

2024 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.

Delegate Discussion Schedule

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Tuesday, December 3 – Opening Delegate Session 2:45 – 5:45 p.m.

Proposed Bylaw Amendments

State Policy # 31 Plant Pests and Diseases(yellow) Scheduled-1

Wednesday, December 4 – Delegate Session 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Board of Director Elections

State Policy #92 Wildlife Management.....(yellow) Scheduled-2

Wednesday, December 4 – Closing Delegate Session 2:45 – 5:30 p.m.

State Policy #43 Michigan State University(yellow) Scheduled-6

AFBF Policy Recommendations

(pink)

110	Regulatory Review and Reform	AFBF-1
125	Highways	AFBF-4
135	Agricultural Workforce	AFBF-8
146	Artificial Intelligence	AFBF-14
149	Cooperatives	AFBF-16
151	Education	AFBF-16
306	Equine	AFBF-18
307	Livestock and Poultry Health	AFBF-19
338	Direct Marketing	AFBF-26
435	Federal Estate and Gift Taxes	AFBF-27
439	Taxation	AFBF-27
462	Role of USDA	AFBF-32
503	Climate Change	AFBF-36

State Policy Recommendations

(white)

3	Agricultural Innovation and Value-Added Initiatives	S-1
4	Animal Care	S-2
7	Bee Industry	S-5
9	Cannabis Production	S-6
15	Direct Marketing and Agritourism	S-8
18	Food Insecurity	S-10
19	Food Safety	S-11
20	Forestry	S-13
24	Maple Sugar Production	S-16
27	Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	S-16
29	Nursery, Floriculture, Sod and Greenhouse Industry	S-20
32	Right to Farm	S-21
37	Urban Farming	S-24
40	Agriscience, Food, and Natural Resources Education and The FFA Organization	S-25
41	Educational Reforms	S-27
42	Michigan Ag Council	S-29
44	Broadband	S-29
45	Renewable and Biomass Products	S-30
46	State Energy Policy	S-33
47	Unmanned Aircraft Systems	S-37
48	Utility Placement	S-39
49	Agricultural Labor	S-40
50	Employer Provided Housing	S-42
51	Immigration	S-45
53	Labor Housing Zoning	S-45
54	MIOSHA	S-46
55	No-Fault Automobile Insurance	S-47
56	Wages and Compensation	S-48
58	Ag Security	S-49

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59	Agricultural Vocational Rehabilitation	S-51
60	Anhydrous Ammonia – NH ₃	S-51
61	Antitrust	S-52
62	Elections	S-53
63	Firefighting	S-55
64	Health	S-56
65	Law Enforcement	S-58
66	Local Government	S-60
67	Public Water and Sewer Infrastructure	S-61
69	Regulatory Reform and Reduction	S-62
70	Streamlining Michigan Government	S-63
71	Tort Liability Reform	S-65
74	Carbon Sequestration and Ecosystem Services Markets	S-66
82	Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program	S-67
83	Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy	S-69
84	Nonpoint Source Pollution and Watershed Management	S-74
85	Oil, Gas, and Mineral Rights	S-78
88	USDA Conservation Programs	S-80
89	Water Use in the Great Lakes Basin	S-82
90	Waters of the United States	S-86
94	Taxation	S-87
96	Farm and Commercial Vehicles	S-91
101	Transportation Improvement	S-94

State Policy Reaffirmations

(white)

1	Agricultural Commodity Commissions	S-101
2	Agricultural Fairs and Exhibitions	S-101
5	Animal Health	S-102
6	Aquaculture and Commercial Fishing	S-105
8	Biotechnology	S-108
10	Commission System of Government	S-110
11	Compliance and Resources for Farm Business Management	S-111
12	Craft Beverage Industry	S-111
13	Cranberry Industry	S-112
14	Dairy Industry	S-112
16	Dry Bean Industry	S-114
17	Equine Industry	S-115
21	Fruits and Vegetables	S-116
22	Intellectual Property Rights	S-116
23	Labeling	S-117
25	Marketing and Bargaining Legislation	S-117
26	Michigan Alliance for Animal Agriculture	S-118
28	Michigan Meat Processing Industry	S-118
30	Payment Protection and Security for Growers	S-119
33	Sheep Industry	S-120

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35	Sugar Industry	S-120
36	TB – Mycobacterium Bovis Tuberculosis	S-121
38	USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service – Great Lakes Field Office	S-124
39	Wheat Industry	S-125
57	Worker Protection Standards	S-126
68	Redress for Unsubstantiated Claims	S-126
72	Agricultural Drainage	S-127
73	Air Quality	S-130
75	Climate Change	S-131
76	Conservation Districts	S-131
77	Farmland Protection	S-134
78	Game Farms and Hunting Preserves	S-136
79	Invasive Species	S-136
80	Land Acquisitions for Public Projects	S-139
81	Land Use	S-140
86	Private Property Rights	S-143
87	Resource Recovery	S-145
91	Wetlands Protection Act	S-146
93	Fees	S-148
95	County Road Commissions	S-148
97	International Trade Crossing	S-149
98	Limited Purpose Operator’s License	S-149
99	Railroads	S-149
100	Safety on Roadways	S-151

Michigan Farm Bureau Policy Reaffirmations

(blue)

102	Legal Defense Fund	MFB-1
103	Membership and Farm Bureau Programs	MFB-1
104	Political Action Program	MFB-2

Policy Discussion Schedule

#31 Plant Pests and Diseases

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

4 We support research to do the following:

- 5 • Determine the impacts of Spotted Wing
6 Drosophila (SWD) by supporting and
7 coordinating with the SWD initiative through
8 Michigan State University and the Michigan
9 Cherry Committee.
- 10 • Develop new chemical and biological controls
11 for disease detection, control, and eradication.
- 12 • Enhance the use of natural plant pest predator
13 species or bio-controls after reviewing potential
14 environmental consequences.
- 15 • Address viable control methods for Spotted
16 lanternfly, Phytophthora capsici, downy mildew,
17 overall spruce decline, Armillaria root fungus,
18 and other plant pests or diseases.
- 19 • Address replant issues in the asparagus
20 industry.

21 Additionally, we support:

- 22 • Industry-led efforts to control and prevent crop
23 losses due to plant pests and diseases.
- 24 • Aggressively advocating for pesticide
25 manufacturers to develop new chemistries for
26 existing and emerging pest threats.
- 27 • Development of regulatory protocol, inspection
28 procedures and pest control methods to allow
29 shipment of quarantined commodities.
- 30 • Indemnification for losses of farm income when
31 agricultural commodities or products are
32 impounded, farms are quarantined, or sales
33 are restricted in the public interest.
- 34 • Holding suppliers responsible for compensation
35 of all losses due to imported plants with
36 diseases.
- 37 • Zero interest/fixed loan or direct and/or indirect
38 compensation to producers for sudden market
39 loss due to invasive species, including SWD,
40 hemlock woolly adelgid and others.
- 41 • Vomitoxin testing in corn field trials. We
42 encourage ethanol plant operators to spot-
43 check for vomitoxin in corn entering the plant
44 and dried distillers grains leaving the plant.
- 45 • Development of more consistent Vomitoxin
46 testing equipment.

- 47 • The creation of a grain inspectors license
- 48 program administered by the Michigan
- 49 Department of Agriculture and Rural
- 50 Development (MDARD).
- 51 • Requiring a grain inspectors license for any
- 52 person administering a grain quality test with
- 53 the intent of applying a discount/rejection
- 54 based on the test result.
- 55 • An industry-driven, comprehensive rewrite of
- 56 Michigan's Plant Pest Protection Act.
- 57 • Educational efforts to help producers and
- 58 consumers understand their importance in
- 59 preventing the spread of plant pests and
- 60 diseases.
- 61 • A review and update of the invasive species
- 62 quarantine rules in Michigan. We urge MDARD
- 63 to develop a permitting system allowing
- 64 agricultural products to be shipped directly for
- 65 in-state processing throughout the year during
- 66 a quarantine period.
- 67 • Quicker review and approval of species by the
- 68 councils maintaining the lists for noxious
- 69 terrestrial weeds and invasive species as
- 70 defined by PA 451 of 1994.
- 71 • Encouraging conservation districts to take
- 72 measures to keep noxious weeds controlled.
- 73 We oppose banning neonicotinoid-based pest
- 74 control products when there is a lack of research or
- 75 conclusive scientific evidence linking them to declining
- 76 bee and other pollinator populations.

#92 Wildlife Management

1 ~~Wildlife is an important part of Michigan's outdoor~~
2 ~~heritage and economy. Sound biological science must~~
3 ~~be used to manage all wildlife populations to maintain~~
4 ~~proper balance in numbers, reduce damage to property,~~
5 ~~and control, monitor and test for disease transmission.~~

6 ~~Michigan Farm Bureau will work with the Michigan~~
7 ~~Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and other~~
8 ~~stakeholders to achieve disease management goals,~~
9 ~~ecological balance, and strategies to establish and not~~
10 ~~exceed carrying capacity of the land. The MDNR should~~
11 ~~increase habitat management on public lands, helping~~
12 ~~both the hunting and farming communities.~~

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

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

20 We support:

21 **Hunting and Trapping**

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

63 **Endangered Species and Depredation**

- 64 • The MDNR being the lead agency to advocate
65 Michigan's authority to manage federally
66 protected species.

- 67 • The American Farm Bureau Federation
68 supporting increasing states' rights to manage
69 federally protected species.
- 70 • Standardized procedures for reporting,
71 investigating and indemnifying depredation at
72 fair market value. A notarized statement of loss
73 should be enough proof for reimbursement
74 when there is no evidence beyond an animal of
75 appropriate size missing.
- 76 • Encouraging farmers to consider alternative
77 methods for controlling loss, which may include
78 lease options. If control methods are
79 ineffective, farmers should have the authority to
80 manage nuisance/destructive species on their
81 land, including utilizing services from programs
82 such as USDA Wildlife Services. Harvested
83 wildlife may be consumed at the discretion of
84 the harvester.
- 85 • Amending the Endangered Species Act to
86 allow lethal control to be used when protecting
87 livestock from wolves.
- 88 • MFB should support efforts to de-list wolves in
89 Michigan, including supporting legal efforts with
90 amicus and financial resources.

91 **Population Health and Disease Management**

- 92 • Basing the decision to allow baiting and feeding
93 on veterinary/animal health science.
- 94 • Artificial baiting.
- 95 • Considering strengthening fines and penalties
96 for illegal feeding of wildlife, similar to those for
97 poaching.
- 98 • Making wildlife control permits low-cost or free
99 and easily accessible based on damage, and
100 allowing landowners to use the appropriate
101 firearm for the land's zone, regardless of the
102 hunting season. Controlling species, regardless
103 of sex, on farmland/forestland is necessary to
104 produce a viable product.
- 105 • Increased use of technology, including QR
106 codes, electronic data reporting and unbiased
107 surveys, along with voluntary check stations for
108 wildlife to provide better population data and
109 control wildlife disease in Michigan. Reporting
110 options should be accessible by mail, online, or
111 by phone within 30 days of harvest. In cases of
112 diseased animals, replacement tags should be
113 issued.
- 114 • Alternative reporting methods that protect
115 landowner privacy.

- 116 • Legislation requiring the MDNR to publish an
117 annual report on county or regional analysis of
118 whitetail deer herd populations. This report
119 should include the risk of herds contracting
120 diseases such as Chronic Wasting Disease
121 (CWD) and Bovine Tuberculosis (TB), and
122 recommendations for proactive herd
123 management to reduce risks of contracting such
124 diseases.
- 125 • MFB providing resources to help farmers
126 address wildlife conflict.
- 127 • The MDNR strictly enforcing disease control
128 laws and regulations.
- 129 • MFB assisting members reporting lax and
130 inconsistent enforcement activities with
131 communications with the NRC, legislators, and
132 administration officials.
- 133 • Legislative oversight and audits of MDNR
134 enforcement consistency.
- 135 • Legislation that allows an individual to transport
136 and possess a loaded firearm in or on any
137 vehicle while on private land with the permission
138 of the landowner.
- 139 • Improving bat habitat.

140 We oppose:

- 141 • Feeding free-ranging deer.
- 142 • Hunting regulations with adverse effects on
143 agriculture, including mandatory antler point
144 restrictions.
- 145 • Translocating untested terrestrial wildlife species
146 with known infected populations from one area
147 of the state to the other, which could increase
148 the risk of spreading infectious and contagious
149 diseases such as CWD and TB.

150 Wildlife management of all species in Michigan
151 should be based on sound biological science that
152 ensures a healthy balance in population, alleviates
153 property damage, and reduces the risk of disease
154 transmission.

155 We support:

- 156 • The Michigan Department of Natural Resources
157 (MDNR) being the lead agency to advocate
158 Michigan's authority to manage federally
159 protected species.
- 160 • Michigan Farm Bureau working with MDNR, as
161 well as other stakeholders, to ensure effective
162 management and ecological balance that
163 minimizes conflict.
- 164 • Hunting and trapping as the primary tool to
165 manage population for all species in the state of

- 166 Michigan. Hunting regulations should provide
167 the maximum opportunities to harvest game
168 species. This includes, but is not limited to,
169 reduced cost of licenses as well as creating,
170 revising, or extending hunting seasons.
- 171 • Programs, regulations, and methods that lead to
172 increased harvest and help control wildlife
173 species as well as reduction of agricultural
174 damage. Adversely, we oppose programs or
175 regulations that have a negative impact on
176 agriculture, which includes, but is not limited to,
177 antler point restrictions.
 - 178 • Decisions on baiting and feeding should be
179 based on science with consideration given to
180 impacts on harvest as well as ongoing disease
181 threats. Therefore, we support baiting to
182 increase harvest and oppose feeding outside of
183 hunting season to limit disease transmission.
 - 184 • Agency culling.
 - 185 • Financial incentives for managing wildlife
186 species, which includes but is not limited to, sale
187 of game meat.
 - 188 • Farmers having the ability to effectively manage
189 all wildlife species that are causing damage or
190 putting their agricultural operation at risk. Lethal
191 authority should be given in a timely manner,
192 provide greatest flexibility and at low or no cost.
 - 193 • Increased access to processing as well as
194 streamlined ability to donate game meat.
 - 195 • The State of Michigan being financially
196 responsible for wildlife damages to farmers.
 - 197 • Investments in habitat and conservation projects
198 that don't negatively impact agriculture.

#43 Michigan State University

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

- 10 • Expanded utilization of current farmland assets
11 on campus at MSU with the goal of no net loss
12 of farmland/farm and agriculture education
13 facilities.

- 14 • State funding for MSU placing it in a comparable
15 academic and financial status with other
16 distinguished land grant research universities.
- 17 • MSU to publish a strategic plan for the future of
18 the College of Agriculture and Natural
19 Resources (CANR) that meets the needs of
20 students and farmers in Michigan.
- 21 • The CANR and the College of Veterinary
22 Medicine (CVM) have historically provided a
23 strong foundation for educating generations of
24 individuals involved in agriculture in Michigan,
25 the nation and worldwide. We continue to
26 support these colleges and urge them to work
27 closely with stakeholders, including producers,
28 to address the research, resource, and
29 information needs of the agriculture industry, as
30 well as the curriculum focus of agricultural job
31 providers.
- 32 • Encourage a higher rate of CVM graduates to
33 address the shortage of large animal
34 veterinarians practicing in Michigan.
- 35 • MSU forming partnerships with affected farmers
36 and state agencies to research PFAS soil
37 contamination and how it can be safely used
38 and mitigated for continued agricultural use.
- 39 • The agriscience education program, including a
40 master's degree program, and a renewed effort
41 to increase the number of graduates who are
42 accredited to teach agricultural education in
43 Michigan.
- 44 • Re-establishing the Agriculture and Natural
45 Resources Communications Program.
- 46 • Programs and policies encouraging increased
47 enrollment of students in agricultural degree
48 programs.
- 49 • Increased incorporation of agricultural literacy
50 into programs preparing elementary and
51 secondary teachers in other degree areas.
- 52 • Michigan Farm Bureau working with MSU to
53 explore the development of an Agriculture 101
54 course for all students.
- 55 • In recognition of the challenges of managing
56 farm stress, MSU should consider exploring
57 continuing education in farm stress and rural
58 mental health for professionals working in
59 mental health and public service.
- 60 • Students' ability to apply directly to the CANR
61 and CVM, not the University as a whole.
- 62 • CANR and CVM expanding their recruitment
63 efforts within the state, including efforts to work

- 64 through existing organizations to promote
65 educational and career opportunities, and
66 encouraging students to apply in the spring of
67 their junior year of high school to CANR, and to
68 CVM for veterinary nursing.
- 69 • Reestablishing the MSU College of Veterinary
70 Medicine stakeholder advisory committee.
 - 71 • Reestablishing/filling the MSU equine extension
72 position in CVM and CANR.
 - 73 • CANR and CVM making a concerted and
74 focused effort recruiting students from FFA
75 chapters, 4-H programs and agricultural
76 businesses in Michigan.
 - 77 • The two-year agricultural technology program
78 which provides a valuable service to Michigan
79 agriculture and should be recognized as a
80 highlight of the CANR.
 - 81 • Improvements to the MSU Institute of Agriculture
82 Technology program to better serve the needs of
83 students, employers, businesses, industry and
84 consumers.
 - 85 • Institute of Agriculture Technology credits being
86 allowed to fully transfer into four-year programs
87 at MSU.
 - 88 • Continued expansion of partnerships with
89 community colleges and other four-year
90 institutions throughout the state to increase
91 development of these career tracks offered by
92 the CANR.
 - 93 • A more realistic financial performance
94 requirement from the university administration
95 for the farms based upon the realities of the real-
96 world farming business while working in the
97 university setting.

98 **Michigan State University Extension (MSUE)**
99 **and AgBioResearch (ABR)**

100 MSUE and ABR must work closely with production
101 agriculture, agribusiness and other research entities to
102 conduct, research, and disseminate the results. This
103 outreach should focus on prioritized industry needs.

104 We support:

- 105 • Increasing state and federal funding for MSUE
106 and ABR, to maintain historical high standards of
107 agricultural research and outreach programs.
- 108 • Funding for Project GREEN, including
109 additional funding for three to five-year projects.
- 110 • A re-emphasis and expedited hiring process for
111 filling extension educator and specialist positions
112 and research-related faculty positions. This

- 113 should address the emerging needs and priority
114 issues of the production agriculture industry.
- 115 • Public posting of administrative level positions to
116 find the most qualified candidates.
 - 117 • The research/extension specialist program on
118 and off campus. These positions have provided
119 direct contact with stakeholders who provide
120 direction for field applied research.
 - 121 • A focus on core agricultural programs.
 - 122 • MSUE considering years of applied career
123 experience in lieu of a master's/bachelor's
124 degree as an alternate avenue to recruit top-tier
125 applicants into MSUE educator and 4-H program
126 coordinator/instructor positions.
 - 127 • Michigan 4-H youth programs and encourage
128 MFB and county Farm Bureaus to assist in state
129 and local 4-H activities. We recognize the
130 educational efforts and impact of youth
131 experiences in animal projects and plant science
132 projects.
 - 133 • Extension plans for 4-H staffing and
134 programming involving volunteer stakeholders
135 as they are critical to program success.
 - 136 • MFB continuing its partnership with the 4-H
137 Capitol Experience. The partnership will
138 encourage students to participate in a high-
139 quality youth leadership experience, with
140 continued support from county Farm Bureaus.
 - 141 • The formation of an advisory board of MFB
142 members to guide extension agricultural staffing
143 plans and programs.
 - 144 • MSU continuing to share financial information
145 regarding investments in agricultural
146 programming at the University and within
147 AgBioResearch and Extension programs in
148 order to facilitate stakeholder partnerships and
149 better support research faculty.

150 **University and Industry Collaboration**

151 To strengthen relationships between MSU and
152 Farm Bureau, we encourage:

- 153 • Partnering with county Farm Bureaus to promote
154 MSU CANR and CVM to prospective students.
- 155 • Targeted recruitment toward the agriculture
156 community, including but not limited to 4-H and
157 FFA students.
- 158 • Attendance and participation between county
159 Farm Bureaus and MSU staff/faculty at
160 respective activities.

- 161 • ~~County and regional extension personnel~~
- 162 ~~attending county Farm Bureau board meetings~~
- 163 ~~on a regular basis.~~
- 164 • ~~Fostering relationships between Institute of~~
- 165 ~~Agriculture Technology programs at MSU and~~
- 166 ~~community colleges with county Farm Bureaus.~~
- 167 • ~~Promotion and support of Collegiate Farm~~
- 168 ~~Bureau activities at MSU and community college~~
- 169 ~~Institute of Agriculture Technology programs by~~
- 170 ~~county Farm Bureaus and MFB.~~
- 171 • ~~Agriculture representation on the MSU Board of~~
- 172 ~~Trustees.~~
- 173 • ~~Greater Farm Bureau and farmer representation~~
- 174 ~~on the MSUE/ABR stakeholder council, CANR,~~
- 175 ~~and department stakeholder advisory~~
- 176 ~~committees.~~
- 177 • ~~An emphasis on filling on and off campus vacant~~
- 178 ~~teaching positions in a timely manner.~~
- 179 • ~~MFB to continue to meet with the leadership of~~
- 180 ~~MSU to discuss the critical importance of the~~
- 181 ~~land grant mission to Michigan agriculture. MFB~~
- 182 ~~must continue to partner with other agriculture~~
- 183 ~~industry leaders to work with leadership at MSU~~
- 184 ~~to reevaluate their educational and outreach~~
- 185 ~~programs and refocus their efforts on core~~
- 186 ~~programs directly or indirectly related to~~
- 187 ~~agriculture.~~
- 188 • ~~MFB collaborating with MSU to create a~~
- 189 ~~committee to develop recommendations for~~
- 190 ~~alternatives, in addition to grower check offs, to~~
- 191 ~~funding university agriculture faculty start-up~~
- 192 ~~packages.~~
- 193 • ~~MFB collaborating with MSU in the development~~
- 194 ~~of tools/training programs to address the~~
- 195 ~~agricultural labor/on farm training needs of~~
- 196 ~~current and future farm employees.~~

197 In 1855, the Michigan Legislature passed Public Act

198 130 which provided for the establishment of the

199 Agricultural College of the State of Michigan. Michigan

200 Agricultural College was the first college in the United

201 States to offer agriculture courses for credit. Today,

202 Michigan State University (MSU) is recognized as a

203 leader in higher learning and agricultural research,

204 extension and youth development. To maintain this

205 status, we support the following:

- 206 • Expanded utilization of current farmland assets
- 207 on campus at MSU with the goal of no net loss
- 208 of farmland/farm and agriculture education
- 209 facilities.

- 210 • State funding for MSU placing it in a comparable
- 211 academic and financial status with other
- 212 distinguished land grant research universities.
- 213 • MSU to publish a strategic plan for the future of
- 214 the College of Agriculture and Natural
- 215 Resources (CANR) that meets the needs of
- 216 students and farmers in Michigan.
- 217 • The CANR and the College of Veterinary
- 218 Medicine (CVM)'s efforts to provide a strong
- 219 foundation for educating individuals involved in
- 220 agriculture at the state, national, and global
- 221 levels. We urge these colleges to work closely
- 222 with stakeholders, including producers, to
- 223 provide relevant curriculum to the students while
- 224 addressing the research, resource, and
- 225 informational needs of the agricultural industry.
- 226 • A higher rate of CVM graduates to address the
- 227 shortage of large animal veterinarians practicing
- 228 in Michigan.
- 229 • MSU forming partnerships with affected farmers
- 230 and state agencies to research PFAS soil
- 231 contamination and how the land can be safely
- 232 used and mitigated for continued agricultural
- 233 use.
- 234 • The Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
- 235 Education bachelor's and master's degree
- 236 programs.
- 237 • Efforts to increase the number of graduates
- 238 certified to teach at state approved agriculture,
- 239 food & natural resources career and technical
- 240 education (CTE) programs.
- 241 • Re-establishing the Agriculture and Natural
- 242 Resources Communications bachelor's degree.
- 243 • Programs and policies to increase enrollment of
- 244 students in agricultural degree programs.
- 245 • Incorporation of agricultural literacy in programs
- 246 preparing elementary and secondary teachers in
- 247 other degree areas.
- 248 • Michigan Farm Bureau working with MSU to
- 249 explore the development of an Agriculture 101
- 250 course for all students.
- 251 • Students' ability to apply directly to the CANR
- 252 and CVM, not the University as a whole.
- 253 • CANR and CVM expanding their recruitment
- 254 efforts within the state, including efforts to work
- 255 through existing organizations to promote
- 256 educational and career opportunities.
- 257 • Encouraging students to apply in the spring of
- 258 their junior year of high school to CANR, and to
- 259 CVM for veterinary nursing.

- 260 • Reestablishing the MSU CVM stakeholder
- 261 advisory committee.
- 262 • Reestablishing/filling the MSU Extension
- 263 (MSUE) equine position in CVM and CANR.
- 264 • CANR and CVM making a concerted and
- 265 focused effort recruiting students from FFA
- 266 chapters, 4-H programs and agricultural
- 267 businesses in Michigan.
- 268 • MSU's Institute of Agriculture Technology (IAT),
- 269 a two-year agricultural technology program
- 270 which provides a valuable service to Michigan
- 271 agriculture and should be recognized as a
- 272 highlight of the CANR.
- 273 • Improvements to the MSU IAT program to better
- 274 serve the needs of students, employers,
- 275 businesses, industry and consumers.
- 276 • MSU IAT credits being allowed to fully transfer
- 277 into four-year programs at MSU.
- 278 • Continued expansion of partnerships with
- 279 community colleges and other four-year
- 280 institutions throughout the state to increase
- 281 development of MSU IAT career tracks offered
- 282 by the CANR.
- 283 • A more realistic financial performance
- 284 requirement from the university administration
- 285 for the farms based upon the realities of the real-
- 286 world farming business while working in the
- 287 university setting.

288 **Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) and**

289 **AgBioResearch (ABR)**

290 MSUE and ABR must work closely with production

291 agriculture, agribusiness and other research entities to

292 conduct research and disseminate the results. This

293 outreach should focus on prioritized industry needs.

294 We support:

- 295 • Increasing state and federal funding for MSUE
- 296 and ABR, to maintain historical high standards of
- 297 agricultural research and outreach programs.
- 298 • Funding for Project GREEN, including
- 299 additional funding for three to five-year projects.
- 300 • A re-emphasis and expedited hiring process for
- 301 filling MSUE coordinator and instructor positions
- 302 and research-related faculty positions. This
- 303 should address the emerging needs and priority
- 304 issues of the production agriculture industry.
- 305 • MSUE considering years of applied career
- 306 experience in lieu of a master's/bachelor's
- 307 degree as an alternate avenue to recruit top-tier
- 308 applicants into MSUE educator and 4-H program
- 309 coordinator/instructor positions.

- 310 • Public posting of administrative level positions to
311 find the most qualified candidates.
- 312 • The research/extension specialist program on
313 and off campus to provide direct contact with
314 stakeholders invested in field-applied research.
- 315 • A focus on core agricultural programs.
- 316 • MSUE 4-H youth programs and encourage MFB
317 and county Farm Bureaus to assist in state and
318 local 4-H activities. We recognize the
319 educational efforts and impact of youth
320 experiences in animal and plant science
321 projects.
- 322 • MSUE plans for 4-H staffing and programming
323 involving volunteer stakeholders as they are
324 critical to program success.
- 325 • MFB continuing its partnership with the 4-H
326 Capitol Experience. The partnership will
327 encourage students to participate in a high-
328 quality youth leadership experience, with
329 continued support from county Farm Bureaus.
- 330 • The formation of an advisory board of MFB
331 members to guide MSUE agricultural staffing
332 plans and programs.
- 333 • MSU continuing to share financial information
334 regarding investments in agricultural
335 programming at the university and within ABR
336 and MSUE programs in order to facilitate
337 stakeholder partnerships and better support
338 research faculty.

339 **University and Industry Collaboration**

340 To strengthen relationships between MSU and
341 Farm Bureau, we encourage:

- 342 • MSU, MSUE, and ABR to partner when
343 appropriate with county Farm Bureaus to
344 promote MSU CANR and CVM to prospective
345 students.
- 346 • Attendance and participation between county
347 Farm Bureaus and MSU staff/faculty at
348 respective activities.
- 349 • County and regional MSUE personnel attending
350 county Farm Bureau board meetings on a
351 regular basis.
- 352 • Fostering relationships between MSU IAT,
353 community colleges and county Farm Bureaus.
- 354 • Promotion and support of Collegiate Farm
355 Bureau activities at MSU and MSU IAT
356 community college programs by county Farm
357 Bureaus and MFB.
- 358 • Agriculture representation on the MSU Board of
359 Trustees.

- 360 • Greater Farm Bureau and farmer representation
361 on the MSUE/ABR stakeholder council, CANR,
362 and department stakeholder advisory
363 committees.
- 364 • An emphasis on filling on and off-campus vacant
365 teaching positions in a timely manner.
- 366 • MFB to continue to meet with the leadership of
367 MSU to discuss the critical importance of the
368 land grant mission to Michigan agriculture.
- 369 • MFB continued partnership with other agriculture
370 industry leaders to work with leadership at MSU
371 to reevaluate the university's educational and
372 outreach programs and refocus the university's
373 efforts on core programs directly or indirectly
374 related to agriculture.
- 375 • MFB collaborating with MSU to create a
376 committee to develop recommendations for
377 alternatives, in addition to grower check offs, to
378 fund university agriculture faculty start-up
379 packages.
- 380 • MFB collaborating with MSU in the development
381 of tools/training programs to address the
382 agricultural labor/on farm training needs of
383 current and future farm employees.
- 384 • MSU explore continuing education in farm stress
385 and rural mental health for professionals working
386 in mental health and public service.

Recommendations on AFBF Policies

#110 Regulatory Review and Reform (amendment at line 13.1)

1. When a court finds that a federal agency is in violation of the law, the landowner that is in compliance with the agency rules should not be held liable for the agency's error. Landowners should be able to continue under the existing rules until the matter is settled and new rules are properly adopted.
2. All federal agencies shall be held to the strictest interpretation of law when setting regulations. No federal agency shall be allowed to legislate through their regulatory power.
3. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and/or any other government agency should not pass any rule that involves fines and/or imprisonment of citizens, or changes the way citizens normally do business, without the approval of a majority of Congress.
4. We support farmer participation in The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act registration discussions on all products important to U.S. agriculture.
5. The EPA shall be required to coordinate with the USDA in the development of conservation and clean air and water regulations impacting agriculture. Specific efforts should be made to oversee and to reform the inspection and rule-making authority of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and EPA.
6. Federal agencies should work with the regulated community to correct problems through improved education and compliance assistance, rather than fines, penalties and prosecution.
7. Prior to proposing any major federal regulation, action agencies shall consult with states regarding federalism concerns expected to be raised by a proposed rule. The action agencies shall respond to those concerns in the administrative record for a final rule. Failure to adequately consult and respond to federalism concerns raised by states should lower the level of deference afforded to the action agencies in any future judicial review of that final regulation.
8. Communication made by federal agencies that support or oppose a proposed rule, legislative bill or other government action, whether directed to the public or Congress, should be prohibited. Any public communication setting forth an agency's interpretation of a proposed rule must be first published in the Federal Register.
9. Federal agencies should allow an additional public comment period for stakeholder review of any revisions before the final rule is promulgated.
10. Regulations, including guidance documents, that affect farmers should only be adopted after appropriate public notice and comment.
11. We believe:
 - 11.1. The purpose of federal regulation should be limited;
 - 11.2. That agencies should enforce existing regulations prior to promulgating additional regulations on related matters;
 - 11.3. When publishing proposed federal rules, regulatory changes or significant actions, publication of the action in the Federal Register often does not provide adequate notice to all stakeholders. Federal agencies should also provide notice of proposed federal rules, regulatory changes or other significant actions directly to targeted stakeholders, stakeholder communities as well as organizations representing affected parties;
 - 11.4. That all federal regulations should be required to follow important policy principles including:
 - 11.4.1. Recognition that property rights are the foundation for resource production and must be protected;
 - 11.4.2. Regulations should be based on sound scientific data that can be replicated and peer reviewed;
 - 11.4.3. More transparency and communication regarding rule development and interpretation;
 - 11.4.4. Risk assessment analysis should be conducted prior to final action;
 - 11.4.5. An estimate of the costs and benefits associated with public and private sector compliance action must be conducted prior to final action;

- 11.4.6. Actions must allow for flexibility to suit varying local conditions;
- 11.4.7. Actions should be subject to independent analysis and public scrutiny;
- 11.4.8. Alternatives to the action must be thoroughly and publicly considered, especially market-based incentives;
- 11.4.9. Actions must properly acknowledge and provide for the reality, practicality and limitations of doing business in the affected sector;
- 11.4.10. Presumption of innocence as opposed to the current presumption of guilt should be strengthened;
- 11.4.11. A measurement of the cumulative impact of federal actions affecting production agriculture prior to the implementation of any federal actions impacting agriculture;
- 11.4.12. Limiting the ability to intervene in regulatory actions to only those parties that can demonstrate they are directly affected by the alleged violation;
- 11.4.13. Limiting the ability for third parties to utilize federal or state funds for legal assistance to file lawsuits against county, state or federal governments; and
- 11.4.14. Giving financial support to property owners in order to comply with any new governmental regulations.
- 11.5. That all congressional or federal actions creating new administrative agencies or giving new responsibilities to existing agencies should include specific termination dates;
- 11.6. That all federal regulations should have sunset provisions;
- 11.7. That Congress should provide for strong congressional oversight of regulatory and significant agency actions as well as a willingness to override unacceptable agency actions;
- 11.8. Environmental impact statements (EIS) findings and requirements should be balanced with a cost-benefit analysis of proposed regulations or agency actions;
- 11.9. That zero-base budgeting should apply to federal agencies as a method of regulatory reform and fiscal responsibility;
- 11.10. That federal agencies should be required to give advance notice not less than 30 days prior to any field hearing or informational meeting;
- 11.11. That if inspections are warranted, to the extent possible, we believe federal agencies should schedule and conduct inspections of farms and processing facilities in advance of the growing, harvesting and processing seasons;
- 11.12. No regulatory action shall be taken against landowners based upon satellite or aerial imagery; and
- 11.13. That agency orders demanding corrective action should allow reasonable time for compliance. At the time of an inspection, the inspector should be required to leave a signed, dated copy of his report with the owner, or operator, of the inspected facility.
- 12. We support:
 - 12.1. Legislation to amend existing laws to reduce and eliminate burdensome federal regulations and provide for a continued pro-business emphasis at the federal, state and local level;
 - 12.2. The immediate review and revision of existing federal regulations to limit promulgation only to rules that are essential to the protection of human health and public safety;
 - 12.3. Development of an annual comprehensive report to the American people, which should provide a thorough evaluation of the following:
 - 12.3.1. Effectiveness and efficiency of all federal agencies;
 - 12.3.2. The total cost and impacts of federal regulatory burden on the private sector economy;
 - 12.3.3. The effectiveness of the reduction in risk/threat demonstrated by federal regulatory implementation; and
 - 12.3.4. Non-regulatory options that may be effective alternatives to reduce targeted risk/threat at a lower cost to the private sector.
 - 12.4. Efforts to streamline the transportation project delivery process to reduce unnecessary time delays including:
 - 12.4.1. Simplifying the environmental process for projects with few impacts;

- 12.4.2. Involving appropriate reviewing agencies early in the process to help expedite overall project schedules;
- 12.4.3. The use of the design-build project delivery method or other innovative construction strategies; and
- 12.4.4. Requiring greater coordination among federal reviewing agencies and setting time limits for their review.
- 12.5. Immediate simplification, improvement, streamlining of, as well as a comprehensive congressional review of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Such improvements should include requiring the following of federal agencies:
 - 12.5.1. Consideration of economic impacts to areas directly affected by regulations;
 - 12.5.2. Consideration of the cumulative impacts of all regulations proposed;
 - 12.5.3. Compliance by Native American tribes with NEPA, regardless whether the land is held in trust status by the Bureau of Indian Affairs;
 - 12.5.4. Details of the time and costs involved in conducting environmental evaluations (Environmental Assessments and EIS) should be publicly reported with an agency-by-agency accounting breakdown for the resources required for initial planning of NEPA activities; and
 - 12.5.5. A full EIS in accordance with NEPA when an alternative is chosen and requires further action under a "programmatic" EIS. Public comments must be taken on the specific action and location chosen.
- 12.6. More vigorous congressional scrutiny of agencies to prohibit regulatory agencies from administering laws, to deter adoption of agency rules and actions that circumvent statutory intent;
- 12.7. Meaningful stakeholder representation by affected sectors on regulatory boards and commissions as well as a willingness to override unacceptable agency actions;
- 12.8. Application of the Department of Defense ethics and conflict of interest policies to all federal regulatory agencies;
- 12.9. Federal officers recusing themselves from decision making in all circumstances in which they may allow their personal views to unethically affect their work as public employees;
- 12.10. The establishment of appropriate provisions, within the power of the federal government, to provide for consequences for federal officers, including civil and criminal penalties, if they misrepresent facts or sources or lie about matters that impact citizens and businesses;
- 12.11. The policy that the comment period for federal rules and significant actions be no less than 60 days;
- 12.12. Federal agencies' ability to purchase "off-the-shelf" supplies for purchases of less than \$2,500;
- 12.13. Government inspection and enforcement activities being paid for by general revenue funds. Fines imposed by federal agencies should be credited to the general fund and not be used to further fund that agency;
- 12.14. Passage of laws that specifically define and prohibit the harassment of citizens by federal, state, county or municipal employees;
- 12.15. Significant budget cuts and sanctions against government agencies that continue to expand their regulatory authority against the will of Congress and the citizens of the United States. Employees of government agencies should be barred from making unsolicited comments on the proposed changes during a public comment period;
- 12.16. Repeal of the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 1990;
- 12.17. Providing an opportunity to remedy any violation of a federal agency rule before the payment of fines, unless the violation rises to the level of a felony;
- 12.18. A means of producer input for all federally appointed positions affecting agriculture;
- 12.19. The development of clear rules of compliance by the Department of Justice for the Americans with Disabilities Act Title III (ADA).

- Furthermore, a grace period for implementation is necessary once these rules have been established;
- 12.20. Federal agencies providing guidance on regulations before they take effect; and
 - 12.21. Lessening logistical regulations during times of emergency as the result of a natural disaster.
13. We oppose:
- 13.1. Legislation that would reestablish the Chevron doctrine;
 - 13.2. The EPA arbitrarily imposing penalties on landowners without first identifying the problem and giving the landowner an opportunity to correct the problem. If there is a difference of opinion concerning the extent of the problem, a reasonable and cost-effective appeal process of the EPA decision should be available to the landowner;
 - 13.3. The establishment and/or operation of any political advocacy group by federal regulatory agencies;
 - 13.4. Any consumer agency or council having any federal authority other than advisory powers;
 - 13.5. Federal regulations on generally accepted agricultural practices;
 - 13.6. The EPA enforcing any new rules or regulations that are being litigated until said legal proceedings are completed;
 - 13.7. Government departments and agencies becoming members of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) or forming public/private partnerships with organizations that are members of the IUCN;
 - 13.8. Use by federal agencies of social media to communicate with the public about proposed rules, other than to notify the public of the opportunity to submit comments to the Federal Register and to post information published in the Federal Register;
 - 13.9. Use by federal agencies of government resources to communicate to the public urging support of regulations while the agency seeks public comments; and
 - 13.10. Any agencies, boards, commissions and like entities from making rules that are outside the statutory authority granted by the legislative process and subsequent laws that created the agency.

#125 Highways (amendment at line 1.64)

1. We support:
 - 1.1. Increasing the Federal Highway Trust Fund fees to reflect increases in fuel economy and inflation, with additional revenue directed to the Highway Account of the Federal Highway Trust Fund for construction and maintenance of roads and bridges;
 - 1.2. Maintaining the separation of the Federal Highway Trust Fund from the unified federal budget;
 - 1.3. Revenue collection efforts on those users who do not currently contribute to the Federal Highway Trust Fund due to increased mileage standards, electric vehicles or alternative fuels;
 - 1.4. Developing a federal electric and hybrid vehicle road-use charge.
 - 1.5. Elimination of the federal highway use tax on farm trucks. Until such action is taken, we will support legislation raising the exemption for trucks from the federal highway use tax from 7,500 to 22,500 miles;
 - 1.6. Harvest-season permits allowing maximum weight limits of 100,000 pounds apply to federal highways except where additional axles are permitted;
 - 1.7. Requiring federal and state revenue agents checking for fuel tax compliance to obtain owner permission or search warrants to enter private property, and that all surprise inspections be conducted in the public domain;
 - 1.8. An increase in gross vehicle weight limits for raw agriculture and forestry commodities by allowing additional axles per federal bridge law;
 - 1.9. U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) allowing gross weight tolerances for the transport of farm products on interstate highways in states in which the tolerances are permitted on state roads and enforcing only gross weight limits, rather than axle

- weight limits, on trucks hauling agriculture or forestry commodities. The effort to identify the most significant issues now facing local roads and bridges and urge that recommendations be developed to deal with these concerns;
- 1.10. Legislation with continued emphasis on the development of secondary, farm-to-market roads and adequate funding for roads and maintenance of bridges;
 - 1.11. Allowing more flexibility in the use of federal highway construction funds at the state level for the purpose of maintaining primary and secondary roads;
 - 1.12. Funding for resurfacing, rehabilitating, repairing and reconstructing the nation's interstate highways as many have passed their designed life span;
 - 1.13. The U.S. Department of Transportation amending its definition of "rural" from "an area that is outside an urbanized area with a population of less than 200,000" to "an area that is outside an urbanized area with a population of less than 100,000";
 - 1.14. An amendment to the federal highway program to give the preservation of prime farmland the same standing as the preservation of parkland, wildlife preserves and similar lands;
 - 1.15. Efforts to bring about greater uniformity and reciprocity among states on truck regulations;
 - 1.16. All 48 contiguous states having a reciprocal agreement regarding their farm plate registrations;
 - 1.17. Federal legislation allowing vehicles with farm plate registrations to travel throughout the 48 contiguous states with no distance limitations;
 - 1.18. Changes to the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) to modify the definition of agricultural commodities to include forest products;
 - 1.19. The provisions of the Highway Beautification Act of 1965 that permit, within reasonable guidelines, the leasing of billboard space for advertising purposes and oppose legislation or regulations, which would deny this right. We believe the act should be amended to support the Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976 by allowing farmers to use roadside signs to advertise their farm markets or u-pick operations, which sell direct to consumers;
 - 1.20. A comprehensive highway safety program to reduce traffic fatalities, injuries and the destruction of property;
 - 1.21. The uniform interpretation and application of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations by enforcement agencies;
 - 1.22. GPS mapping services designating a difference between primary commercial routes and other secondary roads to increase safety and decrease the pressure on secondary roads caused by "shortest distance" mapping;
 - 1.23. Flexibility in duty time commercial drivers can operate;
 - 1.24. The relaxation of environmental impact regulations affecting the construction of federal, state and county roads and bridges;
 - 1.25. Reimbursement from the federal government for the mandates associated with the rule changes to the Federal Highway Administration's Manual on Uniform Control Devices that became effective in 2008;
 - 1.26. Streamlining the process for permitting, funding, construction of federal aid transportation projects;
 - 1.27. All states adopting the EZ Pass program;
 - 1.28. Efforts to allow low-mileage operations to pay a flat annual fee in lieu of submitting quarterly reports as a means of complying with the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA);
 - 1.29. Exempting farmers and custom agriculture services from requirements to obtain commercial driver's license (CDL) when transporting agricultural products including forestry products, production inputs, and agriculture equipment between farms and markets;
 - 1.30. CDL exemptions for 4-H and FFA educators, contestants and other individuals hauling livestock and equine for recreational and educational purposes such as, but not limited to, rodeos, trail rides and other livestock and equine events;

- 1.31. Increasing GVW rating to 12,000 lbs. on trailers before a CDL is required;
- 1.32. Load securement regulations being based on the best available science to safely transport that particular load;
- 1.33. DOT subjecting all foreign truck drivers and their trucks to the same safety rules and regulations as domestic drivers and their trucks;
- 1.34. The exemption held by states for transportation of hazardous materials by farmers and ranchers;
- 1.35. Modifying regulations concerning farm-licensed trucks to facilitate the transportation of farm produce and supplies across state lines, including the DOT and Interstate Fuel Tax between federal and state laws and regulations, we support legislation making state laws the governing authority, where state standards are less stringent than federal;
- 1.36. Making federal regulations for obtaining a medical card uniform with those for obtaining a CDL;
 - 1.36.1. CDL drivers who are dependent on insulin maintaining their license with a physician's order;
 - 1.36.2. Coordination of the timetable for required renewal of medical certification of commercial drivers with restricted medical conditions for renewal of CDLs.
- 1.37. The repeal of Title 23, Section 133(d) (2) of the U.S. Code since ten percent of all federal highway use funds are spent for off-road enhancement;
- 1.38. Flexibility for states to determine the distribution of federal highway monies among highway projects;
- 1.39. States' retention of authority to regulate the intrastate hauling of hazardous material and oppose federal preemption of the same. The regulations should account for the special needs of agriculture and their potential cost to farmers;
- 1.40. Federal legislation to exempt low mileage trucks (15,000 miles per year for agricultural purposes and 5,000 miles per year for all others) from mandatory post-rip inspection to only those carriers operating six or more commercial motor vehicles;
- 1.41. A farmer or farm worker not being required to be haz-mat certified to transport herbicides, insecticides, etc. between farms or return empty containers provided the farmer or farm worker has had training through a private pesticide applicator's license update or other educational program;
- 1.42. Allowing farm trucks that are mandated to have annual inspections to be allowed bi-annual inspections if driven less than 7,500 miles per year;
- 1.43. Regulatory changes to allow "Farm Vehicle Drivers," as defined in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations, to be exempt from the driver qualifications when transporting materials that require making and placarding, and from the hours-of-service requirements;
- 1.44. Producers and livestock haulers being able to complete delivery of their cargo if they are within 300 miles of their destination even if it exceeds the DOT maximum hours of service rules;
- 1.45. Exempting part-time employees (500 hours or less annually) from the requirement to obtain a CDL;
- 1.46. An exemption for agriculture from federal motor carrier safety regulations regarding:
 - 1.46.1. Displaying of DOT numbers;
 - 1.46.2. Displaying registered owners' or farm name;
 - 1.46.3. Limiting mileage;
 - 1.46.4. Requiring a medical card for the driver;
 - 1.46.5. Maintaining hours of service; and
 - 1.46.6. Requiring bumpers on end dump farm vehicles;
- 1.47. Agricultural custom harvesters being exempt from having to obtain a Department of Transportation Form E (proof of insurance form);
- 1.48. Changing the placard requirement when hauling more than 1,000 gallons, because current DOT rules require any vehicle carrying more than 119 gallons of fuel in a tank other than the vehicle fuel tank to be placarded;
- 1.49. Raising the federal commercial trucking weight threshold to be over 26,000 pounds;

- 1.50. Increasing the interstate road weight limits for properly equipped vehicles;
 - 1.51. CDL drivers being eligible for defensive driving programs as a means to dismiss traffic tickets when the violation occurs while operating a non-commercial vehicle;
 - 1.52. The transportation of raw timber on federal interstate highways;
 - 1.53. Exempting production agriculture from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations;
 - 1.54. Agricultural transportation being considered intrastate commerce when the following criteria are present:
 - 1.54.1. The vehicle is not-for-hire;
 - 1.54.2. Transportation is from field to market or to an on-farm storage facility with subsequent transport to market; and
 - 1.54.3. Transportation is provided by a producer or custom harvester;
 - 1.55. The transportation of farm equipment on interstate highways if no safe or viable alternative route is available;
 - 1.56. Federal legislation to reverse requirements on state-licensed physicians to submit to training and certification to be eligible to perform DOT physical examinations for truck drivers;
 - 1.57. Seeking legislation to prevent written warnings from appearing on Compliance, Safety, and Accountability (CSA) reports;
 - 1.58. Clarification on DOT regulations for hauling fuel, tanks and portable storage trailers;
 - 1.59. The expansion of parking facilities for commercial vehicles due to e-log mandates;
 - 1.60. Variances on axle limits for agriculture;
 - 1.61. Increased attention to stakeholder input as highways are considered for conversion to interstate systems or interstate system to toll roads. Issues that need to be addressed include, but are not limited to, the movement of agricultural equipment; access to outer roads, bridges and overpasses; and movement of rural EMS vehicles;
 - 1.62. Allowing CDL drivers 18 and older to haul cargo across state lines;
 - 1.63. The passage of the Safe Routes Act, 2020;
 - 1.64. **Legislation that eases requirements and restrictions on CDL procurement including allowing a CDL learner's permit at 17 years of age, especially for seasonal agricultural employees;**
 - 1.65. The development of accurate testing to determine impairment levels from cannabis use; and
 - 1.66. Agriculture producers being able to purchase permits allowing them to haul agricultural products exceeding interstate road weight limits.
2. We oppose:
- 2.1. The enactment of state legislation or regulations that are more stringent than federal requirements governing hauling of non-food items in trucks used to transport food products;
 - 2.2. Toll road construction where federal funds and lands are involved;
 - 2.3. Converting divided highways into interstates if no safe and viable alternate route is available for farm equipment;
 - 2.4. Increasing highway fuel taxes for deficit reduction purposes;
 - 2.5. Action by Congress or the DOT to impose sanctions or to withhold user taxes or any other federal funds from any state in an attempt to force or coerce states to enact particular laws;
 - 2.6. Any national legislation to remove safe, older vehicles from highways as a means to reduce energy use;
 - 2.7. Implementation or enforcement of any regulation further limiting the driver's hours of operation or the hours a truck can be utilized on the nation's highways;
 - 2.8. The diversion of highways and utility lines from public land;
 - 2.9. The use of federal transportation money used for recreational non-motor vehicle infrastructure;
 - 2.10. Mandatory electronic on-board recording devices on commercial vehicles and vehicles transporting agricultural products which do

- not recognize or provide for breaks within the 14-hour daily service time;
- 2.11. The mandatory use of digital log books for any commercial vehicle hauling livestock or agriculture products;
- 2.12. Mandatory CDL for producers and their employees to transport fuel, chemicals, fertilizer and farm commodities;
- 2.13. Lowering of federal weight and length limits;
- 2.14. The added restrictions to recreational livestock hauling that require a CDL and electronic log device;
- 2.15. The inclusion of agricultural producers in the Unified Carrier Registration program. We support restoring an agricultural exemption from the program;
- 2.16. Requiring a driver possessing a current, valid CDL with a hazmat endorsement and a clean motor vehicle report having to reorder a Homeland Security report when moving to another state;
- 2.17. The use of road tax monies to fund rails-to-trails initiatives while there is a backlog of maintenance needed on existing roads and bridges;
- 2.18. Any federal mandate to install speed limiters on commercial vehicles;
- 2.19. Creation of a federal vehicle mileage tax, which would tax motorists based on the number of miles driven;
- 2.20. A federal DOT regulation requiring professional truck-driving school training for new commercial truck drivers. On-the-job training should be recognized as acceptable for truck-driving training; and
- 2.21. Any marijuana legalization for commercial motor vehicle license holders.

#135 Agricultural Workforce

(amendments at lines 16.9, 16.10, 16.11, 17.15)

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. 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. We may accept visa caps for a year-round program as long as they do not restrict farmers and ranchers from using the visa program and getting their labor needs met;
 - 16.2. 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;
 - 16.3. An H-2A wage rate freeze at 2023 levels;
 - 16.4. Using the USDA Census of Agriculture data when determining policy on agricultural labor;
 - 16.5. 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;
 - 16.6. Any federal mandate on employers to implement E-Verify must:
 - 16.6.1. Include an employment eligibility verification system which is simple, conclusive and timely;

- 16.6.2. Provide an affirmative defense for employers acting in good faith;
- 16.6.3. Allow for status adjustment of workers not authorized prior to implementation; and
- 16.6.4. Be preceded by full implementation of a usable agricultural worker program.
- 16.7. The reform of existing migrant labor laws to promote greater access to an agricultural workforce; and
- 16.8. Legislation at the federal level to exempt farmworkers from time-and-a half or double-time requirements.
- 16.9. The utilization of Temporary Nonimmigrant (TN) visas to enhance our agricultural workforce and the availability of year-round labor.
- 16.10. The State Department providing the rationale for TN visa application denials.
- 16.11. A review of the agricultural job types that are eligible for TN visas.
- 17. We support:
 - 17.1. 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;
 - 17.2. 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;
 - 17.3. Deleting the language "or causes to be used" from the vehicle safety obligations section of MSPA (Section 500.100a);
 - 17.4. 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;
 - 17.5. The family farm exemption in MSPA and oppose any efforts to restrict its application;
 - 17.6. 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;
 - 17.7. EPA withdrawing the WPS of November 2015 in favor of the previous WPS rule;
 - 17.8. Changes to employee protections under the WPS should be based on current scientifically or medically substantiated data and reflect current pesticide labeling;
 - 17.9. 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;
 - 17.10. 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;
 - 17.11. Allowing the use of housing that meets Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) standards for qualified seasonal and agricultural visa workers;
 - 17.12. Increased funding to continue and expand the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Program;

- 17.13. 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;
- 17.14. Improved programs for agricultural workers that assist in finding, hiring and retaining an adequate, legal and cost-competitive labor supply; and
- 17.15. **Elimination of the Adverse Effect Wage Rate.**
Until then, we support seeking legislative proposals that would cap year-over-year increases and account for regional variability with competitive labor rates. Additionally, changes in the H-2A program wage rate methodology should reflect a correlation to the state minimum wage.
- 18. We oppose:
 - 18.1. Fees on the H-2A program that provide funding for programs unrelated to guest worker visas;
 - 18.2. A national agricultural labor board;
 - 18.3. The expansion of the Agricultural Hazardous Occupations Orders by the DOL;
 - 18.4. 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;
 - 18.5. 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;
 - 18.6. Any regulations requiring farmers to pay wages to farm employees during travel time from their residence to place of work; and
 - 18.7. 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.
- 19. **Agricultural Visa Program**
 - 19.1. We support improving the current H-2A program in addition to any new agricultural visa program established;
 - 19.2. 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;
 - 19.3. We support immigration reform including streamlining the H-2A and H-2B process, 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;
 - 19.4. 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;
 - 19.5. We support an agricultural worker program with requirements and fees that are not more stringent for one sector of agriculture than another;
 - 19.6. 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;

- 19.7. 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;
- 19.8. 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;
- 19.9. 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;
- 19.10. 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;
- 19.11. A state employment agency should be required to verify employment eligibility before making any referral to an employer;
- 19.12. 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;
- 19.13. 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;
- 19.14. 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;
- 19.15. 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;
- 19.16. 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;
- 19.17. We support a worker program that:
 - 19.17.1. Classifies H-2A workers who seasonally operate trucks during harvest as Agricultural Equipment Operators;
 - 19.17.2. Addresses agriculture's unique needs, which may change suddenly with weather, global market realities, contract enforceability or other variables beyond the grower's control;
 - 19.17.3. Is simplified and cost-competitive to make their employment more feasible for perishable crops;
 - 19.17.4. Provides workers, including commercial fishing and fish dock workers, with a visa that lasts at least three years and is renewable multiple times;
 - 19.17.5. Provides an H-2B exemption for domestic fisheries and seafood processing;
 - 19.17.6. 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);

- 19.17.7. Allows the worker to maintain their current residency while obtaining a work visa without a requirement of returning to their country of origin;
- 19.17.8. Eliminates excessive or duplicative bureaucracy and unnecessary red tape;
- 19.17.9. Reduces domestic recruitment costs;
- 19.17.10. Allows U.S. farmers to hire qualified migratory and domestic workers;
- 19.17.11. Includes appropriate provisions for foreign commuter workers who return to a residence in their home country nightly or weekly;
- 19.17.12. Establishes an ombudsman to resolve disputes among immigration service, employers and workers;
- 19.17.13. Includes timely certification determination to ensure employers adequate time to bring workers to a job site;
- 19.17.14. Includes the broadest possible definition of agriculture;
- 19.17.15. Provides the option of a housing allowance, in lieu of housing;
- 19.17.16. Provides for an exemption from any contract employment guarantee in the case of a freeze or other emergency catastrophic event;
- 19.17.17. Is administered by USDA;
- 19.17.18. 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 or a limit on hours worked in a week for each farm;
- 19.17.19. Includes data from current and previous H-2A employers in the H-2A prevailing practices survey;
- 19.17.20. 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;
- 19.17.21. Includes forestry;
- 19.17.22. Provides an online format to expedite the exchange of information between the producer and government agencies;
- 19.17.23. Includes work requirements for able-bodied adults on government assistance;
- 19.17.24. Allows for rehiring of past employees without having to refile and resubmit paperwork to four agencies;
- 19.17.25. Allows H-2A workers to get visas for multiple years without refiling them;
- 19.17.26. Streamlines the H-2A application process in order to make the availability of workers more accessible and timelier for agricultural labor needs;
- 19.17.27. A process for timely replacement of H-2A workers due to health reasons or loss of approved worker;
- 19.17.28. Includes dairy parlor and animal care employees in the H-2A program;
- 19.17.29. Reduces fees for H-2A and other visa programs that may be used to employ agricultural workers;
- 19.17.30. Exempts H-2A employees from unions as their contract is already negotiated between the state and federal departments of labor;
- 19.17.31. Sends the I-797B (notice of action) approval notice and the I-129 (petition for a non-immigrant worker) application electronically, and that electronic document should be accepted as an official approval. All communications such as the request for information or denial notice should be made electronically in addition to hard copies being sent through the mail;
- 19.17.32. Allows H-2A employers to stipulate a requested length of work experience required for all interested agricultural workers;
- 19.17.33. The United States Department of Labor (DOL) resurveying the average labor wage for agricultural workers in order to more accurately reflect the local pay rates (domestic versus H-2A) and ease the financial

- 19.17.34. strain on agricultural producers due to an overinflated Adverse Effect Wage Rate required by H-2A provisions; Applying the Adverse Effect Wage Rate at the time of contract signing for the life of the contract;
 - 19.17.35. 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;
 - 19.17.36. An arbitration process to allow Adverse Effect Wage Rate challenges; and
 - 19.17.37. 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; and
 - 19.17.38. The abolishment of the DOL's Adverse Effect Wage Rate methodology for the temporary employment of H-2A nonimmigrants in non-range occupations in the United States finalized in March 2023.
- 19.18. We oppose:
- 19.18.1. Requiring agricultural producers who participate in federal guest worker programs to pay wage rates excessively higher than the state or federal minimum wage;
 - 19.18.2. 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;
 - 19.18.3. 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;
 - 19.18.4. Requiring to pay such cost until at least half of the contract period is complete and unless the costs primarily benefit the employer;
 - 19.18.5. Unreasonable limits to the number of temporary worker visas, or guaranteeing payment of any fraction of a worker's pay for work that has not been performed;
 - 19.18.6. 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;
 - 19.18.7. Applying any labor law that does not currently apply to H-2A visa workers;
 - 19.18.8. A requirement that agricultural visa workers be required to purchase health insurance or meet any health requirement not required for domestic workers;
 - 19.18.9. Separate hourly wage rates for specific tasks in H-2A contracts; and
 - 19.18.10. Constant changes in the requirements for services provided for H-2A workers during the contract period.

#146 Artificial Intelligence

(amendments at lines 2, 2.1)

1. The use of artificial intelligence in agriculture has the potential to offer enhanced efficiency through precision agriculture, optimizing resource use and improving agricultural production. At the same time, the needs of farmers and ranchers must be considered as the regulatory structure for this new technology is developed.
2. Education:
 - 2.1. We support the development and implementation of education and training programs to help farmers understand and adopt AI technologies, with a focus on practical applications, potential concerns, and demonstrated benefits.

3. Ethical Use of AI
 - 3.1. We support:
 - 3.1.1. Transparency in AI Decision Making: Transparency in AI means that the processes and decisions made by AI systems are understandable and explainable;
 - 3.1.2. Explainable AI (XAI): Develop AI models that are inherently interpretable. These models provide insights into how they arrive at a particular decision, making it easier for farmers and stakeholders to understand;
 - 3.1.3. Documentation: Require AI developers to document the training data, algorithms, and parameters used in the systems. This documentation can be made available to regulators and users;
 - 3.1.4. Auditing and Accountability: Implement auditing mechanisms that allow for the tracking of AI decisions and their outcomes over time. This helps in identifying and rectifying biases or errors; and
 - 3.1.5. User-Friendly Interfaces: Create user interfaces that present AI-driver recommendations in a clear and understandable manner, avoiding overly technical jargon.
4. Regulation and Standards: Work towards creating regulatory frameworks and industry standards for AI in farming to ensure safe and fair practices.
 - 4.1. We support:
 - 4.1.1. Safe and fair practices, which can include:
 - 4.1.1.1. Algorithm transparency: Encourage transparency in the algorithms used in AI systems, allowing farmers and ranchers to understand how decisions are made and identify potential biases;
 - 4.1.1.2. Safety standards: Establish safety standards for AI-powered farm and ranch machinery and equipment, ensuring they meet safety and reliability criteria to prevent accidents and harm to operators;
 - 4.1.1.3. Environmental sustainability: Promote AI applications that help reduce the environmental footprint of agriculture, such as precision techniques that optimize resource usage;
 - 4.1.1.4. Fair access: Ensure equitable access to AI technologies for farmers and ranchers of all sizes and types, preventing monopolies or exclusionary practices; and
 - 4.1.1.5. Monitoring and accountability: Implement mechanisms for monitoring AI systems in agriculture and holding developers accountable for any adverse impacts or violations of regulations.
 - 4.2. We oppose:
 - 4.2.1. Biased algorithms: Unfair practices can include AI algorithms that exhibit bias, favoring certain types of agricultural production practices or commodities over others, potentially disadvantaging some farmers; and
 - 4.2.2. Exclusionary pricing: Unfair pricing models for AI services that discriminate against smaller or less financially well-off farmers, limiting their access to beneficial technology.
5. Liability and Insurance
 - 5.1. Liability
 - 5.1.1. We support:
 - 5.1.1.1. Product liability: AI developers and manufactures should be liable for any defects or malfunctions in AI-powered farm and ranch equipment or systems that result in harm to individuals, damage to property, or loss of crops and/or livestock;
 - 5.1.1.2. Algorithmic liability: If an AI system makes a decision that leads to economic losses for a farmer or rancher due to errors or biases in the algorithm, there should be mechanisms for holding the AI developer or operator accountable;
 - 5.1.1.3. Shared liability: In cases where multiple parties are involved in deploying AI solutions (e.g., the farmer and/or rancher, technology provider, and data

provider), liability should be clearly defined, ensuring that responsibility is shared appropriately; and

5.1.1.4. Contractual agreements: Clear and transparent contractual agreements should outline liability arrangements between AI service providers and farmers and ranchers, specifying the extent of responsibility in various scenarios.

5.2. Insurance

5.2.1. We support the availability of specialized AI liability insurance products tailored to the unique risks associated with AI in agriculture.

#149 Cooperatives

(amendment at line 4.4)

1. Agricultural cooperatives being farmer owned and controlled and be based upon the principles of our private competitive enterprise system.
2. We oppose any attempt to repeal or weaken the Capper-Volstead Act. Antitrust suits should not be used to dilute the bargaining power of farmer cooperatives.
3. Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act requirements should apply to cooperatives that do business on cash basis with nonmembers.
4. We support:
 - 4.1. Legal, regulatory and tax codes to encourage the proliferation of farmer-owned closed cooperatives that produce value-added products;
 - 4.2. Allowing cooperatives to keep dividends from deceased members after trying to locate heirs for five years; and
 - 4.3. Disclosure of contingent liabilities tied to customer loan guarantees of farmer-member owned marketing and supply cooperatives.
- 4.4. Cooperatives being included in eligibility for federal grant programs.

#151 Education

(amendment at line 2.2.10)

1. ***Ag in the Classroom***
 - 1.1. Agriculture in the classroom programs improve the agricultural literacy of the public and should be a part of all elementary and secondary education.
 - 1.2. We support:
 - 1.2.1. Agriculture in the Classroom resources and programs for all K-12 classes;
 - 1.2.2. The National Agriculture in the Classroom organization;
 - 1.2.3. The USDA's role as coordinator of the Agriculture in the Classroom program and the continuation of funding for the Annual National Conference, website maintenance and enhancement, Agriculture in the Classroom Excellence Grants Program (ACE), Excellence in Teaching about Agriculture in the Classroom Award and the ability for state programs to apply for Secondary Education, Two-Year Post-secondary Education, Agriculture in the K-12 Classroom Challenge (SPECA) Grants Program and additional programs as funding allows; and
 - 1.2.4. An increase in the annual appropriation for the program.
2. ***Primary and Secondary Education***
 - 2.1. We believe that educational policy is primarily a local and state issue. Reforms to improve educational quality can best be formulated at these levels of government.
 - 2.2. We support:
 - 2.2.1. A rewrite of the formula for federal funding which directs more money to rural and small-town school districts;
 - 2.2.2. Obtaining proficiency in the basics of reading, writing and mathematics by all students in our educational system;

- 2.2.3. The use of English as the teaching language in grades K-12;
- 2.2.4. Programs that provide greater educational opportunities and incentives for exceptional students that emphasize creativity, innovation and teamwork while helping individual students identify their passions earlier in their educational experience;
- 2.2.5. The option of home-based education;
- 2.2.6. Environmental education for all students being based on sound science and factual information;
- 2.2.7. School curricula focusing on science-based facts and not on promoting or advocating the concept of animal or plant rights;
- 2.2.8. Preserving neighborhood schools and maintaining the right of parents or legal guardians to participate in public and private schools affairs;
- 2.2.9. Federal impact aid to localities adversely affected by federal government installations and/or refugee relocations;
- 2.2.10. **Increased emphasis on educational programs that provide training in citizenship, traditional family values, parenting, life skills, ethics, social behavior and interpersonal relations; and**
- 2.2.11. Native American tribes reimbursing local school districts for the full cost of educating tribal members.
- 2.3. We oppose:
 - 2.3.1. Unfunded mandates;
 - 2.3.2. National mandates on local curricula and school boards; and
 - 2.3.3. Federal funding being withheld from school districts because of hunting, shooting sports, angling or archery programs.
- 3. **Higher Education and Student Loans**
 - 3.1. We support:
 - 3.1.1. Eligibility for college loans be based on net operational income;
 - 3.1.2. Interest-free student loans as long as payments are made on time;
 - 3.1.3. Any individual who gets a student Pell Grant should be required to repay it with interest if they do not complete the semester. They should not be eligible for any further government loans or funds until the amount owed is repaid;
 - 3.1.4. Government and lending institutions making every effort to collect delinquent student loans with interest;
 - 3.1.5. Colleges and universities not being penalized for non-repayment of student loans. To avoid jeopardizing the availability of student loans, government guarantee should be reduced from 100 percent to 95 percent;
 - 3.1.6. Resident instruction programs in our colleges of agriculture. The development of students' expertise is critical to the future of the agricultural industry;
 - 3.1.7. Land grant colleges being funded to develop and implement the goal of educating farmers and ranchers on the principles of a market-oriented agriculture;
 - 3.1.8. The original intent of teacher tenure to protect teachers against political abuse. However, tenure should be reformed so that it cannot be used to unduly protect incompetent teachers;
 - 3.1.9. Private schools meeting or exceeding state standards for accreditation;
 - 3.1.10. Government recognizing the right of private groups to organize and operate educational institutions; and
 - 3.1.11. The EPA's environmental education being based on sound science and factual information.
 - 3.2. We oppose:
 - 3.2.1. The Internal Revenue Service interfering with the enrollment practices of private schools;

- 3.2.2. Prisoners qualifying for any welfare or federal or state grants, such as college or school grants;
- 3.2.3. The federal government mandating the forgiveness of student debts; and
- 3.2.4. Including farm and small business assets in the calculation used as part of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

#306 Equine (amendments at line 1.18)

1. We support:
 - 1.1. The use of equine for transportation, recreation, tourism and business;
 - 1.2. Legislation and rulings that allow the sale, possession and transport of horses intended for processing or rendering, and encourage a national education campaign targeted toward legislators and the media as to the consequences of eliminating equine harvest, resulting in unintended animal abuse and neglect, and the negative impact on the equine industry;
 - 1.3. Domestic ownership, control and location of equine processing facilities with the understanding that facility owners will pay for approved USDA inspection if federal funding is not available;
 - 1.4. The reopening or development of new equine harvesting facilities;
 - 1.5. The classification of horses as livestock;
 - 1.6. Maintaining accessibility to federal and state lands for equine activities through the passage of the National "Right to Ride" Act;
 - 1.7. Funding for USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) inspectors in facilities that harvest horses;
 - 1.8. Including all aspects of the equine industry in the agricultural census;
 - 1.9. Encouraging equine owners to follow American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) core vaccination guidelines for equine health and disease related issues;
 - 1.10. Including horses in the definition of livestock as it applies to qualifying for federal disaster programs;
 - 1.11. Individual and non-governmental organization rights to remove horses from harvest as long as they take possession of the horses and are responsible for their care and feeding;
 - 1.12. When an equine is in the custody of a government agency and an adoption has not been able to take place within six months, that equine should be euthanized with minimal stress without delay and processed;
 - 1.13. Legislation that would recognize the inherent risks of equine activities;
 - 1.14. The development of a national testing and surveillance program for Piroplasmiasis;
 - 1.15. Funding for FSIS to create withdrawal protocols for animal remedies used in the equine industry;
 - 1.16. Working with veterinary schools and veterinary associations to encourage education on the use of captive bolt gun for equine euthanasia. This AAEP and American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) approved euthanasia method is more environmentally friendly than barbiturate overdose and ensures more options for carcass disposal;
 - 1.17. Congress directing funds that were previously allocated to inspection of processing plants (and removed in 2015 budget) to research withdrawal times for equine pharmaceuticals and develop rapid diagnostic drug residue testing procedures for horses bound for processing;
 - 1.18. All inspection processes relative to the Horse Protection Act by industry and/or USDA should include science-based criteria to arrive at an objective summation of compliance or non-compliance and conducted by accredited veterinarians;

- 1.19. The unrestricted use of horse pads for purposes of shoeing horses; and
- 1.20. The continued exemption for farriers within the AVMA's Model Veterinary Practice Act (MVPA).
2. We oppose:
 - 2.1. The passage of the Horse Slaughter Prevention Act or similar legislation;
 - 2.2. The classification of horses as companion animals;
 - 2.3. Any regulations that prohibit the harvest of equines;
 - 2.4. Any legislation that would curtail movement into Mexico and Canada of horses that meet the requirements of existing trade agreements;
 - 2.5. Coggins testing for horses going directly to slaughter;
 - 2.6. Legislation or regulation that would ban the use of double deck livestock trailers for horses as long as the trailers are adequately designed; and
 - 2.7. Efforts to ban or effectively ban the use of horses in commerce, service, agriculture, husbandry, transportation, ranching, entertainment, education or exhibition.

#307 Livestock and Poultry Health (amendment at line 10.1)

1. We recognize the need for feed additives and medication in livestock, poultry and minor species. We favor judicious use and withdrawal restrictions of feed additives and therapeutics. We oppose the banning of such additives and therapeutics. We urge thorough investigation of the accuracy of the tests used by government agencies to determine drug residues in livestock and poultry. Producers who have had a drug tissue residue violation and remain compliant for 12 consecutive months should have their names removed from all violators lists.
 - 1.1. We recommend the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) work with end-users and industry to find a clear regulatory pathway that allows for an approval process of new feed additive technology that clearly distinguishes the difference between animal drugs and feed additives so the public has a clear understanding of how producers are using these technologies. We also encourage FDA and USDA to find equivalency for feed additives that are used in animals in other countries when their meat and poultry products are exported to the United States.
2. When animals or groups of animals are partially or completely condemned, there should be a complete written report to the seller recording any permanent identification of the animals and stating the reason for condemnation.
3. Livestock feed labels should provide clear, concise and accurate information regarding ingredients and nutritional information. The FDA and state feed control officials should consider making modifications in labeling requirements by developing more specific classifications of animal protein sources such as "non-ruminant derived animal proteins," "ruminant derived animal proteins" and "non-mammalian derived animal proteins" to provide producers with the information they need to make the certifications about feeding practices that the marketplace is demanding. It is unnecessary to label feed ingredients according to species origin. We support the use of the current warning statement of feed labels that states, "Do not feed to cattle or other ruminants" if the feed contains ingredients prohibited to be fed to ruminants by FDA rules.
4. To help ensure international uniformity in standards for pharmaceutical approval FDA should use scientific research data of foreign countries to assist in approving animal health products for use in the United States. We further encourage Congress to ensure adequate funding for the National Animal Disease Center, National Veterinary Services Laboratory and Center for Veterinary Biologics and the Poison Plant Disease Center.
5. In an effort to protect the entire livestock and poultry industry, we believe that farm animals raised in urban areas should follow similar animal health protocol and production practices as those raised in agricultural areas.
6. We encourage producers to participate in voluntary quality assurance programs.

7. We encourage the use of electronic animal health papers, with the ability to include but not require actual digital photos of the animal, for relevant species. Digital photos of equine may be practical; however, digital photos of mass transit animals like cattle and hogs are not practical.
8. In an attempt to minimize economic impacts, no human disease should be named after an animal or commodity.
9. We oppose any producer checkoff or assessment to fund national livestock disease eradication programs, including but not limited to brucellosis, scrapie and pseudorabies.
10. We support:
 - 10.1. Oversight and staffing for national animal health issues, especially livestock diseases, be housed within USDA and all coordination in livestock-related disease issues be led by USDA.
 - 10.2. Legislation that would continue the ability of veterinarians to prescribe drugs and the accepted extra label usage of drugs needed for proper animal care. Adequate funding should be provided for the Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank to allow for continued, free, immediate expert consultation to livestock owners and veterinarians in the event of accidental drug or toxin exposure to livestock or poultry. Veterinarian-prescribed and FDA-approved animal medication should be permitted to be stored in production facilities in properly secured enclosures;
 - 10.3. The continued sale of veterinary prescribed and over-the-counter animal health products and oppose further restrictions on their use, including any required on-farm reporting of drugs administered to livestock;
 - 10.4. Amending the Controlled Substance Act to allow a veterinarian to transport and dispense controlled substances in the usual course of veterinary practice at a site other than the registrant's registered principal place of business or professional practice, so long as the site is within a state where the veterinarian is licensed to practice;
 - 10.5. Exempting xylazine used in veterinary medicine from any efforts to criminalize possession of the drug;
 - 10.6. Adequate funding for FDA's proposals to increase the research development and availability of approved animal drugs for minor uses and minor species (MUMS Document) as well as the concept that there should be different requirements for drug approval for minor species and minor uses;
 - 10.7. Research, development and importation of labeled animal health products;
 - 10.8. Expedited approval for import to the U.S. of U.S.-approved products which, due to economic constraints, are no longer manufactured in the U.S.;
 - 10.9. The development of a core animal disease surveillance, control and eradication program to prevent the introduction of foreign or emerging animal diseases and poultry diseases and pests into this country and to control and eradicate those that exist;
 - 10.10. The efforts of state agencies to control rabies. We recognize the need for restricted labeling of rabies vaccine. We encourage continued research into effective ways to immunize wildlife against rabies and make those vaccines readily available to responsible state agencies;
 - 10.11. The development and identification of a swift and accurate live animal diagnostic test for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and an eradication program;
 - 10.12. Federal agencies assisting in providing funding for genetic resistance research to eliminate CWD in cervidae;
 - 10.13. Farm animal vaccines containing potentially dangerous endotoxins be required to be labeled to identify possible side effects and preventive measures;
 - 10.14. The National Veterinary Medical Services Act (NVMSA), which provides veterinary school graduates student-loan repayment if they agree to work in underserved areas. We encourage Congress to fund NVMSA and USDA to work with the livestock industry to develop participation guidelines that include giving priority to those who agree to enter the food animal and rural veterinary fields;

- 10.15. Food animal veterinarians being eligible for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program;
 - 10.16. USDA continuing to work with the livestock and dairy industries to further develop methods to control leukosis;
 - 10.17. USDA requiring all commercial feeds being sold show the total digestible nutrients in the feed;
 - 10.18. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) actively pursuing epidemiological studies on Vesicular Stomatitis (VS) and that the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) move quickly to study vectors, reservoirs and mode of transmission;
 - 10.19. APHIS and ARS supporting research for the development of a licensed VS vaccine and protocol for vaccine use;
 - 10.20. APHIS maintaining adequate staff involvement and monetary support to find solutions for the current outbreak and prevent recurrence of VS;
 - 10.21. APHIS carefully evaluating international restrictions on animals and especially on products to assure that such restrictions are science-based;
 - 10.22. Federal legislation, regulations or programs that support regionalization by APHIS to modernize animal movement regulations;
 - 10.23. More research and education on the impact of Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases carried by wildlife that cause serious illness to humans and animals;
 - 10.24. The United States having its own testing requirements for animal diseases based only on sound science, with every effort to adhere to the Office of International Epizootics risk assessment standards;
 - 10.25. Producers' continued access and ability to use polyether ionophores (e.g., monensin, lasalocid) as a feed additive to reduce methane production in cattle and to serve as a coccidiostat in poultry;
 - 10.26. Changing the federal definition of a veterinary-client-patient relationship (VCPR) to allow for the use of telemedicine when making an animal health diagnosis and recommending a course of treatments;
 - 10.27. Reclassifying ionophores used in livestock and poultry production as antiparasitic, not antibiotics;
 - 10.28. That any producer checkoff or assessment to fund a national livestock disease surveillance or eradication program be subject to producer oversight and/or contain a mandatory sunset provision;
 - 10.29. Compartmentalization and secure food plans to protect movement and exports in the livestock and poultry industries during disease incidents;
 - 10.30. The writing of stray voltage guides that correctly depict the most accurate research, technology and testing methods and the true environments of modern dairy farms;
 - 10.31. The use of a 125 ohm resistor, instead of 500 ohm, to more accurately represent the worst case scenario of cow plus cow contact for stray voltage testing;
 - 10.32. Funding for additional U.S. Customs and Border Protection and USDA APHIS inspectors to prevent the importation of animal and plant diseases; and
 - 10.33. The reduction of regulatory barriers to pharmaceutical companies to add additional options for use to the labels of medications used in animal health protection, treatment and pain relief.
11. We oppose:
- 11.1. Limiting the supply to farmers of an animal medication when use of its human counterpart as prescribed by a physician is being discouraged; and
 - 11.2. The release of helium balloons into the air, excluding scientific, military and research balloons, due to dangers to livestock and the environment.
12. **Animal Antibiotics**
- 12.1. To protect the continued use of critical animal health products we support the following:
 - 12.1.1. Clarification and further review of FDA's Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) in regards to therapeutic drug use protocols. We also support a plan for education regarding

- the purpose and implementation of the VFD for producers, feed distributors and veterinary professionals;
- 12.1.2. FDA's VFD preserving the right for producers to use feed additives and injectable antibiotic and probiotic products;
 - 12.1.3. Sound science as the basis for decision-making and policy development regarding antibiotics/antimicrobials used in food animal production;
 - 12.1.4. Use of the National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System, the National Animal Health Monitoring System and USDA's food safety monitoring system to address issues of antimicrobial resistance trends in food-borne bacteria and animal health;
 - 12.1.5. Regulation of antibiotics/antimicrobials at the national level to avoid a state-by-state patchwork of regulation;
 - 12.1.6. Immediate action to increase the availability of long-acting antibiotics to the animal industry
 - 12.1.7. A multi-agency approach to on-farm antimicrobial-resistant bacteria trend research and surveillance that includes APHIS, ARS, Food Safety and Inspection Service and livestock producers;
 - 12.1.8. Rather than limitations or elimination of animal health and food safety protection tools, we would accept veterinarian oversight of antibiotic use, where veterinarian oversight is defined as a working relationship with a licensed veterinarian and allow for the purchasing of animal pharmaceuticals using a prescription without the requirement of purchasing directly from a veterinarian and not requiring veterinarians to physically examine each animal before writing a prescription;
 - 12.1.9. The veterinary/patient client relationship as it relates to medical use and antibiotics, and the information should remain confidential and not subject to Freedom of Information Act requests. Similar to other farm data, all animal health records are the property of the farm and require the owner's written permission to be accessed;
 - 12.1.10. Current slaughter surveillance, testing and inspection as appropriate food safety and animal health protocol;
 - 12.1.11. The use of a standard symbol for all drugs that require a withdrawal time;
 - 12.1.12. The FDA allowing the extra label use of cephalosporin antimicrobial drugs in animals when warranted; and
 - 12.1.13. Amending the VFD to allow veterinarians to prescribe extra-label use of antimicrobial drugs in animals when warranted, including in the treatment of minor species. The VCPR establishes sufficient oversight of veterinarians for extra-label use when necessary.
 - 12.1.14. We oppose any attempt to reclassify over-the-counter non-prescription injectable antibiotics to prescription-only status. If "reclassified," FDA should not:
 - 12.1.14.1. Require prescriptions on a per animal basis;
 - 12.1.14.2. Require additional record keeping for producers outside of regular production records; or
 - 12.1.14.3. Hinder the use of telemedicine or digital prescriptions.
- 12.2. We oppose any expansion to the VFD Program.
13. ***Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE)***
- 13.1. We support:
- 13.1.1. Continued research to verify the means of transmission of BSE and methods to inactivate the causative agent;
 - 13.1.2. Federal legislation, regulations or programs which will support the establishment of a fund within USDA to pay beef and dairy producers to voluntarily submit the heads of downer animals for increased BSE surveillance;
 - 13.1.3. A uniform international standard to confirm BSE;
 - 13.1.4. Confidentiality of all inconclusive BSE test results;
 - 13.1.5. Announcements relating to BSE testing be made during non-trading hours at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME);

- 13.1.6. Continued monitoring and surveillance programs for BSE and other Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSE) in the United States;
- 13.1.7. A ban on the inclusion in ruminant feeds of any animal proteins scientifically shown to transmit BSE; and
- 13.1.8. Prioritizing birth records over dentition, if available, when USDA is testing for BSE.

14. Brucellosis

- 14.1. Since brucellosis is a dangerous disease agent transmittable from wildlife to domestic livestock and humans, we support the enactment of a mechanism and the appropriation of funds to require federal agencies in custody of wildlife to compensate livestock owners and other aggrieved entities for actual expenses and losses brought about by conflicts from wildlife when such losses can be substantiated.
- 14.2. We support the Bi-National Tuberculosis and Brucellosis Committee in its effort to control/eradicate bovine TB and brucellosis in Mexico and to prevent its spread to this country. We urge USDA to adopt regulations consistent with the border states' consensus document. The goal is the complete eradication of the diseases in both countries. This should include the development and validation of rapid tests for the diseases as well as the ability to trace infected animals back to their point of origin. If TB-infected cattle continue to arrive in the United States from any Mexican state, we should urge USDA to place more stringent inspection, quarantine and testing requirements on all imported animals from that state.
- 14.3. We support:
 - 14.3.1. A quarantine of wildlife in Yellowstone Park until it is certified free of brucellosis and TB;
 - 14.3.2. Adequate program funding to complete eradication and provide needed monitoring and surveillance;
 - 14.3.3. The federal government continuing full funding of brucellosis control activities in all infected states;
 - 14.3.4. A voluntary herd depopulation program and increased surveillance in order to speed up brucellosis control;
 - 14.3.5. Efforts to strengthen brucellosis laws and regulations and make them uniform among states;
 - 14.3.6. Updating state and federal rules regarding vaccination of cattle to coincide with RB51 vaccine science versus Strain 19 vaccine,
 - 14.3.7. State and federal funding for developing a more effective vaccine for protecting cattle and wildlife from brucellosis spread by wildlife and expanding research and diagnostics to understand the true health exposure;
 - 14.3.8. The principle of calfhood and mature cattle vaccination for the control and eradication of brucellosis; and
 - 14.3.9. USDA/APHIS provide brucellosis ID tags free of charge.

15. Cattle

- 15.1. We support:
 - 15.1.1. Implementation and funding for the National Strategic Plan for the Cattle Fever Tick Program developed in 2006;
 - 15.1.2. Immediate funding to eliminate Fever Ticks from the temporary preventive quarantine areas and prevent their spread throughout the United States;
 - 15.1.3. Research to develop a test for accurate chute-side testing for Persistent Infectious Bovine Viral Diarrhea (PI-BVD);
 - 15.1.4. The program developed by the cattle industry requiring that all bulls 18 months of age and older offered for sale, at auctions or at private treaty, be for slaughter only unless verified trichomoniasis-free with written certification of a negative trichomoniasis test within 30 days prior to sale;
 - 15.1.5. Research and eventual eradication of the screw worm;
 - 15.1.6. Sufficient fencing along the U.S.-Mexico border in the permanent quarantine zone to help stop the inflow of livestock and wildlife (nilgai, deer and other exotic hoofstock) that are potential carriers of cattle fever ticks from entering the U.S.; and

15.1.7. The allocation of resources and the development of measures to control the spread of and to eradicate the Asian Longhorned Tick in the United States to prevent economic and mortality losses in livestock. We support establishing an indemnification program and funding to mitigate livestock owners' financial losses associated with the Asian Longhorned Tick.

16. Johne's Disease

16.1. We support:

- 16.1.1. Implementation of a multi-year program to identify Johne's disease infected animals and to provide an indemnity payment at fair market value for disposal of livestock whose fecal culture has tested positive for this disease; and
- 16.1.2. The voluntary Johne's herd status program developed by USDA and an accurate rapid testing program. USDA should:
 - 16.1.2.1. Develop an accurate blood test for Johne's disease; and
 - 16.1.2.2. Support funding to reduce the producer's cost to test for Johne's disease.

17. TB (Tuberculosis)

17.1. We support:

- 17.1.1. USDA developing a more accurate TB test;
- 17.1.2. USDA allowing states to have split state status for TB certification;
- 17.1.3. The Emergency Action Plan to complete the eradication of TB, and sufficient federal funding for the elimination of TB in the United States;
- 17.1.4. Amending the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and the Uniform Methods and Rules (UM&R) governing the USDA TB eradication program to allow the state's animal health authority to quarantine TB-infected herds, employ test-and-remove procedures to eliminate infection, and control movement within areas of risk defined by scientific analysis, rather than requiring depopulation of infected herds and downgrading the TB status of the entire state. Additionally, we support amending the CFR and UM&R to base any downgrading of states' status on prevalence and risk of disease spread;
- 17.1.5. Counting test-and-remove herds as TB positive herds only for the one year in which the herd had a positive TB test;
- 17.1.6. The development of a treatment for Blackhead (Histomoniasis) disease in poultry;
- 17.1.7. The authorization of poultry disaster assistance for growers, including contract growers, implemented by USDA to cover Blackhead production/revenue losses and associated disposal and clean-up cost;
- 17.1.8. Changes in the national Mycobacterium bovis TB testing requirements that eliminate the need for an individual test for animal movement from a lower disease prevalence zone to a higher disease prevalence zone; and
- 17.1.9. The establishment and utilization of a science-based zoning approach and testing process to address disease risk (e.g., a 10-mile radius zone around new TB positive domestic livestock herds where wildlife is involved).

18. Poultry

18.1. We support:

- 18.1.1. A ban on the inclusion of ruminant animal proteins in poultry feeds;
- 18.1.2. The practice that all poultry crates and Pullman trailers used to haul live fowl (spent hens) for slaughter be cleaned and sanitized after each use at the poultry processing plant;
- 18.1.3. The development of a high-containment facility by USDA to study avian influenza and an appropriate vaccine;
- 18.1.4. The continuation of the federal-state cooperative agreement for animal avian health and surveillance of low-path H5/H7 avian influenza at current levels;
- 18.1.5. Authorization of poultry disaster assistance for growers, in addition to LIP, including contract growers, implemented by

USDA to cover avian influenza (AI) production /revenue losses and associated disposal and clean-up costs, even if outside of the quarantine area;

- 18.1.6. USDA investigating all alternative suppliers to maintain adequate amounts of testing materials for salmonella pullorum and updating regulations on control programs;
- 18.1.7. Preventing, detecting and responding to future cases of highly-pathogenic AI as a priority for poultry growers, industry and federal and state animal health officials. Prevention starts with sound workable biosecurity procedures included in the daily management activities carried out by growers and integrators; and
 - 18.1.7.1. We support:
 - 18.1.7.1.1. Expanding federal, state and industry response capabilities to enable rapid detection and response in domestic poultry flocks;
 - 18.1.7.1.2. Modifying USDA's indemnity program to split payments between owners/integrators and contract growers in the event of flock depopulation; and
 - 18.1.7.1.3. Streamlining the process for payment of indemnity and the cost of eliminating viruses to assist growers in returning to production.
- 18.2. We oppose mandatory testing of commercial laying flocks for Salmonella enteritidis until there is a statistically significant reliable testing procedure and protocol. Furthermore, we recommend that the trace-back program be discontinued.

19. **Sheep and Goat**

- 19.1. We support:
 - 19.1.1. More research and education on the impact of Bluetongue in livestock;
 - 19.1.2. All owners of sheep and goats participating in the National Scrapie Eradication Program;
 - 19.1.3. Identification and trace back of source flocks for scrapie. All source flocks for scrapie should be identified for a minimum of one year even if there is a change in ownership. The National Scrapie Eradication Program should be administered consistently across state lines, including rules for tagging and identification of breeding animals;
 - 19.1.4. Continued priority funding for scrapie research until the disease is controlled through the ongoing testing regimen; and
 - 19.1.5. The implementation and funding of a USDA Sheep and Goat Scrapie Voluntary Flock Certification Program. We will support efforts to develop a swift and accurate live animal diagnostic test for scrapie and other TSEs.
- 19.2. We oppose banning domestic sheep and goats from federal and state lands where Big Horn Sheep have been introduced.

20. **Specialty Livestock**

- 20.1. We support:
 - 20.1.1. USDA recognizing privately-owned cervidae and camelidae as domestic livestock. We urge individual states to take similar action;
 - 20.1.2. USDA seeking authority to regulate the interstate movement of cervidae and camelidae and developing uniform standards of testing and appropriate follow up procedures. Individual states are encouraged to adopt these standards;
 - 20.1.3. The removal of the Department of the Interior's (DOI) authority to regulate exotic animal agriculture. DOI should continue to regulate non-domesticated animals; and
 - 20.1.4. USDA sharing information regarding USDA-registered operations with state departments of agriculture.

21. **Swine**

- 21.1. We support:
 - 21.1.1. Adequate funding of the pseudorabies eradication plan developed by the swine industry and strengthening the

pseudorabies laws and regulations to require cleanup of infected herds;

- 21.1.2. Programs to develop and utilize swift and accurate tests to diagnose trichina in swine at slaughter and ultimately certify the United States trichina-free;
- 21.1.3. An efficient, strong, and adequately funded brucellosis control program leading to eradication of this disease in swine from the United States and Puerto Rico;
- 21.1.4. USDA continuing to assist countries which have experienced outbreaks of African swine fever to eradicate this disease and prevent its spread to the United States;
- 21.1.5. Creating assurance among swine producers, veterinarians and packers allowing for the timely marketing of animals from herds infected with a non-reportable disease (e.g., Seneca Valley Virus) where animals are otherwise safe to travel, not contagious and pose no food safety risk;
- 21.1.6. More aggressive border control to prevent the spread of virulent livestock diseases such as African Swine Fever (ASF);
- 21.1.7. Government assistance being provided to pork producers who are negatively impacted by African Swine Fever; and
- 21.1.8. The development of a rigorous plan of action to control the spread of African Swine Fever if the disease is diagnosed in North America, including the immediate cancellation of all swine shows until the disease is under control.

22. *Transportation/Interstate & International*

- 22.1. Agencies that have import responsibility for mammal, gastropod, reptile, avian or aquatic animal species should be mandated legislatively to coordinate import requirements with USDA to reduce the risk of animal diseases being introduced. Firmer measures should be taken and more stringent penalties imposed to avoid the smuggling of pet birds into the country by requiring the micro-chipping of all imported birds during the time they are in commerce.
- 22.2. We support:
 - 22.2.1. The USDA program to prevent the introduction of exotic diseases into the United States from foreign countries;
 - 22.2.2. USDA working with the state animal health officials on the development of an electronic signature option for animal health certificates that require a veterinary signature;
 - 22.2.3. USDA regulations allowing certified veterinarian technicians to issue health certificates for interstate movement of livestock;
 - 22.2.4. Federal regulations and programs which will encourage greater uniformity among states and countries in the testing and health requirements necessary for interstate and international transportation of livestock, nontraditional livestock and birds;
 - 22.2.5. The establishment of a reciprocal agreement among brucellosis- and TB-free states which would enable interstate movement of cattle originating from brucellosis- and TB-free herds by waiving the requirement for multiple pre-movement brucellosis and TB testing;
 - 22.2.6. Stepped-up surveillance to prevent the illegal entry of livestock, avian, aquatic and reptilian species from any foreign country; and
 - 22.2.7. Permanent inspection stations for imported livestock on the U.S. side adjacent to the border.

#338 Direct Marketing and Agritourism (amendment at title and lines 2, 2.1)

1. We support:
 - 1.1. The USDA definition of Direct Marketing Farmers: Farmer-producers that sell their own agricultural products directly to the general public, which includes fruits and vegetables, meat, fish, poultry, dairy products, animal fiber, and grains;

- 1.2. The USDA recognizing and accepting State Inspection of Meat and Poultry products at USDA facilities; and
- 1.3. The creation of the U.S. Sod Checkoff program through USDA.

2. Agritourism

2.1. Agritourism is the intersection where agriculture and tourism meet; when a farm opens its doors to the public and invites visitors to enjoy their products and services. We support programming to enhance and promote agritourism, the development of guidelines and best practices, as well as on-farm direct marketing opportunities.

#435 Federal Estate and Gift Taxes (amendments at lines 2.1, 2.7)

1. We support permanent repeal of federal estate taxes. Until permanent repeal is achieved, the exemption should be increased and indexed to inflation. If the exemption is lowered, agricultural land and capital assets should be excluded from estate taxes valuation, as long as they remain in production agriculture.
2. We support:
 - 2.1. ~~Full unlimited stepped-up basis at death must be included in any estate tax reform;~~
 - 2.2. The delay of any capital gains tax liability with inherited property until the asset is sold by the heirs;
 - 2.3. The portability of the exemption between spouses;
 - 2.4. The annual federal gift tax exemption being increased and indexed for inflation;
 - 2.5. Farmland owners having the option of using market value or current use value to determine land value for tax estate purposes and there should be no limit to the amount that property value can be reduced to reflect its actual use;
 - 2.6. Allowing valuations for estate and gift tax purposes to reflect discounts for minority ownership and lack of marketability;
 - 2.7. Increasing or maintaining the estate tax exemption rate and maintaining the current continuation of full and unlimited step-up in basis; and
 - 2.8. The same tax benefits for transitioning the farm to non-related family succession as to related family.
3. We oppose:
 - 3.1. Unreasonable and unfair Internal Revenue Service (IRS) estate tax audits;
 - 3.2. Estate tax audits that rely solely on an IRS agent's opinion on the value of the agricultural estate but should rather be based on the opinions of licensed appraisers with agricultural experience;
 - 3.3. IRS special consensual liens on property or a surety bond that are designed to protect the interest of the government installment payments as allowed by section 6166 of the Internal Revenue Code. These liens inhibit the ability of farmers or ranchers to continue to borrow capital to run their businesses; and
 - 3.4. The sale of agricultural land preservation, environmental easements on farm estates and timbering of farmland triggering a recapture tax during the 10-year agricultural use period.

#439 Taxation (amendment at line 7.1.2)

1. Tax policy should be designed to encourage private initiative, domestic economic growth, equity and simplicity.
2. We support:
 - 2.1. Income tax indexing;
 - 2.2. Reductions in all tax rates;

- 2.3. Confidentiality of federal income tax returns;
 - 2.4. Creating pretax savings accounts as a risk management tool for farmers and ranchers including deferment of self-employment taxes;
 - 2.5. Allowing farmers and ranchers to average income over a five-year period and allowing share-based rental income to be eligible for income averaging;
 - 2.6. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) allowing losses to be carried forward for an indefinite number of years;
 - 2.7. Elimination of the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT). Until repealed, the threshold and deductions allowed should be increased;
 - 2.8. Elimination of the imputed interest rate;
 - 2.9. Elimination of income tax on government grants;
 - 2.10. Seized real property being returned to the tax rolls as soon as possible;
 - 2.11. Taxing for-profit businesses operated by tax-exempt organizations;
 - 2.12. Tax credits for small business;
 - 2.13. Treatment of replacement hedges (i.e., exchanging cash positions with a futures contract) as ordinary income or loss;
 - 2.14. Eliminating income tax on reduced quota payments and state master settlement payments;
 - 2.15. Allowing corporations to deduct earnings distributed to stockholders as dividends;
 - 2.16. Tax incentives, such as exemptions for loan forgiveness programs, to encourage medical professionals and large animal veterinary practitioners, lawyers, accountants and other professionals to practice in rural areas;
 - 2.17. Income tax assessments and income tax refunds having the same statute of limitations;
 - 2.18. Making the provisions of Section 199A dealing with business permanent, with the inclusion of capital gains under qualified business income;
 - 2.19. Requiring the IRS to notify each tax-exempt organization of its tax filing responsibilities; and
 - 2.20. The increase in income levels triggering the taxability of Social Security.
3. We oppose:
- 3.1. Taxing interest income as it accrues;
 - 3.2. The use of agricultural land as a long-term, tax sheltered investment by pension and profit-sharing funds;
 - 3.3. Taxing the cash value buildup in life insurance;
 - 3.4. A value-added tax;
 - 3.5. Earned income credits for dependents who are not citizens and who do not live in the United States;
 - 3.6. IRS' Taxpayer Compliance Measurement Program;
 - 3.7. Tax increases with effective dates prior to the date of enactment;
 - 3.8. Taxation by tribal governments of non-enrolled people within reservation boundaries without representation;
 - 3.9. Taxation on the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment program;
 - 3.10. Businesses, corporations and other enterprises outsourcing jobs to other countries receiving a tax break;
 - 3.11. Wealth taxes;
 - 3.12. Any tax or government-imposed user fee on commodity futures or options transactions;
 - 3.13. Additional taxation on animal-based protein meat products;
 - 3.14. The increase of the capital gains rate and the increase in the corporate tax rate; and
 - 3.15. Taxation of livestock, including methane emissions;
 - 3.16. Any foreign entity or persons receiving any tax credits, abatements, incentives or any other in-kind contribution that affects the taking of agricultural land in the U.S.;
 - 3.17. Expansion of the IRS;
 - 3.18. Taxes on livestock, dairy producers and consumers for supposed environmental damages caused by livestock and dairy production systems;
 - 3.19. Internal Revenue Service agents having the authority to use deadly force or carry firearms; and

- 3.20. Industrial carbon capture and sequestration pipelines qualifying for any additional tax credits or government-subsidized carbon credits.
- 4. **Self-Employment Taxes**
 - 4.1. We support:
 - 4.1.1. Classifying Conservation Reserve Program payments as rental income not subject to Social Security tax;
 - 4.1.2. Allowing self-employment tax liability to be calculated by averaging self-employment income and losses similar to income tax averaging;
 - 4.1.3. Exempting rental income from land rented to the owner's family farm corporation, limited liability company or partnership from the self-employment tax; and
 - 4.1.4. Cutting the self-employment tax so that it equals the employee's share of employment taxes.
- 5. **Capital Gains Tax**
 - 5.1. We oppose any tax on capital gains. Until the capital gains tax is repealed, we support:
 - 5.1.1. Cutting the tax rate on capital gains;
 - 5.1.2. Indexing capital gains to inflation;
 - 5.1.3. An exclusion for the sale of agricultural land that remains in production;
 - 5.1.4. An exclusion for payments for farm land preservation easements and development rights;
 - 5.1.5. An exclusion for the transfer of a business, including farms, between parent and children;
 - 5.1.6. Allowing a taxpayer to defer taxes from the sale of property and machinery by investing the proceeds into a retirement account with taxes due at withdrawal;
 - 5.1.7. Eliminating the \$3,000 limit on capital losses; and
 - 5.1.8. An exclusion for land taken through threat of/or by eminent domain.
 - 5.2. We oppose federal income taxes on unrealized capital gains.
- 6. **Depreciation, Expensing and Deductions**
 - 6.1. We support:
 - 6.1.1. A tax deduction of fair market value for agriculture products donated to charity;
 - 6.1.2. Section 179 Small Business Expensing and indexing the amount for inflation;
 - 6.1.3. Annual expensing of preproduction expenditures;
 - 6.1.4. Treating costs incurred for major equipment repairs as an expense rather than a capital improvement;
 - 6.1.5. Allowing water storage reservoirs built for irrigation and the cost of land leveling for water conservation to be depreciated over a four-year period;
 - 6.1.6. Reforestation costs being treated as an expense in the year they are incurred;
 - 6.1.7. Raising the cap on the tax credit and shortening the amortization period for the cost for replanting of trees;
 - 6.1.8. A deduction for a portion of the home telephone bill used in the farm business;
 - 6.1.9. A deduction for all state and local taxes;
 - 6.1.10. Keeping a deduction for charitable contributions;
 - 6.1.11. A full year's depreciation for capital purchases made during the year;
 - 6.1.12. A deduction for interest and depreciation when as a result of a divorce, farm assets must be purchased by the spouse remaining with the farm;
 - 6.1.13. Written business employment agreements being accepted as proof of a valid employer/employee relationship with family members;
 - 6.1.14. The continuation of the three-year depreciation schedule for race horses. We believe the term "placed in service" means when the horse begins training;
 - 6.1.15. A deduction for business interest expense;
 - 6.1.16. Allowing use of depreciation of assets as a deduction for businesses;
 - 6.1.17. Raising the cap on the tax credit and shortening the amortization period for the full cost for replanting of trees;

- 6.1.18. Making bonus depreciation permanent;
- 6.1.19. The same depreciation schedules for income taxes and the AMT; and
- 6.1.20. Section 179 deductions for agricultural equipment being taken in the year the equipment is ordered and paid for.
- 6.2. We oppose:
 - 6.2.1. Removal of the mortgage interest deduction at the state and federal level.
- 7. **Environmental and Renewable Energy Tax Issues**
 - 7.1. We support:
 - 7.1.1. Tax incentives that encourage farmers and ranchers to safeguard plant and animal species, conserve our natural resources and improve the quality of our air and water;
 - 7.1.2. **A deduction and/or tax credit for the full and fair value of a donated conservation easement or purchased development right;**
 - 7.1.3. A revision to the federal tax code so that a conservation easement with a limited time (less than 99 years) is eligible for tax incentives;
 - 7.1.4. The same installment sales reporting for landowners who donate a term easement as those who donate a permanent easement;
 - 7.1.5. Federal tax revenue received from the sale of development rights being remitted to the state of origin for farmland protection programs;
 - 7.1.6. Exempting cost share benefits received from government mandated or government sponsored conservation practices;
 - 7.1.7. Tax policies that will create a diverse, domestic energy supply to spur economic growth while strengthening our energy security and bolstering rural economies;
 - 7.1.8. Tax incentives for domestic renewable power, including wind power that are calculated on a standard Btu/kwh equivalent measurement basis without regard to the materials, methods or sources;
 - 7.1.9. Transparency in the use of federal tax incentives for domestically produced biodiesel, renewable biodiesel and second-generation biofuel and for alternative fuel vehicle refueling property;
 - 7.1.10. Taxation of the Wetlands Reserve Program payments to be treated as ordinary income or capital gains at the discretion of the landowner;
 - 7.1.11. Energy savings credits for homeowners who utilize biomass thermal energy;
 - 7.1.12. Energy savings tax credits for the construction and retrofitting of buildings and structures that utilize biomass thermal energy. Any tax credit for lower carbon footprint materials should be based on scientifically sound, life-cycle analysis and include safeguards to promote positive outcomes for agricultural land, forests and climate; and
 - 7.1.13. All electric passenger vehicles be exempt from any current or future tax credits.
 - 7.2. We oppose carbon emission related taxes or fees on horsepower of vehicles and equipment used for agricultural production.
- 8. **Financial Distress Tax Relief**
 - 8.1. We support casualty-loss tax treatment for timber destroyed by insects, diseases or natural disasters.
 - 8.2. We support an exclusion from capital gains taxes for forced asset sales due to disasters, bankruptcy, insolvency or serious financial stress, condemnation and indemnification.
 - 8.3. We support amending the current tax code to provide for recouping actual value of casualty losses rather than basis value for forestry operations.
 - 8.4. We support an income tax exclusion for:
 - 8.4.1. Proceeds from the sale of forced livestock sales due to disaster or condemnation provided replacement livestock is purchased in the next 5 years; and

- 8.4.2. Federal farm payments related to weather disaster, reduced quota payments and state master settlement payments.
- 8.5. We support deferring recognition of income for:
 - 8.5.1. Two years for proceeds from a forced livestock sale caused by government reduced grazing periods or permits;
 - 8.5.2. Up to ten years for proceeds from forced liquidations due to disaster or eminent domain; and
 - 8.5.3. One year for all or a percentage of crop insurance or indemnity payments.
- 8.6. We oppose:
 - 8.6.1. The recapture of investment tax credit on agricultural property owned by a farmer who is declared to be insolvent; and
 - 8.6.2. Levying income taxes on taxpayers who are declared insolvent and sell property for less than the loan amount.
- 9. **Taxes on Savings**
 - 9.1. We support:
 - 9.1.1. Increasing the maximum allowance on individual IRAs and tax deferred retirement plans to \$12,000 indexed for inflation;
 - 9.1.2. Eliminating the adjusted gross income limitation for deductible Individual Retirement Account contributions;
 - 9.1.3. Changing the Simplified Employee Pension-Individual Retirement Account contribution rules to allow employees to work up to 210 days and make up to \$10,000 before they must be included in the same percentage of income as the owner contributes;
 - 9.1.4. Eliminating income taxes on the first \$1,000 of interest income from savings accounts of individuals;
 - 9.1.5. Eliminating mandatory distribution from IRAs and other retirement plans;
 - 9.1.6. Allowing penalty free transfers from IRAs to health savings accounts; and
 - 9.1.7. Eliminating the 10-year mandatory distribution on inherited retirement accounts.
- 10. **Taxes on the Transfer of Property**
 - 10.1. We support:
 - 10.1.1. Allowing farmers the unlimited deferral of taxes when exchanging real property for real property (Section 1031 exchanges);
 - 10.1.2. Changing like-kind exchange rules so that the time allowed to identify exchange property is increased from 45 days to six months and, the time allowed to close on and receive property is increased from six months to one year;
 - 10.1.3. Tax incentives for persons who sell or lease land, facilities, machinery, livestock or other assets to beginning farmers, and additional tax incentives for reduced rents;
 - 10.1.4. Installment sale reporting for all gains from the sale or exchange of farm properties;
 - 10.1.5. The use of trade difference or "to boot" pricing for trades in the federal tax codes; and
 - 10.1.6. Legislation that encourages the transition of agricultural land from one generation to the next, regardless of relation.
- 11. **Tax Record Keeping Issues**
 - 11.1. We support:
 - 11.1.1. The option of using cash accounting without restrictions;
 - 11.1.2. Increasing the \$150 Social Security and Medicare threshold to \$2,500, eliminating the total farm payroll test, indexing the threshold, imposing a 24-day test for determining if wages are subject to tax, and exempting full-time students 18 years of age or younger from withholding;
 - 11.1.3. Raising the minimum amount required to be reported on the 1099 form to \$6,000 indexed for inflation;
 - 11.1.4. Exempting forward contract sales by farmers from form 1099B filing requirements;
 - 11.1.5. Granting corporations the same safe harbor from under-estimation penalties as individuals;

- 11.1.6. Setting the tax filing deadline for farm corporations, at 75 days after the close of their fiscal year without requiring estimated quarterly payments;
- 11.1.7. Exempting all plants from the uniform capitalization rules;
- 11.1.8. Farmers having an April 15th tax filing deadline with no requirement for estimated payments;
- 11.1.9. Quarterly federal tax payments being due April 15, July 15, October 15 and January 15 to represent true quarterly payments;
- 11.1.10. A clear policy for implementing income tax filing procedures by H-2A workers who have left the United States and cannot file existing forms on time from their home country;
- 11.1.11. Acceptance of canceled checks as documentation for deductible expenses or contributions; and
- 11.1.12. Family-owned farms that are organized as general partnerships, LLCs, LLPs and S Corps being considered as individually owned entities and not subject to farm syndications rules that prevent them from using cash accounting.

12. Family Tax Issues

12.1. We support:

- 12.1.1. Allowing a 100 percent deduction for a person's health, dental, disability and long-term care insurance premiums and other health benefits;
- 12.1.2. Allowing an adjustment to business income for premiums and non-reimbursable medical expenses. Eligibility should not be predicated on all employees being provided health benefits;
- 12.1.3. Children with income who are claimed as a dependent not having to pay taxes at their parent's rate;
- 12.1.4. A tax deduction for post-secondary education tuition;
- 12.1.5. Educational scholarships shall not be considered taxable income;
- 12.1.6. The elimination of the marriage penalty;
- 12.1.7. Child-care credits for the self-employed;
- 12.1.8. Limiting the Earned Income Tax Credit to the amount of income and employment taxes paid;
- 12.1.9. Extending the Child Tax Credit from age 17 to 23 for dependent children who are full-time college students;
- 12.1.10. Exempting the proceeds from the sale of business property from adjusted gross income caps for retirement purposes;
- 12.1.11. Eliminating the adjusted gross income threshold for deducting medical expenses;
- 12.1.12. Expanding the tax credit for health savings accounts;
- 12.1.13. A full deduction for medical expenses;
- 12.1.14. The ability to deduct premiums paid for member health benefit plans; and
- 12.1.15. 529 and other college saving plans being exempt from gross income.

#462 Role of USDA

(amendments at lines 17.7, 17.11)

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 farm assistance payments, loans, grants and subsidies being administered without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, and reprisal or retaliation from prior civil rights activity.
12. We support immediate evaluation of current USDA staffing, compensation and training at the county, regional and state levels, including county committees, to assist in attaining an adequate, streamlined and talented staff that meets the programmatic needs of the applicant and USDA customers.
 - 12.1. USDA should ensure all staff are properly trained and certified to do all facets of their job within one year of hire.
13. In disputes with any federal government agencies including but not limited to FSA, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Fish and Wildlife Services, producers should have the opportunity to have their disputes heard in court and are judged by their peers and not by the federal government agency personnel with whom they have the dispute. Also, the double jeopardy rule should apply to such disputes so an agency cannot continue to bring back the same dispute until they get a ruling they prefer.
14. We recommend amending USDA policies and procedures that allow for employees to be justly compensated for travel whether they are driving their personal or government issued vehicle.
15. USDA should be:
 - 15.1. A monitor of domestic and foreign agricultural affairs;
 - 15.2. An accurate source of agricultural data and research; and
 - 15.3. An agricultural policy adviser to other departments of the federal government;
16. We support USDA programs that:
 - 16.1. Help farmers obtain needed crop and market information, research, educational assistance and credit;
 - 16.2. Provide workable grades and standards and safeguard product quality through inspection services;
 - 16.3. Help farmers eradicate or control plant and animal pests and diseases;
 - 16.4. 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;
 - 16.5. Assure reliable, unfettered transportation for agricultural commodities;
 - 16.6. Strengthen farmers' power to bargain for a price; and
 - 16.7. Provide comparable services to administer all commodity programs.
17. USDA should:
 - 17.1. Continue to be a full Cabinet-level department and shall not be renamed or consolidated with any other department or agency of government;
 - 17.2. Retain various food assistance and nutrition programs, both domestic and foreign;
 - 17.3. Use U.S. agricultural commodities for domestic food programs. Priority should be given to locally sourced products when possible;
 - 17.4. Not limit or restrict USDA purchases due to the violation of immigration regulations;
 - 17.5. Limit importers from purchasing products from foreign countries and reselling them under the provision of Section 32;

- 17.6. Extend the "Buy American" provision to other noncontiguous states or territories including Alaska, Hawaii, Guam and Puerto Rico;
- 17.7. Continue and streamline access to 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 held accountable for funding of these type of programs;
- 17.8. Use Farm Service Agency (FSA) data and assistance for premise ID registration;
- 17.9. Use the land grant colleges for agriculture-oriented research;
- 17.10. Continue efforts to resolve problems involving environmental and animal care issues;
- 17.11. Maintain an efficient and cost-effective services delivery system, including electronic filing and online options for program signup to include signature collection;
- 17.12. Maintain FSA jurisdiction over the administration of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and cost-share programs;
- 17.13. Change in FSA regulations to allow other forms of verification for production evidence;
- 17.14. Upgrade computer technology and appropriate software to allow the 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;
- 17.15. Encourage "one-stop shopping." All farm program agencies, where feasible, should be located in the same building;
- 17.16. Appoint one or more farmers on any agriculturally related government board;
- 17.17. 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;
- 17.18. Accredited and license commercial dog breeders;
- 17.19. Further support the Foreign Agriculture Service;
- 17.20. Make Beginning Farmer Program eligibility requirements consistent through all USDA agencies, expand the definition of young and beginning farmers to 10 years from the first filing of a Schedule F or until the individual is 35 years old, whichever is longer.
- 17.21. Broaden the service support of and funding preference to active-duty military personnel and all veterans released from service under conditions other than dishonorable.
- 17.22. 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;
- 17.23. Allow for a System for Award Management (SAM) number to be valid for the length of the USDA project for the individual producer;
- 17.24. Co-location of USDA and Soil and Water Conservation Districts when possible; and
- 17.25. 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;
- 17.26. Allow for location-specific job applications and allow the beginning of the on-boarding process immediately.
- 17.27. Allow NRCS state office staff to evaluate job applications for positions within their state and allow them to interview applicants who make it through the screening evaluation;

- 17.28. Allow local FSA applicants to apply for job positions in a desired territory based on rank and time served in location;
 - 17.29. Continue the release of crop condition reports as they are useful to agricultural producers and should maintain their current release schedule;
 - 17.30. Compensate the farmer for legal fees and civil damages when the farmer wins an appeal as a result of incorrect decisions;
 - 17.31. 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;
 - 17.32. Accept evidence provided by the farmer as true, absent substantial evidence to the contrary;
 - 17.33. Employ and make available county personnel based on workload, acreage and number of farms;
 - 17.34. 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;
 - 17.35. Continue to make forms and processes more streamlined and available for online access; and
 - 17.36. 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.
18. We oppose:
- 18.1. Requiring farm trusts to provide the total trust instrument because the individual's last will and testament should be confidential;
 - 18.2. Making FSA county executive directors and program assistants employees of the federal government;
 - 18.3. The transfer of any USDA program to another department or agency;
 - 18.4. Announcing crop estimates until certified acres are known; and
 - 18.5. The Department of Homeland Security or USDA-prescribed homeland security practices being mandated on farms unless such measures are completely funded.
- 19. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**
- 19.1. 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.
 - 19.2. State and county committees will preside over the NRCS in the same capacity as they do with the FSA.
 - 19.3. NRCS should:
 - 19.3.1. Act as a non-regulatory mediator of environmental compliance issues with regulatory agencies, on behalf of producers;
 - 19.3.2. Use funding only for agricultural purposes;
 - 19.3.3. Place a high priority on providing quality, technical and scientific natural resources expertise;
 - 19.3.4. Have adequate funds for technical assistance that are not tied directly to conservation programs;
 - 19.3.5. Ensure local farmer input on NRCS personnel decisions and direction of natural resource programs through conservation districts is maintained for the benefit of producers;
 - 19.3.6. Accept state licenses as proof of qualifications, without further testing or requirements, to be a Technical Service Provider;
 - 19.3.7. Amend NRCS regulation to count perennial crops, such as orchards, vineyards or sod, as prior converted land when the crop is removed;
 - 19.3.8. Inform landowners and tenants when NRCS officials are considering changing or altering wetland status on any portion of their holdings;
 - 19.3.9. Honor wetland determinations made prior to 1990;
 - 19.3.10. 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;
 - 19.3.11. Recognize regional seasonality of farm commodities when determining program sign-up dates;

- 19.3.12. Allow an accredited third party or NRCS staff to complete on-site determinations to ensure timely determinations;
- 19.3.13. Focus exclusively on agriculture services and cease bringing in influences from non-agriculture groups;
- 19.3.14. Allow qualified third parties, as well as NRCS staff, to complete reviews for conservation practices;
- 19.3.15. Allow the farmer and his counsel to call NRCS technical staff as witnesses in appeals; and
- 19.3.16. 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.
- 19.4. NRCS should not:
 - 19.4.1. Become a regulatory agency, serve in a policing capacity or be combined through USDA reorganization with an agency that has regulatory functions;
 - 19.4.2. 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;
 - 19.4.3. Have the authority to rescind its position in the appeals process;
 - 19.4.4. Require partnerships, limited liability corporations and other farm entities to register on the Standardized Award Management Service site; and
 - 19.4.5. Be allowed to prohibit installation of drainage tile in areas outside of designated wetlands.

#503 Climate Change (amendments at lines 2.3, 2.5, 2.33)

1. Market-based incentives, such as carbon credit trading, are preferable to government mandates.
2. We support:
 - 2.1. Science-based, peer-reviewed research to determine the causes and positive and negative impacts of global climate change;
 - 2.2. Updated quantitative scientific research on carbon emissions from current agricultural production equipment and practices - as well as current levels of carbon capture from agricultural sources - to establish an accurate baseline of carbon emitted by U.S. agricultural producers.
 - 2.3. A transparent, voluntary market-based carbon credit trading system with clear, science-base and consistent standards for calculating the amount of carbon sequestered by agricultural practices and forest products that is not detrimental to other agricultural producers, provides credits for previously implemented practices that sequester carbon, and accounts for regional ecological differences;
 - 2.4. If a government agency is to set the "carbon credit" standards for agriculture, it should be the USDA;
 - 2.5. Compensation to farmers for future, current and past activities such as planting crops, managing native and tame grasslands, planting and managing forestland or adopting farming practices that keep carbon in the soil or plant material or improve water quality, or water-use efficiency as a direct payment or a premium on goods produced;
 - 2.6. Alternative energy sources, which will minimize atmospheric pollution;

- 2.7. Incentives to industries seeking to become more energy efficient or to reduce emissions of identifiable atmospheric pollution and the means of preventing it;
- 2.8. Market-based solutions, rather than federal or state emission limits, being used to achieve a reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from any sources;
- 2.9. EPA's re-evaluation of burdensome emission control rules for farming practices, farm equipment, cotton gins, grain handling facilities;
- 2.10. Already established climate-smart farming practices being monetized to participate in carbon programs;
- 2.11. The inclusion of the agricultural community as a full partner in the development of any policy, legislation or markets;
- 2.12. Research and development to better assist farmers in handling weather events and better adapting to weather conditions;
- 2.13. Initiatives, research and education that promote soil health, water quality and soil/water conservation, to be implemented on a voluntary basis;
- 2.14. Ongoing educational campaigns emphasizing the positive impact agriculture has on the climate;
- 2.15. Education programs for farmers and farmland owners with negotiating carbon sequestration language to provide fair and equitable compensation, adequate legal protection and liability limits;
- 2.16. Unbiased science-based research on climate change;
- 2.17. Scientific research to document the continuous improvement and beneficial impact of agricultural efforts designed to increase climate resilience, improve water quality and soil health, sequester more carbon in the soil and prevent soil erosion;
- 2.18. Incentivizing farmers to voluntarily improve on-farm energy efficiency;
- 2.19. Incentivizing improvements to the current electric grid;
- 2.20. Using a broad spectrum of power sources like renewables, biofuels and nuclear energy to help facilitate the market-derived cost of energy;
- 2.21. Federal climate change policy that reflects regional variations;
- 2.22. When sources of greenhouse gasses are being evaluated, wildfires should be considered and compared as a source of greenhouse gas emissions as a means of supporting timber harvest and fuels reduction;
- 2.23. Research and education to create standards in the carbon credit markets;
- 2.24. The ability of farms of all sizes to participate in climate programs;
- 2.25. Contracts for carbon credits being negotiated with a minimum length of time and containing no penalties for non-performance due to weather or other acts of God;
- 2.26. Third-party verification for carbon credits being done by an entity with knowledge and expertise in the agricultural industry. Farmers and ranchers should own and obtain their data being examined;
- 2.27. Entities making improvements in their facilities to offset their carbon footprint, rather than buying credits to offset the carbon;
- 2.28. Agricultural lessees/permittees of federal or state lands having priority to sell carbon credits from those lands instead of governmental entities;
- 2.29. The inseting of carbon for carbon credits within the value chain of an agricultural operation;
- 2.30. Research into methods of reducing the amount of carbon dioxide, methane and other ag-related sources of greenhouse gas emitted into the atmosphere that does not involve transporting or storing these gases beneath agricultural land;
- 2.31. Monitoring the quality, quantity and placement in the pore space of carbon for any injection and geologic sequestration; and
- 2.32. Applying a consumer standard to measure the life cycle assessment (LCA) of greenhouse gas emissions for non-agricultural products manufactured and/or sold in the U.S.
- 2.33. Companies generating revenue in the U.S. prioritizing the purchase of carbon and ecosystem services credits generated in the U.S.

3. We oppose:
 - 3.1. Climate change legislation that establishes mandatory cap-and-trade provisions;
 - 3.2. Climate change legislation that is not fair, affordable or achievable;
 - 3.3. Any law or regulation requiring reporting of any GHG emissions by an agriculture entity;
 - 3.4. Any climate change legislation that would make America less competitive in the global marketplace and put undue costs on American agriculture, business and consumers;
 - 3.5. Any climate change legislation until other countries meet or exceed U.S. requirements;
 - 3.6. Mandatory restrictions to achieve reduced agricultural greenhouse gas emissions;
 - 3.7. Any regulation of GHG by EPA;
 - 3.8. Any attempt to regulate methane emissions from livestock under the Clean Air Act or any other legislative vehicle;
 - 3.9. The imposition of standards on farm and ranch equipment and other non-highway use machinery;
 - 3.10. Inclusion of the carbon impacts resulting from indirect land use changes in other countries in the carbon life cycle analysis of biofuels;
 - 3.11. Taxes or fees on carbon uses or emissions;
 - 3.12. Any and all emissions taxes on livestock;
 - 3.13. Any laws or policies that implicate human activity or agricultural activity of any kind as a cause for climate change without empirical evidence;
 - 3.14. A state-by-state patchwork of climate change policies;
 - 3.15. Any new climate change program that would detract from or weaken the current USDA safety net programs (crop insurance, ARC/PLC, etc.);
 - 3.16. The sale of carbon credits from state or national park lands; and
 - 3.17. Any government regulation using climate change as justification to limit the use of products or resources currently used, such as fertilizers, pesticides, etc., that are widely considered best and safe practices by established science.

Recommendations on State Policies

#3 Agricultural Innovation and Value-Added Initiatives

1 Structural changes in agricultural processing have
2 affected many traditional supply/demand relationships
3 between producers and their buyers. Value-added
4 initiatives offer opportunities to deal with such changes
5 and keep agriculture profitable.

6 We support:

- 7 • Producers' individual and cooperative efforts to
8 improve income with processing and marketing
9 that add value to farm products while
10 maintaining food safety.
- 11 • The Michigan State University Product Center's
12 objectives and ongoing efforts, including
13 educational programs that support and promote
14 agricultural processing opportunities.
- 15 • The coordination and formation of producer
16 alliances and cooperatives.
- 17 • Efforts to strengthen agricultural processing in
18 Michigan. Incentives for existing and/or
19 prospective processors should include (but not
20 be limited to) industrial facility exemption
21 options, tax breaks, regulatory reform/relief, and
22 ample access to necessary inputs such as
23 investment capital, labor, energy, and farm
24 products.
- 25 • A closer working relationship and collaboration
26 between Michigan Farm Bureau and the
27 Michigan Economic Development Corporation
28 (MEDC), including quarterly meetings between
29 their staffs and leadership.
- 30 • Agricultural representation on the MEDC to
31 better serve agriculture and the food industry.
32 We support Michigan Department of Agriculture
33 and Rural Development authority and/or
34 oversight over granting MEDC funds for
35 agricultural development activity.
- 36 • The use of Michigan MarketMaker
37 (<https://mi.foodmarketmaker.com>) for featuring
38 Michigan commodities and value-added
39 products.
- 40 • A coordinated effort between agriculture and
41 controllers of publicly owned lands (e.g., county
42 parks, rest areas, park-n-ride lots, etc.) to
43 facilitate farmers' on-site marketing of Michigan-
44 grown products to consumers.
- 45 • Tax incentives and infrastructure to increase
46 Michigan's food-processing capabilities.

- 47 • State government establishing a low-interest
48 loan program for funding qualified value-added
49 ventures.
- 50 • The Right to Process Act, including protections
51 for agricultural processors and cooperatives.
- 52 • Continued monitoring of the Michigan Cottage
53 Food Law to ensure it maintains its original
54 intent.
- 55 • The use of one-time start-up grants (not
56 recurring funding) for food hubs.
- 57 • Encouraging institutions to purchase more food
58 from local sources.
- 59 • Additional research and development for value-
60 added opportunities.
- 61 • Grant programs for industry segments that
62 struggle to secure loans because they are seen
63 as high risk.
- 64 • Government agencies cooperating to expedite
65 innovative agricultural initiatives.
- 66 • Annual funding of an ag innovation value-added
67 initiative fund.
- 68 • Funds for developing automation and robotics
69 useful to Michigan agriculture.
- 70 • Funds for studying the impact of automation,
71 robotics, software, and communication
72 technology on Michigan agriculture.

#4 Animal Care

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

5 We urge members to respond knowledgeably to
6 misleading information on animal care. We urge
7 members to understand the difference between
8 organizations supporting sound science and animal
9 care versus those promoting animal rights and
10 attempting to eliminate or greatly restrict livestock
11 production. Members should continue to tell the
12 success story of modern animal agriculture wherever
13 the opportunity is available. Numerous laws exist to
14 safeguard the proper care of livestock and, if properly
15 enforced, provide the protection livestock requires.

16 Michigan's livestock and dairy industry is integral to
17 our agricultural economy and needs access to private
18 property rights and privacy laws. Laws appearing to
19 limit free speech or give the perception that agriculture
20 has something to hide may not be the appropriate way

21 to address certain issues impacting the industry. We
22 strongly support transparency by all involved.

23 People who witness animal care practices not in
24 compliance with the Care of Farm Animals Generally
25 Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices
26 (GAAMPs), should report those findings in a timely
27 manner to the appropriate authorities so proper action
28 may be taken. People who hold and release videos in a
29 manner for personal benefit or to promote a group and
30 their cause should be swiftly prosecuted and
31 appropriately fined and sentenced.

32 We support:

- 33 • An animal health and care board to be convened
34 to coordinate activities to enhance and protect
35 the state's livestock industry. The board should
36 be comprised of farmers and industry
37 representatives as voting members; who are
38 nominated by officially recognized livestock and
39 agriculture industry commodity groups; and then
40 appointed by the Governor. Michigan
41 Department of Agriculture and Rural
42 Development (MDARD) and Michigan State
43 University (MSU) officials should serve in an
44 advisory capacity. The establishment of this
45 board should include a state budget
46 appropriation. This new board process should
47 be concluded by December 31, 2025.
- 48 • Strong penalties for those persons criminally
49 convicted of animal cruelty or abuse.
- 50 • The rights of individual commodity groups to
51 develop their own production standards.
- 52 • The involvement of livestock industry in the
53 development of animal care guidelines if
54 required by food industry officials to market
55 products.
- 56 • Participation by livestock and dairy producers in
57 industry-developed, species-specific animal
58 welfare programs.
- 59 • Coordination with animal industry and related
60 groups on animal care and housing related
61 issues.
- 62 • Farmers educating and having guidelines for
63 employees on proper animal care and
64 monitoring their employees.
- 65 • Legislation or rules protecting the rights of
66 farmers/owners to allow the continued utilization
67 of modern livestock production practices,
68 including current euthanization methods.
- 69 • 4-H and youth livestock exhibitor education.

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- Michigan Farm Bureau working with MSU and MDARD to provide proper education to law enforcement, county officials and animal control officers about laws to regulate animal care and livestock production practices in Michigan.
 - MFB and county Farm Bureaus being proactive in educating and training the state and local animal control authorities, local humane societies, local law enforcement, and news media about current animal care and production practices, to build a partnership between Farm Bureau and local animal care organizations.
 - Emergency Response to Accidents Involving Livestock (ERAIL) programs and livestock handling training for all emergency response professionals in Michigan counties.
 - County Farm Bureaus consider cancelling the membership of an individual criminally convicted of animal cruelty or abuse.
 - Land grant colleges and USDA continuing to research and develop programs which will realistically and economically enable farmers to continue to enhance the care and management of livestock.
 - Legislation making it a felony to destroy or release animals lawfully confined for science, research and production, and strong punishment and required restitution for losses or damages.
 - MDARD taking the lead role in the development of Michigan animal health emergency management guidelines in collaboration with MFB and agricultural groups.
 - Amendments to the Dog Law to more clearly define a “farm dog.” The utilization of dogs on farm operations is a normal part of an agricultural enterprise.
 - A sensible approach to the substantiation of animal cruelty or abuse accusations including:
 - Requiring animal control officers receive training on appropriate animal care and normal agricultural practices as it relates to livestock and farm animals.
 - The Animal Industry Division (AID) of MDARD (specifically the State Veterinarian) as the authority relating to farm animals, livestock, and relative care, not local animal control.
 - Governing municipalities be held financially and civilly liable for inaccurate and unjustified 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
- 124 or 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 ○ 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 We oppose:

- 134 ● The concept of animal rights and the
- 135 expenditure of public funds to promote the
- 136 concept of animal rights.
- 137 ● Any attempt to grant legal standing to any
- 138 animals.
- 139 ● Regulatory and legislative actions restricting the
- 140 farmer's/owner's ability to produce at an
- 141 economically feasible level.
- 142 ● The utilization of ballot initiatives to control
- 143 modern livestock production and management
- 144 practices.

145 We support Michigan Care of Farm Animals
146 GAAMPs through the following:

- 147 ● Utilization of the Michigan Care of Farm Animals
- 148 GAAMPs as the standard for animal welfare.
- 149 ● Producer representation on the Michigan Care
- 150 of Farm Animals GAAMPs Committee.
- 151 ● Proper animal care and encourage livestock
- 152 farmers to be in compliance with the Right to
- 153 Farm Act and GAAMPs.
- 154 ● Mandatory education for convicted cruelty
- 155 offenders to help them understand proper
- 156 animal care including the Care of Farm Animals
- 157 GAAMPs.

#7 Bee Industry

1 Bees are a vital resource for pollination of
2 Michigan's diverse crop production and added value of
3 the honey and hive products produced.

4 Some pesticides can harm ~~honeybees~~ honey bees
5 and even destroy whole colonies. We urge beekeepers,
6 farmers and pesticide applicators to cooperate to
7 reduce ~~honeybee~~ honey bee losses.

8 Beekeeping (apiculture) is a specialized form of
9 agriculture and should be recognized under the Right to
10 Farm Act by local, state and national regulatory bodies.

11 We support:

- 12 • Research finding practical, effective means of
13 controlling or reducing the infection from Varroa
14 mites, tracheal mites, small hive beetles — and
15 continued study into all diseases affecting bee
16 colonies.
- 17 • The inclusion of apiaries under paragraph 9.4 of
18 the Wildlife Conservation Order, subsection (1).
19 We encourage the Department of Natural
20 Resources to be proactive in the protecting of
21 Michigan’s pollinators.
- 22 • Michigan Farm Bureau working with state and
23 federal agencies to resolve issues regarding
24 plant species in Michigan and their importance
25 to the Michigan bee industry, such as changes
26 to USDA conservation programs that allow for
27 planting flowering cover crops and pollination
28 plantings that emphasize the health benefits for
29 the bee colonies.
- 30 • Increasing the number of veterinarians trained in
31 honey bee health and expanding the animal
32 health tools available for the bee industry.
- 33 • The use of improved genetic stocks that
34 naturally reduce pest and pathogen loads in
35 honey bees through inherited traits and
36 breeding that focuses on varroa mite resistance.
- 37 • Improving systems of migratory, commercial,
38 and sideline beekeeping practices through
39 inspection and monitoring programs directed
40 toward reduction of pathogen and pest migration
41 into Michigan.

#9 Cannabis Production

1 In alignment with the voter passed initiatives, the
2 Michigan Medical Marihuana Act of 2008 and the
3 Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marihuana Act of
4 2018 (MRTMA), related to cannabis production and
5 use, we support:

- 6 • Funding for continued and expanded research
7 on the ~~health benefits and~~ effects of cannabis
8 use.
- 9 • Local municipalities having the ability to allow or
10 not allow cannabis production and sale in their
11 communities as prescribed in section 6 of
12 MRTMA.
- 13 • The development of setbacks by local
14 municipalities, with input from the Cannabis

15 Regulatory Agency, for new cannabis production
16 operations from non-owned residences to
17 minimize negative interactions between the
18 growing/processing industries from the local
19 residents.

- 20 • The Cannabis Regulatory Agency developing
21 model local ordinances for the cannabis
22 industry.
- 23 • Best practices being developed to provide
24 guidance to the cannabis industry.
- 25 • Continued tracking of the production and
26 distribution of cannabis to ensure the integrity of
27 the industry.
- 28 • The development of accurate testing to
29 determine impairment levels from cannabis use.

30 **Industrial Hemp**

31 ~~We appreciate efforts by the State of Michigan to~~
32 ~~facilitate the permitting of industrial hemp for production~~
33 ~~and processing.~~

34 We support:

- 35 • Changes to the 2018 Farm Bill that allow for
36 industrial hemp with up to 1%
37 Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) to be legal.
- 38 • Changes to federal laws that allow for the
39 housing, transportation and marketing of legally
40 derived industrial hemp products for further
41 processing, regardless of the THC level, if the
42 product for final sale meets legal THC limits.
- 43 • Establishing a Michigan Department of
44 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)
45 Industrial Hemp Advisory Committee to assist in
46 the regulatory development and oversight
47 process, including developing hemp Generally
48 Accepted Agricultural and Management
49 Practices.
- 50 • Collaboration with the industry to develop a
51 professional hemp industry organization.
- 52 • Federal and state funding for required regulatory
53 oversight. We are willing to consider producer
54 and processor funding to help offset or assist
55 with regulatory oversight.
- 56 • ~~MDARD submitting a hemp regulatory plan; the~~
57 ~~plan should include the Department assuming~~
58 ~~responsibility for THC sampling and plans to~~
59 ~~mitigate cross pollination between grain/fiber~~
60 ~~hemp and plants with high THC (marihuana).~~
- 61 • Research on processing, production techniques,
62 prospective volumes, and market outlook.
- 63 • Collaboration amongst MDARD, Michigan State
64 University Extension and other stakeholders to

- 65 develop and disseminate educational materials
66 on growing, processing, transportation and
67 marketing of industrial hemp.
- 68 • Development and approval of alternative uses
69 and/or disposal methods for the destruction of a
70 “hot crop” other than Drug Enforcement Agency
71 disposal rules.
 - 72 • The regulation of hemp/cannabis-derived
73 intoxicating cannabinoids/terpenes that are
74 artificially added to hemp products.
- 75 We urge the Food and Drug Administration to issue
76 guidance and clarity on the rules surrounding the
77 marketing of industrial hemp-derived products.

#15 Direct Marketing and Agritourism

1 Agritourism is the intersection where agriculture
2 and tourism meet; when a farm opens its doors to the
3 public and invites visitors to enjoy their products and
4 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~~ education,
11 entertainment, experiences, or farm stays, but
12 does not change the general intent of the farm
13 operation.
- 14 • The development of an agritourism act,
15 administered by the Michigan Department of
16 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD),
17 that preempts local ordinances. Areas of
18 coverage should include, but not be limited to,
19 event barns, corn mazes, farm stays, and farm
20 animal related activities. Farms will receive the
21 benefits of this act if more than 50% of the farm
22 income is generated by the sales of
23 commodities grown on the farm and if the
24 facilities can meet the building code’s public
25 safety requirements. This does not prohibit local
26 governments from enacting reasonable hour,
27 noise and parking regulations.
- 28 • Master plans and local zoning ordinances
29 recognizing the benefits and allowing the
30 operation of farm markets, roadside stands,
31 agritourism destinations and farmers markets
32 that allow for the placement of these activities on
33 agricultural zoned land without a special use
34 permit. We do not believe a city, township or
35 other local agency can restrict or mandate the

- 36 size of what a farm market/roadside stand is and
37 recognize that selling produce retail is not
38 considered a change of use on land that is
39 currently farmed.
- 40 • Michigan zoning authorities adopting the
41 Agricultural Tourism Model Zoning Ordinance
42 Provisions developed by the Michigan
43 Agricultural Tourism Advisory Commission and
44 MDARD.
 - 45 • Working with the direct market and agritourism
46 industries to improve and strengthen the farm
47 market Generally Accepted Agricultural and
48 Management Practices (GAAMPs).
 - 49 • Creating Generally Accepted Agritourism
50 Practices that align with the GAAMPs outlined in
51 the Right to Farm Act and recognizing
52 agritourism as a sector of the agriculture
53 industry.
 - 54 • Legislation to enhance and promote agritourism,
55 the development of guidelines and best
56 practices, as well as on-farm direct marketing
57 opportunities.
 - 58 • Designating certain roads and highways as
59 “Scenic Agricultural Byways” to showcase
60 Michigan’s agricultural diversity, unique
61 agricultural features, farm markets, roadside
62 stands and related businesses.
 - 63 • The opportunity for farm operations to have their
64 businesses designated as tourism destination
65 points.
 - 66 • The Michigan Farmers Market Association,
67 along with grower vendors, establishing
68 guidelines for agriculture procedures of farmers
69 markets and to assist them if requested. In the
70 event fees are charged by municipalities to
71 farms that participate in farmers markets, we
72 believe those fees should not exceed the cost to
73 run the market.
 - 74 • Locally grown should be defined as produced in
75 Michigan, or within 50 miles of the border.
 - 76 • Community Supported Agriculture programs that
77 build relationships, provide healthy food choices,
78 and encourage consumers to meet the people
79 that grow the products.
 - 80 • Farmers markets and farm marketers promoting
81 and providing food safety education to
82 consumers.
 - 83 • Operations welcoming the public to their
84 facilities and portraying a professional image

- 85 because they are our ambassadors to the public
86 where positive perception is important.
- 87 • Operations with livestock participating in their
88 respective national animal care programs.
 - 89 • Defining farm stays as an agritourism
90 experience.

91 We oppose:

- 92 • Discriminatory regulation, licensing and
93 inspection by regulatory agencies and local units
94 of government on farm markets, roadside stands
95 and agritourism operations which restrict their
96 competitiveness. Markets should not be subject
97 to duplicate or unnecessary inspection by
98 MDARD, the Michigan Department of Health
99 and Human Services, Michigan Department of
100 Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, and
101 local units of government.

#18 Food Insecurity

1 Data suggests that rural communities in Michigan
2 are at greater risk for childhood food insecurity than our
3 urban counterparts. We believe agriculture is positioned
4 to have the greatest impact.

5 We support:

- 6 • Michigan Farm Bureau providing information
7 that is farmer facing on how farms can connect
8 with existing programs for those who are in need
9 as well as the benefits of donation, which may
10 include tax credits or other financial incentives.
- 11 • Farm Bureau participation in the Michigan
12 Sportsmen Against Hunger board.
- 13 • Food assistance programs such as, but not
14 limited to, Michigan Agricultural Surplus System
15 (MASS) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance
16 Program (SNAP) and encourage these market
17 opportunities.
- 18 • The State of Michigan and interested
19 stakeholders working to create a single point of
20 sale system to make it easier for both vendors
21 and customers to participate in state and federal
22 food assistance programs.
- 23 • Food assistance programs in the farm bill and
24 partnering with like-minded Michigan
25 organizations that receive nutrition title funding.
- 26 • Changes to the farm bill and/or USDA programs
27 that would increase farm gate value through
28 federal food assistance or government purchase
29 programs.
- 30 • More focus being placed on the food delivery
31 system to connect farmers with rural families

- 32 that are food insecure. Consideration should
33 also be given to the time of day and locations for
34 distribution.
- 35 • More research on preferred food packaging,
36 size, and quantity to best serve families utilizing
37 food assistance programs.
 - 38 • Increasing access to venison donation programs
39 that allows for free processing of venison that is
40 donated to food banks including an increase in
41 processing locations. Michigan Department of
42 Natural Resources should promote the program
43 and available processing locations.
 - 44 • Increasing access to the Michigan Sportsmen
45 Against Hunger program that includes
46 increasing available processing locations and
47 removing barriers to distributing venison.
 - 48 • The donation of protein sources (venison, beef,
49 etc.) that have not been processed through a
50 USDA processing facility but that have been
51 processed responsibly through a state inspected
52 processor.
 - 53 • County Farm Bureaus coordinating with
54 charitable food networks regarding needs that
55 they have locally, such as cold storage.
 - 56 • Farm Bureau promoting opportunities to
57 members that sell at farm markets on how they
58 can utilize produce prescriptions and connected
59 Medicaid programs to solve symptoms of food
60 insecurity.

#19 Food Safety

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

8 Food safety transportation concerns must be
9 handled at the national level to ensure smooth
10 interstate commerce.

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

17 We support:

- 18 • Proper biosecurity, identification, and safety
19 protocols being followed by state and federal

- 20 agency personnel when visiting farms; including
21 compliance with executive orders and regulatory
22 requirements relative to the industry.
- 23 • Continued use of food safety audits such as
24 Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and food
25 safety risk assessments to ensure food and
26 consumer safety.
 - 27 • A private, third-party audit being accepted by
28 USDA if it includes at least the same minimum
29 standards as a government audit.
 - 30 • Standardizing a single third-party audit that
31 would be broadly accepted by retailers.
 - 32 • Permanent institutional licensing, including
33 churches and civic facilities.
 - 34 • Current milk pasteurization laws, including
35 prohibiting the sale of unpasteurized fluid milk
36 for human consumption.
 - 37 • Michigan Farm Bureau and MDARD working to
38 provide guidelines for cow-share and herd-
39 shares that meet Grade A dairy standards.
 - 40 • Use of wooden pallets and wooden harvest bins.
 - 41 • Custom exempt slaughter.
 - 42 • The ability for families to process and consume
43 their own products on their own farm.
 - 44 • Monitoring of the Cottage Food Law.
 - 45 • Michigan Department of Environment, Great
46 Lakes, and Energy, in consultation with MDARD,
47 reviewing the rules for application of biosolids in
48 close proximity to growing fruit and vegetable
49 crops with the intent of preventing potential
50 human health hazards.
 - 51 • The concept of On-Farm Readiness Review kits
52 along with the Food Safety Modernization Act
53 Grower Training programs that help ease the
54 burden of farms becoming compliant.
 - 55 • MFB and stakeholders conducting educational
56 meetings for microbusinesses related to
57 agriculture.
 - 58 • Prohibiting reuse of food containers or
59 packaging labeled with “use by” or “purchase by”
60 dates, for the benefit of consumer health and
61 producer liability protection.
 - 62 • A committee of MFB members researching and
63 reporting on block chain technology use in
64 agriculture and the potential impact on Michigan
65 agriculture.
 - 66 • MDARD immediately reporting food fraud and
67 cybersecurity impacts.

68 We oppose:

- 69 • Unfunded mandates, including but not limited to
70 USDA GAP audits.
- 71 • Abusive and overreaching Cottage Food Law
72 enforcement and application.
- 73 • Any agency or department quarantining or
74 seizing raw or finished products, commodities,
75 cattle livestock, land, or equipment without clear
76 violation of law or lawfully set standards.

#20 Forestry

1 Forestry is considered an integral part of Michigan
2 agriculture. Producing forest products requires inputs
3 and management practices similar to those necessary
4 for the production of other agricultural commodities.
5 Michigan forests contribute substantially to the state's
6 economy.

7 We support:

- 8 • Efforts to define forest industry activities as
9 agricultural with respect to matters such as truck
10 licenses, equipment taxes, insurance, supply
11 purchases, real estate taxation, zoning, and
12 land-use classification.
- 13 • New/expanded industrial uses of forest products
14 in transportation infrastructure, such as bridge
15 construction, guard rails, and other uses, and
16 urge the Michigan Department of Transportation
17 and county road commissions to use Michigan-
18 grown and processed forest products.
- 19 • The increased and continued utilization of forest
20 products in Michigan as a renewable resource
21 for products such as pallets, as opposed to non-
22 renewable or petroleum-based products.
- 23 • The use of cross-laminated timber in building
24 construction due to its many benefits including
25 carbon sequestration, LEED (Leadership in
26 Energy and Environmental Design) credits, and
27 reduced construction time.
- 28 • Changes to the state building code and other
29 regulations to address the advancements of
30 mass timber.
- 31 • Promoting cross-laminated timber
32 manufacturing in Michigan.
- 33 • Clarifying the use of the log plate to include all
34 activities connected with logging operations.
- 35 • Classifying logging equipment as implements of
36 husbandry.
- 37 • Multiple-use management of public forests,
38 emphasizing sustainable management and
39 harvest of state-owned forests.

- 40 • The Michigan Department of Natural Resources
41 (MDNR) basing public-land timber sales on
42 reasonable aggregate economic, biological and
43 social impacts.
- 44 • Requiring a market-value bid on purchase offers
45 of state-owned forests. Sales should be based
46 on a total-value bid rather than on sales of
47 species or product estimates.
- 48 • MDNR finding markets for oversized red/white
49 pines and tamaracks.
- 50 • The MDNR timber sale extensions period being
51 increased to one year.
- 52 • The MDNR timber sale extension fee being
53 waived due to poor market or weather
54 conditions of a period longer than six months.
- 55 • Timber management practices suited for public
56 lands along roads and highways.
- 57 • Legislation that protects timber operations from
58 liability for individuals using the land for
59 recreation.
- 60 • Requiring log book use to ensure hunter safety
61 on public lands being logged.
- 62 • The maintenance and improvement of tax-
63 reverted lands acquired by the state through
64 reforestation or other conservation practices.
- 65 • Ongoing forest inventory and analysis funded
66 jointly by industry, state, and federal sources.
- 67 • Programs that incentivize landowners to
68 improve forest resources, encourage proper
69 management, promote forest sustainability,
70 and/or benefit the forest products industry.
- 71 • Farms and landowners managing forests,
72 wetlands, and habitat participating in the
73 Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance
74 Program (MAEAP), completing as many
75 recommendations as possible to help preserve
76 air, water, and soil quality, and to practice
77 sustainable land management.
- 78 • State government's efforts to provide education
79 and outreach for private forest landowners.
- 80 • Expanding post-high school education programs
81 in applied/skilled forestry to help ensure a
82 sufficient and skilled workforce.
- 83 • The Right to Forest Act and urge landowners to
84 utilize Generally Accepted Forest Management
85 Practices.
- 86 • State government action to encourage local
87 utilization of ash lumber and biomass, near its
88 point of origin, to minimize the potential for ash
89 borer invasion and spread.

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- Better defining foresters' duties and responsibilities in the Occupational Code, and a voluntary forester registration program.
 - MDNR assisting with prescribed burns on private land. Prescribed fire is an important management tool to control unwanted vegetation and helps prevent accumulated dead wood, needles, etc. from becoming a fire hazard.
 - Reviewing recent changes to the Forestry Best Management Practices (BMP) manual. It is imperative BMP guidelines reflect current industry practices and standards, not ideology. Standards should be based on outcomes, not a prescriptive set of rules.
 - Timber industry efforts to develop a common scale for hardwood saw logs.
 - Michigan universities' conducting an economic study comparing Michigan forestry industry returns to the economic returns from those of other major Michigan commodities.
 - Michigan State University (MSU) collaborating with the University of Wisconsin on a forestry economy specialist.
 - Working with the MDNR, conservation organizations, hunting groups and other interested groups to reduce wildlife populations to acceptable levels that will not deplete the regeneration of new seedlings in woodlots and forests.
 - Michigan Farm Bureau providing expertise and advising the creation of an industry-driven initiative supporting forestry research, education and outreach with MSU, University of Michigan, and Michigan Technological University, funded by State of Michigan appropriations for forest management.
 - The MDNR and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) prioritizing growing and developing new markets, new products, and processing facilities.
 - Conservancies and other non-profits having to pay an average of the qualified forest property tax rate in that county.
 - County Farm Bureaus working with local school districts to retain the ownership and use of school forests. Retaining school forests helps preserve educational opportunities for students, conserve forest resources, and

- 140 provide both short and long-term income for
141 school districts.
- 142 • County Farm Bureaus referring members to
143 local conservation districts for a list of qualified
144 foresters for woodlot owners.
 - 145 • Removing unnecessary rules that are
146 restricting growth and viability of the forestry
147 industry.
 - 148 • Permitting requirements being reasonable and
149 practical for applicants as well as grounded in
150 science with consideration from industry
151 experts. The state permitting process should
152 be done in an expedited manner with strict
153 timelines for issuance. Permit requirements
154 should be considered for removal when no
155 adverse impact is found or possible.
- 156 We oppose:
- 157 • Logging restrictions during hunting season.
 - 158 • Additional licensing or regulatory requirements
159 on forest management professionals.
 - 160 • Mandating forest-practice rules.
 - 161 • Closing existing roads on state forest lands.
 - 162 • Legislation restricting the sale of forest
163 products for non-traditional use.

#24 Maple Sugar Production

1 Maple sugar production is among the oldest forms
2 of agriculture in Michigan, where our vast maple
3 resources are underutilized and have much potential for
4 expansion. Michigan Farm Bureau supports growing
5 Michigan's maple sugar industry and the promotion and
6 marketing of pure, Michigan-made maple syrup, maple
7 sugar and associated products.

8 We support:

- 9 • Michigan State University continuing research of
10 maple sugar production and utilization.
- 11 • Changes to Environmental Protection Agency
12 regulations to allow the use of isopropyl alcohol
13 in cleaning sap lines.

#27 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 the state's agriculture and food system and
4 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 possible.

9 Program areas of a stronger, more encompassing
10 MDARD might include, but would not be limited to
11 consumer protection, environmental protection,
12 resource-based economic development programs,
13 aquaculture, privately owned Cervidae, commercial
14 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 oppose
19 multiple inspections by a variety of jurisdictions.

20 We encourage MDARD to follow these
21 recommendations when prioritizing their budget.
22 Regulatory or enforcement program funding should be
23 taken from the general fund with a limited portion from
24 industry fees. We support strategic investments in
25 MDARD with the following funding priorities:

- 26 • Food safety
- 27 • Regulatory program oversight
- 28 • Animal and plant disease protection and
29 agriculture security
- 30 • Producer protection
- 31 • Agricultural product integrity
- 32 • Market access inspections
- 33 • Statistics and information
- 34 • Industry and trade advocacy

35 We support:

- 36 • Changes to the Bodies of Dead Animals (BODA)
37 Act that make the MDARD director or their
38 designee the lead authority in mass carcass
39 disposal and BODA.
- 40 • Modification of the BODA Act, with input from
41 farmers and dead stock haulers, to allow legal
42 commercial or cooperative mortality
43 management.
- 44 • Modifying the Natural Resources and
45 Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) to clarify
46 that animal mortality disposal is not considered
47 in the definition of production site waste.
- 48 • Making considerations for inclement weather
49 impacts on animal mortality management and
50 disposal timeframes.
- 51 • The creation of a study group initiated by
52 MDARD, led by Michigan State University
53 (MSU), and which includes representation from
54 agriculture and livestock commodity groups to
55 determine and recommend necessary updates
56 to the BODA Act.
- 57 • Protecting animal health through testing,
58 quarantine and depopulation, if necessary.

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- State funding of all required testing.
 - Controlling disease through plant inspection, testing and quarantine.
 - State on-farm inspectors protecting farmers from excessive regulations being advanced by federal inspectors.
 - The abandoned and neglected orchards program and amendments to include other perennial crops. With the involvement of stakeholders and other departments, we support developing rules to strengthen program enforcement provisions, including appropriate funding.
 - Reviews and specific expirations for quarantines or movement restrictions.
 - Indemnification for farm income loss when agricultural commodities or products are impounded, farms are quarantined, or movement or sales are restricted in the public interest. MDARD should consider at least one local appraisal of fair market value in determining indemnification.
 - In the case of widespread animal disease outbreaks, indemnification should reflect prices that were current prior to the outbreak.
 - Investigating the feasibility of a livestock insurance fund to complement existing state or federal indemnification programs. The feasibility study should consider loss of livestock and production due to disease outbreak, depredation, funding options, species participation and producer control of the fund.
 - A mechanism for loans or direct compensation for income loss due to depopulation, quarantine or condemnation of agricultural products.
 - Enforcement of food safety laws, animal identification requirements, and inspection programs, focused on working with producers to resolve problems in a timely fashion before issuing fines and penalties.
 - An increased use of technology and sampling and a decreased use of inspections to ensure a safe food supply.
 - Photographic evidence taken as part of the inspection process being exempt from the Freedom of Information Act.
 - Certifying the accuracy of weights and measures, including moisture testing equipment.
 - Reviewing the point system for Pesticide Applicators Certification to increase efficiency.

- 109 • MDARD's utilization of state certified third-party
110 privatized contracting and technology for
111 inspections, review and oversight for some
112 programs, including virtual online courses.
- 113 • MDARD working with the MSU Pesticide Safety
114 Education program to ensure that training
115 materials for pesticide applicators include
116 appropriate information on proper use, risk,
117 volatility, and application of pesticides and
118 chemicals, especially when near sensitive crops.
- 119 • Online and in-person testing for pesticide
120 applicator licensing.
- 121 • Additional pesticide applicator training for
122 Dicamba based products, only when use or
123 formulation has changed.
- 124 • MDARD meeting with industry representatives
125 prior to regulatory enforcement rule changes.
- 126 • Forming an industry committee to advise the
127 MDARD director regarding the inclusion of
128 injurious plants on the nuisance plant list.
129 Consideration should be given for a phase-in for
130 any commercial plant species added to the
131 nuisance plant list.
- 132 • Aggressive promotion and labeling of Michigan-
133 grown products and commend the efforts of
134 MDARD for its leadership in highlighting the
135 importance of the agricultural industry to the
136 state.
- 137 • Any block grant funds received under the
138 Federal Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act be
139 distributed to Michigan specialty crop commodity
140 sectors on a pro-rated basis with input from a
141 stakeholder group comprised of representatives
142 from the specialty crop industries. All specialty
143 crop sectors, including the nursery and
144 greenhouse sector, should have the opportunity
145 to receive an equitable portion of block grant
146 funds.
- 147 • An economic development and agricultural
148 innovation fund that is overseen by industry
149 officials designed to support innovations,
150 economic growth and direct research for all
151 segments of Michigan agriculture.
- 152 • Further development of meat processing and
153 marketing opportunities through cooperation
154 between the industry, MDARD, MSU and the
155 Michigan Meat Association.
- 156 • Returning to a USDA-equivalent state meat
157 inspection for local custom processors as soon
158 as possible to support value-added

- 159 opportunities. We will support adequate funding
160 for this program.
- 161 • Michigan Farm Bureau working with MDARD to
162 investigate having state inspectors service small
163 scale or portable slaughter facilities in sparsely
164 populated rural areas.
 - 165 • MDARD having sole authority to license and
166 regulate all terrestrial and aquatic plants for sale
167 or commercial use.
 - 168 • MDARD working more closely with the
169 aquaculture industry to clarify and streamline the
170 process for aquaculture operations to harvest
171 and sell directly to the consumer.
 - 172 • MDARD reevaluating current emergency
173 preparedness procedures to enable more timely
174 responses and communication towards the
175 Michigan agricultural industry. Consideration
176 could be given to the creation of a directory of
177 individuals familiar with industry practices to
178 assist with emergency situations (disease
179 outbreaks, data breaches, etc.).

#29 Nursery, Floriculture, Sod and Greenhouse Industry

1 Ornamental horticulture, nursery, landscape,
2 floriculture, sod, Christmas trees, and greenhouse
3 productions are unique forms of agriculture and must be
4 recognized as such by local, state and national
5 regulatory bodies.

6 The nursery, greenhouse, sod, and Christmas tree
7 industries have experienced several inequitable trade
8 practices with Canada, including phytosanitary
9 inspection standards and procedures.

10 We request Michigan Farm Bureau work with allied
11 industry organizations and the Michigan Department of
12 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) to identify
13 areas of concern and formulate appropriate solutions.

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

23 Due to the extensive updates to the Worker
24 Protection Standards' policies and procedures, we
25 encourage MFB and other industry groups, including
26 Michigan State University Extension, MDARD, Michigan
27 Nursery and Landscape Association, and Michigan

28 Greenhouse Growers Council to collaborate and
29 formulate ideas to create new digital training materials.

30 We support:

- 31 • Funding for researchers, research infrastructure,
32 and grant funding through USDA's Specialty
33 Crop Research Initiative and Specialty Crop
34 Block Grants to support the nursery and
35 greenhouse industry. ~~Issues of importance~~
36 ~~include mechanization (due to workforce~~
37 ~~shortages), development of new pesticides to~~
38 ~~replace any that have been or will be cancelled,~~
39 ~~and advanced technologies to propagate and~~
40 ~~grow plants.~~
41 • Research on mechanization, development of
42 new pesticides, pesticide resistance, and
43 advanced technologies to propagate and grow
44 plants.
45 • Greenhouse and nursery crop insurance
46 programs and the indemnification of plants after
47 a disease or pest outbreak. We further support
48 action to develop and complete these programs.

49 We oppose:

- 50 • Legislation regulating the use of neonicotinoids,
51 organophosphates, pyrethroids,
52 methocarbamates, or organochlorines by state
53 agencies, unless research or conclusive
54 scientific evidence prove that these compounds
55 pose adverse effects on the environment when
56 used according to label.
- 57 • Legislating science from the bench of a
58 court/jury without sound scientific proof, well-
59 documented scientific studies from respected
60 scientists, scholars, government bodies, and
61 universities regarding the safe use of necessary
62 tools such as chlorpyrifos and glyphosate
63 without extensive research and study.

#32 Right to Farm

1 We believe Michigan's Right to Farm Act is a model
2 for the country, allowing all sectors of commercial
3 agriculture to utilize existing and new technologies
4 through generally accepted management practices on a
5 voluntary basis while enhancing the environment.

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

11 We recognize the fundamental differences between
12 farming operations in terms of size, soil types, and

13 location. We urge all producers to be aware of
14 applicable GAAMPs and encourage them to employ the
15 Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program
16 (MAEAP) and provisions of the farm bill as
17 management tools in the production of agricultural
18 products and possible expansion of their operations.

19 We support:

- 20 • Developing realistic land-use plans that allow
21 agriculture to evolve, incorporate technology and
22 produce commodities based on market
23 demands.
- 24 • Research on improving manure storage and
25 processing, building design, vegetative barriers
26 and types of livestock feed that could mitigate
27 nuisance odors.
- 28 • Developing an odor estimation model tailored to
29 Michigan's climatic conditions.
- 30 • Changing the Agricultural Disclosure Statement
31 (ADS) to include:
 - 32 ○ Seller notification to the potential buyer.
 - 33 ○ A separate document at the time of closing.
 - 34 ○ Updating the ADS to include additional
35 agricultural practices.
- 36 • The Michigan Right to Farm Act protecting users
37 of existing and new technology, including energy
38 production for on-farm use.

39 We oppose:

- 40 • Agricultural operations being restricted to
41 operating only under their historical use.
- 42 • Expanding livestock farms being deemed
43 nuisances as a result of new non-farm home
44 construction within the approved setback
45 distance after Michigan Department of
46 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)
47 site approval but prior to expansion's
48 completion.
- 49 • Right to Farm protection extending to cannabis
50 growing facilities until growing the plant
51 becomes legal at the federal level.
- 52 • Ballot initiatives seeking to control generally
53 accepted livestock production and management
54 practices.
- 55 • The inclusion of commercial wind turbine or
56 solar facilities in the definition of a farm.

57 **Cooperation**

58 We will work with MDARD and Michigan State
59 University to inform farmers, local units of government,
60 and other interested individuals of the positive benefits
61 of the Right to Farm Act and GAAMPs. We encourage
62 all farmers to follow the recommendations to

63 demonstrate positive concerns for our neighbors and
64 the environment. We encourage greater farmer
65 participation on township boards and planning
66 commissions to review existing ordinances, help
67 educate about Right to Farm and GAAMPs, and assist
68 in creating ordinances consistent with the Right to Farm
69 Act. We encourage the State of Michigan and local
70 units of government to structure programs, ordinances,
71 and community development plans in a manner
72 consistent with the Right to Farm Act.

73 We urge Michigan Farm Bureau to study and
74 recommend amendments to the Right to Farm Act to
75 provide additional protection for agricultural producers
76 enrolled in PA 116 or a permanent farmland
77 preservation program.

78 **GAAMPs**

79 GAAMPs should be viewed as guidelines rather
80 than statutory law, as they are reviewed and updated
81 annually to reflect current agricultural practices.
82 Consideration should first be given to amending existing
83 GAAMPs to address areas of concern, followed by
84 investigation into creating new GAAMPs as necessary.

85 The GAAMP for Site Selection and Odor Control for
86 New and Expanding Livestock Facilities has specific
87 setbacks and scientific parameters.

88 We support:

- 89 • Action by the Michigan Commission of
90 Agriculture and Rural Development to remove
91 language specific to local zoning from the siting
92 and farm market GAAMPs.
- 93 • Creating a GAAMP for ag labor housing.
- 94 • Creating a greenhouse GAAMP that provides
95 nuisance protection for permanent and
96 temporary greenhouse structures used for
97 commercial or production agricultural purposes
98 (except cannabis), regardless of population,
99 zoning, or tax classification.
- 100 • Continued use of GAAMPs to define acceptable
101 farm management practices in Michigan.
- 102 • A cooperative effort between MDARD, MFB, and
103 other stakeholders to define “commercial
104 production of farm products” within the
105 GAAMPs.

106 We oppose:

- 107 • Using non-farm residences to define setbacks
108 for manure structures and stacking.

109 We are concerned about the exemption of GAAMP
110 applicability to municipalities with a population of
111 100,000 or more.

112 We urge greater producer participation on all
113 GAAMP committees.

114 **Complaint Process**

115 The electronic complaint process should include a
116 complete description of the law, including the process
117 and implications for verified and unverified complaints.
118 Following the official Right to Farm visit, follow-up
119 correspondence and appropriate action shall be
120 communicated promptly to the farm owner and the
121 complainant, including MDARD’s ability to enforce
122 action against the farm and/or the complainant.

123 We urge MDARD to notify all complainants of the
124 law allowing MDARD to levy a penalty for unverified
125 complaints. We strongly urge MDARD to recoup the
126 costs of investigating unverified complaints, as provided
127 for in the Right to Farm Act. We do not support
128 anonymous Right to Farm complaints.

#37 Urban Farming

1 Developing management practices unique to new
2 and expanding urban agriculture, including livestock
3 care standards, crops and cropping standards, and
4 environmental standards, is important to increasing
5 understanding of and support for agriculture in
6 Michigan. For food safety reasons, all rules, regulations,
7 and licenses applicable to commercial agriculture
8 should be applicable to urban agriculture.

9 We support:

- 10 • ~~We support e~~ Economic development practices
11 to accept agricultural businesses as part of
12 urban centers.
- 13 • ~~We support the development of~~ Developing
14 agreements that allow urban agricultural
15 production, but also protect the rights of farm
16 businesses with production sites within Michigan
17 municipalities.
- 18 • ~~We support developing management practices~~
19 ~~unique to new and expanding urban agriculture,~~
20 ~~which includes livestock care standards, crops~~
21 ~~and cropping standards, and environmental~~
22 ~~protection standards. For food safety reasons,~~
23 ~~all rules, regulations and licenses should be~~
24 ~~applicable to urban agriculture. We applaud~~
25 ~~r~~ Recommendations of the Michigan Department
26 of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)
27 Urban Livestock Workgroup as an important first
28 step in this process.
- 29 • ~~We support~~ Michigan Farm Bureau’s continued
30 collaboration with MDARD, Michigan State
31 University Extension and other stakeholders to
32 write a model local ordinance to promote
33 protection of and guidelines for urban
34 agriculture.

- 35 • Urban agriculture training and education
36 programs and curricula.
37 • Assisting and educating farmers in urban areas
38 in acquiring grants and financial assistance
39 available through local, state and federal
40 agencies.
41 We oppose:
42 • Compromising Right to Farm protections for
43 commercial agricultural practices ~~must not be~~
44 ~~compromised.~~

#40 Agriscience, Food, and Natural Resources Education and The FFA Organization

1 Michigan Farm Bureau commends the Michigan
2 Department of Education (MDE) Office of Career and
3 Technical Education on its support and recognition of
4 food and agriculture as a greater than \$100 billion
5 industry in the state through the adoption of the
6 Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Cluster. This
7 cluster ~~will enable~~ enables the future agriculture leaders
8 of agriculture to obtain foundational knowledge ~~that will~~
9 ~~help~~ helping shape their careers and ~~ultimately~~ promote
10 the sustainability of the agriculture industry.

11 Michigan's 100 plus Agriscience, Food and Natural
12 Resources Education (AFNRE) programs and FFA
13 programs are important to the future success of
14 Michigan agriculture. These programs ~~provide~~ develop
15 future leadership ~~to in the agricultural~~ agriculture
16 industry and many programmatic and leadership
17 opportunities for non-farm students to learn about and
18 understand agriculture, natural resources and the
19 environment.

20 AFNRE and Michigan FFA chapters ~~in the state of~~
21 Michigan have been supported for years by ~~the local~~
22 school ~~district~~ districts, added-cost funding administered
23 by the MDE, federal Perkins dollars, and FFA
24 Foundation funds, including the Glassbrook FFA
25 Endowment. These appropriations are essential for
26 public school districts to retain AFNRE and the FFA as
27 program 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 Expanding and creating new junior high/middle
32 school and high school AFNRE programs and
33 FFA chapters as vital tools for educating young
34 people, providing career and technical training
35 and development of leaders to work in careers
36 related to Michigan's agricultural industry.

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- Agriscience and natural resources courses fulfilling the criteria and being recognized as a science credit by all high schools, colleges and universities in Michigan.
 - ~~Regional Educational School District administrators, as well as~~ Providing regional administrators, local district superintendents, principals and counselors, ~~being provided~~ information on AFRNE curriculum requirements ~~of agriscience careers~~ so they can encourage student participation.
 - The MDE ~~to adequately funding~~ AFNRE and the ~~Career and Technical Student Organization~~ career and technical student organization programs to provide educational and career opportunities in agriculture and natural resources as because added-cost funding available ~~has continued to decline~~ is declining.
 - Retaining ~~The~~ the word agriculture ~~remaining~~ in the Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Career Cluster title.
 - Reporting ~~of all~~ information regarding graduates, or completers, from ~~all~~ agriscience and natural resources programs within the state to. ~~This information should help~~ increase the amount of added-cost funding for each student ~~currently enrolled in the program~~.
 - ~~All agriscience and natural resources instructors to engage in~~ Instructors taking an active role in the information gathering and reporting process.
 - MFB and county Farm Bureaus assisting in state and local FFA activities.
 - FFA alumni associations and their efforts to strengthen agriscience and natural resource education across the state and nation.
 - AFNRE emergency certification programs, ~~as well as the~~ and hiring ~~of~~ retired ag teachers, ~~to~~ fill these positions without ~~any~~ retirement penalties, due to the lack of qualified people available to lead these programs.
 - ~~Consideration being given to~~ Considering student loan payoff or scholarship programs to help promote AFNRE programs through private or public partnerships.
 - Continued activities of private and public companies and organizations, like those of AgroLiquid, St. Johns, which provide an educational opportunity to the public to learn and experience the role, importance, and economic

- 86 impact of agriculture on food production for
87 generations to come.
- 88 • Access to and financial support of agriscience
89 programs and FFA chapters in all Michigan
90 schools.
 - 91 • ~~The development of~~ Developing an agricultural
92 agriculture credential ~~which that~~ high school
93 AFNRE students could use to gain employment
94 in the agricultural agriculture and natural
95 resources field. The development of this
96 credential should include input from ~~agricultural~~
97 businesses, teachers and educational
98 specialists to ensure the ~~certification~~ credential
99 represents the skills learned through the
100 program in a way that's meaningful for
101 ~~agricultural~~ employers.
 - 102 • ~~The utilization of~~ Utilizing funding for agricultural
103 agriculture internships and apprenticeships
104 through the National Apprenticeship Act.

#41 Educational Reforms

1 We believe all Michigan children should have an
2 equal opportunity for quality education. Education at all
3 levels must meet the constantly changing needs of
4 society.

5 We support:

- 6 • Requiring state foundation grant aid
7 reimbursement be determined annually by June
8 1 ~~annually~~.
- 9 • Funding special education programs for teacher
10 training, children with special needs and gifted
11 children.
- 12 • Fully funding new or revised state mandated
13 programs ~~whether new or amended~~.
- 14 • Funding for state mandated programs should
15 not decrease the basic pupil grant for other
16 Michigan students.
- 17 • Ensuring the per pupil foundation funding grant
18 follows the student to the school of their choice.
- 19 • Requiring state school aid funding to reflect
20 current year enrollment based on average
21 student attendance and eliminate ~~the~~ official
22 count ~~day/s~~ days.
- 23 • Public schools, private schools, charter schools
24 and home schooling.
- 25 • Local school boards having the ability to
26 establish policies such as starting and ending
27 dates, classroom hours in a school year,
28 personnel management, student discipline, and
29 use of local facilities/ and resources.

- 30 • Collaboration between the local school district
31 and the ~~Intermediate School District~~
32 intermediate school district to establish an
33 integrated calendar.
- 34 • The utilization of local Farm Bureau members
35 and organizational resources to assist in
36 reviewing classroom curriculum for accurate
37 information concerning agriculture before its
38 adoption.
- 39 • ~~Michigan Farm Bureau exploring the~~
40 ~~development of a Michigan agriculture unit that~~
41 ~~teaches students where their food comes from.~~
42 Michigan Farm Bureau continue to promote and
43 develop Michigan Agriculture Education Units to
44 increase agricultural literacy among K-12
45 students.
- 46 • ~~Michigan colleges~~ Colleges and universities
47 offering dual credit opportunities for high school
48 students.
- 49 • ~~Michigan colleges and universities offering~~
50 ~~agriscience~~ Agriscience instructor certification,
51 and
- 52 • ~~Michigan colleges and universities offering state~~
53 ~~standardized~~ Standardized programs in
54 specialty (ag) fields like agriculture to increase
55 occupational readiness and employability of
56 students.
- 57 • Consolidated districts maintaining existing FFA
58 and agriscience programs.
- 59 • Review of the foundation funding grant for
60 education.
- 61 • Fiscal aid, limited to the rate of inflation, to
62 districts operating under caps. School districts
63 must exercise fiscal responsibility and look for
64 efficiencies to maximize the use of financial
65 resources.
- 66 • Science, Technology, Engineering, Math,
67 (STEM) education in Pre-K-12 and acknowledge
68 agricultural education as an effective vehicle to
69 deliver this programming. We encourage county
70 Farm Bureaus to highlight opportunities for
71 school districts to meet STEM requirements
72 through agricultural concepts.
- 73 • Funding opportunities for elementary schools
74 ~~such as like~~ grants or scholarship programs to
75 source agriculture education resources such as
76 the FARM Science Lab Programs.
- 77 • County Farm Bureaus working with ~~local~~ school
78 districts to increase Michigan Merit Curriculum
79 (MMC) flexibility acceptance. MMC standards

- 80 must be balanced to recognize the importance
81 of Career and Technical Education (CTE) and
82 provide more opportunities for students to enroll
83 in vocational training programs and mentor-
84 based programs.
- 85 • A well-rounded education containing basic
86 curriculum, including college-prep or
87 vocational/technical courses.
 - 88 • School counselors and faculty informing
89 students about opportunities in vocational
90 training, agriculture, and ~~agriculturally~~-related
91 fields.
 - 92 • Counselors' continuing education courses
93 encompassing CTE opportunities.

#42 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 including~~
4 Michigan Farm Bureau. The efforts of MAC are needed
5 because it is imperative for ~~the~~ stakeholders to write the
6 narrative of Michigan agriculture. ~~This group has taken~~
7 ~~the lead in developing a collaborative effort promoting~~
8 Through its collaborative structure, MAC promotes a
9 positive image for agriculture and takes an assertive,
10 proactive approach in telling the story of modern
11 agriculture as a result of technological advancements.

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

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

#44 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. A
4 comprehensive policy is vital ~~for the state of Michigan to~~
5 provide for statewide 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~~ Allowing county,
10 township or municipalities to utilize special
11 assessment districts in ~~expanding~~ to expand
12 broadband.
- 13 • Tax credits or other incentives for residents
14 purchasing internet services for educational or
15 employment purposes.
- 16 • Encouraging federal, state, and local
17 municipalities to allow public and private internet
18 providers easy and affordable access to build
19 and attach equipment to public-owned
20 communication towers, water towers, and
21 ground.
- 22 • ~~Public-private partnerships to develop~~
23 developing cooperative, alternative funding
24 measures to expand broadband in ~~under-served~~
25 underserved areas.
- 26 • ~~Michigan internet~~ Internet providers taking
27 advantage of the available state and federal
28 government loans and grants.
- 29 • Continued cooperation between the Michigan
30 Public Service Commission, broadband
31 providers, and groups such as Connect
32 Michigan to expand unlimited high-speed
33 internet access in rural and ~~under-served~~
34 underserved areas.
- 35 • Publicly available, well-defined/site-specific high-
36 speed internet coverage maps.
- 37 • Allowing municipalities to create service
38 thresholds when negotiating broadband
39 franchise territories.
- 40 • Requiring electric utilities to allow access to their
41 power poles for the hanging of high-speed fiber-
42 optic lines.
- 43 • Encouraging rural electric co-ops to continue to
44 ~~expand their offerings of broadband internet~~
45 expanding broadband offerings.
- 46 • A report from the Michigan Office of High-Speed
47 Internet Office on the progress of ~~state and~~
48 ~~federal money~~ deploying new broadband
49 technology deployed through state and federal
50 money.

51 We oppose granting of exclusive franchises to
52 broadband providers in municipalities without
53 guaranteed minimum service.

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

15 We support:

- 16 • Requirements for the use of biomass fuels and
17 fuel additives in areas that exceed the 1990
18 federal Clean Air Act standards.
- 19 • ~~The continued~~ Continued production of biomass
20 products such as ethanol and other bio-based
21 fuels and products.
- 22 • Year-round statewide availability of E-15.
- 23 • Efforts to encourage biomass fuel production
24 facilities in Michigan in areas of available
25 feedstock production and co-product utilization.
- 26 • Funding and support for new, existing, and
27 expanding facilities for the generation of
28 sustainable aviation fuel, renewable diesel, and
29 biodiesel from agriculture and forestry products.
- 30 • Research and development being encouraged
31 through tax and cost-share incentives to find
32 ways to reduce the cost of production of
33 biomass products, expand feedstocks, co-
34 product utilization (including those from food
35 processors), and expand the application of
36 technologies such as anaerobic digestion,
37 fermentation, distillation, burning of organic
38 materials (pyrolysis) and hydrogasification.
- 39 • Research on the use of 100 percent biomass
40 fuels for some vehicles, as well as blending
41 biomass fuels with petroleum-based fuels.
- 42 • The ~~State~~ state of Michigan including biomass
43 fueled vehicles in ~~the state~~ its motor pool fleet.
44 We strongly urge all state-owned diesel and E-
45 85 (~~85 percent ethanol, 15 percent gasoline~~)
46 ~~flexible fueled~~ vehicles use the be fueled with
47 their respective fuel source when possible.
- 48 • Expanding the biomass fuel distribution
49 infrastructure, including blending capability at
50 the retail level.
- 51 • Encouraging manufacturers to expand offerings
52 of renewable fueled vehicles.

- 53 • Research, development and use of renewable
- 54 energy sources for on-farm production
- 55 applications.
- 56 • Establishing economic incentives and
- 57 streamlining the permitting and licensing
- 58 process to encourage biomass fuel production.
- 59 • Broadening the use and distribution of biomass
- 60 fuel with incentives consistent with other
- 61 renewable energy sources targeted to
- 62 producers, blenders, distributors and end-users.
- 63 • Requiring new biomass fuels or renewable
- 64 energy commercial production facilities utilizing
- 65 public funding, tax deferments or grants to offer
- 66 an investment opportunity to Michigan citizens to
- 67 keep gains realized in rural America.
- 68 • Encouraging ~~Michigan~~ schools and ~~all~~ municipal
- 69 governmental units to use bio-based products.
- 70 • Educating consumers about the ~~positive~~
- 71 ~~influence and~~ benefits of biomass fuels and
- 72 renewable sources for heating.
- 73 • Utilizing ~~only~~ the latest science-based
- 74 information to promote biomass/renewable
- 75 products.
- 76 • ~~Supporting research~~ Research and
- 77 demonstration programs using ethanol ~~as a fuel~~
- 78 for fuel cell engine development.
- 79 • ~~Supporting research~~ Research and
- 80 demonstration programs to expand the use of
- 81 ethanol, biodiesel, and farm generated methane.
- 82 • Increasing engine efficiency through practices
- 83 such as raising octane levels by utilizing farm
- 84 sourced biofuels.
- 85 • ~~Including identifying~~ Identifying fuel stations
- 86 featuring E-85 and biodiesel with interstate
- 87 highway signs.
- 88 • The scientific measurement and rating of fuels
- 89 and alternative fuels ~~with regard to~~ regarding
- 90 carbon dioxide levels.
- 91 • The increased utilization of ~~silvicultural~~ (forest)
- 92 products and other biomass material, including
- 93 non-native plant species, for ~~the production of~~
- 94 renewable energy production.
- 95 • Exemptions from the ~~normal~~ Michigan
- 96 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and
- 97 Energy permitting process to encourage the
- 98 development of renewable biomass energy
- 99 production and utilization on farms.
- 100 • The use of soy based fire fighting foam.

101 **Anaerobic Digesters**

102 We support changes to state law and regulation to
103 allow:

- 104 • Comingling of product from different farms
105 without additional permitting requirements.
- 106 • Utilization of yard and food waste with manure,
107 without additional regulation.
- 108 • Registration of an anaerobic digester without
109 surface water or ground water permits.
- 110 • Changes to gas purity standards that allow for
111 digester gas to be added to existing fuel/gas
112 while still protecting the current infrastructure.
- 113 • Electricity being generated from digesters to be
114 eligible for Renewable Identification Numbers
115 (RIN).
- 116 • Increased usage of renewable natural gas
117 (RNG) as a transportation fuel.
- 118 • The use of life cycle and combustion
119 methodologies in the analysis of RNG.

#46 State Energy Policy

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

- 7 • ~~[Relocated in Policy] Programs to increase the~~
8 ~~utilization of energy sources to minimize~~
9 ~~adverse environmental impacts.~~
- 10 • ~~[Relocated in Policy] Incentives for additional~~
11 ~~refineries.~~
- 12 • ~~[Relocated Text] Agriculture having consistent,~~
13 reliable, and affordable access to all forms of
14 energy.
- 15 • Upgrading, expanding and protecting our
16 current electrical generating systems and grid.
- 17 • Development, expansion, promotion and
18 incentives for affordable access to natural gas
19 for farms, homes, and businesses.
- 20 • ~~The development of~~ Developing a state energy
21 ~~policy which gives high priority to~~ that prioritizes
22 agricultural enterprises, such as production,
23 processing and storage facilities, allowing them
24 the same power quality and timely access as
25 other commercial industries, regardless of utility
26 territory.
- 27 • ~~[Relocated Text] A statewide study of~~
28 transmission connectivity needs including, but
29 not limited to, transmission connections
30 between the two peninsulas.

- 31 • [Relocated Text] MFB working with county Farm
32 Bureaus to study electrical rate disparities
33 across the state. The study should consider the
34 causes and potential policy recommendations
35 promoting affordability in all regions of the state.
- 36 • Electric car production and usage being
37 matched by concurrent approval for the
38 construction and/or upgrades for reliable electric
39 generation facilities to deliver the power needed.
- 40 • [Relocated Text] The creation of a charging
41 network for electric vehicles in rural
42 communities.

43 **Michigan Public Service Commission and Utilities**

44 We support:

- 45 • Standards for utility companies to resolve
46 power quality issues such as electrical pollution
47 on-farm and urge all parties to maintain their
48 equipment and utility right-of-way to decrease
49 the possibility of neutral-to-ground electrical
50 pollution.
- 51 • Net-metering legislation or regulation enabling
52 producers to sell excess power generated on
53 farms back to utilities at an equitable rate.
- 54 • [Relocated Text] Establishment of an
55 agricultural rate classification for electrical
56 service.
- 57 • [Relocated Text] Michigan Public Service
58 Commission (MPSC) allowance for seasonal
59 inactivity (e.g., irrigation/grain drying) to
60 eliminate the occurrence of non-use monthly
61 charges.
- 62 • [Relocated Text] Voluntary utilization of smart
63 meters.
- 64 • [Relocated Text] All permanent easements
65 owned by utilities, not preserved for future use,
66 being reverted or offered for sale, to the
67 underlying owner at no more than fair market
68 value.
- 69 • [Relocated Text] Including agricultural
70 representation on the MPSC.
- 71 • [Relocated Text] MPSC being responsible for
72 determining capacity needs and the Michigan
73 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and
74 Energy being responsible for only
75 environmental permitting.

76 **Enhancing Production & Programs**

77 We support:

- 78 • The continued operation and upgrades of Line
79 5 and similar pipelines with strict safety

- 80 precautions to protect land and water
81 resources.
- 82 • Incentives for renewable energy efficiency and
83 conservation that reduce energy use and costs
84 ~~through cost-saving energy-efficient equipment~~
85 on farms, food processing firms, and ~~agri-~~
86 ~~businesses~~ agribusinesses.
 - 87 • Incentives for renewable energy production for
88 sale or use for private applications. Examples
89 include ~~co-generation~~ cogeneration, silvicultural
90 material, methane digestion, wind, hydro, and
91 solar power.
 - 92 • Increasing incentives to broaden the use of
93 biomass blended fuels.
 - 94 • Education and policy programs to promote
95 sound energy conservation.
 - 96 • Options expanding domestic energy
97 exploration; incentives to accelerate expansion
98 of liquid natural gas facilities; implementation of
99 technology to utilize domestic coal reserves; and
100 the development of fuel cell technology.
 - 101 • [Relocated Text] Programs to increase the
102 utilization of energy sources to minimize
103 adverse environmental impacts.
 - 104 • [Relocated Text] Incentives for additional
105 refineries.
 - 106 • [Relocated Text] MFB obtaining the services of
107 an in-house grant writer to assist members with
108 the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)
109 and other grant programs.
 - 110 • [Relocated in Policy] ~~Establishment of an~~
111 ~~agricultural rate classification for electrical~~
112 ~~service.~~
 - 113 • [Relocated in Policy] ~~Michigan Public Service~~
114 ~~Commission (MPSC) allowance for seasonal~~
115 ~~inactivity (e.g., irrigation/grain drying) to~~
116 ~~eliminate the occurrence of non-use monthly~~
117 ~~charges.~~
 - 118 • [Relocated in Policy] ~~Voluntary utilization of~~
119 ~~smart meters.~~
 - 120 • [Relocated in Policy] ~~All wind generator towers~~
121 ~~being assessed using multiplier tables~~
122 ~~established by the MPSC through the process~~
123 ~~of public hearings and sworn testimony.~~
 - 124 • [Relocated in Policy] ~~A statewide study of~~
125 ~~transmission connectivity needs including, but~~
126 ~~not limited to, transmission connections~~
127 ~~between the two peninsulas.~~
 - 128 • [Relocated in Policy] ~~MFB working with county~~
129 ~~Farm Bureaus to study electrical rate disparities~~

- 130 across the state. The study should consider the
131 causes and potential policy recommendations
132 promoting affordability in all regions of the state.
- 133 • ~~The continued operation and upgrades of~~
134 ~~pipelines such as Line 5 with strict safety~~
135 ~~precautions to protect land and water~~
136 ~~resources.~~

137 **Farmland Protection and Land Use**

138 We support:

- 139 • Requiring decommissioning plans to return
140 property to the original state As as a part of the
141 permitting process for all new energy projects,
142 ~~requiring decommissioning plans including~~
143 ~~posting an adequate performance bond, or~~
144 ~~funds before final approval.~~
- 145 • [Relocated in Policy] ~~All permanent easements~~
146 ~~owned by utilities, not preserved for future use,~~
147 ~~should be reverted or offered for sale, to the~~
148 ~~underlying owner at no more than fair market~~
149 ~~value.~~
- 150 • [Relocated in Policy] ~~Including agricultural~~
151 ~~representation on the MPSC.~~
- 152 • [Relocated in Policy] ~~MPSC being responsible~~
153 ~~for determining capacity needs and the~~
154 ~~Michigan Department of Environment, Great~~
155 ~~Lakes, and Energy being responsible for only~~
156 ~~environmental permitting.~~
- 157 • ~~Government mandates for electric car~~
158 ~~production and usage being matched by~~
159 ~~concurrent approval for the construction and/or~~
160 ~~upgrades for reliable electric generation~~
161 ~~facilities to deliver the power needed.~~
- 162 • [Relocated in Policy] ~~The creation of a charging~~
163 ~~network for electric vehicles in rural~~
164 ~~communities.~~
- 165 • [Relocated in Policy] ~~Agriculture having~~
166 ~~consistent, reliable, and affordable access to all~~
167 ~~forms of energy.~~
- 168 • ~~Incentivizing the production and use of~~
169 ~~renewable energy on non-agricultural use areas~~
170 ~~such as brownfields, public property, especially~~
171 ~~state-owned or leased buildings with suitable~~
172 ~~land for solar, Michigan Department of~~
173 ~~Transportation rights-of-ways, Michigan state~~
174 ~~parks, state-owned forests, state-owned or~~
175 ~~leased marginal open space, marginal lands, as~~
176 ~~well as industrial, residential and agricultural~~
177 ~~buildings, to reduce easements across farms~~
178 ~~for renewable energy projects and to protect~~
179 ~~prime-farmland.~~

- 180 • [Relocated in Policy] MFB ~~obtaining the~~
181 ~~services of an in-house grant writer to assist~~
182 ~~members with the Rural Energy for America~~
183 ~~Program (REAP) and other grant programs.~~
184 • Solar developers disclosing chemical and
185 electronic components of solar panels and
186 equipment to the landowner prior to offering any
187 lease or approval.
188 • Commercial solar operations notifying ~~land~~
189 ~~owners~~ landowners and disclosing chemicals
190 used for weed and pest control on leased
191 acres.
192 • Requiring public lands to share in the
193 advancement of renewable energy goals
194 created for the public interest. Since state and
195 federal governments own over 20% of land in
196 ~~the state of~~ Michigan, public lands have the
197 opportunity and responsibility to lead by
198 example and host at least 20% of renewable
199 energy development.
200 • [Relocated Text] All wind generator towers
201 being assessed using multiplier tables
202 established by the MPSC through the process
203 of public hearings and sworn testimony.

204 We oppose:

- 205 • Utility companies inflating land rental rates on
206 their property to well above fair market value of
207 contiguous property.
208 • ~~Any attempts~~ Attempts to restrict or ban the
209 use or production of natural gas, LP gas
210 propane or any fossil fuel.

#47 Unmanned Aircraft Systems

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

9 Many of the issues surrounding UAS are
10 governed ~~on the federal level~~ by the Federal Aviation
11 Administration (FAA); ~~however,~~ a number of ~~state~~
12 ~~level~~ state-level issues need to be resolved. We
13 encourage Michigan Farm Bureau to work with the
14 ~~state~~ Legislature to address issues regarding UAS
15 use. Also, we urge MFB to continue to increase their
16 knowledge and understanding of ~~the evolving~~ UAS

17 issues including but not limited to like:

- 18 • Privacy and private property rights (FAA Part
19 ~~89 remote identification beacons~~)
- 20 • Nuisance
- 21 • Reckless endangerment
- 22 • Proprietary data
- 23 • Safety
- 24 • Insurance
- 25 • Authority enforcement and jurisdiction
26 consistent with FAA Part 91 (over 55 pounds)
27 and Part 107 (under 55 pounds) regulations
- 28 • ~~As information becomes more definitive, we~~
29 ~~encourage MFB to continue utilizing a UAS~~
30 ~~action team to develop and promote~~
31 ~~educational tools.~~

32 We support:

- 33 • The use of UAS for commercial purposes
34 (~~i.e. within~~ agriculture, forestry, and ~~other~~
35 natural resources use).
- 36 • ~~Requiring the operator of the UAS operators~~
37 ~~to gain the consent of the landowner and/or~~
38 ~~operator~~ landowners or farm operators, if the
39 UAS will be surveying or gathering data
40 about the ~~landowner's~~ property below
41 navigable airspace.
- 42 • Treating the UAS as an extension of the
43 operator subject to trespass regulations.
- 44 • The regulation of UAS as recreational
45 aircraft.
- 46 • Internet and cellular providers including
47 support within rural networks for agricultural
48 equipment connections.
- 49 • ~~The Michigan Department of Agriculture and~~
50 ~~Rural Development ensuring its policies~~
51 ~~support~~ supporting the use of autonomous
52 farm equipment on farms.
- 53 • Michigan State University increasing its
54 autonomous farm technology research ~~efforts~~
55 ~~related to autonomous technology on farms~~.
- 56 • The use of UAS operations in accordance
57 ~~with Parts 91 and 107~~ with FAA regulations
58 to include all waivable operations such as
59 use of multiple drones (~~107.35~~) and limited
60 nighttime operations (~~107.29b~~).

61 We oppose:

- 62 • A federal Federal, and state and local agency
63 agencies using UAS for ~~the purpose of~~
64 regulatory enforcement, litigation and as a
65 sole source for natural resource inventories
66 ~~used in planning efforts~~.

- 67 • Use of drones for investigation without a
- 68 search warrant or equivalent documents.
- 69 • UAS surveying and gathering data without
- 70 the consent of the landowner and/or operator
- 71 below navigable airspace.

#48 Utility Placement

1 ~~All new and~~ New or replacement above and
 2 underground utility distribution equipment ~~shall~~ should
 3 be 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 installation
 6 of new utilities, including all poles and all lines. We urge
 7 all utility and subcontractor companies to communicate
 8 with landowners before beginning the renovation of
 9 lines, or relocation of individual poles, ~~etc.~~ As farm
 10 equipment increases in size, the placement of utility
 11 services becomes a concern. Adding to the potential
 12 problem, other utility lines, such as telephones and
 13 cable television, are installed below the existing electric
 14 lines. Access to, or operation in, a field or orchard with
 15 farm equipment creates the potential for contact with
 16 the lines.

17 We support:

- 18 • ~~The requirement of a utility to follow~~ Utility
 19 companies following the National Electrical
 20 Safety Code (NESC) and Michigan Public
 21 Service Commission (MPSC) regulations to
 22 protect both the farmer and the utility from
 23 accidents ~~which~~ that could cause injury to an
 24 individual or service interruption ~~of service to a~~
 25 ~~community.~~
- 26 • Legislation or regulation ~~to create~~ creating a
 27 minimum height requirement of 17 ½ feet for all
 28 overhead lines. All new underground utilities
 29 ~~shall~~ should be installed and maintained to
 30 NESC standards. If NESC standards are not
 31 met, utility companies are responsible for
 32 liability, damages, and repairs.
- 33 • ~~Governmental agencies enforcing the~~
 34 Government enforcement of utility height and
 35 depth standards.
- 36 • All parties (e.g. landowners, road commission,
 37 drain commission) communicating prior to ~~the~~
 38 utility installation of utilities. ~~This includes,~~
 39 including a minimum 30-day notice to
 40 landowners for non-emergency projects that
 41 ~~would affect private~~ utility and drainage on
 42 private property or within the ~~right-of-way~~ right-
 43 of-way.

- 44 • The principles of Public Acts 173 and 174 of
45 2013, which provide clarity on the MISS DIG
46 process for farmers by focusing efforts on risk
47 management and providing greater incentives
48 for compliance. We encourage farmers to enroll
49 their property in the MISS DIG system.
- 50 • Farmers considering ~~possible~~ cost-sharing of
51 utility pole re-~~location~~ relocation for safety and
52 productivity of field crops.
- 53 • Utility companies putting additional emphasis on
54 upgrading and placement of poles in the ~~rights-~~
55 ~~of-way~~ right-of-way to reduce long-term
56 maintenance costs and crop damage.
- 57 • Utility companies completing timely repair,
58 maintenance, and expansion to prevent ~~further~~
59 damage to personal and public property.
- 60 • All MISS DIG markings being removed or made
61 of a non-metallic biodegradable material and
62 encourage Michigan Farm Bureau to work with
63 all appropriate entities to promote this change.
- 64 • The MPSC's cost review for line extensions,
65 transformer upgrades and moving charges, and
66 comparing these costs with other utility charges
67 for the same work.

68 We understand the value of utilities, including ~~and~~
69 broadband communication, and support reasonable
70 efforts to minimize damage to infrastructure. New utility
71 equipment should not impede any existing drainage
72 structure. We believe a utility company should promptly
73 settle for damage to crops, soil compaction, existing
74 sub surface drainage (~~tile~~), irrigation, and other similar
75 agricultural infrastructure.

#49 Agricultural Labor Workforce

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

7 Michigan does not have a labor relations law for
8 farm workers and they are using basic contract law as
9 the basis for achieving successful labor 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 law. 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, should
20 be designated if the agriculture exemption to the
21 NLRA is stricken.

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

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

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

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

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

68 effectively encourage workers to come to Michigan.

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

71 We support:

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

94 We oppose:

- 95 • Efforts by purchasers of farm commodities to
96 force farmers to legally recognize and negotiate
97 with specific labor organizations.
- 98 • Purchasers of farm commodities enticing farm
99 ~~workers~~ employees to join unions by paying ~~the~~
100 ~~their~~ union dues ~~for the workers~~.
- 101 • ~~Third party organization attempts~~ organizations
102 attempting to force organized labor negotiations
103 between farmers and farm ~~workers~~ employees.
- 104 • A specific segment of our workforce being
105 targeted for mandatory testing or regulatory
106 compliance.

#50 ~~Employer Provided~~ Agricultural Worker Housing

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

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

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

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

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

36 With aging infrastructure and the continuing issue
37 of lack of housing, renewing, and building new on-
38 farm worker housing is more important now than ever.
39 Continuing pressure with lower commodity pricing and
40 increased input pricing has made it difficult for farmers
41 to make these improvements and maintain
42 competitiveness in the market. We support increased
43 state funding for on-farm housing development.

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

61 ~~owner of the farm. Federal and other state agencies~~
62 ~~should be in audit positions only and shall refer any~~
63 ~~apparent violations to MDARD, rather than issuing an~~
64 ~~immediate penalty.~~

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

68 With aging infrastructure and the continuing lack
69 of housing, renovating and building new agricultural
70 worker housing is more important now than ever.
71 However, continuing pressure with lower commodity
72 pricing and increased input costs has made it difficult
73 for farmers to make these improvements and maintain
74 competitiveness in the market.

75 At the same time, the overlapping of
76 administrative oversight and inspection of agricultural
77 worker housing requirements presents a fragmented
78 format of rules. The Michigan Department of
79 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) Migrant
80 Labor Housing Inspection Program is vital to
81 agricultural employers and Michigan's agricultural
82 economy. This program verifies that agricultural
83 employers have acceptable housing for employees
84 and provides licensing for employers whose housing
85 meets program standards/requirements. This licensing
86 provides protection for both employers and
87 employees.

88 We support:

- 89 • Legislation developing uniform housing
90 standards and requirements across state and
91 federal agencies for agricultural workers.
- 92 • MDARD being the sole inspecting licensor of
93 agricultural worker housing in Michigan.
- 94 • The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) should
95 recognize a current license issued by MDARD
96 as proof agricultural worker housing is
97 acceptable.
- 98 • Federal and other state agencies should be in
99 audit positions only and shall refer any apparent
100 violations to MDARD, rather than issuing an
101 immediate penalty.
- 102 • That once agricultural housing is inspected and
103 licensed by MDARD and then occupied, the
104 USDOL and/or other agencies may not enter the
105 dwellings, which are the homes of the
106 employees, without the employee's permission
107 and proper advance notification to the farm
108 owner.
- 109 • MDARD continuing to provide a publication
110 explaining the current licensing, inspection

- 111 procedures, and regulations for agricultural
112 worker housing.
- 113 • The MDARD Migrant Labor Housing Inspection
114 Program being a fully funded state program that
115 includes pre-occupancy, post-occupancy and
116 complaint-driven inspections, supplemented, if
117 necessary, by reasonable fees based on
118 licensed occupancy.
 - 119 • The State of Michigan and MDARD providing
120 licensing protection to employers who show a
121 good faith effort to maintain their agricultural
122 worker housing to MDARD standards.
 - 123 • Once agricultural worker housing has been
124 inspected and licensed, any violations created
125 by the occupant should not be held against the
126 licensee.
 - 127 • Defining rights and responsibilities between an
128 employer and an employee living in housing
129 facilities provided rent-free by the employer, as
130 well as procedures to be observed when the
131 occupant is no longer an employee.
 - 132 • Legislation that creates a not more than seven-
133 day eviction process for employer provided
134 housing.
 - 135 • Increased state funding for agricultural worker
136 housing development.
 - 137 • Agricultural employers renovating or
138 demolishing abandoned housing.

#51 Immigration

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

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

#53 Labor Housing Zoning of Agricultural Worker Housing

1 Adequate housing for agricultural workers is critical
2 for Michigan agricultural producers and should not be
3 negatively affected by local zoning ordinances.

4 We support:

- 5 • ~~We support~~ MDARD ~~as~~ having exclusive
6 responsibility for inspection and approval of

- 7 occupancy for seasonal farm worker housing in
8 Michigan.
- 9 • ~~We support amending~~ Amending the Michigan
10 Zoning Enabling Act to allow farm worker
11 housing, including multi-family housing and
12 dormitories, as a use by right in all zones.
 - 13 • ~~We support the creation of~~ Creating a statewide
14 migrant labor housing policy that preempts local
15 authority.
 - 16 • ~~We support legislation to allow~~ Legislation
17 allowing farmers to share agricultural ~~labor~~
18 worker housing.
 - 19 • ~~and the development of~~ Developing state tax
20 assessing guidelines that support agricultural
21 ~~labor~~ worker housing.
- 22 We oppose:
- 23 • Local zoning ordinances that are ~~more strict~~
24 stricter for agricultural ~~labor~~ worker housing than
25 ~~these~~ that of any residential home.

#54 MIOSHA Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration

1 We encourage all farmers to become aware of any
2 occupational hazards and voluntarily adopt safety
3 programs. If the Michigan Occupational Safety and
4 Health Administration (MIOSHA) ~~moves forward to~~
5 ~~establish~~ establishes any a standard for agriculture,
6 Michigan Farm Bureau should work with MIOSHA to
7 ensure minimal negative impacts ~~on agriculture~~. Non-
8 mandatory guidance principles should be included in
9 any final regulation.

10 We recommend ~~that any~~ heat-related labor
11 regulations account for the diverse ~~labor~~ workforce
12 requirements of agriculture and not be so restrictive as
13 to create unnecessary difficulty in completing tasks
14 essential to farming.

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

- 18 We support:
- 19 • Appropriate safety regulations.
 - 20 • Including construction standards and health
21 standards in the agricultural exemption in
22 MIOSHA ~~under agricultural operations as~~
23 ~~defined in~~ administrative code MI R325.50171.
 - 24 • Educational programs and no-penalty first-time
25 inspections and/or violations.
 - 26 • ~~We urge that a~~ A portion of the Consultation,
27 Education and Training funding, derived from

- 28 Workers' Compensation premiums, ~~be~~ being
29 used for agricultural safety training.
- 30 • Legislation allowing employers to provide
31 employee safety information, ~~such as safety~~
32 ~~data sheets~~, in an electronic format.
 - 33 • Changing reporting requirements for
34 accidents/fatalities for agricultural operations to
35 include 911 or other first responder supported
36 reporting.
- 37 We oppose:
- 38 • MIOSHA regulations that exceed federal OSHA
39 standards and/or guidance.
 - 40 • Enforcement action against an owner/operator
41 resulting from a self-imposed accidental injury.

#55 ~~No-Fault Automobile Insurance~~

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

6 We support the ~~general~~ principles in Michigan's
7 ~~No-Fault Insurance~~ no-fault insurance law that allow
8 people injured in automobile accidents to receive
9 economic compensation more quickly and equitably.

10 We support the following improvements to ~~No-~~
11 ~~Fault Insurance~~ no-fault insurance:

- 12 • A realistic cap on Personal Injury Protection
13 (PIP) benefits.
- 14 • Optional limits of PIP coverage (e.g., medical,
15 wage loss, economic damages).
- 16 • ~~Use~~ Using a ~~set~~ schedule for medical and PIP
17 benefits, ~~similar to workers~~ like the workers'
18 compensation fee schedule.
- 19 • Better ~~define~~ defining "injuries arising out of the
20 ownership, maintenance or use of an
21 automobile."
- 22 • ~~Require~~ Requiring motorcycles to comply with
23 the same rules as auto and truck automobiles
24 and trucks.
- 25 • Place limits on attendant care.

26 We support legislation ~~which improves~~ improving
27 ~~Michigan's No-Fault Insurance~~ no-fault insurance,
28 ~~reduces~~ reducing the cost of auto insurance, and
29 ~~passes~~ passing the majority of savings on to the
30 consumer.

31 We oppose any legislation ~~that attempts~~ attempting
32 to equalize auto insurance rates ~~throughout Michigan.~~
33 Additionally, we will not support auto insurance
34 rollbacks unless they are offset by reforms ~~which~~ that

35 reduce costs.

36 Michigan's ~~No-Fault Insurance~~ no-fault insurance
37 law provides that drivers having accidents or tickets can
38 be charged more for automobile insurance. To ensure
39 that proper insurance premiums are charged, we
40 support improved accuracy of the Secretary of State's
41 accident/violation records.

42 The Michigan Auto Insurance Placement Facility,
43 which insures high-risk drivers, should be fully self-
44 funded.

45 Uninsured motorists increase costs to law-abiding
46 citizens. We recommend increased law enforcement
47 and an increase in fines and impoundment of the
48 vehicle for uninsured motorists ~~and impoundment of the~~
49 ~~vehicle~~.

50 We urge the exploration of methods ~~and~~
51 ~~mechanisms~~ to change the collections for the Michigan
52 Catastrophic Claims Association Fund to ensure equity
53 amongst Michigan motorists.

#56 Wages and Compensation

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

6 We support:

- 7 • An agricultural exemption from paid sick leave
8 requirements.
- 9 • Agriculture, as defined in the North American
10 Industry Classification System (NAICS 11),
11 ~~remain~~ remaining exempt from overtime wage
12 payments.
- 13 • ~~Agricultural piecework~~ Piece rates as a method
14 of payment to allow for the ~~many~~ variable
15 situations found in agricultural employment.
16 Piecework rates enable skilled agricultural
17 workers to earn income above the average
18 and/or minimum hourly wage.
- 19 • The Michigan Department of Labor and
20 Economic Opportunity (MDLEO) ~~work~~ working
21 with the agriculture community to support the
22 payment of piece rate in compliance with state
23 and federal law.
- 24 • ~~Any increases in minimum wages~~ Minimum
25 wage increases being tied directly to increases
26 of all wage-based employer thresholds, such as
27 unemployment compensation insurance,
28 frequency of withholdings, and frequency of
29 deposits.

- 30 • Investigating a state surveying mechanism and
31 auditing of the survey for calculating ag wages
32 including adverse effect wage rate (AEWR).
- 33 • Unemployment payments should never exceed
34 80% of previous full pay and should not exceed
35 20 weeks.
- 36 • Fair market value for employer provided housing
37 should apply toward fulfillment of minimum wage
38 and AEWR requirements.
- 39 • An evaluation of the current Unemployment
40 Insurance Agency ~~in order to overhaul and~~ make
41 it ~~user friendly~~ user-friendly and accurate.
- 42 • The ~~current~~ Registration and Seeking Work
43 Waiver be extended from a 45-day to a 120-day
44 waiver for agriculture and ~~other~~ seasonal
45 agriculturally agriculture-related businesses.

46 Economic development initiatives are important to
47 the future of Michigan agriculture. We oppose any
48 attempts to mandate union wage scales in economic
49 development projects involving agriculture.

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

56 We oppose ~~all~~ local units of government setting a
57 minimum wage rate.

58 We oppose the concept of predictive scheduling of
59 employees due to the unpredictable nature of
60 agriculture and ~~agriculturally~~ agriculture related
61 businesses.

62 We oppose ~~any~~ additional tax on payroll wages for
63 health care.

64 ~~Recently more and more~~ More farms have added
65 roadside markets and agritourism venues to their ~~mix~~
66 business. We believe MDLEO should view ~~any and all~~
67 ~~labor that is~~ workers used for roadside markets and
68 agritourism venues to be considered agriculture
69 employees. We encourage Michigan Farm Bureau to
70 work with MDLEO to develop and improve ~~agricultural~~
71 agriculture classification codes.

#58 Agriculture Security

1 The ~~continued~~ threat of terrorist attacks on America has
2 ~~resulted in an increased~~ heightened awareness of the
3 ~~possibility of~~ potential for 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 preparation for a response to an agricultural
- 11 terrorist attack or 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~~ to prevent agricultural
- 22 terrorism, which need to consider the
- 23 importance of maintaining an adequate
- 24 workforce for agriculture and related industries.
- 25 • Increased funding for U.S. Customs and Border
- 26 Protection to protect ~~the~~ animal health
- 27 ~~population~~ and agriculture industries at airports
- 28 and ports of entry.
- 29 • A stronger effort to increase ~~bio-security~~
- 30 biosecurity measures on farm operations and at
- 31 the state and national level.
- 32 • Communication with local law enforcement and
- 33 emergency services regarding ~~any~~ suspicious
- 34 activity.
- 35 • Reporting ~~any~~ theft of fertilizer, diesel fuel, or
- 36 diesel exhaust fluid.
- 37 • ~~Verification of the validity of any~~ Verifying and
- 38 validating requests for information about an
- 39 agricultural facility.
- 40 • Controlled access to facilities.
- 41 • Screening of employees.

42 We oppose:

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

54 Foreign investment in Michigan assets is a concern,

55 especially in terms of farmland ownership. Ownership
56 of agricultural land by nonresident aliens, foreign
57 businesses and foreign governments should be limited
58 if not prohibited in Michigan.

#59 Agricultural Vocational Rehabilitation

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

6 We encourage the ~~State~~ state of Michigan,
7 Michigan State University Extension, Michigan Farm
8 Bureau and county Farm Bureaus to continue funding
9 AgrAbility and publicizing its services, recognizing a
10 2.7:1 match from the U.S. Department of Education.

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

#60 Anhydrous Ammonia – NH₃

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

7 We support:

- 8 • The consolidation of responsibility for
9 regulations to improve ~~the~~ efficiency and reduce
10 ~~possible~~ 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
15 maintaining 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~~ theft of
24 ~~anhydrous~~ NH₃.
- 25 • ~~and stronger~~ Stronger enforcement of laws and
26 penalties for people engaged in the theft of
27 ~~anhydrous~~ NH₃.

- 28 • ~~The current classification~~ Classification of NH₃
29 as a non-flammable gas.

#61 Antitrust

1 We request ~~both~~ the Michigan Attorney General
2 and the Antitrust Division of the Federal Trade
3 Commission (FTC) remain vigilant in enforcing the
4 Sherman Antitrust Act or state and federal restraint of
5 trade 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 ~~agricultural~~
9 agriculture supply chain, processing, and service
10 sectors where the lack of competition is counter to the
11 interest of the independent farmer.

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

17 We support:

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

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

#62 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~~ Results projections on Election Day not
10 be released to the public until all polls are closed
11 in 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 percent.
- 15 • Requiring a 2/3 vote of the people for passage
16 of the recurring ballot question to hold a
17 Constitutional Convention.
- 18 • Recall petitions ~~must contain~~ containing proven
19 misfeasance or malfeasance before the petition
20 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 • Nominating Secretary of State and Attorney
31 General candidates on the primary election
32 ballot instead of state party conventions.
- 33 • Apol Standards for the purpose of redistricting.
- 34 • Changes to the Michigan Constitution that allow
35 for gubernatorial appointment, with advice and
36 consent from the Senate for the Michigan State
37 University board of trustees, Wayne State
38 University board of governors, and University of
39 Michigan board of regents.
- 40 • Michigan continuing to honor the Electoral
41 College as designated in the U.S. Constitution.

- 42 • A simplified process to opt out of robocalls.
- 43 • Farm Bureau members to become precinct
- 44 delegates, and MFB to conduct educational
- 45 training on becoming a precinct delegate.
- 46 • The consolidation of the May and August
- 47 elections into a single election in June.

48 **Ballot Reform**

49 We encourage MFB members to be knowledgeable
50 about ballot proposals.

51 We support the following ballot process reforms:

- 52 • Clear ~~and~~, concise ~~and simple~~ language be
- 53 used on ~~all~~ ballot issues.
- 54 • Amend the State Constitution to require petitions
- 55 for initiatives or referendums ~~would have to be~~
- 56 signed by a percentage of individuals who voted
- 57 in the gubernatorial race in the last preceding
- 58 general election representing a large geographic
- 59 area of the state, for example, at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the
- 60 Michigan House districts.
- 61 • Making it unlawful to have paid circulators
- 62 gathering signatures for ballot proposals or
- 63 recalls.
- 64 • Limiting influences from outside our state
- 65 borders on Michigan's ballot process.
- 66 • Township governments being allowed to elect
- 67 local offices on a nonpartisan ballot.
- 68 • Easier ballot access for third party candidates.
- 69 • Reviewing the ballot initiative process that
- 70 special interest groups use to circumvent the
- 71 legislative process and force their ideals on the
- 72 public and agricultural production.

73 **Term Limits**

74 We support:

- 75 • ~~Changing the county commissioners to~~
- 76 ~~staggered terms of office~~ Staggering county
- 77 commissioner terms.
- 78 • ~~With the voter approval of new term limits, we~~
- 79 ~~will continue to assess their effectiveness~~
- 80 Continuing to assess the effectiveness of the
- 81 new term limit structure.

82 **Special Elections**

83 Special elections accrue high costs for local
84 taxpayers.

85 Therefore, we support:

- 86 • Requiring that once an operating millage or
- 87 bond proposal is defeated by voters, it cannot be
- 88 up for another vote for at least one full year.
- 89 • Millage and bond proposal elections ~~should take~~
- 90 taking place during the November General
- 91 Election general election.

- 92 • School board elections being held during mid-
93 ~~term~~ midterm or general elections to avoid
94 unnecessary costs.

95 We oppose:

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

105 **Election Fraud**

106 We support:

- 107 • ~~That the clerk keep~~ Clerks maintaining an up to
108 ~~date and~~ accurate voter registration list.
109 • A passport, enhanced Michigan ID, or enhanced
110 driver's license, REAL ID or REAL Michigan
111 driver's license that proves citizenship for voter
112 registration and voting.

113 We oppose:

- 114 • Election and voter fraud.

#63 Firefighting

1 ~~The firefighter of today is~~ Firefighters are expected
2 to respond to situations that require training and
3 experience. State and federal regulations mandate
4 many hours of training ~~in preparation for a variety of~~
5 ~~response situations~~ to prepare firefighters for a variety
6 of situations and should fund these mandated training
7 requirements. Volunteers and paid on-call firefighters ~~in~~
8 ~~all departments must~~ make a substantial commitment of
9 personal time for ~~this~~ training. ~~The state and federal~~
10 ~~government should fund these mandated training~~
11 ~~requirements.~~

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

16 ~~Local units of government~~ governments have
17 begun charging farms a fee for emergency preparation
18 inspections. These inspections are completed by a local
19 fire department to comply with requirements authorized
20 by the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health
21 Administration (MIOSHA). We believe local ~~units of~~
22 ~~government~~ governments should consider the following:

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

32 Therefore, we support policy that prohibits local
33 units of government and fire authorities from charging
34 for emergency preparation inspections. Furthermore,
35 ~~the E-Tube~~ emergency tubes ~~shall~~ should suffice as an
36 appropriate level of information.

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

44 Firefighters are welcome to visit farms to be
45 prepared for emergency planning and firefighter safety,
46 but at their own expense.

#64 Health

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

3 We support:

- 4 • Requiring hospitals ~~in Michigan~~ to report ~~their~~
5 infection statistics.
6 • Legislation ~~to limit~~ limiting malpractice liability
7 awards, including capping malpractice
8 settlements and strengthening licensing
9 disciplinary action.
10 • ~~The integration of the health~~ Integrating delivery
11 systems' like community health, mental health
12 and substance abuse programs, ~~which~~ that
13 serve the same set of counties.
14 • Increased suicide prevention and mental ~~illness~~
15 health awareness campaigns with funding and
16 training for medical and emergency service
17 providers.
18 • Assertive community treatment programs, ~~such~~
19 as like Certified Community Behavioral Health
20 Clinics, to serve, help, prevent, diagnose and
21 treat those in need.

- 22 • A private and affordable health care plan that
- 23 allows for additional benefits at the consumer's
- 24 option.
- 25 • Methods to reduce ~~the cost of~~ prescription drugs
- 26 drug costs that will best benefit all individuals.
- 27 • Health education to encourage consumers of
- 28 health care to question physicians, hospital staff
- 29 and administration about procedures and costs
- 30 regarding their own health care.
- 31 • Itemized billing.
- 32 • Increased transparency for costs of all services.
- 33 • Insurance incentives for a healthy lifestyle.
- 34 • Health insurance premiums being 100 percent
- 35 tax deductible for all policy purchasers
- 36 immediately.
- 37 • Health Savings Accounts and Medical Savings
- 38 Accounts.
- 39 • Medicare and Medicaid payments that cover
- 40 expenses in full to hospitals. Rural hospitals
- 41 should not be discriminated against by using a
- 42 lower cost of living scale.
- 43 • An individual's right to select treatment options
- 44 which should be respected, and we encourage
- 45 the use of living wills and/or Durable Power of
- 46 Attorney for health care.
- 47 • Nurse practitioners, physician assistants,
- 48 midwives, and certified holistic healthcare
- 49 providers being able to receive reimbursement
- 50 for their services from insurance companies,
- 51 Medicaid and Medicare.
- 52 • Organ and blood donations.
- 53 • Programs that encourage medical professionals
- 54 to locate in rural areas, including the U.S.
- 55 Customs and Immigration Services programs
- 56 supporting placement of foreign-born doctors in
- 57 rural areas.
- 58 • The development of a method to return unused
- 59 prescription drugs to a licensed pharmacist for
- 60 disposal.
- 61 • Employers being exempted from mandatorily
- 62 providing health care coverage to any employee
- 63 who falls under the Migrant and Seasonal
- 64 Workers Protection Act.
- 65 • The expansion of home and community-based
- 66 long-term care.
- 67 • Local healthcare facilities be allowed to decide if
- 68 they should remain open during both normal and
- 69 emergency circumstances.
- 70 • All healthcare be considered essential in the
- 71 event of a crisis or pandemic.

- 72 We oppose:
- 73 • ~~Any state~~ State or federal ~~program~~ programs
 - 74 requiring employers to provide health insurance
 - 75 for employees and their dependents.
 - 76 • ~~Any tax~~ Taxes on an agricultural commodity
 - 77 ~~being used~~ to fund a health care program.

#65 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
- 6 training 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 Upholding state and federal law in courts and
- 12 not ~~apply any~~ applying foreign law to domestic
- 13 activities that could impair constitutional rights.
- 14 • Funding of rural and urban patrols to curb drug
- 15 and vandalism issues.
- 16 • Law enforcement agencies to develop youth
- 17 liaison 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 meeting with local law enforcement and ~~local~~
- 23 elected officials to discuss the importance of
- 24 balancing agriculture's concerns with the use of
- 25 fireworks.
- 26 • Legislation ~~that would define and create the~~
- 27 establishment of defining and creating fireworks-
- 28 free agriculture and livestock safety zones.
- 29 • Additional tools to aid in the identification and
- 30 prosecution of individuals involved in the theft of
- 31 copper wire and other recyclable materials from
- 32 farms.

33 We oppose:

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

39 Trespass

40 We encourage legislation ~~at local and state levels,~~
41 ~~which~~ to strengthens strengthen private property rights
42 on all land, to protect farmers and ~~all~~ landowners

43 against trespassers and vandals. Due to the increased
44 pressure on landowners from trespassers on private
45 property, we encourage implementation of the 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's
50 ~~Recreational Trespass~~ recreational trespass law.
- 51 • Property owners should not be held liable for
52 any 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 which
77 result in death or serious injury, penalties for the illegal
78 use of handheld electronic mobile devices should be
79 similar to those for drunk driving.

80 We support the development of a blood/breath test
81 for Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) so that impaired drivers
82 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, rather
87 than concurrent, sentences for the following offenses
88 causing death or serious injury while operating a motor
89 vehicle:

- 90 • Operating with any bodily presence of
91 drugs/alcohol that cause impairment.

- 92 • Operating while license suspended, revoked, or
93 denied.
94 • Operating while illegally using handheld
95 electronic mobile device.

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

#66 Local Government

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

9 We believe:

- 10 • ~~Townships or local units of government~~ Local
11 governments should not be permitted to enact
12 regulations affecting agriculture that are stricter
13 than existing state and federal regulations.
14 • ~~Local government~~ governments should look for
15 ~~increased~~ efficiencies through consolidation of
16 services and 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 • Agricultural representation on local boards and
22 commissions is vital.

23 We encourage:

- 24 • Standardized ~~residence~~ address signs to be
25 readily visible at the driveway entrance to
26 facilitate emergency response.
27 • Standardized signage be developed for facilities
28 with alternate power sources for the protection
29 of emergency personnel.
30 • Emergency response procedures to allow
31 cooperation between local governments.
32 • Local government officials to fully consider the
33 long-term fiscal implications and yearly
34 operating costs to any public acquisition.
35 • ~~Local units of governments making their audited~~
36 ~~financial statements available not more than one~~
37 ~~year after the close of the fiscal year to publish~~
38 (print or digital) audited financial statements
39 within one year of the previous fiscal year

40 closing, without requiring a Freedom of
41 Information Act request. ~~The financial~~
42 ~~statements should be made available through~~
43 ~~print or electronically.~~

- 44 • Local governments to take advantage of
45 electronic mediums when possible and practical.
46 The importance of continuing the conspicuous
47 posting of notices in several locations and, in
48 some areas non-electronic publishing, cannot be
49 discounted.
- 50 • Continued emphasis on state revenue-sharing
51 payments to local ~~units of governments~~.
- 52 • Farm Bureau members taking a more active role
53 in local government, especially land use
54 planning, zoning and development and updating
55 of master plans.
- 56 • Michigan State University Extension providing
57 more planning and zoning education, including
58 ~~as well as~~ development of master plans for
59 townships and counties. County Farm Bureaus
60 should disseminate this information to ~~their~~
61 members.
- 62 • County Farm Bureaus taking a more active role
63 in recruiting agricultural representatives on local
64 boards, township positions, and
65 commissions. Not all positions that impact
66 agriculture are elected, and farmer
67 representation is important.
- 68 • Promoting existing programs at statewide
69 Michigan Farm Bureau events, such as the
70 Academy for Political Leadership, for members
71 who are not only interested in seeking political
72 office but also interested in learning more about
73 government, its operations, and how members
74 can have an impact.

75 We oppose:

- 76 • Townships requiring engineered site plans and
77 building affidavits for agricultural buildings.

#67 Public Water and Sewer Infrastructure

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

11 systems are faced with limited financial resources, and
12 communities are deferring the investments needed to
13 maintain, rehabilitate, and/or replace older
14 infrastructure. Investments need to continue to be made
15 to provide a safe and reliable water supply.

16 ~~Local units of governments~~ are accountable for
17 maintenance and operation of the infrastructure
18 affecting their residents. Therefore, we support:

- 19 • Research to develop better materials for public
20 water lines, wastewater and storm water
21 systems.
- 22 • Development of better processes for the
23 operation and maintenance of the public
24 infrastructure.
- 25 • Long-range planning and comprehensive asset
26 management.
- 27 • An increase in federal safe drinking water funds,
28 USDA Rural Development water and sewer
29 funds, and Environmental Protection Agency
30 brownfield loan and grant funds.
- 31 • Prioritizing redevelopment and reuse in areas
32 with existing public infrastructure.
- 33 • A third-party, independent annual financial audit
34 of municipal water, sewer and storm water
35 systems being conducted and reported to the
36 ~~State~~ state of Michigan.
- 37 • Municipalities collecting adequate revenue from
38 system users to pay for needed infrastructure
39 repairs and maintenance.
- 40 • Encouraging municipalities to take advantage of
41 low interest loan plans.
- 42 • Implementation and enforcement of pollution
43 prevention control measures on municipalities,
44 especially phosphorus removal.

45 We oppose:

- 46 • A statewide assessment to pay for repair of
47 individual municipality's water, sewer, and storm
48 water infrastructure for any reason.

#69 Regulatory Reform and Reduction

1 We strongly support regulatory reform, including
2 the 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~~ Requiring
11 state agencies to conduct science-based
12 studies, standardized risk assessments,
13 cost/benefit analyses, and economic impact
14 statements of all proposed regulations.
- 15 • ~~During an emergency powers time period~~ When
16 emergency powers are enacted, any branch of
17 government should be subject to the Freedom of
18 Information Act ~~and the so~~ data related to the
19 emergency powers is made available ~~which~~
20 ~~pertains to the emergency powers.~~
- 21 • Checks and balances in emergency power
22 situations in any branch of government.
23 Emergency power should be valid for a
24 maximum of 21 days without legislative
25 oversight.
- 26 • Legislative oversight of state agencies during
27 states of emergency.
- 28 • Eliminating ~~the two times per year time change~~
29 ~~(daylight savings time)~~ in Michigan.
- 30 • A public registry of studies.
- 31 • Easing state regulations on rural community
32 banks to ensure their survival ~~of these vital~~
33 ~~institutions.~~

34 New regulations should expire after a defined
35 period unless a review finds substantial reasons to
36 continue the programs.

37 We oppose:

- 38 • Rules that are unwarranted or ~~retroactive,~~
39 retroactively ~~that~~ penalize practices ~~which were~~
40 ~~previously allowed.~~
- 41 • Requiring redundant studies.
- 42 • State and federal mandates that are not fully
43 funded.
- 44 • The use of the investment and business theory
45 known as environmental, social, and
46 governance standards being used by
47 government, the farm credit system, agriculture
48 industry, or public universities in making
49 determination of programming, loans, grants,
50 laws, regulations, or other assistance.

#70 Streamlining Michigan Government

1 While significant strides have been made in
2 reforming Michigan's government, additional reform is
3 needed to continue to addressing Michigan's economic
4 condition. We feel reform must ~~continue and~~ support
5 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 the
- 17 education system such as privatization of
- 18 services, consolidation of districts, and shared
- 19 services.
- 20 • Competition for higher education funds should
- 21 be minimized. Duplicative research efforts
- 22 performed by multiple state-funded universities
- 23 should be eliminated.
- 24 • State and local governments, including schools,
- 25 ~~to move~~ moving to a defined contribution
- 26 retirement system.

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

- 30 • Michigan's regulatory structure must continue ~~to~~
- 31 ~~foster~~ fostering economic growth. Policy makers
- 32 should ~~have a clear understanding of~~
- 33 understand the impact of regulations on
- 34 business before voting to support new or more
- 35 stringent regulations. Regulatory agencies
- 36 should maintain constitutional roles and
- 37 reasonable environmental protection without
- 38 creating undue regulatory burdens.
- 39 • ~~Michigan should continue to look for increased~~
- 40 Increased efficiencies in state and local
- 41 government such as prioritizing services,
- 42 reforming where possible, eliminating duplicative
- 43 services, and utilizing private partners.
- 44 • Increased efficiency in state government and
- 45 actual reform should be evaluated and
- 46 implemented prior to levying new taxes. If faced
- 47 with a new tax, any tax proposals must be
- 48 broad-based and not favoring/harming any one
- 49 segment of the economy, business type or
- 50 ~~particular~~ demographic.
- 51 • Full transparency of government financial
- 52 transactions at all levels.
- 53 • The concept of an Emergency Financial
- 54 ~~Manager Law~~ emergency financial manager law.

- 55 • Allowing for a virtual or hybrid ~~option~~ options to
56 be offered during for public meetings.

57 While agriculture is not the expert on all the issues
58 outlined in this policy, we will work with coalitions to
59 engage in broad discussions to advance policy
60 solutions that will create better efficiencies. We will hold
61 elected officials accountable for their ability to operate
62 as statespersons acting in the interest of citizens to
63 address these core issues.

#71 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 for paying the defendant
11 defendant's legal fees if the case is settled in the
12 defendant's favor. The court should be
13 responsible for collecting fees from the 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
25 than was intended should not be allowed to
26 bring suit.
- 27 • Court ordered mediation shall not be scheduled
28 before the defendant in civil litigation has the
29 opportunity to file a motion for summary
30 disposition. Court ordered mediation ~~shall~~
31 should take place only if both parties agree to
32 mediate. Any agreement reached in this
33 mediation shall have a waiting or cooling off
34 period of 48 to 72 hours to afford the defendant
35 the opportunity to change his mind after
36 weighing the consequences of this agreement or
37 contract.
- 38 • Employers who are providing proper training and
39 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and are

- 40 working in good faith to protect employee health,
41 should have liability protection.
- 42 • Exemption from personal property liability for
43 any professional service provider who enter farm
44 properties to perform duties at their own risk and
45 in good faith.

#74 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
8 voluntary.
 - 9 • Sound science and public research related to
10 ecosystem services credits addressing
11 Michigan’s diverse agricultural industries.
 - 12 • Standardization, transparency, and clarity
13 related to ecosystem services enrollment
14 contracts, pricing, and credit(s).
 - 15 • Using updated models to estimate emissions for
16 program standards.
 - 17 • ~~Full recognition of agriculture and forestry’s~~
18 ~~value to carbon sequestration.~~
 - 19 • Compensation and recognition for farmers for
20 farming agricultural practices that keep carbon in
21 the soil or in plant material.
 - 22 • Farmers receiving credit or compensation for
23 maintaining previous or existing practices.
 - 24 • The length of time that farmers are
25 compensated to be consistent with the length of
26 practice implementation.
 - 27 • Producers being able to utilize USDA cost-share
28 programs alongside carbon and ecosystem
29 services programs to better support the return
30 on investment of conservation practice adoption.
 - 31 • Michigan Farm Bureau staff, Michigan State
32 University (MSU) staff, and others in their
33 mission to support farmers as they navigate
34 carbon sequestration/ecosystem services credits
35 contracting.
 - 36 • ~~MFB, MSU, and farmers implementing a task~~
37 ~~force to help set guidelines for carbon credits, to~~
38 ~~be reviewed at the 2024 MFB state annual~~
39 ~~meeting.~~

#82 Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program

1 We support the Michigan Agriculture Environmental
2 Assurance Program (MAEAP) and its continuation and
3 improvement. We urge the State of Michigan and the
4 Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural
5 Development (MDARD) to work together with the
6 agriculture community to continue and improve the
7 MAEAP program to foster further voluntary sustainable
8 agricultural practices. Public Acts 1 and 2 of 2011
9 solidified the future of MAEAP. This program offers
10 MAEAP-verified farms protection from civil fines, a
11 presumption of meeting obligations for watershed
12 pollutant loading determinations, and recognition that
13 discharges from farm fields caused by rainfall are
14 nonpoint source pollution. We urge all farm operators
15 and landowners managing forests, wetlands and habitat
16 to participate in the MAEAP program and complete as
17 many recommendations as possible to help ensure the
18 quality of our air, water and soil is preserved.

19 We applaud Michigan farmers for achieving ~~6,658~~
20 7,075 verifications as of October 1, ~~2023~~ 2024.

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

28 We support:

- 29 • Continued efforts for MAEAP to remain a
30 voluntary, confidential, statewide program.
- 31 • MAEAP technicians being housed locally, not
32 employed directly by MDARD, with preference
33 for technicians being housed at local
34 Conservation Districts.
- 35 • Legislation and marketing efforts that would
36 communicate to the general public that MAEAP-
37 verified farms are held to the highest standard of
38 environmental stewardship.
- 39 • MDARD developing an outstanding and
40 recognizable “Pure Michigan”-style labeling
41 program (such as “Pure Michigan-Verified
42 Farm”) to add value to products of MAEAP
43 verified farms and allow the MAEAP logo to be
44 used at point of sale.
- 45 • The MAEAP program making information
46 available about Michigan’s Water Pollution
47 Control Tax Exemption Form which exempts
48 pollution control structures from property tax
49 assessments.

- 50 • MFB working with MAEAP partners to develop
51 educational and promotional materials for farm
52 neighbors and the general public regarding the
53 benefits of MAEAP.
- 54 • All producers using MAEAP verification as the
55 basis for projecting a positive farm image to the
56 public.
- 57 • MFB continuing to pursue greater incentives for
58 MAEAP participation, such as additional
59 protections from frivolous complaints.
- 60 • The Michigan Groundwater and Freshwater
61 Protection Act. This act funds groundwater and
62 surface water programming through providing
63 grants to fund local technicians. These
64 technicians work with farmers to voluntarily
65 adopt stewardship practices, which reduce
66 nonpoint source pollution from agricultural
67 sources. We believe funding of these
68 technicians needs to be a top priority.
- 69 • Participation in MAEAP, including information
70 generated by assessment programs, remaining
71 confidential. Aggregate data that would
72 demonstrate effectiveness of the overall
73 program could be shared.
- 74 • A review of the MAEAP program, seeking new
75 and/or alternative ways of meeting standards
76 without compromising the basis of MAEAP
77 verification.
- 78 • Farm Bureau members participating in regional
79 water stewardship teams.
- 80 • Agriculture being the primary focus of MAEAP
81 assistance in recognition of agriculture's
82 contribution to the dedicated fund.
- 83 • The changes made to strengthen MAEAP and
84 its funding through PA 118 of 2015. Program
85 funds come from Michigan's General Fund and
86 the Freshwater Protection Fund.
- 87 • The changes made to the Freshwater Protection
88 Fund which require all users of industrial
89 fertilizer (e.g., farmers, homeowners, golf
90 courses) pay a fee into the fund.
- 91 • An annual review of the Freshwater Protection
92 Fund finances, with the report being made
93 available to contributors.
- 94 • Freshwater Protection Fund collection at the
95 wholesale level, creating a voluntary contribution
96 option, and exploring other fee collection
97 mechanisms.
- 98 • Recognition of the Michigan law that offers
99 MAEAP-verified farms statutory protection in

100 watersheds with Total Maximum Daily Loads
101 (TMDL). This protection should apply to the
102 applicable systems farms are verified in that
103 address the pollutants listed in that watershed's
104 TMDL by acknowledging the farm meets the
105 obligations for watershed pollutant loading
106 determinations. Verification in all systems
107 applicable to the farm should not be required in
108 order to receive statutory protection.

- 109 • Farmers who are MAEAP-verified being
110 considered in compliance with Environmental
111 Protection Agency regulations.

#83 Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy

1 Regulatory Authority and Responsibility

2 To protect the environment, ensure public safety,
3 and enhance production agriculture, we challenge state
4 and federal agencies to work together to produce more
5 user-friendly programs that provide clear direction and
6 consistent regulatory authority. Oversight should focus
7 on solving problems and not simply on penalizing the
8 regulated community. We support the current statute in
9 Part 31 of the Natural Resources and Environmental
10 Protection Act (NREPA) that prohibits the Michigan
11 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
12 (MDEGLE) from promulgating (putting into effect) rules
13 under this part. If MDEGLE is granted rulemaking
14 authority, we support requiring enhanced legislative
15 oversight of the rulemaking process to minimize
16 economic impacts to the regulated community.

17 Farmers who violate state environmental law are
18 under the jurisdiction of MDEGLE. While the vast
19 majority of farms put forth a considerable effort and are
20 environmentally safe, we recognize the potential for
21 environmental problems.

22 Environmental Enforcement and Standards

23 We encourage Michigan Farm Bureau to work with
24 state and federal agencies, land grant universities and
25 stakeholder groups to develop standards indicating
26 agriculture's positive impact on the environment. We
27 believe environmental credit standards should be
28 developed and applied against any new regulations to
29 offset the regulatory burden on producers. State
30 regulations and standards enforced by MDEGLE should
31 not be more restrictive than federal standards.

32 In addition to providing pollution prevention
33 programs for all farms, the Michigan Department of
34 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) should
35 have an increased role in providing regulatory certainty
36 to Michigan agriculture.

37 We support:

- 38 • Timely, effective and consistent enforcement of
- 39 environmental laws and issuance of permits.
- 40 • Standards for dam management, maintenance,
- 41 and purchases in cooperation with federal
- 42 agencies.
- 43 • Timely enforcement of water quality standards
- 44 using credible data. We urge MFB to pursue
- 45 legislation on credible data and how it may be
- 46 used to better invoke sound science in
- 47 regulation of water quality, air quality and water
- 48 quantity.
- 49 • Applying sound science and performing
- 50 economic impact analysis to MDEGLE rules and
- 51 standards prior to promulgation.
- 52 • Maximum use of Natural Resources
- 53 Conservation Service standards within MDEGLE
- 54 regulations.
- 55 • Appropriate timelines for producer
- 56 implementation of regulations.
- 57 • MDARD intervention on behalf of farmers in
- 58 legal actions if the farmer has worked with state
- 59 agencies to address pollution challenges.
- 60 • Development of a third-party arbitration process
- 61 for disputes between MDEGLE and a farmer.
- 62 • MDEGLE being responsible to pay legal fees
- 63 incurred by the respondent from a wrongful
- 64 enforcement action if the enforcement action is
- 65 settled, a consent agreement is reached, or the
- 66 action is decided in the respondent's favor.
- 67 • PA 268 of 2018 creating the MDEGLE Appeals
- 68 Board.
- 69 • Using funds derived from enforcement penalties
- 70 to support pollution prevention in agriculture.
- 71 • Authorizing permits at the local level in
- 72 accordance with state and federal rules to
- 73 provide for more timely decisions.
- 74 • Allowing water quality testing in lieu of existing
- 75 well setback standards to satisfy the siting
- 76 requirement.
- 77 • A farm's ability to move portable toilets within
- 78 and 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
87 nutrient requirements and at agronomic rates.
- 88 • The continuation of manure application to frozen
89 or snow-covered ground in accordance with the
90 Manure Management and Utilization Generally
91 Accepted Agricultural and Management
92 Practices (GAAMPs). We will vigorously oppose
93 any attempt to eliminate the practice.
 - 94 • The continued practice of broadcasting and
95 injecting nutrients, including manure, in
96 accordance with best practices identified in the
97 Nutrient Utilization GAAMP.
 - 98 • Allowing the application of animal nutrients to
99 non-frozen, non-snow-covered ground any time
100 during the year, regardless of type or size of
101 farm operation.
 - 102 • Updating fertilizer and manure nutrient utilization
103 guidelines.
 - 104 • MDEGLE accepting third-party determinations
105 that an existing manure storage structure is
106 functioning properly for regulatory purposes.
 - 107 • Regulatory recognition of the influence of
108 extreme weather (e.g., rainfall, snow melt) on
109 farming practices.
 - 110 • Flexibility for unlimited on-farm fuel, chemical
111 and fertilizer storage with consistent and
112 adequate containment standards.
 - 113 • Consistency of fuel, chemical and fertilizer
114 containment structure regulations across
115 governmental agencies.

116 **Processing Wastewater and Groundwater** 117 **Regulation**

118 We support:

- 119 • MFB proactively working with MDEGLE to seek
120 solutions that support changes to the regulatory
121 requirement that allow ag processors to land
122 apply wastewater without permitting under a
123 specifically defined set of circumstances.
- 124 • MDARD working with MDEGLE to implement a
125 threshold below which no Groundwater
126 Discharge permit or testing is required for
127 agricultural processing discharge.
- 128 • MDARD assisting MDEGLE to determine
129 appropriate treatment of all types of processing
130 wastewater (breweries, distilleries, fruit and
131 vegetable producers, sugar processing, etc.)
132 that generate high-strength wastewater that has
133 nutrients useful for land application.
- 134 • MFB continuing to work with MDEGLE on
135 development of a general permit specific to

- 136 slaughterhouses that permits land application of
137 process wastewater without advance treatment.
- 138 • ~~MDEGLE benchmarking groundwater discharge~~
139 ~~permit standards with those of neighboring~~
140 ~~states for land application of process~~
141 ~~wastewater.~~
 - 142 • Allowing septic haulers licensed under Part 117
143 of NREPA to also haul food processing
144 wastewater and not requiring them to be
145 licensed as industrial haulers under NREPA Part
146 121.

147 **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System**
148 **(NPDES)**

149 We support:

- 150 • Legislative or administrative changes to require
151 a formal committee of appropriate stakeholders
152 to be involved in all permit developments and
153 rewrites so that input is balanced. All NPDES
154 writing or rewrite committees should be chaired
155 by an unbiased third-party individual.
- 156 • An evaluation of the NPDES permitting process
157 in Michigan with changes to allow long-term
158 certainty for the ag industry and which eliminate
159 the change that takes place for all industries
160 every time a new administration is elected in our
161 state. We support a study committee by MFB to
162 establish this evaluation and make
163 recommendations.
- 164 • Amending state laws to more clearly define
165 MDEGLE's regulatory authority under NPDES
166 permits and where they have no authority,
167 especially animal health which falls under the
168 authority of the Animal Industry Act and wildlife,
169 which falls under the authority of the state
170 veterinarian or the Michigan Department of
171 Natural Resources.
- 172 • Amending or repealing Part 17 of NREPA to
173 prevent predatory litigation by special interests
174 to penalize farmers operating under legitimate
175 permits issued by MDEGLE.
- 176 • Timely issuance of NPDES permits, in
177 accordance with state and federal rules.
- 178 • MFB continuing efforts to eliminate state
179 regulation of animal agriculture more restrictive
180 than federal requirements, including lowering
181 permitting thresholds.
- 182 • Reduced permit paperwork requirements and an
183 increased focus on performance with minimized
184 costs to permitted farms.

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- Increasing incentives for permitted farms to become Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program verified such as limiting annual reporting requirements.
 - Application of permit standards in force at the time of permit application.
 - An appropriate phase-in period for any change in permit requirements.
 - Implementation of permit requirements derived with scientifically verifiable standards as provided in administrative rules.
 - MDEGLE adopting Environmental Protection Agency aquaculture effluent guidelines and promoting feed-based Best Management Practices discharge standards.
 - Development of a General Permit for aquaculture for up to 200,000 pounds of production.

203 We oppose:

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- Classification of manure, sand, accidental commodity spillage, and ag processing by-products as hazardous waste.
 - Taxation and/or fees assessed on the nutrient content of manure.
 - Public access to agricultural information on the MiEnviro Portal online permitting database.
 - Legislation inhibiting the viability of agriculture.
 - Decisions made in response to emotion instead of science, law and common sense.
 - Arbitrary moratoriums affecting the growth of animal agriculture, including limits on animal expansion and storage structure size.
 - State agencies labeling or identifying farm operations, such as CAFO, GMO, or other labels, in any form of communication, no matter the size of operation or requirement of permits.
 - Well setback distances from agriculture practices greater than 75 feet, as listed in the Grade A Dairy Law.

224 **Response to Environmental Scrutiny**

225 Public scrutiny of agriculture and increased

226 regulation continues to challenge farmers to improve

227 farm management and protect the environment. We

228 urge all members to voluntarily implement pollution

229 prevention practices. The agricultural community

230 realizes the need to protect the environment; however,

231 when regulations limit agricultural viability, we believe it

232 is time to take a more aggressive approach to protect

233 our industry. Michigan producers and MFB should

234 aggressively work to counter propaganda that depicts

235 production agriculture in Michigan as abusers of the
236 environment.

237 The harassment of farmers adhering to the State's
238 pollution prevention program for agriculture shall not be
239 tolerated. We support requiring MDEGLE to notify local
240 law enforcement and authorities before any actions are
241 taken against farms. Individuals who lodge complaints
242 with MDEGLE against farms must be required to
243 provide their name for public record. If an individual
244 makes more than three unverified complaints within
245 three years, that individual must pay for the complaint
246 investigation.

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

30 We support:

Fertilizer and Nutrient Management

- 32 • All fertilizer retailers becoming certified in the 4R
33 (Right fertilizer source, Right rate, Right time,
34 Right place) Nutrient Stewardship Program
35 and/or similar fertilizer management efforts.

- 36 • Michigan Farm Bureau coordinating with
- 37 neighboring states and Canada where a
- 38 watershed is shared to reduce nutrient loading
- 39 issues.
- 40 • University, state and federal programs promptly
- 41 updating guidelines when nutrient research is
- 42 completed, so farmers have time to implement
- 43 them.
- 44 • Additional research on dissolved phosphorus.
- 45 • Continued education on appropriate phosphorus
- 46 and other nutrient use.
- 47 • Biosolid applications being consistent with the
- 48 guidelines in the Michigan Water Environment
- 49 Association's Land Application of Biosolids in
- 50 Michigan Management Recommendations.
- 51 • The current regulated use of biosolids as a
- 52 source of nutrients on farmland as allowed in the
- 53 Right to Farm Act.
- 54 • Research in Michigan to determine the safe
- 55 levels of emerging contaminants (including per
- 56 and polyfluoroalkyl substances, PFAS) in
- 57 biosolids that will be applied to land used for
- 58 crop production.
- 59 • Michigan developing standards to keep biosolids
- 60 a feasible crop production nutrient source,
- 61 without the risk of soil contamination by
- 62 emerging contaminants (including PFAS) from
- 63 any applied biosolid.

64 **Conservation and Pollution Prevention Programs**

- 65 • The farm bill providing opportunities for farmers
- 66 to address conservation programs on farms.
- 67 • The continued refining of conservation program
- 68 delivery to ensure the process is transparent,
- 69 consistent and simple to participating farmers.
- 70 We appreciate newly available technical and
- 71 financial assistance to address on-farm above-
- 72 ground fuel tanks and liquid fertilizer storage.
- 73 • Developing nutrient management plans for all
- 74 farms.
- 75 • Continuing the cost-share provided to producers
- 76 for conservation practices.
- 77 • A state-funded cover crop and filter strip cost-
- 78 share program.
- 79 • The Clean Sweep Program with MDARD
- 80 accepting responsibility for future liability for
- 81 chemicals collected.
- 82 • Legislation clarifying forest management
- 83 practices are not point sources of pollution.

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- Developing baseline environmental standards for agriculture in line with current production standards and methods.
 - Coordinated efforts to expedite soil stabilization permits.
 - Scientific, site-specific testing protocols and/or landowner consent prior to the state and federal agencies determining an area is contaminated, with testing costs, loss of land value, and indemnification being the responsibility of the state and/or federal government if the contamination is not the fault of the landowner.
 - The acting agency being held liable for current and future losses and expenses; including but not limited to, loss of value of commodities, loss of land, loss of business, etc. and for complete indemnification of everything a farm loses when the agency decides a farm's soil, water, crops, or livestock is contaminated, when the contamination is not the landowner's fault.
 - Funding for research and collaboration between agencies, universities, and the private sector to evaluate the health risks and strategies for mitigating risks associated with chemical contaminants in water and food.
 - Using sound science to determine the level of impact of emerging contaminant (including PFAS) issues. Before any new regulations are developed the financial impact and liability to the affected community must be determined.
 - MDARD, working in cooperation with MDEGLE and local governments, overseeing the disposal of moderately contaminated watershed sediments on farm lands containing greater levels of the identified contaminants.
 - Legislation providing liability protection to farmers who follow the label directions, pertinent regulations, and Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs) for fertilizers and pesticides.
 - Legislation providing financial support to farms that have been determined by the state to be contaminated with PFAS and other emerging contaminants.
 - MFB being involved in fiscally responsible strategies to fund voluntary conservation practices.
 - The existing Soil and Sedimentation Control Act exemption for plowing, tilling and other agricultural and land improvement activities.

- 134 • Eliminating the acreage cap for Michigan's
135 Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

136 **Water Quality and Watershed Management**

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

161 We oppose:

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

#85 Oil, Gas, and Mineral Rights

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

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

11 We believe government agencies, Farm Credit
12 Services, local and state recording offices, and other
13 state and federal chartered financial institutions should
14 not be allowed to sever oil, gas, and mineral rights from
15 surface rights when they resell land acquired through
16 any land transfer. Oil, gas, and mineral rights that have
17 been severed at foreclosure should be returned or sold
18 to the surface property owner at fair market value.

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

26 We support:

- 27 • The extraction of oil, gas, ~~potash~~ and other
28 minerals from both state-owned and private
29 property in Michigan.
- 30 • A streamlined and incentivized process for
31 permitting of fertilizer manufacturing.
- 32 • The Weights and Measures Division of the
33 Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural
34 Development (MDARD) studying the feasibility
35 of regulating the oil, gas, and mineral industries
36 for the accuracy of reported volumes of oil, gas,
37 and minerals extracted from private property.
38 MDARD needs to become involved in the
39 certification of all metering and measuring.
- 40 • Legislation requiring oil, gas, and mineral rights
41 lessees to notify the landowner and royalty
42 owner by certified mail of their intent to explore
43 for, or develop, oil, gas, and minerals prior to
44 beginning any operations on leased land and
45 that proof of the notification be submitted prior to
46 granting any permit.
- 47 • Legislation requiring an escrow account or bond
48 be filed before commencing operations providing
49 the opportunity for landowners to appeal within
50 10 days of its proposed release to prevent

- 51 surface waste. The escrow account or bond
52 should be reviewed annually and adjusted
53 accordingly, with a post-closure monitoring
54 period of 40 years.
- 55 • The continued use of hydraulic fracturing with
56 the appropriate scientifically verified
57 environmental 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
71 is 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
75 well's 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.

#88 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 in
26 the first quarter of each year to allow additional
27 time for education about the program.
- 28 • Conservation program eligibility being
29 determined by total environmental benefit rather
30 than location within the watershed.
- 31 • All NRCS offices accepting applications for
32 annual programs after closing dates, making
33 them eligible for upcoming sign-up cycles.
- 34 • Continuing voluntary programs like the Wetlands
35 Reserve Easements and the Conservation
36 Reserve Enhancement Program to provide
37 farmers compensation in exchange for
38 conservation easements.
- 39 • The Michigan NRCS Technical Committee
40 evaluating Michigan Agriculture Environmental
41 Assurance Program verification eligibility for
42 Conservation Stewardship Program.

43 **Practice Standards**

- 44 • Allowing more flexible standards for USDA
45 conservation practices.
- 46 • Filter strip plant variety recommendations
47 including pollinator supportive plants.
- 48 • The Farm Service Agency (FSA) enrolling more
49 acres in the Conservation Reserve Program

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

81 **USDA Offices and Staffing**

- 82 • Staffing county offices with professional
83 personnel who have experience in
84 administrative duties, agricultural production,
85 and communication skills, with preference given
86 to local candidates.
- 87 • Immediate evaluation of current USDA staffing,
88 compensation, and training at the county,
89 regional, and state levels, including county
90 committees, to assist in attaining an adequate,
91 streamlined, and talented staff that meets the
92 programmatic needs of USDA applicants and
93 customers.
- 94 • USDA ensuring all staff are properly trained and
95 certified to do all facets of their job within one
96 year of hire.
- 97 • Michigan NRCS continuing the practice of co-
98 locating conservation districts in their offices.

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- Moving or relocating NRCS staff to areas of greater need or where their skills are better matched, while ensuring job applicants within the state have a fair and equal opportunity to apply for positions for which they qualify.
 - ~~NRCS USDA filling vacant positions in a timely manner to facilitate implementation of programs and practices.~~
 - Modifying the system for county office classifications to attract staff with greater talent and experience.
 - Michigan NRCS creating regional education specialists to present NRCS programs at industry meetings of farmers and woodland owners across the state.
 - Creating county farmer oversight committees for local NRCS offices.
 - Increasing farmer representation on the State Technical Committee.

#89 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 and
4 protected for future generations and the future of
5 Michigan agriculture. Food and fiber production is in the
6 public interest, is a reasonable use of water, and
7 provides economic and ecological benefits to the Great
8 Lakes Basin.

Michigan Water Law and Policy

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

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- No fees may EVER be charged for agricultural water use.
 - Existing documented surface and groundwater uses and sites must be grandfathered.
 - Public hearings must take place in the watershed areas before consideration of any reclassification.
 - All reclassification notices should be given at a minimum of 180 days before hearings.
 - Water use permits for withdrawals supplying a common distribution system of less than two million gallons per day in any 90-day consecutive period for agriculture must be

30 handled by the Michigan Department of
31 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD).
32 • Municipalities or other governments with
33 jurisdiction over artificial impoundments, such as
34 ponds and lakes, should be allowed to reduce
35 water levels to remove accumulated sediments.

36 We support:

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

77 **Water Withdrawal Assessment**

78 Michigan has implemented an online science-
79 based water withdrawal assessment tool (WWAT). As

80 there are significant differences between Michigan
81 regions regarding water availability and use, we
82 recognize a “one size fits all” solution may not be the
83 best answer. The process has experienced
84 complications and technical difficulties. According to the
85 Michigan Geological Survey, the current data used in
86 the WWAT is insufficient to adequately map and assess
87 Michigan’s groundwater resources and consider
88 applications for groundwater withdrawal. Although the
89 Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and
90 Energy (MDEGLE) reported the WWAT provides
91 automatic authorization for withdrawals in nearly 70
92 percent of all applications statewide, Michigan Farm
93 Bureau believes continued improvement of the WWAT
94 is needed, including but not limited to the following:

- 95 • Continued MFB leadership in implementing the
96 state’s water withdrawal assessment law in
97 accordance with MFB policy.
- 98 • Additional data collection and model
99 enhancement with the latest scientific data so
100 streamflow depletion predictions agree with
101 actual results of water withdrawals.
- 102 • Continued refinement of the WWAT accounting
103 for regional variability and privately collected
104 data.
- 105 • Requiring MDEGLE through legislation or legal
106 action to update the WWAT and the site-specific
107 review process based upon current research
108 data and enhanced models.
- 109 • University research to verify accuracy of the
110 WWAT.
- 111 • An exemption from the WWAT for withdrawals
112 where the potential for adverse resource impact
113 is negligible based on the collection and analysis
114 of field data using industry standards,
115 methodology and practices.
- 116 • Privately researched data collected in
117 accordance with standard research protocols
118 being included into the WWAT and accepted by
119 the MDEGLE, as well as MDARD.
- 120 • MDARD and MDEGLE, with input of
121 stakeholders, developing and using a
122 standardized template for site specific reviews of
123 high-capacity agricultural water withdrawals.
- 124 • Completing the comprehensive water use study
125 in Southwest Michigan to collect the data
126 necessary to make appropriate changes within
127 the WWAT.
- 128 • The changes made by PA 209 of 2018 to
129 provide an optional alternate process for site

130 specific reviews of high-capacity water
131 withdrawals. This law is based on updated
132 scientific modeling and provides a more
133 accurate reflection of the regional variability of
134 water use impacts. Additionally, the law clarifies
135 MDEGLE's role and timeframes for review and
136 approval of withdrawal applications under the
137 new process. We encourage MFB to oversee
138 the implementation of the law and develop
139 educational information about the process for
140 members.

141 **Aquifer Conflicts**

142 We support the Aquifer Conflict and Dispute
143 Resolution law and further support the following
144 changes to the process:

- 145 • MDARD shall certify well drillers to verify
146 complaints by onsite inspection. These
147 contracted well drillers will be ineligible to
148 replace, repair or modify any well they are sent
149 to inspect.
- 150 • The owner of a high-capacity well should not be
151 assumed at fault until proven otherwise.
- 152 • The law should establish a statute of limitations
153 and release from future claims.

154 **Research and Education**

155 We support:

- 156 • Research enhancing the understanding of water
157 resources, validating the ecological benefits of
158 agriculture's role in the water cycle, and leading
159 to increased agricultural water use efficiency.
- 160 • MFB developing partnerships to increase
161 education and promoting the value of
162 agricultural water use to the public.
- 163 • MFB and partners such as conservation districts
164 facilitating the formation of farmer collectives to
165 gather and share data and develop regional
166 models to assess and predict water use impacts.
- 167 • Increasing education, financial and technical
168 assistance for farmers who participate in
169 voluntary, incentive-driven water use
170 conservation programs.
- 171 • The voluntary use of monitoring wells.
- 172 • Seeking new and expanded opportunities to
173 reclaim and recycle water.
- 174 • Water use record keeping on farms to increase
175 water use efficiencies, protect producer rights to
176 water access and validate agricultural water use
177 as a high priority.
- 178 • Working with well drillers to ensure they have
179 sufficient understanding of geological and

180 hydrologic processes to provide the best
181 possible knowledge and service to clients and
182 the most accurate and useful reporting of data to
183 the State, including groundwater location and
184 availability, and soil and geological formations.
185 We encourage landowners voluntarily submitting
186 geological samples to the Michigan Geological
187 Survey and developing a trust fund to protect
188 participants against liability for negative sample
189 analysis findings.

190 • Investigating funding sources for geological
191 mapping.

192 • The findings of the Southwest Michigan Water
193 Resource Council, which was charged with
194 studying water resources in the region.

195 We oppose:

196 • Any water allocation system preempting surface
197 water riparian doctrine or groundwater rights.

198 • Applying a “public trust doctrine” to groundwater.

199 • Diverting water in its natural state from the Great
200 Lakes Basin.

201 • The definition of consumptive use as applied to
202 agriculture.

203 • Legislative or regulatory efforts resulting from
204 federal, regional, state and/or local initiatives
205 that adversely impact agriculture.

206 • The State of Michigan removing dams located
207 on drains and waterways recharging aquifers of
208 the state and not requiring owners of existing
209 dams to maintain them.

210 • Attempts to limit efficient agricultural water use.

211 • Water use prioritization.

212 • Filing fees for agricultural water use reporting.

213 • Using collected agricultural water use data for
214 regulatory purposes or to advance agendas in
215 opposition to efficient agricultural water use.

216 • Well code changes placing economic or
217 regulatory burdens on landowners in the
218 absence of sound science.

219 • Any attempt to turn water into a commodity.

220 • The Environmental Protection Agency
221 designating interstate aquifers as “sole source
222 aquifers.”

223 • Fraudulent use of the WWAT to register a water
224 withdrawal.

#90 Waters of the United States

1 To limit the scope of the Environmental Protection
2 Agency’s (EPA) oversight, we encourage reaffirmation
3 and support of Justice Scalia’s 2006 U.S. Supreme

4 ~~Court definition of “Waters of the United States” in~~
5 ~~Rapanos v. United States, 547 U.S. 715: “relatively~~
6 ~~permanent, standing or continuously flowing bodies of~~
7 ~~water...not...channels through which water flows~~
8 ~~intermittently or ephemerally, or channels that~~
9 ~~periodically provide drainage for rainfall.”~~ support the
10 U.S. Supreme Court’s definition of “Waters of the United
11 States” in Sackett v. Environmental Protection Agency,
12 598 U.S. 651 (2023), which states: “The [Clean Water
13 Act’s] CWA’s use of ‘waters’ in §1362(7) refers only to
14 ‘geographic[al] features that are described in ordinary
15 parlance as ‘streams, oceans, rivers, and lakes’ and to
16 adjacent wetlands that are ‘indistinguishable’ from those
17 bodies of water due to continuous surface connection.”

18 We oppose changing the wording, meaning or
19 definition of navigable waters in the ~~Clean Water Act~~
20 (CWA), the removal of the term "navigable waters" from
21 the CWA, and any attempt to broaden the reach of the
22 CWA. Federal CWA jurisdiction and the EPA’s power
23 should be limited to navigable streams and flowing
24 waterways with continuous flow 365 days a year.

25 The EPA has already tried to expand its oversight
26 to include “temporary” waterways, which include areas
27 as small as wet spots in fields and puddles in
28 driveways. Under no circumstance should temporary
29 waterways or any agricultural drain be considered a
30 water of the United States. We urge the EPA to include
31 greater farmer input in the development of future rules.

32 We support the county drain/water resources
33 commissioner’s ability to make decisions and
34 determinations about the characteristics of water under
35 their jurisdiction to assist state or federal agencies in
36 jurisdictional determinations.

#94 Taxation

1 Property Tax/Assessing

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

5 We support:

- 6 • Lowering or eliminating agricultural property
7 taxes in Michigan.
- 8 • Development of legislation allowing landowners
9 to voluntarily enroll in a program that reduces
10 assessments on farm buildings by up to 100
11 percent of their current taxable value and
12 assesses farmland, including managed
13 woodlots/forestland, with a goal of reaching a
14 property tax rate of \$5-7 per acre. Voluntary
15 enrollment in the program, open to every farmer,
16 would be in exchange for temporary/long-term

- 17 preservation of farmland for a contract period of
18 approximately 20 years or more with a recapture
19 penalty for early withdrawal or when property
20 changes out of agricultural use.
- 21 • Legislation requiring assessments on farm
22 structures to align with the current use of the
23 structure.
 - 24 • All parcels containing ag worker housing,
25 licensed by the Michigan Department of
26 Agriculture and Rural Development, be eligible
27 for the agricultural 18 mill exemption.
 - 28 • PA 162 of 2013 which states sales of agricultural
29 land without a qualified agricultural affidavit on
30 file will not be used in the sales studies for
31 agricultural land.
 - 32 • Development of taxation methods to more fairly
33 distribute municipal service costs.
 - 34 • Legislation to put an end to the "dark store"
35 assessing theory, ensuring equitable, fair
36 determinations on property tax appeal cases
37 before the Michigan Tax Tribunal.
 - 38 • All agricultural single purpose structures, such
39 as greenhouses, grain bins and silos, be
40 assessed using a realistic accelerated
41 depreciation schedule considering the current
42 practical use of the structure.
 - 43 • A clarification that all temporary agricultural
44 structures, which are moveable and not
45 permanently attached or anchored to the
46 ground, be exempt from sales and use taxes as
47 referenced in Revenue Administrative Bulletin
48 2002-15 of June 2002.
 - 49 • The Qualified Forest Property program which
50 exempts the pop-up tax and provides a 16 mill
51 exemption, as long as the new owner agrees to
52 keep up the qualified forest land agreement.
 - 53 • A significantly reduced tax designation or tax
54 exempt status for land which is designated for
55 mandatory restricted use such as wetlands, filter
56 strips, sand dunes, natural or scenic rivers, or
57 other restrictions on private property.
 - 58 • The retention of the right of local governing units
59 to assess property for taxation purposes.
 - 60 • The qualified agricultural exemption shall remain
61 in effect if the Governor or USDA issues a
62 disaster declaration for the county.
 - 63 • The continued use of tax abatements and
64 Renaissance Zones to encourage the
65 development and expansion of agricultural

- 66 facilities to enhance value-added opportunities
67 for agriculture.
- 68 • Legislation that would allow a farm to include all
69 parcels of the farming operation together when
70 determining the ag classification. If the total farm
71 would qualify for PA 116, then all parcels should
72 maintain their ag classification. Non-contiguous
73 parcels are being reclassified to residential
74 unless 51 percent of the parcel is farmed.
75 Property in Northwest Michigan, and possibly in
76 other parts of the state, cannot be farmed at 51
77 percent because of the topography.
 - 78 • Exempting PA 116 land from all special
79 assessments excluding agricultural drainage.
 - 80 • Local units of government classifying equine
81 therapy facilities, therapeutic riding facilities,
82 equine rehabilitation facilities, and other similar
83 equine-related businesses utilizing horses as the
84 major component of their business as agriculture
85 for property tax purposes.
 - 86 • The continuation of Proposal A in its current
87 form, as it pertains to agriculture.
 - 88 • The change to the summer tax collection which
89 provided for a lifetime deferment of summer tax
90 for qualified agricultural land if the owner files a
91 federal Schedule “F” Income Tax Form or
92 comparable farm 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 • All assessors should follow established
100 procedures and change the classification from
101 agricultural to industrial and use the appropriate
102 tax tables when considering property that
103 changed from agriculture to commercial solar
104 electric production.
 - 105 • The concept of a special assessment deferral
106 program for landowners and encourage
107 members to be involved in the levying of
108 assessments and infrastructure planning in their
109 community.

110 We oppose:

- 111 • Assessing occupied business structures as
112 though they were vacant.
- 113 • The reduction of taxes levied on state-owned
114 land below current levels.

- 115 • The reclassification of agriculture and forest land
116 to a residential classification when no residential
117 structure exists.

118 **Income Tax/Incentives**

119 We support:

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

149 We oppose:

- 150 • Reinstatement of the Michigan estate tax (often
151 referred to as the death tax).
- 152 • Any effort to tax farmer-owned cooperatives on
153 disbursements or credits that are taxable in the
154 hands of patrons.

155 **County/State Taxes**

156 We support:

- 157 • PA 283 of 1909 (MCL section 224.20) be revised
158 to indicate that all new monies generated by
159 county boards of commissioners must be placed
160 on the ballot in a millage election and levied only
161 after receiving the approval of the majority of the
162 voters.

- 163 • The sale of state land to meet its obligations,
164 and return the land to private ownership and the
165 property tax roll.

166 **Sales and Use Tax**

167 We support:

- 168 • The agriculture exemption from state sales and
169 use tax based upon the use of the product.
170 • A continuation of the agriculture sales tax
171 exemption for the equine industry.
172 • Supporters of the FAIR Tax providing education
173 and analyzing the proposal’s impacts and
174 benefits on agriculture.

175 We oppose:

- 176 • Charging state sales tax on the federal
177 manufacturers excise tax.
178 • Sales tax levied on new vehicles before cash
179 back, manufacturer incentives and rebates.
180 • Sales tax levied on the sale of used vehicles.
181 • Any plan which places an undue or unrealistic
182 tax or fee which affects agriculture, such as a
183 tax on gross receipts, a tax on personal property
184 or a tax on assets.
185 • Any tax on food or food additives including so
186 called “sin taxes” on products like processed
187 sugar.

#96 Farm and Commercial Vehicles

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

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

9 **Vehicle Regulations**

10 We support:

- 11 • The development of State of Michigan covered
12 farm vehicle designation to cover rented and
13 commercially plated vehicles for use in
14 agriculture.
15 • Uniformity of enforcement of trucking regulations
16 by all enforcing agencies.
17 • MFB continuing to provide information to
18 members regarding the proper uses of farm-
19 plated vehicles.
20 • A simple, low cost method for the Secretary of
21 State to verify farm or logging connection when
22 applying for the plate designations. Schedule F
23 forms or EINs must not be the only methods

- 24 since not all farmers and loggers have those
25 options.
- 26 • Allowing personal business to be done in the
27 personal pick-up of a logger with a log plate
28 designation.
 - 29 • MFB seeking clarification on the licensing and
30 registration requirements for farmers and others
31 hauling livestock, equipment, and agricultural
32 products to markets, events or shows, and
33 people to events or shows.
 - 34 • More flexibility in the waiting period to obtain a
35 seasonal restricted license.
 - 36 • Specialty license plates and allowing their use
37 on farm, agri-business, and commercial
38 vehicles.
 - 39 • The continuation of permanent trailer license
40 plates without additional fees, and allowing
41 these plates to be transferred.
 - 42 • A revenue-neutral multiyear plate renewal option
43 for all vehicles.
 - 44 • Earmarking part of state, local and county fines
45 for roadway repair to be distributed back to
46 counties through the Michigan Transportation
47 Fund formula. City, township and village fines
48 should be prohibited from being allocated for
49 local law enforcement.
 - 50 • Minor restricted license eligibility. Licenses
51 should not be based on taxable household
52 income, and farm size should not be a factor.
53 Licenses will only be considered for immediate
54 family members.
 - 55 • Individuals and businesses should be able to
56 conduct business and complete transactions
57 with the Secretary of State in an easily
58 accessible manner including in-person, online,
59 or by mail.
 - 60 • Pickup trucks, one ton and under, that have had
61 their beds modified should still be classified as
62 pickup trucks.

63 We oppose:

- 64 • The classification by a state or federal
65 government to include implements of husbandry
66 as commercial motor vehicles.
- 67 • Any proposal requiring vehicles registered in
68 Michigan to display license plates on both the
69 front and rear of the vehicle.

70 **Vehicle Size and Weights**

71 We support the current Michigan per axle weight
72 limits for trucks on state highways. These axle limits
73 should be extended and consistently applied on all

74 county roads. We support the exemption of all farm and
75 agribusiness vehicles of any size, up to legal weight
76 limit per axle, from no through trucks ordinance and
77 laws. We support trailers of common dimensional size,
78 which are currently legal on Class A roads, be allowed
79 to operate on all roads.

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

82 Due to changes in moisture and weights on farm
83 commodities, it can be very difficult to determine if the
84 legal weight limits are being met when loading from the
85 field or farm. We support up to a 10 percent exemption
86 on load limits, or up to a 20 percent tolerance over the
87 legal weight limit on axles provided the vehicle is at or
88 below its legal gross weight, for all farm and forestry
89 commodities loaded out of the field or farm storage. All
90 state highways should be brought up to Class A
91 designation as soon as possible. Until they are, the
92 appropriate road agencies should have the authority to
93 give seasonal permits for movement of agricultural
94 produce. We oppose the actions by local units of
95 government which impose reduced vehicle weight limits
96 on roads established or maintained with state or federal
97 road funding.

98 For seasonal permits, we support:

- 99 • The use of sound engineering principles and
100 criteria and collaboration with surrounding
101 counties to determine when to apply and remove
102 spring load restrictions on county and Michigan
103 Department of Transportation (MDOT) roads.
- 104 • Reasonable, standardized Frost Law permitting
105 criteria and fees for all counties within the state.
- 106 • Requiring MDOT to issue permits for the
107 trucking of agricultural and forestry commodities
108 at normal load limits during spring weight
109 restrictions on the state highway system.
- 110 • Prohibiting county road commissions from
111 requiring to be named as an additional insured
112 for liability coverage to obtain a permit.
- 113 • MDOT being allowed to issue all permits which
114 allows farm equipment to be trailered on
115 weekends, as well as week days, on the state
116 highway system.

117 **Autonomous Vehicles**

118 We support:

- 119 • Development of technology to advance the use
120 of autonomous vehicles.
- 121 • The development of safety technology and
122 mandatory enhanced safety features installed on
123 all new vehicles including, but not limited to,

- 124 braking and cautionary sensors that create a
125 safer driving environment for all farm equipment
126 on roadways.
- 127 • Proper regulation and licensing of road bound
128 vehicles.
 - 129 • We encourage Michigan Farm Bureau to
130 monitor future developments in autonomous
131 vehicles and regulation regarding their use.

132 **Implements of Husbandry**

133 Implements of husbandry have changed over time;
134 therefore, consideration should be given to the design
135 and functional use of the vehicle serving agricultural
136 purposes.

137 We support:

- 138 • Pickups, like farm tractors, being allowed to tow
139 two wagons or trailers, provided the combination
140 of trailers does not exceed the towing capacity
141 of the pickup.
- 142 • Implements of husbandry being operated and
143 maintained with manufacturer’s
144 recommendations.
- 145 • MFB educating members about the safe and
146 appropriate use of implements of husbandry on
147 public roadways.
- 148 • Current statute for size and weight provisions of
149 implements of husbandry, and abide by the
150 posted bridge weight limits, not exceeding the
151 vehicle axle limits.
- 152 • Clarification on the definition of “modified
153 agricultural vehicle” and its distinction from
154 implements of husbandry.
- 155 • A permit to allow tractors and other implements
156 of husbandry to cross the Mackinaw Bridge
157 during oversized load crossing times.

158 We oppose mandating the use of electric powered
159 agriculture equipment/implements of husbandry.

#101 Transportation Improvement

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

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

11 **Transportation Revenue**

12 Michigan’s road and highway maintenance budgets

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

23 We support:

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

44 We oppose:

- 45 • Reverting to the property tax or special
46 assessments as a means of building and
47 maintaining state roads and bridges.

48 **Transportation Formula**

49 All transportation expenditures must be examined
50 to achieve the best and most efficient use of
51 transportation funding. We support PA 51 of 1951 which
52 outlines the distribution of the MTF.

53 We support the following PA 51 changes:

- 54 • At least 25 percent of federal road funds go to
55 local road agencies. At least 25 percent of
56 federal bridge funds go to the Local Bridge
57 program for use by local road agencies.
- 58 • Before any debt is serviced, the Transportation
59 Economic Development Fund (TEDF) shall be
60 allocated with 25 percent to urban counties and
61 25 percent to rural counties, as defined in the
62 TEDF.

- 63 • An increase in federal highway funding and the
64 TEDF dollars used to finance a portion of the all-
65 season road program.
- 66 • All funds from the MTF should be earmarked for
67 maintaining and improving our transportation
68 infrastructure. Eliminate non-road related
69 earmarked administrative funding and off-the-top
70 state debt service from the MTF.
- 71 • Allocating funding from the Michigan
72 Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), at a
73 reasonable rate, to the responsible road
74 maintenance body, or other agency, for removal
75 of wildlife carcasses from the roadways and
76 rights of-way.
- 77 • More effective use of Michigan’s mass transit
78 funds. Ten percent of Michigan’s transportation
79 funds are dedicated to mass transit systems. We
80 urge new or improved mass transit options be
81 studied, including waterways, in appropriate
82 areas.
- 83 • Raising the statutory limit on the amount of
84 funds that can be transferred from primary to
85 local road systems, provided these funds are
86 used to match other locally raised revenue. We
87 believe local roads should receive a higher
88 priority.
- 89 • Adequate funding of the Michigan Forest Roads
90 Program.
- 91 • The concept of easily allowing county road
92 commissions to transfer federal funds to other
93 counties and/or state road projects when
94 applicable.

95 We oppose:

- 96 • Distribution of road funding based on road use
97 or traffic volume.

98 **Road Construction and Maintenance**

99 New road construction, improvements and
100 maintenance, as well as issues of jurisdictional transfer
101 of existing roads should be carried out in a spirit of
102 cooperation between local, state, and federal agencies
103 involving constituent groups throughout the project. We
104 encourage local governments to continue to look for
105 increased efficiencies in government by prioritizing
106 services, reforming where possible, eliminating
107 duplicative services, and utilizing private partners.

108 We believe the local road agency must dedicate
109 themselves to using the most economical means
110 possible to establish and maintain an efficient
111 transportation system.

112 Regarding road planning, we support:

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- Encouraging the local road agency agencies, as well as the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to work in coordination with all pertinent county agencies (e.g., drain/water resources commission), townships, local planning, zoning boards, county Farm Bureaus, and affected property owners in order to minimize road construction cost and gather public input.
 - Providing a role for counties and townships in road improvement decisions.
 - Local road agencies utilizing ~~Michigan Department of Transportation's~~ the (MDOT) Asset Management Program, or similar program, to annually evaluate conditions of all roads and dispersal of funds under their jurisdiction and report such findings to the public.
 - County road commissions maintaining culverts to avoid road closures. Culverts in excess of four feet in diameter should be considered to be bridges.
 - Research to develop better materials for road and bridge construction and maintenance for proper construction and longevity.
 - An emphasis on improving existing roadways prior to constructing new highways.
 - Long-range planning on road construction projects considering not only future needs of the area but also the effects on agriculture.
 - Every consideration being given to landowners adjacent to the roadway to provide for safe travel for farm machinery and products.
 - Requiring consideration of agricultural drainage needs, including proper placement and size of culverts, when planning, designing and maintaining roads.
 - Proper grading of all roads and shoulders on a regular basis.
 - MDOT taking into consideration the size and maneuverability of farm equipment when designing new traffic flow structures such as roundabouts or Michigan turnarounds.
 - Compensation for crop losses when changes are made to the right of way from road improvements or reconstruction.
 - Every effort being made to select alignments that preserve productive farmland, wetlands and historical sites.

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- The use of private contractors and a bidding process for road and bridge development and maintenance.
 - A preference being given to contractors with material testing locations in Michigan with proven results.
 - The removal of state-mandated wage guidelines which may not reflect actual market conditions.
 - An open bid process for all road construction, improvements, and maintenance projects.
 - The cost of road improvements impacted from development being required to be shared by the developer when new developments have an adverse impact on the rural road system.
 - The respective state agency paying for or the requirement for the project being waived, when Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy and MDNR specifications increase the cost of maintaining safe bridge structures.
 - The purchase of rights of way for the construction of complete cloverleafs when new freeways are built.
 - The builder of a housing development near a freeway or existing highway being responsible for erecting an acceptable sound barrier, if needed.
 - Highway maintenance and changes within the existing right of way not having to complete a new environmental impact study before performing the work.
 - Wetlands mitigation not being required if improvements to the road are within the existing road right of way.
 - Ending the inclusion of planned wildlife habitat in the construction and renovation of Michigan highways.
 - Reclassifying US 23 from Toledo to Flint as an interstate highway.
 - Use of improved paint technologies that are more visible and reflective on local, state, and interstate roadways.
- When performing road construction, we support:
- An emphasis being directed toward the placing of crossroad, yield or stop signs at unmarked rural intersections.
 - Hardtop roads of adequate width being marked with highly-reflective center lines and sidelines as an aid to safer nighttime driving.

- 211 • Engineering and design of roadways being
212 required to have at least 20 feet clearance
213 between obstacles.
- 214 • Proper grading and bank reseeding being
215 completed where road construction occurs to
216 improve road safety and reduce erosion.
- 217 • All rural roads should be marked with a name or
218 number.
- 219 • Mail and newspaper boxes being placed on the
220 same side of the road and as far from the
221 traveled portion of the road as safety allows.
- 222 • Prior to non-emergency detouring of state
223 highway traffic onto county roads, MDOT will
224 collaborate with township government, county
225 road departments, and local and county law
226 enforcement, to establish reduced speed limits,
227 establish no-passing zones along the detour
228 route, and mark intersections with illuminated
229 stop signs or overhead traffic lights. As part of
230 the project cost, MDOT will make funds
231 available for law enforcement to specifically
232 patrol the detour.

233 For road maintenance, we support:

- 234 • The designated maintenance authority clearing
235 and maintaining roadsides, roadways and
236 intersections of hazards that obstruct the view of
237 motorists or impede travel, road drainage, or
238 cropland drainage. This would include dead and
239 dying trees within the right of way. In the event
240 the authorized authority is unable to fulfill their
241 maintenance obligations, landowners should be
242 allowed to perform such work. Property owners
243 should maintain proper visibility of intersection
244 views by using the triangular sight-line system.
- 245 • Encouraging the privatization of road
246 maintenance and the mowing and trimming of
247 road ditches when feasible.
- 248 • Individuals, pursuant to reasonable regulations,
249 being allowed to harvest existing forages and
250 trees along roadways without a permit.
- 251 • Any traveled portion of the road and shoulder
252 having trees and overgrowth trimmed to a
253 minimum height of 17 feet due to the increase in
254 height and width of farm and custom application
255 equipment. Also, a reasonably safe condition
256 should be provided by the respective road
257 agency.
- 258 • MDOT being required to fix and maintain fencing
259 along state highways as part of the maintenance
260 of that highway.

- 261 • County road commissions notifying the owner
262 when work in the right of way will be done and
263 will destroy crops or affect field drainage.
- 264 We are especially concerned with excessive use of
265 road salt, the adverse effect it has on the environment,
266 and the increased rate at which it deteriorates roads
267 and bridges in urban and rural Michigan. We support:
- 268 • The use of Calcium Magnesium Acetate or other
269 ag-based products for de-icing roads and
270 bridges, including the use of sand, when
271 environmentally and economically feasible.
 - 272 • A reduction in ice melt and dust control products
273 containing sodium chloride, with no salt being
274 used adjacent to sensitive perennial crops
275 and/or arable soils, wherever feasible.
 - 276 • County road commissions being able to brine
277 roads responsibly and when necessary.

Reaffirmation of State Policies

#1 Agricultural Commodity Commissions

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

5 We support legislation setting time frames for
6 gubernatorial action on filling vacancies when
7 applicants have been submitted.

8 Michigan Farm Bureau will consider supporting
9 commodity group proposals that align with existing
10 policy and are beneficial to producers, including the
11 extension of referendums up to ten years. We
12 encourage member involvement and support of their
13 commodity organizations.

#2 Agricultural Fairs and Exhibitions

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

12 The success of state and county fairs and
13 exhibitions relies on volunteer leaders from the
14 agricultural community. We urge Farm Bureau members
15 to take active roles in providing oversight and taking
16 ownership of these activities to ensure the original
17 intent of fairs and exhibitions continues. Agricultural
18 education exhibits, livestock competitions, agricultural
19 showcases and youth agricultural activities should be
20 the cornerstone of state and county fairs and
21 exhibitions.

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

28 As our industry adapts to change, we must look for
29 alternative venues for these events that provide
30 opportunities for expanded involvement with the non-
31 farm community.

32 We urge MFB to evaluate and make

33 recommendations aimed at ensuring the long-term
34 viability of our agricultural heritage through participation
35 in exhibitions, shows and other public events in addition
36 to state and county fairs.

#5 Animal Health

1 As the world expands to international trade, the
2 potential for transmitting communicable diseases
3 among the agriculture community grows. The
4 uncontrolled spread of disease, intentional or otherwise,
5 could devastate the entire agricultural system.

6 We must protect livestock health in Michigan and
7 across the United States. A healthy animal population is
8 critical to the overall wellbeing of the agricultural
9 economy.

10 We support:

- 11 • Appointing a board of animal health to
12 coordinate activities, programs, and regulations
13 to expedite the control and eradication of animal
14 diseases. The board should consist of livestock
15 producers and industry representatives,
16 Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural
17 Development (MDARD), Michigan Department
18 of Natural Resources (MDNR), Michigan
19 Department of Health and Human Services,
20 Michigan State University (MSU) College of
21 Veterinary Medicine and USDA.
- 22 • MDARD basing new regulations or restrictions
23 for livestock exhibition on veterinary and animal
24 science.
- 25 • Changing the Animals Running At Large Act to
26 define livestock the same as the Animal Industry
27 Act does.
- 28 • State funding for the MSU Veterinary Diagnostic
29 Lab (VDL) to meet the needs of Michigan's
30 animal population.
- 31 • Indemnification for livestock depopulated due to
32 disease or when marketing channels are limited
33 or eliminated by the government.
- 34 • Changes to Michigan's Veterinary Law that
35 expand the services/procedures that veterinary
36 technicians or designated staff with advanced
37 training can perform that help address the rural
38 vet/animal care shortage in Michigan.
- 39 • Requiring continuing education to maintain a
40 Michigan veterinary license.
- 41 • Amending Michigan's Veterinary Law to clarify
42 that artificial insemination of livestock and
43 embryo transplant procedures do not have to be
44 performed by a licensed veterinarian.

- 45 • MSU researching health-related issues
46 impacting Michigan’s livestock industry, including
47 potentially toxic weeds and feedstuffs.
- 48 • Requiring livestock operation visitors to have
49 permission and conduct proper contamination
50 protections, including clothing and disinfectants,
51 to protect and enhance biosecurity on-site.
- 52 • Legislative, regulatory and/or management
53 changes that empower the State Veterinarian to
54 collaborate with appropriate authorities to
55 develop a mass carcass disposal plan.
- 56 • A statewide ban on the sale and use of sky
57 (“Chinese”) lanterns and similar unmanned
58 devices involving open flame that may leave
59 their premises of origin because of the danger of
60 damaging livestock, feed and feed harvesting
61 equipment.
- 62 • Research on the potential for chronic wasting
63 disease prions to infect livestock feed and other
64 plant materials.
- 65 • Encouraging Michigan Farm Bureau, MSU,
66 MDARD and USDA to:
 - 67 ○ Provide sufficient funding and programs for
68 animal health education, disease monitoring,
69 border inspections and disease eradication
70 that protect the livestock industry and ensure
71 market access.
 - 72 ○ Increase efforts to develop a genetic or live
73 animal diagnostic test for Scrapie and Bovine
74 Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE).
 - 75 ○ Continue working cooperatively to support the
76 VDL, and minimize its diagnostic fees.
- 77 • Annual review of the Reportable Disease List in
78 collaboration with industry, MDARD and MDNR
79 to remove inappropriately listed diseases.
- 80 • Livestock producers considering rabies
81 vaccination for all pets, and to learn about the
82 disease.
- 83 • The development and availability of bait
84 vaccines.

85 **Bovine**

- 86 • An aggressive cost-effective Johne’s detection
87 and control program, and the ready availability
88 of the Johne’s vaccine to dairy farmers.

89 **Swine**

- 90 • MDARD providing adequate staffing to:
- 91 • Ensure proper monitoring of Michigan’s swine
92 herd to maintain our achieved pseudorabies
93 status.

- 94 • Support the development and adoption of the
95 U.S. Swine Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) for
96 Michigan's swine industry.

97 **Equine**

- 98 • Requiring equine owners to consult with a
99 veterinarian and vaccinate horses, ponies and
100 mules against infectious and contagious
101 diseases.
- 102 • All fairs, racing events, sale barns, riding stables
103 and other venues where equine may congregate
104 require annual Equine Infectious Anemia
105 (EIA)/Coggins tests for every animal, and
106 mandate those papers be inspected before
107 allowing entry.
- 108 • MDARD working with animal health officials in
109 other states to develop standardized
110 EIA/Coggins testing guidelines and uniform
111 testing and movement procedures.
- 112 • Eliminating EIA/Coggins test requirements for
113 horses going to slaughter.

114 **Animal Identification and Interstate Movement**

- 115 • Swift implementation of a mandatory
116 identification system for Michigan's livestock and
117 encourage the continued utilization of producer
118 input into its development, implementation, and
119 cost-share where feasible. Producer information
120 shall remain proprietary, not for public use or
121 subject to Freedom of Information Act or any
122 requests.
- 123 • Slaughter facilities upgrading their technology to
124 provide timely and accurate information on
125 individual cattle.
- 126 • Rules requiring that all cattle and privately-
127 owned Cervidae be electronically identified
128 before leaving the farm.
- 129 • Violation penalties should be strengthened and
130 enforced by law. In the event an animal loses its
131 tag *en route* to an auction facility, they should
132 be retagged upon arrival before being allowed to
133 enter.
- 134 • Electronic reading and recording of all cattle
135 exhibited in Michigan. Records should be sent to
136 MDARD.
- 137 • MDNR, MDARD, USDA, and the U.S. Fish and
138 Wildlife Service working cooperatively to
139 develop regulations to control disease spread
140 including, but not be limited to a system for
141 monitoring live and dead domestic and game
142 animals coming into Michigan.

143 We oppose importing livestock that does not:

- 144 • Meet import testing requirements deemed
- 145 appropriate by the director of MDARD,
- 146 • Have appropriate quarantine protocols in place,
- 147 • Have an animal identification system for tracking
- 148 livestock movement to prevent disease spread.

149 **Feed Additives and Medication**

150 We recognize the need for medication and other
151 additives in livestock feeds. The availability of livestock
152 antibiotics is critical. Limiting or eliminating livestock
153 antibiotic use will negatively impact the industry, both
154 economically and with respect to animal health.

155 Antibiotic use is approved by the Food and Drug
156 Administration only after scientific review and testing.
157 Animal agriculture relies on veterinarians to assist with
158 and oversee animal health. We define veterinarian
159 oversight as a working relationship with a licensed
160 veterinarian.

161 We support:

- 162 • The existing approval process for antibiotic use
- 163 in farm animals.
- 164 • Veterinarian oversight of antibiotic use rather
- 165 than limiting or eliminating these critical animal
- 166 health and food safety protection tools.
- 167 • Careful use and withdrawal restrictions of feed
- 168 additives.
- 169 • The use of rendered animal protein as additives
- 170 to swine and poultry rations.
- 171 • Strict safeguards to prevent cross-contamination
- 172 of ruminant feeds with ruminant by-products
- 173 formulating feed additives.

174 We oppose:

- 175 • Banning feed additives without scientific
- 176 evidence that they threaten animal and human
- 177 health.
- 178 • Restrictions limiting or eliminating marketing
- 179 opportunities for the livestock, dairy, equine,
- 180 poultry and aquaculture industries and their
- 181 products without sound scientific justification.
- 182 • State agency farm inspections without
- 183 notification to and awareness of the farm
- 184 owner/operation.
- 185 • Mandatory rabies vaccination for farm cats.

217 **#6 Aquaculture and Commercial Fishing**

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

221 We support:

- 222 • Updating the Aquaculture Development Act to
- 223 reflect the status and potential of the industry.

- 7 • Better collaboration between the state agencies
8 and the aquaculture industry that leads to
9 greater investment and enhancement of state
10 hatcheries/fisheries, the commercial fishing
11 industry, and the commercial aquaculture
12 industry. Additional enhancements should also
13 include changes to the permitting process that
14 advance the growth of Michigan's aquaculture
15 industry.
- 16 • Urging regulatory agencies, along with Michigan
17 Economic Development Corporation, state
18 universities, and the aquaculture industry to
19 continue cooperating to address regulatory
20 needs, while at the same time facilitating the
21 continued growth of aquaculture through
22 streamlining regulation and facilitating access to
23 capital for development.
- 24 • Annually reviewing and updating the
25 memorandum of understanding between
26 Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural
27 Development (MDARD), Michigan Department
28 of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
29 (MDEGLE) and Michigan Department of Natural
30 Resources (MDNR).
- 31 • MDARD, MDEGLE, and MDNR understanding
32 that generational transition and industry growth
33 in aquaculture, commercial fishing, and
34 agriculture are critical for future industry success
35 and food security in the state when regulatory
36 decisions are made.
- 37 • The State of Michigan prioritizing food
38 production from aquaculture and commercial
39 fishing at the same level as the recreational
40 fishing industry.
- 41 • Harmonization of the state and federal definition
42 of aquaculture.
- 43 • The concept of group or lot identification for
44 aquaculture species.
- 45 • MDARD registration of out-of-state producers
46 who market aquaculture products in Michigan
47 and enforcement of regulations related to
48 importation of aquaculture products.
- 49 • Funding, research development, and approval of
50 live fish tests to eliminate the need to sacrifice
51 fish, as is the current requirement.
- 52 • If an individual farm has an established herd
53 health plan and a disease status that declares it
54 to be free of regulated aquaculture diseases,
55 that farm should have the ability to ship product
56 interstate.

- 57 • MDARD cooperating with other states and
58 establishing agreements allowing shipment of
59 fish from Michigan into other states that follow
60 similar protocol.
- 61 • MFB being involved in Michigan Aquaculture
62 Association's strategic plan development.
- 63 • Michigan State University establishing an
64 aquaculture program containing dedicated
65 faculty to support and enhance the industry. The
66 program should include research, extension and
67 demonstration and be housed under an
68 agricultural development department.
- 69 • Industry-developed herd plans to include the
70 option for slaughter surveillance testing, where
71 feasible, and be implemented on a voluntary
72 basis with MDARD being the lead agency.
- 73 • Development of science-based aquaculture
74 disease control policies that also take into
75 account indemnification of losses to producers.
- 76 • The right of commercial fishermen to pursue
77 fishing operations in a responsible manner. The
78 MDNR should not adopt regulations more
79 restrictive than those applied to tribal fisheries.
- 80 • Expansion of opportunities to allow sustainable
81 commercial fishing of additional species of fish
82 in the Great Lakes.
- 83 • MDARD having authority over commercial
84 fishing when the fish leave the net.
- 85 • Allocation of funds for research to more
86 effectively manage and utilize this natural
87 resource.
- 88 • Efforts of the commercial fishing industry to
89 establish a program under PA 232 of 1965.
- 90 • The adoption of Best Management Practices
91 (BMPs) as National Pollution Discharge
92 Elimination System (NPDES) permit compliance,
93 rather than individual permits with numerical
94 discharge limitations for aquaculture facilities. If
95 individual permits are required, it should only be
96 for facilities that produce over 20,000 pounds
97 annually and only if on a one-page permit
98 application.
- 99 • Streamlining the NPDES permit process by
100 developing a general permit based on BMPs to
101 reduce water testing requirements.
- 102 • The ability to conduct aquaculture production in
103 current and prior converted wetlands and within
104 the natural rivers districts.

- 105 • MDNR producing and providing fish, at a fair
106 price, for stocking and growth on Michigan
107 aquaculture farms for food production.
- 108 • Enabling legislation and/or the regulatory
109 framework to allow the development of a
110 properly regulated open water net pen
111 aquaculture/cage culture of fish in the Great
112 Lakes and other water bodies.
- 113 • Development of a national aquaculture check-off
114 program.
- 115 • Appropriate staffing within MDARD to lead and
116 collaborate with other agencies on a planned,
117 designed and streamlined process for approval
118 and permitting of aquaculture and commercial
119 fishing processing facilities.
- 120 • Industry oversight on any new state or federal
121 funds for aquaculture or commercial fishing with
122 a majority of the funds going to aquaculture and
123 commercial fishing producers.

124 We oppose:

- 125 • Any ban on the use of biotechnology in
126 aquaculture without specific evidence or
127 demonstration of harm by the technology.
- 128 • Individual identification for aquaculture in the
129 event animal identification is mandated.
- 130 • Restrictions on the culture or stocking of rainbow
131 trout based on genetic strain.
- 132 • Immediate implementation of new
133 Environmental Protection Agency effluent
134 standards if operational viability is jeopardized.
- 135 • Increasing NPDES permit restrictions or
136 compliance requirements without sound
137 scientific justification.
- 138 • The use of the Lacey Act to regulate the
139 interstate movement of aquaculture products
140 and urge immediate action to address current
141 prosecutions, as well as a cessation of this
142 practice by regulatory officials.
- 143 • Testing requirements for the stocking of fish in
144 Michigan that are more restrictive than national
145 requirements set by the International Office of
146 Epizootics.

#8 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 products
5 for specific health, nutritional and industrial purposes.

6 We support:

- 7 • Developing research and testing to enhance
8 adoption of biotechnology products and
9 processes, and address consumer safety and
10 environmental concerns.
- 11 • Funding from companies that develop this
12 technology to educate the public on the safety
13 and benefits of biotechnology.
- 14 • Developing a positive national strategy for the
15 further growth of biotechnology research and the
16 swift dissemination of accurate information to
17 consumers concerning biotechnology products.
- 18 • U.S. government agencies, particularly the
19 USDA and the Food and Drug Administration
20 (FDA), continue to serve their role in providing
21 unbiased, science-based evaluations concerning
22 human and animal safety and wholesomeness,
23 as well as the environmental impacts of
24 biotechnology-enhanced commodities. These
25 agencies should evaluate if improvements could
26 be made to the regulatory approval process to
27 enhance consumer confidence.
- 28 • Developing standardized testing procedures to
29 ensure accurate, timely and cost-effective
30 analysis of biotechnology products throughout
31 the production and marketing chain.
- 32 • The U.S. government to use all available means
33 to improve international understanding of the
34 science-based process used by agencies when
35 approving biotechnology-enhanced
36 commodities.
- 37 • Initiatives that assist in the research,
38 development and regulatory clearance of
39 specialty crop biotechnology products.
- 40 • Michigan Farm Bureau proactively educating
41 members and consumers about the advantages
42 and potential of biotechnology, including the use
43 of the FARM Science Lab.
- 44 • Strong patent protection to encourage these
45 new technologies.
- 46 • An expedited process for the approval of edible
47 and non-edible genetically engineered plant
48 material beneficial to the
49 agricultural/horticultural/floricultural industry
50 through the FDA and USDA Animal and Plant
51 Health Inspection Service.
- 52 • Allowing farmers to use their own crop as seed
53 as long as they pay the technology fee for the
54 seed they use.

- 55 • Communication with end users to identify
56 specific needs to promote value-added trait
57 development.
- 58 • The voluntary approach taken by the
59 biotechnology industry allowing further
60 development of agriceuticals and research while
61 protecting our commercial production. Seed
62 purity (identity preservation) is critical in
63 maintaining consumer and processor confidence
64 in agricultural products.
- 65 • The common practice followed by the seed
66 industry (as well as outlined under the USDA
67 organic practices) that the burden of maintaining
68 genetic purity falls solely upon the producer of
69 the identity-preserved crop as far as needed
70 buffer strips and other cultural practices. Users
71 of biotech seeds should follow planting
72 restrictions and requirements.
- 73 • The U.S. developing a uniform, science-based
74 international approval process for biotechnology.
- 75 • The free choice of farmers to grow what they
76 want, whether it be biotech or non-biotech
77 products.
- 78 • Public and private efforts to continue research
79 on non-biotech seed.

80 The U.S. producer should not have to pay for this
81 technology, development, and marketing alone; all
82 purchasers should share the research cost.

83 Food products utilizing biotechnology that have
84 been scientifically proven safe should not be
85 discriminated against by unfair labeling requirements
86 that are not required of other industries using
87 biotechnology. No products should be released for
88 commercial production until approved for both human
89 and animal utilization.

90 We oppose attempts to limit the production or use
91 of genetically modified crops or animals, based on
92 unproven statements and unsubstantiated fears.

93 We are concerned about the potential loss of
94 current technology, production and management tools
95 that have fostered advancements in agriculture and will
96 oppose attempts to limit the utilization of approved use
97 of biotechnology in production agriculture.

#10 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 Natural
4 Resources with the power to hire directors of the

5 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 a director. The historical
10 commission system creates continuity, transparency
11 and program accountability. We support restoring all
12 duties of the agriculture and natural resources
13 commissions, including the ability to employ a director.

14 Future Natural Resources Commission (NRC)
15 appointees should be balanced, not only in their
16 passion for outdoor recreation but also with ecological
17 and business environments. A farmer representing
18 production agriculture should be on the NRC.

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

#11 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. We encourage Michigan Farm
4 Bureau to monitor and identify regulatory changes to
5 the business environment.

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

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

#12 Craft Beverage Industry

1 Michigan's craft beverage industry is a strong
2 economic contributor to the state of Michigan and
3 impacts many subsectors of our economy including
4 tourism, manufacturing, food, and agriculture. The craft
5 beverage industry also allows for more diversification in
6 agriculture through the growing of specialty crops and
7 grains that help to expand value added niche markets.
8 This industry supports many Michigan produced
9 commodities such as wine grapes, hops, small grains,

10 sugar, forestry products, vegetables, stone fruits, etc.,
11 which also has the potential to serve as a large
12 consumer for Michigan grown commodities. The
13 Michigan craft beverage industry is an important partner
14 in the future of Michigan farming.

15 We support:

- 16 • Expansion of incentives for all Michigan grown
17 commodities used in Michigan craft beverage
18 production.
- 19 • The increased funding to agritourism marketing
20 in Michigan through the Pure Michigan or ad
21 campaign and Craft Beverage Council.
- 22 • Research and development of a Michigan oak
23 barrel industry and other beverage related
24 forestry products.
- 25 • A microbrewery license that operates similar to
26 the small winemaker license.

27 We oppose:

- 28 • The unfair taxation on craft beverage products,
29 especially those that limit the usage of certain
30 fruits and other commodities.

#13 Cranberry Industry

1 We support legislative and regulatory efforts to
2 promote expansion of Michigan's cranberry industry.
3 Michigan Farm Bureau urges the Michigan
4 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
5 (MDEGLE), Michigan Department of Agriculture and
6 Rural Development and the Michigan Legislature to
7 develop proactive policies and legislation that promote
8 and grow the cranberry industry. In a time when the
9 state is seeking diversity of industries and job growth,
10 many policies are overly restrictive compared to
11 surrounding states and have seriously restricted the
12 growth of the cranberry industry.

13 We urge MDEGLE to accommodate the expansion
14 of cranberry production, including prior commitments
15 made under PA 120 of 2009.

#14 Dairy Industry

1 The dairy industry is critical to Michigan's
2 agricultural economy. We support a strong and vibrant
3 dairy industry allowing Michigan dairy farmers to be
4 competitive in national and international markets.

5 We support:

- 6 • Industry collaboration in developing additional
7 dairy processing in Michigan, and urging local,
8 state and federal lawmakers and regulators to
9 help streamline the process for dairy processing
10 expansion.

- 11 • Funding state and federally required dairy
12 industry sampling and inspection programs.
- 13 • Current dairy laws pertaining to milk
14 pasteurization, including prohibiting the sale of
15 unpasteurized fluid milk for human consumption.
- 16 • Michigan Farm Bureau and the Michigan
17 Department of Agriculture and Rural
18 Development working together to provide
19 guidelines for cow-share and herd-share
20 programs that meet Grade A dairy standards.
- 21 • Implementing on-farm biosecurity practices that
22 protect animal health and enhance dairy
23 markets.
- 24 • Continued availability and proper use of animal
25 health tools (e.g., antibiotics, technology).
- 26 • Dairy industry participation in the veterinary feed
27 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
32 dairy cattle health.
- 33 • Industry participation in any changes to the
34 Siting Generally Accepted Agricultural and
35 Management Practice (GAAMP) to allow for
36 continued growth and dairy expansion.
- 37 • Continued farmer participation in any changes to
38 the National Dairy Farmers Assuring
39 Responsible Management (FARM) Program and
40 on-farm implementation of its standards.
- 41 • Continued investments in research that allow for
42 industry growth and efficiency.
- 43 • Continued farmer participation and control over
44 dairy industry promotion funds, enhancements
45 and creativity in dairy promotion ideas and the
46 development of new products.
- 47 • Increased efforts to increase dairy consumption
48 in schools, including higher milk fat options and
49 flavored milks.
- 50 • Dairy farmers being able to collect, store, and
51 market colostrum to licensed collectors/sellers.
- 52 • Collaboration with the United Dairy Industry of
53 Michigan and Michigan Ag Council in promoting
54 the benefits of dairy consumption — especially
55 for youth — to the medical and educational
56 communities.
- 57 • Collaboration across the industry to establish a
58 world-class dairy teaching, research and
59 extension facility at Michigan State University's

60 dairy farm that meets our industry's current and
61 future needs.

#16 Dry Bean Industry

1 We appreciate the Michigan Bean Commission's
2 ongoing efforts to increase the consumption of
3 nutritious Michigan dry beans.

4 We support:

- 5 • Ongoing research to continually improve dry
6 bean production in Michigan, including new
7 technology.
- 8 • Research ensuring the industry can meet
9 changing consumer preferences, specifically the
10 development of new end-user products.
- 11 • Continuation, staffing and adequate funding of
12 Michigan State University's dry bean variety
13 development program.
- 14 • A bean breeding program that includes the
15 development of new varieties that better meet
16 the demands of domestic and international
17 markets.
- 18 • Researching disease control and pest
19 prevention.
- 20 • Production contracts as viable and important
21 marketing tools for growers, elevators and
22 canners. All parties must abide by the provisions
23 of these such agreements, with close interaction
24 among all parties to ensure compliance at all
25 levels.
- 26 • Contract language that includes "Acts of God"
27 provisions accounting for adverse weather
28 conditions affecting growers' ability to plant,
29 grow or harvest a crop.
- 30 • The Pulse Health Initiative.
- 31 • Accurate and timely reporting of dry bean prices
32 by elevators when gathering data for computing
33 revenue insurance.
- 34 • Uniformity of grading standards among elevators
35 regarding foreign material and pick/grading
36 determinations.
- 37 • Production and price reporting in an efficient
38 format that can be updated as needed.
- 39 • Electronic shipping documentation.
- 40 • Representation from the organic dry bean
41 industry on the Michigan Bean Commission.

42 We oppose:

- 43 • Limited market access for all processors and
44 producers.

#17 Equine Industry

1 Michigan's equine industry is very broad and
2 involves many people and a variety of horse breeds.
3 We strongly encourage and support collaborative efforts
4 by equine professionals to strengthen the industry and
5 support its growth. The equine industry is stronger and
6 able to thrive when united and working collectively.

7 We support:

- 8 • The Michigan Department of Agriculture and
9 Rural Development working with local
10 governments to continue classifying equine
11 operations as agricultural for zoning purposes.
- 12 • Additional changes or legislation that provide
13 economic growth and strengthens the horse
14 racing industry.
- 15 • Funding for the expansion of the Pavilion for
16 Agriculture and Livestock Education at Michigan
17 State University.
- 18 • Marketing opportunities for the equine industry.
- 19 • Michigan Farm Bureau working to re-establish
20 additional harvest options for the equine
21 industry.
- 22 • Funding for the USDA Food Safety and
23 Inspection Service for inspectors in facilities that
24 slaughter horses.
- 25 • The Equine Liability Act, which strengthens
26 liability protection measures for the industry.
- 27 • Efforts to establish an equine industry marketing
28 and education program.
- 29 • The industry's efforts in conducting a study to
30 determine the impact and status of the state's
31 equine industry.
- 32 • Removing the online wagering tax cap with the
33 funds being allocated to the Agriculture Equine
34 Industry Development Fund.
- 35 • The expansion and promotion of equine
36 recreational opportunities on public land.
- 37 • Prohibiting bicycle/pedal powered devices on
38 trails signed for equestrian and hiking only.
- 39 • Prohibiting non-equestrian campers in
40 equestrian campgrounds and portions of other
41 campgrounds dedicated to equestrian use.
- 42 • The establishment, growth, and funding of urban
43 equestrian education and promotion programs.
- 44 • Seven-year retention of signed liability release
45 forms.

46 We oppose:

- 47 • Attempts to classify equine as companion
48 animals.

- 49 • Legislation limiting or prohibiting the use of
50 horses as working animals.
51 • Relocating the horsemen’s simulcast purse pool
52 funds to any race meet licensee.

53 We understand there are instances where owners
54 can no longer care for their animals and under these
55 circumstances there must be viable options for dealing
56 with them. All equine owners need to understand the
57 responsibility of owning and caring for their animals.

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

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

67 We are concerned about the number of wild
68 mustangs being rounded up on federal land and being
69 moved into Michigan. These horses should have an
70 inter-state health certificate and meet the health
71 standards of the Michigan equine population and the
72 Bureau of Land Management adoption requirements.

#21 Fruits and Vegetables

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

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

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

#22 Intellectual Property Rights

1 Research institutions, especially land grant
2 universities, are scaling back agricultural research and
3 are requiring agricultural commodity groups and
4 associations to help fund both research and staff
5 positions.

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 affected
10 parties to have input on the licensing system.

11 We support:

- 12 • A standing committee from Michigan Farm
13 Bureau, Michigan Department of Agriculture and
14 Rural Development, and producers representing
15 affected commodities being included in the
16 process of MSU Technologies in licensing
17 products or materials that would affect the
18 profitability or marketing of an agricultural
19 commodity.
- 20 • A portion of revenues derived from licensing
21 intellectual property rights flowing back to
22 funding groups and organizations.
- 23 • Licensing and commercialization opportunities
24 remaining primarily with Michigan-based
25 companies.
- 26 • The right of commodity groups and
27 organizations to have first and last right of
28 refusal in the licensing of intellectual property
29 rights that were funded in part by grower
30 investment and developed at public institutions.

31 It is imperative that our intellectual properties and
32 food security be protected. We encourage MFB to
33 support protecting our food security and agricultural
34 industries.

#23 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 claims.
7 Agricultural products that are made using government
8 approved technologies should not be required to display
9 individual inputs or specific technologies on the product
10 label.

#25 Marketing and Bargaining Legislation

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

6 We support:

- 7 • Legislation or legal actions that strengthen the
8 operation and effectiveness of PA 344 including

- 9 but not limited to returning the definition of the
10 "opt out clause" to its original intent and
11 meaning.
- 12 • Efforts of producers under PA 344 to further
13 enhance their position in the marketplace and
14 secure the sale of their product through the
15 provisions of the marketing and bargaining
16 legislation.
 - 17 • The Michigan Department of Agriculture and
18 Rural Development aggressively enforcing this
19 program.

#26 Michigan Alliance for Animal Agriculture

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

14 We support M-AAA efforts to develop a proposal
15 for establishing a state-funded animal ag research
16 program modeled after the successful Project GREEN
17 (which addresses plant-based industry priorities). The
18 group has established the Michigan Animal Agriculture
19 Innovation and Workforce Development Initiative, which
20 focuses on sustainability within Michigan's animal
21 agriculture sector through a targeted annual investment
22 in research, extension and workforce development.
23 Many dairy and livestock groups are contributing to this
24 effort and we strongly encourage state funding to
25 enhance the effort.

#28 Michigan Meat Processing Industry

1 The livestock industry and meat processing are
2 integral to Michigan's agricultural economy. Local meat
3 processing facilities provide food availability and
4 economic opportunity. Excessive regulation and
5 limitations on retail packaging/sales greatly reduce
6 public access to locally produced meat.

7 To help address supply chain challenges,
8 burdensome regulations and limited market access, we
9 support:

- 10 • Systematic evaluation of Michigan's meat
11 packing industry, retail sales, custom exempt

- 12 facilities, market access, regulation and
13 opportunities for expansion.
- 14 • Michigan State University (MSU), community
15 colleges, career technical schools and the
16 livestock industry coordinating to develop and
17 establish an ag tech-type livestock harvest and
18 meat processing certification program.
 - 19 • More federally inspected meat processing
20 facilities in Michigan.
 - 21 • Investment in and promotion of mobile
22 agricultural processing labs in Michigan.
 - 23 • Creating a Michigan-based meat inspection and
24 licensing system for in-state processing and
25 retail sale of meat.
 - 26 • A partnership between the Michigan Department
27 of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)
28 and USDA to train and authorize state level
29 employees to conduct USDA inspection services
30 of small, independent processing facilities.
 - 31 • Increased utilization of the meats laboratory and
32 professional expertise at MSU to support the
33 meat industry, educate students and train meat
34 industry professionals.
 - 35 • Limiting regulations on small and medium-sized
36 meat processors while protecting and enhancing
37 food safety.
 - 38 • State and federal funding to increase the
39 number of new — and enhance current — small
40 and medium-sized meat processing facilities and
41 on-farm/exempt operations.
 - 42 • State and federal funding and low-interest loans
43 to help small and medium-sized meat
44 processing facilities meet or comply with
45 regulatory requirements.
 - 46 • Government funding to offset the regulatory
47 burdens placed upon small and medium-sized
48 meat processors.
 - 49 • The further establishment of MDARD approved
50 meat processing facilities that allow for the
51 donation to food banks and pantries.

#30 Payment Protection and Security for Growers

1 Michigan Farm Bureau supports the Farm Produce
2 Insurance Authority (FPIA) which protects producers'
3 interests when selling their products.

4 Farmers need maximum payment assurance for
5 commodities delivered. Many parties suffer when a
6 receiver — whether a closed-cooperative, regular
7 cooperative, or commercial company — becomes
8 insolvent or declares bankruptcy. The impact on farmers

9 is significant because of the perishability and
10 seasonality of many commodities.

11 We support:

- 12 • PA 198 of 2013, updates to the Grain Dealers
13 Act that provided assurance that growers
14 receive a priority lien position and full payment
15 for commodities delivered.
- 16 • Farm Bureau working proactively with the
17 Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural
18 Development to expand the FPIA to include fruit
19 and vegetable crops, and creating an
20 appropriate funding mechanism.
- 21 • Exploring all possible options, including
22 amending the Uniform Commercial Code, to
23 ensure a fully secured position payment for
24 commodities delivered.

#33 Sheep Industry

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

4 We support:

- 5 • Developing and researching new uses for wool
6 and new convenient lamb products for
7 consumers.
- 8 • Including lamb prices in market reports.
- 9 • Researching lethal and non-lethal methods of
10 predator control, such as adoption of a "toxic
11 collar" program.
- 12 • Funding for an indemnification program for
13 losses from predators.

14 We urge sheep owners to participate in the
15 National Scrapie Eradication Program.

#35 Sugar Industry

1 Michigan Farm Bureau supports efforts to minimize
2 negative impacts to the U.S. sugar industry from trade
3 agreements.

4 We support:

- 5 • Basing sugar imports on total sugar content,
6 regardless of its refinement level upon entry into
7 the United States.
- 8 • Domestic sugar production allotments being
9 reallocated to current production trends.
- 10 • The early harvest period for sugarbeets in
11 Michigan ending on October 20 for crop
12 insurance purposes.
- 13 • The USDA Risk Management Agency using
14 recoverable white sugar per ton instead of

15 percent sugar for determining Actual Production
16 History for Michigan growers.

#36 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 more
4 assertive in their efforts to eradicate Bovine
5 Tuberculosis (TB) and move Michigan to TB-free status.
6 We also urge the USDA Animal and Plant Health
7 Inspection Service to receive and provide feedback and
8 implement recommendations in a timelier manner. We
9 strongly encourage producer and hunter cooperation in
10 all segments of our eradication efforts and support the
11 departments and industry utilizing the latest
12 technological advancements.

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

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

23 To expedite TB eradication, we support:

- 24 • A bounty and/or income tax credit for deer taken
25 in any Michigan county that is not TB-free and
26 contiguous counties.
- 27 • Funding the entire TB program from MDNR's
28 budget, and tying that budget to deer-herd
29 reduction and TB prevalence.
- 30 • A late hunt in February or March, not January.
- 31 • MDARD, USDA, MDNR and other state and
32 federal agencies involving producers from all
33 affected areas of the state in decision-making
34 processes regarding bovine TB eradication.
- 35 • Producer implementation of a Wildlife Risk
36 Mitigation Plan (WRMP).
- 37 • State and federal funding for hiring a third-party
38 designated agriculturalist to assist with WRMP
39 development, implementation, and inspection.
- 40 • A complete and approved WRMP on file should
41 empower producers with the authority to
42 manage nuisance/destructive species on their
43 land, including access to disease-control permits
44 to reduce deer and elk interaction with cattle or
45 livestock feed to minimize disease transmission.

- 46 Additionally, farmers should be able to shoot any
47 deer 24/7 within a designated farmyard circle.
- 48 • In counties deemed high-risk or positive for TB,
49 and all contiguous counties, white-tailed deer
50 harvest should be allowed year-round by any
51 legal hunter without requiring a permit.
 - 52 • Establishing and implementing a science-based
53 zoning approach and testing process to address
54 disease risk (e.g., a 10-mile radius zone around
55 new TB-positive livestock herds).
 - 56 • Eradication of white-tailed deer within a 10-mile
57 radius high-risk zone established after TB-
58 positive deer or cattle are found.
 - 59 • Changes to the national TB-testing requirements
60 that eliminate the need for an individual test for
61 animals moving from a lower disease
62 prevalence zone to a higher disease prevalence
63 zone.
 - 64 • Tying indemnity payments to the development
65 and implementation of a WRMP on each farm in
66 the modified accredited TB zone.
 - 67 • State and/or federal funding for all required
68 identification and testing.
 - 69 • Producer compensation for all livestock injured
70 or ordered removed during mandatory testing.
 - 71 • The free use of state-owned equipment for
72 producers required to perform state-mandated
73 TB testing.
 - 74 • Continued cooperation between MDARD and
75 USDA to return Michigan to TB-free status by
76 advancing the status in areas where TB has not
77 been found, or those proven to be disease-free
78 through science-based testing.
 - 79 • State and federal funding for comprehensive
80 and concerted research to further understand
81 the transmission, persistence, detection,
82 eradication, and vaccinations necessary to
83 prevent disease transmission.
 - 84 • Science-based and species-specific testing
85 protocols.
 - 86 • Developing an exit strategy for the entire state to
87 upgrade the Modified Accredited Zone (MAZ) to
88 TB-free status.
 - 89 • Research into a buyout program for cattle
90 producers in Deer Management Unit 487.
 - 91 • MDARD pursuing aggressive action with
92 surrounding states to open their borders to
93 Michigan cattle.
 - 94 • Dramatic reduction of the deer herd in any TB-
95 infected Michigan county and contiguous

96 counties. Action should include agency culling,
97 spring hunt, unlimited fall hunting, and no-cost
98 licenses.

- 99 • State support for deer-exclusion fencing around
100 entire contiguous cattle farms and deeming such
101 barriers acceptable options for farmers
102 requesting a WRMP.

103 When herds are quarantined for disease control,
104 we strongly urge MDARD/USDA to remove and test
105 suspect animals as quickly as possible. Upon
106 confirmation of infection, we support:

- 107 • Depopulation, or test-and-remove, within 60
108 days of when the disease was confirmed, and
109 indemnity payments issued within 60 days after
110 an indemnification agreement has been
111 accepted by all parties.
- 112 • If a farm is depopulated because of bovine TB,
113 and was operating under a WRMP with no
114 intention of repopulation, indemnity should not
115 be contingent on modifications to the plan.
- 116 • Requiring state and federal agencies to harvest
117 and test potential carrier animals on and around
118 TB-positive farms, including on state-owned
119 land.
- 120 • Transparency from USDA Wildlife Services,
121 including accounting and reporting of its monthly
122 deer harvest.

123 In zones where TB is found, we support aggressive
124 use of all wildlife management tools to control all animal
125 disease transmission. Limits and bans on baiting and
126 feeding may sometimes be justified and practical, but
127 we do not support a statewide ban.

128 Continued state and federal funding is critical to
129 complete eradication of the disease in free-ranging
130 wildlife and livestock populations.

131 To ensure Michigan TB eradication efforts are not
132 compromised, we encourage the MDARD director to
133 require reciprocal requirements for the importation of
134 breeding, show, and sport cattle.

135 We request state and/or federal funds be made
136 available to producers for implementing WRMPs
137 involving large expenditures. In the MAZ, we support
138 the test-and-remove option for herd owners who have
139 implemented a WRMP. We support whole-herd
140 depopulation as the most effective method of disease
141 eradication. We request USDA count herds positive
142 only for the months in which they contain positive
143 animals.

144 The current memorandum of understanding (MOU)
145 between USDA, MDARD, and MDNR establishes
146 ambitious quotas for collecting deer heads in the M

147 counties, and in surrounding TB surveillance counties.
148 To achieve these goals, we support:

- 149 • A more aggressive approach by MDNR to
150 meeting deer-head collection requirements.
- 151 • Identification, transportation and testing in the
152 MOU.
- 153 • A plan for coordinated effort between MDNR,
154 processors, Michigan State University Veterinary
155 Diagnostic Lab, Farm Bureau, and the hunting
156 community in deer head collection by
157 September 1 of each year.
- 158 • Weekly updates and reporting of completed
159 deer-head testing beginning September 1 of
160 each year.
- 161 • Payment for each deer head turned in until the
162 requirements of the MOU are met, paid by the
163 MDNR.
- 164 • Accountability from state and federal agencies
165 for not meeting MOU requirements.
- 166 • Reduction and possible elimination of cattle
167 testing in buffer counties at the end of the
168 current MOU.
- 169 • Compensation from the MDNR budget to offset
170 farm and MDARD testing expenses rooted in
171 failed agency MOU compliance.
- 172 • Requiring heads from all deer taken on private
173 and public lands in that region to be submitted
174 for testing.

175 In order to meet testing requirements from USDA,
176 MDARD, and MDNR, all deer heads taken from the
177 seven counties around the MAZ for crop damage
178 permits, as well as those taken on private and state
179 lands, should be picked up by MDNR and submitted for
180 TB testing. MDNR should also be required to pick up all
181 vehicle-killed deer in that area and submit those heads
182 for TB testing.

183 To maintain market access for cattle producers in a
184 known TB positive region, we support the movement of
185 cattle out of that region through normal channels as
186 long as testing and movement requirements are met.

#38 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. Most widely
4 adopted by the industry is the USDA National
5 Agricultural Statistics Service program (NASS). To
6 ensure accuracy of these reports, farmers should

7 provide NASS full cooperation. We will vigorously
8 defend the confidentiality of individual farm information.
9 Michigan Farm Bureau will continue working with NASS
10 to improve and simplify information gathering, such as
11 exploring the use of producer information already
12 reported to the Farm Service Agency. We encourage
13 the use of modern technology, including satellite
14 imagery, on-farm electronic data, and a streamlined
15 data collection system.

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

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

30 We support developing an accurate system to
31 calculate county yields based on actual test results or
32 scientific data considering irrigated vs. dry land yields
33 and seed corn production.

#39 Wheat Industry

1 Wheat plays an important role in Michigan's
2 economy with half a million acres planted annually.

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

7 We support:

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

23 **Risk Management Agency (RMA)**

24 We commend RMA for recognizing results of the
25 falling number test when determining quality loss
26 adjustments for white wheat. However, the coverage
27 must be expanded to include all classes of wheat, and
28 discount factors must be comparable to the level of
29 discounts experienced by producers in the marketplace.

30 We also recommend RMA explore developing a
31 new insurance policy recognizing the differentiation
32 between wheat classes.

33 We encourage RMA to standardize wheat planting
34 deadlines with the Farm Service Agency to reflect
35 current climatic conditions.

#57 Worker Protection Standards

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

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

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

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

#68 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 and
5 practices that result in market losses for producers and
6 the filing of frivolous lawsuits against producers. Upon
7 finding a complaint unsubstantiated, the individual or
8 organization who filed the complaint shall be
9 responsible for all court costs, legal fees, and costs
10 associated with market and production losses.

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

#72 Agricultural Drainage

1 Michigan farmland is enhanced by an adequate
2 and well-managed drain system. Over half of Michigan's
3 farmland requires drainage to produce food, feed and
4 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 providing farmers and
36 members with a better understanding of the
37 Drain Code of 1956 by creating an educational
38 series available to the general public.

39 The Michigan Drain Code is the legal vehicle for
40 landowners to organize to solve mutual drainage
41 problems for their benefit. Urbanization, agriculture and
42 technology have increased the need for water resource
43 management. Institutional structures such as the
44 Michigan Drain Code, Subdivision Control Act, and
45 Wetlands Protection Act, lack the necessary uniformity
46 to provide water management standards that meet
47 today's demands and tomorrow's needs.

48 We support the following provisions in the Drain
49 Code:

- 50 • The authority for administering the Drain Code
51 should be maintained within the Michigan
52 Department of Agriculture and Rural
53 Development and the office of the drain/water
54 resources commissioner at the local level.
- 55 • If existing ditches are moved at the request of
56 the county/county road commission, the
57 additional cost should be the responsibility of the
58 county/county road commission's project.
- 59 • Current exemptions for drain maintenance within
60 state statute are appropriate and should be
61 maintained.

62 Revisions to the Drain Code that benefit agriculture
63 are necessary to address the following concerns.

64 We support:

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

- 100 understand the scope of work completed and
101 the cost associated with the types and dates of
102 maintenance performed on a drain.
- 103 • Drain/water resources commissioners providing
104 notice of timing and duration of scheduled drain
105 maintenance projects to affected landowners.
 - 106 • Requiring performance bonds on work done on
107 intercounty drains where project construction
108 costs exceed \$100,000.
 - 109 • Clarification that no drainage district should be
110 extended or established for the purpose of
111 removing sediment from man-made reservoirs
112 on rivers or drains.
 - 113 • The drain/water resources commissioner
114 directing the deployment of drain sediments,
115 both organic and inorganic, to adjacent land as
116 required to minimize sediment return to the
117 drain.
 - 118 • The county drain/water resources commissioner
119 being responsible for removing blockage of a
120 natural watercourse if it affects the function of a
121 county drain.
 - 122 • The use of current technology.
 - 123 • For all new construction, a description of the
124 work to be performed being provided to owners
125 of property abutting the drain at least 10 days
126 prior to the start of construction to ensure
127 appropriate planning to handle increased storm
128 water due to development. Alternatives to storm
129 water retention ponds should be considered.

130 We oppose:

- 131 • Changes to rules developed under the Inland
132 Lakes and Streams Act causing increased
133 regulatory burdens to farmers, drain/water
134 resources commissioners, or road
135 commissioners.
- 136 • Requiring all ditches to be two-stage ditches
137 and/or requiring additional engineering or
138 planning on every new or established drain.
- 139 • State funding being used to purchase farmland
140 to construct retention wetlands for private
141 benefit.
- 142 • MDEGLE's implementation of rules and policies
143 that exceed their federal mandate and are not
144 supported by scientific evidence.
- 145 • The implementation of structures affecting the
146 flow in waterways which negatively impacts
147 agriculture.

#73 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 law
4 in the absence of sound science. We insist government
5 air quality policies be based on sound science and
6 consider economic impact.

7 Federal and state air quality standards for ozone,
8 particulate matter (dust), nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides,
9 carbon dioxide, hydrogen sulfide and others consider
10 agricultural practices such as livestock production
11 facilities, fuel combustion, diesel emissions, and dust
12 from soil tillage, crop harvesting, grain mills, grain
13 elevators and value-added processing plants as
14 potential sources of air quality concerns.

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

21 We support:

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

39 We oppose:

- 40 • Air emission permits for agriculture more
41 stringent than federal rules and regulations and
42 not science or practice-based.
- 43 • Applying air quality regulations to areas of
44 Michigan that are not pollution sources.
45 Pollutants measured in areas of Michigan not
46 meeting air quality standards may originate in
47 urban/industrial settings far removed from the
48 monitored area. Air quality concerns should be
49 addressed at their source.

- 50 • Enforcing air quality standards for ozone and
51 particulate matter on farms and agricultural
52 businesses voluntarily implementing effective
53 environmental conservation practices.
54 • Further emission control requirements for
55 agricultural equipment and practices.
56 • Any ban on the burning of biodegradable
57 household waste.

#75 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 the
8 resulting legislative and policy changes will have on our
9 industry.

10 We support:

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

14 We oppose:

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

#76 Conservation Districts

1 Enhancing farmland conservation practices and
2 natural resource stewardship will benefit both farmers
3 and the public.

4 Michigan's conservation delivery system, including
5 Natural Resources Conservation Service, Michigan
6 Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
7 (MDARD) and Districts, could be more effective in
8 delivering conservation on the ground, and it needs to
9 be improved. We encourage conservation districts to

10 take full advantage of farm bill programs, federal
11 watershed initiative programs, and other grant
12 opportunities to provide services and programs for
13 farmers in addition to dedicated funds. We also
14 encourage conservation districts to promote the
15 Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program
16 (MAEAP) and work in collaboration with farmers to
17 provide technical advice and assistance, including
18 access to financial assistance through the farm bill, in
19 order to address resource concerns and achieve
20 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 • Immediate efforts to find a dedicated line-item
33 funding source for conservation districts, which
34 will allow them to plan long-term projects and
35 provide competitive employee compensation
36 including benefits, knowing funding is secure.
37 Dedicated funds from agricultural sources
38 should focus on providing cost-share to
39 producers for implementing conservation
40 practices. Until dedicated funding is secured, the
41 state should continue to authorize appropriate
42 general funds to support conservation districts.
- 43 • Legislative or regulatory changes to enable
44 conservation districts with budgets less than
45 \$50,000 to participate in grant programs by
46 submitting a financial review in lieu of a formal
47 audit.
- 48 • Farm Bureau members supporting and
49 becoming actively involved with local
50 conservation districts by working collaboratively
51 to improve the conservation delivery system.
- 52 • Farmer leaders in conservation districts using
53 their annual meetings as an opportunity to
54 promote conservation programming in
55 agriculture.

56 We support Michigan Farm Bureau:

- 57 • Working with conservation districts to develop
58 educational materials for members about
59 agricultural stewardship and supporting efforts to

- 60 make the public aware of the benefits of
61 investment in good stewardship.
- 62 • Working with the Michigan Association of
63 Conservation Districts and local conservation
64 districts to ensure landowners' conservation
65 needs are met now and into the future. These
66 groups working together should review the
67 current structure and delivery system, as well as
68 determine what resources and appropriate
69 authorities are needed for conservation districts.

70 We support conservation districts:

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

90 **Conservation Species**

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

99 As a result of recent reductions in funding,
100 conservation districts generate additional sources of
101 revenue by greatly enlarging the approved list of
102 "conservation species," which expands competition with
103 private industry for production and sale of plant
104 material. This "conservation species" list is reviewed
105 annually by an advisory panel, as required by law. We
106 are concerned about the number of recent additions to
107 the approved propagation list. Conservation districts
108 should be encouraged to purchase their plant materials

109 from Michigan private industry suppliers whenever
110 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, help
4 maintain the agricultural industry's competitive position,
5 and aggressively increase its economic value to
6 producers and the state. A successful approach to
7 farmland protection will require a combination of strong
8 local leadership and effective state support.

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

A Strategic Approach

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

16 We support:

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

Funding Farmland Protection

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

36 We support:

PA 116

- 38 • The Farmland and Open Space Preservation
39 Program (commonly known as PA 116) as an
40 effective voluntary method of protecting
41 farmland while giving farmers needed tax relief.
- 42 • Refraining from future changes to existing
43 contracts that risk eroding the integrity of the
44 program.
- 45 • Local units of government zoning land under PA
46 116 contracts as agriculture and identifying it as
47 agriculture in their master plan.

- 48 • All PA 116 tax credit recapture revenue being
49 deposited into the Michigan Department of
50 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)
51 Agricultural Preservation Fund.
- 52 • Continued and aggressive use of PA 116 by
53 creating additional incentives to maintain and
54 increase participation.
- 55 • Additional funding and staffing of MDARD and
56 the Michigan Department of Treasury to
57 administer PA 116 and process refunds in a
58 timely manner.
- 59 • MDARD and the Michigan Department of
60 Treasury developing better communication to
61 resolve issues with PA 116 tax returns.
- 62 • Requiring the State to pay penalties for late
63 issuance of PA 116 refunds to landowners.
- 64 • Protection and exemption from special
65 assessments excluding agricultural drainage.
- 66 • Land currently enrolled in the PA 116 program
67 not being eligible for commercial solar project
68 development.

69 ***Agricultural Preservation Fund***

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

85 ***Agricultural Security Areas***

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

90 ***Urban Revitalization***

- 91 • State programs incentivizing the redevelopment
92 of brownfield properties in Michigan in an effort
93 to stop the loss of farmland.
- 94 • The improvement of cities, greater utilization of
95 current infrastructure, and redevelopment of
96 existing brownfields to reduce pressure to
97 develop farmland.

98 ***Transfer of Development Rights***

- 99 • Transfer of development rights to facilitate the
100 voluntary preservation of farmland where
101 needed while allowing land development in
102 appropriate 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 are
3 an integral part of the agricultural economy of the state.
4 The industry is concerned about increased government
5 restrictions on the use of farms for hunting.

6 We support:

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

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

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

#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 rely
4 on cooperative, voluntary, partnership-based efforts
5 between public agencies, private landowners, and
6 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
27 and gaining their support before releasing a non-
28 native 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 • Development of an aggressive plan by state,
38 federal, and tribal agencies to address the food
39 web imbalance in the Great Lakes that has
40 largely been caused by invasive zebra and
41 quagga mussels, to promote the recovery of our
42 native and naturalized fishery.
- 43 • An increase in funds for inspection services and
44 facilities. Funding should also be made available
45 for public education and outreach efforts.
- 46 • Preventing and controlling noxious weeds and
47 other seeds in mixtures offered to the public.
- 48 • Clear and scientific criteria to delineate what are
49 invasive species. Due to genetic differences
50 between plant genera, plant hybrids, and within
51 species, varieties and cultivars, each should be
52 treated as an individual when delineating
53 invasive species.
- 54 • Studying any predator species before it is
55 introduced to limit or destroy an invasive species
56 to determine any other damage that might occur
57 to the environment or farmers.

- 58 • Regulations including emergency measures to
59 allow for the timely use of chemical controls.
- 60 • Any consideration of endangered or threatened
61 species should recognize and address the role
62 of invasive species.
- 63 • Adequate state and federal funding to develop
64 sound science sufficient to determine long-term
65 effects of invasive species.
- 66 • Indemnification of crop, nursery stock and
67 livestock losses from invasive species when it
68 can be documented that the quarantine
69 requirements or treatment methods are the
70 basis for the loss.
- 71 • Public lands and rights-of-way being managed
72 to reduce and eliminate invasive species as
73 effectively as private lands and in coordination
74 with neighboring privately owned or leased land.
75 Any efforts on public lands affecting the uses
76 and private rights held by public land permittees
77 and users shall be subject to compensation and
78 fair market value for the taking of these property
79 rights by the introduction or proliferation of
80 invasive species.
- 81 • Proper incentives being provided for farmers
82 and ranchers to effectively control noxious and
83 aquatic weeds, along with support for an
84 Integrated Pest Management approach.
- 85 • Consideration being given to the extent to which
86 species may be naturalized in an environment.
87 Any penalties associated with introductions must
88 be realistic.
- 89 • Michigan's ballast water discharge standards
90 reflecting the federal standards which are
91 enforced by the U.S. Coast Guard.

92 We oppose:

- 93 • Plants being prohibited or restricted through
94 legislation and removed from trade unless
95 eradication is concurrently instituted on public
96 lands.
- 97 • Invasive species being defined to include
98 agricultural products or other beneficial non-
99 native species.
- 100 • Regulations being allowed to interfere with or
101 erode property rights.
- 102 • Invasive species programs creating additional
103 restrictions on agriculture producers and
104 landowners.

#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 clear
4 need.

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

14 We support:

- 15 • Legislation to stop or limit developmental grants
16 or other state, local or federal funding to entities
17 using condemnation procedures for private
18 ownership.
- 19 • Direct and verifiable communication in plain
20 language informing landowners of projects
21 seeking eminent domain.
- 22 • Agricultural land not ranking lower than other
23 types of land when calculating impact
24 statements.
- 25 • A complete agricultural impact statement before
26 productive agricultural land is condemned. The
27 statement should evaluate all direct and indirect
28 physical and economic impacts to agriculture.
- 29 • The concept of no-net gain for state and federal
30 ownership of land in Michigan. An environmental
31 impact statement should be a prerequisite for
32 any eminent domain proceeding.
- 33 • Efforts to further strengthen property rights of
34 Michigan property owners, including additional
35 opportunities for judicial review in eminent
36 domain takings.
- 37 • Landowners having at least five years from the
38 time of the original settlement in which to
39 negotiate claims for damages in eminent domain
40 cases.
- 41 • Permanent easements being given to the
42 owners of property left land-locked through land
43 acquired by public entities and utility companies.
- 44 • Michigan Farm Bureau working with public utility
45 companies to ensure they pay fair and
46 reasonable rental rates to landowners for
47 easements.

48 We oppose:

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

#81 Land Use

1 Local land use planning in Michigan is essential for
2 the long-term viability of all communities. We must all
3 work together to plan the proper utilization of land for
4 the long-term. Any plan to address land uses in
5 Michigan must consider and protect the rights of private
6 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 collaborate
16 with the county planning commission when
17 developing the county's master plan and setting
18 long-term plans.
- 19 • Intra-jurisdictional coordination between all
20 public entities in a community, including fire
21 districts, emergency medical services, water and
22 sewer 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
29 on land development patterns.

- 30 • Enabling local communities to use the statutory
31 authority of “concurrency” when negotiating new
32 development approval. Concurrency establishes
33 a 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 existing
42 zoning tools when appropriate to help protect
43 farmland and farm operations by including
44 cluster housing, buffer areas, fencing, planted
45 tree setbacks, and site density zoning.
- 46 • Acknowledgement of the diversity and
47 uniqueness of each community in our state. We
48 believe that land use decisions are best made
49 by local communities including planning and
50 zoning decisions for energy siting and mega site
51 development. We oppose preemption of local
52 zoning for these purposes.
- 53 • The sale of state and federally owned land
54 suitable for residential or industrial use to
55 preserve farmland and increase local revenue.
56 This development should only be considered on
57 vacant sites with existing or nearby utilities fitting
58 the local land use plan.
- 59 • Local governments considering alternatives to
60 minimize adverse impacts to farms within one
61 mile of where land is divided.
- 62 • Encouraging local units of government to utilize
63 brownfield redevelopment authorities.
- 64 • Amending the Land Division Act to:
 - 65 ○ Change the platting process to reduce cost,
66 time and bureaucracy.
 - 67 ○ Create density in communities by revisiting
68 the 10-year redivision requirement.
 - 69 ○ Allow local units of government to utilize the
70 entire Zoning Enabling Act to locally govern
71 the Land Division Act.
 - 72 ○ Require site condominiums, manufactured
73 housing developments and mobile home
74 parks to comply with land division and/or the
75 platting process in the Land Division Act.
- 76 • When agricultural land is within a governmental
77 unit, a representative of production agriculture
78 being appointed to the planning commissions
79 and zoning boards.

- 80 • Members becoming actively involved in land use
81 planning and zoning.
- 82 • Individuals appointed to councils, commissions
83 and boards created by government, state
84 legislators, and MDARD to represent agricultural
85 interests being, or having been, directly involved
86 in the agriculture industry.
- 87 • Legislation being enacted to prevent farmland
88 from being annexed to a municipality without a
89 vote of the people in the affected area. Upon
90 approval of the people in the affected area, an
91 annexation proposal should then be approved
92 by a vote of the residents of the appropriate
93 units of government.
- 94 • Requiring consent of landowners for annexation
95 proposals. Changing the use of property must
96 consider and protect the rights of private
97 property owners.
- 98 • Property enrolled in farmland preservation
99 programs having concurrent approval for
100 annexation or public use by the contracted
101 parties, including land owners.
- 102 • The development and uniformity of Geographic
103 Information Systems and we encourage use by
104 local units of government in land use planning.
- 105 • Michigan Farm Bureau assisting county Farm
106 Bureaus with model zoning ordinances
107 pertaining to agriculture.
- 108 • The development of entry-level or moderate-
109 income housing to attract and maintain an
110 agriculture workforce in rural and small
111 communities.
- 112 • The Michigan Department of Natural Resources
113 (MDNR) continuing and expanding the bidding,
114 renting, and/or sale of state land for agricultural
115 use.

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

124 In addition to required bonding, we believe that
125 state and federal funding for industrial clean-up should
126 be consistent in rural areas for any private and/or
127 publicly funded megasite development that needs to be
128 decommissioned.

129 We oppose:

- 130 • Rezoning agricultural zones if the use has not
131 changed and the landowners have not
132 requested the zoning change.
- 133 • Limitations being placed on state lands for
134 recreational purposes unless there is sound
135 scientific justification or funding restrictions. If
136 limitations are proposed, then justification should
137 be in writing and public hearings conducted.
138 When the MDNR proposes public land use
139 changes, it is imperative that those impacted are
140 involved in the decision-making process.
- 141 • Restrictions on leases of state-owned
142 agricultural land exceeding Generally Accepted
143 Agricultural and Management Practices.
- 144 • State and federal funds being used to develop
145 farmland for non-agricultural purposes, to
146 balance private property rights with the fact that
147 farmland is not infinite.

#86 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 guaranteed
5 to individuals by the Constitution.

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

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

- 19 • The initial request for and final approval of a
20 Natural Rivers Act designation must originate
21 from the local units of government in which the
22 river is located.
- 23 • Agriculture and other industries must be fairly
24 represented on local Natural Rivers Review
25 Boards.
- 26 • An economic impact study should be conducted
27 to determine the effect of a Natural Rivers Act
28 designation on local businesses and property
29 owners.

- 30 • If the local unit of government approves a
31 Natural Rivers Act designation, the designation
32 must be subject to review at least every five
33 years.

34 We support:

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

69 We oppose:

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

#87 Resource Recovery

1 Vast quantities of all types of recoverable materials
2 are generated daily. We support Michigan Farm Bureau
3 taking steps to advocate reducing and recovering our
4 waste where practical. We support immediate and long-
5 term solutions including:

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

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

46 We oppose hauling waste into Michigan from other
47 states and countries for disposal, including nuclear and
48 hazardous waste.

#91 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
18 than five acres and their only connection to an
19 inland lake or stream is an agricultural drain.
- 20 • Exempting cutting woody vegetation and in-
21 place 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
26 and 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 Act.
- 38 • Regulating a wetland if it meets the criteria in the
39 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' 1987 Delineation
40 Manual and Regional Supplements.

41 We recommend the following:

- 42 • The MDEGLE statewide wetland inventory
43 should not be used for regulatory purposes.
44 Michigan Farm Bureau is concerned the
45 inventory includes wetlands that do not meet
46 current wetland delineation standards.
- 47 • Compatible agricultural uses should be allowed
48 in wetlands. Wetland vegetation should be
49 defined as obligate hydrophytes.

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

1 We are very concerned with the expansion of new
2 and increased fees which impact agriculture because:
3 • Fees constitute taxation without representation.
4 • Fees may not be in relation to service provided
5 and generate revenue in excess of the cost of
6 service.
7 • Fees might be interpreted as a replacement for
8 General Fund dollars.
9 • Fees are a cost on a select and limited sector of
10 the economy.

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

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

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

22 An economic impact statement should be
23 completed on the permitted entities before the fee is
24 implemented.

#95 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 is
4 the only state in the country to utilize a county road
5 commission structure. The three or five-member boards
6 have six-year staggered terms and are, in most cases,
7 appointed by the county board of commissioners.

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

12 We believe each county overseen by a road
13 commission should have the option to decide if it needs

14 a three or five-member county road commission. These
15 should be by district, regardless of population, and
16 representative of all areas of the county. Commission
17 members should serve four-year staggered terms.

18 We support properly and consistently training road
19 commission employees to grade and maintain local
20 roadways to uniform grade standards.

21 We support county road commissions having
22 access to state run facilities and equipment.

#97 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 Backups of commercial vehicles at border
5 crossings is detrimental to commerce. We urge
6 adequate staffing to prevent delays in transportation of
7 agricultural products.

8 We applaud the completed agreement to construct
9 the Gordie Howe International Bridge (New
10 International Trade Crossing) and urge its expedient
11 completion.

#98 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 and
6 Michigan residency.

7 We support the State of Michigan:

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

#99 Railroads

1 The transportation of agricultural and forestry inputs
2 and commodities produced is dependent upon efficient
3 and continued railroad service. Mergers with the
4 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, the
9 Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the
10 U.S. Department of Transportation and Congress to
11 ensure future investment and expansion of commodity
12 and passenger rail infrastructures in Michigan and
13 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
17 and 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. Legislation to require railroads
23 to use reflectors or reflectorized paint or tape on
24 the sides of rail cars to improve visibility. In
25 addition, we support the use of strobe and ditch
26 lights on railroad engines and the last car.
- 27 • Public notice and hearing process for Michigan
28 highway projects should be used when changes
29 in Michigan railroads are proposed to ensure the
30 viewpoints of all affected parties are considered.
- 31 • Acceptable rail crossing alternatives be
32 developed and railroad crossing upgrades be
33 completed in a timely manner if existing
34 crossings are required to be closed.
- 35 • Exempting private agriculture crossings from
36 closure and treated as nonresidential seasonal
37 agriculture use.
- 38 • The requesting party be responsible to pay for
39 safety mechanisms at a private crossing if they
40 are determined necessary.
- 41 • Fencing along the rail corridor should be erected
42 and paid for by the railroad when railroads bisect
43 a fenced parcel of land.
- 44 • Railway companies be responsible to keep the
45 railroad right-of-way free of brush for a
46 reasonable distance at road crossings.

47 **Abandoned Railroads**

48 The changing of a railroad right-of-way from its
49 intended use should result in compensation to property
50 owners whose land had been originally purchased or
51 condemned for the purpose of the railroad right-of-way.
52 All unused railroad rights-of-way not preserved for
53 future railroad traffic should be reverted to, or offered for
54 sale at or below fair market value, to the current owner

55 of record of the underlying parcel of real estate from
56 which said right-of-way was originally obtained.
57 Whenever determined not possible, landowners shall
58 be compensated for the condemnation of the land or a
59 change to a non-railroad use.

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

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

69 We support allowing horses on converted railroad
70 trails.

#100 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.

Agricultural Safety on Roads

8 To improve safety regarding agricultural use
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.

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 (SMV)
32 sign and implements of husbandry which is designed to

33 warn other road users that the vehicle displaying the
34 sign is traveling at slower than normal traffic speed.

35 Therefore, we support:

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

51 **Visibility and Warning Signals**

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

- 54 • MFB working in cooperation with the County
55 Road Association to establish a process for use
56 of warning signs related to agriculture vehicles
57 such as entering and exiting roadways.
- 58 • The use of farm and other traffic alert signs in
59 areas of heavy farm or other traffic or similar
60 signage allowed under the Michigan Manual of
61 Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
- 62 • The placement of yellow flashing lights at the
63 beginning of school zones, and appropriate
64 signage as mandated under the Michigan
65 Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
- 66 • An advance stop light change warning system at
67 major state highway intersections. This advance
68 warning system would alert drivers to a signal
69 change from green light to a yellow light,
70 allowing drivers extra time and distance to slow
71 and stop vehicles before the red light is
72 illuminated. This advance warning system would
73 read “when light is flashing be prepared to stop.”
- 74 • The use of low-cost measures, including
75 reflective taping or additional signage, to
76 mitigate accidents at rural intersections and
77 railroad crossings.
- 78 • Where stop lights are present on highways with
79 speed limits above 45 mph, we support the
80 placement of a warning light and sign before the
81 intersection that would flash a warning that “the

- 82 light is about to change” in order to give trucks
83 and large vehicles additional time to stop.
- 84 • Reflectorized material being used on the outer
85 edge of snow blades to be more visible at night.
 - 86 • Voluntary use of pollinator habitat using Natural
87 Resources Conservation Service guidelines
88 along roadways and at intersections to improve
89 line of sight.
 - 90 • More aggressive enforcement by local
91 jurisdictions of laws pertaining to encroachments
92 (e.g., mailboxes, shrines should be on one side
93 of the road) on road rights-of-way.

94 **General Public Safety on Roadways**

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

- 96 • Pedestrians choosing to walk in the roadway
97 should wear high visibility clothing and follow
98 traffic rules.
- 99 • Further education regarding bicycle safety and
100 rules on public roads. Additionally, traffic laws
101 should be enforced by local authorities for
102 bicyclists at the same level as they are for
103 passenger vehicles.
- 104 • Bicyclists being required to ride in single file on
105 highways, or paved shoulders when available,
106 instead of the vehicle traffic lane.
- 107 • Revisions to the Michigan Vehicle Code to
108 include visibility and safety standards for the
109 operation of bicycles on public roads during
110 daylight hours, as well as sunset to sunrise.
- 111 • Front and rear lights and high visibility clothing
112 should be required.
- 113 • All persons over 75 years of age should have to
114 renew their driver’s license in person at a
115 Secretary of State office. The only test that
116 would be needed is a vision test. This test would
117 be optional and at the discretion of the Secretary
118 of State staff.

Reaffirmation of Michigan Farm Bureau Policies

#102 Legal Defense Fund

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

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

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

#103 Membership and Farm Bureau Programs

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

7 We support:

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

- 22 • Equitable opportunities and resources for all
23 members.
24 These programs help our members successfully be
25 the voice for agriculture.

#104 Political Action Program

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

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

27 With the increasing number of legislative and
28 regulatory issues facing agriculture, it's imperative that
29 we have as many Friends of Agriculture elected as
30 possible with county Farm Bureau support. We need
31 more farmers in all forms of government: local, state,
32 university and national.

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