

# **2025 Proposed Resolutions**

## **Submitted by the Policy Development Committee to the Michigan Farm Bureau Annual Meeting Delegates**

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

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

### **Delegate Discussion Schedule**

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#### ***Tuesday, December 2 – Opening Delegate Session 1:45 – 4:45 p.m.***

<i>Proposed Amendments to Michigan Farm Bureau Bylaws</i> .....	Scheduled-1
AFBF #700 Tariff Ad Hoc Committee .....	(yellow) Scheduled-3
#60 Elections .....	(yellow) Scheduled-3
#90 Wildlife Management.....	(yellow) Scheduled-5

#### ***Wednesday, December 3 – Delegate Session 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.***

##### *Board of Director Elections*

[NEW POLICY] Agricultural Conservation .....	(yellow) Scheduled-6
#87 Water Use in the Great Lakes Basin .....	(yellow) Scheduled-7
[NEW POLICY] Water Use and Research .....	(yellow) Scheduled-13

#### ***Wednesday, December 3 – Closing Delegate Session 2:45 – 5:30 p.m.***

#81 Michigan Dept. of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy .....	(yellow) Scheduled-18
[NEW POLICY] Environmental Protection and Regulation .....	(yellow) Scheduled-24
#82 Nonpoint Source Pollution and Watershed Management.....	(yellow) Scheduled-27
[NEW POLICY] Environmental Contaminants .....	(yellow) Scheduled-32

## AFBF Policy Recommendations

(pink)

110	Regulatory Review and Reform	AFBF-1
135	Agricultural Workforce	AFBF-4
240	Sustainable Agriculture	AFBF-11
308	Livestock Identification	AFBF-12
358	Inspection and Grading of Meat, Poultry and Seafood Products	AFBF-13
462	Role of USDA	AFBF-15

## State Policy Recommendations

(white)

3	Agricultural Innovation and Value-Added Initiatives	State-1
4	Animal Care	State-2
5	Animal Health	State-5
6	Aquaculture and Commercial Fishing	State-9
9	Cannabis Production	State-12
15	Direct Marketing and Agritourism	State-14
16	Dry Bean Industry	State-16
18	Food Insecurity	State-17
20	Forestry	State-18
28	Michigan Meat Processing Industry	State-21
29	Nursery, Floriculture, Sod and Greenhouse Industry	State-22
32	Right to Farm	State-23
35	TB – Mycobacterium Bovis Tuberculosis	State-26
39	Agriscience, Food, and Natural Resources Education & the FFA Organization	State-30
40	Educational Reforms	State-32
41	Michigan Ag Council	State-33
45	State Energy Policy	State-34
53	Wages and Compensation	State-36
68	Streamlining Michigan Government	State-38
70	Agricultural Drainage	State-39
71	Air Quality	State-43
72	Carbon Sequestration and Ecosystem Services Markets	State-44
73	Climate Change	State-45
74	Conservation Districts	State-45
75	Farmland Protection	State-48
76	Game Farms and Hunting Preserves	State-50
77	Invasive Species	State-51
78	Land Acquisitions for Public Projects	State-53
79	Land Use	State-54
80	Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program	State-57
83	Oil, Gas, and Mineral Rights	State-60
84	Private Property Rights	State-62
85	Resource Recovery	State-63
86	USDA Conservation Programs	State-64

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89	Wetlands Protection Act	State-67
91	Fees	State-70
92	Taxation	State-70
93	County Road Commissions	State-74
94	Farm and Commercial Vehicles	State-75
95	International Trade Crossing	State-78
96	Limited Purpose Operator's License	State-78
97	Railroads	State-78
98	Safety on Roadways	State-80
99	Transportation Improvement	State-82

## State Policy Reaffirmations (white)

1	Agricultural Commodity Commissions	State-89
2	Agricultural Fairs and Exhibitions	State-89
7	Bee Industry	State-90
8	Biotechnology	State-90
10	Commission System of Government	State-92
11	Compliance and Resources for Farm Business Management	State-93
12	Craft Beverage Industry	State-93
14	Dairy Industry	State-94
17	Equine Industry	State-95
19	Food Safety	State-97
21	Fruits and Vegetables	State-98
22	Intellectual Property Rights	State-99
23	Labeling	State-100
24	Maple Sugar Production	State-100
25	Marketing and Bargaining Legislation	State-100
26	Michigan Alliance for Animal Agriculture	State-101
27	Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	State-101
30	Payment Protection and Security for Growers	State-105
31	Plant Pests and Diseases	State-105
33	Sheep Industry	State-107
34	Sugar Industry	State-107
36	Urban Farming	State-108
37	USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service – Great Lakes Field Office	State-108
38	Wheat Industry	State-109
42	Michigan State University	State-110
43	Broadband	State-114
44	Renewable and Biomass Products	State-115
46	Unmanned Aircraft Systems	State-117
47	Utility Placement	State-118
48	Agricultural Worker Housing	State-120
49	Agricultural Workforce	State-121
50	Immigration	State-123
51	Insurance	State-123

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52	Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration .....	State-124
54	Worker Protection Standards.....	State-125
55	Zoning of Agricultural Worker Housing .....	State-125
56	Agricultural Vocational Rehabilitation .....	State-126
57	Agriculture Security.....	State-126
58	Anhydrous Ammonia – NH <sub>3</sub> .....	State-127
59	Antitrust.....	State-128
61	Firefighting .....	State-129
62	Health .....	State-130
63	Law Enforcement.....	State-131
64	Local Government .....	State-133
65	Public Water and Sewer Infrastructure .....	State-135
66	Redress for Unsubstantiated Claims .....	State-136
67	Regulatory Reform and Reduction .....	State-136
69	Tort Liability Reform.....	State-137

## Michigan Farm Bureau Policy Recommendations

(blue)

100	Legal Defense Fund .....	MFB-1
101	Membership and Farm Bureau Programs .....	MFB-1
102	Political Action Program.....	MFB-2

## Scheduled Policies

### **AFBF #700 Tariff Ad Hoc Committee**

1     We support the creation of a 2026 ad hoc committee  
2     of Farm Bureau members to analyze the impact and  
3     opportunities through tariffs and provide resolution  
4     recommendations.

### **#60 Elections**

1     We believe Michigan Farm Bureau should  
2     encourage members to register to vote. We also believe  
3     MFB should continue efforts to provide education and  
4     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     • Results projections on Election Day not be  
10     released to the public until polls are closed in the  
11     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  
16     the recurring ballot question to hold a  
17     Constitutional Convention.
- 18    • Recall petitions containing proven misfeasance or  
19     malfeasance before the petition is approved.
- 20    • Requiring state legislators to wait at least one  
21     year before becoming a registered lobbyist.
- 22    • Elected officials not being allowed to pursue a  
23     different elected position, unless they are at the  
24     end of their current term or resign from their  
25     currently held elected position.
- 26    • The current primary election process for statewide  
27     offices.
- 28    • Nominating Secretary of State and Attorney  
29     General candidates on the primary election ballot  
30     instead of state party conventions.
- 31    • Apol Standards for the purpose of redistricting.
- 32    • Changes to the Michigan Constitution that allow  
33     for gubernatorial appointment, with advice and  
34     consent from the Senate for the Michigan State  
35     University board of trustees, Wayne State  
36     University board of governors, and University of  
37     Michigan board of regents.
- 38    • Michigan continuing to honor the Electoral  
39     College as designated in the U.S. Constitution.
- 40    • A simplified process to opt out of robocalls.

- 41 • Farm Bureau members to become precinct  
42 delegates, and MFB to conduct educational  
43 training on becoming a precinct delegate.  
44 • The consolidation of the May and August  
45 elections into a single election in June.  
46 [Relocated text through line 54] We oppose:  
47 • The concept of a part-time legislature.  
48 • The Promote the Vote campaign of the Electoral  
49 College system.  
50 • Election Day becoming a holiday.  
51 • Any voting by mail except by absentee ballot.  
52 • Electronic forms of voting without a paper trail.  
53 • Proposals to make the popular vote the sole  
54 determinant of presidential elections.  
55 • Ranked choice voting.  
56 • Convening a Constitutional Convention.

### 57 **Ballot Reform**

58 We encourage MFB members to be knowledgeable  
59 about ballot proposals.

60 We support the following ballot process reforms:

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

### 82 **Term Limits**

83 We support:

- 84 • Staggering county commissioner terms.  
85 • Continuing to assess the effectiveness of the new  
86 term limit structure.

### 87 **Special Elections**

88 Special elections accrue high costs for local  
89 taxpayers.

90 Therefore, we support:

- 91 • Requiring that once an operating millage or bond  
92 proposal is defeated by voters, it cannot be up for  
93 another vote for at least one full year.
- 94 • Millage and bond proposal elections taking place  
95 during the November general election.
- 96 • School board elections being held during midterm  
97 or general elections to avoid unnecessary costs.
- 98 [Relocated in Policy] We oppose:
- 99 • ~~The concept of a part-time legislature.~~
- 100 • ~~The Promote the Vote campaign of the Electoral~~  
101 ~~College system.~~
- 102 • ~~Election Day becoming a holiday.~~
- 103 • ~~Any voting by mail except by absentee ballot.~~
- 104 • ~~Electronic forms of voting without a paper trail.~~
- 105 • ~~Proposals to make the popular vote the sole~~  
106 ~~determinant of presidential elections.~~

### 107 Election Fraud

- 108 We support:
- 109 • Clerks maintaining an accurate voter registration  
110 list.
- 111 • A passport, enhanced Michigan ID, or enhanced  
112 driver's license, REAL ID or REAL Michigan  
113 driver's license that proves citizenship for voter  
114 registration and voting.
- 115 We oppose:
- 116 • Election and voter fraud.

### #90 Wildlife Management

- 1 Wildlife management of all species in Michigan  
2 should be based on ~~sound biological~~ peer-reviewed  
3 science that ensures a healthy balance in population,  
4 alleviates property damage, and reduces the risk of  
5 disease transmission.
- 6 We support:
- 7 • The Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
8 (MDNR) being the lead agency to advocate  
9 Michigan's authority to manage federally  
10 protected species.
- 11 • Michigan Farm Bureau working with MDNR, as  
12 ~~well as~~ and other stakeholders, to ensure  
13 effective management and ecological balance  
14 that minimizes conflict.
- 15 • Hunting and trapping as the primary tool to  
16 manage population for all species in the state of  
17 Michigan. Hunting regulations should provide the  
18 maximum opportunities to harvest game species.  
19 This includes, but is not limited to, reduced cost of  
20 licenses as well as creating, revising, or extending  
21 hunting seasons.

- 22 • Programs, regulations, and methods that lead to  
23 increased harvest and help control wildlife  
24 species as well as reduction of agricultural  
25 damage. Adversely, we oppose programs or  
26 regulations that have a negative impact on  
27 agriculture, which includes, but is not limited to,  
28 antler point restrictions.
- 29 • Decisions on baiting and feeding should be based  
30 on science with consideration given to impacts on  
31 harvest as well as ongoing disease threats.  
32 Therefore, we support baiting to increase harvest  
33 and oppose feeding outside of hunting season to  
34 limit disease transmission.
- 35 • Agency culling.
- 36 • Financial incentives for managing wildlife species,  
37 which includes but is not limited to, sale of game  
38 meat.
- 39 • Farmers having the ability to effectively manage  
40 all wildlife species that are causing damage or  
41 putting their agricultural operation at risk. Lethal  
42 authority should be given in a timely manner,  
43 provide greatest flexibility and at low or no cost.
- 44 • Increased access to processing as well as  
45 streamlined ability to donate game meat with  
46 options for free replacement license.
- 47 • ~~Investments in habitat and conservation projects~~  
48 ~~that don't negatively impact.~~
- 49 • Implementation of local tools and ideas in the  
50 management of wildlife issues.
- 51 • The consideration of a task force or advisory  
52 committee focused on wildlife management.

### **[NEW POLICY] Agricultural Conservation**

1 Conservation management programs and practices  
2 are critical for farm success. These programs and  
3 practices could include different approaches, including  
4 but not limited to, regenerative agriculture, climate-  
5 smart agriculture, soil health, sustainable agriculture, or  
6 ecosystem services programs.

7 We support:

- 8 • All programs and practices remaining voluntary.
- 9 • Peer-reviewed science supporting conservation  
10 practices, including manure management.
- 11 • Programs and practices that provide positive  
12 economic impact for the continued success of  
13 agriculture.
- 14 • Funding for programs and research that provide  
15 effective educational and technical support.
- 16 • Protection making individual farm data exempt from  
17 the Freedom of Information Act.



## **#87 Water Use in the Great Lakes Basin Withdrawal Regulation**

[Reworded and moved to New Water Use and Research Policy A] The Great Lakes Basin represents the largest reserve of fresh water in the world. This unique resource should be used in a responsible manner and protected for future generations and the future of Michigan agriculture. Food and fiber production is in the public interest, is a reasonable use of water, and provides economic and ecological benefits to the Great Lakes Basin.

### **Michigan Water Law and Policy**

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

Michigan's farms depend on reliable access to water within the Great Lakes Basin – the world's largest source of fresh water. Protecting this shared resource must be balanced with policies that maintain the competitiveness and viability of Michigan agriculture.

Burdensome regulation is not necessary to safeguard the Basin and could undermine agricultural productivity and economic growth. Any legislation or permitting system must protect existing rights and ensure timely, science-based, and farmer-focused processes.

Any new laws must include the following protections:

- No fees ~~may EVER~~ shall ever be charged for agricultural water use.
- Existing documented surface and groundwater uses and sites that predate Michigan's water withdrawal law must be grandfathered in as registered uses and sites.
- [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and Research Policy B] ~~Public hearings must take place in the watershed areas before consideration of any reclassification.~~
- [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and Research Policy C] ~~All reclassification notices should be given at a minimum of 180 days before hearings.~~
- ~~Water use p~~Permits for withdrawals supplying a common agricultural distribution system of less than two million gallons per day in any 90-day consecutive period ~~for agriculture~~ must be

49 handled by the Michigan Department of  
50 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD).

- 51 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
52 Research Policy D] ~~Municipalities or other~~  
53 ~~governments with jurisdiction over artificial~~  
54 ~~impoundments, such as ponds and lakes, should~~  
55 ~~be allowed to reduce water levels to remove~~  
56 ~~accumulated sediments.~~

57 We support:

- 58 • [Moved to New Water Use and Research Policy  
59 E] ~~An increased role in any current or future state~~  
60 ~~water use committees due to the diversity of~~  
61 ~~Michigan agriculture.~~
- 62 • The State of Michigan making every effort to  
63 ~~approve agricultural water withdrawals in a timely~~  
64 approvals of agricultural water withdrawals  
65 ~~manner.~~
- 66 • MDARD ~~being~~ serving as the primary department  
67 for agricultural water use reporting and conflict  
68 resolution.
- 69 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
70 Research Policy F] ~~Basing all water use policies~~  
71 ~~and regulations on validated scientific research.~~
- 72 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
73 Research Policy G] ~~Landowners receiving water~~  
74 ~~recharge credit for maintaining open,~~  
75 ~~undeveloped ground. Water use reporting should~~  
76 ~~include “water in” (rainfall) provisions. We~~  
77 ~~encourage the development of incentives for~~  
78 ~~farmers who recover more water than they use.~~
- 79 • [Moved to New Water Use and Research Policy  
80 H] ~~Legislation strengthening Michigan’s authority~~  
81 ~~to conserve and protect the waters of the Great~~  
82 ~~Lakes Basin.~~
- 83 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
84 Research Policy I] ~~Including agricultural water~~  
85 ~~uses in the Michigan Agriculture Environmental~~  
86 ~~Assurance Program (MAEAP). The state should~~  
87 ~~be required to have a greater burden of proof in~~  
88 ~~determining a water use is causing an adverse~~  
89 ~~resource impact if the verified producer is~~  
90 ~~addressing applicable water conservation~~  
91 ~~measures through MAEAP.~~
- 92 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
93 Research Policy J] ~~The inclusion of scientifically~~  
94 ~~sound, environmentally protective and~~  
95 ~~economically feasible water conservation~~  
96 ~~measures in Generally Accepted Agricultural and~~  
97 ~~Management Practices.~~

- 98 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
99 Research Policy K] ~~Increased development and  
100 use of Michigan's Welllog database of well  
101 drilling logs. Accurate records of existing uses  
102 including residential wells are needed to assess  
103 Michigan water supplies and use.~~
- 104 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
105 Research Policy L] ~~Seasonal exemptions in  
106 Michigan's Well Code for shallow aquifer water  
107 withdrawals regardless of well depth.~~

### 108 **Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool**

109 Michigan has implemented an online science-  
110 based water withdrawal assessment tool (WWAT). As  
111 there are significant differences between Michigan  
112 regions regarding water availability and use, we  
113 recognize a "one size fits all" solution may not be the  
114 best answer. The process has experienced  
115 complications and technical difficulties. According to the  
116 Michigan Geological Survey, the current data used in  
117 the WWAT is insufficient to adequately map and assess  
118 Michigan's groundwater resources ~~and to consider~~  
119 applications for groundwater withdrawal. Although the  
120 Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and  
121 Energy (MDEGLE) reported the WWAT provides  
122 automatic authorization for withdrawals in nearly 70  
123 percent of all applications statewide, Michigan Farm  
124 Bureau believes continued improvement of the WWAT  
125 is needed, including but not limited to the following:

- 126 • Continued MFB leadership in implementing and  
127 improving the state's water withdrawal  
128 assessment law in accordance with MFB policy  
129 WWAT, including assembling a working group of  
130 people with professional expertise in hydrology  
131 and geology to review and make  
132 recommendations on improving the WWAT, site-  
133 specific review, model development, and benefits  
134 of creating a mediation process for disputes of  
135 water withdrawal decisions.
- 136 • Additional Enhanced data collection and model  
137 enhancement with the latest updates using peer-  
138 reviewed scientific data research so streamflow  
139 depletion predictions agree with actual ~~results of~~  
140 water withdrawal depletions.
- 141 • Continued refinement of the WWAT accounting for  
142 regional variability and privately collected data.
- 143 • ~~Requiring MDEGLE through~~ Legislation or legal  
144 action requiring EGLE to update the WWAT and  
145 the site-specific review process based upon  
146 current the latest research data and enhanced  
147 models.

- 148 • ~~University research to verify accuracy~~ Third-party  
149 verification of the WWAT accuracy.
- 150 • ~~An e Exemptions from the WWAT for withdrawals~~  
151 ~~where the potential for adverse resource impact is~~  
152 ~~negligible based on the collection and analysis of~~  
153 ~~field data using industry standards, methodology~~  
154 ~~and practices.~~
- 155 • ~~Privately, peer-reviewed researched data~~  
156 ~~collected in accordance with standard research~~  
157 ~~protocols being included in the WWAT and to be~~  
158 ~~accepted by the MDEGLE and, as well as~~  
159 ~~MDARD.~~
- 160 • ~~MDARD and MDEGLE, with input of~~  
161 ~~stakeholders, d~~ Developing and using a  
162 standardized template for site-specific reviews of  
163 high-capacity agricultural water withdrawals-site-  
164 specific reviews.
- 165 • ~~Completing the comprehensive water use study in~~  
166 ~~Southwest Michigan Water Use Study to collect~~  
167 ~~the data necessary to make appropriate changes~~  
168 ~~within improve the WWAT modeling.~~
- 169 • ~~The changes made by Implementing and~~  
170 ~~requiring the use of PA 209 of 2018 to provide an~~  
171 ~~optional alternate process for site-specific reviews~~  
172 ~~of high-capacity water withdrawals. This law is~~  
173 ~~based on updated scientific modeling and~~  
174 ~~provides a more accurate reflection of the~~  
175 ~~regional variability of water use impacts.~~  
176 ~~Additionally, the law clarifies MDEGLE's role and~~  
177 ~~timeframes for review and approval of withdrawal~~  
178 ~~applications under the new process. We~~  
179 ~~encourage MFB to oversee the implementation of~~  
180 ~~the law and develop educational information~~  
181 ~~about the process for members which modernized~~  
182 ~~the site-specific review process with updated~~  
183 ~~modeling and clearer timeframes for EGLE~~  
184 ~~review.~~

### 185 **Aquifer Conflicts**

186 [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
187 Research Policy M] ~~We support the Aquifer Conflict and~~  
188 ~~Dispute Resolution law and further support the following~~  
189 ~~changes to the process:~~

- 190 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
191 Research Policy N] ~~MDARD shall certify well~~  
192 ~~drillers to verify complaints by onsite inspection.~~  
193 ~~These contracted well drillers will be ineligible to~~  
194 ~~replace, repair or modify any well they are sent to~~  
195 ~~inspect.~~
- 196 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
197 Research Policy O] ~~The owner of a high-capacity~~

- 198 well should not be assumed at fault until proven  
199 otherwise.  
200 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
201 Research Policy P] The law should establish a  
202 statute of limitations and release from future  
203 claims.

#### 204 **Research and Education**

- 205 We support:
- 206 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
207 Research Policy Q] Research enhancing the  
208 understanding of water resources, validating the  
209 ecological benefits of agriculture's role in the  
210 water cycle, and leading to increased agricultural  
211 water use efficiency.
  - 212 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
213 Research Policy R] MFB developing partnerships  
214 to increase education and promoting the value of  
215 agricultural water use to the public.
  - 216 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
217 Research Policy S] MFB and partners such as  
218 conservation districts facilitating the formation of  
219 farmer collectives to gather and share data and  
220 develop regional models to assess and predict  
221 water use impacts.
  - 222 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
223 Research Policy T] Increasing education, financial  
224 and technical assistance for farmers who  
225 participate in voluntary, incentive-driven water use  
226 conservation programs.
  - 227 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
228 Research Policy U] The voluntary use of  
229 monitoring wells.
  - 230 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
231 Research Policy T] Seeking new and expanded  
232 opportunities to reclaim and recycle water.
  - 233 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
234 Research Policy U] Water use record-keeping on  
235 farms to increase water use efficiencies, protect  
236 producer rights to water access and validate  
237 agricultural water use as a high priority.
  - 238 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
239 Research Policy V] Working with well-drillers to  
240 ensure they have sufficient understanding of  
241 geological and hydrologic processes to provide  
242 the best possible knowledge and service to clients  
243 and the most accurate and useful reporting of  
244 data to the State, including groundwater location  
245 and availability, and soil and geological  
246 formations. We encourage landowners voluntarily  
247 submitting geological samples to the Michigan

248 Geological Survey and developing a trust fund to  
249 protect participants against liability for negative  
250 sample analysis findings.

- 251 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
252 Research Policy V] Investigating funding sources  
253 for geological mapping.
- 254 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
255 Research Policy X] The findings of the Southwest  
256 Michigan Water Resource Council, which was  
257 charged with studying water resources in the  
258 region.

259 We oppose:

- 260 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
261 Research Policy Y] Any water allocation system  
262 preempting surface water riparian doctrine or  
263 groundwater rights.
- 264 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
265 Research Policy Z] Applying a “public trust  
266 doctrine” to groundwater.
- 267 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
268 Research Policy AA] Diverting water in its natural  
269 state from the Great Lakes Basin.
- 270 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
271 Research Policy BB] The definition of  
272 consumptive use as applied to agriculture.
- 273 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
274 Research Policy CC] Legislative or regulatory  
275 efforts resulting from federal, regional, state  
276 and/or local initiatives that adversely impact  
277 agriculture.
- 278 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
279 Research Policy DD] The State of Michigan  
280 removing dams located on drains and waterways  
281 recharging aquifers of the state and not requiring  
282 owners of existing dams to maintain them.
- 283 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
284 Research Policy EE] Attempts to limit efficient  
285 agricultural water use.
- 286 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
287 Research Policy FF] Water use prioritization.
- 288 • Filing fees for agricultural water use reporting.
- 289 • [Moved to New Water Use and Research Policy  
290 GG] Using collected agricultural water use data  
291 for regulatory purposes or to advance agendas in  
292 opposition to efficient agricultural water use.
- 293 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
294 Research Policy HH] Well code changes placing  
295 economic or regulatory burdens on landowners in  
296 the absence of sound science.

- 297 • [Reworded and moved to New Water Use and  
298 Research Policy II] ~~Any attempt to turn water into~~  
299 ~~a commodity.~~
- 300 • [Moved to New Water Use and Research Policy  
301 JJ] ~~The Environmental Protection Agency~~  
302 ~~designating interstate aquifers as “sole source~~  
303 ~~aquifers.”~~
- 304 • Fraudulent use of the WWAT to register a water  
305 withdrawals.

#### **[NEW POLICY] Water Use and Research**

1 [Reworded and moved from #87 Water Withdrawal  
2 Regulation A] The Great Lakes Basin holds the world’s  
3 largest reserve of fresh water. Responsible  
4 management is essential to sustain future generations  
5 and Michigan agriculture. Food and fiber production is a  
6 reasonable and beneficial use of water that supports  
7 both the economy and the environment.

8 We support:

- 9 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
10 Withdrawal Regulation D] Municipalities or other  
11 governments with jurisdiction over artificial  
12 impoundments, such as ponds and lakes, being  
13 allowed to reduce water levels to remove  
14 accumulated sediments.
- 15 • [Moved from #87 Water Withdrawal Regulation E]  
16 An increased role in any current or future state  
17 water use committees due to the diversity of  
18 Michigan agriculture.
- 19 • Developing water user committees to resolve  
20 water access challenges in watersheds where  
21 use may be limited.
- 22 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
23 Withdrawal Regulation F] Water use policies and  
24 regulations based on peer-reviewed scientific  
25 research.
- 26 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
27 Withdrawal Regulation B] Public hearings taking  
28 place in affected watersheds before considering  
29 any reclassification of stream temperature or size.
- 30 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
31 Withdrawal Regulation C] Reclassification notices  
32 being provided a minimum of 180 days before  
33 hearings.
- 34 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
35 Withdrawal Regulation G] Crediting landowners  
36 for recharge-enhancing practices to account for  
37 “water in” (rainfall) provisions.

- 38 • [Moved from #87 Water Withdrawal Regulation H] Legislation strengthening Michigan's authority to  
39 conserve and protect the waters of the Great  
40 Lakes Basin.
- 41
- 42 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
43 Withdrawal Regulation I] Including agricultural  
44 water uses in the Michigan Agriculture  
45 Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP),  
46 ensuring verified producers are protected from  
47 unverified adverse resource impact claims.
- 48 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
49 Withdrawal Regulation J] The inclusion of peer-  
50 reviewed science and environmentally protective  
51 and economically feasible water conservation  
52 measures in Generally Accepted Agricultural and  
53 Management Practices.
- 54 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
55 Withdrawal Regulation K] Improving the use of  
56 Michigan's Wellogic database of well drilling logs.
- 57 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
58 Withdrawal Regulation L] Seasonal exemptions in  
59 Michigan's Well Code for shallow aquifer water  
60 withdrawals.

#### 61 **Aquifer Conflicts**

62 [Reworded and moved from #87 Water Withdrawal  
63 Regulation M] We support the Aquifer Conflict and  
64 Dispute Resolution with the following changes:

- 65 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
66 Withdrawal Regulation N] Michigan Department of  
67 Agriculture and Rural Development-certified well  
68 drillers to verify complaints, who cannot profit  
69 from repairs or replacements.
- 70 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
71 Withdrawal Regulation O] High-capacity well  
72 owners not being presumed at fault until proven  
73 otherwise.
- 74 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
75 Withdrawal Regulation P] Establishing a statute of  
76 limitations and release from future claims.

#### 77 **Research and Education**

78 We support:

- 79 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
80 Withdrawal Regulation Q] Advancing research on  
81 water resources and agriculture's role in the water  
82 cycle.
- 83 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
84 Withdrawal Regulation R] Fostering public  
85 education partnerships highlighting agriculture's  
86 water stewardship.



- 87 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
88 Withdrawal Regulation U] The voluntary use of  
89 monitoring wells and water use record keeping on  
90 farms to increase efficiency, protect producer  
91 rights to water access and validate agricultural  
92 water use as a high priority.
- 93 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
94 Withdrawal Regulation S] Voluntary farmer  
95 collectives for data sharing and regional  
96 modeling.
- 97 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
98 Withdrawal Regulation T] Expanding incentive-  
99 based conservation programs and water  
100 recycling/reuse initiatives.
- 101 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
102 Withdrawal Regulation V] Encouraging accurate  
103 well data reporting and training for well drillers,  
104 and funding for geological mapping.
- 105 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
106 Withdrawal Regulation X] The findings of the  
107 Southwest Michigan Water Resource Council,  
108 which was charged with studying water resources  
109 in the region, and the Cass County Water Use  
110 Study, which collected data and developed  
111 models to predict water use impacts from  
112 watersheds in the region.
- 113 We oppose:
- 114 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
115 Withdrawal Regulation Y] Water allocation  
116 systems preempting surface water riparian  
117 doctrine or groundwater rights.
- 118 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
119 Withdrawal Regulation Z] Applying public trust  
120 doctrine to groundwater.
- 121 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
122 Withdrawal Regulation AA] Diversion of natural  
123 Great Lakes Basin water.
- 124 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
125 Withdrawal Regulation BB] Michigan's definition  
126 of agriculture's consumptive use.
- 127 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
128 Withdrawal Regulation CC] Legislative or  
129 regulatory efforts resulting from federal, regional,  
130 state and/or local initiatives that adversely impact  
131 agriculture.
- 132 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
133 Withdrawal Regulation DD] The State of Michigan  
134 removing dams located on drains and waterways  
135 that recharge aquifers of the state.

- 136 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
137 Withdrawal Regulation DD] Not requiring owners  
138 of existing dams to maintain them.
- 139 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
140 Withdrawal Regulation EE] Attempts to limit  
141 efficient agricultural water use.
- 142 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
143 Withdrawal Regulation FF] Water use  
144 prioritization.
- 145 • [Moved from #87 Water Withdrawal Regulation  
146 GG] Using collected agricultural water use data  
147 for regulatory purposes or to advance agendas in  
148 opposition to efficient agricultural water use.
- 149 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
150 Withdrawal Regulation HH] Well code changes  
151 placing economic or regulatory burdens on  
152 landowners in the absence of peer-reviewed  
153 science.
- 154 • [Reworded and moved from #87 Water  
155 Withdrawal Regulation II] The commodification of  
156 water.
- 157 • [Moved from #87 Water Withdrawal Regulation  
158 JJ] The Environmental Protection Agency  
159 designating interstate aquifers as “sole source  
160 aquifers.”

**The following is a copy of the proposed new policy Water Use and Research, identical to the version above but without markup, provided for easier reading and as an additional reference as you consider the proposed language.**

**[NEW POLICY] Water Use and Research**

1     The Great Lakes Basin holds the world's largest  
2 reserve of fresh water. Responsible management is  
3 essential to sustain future generations and Michigan  
4 agriculture. Food and fiber production is a reasonable  
5 and beneficial use of water that supports both the  
6 economy and the environment.

7     We support:

- 8     • Municipalities or other governments with  
9 jurisdiction over artificial impoundments, such as  
10 ponds and lakes, being allowed to reduce water  
11 levels to remove accumulated sediments.
- 12 • An increased role in any current or future state  
13 water use committees due to the diversity of  
14 Michigan agriculture.
- 15 • Developing water user committees to resolve  
16 water access challenges in watersheds where  
17 use may be limited.

- Water use policies and regulations based on peer-reviewed scientific research.
- Public hearings taking place in affected watersheds before considering any reclassification of stream temperature or size.
- Reclassification notices being provided a minimum of 180 days before hearings.
- Crediting landowners for recharge-enhancing practices to account for “water in” (rainfall) provisions.
- Legislation strengthening Michigan’s authority to conserve and protect the waters of the Great Lakes Basin.
- Including agricultural water uses in the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP), ensuring verified producers are protected from unverified adverse resource impact claims.
- The inclusion of peer-reviewed science and environmentally protective and economically feasible water conservation measures in Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices.
- Improving the use of Michigan’s Wellogic database of well drilling logs.
- Seasonal exemptions in Michigan’s Well Code for shallow aquifer water withdrawals.

#### **Aquifer Conflicts**

We support the Aquifer Conflict and Dispute Resolution with the following changes:

- Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development-certified well drillers to verify complaints, who cannot profit from repairs or replacements.
- High-capacity well owners not being presumed at fault until proven otherwise.
- Establishing a statute of limitations and release from future claims.

#### **Research and Education**

We support:

- Advancing research on water resources and agriculture’s role in the water cycle.
- Fostering public education partnerships highlighting agriculture’s water stewardship.
- The voluntary use of monitoring wells and water use record keeping on farms to increase efficiency, protect producer rights to water access and validate agricultural water use as a high priority.

- 67 • Voluntary farmer collectives for data sharing and
- 68 regional modeling.
- 69 • Expanding incentive-based conservation
- 70 programs and water recycling/reuse initiatives.
- 71 • Encouraging accurate well data reporting and
- 72 training for well drillers, and funding for geological
- 73 mapping.
- 74 • The findings of the Southwest Michigan Water
- 75 Resource Council, which was charged with
- 76 studying water resources in the region, and the
- 77 Cass County Water Use Study, which collected
- 78 data and developed models to predict water use
- 79 impacts from watersheds in the region.
- 80 We oppose:
- 81 • Water allocation systems preempting surface
- 82 water riparian doctrine or groundwater rights.
- 83 • Applying public trust doctrine to groundwater.
- 84 • Diversion of natural Great Lakes Basin water.
- 85 • Michigan's definition of agriculture's consumptive
- 86 use.
- 87 • Legislative or regulatory efforts resulting from
- 88 federal, regional, state and/or local initiatives that
- 89 adversely impact agriculture.
- 90 • The State of Michigan removing dams located on
- 91 drains and waterways that recharge aquifers of
- 92 the state.
- 93 • Not requiring owners of existing dams to maintain
- 94 them.
- 95 • Attempts to limit efficient agricultural water use.
- 96 • Water use prioritization.
- 97 • Using collected agricultural water use data for
- 98 regulatory purposes or to advance agendas in
- 99 opposition to efficient agricultural water use.
- 100 • Well code changes placing economic or
- 101 regulatory burdens on landowners in the absence
- 102 of peer-reviewed science.
- 103 • The commodification of water.
- 104 • The Environmental Protection Agency designating
- 105 interstate aquifers as "sole source aquifers."

## **#81 Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy**

### **Regulatory Department Authority and Responsibility**

3 [Reworded and moved to New Environmental  
4 Protection and Regulation Policy B] ~~To protect the~~  
5 ~~environment, ensure public safety, and enhance~~  
6 ~~production agriculture, we challenge state and federal~~  
7 ~~agencies to work together to produce more user-friendly~~  
8 ~~programs that provide clear direction and consistent~~

9 regulatory authority. Oversight should focus on solving  
10 problems and not simply on penalizing the regulated  
11 community. We support the current statute in Part 31 of  
12 the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection  
13 Act (NREPA) that prohibits the Michigan Department of  
14 Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (MDEGLE) from  
15 promulgating (~~putting into effect~~ creating or changing)  
16 rules under this part. If MDEGLE is granted rulemaking  
17 authority, we support requiring enhanced legislative  
18 oversight of the rulemaking process to minimize  
19 economic impacts to the regulated community.

20 Farmers who violate state environmental law are  
21 under the jurisdiction of MDEGLE. While ~~the vast~~  
22 ~~majority of~~ most farms put forth a considerable effort  
23 and are environmentally safe, we recognize the  
24 ~~potential for that~~ environmental problems challenges  
25 can still arise.

#### 26 **Environmental Enforcement and Standards**

27 [Reworded and moved to New Environmental  
28 Protection and Regulation Policy B] ~~We encourage~~  
29 ~~Michigan Farm Bureau to work with state and federal~~  
30 ~~agencies, land grant universities and stakeholder~~  
31 ~~groups to develop standards indicating agriculture's~~  
32 ~~positive impact on the environment. We believe~~  
33 ~~environmental credit standards should be developed~~  
34 ~~and applied against any new regulations to offset the~~  
35 ~~regulatory burden on producers.~~ State regulations and  
36 standards enforced by MDEGLE should not be more  
37 restrictive than federal standards.

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

43 We support:

- 44 • Timely, effective and consistent enforcement of  
45 environmental laws and issuance of permits.
- 46 • Standards for dam management, maintenance,  
47 and purchases in cooperation with federal  
48 agencies.
- 49 • [Reworded and moved to New Environmental  
50 Protection and Regulation Policy C] ~~Timely~~  
51 ~~enforcement of water quality standards using~~  
52 ~~credible data. We urge MFB to pursue legislation~~  
53 ~~on credible data and how it may be used to better~~  
54 ~~invoke sound science in regulation of water~~  
55 ~~quality, air quality and water quantity.~~
- 56 • Applying sound peer-reviewed science and  
57 performing economic impact analysis to MDEGLE  
58 rules and standards prior to promulgation.

- 59 • Maximum use of Natural Resources Conservation  
60 Service standards within MDEGLE regulations.
- 61 • Appropriate timelines for producer implementation  
62 of regulations.
- 63 • [Reworded and moved to New Environmental  
64 Protection and Regulation Policy D] MDARD  
65 intervention on behalf of farmers in legal actions if  
66 the farmer has worked with state agencies to  
67 address pollution challenges.
- 68 • ~~Development of~~ Developing a third-party  
69 arbitration process for disputes between  
70 MDEGLE and a farmer.
- 71 • MDEGLE being responsible to pay legal fees  
72 incurred by the respondent from a wrongful  
73 enforcement action if the enforcement action is  
74 settled, a consent agreement is reached, or the  
75 action is decided in the respondent's favor.
- 76 • ~~PA 268 of 2018 creating~~ Reestablishing the  
77 MDEGLE Appeals Board Environmental Permit  
78 Review Commission.
- 79 • [Reworded and moved to New Environmental  
80 Protection and Regulation Policy E] Using funds  
81 derived from enforcement penalties to support  
82 pollution prevention in agriculture.
- 83 • [Relocated to New Environmental Protection and  
84 Regulation Policy F] Authorizing permits at the  
85 local level in accordance with state and federal  
86 rules to provide for more timely decisions.
- 87 • [Reworded and moved to New Environmental  
88 Protection and Regulation Policy G] Allowing  
89 water quality testing in lieu of existing well  
90 setback standards to satisfy the siting  
91 requirement.
- 92 • A farm's ability to move portable toilets within and  
93 between their farms.
- 94 • [Reworded and relocated Text A] Requiring EGLE  
95 to notify local law enforcement and authorities  
96 before any actions are taken against farms.
- 97 • [Reworded and relocated Text A] Individuals who  
98 lodge complaints with EGLE against farms being  
99 required to provide their name for public record. If  
100 an individual makes more than three unverified  
101 complaints within three years, that individual must  
102 pay for the complaint investigation.

#### 103 **Manure, Nutrient, and Fuel Nutrients and Manure** 104 **Management**

105 We support:

- 106 • The continued ability for farmers farms of all any  
107 sizes to manifest, move or sell animal nutrients  
108 from their farm to another farm/ or owner. We will

vigorously oppose any attempts to limit or eliminate the ability of agriculture to utilize animal nutrients when they are being utilized according to nutrient requirements and at agronomic rates.

- The continuation of manure application to frozen or snow-covered ground in accordance with the Manure Management and Utilization Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs). We will vigorously oppose any attempt to eliminate the practice.
- The continued practice of broadcasting and injecting nutrients, including manure, in accordance with best practices identified in the Nutrient Utilization GAAMP.
- Allowing the application of animal nutrients to non-frozen, non-snow-covered ground any time during the year, regardless of type or size of farm operation.
- ~~Updating fertilizer and manure nutrient utilization guidelines.~~
- MDEGLE accepting third-party determinations that an existing manure storage structure is functioning properly for regulatory purposes.
- Regulatory recognition of the influence of extreme weather (e.g., rainfall, snow melt) on farming practices.
- [Reworded and moved to New Environmental Protection and Regulation Policy H] ~~Flexibility for unlimited on-farm fuel, chemical and fertilizer storage with consistent and adequate containment standards~~
- [Reworded and moved to New Environmental Protection and Regulation Policy H] ~~Consistency of fuel, chemical and fertilizer containment structure regulations across governmental agencies.~~

## **Processing Wastewater and Groundwater Regulation**

We support:

- MFB proactively working with MDEGLE to seek solutions that support changes to the regulatory requirement that allow ag processors to land apply wastewater without permitting under a specifically defined set of circumstances.
- MDARD working with MDEGLE to implement a threshold below which no Groundwater Discharge permit or testing is required for agricultural processing discharge.
- MDARD assisting MDEGLE to determine appropriate treatment of all types of agricultural

processing wastewater (~~breweries, distilleries, fruit and vegetable producers, sugar processing, etc.~~) that generate high-strength wastewater that has nutrients useful for land application.

- MFB continuing to work with MDEGLE on development of a general permit specific to slaughterhouses that permits land application of process wastewater without advance treatment.
- Allowing septic haulers licensed under Part 117 of NREPA to also haul food processing wastewater and not requiring them to be licensed as industrial haulers under NREPA Part 121.

## **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)**

We support:

- Legislative or administrative changes to requiring a formal committee of appropriate stakeholders to be involved in all permit developments and rewrites so that input is balanced. All NPDES writing or rewrite committees should be chaired by an unbiased third-party individual.
- An evaluation of the Michigan's NPDES permitting process in Michigan, with changes to allow that provide long-term certainty for the agriculture industry and which eliminate the change that takes place for all industries every time a new administration is elected in our state prevent shifts in policy with each new state administration. We support a study committee by MFB to establish this evaluation and make recommendations.
- Amending state laws to more clearly define MDEGLE's regulatory authority under NPDES permits and where they have no authority, especially animal health which falls under the authority of the Animal Industry Act and wildlife, which falls under the authority of the state veterinarian or the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.
- Amending or repealing Part 17 of NREPA to prevent predatory litigation by special interests to penalize farmers operating under legitimate permits issued by MDEGLE.
- Timely issuance of NPDES permits, in accordance with state and federal rules.
- [Reworded and moved to New Environmental Protection and Regulation Policy I] ~~MFB continuing efforts to eliminate state regulation of animal agriculture more restrictive than federal~~



requirements, [Reworded and relocated within Policy B] including lowering permitting thresholds.

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

We oppose:

- [Reworded and moved from #70 Agricultural Drainage A] EGLE implementing rules and policies that exceed their federal mandate and are not supported by scientific evidence.
- Classification of manure, sand, accidental commodity spillage, and ag processing by-products as hazardous waste.
- Taxation ~~and/or~~ fees assessed on the nutrient content of manure.
- Public access to agricultural information on the MiEnviro Portal online permitting database.
- [Reworded and moved to New Environmental Protection and Regulation Policy J] Legislation inhibiting the viability of agriculture.
- ~~Decisions made in response to emotion instead of science, law and common sense.~~
- Arbitrary moratoriums affecting the growth of animal agriculture, including limits on animal expansion and storage structure size.
- [Reworded and Relocated Text B] Reducing the number of livestock that triggers the requirement for an NPDES permit.
- [Reworded and moved to New Environmental Protection and Regulation Policy K] State agencies labeling or identifying farm operations,

258 such as CAFO, GMO, or other labels, in any form  
259 of communication, no matter the size of operation  
260 or requirement of permits.

261 • Well setback distances from agriculture practices  
262 greater than 75 feet, as listed in the Grade A Dairy  
263 Law.

264 • [Reworded and Relocated text C] The  
265 harassment of farmers adhering to the state's  
266 pollution prevention programs for agriculture.

### 267 **Response to Environmental Scrutiny**

268 ~~Public scrutiny of agriculture and increased~~  
269 ~~regulation continues to challenge farmers to improve~~  
270 ~~farm management and protect the environment.~~  
271 ~~[Reworded and moved to New Environmental~~  
272 ~~Protection and Regulation Policy L] We urge all~~  
273 ~~members to voluntarily implement pollution prevention~~  
274 ~~practices. The agricultural community realizes the need~~  
275 ~~to protect the environment; however, when regulations~~  
276 ~~limit agricultural viability, we believe it is time to take a~~  
277 ~~more aggressive approach to protect our industry.~~  
278 ~~[Reworded and moved to New Environmental~~  
279 ~~Protection and Regulation M] Michigan producers and~~  
280 ~~MFB should aggressively work to counter propaganda~~  
281 ~~that depicts production agriculture in Michigan as~~  
282 ~~abusers of the environment.~~

283 ~~[Reworded and relocated within policy A] The~~  
284 ~~harassment of farmers adhering to the State's pollution~~  
285 ~~prevention program for agriculture shall not be~~  
286 ~~tolerated. We support requiring MDEGLE to notify local~~  
287 ~~law enforcement and authorities before any actions are~~  
288 ~~taken against farms. Individuals who lodge complaints~~  
289 ~~with MDEGLE against farms must be required to~~  
290 ~~provide their name for public record. If an individual~~  
291 ~~makes more than three unverified complaints within~~  
292 ~~three years, that individual must pay for the complaint~~  
293 ~~investigation.~~

### **[NEW POLICY] Environmental Protection and Regulation**

1 ~~[Reworded and moved from #81 Michigan~~  
2 ~~Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy~~  
3 ~~B] Michigan agriculture is committed to protecting the~~  
4 ~~environment, ensuring public safety, and supporting~~  
5 ~~responsible production. Overlapping or inconsistent~~  
6 ~~regulations can create confusion, cost, and inefficiency.~~  
7 ~~Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) calls on state and federal~~  
8 ~~agencies, land-grant universities, and stakeholders to~~  
9 ~~collaborate in developing clear, science-based, and~~  
10 ~~user-friendly programs that prioritize problem-solving~~

11 over punishment and recognize agriculture's positive  
12 contributions to environmental health.

13 We support:

- 14 • [Reworded and moved from #81 Michigan  
15 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and  
16 Energy C] Timely enforcement of water quality  
17 standards based on credible, scientifically valid  
18 data.
- 19 • [Reworded and moved from #81 Michigan  
20 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and  
21 Energy C] Legislation requiring credible data be  
22 used to guide policy on air quality and water  
23 quality and quantity.
- 24 • [Reworded and moved from #81 Michigan  
25 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and  
26 Energy D] Michigan Department of Agriculture  
27 and Rural Development (MDARD) intervention on  
28 behalf of farmers who are cooperating with state  
29 agencies to address pollution challenges.
- 30 • [Reworded and moved from #81 Michigan  
31 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and  
32 Energy E] Using enforcement penalty funds to  
33 support pollution prevention in agriculture.
- 34 • [Relocated text from #81 Michigan Department of  
35 Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy F]  
36 Authorizing permits at the local level in  
37 accordance with state and federal rules to provide  
38 for more timely decisions.
- 39 • [Reworded and moved from #81 Michigan  
40 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and  
41 Energy G] Water quality testing as an alternative  
42 to strict well setback standards when siting  
43 facilities.
- 44 • Updated fertilizer and manure nutrient utilization  
45 guidelines that reflect current science and  
46 technology, including Tri-State recommendations  
47 and Extension Bulletins.
- 48 • [Reworded and moved from #81 Michigan  
49 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and  
50 Energy H] Flexibility for unlimited on-farm fuel,  
51 chemical, and fertilizer storage with uniform,  
52 consistent, and adequate containment standards  
53 and regulations across all levels of government.
- 54 • [Reworded and moved from #81 Michigan  
55 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and  
56 Energy L] Voluntary implementation of pollution  
57 prevention practices.
- 58 • [Reworded and moved from #81 Michigan  
59 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and  
60 Energy M] MFB doing public outreach to counter

61 misinformation portraying agriculture as harmful  
62 to the environment

63 We oppose:

- 64 • [Reworded and moved from #82 Nonpoint Source  
65 Pollution and Watershed Management P] A  
66 statewide septic code requiring mandatory  
67 inspections of private septic systems.
- 68 • [Reworded and moved from #82 Nonpoint Source  
69 Pollution and Watershed Management N] Local  
70 fertilizer or pesticide regulations stricter than  
71 MDARD or EPA standards.
- 72 • [Reworded and moved from #81 Michigan  
73 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and  
74 Energy J] Legislation that undermines the  
75 economic viability of agriculture.
- 76 • [Reworded and moved from #82 Nonpoint  
77 Source Pollution and Watershed Management O]  
78 Presuming farmers responsible for pollution  
79 without credible evidence.
- 80 • [Reworded and moved from #81 Michigan  
81 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and  
82 Energy K] Agency labeling of farms (e.g., CAFO,  
83 GMO, or similar identifiers) in communications or  
84 public records.
- 85 • [Reworded and moved from #81 Michigan  
86 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and  
87 Energy I] State regulation of animal agriculture  
88 exceeding federal requirements.

**The following is a copy of the proposed new policy**  
**Environmental Protection and Regulation, identical to**  
**the version above but without markup, provided for**  
**easier reading and as an additional reference as you**  
**consider the proposed language.**

**[NEW POLICY] Environmental Protection and**  
**Regulation**

1 Michigan agriculture is committed to protecting the  
2 environment, ensuring public safety, and supporting  
3 responsible production. Overlapping or inconsistent  
4 regulations can create confusion, cost, and inefficiency.  
5 Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB) calls on state and federal  
6 agencies, land-grant universities, and stakeholders to  
7 collaborate in developing clear, science-based, and  
8 user-friendly programs that prioritize problem-solving  
9 over punishment and recognize agriculture's positive  
10 contributions to environmental health.

11 We support:

- 12 • Timely enforcement of water quality standards  
13 based on credible, scientifically valid data.

- 14 • Legislation requiring credible data be used to  
15 guide policy on air quality and water quality and  
16 quantity.
- 17 • Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural  
18 Development (MDARD) intervention on behalf of  
19 farmers who are cooperating with state agencies  
20 to address pollution challenges.
- 21 • Using enforcement penalty funds to support  
22 pollution prevention in agriculture.
- 23 • Authorizing permits at the local level in  
24 accordance with state and federal rules to provide  
25 for more timely decisions.
- 26 • Water quality testing as an alternative to strict well  
27 setback standards when siting facilities.
- 28 • Updated fertilizer and manure nutrient utilization  
29 guidelines that reflect current science and  
30 technology, including Tri-State recommendations  
31 and Extension Bulletins.
- 32 • Flexibility for unlimited on-farm fuel, chemical, and  
33 fertilizer storage with uniform, consistent, and  
34 adequate containment standards and regulations  
35 across all levels of government.
- 36 • Voluntary implementation of pollution prevention  
37 practices.
- 38 • MFB doing public outreach to counter  
39 misinformation portraying agriculture as harmful  
40 to the environment

#### 41 We oppose:

- 42 • A statewide septic code requiring mandatory  
43 inspections of private septic systems.
- 44 • Local fertilizer or pesticide regulations stricter  
45 than MDARD or EPA standards.
- 46 • Legislation that undermines the economic  
47 viability of agriculture.
- 48 • Presuming farmers responsible for pollution  
49 without credible evidence.
- 50 • Agency labeling of farms (e.g., CAFO, GMO, or  
51 similar identifiers) in communications or public  
52 records.
- 53 • State regulation of animal agriculture exceeding  
54 federal requirements.

## **#82 Nonpoint Source Pollution and Watershed Management**

1 Farmers ~~— like, along with~~ other rural and urban  
2 residents, ~~—~~ are concerned about nonpoint source  
3 pollution of ~~affecting~~ Michigan's surface and  
4 groundwater. Protecting surface and groundwater from  
5 ~~contamination~~ is a priority, and we recognize agriculture

6 shares ~~the~~ this responsibility with many others.

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

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

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

30 We support:

#### 31 **Fertilizer and Nutrient Management**

- 32 • ~~All~~ Fertilizer retailers becoming certified in the  
33 4R (Right fertilizer source, Right rate, Right time,  
34 Right place) Nutrient Stewardship Program and/or  
35 similar fertilizer management efforts.
- 36 • Michigan Farm Bureau coordinating with  
37 neighboring states and Canada where a  
38 watershed is shared to reduce nutrient loading  
39 issues.
- 40 • University, state and federal programs promptly  
41 updating guidelines when nutrient research is  
42 completed, so farmers have time to implement  
43 them.
- 44 • Additional research on dissolved phosphorus.
- 45 • Continued education on appropriate phosphorus  
46 and other nutrient use.
- 47 • Biosolids applications being consistent with the  
48 guidelines in the Michigan Water Environment  
49 Association's Land Application of Biosolids in  
50 Michigan Management Recommendations.
- 51 • The current regulated use of biosolids as a source  
52 of nutrients on farmland as allowed in the Right to  
53 Farm Act.
- 54 • [Reworded and moved to New Environmental  
55 Contaminants Policy A] ~~Research in Michigan to~~

determine the safe levels of emerging contaminants (including per and polyfluoroalkyl substances, PFAS) in biosolids that will be applied to land used for crop production.

- [Reworded and moved to New Environmental Contaminants Policy B] Michigan developing standards to keep biosolids a feasible crop production nutrient source, without the risk of soil contamination by emerging contaminants (including PFAS) from any applied biosolid.

## **Conservation and Pollution Prevention Programs**

- The farm bill providing opportunities for farmers to address conservation programs on farms.
- The continued refining of conservation program delivery to ensure the process is transparent, consistent and simple to participating farmers. We appreciate newly available technical and financial assistance to address on-farm above-ground fuel tanks and liquid fertilizer storage.
- Developing nutrient management plans for all farms.
- Continuing the cost-share provided to producers for conservation practices.
- A state-funded cover crop and filter strip cost-share program.
- The Clean Sweep Program with MDARD accepting responsibility for future liability for chemicals collected.
- Legislation clarifying forest management practices are not point sources of pollution.
- Developing baseline environmental standards for agriculture in line with current production standards and methods.
- [Relocated from #86 USDA Conservation Programs A] Conservation program eligibility being determined by total environmental benefit rather than location within the watershed.
- Coordinated efforts to expedite soil stabilization permits.
- [Reworded and moved to New Environmental Contaminants Policy C] ~~Scientific, site-specific testing protocols and/or landowner consent prior to the state and federal agencies determining an area is contaminated, with testing costs, loss of land value, and indemnification being the responsibility of the state and/or federal government if the contamination is not the fault of the landowner.~~
- [Reworded and moved to New Environmental Contaminants Policy D] ~~The acting agency being~~

- 106 held liable for current and future losses and  
107 expenses; including but not limited to, loss of  
108 value of commodities, loss of land, loss of  
109 business, etc. and for complete indemnification of  
110 everything a farm loses when the agency decides  
111 a farm's soil, water, crops, or livestock is  
112 contaminated, when the contamination is not the  
113 landowner's fault.
- 114 • [Reworded and moved to New Environmental  
115 Contaminants Policy E] Funding for research and  
116 collaboration between agencies, universities, and  
117 the private sector to evaluate the health risks and  
118 strategies for mitigating risks associated with  
119 chemical contaminants in water and food.
  - 120 • [Reworded and moved to New Environmental  
121 Contaminants Policy F] Using sound science to  
122 determine the level of impact of emerging  
123 contaminant (including PFAS) issues. Before any  
124 new regulations are developed the financial  
125 impact and liability to the affected community  
126 must be determined.
  - 127 • [Reworded and moved to New Environmental  
128 Contaminants Policy G] MDARD, working in  
129 cooperation with MDEGLE and local  
130 governments, overseeing the disposal of  
131 moderately contaminated watershed sediments  
132 on farm lands containing greater levels of the  
133 identified contaminants.
  - 134 • [Reworded and moved to New Environmental  
135 Contaminants Policy H] Legislation providing  
136 liability protection to farmers who follow the label  
137 directions, pertinent regulations, and Generally  
138 Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices  
139 (GAAMPs) for fertilizers and pesticides.
  - 140 • [Reworded and moved to New Environmental  
141 Contaminants Policy I] Legislation providing  
142 financial support to farms that have been  
143 determined by the state to be contaminated with  
144 PFAS and other emerging contaminants.
  - 145 • MFB being involved in fiscally responsible  
146 strategies to fund voluntary conservation  
147 practices.
  - 148 • The existing Soil and Sedimentation Control Act  
149 exemption for plowing, tilling and other  
150 agricultural and land improvement activities.
  - 151 • Eliminating the acreage cap for Michigan's  
152 Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.
- 153 **Water Quality and Watershed Management**
- 154 • Use of the Saginaw Bay Optimization Model.



- 155 • Modifying the Lake Erie Domestic Action Plan to  
156 better support farmers.
- 157 • Prioritizing funding for conservation practices to  
158 address impaired waters.
- 159 • Streamlining the funding process of allocating  
160 funds to improve water quality at the farm level.
- 161 • The use of ~~sound~~ peer-reviewed science to  
162 determine water quality.
- 163 • MFB taking a leadership role in developing  
164 protocols for water quality monitoring.
- 165 • An unbiased study to determine contributors  
166 negatively impacting water quality before  
167 additional regulations are imposed upon  
168 agriculture.
- 169 • Farm Bureau members participating in voluntary  
170 water quality monitoring programs, in which  
171 results are kept confidential.
- 172 • Farmer representation on local boards and  
173 commissions making decisions on environmental  
174 policies such as land use and watershed  
175 planning.
- 176 • Encouraging state and local governments to  
177 utilize buffer strips around government owned  
178 buildings and parking areas.
- 179 We oppose:
- 180 • Water quality monitoring of ditches and streams  
181 selectively performed to incriminate individuals  
182 and not performed by certified individuals in  
183 accordance with MDEGLE protocols.
- 184 • [Reworded and moved to New Environmental  
185 Protection and Regulation Policy N] ~~Any fertilizer~~  
186 ~~and pesticide use regulation by local government~~  
187 ~~more restrictive than MDARD and EPA~~  
188 ~~regulations.~~
- 189 • [Reworded and moved to New Environmental  
190 Protection and Regulation Policy O] ~~Farmers~~  
191 ~~being presumed to cause pollution of public or~~  
192 ~~private water supplies near agricultural~~  
193 ~~operations.~~
- 194 • Additional environmental permits for agricultural  
195 non-point source pollution.
- 196 • Restricting phosphorus for agricultural use if  
197 producers follow GAAMPs or soil testing by a  
198 certified lab.
- 199 • Giving legal standing or rights to natural  
200 resources and bodies of water.
- 201 • [Reworded and moved to New Environmental  
202 Protection and Regulation Policy P] ~~A statewide~~  
203 ~~septic code that requires mandatory inspections~~  
204 ~~of private septic systems.~~

## **[NEW POLICY] Environmental Contaminants**

Michigan farmers are increasingly concerned about environmental contaminants – including PFAS and other chemicals – that may affect farmland, surface and groundwater, and public confidence in food safety. While protecting natural resources is a priority, farmers must not be held responsible for contamination they did not cause. Policies must ensure both environmental protection and farmer protection from unjust liability, cleanup costs, and loss of land or product value.

### We support:

- [Reworded and moved from #82 Nonpoint Source Pollution and Watershed Management C] Scientific, site-specific testing protocols and landowner consent prior to testing or sampling for environmental contaminants, with costs being covered by the state or federal agency.
- [Reworded and moved from #82 Nonpoint Source Pollution and Watershed Management D] The acting agency being held liable for complete indemnification of current and future losses when contamination is not the landowner's and/or farmer's fault. This includes losses in commodity value, land value or access, business income, and crops, soil, or livestock determined to be contaminated.
- [Reworded and moved from #82 Nonpoint Source Pollution and Watershed Management E] Funding for research and collaboration among agencies, universities, and the private sector to evaluate the health risks, develop mitigation strategies for environmental contaminants, and to develop regulatory limits.
- [Reworded and moved from #82 Nonpoint Source Pollution and Watershed Management F] Use of peer-reviewed science to determine the level and extent of risks posed by environmental contaminants.
- [Reworded and moved from #82 Nonpoint Source Pollution and Watershed Management F] Economic impact assessments before implementing any new regulations to determine potential costs and liabilities to affected communities.
- [Reworded and moved from #82 Nonpoint Source Pollution and Watershed Management H] Legislation providing liability protection for farmers who comply with product labels, regulations, and

- 48 Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management  
49 Practices (GAAMPs) for fertilizers and pesticides.
- 50 • [Reworded and moved from #82 Nonpoint Source  
51 Pollution and Watershed Management I] Financial  
52 assistance for farms identified by the state to be  
53 contaminated with any environmental  
54 contaminants.
  - 55 • [Reworded and moved from #82 Nonpoint Source  
56 Pollution and Watershed Management A] State-  
57 funded research to identify safe levels of  
58 environmental contaminants in biosolids applied  
59 to farmland.
  - 60 • [Reworded and moved from #82 Nonpoint Source  
61 Pollution and Watershed Management B] Michigan-specific standards to ensure biosolids  
62 remain a viable and safe nutrient source without  
63 risk of soil contamination.
  - 64 • [Reworded and moved from #82 Nonpoint Source  
65 Pollution and Watershed Management G] Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural  
66 Development oversight in coordination with the  
67 Michigan Department of Environment, Great  
68 Lakes, and Energy and local governments of the  
69 disposal of moderately contaminated sediments  
70 on farmland.
  - 71  
72

**The following is a copy of the proposed new policy Environmental Contaminants, identical to the version above but without markup, provided for easier reading and as an additional reference as you consider the proposed language.**

**[NEW POLICY] Environmental Contaminants**

- 1 Michigan farmers are increasingly concerned about  
2 environmental contaminants – including PFAS and  
3 other chemicals – that may affect farmland, surface and  
4 groundwater, and public confidence in food safety.  
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48 Development oversight in coordination with the  
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50 Lakes, and Energy and local governments of the  
51 disposal of moderately contaminated sediments  
52 on farmland.

# AFBF Policy Recommendations

## #110 Regulatory Review and Reform (amendment at line 13.10)

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

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

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

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

## **#135 Agricultural Workforce**

**(amendments at lines 20.1.1.1, 20.1.1.2, 20.1.1.4, 20.1.1.5)**

- 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;
  - 9.5. We call for the repeal of DOL's authority to seek and secure "hot goods" orders on perishable commodities; and
  - 9.6. Inspection criteria that cannot impede daily operations and provide a least disruptive time frame as possible.
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. We support:
  - 14.1. Consistency between states' implementation of DOL rules and regulations;
  - 14.2. Clear and reasonable housing inspection criteria for H-2A housing;
  - 14.3. Clear criteria for H-2A housing fines and a warning system before fines are issued; and
  - 14.4. Housing inspection criteria that ensure an efficient inspection process.
15. Fine structures should be published and available for public review:
  - 15.1. 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.
16. Federal requirements for employers reporting newly hired employees should be changed to exclude reporting temporary and day-by-day employees.
17. We support:
  - 17.1. Using the USDA Census of Agriculture data when determining policy on agricultural labor;

- 17.2. Requiring state employment agencies to verify employment eligibility of potential workers before making any referral to an employer;
- 17.3. The reform of existing migrant labor laws to promote greater access to an agricultural workforce;
- 17.4. Legislation at the federal level to exempt farmworkers from time-and-a half or double-time requirements;
- 17.5. 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 guest worker visa or seeking to obtain a federal guest worker visa unless the newly legalized worker has obtained a green card;
- 17.6. Offering an opportunity, and providing 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);
- 17.7. 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;
- 17.8. Allowing U.S. farmers to hire qualified migratory and domestic workers;
- 17.9. Including work requirements for able-bodied adults on government assistance;
- 17.10. The standardization of the definition of agriculture and agricultural employment for all state/federal labor-related legislation to include the work activity described by the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS), code 11. The NAICS code reflects modern agriculture practices and is now used by the agricultural census and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health because the description more accurately reflects current agricultural organizational structures;
- 17.11. 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;
- 17.12. Retention of the present family farm exemption from the child labor provisions of the FLSA regardless of business structure where members of the family/families are owners, including a closely held corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, limited liability company or any other business entity;
- 17.13. Deleting the language "or causes to be used" from the vehicle safety obligations section of MSPA (Section 500.100a);
- 17.14. Enforcement of federal child labor laws designed to prevent underage children from working in all industries. We support existing FLSA provisions, which specify and provide opportunities for young people of the proper age to perform certain agriculture jobs;
- 17.15. The family farm exemption in MSPA and oppose any efforts to restrict its application;
- 17.16. Changes in the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) so posting of field entrances does not unduly alarm consumers about the use of crop protection products. We request significant research and data can be provided resolving serious flaws with the present regulation;
- 17.17. EPA withdrawing the WPS of November 2015 in favor of the previous WPS rule;
- 17.18. Changes to employee protections under the WPS should be based on current scientifically or medically substantiated data and reflect current pesticide labeling;

- 17.19. Eliminating from the WPS the existing provision granting “designated representatives” access to farm-specific pesticide data. Any access to such data by “designated representatives” should be restricted to matters related to the health, safety or exposure of the employee who authorized access and the “designated representative” should not be allowed to disclose the data to anyone other than the employee;
- 17.20. The freedom to use farm labor contractors in the recruitment and management of migrant seasonal and day haul agricultural employees. The labor contractor should be recognized as the sole employer of said workforce;
- 17.21. Increased funding to continue and expand the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Program;
- 17.22. 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
- 17.23. Improved programs for agricultural workers that assist in finding, hiring and retaining an adequate, legal and cost-competitive labor supply.
- 18. We oppose:
  - 18.1. Continued obtrusive rulemaking by the DOL as related to farm labor programs;
  - 18.2. A national agricultural labor board;
  - 18.3. The expansion of the Agricultural Hazardous Occupations Orders by the DOL;
  - 18.4. Unauthorized entry into any facilities including, but not limited to, employee housing units, barns, accessory buildings, and fields by agents of the U.S. government;
  - 18.5. Any regulations requiring farmers to pay wages to farm employees during travel time from their residence to place of work;
  - 18.6. 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; and
  - 18.7. States' overtime laws impacting the federal AEWR.
- 19. **Agricultural Visa Programs**
  - 19.1. We support a visa program that:
    - 19.1.1. Is portable (at will) or by contract and that also deals with ag sectors that need year-round workers;
    - 19.1.2. Streamlines the H-2A and H-2B process, to prioritize making a national immigration policy that is farmer friendly providing a legal agricultural workforce that would benefit producers, farm workers and the American consumer;
    - 19.1.3. Is uncapped and open to all segments of agriculture and flexible enough to provide for the differing needs of farmers and ranchers. We may accept visa caps for a year-round program as long as they do not restrict farmers and ranchers from using the visa program and getting their labor needs met;
    - 19.1.4. Addresses agriculture's unique needs, which may change suddenly with weather, global market realities, contract enforceability or other variables beyond the grower's control;
    - 19.1.5. Is simplified and cost-competitive to make their employment more feasible for perishable crops;
    - 19.1.6. Provides workers with a visa that lasts at least three years and is renewable multiple times;
    - 19.1.7. Allows the worker to maintain their current residency while obtaining a work visa without a requirement of returning to their country of origin;
    - 19.1.8. Eliminates excessive or duplicative bureaucracy and unnecessary red tape;
    - 19.1.9. Reduces domestic recruitment costs;

- 19.1.10. Includes appropriate provisions for foreign commuter workers who return to a residence in their home country nightly or weekly;
  - 19.1.11. Establishes an ombudsman to resolve disputes among immigration service, employers and workers;
  - 19.1.12. Includes timely certification determination to ensure employers adequate time to bring workers to a job site;
  - 19.1.13. Includes the broadest possible definition of agriculture;
  - 19.1.14. Provides the option of a housing allowance, in lieu of housing;
  - 19.1.15. Provides for an exemption from any contract employment guarantee in the case of a freeze or other emergency catastrophic event;
  - 19.1.16. Is administered by USDA;
  - 19.1.17. 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 or a limit on hours worked in a week for each farm;
  - 19.1.18. Automatically increases the number of available visas (to avoid crop losses) if the visa limit is reached, should a future agricultural visa program cap the number of available visas;
  - 19.1.19. Includes forestry;
  - 19.1.20. Provides an online format to expedite the exchange of information between the producer and government agencies;
  - 19.1.21. Allows for rehiring of past employees without having to refile and resubmit paperwork to four agencies;
  - 19.1.22. Allows a physical visit to the consulate of a worker's home country be used to satisfy a "touch back," which is part of a status adjustment process; and
  - 19.1.23. Any unspent farm worker COVID relief funds being allocated to the construction and/or renovation of farm worker housing.
- 19.2. We oppose:
- 19.2.1. An agricultural worker program with requirements and fees that are more stringent for one sector of agriculture than another;
  - 19.2.2. Requiring agricultural producers who participate in federal guest worker programs to pay wage rates excessively higher than the state or federal minimum wage;
  - 19.2.3. Requiring employers to pay local youth workers the same wages as an H-2A or visa worker under a new agricultural visa program for doing the same job;
  - 19.2.4. After the contract period has begun, requiring employers to hire domestic job seekers that will displace a contracted H-2A worker;
  - 19.2.5. Unreasonable limits to the number of temporary worker visas, or guaranteeing payment of any fraction of a worker's pay for work that has not been performed;
  - 19.2.6. Expanding the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act to employers of agricultural temporary workers or otherwise providing those workers with a private right of action, whether expressed or implied, in state or federal court;
  - 19.2.7. A requirement that agricultural visa workers be required to purchase health insurance or meet any health requirement not required for domestic workers; and
  - 19.2.8. 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.

## 20. **H-2A Visa Program**

### 20.1. **Wages**

20.1.1. We support:

- 20.1.1.1. ~~An H-2A wage rate freeze at 2023 levels;~~
- 20.1.1.2. The methodology to establish AEWR described in the IFR published on October 2, 2025.
- 20.1.1.3. Elimination of the Adverse Effect Wage Rate. Until then, we support seeking legislative proposals that would cap year-over-year increases and account for regional variability with competitive labor rates. Additionally, changes in the H-2A program wage rate methodology should reflect a correlation to the state minimum wage;
- 20.1.1.4. ~~Additional resources to improve the National Agricultural Statistics Service Farm Labor Survey (FLS) used to set the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR); specifically, to collect data from a larger sample size, survey base rates of pay, and calculate both median and average wage rates for each state;~~
- 20.1.1.5. ~~The abolishment of the Adverse Effect Wage Rate methodology regarding disaggregation for the temporary employment of H-2A nonimmigrants in non-range occupations in the United States finalized in March 2023;~~
- 20.1.1.6. Applying the Adverse Effect Wage Rate at the time of contract signing for the life of the contract;
- 20.1.1.7. Legislation requiring that the H-2A program's Adverse Effect Wage Rate should only take effect when there is evidence of a significant effect on local employment; and
- 20.1.1.8. An arbitration process to allow Adverse Effect Wage Rate challenges.

### 20.2. **General**

20.2.1. We support:

- 20.2.1.1. Improving the current H-2A program in addition to any new agricultural visa program established;
- 20.2.1.2. Allowing H-2A workers to get visas for multiple years without refiling them;
- 20.2.1.3. Streamlining the H-2A application process in order to make the availability of workers more accessible and timelier for agricultural labor needs;
- 20.2.1.4. A process for timely replacement of H-2A workers due to health reasons or loss of approved worker;
- 20.2.1.5. Including dairy parlor and animal care employees in the H-2A program;
- 20.2.1.6. Reducing fees for H-2A and other visa programs that may be used to employ agricultural workers;
- 20.2.1.7. Exempting H-2A employees from unions as their contract is already negotiated between the state and federal departments of labor;
- 20.2.1.8. Sending the I-797B (notice of action) approval notice and the I-129 (petition for a non-immigrant worker) application electronically, and that electronic document should be accepted as an official approval. All communications such as the request for information or denial notice should be

- made electronically in addition to hard copies being sent through the mail;
- 20.2.1.9. Allowing H-2A employers to stipulate a requested length of work experience required for all interested agricultural workers;
- 20.2.1.10. Including data from current and previous H-2A employers in the H-2A prevailing practices survey;
- 20.2.1.11. Classifying H-2A workers who seasonally operate trucks during harvest as Agricultural Equipment Operators;
- 20.2.1.12. 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;
- 20.2.1.13. DOL working 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;
- 20.2.1.14. Improving training for employers to understand and better use the H-2A program, and provide better information for new users to the program;
- 20.2.1.15. The DOL providing appropriate oversight for state labor departments to ensure that H-2A applications are processed at the state level in a timely and impartial manner;
- 20.2.1.16. 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;
- 20.2.1.17. 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;
- 20.2.1.18. That H-2A employers who lose their H-2A employees to transfer or abscondment have their H-2A visa(s) immediately reinstated for no additional fees so they can replace their H-2A workers;
- 20.2.1.19. 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; and
- 20.2.1.20. A process for immediate replacement of H-2A workers due to any reason or loss of an approved worker before completion of a contract.
- 20.2.2. We oppose:
  - 20.2.2.1. Fees on the H-2A program that provide funding for programs unrelated to guest worker visas;
  - 20.2.2.2. Applying any labor law that does not currently apply to H-2A visa workers;
  - 20.2.2.3. Separate hourly wage rates for specific tasks in H-2A contracts; and
  - 20.2.2.4. Constant changes in the requirements for services provided for H-2A workers during the contract period.

**21. H-2B Visa Program**

21.1. We support:

- 21.1.1. 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;
- 21.1.2. 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; and
- 21.1.3. Providing an H-2B cap exemption for domestic fisheries and seafood processing.

**22. TN Visa Program**

- 22.1. We support the TN visa program and urge transparency, efficiency and responsiveness to industry needs in the U.S. Department of State's administration of the program.

**#240 Sustainable Agriculture  
(amendment at line 3)**

- 1. Agriculture provides society numerous benefits including, but not limited to food security, a safe and healthy food supply, environmental benefits and community stability. It is important to remember that agriculture needs the flexibility to alter cropping patterns and practices to meet the demands of operating in an open marketplace where our competition comes from farmers worldwide. When considering sustainable agriculture, there is only one constant and that is agriculture is only sustainable when it is profitable.
- 2. Sustainable agriculture should recognize the benefits of accepted management practices that American agriculture currently employs, such as Integrated Pest Management. Sustainable agriculture should be flexible enough to fit America's diverse climates, cropping patterns, land use standards, and regulatory requirements. Regulations should not limit agricultural practices without strong scientific and economic justification. Sustainable agriculture should rely on measurable results and focus on adaptive management for continual improvements rather than a rigid set of practices.
- 3. Regenerative agriculture should be defined as any production system along with conservation practices that reduce negative ~~minimizes~~ environmental impacts, enhance soil quality ~~maximizes production and increases the productivity of soil over time, and stabilize production against adverse weather conditions.~~
- 4. We support scientific research and education that encourages all participants in the agricultural industry to produce, process and distribute safe food, feed, fiber and fuel in a manner that is economically viable and enhances the quality of life for present and future generations.
- 5. We support methods of farming that result in:
  - 5.1. A profit for the farm operator;
  - 5.2. A producer striving to show continuous improvement in his/her environmental performance; and
  - 5.3. An adequate supply of high-quality safe food, feed, fiber and fuel.
- 6. We are keenly aware that the means to accomplish these ends may vary from farm operation to farm operation and that no single method of farming will work with every operator.
- 7. We support:
  - 7.1. Research aimed at reducing overall inputs needed to sustain a profitable farming operation; and
  - 7.2. Efforts to provide information to farmers on proven means of improving the efficiency of inputs.
- 8. We oppose:
  - 8.1. Any attempt to mandate low input methods of farming;
  - 8.2. Requiring low input methods as a condition of participation in government farm programs; and
  - 8.3. Programs that are used by organizations whose goal is to eliminate or control commercial agricultural practices.

## #308 Livestock Identification

### (amendment at line 3)

1. A national animal identification system that facilitates animal disease traceability should be considered a separate and distinct issue from country-of-origin labeling. We favor the continued use of legally recognized traditional methods of permanent identification of livestock for individual ownership.
2. Any new method of livestock identification should only be considered if it is proven equally practical and effective as current methods and is a legally recognized form of proof of ownership in all states having livestock brand law. We urge the USDA to conduct a full cost analysis study of a national animal identification system program and to publish the details. No action should be mandatory until Congress has published the cost figures and appropriated funding.
3. We support the establishment and implementation of a market-driven voluntary ~~(not a federal mandatory)~~ national animal identification system capable of providing support for animal disease control and eradication, and further enhancing export markets for U.S. livestock products. Individual states and/or tribes should have control of the animal ID program, not a private "for profit" company. We support the opportunity for each state to decide the entity controlling their respective animal ID program database. However, in the event of a disease outbreak, the controlling entities must be equipped to communicate and utilize the system to track and trace animals in a timely manner.
4. A cost-effective national system of livestock identification, with adequate cost share among government, industry and producers should be established and regulated by an advisory board of producers, processors and USDA. Any such program must protect producers from liability for acts of others after livestock leaves the producers' hands, including nuisance suits naming everyone who handled particular livestock.
  - 4.1. We support USDA implementing a comprehensive educational system for producers on the transition from the National Uniform Ear Tagging System (NUES) to an 840-prefix radio frequency identification (RFID) system for nationwide identification requirements for cattle and bison.
5. We support the following guidelines for a livestock identification program:
  - 5.1. The program must be as simple and inexpensive as possible for producers to implement;
  - 5.2. The cost of enhanced animal identification tagging by the federal government should be subsidized by the federal government since the general public is the primary beneficiary of this initiative;
  - 5.3. Producer information shall be confidential and exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA);
  - 5.4. Information shall be made available only to the proper animal health authorities in the event of an animal disease incident. Any unauthorized use shall constitute a felony;
  - 5.5. All imported animals should be permanently identified regarding their country of origin upon entry into the United States;
  - 5.6. Ensuring the security of producer information and respecting the privacy of producers by only collecting data necessary to establish a trace-back system;
  - 5.7. All current animal disease programs should be incorporated into a national animal disease traceability system. Producers should need only one number for all programs; however, due to the voluntary nature of a national animal identification system, an opt-out method should be available to producers at their request;
  - 5.8. Allowing an exclusion from any government mandated livestock traceability program for cattle under 18 months of age and those going directly from farm to slaughter;
  - 5.9. The development of uniform standards for electronic identification;



- 5.10. The development and adoption of livestock identification technology which will enhance the implementation of value-based marketing;
- 5.11. The hot-iron brand identification method as a legal, federally recognized method of permanent identification/proof of ownership in those states that have livestock brand laws;
- 5.12. Meeting the reasonable identification requirements of foreign trade partners and overseas customers, ensuring the U.S. reputation as a reliable supplier of meat; and
- 5.13. Producers being able to apply identification tags themselves and not requiring veterinary application.
6. We oppose the labeling of the U.S. and Canadian cattle herds as one North American herd.

### **#358 Inspection and Grading of Meat, Poultry and Seafood Products (amendment at line 11.20)**

1. The objective of federal and state meat and poultry inspection programs is to provide consumers with a supply of wholesome meat and poultry products. This is a service to consumers and costs should be paid from general revenue funds and should cover all inspection costs including overtime for very small, small, and medium-sized plants in times of emergency declarations.
2. We recommend that reimbursements to states for meat processing inspectors under the Cooperative Interstate Shipping Program be increased from 60 percent to 100 percent.
3. We support USDA approval of management tools that improve food safety based on cost benefit analysis.
4. We urge that all tests required by other countries for the export of our meat products be conducted by the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). If FSIS is unable to do the required tests, FSIS should be required to coordinate and facilitate the transfer of any required tests to certified laboratories.
5. We believe seafood products should be inspected and tested to the same standard as meat and poultry. Funding sources for any new federally mandated seafood inspection program should be consistent with existing funding for other food commodities.
6. Regulations governing the application of federal inspection programs to custom slaughtering plants, locker plants and producer-slaughters should be modified so as not to eliminate these local services.
7. We favor modifying U.S. beef, lamb and pork grade standards if scientific research shows that changes will provide leaner, more acceptable beef, lamb and pork that will benefit consumers, processors and producers.
8. We recommend the USDA provide processing facility plans to assist processors through the requirements associated with constructing a plant.
9. We recommend that any product that is USDA- or FDA-approved can be sold anywhere in the United States.
10. USDA should:
  - 10.1. Adopt a program taking advantage of new techniques proven by research to be effective in reducing bacterial contamination;
  - 10.2. Focus an aggressive education program on safe food handling of perishable foods to minimize the risk of pathogen contamination. The public also must be educated about the relative and changing risk status to individuals;
  - 10.3. Fund and inspect seafood, farm-raised rabbits, privately-owned cervids, buffalo and ratite meat as currently being done with poultry, pork and beef;
  - 10.4. Support small-scale meat processors and examine existing requirements to alleviate the immense burdens placed on small-scale meat processors;
  - 10.5. Develop electronic beef, lamb and pork grading machines and institute their use where practical;
  - 10.6. Provide more training opportunities and communication for FSIS regarding meat inspection requirements including Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) training;

- 10.7. Approve a carcass grading system to be utilized while grading meat or performing an inspection in place of a live grading agent; and
- 10.8. Provide on-the-job, peer training for all new FSIS veterinarian and plant inspectors in a facility unrelated to the plant to which they will be assigned.
11. We support:
  - 11.1. Limiting FSIS inspectors' authority to shut down plants only for violations of food safety or the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act. FSIS should work to ensure consistency of interpretation and application of regulations, guidelines and directives to plants. We encourage FSIS to work cooperatively with the plant manager when actions to shut down a plant impact the health and welfare of livestock being delivered;
  - 11.2. Changes to Humane Methods of Slaughter Act that will allow more flexibility for inspectors to recognize that every attempt is being made to be in compliance with the law and that no violation exists when a second shot or stun method is immediately employed;
  - 11.3. USDA approval of the use of hot water, steam and other proven rinses of carcasses prior to further processing. We also support USDA approval of the use of pasteurization and completion of research of high intensity pulses of light to kill pathogens;
  - 11.4. Granting the secretary of agriculture authority to impose mandatory quarantine and recall of meat products based on scientific testing and detection procedures. Authority to do trace backs to the farm should be focused on control and eradication of animal health diseases and related epidemiological studies;
  - 11.5. Development of analytical methods for on-site detection of contaminants and other adulterants that may impact food safety;
  - 11.6. Changes to the Wholesome Poultry Act to allow more than one person to slaughter or process poultry at a facility;
  - 11.7. Changes to USDA regulations to allow for part-time supervision of small local slaughterhouses;
  - 11.8. USDA grants being made available to meat processing plants with a special emphasis on very small, small and medium-sized plants to upgrade, modernize and assist them with staying in business;
  - 11.9. USDA revisions of the yield grade standards for lamb and mutton. This includes mandatory coupling of yield and quality grading and the removal of the kidney and pelvic (KP) fat on the slaughter floor;
  - 11.10. Establishing federal standards for packing plants that purchase cattle, sheep and hogs on a grade and yield basis;
  - 11.11. Legislation to eliminate unnecessary inspection;
  - 11.12. Exempting from federal USDA slaughter inspection requirements animals and meat sold to the end user that has been slaughtered and processed at a state-inspected custom-licensed slaughter facility;
  - 11.13. USDA allowing a third party pre- and post-slaughter inspection at a state-licensed facility in a state that has no meat inspection program and allowing the owner of the animal to sell the meat as individual cuts directly to the end user. Producer-led quality assurance programs that deal with issues of food safety;
  - 11.14. Enforcement of meat inspection standards. We recommend that the meat inspection program remain under USDA and not be placed with the Food and Drug Administration;
  - 11.15. States being allowed to create a different, but equally protective, standard of meat inspection for meat sold within the state;
  - 11.16. The direct-to-consumer interstate sale of state-inspected meats;
  - 11.17. Allowing states to enter into memorandum of understanding to allow the sale of state inspected meat into other states;
  - 11.18. Meat inspectors being deemed essential employees in cases of government shutdowns;
  - 11.19. Reclassifying rabbits raised for food from exotic animals to livestock for processing purposes;
  - 11.20. Federal meat inspectors being made available to small meat processors and funds for recruitment and training for new and additional ~~USDA inspectors to replace retiring inspectors;~~

- 11.21. An exemption for poultry processing facilities of fewer than 20,000 birds annually, allowing them to lease to other processors who have a HACCP plan and are processing their own birds;
- 11.22. The establishment of a new set of inspection rules that allow physically injured but otherwise healthy livestock to be slaughtered under FSIS oversight;
- 11.23. Affording all animals harvested in a federally inspected plant the same inspection and cost whether amenable or non-amenable. This privilege should not apply to wild game animals;
- 11.24. Flexibility in USDA's meat inspection hiring process to allow contract agreements with licensed veterinarians to perform inspection services in underserved and understaffed areas and in the event of temporary disruptions within the industry;
- 11.25. Developing a grant program to help local butcher shops upgrade to federal inspection standards and to also help new start up processing plants including on farm processing; and
- 11.26. USDA researching and exploring the use of technology (ex: video inspection) in meat processing facilities.
- 12. We oppose:
  - 12.1. User fees to finance federally mandated meat, poultry, non-traditional food animals and seafood inspection;
  - 12.2. The use of excessive penalties on producers, processors and handlers. Producers should have feasible control or prevention programs available to them before punitive actions are taken;
  - 12.3. Characterizing meat animals as carriers of E. coli;
  - 12.4. Uniform grade names for all graded foods; and
  - 12.5. Cutbacks in funding of the federal meat inspection programs unless the regulations are changed.

#### **#462 Role of USDA (amendment at line 20.3.17)**

- 1. Agriculture should remain the primary responsibility of USDA. Food and fiber consumers will be better served by healthy, profitable production agriculture than by consumer advocacy within USDA.
- 2. USDA should be an advocate for agriculture with emphasis on production agriculture and the processing and marketing of agricultural products and promoting the use of domestically produced food and fiber by all branches of the U.S. government and military services.
- 3. Leadership at USDA should be vested in appointed people who are competent, have background and experience in agriculture and have evidenced a knowledge and concern for the welfare of agricultural producers.
- 4. The Undersecretary of Natural Resources and the Environment should be an effective advocate for agriculture on environmental issues.
- 5. We support the secretary of agriculture and the U.S. Trade Representative being included in the National Security Council.
- 6. We support long-term funding of the USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) and local Farm Service Agencies (FSA).
- 7. Review criteria for USDA office closure decisions should include miles driven between offices, workload, local input, and inter-agency efficiency.
- 8. We support adding the Secretary of Agriculture to the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States.
- 9. We support restructuring federal agriculture policy and programs so that all agricultural producers, regardless of the population density of the area in which their farm is located, be eligible for a broader swath of federal grant funding.
- 10. We recommend that all USDA programs eliminate the term and classification "socially disadvantaged."
- 11. We support farm assistance payments, loans, grants and subsidies being administered without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, and reprisal or retaliation from prior civil rights activity.

12. We support immediate evaluation of current USDA staffing, compensation and training at the county, regional and state levels, including county committees, to assist in attaining an adequate, streamlined and talented staff that meets the programmatic needs of the applicant and USDA customers.
  - 12.1. USDA should ensure all staff are properly trained and certified to do all facets of their job within one year of hire.
13. In disputes with any federal government agencies including but not limited to FSA, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Fish and Wildlife Services, producers should have the opportunity to have their disputes heard in court and are judged by their peers and not by the federal government agency personnel with whom they have the dispute. Also, the double jeopardy rule should apply to such disputes so an agency cannot continue to bring back the same dispute until they get a ruling they prefer.
14. We recommend amending USDA policies and procedures that allow for employees to be justly compensated for travel whether they are driving their personal or government issued vehicle.
15. Any municipality that receives USDA funding should be required to support and approve farmworker housing in their municipality.
16. USDA should be:
  - 16.1. A monitor of domestic and foreign agricultural affairs;
  - 16.2. An accurate source of agricultural data and research; and
  - 16.3. An agricultural policy adviser to other departments of the federal government;
17. We support USDA programs that:
  - 17.1. Help farmers obtain needed crop and market information, research, educational assistance and credit;
  - 17.2. Provide workable grades and standards and safeguard product quality through inspection services;
  - 17.3. Help farmers eradicate or control plant and animal pests and diseases;
  - 17.4. 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;
  - 17.5. Assure reliable, unfettered transportation for agricultural commodities;
  - 17.6. Strengthen farmers' power to bargain for a price;
  - 17.7. Provide comparable services to administer all commodity programs; and
  - 17.8. Have no time limit for veterans to receive credit for participation in USDA programs.
18. USDA should:
  - 18.1. Continue to be a full Cabinet-level department and shall not be renamed or consolidated with any other department or agency of government;
  - 18.2. Retain various food assistance and nutrition programs, both domestic and foreign;
  - 18.3. Use U.S. agricultural commodities for domestic food programs. Priority should be given to locally sourced products when possible;
  - 18.4. Not limit or restrict USDA purchases due to the violation of immigration regulations;
  - 18.5. Limit importers from purchasing products from foreign countries and reselling them under the provision of Section 32;
  - 18.6. Extend the "Buy American" provision to other noncontiguous states or territories including Alaska, Hawaii, Guam and Puerto Rico;
  - 18.7. 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. In addition, USDA should prioritize a single point of sale system for all programs for farmers utilizing these market opportunities;

- 18.8. Use Farm Service Agency (FSA) data and assistance for premise ID registration;
- 18.9. Use the land grant colleges for agriculture-oriented research;
- 18.10. Continue efforts to resolve problems involving environmental and animal care issues;
- 18.11. Maintain an efficient and cost-effective services delivery system, including electronic filing;
- 18.12. Maintain FSA jurisdiction over the administration of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and cost-share programs;
- 18.13. Change in FSA regulations to allow other forms of verification for production evidence;
- 18.14. Upgrade computer technology and appropriate software to allow the NRCS, FSA, RMA, and National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to utilize and share the same farm program enrollment information and production, and reduce duplicate reporting and surveys, provided appropriate privacy disclosures and safeguards are utilized;
- 18.15. Encourage "one-stop shopping." All farm program agencies, where feasible, should be located in the same building;
- 18.16. Appoint one or more farmers on any agriculturally related government board;
- 18.17. 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;
- 18.18. Accredite and license commercial dog breeders;
- 18.19. Further support the Foreign Agriculture Service;
- 18.20. 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 40 years old, whichever is longer;
- 18.21. Broaden the service support of and funding preference to active-duty military personnel and all veterans released from service under conditions other than dishonorable;
- 18.22. 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;
- 18.23. Allow for a System for Award Management (SAM) number to be valid for the length of the USDA project for the individual producer;
- 18.24. Co-location of USDA and Soil and Water Conservation Districts when possible;
- 18.25. 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;
- 18.26. Allow for location-specific job applications and allow the beginning of the on-boarding process immediately;
- 18.27. Allow NRCS state office staff to evaluate job applications for positions within their state and allow them to interview applicants who make it through the screening evaluation;
- 18.28. Allow local FSA applicants to apply for job positions in a desired territory based on rank and time served in location;

- 18.29. Continue the release of crop condition reports as they are useful to agricultural producers and should maintain their current release schedule;
  - 18.30. Compensate the farmer for legal fees and civil damages when the farmer wins an appeal as a result of incorrect decisions;
  - 18.31. Be required to provide the entire record or decisional documentation to the farmer at the time of the alleged compliance violation and/or at the time of an adverse determination;
  - 18.32. Accept evidence provided by the farmer as true, absent substantial evidence to the contrary;
  - 18.33. Employ and make available county personnel based on workload, acreage and number of farms;
  - 18.34. Be allowed to hire temporary employees on a contracted basis to assist during special farm program sign-up periods, including retired employees without impacting their pension;
  - 18.35. Continue to make forms and processes more streamlined and available for online access; and
  - 18.36. Make farm number reconstitutions voluntary and should allow, at a minimum, a one-time opportunity to reverse previously mandated changes for those farms that have already been reconstituted.
19. We oppose:
- 19.1. Requiring farm trusts to provide the total trust instrument because the individual's last will and testament should be confidential;
  - 19.2. Making FSA county executive directors and program assistants employees of the federal government;
  - 19.3. The transfer of any USDA program to another department or agency;
  - 19.4. Announcing crop estimates until certified acres are known; and
  - 19.5. The Department of Homeland Security or USDA-prescribed homeland security practices being mandated on farms unless such measures are completely funded.
20. **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**
- 20.1. 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.
  - 20.2. State and county committees will preside over the NRCS in the same capacity as they do with the FSA.
  - 20.3. NRCS should:
    - 20.3.1. Act as a non-regulatory mediator of environmental compliance issues with regulatory agencies, on behalf of producers;
    - 20.3.2. Use funding only for agricultural purposes;
    - 20.3.3. Place a high priority on providing quality, technical and scientific natural resources expertise;
    - 20.3.4. Have adequate funds for technical assistance that are not tied directly to conservation programs;
    - 20.3.5. Ensure local farmer input on NRCS personnel decisions and direction of natural resource programs through conservation districts is maintained for the benefit of producers;
    - 20.3.6. Accept state licenses as proof of qualifications, without further testing or requirements, to be a Technical Service Provider;
    - 20.3.7. Amend NRCS regulation to count perennial crops, such as orchards, vineyards or sod, as prior converted land when the crop is removed;
    - 20.3.8. Inform landowners and tenants when NRCS officials are considering changing or altering wetland status on any portion of their holdings;

- 20.3.9.Honor wetland determinations made prior to 1990;
  - 20.3.10.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;
  - 20.3.11.Recognize regional seasonality of farm commodities when determining program sign-up dates;
  - 20.3.12.Allow an accredited third party or NRCS staff to complete on-site determinations to ensure timely determinations;
  - 20.3.13.Focus exclusively on agriculture services and cease bringing in influences from non-agriculture groups;
  - 20.3.14.Allow qualified third parties, as well as NRCS staff, to complete reviews for conservation practices;
  - 20.3.15.Allow the farmer and his counsel to call NRCS technical staff as witnesses in appeals; and
  - 20.3.16.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.
  - 20.3.17.Pay farmers money obligated for farm bill conservation practices within 30 days of approval of the practice's completion or interest will accrue on unpaid funds.
- 20.4. NRCS should not:
- 20.4.1.Become a regulatory agency, serve in a policing capacity or be combined through USDA reorganization with an agency that has regulatory functions;
  - 20.4.2.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;
  - 20.4.3.Have the authority to rescind its position in the appeals process;
  - 20.4.4.Require partnerships, limited liability corporations and other farm entities to register on the Standardized Award Management Service site; and
  - 20.4.5.Be allowed to prohibit installation of drainage tile in areas outside of designated wetlands.

## State Policy Recommendations

### #3 Agricultural Innovation and Value-Added Initiatives

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

We support:

- Producers' individual and cooperative efforts to improve income with processing and marketing that add value to farm products while maintaining food safety.
- The Michigan State University Product Center's objectives and ongoing efforts, including educational programs that support and promote agricultural processing opportunities.
- The coordination and formation of producer alliances and cooperatives.
- Efforts to strengthen agricultural processing in Michigan. Incentives for existing and/or prospective processors should include (but not be limited to) industrial facility exemption options, tax breaks, regulatory reform/relief, and ample access to necessary inputs such as investment capital, labor, energy, and farm products.
- A closer working relationship and collaboration between Michigan Farm Bureau and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), including quarterly meetings between their staffs and leadership.
- Agricultural representation on the MEDC to better serve agriculture and the food industry. We support Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development authority and/or oversight over granting MEDC funds for agricultural development activity.
- The use of Michigan MarketMaker (<https://mi.foodmarketmaker.com>) for featuring Michigan commodities and value-added products.
- A coordinated effort between agriculture and controllers of publicly owned lands (e.g., county parks, rest areas, park-n-ride lots, etc.) to facilitate farmers' on-site marketing of Michigan-grown products to consumers.
- Tax incentives and infrastructure to increase Michigan's food-processing capabilities.
- State government establishing a low-interest loan program for funding qualified value-added ventures.



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

#### **#4 Animal Care**

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

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

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

23       People who witness animal care practices not in  
24 compliance with the Care of Farm Animals Generally  
25 Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices

(GAAMPs), should report those findings in a timely manner to the appropriate authorities so proper action may be taken. People who hold and release videos in a manner for personal benefit or to promote a group and their cause should be swiftly prosecuted and appropriately fined and sentenced.

We support:

- An animal health and care board to be convened to coordinate activities to enhance and protect the state's livestock industry. The board should be comprised of farmers and industry representatives as voting members; who are nominated by officially recognized livestock and agriculture industry commodity groups; and then appointed by the Governor. Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) and Michigan State University (MSU) officials should serve in an advisory capacity. The establishment of this board should include a state budget appropriation. This new board process should be concluded by December 31, 2025.
- Strong penalties for those persons criminally convicted of animal cruelty or abuse.
- The rights of individual commodity groups to develop their own production standards.
- The involvement of livestock industry in the development of animal care guidelines if required by food industry officials to market products.
- Participation by livestock and dairy producers in industry-developed, species-specific animal welfare programs.
- Coordination with animal industry and related groups on animal care and housing related issues.
- Farmers educating and having guidelines for employees on proper animal care and monitoring their employees.
- Legislation or rules protecting the rights of farmers/owners to allow the continued utilization of modern livestock production practices, including current euthanization methods.
- 4-H and youth livestock exhibitor education.
- Michigan Farm Bureau working with MSU and MDARD to provide proper education to law enforcement, county officials and animal control officers about laws to regulate animal care and livestock production practices in Michigan.
- MFB and county Farm Bureaus being proactive in educating and training the state and local animal control authorities, local humane societies, local

76 law enforcement, and news media about current  
77 animal care and production practices, to build a  
78 partnership between Farm Bureau and local  
79 animal care organizations.

- 80 • Emergency Response to Accidents Involving  
81 Livestock (ERAIL) programs and livestock  
82 handling training for a select number of  
83 emergency response professionals in Michigan  
84 counties, based on the county's potential  
85 exposure to livestock emergencies.
- 86 • County Farm Bureaus consider cancelling the  
87 membership of an individual criminally convicted  
88 of animal cruelty or abuse.
- 89 • Land grant colleges and USDA continuing to  
90 research and develop programs which will  
91 realistically and economically enable farmers to  
92 continue to enhance the care and management of  
93 livestock.
- 94 • Legislation making it a felony to destroy or  
95 release animals lawfully confined for science,  
96 research and production, and strong punishment  
97 and required restitution for losses or damages.
- 98 • MDARD taking the lead role in the development  
99 of Michigan animal health emergency  
100 management guidelines in collaboration with the  
101 Animal Industry Division (AID) of MDARD, the  
102 State Veterinarian, MFB and agricultural groups.
- 103 • Amendments to the Dog Law to more clearly  
104 define a "farm dog." The utilization of dogs on  
105 farm operations is a normal part of an agricultural  
106 enterprise.
- 107 • A sensible approach to the substantiation of  
108 animal cruelty or abuse accusations including:
  - 109 ○ Requiring animal control officers receive  
110 training on appropriate animal care and  
111 normal agricultural practices as it relates to  
112 livestock and farm animals.
  - 113 ○ The AID of MDARD (specifically the State  
114 Veterinarian) as the authority relating to  
115 farm animals, livestock, and relative care,  
116 not local animal control.
  - 117 ○ Governing municipalities be held financially  
118 and civilly liable for inaccurate and  
119 unjustified actions of those officers and  
120 departments.
  - 121 ○ Requiring reported abuse cases to follow  
122 uniform administrative procedures to  
123 confirm cruelty or abuse before any legal  
124 action is taken.

- Contacting the local law enforcement agency or animal control authority.
- Local law enforcement agencies obtaining the opinion of two unbiased local livestock professionals and a large animal veterinarian.
- Costs associated with the resulting investigation be paid for by the accuser if no abuse is found.
- Cruelty or abuse cases of farm livestock be handled through MDARD.

We oppose:

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

We support Michigan Care of Farm Animals

GAAMPs through the following:

- Utilization of the Michigan Care of Farm Animals GAAMPs as the standard for animal welfare.
- Producer representation on the Michigan Care of Farm Animals GAAMPs Committee.
- Proper animal care and encourage livestock farmers to be in compliance with the Right to Farm Act and GAAMPs.
- Mandatory education for convicted cruelty offenders to help them understand proper animal care including the Care of Farm Animals GAAMPs.

## **#5 Animal Health**

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

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

We support:

- Appointing a board of animal health to coordinate activities, programs, and regulations to expedite

the control and eradication of animal diseases. The board should consist of livestock producers and industry representatives, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Michigan State University (MSU) College of Veterinary Medicine and USDA.

- MDARD basing new regulations or restrictions for livestock exhibition on veterinary and animal science.
- Changing the Animals Running At Large Act to define livestock the same as the Animal Industry Act does.
- State funding for the MSU Veterinary Diagnostic Lab (VDL) to meet the needs of Michigan's animal population.
- Indemnification for livestock depopulated due to disease or when marketing channels are limited or eliminated by the government.
- Changes to Michigan's Veterinary Law that expand the services/procedures that veterinary technicians or designated staff with advanced training can perform that help address the rural vet/animal care shortage in Michigan.
- Requiring continuing education to maintain a Michigan veterinary license.
- Amending Michigan's Veterinary Law to clarify that artificial insemination of livestock and embryo transplant procedures do not have to be performed by a licensed veterinarian.
- MSU researching health-related issues impacting Michigan's livestock industry, including potentially toxic weeds and feedstuffs.
- Requiring livestock operation visitors to have permission and conduct proper contamination protections, including clothing and disinfectants, to protect and enhance biosecurity on-site.
- Legislative, regulatory and/or management changes that empower the State Veterinarian to collaborate with appropriate authorities to develop a mass carcass disposal plan.
- A statewide ban on the sale and use of sky ("Chinese") lanterns and similar unmanned devices involving open flame that may leave their premises of origin because of the danger of damaging livestock, feed and feed harvesting equipment.

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

#### 85 **Bovine**

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

#### 89 **Swine**

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

#### 97 **Equine**

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

- Eliminating EIA/Coggins test requirements for horses going to slaughter.

#### **Animal Identification and Interstate Movement**

- Swift implementation of a mandatory identification system for Michigan's livestock and encourage the continued utilization of producer input into its development, implementation, and cost-share where feasible. Producer information shall remain proprietary, not for public use or subject to Freedom of Information Act or any requests.
  - Slaughter facilities upgrading their technology to provide timely and accurate information on individual cattle.
  - Rules requiring that all cattle and privately-owned Cervidae be electronically identified before leaving the farm.
  - Violation penalties should be strengthened and enforced by law. In the event an animal loses its tag *en route* to an auction facility, they should be retagged upon arrival before being allowed to enter.
  - Electronic reading and recording of all cattle exhibited in Michigan. Records should be sent to MDARD.
  - MDNR, MDARD, USDA, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service working cooperatively to develop regulations to control disease spread including, but not be limited to a system for monitoring live and dead domestic and game animals coming into Michigan.
- We oppose importing livestock that does not:
- Meet import testing requirements deemed appropriate by the director of MDARD,
  - Have appropriate quarantine protocols in place,
  - Have an animal identification system for tracking livestock movement to prevent disease spread.

#### **Feed Additives and Medication**

We recognize the need for medication and other additives in livestock feeds. The availability of livestock antibiotics is critical. Limiting or eliminating livestock antibiotic use will negatively impact the industry, both economically and with respect to animal health. Antibiotic use is approved by the Food and Drug Administration only after scientific review and testing. Animal agriculture relies on veterinarians to assist with and oversee animal health. We define veterinarian oversight as a working relationship with a licensed veterinarian.

We support:

- 161 • The existing approval process for antibiotic use in
- 162 farm animals.
- 163 • Veterinarian oversight of antibiotic use rather than
- 164 limiting or eliminating these critical animal health
- 165 and food safety protection tools.
- 166 • Careful use and withdrawal restrictions of feed
- 167 additives.
- 168 • The use of rendered animal protein as additives
- 169 to swine and poultry rations.
- 170 • Strict safeguards to prevent cross-contamination
- 171 of ruminant feeds with ruminant by-products
- 172 formulating feed additives.
- 173 We oppose:
- 174 • Banning feed additives without scientific evidence
- 175 that they threaten animal and human health.
- 176 • Restrictions limiting or eliminating marketing
- 177 opportunities for the livestock, dairy, equine,
- 178 poultry and aquaculture industries and their
- 179 products without ~~sound~~ peer-reviewed scientific
- 180 justification.
- 181 • State agency farm inspections without notification
- 182 to and awareness of the farm owner/operation.
- 183 • Mandatory rabies vaccination for farm cats.

## **#6 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 • Updating the Aquaculture Development Act to
- 6 reflect the status and potential of the industry.
- 7 • Better collaboration between the state agencies
- 8 and the aquaculture industry that leads to greater
- 9 investment and enhancement of state
- 10 hatcheries/fisheries, the commercial fishing
- 11 industry, and the commercial aquaculture industry.
- 12 Additional enhancements should also include
- 13 changes to the permitting process that advance
- 14 the growth of Michigan's aquaculture industry.
- 15 • Urging regulatory agencies, along with Michigan
- 16 Economic Development Corporation, state
- 17 universities, and the aquaculture industry to
- 18 continue cooperating to address regulatory
- 19 needs, while at the same time facilitating the
- 20 continued growth of aquaculture through
- 21 streamlining regulation and facilitating access to
- 22 capital for development.
- 23 • The Michigan Department of Health and Human
- 24 Services simplifying the Eat Safe Fish Guide
- 25 through engagement with industry and consumer



stakeholders to enhance consumer understanding of the guide and ensure Michigan farm-raised fish are highlighted as a safe and nutritional choice for consumers.

- Annually reviewing and updating the memorandum of understanding between Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (MDEGLE) and Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR).
- MDARD, MDEGLE, and MDNR understanding that generational transition and industry growth in aquaculture, commercial fishing, and agriculture are critical for future industry success and food security in the state when regulatory decisions are made.
- The State of Michigan prioritizing food production from aquaculture and commercial fishing at the same level as the recreational fishing industry.
- Harmonization of the state and federal definition of aquaculture.
- The concept of group or lot identification for aquaculture species.
- MDARD registration of out-of-state producers who market aquaculture products in Michigan and enforcement of regulations related to importation of aquaculture products.
- Funding, research development, and approval of live fish tests to eliminate the need to sacrifice fish, as is the current requirement.
- If an individual farm has an established herd health plan and a disease status that declares it to be free of regulated aquaculture diseases, that farm should have the ability to ship product interstate.
- MDARD cooperating with other states and establishing agreements allowing shipment of fish from Michigan into other states that follow similar protocol.
- MFB being involved in Michigan Aquaculture Association's strategic plan development.
- Michigan State University establishing an aquaculture program containing dedicated faculty to support and enhance the industry. The program should include research, extension and demonstration and be housed under an agricultural development department.
- Industry-developed herd plans to include the option for slaughter surveillance testing, where

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

designed and streamlined process for approval and permitting of aquaculture and commercial fishing processing facilities.

- Industry oversight on any new state or federal funds for aquaculture or commercial fishing with a majority of the funds going to aquaculture and commercial fishing producers.

We oppose:

- Any ban on the use of biotechnology in aquaculture without specific evidence or demonstration of harm by the technology.
- Individual identification for aquaculture in the event animal identification is mandated.
- Restrictions on the culture or stocking of rainbow trout based on genetic strain.
- Immediate implementation of new Environmental Protection Agency effluent standards if operational viability is jeopardized.
- Increasing NPDES permit restrictions or compliance requirements without ~~sound~~ peer-reviewed scientific justification.
- The use of the Lacey Act to regulate the interstate movement of aquaculture products and urge immediate action to address current prosecutions, as well as a cessation of this practice by regulatory officials.
- Testing requirements for the stocking of fish in Michigan that are more restrictive than national requirements set by the International Office of Epizootics.

## **#9 Cannabis Production**

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

- Funding for continued and expanded research on the effects of cannabis use.
- Local municipalities having the ability to allow or not allow cannabis production and sale in their communities as prescribed in section 6 of MRTMA.
- The development of site selection and setbacks guidelines by local municipalities, with input from the Cannabis Regulatory Agency, for new cannabis production operations from non-owned residences to minimize negative interactions between the growing/processing industries ~~from~~ and the local residents.

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

## 30 **Industrial Hemp**

31 We support:

- 32 • Changes to the 2018 Farm Bill that allow for  
33 industrial hemp with up to 1%  
34 Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) to be legal.
- 35 • Changes to federal laws that allow for the  
36 housing, transportation and marketing of legally  
37 derived industrial hemp products for further  
38 processing, regardless of the THC level, if the  
39 product for final sale meets legal THC limits.
- 40 • Establishing a Michigan Department of Agriculture  
41 and Rural Development (MDARD) Industrial  
42 Hemp Advisory Committee to assist in the  
43 regulatory development and oversight process,  
44 including developing hemp Generally Accepted  
45 Agricultural and Management Practices.
- 46 • Collaboration with the industry to develop a  
47 professional hemp industry organization.
- 48 • Federal and state funding for required regulatory  
49 oversight. We are willing to consider producer and  
50 processor funding to help offset or assist with  
51 regulatory oversight.
- 52 • Research on processing, production techniques,  
53 prospective volumes, and market outlook.
- 54 • Collaboration amongst MDARD, Michigan State  
55 University Extension and other stakeholders to  
56 develop and disseminate educational materials on  
57 growing, processing, transportation and marketing  
58 of industrial hemp.
- 59 • Development and approval of alternative uses  
60 and/or disposal methods for the destruction of a  
61 “hot crop” other than Drug Enforcement Agency  
62 disposal rules.
- 63 • The regulation of hemp/cannabis-derived  
64 intoxicating cannabinoids/terpenes that are  
65 artificially added to hemp products.

66 We urge the Food and Drug Administration to issue  
67 guidance and clarity on the rules surrounding the  
68 marketing of industrial hemp-derived products.

## #15 Direct Marketing and Agritourism

Agritourism is the intersection where agriculture and tourism meet; when a farm opens its doors to the public and invites visitors to enjoy their products and services. Direct marketing is the sales of goods or services produced on the farm directly to the consumer. Many direct marketers also utilize agritourism.

We support:

- Legislation defining agritourism as activities on the farm that may or may not be directly related to the farm operation, conducted for the purpose of increasing income for the farm business including education, entertainment, experiences, or farm stays, but does not change the general intent of the farm operation.
- The development of an agritourism act, administered by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), that preempts local ordinances. Areas of coverage should include, but not be limited to, event barns, corn mazes, farm stays, and farm animal related activities. Farms will receive the benefits of this act if more than 50% of the farm income is generated by the sales of commodities grown on the farm and if the facilities can meet the building code's public safety requirements. This does not prohibit local governments from enacting reasonable hour, noise and parking regulations.
- Master plans and local zoning ordinances recognizing the benefits and allowing the operation of farm markets, roadside stands, agritourism destinations and farmers markets that allow for the placement of these activities on agricultural zoned land without a special use permit. We do not believe a city, township or other local agency can restrict or mandate the size of what a farm market/roadside stand is and recognize that selling produce retail is not considered a change of use on land that is currently farmed.
- Michigan zoning authorities adopting the Agricultural Tourism Model Zoning Ordinance Provisions developed by the Michigan Agricultural Tourism Advisory Commission and MDARD.
- Working with the direct market and agritourism industries to improve and strengthen the farm market Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs).

- 49 • Creating Generally Accepted Agritourism  
50 Practices that align with the GAAMPs outlined in  
51 the Right to Farm Act and recognizing agritourism  
52 as a sector of the agriculture industry.
- 53 • Legislation to enhance and promote agritourism,  
54 the development of guidelines and best practices,  
55 as well as on-farm direct marketing opportunities.
- 56 • Designating certain roads and highways as  
57 “Scenic Agricultural Byways” to showcase  
58 Michigan’s agricultural diversity, unique  
59 agricultural features, farm markets, roadside  
60 stands and related businesses.
- 61 • The opportunity for farm operations to have their  
62 businesses designated as tourism destination  
63 points.
- 64 • The Michigan Farmers Market Association, along  
65 with grower vendors, establishing guidelines for  
66 agriculture procedures of farmers markets and to  
67 assist them if requested. In the event fees are  
68 charged by municipalities to farms that participate  
69 in farmers markets, we believe those fees should  
70 not exceed the cost to run the market.
- 71 • Locally grown should be defined as produced in  
72 Michigan, or within 50 miles of the border.
- 73 • Community Supported Agriculture programs that  
74 build relationships, provide healthy food choices,  
75 and encourage consumers to meet the people  
76 that grow the products.
- 77 • Farmers markets and farm marketers promoting  
78 and providing food safety education to  
79 consumers.
- 80 • Operations welcoming the public to their facilities  
81 and portraying a professional image because they  
82 are our ambassadors to the public where positive  
83 perception is important.
- 84 • Operations with livestock participating in their  
85 respective national animal care programs.
- 86 • Defining farm stays as an agritourism experience.
- 87 We oppose:
  - 88 • Discriminatory regulation, licensing and inspection  
89 by regulatory agencies and local units of  
90 government on farm markets, roadside stands  
91 and agritourism operations which restrict their  
92 competitiveness. Markets should not be subject to  
93 duplicate or unnecessary inspection by MDARD,  
94 the Michigan Department of Health and Human  
95 Services, Michigan Department of Environment,  
96 Great Lakes, and Energy, and local units of  
97 government.

## #16 Dry Bean Industry

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

4 We support:

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

41 We oppose:

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

## #18 Food Insecurity

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

5 We support:

- 6 • Michigan Farm Bureau providing information that  
7 is farmer facing on how farms can connect with  
8 existing programs for those who are in need as  
9 well as the benefits of donation, which may  
10 include tax credits or other financial incentives.
- 11 • Farm Bureau participation in the Michigan  
12 Sportsmen Against Hunger board.
- 13 • Food assistance programs such as, but not  
14 limited to, Michigan Agricultural Surplus System  
15 (MASS) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance  
16 Program (SNAP) and encourage these market  
17 opportunities.
- 18 • The State of Michigan and interested  
19 stakeholders working to create a single point of  
20 sale system to make it easier for both vendors  
21 and customers to participate in state and federal  
22 food assistance programs.
- 23 • Food assistance programs in the farm bill and  
24 partnering with like-minded Michigan  
25 organizations that receive nutrition title funding.
- 26 • Changes to the farm bill and/or USDA programs  
27 that would increase farm gate value through  
28 federal food assistance or government purchase  
29 programs.
- 30 • More focus being placed on the food delivery  
31 system to connect farmers with rural families that  
32 are food insecure. Consideration should also be  
33 given to the time of day and locations for  
34 distribution.
- 35 • More research on preferred food packaging, size,  
36 and quantity to best serve families utilizing food  
37 assistance programs.
- 38 • Increasing access to venison donation programs  
39 that allows for free processing of venison that is  
40 donated to food banks including an increase in  
41 processing locations. ~~Michigan~~ The Department of  
42 Natural Resources should promote the program  
43 and available processing locations.
- 44 • Increasing access to the Michigan Sportsmen  
45 Against Hunger program that includes increasing  
46 available processing locations and removing  
47 barriers to distributing venison.
- 48 • The donation of protein sources (venison, beef,  
49 etc.) that have not been processed through a



- 50 USDA processing facility but that have been  
51 processed responsibly through a state inspected  
52 processor.
- 53 • County Farm Bureaus coordinating with charitable  
54 food networks regarding needs that they have  
55 locally, such as cold storage.
  - 56 • Farm Bureau promoting opportunities to members  
57 that sell at farm markets on how they can utilize  
58 produce prescriptions and connected Medicaid  
59 programs to solve symptoms of food insecurity.

## #20 Forestry

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

7 We support:

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

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

- 88 • State government action to encourage local  
89 utilization of ash lumber and biomass, near its  
90 point of origin, to minimize the potential for ash  
91 borer invasion and spread.
- 92 • Better defining foresters' duties and  
93 responsibilities in the Occupational Code, and a  
94 voluntary forester registration program.
- 95 • MDNR assisting with prescribed burns on private  
96 land. Prescribed fire is an important management  
97 tool to control unwanted vegetation and helps  
98 prevent accumulated dead wood, needles, etc.  
99 from becoming a fire hazard.
- 100 • Reviewing recent changes to the Forestry Best  
101 Management Practices (BMP) manual. It is  
102 imperative BMP guidelines reflect current industry  
103 practices and standards, not ideology. Standards  
104 should be based on outcomes, not a prescriptive  
105 set of rules.
- 106 • Timber industry efforts to develop a common  
107 scale for hardwood saw logs.
- 108 • Michigan universities' conducting an economic  
109 study comparing Michigan forestry industry  
110 returns to the economic returns from those of  
111 other major Michigan commodities.
- 112 • Michigan State University (MSU) collaborating  
113 with the University of Wisconsin on a forestry  
114 economy specialist.
- 115 • Working with the MDNR, conservation  
116 organizations, hunting groups and other  
117 interested groups to reduce wildlife populations to  
118 acceptable levels that will not deplete the  
119 regeneration of new seedlings in woodlots and  
120 forests.
- 121 • Michigan Farm Bureau providing expertise and  
122 advising the creation of an industry-driven  
123 initiative supporting forestry research, education  
124 and outreach with MSU, University of Michigan,  
125 and Michigan Technological University, funded by  
126 State of Michigan appropriations for forest  
127 management.
- 128 • The MDNR and the Michigan Department of  
129 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)  
130 prioritizing growing and developing new markets,  
131 new products, and processing facilities.
- 132 • Conservancies and other non-profits having to  
133 pay an average of the qualified forest property tax  
134 rate in that county.
- 135 • County Farm Bureaus working with local school  
136 districts to retain the ownership and use of school  
137 forests. Retaining school forests helps preserve

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

## **#28 Michigan Meat Processing Industry**

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

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

- 10 • Systematic evaluation of Michigan's meat packing  
11 industry, retail sales, custom exempt facilities,  
12 market access, regulation and opportunities for  
13 expansion.
- 14 • Michigan State University (MSU), community  
15 colleges, career technical schools and the  
16 livestock industry coordinating to develop and  
17 establish an ag tech-type livestock harvest and  
18 meat processing certification program.
- 19 • More federally inspected meat processing  
20 facilities in Michigan.
- 21 • Investment in and promotion of mobile agricultural  
22 processing labs in Michigan.

- 23 • Creating a Michigan-based meat inspection and  
24 licensing system for in-state processing and retail  
25 sale of meat.
- 26 • A partnership between the Michigan Department  
27 of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)  
28 and USDA to train and authorize state level  
29 employees to conduct USDA inspection services  
30 of small, independent processing facilities.
- 31 • Increased utilization of the meats laboratory and  
32 professional expertise at MSU to support the  
33 meat industry, educate students and train meat  
34 industry professionals.
- 35 • Limiting regulations on small and medium-sized  
36 meat processors while protecting and enhancing  
37 food safety.
- 38 • State and federal funding to increase the number  
39 of new — and enhance current — small and  
40 medium-sized meat processing facilities and on  
41 farm/exempt operations.
- 42 • State and federal funding and low-interest loans  
43 to help small and medium-sized meat processing  
44 facilities meet or comply with regulatory  
45 requirements.
- 46 • Government funding to offset the regulatory  
47 burdens placed upon small and medium-sized  
48 meat processors.
- 49 • The further establishment of MDARD approved  
50 meat processing facilities that allow for the  
51 donation to food banks and pantries.

## **#29 Nursery, Floriculture, Sod and Greenhouse Industry**

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

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

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

14 We urge MFB to continue cooperating with plant  
15 industry groups regarding revisions to both PA 189 of  
16 1931 and PA 72 of 1945 including, but not limited to,  
17 elimination of intrastate inspections of nursery stock,  
18 and to no longer recognize mums as a hardy perennial.

19 This change will allow the reallocation of resources to  
20 provide improved inspections of interstate and  
21 international shipments, and voluntary in-state  
22 inspections as requested by the industry.

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

30 We support:

- 31 • Funding for researchers, research infrastructure,  
32 and grant funding through USDA's Specialty Crop  
33 Research Initiative and Specialty Crop Block  
34 Grants to support the nursery and greenhouse  
35 industry.
- 36 • Research on mechanization, development of new  
37 pesticides, pesticide resistance, and advanced  
38 technologies to propagate and grow plants.
- 39 • Greenhouse and nursery crop insurance  
40 programs and the indemnification of plants after a  
41 disease or pest outbreak. We further support  
42 action to develop and complete these programs.

43 We oppose:

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

### **#32 Right to Farm**

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

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

We recognize the fundamental differences between farming operations in terms of size, soil types, and location. We urge all producers to be aware of applicable GAAMPs and encourage them to employ the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) and provisions of the farm bill as management tools in the production of agricultural products and possible expansion of their operations.

We support:

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

We oppose:

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

### **Cooperation**

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

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

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

#### **GAAMPs**

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

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

We support:

- Action by the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development to remove language specific to local zoning from the siting and farm market GAAMPs.
- The GAAMP for Site Selection and Odor Control for New and Expanding Livestock Facilities retaining specific setbacks and scientific parameters.
- Creating a GAAMP for ag labor housing.
- Creating a greenhouse GAAMP that provides nuisance protection for permanent and temporary greenhouse structures used for commercial or production agricultural purposes (except cannabis), regardless of population, zoning, or tax classification.
- Continued use of GAAMPs to define acceptable farm management practices in Michigan.
- A cooperative effort between MDARD, MFB, and other stakeholders to define “commercial production of farm products” within the GAAMPs.
- Greater producer participation on all GAAMP committees.

We oppose:



- 110       • Using non-farm residences to define setbacks for  
111       manure structures and stacking.

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

115       ~~We urge greater producer participation on all~~  
116       ~~GAAMP committees.~~

### 117       **Complaint Process**

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

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

## 237       **#35 TB - Mycobacterium Bovis Tuberculosis**

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

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

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

23       To expedite TB eradication, we support:

- 24       • A bounty and/or income tax credit for deer taken  
25       in any Michigan county that is not TB-free and  
26       contiguous counties.

- 27 • Funding the entire TB program from MDNR's  
28 budget, and tying that budget to deer-herd  
29 reduction and TB prevalence.
- 30 • A late hunt in February or March, not January.
- 31 • MDARD, USDA, MDNR and other state and  
32 federal agencies involving producers from all  
33 affected areas of the state in decision-making  
34 processes regarding bovine TB eradication.
- 35 • Producer implementation of a Wildlife Risk  
36 Mitigation Plan (WRMP).
- 37 • State and federal funding for hiring a third-party  
38 designated agriculturalist to assist with WRMP  
39 development, implementation, and inspection.
- 40 • A complete and approved WRMP on file should  
41 empower producers with the authority to manage  
42 nuisance/destructive species on their land,  
43 including access to disease-control permits to  
44 reduce deer and elk interaction with cattle or  
45 livestock feed to minimize disease transmission.  
46 Additionally, farmers should be able to shoot any  
47 deer 24/7 within a designated farmyard circle.
- 48 • In counties deemed high-risk or positive for TB,  
49 and all contiguous counties, white-tailed deer  
50 harvest should be allowed year-round by any  
51 legal hunter without requiring a permit.
- 52 • Establishing and implementing a science-based  
53 zoning approach and testing process to address  
54 disease risk (e.g., a 10-mile radius zone around  
55 new TB-positive livestock herds).
- 56 • Eradication of white-tailed deer within a 10-mile  
57 radius high-risk zone established after TB-positive  
58 deer or cattle are found.
- 59 • Changes to the national TB-testing requirements  
60 that eliminate the need for an individual test for  
61 animals moving from a lower disease prevalence  
62 zone to a higher disease prevalence zone.
- 63 • Tying indemnity payments to the development  
64 and implementation of a WRMP on each farm in  
65 the modified accredited TB zone.
- 66 • State and/or federal funding for all required  
67 identification and testing.
- 68 • Producer compensation for all livestock injured or  
69 ordered removed during mandatory testing.
- 70 • The free use of state-owned equipment for  
71 producers required to perform state-mandated TB  
72 testing.
- 73 • Continued cooperation between MDARD and  
74 USDA to return Michigan to TB-free status by  
75 advancing the status in areas where TB has not

- 76 been found, or those proven to be disease-free  
77 through science-based testing.
- 78 • State and federal funding for comprehensive and  
79 concerted research to further understand the  
80 transmission, persistence, detection, eradication,  
81 and vaccinations necessary to prevent disease  
82 transmission.
  - 83 • Science-based and species-specific testing  
84 protocols.
  - 85 • Developing an exit strategy for the entire state to  
86 upgrade the Modified Accredited Zone (MAZ) to  
87 TB-free status.
  - 88 • Research into a buyout program for cattle  
89 producers in Deer Management Unit 487.
  - 90 • MDARD pursuing aggressive action with  
91 surrounding states to open their borders to  
92 Michigan cattle.
  - 93 • Dramatic reduction of the deer herd in any TB-  
94 infected Michigan county and contiguous  
95 counties. Action should include agency culling,  
96 spring hunt, unlimited fall hunting, and no-cost  
97 licenses.
  - 98 • State support for deer-exclusion fencing around  
99 entire contiguous cattle farms and deeming such  
100 barriers acceptable options for farmers requesting  
101 a WRMP.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The current memorandum of understanding (MOU) between USDA, MDARD, and MDNR establishes ambitious quotas for collecting deer heads in the M counties, and in surrounding TB surveillance counties. To achieve these goals, we support:

- A more aggressive approach by MDNR to meeting deer-head collection requirements.
- Identification, transportation and testing in the MOU.
- A plan for coordinated effort between MDNR, processors, Michigan State University Veterinary Diagnostic Lab, Farm Bureau, and the hunting community in deer head collection by September 1 of each year.
- Weekly updates and reporting of completed deer-head testing beginning September 1 of each year.
- Payment for each deer head turned in until the requirements of the MOU are met, paid by the MDNR.
- Accountability from state and federal agencies for not meeting MOU requirements.
- Reduction and possible elimination of cattle testing in buffer counties at the end of the current MOU.
- Compensation from the MDNR budget to offset farm and MDARD testing expenses rooted in failed agency MOU compliance.
- Requiring heads from all deer taken on private and public lands in that region to be submitted for testing.

In order to meet testing requirements from USDA, MDARD, and MDNR, all deer heads taken from the seven counties around the MAZ for crop damage permits, as well as those taken on private and state

176 lands, should be picked up by MDNR and submitted for  
177 TB testing. MDNR should also be required to pick up all  
178 vehicle-killed deer in that area and submit those heads  
179 for TB testing.

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

### **#39 Agriscience, Food, and Natural Resources Education and the FFA Organization**

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

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

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

26 We support:

- 27 • Expanding and creating new junior high/middle  
28 school and high school AFNRE programs and  
29 FFA chapters as vital tools for educating young  
30 people, providing career and technical training  
31 and development of leaders to work in careers  
32 related to Michigan's agricultural industry.
- 33 • Agriscience and natural resources courses  
34 fulfilling the criteria and being recognized as a  
35 science credit by all high schools, colleges and  
36 universities in Michigan.
- 37 • Providing regional administrators, local district  
38 superintendents, principals and counselors  
39 information on AFRNE curriculum requirements  
40 so they can encourage student participation.

- 41 • The MDE adequately funding AFNRE and career  
42 and technical student organization programs to  
43 provide educational and career opportunities in  
44 agriculture and natural resources because added-  
45 cost funding available is declining.
- 46 • Retaining the word agriculture in the Agriculture,  
47 Food and Natural Resources Career Cluster title.
- 48 • Reporting information regarding graduates, or  
49 completers, from agriscience and natural  
50 resources programs within the state to increase  
51 added-cost funding for each student enrolled.
- 52 • Instructors taking an active role in the information  
53 gathering and reporting process.
- 54 • MFB and county Farm Bureaus assisting in state  
55 and local FFA activities.
- 56 • FFA alumni associations and their efforts to  
57 strengthen agriscience and natural resource  
58 education across the state and nation.
- 59 • AFNRE emergency certification programs and  
60 hiring retired ag teachers to fill these positions  
61 without retirement penalties, due to the lack of  
62 qualified people available to lead these programs.
- 63 • Considering student loan payoff or scholarship  
64 programs to help promote AFNRE programs  
65 through private or public partnerships.
- 66 • Continued activities of private and public  
67 companies and organizations, like those of  
68 AgroLiquid, St. Johns, which provide an  
69 educational opportunity to the public to learn and  
70 experience the role, importance, and economic  
71 impact of agriculture on food production for  
72 generations to come.
- 73 • Access to and financial support of agriscience  
74 programs and FFA chapters in all Michigan  
75 schools.
- 76 • ~~Developing an agriculture credential that high~~  
77 ~~school AFNRE students could use to gain~~  
78 ~~employment in the agriculture and natural~~  
79 ~~resources field. The development of this~~  
80 ~~credential should include input from businesses,~~  
81 ~~teachers and educational specialists to ensure the~~  
82 ~~credential represents the skills learned through~~  
83 ~~the program in a way that's meaningful for~~  
84 ~~employers.~~
- 85 • Continued support and promotion of the  
86 Agricultural Experience Tracker (AET) and  
87 AFNRE agriculture credential for high school  
88 AFNRE students to use when seeking  
89 employment in the agriculture and natural  
90 resources fields.

- Utilizing funding for agriculture internships and apprenticeships through the National Apprenticeship Act.

#### **#40 Educational Reforms**

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

We support:

- Requiring state foundation grant aid reimbursement be determined annually by June 1.
- Funding special education programs for teacher training, children with special needs and gifted children.
- Fully funding new or revised state mandated programs.
- Funding for state mandated programs should not decrease the basic pupil grant for other students.
- Ensuring the per pupil foundation funding grant follows the student to the school of their choice.
- Requiring state school aid funding to reflect current year enrollment based on average student attendance and eliminate official count days.
- Public schools, private schools, charter schools and home schooling.
- Local school boards having the ability to establish policies such as starting and ending dates, classroom hours in a school year, personnel management, student discipline, and use of local facilities and resources.
- Collaboration between the local school district and the intermediate school district to establish an integrated calendar.
- The utilization of local Farm Bureau members and organizational resources to assist in reviewing classroom curriculum for accurate information concerning agriculture before its adoption.
- Michigan Farm Bureau continue to promote and develop Michigan Agriculture Education Units to increase agricultural literacy among Pre-K-12 students.
- Colleges and universities offering dual credit opportunities for high school students, ~~and~~
- Agriscience instructor certification, ~~and~~
- Standardized programs in specialty fields like agriculture to increase occupational readiness and employability of students.
- Consolidated districts maintaining existing FFA and agriscience programs.

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

#### **#41 Michigan Ag Council**

1 The Michigan Ag Council (MAC) is comprised of  
2 more than 15 agriculture related groups, including  
3 Michigan Farm Bureau. The efforts of MAC are needed  
4 because it is imperative for stakeholders to write the  
5 narrative of Michigan agriculture. Through its  
6 collaborative structure, MAC promotes a positive image  
7 for agriculture and takes an assertive, proactive  
8 approach in telling the story of modern agriculture as a  
9 result of technological advancements.

10 We encourage MAC to expand national and  
11 regional collaboration.

12 Funding for the MAC is critical; to be successful, it  
13 needs to come from a variety of sources focused on  
14 Michigan including commodity groups, financial



15 institutions, food processors and retailers. We  
16 encourage county Farm Bureaus and individual  
17 members to financially support MAC and Farm Bureau  
18 members to consider joining MAC as business  
19 members. A mix of financing for this joint effort will allow  
20 MAC to do more positive education and promotion  
21 about agriculture, and multiply its ability to reach  
22 consumers at all levels.

#### **#45 State Energy Policy**

1 We support Michigan Farm Bureau advocating for  
2 adequate and affordable energy for residents and  
3 businesses. We recognize agriculture's vulnerability to  
4 energy interruptions and price volatility and support  
5 immediate and long-term solutions including:  
6 • Agriculture having consistent, reliable, and  
7 affordable access to all forms of energy.  
8 • Upgrading, expanding and protecting our current  
9 electrical generating systems and grid.  
10 • Development, expansion, promotion and  
11 incentives for affordable access to natural gas for  
12 farms, homes, and businesses.  
13 • Developing a state energy policy that prioritizes  
14 agricultural enterprises, such as production,  
15 processing and storage facilities, allowing them  
16 the same power quality and timely access as  
17 other industries, regardless of utility territory.  
18 • A statewide study of transmission connectivity  
19 needs including, but not limited to, transmission  
20 connections between the two peninsulas.  
21 • MFB working with county Farm Bureaus to study  
22 electrical rate disparities across the state. The  
23 study should consider the causes and potential  
24 policy recommendations promoting affordability in  
25 all regions of the state.  
26 • Electric car production and usage being matched  
27 by concurrent approval for the construction and/or  
28 upgrades for reliable electric generation facilities  
29 to deliver the power needed.  
30 • The creation of a charging network for electric  
31 vehicles in rural communities.

#### **Michigan Public Service Commission and Utilities**

32 We support:  
33 • Standards for utility companies to resolve power  
34 quality issues such as electrical pollution on-farm  
35 and urge all parties to maintain their equipment  
36 and utility right-of-way to decrease the possibility  
37 of neutral-to-ground electrical pollution.  
38

- 39 • Net-metering legislation or regulation enabling
- 40 producers to sell excess power generated on
- 41 farms back to utilities at an equitable rate.
- 42 • Establishment of an agricultural rate classification
- 43 for electrical service.
- 44 • Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC)
- 45 allowance for seasonal inactivity (e.g.,
- 46 irrigation/grain drying) to eliminate the occurrence
- 47 of non-use monthly charges.
- 48 • Voluntary utilization of smart meters.
- 49 • All permanent easements owned by utilities, not
- 50 preserved for future use, being reverted or offered
- 51 for sale, to the underlying owner at no more than
- 52 fair market value.
- 53 • Including agricultural representation on the
- 54 MPSC.
- 55 • MPSC being responsible for determining capacity
- 56 needs and the Michigan Department of
- 57 Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy being
- 58 responsible for only environmental permitting.

### 59 **Enhancing Production & Programs**

60 We support:

- 61 • The continued operation and upgrades of Line 5
- 62 and similar pipelines with strict safety precautions
- 63 to protect land and water resources.
- 64 • Incentives for renewable energy efficiency and
- 65 conservation that reduce energy use and costs on
- 66 farms, food processing firms, and agribusinesses.
- 67 • Incentives for renewable energy production for
- 68 sale or use for private applications. Examples
- 69 include cogeneration, silvicultural material,
- 70 methane digestion, wind, hydro, and solar power.
- 71 • Increasing incentives to broaden the use of
- 72 biomass blended fuels.
- 73 • Education and policy programs to promote sound
- 74 energy conservation.
- 75 • Options expanding domestic energy exploration,
- 76 incentives to accelerate expansion of liquid
- 77 natural gas facilities, implementation of
- 78 technology to utilize domestic coal reserves, and
- 79 the development of fuel cell technology.
- 80 • Programs to increase the utilization of energy
- 81 sources to minimize adverse environmental
- 82 impacts.
- 83 • Incentives for additional refineries.
- 84 • MFB obtaining the services of an in-house grant
- 85 writer to assist members with the Rural Energy for
- 86 America Program (REAP) and other grant
- 87 programs.

### 88 **Farmland Protection and Land Use**

- 89 We support:
- 90 • Requiring decommissioning plans to return
  - 91 property to the original state as a part of the
  - 92 permitting process for all new energy projects,
  - 93 including posting an adequate performance bond,
  - 94 or funds before final approval.
  - 95 • Incentivizing the production and use of renewable
  - 96 energy on non-agricultural use areas such as
  - 97 brownfields, public property, especially state-
  - 98 owned or leased buildings with suitable land for
  - 99 solar, Michigan Department of Transportation
  - 100 rights-of-ways, state parks, state-owned forests,
  - 101 state-owned or leased marginal open space,
  - 102 marginal lands, as well as industrial, residential
  - 103 and agricultural buildings, to reduce easements
  - 104 across farms for renewable energy projects and
  - 105 to protect prime farmland.
  - 106 • Solar developers disclosing chemical and
  - 107 electronic components of solar panels and
  - 108 equipment to the landowner and local government
  - 109 prior to offering any lease or approval.
  - 110 • Commercial solar operations notifying landowners
  - 111 and disclosing chemicals used for weed and pest
  - 112 control on leased acres.
  - 113 • Requiring public lands to share in the
  - 114 advancement of renewable energy goals created
  - 115 for the public interest. Since state and federal
  - 116 governments own over 20% of land in Michigan,
  - 117 public lands have the opportunity and
  - 118 responsibility to lead by example and host at least
  - 119 20% of renewable energy development.
  - 120 • All wind generator towers being assessed using
  - 121 multiplier tables established by the MPSC through
  - 122 the process of public hearings and sworn
  - 123 testimony.
- 124 We oppose:
- 125 • Utility companies inflating land rental rates on
  - 126 their property to well above fair market value of
  - 127 contiguous property.
  - 128 • Attempts to restrict or ban the use or production
  - 129 of natural gas, LP gas propane or any fossil fuel.

### **#53 Wages and Compensation**

1 Although most farm employees are paid above the  
2 minimum wage level, it does serve as a floor for wage  
3 rates. The state minimum wage and piecework rates  
4 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 remaining exempt from overtime wage payments.
- 11 • Piece rates as a method of payment to allow for
- 12 the variable situations found in agricultural
- 13 employment. Piecework rates enable skilled
- 14 agricultural workers to earn income above the
- 15 average and/or minimum hourly wage.
- 16 • The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic
- 17 Opportunity (MDLEO) working with the agriculture
- 18 community to support the payment of piece rate in
- 19 compliance with state and federal law.
- 20 • Minimum wage increases being tied directly to
- 21 increases of all wage-based employer thresholds,
- 22 such as unemployment compensation insurance,
- 23 frequency of withholdings, and frequency of
- 24 deposits.
- 25 • Investigating a state surveying mechanism and
- 26 auditing of the survey for calculating ag wages
- 27 including adverse effect wage rate (AEWR).
- 28 • Unemployment payments should never exceed
- 29 80% of previous full pay and should not exceed
- 30 20 weeks.
- 31 • Fair market value for employer provided housing
- 32 should apply toward fulfillment of minimum wage
- 33 and AEWR requirements.
- 34 • An evaluation of the current Unemployment
- 35 Insurance Agency to make it user-friendly and
- 36 accurate.
- 37 • The Registration and Seeking Work Waiver be
- 38 extended from a 45-day to a 120-day waiver for
- 39 agriculture and seasonal agriculture-related
- 40 businesses.

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

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

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

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

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

58 More farms have added roadside markets and  
59 agritourism venues to their business. We believe  
60 MDLEO should view all workers used for roadside  
61 markets and agritourism venues to be considered  
62 agriculture employees. We encourage Michigan Farm  
63 Bureau to work with MDLEO to develop and improve  
64 agriculture classification codes.

65 We strongly oppose the Improved Workforce  
66 Opportunity Wage Act (PA 337 of '18) and the Earned  
67 Sick Time Act (PA 338 of '18). We urge the adoption of  
68 reforms similar to PA 369 of '18, restrictions to the  
69 policy applying only to employers with more than 50  
70 employees, or outright repeal of the two acts.

71 We oppose legislation to give the Michigan  
72 Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs full  
73 control of youth labor in Michigan. Even the exemption  
74 for on-farm children is not enough as the new policy  
75 would be detrimental to feed mills, landscapers, and  
76 other ag-connected industries.

## **#68 Streamlining Michigan Government**

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

- 5 • ~~Michigan should have a standardized 'MD' in front~~  
6 ~~of all department acronyms.~~
- 7 • Michigan provides human service programs to  
8 those in need but must be more vigilant in  
9 addressing fraud and duplication within these  
10 programs.
- 11 • The review and potential change of corrections  
12 system cost-drivers, such as sentencing  
13 guidelines, prisoner health care and  
14 administrative procedures.
- 15 • Increased efficiencies within the education system  
16 such as privatization of services, consolidation of  
17 districts, and shared services.
- 18 • Competition for higher education funds should be  
19 minimized. Duplicative research efforts performed  
20 by multiple state-funded universities should be  
21 eliminated.
- 22 • State and local governments, including schools,  
23 moving to a defined contribution retirement  
24 system.

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

- 28 • Michigan's regulatory structure must continue  
29 fostering economic growth and eliminate

30 unnecessary barriers to entry for producers.  
 31 Policy makers should understand the impact of  
 32 regulations on business before voting to support  
 33 new or more stringent regulations. Regulatory  
 34 agencies should maintain constitutional roles and  
 35 reasonable environmental protection without  
 36 creating undue regulatory burdens.

- 37 • Increased efficiencies in state and local  
 38 government such as prioritizing services,  
 39 reforming where possible, eliminating duplicative  
 40 services, and utilizing private partners.
- 41 • Increased efficiency in state government and  
 42 actual reform should be evaluated and  
 43 implemented prior to levying new taxes. If faced  
 44 with a new tax, any tax proposals must be broad-  
 45 based and not favoring/harming any one segment  
 46 of the economy, business type or demographic.
- 47 • Full transparency of government financial  
 48 transactions at all levels.
- 49 • The State Legislature, Governor, and Lieutenant  
 50 Governor be subject to the Freedom of  
 51 Information Act.
- 52 • The concept of an emergency financial manager  
 53 law.
- 54 • Allowing virtual or hybrid options for public  
 55 meetings.

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

## #70 Agricultural Drainage

1 Michigan farmland is enhanced by an adequate  
 2 and well-managed drain system. Over half of Michigan's  
 3 farmland requires drainage to produce food, feed and  
 4 fiber.

5 We support:

- 6 • Members obtaining and recording drainage  
 7 easements for all private drains crossing  
 8 neighboring properties.
- 9 • Requiring an individual or entity who breaks or  
 10 damages a properly functioning and marked tile  
 11 and or properly marked tile outlet to be  
 12 responsible for returning the tile to operational  
 13 condition within 30 days.
- 14 • Legislation revoking the 1982 Michigan  
 15 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and

16 Energy (MDEGLE) Rule 8 under Part 31 Rules for  
17 Inland Lakes and Streams, designating several  
18 drains as mainstream portions of eleven natural  
19 water courses. If the rule is not revoked,  
20 MDEGLE should be responsible to pay for paying  
21 ~~all~~ maintenance costs of the waterways according  
22 to the ~~County Drain~~ standards.

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

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

- 50 • The authority for administering the ~~Drain Code~~  
51 should be maintained within the Michigan  
52 Department of Agriculture and Rural Development  
53 and the office of the drain/ or water resources  
54 commissioner at the local level.
- 55 • If existing ditches are moved at the request of the  
56 county/ or county road commission, the additional  
57 cost should be the responsibility of the county/ or  
58 county road commission's project.
- 59 • Current exemptions for drain maintenance within  
60 state statute are appropriate and should be  
61 maintained.
- 62 • [Relocated Text] Increasing the limit on drainage  
63 maintenance assessments (such as \$10,000 per  
64 mile), and payback time, to allow drain work to be  
65 done more efficiently and at a lower cost.

[Relocated Text] Urbanization, agriculture and technology have increased the need for water resource management. Institutional structures such as the Michigan Drain Code, Subdivision Control Act, and Wetlands Protection Act, lack the necessary uniformity to provide water management standards that meet today's demands and tomorrow's needs. Revisions to the ~~D~~drain ~~C~~code that benefit agriculture are necessary to address the following concerns.

We support:

- The concept of watershed management plan development with collaboration between drain/ or water resources commissioners, township and municipal officials, landowners, and conservation districts, and/or NRCS, and Army Corps of Engineers that improves county drain function. Watershed management boards should include representation from affected county road commissions and landowners throughout the watershed selected by county commissioners. Watershed management plans developed by these boards should be subject to review by county commissioners with the authority to approve, amend, or reject plans.
- The limited use of eminent domain to take private property for projects in watershed or drainage district management plans.
- [Relocated in Policy] ~~Increasing the limit on drainage maintenance assessments (such as \$10,000 per mile), and payback time, to allow drain work to be done more efficiently and at a lower cost.~~
- Elimination of the current exemption allowing non-elected drain/ or water resources commissioners.
- All land in a drainage district being assessed according to benefits derived, including public lands.
- Requiring that special assessment notices include the estimated percentage and dollar amounts apportioned to the recipient's land, the estimated annual total of project assessments, and the estimated project assessment duration.
- Keeping records of public drain work in a manner so the public can view them and understand the scope of work completed and the cost associated with the types and dates of maintenance performed on a drain.
- Drain/ or water resources commissioners providing notice of timing and duration of



115 scheduled drain maintenance projects to affected  
116 landowners.

- 117 • Requiring performance bonds on work done on  
118 intercounty drains where project construction  
119 costs exceed \$100,000.
- 120 • Clarification that no drainage district should be  
121 extended or established for the purpose of  
122 removing sediment from man-made reservoirs on  
123 rivers or drains.
- 124 • The drain/ or water resources commissioner  
125 directing the deployment of drain sediments, both  
126 organic and inorganic, to adjacent land as  
127 required to minimize sediment return to the drain.
- 128 • The ~~county~~ drain/ or water resources  
129 commissioner being responsible for removing  
130 blockage of a natural watercourse if it affects the  
131 function of a county drain.
- 132 • The use of current technology.
- 133 • For ~~all~~ new construction, a description of the work  
134 to be performed being provided to owners of  
135 property abutting the drain at least 10 days prior  
136 to the start of construction to ensure appropriate  
137 planning to handle increased storm water due to  
138 development. Alternatives to storm water  
139 retention ponds should be considered.
- 140 • Exploring strategies for a major investment into  
141 our county drain system, such as the clean water  
142 state revolving fund, a dedicated statewide fund,  
143 or other new revenue sources that lower the  
144 burden on landowners.

145 We oppose:

- 146 • Changes to rules developed under the Inland  
147 Lakes and Streams Act ~~causing that~~ increased  
148 regulatory burdens ~~to on~~ farmers, drain/ or water  
149 resources commissioners, or road  
150 commissioners.
- 151 • Requiring all ditches to be two-stage ditches  
152 and/or requiring additional engineering or  
153 planning on every new or established drain.
- 154 • ~~State funding being used~~ Using state funding to  
155 purchase farmland to construct retention wetlands  
156 for private benefit.
- 157 • [Reworded and moved to #81 Michigan  
158 Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and  
159 Energy] ~~MDEGLE's implementation of rules and~~  
160 ~~policies that exceed their federal mandate and are~~  
161 ~~not supported by scientific evidence.~~
- 162 • The implementation of structures affecting the  
163 flow in waterways ~~which that~~ negatively impacts  
164 agriculture.

## #71 Air Quality

Changes to state and federal air quality standards and lawsuits driven by environmental groups impact farms by forcing the development of regulation and law in the absence of ~~sound~~ peer-reviewed science. We insist government air quality policies be based on ~~sound~~ peer-reviewed science and consider economic impact.

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

We urge Michigan Farm Bureau to seek out ~~major~~ university research on agricultural air quality standards and best management practices. We urge MFB to work with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy to recognize normal agricultural production practices and the associated air particulate generated.

We support:

- MFB educating members on air quality and how this issue impacts members and Michigan agriculture.
- The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development as lead agency for ~~all~~ agricultural air quality concerns.
- Provisions in the Michigan Right to Farm Act and Michigan Agricultural Processing Act that protect farmers and processors following the Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices and Generally Accepted Processing Practices to address air quality concerns.
- ~~The Michigan Right to Farm Act as the primary means for farmers to address air quality concerns. Regulatory provisions exempting farmers who conform to Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices from nuisance regulation must remain in law.~~
- A scientific, practice-based approach to meet air quality objectives.
- Re-evaluation of emissions standards for farm and ranch equipment and other non-highway use machinery.

We oppose:

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

## **#72 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~~ remaining
  - 8 voluntary.
  - 9 • ~~Sound~~ Peer-reviewed science and public
  - 10 research related to ecosystem services credits
  - 11 addressing Michigan's diverse agricultural
  - 12 industries.
  - 13 • Standardization, transparency, and clarity related
  - 14 to ecosystem services enrollment contracts,
  - 15 pricing, and credit(s).
  - 16 • Using ~~updated~~ the most up-to-date models to
  - 17 estimate emissions for program standards.
  - 18 • Compensation and recognition for agricultural
  - 19 practices that keep carbon in the soil or in plant
  - 20 material.
  - 21 • Farmers receiving credit or compensation for
  - 22 maintaining previous or existing practices.
  - 23 • Keeping ~~the~~ the length of time that farmers are
  - 24 compensated ~~to be~~ consistent with the length of
  - 25 practice implementation.
  - 26 • Producers being able to utilize USDA cost-share
  - 27 programs alongside ~~carbon and~~ ecosystem
  - 28 services programs to better support the return on
  - 29 investment of conservation practice adoption.

- 30 • Michigan Farm Bureau staff, Michigan State  
31 University staff, and others in their mission to  
32 support farmers as they navigate carbon  
33 sequestration/ecosystem services credits  
34 contracting.

### #73 Climate Change

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

10 We support:

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

13 We oppose:

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

### #74 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. Michigan's conservation delivery system~~  
10 — including the Natural Resources Conservation  
11 Service, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and  
12 Rural Development (MDARD), and local districts — has

13 room for improvement to more effectively implement  
14 conservation efforts on the ground.

15 We encourage conservation districts to ~~take full~~  
16 ~~advantage of~~ fully leverage farm bill programs, federal  
17 watershed initiative programs, and other grant  
18 opportunities to ~~provide~~ enhance services and  
19 ~~programs support~~ for farmers ~~in addition to~~ alongside  
20 dedicated funds. We also encourage conservation  
21 districts to promote the Michigan Agriculture  
22 Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) and work  
23 in collaboration with farmers to provide technical advice  
24 and assistance, including access to financial assistance  
25 through the farm bill, ~~in order~~ to address resource  
26 concerns and achieve MAEAP verification.

27 We support:

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

62 We support Michigan Farm Bureau:

- 63 • Working with conservation districts to develop  
64 educational materials for members about  
65 agricultural stewardship and supporting efforts to  
66 make the public aware of the benefits of  
67 ~~investment~~ investing in good stewardship.
- 68 • Working with the Michigan Association of  
69 Conservation Districts (MACD) and local  
70 conservation districts to ensure landowners'  
71 conservation needs are met now and into the  
72 future. These groups working together should  
73 review the current structure and delivery system,  
74 as well as determine what resources and  
75 appropriate authorities are needed for  
76 conservation districts.

77 We support conservation districts:

- 78 • Focusing on conservation for agriculture.
- 79 • Providing technical support to farmers utilizing  
80 Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management  
81 Practices to protect soil, water and other  
82 resources.
- 83 • Evaluating and adopting ~~relevant successful~~  
84 effective programs from other conservation  
85 districts and states — such as water quality  
86 assistance and ditch maintenance ~~Programming~~  
87 ~~could vary from county to county, based on the~~  
88 ~~direction of the district boards and the needs of~~  
89 ~~agriculture. with programming tailored to each~~  
90 county based on district board direction and  
91 agricultural needs.
- 92 • Partnering at a watershed scale.
- 93 • Providing multi-disciplinary cross-training for all  
94 conservation district technicians.
- 95 • Being the primary agency to initiate watershed  
96 management programming and technical  
97 assistance.
- 98 • Only offering non-invasive species for  
99 conservation purposes.
- 100 • Being encouraged to purchase their plant  
101 materials from Michigan private industry  
102 whenever possible.

### 103 **Conservation Species**

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

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

## **#75 Farmland Protection**

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

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

### **A Strategic Approach**

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

15 We support:

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

### **Funding Farmland Protection**

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

34 We support:

35 **PA 116**

- The Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program (commonly known as PA 116) as an effective voluntary method of protecting farmland while ~~giving~~ providing farmers needed tax relief.
- Refraining from future changes to existing contracts that risk eroding the program's integrity ~~of the program~~.
- Local units of government zoning land under PA 116 contracts as agriculture and identifying it as agriculture in their master plan.
- All PA 116 tax credit recapture revenue being deposited into the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) Agricultural Preservation Fund.
- Continued and aggressive use of PA 116 by creating additional incentives to maintain and increase participation.
- Additional funding and staffing of MDARD and the Michigan Department of Treasury to administer PA 116 and process refunds in a timely manner.
- MDARD and the Michigan Department of Treasury developing better communication to resolve issues with PA 116 tax returns.
- Requiring the ~~S~~state to pay penalties for late issuance of PA 116 refunds to landowners.
- Protection and exemption from special assessments excluding agricultural drainage.
- Land ~~currently~~ enrolled in the PA 116 program ~~not~~ being ineligible for commercial solar project development.

#### ***Agricultural Preservation Fund***

- Aggressive funding of the Agricultural Preservation Fund: ~~Funding opportunities can include but should not be,~~ including but not limited to, bond issues, conversion fees, property transfer fees, the lease of mineral rights from state-owned land, and general appropriations.
- Clarification of the “conflict of interest” policy for grants, including language such as “If an applicant has a conflict of interest, they shall abstain from participating if and when their application comes before the public body upon which they serve.”
- The landowner option of spreading the ~~D~~development ~~R~~ights payments over a period of years.

#### ***Agricultural Security Areas***

- Legislation establishing voluntary ~~A~~gricultural ~~S~~ecurity ~~A~~reas to place temporary, long-term agricultural conservation easements on farmland.



## **Urban Revitalization**

- State programs incentivizing the redevelopment of brownfield properties in Michigan ~~in an effort to stop the loss of farmland.~~
- ~~The improvement of~~ Improving cities, ~~greater maximizing~~ utilization of current infrastructure, and ~~redevelopment of existing~~ redeveloping brownfields to reduce pressure ~~to develop on~~ farmland development.

## **Transfer of Development Rights**

- Transfer of development rights to facilitate the voluntary preservation of farmland where needed while allowing land development in appropriate areas without using public funds.

## **Permanent Conservation Easements**

- Permanent conservation easements for land preservation and those working in conjunction with PA 116 tax credits.

## **#76 Game Farms and Hunting Preserves**

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

We support:

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

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

- Disease testing and record keeping for ~~all~~ incoming and outgoing animals.
- Strict fencing requirements to eliminate the risk of recreationally hunted swine escaping into the wild.
- Following ~~all~~ standard accepted practices for swine meat production operations moving animals interstate and internationally.
- Hunting swine populations consisting only of sterile animals.
- Permanent individual animal identification on ~~all~~ animals used for breeding and stocking swine in hunting facilities.

- 31 • ~~All cost of regulation~~ Regulatory costs being paid  
32 for by a licensing fee.

## #77 Invasive Species

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

7 We support:

- 8 • ~~The reestablishment of~~ Reestablishing the  
9 Michigan Invasive Species Advisory Council, with  
10 producer 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 state  
18 budget approval ~~through state budget~~  
19 ~~appropriations~~.
- 20 • The role of the Agriculture and Natural Resource  
21 Commissions in establishing the prohibited  
22 species list.
- 23 • Federal, state and local agencies and research  
24 institutions ~~working~~ collaborating more effectively  
25 with private landowners to control or eradicate  
26 invasive species.
- 27 • MDNR notifying all levels of local government and  
28 gaining their support before releasing a non-  
29 native species.
- 30 • Efforts to establish the Michigan Department of  
31 Agriculture and Rural Development, with input  
32 from appropriate industry associations, as the  
33 state agency with responsibility for all terrestrial  
34 invasive species.
- 35 • The substantial efforts by the State of Michigan to  
36 work with other agencies to stop the invasion of  
37 the Asian Carp into Michigan waters.
- 38 • Development of an aggressive plan by state,  
39 federal, and tribal agencies to address the food  
40 web imbalance in the Great Lakes that has largely  
41 been caused by invasive zebra and quagga  
42 mussels, to promote the recovery of our native  
43 and naturalized ~~fishery~~ fisheries.
- 44 • An increase in funds for inspection services and  
45 facilities. Funding should also be made available  
46 for public education and outreach efforts.

- 47 • Preventing and controlling noxious weeds and  
48 other unwanted seeds in mixtures offered to the  
49 public.
- 50 • Clear and scientific criteria to delineate ~~what are~~  
51 invasive species. Due to genetic differences  
52 between plant genera, plant hybrids, and within  
53 species, varieties and cultivars, each should be  
54 treated as an individual when delineating invasive  
55 species.
- 56 • Studying any predator species before it is  
57 introduced to ~~limit or destroy~~ control an invasive  
58 species, to determine any other damage that  
59 might occur to the environment or farmers.
- 60 • Regulations including emergency measures to  
61 allow for the timely use of chemical controls.
- 62 • ~~Any consideration of~~ Recognizing the impact  
63 invasive species may have on endangered or  
64 threatened species ~~should recognize and address~~  
65 ~~the role of invasive species.~~
- 66 • Adequate state and federal funding to develop  
67 ~~sound~~ peer-reviewed science sufficient to  
68 determine long-term effects of invasive species.
- 69 • Indemnification of crop, nursery stock and  
70 livestock losses from invasive species when it can  
71 be documented that ~~the~~ quarantine requirements  
72 or treatment methods are the basis for the loss.
- 73 • Public lands and rights-of-way being managed to  
74 reduce and eliminate invasive species as  
75 ~~effectively as private lands and~~ in coordination  
76 with neighboring privately owned or leased land.  
77 Any efforts on public lands affecting the uses and  
78 private rights held by public land permittees and  
79 users shall be subject to compensation and fair  
80 market value for the taking of these property  
81 rights caused by the introduction or proliferation of  
82 invasive species.
- 83 • Proper incentives ~~being provided~~ for farmers and  
84 ranchers to effectively control noxious and aquatic  
85 weeds, along with support for an ~~integrated~~  
86 ~~P~~est ~~M~~anagement approach.
- 87 • Consideration being given to the extent to which  
88 species may be naturalized in an environment.  
89 Any penalties associated with introductions must  
90 be realistic.
- 91 • Michigan's ballast water discharge standards  
92 reflecting the federal standards which are  
93 enforced by the U.S. Coast Guard.
- 94 • Simplification of the review process of invasive  
95 species programs.

96 We oppose:

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

## **#78 Land Acquisitions for Public Projects**

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

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

15 We support:

- 16 • The state constitution prohibiting the use of  
17 eminent domain for private ownership.
- 18 • Legislation to stop or limit developmental grants  
19 or other state, local or federal funding to entities  
20 using condemnation procedures for private  
21 ownership.
- 22 • Direct and verifiable communication in plain  
23 language informing landowners of projects  
24 seeking eminent domain.
- 25 • Agricultural land not ranking lower than other  
26 types of land when calculating impact statements.
- 27 • A complete agricultural impact statement before  
28 productive agricultural land is condemned. The  
29 statement should evaluate all direct and indirect  
30 physical and economic impacts ~~to agriculture.~~
- 31 • The concept of no-net gain for state and federal  
32 ownership of land in Michigan. An environmental  
33 impact statement should be a prerequisite for ~~any~~  
34 eminent domain proceedings.
- 35 • Efforts to further strengthen property rights of  
36 Michigan property owners, including additional

- 37 opportunities for judicial review in eminent domain  
38 takings.
- 39 • Landowners having at least five years from the  
40 time of the original settlement in which to  
41 negotiate claims for damages in eminent domain  
42 cases.
  - 43 • Permanent easements being given to the owners  
44 of property left land-locked through land acquired  
45 by public entities and utility companies.
  - 46 • Michigan Farm Bureau working with public utility  
47 companies to ensure they pay fair and reasonable  
48 rental rates to landowners for easements.
- 49 We oppose:
- 50 • The taking of property by the government for the  
51 purpose of development of privately-owned  
52 projects.
  - 53 • The ability of non-elected public or private boards,  
54 agencies, or commissions to utilize the eminent  
55 domain process.
  - 56 • The practice of acquiring new rights-of-way  
57 through farmland when nearby public corridors  
58 exist, such as railways, highways, power lines,  
59 and pipelines.
  - 60 • Property being condemned in fee title if a lesser  
61 interest will suffice. In cases where any portion of  
62 condemned land is not needed at the completion  
63 of a public project, is abandoned, or is no longer  
64 used for the purpose stated, the landowner  
65 should have the right of first refusal at the price  
66 paid by the government entity.
  - 67 • The use of eminent domain for solar or wind  
68 energy projects.

## **#79 Land Use**

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

7 We support:

- 8 • Requiring agriculture to be included in community  
9 master plans, county economic development  
10 plans and all aspects of local planning and  
11 zoning.
- 12 • Regional cooperation between municipalities,  
13 counties and townships.
- 14 • Requiring the county road commission and drain/  
15 or water resources commission to collaborate with  
16 the county planning commission when developing

the county's master plan and setting long-term plans.

- Intra-jurisdictional coordination between all public entities in a community, including fire districts, emergency medical services, water and sewer authorities, school district, solid waste management.
- Encouraging the use of current infrastructure.
- Transportation development projects incorporating local land use planning and minimizing impacts to farmland. Transportation infrastructure placement is a primary influence on land development patterns.
- Enabling local communities to use the statutory authority of "concurrency" when negotiating new development approval. Concurrency establishes a pay-as you-go approach which ensures public facilities and services are available at the same time as the impacts of development.
- Michigan State University and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) providing technical assistance, education and research to local officials and property owners.
- Encouraging local communities to utilize existing zoning tools when appropriate to help protect farmland and farm operations by including cluster housing, buffer areas, fencing, planted tree setbacks, and site density zoning.
- Acknowledgement of the diversity and uniqueness of each community in our state. We believe that land use decisions are best made by local communities including planning and zoning decisions for energy siting and mega site development. We oppose preemption of local zoning for these purposes.
- The sale of state and federally owned land suitable for residential or industrial use to preserve farmland and increase local revenue. This development should only be considered on vacant sites with existing or nearby utilities fitting the local land use plan.
- Local governments considering alternatives to minimize adverse impacts to farms within one mile of where land is divided.
- Encouraging local ~~units of~~ governments to utilize brownfield redevelopment authorities.
- Amending the Land Division Act to:
  - Change the platting process to reduce cost, time and bureaucracy.

- Create density in communities by revisiting the 10-year redivision requirement.
- Allow local ~~units of~~ governments to utilize the entire Zoning Enabling Act to locally govern the Land Division Act.
- Require site condominiums, manufactured housing developments and mobile home parks to comply with land division and/or the platting process in the Land Division Act.
- When agricultural land is within a governmental unit, a representative of production agriculture being appointed to the planning commissions and zoning boards.
- Members becoming actively involved in land use planning and zoning.
- Individuals appointed to councils, commissions and boards created by government, state legislators, and MDARD to represent agricultural interests being, or having been, directly involved in the agriculture industry.
- Legislation being enacted to prevent farmland from being annexed to a municipality without a vote of the people in the affected area. Upon approval of the people in the affected area, an annexation proposal should then be approved by a vote of the residents of the appropriate units of government.
- Requiring consent of landowners for annexation proposals. Changing the use of property must consider and protect the rights of private property owners.
- Property enrolled in farmland preservation programs having concurrent approval for annexation or public use by the contracted parties, including land owners.
- The development and uniformity of Geographic Information Systems and we encourage use by local units of government in land use planning.
- Michigan Farm Bureau assisting county Farm Bureaus with model zoning ordinances pertaining to agriculture.
- The development of entry-level or moderate-income housing to attract and maintain an agriculture workforce in rural and small communities and acknowledgement of the affordable housing shortage.
- The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) continuing and expanding the bidding,

116 renting, and/or sale of state land for agricultural  
117 use.

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

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

131 We oppose:

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

## **#80 Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program**

1 We support the Michigan Agriculture Environmental  
2 Assurance Program's (MAEAP) ~~and its~~ continuation  
3 and improvement. We urge the State of Michigan and  
4 the 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. codified~~ This program to  
10 offers MAEAP-verified farms protection from civil fines,  
11 a presumption of meeting obligations for watershed  
12 pollutant loading determinations, and recognition that  
13 discharges from farm fields caused by rainfall are



nonpoint source pollution. We urge all farm operators and landowners managing forests, wetlands and habitat to participate in the MAEAP program and complete as many recommendations as possible to help ~~ensure~~ preserve the quality of our air, water and soil is ~~preserved~~.

We applaud Michigan farmers for achieving ~~7,075~~ 7,614 verifications as of October 1, ~~2024~~ 2025.

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

We support:

- ~~Continued efforts for~~ MAEAP to remaining a voluntary, confidential, statewide program.
- MAEAP technicians being housed locally, not employed directly by MDARD, with preference for technicians being housed at local Conservation Districts.
- Legislation and marketing efforts ~~that would communicate~~ communicating to the general public that MAEAP-verified farms are held to the highest standard of environmental stewardship.
- MDARD developing an outstanding and recognizable “Pure Michigan”-style labeling program (~~—~~ such as “Pure Michigan-Verified Farm”) ~~—~~ to add value to products of MAEAP verified farms and allow expand use of the MAEAP logo ~~to be used~~ at point of sale.
- The MAEAP program making information available about Michigan’s Water Pollution Control Tax Exemption Form which exempts pollution control structures from property tax assessments.
- MFB working with MAEAP partners to develop educational and promotional materials for farm neighbors and the ~~general~~ public regarding the benefits of MAEAP.
- ~~All p~~Producers using MAEAP verification as the basis for projecting a positive farm image to the public.
- MFB continuing to pursue greater incentives for MAEAP participation, such as additional protections from frivolous complaints.
- The Michigan Groundwater and Freshwater Protection Act that ~~This act~~ funds groundwater and surface water programming through providing

grants to fund local technicians. These technicians work with farmers to voluntarily adopt stewardship practices, which reduce nonpoint source pollution from agricultural sources. We believe funding of these technicians needs to be a top priority.

- Participation in MAEAP, including information generated by assessment programs, remaining confidential. Aggregate data that would demonstrate effectiveness of the overall program could be shared.
- A review of the MAEAP program, seeking new and/or alternative ways of meeting standards without compromising the basis of MAEAP verification.
- Farm Bureau members participating in regional water stewardship teams.
- Agriculture being the primary focus of MAEAP assistance in recognition of agriculture's contribution to the dedicated fund.
- The changes made to strengthen MAEAP and its funding through PA 118 of 2015. Program funds come from Michigan's General Fund and the Freshwater Protection Fund.
- The changes made to the Freshwater Protection Fund which require all users of industrial fertilizer manufacturers and distributors to (e.g., farmers, homeowners, golf courses) pay a fee into the fund.
- An annual review of the Freshwater Protection Fund finances, with the report being made available to contributors.
- Freshwater Protection Fund collection at the wholesale level, creating a voluntary contribution option, and exploring other fee collection mechanisms.
- Recognition of the Michigan law that offers MAEAP-verified farms statutory protection in watersheds with Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL). This protection should apply to the applicable systems farms are verified in that address the pollutants listed in that watershed's TMDL by acknowledging the farm meets the obligations for watershed pollutant loading determinations. Verification in all systems applicable to the farm should not be required in order to receive statutory protection.
- Farmers who are MAEAP-verified being considered in compliance with Environmental Protection Agency regulations.

### #83 Oil, Gas, and Mineral Rights

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

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

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

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

26 We support:

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

within 10 days of its proposed release to prevent surface waste. The escrow account or bond should be reviewed annually and adjusted accordingly, with a post-closure monitoring period of 40 years.

- The continued use of hydraulic fracturing with the appropriate scientifically verified environmental safeguards.
- An agricultural environmental and economic impact statement being required before the supervisor of wells issues a permit.
- Affected adjacent landowners being compensated for losses ~~When an injection well damages the value of their oil, gas, and mineral rights of adjacent landowners, the affected landowners being compensated for these losses.~~
- Sharing ~~Gas, oil, and mineral royalties from state-owned land and all setting reasonable~~ severance taxes ~~being that are~~ shared with local units of government in the region where the commodity is removed.
- ~~A reasonable severance tax for gas, oil, and precious metals, with the priority focus of the funds being in the region where the commodity is removed.~~
- Rights of townships granted to them under the Township Ordinance Act, ~~PA 246 of 1945.~~
- Requiring a new permit for any change in a well's use.
- Agricultural representation on the state oil and gas advisory committee.
- MFB exploring alternative distribution of the Natural Resources Trust Fund. Consideration should be given to maintaining and improving parks, roads, and wildlife habitat on existing state lands.

We oppose:

- Any deductions by the oil, gas, and mineral industries from a private lessor's share of revenue unless it is expressly provided for in the signed lease. If deductions take place, the lease must contain the definition of the deduction, specific items eligible for deductions, a clear process enabling the lessor to monitor deductions, and a maximum percentage of costs to be deducted.
- Attempts to ban exploration for oil, gas, and mineral deposits.
- The ~~S~~state burdening private royalty owners with the deduction of post-production costs. ~~Traditionally in Michigan, oil, gas, and mineral~~

100 owners' 1/8 interest was "free of costs" because  
101 owners and developers bore the expense from  
102 the wellhead.

#### #84 Private Property Rights

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

7 We believe any action by the government  
8 diminishing an owner's right to use their property, such  
9 as the Endangered Species Act or the Natural Rivers  
10 Act, constitutes a taking of that owner's property.  
11 Government should provide for the removal of  
12 endangered species or due process and compensation  
13 to the exact degree an owner's right to use his or her  
14 property has been diminished by 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 only  
18 strengthen private property rights, but create more  
19 widespread support and compliance with the Act:

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

- 46 new land survey is conducted by a registered  
47 surveyor.
- 48 • A property line survey for all arm's length property  
49 sales.
  - 50 • The Doctrine of Adverse Possession continuing in  
51 property line disputes.
  - 52 • Review of ~~all~~ regulations and enforcement  
53 policies encroaching on the rights of property  
54 owners, including buildings, planted trees and  
55 travel ways placed too close to property lines. The  
56 presence of other trespassing does not constitute  
57 permission to enter private land.
  - 58 • Legislation denying claims of prescriptive  
59 easement based on intentional recreational  
60 trespass.
  - 61 • Developing and implementing a "purple paint law"  
62 to authorize posting of private property by using a  
63 specific paint color.
  - 64 • A public awareness campaign utilizing all types of  
65 media to encourage better understanding  
66 between farmers and nonfarm neighbors as  
67 population density around farms increases.
  - 68 • Increased and graduated fines for trespassing.
- 69 We oppose:
- 70 • ~~Any~~ Legislation allowing public access to or  
71 through private property without permission of the  
72 property owner or owner's authorized agent.
  - 73 • Non-private easements (except maintenance  
74 easements) being sold, traded or otherwise  
75 transferred without consent of the current property  
76 owner. This should include ~~all~~ past and future  
77 transactions. Michigan law should protect the  
78 rights of the property owner.

## **#85 Resource Recovery**

- 1 Vast quantities of ~~all types of~~ recoverable materials  
2 are generated daily. We support Michigan Farm  
3 Bureau's ~~taking steps efforts~~ to advocate ~~reducing and~~  
4 ~~recovering our waste where practical~~ for practical waste  
5 reduction and recovery. We support immediate and  
6 long-term solutions including:
- 7 • Using farm plastic recycling programs such as  
8 Clean Sweep.
  - 9 • Implementing recycling programs for agricultural  
10 tires and ~~all~~ other reusable agricultural material.
  - 11 • Establishing grant or loan programs to facilitate  
12 purchasing equipment capable of processing  
13 agricultural and heavy-duty tires and tracks.
  - 14 • Adopt-a-local-roadside programs.

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

44 We encourage agricultural representation on all  
45 established Material Management Advisory Committees  
46 required by the Material Management Act Part 115.

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

## **#86 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~~:

### **Farm Bill Programs**

- 8 • NRCS and Michigan Farm Bureau ~~aggressively~~  
9 proactively informing producers about federal  
10 farm bill opportunities (e.g., Environmental Quality  
11 Incentives Program (EQIP) financial assistance)  
12 and cooperative efforts with NRCS, Michigan  
13

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), and conservation districts, including the amount of federal farm bill conservation money ~~coming~~ provided to producers and landowners of Michigan from this cooperation.

- Simplifying farm bill programming for farmers, as NRCS programming is paper-driven and difficult to manage.
- Expediting the use of NRCS funding for conservation district programs.
- Encouraging the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP) to hold sign-ups in the first quarter of each year to allow additional time for educational ~~about the program~~ outreach.
- [Relocated to #82 Nonpoint Source Pollution and Watershed Management] ~~Conservation program eligibility being determined by total environmental benefit rather than location within the watershed.~~
- All NRCS offices accepting applications for annual programs after closing dates, making them eligible for upcoming sign-up cycles.
- Continuing voluntary programs like the Wetlands Reserve Easements and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program to provide ~~farmers~~ compensation ~~in exchange~~ for conservation easements.
- The Michigan NRCS Technical Committee evaluating the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program verification as eligibility for the Conservation Stewardship Program.

#### **Practice Standards**

- Allowing more flexible standards for USDA conservation practices.
- Filter strip plant variety recommendations including pollinator supportive plants.
- The Farm Service Agency (FSA) enrolling more acres in the Conservation Reserve Program around ditches and streams to decrease the amount of nutrient runoff ~~on~~ from fields.
- Directing NRCS and FSA to prioritize using filter strips as a nutrient management tool with flexible standards such as allowing mowing of filter strips and removal of cut vegetation.
- Preliminary technical wetland and highly erodible land determinations being made within 30 days. After 30 days, producers may hire an outside vendor to conduct the determination(s), before proceeding with the proposed land improvement project(s).



- 63 • Defining wetlands as a naturally occurring and
- 64 functioning area of predominately hydric soils that
- 65 presently support hydrophytic vegetation because
- 66 of existing wetland hydrology.
- 67 • Requiring USDA to determine a minimum acreage
- 68 criteria for automatic minimal effect designation.
- 69 • Michigan USDA (NRCS and FSA) staff completing
- 70 wetland and highly erodible land determinations
- 71 and appeals process within ~~12~~ 6 months.
- 72 • Promoting the economic and environmental
- 73 benefits of using grid/zone soil sampling and/or
- 74 ~~V~~variable Rate Fertilizer Technology through
- 75 the Conservation Stewardship Program.
- 76 • Michigan, Ohio and Indiana NRCS including
- 77 cover crop ~~cost-share~~ financial assistance on all
- 78 acres enrolling in RCPP, including farm tract acres
- 79 with preexisting cover crop history.
- 80 • We support the undertaking of a study, working
- 81 with the USDA and the Fish and Wildlife Division,
- 82 to determine if historical property default
- 83 easements are necessary and effective or if these
- 84 areas are protected by other state or federal laws.

#### 85 **USDA Offices and Staffing**

- 86 • Staffing county offices with professional personnel
- 87 who have experience in administrative duties,
- 88 agricultural production, and communication skills,
- 89 with preference given to local candidates.
- 90 • Immediate evaluation of current USDA staffing,
- 91 compensation, and training at the county,
- 92 regional, and state levels, including county
- 93 committees, to ~~assist in attaining~~ attain an
- 94 adequate, streamlined, and talented staff that
- 95 meets the programmatic needs of USDA
- 96 applicants and customers.
- 97 • USDA ensuring all staff are properly trained and
- 98 certified to ~~do~~ perform all facets of their job within
- 99 one year of hire.
- 100 • Michigan NRCS continuing the practice of co-
- 101 locating conservation districts ~~in~~ within their
- 102 offices.
- 103 • Moving or relocating NRCS staff to areas of
- 104 greater need or where their skills are better
- 105 matched, while ensuring job applicants within the
- 106 state have a fair and equal opportunity to apply
- 107 for positions for which they qualify.
- 108 • USDA filling vacant positions in a timely manner.
- 109 • Modifying the system for county office
- 110 classifications to attract staff with greater talent
- 111 and experience.

- 112 • Michigan NRCS creating regional education  
113 specialists to present NRCS programs at industry  
114 meetings of farmers and woodland owners across  
115 the state.
- 116 • Creating county farmer oversight committees for  
117 local NRCS offices.
- 118 • Increasing farmer representation on the State  
119 Technical Committee.

## **#89 Wetlands Protection Act**

1 [Reworded and relocated in policy] ~~The Michigan~~  
2 ~~Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy's~~  
3 ~~(MDEGLE) interpretation and enforcement of the~~  
4 ~~Wetlands Protection Act saved valuable wetlands, but~~  
5 ~~also placed a disproportionate burden on some~~  
6 ~~landowners.~~

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

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

- 41 • Regulating a wetland if it meets the criteria in the  
42 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' 1987 Delineation  
43 Manual and Regional Supplements.
- 44 [Reworded and relocated text] EGLE's  
45 interpretation and enforcement of the Wetlands  
46 Protection Act saves valuable wetlands, but also places  
47 a disproportionate burden on some landowners. We  
48 recommend the following:
- 49 • [Reworded and relocated in policy] ~~The MDEGLE~~  
50 ~~statewide wetland inventory should not be used~~  
51 ~~for regulatory purposes. Michigan Farm Bureau is~~  
52 ~~concerned the inventory includes wetlands that do~~  
53 ~~not meet current wetland delineation standards.~~
  - 54 • Compatible agricultural uses should be allowed in  
55 wetlands. Wetland vegetation should be defined  
56 as obligate hydrophytes.
  - 57 • [Reworded and relocated in policy] ~~There should~~  
58 ~~be no regulation of man-made wetlands or~~  
59 ~~voluntarily established wetlands implemented as~~  
60 ~~conservation practices through state or federal~~  
61 ~~programs.~~
  - 62 • [Reworded and moved to New Environmental  
63 Contaminants Policy] ~~Application of contaminated~~  
64 ~~soils and sediments to farm fields at agronomic~~  
65 ~~rates should be in accordance with state and~~  
66 ~~federal requirements.~~
  - 67 • County drain/ or water resources commissions  
68 should be the sole authority on public drains,  
69 culverts and maintenance.
  - 70 • Statewide standards for wetland determinations  
71 and historical function must be established to  
72 ensure uniform application at all locations.
  - 73 • Permits must be issued promptly.
  - 74 • Where ~~application of wetland regulations results~~  
75 ~~in~~ cause a substantial or total loss of the value of  
76 the property, the State must fully compensate the  
77 property owner. Control and access to the  
78 property must remain with the property owner.
  - 79 • [Reworded and relocated in policy] ~~All prior~~  
80 ~~converted wetlands should be excluded from~~  
81 ~~regulation.~~
  - 82 • [Reworded and relocated in policy] ~~Cleaning up~~  
83 ~~edges of fields back to the original farmed~~  
84 ~~boundaries and removing barriers such as brush~~  
85 ~~and trees protruding into fields should not trigger~~  
86 ~~a wetland determination or disciplinary action~~  
87 ~~against the farmer/landowner.~~
  - 88 • Cost-sharing or other incentives should be  
89 provided for wetlands restoration programs on  
90 farms.

- 91 • A fund should be established to compensate  
92 neighboring farms for their economic loss due to  
93 unforeseen problems created by wetland  
94 restoration.
- 95 • ~~MDEGLE and the~~ Natural Resources  
96 Conservation Service should completely explain  
97 in advance and in writing landowner obligations  
98 during and after ~~a contract for the maintenance~~  
99 ~~and/or reversion of a wetland~~ restoration or  
100 maintenance of a wetland.
- 101 • Creative solutions should reflect economic and  
102 environmental realities to resolve wetlands  
103 disputes.
- 104 • [Reworded and relocated in policy] ~~Productive~~  
105 ~~agricultural land should not be used to mitigate~~  
106 ~~wetlands, especially by condemnation.~~
- 107 • Wetland violations should be heard within the  
108 court jurisdiction where the violation has been  
109 alleged.
- 110 • Government agencies should cooperate and  
111 provide a single contact for regulatory compliance  
112 to handle all issues of wetland determination,  
113 enforcement, and penalties.
- 114 • ~~MDEGLE should recognize the section of the~~  
115 ~~Wetlands Protection Act finding wetlands to be~~  
116 ~~are a~~ valuable as an agricultural resource for  
117 producing food and fiber, including certain crops  
118 which may only be grown on sites developed from  
119 wetlands.
- 120 We oppose:
- 121 • [Reworded and relocated text] The EGLE  
122 statewide wetland inventory being used for  
123 regulatory purposes. Michigan Farm Bureau is  
124 concerned the inventory includes wetlands that do  
125 not meet current wetland delineation standards.
- 126 • Other states converting Michigan farmland to  
127 offset wetland mitigation.
- 128 • [Reworded and relocated text] Regulating man-  
129 made wetlands or voluntarily established  
130 wetlands implemented as conservation practices  
131 through state or federal programs.
- 132 • [Reworded and relocated text] Wetland  
133 determinations, violations, or disciplinary action  
134 against farmers or landowners because of  
135 activities like cleaning up field edges to original  
136 farmed boundaries or removing barriers such as  
137 brush and trees protruding into fields.
- 138 • [Reworded and relocated text] Regulating prior  
139 converted cropland.

- 140 • [Reworded and relocated text] Using productive  
141 agricultural land to mitigate wetlands, especially  
142 by condemnation.

## #91 Fees

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

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

12 We oppose any revenue-generating fees ~~which are~~  
13 ~~charged imposed~~ imposed by the State of Michigan, ~~that are~~  
14 ~~based on a violations history, of past violations~~ rather  
15 ~~than from new or current~~ violations.

16 Compliance monitoring and enforcement that  
17 benefit the general public should be funded ~~from~~  
18 through the General Fund. ~~Funding for~~ Likewise,  
19 general administration and operational costs should be  
20 ~~funded supported~~ supported by the General Fund, not by fees or  
21 fines.

22 Departments ~~which depend~~ that rely on fee- or fine-  
23 based revenue ~~must continue to receive~~ should remain  
24 subject to annual legislative review and oversight.

25 An economic impact statement should be  
26 completed on the permitted entities before the fee is  
27 implemented.

## #92 Taxation

### 1 Property Tax/Assessing and Assessments

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

5 We support:

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

17 preservation of farmland for a contract period of  
18 approximately 20 years or more with a recapture  
19 penalty for early withdrawal or when property  
20 changes out of agricultural use.

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

67 facilities to enhance value-added opportunities for  
68 agriculture.

- 69 • Legislation that would allow a farm to include all  
70 parcels of the farming operation together when  
71 determining the ag classification. If the total farm  
72 would qualify for PA 116, then all parcels should  
73 maintain their ag classification. Non-contiguous  
74 parcels are being reclassified to residential unless  
75 51 percent of the parcel is farmed. Property in  
76 Northwest Michigan, and possibly in other parts of  
77 the state, cannot be farmed at 51 percent  
78 because of the topography.
- 79 • Exempting PA 116 land from all special  
80 assessments excluding agricultural drainage.
- 81 • ~~Local units of governments~~ classifying equine  
82 therapy facilities, therapeutic riding facilities,  
83 equine rehabilitation facilities, and ~~other~~ similar  
84 ~~equine-related~~ businesses utilizing horses as the  
85 major component of their business as agriculture  
86 for property tax purposes.
- 87 • The continuation of Proposal A in its current form,  
88 as it pertains to agriculture.
- 89 • The change to the summer tax collection which  
90 provided for a lifetime deferment of summer tax  
91 for qualified agricultural land if the owner files a  
92 federal Schedule "F" Income Tax Form or  
93 comparable farm income tax filing.
- 94 • The time frame for qualified agriculture property  
95 be a period of three years between the start of  
96 delinquent status to the expiration of redemption  
97 rights. We believe the private individual should  
98 have the first option to redeem delinquent  
99 property.
- 100 • ~~All assessors should~~ following established  
101 procedures ~~and to~~ change the classification from  
102 agricultural to industrial and use the appropriate  
103 tax tables when considering property that  
104 changed from agriculture to commercial solar  
105 electric production.
- 106 • The concept of a special assessment deferral  
107 program for landowners and encourage members  
108 to be involved in the levying of assessments and  
109 infrastructure planning in their community.
- 110 • Offering financial incentives to retiring property  
111 owners who work to transition farmland to a new  
112 generation of farmers.

113 We oppose:

- 114 • Assessing occupied business structures as  
115 though they were vacant.

- 116 • The reduction of taxes levied on state-owned land  
117 below current levels.
- 118 • The reclassification of agriculture and forest land  
119 to a residential classification when no residential  
120 structure exists.

#### 121 **Income Tax/Incentives**

122 We support:

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

151 We oppose:

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

#### 157 **County/State Taxes**

158 We support:

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



- 165       • The sale of state land to meet its obligations; and  
166       return the land to private ownership and the  
167       property tax roll.

### 168       **Sales and Use Tax**

169       We support:

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

177       We oppose:

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

### **#93 County Road Commissions**

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

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

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

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

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

## #94 Farm and Commercial Vehicles

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

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

### 9 Vehicle Regulations

10 We support:

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

- Minor restricted license eligibility. Licenses should not be based on taxable household income, and farm size should not be a factor. Licenses will only be considered for immediate family members.
- Individuals and businesses ~~should~~ being able to conduct business and complete transactions with the Secretary of State in an easily accessible manner including in-person, online, or ~~by~~ mail.
- Pickup trucks, one ton and under, that have had their beds modified should still be classified as pickup trucks.

We oppose:

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

### **Vehicle Size and Weights**

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

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

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

For seasonal permits, we support:

- The use of ~~sound~~ peer-reviewed engineering principles and criteria and collaboration with surrounding counties to determine when to apply and remove spring load restrictions on county and

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

#### 114 **Autonomous Vehicles**

115 We support:

- 116 • Development of technology to advance the use of  
117 autonomous vehicles.
- 118 • The development of safety technology and  
119 mandatory enhanced safety features installed on  
120 ~~all~~ new vehicles including, but not limited to,  
121 braking and cautionary sensors that create a  
122 safer driving environment for ~~all~~ farm equipment  
123 on roadways.
- 124 • Proper regulation and licensing of road bound  
125 vehicles.
- 126 • We encourage Michigan Farm Bureau to monitor  
127 future developments in autonomous vehicles and  
128 regulation regarding their use.

#### 129 **Implements of Husbandry**

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

134 We support:

- 135 • Pickups, like farm tractors, being allowed to tow  
136 two wagons or trailers, provided the combination  
137 of trailers does not exceed the towing capacity of  
138 the pickup.
- 139 • Implements of husbandry being operated and  
140 maintained with manufacturer's  
141 recommendations.
- 142 • MFB educating members about the safe and  
143 appropriate use of implements of husbandry on  
144 public roadways.
- 145 • Current statute for size and weight provisions of  
146 implements of husbandry, and abide by the  
147 posted bridge weight limits, not exceeding the  
148 vehicle axle limits.

- 149 • Clarification on the definition of “modified  
150 agricultural vehicle” and its distinction from  
151 implements of husbandry.  
152 • A permit to allow tractors and other implements of  
153 husbandry to cross the Mackinaw Bridge during  
154 oversized load crossing times.  
155 We oppose mandating the use of electric powered  
156 agriculture equipment/ or implements of husbandry.

### **#95 International Trade Crossing**

1 Canada is Michigan's leading trade partner, and  
2 reliable transportation to and from Canada between the  
3 two countries is vital to ~~accommodate~~ support the  
4 state's agricultural industry.

5 ~~Backups of e~~Commercial vehicles backups at  
6 border crossings is are detrimental to commerce. We  
7 urge adequate staffing to prevent delays in  
8 transportation of agricultural products.

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

### **#96 Limited Purpose Operator's License**

1 Prior to 2008, Michigan law ~~contained no~~  
2 ~~requirement that an applicant for~~ did not require a  
3 driver's license or state ID applicants card needed to  
4 have a specific immigration or citizenship status, ~~in~~  
5 ~~order to be eligible and had to submit~~ Applicants only  
6 needed to provide documents sufficient to prove their  
7 identity and Michigan residency.

8 We support the State of Michigan:

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

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

### **#97 Railroads**

1 The transportation of agricultural and forestry inputs  
2 and commodities ~~produced is dependent upon~~ depends  
3 on efficient and continued railroad service. Mergers

4 within the industry and low priority designations by  
5 railroad management have created an unstable and, in  
6 some areas, unreliable rail service.

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

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

- 17 • Urging the responsible authorities to improve and  
18 maintain railroad crossings to current code,  
19 including replacing existing railroad cross buck  
20 signs with cross buck signs that are reflectorized  
21 on both sides, and requiring stop signs or warning  
22 lights to replace yield signs where visibility is  
23 limited.
- 24 • Legislation to require railroads to use reflectors or  
25 reflectorized paint or tape on the sides of rail cars  
26 to improve visibility. ~~In addition, we support~~
- 27 • ~~t~~The use of strobe and ditch lights on railroad  
28 engines and the last car.
- 29 • Public notice and hearing process for ~~Michigan~~  
30 highway projects should be used when changes  
31 in Michigan railroads are proposed to ensure the  
32 viewpoints of all affected parties are considered.
- 33 • Acceptable rail crossing alternatives be  
34 developed and railroad crossing upgrades be  
35 completed in a timely manner if existing crossings  
36 are required to be closed.
- 37 • Exempting private agriculture crossings from  
38 closure and treated as nonresidential seasonal  
39 agriculture use.
- 40 • The requesting party be responsible to pay for  
41 safety mechanisms at a private crossing if they  
42 are determined necessary.
- 43 • Fencing along the rail corridor should be erected  
44 and paid for by the railroad when railroads bisect  
45 a fenced parcel of land.
- 46 • Railway companies be responsible to keep the  
47 railroad right-of-way free of brush for a  
48 reasonable distance at road crossings.

#### 49 **Abandoned Railroads**

50 The changing of a railroad right-of-way from its  
51 intended use should result in compensation to property  
52 owners whose land had been originally purchased or  
53 condemned for the purpose of the railroad right-of-way.

54 All ~~unused~~ railroad rights-of-way not preserved for  
55 future railroad traffic should be reverted to, or offered for  
56 sale at or below fair market value, to the current owner  
57 of record of the underlying parcel of real estate from  
58 which said right-of-way was originally obtained.

59 Whenever determined not possible, landowners shall  
60 be compensated for the condemnation of the land or a  
61 change to a non-railroad use.

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

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

71 We support allowing horses on converted railroad  
72 trails.

## **#98 Safety on Roadways**

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

### **Agricultural Safety on Roads**

8 To improve ~~safety regarding~~ agricultural use  
9 roadways safety, 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 irrigation, field and  
19 ~~animal~~ livestock 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 their livestock  
27 enclosures.

### **Slow Moving Vehicle Signs**

28 Michigan Farm Bureau should continue ~~efforts to~~  
29 ~~educate~~ educating the public and farmers ~~regarding on~~  
30

the proper use and recognition of the slow moving vehicle (SMV) sign and implements of husbandry which is designed to warn other road users that the vehicle displaying the sign is traveling at slower than normal traffic speed.

Therefore, we support:

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

#### **Visibility and Warning Signals**

To improve safety and visibility on roadways, we support:

- MFB working in cooperation with the County Road Association to establish a process for use of warning signs related to agriculture vehicles such as entering and exiting roadways.
- The use of farm and other traffic alert signs in areas of heavy farm or other traffic or similar signage allowed under the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
- The placement of yellow flashing lights at the beginning of school zones, and appropriate signage as mandated under the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
- An advance stop light change warning system at major state highway intersections. This advance warning system would alert drivers to a signal change from green light to a yellow light, allowing drivers extra time and distance to slow and stop vehicles before the red light is illuminated. This advance warning system would read “when light is flashing be prepared to stop.”
- The use of low-cost measures, including reflective taping or additional signage, to mitigate accidents at rural intersections and railroad crossings.
- Where stop lights are present on highways with speed limits above 45 mph, we support the placement of a warning light and sign before the



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

#### 94 **General Public Safety on Roadways**

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

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

#### **#99 Transportation Improvement**

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

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

9 system will create jobs, attract business and strengthen  
10 our economy.

### 11 **Transportation Revenue**

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

23 We support:

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

43 We oppose:

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

### 47 **Transportation Formula**

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

52 We support the following PA 51 changes:

- 53 • At least 25 percent of federal road funds go to  
54 local road agencies. At least 25 percent of federal  
55 bridge funds go to the Local Bridge program for  
56 use by local road agencies.
- 57 • Before any debt is serviced, the Transportation  
58 Economic Development Fund (TEDF) shall be

59 allocated with 25 percent to urban counties and  
60 25 percent to rural counties, as defined in the  
61 TEDF.

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

92 We oppose:

- 93 • Distribution of road funding based on road use or  
94 traffic volume.

### 95 **Road Construction and Maintenance**

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

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

- 109 Regarding road planning, we support:
- 110 • Encouraging the local road agencies, as well as
  - 111 the Michigan Department of Transportation
  - 112 (MDOT) to work in coordination with all pertinent
  - 113 county agencies (e.g., drain/water resources
  - 114 commission), townships, local planning, zoning
  - 115 boards, county Farm Bureaus, and affected
  - 116 property owners ~~in order~~ to minimize road
  - 117 construction cost and gather public input.
  - 118 • Providing a role for counties and townships in
  - 119 road improvement decisions.
  - 120 • Local road agencies utilizing the MDOT Asset
  - 121 Management Program, or similar program, to
  - 122 annually evaluate conditions of all roads and
  - 123 dispersal of funds under their jurisdiction and
  - 124 report such findings to the public.
  - 125 • County road commissions maintaining culverts to
  - 126 avoid road closures. Culverts ~~in excess of~~
  - 127 exceeding four feet in diameter should be
  - 128 considered ~~to be~~ bridges.
  - 129 • Research to develop better materials for road and
  - 130 bridge construction and maintenance for proper
  - 131 construction and longevity.
  - 132 • An emphasis on improving existing roadways
  - 133 prior to constructing new highways.
  - 134 • Long-range planning on road construction
  - 135 projects considering not only future needs of the
  - 136 area but also the effects on agriculture.
  - 137 • Every consideration being given to landowners
  - 138 adjacent to the roadway to provide for safe travel
  - 139 for farm machinery and products.
  - 140 • Requiring consideration of agricultural drainage
  - 141 needs, including proper placement and size of
  - 142 culverts, when planning, designing and
  - 143 maintaining roads.
  - 144 • Proper grading of all roads and shoulders on a
  - 145 regular basis.
  - 146 • MDOT taking into consideration the size and
  - 147 maneuverability of farm equipment when
  - 148 designing new traffic flow structures such as
  - 149 roundabouts or ~~Michigan~~ turnarounds.
  - 150 • Compensation for crop losses when changes are
  - 151 made to the right of way from road improvements
  - 152 or reconstruction.
  - 153 • Every effort being made to select alignments that
  - 154 preserve productive farmland, wetlands and
  - 155 historical sites.
  - 156 • The use of private contractors and a bidding
  - 157 process for road and bridge development and
  - 158 maintenance.

- 159 • A preference being given to contractors with
- 160 material testing locations in Michigan with proven
- 161 results.
- 162 • The removal of state-mandated wage guidelines
- 163 which may not reflect actual market conditions.
- 164 • An open bid process for all road construction,
- 165 improvements, and maintenance projects.
- 166 • The cost of road improvements impacted from
- 167 development being required to be shared by the
- 168 developer when new developments have an
- 169 adverse impact on the rural road system.
- 170 • The respective state agency paying for or the
- 171 requirement for the project being waived, when
- 172 Michigan Department of Environment, Great
- 173 Lakes, and Energy and MDNR specifications
- 174 increase the cost of maintaining safe bridge
- 175 structures.
- 176 • The purchase of rights of way for the construction
- 177 of complete cloverleafs when new freeways are
- 178 built.
- 179 • The builder of a housing development near a
- 180 freeway or existing highway being responsible for
- 181 erecting an acceptable sound barrier, if needed.
- 182 • Highway maintenance and changes within the
- 183 existing right of way not having to complete a new
- 184 environmental impact study before performing the
- 185 work.
- 186 • Wetlands mitigation not being required if
- 187 improvements to the road are within the existing
- 188 road right of way.
- 189 • Ending the inclusion of planned wildlife habitat in
- 190 the construction and renovation of Michigan
- 191 highways.
- 192 • Reclassifying US 23 from Toledo to Flint as an
- 193 interstate highway.
- 194 • Use of improved paint technologies that are more
- 195 visible and reflective on local, state, and interstate
- 196 roadways.
- 197 When performing road construction, we support:
- 198 • An emphasis being directed toward the placing of
- 199 crossroad, yield or stop signs at unmarked rural
- 200 intersections.
- 201 • Hardtop roads of adequate width being marked
- 202 with highly-reflective center lines and sidelines as
- 203 an aid to safer nighttime driving.
- 204 • Engineering and design of roadways being
- 205 required to have at least 20 feet clearance
- 206 between obstacles.

- 207 • Proper grading and bank reseeding being
- 208 completed where road construction occurs to
- 209 improve road safety and reduce erosion.
- 210 • All rural roads should be marked with a name or
- 211 number.
- 212 • Mail and newspaper boxes being placed on the
- 213 same side of the road and as far from the traveled
- 214 portion of the road as safety allows.
- 215 • Prior to non-emergency detouring of state
- 216 highway traffic onto county roads, MDOT will
- 217 collaborate with township government, county
- 218 road departments, and local and county law
- 219 enforcement, to establish reduced speed limits,
- 220 establish no-passing zones along the detour
- 221 route, and mark intersections with illuminated stop
- 222 signs or overhead traffic lights. As part of the
- 223 project cost, MDOT will make funds available for
- 224 law enforcement to specifically patrol the detour.
- 225 For road maintenance, we support:
- 226 • The designated maintenance authority clearing
- 227 and maintaining roadsides, roadways and
- 228 intersections of hazards that obstruct the view of
- 229 motorists or impede travel, road drainage, or
- 230 cropland drainage. This would include dead and
- 231 dying trees within the right of way. In the event the
- 232 authorized authority is unable to fulfill their
- 233 maintenance obligations, landowners should be
- 234 allowed to perform such work. Property owners
- 235 should maintain proper visibility of intersection
- 236 views by using the triangular sight-line system.
- 237 • Encouraging the privatization of road
- 238 maintenance and the mowing and trimming of
- 239 road ditches when feasible.
- 240 • Individuals, pursuant to reasonable regulations,
- 241 being allowed to harvest existing forages and
- 242 trees along roadways without a permit.
- 243 • Any traveled portion of the road and shoulder
- 244 having trees and overgrowth trimmed to a
- 245 minimum height of 17 feet due to the increase in
- 246 height and width of farm and custom application
- 247 equipment. Also, a reasonably safe condition
- 248 should be provided by the respective road
- 249 agency.
- 250 • MDOT being required to fix and maintain fencing
- 251 along state highways as part of the maintenance
- 252 of that highway.
- 253 • County road commissions notifying the owner
- 254 when work in the right of way will be done and will
- 255 destroy crops or affect field drainage.

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

- 260 • The use of Calcium Magnesium Acetate or other  
261 ag-based products for de-icing roads and bridges,  
262 including the use of sand, when environmentally  
263 and economically feasible.
- 264 • A reduction in ice melt and dust control products  
265 containing sodium chloride, and research of  
266 alternatives, with no salt being used adjacent to  
267 sensitive perennial crops and/or arable soils,  
268 wherever feasible.
- 269 • County road commissions being able to brine  
270 roads responsibly and when necessary.

## Reaffirmation of State Policies

### #1 Agricultural Commodity Commissions

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

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

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

### #2 Agricultural Fairs and Exhibitions

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

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

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

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

32 We urge MFB to evaluate and make



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

## **#7 Bee Industry**

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

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

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

11 We support:

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

## **#8 Biotechnology**

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

6 We support:

- Developing research and testing to enhance adoption of biotechnology products and processes, and address consumer safety and environmental concerns.
- Funding from companies that develop this technology to educate the public on the safety and benefits of biotechnology.
- Developing a positive national strategy for the further growth of biotechnology research and the swift dissemination of accurate information to consumers concerning biotechnology products.
- U.S. government agencies, particularly the USDA and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), continue to serve their role in providing unbiased, science-based evaluations concerning human and animal safety and wholesomeness, as well as the environmental impacts of biotechnology-enhanced commodities. These agencies should evaluate if improvements could be made to the regulatory approval process to enhance consumer confidence.
- Developing standardized testing procedures to ensure accurate, timely and cost-effective analysis of biotechnology products throughout the production and marketing chain.
- The U.S. government to use all available means to improve international understanding of the science-based process used by agencies when approving biotechnology-enhanced commodities.
- Initiatives that assist in the research, development and regulatory clearance of specialty crop biotechnology products.
- Michigan Farm Bureau proactively educating members and consumers about the advantages and potential of biotechnology, including the use of the FARM Science Lab.
- Strong patent protection to encourage these new technologies.
- An expedited process for the approval of edible and non-edible genetically engineered plant material beneficial to the agricultural/horticultural/floricultural industry through the FDA and USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.
- Allowing farmers to use their own crop as seed as long as they pay the technology fee for the seed they use.

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

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

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

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

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

## **#10 Commission System of Government**

1 Prior to 2009, bipartisan commissions controlled  
2 the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural  
3 Development and the Michigan Department of Natural

4 Resources with the power to hire directors of the  
5 respective departments.

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

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

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

## **#11 Compliance and Resources for Farm Business Management**

1 Michigan farmers are business owners and  
2 employers operating in an increasingly complex and  
3 technical environment. We encourage Michigan Farm  
4 Bureau to monitor and identify regulatory changes to  
5 the business environment.

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

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

## **#12 Craft Beverage Industry**

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

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

15 We support:

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

27 We oppose:

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

## **#14 Dairy Industry**

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

5 We support:

- 6 • Industry collaboration in developing additional  
7 dairy processing in Michigan, and urging local,  
8 state and federal lawmakers and regulators to  
9 help streamline the process for dairy processing  
10 expansion.
- 11 • Funding state and federally required dairy  
12 industry sampling and inspection programs.
- 13 • Current dairy laws pertaining to milk  
14 pasteurization, including prohibiting the sale of  
15 unpasteurized fluid milk for human consumption.
- 16 • Michigan Farm Bureau and the Michigan  
17 Department of Agriculture and Rural  
18 Development working together to provide  
19 guidelines for cow-share and herd-share  
20 programs that meet Grade A dairy standards.
- 21 • Implementing on-farm biosecurity practices that  
22 protect animal health and enhance dairy  
23 markets.
- 24 • Continued availability and proper use of animal  
25 health tools (e.g., antibiotics, technology).

- 26 • Dairy industry participation in the veterinary feed  
27 directive.
- 28 • Collaboration between farmers, animal health  
29 officials and the veterinary community in an  
30 aggressive Johnes detection and eradication  
31 program, and continued focus on improving  
32 dairy cattle health.
- 33 • Industry participation in any changes to the  
34 Siting Generally Accepted Agricultural and  
35 Management Practice (GAAMP) to allow for  
36 continued growth and dairy expansion.
- 37 • Continued farmer participation in any changes to  
38 the National Dairy Farmers Assuring  
39 Responsible Management (FARM) Program and  
40 on-farm implementation of its standards.
- 41 • Continued investments in research that allow for  
42 industry growth and efficiency.
- 43 • Continued farmer participation and control over  
44 dairy industry promotion funds, enhancements  
45 and creativity in dairy promotion ideas and the  
46 development of new products.
- 47 • Increased efforts to increase dairy consumption  
48 in schools, including higher milk fat options and  
49 flavored milks.
- 50 • Dairy farmers being able to collect, store, and  
51 market colostrum to licensed collectors/sellers.
- 52 • Collaboration with the United Dairy Industry of  
53 Michigan and Michigan Ag Council in promoting  
54 the benefits of dairy consumption — especially  
55 for youth — to the medical and educational  
56 communities.
- 57 • Collaboration across the industry to establish a  
58 world-class dairy teaching, research and  
59 extension facility at Michigan State University's  
60 dairy farm that meets our industry's current and  
61 future needs.

## **#17 Equine Industry**

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

7 We support:

- 8 • The Michigan Department of Agriculture and  
9 Rural Development working with local  
10 governments to continue classifying equine  
11 operations as agricultural for zoning purposes.

- Additional changes or legislation that provide economic growth and strengthens the horse racing industry.
- Funding for the expansion of the Pavilion for Agriculture and Livestock Education at Michigan State University.
- Marketing opportunities for the equine industry.
- Michigan Farm Bureau working to re-establish additional harvest options for the equine industry.
- Funding for the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service for inspectors in facilities that slaughter horses.
- The Equine Liability Act, which strengthens liability protection measures for the industry.
- Efforts to establish an equine industry marketing and education program.
- The industry's efforts in conducting a study to determine the impact and status of the state's equine industry.
- Removing the online wagering tax cap with the funds being allocated to the Agriculture Equine Industry Development Fund.
- The expansion and promotion of equine recreational opportunities on public land.
- Prohibiting bicycle/pedal powered devices on trails signed for equestrian and hiking only.
- Prohibiting non-equestrian campers in equestrian campgrounds and portions of other campgrounds dedicated to equestrian use.
- The establishment, growth, and funding of urban equestrian education and promotion programs.
- Seven-year retention of signed liability release forms.

We oppose:

- Attempts to classify equine as companion animals.
- Legislation limiting or prohibiting the use of horses as working animals.
- Relocating the horsemen's simulcast purse pool funds to any race meet licensee.

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

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

In an attempt to encourage the equine industry to

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

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

## **#19 Food Safety**

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

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

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

17 We support:

- 18 • Proper biosecurity, identification, and safety  
19 protocols being followed by state and federal  
20 agency personnel when visiting farms; including  
21 compliance with executive orders and regulatory  
22 requirements relative to the industry.
- 23 • Continued use of food safety audits such as  
24 Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and food  
25 safety risk assessments to ensure food and  
26 consumer safety.
- 27 • A private, third-party audit being accepted by  
28 USDA if it includes at least the same minimum  
29 standards as a government audit.
- 30 • Standardizing a single third-party audit that  
31 would be broadly accepted by retailers.
- 32 • Permanent institutional licensing, including  
33 churches and civic facilities.
- 34 • Current milk pasteurization laws, including  
35 prohibiting the sale of unpasteurized fluid milk  
36 for human consumption.



- 37 • Michigan Farm Bureau and MDARD working to  
38 provide guidelines for cow-share and herd-  
39 shares that meet Grade A dairy standards.
- 40 • Use of wooden pallets and wooden harvest bins.
- 41 • Custom exempt slaughter.
- 42 • The ability for families to process and consume  
43 their own products on their own farm.
- 44 • Monitoring of the Cottage Food Law.
- 45 • Michigan Department of Environment, Great  
46 Lakes, and Energy, in consultation with MDARD,  
47 reviewing the rules for application of biosolids to  
48 growing fruit and vegetable crops with the intent  
49 of preventing potential human health hazards.
- 50 • The concept of On-Farm Readiness Review kits  
51 along with the Food Safety Modernization Act  
52 Grower Training programs that help ease the  
53 burden of farms becoming compliant.
- 54 • MFB and stakeholders conducting educational  
55 meetings for microbusinesses related to  
56 agriculture.
- 57 • Prohibiting reuse of food containers or  
58 packaging labeled with “use by” or “purchase by”  
59 dates, for the benefit of consumer health and  
60 producer liability protection.
- 61 • A committee of MFB members researching and  
62 reporting on block chain technology use in  
63 agriculture and the potential impact on Michigan  
64 agriculture.
- 65 • MDARD immediately reporting food fraud and  
66 cybersecurity impacts.

67 We oppose:

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

## **#21 Fruits and Vegetables**

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

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

10 insurance.

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

## **#22 Intellectual Property Rights**

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

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

11 We support:

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

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

### **#23 Labeling**

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

### **#24 Maple Sugar Production**

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

8 We support:

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

### **#25 Marketing and Bargaining Legislation**

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

6 We support:

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

## **#26 Michigan Alliance for Animal Agriculture**

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

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

## **#27 Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development**

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

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

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

20 We encourage MDARD to follow these  
21 recommendations when prioritizing their budget.  
22 Regulatory or enforcement program funding should be

23 taken from the general fund with a limited portion from  
24 industry fees. We support strategic investments in  
25 MDARD with the following funding priorities:

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

35 We support:

- 36 • Changes to the Bodies of Dead Animals (BODA)  
37 Act that make the MDARD director or their  
38 designee the lead authority in mass carcass  
39 disposal and BODA.
- 40 • Modification of the BODA Act, with input from  
41 farmers and dead stock haulers, to allow legal  
42 commercial or cooperative mortality  
43 management.
- 44 • Modifying the Natural Resources and  
45 Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) to clarify  
46 that animal mortality disposal is not considered  
47 in the definition of production site waste.
- 48 • Making considerations for inclement weather  
49 impacts on animal mortality management and  
50 disposal timeframes.
- 51 • The creation of a study group initiated by  
52 MDARD, led by Michigan State University  
53 (MSU), and which includes representation from  
54 agriculture and livestock commodity groups to  
55 determine and recommend necessary updates  
56 to the BODA Act.
- 57 • Protecting animal health through testing,  
58 quarantine and depopulation, if necessary.
- 59 • State funding of all required testing.
- 60 • Controlling disease through plant inspection,  
61 testing and quarantine.
- 62 • State on-farm inspectors protecting farmers from  
63 excessive regulations being advanced by federal  
64 inspectors.
- 65 • The abandoned and neglected orchards  
66 program and amendments to include other  
67 perennial crops. With the involvement of  
68 stakeholders and other departments, we support  
69 developing rules to strengthen program  
70 enforcement provisions, including appropriate  
71 funding.

- 72 • Reviews and specific expirations for quarantines  
73 or movement restrictions.
- 74 • Indemnification for farm income loss when  
75 agricultural commodities or products are  
76 impounded, farms are quarantined, or  
77 movement or sales are restricted in the public  
78 interest. MDARD should consider at least one  
79 local appraisal of fair market value in  
80 determining indemnification.
- 81 • In the case of widespread animal disease  
82 outbreaks, indemnification should reflect prices  
83 that were current prior to the outbreak.
- 84 • Investigating the feasibility of a livestock  
85 insurance fund to complement existing state or  
86 federal indemnification programs. The feasibility  
87 study should consider loss of livestock and  
88 production due to disease outbreak,  
89 depredation, funding options, species  
90 participation and producer control of the fund.
- 91 • A mechanism for loans or direct compensation  
92 for income loss due to depopulation, quarantine  
93 or condemnation of agricultural products.
- 94 • Enforcement of food safety laws, animal  
95 identification requirements, and inspection  
96 programs, focused on working with producers to  
97 resolve problems in a timely fashion before  
98 issuing fines and penalties.
- 99 • An increased use of technology and sampling  
100 and a decreased use of inspections to ensure a  
101 safe food supply.
- 102 • Photographic evidence taken as part of the  
103 inspection process being exempt from the  
104 Freedom of Information Act.
- 105 • Certifying the accuracy of weights and  
106 measures, including moisture testing equipment.
- 107 • Reviewing the point system for Pesticide  
108 Applicators Certification to increase efficiency.
- 109 • MDARD's utilization of state certified third-party  
110 privatized contracting and technology for  
111 inspections, review and oversight for some  
112 programs, including virtual online courses.
- 113 • MDARD working with the MSU Pesticide Safety  
114 Education program to ensure that training  
115 materials for pesticide applicators include  
116 appropriate information on proper use, risk,  
117 volatility, and application of pesticides and  
118 chemicals, especially when near sensitive crops.
- 119 • Online and in-person testing for pesticide  
120 applicator licensing.

- Additional pesticide applicator training for Dicamba based products, only when use or formulation has changed.
- MDARD meeting with industry representatives prior to regulatory enforcement rule changes.
- Forming an industry committee to advise the MDARD director regarding the inclusion of injurious plants on the nuisance plant list. Consideration should be given for a phase-in for any commercial plant species added to the nuisance plant list.
- Aggressive promotion and labeling of Michigan-grown products and commend the efforts of MDARD for its leadership in highlighting the importance of the agricultural industry to the state.
- Any block grant funds received under the Federal Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act be distributed to Michigan specialty crop commodity sectors on a pro-rated basis with input from a stakeholder group comprised of representatives from the specialty crop industries. All specialty crop sectors, including the nursery and greenhouse sector, should have the opportunity to receive an equitable portion of block grant funds.
- An economic development and agricultural innovation fund that is overseen by industry officials designed to support innovations, economic growth and direct research for all segments of Michigan agriculture.
- Further development of meat processing and marketing opportunities through cooperation between the industry, MDARD, MSU and the Michigan Meat Association.
- Returning to a USDA-equivalent state meat inspection for local custom processors as soon as possible to support value-added opportunities. We will support adequate funding for this program.
- Michigan Farm Bureau working with MDARD to investigate having state inspectors service small scale or portable slaughter facilities in sparsely populated rural areas.
- MDARD having sole authority to license and regulate all terrestrial and aquatic plants for sale or commercial use.
- MDARD working more closely with the aquaculture industry to clarify and streamline the

170 process for aquaculture operations to harvest  
171 and sell directly to the consumer.  
172 • MDARD reevaluating current emergency  
173 preparedness procedures to enable more timely  
174 responses and communication towards the  
175 Michigan agricultural industry. Consideration  
176 could be given to the creation of a directory of  
177 individuals including veterinarians familiar with  
178 industry practices to assist with emergency  
179 situations (disease outbreaks, data breaches,  
180 etc.).

### **#30 Payment Protection and Security for Growers**

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

4 Farmers need maximum payment assurance for  
5 commodities delivered. Many parties suffer when a  
6 receiver — whether a closed-cooperative, regular  
7 cooperative, or commercial company — becomes  
8 insolvent or declares bankruptcy. The impact on  
9 farmers is significant because of the perishability and  
10 seasonality of many commodities.

11 We support:

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

### **#31 Plant Pests and Diseases**

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

4 We support research to do the following:

- 5 • Determine the impacts of the Spotted  
6 Lanternfly.
- 7 • Determine the impacts of Spotted Wing  
8 Drosophila (SWD) by supporting and  
9 coordinating with the SWD initiative through  
10 Michigan State University and the Michigan  
11 Cherry Committee.



- Develop new chemical and biological controls for disease detection, control, and eradication.
- Enhance the use of natural plant pest predator species or bio-controls after reviewing potential environmental consequences.
- Address viable control methods for Spotted lanternfly, *Phytophthora capsici*, downy mildew, overall spruce decline, *Armillaria* root fungus, and other plant pests or diseases.
- Address replant issues in the asparagus industry.

Additionally, we support:

- Industry-led efforts to control and prevent crop losses due to plant pests and diseases.
- Aggressively advocating for pesticide manufacturers to develop new chemistries for existing and emerging pest threats.
- Development of regulatory protocol, inspection procedures and pest control methods to allow shipment of quarantined commodities.
- Indemnification for losses of farm income when agricultural commodities or products are impounded, farms are quarantined, or sales are restricted in the public interest.
- Holding suppliers responsible for compensation of all losses due to imported plants with diseases.
- Zero interest/fixed loan or direct and/or indirect compensation to producers for sudden market loss due to invasive species, including SWD, hemlock woolly adelgid and others.
- Vomitoxin testing in corn field trials. We encourage ethanol plant operators to spot-check for vomitoxin in corn entering the plant and dried distillers grains leaving the plant.
- Development of more consistent Vomitoxin testing equipment.
- The creation of a grain inspectors license program administered by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD).
- Requiring a grain inspectors license for any person administering a grain quality test, on behalf of a licensed grain dealer, with the intent of applying a discount/rejection based on the test result.
- An industry-driven, comprehensive rewrite of Michigan's Plant Pest Protection Act.
- Educational efforts to help producers and consumers understand their importance in

62 preventing the spread of plant pests and  
 63 diseases.

- 64 • A review and update of the invasive species  
 65 quarantine rules in Michigan. We urge MDARD  
 66 to develop a permitting system allowing  
 67 agricultural products to be shipped directly for  
 68 in-state processing throughout the year during  
 69 a quarantine period.
- 70 • Quicker review and approval of species by the  
 71 councils maintaining the lists for noxious  
 72 terrestrial weeds and invasive species as  
 73 defined by PA 451 of 1994.
- 74 • Encouraging conservation districts to take  
 75 measures to keep noxious weeds controlled.

76 We oppose banning neonicotinoid-based pest  
 77 control products when there is a lack of research or  
 78 conclusive scientific evidence linking them to declining  
 79 bee and other pollinator populations.

### **#33 Sheep Industry**

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

4 We support:

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

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

### **#34 Sugar Industry**

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

4 We support:

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

- 13       • The USDA Risk Management Agency using  
14       recoverable white sugar per ton instead of  
15       percent sugar for determining Actual Production  
16       History for Michigan growers.

### **#36 Urban Farming**

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

9       We support:

- 10       • Urban farming as defined by the Natural  
11       Resources Conservation Service.  
12       • Economic development practices to accept  
13       agricultural businesses as part of urban centers.  
14       • Developing agreements that allow urban  
15       agricultural production, but also protect the  
16       rights of farm businesses with production sites  
17       within Michigan municipalities.  
18       • Recommendations of the Michigan Department  
19       of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)  
20       Urban Livestock Workgroup.  
21       • Michigan Farm Bureau's continued collaboration  
22       with MDARD, Michigan State University  
23       Extension and other stakeholders to write a  
24       model local ordinance to promote protection of  
25       and guidelines for urban agriculture.  
26       • Urban agriculture training and education  
27       programs and curricula.  
28       • Assisting and educating farmers in urban areas  
29       in acquiring grants and financial assistance  
30       available through local, state and federal  
31       agencies.

32       We oppose:

- 33       • Compromising Right to Farm protections for  
34       commercial agricultural practices.

### **#37 USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service – Great Lakes Field Office**

1       The agricultural industry has developed many  
2       mechanisms for reporting the size and progress of  
3       crops and other agricultural commodities. Most widely  
4       adopted by the industry is the USDA National  
5       Agricultural Statistics Service program (NASS). To  
6       ensure accuracy of these reports, farmers should  
7       provide NASS full cooperation. We will vigorously

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

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

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

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

### **#38 Wheat Industry**

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

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

7 We support:

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

### **Risk Management Agency (RMA)**

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

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

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

#### **#42 Michigan State University**

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

- 10 • Expanded utilization of current farmland assets  
11 on campus at MSU with the goal of no net loss  
12 of farmland/farm and agriculture education  
13 facilities.
- 14 • State funding for MSU placing it in a comparable  
15 academic and financial status with other  
16 distinguished land grant research universities.
- 17 • MSU to publish a strategic plan for the future of  
18 the College of Agriculture and Natural  
19 Resources (CANR) that meets the needs of  
20 students and farmers in Michigan.
- 21 • The CANR and the College of Veterinary  
22 Medicine (CVM)'s efforts to provide a strong  
23 foundation for educating individuals involved in  
24 agriculture at the state, national, and global  
25 levels. We urge these colleges to work closely  
26 with stakeholders, including producers, to  
27 provide relevant curriculum to the students while  
28 addressing the research, resource, and  
29 informational needs of the agricultural industry.
- 30 • A higher rate of CVM graduates to address the  
31 shortage of large animal veterinarians practicing  
32 in Michigan.
- 33 • MSU forming partnerships with affected farmers  
34 and state agencies to research PFAS soil  
35 contamination and how the land can be safely  
36 used and mitigated for continued agricultural  
37 use.

- The Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Education bachelor's and master's degree programs.
- Efforts to increase the number of graduates certified to teach at state approved agriculture, food & natural resources career and technical education (CTE) programs.
- Re-establishing the Agriculture and Natural Resources Communications bachelor's degree.
- Programs and policies to increase enrollment of students in agricultural degree programs.
- Incorporation of agricultural literacy in programs preparing elementary and secondary teachers in other degree areas.
- Students' ability to apply directly to the CANR and CVM, not the University as a whole.
- CANR and CVM expanding their recruitment efforts within the state, including efforts to work through existing organizations to promote educational and career opportunities.
- Encouraging students to apply in the spring of their junior year of high school to CANR, and to CVM for veterinary nursing.
- Reestablishing the MSU CVM stakeholder advisory committee.
- Reestablishing/filling the MSU Extension (MSUE) equine position in CVM and CANR.
- CANR and CVM making a concerted and focused effort recruiting students from FFA chapters, 4-H programs and agricultural businesses in Michigan.
- MSU's Institute of Agriculture Technology (IAT), a two-year agricultural technology program which provides a valuable service to Michigan agriculture and should be recognized as a highlight of the CANR.
- Improvements to the MSU IAT program to better serve the needs of students, employers, businesses, industry and consumers.
- MSU IAT credits being allowed to fully transfer into four-year programs at MSU.
- Continued expansion of partnerships with community colleges and other four-year institutions throughout the state to increase development of MSU IAT career tracks offered by the CANR.
- A more realistic financial performance requirement from the university administration for the farms based upon the realities of the real-

87 world farming business while working in the  
88 university setting.

89 **Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) and**  
90 **AgBioResearch (ABR)**

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

95 We support:

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

137 and MSUE programs in order to facilitate  
138 stakeholder partnerships and better support  
139 research faculty.

#### 140 **University and Industry Collaboration**

141 To strengthen relationships between MSU and  
142 Farm Bureau, we encourage:

- 143 • MSU, MSUE, and ABR to partner when  
144 appropriate with county Farm Bureaus to  
145 promote MSU CANR and CVM to prospective  
146 students.
- 147 • Attendance and participation between county  
148 Farm Bureaus and MSU staff/faculty at  
149 respective activities.
- 150 • County and regional MSUE personnel attending  
151 county Farm Bureau board meetings on a  
152 regular basis.
- 153 • Fostering relationships between MSU IAT,  
154 community colleges and county Farm Bureaus.
- 155 • Promotion and support of Collegiate Farm  
156 Bureau activities at MSU and MSU IAT  
157 community college programs by county Farm  
158 Bureaus and MFB.
- 159 • Agriculture representation on the MSU Board of  
160 Trustees.
- 161 • Greater Farm Bureau and farmer representation  
162 on the MSUE/ABR stakeholder council, CANR,  
163 and department stakeholder advisory  
164 committees.
- 165 • An emphasis on filling on and off-campus vacant  
166 teaching positions in a timely manner.
- 167 • MFB to continue to meet with the leadership of  
168 MSU to discuss the critical importance of the  
169 land grant mission to Michigan agriculture.
- 170 • MFB continued partnership with other agriculture  
171 industry leaders to work with leadership at MSU  
172 to reevaluate the university's educational and  
173 outreach programs and refocus the university's  
174 efforts on core programs directly or indirectly  
175 related to agriculture.
- 176 • MFB collaborating with MSU to create a  
177 committee to develop recommendations for  
178 alternatives, in addition to grower check offs, to  
179 fund university agriculture faculty start-up  
180 packages.
- 181 • MFB collaborating with MSU in the development  
182 of tools/training programs to address the  
183 agricultural labor/on farm training needs of  
184 current and future farm employees.



- 185 • MSU explore continuing education in farm stress  
186 and rural mental health for professionals working  
187 in mental health and public service.
- 188 • Exploring options to develop a center within  
189 MSU CANR dedicated to agriculture technology  
190 advancements, including artificial intelligence,  
191 drones, field sensors and emerging fields.

#### **#43 Broadband**

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

7 We support:

- 8 • Allowing county, township or municipalities to  
9 utilize special assessment districts to expand  
10 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 developing  
21 cooperative, alternative funding measures to  
22 expand broadband in underserved areas.
- 23 • Internet providers taking advantage of the  
24 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  
29 Michigan to expand unlimited high-speed  
30 internet access in rural and underserved 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  
35 franchise 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  
40 expanding broadband offerings.

- A report from the Michigan High-Speed Internet Office on the progress of new broadband technology deployed through state and federal money.

We oppose granting exclusive franchises to broadband providers in municipalities without guaranteed minimum service.

#### **#44 Renewable and Biomass Products**

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

We applaud the increased interest in ethanol and biodiesel and the positive impact to grain farmers. At the same time, we caution the entire agriculture industry to understand the economic impact to livestock production. We urge balanced economic decisionmaking as we expand alternative energy options. A level playing field is important for all segments of agriculture to prosper.

We support:

- Requirements for the use of biomass fuels and fuel additives in areas that exceed the 1990 federal Clean Air Act standards.
- Continued production of biomass products such as ethanol and other bio-based fuels and products.
- Year-round statewide availability of E-15.
- Efforts to encourage biomass fuel production facilities in areas of available feedstock production and co-product utilization.
- Funding and support for new, existing, and expanding facilities for the generation of sustainable aviation fuel, renewable diesel, and biodiesel from agriculture and forestry products.
- Research and development being encouraged through tax and cost-share incentives to find ways to reduce the cost of production of biomass products, expand feedstocks, co-product utilization (including those from food processors), and expand the application of technologies such as anaerobic digestion, fermentation, distillation, burning of organic materials (pyrolysis) and hydrogasification.
- Research on the use of 100 percent biomass fuels for some vehicles, as well as blending biomass fuels with petroleum-based fuels.
- The state of Michigan including biomass fueled vehicles in its motor pool fleet. We strongly urge

all state-owned diesel and E-85 vehicles be fueled with their respective fuel source when possible.

- Expanding the biomass fuel distribution infrastructure, including blending capability at the retail level.
- Encouraging manufacturers to expand offerings of renewable fueled vehicles.
- Research, development and use of renewable energy sources for on-farm production applications.
- Establishing economic incentives and streamlining the permitting and licensing process to encourage biomass fuel production.
- Broadening the use and distribution of biomass fuel with incentives consistent with other renewable energy sources targeted to producers, blenders, distributors and end-users.
- Requiring new biomass fuels or renewable energy commercial production facilities utilizing public funding, tax deferments or grants to offer an investment opportunity to Michigan citizens to keep gains realized in rural America.
- Encouraging schools and municipal governmental units to use bio-based products.
- Educating consumers about the benefits of biomass fuels and renewable sources for heating.
- Utilizing the latest science-based information to promote biomass/renewable products.
- Research and demonstration programs using ethanol for fuel cell engine development.
- Research and demonstration programs to expand the use of ethanol, biodiesel, and farm generated methane.
- Increasing engine efficiency through practices such as raising octane levels by utilizing farm sourced biofuels.
- Identifying fuel stations featuring E-85 and biodiesel with interstate highway signs.
- The scientific measurement and rating of fuels and alternative fuels regarding carbon dioxide levels.
- The increased utilization of forest products and other biomass material, including non-native plant species, for renewable energy production.
- Exemptions from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy permitting process to encourage the

91 development of renewable biomass energy  
92 production and utilization on farms.

### 93 **Anaerobic Digesters**

94 We support changes to state law and regulation to  
95 allow:

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

### **#46 Unmanned Aircraft Systems**

1 The use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS),  
2 like drones, will continue growing as costs for this  
3 technology are reduced. The proper use of this  
4 technology in agriculture can result in significant  
5 benefits, however privacy and public safety issues  
6 are becoming more prominent.

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

- 15 • Privacy and private property rights
- 16 • Nuisance
- 17 • Reckless endangerment
- 18 • Proprietary data
- 19 • Safety
- 20 • Insurance
- 21 • Authority enforcement and jurisdiction  
22 consistent with FAA regulations

23 We support:

- 24 • The use of UAS for commercial purposes  
25 within agriculture, forestry, and natural  
26 resources.
- 27 • Requiring UAS operators to gain consent of

- 28 landowners or farm operators, if the UAS will  
29 be surveying or gathering data about the  
30 property below navigable airspace.
- 31 • Treating the UAS as an extension of the  
32 operator subject to trespass regulations.
  - 33 • The regulation of UAS as recreational  
34 aircraft.
  - 35 • Internet and cellular providers including  
36 support within rural networks for agricultural  
37 equipment connections.
  - 38 • Michigan Department of Agriculture and  
39 Rural Development policies supporting the  
40 use of autonomous farm equipment.
  - 41 • Michigan State University increasing  
42 autonomous farm technology research.
  - 43 • The use of UAS operations in accordance  
44 with FAA regulations to include all waivable  
45 operations such as use of multiple drones  
46 and limited nighttime operations.

47 We oppose:

- 48 • Federal, state and local agencies using UAS  
49 for regulatory enforcement, litigation and as a  
50 sole source for natural resource inventories.
- 51 • Use of drones for investigation without a  
52 search warrant or equivalent documents.
- 53 • UAS surveying and gathering data without  
54 the consent of the landowner and/or operator  
55 below navigable airspace.

#### **#47 Utility Placement**

1 New or replacement above and underground utility  
2 distribution equipment should be placed or relocated in  
3 the existing road right-of-way. When utilities are being  
4 replaced, the utility owner should remove the replaced  
5 sections upon installation of new utilities, including all  
6 poles and all lines. We urge all utility and subcontractor  
7 companies to communicate with landowners before  
8 beginning the renovation of lines or relocation of  
9 individual poles. As farm equipment increases in size,  
10 the placement of utility services becomes a concern.  
11 Adding to the potential problem, other utility lines such  
12 as telephones and cable television, are installed below  
13 the existing electric lines. Access to, or operation in, a  
14 field or orchard with farm equipment creates the  
15 potential for contact with the lines.

16 We support:

- 17 • Utility companies following the National  
18 Electrical Safety Code (NESC) and Michigan  
19 Public Service Commission (MPSC) regulations

to protect both the farmer and the utility from accidents that could cause injury to an individual or service interruption.

- Legislation or regulation creating a minimum height requirement of 17 ½ feet for all overhead lines. All new underground utilities should be installed and maintained to NESC standards. If NESC standards are not met, utility companies are responsible for liability, damages, and repairs.
- Government enforcement of utility height and depth standards.
- All parties (e.g. landowners, road commission, drain commission) communicating prior to utility installation, including a minimum 30-day notice to landowners for non-emergency projects that affect utility and drainage on private property or within the right-of-way.
- The principles of Public Acts 173 and 174 of 2013, which provide clarity on the MISS DIG process for farmers by focusing efforts on risk management and providing greater incentives for compliance. We encourage farmers to enroll their property in the MISS DIG system.
- Farmers considering cost-sharing of utility pole relocation for safety and productivity of field crops.
- Utility companies putting additional emphasis on upgrading and placement of poles in the right-of-way to reduce long-term maintenance costs and crop damage.
- Utility companies completing timely repair, maintenance, and expansion to prevent damage to personal and public property.
- MISS DIG markings being removed or made of a non-metallic biodegradable material and encourage Michigan Farm Bureau to work with appropriate entities to promote this change.
- The MPSC's cost review for line extensions, transformer upgrades and moving charges, and comparing these costs with other utility charges for the same work.

We understand the value of utilities, including broadband communication, and support reasonable efforts to minimize damage to infrastructure. New utility equipment should not impede any existing drainage structure. We believe a utility company should promptly settle for damage to crops, soil compaction, existing sub surface drainage, irrigation, and other similar agricultural infrastructure.

70 We oppose loss of local control regarding solar  
71 energy projects.

#### **#48 Agricultural Worker Housing**

1 With aging infrastructure and the continuing lack  
2 of housing, renovating and building new agricultural  
3 worker housing is more important now than ever.  
4 However, continuing pressure with lower commodity  
5 pricing and increased input costs has made it difficult  
6 for farmers to make these improvements and maintain  
7 competitiveness in the market.

8 At the same time, the overlapping of  
9 administrative oversight and inspection of agricultural  
10 worker housing requirements presents a fragmented  
11 format of rules. The Michigan Department of  
12 Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) Migrant  
13 Labor Housing Inspection Program is vital to  
14 agricultural employers and Michigan's agricultural  
15 economy. This program verifies that agricultural  
16 employers have acceptable housing for employees  
17 and provides licensing for employers whose housing  
18 meets program standards/requirements. This licensing  
19 provides protection for both employers and  
20 employees.

21 We support:

- 22 • Legislation developing uniform housing  
23 standards and requirements across state and  
24 federal agencies for agricultural workers.
- 25 • MDARD being the sole inspecting licensor of  
26 agricultural worker housing in Michigan.
- 27 • The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) should  
28 recognize a current license issued by MDARD  
29 as proof agricultural worker housing is  
30 acceptable.
- 31 • Federal and other state agencies should be in  
32 audit positions only and shall refer any apparent  
33 violations to MDARD, rather than issuing an  
34 immediate penalty.
- 35 • That once agricultural housing is inspected and  
36 licensed by MDARD and then occupied, the  
37 USDOL and/or other agencies may not enter the  
38 dwellings, which are the homes of the  
39 employees, without the employee's permission  
40 and proper advance notification to the farm  
41 owner.
- 42 • MDARD continuing to provide a publication  
43 explaining the current licensing, inspection  
44 procedures, and regulations for agricultural  
45 worker housing.

- 46 • The MDARD Migrant Labor Housing Inspection  
47 Program being a fully funded state program that  
48 includes pre-occupancy, post-occupancy and  
49 complaint-driven inspections, supplemented, if  
50 necessary, by reasonable fees based on  
51 licensed occupancy.
- 52 • The State of Michigan and MDARD providing  
53 licensing protection to employers who show a  
54 good faith effort to maintain their agricultural  
55 worker housing to MDARD standards.
- 56 • Once agricultural worker housing has been  
57 inspected and licensed, any violations created  
58 by the occupant should not be held against the  
59 licensee.
- 60 • Defining rights and responsibilities between an  
61 employer and an employee living in housing  
62 facilities provided rent-free by the employer, as  
63 well as procedures to be observed when the  
64 occupant is no longer an employee.
- 65 • Legislation that creates a not more than seven-  
66 day eviction process for employer provided  
67 housing.
- 68 • Increased state funding for agricultural worker  
69 housing development.
- 70 Agricultural employers renovating or demolishing  
71 abandoned housing.

#### **#49 Agricultural Workforce**

1 Michigan Farm Bureau should continue informing  
2 consumers about the agricultural workforce and  
3 correct misconceptions about farm workforce  
4 conditions.

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

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

20 State legislation must protect the rights of the  
21 workers, farmers and consumers against the loss of  
22 crops during labor disputes and should:



- Preserve the right of secret ballot elections for farm workers.
- Prohibit secondary boycotts.
- Include workable provisions on bargaining units.
- Prohibit strikes by workers during critical periods of growing and harvesting.
- Guarantee the right of agricultural employers to reduce labor needs through mechanization.
- Not include any requirement for a successor clause in a labor contract.
- Ensure the continuation of the piece rate of payment for workers.
- Ensure the equal opportunity to work without being forced to join a union or be required to finance or collect on behalf of a union.
- Ensure that organizing activities do not infringe on the safety of the workers' and employers' lives and property.
- Ensure union organizing activities do not interfere with agriculture production.
- Ensure if a union agreement is in effect, money from workers' dues could not be used for political issues, candidates or parties without the individual union member's authorization.

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

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

MFB should continue participating in recruiting efforts to ensure an adequate and legal agricultural workforce. Recruiting methods and programs currently being used should be evaluated for effectiveness. Efforts should be ongoing to more effectively encourage workers to come to Michigan.

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

We support:

- The concept of an inmate vocational training program in cooperation with Michigan Works or other educational institutions to provide non-violent inmates the skills to be reintroduced to the workforce through the agricultural industry.

- 73 • MFB efforts through its affiliate company, Great  
74 Lakes Ag Labor Services, to assist growers in  
75 navigating the cumbersome H-2A program. We  
76 encourage expansion into other viable visa  
77 worker programs. We support this program  
78 continuing as a “user pays” system and  
79 available to all MFB members.
  - 80 • The right of farm employees to join, not join, or  
81 resign from a union by their own convictions.
  - 82 • Reestablishing Michigan as a Right to Work  
83 state, where employees only voluntarily  
84 associate themselves with a union.
  - 85 • Expanded opportunities for employment of  
86 young people in agricultural operations.
- 87 We oppose:
- 88 • Efforts by purchasers of farm commodities to  
89 force farmers to legally recognize and negotiate  
90 with specific labor organizations.
  - 91 • Purchasers of farm commodities enticing farm  
92 employees to join unions by paying their union  
93 dues.
  - 94 • Third party organizations attempting to force  
95 organized labor negotiations between farmers  
96 and farm employees.
  - 97 • A specific segment of our workforce being  
98 targeted for mandatory testing or regulatory  
99 compliance.

## **#50 Immigration**

- 1 Immigration laws and border security should be  
2 strictly enforced as the responsibility of the federal  
3 government. We oppose state mandates on employers  
4 to use E-Verify or similar programs.
- 5 We support improving worker availability in  
6 agriculture. Michigan Farm Bureau should continue  
7 working to address agriculture workforce challenges.

## **#51 Insurance**

- 1 We oppose assessments on individual insurance  
2 policies for costs not directly related to the coverage  
3 provided to the individual purchaser of that insurance.  
4 This further increases the cost of insurance and is a  
5 hidden means of taxation.
- 6 We support the principles in Michigan's no-fault  
7 insurance law that allow people injured in automobile  
8 accidents to receive economic compensation more  
9 quickly and equitably.
- 10 We support the following improvements to no-  
11 fault insurance:

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

24 We support legislation improving no-fault  
25 insurance, reducing the cost of auto insurance, and  
26 passing the majority of savings on to the consumer.

27 We oppose legislation attempting to equalize auto  
28 insurance rates. Additionally, we will not support auto  
29 insurance rollbacks unless they are offset by reforms  
30 that reduce costs.

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

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

40 Uninsured motorists increase costs to law-abiding  
41 citizens. We recommend increased law enforcement  
42 and an increase in fines and impoundment of the  
43 vehicle for uninsured motorists.

44 We urge the exploration of methods to change the  
45 collections for the Michigan Catastrophic Claims  
46 Association Fund to ensure equity amongst motorists.

## **#52 Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration**

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

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

14 As MIOSHA continues as a policy-making body, it is  
15 essential that representation be provided for agriculture  
16 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 administrative code MI R325.50171.
- 22 • Educational programs and no-penalty first-time  
23 inspections and/or violations.
- 24 • A portion of the Consultation, Education and  
25 Training funding, derived from Workers'  
26 Compensation premiums, being used for  
27 agricultural safety training.
- 28 • Legislation allowing employers to provide  
29 employee safety information in an electronic  
30 format.
- 31 • Changing reporting requirements for  
32 accidents/fatalities for agricultural operations to  
33 include 911 or other first responder supported  
34 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.

#### **#54 Worker Protection Standards**

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

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

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

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

#### **#55 Zoning of Agricultural Worker Housing**

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

4 We support:

- 5 • MDARD having exclusive responsibility for  
6 inspection and approval of occupancy for  
7 seasonal farm worker housing.

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

### **#56 Agricultural Vocational Rehabilitation**

1 We support the concept and use of AgrAbility to  
2 keep producers, employees, and migrant workers  
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 and  
7 county Farm Bureaus to continue funding AgrAbility  
8 and publicizing its services, recognizing a 2.7:1 match  
9 from the U.S. Department of Education.

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

### **#57 Agriculture Security**

1 The threat of terrorist attacks on America has  
2 heightened awareness of the potential for agricultural  
3 terrorism.

4 We support:

- 5 • Increased penalties for individuals who destroy  
6 or contaminate agricultural property to create  
7 terror.
- 8 • Increased communication between state and  
9 federal agencies in preparation for a response to  
10 an agricultural terrorist attack or threat.
- 11 • Continued testing and monitoring of food and  
12 feed.
- 13 • Evaluating the security of food and feed storage  
14 facilities.
- 15 • Increased scrutiny and screening of imported  
16 agricultural goods.
- 17 • Giving preference to domestically produced  
18 agricultural goods.
- 19 • Changes to regulations established to prevent  
20 agricultural terrorism, which need to consider the

- 21 importance of maintaining an adequate  
22 workforce for agriculture and related industries.
- 23 • Increased funding for U.S. Customs and Border  
24 Protection to protect animal health and  
25 agriculture industries at airports and ports of  
26 entry.
  - 27 • A stronger effort to increase biosecurity  
28 measures on farm operations and at the state  
29 and national level.
  - 30 • Communication with local law enforcement and  
31 emergency services regarding suspicious  
32 activity.
  - 33 • Reporting theft of fertilizer, diesel fuel, or diesel  
34 exhaust fluid.
  - 35 • Verifying and validating requests for information  
36 about an agricultural facility.
  - 37 • Controlled access to facilities.
  - 38 • Screening of employees.

39 We oppose:

- 40 • Additional regulation without consultation of the  
41 agricultural community.
- 42 • Unauthorized entry by agents of the state of  
43 Michigan or the U.S. government into facilities  
44 (including worker housing units, barns,  
45 accessory buildings and fields) which violates  
46 the Generally Accepted Agricultural and  
47 Management Practices, Good Agricultural  
48 Practices standards, and biosecurity standards.

49 Foreign investment in Michigan assets is a concern,  
50 especially in terms of farmland ownership. Ownership  
51 of agricultural land by nonresident aliens, foreign  
52 businesses and foreign governments should be limited  
53 if not prohibited in Michigan.

### **#58 Anhydrous Ammonia - NH<sub>3</sub>**

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

7 We support:

- 8 • The consolidation of responsibility for  
9 regulations to improve efficiency and reduce  
10 confusion.
- 11 • Designating the Michigan Department of  
12 Agriculture and Rural Development as the  
13 primary department responsible.
- 14 • Michigan Department of State Police  
15 maintaining jurisdiction for transportation issues.

- 16 • An educational effort for individuals involved with
- 17 the sale, transportation or application of NH<sub>3</sub>.
- 18 • Informational and educational programs to deter
- 19 theft and vandalism of NH<sub>3</sub>.
- 20 • A cost-share program for anhydrous ammonia
- 21 tank locks and GloTell™ or similar product
- 22 application to discourage theft of NH<sub>3</sub>.
- 23 • Stronger enforcement of laws and penalties for
- 24 people engaged in the theft of NH<sub>3</sub>.
- 25 • Classification of NH<sub>3</sub> as a non-flammable gas.

## **#59 Antitrust**

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

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

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

16 We support:

- 17 • Limiting campaign donations to candidate and
- 18 office holders from government regulated
- 19 monopolies and utilities.
- 20 • A formal request to the Department of Justice
- 21 (DOJ) by attorneys general around the United
- 22 States to investigate the following sectors:
  - 23 ○ Meat packers, and the vertical integration of
  - 24 that industry.
  - 25 ○ The consolidation of co-ops, at all levels and
  - 26 in all areas.
  - 27 ○ The use of “loyalty agreements” by
  - 28 agrichemical companies to limit the use of
  - 29 generic crop protection chemicals.
  - 30 ○ The increased consolidation of retail
  - 31 agribusiness units.
  - 32 ○ The monopolistic practices of fertilizer and
  - 33 seed companies.
- 34 • A formal request to the FTC by state attorneys
- 35 general to investigate the consolidation of
- 36 Agrium, Mosiac, CF Industries, and the creation
- 37 and operation of Canpotex.

- 38 • A formal request to the DOJ and congressional  
39 oversight committees regarding the foreign  
40 ownership and influence in American  
41 agribusiness.
- 42 • A formal request to the Environmental Protection  
43 Agency regarding the restrictions of the  
44 manufacture of the basic “tech material” needed  
45 to formulate crop protection products.

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

## #61 Firefighting

1 Firefighters are expected to respond to situations  
2 that require training and experience. State and federal  
3 regulations mandate many hours of training to prepare  
4 firefighters for a variety of situations and should fund  
5 these mandated training requirements. Volunteers and  
6 paid on-call firefighters make a substantial commitment  
7 of personal time for training.

8 When a property owner is conducting a legal burn,  
9 the property owner should not be responsible for costs  
10 incurred by an unnecessary fire department dispatch.

11 Local governments have begun charging farms a  
12 fee for emergency preparation inspections. These  
13 inspections are completed by a local fire department to  
14 comply with requirements authorized by the Michigan  
15 Occupational Safety and Health Administration  
16 (MIOSHA). We believe local governments should  
17 consider:

- 18 • Farms financially support fire protection service  
19 through property taxes.
- 20 • Farms pay a tax on fertilizer and pesticides  
21 purchased to support voluntary emergency  
22 tubes through the Michigan Agriculture  
23 Environmental Assurance Program.

24 Therefore, we support policy that prohibits local  
25 units of government and fire authorities from charging  
26 for emergency preparation inspections. Furthermore,  
27 emergency tubes should suffice as an appropriate level  
28 of information.

29 Per the Emergency Planning and Community  
30 Right-To-Know Act, we encourage producers to comply  
31 with Tier II reporting of any threshold planning quantity  
32 materials (Environmental Protection Agency listed  
33 chemicals) to the Michigan Department of Environment,



34 Great Lakes, and Energy on or before March 1 of each  
35 year.

36 Firefighters are welcome to visit farms to be  
37 prepared for emergency planning and firefighter safety,  
38 but at their own expense.

39 Michigan Farm Bureau supports the use of soy-  
40 based foam as a replacement for chemical AFFF  
41 (aqueous film-forming foam) to help eliminate PFAS  
42 contamination.

## **#62 Health**

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

3 We support:

- 4 • Requiring hospitals to report infection statistics.
- 5 • Legislation limiting malpractice liability awards,  
6 including capping malpractice settlements and  
7 strengthening licensing disciplinary action.
- 8 • Integrating delivery systems like community  
9 health, mental health and substance abuse  
10 programs, that serve the same set of counties.
- 11 • Increased suicide prevention and mental health  
12 awareness campaigns with funding and training  
13 for medical and emergency service providers.
- 14 • Assertive community treatment programs, like  
15 Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics,  
16 to serve, help, prevent, diagnose and treat those  
17 in need.
- 18 • A private and affordable health care plan that  
19 allows for additional benefits at the consumer's  
20 option.
- 21 • Methods to reduce prescription drug costs that  
22 will best benefit all individuals.
- 23 • Health education to encourage consumers of  
24 health care to question physicians, hospital staff  
25 and administration about procedures and costs  
26 regarding their own health care.
- 27 • Itemized billing.
- 28 • Increased transparency for costs of all services.
- 29 • Insurance incentives for a healthy lifestyle.
- 30 • Health insurance premiums being 100 percent  
31 tax deductible for all policy purchasers  
32 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  
37 should not be discriminated against by using a  
38 lower cost 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 • Employers being exempted from mandatorily  
58 providing health care coverage to any employee  
59 who falls under the Migrant and Seasonal  
60 Workers Protection Act.
  - 61 • The expansion of home and community-based  
62 long-term care.
  - 63 • Local healthcare facilities be allowed to decide if  
64 they should remain open during both normal and  
65 emergency circumstances.
  - 66 • All healthcare be considered essential in the  
67 event of a crisis or pandemic.
- 68 We oppose:
- 69 • State or federal programs requiring employers to  
70 provide health insurance for employees and  
71 their dependents.
  - 72 • Taxes on an agricultural commodity to fund a  
73 health care program.

### **#63 Law Enforcement**

1 As an agricultural community, we stand behind,  
2 support and respect 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 to preserve individual  
9 rights.
- 10 • Upholding state and federal law in courts and  
11 not applying foreign law to domestic activities  
12 that could impair constitutional rights.

- Funding of rural and urban patrols to curb drug and vandalism issues.
- Law enforcement agencies to develop youth liaison programs.
- Juvenile justice reform, including youth prisons, for violent and dangerous juveniles.
- Capital punishment.
- Producers and county Farm Bureaus meeting with local law enforcement and elected officials to discuss the importance of balancing agriculture's concerns with the use of fireworks.
- Legislation defining and creating fireworks-free agriculture and livestock safety zones.
- Additional tools to aid in the identification and prosecution of individuals involved in the theft of copper wire and other recyclable materials from farms.

We oppose:

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

### **Trespass**

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

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

- 62 or land participating in a food safety or security  
63 program.
- 64 • Confiscation of unmanned aircraft, vehicle or off-  
65 road vehicle for repeat trespassers.
  - 66 • Use of photography for the immediate arrest of a  
67 trespasser.
  - 68 • Revocation of hunting, fishing and trapping  
69 privileges and loss of vehicles used in the  
70 violation.

## 71 **Impaired Driving**

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

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

79 We support establishing a limit for THC for impaired  
80 driving.

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

- 86 • Operating with any bodily presence of  
87 drugs/alcohol that cause impairment.
- 88 • Operating while license suspended, revoked, or  
89 denied.
- 90 • Operating while illegally using handheld  
91 electronic mobile device.

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

## **#64 Local Government**

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

9 We believe:

- 10 • Local governments should not be permitted to  
11 enact regulations affecting agriculture that are  
12 stricter than existing state and federal  
13 regulations.

- Local governments should look for efficiencies through consolidation of services and streamlining regulations.
- Secondary use of agricultural property, including buildings, that does not conflict or substantially change the nature of the farm business should be allowed.
- Agricultural representation on local boards and commissions is vital.

We encourage:

- Standardized address signs be readily visible at the driveway entrance to facilitate emergency response.
- Standardized signage be developed for facilities with alternate power sources for the protection of emergency personnel.
- Emergency response procedures to allow cooperation between local governments.
- Local government officials to fully consider the long-term fiscal implications and yearly operating costs to any public acquisition.
- Local governments to publish (print or digital) audited financial statements within one year of the previous fiscal year closing, without requiring a Freedom of Information Act request.
- Local governments to take advantage of electronic mediums when possible and practical. The importance of continuing the conspicuous posting of notices in several locations and, in some areas non-electronic publishing, cannot be discounted.
- Continued emphasis on state revenue-sharing payments to local governments.
- Farm Bureau members taking a more active role in local government, especially land use planning, zoning and development and updating of master plans.
- Michigan State University Extension providing more planning and zoning education, including development of master plans for townships and counties. County Farm Bureaus should disseminate this information to members.
- County Farm Bureaus taking a more active role in recruiting agricultural representatives on local boards, township positions, and commissions. Not all positions that impact agriculture are elected, and farmer representation is important.
- Promoting existing programs at statewide Michigan Farm Bureau events, such as the

64 Academy for Political Leadership, for members  
65 who are not only interested in seeking political  
66 office but also interested in learning more about  
67 government, its operations, and how members  
68 can have an impact.

69 We oppose:

- 70 • Townships requiring engineered site plans and  
71 building affidavits for agricultural buildings.

## **#65 Public Water and Sewer Infrastructure**

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

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

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

- 18 • Research to develop better materials for public  
19 water lines, wastewater and storm water  
20 systems.
- 21 • Development of better processes for the  
22 operation and maintenance of the public  
23 infrastructure.
- 24 • Long-range planning and comprehensive asset  
25 management.
- 26 • An increase in federal safe drinking water funds,  
27 USDA Rural Development water and sewer  
28 funds, and Environmental Protection Agency  
29 brownfield loan and grant funds.
- 30 • Prioritizing redevelopment and reuse in areas  
31 with existing public infrastructure.
- 32 • A third-party, independent annual financial audit  
33 of municipal water, sewer and storm water  
34 systems being conducted and reported to the  
35 state of Michigan.
- 36 • Municipalities collecting adequate revenue from  
37 system users to pay for needed infrastructure  
38 repairs and maintenance.

- 39 • Encouraging municipalities to take advantage of  
40 low interest loan plans.
- 41 • Implementation and enforcement of pollution  
42 prevention control measures on municipalities,  
43 especially phosphorus removal.
- 44 We oppose:
- 45 • A statewide assessment to pay for repair of  
46 individual municipality's water, sewer, and storm  
47 water infrastructure for any reason.

#### **#66 Redress for Unsubstantiated Claims**

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

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

#### **#67 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 • Requiring state agencies to conduct science-  
11 based studies, standardized risk assessments,  
12 cost/benefit analyses, and economic impact  
13 statements of proposed regulations.
  - 14 • When emergency powers are enacted, any  
15 branch of government should be subject to the  
16 Freedom of Information Act so data related to  
17 the emergency powers is made available.
  - 18 • Checks and balances in emergency power  
19 situations in any branch of government.  
20 Emergency power should be valid for a  
21 maximum of 21 days without legislative  
22 oversight.
  - 23 • Legislative oversight of state agencies during  
24 states of emergency.

- 25 • Eliminating daylight saving time in Michigan.
- 26 • A public registry of studies.
- 27 • Easing state regulations on rural community
- 28 banks to ensure their survival.
- 29 • New regulations should expire after a defined
- 30 period unless a review finds substantial reasons
- 31 to continue the programs.

32 We oppose:

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

#### **#69 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 should be responsible for paying the
- 10 defendant's legal fees if the case is settled in the
- 11 defendant's favor. The court should be
- 12 responsible for collecting fees from the plaintiff.
- 13 • Reform the collateral source rule to mandate
- 14 revealing other sources of compensation for
- 15 damages available to the plaintiff.
- 16 • Mandate structured settlements for large
- 17 monetary judgments.
- 18 • Reform prejudgment interest rules by reducing
- 19 the interest rate, which would start accruing the
- 20 day the judgment is awarded.
- 21 • Arbitration boards should be used to settle
- 22 cases.
- 23 • A person who uses a product in a way other
- 24 than was intended should not be allowed to
- 25 bring suit.
- 26 • Court ordered mediation shall not be scheduled
- 27 before the defendant in civil litigation has the



28 opportunity to file a motion for summary  
29 disposition. Court ordered mediation should take  
30 place only if both parties agree to mediate. Any  
31 agreement reached in this mediation shall have  
32 a waiting or cooling off period of 48 to 72 hours  
33 to afford the defendant the opportunity to  
34 change his mind after weighing the  
35 consequences of this agreement or contract.

- 36 • Employers who are providing proper training and  
37 Personal Protective Equipment, and are working  
38 in good faith to protect employee health, should  
39 have liability protection.
- 40 • Exemption from personal property liability for  
41 any professional service provider who enter farm  
42 properties to perform duties at their own risk and  
43 in good faith.

# Michigan Farm Bureau Policy Recommendations

## #100 Legal Defense Fund

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

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

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

## #101 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 and other programs  
6 through county Farm 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~~  
14 ~~professional development~~ Personal and  
15 professional development leadership programs,
- 16 • Developing young and beginning farmers for the  
17 future of our industry,
- 18 • A diverse membership to promote and grow our  
19 agricultural community,
- 20 • An inclusive culture that welcomes all farmers and  
21 agriculturalists, and

- 22 • Equitable opportunities and resources for all  
23 members.

24 These programs help our members be a  
25 successfully ~~be the~~ voice for agriculture.

## #102 Political Action Program

1 [Relocated Text] With the increasing number of  
2 legislative and regulatory issues facing agriculture, it's  
3 imperative that we have as many Friends of Agriculture  
4 elected as possible with county Farm Bureau support.  
5 We need more farmers in all forms of government:  
6 local, state, university and national. [Relocated Text]  
7 Grassroots involvement is the backbone of Farm  
8 Bureau. We support programs and activities such as:

- 9 • Evaluating and endorsing candidates seeking  
10 federal, state or university ~~or state~~ office whose  
11 positions are compatible with Michigan Farm  
12 Bureau policies, without regard to party affiliation.  
13 • Allocating AgriPac and FarmPac funds for the  
14 purpose of electing Friends of Agriculture.  
15 • Promoting the personal and financial involvement  
16 of county Farm Bureau members in the election of  
17 Friends of Agriculture.  
18 • Encouraging county Farm Bureaus to further  
19 engage in the electoral process.  
20 • ~~The local grassroots process of county Farm~~  
21 ~~Bureau Candidate Evaluation Committees taking~~  
22 ~~the initial lead on candidate evaluation and then~~  
23 ~~making recommendations to the MFB AgriPac.~~  
24 [Relocated in Policy] Grassroots involvement is  
25 the backbone of Farm Bureau. Having county  
26 Farm Bureau candidate evaluation committees  
27 take the initial lead on candidate evaluation and  
28 make recommendations to the MFB AgriPac  
29 Committee.

30 The MFB AgriPac Committee is appointed by the  
31 MFB's president, with consent of the board of  
32 ~~D~~irectors. ~~The Committee~~ AgriPac designates Friends  
33 of Agriculture and provides a framework in which we  
34 can endorse, and possibly financially support. AgriPac  
35 decisions look at the "big picture" and are based on  
36 input from county ~~C~~andidate ~~E~~valuation  
37 ~~C~~ommittees, voting records, and possible past Farm  
38 Bureau interaction with the candidate.

39 [Relocated in Policy] ~~With the increasing number of~~  
40 ~~legislative and regulatory issues facing agriculture, it's~~  
41 ~~imperative that we have as many Friends of Agriculture~~  
42 ~~elected as possible with county Farm Bureau support.~~  
43 ~~We need more farmers in all forms of government:~~  
44 ~~local, state, university and national.~~

45       The autonomy of AgriPac is crucial to its success.  
46       Nevertheless, prompt decisions and timely  
47       communications of final decisions to each county is  
48       important. Endorsements should not be withheld simply  
49       because the candidate is running unopposed. We  
50       encourage our members to contribute to AgriPac or  
51       FarmPac.

52       The delegate body directs MFB to form a  
53       group/committee to look at and make recommendations  
54       of ways to increase the money in our AgriPac fund and  
55       also how we can have greater impact of those dollars.