

2021 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 finishing 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.

Policy Discussion Schedule

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Tuesday Delegate Session 2:30 – 5:30 p.m.

New	Carbon Sequestration and Ecosystem Services Markets	Scheduled-1
45	State Energy Policy	Scheduled-1

Wednesday Morning Delegate Session 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

27	Michigan Meat Processing Industry	Scheduled-3
35	TB – Mycobacterium Bovis Tuberculosis.....	Scheduled-4

Wednesday Afternoon Delegate Session 2:30 – 5:30 p.m.

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Michigan Farm Bureau Policy Recommendation

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Policy Discussion Schedule

NEW 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 and credit(s).
15 • **[Relocated from policy #73, Lines 9-10]** Full
16 recognition of agriculture and forestry's value to
17 carbon sequestration.
18 • **[Modified from policy #73, Line 13 through**
19 **farmers]** Compensation for farmers
20 **[Relocated from policy #73, Lines 16-17]** for
21 farming practices that keep carbon in the soil or
22 in plant material.
23 • Farmers receiving credit or compensation for
24 maintaining existing practices.
25 • The length of time that farmers are
26 compensated to be consistent with the length
27 of practice implementation.
28 • Farm Bureau staff, Michigan State University
29 staff, and others in their mission to support
30 farmers as they navigate carbon
31 sequestration/ecosystem services credits
32 contracting. ♦

#45 STATE ENERGY POLICY

- 1 We support Michigan Farm Bureau taking steps to
2 advocate for adequate and affordable energy for Michigan
3 residents and businesses. We recognize agriculture's
4 vulnerability to energy interruptions and price volatility. We
5 support immediate and long-term solutions including:
6 • Programs to increase the utilization of energy
7 sources to minimize adverse environmental impacts.
8 • Incentives for additional refineries.
9 • Upgrading, expanding and protecting our current
10 electrical generating systems and grid.
11 • Development, expansion, promotion and incentives

for affordable access to natural gas for farms, homes, and businesses.

- The development of a state energy policy which gives high priority to agricultural enterprises, such as production, processing and storage facilities, allowing them the same power quality and timely access as other commercial industries, regardless of utility territory.
- Standards for utility companies to resolve power quality issues such as electrical pollution on-farm, and urge all parties to maintain their equipment and utility right-of-way to decrease the possibility of neutral-to-ground electrical pollution.
- Net-metering legislation or regulation enabling producers to sell excess power generated on farms back to utilities at an equitable rate.
- Incentives for renewable energy production for sale or use on farms. Examples include co-generation, silvicultural material, methane digestion, wind, hydro and solar power.
- Increasing incentives to broaden the use of biomass blended fuels.
- Education and policy programs to promote sound energy conservation.
- Options expanding domestic exploration; incentives to accelerate expansion of liquid natural gas facilities; implementation of technology to utilize domestic coal reserves; and the development of fuel cell technology.
- Establishment of an agricultural rate classification for electrical service.
- Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) allowance for seasonal inactivity (e.g., irrigation/grain drying) to eliminate the occurrence of non-use monthly charges.
- Voluntary utilization of smart meters.
- All wind generator towers being assessed using multiplier tables established by the MPSC through the process of public hearings and sworn testimony.
- A statewide study of transmission connectivity needs including, but not limited to, transmission connections between the two peninsulas.
- MFB working with county Farm Bureaus to study electrical rate disparities across the state. The study should consider the causes and potential policy recommendations promoting affordability in all regions of the state.
- The continued operation and upgrades of pipelines such as Line 5 with strict safety precautions to protect land and water resources.
- As a part of the permitting process for all new

- 63 energy projects, requiring decommissioning plans
64 before final approval.
- 65 • All permanent easements owned by utilities, not
66 preserved for future use, should be reverted or
67 offered for sale, to the underlying owner at no more
68 than fair market value.
 - 69 • Including agricultural representation on the MPSC.
 - 70 • MPSC being responsible for determining capacity
71 needs and the Michigan Department of
72 Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy being
73 responsible for only environmental permitting.
 - 74 • Government mandates for electric car production
75 and usage being matched by concurrent approval
76 for the construction and/or upgrades for reliable
77 electric generation facilities to deliver the power
78 needed.
 - 79 • Agriculture having consistent, reliable, and
80 affordable access to all forms of energy.
 - 81 • Incentivizing the production and use of renewable
82 energy on non-agricultural use areas such as
83 brownfield, public property, Michigan Department of
84 Transportation rights-of-ways and other marginal
85 lands, as well as industrial, residential and
86 agricultural buildings, to reduce easements across
87 farms for renewable energy projects and to protect
88 prime farmland.
 - 89 • Solar developers disclosing chemical and
90 electronic components of solar panels and
91 equipment to the landowner.

92 We oppose utility companies inflating land rental rates
93 on their property to well above fair market value of
94 contiguous property. ♦

#27 MICHIGAN MEAT PROCESSING INDUSTRY

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

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

- 10 • A study and evaluation of Michigan's meat packing
11 industry, retail sales, custom exempt facilities, market
12 access, opportunities for expansion and regulatory
13 issues.
- 14 • A partnership between Michigan State University
15 (MSU), community colleges, career technical schools
16 and the livestock industry coordinating the

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

#35 TB – MYCOBACTERIUM BOVIS TUBERCULOSIS

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

12 MDARD should draft an aggressive action plan with
13 benchmarks and dates with a final goal of statewide TB-
14 free status. This plan should involve industry stakeholders
15 and request adequate funding for implementation. The

16 Legislature must provide oversight for accountability.

17 We support MDARD creating, implementing, or
18 enforcing any rules or regulations more stringent than
19 USDA's published rules regarding bovine TB. To
20 expedite the eradication of TB, we support:

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

66 ordered removed during mandatory testing.

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

99 When herds are quarantined for disease control
100 purposes, we strongly urge MDARD/USDA remove and
101 test suspect animals as soon as possible. Upon
102 confirmation of infection, we support:

- 103 • Depopulation, or test and remove, within 60 days
- 104 when the disease has been confirmed; indemnity
- 105 payments must be issued within 60 days after
- 106 indemnification agreement has been accepted by
- 107 all parties.
- 108 • If a farm is depopulated because of bovine TB and
- 109 the farm was operating under a WRMP with no
- 110 intention of repopulation, indemnity should not be
- 111 contingent on modifications to the plan.
- 112 • State and federal agencies be required to harvest
- 113 and test potential carrier animals on and around
- 114 TB positive farms, including on state-owned land.
- 115 • Further transparency from USDA Wildlife Services

116 including an accounting and reporting of monthly
117 agency deer harvest.

118 In zones where TB is found, we support aggressive use
119 of all wildlife management tools to control all animal
120 disease transmission. Limits and bans on baiting and
121 feeding may sometimes be justified and practical;
122 however, the current ban has not reduced TB prevalence
123 while deer density has increased as hunting has
124 decreased. Therefore, we do not support a statewide ban
125 on baiting and ask MDARD to consider a new
126 memorandum of understanding (MOU) provision with
127 USDA on the issue in the TB zone that allows for limited
128 baiting when coupled with an aggressive taking of deer.

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

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

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

144 The current MOU between USDA, MDARD, and MDNR
145 establishes ambitious quotas for the collection of deer
146 heads in each of the counties in the MAZ and in the
147 surrounding TB surveillance counties. To achieve these
148 goals, we support,

- 149 • A more aggressive approach by MDNR to
150 meeting the requirements of deer head
151 collection.
- 152 • Identification, transportation and testing in the
153 MOU.
- 154 • A plan and coordinated effort between MDNR,
155 processors, Michigan State University
156 Veterinary Diagnostic Lab, Farm Bureau and
157 the hunting community in deer head collection
158 by September 1 of each year.
- 159 • A weekly update and reporting of completed
160 deer head testing beginning September 1 of
161 each year.
- 162 • A per head payment for each deer head turned
163 in until the requirements of the MOU are met,
164 paid by the MDNR.

- 165 • State and federal agencies being held
- 166 accountable for not meeting their
- 167 requirements as spelled out in the MOU.
- 168 • A reduction and possible elimination of cattle
- 169 testing in the buffer counties at the end of the
- 170 current MOU.
- 171 • Compensation from the MDNR budget to offset
- 172 farm and MDARD expenses required due to
- 173 testing requirements when caused by failed
- 174 agency MOU compliance.
- 175 • Requiring heads from all deer taken on private and
- 176 public lands in that region to be submitted for
- 177 testing.

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

186 In an effort to maintain market access for cattle
187 producers in a known TB positive region, we support the
188 movement of cattle out of that region through normal
189 channels as long as testing and movement requirements
190 are met. ♦

#42 MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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

- 9 • State funding for MSU placing it in a comparable
- 10 academic and financial status with other
- 11 distinguished research universities.
- 12 • The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
- 13 (CANR) and the College of Veterinary Medicine
- 14 (CVM) have historically provided a strong foundation
- 15 for educating generations of individuals involved in
- 16 agriculture in Michigan, the nation and worldwide.
- 17 We continue to support these colleges and urge
- 18 them to work closely with stakeholders, including
- 19 producers, to address the research, resource, and
- 20 information needs of the agriculture industry, as well
- 21 as the curriculum focus of agricultural job providers.

- Programs such as the Production Medicine Scholars program and incentives to encourage a higher rate of CVM graduates to address the shortage of large animal veterinarians practicing in Michigan.
- The agriscience education program, including a master's degree program, and a renewed effort to increase the number of graduates who are accredited to teach agricultural education in Michigan.
- Re-establishing the Agriculture and Natural Resources Communications Program.
- Programs and policies encouraging increased enrollment of students in agricultural degree programs.
- Increased incorporation of agricultural literacy into programs preparing elementary and secondary teachers in other degree areas.
- Michigan Farm Bureau working with MSU to explore the development of an Agriculture 101 course for all students.
- MFB to continue to meet with the leadership of MSU to discuss the critical importance of the land grant mission to Michigan agriculture. MFB must continue to partner with other agriculture industry leaders to work with leadership at MSU to reevaluate their educational and outreach programs and refocus their efforts on core programs directly or indirectly related to agriculture.
- MSU continuing to share financial information regarding investments in agricultural programming at the University and within AgBioResearch and Extension programs in order to facilitate stakeholder partnerships.
- Students' ability to apply directly to the CANR and CVM, not the University as a whole.
- CANR and CVM expanding their recruitment efforts within the state, including efforts to work through existing organizations to promote educational and career opportunities, and encouraging students to apply in the spring of their junior year of high school.
- The two-year agricultural technology program which provides a valuable service to Michigan agriculture and should be recognized as a highlight of the CANR.
- Improvements to the MSU ag-tech program to better serve the needs of students, employers, businesses, industry and consumers.
- Ag-tech credits being allowed to fully transfer into

four-year programs at MSU.

- Continued expansion of partnerships with community colleges and other four-year institutions throughout the state to increase development of these career tracks offered by the CANR.
- A more realistic financial performance requirement from the university administration for the farms based upon the realities of the real-world farming business while working in the university setting.

Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) and AgBioResearch (ABR)

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

We support:

- Increasing state and federal funding for MSUE and ABR, to maintain historical high standards of agricultural research and outreach programs.
- Funding for Project GREEN, including additional funding for three to five-year projects.
- ~~A re-emphasis on~~ and expedited hiring process and for filling extension educator positions and research-related faculty positions. ~~This should to~~ address the emerging needs and priority issues of the production agriculture industry.
- The research/extension specialist program on and off campus. These positions have provided direct contact with stakeholders who provide direction for field-applied research.
- A focus on core agricultural programs.
- MSUE considering years of applied career experience in lieu of a Master's/~~Bachelor's~~ degree as an alternate avenue to recruit top-tier applicants into MSUE educator/4-H educator positions.
- Michigan 4-H youth programs and encourage MFB and county Farm Bureaus to assist in state and local 4-H activities. We recognize the educational efforts and impact of youth experiences in animal projects and plant science projects.
- Extension plans for 4-H staffing and programming involving volunteer stakeholders as they are critical to program success.
- MFB continuing its partnership with the 4-H Capitol Experience. The partnership will encourage students to participate in a high-quality youth leadership experience, with continued support from county Farm Bureaus.
- The formation of an advisory board of MFB

123 members to guide extension agricultural
124 staffing plans and programs. ♦

#94 FARM AND COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

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

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

7 ~~We support establishing a Transportation Advisory Task~~
8 ~~Force within MFB to review transportation regulations.~~

Vehicle Regulations

9 We support:
10

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

not be based on taxable household income, and farm size should not be a factor. Licenses will only be considered for immediate family members.

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

We oppose:

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

Vehicle Size and Weights

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

We support allowing double wide round bales to be over width and travel down roadways without a permit.

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

For seasonal permits, we support:

- The use of sound engineering principles and criteria to determine when to apply and remove spring load restrictions on county and Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) roads.
- Reasonable, standardized Frost Law permitting criteria and fees for all counties within the state.
- Requiring MDOT to issue permits for the trucking of agricultural and forestry commodities at normal

- 98 load limits during spring weight restrictions on the
99 state highway system.
- 100 • Prohibiting county road commissions from
101 requiring to be named as an additional insured for
102 liability coverage to obtain a permit.
 - 103 • MDOT being allowed to issue all permits which
104 allows farm equipment to be trailered on
105 weekends, as well as week days, on the state
106 highway system.

107 **Autonomous Vehicles**

108 We support:

- 109 • Development of technology to advance the use of
110 autonomous vehicles.
- 111 • The development of safety technology and
112 mandatory enhanced safety features installed on
113 all new vehicles including, but not limited to,
114 braking and cautionary sensors that create a safer
115 driving environment for all farm equipment on
116 roadways.
- 117 • Proper regulation and licensing of road bound
118 vehicles.

119 We encourage Michigan Farm Bureau to monitor future
120 developments in autonomous vehicles and regulation
121 regarding their use.

122 **Implements of Husbandry**

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

126 We support:

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

Recommendations on AFBF Policies

#125 Highways

(amendment at line 1.14)

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. 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;
 - 1.5. Harvest-season permits allowing maximum weight limits of 100,000 pounds apply to federal highways except where additional axles are permitted;
 - 1.6. 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;
 - 1.7. 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;
 - 1.8. Legislation with continued emphasis on the development of secondary, farm-to-market roads and adequate funding for roads and maintenance of bridges;
 - 1.9. Allowing more flexibility in the use of federal highway construction funds at the state level for the purpose of maintaining primary and secondary roads;
 - 1.10. Funding for resurfacing, rehabilitating, repairing and reconstructing the nation's interstate highways as many have passed their designed life span;
 - 1.11. 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;
 - 1.12. Efforts to bring about greater uniformity and reciprocity among states on truck regulations;
 - 1.13. All 48 contiguous states having a reciprocal agreement regarding their farm plate registrations;
 - 1.14. 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;
 - 1.15. 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;
 - 1.16. A comprehensive highway safety program to reduce traffic fatalities, injuries and the destruction of property;
 - 1.17. The uniform interpretation and application of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations by enforcement agencies;

- 1.18. 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;
- 1.19. Flexibility in duty time commercial drivers can operate;
- 1.20. The relaxation of environmental impact regulations affecting the construction of federal, state and county roads and bridges;
- 1.21. 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;
- 1.22. Streamlining the process for permitting, funding, construction of federal aid transportation projects;
- 1.23. All states adopting the EZ Pass program;
- 1.24. 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);
- 1.25. Exempting farmers and custom harvesters from requirements to obtain commercial driver's license (CDL) when transporting agricultural commodities including forestry products, production inputs, and harvesting equipment between farms and markets;
- 1.26. Increasing GVW rating to 12,000 lbs. on trailers before a CDL is required;
- 1.27. Load securement regulations being based on the best available science to safely transport that particular load;
- 1.28. DOT subjecting all foreign truck drivers and their trucks to the same safety rules and regulations as domestic drivers and their trucks;
- 1.29. The exemption held by states for transportation of hazardous materials by farmers and ranchers;
- 1.30. 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;
- 1.31. Making federal regulations for obtaining a medical card uniform with those for obtaining a CDL;
 - 1.31.1. CDL drivers who are dependent on insulin maintaining their license with a physician's order;
 - 1.31.2. Coordination of the timetable for required renewal of medical certification of commercial drivers with restricted medical conditions for renewal of CDLs.
- 1.32. 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;
- 1.33. Flexibility for states to determine the distribution of federal highway monies among highway projects;
- 1.34. 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;
- 1.35. 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;
- 1.36. 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;
- 1.37. 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;
- 1.38. 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;
- 1.39. Exempting part-time employees (500 hours or less annually) from the requirement to obtain a CDL;

- 1.40. An exemption for agriculture from federal motor carrier safety regulations regarding:
 - 1.40.1. Displaying of DOT numbers;
 - 1.40.2. Displaying registered owners' or farm name;
 - 1.40.3. Limiting mileage;
 - 1.40.4. Requiring a medical card for the driver;
 - 1.40.5. Maintaining hours of service; and
 - 1.40.6. Requiring bumpers on end dump farm vehicles;
- 1.41. Agricultural custom harvesters being exempt from having to obtain a Department of Transportation Form E (proof of insurance form);
- 1.42. 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;
- 1.43. Raising the federal commercial trucking weight threshold to be over 26,000 pounds;
- 1.44. Increasing the interstate road weight limits for properly equipped vehicles;
- 1.45. 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;
- 1.46. The transportation of raw timber on federal interstate highways;
- 1.47. Exempting production agriculture from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations;
- 1.48. Agricultural transportation being considered intrastate commerce when the following criteria are present:
 - 1.48.1. The vehicle is not-for-hire;
 - 1.48.2. Transportation is from field to market or to an on-farm storage facility with subsequent transport to market; and
 - 1.48.3. Transportation is provided by a producer or custom harvester;
- 1.49. The transportation of farm equipment on interstate highways if no safe or viable alternative route is available;
- 1.50. 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;
- 1.51. Seeking legislation to prevent written warnings from appearing on Compliance, Safety, and Accountability (CSA) reports;
- 1.52. The expansion of parking facilities for commercial vehicles due to e-log mandates;
- 1.53. Variances on axle limits for agriculture;
- 1.54. 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;
- 1.55. Allowing CDL drivers under the age of 21 to haul cargo across state lines within 150 air miles from point of origin; and
- 1.56. The passage of the Safe Routes Act, 2020.
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; and
- 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. ♦

#137 Immigration (amendment at line 1.8.21)

1. *General Immigration*

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

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

- 1.8.14. ICE being required to contact employers immediately following farm enforcement measures when employees are taken from businesses so that employers and families are informed;
- 1.8.15. The U.S. State Department increasing funding and personnel to handle the peak period for visa demand thus reducing worker delays;
- 1.8.16. The development of a special visa, green card or citizenship for farmers immigrating, or those who have immigrated to the U.S. Specifically, we recommend changes to existing laws and E2 visa requirements to better reflect and support farm family businesses;
- 1.8.17. Unaccompanied minors who enter the United States illegally should be treated under the same laws as adults entering the country illegally;
- 1.8.18. The United States Department of Labor resurveying the average labor wage for agricultural workers in order to more accurately reflect the local pay rates and ease the financial strain on agricultural producers due to an overinflated Adverse Effect Wage Rate required by H-2A provisions;
- 1.8.19. Applying the Adverse Effect Wage Rate at the time of contract signing for the life of the contract;
- 1.8.20. Legislation requiring that the H-2A program Adverse Effect Wage Rate should only take effect when there is evidence of a significant effect on local employment;
- 1.8.21. An arbitration process to allow Adverse Effect Wage Rate challenges.
- 1.8.22. The denial of federal funds to sanctuary cities; and
- 1.8.23. A physical visit to the consulate of a worker's home country be used to satisfy a "touch back," which is part of a status adjustment process.
- 1.9. We oppose:
 - 1.9.1. Any efforts to repeal the open agricultural field search warrant provision of IRCA;
 - 1.9.2. The counting of undocumented or unauthorized persons in the U.S. Census relative to redistricting; and
 - 1.9.3. Sanctuary counties, cities and states.
2. **Agricultural Visa Program**
 - 2.1. We support improvements to the H-2A program to make it more effective, affordable and broadened to provide visa workers for both seasonal and year-round agriculture without a visa cap;
 - 2.2. We support establishing an agricultural visa that is portable (at will) or by contract and that also deals with ag sectors that need year-round workers.
 - 2.3. We support an agricultural worker program with requirements and fees that are not more stringent for one sector of agriculture than another.
 - 2.4. We support amending the Migrant and Seasonal Worker Protection Act (MSPA) and the H-2A Act to require that court jurisdiction fall with the state and/or country where the alleged violation occurred.
 - 2.5. We recommend that DOL work quickly and judiciously to provide guidance to state labor departments and settle disputes regarding the H-2A Program to make it very clear that the federal government has oversight and final determination in all areas of the H-2A Program.
 - 2.6. We support improved training for employers to understand and better use the H-2A program, and provide better information for new users to the program.
 - 2.7. The DOL should provide appropriate oversight for state labor departments to ensure that H-2A applications are processed at the state level in a timely and impartial manner.
 - 2.8. We recommend that resident aliens with work permits be allowed to work on as many different farms as needed each year, i.e., they should not be restricted to one farm or one employer, but some may be limited to the agricultural sector for a temporary period of time.

- 2.9. We support amending the H-2A program to allow workers to work for other farmers as long as a transfer is approved by the original contracting employer.
- 2.10. A state employment agency should be required to verify employment eligibility before making any referral to an employer.
- 2.11. We support changes to policy in order to reduce the H-2A waiting period because lack of local labor interest and to eliminate the newspaper advertising requirement.
- 2.12. We support modifying the definition of agricultural labor or services, pursuant to 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(H)(ii)(a), as defined as agricultural labor and applied in Sec. 3121(g) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 at U.S.C. 3121(g); and agriculture as defined and applied in Sec. 3(f) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (FLSA) at 29 U.S.C 203(f) and any other applicable rules/regulations that the definition of agriculture and agricultural labor or services include the transportation of raw, unprocessed crops from the field following harvest to the mill, processor, packing house, elevator or first point of sale.
- 2.13. We support modifications that define farm labor contractors who transport a farmer's crop from the field to the mill, processor, elevator, packing house or first point of sale as agriculture, agricultural labor and/or an agricultural service that is part of the crop harvest for farmers and meet the H-2A eligibility criteria to apply and petition for H-2A visa workers.
- 2.14. We support a worker program that:
 - 2.14.1. Classifies H-2A workers who seasonally operate trucks during harvest as Agricultural Equipment Operators;
 - 2.14.2. Addresses agriculture's unique needs, which may change suddenly with weather, global market realities, contract enforceability or other variables beyond the grower's control;
 - 2.14.3. Is simplified and cost-competitive to make their employment more feasible for perishable crops;
 - 2.14.4. Provides workers, including commercial fishing and fish dock workers, with a visa that lasts at least three years and is renewable multiple times;
 - 2.14.5. Offers an opportunity, and provides a waiver from inadmissibility, to interested agricultural workers who were unlawfully present and working in agriculture prior to introduction of legislation but are otherwise admissible under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA);
 - 2.14.6. Allows the worker to maintain their current residency while obtaining a work visa without a requirement of returning to their country of origin;
 - 2.14.7. Eliminates excessive or duplicative bureaucracy and unnecessary red tape;
 - 2.14.8. Reduces domestic recruitment costs;
 - 2.14.9. Allows U.S. farmers to hire qualified migratory and domestic workers;
 - 2.14.10. Includes appropriate provisions for foreign commuter workers who return to a residence in their home country nightly or weekly;
 - 2.14.11. Establishes an ombudsman to resolve disputes among immigration service, employers and workers;
 - 2.14.12. Includes timely certification determination to ensure employers adequate time to bring workers to a job site;
 - 2.14.13. Includes the broadest possible definition of agriculture;
 - 2.14.14. Provides the option of a housing allowance, in lieu of housing;
 - 2.14.15. Provides for an exemption from any contract employment guarantee in the case of a freeze or other emergency catastrophic event;
 - 2.14.16. Is administered by USDA;
 - 2.14.17. Allows cooperating farmers to make a joint application for workers. These workers would be allowed to move from one cooperating farm to another during the workers' contract period, without shared liability;
 - 2.14.18. Includes data from current and previous H-2A employers in the H-2A prevailing practices survey;

- 2.14.19. Automatically increases the number of available visas (to avoid crop losses) if the visa limit is reached, should a future agricultural visa program cap the number of available visas;
- 2.14.20. Includes forestry;
- 2.14.21. Provides an online format to expedite the exchange of information between the producer and government agencies;
- 2.14.22. Includes work requirements for able-bodied adults on government assistance;
- 2.14.23. Allows for rehiring of past employees without having to refile and resubmit paperwork to four agencies;
- 2.14.24. Allows H-2A workers to get visas for multiple years without refiling them;
- 2.14.25. Streamlines the H-2A application process in order to make the availability of workers more accessible and timelier for agricultural labor needs;
- 2.14.26. A process for timely replacement of H-2A workers due to health reasons or loss of approved worker; and
- 2.14.27. Includes dairy parlor and animal care employees in the H-2A program.
- 2.15. We oppose:
 - 2.15.1. Requiring agricultural producers who participate in federal guest worker programs to pay wage rates higher than their state minimum wage or 10% above the federal minimum wage;
 - 2.15.2. Requiring employers to pay local youth workers the same wages as an H-2A or visa worker under a new agricultural visa program for doing the same job;
 - 2.15.3. Requiring housing or transportation, or the hiring of domestic workers after the contract period has begun; housing or transportation may be encouraged with tax credits;
 - 2.15.4. Requiring to pay such cost until at least half of the contract period is complete and unless the costs primarily benefit the employer;
 - 2.15.5. Limiting the number of temporary worker visas, or guaranteeing payment of any fraction of a worker's pay for work that has not been performed;
 - 2.15.6. Expanding the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act to employers of agricultural temporary workers or otherwise providing those workers with a private right of action, whether expressed or implied, in state or federal court;
 - 2.15.7. Applying any labor law that does not currently apply to H-2A visa workers;
 - 2.15.8. A requirement that agricultural visa workers be required to purchase health insurance; and
 - 2.15.9. Separate hourly wage rates for specific tasks in H-2A contracts. ♦

#239 National Farm Policy

(amendments at lines 8.2.3.4.2.2 and 8.2.3.4.2.3)

1. Agriculture is strategically important to the survival of the United States. Our nation's economy, energy, environment and national security are dependent upon the viability of the agricultural industry. Agriculture must be treated as a strategic resource by our nation and reflected as such in local, state and national government policies.
2. We support a consistent, long-term, market-oriented farm policy that will:
 - 2.1. Rely less on government and increasingly more on the market as well as providing more options for insurance and revenue assurance products that are more equitable for all commodities in all production regions of the country against adverse market fluctuations and weather-related hazards;
 - 2.2. Support farmers during times of market disruption based on gross revenue and cost of production;
 - 2.3. Allow farmers to take maximum advantage of market opportunities at home and abroad without government interference;

- 2.4. Encourage production decisions based on market demand;
- 2.5. Develop risk management tools to deal with the inherent fluctuations in revenue and income associated with farming;
- 2.6. Provide strong and effective safety net/risk management programs that do not guarantee a profit, but instead protects producers from catastrophic occurrences while minimizing the potential for farm programs affecting production decisions;
- 2.7. Is compliant with the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements;
- 2.8. Reduce complexity while allowing producers increased flexibility to plant in response to market demand; and
- 2.9. Increase efforts to encourage processing and marketing opportunities for direct-to-market producers. Infrastructure, workforce development and local processing capacity need to be expanded as this market demand has increased exponentially.
- 3. We oppose:
 - 3.1. New mandatory government supply management programs and acreage reduction programs, excluding the Conservation Reserve Program and conservation easements, for marketing loan commodities under the current farm program;
 - 3.2. A farmer-owned reserve or any federally controlled grain reserve with the exception of the existing, capped emergency commodity reserve;
 - 3.3. Income means testing. However, if such programs are implemented, they must be based on net income rather than gross income;
 - 3.4. Payment limitations; and
 - 3.5. Targeting of benefits being applied to farm program payment eligibility.
- 4. U.S. policies affecting agriculture should be designed to:
 - 4.1. Ensure that U.S. consumers have access to a stable, ample, safe and nutritious food supply;
 - 4.2. Minimize domestic and world hunger and nutrition deficiencies;
 - 4.3. Create and sustain a long-term, competitive and profitable agricultural industry;
 - 4.4. Reduce regulatory burdens on farmers and ranchers;
 - 4.5. Provide a tax structure that is fair and equitable to present and future generations of farmers;
 - 4.6. Continue to improve the environment through expanded incentives to encourage voluntary soil conservation, water and air quality programs, and advanced technological and biotechnological procedures that are based on sound science and are economically feasible;
 - 4.7. Enhance U.S. agriculture's access and competitiveness in the world market;
 - 4.8. Improve the quality of rural life and increase rural economic development;
 - 4.9. Improve Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) to decrease county yield disparity;
 - 4.10. Prioritize Risk Management Agency (RMA) yield data as the primary source of yield data for National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) surveys and future government programs similar to ARC-County as long as RMA data at the farm level is protected from the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA);
 - 4.11. Compensate farmers for their positive impact on habitat, wildlife and the environment;
 - 4.12. Recognize the regional and commodity based differences that exist in U.S. production agriculture and provide programs that meet these needs, while recognizing the need to be internationally competitive; and
 - 4.13. Be implemented in a way that minimizes the negative effects on non-program crops and livestock production and ensure that accepted conservation practices such as cover crops do not impact compliance or payment eligibility. Statements of support for individual commodity programs and provisions shall adhere to these general principles of farm programs, regulatory, international trade, and tax provisions.

5. Improving net farm income, enhancing the economic opportunity for farmers, preserving property rights and conserving the environment are our most important goals.
6. We should undertake a comprehensive effort to assure U.S. producer competitiveness. Competitiveness issues should include biotech seed cost, agricultural research, U.S. transportation infrastructure, U.S. farm bill structure and funding, exchange rates and other factors relevant to agricultural global competitiveness.
7. We support the development of a protocol plan to ensure better stability of farm commodities and infrastructure in times of national emergencies to prevent income loss and to enable the reliable distribution of food.
8. **Farm Bill Principles:**
 - 8.1. We support the following principles to guide development of programs in the next farm bill:
 - 8.1.1. Protecting current Farm Bill program spending;
 - 8.1.2. Maintaining a unified farm bill which includes nutrition programs and farm programs together;
 - 8.1.3. Any changes to current farm legislation be an amendment to the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 or the Agricultural Act of 1949; and
 - 8.1.4. Risk management tools which include both federal crop insurance and commodity programs as top funding priorities.
 - 8.2. **Other Principles:**
 - 8.2.1. **Commodity Programs:**
 - 8.2.1.1. We support:
 - 8.2.1.1.1. Continuation of a counter-cyclical program like the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program and a revenue program like the ARC program, including using RMA data as the primary source to determine a more accurate county yield as long as RMA data at the farm level data is protected from FOIA. If ARC-County is continued, we support changes to make the program more effective and fairer to all farmers;
 - 8.2.1.1.2. If existing programs continue, the opportunity for farmers to re-elect and/or re-enroll;
 - 8.2.1.1.3. Basing Title I payments on historic, rather than planted, acres;
 - 8.2.1.1.4. Modifying "Actively Engaged" rules to more broadly define "family" by including non-lineal familial relationships such as first or second cousins. The family farm exemption from the management restriction and recordkeeping requirements should remain in place;
 - 8.2.1.1.5. Developing farm savings accounts as a risk management option for all producers;
 - 8.2.1.1.6. The current provisions for the peanut program in the 2018 farm bill;
 - 8.2.1.1.7. Individual farm program payments for any actively engaged farmer regardless of the farm's organizational structure; and
 - 8.2.1.1.8. A flexible, renewable one-year program that incentivizes specified nutrient loss reduction or management practices on land currently in production with an emphasis on improving water quality.
 - 8.2.2. **Risk Management Programs**
 - 8.2.2.1. The availability of crop yield and/or revenue insurance at current subsidy levels for all producers of all crops, aquaculture, livestock and poultry in the country; and
 - 8.2.2.2. Changes in the Livestock Forage Program to allow contiguous counties also be declared eligible for

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

8.2.3. **Dairy:**

- 8.2.3.1. Further development and availability of the new Dairy Revenue Protection insurance product and the ability for producers to use it in conjunction with the Dairy Livestock Gross Margin (LGM) program and a commodity title dairy safety net;
- 8.2.3.2. Expansion of RMA risk management programs for dairy producers, with the inclusion of milk as a defined commodity;
- 8.2.3.3. All federal insurance programs related to the dairy industry taking into consideration negative Producer Price Differentials (PPDs) to ensure that farmers actually receive the margin that they insured;
- 8.2.3.4. Require a commodity title dairy safety net program that:
 - 8.2.3.4.1. Gives farmers an option to select either a program that provides protection against a decline in milk price or a decline in milk margin;
 - 8.2.3.4.2. Includes significant enhancements to any gross margin program to effectively support dairy farmers, including:
 - 8.2.3.4.2.1 Adjusting the program trigger to function monthly;
 - 8.2.3.4.2.2 Increasing Tier 1 coverage from 4 5 million pounds of milk to 5 10 million pounds of milk for all dairy producers;
 - 8.2.3.4.2.3 Making tier levels more affordable;
 - 8.2.3.4.2.4 Increasing the catastrophic margin level from \$4.00 to \$5.00 and maintaining the ability to buy up to \$8.00 margin coverage; and
 - 8.2.3.4.2.5 Making strategic adjustments to the feed formula.

8.2.4. **Conservation:**

- 8.2.4.1. Maintaining funding for federal conservation programs which maintain environmental benefits;
- 8.2.4.2. Working lands conservation programs over retirement lands programs;
- 8.2.4.3. Maintaining the current prioritization of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding being targeted to livestock producers;
- 8.2.4.4. Calculation of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) rental rates being re-examined annually at enrollment to ensure they mirror, but do not exceed, the rental rates of comparable land in the immediate area;
- 8.2.4.5. Marginal and highly erodible land returning as the main focus of the CRP. The current limit of 24 million acres in the CRP should continue;
- 8.2.4.6. Improvements to the State Technical Committees to make them more ag friendly by encouraging producers' participation and input;
- 8.2.4.7. Limits the size of pollinator tracts with an emphasis on smaller parcels and cap pollinator rates;
- 8.2.4.8. A path to eligibility for farms that have not previously been in compliance;

- 8.2.4.9. Requiring continual sign-up periods to allow for projects to come online throughout the year.
- 8.2.4.10. Increasing Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) funding;
- 8.2.4.11. Increasing the ceiling on the eligible federal share for ACEP conservation easement to 80 percent of the easement value;
- 8.2.4.12. Requiring continual sign-up periods to allow for projects to come online throughout the year; and
- 8.2.4.13. Allowing for ACEP-Agricultural Land Easement funds to be used to cover transaction costs incurred by landowners and eligible entities facilitating the transaction as well as project start-up costs.
- 8.2.5. **Specialty Crops:**
 - 8.2.5.1. Incorporating all types of domestic fruits and vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned and dried) into the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program providing an affordable option for increasing the variety available year-round for low income school children and more market opportunities for producers. Priority must be given to fresh and locally grown product when available notwithstanding price;
 - 8.2.5.2. Maintaining adequate funding for the specialty crop industry with emphasis on fundamental research, marketing and promotions, and pest management programs;
 - 8.2.5.3. The USDA giving more consideration to specialty crop growers when considering planting history for various programs; and
 - 8.2.5.4. Requiring RMA to include all counties that produce wild and cultivated blueberries to be covered under the federal crop insurance program.
- 8.2.6. **Livestock:**
 - 8.2.6.1. The exploration of new risk management tools for livestock producers; and
 - 8.2.6.2. The Risk Management Agency continually working to improve the livestock and other risk management programs.
- 8.2.7. **Energy:**
 - 8.2.7.1. Adequate funding for the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP).
- 8.2.8. **Rural Development:**
 - 8.2.8.1. Streamlining programs and a more transparent and efficient grant and loan approval process for rural development programs that includes the timely approval of applications and a more effective priority-setting process so that federal funds are expended on projects with the greatest economic potential; and
 - 8.2.8.2. Modifying the broadband programs to increase utilization of loans and grants in rural/underserved communities. We support adequate funding for improvements in USDA's Community Connect, Distance Learning and Telemedicine, and Rural Gigabit Network pilot programs.
- 8.2.9. **Trade:**
 - 8.2.9.1. Increased funding for the Foreign Market Development (FMD) program and Market Assistance Program (MAP).
- 8.2.10. **Credit:**
 - 8.2.10.1. Increasing the amount of funding authorized for the Farm Service Agency loan guarantee programs and raising the current caps on individual amounts a farmer may be granted;
 - 8.2.10.2. A floating conservation-oriented commodity loan program that increases loan prices, addresses conservation goals and satisfies the credit needs of beginning farmers; and

8.2.10.3. More streamlined and minimized application requirements for young and beginning farmer guarantee programs to be more aligned with agricultural lenders.

8.2.11. **Research:**

8.2.11.1. Funding for agricultural research and education.

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

8.2.12.1. Simplifying procedures, reducing paperwork requirements and streamlining interactions between the Farm Service Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Agricultural Statistics Service and the Risk Management Agency; and

8.2.12.2. Congress creating Farm Bill language directing USDA to adopt better data integration and analysis practices from farmer driven data to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of farm programs, crop insurance, and conservation programs while supporting producer profitability and environmental performance on working lands.

9. **General Issues**

9.1. We support:

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

- 9.1.15.Changing FSA regulations to not require farms that are owned and operated by the same individual, but not contiguous, be reconstituted into one farm;
- 9.1.16.Individuals directly involved in family farming operations not having payment eligibility adversely affected by farm business loans secured by cross collateralization, (same assets pledged for multiple producer loans);
- 9.1.17.The establishment of a reasonable time limitation on USDA's ability to alter or reverse an FSA compliance determination so that no producer enrolled in a farm program may be penalized in a subsequent crop year;
- 9.1.18.Allowing either a conservation compliance plan or a confined animal feeding operation permit to meet eligibility requirements for farms which require a conservation compliance plan for eligibility for certain USDA farm programs;
- 9.1.19.Funding sources to assist farmers in complying with livestock regulations;
- 9.1.20.The FSA facility loan program to include all commodity storage;
- 9.1.21.Allowing tenants with multiple landlords to treat each farm as a separate entity for compliance with the farm bill;
- 9.1.22.Action by a landlord not placing any tenant farm program payments in jeopardy. The tenant should be able to maintain eligibility for all farms;
- 9.1.23.Consolidation of the power of attorney form to enable the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the FSA and the Risk Management Agency (RMA) to honor one power of attorney form;
- 9.1.24.Producers being able to use Federal Crop Insurance records for proving yield for base and yield updates;
- 9.1.25.Allowing grain bag storage systems as storage for USDA commodity loan purposes;
- 9.1.26.Efforts to harmonize methods of property descriptions between FSA, Crop Insurance and the RMA to streamline information sharing between the two agencies and to develop a common method to establish crop yields for the various programs, as well as exempting farm operations that utilize crop insurance from filling out NASS surveys;
- 9.1.27.Defining "specialty crops" as any fruit, vegetable, nut or non-program crop grown for consumption and sales;
- 9.1.28.Funding to support the specialty crop industry through the following prioritized funding options:
 - 9.1.28.1. Per state competitive grant program to enhance grower directed research and extension programs;
 - 9.1.28.2. Expanded crop insurance;
 - 9.1.28.3. Dedicated funding for specialty crop growers in working lands programs; and
 - 9.1.28.4. USDA commodity purchases;
- 9.1.29.The recognition of horticulture, Christmas trees, sod and equine as agriculture enterprises eligible for government assistance through disaster programs, crop insurance and conservation programs;
- 9.1.30.Removal of matching fund requirements for public grants and loans intended to help small farmers. In the interim, in-kind contributions like labor should be allowed to be applied to matching fund considerations;
- 9.1.31.Use of producer-generated GPS data be allowed to supplement FSA and crop insurance purposes;
- 9.1.32.Native pollinator conservation efforts in farm policy legislation;
- 9.1.33.Cotton intercropped with cucurbit crops be counted toward base acres;
- 9.1.34.USDA requiring mandatory monthly reporting of rice stocks and rice production;
- 9.1.35.Requiring the FSA Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) Statement be signed and effective for more than one year or up to the full length of each Farm Bill period. Each individual entity should be responsible for reporting changes to conditions of

approved status. AGI should be subject to random verification;

- 9.1.36. The Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) be combined with the FMNP Senior program that is already part of the Farm Bill;
- 9.1.37. A cottonseed and/or cotton lint farm program that provides an option for generic base acres to be reallocated to a new cotton farm program. In the process of reallocation, generic base acres that have been in agricultural use but not planted to an ARC/PLC crop must be allowed to maintain their base acres. If cottonseed and/or cotton lint are not included as Title I farm program commodities, we support annual appropriations for a ginning assistance program;
- 9.1.38. Cotton producers being eligible for Title I programs and STAX at the same time;
- 9.1.39. Base acres and yields being adjusted yearly, on a voluntary basis, using a five-year average.
- 9.1.40. Allowing dairy farms to update their historical production numbers on a rolling five-year average;
- 9.1.41. The use of commodity certificates for repaying loans for all program commodities;
- 9.1.42. A 90-day lock-in period for marketing loan gains for all commodities;
- 9.1.43. Maintaining the ARC-Individual program;
- 9.1.44. Collaborating with USDA on how the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) funds can be better spread among numerous entities and an appeals process for grants that have been awarded;
- 9.1.45. The current use of SCBGP funds for market promotion and research and not for implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). The FSMA congressional mandate must be funded through the Food and Drug Administration budget;
- 9.1.46. The exemption of growers from the registration and reporting requirements associated with the System for Award Management;
- 9.1.47. Eliminating the reporting requirement for non-program grass waterways/fallow areas that are baled for forage;
- 9.1.48. Continuation of the Good Neighbor Authority (forestry) program;
- 9.1.49. The use of a longer deadline period for conservation compliance first time farmer exceptions;
- 9.1.50. When farm program benefits are denied due to an alleged violation and the enforcement action is decided in the respondent's favor, we support changes in the law to require the government agency to be responsible to pay the respondent's legal fees and any denied benefits for the unsubstantiated claim;
- 9.1.51. Allowing in-kind contributions like labor to be applied to matching fund considerations;
- 9.1.52. Allowing consideration of off-farm income toward the calculation of loan paybacks in the same way that they are now used for grant eligibility;
- 9.1.53. Eliminating the cultural resources requirements on the FSA-850 Environmental Screening Worksheet;
- 9.1.54. FSA allowing ARC/PLC applications via the FSA-578 form;
- 9.1.55. Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) and Stacked Income Protection Program (STAX) indemnity payments be paid earlier;
- 9.1.56. An additional category for alfalfa in producer's FSA base acres;
- 9.1.57. An increase in funding for USDA NRCS EQIP's hoop house grant program;
- 9.1.58. The creation of a grassland savanna program that prioritizes the importance of the Coastal Flatwoods longleaf pine ecosystem as both a timberland and grassland for the purposes of NRCS program participation;
- 9.1.59. Renaming the Agriculture Improvement Act to the American Food Security and Assistance Act;

- 9.1.60. Maintaining the integrity and intent of all USDA programs through rigorous oversight; and
- 9.1.61. Increased funding for USDA programs with specific attention to easing access for farm families and those inheriting family farms as well as to increasing the racial diversity of farmland ownership.
- 9.2. We oppose:
 - 9.2.1. Producers becoming ineligible for participation in any USDA program due to their participation in federal or state water projects;
 - 9.2.2. Compliance status of one farm affecting the ability to receive benefits on another farm;
 - 9.2.3. The extension of the CCC commodity loans beyond the current term;
 - 9.2.4. The system of anonymous reporting of operator violations to the FSA and NRCS;
 - 9.2.5. The use of conservation programs by entities unrelated to agriculture; and
 - 9.2.6. Penalties for farm program violations being applied to the entire farm operation instead of the portion of the farm in question. ♦

#336 Agricultural Chemicals **(amendments at lines 7.7 and 10.3.1)**

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

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

- 7.17.8. The concept of state management plans. However, we oppose the proposed EPA state management plan rule which fails to recognize effective state programs and imposes federal requirements to maintain uses of important crop protection tools;
- 7.17.9. The continued use of the neonicotinoid pesticide group for agricultural and horticultural crops;
- 7.17.10. If a crop protection product has gone through a review three times or more, the time frame between reviews should be doubled;
- 7.17.11. Consistent funding and streamlining of the pesticide review process within EPA to expedite registration;
- 7.17.12. Development of new crop protection technologies that benefit specialty growers and row-crop farmers alike, while minimizing effects on other plant habitat and the environment; and
- 7.17.13. EPA's policy that allows the expeditious use of existing stocks of pesticide products whose registrations have been amended, canceled, or suspended.
- 7.18. We oppose:
 - 7.18.1. Any legal action made against the federal government based on excessively broad interpretations of environmental laws, which restrict or limit the safe and proper use of agricultural chemicals. Actions impacting a limited geographical region may set harmful and nationally recognized legal and regulatory precedent;
 - 7.18.2. Any regulation that would require a permit prior to application of a chemical for crop protection;
 - 7.18.3. Any requirement that applicators be required to notify all neighbors prior to any pesticide/fertilizer application and/or fumigant buffer zone limitations proposed by the EPA;
 - 7.18.4. Any curtailment of the safe and proper use of agricultural chemicals unless research and scientific data determine that injury to health and well-being would result;
 - 7.18.5. The inclusion of the Private Right of Action provision in the language of FIFRA;
 - 7.18.6. Any reduction to the quantity of methyl bromide requested by methyl bromide users for nomination as Critical Use Exemptions to the Parties of the Montreal Protocol, and we oppose any reduction by the EPA in the amount of Critical Use Exemptions authorized by the Parties of the Montreal Protocol; and
 - 7.18.7. Any additional EPA regulation of seed treatments for planting.
- 8. ***Labeling and Handling***
 - 8.1. We recommend the agricultural chemical industry and agricultural producers work with the appropriate agencies to develop and use reusable, returnable and soluble pesticide containers and an economically and logistically feasible plan to dispose of containers.
 - 8.2. We recommend that compliance with federally approved label instructions absolve farmers from liability claims for health issues, environmental pollution and from paying the cost of cleaning up environmental contamination.
 - 8.3. We recommend that EPA financially support continued education on the proper use and handling of agricultural protectants.
 - 8.4. We recommend that farmers triple rinse or pressure rinse containers and to return them for recycling in areas where such programs are currently available.
 - 8.5. We recommend establishment of an industry standard for voluntary field marking that signifies the traits planted in the field.
 - 8.6. We support:
 - 8.6.1. Clarification of the current label on 2,4-D to allow its continued use as part of no-till systems;
 - 8.6.2. The use of vegetable oils as the base or carrier for pesticides;
 - 8.6.3. EPA cooperating in sponsoring amnesty programs for proper disposal of hazardous chemicals and discontinued chemicals;

- 8.6.4. A permanent labeling system covering product name, date of manufacture, effective life and proper storage requirements being required to avoid the use of ineffective pesticides;
- 8.6.5. EPA reconsidering labeling for pesticide application wind speeds in view of advancements in engineering and technology such as wind guards and low drift spray tips;
- 8.6.6. The development and immediate use of uniform, permanent international symbols on agricultural chemical containers to ensure proper handling;
- 8.6.7. Printing the EPA registration number and re-entry interval of each pesticide active ingredient in legible type size directly below its name;
- 8.6.8. Periodic upgrading of EPA/state pesticide applicator training to ensure a sound and effective source of training, information and certification on the proper handling and safe use of pesticides;
- 8.6.9. The development of more effective equipment for farm applications;
- 8.6.10. The safe use of pesticides and practices which will ensure the safety of handlers, applicators and agricultural workers; and
- 8.6.11. A list available online of all label changes.
- 8.7. We oppose:
 - 8.7.1. Politically mandated buffer zones;
 - 8.7.2. EPA's attempt to shorten the permit certification timeline for pesticide applicator licensing and increase testing standards to make it more difficult for farmers to obtain a pesticide applicator license; and
 - 8.7.3. EPA revocation of approved chemicals based on applicator error.
- 9. **Data and Record-keeping**
 - 9.1. We support:
 - 9.1.1. Uniform pesticide record-keeping and statistically valid reporting for use in evaluating and maintaining pesticide registrations. The enforcement of record-keeping for restricted use farm chemicals should be done at the state level and in a manner that educates and is helpful to the producer rather than punitive;
 - 9.1.2. The voluntary collection of actual residue data from farm and orchard products to establish use patterns of the agricultural chemicals used in crop production. This data should be used in the pesticide registration, reregistration, cancellation and special review process only; and
 - 9.1.3. Increased funding for the USDA to increase credible information on pesticide use collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).
- 10. **Specialty (Minor) Crop Chemicals**
 - 10.1. We urge Congress and the appropriate agencies to address the cost of label registration and reregistration for chemicals to be used on minor use crops and to provide methods of label clearance for them. Reregistration of specialty use chemicals should not be required unless research by qualified specialists demonstrates a need to change the registration.
 - 10.2. To expedite specialty crop pesticide registrations, we urge that chemicals cleared for application on edible food crops be additionally registered, with agreement of the manufacturer, for like applications of that same crop when planted for nonfood uses. If a chemical is cleared for control of a specific pest on an edible food crop, it should also be cleared for pest control on nonfood crops.
 - 10.3. We support:
 - 10.3.1. A dedicated funding source to support research into specialty crops and their existing and emerging pest threats for new pesticide development and expanding current label registrations.

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

#402 Energy

(amendment at line 4)

- 1. The U.S. should be focused on energy independence.
- 2. We support the development and implementation of a comprehensive energy policy, which includes conservation, efficiency, exploration, research, and proportional use of subsidies to provide for the production of traditional and renewable energy sources. However, further action is needed to address the vulnerabilities of the U.S. energy sector and the resulting impacts on our nation's farmers and ranchers.
- 3. We stand behind the U.S. coal industry and coal-fired electrical generating plants to help achieve energy independence. We oppose efforts to comply with international environmental goals for coal power plants.
- 4. **We oppose any governmental mandate requiring auto manufacturers to supply only electric vehicles.**
- 5. We believe that a government requirement/mandate for electric car production and use should be matched by concurrent approval for the construction and/or upgrades for reliable electric generation facilities to deliver the power needed. We support charging electric cars in off-peak hours.
- 6. We urge Congress and the administration to enact policies that will:
 - 6.1. Encourage the states to develop and implement regulations for the handling of abandoned oil and gas production equipment and pipelines;
 - 6.2. Expedite the development of energy resources anywhere in the U.S., including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Outer Continental Shelf and Bakken oil fields;
 - 6.3. Increase domestic oil refining capacity by modifying and streamlining permitting requirements and other regulations;
 - 6.4. Diversify geographic locations of oil refineries and U.S. energy supplies;
 - 6.5. Encourage exploration, extraction, pipeline and port facility construction to ensure gas and oil supplies meet demand;
 - 6.6. Require pipelines carrying hazardous liquid be installed to a minimum depth of 48 inches below the soil surface where applicable;
 - 6.7. Reduce the number of boutique fuels;
 - 6.8. Increase incentives for the use of clean coal technology in electric power generation;
 - 6.9. Stimulate domestic production of oil and gas by reinstating the depletion allowance, eliminating the tax disincentives for drilling and removing excessive environmental regulations;
 - 6.10. Support further development of nuclear, solar, geothermal, bio-based, hydroelectric, oil shale, tar sands, wind and other sources of energy and recommend that special emphasis be given to converting to expanded use of coal, including gasification, liquefaction and alcohol production; and

- 6.11. Order a thorough economic impact study be completed to demonstrate the true benefits derived from the domestic production of renewable energy to assist in our nation becoming self-sufficient in energy production.
7. We support:
 - 7.1. The goals of the 25x25 Alliance which are: "Agriculture will provide 25 percent of the total energy consumed in the United States by 2025 while continuing to produce abundant, safe and affordable food, feed and fiber";
 - 7.2. Department of Energy (DOE) developing a grant program for the installation of alternative energy systems on farms;
 - 7.3. Educational programs and incentives to promote sound energy conservation renewable energy programs;
 - 7.4. The oil and gas industries' use of hydraulic fracturing in the exploration and recovery process. Hydraulic fracturing should continue to be regulated by the states, rather than the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); and
 - 7.5. Voluntary energy audits to help evaluate energy use and develop energy strategies for livestock facilities, dairies, nurseries and greenhouses.
8. We oppose:
 - 8.1. The federal mandate banning the sale of incandescent light bulbs;
 - 8.2. Government rationing as a means of allocating scarce energy supplies, except in the case of national emergencies. In such cases, agriculture should receive uninterrupted supplies;
 - 8.3. So-called "divorcement" legislation, at state or national level, which would prevent anyone, including farm cooperatives, who sells gasoline at wholesale from selling gasoline at retail;
 - 8.4. The U.S. government subsidizing gas exploration in other countries;
 - 8.5. Alternative electrical energy being paid more than the bulk market rate. Any such contracts should be allowed to expire;
 - 8.6. The federal government's Clean Power Plan that addresses coal-fired generation; and
 - 8.7. Fuel stations requiring/collecting signatures and information for kerosene purchases.
9. **Crude Oil**
 - 9.1. We support a gradual increase in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.
 - 9.2. We oppose:
 - 9.2.1. Establishing oil prices through legislation; and
 - 9.2.2. Releasing oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve in non-emergency situations.
10. **Natural Gas**
 - 10.1. Extensive changes need to be made to laws and procedures governing the review, approval, location and construction of interstate gas pipelines. In particular, we would recommend changes to law that would:
 - 10.1.1. Require governmental agencies to timely notify all landowners who would be affected by a proposed gas pipeline under their jurisdiction;
 - 10.1.2. Require gas pipeline operators to provide compensation to landowners for not only all current losses but also all future losses which may result from condemnations for gas pipeline use, and require operators to pay such compensation within six months of the date the landowner loses his or her property interest;
 - 10.1.3. Require a minimum five-year restitution period for the tile and compaction disruption on public easement; and
 - 10.1.4. Require gas pipeline operators to drain any area which has become a wetland as a result of pipeline construction and restore such area to its previous condition and productivity.
 - 10.2. We support:
 - 10.2.1. Allowing natural gas companies to renegotiate take-or-pay contracts for transmission lines in order to decrease the price of such gas;
 - 10.2.2. Continuing the Surface Transportation Board's role in overseeing pipeline rates;

- 10.2.3. Revising the Federal Power Act and the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 so the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is supported by general revenue funds rather than pipeline fees;
- 10.2.4. Incentivizing the use of natural gas in agriculture, transportation, and electrical generation;
- 10.2.5. Methanol production from natural gas for fuel use;
- 10.2.6. Odorization of natural gas or components when being transported so that leaks can be safely detected;
- 10.2.7. Royalty owners being given secured creditor status in bankruptcy filings by gas operators; and
- 10.2.8. The increased availability of natural gas in America.
- 11. **Renewable Energy**
 - 11.1. We support:
 - 11.1.1. Incentive programs and initiatives that will increase the use of, and facilitate the local ownership of all renewable energy sources;
 - 11.1.2. Incentives for renewable energy systems in rural areas as long as it does not restrict agricultural production;
 - 11.1.3. The ownership of methane as separate from other energy resources; and
 - 11.1.4. Increased funding for the AGSTAR (methane promotion) program.
- 12. Solar Energy
 - 12.1. We support:
 - 12.1.1. Solar energy generation as a component of the nation's energy portfolio;
 - 12.1.2. Establishment of state standards for commercial solar energy conversion systems that protect private property rights and allow for reasonable development of projects;
 - 12.1.3. Ensuring adequate funds are in place for decommissioning;
 - 12.1.4. Allowing landowners the option of terminating a solar lease agreement if solar panels fail to produce energy for a period longer than 12 consecutive months; and
 - 12.1.5. Efforts to locate solar energy projects on marginal or underused lands.
 - 12.2. We oppose giving public utility status to solar energy or solar energy development companies. ♦

#404 Renewable Fuels

(amendments at lines 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.6, 2.1.7, 5.1.5, 5.1.7 and 7.1.2)

- 1. We support:
 - 1.1. Full research and development for the increased production of all forms of renewable energy from agricultural resources including solutions to help producers effectively manage soil and water conservation issues and control invasive species;
 - 1.2. Private and public efforts to develop and promote new uses for agricultural products;
 - 1.3. Research into the viability and economic potential of agricultural products and commodities used for energy generation;
 - 1.4. Production and use of agricultural based fuels;
 - 1.5. Research and demonstration programs that use renewable fuel as a fuel for fuel cell engine development;
 - 1.6. The Renewable Fuels Standard 2 (RFS2) as passed in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, and that Congress maintain administrative control over renewable volume obligations after 2022; and
 - 1.7. The availability of multi-grade non-ethanol gasoline for small engine, marine and boutique uses, and all agricultural uses.
- 2. **Biofuels**
 - 2.1. We support:
 - 2.1.1. The establishment and enforcement of national quality standards for biodiesel, renewable fuels and related co-products. Biodiesel shall be defined by meeting the

specifications of the American Society of Testing and Materials 6751 or its properly designated successor;

- 2.1.2. Diesel to be a biodiesel or renewable diesel blend and gasoline be an renewable fuel blend;
- 2.1.3. Efforts to educate consumers and industry on the benefits of biofuel blends higher than ten percent;
- 2.1.4. Legislation requiring the production of clear gasoline that would accommodate year-round blending with ethanol in all fuels;
- 2.1.5. Research for the development of alternative denaturing options, in an attempt to make the denaturing of renewable fuel more economical;
- 2.1.6. Including biodiesel and renewable diesel in all the Department of Energy's (DOE) policies and materials regarding alternative and renewable fuels;
- 2.1.7. Legislative and regulatory approval for a minimum 95 octane transition to a 98 RON (approximately 93 US standard octane) fuel standard utilizing higher blends of ethanol to help automobile manufacturers meet fuel efficiency standards and reduce their carbon footprint;
- 2.1.8. Standardization of all new gasoline dispensers to be Underwriters Laboratories (UL) certified for a minimum of E-30;
- 2.1.9. The continuation of programs such as the Renewable Fuel Standard as legislated to promote increased sales and higher blends of biofuels;
- 2.1.10. A national standard for the labeling and identification of biofuel products;
- 2.1.11. U.S. Department of Defense adoption and use of renewable fuels; and
- 2.1.12. Efforts to expand the use of renewable fuel in commercial aviation, maritime, and other large-volume users.
- 2.2. We oppose:
 - 2.2.1. Attempts to defund, repeal or rollback implementation of the RFS2; and
 - 2.2.2. Small Refinery Exemption waivers under the RFS and support the reallocation of waived gallons as originally mandated under the RFS2.
- 3. *Biomass*
 - 3.1. We support:
 - 3.1.1. Defining biomass to include all forms of plant fiber harvested from all lands, public and private;
 - 3.1.2. Harvesting of lowland and riparian areas for biomass use except lands enrolled in retirement programs;
 - 3.1.3. Increasing the establishment, production and utilization of eligible biomass energy crops through the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP); and
 - 3.1.4. Retaining and developing policies which support the biomass fuels industry.
 - 3.2. We oppose declaring any potential biomass crop ineligible for use in any biomass energy incentive program simply because it is non-native.
- 4. *Co-products*
 - 4.1. We support:
 - 4.1.1. Continued research and education into ruminant and non-ruminant feed utilization of renewable fuel co-products;
 - 4.1.2. Renewable fuel producers be encouraged and offered incentives to use recycled effluent water produced by local

- municipal wastewater treatment facilities in the production process; and
- 4.1.3. Adding price reporting for corn and its co-products, including dry distillers grains (DDGs), to the U.S. Census Bureau Current Industrial Reports as well as to the Bureau's domestic and international market reports.
- 5. *Emissions*
 - 5.1. We support:
 - 5.1.1. Oxygenate standards unless there are enhancements of laws and regulations (anti-backsliding) that preserve the improvements in air quality that renewable fuel provides as a fuel;
 - 5.1.2. Promoting, using and expanding renewable fuel as an octane or cetane enhancer, fuel source, or lubricity agent to improve air quality. Our goal is to expand the use of renewable fuels;
 - 5.1.3. Continuing tests on E diesel to prove the viability of an ethanol additive to lower the particulates in diesel engine emissions;
 - 5.1.4. Amending the Clean Air Act to hold states harmless for emission levels resulting from emergency waivers granted by EPA;
 - 5.1.5. Designating the cost of purchasing biodiesel and renewable diesel as an allowable expense in the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality program;
 - 5.1.6. Changing tests for low-sulfur fuel to be based on levels of sulfur rather than testing for red dye;
 - 5.1.7. Using biodiesel and renewable diesel to meet up to 100 percent of an affected utility or government fleet emission reduction requirements under the Energy Policy Act of 1992; and
 - 5.1.8. Accommodation issues surrounding Reid Vapor Pressure to ensure ethanol volumes can continue to expand.
 - 5.2. We are opposed to states being exempt from the oxygenate requirements of the Clean Air Act.
- 6. *Engines and Vehicles*
 - 6.1. We support:
 - 6.1.1. Research for better performing engines that run on renewable fuels;
 - 6.1.2. Legislation to require all new gasoline-powered vehicles be flex-fuel;
 - 6.1.3. Industry standards that would require all vehicles capable of burning E85 fuel to be equipped with a yellow gas cap to distinguish this capability; and
 - 6.1.4. Using renewable fuels in all federal vehicles where available.
 - 6.2. We oppose efforts to ban internal combustion engines.
- 7. *Infrastructure*
 - 7.1. We support:
 - 7.1.1. Timely certification by UL of dispensing equipment for all renewable fuel products, including all storage tanks and pumping equipment;
 - 7.1.2. All diesel engine manufacturers adopting biodiesel and renewable diesel as an alternative for complying with EPA emission control standards;
 - 7.1.3. Streamlining and expediting the process for issuing permits for the construction and operation of refineries for the production of renewable fuels and coal gasification;
 - 7.1.4. Distributing renewable fuels via pipelines or other cost effective means;
 - 7.1.5. Color coding fuel pumps to indicate blends of liquid energy; and

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

#418 Fiscal Policy

(amendment at line 11.6)

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

- 11.6. A Universal Basic Income.
12. **The Federal Reserve**
- 12.1. The Federal Reserve System should be audited annually and the results of the audit should be made public in a timely manner. The Reserve should have an independent board of governors with production agriculture represented on the Board; and
- 12.2. We oppose the Federal Reserve buying up United States government debt. ♦

#455 Agricultural Reports (amendment at line 2.21)

1. Confidentiality of government-collected individual producer data or records, including the names and addresses of participants, is important and should not be released to any government agency or any other entity. A privacy statement should be supplied stating that the information will not be released without written consent from the individual/customer/ client.
2. We support:
 - 2.1. Changes in national and international crop reporting services that use improved technology and methodology as appropriate to provide more timely and accurate supply-demand information, including current planting intentions;
 - 2.2. The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) should continue to collect and publish county, state and national level data and statistics;
 - 2.3. USDA including agricultural imports from all countries in its crop reporting service in a timely manner;
 - 2.4. Releases and reports issued by USDA being scheduled to minimize the impact on other agricultural commodities;
 - 2.5. Funding to establish a national dry bean stocks report compiled by NASS;
 - 2.6. Regularly collecting and reporting of NASS data on the production and use of ethanol co-products used for livestock feed and the replacement percentage of corn exports with dried distillers grains;
 - 2.7. The Peanut Planting Acreage Report being released after the Farm Service Agency (FSA) deadline for planted peanuts has passed;
 - 2.8. The addition of another rice stocks reporting date of June 1;
 - 2.9. Implementation on an operational basis of the Large Area Crop Inventory Experiment technology to better track worldwide inventory of agricultural production;
 - 2.10. A greater international effort to improve global crop and livestock reporting;
 - 2.11. Prompt release of satellite and other sources of information on crop acreage and conditions such as production estimates, effects of weather and insect pressures around the world. The lack of such pertinent information from USDA results in wide swings in market prices which are costly to farmers;
 - 2.12. World production information, including U.S. data, should be reported in the same units of measurement;
 - 2.13. Development of budget expenses and recoveries that more clearly portray the net cost of farm programs to the U.S. government;
 - 2.14. Cooperation with NASS by producers to submit their best estimates on crop report questionnaires or to provide information to enumerators;
 - 2.15. The agriculture census being restricted to questions relative to farm acreage and livestock numbers. Reporting forms should be updated, simplified, and restricted to relevant personal information;
 - 2.16. Re-evaluating the definition of "farmer" for the purpose of the USDA Agricultural Census;
 - 2.17. The USDA Market News Service furnishing information on direct sales of slaughter and feeder cattle, sheep and hogs including the reporting of wholesale dressed beef, pork and lamb trade;
 - 2.18. USDA making a distinction between hair and wool sheep in their Annual Livestock Census;
 - 2.19. Annual production reports being reinstated for all fruit, vegetables and specialty crops;

- 2.20. USDA including in its estimated gross agricultural income the fair rental value of farm homes and the value of home-grown produce consumed on the farm. These factors are not used in computing nonagricultural income. The same methods should be used in computing agricultural and nonagricultural gross income;
- 2.21. The NASS survey being audited periodically by a third party, every 5 years;
- 2.22. Appropriate action being taken if a processor incorrectly reports inventory to either NASS or Chicago Mercantile Exchange, and are found to be manipulating the market by incorrectly reporting inventory;
- 2.23. The definitions of "agritourism enterprise" and "agriculture tourism" for use in the Agriculture Census be as follows:
 - 2.23.1. Agritourism enterprise refers to an enterprise as a working farm, ranch or agriculture plant conducted for the enjoyment of visitors that generates income for the owner; and
 - 2.23.2. Agriculture tourism refers to the act of visiting a working farm or any agriculture, horticulture or agribusiness operation for the purpose of enjoyment, education or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation that also adds to the economic viability of the state;
- 2.24. FSA as the primary crop reporting agency;
- 2.25. USDA's NASS valuation of Hawaii coffee crop as green bean;
- 2.26. Voluntary participation in all government agricultural surveys, including the USDA Agricultural Census;
- 2.27. A NASS no-call list;
- 2.28. Share rent and cash rent being included in all surveys. All share-rent surveys should include a cash rent value;
- 2.29. Using actual crop insurance production yields, rather than NASS survey yields, to calculate county crop yield averages; and
- 2.30. USDA having better price collection and price series information on specialty crops.
- 3. We oppose the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) and USDA releasing reports without peer review or adequate scientific review. ♦

#462 Role of USDA

(amendments at lines 10.25 and 10.26)

- 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. USDA should be:
 - 8.1. A monitor of domestic and foreign agricultural affairs;
 - 8.2. An accurate source of agricultural data and research; and
 - 8.3. An agricultural policy adviser to other departments of the federal government;
- 9. We support USDA programs that:
 - 9.1. Help farmers obtain needed crop and market information, research, educational assistance and credit;

- 9.2. Provide workable grades and standards and safeguard product quality through inspection services;
- 9.3. Help farmers eradicate or control plant and animal pests and diseases;
- 9.4. 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;
- 9.5. Assure reliable, unfettered transportation for agricultural commodities;
- 9.6. Strengthen farmers' power to bargain for a price; and
- 9.7. Provide comparable services to administer all commodity programs.
10. USDA should:
 - 10.1. Continue to be a full Cabinet-level department and shall not be renamed or consolidated with any other department or agency of government;
 - 10.2. Retain various food assistance and nutrition programs, both domestic and foreign;
 - 10.3. Use U.S. agricultural commodities for domestic food programs. Priority should be given to locally sourced products when possible;
 - 10.4. Not limit or restrict USDA purchases due to the violation of immigration regulations;
 - 10.5. Limit importers from purchasing products from foreign countries and reselling them under the provision of Section 32;
 - 10.6. Extend the "Buy American" provision to other noncontiguous states or territories including Alaska, Hawaii, Guam and Puerto Rico;
 - 10.7. Continue the Women, Infants and Children's (WIC) program, the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program but farmers should not be assessed for funding of these type of programs;
 - 10.8. Use Farm Service Agency (FSA) data and assistance for premise ID registration;
 - 10.9. Use the land grant colleges for agriculture-oriented research;
 - 10.10. Continue efforts to resolve problems involving environmental and animal care issues;
 - 10.11. Maintain an efficient and cost-effective services delivery system, including electronic filing;
 - 10.12. Maintain FSA jurisdiction over the administration of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and cost-share programs;
 - 10.13. Change in FSA regulations to allow other forms of verification for production evidence;
 - 10.14. Not allow FSA to combine farm numbers without written permission from the farmer;
 - 10.15. Upgrade computer technology and appropriate software to allow the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), FSA, RMA, and National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to utilize and share the same farm program enrollment information and production, and reduce duplicate reporting and surveys, provided appropriate privacy disclosures and safeguards are utilized;
 - 10.16. Encourage "one-stop shopping." All farm program agencies, where feasible, should be located in the same building;
 - 10.17. Appoint one or more farmers on any agriculturally related government board;
 - 10.18. 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;
 - 10.19. Accredited and license commercial dog breeders;
 - 10.20. Further support the Foreign Agriculture Service;
 - 10.21. Make Beginning Farmer Program eligibility requirements consistent through all USDA agencies, expand the definition of young and beginning farmer and extend the time frame to 15 years for FSA programs;
 - 10.22. 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;

- 10.23. Allow for a System for Award Management (SAM) number to be valid for the length of the USDA project for the individual producer;
- 10.24. Co-location of USDA and Soil and Water Conservation Districts when possible; and
- 10.25. Provide notifications of job positions (openings) within FSA ~~and NRCS should be opened~~ 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;
- 10.26. Revise regional NRCS hiring policy to meet the needs of local producers.
- 10.27. Allow local FSA applicants to apply for job positions in a desired territory based on rank and time served in location;
- 10.28. Continue the release of crop condition reports as they are useful to agricultural producers and should maintain their current release schedule;
- 10.29. Compensate the farmer for legal fees and civil damages when the farmer wins an appeal as a result of incorrect decisions;
- 10.30. 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;
- 10.31. Accept evidence provided by the farmer as true, absent substantial evidence to the contrary;
- 10.32. Employ and make available county personnel based on workload, acreage and number of farms; and
- 10.33. 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.
- 11. We oppose:
 - 11.1. Requiring farm trusts to provide the total trust instrument because the individual's last will and testament should be confidential;
 - 11.2. Making FSA county executive directors and program assistants employees of the federal government;
 - 11.3. The transfer of any USDA program to another department or agency;
 - 11.4. Announcing crop estimates until certified acres are known; and
 - 11.5. The Department of Homeland Security or USDA-prescribed homeland security practices being mandated on farms unless such measures are completely funded.
- 12. **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**
 - 12.1. 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.
 - 12.2. State and county committees will preside over the NRCS in the same capacity as they do with the FSA.
 - 12.3. NRCS should:
 - 12.3.1. Act as a non-regulatory mediator of environmental compliance issues with regulatory agencies, on behalf of producers;
 - 12.3.2. Use funding only for agricultural purposes;
 - 12.3.3. Place a high priority on providing quality, technical and scientific natural resources expertise;
 - 12.3.4. Have adequate funds for technical assistance that are not tied directly to conservation programs;
 - 12.3.5. Ensure local farmer input on NRCS personnel decisions and direction of natural resource programs through conservation districts is maintained for the benefit of producers;
 - 12.3.6. Accept state licenses as proof of qualifications, without further testing or requirements, to be a Technical Service Provider;

- 12.3.7. Amend NRCS regulation to count perennial crops, such as orchards, vineyards or sod, as prior converted land when the crop is removed;
- 12.3.8. Inform landowners and tenants when NRCS officials are considering changing or altering wetland status on any portion of their holdings;
- 12.3.9. Honor wetland determinations made prior to 1990;
- 12.3.10. 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;
- 12.3.11. Recognize regional seasonality of farm commodities when determining program sign-up dates;
- 12.3.12. Allow an accredited third party or NRCS staff to complete on-site determinations to ensure timely determinations;
- 12.3.13. Focus exclusively on agriculture services and cease bringing in influences from non-agriculture groups;
- 12.3.14. Allow qualified third parties, as well as NRCS staff, to complete reviews for conservation practices; and
- 12.3.15. Allow the farmer and his counsel to call NRCS technical staff as witnesses in appeals.
- 12.4. NRCS should not:
 - 12.4.1. Become a regulatory agency, serve in a policing capacity or be combined through USDA reorganization with an agency that has regulatory functions;
 - 12.4.2. 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;
 - 12.4.3. Have the authority to rescind its position in the appeals process; and
 - 12.4.4. Require partnerships, limited liability corporations and other farm entities to register on the Standardized Award Management Service site. ♦

#503 Climate Change

(amendment at line 2.3)

- 1. Market-based incentives, such as pollutant credit trading, are preferable to government mandates.
- 2. We support:
 - 2.1. Science-based, peer-reviewed research to determine the causes and impacts of global climate change;
 - 2.2. A voluntary market-based carbon credit trading system that is not detrimental to other agricultural producers;
 - 2.3. Standardization, transparency, and clarity related to ecosystem services enrollment contracts;
 - 2.4. Compensation to farmers for planting crops or adopting farming practices that keep carbon in the soil or plant material;
 - 2.5. Alternative energy sources, which will minimize atmospheric pollution;
 - 2.6. Incentives to industries seeking to become more energy efficient or to reduce emissions of identifiable atmospheric pollution and the means of preventing it;
 - 2.7. Market-based solutions, rather than federal or state emission limits, being used to achieve a reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from any sources;
 - 2.8. EPA's re-evaluation of burdensome emission control rules for farming practices, farm equipment, cotton gins, grain handling facilities, etc.;
 - 2.9. The inclusion of the agricultural community as a full partner in the development of any policy, legislation or markets;
 - 2.10. Research and development to better assist farmers in handling weather events and better adapting to weather conditions;
 - 2.11. Initiatives, research and education that promote soil health, water quality and soil/water conservation, to be implemented on a voluntary basis;

- 2.12. Ongoing educational campaigns emphasizing the positive impact agriculture has on the climate;
- 2.13. Unbiased science-based research on climate change;
- 2.14. 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;
- 2.15. Incentivizing farmers to voluntarily improve on-farm energy efficiency;
- 2.16. Incentivizing improvements to the current electric grid;
- 2.17. Using a broad spectrum of power sources like renewables, biofuels and nuclear energy to help facilitate the market-derived cost of energy;
- 2.18. Federal climate change policy that reflects regional variations; and
- 2.19. 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.
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 on carbon uses or emissions;
 - 3.12. Any laws or policies that implicate agricultural activity of any kind as a cause for climate change without empirical evidence; and
 - 3.13. A state-by-state patchwork of climate change policies. ♦

#537 Private Property Rights (amendment at line 5.3)

1. We believe in the American capitalistic, private, competitive enterprise system in which property is privately owned, privately managed and operated for profit and individual satisfaction. Any erosion of that right weakens all other rights guaranteed to individuals by the Constitution. Any action by government that diminishes an owner's right to use his property constitutes a taking of that owner's property.
2. When regulations or legislation regarding rare, threatened or endangered species or environmental restrictions alter agricultural practices, agricultural producers should be compensated for the cost of these altered agricultural practices.
3. New technology expands the boundaries of property rights infringement. Federal laws should evolve with these technological advancements to maintain the traditional concepts of private property rights.
4. We support:
 - 4.1. Government providing due process and compensation to the exact degree that an owner's right to use and the value of the property has been diminished by government action;
 - 4.2. All levels of government abiding by the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution: "No person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation";

- 4.3. An open public process for the transfer of lands and/or regulatory jurisdictions between state, federal and/or local agencies for development that considers the impact on surrounding land, including agriculture;
- 4.4. Legislation that requires federal officials to identify themselves, notify property owners and obtain written permission or a search warrant before going onto private property;
- 4.5. Requiring all federal officials, when visiting an agricultural entity, to present photo identification and one other form of identification, with a copy of one being left on site;
- 4.6. Regulation that would prevent the publication of maps produced by GPS data without marking private roads as not available for public use;
- 4.7. Regulation that would prevent internet routing through private roads except for delivery to a specific home or business located on the private road;
- 4.8. Review of all federal regulations that encroach on the rights of property owners;
- 4.9. A definition of private property that includes all land, timber, water rights or other valuable considerations associated with land ownership;
- 4.10. Enactment of presidential Executive Order 12630 regarding the protection of private property rights law;
- 4.11. The basis for just compensation being fair market value of the property or the economic loss to the owner or any adjoining landowner whose property is devalued;
- 4.12. Compensation for partial takings of the property being based on the reduction in the value of the total property;
- 4.13. Business owners having the exclusive right to prohibit tobacco use in their private business;
- 4.14. Buffers around the perimeter of military bases designed to keep land in production agriculture being clearly focused on that purpose alone;
- 4.15. Reimbursement to businesses, industries and farmers who have expended sums of money to prove they are meeting environmental regulations if they show they were meeting the requirements before the government agency questioned their performance;
- 4.16. Protection of adjoining landowners by providing adequate fencing and protection from liability issues related to the use of such facilities in cases where recreational trails are established;
- 4.17. Legislation that allows any U.S. citizen, regardless of race, color, creed or national origin, to own reindeer;
- 4.18. Legislation that would protect innocent private property owners from property confiscation in the event that illegal substances are found, stored or growing on private property without the landowner's knowledge or consent;
- 4.19. Legislation to ensure that all information, including video and audio recordings, from private farms and farm production is treated as private property and is to be made available and/or controlled by the farm owner and operator. We believe that the estate administrator or trustee shall have access to all digital assets and other electronic forms of communication as part of the estate;
- 4.20. Continued public availability of Differential Global Positioning System signals;
- 4.21. Repeal of those provisions of scenic byway legislation that would result in the loss of private property rights;
- 4.22. The right to sell land remaining in the hands of landowners; and
- 4.23. If the government claims an important public interest in private property it should be required to specifically identify the area and the reason for the determination.
5. We oppose:
 - 5.1. Any legislation or application of the Public Trust Doctrine that would allow public access to or through private property without permission of the property owner or authorized agent;
 - 5.2. The gathering of data from private property when that data may be used to facilitate federal land use planning;

- 5.3. Surveillance of private property, personal, or financial data by any government agency without a warrant or probable cause;
- 5.4. The practice of including privately owned land on maps of government-owned properties (such as national forests) without clear delineation of private property lines;
- 5.5. Action by federal agencies, acting individually or collectively, which would result in:
 - 5.5.1. An involuntary net loss of private land in any state; and
 - 5.5.2. Increasing the amount of land which is exempt from state and local laws and property taxes;
- 5.6. Any agency designating a citizen's land as a historical site without the owner's approval;
- 5.7. Regulatory enforcement based solely on aerial surveillance;
- 5.8. Government entities, other than local fire authorities, regulating burning of burdensome vegetative growth on private property;
- 5.9. Any concept of civil asset forfeiture that allows any agency to seize private property without due process and without a presumption of innocence of the property owner; and
- 5.10. All federal funding used to design, build, maintain, utilize or provide access to a federal database or geospatial information on community disparities in access to affordable housing. ♦

Recommendations on State Policies

#2 AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION AND VALUE - ADDED INITIATIVES

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

6 We support:

- 7 • Individual and cooperative efforts by producers to
8 improve income with processing and marketing
9 methods which add value to farm products while
10 maintaining food safety.
- 11 • The Michigan State University Product Center, their
12 objectives and ongoing efforts.
- 13 • The coordination and formation of producer alliances
14 and cooperatives.
- 15 • Efforts to maintain and build a strong agricultural
16 processing industry in the state. To achieve this goal,
17 we recommend existing and prospective processors
18 be given more incentives to stay or build in Michigan,
19 including but not limited to industrial facility
20 exemption options, tax breaks and regulatory
21 reform/relief, and ample access to necessary inputs
22 such as investment capital, labor, energy and farm
23 products.
- 24 • Agricultural representation on the Michigan
25 Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to
26 better serve the needs of agriculture and the food
27 industry. We support Michigan Department of
28 Agriculture and Rural Development authority and/or
29 oversight over the granting of MEDC funds for
30 agricultural development activity.
- 31 • The use of Michigan MarketMaker
32 (<https://mi.foodmarketmaker.com>), an Internet
33 marketplace for farmers to feature Michigan-based
34 commodities and value-added products.
- 35 • A coordinated effort between the agriculture
36 industry and controllers of publicly owned lands
37 (e.g., county parks, rest areas, car pool lots, parking
38 lots) to facilitate farmers' marketing of Michigan-
39 grown products to consumers at these locations.
- 40 • Tax incentives and an infrastructure to grow
41 Michigan's food processing capabilities.
- 42 • The establishment of a State of Michigan low interest
43 loan program to fund qualified value-added ventures.
- 44 • The Right to Process Act, including protections for
45 agricultural processors and cooperatives.
- 46 • Continued monitoring of the Michigan Cottage Food

- 47 Law to ensure it maintains its original intent.
- 48 • The production of hops, malting barley and
- 49 associated crops as part of a viable and expanding
- 50 brewing industry in Michigan.
- 51 • The concept of a farm brewery license that will allow
- 52 farm breweries in Michigan to operate in a similar
- 53 fashion to Michigan farm wineries.
- 54 • The use of one-time start-up grants for “food hub
- 55 type” endeavors, not recurring funding.
- 56 • Encouraging institutions to purchase more food from
- 57 local sources.
- 58 • Additional research and development for value-
- 59 added opportunities.
- 60 • The use of grant programs for industry segments
- 61 that typically find it difficult to secure loans due to
- 62 being perceived as high-risk ventures.
- 63 • All government agencies cooperating with one
- 64 another to expedite innovative agricultural initiatives.
- 65 • Annual funding of an ag innovation value-added
- 66 initiative fund. ♦

#11 DAIRY INDUSTRY

1 The dairy industry is critical to the overall agriculture

2 economy in Michigan. We support a strong and vibrant

3 dairy industry in Michigan that allows our dairy farmers to

4 be competitive in national and international markets.

5 We support:

- 6 • Industry collaboration in the development of
- 7 additional dairy processing in Michigan and urge
- 8 local, state and federal lawmakers and regulators to
- 9 assist with streamlining the process for dairy
- 10 industry expansion in processing.
- 11 • Funding for all state and federally required dairy
- 12 industry sampling and inspection programs.
- 13 • Current dairy laws as they pertain to the
- 14 pasteurization of milk, including prohibiting the sale
- 15 of unpasteurized fluid milk for human consumption.
- 16 • Michigan Farm Bureau and the Michigan Department
- 17 of Agriculture and Rural Development working
- 18 together to provide guidelines for cow-share and
- 19 herd-share programs that meet Grade A dairy
- 20 standards.
- 21 • On-farm bio-security practices being implemented
- 22 that protect and enhance animal health and our
- 23 dairy markets.
- 24 • Continued availability and proper use of animal
- 25 health tools (e.g., antibiotics, technology).
- 26 • Industry support and participation in the veterinary
- 27 feed directive.
- 28 • Collaboration between farmers, animal health

- 29 officials and the veterinary community in an
30 aggressive Johnes detection and eradication
31 program and a continued focus on improving dairy
32 cattle health.
- 33 • Industry participation in any changes to the Siting
34 Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management
35 Practice so as to allow for continued growth and
36 dairy expansion.
 - 37 • Continued farmer participation in any changes to the
38 National Dairy FARM Program and on-farm
39 implementation of the standards.
 - 40 • Continued investments in research that allow for
41 industry growth and efficiency.
 - 42 • Continued farmer participation and control over
43 dairy industry promotion dollars, enhancements
44 and creativity in dairy promotion ideas and the
45 development of new products.
 - 46 • Increased efforts to expand dairy consumption in
47 school systems including inclusion of higher milk
48 fat options and flavored milks.
 - 49 • Dairy farmers being able to collect, store, and market
50 colostrum to licensed collectors/sellers.
 - 51 • Collaboration with the United Dairy Industry of
52 Michigan and Michigan Ag Council educating the
53 medical community and education system about the
54 benefits of milk/dairy consumption, especially for
55 youth.
 - 56 • Collaboration with the industry including farmers, on
57 the establishment of a world class dairy teaching
58 research and extension facility located on the current
59 Michigan State University south campus dairy farm
60 that meets the current and future needs of our dairy
61 industry. ♦

#12 DIRECT FARM MARKETING AND AGRITOURISM

- 1 Agritourism is the intersection where agriculture and
2 tourism meet; when a farm opens its doors to the public and
3 invites visitors to enjoy their products and services.
- 4 We support:
- 5 • Legislation defining agritourism as activities on the
6 farm that may or may not be directly related to the
7 farm operation, conducted for the purpose of
8 increasing income for the farm business including
9 educational or entertainment experiences, but does
10 not change the general intent of the farm operation.
 - 11 • The development of an Agritourism Act,
12 administered by the Michigan Department of
13 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), that
14 preempts local ordinances. Areas of coverage
15 should include, but not be limited to, event barns,

corn mazes, and any farm animal related activities. Farms will receive the benefits of this Act as long as more than 50% of the farm income is generated by the sales of commodities grown on the farm and as long as the facilities can meet the public safety requirements in the building code. This does not prohibit local governments from enacting reasonable hour, noise and parking regulations.

- Local zoning ordinances that recognize the benefits and allow for the operation of farm markets, roadside stands, agritourism destinations and farmers markets that allow for the placement of these activities on agricultural zoned land without a special use permit. We do not believe a city, township or other local agency can restrict or mandate the size of what a farm market/roadside stand is.
- Michigan zoning authorities adopting the farmer friendly “Agricultural Tourism Model Zoning Ordinance Provisions” as developed by the Michigan Agricultural Tourism Advisory Commission and ~~Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD).~~
- Working with the direct farm market and agritourism industries to improve and strengthen the farm market Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs).
- The creation of a set of Generally Accepted Agritourism Practices that align with the GAAMPs outlined in the Right to Farm Act and recognizing agritourism as a sector of the agriculture industry.
- ~~Michigan Farm Bureau to work with Farm Bureau Insurance to investigate adequate ways to insure the agritourism industry.~~
- Legislation to enhance and promote agritourism, the development of guidelines and best practices, as well as on-farm direct marketing opportunities.
- Proposing certain roads and highways across the state be designated as “Scenic Agricultural Byways.” These routes would be designated to showcase Michigan’s agricultural diversity, unique agricultural features, farm markets, roadside stands and related agricultural businesses.
- The opportunity for farm operations to have their businesses designated as tourism destination points.
- Michigan Farmers Market Association, along with grower vendors, to establish guidelines for agriculture procedures of farmers markets and to assist them if requested. In the event fees are

67 charged by municipalities to farms that participate in
68 farmers markets, we believe those fees should not
69 be in excess of the actual cost to run the market. We
70 believe locally grown should be defined as produced
71 in the state of Michigan, or within 50 miles of the
72 state border.

- 73 • Community Supported Agriculture programs that
74 build relationships, provide healthy food choices,
75 and encourage consumers to meet the people that
76 grow the products.
- 77 • Farmers markets and farm marketers to promote
78 and provide education on food safety to
79 consumers.
- 80 • Operations that welcome the general public on to
81 their facilities to portray a professional image
82 because they are our ambassadors to the public
83 where positive perception is important.
- 84 • Operations with livestock to participate in their
85 respective national animal care programs.

86 We oppose:

- 87 • Discriminatory regulation, licensing and inspection by
88 regulatory agencies and local units of government on
89 farm markets, roadside stands and agritourism
90 operations which restrict their ability to remain
91 competitive. Markets should not be subject to
92 duplicate inspection by MDARD, the Michigan
93 Department of Health and Human Services, and local
94 units of government. ♦

#16 FOOD SAFETY

1 Food safety is a significant concern for both 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, we must keep in mind
6 a balance between risk and over-regulation that hinders
7 entrepreneurial opportunities.

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

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

16 We support:

- 17 • Proper ~~security~~ biosecurity, identification, and safety
18 protocols being followed by all state and federal
19 agency personnel when visiting farms; including
20 compliance with all executive orders and regulatory

- 21 requirements relative to the ag industry.
- 22 • Continued use of food safety audits such as Good
- 23 Agricultural Practices (GAP) and food safety risk
- 24 assessments to ensure food and consumer safety.
- 25 • Michigan Farm Bureau joining an existing coalition
- 26 that is working on standardizing a third-party audit
- 27 that would be broadly accepted by retailers.
- 28 • Permanent institutional licensing, including
- 29 churches and civic facilities.
- 30 • Current dairy laws as they pertain to the
- 31 pasteurization of milk, including prohibiting the sale
- 32 of unpasteurized fluid milk for human consumption.
- 33 • MFB and MDARD working to provide guidelines
- 34 for cow-share and herd-shares that meet Grade A
- 35 dairy standards.
- 36 • Use of wooden pallets and wooden harvest bins.
- 37 • Custom exempt slaughter.
- 38 • The ability for families to process and consume
- 39 their own products on their own farm.
- 40 • Continued monitoring of the Cottage Food Law.
- 41 • Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes,
- 42 and Energy, in consultation with MDARD, reviewing
- 43 the rules for application of biosolids in close
- 44 proximity to growing fruit and vegetable crops with
- 45 the intent of preventing potential human health
- 46 hazards.
- 47 • The concept of On-Farm Readiness Review kits
- 48 along with the Food Safety Modernization Act
- 49 Grower Training programs that help ease the
- 50 burden of farms becoming compliant.
- 51 • Prohibiting reuse of food containers or packaging
- 52 labeled with “use by” or “purchase by” dates, for the
- 53 benefit of consumer health and producer liability
- 54 protection.
- 55 • A committee comprised of MFB members research
- 56 and report back on block chain technology use in
- 57 agriculture and the potential impact on Michigan
- 58 agriculture.
- 59 We oppose:
- 60 • Any unfunded mandates including but not limited to
- 61 USDA GAP audits.
- 62 • Abuse and overreach of the Cottage Food Law
- 63 provisions. ♦

#17 FORESTRY

1 Forestry should be treated and defined as an integral

2 part of Michigan agriculture. The production of forest

3 products requires inputs and management, which are

4 similar to those necessary for the production of other

5 commodities. Michigan forests contribute much to the

Michigan economy.

We support:

- Efforts to clarify forest industry activities as agricultural for things such as truck licenses, tax on equipment, insurance, supply purchases, real estate taxation and agriculture classification.
- New industrial uses of forest products such as the construction of bridges, guard rails, sign posts and other uses on roads and highways. We urge the Michigan Department of Transportation and county road commissions to use these Michigan-grown and processed forest products.
- The promotion of use of cross-laminated timber in construction of buildings in Michigan due to its many benefits, including carbon sequestration, LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) credits, and reduced construction time.
- Changes to the state building code to address the advancements of cross-laminated timber.
- Promoting the development of a cross-laminated timber manufacturing plant in Michigan.
- Clarifying the use of the log plate to include all activities connected with logging operations.
- The classification of logging equipment as an implement of husbandry.
- The multiple use management philosophy of our public forests with emphasis on sustainable management and harvest of state-owned forestlands.
- We urge the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to base timber sales from public lands on reasonable aggregate economic, biological and social impacts.
- Requiring a market-value bid on purchase offers of Michigan state-owned forests. All sales should be based on a total value bid rather than on sales of species/products estimates.
- Timber management with techniques best suited for public lands along roads and highways.
- Legislation that protects timber operations from liability involving individuals using the land for recreational purposes.
- When hunting occurs on public lands that are being logged, we support the requirement for hunter log books for safety purposes.
- Tax reverted lands acquired by the state be maintained or improved through reforestation or other approved soil and water conservation practices.
- An ongoing Michigan forest inventory and analysis with joint funding by industry, state and federal

- 57 sources.
- 58 • Programs and/or initiatives that provide landowners
- 59 with incentives to improve forest resources,
- 60 encourage proper management, promote
- 61 sustainability of forestlands, and benefit the forest
- 62 products industry.
- 63 • All farm operations and landowners managing
- 64 forests, wetlands, and habitat enrolling in the
- 65 Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance
- 66 Program and completing as many
- 67 recommendations as possible to help preserve air,
- 68 water, and soil quality, and to achieve sustainable
- 69 land management goals.
- 70 • Efforts by the State of Michigan to provide
- 71 education and outreach for private forest
- 72 landowners.
- 73 • The expansion of applied/skilled forestry post-
- 74 high school education programs to ensure
- 75 a sufficient forestry workforce for the future.
- 76 • The Right to Forest Act and urge landowners to
- 77 utilize Generally Accepted Forest Management
- 78 Practices.
- 79 • Encouragement by the State to better utilize ash
- 80 lumber and biomass so they can be utilized near
- 81 the point of origin prior to ash borer invasion.
- 82 • A voluntary registration program for foresters and
- 83 recognize the need to greatly improve the definition
- 84 of a forester's duties under the Occupational Code.
- 85 • Assistance from MDNR with prescribed burns on
- 86 private land. Prescribed fire is an important
- 87 management tool to control unwanted vegetation.
- 88 This will also help keep the accumulation of dead
- 89 wood, needles, etc. from becoming a fire hazard.
- 90 • A review of the recent changes to the Forestry Best
- 91 Management Practices (BMP) manual. It is
- 92 imperative the BMP guidelines are reflective of
- 93 current industry practices and standards, not
- 94 ideological principles. Standards should be based
- 95 on outcomes, not a prescriptive set of rules.
- 96 • Efforts by the timber industry on the development
- 97 of a common scale for hardwood saw logs.
- 98 • Michigan State University (MSU) to conduct an
- 99 economic study comparing the economic returns
- 100 of the Michigan forestry industry to the economic
- 101 returns from Michigan's other major
- 102 commodities.
- 103 • The collaboration between MSU and University of
- 104 Wisconsin on a forestry economy specialist.

105 We oppose:

- 106 • Restrictions of logging during hunting season.
- 107 • Any additional licensing or regulatory requirements

- 108 on forest management professionals.
- 109 • Mandating forest practice rules.
- 110 • The closing of existing roads on state forest lands.
- 111 • Any legislation restricting the sale of forest
- 112 products for non-traditional use.

113 Regeneration of new seedlings, ensuring future crops
114 of trees in our woodlots and forests, is being seriously
115 depleted by wildlife populations that are too high. We will
116 work with the MDNR, conservation organizations, hunting
117 groups and other interested groups to bring the wildlife
118 population down to acceptable levels.

119 We urge the creation of an industry-driven initiative
120 funded by state of Michigan appropriations for forest
121 management, research, education and outreach at MSU,
122 University of Michigan, and Michigan Technological
123 University. Michigan Farm Bureau should provide
124 assistance and expertise to such an initiative.

125 We request MDNR and the Michigan Department of
126 Agriculture and Rural Development to place a high priority
127 on growing and developing new markets, new products,
128 and processing facilities.

129 We encourage county Farm Bureaus to work with their
130 local school districts to retain the ownership and use of
131 school forests. The retention of school forests will help
132 preserve educational opportunities for students, help
133 conserve forest resources, and provide both short and long-
134 term income for school districts.

135 We encourage county Farm Bureaus to refer members
136 to their local conservation districts to obtain a list of qualified
137 foresters for woodlot owners. ♦

#26 MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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

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

14 We have concerns with the lack of expertise and
15 understanding of farming in other state departments.
16 Therefore, we request MDARD be the primary representative
17 of government on our farms. We are opposed to multiple

18 inspections by a variety of jurisdictions.
19 We encourage MDARD to follow these
20 recommendations when prioritizing their current budget.
21 Regulatory or enforcement program funding should be taken
22 from the General Fund with a limited portion of the cost to be
23 generated from industry fees. We support strategic
24 investments in MDARD with the following funding priorities:

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

34 We support:

- 35 • Protection of animal health through testing,
36 quarantine and depopulation, if necessary.
- 37 • State funding of all required testing.
- 38 • Plant inspection, testing and quarantine to control
39 disease.
- 40 • State on-farm inspectors pursuing opportunities to
41 protect Michigan farmers from excessive regulations
42 being advanced by federal inspectors.
- 43 • The MDARD abandoned and neglected orchards
44 program and amendments to include other perennial
45 crops. With the involvement of stakeholders and
46 other departments, we support the development of
47 rules to strengthen enforcement provisions of the
48 program, including appropriate funding.
- 49 • Reviews and specific expirations for quarantines or
50 movement restrictions.
- 51 • Indemnification for losses of farm income when
52 agricultural commodities or products are impounded,
53 farms are quarantined, or movement or sales are
54 restricted in the public interest. In determining
55 indemnification, MDARD should consider at least
56 one local appraisal of fair market value.
- 57 • In the case of widespread animal disease outbreaks,
58 indemnification should reflect prices that were
59 current prior to the outbreak.
- 60 • Investigating the feasibility of a livestock insurance
61 fund that might complement existing state and/or
62 federal indemnification programs. The feasibility
63 study should consider loss of livestock and
64 production due to disease outbreak, depredation,
65 funding options, species participation and producer
66 control of the fund.
- 67 • A mechanism for loans or direct compensation for
68 loss of income due to depopulation, quarantine or

condemnation of agricultural products.

- Enforcement of food safety laws, animal identification requirements, and inspection programs in Michigan, focused on working with producers to resolve problems in a timely fashion before the issuance of 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.
- MDARD's utilization of state certified third-party privatized contracting and technology for inspections, review and oversight for some programs, including virtual online courses.
- MDARD working with the Michigan State University (MSU) Pesticide Safety Education program to ensure that training materials for pesticide applicators include appropriate information on proper use, risk, volatility, and application of pesticides and chemicals, especially when near sensitive crops.
- Online and in-person testing for pesticide applicator licensing.
- Additional pesticide applicator training for Dicamba based products, only when use or formulation has changed.
- MDARD meeting with industry representatives prior to regulatory enforcement rule changes.
- Formation of an industry committee to advise the MDARD director regarding the inclusion of injurious plants on the nuisance plant list. Consideration should be given for a phase-in for any commercial plant species added to the nuisance plant list.
- Aggressive promotion and the labeling of Michigan-grown products and commend the efforts of MDARD for its leadership in highlighting the importance of the agricultural industry to the state of Michigan.
- Any block grant funds received under the Federal Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act be distributed to Michigan specialty crop commodity sectors on a pro-rata basis with input from a stakeholder group comprised of representatives from the specialty crop industries. All specialty crop sectors, including the nursery and greenhouse sector, should have the

- 120 opportunity to receive an equitable portion of block
121 grant funds.
- 122 • An economic development and ag innovation
123 fund that is overseen by ag industry officials
124 designed to support new innovations,
125 economic growth and direct research for
126 agriculture in Michigan. This fund should be
127 accessible to all segments of agriculture.
 - 128 • Further development of meat processing and
129 marketing opportunities through joint cooperation
130 between the industry, MDARD, MSU and the
131 Michigan Meat Association.
 - 132 • The State returning to a USDA-equivalent state
133 meat inspection for local custom processors as
134 soon as possible to support value-added
135 opportunities. We will support adequate funding for
136 this program.
 - 137 • Michigan Farm Bureau working with MDARD to
138 investigate having state inspectors service small
139 scale or portable slaughter facilities in sparsely
140 populated rural areas.
 - 141 • MDARD having sole authority to license and regulate
142 all terrestrial and aquatic plants for sale or commercial
143 use.
 - 144 • MDARD working more closely with the aquaculture
145 industry to clarify and streamline the process for
146 aquaculture operations to harvest and sell directly to
147 the consumer. ♦

#28 NURSERY, FLORICULTURE, SOD AND GREENHOUSE INDUSTRY

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

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

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

20 allow for voluntary in-state inspections as requested by the
21 industry.

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

29 We support:

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

45 We oppose:

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

#30 PLANT PESTS AND DISEASES

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

4 We support research to do the following:

- 5 • Determine the impacts of Spotted Wing Drosophila
6 (SWD) to support and coordinate with the SWD
7 initiative through Michigan State University and the
8 Michigan Cherry Committee.
- 9 • Develop new chemical and biological controls for
10 disease detection, control and eradication.

- Enhance the use of natural plant pest predator species or bio-controls after thoroughly reviewing the potential consequences to the environment.
- Address viable control methods for, but not limited to, *Phytophthora capsici*, downy mildew, overall spruce decline and *Armillaria* root fungus.
- Address replant issues in the asparagus industry.

Additionally, we support:

- Industry-led efforts to control and prevent crop losses due to plant pests and diseases.
- More aggressively advocating for pesticide manufacturers to develop new chemistries for existing and emerging pest threats.
- The development of regulatory protocol, inspection procedures and pest control methods to allow for the shipment of quarantined commodities.
- Indemnification for losses of farm income when agricultural commodities or products are impounded, farms are quarantined or sales are restricted in the public interest.
- The supplier being held responsible for compensation for all losses due to imported plants with diseases.
- Zero interest/fixed loan or direct and/or indirect compensation to producers for sudden market loss due to invasive species including but not limited to SWD and hemlock woolly adelgid.
- Testing for vomitoxin in corn field trials. We encourage ethanol plant operators to spot-check for vomitoxin in corn entering the plant and dried distillers grains leaving the plant.
- An industry-driven comprehensive rewrite of Michigan's Plant Pest Protection Act.
- Educational efforts to help producers and consumers understand the importance of their roles in preventing the spread of plant pests and diseases.
- A review and update of the current invasive species quarantine rules in Michigan. We urge Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to develop a system that allows agricultural products to be shipped directly for processing on a permitted basis throughout the year in Michigan, during a quarantine period.
- The current councils which maintain the lists for noxious terrestrial weeds and invasive species as defined by PA 451 of 1994 and encourage swifter action to review and approve species for those lists.
- Encouraging conservation districts to take measures to keep these noxious weeds controlled.

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

#34 SUGAR INDUSTRY

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

4 We support:

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

#36 URBAN FARMING

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

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

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

22 Right to Farm protections for commercial agricultural

23 practices must not be compromised. ◇

#38 WHEAT INDUSTRY

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

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

7 We support:

- 8 • Michigan Farm Bureau collaborating with
9 representatives of the crop insurance industry,
10 wheat millers, and Michigan Agri-Business
11 Association to discuss transparency in Michigan
12 wheat pricing and statewide standards for wheat
13 sampling.
- 14 • Continued efforts, including education and
15 certification, to improve sampling and testing
16 procedures to ensure accurate and consistent
17 falling number and vomitoxin testing results.
- 18 • The continuation of the wheat checkoff program.
- 19 • The Great Lakes Yield Enhancement Network,
20 which evaluates the production practices of wheat
21 producers, and we encourage stakeholders to
22 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
27 coverage must be expanded to include all classes
28 of wheat, and discount factors must be
29 comparable to the level of discounts experienced
30 by producers in the marketplace.
- 31 • We also recommend RMA explore development
32 of a new insurance policy recognizing the
33 differentiation between wheat classes.
- 34 • We encourage RMA to standardize wheat
35 planting deadlines with the Farm Service Agency
36 to appropriately reflect current climatic
37 conditions. ◇

#39 AGRISCIENCE, FOOD, AND NATURAL RESOURCES EDUCATION & 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 food
4 and agriculture as a greater than \$100 billion industry in the
5 state through the adoption of the Agriculture, Food and
6 Natural Resources Cluster. This cluster will enable the
7 future leaders of agriculture to obtain foundational

8 knowledge that will help shape their careers and ultimately
9 promote the sustainability of the agriculture industry.

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

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

26 We support:

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

- 59 • FFA alumni associations and their efforts to
60 strengthen agriscience and natural resource
61 education across the state and nation.
- 62 • AFNRE emergency certification programs, as well
63 as the hiring of retired ag teachers, to fill these
64 positions without any retirement penalties, due to
65 the lack of qualified people available to lead these
66 programs.
- 67 • Consideration being given to student loan payoff
68 or scholarship programs to help promote AFNRE
69 programs through private or public partnerships.
- 70 • Continued activities of private and public companies
71 and organizations, like those of AgroLiquid, St.
72 Johns, which provide an educational opportunity to
73 the public to learn and experience the role,
74 importance, and economic impact of agriculture on
75 food production for generations to come.
- 76 • The development of an agricultural credential which
77 high school AFNR students could use to gain
78 employment in the agricultural and natural resources
79 field. The development of this credential should
80 include input from agricultural businesses, teachers
81 and educational specialists to ensure the
82 certification represents the skills learned through the
83 program in a way that's meaningful for agricultural
84 employers. ♦

#44 RENEWABLE AND BIOMASS PRODUCTS

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

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

14 We support:

- 15 • Requirements for the use of biomass fuels and fuel
16 additives in areas that exceed the 1990 federal
17 Clean Air Act standards.
- 18 • The continued production of biomass products
19 such as ethanol and other bio-based fuels and
20 products.
- 21 • Year-round statewide availability of E-15.
- 22 • Efforts to encourage biomass fuel production

facilities in Michigan in areas of available feedstock production and co-product utilization.

- Research and development being encouraged through tax and cost-share incentives to find ways to reduce the cost of production of biomass products, expand feedstocks, co-product utilization (including those from food processors), and expand the application of technologies such as anaerobic digestion, fermentation, distillation, burning of organic materials (pyrolysis) and hydrogasification.
- Research on the use of 100 percent biomass fuels for some vehicles, as well as blending biomass fuels with petroleum-based fuels.
- The State of Michigan including biomass fueled vehicles in the state motor pool fleet. We strongly urge all state-owned diesel and E-85 (85 percent ethanol, 15 percent gasoline) flexible fueled vehicles use the respective fuel source when possible.
- Expanding the biomass fuel distribution infrastructure, including blending capability at the retail level.
- Encouraging manufacturers to expand offerings of renewable fueled vehicles.
- Research, development and use of renewable energy sources for on-farm production applications.
- Establishing economic incentives and streamlining the permitting and licensing process to encourage biomass fuel production, ~~and~~.
- Broadening the use and distribution with incentives consistent with other renewable energy sources targeted to producers, blenders, distributors and end-users.
- Requiring new biofuels or renewable energy commercial production facilities utilizing public funding, tax deferments or grants to offer an investment opportunity to Michigan citizens to keep gains realized in rural America.
- Encouraging Michigan schools and all municipal governmental units to use bio-based products.
- Educating consumers about the positive influence and benefits of biomass fuels and renewable sources for heating.
- Utilizing only the latest science-based information to promote biomass/renewable products.
- Supporting research and demonstration programs using ethanol as a fuel for fuel cell engine development.
- Supporting research and demonstration programs to expand the use of ethanol, ~~and~~ biodiesel, and

- 74 farm generated methane as a fuel alternative.
- 75 • Increasing engine efficiency through practices
- 76 such as raising octane levels by utilizing farm
- 77 sourced biofuels.
- 78 • Including identifying fuel stations featuring E-85 and
- 79 biodiesel with interstate highway signs.
- 80 • The scientific measurement and rating of fuels and
- 81 alternative fuels with regard to carbon dioxide
- 82 levels.
- 83 • The increased utilization of silvicultural (forest)
- 84 products and other biomass material, including non-
- 85 native plant species, for the production of renewable
- 86 energy.
- 87 • Exemptions from the normal Michigan Department
- 88 of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy permitting
- 89 process to encourage the development of
- 90 renewable biomass energy production and
- 91 utilization on farms. ♦

#47 UTILITY PLACEMENT

1 All new and replacement above and underground utility

2 distribution equipment shall be placed or relocated in the

3 existing road right-of-way. When utilities are being replaced,

4 the utility owner should remove the replaced sections upon

5 installation of new utilities. We urge all utility companies to

6 communicate with land owners before beginning the

7 renovation of lines, individual poles, etc. As farm equipment

8 increases in size, the placement of utility services becomes

9 a concern. Adding to the potential problem, other utility

10 lines, such as telephones and cable television, are installed

11 below the existing electric lines. Access to, or operation in,

12 a field or orchard with farm equipment creates the potential

13 for contact with the lines.

14 We support:

- 15 • The requirement of a utility to follow the National
- 16 Electrical Safety Code (NESC) and Michigan Public
- 17 Service Commission (MPSC) regulations to protect
- 18 both the farmer and the utility from accidents which
- 19 could cause injury to an individual or interruption of
- 20 service to a community.
- 21 • Legislation or regulation to create a minimum height
- 22 requirement for all overhead lines to align with
- 23 NESC code 230E1, which has a minimum line
- 24 height requirement of 15½ feet. All new
- 25 underground utilities shall be installed and
- 26 maintained at least four feet under the surface to
- 27 NESC standards. If NESC standards are not met,
- 28 utility companies are responsible for liability,
- 29 damages, and repairs.
- 30 • Governmental agencies enforcing the utility height

- 31 and depth standards.
- 32 • All parties (e.g. landowners, road commission,
 - 33 drain commission) communicating prior to the
 - 34 installation of utilities.
 - 35 • The principles of Public Acts 173 and 174 of 2013,
 - 36 which provide clarity on the MISS DIG process for
 - 37 farmers by focusing efforts on risk management
 - 38 and providing greater incentives for compliance.
 - 39 • Farmers considering possible cost-sharing of utility
 - 40 pole re-location for safety and productivity of field
 - 41 crops.
 - 42 • Utility companies putting additional emphasis on
 - 43 upgrading and placement of poles in the rights-of-
 - 44 way to reduce long-term maintenance costs and
 - 45 crop damage.
 - 46 • Utility companies completing timely repair and
 - 47 maintenance to prevent further damage to personal
 - 48 property.
 - 49 • All MISS DIG markings being removed or made of
 - 50 a non-metallic biodegradable material.
 - 51 • The MPSC's cost review for line extensions,
 - 52 transformer upgrades and moving charges, and
 - 53 comparing these costs with other utility charges for
 - 54 the same work.

55 We understand the value of utilities and broadband
56 communication and support reasonable efforts to minimize
57 damage to infrastructure. New utility equipment should not
58 impede any existing drainage structure. We believe a utility
59 company should promptly settle for damage to crops, soil
60 compaction, existing sub surface drainage (tile), irrigation,
61 and other similar agricultural infrastructure. ♦

#49 EMPLOYER PROVIDED HOUSING

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

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

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

11 The Agricultural Labor Housing Inspection Program is
12 vital to agricultural employers and Michigan's agricultural
13 economy. The program verifies that agricultural employers
14 have Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural
15 Development (MDARD) acceptable housing for employees
16 and provides licensing for employers whose housing meets
17 that program's standards/requirements. This licensing

18 provides protection for both employers and employees. We
19 support that once a camp has been inspected and licensed
20 by the appropriate state agency, any violations created by
21 the occupant should not be held against the labor housing
22 licensee.

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

33 The state construction grant program, administered by
34 MDARD, was created to assist farmers in
35 construction/renovation of farm labor housing. We ~~will~~
36 ~~continue to seek higher appropriations for this program,~~
37 request the reestablishment of the construction grant
38 program, as well as other sources of funding and support. All
39 funds that become available for temporary housing should
40 only be directed to applicants of the Construction Grant
41 Program. We support the revision of the Construction Grant
42 Program to make fund allocations based on the number of
43 licensed housing units. We will oppose any changes in the
44 construction grant laws that reduce the eligibility, application
45 and distribution process. This program has the support of all
46 affected parties, including employees, employers, labor,
47 migrant advocates and government regulating agencies.

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

67 We encourage legislation to develop uniform housing
68 standards/requirements across state and federal agencies for

#55 WAGES AND COMPENSATION

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

5 We recommend:

- 6 • Agriculture, as defined in the North American
7 Industry Classification System (NAICS 11), remain
8 exempt from overtime wage payments.
- 9 • Agricultural piecework rates as a method of
10 payment to allow for the many variable situations
11 found in agricultural employment. Piecework rates
12 enable skilled agricultural workers to earn income
13 above the average and/or minimum hourly wage.
- 14 • The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic
15 Opportunity (MDLEO) work with the agriculture
16 community to support the payment of piece rate in
17 compliance with state and federal law.
- 18 • Any increases in minimum wages be tied directly to
19 increases of all wage-based employer thresholds,
20 such as unemployment compensation insurance,
21 frequency of withholdings, and frequency of
22 deposits.
- 23 • Investigating a state surveying mechanism and
24 auditing of the survey for calculating ag wages
25 including Adverse Effect Wage Rate.
- 26 • Unemployment payments should never exceed
27 80% of previous full pay and should not exceed 26
28 weeks.
- 29 • An evaluation of the current Unemployment
30 Insurance Agency in order to overhaul and make it
31 user friendly and accurate.
- 32 • The current Registration and Seeking Work Waiver be
33 extended from a 45-day to a 120-day waiver for
34 agriculture and other seasonal agriculturally-related
35 businesses.

36 Economic development initiatives are important to the
37 future of Michigan agriculture. We oppose any attempts to
38 mandate union wage scales in economic development
39 projects involving agriculture.

40 We oppose Workers' Compensation rules that mandate
41 fringe benefits being included in the base-rate premium,
42 including housing and health insurance. We support the
43 continued full liability coverage for employers who exercise
44 due diligence in employee verification.

45 We oppose all local units of government setting a
46 minimum wage rate.

47 We oppose any additional tax on payroll wages for
48 health care.

49 Recently more and more farms have added roadside
50 markets and agritourism venues to their mix. We believe
51 MDLEO should view any and all labor that is used for
52 roadside markets and agritourism venues to be considered
53 ag employees. We encourage Michigan Farm Bureau to
54 work with MDLEO to develop and improve agricultural
55 classification codes. ♦

#60 ANTI-TRUST

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

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

#61 ELECTIONS

1 We believe Michigan Farm Bureau should encourage all
2 members to register to vote. We also believe MFB should
3 continue efforts to provide education and information on
4 elections and candidates.

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

8 We support:

- 9 • Election projections on Election Day not be
10 released to the public until all polls are closed in the
11 continental United States.
- 12 • The Michigan Constitution be amended to increase
13 the percentage of voter signatures required to
14 initiate a recall election to 35 percent.
- 15 • Requiring a 2/3 vote of the people for passage of
16 the recurring ballot question to hold a Constitutional
17 Convention.
- 18 • Recall petitions must contain proven misfeasance
19 or malfeasance before the petition is approved.
- 20 • Requiring current state legislators to wait at least one
21 year before becoming a registered lobbyist in
22 Michigan.
- 23 • Elected officials not being allowed to pursue a
24 different elected position, unless they are at the end
25 of their current term or resign from their currently
26 held elected position.
- 27 • The current primary election process for statewide
28 offices.
- 29 • Apol Standards for the purpose of redistricting.

- Electing the three university boards - Michigan State University, University of Michigan, and Wayne State University - by districts, not statewide.
- Michigan continuing to honor the Electoral College as designated in the U.S. Constitution.
- A simplified process to opt out of robocalls.
- Farm Bureau members to become precinct delegates, and MFB to conduct educational training on becoming a precinct delegate.
- The consolidation of the May and August elections into a single election in June.

Ballot Reform

We encourage MFB members to be knowledgeable about ballot proposals.

We support the following ballot process reforms:

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

Term Limits

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

We support:

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

Special Elections

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

90 We oppose:

- 91 • The concept of a part-time legislature.
- 92 • The Promote the Vote campaign of the Electoral
93 College system.
- 94 • ~~Reducing the voter registration deadline to~~
95 ~~anything less than 30 days before an election.~~
- 96 • Election Day becoming a holiday.
- 97 • Any voting by mail except by absentee ballot.
- 98 • Totally electronic forms of voting without a paper
99 trail.
- 100 • Proposals to make the popular vote the sole
101 determinant of presidential elections.

102 **Election Fraud**

103 We support:

- 104 • That the clerk keep an up to date and accurate
105 voter registration list.
- 106 • A passport, enhanced Michigan I.D., or enhanced
107 driver's license that proves citizenship for voter
108 registration and voting.

109 We oppose:

- 110 • Election and voter fraud. ♦

#64 LAW ENFORCEMENT

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

3 We support:

- 4 • Law enforcement agencies being maintained and
5 funded at levels to provide adequate training and
6 service.
- 7 • Effective use of current police powers, but oppose
8 further expansion in order to preserve individual
9 rights.
- 10 • The state and federal law to be upheld in our courts
11 and not apply any foreign law to domestic activities
12 that could impair constitutional rights.
- 13 • Funding of rural and urban patrols to curb drug and
14 vandalism issues.
- 15 • Law enforcement agencies to develop youth liaison
16 programs.
- 17 • Juvenile justice reform, including youth prisons, for
18 violent and dangerous juveniles.

- Capital punishment.
- Producers and/or county Farm Bureaus to meet with local law enforcement and local elected officials to discuss the importance of balancing agriculture's concerns with the use of fireworks.
- Legislation that would define and create the establishment of fireworks-free agriculture and livestock safety zones.
- Additional tools to aid in the identification and prosecution of individuals involved in the theft of copper wire and other recyclable materials from farms.

We oppose:

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

Trespass

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

- The ability to prosecute trespassers regardless of whether or not "No Trespassing" signs were posted.
- Rigorous enforcement of the Michigan Recreational Trespass law.
- Property owners should not be held liable for any accidents, injuries, or damage to personnel, equipment, and/or property, by trespassers.
- Increased fines and penalties for trespassing.
- Amendments to the Michigan statutes imposing civil liability for recreational and non-recreational trespass, that set a jurisdictional limit of \$3,000 or five times the actual damages, whichever is higher, and include incurred attorney fees and court costs, payable to the landowner and or lessee.
- Increased fines for trespass and damages for losses incurred on land enrolled in PA 116 or other land preservation programs, the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program, or land participating in a food safety or security program
- Confiscation of unmanned aircraft, vehicle or off-road vehicle for repeat trespassers.
- Use of photography for the immediate arrest of a trespasser.

- Revocation of hunting, fishing and trapping privileges and loss of vehicles used in the violation.

Impaired Driving

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

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

We support establishing a limit for THC for impaired driving.

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

- Operating while intoxicated.
- Operating while visibly impaired.
- Operating with any presence of drugs.
- Operating while license suspended, revoked, or denied.
- Operating while illegally using handheld electronic mobile device.

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

#68 REGULATORY REFORM AND REDUCTION

We strongly support regulatory reform, including the following actions:

- Repeal of occupational licensing unless required to protect public health and safety.
- Rulemaking authority should be limited by legislative actions.
- Regulations should be understandable and easy to comply with and any penalties should fit the violation.
- State agencies should be required to conduct science-based studies, standardized risk assessments, cost/benefit analyses, and economic impact statements of all proposed regulations.
- During an Emergency Powers time period, any branch of government be subject to the Freedom of Information Act and the data made available which pertains to the Emergency Powers.
- Eliminating the two times per year time change (daylight savings time) in Michigan.
- A public registry of studies.

- 20 • Easing state regulations on rural community banks to
21 ensure survival of these vital institutions.
- 22 New regulations should expire after a defined period
23 unless a review finds substantial reasons to continue the
24 programs.
- 25 We oppose:
 - 26 • Rules that are unwarranted or retroactive, that
27 penalize practices which were previously allowed.
 - 28 • Requiring redundant studies.
 - 29 • State and federal mandates that are not fully
30 funded. ♦

#69 STREAMLINING MICHIGAN GOVERNMENT

- 1 While significant strides have been made in reforming
2 Michigan's government, additional reform is needed to
3 continue to address Michigan's economic condition. We feel
4 reform must continue and support the following:
- 5 • Michigan should have a standardized 'MD' in front
6 of all department acronyms.
 - 7 • Michigan provides human service programs to
8 those in need but must be more vigilant in
9 addressing fraud and duplication within these
10 programs.
 - 11 • The review and potential change of corrections
12 system cost-drivers, such as sentencing guidelines,
13 prisoner health care and administrative procedures.
 - 14 • Increased efficiencies within Michigan's education
15 system such as privatization of services,
16 consolidation of districts, and shared services.
 - 17 • Competition for higher education funds should be
18 minimized. Duplicative research efforts performed by
19 multiple state-funded universities should be
20 eliminated.
 - 21 • State and local governments, including schools, to
22 move to a defined contribution retirement system.
- 23 In addition to critically necessary changes in human
24 services, corrections, and education, we continue to
25 support the following:
- 26 • Michigan's regulatory structure must continue to
27 foster economic growth. Policy makers should have
28 a clear understanding of the impact of regulations
29 on business before voting to support new or more
30 stringent regulations. Regulatory agencies should
31 maintain constitutional roles and reasonable
32 environmental protection without creating undue
33 regulatory burdens.
 - 34 • Michigan should continue to look for increased
35 efficiencies in state and local government such as
36 prioritizing services, reforming where possible,
37 eliminating duplicative services, and utilizing private

- 38 partners.
- 39 • Increased efficiency in state government and
 - 40 actual reform should be evaluated and
 - 41 implemented prior to levying new taxes. If faced
 - 42 with a new tax, any tax proposals must be broad-
 - 43 based and not favoring/harming any one segment
 - 44 of the economy, business type or particular
 - 45 demographic.
 - 46 • Full transparency of government financial
 - 47 transactions at all levels.
 - 48 • The concept of an Emergency Financial Manager
 - 49 Law.
 - 50 • Checks and balances in Emergency Power
 - 51 situations in any branch of government.
 - 52 Emergency Power should be valid for a maximum
 - 53 of 28 days without legislative oversight.
 - 54 • Legislative oversight of state agencies during states
 - 55 of emergency.
 - 56 • Allowing for a virtual or hybrid option to be offered
 - 57 during public meetings.

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

#71 AGRICULTURAL DRAINAGE

1 Michigan farmland is enhanced by an adequate and
2 well-managed drain system. Over half of Michigan's
3 farmland requires drainage to produce food, feed and fiber.
4 ~~Virtually all agricultural lands worth the initial~~
5 ~~investment have been drained. Emphasis has now shifted~~
6 ~~to maintaining or reconstructing original drainage systems~~
7 ~~or improving drains to provide more intensive drainage of~~
8 ~~existing croplands. However, land use changes affect~~
9 ~~drainage systems.~~

10 We support:

- 11 • Members obtaining and recording drainage
- 12 easements for all private drains crossing
- 13 neighboring properties.
- 14 • Requiring an individual or entity who breaks or
- 15 damages a properly functioning tile and properly
- 16 marked tile outlet to be responsible for returning
- 17 the tile to operational condition within 30 days.
- 18 • Legislation revoking the 1982 Michigan
- 19 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and
- 20 Energy (MDEGLE) Rule 8 under Part 31 Rules for
- 21 Inland Lakes and Streams, designating several

drains as mainstream portions of eleven natural water courses. If the rule is not revoked, MDEGLE should be responsible to pay for all maintenance costs of the waterways according to the County Drain standards.

- Landowners taking a proactive role and/or being notified and involved with their drain/water resources commissioners in routine drain maintenance and emergency repairs.
- Drain/water resources commissioners offering incentives or credits for landowners who properly maintain drains located on their property.
- Landowners voluntarily contributing to county drain maintenance through appropriate soil conservation practices working with Natural Resources Conservation Service and county drain/water resources commissioners.
- Michigan Farm Bureau promoting to its members the video, "The Importance of Michigan Drain Commissioners," created by the Michigan Association of County Drain Commissioners.
- MFB providing farmers and members with a better understanding of the Drain Code of 1956 by creating an educational series available to the general public.

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

We support the following provisions in the Drain Code:

- The authority for administering the Drain Code should be maintained within the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the office of the drain/water resources commissioner at the local level.
- If existing ditches are moved at the request of the county/county road commission, the additional cost should be the responsibility of the county/county road commission's project.
- Current exemptions for drain maintenance within state statute are appropriate and should be maintained.

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

We support:

- Increasing the limit on drainage maintenance

- 73 assessments (such as \$10,000 per mile), and
74 payback time, to allow drain work to be done more
75 efficiently and at a lower cost.
- 76 • Elimination of the current exemption allowing
77 non-elected drain/water resources
78 commissioners.
 - 79 • All land in a drainage district being assessed
80 according to benefits derived, including public
81 lands.
 - 82 • Requiring that special assessment notices include
83 the estimated percentage and dollar amounts
84 apportioned to the recipient's land, the estimated
85 annual total of all project assessments, and the
86 estimated project assessment duration.
 - 87 • Keeping records of public drain work in a manner
88 so the public can view them and understand the
89 scope of work completed and the cost associated
90 with the types and dates of maintenance
91 performed on a drain.
 - 92 • Drain/water resources commissioners providing
93 notice of timing and duration of scheduled drain
94 maintenance projects to affected landowners.
 - 95 • Requiring performance bonds on work done on
96 intercounty drains where project construction costs
97 exceed \$100,000.
 - 98 • Clarification that no drainage district should be
99 extended or established for the purpose of
100 removing sediment from man-made reservoirs on
101 rivers or drains.
 - 102 • The drain/water resources commissioner directing
103 the deployment of drain sediments, both organic
104 and inorganic, to adjacent land as required to
105 minimize sediment return to the drain.
 - 106 • The county drain/water resources commissioner
107 being responsible for removing blockage of a
108 natural watercourse if it affects the function of a
109 county drain.
 - 110 • The use of current technology.
 - 111 • For all new construction, a description of the work
112 to be performed being provided to owners of
113 property abutting the drain at least 10 days prior to
114 the start of construction to ensure appropriate
115 planning to handle increased storm water due to
116 development. Alternatives to storm water retention
117 ponds should be considered.

118 We oppose:

- 119 • Changes to rules developed under the Inland
120 Lakes and Streams Act causing increased
121 regulatory burdens to farmers, drain/water
122 resources commissioners, or road commissioners.
- 123 • Requiring all ditches to be two-stage ditches

- 124 and/or requiring additional engineering or planning
 125 on every new or established drain.
 126 • State funding being used to purchase farmland to
 127 construct retention wetlands for private benefit.
 128 • MDEGLE's implementation of rules and policies
 129 that exceed their federal mandate and are not
 130 supported by scientific evidence.
 131 • The implementation of structures affecting the flow
 132 in waterways which negatively impacts
 133 agriculture. ♦

#73 CLIMATE CHANGE

1 We urge Michigan Farm Bureau to research and
 2 communicate to its membership the impact climate change
 3 legislation and policies will have on our industry.

4 We support:

- 5 • Research and investments to assist agriculture in
 6 adapting to climate variability.
 7 • **[Relocated to New Policy: Carbon**
 8 **Sequestration and Ecosystem Services**
 9 **Markets]** ~~Full recognition of agriculture and~~
 10 ~~forestry's value to carbon sequestration.~~
 11 • **[Relocated through farmers to New Policy:**
 12 **Carbon Sequestration and Ecosystem**
 13 **Services Markets]** ~~Compensation for farmers~~
 14 ~~through USDA programs~~ **[Relocated to New**
 15 **Policy: Carbon Sequestration and Ecosystem**
 16 **Services Markets]** ~~for farming practices that keep~~
 17 ~~carbon in the soil or in plant material.~~

18 We oppose:

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

#75 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND AUTHORITY

Regulatory Authority and Responsibility

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

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

Environmental Enforcement and Standards

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

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

We support:

- Timely, effective and consistent enforcement of environmental laws and issuance of permits.
- Timely enforcement of water quality standards using credible data. We urge MFB to pursue legislation on credible data and how it may be used to better invoke sound science in regulation of water quality, air quality and water quantity.
- Applying sound science and performing economic impact analysis to MDEGLE rules and standards prior to promulgation.
- Maximum use of Natural Resources Conservation Service standards within MDEGLE regulations.
- Appropriate timelines for producer implementation of regulations.
- MDARD intervention on behalf of farmers in legal actions if the farmer has worked with state agencies to address pollution challenges.
- Development of a third-party arbitration process for disputes between MDEGLE and a farmer.
- MDEGLE being responsible to pay legal fees incurred by the respondent from a wrongful enforcement action if the enforcement action is

settled, a consent agreement is reached, or the action is decided in the respondent's favor.

- PA 268 of 2018 creating the MDEGLE Appeals Board.
- Using funds derived from enforcement penalties to support pollution prevention in agriculture.
- Authorizing permits at the local level in accordance with state and federal rules to provide for more timely decisions.
- Modification of the Bodies of Dead Animals Act with input from farmers and dead stock haulers to allow any type of legal commercial or cooperative mortality management, and further recommend modifying the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) to clarify that animal mortality disposal is not considered in the definition of production site waste. Consideration should be made for inclement weather impacts on animal mortality management and timeframes for disposal.
- Allowing water quality testing in lieu of existing well setback standards to satisfy the siting requirement.
- A farm's ability to move portable toilets within and between their farms.

Manure, Nutrient, and Fuel Management

We support:

- The continued ability for farmers of all sizes to manifest, move or sell animal nutrients from their farm to another farm/owner. We will vigorously oppose any attempts to limit or eliminate the ability of agriculture to utilize animal nutrients when they are being utilized according to nutrient requirements and at agronomic rates.
- The continuation of manure application to frozen or snow-covered ground in accordance with the Manure Management and Utilization Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practice (GAAMP). We will vigorously oppose any attempt to eliminate the practice.
- The continued practice of broadcasting and injecting nutrients, including manure, in accordance with best practices identified in the Nutrient Utilization GAAMP.
- Allowing the application of animal nutrients to non-frozen, non-snow-covered ground any time during the year, regardless of type or size of farm operation.
- Updating fertilizer and manure nutrient utilization guidelines.
- MDEGLE accepting third-party determinations that an existing manure storage structure is functioning

properly for regulatory purposes.

- Regulatory recognition of the influence of extreme weather (e.g., rainfall, snow melt) on farming practices.
- Flexibility for unlimited on-farm fuel, chemical and fertilizer storage with consistent and adequate containment standards.
- Consistency of fuel, chemical and fertilizer containment structure regulations across governmental agencies.

Processing Wastewater and Groundwater Regulation

We support:

- MDARD working with MDEGLE to implement a threshold below which no Groundwater Discharge permit or testing is required for agricultural processing discharge.
- MDARD assisting MDEGLE to determine appropriate treatment of all types of processing wastewater (breweries, distilleries, fruit and vegetable producers, etc.) that generate high-strength wastewater that has nutrients useful for land application.
- MFB continuing to work with MDEGLE on development of a general permit specific to slaughterhouses that permits land application of process wastewater without advance treatment.
- MDEGLE benchmarking groundwater discharge permit standards with those of neighboring states for land application of process wastewater.
- Allowing septic haulers licensed under Part 117 of NREPA to also haul food processing wastewater and not requiring them to be licensed as industrial haulers under NREPA Part 121.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)

We support:

- Legislative or administrative changes to require a formal committee of appropriate stakeholders to be involved in all permit developments and rewrites so that input is balanced. All NPDES writing or rewrite committees should be chaired by an unbiased third-party individual.
- An evaluation of the NPDES permitting process in Michigan with changes to allow long-term certainty for the ag industry and which eliminate the change that takes place for all industries every time a new administration is elected in our state. We support a study committee by MFB to establish this evaluation and make recommendations.
- Amending state laws to more clearly define

153 MDEGLE's regulatory authority under NPDES
154 permits and where they have no authority,
155 especially animal health which falls under the
156 authority of the Animal Industry Act and wildlife,
157 which falls under the authority of the state
158 veterinarian or the Michigan Department of Natural
159 Resources.

- 160 • Amending or repealing Part 17 of NREPA to
- 161 prevent predatory litigation by special interests to
- 162 penalize farmers operating under legitimate
- 163 permits issued by MDEGLE.
- 164 • Timely issuance of NPDES permits, in accordance
- 165 with state and federal rules.
- 166 • MFB continuing efforts to eliminate state regulation
- 167 of animal agriculture more restrictive than federal
- 168 requirements, including lowering permitting
- 169 thresholds.
- 170 • Reduced permit paperwork requirements and an
- 171 increased focus on performance with minimized
- 172 costs to permitted farms.
- 173 • Increasing incentives for permitted farms to become
- 174 Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance
- 175 Program verified such as limiting annual reporting
- 176 requirements.
- 177 • Application of permit standards in force at the time
- 178 of permit application.
- 179 • An appropriate phase-in period for any change in
- 180 permit requirements.
- 181 • Implementation of permit requirements derived
- 182 with scientifically verifiable standards as provided
- 183 in administrative rules.
- 184 • MDEGLE adopting Environmental Protection
- 185 Agency aquaculture effluent guidelines and
- 186 promoting feed-based Best Management
- 187 Practices discharge standards.
- 188 • Development of a General Permit for aquaculture
- 189 for up to 200,000 pounds of production.

190 We oppose:

- 191 • Classification of manure, sand, accidental
- 192 commodity spillage, and ag processing by-
- 193 products as hazardous waste.
- 194 • Taxation and/or fees assessed on the nutrient
- 195 content of manure.
- 196 • Public access to agricultural information on the
- 197 MiWaters online permitting database.
- 198 • Legislation inhibiting the viability of agriculture.
- 199 • Decisions made in response to emotion instead of
- 200 science, law and common sense.
- 201 • Arbitrary moratoriums affecting the growth of animal
- 202 agriculture, including limits on animal expansion
- 203 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.

Response to Environmental Scrutiny

Public scrutiny of agriculture and increased regulation continues to challenge farmers to improve farm management and protect the environment. We urge all members to voluntarily implement pollution prevention practices. The agricultural community realizes the need to protect the environment; however, when regulations limit agricultural viability, we believe it is time to take a more aggressive approach to protect our industry. Michigan producers and MFB should aggressively work to counter propaganda that depicts production agriculture in Michigan as abusers of the environment.

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

#81 MICHIGAN AGRICULTURE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSURANCE PROGRAM

~~Public Acts 1 and 2, signed by Governor Rick Snyder in March of 2011, solidified the future of the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP). We commend the enactment of legislation protecting farms completing verification in the MAEAP program. It We support the MAEAP program and its continuation and improvement. We urge the State of Michigan and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) to work together with the agriculture community to continue and improve the MAEAP program to foster further voluntary sustainable agricultural practices. Public Acts 1 and 2 of 2011 solidified the future of MAEAP. This program offers MAEAP-verified farms protection from civil fines, a presumption of meeting obligations for watershed pollutant loading determinations, and recognition that discharges from farm fields caused by rainfall are nonpoint source pollution. We urge all farm operators and landowners managing forests, wetlands and habitat to participate in the MAEAP program and complete~~

as many recommendations as possible to help ensure the quality of our air, water and soil is preserved.

~~With MAEAP in law, Michigan has set a goal to increase the number of MAEAP verifications to 6,000 by the end of 2020. As of June 2020, MAEAP reached 5,666 total on-farm verifications. We applaud Michigan farmers for achieving 6,076 verifications as of September 30, 2021.~~

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

We support:

- Continued efforts for MAEAP to remain a voluntary, confidential, statewide program.
- Legislation and marketing efforts that would communicate to the general public that MAEAP-verified farms are held to the highest standard of environmental stewardship.
- ~~The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)~~ developing an outstanding and recognizable “Pure Michigan”-style labeling program (such as “Pure Michigan-Verified Farm”) to add value to products of MAEAP verified farms and allow the MAEAP logo to be used at point of sale.
- The MAEAP program making information available about Michigan’s Water Pollution Control Tax Exemption Form which exempts pollution control structures from property tax assessments.
- MFB working with MAEAP partners to develop educational and promotional materials for farm neighbors and the general public regarding the benefits of MAEAP.
- All producers using MAEAP verification as the basis for projecting a positive farm image to the public.
- MFB continuing to pursue greater incentives for MAEAP participation, such as additional protections from frivolous complaints.
- The Michigan Groundwater and Freshwater Protection Act. This act funds groundwater and surface water programming through providing grants to fund local technicians. These technicians work with farmers to voluntarily adopt stewardship practices, which reduce nonpoint source pollution from agricultural sources. We believe funding of these technicians needs to be a top priority.
- Participation in MAEAP, including information

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

#85 RESOURCE RECOVERY

- 1 Daily we generate vast quantities of all types of
2 recoverable materials. Our society must reduce as much
3 solid waste as practical through a wide variety of ways.
4 We specifically support strategies for resource recovery
5 through the following:
6 • Using farm plastic recycling programs such as

Clean Sweep.

- Implementing recycling programs for agricultural tires and all reusable agricultural material.
- Establishing grant or loan programs to facilitate purchasing equipment capable of processing agricultural and heavy-duty tires and tracks.
- Adopt-a-local-roadside programs.
- Michigan Farm Bureau working with universities, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy to seek solutions for composting organic materials including, animal, plant, forest and silvicultural materials, and differentiating between agricultural and commercial composters to protect the welfare of residents as well as the integrity of agriculture.
- Incentives to use biodegradable products, especially those made from renewable agricultural products.
- Amendments to the bottle law requiring similar containers have a 10-cent deposit.
- A state initiative that takes a portion of the State's unreturned bottle deposit funds for the creation and maintenance of local recycling centers.
- Land application of properly researched and approved materials at agronomic rates without additional state or local regulation.
- Alternative uses for excess food ranging from food banks to anaerobic digesters.
- The proper recycling of heavy metal (electric vehicle) batteries.

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

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

#86 USDA CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

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

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

Farm Bill Programs

- NRCS and Michigan Farm Bureau aggressively informing producers about federal farm bill opportunities (e.g., Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) financial assistance) and cooperative efforts with NRCS, Michigan

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

38 ***Practice Standards***

- 39 • ~~Allowing filter strips with more flexible standards,~~
40 ~~such as a minimum of 10 feet for USDA~~
41 ~~conservation practices.~~
- 42 • Filter strip plant variety recommendations including
43 pollinator supportive plants.
- 44 • The Farm Service Agency (FSA) enrolling more
45 acres in the Conservation Reserve Program
46 around ditches and streams to decrease the
47 amount of nutrient runoff on fields.
- 48 • Directing NRCS and FSA to prioritize using filter
49 strips as a nutrient management tool with flexible
50 standards such as allowing mowing of filter strips
51 and removal of cut vegetation.
- 52 • Preliminary technical wetland and highly erodible
53 land determinations being made within 30 days. If
54 no determination is made within that timeframe,
55 producers may proceed with initially proposed land
56 improvement projects.
- 57 • Michigan USDA (NRCS and FSA) staff completing
58 wetland and highly erodible land determinations
59 and appeals process within 12 months.
- 60 • Promoting the economic and environmental
61 benefits of using grid/zone soil sampling and/or
62 Variable Rate Fertilizer Technology through the
63 Conservation Stewardship Program.

- 64 • Michigan, Ohio and Indiana NRCS including
65 cover crop cost-share on all acres enrolling in
66 RCPP, including farm tract acres with preexisting
67 cover crop history.

68 **USDA Offices and Staffing**

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

#88 WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES

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

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

17 The EPA has already tried to expand its oversight to
18 include "temporary" waterways, which include areas as
19 small as wet spots in fields and puddles in driveways.

20 Under no circumstance should temporary waterways or
21 any agricultural drain be considered a water of the United
22 States. We urge the EPA to include greater farmer input in
23 the development of future rules.

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

#91 FEES

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

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

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

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

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

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

#92 TAXATION

1 Property Tax/Assessing

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

4 We support:

- 5 • Lowering agricultural property taxes in Michigan.
- 6 • Development of legislation allowing landowners to
7 voluntarily enroll in a program that reduces
8 assessments on farm buildings by up to 100 percent
9 of their current taxable value and assesses farmland,
10 including managed woodlots/forestland, with a goal of
11 reaching a property tax rate of \$5-7 per acre.
12 Voluntary enrollment in the program, open to every
13 farmer, would be in exchange for temporary/long-
14 term preservation of farmland for a contract period of
15 approximately 20 years or more with a recapture
16 penalty for early withdrawal or when property

changes out of agricultural use.

- Legislation requiring assessments on farm structures to align with the current use of the structure.
- PA 162 of 2013 which states sales of agricultural land without a qualified agricultural affidavit on file will not be used in the sales studies for agricultural land.
- Development of taxation methods to more fairly distribute municipal service costs.
- All agricultural single purpose structures, such as greenhouses, grain bins and silos, be assessed using a realistic accelerated depreciation schedule considering the current practical use of the structure.
- A clarification that all temporary agricultural structures, which are moveable and not permanently attached or anchored to the ground, be exempt from sales and use taxes as referenced in Revenue Administrative Bulletin 2002-15 of June 2002.
- The Qualified Forest Property program which exempts the pop-up tax and provides a 16 mill exemption, as long as the new owner agrees to keep up the qualified forest land agreement.
- A significantly reduced tax designation or tax exempt status for land which is designated for mandatory restricted use such as wetlands, filter strips, sand dunes, natural or scenic rivers, or other restrictions on private property.
- The retention of the right of local governing units to assess property for taxation purposes.
- The qualified agricultural exemption shall remain in effect if the Governor or USDA issues a disaster declaration for the county.
- The continued use of tax abatements and Renaissance Zones to encourage the development and expansion of agricultural facilities to enhance value-added opportunities for agriculture.
- Legislation that would allow a farm to include all parcels of the farming operation together when determining the ag classification. If the total farm would qualify for PA 116, then all parcels should maintain their ag classification. Non-contiguous parcels are being reclassified to residential unless 51 percent of the parcel is farmed. Property in Northwest Michigan, and possibly in other parts of the state, cannot be farmed at 51 percent because of the topography.
- Exempting PA 116 land from all special assessments excluding agricultural drainage.

- Local units of government classifying equine therapy facilities, therapeutic riding facilities, equine rehabilitation facilities, and other similar equine-related businesses utilizing horses as the major component of their business as agriculture for property tax purposes.
- The continuation of Proposal A in its current form, as it pertains to agriculture.
- Deletion of the words “for a period of more than five years” from Article II Section 6 of the Michigan Constitution of 1963. This would have the effect of only property owners voting on property tax questions.
- The change to the summer tax collection which provided for a lifetime deferment of summer tax for qualified agricultural land if the owner files a federal Schedule “F” Income Tax Form or comparable farm income tax filing.
- The time frame for qualified agriculture property be a period of three years between the start of delinquent status to the expiration of redemption rights. We believe the private individual should have the first option to redeem delinquent property.
- ~~A qualified agricultural exemption to remain in place if a county is deemed a disaster county by the state Governor or the USDA.~~

We oppose:

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

Income Tax/Incentives

We support:

- Deferment of crop insurance income to the year following the crop insurance payment to align with federal rules.
- Tax credits used to create jobs and tax equity for the agricultural economy.
- The concept of a beginning farmer tax credit program.
- The State of Michigan providing tax incentives rather than tax the production, distribution or sale of renewable energy or fuel including but not limited to wood, cherry pits, biodiesel, ethanol, methane digester power, geo and hydro power, as well as windmill and solar power. If the majority of the energy is used for onsite purposes, the generation of the energy and associated equipment should be

- 119 tax exempt.
- 120 • Using federal adjusted gross income (AGI) as the
- 121 base for Michigan's income tax calculation and
- 122 oppose decoupling for items such as accelerated
- 123 depreciation and expensing rules (Sec. 179).
- 124 • Allowing a surviving spouse who has not remarried
- 125 to continue to use the age of the deceased spouse
- 126 for the purpose of the determination of qualification
- 127 for pension subtraction from income.
- 128 • Allowing for a line item tax deduction for primary
- 129 education (preschool-grade 12) expenses, such as
- 130 tuition and teaching materials.

131 We Oppose:

- 132 • Reinstatement of the Michigan estate tax (often
- 133 referred to as the death tax).
- 134 • Any effort to tax farmer-owned cooperatives on
- 135 disbursements or credits that are taxable in the hands of
- 136 patrons.

137 **County/State Taxes**

138 We support:

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

147 **Sales and Use Tax**

148 We support:

- 149 • The agriculture exemption from state sales and use
- 150 tax based upon the use of the product.
- 151 • A continuation of the agriculture sales tax
- 152 exemption for the equine industry.
- 153 • Supporters of the FAIR Tax providing education
- 154 and analyzing the proposal's impacts and benefits
- 155 on agriculture.
- 156 • A tax-free weekend, prior to the start of the school
- 157 year, for purchasing clothing, computers, books,
- 158 school supplies, footwear, etc.

159 We oppose:

- 160 • Charging state sales tax on the federal
- 161 manufacturers excise tax.
- 162 • Sales tax levied on new vehicles before cash back,
- 163 manufacturer incentives and rebates.
- 164 • Sales tax levied on the sale of used vehicles.
- 165 • Any plan which places an undue or unrealistic tax
- 166 or fee which affects agriculture, such as a tax on
- 167 gross receipts, a tax on personal property or a tax
- 168 on assets.
- 169 • Any tax on food or food additives including so called

#99 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT

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

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

9 **Transportation Revenue**

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

20 We support:

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

35 We oppose:

- 36 • Reverting to the property tax or special
37 assessments as a means of building and
38 maintaining state roads and bridges.

39 **Transportation Formula**

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

44 We support the following PA 51 changes:

- 45 • At least 25 percent of federal road funds go to local
46 road agencies. At least 25 percent of federal bridge
47 funds go to the Local Bridge program for use by local

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

81 We oppose:

- 82 • Distribution of road funding based on road use or
- 83 traffic volume.

84 **Road Construction and Maintenance**

85 New road construction, improvements and

86 maintenance, as well as issues of jurisdictional transfer of

87 existing roads should be carried out in a spirit of

88 cooperation between local, state, and federal agencies

89 involving constituent groups throughout the project. We

90 encourage local governments to continue to look for

91 increased efficiencies in government by prioritizing

92 services, reforming where possible, eliminating duplicative

93 services, and utilizing private partners.

94 We believe the local road agency must dedicate

95 themselves to using the most economical means possible to

96 establish and maintain an efficient transportation system.

97 Regarding road planning, we support:

- 98 • Encouraging the local road agency 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 (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.
- 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.
- 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

- 150 impact on the rural road system.
- 151 • The respective state agency paying for or the
 - 152 requirement for the project being waived, when
 - 153 Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes,
 - 154 and Energy and MDNR specifications increase the
 - 155 cost of maintaining safe bridge structures.
 - 156 • The purchase of rights of way for the construction of
 - 157 complete cloverleafs when new freeways are built.
 - 158 • The builder of a housing development near a
 - 159 freeway or existing highway being responsible for
 - 160 erecting an acceptable sound barrier, if needed.
 - 161 • Highway maintenance and changes within the
 - 162 existing right of way not having to complete a new
 - 163 environmental impact study before performing the
 - 164 work.
 - 165 • Wetlands mitigation not being required if
 - 166 improvements to the road are within the existing road
 - 167 right of way.
 - 168 • Ending the inclusion of planned wildlife habitat in the
 - 169 construction and renovation of Michigan highways.
 - 170 • Reclassifying US 23 from Toledo to Flint as an
 - 171 interstate highway.

172 When performing road construction, we support:

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

190 For road maintenance, we support:

- 191 • The designated maintenance authority clearing and
- 192 maintaining roadsides, roadways and intersections
- 193 of hazards that obstruct the view of motorists or
- 194 impede travel, road drainage, or cropland drainage.
- 195 This would include dead and dying trees within the
- 196 right of way. In the event the authorized authority is
- 197 unable to fulfill their maintenance obligations,
- 198 landowners should be allowed to perform such work.
- 199 Property owners should maintain proper visibility of
- 200 intersection views by using the triangular sight-line

- 201 system.
- 202 • Encouraging the privatization of road maintenance
- 203 and the mowing and trimming of road ditches when
- 204 feasible.
- 205 • Individuals, pursuant to reasonable regulations,
- 206 being allowed to harvest existing forages and trees
- 207 along roadways without a permit.
- 208 • Any traveled portion of the road and shoulder
- 209 having trees and overgrowth trimmed to a minimum
- 210 height of 17 feet due to the increase in height and
- 211 width of farm and custom application equipment.
- 212 Also, a reasonably safe condition should be
- 213 provided by the respective road agency.
- 214 • MDOT being required to fix and maintain fencing
- 215 along state highways as part of the maintenance of
- 216 that highway.
- 217 • County road commissions notifying the owner
- 218 when work in the right of way will be done and will
- 219 destroy crops.

220 We are especially concerned with excessive use of

221 road salt, the adverse effect it has on the environment, and

222 the increased rate at which it deteriorates roads and

223 bridges in urban and rural Michigan. We support:

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

Reaffirmation of State Policies

#1 AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY COMMISSION

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

5 Michigan Farm Bureau will consider supporting
6 commodity groups' proposals that meet existing
7 Farm Bureau policy and will be beneficial to
8 producers. We encourage Farm Bureau members to
9 be involved in their commodity organizations. ♦

#3 ANIMAL CARE

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

5 We urge Farm Bureau members to respond
6 knowledgeably to misleading information on animal
7 care. We urge members to understand the difference
8 between organizations that support sound science
9 and animal care versus those that are promoting
10 animal rights and attempting to eliminate or greatly
11 restrict livestock production in the United States.
12 Members should continue to tell the success story of
13 modern animal agriculture wherever the opportunity
14 is found. A number of laws now exist for
15 safeguarding the proper care of livestock and, if
16 properly enforced, will provide the necessary
17 protection livestock need.

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

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

37 We support:

- 38 • A board of animal health and care be
39 convened to coordinate activities that
40 enhance and protect the state's livestock
41 industry. The board should consist of
42 farmers and industry representatives as
43 voting members; who are nominated by
44 officially recognized livestock and agriculture
45 industry commodity groups; and then
46 appointed by the Governor. Agency and
47 university officials should serve in an
48 advisory capacity. The establishment of this
49 board should include a state budget
50 appropriation. This process should be
51 concluded by December 31, 2025.
- 52 • Strong penalties for those persons criminally
53 convicted of animal cruelty or abuse.
- 54 • The rights of individual commodity groups to
55 develop production standards.
- 56 • The involvement of livestock industry in the
57 development of animal care guidelines if
58 they are required by food industry officials in
59 order to market products.
- 60 • Participation by all livestock and dairy
61 producers in industry-developed species-
62 specific animal welfare programs.
- 63 • Coordination with animal industry and
64 related groups on animal care and housing
65 related issues.
- 66 • Utilization of the Care of Farm Animals
67 GAAMPs as the standard for animal welfare
68 in Michigan.
- 69 • Producer representation on the Care of
70 Farm Animals GAAMPs Committee.
- 71 • Proper animal care and encourage livestock
72 farmers to be in compliance with the Right to
73 Farm Act and GAAMPs.
- 74 • Farmers educating and having guidelines for
75 employees on proper animal care.
- 76 • Legislation or rules that protect the rights of
77 farmers/owners to allow the continued
78 utilization of modern-day livestock
79 production practices, including current
80 methods of euthanization for livestock.
- 81 • 4-H and youth livestock exhibitor education.
- 82 • Michigan Farm Bureau working with
83 Michigan State University and Michigan
84 Department of Agriculture and Rural
85 Development (MDARD) to provide proper
86 education to law enforcement, county
87 officials and animal control officers about the

current laws that regulate animal care and livestock production practices in Michigan.

- County Farm Bureaus being proactive in educating the controlling authorities, local humane societies, and news media about current animal care and production practices, so as to build a partnership between Farm Bureau and local animal care organizations.
- 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 and poultry.
- Legislation that makes it a felony to destroy or release animals lawfully confined for science, research and production, and provide for strong punishment and required restitution for losses or damages.
- MDARD taking the lead role in the development of Michigan Animal Health Emergency Management guidelines.
- 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.
 - Governing municipalities be held financially and civilly liable for inaccurate and unjustified actions of those officers and departments.
 - Requiring reported abuse cases to follow uniform administrative procedures to confirm cruelty or abuse before any legal action is taken.
 - Contacting the local law enforcement agency or animal control authority.
 - Local law enforcement agencies obtaining the opinion of two unbiased local livestock professionals and a large animal veterinarian.
 - All costs associated with the resulting

139 investigation be paid for by the accuser
140 if no abuse is found.
141 ■ Cruelty or abuse cases of farm livestock
142 be handled through MDARD.
143 ■ Mandatory education for convicted
144 cruelty offenders to help them
145 understand proper animal care including
146 the Care of Farm Animals GAAMPs
147 developed under the Right to Farm Act.

148 We oppose:

- 149 • The concept of animal "rights" and the
150 expenditure of public funds to promote the
151 concept of animal rights.
- 152 • Any attempt that would grant "legal
153 standing" to any animals.
- 154 • Further regulatory and legislative actions
155 that would restrict the farmer's/owner's
156 ability to produce at an economically
157 feasible level.
- 158 • The utilization of ballot initiatives as a way to
159 control modern livestock production and
160 management practices. ♦

#4 ANIMAL HEALTH

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

8 It is imperative we protect the health of the
9 livestock, dairy, equine, poultry and aquaculture
10 operations in Michigan and across the United States.
11 A healthy animal population is critical to our overall
12 agricultural economy.

13 We support:

- 14 • Changes to the Animal Industry Act that
15 allow for the State Veterinarian to declare an
16 Emergency Stop Animal Movement Order
17 for a maximum of 72 hours. Any such order
18 that lasts more than, or is extended beyond,
19 72 hours would need the approval of the
20 impacted animal industries and Michigan
21 Commission of Agriculture and Rural
22 Development.
- 23 • A board of animal health be appointed and
24 convened to coordinate activities, programs,
25 and regulations to expedite the control and
26 eradication of animal diseases. The board
27 should consist of producers and industry

representatives, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Michigan State University (MSU) Veterinary Medicine and USDA.

- MDARD relying on veterinary science and animal science when establishing any new regulations or restrictions on livestock exhibition.
- Changes to the Animals Running At Large Act that define livestock in a consistent manner with the Animal Industry Act.
- MDARD providing adequate staffing to ensure proper monitoring of the state's swine herd to maintain our achieved pseudorabies status.
- Appropriate state funding of the MSU Veterinary Diagnostic Lab (VDL) to meet the needs of our state's animal population.
- Indemnification for livestock ordered to be destroyed due to disease outbreak or when marketing channels are limited or eliminated by the government for any portion of a particular industry.
- The requirement of continuing education to maintain a veterinary license with the State of Michigan.
- Amending Michigan's Veterinary Law to clarify that livestock artificial insemination and embryo transplant procedures are not required to be performed by a licensed veterinarian.
- Continued research by MSU on health-related issues that impact our livestock industry, including a list of all potential toxic weeds and feedstuffs.
- Visitors seeking permission and having proper contamination protections, including clothing and disinfectants, in an effort to protect and enhance bio-security.
- All equine owners to consult with their veterinarian and have their horses, ponies and mules vaccinated for infectious and contagious diseases.
- All fairs, racing events, sale barns, riding stables and other occasions where equine are co-mingled should require a yearly Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA)\Coggins test

and have the papers inspected before entry into the grounds or facilities.

- MDARD working with animal health officials in other states to develop a standardized set of EIA\Coggins testing guidelines that allow for a more uniform set of testing and movement procedures. We support elimination of the need for a Coggins test for horses going directly to slaughter.
- An aggressive cost-effective Johne's detection and control program and encourage the Johne's vaccine to be available for dairy farmers.
- Swift implementation of a mandatory identification system for Michigan's livestock industry and encourage the continued utilization of producer input into the development, implementation, and cost-share where feasible. Producer information shall remain proprietary, not subject to the Freedom of Information Act or any other public use.
- The timely development and implementation of an electronic database for Michigan cattle and allow availability of movement certificates at no charge on-line in real time, 24 hours, seven days a week.
- Slaughter facilities updating technology in order to provide timely and accurate response on individual cattle information.
- The electronic identification rules that require all cattle and privately-owned cervidae to be electronically identified before they leave the farm. Penalties for violations of the rules should be strengthened and enforced by the court of law. We understand there are occasions where animals lose a tag en route to a livestock auction facility. In those situations, we support the retagging of animals upon arrival at the sale facility.
- Electronic reading and recording of all cattle exhibited in Michigan. Records should be sent to MDARD.
- Legislative, regulatory and/or management changes that give the State Veterinarian the authority to mandate landfill use for disposal of animal carcasses during these emergencies or disease outbreaks.
- The MDNR, MDARD, USDA, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service working cooperatively to identify and develop

potential regulations to control the spread of diseases. These regulations should include, but not be limited to, developing a system to monitor live and dead domestic and game animals and birds coming into Michigan.

- A statewide ban on the sale and use of Chinese lanterns (sky lanterns), or similar unmanned devices containing open flame that have the potential to leave the premises of their origin.
- Research to study the potential for chronic wasting disease prions to infect livestock feeds and other plant materials.
- Michigan Farm Bureau, MSU, MDARD and USDA to:
 - Provide sufficient funding and programs for animal health education, disease monitoring, border inspections and disease eradication that protect the U.S. livestock industry and ensure continued market access.
 - Increase efforts on the development of a genetic or live animal diagnostic test for Scrapie and Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE).
 - Continue to work cooperatively to support the VDL, keeping fees for diagnosis at a reasonable level.
- An annual review of the Reportable Disease List in collaboration with industry, MDARD and MDNR and removal of all inappropriately listed diseases.

We oppose:

- Restrictions that limit or eliminate the marketing opportunities for the livestock, dairy, equine, poultry and aquaculture industries and their products without sound scientific justification.
- Importation of livestock that does not meet import testing requirements as deemed appropriate by the director of MDARD, have appropriate quarantine protocols in place, and have an animal I.D. system to track the movement of livestock to prevent the possible spread of disease.
- State agency personnel performing inspections of farms without notification to and awareness of the farm owner/operation.
- Mandatory rabies vaccination for farm cats. We encourage livestock producers to consider rabies vaccination for all pets and

180 become educated about the disease. We
181 encourage the development and availability
182 of bait vaccines.

183 **Feed Additives and Medication**

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

197 We support:

- 198 • The current approval process for antibiotic
199 use in farm animals.
- 200 • Veterinarian oversight of antibiotic use
201 rather than limitations or elimination of these
202 critical animal health and food safety
203 protection tools.
- 204 • Careful use and withdrawal restrictions of
205 feed additives.
- 206 • The use of rendered ruminant and other
207 species protein as feed additives to rations
208 for swine and poultry.
- 209 • Strict safeguards to prevent cross
210 contamination of ruminant feeds with
211 ruminant by-product during the formulation
212 of the feed additives.

213 We oppose:

- 214 • The banning of such additives without sound
215 scientific evidence that these additives pose
216 a threat to animal and human health. ♦

218 **#5 AQUACULTURE AND COMMERCIAL FISHING**

1 Aquaculture and commercial fishing are major
2 contributors to our Michigan food basket and should
3 be recognized as a part of agriculture.

4 We support:

- 5 • Changes to the Aquaculture Development
6 Act that reflect the current status of the
7 industry and its potential.
- 8 • Urging the regulatory agencies, along with
9 Michigan Economic Development
10 Corporation, state universities, and the
11 aquaculture industry to continue working
12 cooperatively to address the regulatory

needs of the State, while at the same time facilitating the continued growth of aquaculture in Michigan through streamlining aquaculture regulation and facilitating access to capital for development.

- An annual review and update of the memorandum of understanding between Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy and Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR).
- Harmonization of the state definition of aquaculture so that it is in line with the federal definition of aquaculture.
- The concept of group or lot identification for aquaculture species.
- MDARD registration of out-of-state producers who market aquaculture products in Michigan and enforcement of current regulations related to importation of aquaculture products into Michigan.
- Funding, research development, and approval of live fish tests so as to eliminate the need to sacrifice fish, as is the current requirement.
- If an individual farm has an established herd health plan and a disease status that declares it to be free of regulated aquaculture diseases, that farm should have the ability to ship product interstate.
- MDARD cooperating with other states and establishing agreements that allow for shipment of fish from Michigan into other states that follow similar protocol.
- MFB being involved in Michigan Aquaculture Association's strategic plan development.
- Michigan State University establishing an aquaculture program that contains dedicated faculty to support and enhance the aquaculture industry. The program should include research, extension and demonstration and be housed under an agricultural development department.
- Industry-developed herd plans to include the option for slaughter surveillance testing, where feasible, and be implemented on a voluntary basis with MDARD being the lead agency.
- Development of science-based aquaculture

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

102 We oppose:

- 103 • Any ban on the use of biotechnology in
104 aquaculture without specific evidence or
105 demonstration of harm by the particular
106 technology.
- 107 • Individual identification for aquaculture in the
108 event animal identification is mandated.
- 109 • Restrictions on the culture or stocking of
110 rainbow trout based on “genetic strain.”
- 111 • Immediate implementation of new
112 Environmental Protection Agency effluent
113 standards if operational viability is
114 jeopardized.

- 115 • Increasing NPDES permit restrictions or
116 compliance requirements without sound
117 scientific justification.
- 118 • The use of the Lacey Act to regulate the
119 interstate movement of aquaculture
120 products and urge immediate action to
121 address current prosecutions, as well as a
122 cessation of this practice by regulatory
123 officials. ♦

#6 BEE INDUSTRY

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

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

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

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

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

#7 BIOTECHNOLOGY

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

7 We support:

- 8 • The development of research and testing
9 that will enhance the adoption of

10 biotechnology products and processes, and
11 address consumer safety and environmental
12 concerns.

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

own crop as seed as long as they pay the technology fee for the seed they use.

- Communication with end users to identify specific needs to promote value-added trait development.
- The voluntary approach taken by the biotech industry that allows for further development of agriceuticals and research while still protecting our commercial production. Seed purity (identity preservation) is critical in maintaining both consumer and processor confidence in agricultural products.
- The common practice followed by the seed industry (as well as outlined under the USDA organic practices) that the burden of maintaining genetic purity falls solely upon the producer of the identity-preserved crop as far as needed buffer strips and other cultural practices. Users of biotech seeds should follow planting restrictions and requirements.
- Active involvement by the U.S. in the development of a uniform scientifically-based international approval process for biotechnology.
- The free choice of farmers to grow what they want, whether it be biotech or non-biotech products.
- Public and private efforts to continue research on non-biotech seed.

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

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

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

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

#8 COMMISSION SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

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

6 We strongly support this historical commission
7 system of government. Commissions should provide
8 oversight and set policy for the department, conduct
9 appeals, and employ the director. The historical
10 commission system allowed for continuity,
11 transparency and accountability of programs. We
12 support restoring all duties of the Agriculture and
13 Natural Resources Commissions, including the
14 ability to employ the director.

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

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

#9 COMPLIANCE AND RESOURCES FOR FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

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

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

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

#10 CRANBERRY INDUSTRY

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

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

15 We urge MDEGLE to accommodate the
16 expansion of cranberry production in Michigan,
17 including prior commitments made under PA 120 of
18 2009. ♦

#13 DRY BEAN INDUSTRY

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

4 We support:

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

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

#14 EQUINE INDUSTRY

- 1 Michigan's equine industry is very broad and
2 involves many people and a wide variety of types
3 and breeds of horses. We strongly encourage and
4 support a collaborative effort by equine professionals
5 to strengthen the industry and support its continued
6 growth. The equine industry is much stronger and
7 able to thrive more successfully when united and
8 working collectively.
- 9 We support:
- 10 • Encouraging the Michigan Department of
11 Agriculture and Rural Development to work
12 with local units of governments to continue to
13 classify equine operations as agricultural for
14 zoning purposes.
 - 15 • Efforts to pass additional changes and/or
16 legislation that provide economic growth and
17 strengthen Michigan's horse racing industry.
 - 18 • Funding for the expansion of the Pavilion for
19 Agriculture and Livestock Education at
20 Michigan State University.
 - 21 • Marketing opportunities for the equine
22 industry. We encourage Michigan Farm
23 Bureau to work to re-establish additional
24 harvest options for the equine industry.
 - 25 • Funding for the USDA Food Safety and
26 Inspection Service for inspectors in facilities
27 that slaughter horses.
 - 28 • The Equine Liability Act that strengthens
29 liability protection measures for the equine
30 industry.
 - 31 • Efforts of the equine industry to establish an
32 equine industry marketing and education
33 program.
 - 34 • The equine industry's efforts in conducting a
35 study to determine the overall impact and

36 status of the equine industry in the state of
37 Michigan.

38 We oppose:

- 39 • All attempts to classify equine as companion
40 animals.
- 41 • Legislation that would limit/prohibit the use of
42 horses as working animals.
- 43 • Any reallocation of the Horsemen's
44 Simulcast purse pool funds to any race meet
45 licensee.

46 We understand there are instances where
47 owners can no longer care for their animals and,
48 under these circumstances there must be viable
49 options for dealing with them. It is important that all
50 equine owners understand the responsibility of
51 owning and caring for their animals.

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

55 In an attempt to encourage the equine industry
56 to be more proactive in environmental protection, we
57 encourage MFB to develop an equine specific
58 industry strategy that focuses on Michigan
59 Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program
60 verification, manure management and environmental
61 protection for the equine industry.

62 We are concerned about the number of wild
63 mustangs rounded up on federal land and being
64 moved into Michigan. These horses should be
65 required to move into Michigan on an inter-state
66 health certificate and meet the health standards of
67 the Michigan equine population and the Bureau of
68 Land Management adoption requirements. ♦

#15 FAIRS AND EXHIBITIONS

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

13 The success of state and county fairs and
14 exhibitions is reliant upon leadership and volunteers
15 from the agricultural community. We urge Farm
16 Bureau members to take an active role in providing

17 oversight and taking ownership of these activities to
18 ensure the original intent of fairs and exhibitions
19 continues. Agricultural education exhibits, livestock
20 competitions, agricultural showcases and youth
21 agricultural activities should be the cornerstone of
22 state and county fairs and exhibitions.

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

30 As our industry has changed and we adapt to
31 those changes, we must look at new and alternative
32 venues for these events that provide opportunities
33 for expanded involvement with the non-farm
34 population. We ask that county Farm Bureaus
35 embrace the concept of local, regional, and/or state
36 fairs financed by sponsorships and promotion by
37 organizations and companies directly involved in
38 promoting positive aspects of our great state.

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

#18 FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

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

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

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

#19 HOPS INDUSTRY

1 Production of hops and other associated
2 ingredients are part of a viable and expanding craft
3 brewing industry as Michigan has proven to be an
4 ideal climate for commercial hop production.
5 Michigan Farm Bureau supports the concept of a
6 farm brewery license allowing farm breweries to
7 operate in a similar fashion to farm wineries.
8 MFB supports incentives for breweries to utilize
9 more local hops in their recipes, which in turn would
10 allow for further expansion of hop production in the
11 state. ♦

#20 INDUSTRIAL HEMP

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

- 5 • Changes to the 2018 Farm Bill that allow for
6 industrial hemp with up to 1%
7 Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) to be legal.
- 8 • Changes to federal laws that allow for the
9 housing, transportation and marketing of all
10 legally derived industrial hemp products for
11 further processing, regardless of the THC
12 level, as long as the product for final sale
13 meets legal THC limits.
- 14 • The establishment of a Michigan Department
15 of Agriculture and Rural Development
16 (MDARD) Industrial Hemp Advisory
17 Committee to offer assistance in the
18 regulatory development and oversight
19 process.
- 20 • Collaboration with the industrial hemp
21 industry to develop a professional hemp
22 industry organization.
- 23 • Federal and state funding for all required
24 regulatory oversight. We are willing to
25 consider producer and processor funding to
26 help offset or assist with regulatory
27 oversight.
- 28 • MDARD submitting a hemp regulatory plan;
29 the plan should include the Department
30 assuming responsibility for THC sampling
31 and plans to mitigate cross pollination
32 between grain/fiber hemp and Cannabidiol
33 (CBD) hemp or marijuana.
- 34 • Research on the following: processing,
35 production techniques, prospective volumes,
36 and market outlook.

- 37 • Collaboration amongst MDARD, Michigan
38 State University Extension and other
39 stakeholders to develop and disseminate
40 educational materials pertaining to growing,
41 processing, transportation and marketing of
42 industrial hemp.
 - 43 • The development and approval of alternative
44 uses and/or disposal methods for the
45 destruction of a “hot crop” other than Drug
46 Enforcement Agency disposal rules.
- 47 We urge the Food and Drug Administration to
48 issue guidance and clarity on the rules surrounding
49 the marketing of industrial hemp derived products. ♦

#21 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

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

6 Because the licensing policies of Michigan State
7 University (MSU) Technologies directly or indirectly
8 affect cost, profitability, and marketing of Michigan
9 agricultural commodities, it is necessary for the
10 affected parties within the state to have input into the
11 licensing system.

12 Therefore, we support:

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

34 It is imperative that our intellectual properties and
35 food security be protected. We encourage MFB to be

36 supportive of protecting our food security and
37 agricultural industries. ♦

#22 LABELING

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

#23 MAPLE SUGAR PRODUCTION

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

9 We support:

- 10 • Changes to Environmental Protection
11 Agency regulations to allow isopropyl alcohol
12 to be used by producers in Michigan to clean
13 sap lines. ♦

#24 MARKETING AND BARGAINING LEGISLATION

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

7 We support:

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

#25 MICHIGAN ALLIANCE FOR ANIMAL AGRICULTURE

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

15 We support the M-AAA and their efforts in
16 developing a proposal to establish a state-funded
17 animal ag research program modeled after the
18 successful Project GREEN that addresses plant-
19 based industry priorities. The group has established
20 the Michigan Animal Agriculture Innovation and
21 Workforce Development Initiative which focuses on
22 ensuring the sustainability of the state's animal
23 agriculture sector through a targeted annual
24 investment in research, extension and workforce
25 development. Many dairy and livestock related
26 groups are making annual contributions to support
27 this effort and we strongly encourage state funding to
28 enhance the effort. ♦

#29 PAYMENT PROTECTION AND SECURITY FOR GROWERS

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

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

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

16 We urge Farm Bureau to work proactively with
17 the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural
18 Development to expand the FPIA to include fruit and

19 vegetable crops, and to create an appropriate
20 funding mechanism.

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

#31 RIGHT TO FARM

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

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

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

20 We support:

- 21 • Agricultural operations not being restricted
22 to only operating under their historical use.
- 23 • Developing realistic plans for land use,
24 which will allow agriculture to change,
25 incorporate technology and produce
26 commodities based on market demands.
- 27 • An expanding livestock farm not be
28 considered a nuisance as a result of new
29 home construction (non-farm residence)
30 within the approved setback distance after
31 the Michigan Department of Agriculture and
32 Rural Development's (MDARD) site
33 approval, but prior to completion of the
34 expansion.
- 35 • Research regarding manure storage,
36 manure processing, building design, and
37 types of livestock feed that could help with
38 odor problems.
- 39 • Development of an odor estimation model
40 for Michigan's climatic conditions.
- 41 • Changes to the Agricultural Disclosure
42 Statement (ADS) that would include:
 - 43 ▪ Seller notification to the potential buyer.

- A separate document at the time of closing.
- Updating the ADS to include additional agricultural practices.

We oppose:

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

Cooperation

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

We urge Michigan Farm Bureau to study and make recommendations for amendment to the Right to Farm Act that would provide additional protection to agricultural producers enrolled in either PA 116 or a permanent farmland preservation program.

GAAMPs

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

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

We support:

- 95 • The action taken by the Michigan
96 Commission of Agriculture and Rural
97 Development to remove the language
98 specific to local zoning from the siting and
99 farm market GAAMPs.
- 100 • Creation of a GAAMP for ag labor housing.
- 101 • The continued use of GAAMPs to define
102 acceptable farm management practices in
103 the state of Michigan.
- 104 • A cooperative effort among MDARD, MFB,
105 and other stakeholders to establish a
106 definition for “commercial production of farm
107 products” within the GAAMPs framework.

108 We oppose:

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

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

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

117 **Complaint Process**

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

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

218 **#32 SHEEP INDUSTRY**

219 We believe with proper leadership and research
220 the sheep industry will provide a substantial source
221 of income for Michigan farmers.

222 We support:

- 223 • Increased development of new uses of wool
224 and new consumer convenient lamb
225 products.
- 226 • Inclusion of lamb prices in market reports
227 and radio broadcasts.

- 10 • Research into lethal and non-lethal methods
11 of predator control as they can be applied in
12 Michigan such as adoption of a "toxic collar"
13 program.
 - 14 • Funding for an indemnification program for
15 losses from predators.
- 16 We urge all owners of sheep to participate in the
17 National Scrapie Eradication Program. ♦

#33 SOUND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH STANDARDS

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

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

1 The agricultural industry has developed many
2 mechanisms for reporting the size and progress of
3 crops and other agricultural commodities. The
4 system most widely adopted by the industry is the
5 USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service
6 program (NASS). To ensure the accuracy of these
7 reports, farmers should provide NASS full
8 cooperation. We will vigorously defend the
9 confidentiality of individual farm information.
10 Michigan Farm Bureau will continue to work with
11 NASS to find ways to improve and simplify the
12 gathering of information, such as exploring the use of
13 Farm Service Agency producer information already
14 reported. We encourage the use of modern
15 technology including satellite imagery, on-farm
16 electronic data, and development of a streamlined
17 data collection system.

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

28 We encourage producers to cooperate with the
29 NASS in conducting the U.S. Census of Agriculture.

30 We support distribution of the data in a timely and
31 usable format to producers.

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

#40 EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

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

5 We support:

- 6 • Requiring state foundation grant aid
7 reimbursement be determined by June 1
8 annually.
- 9 • Funding special education programs for
10 teacher training, children with special needs
11 and gifted children.
- 12 • Fully funding state mandated programs
13 whether new or amended. Funding for state
14 mandated programs should not decrease
15 the basic pupil grant for other Michigan
16 students.
- 17 • Ensuring the per pupil foundation funding
18 grant follows the student to the school of
19 their choice.
- 20 • Requiring state school aid funding to reflect
21 current year enrollment based on average
22 student attendance, and eliminate the
23 official count day/s.
- 24 • Public schools, private schools, charter
25 schools and home schooling.
- 26 • Local school boards having the ability to
27 establish policies such as starting and
28 ending dates, classroom hours in a school
29 year, personnel management, student
30 discipline, and use of local
31 facilities/resources.
- 32 • Collaboration between the local school
33 district and the Intermediate School District
34 to establish an integrated calendar.
- 35 • The utilization of local Farm Bureau
36 members and organizational resources to
37 assist in reviewing classroom curriculum for
38 accurate information concerning agriculture
39 before its adoption.
- 40 • Michigan Farm Bureau exploring the
41 development of a Michigan agriculture unit
42 that teaches students where their food
43 comes from.

- 44 • Michigan colleges and universities offering
45 dual credit opportunities for high school
46 students.
- 47 • Michigan colleges and universities offering
48 agriscience instructor certification.
- 49 • Michigan colleges and universities offering
50 state standardized programs in specialty
51 (ag) fields to increase occupational
52 readiness and employability of students.
- 53 • Consolidated districts maintaining existing
54 FFA and agriscience programs.
- 55 • Review of the foundation funding grant for
56 education.
- 57 • Fiscal aid, limited to the rate of inflation, to
58 districts operating under caps. School
59 districts must exercise fiscal responsibility
60 and look for efficiencies to maximize the use
61 of financial resources.
- 62 • Science, Technology, Engineering, Math,
63 (STEM) education in Pre-K-12 and
64 acknowledge agricultural education as an
65 effective vehicle to deliver this programming.
66 We encourage county Farm Bureaus to
67 highlight opportunities for school districts to
68 meet STEM requirements through
69 agricultural concepts.
- 70 • Funding opportunities for elementary
71 schools such as grants or scholarship
72 programs to source agriculture education
73 resources such as the FARM Science Lab.
- 74 • County Farm Bureaus working with local
75 school districts to increase Michigan Merit
76 Curriculum (MMC) flexibility acceptance.
77 MMC standards must be balanced to
78 recognize the importance of Career and
79 Technical Education (CTE) and provide
80 more opportunities for students to enroll in
81 vocational training programs and mentor-
82 based programs.
- 83 • A well-rounded education containing basic
84 curriculum, including college-prep or
85 vocational/technical courses.
- 86 • School counselors and faculty informing
87 students about opportunities in vocational
88 training, agriculture, and agriculturally-
89 related fields.
- 90 • Counselors' continuing education courses
91 encompassing CTE opportunities.

92 We oppose:

- 93 • Common Core Standards. ♦

#41 MICHIGAN AG COUNCIL

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

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

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

#43 BROADBAND

1 Rural access to broadband internet service is a
2 major factor impacting the ability of rural Michigan
3 residents to compete and participate in the economy.
4 A comprehensive policy is vital for the state of
5 Michigan to provide for universal broadband access
6 statewide that is equitable in cost and quality in both
7 rural and urban settings.

8 We support:

- 9 • Allowing municipalities to utilize special
10 assessment districts in expanding
11 broadband.
- 12 • Tax credits or other incentives for residents
13 purchasing internet services for educational
14 or employment purposes.
- 15 • Encouraging federal, state, and local
16 municipalities to allow public and private
17 internet providers easy and affordable
18 access to build and attach equipment to
19 public-owned communication towers, water
20 towers, and ground.
- 21 • Public-private partnerships to develop
22 cooperative, alternative funding measures to
23 expand broadband in under-served areas.

- 24 • Michigan internet providers taking
25 advantage of the available state and federal
26 government loans and grants.
- 27 • Continued cooperation between the
28 Michigan Public Service Commission,
29 broadband providers, and groups such as
30 Connect Michigan to expand unlimited high-
31 speed internet access in rural and under-
32 served areas.
- 33 • Publicly available well-defined/site-specific
34 high-speed internet coverage maps.
- 35 • Allowing municipalities to create service
36 thresholds when negotiating broadband
37 franchise territories.
- 38 • Requiring electric utilities to allow access to
39 their power poles for the hanging of high-
40 speed fiber-optic lines.
- 41 • Encouraging rural electric co-ops to
42 continue to expand their offerings of
43 broadband internet.

44 We oppose granting of exclusive franchises to
45 broadband providers in municipalities without
46 guaranteed minimum service. ♦

#46 UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS

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

8 Many of the issues surrounding UAS are
9 governed on the federal level by the Federal Aviation
10 Administration (FAA); however, a number of state
11 level issues need to be resolved. We encourage
12 Michigan Farm Bureau to work with the state
13 Legislature to address issues regarding UAS use.
14 Also, we urge MFB to continue to increase their
15 knowledge and understanding of the evolving UAS
16 issues including but not limited to:

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

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

28 We support:

- 29 • The use of UAS for commercial purposes
30 (i.e. agriculture, forestry, and other natural
31 resource use).
- 32 • Requiring the operator of the UAS to gain
33 the consent of the landowner and/or
34 operator, if the UAS will be surveying or
35 gathering data about the landowner's
36 property below navigable airspace.
- 37 • Treating the UAS as an extension of the
38 operator subject to trespass regulations.
- 39 • The regulation of UAS as recreational
40 aircraft.

41 We oppose:

- 42 • A federal and state agency using UAS for
43 the purpose of regulatory enforcement,
44 litigation and as a sole source for natural
45 resource inventories used in planning
46 efforts.
- 47 • UAS surveying and gathering data without
48 the consent of the landowner and/or
49 operator below navigable airspace.
- 50 • FAA and/or state agencies regulating UAS
51 as fixed-winged aircraft. ♦

#48 AGRICULTURAL LABOR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

71 The State Workforce Agency should only refer
72 legally authorized workers to all employers.

73 We support:

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

95 We oppose:

- 96 • Efforts by purchasers of farm commodities
97 to force farmers to legally recognize and
98 negotiate with specific labor organizations.
- 99 • Purchasers of farm commodities enticing
100 farm workers to join unions by paying the
101 union dues for the workers.
- 102 • Third party organization attempts to force
103 organized labor negotiations between
104 farmers and farm workers.
- 105 • Any attempts to overturn Michigan’s Right to
106 Work law.
- 107 • A specific segment of our workforce being
108 targeted for mandatory testing or regulatory
109 compliance. ♦

#50 IMMIGRATION

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

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

#51 INSURANCE ASSESSMENTS AND FINES

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

#52 LABOR HOUSING ZONING

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

8 We support legislation that will clearly establish
9 MDARD as having exclusive responsibility for siting,
10 construction, inspection, and approval of occupancy
11 for seasonal farm worker housing in Michigan.

12 We oppose local zoning ordinances that are more
13 strict for ag labor housing than those of any
14 residential home. ♦

#53 MIOSHA

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

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

12 We support:

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

- 27 • Changing reporting requirements for
28 accidents/fatalities for agricultural operations
29 to include 911 or other first responder
30 reporting.
- 31 We oppose:
 - 32 • MIOSHA regulations that exceed federal
33 OSHA standards and/or guidance.
 - 34 • Enforcement action against an
35 owner/operator resulting from a self-
36 imposed accidental injury. ♦

#54 NO-FAULT AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

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

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

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

20 We support legislation which improves Michigan's
21 No-Fault Insurance, reduces the cost of auto
22 insurance, and passes the majority of savings on to
23 the consumer.

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

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

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

38 Uninsured motorists increase costs to law-abiding
39 citizens. We recommend increased law enforcement

40 and an increase in fines for uninsured motorists and
41 impoundment of the vehicle. We urge the exploration
42 of methods and mechanisms to change the
43 collections for the Michigan Catastrophic Claims
44 Association Fund to ensure equity amongst Michigan
45 motorists. ♦

#56 WORKER PROTECTION STANDARDS

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

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

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

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

#57 AG SECURITY

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

4 We support:

- 5 • Increased penalties for individuals who
6 destroy or contaminate agricultural property
7 with the intent to create terror.
- 8 • Increased communication between state
9 departments and federal agencies in
10 preparing for a response to an agricultural
11 terrorist attack or threat.
- 12 • Continued testing and monitoring of food
13 and feed produced and used by agriculture.
- 14 • Evaluating the security of food and animal
15 feed storage facilities.
- 16 • Increased scrutiny and screening of all
17 imported agricultural goods.
- 18 • Giving preference to domestically produced
19 agricultural goods.
- 20 • Changes to regulations established for the
21 purpose of preventing agricultural terrorism
22 which need to consider the importance of
23 maintaining an adequate workforce for
24 agriculture and related industries.
- 25 • Increased funding for U.S. Customs and
26 Border Protection to protect the animal
27 health population and ag industries at
28 airports and ports of entry.

- 29 • A stronger effort to increase bio-security
- 30 measures on farm operations and at the
- 31 state and national level.
- 32 • Communication with local law enforcement
- 33 and emergency services regarding any
- 34 suspicious activity.
- 35 • Reporting any theft of fertilizer, diesel fuel,
- 36 or diesel exhaust fluid.
- 37 • Verification of the validity of any requests for
- 38 information about an agricultural facility.
- 39 • Controlled access to facilities.
- 40 • Screening of employees.

41 We oppose:

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

#58 AGRICULTURAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

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

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

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

#59 ANHYDROUS AMMONIA - NH₃

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

7 We support:

- 8 • The consolidation of responsibility for
- 9 regulations to improve the efficiency and
- 10 reduce possible confusion of regulatory
- 11 responsibility.

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

#62 FIRE FIGHTING

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

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

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

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

28 Therefore, we support policy that prohibits local
29 units of government and fire authorities from
30 charging for emergency preparation inspections.

31 Furthermore, the E-Tube shall suffice as an
32 appropriate level of information.

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

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

#63 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
5 their infection statistics.
- 6 • Legislation to limit malpractice liability
7 awards including capping malpractice
8 settlements and strengthening licensing
9 disciplinary action.
- 10 • The integration of the health delivery
11 systems' community health, mental health
12 and substance abuse programs, which
13 serve the same set of counties.
- 14 • Increased suicide prevention and mental
15 illness awareness campaigns with funding
16 and training for medical and emergency
17 service providers.
- 18 • A private and affordable health care plan
19 that allows for additional benefits at the
20 consumer's option.
- 21 • Methods to reduce the cost of prescription
22 drugs that will best benefit all individuals.
- 23 • Health education to encourage consumers
24 of health care to question physicians,
25 hospital staff and administration about
26 procedures and costs regarding their own
27 health care.
- 28 • Itemized billing.
- 29 • Insurance incentives for a healthy lifestyle.
- 30 • Health insurance premiums being 100
31 percent tax deductible for all policy
32 purchasers immediately.
- 33 • Health Savings Accounts and Medical
34 Savings Accounts.
- 35 • Medicare and Medicaid payments that cover
36 expenses in full to hospitals. Rural hospitals

- 37 should not be discriminated against by using
38 a lower cost of living scale.
- 39 • An individual's right to select treatment
40 options which should be respected, and we
41 encourage the use of living wills and/or
42 Durable Power of Attorney for health care.
 - 43 • Nurse practitioners, physician assistants,
44 midwives, and certified holistic healthcare
45 providers being able to receive
46 reimbursement for their services from
47 insurance companies, Medicaid and
48 Medicare.
 - 49 • Organ and blood donations.
 - 50 • Allowing "sleeping rails" on nursing home
51 beds to help ensure patient safety.
 - 52 • Programs that encourage medical
53 professionals to locate in rural areas,
54 including the U.S. Customs and Immigration
55 Services programs supporting placement of
56 foreign-born doctors in rural areas.
 - 57 • The development of a method to return
58 unused prescription drugs to a licensed
59 pharmacist for disposal.
 - 60 • Closer tracking of production and
61 distribution to ensure the integrity of the
62 Michigan Medical Marijuana program.
 - 63 • MFB assisting county Farm Bureaus with
64 model ordinances pertaining to growing and
65 processing medical marijuana.
 - 66 • The requirement that medical marijuana be
67 processed by the current United States
68 Pharmacopeia standards using sound
69 science when refined into a consumable
70 form. This product should then be
71 prescribed by potency since drug levels vary
72 by plant type.
 - 73 • Employers being exempted from
74 mandatorily providing health care coverage
75 to any employee who falls under the Migrant
76 and Seasonal Workers Protection Act.
 - 77 • The expansion of home and community-
78 based long-term care.
 - 79 • Local healthcare facilities be allowed to
80 decide if they should remain open during
81 both normal and emergency circumstances.
 - 82 • All healthcare be considered essential in the
83 event of a crisis or pandemic.

84 We oppose:

- 85 • Any state or federal program requiring
86 employers to provide health insurance for
87 employees and their dependents.

- 88 • Any tax on an agricultural commodity being
89 used to fund a health care program. ♦

#65 LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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

9 We believe:

- 10 • Townships or local units of government
11 should not be permitted to enact regulations
12 affecting agriculture that are stricter than
13 existing state and federal regulations.
14 • Local government should look for increased
15 efficiencies through consolidation of
16 services and streamlining regulations.
17 • Secondary use of agricultural property,
18 including buildings, that does not conflict or
19 substantially change the nature of the farm
20 business should be allowed.

21 We encourage:

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

- 46 • Continued emphasis on state revenue-
47 sharing payments to local units of
48 government. ♦

#66 PUBLIC WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE

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

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

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

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

47 We oppose:

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

#67 REDRESS FOR UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS

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

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

#70 TORT LIABILITY REFORM

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

- 5 • Perform calculations that reduce future
- 6 damages to present value.
- 7 • Reform and reduce attorney contingency fee
- 8 arrangements.
- 9 • A plaintiff (party pursuing suit) should be
- 10 responsible to pay defendant legal fees if
- 11 the case is settled in the defendant's favor.
- 12 The court should be responsible for
- 13 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
- 20 reducing the interest rate, which would start
- 21 accruing the 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
- 28 scheduled before the defendant in civil
- 29 litigation has the opportunity to file a motion

30 for summary disposition. Court ordered
31 mediation shall take place only if both
32 parties agree to mediate. Any agreement
33 reached in this mediation shall have a
34 waiting or cooling off period of 48 to 72
35 hours to afford the defendant the opportunity
36 to change his mind after weighing the
37 consequences of this agreement or contract.
38 • Employers who are providing proper training
39 and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE),
40 and are working in good faith to protect
41 employee health, should have liability
42 protection. ♦

#72 AIR QUALITY

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

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

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

23 We support:

- 24 • MFB educating members on air quality and
25 how this issue impacts members and
26 Michigan agriculture.
- 27 • The Michigan Department of Agriculture and
28 Rural Development as lead agency for all
29 agricultural air quality concerns.
- 30 • The Michigan Right to Farm Act as the
31 primary means for farmers to address air
32 quality concerns. Regulatory provisions
33 exempting farmers who conform to
34 Generally Accepted Agricultural and
35 Management Practices from nuisance
36 regulation must remain in law.

- 37 • A scientific, practice-based approach to
- 38 meet air quality objectives.
- 39 • Re-evaluation of emissions standards for
- 40 farm and ranch equipment and other non-
- 41 highway use machinery.
- 42 We oppose:
- 43 • Air emission permits for agriculture more
- 44 stringent than federal rules and regulations
- 45 and not science or practice-based.
- 46 • Applying air quality regulations to areas of
- 47 Michigan that are not pollution sources.
- 48 Pollutants measured in areas of Michigan
- 49 not meeting air quality standards may
- 50 originate in urban/industrial settings far
- 51 removed from the monitored area. Air
- 52 quality concerns should be addressed at
- 53 their source.
- 54 • Enforcing air quality standards for ozone
- 55 and particulate matter on farms and
- 56 agricultural businesses voluntarily
- 57 implementing effective environmental
- 58 conservation practices.
- 59 • Further emission control requirements for
- 60 agricultural equipment and practices.
- 61 • Any ban on the burning of biodegradable
- 62 household waste. ♦

#74 CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

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

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

21 We support:

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

55 We support Michigan Farm Bureau:

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

71 We support conservation districts:

- 72 • Focusing on conservation for agriculture.

- Providing technical support to farmers utilizing Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices to protect soil, water and other resources.
- Evaluating and adopting relevant successful programs from other conservation districts and states, such as water quality assistance and ditch maintenance. Programming could vary from county to county, based on the direction of the district boards and the needs of agriculture.
- Partnering at a watershed scale.
- Providing multi-disciplinary cross-training for all conservation district technicians.
- Being the primary agency to initiate watershed management programming and technical assistance.
- Only offering non-invasive species for conservation purposes.

Conservation Species

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

As a result of recent reductions in funding, conservation districts generate additional sources of revenue by greatly enlarging the approved list of “conservation species,” which expands competition with private industry for production and sale of plant material. This “conservation species” list is reviewed annually by an advisory panel, as required by law. We are concerned about the number of recent additions to the approved propagation list. Conservation districts should be encouraged to purchase their plant materials from Michigan private industry suppliers whenever possible. ♦

#76 FARMLAND PROTECTION

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

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

13 **A Strategic Approach**

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

17 We support:

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

27 **Funding Farmland Protection**

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

37 We support:

38 **PA 116**

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

- 61 • MDARD and the Michigan Department of
62 Treasury developing better communication to
63 resolve issues with PA 116 tax returns.
- 64 • Requiring the State to pay penalties for late
65 issuance of PA 116 refunds to landowners.
- 66 • Protection and exemption from special
67 assessments excluding agricultural drainage.

68 ***Agricultural Preservation Fund***

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

84 ***Agricultural Security Areas***

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

89 ***Urban Revitalization***

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

94 ***Transfer of Development Rights***

- 95 • Transfer of development rights to facilitate the
96 voluntary preservation of farmland where
97 needed while allowing land development in
98 appropriate areas without using public
99 funds. ♦

#77 GAME FARMS AND HUNTING PRESERVES

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

7 We support:

- 8 • Legislation providing opportunities and
9 protection for this growing segment of

- 10 Michigan agriculture, including privately
11 owned cervidae and other similar species.
12 • The elimination of feral swine.
13 • The invasive species order that went into
14 effect on October 8, 2011, naming certain
15 species of swine as invasive.
- 16 Continued development and implementation of
17 regulations on swine hunting facilities should include,
18 but not be limited to:
- 19 • Disease testing and record keeping for all
20 incoming and outgoing animals.
 - 21 • Strict fencing requirements to eliminate the
22 risk of recreationally hunted swine escaping
23 into the wild.
 - 24 • Following all standard accepted practices for
25 swine meat production operations moving
26 animals interstate and internationally.
 - 27 • Hunting swine populations consisting only of
28 sterile animals.
 - 29 • Permanent individual animal identification
30 on all animals used for breeding and
31 stocking swine in hunting facilities.
 - 32 • All cost of regulation being paid for by a
33 licensing fee. ♦

#78 INVASIVE SPECIES

- 1 It is imperative Michigan has a comprehensive
2 state policy addressing the introduction and
3 management of invasive species. Programs should
4 rely on cooperative, voluntary, partnership-based
5 efforts between public agencies, private landowners,
6 and concerned citizens.
- 7 We support:
- 8 • The reestablishment of the Michigan
9 Invasive Species Advisory Council, with
10 producer representation.
 - 11 • The Michigan Department of Natural
12 Resources' (MDNR) formation and support
13 of Cooperative Invasive Species
14 Management Areas (CISMAs) at the local
15 level to educate the public and take action to
16 prevent the spread of invasive species in
17 Michigan, with long term funding for this
18 program instead of the current process of
19 annual approval through state budget
20 appropriations.
 - 21 • The role of the Agriculture and Natural
22 Resource Commissions in establishing the
23 prohibited species list.
 - 24 • Federal, state and local agencies and
25 research institutions working more

- 26 effectively with private landowners to control
27 or eradicate invasive species.
- 28 • MDNR notifying all levels of local
29 government and gaining their support before
30 releasing a non-native species.
 - 31 • Efforts to establish the Michigan Department
32 of Agriculture and Rural Development, with
33 input from appropriate industry associations,
34 as the state agency with responsibility for all
35 terrestrial invasive species.
 - 36 • The substantial efforts by the State of
37 Michigan to work with other agencies to stop
38 the invasion of the Asian Carp into Michigan
39 waters.
 - 40 • An increase in funds for inspection services
41 and facilities. Funding should also be made
42 available for public education and outreach
43 efforts.

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

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

- 76 • Indemnification of crop, nursery stock and
77 livestock losses from invasive species when
78 it can be documented that the quarantine
79 requirements or treatment methods are the
80 basis for the loss.
- 81 • Public lands and rights-of-way being
82 managed to reduce and eliminate invasive
83 species as effectively as private lands and in
84 coordination with neighboring privately
85 owned or leased land. Any efforts on public
86 lands affecting the uses and private rights
87 held by public land permittees and users
88 shall be subject to compensation and fair
89 market value for the taking of these property
90 rights by the introduction or proliferation of
91 invasive species.
- 92 • Proper incentives being provided for farmers
93 and ranchers to effectively control noxious
94 and aquatic weeds, along with support for
95 an Integrated Pest Management approach.
- 96 • Plants not being prohibited or restricted
97 through legislation and removed from trade
98 unless eradication is concurrently instituted
99 on public lands.
- 100 • Invasive species not being defined to
101 include agricultural products or other
102 beneficial non-native species.
- 103 • Consideration being given to the extent to
104 which species may be naturalized in an
105 environment. Any penalties associated with
106 introductions must be realistic.
- 107 • Michigan's ballast water discharge
108 standards reflecting the federal standards
109 which are enforced by the U.S. Coast
110 Guard. ♦

#79 LAND ACQUISITIONS FOR PUBLIC PROJECTS

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

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

15 We support:

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

52 We oppose:

- 53 • The taking of property by the government for
- 54 the purpose of development of privately-
- 55 owned projects.
- 56 • The ability of non-elected public or private
- 57 boards, agencies, or commissions to utilize
- 58 the eminent domain process.
- 59 • The practice of acquiring new rights-of-way
- 60 through farmland when nearby public
- 61 corridors exist, such as railways, highways,
- 62 power lines, and pipelines.
- 63 • Property being condemned in fee title if a
- 64 lesser interest will suffice. In cases where
- 65 any portion of condemned land is not

66 needed at the completion of a public project,
67 is abandoned, or is no longer used for the
68 purpose stated, the landowner should have
69 the right of first refusal at the price paid by
70 the government entity. ♦

#80 LAND USE

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

7 We support:

- 8 • Requiring agriculture to be included in
9 community master plans, county economic
10 development plans and all aspects of local
11 planning and zoning.
- 12 • Regional cooperation between
13 municipalities, counties and townships.
- 14 • Requiring the county road commission and
15 drain/water resources commission to
16 collaborate with the county planning
17 commission when developing the county's
18 master plan and setting long-term plans.
- 19 • Intra-jurisdictional coordination between all
20 public entities in a community, including fire
21 districts, emergency medical services, water
22 and sewer authorities, school district, solid
23 waste management.
- 24 • Encouraging the use of current
25 infrastructure.
- 26 • Transportation development projects
27 incorporating local land use planning and
28 minimizing impacts to farmland.
29 Transportation infrastructure placement is a
30 primary influence on land development
31 patterns.
- 32 • Enabling local communities to use the
33 statutory authority of "concurrency" when
34 negotiating new development approval.
35 Concurrency establishes a pay-as you-go
36 approach which ensures public facilities and
37 services are available at the same time as
38 the impacts of development.
- 39 • Michigan State University and the Michigan
40 Department of Agriculture and Rural
41 Development (MDARD) providing technical
42 assistance, education and research to local
43 officials and property owners.

- Encouraging local communities to utilize existing zoning tools when appropriate to help protect farmland and farm operations by including cluster housing, buffer areas, fencing, planted tree setbacks, and site density zoning.
- The sale of state and federally owned land suitable for residential or industrial use to preserve farmland and increase local revenue. This development should only be considered on vacant sites with existing or nearby utilities fitting the local land use plan.
- Local governments considering alternatives to minimize adverse impacts to farms within one mile of where land is divided.
- Encouraging local units of government to utilize brownfield redevelopment authorities.
- Amending the Land Division Act to:
 - Change the platting process to reduce cost, time and bureaucracy.
 - Create density in communities by revisiting the 10-year redivision requirement.
 - Allow local units of government to utilize the entire Zoning Enabling Act to locally govern the Land Division Act.
 - Require site condominiums, manufactured housing developments and mobile home parks to comply with land division and/or the platting process in the Land Division Act.
- When agricultural land is within a governmental unit, a representative of production agriculture being appointed to the planning commissions and zoning boards.
- Members becoming actively involved in land use planning and zoning.
- Individuals appointed to councils, commissions and boards created by government, state legislators, and MDARD to represent agricultural interests being, or having been, directly involved in the agriculture industry.
- Legislation being enacted to prevent farmland from being annexed to a municipality without a vote of the people in the affected area. Upon approval of the people in the affected area, an annexation proposal should then be approved by a

- 94 vote of the residents of the appropriate
95 units of government.
- 96 • Requiring consent of landowners for
97 annexation proposals. Changing the use of
98 property must consider and protect the
99 rights of private property owners.
 - 100 • Property enrolled in farmland preservation
101 programs having concurrent approval for
102 annexation or public use by the contracted
103 parties, including land owners.
 - 104 • The development and uniformity of
105 Geographic Information Systems and we
106 encourage use by local units of
107 government in land use planning.
 - 108 • Michigan Farm Bureau assisting county
109 Farm Bureaus with model zoning
110 ordinances pertaining to agriculture.
 - 111 • Legislation and zoning to enable energy
112 production on farms, including the sale or
113 use of the generated electricity. Specific
114 zoning for the production of alternative
115 energy should use sound science and
116 adopt state siting guidelines.
 - 117 • Legislation pre-empting local height
118 restrictions.
 - 119 • The Michigan Department of Natural
120 Resources (MDNR) continuing and
121 expanding the bidding, renting, and/or sale
122 of state land for agricultural use.

123 In areas where trails run through production
124 agriculture and other private lands, the authority
125 responsible for the trail should build and maintain
126 fences to keep trail users on the trail and install
127 gates so that property owners have access to both
128 sides of their property if the trail divides the property.
129 All users of the trails shall stop or yield at all
130 crossings, regardless of whether public or private.
131 We oppose:

- 132 • Rezoning agricultural zones if the use has
133 not changed and the landowners have not
134 requested the zoning change.
- 135 • Limitations being placed on state lands for
136 recreational purposes unless there is sound
137 scientific justification or funding restrictions.
138 If limitations are proposed, then justification
139 should be in writing and public hearings
140 conducted. When the MDNR proposes
141 public land use changes, it is imperative that
142 those impacted are involved in the decision-
143 making process.

- 144 • Restrictions on leases of state-owned
145 agricultural land exceeding Generally
146 Accepted Agricultural and Management
147 Practices. ♦

#82 NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION AND WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

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

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

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

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

32 We support:

33 ***Fertilizer and Nutrient Management***

- 34 • All fertilizer retailers becoming certified in
35 the 4R (Right fertilizer source, Right rate,
36 Right time, Right place) Nutrient
37 Stewardship Program and/or similar fertilizer
38 management efforts.
39 • Michigan Farm Bureau coordinating with
40 neighboring states and Canada where a
41 watershed is shared to reduce nutrient
42 loading issues.
43 • University, state and federal programs
44 promptly updating guidelines when nutrient

research is completed, so farmers have time to implement them.

- Additional research on dissolved phosphorus.
- Continued education on appropriate phosphorus and other nutrient use.
- Biosolid applications being consistent with the guidelines in the Michigan Water Environment Association's Land Application of Biosolids in Michigan Management Recommendations.

Conservation and Pollution Prevention Programs

- The farm bill providing opportunities for farmers to address conservation programs on farms.
- The continued refining of conservation program delivery to ensure the process is transparent, consistent and simple to participating farmers. We appreciate newly available technical and financial assistance to address on-farm above-ground fuel tanks and liquid fertilizer storage.
- Developing nutrient management plans for all farms.
- Continuing the cost-share provided to producers for conservation practices.
- A state-funded cover crop and filter strip cost-share program.
- The Clean Sweep Program with MDARD accepting responsibility for future liability for chemicals collected.
- Legislation clarifying forest management practices are not point sources of pollution.
- 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 Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (MDEGLE) 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.
- Using sound science to determine the level of impact of emerging contaminant 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.
- 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.
- Eliminating the acreage cap for Michigan's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.
- Establishing a statewide septic task force consisting of agricultural, rural, urban and statewide geographic representatives responsible for developing:
 - A set of state septic system standards including maintenance and time of sale inspections that supersede local ordinances.
 - Fair and uniform implementation and enforcement across Michigan by local health departments.
 - General public education to increase the understanding of properly constructed and working septic systems.
 - A standard for inspections and state certification of inspectors.
 - Proactive government programs to replace failing or noncompliant septic systems.

Water Quality and Watershed Management

- Use of the Saginaw Bay Optimization Model.
- The Lake Erie Domestic Action Plan.
- Streamlining the process of allocating funds to improve water quality at the farm level.
- The use of sound science to determine water quality.

- 146 • MFB taking a leadership role in developing
- 147 protocols for water quality monitoring.
- 148 • An unbiased study to determine contributors
- 149 negatively impacting water quality before
- 150 additional regulations are imposed upon
- 151 agriculture.
- 152 • Farm Bureau members participating in
- 153 voluntary water quality monitoring programs,
- 154 in which results are kept confidential.
- 155 • Farmer representation on local boards and
- 156 commissions making decisions on
- 157 environmental policies such as land use and
- 158 watershed planning.
- 159 • Encouraging state and local governments to
- 160 utilize buffer strips around government
- 161 owned buildings and parking areas.

162 We oppose:

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

#83 OIL, GAS, AND MINERAL RIGHTS

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

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

12 We believe government agencies, Farm Credit
13 Services, local and state recording offices, and other
14 state and federal chartered financial institutions

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

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

29 We support:

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

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

86 We oppose:

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

#84 PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

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

6 We believe any action by the government
7 diminishing an owner's right to use their property,
8 such as the Endangered Species Act or the Natural
9 Rivers Act, constitutes a taking of that owner's
10 property. Government should provide for the removal

11 of endangered species or due process and
12 compensation to the exact degree an owner's right to
13 use his or her property has been diminished by
14 government action.

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

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

36 We support:

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

- 62 • Developing and implementing a “purple
- 63 paint law” to authorize posting of private
- 64 property by using a specific paint color.
- 65 • A public awareness campaign utilizing all
- 66 types of media to encourage better
- 67 understanding between farmers and
- 68 nonfarm neighbors as population density
- 69 around farms increases.
- 70 • Increased fines for trespassing.
- 71 We oppose:
- 72 • Any legislation allowing public access to or
- 73 through private property without permission
- 74 of the property owner or owner’s authorized
- 75 agent.
- 76 • Non-private easements (except
- 77 maintenance easements) being sold, traded
- 78 or otherwise transferred without consent of
- 79 the current property owner. This should
- 80 include all past and future transactions.
- 81 Michigan law should protect the rights of the
- 82 property owner. ♦

#87 WATER USE IN THE GREAT LAKES BASIN

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

Michigan Water Law and Policy

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

- 18 • No fees may EVER be charged for
- 19 agricultural water use.
- 20 • Existing documented surface and
- 21 groundwater uses and sites must be
- 22 grandfathered.
- 23 • Water use permits for withdrawals supplying
- 24 a common distribution system of less than
- 25 two million gallons per day in any 90-day
- 26 consecutive period for agriculture must be
- 27 handled by the Michigan Department of

Agriculture and Rural Development
(MDARD).

- Municipalities or other governments with jurisdiction over artificial impoundments, such as ponds and lakes, should be allowed to reduce water levels to remove accumulated sediments.

We support:

- An increased role in any current or future state water use committees due to the diversity of Michigan agriculture.
- The State of Michigan making every effort to approve agricultural water withdrawals in a timely manner.
- MDARD being the primary department for agricultural water use reporting and conflict resolution.
- Basing all water use policies and regulations on validated scientific research.
- Landowners receiving water recharge credit for maintaining open, undeveloped ground. Water use reporting should include “water in” (rainfall) provisions. We encourage the development of incentives for farmers who recover more water than they use.
- Legislation strengthening Michigan’s authority to conserve and protect the waters of the Great Lakes Basin.
- Including agricultural water uses in the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP). The state should be required to have a greater burden of proof in determining a water use is causing an adverse resource impact if the verified producer is addressing applicable water conservation measures through MAEAP.
- The inclusion of scientifically sound, environmentally protective and economically feasible water conservation measures in Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices.
- Increased development and use of Michigan’s Wellogic database of well drilling logs. Accurate records of existing uses including residential wells are needed to assess Michigan water supplies and use.
- Seasonal exemptions in Michigan’s Well Code for shallow aquifer water withdrawals regardless of well depth.

Water Withdrawal Assessment

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

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

- The changes made by PA 209 of 2018 to provide an optional alternate process for site specific reviews of high-capacity water withdrawals. This law is based on updated scientific modeling and provides a more accurate reflection of the regional variability of water use impacts. Additionally, the law clarifies MDEGLE's role and timeframes for review and approval of withdrawal applications under the new process. We encourage MFB to oversee the implementation of the law and develop educational information about the process for members.

Aquifer Conflicts

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

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

Research and Education

We support:

- Research enhancing the understanding of water resources, validating the ecological benefits of agriculture's role in the water cycle, and leading to increased agricultural water use efficiency.
- MFB developing partnerships to increase education and promoting the value of agricultural water use to the public.
- MFB and partners such as Conservation Districts facilitating the formation of farmer collectives to gather and share data and develop regional models to assess and predict water use impacts.
- Increasing education, financial and technical assistance for farmers who participate in voluntary, incentive-driven water use conservation programs.
- The voluntary use of monitoring wells.
- Seeking new and expanded opportunities to reclaim and recycle water.
- Water use record keeping on farms to increase water use efficiencies, protect

- 180 producer rights to water access and validate
181 agricultural water use as a high priority.
- 182 • Working with well drillers to ensure they
183 have sufficient understanding of geological
184 and hydrologic processes to provide the
185 best possible knowledge and service to
186 clients and the most accurate and useful
187 reporting of data to the State, including
188 groundwater location and availability, and
189 soil and geological formations. We
190 encourage landowners voluntarily submitting
191 geological samples to the Michigan
192 Geological Survey and developing a trust
193 fund to protect participants against liability
194 for negative sample analysis findings.
 - 195 • Investigating funding sources for geological
196 mapping.
 - 197 • The findings of the Southwest Michigan
198 Water Resource Council, which was
199 charged with studying water resources in
200 the region.

201 We oppose:

- 202 • Any water allocation system preempting
203 surface water riparian doctrine or
204 groundwater rights.
- 205 • Applying a “public trust doctrine” to
206 groundwater.
- 207 • Diverting water in its natural state from the
208 Great Lakes Basin.
- 209 • The definition of consumptive use as applied
210 to agriculture.
- 211 • Legislative or regulatory efforts resulting
212 from federal, regional, state and/or local
213 initiatives that adversely impact agriculture.
- 214 • The State of Michigan removing dams
215 located on drains and waterways recharging
216 aquifers of the state and not requiring
217 owners of existing dams to maintain them.
- 218 • Attempts to limit efficient agricultural water
219 use.
- 220 • Water use prioritization.
- 221 • Filing fees for agricultural water use
222 reporting.
- 223 • Using collected agricultural water use data
224 for regulatory purposes or to advance
225 agendas in opposition to efficient agricultural
226 water use.
- 227 • Well code changes placing economic or
228 regulatory burdens on landowners in the
229 absence of sound science.
- 230 • Any attempt to turn water into a commodity.

- 231 • The Environmental Protection Agency
232 designating interstate aquifers as “sole
233 source aquifers.”
- 234 • Fraudulent use of the WWAT to register a
235 water withdrawal. ♦

#89 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
8 federally delegated authority of the Clean Water Act
9 Section 404 Program. The law provided many
10 reforms benefiting agriculture, including:

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

Delineation Manual and Regional
Supplements.

We recommend the following:

- The MDEGLE statewide wetland inventory should not be used for regulatory purposes. Michigan Farm Bureau is concerned the inventory includes wetlands that do not meet current wetland delineation standards.
- Compatible agricultural uses should be allowed in wetlands. Wetland vegetation should be defined as obligate hydrophytes.
- There should be no regulation of man-made wetlands or voluntarily established wetlands implemented as conservation practices through state or federal programs.
- Application of contaminated soils and sediments to farm fields at agronomic rates should be in accordance with state and federal requirements.
- County drain/water resources commissions should be the sole authority on public drains, culverts and maintenance.
- Statewide standards for wetland determinations and historical function must be established to ensure uniform application at all locations.
- Permits must be issued promptly.
- Where application of wetland regulation results in a substantial or total loss of the value of the property, the State must fully compensate the property owner. Control and access to the property must remain with the property owner.
- All prior converted wetlands should be excluded from regulation.
- Cleaning up edges of fields back to the original farmed boundaries and removing barriers such as brush and trees protruding into fields should not trigger a wetland determination or disciplinary action against the farmer/landowner.
- Cost-sharing or other incentives should be provided for wetlands restoration programs on farms.
- A fund should be established to compensate neighboring farms for their economic loss due to unforeseen problems created by wetland restoration.
- MDEGLE and Natural Resources Conservation Service should completely explain in advance and in writing landowner

- 95 obligations during and after a contract for
96 the maintenance and/or reversion of a
97 wetland.
- 98 • Creative solutions should reflect economic
99 and environmental realities to resolve
100 wetlands disputes.
 - 101 • Productive agricultural land should not be
102 used to mitigate wetlands, especially by
103 condemnation.
 - 104 • Wetland violations should be heard within
105 the court jurisdiction where the violation has
106 been alleged.
 - 107 • Government agencies should cooperate and
108 provide a single contact for regulatory
109 compliance to handle all issues of wetland
110 determination, enforcement, and penalties.
 - 111 • MDEGLE should recognize the section of
112 the Wetlands Protection Act finding
113 wetlands to be valuable as an agricultural
114 resource for producing food and fiber,
115 including certain crops which may only be
116 grown on sites developed from wetlands. ♦

#90 WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

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

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

15 We urge the MDNR to finalize its plan for citizen
16 advisory councils in the Lower Peninsula. Two
17 citizens advisory councils have been created in the
18 Upper Peninsula. These advisory councils have
19 provided an excellent forum for interaction between
20 stakeholders and individual citizens resulting in
21 better resource management with increased
22 transparency.

23 We support:

Hunting and Trapping

- 25 • Hunting and trapping being protected as the
26 primary tools for wildlife management.

- Competitive license fees to encourage resident and nonresident hunting and fishing opportunities.
- The MDNR reviewing management units for all wildlife and considering reconfigurations based on biogeographic areas.
- The MDNR simplifying, revising, and extending or creating hunting seasons to provide the most flexibility to hunters to improve success and effectively manage populations.
- Programs and methods to help control problem species, including earn-a-buck and other doe management techniques.
- The MFB Wildlife Action Team report which encourages:
 - Farmer participation at Natural Resources Commission (NRC) meetings.
 - Managing wildlife populations with a regional quota-based system to support a balanced wildlife population based on the carrying capacity of each region of the state. When quotas are not achieved, additional hunting seasons should be made available or existing seasons extended.
- Agency culling/harvest to reduce overpopulation.
- The Michigan Wildlife Management Education Fund, which is financed by a fee on hunting and fishing licenses and used to educate the public on natural resource issues.

Endangered Species and Depredation

- The MDNR being the lead agency to advocate Michigan's authority to manage federally protected species.
- The American Farm Bureau Federation supporting increasing states' rights to manage federally protected species.
- Standardized procedures for reporting, investigating and indemnifying depredation at fair market value. A notarized statement of loss should be enough proof for reimbursement when there is no evidence beyond an animal of appropriate size missing.
- Encouraging farmers to consider alternative methods for controlling loss, which may include lease options. If control methods are

ineffective, farmers should have the authority to manage nuisance/destructive species on their land, including utilizing services from programs such as USDA Wildlife Services.

Population Health and Disease Management

- Basing the decision to allow baiting and feeding on veterinary/animal health science.
- Artificial baiting.
- Considering strengthening fines and penalties for illegal feeding of wildlife, similar to those for poaching.
- Making wildlife control permits low-cost or free and easily accessible based on damage, and allowing landowners to use the appropriate firearm for the land's zone, regardless of the hunting season. Controlling species, regardless of sex, on farmland is necessary to produce a viable product.
- Increased use of technology, including QR codes, electronic data reporting and unbiased surveys, along with voluntary check stations for wildlife to provide better population data and control wildlife disease in Michigan. In cases of diseased animals, replacement tags should be issued.
- Legislation requiring the MDNR to publish an annual report on county or regional analysis of whitetail deer herd populations. This report should include the risk of herds contracting diseases such as Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and Bovine Tuberculosis (TB), and recommendations for proactive herd management to reduce risks of contracting such diseases.
- MFB providing resources to help farmers address wildlife conflict.
- The MDNR strictly enforcing disease control laws and regulations.
- MFB assisting members reporting lax and inconsistent enforcement activities with communications with the NRC, legislators, and administration officials.
- Legislative oversight and audits of MDNR enforcement consistency.
- Legislation that allows an individual to transport and possess a loaded firearm in or on any vehicle while on private land with the permission of the landowner.

We oppose:

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

#93 COUNTY ROAD COMMISSIONS

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

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

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

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

#95 INTERNATIONAL TRADE CROSSING

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

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

#96 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 I.D. card needed a specific immigration or
4 citizenship status in order to be eligible and had to
5 submit documents sufficient to prove their identity
6 and Michigan residency.

7 We support the State of Michigan:

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

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

#97 RAILROADS

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

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

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

- 16 • Urging the responsible authorities to
- 17 improve and maintain railroad crossings to
- 18 current code, including replacing existing
- 19 railroad cross buck signs with cross buck
- 20 signs that are reflectorized on both sides,
- 21 and requiring stop signs or warning lights to
- 22 replace yield signs where visibility is limited.
- 23 • Legislation to require railroads to use
- 24 reflectors or reflectorized paint or tape on
- 25 the sides of rail cars to improve visibility. In
- 26 addition, we support the use of strobe and
- 27 ditch lights on railroad engines and the last
- 28 car.
- 29 • Public notice and hearing process for
- 30 Michigan highway projects should be used
- 31 when changes in Michigan railroads are

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

50 **Abandoned Railroads**

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

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

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

73 We support allowing horses on converted
74 railroad trails. ♦

#98 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

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

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

Slow Moving Vehicle Signs

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

Therefore, we support:

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

Visibility and Warning Signals

To improve safety and visibility on roadways, we support:

- MFB working in cooperation with the County Road Association to establish a process for use of warning signs related to agriculture

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

99 **General Public Safety on Roadways**

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

- 101 • Pedestrians choosing to walk in the roadway
102 should wear high visibility clothing and follow
103 traffic rules.
- 104 • Further education regarding bicycle safety and
105 rules on public roads. Additionally, traffic laws
106 should be enforced by local authorities for

- 107 bicyclists at the same level as they are for
108 passenger vehicles.
- 109 • Bicyclists being required to ride in single file
110 on highways, or paved shoulders when
111 available, instead of the vehicle traffic lane.
 - 112 • Revisions to the Michigan Vehicle Code to
113 include visibility and safety standards for the
114 operation of bicycles on public roads during
115 daylight hours, as well as sunset to sunrise.
 - 116 • Front and rear lights and high visibility clothing
117 should be required.
 - 118 • All persons over 75 years of age should have
119 to renew their driver's license in person at a
120 Secretary of State office. The only test that
121 would be needed is a vision test. This test
122 would be optional and at the discretion of the
123 Secretary of State staff. ♦

Recommendation on Michigan Farm Bureau Policy

#101 MEMBERSHIP AND FARM BUREAU PROGRAMS

- 1 Membership is the lifeblood of our organization.
2 Michigan Farm Bureau encourages member engagement
3 in membership, Community Action Groups, Promotion &
4 Education, Young Farmer, High School and Collegiate
5 programs through county Farm Bureaus.
6 We support:
- 7 • Engaging, growing and maintaining membership,
 - 8 • Grassroots local policy development,
 - 9 • Educating youth, farmers, educators, consumers
10 and public officials about agriculture and its
11 importance to our economy,
 - 12 • Leadership programs for personal and
13 professional development, ~~and~~
 - 14 • Developing young farmers for the future of our
15 industry-, and
 - 16 • A diverse membership to promote and grow our
17 agricultural community.
- 18 These programs help our members successfully be the
19 voice for agriculture. ♦

Reaffirmation of Michigan Farm Bureau Policies

#100 LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

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

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

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

#102 POLITICAL ACTION PROGRAM

1 We support programs and activities such as:
2

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

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

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

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