

# Purpose

Candidates for elected offices are becoming further removed from production agriculture. It is very important the candidates who are elected to office express a willingness to listen to agricultural input on issues and understand the impact that proposed policies may have on production agriculture. For more than 30 years, the Michigan Farm Bureau Political Action Committee (AgriPac) has identified candidates who are “Friends of Agriculture” by utilizing input from county Farm Bureau Candidate Evaluation Committees.

The purpose of this handbook is to go one step further and offer suggestions for activities the county Farm Bureau can do to help elect candidates designated as “Friends of Agriculture.”

It is suggested that county Farm Bureaus appoint an ad hoc Elections Committee to be the primary county committee utilized to conduct the suggested activities. If the county so chooses, it can also use other county committees.

The committee would develop an action plan and budget for the chosen events and present the proposed action plan to the county Farm Bureau Board of Directors for approval.

NOTE: The planned county Farm Bureau election activity should be communicated to personnel of Michigan Farm Bureau and/or any of its Affiliated Companies who are operating within the county. Such communication will assist these companies in directing questions they may receive to the appropriate individuals.

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# 2010 Michigan Farm Bureau Star Awards-Political Action Application



2010  
Michigan Farm Bureau  
Star Awards Program  
**Political Action**

~ MFB USE ONLY ~

\_\_\_ Gold: 75 points or more  
\_\_\_ Silver: 50-74 points  
\_\_\_ No star: 49 points or less

Regular member category \_\_\_

**Due Date: July 1, 2010**

\_\_\_ County Farm Bureau

*Applications will be scored by MFB and points will be awarded in home office.*

**Minimum Criteria**

The following minimum criteria must be met in order to receive a Gold Star in the area of **Political Action**.

- |  |                          |  |
|--|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Our county appointed a Candidate Evaluation Committee (CEC) in 2010.                | <b>Yes</b>               |  |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| 2. Our CEC met and sent recommendations for endorsements to the MFB AgriPac Committee. | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |

**Committee Dynamics**

Please answer the following questions as they pertain to the area of your **Candidate Evaluation Committee**.

- |   |                          |  |
|---|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Our CEC submitted a plan of work to the county FB Board of Directors. (Please attach copy) | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| 2. Our CEC met ___ times and involved ___ members.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| 3. Our CEC conducted in-person interviews with candidates for office.                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| 4. Throughout our election activities, our CEC involved ___ (number) members.                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| 5. Our CEC held a "Meet the Candidate" activity for our members.                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |  |

**Election Activities Conducted**

1. Our CFB engaged in activities to register people and urge them to vote. List activities: \_\_\_
2. Our CFB engaged in surfacing candidates to run for office. List activities: \_\_\_
3. Our CFB promoted Absentee Ballot usage to our membership. Explain how: \_\_\_
4. Our CFB put together a plan and distributed signs for Friends of Agriculture candidates.
5. Our CFB sent postcards , conducted a phone bank,  or other activities \_\_\_ (example) in support of our endorsed candidates.

**Star Activities**

A. Describe the most important activity conducted by your CEC and county Farm Bureau within the past year to help get "Friends of Agriculture" endorsed candidates elected. Describe why you believe this activity qualifies your county for the Star Award. You may include info on an additional sheet if you need more room.

Activity: \_\_\_ Date(s): \_\_\_

# Involved: \_\_\_

Purpose / Benefit: \_\_\_

B. Please describe what activities/actions your CEC and county Farm Bureau took to communicate to and inform your members of Friend of Agriculture endorsements.

Activity: \_\_\_

# Involved \_\_\_

Purpose/Benefit \_\_\_

POINTS
50 Max
___
___
___
___
___
___
___
25 Max
___
25 Max
___
TOTAL
___
(100)

*By signing below you affirm that all information is complete and accurate to the best of your knowledge.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
County President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Chair



# 2010 County Activity Timeline

## August

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

### Tuesday, August 3

Primary Election: VOTE

## September

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

### Wednesday, September 1

Michigan Farm Bureau Statewide Candidate Interview Forum and Elections Conference

### Tuesday, September 14

AgriPac meets to evaluate statewide candidates nominated at political party conventions and make endorsements for November 2 General Election.

### Wednesday, September 15

List of candidates endorsed for November 2 General Election by AgriPac sent to county Farm Bureau Presidents and county Farm Bureau Candidate Evaluation Committees for their information.

### Thursday, September 23

List of candidate endorsements released to news media.

# Attachment B

## Postcard Orders

All of the "Friends of Agriculture" candidates whose legislative districts are within the county will be printed on the postcard.

## County Farm Bureau Cost for Postcards

If the county Farm Bureau chooses to address and mail the postcards, Michigan Farm Bureau will charge **8 cents per postcard** for the cost of printing. **(When considering this option, please determine the cost to the county Farm Bureau of addressing the postcards and postage. 1st Class postage will cost 28 cents per postcard.)**

The county Farm Bureau can choose to have Michigan Farm Bureau print, address, and mail the postcards for a cost of **36 cents per postcard**.

## Ordering Procedure

### PRIMARY ELECTION

Postcards will be mailed to:

- a. All county Farm Bureau Members. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Only county Farm Bureau Regular Members \_\_\_\_\_

Orders for postcards for the Primary Election need to be submitted via the Michigan Farm Bureau Printing Services website at <http://mfbprint> **no later than Wednesday, June 30, 2010**. Confirmation of received orders will be e-mailed to the county Farm Bureau.

Postcards mailed from the Michigan Farm Bureau home office will be mailed to the county Farm Bureau membership between July 16 and July 23, 2010.

### GENERAL ELECTION

Postcards will be mailed to:

- a. All county Farm Bureau Members. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Only county Farm Bureau Regular Members \_\_\_\_\_


Orders for postcards for the General Election need to be submitted via the Michigan Farm Bureau Printing Services website at <http://mfbprint> **no later than Wednesday, September 29, 2010**. Confirmation of received orders will be e-mailed to the county Farm Bureau.

Postcards mailed from the Michigan Farm Bureau home office will be mailed to the county Farm Bureau membership between October 15 and October 22, 2010.

Mail order to: Michigan Farm Bureau  
 Attn: Matthew Kapp  
 Public Policy Division  
 7373 West Saginaw Highway  
 P.O. Box 30960  
 Lansing, Michigan 48909-8460

# Attachment B

# 2010 County Activity Timeline



**MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU**  
P.O. Box 30960, Lansing, MI 48909

They Understand!  
Agriculture is Important!

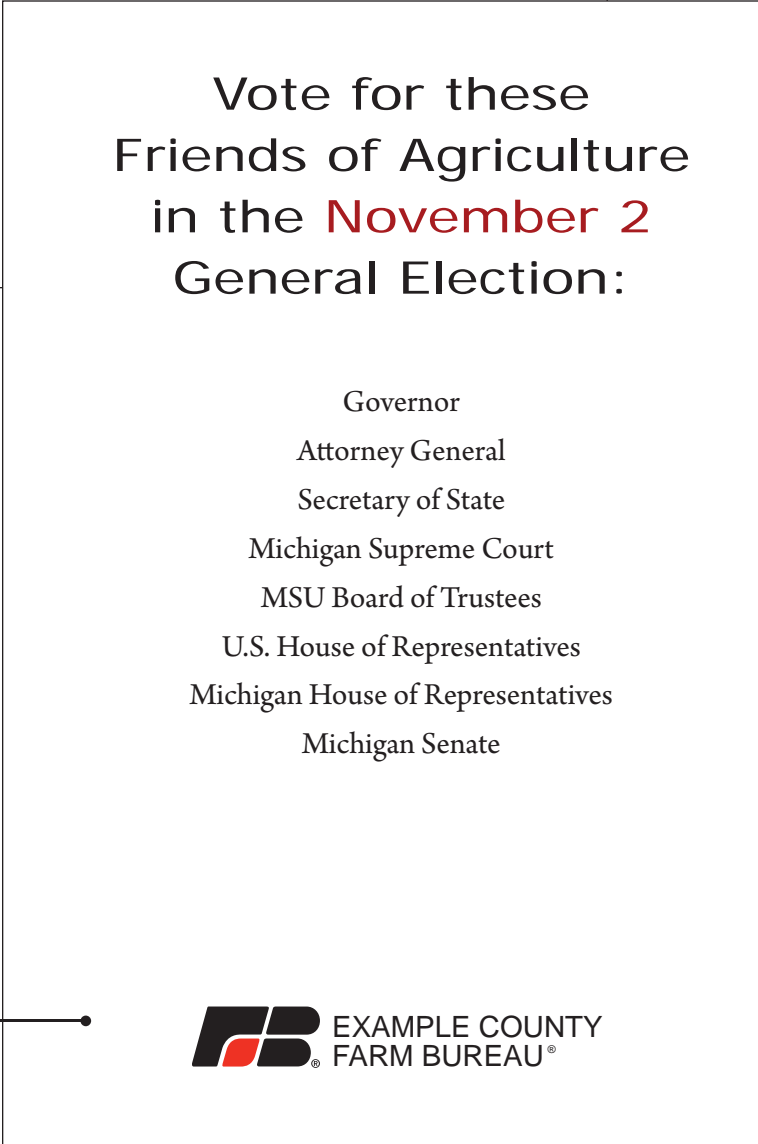
Take this postcard to the polls and remember to vote for "Friends of Agriculture" on November 2.

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT NO. 37  
LANSING, MI

**Vote for these Friends of Agriculture in the November 2 General Election:**

Governor  
Attorney General  
Secretary of State  
Michigan Supreme Court  
MSU Board of Trustees  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Michigan House of Representatives  
Michigan Senate

Postcard Front



**EXAMPLE COUNTY FARM BUREAU**

## October

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

### Monday, October 4

Last day to register for General Election.

## November

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

### Tuesday, November 2

General Election: VOTE



# Legal Limitations for County Farm Bureaus

The county Farm Bureau **can** recommend that its members vote for “Friends of Agriculture” in communications with the **county Farm Bureau membership** and others (see FAQ #8 on page 6).

The county Farm Bureau **cannot** make either a financial contribution or an in-kind contribution to any political candidate.

- An in-kind contribution is any activity in support of a candidate which may have a value or cost attributed to it (meals, giveaway items, employee time).

The county Farm Bureau **cannot** mail candidate’s campaign literature to the county Farm Bureau membership without charging the candidate for all incurred costs (the county Farm Bureau must act independently).

The county Farm Bureau **can** recommend people vote for a candidate in any document that is directed to anyone other than the members of that county Farm Bureau, but it must register with the Secretary of State.

Note: Many political activities that cannot be undertaken by the county Farm Bureau can nevertheless be undertaken by individual members. For example, individual members could purchase logo screened golf balls and donate them directly to a candidate. Good ideas can be modified to comply with legal limitations.

- The county FB cannot pay for its members to attend fundraisers.
- The county FB cannot have its employees provide assistance to candidates (during company employment time).
- The county can allow members to use offices and phones to aid in political activities on behalf of Friends of Agriculture.

*If you have any questions concerning legal limitations on county Farm Bureau activities, please contact Michigan Farm Bureau at 1-800-292-2680 (Matt Kapp, ext. 2027).*

# Attachment A (Pre-General Election Letter)

Dear (Member’s First Name):

I am writing to you on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ County Farm Bureau about a very important issue facing agriculture. The issue is the upcoming election. Candidates for elected offices are becoming further removed from production agriculture and those elected legislators who understand production agriculture will only spend a limited time in office, due to term-limits, before someone new takes their place.

That is why it is important that candidates who are elected to office express a willingness to listen to agricultural input on issues and understand the impact that proposed legislation may have on production agriculture.

Farm Bureau has carefully reviewed the candidates running for office and has determined that the following candidates are “Friends of Agriculture:”

(Names of Candidates)	(Office Sought)	(District #)
-----------------------	-----------------	--------------

Please remember to vote in the General Election on Tuesday, November 2, 2010 and give every consideration to voting for the “Friends of Agriculture.”

Your Vote Will Count!

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_, President  
\_\_\_\_\_  
County Farm Bureau

# Attachment A

(Pre-Primary Election Letter)

Dear (Member's First Name):

I am writing to you on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ County Farm Bureau about a very important issue facing agriculture. The issue is the upcoming election. Every year the agricultural industry has to deal with new laws and regulations that have an impact on how you operate.

It is important that we elect candidates to office who understand agriculture is an industry that cannot pass along additional governmental generated costs, but rather must absorb these costs. As you well know, the margin of profit is very limited and sometimes is nonexistent.

Farm Bureau has carefully reviewed the candidates running for office and has determined that the following candidates are "Friends of Agriculture:"

(Names of Candidates)	(Office Sought)	(District #)
-----------------------	-----------------	--------------

Please remember to vote in the Primary Election on Tuesday, August 3, 2010 and give every consideration to voting for the "Friends of Agriculture."

Your Vote Will Count!

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_, President  
\_\_\_\_\_  
County Farm Bureau

**NOTE: County Administrative Managers can access the sample letters in Attachment A through the Shared Drive under the following folder: Public/Field Ops/Public Policy/Election Handbook.**

# Legal Limitations

## Frequently Asked Questions

### QUESTION

1. Can a county Farm Bureau buy a lunch or pay for the county annual meeting ticket for a candidate?

2. Can a county Farm Bureau put a candidate's sign on county Farm Bureau property?

3. Can a county Farm Bureau organize a PAC?

4. Can a county Farm Bureau use general funds to help a candidate financially?

5. The county Farm Bureau would like to conduct a fundraiser in November 2009 for the current Attorney General, who is a candidate for Governor in 2010. Can they do that?

6. Jon Doe, a new candidate for the 80th house seat who was recommended for endorsement by our county, wants to send postcards out noticing our members about a series of farm meetings he is planning. AgriPac hasn't made any endorsements in that race yet. He is offering to provide the postcards and pay for the mailing. Can the CAM put the labels on the postcards, if the board has agreed to let him use the membership list?

### ANSWER

1. No. A county Farm Bureau member can pay for such expenditures for a candidate, but not the county Farm Bureau itself.

2. Yes.

3. Yes. At least one has done this in the past. There are significant compliance requirements, however.

4. No. This would be a direct contribution to the candidate's campaign which the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled is illegal. The county Farm Bureau can indirectly support the candidate's campaign, however.

5. Not unless the county Farm Bureau is reimbursed by the candidate for all costs and expenditures, because otherwise this would be an impermissible contribution. However, a member of the county Farm Bureau could conduct such a fundraiser (subject to reporting the costs if more than \$100).

6. Legally, this is allowable, as long as the candidate pays all costs (including an appropriate amount for the County Administrative Manager's time). The county Farm Bureau cannot bear any of the costs.

# Legal Limitations Frequently Asked Questions

## QUESTION

7. Could the county Farm Bureau sponsor the meetings referred to in #6, or hold one at their office?

8. What does the new Supreme Court ruling mean? How should/can county Farm Bureaus get involved in ways they were not allowed previously?

9. Can county Farm Bureaus contribute to a candidate's campaign? What is considered a contribution?

## ANSWER

7. The county Farm Bureau could not sponsor the meetings referred to in #6, as that would be a direct contribution to the candidate's campaign. A meeting could be held at the county Farm Bureau office as long as the candidate reimburses the county Farm Bureau for the cost of the space.

8. In January of 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its opinion in the case of Citizens United v. FEC. The Court struck down limits on independent corporate political expenditures, permitting businesses and unions to spend corporate funds on independent advertising expressly for or against candidates. The decision affirms that the the Constitution protects corporations' rights to express themselves about political candidates. It struck down not only a provision of the 2002 McCain-Feingold campaign-finance act limiting corporate-funded political ads ("issue ads") immediately before federal elections, but also federal laws and state laws that restricted corporations from directly funding political messages from their general treasuries. The Court did leave in place certain provisions:

1. Corporate advertising expenditures need to be disclosed.
2. Corporate contributions can not be made directly to candidates.
3. Corporate expenditures on ads can not be directed by candidates.
4. The Corporation must file reports if it spends \$100 or more in independent expenditures during a year.

A county Farm Bureau can thus, now, pay for newspaper ads, place billboards, radio ads, TV ads, send postcards, print their own yard signs, etc. for or against candidates, subject to these provisions.

9. Since a county Farm Bureau is a corporation, it cannot contribute to a candidate's campaign. A contribution is money or "anything of ascertainable monetary value" that is given for the purpose of influencing the election of a candidate.

# Ride to the Polls Program

**PURPOSE:** To increase the number of county Farm Bureau members who vote by offering rides to the polls for those members who do not have another way to get to the polls.

The county Farm Bureau can coordinate rides to the polls for members who contact the county Farm Bureau and request transportation to the polls.

The county Farm Bureau would contact members to ask for volunteers to drive members to the polls.

- Contact leadership for volunteers.
  - Contact retired members who might be interested in offering rides.
  - Once the volunteer drivers have been identified, the county Farm Bureau can advertise to its members the offer of rides to the polls.
  - Advertise the membership "Ride to the Poll" service in county Farm Bureau publications or in a direct mailing to the members.
    - List the phone number and hours members may call to make a reservation.
    - Have members call, up to the day before Election Day, to schedule a ride to the polls.
- Note: We suggest that all phone calls for rides be received before Election Day.**
- Record member's address, directions to his/her house and telephone number at which he/she can be contacted, if the driver has questions.
  - Delegate rides to volunteer drivers.
  - After the event, send thank you notes to all volunteers.

## **COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER DUTIES:**

- Encourage member involvement.
- Participate in planning and conducting county committee activities. Provide support services to the county committee, as needed.
- Assist chairperson (or designated volunteer) with scheduling rides prior to Election Day.

## **REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES:**

- Assist county Farm Bureau leadership and the county committee assigned the election activity with the organization and implementation of the event or activity.

## **LEGAL LIMITATIONS:**

The county Farm Bureau may conduct a "Ride to the Polls" campaign for its membership.



## Meet “Friends of Agriculture” Night

- Develop the program.
  - The chairperson of the meeting should:
    - Start the meeting on time.
    - Thank everyone for coming.
    - Review the agenda.
    - Give a brief explanation on how the “Friend of Agriculture” endorsement works and why it is important to elect a candidate who is willing to work with agriculture.
    - Introduce each “Friend of Agriculture” candidate.
    - Allow each “Friend of Agriculture” candidate a stated amount of time to address the members. Give the county Farm Bureau members a predetermined amount of time to ask questions of each candidate.
    - Thank the candidates and everyone for coming.
    - Close the meeting on time. Offer time for anyone who wishes to stay afterward to visit one-on-one with the candidates, if they so choose.
- Send thank you notes to.
  - Volunteers who helped plan, prepare and conduct the meeting.
  - “Friend of Agriculture” candidates who participated.

### COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER DUTIES:

- Encourage member involvement.
- Participate in planning and conducting county committee activities. Provide support services to the county committee, as needed.
- Send out notice to the county Farm Bureau regular members regarding the meeting.
- Help coordinate meeting with the county Farm Bureau Candidate Evaluation Committee chairperson (time, location, refreshments, food, nametags, and speakers).
- Encourage/follow-up with chairperson to make sure they write thank-you notes.

### REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES:

- Assist county Farm Bureau leadership and the county committee assigned the election activity with the organization and implementation of the event or activity.
- Provide microphone and sound system.

### LEGAL LIMITATIONS:

County Farm Bureaus may conduct a meeting of only AgriPac endorsed “Friends of Agriculture” candidates for the county Farm Bureau membership to attend, for the purpose of meeting the endorsed candidates. If the county Farm Bureau opened the meeting to people other than membership, the county Farm Bureau would need to charge the candidates for all costs of the event.

## Legal Limitations Frequently Asked Questions

### QUESTION

10. What are the rules for reporting meals purchased for legislators? (county Farm Bureau annual meeting, legislative breakfasts, etc., do counties have to worry about the meal cost)

11. Fundraising for candidates and fundraising for current legislators – what can and can’t we do?

### ANSWER

10. This is not a campaign finance question, but is a Lobbying Act issue. It is important to differentiate between those, because often it is permissible for a corporation to buy meals or pay for expenses of a legislator, but it is not permissible for a corporation to do that for a candidate. If an elected official is not going to speak about his/her campaign at an event, the event and the official’s presence is not an election event and the campaign finance laws do not apply.

11. The key to this is who is meant by “we”—the individual members, or the county Farm Bureau itself? The county Farm Bureau cannot hold a fundraiser for a candidate, or a current legislator. This would be an impermissible contribution. An individual member can hold fundraisers for candidates and legislators, but must file a report with the County Clerk if he/she spends more than \$100 in expenditures.

*If you have any questions concerning legal limitations on county Farm Bureau activities, please contact Michigan Farm Bureau at 1-800-292-2680 (Matt Kapp, ext. 2027).*

## Register Members & Encourage Members to Vote

PURPOSE: Increase county Farm Bureau members' awareness of voter registration and encourage members to register and vote.

### REGISTER MEMBERS TO VOTE:

- Contact the County Clerk for information to help plan an activity to register members to vote. (Note: The county Farm Bureau Committee needs to work with the County Clerk to receive information needed so the activity can be successful.)
  - Get mail-in voter registration applications.
  - Discuss planned activity for input from the County Clerk.
- Promote the importance of members registering to vote.
  - Articles in county Farm Bureau publications.
  - Letters to Community Action Groups.
  - Conduct postcard mailings to members.
  - Display material or posters in the county Farm Bureau office or at county Farm Bureau functions
  - Insert stuffers in member mailings.
- Identify which county Farm Bureau events will have mail-in voter registration applications available for county Farm Bureau members. (**Note: You must register at least 30 days before the election. July 6 is the last day to register for the Primary Election. October 4 is the last day for the General Election.**)
  - County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting.
  - Farm Bureau booth at the county fair.
  - Special events.
- Have mail-in voter registration applications available in county Farm Bureau offices and Farm Bureau Insurance agent offices.
  - Mail voter registration forms to county Farm Bureau members, if requested.
- Consider targeting a specific age group/Use iMIS to direct mail.
  - Example: 18 to 30 years of age, because this age group has a low voter turnout.

### ENCOURAGE MEMBERS TO VOTE:

- Promote the importance of members voting.
  - In county Farm Bureau publications.
  - At county Farm Bureau events and activities.

## Meet “Friends of Agriculture” Night

PURPOSE: To provide additional exposure for the “Friends of Agriculture” by providing a venue for them to meet with county Farm Bureau members.

**Note: County Farm Bureaus are strongly encouraged to conduct a meeting for the “Friends of Agriculture” candidates instead of a meeting open for all candidates.**

The county Farm Bureau can choose to host a meeting in which the “Friend of Agriculture” candidates would meet with the county Farm Bureau members.

- Check with “Friend of Agriculture” candidates and identify a date and time for the event.
  - Work with either the candidates or their campaign managers.
  - Pick the best date and time that works with the most candidates.  
(You may not be able to schedule a date that works with all “Friend of Agriculture” candidates.)
- Invite the county Farm Bureau membership and promote the event.
  - Mail notices of the events to county Farm Bureau members.
    - All members
    - Just regular members
  - Email an invitation to members
  - Publish notice in county publications.
    - Stress member-only event
  - Promote event
- Choose a good facility for meeting.
  - Make sure facility can handle the number of people, has good acoustics and has no distractions or potential interruptions.
  - Has a good sound system available.
  - Have refreshments available.
  - Have room set-up appropriately.
    - Front table with podium for candidates.
    - Flags at the front of the room.
    - Good speaker system at head table with a microphone for questions from audience.
    - Theater-style seating facing front table.
    - Know how to work the lights for the room.
    - Make sure the temperature of the room is correct and know how to adjust it.

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*continued on back*

# Friend-to-Friend Cards or E-mails

**PURPOSE:** To encourage the election of “Friends of Agriculture” by use of notes or e-mails from members to their neighbors and friends.

The county Farm Bureau can encourage its members to host a “Friend-to-Friend” postcard or e-mail meeting.

- May utilize county Farm Bureau Community Action Groups to conduct this activity.
- Set a date with time and location (member’s home) for the meeting.
- Identify key county Farm Bureau leaders and invite them to participate in the “Friend-to-Friend” meeting.
  - Phone the identified leaders to individually invite them to participate.
    - Ask participants to bring a list of their neighbors and friends, or address book.
- Make the meeting a fun event.
  - Keep the meeting light.
  - Have refreshments and food available.
- Suggestions on what members can write or e-mail.
  - Members should write brief notes in their own words.

**Sample:** An appropriate greeting.  
A reminder of the importance of their vote.  
Let them know how their vote is important for agriculture.  
The reasons why you think the “Friend of Agriculture” candidate would be good for agriculture.  
A request to consider voting for the “Friend of Agriculture.”  
Thank you,  
Sign your name.

## **COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER DUTIES:**

- Encourage member involvement.
- Participate in planning and conducting county committee activities. Provide support services to the county committee, as needed.
- Assist the Candidate Evaluation committee chairperson with scheduling a meeting.
- If the county Farm Bureau Board of Directors approves the meeting, provide to the county committee labels, pens, postcards, stamps, as well as a county Farm Bureau membership list, for the county Farm Bureau’s regular members.

## **REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES:**

- Assist county Farm Bureau leadership and the county committee assigned the election activity with the organization and implementation of the event or activity.

## **LEGAL LIMITATIONS:**

The county Farm Bureau could host a “Friend-to-Friend” meeting, if all the notes sent out are from county Farm Bureau members to county Farm Bureau members. The county Farm Bureau may encourage its members to host a “Friend-to-Friend” meeting.

# Register Members & Encourage Members to Vote

## **COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER DUTIES:**

- Encourage member involvement.
- Participate in planning and conducting county committee activities. Provide support services to the county committee, as needed.
- Have supplies available, such as application forms, in county Farm Bureau office for non-registered members.
- Include article in county Farm Bureau newsletter on procedures for registering to vote.

## **REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES:**

- Assist county Farm Bureau leadership and the county committee assigned the election activity with the organization and implementation of the event or activity.

## **LEGAL LIMITATIONS:**

The county Farm Bureau may encourage members to register to vote, and to vote in both the Primary Election and General Election, and can expend funds to support these efforts.



# Promote Absentee Ballot Usage

**PURPOSE:** Increase county Farm Bureau members' awareness of using absentee ballots and encourage members to utilize this voting method.

**NOTE: A registered voter may obtain an absent voter ballot if he/she is: age 60 years old or older, unable to vote without assistance at the polls, expecting to be out of town on election day, in jail awaiting arraignment or trial, unable to attend the polls due to religious reasons, or appointed to work as an election inspector in a precinct outside of his/her precinct of residence.**

- Work with county or township clerk to conduct an educational and promotion program for the county Farm Bureau membership on the use and purpose of voting by absentee ballot.
  - Articles in county Farm Bureau publications.
  - Letters to Community Action Groups.
  - Conduct postcard mailings to members.
  - Display material or posters in the county Farm Bureau office or at county Farm Bureau functions.
  - Insert stuffers in member mailings.
  - Mail absentee ballot applications to all members.
  - Mail absentee ballot applications to certain age groups, (i.e. senior citizens, young farmers) due to absentee ballot tendencies.
- Work with county clerk to acquire **applications** for absentee ballots and identify addresses of city and township clerks within the county where applications are to be sent.
  - Have applications available in the county Farm Bureau office.
  - Mail applications to members upon request.
  - Identify deadline for sending applications to clerks. (Note: See 2010 Election Timeline on page 2 & 3.)

## **COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER DUTIES:**

- Encourage member involvement.
- Participate in planning and conducting county committee activities. Provide support services to the county committee, as needed.
- Hand out needed information and assist members with questions or needs.

## **REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES:**

- Assist county Farm Bureau leadership and the county committee assigned the election activity with the organization and implementation of the event or activity.

## **LEGAL LIMITATIONS:**

The county Farm Bureau may promote the usage of absentee ballots or supply applications for absentee ballots to county Farm Bureau members and can spend funds in this effort.

# Hosting Candidate Fundraiser

## **COUNTY FARM BUREAU ENCOURAGES INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS TO HOST A FUNDRAISER:**

The county Farm Bureau can encourage individual county Farm Bureau members to host a fundraiser for the "Friend of Agriculture" candidate by use of:

- Mailings to membership
- Information in county publications
- Identifying potential members who may be interested in hosting a fundraiser

When a county Farm Bureau member wishes to host a fundraiser, the county Farm Bureau should refer the member to the campaign manager of the "Friend of Agriculture" for details about the fundraiser.

## **COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER DUTIES:**

- Participate in planning and conducting county committee activities. Provide support services to the county committee, as needed.
- Assist in mailings.

## **REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES:**

- Assist county Farm Bureau leadership and the county committee assigned the election activity with the organization and implementation of the event or activity.

## **LEGAL LIMITATIONS:**

The county Farm Bureau may encourage its members to individually host a fundraiser for a "Friend of Agriculture" candidate.



# Hosting Candidate Fundraiser

**PURPOSE:** To help “Friends of Agriculture” raise funds for their campaigns so they can be elected.

## **COUNTY FARM BUREAU HOSTING A CANDIDATE FUNDRAISER:**

Work with the “Friend of Agriculture’s” campaign manager to coordinate a candidate fundraiser event.

Mail notice to county Farm Bureau members about the fundraiser.

- Options:
  - Mail to key leadership only.
  - Mail to regular members only.
  - Mail to all members.

Provide facility for the event.

- Options:
  - County Farm Bureau office
  - Member’s farm
  - Rented facility

The county Farm Bureau must keep track of all costs to the county Farm Bureau to charge the candidate.

- Cost of County Administrative Manager’s time
- Cost of refreshments
- Cost of mailings
- Cost of facilities

## **COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER DUTIES:**

- Encourage member involvement.
- Participate in planning and conducting county committee activities. Provide support services to the county committee, as needed.
- Send out notice to county Farm Bureau regular members regarding the meeting.
- Help coordinate meeting with county Farm Bureau Candidate Evaluation Committee Chairperson (time, location, refreshments, food, and speakers).
- Keep track of cost associated with the meeting and bill candidate appropriately.

## **REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES:**

- Assist county Farm Bureau leadership and the county committee assigned the election activity with the organization and implementation of the event or activity.

## **LEGAL LIMITATIONS:**

The county Farm Bureau must charge the candidate for any costs incurred for the fundraiser.

# Identify Close Legislative Races

**PURPOSE:** To assist the county Farm Bureau in identifying legislative races within its county that are projected to be close contests and to help “Friends of Agriculture” get elected in those races.

## **HOW TO IDENTIFY CLOSE LEGISLATIVE RACES:**

- Contact county political parties for input
- Contact state political parties for input
- Utilize media for information on political races
- Contact the “Friends of Agriculture” candidate for input
- Read local media stories about the legislative race
- Contact Michigan Farm Bureau for input

**Conduct an activity or event suggested in this handbook to help elect the “Friends of Agriculture.”**

## **COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER DUTIES:**

- Encourage member involvement.
- Participate in planning and conducting county committee activities. Provide support services to the county committee, as needed.

## **REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES:**

- Assist county Farm Bureau leadership and the county committee assigned the election activity with the organization and implementation of the event or activity.

## **LEGAL LIMITATIONS:**

The county Farm Bureau may identify close legislative races. See “Legal Limitations” for each suggested activity or event that may involve expenditures of county Farm Bureau funds in support of or opposition to candidates.

# Communication with Membership

**PURPOSE:** To recommend various ways that the county Farm Bureau can communicate with its membership to encourage the election of “Friends of Agriculture.”

The county Farm Bureau can:

- Communicate by e-mail with their members for which they have identified e-mail addresses.
- Contact members by phone (See Phone Bank Activity, page 16).
- Mail a letter from the county President or Board of Directors to its membership stating support for a “Friend of Agriculture” candidate. (See attachment A)
- Mail a postcard to its membership identifying “Friends of Agriculture” and encourage members to vote for these candidates. (See attachment B)
- Create a county Farm Bureau newsletter. NOTE: Communications with the membership can be mailed at a bulk rate but must be mailed at least two weeks prior to the event. (Contact Karen Meyers at ext. 6613 for details).

## **COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER DUTIES:**

- Encourage member involvement.
- Participate in planning and conducting county committee activities. Provide support services to the county committee, as needed.
- Get county Farm Bureau Board approval to use membership list/labels.
- Get county Farm Bureau Board approval for costs (e.g., stamps).
- Coordinate mailings – county or home office.
- Affix labels and stamps to envelope and mail (if approved for county to conduct mailing).
  - Postal Identification
  - Bulk vs. 1st Class

## **REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES:**

- Assist county Farm Bureau leadership and the county committee assigned the election activity with the organization and implementation of the event or activity.

## **LEGAL LIMITATIONS:**

The key to remember here is that a county Farm Bureau can communicate freely with its members about campaign issues. A county Farm Bureau can legally also communicate with non-members, but those communications are subject to a number of legal restrictions and requirements.

# Phone Bank

## **AGRIPAC ENDORSEMENT PROCESS**

County Farm Bureau Candidate Evaluation Committees (made up of county Farm Bureau regular members) evaluate the various candidates on numerous areas, including knowledge of agriculture, their willingness to listen to agricultural input on legislative issues, and, if the candidate is an incumbent, the Committees review his/her voting record on key agricultural issues. The County Candidate Evaluation Committees then recommend candidates for endorsement to the Michigan Farm Bureau Political Action Committee (AgriPac) (comprised of regular farmer members from throughout the State). AgriPac then takes the recommendations from all County Farm Bureau Candidate Evaluation Committees within the legislative district and researches the candidate further and determines whether to designate the candidate as a “Friend of Agriculture.”

## **COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER DUTIES:**

- Encourage member involvement.
- Participate in planning and conducting county committee activities. Provide support services to the county committee, as needed.
- Provide county Farm Bureau member list to the county committee (if Board approved). This should include phone numbers if they are within Farm Bureau mainframe system. (This can easily be done through the database – querying the county Farm Bureau regular members).
- Provide office space and phones for county committee members’ usage.
- Make sure office is unlocked for event.

## **REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES:**

- Assist county Farm Bureau leadership and the county committee assigned the election activity with the organization and implementation of the event or activity.

## **LEGAL LIMITATIONS:**

The county Farm Bureau can phone its membership and suggest that its members vote for “Friends of Agriculture” if it contacts its membership and the message given is created by the county Farm Bureau.

If the offices of a Michigan Farm Bureau Affiliated Company are utilized to conduct the phone bank, the Affiliated Company must be reimbursed by the county Farm Bureau for the use of its offices.

If the county Farm Bureau calls people other than county Farm Bureau members or delivers a message prepared by the candidate, the cost of the phone bank would need to be charged to the candidate. The county Farm Bureau can call non-members with an “independent expenditure” in support of a candidate, without charging the candidate, but will need to report the activity if the cost exceeds \$100.

## Phone Bank

PURPOSE: To contact county Farm Bureau members by phone to remind them to vote for “Friends of Agriculture.”

Acquire approval by the county Farm Bureau Board of Directors to utilize the county Farm Bureau office to set up a phone bank to contact the members of the county Farm Bureau to remind them to vote for the “Friends of Agriculture.”

- Estimate potential cost to the county Farm Bureau.
  - Determine potential phone costs by identifying who will be on the call list and estimating the cost of the phone calls.
  - Determine the cost of refreshments for the volunteers.
  - Determine whether there is a cost for the County Administrative Manager to prepare for the event.
  - Determine miscellaneous costs.
- Set date for event.
  - Set a date within one week prior to the election in question.
    - Primary Election – Tuesday, August 3, 2010
    - General Election – Tuesday, November 2, 2010

Contact county Farm Bureau members who are volunteering to work on the phone bank to call the county Farm Bureau members.

- Identify the amount of time required by the volunteer.
- Verify that the volunteer will have a suggested script to follow when talking to the members.
- Make a list of who has confirmed to make calls.

Create a phone list of county Farm Bureau members to be contacted.

- Make sure a household is only called once. Do not call spouses separately.
- Divide the list among volunteer participants.

**NOTE: This can be done by using IMIS and querying the county Farm Bureau’s regular members.**

Prepare a script the volunteer phone workers can use.

“Hello, may I speak with (member’s name). My name is (caller’s name) and I am a volunteer calling on behalf of (county name) County Farm Bureau and I wanted to remind you to vote on Tuesday and ask you to consider voting for (names of candidates). Michigan Farm Bureau has designated these candidates as “Friends of Agriculture” and believe they will work with agriculture on legislative issues. Thank you for your time and remember to vote on Tuesday.

**NOTE: If members ask questions about the “Friends of Agriculture” endorsement, just talk about the endorsement process that follows. (See next page)**

## Communication with Membership

The county Farm Bureau **can** recommend that its members vote for “Friends of Agriculture” in communications with the **county Farm Bureau membership**.

The county Farm Bureau **cannot**:

- Mail candidate’s campaign literature to the county Farm Bureau membership.
- Give either a financial contribution or an in-kind contribution to a candidate (An in-kind contribution is any activity in support of a candidate which may have a value or cost attributed to it.)
- If a county Farm Bureau chooses to use its money or in-kind contributions to support or oppose a candidate with non-members, it must report those expenditures to the County Clerk within 10 calendar days of expending more than \$100. Reporting form is at [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Independent\\_Expenditure\\_Report\\_98244\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Independent_Expenditure_Report_98244_7.pdf).
- If a county Farm Bureau expends more than \$5000 to support or oppose a candidate with non-members, it must register as a “committee” and is subject to additional reporting requirements.

# Membership Lists and Labels

**PURPOSE:** The county Farm Bureau may be asked for a copy of its membership list/labels for the purpose of a mailing. The following is a guideline on controlling and handling the county Farm Bureau membership list/labels.

## **HANDLING PROCEDURES:**

**The county Farm Bureau Board of Directors must always approve the use of the county Farm Bureau membership list/labels for any purpose.**

Handling of the list/labels can occur in the following ways:

- The candidate's volunteers can come to the county Farm Bureau office, or a designated location, and affix the membership labels to the candidate's envelopes.
- County Farm Bureau member volunteers can stuff and affix membership labels to the candidate's envelopes.
- The candidate's stuffed and sealed envelopes can be mailed through the MFB Print Shop if the candidate prepays the mailing. (Contact Karen Meyers at ext. 6613 for details).

**NOTE: Please inform the political candidate of any potential costs before labels are ordered and mailing occurs.**

**NOTE: To ensure labels are NOT duplicated, please make sure labels remain in the jurisdiction of the county Farm Bureau (or at a designated location) until they are affixed to envelopes.**

## **COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER DUTIES:**

- Encourage member involvement.
- Participate in planning and conducting county committee activities. Provide support services to the county committee, as needed.
- Get county Farm Bureau Board approval to use membership list/labels.
- If approved, provide copies to those in need.
- Set up designated location for candidate volunteer.

## **REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES:**

- Assist county Farm Bureau leadership and the county committee assigned the election activity with the organization and implementation of the event or activity.

## **LEGAL LIMITATIONS:**

If the mailing includes a candidate's campaign literature, the county Farm Bureau must charge the candidate for any costs incurred. These costs may include: cost of the membership labels, cost of the County Administrative Manager's time, postage, envelopes and so forth.

# Election Signage

**PURPOSE:** Identify landowners who are willing to post political signs for "Friends of Agriculture" on their property.

County Farm Bureau Candidate Evaluation Committees identify current farmers who would be willing to post political signs for "Friends of Agriculture."

- Identify key locations along traveled highways.
  - Develop a countywide map for sign placements.
- Develop tools to identify members willing to allow signs to be placed on their property.
  - County questionnaires
  - Utilize iMIS
  - County newsletter
  - Signage within office

County Farm Bureau establishes its ongoing list of farmers on its database who would be available to post signs.

- County committee establishes timetable, number of races to help with, workers, and activities (county annual, fair booth, county office) where signs are to be distributed.
- County committee coordinates sign pick-up, assembly, housing, distribution, and posting on the property of members who are located in key locations throughout the county.

**Note: The county committee needs to check city/township ordinances for political sign restrictions (such as distance, size, height and time that signs can be displayed) for sign placement.**

County committee communicates with "Friends of Agriculture" campaign headquarters and other supportive groups concerning its sign distribution plans.

## **COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER DUTIES:**

- Encourage member involvement.
- Participate in planning and conducting county committee activities. Provide support services to the county committee, as needed.
- Have signs be visible and available within county office.
- Ask regular members who visit or call the county Farm Bureau office whether or not they would mind displaying a sign on their property and help develop a potential list for the election committee.
- Post "Friend of Agriculture" signs on the county Farm Bureau property.
- Work with committee to check city/township ordinances for political sign restrictions.

## **REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES:**

- Assist county Farm Bureau leadership and the county committee assigned the election activity with the organization and implementation of the event or activity.

## **LEGAL LIMITATIONS:**

County Farm Bureau members may volunteer their time and efforts in establishing a sign campaign.