken. Those persons who do not report
32 such abuses or hold and release videos in a manner
33 that is done for personal benefit or simply to promote a
34 group and their cause should be swiftly prosecuted and
35 appropriately fined and sentenced.

36 We support:

- 37 • A board of animal health and care be convened to
38 coordinate activities that enhance and protect the
39 state's livestock industry. The board should consist
40 of farmers and industry representatives as voting
41 members; who are nominated by officially
42 recognized livestock and agriculture industry
43 commodity groups; and then appointed by the
44 Governor. Agency and university officials should
45 serve in an advisory capacity. The establishment of
46 this board should include a state budget
47 appropriation. This process should be concluded by
48 December 31, 2025.
- 49 • Strong penalties for those persons criminally
50 convicted of animal cruelty or abuse.
- 51 • The rights of individual commodity groups to
52 develop production standards.
- 53 • The involvement of livestock industry in the
54 development of animal care guidelines if they are
55 required by food industry officials in order to market
56 products.
- 57 • Participation by all livestock and dairy producers
58 in industry-developed species-specific animal
59 welfare programs.

- 60 • Coordination with animal industry and related
61 groups on animal care and housing related issues.
- 62 • Utilization of the Care of Farm Animals GAAMPs
63 as the standard for animal welfare in Michigan.
- 64 • Producer representation on the Care of Farm
65 Animals GAAMPs Committee.
- 66 • Proper animal care and encourage livestock
67 farmers to be in compliance with the Right to
68 Farm Act and GAAMPs.
- 69 • Farmers educating and having guidelines for
70 employees on proper animal care.
- 71 • Legislation or rules that protect the rights of
72 farmers/owners to allow the continued utilization of
73 modern-day livestock production practices, including
74 current methods of euthanization for livestock.
- 75 • 4-H and youth livestock exhibitor education.
- 76 • Michigan Farm Bureau working with Michigan State
77 University and Michigan Department of Agriculture
78 and Rural Development (MDARD) to provide
79 proper education to law enforcement, county
80 officials and animal control officers about the
81 current laws that regulate animal care and livestock
82 production practices in Michigan.
- 83 • MFB and county Farm Bureaus being proactive in
84 educating and training the state and local animal
85 controlling authorities, local humane societies, local
86 law enforcement, and news media about current
87 animal care and production practices, so as to build
88 a partnership between Farm Bureau and local
89 animal care organizations.
- 90 • County Farm Bureaus consider cancelling the
91 membership of an individual criminally convicted
92 of animal cruelty or abuse.
- 93 • Land grant colleges and USDA continuing to
94 research and develop programs which will
95 realistically and economically enable farmers to
96 continue to enhance the care and management of
97 livestock and poultry.
- 98 • Legislation that makes it a felony to destroy or
99 release animals lawfully confined for science,
100 research and production, and provide for strong
101 punishment and required restitution for losses or
102 damages.
- 103 • MDARD taking the lead role in the development of
104 Michigan Animal Health Emergency Management
105 guidelines.
- 106 • Amendments to the Dog Law to more clearly define
107 a “farm dog.” The utilization of dogs on farm
108 operations is a normal part of an agricultural
109 enterprise.
- 110 • A sensible approach to the substantiation of

- 111 animal cruelty or abuse accusations including:
- 112 ▪ Requiring animal control officers receive
 - 113 training on appropriate animal care and normal
 - 114 agricultural practices as it relates to livestock
 - 115 and farm animals.
 - 116 ▪ Governing municipalities be held financially and
 - 117 civilly liable for inaccurate and unjustified
 - 118 actions of those officers and departments.
 - 119 ▪ Requiring reported abuse cases to follow
 - 120 uniform administrative procedures to confirm
 - 121 cruelty or abuse before any legal action is
 - 122 taken.
 - 123 ▪ Contacting the local law enforcement agency or
 - 124 animal control authority.
 - 125 ▪ Local law enforcement agencies obtaining the
 - 126 opinion of two unbiased local livestock
 - 127 professionals and a large animal veterinarian.
 - 128 ▪ All costs associated with the resulting
 - 129 investigation be paid for by the accuser if no
 - 130 abuse is found.
 - 131 ▪ Cruelty or abuse cases of farm livestock be
 - 132 handled through MDARD.
 - 133 ▪ Mandatory education for convicted cruelty
 - 134 offenders to help them understand proper
 - 135 animal care including the Care of Farm Animals
 - 136 GAAMPs developed under the Right to Farm
 - 137 Act.

138 We oppose:

- 139 • The concept of animal "rights" and the expenditure
- 140 of public funds to promote the concept of animal
- 141 rights.
- 142 • Any attempt that would grant "legal standing" to
- 143 any animals.
- 144 • Further regulatory and legislative actions that
- 145 would restrict the farmer's/owner's ability to
- 146 produce at an economically feasible level.
- 147 • The utilization of ballot initiatives as a way to control
- 148 modern livestock production and management
- 149 practices. ◆

#4 ANIMAL HEALTH

1 As the world becomes more open to international
2 trade, the potential for transmission of communicable
3 diseases among the agricultural community
4 increases. The uncontrolled spread of diseases
5 through intentional or unintentional means can result
6 in economic devastation to the entire agricultural
7 system.

8 It is imperative we protect the health of the
9 livestock, dairy, equine, poultry and aquaculture
10 operations in Michigan and across the United States.

11 A healthy animal population is critical to our overall
12 agricultural economy.

13 We support:

- 14 • ~~Changes to the Animal Industry Act that allow~~
15 ~~for the State Veterinarian to declare an~~
16 ~~Emergency Stop Animal Movement Order for a~~
17 ~~maximum of 72 hours. Any such order that lasts~~
18 ~~more than, or is extended beyond, 72 hours~~
19 ~~would need the approval of the impacted animal~~
20 ~~industries and Michigan Commission of~~
21 ~~Agriculture and Rural Development.~~
- 22 • A board of animal health be appointed and
23 convened to coordinate activities, programs,
24 and regulations to expedite the control and
25 eradication of animal diseases. The board
26 should consist of producers and industry
27 representatives, Michigan Department of
28 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD),
29 Michigan Department of Natural Resources
30 (MDNR), Michigan Department of Health and
31 Human Services, Michigan State University
32 (MSU) Veterinary Medicine and USDA.
- 33 • MDARD relying on veterinary science and animal
34 science when establishing any new regulations or
35 restrictions on livestock exhibition.
- 36 • Changes to the Animals Running At Large Act
37 that define livestock in a consistent manner with
38 the Animal Industry Act.
- 39 • MDARD providing adequate staffing to ensure
40 proper monitoring of the state's swine herd to
41 maintain our achieved pseudorabies status.
- 42 • MDARD providing adequate staffing to support the
43 development and adoption of the U.S. Swine
44 Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) program for the
45 swine industry in Michigan.
- 46 • Appropriate state funding of the MSU Veterinary
47 Diagnostic Lab (VDL) to meet the needs of our
48 state's animal population.
- 49 • Indemnification for livestock ordered to be
50 destroyed due to disease outbreak or when
51 marketing channels are limited or eliminated by
52 the government for any portion of a particular
53 industry.
- 54 • The requirement of continuing education to
55 maintain a veterinary license with the State of
56 Michigan.
- 57 • Amending Michigan's Veterinary Law to clarify
58 that livestock artificial insemination and embryo
59 transplant procedures are not required to be
60 performed by a licensed veterinarian.

- 61 • Continued research by MSU on health-related
62 issues that impact our livestock industry,
63 including a list of all potential toxic weeds and
64 feedstuffs.
- 65 • Visitors seeking permission and having proper
66 contamination protections, including clothing
67 and disinfectants, in an effort to protect and
68 enhance bio-security.
- 69 • All equine owners to consult with their
70 veterinarian and have their horses, ponies and
71 mules vaccinated for infectious and contagious
72 diseases.
- 73 • All fairs, racing events, sale barns, riding stables
74 and other occasions where equine are co-
75 mingled should require a yearly Equine Infectious
76 Anemia (EIA)\Coggins test and have the papers
77 inspected before entry into the grounds or
78 facilities.
- 79 • MDARD working with animal health officials in
80 other states to develop a standardized set of
81 EIA\Coggins testing guidelines that allow for a
82 more uniform set of testing and movement
83 procedures. We support elimination of the need
84 for a Coggins test for horses going directly to
85 slaughter.
- 86 • An aggressive cost-effective Johne's detection
87 and control program and encourage the Johne's
88 vaccine to be available for dairy farmers.
- 89 • Swift implementation of a mandatory
90 identification system for Michigan's livestock
91 industry and encourage the continued utilization
92 of producer input into the development,
93 implementation, and cost-share where feasible.
94 Producer information shall remain proprietary,
95 not subject to the Freedom of Information Act or
96 any other public use.
- 97 • The timely development and implementation of
98 an electronic database for Michigan cattle and
99 allow availability of movement certificates at no
100 charge on-line in real time, 24 hours, seven
101 days a week.
- 102 • Slaughter facilities updating technology in order
103 to provide timely and accurate response on
104 individual cattle information.
- 105 • The electronic identification rules that require all
106 cattle and privately-owned cervidae to be
107 electronically identified before they leave the farm.
108 Penalties for violations of the rules should be
109 strengthened and enforced by the court of law. We
110 understand there are occasions where animals
111 lose a tag en route to a livestock auction facility. In

- 112 those situations, we support the retagging of
113 animals upon arrival at the sale facility.
- 114 • Electronic reading and recording of all cattle
115 exhibited in Michigan. Records should be sent to
116 MDARD.
 - 117 • Legislative, regulatory and/or management
118 changes that give the State Veterinarian the
119 authority to mandate landfill use for disposal of
120 animal carcasses during these emergencies or
121 disease outbreaks.
 - 122 • The MDNR, MDARD, USDA, and the U.S. Fish
123 and Wildlife Service working cooperatively to
124 identify and develop potential regulations to
125 control the spread of diseases. These
126 regulations should include, but not be limited to,
127 developing a system to monitor live and dead
128 domestic and game animals and birds coming
129 into Michigan.
 - 130 • A statewide ban on the sale and use of Chinese
131 lanterns (sky lanterns), or similar unmanned
132 devices containing open flame that have the
133 potential to leave the premises of their origin.
 - 134 • Research to study the potential for chronic
135 wasting disease prions to infect livestock feeds
136 and other plant materials.
 - 137 • Michigan Farm Bureau, MSU, MDARD and USDA
138 to:
 - 139 ▪ Provide sufficient funding and programs for
140 animal health education, disease monitoring,
141 border inspections and disease eradication that
142 protect the U.S. livestock industry and ensure
143 continued market access.
 - 144 ▪ Increase efforts on the development of a
145 genetic or live animal diagnostic test for
146 Scrapie and Bovine Spongiform
147 Encephalopathy (BSE).
 - 148 ▪ Continue to work cooperatively to support
149 the VDL, keeping fees for diagnosis at a
150 reasonable level.
 - 151 • An annual review of the Reportable Disease List
152 in collaboration with industry, MDARD and
153 MDNR and removal of all inappropriately listed
154 diseases.
- 155 We oppose:
- 156 • Restrictions that limit or eliminate the marketing
157 opportunities for the livestock, dairy, equine,
158 poultry and aquaculture industries and their
159 products without sound scientific justification.
 - 160 • Importation of livestock that does not meet
161 import testing requirements as deemed

162 appropriate by the director of MDARD, have
163 appropriate quarantine protocols in place, and
164 have an animal I.D. system to track the
165 movement of livestock to prevent the possible
166 spread of disease.

- 167 • State agency personnel performing inspections
168 of farms without notification to and awareness
169 of the farm owner/operation.
- 170 • Mandatory rabies vaccination for farm cats. We
171 encourage livestock producers to consider rabies
172 vaccination for all pets and become educated
173 about the disease. We encourage the
174 development and availability of bait vaccines.

175 **Feed Additives and Medication**

176 We recognize the need for feed additives and
177 medication in livestock feeds. The availability of
178 antibiotics for the livestock industry is critical. The
179 limitation or elimination of animal antibiotic use from
180 the livestock industry will have negative economic and
181 animal health consequences. The use of antibiotics is
182 approved by FDA only after a complete scientific
183 review and testing process has been completed. The
184 animal agriculture industry relies on the veterinarian
185 community to assist with and oversee animal health.
186 We believe that veterinarian oversight is defined as a
187 working relationship with a licensed veterinarian.

188 We support:

- 189 • The current approval process for antibiotic use in
190 farm animals.
- 191 • Veterinarian oversight of antibiotic use rather
192 than limitations or elimination of these critical
193 animal health and food safety protection tools.
- 194 • Careful use and withdrawal restrictions of feed
195 additives.
- 196 • The use of rendered ruminant and other species
197 protein as feed additives to rations for swine
198 and poultry.
- 199 • Strict safeguards to prevent cross contamination
200 of ruminant feeds with ruminant by-product during
201 the formulation of the feed additives.

202 We oppose:

- 203 • The banning of such additives without sound
204 scientific evidence that these additives pose a
205 threat to animal and human health. ◆

218 **#5 AQUACULTURE AND COMMERCIAL FISHING**

219 Aquaculture and commercial fishing are major
220 contributors to our Michigan food basket and should be
221 recognized as a part of agriculture.

222 We support:

- 223 • Changes to the Aquaculture Development Act

- 6 that reflect the current status of the industry and
7 its potential.
- 8 • Urging the regulatory agencies, along with
9 Michigan Economic Development Corporation,
10 state universities, and the aquaculture industry
11 to continue working cooperatively to address the
12 regulatory needs of the State, while at the same
13 time facilitating the continued growth of
14 aquaculture in Michigan through streamlining
15 aquaculture regulation and facilitating access to
16 capital for development.
 - 17 • An annual review and update of the
18 memorandum of understanding between
19 Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural
20 Development (MDARD), Michigan Department of
21 Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy and
22 Michigan Department of Natural Resources
23 (MDNR).
 - 24 • Harmonization of the state definition of
25 aquaculture so that it is in line with the federal
26 definition of aquaculture.
 - 27 • The concept of group or lot identification for
28 aquaculture species.
 - 29 • MDARD registration of out-of-state producers
30 who market aquaculture products in Michigan
31 and enforcement of current regulations related
32 to importation of aquaculture products into
33 Michigan.
 - 34 • Funding, research development, and approval of
35 live fish tests so as to eliminate the need to
36 sacrifice fish, as is the current requirement.
 - 37 • If an individual farm has an established herd
38 health plan and a disease status that declares it
39 to be free of regulated aquaculture diseases,
40 that farm should have the ability to ship product
41 interstate.
 - 42 • MDARD cooperating with other states and
43 establishing agreements that allow for shipment
44 of fish from Michigan into other states that follow
45 similar protocol.
 - 46 • MFB being involved in Michigan Aquaculture
47 Association's strategic plan development.
 - 48 • Michigan State University establishing an
49 aquaculture program that contains dedicated faculty
50 to support and enhance the aquaculture industry.
51 The program should include research, extension
52 and demonstration and be housed under an
53 agricultural development department.
 - 54 • Industry-developed herd plans to include the
55 option for slaughter surveillance testing, where
56 feasible, and be implemented on a voluntary

- 57 basis with MDARD being the lead agency.
- 58 • Development of science-based aquaculture
 - 59 disease control policies that also take into
 - 60 account indemnification of losses to producers.
 - 61 • The right of commercial fishermen to pursue
 - 62 fishing operations in a responsible manner. The
 - 63 MDNR should not adopt regulations more
 - 64 restrictive than those applied to tribal fisheries.
 - 65 • MDARD having authority over commercial
 - 66 fishing when the fish leave the net.
 - 67 • Allocation of funds for research to more
 - 68 effectively manage and utilize this natural
 - 69 resource.
 - 70 • Efforts of the commercial fishing industry to
 - 71 establish a program under PA 232 of 1965.
 - 72 • The adoption of Best Management Practices
 - 73 (BMPs) as National Pollution Discharge
 - 74 Elimination System (NPDES) permit
 - 75 compliance, rather than individual permits with
 - 76 numerical discharge limitations for all
 - 77 aquaculture facilities. If individual permits are
 - 78 required, it should only be for facilities that
 - 79 produce over 20,000 pounds annually and only
 - 80 if on a one-page permit application.
 - 81 • Streamlining the NPDES permit process by
 - 82 developing a general permit based on BMPs to
 - 83 reduce water testing requirements.
 - 84 • The ability to conduct aquaculture production in
 - 85 current and prior converted wetlands and within
 - 86 the Natural Rivers districts.
 - 87 • Enabling legislation and/or the regulatory
 - 88 framework to allow for the development of a
 - 89 properly regulated open water net pen
 - 90 aquaculture/cage culture of fish in the Great
 - 91 Lakes and other water bodies.
 - 92 • Development of a national aquaculture check-off
 - 93 program.
 - 94 • Appropriate staffing within MDARD to lead and
 - 95 collaborate with other agencies on a planned,
 - 96 designed and streamlined process for approval
 - 97 and permitting of aquaculture and commercial
 - 98 fishing processing facilities in Michigan.
 - 99 • Industry oversight on any new state or federal
 - 100 funds for aquaculture or commercial fishing with
 - 101 a majority of the funds going to aquaculture and
 - 102 commercial fishing producers.

103 We oppose:

- 104 • Any ban on the use of biotechnology in
- 105 aquaculture without specific evidence or
- 106 demonstration of harm by the particular
- 107 technology.

- 108 • Individual identification for aquaculture in the
109 event animal identification is mandated.
- 110 • Restrictions on the culture or stocking of
111 rainbow trout based on “genetic strain.”
- 112 • Immediate implementation of new Environmental
113 Protection Agency effluent standards if
114 operational viability is jeopardized.
- 115 • Increasing NPDES permit restrictions or compliance
116 requirements without sound scientific justification.
- 117 • The use of the Lacey Act to regulate the interstate
118 movement of aquaculture products and urge
119 immediate action to address current prosecutions,
120 as well as a cessation of this practice by regulatory
121 officials.
- 122 • Testing requirements for the stocking of fish in
123 Michigan that are more restrictive than national
124 requirements set forth by the International Office of
125 Epizootics. ◆

#12 DIRECT FARM MARKETING AND AGRITOURISM

1 Agritourism is the intersection where agriculture
2 and tourism meet; when a farm opens its doors to
3 the public and invites visitors to enjoy their products
4 and services.

5 We support:

- 6 • Legislation defining agritourism as activities on
7 the farm that may or may not be directly related
8 to the farm operation, conducted for the purpose
9 of increasing income for the farm business
10 including educational or entertainment
11 experiences, but does not change the general
12 intent of the farm operation.
- 13 • The development of an Agritourism Act,
14 administered by the Michigan Department of
15 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD),
16 that preempts local ordinances. Areas of
17 coverage should include, but not be limited to,
18 event barns, corn mazes, and any farm animal
19 related activities. Farms will receive the benefits
20 of this Act as long as more than 50% of the farm
21 income is generated by the sales of commodities
22 grown on the farm and as long as the facilities
23 can meet the public safety requirements in the
24 building code. This does not prohibit local
25 governments from enacting reasonable hour,
26 noise and parking regulations.
- 27 • Local zoning ordinances that recognize the
28 benefits and allow for the operation of farm
29 markets, roadside stands, agritourism
30 destinations and farmers markets that allow for

- 31 the placement of these activities on agricultural
32 zoned land without a special use permit. We do
33 not believe a city, township or other local
34 agency can restrict or mandate the size of what
35 a farm market/roadside stand is, and recognize
36 that selling produce retail is not considered a
37 change of use on land that is currently farmed.
- 38 • Michigan zoning authorities adopting the farmer
39 friendly “Agricultural Tourism Model Zoning
40 Ordinance Provisions” as developed by the
41 Michigan Agricultural Tourism Advisory
42 Commission and MDARD.
 - 43 • Working with the direct farm market and
44 agritourism industries to improve and strengthen
45 the farm market Generally Accepted Agricultural
46 and Management Practices (GAAMPs).
 - 47 • The creation of a set of Generally Accepted
48 Agritourism Practices that align with the GAAMPs
49 outlined in the Right to Farm Act and recognizing
50 agritourism as a sector of the agriculture industry.
 - 51 • Legislation to enhance and promote agritourism,
52 the development of guidelines and best
53 practices, as well as on-farm direct marketing
54 opportunities.
 - 55 • Proposing certain roads and highways across the
56 state be designated as “Scenic Agricultural
57 Byways.” These routes would be designated to
58 showcase Michigan’s agricultural diversity, unique
59 agricultural features, farm markets, roadside stands
60 and related agricultural businesses.
 - 61 • The opportunity for farm operations to have their
62 businesses designated as tourism destination
63 points.
 - 64 • Michigan Farmers Market Association, along
65 with grower vendors, to establish guidelines for
66 agriculture procedures of farmers markets and to
67 assist them if requested. In the event fees are
68 charged by municipalities to farms that
69 participate in farmers markets, we believe those
70 fees should not be in excess of the actual cost to
71 run the market. We believe locally grown should
72 be defined as produced in the state of Michigan,
73 or within 50 miles of the state border.
 - 74 • Community Supported Agriculture programs
75 that build relationships, provide healthy food
76 choices, and encourage consumers to meet the
77 people that grow the products.
 - 78 • Farmers markets and farm marketers to promote
79 and provide education on food safety to
80 consumers.
 - 81 • Operations that welcome the general public on

82 to their facilities to portray a professional image
83 because they are our ambassadors to the public
84 where positive perception is important.

- 85 • Operations with livestock to participate in their
86 respective national animal care programs.

87 We oppose:

- 88 • Discriminatory regulation, licensing and inspection
89 by regulatory agencies and local units of
90 government on farm markets, roadside stands and
91 agritourism operations which restrict their ability to
92 remain competitive. Markets should not be subject
93 to duplicate and/or unnecessary inspection by
94 MDARD, the Michigan Department of Health and
95 Human Services, Michigan Department of
96 Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, and local
97 units of government. ◆

#14 EQUINE INDUSTRY

1 Michigan's equine industry is very broad and
2 involves many people and a wide variety of types
3 and breeds of horses. We strongly encourage and
4 support a collaborative effort by equine
5 professionals to strengthen the industry and
6 support its continued growth. The equine industry
7 is much stronger and able to thrive more
8 successfully when united and working collectively.

9 We support:

- 10 • Encouraging the Michigan Department of
11 Agriculture and Rural Development to work with
12 local units of governments to continue to classify
13 equine operations as agricultural for zoning
14 purposes.
- 15 • Efforts to pass additional changes and/or
16 legislation that provide economic growth and
17 strengthen Michigan's horse racing industry.
- 18 • Funding for the expansion of the Pavilion for
19 Agriculture and Livestock Education at Michigan
20 State University.
- 21 • Marketing opportunities for the equine industry.
22 We encourage Michigan Farm Bureau to work to
23 re-establish additional harvest options for the
24 equine industry.
- 25 • Funding for the USDA Food Safety and Inspection
26 Service for inspectors in facilities that slaughter
27 horses.
- 28 • The Equine Liability Act that strengthens liability
29 protection measures for the equine industry.
- 30 • Efforts of the equine industry to establish an
31 equine industry marketing and education program.

- 32 • The equine industry's efforts in conducting a study
33 to determine the overall impact and status of the
34 equine industry in the state of Michigan.
- 35 • Removing the cap on the online wagering tax with
36 the funds being allocated to the Agriculture Equine
37 Industry Development Fund.
- 38 • The expansion and promotion of equine
39 recreational opportunities on public land in
40 Michigan.
- 41 • The prohibition of bicycle/pedal powered devices
42 on trails signed for equestrian and hiking only.
- 43 • The prohibition of non-equestrian campers in
44 equestrian campgrounds and portions of other
45 campgrounds dedicated to equestrian use.
- 46 • The establishment, growth, and funding of urban
47 equestrian educational and promotion programs.

48 We oppose:

- 49 • All attempts to classify equine as companion
50 animals.
- 51 • Legislation that would limit/prohibit the use of
52 horses as working animals.
- 53 • Any reallocation of the Horsemen's Simulcast
54 purse pool funds to any race meet licensee.

55 We understand there are instances where
56 owners can no longer care for their animals and,
57 under these circumstances there must be viable
58 options for dealing with them. It is important that all
59 equine owners understand the responsibility of
60 owning and caring for their animals.

61 In instances where equine is abandoned, we
62 encourage local officials to seek out the owner and
63 levy a fine for animal abandonment.

64 In an attempt to encourage the equine industry
65 to be more proactive in environmental protection, we
66 encourage MFB to develop an equine specific
67 industry strategy that focuses on Michigan
68 Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program
69 verification, manure management and environmental
70 protection for the equine industry.

71 We are concerned about the number of wild
72 mustangs rounded up on federal land and being
73 moved into Michigan. These horses should be
74 required to move into Michigan on an inter-state
75 health certificate and meet the health standards of
76 the Michigan equine population and the Bureau of
77 Land Management adoption requirements. ♦

#16 FOOD SAFETY

1 Food safety is a significant concern for both
2 agricultural producers and consumers and is one of
3 the highest priorities for the Michigan Department of
4 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD). In
5 making decisions regarding regulations for food
6 safety, they must keep in mind a balance between risk
7 preventative measures, and over-regulation that
8 hinders entrepreneurial opportunities.

9 Food safety transportation concerns must be dealt
10 with at the national level to ensure smooth interstate
11 commerce.

12 As food safety regulations increase, it is vital for
13 Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) and
14 MDARD to continually review and monitor any
15 changes to the current pesticide labels. It is imperative
16 for farmers to have this up-to-date information when
17 following the pesticide spray recommendations in the
18 MSUE spray guides.

19 We support:

- 20 • Proper biosecurity, identification, and safety
21 protocols being followed by all state and federal
22 agency personnel when visiting farms; including
23 compliance with all executive orders and
24 regulatory requirements relative to the ag industry.
- 25 • Continued use of food safety audits such as Good
26 Agricultural Practices (GAP) and food safety risk
27 assessments to ensure food and consumer safety.
- 28 • A private, third-party audit be accepted by USDA
29 as long as it includes the same minimum standards
30 as a government audit.
- 31 • ~~Michigan Farm Bureau joining an existing~~
32 ~~coalition that is working on~~ Standardizing a
33 single third-party audit that would be broadly
34 accepted by retailers.
- 35 • Permanent institutional licensing, including
36 churches and civic facilities.
- 37 • Current dairy laws as they pertain to the
38 pasteurization of milk, including prohibiting the
39 sale of unpasteurized fluid milk for human
40 consumption.
- 41 • Michigan Farm Bureau and MDARD working to
42 provide guidelines for cow-share and herd-
43 shares that meet Grade A dairy standards.
- 44 • Use of wooden pallets and wooden harvest bins.
- 45 • Custom exempt slaughter.
- 46 • The ability for families to process and consume
47 their own products on their own farm.
- 48 • Continued monitoring of the Cottage Food Law.
- 49 • Michigan Department of Environment, Great
50 Lakes, and Energy, in consultation with MDARD,

- 51 reviewing the rules for application of biosolids in
52 close proximity to growing fruit and vegetable
53 crops with the intent of preventing potential
54 human health hazards.
- 55 • The concept of On-Farm Readiness Review kits
56 along with the Food Safety Modernization Act
57 Grower Training programs that help ease the
58 burden of farms becoming compliant.
 - 59 • Prohibiting reuse of food containers or packaging
60 labeled with “use by” or “purchase by” dates, for
61 the benefit of consumer health and producer
62 liability protection.
 - 63 • A committee comprised of MFB members research
64 and report back on block chain technology use in
65 agriculture and the potential impact on Michigan
66 agriculture.
 - 67 • MDARD should immediately report food fraud and
68 cybersecurity impacts.
- 69 We oppose:
- 70 • Any unfunded mandates including but not limited
71 to USDA GAP audits.
 - 72 • Abuse and overreach of the Cottage Food Law
73 provisions. ♦

#17 FORESTRY

- 1 Forestry should be treated and defined as an
2 integral part of Michigan agriculture. The production of
3 forest products requires inputs and management,
4 which are similar to those necessary for the production
5 of other commodities. Michigan forests contribute
6 much to the Michigan economy.
- 7 We support:
- 8 • Efforts to clarify forest industry activities as
9 agricultural for things such as truck licenses, tax
10 on equipment, insurance, supply purchases, real
11 estate taxation and agriculture classification.
 - 12 • New industrial uses of forest products such as
13 the construction of bridges, guard rails, sign
14 posts and other uses on roads and highways.
15 We urge the Michigan Department of
16 Transportation and county road commissions to
17 use these Michigan-grown and processed
18 forest products.
 - 19 • The promotion of use of cross-laminated
20 timber in construction of buildings in Michigan
21 due to its many benefits, including carbon
22 sequestration, LEED (Leadership in Energy
23 and Environmental Design) credits, and
24 reduced construction time.
 - 25 • Changes to the state building code and other

- 26 regulations to address the advancements of ~~cross-~~
27 laminated mass timber.
- 28 • Promoting the development of a cross-
29 laminated timber manufacturing plant in
30 Michigan.
 - 31 • Clarifying the use of the log plate to include all activities
32 connected with logging operations.
 - 33 • The classification of logging equipment as an
34 implement of husbandry.
 - 35 • The multiple use management philosophy of our
36 public forests with emphasis on sustainable
37 management and harvest of state-owned
38 forestlands.
 - 39 • We urge the Michigan Department of Natural
40 Resources (MDNR) to base timber sales from
41 public lands on reasonable aggregate
42 economic, biological and social impacts.
 - 43 • Requiring a market-value bid on purchase offers
44 of Michigan state-owned forests. All sales should
45 be based on a total value bid rather than on
46 sales of species/products estimates.
 - 47 • Timber management with techniques best suited
48 for public lands along roads and highways.
 - 49 • Legislation that protects timber operations from
50 liability involving individuals using the land for
51 recreational purposes.
 - 52 • When hunting occurs on public lands that are
53 being logged, we support the requirement for
54 hunter log books for safety purposes.
 - 55 • Tax reverted lands acquired by the state be
56 maintained or improved through reforestation or
57 other approved soil and water conservation
58 practices.
 - 59 • An ongoing Michigan forest inventory and analysis
60 with joint funding by industry, state and federal
61 sources.
 - 62 • Programs and/or initiatives that provide
63 landowners with incentives to improve forest
64 resources, encourage proper management,
65 promote sustainability of forestlands, and benefit
66 the forest products industry.
 - 67 • All farm operations and landowners managing
68 forests, wetlands, and habitat enrolling in the
69 Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance
70 Program and completing as many
71 recommendations as possible to help preserve
72 air, water, and soil quality, and to achieve
73 sustainable land management goals.
 - 74 • Efforts by the State of Michigan to provide
75 education and outreach for private forest
76 landowners.

- 77 • The expansion of applied/skilled forestry post-
78 high school education programs to ensure a
79 sufficient forestry workforce for the future.
- 80 • The Right to Forest Act and urge landowners to
81 utilize Generally Accepted Forest Management
82 Practices.
- 83 • Encouragement by the State to better utilize ash
84 lumber and biomass so they can be utilized near
85 the point of origin prior to ash borer invasion.
- 86 • A voluntary registration program for foresters and
87 recognize the need to greatly improve the
88 definition of a forester's duties under the
89 Occupational Code.
- 90 • Assistance from MDNR with prescribed burns on
91 private land. Prescribed fire is an important
92 management tool to control unwanted
93 vegetation. This will also help keep the
94 accumulation of dead wood, needles, etc. from
95 becoming a fire hazard.
- 96 • A review of the recent changes to the Forestry
97 Best Management Practices (BMP) manual. It is
98 imperative the BMP guidelines are reflective of
99 current industry practices and standards, not
100 ideological principles. Standards should be
101 based on outcomes, not a prescriptive set of
102 rules.
- 103 • Efforts by the timber industry on the
104 development of a common scale for hardwood
105 saw logs.
- 106 • Michigan State University (MSU) to conduct an
107 economic study comparing the economic
108 returns of the Michigan forestry industry to the
109 economic returns from Michigan's other major
110 commodities.
- 111 • The collaboration between MSU and University of
112 Wisconsin on a forestry economy specialist.

113 We oppose:

- 114 • Restrictions of logging during hunting season.
- 115 • Any additional licensing or regulatory
116 requirements on forest management
117 professionals.
- 118 • Mandating forest practice rules.
- 119 • The closing of existing roads on state forest lands.
- 120 • Any legislation restricting the sale of forest
121 products for non-traditional use.

122 Regeneration of new seedlings, ensuring future
123 crops of trees in our woodlots and forests, is being
124 seriously depleted by wildlife populations that are
125 too high. We will work with the MDNR, conservation
126 organizations, hunting groups and other interested
127 groups to bring the wildlife population down to

128 acceptable levels.

129 We urge the creation of an industry-driven
130 initiative funded by State of Michigan appropriations
131 for forest management, research, education and
132 outreach at MSU, University of Michigan, and
133 Michigan Technological University. Michigan Farm
134 Bureau should provide assistance and expertise to
135 such an initiative.

136 We request MDNR and the Michigan Department of
137 Agriculture and Rural Development to place a high
138 priority on growing and developing new markets, new
139 products, and processing facilities.

140 We encourage county Farm Bureaus to work
141 with their local school districts to retain the
142 ownership and use of school forests. The retention of
143 school forests will help preserve educational
144 opportunities for students, help conserve forest
145 resources, and provide both short and long-term
146 income for school districts.

147 We encourage county Farm Bureaus to refer
148 members to their local conservation districts to obtain a
149 list of qualified foresters for woodlot owners. ◆

#26 MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

1 We recognize the evolving role of the Michigan
2 Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
3 (MDARD) in Michigan's agriculture and food system, as
4 well as supporting rural development.

5 We support the continued individual existence of
6 MDARD within state government. We challenge
7 MDARD to continue to be proactive, focus on core
8 programs and eliminate redundancies where
9 possible. Program areas of a stronger, more
10 encompassing MDARD might include, but would not
11 be limited to: consumer protection, environmental
12 protection, resource-based economic development
13 programs, aquaculture, privately owned cervidae,
14 commercial fishing and forestry programs.

15 We have concerns with the lack of expertise and
16 understanding of farming in other state departments.
17 Therefore, we request MDARD be the primary
18 representative of government on our farms. We are
19 opposed to multiple inspections by a variety of
20 jurisdictions.

21 We encourage MDARD to follow these
22 recommendations when prioritizing their current
23 budget. Regulatory or enforcement program funding
24 should be taken from the General Fund with a limited
25 portion of the cost to be generated from industry fees.

26 We support strategic investments in MDARD with the
27 following funding priorities:

- 28 • Food safety.
- 29 • Oversight of industry regulatory programs.
- 30 • Animal and plant disease protection and
31 agriculture security.
- 32 • Producer protection; integrity of agricultural products.
- 33 • Market access inspections.
- 34 • Statistics and information.
- 35 • Industry and trade advocate.

36 We support:

- 37 • Changes to the Bodies of Dead Animals (BODA) Act
38 that make the MDARD Director, or their designee the
39 lead authority in mass carcass disposal and BODA.
- 40 • **[Relocated from policy #76]** Modification of the
41 BODA Act with input from farmers and dead stock
42 haulers to allow any type of legal commercial or
43 cooperative mortality management, and further
44 recommend modifying the Natural Resources and
45 Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) to clarify that
46 animal mortality disposal is not considered in the
47 definition of production site waste. Consideration
48 should be made for inclement weather impacts on
49 animal mortality management and timeframes for
50 disposal.
- 51 • The creation of a study group initiated by MDARD, led
52 by Michigan State University, and which includes
53 representation from agriculture and livestock
54 commodity groups to determine and recommend
55 necessary updates to the BODA Act.
- 56 • Protection of animal health through testing, quarantine
57 and depopulation, if necessary.
- 58 • State funding of all required testing.
- 59 • Plant inspection, testing and quarantine to
60 control disease.
- 61 • State on-farm inspectors pursuing opportunities
62 to protect Michigan farmers from excessive
63 regulations being advanced by federal
64 inspectors.
- 65 • The MDARD abandoned and neglected orchards
66 program and amendments to include other
67 perennial crops. With the involvement of
68 stakeholders and other departments, we support
69 the development of rules to strengthen
70 enforcement provisions of the program, including
71 appropriate funding.
- 72 • Reviews and specific expirations for quarantines or
73 movement restrictions.
- 74 • Indemnification for losses of farm income when
75 agricultural commodities or products are
76 impounded, farms are quarantined, or

- 77 movement or sales are restricted in the public
78 interest. In determining indemnification,
79 MDARD should consider at least one local
80 appraisal of fair market value.
- 81 • In the case of widespread animal disease
82 outbreaks, indemnification should reflect prices
83 that were current prior to the outbreak.
 - 84 • Investigating the feasibility of a livestock insurance
85 fund that might complement existing state and/or
86 federal indemnification programs. The feasibility
87 study should consider loss of livestock and
88 production due to disease outbreak, depredation,
89 funding options, species participation and producer
90 control of the fund.
 - 91 • A mechanism for loans or direct
92 compensation for loss of income due to
93 depopulation, quarantine or condemnation of
94 agricultural products.
 - 95 • Enforcement of food safety laws, animal
96 identification requirements, and inspection
97 programs in Michigan, focused on working with
98 producers to resolve problems in a timely
99 fashion before the issuance of fines and
100 penalties.
 - 101 • An increased use of technology and sampling and
102 a decreased use of inspections to ensure a safe
103 food supply.
 - 104 • Photographic evidence taken as part of the
105 inspection process being exempt from the
106 Freedom of Information Act.
 - 107 • Certifying the accuracy of weights and measures,
108 including moisture testing equipment.
 - 109 • Reviewing the point system for Pesticide Applicators
110 Certification to increase efficiency.
 - 111 • MDARD's utilization of state certified third-party
112 privatized contracting and technology for
113 inspections, review and oversight for some
114 programs, including virtual online courses.
 - 115 • MDARD working with the Michigan State
116 University (MSU) Pesticide Safety Education
117 program to ensure that training materials for
118 pesticide applicators include appropriate
119 information on proper use, risk, volatility, and
120 application of pesticides and chemicals,
121 especially when near sensitive crops.
 - 122 • Online and in-person testing for pesticide applicator
123 licensing.
 - 124 • Additional pesticide applicator training for
125 Dicamba based products, only when use or
126 formulation has changed.
 - 127 • MDARD meeting with industry representatives

- 128 prior to regulatory enforcement rule changes.
- 129 • Formation of an industry committee to advise the
- 130 MDARD director regarding the inclusion of
- 131 injurious plants on the nuisance plant list.
- 132 Consideration should be given for a phase-in for
- 133 any commercial plant species added to the
- 134 nuisance plant list.
- 135 • Aggressive promotion and the labeling of
- 136 Michigan-grown products and commend the
- 137 efforts of MDARD for its leadership in
- 138 highlighting the importance of the agricultural
- 139 industry to the state of Michigan.
- 140 • Any block grant funds received under the Federal
- 141 Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act be
- 142 distributed to Michigan specialty crop commodity
- 143 sectors on a pro-rata basis with input from a
- 144 stakeholder group comprised of representatives
- 145 from the specialty crop industries. All specialty
- 146 crop sectors, including the nursery and
- 147 greenhouse sector, should have the opportunity to
- 148 receive an equitable portion of block grant funds.
- 149 • An economic development and ag innovation
- 150 fund that is overseen by ag industry officials
- 151 designed to support new innovations, economic
- 152 growth and direct research for agriculture in
- 153 Michigan. This fund should be accessible to all
- 154 segments of agriculture.
- 155 • Further development of meat processing and
- 156 marketing opportunities through joint
- 157 cooperation between the industry, MDARD,
- 158 MSU and the Michigan Meat Association.
- 159 • The State returning to a USDA-equivalent state
- 160 meat inspection for local custom processors as
- 161 soon as possible to support value-added
- 162 opportunities. We will support adequate funding
- 163 for this program.
- 164 • Michigan Farm Bureau working with MDARD to
- 165 investigate having state inspectors service small
- 166 scale or portable slaughter facilities in sparsely
- 167 populated rural areas.
- 168 • MDARD having sole authority to license and
- 169 regulate all terrestrial and aquatic plants for sale or
- 170 commercial use.
- 171 • MDARD working more closely with the
- 172 aquaculture industry to clarify and streamline the
- 173 process for aquaculture operations to harvest
- 174 and sell directly to the consumer. ♦

#27 MICHIGAN MEAT PROCESSING INDUSTRY

1 The livestock and meat processing industries
2 are an integral part of our agricultural economy in
3 Michigan. Local meat processing facilities serve an
4 important role in providing food availability as well
5 as providing economic opportunities. Excess
6 regulations and continued limits on retail
7 packaging/sales greatly reduce public access to
8 locally produced meat.

9 In an effort to address supply chain issues,
10 regulatory burden and limited market access, we
11 support the following:

- 12 • A study and evaluation of Michigan's meat
13 packing industry, retail sales, custom exempt
14 facilities, market access, opportunities for
15 expansion and regulatory issues.
- 16 • A partnership between Michigan State University
17 (MSU), community colleges, career technical
18 schools and the livestock industry coordinating
19 the development and establishment of an Ag
20 Tech-type livestock harvest/meat processing
21 certification program.
- 22 • The investment and promotion for more mobile
23 agricultural processing labs in Michigan.
- 24 • The creation of a Michigan-based meat inspection
25 and licensing system for in-state processing.
- 26 • The creation of a partnership program between
27 the Michigan Department of Agriculture and
28 Rural Development and USDA to train and
29 authorize state level employees to conduct
30 USDA inspection services of small independent
31 processing facilities.
- 32 • An increase in federally inspected meat processing
33 facilities in Michigan.
- 34 • Limiting regulatory burden for small and medium
35 sized meat processors while protecting and
36 enhancing food safety.
- 37 • State and federal funding to increase the
38 number of new and enhance current small and
39 medium sized meat processing facilities.
- 40 • State and federal funding and low interest loans
41 for small and medium sized facilities to meet or
42 comply with regulatory requirements.
- 43 • Government funding to offset additional
44 regulatory burdens that are placed upon small
45 and medium sized meat processors.
- 46 • Greater utilization of the meats laboratory and
47 professionals at MSU to support the meat industry,
48 educate students and train meat industry
49 professionals.

- 50 • Allowing for meat processed at licensed custom-
51 exempt facilities to be eligible for licensed retail
52 sales. ◆

#30 PLANT PESTS AND DISEASES

1 Plant pests and diseases create quarantine
2 situations which can restrict both intra and interstate
3 marketing opportunities.

4 We support research to do the following:

- 5 • Determine the impacts of Spotted Wing
6 Drosophila (SWD) to support and coordinate with
7 the SWD initiative through Michigan State
8 University and the Michigan Cherry Committee.
- 9 • Develop new chemical and biological controls for
10 disease detection, control and eradication.
- 11 • Enhance the use of natural plant pest predator
12 species or bio-controls after thoroughly reviewing
13 the potential consequences to the environment.
- 14 • Address viable control methods for, but not
15 limited to, Spotted lanternfly, Phytophthora
16 capsici, downy mildew, overall spruce decline
17 and Armillaria root fungus.
- 18 • Address replant issues in the asparagus industry.

19 Additionally, we support:

- 20 • Industry-led efforts to control and prevent crop
21 losses due to plant pests and diseases.
- 22 • More aggressively advocating for pesticide
23 manufacturers to develop new chemistries for
24 existing and emerging pest threats.
- 25 • The development of regulatory protocol, inspection
26 procedures and pest control methods to allow for
27 the shipment of quarantined commodities.
- 28 • Indemnification for losses of farm income when
29 agricultural commodities or products are
30 impounded, farms are quarantined or sales are
31 restricted in the public interest.
- 32 • The supplier being held responsible for
33 compensation for all losses due to imported
34 plants with diseases.
- 35 • Zero interest/fixed loan or direct and/or indirect
36 compensation to producers for sudden market
37 loss due to invasive species including but not
38 limited to SWD and hemlock woolly adelgid.
- 39 • Testing for vomitoxin in corn field trials. We
40 encourage ethanol plant operators to spot-check
41 for vomitoxin in corn entering the plant and dried
42 distillers grains leaving the plant.
- 43 • An industry-driven comprehensive rewrite of
44 Michigan's Plant Pest Protection Act.
- 45 • Educational efforts to help producers and

46 consumers understand the importance of their
47 roles in preventing the spread of plant pests and
48 diseases.

- 49 • A review and update of the current invasive species
50 quarantine rules in Michigan. We urge Michigan
51 Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
52 to develop a system that allows agricultural
53 products to be shipped directly for processing on a
54 permitted basis throughout the year in Michigan,
55 during a quarantine period.
- 56 • The current councils which maintain the lists for
57 noxious terrestrial weeds and invasive species
58 as defined by PA 451 of 1994 and encourage
59 swifter action to review and approve species for
60 those lists.
- 61 • Encouraging conservation districts to take
62 measures to keep these noxious weeds
63 controlled.

64 We oppose banning neonicotinoid-based pest
65 control products when there is a lack of research or
66 conclusive scientific evidence that links them to
67 declining bee and other pollinator populations. ◆

#31 RIGHT TO FARM

1 We believe Michigan's Right to Farm Act is the
2 model for our country. The Act has allowed all sectors
3 of commercial agriculture to move forward utilizing
4 existing and new technologies through generally
5 accepted management practices on a voluntary basis
6 while enhancing the environment.

7 The integrity of Michigan's Right to Farm Act and
8 science-based Generally Accepted Agricultural and
9 Management Practices (GAAMPs) should not be
10 weakened or jeopardized by including practices not
11 integral or directly related to farming.

12 We recognize the fundamental differences
13 between farming operations in terms of size, soil
14 types and location. We urge all producers to be
15 aware of applicable GAAMPs and encourage all
16 producers to employ the Michigan Agriculture
17 Environmental Assurance Program and provisions of
18 the farm bill as management tools in the production
19 and expansion of their operations.

20 We support:

- 21 • Agricultural operations not being restricted to only
22 operating under their historical use.
- 23 • Developing realistic plans for land use, which will
24 allow agriculture to change, incorporate
25 technology and produce commodities based on
26 market demands.

- 27 • An expanding livestock farm not be considered
28 a nuisance as a result of new home
29 construction (non-farm residence) within the
30 approved setback distance after the Michigan
31 Department of Agriculture and Rural
32 Development's (MDARD) site approval, but
33 prior to completion of the expansion.
- 34 • Research regarding manure storage, manure
35 processing, building design, and types of
36 livestock feed that could ~~help with odor problems~~
37 mitigate nuisance odors.
- 38 • Development of an odor estimation model for
39 Michigan's climatic conditions.
- 40 • Changes to the Agricultural Disclosure
41 Statement (ADS) that would include:
 - 42 ▪ Seller notification to the potential buyer.
 - 43 ▪ A separate document at the time of closing.
 - 44 ▪ Updating the ADS to include additional
45 agricultural practices.

46 We oppose:

- 47 • Right to Farm protection being extended to
48 marijuana growing facilities until growing the
49 plant becomes legal at the federal level.
- 50 • Ballot initiatives seeking to control generally
51 accepted livestock production and management
52 practices.
- 53 • The inclusion of commercial wind turbine or
54 solar facilities in the definition of a farm. The
55 Michigan Right to Farm Act should allow for
56 and protect users of existing and new
57 technology, including energy production for on-
58 farm use.

59 **Cooperation**

60 We will work with MDARD and Michigan State
61 University to inform farmers, local units of
62 government and other interested individuals of the
63 positive benefits of the Right to Farm Act and
64 GAAMPs. We encourage all farmers to follow the
65 recommendations to demonstrate positive concerns
66 for our neighbors and the environment. We
67 encourage greater farmer participation on township
68 boards and planning commissions to review existing
69 ordinances, help educate about Right to Farm and
70 GAAMPs, and assist in the creation of ordinances
71 that are consistent with the Right to Farm Act. We
72 encourage the State of Michigan and local units of
73 government to structure their programs, ordinances
74 and community development plans in a manner
75 consistent with the Right to Farm Act.

76 We urge Michigan Farm Bureau to study and
77 make recommendations for amendment to the

78 Right to Farm Act that would provide additional
79 protection to agricultural producers enrolled in
80 either PA 116 or a permanent farmland
81 preservation program.

82 **GAAMPs**

83 GAAMPs should be viewed as guidelines rather
84 than statutory law, as they are reviewed and updated
85 annually to reflect current agricultural practices.
86 Consideration should first be given to amending
87 existing GAAMPs to address those areas of concern,
88 followed by investigation into creating new GAAMPs
89 if deemed necessary.

90 The GAAMP for Site Selection and Odor Control
91 for new and expanding livestock facilities has
92 specific setbacks and scientific parameters.

93 We support:

- 94 • The action taken by the Michigan Commission of
95 Agriculture and Rural Development to remove
96 the language specific to local zoning from the
97 siting and farm market GAAMPs.
- 98 • ~~Creation of a GAAMP for ag labor housing.~~
- 99 • The creation of a Greenhouse GAAMP that
100 provides nuisance protection for permanent and
101 temporary greenhouse structures, regardless of
102 population, zoning, or tax classification.
- 103 • The continued use of GAAMPs to define
104 acceptable farm management practices in the
105 state of Michigan.
- 106 • A cooperative effort among MDARD, MFB, and
107 other stakeholders to establish a definition for
108 “commercial production of farm products” within
109 the GAAMPs framework.

110 We oppose:

- 111 • The use of non-farm residences to define
112 setbacks for manure structures and stacking.

113 We are concerned about the exemption of GAAMP
114 applicability to municipalities with a population of
115 100,000 or more.

116 We urge greater producer participation on all
117 GAAMP Committees.

118 **Complaint Process**

119 The electronic complaint process should include
120 a complete description of the law, including the
121 process and implications for both verified and
122 unverified complaints. Following the official Right to
123 Farm visit, follow-up correspondence and
124 appropriate action shall be communicated to the
125 farm owner and the complainant in a timely fashion,
126 including the ability of MDARD to bring enforcement
127 action against the farm and/or the complainant.

128 We urge MDARD to notify all complainants of the
129 law which allows MDARD to levy a penalty for
130 unverified complaints. We strongly urge MDARD to
131 recoup the costs of investigating unverified
132 complaints, as provided for in the Right to Farm Act.
133 We do not support anonymous Right to Farm
134 complaints. ♦

#34 SUGAR INDUSTRY

1 Michigan Farm Bureau supports continued efforts
2 to minimize negative impacts to the U.S. sugar
3 industry from any trade agreement.
4 We support:

- 5 • Sugar imports be based on total sugar content
6 regardless of the level of refinement upon entry
7 into the United States.
- 8 • Domestic sugar production allotments being
9 reallocated to current production trends.
- 10 • ~~Co-products from sugar beet processing being~~
11 ~~used as a road deicer by the Michigan Department~~
12 ~~of Transportation, county road commissions and~~
13 ~~local municipalities.~~
- 14 • The early harvest period for sugar beets in
15 Michigan should end on October 20 for crop
16 insurance purposes.
- 17 • The USDA Risk Management Agency using
18 recoverable white sugar per ton instead of percent
19 sugar for determining Actual Production History for
20 Michigan growers. ♦

#35 TB – MYCOBACTERIUM BOVIS TUBERCULOSIS

1 We urge the Michigan Department of Agriculture
2 and Rural Development (MDARD) and Michigan
3 Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to be
4 more assertive in their efforts to eradicate Bovine
5 Tuberculosis (TB) and move the State to TB free
6 status. We also urge the USDA Animal and Plant
7 Health Inspection Service to receive and provide
8 feedback and implement recommendations in a
9 timelier manner. We strongly encourage producer
10 and hunter cooperation in all segments of our
11 eradication efforts and support the utilization of the
12 latest technological advancements by the
13 departments and the industry.

14 MDARD should draft an aggressive action plan
15 with benchmarks and dates with a final goal of
16 statewide TB-free status. This plan should involve
17 industry stakeholders and request adequate funding
18 for implementation. The Legislature must provide
19 oversight for accountability.

20 We oppose MDARD creating, implementing, or
21 enforcing any rules or regulations that would fall on
22 cattle producers that would be more stringent than
23 USDA's published rules regarding bovine TB.

24 To expedite the eradication of TB, we support:

- 25 • A bounty and/or income tax credit for all deer
26 taken in any county and contiguous county of
27 the state that is not TB-free.
- 28 • Tying the MDNR budget to deer herd reduction
29 and TB prevalence number in the state's deer
30 herd and funding the entire TB program from the
31 MDNR budget.
- 32 • A late hunt being conducted in either February or
33 March; not January.
- 34 • MDARD, USDA, MDNR and other state and
35 federal agencies involving producers from all
36 affected areas of the state in decision-making
37 processes regarding the bovine TB eradication
38 program.
- 39 • Producer implementation of a Wildlife Risk
40 Mitigation Plan (WRMP).
- 41 • State and federal funding for the hiring of a third
42 party designated agriculturalist to assist with
43 WRMP development, implementation, and
44 inspection.
- 45 • Producers with a completed WRMP in any area of
46 the state should have the authority to manage
47 nuisance/destructive species on their land,
48 including access to disease control permits to
49 reduce deer and elk interaction with cattle or
50 livestock feed to prevent disease risk. Additionally,
51 farmers should be able to shoot any deer 24/7
52 within a designated farmyard circle.
- 53 • In counties established as high-risk areas or
54 positive for TB, and all bordering counties, the
55 harvest of white-tailed deer should be allowed
56 year-round, by any legal hunter without need
57 for permit.
- 58 • Establishment and utilization of a science-based
59 zoning approach and testing process to address
60 disease risk (e.g., a 10-mile radius zone around
61 new TB positive domestic livestock herds).
- 62 • Requiring the eradication of white-tailed deer in
63 any 10-mile radius, high-risk zone established
64 after a TB positive deer or cattle herd is found.
- 65 • Changes to the national TB testing requirements
66 that eliminate the need for an individual test for
67 an animal moving from a lower disease
68 prevalence zone to a higher disease prevalence
69 zone.
- 70 • Tying indemnity payments to the development

- 71 and implementation of a WRMP on each farm in
72 the modified accredited TB zone.
- 73 • State and/or federal funding for all required
74 identification and testing.
 - 75 • Producer compensation for all livestock injured
76 or ordered removed during mandatory testing.
 - 77 • The use of state-owned equipment free of charge
78 to producers who are required to perform state-
79 mandated TB tests.
 - 80 • Continued cooperative efforts between
81 MDARD and USDA to return Michigan to TB-
82 free status by advancing the status in areas of
83 the state where TB has not been found or has
84 proven to be free through science-based
85 testing protocols.
 - 86 • State and federal funding necessary for
87 comprehensive and concerted research
88 initiatives to further understand the
89 transmission, persistence, detection, eradication
90 and vaccinations to prevent transmission of
91 animal diseases.
 - 92 • Science-based and species-specific testing protocols.
 - 93 • Development of an exit strategy for the entire
94 state to upgrade the Modified Accredited Zone
95 (MAZ) to TB-free status.
 - 96 • Research into a buyout program for cattle
97 producers in Deer Management Unit 487.
 - 98 • MDARD pursuing aggressive action with
99 surrounding states to open their borders to
100 Michigan cattle.
 - 101 • Dramatic reduction of the deer herd in any TB
102 infected county or contiguous county in
103 Michigan. Action should include agency culling,
104 spring hunt and unlimited fall hunting with no-
105 cost licenses.
 - 106 • Deer exclusion fencing around entire
107 contiguous farmsteads with cattle, receiving
108 state support and being considered an
109 acceptable option a farmer may request for
110 WRMP.

111 When herds are quarantined for disease control
112 purposes, we strongly urge MDARD/USDA remove
113 and test suspect animals as soon as possible. Upon
114 confirmation of infection, we support:

- 115 • Depopulation, or test and remove, within 60 days
116 when the disease has been confirmed; indemnity
117 payments must be issued within 60 days after
118 indemnification agreement has been accepted by
119 all parties.
- 120 • If a farm is depopulated because of bovine TB
121 and the farm was operating under a WRMP with

- 122 no intention of repopulation, indemnity should
123 not be contingent on modifications to the plan.
- 124 • State and federal agencies be required to
125 harvest and test potential carrier animals on and
126 around TB positive farms, including on state-
127 owned land.
 - 128 • Further transparency from USDA Wildlife
129 Services including an accounting and reporting of
130 monthly agency deer harvest.

131 In zones where TB is found, we support aggressive
132 use of all wildlife management tools to control all
133 animal disease transmission. Limits and bans on
134 baiting and feeding may sometimes be justified and
135 practical, however we do not support a statewide ban
136 on baiting.

137 Continued state and federal funding is critical to
138 complete eradication of the disease in the free-
139 ranging wildlife and production livestock population.

140 To ensure that Michigan TB eradication efforts
141 are not compromised, we encourage the Director of
142 MDARD to require reciprocal requirements for the
143 importation of breeding, show, and sport cattle.

144 We request state and/or federal funds be made
145 available to producers to implement their WRMP
146 when large expenditures are needed. In the MAZ, we
147 support the test and remove option for herd owners
148 who have implemented a WRMP. We support whole
149 herd depopulation as the most effective method of
150 disease eradication. We request USDA count herds
151 positive only for the months in which the herd contains
152 positive animals.

153 The current memorandum of understanding
154 (MOU) between USDA, MDARD, and MDNR
155 establishes ambitious quotas for the collection of
156 deer heads in each of the counties in the MAZ and in
157 the surrounding TB surveillance counties. To achieve
158 these goals, we support,

- 159 • A more aggressive approach by MDNR to
160 meeting the requirements of deer head
161 collection.
- 162 • Identification, transportation and testing in the MOU.
- 163 • A plan and coordinated effort between MDNR,
164 processors, Michigan State University
165 Veterinary Diagnostic Lab, Farm Bureau and
166 the hunting community in deer head collection
167 by September 1 of each year.
- 168 • A weekly update and reporting of completed
169 deer head testing beginning September 1 of
170 each year.

- 171 • A per head payment for each deer head turned
 - 172 in until the requirements of the MOU are met,
 - 173 paid by the MDNR.
 - 174 • State and federal agencies being held
 - 175 accountable for not meeting their requirements
 - 176 as spelled out in the MOU.
 - 177 • A reduction and possible elimination of cattle
 - 178 testing in the buffer counties at the end of the
 - 179 current MOU.
 - 180 • Compensation from the MDNR budget to offset
 - 181 farm and MDARD expenses required due to
 - 182 testing requirements when caused by failed
 - 183 agency MOU compliance.
 - 184 • Requiring heads from all deer taken on private
 - 185 and public lands in that region to be submitted for
 - 186 testing.
- 187 In order to meet testing requirements from USDA,
- 188 MDARD, and MDNR, all heads from deer taken from
- 189 the seven surrounding counties around the MAZ crop
- 190 damage permits, as well as those taken on private
- 191 and state lands should be picked up by MDNR and
- 192 submitted for TB testing. MDNR should also be
- 193 required to pick up all vehicle-killed deer in that area
- 194 and submit those heads for TB testing.
- 195 In an effort to maintain market access for cattle
- 196 producers in a known TB positive region, we support
- 197 the movement of cattle out of that region through
- 198 normal channels as long as testing and movement
- 199 requirements are met. ♦

#39 AGRISCIENCE , FOOD, AND NATURAL RESOURCES EDUCATION & THE FFA ORGANIZATION

1 Michigan Farm Bureau commends the

2 Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Office of

3 Career and Technical Education on its support and

4 recognition of food and agriculture as a greater than

5 \$100 billion industry in the state through the

6 adoption of the Agriculture, Food and Natural

7 Resources Cluster. This cluster will enable the

8 future leaders of agriculture to obtain foundational

9 knowledge that will help shape their careers and

10 ultimately promote the sustainability of the

11 agriculture industry.

12 Michigan's 100 plus Agriscience, Food and

13 Natural Resources Education (AFNRE) programs and

14 FFA programs are important to the future success of

15 Michigan agriculture. These programs provide future

16 leadership to the agricultural industry and many

17 programmatic and leadership opportunities for non-

18 farm students to learn about and understand
19 agriculture, natural resources and the environment.

20 AFNRE and FFA chapters in the state of
21 Michigan have been supported for years by the local
22 school district, added-cost funding administered by
23 the MDE, federal Perkins dollars, and FFA Foundation
24 funds, including the Glassbrook FFA Endowment.
25 These appropriations are essential for public school
26 districts to retain AFNRE and the FFA as program
27 priorities, and as an incentive to expand these
28 programs into other school districts.

29 We support:

- 30 • The expansion of the current and creation of
31 new junior high/middle school and high school
32 AFNRE programs and FFA chapters as vital
33 tools for educating young people, providing
34 career and technical training and development of
35 leaders to work in careers related to Michigan's
36 agricultural industry.
- 37 • Agriscience and natural resources courses
38 fulfilling the criteria and being recognized as a
39 science credit by all high schools, colleges and
40 universities in Michigan.
- 41 • Regional Educational School District
42 administrators, as well as local district
43 superintendents, principals and counselors,
44 being provided information on curriculum
45 requirements of agriscience careers so they can
46 encourage student participation.
- 47 • The MDE to adequately fund AFNRE and the
48 Career and Technical Student Organization
49 programs to provide educational and career
50 opportunities in agriculture and natural
51 resources as added-cost funding available has
52 continued to decline.
- 53 • The word agriculture remaining in the
54 Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Career
55 Cluster title.
- 56 • Reporting of all information regarding graduates,
57 or completers, from all agriscience and natural
58 resources programs within the state. This
59 information should help increase the amount of
60 added-cost funding for each student currently
61 enrolled in the program. All agriscience and
62 natural resources instructors to engage in an
63 active role in the information gathering and
64 reporting process.
- 65 • MFB and county Farm Bureaus assisting in state
66 and local FFA activities.
- 67 • FFA alumni associations and their efforts to
68 strengthen agriscience and natural resource

- 69 education across the state and nation.
- 70 • AFNRE emergency certification programs, as well
- 71 as the hiring of retired ag teachers, to fill these
- 72 positions without any retirement penalties, due to
- 73 the lack of qualified people available to lead these
- 74 programs.
- 75 • Consideration being given to student loan
- 76 payoff or scholarship programs to help
- 77 promote AFNRE programs through private or
- 78 public partnerships.
- 79 • Continued activities of private and public
- 80 companies and organizations, like those of
- 81 AgroLiquid, St. Johns, which provide an
- 82 educational opportunity to the public to learn and
- 83 experience the role, importance, and economic
- 84 impact of agriculture on food production for
- 85 generations to come.
- 86 • The development of an agricultural credential
- 87 which high school AFNR students could use to
- 88 gain employment in the agricultural and natural
- 89 resources field. The development of this
- 90 credential should include input from agricultural
- 91 businesses, teachers and educational
- 92 specialists to ensure the certification represents
- 93 the skills learned through the program in a way
- 94 that's meaningful for agricultural employers.
- 95 • The utilization of funding for agricultural
- 96 internships and apprenticeships through the
- 97 National Apprenticeship Act. ♦

#40 EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

1 We believe all Michigan children should have an

2 equal opportunity for quality education. Education at

3 all levels must meet the constantly changing needs

4 of society.

5 We support:

- 6 • Requiring state foundation grant aid
- 7 reimbursement be determined by June 1 annually.
- 8 • Funding special education programs for teacher
- 9 training, children with special needs and gifted
- 10 children.
- 11 • Fully funding state mandated programs
- 12 whether new or amended. Funding for state
- 13 mandated programs should not decrease the
- 14 basic pupil grant for other Michigan students.
- 15 • Ensuring the per pupil foundation funding grant
- 16 follows the student to the school of their choice.
- 17 • Requiring state school aid funding to reflect
- 18 current year enrollment based on average

- 19 student attendance, and eliminate the official
20 count day/s.
- 21 • Public schools, private schools, charter schools
22 and home schooling.
 - 23 • Local school boards having the ability to
24 establish policies such as starting and ending
25 dates, classroom hours in a school year,
26 personnel management, student discipline, and
27 use of local facilities/resources.
 - 28 • Collaboration between the local school district
29 and the Intermediate School District to establish
30 an integrated calendar.
 - 31 • The utilization of local Farm Bureau members and
32 organizational resources to assist in reviewing
33 classroom curriculum for accurate information
34 concerning agriculture before its adoption.
 - 35 • Michigan Farm Bureau exploring the
36 development of a Michigan agriculture unit that
37 teaches students where their food comes from.
 - 38 • Michigan colleges and universities offering dual
39 credit opportunities for high school students.
 - 40 • Michigan colleges and universities offering
41 agriscience instructor certification.
 - 42 • Michigan colleges and universities offering state
43 standardized programs in specialty (ag) fields to
44 increase occupational readiness and employability
45 of students.
 - 46 • Consolidated districts maintaining existing FFA
47 and agriscience programs.
 - 48 • Review of the foundation funding grant for
49 education.
 - 50 • Fiscal aid, limited to the rate of inflation, to
51 districts operating under caps. School districts
52 must exercise fiscal responsibility and look for
53 efficiencies to maximize the use of financial
54 resources.
 - 55 • Science, Technology, Engineering, Math,
56 (STEM) education in Pre-K-12 and
57 acknowledge agricultural education as an
58 effective vehicle to deliver this programming.
59 We encourage county Farm Bureaus to
60 highlight opportunities for school districts to
61 meet STEM requirements through agricultural
62 concepts.
 - 63 • Funding opportunities for elementary schools such
64 as grants or scholarship programs to source
65 agriculture education resources such as the
66 FARM Science Lab.
 - 67 • County Farm Bureaus working with local school
68 districts to increase Michigan Merit Curriculum
69 (MMC) flexibility acceptance. MMC standards

- 70 must be balanced to recognize the importance
71 of Career and Technical Education (CTE) and
72 provide more opportunities for students to enroll
73 in vocational training programs and mentor-
74 based programs.
- 75 • A well-rounded education containing basic
76 curriculum, including college-prep or
77 vocational/technical courses.
 - 78 • School counselors and faculty informing students
79 about opportunities in vocational training,
80 agriculture, and agriculturally-related fields.
 - 81 • Counselors' continuing education courses
82 encompassing CTE opportunities.
- 83 ~~We oppose:~~
- 84 • ~~Common Core Standards.~~ ◆

#44 RENEWABLE AND BIOMASS PRODUCTS

1 Ethanol fuels and biodiesel are excellent sources of
2 renewable energy contributing to a cleaner and safer
3 environment through major reductions in vehicle
4 exhaust emissions.

5 We applaud the popular increase in the interest
6 level of ethanol and biodiesel and realize the positive
7 impact to Michigan's grain farmers. At the same time,
8 we caution the entire agricultural industry to fully
9 understand the economic impact to our livestock
10 production. We urge that balanced economic
11 decisions be made as we work to expand alternative
12 energy options. A level playing field is important, if all
13 segments of agriculture are to succeed and prosper.

14 We support:

- 15 • Requirements for the use of biomass fuels and
16 fuel additives in areas that exceed the 1990
17 federal Clean Air Act standards.
- 18 • The continued production of biomass products
19 such as ethanol and other bio-based fuels and
20 products.
- 21 • Year-round statewide availability of E-15.
- 22 • Efforts to encourage biomass fuel production
23 facilities in Michigan in areas of available
24 feedstock production and co-product utilization.
- 25 • Funding and support for new, existing, and
26 expanding facilities for the generation of
27 sustainable aviation fuel and renewable diesel
28 from agriculture and forestry products.
- 29 • Research and development being encouraged
30 through tax and cost-share incentives to find
31 ways to reduce the cost of production of
32 biomass products, expand feedstocks, co-
33 product utilization (including those from food

- 34 processors), and expand the application of
35 technologies such as anaerobic digestion,
36 fermentation, distillation, burning of organic
37 materials (pyrolysis) and hydrogasification.
- 38 • Research on the use of 100 percent biomass fuels
39 for some vehicles, as well as blending biomass
40 fuels with petroleum-based fuels.
 - 41 • The State of Michigan including biomass fueled
42 vehicles in the state motor pool fleet. We
43 strongly urge all state-owned diesel and E-85
44 (85 percent ethanol, 15 percent gasoline) flexible
45 fueled vehicles use the respective fuel source
46 when possible.
 - 47 • Expanding the biomass fuel distribution
48 infrastructure, including blending capability at the
49 retail level.
 - 50 • Encouraging manufacturers to expand offerings of
51 renewable fueled vehicles.
 - 52 • Research, development and use of renewable
53 energy sources for on-farm production
54 applications.
 - 55 • Establishing economic incentives and streamlining
56 the permitting and licensing process to encourage
57 biomass fuel production.
 - 58 • Broadening the use and distribution with
59 incentives consistent with other renewable
60 energy sources targeted to producers,
61 blenders, distributors and end-users.
 - 62 • Requiring new biofuels or renewable energy
63 commercial production facilities utilizing public
64 funding, tax deferments or grants to offer an
65 investment opportunity to Michigan citizens to
66 keep gains realized in rural America.
 - 67 • Encouraging Michigan schools and all municipal
68 governmental units to use bio-based products.
 - 69 • Educating consumers about the positive influence
70 and benefits of biomass fuels and renewable
71 sources for heating.
 - 72 • Utilizing only the latest science-based information to
73 promote biomass/renewable products.
 - 74 • Supporting research and demonstration
75 programs using ethanol as a fuel for fuel cell
76 engine development.
 - 77 • Supporting research and demonstration programs
78 to expand the use of ethanol, biodiesel, and farm
79 generated methane.
 - 80 • Increasing engine efficiency through practices such
81 as raising octane levels by utilizing farm sourced
82 biofuels.
 - 83 • Including identifying fuel stations featuring E-85 and
84 biodiesel with interstate highway signs.

- 85 • The scientific measurement and rating of fuels and
86 alternative fuels with regard to carbon dioxide
87 levels.
- 88 • The increased utilization of silvicultural (forest)
89 products and other biomass material, including
90 non-native plant species, for the production of
91 renewable energy.
- 92 • Exemptions from the normal Michigan
93 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and
94 Energy permitting process to encourage the
95 development of renewable biomass energy
96 production and utilization on farms.

97 **Anaerobic Digesters**

98 We support changes to state law and
99 regulation to allow:

- 100 • Comingling of product from different farms
101 without additional permitting requirements.
- 102 • Utilization of food waste with manure, without
103 additional regulation.
- 104 • Changes to gas purity standards that allow for
105 digester gas to be added to existing fuel/gas
106 while still protecting the current infrastructure.
- 107 • Electricity being generated from digesters to be
108 eligible for Renewable Identification Numbers
109 (RIN).
- 110 • Increased usage of renewable natural gas
111 (RNG) as a transportation fuel.
- 112 • The use of life cycle and combustion
113 methodologies in the analysis of RNG. ◆

#45 STATE ENERGY POLICY

1 We support Michigan Farm Bureau taking steps to
2 advocate for adequate and affordable energy for
3 Michigan residents and businesses. We recognize
4 agriculture's vulnerability to energy interruptions and
5 price volatility. We support immediate and long-term
6 solutions including:

- 7 • Programs to increase the utilization of energy
8 sources to minimize adverse environmental
9 impacts.
- 10 • Incentives for additional refineries.
- 11 • Upgrading, expanding and protecting our current
12 electrical generating systems and grid.
- 13 • Development, expansion, promotion and
14 incentives for affordable access to natural gas
15 for farms, homes, and businesses.
- 16 • The development of a state energy policy which
17 gives high priority to agricultural enterprises, such
18 as production, processing and storage facilities,
19 allowing them the same power quality and timely

- 20 access as other commercial industries, regardless
21 of utility territory.
- 22 • Standards for utility companies to resolve
23 power quality issues such as electrical
24 pollution on-farm, and urge all parties to
25 maintain their equipment and utility right-of-
26 way to decrease the possibility of neutral-to-
27 ground electrical pollution.
 - 28 • Net-metering legislation or regulation enabling
29 producers to sell excess power generated on
30 farms back to utilities at an equitable rate.
 - 31 • Incentives for renewable energy production for
32 sale or use on farms. Examples include co-
33 generation, silvicultural material, methane
34 digestion, wind, hydro and solar power.
 - 35 • Increasing incentives to broaden the use of
36 biomass blended fuels.
 - 37 • Education and policy programs to promote
38 sound energy conservation.
 - 39 • Options expanding domestic exploration;
40 incentives to accelerate expansion of liquid
41 natural gas facilities; implementation of
42 technology to utilize domestic coal reserves;
43 and the development of fuel cell technology.
 - 44 • Establishment of an agricultural rate classification
45 for electrical service.
 - 46 • Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC)
47 allowance for seasonal inactivity (e.g.,
48 irrigation/grain drying) to eliminate the
49 occurrence of non-use monthly charges.
 - 50 • Voluntary utilization of smart meters.
 - 51 • All wind generator towers being assessed using
52 multiplier tables established by the MPSC
53 through the process of public hearings and
54 sworn testimony.
 - 55 • A statewide study of transmission connectivity
56 needs including, but not limited to, transmission
57 connections between the two peninsulas.
 - 58 • MFB working with county Farm Bureaus to
59 study electrical rate disparities across the state.
60 The study should consider the causes and
61 potential policy recommendations promoting
62 affordability in all regions of the state.
 - 63 • The continued operation and upgrades of
64 pipelines such as Line 5 with strict safety
65 precautions to protect land and water resources.
 - 66 • As a part of the permitting process for all new
67 energy projects, requiring decommissioning
68 plans including posting an adequate
69 performance bond or funds before final
70 approval.

- 71 • All permanent easements owned by utilities, not
72 preserved for future use, should be reverted or
73 offered for sale, to the underlying owner at no
74 more than fair market value.
- 75 • Including agricultural representation on the MPSC.
76 • MPSC being responsible for determining
77 capacity needs and the Michigan Department of
78 Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy being
79 responsible for only environmental permitting.
- 80 • Government mandates for electric car
81 production and usage being matched by
82 concurrent approval for the construction and/or
83 upgrades for reliable electric generation
84 facilities to deliver the power needed.
- 85 • Agriculture having consistent, reliable, and
86 affordable access to all forms of energy.
- 87 • Incentivizing the production and use of
88 renewable energy on non-agricultural use
89 areas such as brownfield, public property,
90 Michigan Department of Transportation rights-
91 of-ways and other marginal lands, as well as
92 industrial, residential and agricultural buildings,
93 to reduce easements across farms for
94 renewable energy projects and to protect prime
95 farmland.
- 96 • Solar developers disclosing chemical and
97 electronic components of solar panels and
98 equipment to the landowner.
- 99 • ~~Solar farm~~ Commercial solar operations
100 notifying land owners and disclosing chemicals
101 used for weed and pest control on leased acres.
- 102 We oppose utility companies inflating land rental
103 rates on their property to well above fair market
104 value of contiguous property. ♦

#47 UTILITY PLACEMENT

1 All new and replacement above and
2 underground utility distribution equipment shall be
3 placed or relocated in the existing road right-of-way.
4 When utilities are being replaced, the utility owner
5 should remove the replaced sections upon
6 installation of new utilities. We urge all utility
7 companies to communicate with land owners before
8 beginning the renovation of lines, individual poles,
9 etc. As farm equipment increases in size, the
10 placement of utility services becomes a concern.
11 Adding to the potential problem, other utility lines,
12 such as telephones and cable television, are
13 installed below the existing electric lines. Access to,
14 or operation in, a field or orchard with farm

15 equipment creates the potential for contact with the
16 lines.

17 We support:

- 18 • The requirement of a utility to follow the
19 National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) and
20 Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC)
21 regulations to protect both the farmer and the
22 utility from accidents which could cause injury
23 to an individual or interruption of service to a
24 community.
- 25 • Legislation or regulation to create a minimum
26 height requirement for all overhead lines to align
27 with NESC code 230E1, which has a minimum
28 line height requirement of 15½ feet. All new
29 underground utilities shall be installed and
30 maintained to NESC standards. If NESC
31 standards are not met, utility companies are
32 responsible for liability, damages, and repairs.
- 33 • Governmental agencies enforcing the utility
34 height and depth standards.
- 35 • All parties (e.g. landowners, road commission,
36 drain commission) communicating prior to the
37 installation of utilities.
- 38 • The principles of Public Acts 173 and 174 of
39 2013, which provide clarity on the MISS DIG
40 process for farmers by focusing efforts on risk
41 management and providing greater incentives for
42 compliance.
- 43 • Farmers considering possible cost-sharing of
44 utility pole re-location for safety and productivity of
45 field crops.
- 46 • Utility companies putting additional emphasis on
47 upgrading and placement of poles in the rights-of-
48 way to reduce long-term maintenance costs and
49 crop damage.
- 50 • Utility companies completing timely repair, ~~and~~
51 maintenance, and expansion to prevent further
52 damage to personal and public property.
- 53 • All MISS DIG markings being removed or made
54 of a non-metallic biodegradable material.
- 55 • The MPSC's cost review for line extensions,
56 transformer upgrades and moving charges, and
57 comparing these costs with other utility charges
58 for the same work.

59 We understand the value of utilities and
60 broadband communication and support reasonable
61 efforts to minimize damage to infrastructure. New
62 utility equipment should not impede any existing
63 drainage structure. We believe a utility company
64 should promptly settle for damage to crops, soil
65 compaction, existing sub surface drainage (tile),

66 irrigation, and other similar agricultural
67 infrastructure. ◆

#52 LABOR HOUSING ZONING

1 Adequate housing for workers is critical for
2 Michigan agricultural producers and should not be
3 negatively affected by local zoning ordinances. The
4 Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural
5 Development (MDARD) should, in consultation with
6 the ag industry, develop a model zoning ordinance
7 for agricultural labor housing.

8 We support MDARD as having exclusive
9 responsibility for inspection and approval of
10 occupancy for seasonal farm worker housing in
11 Michigan.

12 We support amending the Michigan Zoning
13 Enabling Act to allow farm worker housing, in an
14 agricultural district, be sited at the discretion of the
15 landowner, as long as it meets zoning setbacks.

16 We support the creation of statewide migrant
17 labor housing policy that preempts local authority.

18 We support legislation to allow farmers to share
19 agricultural labor housing and the development of
20 state tax assessing guidelines that support
21 agricultural labor housing.

22 We oppose local zoning ordinances that are more
23 strict for agricultural labor housing than those of any
24 residential home. ◆

#55 WAGES AND COMPENSATION

1 Although most farm workers are paid above the
2 minimum wage level, it does serve as a floor for all
3 wage rates. The state minimum wage and piecework
4 rates should not exceed the federal minimum wage.

5 We recommend support:

- 6 • An agricultural exemption from paid sick leave
7 requirements.
- 8 • Agriculture, as defined in the North American
9 Industry Classification System (NAICS 11),
10 remain exempt from overtime wage payments.
- 11 • Agricultural piecework rates as a method of
12 payment to allow for the many variable
13 situations found in agricultural employment.
14 Piecework rates enable skilled agricultural
15 workers to earn income above the average
16 and/or minimum hourly wage.
- 17 • The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic
18 Opportunity (MDLEO) work with the agriculture
19 community to support the payment of piece rate in
20 compliance with state and federal law.

- 21 • Any increases in minimum wages be tied directly
- 22 to increases of all wage-based employer
- 23 thresholds, such as unemployment
- 24 compensation insurance, frequency of
- 25 withholdings, and frequency of deposits.
- 26 • Investigating a state surveying mechanism and
- 27 auditing of the survey for calculating ag wages
- 28 including adverse effect wage rate (AEWR).
- 29 • Unemployment payments should never exceed
- 30 80% of previous full pay and should not exceed
- 31 20 weeks.
- 32 • Fair market value for employer provided
- 33 housing should apply toward fulfillment of
- 34 minimum wage and AEWR requirements.
- 35 • An evaluation of the current Unemployment
- 36 Insurance Agency in order to overhaul and
- 37 make it user friendly and accurate.
- 38 • The current Registration and Seeking Work Waiver
- 39 be extended from a 45-day to a 120-day waiver for
- 40 agriculture and other seasonal agriculturally-related
- 41 businesses.

42 Economic development initiatives are important to
43 the future of Michigan agriculture. We oppose any
44 attempts to mandate union wage scales in economic
45 development projects involving agriculture.

46 We oppose Workers' Compensation rules that
47 mandate fringe benefits being included in the base-
48 rate premium, including housing and health insurance.
49 We support the continued full liability coverage for
50 employers who exercise due diligence in employee
51 verification.

52 We oppose all local units of government setting a
53 minimum wage rate.

54 We oppose any additional tax on payroll wages for
55 health care.

56 Recently more and more farms have added
57 roadside markets and agritourism venues to their mix.
58 We believe MDLEO should view any and all labor that
59 is used for roadside markets and agritourism venues
60 to be considered ag employees. We encourage
61 Michigan Farm Bureau to work with MDLEO to
62 develop and improve agricultural classification
63 codes. ♦

#60 ANTITRUST

1 We request both the Michigan Attorney General
2 and the Antitrust Division of the Federal Trade
3 Commission remain vigilant in enforcing the Sherman
4 Antitrust Act or state and federal restraint of trade
5 legislation. Appropriate action should be taken

6 whenever violations are discovered.

7 We encourage national and state reforms to
8 prevent monopolies from forming within the
9 agricultural supply, processing, and service sectors
10 where the lack of competition is counter to the
11 interest of the independent farmer.

12 In the past 18 months, a lack of free market forces
13 has become more evident within the agricultural
14 sector. From meat packers to chemical suppliers, a
15 lack of competition has created increased hardships
16 for the American farmer.

17 We support:

- 18 • A formal request to the Department of Justice
19 (DOJ) by attorneys general around the United
20 States to investigate the following sectors:
 - 21 ▪ Meat packers, and the vertical integration of that
22 industry.
 - 23 ▪ The consolidation of co-ops, at all levels and
24 in all areas.
 - 25 ▪ The use of “loyalty agreements” by agri-chemical
26 companies to limit the use of generic crop protection
27 chemicals.
 - 28 ▪ The increased consolidation of retail agri-
29 business units.
 - 30 ▪ The monopolistic practices of fertilizer and seed
31 companies.
- 32 • A formal request to the FTC by state attorneys
33 general to investigate the consolidation of
34 Agrium, Mosiac, CF Industries, and the creation
35 and operation of Canpotex.
- 36 • A formal request to the DOJ and congressional
37 oversight committees regarding the foreign
38 ownership and influence in American
39 agribusiness.
- 40 • A formal request to the Environmental Protection
41 Agency regarding the restrictions of the
42 manufacture of the basic “tech material” needed
43 to formulate crop protection products.

44 The tenants of the Sherman Antitrust Act are
45 essential for the continued survival and
46 competitiveness of agriculture. We implore state
47 attorneys general and policy makers at all levels to
48 remain vigilant for violations, utilize all enforcement
49 tools at their disposal, and to urge the FTC to
50 address violations quickly and decisively. ◆

#61 ELECTIONS

1 We believe Michigan Farm Bureau should
2 encourage all members to register to vote. We also
3 believe MFB should continue efforts to provide

4 education and information on elections and candidates.

5 Campaign reform is overdue and should be
6 established at all levels of government and address all
7 elements of campaigning.

8 We support:

- 9 • Election projections on Election Day not be
10 released to the public until all polls are closed in
11 the continental United States.
- 12 • The Michigan Constitution be amended to
13 increase the percentage of voter signatures
14 required to initiate a recall election to 35
15 percent.
- 16 • Requiring a 2/3 vote of the people for passage of
17 the recurring ballot question to hold a
18 Constitutional Convention.
- 19 • Recall petitions must contain proven misfeasance
20 or malfeasance before the petition is approved.
- 21 • Requiring current state legislators to wait at least
22 one year before becoming a registered lobbyist
23 in Michigan.
- 24 • Elected officials not being allowed to pursue a
25 different elected position, unless they are at the
26 end of their current term or resign from their
27 currently held elected position.
- 28 • The current primary election process for
29 statewide offices.
- 30 • Apol Standards for the purpose of redistricting.
- 31 • Electing the three university boards - Michigan
32 State University, University of Michigan, and
33 Wayne State University - by districts, not statewide.
- 34 • Michigan continuing to honor the Electoral
35 College as designated in the U.S. Constitution.
- 36 • A simplified process to opt out of robocalls.
- 37 • Farm Bureau members to become precinct
38 delegates, and MFB to conduct educational
39 training on becoming a precinct delegate.
- 40 • The consolidation of the May and August
41 elections into a single election in June.

42 **Ballot Reform**

43 We encourage MFB members to be
44 knowledgeable about ballot proposals.

45 We support the following ballot process reforms:

- 46 • Clear, concise and simple language be used on
47 all ballot issues.
- 48 • Amend the State Constitution to require petitions
49 for initiatives or referendums would have to be
50 signed by a percentage of individuals who voted
51 in the gubernatorial race in the last preceding
52 general election representing a large geographic
53 area of the state, for example, at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the
54 Michigan House districts.

- 55 • Making it unlawful to have paid circulators gathering
56 signatures for ballot proposals or recalls.
- 57 • Limiting influences from outside our state borders on
58 Michigan’s ballot process.
- 59 • Township governments being allowed to elect
60 local offices on a nonpartisan ballot.
- 61 • Easier ballot access for third party candidates.
- 62 • Reviewing the ballot initiative process that
63 special interest groups use to circumvent the
64 legislative process and force their ideals on the
65 public and agricultural production.

66 **Term Limits**

67 Current term limits have been successful in cycling
68 new people into public service as State legislators.
69 However, this turnover occurs too quickly for those
70 elected to amass the required experience to become
71 the leaders we need.

72 We support:

- 73 • Extending the number of terms for State
74 Representatives up to 6 two-year terms and State
75 Senators up to 3 four-year terms and MFB will
76 work with other organizations to initiate a petition
77 drive to accomplish this.
- 78 • ~~Changing the length of term for county~~
79 ~~commissioners to four years who shall have~~
80 ~~staggered terms of office.~~

81 **Special Elections**

82 Special elections accrue high costs for local taxpayers.

83 Therefore, we support:

- 84 • Requiring that once an operating millage or bond
85 proposal is defeated by voters, it cannot be up for
86 another vote for at least one full year.
- 87 • Millage and bond proposal elections should take
88 place during the November General Election.
- 89 • School board elections being held during mid-term
90 or general elections to avoid unnecessary costs.

91 We oppose:

- 92 • The concept of a part-time legislature.
- 93 • The Promote the Vote campaign of the Electoral
94 College system.
- 95 • Election Day becoming a holiday.
- 96 • Any voting by mail except by absentee ballot.
- 97 • Totally electronic forms of voting without a paper trail.
- 98 • Proposals to make the popular vote the sole
99 determinant of presidential elections.

100 **Election Fraud**

101 We support:

- 102 • That the clerk keep an up to date and accurate voter
103 registration list.
- 104 • A passport, enhanced Michigan ID, or enhanced
105 driver’s license, REAL ID or REAL Michigan driver’s

106 license that proves citizenship for voter registration
107 and voting.

108 We oppose:

- 109 • Election and voter fraud. ◆

#63 Health

1 Michigan Farm Bureau members have a real concern
2 for their family's good health.

3 We support:

- 4 • Requiring hospitals in Michigan to report their
5 infection statistics.
- 6 • Legislation to limit malpractice liability awards
7 including capping malpractice settlements and
8 strengthening licensing disciplinary action.
- 9 • The integration of the health delivery systems'
10 community health, mental health and substance
11 abuse programs, which serve the same set of
12 counties.
- 13 • Increased suicide prevention and mental illness
14 awareness campaigns with funding and training for
15 medical and emergency service providers.
- 16 • A private and affordable health care plan that
17 allows for additional benefits at the consumer's
18 option.
- 19 • Methods to reduce the cost of prescription drugs
20 that will best benefit all individuals.
- 21 • Health education to encourage consumers of
22 health care to question physicians, hospital staff
23 and administration about procedures and costs
24 regarding their own health care.
- 25 • Itemized billing.
- 26 • Insurance incentives for a healthy lifestyle.
- 27 • Health insurance premiums being 100 percent tax
28 deductible for all policy purchasers immediately.
- 29 • Health Savings Accounts and Medical Savings
30 Accounts.
- 31 • Medicare and Medicaid payments that cover
32 expenses in full to hospitals. Rural hospitals
33 should not be discriminated against by using a
34 lower cost of living scale.
- 35 • An individual's right to select treatment options
36 which should be respected, and we encourage the
37 use of living wills and/or Durable Power of
38 Attorney for health care.
- 39 • Nurse practitioners, physician assistants,
40 midwives, and certified holistic healthcare
41 providers being able to receive reimbursement
42 for their services from insurance companies,
43 Medicaid and Medicare.
- 44 • Organ and blood donations.

- 45 • ~~Allowing “sleeping rails” on nursing home beds~~
- 46 ~~to help ensure patient safety.~~
- 47 • Programs that encourage medical professionals
- 48 to locate in rural areas, including the U.S.
- 49 Customs and Immigration Services programs
- 50 supporting placement of foreign-born doctors in
- 51 rural areas.
- 52 • The development of a method to return unused
- 53 prescription drugs to a licensed pharmacist for
- 54 disposal.
- 55 • Closer tracking of production and distribution to
- 56 ensure the integrity of the Michigan Medical
- 57 Marijuana program.
- 58 • MFB assisting county Farm Bureaus with model
- 59 ordinances pertaining to growing and processing
- 60 medical marijuana.
- 61 • The requirement that medical marijuana be
- 62 processed by the current United States
- 63 Pharmacopeia standards using sound science
- 64 when refined into a consumable form. This
- 65 product should then be prescribed by potency
- 66 since drug levels vary by plant type.
- 67 • Employers being exempted from mandatorily
- 68 providing health care coverage to any employee
- 69 who falls under the Migrant and Seasonal
- 70 Workers Protection Act.
- 71 • The expansion of home and community-based
- 72 long-term care.
- 73 • Local healthcare facilities be allowed to decide if
- 74 they should remain open during both normal and
- 75 emergency circumstances.
- 76 • All healthcare be considered essential in the event
- 77 of a crisis or pandemic.

78 We oppose:

- 79 • Any state or federal program requiring
- 80 employers to provide health insurance for
- 81 employees and their dependents.
- 82 • Any tax on an agricultural commodity being used
- 83 to fund a health care program. ◆

#64 LAW ENFORCEMENT

1 As an agricultural community, we stand behind,
 2 support, and respect our law enforcement officers.

3 We support:

- 4 • Law enforcement agencies being maintained
- 5 and funded at levels to provide adequate training
- 6 and service.
- 7 • Effective use of current police powers, but
- 8 oppose further expansion in order to preserve
- 9 individual rights.
- 10 • The state and federal law to be upheld in our

- 11 courts and not apply any foreign law to
12 domestic activities that could impair
13 constitutional rights.
- 14 • Funding of rural and urban patrols to curb drug
15 and vandalism issues.
 - 16 • Law enforcement agencies to develop youth liaison
17 programs.
 - 18 • Juvenile justice reform, including youth prisons,
19 for violent and dangerous juveniles.
 - 20 • Capital punishment.
 - 21 • Producers and/or county Farm Bureaus to meet
22 with local law enforcement and local elected
23 officials to discuss the importance of balancing
24 agriculture’s concerns with the use of fireworks.
 - 25 • Legislation that would define and create the
26 establishment of fireworks-free agriculture and
27 livestock safety zones.
 - 28 • Additional tools to aid in the identification and
29 prosecution of individuals involved in the theft of
30 copper wire and other recyclable materials from
31 farms.

32 We oppose:

- 33 • Further restrictions on firearm rights and fully
34 support Second Amendment rights.
- 35 • The use of state and national funding for public
36 nuisance issues, such as seat belt enforcement
37 zones.

38 **Trespass**

39 We encourage legislation at local and state levels,
40 which strengthens private property rights on all land, to
41 protect farmers and all landowners against
42 trespassers and vandals. Due to the increased
43 pressure on landowners from trespassers on private
44 property, we encourage implementation of the
45 following:

- 46 • The ability to prosecute trespassers regardless
47 of whether or not “No Trespassing” signs were
48 posted.
- 49 • Rigorous enforcement of the Michigan
50 Recreational Trespass law.
- 51 • Property owners should not be held liable for any
52 accidents, injuries, or damage to personnel,
53 equipment, and/or property, by trespassers.
- 54 • Increased fines and penalties for trespassing.
- 55 • Amendments to the Michigan statutes imposing
56 civil liability for recreational and non-recreational
57 trespass, that set a jurisdictional limit of \$3,000
58 or five times the actual damages, whichever is
59 higher, and include incurred attorney fees and
60 court costs, payable to the landowner and or
61 lessee.

- 62 • Increased fines for trespass and damages for
63 losses incurred on land enrolled in PA 116 or
64 other land preservation programs, the Michigan
65 Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program,
66 or land participating in a food safety or security
67 program.
68 • Confiscation of unmanned aircraft, vehicle or off-
69 road vehicle for repeat trespassers.
70 • Use of photography for the immediate arrest of a
71 trespasser.
72 • Revocation of hunting, fishing and trapping
73 privileges and loss of vehicles used in the
74 violation.

75 **Impaired Driving**

76 Driving is a privilege, not a right. For offenses
77 which result in death or serious injury, penalties for
78 the illegal use of handheld electronic mobile devices
79 should be similar to those for drunk driving.

80 We support the development of a blood/breath
81 test for Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) so that impaired
82 drivers can be identified and prosecuted.

83 We support establishing a limit for THC for impaired
84 driving.

85 We support changes to legislation that would
86 require convicted offenders to serve consecutive,
87 rather than concurrent, sentences for the following
88 offenses causing death or serious injury while
89 operating a motor vehicle:

- 90 • ~~Operating while intoxicated.~~
91 • ~~Operating while visibly impaired.~~
92 • Operating with any bodily presence of drugs/alcohol that
93 cause impairment.
94 • Operating while license suspended, revoked, or denied.
95 • Operating while illegally using handheld electronic
96 mobile device.

97 We also support legislation establishing stricter
98 guidelines for habitual offenders that would lower the
99 bar for deeming a person a habitual offender. These
100 sentences should be served consecutive to any felony
101 convictions. ◆

#68 REGULATORY REFORM AND REDUCTION

1 We strongly support regulatory reform, including the
2 following actions:

- 3 • Repeal of occupational licensing unless required
4 to protect public health and safety.
5 • Rulemaking authority should be limited by
6 legislative actions.
7 • Regulations should be understandable and easy
8 to comply with and any penalties should fit the

- 9 violation.
- 10 • State agencies should be required to conduct
 - 11 science-based studies, standardized risk
 - 12 assessments, cost/benefit analyses, and
 - 13 economic impact statements of all proposed
 - 14 regulations.
 - 15 • During an emergency powers time period, any
 - 16 branch of government be subject to the Freedom
 - 17 of Information Act and the data made available
 - 18 which pertains to the emergency powers.
 - 19 • **[Relocated from policy #69]** Checks and
 - 20 balances in emergency power situations in any
 - 21 branch of government. Emergency power
 - 22 should be valid for a maximum of 21 days
 - 23 without legislative oversight.
 - 24 • **[Relocated from policy #69]** Legislative oversight of
 - 25 state agencies during states of emergency.
 - 26 • Eliminating the two times per year time change
 - 27 (daylight savings time) in Michigan.
 - 28 • A public registry of studies.
 - 29 • Easing state regulations on rural community
 - 30 banks to ensure survival of these vital institutions.
 - 31 New regulations should expire after a defined period
 - 32 unless a review finds substantial reasons to continue the
 - 33 programs.
 - 34 We oppose:
 - 35 • Rules that are unwarranted or retroactive, that penalize
 - 36 practices which were previously allowed.
 - 37 • Requiring redundant studies.
 - 38 • State and federal mandates that are not fully funded.
 - 39 • The concept of environmental, social, and governance
 - 40 standards. ◆

#69 STREAMLINING MICHIGAN GOVERNMENT

1 While significant strides have been made in
2 reforming Michigan's government, additional reform
3 is needed to continue to address Michigan's
4 economic condition. We feel reform must continue
5 and support the following:

- 6 • Michigan should have a standardized 'MD' in
- 7 front of all department acronyms.
- 8 • Michigan provides human service programs to
- 9 those in need but must be more vigilant in
- 10 addressing fraud and duplication within these
- 11 programs.
- 12 • The review and potential change of corrections
- 13 system cost-drivers, such as sentencing
- 14 guidelines, prisoner health care and
- 15 administrative procedures.
- 16 • Increased efficiencies within Michigan's

- 17 education system such as privatization of
18 services, consolidation of districts, and shared
19 services.
- 20 • Competition for higher education funds should be
21 minimized. Duplicative research efforts performed
22 by multiple state-funded universities should be
23 eliminated.
 - 24 • State and local governments, including schools,
25 to move to a defined contribution retirement
26 system.

27 In addition to critically necessary changes in
28 human services, corrections, and education, we
29 continue to support the following:

- 30 • Michigan's regulatory structure must continue to
31 foster economic growth. Policy makers should
32 have a clear understanding of the impact of
33 regulations on business before voting to support
34 new or more stringent regulations. Regulatory
35 agencies should maintain constitutional roles
36 and reasonable environmental protection without
37 creating undue regulatory burdens.
- 38 • Michigan should continue to look for increased
39 efficiencies in state and local government such as
40 prioritizing services, reforming where possible,
41 eliminating duplicative services, and utilizing
42 private partners.
- 43 • Increased efficiency in state government and
44 actual reform should be evaluated and
45 implemented prior to levying new taxes. If faced
46 with a new tax, any tax proposals must be broad-
47 based and not favoring/harming any one
48 segment of the economy, business type or
49 particular demographic.
- 50 • Full transparency of government financial
51 transactions at all levels.
- 52 • The concept of an Emergency Financial Manager Law.
- 53 • ~~[Relocated to policy #68] Checks and~~
54 ~~balances in Emergency Power situations in any~~
55 ~~branch of government. Emergency Power~~
56 ~~should be valid for a maximum of 21 days~~
57 ~~without legislative oversight.~~
- 58 • ~~[Relocated to policy #68] Legislative oversight of~~
59 ~~state agencies during states of emergency.~~
- 60 • Allowing for a virtual or hybrid option to be offered
61 during public meetings.

62 While agriculture is not the expert on all the
63 issues outlined in this policy, we will work with
64 coalitions to engage in broad discussions to advance
65 policy solutions that will create better efficiencies.
66 We will hold elected officials accountable for their
67 ability to operate as statespersons acting in the

68 interest of citizens to address these core issues. ◆

#74 CLIMATE CHANGE

1 Farmers were the original environmental pioneers
2 and have led the environmental movement regarding
3 land, water, and air quality since the beginning of
4 agrarian practices. We urge Michigan Farm Bureau,
5 with the assistance of Michigan State University, to
6 research and communicate to its membership the
7 impact climate change legislation and policies and
8 the resulting legislative and policy changes will have
9 on our industry.

10 We support:

- 11 • Research and investments to assist agriculture in
12 adapting to climate variability.

13 We oppose:

- 14 • Mandatory restrictions to achieve agricultural
15 greenhouse gas emission reductions.
- 16 • Mandates, such as carbon taxes or fees and cap
17 and trade policies.
- 18 • State or federal mandates that are not fully funded.
- 19 • Any attempt to regulate emissions from animals.
- 20 • Emission control rules for farming practices, farm
21 equipment, grain handling facilities, etc.
- 22 • The Michigan Department of Environment, Great
23 Lakes, and Energy involvement in the state's
24 determination of energy needs; that is the role of
25 the Michigan Public Service Commission.
- 26 • Non-scientific assumptions linking bio-fuel production
27 and international land use. ◆

#76 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND AUTHORITY MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY

1 Regulatory Authority and Responsibility

2 To protect the environment, ensure public
3 safety, and enhance production agriculture, we
4 challenge state and federal agencies to work
5 together to produce more user-friendly programs
6 that provide clear direction and consistent
7 regulatory authority. Oversight should focus on
8 solving problems and not simply on penalizing the
9 regulated community.

10 Farmers who violate state environmental law are
11 under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of
12 Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (MDEGLE).
13 While the vast majority of farms put forth a
14 considerable effort and are environmentally safe, we
15 recognize the potential for environmental problems.

16 **Environmental Enforcement and Standards**

17 We encourage Michigan Farm Bureau to work with
18 state and federal agencies, land grant universities and
19 stakeholder groups to develop standards indicating
20 agriculture’s positive impact on the environment. We
21 believe environmental credit standards should be
22 developed and applied against any new regulations to
23 offset the regulatory burden on producers. State
24 regulations and standards enforced by MDEGLE
25 should not be more restrictive than federal standards.

26 In addition to providing pollution prevention
27 programs for all farms, the Michigan Department of
28 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) should
29 have an increased role in providing regulatory certainty
30 to Michigan agriculture.

31 We support:

- 32 • Timely, effective and consistent enforcement of
33 environmental laws and issuance of permits.
- 34 • Timely enforcement of water quality standards
35 using credible data. We urge MFB to pursue
36 legislation on credible data and how it may be
37 used to better invoke sound science in
38 regulation of water quality, air quality and water
39 quantity.
- 40 • Applying sound science and performing
41 economic impact analysis to MDEGLE rules
42 and standards prior to promulgation.
- 43 • Maximum use of Natural Resources Conservation
44 Service standards within MDEGLE regulations.
- 45 • Appropriate timelines for producer implementation of
46 regulations.
- 47 • MDARD intervention on behalf of farmers in legal
48 actions if the farmer has worked with state
49 agencies to address pollution challenges.
- 50 • Development of a third-party arbitration process for
51 disputes between MDEGLE and a farmer.
- 52 • MDEGLE being responsible to pay legal fees
53 incurred by the respondent from a wrongful
54 enforcement action if the enforcement action is
55 settled, a consent agreement is reached, or the
56 action is decided in the respondent’s favor.
- 57 • PA 268 of 2018 creating the MDEGLE Appeals Board.
- 58 • Using funds derived from enforcement penalties to
59 support pollution prevention in agriculture.
- 60 • Authorizing permits at the local level in
61 accordance with state and federal rules to
62 provide for more timely decisions.
- 63 • ~~[Relocated to policy #26] Modification of the~~
64 ~~Bodies of Dead Animals Act with input from~~
65 ~~farmers and dead stock haulers to allow any~~
66 ~~type of legal commercial or cooperative~~

67 mortality management, and further recommend
68 modifying the Natural Resources and
69 Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) to clarify
70 that animal mortality disposal is not considered
71 in the definition of production site waste.
72 Consideration should be made for inclement
73 weather impacts on animal mortality
74 management and timeframes for disposal.

- 75 • Allowing water quality testing in lieu of existing well
76 setback standards to satisfy the siting requirement.
- 77 • A farm's ability to move portable toilets within and
78 between their farms.

79 **Manure, Nutrient, and Fuel Management**

80 We support:

- 81 • The continued ability for farmers of all sizes to
82 manifest, move or sell animal nutrients from their
83 farm to another farm/owner. We will vigorously
84 oppose any attempts to limit or eliminate the
85 ability of agriculture to utilize animal nutrients
86 when they are being utilized according to nutrient
87 requirements and at agronomic rates.
- 88 • The continuation of manure application to frozen or
89 snow-covered ground in accordance with the
90 Manure Management and Utilization Generally
91 Accepted Agricultural and Management Practice
92 (GAAMP). We will vigorously oppose any attempt
93 to eliminate the practice.
- 94 • The continued practice of broadcasting and
95 injecting nutrients, including manure, in accordance
96 with best practices identified in the Nutrient
97 Utilization GAAMP.
- 98 • Allowing the application of animal nutrients to non-
99 frozen, non-snow-covered ground any time during
100 the year, regardless of type or size of farm operation.
- 101 • Updating fertilizer and manure nutrient utilization
102 guidelines.
- 103 • MDEGLE accepting third-party determinations
104 that an existing manure storage structure is
105 functioning properly for regulatory purposes.
- 106 • Regulatory recognition of the influence of extreme
107 weather (e.g., rainfall, snow melt) on farming
108 practices.
- 109 • Flexibility for unlimited on-farm fuel, chemical
110 and fertilizer storage with consistent and
111 adequate containment standards.
- 112 • Consistency of fuel, chemical and fertilizer
113 containment structure regulations across
114 governmental agencies.

115 **Processing Wastewater and Groundwater Regulation**

116 We support:

- 117 • MDARD working with MDEGLE to implement a

- 118 threshold below which no Groundwater
119 Discharge permit or testing is required for
120 agricultural processing discharge.
- 121 • MDARD assisting MDEGLE to determine
122 appropriate treatment of all types of processing
123 wastewater (breweries, distilleries, fruit and
124 vegetable producers, sugar processing, etc.) that
125 generate high-strength wastewater that has
126 nutrients useful for land application.
 - 127 • MFB continuing to work with MDEGLE on
128 development of a general permit specific to
129 slaughterhouses that permits land application of
130 process wastewater without advance treatment.
 - 131 • MDEGLE benchmarking groundwater discharge
132 permit standards with those of neighboring
133 states for land application of process
134 wastewater.
 - 135 • Allowing septic haulers licensed under Part 117
136 of NREPA to also haul food processing
137 wastewater and not requiring them to be licensed
138 as industrial haulers under NREPA Part 121.

139 **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System** 140 **(NPDES)**

141 We support:

- 142 • Legislative or administrative changes to require a
143 formal committee of appropriate stakeholders to
144 be involved in all permit developments and
145 rewrites so that input is balanced. All NPDES
146 writing or rewrite committees should be chaired
147 by an unbiased third-party individual.
- 148 • An evaluation of the NPDES permitting process
149 in Michigan with changes to allow long-term
150 certainty for the ag industry and which eliminate
151 the change that takes place for all industries
152 every time a new administration is elected in
153 our state. We support a study committee by
154 MFB to establish this evaluation and make
155 recommendations.
- 156 • Amending state laws to more clearly define
157 MDEGLE's regulatory authority under NPDES
158 permits and where they have no authority,
159 especially animal health which falls under the
160 authority of the Animal Industry Act and wildlife,
161 which falls under the authority of the state
162 veterinarian or the Michigan Department of
163 Natural Resources.
- 164 • Amending or repealing Part 17 of NREPA to
165 prevent predatory litigation by special interests to
166 penalize farmers operating under legitimate
167 permits issued by MDEGLE.
- 168 • Timely issuance of NPDES permits, in

- 169 accordance with state and federal rules.
- 170 • MFB continuing efforts to eliminate state regulation
- 171 of animal agriculture more restrictive than federal
- 172 requirements, including lowering permitting
- 173 thresholds.
- 174 • Reduced permit paperwork requirements and an
- 175 increased focus on performance with minimized
- 176 costs to permitted farms.
- 177 • Increasing incentives for permitted farms to
- 178 become Michigan Agriculture Environmental
- 179 Assurance Program verified such as limiting annual
- 180 reporting requirements.
- 181 • Application of permit standards in force at the time
- 182 of permit application.
- 183 • An appropriate phase-in period for any change
- 184 in permit requirements.
- 185 • Implementation of permit requirements derived
- 186 with scientifically verifiable standards as
- 187 provided in administrative rules.
- 188 • MDEGLE adopting Environmental Protection
- 189 Agency aquaculture effluent guidelines and
- 190 promoting feed-based Best Management
- 191 Practices discharge standards.
- 192 • Development of a General Permit for
- 193 aquaculture for up to 200,000 pounds of
- 194 production.

195 We oppose:

- 196 • Classification of manure, sand, accidental
- 197 commodity spillage, and ag processing by-
- 198 products as hazardous waste.
- 199 • Taxation and/or fees assessed on the nutrient
- 200 content of manure.
- 201 • Public access to agricultural information on the
- 202 MiWaters online permitting database.
- 203 • Legislation inhibiting the viability of agriculture.
- 204 • Decisions made in response to emotion instead
- 205 of science, law and common sense.
- 206 • Arbitrary moratoriums affecting the growth of animal
- 207 agriculture, including limits on animal expansion
- 208 and storage structure size.
- 209 • State agencies labeling or identifying farm
- 210 operations, such as CAFO, GMO, or other
- 211 labels, in any form of communication, no matter
- 212 the size of operation or requirement of permits.
- 213 • Well setback distances from agriculture practices
- 214 greater than 75 feet, as listed in the Grade A Dairy
- 215 Law.

216 **Response to Environmental Scrutiny**

217 Public scrutiny of agriculture and increased

218 regulation continues to challenge farmers to improve

219 farm management and protect the environment. We

220 urge all members to voluntarily implement pollution
221 prevention practices. The agricultural community
222 realizes the need to protect the environment; however,
223 when regulations limit agricultural viability, we believe it
224 is time to take a more aggressive approach to protect
225 our industry. Michigan producers and MFB should
226 aggressively work to counter propaganda that depicts
227 production agriculture in Michigan as abusers of the
228 environment.

229 The harassment of farmers adhering to the
230 State's pollution prevention program for agriculture
231 shall not be tolerated. We support requiring MDEGLE
232 to notify local law enforcement and authorities before
233 any actions are taken against farms. Individuals who
234 lodge complaints with MDEGLE against farms must
235 be required to provide their name for public record. If
236 an individual makes more than three unverified
237 complaints within three years, that individual must
238 pay for the complaint investigation. ◆

#79 INVASIVE SPECIES

1 It is imperative Michigan has a comprehensive
2 state policy addressing the introduction and
3 management of invasive species. Programs should
4 rely on cooperative, voluntary, partnership-based
5 efforts between public agencies, private landowners,
6 and concerned citizens.

7 We support:

- 8 • The reestablishment of the Michigan Invasive
9 Species Advisory Council, with producer
10 representation.
- 11 • The Michigan Department of Natural Resources'
12 (MDNR) formation and support of Cooperative
13 Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs)
14 at the local level to educate the public and take
15 action to prevent the spread of invasive species
16 in Michigan, with long term funding for this
17 program instead of the current process of annual
18 approval through state budget appropriations.
- 19 • The role of the Agriculture and Natural Resource
20 Commissions in establishing the prohibited
21 species list.
- 22 • Federal, state and local agencies and research
23 institutions working more effectively with private
24 landowners to control or eradicate invasive
25 species.
- 26 • MDNR notifying all levels of local government and
27 gaining their support before releasing a non-native
28 species.

- 29 • Efforts to establish the Michigan Department of
30 Agriculture and Rural Development, with input
31 from appropriate industry associations, as the
32 state agency with responsibility for all terrestrial
33 invasive species.
- 34 • The substantial efforts by the State of Michigan
35 to work with other agencies to stop the invasion
36 of the Asian Carp into Michigan waters.
- 37 • An aggressive plan by state agencies, with
38 industry input, on control and eradication of
39 invasive species in the Great Lakes so that
40 native species of fish can return to normal
41 populations.
- 42 • An increase in funds for inspection services and
43 facilities. Funding should also be made available
44 for public education and outreach efforts.

45 ~~Any statutory policy changes and control measures~~
46 ~~to deal with invasive species should be based on~~
47 ~~the following:~~

- 48 • ~~**[Relocated in policy]** Regulations not being~~
49 ~~allowed to interfere with or erode property~~
50 ~~rights.~~
- 51 • ~~**[Relocated in policy]** Invasive species programs~~
52 ~~not creating additional restrictions on agriculture~~
53 ~~producers and landowners.~~
- 54 • Preventing and controlling noxious weeds and
55 other seeds in mixtures offered to the public.
- 56 • Clear and scientific criteria to delineate what are
57 invasive species. Due to genetic differences
58 between plant genera, plant hybrids, and within
59 species, varieties and cultivars, each should be
60 treated as an individual when delineating invasive
61 species.
- 62 • Studying any predator species before it is
63 introduced to limit or destroy an invasive
64 species to determine any other damage that
65 might occur to the environment or farmers.
- 66 • Regulations including emergency measures to
67 allow for the timely use of chemical controls.
- 68 • Any consideration of endangered or threatened
69 species should recognize and address the role of
70 invasive species.
- 71 • Adequate state and federal funding to develop
72 sound science sufficient to determine long-term
73 effects of invasive species.
- 74 • Indemnification of crop, nursery stock and
75 livestock losses from invasive species when it can
76 be documented that the quarantine requirements
77 or treatment methods are the basis for the loss.
- 78 • Public lands and rights-of-way being managed to
79 reduce and eliminate invasive species as

- 80 effectively as private lands and in coordination
81 with neighboring privately owned or leased land.
82 Any efforts on public lands affecting the uses and
83 private rights held by public land permittees and
84 users shall be subject to compensation and fair
85 market value for the taking of these property
86 rights by the introduction or proliferation of
87 invasive species.
- 88 • Proper incentives being provided for farmers and
89 ranchers to effectively control noxious and aquatic
90 weeds, along with support for an Integrated Pest
91 Management approach.
 - 92 • **[Relocated in policy]** ~~Plants not being~~
93 ~~prohibited or restricted through legislation and~~
94 ~~removed from trade unless eradication is~~
95 ~~concurrently instituted on public lands.~~
 - 96 • **[Relocated in policy]** ~~Invasive species not being~~
97 ~~defined to include agricultural products or other~~
98 ~~beneficial non-native species.~~
 - 99 • Consideration being given to the extent to which
100 species may be naturalized in an environment.
101 Any penalties associated with introductions must
102 be realistic.
 - 103 • Michigan's ballast water discharge standards
104 reflecting the federal standards which are
105 enforced by the U.S. Coast Guard.

106 We oppose:

- 107 • **[Relocated text]** Plants being prohibited or
108 restricted through legislation and removed from
109 trade unless eradication is concurrently instituted
110 on public lands.
- 111 • **[Relocated text]** Invasive species being defined
112 to include agricultural products or other beneficial
113 non-native species.
- 114 • **[Relocated text]** Regulations being allowed to
115 interfere with or erode property rights.
- 116 • **[Relocated text]** Invasive species programs
117 creating additional restrictions on agriculture
118 producers and landowners. ◆

#82 MICHIGAN AGRICULTURE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSURANCE PROGRAM

1 We support the Michigan Agriculture
2 Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) and its
3 continuation and improvement. We urge the State of
4 Michigan and the Michigan Department of
5 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) to
6 work together with the agriculture community to
7 continue and improve the MAEAP program to foster
8 further voluntary sustainable agricultural practices.

9 Public Acts 1 and 2 of 2011 solidified the future of
10 MAEAP. This program offers MAEAP-verified farms
11 protection from civil fines, a presumption of meeting
12 obligations for watershed pollutant loading
13 determinations, and recognition that discharges from
14 farm fields caused by rainfall are nonpoint source
15 pollution. We urge all farm operators and landowners
16 managing forests, wetlands and habitat to participate
17 in the MAEAP program and complete as many
18 recommendations as possible to help ensure the
19 quality of our air, water and soil is preserved.

20 We applaud Michigan farmers for achieving ~~6,076~~
21 6,316 verifications as of ~~September 30, 2021~~ October 1,
22 2022.

23 Michigan Farm Bureau members should lead the
24 conversation on the definition of sustainable
25 agriculture. We must put programs such as MAEAP
26 and guidelines like the Generally Accepted
27 Agriculture and Management Practices (GAAMPs)
28 front and center, highlighting how farmers today are
29 producing safe and sustainable food, fuel and fiber.
30 We support:

- 31 • Continued efforts for MAEAP to remain a voluntary,
32 confidential, statewide program.
- 33 • Legislation and marketing efforts that would
34 communicate to the general public that MAEAP-
35 verified farms are held to the highest standard of
36 environmental stewardship.
- 37 • MDARD developing an outstanding and
38 recognizable “Pure Michigan”-style labeling
39 program (such as “Pure Michigan-Verified Farm”)
40 to add value to products of MAEAP verified farms
41 and allow the MAEAP logo to be used at point of
42 sale.
- 43 • The MAEAP program making information
44 available about Michigan’s Water Pollution
45 Control Tax Exemption Form which exempts
46 pollution control structures from property tax
47 assessments.
- 48 • MFB working with MAEAP partners to develop
49 educational and promotional materials for farm
50 neighbors and the general public regarding the
51 benefits of MAEAP.
- 52 • All producers using MAEAP verification as the
53 basis for projecting a positive farm image to the
54 public.
- 55 • MFB continuing to pursue greater incentives for
56 MAEAP participation, such as additional
57 protections from frivolous complaints.
- 58 • The Michigan Groundwater and Freshwater
59 Protection Act. This act funds groundwater and

- 60 surface water programming through providing
61 grants to fund local technicians. These
62 technicians work with farmers to voluntarily
63 adopt stewardship practices, which reduce
64 nonpoint source pollution from agricultural
65 sources. We believe funding of these
66 technicians needs to be a top priority.
- 67 • Participation in MAEAP, including information
68 generated by assessment programs, remaining
69 confidential. Aggregate data that would
70 demonstrate effectiveness of the overall program
71 could be shared.
 - 72 • A review of the MAEAP program, seeking new
73 and/or alternative ways of meeting standards
74 without compromising the basis of MAEAP
75 verification.
 - 76 • Farm Bureau members participating in regional
77 water stewardship teams.
 - 78 • Agriculture being the primary focus of MAEAP
79 assistance in recognition of agriculture's
80 contribution to the dedicated fund.
 - 81 • The changes made to strengthen MAEAP and
82 its funding through PA 118 of 2015. Program
83 funds come from Michigan's General Fund and
84 the Freshwater Protection Fund.
 - 85 • The changes made to the Freshwater Protection
86 Fund which require all users of industrial fertilizer
87 (e.g., farmers, homeowners, golf courses) pay a
88 fee into the fund.
 - 89 • An annual review of the Freshwater Protection
90 Fund finances, with the report being made
91 available to contributors.
 - 92 • Freshwater Protection Fund collection at the
93 wholesale level, creating a voluntary contribution
94 option, and exploring other fee collection
95 mechanisms.
 - 96 • Recognition of the Michigan law that offers
97 MAEAP-verified farms statutory protection in
98 watersheds with Total Maximum Daily Loads
99 (TMDL). This protection should apply to the
100 applicable systems farms are verified in that
101 address the pollutants listed in that watershed's
102 TMDL by acknowledging the farm meets the
103 obligations for watershed pollutant loading
104 determinations. Verification in all systems
105 applicable to the farm should not be required in
106 order to receive statutory protection.
 - 107 • Farmers who are MAEAP-verified being
108 considered in compliance with Environmental
109 Protection Agency regulations. ◆

#86 RESOURCE RECOVERY

1 ~~Daily we generate~~ Vast quantities of all types of
2 recoverable materials are generated daily. Our
3 ~~society must reduce as much solid waste as practical~~
4 ~~through a wide variety of ways.~~ We support Michigan
5 Farm Bureau taking steps to advocate reducing and
6 recovering our waste where practical. We support
7 immediate and long-term solutions including:

8 ~~We specifically support strategies for resource~~
9 ~~recovery through the following:~~

- 10 • Using farm plastic recycling programs such as
11 Clean Sweep.
- 12 • Implementing recycling programs for agricultural
13 tires and all reusable agricultural material.
- 14 • Establishing grant or loan programs to facilitate
15 purchasing equipment capable of processing
16 agricultural and heavy-duty tires and tracks.
- 17 • Adopt-a-local-roadside programs.
- 18 • MFB working with universities, Michigan
19 Department of Agriculture and Rural
20 Development and the Michigan Department of
21 Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy to seek
22 solutions for composting organic materials
23 including, animal, plant, forest and silvicultural
24 materials, and differentiating between agricultural
25 and commercial composters to protect the welfare
26 of residents as well as the integrity of agriculture.
- 27 • Incentives to use biodegradable products,
28 especially those made from renewable
29 agricultural products.
- 30 • Amendments to the bottle law requiring similar
31 containers have a 10-cent deposit.
- 32 • A state initiative that takes a portion of the State's
33 unreturned bottle deposit funds for the creation and
34 maintenance of local recycling centers.
- 35 • Land application of properly researched and
36 approved materials at agronomic rates without
37 additional state or local regulation.
- 38 • Alternative uses for excess food ranging from
39 food banks to anaerobic digesters.
- 40 • The proper recycling of heavy metal (~~electric~~
41 ~~vehicle~~) and rare earth batteries.
- 42 • Research into and the reuse or recycling of
43 renewable energy components when removed from
44 service.

45 We encourage agricultural representation on all
46 established Solid Waste Advisory Committees
47 required by the Solid Waste Management Act.

48 We oppose hauling waste into Michigan from
49 other states and countries for disposal, including
50 nuclear and hazardous waste. ◆

#87 USDA CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

1 The Natural Resources Conservation Service
2 (NRCS) is an active partner in implementing
3 conservation practices on farms and woodlands. We
4 encourage NRCS to improve their relevance and ability
5 to aid farmers with conservation issues.

6 To maximize agriculture's participation in farm bill
7 conservation programs, we recommend the following:

8 ***Farm Bill Programs***

- 9 • NRCS and Michigan Farm Bureau aggressively
10 informing producers about federal farm bill
11 opportunities (e.g., Environmental Quality
12 Incentives Program (EQIP) financial assistance)
13 and cooperative efforts with NRCS, Michigan
14 Department of Agriculture and Rural
15 Development (MDARD), and conservation
16 districts, including the amount of federal farm bill
17 conservation money coming to producers and
18 landowners of Michigan from this cooperation.
- 19 • Simplifying farm bill programming for farmers, as
20 NRCS programming is paper-driven and difficult
21 to manage.
- 22 • Expediting the use of NRCS funding for
23 conservation district programs.
- 24 • Encouraging the Regional Conservation
25 Partnership Program (RCPP) to hold sign-ups
26 in the first quarter of each year to allow
27 additional time for education about the
28 program.
- 29 • Conservation program eligibility being
30 determined by total environmental benefit
31 rather than location within the watershed.
- 32 • All NRCS offices accepting applications for annual
33 programs after closing dates, making them eligible
34 for upcoming sign-up cycles.
- 35 • Continuing voluntary programs like the Wetlands
36 Reserve Easements and the Conservation
37 Reserve Enhancement Program to provide
38 farmers compensation in exchange for
39 conservation easements.

40 ***Practice Standards***

- 41 • Allowing more flexible standards for USDA
42 conservation practices.
- 43 • Filter strip plant variety recommendations including
44 pollinator supportive plants.
- 45 • The Farm Service Agency (FSA) enrolling more
46 acres in the Conservation Reserve Program
47 around ditches and streams to decrease the
48 amount of nutrient runoff on fields.
- 49 • Directing NRCS and FSA to prioritize using filter

- 50 strips as a nutrient management tool with
51 flexible standards such as allowing mowing of
52 filter strips and removal of cut vegetation.
- 53 • Preliminary technical wetland and highly
54 erodible land determinations being made within
55 30 days. After 30 days, producers may hire an
56 outside vendor to conduct the determination(s),
57 before proceeding with the proposed land
58 improvement project(s).
 - 59 • Defining wetlands as a naturally occurring and
60 functioning area of predominately hydric soils
61 that presently support hydrophytic vegetation
62 because of existing wetland hydrology.
 - 63 • Requiring USDA to determine a minimum
64 acreage criteria for automatic minimal effect
65 designation.
 - 66 • Michigan USDA (NRCS and FSA) staff
67 completing wetland and highly erodible land
68 determinations and appeals process within 12
69 months.
 - 70 • Promoting the economic and environmental
71 benefits of using grid/zone soil sampling and/or
72 Variable Rate Fertilizer Technology through the
73 Conservation Stewardship Program.
 - 74 • Michigan, Ohio and Indiana NRCS including
75 cover crop cost-share on all acres enrolling in
76 RCPP, including farm tract acres with preexisting
77 cover crop history.

78 ***USDA Offices and Staffing***

- 79 • Staffing county offices with professional
80 personnel who have experience in administrative
81 duties, agricultural production, and
82 communication skills.
- 83 • Michigan NRCS continuing the practice of co- locating
84 conservation districts in their offices.
- 85 • Moving or relocating NRCS staff to areas of
86 greater need or where their skills are better
87 matched, while ensuring job applicants within
88 the state have a fair and equal opportunity to
89 apply for positions for which they qualify.
- 90 • NRCS filling vacant positions in a timely manner to
91 facilitate implementation of programs and practices.
- 92 • Modifying the system for county office
93 classifications to attract staff with greater talent
94 and experience.
- 95 • Michigan NRCS creating regional education
96 specialists to present NRCS programs at industry
97 meetings of farmers and woodland owners across
98 the state.
- 99 • Creating county farmer oversight committees for
100 local NRCS offices.

- 101 • Increasing farmer representation on the State Technical
102 Committee. ◆

#90 WETLANDS PROTECTION ACT

1 The Michigan Department of Environment, Great
2 Lakes, and Energy's (MDEGLE) interpretation and
3 enforcement of the Wetlands Protection Act saved
4 valuable wetlands, but also placed a disproportionate
5 burden on some landowners.

6 We support the changes made to the Wetlands
7 Protection Act under PA 98 of 2013 to retain federally
8 delegated authority of the Clean Water Act Section 404
9 Program. The law provided many reforms benefiting
10 agriculture, including:

- 11 • Defining and exempting agricultural drainage
12 maintenance.
- 13 • Excluding drainage structures from wetland
14 regulation.
- 15 • Exempting established and on-going farming
16 operations.
- 17 • Wetlands not being regulated if they are less than
18 five acres and their only connection to an inland
19 lake or stream is an agricultural drain.
- 20 • Exempting cutting woody vegetation and in-place
21 stump grinding within a wetland.
- 22 • Directing MDEGLE to create a blueberry general
23 permit with permitting flexibility, including
24 mitigation and a blueberry assistance program.
- 25 • Exempting construction of livestock crossings and
26 fencing associated with grazing.
- 27 • Not regulating temporarily obstructed drains as
28 wetlands.
- 29 • Declaring the MDEGLE's delegated authority is
30 limited to application of the Clean Water Act,
31 associated rules, or court decisions and any
32 further regulation is the responsibility of the
33 Michigan Legislature.
- 34 • Repealing Michigan's wetland law within 160
35 days if the Environmental Protection Agency
36 withdraws Michigan's federally delegated
37 authority for Section 404 of the Clean Water
38 Act.
- 39 • Regulating a wetland if it meets the criteria in the
40 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' 1987 Delineation
41 Manual and Regional Supplements.

42 We recommend the following:

- 43 • The MDEGLE statewide wetland inventory
44 should not be used for regulatory purposes.
45 Michigan Farm Bureau is concerned the

- 46 inventory includes wetlands that do not meet
47 current wetland delineation standards.
- 48 • Compatible agricultural uses should be allowed in
49 wetlands. Wetland vegetation should be defined
50 as obligate hydrophytes.
 - 51 • There should be no regulation of man-made
52 wetlands or voluntarily established wetlands
53 implemented as conservation practices through
54 state or federal programs.
 - 55 • Application of contaminated soils and sediments
56 to farm fields at agronomic rates should be in
57 accordance with state and federal requirements.
 - 58 • County drain/water resources commissions
59 should be the sole authority on public drains,
60 culverts and maintenance.
 - 61 • Statewide standards for wetland determinations
62 and historical function must be established to
63 ensure uniform application at all locations.
 - 64 • Permits must be issued promptly.
 - 65 • Where application of wetland regulation results
66 in a substantial or total loss of the value of the
67 property, the State must fully compensate the
68 property owner. Control and access to the
69 property must remain with the property owner.
 - 70 • All prior converted wetlands should be excluded
71 from regulation.
 - 72 • Cleaning up edges of fields back to the original
73 farmed boundaries and removing barriers such
74 as brush and trees protruding into fields should
75 not trigger a wetland determination or
76 disciplinary action against the farmer/landowner.
 - 77 • Cost-sharing or other incentives should be
78 provided for wetlands restoration programs on
79 farms.
 - 80 • A fund should be established to compensate
81 neighboring farms for their economic loss due to
82 unforeseen problems created by wetland
83 restoration.
 - 84 • MDEGLE and Natural Resources Conservation
85 Service should completely explain in advance
86 and in writing landowner obligations during and
87 after a contract for the maintenance and/or
88 reversion of a wetland.
 - 89 • Creative solutions should reflect economic and
90 environmental realities to resolve wetlands
91 disputes.
 - 92 • Productive agricultural land should not be used to
93 mitigate wetlands, especially by condemnation.
 - 94 • Wetland violations should be heard within the
95 court jurisdiction where the violation has been
96 alleged.

- 97 • Government agencies should cooperate and
98 provide a single contact for regulatory
99 compliance to handle all issues of wetland
100 determination, enforcement, and penalties.
101 • MDEGLE should recognize the section of the
102 Wetlands Protection Act finding wetlands to be
103 valuable as an agricultural resource for
104 producing food and fiber, including certain crops
105 which may only be grown on sites developed
106 from wetlands.
107 We oppose other states converting Michigan
108 farmland to offset wetland mitigation. ◆

#93 TAXATION

1 **Property Tax/Assessing**

2 Agricultural property in Michigan is taxed at 50
3 percent above the national average, which is a significant
4 cost.

5 We support:

- 6 • Lowering agricultural property taxes in Michigan.
7 • Development of legislation allowing landowners
8 to voluntarily enroll in a program that reduces
9 assessments on farm buildings by up to 100
10 percent of their current taxable value and
11 assesses farmland, including managed
12 woodlots/forestland, with a goal of reaching a
13 property tax rate of \$5-7 per acre. Voluntary
14 enrollment in the program, open to every farmer,
15 would be in exchange for temporary/long-term
16 preservation of farmland for a contract period of
17 approximately 20 years or more with a recapture
18 penalty for early withdrawal or when property
19 changes out of agricultural use.
20 • Legislation requiring assessments on farm
21 structures to align with the current use of the
22 structure.
23 • PA 162 of 2013 which states sales of
24 agricultural land without a qualified agricultural
25 affidavit on file will not be used in the sales
26 studies for agricultural land.
27 • Development of taxation methods to more fairly
28 distribute municipal service costs.
29 • Legislation to put an end to the "dark store"
30 assessing theory, ensuring equitable, fair
31 determinations on property tax appeal cases
32 before the Michigan Tax Tribunal.
33 • All agricultural single purpose structures, such as
34 greenhouses, grain bins and silos, be assessed
35 using a realistic accelerated depreciation
36 schedule considering the current practical use of
37 the structure.

- 38 • A clarification that all temporary agricultural
39 structures, which are moveable and not
40 permanently attached or anchored to the
41 ground, be exempt from sales and use taxes as
42 referenced in Revenue Administrative Bulletin
43 2002-15 of June 2002.
- 44 • The Qualified Forest Property program which
45 exempts the pop-up tax and provides a 16 mill
46 exemption, as long as the new owner agrees to
47 keep up the qualified forest land agreement.
- 48 • A significantly reduced tax designation or tax
49 exempt status for land which is designated for
50 mandatory restricted use such as wetlands, filter
51 strips, sand dunes, natural or scenic rivers, or
52 other restrictions on private property.
- 53 • The retention of the right of local governing units
54 to assess property for taxation purposes.
- 55 • The qualified agricultural exemption shall remain
56 in effect if the Governor or USDA issues a
57 disaster declaration for the county.
- 58 • The continued use of tax abatements and
59 Renaissance Zones to encourage the
60 development and expansion of agricultural
61 facilities to enhance value-added opportunities for
62 agriculture.
- 63 • Legislation that would allow a farm to include all
64 parcels of the farming operation together when
65 determining the ag classification. If the total farm
66 would qualify for PA 116, then all parcels should
67 maintain their ag classification. Non-contiguous
68 parcels are being reclassified to residential
69 unless 51 percent of the parcel is farmed.
70 Property in Northwest Michigan, and possibly in
71 other parts of the state, cannot be farmed at 51
72 percent because of the topography.
- 73 • Exempting PA 116 land from all special
74 assessments excluding agricultural drainage.
- 75 • Local units of government classifying equine
76 therapy facilities, therapeutic riding facilities,
77 equine rehabilitation facilities, and other similar
78 equine-related businesses utilizing horses as the
79 major component of their business as agriculture
80 for property tax purposes.
- 81 • The continuation of Proposal A in its current
82 form, as it pertains to agriculture.
- 83 • ~~Deletion of the words “for a period of more than
84 five years” from Article II Section 6 of the
85 Michigan Constitution of 1963. This would have
86 the effect of only property owners voting on
87 property tax questions.~~
- 88 • The change to the summer tax collection which

89 provided for a lifetime deferment of summer tax for
90 qualified agricultural land if the owner files a federal
91 Schedule "F" Income Tax Form or comparable farm
92 income tax filing.

- 93 • The time frame for qualified agriculture property
94 be a period of three years between the start of
95 delinquent status to the expiration of redemption
96 rights. We believe the private individual should
97 have the first option to redeem delinquent
98 property.

99 We oppose:

- 100 • Assessing occupied business structures as
101 though they were vacant.
- 102 • The reduction of taxes levied on state-owned
103 land below current levels.
- 104 • The reclassification of agriculture and forest land
105 to a residential classification when no residential
106 structure exists.

107 **Income Tax/Incentives**

108 We support:

- 109 • Deferment of crop insurance income to the year
110 following the crop insurance payment to align
111 with federal rules.
- 112 • Tax credits used to create jobs and tax equity for
113 the agricultural economy.
- 114 • The concept of a beginning farmer tax credit program.
- 115 • The State of Michigan providing tax incentives
116 rather than tax the production, distribution or
117 sale of renewable energy or fuel including but
118 not limited to wood, cherry pits, biodiesel,
119 ethanol, methane digester power, geo and hydro
120 power, as well as windmill and solar power. If
121 the majority of the energy is used for onsite
122 purposes, the generation of the energy and
123 associated equipment should be tax exempt.
- 124 • Using federal adjusted gross income (AGI) as
125 the base for Michigan's income tax calculation
126 and oppose decoupling for items such as
127 accelerated depreciation and expensing rules
128 (Sec. 179).
- 129 • Allowing a surviving spouse who has not
130 remarried to continue to use the age of the
131 deceased spouse for the purpose of the
132 determination of qualification for pension
133 subtraction from income.
- 134 • Allowing for a line item tax deduction for primary
135 education (preschool-grade 12) expenses, such
136 as tuition and teaching materials.

137 We Oppose:

- 138 • Reinstatement of the Michigan estate tax (often
139 referred to as the death tax).

- 140 • Any effort to tax farmer-owned cooperatives on
141 disbursements or credits that are taxable in the
142 hands of patrons.

143 **County/State Taxes**

144 We support:

- 145 • PA 283 of 1909 (MCL section 224.20) be
146 revised to indicate that all new monies
147 generated by county boards of commissioners
148 must be placed on the ballot in a millage
149 election and levied only after receiving the
150 approval of the majority of the voters.
151 • The sale of state land to meet its obligations, and
152 return the land to private ownership and the
153 property tax roll.

154 **Sales and Use Tax**

155 We support:

- 156 • The agriculture exemption from state sales and
157 use tax based upon the use of the product.
158 • A continuation of the agriculture sales tax
159 exemption for the equine industry.
160 • Supporters of the FAIR Tax providing
161 education and analyzing the proposal's
162 impacts and benefits on agriculture.

163 We oppose:

- 164 • Charging state sales tax on the federal
165 manufacturers excise tax.
166 • Sales tax levied on new vehicles before cash back,
167 manufacturer incentives and rebates.
168 • Sales tax levied on the sale of used vehicles.
169 • Any plan which places an undue or unrealistic
170 tax or fee which affects agriculture, such as a
171 tax on gross receipts, a tax on personal property
172 or a tax on assets.
173 • Any tax on food or food additives including so
174 called "sin taxes" on products like processed
175 sugar. ♦

Reaffirmation of State Policies

#6 BEE INDUSTRY

1 Honeybees are an important resource to
2 Michigan agriculture, both for the honey they
3 produce and the pollination of crops. Some
4 pesticides used on crops can harm honeybees and
5 may even destroy whole colonies. We urge
6 beekeepers, farmers and commercial pesticide
7 applicators to communicate and cooperate to reduce
8 the loss of honeybees in Michigan from pesticides.

9 We support research efforts to find practical,
10 effective methods to control or reduce the infection of
11 Varroa mites, tracheal mites, small hive beetles in
12 honeybees and the continued study of Colony
13 Collapse Disorder.

14 We continue to support the inclusion of
15 beekeeper apiaries under paragraph 9.4 of the
16 Wildlife Conservation Order in Emergency clause.
17 We further encourage the Department of Natural
18 Resources to be proactive in the protection of
19 Michigan's pollinators.

20 We urge Michigan Farm Bureau to work with
21 state and federal agencies to resolve issues
22 regarding plant species in Michigan and their
23 importance to the Michigan bee industry, such as
24 changes to USDA conservation land programs that
25 allow for the planting of flowering cover crops.

26 Beekeeping (apiary) is a specialized form of
27 agriculture and should be recognized under the Right
28 to Farm Act by local, state and national regulatory
29 bodies. ◆

#7 BIOTECHNOLOGY

1 Biotechnology offers tremendous benefits to
2 society, including being able to increase production
3 while preserving scarce natural resources to ease
4 world hunger, and to tailor-design agricultural
5 products for specific health, nutritional and industrial
6 purposes.

7 We support:

- 8 • The development of research and testing that will
9 enhance the adoption of biotechnology products
10 and processes, and address consumer safety
11 and environmental concerns.
- 12 • Funding from companies that develop this
13 technology to educate the public on the safety
14 and benefits of biotechnology.
- 15 • Development of a positive national strategy for
16 the further development of biotechnology

- 17 research and favor the swift dissemination of
18 accurate information to consumers concerning
19 biotechnology products.
- 20 • U.S. government agencies, particularly the
21 USDA and the Food and Drug Administration
22 (FDA), continue to serve their respective roles in
23 providing unbiased, scientifically-based
24 evaluations concerning human and animal safety
25 and wholesomeness, as well as the
26 environmental impacts, of biotechnology-
27 enhanced commodities. U.S. government
28 agencies should evaluate whether there are
29 improvements in the regulatory approval process
30 that could be made to further enhance consumer
31 confidence.
 - 32 • The development of standardized testing
33 procedures to ensure accurate, timely and cost-
34 effective analysis of biotech products throughout
35 the entire production and marketing chain.
 - 36 • The U.S. government to use all available means
37 to improve international understanding of the
38 science-based process used by U.S. agencies
39 when approving biotechnology-enhanced
40 commodities.
 - 41 • Initiatives that assist in the research,
42 development and regulatory clearance of
43 specialty crop biotechnology products.
 - 44 • Michigan Farm Bureau take a proactive
45 approach to educating members and consumers
46 about the advantages and potential of
47 biotechnology, including the use of the FARM
48 Science Lab.
 - 49 • Strong patent protection to encourage these new
50 technologies.
 - 51 • An expedited process for the approval of edible
52 and non-edible genetically engineered plant
53 material beneficial to the
54 agriculture/horticultural/floricultural industry
55 through the FDA and USDA Animal and Plant
56 Health Inspection Service.
 - 57 • The concept of allowing farmers to use their own
58 crop as seed as long as they pay the technology
59 fee for the seed they use.
 - 60 • Communication with end users to identify specific
61 needs to promote value-added trait development.
 - 62 • The voluntary approach taken by the biotech
63 industry that allows for further development of
64 agriceuticals and research while still protecting
65 our commercial production. Seed purity (identity
66 preservation) is critical in maintaining both
67 consumer and processor confidence in

- 68 agricultural products.
- 69 • The common practice followed by the seed
 - 70 industry (as well as outlined under the USDA
 - 71 organic practices) that the burden of maintaining
 - 72 genetic purity falls solely upon the producer of
 - 73 the identity-preserved crop as far as needed
 - 74 buffer strips and other cultural practices. Users of
 - 75 biotech seeds should follow planting restrictions
 - 76 and requirements.
 - 77 • Active involvement by the U.S. in the
 - 78 development of a uniform scientifically-based
 - 79 international approval process for biotechnology.
 - 80 • The free choice of farmers to grow what they
 - 81 want, whether it be biotech or non-biotech
 - 82 products.
 - 83 • Public and private efforts to continue research on
 - 84 non-biotech seed.

85 The U.S. producer should not have to pay for this
86 technology, development, and marketing cost alone.
87 All purchasers should share in the cost of this
88 research.

89 Food products utilizing biotechnology that have
90 been scientifically proven safe should not be
91 discriminated against by unfair labeling requirements
92 that are not required of other industries using
93 biotechnology. No biotech products should be
94 released for commercial production until approved
95 for both human and animal utilization.

96 We oppose all attempts to limit the production or
97 use of genetically modified crops or animals, based
98 upon unproven statements and unsubstantiated
99 fears.

100 We are concerned about the potential loss of
101 current technology, production and management
102 tools that have fostered advancements in agriculture,
103 and will oppose all attempts which limit the utilization
104 of approved use of biotechnology in the production of
105 agricultural products. ◆

#8 COMMISSION SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

1 Prior to 2009, bipartisan commissions controlled
2 the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural
3 Development and the Michigan Department of
4 Natural Resources with the power to hire directors of
5 the respective departments.

6 We strongly support this historical commission
7 system of government. Commissions should provide
8 oversight and set policy for the department, conduct
9 appeals, and employ the director. The historical
10 commission system allowed for continuity,

11 transparency and accountability of programs. We
12 support restoring all duties of the Agriculture and
13 Natural Resources Commissions, including the
14 ability to employ the director.

15 Future appointees to the Natural Resources
16 Commission (NRC) should be balanced, not only in
17 their passion for outdoor recreation, but also with
18 regard to the ecological and business environments
19 of the State. A farmer representative from production
20 agriculture should be on the NRC.

21 Furthermore, we insist the Michigan Legislature or
22 Governor create a commission for the Michigan
23 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and
24 Energy. We urge appointments to include agricultural
25 representation in proportion to other interests and
26 follow guidelines similar to those listed above. ♦

#9 COMPLIANCE AND RESOURCES FOR FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

1 Michigan farmers are business owners and
2 employers operating in an increasingly complex and
3 technical environment. Therefore, we encourage
4 Michigan Farm Bureau to monitor and identify broad
5 regulation changes in relation to the business
6 environment.

7 We support the creation of educational
8 documents, credible referrals, and technical services
9 covering, but not limited to:

- 10 • Steps to becoming an employer.
- 11 • Steps to determine business structure and
12 formation.
- 13 • Employer obligations, laws and regulations.
- 14 • Estate planning.
- 15 • Liability issues.
- 16 • Taxation. ♦

#10 CRANBERRY INDUSTRY

1 We support efforts through legislation and/or
2 regulations to promote the expansion of the cranberry
3 industry in Michigan.

4 Michigan Farm Bureau urges the Michigan
5 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
6 (MDEGLE), Michigan Department of Agriculture and
7 Rural Development and the Michigan Legislature to
8 develop proactive policies and legislation that help
9 promote and grow the cranberry industry in Michigan. In
10 a time when the State is seeking diversity of industries
11 and job growth, many policies are overly restrictive
12 compared to surrounding states and have seriously

13 restricted the growth of the cranberry industry in
14 Michigan.

15 We urge MDEGLE to accommodate the expansion
16 of cranberry production in Michigan, including prior
17 commitments made under PA 120 of 2009. ♦

#11 DAIRY INDUSTRY

1 The dairy industry is critical to the overall agriculture
2 economy in Michigan. We support a strong and vibrant
3 dairy industry in Michigan that allows our dairy farmers
4 to be competitive in national and international markets.

5 We support:

- 6 • Industry collaboration in the development of
7 additional dairy processing in Michigan and urge
8 local, state and federal lawmakers and regulators to
9 assist with streamlining the process for dairy
10 industry expansion in processing.
- 11 • Funding for all state and federally required dairy
12 industry sampling and inspection programs.
- 13 • Current dairy laws as they pertain to the
14 pasteurization of milk, including prohibiting the sale
15 of unpasteurized fluid milk for human consumption.
- 16 • Michigan Farm Bureau and the Michigan
17 Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
18 working together to provide guidelines for cow-
19 share and herd-share programs that meet Grade A
20 dairy standards.
- 21 • On-farm bio-security practices being implemented
22 that protect and enhance animal health and our
23 dairy markets.
- 24 • Continued availability and proper use of animal
25 health tools (e.g., antibiotics, technology).
- 26 • Industry support and participation in the veterinary
27 feed directive.
- 28 • Collaboration between farmers, animal health
29 officials and the veterinary community in an
30 aggressive Johnes detection and eradication
31 program and a continued focus on improving dairy
32 cattle health.
- 33 • Industry participation in any changes to the Siting
34 Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management
35 Practice so as to allow for continued growth and
36 dairy expansion.
- 37 • Continued farmer participation in any changes to
38 the National Dairy FARM Program and on-farm
39 implementation of the standards.
- 40 • Continued investments in research that allow for
41 industry growth and efficiency.
- 42 • Continued farmer participation and control over

- 43 dairy industry promotion dollars, enhancements and
44 creativity in dairy promotion ideas and the
45 development of new products.
- 46 • Increased efforts to expand dairy consumption in
47 school systems including inclusion of higher milk fat
48 options and flavored milks.
 - 49 • Dairy farmers being able to collect, store, and
50 market colostrum to licensed collectors/sellers.
 - 51 • Collaboration with the United Dairy Industry of
52 Michigan and Michigan Ag Council educating the
53 medical community and education system about the
54 benefits of milk/dairy consumption, especially for
55 youth.
 - 56 • Collaboration with the industry, including farmers,
57 on the establishment of a world class dairy teaching
58 research and extension facility located on the
59 current Michigan State University south campus
60 dairy farm that meets the current and future needs
61 of our dairy industry. ◆

#13 DRY BEAN INDUSTRY

- 1 We appreciate the Michigan Bean Commission's
2 ongoing efforts to increase the consumption of nutrient
3 dense, Michigan dry beans.
- 4 We support:
- 5 • The ongoing research necessary, including new
6 technology, to continually improve dry bean
7 production in Michigan.
 - 8 • Research assuring the industry is able to meet the
9 everchanging needs of the consumer, specifically
10 the development of new end-user products.
 - 11 • Continuation, staffing and adequate funding of the
12 dry bean variety development program at Michigan
13 State University.
 - 14 • A bean breeding program that includes the
15 development of new varieties to better meet the
16 demands of domestic and world markets.
 - 17 • Research into areas of disease control and pest
18 prevention.
 - 19 • Production contracts as viable and important
20 marketing tools for growers, elevators and canners.
21 All parties must abide by the provisions of these
22 agreements and the interaction between all parties
23 must be closer to ensure compliance at all levels.
 - 24 • Contract language that includes Act of God (due to
25 weather and the inability to plant, grow or harvest a
26 crop) provisions.
 - 27 • The Pulse Health Initiative.

- 28 • Accurate and timely reporting of dry bean prices by
29 elevators when gathering data for computing
30 revenue insurance.
 - 31 • Uniformity of grading standards among elevators
32 regarding foreign material and pick/grading
33 determinations.
 - 34 • Production and price reporting in an efficient format
35 that can be updated as needed.
 - 36 • All shipping documentation being completed
37 electronically.
- 38 We oppose:
- 39 • Limited market access for all processors and
40 producers. ◆

#15 FAIRS AND EXHIBITIONS

1 Michigan Farm Bureau and Farm Bureau
2 members have a long history of supporting
3 agricultural exhibitions and livestock shows that
4 promote agriculture. Agriculture has long realized the
5 importance of these events as a forum for
6 competition among individuals involved in our
7 industry and an opportunity to improve the next
8 generation of agricultural products. These activities
9 also provide an excellent opportunity to enhance the
10 leadership skills and increase the agricultural
11 knowledge of our youth, while promoting agriculture
12 with the general public.

13 The success of state and county fairs and
14 exhibitions is reliant upon leadership and volunteers
15 from the agricultural community. We urge Farm
16 Bureau members to take an active role in providing
17 oversight and taking ownership of these activities to
18 ensure the original intent of fairs and exhibitions
19 continues. Agricultural education exhibits, livestock
20 competitions, agricultural showcases and youth
21 agricultural activities should be the cornerstone of
22 state and county fairs and exhibitions.

23 Financial resources are a critical component to
24 the continued viability of state and county fairs and
25 exhibitions. We urge the State of Michigan and
26 individual county fair boards to implement a long-
27 range plan that addresses the financial needs of
28 these events including but not limited to premiums
29 and infrastructure.

30 As our industry has changed and we adapt to
31 those changes, we must look at new and alternative
32 venues for these events that provide opportunities
33 for expanded involvement with the non-farm
34 population. We ask that county Farm Bureaus
35 embrace the concept of local, regional, and/or state

36 fairs financed by sponsorships and promotion by
37 organizations and companies directly involved in
38 promoting positive aspects of our great state.

39 We urge MFB to evaluate and make the
40 necessary recommendations to ensure the long-term
41 viability of our agricultural heritage through
42 participation at exhibitions, shows, or other public
43 events, in addition to state and county fairs. ♦

#18 FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

1 Michigan Farm Bureau will cooperate with
2 industry groups to research and implement Michigan
3 minimum grade quality standards for fresh fruits and
4 vegetables that will improve product quality, meet
5 consumer expectations and enhance Michigan's
6 competitive position.

7 We recommend USDA update the grade
8 standards for apples so the Risk Management
9 Agency can utilize current industry standards in crop
10 insurance.

11 We encourage MFB to work with Michigan State
12 University and fruit organizations established under
13 the Michigan Agricultural Commodities Marketing Act
14 (PA 232 of 1965) to encourage research on the
15 development of new varieties for growing and
16 marketing that are specifically geared for growers in
17 the Midwest. Other growing regions are doing this to
18 remain competitive within the marketplace and to
19 offer consumers better products. ♦

#19 HOPS INDUSTRY

1 Production of hops and other associated
2 ingredients are part of a viable and expanding craft
3 brewing industry as Michigan has proven to be an
4 ideal climate for commercial hop production.

5 Michigan Farm Bureau supports the concept of a
6 farm brewery license allowing farm breweries to
7 operate in a similar fashion to farm wineries.

8 MFB supports incentives for breweries to utilize
9 more local hops in their recipes, which in turn would
10 allow for further expansion of hop production in the
11 state. ♦

#20 INDUSTRIAL HEMP

1 We appreciate the efforts by the State of Michigan to
2 facilitate the legal permitting of industrial hemp for
3 production and processing.

4 We support:

- 5 • Changes to the 2018 Farm Bill that allow for
6 industrial hemp with up to 1%
7 Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) to be legal.

- 8 • Changes to federal laws that allow for the
- 9 housing, transportation and marketing of all
- 10 legally derived industrial hemp products for
- 11 further processing, regardless of the THC level,
- 12 as long as the product for final sale meets legal
- 13 THC limits.
- 14 • The establishment of a Michigan Department of
- 15 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)
- 16 Industrial Hemp Advisory Committee to offer
- 17 assistance in the regulatory development and
- 18 oversight process.
- 19 • Collaboration with the industrial hemp industry to
- 20 develop a professional hemp industry
- 21 organization.
- 22 • Federal and state funding for all required
- 23 regulatory oversight. We are willing to consider
- 24 producer and processor funding to help offset or
- 25 assist with regulatory oversight.
- 26 • MDARD submitting a hemp regulatory plan; the
- 27 plan should include the Department assuming
- 28 responsibility for THC sampling and plans to
- 29 mitigate cross pollination between grain/fiber
- 30 hemp and Cannabidiol (CBD) hemp or
- 31 marijuana.
- 32 • Research on the following: processing,
- 33 production techniques, prospective volumes, and
- 34 market outlook.
- 35 • Collaboration amongst MDARD, Michigan State
- 36 University Extension and other stakeholders to
- 37 develop and disseminate educational materials
- 38 pertaining to growing, processing, transportation
- 39 and marketing of industrial hemp.
- 40 • The development and approval of alternative
- 41 uses and/or disposal methods for the destruction
- 42 of a “hot crop” other than Drug Enforcement
- 43 Agency disposal rules.
- 44 We urge the Food and Drug Administration to
- 45 issue guidance and clarity on the rules surrounding
- 46 the marketing of industrial hemp derived products. ♦

#21 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

1 Research institutions, especially land grant
2 universities, are scaling back on their agricultural
3 research and are requiring agricultural commodity
4 groups and associations to participate financially,
5 both in the research areas and in staff funding.

6 Because the licensing policies of Michigan State
7 University (MSU) Technologies directly or indirectly
8 affect cost, profitability, and marketing of Michigan
9 agricultural commodities, it is necessary for the

10 affected parties within the state to have input into the
11 licensing system.

12 Therefore, we support:

- 13 • A standing committee from Michigan Farm
14 Bureau, Michigan Department of Agriculture and
15 Rural Development and producer representatives
16 of affected commodities be included in the
17 process of MSU Technologies in licensing any
18 product or material that would affect the
19 profitability or marketing of any agricultural
20 commodity.
- 21 • A portion of the revenue derived from the
22 licensing of intellectual property rights flow back
23 to the funding groups and organizations.
- 24 • Licensing and commercialization opportunities
25 remain with Michigan-based companies when
26 appropriate.
- 27 • The right of commodity groups and organizations
28 to have first and last right of refusal in the
29 licensing of intellectual property rights that were at
30 least partially funded by grower investment and
31 developed at public institutions.

32 It is imperative that our intellectual properties and
33 food security be protected. We encourage MFB to be
34 supportive of protecting our food security and
35 agricultural industries. ◆

#22 LABELING

1 We support consumer friendly, science-based
2 labeling of agricultural products which provides
3 consumers with useful information concerning the
4 ingredients and nutritional value of food sold in the
5 United States. We oppose false, misleading or
6 deceptive marketing, promotion and/or labeling
7 claims. Agricultural products that are produced using
8 government approved technologies should not be
9 required to designate individual inputs or specific
10 technologies on the product label. ◆

#23 MAPLE SUGAR PRODUCTION

1 Maple sugar production is one of the oldest forms
2 of agriculture in Michigan. Michigan is home to a vast
3 maple sugar resource that is underutilized and has
4 potential for expansion. Michigan Farm Bureau
5 supports the expansion of Michigan's maple sugar
6 industry and the promotion and marketing of pure
7 Michigan-made maple syrup, maple sugar and
8 associated products.

- 9 We support:
- 10 • Changes to Environmental Protection Agency
 - 11 regulations to allow isopropyl alcohol to be used
 - 12 by producers in Michigan to clean sap lines. ◆

#24 MARKETING AND BARGAINING LEGISLATION

1 The Michigan Agricultural Marketing and
2 Bargaining Act (PA 344, as amended) has proven to
3 be a fair and equitable procedure through which
4 marketing and bargaining associations and
5 processors negotiate fruit and vegetable prices and
6 other terms of trade.

7 We support:

- 8 • Legislation or legal actions that strengthen the
- 9 operation and effectiveness of PA 344 including
- 10 but not limited to returning the definition of the
- 11 "opt out clause" to its original intent and
- 12 meaning.
- 13 • Efforts of producers under PA 344 to further
- 14 enhance their position in the marketplace and
- 15 secure the sale of their product through the
- 16 provisions of the marketing and bargaining
- 17 legislation.
- 18 • Efforts of the Michigan Department of Agriculture
- 19 and Rural Development to aggressively enforce
- 20 this program. ◆

#25 MICHIGAN ALLIANCE FOR ANIMAL AGRICULTURE

1 The dairy and livestock industries are an integral
2 part of Michigan's overall agriculture economy.
3 Segments of our industry are constantly challenged
4 by the lack of animal related research and workforce
5 development training. In an effort to address these
6 issues, the Michigan Alliance for Animal Agriculture
7 (M-AAA) was established with representatives from
8 Michigan Farm Bureau, various animal
9 agriculture stakeholder organizations, Michigan
10 Department of Agriculture and Rural Development,
11 Michigan State University's Extension, College of
12 Veterinary Medicine, Department of Animal Science,
13 AgBioResearch, and College of Agriculture and
14 Natural Resources.

15 We support the M-AAA and their efforts in
16 developing a proposal to establish a state-funded
17 animal ag research program modeled after the
18 successful Project GREEN that addresses plant-
19 based industry priorities. The group has established
20 the Michigan Animal Agriculture Innovation and
21 Workforce Development Initiative which focuses on

22 ensuring the sustainability of the state's animal
23 agriculture sector through a targeted annual
24 investment in research, extension and workforce
25 development. Many dairy and livestock related
26 groups are making annual contributions to support
27 this effort and we strongly encourage state funding to
28 enhance the effort. ◆

#28 NURSERY, FLORICULTURE, SOD AND GREENHOUSE INDUSTRY

1 The nursery, greenhouse, sod and Christmas tree industries
2 have experienced a number of inequitable trade practices with
3 Canada, including phytosanitary inspection standards and
4 procedures. We request Michigan Farm Bureau work with allied
5 industry organizations and the Michigan Department of
6 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) to identify areas of
7 concern and formulate appropriate solutions.

8 Ornamental horticulture, nursery, landscape, floriculture,
9 sod, Christmas trees and greenhouse productions are unique
10 forms of agriculture and must be recognized as such by local,
11 state and national regulatory bodies.

12 We urge MFB to continue cooperating with plant industry
13 groups regarding revisions to both PA 189 of 1931 and PA 72 of
14 1945 including, but not limited to, the elimination of intrastate
15 inspections of nursery stock, and to no longer recognize mums
16 as a hardy perennial. This change will allow for the reallocation
17 of resources to provide for improved inspections of interstate and
18 international shipments, and to allow for voluntary in-state
19 inspections as requested by the industry.

20 Due to the extensive updates to the Worker Protection
21 Standards, policies and procedures,
22 we encourage MFB and other industry groups, including Michigan
23 State University Extension, MDARD, Michigan Nursery and
24 Landscape Association, and Michigan Greenhouse
25 Growers Council, to collaborate and formulate ideas to create new
26 training materials
27 in digital format.

28 We support:

- 29 • Funding for researchers, research infrastructure, and
30 grant funding through USDA's Specialty Crop
31 Research Initiative and Specialty Crop Block Grants
32 to support the nursery and greenhouse industry.

33 Issues of importance include mechanization (due to
34 labor shortages), development of new pesticides to
35 replace any that have been or will be deregulated,
36 and advanced technologies to propagate and grow
37 plants.

- 38 • Greenhouse and nursery crop insurance programs
39 and the indemnification of plants after a disease or
40 pest outbreak. We further support action to be
41 taken to develop and complete these programs.

42 We oppose:

- 43 • Legislation that regulates the use of neonicotinoids,

- 44 organophosphates, pyrethroids, methocarbamates, and/or
45 organochlorines by state agencies, unless research or
46 conclusive scientific evidence prove that these compounds
47 pose adverse effects on the environment when used
48 according to label.
- 49 • Legislating science from the bench of a court/jury without
50 sound scientific proof, well-documented scientific studies
51 from respected scientists, scholars, government bodies
52 and universities in regard to the safe use of necessary
53 tools such as chlorpyrifos and glyphosate without
54 extensive research and study. ◆

#29 PAYMENT PROTECTION AND SECURITY FOR GROWERS

1 Michigan Farm Bureau supports the Farm
2 Produce Insurance Authority (FPIA) that protects the
3 interest of producers when selling their products.

4 For commodities delivered, farmers need
5 maximum payment assurance. When a receiver,
6 whether they are a closed-cooperative, regular
7 cooperative, or a commercial company, becomes
8 insolvent or declares bankruptcy, many people
9 suffer. The impact on farmers is more significant
10 because of the perishability and seasonality of many
11 commodities.

12 We support PA 198 of 2013, updates to the Grain
13 Dealers Act that provided assurance that growers
14 receive a priority lien position and full payment for
15 commodities delivered.

16 We urge Farm Bureau to work proactively with
17 the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural
18 Development to expand the FPIA to include fruit and
19 vegetable crops, and to create an appropriate
20 funding mechanism.

21 We recommend exploring all possible options,
22 including amending the Uniform Commercial Code,
23 to ensure a fully secured position payment for
24 commodities delivered. ◆

#32 SHEEP INDUSTRY

1 We believe with proper leadership and research
2 the sheep industry will provide a substantial source
3 of income for Michigan farmers.

4 We support:

- 5 • Increased development of new uses of wool and
6 new consumer convenient lamb products.
- 7 • Inclusion of lamb prices in market reports and
8 radio broadcasts.
- 9 • Research into lethal and non-lethal methods of
10 predator control as they can be applied in

11 Michigan such as adoption of a "toxic collar"
12 program.
13 • Funding for an indemnification program for
14 losses from predators.
15 We urge all owners of sheep to participate in the
16 National Scrapie Eradication Program. ◆

#33 SOUND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH STANDARDS

1 Michigan Farm Bureau policies reflect a
2 dependence on sound science. We request research
3 used for the investigation of public health concerns,
4 and the development of policies, rules, legislation
5 and published statistics be supported by sound
6 science. Information supplied to decision makers
7 must be derived using accepted research practices
8 and validated models subject to third party
9 verification/audit and peer reviews. ◆

#36 URBAN FARMING

1 We support economic development that accepts
2 agricultural businesses as part of urban center economies
3 and development of agreements which allow urban
4 agricultural production while protecting the rights of farm
5 businesses with production sites within Michigan
6 municipalities.

7 We support the development of a separate set of
8 management practices unique to new and expanding urban
9 agriculture, which also include provisions for local zoning
10 requirements, livestock care standards, crops and cropping
11 standards, and environmental protection standards. For
12 food safety reasons, all rules, regulations and licenses
13 should be applicable to urban agriculture. We applaud
14 recommendations of the Michigan Department of
15 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) Urban
16 Livestock Workgroup as an important first step in this
17 process.

18 We support Farm Bureau's continued collaboration with
19 MDARD, Michigan State University Extension and other
20 stakeholders to write a model local ordinance to promote
21 protection of and guidelines for urban agriculture.

22 Right to Farm protections for commercial agricultural
23 practices must not be compromised. ◆

#37 USDA NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE – GREAT LAKES FIELD OFFICE

1 The agricultural industry has developed many
2 mechanisms for reporting the size and progress of
3 crops and other agricultural commodities. The
4 system most widely adopted by the industry is the
5 USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service

6 program (NASS). To ensure the accuracy of these
7 reports, farmers should provide NASS full
8 cooperation. We will vigorously defend the
9 confidentiality of individual farm information.
10 Michigan Farm Bureau will continue to work with
11 NASS to find ways to improve and simplify the
12 gathering of information, such as exploring the use of
13 Farm Service Agency producer information already
14 reported. We encourage the use of modern
15 technology including satellite imagery, on-farm
16 electronic data, and development of a streamlined
17 data collection system.

18 We recommend USDA and the Michigan
19 Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
20 (MDARD) adequately fund their full portion of this
21 cost-share service. Accurate and timely third-party
22 statistics are essential to the further development of
23 Michigan agriculture and finding new markets, as
24 well as attracting new processing facilities. We
25 support cooperative agreements with Michigan State
26 University, MDARD and private funding to fund state-
27 specific statistical analysis.

28 We encourage producers to cooperate with the
29 NASS in conducting the U.S. Census of Agriculture.
30 We support distribution of the data in a timely and
31 usable format to producers.

32 We support development of an accurate system
33 to calculate county yields based on actual test
34 results or scientific data considering irrigated vs. dry
35 land yields and seed corn production. ◆

#38 WHEAT INDUSTRY

1 Wheat plays an important role in Michigan's economy
2 with annual planted acreage of over one-half million acres.

3 We encourage the continued coordination of industry-
4 related needs with research priorities and processor
5 requirements through the Michigan Wheat Program,
6 ultimately leading to profitability.

7 We support:

- 8 • Michigan Farm Bureau collaborating with
9 representatives of the crop insurance industry, wheat
10 millers, and Michigan Agri-Business Association to
11 discuss transparency in Michigan wheat pricing and
12 statewide standards for wheat sampling.
- 13 • Continued efforts, including education and
14 certification, to improve sampling and testing
15 procedures to ensure accurate and consistent
16 falling number and vomitoxin testing results.
- 17 • The continuation of the wheat checkoff program.
- 18 • The Great Lakes Yield Enhancement Network, which
19 evaluates the production practices of wheat

20 producers, and we encourage stakeholders to help
21 fund this research.

22 **Risk Management Agency (RMA)**

- 23 • We commend RMA for recognizing results of the
24 falling number test when determining quality loss
25 adjustments for white wheat. However, the coverage
26 must be expanded to include all classes of wheat,
27 and discount factors must be comparable to the level
28 of discounts experienced by producers in the
29 marketplace.
- 30 • We also recommend RMA explore development
31 of a new insurance policy recognizing the
32 differentiation between wheat classes.
- 33 • We encourage RMA to standardize wheat
34 planting deadlines with the Farm Service Agency
35 to appropriately reflect current climatic
36 conditions. ◆

#41 MICHIGAN AG COUNCIL

1 The Michigan Ag Council (MAC) is currently
2 comprised of more than 15 agriculture related groups
3 in which Michigan Farm Bureau is a partner. The
4 efforts of MAC are needed because it is imperative
5 for the stakeholders to write the narrative of Michigan
6 agriculture. This group has taken the lead in
7 developing a collaborative effort promoting a positive
8 image for agriculture and takes an assertive,
9 proactive approach in telling the story of modern
10 agriculture as a result of technological
11 advancements.

12 We encourage MAC to continue to expand
13 collaboration on national and regional levels.

14 Funding for the MAC is critical. In order to be
15 successful, it needs to come from a variety of
16 sources focused on Michigan including commodity
17 groups, financial institutions, food processors and
18 retailers. We encourage county Farm Bureaus and
19 individual members to financially support the
20 Council. A broad mix of financing for this joint effort
21 will not only allow the Council to do more positive
22 education and promotion about agriculture, but it will
23 multiply the ability to reach the consumer at all levels
24 of the food system. ◆

#43 BROADBAND

1 Rural access to broadband internet service is a
2 major factor impacting the ability of rural Michigan
3 residents to compete and participate in the economy.
4 A comprehensive policy is vital for the state of
5 Michigan to provide for universal broadband access

6 statewide that is equitable in cost and quality in both
7 rural and urban settings.

8 We support:

- 9 • Allowing municipalities to utilize special
10 assessment districts in expanding broadband.
- 11 • Tax credits or other incentives for residents
12 purchasing internet services for educational or
13 employment purposes.
- 14 • Encouraging federal, state, and local
15 municipalities to allow public and private internet
16 providers easy and affordable access to build
17 and attach equipment to public-owned
18 communication towers, water towers, and
19 ground.
- 20 • Public-private partnerships to develop
21 cooperative, alternative funding measures to
22 expand broadband in under-served areas.
- 23 • Michigan internet providers taking advantage of
24 the available state and federal government loans
25 and grants.
- 26 • Continued cooperation between the Michigan
27 Public Service Commission, broadband
28 providers, and groups such as Connect Michigan
29 to expand unlimited high-speed internet access
30 in rural and under-served areas.
- 31 • Publicly available well-defined/site-specific high-
32 speed internet coverage maps.
- 33 • Allowing municipalities to create service
34 thresholds when negotiating broadband franchise
35 territories.
- 36 • Requiring electric utilities to allow access to their
37 power poles for the hanging of high-speed fiber-
38 optic lines.
- 39 • Encouraging rural electric co-ops to continue to
40 expand their offerings of broadband internet.

41 We oppose granting of exclusive franchises to
42 broadband providers in municipalities without
43 guaranteed minimum service. ◆

#46 UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS

1 The use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)
2 (i.e., drones) will continue to grow dramatically in the
3 near future as costs for this technology are reduced.
4 The proper use of this technology in agriculture can
5 result in significant benefits for the industry.
6 However, privacy and public safety issues are
7 becoming more prominent as use increases.

8 Many of the issues surrounding UAS are
9 governed on the federal level by the Federal Aviation
10 Administration (FAA); however, a number of state
11 level issues need to be resolved. We encourage

12 Michigan Farm Bureau to work with the state
13 Legislature to address issues regarding UAS use.
14 Also, we urge MFB to continue to increase their
15 knowledge and understanding of the evolving UAS
16 issues including but not limited to:

- 17 • Privacy and private property rights
- 18 • Nuisance
- 19 • Reckless endangerment
- 20 • Proprietary data
- 21 • Safety
- 22 • Insurance
- 23 • Authority enforcement and jurisdiction consistent
24 with FAA part 107

25 As information becomes more definitive, we
26 encourage MFB to continue utilizing a UAS action
27 team to develop and promote educational tools.

28 We support:

- 29 • The use of UAS for commercial purposes (i.e.
30 agriculture, forestry, and other natural resource
31 use).
- 32 • Requiring the operator of the UAS to gain the
33 consent of the landowner and/or operator, if the
34 UAS will be surveying or gathering data about
35 the landowner's property below navigable
36 airspace.
- 37 • Treating the UAS as an extension of the operator
38 subject to trespass regulations.
- 39 • The regulation of UAS as recreational aircraft.
- 40 • Internet and cellular providers including support
41 within rural networks for agricultural equipment
42 connections.
- 43 • The Michigan Department of Agriculture and
44 Rural Development ensuring its policies support
45 the use of autonomous equipment on farms.
- 46 • Michigan State University increasing its research
47 efforts related to autonomous technology on
48 farms.

49 We oppose:

- 50 • A federal and state agency using UAS for the
51 purpose of regulatory enforcement, litigation and
52 as a sole source for natural resource inventories
53 used in planning efforts.
- 54 • UAS surveying and gathering data without the
55 consent of the landowner and/or operator below
56 navigable airspace.
- 57 • FAA and/or state agencies regulating UAS as
58 fixed-winged aircraft. ♦

#48 AGRICULTURAL LABOR

1 Michigan Farm Bureau should continue to inform
2 the public about agricultural employment and the
3 economic contributions farm labor makes to the local
4 and state economies, and correct widespread
5 misconceptions about farm labor conditions.

6 Michigan does not have a labor relations law for
7 farm workers and they are using basic contract law
8 as the basis for achieving successful labor
9 agreements.

10 The lack of an agricultural labor relations law
11 allows for consumer and secondary boycotts of
12 perishable farm commodities. We are not opposed to
13 removing the agricultural labor exemption from the
14 National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) and prefer this
15 action over enactment of a state agricultural labor
16 relations act. While we are opposed to a separate
17 agricultural labor relations board, we believe a
18 separate counsel and staff, cognizant and
19 understanding of the challenges of agriculture,
20 should be designated if the agriculture exemption to
21 the NLRA is stricken.

22 Any state legislation must protect the rights of the
23 workers, farmers and consumers against the loss of
24 crops during labor disputes. Such legislation should:

- 25 • Preserve the right of secret ballot elections for
26 farm workers.
- 27 • Prohibit secondary boycotts.
- 28 • Include workable provisions on bargaining units.
- 29 • Prohibit strikes by workers during critical periods
30 of growing and harvesting.
- 31 • Guarantee the right of agricultural employers to
32 reduce labor needs through mechanization.
- 33 • Ensure that such legislation shall not include any
34 requirement for a successor clause in a labor
35 contract.
- 36 • Ensure the continuation of the piece rate of
37 payment for workers.
- 38 • Ensure the equal opportunity to work without
39 being forced to join a union or be required to
40 finance or collect on behalf of a union.
- 41 • Ensure that organizing activities do not infringe
42 on the safety of the workers' and employers' lives
43 and property.
- 44 • Ensure union organizing activities do not
45 interfere with normal agriculture production.
- 46 • Ensure if a union agreement is in effect, money
47 from workers' dues could not be used for political
48 issues, candidates or parties without the
49 individual union member's authorization.

50 The family farm exemption in the Migrant and
51 Seasonal Agricultural Workers Protection Act is
52 being eroded by the expansion of the terms
53 “recruitment” and “transportation.” We oppose the
54 inclusion of gratuitous referrals and transportation in
55 the course of employment when the vehicle is not
56 driven by a family member, in the determination of
57 whether the family farm exemption applies.

58 The North American Industrial Classification
59 System (NAICS), sector 11 should be the
60 standardized definition for agriculture and farm work
61 for all state labor legislation.

62 MFB should continue participating in recruiting
63 efforts to ensure an adequate and legal agricultural
64 work force in Michigan. Recruiting methods and
65 programs currently being used should be evaluated
66 for effectiveness. Efforts should be ongoing to more
67 effectively encourage workers to come to Michigan.

68 The State Workforce Agency should only refer
69 legally authorized workers to all employers.

70 We support:

- 71 • The concept of an inmate vocational training
72 program in cooperation with Michigan Works or
73 other educational institutions to provide non-
74 violent inmates the skills to be reintroduced to the
75 work force through the agricultural industry.
- 76 • MFB efforts through the Great Lakes Ag Labor
77 Services to assist growers in navigating the
78 cumbersome H-2A program. We encourage
79 expansion into other viable visa worker
80 programs. We support this program continuing
81 as a “user pays” system and available to all MFB
82 members.
- 83 • The right of farm workers to join, not join, or resign
84 from a union by their own convictions.
- 85 • Michigan’s position as a Right to Work (Freedom
86 to Work) state, where employees only voluntarily
87 associate themselves with a union.
- 88 • Expanded opportunities for employment of young
89 people in agricultural operations.

90 We oppose:

- 91 • Efforts by purchasers of farm commodities to
92 force farmers to legally recognize and negotiate
93 with specific labor organizations.
- 94 • Purchasers of farm commodities enticing farm
95 workers to join unions by paying the union dues
96 for the workers.
- 97 • Third party organization attempts to force
98 organized labor negotiations between farmers
99 and farm workers.

- 100 • Any attempts to overturn Michigan’s Right to
- 101 Work law.
- 102 • A specific segment of our workforce being
- 103 targeted for mandatory testing or regulatory
- 104 compliance. ◆

#49 EMPLOYER PROVIDED HOUSING

1 State law does not address the relationship existing
2 between an employer and an employee living in housing
3 facilities provided rent-free by the employer. There are no
4 guidelines defining rights, responsibilities or procedures to
5 be observed when the occupant is no longer an employee.

6 We will seek and support legislation that addresses not
7 more than a seven-day eviction process for employer
8 provided housing.

9 We encourage agricultural employers to renovate or
10 demolish their abandoned housing.

11 The Agricultural Labor Housing Inspection Program is
12 vital to agricultural employers and Michigan’s agricultural
13 economy. The program verifies that agricultural employers
14 have Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural
15 Development (MDARD) acceptable housing for employees
16 and provides licensing for employers whose housing meets
17 that program’s standards/requirements. This licensing
18 provides protection for both employers and employees. We
19 support that once a camp has been inspected and licensed
20 by the appropriate state agency, any violations created by
21 the occupant should not be held against the labor housing
22 licensee.

23 Michigan Farm Bureau supports MDARD being the
24 sole inspecting licensor of agricultural housing in Michigan.
25 We support the Agricultural Labor Housing Inspection
26 Program being a fully funded state program that includes
27 pre-occupancy, post-occupancy and complaint-driven
28 inspections, and supplemented by reasonable fees based
29 on licensed occupancy only if necessary. We encourage
30 the State of Michigan and MDARD to provide labor housing
31 licensing protection to all growers who show a good faith
32 effort to maintain their labor housing to MDARD standards.

33 The state construction grant program, administered by
34 MDARD, was created to assist farmers in
35 construction/renovation of farm labor housing. We request
36 the reestablishment of the construction grant program, as
37 well as other sources of funding and support. All funds that
38 become available for temporary housing should only be
39 directed to applicants of the construction grant program. We
40 support the revision of the construction grant program to
41 make fund allocations based on the number of licensed
42 housing units. We will oppose any changes in the
43 construction grant laws that reduce the eligibility, application

44 and distribution process. This program has the support of all
45 affected parties, including employees, employers, labor,
46 migrant advocates and government regulating agencies.

47 Overlapping of administrative oversight and inspection of
48 temporary housing requirements presents a fragmented
49 format of temporary housing rules. MFB requests MDARD be
50 the sole vendor of temporary housing law enforcement. We
51 encourage MDARD to continue to publish and provide a
52 publication explaining the current complete licensing,
53 inspection procedures, and regulations for temporary
54 housing both on and off farm. The U.S. Department of Labor
55 (USDOL) should recognize a current license issued by
56 MDARD as proof the labor camp is acceptable for habitation.
57 We support that once an agriculture labor camp is inspected
58 and licensed by MDARD and then occupied, the USDOL
59 and/or other agencies may not enter the camp dwellings,
60 which are the homes of the employees, without the
61 employee's permission and proper advance notification to
62 the owner of the farm. Federal and other state agencies
63 should be in audit positions only and shall refer any apparent
64 violations to MDARD, rather than issuing an immediate
65 penalty.

66 We encourage legislation to develop uniform housing
67 standards/requirements across state and federal agencies for
68 agricultural workers. ♦

#50 IMMIGRATION

1 All immigration laws and border security should
2 be strictly enforced and the responsibility of the
3 federal government. We oppose any state mandate
4 on employers to use E-Verify or any other similar
5 program.

6 We support improving worker availability in
7 agriculture. Michigan Farm Bureau should continue
8 working to address the challenges of agricultural
9 labor in Michigan. ♦

#51 INSURANCE ASSESSMENTS AND FINES

1 We oppose assessments on individual insurance
2 policies for costs that are not directly related to the
3 coverage being provided to the individual purchaser
4 of that insurance. This further increases the cost of
5 insurance and is a hidden means of taxation. ♦

#53 MIOSHA

1 We encourage all farmers to become aware of
2 any occupational hazards and voluntarily adopt
3 safety programs. If MIOSHA moves forward to
4 establish any standard for agriculture, Michigan
5 Farm Bureau should work with MIOSHA to ensure
6 minimal negative impacts on agriculture. Non-

7 mandatory guidance principles should be included in
8 any final regulation.

9 As MIOSHA continues as a policy-making body, it
10 is essential that representation be provided for
11 agriculture on applicable agency commissions.

12 We support:

- 13 • Appropriate safety regulations.
- 14 • Including construction standards and health
15 standards in the agricultural exemption in
16 MIOSHA under agricultural operations as defined
17 in MI R325.50171.
- 18 • Educational programs and no-penalty first-time
19 inspections and/or violations. We urge that a
20 portion of the Consultation, Education and
21 Training funding, derived from Workers'
22 Compensation premiums, be used for agricultural
23 safety training.
- 24 • Legislation allowing employers to provide
25 employee safety information, such as safety data
26 sheets, in an electronic format.
- 27 • Changing reporting requirements for
28 accidents/fatalities for agricultural operations to
29 include 911 or other first responder reporting.

30 We oppose:

- 31 • MIOSHA regulations that exceed federal OSHA
32 standards and/or guidance.
- 33 • Enforcement action against an owner/operator
34 resulting from a self-imposed accidental injury. ❖

#54 NO-FAULT AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

1 We support the general principles in Michigan's
2 No-Fault Insurance law that allow people injured in
3 automobile accidents to receive economic
4 compensation more quickly and equitably.

5 We support the following improvements to No-
6 Fault Insurance:

- 7 • A realistic cap on Personal Injury Protection
8 (PIP) benefits.
- 9 • Optional limits of PIP coverage (e.g., medical,
10 wage loss, economic damages).
- 11 • Use a set schedule for medical and PIP benefits,
12 similar to workers compensation fee schedule.
- 13 • Better define "injuries arising out of the
14 ownership, maintenance or use of an
15 automobile."
- 16 • Require motorcycles to comply with same rules
17 as auto and truck.
- 18 • Place limits on attendant care.

19 We support legislation which improves Michigan's
20 No-Fault Insurance, reduces the cost of auto

21 insurance, and passes the majority of savings on to
22 the consumer.

23 We oppose any legislation that attempts to
24 equalize auto insurance rates throughout Michigan.
25 Additionally, we will not support auto insurance
26 rollbacks unless they are offset by reforms which
27 reduce costs.

28 Michigan's No-Fault Insurance law provides that
29 drivers having accidents or tickets can be charged
30 more for automobile insurance. To ensure that
31 proper insurance premiums are charged, we support
32 improved accuracy of the Secretary of State's
33 accident/violation records.

34 The Michigan Auto Insurance Placement Facility,
35 which insures high-risk drivers, should be fully self-
36 funded.

37 Uninsured motorists increase costs to law-abiding
38 citizens. We recommend increased law enforcement
39 and an increase in fines for uninsured motorists and
40 impoundment of the vehicle. We urge the exploration
41 of methods and mechanisms to change the
42 collections for the Michigan Catastrophic Claims
43 Association Fund to ensure equity amongst Michigan
44 motorists. ◆

#56 WORKER PROTECTION STANDARDS

1 Michigan Farm Bureau should continue to work
2 with Michigan State University Extension and
3 Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural
4 Development (MDARD) to provide education
5 regarding Worker Protection Standards (WPS) for
6 farmers and farm employees.

7 We encourage MDARD to make the initial
8 inspection and those should be educational rather
9 than punitive.

10 We oppose the regulation of WPS by local units
11 of government.

12 We support continued authority of MDARD to
13 implement and enforce WPS. ◆

#57 AG SECURITY

1 The continued threat of terrorist attacks on America
2 has resulted in an increased awareness of the
3 possibility of agricultural terrorism.

4 We support:

- 5 • Increased penalties for individuals who destroy
6 or contaminate agricultural property with the
7 intent to create terror.
- 8 • Increased communication between state
9 departments and federal agencies in preparing

- 10 for a response to an agricultural terrorist attack or
11 threat.
- 12 • Continued testing and monitoring of food and
13 feed produced and used by agriculture.
 - 14 • Evaluating the security of food and animal feed
15 storage facilities.
 - 16 • Increased scrutiny and screening of all imported
17 agricultural goods.
 - 18 • Giving preference to domestically produced
19 agricultural goods.
 - 20 • Changes to regulations established for the
21 purpose of preventing agricultural terrorism
22 which need to consider the importance of
23 maintaining an adequate workforce for
24 agriculture and related industries.
 - 25 • Increased funding for U.S. Customs and Border
26 Protection to protect the animal health population
27 and ag industries at airports and ports of entry.
 - 28 • A stronger effort to increase bio-security
29 measures on farm operations and at the state
30 and national level.
 - 31 • Communication with local law enforcement and
32 emergency services regarding any suspicious
33 activity.
 - 34 • Reporting any theft of fertilizer, diesel fuel, or
35 diesel exhaust fluid.
 - 36 • Verification of the validity of any requests for
37 information about an agricultural facility.
 - 38 • Controlled access to facilities.
 - 39 • Screening of employees.

40 We oppose:

- 41 • Additional regulation without consultation with the
42 agricultural community.
- 43 • The unauthorized entry by agents of the State of
44 Michigan or the U.S. government into any
45 facilities (including worker housing units, barns,
46 accessory buildings and fields) which is in clear
47 violation of Generally Accepted Agricultural and
48 Management Practices, Good Agricultural
49 Practices standards, and ag/bio security
50 standards.

51 Foreign investment in Michigan assets is a
52 concern, especially in terms of farmland ownership.
53 Ownership of agricultural land by nonresident aliens,
54 foreign businesses and foreign governments should
55 be limited if not prohibited in Michigan. ◆

#58 AGRICULTURAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

1 We support the concept and use of AgrAbility to
2 keep producers viable who have issues with walking,
3 carrying, lifting and normal movements in day-to-day
4 farm activities.

5 We encourage the State of Michigan, Michigan
6 State University Extension, Michigan Farm Bureau
7 and county Farm Bureaus to continue funding
8 AgrAbility and publicizing its services, recognizing a
9 2.7:1 match from the U.S. Department of Education.

10 We support the Michigan Chapter of the Farmer
11 Veteran Coalition in their mission to help veterans
12 identify agriculture as a viable career option after
13 military service. ♦

#59 ANHYDROUS AMMONIA - NH₃

1 Anhydrous ammonia is an important and
2 economical plant nutrient, which requires
3 considerable care during transport and application.
4 Four state departments have responsibility for
5 regulations regarding the sale, transportation and
6 application of NH₃.

7 We support:

- 8 • The consolidation of responsibility for regulations
9 to improve the efficiency and reduce possible
10 confusion of regulatory responsibility.
- 11 • Designating the Michigan Department of
12 Agriculture and Rural Development as the
13 primary department responsible.
- 14 • Michigan Department of State Police maintaining
15 jurisdiction for transportation issues.
- 16 • An educational effort for all individuals involved
17 with the sale, transportation or application of
18 NH₃.
- 19 • Informational and educational programs to deter
20 theft and vandalism of NH₃.
- 21 • A cost-share program for anhydrous ammonia
22 tank locks and GloTell™ or similar product
23 application to discourage stealing of anhydrous
24 and stronger enforcement of laws and penalties
25 for people engaged in the theft of anhydrous.
- 26 • The current classification of NH₃ as a non-
27 flammable gas. ♦

#62 FIRE FIGHTING

1 The fire fighter of today is expected to respond to
2 situations that require training and experience. State
3 and federal regulations mandate many hours of
4 training in preparation for a variety of response
5 situations. Volunteers and paid on-call fire fighters in
6 all departments must make a substantial

7 commitment of personal time for this training. The
8 state and federal government should fund these
9 mandated training requirements.

10 When a property owner is conducting a legal
11 burn, the property owner should not be responsible
12 for costs incurred by an unnecessary fire truck
13 dispatch.

14 Local units of government have begun charging
15 farms a fee for emergency preparation inspections.
16 These inspections are completed by a local fire
17 department to comply with requirements authorized
18 by MIOSHA. We believe local units of government
19 should consider the following:

- 20 • Farms already provide for fire protection service
21 through the levy of property taxes.
- 22 • Farms currently pay a tax on fertilizer and
23 pesticides purchased to support the voluntary
24 emergency tube program (E-Tube) through the
25 Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance
26 Program administered by conservation districts.

27 Therefore, we support policy that prohibits local
28 units of government and fire authorities from
29 charging for emergency preparation inspections.
30 Furthermore, the E-Tube shall suffice as an
31 appropriate level of information.

32 Per the Emergency Planning and Community
33 Right-To-Know Act, we encourage producers to
34 comply with Tier II reporting of any threshold
35 planning quantity materials (Environmental
36 Protection Agency listed chemicals) to the Michigan
37 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and
38 Energy on or before March 1 of each year.

39 Firefighters are welcome to visit farms to be
40 prepared for emergency planning and firefighter
41 safety, but at their own expense. ◆

#65 LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1 We support Michigan's current township
2 government system. Townships should not be
3 required to combine government services they now
4 provide, (e.g. elections, property tax collections,
5 assessor services), with multiple jurisdictions, unless
6 a township chooses to and determines that the
7 township's residents would be better served by the
8 multiple jurisdiction system for certain services.

9 We believe:

- 10 • Townships or local units of government should
11 not be permitted to enact regulations affecting
12 agriculture that are stricter than existing state
13 and federal regulations.

- 14 • Local government should look for increased
15 efficiencies through consolidation of services and
16 streamlining regulations.
- 17 • Secondary use of agricultural property, including
18 buildings, that does not conflict or substantially
19 change the nature of the farm business should
20 be allowed.

21 We encourage:

- 22 • Standardized residence address signs to be
23 readily visible at the driveway entrance to
24 facilitate emergency response.
- 25 • Standardized signage be developed for facilities
26 with alternate power sources for the protection of
27 emergency personnel.
- 28 • Emergency response procedures to allow
29 cooperation between local governments.
- 30 • Local government officials to fully consider the
31 long-term fiscal implications and yearly operating
32 costs to any public acquisition.
- 33 • Local units of governments making their audited
34 financial statements available not more than one
35 year after the close of the fiscal year, without
36 requiring a Freedom of Information Act request.
37 The financial statements should be made
38 available through print or electronically.
- 39 • Local governments to take advantage of
40 electronic mediums when possible and practical.
41 The importance of continuing the conspicuous
42 posting of notices in several locations and, in
43 some areas non-electronic publishing, cannot be
44 discounted.
- 45 • Continued emphasis on state revenue-sharing
46 payments to local units of government. ◆

#66 PUBLIC WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE

1 The majority of Michigan residents get their
2 drinking water from community water systems, most
3 of which were built between 50 and 100 plus years
4 ago. Many of these municipal systems have already
5 exceeded their expected lifespan and do not meet
6 today's state and federal drinking water, wastewater,
7 and storm water standards.

8 These systems are often not thought about,
9 operating largely without the public's attention, except
10 for times of crisis. Many rural and urban water and
11 drain systems are faced with limited financial
12 resources, and communities are deferring the
13 investments needed to maintain, rehabilitate, and/or
14 replace older infrastructure. Investments need to
15 continue to be made to provide a safe and reliable
16 water supply.

- 17 Local units of government are accountable for
18 maintenance and operation of the infrastructure
19 affecting their residents. Therefore, we support:
- 20 • Research to develop better materials for public
21 water lines, wastewater and storm water
22 systems.
 - 23 • Development of better processes for the
24 operation and maintenance of the public
25 infrastructure.
 - 26 • Long-range planning and comprehensive asset
27 management.
 - 28 • An increase in federal safe drinking water funds,
29 USDA Rural Development water and sewer
30 funds, and Environmental Protection Agency
31 brownfield loan and grant funds.
 - 32 • Prioritizing redevelopment and reuse in areas
33 with existing public infrastructure.
 - 34 • A third-party, independent annual financial audit
35 of municipal water, sewer and storm water
36 systems being conducted and reported to the
37 State of Michigan.
 - 38 • Municipalities collecting adequate revenue from
39 system users to pay for needed infrastructure
40 repairs and maintenance.
 - 41 • Encouraging municipalities to take advantage of
42 low interest loan plans.
 - 43 • Implementation and enforcement of pollution
44 prevention control measures on municipalities,
45 especially phosphorus removal.
- 46 We oppose:
- 47 • A statewide assessment to pay for repair of
48 individual municipality's water, sewer, and storm
49 water infrastructure for any reason. ◆

#67 REDRESS FOR UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS

1 We support legislation making individuals, news
2 organizations, consumer and environmental groups
3 responsible for damages caused by their
4 unsubstantiated claims against approved products
5 and practices that result in market losses for
6 producers and the filing of frivolous lawsuits against
7 producers. Upon finding a complaint
8 unsubstantiated, the individual or organization who
9 filed the complaint shall be responsible for all court
10 costs, legal fees, and costs associated with market
11 and production losses.

12 A person should be prohibited from filing a liability
13 claim if the person was trespassing, breaking a law
14 or serving a prison sentence at the time of loss. ◆

#70 TORT LIABILITY REFORM

1 To alleviate the tremendous economic pressure
2 placed on businesses, medical providers, local
3 governments and others, we continue to support the
4 following tort reform measures:

- 5 • Perform calculations that reduce future damages
6 to present value.
- 7 • Reform and reduce attorney contingency fee
8 arrangements.
- 9 • A plaintiff (party pursuing suit) should be
10 responsible to pay defendant legal fees if the
11 case is settled in the defendant's favor. The court
12 should be responsible for collecting fees from the
13 plaintiff.
- 14 • Reform the collateral source rule to mandate
15 revealing other sources of compensation for
16 damages available to the plaintiff.
- 17 • Mandate structured settlements for large
18 monetary judgments.
- 19 • Reform prejudgment interest rules by reducing
20 the interest rate, which would start accruing the
21 day the judgment is awarded.
- 22 • Arbitration boards should be used to settle
23 cases.
- 24 • A person who uses a product in a way other than
25 was intended should not be allowed to bring suit.
- 26 • Court ordered mediation shall not be scheduled
27 before the defendant in civil litigation has the
28 opportunity to file a motion for summary
29 disposition. Court ordered mediation shall take
30 place only if both parties agree to mediate. Any
31 agreement reached in this mediation shall have a
32 waiting or cooling off period of 48 to 72 hours to
33 afford the defendant the opportunity to change his
34 mind after weighing the consequences of this
35 agreement or contract.
- 36 • Employers who are providing proper training and
37 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and are
38 working in good faith to protect employee health,
39 should have liability protection. ◆

#72 AIR QUALITY

1 Changes to state and federal air quality standards
2 and lawsuits driven by environmental groups impact
3 farms by forcing the development of regulation and
4 law in the absence of sound science. We insist
5 government air quality policies be based on sound
6 science and consider economic impact.

7 Federal and state air quality standards for ozone,
8 particulate matter (dust), nitrogen oxides, sulfur
9 oxides, carbon dioxide, hydrogen sulfide and others

10 consider agricultural practices such as livestock
11 production facilities, fuel combustion, diesel
12 emissions, and dust from soil tillage, crop harvesting,
13 grain mills, grain elevators and value-added
14 processing plants as potential sources of air quality
15 concerns.

16 We urge Michigan Farm Bureau to seek out major
17 university research on agricultural air quality
18 standards and best management practices. We urge
19 MFB to work with the Environmental Protection
20 Agency to recognize normal agricultural production
21 practices and the associated air particulate
22 generated.

23 We support:

- 24 • MFB educating members on air quality and how
25 this issue impacts members and Michigan
26 agriculture.
- 27 • The Michigan Department of Agriculture and
28 Rural Development as lead agency for all
29 agricultural air quality concerns.
- 30 • The Michigan Right to Farm Act as the primary
31 means for farmers to address air quality
32 concerns. Regulatory provisions exempting
33 farmers who conform to Generally Accepted
34 Agricultural and Management Practices from
35 nuisance regulation must remain in law.
- 36 • A scientific, practice-based approach to meet air
37 quality objectives.
- 38 • Re-evaluation of emissions standards for farm
39 and ranch equipment and other non-highway use
40 machinery.

41 We oppose:

- 42 • Air emission permits for agriculture more
43 stringent than federal rules and regulations and
44 not science or practice-based.
- 45 • Applying air quality regulations to areas of
46 Michigan that are not pollution sources.
47 Pollutants measured in areas of Michigan not
48 meeting air quality standards may originate in
49 urban/industrial settings far removed from the
50 monitored area. Air quality concerns should be
51 addressed at their source.
- 52 • Enforcing air quality standards for ozone and
53 particulate matter on farms and agricultural
54 businesses voluntarily implementing effective
55 environmental conservation practices.
- 56 • Further emission control requirements for
57 agricultural equipment and practices.
- 58 • Any ban on the burning of biodegradable
59 household waste. ♦

#73 CARBON SEQUESTRATION AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES MARKETS

- 1 Ecosystem services markets are rapidly evolving.
2 These would include carbon sequestration, phosphorus
3 reduction, water quality and conservation, and others.
4 Ecosystem services markets typically function with a
5 financial exchange for outcomes (credits).
6 We support:
- 7 • Ecosystem services markets to remain voluntary.
 - 8 • Sound science and public research related to
9 ecosystem services credits addressing Michigan's
10 diverse agricultural industries.
 - 11 • Standardization, transparency, and clarity related to
12 ecosystem services enrollment contracts and
13 credit(s).
 - 14 • Full recognition of agriculture and forestry's value to
15 carbon sequestration.
 - 16 • Compensation for farmers for farming practices that
17 keep carbon in the soil or in plant material.
 - 18 • Farmers receiving credit or compensation for
19 maintaining previous or existing practices.
 - 20 • The length of time that farmers are compensated to
21 be consistent with the length of practice
22 implementation.
 - 23 • Farm Bureau staff, Michigan State University staff,
24 and others in their mission to support farmers as
25 they navigate carbon sequestration/ecosystem
26 services credits contracting. ◆

#75 CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

- 1 Enhancing farmland conservation practices and
2 natural resource stewardship will benefit both
3 farmers and the public.
- 4 Michigan's conservation delivery system,
5 including Natural Resources Conservation Service,
6 Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural
7 Development (MDARD) and Districts, could be more
8 effective in delivering conservation on the ground,
9 and it needs to be improved. We encourage
10 conservation districts to take full advantage of farm
11 bill programs, federal watershed initiative programs,
12 and other grant opportunities to provide services and
13 programs for farmers in addition to dedicated funds.
14 We also encourage conservation districts to promote
15 the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance
16 Program (MAEAP) and work in collaboration with
17 farmers to provide technical advice and assistance,
18 including access to financial assistance through the

19 farm bill, in order to address resource concerns and
20 achieve MAEAP verification.

21 We support:

- 22 • Funding for conservation districts to develop and
23 improve soil, water and forestry programs to
24 assist agricultural landowners.
- 25 • The Michigan Legislature redirecting the
26 Michigan Department of Environment, Great
27 Lakes, and Energy's non-regulatory
28 responsibilities and accompanying funding to
29 MDARD for distribution to conservation districts.
- 30 • Adequate funding for conservation districts to
31 ensure an efficient conservation delivery system.
- 32 • Efforts to find a dedicated funding source for
33 conservation districts, which will allow them to
34 plan long-term projects knowing funding is
35 secure. Dedicated funds from agricultural
36 sources should focus on providing cost-share to
37 producers for implementing conservation
38 practices.
- 39 • Legislative or regulatory changes to enable
40 conservation districts with budgets less than
41 \$50,000 to participate in grant programs by
42 submitting a financial review in lieu of a formal
43 audit.
- 44 • Farm Bureau members supporting and becoming
45 actively involved with local conservation districts
46 by working collaboratively to improve the
47 conservation delivery system.
- 48 • Farmer leaders in conservation districts using
49 their annual meetings as an opportunity to
50 promote conservation programming in
51 agriculture.

52 We support Michigan Farm Bureau:

- 53 • Working with conservation districts to develop
54 educational materials for members about
55 agricultural stewardship and supporting efforts to
56 make the public aware of the benefits of
57 investment in good stewardship.
- 58 • Working with the Michigan Association of
59 Conservation Districts and local conservation
60 districts to ensure landowners' conservation
61 needs are met now and into the future. These
62 groups working together should review the
63 current structure and delivery system, as well as
64 determine what resources and appropriate
65 authorities are needed for conservation districts.

66 We support conservation districts:

- 67 • Focusing on conservation for agriculture.
- 68 • Providing technical support to farmers utilizing
69 Generally Accepted Agricultural and

- 70 Management Practices to protect soil, water and
71 other resources.
- 72 • Evaluating and adopting relevant successful
73 programs from other conservation districts and
74 states, such as water quality assistance and ditch
75 maintenance. Programming could vary from
76 county to county, based on the direction of the
77 district boards and the needs of agriculture.
 - 78 • Partnering at a watershed scale.
 - 79 • Providing multi-disciplinary cross-training for all
80 conservation district technicians.
 - 81 • Being the primary agency to initiate watershed
82 management programming and technical
83 assistance.
 - 84 • Only offering non-invasive species for
85 conservation purposes.

86 **Conservation Species**

87 Under PA 451 of 1994 as amended, conservation
88 districts may propagate, grow and sell plants
89 designated as “conservation species” by the
90 Conservation Species Advisory Panel for
91 conservation practices. The legislative intent of PA
92 451 was to limit the negative impact on the private
93 nursery and greenhouse industry from plant sales by
94 state-subsidized, tax-exempt conservation districts.

95 As a result of recent reductions in funding,
96 conservation districts generate additional sources of
97 revenue by greatly enlarging the approved list of
98 “conservation species,” which expands competition
99 with private industry for production and sale of plant
100 material. This “conservation species” list is reviewed
101 annually by an advisory panel, as required by law.

102 We are concerned about the number of recent
103 additions to the approved propagation list.
104 Conservation districts should be encouraged to
105 purchase their plant materials from Michigan private
106 industry suppliers whenever possible. ◆

#77 FARMLAND PROTECTION

1 We support the creation and effective
2 implementation of both temporary and permanent
3 farmland protection tools to stabilize the land base,
4 help maintain the agricultural industry's competitive
5 position, and aggressively increase its economic
6 value to producers and the state. A successful
7 approach to farmland protection will require a
8 combination of strong state leadership and local
9 community support.

10 We believe an investment in farmland protection
11 is an investment in the future of agriculture and the
12 next generation of Michigan farmers and citizens.

13 **A Strategic Approach**

14 Farmland protection initiatives should strengthen
15 the agricultural industry and maintain producer
16 flexibility and control.

17 We support:

- 18 • A voluntary, coordinated, and incentive-driven
19 approach at the state and local levels that
20 protects large blocks of farmland and increases
21 the opportunity for economically viable
22 agriculture.
- 23 • Reviewing the local revenue-sharing formula and
24 investigating the merits of linking revenue-
25 sharing to effective farmland preservation and
26 urban redevelopment.

27 **Funding Farmland Protection**

28 We support Michigan Farm Bureau and county
29 Farm Bureaus to continue working with partners to
30 develop innovative farmland protection funding
31 approaches at the state and local level, including tax
32 relief based on parcel size and duration of ownership
33 and the linking of urban development tax credits with
34 greenfield preservation, in addition to established
35 concepts including conversion fees, millage
36 proposals, tax credits, and recapture penalties.

37 We support:

38 **PA 116**

- 39 • The Farmland and Open Space Preservation
40 Program (commonly known as PA 116) as an
41 effective voluntary method of protecting farmland
42 while giving farmers needed tax relief.
- 43 • Refraining from future changes to existing
44 contracts that risk eroding the integrity of the
45 program.
- 46 • Local units of government zoning land under PA
47 116 contracts as agriculture and identifying it as
48 agriculture in their master plan.
- 49 • All PA 116 tax credit recapture revenue being
50 deposited into the Michigan Department of
51 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)
52 Agricultural Preservation Fund.
- 53 • Continued and aggressive use of PA 116 by
54 creating additional incentives to maintain and
55 increase participation.
- 56 • Additional funding and staffing of MDARD and
57 the Michigan Department of Treasury to
58 administer PA 116 and process refunds in a
59 timely manner.
- 60 • MDARD and the Michigan Department of
61 Treasury developing better communication to
62 resolve issues with PA 116 tax returns.

- 63 • Requiring the State to pay penalties for late
64 issuance of PA 116 refunds to landowners.
- 65 • Protection and exemption from special
66 assessments excluding agricultural drainage.

67 ***Agricultural Preservation Fund***

- 68 • Aggressive funding of the Agricultural
69 Preservation Fund. Funding opportunities can
70 include but should not be limited to bond issues,
71 conversion fees, property transfer fees, the lease
72 of mineral rights from state-owned land, and
73 general appropriations.
- 74 • Clarification of the “conflict of interest” policy for
75 grants, including language such as “If an
76 applicant has a conflict of interest, they shall
77 abstain from participating if and when their
78 application comes before the public body upon
79 which they serve.”
- 80 • The landowner option of spreading the
81 Development Rights payments over a period of
82 years.

83 ***Agricultural Security Areas***

- 84 • Legislation establishing voluntary Agricultural
85 Security Areas to place temporary, long-term
86 agricultural conservation easements on farmland.

87 ***Urban Revitalization***

- 88 • The improvement of cities, greater utilization of
89 current infrastructure, and redevelopment of
90 existing brownfields to reduce pressure to
91 develop farmland.

92 ***Transfer of Development Rights***

- 93 • Transfer of development rights to facilitate the
94 voluntary preservation of farmland where needed
95 while allowing land development in appropriate
96 areas without using public funds. ◆

#78 GAME FARMS AND HUNTING PRESERVES

1 Michigan game breeders and hunting preserves
2 that breed, feed, and graze privately-owned animals
3 are an integral part of the agricultural economy of the
4 state. The industry is concerned about increased
5 government restrictions on the use of farms for
6 hunting.

7 We support:

- 8 • Legislation providing opportunities and protection
9 for this growing segment of Michigan agriculture,
10 including privately owned cervidae and other
11 similar species.
- 12 • The elimination of feral swine.
- 13 • The invasive species order that went into effect
14 on October 8, 2011, naming certain species of
15 swine as invasive.

16 Continued development and implementation of
17 regulations on swine hunting facilities should include,
18 but not be limited to:

- 19 • Disease testing and record keeping for all
20 incoming and outgoing animals.
- 21 • Strict fencing requirements to eliminate the risk
22 of recreationally hunted swine escaping into the
23 wild.
- 24 • Following all standard accepted practices for
25 swine meat production operations moving
26 animals interstate and internationally.
- 27 • Hunting swine populations consisting only of
28 sterile animals.
- 29 • Permanent individual animal identification on all
30 animals used for breeding and stocking swine in
31 hunting facilities.
- 32 • All cost of regulation being paid for by a licensing
33 fee. ♦

#80 LAND ACQUISITIONS FOR PUBLIC PROJECTS

1 The condemnation of property by eminent domain
2 should be permitted only in conformance with the
3 amended State Constitution and when there is a
4 clear need.

5 When the eminent domain provision is used to
6 acquire easements, rights-of-way, leases, etc.
7 through a farm, condemnation payments need to
8 reflect the loss of value to the entire parcel. If
9 property is taken for public ownership, such as for
10 roads and bridges, the minimum payment should be
11 two times its present value. If property is taken for
12 private ownership, such as for shopping centers and
13 utility uses, the minimum payment should be three
14 times its present value.

15 We support:

- 16 • Legislation to stop or limit developmental grants
17 or other state, local or federal funding to entities
18 using condemnation procedures for private
19 ownership.
- 20 • Direct and verifiable communication in plain
21 language informing landowners of projects
22 seeking eminent domain.
- 23 • Agricultural land not ranking lower than other
24 types of land when calculating impact
25 statements.
- 26 • A complete agricultural impact statement before
27 productive agricultural land is condemned. The
28 statement should evaluate all direct and indirect
29 physical and economic impacts to agriculture.
- 30 • The concept of no-net gain for state and federal
31 ownership of land in Michigan. An environmental

- 32 impact statement should be a prerequisite for
33 any eminent domain proceeding.
- 34 • Efforts to further strengthen property rights of
35 Michigan property owners, including additional
36 opportunities for judicial review in eminent
37 domain takings.
 - 38 • Landowners having at least five years from the
39 time of the original settlement in which to
40 negotiate claims for damages in eminent domain
41 cases.
 - 42 • Permanent easements being given to the owners
43 of property left land-locked through land acquired
44 by public entities and utility companies.
 - 45 • Michigan Farm Bureau working with public utility
46 companies to ensure they pay fair and
47 reasonable rental rates to land owners for
48 easements.

49 We oppose:

- 50 • The taking of property by the government for the
51 purpose of development of privately-owned
52 projects.
- 53 • The ability of non-elected public or private
54 boards, agencies, or commissions to utilize the
55 eminent domain process.
- 56 • The practice of acquiring new rights-of-way
57 through farmland when nearby public corridors
58 exist, such as railways, highways, power lines,
59 and pipelines.
- 60 • Property being condemned in fee title if a lesser
61 interest will suffice. In cases where any portion of
62 condemned land is not needed at the completion
63 of a public project, is abandoned, or is no longer
64 used for the purpose stated, the landowner
65 should have the right of first refusal at the price
66 paid by the government entity. ♦

#84 OIL, GAS, AND MINERAL RIGHTS

1 We urge members to obtain information on oil,
2 gas, and mineral leasing from Michigan State
3 University Extension offices or through Michigan
4 Farm Bureau before signing a lease. A checklist for
5 oil, gas, and mineral leases is available on the MFB
6 web site.

7 We believe *wellhead* and *point of severance*
8 means the point at which the well is drilled or
9 minerals are extracted. When oil, gas, and minerals
10 are severed from the ground, everything occurring
11 after severance is the responsibility of the lessee.

12 We believe government agencies, Farm Credit
13 Services, local and state recording offices, and other

14 state and federal chartered financial institutions
15 should not be allowed to sever oil, gas, and mineral
16 rights from surface rights when they resell land
17 acquired through any land transfer. Oil, gas, and
18 mineral rights that have been severed at foreclosure
19 should be returned or sold to the surface property
20 owner at fair market value.

21 Oil, gas, and mineral rights without activity revert
22 to the owner of the property unless they are re-
23 registered every 20 years by the owner of the
24 specific rights at the register of deeds office. We
25 believe this law should be changed to require re-
26 registration every 10 years, and the property owner
27 should be notified and be given the opportunity to
28 object at the time of re-registration.

29 We support:

- 30 • The extraction of oil, gas, potash and other
31 minerals from both state-owned and private
32 property in Michigan.
- 33 • The Weights and Measures Division of the
34 Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural
35 Development (MDARD) studying the feasibility of
36 regulating the oil, gas, and mineral industries for
37 the accuracy of reported volumes of oil, gas, and
38 minerals extracted from private property. MDARD
39 needs to become involved in the certification of all
40 metering and measuring.
- 41 • Legislation requiring oil, gas, and mineral rights
42 lessees to notify the landowner and royalty
43 owner by certified mail of their intent to explore
44 for, or develop, oil, gas, and minerals prior to
45 beginning any operations on leased land and that
46 proof of the notification be submitted prior to
47 granting any permit.
- 48 • Legislation requiring an escrow account or bond
49 be filed before commencing operations providing
50 the opportunity for landowners to appeal within 10
51 days of its proposed release to prevent surface
52 waste. The escrow account or bond should be
53 reviewed annually and adjusted accordingly, with
54 a post-closure monitoring period of 40 years.
- 55 • The continued use of hydraulic fracturing with the
56 appropriate scientifically verified environmental
57 safeguards.
- 58 • An agricultural environmental and economic
59 impact statement being required before the
60 supervisor of wells issues a permit.
- 61 • When an injection well damages the value of the
62 oil, gas, and mineral rights of adjacent
63 landowners, the affected landowners being
64 compensated for these losses.

- 65 • Gas, oil, and mineral royalties from state-owned
- 66 land and all severance taxes being shared with
- 67 local units of government.
- 68 • A reasonable severance tax for gas, oil, and
- 69 precious metals, with the priority focus of the
- 70 funds being in the region where the commodity is
- 71 removed.
- 72 • Rights of townships granted to them under the
- 73 Township Ordinance, PA 246 of 1945.
- 74 • Requiring a new permit for any change in a well's
- 75 use.
- 76 • Agricultural representation on the state oil and
- 77 gas advisory committee.
- 78 • MFB exploring alternative distribution of Natural
- 79 Resources Trust Fund. Consideration should be
- 80 given to maintaining and improving parks, roads
- 81 and wildlife habitat on existing state lands.

82 We oppose:

- 83 • Any deductions by the oil, gas, and mineral
- 84 industries from a private lessor's share of
- 85 revenue unless it is expressly provided for in the
- 86 signed lease. If deductions take place, the lease
- 87 must contain the definition of the deduction,
- 88 specific items eligible for deductions, a clear
- 89 process enabling the lessor to monitor
- 90 deductions, and a maximum percentage of costs
- 91 to be deducted.
- 92 • Attempts to ban exploration for oil, gas, and
- 93 mineral deposits.
- 94 • The State burdening private royalty owners with
- 95 the deduction of post-production costs.
- 96 Traditionally in Michigan, oil, gas, and mineral
- 97 owners' 1/8 interest was "free of costs" because
- 98 owners and developers bore the expense from
- 99 the wellhead. ◆

#85 PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

1 We believe in the American free market system in
2 which property is privately owned, managed, and
3 operated for profit and individual satisfaction. Any
4 erosion of that right weakens all other rights
5 guaranteed to individuals by the Constitution.

6 We believe any action by the government
7 diminishing an owner's right to use their property,
8 such as the Endangered Species Act or the Natural
9 Rivers Act, constitutes a taking of that owner's
10 property. Government should provide for the removal
11 of endangered species or due process and
12 compensation to the exact degree an owner's right to
13 use his or her property has been diminished by
14 government action.

15 We believe the Natural Rivers Act should be
16 reviewed to ensure private property owners' rights
17 remain protected. We believe the following will not
18 only strengthen private property rights, but create
19 more widespread support and compliance with the
20 Act:

- 21 • The initial request for and final approval of a
22 Natural Rivers Act designation must originate
23 from the local units of government in which the
24 river is located.
- 25 • Agriculture and other industries must be fairly
26 represented on local Natural Rivers Review
27 Boards.
- 28 • An economic impact study should be conducted
29 to determine the effect of a Natural Rivers Act
30 designation on local businesses and property
31 owners.
- 32 • If the local unit of government approves a Natural
33 Rivers Act designation, the designation must be
34 subject to review at least every five years.

35 We support:

- 36 • Legislation requiring state and local agencies to
37 evaluate the impact of proposed rules and
38 regulations on private property rights and
39 compensate the landowner for any private
40 property rights taken.
- 41 • The original description of a parcel standing and
42 the moving of a boundary through re-
43 measurement not being automatically considered
44 conclusive.
- 45 • The development of a process to provide
46 notification to all adjacent landowners when a
47 new land survey is conducted by a registered
48 surveyor.
- 49 • The Doctrine of Adverse Possession continuing
50 in property line disputes.
- 51 • Review of all regulations and enforcement
52 policies encroaching on the rights of property
53 owners, including buildings, planted trees and
54 travel ways placed too close to property lines.
55 The presence of other trespassing does not
56 constitute permission to enter private land.
- 57 • Legislation denying claims of prescriptive
58 easement based on intentional recreational
59 trespass.
- 60 • Developing and implementing a "purple paint
61 law" to authorize posting of private property by
62 using a specific paint color.
- 63 • A public awareness campaign utilizing all types
64 of media to encourage better understanding

65 between farmers and nonfarm neighbors as
66 population density around farms increases.

- 67 • Increased fines for trespassing.

68 We oppose:

- 69 • Any legislation allowing public access to or
70 through private property without permission of
71 the property owner or owner's authorized agent.
- 72 • Non-private easements (except maintenance
73 easements) being sold, traded or otherwise
74 transferred without consent of the current
75 property owner. This should include all past and
76 future transactions. Michigan law should protect
77 the rights of the property owner. ♦

#88 WATER USE IN THE GREAT LAKES BASIN

1 The Great Lakes Basin represents the largest
2 reserve of fresh water in the world. This unique
3 resource should be used in a responsible manner
4 and protected for future generations and the future of
5 Michigan agriculture. Food and fiber production is in
6 the public interest, is a reasonable use of water, and
7 provides economic and ecological benefits to the
8 Great Lakes Basin.

Michigan Water Law and Policy

9 Management of the waters of the Great Lakes
10 Basin does not require water use permitting.
11 Burdensome regulation is not necessary to protect
12 the Great Lakes and could challenge the
13 competitiveness of Michigan farms. Any laws
14 regarding water use permitting must be carefully
15 examined and opposed if they do not include the
16 following provisions:

- 18 • No fees may EVER be charged for agricultural
19 water use.
- 20 • Existing documented surface and groundwater
21 uses and sites must be grandfathered.
- 22 • Water use permits for withdrawals supplying a
23 common distribution system of less than two
24 million gallons per day in any 90-day consecutive
25 period for agriculture must be handled by the
26 Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural
27 Development (MDARD).
- 28 • Municipalities or other governments with
29 jurisdiction over artificial impoundments, such as
30 ponds and lakes, should be allowed to reduce
31 water levels to remove accumulated sediments.

32 We support:

- 33 • An increased role in any current or future state
34 water use committees due to the diversity of
35 Michigan agriculture.

- 36 • The State of Michigan making every effort to
37 approve agricultural water withdrawals in a timely
38 manner.
- 39 • MDARD being the primary department for
40 agricultural water use reporting and conflict
41 resolution.
- 42 • Basing all water use policies and regulations on
43 validated scientific research.
- 44 • Landowners receiving water recharge credit for
45 maintaining open, undeveloped ground. Water
46 use reporting should include “water in” (rainfall)
47 provisions. We encourage the development of
48 incentives for farmers who recover more water
49 than they use.
- 50 • Legislation strengthening Michigan’s authority to
51 conserve and protect the waters of the Great
52 Lakes Basin.
- 53 • Including agricultural water uses in the Michigan
54 Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program
55 (MAEAP). The state should be required to have a
56 greater burden of proof in determining a water
57 use is causing an adverse resource impact if the
58 verified producer is addressing applicable water
59 conservation measures through MAEAP.
- 60 • The inclusion of scientifically sound,
61 environmentally protective and economically
62 feasible water conservation measures in
63 Generally Accepted Agricultural and
64 Management Practices.
- 65 • Increased development and use of Michigan’s
66 Wellogic database of well drilling logs. Accurate
67 records of existing uses including residential
68 wells are needed to assess Michigan water
69 supplies and use.
- 70 • Seasonal exemptions in Michigan’s Well Code
71 for shallow aquifer water withdrawals regardless
72 of well depth.

73 **Water Withdrawal Assessment**

74 Michigan has implemented an online science-
75 based water withdrawal assessment tool (WWAT).
76 As there are significant differences between
77 Michigan regions regarding water availability and
78 use, we recognize a “one size fits all” solution may
79 not be the best answer. The process has
80 experienced complications and technical difficulties.
81 According to the Michigan Geological Survey, the
82 current data used in the WWAT is insufficient to
83 adequately map and assess Michigan’s groundwater
84 resources and consider applications for groundwater
85 withdrawal. Although the Michigan Department of
86 Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (MDEGLE)

87 reported the WWAT provides automatic authorization
88 for withdrawals in nearly 70 percent of all
89 applications statewide, Michigan Farm Bureau
90 believes continued improvement of the WWAT is
91 needed, including but not limited to the following:

- 92 • Continued MFB leadership in implementing the
93 state’s water withdrawal assessment law in
94 accordance with MFB policy.
- 95 • Additional data collection and model
96 enhancement with the latest scientific data so
97 streamflow depletion predictions agree with
98 actual results of water withdrawals.
- 99 • Continued refinement of the WWAT accounting
100 for regional variability and privately collected
101 data.
- 102 • University research to verify accuracy of the
103 WWAT.
- 104 • An exemption from the WWAT for withdrawals
105 where the potential for adverse resource impact
106 is negligible based on the collection and analysis
107 of field data using industry standards,
108 methodology and practices.
- 109 • Privately researched data collected in
110 accordance with standard research protocols
111 being included into the WWAT and accepted by
112 the MDEGLE, as well as MDARD.
- 113 • MDARD and MDEGLE, with input of
114 stakeholders, developing and using a
115 standardized template for site specific reviews of
116 high-capacity agricultural water withdrawals.
- 117 • Completing the comprehensive water use study
118 in Southwest Michigan to collect the data
119 necessary to make appropriate changes within
120 the WWAT.
- 121 • The changes made by PA 209 of 2018 to provide
122 an optional alternate process for site specific
123 reviews of high-capacity water withdrawals. This
124 law is based on updated scientific modeling and
125 provides a more accurate reflection of the
126 regional variability of water use impacts.
127 Additionally, the law clarifies MDEGLE’s role and
128 timeframes for review and approval of withdrawal
129 applications under the new process. We
130 encourage MFB to oversee the implementation
131 of the law and develop educational information
132 about the process for members.

133 **Aquifer Conflicts**

134 We support the Aquifer Conflict and Dispute
135 Resolution law and further support the following
136 changes to the process:

- 137 • MDARD shall certify well drillers to verify
- 138 complaints by onsite inspection. These
- 139 contracted well drillers will be ineligible to
- 140 replace, repair or modify any well they are sent to
- 141 inspect.
- 142 • The owner of a high-capacity well should not be
- 143 assumed at fault until proven otherwise.
- 144 • The law should establish a statute of limitations
- 145 and release from future claims.

146 **Research and Education**

147 We support:

- 148 • Research enhancing the understanding of water
- 149 resources, validating the ecological benefits of
- 150 agriculture's role in the water cycle, and leading
- 151 to increased agricultural water use efficiency.
- 152 • MFB developing partnerships to increase
- 153 education and promoting the value of agricultural
- 154 water use to the public.
- 155 • MFB and partners such as conservation districts
- 156 facilitating the formation of farmer collectives to
- 157 gather and share data and develop regional
- 158 models to assess and predict water use impacts.
- 159 • Increasing education, financial and technical
- 160 assistance for farmers who participate in
- 161 voluntary, incentive-driven water use
- 162 conservation programs.
- 163 • The voluntary use of monitoring wells.
- 164 • Seeking new and expanded opportunities to
- 165 reclaim and recycle water.
- 166 • Water use record keeping on farms to increase
- 167 water use efficiencies, protect producer rights to
- 168 water access and validate agricultural water use
- 169 as a high priority.
- 170 • Working with well drillers to ensure they have
- 171 sufficient understanding of geological and
- 172 hydrologic processes to provide the best possible
- 173 knowledge and service to clients and the most
- 174 accurate and useful reporting of data to the State,
- 175 including groundwater location and availability,
- 176 and soil and geological formations. We
- 177 encourage landowners voluntarily submitting
- 178 geological samples to the Michigan Geological
- 179 Survey and developing a trust fund to protect
- 180 participants against liability for negative sample
- 181 analysis findings.
- 182 • Investigating funding sources for geological
- 183 mapping.
- 184 • The findings of the Southwest Michigan Water
- 185 Resource Council, which was charged with
- 186 studying water resources in the region.

187 We oppose:

- 188 • Any water allocation system preempting surface
- 189 water riparian doctrine or groundwater rights.
- 190 • Applying a “public trust doctrine” to groundwater.
- 191 • Diverting water in its natural state from the Great
- 192 Lakes Basin.
- 193 • The definition of consumptive use as applied to
- 194 agriculture.
- 195 • Legislative or regulatory efforts resulting from
- 196 federal, regional, state and/or local initiatives that
- 197 adversely impact agriculture.
- 198 • The State of Michigan removing dams located on
- 199 drains and waterways recharging aquifers of the
- 200 state and not requiring owners of existing dams
- 201 to maintain them.
- 202 • Attempts to limit efficient agricultural water use.
- 203 • Water use prioritization.
- 204 • Filing fees for agricultural water use reporting.
- 205 • Using collected agricultural water use data for
- 206 regulatory purposes or to advance agendas in
- 207 opposition to efficient agricultural water use.
- 208 • Well code changes placing economic or
- 209 regulatory burdens on landowners in the
- 210 absence of sound science.
- 211 • Any attempt to turn water into a commodity.
- 212 • The Environmental Protection Agency
- 213 designating interstate aquifers as “sole source
- 214 aquifers.”
- 215 • Fraudulent use of the WWAT to register a water
- 216 withdrawal. ◆

#89 WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES

1 To limit the scope of the Environmental Protection
2 Agency’s (EPA) oversight, we encourage reaffirmation and
3 support of Justice Scalia’s 2006 U.S. Supreme Court
4 definition of “Waters of the United States” in *Rapanos v.*
5 *United States*, 547 U.S. 715: “relatively permanent,
6 standing or continuously flowing bodies of
7 water...not...channels through which water flows
8 intermittently or ephemerally, or channels that periodically
9 provide drainage for rainfall.”

10 We oppose changing the wording, meaning or definition
11 of navigable waters in the Clean Water Act (CWA), the
12 removal of the term "navigable waters" from the CWA, and
13 any attempt to broaden the reach of the CWA. Federal
14 CWA jurisdiction and the EPA’s power should be limited to
15 navigable streams and flowing waterways with continuous
16 flow 365 days a year.

17 The EPA has already tried to expand its oversight to
18 include “temporary” waterways, which include areas as
19 small as wet spots in fields and puddles in driveways.
20 Under no circumstance should temporary waterways or

21 any agricultural drain be considered a water of the United
22 States. We urge the EPA to include greater farmer input in
23 the development of future rules.

24 We support the county drain/water resources
25 commissioner's ability to make decisions and
26 determinations about the characteristics of water under
27 their jurisdiction to assist state or federal agencies in
28 jurisdictional determinations. ◆

#92 FEES

1 We are very concerned with the expansion of new and
2 increased fees which impact agriculture because:

- 3 • Fees constitute taxation without representation.
- 4 • Fees may not be in relation to service provided and
5 generate revenue in excess of the cost of service.
- 6 • Fees might be interpreted as a replacement for General
7 Fund dollars.
- 8 • Fees are a cost on a select and limited sector of the
9 economy.

10 We oppose any revenue generating fees which are
11 charged by the State of Michigan, based on a violations
12 history, rather than from new violations.

13 Compliance monitoring and enforcement that benefit the
14 general public should be funded from the General Fund.
15 Funding for general administration and operation should be
16 funded by the General Fund, not fees or fines.

17 Departments which depend on fee or fine-based revenue
18 must continue to receive annual legislative review and
19 oversight.

20 An economic impact statement should be completed
21 on the permitted entities before the fee is implemented. ◆

#94 COUNTY ROAD COMMISSIONS

1 The board of county road commissioners is a unit
2 of local government responsible for maintenance and
3 construction of most roads within a county. Michigan
4 is the only state in the country to utilize a county road
5 commission structure. The three or five-member
6 boards have six-year staggered terms and are, in
7 most cases, appointed by the county board of
8 commissioners.

9 Public Acts 14 and 15 of 2012 allows a county
10 board of commissioners to assume the duties of the
11 county road commission. We continue to support a
12 system of local control selection.

13 We believe each county overseen by a road
14 commission should have the option to decide if it
15 needs a three or five-member county road
16 commission. These should be by district, regardless
17 of population, and representative of all areas of the

18 county. Commission members should serve four-
19 year staggered terms.

20 We support properly and consistently training
21 road commission employees to grade and maintain
22 local roadways to uniform grade standards. ◆

#95 FARM AND COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

1 As farm suppliers and markets become fewer and farther
2 between, distances farmers must travel for supplies, services
3 and markets have increased substantially.

4 We encourage Michigan Farm Bureau members to
5 review the Michigan Farmer's Transportation Guidebook
6 and use it as an educational tool for all drivers.

Vehicle Regulations

8 We support:

- 9 • The development of State of Michigan covered farm
10 vehicle designation to cover rented and commercially
11 plated vehicles for use in agriculture.
- 12 • Uniformity of enforcement of trucking regulations by
13 all enforcing agencies.
- 14 • MFB continuing to provide information to members
15 regarding the proper uses of farm-plated vehicles.
- 16 • A simple, low cost method for the Secretary of State to
17 verify farm or logging connection when applying for
18 the plate designations. Schedule F forms or EINs must
19 not be the only methods since not all farmers and
20 loggers have those options.
- 21 • Allowing personal business to be done in the personal
22 pick-up of a logger with a log plate designation.
- 23 • MFB seeking clarification on the licensing and registration
24 requirements for farmers and others hauling livestock,
25 equipment, and agricultural products to markets, events or
26 shows, and people to events or shows.
- 27 • More flexibility in the waiting period to obtain a
28 seasonal restricted license.
- 29 • Specialty license plates and allowing their use on agri-
30 business and commercial vehicles.
- 31 • The continuation of permanent trailer license plates
32 without additional fees, and allowing these plates to
33 be transferred.
- 34 • A revenue-neutral multiyear plate renewal option for
35 all vehicles.
- 36 • Earmarking part of state, local and county fines for
37 roadway repair to be distributed back to counties
38 through the Michigan Transportation Fund formula.
39 City, township and village fines should be prohibited
40 from being allocated for local law enforcement.
- 41 • Minor restricted license eligibility. Licenses should not
42 be based on taxable household income, and farm size
43 should not be a factor. Licenses will only be considered
44 for immediate family members.

- 45 • Individuals and businesses should be able to conduct
46 business and complete transactions with the Secretary
47 of State in an easily accessible manner including in-
48 person, online, or by mail.

49 We oppose:

- 50 • The classification by a state or federal government to
51 include implements of husbandry as commercial motor
52 vehicles.
53 • Any proposal requiring vehicles registered in Michigan to
54 display license plates on both the front and rear of the
55 vehicle.

56 **Vehicle Size and Weights**

57 We support the current Michigan per axle weight
58 limits for trucks on state highways. These axle limits
59 should be extended and consistently applied on all
60 county roads. We support the exemption of all farm
61 and agribusiness vehicles of any size, up to legal
62 weight limit per axle, from no through trucks ordinance
63 and laws. We support trailers of common dimensional
64 size, which are currently legal on Class A roads, be
65 allowed to operate on all roads.

66 We support allowing permits to be issued for
67 hauling over width loads of double wide loads of bales.

68 Due to changes in moisture and weights on farm
69 commodities, it can be very difficult to determine if the
70 legal weight limits are being met when loading from the
71 field or farm. We support up to a 10 percent exemption
72 on load limits, or up to a 20 percent tolerance over the
73 legal weight limit on axles provided the vehicle is at or
74 below its legal gross weight, for all farm and forestry
75 commodities loaded out of the field or farm storage. All
76 state highways should be brought up to Class A
77 designation as soon as possible. Until they are, the
78 appropriate road agencies should have the authority to
79 give seasonal permits for movement of agricultural
80 produce. We oppose the actions by local units of
81 government which impose reduced vehicle weight limits
82 on roads established or maintained with state or federal
83 road funding.

84 For seasonal permits, we support:

- 85 • The use of sound engineering principles and criteria
86 to determine when to apply and remove spring load
87 restrictions on county and Michigan Department of
88 Transportation (MDOT) roads.
89 • Reasonable, standardized Frost Law permitting criteria
90 and fees for all counties within the state.
91 • Requiring MDOT to issue permits for the trucking of
92 agricultural and forestry commodities at normal load
93 limits during spring weight restrictions on the state
94 highway system.
95 • Prohibiting county road commissions from requiring

- 96 to be named as an additional insured for liability
97 coverage to obtain a permit.
98 • MDOT being allowed to issue all permits which
99 allows farm equipment to be trailered on weekends,
100 as well as week days, on the state highway system.

101 **Autonomous Vehicles**

102 We support:

- 103 • Development of technology to advance the use of
104 autonomous vehicles.
- 105 • The development of safety technology and mandatory
106 enhanced safety features installed on all new vehicles
107 including, but not limited to, braking and cautionary
108 sensors that create a safer driving environment for all
109 farm equipment on roadways.
- 110 • Proper regulation and licensing of road bound vehicles.
111 We encourage Michigan Farm Bureau to monitor future
112 developments in autonomous vehicles and regulation
113 regarding their use.

114 **Implements of Husbandry**

115 Implements of husbandry have changed over time;
116 therefore, consideration should be given to the design and
117 functional use of the vehicle serving agricultural purposes.

118 We support:

- 119 • Pickups, like farm tractors, being allowed to tow two
120 wagons or trailers, provided the combination of trailers
121 does not exceed the towing capacity of the pickup.
- 122 • Implements of husbandry being operated and
123 maintained with manufacturer's recommendations.
- 124 • MFB educating members about the safe and
125 appropriate use of implements of husbandry on public
126 roadways.
- 127 • Current statute for size and weight provisions of
128 implements of husbandry, and abide by the posted bridge
129 weight limits, not exceeding the vehicle axle limits.
- 130 • Clarification on the definition of "modified agricultural
131 vehicle" and its distinction from implements of
132 husbandry. ♦

#96 INTERNATIONAL TRADE CROSSING

1 Canada is Michigan's leading trade partner and
2 transportation to and from Canada is vital to
3 accommodate the agricultural industry.

4 We applaud the completed agreement to
5 construct the Gordie Howe International Bridge (New
6 International Trade Crossing) and urge its expedient
7 completion. ♦

#97 LIMITED PURPOSE OPERATOR'S LICENSE

1 Prior to 2008, Michigan law contained no
2 requirement that an applicant for a driver's license or
3 state ID card needed a specific immigration or
4 citizenship status in order to be eligible and had to
5 submit documents sufficient to prove their identity
6 and Michigan residency.

7 We support the State of Michigan:

- 8 • Providing a limited purpose operator's license for
9 individuals without proof of citizenship status.
- 10 • Setting standards for documentation required for
11 the limited purpose operator's license.
- 12 • Increasing penalties for providing fraudulent
13 information to the Michigan Secretary of State,
14 including fraudulent claims of state residency.
- 15 • Requiring passage of a written and driver skill
16 test.

17 The limited purpose operator's license would not
18 be acceptable for official federal purposes. It would
19 be issued only as a license to drive a motor vehicle
20 and not establish eligibility for employment, voter
21 registration, or public benefits. ◆

#98 RAILROADS

1 The transportation of agricultural and forestry
2 inputs and commodities produced is dependent upon
3 efficient and continued railroad service. Mergers with
4 the industry and low priority designations by railroad
5 management have created an unstable and, in some
6 areas, unreliable rail service.

7 Farm Bureau should work with the Michigan
8 Department of Agriculture and Rural Development,
9 the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT),
10 the U.S. Department of Transportation and Congress
11 to ensure future investment and expansion of
12 commodity and passenger rail infrastructures in
13 Michigan and throughout the United States.

14 We encourage the continuance of rail service in
15 Michigan. Therefore, we support:

- 16 • Urging the responsible authorities to improve and
17 maintain railroad crossings to current code,
18 including replacing existing railroad cross buck
19 signs with cross buck signs that are reflectorized
20 on both sides, and requiring stop signs or
21 warning lights to replace yield signs where
22 visibility is limited.
- 23 • Legislation to require railroads to use reflectors
24 or reflectorized paint or tape on the sides of rail
25 cars to improve visibility. In addition, we support
26 the use of strobe and ditch lights on railroad
27 engines and the last car.

- 28 • Public notice and hearing process for Michigan
29 highway projects should be used when changes
30 in Michigan railroads are proposed to ensure the
31 viewpoints of all affected parties are considered.
- 32 • Acceptable rail crossing alternatives be
33 developed and railroad crossing upgrades be
34 completed in a timely manner if existing
35 crossings are required to be closed.
- 36 • Exempting private agriculture crossings from
37 closure and treated as nonresidential seasonal
38 agriculture use.
- 39 • The requesting party be responsible to pay for
40 safety mechanisms at a private crossing if they
41 are determined necessary.
- 42 • Fencing along the rail corridor should be erected
43 and paid for by the railroad when railroads bisect
44 a fenced parcel of land.
- 45 • Railway companies be responsible to keep the
46 railroad right-of-way free of brush for a
47 reasonable distance at road crossings.

48 **Abandoned Railroads**

49 The changing of a railroad right-of-way from its
50 intended use should result in compensation to
51 property owners whose land had been originally
52 purchased or condemned for the purpose of the
53 railroad right-of-way. All unused railroad rights-of-
54 way not preserved for future railroad traffic should be
55 reverted to, or offered for sale at or below fair market
56 value, to the current owner of record of the
57 underlying parcel of real estate from which said right-
58 of-way was originally obtained. Whenever
59 determined not possible, landowners shall be
60 compensated for the condemnation of the land or a
61 change to a non-railroad use.

62 MDOT, who controls the abandoned railroads,
63 should allow the adjacent property owner to clear
64 and remove the railroad bed to return it to
65 agricultural production.

66 We propose a state standard be developed by
67 MDOT requiring removal of non-service or
68 abandoned grade crossing signage within a set time
69 period after public notification of rail line non-service
70 or abandonment.

71 We support allowing horses on converted
72 railroad trails. ♦

#99 SAFETY ON ROADWAYS

1 We continue to support legislation and education
2 which will promote highway safety and improve the
3 interface between farm machinery and other vehicles
4 on Michigan roadways. This information should be

5 included in the Michigan Farmers Transportation
6 Guidebook.

7 **Agricultural Safety on Roads**

8 To improve safety regarding agricultural use of
9 roadways, we support:

- 10 • Greater emphasis in driver education programs
11 regarding how farm machinery operates on
12 public roads.
- 13 • The creation of educational materials for use at
14 Secretary of State offices.
- 15 • The voluntary use of reflective tape or other
16 reflective material where appropriate, including
17 horseback riders.
- 18 • Farmers using care to keep field and animal
19 residue off roads.
- 20 • Prohibiting legal suits from small spillage of
21 agricultural products, including feeds and
22 fertilizers, which does not impede traffic or result
23 in pollution.
- 24 • Farmers not being ticketed for livestock that
25 escape onto roadways unless the farmer is
26 negligent in the maintenance of his livestock
27 enclosures.

28 **Slow Moving Vehicle Signs**

29 Michigan Farm Bureau should continue efforts to
30 educate the public and farmers regarding the proper
31 use and recognition of the slow moving vehicle
32 (SMV) sign and implements of husbandry which is
33 designed to warn other road users that the vehicle
34 displaying the sign is traveling at slower than normal
35 traffic speed.

36 Therefore, we support:

- 37 • Greater use of SMV questions on the driver
38 license test.
- 39 • Labels on SMV signs to inform purchasers of the
40 legal and illegal uses of the signs.
- 41 • Efforts to implement visible lighting and SMV
42 signs on horse-drawn vehicles and education
43 regarding sharing the road with equine. We
44 recommend horse-drawn vehicles have flashing
45 front amber lights and flashing red tail lights.
- 46 • Appropriate use of SMV emblems. Furthermore,
47 enforcement actions taken when SMV signs are
48 used for purposes other than legally intended,
49 such as driveway markers.

50 **Visibility and Warning Signals**

51 To improve safety and visibility on roadways, we
52 support:

- 53 • MFB working in cooperation with the County
54 Road Association to establish a process for use

- 55 of warning signs related to agriculture vehicles
56 such as entering and exiting roadways.
- 57 • The use of farm and other traffic alert signs in areas
58 of heavy farm or other traffic or similar signage
59 allowed under the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic
60 Control Devices.
 - 61 • The placement of yellow flashing lights at the
62 beginning of school zones, and appropriate
63 signage as mandated under the Michigan
64 Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
 - 65 • An advance stop light change warning system at
66 major state highway intersections. This advance
67 warning system would alert drivers to a signal
68 change from green light to a yellow light, allowing
69 drivers extra time and distance to slow and stop
70 vehicles before the red light is illuminated. This
71 advance warning system would read “when light
72 is flashing be prepared to stop.”
 - 73 • The use of low-cost measures, including
74 reflective taping or additional signage, to mitigate
75 accidents at rural intersections and railroad
76 crossings.
 - 77 • Where stop lights are present on highways with
78 speed limits above 45 mph, we support the
79 placement of a warning light and sign before the
80 intersection that would flash a warning that “the
81 light is about to change” in order to give trucks
82 and large vehicles additional time to stop.
 - 83 • Reflectorized material being used on the outer
84 edge of snow blades to be more visible at night.
 - 85 • Voluntary use of pollinator habitat using Natural
86 Resources Conservation Service guidelines
87 along roadways and at intersections to improve
88 line of sight.
 - 89 • More aggressive enforcement by local
90 jurisdictions of laws pertaining to encroachments
91 (e.g., mailboxes, shrines should be on one side
92 of the road) on road rights-of-way.

93 **General Public Safety on Roadways**

94 To improve safety on our public roads, we support:

- 95 • Pedestrians choosing to walk in the roadway
96 should wear high visibility clothing and follow
97 traffic rules.
- 98 • Further education regarding bicycle safety and
99 rules on public roads. Additionally, traffic laws
100 should be enforced by local authorities for
101 bicyclists at the same level as they are for
102 passenger vehicles.
- 103 • Bicyclists being required to ride in single file on
104 highways, or paved shoulders when available,
105 instead of the vehicle traffic lane.

- 106 • Revisions to the Michigan Vehicle Code to
107 include visibility and safety standards for the
108 operation of bicycles on public roads during
109 daylight hours, as well as sunset to sunrise.
110 • Front and rear lights and high visibility clothing
111 should be required.
112 • All persons over 75 years of age should have to
113 renew their driver's license in person at a
114 Secretary of State office. The only test that would
115 be needed is a vision test. This test would be
116 optional and at the discretion of the Secretary of
117 State staff. ♦

#100 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT

1 Agriculture is dependent on a sound transportation system
2 to move materials and products to and from farm and market.

3 Michigan Farm Bureau recognizes the importance of the
4 state and local road network to agriculture. Investment in
5 infrastructure, such as highways and airports, can be
6 directly linked to growth in business and economy.
7 Improving Michigan's transportation system will create jobs,
8 attract business and strengthen our economy.

9 **Transportation Revenue**

10 Michigan's road and highway maintenance budgets have
11 regularly seen funding shortfalls over the last several years
12 despite legislative efforts in 2015, and these funding
13 deficiencies are growing due to rising maintenance costs
14 coupled with increases in automotive fuel economy. MFB
15 believes having adequate road funding should remain a
16 high priority for the state. We believe state and local road
17 agencies should be adequately funded so they are able to
18 properly fund routine maintenance and ensure safe and
19 efficient roadways for all motorists.

20 We support:

- 21 • User taxes when new revenue is needed for roads
22 and bridges. User taxes may include, but are not
23 limited to, gas tax, registration and other user fees.
24 New revenues for roads and bridges shall go through
25 the Michigan Transportation Fund (MTF). Such taxes
26 must be in line with maintenance costs and should be
27 consistent with neighboring states.
28 • Local options that raise funds dedicated to road
29 funding from user-based fees.
30 • A system that allows for indexing of the fuel tax rate.
31 • Taxing other forms of energy that are used in
32 transportation at an equitable rate.
33 • An increase in the return of Michigan-collected
34 revenues sent to the National Highway Trust Fund.

35 We oppose:

- 36 • Reverting to the property tax or special

37 assessments as a means of building and
38 maintaining state roads and bridges.

39 **Transportation Formula**

40 All transportation expenditures must be examined to
41 achieve the best and most efficient use of transportation
42 funding. We support PA 51 of 1951 which outlines the
43 distribution of the MTF.

44 We support the following PA 51 changes:

- 45 • At least 25 percent of federal road funds go to local road
46 agencies. At least 25 percent of federal bridge funds go
47 to the Local Bridge program for use by local road
48 agencies.
- 49 • Before any debt is serviced, the Transportation
50 Economic Development Fund (TEDF) shall be allocated
51 with 25 percent to urban counties and 25 percent to
52 rural counties, as defined in the TEDF.
- 53 • An increase in federal highway funding and the TEDF
54 dollars used to finance a portion of the all-season
55 road program.
- 56 • All funds from the MTF should be earmarked for
57 maintaining and improving our transportation
58 infrastructure. Eliminate non-road related
59 earmarked administrative funding and off-the-top
60 state debt service from the MTF.
- 61 • Allocating funding from the Michigan Department of
62 Natural Resources (MDNR), at a reasonable rate, to the
63 responsible road maintenance body for removal of wildlife
64 carcasses from the roadways and rights of-way.
- 65 • More effective use of Michigan's mass transit funds.
66 Ten percent of Michigan's transportation funds are
67 dedicated to mass transit systems. We urge new or
68 improved mass transit options be studied, including
69 waterways, in appropriate areas.
- 70 • Raising the statutory limit on the amount of funds that
71 can be transferred from primary to local road systems,
72 provided these funds are used to match other locally
73 raised revenue. We believe local roads should receive
74 a higher priority.
- 75 • Adequate funding of the Michigan Forest Roads Program.
- 76 • The concept of easily allowing county road
77 commissions to transfer federal funds to other counties
78 and/or state road projects when applicable.

79 We oppose:

- 80 • Distribution of road funding based on road use or
81 traffic volume.

82 **Road Construction and Maintenance**

83 New road construction, improvements and
84 maintenance, as well as issues of jurisdictional transfer of
85 existing roads should be carried out in a spirit of
86 cooperation between local, state, and federal agencies
87 involving constituent groups throughout the project. We

88 encourage local governments to continue to look for
89 increased efficiencies in government by prioritizing
90 services, reforming where possible, eliminating duplicative
91 services, and utilizing private partners.

92 We believe the local road agency must dedicate
93 themselves to using the most economical means possible to
94 establish and maintain an efficient transportation system.

95 Regarding road planning, we support:

- 96 • Encouraging the local road agency to work in
97 coordination with all pertinent county agencies (e.g.,
98 drain/water resources commission), townships, local
99 planning, zoning boards, county Farm Bureaus, and
100 affected property owners in order to minimize road
101 construction cost and gather public input.
- 102 • Providing a role for counties and townships in road
103 improvement decisions.
- 104 • Local road agencies utilizing Michigan Department of
105 Transportation's (MDOT) Asset Management Program,
106 or similar program, to annually evaluate conditions of all
107 roads and dispersal of funds under their jurisdiction and
108 report such findings to the public.
- 109 • Research to develop better materials for road and
110 bridge construction and maintenance for proper
111 construction and longevity.
- 112 • An emphasis on improving existing roadways prior to
113 constructing new highways.
- 114 • Long-range planning on road construction projects
115 considering not only future needs of the area but also
116 the effects on agriculture.
- 117 • Every consideration being given to landowners
118 adjacent to the roadway to provide for safe travel for
119 farm machinery and products.
- 120 • Requiring consideration of agricultural drainage
121 needs, including proper placement and size of
122 culverts, when planning, designing and maintaining
123 roads.
- 124 • Proper grading of all roads and shoulders on a
125 regular basis.
- 126 • MDOT taking into consideration the size and
127 maneuverability of farm equipment when designing
128 new traffic flow structures such as roundabouts or
129 Michigan turnarounds.
- 130 • Compensation for crop losses when changes are
131 made to the right of way from road improvements or
132 reconstruction.
- 133 • Every effort being made to select alignments that
134 preserve productive farmland, wetlands and historical
135 sites.
- 136 • The use of private contractors and a bidding process
137 for road and bridge development and maintenance.

- 138 • A preference being given to contractors with material
- 139 testing locations in Michigan with proven results.
- 140 • The removal of state-mandated wage guidelines which
- 141 may not reflect actual market conditions.
- 142 • An open bid process for all road construction,
- 143 improvements, and maintenance projects.
- 144 • The cost of road improvements impacted from
- 145 development being required to be shared by the developer
- 146 when new developments have an adverse impact on the
- 147 rural road system.
- 148 • The respective state agency paying for or the
- 149 requirement for the project being waived, when
- 150 Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes,
- 151 and Energy and MDNR specifications increase the cost
- 152 of maintaining safe bridge structures.
- 153 • The purchase of rights of way for the construction of
- 154 complete cloverleaves when new freeways are built.
- 155 • The builder of a housing development near a
- 156 freeway or existing highway being responsible for
- 157 erecting an acceptable sound barrier, if needed.
- 158 • Highway maintenance and changes within the
- 159 existing right of way not having to complete a new
- 160 environmental impact study before performing the
- 161 work.
- 162 • Wetlands mitigation not being required if
- 163 improvements to the road are within the existing road
- 164 right of way.
- 165 • Ending the inclusion of planned wildlife habitat in the
- 166 construction and renovation of Michigan highways.
- 167 • Reclassifying US 23 from Toledo to Flint as an
- 168 interstate highway.

169 When performing road construction, we support:

- 170 • An emphasis being directed toward the placing of crossroad,
- 171 yield or stop signs at unmarked rural intersections.
- 172 • Hardtop roads of adequate width being marked with
- 173 highly-reflective center lines and sidelines as an aid to
- 174 safer nighttime driving.
- 175 • Engineering and design of roadways being required to
- 176 have at least 20 feet clearance between obstacles.
- 177 • Proper grading and bank reseeding being completed
- 178 where road construction occurs to improve road safety
- 179 and reduce erosion.
- 180 • All rural roads should be marked with a name or
- 181 number.
- 182 • Mail and newspaper boxes being placed on the
- 183 same side of the road and as far from the traveled
- 184 portion of the road as safety allows.
- 185 • Prior to non-emergency detouring of state highway
- 186 traffic onto county roads, MDOT will collaborate with
- 187 township government, county road departments, and
- 188 local and county law enforcement, to establish

189 reduced speed limits, establish no-passing zones
190 along the detour route, and mark intersections with
191 illuminated stop signs or overhead traffic lights. As
192 part of the project cost, MDOT will make funds
193 available for law enforcement to specifically patrol
194 the detour.

195 For road maintenance, we support:

- 196 • The designated maintenance authority clearing and
197 maintaining roadsides, roadways and intersections of
198 hazards that obstruct the view of motorists or impede
199 travel, road drainage, or cropland drainage. This would
200 include dead and dying trees within the right of way. In
201 the event the authorized authority is unable to fulfill
202 their maintenance obligations, landowners should be
203 allowed to perform such work. Property owners should
204 maintain proper visibility of intersection views by using
205 the triangular sight-line system.
- 206 • Encouraging the privatization of road maintenance
207 and the mowing and trimming of road ditches when
208 feasible.
- 209 • Individuals, pursuant to reasonable regulations,
210 being allowed to harvest existing forages and trees
211 along roadways without a permit.
- 212 • Any traveled portion of the road and shoulder having
213 trees and overgrowth trimmed to a minimum height of
214 17 feet due to the increase in height and width of farm
215 and custom application equipment. Also, a reasonably
216 safe condition should be provided by the respective
217 road agency.
- 218 • MDOT being required to fix and maintain fencing
219 along state highways as part of the maintenance of
220 that highway.
- 221 • County road commissions notifying the owner when
222 work in the right of way will be done and will destroy
223 crops.

224 We are especially concerned with excessive use of
225 road salt, the adverse effect it has on the environment, and
226 the increased rate at which it deteriorates roads and
227 bridges in urban and rural Michigan. We support:

- 228 • The use of Calcium Magnesium Acetate or other ag-
229 based products for de-icing roads and bridges,
230 including the use of sand, when environmentally and
231 economically feasible.
- 232 • A reduction in ice melt and dust control products
233 containing sodium chloride, with no salt being used
234 adjacent to sensitive perennial crops and/or arable
235 soils, wherever feasible. ◆

Reaffirmation of Michigan Farm Bureau Policies

#101 LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

1 The Michigan Farm Bureau Legal Defense Fund
2 is designed to provide financial support in connection
3 with legal issues of common concern to Michigan
4 agriculture and, in particular, those issues where the
5 decision will be viewed as establishing an important
6 legal precedent.

7 We recommend county Farm Bureaus contribute
8 to the Legal Defense Fund a minimum of 10 cents
9 per member, based on prior year membership, and
10 encourage them to make additional discretionary
11 contributions whenever possible. Further, we
12 recommend that MFB continue to contribute up to a
13 maximum of \$20,000 annually, or an amount equal
14 to that contributed by the county Farm Bureaus.

15 A letter requesting contributions, outlining
16 significant activities supported by the fund and the
17 present status of the fund balance should be sent to
18 the county Farm Bureaus prior to their annual
19 budgeting process. The Chief Operating Officer of
20 MFB should annually evaluate the need for
21 contributions to the fund based on the accumulated
22 fund balance and the requests for legal
23 assistance. ♦

#102 MEMBERSHIP AND FARM BUREAU PROGRAMS

1 Membership is the lifeblood of our organization.
2 Michigan Farm Bureau encourages member engagement
3 in membership, Community Action Groups, Promotion &
4 Education, Young Farmer, High School and Collegiate
5 programs through county Farm Bureaus.

6 We support:

- 7 • Engaging, growing and maintaining membership,
- 8 • Grassroots local policy development,
- 9 • Educating youth, farmers, educators, consumers and
10 public officials about agriculture and its importance to
11 our economy,
- 12 • Leadership programs for personal and professional
13 development,
- 14 • Developing young farmers for the future of our
15 industry,
- 16 • A diverse membership to promote and grow our
17 agricultural community,
- 18 • An inclusive culture that welcomes all farmers
19 and agriculturalists, and

- Equitable opportunities and resources for all members.
- These programs help our members successfully be the voice for agriculture. ♦

#103 POLITICAL ACTION PROGRAM

- We support programs and activities such as:
- Evaluating and endorsing candidates seeking federal, university or state office whose positions are compatible with Michigan Farm Bureau policies, without regard to party affiliation.
 - Allocating AgriPac and FarmPac funds for the purpose of electing Friends of Agriculture.
 - Promoting the personal and financial involvement of Farm Bureau members in the election of Friends of Agriculture.
 - Encouraging county Farm Bureaus to further engage in the electoral process.
 - The local grassroots process of county Farm Bureau Candidate Evaluation Committees taking the initial lead on candidate evaluation and then making recommendations to the MFB AgriPac. Grassroots involvement is the backbone of Farm Bureau.

The MFB AgriPac is appointed by MFB's president, with consent of the Board of Directors. The Committee designates Friends of Agriculture and provides a framework in which we can endorse, and possibly financially support. AgriPac decisions look at the "big picture" and are based on input from county Candidate Evaluation Committees, voting records, and possible past Farm Bureau interaction with the candidate.

With the increasing number of legislative and regulatory issues facing agriculture, it's imperative that we have as many Friends of Agriculture elected as possible. We need more farmers in all forms of government: local, state, university and national.

The autonomy of AgriPac is crucial to its success. Nevertheless, prompt decisions and timely communications of final decisions to each county is important. Endorsements should not be withheld simply because the candidate is running unopposed. We encourage our members to contribute to AgriPac or FarmPac. ♦