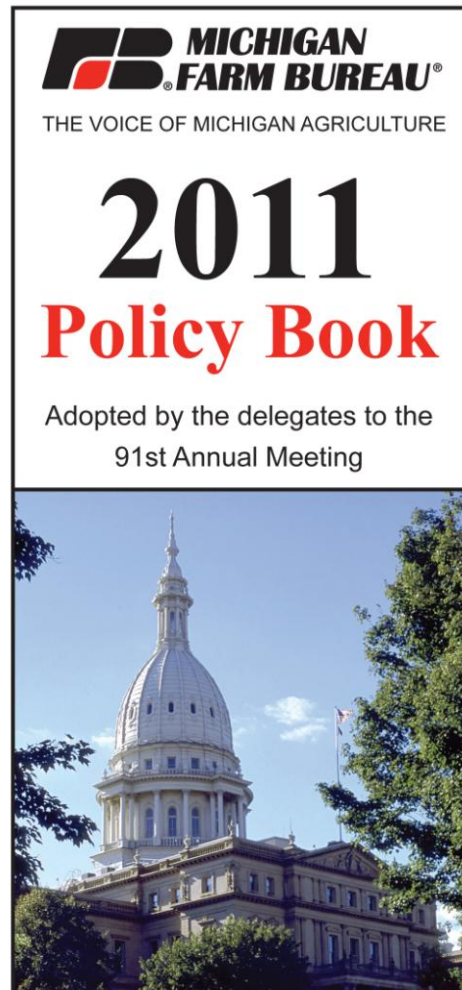


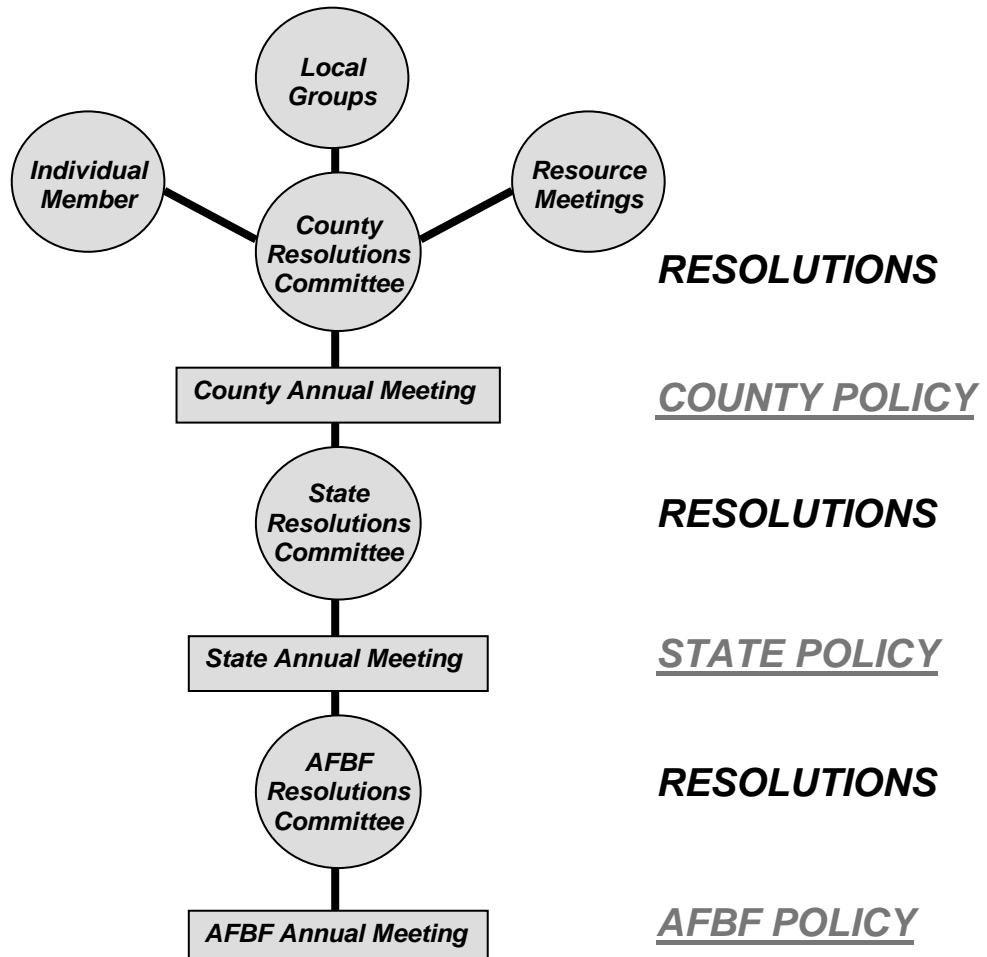
Farm Bureau Policy Development

County Committee Resource Guide

***FARM BUREAU POLICY.
GRASSROOTS DRIVEN. MEMBER DEVELOPED.
PROVEN SUCCESSFUL.***



The Policy Development Process



| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p><i>Recommendations from members, Community Groups, Young Farmers, Commodity committees, and other county Farm Bureau committees</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">→</p> | <p><i>County Farm Bureau Policy Development Committee reviews recommendations and develop proposed policies</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">→</p> | <p><i>Members attend County Annual Meeting where they debate and vote on proposed policies</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">→</p> <p><i>Decisions on local issues give Farm Bureau policies on county issues</i></p> | <p><i>Recommendations on state and national/international issues go to Michigan Farm Bureau Policy Development Committee</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">→</p> |
|--|---|---|--|

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p><i>Proposed policies on state and national/international issues go to Michigan Farm Bureau Annual Meeting where delegates debate and vote</i></p> <p><i>Decisions on state issues result in Michigan Farm Bureau policies</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">→</p> | <p><i>Policy recommendations on national/international issues go to American Farm Bureau Policy Development Committee</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">→</p> | <p><i>Proposed policies on national/international issues go to American Farm Bureau Federation Convention where delegates debate and vote</i></p> <p><i>Decisions on national/international issues give Farm Bureau policies on national/international issues</i></p> |
|--|---|---|

Where Can Our Committee Find Resources?

MFB Website

The MFB website has a comprehensive section dedicated to Policy Development, complete with access to the AFBF and MFB current policy books, backgrounder sheets on probable issues, resource material for county PD Committees, information regarding the grassroots process, information on your State MFB PD Committee, an electronic issues survey, an instructional PD video, and information regarding county annual meetings. Go to: <http://www.michfb.com/policy/development>

MFB Policy Book

Each committee member receives a copy of the current MFB policy book, and this serves as an excellent resource to see if current issues are already covered, and for areas where policy may need updates. It is also available electronically, 24-7 on the MFB website at:

<http://www.michfb.com/policy/book>

AFBF Policy Book

The current AFBF policy book serves as an excellent resource on national issues, to see if current issues are already covered, and for areas where policy may need updates. It is also available electronically, 24-7 on the MFB website at:

<http://www.michfb.com/files/policy/2011%20AFBF%20Policy%20Book.pdf>

AFBF Website

Information regarding American Farm Bureau's priority issues and backgrounders related to those issues can be found at <http://www.fb.org/index.php?fuseaction=issues.home>

Local Issues

Local elected officials such as township supervisors & trustees, county commissioners, Sheriff, drain commissioners, road commissioners, school officials, zoning and planning boards, etc., can be an excellent resource for a local PD meeting to surface discussion on local issues of importance in the county. Consider hosting them for an informal discussion at one of your committee meetings. Find more information on your local elected officials at <http://www.michfb.com/legislative/action>

Information Sources

Make use of various sources of information such as the Michigan Farm News, AFBF News, minutes from Community Action Groups in your county, county publications, MSU and USDA publications, farm and commodity specific magazines, newspapers, etc. Some county Farm Bureau Boards also keep a monthly "Issues" folder with information on issues discussed at monthly board meetings. Contact your county Administrative Manager for more details on whether your county board does this.

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A Checklist for Policy Resolutions that Work

1. *Clear and concise*
2. *Significant agricultural impact*
3. *Provides direction and allows flexibility*
4. *Identifies / describes issue or problem*
5. *Develops solution or alternatives to issue or problem*
6. *Resolution is cost-effective and attainable*

Consider the following questions when determining if your resolutions are core to the agricultural industry and enhance the interests of Farm Bureau members. These questions are intended to aid in evaluating your resolutions. There is no correct answer.

- Is this a core ag issue? Does this issue have a broad-based impact on Michigan agriculture?*
- Does the issue directly impact the profitability and viability of farming in Michigan?*
- Is this an issue in which MFB would be the lead organization in advancing the cause/resolving the problem?*
- Would the Legislature/State government, etc. come to MFB for direction on this issue?*
- Is another organization better suited to take the lead on the issue?*
- Every organization has limited resources – is working this issue how you would choose to spend MFB's staff resources?*
- Would a majority of our membership vote to increase dues to address this issue if additional resources were needed?*
- Is this resolution being proposed for the primary benefit of an organization other than Michigan Farm Bureau?*
- Is this really a local issue?*



FARM BUREAU POLICY.
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PROVEN SUCCESSFUL.

Make Sure Your Resolutions Say and Do What you Want Them To!

EXAMPLES OF SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS THAT ARE UNCLEAR OR INCOMPLETE

1. *Can anyone find anything that is not made in China? Does this impact anyone? {what action is requested?}*
2. *Bring parity back as it was before 1976 but change the percentage from the 70% to now 120% or higher. This is for the dairy industry but other commodities could join in at any time.*
3. *_____ County Farm Bureau supports that sales taxes should only be charged on the final negotiated price. {What level of tax? Final price on everything?}*
4. *We recommend a mandatory budget balanced by whatever steps necessary when a deficient budget occurs in three consecutive years. {Would we support a property tax to balance the budget? Would we support elimination of MDA and the sales tax exemption for ag?}*
5. *We support updating the Right to Farm Act under the provisions of HB 4300. {What if the bill changes?}*
6. *We support the Plant Initiative at MSU. {What is the Plant Initiative? Why is it good or bad?}*
7. *Be it resolved, we favor eliminating the Single Business Tax. {How much revenue would be cut? How much would farmers save?}*
8. *Be it resolved, we support a flat rate income tax plan. {State or national? Does this include a percent on the first dollar of income? What if the rate is 15%?}*
9. *As long as the Governor has line-item veto, we hold the Governor responsible for a balanced budget by voting all pork barrel spending. {Define pork. Is PA 116 or disaster assistance a pork barrel project?}*
10. *We would like the State Legislature to address the issue of who is responsible to remove dead animals weighing over 30 pounds from the roads. {Should the landowner or the person who hit the animal be responsible? At what cost, and who should pay?}*
11. *We support an increase in the state gasoline tax of no more than 6 cents per gallon. {What if a 7 cent proposal is introduced? What if the money is earmarked for use other than roads?}*
12. *We support current Michigan law, PA 88, which allows county board of commissioners to implement up to 0.5 mills for economic development and promotion of agriculture and tourism. We commend the _____ County Board of Commissioners for recently approving unanimously a .339 county wide millage to help fund MSU Extension and Greater _____ Development. We further recommend the _____ County Board of Commissioners approve a county wide millage each year to continue funding MSU Extension and Greater _____ Development at levels necessary to maintain current programs and staff. {Submitted as a County resolution. PA 88 is a State law. Should the resolution be written more broadly so it reflects a state issue and be categorized as a state issue?}*

HOW TO WRITE A RESOLUTION

The framework of the following sample may be useful in writing county resolutions.

State subject of the resolution ----- **TRESPASSING**

Define the problem ----- *Damage to property by trespassers has become a serious problem in _____ County.*

Tell what it means to the county or community ----- *Each year, thousands of dollars worth of damage is done to rural property in this county by some irresponsible hunters, fisherman and others who come upon private property, kill livestock, damage fences, leave gates open, trample crops, steal and even endanger human life.*

Explain why action is wanted----- *Experience has shown that our property owners are almost helpless in doing anything about this situation. We are informed that the present trespassing laws are not sufficient to deal with this problem.*

Summarize what is proposed to be done ----- *We believe that a person should have written permission before entering private property. Many of the farmers in this county will give permission to hunt, fish or picnic on their land if they are asked. They resent persons using their property without permission.*

Utilizing the above resolution framework, a county resolution, such as the example above, may result in the following:

TRESPASS

Farmers are concerned with the increasing disregard for private property rights by trespassers and the inability or unwillingness of local authorities to protect such rights. We will support an amendment to the current trespass law that would authorize all law enforcement officials to arrest without a warrant or complaint any person who does not have written permission from the property owner or lessee.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT RESOLUTIONS WORKSHEET

___ Local

___ State

___ National

1.) Title: _____

2.) Problem: _____

3.) Impact or Cost: _____

4.) Need: _____

5.) Solution:

We: Support _____
 Oppose _____
 Favor _____

 Recognize _____
 Urge _____
 Encourage _____

 Believe _____
 Recommend _____
 Commend _____

We will: Continue _____
 Defend _____
 Work _____

Effective County Annual Meetings

CREATING DISCUSSION ON RESOLUTIONS AT THE COUNTY FARM BUREAU ANNUAL MEETING

PLAN AHEAD!

- ❑ Send copies of the proposed resolutions which will be voted on at the annual meeting to your membership prior to the meeting for their review.
- ❑ On your annual meeting notice or invitation, include summary statements about the policies that will be discussed.
- ❑ Send copies of the proposed resolutions to your Board of Directors, Community Action Groups and various county Farm Bureau committees asking those members to come to the annual meeting prepared to discuss the issues.

AT THE COUNTY FARM BUREAU ANNUAL MEETING

The following techniques could be used to involve members in discussing resolutions presented by the Policy Development Committee at the County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting.

- ❑ If a resolution is surfaced from a specific member, Community Action Group, etc., ask that member or group to comment on its importance after the resolution has been read by the Policy Development Committee
- ❑ If a resolution addresses an issue of a specific commodity, call on two or three producers of the commodity who are present at the annual meeting to give their opinion of the resolution.
- ❑ If a meal is served prior to the business meeting, assign each table a specific resolution to talk about during the meal and be prepared to make comments when it is read during the report of resolutions. Each table could be assigned more than one specific resolution.
- ❑ Before the resolutions report is given at the Annual Meeting, divide the members into four or five subgroups and ask them to go to separate areas of the meeting facility to discuss specific resolutions. Have a committee member or resource person present at each subgroup who can provide information and answer questions about the resolution(s) assigned to the subgroup. After the subgroups have met, and the resolutions are read for final action, ask a person from each subgroup to comment on their discussion and recommendation (including amendments) for each assigned resolution.

REAFFIRMATION PROCEDURE

Many county Farm Bureau Policy Development Committees choose to do their reaffirmations in blocks, and simply read the title of the resolution. They then call for a vote on a block of reaffirmations at a time, and take any questions or discussion on the whole block. This speeds up the PD portion of the meeting and allows for more time to be spent on the new resolutions.

Sample Script

INTRODUCTION OF THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AT THE COUNTY FARM BUREAU ANNUAL MEETING

[PD Chair or County President]

We now will proceed with the policy development portion of our annual meeting. As you may or may not know, the development of policy by our members gives our organization direction for the year. Tonight you will have the opportunity to discuss a number of issues your policy development committee has spent many hours researching and drafting resolutions on.

These resolutions become the platform for our organization and the basis for the positions we take on every issue we work on. The resolutions you pass tonight will be used in many ways:

- Local resolutions will be presented by our County Farm Bureau to the appropriate local officials to make them aware of our position;
- State and National resolutions will be sent on to the State Policy Development Committee who will review each and every resolution that comes from the counties, and prepare a report of resolutions to be considered by the voting delegates at our state Farm Bureau annual meeting in November;
- The National resolutions adopted at our state annual meeting will then be passed on to the American Farm Bureau for consideration at their annual meeting.

The policy book [*hold up a copy of the Michigan Farm Bureau and/or American Farm Bureau policy books*] is the result of our hard work here tonight and contains policy written by and voted on by you. If you believe Farm Bureau needs to take a different stand on an issue, then tonight is your opportunity to affect that process.

Please take this opportunity to think about the issues being brought before you tonight, and participate in the discussion. Raise your hand or come to the microphone if you have a question or an idea you'd like considered.

Would the Policy Development committee please join me at the front for consideration of the 2011 proposed resolutions?

IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL DELEGATES TO THE MFB ANNUAL MEETING

Questions To Ask

The following are a series of questions that your county Farm Bureau might use in determining who might best represent your county's interests at the Michigan Farm Bureau annual meeting. These questions are based on a review of the delegate survey completed at a recent annual meeting. If the majority of questions are answered yes, the member is probably a highly qualified delegate to represent your county's interests.

- Is the member a full-time (40hrs/wk) farmer?
- Is the member a part-time farmer actively involved in farm management, and/or the industry?
- Has the member served on the county or state PD committee?
- Is the member able to set personal interests aside & provide input/discussion in an unbiased way representing the interests of your county farm bureau?
- Did the member attend the county annual meeting?
- Is the member committed to devoting the time necessary to prepare for the state annual in advance?
- Can the member attend the entire delegate session?



So you want
to be a delegate...



For more information about being a delegate, go to
<http://www.michfb.com/policy/delegates>.

Then click on the PDF file: "So you want to be a Delegate"



2011
Michigan Farm Bureau
Star Awards Program
Policy Development

~ 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, 2011

___ **County Farm Bureau**

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

A. Minimum Criteria: The following activities represent minimum criteria to be eligible for a Gold Star in the Policy Development category:

1. Did your Policy Development Committee submit a program of work to your county board of directors? Yes No
(MUST ATTACH A COPY OF THE BOARD MINUTES SHOWING APPROVAL AND PROGRAM OF WORK)
2. Did your Policy Development Committee meet at least twice in the last year?
(Not including your annual meeting or regional meeting) Yes No

B. Committee Dynamics

Please answer the following questions as they pertain to the area of **Policy Development**.

- | | <u>Yes</u> | |
|---|--------------------------|-----|
| 1. This committee has active members representing the commodities grown in the county. | <input type="checkbox"/> | ___ |
| 2. This committee has active members representing the Young Farmer Committee. | <input type="checkbox"/> | ___ |
| 3. The committee attended the district policy development meeting. | <input type="checkbox"/> | ___ |
| 4. This committee worked with the County Issues and Public Policy Committees to obtain suggestions for policy development issues. | <input type="checkbox"/> | ___ |
| 5. This committee worked with local & county officials to obtain suggestions for local policy development issues. | <input type="checkbox"/> | ___ |
| 6. This committee used innovative ways, such as: <input type="checkbox"/> web survey, <input type="checkbox"/> written questionnaire, <input type="checkbox"/> phone surveys, <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ to obtain suggestions for policy development issues from CFB members. (please check box) | <input type="checkbox"/> | ___ |
| 7. This committee submitted a written copy of proposed resolutions for inclusion in the CFB annual meeting report. | <input type="checkbox"/> | ___ |
| 8. The committee submitted ___ (type / write in #) proposed resolutions on local issues. | <input type="checkbox"/> | ___ |
| 9. The committee submitted ___ (type / write in #) proposed resolutions on state issues. | <input type="checkbox"/> | ___ |
| 10. The committee submitted ___ (type / write in #) proposed resolutions on national issues. | <input type="checkbox"/> | ___ |

POINTS
60 Max

C. Activities Conducted

Describe the 2 most important **county** activities that you believe qualify for a Gold Star in **Policy Development**. Please give detail and explain. (If additional space is needed, please continue or list on a separate sheet of paper)

Activity: _____ Number of members involved: ___

Purpose & Results: _____

Number of members involved: ___

Activity: _____

Purpose & Results: _____

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

County President

Committee Chair

TOTAL

(100)

2011 Michigan Farm Bureau Policy Development Committee

Chair: Mike Fusilier / Vice-Chair: David Girton

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