

2023 Proposed Resolutions Submitted by the Policy Development Committee to the Michigan Farm Bureau Annual Meeting Delegates

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

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

Policy Discussion Schedule (Yellow Pages)

Policy # Page #
Wednesday, November 29 - Delegate Session 8:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

State	
8	Cannabis Production Scheduled-1
58	Ag Security Scheduled-3
84	Nonpoint Source Pollution and Watershed Management..... Scheduled-4
New.....	Craft Beverage Industry Scheduled-8

Wednesday, November 29 - Delegate Session 2:30 – 5:30 p.m.

State	
43	Michigan State University Scheduled-8
62	Elections..... Scheduled-12
New	Food Insecurity..... Scheduled-15

Thursday, November 30 - Delegate Session 8:00 – 11:00 a.m.

State	
46	State Energy Policy Scheduled-16
77	Farmland Protection Scheduled-18
81	Land Use..... Scheduled-20

AFBF Policy Recommendations

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135	Agricultural Workforce	AFBF-4
137	Immigration	AFBF-12
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165	Unmanned Aircraft Systems.....	AFBF-19
225	Risk Management/Crop Insurance	AFBF-20
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301	Animal Care	AFBF-39
315	Sheep and Goats, Wool and Mohair.....	AFBF-41
419	Fiscal Policy	AFBF-42
420	Foreign Investment.....	AFBF-43
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700	Guest Worker Task Force	AFBF-48

State Policy Recommendations

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9	Commission System of Government	S-15
10	Compliance and Resources for Farm Business Management	S-16
11	Cranberry Industry.....	S-16
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13	Direct Farm Marketing and Agritourism	S-18
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19	Fruits and Vegetables.....	S-29
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24	Maple Sugar Production.....	S-31
25	Marketing and Bargaining Legislation.....	S-31
26	Michigan Alliance for Animal Agriculture.....	S-32
27	Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.....	S-32
28	Michigan Meat Processing Industry	S-36
29	Nursery, Floriculture, Sod and Greenhouse Industry	S-37

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(White Pages)

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31	Plant Pests and Diseases.....	S-39
32	Right to Farm	S-40
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36	TB – Mycobacterium Bovis Tuberculosis	S-45
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38	USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service – Great Lakes Field Office	S-50
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Michigan Farm Bureau Policy Reaffirmations

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103..... Membership and Farm Bureau Programs..... MFB-2

Policy Discussion Schedule

STATE

#8 CANNABIS PRODUCTION

1 Michigan Farm Bureau shall appoint an ad hoc
2 cannabis task force to develop policy
3 recommendations and potential action for
4 consideration by MFB leadership and members. The
5 task force should consider both regular
6 Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and non-THC cannabis
7 production policies. Task force members should
8 include but not be limited to active MFB members,
9 local officials, those involved in cannabis production
10 and landowners who have rented their land for
11 cannabis production.

12 In alignment with the voter passed initiatives, the
13 Michigan Medical Marihuana Act of 2008
14 and the Michigan Regulation and Taxation of
15 Marihuana Act of 2018 (MRTMA), related to
16 cannabis production and use, we support:

- 17 • Funding for continued and expanded research on
18 the health benefits and effects of cannabis use.
- 19 • Local municipalities having the ability to allow or
20 not allow cannabis production and sale in their
21 communities as prescribed in section 6 of
22 MRTMA.
- 23 • The development of setbacks by local
24 municipalities, with input from the Cannabis
25 Regulatory Agency, for new cannabis production
26 operations from non-owned residences to
27 minimize negative interactions between the
28 growing/processing industries from the local
29 residents.
- 30 • The Cannabis Regulatory Agency developing
31 model local ordinances for the cannabis industry.
- 32 • Best practices being developed to provide
33 guidance to the cannabis industry.
- 34 • Continued tracking of the production and
35 distribution of cannabis to ensure the integrity of
36 the industry.
- 37 • Farm Bureau Insurance exploring opportunities to
38 provide insurance products to the cannabis
39 industry.
- 40 • Cannabis growing facilities having an agricultural
41 property tax classification.
- 42 • Cannabis being recognized as an agricultural
43 commodity.
- 44 • The development of accurate testing to determine
45 impairment levels from cannabis use.

46 **Industrial Hemp**

47 We appreciate efforts by the State of Michigan to
48 facilitate the permitting of industrial hemp for
49 production and processing.

50 We support:

- 51 • Changes to the 2018 Farm Bill that allow for
52 industrial hemp with up to 1%
53 Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) to be legal.
- 54 • Changes to federal laws that allow for the
55 housing, transportation and marketing of legally
56 derived industrial hemp products for further
57 processing, regardless of the THC level, if the
58 product for final sale meets legal THC limits.
- 59 • Establishing a Michigan Department of
60 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)
61 Industrial Hemp Advisory Committee to assist in
62 the regulatory development and oversight
63 process.
- 64 • Collaboration with the industry to develop a
65 professional hemp industry organization.
- 66 • Federal and state funding for required regulatory
67 oversight. We are willing to consider producer
68 and processor funding to help offset or assist with
69 regulatory oversight.
- 70 • MDARD submitting a hemp regulatory plan; the
71 plan should include the Department assuming
72 responsibility for THC sampling and plans to
73 mitigate cross pollination between grain/fiber
74 hemp and Cannabidiol (CBD) hemp or marijuana.
- 75 • Research on processing, production techniques,
76 prospective volumes, and market outlook.
- 77 • Collaboration amongst MDARD, Michigan State
78 University Extension and other stakeholders to
79 develop and disseminate educational materials
80 on growing, processing, transportation and
81 marketing of industrial hemp.
- 82 • Development and approval of alternative uses
83 and/or disposal methods for the destruction of a
84 “hot crop” other than Drug Enforcement Agency
85 disposal rules.
- 86 • The regulation of hemp/cannabis-derived
87 intoxicating cannabinoids/terpenes that are
88 artificially added to hemp products.

89 We urge the Food and Drug Administration to
90 issue guidance and clarity on the rules surrounding
91 the marketing of industrial hemp derived
92 products. ◆

STATE
#58 AG SECURITY

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

4 We support:

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

40 We oppose:

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

48 Practices, Good Agricultural Practices standards,
49 and ag/bio security standards.
50 ~~Foreign investment in Michigan assets is a concern,~~
51 ~~especially in terms of farmland ownership. Ownership of~~
52 ~~agricultural land by nonresident aliens, foreign~~
53 ~~businesses and foreign governments should be limited if~~
54 ~~not prohibited in Michigan. ♦~~

STATE

#84 NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION AND WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

1 Farmers, along with other rural and urban
2 residents, are concerned about nonpoint source
3 pollution of Michigan's surface and groundwater.
4 Protecting surface and groundwater from
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:

Fertilizer and Nutrient Management

- 34 • All fertilizer retailers becoming certified in the 4R
35 (Right fertilizer source, Right rate, Right time,
36 Right place) Nutrient Stewardship Program and/or
37 similar fertilizer management efforts.
- 38 • Michigan Farm Bureau coordinating with
39 neighboring states and Canada where a

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

65 **Conservation and Pollution Prevention Programs**

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

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

- 140 ▪ ~~Fair and uniform implementation and~~
- 141 ~~enforcement across Michigan by local health~~
- 142 ~~departments.~~
- 143 ▪ ~~General public education to increase the~~
- 144 ~~understanding of properly constructed and~~
- 145 ~~working septic systems.~~
- 146 ▪ ~~A standard for inspections and state~~
- 147 ~~certification of inspectors.~~
- 148 ▪ ~~Proactive government programs to replace~~
- 149 ~~failing or noncompliant septic systems.~~

150 **Water Quality and Watershed Management**

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

172 **We oppose:**

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

- 190 • A statewide septic code that requires mandatory
191 inspections of private septic systems. ◆

STATE NEW – CRAFT BEVERAGE INDUSTRY

1 Michigan’s craft beverage industry is a strong
2 economic contributor to the state of Michigan and
3 impacts many subsectors of our economy including
4 tourism, manufacturing, food, and agriculture. The
5 craft beverage industry also allows for more
6 diversification in agriculture through the growing of
7 specialty crops and grains that help to expand value
8 added niche markets. This industry supports many
9 Michigan produced commodities such as, wine
10 grapes, hops, small grains, sugar, forestry products,
11 vegetables, stone fruits, etc., which also has the
12 potential to serve as a large consumer for Michigan
13 grown commodities. The Michigan craft beverage
14 industry is an important partner in the future of
15 Michigan farming.

16 We support:

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

28 We oppose:

- 29 • The unfair taxation on craft beverage products,
30 especially those that limit the usage of certain
31 fruits and other commodities.
32 • Townships or local units of government enacting
33 regulations affecting the licensure and overall
34 operations of the craft beverage industry that are
35 more stringent than the existing state and federal
36 regulations. ◆

STATE #43 MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

1 In 1855, the Michigan Legislature passed Act 130
2 which provided for the establishment of the
3 Agricultural College of the State of Michigan.
4 Michigan Agricultural College was the first college in
5 the United States to offer agriculture courses for

6 credit. Today, Michigan State University (MSU) is
7 recognized as a leader in higher learning and
8 agricultural research, extension and youth
9 development. To maintain this status, we support the
10 following:

- 11 • Expanded utilization of current farmland assets on
12 campus at MSU with the goal of no net loss of
13 farmland/farm and agriculture education facilities.
- 14 • State funding for MSU placing it in a comparable
15 academic and financial status with other
16 distinguished land grant research universities.
- 17 • MSU to publish a strategic plan for the future of the
18 College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR)
19 that meets the needs of students and farmers in
20 Michigan.
- 21 • The CANR and the College of Veterinary
22 Medicine (CVM) have historically provided a
23 strong foundation for educating generations of
24 individuals involved in agriculture in Michigan,
25 the nation and worldwide. We continue to
26 support these colleges and urge them to work
27 closely with stakeholders, including producers, to
28 address the research, resource, and information
29 needs of the agriculture industry, as well as the
30 curriculum focus of agricultural job providers.
- 31 • Encourage a higher rate of CVM graduates to
32 address the shortage of large animal
33 veterinarians practicing in Michigan.
- 34 • MSU forming partnerships with affected farmers
35 and state agencies to research PFAS soil
36 contamination and how it can be safely used and
37 mitigated for continued agricultural use.
- 38 • The agriscience education program, including a
39 master's degree program, and a renewed effort to
40 increase the number of graduates who are
41 accredited to teach agricultural education in
42 Michigan.
- 43 • Re-establishing the Agriculture and Natural
44 Resources Communications Program.
- 45 • Programs and policies encouraging increased
46 enrollment of students in agricultural degree
47 programs.
- 48 • Increased incorporation of agricultural literacy into
49 programs preparing elementary and secondary
50 teachers in other degree areas.
- 51 • Michigan Farm Bureau working with MSU to explore
52 the development of an Agriculture 101 course for all
53 students.
- 54 • In recognition of the challenges of managing farm
55 stress, MSU should consider exploring continuing

- 56 education in farm stress and rural mental health for
57 professionals working in mental health and public
58 service.
- 59 • Students' ability to apply directly to the CANR and
60 CVM, not the University as a whole.
 - 61 • CANR and CVM expanding their recruitment efforts
62 within the state, including efforts to work through
63 existing organizations to promote educational and
64 career opportunities, and encouraging students to
65 apply in the spring of their junior year of high
66 school to CANR, and to CVM for veterinary
67 nursing.
 - 68 • Reestablishing the MSU College of Veterinary
69 Medicine stakeholder advisory committee.
 - 70 • Reestablishing/filling the MSU equine extension
71 position in CVM and CANR.
 - 72 • CANR and CVM making a concerted and focused
73 effort recruiting students from FFA chapters, 4-H
74 programs and agricultural businesses in Michigan.
 - 75 • The two-year agricultural technology program which
76 provides a valuable service to Michigan agriculture
77 and should be recognized as a highlight of the
78 CANR.
 - 79 • Improvements to the MSU Institute of Agriculture
80 Technology program to better serve the needs of
81 students, employers, businesses, industry and
82 consumers.
 - 83 • Institute of Agriculture Technology credits being
84 allowed to fully transfer into four-year programs at
85 MSU.
 - 86 • Continued expansion of partnerships with
87 community colleges and other four-year
88 institutions throughout the state to increase
89 development of these career tracks offered by
90 the CANR.
 - 91 • A more realistic financial performance
92 requirement from the university administration for
93 the farms based upon the realities of the real-
94 world farming business while working in the
95 university setting.

96 **Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) and**
97 **AgBioResearch (ABR)**

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

102 We support:

- 103 • Increasing state and federal funding for MSUE and
104 ABR, to maintain historical high standards of
105 agricultural research and outreach programs.

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

148 **University and Industry Collaboration**

149 To strengthen relationships between MSU and Farm
150 Bureau, we encourage:

- 151 • Partnering with county Farm Bureaus to
152 promote MSU CANR and CVM to prospective
153 students.
- 154 • Targeted recruitment toward the agriculture
155 community, including but not limited to 4-H and

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

STATE #62 ELECTIONS

- 1 We believe Michigan Farm Bureau should
- 2 encourage all members to register to vote. We also
- 3 believe MFB should continue efforts to provide
- 4 education and information on elections and candidates.
- 5 Campaign reform is overdue and should be
- 6 established at all levels of government and address all
- 7 elements of campaigning.

8 We support:

- 9 • Election projections on Election Day not be
10 released to the public until all polls are closed
11 in the continental United States.
- 12 • The Michigan Constitution be amended to
13 increase the percentage of voter signatures
14 required to initiate a recall election to 35 percent.
- 15 • Requiring a 2/3 vote of the people for passage of the
16 recurring ballot question to hold a Constitutional
17 Convention.
- 18 • Recall petitions must contain proven misfeasance or
19 malfeasance before the petition is approved.
- 20 • Requiring current state legislators to wait at least
21 one 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
25 end of their current term or resign from their
26 currently held elected position.
- 27 • The current primary election process for statewide
28 offices.
- 29 • Nominating Secretary of State and Attorney
30 General candidates on the primary election ballot
31 instead of state party conventions.
- 32 • ~~Apol Standards for the purpose of redistricting.~~
- 33 • ~~Electing the three university boards – Michigan~~
34 ~~State University, University of Michigan, and~~
35 ~~Wayne State University – by districts, not~~
36 ~~statewide.~~
- 37 • Changes to the Michigan Constitution that allow for
38 gubernatorial appointment, with advice and
39 consent from the Senate for the Michigan State
40 University board of trustees, Wayne State
41 University board of governors, and University of
42 Michigan board of regents.
- 43 • Michigan continuing to honor the Electoral
44 College as designated in the U.S. Constitution.
- 45 • A simplified process to opt out of robocalls.
- 46 • Farm Bureau members to become precinct
47 delegates, and MFB to conduct educational
48 training on becoming a precinct delegate.
- 49 • The consolidation of the May and August
50 elections into a single election in June.

51 **Ballot Reform**

52 We encourage MFB members to be
53 knowledgeable about ballot proposals.

54 We support the following ballot process reforms:

- 55 • Clear, concise and simple language be used on
56 all ballot issues.
- 57 • Amend the State Constitution to require petitions

58 for initiatives or referendums would have to be
59 signed by a percentage of individuals who voted
60 in the gubernatorial race in the last preceding
61 general election representing a large geographic
62 area of the state, for example, at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the
63 Michigan House districts.

- 64 • Making it unlawful to have paid circulators gathering
65 signatures for ballot proposals or recalls.
- 66 • Limiting influences from outside our state borders on
67 Michigan's ballot process.
- 68 • Township governments being allowed to elect
69 local offices on a nonpartisan ballot.
- 70 • Easier ballot access for third party candidates.
- 71 • Reviewing the ballot initiative process that special
72 interest groups use to circumvent the legislative
73 process and force their ideals on the public and
74 agricultural production.

75 **Term Limits**

76 We support:

- 77 • Changing the county commissioners to
78 staggered terms of office.
- 79 • With the voter approval of new term limits, we will
80 continue to assess their effectiveness.

81 **Special Elections**

82 Special elections accrue high costs for local taxpayers.

83 Therefore, we support:

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

91 We oppose:

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

100 **Election Fraud**

101 We support:

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

- 108 We oppose:
109 • Election and voter fraud. ♦

STATE
NEW – FOOD INSECURITY

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

5 We support:

- 6 • Michigan Farm Bureau providing information that is
7 farmer facing on how farms can connect with
8 existing programs for those who are in need as well
9 as the benefits of donation, which may include tax
10 credits or other financial incentives.
- 11 • Food assistance programs such as, but not limited
12 to, Michigan Agricultural Surplus System (MASS)
13 and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
14 (SNAP) and encourage these market opportunities.
- 15 • Food assistance programs in the farm bill and
16 partner with like-minded Michigan organizations that
17 receive nutrition title funding.
- 18 • Changes to the farm bill and USDA programs that
19 would increase farm gate value through federal food
20 assistance or government purchase programs.
- 21 • More focus being placed on the food delivery system
22 to connect farmers with rural families that are food
23 insecure. Consideration should also be given to the
24 time of day and locations for distribution.
- 25 • More research on preferred food packaging, size,
26 and quantity to best serve families utilizing food
27 assistance programs.
- 28 • Increasing access to the Hunters Against Hunger
29 program that allows for free processing of venison
30 that is donated to food banks including an increase
31 in processing locations. Michigan Department of
32 Natural Resources should promote the program and
33 available processing locations.
- 34 • The donation of protein sources (venison, beef, etc.)
35 that have not been processed through a USDA
36 processing facility but that have been processed
37 responsibly through a state inspected processor.
- 38 • County Farm Bureaus coordinating with charitable
39 food networks regarding needs that they have
40 locally, such as cold storage.
- 41 • Farm Bureau promoting opportunities to members
42 that sell at farm markets on how they can utilize
43 produce prescriptions and connected Medicaid
44 programs to solve symptoms of food insecurity. ♦

STATE

#46 STATE ENERGY POLICY

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

- 7 • Programs to increase the utilization of energy
8 sources to minimize adverse environmental
9 impacts.
- 10 • Incentives for additional refineries.
- 11 • Upgrading, expanding and protecting our current
12 electrical generating systems and grid.
- 13 • Development, expansion, promotion and
14 incentives for affordable access to natural gas
15 for farms, homes, and businesses.
- 16 • The development of a state energy policy which
17 gives high priority to agricultural enterprises, such
18 as production, processing and storage facilities,
19 allowing them the same power quality and timely
20 access as other commercial industries,
21 regardless of utility territory.
- 22 • Standards for utility companies to resolve
23 power quality issues such as electrical
24 pollution on-farm, and urge all parties to
25 maintain their equipment and utility right-of-
26 way to decrease the possibility of neutral-to-
27 ground electrical pollution.
- 28 • Net-metering legislation or regulation enabling
29 producers to sell excess power generated on
30 farms back to utilities at an equitable rate.
- 31 • Incentives for renewable energy production for sale
32 or use ~~on farms~~ for private applications. Examples
33 include co-generation, silvicultural material,
34 methane digestion, wind, hydro and solar power.
- 35 • Increasing incentives to broaden the use of
36 biomass blended fuels.
- 37 • Education and policy programs to promote
38 sound energy conservation.
- 39 • Options expanding domestic exploration;
40 incentives to accelerate expansion of liquid
41 natural gas facilities; implementation of
42 technology to utilize domestic coal reserves; and
43 the development of fuel cell technology.
- 44 • Establishment of an agricultural rate classification
45 for electrical service.
- 46 • Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC)
47 allowance for seasonal inactivity (e.g.,
48 irrigation/grain drying) to eliminate the occurrence

- 49 of non-use monthly charges.
- 50 • Voluntary utilization of smart meters.
 - 51 • All wind generator towers being assessed using
 - 52 multiplier tables established by the MPSC
 - 53 through the process of public hearings and
 - 54 sworn testimony.
 - 55 • A statewide study of transmission connectivity
 - 56 needs including, but not limited to, transmission
 - 57 connections between the two peninsulas.
 - 58 • MFB working with county Farm Bureaus to study
 - 59 electrical rate disparities across the state. The
 - 60 study should consider the causes and potential
 - 61 policy recommendations promoting affordability in
 - 62 all regions of the state.
 - 63 • The continued operation and upgrades of
 - 64 pipelines such as Line 5 with strict safety
 - 65 precautions to protect land and water resources.
 - 66 • As a part of the permitting process for all new
 - 67 energy projects, requiring decommissioning
 - 68 plans including posting an adequate
 - 69 performance bond or funds before final
 - 70 approval.
 - 71 • All permanent easements owned by utilities, not
 - 72 preserved for future use, should be reverted or
 - 73 offered for sale, to the underlying owner at no
 - 74 more than fair market value.
 - 75 • Including agricultural representation on the
 - 76 MPSC.
 - 77 • MPSC being responsible for determining capacity needs
 - 78 and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great
 - 79 Lakes, and Energy being responsible for only
 - 80 environmental permitting.
 - 81 • Government mandates for electric car production and
 - 82 usage being matched by concurrent approval for the
 - 83 construction and/or upgrades for reliable electric
 - 84 generation facilities to deliver the power needed.
 - 85 • The creation of a charging network for electric vehicles
 - 86 in rural communities.
 - 87 • Agriculture having consistent, reliable, and affordable
 - 88 access to all forms of energy.
 - 89 • Incentivizing the production and use of renewable
 - 90 energy on non-agricultural use areas such as brownfield,
 - 91 public property, Michigan Department of Transportation
 - 92 rights-of-ways and other marginal lands, as well as
 - 93 industrial, residential and agricultural buildings, to reduce
 - 94 easements across farms for renewable energy projects
 - 95 and to protect prime farmland.
 - 96 • Solar developers disclosing chemical and electronic
 - 97 components of solar panels and equipment to the
 - 98 landowner.

- 99 • Commercial solar operations notifying land owners and
100 disclosing chemicals used for weed and pest control on
101 leased acres.

102 We oppose:

- 103 • Utility companies inflating land rental rates on
104 their property to well above fair market value of
105 contiguous property.
106 • Any attempts to restrict or ban the use or
107 production of natural gas or LP gas propane. ◆

STATE

#77 FARMLAND PROTECTION

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

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

A Strategic Approach

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

17 We support:

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

Funding Farmland Protection

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

36 We support:

PA 116

- 38 • The Farmland and Open Space Preservation

- 39 Program (commonly known as PA 116) as an
40 effective voluntary method of protecting farmland
41 while giving farmers needed tax relief.
- 42 • Refraining from future changes to existing
43 contracts that risk eroding the integrity of the
44 program.
 - 45 • Local units of government zoning land under PA
46 116 contracts as agriculture and identifying it as
47 agriculture in their master plan.
 - 48 • All PA 116 tax credit recapture revenue being
49 deposited into the Michigan Department of
50 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)
51 Agricultural Preservation Fund.
 - 52 • Continued and aggressive use of PA 116 by
53 creating additional incentives to maintain and
54 increase participation.
 - 55 • Additional funding and staffing of MDARD and the
56 Michigan Department of Treasury to administer
57 PA 116 and process refunds in a timely manner.
 - 58 • MDARD and the Michigan Department of
59 Treasury developing better communication to
60 resolve issues with PA 116 tax returns.
 - 61 • Requiring the State to pay penalties for late
62 issuance of PA 116 refunds to landowners.
 - 63 • Protection and exemption from special
64 assessments excluding agricultural drainage.
 - 65 • Land currently enrolled in the PA 116 program not
66 being eligible for commercial solar project
67 development.

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 issues,
72 conversion fees, property transfer fees, the lease
73 of mineral rights from state-owned land, and
74 general appropriations.
- 75 • Clarification of the “conflict of interest” policy for
76 grants, including language such as “If an applicant
77 has a conflict of interest, they shall abstain from
78 participating if and when their application comes
79 before the public body upon which they serve.”
- 80 • The landowner option of spreading the
81 Development Rights payments over a period of
82 years.

83 ***Agricultural Security Areas***

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

87 ***Urban Revitalization***

- 88 • State programs incentivizing the redevelopment of

- 89 brownfield properties in Michigan in an effort to
90 stop the loss of farmland.
- 91 • The improvement of cities, greater utilization of
92 current infrastructure, and redevelopment of
93 existing brownfields to reduce pressure to develop
94 farmland.
- 95 ***Transfer of Development Rights***
- 96 • Transfer of development rights to facilitate the
97 voluntary preservation of farmland where needed
98 while allowing land development in appropriate
99 areas without using public funds. ♦

STATE #81 LAND USE

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

- 37 • Encouraging local communities to utilize existing
38 zoning tools when appropriate to help protect
39 farmland and farm operations by including cluster
40 housing, buffer areas, fencing, planted tree
41 setbacks, and site density zoning.
- 42 • Acknowledgement of the diversity and uniqueness of
43 each community in our state. We believe that land
44 use decisions are best made by local communities
45 including planning and zoning decisions for energy
46 siting and mega site development. We oppose
47 preemption of local zoning for these purposes.
- 48 • ~~Encouraging farmers and county Farm Bureaus to~~
49 ~~work with local governments to establish zoning~~
50 ~~standards for commercial solar operations to also~~
51 ~~produce agricultural goods.~~
- 52 • The sale of state and federally owned land suitable
53 for residential or industrial use to preserve farmland
54 and increase local revenue. This development
55 should only be considered on vacant sites with
56 existing or nearby utilities fitting the local land use
57 plan.
- 58 • Local governments considering alternatives to
59 minimize adverse impacts to farms within one mile of
60 where land is divided.
- 61 • Encouraging local units of government to utilize
62 brownfield redevelopment authorities.
- 63 • Amending the Land Division Act to:
 - 64 ▪ Change the platting process to reduce cost, time
65 and bureaucracy.
 - 66 ▪ Create density in communities by revisiting the
67 10-year redivision requirement.
 - 68 ▪ Allow local units of government to utilize the
69 entire Zoning Enabling Act to locally govern the
70 Land Division Act.
 - 71 ▪ Require site condominiums, manufactured
72 housing developments and mobile home parks to
73 comply with land division and/or the platting
74 process in the Land Division Act.
- 75 • When agricultural land is within a governmental unit,
76 a representative of production agriculture being
77 appointed to the planning commissions and zoning
78 boards.
- 79 • Members becoming actively involved in land use
80 planning and zoning.
- 81 • Individuals appointed to councils, commissions and
82 boards created by government, state legislators, and
83 MDARD to represent agricultural interests being, or
84 having been, directly involved in the agriculture
85 industry.

- 86 • Legislation being enacted to prevent farmland from
87 being annexed to a municipality without a vote of the
88 people in the affected area. Upon approval of the
89 people in the affected area, an annexation proposal
90 should then be approved by a vote of the residents
91 of the appropriate units of government.
- 92 • Requiring consent of landowners for annexation
93 proposals. Changing the use of property must
94 consider and protect the rights of private property
95 owners.
- 96 • Property enrolled in farmland preservation programs
97 having concurrent approval for annexation or public
98 use by the contracted parties, including land owners.
- 99 • The development and uniformity of Geographic
100 Information Systems and we encourage use by local
101 units of government in land use planning.
- 102 • Michigan Farm Bureau assisting county Farm
103 Bureaus with model zoning ordinances pertaining to
104 agriculture.
- 105 • The development of entry-level or moderate-income
106 housing to attract and maintain an agriculture
107 workforce in rural and small communities.
- 108 • ~~Legislation and zoning to enable energy production~~
109 ~~on farms, including the sale or use of the generated~~
110 ~~electricity. Specific zoning for the production of~~
111 ~~alternative energy should use sound science and~~
112 ~~adopt state siting guidelines.~~
- 113 • ~~Legislation pre-empting local height restrictions.~~
- 114 • The Michigan Department of Natural Resources
115 (MDNR) continuing and expanding the bidding,
116 renting, and/or sale of state land for agricultural use.
- 117 In areas where trails run through production
118 agriculture and other private lands, the authority
119 responsible for the trail should build and maintain
120 fences to keep trail users on the trail and install gates
121 so that property owners have access to both sides of
122 their property if the trail divides the property. All users of
123 the trails shall stop or yield at all
124 crossings, regardless of whether public or private.
- 125 In addition to required bonding, we believe that state
126 and federal funding for industrial clean-up should be
127 consistent in rural areas for any private and/or publicly
128 funded megasite development that needs to be
129 decommissioned.
- 130 We oppose:
- 131 • Rezoning agricultural zones if the use has not
132 changed and the landowners have not requested the
133 zoning change.
- 134 • Limitations being placed on state lands for
135 recreational purposes unless there is sound

- 136 scientific justification or funding restrictions. If
137 limitations are proposed, then justification should be
138 in writing and public hearings conducted. When the
139 MDNR proposes public land use changes, it is
140 imperative that those impacted are involved in the
141 decision-making process.
- 142 • Restrictions on leases of state-owned agricultural
143 land exceeding Generally Accepted Agricultural and
144 Management Practices.
 - 145 • Using state and federal funds to support the
146 development of farmland for industrial and/or non-
147 agricultural use.
 - 148 • Any state efforts to pre-empt local zoning restrictions
149 regarding sand and gravel mining. ◆

Recommendations on AFBF Policies

#125 HIGHWAYS

(amendments at lines 1.62 and 2.21)

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. The U.S. Department of Transportation amending its definition of "rural" from "an area that is outside an urbanized area with a population of less than 200,000" to "an area that is outside an urbanized area with a population of less than 100,000";
 - 1.12. 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;
 - 1.13. Efforts to bring about greater uniformity and reciprocity among states on truck regulations;
 - 1.14. All 48 contiguous states having a reciprocal agreement regarding their farm plate registrations;
 - 1.15. Federal legislation allowing vehicles with farm plate registrations to travel throughout the 48 contiguous states with no distance limitations;
 - 1.16. 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;
 - 1.17. 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;

- 1.18. A comprehensive highway safety program to reduce traffic fatalities, injuries and the destruction of property;
- 1.19. The uniform interpretation and application of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations by enforcement agencies;
- 1.20. 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;
- 1.21. Flexibility in duty time commercial drivers can operate;
- 1.22. The relaxation of environmental impact regulations affecting the construction of federal, state and county roads and bridges;
- 1.23. 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;
- 1.24. Streamlining the process for permitting, funding, construction of federal aid transportation projects;
- 1.25. All states adopting the EZ Pass program;
- 1.26. 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);
- 1.27. Exempting farmers and custom agriculture services from requirements to obtain commercial driver's license (CDL) when transporting agricultural products including forestry products, production inputs, and agriculture equipment between farms and markets;
- 1.28. CDL exemptions for 4-H and FFA educators, contestants and other individuals hauling livestock and equine for recreational and educational purposes such as, but not limited to, rodeos, trail rides and other livestock and equine events;
- 1.29. Increasing GVW rating to 12,000 lbs. on trailers before a CDL is required;
- 1.30. Load securement regulations being based on the best available science to safely transport that particular load;
- 1.31. DOT subjecting all foreign truck drivers and their trucks to the same safety rules and regulations as domestic drivers and their trucks;
- 1.32. The exemption held by states for transportation of hazardous materials by farmers and ranchers;
- 1.33. 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;
- 1.34. Making federal regulations for obtaining a medical card uniform with those for obtaining a CDL;
 - 1.34.1. CDL drivers who are dependent on insulin maintaining their license with a physician's order;
 - 1.34.2. Coordination of the timetable for required renewal of medical certification of commercial drivers with restricted medical conditions for renewal of CDLs.
- 1.35. 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;
- 1.36. Flexibility for states to determine the distribution of federal highway monies among highway projects;
- 1.37. 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;
- 1.38. 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;
- 1.39. A farmer or farm worker not being required to be haz-mat certified to transport herbicides, insecticides, etc. between farms or return empty containers

- provided the farmer or farm worker has had training through a private pesticide applicator's license update or other educational program;
- 1.40. 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;
- 1.41. 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;
- 1.42. 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;
- 1.43. Exempting part-time employees (500 hours or less annually) from the requirement to obtain a CDL;
- 1.44. An exemption for agriculture from federal motor carrier safety regulations regarding:
 - 1.44.1. Displaying of DOT numbers;
 - 1.44.2. Displaying registered owners' or farm name;
 - 1.44.3. Limiting mileage;
 - 1.44.4. Requiring a medical card for the driver;
 - 1.44.5. Maintaining hours of service; and
 - 1.44.6. Requiring bumpers on end dump farm vehicles;
- 1.45. Agricultural custom harvesters being exempt from having to obtain a Department of Transportation Form E (proof of insurance form);
- 1.46. 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;
- 1.47. Raising the federal commercial trucking weight threshold to be over 26,000 pounds;
- 1.48. Increasing the interstate road weight limits for properly equipped vehicles;
- 1.49. 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;
- 1.50. The transportation of raw timber on federal interstate highways;
- 1.51. Exempting production agriculture from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations;
- 1.52. Agricultural transportation being considered intrastate commerce when the following criteria are present:
 - 1.52.1. The vehicle is not-for-hire;
 - 1.52.2. Transportation is from field to market or to an on-farm storage facility with subsequent transport to market; and
 - 1.52.3. Transportation is provided by a producer or custom harvester;
- 1.53. The transportation of farm equipment on interstate highways if no safe or viable alternative route is available;
- 1.54. 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;
- 1.55. Seeking legislation to prevent written warnings from appearing on Compliance, Safety, and Accountability (CSA) reports;
- 1.56. The expansion of parking facilities for commercial vehicles due to e-log mandates;
- 1.57. Variances on axle limits for agriculture;
- 1.58. 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;
- 1.59. Allowing CDL drivers 18 and older to haul cargo across state lines;
- 1.60. The passage of the Safe Routes Act, 2020; and
- 1.61. Legislation that eases requirements and restrictions on CDL procurement, especially for seasonal agricultural employees.
- 1.62. The development of accurate testing to determine impairment levels from cannabis use.

2. We oppose:
 - 2.1. The enactment of state legislation or regulations that are more stringent than federal requirements governing hauling of non-food items in trucks used to transport food products;
 - 2.2. Toll road construction where federal funds and lands are involved;
 - 2.3. Converting divided highways into interstates if no safe and viable alternate route is available for farm equipment;
 - 2.4. Increasing highway fuel taxes for deficit reduction purposes;
 - 2.5. Action by Congress or the DOT to impose sanctions or to withhold user taxes or any other federal funds from any state in an attempt to force or coerce states to enact particular laws;
 - 2.6. Any national legislation to remove safe, older vehicles from highways as a means to reduce energy use;
 - 2.7. Implementation or enforcement of any regulation further limiting the driver's hours of operation or the hours a truck can be utilized on the nation's highways;
 - 2.8. The diversion of highways and utility lines from public land;
 - 2.9. The use of federal transportation money used for recreational non-motor vehicle infrastructure;
 - 2.10. Mandatory electronic on-board recording devices on commercial vehicles and vehicles transporting agricultural products which do not recognize or provide for breaks within the 14-hour daily service time;
 - 2.11. The mandatory use of digital log books for any commercial vehicle hauling livestock or agriculture products;
 - 2.12. Mandatory CDL for producers and their employees to transport fuel, chemicals, fertilizer and farm commodities;
 - 2.13. Lowering of federal weight and length limits;
 - 2.14. The added restrictions to recreational livestock hauling that require a CDL and electronic log device;
 - 2.15. The inclusion of agricultural producers in the Unified Carrier Registration program. We support restoring an agricultural exemption from the program;
 - 2.16. Requiring a driver possessing a current, valid CDL with a hazmat endorsement and a clean motor vehicle report having to reorder a Homeland Security report when moving to another state;
 - 2.17. The use of road tax monies to fund rails-to-trails initiatives while there is a backlog of maintenance needed on existing roads and bridges;
 - 2.18. Any federal mandate to install speed limiters on commercial vehicles;
 - 2.19. Creation of a federal vehicle mileage tax, which would tax motorists based on the number of miles driven;
 - 2.20. A federal DOT regulation requiring professional truck-driving school training for new commercial truck drivers. On-the-job training should be recognized as acceptable for truck-driving training; and
 - 2.21. ~~Any marijuana legalization for commercial motor vehicle license holders.~~ ♦

#135 AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE

(amendments at lines 16.15-16.20, 17.1, 18-18.18.8)

1. We support requiring that Department of Labor (DOL) employees notify farm owners/operators upon their arrival and prior to any inspection or questioning of employees.
2. We should work with agricultural employers in the various states and regions to:
 - 2.1. Improve farm labor-management relations; and
 - 2.2. Increase productivity of the agricultural workforce.
3. We uphold the right of farm workers to decline union membership based on their own convictions.
4. Each state should have the right to decide whether agricultural employment should be brought under the National Labor Relations Act and we favor legislation to provide such an option.
5. Where federal regulations require new or remodeled housing for migrant farm workers, low-interest financing should be made available. To encourage the construction of affordable farm worker housing, provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) should be

- modified so that only a reasonable percentage of such a housing project must be made accessible to the mobility impaired. The federal, state and county agencies which enforce employee housing laws should designate among themselves the one agency to be the lead and exclusive agency to enforce those laws in each county; preferably, that agency should be the most local one.
6. In a closely held corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, limited liability company, or any other business entity, members of the family/families should be exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSPA), unemployment compensation laws and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).
 7. When a farmer is engaged in the processing, handling, packing or storing of perishable products grown on his own farm and the perishable products of other farmers, the operation should be classified as "agriculture," provided that a minimum of 50 percent of the total output of such processing plant is grown on his own farm.
 8. We ask the DOL to change its interpretations so as to clarify that persons employed on farms year-round by the same employer are not considered to be seasonal employees under MSPA.
 9. We support maximum transparency in the investigation practices by the DOL, including but not limited to full disclosure of DOL policies, guidelines and operating procedures such as those found in their Field Operations Handbook:
 - 9.1. When DOL notifies a producer of alleged wage and hour violations the department must inform the producer;
 - 9.1.1. That DOL's requests are strictly voluntary;
 - 9.1.2. Of its legal authority in an accurate manner;
 - 9.1.3. Of the producer's rights; and
 - 9.1.4. With all information DOL relied on to determine the alleged violations.
 - 9.2. DOL may only cite the producer for violations that investigators have personally observed and can prove to the appropriate legal standard;
 - 9.3. Producers should not be cited for alleged violations based on an investigator's subjective belief or conjecture or based on DOL statistics;
 - 9.4. DOL should seek "hot goods" orders only when a producer has demonstrated repeated and willful violations along with a lack of cooperation. In these cases, the federal government must not contact the producer's customers unless the department has already secured the necessary court orders; and
 - 9.5. We call for the repeal of DOL's authority to seek and secure "hot goods" orders on perishable commodities.
 10. We recommend that, when a complaint has been registered with the Federal Wage and Hour Division, the investigators be required to list the complaint with the farmer along with the name of the persons registering the complaint; and that the investigation be limited to the area of the complaint.
 11. We call for repeal or major revision of the private right of action under Section 504 of the MSPA. However, we will continue to assist in the defense of the term "intentional" in that section to mean a conscious or deliberate act.
 12. We encourage agencies that perform agricultural employee housing inspections, including the DOL wage and hour division, to work with growers in providing safe housing, or camps, and to allow them to correct problem areas in a timely manner before imposing fines.
 13. We recommend that once agricultural employee housing is inspected and licensed by the appropriate state agency and then occupied, the DOL may not enter the dwellings without the employee's permission and proper notification to the owner of the farm.
 14. Fine structures should be published and available for public review:
 - 14.1. Rationale for specific fines or assessments should be immediately communicated to a producer along with the code section of the alleged violation and the reason for the issuance of the citation.
 15. Federal requirements for employers reporting newly hired employees should be changed to exclude reporting temporary and day-by-day employees.
 16. We support:

- 16.1. The standardization of the definition of agriculture and agricultural employment for all state/federal labor-related legislation to include the work activity described by the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS), code 11. The NAICS code reflects modern agriculture practices and is now used by the agricultural census and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health because the description more accurately reflects current agricultural organizational structures;
- 16.2. Retention of the present family farm exemption from the child labor provisions of the FLSA regardless of business structure where members of the family/families are owners, including a closely held corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, limited liability company or any other business entity;
- 16.3. Deleting the language "or causes to be used" from the vehicle safety obligations section of MSPA (Section 500.100a);
- 16.4. Enforcement of federal child labor laws designed to prevent underage children from working in all industries. We support existing FLSA provisions, which specify and provide opportunities for young people of the proper age to perform certain agriculture jobs;
- 16.5. The family farm exemption in MSPA and oppose any efforts to restrict its application;
- 16.6. Changes in the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) so posting of field entrances does not unduly alarm consumers about the use of crop protection products. We request significant research and data can be provided resolving serious flaws with the present regulation;
- 16.7. EPA withdrawing the WPS of November 2015 in favor of the previous WPS rule;
- 16.8. Changes to employee protections under the WPS should be based on current scientifically or medically substantiated data and reflect current pesticide labeling;
- 16.9. Eliminating from the WPS the existing provision granting "designated representatives" access to farm-specific pesticide data. Any access to such data by "designated representatives" should be restricted to matters related to the health, safety or exposure of the employee who authorized access and the "designated representative" should not be allowed to disclose the data to anyone other than the employee;
- 16.10. The freedom to use farm labor contractors in the recruitment and management of migrant seasonal and day haul agricultural employees. The labor contractor should be recognized as the sole employer of said workforce;
- 16.11. Allowing the use of housing that meets Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) standards for qualified seasonal and agricultural visa workers;
- 16.12. Increased funding to continue and expand the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Program;
- 16.13. Employers and employees being free to negotiate piece rate or any other performance- and/or seniority-based wage system as long as the worker and employer negotiate a performance and/or seniority-based wage, that wage shall include time spent during rest breaks, moving from job to job, clean up and any other nonproductive time; and
- 16.14. Improved programs for agricultural workers that assist in finding, hiring and retaining an adequate, legal and cost-competitive labor supply.
- 16.15. Elimination of the Adverse Effect Wage Rate, until then, we support seeking legislative proposals that would cap year-over-year growth.
- 16.16. [Relocated from Policy #137] The United States Department of Labor (DOL) resurveying the average labor wage for agricultural workers in order to more accurately reflect the local pay rates and ease the financial strain on agricultural producers due to an overinflated

Adverse Effect Wage Rate required by H-2A provisions;

- 16.17. Applying the Adverse Effect Wage Rate at the time of contract signing for the life of the contract;
- 16.18. 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;
- 16.19. An arbitration process to allow Adverse Effect Wage Rate challenges; and
- 16.20. 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.

17. We oppose:

- 17.1. Fees on the H-2A program that provide funding for programs unrelated to guest worker visas.
- 17.2. A national agricultural labor board;
- 17.3. The expansion of the Agricultural Hazardous Occupations Orders by the DOL;
- 17.4. Unauthorized entry into any facilities including, but not limited to, employee housing units, barns, accessory buildings, and fields by agents of the U.S. government;
- 17.5. Requiring employers to pay employee travel and related expenses from the employee's permanent residence to the employer's place of business, except as may be required under a temporary foreign worker program in which the farmer is voluntarily participating;
- 17.6. Any regulations requiring farmers to pay wages to farm employees during travel time from their residence to place of work; and
- 17.7. Any policy/federal mandate that requires the agricultural industry to pay more than what any other general industry is required to pay – the state or federal minimum wage. The existing minimum wages set a floor that works for every other industry in the country and that does not preclude any employer from paying higher wages, as most currently do. Agriculture should not be held to a higher standard than every other business in America.

18. **[Relocated from Policy #137] Agricultural Visa Program**

- 18.1 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;
- 18.2 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.
- 18.3 We support immigration reform including streamlining the H-2A and H-2B process, to prioritize making a national immigration policy that is farmer friendly providing a legal agricultural workforce that would benefit producers, farm workers and the American consumer
- 18.4 Regarding immigration reform legislation that adjusts the status of undocumented agricultural

- workers, we support that any farmer who made investments to hire their legal workforce through participation in federal guest worker programs shall be permitted to continue to participate in the federal guest worker programs without having to give a hiring preference to a newly legalized worker over any worker with a federal guestworker visa or seeking to obtain a federal guest worker visa unless the newly legalized worker has obtained a green card.
- 18.5 We support an agricultural worker program with requirements and fees that are not more stringent for one sector of agriculture than another.
- 18.6 We support amending the Migrant and Seasonal Worker Protection Act (MSPA) and the H-2A Act to require that court jurisdiction fall with the state and/or country where the alleged violation occurred.
- 18.7 We recommend that DOL work quickly and judiciously to provide guidance to state labor departments and settle disputes regarding the H-2A Program to make it very clear that the federal government has oversight and final determination in all areas of the H-2A program.
- 18.8 We support improved training for employers to understand and better use the H-2A program, and provide better information for new users to the program.
- 18.9 The DOL should provide appropriate oversight for state labor departments to ensure that H-2A applications are processed at the state level in a timely and impartial manner.
- 18.10 We recommend that resident aliens with work permits be allowed to work on as many different farms as needed each year, i.e., they should not be restricted to one farm or one employer, but some may be limited to the agricultural sector for a temporary period of time.
- 18.11 A state employment agency should be required to verify employment eligibility before making any referral to an employer.
- 18.12 We support changes to policy in order to reduce the H-2A waiting period because of lack of local labor interest and to eliminate the newspaper advertising requirement.
- 18.13 We support actions to limit abscondments of H-2A workers by requiring those who file a transfer petition to get the approval of the

current H-2A employer before the transfer petition can be approved. In the event a transfer petition(s) is secured without the current H-2A employer's approval, the transferring H-2A employer would be required to repay the transportation, border crossing and visa fees paid by the original petitioning H-2A employer.

- 18.14 We support that H-2A employers who lose their H-2A employees to transfer or abscondment have their H-2A visa(s) immediately returned so they can replace their H-2A workers.
- 18.15 We support modifying the definition of agricultural labor or services, pursuant to 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(H)(ii)(a), as defined as agricultural labor and applied in Sec. 3121(g) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 at U.S.C. 3121(g); and agriculture as defined and applied in Sec. 3(f) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (FLSA) at 29 U.S.C 203(f) and any other applicable rules/regulations that the definition of agriculture and agricultural labor or services include the transportation of raw, unprocessed crops from the field following harvest to the mill, processor, packing house, elevator or first point of sale.
- 18.16 We support modifications that define farm labor contractors who transport a farmer's crop from the field to the mill, processor, elevator, packing house or first point of sale as agriculture, agricultural labor and/or an agricultural service that is part of the crop harvest for farmers and meet the H-2A eligibility criteria to apply and petition for H-2A visa workers.
- 18.17 We support a worker program that:
- 18.17.1 Classifies H-2A workers who seasonally operate trucks during harvest as Agricultural Equipment Operators;
 - 18.17.2 Addresses agriculture's unique needs, which may change suddenly with weather, global market realities, contract enforceability or other variables beyond the grower's control;
 - 18.17.3 Is simplified and cost-competitive to make their employment more feasible for perishable crops;
 - 18.17.4 Provides workers, including commercial fishing and fish dock workers, with a

- visa that lasts at least three years and is renewable multiple times;
- 18.17.5 Offers an opportunity, and provides a waiver from inadmissibility, to interested agricultural workers who were unlawfully present and working in agriculture prior to introduction of legislation but are otherwise admissible under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA);
- 18.17.6 Allows the worker to maintain their current residency while obtaining a work visa without a requirement of returning to their country of origin;
- 18.17.7 Eliminates excessive or duplicative bureaucracy and unnecessary red tape;
- 18.17.8 Reduces domestic recruitment costs;
- 18.17.9 Allows U.S. farmers to hire qualified migratory and domestic workers;
- 18.17.10 Includes appropriate provisions for foreign commuter workers who return to a residence in their home country nightly or weekly;
- 18.17.11 Establishes an ombudsman to resolve disputes among immigration service, employers and workers;
- 18.17.12 Includes timely certification determination to ensure employers adequate time to bring workers to a job site;
- 18.17.13 Includes the broadest possible definition of agriculture;
- 18.17.14 Provides the option of a housing allowance, in lieu of housing;
- 18.17.15 Provides for an exemption from any contract employment guarantee in the case of a freeze or other emergency catastrophic event;
- 18.17.16 Is administered by USDA;
- 18.17.17 Allows cooperating farmers to make a joint application for workers. These workers would be allowed to move from one cooperating farm to another during the workers' contract period, without shared liability;
- 18.17.18 Includes data from current and previous H-2A employers in the H-2A prevailing practices survey;
- 18.17.19 Automatically increases the number of available visas (to avoid crop losses) if the visa limit is reached, should a future

- agricultural visa program cap the number of available visas;
- 18.17.20 Includes forestry;
- 18.17.21 Provides an online format to expedite the exchange of information between the producer and government agencies;
- 18.17.22 Includes work requirements for able-bodied adults on government assistance;
- 18.17.23 Allows for rehiring of past employees without having to refile and resubmit paperwork to four agencies;
- 18.17.24 Allows H-2A workers to get visas for multiple years without refiling them;
- 18.17.25 Streamlines the H-2A application process in order to make the availability of workers more accessible and timelier for agricultural labor needs;
- 18.17.26 A process for timely replacement of H-2A workers due to health reasons or loss of approved worker; and
- 18.17.27 Includes dairy parlor and animal care employees in the H-2A program.
- 18.18 We oppose:
 - 18.18.1 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;
 - 18.18.2 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;
 - 18.18.3 Requiring to pay such cost until at least half of the contract period is complete and unless the costs primarily benefit the employer;
 - 18.18.4 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;
 - 18.18.5 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;
 - 18.18.6 Applying any labor law that does not currently apply to H-2A visa workers;

- 18.18.7 A requirement that agricultural visa workers be required to purchase health insurance; and
- 18.18.8 Separate hourly wage rates for specific tasks in H-2A contracts. ◆

#137 Immigration

(amendments at lines 1.9.18-1.9.20, 1.9.22-1.9.23 and 2-2.18.9)

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.
- 1.4. We support enforcement of immigration laws to deter the employment of unauthorized workers.
- 1.5. 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.
- 1.6. 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.
- 1.7. 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.
- 1.8. Any federal mandate on employers to implement E-Verify must:
 - 1.8.1. Include an employment eligibility verification system which is simple, conclusive and timely;
 - 1.8.2. Provide an affirmative defense for employers acting in good faith;
 - 1.8.3. Allow for status adjustment of workers not authorized prior to implementation; and
 - 1.8.4. Be preceded by full implementation of a usable agricultural worker program.
- 1.9. We support:
 - 1.9.1. The reform of existing migrant labor laws to promote greater access to an agricultural workforce;
 - 1.9.2. Legislation at the federal level to exempt farmworkers from time-and-a half or double-time requirements;
 - 1.9.3. 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:
 - 1.9.3.1. Provides a waiver from inadmissibility;
 - 1.9.3.2. 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;
 - 1.9.3.3. Does not penalize the employer when a worker comes forward;
 - 1.9.3.4. Enables agricultural employers to retain their experienced workforce while transitioning into a new worker program;
 - 1.9.3.5. Deters future illegal immigration and otherwise improves homeland security; and
 - 1.9.3.6. Offers an incentive to workers who obtain permanent legal status through agriculture to stay in agriculture.

- 1.9.4. Replacement of work authorization documents with tamper-resistant, machine-readable documents that include biometric identifiers;
- 1.9.5. Legislation to strengthen the present immigration and naturalization laws of the United States and to especially address the following subjects:
 - 1.9.5.1. 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;
 - 1.9.5.2. Undocumented or unauthorized persons should not be eligible for any of our social welfare programs, including housing, fuel, education and health benefits;
 - 1.9.5.3. Any foreign national testing positive for a communicable disease should not be admitted into the United States; and
 - 1.9.5.4. Non-citizens convicted of a felony should be deported immediately after serving any prison time imposed on them.
- 1.9.6. 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;
- 1.9.7. Just compensation to owners for any damages done to property or business during DHS enforcement activities;
- 1.9.8. Preventing workers found to be undocumented or unauthorized persons from continuing to occupy grower's housing unless provided with immediate work authorization;
- 1.9.9. 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;
- 1.9.10. Repealing of the employer sanctions clause. Employers should not be held liable for determining the legal or illegal status of employees;
- 1.9.11. 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;
- 1.9.12. 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;
- 1.9.13. 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;
- 1.9.14. ICE being required to contact employers immediately following farm enforcement measures when employees are taken from businesses so that employers and families are informed;
- 1.9.15. The U.S. State Department increasing funding and personnel to handle the peak period for visa demand thus reducing worker delays;
- 1.9.16. 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;
- 1.9.17. Unaccompanied minors who enter the United States illegally should be treated under the same laws as adults entering the country illegally;
- 1.9.18. **[Relocated to Policy #135] ~~The United States Department of Labor (DOL) resurveying the average labor wage for~~**

~~agricultural workers in order to more accurately reflect the local pay rates and ease the financial strain on agricultural producers due to an overinflated Adverse Effect Wage Rate required by H-2A provisions;~~

- ~~1.9.19. Applying the Adverse Effect Wage Rate at the time of contract signing for the life of the contract;~~
 - ~~1.9.20. 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;~~
 - ~~1.9.21. The denial of federal funds to sanctuary cities;~~
 - ~~1.9.22. An arbitration process to allow Adverse Effect Wage Rate challenges; and~~
 - ~~1.9.23. 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.~~
- 1.10. We oppose:
- 1.10.1. Any efforts to repeal the open agricultural field search warrant provision of IRCA;
 - 1.10.2. The counting of undocumented or unauthorized persons in the U.S. Census relative to redistricting; and
 - 1.10.3. Sanctuary counties, cities and states.

2. [Relocated to Policy #135] *Agricultural Visa Program*

- ~~2.1. We support improvements to the H-2A program to make it more effective, affordable and broadened to provide visa workers for both seasonal and year-round agriculture without a visa cap;~~
- ~~2.2. We support establishing an agricultural visa that is portable (at will) or by contract and that also deals with ag sectors that need year-round workers.~~
- ~~2.3. We support immigration reform including streamlining the H-2A and H-2B process, to prioritize making a national immigration policy that is farmer friendly providing a legal agricultural workforce that would benefit producers, farm workers and the American consumer~~
- ~~2.4. Regarding immigration reform legislation that adjusts the status of undocumented agricultural workers, we support that any farmer who made investments to hire their legal workforce through participation in federal guest worker programs shall be permitted to continue to participate in the federal guest worker programs without having to give a hiring preference to a newly legalized worker over any worker with a federal~~

- ~~guestworker visa or seeking to obtain a federal guest worker visa unless the newly legalized worker has obtained a green card.~~
- ~~2.5. We support an agricultural worker program with requirements and fees that are not more stringent for one sector of agriculture than another.~~
 - ~~2.6. We support amending the Migrant and Seasonal Worker Protection Act (MSPA) and the H-2A Act to require that court jurisdiction fall with the state and/or country where the alleged violation occurred.~~
 - ~~2.7. We recommend that DOL work quickly and judiciously to provide guidance to state labor departments and settle disputes regarding the H-2A Program to make it very clear that the federal government has oversight and final determination in all areas of the H-2A program.~~
 - ~~2.8. We support improved training for employers to understand and better use the H-2A program, and provide better information for new users to the program.~~
 - ~~2.9. The DOL should provide appropriate oversight for state labor departments to ensure that H-2A applications are processed at the state level in a timely and impartial manner.~~
 - ~~2.10. We recommend that resident aliens with work permits be allowed to work on as many different farms as needed each year, i.e., they should not be restricted to one farm or one employer, but some may be limited to the agricultural sector for a temporary period of time.~~
 - ~~2.11. A state employment agency should be required to verify employment eligibility before making any referral to an employer.~~
 - ~~2.12. We support changes to policy in order to reduce the H-2A waiting period because of lack of local labor interest and to eliminate the newspaper advertising requirement.~~
 - ~~2.13. We support actions to limit abscondments of H-2A workers by requiring those who file a transfer petition to get the approval of the current H-2A employer before the transfer petition can be approved. In the event a transfer petition(s) is secured without the current H-2A employer's approval, the transferring H-2A employer would be required to repay the transportation, border crossing and visa fees paid by the original petitioning H-2A employer.~~
 - ~~2.14. We support that H-2A employers who lose their H-2A employees to transfer or abscondment~~

- have their H-2A visa(s) immediately returned so they can replace their H-2A workers.
- 2.15. We support modifying the definition of agricultural labor or services, pursuant to 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(H)(ii)(a), as defined as agricultural labor and applied in Sec. 3121(g) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 at U.S.C. 3121(g); and agriculture as defined and applied in Sec. 3(f) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (FLSA) at 29 U.S.C. 203(f) and any other applicable rules/regulations that the definition of agriculture and agricultural labor or services include the transportation of raw, unprocessed crops from the field following harvest to the mill, processor, packing house, elevator or first point of sale.
 - 2.16. We support modifications that define farm labor contractors who transport a farmer's crop from the field to the mill, processor, elevator, packing house or first point of sale as agriculture, agricultural labor and/or an agricultural service that is part of the crop harvest for farmers and meet the H-2A eligibility criteria to apply and petition for H-2A visa workers.
 - 2.17. We support a worker program that:
 - 2.17.1. Classifies H-2A workers who seasonally operate trucks during harvest as Agricultural Equipment Operators;
 - 2.17.2. Addresses agriculture's unique needs, which may change suddenly with weather, global market realities, contract enforceability or other variables beyond the grower's control;
 - 2.17.3. Is simplified and cost-competitive to make their employment more feasible for perishable crops;
 - 2.17.4. Provides workers, including commercial fishing and fish dock workers, with a visa that lasts at least three years and is renewable multiple times;
 - 2.17.5. Offers an opportunity, and provides a waiver from inadmissibility, to interested agricultural workers who were unlawfully present and working in agriculture prior to introduction of legislation but are otherwise admissible under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA);
 - 2.17.6. Allows the worker to maintain their current residency while obtaining a work visa without a requirement of returning to their country of origin;

- 2.17.7. ~~Eliminates excessive or duplicative bureaucracy and unnecessary red tape;~~
- 2.17.8. ~~Reduces domestic recruitment costs;~~
- 2.17.9. ~~Allows U.S. farmers to hire qualified migratory and domestic workers;~~
- 2.17.10. ~~Includes appropriate provisions for foreign commuter workers who return to a residence in their home country nightly or weekly;~~
- 2.17.11. ~~Establishes an ombudsman to resolve disputes among immigration service, employers and workers;~~
- 2.17.12. ~~Includes timely certification determination to ensure employers adequate time to bring workers to a job site;~~
- 2.17.13. ~~Includes the broadest possible definition of agriculture;~~
- 2.17.14. ~~Provides the option of a housing allowance, in lieu of housing;~~
- 2.17.15. ~~Provides for an exemption from any contract employment guarantee in the case of a freeze or other emergency catastrophic event;~~
- 2.17.16. ~~Is administered by USDA;~~
- 2.17.17. ~~Allows cooperating farmers to make a joint application for workers. These workers would be allowed to move from one cooperating farm to another during the workers' contract period, without shared liability;~~
- 2.17.18. ~~Includes data from current and previous H-2A employers in the H-2A prevailing practices survey;~~
- 2.17.19. ~~Automatically increases the number of available visas (to avoid crop losses) if the visa limit is reached, should a future agricultural visa program cap the number of available visas;~~
- 2.17.20. ~~Includes forestry;~~
- 2.17.21. ~~Provides an online format to expedite the exchange of information between the producer and government agencies;~~
- 2.17.22. ~~Includes work requirements for able-bodied adults on government assistance;~~
- 2.17.23. ~~Allows for rehiring of past employees without having to refile and resubmit paperwork to four agencies;~~
- 2.17.24. ~~Allows H-2A workers to get visas for multiple years without refiling them;~~
- 2.17.25. ~~Streamlines the H-2A application process in order to make the availability of~~

- ~~workers more accessible and timelier for agricultural labor needs;~~
- 2.17.26. ~~A process for timely replacement of H-2A workers due to health reasons or loss of approved worker; and~~
- 2.17.27. ~~Includes dairy parlor and animal care employees in the H-2A program.~~
- 2.18. ~~We oppose:~~
 - 2.18.1. ~~Requiring agricultural producers who participate in federal guest worker programs to pay wage rates higher than their state minimum wage or 10% above the federal minimum wage;~~
 - 2.18.2. ~~Requiring employers to pay local youth workers the same wages as an H-2A or visa worker under a new agricultural visa program for doing the same job;~~
 - 2.18.3. ~~Requiring housing or transportation, or the hiring of domestic workers after the contract period has begun; housing or transportation may be encouraged with tax credits;~~
 - 2.18.4. ~~Requiring to pay such cost until at least half of the contract period is complete and unless the costs primarily benefit the employer;~~
 - 2.18.5. ~~Limiting the number of temporary worker visas, or guaranteeing payment of any fraction of a worker's pay for work that has not been performed;~~
 - 2.18.6. ~~Expanding the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act to employers of agricultural temporary workers or otherwise providing those workers with a private right of action, whether expressed or implied, in state or federal court;~~
 - 2.18.7. ~~Applying any labor law that does not currently apply to H-2A visa workers;~~
 - 2.18.8. ~~A requirement that agricultural visa workers be required to purchase health insurance; and~~
 - 2.18.9. ~~Separate hourly wage rates for specific tasks in H-2A contracts. ♦~~

#158 NARCOTICS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE
(amendments at lines 2.3 and 3.3)

- 1. We encourage vigorous educational efforts to inform youth, parents and others concerning the harmful effects of substance abuse.
- 2. We support:
 - 2.1. Effective enforcement of present laws and enactment of new legislation to prevent the illegal production, importation,

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

**#165 UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS
(amendment at line 1.10)**

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

- 1.9. Minimized testing requirements for farm operators of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS/drones) when the UAS is used on a farm operated by the farmer.
- 1.10. The use of multiple UAS by a single operator at a single location for agricultural/forestry purposes.
2. We oppose a federal, state or local agency using UAS for the purpose of regulatory enforcement, litigation and as a sole source for natural resource inventories used in planning efforts. ♦

#225 RISK MANAGEMENT/CROP INSURANCE **(amendments at lines 1.3.6 and 1.3.24)**

1. ***Crop/Revenue Insurance***
 - 1.1. USDA should not change compliance policy pertaining to conservation plans without an open comment period.
 - 1.2. We urge USDA to consider the grazing management system used on the farm when determining eligibility for the Livestock Forage Program (LFP), Pasture, Rangeland, and Forage Program (PRF), and other USDA livestock programs.
 - 1.3. We support:
 - 1.3.1. The availability of commodity insurance designed for agricultural producers of all crops, aquaculture, livestock and poultry in the country;
 - 1.3.2. The development of a revenue protection program for contract poultry producers;
 - 1.3.3. Taking all necessary steps to include furrow-irrigated rice in the traditional crop insurance program;
 - 1.3.4. The development of new risk management programs to supplement or be an alternative to current crop and future livestock insurance programs;
 - 1.3.5. More equitable crop insurance costs across the country and counties. Insurance premiums should reflect the risk on the farm and not have wide premium differences across county lines;
 - 1.3.6. More equitable crop insurance indemnification payment rates, in correlation to premiums, across all crops.
 - 1.3.7. Annual reviews to ensure proper premium ratings that are actuarially sound by crop, county and state;
 - 1.3.8. Continuation of the federal government financial support, at a percent not less than current levels, for the program with the private sector continuing to serve as the primary deliverer of insurance;
 - 1.3.9. Continuation of everyone being eligible for the program, regardless of size of the operation or payments;
 - 1.3.10. Improved risk management education programs;
 - 1.3.11. Providing producers of all crops options for various insurance products that accurately reflect individual risk considerations regardless of end-market designation when making crop insurance purchasing decisions;
 - 1.3.12. The ability of an insurance provider to bring new technology and innovation to the crop insurance industry;
 - 1.3.13. Requiring clear delineation during the sales and billing processes to distinguish between federal crop insurance policies and private company add-on products;
 - 1.3.14. Development of crop revenue policies that provide coverage for all grain quality discounts, including unmarketable grain and grain damaged by acts of nature, for producers that follow good farming practices determined by the Risk Management Agency (RMA). Discount factors must be comparable to the level of discounts experienced by producers in the market;
 - 1.3.15. The notification of an option of a federal grade should be given on grain when it is sold or delivered;
 - 1.3.16. Loss calculations utilizing quality standards recognized in the marketplace;

- 1.3.17. Actual Production History (APH) not being affected when a crop is unable to be planted and prevented planting payments are accepted;
- 1.3.18. Animal depredation claims not counting against APH;
- 1.3.19. APH reflecting actual yield with no reduction for quality losses;
- 1.3.20. Alteration of crop insurance grain quality adjustments to reflect USDA grain inspection standards. When verifying crop quality loss adjustments, sampling and inspection conducted by state or federally licensed elevators grading to a "marketable" quality product should be accepted proof of loss;
- 1.3.21. Federal disaster programs aiding producers with forage loss and hay transportation;
- 1.3.22. Revising loss adjustment procedures for aflatoxin/vomitoxin by multiplying the Quality Adjustment Factor (QAF) by the crop insurance price instead of bushels delivered;
- 1.3.23. Altering the NAP crop insurance planting deadline to provide multiple planting deadlines for long season crops such as vegetables (i.e., tomatoes);
- 1.3.24. Updating planting dates and replanting dates to better reflect variety maturity, growing season length, Land Grant University or processor recommendations, geographic areas and weather conditions. We also support flexibility to allow the secretary of agriculture to adjust planting and harvest dates, with loss protection for changing those dates provided to private companies. All crop acreage reporting dates should be a minimum of 30 days after the actual RMA final planting date;
- 1.3.25. Payment reduction of 65% for haying and grazing a cover crop before October 1st on prevented planting acres;
- 1.3.26. Changes to RMA qualifications of a beginning farmer from five years to coincide with Farm Service Agency (FSA) qualification of 10 years;
- 1.3.27. Special provisions for seed crops requiring pollinator rows for seed production;
- 1.3.28. Removing mandatory harvest requirements from federal crop insurance claim provisions;
- 1.3.29. Planting and harvesting technologies being accepted for compliance for crop insurance unit designation;
- 1.3.30. Coordination of rules between the RMA and the FSA to allow for proper differentiation between irrigated and non-irrigated tracts within a farm;
- 1.3.31. Federal crop insurance recognizing FSA figures and maps;
- 1.3.32. Changes to RMA standards that allow more than one tract, in lieu of more than one FSA farm serial number, to qualify for Enterprise Units;
- 1.3.33. A crop insurance program that offers replant benefits that accurately reflect the actual cost of replanting the damaged crop every time and would be paid to the landowner and/or tenant in proportion to the planting cost incurred rather than crop share;
- 1.3.34. Simplifying application, reporting and claim procedures by promoting flexibility in the process and communication between agents, adjusters, FSA and others;
- 1.3.35. A program that requires clear and consistent interpretation and implementation of all federal crop insurance provisions, especially Prevented Planting provisions, including better clarification of the 20/20 rule;
- 1.3.36. Allowing acreage reporting revisions based on accurate FSA certification;
- 1.3.37. Timely adjustment and payment of claims;

- 1.3.38.RMA requiring approved insurance providers (AIP) to compensate a producer in the amount of 18% Annual Percentage Rate (APR), should the company not settle a claim within 60 days;
- 1.3.39.The APH staying with the land;
- 1.3.40.Requiring RMA claim guidelines to take into consideration economic justification when Best Management Practices are used to determine treatment thresholds and timeliness of applications;
- 1.3.41.Having RMA change the test weight "reduction in value" discount in corn back to original regional levels;
- 1.3.42.The exclusion of crop losses caused by other parties' negligence in the calculation of APHs;
- 1.3.43.Farm owner/operator choice to combine or separate farms, tracts or fields rather than being designated as a single farm unit;
- 1.3.44.The structuring of crop insurance policies so that premiums do not continue to increase for producers whose APH yields are lowered due to multi-year losses;
- 1.3.45.Allowing new producers and/or beginning farmers to use county RMA averages instead of the T-yield when establishing yield for federal crop insurance;
- 1.3.46.Adjusting crops at or below harvest cost to be considered a zero level of production;
- 1.3.47.The removal of "production to count" from all crop insurance policies;
- 1.3.48.USDA developing standard production evidence procedures for both FSA and crop insurance purposes;
- 1.3.49.Making Area Risk Protection Insurance (ARPI) policies available in all counties;
- 1.3.50.Requiring USDA to release the individual county final yield averages needed for ARPI policies one month prior to the deadline for the crop insurance sales closing date for the federal crop insurance program;
- 1.3.51.Using actual production yields rather than NASS survey yields to calculate ARPI insurance policies;
- 1.3.52.Requiring crop insurance agents to receive training and pass a written examination on each specific crop they wish to be certified to sell;
- 1.3.53.Abolishing or modifying the "one-in-three" rule that requires a farmer to plant and harvest a particular program crop at least one out of three years in a field in order for that crop to be eligible for crop insurance;
- 1.3.54.Exempting a year that is declared a disaster from the "one-in-three" calculation;
- 1.3.55.A crop insurance policy provision to provide coverage due to regulation of a quarantined disease;
- 1.3.56.County trend yield adjustments for all insurable commodities at least every 10 years;
- 1.3.57.Provisions that allow increasing APH when adopting new technologies such as drip irrigation;
- 1.3.58.Allowing harvested apples and peaches, regardless of the intended use, to be counted toward yield and APH;
- 1.3.59.Reducing the legal weight for one bushel of apples from 42 pounds to 40 pounds for all states as defined in USDA's Apple Crop Insurance Provisions;
- 1.3.60.Elimination of the "staged production guarantee";
- 1.3.61.Making permanent the emergency rule allowing winter cover crops to be harvested in the spring without jeopardizing crop insurance eligibility for the primary crop planted after the winter crop is harvested;
- 1.3.62.Adopting conservation practices to control soil and nutrient loss on acres that are eligible to receive prevented planting payments;
- 1.3.63.Requiring crop insurance premium due dates to be set based on harvest zone times and due when crops are harvested, not before;
- 1.3.64.A producer receiving an APH based on the settlement yield when a canning field is "passed" for harvest;

- 1.3.65. Producers who rotate crops being allowed to qualify for county average when calculating yields for the purpose of federal crop insurance on acres producing crops historically grown in their geographic area;
- 1.3.66. Allowing farmers to separately insure by practice, such as double cropping, irrigation/non-irrigation, or organic/non-organic as part of either a basic or an enterprise unit so that neither crop's claim calculation impacts the other;
- 1.3.67. The use of separate measurements to calculate a loss between organic and transitional crops. USDA should provide specific language that crop insurance agents, companies and adjusters can use as a standard for correctly handling a crop insurance claim when both organic and transitional acreage is involved;
- 1.3.68. A farmer receiving a portion of their claim (50-75%) when the toxin level qualifies the grain as a total loss and the farmer is eligible for a claim. The balance of the money should be paid when the grain is completely disposed;
- 1.3.69. A crop insurance program that allows the use of all elevator quality factors conducted by certified graders using certified testing equipment. These factors include moisture, foreign material, test weight, damage, alpha-amylase enzyme and mycotoxins;
- 1.3.70. Rule changes that would allow farmers to recover commodity losses under the crop insurance program if they have been adversely affected by erroneous information given out by FDA and USDA;
- 1.3.71. Legislation which strongly addresses crop insurance fraud;
- 1.3.72. Allowing counties to use more than one National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration-approved rainfall recording station, such as municipal airports and municipal wastewater treatment facilities, for the purpose of determining Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) drought payments;
- 1.3.73. The PRF program being based on smaller rainfall index quadrants to give each farm an accurate assessment;
- 1.3.74. Specialty crop insurance products being made available to commodity specific producers who request coverage provided a survey be conducted of the relevant industry;
- 1.3.75. A study on an insurance premium discount for producers who use new technologies that protect against yield loss;
- 1.3.76. Payment of crop insurance claims for crop losses caused when authorities intentionally breach a levee or open a federal control structure;
- 1.3.77. The continuing availability of crop insurance for tobacco including fields with an acceptable crop rotation management plan;
- 1.3.78. Fields used for crop rotation, including forage crops, being exempt from the sodbuster regulation for crop insurance;
- 1.3.79. Maintaining up-to-date federal rate maps to reflect flood and other risks as accurately as possible;
- 1.3.80. Development of a crop revenue policy for limited irrigated crops;
- 1.3.81. A re-evaluation of irrigated T-yields to ensure they are more in line with water use;
- 1.3.82. Changing the tolerance for production yield for rice from one pound per acre to one one-hundredweight (cwt) per acre;
- 1.3.83. A limited irrigation category in the RMA crop insurance program;
- 1.3.84. A crop insurance program that covers a crop until the time of the crop's normal harvest time, and the policy includes provisions for abnormally late harvest due to adverse weather events;
- 1.3.85. The ability of all states to insure individual blocks of grape varieties;
- 1.3.86. The current legislatively approved farmer premium discount schedule;

- 1.3.87. Acres planted to cover crops managed to promote soil health be considered “fallow” for the following year’s crop including fall planted crops;
- 1.3.88. Creation of a stakeholder advisory committee within each RMA regional office. These committees should be composed of producers, Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs), agents, adjusters and regional agronomists to advise policy makers as to possible effect of procedure;
- 1.3.89. Maintaining a revenue-based policy with the opportunity to use the Harvest Price Option;
- 1.3.90. Continuation of the Whole Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) as a pilot program;
- 1.3.91. State-listed noxious weed control requirements be enforced on fields with prevented planting;
- 1.3.92. Development of special crop insurance products to compensate farmers for wildlife damage;
- 1.3.93. Encouraging the RMA to establish a county base value of no less than the most recent NASS pasture cash rental rate for each county and also the formula for determining the county base value plus the sites for rainfall determinations for a grid to be more transparent;
- 1.3.94. RMA being transparent in the precipitation data collection process for pasture, rangeland and forage policies and held accountable for meeting payment deadlines.
- 1.3.95. One insurance premium per farm number, even if one farm number is in multiple counties;
- 1.3.96. Adding row rice as a covered commodity with the RMA;
- 1.3.97. Moving the haying, grazing and chopping date of prevented planting acres planted to a cover crop from November 1 to a date set regionally by the RMA. If prevented planting acres planted to a cover crop are hayed, grazed or chopped after a regionally set date, there shall be no reduction in the insured’s prevented planting payment;
- 1.3.98. The U.S. government, as part of the private-government partnership with National Crop Insurance Services (NCIS), requiring the NCIS board of directors to include at least one active farmer from each of the five major geographical regions of the United States;
- 1.3.99. Amending the USDA-RMA crop insurance basic policy provisions to allow prior converted crop acres to be eligible for prevented planting coverage/claim if the acres were unable to be planted in one of the two previous years due to an U.S. Army Corps of Engineers cease and desist order or other governmental restriction(s) that stopped the farm acreage from being planted, thereby making the farm acreage eligible for prevented planting after the restrictive order is lifted;
- 1.3.100. Allowing a producer who elects to include a Harvest Price Option (HPO) to receive the harvest price if it is higher on prevented plant acres;
- 1.3.101. The development of a crop insurance product for specialty crops that:
 - 1.3.101.1. Allows for the sale of specialty crops originally intended for the fresh market that do not meet quality standards into other marketing channels;
 - 1.3.101.2. Indemnifies growers based on the price differential between fresh markets and the alternative marketing channel; and
 - 1.3.101.3. Does not require the specialty crop to be destroyed to qualify for crop insurance or disaster assistance coverage;
- 1.3.102. RMA’s Hurricane Insurance Protection – Wind Index policy indemnifying policyholders in all counties that have sustained hurricane-force winds. Counties adjacent to counties that have sustained hurricane-force winds should also be eligible for an indemnity. Counties and adjacent counties should be eligible for HIP-WI even if a hurricane does not make landfall in the U.S., so long as hurricane-force winds were experienced;

- 1.3.103. Hay and forage producers' access to effective risk management tools that address the full scope of hay and pasture production including loss from weather and pests;
 - 1.3.104. Allowing producers the opportunity to purchase multiple replant coverage for their crops;
 - 1.3.105. A wheat crop insurance option to insure for flour grade or feed grade;
 - 1.3.106. The expansion of RMA's Hurricane Insurance Protection policy to also include a rainfall index that would indemnify policyholders in a county or adjacent counties that have hurricane-related sustained rainfall above a historical index level;
 - 1.3.107. The expansion of RMA forage establishment insurance to all states;
 - 1.3.108. RMA making exceptions on the planting dates in a drought year;
 - 1.3.109. The continuation of crops covered by crop insurance, as prevented planting, due to the Army Corps of Engineers flooding;
 - 1.3.110. Inter-seeding cover crops as a valid/good farming practice, and as such should be utilized without the restriction of having the coverage on the first insurable crop being voided; and
 - 1.3.111. Crop insurance premiums not being impacted by nonvoluntary specific on-farm conservation practices.
- 1.4. We oppose:
- 1.4.1. The public release of crop insurance indemnity payments made to individual producers;
 - 1.4.2. Requiring irrigation after crop failure has occurred;
 - 1.4.3. The double selling of tobacco pounds through the use of both the open market and contracts when federal tobacco crop insurance claims are sought. The acreage for tobacco crops on which insurance is paid should be verified to be destroyed and not allowed to be marketed;
 - 1.4.4. Crop insurance that includes an automatic harvest deduction rather than a calculation by a crop adjuster only for grape producers;
 - 1.4.5. RMA announcing special provision changes so late in the season that it negatively affects producers who have already made plans and rental agreements for the next year's particular crop;
 - 1.4.6. Caps or limits being applied to crop insurance premium assistance to producers;
 - 1.4.7. Means testing and payment limitations for crop insurance;
 - 1.4.8. Federal crop insurance premium prices based on specific conservation practices;
 - 1.4.9. Farmers being charged a farm visit fee to verify that a cover crop that includes a fruit and/or vegetable was not harvested as a fruit or vegetable;
 - 1.4.10. Any reduction in funding of the federal crop insurance program;
 - 1.4.11. Any tie and/or connection of climate focused practices to federal crop insurance programs;
 - 1.4.12. Mandatory best management practices to qualify for federal crop insurance programs and federal farm programs; and
 - 1.4.13. The RMA excluding a producer from receiving prevented planting coverage due to flooding.

2. **Disaster Programs**

- 2.1. We support:
 - 2.1.1. Programs for livestock, poultry and tree producers, which include the Livestock Forage Program (LFP), the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP), the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), the Tree Assistance Program (TAP), and the Emergency Haying and Grazing of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) authorities, and other programs to provide assistance to livestock and poultry producers during crises or natural disasters;

- 2.1.2. Valuations in disaster programs, specifically in the livestock administrative programs, reflecting market values at the time of the disaster;
- 2.1.3. The creation of voluntary risk management products for contracted poultry growers to assist them financially during disease outbreaks or interruption in the supply of birds;
- 2.1.4. A federal flood insurance program for grain stored on farms.
- 2.1.5. Disaster assistance for catastrophic natural disasters that:
 - 2.1.5.1. Provides assistance for quantity and quality losses;
 - 2.1.5.2. Covers all affected segments of agriculture;
 - 2.1.5.3. Does not exclude declared types of natural disasters;
 - 2.1.5.4. Provides timely delivery of assistance;
 - 2.1.5.5. Requires recipients to have crop insurance, NAP coverage or a Whole Farm Revenue Protection Policy, if it is available for their commodity;
 - 2.1.5.6. Allows for specialty crops intended for fresh market but no longer meeting fresh market quality standards to be sent to an alternative market, not be destroyed, and still qualify for disaster assistance for the price differential; and
 - 2.1.5.7. Supports the expansion of LIP to cover both direct and indirect losses from natural disasters.
- 2.1.6. Not penalizing producers who have purchased higher levels of crop insurance, stacked income protection (STAX) and wind & hail coverage;
- 2.1.7. The availability of disaster assistance payments for producers who are victims of bioterrorism;
- 2.1.8. Disaster payment determinations based on best available data;
- 2.1.9. Allocation of disaster assistance by Congress without regard to existing farm program payments;
- 2.1.10. The ability of a producer to receive disaster assistance in the year of the disaster even if harvest is scheduled for the following year;
- 2.1.11. Disaster coverage for crop losses due to governmental restrictions or pest infestations, or cyber-attacks;
- 2.1.12. USDA Emergency Loan interest rates being set lower than other USDA loan rates;
- 2.1.13. Producers who have paid the maximum NAP fee of \$750.00 for three specified crops in a county being considered in compliance for disaster-related programs and the statement "or any other" crop being included in the policy. The NAP premium should be pro-rated to reflect appropriate percentages of crop ownership as stated in the rental agreement;
- 2.1.14. Efforts to streamline the FSA NAP insurance program record keeping requirements for multi-crop farms;
- 2.1.15. A 60-day operational grace period from application submission to correct any paperwork erroneously submitted for the Specialty Crop NAP Insurance, without penalty;
- 2.1.16. Acres planted for conservation programs designed to promote soil health that are destroyed by the crop insurance deadline should be considered "fallow" for the following year's crop, including fall planted crops;
- 2.1.17. NAP coverage for all instances of double crops be permitted unless a certified crop advisor determines the practice is not a Best Management Practice;
- 2.1.18. Increased funding for livestock disaster assistance programs, such as ELAP. We recommend that poultry disaster assistance be authorized for growers, including contract growers, and implemented by USDA to cover Avian Flu production/revenue losses and associated disposal and clean-up costs;
- 2.1.19. Legislation that would give tax relief to private timberland and nut tree owners damaged by natural disaster;

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

#239 NATIONAL FARM POLICY

(amendments at lines 2, 8.2.1.1.3, 8.2.8.4.1(8), and 9.1.68)

- 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 timely, 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. Comply with World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements;
 - 2.8. Reduce complexity while allowing producers increased flexibility to plant in response to market demand;
 - 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; and
 - 2.10. Expand accessibility to risk management programs and disaster relief programs within the farm bill to support financial stability for producers.
- 3. We oppose:
 - 3.1. New mandatory government supply management programs and acreage reduction programs, excluding the Conservation Reserve

- Program (CRP) 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. Increasing baseline for 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 that include both federal crop insurance and commodity programs as top funding priorities.
- 8.1.5. Adequate USDA staffing capacity and technical assistance;
- 8.2. Other Principles:
 - 8.2.1. Title I:
 - 8.2.1.1. We support:
 - 8.2.1.1.1. The 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 annually;
 - 8.2.1.1.3. Basing Title I payments on historic planted, rather than planted historic, acres;
 - 8.2.1.1.4. A reference price increase for all Title I commodities;
 - 8.2.1.1.5. Unassigned, former generic base acres being redistributed to update crop base on the same farm;
 - 8.2.1.1.6. Increased commodity loan rates;
 - 8.2.1.1.7. Restoring ARC/PLC payment base on the 20% of seed cotton base acres that were designated as unassigned and unpaid in the 2018 farm bill;
 - 8.2.1.1.8. Keeping provisions that Loan Deficiency Payments and Marketing Loan Gains do not count against per person payment limits;
 - 8.2.1.1.9. Updated production history once every five years based on the highest of a prior three-year history, until then we support supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) production history changes;
 - 8.2.1.1.10. Retaining the current DMC with supplemental and feed cost updates;
 - 8.2.1.1.11. Increasing the DMC 5-million-pound limit for Tier 1;
 - 8.2.1.1.12. Additional transparency to milk checks including listing the percentage of pooled and de-pooled milk by each processor and PPD calculations;
 - 8.2.1.1.13. Modified block voting flexibility within coops (allowing farmers to vote independently and confidentially unless a farmer opts out after being given notice of a referendum);
 - 8.2.1.1.14. Eliminating provisions on a “no” vote on a referendum causing elimination of the entire FMMO;
 - 8.2.1.1.15. Whole milk being promoted and advanced through the special milk program through the schools, welfare groups and the U.S. military;
 - 8.2.1.1.16. 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; and
 - 8.2.1.1.17. We oppose any regulations or legislation that will ban or limit flavored milk in schools.
- 8.2.2. Title II:
 - 8.2.2.1. We support:
 - 8.2.2.1.1. Maintaining funding for federal conservation programs which maintain environmental benefits;
 - 8.2.2.1.2. Working lands conservation programs over retirement lands programs;
 - 8.2.2.1.3. Streamlining the NRCS conservation practice approval process;
- 8.2.3. Conservation Reserve Program
 - 8.2.3.1. We support:
 - 8.2.3.1.1. Capping acreage enrollment to keep land in production;
 - 8.2.3.1.2. Capping rental rates to a percentage of average county rental rates;
 - 8.2.3.1.3. Making common sense updates to emergency haying and grazing rules, especially adjustments to the turn-in dates surrounding the “primary nesting season,” bale removal, etc.;
 - 8.2.3.1.4. Encouraging prime farmland to come back into production, but retain the program for marginal acres, land that is highly erodible or non-productive;
 - 8.2.3.1.5. Adjusting the 25% limitation. Extend the 25% limitation to a per farm basis, not just county wide;
 - 8.2.3.1.6. Prioritizing water quality and soil health benefits of CRP over wildlife protection and manage requirements of the program accordingly (such as mowing and maintenance, species mixes, and implementation of buffer/filter strips); and
 - 8.2.3.1.7. Limiting the size of pollinator tracts with an emphasis on smaller parcels and capping pollinator rates.
- 8.2.4. Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
 - 8.2.4.1. We support:
 - 8.2.4.1.1. Maintaining the current prioritization of the EQIP funding being targeted to livestock producers;
 - 8.2.4.1.2. Maintaining an air quality program that assists producers with air quality compliance; and
 - 8.2.4.1.3. Allowing for flexibility in addressing local and regional resource challenges, including groundwater sustainability and drought relief, resilience and preparedness.
- 8.2.5. Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
 - 8.2.5.1. We support:
 - 8.2.5.1.1. Funding for the CSP with greater accessibility to farmers;
- 8.2.6. Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
 - 8.2.6.1. We support:
 - 8.2.6.1.1. Increasing ACEP funding; and
 - 8.2.6.1.2. Increasing the ceiling on the eligible federal share for ACEP conservation easement to 80% of the easement value.
- 8.2.7. Title XI:
 - 8.2.7.1. We support:
 - 8.2.7.1.1. A robust crop insurance program, with no reductions in premium cost share. We oppose means testing, income limits, or

add in's, such as required production practices, that might limit the availability or adversely impact risk pools;

- 8.2.7.1.2. Expansion of insured commodities including specialty crops. Given limitations of process in adding new commodities, examine ways in which to encourage swifter adoption of policies;
- 8.2.7.1.3. Develop and maintain adequate risk management tools for livestock producers including contract growers; and
- 8.2.7.1.4. USDA enhancing the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage from the current 50% level on production and 55% of the established price by allowing producers to purchase a higher level up to the 65% level and the option to increase the market price option from 55% to 100%.

8.2.8. Miscellaneous:

8.2.8.1. Trade

8.2.8.1.1. We support:

- (1) Increased funding for the Foreign Market Development (FMD) program and Market Assistance Program (MAP); and
- (2) Enhancements to Whole Farm Revenue Protection insurance that provide a more appropriate level of affordable coverage and safety net, along with reducing the amount of paperwork required.

8.2.8.2. Credit

8.2.8.2.1. We support:

- (1) Streamlining loan programs and ensuring loan amounts keep pace with farm-level expenses; and
- (2) Minimizing application requirements for young and beginning farmer guarantee programs so they are more aligned with agricultural lenders.

8.2.8.3. Rural Development

8.2.8.3.1. We support:

- (1) A consistent, long-term, market-oriented farm policy that is transparent and efficient prioritizing projects with the greatest economic potential for rural communities.
- (2) Programs should focus on the following:
- (3) 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;
- (4) Broadband programs prioritizing resources for rural

- (5) communities most in need of connectivity; and Increased access and incentives to provide safe and adequate childcare in rural communities.

8.2.8.4. Specialty Crops

8.2.8.4.1. We support:

- (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 not withstanding price;
- (2) Ensuring adequate funding for the specialty crop industry with emphasis on fundamental research, marketing and promotions, and pest management programs;
- (3) The USDA giving more consideration to specialty crop growers when considering planting history for various programs;
- (4) Defining "specialty crops" as any fruit, vegetable, nut or non-program crop grown for consumption and sales;
- (5) Dedicated funding for specialty crop growers in working lands programs;
- (6) USDA commodity purchases; and
- (7) The fruit and vegetable industry developing a termed stopgap profit/loss assistance program to mitigate the impact of producer losses due to foreign imports, resulting in an upside-down market.
- (8) The development of a price support program for seasonal and perishable crops, similar to the American Seasonal and Perishable Crop Support Act.

8.2.8.5. Research

8.2.8.5.1. We support:

- (1) Funding for agricultural research and education;

- (2) Funding a producer-directed, research-oriented specialty crop block grant program and the IR4 bio-pesticide research program for minor crops; and
- (3) Funding for research into the health risks and strategies for mitigating risks associated with chemical contaminants in water and food such as PFAS.

8.2.8.6. Energy

8.2.8.6.1. We support:

- (1) Adequate funding indexed for inflation for the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), and an increase to the percentage of USDA cost share;
- (2) Increased resources for biofuels; and
- (3) Increased resources for methane digesters.

8.2.8.7. Nutrition

8.2.8.7.1. We support:

- (1) The inclusion of a block grant program that would allow food banks and food access networks to directly purchase specialty crops from farmers;
- (2) Technical and monetary assistance being given to farmers to help facilitate online SNAP sales and streamline the requirement to be able to collect SNAP benefits; and
- (3) The use of SNAP for U.S.-produced agricultural products when available.

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 Resources 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. Studying the development of a Cotton Seed Marketing Loan program;
- 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. The FSA 578 form designating which acres/farms are enrolled in PLC and ARC;
- 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. Referencing new farm bills with terminology that recognizes the relationship between farm, food and nutrition;
- 9.1.60. Maintaining the integrity and intent of all USDA programs through rigorous oversight;
- 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;
- 9.1.62. If a producer has an on-call contract on an eligible commodity that has unpriced production at the time a Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP) becomes available, the unpriced amount should be eligible for the LDP;
- 9.1.63. Stable and adequate federal funding for the National Agricultural Law Center to maintain its mission as the nation's leading source of agriculture in food law research and information;
- 9.1.64. The simplification of the farm bill;
- 9.1.65. The inclusion of a block grant program that would allow food banks and food access networks to directly purchase specialty crops from farmers;
- 9.1.66. The continuation of USDA's Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA) and USDA's Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP); and
- 9.1.67. The development of a permanent program in future farm bills for disaster relief based on a determination by county.
- 9.1.68. All USDA programs treating rented land the same, with no impact on the landlord's eligibility for programs.
- 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.
- 9.3. **Acreege Crop Reporting Streamlining Initiative (ACRSI):**
 - 9.3.1. 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
- 9.3.2. 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.
- 9.4. **Commodity Programs**
- 9.4.1. We support:
- 9.4.1.1. Modifying “actively engaged” rules to more broadly define “family” by including non-lineal familial relationships such as first or second cousins. The family farm exemption from the management restriction and recordkeeping requirements should remain in place;
- 9.4.1.2. Developing farm savings accounts as a risk management option for all producers;
- 9.4.1.3. Improvements to the current provisions for the peanut program in the farm bill because of extreme increases in the cost of production;
- 9.4.1.4. Individual farm program payments for any actively engaged farmer regardless of the farm’s organizational structure;
- 9.4.1.5. A flexible, renewable one-year program that incentivizes specified nutrient loss reduction or management practices on land currently in production with an emphasis on improving water quality;
- 9.4.1.6. Classifying program crop base acres that are being utilized in renewable energy projects as “conservation,” the same as CRP with program crop base acres maintained and no ARC/PLC paid. When the renewable energy project is decommissioned and the idled base acres restored for agricultural production, farm program support and the payment base can be reactivated to transition the base acres from renewable energy production back into program crop production; and
- 9.4.1.7. Inflation-adjusted farm program payment limits.
- 9.5. **Conservation**
- 9.5.1. Calculation of the CRP and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) rental rates being re-examined annually at enrollment to ensure they mirror, but do not exceed, the rental rates of comparable land in the immediate area;
- 9.5.2. Marginal and highly erodible land returning as the main focus of the CRP. The current limit of 24 million acres in the CRP should continue;
- 9.5.3. Improvements to the State Technical Committees to make them more ag friendly by encouraging producers’ participation and input;
- 9.5.4. A path to eligibility for farms that have not previously been in compliance;
- 9.5.5. Requiring continual sign-up periods to allow for projects to come online throughout the year;
- 9.5.6. Requiring continual sign-up periods to allow for projects to come online throughout the year; and
- 9.5.7. Allowing for ACEP-Agricultural Land Easement funds to be used to cover transaction costs incurred by landowners and eligible entities facilitating the transaction as well as project start-up costs.
- 9.6. **Credit**
- 9.6.1. 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; and

- 9.6.2. A floating conservation-oriented commodity loan program that increases loan prices, addresses conservation goals and satisfies the credit needs of beginning farmers.
- 9.7. **Dairy**
 - 9.7.1. We support:
 - 9.7.1.1. Further development and availability of the new Dairy Revenue Protection insurance product and the ability for producers to use it in conjunction with the Dairy Livestock Gross Margin (LGM) program and a commodity title dairy safety net;
 - 9.7.1.2. Expansion of RMA risk management programs for dairy producers, with the inclusion of milk as a defined commodity;
 - 9.7.1.3. Require a commodity title dairy safety net program that:
 - 9.7.1.3.1. Gives farmers an option to select either a program that provides protection against a decline in milk price or a decline in milk margin;
 - 9.7.1.3.2. Includes significant enhancements to any gross margin program to effectively support dairy farmers, including: We support:
 - (1) Making tier levels more affordable;
 - (2) Increasing the catastrophic margin level from \$4.00 to \$5.00 and adding the ability to buy up to \$12.00 margin coverage
 - (3) Making strategic adjustments to the feed formula;
 - (4) Using the regional or state level all milk and feed price rather than national level price estimates in the calculation of margin over feed cost for the purpose of calculating DMC program payouts; and
 - (5) The Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) calculation including an adjustor related to the cost of diesel fuel.
- 9.8. **Livestock**
 - 9.8.1. Changes in the Livestock Forage Program to allow contiguous counties also be declared eligible for disaster assistance, and for increasing the number of weather stations in a county;
 - 9.8.2. The exploration of new risk management tools for livestock producers;
 - 9.8.3. The Risk Management Agency continually working to improve the livestock and other risk management programs;
 - 9.8.4. We support the reauthorization and expansion of the Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) program and increasing of the subsidy rate to similar support levels of other commodity risk management programs in future farm bills; and
 - 9.8.5. A grassland reserve-type program for livestock producers administered through USDA with regional differences for stocking rates and farming practices for eligibility.
- 9.9. **Specialty Crops**
 - 9.9.1. Requiring RMA to include all counties that produce wild and cultivated blueberries to be covered under the federal crop insurance program. ◆

#301 ANIMAL CARE

(amendment at line 6.1)

1. Proper care of livestock, poultry and fur-bearing animals is essential to the efficient and profitable production of food and fiber. No segment of society has more concern for the well-being of poultry and livestock than the producer. Animal-based medical research benefits both humans and animals - including pets, farm animals and endangered species. Research utilizing animals is necessary to ensure more effective human and veterinary medical practices.
2. Results from peer reviewed animal stress research should be emphasized along with practical ways to implement the results on farms and ranches.
3. We will encourage all commodity groups to pool resources to create and continue a direct concentrated effort to educate consumers on the facts associated with the production of livestock and other agricultural commodities using accepted best management practices.
4. Regulations should not unduly restrict the right of farmers, distributors, or retailers to hold and sell live animals. Likewise, the right of individuals to purchase live animals to prepare for food consistent with their personal or cultural beliefs should not be restricted beyond reasonable safeguards relating to the health of the species, safe handling, processing of animals and ensuring food safety.
5. We support:
 - 5.1. The proper treatment of animals;
 - 5.2. A farmer's right, in consultation with their veterinarians, to set appropriate protocol for common animal husbandry practices to be administered by the farmer or trained employee that are appropriate for their farm;
 - 5.3. The Working Animal Protection Act;
 - 5.4. Properly researched and industry-tested poultry and livestock practices that provide consumers with a wholesome food supply and enable farmers to improve the care and management of livestock and poultry;
 - 5.5. The use of scientifically proven technologies for agricultural production practices;
 - 5.6. The rights of individual commodity groups to develop a voluntary national production standard;
 - 5.7. Continued cooperation with other agricultural and agricultural-related organizations to address the animal care issue;
 - 5.8. The practice of educating livestock exhibitors and breeders about ethics and positive animal care practices;
 - 5.9. The exemption of farm visits by the general public, whether for profit or not, from licensing under the federal Animal Welfare Act;
 - 5.10. Vigorous enforcement of fines and/or reimbursement for animal research lost and all costs and damage incurred when farms or research facilities are willfully damaged. Responsible persons or organizations should pay all costs;
 - 5.11. Criminal prosecution for individuals obtaining employment or entry into agricultural facilities under false or misleading pretenses;
 - 5.12. Making it a criminal offense for someone to willfully harass another person's livestock using a drone or any other means;
 - 5.13. Legislation that requires person(s) witnessing animal abuse to report findings to management and/or the proper authorities as soon as feasible or within 24 hours of witnessing such action;
 - 5.14. A proactive and aggressive effort to address attacks by activist organizations on animal agriculture and the food industry;
 - 5.15. Legislation to prohibit photography or audio recordings on private premise without the landowner's knowledge or consent;
 - 5.16. The interstate commerce clause of the U.S. Constitution for all food commodity products which comply with public health or food safety regulation. There should be no restrictions on state-to-state movement of food products that do not affect the safe and healthy use of those products;
 - 5.17. Producer-led, voluntary quality assurance programs for all livestock sectors. We encourage all segments of the value chain, from farm to fork, to participate in their respective quality assurance program;

- 5.18. Legislation that protects animal producers against animal welfare challenges that result from accidents, natural disasters or catastrophic events;
 - 5.19. USDA not making available online animal and livestock inspection reports until a second citation involving the same violation at the same facility;
 - 5.20. USDA maintaining their "Teachable Moments" on animal welfare inspection reports for USDA licensed entities;
 - 5.21. A "no permit required" rule for commercial poultry operations who wish to control overflying and/or problematic wild fowl; and
 - 5.22. Dairy farmers not losing their milk market because of approved veterinary procedures performed on their farm.
6. We oppose:
- 6.1. State-mandated production standards that limit commerce or agricultural sales from other states.
 - 6.2. Any changes to the current animal cruelty laws that adversely impact the normally accepted practices of handling livestock and any legislation that inhibits or prohibits animal husbandry practices commonly used in livestock production and exhibitions;
 - 6.3. Any age restriction on the harvest of livestock;
 - 6.4. Any mandatory requirement that producers establish psychological profiles or daily psychological monitoring of individual animals;
 - 6.5. Initiatives, referendums or legislation that create standards above sound veterinary science and best management standards;
 - 6.6. Any laws or regulations which would mandate specific farming practices in livestock production;
 - 6.7. Federal legislation or regulations attempting to place an additional tax or fee associated with animal care practices on each animal produced by an agricultural production facility;
 - 6.8. Legislation and regulations which would prohibit or unduly restrict the use of animals in research;
 - 6.9. The use of educational materials in our public schools that discourage use of animal products;
 - 6.10. The concept of animal rights and the expenditure of public funds to promote the concept of animal rights;
 - 6.11. Laws or regulations elevating the well-being of animals to a similar status as the rights of people;
 - 6.12. Legislation that would give animal rights organizations the right to establish standards for the raising, marketing, handling, feeding, housing or transportation of livestock including equines, poultry, aquaculture and fur-bearing animals;
 - 6.13. Any legislation that would pay bounties to complainants;
 - 6.14. The training of law enforcement personnel exclusively by any animal rights/welfare organization/group or the exclusive use of the groups' literary/course material for the purpose of the enforcement of animal welfare laws of the proper handling and containment of animals;
 - 6.15. Regulation/legislation that restricts the ability to transport animals, other than concerning the legality of ownership or the temporary containment of the spread of disease or feral hogs;
 - 6.16. Any ban on import, export, transport, sale or purchase of mink in the U.S.; and
 - 6.17. Local governments/sheriff's offices putting animal rights/welfare organizations/groups in charge of inspection and enforcement of livestock animal welfare cases.
7. We urge Congress to continue to address the problem of animal rights terrorism:
- 7.1. We support the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act of 2006 and urge all states to adopt similar statutes;
 - 7.2. Amend the federal tax code to allow for suspension or revocation of tax-exempt status for federally recognized charities linked to terrorist groups in the event that such relationships are confirmed by federal or state investigation;
 - 7.3. The IRS should diligently pursue removal of tax-exempt status to animal rights organizations whose level of political activity exceeds the level allowed for charitable organizations; and
 - 7.4. Direct the Office of Personnel Management to allow for permanent removal of the charity from the Combined Federal Campaign list of eligible charities in the event that such relationships are confirmed

by federal investigation and be required to return all funds they have received as a result of being on the Combined Federal Campaign list.

8. We recommend:
 - 8.1. Stricter enforcement of laws requiring livestock market owners to water and feed livestock kept overnight in stockyards and markets;
 - 8.2. Industry-coordinated, non-ambulatory animal handling educational activities and oppose additional unreasonable federal regulations;
 - 8.3. The livestock industry opposes the shipment of non-ambulatory livestock from the farm to livestock markets or auctions;
 - 8.4. Separate classification of non-ambulatory livestock -- those due to an injury or accident and those which are diseased. Non-ambulatory livestock due to injury or accident should be allowed to be slaughtered and processed for personal use;
 - 8.5. Non-ambulatory livestock be properly handled or treated on the farm to avoid unnecessary suffering;
 - 8.6. If the proper professional treatment on the farm fails, non-ambulatory livestock be euthanized on the farm and properly disposed;
 - 8.7. If livestock becomes non-ambulatory during transport or while being held at livestock markets, non-ambulatory livestock should receive appropriate veterinary treatment, and special arrangements be made to have animals that remain nonresponsive after treatment euthanized, properly disposed and not used for human consumption;
 - 8.8. The livestock industry support additional research and evaluation of livestock husbandry including proper methods for the movement of non-ambulatory livestock, design of livestock production, handling and transportation systems; and
 - 8.9. The livestock industry encourages aggressive initiatives within its ranks to communicate the best modern animal husbandry and handling practices, including but not limited to:
 - 8.9.1. Methods to prevent livestock from becoming non-ambulatory;
 - 8.9.2. Information on practical and acceptable methods for the proper movement of non-ambulatory livestock;
 - 8.9.3. Facility designs that promote the safe and appropriate production and movement of livestock; and
 - 8.9.4. Education of producers and their employees on accepted protocols for animal care and antibiotic residue avoidance. ♦

#315 SHEEP AND GOATS, WOOL AND MOHAIR (amendment at line 3.8)

1. USDA should evaluate the testing requirement of the wool grading program with emphasis on producer cost and feasibility.
2. Imported goat milk or curd must meet USDA milk quality regulations.
3. We support:
 - 3.1. The continuation of a strong sheep, goat, wool and mohair industry in the United States and recognize the need for continued promotion and development of value-added processing;
 - 3.2. The use of domestically raised lamb and goats;
 - 3.3. The designation of sheep and goats as minor species so that cattle research data can be used to approve animal health products for use in these species;
 - 3.4. The development of a separate sheep and goat checkoff program for promotion of their respective industries;
 - 3.5. The current loan program for wool and mohair;
 - 3.6. A lamb checkoff if consistent with our commodity promotion policy;
 - 3.7. The use of livestock protection animals on federal, state and public lands;
- 3.8. Free trade of embryos, semen, and breeding stock that meet USDA health standards;
- 3.9. The development of an orderly marketing framework involving all countries importing lamb into the United States;
- 3.10. The development of an appropriate somatic cell count test for dairy goats and sheep; and

- 3.11. Restoring a lamb insurance program (Lamb LRP) through the farm bill.
4. We oppose using a somatic cell count test designed for bovines to regulate dairy goat and sheep milk.
5. We recommend the land grant universities explore the opportunities to market live and processed sheep and goats.
6. We support FDA approval of and increased access to small ruminant pharmaceutical products including anthelmintics, vaccines, antibiotics and reproductive products that are currently being widely used outside of the United States and are proven to be effective. ♦

#419 FISCAL POLICY

(amendments at lines 10.3 and 11.11)

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

10.2. The reinstatement of the Glass-Steagall Act that would limit activities and affiliations between commercial banks and security firms.

10.3. The reduction of convenience fees for e-transactions.

11. We oppose:

11.1. Awarding federal monies to citizen action groups;

11.2. Government-mandated redistribution of wealth;

11.3. Federal funding for the National Endowment for the Arts;

11.4. Withholding funds to force compliance with federal programs;

11.5. The federal government bailing out states and cities that are in financial trouble;

11.6. Changing the budget status of programs to mask federal spending or taxation;

11.7. The monitoring and reporting of bank accounts and financial transactions to the Internal Revenue Service;

11.8. Governmental programs, mandates or initiatives to create a cashless society;

11.9. A universal basic income; and

11.10. Any form of a Securities and Exchange Commission ruling that would require emissions reporting that could directly or indirectly impact farmers and ranchers.

11.11. Cash deposit limits for legitimate businesses.

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. ♦

**#420 FOREIGN INVESTMENT
(amendment at line 2)**

1. Foreign investment in U.S. assets is a concern. The impact of foreign investment in agriculture, banking, insurance and other business institutions in the United States should be monitored.

2. We support additional funding to improve data collection, auditing techniques and enforcement of reporting under the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act.

3. Foreign ownership of utility companies and natural resource businesses, including agricultural land, should be limited to less than a controlling interest. We oppose preferential treatment of foreign investments in agriculture and insist that foreign investors be required to conform to the same tax laws, import and export regulations as American producers. ♦

**#462 ROLE OF USDA
(amendments at lines 11.1, 14.21,14.25)**

1. Agriculture should remain the primary responsibility of USDA. Food and fiber consumers will be better served by healthy, profitable production agriculture than by consumer advocacy within USDA.

2. USDA should be an advocate for agriculture with emphasis on production agriculture and the processing and marketing of agricultural products and promoting the use of domestically produced food and fiber by all branches of the U.S. government and military services.

3. Leadership at USDA should be vested in appointed people who are competent, have background and experience in agriculture and have evidenced a knowledge and concern for the welfare of agricultural producers.

4. The Undersecretary of Natural Resources and the Environment should be an effective advocate for agriculture on environmental issues.

5. We support the secretary of agriculture and the U.S. Trade Representative being included in the National Security Council.

6. We support long-term funding of the USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) and local Farm Service Agencies (FSA).
7. Review criteria for USDA office closure decisions should include miles driven between offices, workload, local input, and inter-agency efficiency.
8. We support adding the Secretary of Agriculture to the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States.
9. We support restructuring federal agriculture policy and programs so that all agricultural producers, regardless of the population density of the area in which their farm is located, be eligible for a broader swath of federal grant funding.
10. We recommend that all USDA programs eliminate the term and classification "socially disadvantaged."
11. We support immediate evaluation of current USDA staffing, compensation and training at the county, regional and state levels, including county committees, to assist in attaining an adequate, streamlined and talented staff that meets the programmatic needs of the applicant and USDA customers.
 - 11.1. USDA should ensure all staff are properly trained and certified to do all facets of their job within one year of hire.
12. USDA should be:
 - 12.1. A monitor of domestic and foreign agricultural affairs;
 - 12.2. An accurate source of agricultural data and research; and
 - 12.3. An agricultural policy adviser to other departments of the federal government;
13. We support USDA programs that:
 - 13.1. Help farmers obtain needed crop and market information, research, educational assistance and credit;
 - 13.2. Provide workable grades and standards and safeguard product quality through inspection services;
 - 13.3. Help farmers eradicate or control plant and animal pests and diseases;
 - 13.4. Encourage conservation of land and water resources by maintaining land in private ownership. USDA programs should not be used to facilitate the transfer of private farms and ranches to public lands;
 - 13.5. Assure reliable, unfettered transportation for agricultural commodities;
 - 13.6. Strengthen farmers' power to bargain for a price; and
 - 13.7. Provide comparable services to administer all commodity programs.
14. USDA should:
 - 14.1. Continue to be a full Cabinet-level department and shall not be renamed or consolidated with any other department or agency of government;
 - 14.2. Retain various food assistance and nutrition programs, both domestic and foreign;
 - 14.3. Use U.S. agricultural commodities for domestic food programs. Priority should be given to locally sourced products when possible;
 - 14.4. Not limit or restrict USDA purchases due to the violation of immigration regulations;
 - 14.5. Limit importers from purchasing products from foreign countries and reselling them under the provision of Section 32;
 - 14.6. Extend the "Buy American" provision to other noncontiguous states or territories including Alaska, Hawaii, Guam and Puerto Rico;
 - 14.7. Continue the Women, Infants and Children's (WIC) program, the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program but farmers should not be assessed for funding of these type of programs;
 - 14.8. Use Farm Service Agency (FSA) data and assistance for premise ID registration;
 - 14.9. Use the land grant colleges for agriculture-oriented research;
 - 14.10. Continue efforts to resolve problems involving environmental and animal care issues;
 - 14.11. Maintain an efficient and cost-effective services delivery system, including electronic filing;

- 14.12. Maintain FSA jurisdiction over the administration of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and cost-share programs;
- 14.13. Change in FSA regulations to allow other forms of verification for production evidence;
- 14.14. Upgrade computer technology and appropriate software to allow the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), FSA, RMA, and National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to utilize and share the same farm program enrollment information and production, and reduce duplicate reporting and surveys, provided appropriate privacy disclosures and safeguards are utilized;
- 14.15. Encourage "one-stop shopping." All farm program agencies, where feasible, should be located in the same building;
- 14.16. Appoint one or more farmers on any agriculturally related government board;
- 14.17. Require federal agencies to keep all documentation of all historical field maps or aerial maps supporting determination and supply onsite documentation of new determination to farmers;
- 14.18. Accredite and license commercial dog breeders;
- 14.19. Further support the Foreign Agriculture Service;
- 14.20. Make Beginning Farmer Program eligibility requirements consistent through all USDA agencies, expand the definition of young and beginning farmers to 10 years from the first filing of a Schedule F or until the individual is 35 years old, whichever is longer.
- 14.21. Broaden the service support of and funding preference to active-duty military personnel and all veterans released from service under conditions other than dishonorable.**
- 14.22. 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;
- 14.23. Allow for a System for Award Management (SAM) number to be valid for the length of the USDA project for the individual producer;
- 14.24. Co-location of USDA and Soil and Water Conservation Districts when possible; and
- 14.25. Provide notifications of job positions (openings) within FSA and NRCS as soon as the job becomes available or notification of a transfer, retirement, termination or resignation. Finding qualified applicants should be a priority without a waiting period or other unnecessary delays; however, preference should be given to local candidates;**
- 14.26. Allow local FSA applicants to apply for job positions in a desired territory based on rank and time served in location;
- 14.27. Continue the release of crop condition reports as they are useful to agricultural producers and should maintain their current release schedule;
- 14.28. Compensate the farmer for legal fees and civil damages when the farmer wins an appeal as a result of incorrect decisions;
- 14.29. Be required to provide the entire record or decisional documentation to the farmer at the time of the alleged compliance violation and/or at the time of an adverse determination;
- 14.30. Accept evidence provided by the farmer as true, absent substantial evidence to the contrary;
- 14.31. Employ and make available county personnel based on workload, acreage and number of farms;
- 14.32. Be allowed to hire temporary employees on a contracted basis to assist during special farm program sign-up periods, including retired employees without impacting their pension;
- 14.33. Continue to make forms and processes more streamlined and available for online access; and

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

- would give NRCS the power to develop, implement, or police those agencies' regulations on agricultural land;
- 16.4.3. Have the authority to rescind its position in the appeals process;
- 16.4.4. Require partnerships, limited liability corporations and other farm entities to register on the Standardized Award Management Service site; and
- 16.4.5. Be allowed to prohibit installation of drainage tile in areas outside of designated wetlands. ♦

#506 Waste Disposal and Recycling (amendments at lines 1.18 and 1.19)

1. We support:
 - 1.1. Per capita generation of garbage being reduced and a combination of source reduction, source separation, recycling, resource recovery, composting and incineration be instituted, together with financial incentives, for preferred long-term disposal methods;
 - 1.2. Research into laser gasification for the mining of landfills and disposal of garbage;
 - 1.3. Establishing reasonable standards for emissions by incinerators burning nontoxic municipal waste. Current stringent requirements are making incineration cost-prohibitive, resulting in more landfills being located on prime agricultural land. Current EPA regulations place unrealistic guidelines on landfill use. They give no regard to feasibility or to providing any remedy for meeting the actual needs of waste disposal;
 - 1.4. A moratorium on the new landfill regulations until a workable waste disposal plan is developed and adequate funding is made available;
 - 1.5. Agricultural operations which have legally disposed of materials being exempted from liability provisions of the Comprehensive Environmental Regulatory Cleanup and Liability Act (CERCLA);
 - 1.6. Repealing the cradle to grave rule for environmental liability for products or substances not to include real estate. When a product or substance changes hands, the environmental liability of the disposal of that product or substance should transfer to the new owner or responsible party of the product;
 - 1.7. Government agencies responsible for approving land application systems allowing private agriculture to utilize municipal waste water and sludge;
 - 1.8. EPA and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service utilizing proven scientific practices when developing policies concerning waste management;
 - 1.9. Contracts governing the use of farmland for disposal of such wastes that:
 - 1.9.1. Permit voluntary participation by agriculture in a private enterprise system;
 - 1.9.2. Provide flexibility in amount and timing of application of the wastes according to agricultural needs;
 - 1.9.3. Provide indemnity payments for unsalable crops due to Food and Drug Administration regulations or crop losses caused by components in the wastes;
 - 1.9.4. Provide indemnity for land should it be contaminated because of components in the wastes;
 - 1.9.5. Provide economic incentives for new or improved techniques for handling waste water and sludge; and
 - 1.9.6. Provide farmers with an analysis of nutrients, heavy metals and trace elements of biosolids applied to fields;
 - 1.10. Government agencies must utilize proven current scientific information when developing policies concerning application of sludge. The responsibility of this being required to rest with the waste handling authorities;
 - 1.11. Each state having the right to require that all municipal biosolid applications be tracked using Global Positioning System (GPS) technology and be reported electronically;
 - 1.12. Pathogen certification for sludge imported from out of state being supplemented with periodic in-state lab tests, with results

- transmitted simultaneously to the applicator, the farmer and the government;
- 1.13. Any beverage sold and not required to be consumed on the premises where sold, being in degradable or recyclable containers or in containers for which a substantial refund is offered for return;
 - 1.14. Efforts by individual states to provide incentives for recycling of beverage containers and existing laws pertaining to littering being enforced with greater vigor;
 - 1.15. Recycling where economically feasible and efforts to expand the market for recycled products;
 - 1.16. Increasing the biodegradable standard for containers;
 - 1.17. Wider use of biodegradable bags and packaging to reduce litter and landfill volume; and
 - 1.18. The requirement of disposal plans at the end of life for materials being used for alternative energy sources, such as batteries for vehicles, solar panels, and wind turbines.
 - 1.19. ~~Proper disposal practices of electric motor vehicles and electric vehicle batteries.~~ The manufacturers of electric vehicles should be held responsible for the payment of disposal fees related to electric vehicles. ♦

#700 GUEST WORKER TASK FORCE

We support AFBF establishing a guest worker task force comprised of the top 15 H-2A using states to address the following issues: AEW, labor availability, portability of labor contracts, and longer-term ag labor needs for livestock operations (not just the idea of H-2A returning to their country of origin after 365 days). We request policy recommendations or action back out to the states by September 15, 2024. ♦

Recommendations on State Policies

#1 AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY COMMISSIONS

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

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

#2 AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION AND VALUE – ADDED INITIATIVES

1 Structural changes in ~~the~~ agricultural processing
2 ~~industry~~ have affected many traditional supply/demand
3 relationships between producers and their buyers.

4 Value-added initiatives ~~allow for~~ offer opportunities to
5 deal with ~~these~~ such changes and keep ~~the~~
6 ~~agricultural~~ industry profitable.

7 We support:

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

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

#3 ANIMAL CARE

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

5 We urge members to respond knowledgeably to
6 misleading information on animal care. We urge
7 members to understand the difference between
8 organizations supporting sound science and animal care
9 versus those promoting animal rights and attempting to
10 eliminate or greatly restrict livestock production.

11 Members should continue to tell the success story of
12 modern animal agriculture wherever the opportunity is
13 available. Numerous laws exist to safeguard the proper
14 care of livestock and, if properly enforced, provide the
15 protection livestock requires.

16 Michigan's livestock and dairy industry is integral to
17 our agricultural economy and needs access to private
18 property rights and privacy laws. Laws appearing to limit
19 free speech or give the perception that agriculture has
20 something to hide may not be the appropriate way to
21 address certain issues impacting the industry. We
22 strongly support transparency by all involved.

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

32 We support:

- 33 • A animal health and care board to be convened
34 coordinating activities to enhance and protect the
35 state's livestock industry. The board should be
36 comprised of farmers and industry representatives
37 as voting members; who are nominated by officially
38 recognized livestock and agriculture industry
39 commodity groups; and then appointed by the
40 Governor. MDARD and MSU officials should serve in
41 an advisory capacity. The establishment of this
42 board should include a state budget appropriation.
43 This new board process should be concluded by
44 December 31, 2025.
- 45 • Strong penalties for those persons criminally
46 convicted of animal cruelty or abuse.
- 47 • The rights of individual commodity groups to develop
48 their own production standards.

- 49 • The involvement of livestock industry in the
50 development of animal care guidelines if required by
51 food industry officials to market products.
- 52 • Participation by livestock and dairy producers in
53 industry-developed, species-specific animal welfare
54 programs.
- 55 • Coordination with animal industry and related groups
56 on animal care and housing related issues.
- 57 • Farmers educating and having guidelines for
58 employees on proper animal care and monitoring
59 their employees.
- 60 • Legislation or rules protecting the rights of
61 farmers/owners to allow the continued utilization of
62 modern livestock production practices, including
63 current euthanization methods.
- 64 • 4-H and youth livestock exhibitor education.
- 65 • Michigan Farm Bureau working with Michigan State
66 University and Michigan Department of Agriculture
67 and Rural Development (MDARD) to provide proper
68 education to law enforcement, county officials and
69 animal control officers about laws to regulate animal
70 care and livestock production practices in Michigan.
- 71 • MFB and county Farm Bureaus being proactive in
72 educating and training the state and local animal
73 control authorities, local humane societies, local law
74 enforcement, and news media about current animal
75 care and production practices, to build a partnership
76 between Farm Bureau and local animal care
77 organizations.
- 78 • County Farm Bureaus consider cancelling the
79 membership of an individual criminally convicted of
80 animal cruelty or abuse.
- 81 • Land grant colleges and USDA continuing to
82 research and develop programs which will
83 realistically and economically enable farmers to
84 continue to enhance the care and management of
85 livestock.
- 86 • Legislation making it a felony to destroy or release
87 animals lawfully confined for science, research and
88 production, and strong punishment and required
89 restitution for losses or damages.
- 90 • MDARD taking the lead role in the development of
91 Michigan Animal Health Emergency Management
92 guidelines.
- 93 • Amendments to the Dog Law to more clearly define
94 a “farm dog.” The utilization of dogs on farm
95 operations is a normal part of an agricultural
96 enterprise.
- 97 • A sensible approach to the substantiation of animal
98 cruelty or abuse accusations including:

- 99 ▪ Requiring animal control officers receive training
- 100 on appropriate animal care and normal
- 101 agricultural practices as it relates to livestock and
- 102 farm animals.
- 103 ▪ Governing municipalities be held financially and
- 104 civilly liable for inaccurate and unjustified actions
- 105 of those officers and departments.
- 106 ▪ Requiring reported abuse cases to follow uniform
- 107 administrative procedures to confirm cruelty or
- 108 abuse before any legal action is taken.
- 109 ▪ Contacting the local law enforcement agency or
- 110 animal control authority.
- 111 ▪ Local law enforcement agencies obtaining the
- 112 opinion of two unbiased local livestock
- 113 professionals and a large animal veterinarian.
- 114 ▪ Costs associated with the resulting investigation
- 115 be paid for by the accuser if no abuse is found.
- 116 ▪ Cruelty or abuse cases of farm livestock be
- 117 handled through MDARD.

118 Support of Michigan Care of Farm Animals GAAMPs
 119 through the following:

- 120 ▪ Utilization of the Michigan Care of Farm Animals
- 121 GAAMPs as the standard for animal welfare.
- 122 ▪ Producer representation on the Michigan Care of
- 123 Farm Animals GAAMPs Committee.
- 124 ▪ Proper animal care and encourage livestock
- 125 farmers to be in compliance with the Right to
- 126 Farm Act and GAAMPs.
- 127 ▪ Mandatory education for convicted cruelty
- 128 offenders to help them understand proper animal
- 129 care including the Care of Farm Animals
- 130 GAAMPs.

131 We oppose:

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

#4 ANIMAL HEALTH

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

7 We must protect livestock health in Michigan and
 8 across the United States. A healthy animal population

9 is critical to the overall wellbeing of the agricultural
10 economy.

11 We support:

- 12 • Appointing a board of animal health to coordinate
13 activities, programs, and regulations to expedite the
14 control and eradication of animal diseases. The
15 board should consist of livestock producers and
16 industry representatives, Michigan Department of
17 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD),
18 Michigan Department of Natural Resources
19 (MDNR), Michigan Department of Health and
20 Human Services, Michigan State University (MSU)
21 College of Veterinary Medicine and USDA.
- 22 • MDARD basing new regulations or restrictions for
23 livestock exhibition on veterinary and animal
24 science.
- 25 • Changing the Animals Running At Large Act to
26 define livestock the same as the Animal Industry Act
27 does.
- 28 • State funding for the MSU Veterinary Diagnostic Lab
29 (VDL) to meet the needs of Michigan’s animal
30 population.
- 31 • Indemnification for livestock depopulated due to
32 disease or when marketing channels are limited or
33 eliminated by the government.
- 34 • Changes to Michigan’s Veterinary Law that expand
35 the services/procedures that veterinary technicians
36 or designated staff with advanced training can
37 perform that help address the rural vet/animal care
38 shortage in Michigan.
- 39 • Requiring continuing education to maintain a
40 Michigan veterinary license.
- 41 • Amending Michigan’s Veterinary Law to clarify that
42 artificial insemination of livestock and embryo
43 transplant procedures do not have to be performed
44 by a licensed veterinarian.
- 45 • MSU researching health-related issues impacting
46 Michigan’s livestock industry, including potentially
47 toxic weeds and feedstuffs.
- 48 • Requiring livestock operation visitors to have
49 permission and conduct proper contamination
50 protections, including clothing and disinfectants, to
51 protect and enhance biosecurity on-site.
- 52 • Legislative, regulatory and/or management changes
53 that empower the State Veterinarian to collaborate
54 with appropriate authorities to develop a mass
55 carcass disposal plan.
- 56 • A statewide ban on the sale and use of sky
57 (“Chinese”) lanterns and similar unmanned devices

- 58 involving open flame that may leave their premises
59 of origin.
- 60 • Research on the potential for chronic wasting
61 disease prions to infect livestock feed and other
62 plant materials.
 - 63 • Encouraging Michigan Farm Bureau, MSU, MDARD
64 and USDA to:
 - 65 ▪ Provide sufficient funding and programs for
66 animal health education, disease monitoring,
67 border inspections and disease eradication that
68 protect the livestock industry and ensure market
69 access.
 - 70 ▪ Increase efforts to develop a genetic or live
71 animal diagnostic test for Scrapie and Bovine
72 Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE).
 - 73 ▪ Continue working cooperatively to support the
74 VDL, and minimize its diagnostic fees.
 - 75 • Annual review of the Reportable Disease List in
76 collaboration with industry, MDARD and MDNR to
77 remove inappropriately listed diseases.
 - 78 • Livestock producers considering rabies vaccination
79 for all pets, and to learn about the disease.
 - 80 • We encourage the development and availability of
81 bait vaccines.

82 **Bovine**

- 83 • An aggressive cost-effective Johne's detection and
84 control program, and the ready availability of the
85 Johne's vaccine to dairy farmers.

86 **Swine**

- 87 • MDARD providing adequate staffing to:
- 88 • Ensure proper monitoring of Michigan's swine herd
89 to maintain our achieved pseudorabies status.
- 90 • Support the development and adoption of the U.S.
91 Swine Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) for
92 Michigan's swine industry.

93 **Equine**

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

108 **Animal Identification and Interstate Movement**

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

136 We oppose importing livestock that does not:

- 137 • Meet import testing requirements deemed
- 138 appropriate by the director of MDARD,
- 139 • Have appropriate quarantine protocols in place,
- 140 • Have an animal identification system for tracking
- 141 livestock movement to prevent disease spread.

142 **Feed Additives and Medication**

143 We recognize the need for medication and other

144 additives in livestock feeds. The availability of livestock

145 antibiotics is critical. Limiting or eliminating livestock

146 antibiotic use will negatively impact the industry, both

147 economically and with respect to animal health.

148 Antibiotic use is approved by FDA only after scientific

149 review and testing. Animal agriculture relies on

150 veterinarians to assist with and oversee animal health.

151 We define veterinarian oversight as a working

152 relationship with a licensed veterinarian.

153 We support:

- 154 • The existing approval process for antibiotic use in
- 155 farm animals.

- 156 • Veterinarian oversight of antibiotic use rather than
157 limiting or eliminating these critical animal health
158 and food safety protection tools.
- 159 • Careful use and withdrawal restrictions of feed
160 additives.
- 161 • The use of rendered animal protein as additives to
162 swine and poultry rations.
- 163 • Strict safeguards to prevent cross-contamination of
164 ruminant feeds with ruminant by-products
165 formulating feed additives.

166 We oppose:

- 167 • Banning feed additives without scientific evidence
168 that they threaten animal and human health.
- 169 • Restrictions limiting or eliminating marketing
170 opportunities for the livestock, dairy, equine, poultry
171 and aquaculture industries and their products
172 without sound scientific justification.
- 173 • State agency farm inspections without notification to
174 and awareness of the farm owner/operation.
- 175 • Mandatory rabies vaccination for farm cats. ◆

#5 AQUACULTURE AND COMMERCIAL FISHING

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

4 We support:

- 5 • Changes to Updating the Aquaculture
6 Development Act that to reflect the current status
7 and potential of the industry and its potential.
- 8 • Better collaboration between the state agencies
9 and the aquaculture industry that leads to greater
10 investment and enhancement of state
11 hatcheries/fisheries, commercial fishing industry,
12 and the commercial aquaculture industry.
13 Additional enhancements should also include
14 changes to the permitting process that advance
15 the growth of Michigan's aquaculture industry.
- 16 • Urging the regulatory agencies, along with
17 Michigan Economic Development Corporation,
18 state universities, and the aquaculture industry
19 to continue working cooperatively cooperating
20 to address the regulatory needs of the State,
21 while at the same time facilitating the continued
22 growth of aquaculture in Michigan through
23 streamlining aquaculture regulation and
24 facilitating access to capital for development.
- 25 • An annual Annually reviewing and update of
26 updating the memorandum of understanding
27 between Michigan Department of Agriculture

- 28 and Rural Development (MDARD), Michigan
29 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and
30 Energy (MDEGLE) and Michigan Department of
31 Natural Resources (MDNR).
- 32 • MDARD, MDEGLE, and MDNR understanding
33 that generational transition and industry growth
34 in aquaculture, commercial fishing, and
35 agriculture are critical for future industry success
36 and food security in the state when regulatory
37 decisions are made.
 - 38 • The State of Michigan prioritizing food
39 production from aquaculture and commercial
40 fishing at the same level as the recreational
41 fishing industry.
 - 42 • Harmonization of the state and federal definition
43 of aquaculture ~~so that it is in line with the federal~~
44 ~~definition of aquaculture.~~
 - 45 • The concept of group or lot identification for
46 aquaculture species.
 - 47 • MDARD registration of out-of-state producers
48 who market aquaculture products in Michigan
49 and enforcement of ~~current~~ regulations
50 related to importation of aquaculture products
51 ~~into Michigan.~~
 - 52 • Funding, research development, and approval
53 of live fish tests ~~so as~~ to eliminate the need to
54 sacrifice fish, as is the current requirement.
 - 55 • If an individual farm has an established herd
56 health plan and a disease status that declares it
57 to be free of regulated aquaculture diseases,
58 that farm should have the ability to ship product
59 interstate.
 - 60 • MDARD cooperating with other states and
61 establishing agreements ~~that allowing for~~
62 shipment of fish from Michigan into other states
63 that follow similar protocol.
 - 64 • MFB being involved in Michigan Aquaculture
65 Association's strategic plan development.
 - 66 • Michigan State University establishing an
67 aquaculture program ~~that contains~~ containing
68 dedicated faculty to support and enhance the
69 ~~aquaculture~~ industry. The program should include
70 research, extension and demonstration and be
71 housed under an agricultural development
72 department.
 - 73 • Industry-developed herd plans to include the
74 option for slaughter surveillance testing, where
75 feasible, and be implemented on a voluntary
76 basis with MDARD being the lead agency.
 - 77 • Development of science-based aquaculture

- 78 disease control policies that also take into
79 account indemnification of losses to producers.
- 80 • The right of commercial fishermen to pursue
81 fishing operations in a responsible manner. The
82 MDNR should not adopt regulations more
83 restrictive than those applied to tribal fisheries.
 - 84 • Expansion of opportunities to allow sustainable
85 commercial fishing of additional species of fish
86 in the Great Lakes.
 - 87 • MDARD having authority over commercial
88 fishing when the fish leave the net.
 - 89 • Allocation of funds for research to more
90 effectively manage and utilize this natural
91 resource.
 - 92 • Efforts of the commercial fishing industry to
93 establish a program under PA 232 of 1965.
 - 94 • The adoption of Best Management Practices
95 (BMPs) as National Pollution Discharge
96 Elimination System (NPDES) permit
97 compliance, rather than individual permits with
98 numerical discharge limitations for all
99 aquaculture facilities. If individual permits are
100 required, it should only be for facilities that
101 produce over 20,000 pounds annually and only
102 if on a one-page permit application.
 - 103 • Streamlining the NPDES permit process by
104 developing a general permit based on BMPs to
105 reduce water testing requirements.
 - 106 • The ability to conduct aquaculture production in
107 current and prior converted wetlands and within
108 the ~~Natural Rivers~~ natural rivers districts.
 - 109 • DNR producing and providing fish, at a fair
110 price, for stocking and growth on Michigan
111 aquaculture farms for food production.
 - 112 • Enabling legislation and/or the regulatory
113 framework to allow for the development of a
114 properly regulated open water net pen
115 aquaculture/cage culture of fish in the Great
116 Lakes and other water bodies.
 - 117 • Development of a national aquaculture check-off
118 program.
 - 119 • Appropriate staffing within MDARD to lead and
120 collaborate with other agencies on a planned,
121 designed and streamlined process for approval
122 and permitting of aquaculture and commercial
123 fishing processing facilities in Michigan.
 - 124 • Industry oversight on any new state or federal
125 funds for aquaculture or commercial fishing with
126 a majority of the funds going to aquaculture and
127 commercial fishing producers.

128 We oppose:

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

#6 BEE INDUSTRY

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

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

14 We support:

- 15 • ~~We support~~ Research efforts to find finding
16 practical, effective ~~methods to~~ means of
17 controlling or ~~reduce-reducing~~ the infection of
18 from Varroa mites, tracheal mites, small hive
19 beetles in ~~honeybees~~ — and the continued study
20 of into Colony Collapse Disorder.
- 21 • ~~We continue to support the inclusion of~~
22 beekeeper ~~†~~ The inclusion of apiaries under
23 paragraph 9.4 of the Wildlife Conservation Order,
24 in ~~Emergency clause~~ subsection (1). We further

25 encourage the Department of Natural Resources
26 to be proactive in ~~the protection~~ protecting of
27 Michigan's pollinators.

28 • ~~We urge Michigan Farm Bureau to working~~ with
29 state and federal agencies to resolve issues
30 regarding plant species in Michigan and their
31 importance to the Michigan bee industry, such as
32 changes to USDA conservation ~~land~~ programs
33 that allow for ~~the~~ planting of flowering cover
34 crops.

35 • Increasing the number of veterinarians and
36 expanding the animal health tools available for
37 the bee industry.

38 ~~Beekeeping (apiary) is a specialized form of~~
39 ~~agriculture and should be recognized under the Right~~
40 ~~to Farm Act by local, state and national regulatory~~
41 ~~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 d~~Developmenting of research and testing that
9 ~~to will~~ enhance the adoption of biotechnology
10 products and processes, and address consumer
11 safety and environmental concerns.

12 • Funding from companies that develop this
13 technology to educate the public on the safety
14 and benefits of biotechnology.

15 • Developmenting of a positive national strategy for
16 the further ~~development~~ growth of biotechnology
17 research and ~~favor~~ the swift dissemination of
18 accurate information to consumers concerning
19 biotechnology products.

20 • U.S. government agencies, particularly the USDA
21 and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA),
22 continue to serve their ~~respective~~ roles in
23 providing unbiased, ~~scientifically~~ science-based
24 evaluations concerning human and animal safety
25 and wholesomeness, as well as the
26 environmental impacts, of biotechnology-
27 enhanced commodities. ~~U.S. government~~ These
28 agencies should evaluate ~~whether there are~~ if
29 improvements could be made in to the regulatory
30 approval process ~~that could be made~~ to further
31 enhance consumer confidence.

- 32 • ~~The development of~~ Developing standardized
33 testing procedures to ensure accurate, timely and
34 cost-effective analysis of biotechnology products
35 throughout the ~~entire~~ production and marketing
36 chain.
- 37 • The U.S. government to use all available means
38 to improve international understanding of the
39 science-based process used by ~~U.S.~~ agencies
40 when approving biotechnology-enhanced
41 commodities.
- 42 • Initiatives that assist in the research,
43 development and regulatory clearance of
44 specialty crop biotechnology products.
- 45 • Michigan Farm Bureau ~~take a proactive approach~~
46 ~~to~~ proactively educating members and consumers
47 about the advantages and potential of
48 biotechnology, including the use of the FARM
49 Science Lab.
- 50 • Strong patent protection to encourage these new
51 technologies.
- 52 • An expedited process for the approval of edible
53 and non-edible genetically engineered plant
54 material beneficial to the
55 agriculture/horticultural/floricultural industry
56 through the FDA and USDA Animal and Plant
57 Health Inspection Service.
- 58 • ~~The concept of allowing~~ Allowing farmers to use
59 their own crop as seed as long as they pay the
60 technology fee for the seed they use.
- 61 • Communication with end users to identify specific
62 needs to promote value-added trait development.
- 63 • The voluntary approach taken by the
64 biotechnology industry ~~that allows for~~ allowing
65 further development of agriceuticals and research
66 while ~~still~~ protecting our commercial production.
67 Seed purity (identity preservation) is critical in
68 maintaining ~~both~~ consumer and processor
69 confidence in agricultural products.
- 70 • The common practice followed by the seed
71 industry (as well as outlined under the USDA
72 organic practices) that the burden of maintaining
73 genetic purity falls solely upon the producer of the
74 identity-preserved crop as far as needed buffer
75 strips and other cultural practices. Users of
76 biotech seeds should follow planting restrictions
77 and requirements.
- 78 • ~~Active involvement by the~~ The U.S. in the
79 ~~development~~ developing of a uniform,
80 scientifically science-based international approval
81 process for biotechnology.

- 82 • The free choice of farmers to grow what they
83 want, whether it be biotech or non-biotech
84 products.
85 • Public and private efforts to continue research on
86 non-biotech seed.

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

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

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

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

#9 COMMISSION SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

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

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

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

22 Furthermore, We insist the Michigan Legislature

23 or Governor create a commission for the Michigan
24 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and
25 Energy. We urge appointments to include agricultural
26 representation in proportion to other interests and to
27 follow guidelines ~~similar to~~ like those listed above. ◆

#10 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~~ We encourage
4 Michigan Farm Bureau to monitor and identify ~~broad~~
5 ~~regulation~~ regulatory changes ~~in relation to the~~
6 business 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. ◆

#11 CRANBERRY INDUSTRY

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

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

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

#12 DAIRY INDUSTRY

1 The dairy industry is critical to ~~the overall~~
2 ~~Michigan's agriculture~~ agricultural economy ~~in Michigan~~.
3 We support a strong and vibrant dairy industry ~~in~~

4 ~~Michigan that allows our~~ allowing Michigan dairy
5 farmers to be competitive in national and international
6 markets.

7 We support:

- 8 • ~~Industry collaboration in the development of~~
9 developing additional dairy processing in Michigan,
10 and ~~urge~~ urging local, state and federal lawmakers
11 and regulators to ~~assist with~~ help streamlining
12 streamline the process for dairy ~~industry~~ processing
13 expansion ~~in processing~~.
- 14 • Funding ~~for all~~ state and federally required dairy
15 industry sampling and inspection programs.
- 16 • Current dairy laws ~~as they~~ pertaining to the milk
17 pasteurization of milk, including prohibiting the sale
18 of unpasteurized fluid milk for human consumption.
- 19 • Michigan Farm Bureau and the Michigan
20 Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
21 working together to provide guidelines for cow-share
22 and herd-share programs that meet Grade A dairy
23 standards.
- 24 • Implementing ~~On-farm~~ bio-security practices ~~being~~
25 ~~implemented~~ that protect and ~~enhance~~ animal health
26 and ~~our~~ enhance dairy markets.
- 27 • Continued availability and proper use of animal
28 health tools (e.g., antibiotics, technology).
- 29 • ~~Industry support and~~ Dairy industry participation in
30 the veterinary feed directive.
- 31 • Collaboration between farmers, animal health
32 officials and the veterinary community in an
33 aggressive Johnes detection and eradication
34 program, and a continued focus on improving dairy
35 cattle health.
- 36 • Industry participation in any changes to the Siting
37 Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management
38 Practice (GAAMP) ~~so as~~ to allow for continued
39 growth and dairy expansion.
- 40 • Continued farmer participation in any changes to the
41 National Dairy Farmers Assuring Responsible
42 Management (FARM) Program and on-farm
43 implementation of ~~the~~ its standards.
- 44 • Continued investments in research that allow for
45 industry growth and efficiency.
- 46 • Continued farmer participation and control over dairy
47 industry promotion ~~dollars~~ funds, enhancements and
48 creativity in dairy promotion ideas and the
49 development of new products.
- 50 • Increased efforts to ~~expand~~ increase dairy
51 consumption in schools systems, including ~~inclusion~~
52 of higher milk fat options and flavored milks.
- 53 • Dairy farmers being able to collect, store, and

- 54 market colostrum to licensed collectors/sellers.
- 55 • Collaboration with the United Dairy Industry of
56 Michigan and Michigan Ag Council educating in
57 promoting the benefits of dairy consumption —
58 especially for youth — to the medical and
59 educational community and education system about
60 the benefits of milk/dairy consumption, especially for
61 youth communities.
- 62 • Collaboration with across the industry, including
63 farmers, on the to establishment of a world-class
64 dairy teaching, research and extension facility
65 located on the current at Michigan State University's
66 south campus dairy farm that meets the our
67 industry's current and future needs of our dairy
68 industry. ◆

#13 DIRECT FARM MARKETING AND AGRITOURISM

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

5 We support:

- 6 • Legislation defining agritourism as activities on
7 the farm that may or may not be directly related
8 to the farm operation, conducted for the purpose
9 of increasing income for the farm business
10 including educational or entertainment
11 experiences, but does not change the general
12 intent of the farm operation.
- 13 • The development of an Agritourism Act,
14 administered by the Michigan Department of
15 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD),
16 that preempts local ordinances. Areas of
17 coverage should include, but not be limited to,
18 event barns, corn mazes, and ~~any~~ farm animal
19 related activities. Farms will receive the benefits
20 of this Act ~~as long as if~~ more than 50% of the
21 farm income is generated by the sales of
22 commodities grown on the farm and ~~as long as if~~
23 the facilities can meet the building code's public
24 safety requirements ~~in the building code~~. This
25 does not prohibit local governments from
26 enacting reasonable hour, noise and parking
27 regulations.
- 28 • Master plans and Local zoning ordinances that
29 recognizeing the benefits and allowing for the
30 operation of farm markets, roadside stands,
31 agritourism destinations and farmers markets
32 that allow for the placement of these activities
33 on agricultural zoned land without a special use

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

- 84 promoteing and provideing education on food
85 safety education to consumers.
- 86 • Operations ~~that~~ welcomeing the general public
87 on to their facilities to and portraying a
88 professional image because they are our
89 ambassadors to the public where positive
90 perception is important.
 - 91 • Operations with livestock to participateing in
92 their respective national animal care programs.

93 We oppose:

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

#14 DRY BEAN INDUSTRY

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

4 We support:

- 5 • ~~The~~ Ongoing research necessary, including new
6 technology, to continually improve dry bean
7 production in Michigan, including new technology.
- 8 • Research asensuring the industry is able to can
9 meet the ever changing consumer needs of the
10 ~~consumer~~ preferences, specifically the development
11 of new end-user products.
- 12 • Continuation, staffing and adequate funding of
13 Michigan State University's the dry bean variety
14 development program at ~~Michigan State University~~.
- 15 • A bean breeding program that includes the
16 development of new varieties to that better meet the
17 demands of domestic and ~~world~~ international
18 markets.
- 19 • ~~Research into areas of~~ Researching disease control
20 and pest prevention.
- 21 • Production contracts as viable and important
22 marketing tools for growers, elevators and canners.
23 All parties must abide by the provisions of these
24 such agreements, with close ~~and the~~ interaction
25 between among all parties ~~must be closer~~ to ensure
26 compliance at all levels.
- 27 • Contract language that includes "Acts of God"
28 provisions accounting for adverse (~~due to~~ weather

- 29 ~~conditions affecting growers' and the inability to~~
 30 ~~plant, grow or harvest a crop) provisions.~~
- 31 • The Pulse Health Initiative.
 - 32 • Accurate and timely reporting of dry bean prices by
 33 elevators when gathering data for computing
 34 revenue insurance.
 - 35 • Uniformity of grading standards among elevators
 36 regarding foreign material and pick/grading
 37 determinations.
 - 38 • Production and price reporting in an efficient format
 39 that can be updated as needed.
 - 40 • All Electronic shipping documentation being
 41 ~~completed electronically.~~
 - 42 • Representation from the organic dry bean industry
 43 on the Michigan Bean Commission.
- 44 We oppose:
- 45 • Limited market access for all processors and
 46 producers. ◆

#15 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 breeds.~~ We strongly
 4 encourage and support a collaborative efforts by
 5 equine professionals to strengthen the industry and
 6 support its continued growth. The equine industry
 7 is much stronger and able to thrive more
 8 successfully when united and working collectively.

9 We support:

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

- 29 • The Equine Liability Act ~~that, which~~ strengthens
30 liability protection measures for the equine
31 industry.
- 32 • ~~Efforts of the equine industry~~ to establish an
33 equine industry marketing and education program.
- 34 • The equine industry's efforts in conducting a
35 study to determine the ~~overall~~ impact and status
36 of the state's equine industry ~~in the state of~~
37 Michigan.
- 38 • Removing the ~~cap on the~~ online wagering tax cap
39 with the funds being allocated to the Agriculture
40 Equine Industry Development Fund.
- 41 • The expansion and promotion of equine
42 recreational opportunities on public land ~~in~~
43 Michigan.
- 44 • ~~The prohibition of~~ Prohibiting bicycle/pedal
45 powered devices on trails signed for equestrian
46 and hiking only.
- 47 • ~~The prohibition of~~ Prohibiting non-equestrian
48 campers in equestrian campgrounds and portions
49 of other campgrounds dedicated to equestrian
50 use.
- 51 • The establishment, growth, and funding of urban
52 equestrian educational and promotion programs.
- 53 • Seven-year retention of signed liability release
54 forms.

55 We oppose:

- 56 • ~~All attempts~~ Attempts to classify equine as
57 companion animals.
- 58 • Legislation ~~that would~~ limiting /or prohibiting the
59 use of horses as working animals.
- 60 • ~~Any relocation~~ Relocating of the Hhorsemen's
61 Ssimulcast purse pool funds to any race meet
62 licensee.

63 We understand there are instances where
64 owners can no longer care for their animals and
65 under these circumstances there must be viable
66 options for dealing with them. ~~It is important that all~~
67 All equine owners need to understand the
68 responsibility of owning and caring for their animals.

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

72 In an attempt to encourage the equine industry to
73 be more proactive in environmental protection, we
74 encourage MFB to develop an equine specific
75 ~~industry~~ strategy that focuses on Michigan
76 Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program
77 verification, manure management and environmental
78 protection for the ~~equine~~ industry.

79 We are concerned about the number of wild
80 mustangs being rounded up on federal land and
81 being moved into Michigan. These horses should ~~be~~
82 ~~required to move into Michigan on~~ have an inter-
83 state health certificate and meet the health standards
84 of the Michigan equine population and the Bureau of
85 Land Management adoption requirements. ♦

#16 AGRICULTURAL 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
5 the 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~~
10 opportunities for enhance the enhancing leadership
11 skills and ~~increase~~ boosting the agricultural
12 knowledge of ~~our~~ participating youth, while also
13 promoting agriculture ~~with~~ to the general public.

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

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

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

42 We urge MFB to evaluate and make the

43 ~~necessary~~ recommendations ~~to~~ aimed at ensuring
44 the long-term viability of our agricultural heritage
45 through participation ~~in~~ at exhibitions, shows, ~~or~~
46 and other public events; in addition to state and
47 county fairs. ♦

#17 FOOD SAFETY

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

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

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

20 We support:

- 21 • Proper biosecurity, identification, and safety
22 protocols being followed by ~~all~~ state and federal
23 agency personnel when visiting farms; including
24 compliance with ~~all~~ executive orders and
25 regulatory requirements relative to the ~~ag~~ industry.
- 26 • Continued use of food safety audits such as Good
27 Agricultural Practices (GAP) and food safety risk
28 assessments to ensure food and consumer safety.
- 29 • A private, third-party audit being accepted by
30 USDA ~~as long as if~~ it includes at least the same
31 minimum standards as a government audit.
- 32 • Standardizing a single third-party audit that
33 would be broadly accepted by retailers.
- 34 • Permanent institutional licensing, including
35 churches and civic facilities.
- 36 • ~~Current dairy laws as they pertain to the~~
37 pasteurization of milk pasteurization laws,
38 including prohibiting the sale of unpasteurized
39 fluid milk for human consumption.
- 40 • Michigan Farm Bureau and MDARD working to
41 provide guidelines for cow-share and herd-
42 shares that meet Grade A dairy standards.
- 43 • Use of wooden pallets and wooden harvest bins.

- 44 • Custom exempt slaughter.
- 45 • The ability for families to process and consume
- 46 their own products on their own farm.
- 47 • ~~Continued monitoring~~ Monitoring of the Cottage Food
- 48 Law.
- 49 • Michigan Department of Environment, Great
- 50 Lakes, and Energy, in consultation with
- 51 MDARD, reviewing the rules for application of
- 52 biosolids in close proximity to growing fruit and
- 53 vegetable crops with the intent of preventing
- 54 potential human health hazards.
- 55 • The concept of On-Farm Readiness Review kits
- 56 along with the Food Safety Modernization Act
- 57 Grower Training programs that help ease the
- 58 burden of farms becoming compliant.
- 59 • MFB and stakeholders conducting educational
- 60 meetings for microbusinesses related to
- 61 agriculture.
- 62 • Prohibiting reuse of food containers or packaging
- 63 labeled with “use by” or “purchase by” dates, for
- 64 the benefit of consumer health and producer
- 65 liability protection.
- 66 • A committee ~~comprised~~ of MFB members
- 67 researching and reporting back on block chain
- 68 technology use in agriculture and the potential
- 69 impact on Michigan agriculture.
- 70 • MDARD ~~should~~ immediately reporting food fraud and
- 71 cybersecurity impacts.

72 We oppose:

- 73 • ~~Any unfunded~~ Unfunded mandates, including but
- 74 not limited to USDA GAP audits.
- 75 • Abuse and overreach of the Cottage Food Law
- 76 provisions.
- 77 • Any agency or department quarantining or
- 78 seizing raw or finished products, commodities,
- 79 cattle, land, or equipment without clear violation
- 80 of law or lawfully set standards. ♦

#18 FORESTRY

1 Forestry ~~should be is treated and defined is~~
 2 considered an integral part of Michigan agriculture. The
 3 ~~production~~ Producing of forest products requires inputs
 4 and management, which are practices similar to those
 5 necessary for the production of other agricultural
 6 commodities. Michigan forests contribute substantially
 7 ~~much~~ to the Michigan state's economy.

8 We support:

- 9 • Efforts to define clarify forest industry activities
- 10 as agricultural with respect to matters ~~for things~~
- 11 such as truck licenses, equipment taxes ~~on~~

- 12 equipment, insurance, supply purchases, real
13 estate taxation, zoning, and agriculture land-use
14 classification.
- 15 • New/expanded industrial uses of forest
16 products in transportation infrastructure, such
17 as the bridge construction of bridges, guard
18 rails, and other uses on roads and highways.
19 We urge the Michigan Department of
20 Transportation and county road commissions
21 to use ~~these~~ Michigan-grown and processed
22 forest products.
 - 23 • ~~The promotion of~~ use of cross-laminated
24 timber in building construction of buildings in
25 Michigan due to its many benefits, including
26 carbon sequestration, LEED (Leadership in
27 Energy and Environmental Design) credits,
28 and reduced construction time.
 - 29 • Changes to the state building code and other
30 regulations to address the advancements of mass
31 timber.
 - 32 • Promoting ~~the development of a~~ cross-
33 laminated timber manufacturing ~~plant~~ in
34 Michigan.
 - 35 • Clarifying the use of the log plate to include all
36 activities connected with logging operations.
 - 37 • ~~The classification of~~ Classifying logging
38 equipment as ~~an~~ implements of husbandry.
 - 39 • ~~The multiple-use management philosophy of~~
40 our public forests, with emphasis emphasizing
41 on sustainable management and harvest of
42 state-owned forestlands.
 - 43 • ~~We urge t~~The Michigan Department of Natural
44 Resources (MDNR) to base basing public-land
45 timber sales from public lands on reasonable
46 aggregate economic, biological and social
47 impacts.
 - 48 • Requiring a market-value bid on purchase offers
49 of Michigan state-owned forests. ~~All s~~Sales
50 should be based on a total-value bid rather than
51 on sales of species/or products estimates.
 - 52 • MDNR finding markets for oversized red/white
53 pines and tamaracks.
 - 54 • The MDNR timber sale extensions period
55 being increased to one year.
 - 56 • The MDNR timber sale extension fee being
57 waived due to poor market or weather
58 conditions of a period longer than six months.
 - 59 • Timber management ~~with techniques practices~~
60 best suited for public lands along roads and
61 highways.

- 62 • ~~Legislation that protects timber operations from~~
63 ~~liability involving for individuals using the land~~
64 ~~for recreational purposes.~~
- 65 • Requiring log book use to ensure hunter safety
66 ~~When hunting occurs on public lands that are~~
67 ~~being logged, we support the requirement for~~
68 ~~hunter log books for safety purposes.~~
- 69 • The maintenance and improvement of tax-
70 ~~reverted lands acquired by the state be~~
71 ~~maintained or improved through reforestation or~~
72 ~~other approved soil and water conservation~~
73 ~~practices.~~
- 74 • An ongoing Michigan forest inventory and
75 ~~analysis with funded jointly funding by industry,~~
76 ~~state, and federal sources.~~
- 77 • Programs and/or initiatives that provide
78 incentivize landowners with incentives to
79 improve forest resources, encourage proper
80 management, promote forest sustainability of
81 forestlands, and/or benefit the forest products
82 industry.
- 83 • All farms operations and landowners
84 managing forests, wetlands, and habitat
85 enrolling participating in the Michigan
86 Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program
87 (MAEAP) and, completing as many
88 recommendations as possible to help preserve
89 air, water, and soil quality, and to achieve
90 practice sustainable land management goals.
- 91 • Efforts by the State of Michigan government's
92 efforts to provide education and outreach for
93 private forest landowners.
- 94 • The expansion of Expanding post-high school
95 education programs in applied/skilled forestry
96 post-high school education programs to help
97 ensure a sufficient and, skilled forestry workforce
98 for the future.
- 99 • The Right to Forest Act and urge landowners to
100 utilize Generally Accepted Forest Management
101 Practices.
- 102 • ~~Encouragement by the State to better utilize ash~~
103 ~~lumber and biomass so they can be utilized~~
104 ~~near the point of origin prior to ash borer~~
105 ~~invasion. State government action to encourage~~
106 ~~local utilization of ash lumber and biomass, near~~
107 ~~its point of origin, to minimize the potential for~~
108 ~~ash borer invasion and spread.~~
- 109 • Better defining foresters' duties and
110 responsibilities in the Occupational Code, and
111 a voluntary forester registration program for

- 112 foresters and recognize the need to greatly
113 improve the definition of a forester's duties under
114 the Occupational Code.
- 115 • ~~Assistance from MDNR~~ assisting with
116 prescribed burns on private land. Prescribed fire
117 is an important management tool to control
118 unwanted vegetation and helps prevent. ~~This~~
119 ~~will also help keep the accumulated~~ tion of dead
120 wood, needles, etc. from becoming a fire
121 hazard.
 - 122 • ~~A r~~ Reviewing of the recent changes to the
123 Forestry Best Management Practices (BMP)
124 manual. It is imperative ~~the~~ BMP guidelines are
125 reflective of current industry practices and
126 standards, not ideological principles.
127 Standards should be based on outcomes, not a
128 prescriptive set of rules.
 - 129 • ~~Efforts by the t~~ Timber industry efforts to on the
130 development of a common scale for hardwood
131 saw logs.
 - 132 • ~~Michigan State University (MSU) to~~ Michigan
133 universities' conducting an economic study
134 comparing ~~the economic returns of the~~
135 Michigan forestry industry returns to the
136 economic returns from those of Michigan's
137 other major Michigan commodities.
 - 138 • ~~The collaboration between~~ Michigan State
139 University (MSU) collaborating with the and
140 University of Wisconsin on a forestry economy
141 specialist.
 - 142 • Working with the MDNR, conservation
143 organizations, hunting groups and other
144 interested groups to reduce wildlife
145 populations to acceptable levels that will not
146 deplete the regeneration of new seedlings in
147 woodlots and forests.
 - 148 • Michigan Farm Bureau providing expertise
149 and advising the creation of an industry-driven
150 initiative supporting forestry research,
151 education and outreach with MSU, University
152 of Michigan, and Michigan Technological
153 University, funded by State of Michigan
154 appropriations for forest management.
 - 155 • The MDNR and the Michigan Department of
156 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)
157 prioritizing growing and developing new
158 markets, new products, and processing
159 facilities.
 - 160 • County Farm Bureaus working with local
161 school districts to retain the ownership and

162 use of school forests. Retaining school forests
163 helps preserve educational opportunities for
164 students, conserve forest resources, and
165 provide both short and long-term income for
166 school districts.

- 167 • County Farm Bureaus referring members to
168 local conservation districts for a list of qualified
169 foresters for woodlot owners.

170 We oppose:

- 171 • Logging Rrestrictions of logging during hunting season.
- 172 • Any aAdditional licensing or regulatory
173 requirements on forest management
174 professionals.
- 175 • Mandating forest practice rules.
- 176 • The cClosing of existing roads on state forest lands.
- 177 • Any lLegislation restricting the sale of forest
178 products for non-traditional use.

179 ~~Regeneration of new seedlings, ensuring future~~
180 ~~crops of trees in our woodlots and forests, is being~~
181 ~~seriously depleted by wildlife populationsthat are too~~
182 ~~high. We will work with the MDNR, conservation~~
183 ~~organizations, hunting groups and other interested~~
184 ~~groups to bring the wildlife population downto~~
185 ~~acceptable levels.~~

186 ~~We urge the creation of an industry driven~~
187 ~~initiativefunded by State of Michigan appropriations for~~
188 ~~forest management, research, education and outreach~~
189 ~~at MSU, University of Michigan, and Michigan~~
190 ~~Technological University. Michigan Farm Bureau~~
191 ~~should provide assistance and expertise to such an~~
192 ~~initiative.~~

193 ~~We request MDNR and the Michigan Department of~~
194 ~~Agriculture and Rural Development to place a high~~
195 ~~priority on growing and developing new markets, new~~
196 ~~products, and processing facilities.~~

197 ~~We encourage county Farm Bureaus to work~~
198 ~~with their local school districts to retain the~~
199 ~~ownership and use of school forests. The retention of~~
200 ~~school forests willhelp preserve educational~~
201 ~~opportunities for students, help conserve forest~~
202 ~~resources, and provide both short and long-term~~
203 ~~income for school districts.~~

204 ~~We encourage county Farm Bureaus to refer~~
205 ~~members to their local conservation districts to~~
206 ~~obtain a list of qualified foresters for woodlot~~
207 ~~owners. ♦~~

#19 FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- 1 Michigan Farm Bureau will cooperate with industry
- 2 groups to research and implement Michigan minimum

3 grade quality standards for fresh fruits and vegetables
4 that will improve product quality, meet consumer
5 expectations and enhance Michigan's competitive
6 position.

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

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

#22 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 help fund both ~~in the~~ research areas and ~~in~~ staff
6 funding positions.

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

13 ~~Therefore, we~~ We support:

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

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

#23 LABELING

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

#24 MAPLE SUGAR PRODUCTION

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

10 We support:

- 11 • Changes to Environmental Protection Agency
12 (EPA) regulations to allow the use of isopropyl
13 alcohol ~~to be used by producers in Michigan to~~
14 cleaning sap lines. ♦

#25 MARKETING AND BARGAINING LEGISLATION

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

7 We support:

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

- 17 • ~~Efforts of the~~ The Michigan Department of
18 Agriculture and Rural Development ~~to~~
19 aggressively enforcing this program. ◆

#26 MICHIGAN ALLIANCE FOR ANIMAL AGRICULTURE

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

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

#27 MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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

5 We support the continued individual existence of
6 MDARD within state government. We challenge
7 MDARD to continue to be proactive, focus on core
8 programs and eliminate redundancies where possible.
9 Program areas of a stronger, more encompassing
10 MDARD might include, but would not be limited to:
11 consumer protection, environmental protection,

12 resource-based economic development programs,
13 aquaculture, privately owned eCervidae, commercial
14 fishing and forestry programs.

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

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

- 28 • Food safety-
- 29 • ~~Oversight of industry r~~Regulatory programs- oversight
- 30 • Animal and plant disease protection and
31 agriculture security-
- 32 • Producer protection;
- 33 • ~~integrity of a~~Agricultural products integrity-
- 34 • Market access inspections-
- 35 • Statistics and information-
- 36 • Industry and trade advocacy-

37 We support:

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

- 62 ~~to protecting Michigan~~ farmers from excessive
63 regulations being advanced by federal
64 inspectors.
- 65 • The MDARD abandoned and neglected
66 orchards program and amendments to include
67 other perennial crops. With the involvement of
68 stakeholders and other departments, we support
69 ~~the development of~~ ing rules to strengthen
70 program enforcement provisions ~~of the program~~,
71 including appropriate funding.
 - 72 • Reviews and specific expirations for quarantines or
73 movement restrictions.
 - 74 • Indemnification for ~~losses of~~ farm income loss
75 when agricultural commodities or products are
76 impounded, farms are quarantined, or
77 movement or sales are restricted in the public
78 interest. ~~In determining indemnification,~~
79 MDARD should consider at least one local
80 appraisal of fair market value in determining
81 indemnification.
 - 82 • In the case of widespread animal disease
83 outbreaks, indemnification should reflect prices
84 that were current prior to the outbreak.
 - 85 • Investigating the feasibility of a livestock insurance
86 fund ~~that might to~~ complement existing state ~~and/or~~
87 federal indemnification programs. The feasibility
88 study should consider loss of livestock and
89 production due to disease outbreak, depredation,
90 funding options, species participation and producer
91 control of the fund.
 - 92 • A mechanism for loans or direct
93 compensation for ~~loss of~~ income loss due to
94 depopulation, quarantine or condemnation of
95 agricultural products.
 - 96 • Enforcement of food safety laws, animal
97 identification requirements, and inspection
98 programs ~~in Michigan~~, focused on working with
99 producers to resolve problems in a timely
100 fashion before ~~the issuance of~~ issuing fines and
101 penalties.
 - 102 • An increased use of technology and sampling and
103 a decreased use of inspections to ensure a safe
104 food supply.
 - 105 • Photographic evidence taken as part of the
106 inspection process being exempt from the
107 Freedom of Information Act.
 - 108 • Certifying the accuracy of weights and measures,
109 including moisture testing equipment.
 - 110 • Reviewing the point system for Pesticide Applicators
111 Certification to increase efficiency.

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

- 162 state meat inspection for local custom
163 processors as soon as possible to support
164 value-added opportunities. We will support
165 adequate funding for this program.
- 166 • Michigan Farm Bureau working with MDARD to
167 investigate having state inspectors service small
168 scale or portable slaughter facilities in sparsely
169 populated rural areas.
 - 170 • MDARD having sole authority to license and
171 regulate all terrestrial and aquatic plants for sale
172 or commercial use.
 - 173 • MDARD working more closely with the aquaculture
174 industry to clarify and streamline the process for
175 aquaculture operations to harvest and sell directly to
176 the consumer. ♦

#28 MICHIGAN MEAT PROCESSING INDUSTRY

- 1 The livestock industry and meat processing are
2 integral to Michigan's agricultural economy. Local meat
3 processing facilities provide food availability and
4 economic opportunity. Excessive regulation and
5 limitations on retail packaging/sales greatly reduce
6 public access to locally produced meat.
7 To help address supply chain challenges, burdensome
8 regulations and limited market access, we support:
- 9 • Systematic evaluation of Michigan's meat packing
10 industry, retail sales, custom exempt facilities,
11 market access, regulation and opportunities for
12 expansion.
 - 13 • Michigan State University (MSU), community
14 colleges, career technical schools and the livestock
15 industry coordinating to develop and establish an ag
16 tech-type livestock harvest and meat processing
17 certification program.
 - 18 • More federally inspected meat processing facilities
19 in Michigan.
 - 20 • Investment in and promotion of mobile agricultural
21 processing labs in Michigan.
 - 22 • Creating a Michigan-based meat inspection and
23 licensing system for in-state processing and retail
24 sale of meat.
 - 25 • A partnership between the Michigan Department of
26 Agriculture and Rural Development and USDA to
27 train and authorize state level employees to conduct
28 USDA inspection services of small, independent
29 processing facilities.
 - 30 • Increased utilization of the meats laboratory and
31 professional expertise at MSU to support the meat
32 industry, educate students and train meat industry
33 professionals.

- 34 • Limiting regulations on small and medium-sized
- 35 meat processors while protecting and enhancing
- 36 food safety.
- 37 • State and federal funding to increase the number of
- 38 new — and enhance current — small and medium
- 39 sized meat processing facilities and on-farm/exempt
- 40 operations.
- 41 • State and federal funding and low-interest loans to
- 42 help small and medium-sized meat processing
- 43 facilities meet or comply with regulatory
- 44 requirements.
- 45 • Government funding to offset the regulatory burdens
- 46 placed upon small and medium-sized meat
- 47 processors.
- 48 • The further establishment of MDARD approved
- 49 meat processing facilities that allow for the donation
- 50 to food banks and pantries. ◆

#29 NURSERY, FLORICULTURE, SOD AND GREENHOUSE INDUSTRY

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

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

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

14 **[Relocated in Policy]** ~~Ornamental horticulture,~~
 15 ~~nursery, landscape, floriculture, sod, Christmas trees~~
 16 ~~and greenhouse productions are unique forms of~~
 17 ~~agriculture and must be recognized as such by local,~~
 18 ~~state and national regulatory bodies.~~

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

29 Due to the extensive updates to the Worker
 30 Protection Standards, policies and procedures, we

31 encourage MFB and other industry groups, including
32 Michigan State University Extension, MDARD, Michigan
33 Nursery and Landscape Association, and Michigan
34 Greenhouse Growers Council, to collaborate and
35 formulate ideas to create new digital training materials
36 ~~in digital format.~~

37 We support:

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

51 We oppose:

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

#30 PAYMENT PROTECTION AND SECURITY FOR GROWERS

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

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

13 seasonality of many commodities.

14 We support:

- 15 • PA 198 of 2013, updates to the Grain Dealers Act
16 that provided assurance that growers receive a
17 priority lien position and full payment for
18 commodities delivered.

19 ~~We urge~~

- 20 • Farm Bureau ~~to~~ working proactively with the
21 Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural
22 Development to expand the FPIA to include fruit
23 and vegetable crops, and ~~to~~ creating an
24 appropriate funding mechanism.

25 ~~We recommend~~

- 26 • ~~e~~ Exploring all possible options, including
27 amending the Uniform Commercial Code, to
28 ensure a fully secured position payment for
29 commodities delivered. ◆

#31 PLANT PESTS AND DISEASES

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

4 We support research to do the following:

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

22 Additionally, we support:

- 23 • Industry-led efforts to control and prevent crop
24 losses due to plant pests and diseases.
- 25 • ~~More a~~ Aggressively advocating for pesticide
26 manufacturers to develop new chemistries for
27 existing and emerging pest threats.
- 28 • ~~The d~~ Development of regulatory protocol,
29 inspection procedures and pest control methods to
30 allow ~~for the~~ shipment of quarantined commodities.

- 31 • Indemnification for losses of farm income when
32 agricultural commodities or products are impounded,
33 farms are quarantined, or sales are restricted in the
34 public interest.
 - 35 • ~~The supplier being held~~ Holding suppliers
36 responsible for compensation ~~for~~ of all losses
37 due to imported plants with diseases.
 - 38 • Zero interest/fixed loan or direct and/or indirect
39 compensation to producers for sudden market
40 loss due to invasive species, including ~~but not~~
41 ~~limited to~~ SWD, and hemlock woolly adelgid
42 and others.
 - 43 • ~~Testing for~~ Vomitoxin testing in corn field trials.
44 We encourage ethanol plant operators to spot-
45 check for vomitoxin in corn entering the plant
46 and dried distillers grains leaving the plant.
 - 47 • An industry-driven, comprehensive rewrite of
48 Michigan's Plant Pest Protection Act.
 - 49 • Educational efforts to help producers and
50 consumers understand their importance of their
51 ~~roles~~ in preventing the spread of plant pests and
52 diseases.
 - 53 • A review and update of the ~~current~~ invasive
54 species quarantine rules in Michigan. We urge the
55 Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural
56 Development to develop a permitting system ~~that~~
57 allowing agricultural products to be shipped
58 directly for in-state processing ~~on a permitted basis~~
59 throughout the year ~~in Michigan~~, during a
60 quarantine period.
 - 61 • Quicker review and approval of species by ~~The~~
62 ~~current~~ councils ~~which~~ maintaining the lists for
63 noxious terrestrial weeds and invasive species
64 as defined by PA 451 of 1994 ~~and encourage~~
65 ~~swifter action to review and approve species for~~
66 ~~these lists~~.
 - 67 • Encouraging conservation districts to take
68 measures to keep ~~these~~ noxious weeds
69 controlled.
- 70 We oppose banning neonicotinoid-based pest
71 control products when there is a lack of research or
72 conclusive scientific evidence ~~that links~~ linking them
73 to declining bee and other pollinator populations. ♦

#32 RIGHT TO FARM

1 We believe Michigan's Right to Farm Act is ~~the~~ a
2 model for ~~our~~ the country. ~~The Act has allowed,~~
3 allowing all sectors of commercial agriculture ~~to move~~
4 ~~forward~~ utilizing utilize existing and new technologies
5 through 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 between
13 farming operations in terms of size, soil types, and
14 location. We urge all producers to be aware of
15 applicable GAAMPs and encourage ~~all producers~~ them
16 to employ the Michigan Agriculture Environmental
17 Assurance Program (MAEAP) and provisions of the
18 farm bill as management tools in the production of
19 agricultural products and possible expansion of their
20 operations.

21 We support:

- 22 • ~~Agricultural operations not being restricted to only~~
23 ~~operating under their historical use.~~
- 24 • Developing realistic land-use plans for ~~land use,~~
25 ~~which will that~~ allow agriculture to ~~change~~
26 evolve, incorporate technology and produce
27 commodities based on market demands.
- 28 • ~~An expanding livestock farm not be considered~~
29 ~~a nuisance as a result of new home~~
30 ~~construction (non-farm residence) within the~~
31 ~~approved setback distance after the Michigan~~
32 ~~Department of Agriculture and Rural~~
33 ~~Development's (MDARD) site approval, but~~
34 ~~prior to completion of the expansion.~~
- 35 • Research regarding ~~manure storage, on~~
36 improving manure storage and processing,
37 building design, and types of livestock feed that
38 could mitigate nuisance odors.
- 39 • ~~Development of~~ Developing an odor estimation
40 model for tailored to Michigan's climatic
41 conditions.
- 42 • ~~Changes to~~ Changing the Agricultural
43 Disclosure Statement (ADS) ~~that would to~~
44 include:
 - 45 ▪ Seller notification to the potential buyer.
 - 46 ▪ A separate document at the time of closing.
 - 47 ▪ Updating the ADS to include additional
48 agricultural practices.
- 49 • The Michigan Right to Farm Act ~~should allow for~~
50 ~~and protecting~~ users of existing and new
51 technology, including energy production for on-
52 farm use.

53 We oppose:

- 54 • Agricultural operations being restricted to
55 operating only under their historical use.

- 56 • Expanding livestock farms being deemed
- 57 nuisances as a result of new non-farm home
- 58 construction within the approved setback distance
- 59 after Michigan Department of Agriculture and
- 60 Rural Development (MDARD) site approval but
- 61 prior to expansion's completion.
- 62 • Right to Farm protection ~~being~~ extended to
- 63 marijuana ~~cannabis~~ growing facilities until
- 64 growing the plant becomes legal at the federal
- 65 level.
- 66 • Ballot initiatives seeking to control generally
- 67 accepted livestock production and management
- 68 practices.
- 69 • The inclusion of commercial wind turbine or solar
- 70 facilities in the definition of a farm.

71 **Cooperation**

72 We will work with MDARD and Michigan State
 73 University to inform farmers, local units of
 74 government, and other interested individuals of the
 75 positive benefits of the Right to Farm Act and
 76 GAAMPs. We encourage all farmers to follow the
 77 recommendations to demonstrate positive concerns
 78 for our neighbors and the environment. We
 79 encourage greater farmer participation on township
 80 boards and planning commissions to review existing
 81 ordinances, help educate about Right to Farm and
 82 GAAMPs, and assist in ~~the creation of~~ creating
 83 ~~ordinances that are~~ consistent with the Right to Farm
 84 Act. We encourage the State of Michigan and local
 85 units of government to structure ~~their~~ programs,
 86 ordinances, and community development plans in a
 87 manner consistent with the Right to Farm Act.

88 We urge Michigan Farm Bureau to study and
 89 ~~make recommendations for~~ amendments to the
 90 Right to Farm Act ~~that would~~ to provide additional
 91 protection ~~to~~ for agricultural producers enrolled in
 92 ~~either~~ PA 116 or a permanent farmland preservation
 93 program.

94 **GAAMPs**

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

102 The GAAMP for Site Selection and Odor Control
 103 for ~~n~~New and ~~e~~Expanding ~~l~~Livestock ~~f~~Facilities has
 104 specific setbacks and scientific parameters.

105 We support:

- 106 • ~~The a~~Action taken by the Michigan Commission
107 of Agriculture and Rural Development to remove
108 ~~the~~ language specific to local zoning from the
109 siting and farm market GAAMPs.
- 110 • ~~Creation of~~Creating a GAAMP for ag labor
111 housing.
- 112 • ~~The creation of~~ Creating a Ggreenhouse GAAMP
113 that provides nuisance protection for permanent
114 and temporary greenhouse structures, used for
115 commercial or production agricultural purposes
116 ~~other than (except~~ cannabis), regardless of
117 population, zoning, or tax classification.
- 118 • ~~The c~~Continued use of GAAMPs to define
119 acceptable farm management practices in ~~the~~
120 state of Michigan.
- 121 • A cooperative effort ~~among~~ between MDARD,
122 MFB, and other stakeholders to ~~establish a~~
123 ~~definition for~~ define “commercial production of
124 farm products” within the GAAMPs ~~framework~~.

125 We oppose:

- 126 • ~~The use of~~Using non-farm residences to define
127 setbacks for manure structures and stacking.

128 We are concerned about the exemption of GAAMP
129 applicability to municipalities with a population of
130 100,000 or more.

131 We urge greater producer participation on all
132 GAAMP Gcommittees.

133 **Complaint Process**

134 The electronic complaint process should include
135 a complete description of the law, including the
136 process and implications for ~~both~~ verified and
137 unverified complaints. Following the official Right to
138 Farm visit, follow-up correspondence and
139 appropriate action shall be communicated promptly
140 to the farm owner and the complainant ~~in a timely~~
141 ~~fashion~~, including ~~the~~MDARD's ability of MDARD to
142 ~~bring~~ enforcement action against the farm and/or the
143 complainant.

144 We urge MDARD to notify all complainants of the
145 law ~~which~~ allowing MDARD to levy a penalty for
146 unverified complaints. We strongly urge MDARD to
147 recoup the costs of investigating unverified
148 complaints, as provided for in the Right to Farm Act.
149 We do not support anonymous Right to Farm
150 complaints. ◆

226 **#33 SHEEP INDUSTRY**

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

4 leadership and research.

5 We support:

- 6 • ~~Increased development of~~ Developing and
7 researching new uses of for wool and new
8 ~~consumer~~ convenient lamb products for
9 consumers.
- 10 • ~~Inclusion of~~ Including lamb prices in market
11 reports ~~and radio broadcasts.~~
- 12 • Researching ~~into~~ lethal and non-lethal methods of
13 predator control ~~as they can be applied in~~
14 Michigan, such as adoption of a "toxic collar"
15 program.
- 16 • Funding for an indemnification program for losses
17 from predators.

18 We urge all sheep owners ~~of sheep~~ to participate
19 in the National Scrapie Eradication Program. ◆

#34 SOUND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH STANDARDS

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

#35 SUGAR INDUSTRY

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

4 We support:

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

#36 TB – MYCOBACTERIUM BOVIS TUBERCULOSIS

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

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

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

27 To expedite ~~the TB~~ eradication of TB, we support:

- 28 • A bounty and/or income tax credit for all deer
29 taken in any Michigan county ~~and contiguous~~
30 ~~county of the state~~ that is not TB-free and
31 contiguous counties.
- 32 • ~~Tying the MDNR budget to deer herd reduction~~
33 ~~and TB prevalence number in the state's deer~~
34 ~~herd and f~~Funding the entire TB program from the
35 MDNR's budget, and tying that budget to deer-
36 herd reduction and TB prevalence.
- 37 • A late hunt ~~being conducted~~ in either February
38 or March, ~~;~~ not January.
- 39 • MDARD, USDA, MDNR and other state and
40 federal agencies involving producers from all
41 affected areas of the state in decision-making
42 processes regarding ~~the~~ bovine TB eradication
43 program.
- 44 • Producer implementation of a Wildlife Risk
45 Mitigation Plan (WRMP).
- 46 • State and federal funding for ~~the hiring of a third-~~
47 party designated agriculturalist to assist with
48 WRMP development, implementation, and
49 inspection.

- 50 • ~~Producers with a~~ completed and approved
51 ~~WRMP in any area of the state on file~~ should
52 empower producers with ~~have~~ the authority to
53 manage nuisance/destructive species on their
54 land, including access to disease-control permits
55 to reduce deer and elk interaction with cattle or
56 livestock feed to ~~prevent~~ minimize disease risk
57 transmission. Additionally, farmers should be able
58 to shoot any deer 24/7 within a designated
59 farmyard circle.
- 60 • In counties ~~established as~~ deemed high-risk
61 ~~areas~~ or positive for TB, and all ~~bordering~~
62 contiguous counties, ~~the harvest of~~ white-tailed
63 deer harvest should be allowed year-round, by
64 any legal hunter without ~~need for~~ requiring a
65 permit.
- 66 • ~~Establishing~~ ment and utilization ~~implementing~~ of
67 a science-based zoning approach and testing
68 process to address disease risk (e.g., a 10-mile
69 radius zone around new TB-positive ~~domestic~~
70 livestock herds).
- 71 • ~~Requiring the e~~ Eradication of white-tailed deer
72 within any 10-mile radius, high-risk zone
73 ~~established after a~~ TB-positive deer or cattle
74 ~~herd is~~ are found.
- 75 • Changes to the national TB-testing requirements
76 that eliminate the need for an individual test for
77 ~~an~~ animals moving from a lower disease
78 prevalence zone to a higher disease prevalence
79 zone.
- 80 • Tying indemnity payments to the development
81 and implementation of a WRMP on each farm in
82 the modified accredited TB zone.
- 83 • State and/or federal funding for all required
84 identification and testing.
- 85 • Producer compensation for all livestock injured
86 or ordered removed during mandatory testing.
- 87 • The free use of state-owned equipment ~~free of~~
88 ~~charge~~ to producers ~~who are~~ required to perform
89 state-mandated TB testings.
- 90 • Continued ~~cooperative~~ on ~~efforts~~ between
91 MDARD and USDA to return Michigan to TB-
92 free status by advancing the status in areas of
93 ~~the state~~ where TB has not been found, or
94 those ~~has~~ proven to be disease-free through
95 science-based testing ~~protocols~~.
- 96 • State and federal funding ~~necessary~~ for
97 comprehensive and concerted research
98 ~~initiatives~~ to further understand the
99 transmission, persistence, detection,

100 eradication, and vaccinations necessary to
101 prevent disease transmission ~~of animal~~
102 ~~diseases~~.

- 103 • Science-based and species-specific testing protocols.
- 104 • Developing ~~of~~ an exit strategy for the entire
105 state to upgrade the Modified Accredited Zone
106 (MAZ) to TB-free status.
- 107 • Research into a buyout program for cattle
108 producers in Deer Management Unit 487.
- 109 • MDARD pursuing aggressive action with
110 surrounding states to open their borders to
111 Michigan cattle.
- 112 • Dramatic reduction of the deer herd in any TB-
113 infected Michigan county ~~or and~~ contiguous
114 ~~counties in Michigan~~. Action should include
115 agency culling, spring hunt, ~~and~~ unlimited fall
116 hunting ~~with, and~~ no-cost licenses.
- 117 • State support for deer ~~exclusion~~ fencing
118 around entire contiguous cattle farmsteads
119 ~~with cattle, receiving state support and~~
120 deeming such barriers being considered an
121 acceptable options for a farmers may
122 requesting for a WRMP.

123 When herds are quarantined for disease control
124 ~~purposes~~, we strongly urge MDARD/USDA to
125 remove and test suspect animals as ~~seen~~ quickly as
126 possible. Upon confirmation of infection, we support:

- 127 • Depopulation, or test and remove, within 60
128 days of when the disease ~~was~~ has been confirmed,
129 and; indemnity payments ~~must be~~ issued within
130 60 days after an indemnification agreement has
131 been accepted by all parties.
- 132 • If a farm is depopulated because of bovine TB,
133 and ~~the farm~~ was operating under a WRMP
134 with no intention of repopulation, indemnity
135 should not be contingent on modifications to
136 the plan.
- 137 • Requiring sState and federal agencies ~~be~~
138 required to harvest and test potential carrier
139 animals on and around TB-positive farms,
140 including on state-owned land.
- 141 • Further tTransparency from USDA Wildlife
142 Services, including ~~an~~ accounting and reporting
143 of its monthly ~~agency~~ deer harvest.

144 In zones where TB is found, we support aggressive
145 use of all wildlife management tools to control all
146 animal disease transmission. Limits and bans on
147 baiting and feeding may sometimes be justified and
148 practical, ~~however~~ but we do not support a statewide
149 ~~ban on baiting~~.

150 Continued state and federal funding is critical to
151 complete eradication of the disease in ~~the free-~~
152 ~~ranging wildlife and production~~ livestock populations.

153 To ensure that Michigan TB eradication efforts
154 are not compromised, we encourage the ~~Director of~~
155 MDARD director to require reciprocal requirements
156 for the importation of breeding, show, and sport
157 cattle.

158 We request state and/or federal funds be made
159 available to producers ~~to~~ for implementing ~~their~~
160 WRMPs when involving large expenditures ~~are~~
161 ~~needed~~. In the Modified Accredited Zone (MAZ), we
162 support the test-and-remove option for herd owners
163 who have implemented a WRMP. We support whole-
164 herd depopulation as the most effective method of
165 disease eradication. We request USDA count herds
166 positive only for the months in which they ~~herd~~
167 contains positive animals.

168 The current memorandum of understanding
169 (MOU) between USDA, MDARD, and MDNR
170 establishes ambitious quotas for ~~the collection~~
171 collecting of deer heads ~~in each of the counties~~ in the
172 Modified Accredited Zone counties, and in the
173 surrounding TBsurveillance counties. To achieve
174 these goals, we support;

- 175 • A more aggressive approach by MDNR to
176 meeting the deer-head collection requirements
177 ~~of deer head collection~~.
- 178 • Identification, transportation and testing in the MOU.
- 179 • A plan ~~and~~ for coordinated effort between
180 MDNR, processors, Michigan State University
181 Veterinary Diagnostic Lab, Farm Bureau, and
182 the hunting community in deer head collection
183 by September 1 of each year.
- 184 • ~~A w~~Weekly updates and reporting of
185 completed deer-head testing beginning
186 September 1 of each year.
- 187 • ~~A per head p~~Payment for each deer head
188 turned in until the requirements of the MOU
189 are met, paid by the MDNR.
- 190 • Accountability from ~~S~~state and federal agencies
191 ~~being held accountable~~ for not meeting their
192 MOU requirements as spelled out in the MOU.
- 193 • ~~A r~~Reduction and possible elimination of cattle
194 testing in the buffer counties at the end of the
195 current MOU.
- 196 • Compensation from the MDNR budget to
197 offset farm and MDARD testing expenses
198 ~~required due to testing requirements when~~

199 ~~caused by~~ rooted in failed agency MOU
200 compliance.

- 201 • Requiring heads from all deer taken on private
202 and public lands in that region to be submitted for
203 testing.

204 In order to meet testing requirements from USDA,
205 MDARD, and MDNR, all deer heads ~~from deer~~ taken
206 from the seven ~~surrounding~~ counties around the MAZ
207 for crop damage permits, as well as those taken on
208 private and state lands, should be picked up by
209 MDNR and submitted for TB testing. MDNR should
210 also be required to pick up all vehicle-killed deer in
211 that area and submit those heads for TB testing.

212 ~~In an effort to~~ To maintain market access for cattle
213 producers in a known TB positive region, we support
214 the movement of cattle out of that region through
215 normal channels as long as testing and movement
216 requirements are met. ◆

#37 URBAN FARMING

1 We support economic development practices that to
2 ~~accepts~~ agricultural businesses as part of urban centers
3 ~~economies~~. We support the ~~and~~ development of
4 ~~agreements which that~~ allow urban agricultural
5 production, ~~while but also~~ protecting the rights of farm
6 businesses with production sites within Michigan
7 municipalities.

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

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

25 Right to Farm protections for commercial agricultural
26 practices must not be compromised. ◆

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

1 The agricultural industry has developed many
2 mechanisms for reporting the size and progress of
3 crops and other agricultural commodities. ~~The~~
4 ~~system in~~ Most widely adopted by the industry is the
5 USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service
6 program (NASS). To ensure 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~~ working with
11 NASS to ~~find ways to~~ improve and simplify the
12 information gathering of information, such as
13 exploring the use of producer information already
14 reported to the Farm Service Agency ~~producer~~
15 ~~information already reported~~. We encourage the use
16 of modern technology, including satellite imagery,
17 on-farm electronic data, and ~~development of a~~
18 streamlined data collection system.

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

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

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

#39 WHEAT INDUSTRY

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

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

8 We support:

- 9 • Michigan Farm Bureau collaborating with

10 representatives of the crop insurance industry, wheat
11 millers, and the Michigan Agri-Business Association
12 to discuss transparency in ~~Michigan~~ wheat pricing and
13 statewide standards for wheat sampling.

- 14 • Continued ~~efforts, including~~ education and
15 certification efforts, to improve sampling and testing
16 procedures to ensure accurate and consistent falling
17 number and vomitoxin testing results.
- 18 • ~~The e~~Continuation of the wheat checkoff program.
- 19 • The Great Lakes Yield Enhancement Network, which
20 evaluates the production practices of wheat
21 producers, and we encourage stakeholders to help
22 fund this research.

23 **Risk Management Agency (RMA)**

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

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

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

#44 **BROADBAND**

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

8 We support:

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

- 23 • Michigan internet providers taking advantage of
24 the available state and federal government loans
25 and grants.
- 26 • Continued cooperation between the Michigan
27 Public Service Commission, broadband
28 providers, and groups such as Connect Michigan
29 to expand unlimited high-speed internet access
30 in rural and under-served areas.
- 31 • Publicly available well-defined/site-specific high-
32 speed internet coverage maps.
- 33 • Allowing municipalities to create service
34 thresholds when negotiating broadband franchise
35 territories.
- 36 • Requiring electric utilities to allow access to their
37 power poles for the hanging of high-speed fiber-
38 optic lines.
- 39 • Encouraging rural electric co-ops to continue to
40 expand their offerings of broadband internet.
- 41 • A report from the Michigan Office of High-Speed
42 Internet on the progress of state and federal
43 money deploying new broadband technology.
44 We oppose granting of exclusive franchises to
45 broadband providers in municipalities without
46 guaranteed minimum service. ◆

#47 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 (FAA part 89
18 remote identification beacons)
 - 19 • Nuisance
 - 20 • Reckless endangerment
 - 21 • Proprietary data
 - 22 • Safety
 - 23 • Insurance
 - 24 • Authority enforcement and jurisdiction consistent

25 with FAA Part 91 (over 55 pounds) and part 107
26 (under 55 pounds).

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

30 We support:

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

56 We oppose:

- 57 • A federal and state agency using UAS for the
58 purpose of regulatory enforcement, litigation and
59 as a sole source for natural resource inventories
60 used in planning efforts.
- 61 • UAS surveying and gathering data without the
62 consent of the landowner and/or operator below
63 navigable airspace.
- 64 • ~~FAA and/or state agencies regulating UAS as~~
65 ~~fixed-winged aircraft.~~ ◆

#48 UTILITY PLACEMENT

1 All new and replacement above and
2 underground utility distribution equipment shall be
3 placed or relocated in the existing road right-of-way.
4 When utilities are being replaced, the utility owner
5 should remove the replaced sections upon
6 installation of new utilities, including all poles and
7 lines. We urge all utility companies to communicate

8 with land owners before beginning the renovation of
9 lines, individual poles, etc. As farm equipment
10 increases in size, the placement of utility services
11 becomes a concern. Adding to the potential
12 problem, other utility lines, such as telephones and
13 cable television, are installed below the existing
14 electric lines. Access to, or operation in, a field or
15 orchard with farm equipment creates the potential
16 for contact with the lines.

17 We support:

- 18 • The requirement of a utility to follow the
19 National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) and
20 Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC)
21 regulations to protect both the farmer and the
22 utility from accidents which could cause injury
23 to an individual or interruption of service to a
24 community.
- 25 • Legislation or regulation to create a minimum
26 height requirement of 17 ½ feet for all overhead
27 lines. All new underground utilities shall be
28 installed and maintained to NESC standards. If
29 NESC standards are not met, utility companies
30 are responsible for liability, damages, and repairs.
- 31 • Governmental agencies enforcing the utility
32 height and depth standards.
- 33 • All parties (e.g. landowners, road commission,
34 drain commission) communicating prior to the
35 installation of utilities. This includes a minimum
36 30-day notice to landowners for non-emergency
37 projects that would affect private utility and
38 drainage on private property or within the right
39 of way.
- 40 • The principles of Public Acts 173 and 174 of
41 2013, which provide clarity on the MISS DIG
42 process for farmers by focusing efforts on risk
43 management and providing greater incentives for
44 compliance. We encourage farmers to enroll their
45 property in the MISS DIG system.
- 46 • Farmers considering possible cost-sharing of
47 utility pole re-location for safety and productivity of
48 field crops.
- 49 • Utility companies putting additional emphasis on
50 upgrading and placement of poles in the rights-of-
51 way to reduce long-term maintenance costs and
52 crop damage.
- 53 • Utility companies completing timely repair,
54 maintenance, and expansion to prevent further
55 damage to personal and public property.
- 56 • All MISS DIG markings being removed or made
57 of a non-metallic biodegradable material.

- 58 • The MPSC's cost review for line extensions,
59 transformer upgrades and moving charges, and
60 comparing these costs with other utility charges for
61 the same work.

62 We understand the value of utilities and
63 broadband communication and support reasonable
64 efforts to minimize damage to infrastructure. New
65 utility equipment should not impede any existing
66 drainage structure. We believe a utility company
67 should promptly settle for damage to crops, soil
68 compaction, existing sub surface drainage (tile),
69 irrigation, and other similar agricultural
70 infrastructure. ◆

#49 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 as
8 the basis for achieving successful labor agreements.

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

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

- 24 • Preserve the right of secret ballot elections for farm
25 workers.
- 26 • Prohibit secondary boycotts.
- 27 • Include workable provisions on bargaining units.
- 28 • Prohibit strikes by workers during critical periods of
29 growing and harvesting.
- 30 • Guarantee the right of agricultural employers to
31 reduce labor needs through mechanization.
- 32 • Ensure that such legislation shall not include any
33 requirement for a successor clause in a labor
34 contract.

- 35 • Ensure the continuation of the piece rate of
36 payment for workers.
- 37 • Ensure the equal opportunity to work without being
38 forced to join a union or be required to finance or
39 collect on behalf of a union.
- 40 • Ensure that organizing activities do not infringe on
41 the safety of the workers' and employers' lives and
42 property.
- 43 • Ensure union organizing activities do not interfere
44 with normal agriculture production.
- 45 • Ensure if a union agreement is in effect, money from
46 workers' dues could not be used for political issues,
47 candidates or parties without the individual union
48 member's authorization.

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

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

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

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

69 We support:

- 70 • The concept of an inmate vocational training
71 program in cooperation with Michigan Works or
72 other educational institutions to provide non-violent
73 inmates the skills to be reintroduced to the work
74 force through the agricultural industry.
- 75 • MFB efforts through the Great Lakes Ag Labor
76 Services to assist growers in navigating the
77 cumbersome H-2A program. We encourage
78 expansion into other viable visa worker programs.
79 We support this program continuing as a "user
80 pays" system and available to all MFB members.
- 81 • The right of farm workers to join, not join, or resign
82 from a union by their own convictions.

- 83 • Reestablishment of Michigan's position as a Right to
84 Work (Freedom to Work) state, where employees
85 only voluntarily associate themselves with a union.
86 • Expanded opportunities for employment of young
87 people in agricultural operations.

88 We oppose:

- 89 • Efforts by purchasers of farm commodities to force
90 farmers to legally recognize and negotiate with
91 specific labor organizations.
92 • Purchasers of farm commodities enticing farm
93 workers to join unions by paying the union dues for
94 the workers.
95 • Third party organization attempts to force
96 organized labor negotiations between farmers and
97 farm workers.
98 • ~~Any attempts to overturn Michigan's Right to Work~~
99 ~~law.~~
100 • A specific segment of our workforce being targeted
101 for mandatory testing or regulatory compliance. ◆

#50 EMPLOYER PROVIDED HOUSING

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

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

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

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

25 Michigan Farm Bureau supports MDARD being
26 the sole inspecting licenser of agricultural housing in
27 Michigan. We support the Agricultural Labor Housing
28 Inspection Program being a fully funded state

29 program that includes pre-occupancy, post-occupancy
30 and complaint-driven inspections, and supplemented
31 by reasonable fees based on licensed occupancy only
32 if necessary. We encourage the State of Michigan and
33 MDARD to provide labor housing licensing protection
34 to all growers who show a good faith effort to maintain
35 their labor housing to MDARD standards.

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

52 With aging infrastructure and the continuing issue
53 of lack of housing, renewing, and building new on-
54 farm worker housing is more important now than ever.
55 Continuing pressure with lower commodity pricing and
56 increased input pricing has made it difficult for farmers
57 to make these improvements and maintain
58 competitiveness in the market. We support increased
59 state funding for on-farm housing development.

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

80 immediate penalty.

81 We encourage legislation to develop uniform
82 housing standards/requirements across state and
83 federal agencies for agricultural workers. ◆

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

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

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

35 We oppose:

- 36 • MIOSHA regulations that exceed federal OSHA
37 standards and/or guidance.
- 38 • Enforcement action against an owner/operator
39 resulting from a self-imposed accidental injury. ◆

#56 WAGES AND COMPENSATION

1 Although most farm workers are paid above the
2 minimum wage level, it does serve as a floor for all
3 wage rates. The state minimum wage and piecework

4 rates should not exceed the federal minimum wage.

5 We support:

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

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

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

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

54 We oppose the concept of predictive scheduling of
55 employees due to the unpredictable nature of
56 agriculture and agriculturally related businesses.

57 We oppose any additional tax on payroll wages for
58 health care.

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

#61 ANTITRUST

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

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

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

17 We support:

- 18 • A formal request to the Department of Justice
19 (DOJ) by attorneys general around the United
20 States to investigate the following sectors:
 - 21 ▪ Meat packers, and the vertical integration of that
22 industry.
 - 23 ▪ The consolidation of co-ops, at all levels and
24 in all areas.
 - 25 ▪ The use of “loyalty agreements” by agri-chemical
26 companies to limit the use of generic crop protection
27 chemicals.
 - 28 ▪ The increased consolidation of retail agri-
29 business units.
 - 30 ▪ The monopolistic practices of fertilizer and seed
31 companies.
- 32 • A formal request to the FTC by state attorneys
33 general to investigate the consolidation of
34 Agrium, Mosaic, CF Industries, and the creation
35 and operation of Canpotex.

36 • A formal request to the DOJ and congressional
37 oversight committees regarding the foreign
38 ownership and influence in American
39 agribusiness.

40 • A formal request to the Environmental
41 Protection Agency regarding the restrictions of
42 the manufacture of the basic “tech material”
43 needed to formulate crop protection products.

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

#64 HEALTH

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

3 We support:

- 4 • Requiring hospitals in Michigan to report their
5 infection statistics.
- 6 • Legislation to limit malpractice liability awards
7 including capping malpractice settlements and
8 strengthening licensing disciplinary action.
- 9 • The integration of the health delivery systems’
10 community health, mental health and substance
11 abuse programs, which serve the same set of
12 counties.
- 13 • Increased suicide prevention and mental illness
14 awareness campaigns with funding and training
15 for medical and emergency service providers.
- 16 • Assertive community treatment programs, such
17 as Certified Community Behavioral Health
18 Clinics, to serve, help, prevent, diagnose and
19 treat those in need.
- 20 • A private and affordable health care plan that
21 allows for additional benefits at the consumer’s
22 option.
- 23 • Methods to reduce the cost of prescription drugs
24 that will best benefit all individuals.
- 25 • Health education to encourage consumers of
26 health care to question physicians, hospital
27 staff and administration about procedures and
28 costs regarding their own health care.
- 29 • Itemized billing.
- 30 • Insurance incentives for a healthy lifestyle.
- 31 • Health insurance premiums being 100 percent tax
32 deductible for all policy purchasers immediately.

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

80 We oppose:

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

#66 LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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

9 We believe:

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

23 We encourage:

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

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

#72 AGRICULTURAL DRAINAGE

- 1 Michigan farmland is enhanced by an adequate
2 and well-managed drain system. Over half of
3 Michigan's farmland requires drainage to produce
4 food, feed and fiber.
- 5 We support:
- 6 • Members obtaining and recording drainage
7 easements for all private drains crossing
8 neighboring properties.
 - 9 • Requiring an individual or entity who breaks or
10 damages a properly functioning tile and properly
11 marked tile outlet to be responsible for returning
12 the tile to operational condition within 30 days.
 - 13 • Legislation revoking the 1982 Michigan
14 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and
15 Energy (MDEGLE) Rule 8 under Part 31 Rules
16 for Inland Lakes and Streams, designating
17 several drains as mainstream portions of eleven
18 natural water courses. If the rule is not revoked,
19 MDEGLE should be responsible to pay for all
20 maintenance costs of the waterways according
21 to the County Drain standards.

- 22 • Landowners taking a proactive role and/or being
23 notified and involved with their drain/water
24 resources commissioners in routine drain
25 maintenance and emergency repairs.
- 26 • Drain/water resources commissioners offering
27 incentives or credits for landowners who
28 properly maintain drains located on their
29 property.
- 30 • Landowners voluntarily contributing to county
31 drain maintenance through appropriate soil
32 conservation practices working with Natural
33 Resources Conservation Service and county
34 drain/water resources commissioners.
- 35 • ~~Michigan Farm Bureau promoting to its members
36 the video, "The Importance of Michigan Drain
37 Commissioners," created by the Michigan
38 Association of County Drain Commissioners.~~
- 39 • MFB providing farmers and members with a
40 better understanding of the Drain Code of 1956
41 by creating an educational series available to the
42 general public.

43 The Michigan Drain Code is the legal vehicle for
44 landowners to organize to solve mutual drainage
45 problems for their benefit. Urbanization, agriculture
46 and technology have increased the need for water
47 resource management. Institutional structures such
48 as the Michigan Drain Code, Subdivision Control Act,
49 and Wetlands Protection Act, lack the necessary
50 uniformity to provide water management standards
51 that meet today's demands and tomorrow's needs.
52 We support the following provisions in the Drain Code:

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

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

67 We support:

- 68 • The concept of watershed management plan
69 development with collaboration between
70 drain/water resources commissioners, township
71 and municipal officials, landowners, and

72 conservation districts, and/or NRCS, and Army
73 Corps of Engineers that improves county drain
74 function. Watershed management boards should
75 include representation from affected county road
76 commissions and landowners throughout the
77 watershed selected by county commissioners.
78 Watershed management plans developed by
79 these boards should be subject to review by
80 county commissioners with the authority to
81 approve, amend, or reject plans.

- 82 • The limited use of eminent domain to take private
83 property for projects in watershed or drainage
84 district management plans.
- 85 • Increasing the limit on drainage maintenance
86 assessments (such as \$10,000 per mile), and
87 payback time, to allow drain work to be done more
88 efficiently and at a lower cost.
- 89 • Elimination of the current exemption allowing
90 non-elected drain/water resources
91 commissioners.
- 92 • All land in a drainage district being assessed
93 according to benefits derived, including public
94 lands.
- 95 • Requiring that special assessment notices
96 include the estimated percentage and dollar
97 amounts apportioned to the recipient's land, the
98 estimated annual total of all project
99 assessments, and the estimated project
100 assessment duration.
- 101 • Keeping records of public drain work in a manner
102 so the public can view them and understand the
103 scope of work completed and the cost associated
104 with the types and dates of maintenance
105 performed on a drain.
- 106 • Drain/water resources commissioners providing
107 notice of timing and duration of scheduled drain
108 maintenance projects to affected landowners.
- 109 • Requiring performance bonds on work done on
110 intercounty drains where project construction
111 costs exceed \$100,000.
- 112 • Clarification that no drainage district should be
113 extended or established for the purpose of
114 removing sediment from man-made reservoirs
115 on rivers or drains.
- 116 • The drain/water resources commissioner
117 directing the deployment of drain sediments, both
118 organic and inorganic, to adjacent land as
119 required to minimize sediment return to the drain.
- 120 • The county drain/water resources commissioner
121 being responsible for removing blockage of a

122 natural watercourse if it affects the function of a
123 county drain.

- 124 • The use of current technology.
- 125 • For all new construction, a description of the
126 work to be performed being provided to owners
127 of property abutting the drain at least 10 days
128 prior to the start of construction to ensure
129 appropriate planning to handle increased storm
130 water due to development. Alternatives to storm
131 water retention ponds should be considered.

132 We oppose:

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

#74 CARBON SEQUESTRATION AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES MARKETS

1 Ecosystem services markets are rapidly evolving.
2 These would include carbon sequestration, phosphorus
3 reduction, water quality and conservation, and others.
4 Ecosystem services markets typically function with a
5 financial exchange for outcomes (credits).

6 We support:

- 7 • Ecosystem services markets to remain voluntary.
- 8 • Sound science and public research related to
9 ecosystem services credits addressing Michigan's
10 diverse agricultural industries.
- 11 • Standardization, transparency, and clarity related to
12 ecosystem services enrollment contracts and
13 credit(s).
- 14 • Full recognition of agriculture and forestry's value to
15 carbon sequestration.
- 16 • Compensation for farmers for farming practices that
17 keep carbon in the soil or in plant material.
- 18 • Farmers receiving credit or compensation for
19 maintaining previous or existing practices.

- 20 • The length of time that farmers are compensated to
21 be consistent with the length of practice
22 implementation.
- 23 • Michigan Farm Bureau staff, Michigan State
24 University (MSU) staff, and others in their mission to
25 support farmers as they navigate carbon
26 sequestration/ecosystem services credits
27 contracting.
- 28 • MFB, MSU, and farmers implementing a task force
29 to help set guidelines for carbon credits, to be
30 reviewed at the 2024 MFB state annual meeting. ◆

#75 CLIMATE CHANGE

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

10 We support:

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

14 We oppose:

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

#76 CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

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

4 Michigan's conservation delivery system, including
5 Natural Resources Conservation Service, Michigan
6 Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

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

21 We support:

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

55 We support Michigan Farm Bureau:

- 56 • Working with conservation districts to develop

57 educational materials for members about
58 agricultural stewardship and supporting efforts to
59 make the public aware of the benefits of
60 investment in good stewardship.

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

69 We support conservation districts:

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

89 **Conservation Species**

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

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

107 Conservation districts should be encouraged to
108 purchase their plant materials from Michigan private
109 industry suppliers whenever possible. ◆

#80 LAND ACQUISITIONS FOR PUBLIC PROJECTS

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

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

15 We support:

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

45 companies to ensure they pay fair and reasonable
46 rental rates to land owners for easements.

47 We oppose:

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

#82 MICHIGAN AGRICULTURE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSURANCE PROGRAM

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

20 We applaud Michigan farmers for achieving 6,316
21 6,658 verifications as of October 1, ~~2022~~ 2023.

22 Michigan Farm Bureau members should lead the
23 conversation on the definition of sustainable
24 agriculture. We must put programs such as MAEAP
25 and guidelines like the Generally Accepted

26 Agriculture and Management Practices (GAAMPs)
27 front and center, highlighting how farmers today are
28 producing safe and sustainable food, fuel and fiber.

29 We support:

- 30 • Continued efforts for MAEAP to remain a voluntary,
31 confidential, statewide program.
- 32 • Legislation and marketing efforts that would
33 communicate to the general public that MAEAP-
34 verified farms are held to the highest standard of
35 environmental stewardship.
- 36 • MDARD developing an outstanding and
37 recognizable “Pure Michigan”-style labeling
38 program (such as “Pure Michigan-Verified
39 Farm”) to add value to products of MAEAP
40 verified farms and allow the MAEAP logo to be
41 used at point of sale.
- 42 • The MAEAP program making information
43 available about Michigan’s Water Pollution
44 Control Tax Exemption Form which exempts
45 pollution control structures from property tax
46 assessments.
- 47 • MFB working with MAEAP partners to develop
48 educational and promotional materials for farm
49 neighbors and the general public regarding the
50 benefits of MAEAP.
- 51 • All producers using MAEAP verification as the
52 basis for projecting a positive farm image to the
53 public.
- 54 • MFB continuing to pursue greater incentives for
55 MAEAP participation, such as additional
56 protections from frivolous complaints.
- 57 • The Michigan Groundwater and Freshwater
58 Protection Act. This act funds groundwater and
59 surface water programming through providing
60 grants to fund local technicians. These technicians
61 work with farmers to voluntarily adopt stewardship
62 practices, which reduce nonpoint source pollution
63 from agricultural sources. We believe funding of
64 these technicians needs to be a top priority.
- 65 • Participation in MAEAP, including information
66 generated by assessment programs, remaining
67 confidential. Aggregate data that would
68 demonstrate effectiveness of the overall program
69 could be shared.
- 70 • A review of the MAEAP program, seeking new
71 and/or alternative ways of meeting standards
72 without compromising the basis of MAEAP
73 verification.
- 74 • Farm Bureau members participating in regional
75 water stewardship teams.

- 76 • Agriculture being the primary focus of MAEAP
77 assistance in recognition of agriculture's
78 contribution to the dedicated fund.
- 79 • The changes made to strengthen MAEAP and its
80 funding through PA 118 of 2015. Program funds come
81 from Michigan's General Fund and the Freshwater
82 Protection Fund.
- 83 • The changes made to the Freshwater Protection
84 Fund which require all users of industrial fertilizer
85 (e.g., farmers, homeowners, golf courses) pay a fee
86 into the fund.
- 87 • An annual review of the Freshwater Protection
88 Fund finances, with the report being made
89 available to contributors.
- 90 • Freshwater Protection Fund collection at the
91 wholesale level, creating a voluntary contribution
92 option, and exploring other fee collection
93 mechanisms.
- 94 • Recognition of the Michigan law that offers
95 MAEAP-verified farms statutory protection in
96 watersheds with Total Maximum Daily Loads
97 (TMDL). This protection should apply to the
98 applicable systems farms are verified in that
99 address the pollutants listed in that watershed's
100 TMDL by acknowledging the farm meets the
101 obligations for watershed pollutant loading
102 determinations. Verification in all systems
103 applicable to the farm should not be required in
104 order to receive statutory protection.
- 105 • Farmers who are MAEAP-verified being
106 considered in compliance with Environmental
107 Protection Agency regulations.
- 108 • The MAEAP Advisory Council studying the
109 earning of Restricted Use Pesticide credits in
110 alignment with MAEAP verification. ◆

#83 MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY

1 Regulatory Authority and Responsibility

2 To protect the environment, ensure public safety,
3 and enhance production agriculture, we challenge
4 state and federal agencies to work together to produce
5 more user-friendly programs that provide clear
6 direction and consistent regulatory authority. Oversight
7 should focus on solving problems and not simply on
8 penalizing the regulated community. We support the
9 current statute in Part 31 of the Natural Resources and
10 Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) that prohibits
11 the Michigan Department of Environment, Great
12 Lakes, and Energy (MDEGLE) from promulgating

13 (putting into effect) rules under this part. If MDEGLE is
14 granted rulemaking authority, we support requiring
15 enhanced legislative oversight of the rulemaking
16 process to minimize economic impacts to the
17 regulated community.

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

23 **Environmental Enforcement and Standards**

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

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

38 We support:

- 39 • Timely, effective and consistent enforcement of
40 environmental laws and issuance of permits.
- 41 • Standards for dam management, maintenance, and
42 purchases in cooperation with federal agencies.
- 43 • Timely enforcement of water quality standards using
44 credible data. We urge MFB to pursue legislation on
45 credible data and how it may be used to better
46 invoke sound science in regulation of water quality,
47 air quality and water quantity.
- 48 • Applying sound science and performing
49 economic impact analysis to MDEGLE rules
50 and standards prior to promulgation.
- 51 • Maximum use of Natural Resources Conservation
52 Service standards within MDEGLE regulations.
- 53 • Appropriate timelines for producer implementation of
54 regulations.
- 55 • MDARD intervention on behalf of farmers in legal
56 actions if the farmer has worked with state
57 agencies to address pollution challenges.
- 58 • Development of a third-party arbitration process for
59 disputes between MDEGLE and a farmer.
- 60 • MDEGLE being responsible to pay legal fees
61 incurred by the respondent from a wrongful
62 enforcement action if the enforcement action is

- 63 settled, a consent agreement is reached, or the
64 action is decided in the respondent's favor.
- 65 • PA 268 of 2018 creating the MDEGLE Appeals Board.
 - 66 • Using funds derived from enforcement penalties
67 to support pollution prevention in agriculture.
 - 68 • Authorizing permits at the local level in accordance
69 with state and federal rules to provide for more
70 timely decisions.
 - 71 • Allowing water quality testing in lieu of existing
72 well setback standards to satisfy the siting
73 requirement.
 - 74 • A farm's ability to move portable toilets within and
75 between their farms.

76 **Manure, Nutrient, and Fuel Management**

77 We support:

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

112 **Processing Wastewater and Groundwater Regulation**

113 We support:

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

136 **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System**
137 **(NPDES)**

138 We support:

- 139 • Legislative or administrative changes to require a
140 formal committee of appropriate stakeholders to
141 be involved in all permit developments and
142 rewrites so that input is balanced. All NPDES
143 writing or rewrite committees should be chaired by
144 an unbiased third-party individual.
- 145 • An evaluation of the NPDES permitting process in
146 Michigan with changes to allow long-term certainty
147 for the ag industry and which eliminate the change
148 that takes place for all industries every time a new
149 administration is elected in our state. We support a
150 study committee by MFB to establish this evaluation
151 and make recommendations.
- 152 • 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 permits

- 163 issued by MDEGLE.
- 164 • Timely issuance of NPDES permits, in
 - 165 accordance 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
 - 174 become Michigan Agriculture Environmental
 - 175 Assurance Program verified such as limiting
 - 176 annual reporting requirements.
 - 177 • Application of permit standards in force at the time
 - 178 of permit application.
 - 179 • An appropriate phase-in period for any change
 - 180 in permit requirements.
 - 181 • Implementation of permit requirements derived with
 - 182 scientifically verifiable standards as provided in
 - 183 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
 - 189 aquaculture for up to 200,000 pounds of
 - 190 production.

191 We oppose:

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

212 **Response to Environmental Scrutiny**

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

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

#86 PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

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

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

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

- 21 • The initial request for and final approval of a
22 Natural Rivers Act designation must originate from
23 the local units of government in which the river is
24 located.
- 25 • Agriculture and other industries must be fairly
26 represented on local Natural Rivers Review Boards.

- 27 • An economic impact study should be conducted to
28 determine the effect of a Natural Rivers Act
29 designation on local businesses and property
30 owners.
31 • If the local unit of government approves a Natural
32 Rivers Act designation, the designation must be
33 subject to review at least every five years.

34 We support:

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

68 We oppose:

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

#88 USDA CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

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

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

8 **Farm Bill Programs**

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

44 **Practice Standards**

- 45 • Allowing more flexible standards for USDA
46 conservation practices.

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

82 **USDA Offices and Staffing**

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

- 97 year of hire.
- 98 • Michigan NRCS continuing the practice of co- locating
- 99 conservation districts in their offices.
- 100 • Moving or relocating NRCS staff to areas of greater
- 101 need or where their skills are better matched, while
- 102 ensuring job applicants within the state have a fair
- 103 and equal opportunity to apply for positions for
- 104 which they qualify.
- 105 • NRCS filling vacant positions in a timely manner to
- 106 facilitate implementation of programs and
- 107 practices.
- 108 • Modifying the system for county office
- 109 classifications to attract staff with greater talent
- 110 and experience.
- 111 • Michigan NRCS creating regional education
- 112 specialists to present NRCS programs at industry
- 113 meetings of farmers and woodland owners across
- 114 the state.
- 115 • Creating county farmer oversight committees for
- 116 local NRCS offices.
- 117 • Increasing farmer representation on the State Technical
- 118 Committee. ♦

#89 WATER USE IN THE GREAT LAKES BASIN

1 The Great Lakes Basin represents the largest

2 reserve of fresh water in the world. This unique

3 resource should be used in a responsible manner

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:

17 following provisions:

- 18 • No fees may EVER be charged for agricultural
- 19 water use.
- 20 • Existing documented surface and groundwater uses
- 21 and sites must be grandfathered.
- 22 • Public hearings must take place in the watershed
- 23 areas before consideration of any reclassification.
- 24 • All reclassification notices should be given at a
- 25 minimum of 180 days before hearings.
- 26 • Water use permits for withdrawals supplying a

27 common distribution system of less than two million
28 gallons per day in any 90-day consecutive period for
29 agriculture must be handled by the Michigan
30 Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
31 (MDARD).

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

36 We support:

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

76 **Water Withdrawal Assessment**

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

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

127 approval of withdrawal applications under the new
128 process. We encourage MFB to oversee the
129 implementation of the law and develop educational
130 information about the process for members.

131 **Aquifer Conflicts**

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

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

143 **Research and Education**

144 We support:

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

- 177 • Investigating funding sources for geological
178 mapping.
- 179 • The findings of the Southwest Michigan Water
180 Resource Council, which was charged with studying
181 water resources in the region.
- 182 We oppose:
- 183 • Any water allocation system preempting surface
184 water riparian doctrine or groundwater rights.
- 185 • Applying a “public trust doctrine” to groundwater.
- 186 • Diverting water in its natural state from the Great
187 Lakes Basin.
- 188 • The definition of consumptive use as applied to
189 agriculture.
- 190 • Legislative or regulatory efforts resulting from
191 federal, regional, state and/or local initiatives that
192 adversely impact agriculture.
- 193 • The State of Michigan removing dams located on
194 drains and waterways recharging aquifers of the
195 state and not requiring owners of existing dams to
196 maintain them.
- 197 • Attempts to limit efficient agricultural water use.
- 198 • Water use prioritization.
- 199 • Filing fees for agricultural water use reporting.
- 200 • Using collected agricultural water use data for
201 regulatory purposes or to advance agendas in
202 opposition to efficient agricultural water use.
- 203 • Well code changes placing economic or regulatory
204 burdens on landowners in the absence of sound
205 science.
- 206 • Any attempt to turn water into a commodity.
- 207 • The Environmental Protection Agency designating
208 interstate aquifers as “sole source aquifers.”
- 209 • Fraudulent use of the WWAT to register a water
210 withdrawal. ♦

#92 WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

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

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

14 habitat management on public lands, helping both the
15 hunting and farming communities.

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

23 We support:

24 **Hunting and Trapping**

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

60 **Endangered Species and Depredation**

- 61 • The MDNR being the lead agency to advocate
62 Michigan's authority to manage federally protected
63 species.

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

87 **Population Health and Disease Management**

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

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

134 We oppose:

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

#94 TAXATION

1 **Property Tax/Assessing**

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

5 We support:

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

- 19 align with the current use of the structure.
- 20 ● PA 162 of 2013 which states sales of agricultural
21 land without a qualified agricultural affidavit on
22 file will not be used in the sales studies for
23 agricultural land.
 - 24 ● Development of taxation methods to more fairly
25 distribute municipal service costs.
 - 26 ● Legislation to put an end to the "dark store"
27 assessing theory, ensuring equitable, fair
28 determinations on property tax appeal cases
29 before the Michigan Tax Tribunal.
 - 30 ● All agricultural single purpose structures, such as
31 greenhouses, grain bins and silos, be assessed
32 using a realistic accelerated depreciation
33 schedule considering the current practical use of
34 the structure.
 - 35 ● A clarification that all temporary agricultural
36 structures, which are moveable and not
37 permanently attached or anchored to the
38 ground, be exempt from sales and use taxes as
39 referenced in Revenue Administrative Bulletin
40 2002-15 of June 2002.
 - 41 ● The Qualified Forest Property program which
42 exempts the pop-up tax and provides a 16 mill
43 exemption, as long as the new owner agrees to
44 keep up the qualified forest land agreement.
 - 45 ● A significantly reduced tax designation or tax
46 exempt status for land which is designated for
47 mandatory restricted use such as wetlands, filter
48 strips, sand dunes, natural or scenic rivers, or
49 other restrictions on private property.
 - 50 ● The retention of the right of local governing units
51 to assess property for taxation purposes.
 - 52 ● The qualified agricultural exemption shall remain
53 in effect if the Governor or USDA issues a
54 disaster declaration for the county.
 - 55 ● The continued use of tax abatements and
56 Renaissance Zones to encourage the
57 development and expansion of agricultural
58 facilities to enhance value-added opportunities for
59 agriculture.
 - 60 ● Legislation that would allow a farm to include all
61 parcels of the farming operation together when
62 determining the ag classification. If the total farm
63 would qualify for PA 116, then all parcels should
64 maintain their ag classification. Non-contiguous
65 parcels are being reclassified to residential
66 unless 51 percent of the parcel is farmed.
67 Property in Northwest Michigan, and possibly in
68 other parts of the state, cannot be farmed at 51

- 69 percent because of the topography.
- 70 • Exempting PA 116 land from all special
 - 71 assessments excluding agricultural drainage.
 - 72 • Local units of government classifying equine
 - 73 therapy facilities, therapeutic riding facilities,
 - 74 equine rehabilitation facilities, and other similar
 - 75 equine-related businesses utilizing horses as the
 - 76 major component of their business as agriculture
 - 77 for property tax purposes.
 - 78 • The continuation of Proposal A in its current
 - 79 form, as it pertains to agriculture.
 - 80 • The change to the summer tax collection which
 - 81 provided for a lifetime deferment of summer tax
 - 82 for qualified agricultural land if the owner files a
 - 83 federal Schedule "F" Income Tax Form or
 - 84 comparable farm income tax filing.
 - 85 • The time frame for qualified agriculture property be
 - 86 a period of three years between the start of
 - 87 delinquent status to the expiration of redemption
 - 88 rights. We believe the private individual should
 - 89 have the first option to redeem delinquent
 - 90 property.
 - 91 • All assessors should follow established procedures
 - 92 and change the classification from agricultural to
 - 93 industrial and use the appropriate tax tables when
 - 94 considering property that changed from agriculture
 - 95 to commercial solar electric production.

96 We oppose:

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

104 **Income Tax/Incentives**

105 We support:

- 106 • Deferment of crop insurance income to the year
- 107 following the crop insurance payment to align
- 108 with federal rules.
- 109 • Tax credits used to create jobs and tax equity for
- 110 the agricultural economy.
- 111 • The concept of a beginning farmer tax credit program.
- 112 • The State of Michigan providing tax incentives
- 113 rather than tax the production, distribution or
- 114 sale of renewable energy or fuel including but
- 115 not limited to wood, cherry pits, biodiesel,
- 116 ethanol, methane digester power, geo and
- 117 hydro power, as well as windmill and solar
- 118 power. If the majority of the energy is used for

119 onsite purposes, the generation of the energy
120 and associated equipment should be tax
121 exempt.

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

135 We oppose:

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

141 **County/State Taxes**

142 We support:

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

152 **Sales and Use Tax**

153 We support:

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

161 We oppose:

- 162 • Charging state sales tax on the federal
163 manufacturers excise tax.
- 164 • Sales tax levied on new vehicles before cash back,
165 manufacturer incentives and rebates.
- 166 • Sales tax levied on the sale of used vehicles.
- 167 • Any plan which places an undue or unrealistic
168 tax or fee which affects agriculture, such as a

- 169 tax on gross receipts, a tax on personal
170 property or a tax on assets.
171 • Any tax on food or food additives including so
172 called “sin taxes” on products like processed
173 sugar. ◆

#95 COUNTY ROAD COMMISSIONS

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

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

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

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

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

#96 FARM AND COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

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

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

9 **Vehicle Regulations**

10 We support:

- 11 • The development of State of Michigan covered farm
12 vehicle designation to cover rented and
13 commercially plated vehicles for use in agriculture.
- 14 • Uniformity of enforcement of trucking regulations by
15 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 State

19 to verify farm or logging connection when applying
20 for the plate designations. Schedule F forms or EINs
21 must not be the only methods since not all farmers
22 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
29 products to markets, events or shows, and people to
30 events or 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 farm, agri-business, and commercial vehicles.
- 35 • The continuation of permanent trailer license plates
36 without additional fees, and allowing these plates to
37 be transferred.
- 38 • A revenue-neutral multiyear plate renewal option for
39 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 prohibited
44 from being allocated for local law enforcement.
- 45 • Minor restricted license eligibility. Licenses should
46 not be based on taxable household income, and
47 farm size should not be a factor. Licenses will only
48 be considered for immediate family members.
- 49 • Individuals and businesses should be able to
50 conduct business and complete transactions with
51 the Secretary of State in an easily accessible
52 manner including in-person, online, or by mail.
- 53 • Pickup trucks, one ton and under, that have had
54 their beds modified should still be classified as
55 pickup trucks.

56 We oppose:

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

63 **Vehicle Size and Weights**

64 We support the current Michigan per axle weight
65 limits for trucks on state highways. These axle limits
66 should be extended and consistently applied on all
67 county roads. We support the exemption of all farm and
68 agribusiness vehicles of any size, up to legal weight

69 limit per axle, from no through trucks ordinance and
70 laws. We support trailers of common dimensional size,
71 which are currently legal on Class A roads, be allowed
72 to operate on all roads.

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

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

91 For seasonal permits, we support:

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

108 **Autonomous Vehicles**

109 We support:

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

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

122 **Implements of Husbandry**

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

127 We support:

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

#97 INTERNATIONAL TRADE CROSSING

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

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

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

#100 SAFETY ON ROADWAYS

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

7 **Agricultural Safety on Roads**

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

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

28 **Slow Moving Vehicle Signs**

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

36 Therefore, we support:

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

51 **Visibility and Warning Signals**

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

- 54 • MFB working in cooperation with the County Road
55 Association to establish a process for use of warning
56 signs related to agriculture vehicles such as entering
57 and exiting roadways.
- 58 • The use of farm and other traffic alert signs in
59 areas of heavy farm or other traffic or similar

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

93 **General Public Safety on Roadways**

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

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

- 110 • Front and rear lights and high visibility clothing
111 should be required.
112 All persons over 75 years of age should have to
113 renew their driver's license in person at a Secretary
114 of State office. The only test that would be needed is
115 a vision test. This test would be optional and at the
116 discretion of the Secretary of State staff. ◆

#101 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT

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

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

Transportation Revenue

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

23 We support:

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

40 We oppose:

- 41 • Reverting to the property tax or special assessments

42 as a means of building and maintaining state roads
43 and bridges.

44 **Transportation Formula**

45 All transportation expenditures must be examined
46 to achieve the best and most efficient use of
47 transportation funding. We support PA 51 of 1951 which
48 outlines the distribution of the MTF.

49 We support the following PA 51 changes:

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

86 We oppose:

- 87 • Distribution of road funding based on road use or
88 traffic volume.

89 **Road Construction and Maintenance**

90 New road construction, improvements and
91 maintenance, as well as issues of jurisdictional transfer

92 of existing roads should be carried out in a spirit of
93 cooperation between local, state, and federal agencies
94 involving constituent groups throughout the project. We
95 encourage local governments to continue to look for
96 increased efficiencies in government by prioritizing
97 services, reforming where possible, eliminating
98 duplicative services, and utilizing private partners.

99 We believe the local road agency must dedicate
100 themselves to using the most economical means
101 possible to establish and maintain an efficient
102 transportation system.

103 Regarding road planning, we support:

- 104 • Encouraging the local road agency to work in
105 coordination with all pertinent county agencies (e.g.,
106 drain/water resources commission), townships, local
107 planning, zoning boards, county Farm Bureaus, and
108 affected property owners in order to minimize road
109 construction cost and gather public input.
- 110 • Providing a role for counties and townships in road
111 improvement decisions.
- 112 • Local road agencies utilizing Michigan Department
113 of Transportation's (MDOT) Asset Management
114 Program, or similar program, to annually evaluate
115 conditions of all roads and dispersal of funds under
116 their jurisdiction and report such findings to the
117 public.
- 118 • County road commissions maintaining culverts to
119 avoid road closures. Culverts in excess of four feet
120 in diameter should be considered to be bridges.
- 121 • Research to develop better materials for road and
122 bridge construction and maintenance for proper
123 construction and longevity.
- 124 • An emphasis on improving existing roadways prior to
125 constructing new highways.
- 126 • Long-range planning on road construction projects
127 considering not only future needs of the area but
128 also the effects on agriculture.
- 129 • Every consideration being given to landowners
130 adjacent to the roadway to provide for safe travel for
131 farm machinery and products.
- 132 • Requiring consideration of agricultural drainage
133 needs, including proper placement and size of
134 culverts, when planning, designing and maintaining
135 roads.
- 136 • Proper grading of all roads and shoulders on a
137 regular basis.
- 138 • MDOT taking into consideration the size and
139 maneuverability of farm equipment when designing
140 new traffic flow structures such as roundabouts or
141 Michigan turnarounds.

- 142 • Compensation for crop losses when changes are
143 made to the right of way from road improvements or
144 reconstruction.
- 145 • Every effort being made to select alignments that
146 preserve productive farmland, wetlands and
147 historical sites.
- 148 • The use of private contractors and a bidding process
149 for road and bridge development and maintenance.
- 150 • A preference being given to contractors with material
151 testing locations in Michigan with proven results.
- 152 • The removal of state-mandated wage guidelines
153 which may not reflect actual market conditions.
- 154 • An open bid process for all road construction,
155 improvements, and maintenance projects.
- 156 • The cost of road improvements impacted from
157 development being required to be shared by the
158 developer when new developments have an adverse
159 impact on the rural road system.
- 160 • The respective state agency paying for or the
161 requirement for the project being waived, when
162 Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes,
163 and Energy and MDNR specifications increase the
164 cost of maintaining safe bridge structures.
- 165 • The purchase of rights of way for the construction of
166 complete cloverleaves when new freeways are built.
- 167 • The builder of a housing development near a
168 freeway or existing highway being responsible for
169 erecting an acceptable sound barrier, if needed.
- 170 • Highway maintenance and changes within the
171 existing right of way not having to complete a new
172 environmental impact study before performing the
173 work.
- 174 • Wetlands mitigation not being required if
175 improvements to the road are within the existing
176 road right of way.
- 177 • Ending the inclusion of planned wildlife habitat in the
178 construction and renovation of Michigan highways.
- 179 • Reclassifying US 23 from Toledo to Flint as an
180 interstate highway.
- 181 • Use of improved paint technologies that are more
182 visible and reflective on both local, state, and
183 interstate roadways.
- 184 When performing road construction, we support:
 - 185 • An emphasis being directed toward the placing of
186 crossroad, yield or stop signs at unmarked rural
187 intersections.
 - 188 • Hardtop roads of adequate width being marked with
189 highly-reflective center lines and sidelines as an aid
190 to safer nighttime driving.

- 191 • Engineering and design of roadways being required
192 to have at least 20 feet clearance between
193 obstacles.
- 194 • Proper grading and bank reseeding being completed
195 where road construction occurs to improve road
196 safety and reduce erosion.
- 197 • All rural roads should be marked with a name or
198 number.
- 199 • Mail and newspaper boxes being placed on the
200 same side of the road and as far from the traveled
201 portion of the road as safety allows.
- 202 • Prior to non-emergency detouring of state highway
203 traffic onto county roads, MDOT will collaborate with
204 township government, county road departments, and
205 local and county law enforcement, to establish
206 reduced speed limits, establish no-passing zones
207 along the detour route, and mark intersections with
208 illuminated stop signs or overhead traffic lights. As
209 part of the project cost, MDOT will make funds
210 available for law enforcement to specifically patrol
211 the detour.

212 For road maintenance, we support:

- 213 • The designated maintenance authority clearing and
214 maintaining roadsides, roadways and intersections
215 of hazards that obstruct the view of motorists or
216 impede travel, road drainage, or cropland drainage.
217 This would include dead and dying trees within the
218 right of way. In the event the authorized authority is
219 unable to fulfill their maintenance obligations,
220 landowners should be allowed to perform such work.
221 Property owners should maintain proper visibility of
222 intersection views by using the triangular sight-line
223 system.
- 224 • Encouraging the privatization of road maintenance
225 and the mowing and trimming of road ditches when
226 feasible.
- 227 • Individuals, pursuant to reasonable regulations,
228 being allowed to harvest existing forages and trees
229 along roadways without a permit.
- 230 • Any traveled portion of the road and shoulder having
231 trees and overgrowth trimmed to a minimum height
232 of 17 feet due to the increase in height and width of
233 farm and custom application equipment. Also, a
234 reasonably safe condition should be provided by the
235 respective road agency.
- 236 • MDOT being required to fix and maintain fencing
237 along state highways as part of the maintenance of
238 that highway.
- 239 • County road commissions notifying the owner when
240 work in the right of way will be done and will destroy

241 crops.

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

- 246 • The use of Calcium Magnesium Acetate or other ag-
247 based products for de-icing roads and bridges,
248 including the use of sand, when environmentally and
249 economically feasible.
- 250 • A reduction in ice melt and dust control products
251 containing sodium chloride, with no salt being used
252 adjacent to sensitive perennial crops and/or arable
253 soils, wherever feasible.
- 254 • County road commissions being able to brine
255 roads responsibly and when necessary. ◆

Reaffirmation of State Policies

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

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

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

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

30 We support:

- 31 • The expansion of the current and creation of
32 new junior high/middle school and high school
33 AFNRE programs and FFA chapters as vital
34 tools for educating young people, providing
35 career and technical training and development
36 of leaders to work in careers related to
37 Michigan's agricultural industry.
- 38 • Agriscience and natural resources courses
39 fulfilling the criteria and being recognized as a
40 science credit by all high schools, colleges and
41 universities in Michigan.
- 42 • Regional Educational School District
43 administrators, as well as local district
44 superintendents, principals and counselors,
45 being provided information on curriculum

- 46 requirements of agriscience careers so they can
47 encourage student participation.
- 48 • The MDE to adequately fund AFNRE and the
49 Career and Technical Student Organization
50 programs to provide educational and career
51 opportunities in agriculture and natural
52 resources as added-cost funding available has
53 continued to decline.
 - 54 • The word agriculture remaining in the
55 Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
56 Career Cluster title.
 - 57 • Reporting of all information regarding
58 graduates, or completers, from all agriscience
59 and natural resources programs within the state.
60 This information should help increase the
61 amount of added-cost funding for each student
62 currently enrolled in the program. All agriscience
63 and natural resources instructors to engage in
64 an active role in the information gathering and
65 reporting process.
 - 66 • MFB and county Farm Bureaus assisting in state
67 and local FFA activities.
 - 68 • FFA alumni associations and their efforts to
69 strengthen agriscience and natural resource
70 education across the state and nation.
 - 71 • AFNRE emergency certification programs, as
72 well as the hiring of retired ag teachers, to fill
73 these positions without any retirement penalties,
74 due to the lack of qualified people available to
75 lead these programs.
 - 76 • Consideration being given to student loan
77 payoff or scholarship programs to help
78 promote AFNRE programs through private or
79 public partnerships.
 - 80 • Continued activities of private and public
81 companies and organizations, like those of
82 AgroLiquid, St. Johns, which provide an
83 educational opportunity to the public to learn
84 and experience the role, importance, and
85 economic impact of agriculture on food
86 production for generations to come.
 - 87 • The development of an agricultural credential
88 which high school AFNR students could use to
89 gain employment in the agricultural and natural
90 resources field. The development of this
91 credential should include input from agricultural
92 businesses, teachers and educational
93 specialists to ensure the certification
94 represents the skills learned through the
95 program in a way that's meaningful for

- 96 agricultural employers.
- 97 • The utilization of funding for agricultural
- 98 internships and apprenticeships through the
- 99 National Apprenticeship Act. ◆

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

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

#42 MICHIGAN AG COUNCIL

1 The Michigan Ag Council (MAC) is currently
2 comprised of more than 15 agriculture related groups
3 in which Michigan Farm Bureau is a partner. 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 Council.
20 A broad mix of financing for this joint effort will not
21 only allow the Council to do more positive education
22 and promotion about agriculture, but it will multiply
23 the ability to reach the consumer at all levels of the
24 food system. ◆

#45 RENEWABLE AND BIOMASS PRODUCTS

1 Ethanol fuels and biodiesel are excellent sources
2 of renewable energy contributing to a cleaner and
3 safer environment through major reductions in
4 vehicle exhaust 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
10 that balanced economic decisions be made as we work
11 to expand alternative energy options. A level playing field
12 is important, if all segments of agriculture are to succeed
13 and prosper.

14 We support:

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

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

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

97 **Anaerobic Digesters**

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

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

#51 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. ♦

#52 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 of
4 that insurance. This further increases the cost of
5 insurance and is a hidden means of taxation. ♦

#53 LABOR HOUSING ZONING

1 Adequate housing for workers is critical for Michigan
2 agricultural producers and should not be negatively

3 affected by local zoning ordinances.

4 We support MDARD as having exclusive
5 responsibility for inspection and approval of occupancy
6 for seasonal farm worker housing in Michigan.

7 We support amending the Michigan Zoning Enabling
8 Act to allow farm worker housing, including multi-family
9 housing and dormitories, as a use by right in all zones.

10 We support the creation of statewide migrant labor
11 housing policy that preempts local authority.

12 We support legislation to allow farmers to share
13 agricultural labor housing and the development of state
14 tax assessing guidelines that support agricultural labor
15 housing.

16 We oppose local zoning ordinances that are more
17 strict for agricultural labor housing than those of any
18 residential home. ◆

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

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

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

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

33 accident/violation records.

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

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

#57 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. ♦

#59 AGRICULTURAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

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

#60 ANHYDROUS AMMONIA-NH₃

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

7 We support:

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

#63 FIREFIGHTING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#65 LAW ENFORCEMENT

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

- 4 • Law enforcement agencies being maintained
5 and funded at levels to provide adequate
6 training and service.
- 7 • Effective use of current police powers, but
8 oppose further expansion in order to preserve
9 individual rights.
- 10 • The state and federal law to be upheld in our
11 courts and not apply any foreign law to
12 domestic activities that could impair
13 constitutional rights.
- 14 • Funding of rural and urban patrols to curb drug
15 and vandalism issues.
- 16 • Law enforcement agencies to develop youth liaison
17 programs.
- 18 • Juvenile justice reform, including youth prisons,
19 for violent and dangerous juveniles.
- 20 • Capital punishment.
- 21 • Producers and/or county Farm Bureaus to meet
22 with local law enforcement and local elected
23 officials to discuss the importance of balancing
24 agriculture's concerns with the use of fireworks.
- 25 • Legislation that would define and create the
26 establishment of fireworks-free agriculture and
27 livestock safety zones.
- 28 • Additional tools to aid in the identification and
29 prosecution of individuals involved in the theft of
30 copper wire and other recyclable materials from
31 farms.

32 We oppose:

- 33 • Further restrictions on firearm rights and fully
34 support Second Amendment rights.
- 35 • The use of state and national funding for public

36 nuisance issues, such as seat belt enforcement
37 zones.

38 **Trespass**

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

- 46 • The ability to prosecute trespassers regardless
47 of whether or not “No Trespassing” signs were
48 posted.
- 49 • Rigorous enforcement of the Michigan
50 Recreational Trespass law.
- 51 • Property owners should not be held liable for any
52 accidents, injuries, or damage to personnel,
53 equipment, and/or property, by trespassers.
- 54 • Increased fines and penalties for trespassing.
- 55 • Amendments to the Michigan statutes imposing
56 civil liability for recreational and non-recreational
57 trespass, that set a jurisdictional limit of \$3,000
58 or five times the actual damages, whichever is
59 higher, and include incurred attorney fees and
60 court costs, payable to the landowner and or
61 lessee.
- 62 • Increased fines for trespass and damages for
63 losses incurred on land enrolled in PA 116 or
64 other land preservation programs, the Michigan
65 Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program,
66 or land participating in a food safety or security
67 program.
- 68 • Confiscation of unmanned aircraft, vehicle or off-
69 road vehicle for repeat trespassers.
- 70 • Use of photography for the immediate arrest of a
71 trespasser.
- 72 • Revocation of hunting, fishing and trapping
73 privileges and loss of vehicles used in the
74 violation.

75 **Impaired Driving**

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

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

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

85 We support changes to legislation that would

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

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

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

#67 PUBLIC WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE

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

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

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

- 20 • Research to develop better materials for public
21 water lines, wastewater and storm water systems.
- 22 • Development of better processes for the
23 operation and maintenance of the public
24 infrastructure.
- 25 • Long-range planning and comprehensive asset
26 management.
- 27 • An increase in federal safe drinking water funds,
28 USDA Rural Development water and sewer
29 funds, and Environmental Protection Agency
30 brownfield loan and grant funds.
- 31 • Prioritizing redevelopment and reuse in areas
32 with existing public infrastructure.

- 33 • A third-party, independent annual financial audit
- 34 of municipal water, sewer and storm water
- 35 systems being conducted and reported to the
- 36 State of Michigan.
- 37 • Municipalities collecting adequate revenue from
- 38 system users to pay for needed infrastructure
- 39 repairs and maintenance.
- 40 • Encouraging municipalities to take advantage of
- 41 low interest loan plans.
- 42 • Implementation and enforcement of pollution
- 43 prevention control measures on municipalities,
- 44 especially phosphorus removal.
- 45 We oppose:
- 46 • A statewide assessment to pay for repair of
- 47 individual municipality's water, sewer, and storm
- 48 water infrastructure for any reason. ◆

#68 REDRESS FOR UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS

1 We support legislation making individuals, news
 2 organizations, consumer and environmental groups
 3 responsible for damages caused by their
 4 unsubstantiated claims against approved products
 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
 13 liability claim if the person was trespassing, breaking
 14 a law or serving a prison sentence at the time of
 15 loss. ◆

#69 REGULATORY REFORM AND REDUCTION

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

- 3 • Repeal of occupational licensing unless required
- 4 to protect public health and safety.
- 5 • Rulemaking authority should be limited by
- 6 legislative actions.
- 7 • Regulations should be understandable and easy
- 8 to comply with and any penalties should fit the
- 9 violation.
- 10 • State agencies should be required to conduct
- 11 science-based studies, standardized risk
- 12 assessments, cost/benefit analyses, and
- 13 economic impact statements of all proposed

- 14 regulations.
- 15 • During an emergency powers time period, any
 - 16 branch of government be subject to the Freedom
 - 17 of Information Act and the data made available
 - 18 which pertains to the emergency powers.
 - 19 • Checks and balances in emergency power
 - 20 situations in any branch of government.
 - 21 Emergency power should be valid for a
 - 22 maximum of 21 days without legislative
 - 23 oversight.
 - 24 • Legislative oversight of state agencies during states
 - 25 of emergency.
 - 26 • Eliminating the two times per year time change
 - 27 (daylight savings time) in Michigan.
 - 28 • A public registry of studies.
 - 29 • Easing state regulations on rural community
 - 30 banks to ensure survival of these vital
 - 31 institutions.

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

35 We oppose:

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

#70 STREAMLINING MICHIGAN GOVERNMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

#71 TORT LIABILITY REFORM

1 To alleviate the tremendous economic pressure
2 placed on businesses, medical providers, local
3 governments and others, we continue to support the

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

#73 AIR QUALITY

1 Changes to state and federal air quality
2 standards and lawsuits driven by environmental
3 groups impact farms by forcing the development of
4 regulation and law in the absence of sound science.
5 We insist government air quality policies be based on
6 sound 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
17 major university research on agricultural air quality
18 standards and best management practices. We urge
19 MFB to work with the Environmental Protection
20 Agency to recognize normal agricultural production
21 practices and the associated air particulate
22 generated.

23 We support:

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

41 We oppose:

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

#78 GAME FARMS AND HUNTING PRESERVES

1 Michigan game breeders and hunting preserves
2 that breed, feed, and graze privately-owned animals

3 are an integral part of the agricultural economy of the
4 state. The industry is concerned about increased
5 government restrictions on the use of farms for
6 hunting.

7 We support:

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

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

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

#79 INVASIVE SPECIES

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

7 We support:

- 8 • The reestablishment of the Michigan Invasive
9 Species Advisory Council, with producer
10 representation.
- 11 • The Michigan Department of Natural Resources'
12 (MDNR) formation and support of Cooperative
13 Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs) at
14 the local level to educate the public and take
15 action to prevent the spread of invasive species in
16 Michigan, with long term funding for this program
17 instead of the current process of annual approval
18 through state budget appropriations.

- 19 • The role of the Agriculture and Natural Resource
20 Commissions in establishing the prohibited
21 species list.
- 22 • Federal, state and local agencies and research
23 institutions working more effectively with private
24 landowners to control or eradicate invasive
25 species.
- 26 • MDNR notifying all levels of local government and
27 gaining their support before releasing a non-native
28 species.
- 29 • Efforts to establish the Michigan Department of
30 Agriculture and Rural Development, with input
31 from appropriate industry associations, as the
32 state agency with responsibility for all terrestrial
33 invasive species.
- 34 • The substantial efforts by the State of Michigan to
35 work with other agencies to stop the invasion of
36 the Asian Carp into Michigan waters.
- 37 • Development of an aggressive plan by state,
38 federal, and tribal agencies to address the food
39 web imbalance in the Great Lakes that has largely
40 been caused by invasive zebra and quagga
41 mussels, to promote the recovery of our native
42 and naturalized fishery.
- 43 • An increase in funds for inspection services and
44 facilities. Funding should also be made available
45 for public education and outreach efforts.
- 46 • Preventing and controlling noxious weeds and
47 other seeds in mixtures offered to the public.
- 48 • Clear and scientific criteria to delineate what are
49 invasive species. Due to genetic differences
50 between plant genera, plant hybrids, and within
51 species, varieties and cultivars, each should be
52 treated as an individual when delineating invasive
53 species.
- 54 • Studying any predator species before it is
55 introduced to limit or destroy an invasive species
56 to determine any other damage that might occur
57 to the environment or farmers.
- 58 • Regulations including emergency measures to
59 allow for the timely use of chemical controls.
- 60 • Any consideration of endangered or threatened
61 species should recognize and address the role of
62 invasive species.
- 63 • Adequate state and federal funding to develop
64 sound science sufficient to determine long-term
65 effects of invasive species.
- 66 • Indemnification of crop, nursery stock and
67 livestock losses from invasive species when it can
68 be documented that the quarantine requirements

- 69 or treatment methods are the basis for the loss.
- 70 • Public lands and rights-of-way being managed to
- 71 reduce and eliminate invasive species as
- 72 effectively as private lands and in coordination
- 73 with neighboring privately owned or leased land.
- 74 Any efforts on public lands affecting the uses and
- 75 private rights held by public land permittees and
- 76 users shall be subject to compensation and fair
- 77 market value for the taking of these property rights
- 78 by the introduction or proliferation of invasive
- 79 species.
- 80 • Proper incentives being provided for farmers and
- 81 ranchers to effectively control noxious and aquatic
- 82 weeds, along with support for an Integrated Pest
- 83 Management approach.
- 84 • Consideration being given to the extent to which
- 85 species may be naturalized in an environment.
- 86 Any penalties associated with introductions must
- 87 be realistic.
- 88 • Michigan's ballast water discharge standards
- 89 reflecting the federal standards which are
- 90 enforced by the U.S. Coast Guard.

91 We oppose:

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

#85 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 specific
24 rights at the register of deeds office. We believe this
25 law should be changed to require re-registration
26 every 10 years, and the property owner should be
27 notified and be given the opportunity to object at the
28 time of re-registration.

29 We support:

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

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

82 We oppose:

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

#87 RESOURCE RECOVERY

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

- 6 • Using farm plastic recycling programs such as
- 7 Clean Sweep.
- 8 • Implementing recycling programs for agricultural
- 9 tires and all reusable agricultural material.
- 10 • Establishing grant or loan programs to facilitate
- 11 purchasing equipment capable of processing
- 12 agricultural and heavy-duty tires and tracks.
- 13 • Adopt-a-local-roadside programs.

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

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

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

#90 WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES

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

10 We oppose changing the wording, meaning or
11 definition of navigable waters in the Clean Water Act
12 (CWA), the removal of the term "navigable waters" from
13 the CWA, and any attempt to broaden the reach of the
14 CWA. Federal CWA jurisdiction and the EPA's power

15 should be limited to navigable streams and flowing
16 waterways with continuous 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
22 United States. We urge the EPA to include greater
23 farmer input in 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 WETLANDS PROTECTION ACT

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

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

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

35 if the Environmental Protection Agency withdraws
36 Michigan's federally delegated authority for
37 Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

- 38 • Regulating a wetland if it meets the criteria in the
39 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' 1987 Delineation
40 Manual and Regional Supplements.

41 We recommend the following:

- 42 • The MDEGLE statewide wetland inventory should
43 not be used for regulatory purposes. Michigan
44 Farm Bureau is concerned the inventory includes
45 wetlands that do not meet current wetland
46 delineation standards.
- 47 • Compatible agricultural uses should be allowed in
48 wetlands. Wetland vegetation should be defined
49 as obligate hydrophytes.
- 50 • There should be no regulation of man-made
51 wetlands or voluntarily established wetlands
52 implemented as conservation practices through
53 state or federal programs.
- 54 • Application of contaminated soils and sediments
55 to farm fields at agronomic rates should be in
56 accordance with state and federal requirements.
- 57 • County drain/water resources commissions should
58 be the sole authority on public drains, culverts and
59 maintenance.
- 60 • Statewide standards for wetland determinations
61 and historical function must be established to
62 ensure uniform application at all locations.
- 63 • Permits must be issued promptly.
- 64 • Where application of wetland regulation results in
65 a substantial or total loss of the value of the
66 property, the State must fully compensate the
67 property owner. Control and access to the
68 property must remain with the property owner.
- 69 • All prior converted wetlands should be excluded
70 from regulation.
- 71 • Cleaning up edges of fields back to the original
72 farmed boundaries and removing barriers such as
73 brush and trees protruding into fields should not
74 trigger a wetland determination or disciplinary
75 action against the farmer/landowner.
- 76 • Cost-sharing or other incentives should be
77 provided for wetlands restoration programs on
78 farms.
- 79 • A fund should be established to compensate
80 neighboring farms for their economic loss due to
81 unforeseen problems created by wetland
82 restoration.
- 83 • MDEGLE and Natural Resources Conservation
84 Service should completely explain in advance and

85 in writing landowner obligations during and after a
86 contract for the maintenance and/or reversion of a
87 wetland.

- 88 • Creative solutions should reflect economic and
89 environmental realities to resolve wetlands
90 disputes.
- 91 • Productive agricultural land should not be used to
92 mitigate wetlands, especially by condemnation.
- 93 • Wetland violations should be heard within the
94 court jurisdiction where the violation has been
95 alleged.
- 96 • Government agencies should cooperate and
97 provide a single contact for regulatory compliance
98 to handle all issues of wetland determination,
99 enforcement, and penalties.
- 100 • MDEGLE should recognize the section of the
101 Wetlands Protection Act finding wetlands to be
102 valuable as an agricultural resource for producing
103 food and fiber, including certain crops which may
104 only be grown on sites developed from wetlands.

105 We oppose other states converting Michigan
106 farmland to offset wetland mitigation. ♦

#93 FEES

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

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

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

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

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

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

#98 LIMITED PURPOSE OPERATOR'S LICENSE

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

7 We support the State of Michigan:

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

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

#99 RAILROADS

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

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

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

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

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

47 **Abandoned Railroads**

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

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

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

70 We support allowing horses on converted
 71 railroad trails. ◆

Recommendations on Michigan Farm Bureau Policy

#104 POLITICAL ACTION PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

Reaffirmation of Michigan Farm Bureau Policies

#102 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 per
9 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 to
14 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 accumu-
22 lated fund balance and the requests for legal
23 assistance. ♦

#103 MEMBERSHIP AND FARM BUREAU PROGRAMS

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

7 We support:

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

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