

2020

Policy Book

Resolutions on issues adopted by voting delegates at the 105th Annual Meeting of the Missouri Farm Bureau Federation.



FOREWORD

Farm Bureau is a voluntary, non-governmental farm organization financed by membership dues. Its purpose is to represent, serve and protect farmers and ranchers.

The Missouri Farm Bureau Federation is made up of 113 county Farm Bureaus with a combined membership of 134,912 families. The American Farm Bureau Federation, the world's largest farm organization with nearly six million member families, consists of 50 state Farm Bureaus, including the Missouri Farm Bureau.

This booklet contains Missouri Farm Bureau's policies for 2020 as adopted by the voting delegates at its 105th Annual Meeting. All Farm Bureau policies originate at the county level where problems are identified, discussed and then proposed solutions or suggestions are offered in the form of written resolutions.

Once approved by the membership, policies provide Farm Bureau the unified voice necessary to effectively represent the interests of farmers.

This unique method of focusing on problems from the grassroots level has kept Farm Bureau responsive to the needs of famers and effective in assuring farm families better economic, social and educational opportunities.



Blake Hurst
Missouri Farm Bureau President

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FARM BUREAU PHILOSOPHY

Farm Bureau is an independent, non-governmental, voluntary organization of farmers and rural citizens united to analyze their problems and to formulate action to solve these problems. Its efforts are directed, not at improved commodity prices alone, but also toward the general welfare of all aspects of farm and rural life and through this to the general welfare of the entire nation. To this end, Farm Bureau strives for educational improvement, economic opportunity, and social advancement. Farm Bureau takes the stand that property rights and personal freedom as guaranteed by the United States Constitution are essential to the general welfare and these freedoms should be defended against all attack.

As Farm Bureau members we believe in our constitutional form of government, in freedom of speech and peaceful assembly, and in the right of each individual to worship according to his own belief. We believe that cultural advancement, ethical and religious principles flourish when men are free, responsible individuals. We further believe that economic progress is best achieved in a free market system.

We believe as Farm Bureau members we should reaffirm our home and family values and that family life and parental authority should be asserted.

We believe in the right of every person to choose his or her occupation, to be rewarded according to his or her contribution to society, but that individual freedoms and opportunity must not be sacrificed in quest for “guaranteed security.”

Successful functioning of a democracy is possible only when all citizens take an active part in governmental affairs. We in Farm Bureau believe we should impress upon all citizens the importance of their vote and the need to accept responsibility in public policy. We pledge our best efforts to the important job of citizenship training.

We believe in the rights of individual states.

We believe the laws should be administered as close to the people involved as possible.

We believe that the greatest threats to our American democratic system are a powerful federal bureaucracy capable of developing national policy by administrative decision and the apathy of the people who allow this to happen.

Farm Bureau is organized to do what its members want done. It provides a means by which farmers and rural citizens can work together toward the goals upon which they agree.

AGRICULTURAL CREDIT

General

We encourage cooperation and communication between state and federal government organizations for loans.

Agricultural Liens

We favor the current Missouri law which gives lending institutions the option of releasing a portion of their security interest and giving priority to credit issued by farm suppliers.

Beginning Farmer Assistance

We favor legislation which would better assist lending institutions in making loans to beginning farmers through improved flexibility of loans, such as longer terms, lower down payments, lower interest rates and redefining beginning farmer.

We feel that Farm Service Agency (FSA) loan amount limits for beginning farmer ownership loans should be reevaluated at regular intervals to ensure they are meeting financing needs.

We support the Tax Exempt Agricultural Bond for Beginning Farmers or “Aggie Bond” program used by state agencies to assist farmers and ranchers with purchases of farmland, breeding stock and farm improvements. We believe the word “median” should be changed to “average” in the definition of previously owned real estate to make more beginning farmers eligible for the Aggie Bond program.

We support beginning farmer training and assistance for veterans and members of the military transitioning into the civilian workforce.

We support expanding the VA loan program to allow veterans to purchase farmland.

Farm Credit System

Preservation of the Farm Credit System is in the long-term best interest of U.S. agriculture. We favor decentralization to the maximum extent feasible. We support promotion of “Farmer Mac.”

The Farm Credit System has an important and constructive role to play in making financing available for rural housing, agri-businesses and rural infrastructure development.

We oppose any restructuring of the Farm Credit System which replaces farmer-elected members of System boards with commercial bankers or expands commercial bank access to FCS funding.

We believe it is in the best interest of Missouri agricultural producers for the Farm Credit System to remain intact. We support legislation to remove the statutory exit provision from the Farm Credit Act.

Farm Foreclosures

Efforts to protect all farmers with moratorium legislation would make it more difficult and more costly for farmers to receive credit in the future. We believe farm loan decisions must be made on a case-by-case basis.

Lenders should be encouraged to sell a homestead separate from other farm properties when doing so is consistent with sound business principles.

Farm Service Agency

We urge Congress to increase funding for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) guaranteed and direct loan programs due to higher demand for credit.

We favor allowing the FSA to dispose of property at fair market value acquired through foreclosures to recover costs on borrowers who have not and cannot pay the interest and principal on their loans.

We favor moving FSA loans away from direct government loans to guaranteed loans (where private lenders make the loans backed by a government guarantee). We encourage commercial bankers and FSA to work together to ensure paperwork and reporting requirements for FSA guaranteed loans do not impede participation.

We favor subsidizing FSA interest rates by the federal government for disaster loans.

We support repeal of the program which allows certain inventoried FSA land to be sold subject to conservation easements. If these easements are allowed, we favor government agencies (e.g. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) be required to make payments in lieu of taxes on easement acreages.

We oppose the transfer of inventoried property to federal or state natural resource agencies without it first being offered for sale to the public.

We believe the FSA beginning farmer program should give priority to younger farmers and should use a debt to equity factor for determining eligibility rather than the current requirement that applicants can own no more than 30% of the average size farm in their county.

We support expanding the FSA beginning farmer loan program to include farm equipment.

We favor FSA disaster or guaranteed loans being made available to incorporated levee districts.

We believe that eligibility for FSA loan guarantee, interest assistance and direct loan programs should not be limited to an arbitrary number of years.

We support federal or state funding of low interest loan programs for the construction of farm grain storage bins.

We support amending Section 310B(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to allow for business and industry guaranteed loans to be made for farmer-owned projects that add value to or process agricultural products regardless of the physical location of the plant.

We feel that farmers and landowners should be able to continue receiving their farm payments by check and should not be forced to take payments as a credit to their checking accounts electronically.

“Land Link”

We support the concept of establishing a service to help match beginning farmers with retiring farmers who do not have heirs to continue the family farm business.

We support providing a state income tax deduction to a landowner who leases or sells assets or land to a beginning farmer.

Loan Guarantee Program

We support a program to provide loan guarantees for loans to value-added processing facilities through the sale of taxable bonds. The main source of revenues to repay or guarantee these bonds should come from general revenue appropriations.

Small Business Administration

The Small Business Administration (SBA), which offers a variety of loan services, is increasingly being utilized by lenders to guarantee agricultural loans because of the flexibility of its programs. We encourage Congress to maintain funding for SBA programs.

State-Sponsored Loans

We favor the continuation of the Missouri linked deposit program, Missouri FIRST, which reduces interest rates to farmers and small businesses through local banks and Farm Credit System banks. We support the State Treasurer's program to set aside a portion of the state's investment portfolio to be used to create capital for value-added and other agricultural enterprises.

In addition, we believe eligibility for Missouri FIRST should be maintained for 2-3 years even though a borrower's debt to asset ratio may improve after they initially qualify for the program.

We favor requiring the same criteria for small business as currently exist for the agricultural loan program.

We support Missouri FIRST funds being made available for on-farm grain storage, drying, handling systems and structures.

We oppose the state going beyond Missouri FIRST to create a state agricultural bank and to issue voter-approved bonds to provide additional low interest loan money for farmers.

We support the State Treasurer's efforts to invest more state funds with Missouri financial institutions rather than out-of-state.

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION

General

We believe MU and Lincoln University Extension continue to play an important role in Missouri agriculture and for people across the state of Missouri.

Agriculture and Natural Resources, 4-H Youth Development, Community Development, Human Environmental Sciences, Business Development and Continuing Education programs should continue to be the strength of MU Extension for rural Missouri.

We support the production agricultural specialist position and believe MU Extension officials should work with Farm Bureau before any restructuring plans are considered.

We favor increased funding for county extension offices to allow specialists more time to deal with programs and customers. We believe county extension councils should have increased authority and responsibilities for local MU Extension programs.

We support current law authorizing the formation of county extension districts by one or more county extension councils, which would be authorized to seek voter approval of a property tax levy for the purpose of funding district operations.

We support the consideration of a “grow your own specialist in training program” hiring individuals with less than Master’s degrees and developing them into faculty/specialists with Master’s degrees.

We support promotional activities, such as Farm Family Day, that increase public awareness of county Extension programs and services and we urge county Farm Bureaus to take an active role in county Extension program development.

We favor increased rural representation on county councils.

We also recommend more funds be made available for Extension programs to increase local faculty presence. We believe any money raised by extension agents for extension programs in the local area should be kept local and no portion of that money should be sent to the University of Missouri.

We believe every county which finances the necessary office and travel expenses should be assigned at least one extension specialist with agriculture specialists accessible in every county.

We believe the Vice-Chancellor of Extension and Engagement and the Vice-Chancellor and Dean of the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources should work in partnership to develop and deliver programs to meet the needs of agriculture and communities in Missouri.

Commercial Agriculture Program

We believe the Commercial Agriculture Program is a strong component of the MU Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension program for Missouri farmers and ranchers. We support increased funding for the Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension program including the Commercial Agriculture Program.

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING AND REGULATORY PROGRAMS

Agricultural Cooperatives

Agricultural cooperatives are a vital part of our private competitive enterprise system. The strength of cooperatives lies in their ability to serve their members. We oppose any attempt to repeal or weaken the Capper-Volstead Act.

We support the formation of a perpetual funding incentive source to assist farmer owned cooperatives in processing Missouri agriculture products into value added consumer goods.

Missouri Farm Bureau should provide leadership in the development of marketing cooperatives and the creation of networking opportunities for smaller producers.

Agricultural Drugs and Chemicals

We support labeling requirements for feed additives to accurately identify actual drug strength in products.

We oppose label restrictions on essential agricultural pesticides for the protection of endangered species when such restrictions will jeopardize agricultural production. Restricting pesticide use to protect endangered species will only be workable when the scope of the habitat

has been narrowly and clearly defined and when economically affordable alternative chemicals or methods of control are approved and available for use.

We recognize the importance of new chemical technology and support the efforts of the MDA to establish viable protocols for the safe use of new chemical technology in Missouri.

The loss of atrazine would be an extremely serious/critical loss to farming operations. We urge the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to not further restrict the use of atrazine while maintaining cost effectiveness.

We oppose broad pesticide use restrictions proposed by EPA to protect bees and instead urge EPA to follow existing label approval procedures for evaluating active ingredients or families of pesticide products as recommended by state pesticide officials.

Any record-keeping requirements for farm chemicals should meet the following criteria:

1. Mandatory record-keeping should be limited to restricted-use products only and not apply to general-use products;
2. Records should be kept on the farm for a period of two years;
3. Records may be inspected by the appropriate state pesticide agency only after showing just cause; and
4. Records should be kept confidential and treated as confidential business information.

We urge adequate supplies of fungicides remain available to prevent and treat soybean rust.

We vigorously support the release of effective chemicals banned by the EPA for use in emergency cases such as serious grasshopper and cutworm infestations.

We support a regulatory process which does not discourage the development and commercialization of minor use pesticides.

We recommend the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and EPA cooperate with private industry in actively searching out such products and providing clearance, when possible, from data used to approve these products in other countries.

For the sake of accuracy and convenience, we do not believe crop protection chemical manufacturers should be required to convert to the metric system in the U.S. With our land areas being described in U.S. measures, we believe it will be difficult to even convert pesticide rates to metric.

We are concerned that EPA's Worker Protection Standards for agricultural pesticides are far more detailed and complicated than necessary for the protection of the typical family farm operation. We recommend that EPA continue to work with the farm community to modify this program in order to develop guidelines that are more practical and workable. In addition, we recommend that EPA focus their efforts on training and informing farmers rather than seeking to penalize farmers through enforcement actions.

We believe that Worker Protection Standards should be applied to all pesticide applicators, both public and private. There should be no exemptions for golf courses, state transportation departments, etc.

While we oppose EPA's regulations that exceed Missouri's requirements for private pesticide applicator certification, we support Missouri Department of Agriculture's recommendations to update pesticide applicator license regulations to meet national standards. We support changes in state law to allow fees to be charged to cover costs of operating the private pesticide applicator program. We believe private applicator fees should be less than commercial applicator fees. We support increasing the state pesticide registration fee paid by pesticide companies to help provide funding for private applicator training and licensing. We support renewals of no less than 5 years. We support the development of both face-to-face and online training, prioritizing face-to-face first.

We support general revenue appropriations for the Missouri Department of Agriculture to address the shortfall in the Plant Industries Division.

In order to protect against spray drift or misapplication, we favor a more uniform procedure for labeling and flagging fields.

We encourage producers and applicators to more consistently use programs such as DriftWatch in order to ensure pesticide application is not having an unintended impact on bee populations / specialty crops.

We believe chemical trespassing is a property rights issue and applicators should be held responsible for off label applications.

We support on-label application of pesticides. We support proportional penalties to deter intentional off-label applications.

We urge EPA to accelerate approval of new chemistry formulations of pesticides.

Agricultural Marketing

We support legislation prohibiting states from imposing production standards or practices onto other states' agricultural products for reasons other than food safety or animal/plant health.

We believe access to open and competitive markets is essential to all producers of farm commodities.

We oppose California's state law prohibiting the sale of eggs, pork and veal from out-of-state that are not produced in compliance with production standards as strict as California's. We support legal challenges filed by AFBF and by Missouri's Attorney General on behalf of several states seeking to prohibit California from unfairly restricting market access. We oppose efforts by any state to unfairly restrict market access.

We encourage end users to allow a mechanism for farmers to communicate with them directly on issues related to procurement.

We believe that Farm Bureau, commodity organizations, academic institutions and public officials should become more active in providing agronomic, economic and business assistance for agricultural producers.

Agritourism

We support efforts to promote the importance of agritourism as a tool for local and regional economic development.

We support protecting agritourism operators from inherent risk and liability as enacted in the Agritourism Promotion Act.

We encourage Missouri Farm Bureau to continue a dialogue with the Missouri Department of Transportation and other interested parties to meet the needs of the agritourism industry in regards to reasonable and adequate roadside signage.

We commend the MOFB board of directors for establishing a Farm Bureau advisory committee devoted to agritourism issues.

We support an exemption for “on-farm lodging” venues from jurisdictional regulations, controls, taxes, and fees meant for hotels.

Animal Agriculture

When considering the growing number of public policy issues that animal agriculture is facing, we believe it should remain the objective of Missouri Farm Bureau to:

1. Be the prominent agricultural organization representing the interests and general concerns of the independent farmer;
2. Work for the improved competitiveness of independent producers; and
3. Aggressively work against unfair and unreasonable governmental regulations that impair the economic viability of the independent farmer.

We further believe that those independent family operators who choose to contract with, or form an alliance with a corporation, cooperative, or any other entity should be recognized as part of an ever changing yet continuing trend in animal agriculture.

We believe the environmental concerns raised by the concentration of large numbers of animals in confinement operations warrants the distinction, for the purpose of regulating animal source nutrient management systems, that the Clean Water Commission has made between very large operations and smaller sized operations. We will vigorously oppose any effort to apply more stringent regulations to smaller livestock operations.

We believe that Missouri currently has adequate laws to regulate animal agriculture. We also believe that necessary permits should be approved for livestock operations that comply with applicable state and federal laws and regulations. We applaud efforts by the Clean Water Commission and Missouri Department of Natural Resources to reduce the permit backlog and expedite approval.

We believe that llamas and ratites should be treated and classified as domesticated livestock.

Animal Identification

We favor a producer-driven (not a USDA or state mandatory) national animal identification and traceability system that will provide support for animal disease control, eradication, and marketing opportunities. Data privacy, program cost and liability continue to be primary concerns of farmers and ranchers.

The Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) program, which the USDA developed through rulemaking and finalized in January 2013, is now being implemented by states. We urge state animal health officials to (1) continue to involve and seek input from livestock producers,

agriculture organizations and allied industry with regard to the ADT program; (2) utilize the formal rulemaking process when any new requirements are considered for farmers/ranchers and/or livestock markets; and (3) refrain from adopting regulations more stringent than USDA's final rule.

We encourage all producers to become Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) certified.

USDA is in the process of integrating interstate animal disease surveillance program information and standardizing data elements. A producer that participates in an animal disease surveillance program should have the option to either continue to use the existing producer identification system or a new state-based system with compatible requirements.

We oppose a mandatory brand law, but support increased enforcement of current branding laws with penalties for violations.

Animal Protection

The United States livestock, poultry, and kennel industries are being threatened by animal rights activists. These individuals are claiming that livestock, poultry, and kennel confinement operations subject animals to inhumane conditions. We disagree with this contention and recognize that animals were put on the earth for man's use by Almighty God, and believe that animals are, in fact, benefiting from the protection and care they receive from modern-day agricultural practices. We oppose any efforts to develop laws or regulations which would mandate impractical methods of production resulting in higher costs of production for farmers and ultimately higher food costs for the consumer. We believe laws prohibiting animal abuse should not be construed to restrict modern livestock production practices.

Ballot initiatives and legislative public policy efforts are tools used by the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and other animal activist groups to carry out their ultimate goal of destroying animal agriculture in the United States. We continue to oppose groups such as HSUS and will not compromise with any animal activist groups on any legislation or rules of production. We believe Farm Bureau must do everything possible to protect Missouri agriculture from these threats and must aggressively oppose any Missouri ballot initiative or related policy advocated by these groups deemed detrimental to farmers and ranchers.

We do not condone the mistreatment of animals in any manner whatsoever and support reasonable and proven standards; at the same time, we oppose any initiative petition or legislation in Missouri that would impose unnecessary and unreasonable regulations on the breeding and raising of animals.

We believe animal protection authorities should be prohibited from confiscating livestock herds with animals in good condition.

We believe animal protection authorities should be required to obtain the approval of the state veterinarian before confiscating hooved animals. In such cases, we believe animal protection authorities should be required to give advance notification to the animal owners as well as the farm or facility manager.

Research utilizing animals is necessary to ensure more effective and humane veterinary medical practices. We oppose legislation and regulations which would prohibit or unduly restrict the use of animals in research.

We believe that animal researchers should do a better job of verifying the ownership of animals used for research.

We support the creation, establishment, and strict enforcement of federal and state laws and regulations that increase the penalties for individuals who break into, vandalize, remove animals from, trespass on or demonstrate the intent to disrupt farming, ranching or agricultural research facilities. Humane Society personnel or other activists must be required to obtain a search warrant with the following stipulations to access our farms or kennels:

1. Any search warrant must be issued by the local magistrate of the district where the farm or kennel is located; and
2. The local law enforcement authorities must accompany the Humane Society or activists at all times while at the farm or kennel.

We support an aggressive, comprehensive education program presenting the facts of animal and poultry production and well-being to the general public and to school children.

We support practical, on-farm research to help document minimal stress placed on farm animals under current production systems.

Biomass Fuel Pellets

We support the establishment of uniform standards for biomass fuel pellets.

Biotechnology

We support using the tools of biotechnology in agriculture to develop proven and safe products and practices that improve farm efficiency and profitability.

We favor a regulatory process which would assure that products developed through biotechnology are reviewed in a timely and scientific manner.

We oppose the efforts of federal agencies to lengthen the approval process for commercializing seed varieties incorporating new technologies.

We believe biotechnology should be regulated only at the state and federal levels.

Plant-made pharmaceuticals are being developed to increase the availability and affordability of compounds for medicinal purposes. In addition to the humanitarian benefits, plant-made pharmaceuticals have the potential to open new markets for U.S. farmers and increase the value of their annual production.

We support the production of plant-made pharmaceuticals in Missouri in accordance with the scientific protocols set in place by the U.S. government.

We believe that crop and livestock genetic editing should be regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture and not the Food and Drug Administration.

Carbon Sequestration and Credits

We are concerned about agriculture becoming involved in the trading or selling of carbon credits, an approach to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions formalized during the U.N. Kyoto Climate Change Treaty negotiations.

The implementation of a mandatory cap-and-trade system and/or regulations will increase the price of carbon-based energy and threaten the viability of production agriculture as an

energy-intensive sector. We recognize some agricultural producers may have an opportunity to offset a very small portion of their increased energy and input costs through carbon credit trading, but not all farmers and ranchers will be able to participate due to their type of operation. All producers will incur higher operating expenses.

We oppose a federally imposed carbon credit trading system.

Confidentiality of Farm Information

We oppose the release of individual farmer-specific records or census data. We also oppose the release of confidential farm records by employees of the Missouri Department of Conservation's Private Lands Initiative operating in county USDA and/or Soil and Water Conservation District offices.

We believe personal information reported by farmers (e.g. name, personal home address, e-mail address, and phone numbers) to government agencies as a result of mandatory or voluntary federal or state requirements should remain confidential.

We support stricter penalties for corporate and governmental entities that suffer data breaches that affect the sensitive personal information of individuals and farms when said entities fail to immediately disclose a data breach.

Farmers should own whatever data is generated from their farms. Farmers should be compensated for their data shared with third parties. Compilations of yield data collected from yield monitors should be shared with farmers who helped generate the data and only used for developing yield estimates with the farmers' knowledge and permission. All privacy/"terms and conditions" contracts from seed/farm machinery companies should contain multiple participation options.

Country of Origin Labeling

We support a voluntary country of origin labeling (COOL) program for agricultural products that is market driven and adds value to the products.

MOFB should continue to monitor the mandatory COOL program for covered commodities to ensure it is carried out by USDA without imposing undue compliance costs, liability, recordkeeping and verification requirements on farmers and ranchers.

We support the concept of establishing a recognizable "national logo" that designates USA produced products.

Deceptive Marketing

We support the voluntary labeling of food and agricultural products that contain Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). We oppose allowing the manufacturers of food or other consumer products to apply non-GM labels to products for which no GM alternatives exist.

We oppose deceptive marketing tactics by food companies that market products including but not limited to rice, milk, or meat when they do not contain these products.

We support prohibiting the use of commonly known and industry recognized "meat" terms in the labeling and advertising of all lab-grown and plant-based alternatives.

We support legislation that restricts deceptive marketing tactics.

Farmers' Markets

We support farmers' markets.

We encourage Missouri Farm Bureau to work with farmers and interested organizations to improve access to farmers' markets for local food producers.

Approved vendors at farmers' markets should be an acceptable point of redemption for food and nutrition assistance.

Feed Law

We oppose exempting any segment of the poultry or livestock industry from the Missouri feed inspection fee which is collected on feed ingredients.

If the Missouri Department of Agriculture replaces feed registrations with facility licenses, small livestock feed dealers should not be adversely impacted.

Fertilizer Regulation

We are opposed to any further regulation of the sale of ammonium nitrate or anhydrous ammonia for agricultural use.

We support current state law designating the release or escape of anhydrous ammonia into the atmosphere by any person not the owner or in lawful control of an approved container of anhydrous ammonia as illegal.

We support current state law classifying such illegal release as a Class B felony, unless such release causes death or serious physical injury to any person, in which case it would be a Class A felony.

We favor farmers and industry suppliers having more control in setting fertilizer fees and the utilization of those funds through the Fertilizer Control Board.

Food Quality and Safety

The American food supply is the safest and most abundant in the world. Agricultural chemicals and other technological advances play a major role in maintaining both the quality and quantity of our food supply. Farmers are trained and well-equipped to use farm chemicals and fertilizers effectively and safely and in amounts that are no more than what is necessary to combat pests and disease.

We believe the protection of the U.S. food supply would be enhanced by requiring that imported food products be subjected to the same high safety standards and testing as food produced in the U.S.

State food safety laws and regulations should be monitored to ensure they do not become more restrictive than federal laws and regulations.

Balanced and science-based implementation of food quality and safety laws and regulations is of the utmost concern to Missouri farmers and ranchers. We believe that failure to implement laws and regulations in a balanced way could have serious negative effects on pest management and food and fiber production in the United States, with subsequent adverse impacts on the health and well-being of the American people. Specifically, we support the following principles:

1. Sound science – implementation must be based on sound science and reliable information;
2. Transparency – the public must be informed of the criteria used to assess risk and the process by which decisions are reached;
3. Balance – as EPA considers canceling older pesticide products as a result of the tolerance reassessment and re-registration process, it must give high priority to the review and approval of new products; and
4. Workability – laws and regulations must be administered in a practical and realistic way. If EPA or other federal agencies fail to follow Congressional intent during the implementation process, we support the use of options such as litigation and legislation.

We support legislative and regulatory decisions concerning food irradiation that are based on valid research.

We oppose the use of public funds by specialty, niche or value-added producers for derogatory, destructive or disparaging campaigns against conventionally raised farm products.

Futures Trading

The Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) should continue to be the regulator of the commodity futures business. We oppose combining the CFTC with the Securities Exchange Commission or weakening the CFTC by transferring or reducing its authorities.

We urge continued congressional oversight of the CFTC to make sure they are providing the safeguards necessary to protect the integrity of the futures market trading system in providing price discovery and risk management tools for farmers and ranchers.

We also favor having at least one farmer or agricultural representative on the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

To help protect the interests of producers, we believe the delivery of the actual commodity should be as efficient as possible and a reflection of the cash market. Steers and heifers should be deliverable at the market and delivery weights should reflect the cash market.

We believe regulatory action by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission or the individual commodity exchanges should be taken in a way that will have the least disruptive impact on the producers of the commodities involved.

We oppose any increase of fees charged by commodity exchanges for subscribers to marketing services.

The emergence of index funds as a new class of market participant and their use of “swaps” has created serious challenges for traditional hedgers, producers, and other market participants in gauging market fundamentals. Given the fact that index funds have no involvement in the physical commodity or marketing channel, we feel it is inappropriate for them to be granted a hedge exemption. Furthermore, we feel it inappropriate to classify them as a “commercial” account in the Commitment of Traders reports. We strongly support that the reporting activity of index funds be separated from the trading activity of traditional “commercial” accounts, historically a category reserved for grain companies and processors hedging price and inventory risk, in future Commitment of Traders reports.

We encourage the Commodity Futures Trading Commission to adopt some form of demand certificates (compelled loadout) for all delivery locations, both existing locations and new locations proposed by the CME Group.

Grain Grading

We favor revision of the grading and pricing system for all grains to reflect premiums for quality and to reward producers for drier grain in the same manner the producer is penalized for moisture content. If premiums for moisture and test weight cannot be accomplished, we would favor a system of averaging loads of grain to determine prices.

We believe grain sold to farmers from a commercial source should be sold on a graded basis.

We oppose the use of vacuum drawn grain samples used for grading purposes, but we do not oppose mechanically drawn, vacuum transferred systems.

We believe sellers of agricultural products should have grades and discounts available before those products are unloaded.

Revised grain standards should indicate clearly and give assurance that we will provide clean grains for our customers at home and abroad. We recommend that blending regulations be better enforced so that foreign material is not added to exported grain. Blending requirements as to moisture should be better enforced so that we can export an improved quality of grain.

We support a grain grading system that separates broken kernels and foreign matter into separate grade factors.

We believe the Missouri Department of Agriculture should develop a process that allows producers and processors to certify that raw or processed products are free of genetically enhanced organisms according to tolerances set by export customers.

Grain Indemnity Fund

Rather than creating a grain indemnity fund, the Legislature needs to make sure the Department is funded at levels to adequately carry out their statutory responsibilities on a timely basis.

Grain Warehouse

While we support Missouri's Grain Warehouse law, we caution against overly stringent requirements which might force smaller grain elevators or grain dealers out of business leaving farmers with fewer markets for their grain.

We support allowing grain dealers and warehousemen to submit compiled financial statements prepared by a Certified Public Accountant instead of the review or audit level statements required by the Missouri Grain Warehouse and Grain Dealer Laws.

We believe CCC measurement rules should be made more lenient so farmers will be able to fill their bins to peak capacity. With the limited storage available, this could add as much as ten percent to storage capacity.

We oppose any federal pre-emption of state grain dealer laws by the United States Grain Warehouse Act. We feel it is in the best interests of Missouri grain producers that all grain

dealers and warehouses doing business in Missouri be licensed by the state of Missouri and under the regulatory scrutiny of the Missouri Grain Dealer Law.

Grapes

We support the continued development of a strong grape and wine industry in the state of Missouri and recognize the need for continued promotion.

We support allowing Missouri wineries to sell wine on premises and ship or deliver wine directly to retail stores and restaurants.

We oppose any legislation limiting Missouri wineries' ability to market their product to customers of legal age.

We support increased state and federal funding for grape and enology research.

We support the ability of Missouri's independent grape growers and wine, beer and spirit producers to freely produce and market their products without burdensome interference from wholesalers and distributors.

We believe an open determination of a community of interest should be made prior to the establishment of a legal franchise, allowing wine, beer and spirit producers to enter and exit oral marketing agreements freely and without franchise agreements coming into being.

Industrial Hemp

We support the production of industrial hemp under the provisions of the 2018 Farm Bill.

Kennel Regulations

We oppose any unnecessary and excessive laws and regulations affecting kennel owners.

We support authorizing only trained USDA or Missouri Department of Agriculture officials to inspect state and federally licensed kennels. We oppose authorizing the Humane Society of the United States, Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or similar organizations to enforce kennel laws and regulations.

We recommend canines in kennels licensed by the Missouri Department of Agriculture and/or USDA be considered as an agricultural commodity with protection of customary agricultural exemptions and policies.

We oppose the Missouri Department of Agriculture license renewal and notifications for kennels being only available online and would request that it also be provided in hard copy format.

Licensing and Titling of Farm Motorized Equipment

We oppose the licensing and/or titling of motorized farm equipment (for example, tractors and combines). We further oppose any effort to license operators of farm equipment.

Livestock Marketing

In order to be competitive, Missouri livestock producers must have readily available market outlets. We believe Farm Bureau should take the lead in closely monitoring all mergers, ownership changes or other trends in the livestock packing industry that would signal a lessening of competitive market availability or a violation of the Packers and Stockyards Act or any other state or federal statute.

Producers should be able to forward contract with packers for the sale of livestock, but we are concerned that packers, through the use of forward contracting, are able to adversely affect the cash market for livestock. We should closely monitor the ability of packers to manipulate the market by forward contracting with producers.

We believe the ownership of all livestock selling through private sale barns should be announced at ringside before the animals are sold.

We believe all livestock being sold by the pound at private sale barns should be weighed prior to the sale.

We support strict enforcement of the federal Packers and Stockyards Act.

We support breeder hens and all forms of poultry being added to the protection under the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Act (GIPSA). In addition, we favor GIPSA making rule changes to coincide with Missouri Farm Bureau policy concerning production contracts, such as banning mandatory arbitration and prohibiting retaliation.

Farm Bureau should intensify their efforts to monitor and oppose further market/packer consolidation that would be detrimental to livestock producers.

We support USDA's efforts to investigate recent beef margins to determine if there is any evidence of price manipulation, collusion, or restrictions of competition or other unfair practices.

We strongly support state incentives to attract a commercial cattle slaughter operation to Missouri.

We oppose any restrictions on livestock production and/or marketing in Missouri that would limit or restrict production and/or marketing options or opportunities for livestock producers.

We support efforts of the Missouri Department of Agriculture to develop and implement strategies that add value to Missouri's high quality cattle herd.

We believe captive cervids (deer and elk) should be considered production livestock and under the jurisdiction of the Missouri Department of Agriculture.

Livestock Price Reporting

Any packer who processes more than 5% of the national daily slaughter should be required to report cash and contract prices and terms of sale to the federal market news service.

Livestock Regulations

County health ordinances regulating animal agriculture have been promoted under the guise of protection of public health. In truth, the ordinances are designed for the primary purpose of restricting animal agriculture.

We support the state law prohibiting county health regulations that impose standards on agriculture that are stricter than state standards. We urge counties to act expeditiously to rescind any such regulations.

Meat Quality & Inspection

We recommend that the permissible “water added” content of meat and poultry products be reduced to protect the quality of meat without adding undue cost to the product and the word “fresh” not be allowed on these products with more than 10% salt solution added.

We support and favor promoting a Meat Quality Assurance Program.

We strongly support 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.

We support allowing state-inspected meat processing facilities, which meet all federal regulations and policies under the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act and are approved by USDA, to ship products in interstate commerce.

We support increasing the number of state inspectors to ensure safety of Missouri meat products and to create more opportunities for direct marketing to consumers.

We support meat handling labels that educate the consumer about meat quality and safety issues.

We support allowing non-ambulatory disabled, but otherwise healthy, livestock to be processed for personal consumption by the animal owner(s) or charitable donation if approved by a veterinarian.

The USDA should be the regulatory agency over fake meat production, not FDA.

Mergers and Acquisitions

We believe that consolidation, and subsequent concentration, within the U.S. agricultural sector is having adverse economic impacts on U.S. family farmers. To address this trend, we believe Congress should review existing statutes, develop legislation where necessary and strengthen enforcement activities. This includes examining the Sherman Act, Clayton Act, Hart/Scott/Rodino Act, Packers and Stockyards Act and other applicable laws.

In the event the Congress fails to act, and consolidation continues, we believe a moratorium on future mergers and acquisitions or other measures should be pursued.

Milk Inspection Program

We support adequate general revenue funding to the state milk inspection program so as not to increase funding from raising the milk inspection fees on processors and producers.

Missouri Grown Program

We support the Missouri Department of Agriculture’s Missouri Grown Program which is designed to help identify and promote Missouri grown and processed products.

We favor increased funding for the Missouri Grown Program.

Missouri Market News Program

Access to unbiased market information is critical to farmers and ranchers when making marketing decisions. We support funding for the Missouri Department of Agriculture’s “Missouri Market News Program” that allows for the continuation of market news reports at current and/or expanded level(s) of service.

Missouri Seed Law

In order to protect and encourage the development of new seed varieties, we recommend changing the Missouri Seed Law to prohibit the sale by commercial seedsmen of “variety not stated” or “brown bagged” wheat or soybean seed.

We oppose the incorporation of a sterile gene designed specifically to prevent the public and private propagation of seed.

We believe that extreme care should be taken to ensure that adding genetically engineered traits to seed does not accidentally make most of that crop more susceptible to some disease.

We believe extreme care should be taken to ensure that adding genetically engineered traits to seed does not create unacceptable risk to humans, animals or the environment.

We favor farmers being allowed to save seed for their own use. However, we recognize some seed is subject to federal patent protection, and we do not support state law to allow farmers to save patented seed, which would put those farmers who save seed in violation of federal law. We favor changing federal seed patent law to allow farmers to save patented seed.

Farmers should be allowed to save and replant patented seed by paying a minimal technology fee on saved seed. Companies that sell patented seed should keep the price of U.S. seed competitive with the price of seed sold in other countries. While we recognize that the costs of research and development must be recouped, we believe American farmers can be put at a disadvantage through the high cost of biotech fees, i.e. royalties. The U.S. government and biotechnology patent owners should make it a priority to work with our international trading partners to enforce seed laws, prosecute pirating and ensure an equitable playing field for all producers.

We are concerned with consolidation in the seed industry and the lack of competition that allows patented seed products to be priced in a questionably fair manner.

We believe Kentucky 31 Fescue Seed production is an important Missouri agriculture industry, and we support seed purchasing standards that promote high quality seed production that will maintain our current market, but are against any state rule, regulation or law that would limit or prohibit a farmer from selling his/her tall fescue seed crop as the variety Kentucky 31, as he/she knows or understands it to be.

Pet Sales

We oppose restricting or banning the sale of pets from USDA or Missouri Animal Care Facilities Act (ACFA) licensed breeders.

Production Contracts

We believe contract production agriculture is a way to assist individual producers in competing in the agriculture industry.

We support the rights of producers to enter into contracts.

We support:

1. Ensuring that confidentiality clauses allow producers to share information with business advisors and attorneys and allow a period for contract review prior to signing;

2. Improving the readability of contracts;
3. Requiring the disclosure of material risks;
4. Allowing contract producers/growers the ability to review and discuss contract terms with the contractor/integrator in making their business agreements without apprehension of retaliation from the contractor/integrator; and
5. Banning mandatory arbitration clauses in contracts. We believe arbitration should be left as a choice; not mandatory, for contract producers.

Promotion and Check-Offs

We support commodity check-off and self-imposed funding programs in cooperation with the goals of the various agricultural commodity organizations. We believe that all legislated commodity check-offs should be passed by producer referendum and should comply with all provisions of each check-off's respective act and order.

Specifically, commodity legislative check-offs should continue to be used for promotion, education and research activities, and not for legislative or lobbying purposes.

Missouri Farm Bureau should encourage greater participation by producers in check-off referendum and merchandising council elections. It is important to have accurate producer lists with current contact information for use in merchandising council elections and referendums.

For purpose of check-off / merchandising council elections, we support access to the list of registered voters via a third party.

We support the mandatory cotton check-off.

We support the National Beef Check-Off Program established under the Beef Promotion and Research Act of 1985.

We oppose the creation of a national beef check-off program under the Commodity Promotion, Research and Information Act of 1996.

We support the development of a state beef check-off program in addition to the current one dollar national beef check-off. We believe these new check-off funds should be administered by the Missouri Beef Industry Council and only be used for promotion, education and research programs and not for legislative or lobbying purposes.

Regulatory Reform

We believe farmers and ranchers are being negatively impacted by overregulation.

We applaud ongoing comprehensive regulatory reform. We believe public health, safety and the environment can and must be protected without overregulation.

We urge Congress to enact legislation reforming the federal rulemaking process, including the following:

1. Public outreach and participation early in the process;
 2. Agency decisions based on solid scientific, technical and economic information;
 3. Thorough cost-benefit analysis leading to adoption of the most cost-effective option;
- and

4. Automatic review of rules after specified period of time.

We support reforming the federal rulemaking process to increase accountability and transparency. Such changes could include requiring Congress to vote on every major rulemaking, requiring agencies to consider a rule's impact on the economy, and establishing a commission to review existing regulations and identify those that should be repealed.

We believe economic impact studies for proposed regulations should be made available to industry, landowners and the media before any new regulations are adopted.

We also believe that economic impact studies for proposed regulations should be developed through hearings including affected industry and landowners.

Furthermore, we believe the cumulative impact of regulations affecting production agriculture should be assessed prior to the implementation of any regulation impacting agriculture.

Right-to-Farm

Missouri Farm Bureau will make it a priority to protect and enhance the ability of farmers and ranchers to continue agricultural production in the State of Missouri. We support Constitutional Amendment #1 approved by voters in 2014 to protect the right of farmers and ranchers to engage in farming and ranching practices. Missouri Farm Bureau will also make it a priority to ensure the regulation of agriculture is limited to the state and federal government.

We support responsible actions designed to permit and protect the privilege and the rights of farmers to produce without undue or unreasonable restrictions, regulations or harassment from the public or private sectors. We support actions to ensure that farmers be protected from undue liability and nuisance suits when carrying out normal production practices.

We support Missouri's present nuisance law to limit damages for permanent nuisance to the value of a plaintiff's property.

We support efforts to give agricultural producers increased protections against false and defamatory statements that tend to damage or endanger a producer's livelihood, product or property.

We favor real estate brokers and agents include on the sellers disclosure statement form this statement: "Proximity to farming: This notice is to inform you that the real property you are considering for purchase may lie in close proximity to a farm. The operation of a farm involves usual and customary agricultural practices which are protected."

We oppose broadening the scope of protection under right to farm to include the production of any illegal crops as defined by state or federal law.

Sale of Mortgaged Agricultural Products

We support the current system of prior notification whereby lienholders are required to notify potential buyers of their secured interest in order to protect such interest. We support efforts by private industry to provide a more unified listing of farm liens in order to make prior notification of potential buyers more practical and cost effective.

User Fees

We believe that user fees should only be used to fund expenses for the program under which they were collected.

We oppose reallocating revenue from user fees or increasing user fees to create new programs or fund existing programs not directly related to the program for which the fee was established.

Value-Added Agriculture

We believe state government has an important role to play in developing value-added marketing and processing of agricultural products in Missouri.

We support participation in production and/or marketing activities such as producer alliances or new generation cooperatives. We support legislation to modernize federal law to ensure that farmer cooperatives, including new generation cooperatives, continue to have access to credit.

We support the establishment of an agricultural innovation center in Missouri which could serve as a central distribution point for information as well as state and federal funds for individuals interested in pursuing value-added agricultural opportunities. We believe the agricultural community would be best served if the agricultural innovation center was established at the state's land grant institution.

We commend and support private and public efforts to develop and promote alternative uses for agricultural products, such as corn-based starch products, ethanol blended fuels, soy diesel fuel, soy ink and beef tallow for hay preservation and energy use.

We support the development of methods to recycle plant nutrients via processing manure into fertilizer and encourage the use of tax credits and other incentives to promote this industry.

We strongly encourage the use of bio-based products at all levels of government and we recommend that a bio-based products preferential purchase program be adopted by the state of Missouri.

We support measures that will encourage agricultural cooperatives to enhance the profitability of its farmer members by becoming more involved in value-added processing.

We further support:

1. Providing additional financial incentives to assist new generation cooperatives with start-up costs, including plant construction and processing equipment costs; and
2. Retaining state funds appropriated for eligible value-added agricultural operations that are not allocated in a fiscal year for use by such operations in subsequent years.

We support the state tax credit program for farmers who invest in new generation cooperatives and processing facilities.

We support increasing funding for the Missouri Agriculture and Small Business Development Authority for investor tax credits.

We support providing state tax credits for expansion of livestock operations.

We support the Show-Me State Food, Beverage and Forest Products Manufacturing Initiative and believe implementation of the recommendations will create a foundation for significant long-term economic growth within many sectors of Missouri agriculture.

Weed Control

We believe the current state Weed Control Law should be amended to provide for the detection, isolation and eradication of infestations of new or potentially dangerous noxious weeds on both private and public land.

We support the formation of county weed boards as deemed necessary by county courts.

We believe that public agencies should undertake efforts to prevent the infestation of new or potentially dangerous noxious weeds on public land.

We support adding Sericea lespedeza and Hemlock to the noxious weed list and support eradicating all noxious weeds from public and private lands.

Wildlife Pests

Blackbirds, starlings, Canada geese, black vultures and similar pests are causing serious damage to crops, livestock and property in many areas. They are a hazard to aviation and a carrier of diseases to humans as well as to livestock and crops.

We oppose requiring permits to eliminate pests covered by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, especially black vultures.

Wildlife is increasing over a wide geographic area. Intensive research efforts should be carried out at the state and federal levels accompanied by prompt implementation by the Conservation Commission and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal Plant Health Inspection Service of all practical recommendations and methods necessary to control these pests.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

We believe an aggressive and meaningful public research program is essential to the future of agriculture. We support agriculture research at all state universities and colleges.

In light of the high cost and the availability of only patented seeds (e.g. corn, soybeans, etc.) from private companies, we believe that our land grant universities must renew their efforts in developing new high yield, disease resistant public varieties.

We urge the University of Missouri to expedite the processes of patenting and commercializing agricultural products such as new crop varieties and genetics.

We also support increased state and federal appropriations, including additional research to develop new markets for agriculture products.

We also support private funding for agricultural research programs to develop new products and urge close cooperation between private sources of funding and our state colleges and universities.

We urge the adoption of a more inclusive, transparent decision-making process for the establishment of USDA's agricultural research priorities and allocation of funding.

We support more research on naturally occurring environmentally safe pesticides that provide effective control.

We urge increased federal funding for development of disease-resistant varieties, as well as new crop protection treatments, to help combat Soybean Rust.

We support federal funding for the National Soybean Research Center on the University of Missouri campus.

We urge the University of Missouri's College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources to represent the interests of agriculture in the development of public policy by initiating timely research and analysis for the purpose of participating in the legislative and regulatory decision-making process.

We also encourage the continued use of producer self-help check-off funds to help supplement research activities wherever possible.

We recommend the University of Missouri and associated research facilities place a higher priority on the research of value-added and specialty crops such as fruits, vegetables, nuts and other emerging crops.

We recommend funds for more intensive study of soybean cyst nematode.

We support additional applied water quality research that recognizes the importance of involving local agricultural producers.

We favor the continued use of animals for agricultural and medical education and research.

We support the research for new biotechnology in agriculture that improves farm efficiency, profitability, and is proven a safe product or practice.

We encourage Missouri to lead in developing biotechnology and applied research in developing foods and fiber.

We support using a portion of Missouri's share of the national tobacco settlement for life science research in the state.

We support allowing counties to establish agricultural research districts with authority to levy up to 25 cents per acre to fund agricultural research projects as long as only agricultural producers in a county are allowed to petition for a referendum, vote in the referendum and serve on the local board that controls the funds.

We support funding for the National Institute for Food and Agriculture.

We support efforts to establish the National Center for Beef Excellence in Missouri.

We would support the state making funds available for a competitive grant to be used by Missouri college students for researching and identifying innovative ways for new farmers to overcome challenges associated with production agriculture.

We support additional funding for research to develop new uses and markets for Missouri agricultural products.

ANIMAL HEALTH

African Swine Fever

We support increased surveillance and preparedness for African Swine Fever. We support increased biosecurity inspections at all points of entry and increased funding for additional security.

Animal Husbandry

We support an animal owner being able to hire a non-veterinarian, non-employee to perform traditional animal husbandry practices for compensation as currently allowed under the Missouri Veterinary Practices Act at the discretion of the Missouri Veterinary Medical Board.

Avian Influenza

Preventing, detecting and responding to future cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) must be a priority for poultry growers, industry and federal and state animal health officials. Prevention starts with sound, workable biosecurity procedures included in the daily management activities carried out by growers and integrators.

We support:

1. Expanding federal, state and industry response capabilities to enable rapid detection and response in domestic poultry flocks;
2. Modifying USDA's indemnity program to split payments between owners/integrators and contract growers in the event of flock depopulation; and
3. Streamlining the processes for payment of indemnity and the cost of eliminating viruses to assist growers in returning to production.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE)

Reports of inconclusive BSE tests cause excessive market volatility. Therefore, we believe that USDA should not report BSE tests unless they have a confirmed case.

Brucellosis

We favor an accelerated national eradication program for brucellosis. We support a research program to develop a better vaccine for both cattle and calves.

We oppose reducing available funds from the state or national eradication programs.

We encourage producers to voluntarily vaccinate.

Because of Missouri's long term brucellosis free accreditation from USDA a mandatory testing surveillance program is no longer required. We encourage the Missouri Department of Agriculture to keep an aggressive testing and surveillance program for brucellosis (adequately funded by the state legislature) in place.

We favor the Missouri Department of Agriculture adopting the PCR canine brucellosis test as the official recognized canine brucellosis test for the State of Missouri.

Diagnostic Laboratories

We recommend that continued emphasis be placed on expanding the technology of the area diagnostic laboratories. Area laboratories should be maintained as they are very beneficial to the state's livestock and poultry industries for disease detection and control.

We recommend developing laboratories in areas of the state where needed.

We recognize the importance of protecting our animal industry. Therefore, we support the efforts to increase diagnostic and animal disease research facilities and capability for the protection of our livestock and wildlife populations.

Interstate Movement

We favor enforcement of embargoes against importation of livestock from states which do not have effective disease control programs (brucellosis, pseudorabies and tuberculosis).

Medications

Livestock and poultry producers are involved in husbandry practices on a daily basis. As such, producers recognize common health issues developing in livestock and poultry. Continued access to animal health medicines approved as safe by the Food and Drug Administration is essential for animal well-being and ultimately the production of safe and healthful meat, poultry and dairy products for consumers. We support their right and responsibility to care for their animals and believe they should be able to use antibiotics, as prescribed and labeled, to treat animals when needed. We oppose restrictions on antibiotic use based on unscientific claims.

We favor judicious use and withdrawal restrictions of feed additives and therapeutics and oppose banning these animal health products. We urge repeal of the FDA's Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) (Guidance for Industry #209, #213, and #120). We oppose any expansion of the VFD. FDA should address livestock producers' concerns by providing flexibility in the VFD to include allowing veterinarians to recommend extra label use of antibiotics when needed. We also support modifying the definition of a veterinary-client patient relationship to allow the use of telemedicine when making an animal health diagnosis and treatment recommendation.

We support continued funding for USDA's antimicrobial research and monitoring programs.

We support and encourage the education of users of animal pesticides and medications to ensure their safe use. However, we oppose requiring certification of the user of animal pesticides and medications (e.g., ear tags, wormers, implants, etc.), but suggest that producers strictly adhere to all labeled directions for use.

It is imperative that there be state oversight of the dispensing of veterinary prescription drugs by a non-veterinarian. In order to ensure the quality, safe handling, and accurate dispensing of these drugs, it is important for this authority to be granted to a state entity with the resources and expertise to meet these obligations.

We believe that veterinarians should be able to sell over-the-counter drugs under the same rules and regulations as retail suppliers.

While we recognize the need to control veterinary prescription drugs, we believe the interpretation of present statutes and rulings by the Division of Professional Registration can cause real harm to those in the livestock industry. We would therefore recommend that all veterinary pharmaceutical inspections be transferred to the jurisdiction of the State Veterinarian along with the proper funding.

Pseudorabies

We support full federal funding for both laboratory services and field personnel for Missouri's pseudorabies program and support mandatory testing for pseudorabies.

State Veterinarian

We believe the Missouri State Veterinarian should assume the lead role in detecting and developing a feasible plan to combat maladies affecting livestock and be given adequate funding and staff. This includes coordination with other state agencies as well as officials at the local, state and national levels.

Trichomoniasis

We support the Missouri Department of Agriculture (MDA) regulation which requires the program developed by the cattle industry requiring that all bulls 24 months of age and older offered for sale, at auctions or at private treaty, be for slaughter only unless verified trichomoniasis-free with written certification of a negative trichomoniasis test within 60 days prior to sale. Provisions should be made to allow retest and reclassification of a positive bull based on sound epidemiological evidence.

We strongly support the development of a Trichomoniasis notification rule for cattle producers adjacent to an infected herd and believe notification should be the responsibility of MDA animal health officials. The Department should move forward with a plan to modify the current rules in the swiftest manner possible and provide the necessary resources.

Veterinarians

We believe admittance to veterinary school should be based on academic qualifications rather than referrals.

We support actions that will lead to full funding of the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Missouri, Columbia. This action should provide full funding even in times of state budget constraints. This includes funding for facilities and operation of the Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (VMDL).

We encourage students to enter large animal practice. We also support financial aid and incentives for students and new veterinarian graduates that commit to practice large animal medicine in underserved rural areas. However, there is a growing shortage of food animal veterinarians willing to serve out-state Missouri and it is apparent that the situation will worsen in the future as incentive programs currently in place are proving to be inadequate.

We resolve that a task force/committee meeting of food animal producers, out-state veterinarians, and representatives of Missouri Department of Agriculture, MU College of Veterinary Medicine, commodity and farm organizations, and any other interested parties, be convened to generate ideas to positively address the problem.

We support the veterinary/patient client relationship as it relates to medical use and antibiotics, and the information should remain confidential and not subject to Freedom of Information Act requests. Similar to other farm data, all animal health records are the property of the farm and require the owner's written permission to be accessed.

CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

General

We believe the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) should place more emphasis on informing and working with adjoining landowners of land owned or under consideration to be purchased by MDC.

The public access to MDC lands creates many potential problems for neighboring landowners. MDC should manage and adequately supervise their lands to address such concerns as hunting and trespassing on private land, increased traffic on local roads, safety of neighbors, littering, vandalism and other related activities.

We favor a cooperative land agreement with landowners to provide incentives for the development of game habitat on private land as an alternative to additional land purchases by MDC.

We support MDC's program of using prairie grass to promote and support wildlife in Missouri.

We believe MDC should continue to make payments in lieu of taxes on their land. We support legislation to require that payments by MDC for property tax be adjusted periodically to reflect changes in property taxes paid by surrounding landowners.

We believe land owned by MDC should have reasonable access facilities and that MDC should help maintain roads leading to these facilities.

We believe MDC should not lobby on farm bill program eligibility requirements. We oppose the use of public funds for lobbying purposes (i.e. one-eighth cent sales tax, license fees, etc.).

We believe the Conservation Department should mow their rights-of-way at least annually.

We strongly oppose any effort by animal rights groups to limit the rights of individuals to legally harvest and control wildlife.

We support amending the Missouri Constitution to guarantee the right to hunt, fish and harvest game subject to state law and regulations.

We urge the Missouri Legislature to pass a law requiring MDC to pay the deductible on all comprehensive insured, Missouri licensed vehicles involved in a collision with deer, elk, coyote, turkey or any other protected wildlife capable of damaging a vehicle in the state of Missouri.

We oppose any restrictions on landowners related to MDC's Exotic Plant Policy or the Clinton Administration's Invasive Species Executive Order. The list of exotic plants to be eradicated from land managed by MDC includes tall fescue, Caucasian bluestem and other

varieties which have contributed significantly to the economic viability of Missouri's cattle industry and fescue seed industry. Tall fescue has also provided tremendous soil conservation benefits to Missouri landowners.

We believe MDC should establish policies which promote soil conservation and economic viability on private lands.

We believe MDC should make handfishing for catfish a legally regulated sport in the state of Missouri.

We believe landowners, farmers and individuals holding licenses to hunt turkeys in Missouri should be able to legally kill bobcats or coyotes that respond to a hunter's call.

We support state legislation to protect landowners from liability for damages associated with allowing others to hunt or fish on their property.

We believe landowners or tenants should have the authority to remove elk, wolves, bears or mountain lions when these species cause damage on their property.

We believe MDC should work more closely with other state agencies and Missouri's agricultural and transportation interests on issues associated with future management of the Missouri River.

We believe that recommendations by MDC to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources or other state or federal agencies should be based on sound science and the supporting scientific studies be available for review by the public.

We also believe recommendations by MDC to regulatory agencies should be carefully considered within MDC and should represent its official position.

We oppose aerial videotaping conducted by MDC without the consent of private landowners whose property is observed on taped footage.

To preserve the integrity of the Ozark Trail as a multi-use trail, we believe MDC should allow equine and bicycles on the trail or on alternate routes.

All land owned by MDC and open for equine trail riding should remain open without a permit from MDC.

We believe any active duty military member that is a Missouri resident should be exempt from any MDC license fees, including deer, turkey, small game and fishing licenses.

We oppose charging a fee for landowner hunting permits.

MDC already derives significant revenue from the dedicated one-eighth cent sales tax. Therefore we oppose increasing permit fees, for existing permits or requiring new permits.

We are opposed to permit fee pricing being tied to the Consumer Price Index or any other index.

We propose that MDC cost share mowing the roadways.

We support MDC's decision reinstating the landowner registry for verifying eligibility for landowner hunting permits, but we oppose increasing the minimum for landowner permit eligibility from 5 to 20 acres.

Conservation Commission

Since most of the functions of the Conservation Department are concentrated in the rural areas of the state and because many of the Department's activities have a direct impact upon agriculture, we believe at least half of the Conservation Commission members should come from the rural areas and be directly involved with or at least knowledgeable about agriculture. We believe proposals to increase the number of commissioners provides the opportunity for greater accountability and increased representation for rural Missouri.

We support legislation increasing citizen participation in the government of MDC by giving the citizens of Missouri the right to vote on an amendment to the state constitution that increases the number of Missouri Department of Conservation Commissioners from the current four members to eight members, one from each of the Department's eight conservation regions. The commissioners will be appointed by the governor with no more than four commissioners from the same political party. Terms should be staggered and limited to two terms per commissioner, without compensation, except expenses.

Crayfish

We support the rule that allows only the Virile (or "Northern") Crayfish (*Orconecthetes virilis*) to be purchased for re-sale or sold for use as live bait in Missouri. We believe MDC should strengthen its education campaign targeting fishermen to also include classroom instructors who use live crayfish for educational purposes on proper disposal at the end of their use.

Deer Overpopulation

Overpopulation of deer in many areas of the state has created serious problems including crop and property destruction. We recommend additional steps be taken to reduce deer numbers in Missouri. We support the development of a program in which landowners are voluntarily linked up with hunters to provide hunting opportunities under controlled circumstances to further reduce the size of the deer herd.

We oppose the department's plan to increase deer numbers starting with the 2016-2017 hunting season.

We support opening the deer season one week earlier for landowners hunting on their own property. This would allow safer hunting for farm families and could perhaps be helpful in making landowners more willing to allow hunting on their property after the opening of the regular deer season.

We favor the continuation of the practice of allowing deer hunting in certain state parks adjacent to agricultural areas whenever it is necessary to control the deer population.

We favor landowners being given the opportunity to give their deer tags away to other hunters during deer season to further reduce the population.

We believe agricultural producers eligible for no-cost resident landowner hunting permits should be allowed to use those permits on rented property under their control.

We support creating a statewide program funded by the Missouri Department of Conservation to pay for the processing of deer that are donated to a food pantry.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a serious issue for Missouri's domestic and wild whitetail deer and elk populations. We commend MDC on being proactive on holding CWD in check by establishing county CWD management zones. However, we oppose the moratorium on permitting new domestic whitetail deer farms as an invasion of personal property rights.

Hunting or Fishing Trespass

We recommend anyone found guilty of trespass in the first degree for the purpose of hunting or fishing should have their hunting and fishing license revoked for one to three years.

We further recommend that their license be revoked for five years if a second trespass occurs within five years of the first offense.

We support education efforts and enforcement action by Missouri Department of Conservation to promote respect for private property rights.

Multiflora Rose, Thistle and Noxious Weeds

We urge counties to make funds available for multi-flora rose eradication in order to assist landowners in their effort to control multi-flora rose and to consider cost-share programs offered by MDC.

We believe the Conservation Department should eradicate the multi-flora rose, thistle and other noxious weeds on their property.

We favor federal and state governments and corporations having the same responsibilities as private landowners in controlling their multi-flora, thistle and other noxious weeds.

One-Eighth Cent Sales Tax

We believe the issue of retaining the one-eighth cent sales tax for Conservation should be placed before the voters every ten years. We strongly encourage the state legislature to pass a constitutional amendment to place renewal of the one-eighth cent sales tax on the ballot. We also believe that earmarked tax issues should never be placed in the Missouri Constitution unless there are also provisions for automatic, periodic voter review. Also, we urge that less money from this tax be used for land acquisition. This land acquisition should never result in eroding the population base of school districts and rural communities, and more money should be used for other purposes such as small game cover and food plots on private land, weed control, timber stand improvement, warmseason grasses, fencing, etc.

We believe the state legislature should have more authority in appropriating and controlling the expenditures of the department's sales tax, hunting and fishing fees, and other funds. We support capping the revenue received by the Department of Conservation from the one-eighth cent sales tax.

Reintroduction of Wild Animals

We support requiring legislative approval before any fish or wildlife can be reintroduced in Missouri. We oppose the Missouri Conservation Commission's decision to approve the reintroduction of elk in Missouri. We believe that elk reintroduced by the Missouri Department of Conservation are the responsibility of the department. Before the end of the research phase during which all reintroduced elk will be fitted with tracking collars, we urge the department to periodically release monitoring data on herd movement and impact.

We believe the department should be financially responsible for:

1. The value of crops and pasture damaged or destroyed by elk;
2. The indemnification of losses suffered by livestock producers as a result of harassment or disease spread from elk;
3. The value of fencing and other private property damaged by elk; and
4. The personal injury and damage incurred in a collision with elk or livestock released due to elk.

We believe landowners should have the authority to destroy elk on their land anytime damages occur.

We are opposed to the reintroduction or release of any wildlife species without public hearings and public comment periods.

We are opposed to the introduction or release of mountain lions anywhere in the state of Missouri.

We oppose any wolf introduction or reintroduction program.

Streambank Stabilization

We urge MDC to provide more flexibility and financial assistance in streambank recovery programs to include the removal of gravel and obstructions from the stream channel and the use of removed material to repair streambank erosion.

Wildlife Damage

We favor the Conservation Department establishing a program to help compensate farmers who have crop or livestock damage due to wildlife. We urge MDC to cooperate with and assist landowners in eradicating wildlife that damages property or threatens human safety. We favor an increase in the wild game harvest in areas where there is excess population or excessive property damage.

We believe the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) should do more to reduce wildlife damage to Missouri crops. This includes giving the Missouri Department of Conservation authority to enable landowners to increase the harvest of wildlife in cases of excessive property damage and we believe the Missouri Department of Conservation should cooperate with APHIS to enable Missouri to receive the maximum amount of federal help in this matter.

We believe the Missouri Department of Conservation should take steps to reduce the coyote and mountain lion population in Missouri, including expanding the hunting season to be year-round and initiating a statewide bounty on coyotes and mountain lions.

We support the efforts of the Missouri Department of Conservation to renew special light goose hunting provisions to manage overpopulation and/or enact a program similar to that in the cities to take care of nuisance wildlife.

We would like to see the MDC take care of the removal of dead animals from roadways and state right of ways.

Wildlife Protection

We do not believe regulations should go beyond those necessary to encourage the proper disposition of game animals and game fish taken legally within the State of Missouri.

We support state legislation to make it an offense to remove wild plants from the property of others without the permission of the landowners.

CORPORATE AGRICULTURE

We believe that independent farming operations can produce agricultural commodities of as good a quality and as economically as large corporate farming operations.

We support regulations that would assure independent producers of market accessibility.

We oppose overly restrictive amendments to the Missouri corporate farming law which might limit the incorporation options available to independent farmers.

We oppose any tax incentives, tax breaks, state grants or other governmental assistance to corporate agricultural interests which are not available to all producers.

We oppose further exemptions of counties from the corporate agriculture law.

COUNTY, STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Building Codes

We are opposed to statewide building codes. However, if such a law is proposed, we believe:

1. Farm buildings, including the farm residence, be exempt;
2. Minimum standards should set guidelines but provide flexibility;
3. Adoption must require approval by local voters in affected unincorporated areas.

We oppose amending state law to allow local governmental bodies or voters in third and fourth class counties to adopt county building codes.

Circuit Court Budget

We believe county commissions should have the same veto power over circuit court budget requests as they have over all other county offices, departments and commissions requesting county funds for salaries, equipment, supplies and services which are not specifically set by state law.

Constitutional Amendments

We believe the Missouri Constitution is too easily changed (having more than 100 amendments since its adoption in 1945 as compared to the U.S. Constitution having only 27 amendments since 1790, including the first ten called The Bill of Rights). A Constitution should be a framework for action rather than a collection of special-interest taxes and programs. Therefore, we support an amendment to the Missouri Constitution requiring a two-thirds majority rather than a simple majority to adopt amendments. We believe that only a simple majority vote should be necessary to completely remove existing constitutional amendments previously adopted by a simple majority.

County Government

We believe any county should be authorized to adopt a charter form of government (home rule) if approved by a majority vote.

We oppose any efforts to change existing elected offices in second, third, or fourth class counties to appointed positions.

We support the consolidation of county offices and/or facilities when desirable and practical.

We support giving the voters of a county the authority to approve the sale of property built from voter-approved county bond issues.

We encourage county governments to develop reasonable and adequate emergency preparedness programs including possible emergency drills.

We believe school tax increases and bond issues should be placed before local voters no more frequently than once a year.

We support decoupling and/or changes in the salary-setting procedures for elected county officials that will simplify, make more equitable, and less political the process for establishing salaries for county elected officials.

We believe county commissioners should be notified in advance of hearings, as well as proposed regulatory or operational changes which will affect the counties. In many cases, local elected officials and taxpayers find out about changes after the fact.

We support legislation that would give county governments equal standing with both the municipality and the local developer when tax increment financing districts are established, including the following:

1. Permanent county government representation on a municipality's T.I.F. (Tax Increment Financing) Commission; and
2. A prohibition on the General Assembly from diverting revenue from voter-approved county sales taxes.

We support state law authorizing county commissioners to enact a temporary county burn ban during a declared drought disaster with an exemption for agricultural operations using best management practices. We also support authorizing county commissioners to impose appropriate penalties for enforcement.

County Government Audits

We believe counties and other local tax-supported political subdivisions that are supported primarily by taxes should be audited by competent outside auditors or auditing firms on a regular basis, and audit conclusions should be published.

We believe fire protection, sewer, ambulance and water districts that are supported by taxes should be audited the same as any other tax-supported district.

County Planning and Zoning

If planning and zoning becomes necessary, it should be administered at the county level and counties should be allowed to enact zoning authority for specific concerns such as solid

waste disposal. Only the unincorporated areas and not the incorporated areas should be able to vote for the acceptance or rejection of planning and zoning.

We oppose legislation granting county commissioners the authority to name county planning commissions to develop a comprehensive master plan even if the master plan would go to a vote of the people.

We favor legislation that would prohibit non-charter, first class counties from imposing regulations or requiring permits for agricultural land or buildings. Missouri statutes contain such a limitation on second and third class counties.

We favor the regulation of agriculture being limited to state jurisdiction and do not believe local jurisdiction, such as county commissions and county health organizations should be allowed to regulate agriculture.

Counties developing a land-use policy should ensure a policy favorable to agriculture. We urge all county governments to allow their respective county Farm Bureau the opportunity to help draft a county land-use policy.

We oppose the taking of property for road frontage as a condition for county approval of non-commercial building permits. We also oppose the addition of other unrelated requirements as a condition for the approval of non-commercial building permits.

We oppose changing existing state law setting the minimum size of parcels for subdivided development in the unincorporated area of the county.

Economic Development

Economic development is important to the vitality of all areas of the state. We support efforts by the state legislature and the Department of Economic Development to address the economic development needs in Missouri's agricultural communities.

An example of such a program is the development of rural enterprise zones which give businesses incentives to build and expand in rural areas.

We believe that grain processing plants should be eligible for enterprise zones the same as manufacturing plants which qualify now.

We support efforts to spur economic growth in areas of persistent poverty. We encourage additional use of programs such as USDA's Operation Strike Force and legislative proposals like the 10-20-30 Act.

We support state efforts to attract commodity processing facilities.

Federal Government

We support the designation of the operations of the Commodity Credit Corporation and FSA Loan Services as essential during government shutdowns.

If any part of the federal government is shut down due to a failure of Congress to pass an appropriations bill, no Member of Congress should be paid for the duration of the shutdown. No Member of Congress should receive back pay when the shutdown ends. Their pay should be forfeited.

If any part of the federal government is operating under a continuing resolution, all Members of Congress should receive only 50% of their salary for the duration of the continuing resolution, with no back pay.

Initiative Petitions

We believe out-of-state interests should be restricted as much as possible from instigating changes to Missouri's Constitution and laws through the initiative petition process.

We support legislation which would require sponsoring organizations of initiative petitions to be identified and give accurate and detailed public notice of the provisions contained in the statutory or constitutional changes being proposed. Such notice should be given in advance of any efforts to obtain signatures.

We support requiring signature gatherers be registered Missouri voters.

We support requiring signature gatherers to disclose if they are paid or volunteers.

We support requiring a public hearing or independent review of proposed ballot initiatives by the bipartisan Joint Committee on Legislative Research prior to final approval of ballot language by the Secretary of State.

We support legislation which would require people gathering signatures on an initiative petition to ask potential signers of the petition to first read the ballot title.

We support limiting the use of professional signature gathering organizations for initiative petition efforts, including prohibiting payment on a per-signature basis and requiring them to register with the state.

We support requiring detailed cost estimates and proposed funding sources with any proposed ballot initiative for voter approval.

We recommend that when a ballot measure proposed by initiative petition or legislation is approved for inclusion on the Missouri ballot, and Missouri Farm Bureau has no policy on that issue, that Missouri Farm Bureau make an effort to inform members of the pro and con facts of the issue.

We further recommend that Missouri Farm Bureau poll county presidents to determine whether to establish a position on the initiative after providing appropriate educational materials.

We support granting the Secretary of State the authority for charging reasonable fees when filing a ballot initiative for the purpose of discouraging frivolous and repetitive initiative petitions.

We believe that for initiated constitutional amendments, proponents must collect signatures equal to at least eight percent of the most recent gubernatorial vote in all of Missouri's Congressional districts.

Mailing Lists

We oppose county, city, state and federal government agencies from making mailing lists available to the private sector to be used for business solicitation purposes.

Public Employees

We believe the law preventing the use of public employees on public time and the use of other public resources to pass or defeat a constitutional amendment or proposition before the voters for their approval should be strictly enforced.

Redistricting

Individuals residing illegally in the United States should be excluded from the U.S. Census for the purpose of redistricting congressional districts.

Rural Fire Protection

We believe it should remain the right of the citizens in rural communities to determine whether they will be served by volunteer fire departments or tax-supported fire districts.

Whenever possible, we believe rural fire district boundaries should be established to include all of a landowner's contiguous property if the landowner desires to be included in the fire district.

We support legislation that would remove population restrictions in 321.322 RSMo as to provide for a five year phase-out for all fire protection districts and membership departments affected by a municipality annexation.

We believe the same protections should apply to rural fire districts as school districts when subject to forced annexation by municipalities.

We believe any person running for election to a rural fire district board in Third and Fourth Class Counties must live and vote in the fire district he or she is running in.

Rural Housing

We urge federal agencies to examine their programs to ensure that calculations for housing assistance treat outstate rural residents the same as residents in rural metropolitan statistical areas.

Rural Subdivision Streets

We believe rural subdivision street maintenance should be the responsibility of the property owners. If county government accepts the responsibility of rural subdivision street maintenance, county courts should have the authority to levy street improvement taxes.

Rural Water Districts

We oppose efforts to weaken or repeal the authority of rural water districts relative to local control and administration of rural water services.

Sovereign Immunity

We support the complete restoration of sovereign immunity for local government and public officials when acting in an official capacity of the office, and further, if sovereign immunity cannot be restored, we oppose raising the limits of sovereign immunity on local agencies.

State and Federal Legislatures

We believe that the Congress of the U.S. should live under the same legislative laws as mandated for the general public, i.e., medical care, retirement pensions, equal opportunities, discrimination, etc.

We are in favor of both the State and Federal legislative bodies having a mandatory study period of at least one week on any bill that comes out of committee. We feel that in order for a legislator to make an informed decision on a bill he/she should have time to go over it before they make a decision and then are held accountable for his/her vote.

We are concerned that the integrity of the state and federal legislative process has deteriorated by allowing amendments of an unrelated subject matter to be attached to pending legislation. We believe this practice of piggybacking amendments should be corrected either legislatively or through a constitutional amendment.

We urge the Missouri General Assembly and Congress to fully exercise their authority under our system of “checks and balances” by overseeing regulatory actions by the Executive Branch and its agencies.

We oppose the use of executive orders to bypass the legislative process.

We oppose any effort to reduce the size of the Missouri House of Representatives.

We oppose redistricting that reduces rural representation in the General Assembly. We are concerned with the passage of new redistricting guidelines in 2018 and would support legislative efforts to protect rural representation.

We support maintaining the legislature’s existing authority to amend voter-approved laws.

Our nation’s founding fathers deliberately chose representative republic as our system of government, not direct democracy. Under the legislative process, our elected lawmakers conduct hearings and debate. During this process, differing views are aired publicly, and information that may not have been considered during a ballot initiative campaign can be taken into account. We do not believe voter-approved laws should have special protection under the legislative process.

State Director of Agriculture

We oppose making the director of agriculture an elected position.

State Regulations

We support strengthening requirements that fiscal notes accompanying legislation and proposed regulations estimate cost and benefits to the public.

We support current law requiring the sunset and review of all new and current regulations.

We support preventing state regulations from being stricter than federal law unless justified through a public hearing.

We oppose unnecessary data collection from regulatory permit applicants, including financial disclosure by producers.

We believe state agencies should be assessed financial penalties for failing to act in accordance with mandatory requirements and deadlines contained in state law.

We support the current three-acre exemption on sewage treatment regulations.

We believe the statutory opt-out should be eliminated and counties should oversee administration of on-site sewage treatment regulations.

We strongly oppose the State Health Department contracting with county health officials to enforce stringent health regulations at the county level that result in the discontinuation of county fairs' and local churches' fundraising activities.

EDUCATION

Agricultural Education

Few courses of study and related extracurricular activities do as much for leadership training and personal development as vocational agriculture. Therefore, we favor and urge continued emphasis on agricultural education in Missouri and the United States.

We support the Missouri Agricultural Skills and Knowledge Industry Recognized Credential program developed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to advance students' educational and career opportunities.

We are concerned about actions at the state and federal levels that undermine agricultural education and FFA programs.

We support funding for new start up agricultural education departments and FFA chapters.

We urge the U.S. Department of Education to retain the two professional staff positions in the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education that provide national leadership and support for Agricultural Education and FFA. These positions should be maintained at the current grade level, receive the necessary support for current functions and responsibilities, and be filled by individuals possessing the knowledge, experience and skill to provide leadership in Agricultural Education and FFA.

We encourage students to enter agricultural education with an emphasis on classroom education. We also support financial aid and incentives for students and agricultural education graduates that commit to teaching in the area of agricultural education from rural to urban areas of Missouri.

We encourage school districts to schedule field trips to visit farms in an effort to educate elementary students about the agriculture industry. We encourage Farm Bureau members to host school groups to visit our farms to see what happens on both small and large scale agriculture operations.

We believe all public universities in Missouri should accept certain agricultural education courses to fulfill entrance requirements such as allowing three units of vocational agriculture to meet the requirement for two units of science.

We believe there is a need for advanced training of adult farm employees in today's farming operations. We support the institution of certificate programs through the University of

Missouri, University Extension, state colleges, community colleges and area vocational schools that would meet the educational needs and provide the technical training of farm employees.

We support restoring funding by the state for adult agricultural education.

We believe that all state-funded educational institutions in Missouri should be encouraged to offer an introductory agriculture course as a component of general education requirements.

We support the ALOT (Agricultural Leadership of Tomorrow) program.

We believe agriculture education programs offered in secondary educational institutions should be twelve-month programs. All teachers within these programs should be employed to teach on a twelve-month contract.

Universities producing agriculture graduates aspiring to become teachers should be provided a solid foundation knowledge and understanding of the culture of rural America and production agriculture.

Agriculture in the Classroom

We commend the Agriculture in the Classroom program, which has developed educational materials, including online programs, on agriculture for use in the school systems and would encourage their acceptance in the curricula of all schools.

We favor increasing the annual federal appropriations for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's "Agriculture in the Classroom" program.

Career and Technical Education

We support the establishment of the Career and Technical Education Advisory Council (CTEAC) within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). We firmly believe establishing the CTEAC is an important step toward making Missouri a leader in industry and business and strengthening Missouri's leadership in the field of agriculture.

We support the Perkins Act as the principal source of federal funding for secondary and postsecondary career and technical education (CTE) programs.

We support federal appropriations for the formula grant program that benefits states and ultimately local school districts providing CTE programs.

Missouri should remain a participant in the formula grant program by continuing the federally required maintenance of effort.

We support career and technical education and believe student organizations such as FFA and FCCLA should remain an "intra-curricular" element of high school programs. We oppose changes in the Missouri School Improvement Program Standards and Indicators Manual or other actions that would undermine the importance of student organizations as an integral part of career and technical education.

Credit Transferability

We urge greater progress in the development of a standardized system for the equal transfer of like-kind credits such as math, science, English, etc., within all accredited universities, colleges and community colleges in Missouri.

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

We believe the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education should hold public meetings when restructuring may affect delivery of services/programs to local schools.

We support efforts to ensure the State Board of Education remains independent and exercises its appropriate constitutional authority.

We urge the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to continue to use public funding to support public education that is accessible to all children in the State of Missouri.

We urge the Missouri General Assembly and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to ensure that resources provided to local school districts, including Career & Technical Programs, do not fall below 2010 levels.

Driver Education

We believe driver education should be made available to all Missouri high school students.

Economic Education

We favor basic instruction in economic principles for teachers and students in our public schools.

Federal Department of Education

We believe that decisions affecting education, including the distribution of tax revenue, should be made at the state and local level. Therefore, we support the dissolution of the Federal Department of Education.

Foreign Students

We believe Missouri students should be given priority for financial assistance and admission over foreign students into tax supported institutions of higher education.

Higher Education

We believe that fiscal efficiency is of the utmost importance at all Missouri institutions of higher education.

We believe that financial aid packages should keep pace with annual increases in both tuition and associated fees.

We do not believe any academic institution should compete with agricultural producers for farmland unless:

1. It can be proven that land already owned by the institution is not suitable;
2. Efforts were made to contract for the production with local farmers; and
3. The institution conducts public outreach to explain the reasons for its actions.

We believe a greater emphasis should be placed on education in International Marketing.

We believe persons desiring to bequeath land to an institution of higher education should do so without stipulation to allow for the best use of the resource.

We do not believe admission standards should include a foreign language requirement.

Certain vocational agriculture and human environmental science courses should qualify as science units.

We do not believe that academic standards should be too reliant upon test scores and class rank. Non-academic factors such as willingness to work hard and strong leadership skills are often a better predictor of success.

We believe the governing body of each institution of higher education in Missouri should include an active agricultural producer.

We believe a greater emphasis should be placed on professors teaching rather than nonteaching activities.

We believe that credits earned within a school or university should be acceptable in every academic program at the school or university.

We believe that all four year state funded college and university institutions in Missouri should be encouraged to offer an introductory agriculture course taught by faculty within the Agriculture Department to educate students in a way that will allow them to make informed decisions regarding agriculture issues as a component of their humanities or elective requirements.

We support line item budgeting to provide administrators with greater control of their finances.

We believe a strong system of public higher education is essential to our state in order to provide Missouri residents affordable and meaningful post high school educational opportunities.

Higher Standards of Education

In keeping with the principles of Farm Bureau philosophy, we support a strong academic education for all Missouri students. We strongly support the right and role of parental responsibility for their children's attendance and performance in public schools. We would also encourage increased parental accountability and involvement in their children's evaluation, assessment and curriculum through local boards of education.

We recognize that students should be expected to obtain proficiency in the basics of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and history. To this end, adequate public hearings and legislative approval should be required before offering the academic standards and statewide assessment system to the local school board for approval or rejection.

We oppose implementation of the Common Core Standards at the state and federal level.

We believe the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Accredited with Distinction designation for school districts should be based on the performance standards set forth in the MSIP-5 final rule 5CSR20-100.105.

We oppose changes in Missouri high school graduation credit requirements or additional assessments that restrict course options for students such as agriculture education and other electives.

We do not believe it to be in the best interest of Missouri educators or Missouri students to implement an exit exam for high school graduation. We will not support any standards or

assessment system to be used for punitive actions against local school districts, such as withholding of state school funds, consolidation of schools, or the removal of local school boards.

We favor an educational system that is driven by academic standards that can be objectively tested. We further believe that the education of our children can best be managed on a local level.

We oppose usurping local control with new grade and course level expectations (GLE and CLE) for high school social studies as set forth by the state and federal departments of education for the teaching of “Principles of Constitutional Democracy.” The United States is a constitutional republic of federated states with a representative form of government.

We believe that A+ funds should be available for students who meet the requirements and that students be allowed to use the amount of money they receive at any community college or four-year institution.

We support Missouri Farm Bureau being engaged in legislative discussions regarding charter schools in rural Missouri.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

We support provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to allow students with disabilities to be disciplined in the same way other students are disciplined provided that the student’s behavior is not related to his or her disability.

Language

We favor English as the compulsory language in all schools. Bilingual education shall be limited to a transitional role.

Length of School Year

In order to be competitive in an increasingly complex world, we favor improving the quality of education within the time frame of the existing school year.

We oppose extending the minimum school year beyond the current 174 days.

Parents As Teachers

We favor full funding by the state for the Parents as Teachers program.

Practical Arts

We encourage school districts to increase curriculum offerings and embedded credit in practical art fields, family and consumer sciences, industrial arts and trades, agricultural education, and financial literacy education.

Pupil-Teacher Ratio

We favor the State Department of Education encouraging local school boards to lower their pupil-teacher ratio in the elementary grades by working to increase funding in the school foundation program. We believe each school district should have the authority to establish its own ratio.

Retired Teachers

We support raising the number of hours that retired teachers can work in critical shortage employment school districts while still drawing full retirement.

We support the Missouri School Teachers' Retirement to continue to be controlled by the Public School and Education Employee Retirement Systems of Missouri (PSRS/PEERS) and not being changed by the legislative process.

School Boards

We favor local control in the form of elected school boards for the management of school districts.

We believe that convicted sex offenders should not serve on local school boards.

School Employees

We are opposed to strikes by school employees.

We favor legislation that would penalize teachers or other school employees who deliberately violate the law by striking after they have signed their contracts.

We believe all certified staff, including vocational agriculture education instructors, enrolled in the Public School Retirement System should remain exempt from Social Security.

School Finance

We support the concept of a minimum tax levy base in order for local school districts to receive state funds. We oppose any increase in the current minimum tax levy. We believe any school foundation formula should achieve an equitable distribution of funds for rural school districts. We strongly support full funding of the foundation formula for education.

We continue to believe decision-making should remain at the local level as much as possible, that local school districts should be allowed more creative school financing authority, that state management and local administration expenses be kept to a minimum, and that teacher salaries and educational materials receive high priority as increased funding is made available.

Due to the financial cuts to schools, we believe that two rural school districts in the same county with 300 students or less be allowed to share a superintendent of schools.

We believe that student participation in Farm Bureau Youth Leadership Day, any bonafide 4-H or FFA activity, or organized competitions at the Missouri State Fair, should be an excused absence and the school should not be penalized in the school funding formula as a result of their absence.

We are concerned that local governing bodies, particularly school boards, refuse to roll back tax levies to comply with the state constitution.

We believe that the state constitution has precedence over statutory laws and that failure to comply with the constitution should be grounds for removal from office.

We believe that state funds should be made available to rural school districts for the construction of school buildings through such programs as matching grants or low or no interest loans.

We oppose tax funded child care facilities in our public schools.

We believe the percentage of funding for programs within the Missouri Department of Education should not be cut after a program is started.

School Safety

In response to increased school violence, we support districts that work to increase student safety by appropriate means they deem necessary, including but not limited to training for staff, additional security measures and/or personnel, and allowing teachers/staff with proper training/certification to carry firearms on district property.

Student Loans

We favor the continuation of student loan and work programs. We believe, however, there should be uniform enforcement of penalties for not repaying the loans.

Student Records

We believe that when a student moves to a new school, all records, including academic and discipline records, should be required to be transferred to the new school. Furthermore, we believe any current expulsions or suspensions should be honored by the receiving school. However, records should not be released until all unpaid fees are resolved.

Summer School

We believe summer school is a suitable alternative to retaining students who are not ready to advance to the next grade level as long as they master skills at the same level as students progressing to the same grade level.

We believe summer school in Missouri public schools should be revised to put an emphasis on the curriculum offered during the regular school year.

Teacher Retention

We support due process with regard to teacher employment and retention.

Teacher Salary

We support a state initiative to increase teachers' salaries, if funded by state general revenue.

Testing and Accountability

We favor having present holders of lifetime teaching certificates recertified every few years to be able to continue teaching.

We favor establishing a basic knowledge test for teachers along the lines of the tests administered to eighth grade students except on a much higher level. We believe that establishing such a program would improve the performance of teachers, create a more favorable public opinion of our teachers and result in a better environment in our schools.

We believe that college teachers, who are training teachers, should be required to take a sabbatical leave every five years and go teach that subject in a public school.

New college teachers who are training teachers need to have previous teaching experience in public schools.

We support modifying the Missouri teacher certification requirements to better meet the needs of today's agricultural education teachers.

We believe DESE should examine the alternative teacher certification program to ensure requirements are rigorous and relevant for individuals seeking certification.

University of Missouri

Missouri Farm Bureau has a long history of supporting the University of Missouri, particularly the teaching, research and Extension efforts in the College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (CAFNR). We believe strongly that a land-grant university is a public university dedicated to meeting the educational and research needs of the state with a strong emphasis on agriculture. We encourage University of Missouri administrators to follow carefully the basic principles of a land-grant university by providing ready access to students from the public sector, ongoing funding of programs with public funds and the continuation of a strong agricultural research and Extension effort.

We believe it is important for the State of Missouri to have broad representation on the University of Missouri Board of Curators. At least one curator should be involved in agriculture.

We believe CAFNR should emphasize the importance and mechanics of modern production agriculture to all students in the college, especially those who intend to pursue careers in the regulatory environment.

We believe that funding above base levels for Agricultural Experiment Stations should be used at the discretion of their respective advisory boards.

We support the Life Science Center and believe agriculture should be a key component of the Center's mission and research programs.

We support increased university, state and federal funding for the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI).

We support federal appropriations for university policy centers, including FAPRI, as authorized in the research title of the 2014 Farm Bill to provide objective, unbiased agricultural policy analysis to Congress.

We believe Agricultural Research Stations play an important role in agricultural research.

We support additional funding for competitive research grants, infrastructure and support staff.

We support increased funding for the Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station (MoAES) Fund earmarked for agriculture research stations.

We urge CAFNR to support continuation of the Livestock Judging Team in the Division of Animal Sciences.

ELECTION LAWS

Campaign Reform

We believe there should be election law reforms at the state and federal levels to afford challengers the same opportunities as incumbents. We favor campaign spending limits. Other

reforms could include such things as limits on amounts of money collected for campaigns, unfair use of travel, staff and franking privileges by incumbents, individual contributions to candidates, size of “war chests”, and a prohibition on contributions to state incumbents during a legislative session.

We reaffirm our policy supporting campaign contribution limits and support legislation putting campaign limits in place as well as further increasing transparency through the electronic reporting process.

We have concerns with individuals and special interest groups using political committees to make sizeable indirect contributions to candidates, thereby avoiding public disclosure; consequently, we believe such “pass-through funding” by using political committees should be made transparent or eliminated.

We support legislation that only allows financial contributions for Presidential and Congressional candidates from U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote and reside in areas that the candidate would represent.

We are troubled by the amount of negative and misleading advertisements in today’s political campaigns. We support efforts to penalize a candidate’s campaign for advertisements that are found to be untruthful and slanderous.

We oppose any state or federal elected official from changing their party affiliation during their elected term.

We believe the use of recorded messages for campaign purposes should be abolished. We believe campaigns should abide by Missouri’s no-call list.

We support keeping term limits for state legislators at the maximum combined total of sixteen years, but allowing any combination of years served in the Missouri House and/or Senate up to sixteen years total.

Candidate Requirements

We believe all candidates should be required to be a resident of the area they will be representing for at least one year before they can be elected to any office.

In order to be placed on ballots, we support requiring candidates to provide current paid tax receipts on personal and real property, including proof of residency.

We support amending current law by deleting the provision that allows a thirty day grace period for candidates who are found delinquent in the payment of any taxes.

Election Day Registration

We oppose election day voter registration.

Elections

In order to minimize costs, we believe all elections, including presidential primaries and all state ballot issues, should be submitted to the voters on a regularly scheduled election day.

We favor the reopening of filing for candidacy in the event of the death of a candidate prior to an election.

We favor changing the statute on voter fraud from a misdemeanor to a felony.

We urge Congress to prohibit the news media from reporting election results and exit poll results prior to the closing of all applicable polling places.

We support the Electoral College and the certification process.

We believe funeral homes should be required to notify county clerks when a person dies so the person can be removed from the voter registration roster. In addition, when a new resident registers to vote, the county clerk should be required to notify the county clerk where the resident moved from so the person is not registered to vote in two places.

We oppose changing the U.S. Constitution to allow foreign-born citizens to run for President of the United States.

We oppose early voting, but we support no-excuse absentee voting.

Ethics

We support a mandatory waiting period after which ex-legislators can become registered lobbyists.

We support further restrictions on gifts from lobbyists to state legislators.

We support prohibiting campaign contributions to state legislators during a state legislative session.

Voter Identification

We support a voter photo identification card.

ENERGY

Alternative Energy Sources

We favor expanded efforts to obtain alternative energy sources.

We encourage electric companies and cooperatives to increase their generation of electricity from renewable or green sources such as animal waste, wind, crop by-products, forest biomass and other agricultural residues.

We oppose restrictions on hydroelectric dams which limit their ability to operate at maximum efficiency.

We favor additional tax incentives by the state such as low interest loans, fuel tax considerations or production incentives to encourage the use of renewable energy sources such as wood chips, wood pellets, organic solid waste, bio-diesel and ethanol.

We support the continued expansion of nuclear energy plants, including breeder reactors, as a source of needed energy with adequate safeguards to ensure their safe and environmentally sound use, with increased emphasis regarding the reprocessing of nuclear waste.

We support additional research into disposal and reprocessing of nuclear waste.

We support the goal of deriving 25 percent of our nation's energy from renewable sources by 2025.

With the Missouri Public Service Commission overseeing the costs charged to rate payers, we support amending the Construction Work In Progress Law to allow cost recovery during construction of new power generation facilities in Missouri.

Energy and Agriculture

We favor a strong national energy policy. We support the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and the incentives it provides for the production of traditional and renewable energy sources.

However, further action is needed to address the vulnerabilities of the U.S. energy sector and the resulting impacts on our nation's farmers and ranchers. We urge Congress and the Administration to enact policies that will:

1. Expedite the development of energy resources anywhere in the U.S., including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and Outer Continental Shelf, without unduly impacting the environment;
2. Increase domestic oil refining capacity by streamlining permitting requirements and other regulations;
3. Diversify geographic locations of oil refineries and U.S. energy supplies;
4. Expedite the construction of liquefied natural gas terminals;
5. Reduce the number of specialty blends/boutique fuels;
6. Encourage the use of domestically produced fuels;
7. Incentivize the use of clean coal technology in electric power generation;
8. Expand the utilization of renewable fuels; and
9. Expand and construct nuclear power plants.

Emphasis should be placed on alternative energy-saving technologies, such as minimum tillage (where practical), the use of animal wastes on cropland and pastures, solar drying of grain, high moisture storage of grain, and the development of vegetable oils, ethanol and methane.

We believe, in the event of an energy crisis, agriculture should be granted priority ahead of the other commercial users of fuel and petroleum products.

We believe the current requirement for energy use information tags on home appliances is a useful way to assist consumers in making informed choices when purchasing appliances. However, we oppose efforts by the government to attempt to restrict consumer choice based on energy consumption.

Ethanol, Methane and Bio-Diesel

We believe effort should be made to strike a balance with a goal of profitability in both crop and livestock sectors. We support the Renewable Fuels Standard 2 (RFS 2) as passed by Congress.

We believe the United States must explore all practical options for decreasing our costly dependence on unstable foreign nations for a major portion of our energy needs, namely oil. We support the development and use of renewable energy from feedstocks produced on farms, ranches, and forestlands. Such options include the production of ethanol from grain and cellulosic materials (e.g. crop residues, forest biomass, etc.), bio-diesel from oilseeds and animal

by-products, synthetic gas from biomass sources, and fuel pellets from renewable biomass inputs. We urge the removal of any government obstacles which may be preventing farmers from producing these sources of energy.

We support cooperative efforts between Missouri Farm Bureau and renewable energy industry stakeholders to achieve greater energy independence.

We support the use of reformulated gasoline made with ethanol and diesel fuel with biodiesel as a component of Missouri's plan to bring St. Louis into compliance with air quality standards mandated by the Environmental Protection Agency.

We further believe government grants for alcohol research should go to our Land Grant Colleges and not to oil companies. Information developed from such research should be made available to farmers.

We believe that the production and sale of ethanol and bio-diesel in this state provides numerous economic benefits to the producer and the state's economy.

We oppose any efforts to repeal or reduce the 2 cent/gallon ethanol exemption from the state fuel tax.

We support full funding for the state ethanol and bio-diesel incentive, and we support prioritizing the allocation of state-funded incentives to increase support for the production of renewable fuels from cellulosic materials and livestock by-products.

We support finding a permanent solution in funding renewable fuels incentives for producer-owned production facilities.

Plants receiving funding under the biofuels incentive funds should be encouraged to use a majority of Missouri produced commodities.

The State should promote the use of ethanol by-products for Missouri livestock and poultry producers and support further research on making feed rations with distiller's grains more palatable. We urge ethanol plants operating in Missouri to recognize the importance of livestock producers by making distiller's grains available at the local level. Ethanol plants receiving state incentive funding should be required to make distiller's grains available for purchase by Missouri farmers and ranchers.

We support voluntary pump labeling of ethanol.

We favor the use of ethanol blends and other cleaner burning fuels with an oxygen content level no lower than 3.5%, ensuring that there is a long term market for ethanol.

We favor the use of 20% bio-diesel blends utilizing B100 meeting ASTM D6751 requirements. We also favor the use of B99 meeting ASTM D6751 for marine use.

We support a seasonably flexible bio-diesel blended fuel standard statewide.

We support a 10% ethanol-blended fuel standard statewide.

We support a 15 billion gallon corn-based renewable fuel standard.

We support prohibiting the use of methyl-tertiary-butyl-ether (MTBE) as a fuel additive.

We support maintaining the federal tax incentive for domestically produced cellulosic ethanol and bio-diesel.

We support a state and/or federal tax incentive or credit for the purchase of fueling equipment, machinery and vehicles that run E-85 fuel and/or bio-diesel.

We believe tax credits or incentives should be offered to retailers to increase the installation of E-85 and bio-diesel pumps in Missouri. We encourage commodity groups and committees to increase their education efforts on benefits of bio-fuel usage.

We oppose inclusion of projected indirect land use impacts in figuring greenhouse gas emissions from biofuel production and use.

Propane

We oppose unnecessary and costly new equipment and labor requirements on the delivery of propane.

We are opposed to regulations promulgated under the Environmental Protection Agency's Risk Management Program that requires the development of comprehensive prevention and emergency response programs for propane storage. We believe the regulations provide no additional safeguards and that existing federal, state and local regulations adequately meet public safety goals.

FARM POLICY

Government Farm Program

Recognizing the difficult budget climate in Washington D.C., tough decisions must be made regarding agricultural spending. We believe agriculture should do its part in exercising fiscal restraint, but we also believe deficit reduction should be a shared sacrifice across the federal government. Agriculture programs, conservation in particular, should not shoulder undue burden given these programs account for less than one percent of the overall federal budget.

We believe farmers should receive a reasonable profit for their products. We believe this can best be achieved through a market oriented system by expanding foreign trade and developing new domestic uses for agricultural products. Government farm programs should provide a "safety net" for farmers without unduly interfering with the movement of farm products in the market place. We believe farmers should have the flexibility to respond to the market place.

We believe it is imperative that every effort must be made to limit extreme market volatility, reduce concentration in the production and processing sectors serving farmers, lower taxes, reform burdensome regulations, expand domestic energy production, and to increase domestic and global demand for U.S. agricultural products.

We believe farm programs should be equitable and workable for all commodities and implemented in a manner consistent with our international trade obligations.

In implementing the Farm Bill, we favor allowing the aggregation of base acres for determining farm program eligibility.

We believe the Farm Service Agency should be required to improve the formula used to set Posted County Prices (PCPs) to ensure they accurately reflect local conditions and that the differential between the cash price and PCP does not penalize producers or county elevators.

Aquaculture

We support the efforts of Missouri colleges and universities, Missouri Departments of Agriculture and Conservation, the Missouri Aquaculture Association, and the Missouri Aquaculture Advisory Council in establishing facilities and programs in aquaculture research and development in Missouri.

Beekeeping

We support efforts to keep the apiculture industry viable in the United States. We can import honey, but we cannot import the pollination benefits of the beekeeping industry to American agriculture.

We support research to prevent and eliminate the diseases and pests that are threatening the beekeeping industry.

Census of Agriculture

The Census of Agriculture is the most comprehensive set of information on agriculture available nationwide on the county level. It is in the best interest of the entire agricultural community that the Census of Agriculture be complete and accurate.

Conservation Programs

Soil and water conservation should be the primary focus of programs administered by USDA and its agencies with an emphasis on working lands.

Among existing programs, the Environmental Quality Incentives Programs (EQIP) is especially valuable when directed at soil and water protection on land in production, and we support full funding. EQIP is an important tool for helping farmers comply with local, state and federal regulations.

We believe more emphasis should be placed on working lands programs such as EQIP rather than land retirement programs like the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

We support giving priority to farmers in traditional production agriculture regarding distribution of EQIP funds. The priority should be on livestock and cropping systems with the goal of assisting producers in optimizing positive soil and water conservation impacts.

We support the allocation of a portion of Missouri EQIP funds for local resource needs to be distributed on a county basis at levels comparable to those of recent years.

We believe marginal/highly erodible land should return as the main focus of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). We believe the current cap/limit of 27 million acres that can be enrolled in CRP should continue. We do not support early exit from the CRP program without penalty.

For the purpose of current or future CRP sign-up, USDA should define reseeding as:

1. From forage to row crop to forage;
2. From one forage species to another; or
3. Broadcasting seed over an existing stand to diversify current populations.

We support providing federal and/or state incentives for erosion control improvements on CRP acreage returning to agricultural production beginning in the first year.

We believe tall fescue should continue to be an acceptable cool-season grass species in seeding mixes for new and reentering CRP acreage.

We recommend modifying the Wetland Reserve Program, which is now part of USDA's Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, to lower the national enrollment cap, eliminate annual payments and eliminate permanent easements.

We believe criteria for enrolling Missouri farmland in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and other conservation programs should emphasize the importance of "working lands" so as not to create unfair competition by taking entire farms or fields out of production.

We believe any post-contract changes in requirements of programs administered by USDA should be realistic, based on good agricultural practices, and not have undue impact on future and existing eligibility for these programs.

We support grazing as a mid-contract management practice in the CRP so long as the livestock being grazed belong to the landowner/operator and his/her own land, without any deduction in payment from USDA. We oppose the use of grazing by non-landowner/operators for any compensation under this program.

Corn

We urge public agencies and private companies to eliminate the 50 percent acreage restrictions on Bt corn in Southeast Missouri.

Cotton

We believe existing textile agreements should be rigidly enforced.

We believe all options should be pursued as to support the domestic textile industry.

We favor the enactment of legislation which prohibits changing the classification of a bale of cotton after it leaves the grower's control.

We recommend that cotton grading standards be continually monitored and upgraded to accurately reflect the true value of cotton. We insist on a system that is reliable and repeatable.

We request that the University of Missouri (Delta Center) continue to be a leader in research and development of new production techniques for quality cotton in the Northern Delta Area, including working with irrigation, particularly scheduling and amount of water applied to maximize yields and conserve use of water and energy.

We support continuation of the USDA's Cotton Marketing Advisory Committee.

We encourage more research in the use of whole cottonseed for feed and human consumption.

We ardently support the boll weevil eradication program. We also favor a concerted effort between Midsouth states on this vital endeavor. We encourage cotton farmers to destroy cotton stalks as soon as possible after harvest as a management tool to aid in boll weevil control.

We support state financial aid for implementation of the boll weevil program in Missouri, and we support federal financial support for boll weevil eradication in Missouri and all cotton producing states.

It is crucial that producers not be placed at the mercy of one of two dominant companies for seed supplies of major crops. Therefore, we urge that the Agricultural Experiment Stations, in collaboration with Cotton Incorporated, pursue a vigorous cotton breeding program to ensure the release of superior public cotton varieties.

We support the National Cotton Council and the programs of Cotton Incorporated.

We support self-assessment of Missouri cotton producers for the purpose of funding cotton research.

Dairy

We believe federal dairy programs should reflect the dynamics of today's dairy industry.

In general, we believe federal dairy policies should:

1. Support producer margins (i.e. income minus feed costs) rather than farm-level milk and/or product prices;
2. Limit extreme price volatility;
3. Encourage milk market administrators to more clearly define milk pricing from co-op to farm; and
4. Enhance our competitiveness in the global marketplace.

We support enhancements in the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) and Livestock Gross Margin Program (LGM-Dairy) for dairy producers. Both programs should be administered by USDA's Risk Management Agency with producers continuing to have the ability to choose programs. Modifications in the DMC could include changing the payment calculation from a two-month to a one-month period, adjusting the feed cost coefficient and/or increasing the base margin. We believe premium support for LGM-Dairy and DMC should be at levels similar to crop insurance.

Milk protein concentrates (MPC) should be classified as a dairy product in trade negotiations and agreements. We encourage more MPC production in the United States.

We support industry efforts with the CWT (Cooperative Working Together) program and encourage 100% participation. We support the concept of expanding the present Export Assistance Program of CWT.

We support a dairy self-help program to enhance exports, funded and controlled by the producers.

We support increasing minimum solids to current California standards.

We believe the Missouri Department of Agriculture should increase funding for the Johnes Disease eradication program.

We oppose the sale of raw milk except for the current exemptions provided for in Missouri statutes. Producers who choose to sell raw milk to the public should be required to have some type of premise inspection to be developed by the State Milk Board. We believe sellers of raw milk should be required to register with the State Milk Board and maintain a current distribution list. We support requiring all raw milk to have a warning label.

We believe state law should be clarified to allow licensed Grade A retail raw milk to be sold at retail.

We oppose the Missouri “Unfair Milk Practices Act Section 416.415” and strongly urge the Missouri Legislature to repeal said law.

We support the national Dairy Pride Bill, banning the sale of artificial or imitation dairy products not labeled imitation.

We support placing milk vending machines in schools.

We support the AFBF Dairy Revenue Protection insurance program.

Dairy Federal Milk Marketing Order

We believe the Federal Milk Marketing Orders should be reformed with the goals of increasing transparency and making the formulas and price classes used to compute milk prices more reflective of current market conditions. Policy changes could include creating a competitive pay price and eliminating make allowances.

We oppose bloc voting by dairy cooperatives.

We support modified bloc voting.

We support dairy farmers being able to vote independently and confidentially during an FMMO approval or referendum process.

We support eliminating provisions on a “no” vote on a referendum causing elimination of the entire FMMO.

We support modifying the referendum approval threshold to require a two-thirds majority of the voting producers and a two-thirds majority of the voting milk volume to amend or issue an FMMO.

We support flexible Class I location differentials that are adjusted for seasonality. We support more frequent evaluation of Class I location differentials. We support an update to Class I location differentials that includes higher differentials in surplus milk production regions to limit milk moving into deficit regions of the U.S.

We oppose transportation credits in all FMMO.

We support a minimum of 10 delivery days per month days in the Southeast and Appalachian FMMOs. Delivery-day requirements should be increased for other FMMOs on a case-by-case basis.

We support a study on the economic impact of tighter qualification criteria on FMMO pools, including but not limited to the ability to establish competitive pay pricing in the U.S.

We support consideration of removing barrel cheddar cheese from the Chicago Mercantile Exchange spot markets.

We support improvements in milk pricing formulas to eliminate adverse impacts such as a wide blockbarrel spread, whey price inversion or other price misalignments.

We support modifying make allowances to make them equal to a percentage of the commodity value.

We support capping make allowances to no more than 10% of the value of wholesale dairy commodities or classified milk prices.

We oppose milk price make allowances being indexed for factors such as inflation, labor or energy costs.

We support an economic examination of changes to milk price yield factors and the impact on farm level milk prices.

We support simplified milk pricing provisions.

We would be willing to consider modifications to milk pricing regulations that facilitate enhanced export opportunities.

We support Class I beverage milk pricing and pooling provisions, including all beverage-style products using milk or dairy products as an ingredient.

Equine

We believe equine farms, businesses and related operations should be recognized as a bona fide segment of Missouri agriculture. We believe equine should be classified as a “livestock entity” and strongly oppose any efforts to relate equine as “pets” or “companion animals.”

We support the humane use of animals including but not limited to equine for recreation and work.

We believe the processing of cull and/or unsound horses should not be prohibited by state or federal statutes or regulations. A ban on the processing of such horses would only increase the likelihood of abuse or neglect. Starvation or lack of medical treatment for unwanted horses is a far worse fate than humane euthanasia.

We oppose a federal ban on horse processing or restrictions on the movement of horses that may be used for human consumption outside the U.S. We oppose the elimination of funds for federal inspection at processing facilities. Furthermore, we strongly oppose the prosecution of individuals moving, selling, purchasing or transporting horses to be processed either in the U.S. or abroad.

We strongly support reduction of unmanaged feral equine numbers on federal lands by methods other than adoption. Alternative population control measures may include birth-control drugs and neutering.

We encourage the University of Missouri Extension and Outreach Program to support Missouri’s growing equine industry by providing a full-time equine specialist to assist local Extension centers.

We encourage Missouri Farm Bureau to help coordinate a coalition of equine organizations and an equine education program.

We encourage better communication between the State Veterinarian, local veterinarian, and person in-custody of equine in moving and transporting across state lines.

We support seeking the necessary funding for an annual comprehensive National Agricultural Statistics Service survey for equine.

We support use and access for horses and mules on state and federal public lands where sufficient acreage and conditions exist to permit such use, and scientific data by appropriate authorities does not exist to preclude such use.

We support the inclusion of equine in federal disaster assistance and farm bill programs.

Forestry

We support the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in the effort to encourage the overall management and the planting of trees. Programs administered by these agencies provide valuable resources to forest landowners and should be utilized in all 114 counties. In addition, we recommend that policy, application and approval processes be streamlined to provide efficient and effective services to landowners.

We recommend the Missouri Department of Agriculture recognize forestry as an agricultural commodity. We further recommend that the Missouri Department of Agriculture include forestry commodity information and alternative forest product information in the publication Missouri Farm Facts.

We support sustainable, multiple-use forest management. We support programs that encourage sustainable forest management like the Sustainable Forestry Initiative and the Missouri Tree Farm Program.

We urge the University of Missouri and the Missouri Department of Conservation to jointly research forest management practices that will improve the quality and health of our forests in this state.

We support the efforts to assist private landowners to improve forest health and conditions so that they are less susceptible to the threat of natural and exotic pests. We further support efforts to eradicate exotic pests keeping in mind the preservation of private property rights.

We urge the cooperation of all government agencies in efforts to improve the management of private and public forests. We urge research to improve the quality and productivity of private, non-industrial forestlands. We support the development and implementation of enhanced educational, technical and marketing assistance programs for private landowners. Enhanced educational efforts should stress the economic and environmental benefits of Best Management Practices.

We strongly support the preservation of private property rights as landowners consider timber production and marketing options. We support voluntary logger training and certification. We oppose the implementation of new regulations that:

1. Impose a severance tax or conservation bond on timber sales;
2. Restrict the size or method of timber harvest;
3. Require prior notification of a timber harvest;
4. Require reforestation or reseeding;
5. Impose diameter limits on trees processed by chip mills and forest biomass processors;
6. Establish a permit system for wood processed by chip mills;
7. Adopt a Forest Practices Act; and

8. Impose a moratorium on chip mills operating in the state of Missouri.

We strongly encourage the Missouri Department of Conservation to continue technical forestry assistance and the quarterly price trend report for private landowners.

We support continued efforts to reduce the threat of wildfires by using sound science and management techniques such as prescribed burns and selective logging to decrease high fuel loads.

We continue to believe alternative #5 in the 2005 Land and Resource Management Plan for the Mark Twain National Forest best represents the needs of Missouri landowners and other stakeholders.

We believe the USFS should concentrate its human and financial resources on addressing oak decline which will optimize forest health and sustainability while increasing rural economic growth.

Horticulture

We urge Farm Bureau members to become aware of the possible relaxation of Q-37 restrictions by the USDA. Q-37 regulates the quantities of plants and plant material entering the U.S. through inspection points.

We support the clarification of horticulture as an agricultural activity that should receive appropriate sales tax exemptions.

We support Farm Bureau's membership in the Minor Use Farmer Alliance. We believe there are legislative changes that could improve the regulatory climate for minor use chemicals as well as provide incentives for manufacturers to maintain and pursue new registration.

We believe full funding should be provided for the USDA's IR-4 to cut the cost of collecting reregistration data.

We recommend that Missouri universities and the Cooperative Extension Service increase research in production, processing and marketing of horticultural crops.

We oppose laws that require horticultural container volume labeling and producer name.

Livestock

We support increased funding for USDA's foot and mouth disease vaccine bank.

We support the Risk Management Agency's Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) and Pasture, Rangeland and Forage (PRF) insurance programs.

Minimum Pricing

We oppose efforts to achieve the goals of minimum pricing legislation by establishing interstate grain marketing compacts among states.

Pork

We favor increased research in assisting farmers in marketing pork by developing new products to satisfy the convenience market and urge the continued promotion of pork products in fast food restaurants and institutions.

We support a standardized pork value pricing system and an accurate reporting of prices.

We support programs by producer-controlled groups that take the lead in education of producers and activists in the state on the issue of medication residues-informing them of proper use, benefits, and safety of feed and water medications.

We encourage producers and packers to work together to keep packers and jobs in the U.S. and to improve public opinion.

Program Compliance

We are opposed to off-setting and cross compliance on commodities and/or farm units in determining compliance with government farm programs.

We believe guidelines need to be clearer in regard to the conservation compliance program so that landowners might have the privilege of caring for their land without getting agency approval on every practice they wish to undertake.

We favor common-sense guidelines in regard to residue cover that take into consideration year to year conditions which vary due to weather and other conditions out of the control of producers.

We oppose the linking of conservation program compliance to crop insurance.

Rice

We support research on blackbird repellent and other methods to control depredation.

We support the distinction made between long and medium grain rice in federal farm programs.

We believe the rice check-off should be applied to rice imports.

We support all necessary steps to include Furrow-Irrigated Rice in the traditional crop insurance program.

Risk Management Insurance

We believe all producers in all states should have access to commodity insurance programs and policies. Limiting the availability of programs and policies discriminates against some producers.

We oppose any reduction in commodity insurance premium subsidies.

To develop a workable insurance program, we support the revamping of field maps with insurance rates based on the real productivity of the land over the past 10 years. Field types in the same operation would need to be broken out separately.

We support commodity insurance premiums that more accurately reflect individual operators and commodity loss ratio histories on insurable farm units.

We believe commodity insurance actuarial maps should be updated to reflect current flood history in regard to high risk commodity insurance premiums.

We believe that producers with farming operations in more than one county which pay the catastrophic coverage commodity insurance premium in one county should be exempt from premium costs in additional counties if the total acres farmed in the additional counties are less than 50 acres per county.

We support the Risk Management Agency's Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) and Pasture, Rangeland and Forage (PRF) insurance programs.

We support the development of risk management programs for identity-preserved and other value-enhanced products including specialty grains.

Soybean rust has the potential to cause damage to the soybean crop. We believe the Risk Management Agency should continue to provide timely information to producers regarding guidelines and potential qualifications for insuring soybean acreage that may be impacted by soybean rust.

School Nutrition Programs

We encourage the use of more red meat, poultry, and fish as well as other farm products in the school lunch program. We strongly oppose restricting meat from school meals. Furthermore, we oppose restricting flavored milk and other dairy products from school meals.

We support promoting milk and dairy product consumption in school nutrition programs.

Only domestically produced products should be used in the school lunch program.

States should be allowed to handle their own school lunch programs using block grants.

We support greater flexibility with the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs to ensure local school districts are able to determine how to meet the nutritional needs of their students.

We support the recent increase in all fruit and vegetable offerings.

We oppose mandatory calorie limits and mandatory limits on lean meat protein and dairy.

We encourage Missouri schools to purchase a percentage of their food from local sources.

Sheep & Goats

We recommend increased state and federal funding for sheep and goat research at the University of Missouri and Lincoln University. We recommend at least two full-time small ruminant specialists to serve from the Lincoln University campus. Farm Bureau supports continued funding of national research centers.

We support the continuation of a strong sheep and goat (meat, milk, wool, pelt and mohair) industry in the state of Missouri and recognize the need for continued promotion.

We support and encourage further development of marketing programs that increase consumer demand for lamb and chevon.

We support the development of a long-term government support program addressing the health issues of the sheep industry (e.g., scrapies eradication, foot rot and internal parasite resistance).

We support a long-term government program addressing the quality of meat and wool production.

We strongly encourage continued research into medication, dewormers and vaccines for minor species of livestock.

We support University Extension and MDA efforts to educate producers about possible copper toxicity in small ruminant diets.

The sheep check-off should apply to both foreign and domestic lamb and consideration should be given to developing a similar check-off program for goats.

We support an increase in the number of quality markets in Missouri for sheep and goats.

We support increased market reporting for sheep and goats by the Missouri Department of Agriculture.

Implementation of a national identification system for livestock in the sheep and goat sector should not be duplicative of the National Scrapie Eradication Program or Country of Origin Labeling requirements.

We strongly support the continuation of the funding of the Livestock Protection Program of the USDA Wildlife Services.

We support youth programs that encourage participation in the sheep and goat industries.

We recognize an increasing need for sheep shearers and encourage programs to develop qualified shearers.

We support a central source of information on pharmaceutical withdrawals for small ruminants.

Soybeans

We believe that vegetable oil in a product should be labeled as to type, such as soy oil, peanut, palm or coconut as opposed to the current "and/or" label.

We support the alternative uses of soybeans in products such as soy-diesel fuel and soy ink.

Sustainable Agriculture

Sustainable agriculture is a term frequently used in today's society. When considering sustainable agriculture, there is only one constant - agriculture is only sustainable when it is profitable.

Farmers and ranchers have always recognized the responsibility to be good stewards of the resources they manage. Sustainable agriculture should rely on measurable results and focus on adaptive management for continual improvements rather than a rigid set of practices.

We support all methods of farming that result in: a profit for the farm operator; a clean environment; an adequate supply of high quality safe food, feed, fiber and fuel; and a better quality of life for present and future generations. 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.

USDA Reorganization

We support efforts to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of all federal agencies not just USDA.

We oppose efforts to move certain USDA functions, such as food safety and inspection and soil and water conservation programs, to other agencies of the federal government.

We oppose any effort to reduce the local control of the locally elected FSA county committee and we oppose federalizing any and all legacy ASCS positions (positions before reorganization and FSA's responsibility for farm loan programs).

We believe the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) should continue to collect and publish county, state and national level data and statistics.

We urge USDA to refocus resources to providing technical assistance.

We support the relocation of USDA agencies to the Kansas City region.

FOREIGN POLICY & INVESTMENTS

General

We support prohibiting foreign ownership of agricultural land even though current state law allows up to 1% of Missouri farmland to be foreign owned. We support reducing the 1% cap.

We are concerned with the amount of foreign investment in agriculture enterprises and we favor continuous monitoring of foreign investments in the United States.

We oppose preferential tax treatment of foreign investors and insist that all foreign investors be subject to the same tax liabilities as U.S. citizens.

We favor maintaining the existing U.S. currency exchange system and oppose any movement to an "Amero" or any combination thereof with Mexico and Canada. Due to the concern for identify theft and privacy issues in our personal lives, we oppose moving to a cashless society with electronic transfers to foreign countries.

We oppose Missouri or any portion thereof being designated as a regional center by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS), which would make the state eligible to accept foreign investments focused on the expansion of agriculture production and infrastructure.

Immigration

We believe immigration reform should include the following four processes:

1. Secure our borders;
2. Deny amnesty to illegal immigrants;
3. Put in place a guest worker program, without amnesty, that will efficiently provide American employers with willing guest workers who come to America legally; and
4. Enforce tough employer sanctions that ensure a full partnership between American business and the American government in the enforcement of our laws on immigration and guest workers. The current system for verifying documents and worker eligibility should be strengthened.

We support reforming the H-2a visa program to better enable American farmers, including those who have year-round labor needs, to recruit legal temporary foreign workers when domestic workers cannot fulfill labor demand.

United Nations

Whereas the United Nations, through its policies and programs, demonstrates philosophies that are in direct conflict with the principles in the U.S. Constitution and with the principles of the free enterprise system; and whereas the United Nations seeks to impose its philosophies upon the American people through a variety of international treaties and agreements; therefore we oppose the ratification of:

The UN Convention on Biological Diversity,

The UN Convention on the Law of the Seas,

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and

The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Due to the fact that there is no scientific consensus to support the theory of global warming, we are opposed to the ratification or implementation by regulation of the Kyoto Protocol to the U.N. Climate Change Treaty. The provisions of this protocol would severely reduce the ability of America and other developed nations to compete with the rest of the world.

We support the withdrawal of the United States from further participation in, and funding of, the United Nations.

HEALTH

General

As the First Responder program is developed, state and federal cost-share money for emergency equipment should be provided as rural counties have the trained volunteers to use the equipment.

We oppose more restrictive supervision rules for physician assistants and/or nurse practitioners. We favor expansion of nurse practitioners' and physician assistants' authority based on their qualifications.

County Health Services

We oppose any proposal calling for a premium tax on health service contracts and insurance premiums to fund community health services.

Emergency Medical Services Personnel

We believe emergency medical services personnel should receive special training to equip them to handle farm-related accidents.

We support the Advanced EMT license process for the state of Missouri as a whole. We support a sustainable Time Critical Diagnosis System in Missouri that allows for a funding system that will support oversight and data collection, as well as updated regulations.

Health Care Reform

We support efforts to improve the present health care delivery system. Reforms should embrace these principles:

1. Health care is primarily the responsibility of the individual. Personal wellness, fitness and preventive care should be basic health goals;
2. Government intervention between providers and receivers of health care should be minimized; and
3. Patients must maintain the right to choose physicians and methods of treatment.

We oppose the “Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act” enacted in 2010 and urge its repeal. With the goals of improving health care access and delivery, we believe Congress should:

1. Eliminate unnecessary government regulations and red tape;
2. Support tax policies that encourage individuals and families to prepare for health care needs, such as tax preferred medical savings accounts;
3. Allow individuals to purchase health insurance policies across state lines;
4. Reform medical liability limits (e.g. impose a ceiling on medical malpractice settlements);
5. Reimburse rural doctors and hospitals at the same rate as urban health care providers for Medicare/Medicaid treated patients; and
6. Consider modifying federal and/or state health care programs to focus on rural health care.

We support the concept of a voucher system to enable individuals to purchase a barebones private health insurance policy and/or a program to allow health insurance carriers to offer lower-priced, no-frills health insurance policies that are not required to contain the various state mandated health benefits.

We oppose national health insurance, a public option, or any form of socialized medicine.

We also oppose state financed programs to provide health insurance coverage for Missouri citizens.

We support the immediate implementation of state and federal tax deductions of the full amount paid by a self-employed taxpayer as a small business expense deduction, including retired or semi-retired individuals, for health insurance.

We believe regulation of the health insurance industry should remain a function of state government and should not be shifted to the federal government.

To ensure that healthcare, particularly in rural areas, will not be further eroded, Farm Bureau should work with healthcare organizations to support enacted measures to address the problem of the spiraling cost of malpractice insurance and the decline in the number of insurance providers for hospital and physician malpractice insurance.

We encourage health care providers, health insurance companies, hospital administrators and others involved in the health care industry to cooperate whenever possible to help contain health care costs. Some examples of cost containment ideas which we support include

elimination of duplicate services and cost shifting, sharing of facilities and specialized equipment, creation of more satellite clinics and increased use of non-physician providers.

We believe it is a reasonable expectation for insurance companies to offer health insurance to individuals with pre-existing conditions at a comparable cost to basic health care plans, assuming that they have proof of basic insurance coverage in the past.

We encourage health insurance companies and health care providers to place more emphasis on preventative care practices especially in the area of education programs.

We encourage the health care industry to publish pricing guidelines for the most common medical procedures and services offered to patients in order to allow individuals a better chance to assess and control their medical costs.

We favor a minimum of 90 days between date of notification and date of cancellation of a health insurance group. We also favor more affordable options for those being cancelled.

We do not support efforts to restrict a Medicare eligible citizen's ability to privately contract with a physician for medical service beyond Medicare-approved treatment.

Home Health Care

We believe home health care agencies, especially those that are small and located in rural areas, have been devastated by changes in the federal payment structure. We support efforts to resolve funding problems in a manner that ensures access and does not jeopardize small businesses.

Medical Information Data Bases

We oppose the establishment of a national data base of personal medical information.

We support the state adopting a statewide Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) preventing doctors from unintentionally over prescribing dangerous drugs. We support doctors, nurses, and physician assistants allowing their designees to access and enter the data. We would support making the PDMP mandatory for all providers.

Medical Schools

We believe admittance to medical schools should be based on academic qualifications rather than referrals.

We support expansion of residencies at training hospitals as well as medical school and nursing school slots while maintaining rigorous admission guidelines.

Nutrition Information

We believe that variety, moderation and balance are the cornerstones of a healthy diet.

We support accurate labeling of food products for consumers.

We oppose deceptive marketing and promotion and/or label claims pertaining to dairy and other food products, implying superiority when compared to other products not bearing such claims.

Rural Health Care

We support a program by state government in cooperation with local individuals and institutions which would provide economic incentives for doctors and registered nurses and licensed practical nurses to practice in rural areas. One such program would be a state-sponsored loan program for medical students and other medical health care professionals with partial forgiveness of the loan if they establish and maintain a practice in a rural area for at least five years.

We support the rural-focused programs of the Missouri Area Health Education Centers (MAHEC), which recruits and provides educational assistance for students from rural areas who are preparing to enter health professions and who will practice in rural areas. We support state funding for the MAHEC separate from, and in addition to, funds currently provided through the Primary Care Resource Initiative for Missouri (PRIMO) program.

We support greater use of non-physician providers to help relieve personnel shortages in underserved rural areas.

We encourage county Farm Bureaus to work cooperatively with other local organizations to help organize and conduct effective physician recruitment programs in their respective rural communities and to explore other local solutions to rural health problems, and to support those physicians by expanding telemedicine and telehealth programs.

We support the implementation/expansion of mental health services in rural Missouri to provide support for law enforcement officers who must deal with troubled individuals. These services need to be an alternative to the 96 hour involuntary hold, or voluntary committal, or do nothing approach for these individuals, which are the three choices currently available to law enforcement for people with mental problems.

We support making it easier for doctors to practice across state lines.

INSURANCE

Department of Insurance

We believe individuals selling burial policies and annuities through funeral homes should meet the same Department of Insurance guidelines for licensing and continuing education as are required for insurance agents in Missouri.

Disaster Assistance

Because of the potential for a destructive earthquake in Missouri and other parts of the country, we support legislation to establish a federal earthquake insurance program to form a workable partnership between federal government and the private insurance industry.

Farm Bureau Insurance

We support the Farm Bureau Insurance Companies in their continued efforts to be the major insurer of farmers, rural residents, and Missouri citizens. The Farm Bureau Insurance Companies were chartered to write business in rural Missouri, and we believe that continues to be the main purpose for the Companies' existence.

Health Insurance

We believe the first concern of health insurance providers should be for their subscribers.

We believe that Farm Bureau should make available the best possible health care coverage at the most affordable rates, under current federal healthcare law. We believe that all areas of the state should have available cost saving programs such as preferred provider organizations.

We support association health plans.

Long Term Care Insurance

We support the audit and certification of rate increases for Long Term Care Insurance as currently conducted by the Missouri Department of Insurance.

No-Fault Insurance

We encourage support of a modified no-fault insurance plan for Missouri that would save money for both the policyholder and insurance carrier.

Proof of Insurance

We believe that the state of Missouri should require proof of insurance at the time of license renewal. Insurance companies should be required to notify the state of Missouri whenever a licensee cancels or drops the insurance or bond required by the law. Further, that the state of Missouri, when notified, notify the licensee that their license is suspended until the required insurance or bond is reestablished.

Rates

We believe the use of age, gender, marital status, geographical location, and driving record is a fair and equitable basis for establishing auto rates.

We believe open competition rating is the best way to assure a strong insurance industry and better services for the people of Missouri.

Safe Driving

We support a safe-driving program for teenagers coupled with financial incentives at the end of five years if the driver remains claim-free.

Uninsured Motorists

Anyone who is involved in an accident who is driving with a suspended or revoked drivers license, or whose vehicle is not licensed, or who does not have automobile insurance on that vehicle, should not be able to collect benefits or proceeds from any person or insurance company regardless of who is at fault and should be denied a valid drivers license for a period of no less than six months.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Agricultural Trade

We encourage the United States Department of Agriculture and Congress to make every effort to increase exports of agricultural commodities.

We support adequate funding for the Foreign Agriculture Service in order to provide a continuing effort to promote foreign market development of agricultural commodities.

We favor the U.S. eliminating trade distorting subsidies as long as other countries do likewise.

We believe that export bonus or incentive programs should be applied to all trade partners on bulk and value added agricultural products.

We support Trade Promotion Authority.

We urge the Administration to improve access to foreign markets through multilateral, regional and bilateral trade negotiations. Social reforms and labor and environmental standards should not be included in trade agreements.

We continue to support agriculture negotiations within the World Trade Organization (WTO) to help reduce barriers to trade. However, we oppose reductions in U.S. farm support if developed countries do not agree to dramatically reduce their trade-distorting domestic supports. Any final WTO agreement must provide greater foreign market access for U.S. producers and address the trade distorting policies of developed and developing nations.

Due to the dramatic increase in the cost of fertilizer and the fact that domestic fertilizer manufacturers no longer need the protection of tariffs to ensure profitability, we believe tariffs on fertilizer imports should be eliminated.

We support the U.S. Trade Representative moving forward with Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) so long as each agreement is evaluated in terms of the overall benefit for U.S. agriculture.

We support USTR pursuing trade enforcement actions against countries whose ag support levels violate their trade commitments.

Our government should insist on strict implementation of international trade rules to prevent unfair practices by competing nations. We oppose inclusion of remaining U.S. agricultural import restrictions unless other countries agree that their restrictions are negotiable.

We support harmonization of import standards to allow for a de minimis presence of genetically modified (GM) commodities not approved by importing nations.

We strongly oppose interference in the movement of commodities by unions or trade groups.

We believe that foreign grain sales should continue to be handled by private companies and/or co-ops rather than by government grain boards.

In order to offset trade barriers and subsidized foreign competition, to regain important export markets, and to achieve a more equitable trade balance, we favor increased funding for programs that will reduce the price of United States farm exports either directly or indirectly through reduced interest rates.

We support sufficient funding for the revolving fund administered by the Commodity Credit Corporation for the purpose of promoting export sales of agricultural commodities.

We vigorously oppose the imposition of any import levies by the European Union (EU) on U.S. farm products, which now enter the EU under a duty-free binding.

We support the careful consideration of the United States writing off substantial portions of the debt of other countries.

Farm Bureau should assist farmers in developing ways of marketing farm products directly to export customers.

We support passage of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). Until then, we believe the U.S. government should continue to closely monitor the enforcement of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and its effect on U.S. agriculture. We oppose changes which would relax existing commitments made by Canada, Mexico and the U.S.

We oppose any transportation agreement or initiative that compromises our sovereignty by building a super highway from Mexican ports to Canada.

We believe the United States should continue its efforts to obtain reductions in the variable import levies and other trade restrictions now imposed by our trading partners.

We believe that the USDA and private sector companies should work to promote the acceptance of biotechnology-enhanced products by our trade partners. We support the WTO ruling against the European Union for its illegal moratorium on approving agricultural biotech products and member-state bans on previously approved products. We urge the U.S. Trade Representative to vigorously work to ensure the EU complies with the ruling in its entirety or seek appropriate remedies.

We are opposed to any restrictions on agricultural exports to Cuba.

Russia should continue to lower trade barriers to U.S. agricultural commodities.

China should adhere to the rules set by the WTO and should be closely monitored to ensure agricultural trade commitments are upheld.

We believe our trading partners should adhere to the science-based international guidelines for normalizing beef trade. The Administration and Congress should take action against countries that do not acknowledge these standards and reopen their markets to U.S. beef.

We strongly support the concept of “single undertaking” in trade negotiations.

Cargo Preference

We support exempting all exports from costly cargo preference requirements.

If subsidization of the U.S. maritime industry can be justified on the basis of national security considerations, then subsidies should be provided in a more direct manner rather than being borne by the American farmer.

Embargoes

We believe embargoes, trade sanctions or other efforts to restrict farm exports should only be accomplished through an Act of Congress, not as a result of action by the President, Secretary of State or other government officials. Embargoes should not be imposed on farm products unless national security is at stake and all trade, technology, and exchanges are halted.

Exports-Product Quality

We support a study on the feasibility of containerized shipments of grain from farm to export user. This would eliminate much damage to grain and would allow the producer to be paid according to the quality of his grain.

Foreign Trade Offices

We commend the Missouri Department of Agriculture for their aggressive international marketing effort and their successful efforts to expand marketing for Missouri farm products. We support the establishment of trade offices in other countries.

Import Standards

We recommend that all imported agricultural products be subject to the same inspection, sanitary, quality, labeling, and residue standards as domestic products. Any products that do not meet these standards should be refused entry.

Foreign products produced with the use of pesticides and other materials that are not allowed in this country or that are slaughtered and processed under standards that are not as strict as those in the United States should not be imported into the United States.

We support a ban on the utilization and importation of animals, animal products, animal protein and animal byproduct protein (e.g. meat, bone blood meal) for any use in the United States from sources known to have BSE, foot and mouth disease (FMD), or other infectious and contagious foreign animal diseases that have not been designated as a minimal risk region. We urge USDA to closely monitor and strictly enforce animal health regulations (e.g. through frequent inspections, information collection, etc.) when minimal risk regions are designated to protect U.S. consumers and the livestock industry.

Imports-Public Funds

We oppose the use of public funds for the purchase of imported meat and dairy products.

We recommend that only domestic agricultural products be used in government supported institutions and distribution programs.

International Assistance

We believe global poverty should be addressed; however, we oppose any initiative that contradicts U.S. farm policy and promotes policies that would put American producers at a disadvantage in international markets.

We urge expanded use of P. L. 480 to permit the United States to continue to provide food assistance to needy countries and utilize our surplus commodity stocks.

We oppose economic aid through any state, federal, or international program or private lending institutions which contribute to the production or distribution of any agricultural products produced by our foreign competitors. Assistance currently in place should be curtailed immediately.

LABOR/MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

Davis-Bacon Act and Prevailing Wage Laws

We believe the Davis-Bacon Act, which requires payment of union scale wages on any construction project that is being paid for in whole, or in part, from Federal funds, should be repealed. It is in the best interest of all concerned, especially the taxpayer, that projects constructed in the public interest be awarded on a competitive bid basis with no restrictions as to wage rates paid. We oppose Missouri's "Prevailing Wage" law for the same reasons.

We support exempting projects in third class counties from Missouri's prevailing wage law.

Farm Labor

We uphold the right of farm workers to join or not to join a union by their own conviction.

We favor legislation which would allow each state the right to decide whether agricultural employment should be brought under the National Labor Relations Act.

We support efforts to keep an adequate work force of seasonal agricultural workers and to attempt to see that employers are not saddled with unreasonable documentation and record keeping requirements, such as the current Worker Protection Standards (WPS).

We believe some of the restrictions included in the Worker Protection Standards (WPS) are too stringent and will place undue liability on the landowner/employer. We believe that Congress should make adjustments in the WPS that will include limiting the liability of farmers who make a good-faith effort to comply and limiting the scope of the WPS to labor intensive operations.

Farms need access to good labor whether foreign or domestic. We support limited liability for the employer if good faith was practiced in employment eligibility documents.

We support legislation to repeal the income tax withholding requirements for farm workers.

We support existing federal child labor laws, which specify and provide opportunities for young people of the proper age to perform certain agriculture jobs. We support the existing student learner exemptions to the Agriculture Hazardous Occupations Orders.

State child labor requirements should be no stricter than current federal law.

Minimum Wage

We oppose federal minimum wage laws. Since there is currently a federal minimum wage, we support keeping the federal minimum wage at the 2012 level.

We oppose increasing the state minimum wage above the federal minimum wage. We support eliminating automatic cost-of-living increases in the state minimum wage.

Organized Labor

We do not oppose organized labor, but believe that it is the basic right of each person to choose his or her occupation without being forced to join a union. We support legislation that would guarantee this right.

We are opposed to the federal government providing welfare aid or subsistence payments of any kind to workers on strike or their dependents.

We believe that no union or trade group should be allowed to interfere in the movement of commodities to or from foreign lands.

Public Employees

We urge strict enforcement of no-strike laws with regard to public employees. A strike by such employees jeopardizes public safety, public and private property and public health.

We believe that a strike by public employees should be grounds for their dismissal. In addition, we believe any penalty such as fines imposed by the judicial system in such a strike should be strictly enforced. We would favor de-certifying any union which refuses to pay a fine resulting from a strike by public employees.

We are opposed to collective bargaining for public employees.

Right to Work

We support adoption of right-to-work in Missouri.

Unemployment Compensation Laws

Presently payments into the unemployment compensation fund are made only by employers. We support requiring both employees and employers to pay into the fund on an equal basis.

The current threshold for determining employer liabilities to the unemployment fund should be indexed to reflect inflation and wage increases.

Workers' Compensation

We believe that tightly held family corporations and limited liability companies should enjoy the same relief from the workers' compensation law that sole proprietorships and partnerships enjoy with respect to the right to exempt owners and family members from required inclusion in the program.

LAW AND ORDER

Accountability

We believe officials at all levels of government, including elected and appointed, when duly sworn into office shall enforce the laws of the state and nation. If they choose not to, it would be grounds for swift removal from office.

Automobile Liability Insurance

In order to enforce the mandatory automobile liability insurance law, we believe proof of insurance should be required before licenses are renewed. We also encourage spot checks by law enforcement officials.

Firearms

We oppose any new legislation or regulatory action by state or federal agencies that would register or license firearms beyond present registration standards.

We are opposed to a cased firearm law.

We support keeping a concealed-carry handgun law.

Judiciary

We urge that law and order be restored by strict enforcement of present laws and by swift action in the courts. We also believe the death penalty is an appropriate sentence for those committing murder in the first degree.

We do not believe the judicial system should have the power to order expenditures of public monies without legislative authorization.

To improve our jury selection process, we recommend that our Criminal Code be changed so that in identified capital punishment crimes, no juror may be approved if he is identified in the selection process as being opposed to capital punishment.

Enemy combatants captured outside the U.S. should be tried by military tribunals, not federal criminal courts.

We recommend that the jury be informed that a one year sentence in the Department of Corrections is not a full year. They need to know this when making sentencing recommendations.

We recommend that jurors be permitted to take notes during trial proceedings.

We strongly recommend that Farm Bureau members become more active in serving as jurors.

We recommend that more information be made available on prior convictions before a convicted felon is sentenced.

We recommend that local juvenile officers be better trained, highly qualified, and provided with adequate job descriptions. Juvenile officers should routinely follow up on frequent truancy cases in school districts.

We favor prosecuting juveniles committing felony crimes under the same laws as adults.

We believe there should be more discretion used in plea bargaining.

We favor limiting the term of service for Federal Judges.

We favor mandatory retirement of all federal and state judges at age seventy.

We believe federal judges should be reconfirmed to office every six years as is currently the practice for judges in the state of Missouri.

We favor changing the plea of “innocent by reason of insanity” to “guilty but insane”.

We favor mandatory payment of restitution into the Crime Victims Compensation Fund as a condition for probation in all crimes. We favor mandatory full payment of restitution to insurers and others incurring financial loss by parties found guilty of livestock, machinery or crop theft, fraud, vandalism or arson.

We support county prosecutors being limited to two times of dropping and refileing the same charges of any action.

We favor more strict enforcement and stronger penalties in dealing with illegal drugs and alcohol.

We support additional legislation to strengthen the present state sexual misconduct and nudity laws to prohibit indecent exposure by both men and women in recreational areas including floatable streams. We oppose indecent exposure by both men and women to the general public and landowners on floatable streams.

We support American law for American courts.

U.S. policymakers, judges and others in authority should not allow any other country or religious legal code to become established in this country as an alternate or parallel system to the Constitution.

We oppose human trafficking.

We oppose the legalization of recreational marijuana in Missouri.

Operation of Vehicles or Motorized Watercraft Under the Influence

We support the increased efforts by local and state law enforcement agencies in controlling the problem of apprehending persons driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

We support a “zero tolerance level” for minors caught driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

We strongly encourage law enforcement agencies to enforce the “abuse and lose” law.

We favor annual drug testing for any person driving an emergency response vehicle (fire, police, ambulance), including volunteers, and for individuals who operate commercial passenger vehicles.

For a person who commits the crime of driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, we support the automatic suspension of his or her driver's license and mandatory participation in a traffic offender program. Furthermore, repeat offenders should receive a mandatory jail sentence.

We support making the open container law more strict.

We support making the repeat offender laws more strict.

We oppose operation of motorized watercraft while intoxicated. We encourage the Missouri Highway Patrol to increase enforcement on waterways.

Prisons

We favor work programs for prisoners.

We encourage the Missouri Department of Corrections and/or counties to establish regional jails that would serve multi-counties and to consider contract jails.

All judges should be mandated to add prison costs, including room and board and medical costs, to the sentence of prisoners.

We support efforts to restrict the ability of prisoners to file frivolous lawsuits.

Protecting Private Property

We believe present laws and court rulings are overly protective of criminals relative to the rights available to individuals who attempt to protect their property.

We favor allowing private property owners to protect themselves, families, and homes by reasonable means from criminal harm without fear of prosecution.

We favor stronger trespass laws which would protect the property owner. We believe the burden of proof should fall on the accused in trespassing cases.

We support creating a Class C misdemeanor for the discharge of a firearm across property lines without permission.

Because of a concern for our constitutional rights, we do not believe a landowner's property should be confiscated when a landowner is unaware that drug violations have occurred on his farm and the landowner is not convicted of any crime.

We further believe property of individuals convicted of drug violations committed on someone else's property should be subject to forfeiture proceedings the same as if the violations had occurred on the convicted individual's own property.

Rural Crime Prevention

We encourage county law officials to set up neighborhood watch groups in cooperation with rural residents.

Missouri Farm Bureau should continue to work with the Missouri Sheriff's Association and the Missouri Highway Patrol to develop and promote a statewide personal property identification system that would help law enforcement officials return stolen property to the rightful owner.

LIABILITY

With rising liability judgments and the rising cost of insurance against such judgments, we believe more fair and equitable guidelines, preferably on a national basis, should be adopted to help solve liability disputes. We support the tort reforms enacted in Missouri. We believe there should be a maximum cap on punitive damages at \$250,000 for liability suits.

Joint and several liability rules should provide that no defendant would be required to pay more than their just share of the fault.

In addition, we would support penalties for individuals who bring civil suits that are without foundation and are of a frivolous nature.

A person who has been injured while in the act of committing a crime should not be allowed to sue for damages.

We believe lawyers should not receive attorney's fees in liability cases that they solicit, file, and in which no judgments are awarded. Any plaintiff and their attorney who initiate a lawsuit should be responsible for all litigation costs, including defendant's attorney fees, if the plaintiff loses. This would not apply to lawsuits against governmental entities.

Farm Bureau needs to take the lead in educating people and changing attitudes of our “sue happy society.”

We support reforms in the state tort system to limit the liability of volunteer emergency response organizations such as volunteer fire districts, rescue squads, etc.

We believe there should be limits on liability suits pertaining to not-for-profit public places, organizations, and events.

We support liability limits on activities, such as county fairs and horse shows as addressed in state statute.

We believe that when lawyers handle civil suits on a contingency basis they should be required to disclose these arrangements.

MONETARY, SPENDING AND TAX POLICIES

Alternative Minimum Tax

We support repeal of the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT). Until the law is repealed, we support increasing the household income threshold and deductions allowed, so that capital intensive businesses like farming are not disadvantaged by the tax.

Balanced Federal Budget

For the economic betterment of all U.S. citizens, we believe the U.S. government should strive for a balanced federal budget.

We believe the President should be granted line-item veto authority to reduce spending in appropriations bills.

We support the goal of a freeze in total federal spending, including entitlement programs, at the previous fiscal year’s level with the exception of interest payments on the national debt and natural disasters. All departments of the government should be examined for budgetary savings. Spending reductions for Social Security and Medicare should focus on increased efficiency.

We oppose increasing the federal fuel taxes.

We support a constitutional amendment to require a federal balanced budget.

We recognize that the requirement for a balanced budget should be waived in the event of war with concurrence of the House of Representatives, the Senate and the Executive Branch.

We favor a constitutional amendment to restrict the spending authority of the federal government to a realistic percentage of the gross national product.

We support “pay go” and a two-thirds majority vote rather than three-fifths to increase spending beyond “pay go.”

We believe members of Congress should be prohibited from increasing their salaries, benefits and/or pensions during deficit budget years. The formula for calculating the pensions of Congress should be revised by reducing the entitlements.

We believe the determination must be made to pay off the national debt and control the deficit. We believe Congress should retain control of the national debt as delineated in Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution and that the debt ceiling should only be raised in a national emergency by two-thirds vote of both the House and the Senate.

We believe that we should do away with automatic “cost of living adjustments” for jobs in the public sector.

We believe the federal budget process should be completely revised to better allow for long term planning and a more fiscally sound approach to the spending process. We favor a multi-year budget.

We urge Congress to adopt an official definition of “spending cut” as an actual reduction in dollars spent and “budget cut” as an actual reduction in dollars budgeted.

Banking

We support banks requiring a notation for mobile deposit on checks when deposited electronically by the account holder and not at the physical bank location.

Bond Issue

We favor requiring a two-thirds majority for passage of all bond issues, including school bonds and tax levies.

We do not support an increase in bonding capacity above the current constitutional limit of 15 percent for public schools either statewide or by individual school districts.

We oppose the use of lease/purchase if the school district has reached the limit of its bonding capacity.

Drainage and Levee Taxes

We believe everyone who pays drainage and levee taxes should be protected by levees and have access to the drainage ditch for which the taxes are paid, and everyone who has access to the drainage ditch should pay taxes.

We believe the drainage and levee districts should be maintained to their original specifications or above throughout the system.

Fuel Tax

We support increasing the availability of red-dye diesel fuel and simplifying the federal and state collection process for agricultural producers.

We oppose a fuel tax on non-highway farm diesel.

Gift and Estate Tax

We support permanent repeal of federal estate taxes. Until permanent repeal can be achieved, we believe any estate tax reform should:

1. Maintain stepped-up basis;
2. Increase and index the exemption for inflation;
3. Allow the transfer of any unused exemption to a surviving spouse; and

4. Set the top estate tax rate at 15%.

We oppose any reduction in the current federal estate tax exemption or the amount of assets “stepped-up” at death.

We would prefer a law that would allow the executor or administrator of estates of decedents to negotiate the attorney’s fees.

Personal Property Taxes

We oppose transferring the burden of personal property taxes to real property taxes.

We favor the elimination of property taxes on all personal property, except vehicles that require licensing, if the money could be raised in another way.

We strongly urge that the Missouri Department of Revenue work with the Missouri legislature to close the many loopholes enabling people to avoid paying personal property taxes on vehicles, in turn causing farm people to carry more than their fair share of county property taxes.

Real Property Taxes

We support the requirement of the State Tax Commission (S.T.C.) to re-evaluate productivity values for each of the grades of agriculture land only after careful study and review to assure that any proposed values truly reflect productive capabilities for each of the eight classes of agricultural land. Re-evaluating should occur in no less than a two-year cycle with a reasonable cap on any increase that may be proposed.

Regarding the re-evaluation of farmland productivity values, we urge the State Tax Commission to take into consideration the volatility of commodity prices and profitability. We believe all grades of agricultural/horticultural land should be classified based on the USDA soil productivity index. Once a productivity index is established on a piece of agricultural/horticultural land, consideration for limiting factors that would hinder the soil’s ability to produce at its productivity index level should be given. After all limiting factors are considered, the soil grade should be adjusted accordingly to reflect actual productivity. In no case should agricultural/horticultural land be valued based on subjective or fair market values or any other conceivable reason.

We believe the role of the State Tax Commission should be limited to the establishment of equitable tax rates throughout the state. Final approval of agricultural productivity use values for land should remain with the state legislature. The establishment of local property values should remain in the hands of the county tax assessor.

We urge the State Tax Commission to give more weight to the decisions of local elected assessors when reviewing property tax appeals by multinational corporations.

We believe “site value” or “incentive” taxation, which places a lighter burden on improvements but a heavier burden on land, should be restricted to urban areas.

We believe that real property owners are paying their fair share of taxes. If personal property taxes are eliminated then an increased margin of approval should be required in a vote to increase levy rates. If reallocated revenue, or additional tax revenues are required, we believe additional sales taxes or vehicle fees would be more equitable for all citizens.

To allow farmers the opportunity for appeal, we support requiring assessors to notify farmers if their land classification changes, moving them to a class of higher value for property tax assessment purposes and notifying farmers of the number of acres of each class listed on annual tax bill.

We support requiring new soil tests or a changing of productivity values before an assessor can change the classification of agricultural property.

We favor requiring municipalities and city-owned utilities to continue to pay property taxes on all real estate they acquire.

We favor a reduction or repeal of property taxes, including a partial homestead exemption for homeowners to be based on a portion of any excess total state revenues in the previous fiscal year.

We support requiring state and federal agencies to make payments to all county taxing entities, including levee and drainage districts, in lieu of taxes on land owned by the agency with payments adjusted in accordance with tax assessments on comparable privately owned lands in the county. We believe payments in lieu of taxes (PILT) for state parks property should continue as long as the property is owned by the state.

We support real property associated with wind and solar energy projects being assessed as local property.

Sales Tax

We oppose repeal of the sales tax exemption on farm machinery, repair parts, feed additives, fuels, veterinary supplies, farm and ranch fencing supplies, grain storage and drying units, underground terrace tile outlets and drain tile, and other agriculture products and services.

We oppose trading an end to the sales tax exemption, including farm machinery and related agricultural items, for a lower rate or repeal of Missouri's personal income tax.

We believe the present collection and allocation of sales tax in Missouri is very unfair to rural counties. We support a more equitable means of allocation of sales tax monies between the urban areas and the surrounding rural counties to help provide needed services in the rural areas.

We favor the exemption of agricultural or horticultural products sold at seasonal farmers' markets and roadside stands from the state sales tax.

We oppose adding a sales tax to gasoline.

We favor state and local sales tax exemption for lease or rent of land for hunting purposes. This should include, but not be limited to, farms, ranches, hunting preserves, licensed shooting areas and game farms.

We oppose any form of severance tax on natural resources.

We oppose any legislation which would establish a transfer tax, sales tax or any other tax on the purchase, sale or exchange of real estate.

We further oppose any legislation requiring the reporting of real estate sale price to any state or county agency or official.

We oppose a tax increase targeting specific agricultural products.

We support allowing state and local governments to collect sales tax on internet sales by out-of-state sellers to support local businesses and communities.

State Indebtedness

We are concerned about debt incurred through state issued bonds. We believe we must adopt more of a “pay as we go” policy in Missouri. We believe revenue bonds should be used only when there is a clear and identified revenue source sufficient to pay the principal and interest of the bonds.

Tax Credits

We favor making tax credits subject to the annual budget process.

Tax Limitation

We believe that any major state tax, fee or other revenue increase should be submitted to the voters for their approval. A major increase in new state revenues is defined as an annual increase in total state revenues of more than 1%.

If any of the constitutional tax limitation provisions approved by the voters in 1980 and 1996 are determined to be unconstitutional by the courts, then we believe the state legislature should immediately act to rectify such provisions so as to maintain the integrity of the state tax limitation in the constitution that has such strong support among Missourians.

We urge the Governor and legislative leaders to establish a reporting system to track compliance with the tax limitation provisions, including tax and fee increases in legislation approved by the General Assembly.

We oppose any proposal to allow the spending of excess state revenue instead of refunding as required by the state constitution.

Tax Reform

Tax policy should be designed to encourage private initiative, economic growth, equity and simplicity. We support:

1. Income averaging;
2. Reinstatement of investment tax credits;
3. Annual expensing of preproduction expenditures;
4. Eliminating taxes on capital gains and until that occurs, providing exemptions for the transfer of agricultural land that will remain in agricultural production;
5. Farm and ranch risk management accounts;
6. Elimination of the federal marriage penalty;
7. Elimination of self-employment taxes on Conservation Reserve Program payments;
8. Exempting rental income from land rented to a family corporation or partnership from the self-employment tax; and
9. Allowing at least \$500,000 of expenses to be deducted under Section 179 Small Business Expensing and indexing the amount for inflation.

We oppose “means testing” to determine which taxpayers will receive a tax hike or a tax break.

We oppose any tax or fee on e-mail.

We oppose a federal flat tax on income if that proposal includes expensing of real estate and/or machinery purchases, and excludes business interest payments as a deductible business expense.

We support a state and federal income tax exemption for state and federal disaster relief payments.

We support the concept of the FairTax and its passage.

We support Missouri Farm Bureau developing more information on the concept of a consumption tax replacing our current state income tax system.

We support any effort to make the Internal Revenue Service more responsive to taxpayers.

We believe legislation should be enacted to prevent the Internal Revenue Service from seizing or placing a lien on personal and business property as well as on assets of an individual or business without proof of tax indebtedness.

We recommend if a court case is decided in favor of the taxpayers the Internal Revenue Service should be responsible for court costs and legal fees.

We believe tax credits and incentives should be provided to farmers who invest in new agricultural technology and capital improvements to modernize their farming operations.

We support tax incentives to encourage economic development in rural Missouri.

We support legislation which would allow individuals 59½ or older to contribute amounts currently held in IRA accounts directly to qualified charities without having to first recognize the income for tax purposes.

We oppose a gross receipt tax.

Value Added Tax

We oppose a value added tax.

MORAL ISSUES

Abortion

We oppose abortion except in cases of rape, incest, or when the life of the mother is in danger. We oppose government funding of abortion. Partial birth abortions should not be performed under any circumstance.

We oppose the Freedom of Choice Act.

Adoptions

We support secure permanent adoptions as a means to link loving families with children who need a home. Since many children are caught in the foster care system for too long, we

believe Missouri's adoption laws should be updated and strengthened to encourage, expedite and protect Missouri adoptions.

Cloning

We are opposed to the cloning of human beings. We support adult stem cell research. We are opposed to the creation and use of human embryos or blastocysts for research purposes in which they are destroyed, discarded or knowingly subjected to risk of injury or death.

Drug Abuse

We believe that drug abuse is still one of the major problems in our society. The existing programs on education and eradication must be significantly increased. We favor stricter, mandatory sentences for all violators to discourage the illegal production, importation, manufacture, or distribution of narcotics, drugs and related paraphernalia.

We favor a statewide program to educate children in our public schools about the danger and harmful effects of drugs and alcohol. We encourage the formation and support of SADD (Students Against Drunk Drivers), MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers) and D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) groups within our schools and communities. We encourage all Farm Bureau members to support local programs for alcohol and drug-free prom and graduation activities.

Presently, confiscated property must be sold at public auction. We favor new legislation that would allow confiscated property such as automobiles and airplanes to be used by local authorities for drug enforcement.

We support existing laws restricting the availability of non-agricultural ingredients such as ephedrine and pseudoephedrine that are used to make methamphetamine. We support restoring funding for electronic networking and investigations conducted by law enforcement officials to further reduce methamphetamine production and trafficking.

Gay Rights

We oppose the concept of a "Gay Bill of Rights."

We are opposed to the legalization of gay marriages by either state or national legislation.

We oppose the addition of the term "sexual orientation" into the non-discrimination disclaimer by the state or federal government or any institution receiving public funding.

We support the passage of the Federal Marriage Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

National Endowment For The Arts

We favor eliminating tax monies being used to fund the National Endowment for the Arts. We believe the art world can censor itself and fund those projects that it feels are useful and artistic.

Pornography

We encourage Farm Bureau members to write television networks and sponsors to voice their displeasure with television shows containing obscenity, sex, violence and obscene language which are being presented to the American viewing public.

We oppose distribution of obscene material through books, magazines, movies or the internet.

We favor swift, vigorous prosecution of violators of obscenity laws.

Right to Life

We support a Right to Life Amendment to the Constitution.

Parental Guidance

As with any other crucial matter concerning both parent and child; we encourage and request that parents or guardians be notified by mail of upcoming dates and subject matter that will be introduced to the student pertaining to sexual behavior, birth control and protection methods. We request the choice of abstinence be taught at school; as a method of birth control.

NATIONAL DEFENSE

General

We support the military action in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. We encourage the President and Congress to continue the efforts to eradicate terrorist activity and to protect U.S. citizens from that danger. We believe the circumstances call for extraordinary measures, however we cannot overemphasize the importance of restraint in taking measures that infringe on the freedoms and liberties that are the foundation of this country.

We believe a national defense system consisting of land-based, ship-based and airborne radar as well as missile systems designed to destroy hostile missiles should be implemented to protect our nation, troops stationed overseas and allied countries.

We believe the agriculture industry should play a role in protecting the security of our nation; however, producers should not be hindered with burdensome regulations. We urge the Department of Homeland Security to better coordinate with USDA on issues affecting agriculture. In addition, farmers should have the opportunity to review and comment on all proposed regulations that impact agriculture.

We urge Farm Bureau to work with the Department of Transportation and other federal and state agencies in developing and facilitating education and implementation of new Homeland Security requirements impacting agriculture.

We are concerned about the invasiveness of advanced screening procedures for airline passengers and encourage the Transportation Security Administration to better balance its safety measures with passenger privacy.

We urge the President and Congress to support a United States foreign policy that will reflect a national strategy of peace through strength.

We favor a strong national defense that is second to none, believing that its funding has been cut too deeply. We believe that our military arsenals, that have been depleted over the last few years, should be replenished.

We favor better management and increased efficiency in the Defense Department.

We believe our forces should have superior force protection for those in harm's way.

We believe the United States should take definite steps to stop the aggression of unfriendly foreign governments and/or terrorist organizations toward the U.S.A. or its citizens.

The U.S. military should not be used as a worldwide police force.

We believe military personnel of the USA should always be under the direct command of U.S. military commanders.

We have strong concerns about sending American forces to any country torn by civil strife, however, once our forces are deployed in a foreign country, we believe they deserve the full support of the American public and they must be given clear authority to use whatever force is necessary to protect their personal safety.

We support the P. L. 480 program to promote peace in the world.

We believe the R.O.T.C., National Guard and Reserve Units are important to the wellbeing of our nation and urge all eligible persons to participate; however, we recommend that efforts be made to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of these units. In the event that the effectiveness of our military defense manpower becomes dangerously low, there should be no delay in reinstating the draft.

Agroterrorism

An attack aimed at the safety of our food supply and agricultural infrastructure could cause widespread and long-term damage. We must continue to increase surveillance and ensure that adequate resources are available for USDA and other agencies to combat any posed biological threat or mobilize against any occurrence.

We support funding for the development of ways to better safeguard agriculture and America's food supply from the potential impact of agroterrorism.

We believe agricultural producers should be exempt from any liability as a result of agroterrorism.

Veterans Affairs

We oppose the decreasing support of military veterans while assistance to illegal immigrants is increasing.

We believe the U.S. military veterans should receive the benefits and support they were promised to include full funding for veterans' hospitals.

We support the recommendation that all concerned Missouri Farm Bureau members request their members of Congress to demand a full accounting of all unaccounted for POWs and MIAs as a consideration in specific trade negotiations.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Aboveground Fuel Storage Tanks

We believe the Environmental Protection Agency's Spill, Control and Countermeasure Rule regulating aboveground fuel storage tanks is overly restrictive on agricultural producers. All farmers regardless of their on-farm fuel storage capacity should be allowed to complete and

self-certify a spill control plan for their operation in lieu of being required to hire a certified engineer to develop a plan.

Air Quality

We support the EPA's review of federal regulations that require more than 90% emissions reductions for off-road diesel vehicles. The cost of these regulatory requirements will far outweigh the benefits. We support diesel emission standards based on best available technology, which does not make it necessary to use diesel exhaust fluid (DEF).

We support the EPA and Department of Transportation's plans to suspend the scheduled phase-in of stricter corporate average fuel economy (CAFÉ) standards for cars and light-duty trucks. We urge the agencies to take similar action regarding full-size pickups.

We oppose further revisions to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for coarse particulate matter due to the long-term ramifications these regulations will have on production agriculture. We believe coarse particulate matter from agricultural sources should be excluded from the NAAQS because there is no conclusive scientific evidence indicating that particulate matter from typical farm and ranch operations adversely affects public health.

We oppose a reduction in the current National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for ground level ozone.

We encourage entities such as the University of Missouri Extension, Farm Service Agency or Natural Resources Conservation Service to conduct workshops to educate landowners on proper open burning procedures.

We believe the environmental concerns raised by the concentration of large numbers of animals in confinement operations warrants the distinction, for the purpose of regulating odor, that the Air Conservation Commission has made between very large operations and smaller sized operations. We will vigorously oppose any effort to apply the more stringent regulations to farming operations that have less than a Class 1A designation.

We question the accuracy of the allegations made by the Humane Society of the United States and other organizations regarding livestock emissions. We oppose their attempts to force the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to require livestock producers to report hydrogen sulfide, ammonia, and other naturally occurring emissions.

All-Terrain Vehicles

We are concerned that indiscriminate use of all-terrain vehicles increases soil erosion and water pollution, damages stream banks, jeopardizes fish and wildlife and threatens rights of rural property owners.

American Heritage River Initiative

We are opposed to the American Heritage River Initiative.

Climate Change

We support the US EPA's initiative to provide guidelines for states to consider rather than mandates to address greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Emissions mandates would have significant adverse economic impacts on production agriculture and the US economy, increasing

fuel, fertilizer, and energy costs and ultimately the price of food for consumers. Furthermore, many producers would be required to obtain permits and pay fees.

We strongly oppose mandatory cap and trade legislation due to the higher costs that it will impose on consumers for electricity, fuel, and goods produced using energy.

We oppose a mandatory cap on GHG emissions in Missouri.

We believe a comprehensive study of a cap on GHG emissions and its economic impacts on agriculture and other sectors should be conducted before any action is taken.

We oppose additional restrictions on the use of coal in the production of electricity through government rules, regulations and laws.

Dam Safety

We believe existing standards for agricultural dams are appropriate and oppose increased regulation of agricultural dams.

Endangered Species Act

We support reform of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) which will result in a more appropriate balance between the needs of plants and animals and the needs of people. Such reforms could include:

1. More clearly reflecting a respect for private property and a recognition that costs to recover species must be borne by the public not by private property owners;
2. Requiring an economic analysis related to the impacts to private landowners regardless of whether or not critical habitat is requested; and
3. Establishing a five-year sunset on species listings at which time the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service could re-propose protections using the formal rulemaking process.

We oppose the use of the ESA to influence federal policies such as climate change and energy.

We believe that endangered species protection can be more effectively achieved by providing incentives to private landowners rather than by imposing land use restrictions and penalties.

We urge federal and state agencies to use voluntary, incentive-based programs to assist landowners in addressing species concerns rather than listing species as threatened or endangered and designating critical habitat under the ESA.

We believe that state and local agencies should be allowed to assume the job of assessing the environmental, social, and economic impact of the species preservation and determine a reasonable balance.

Excavation of Sand and Gravel

We oppose increased governmental regulation of private sand and gravel excavation by landowners. In addition, we support allowing landowners to sell sand and gravel excavated from streams on their property following reasonable operational standards set by DNR without a permit.

Many streams in Missouri have an excessive load of gravel and vegetation growing in the stream channel accelerating streambank erosion and reducing fish habitat by decreasing the water pool. We favor the modification of current agency guidelines to make it easier to remove gravel and vegetation from streams and to use that material to repair streambank erosion sites.

We oppose regulations requiring a buffer area between gravel excavation sites and the water's edge.

We are concerned that scientific studies from other states and countries may not accurately reflect the dynamics of Missouri streams.

We believe studies should be conducted on Missouri streams to examine the true impact of gravel removal as it relates to streambank erosion and the creation of fish habitat.

We are concerned that no economic studies on this issue have been done in Missouri involving affected landowners and industry.

We also believe comprehensive economic impact studies should be done on this issue before any further guidelines or regulations are adopted.

Fish & Wildlife Organizations

We oppose the federal and state funding of fish and wildlife organizations that pursue legal action against livestock producers, farmers and other resource users.

Floodplain Management

The Corps of Engineers controls many rivers, tributaries and lakes in the United States. The levees and lakes along those waterways were primarily built to for flood control and navigation. We believe the Corps' primary operational control should be to prevent flooding and maintain navigation along all rivers and tributaries under their jurisdiction.

We are concerned about the amount of land being acquired by state and federal agencies in the Missouri River floodplain.

The combination of the Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, Missouri River Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Project, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP; now the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program) and others has targeted an alarming amount of farmland for acquisition.

This not only takes land out of production, impacting local economies, but where land is acquired in a levee district the rest of the landowners are endangered by the resistance of government agencies to allow the repair of levees. This can create willing sellers.

We oppose funding for additional land acquisition in the Missouri River floodplain under the Missouri River Mitigation Project or other federal or state programs.

We oppose additional restrictions on activities in the floodplain and support President Trump's revocation of Presidential Executive Order 13690.

We are opposed to efforts by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to expand the Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge on the Missouri River.

We support efforts to have oversight of the Missouri River Basin's mitigation project that:

1. Require an annual inventory of lands owned, acquired or controlled by federal agencies;
2. Identify actions proposed in the upcoming federal fiscal year;
3. Assess progress made in furthering the project; and
4. Outline additional actions necessary.

Inland Waterways System

We favor the Corps of Engineers maintaining the Missouri River below flood stage whenever possible.

We strongly believe the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers should not implement changes in the management of the Missouri River, such as a spring rise or split navigation season, which will have adverse economic and environmental consequences to the citizens of the State of Missouri. This includes reduced flood control, reduced water supplies for municipalities and the creation of flow situations that have adverse economic impacts on our state. Furthermore, it is reprehensible the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would implement a man-made spring rise considering the federal crop insurance program may not cover crop losses resulting from an event that does not occur naturally, such as a man-made flood.

We commend the Missouri Department of Natural Resources for their leadership in protecting landowners' interests relative to future management of the Missouri River. Also, we support efforts that enhance fish and wildlife habitat in or along the Missouri River that are compatible with the economic uses that are now required.

We oppose any changes in the management of the Missouri River which would shift the primary purpose of the upstream dams and reservoirs toward recreational and environmental goals at the expense of flood control, navigation and water availability for community public water supply and power generation. We are strongly opposed to the Congressionally-mandated Missouri River Authorized Purposes Study designed to review the original project purposes based on the Flood Control Act of 1944 and determine if changes are warranted. We also oppose efforts by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to expand their mission on the Missouri River from endangered species recovery to ecosystem restoration. Such a shift in priorities on the Missouri River will also have an immediate and direct impact on the Mississippi River and will have serious implications for agricultural, commercial and community interests on all inland waterways.

We strongly support port authorities and river commerce and believe funding for river transportation and port improvements should be a component of state and federal transportation legislation.

We believe the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers should notify all landowners, farm operators and political subdivisions (i.e. cities, drainage districts, etc.) of changes made in river operations and identify all possible effects due to proposed changes.

We believe the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers should pay damages to landowners and farm operators for lands lost to erosion or flooding on rivers resulting from navigation locks and dams.

We strongly oppose the dumping or designed erosion of soil into the Missouri River by the Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. We support legislation that will simply and clearly prohibit the Corps from dumping or causing the soil to erode into the Missouri River.

We support legal action against EPA for not enforcing the Clean Water Act against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for their continued dumping of soil during construction of environmental projects and dredging of the intra-coastal waterway.

International Treaties

We are opposed to any environmental regulations or mandates put in place by international treaty and given the force of U.S. law.

Invasive Species

We believe federal, state and local agencies should work more closely with private landowners to address invasive species problems. Any invasive species program that is proposed should not create additional restrictions on agricultural producers and landowners similar to those of the Endangered Species Act and other existing laws.

Invasive species should not be defined to include agricultural products or other beneficial non-native species.

Levee Protection

Well maintained levees are essential not only because they allow some of our most productive land to be utilized in farm production, but also to prevent the ravages of flooding from destroying roads, bridges, railroads, homes and businesses. When levees are destroyed by extraordinary rainfall, it can cause severe economic hardship to farmers, rural businesses and entire rural communities.

We believe federal and state governmental agencies should be committed to the timely repair and maintenance of levees on the main rivers and their tributaries to their previous condition and elevation.

We are very concerned about the disproportionate amount of funding used by the Corps of Engineers for environmental restoration projects versus flood control. We believe the highest budget priorities of the Corps of Engineers should be levee construction and rehabilitation, bank stabilization and channel maintenance.

We believe the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers should develop guidelines under which levee districts could approve contracts for levee repair and reconstruction.

We believe Congress should support a comprehensive plan for the Upper Mississippi River that enhances system wide flood control without creating adverse impacts on existing levees, levee districts, rural communities and metropolitan areas. The comprehensive plan should be based on analyses that quantifies the impacts of enhanced flood control measures and acknowledges the importance of keeping agricultural land in production. We oppose Plan H of the Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Plan, as currently drafted, as it would be harmful to Missouri communities and citizens.

We support the ability of the entire Upper Mississippi to have fair and equal flood protection to include levee heights and share equal flood responsibility across all levee districts in the Upper Mississippi Region.

We recommend the following actions to ease potential flooding:

1. Non-federal, non-qualifying levees should be allowed the opportunity to enter into the Corps of Engineers cost-share program;
2. Adequate funds should be made available to the Corps of Engineers and Natural Resources Conservation Service to assist in the repair of levees on the main rivers and their tributaries;
3. Wetland, endangered species and other environmental restrictions should be modified to allow a common-sense approach to the removal of trees and brush, the use of river dredges, and location of borrow areas to repair damaged levees;
4. Adequate funds should be provided to assist in sand and debris removal and to provide voluntary non-levee alternatives such as emergency wetlands reserve program; and
5. Because of the increased threat levees will be topped due largely to development and the pouring of concrete in urban areas, urban areas should build catch-type basins to retain water during heavy rains.

We urge the United States Army Corps of Engineers to change the 365-day contract between the Corps and levee repair contractors to a 100-day contract.

We support the St. John's Bayou and New Madrid Floodway Project.

Littering

We support legislation enacting a container deposit law. We also recommend that laws on littering be strengthened and enforced with the help of the county prosecuting attorneys and that the law be enforced to prevent dumping trash on private property.

Livestock Source Nutrient Management

We believe the Cooperative Extension Service should maintain an adequate number of agriculture engineer specialists to assist farmers in the planning and layout of animal source nutrient handling facilities.

We oppose state regulations for animal source nutrient handling that are more restrictive than EPA's regulations, and we urge DNR to provide livestock producers maximum flexibility and minimum restrictions in revised state regulations that may be necessary to comply with the revised federal regulations. Stricter state regulations would only serve to place Missouri livestock producers at a competitive disadvantage with producers from other states.

Intense public scrutiny and market pressures have prompted efforts to review the accelerated regulation of livestock source nutrient management. We believe livestock source nutrients are a valuable resource for farmers and ranchers and as such should be treated as an asset. We believe that once ownership of livestock manure has been transferred, the responsibility for its proper handling and management must be solely in the hands of the new owner. We advocate responsible livestock source nutrient management, including:

1. Design, construction and operation of storage facilities based upon accepted engineering standards;
2. Land application of manure based upon current agronomic research;
3. Cost-share assistance for voluntary site-specific nutrient management planning as appropriate research is made available to landowners;
4. Being a “good neighbor” by maintaining communication with nearby residents and avoiding unnecessary interference in neighbors’ activities; and
5. Consideration of the use of odor control practices.

Livestock source nutrient regulations and management standards should be based on sound science and cost-benefit analysis. We support technical assistance, cost-share and other incentives for compliance as well as voluntary efforts to exceed minimum requirements.

We support continued research and training by universities, colleges and research centers to control odor, improve nutrient utilization and develop new alternatives to handle livestock source nutrients prior to, and during, land application. We believe this information should be used as the basis for site-specific nutrient management planning.

We do not support additional laws or regulations for water quality issues associated with livestock source nutrients, including applying whole body contact water quality standards to waterbodies that are not conducive to swimming. We support maintaining the existing exemption from permits for operations under 1,000 animal units.

Permits should be based on an objective assessment of facility design, construction, and operational plans. A public hearing on permit applications should not be required.

Before fee increases for livestock source nutrient management general permits are considered, we believe the following options must be explored:

1. Redirect existing funding from programs not mandated by state or federal law to the permit program;
2. Cut permit program costs; and
3. Identify other funding sources.

We believe adequate general revenue funding must be budgeted for the permit program.

We do not support transferring permitting authority from DNR to the EPA.

We strongly oppose classifying livestock source nutrients as hazardous waste and subjecting livestock and poultry operations to liability under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980, Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act (EPCRA) of 1986 and Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act (SARA). We applaud EPA’s action to comply with legislation enacted to exempt livestock producers from air emissions reporting.

Mining on Public Lands

We support mining on public lands if appropriate safeguards are required to protect fish, forest and wildlife resources and the leases reflect fair market value. We urge DNR and Missouri

University of Science & Technology (S&T) to coordinate in assessing the feasibility of recovering the marketable minerals from mining waste and publishing the findings.

National Flood Insurance

We believe the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) should exempt farm buildings from federal flood construction standards as long as no federal flood protection is granted on such buildings or their contents.

One-Tenth Cent Sales Tax

We support the one-tenth cent sales tax. We are proud of Missouri's soil and water conservation and state parks programs, which share equally in the revenue generated by this sales tax.

We believe the Soil and Water District Commission (SWDC) should have the responsibility and authority to administer the Soil and Water Conservation program as approved by Missouri voters and be free of political influences that could jeopardize the integrity of the program.

We believe the SWDC should focus the use of funds from the one-tenth cent sales tax on soil erosion control and develop statewide soil and water conservation programs for private lands by working with the local elected Soil and Water District supervisors as long as such programs continue to address soil and water conservation as originally intended.

We believe a higher percentage of the State Soil and Water Conservation program's budget derived from the sales tax should be allocated to the cost-share program.

We support retaining the requirement that members of the state SWDC and local district board members be farmers. As appointments to the SWDC are made, we believe one of the qualifications that may be taken into account is experience on a county board of supervisors. We support the continued administration of the soil and water programs by the SWDC as currently authorized.

Port Authorities

We strongly support the efforts of the Missouri Port Authority Association to receive administrative and legislative authorization for capital improvement funding in the state budget in order to meet developmental infrastructure needs.

Public Lands

We recommend that leases for public lands (both state and federal) be offered on a bid basis for at least five-year terms. This will allow successful bidders the opportunity to fully utilize the productive value of the land they rent. In addition, we believe lessees should be given incentives in their rental contracts to preserve the fertility of the public land they rent.

We oppose buffer zones around state and national parks.

To accurately reflect the boundaries we believe the U.S. Forest Service should not include privately owned land on maps of national forests.

We believe the Missouri Departments of Natural Resources (DNR) and Conservation (MDC) should manage wildlife so as not to endanger the health of humans or livestock on private property.

We are concerned about the current “cut and drop” practice of clearing unwanted timber species on public lands as new demands have proven these resources to be marketable. Instead of destroying these species at taxpayer expense, we believe the Missouri Departments of Conservation and Natural Resources should partner with timber marketers to utilize resources.

We are opposed to any effort in which the control or management of land or natural resources of the United States is relinquished or diminished in any way by treaty or other means to the United Nations or any other foreign body. This applies to activities such as bioreserves or others that have been proposed by local, state, federal or international agencies or organizations.

Prior to agricultural land (except road rights-of-way) being purchased by federal, state or local government public hearings must be held to allow for taxpayer input. A cost/benefit analysis of the proposed purchase shall be prepared by an impartial, reputable source. The cost of the analysis shall be paid for by the proposed buyer.

We strongly support private ownership of land in Missouri.

Public lands could be sold under certain circumstances and should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. We oppose the sale of parcels of the Mark Twain National Forest and other tracts of U.S. Forest lands to fund the Secure Rural Schools Act that would send proceeds to other states.

We support the sale of public lands when covenants are violated.

We believe no new land should be acquired or agreements entered into to use for state parks unless maintenance of existing state parks is adequately funded.

We believe the activities of departments and agencies of the state and federal government should be more transparent and accountable to the taxpayer. Therefore, all departments and agencies of the state and federal government should be required to notify county commissioners and district legislators representing the county in writing, prior to negotiating a contract land purchase, option to purchase, lease, donation, easement agreement or taking by eminent domain.

Rights of Nature

We oppose granting special rights to natural elements such as trees, lakes, rivers, oceans, streams, etc.

We oppose the personification of natural elements in our laws and judicial system, including granting a Bill of Rights or the rights of personhood/beinghood.

We oppose natural elements having the same legal status as humans, and support legislation to prevent such.

Rural Water Supply

We believe pure clean water is a vital part of rural Missouri. We support the efforts of rural water districts in obtaining loans and grants to serve their areas.

Scenic Rivers

We oppose the expansion of land and designation of additional rivers as a part of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

We oppose the designation of any additional waterbodies as Outstanding State Resource Waters.

Soil Conservation

We believe the NRCS should be a non-regulatory provider of education and technical assistance and not an agricultural environmental enforcement agency.

We favor incentives to landowners for putting fragile, erodible soil into long-term conserving cover crops such as grass, trees, etc. by cost-share and tax credits.

We favor sufficient flexibility in the regulation to allow local Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committees, with the advice of the local Natural Resources Conservation Service technicians, to determine the soil conservation practice or combination of practices that best serve the needs of the local area in achieving the optimum level of erosion reduction.

We favor strict enforcement of maintenance requirements on all cost-share conserving practices.

We favor a reevaluation in order to develop more practical construction specifications pertaining to building waterways, water improvement structures, terraces, stream bank stabilization, etc.

We favor both state and federal income tax deductions for permanent soil conservation practices.

NRCS should not enter into agreements with other federal agencies to develop and/or enforce regulations on agricultural land.

We support funding for NRCS to maintain the staff needed in local service centers for program implementation and technical assistance. We oppose fee-based services.

We support landowners having the ability to stabilize streambanks in accordance with best management practices without a permit when flood disasters occur.

Solid and Hazardous Waste Disposal

We believe each state should be responsible for disposing of the majority of the solid waste generated within their borders. In addition, we support giving state and local political subdivisions more authority to accept or deny out-of-state solid waste.

We believe in the principle of recycling. We also believe that present recycling law makes individual counties ultimately financially responsible for implementing a recycling program without providing any substantial amount of new funding to meet the various deadlines. We believe the state should provide this funding in accordance with Article 10, Section 21 of the "Hancock Amendment." Because of the increasing importance to create a market for recycled products, tax incentives should be given to businesses for recycling their products or for purchasing recycled material.

We support legislation enacting new requirements and guidelines for the siting of a sanitary landfill in Missouri. These new siting requirements should afford added protection and recourse not only to the adjoining landowners, but to nearby communities and towns with regard to such things as economic impact and social consequences.

We further believe that once a permit application has been declared completed, a copy of the application and the completed plan be made available in the local library for 30 days prior to the public hearing.

We believe that the Department of Natural Resources should, upon the application of any waste disposal facility, notify immediately all adjacent landowners, county commissioners and the general public.

We believe hazardous waste disposal sites should be located on federal property. The individuals or companies who produce hazardous waste should be legally and financially responsible for its disposal.

We recommend that the definition of “habitual violator” of hazardous waste laws be spelled out in Missouri state law.

We favor pesticides being sold in containers that can be easily and safely destroyed by the user. If certain pesticides cannot be placed in such containers, manufacturers and distributors should be willing to receive empty containers for disposal.

We favor having at least two full-time farmers on commissions in charge of hazardous waste disposal.

We support voluntary disposal and recycling of unused pesticides and containers at authorized collection and disposal sites. We encourage farmers and commercial applicators to triple rinse or pressure rinse containers and return them to their participating dealers for recycling.

We believe that legislation which limits the responsibility of private property owners for hazardous material illegally dumped on their land is urgently needed. Legislation should exclude the property owner from any legal responsibility to clean up the hazardous material and allow landowners to notify the proper state or county agency to have the illegally dumped material removed.

We encourage the Departments of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Economic Development to seek ways to attract rendering plants to Missouri.

We believe that when sites are considered an environmental problem or hazardous by the EPA or DNR under programs such as Superfund, a comprehensive scientific assessment should be conducted by a qualified independent research entity before any regulatory restrictions on land use activities are imposed.

We support the 50 cent fee for the waste tire disposal program which sunsets in 2020, and we believe the funds should be used to transition to a privately run program.

Steel Traps

We favor the continued use of steel traps under present regulation. We believe any international agreements aimed at banning furs from countries using steel traps should be challenged by our government as non-tariff trade barriers subject to retaliation under international trade agreements.

Vehicle Emissions

We believe federally mandated air pollution control devices such as catalytic converters now installed on motor vehicles coupled with voluntary efforts by industry are sufficient to assure safe motor vehicle emission. We therefore oppose annual auto emission inspection.

We oppose implementation of Clean Air Act regulations that will increase purchase and maintenance costs for diesel engines. Adding urea to diesel exhaust systems is prohibitively expensive.

We oppose the 75 mph limit on emergency vehicles. If implemented, it will cost lives for a very small reduction in particulate emissions.

Air emissions in St. Louis have been decreasing since 1984 as voluntary and mandatory industry and vehicle emissions control measures have been implemented. We therefore support repeal of the auto emissions inspection program.

Water Quality

We recognize the need for high quality surface and groundwater in Missouri. We support a water inventory and monitoring program to evaluate the quality of Missouri's water. We believe such a program should be funded from general revenues.

We urge policymakers to consider the following points:

1. The conservation provisions of federal farm bills since 1985 have greatly expedited the implementation of soil and water conservation practices and structures. We urge Congress to fully account for these positive soil and water conservation gains as they draft non-point source pollution legislation. These successful on-going soil and water conservation programs should be continued as the cornerstone of any plan to address non-point source water quality issues;
2. We believe USDA should be the primary federal agency in the development and implementation of any federal groundwater policy or program affecting agriculture;
3. Many factors must be considered when determining water quality goals including the cost of pollution abatement, the needs of agriculture or other industries and the presence of naturally occurring pollutants. Water quality policy must also be carefully tied to a sound scientific base and not dominated by emotional or political appeal; and
4. Educational programs linked with cost share incentives provide a much more effective way of achieving cooperation from farmers and other landowners as opposed to mandatory programs such as requiring the implementation of certain "best management practices" on all farms.

We oppose efforts by state and/or federal regulatory agencies to designate waterbodies as impaired, including designation for whole body contact, or implement watershed management plans or similar measures in the absence of sound scientific data, clear standards, and the support of affected landowners. We do not believe EPA has the authority to use Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and other provisions of the Clean Water Act to regulate nonpoint source pollution. We oppose the inclusion of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers on the state list of impaired waters and listing waterbodies based on mercury deposition.

We believe Missouri Farm Bureau, county Farm Bureau leaders, and affected landowners should be involved in any actions affecting land use. We support the decision to discontinue the Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Our Missouri Waters (OMW) initiative and believe any watershed management plans or other recommendations resulting from the OMW initiative should be voluntary and implemented only when fully vetted with and supported by affected landowners. We oppose any watershed management plans, recommendations or other future actions authorizing local watershed committees or other entities to restrict land use.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency should work with state regulatory officials to allow landowners the flexibility to manage streambank erosion without a site-specific permit. Congress should provide comprehensive oversight of the regulatory jurisdiction claimed by these agencies over waters of the United States.

We oppose EPA's policy requiring DNR to list the entire stream length rather than only the actual length of an impaired portion on the state TMDL list of impaired waters.

We oppose proposals to increase classified streams in Missouri that would impose unnecessary and unaffordable water quality regulations on landowners and others. Although we recognize that costly new regulations adopted by the Missouri Clean Water Commission will bring the state into compliance with the federal Clean Water Act, we oppose classifying waters that should not be classified. Consequently, we urge DNR to:

1. Fully exercise its authority to keep waters that should not be classified from being classified;
2. Establish a streamlined process for declassification of such waters; and
3. Designate only those uses for classified waters that are in fact supported by those waters.

We oppose programs in which volunteers are used to collect technical information on aquatic resources.

We oppose any efforts by state agencies to place "no discharge" regulations on any streams in Missouri unless those streams have an undeveloped watershed and are located on or pass through state or federally owned land.

We believe that regulations for sediment release and runoff that apply to private landowners should also apply to any government agency.

We believe federal and state agencies should give Missouri agriculture credit for the improvements that have resulted from passage of the one-tenth cent sales tax for soil and water conservation.

We support training offered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service to qualify individuals outside their agency to develop nutrient management programs.

We urge DNR to complete Use Attainability Analyses (UAAs) required by the federal Clean Water Act to de-designate waterbodies that are unsuitable for whole body contact recreation but so designated as a result of legal action initiated by the Coalition for the Environment.

We oppose requiring farmers and landowners to obtain a Clean Water Act permit to apply chemical pesticides near water when products are applied in compliance with pesticide labeling laws.

We support actions taken by the EPA and Corps to repeal the “Waters of the United States” rule and rewrite the definition to comply with jurisdictional limits approved by Congress and affirmed by the US Supreme Court.

Water Rights

We support the establishment of regional commissions comprised of local landowners to study, protect, and enhance our underground water supply and administer any laws and regulations relating to this vital resource.

We recommend that the Missouri Farm Bureau, in cooperation with other interested groups, become actively involved in developing and securing passage of a sound water rights law in Missouri.

We believe that any water rights law should recognize the principle of first in time, first in right.

We favor adequate compensation be guaranteed to anyone who has an established lawful right to water usage which is later prohibited or restricted by any private entity or state agency, board, commission, etc.

We support the use of the state’s underground aquifers to be utilized to meet in-state needs, including drinking water and irrigation purposes. We acknowledge that different regions in Missouri have different water needs.

We recommend that legislation be enacted to prohibit the sale of water from the aquifers within the state to other states or entities outside the state of Missouri.

Wetlands

We believe that the government’s authority in designating wetlands and requiring mitigation for altered wetlands should be sharply curtailed. We further believe that denial of a wetlands dredge-and-fill permit constitutes a taking of property for which landowners should be provided “just compensation.”

We support using farmed or converted wetland enrolled in USDA’s Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) (formerly the Wetland Reserve Program) under permanent easement to also be used toward wetland mitigation requirements.

We oppose dredge-and-fill regulations being applied to agricultural land.

We believe that government agencies with jurisdiction over wetlands should be required to weigh the benefits to wildlife and the environment created by manmade wetlands against the effects of changing the wetland.

We believe all federal wetlands determinations on farmland should be made by only one federal agency, preferably the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

In light of the confusion and complexity of federal wetlands regulations, we oppose any state programs to further regulate wetlands in Missouri. We believe state efforts should be limited to educational and informational programs concerning wetlands, inventory projects to

better determine the location and condition of existing wetlands and voluntary programs which provide incentives to landowners to preserve or restore wetlands.

When mitigation (replacement) acres for wetlands, or other public use, are required by federal agencies, no more than one acre should be required to be mitigated per acre of converted wetlands.

We oppose any mandatory reclassification of farmland to wetlands due to flooding or reevaluation.

We support efforts which have improved cooperation between the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and other state and federal agencies in completing approved Natural Resources Conservation Service flood control and stabilization projects. However, we oppose expanding the definition of “aquatic habitat” to include land that does not typically support aquatic life.

We believe that prior to a landowner putting part or all of their farm in a government wetland program that all adjoining landowners should be made aware of this, especially where surrounding landowners’ waterflow or natural drainage is affected.

Wildlife Damage

We believe feral hogs are an unacceptable risk to humans, livestock, crops, and property. We believe eradication of all feral hogs is the ultimate goal. We support federal and state eradication efforts.

We oppose any form of profit to be derived from feral hogs or hunting of feral hogs.

If public lands are closed to feral hog hunting, we believe relevant federal and state agencies must respond with increased eradication efforts. Furthermore, any decision to close public land owned or managed by federal or state agencies must be re-examined no later than 3 years from the date of enactment.

We believe agencies involved in eradication efforts should prioritize the removal of feral hogs. Current expenditures and staff time focused on feral hogs is not adequate. If additional funds are necessary they should be reallocated from other areas within the departments. No new taxes or fees should be required.

We support stakeholder cooperation in eradication efforts. We believe landowners and relevant agencies should work together. Eradication efforts should be done by any means necessary to eliminate feral hogs.

We support allowing landowners and landowner’s agents to use any legal means necessary to eliminate feral hogs. This includes the use of artificial lights, night vision and thermal imaging. All elimination efforts should be done with the ultimate goal of eradication.

We support allowing incidental take of feral hogs on public lands closed to feral hog hunting in accordance with MDC and U.S. Forest Service regulations.

We support a clear definition of a feral hog in state statute and regulations. The definition should be clear enough to allow law enforcement officials to punish individuals for transporting and holding feral hogs while protecting agricultural operations.

We believe the Feral Hog Elimination Partnership should have a disposal plan in case of any disease outbreak.

We support increasing the penalty in Missouri from a misdemeanor to a felony for the intentional release of any hogs on public land or private land without acceptable confinement. We also believe it should be a felony to hold alive or transport feral hogs without permission from the Missouri Department of Agriculture.

We support the development of educational programs and materials for law enforcement officials. We support allowing any law enforcement official to write a citation for illegal transport or holding of feral hogs. Law enforcement will confiscate and kill such feral hogs. We encourage the active involvement of county prosecutors, and believe anyone caught transporting or holding feral hogs should be punished to the fullest extent of the law including the loss of hunting privileges.

PATRIOTISM

General

We believe the words “under God” should be retained in the Pledge of Allegiance and all efforts to remove them vigorously opposed.

We believe the words “In God We Trust” should continue to be printed on all U.S. currency.

Our national anthem is a beautiful message for the ages. We must continue to honor those who fought and served this country by keeping it in its current form.

We support the preservation of all grave sites, historical sites and historical monuments.

United States Flag

We support a U.S. constitutional amendment to allow states to prosecute any person guilty of desecration of the United States flag.

POLITICAL ACTION PROGRAMS

Because political decisions affect us as individuals and as farmers, we believe that Missouri Farm Bureau should build on past successes by:

1. Continuing to strengthen and support the Missouri Farm Bureau Federal and State PAC program with renewed emphasis on selecting trustees who represent the best interest of the county membership and by rotating individuals for this important position whenever possible;
2. Continued close cooperation with independent businesses, co-ops, farm organizations and other groups with similar goals; and
3. Increased efforts to inform the public of issues affecting agriculture.

These efforts should be supported by the active participation and financial contributions of all Farm Bureau members.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

We believe that Farm Bureau should use its resources and expertise to persuade public officials or candidates to respect private ownership of property and the chain of title that guarantees the ownership of private property.

We urge strict adherence to the Missouri “Private Property Rights” law which requires state governmental agencies to review and modify their proposed rules and regulations in order to prevent the further loss of private property rights. We favor passage of a similar bill at the federal level.

If there is a loss in either market value or production capability of the land, the landowners should be justly compensated.

A property owner should be allowed to have a cause of action against a governmental entity to recover damages if such governmental entity applies a statute, rule or regulation that reduces the use of the individual’s property or the fair market value of the individual’s property.

We oppose the use of off-shore drilling fees for purchase of private lands.

We oppose the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA) or similar legislation that would significantly increase funding for federal and state land acquisition.

We support statutory fines for malicious, unfounded, or repeated false reports of environmental infractions. We oppose the improper use of environmental law to harass property owners.

Aerial Surveillance of Agricultural Operations

We strongly oppose governmental aerial surveillance of private property except in the case of national security or to find missing persons.

We favor the use of UAV/UAS (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Systems/Unmanned Aircraft Systems) for agricultural use. We promote responsible research that will set acceptable, ethical, and safe guidelines that protect not only agriculture’s use of UAV/UAS but also the surrounding populations of agricultural use areas.

American Heritage Trust Act

We are opposed to the American Heritage Trust Act concept which would establish a multi-billion dollar federal trust fund to acquire private land for recreational and other public use.

Billboards

The federal highway beautification law should be amended to include an agricultural exemption allowing billboards to be erected on agricultural property owned by an agribusiness wishing to advertise its own business.

Biological Resources Survey

We oppose efforts by the Department of Interior or any other department or agency of the federal government to conduct a national survey of all biological resources, which we believe will result in further restrictions on private property.

Eminent Domain

The government acquisition of land and buildings should be severely restricted in cases where reasonable alternatives are available. We oppose the acquisition of land and buildings from an unwilling seller simply to keep development within a particular political boundary.

We support Missouri's eminent domain reform law, which strengthens the protection of landowners from condemnation with assurance that needed rural infrastructure such as roads, power lines and water and sewer lines can be built in a timely and economical manner with equitable compensation granted to all affected landowners. We believe entities with condemnation authority should be required to consider alternate routes and to directly notify and publicly disclose routes for proposed right-of-way expansion to affected landowners.

We oppose the use of eminent domain for the acquisition of land to be resold to private owners or for the transfer of property from one private entity to another for the purpose of economic development. We believe that easements acquired by an entity with condemnation authority should return to the landowner if unused after ten years. We oppose granting eminent domain authority to cable companies or any other entities that do not already have eminent domain authority.

We believe eminent domain authority should not be used for purposes of private development or recreational facilities, and the term "public use" in eminent domain statutes and the state constitution excludes these purposes.

We support further restrictions on the use of eminent domain to acquire blighted property in both urban and rural areas.

We believe landowners in eminent domain cases should have five years from the time of the original settlement in which to negotiate claims for damage from construction and maintenance that may not have been confirmed at the time of the initial settlement.

We believe that when it becomes necessary for any city to condemn private property outside the city limits, for any authorized purpose, the governing body of the city must first be required to obtain the approval of the county commission of the county containing such property.

We support changes to the Missouri Constitution which promote our established policy on property rights. Furthermore, if deemed to be a valuable tool to that end, we support the use of a Missouri Farm Bureau initiated initiative petition process to effect those changes.

Missouri Supreme Court rulings have upheld key provisions of Missouri's eminent domain reform law enacted in 2006. If legal challenges weaken the law, we support necessary modifications to protect property rights.

Farmland Preservation

The rapid and continuing loss of prime farmland to soil erosion and to residential, commercial, industrial, recreational and governmental use should be a concern to every American. Solutions to the problem must be found. But, as we seek solutions, we should remember that even though land ownership is a sacred trust, private ownership of property is the foundation for a free society, and public policies that unduly interfere with private property rights are a threat to our American democratic system.

We believe any proposal to provide state funds for farmland preservation should be subject to thorough public review and comment and should protect the private property rights of participating landowners who enter into agreements to keep their farmland in production.

The best way to preserve farmland is to allow the farmer to profitably farm by developing a combination of incentives and policies that will preserve and conserve his land, protect his rights as a landowner and allow him a reasonable return on his investment and labor.

We therefore support:

1. Farmland assessments based on productive capability;
2. Abolition of all estate taxes;
3. Adequate and reasonable credit for farmers; and
4. Cost sharing for soil conserving improvements.

And, we therefore oppose:

1. Excessive governmental rules and regulations;
2. Exclusive agricultural zoning;
3. Unnecessary governmental acquisition of farmland;
4. Exploitation of the “willing seller” covenant to justify farmland acquisition by public or private entities; and
5. Forced annexation.

We oppose government action that would deny, postpone or restrict the property rights of landowners without just compensation such as the Natural Streams Act, wetlands, Endangered Species Act, railway and utility abandonment, and reintroduction of fish and wildlife species.

We support an aggressive education effort to make landowners aware of the potential adverse consequences of land trust agreements and conservation easements.

Fence Law

We support the existing Missouri fence law. The definition of a legal fence should be revised to include energized high-tensile fencing.

The landowner should be responsible for the removal of limbs and repair of boundary fences damaged by fallen trees if the trees were growing on the landowner’s property.

Heritage Corridors

We oppose the Mississippi River Heritage Corridor and any other proposed Heritage Corridor and all their implications.

We also oppose any other plan that removes or threatens the rights of property owners.

Land Acquisition

We favor a constitutional amendment to require any additional land purchased by the Missouri Department of Conservation and Missouri Department of Natural Resources to be approved by the Missouri General Assembly.

National Trails Act

We believe adjacent landowners should be given the first option to acquire abandoned rights-of-way. In addition, railroad rights-of-way, whether owned by the railroad or obtained by easements, should not be converted to any other purpose after the railroad company ceases to use the line for rail traffic. We oppose any federal or state law, such as the National Trails Act, which attempts to circumvent landowners' easement rights by using the abandoned line for some other purpose. We oppose the use of state resources to convert abandoned railways to recreational trails.

If not repealed altogether, we believe that the National Trails System Act should be amended as follows:

1. Allow only those abandoned railroad rights-of-way which have a realistic probability of being used again someday for a railroad be approved for interim use as recreational trails;
2. Require the state or other trail sponsor which receives certification for interim trail use of an abandoned railroad to be held responsible for fencing, taxes, maintenance of the right-of-way, and other such costs which were required of the railroad and also be responsible for compensating the owners of the right-of-way for use of the property easement;
3. Require railroads to notify individual affected landowners in advance of proposed abandonment;
4. Require railroads to disclose to individual affected landowners the legal status of its occupancy of their tract of property;
5. Provide for automatic compensation to landowners whose property is taken as a result of railbanking;
6. Require a public comment period prior to certification or notification for interim trail use;
7. Require that the Surface Transportation Board evaluate and report specific findings regarding the suitability of the corridor for interim trail use prior to certification or notification for interim trail use, including safety, health, security, privacy, biosecurity, food security and the economic interests of adjacent landowners; and
8. Require approval by the local governing bodies in affected communities and counties as a condition for eligibility before railbanking can be authorized.

Property Easements

We believe that when a property easement is no longer used for the purpose for which it was granted, or by the entity specific to the utility to which it was granted, that the full control of that property return to the landowner. We support allowing rural electric cooperative easements to be used for the additional purpose of broadband service only, without compensation to the landowners as long as the landowners' use of the easement is unaffected and no other damages or loss of property values are incurred.

All unused easements should have a sunset clause of no more than ten years. All easements should be returned to the landowner within one year after abandonment of its original purpose.

Right To Repair

We support farmers, independent repair shops and aftermarket parts stores having access to manuals and diagnostic tools needed to repair farm equipment.

Scenic Byways

We support the promotion of tourism in rural Missouri, however, we believe all applications for scenic byway designations must be subjected to thorough public review and comment and should not be made without the approval of affected landowners.

We believe that landowners in unincorporated areas affected by scenic byways proposals and corridor management plans should have discretionary authority to approve scenic byway designation.

State Planning Commission

We are opposed to the development of an appointed state land use and development commission to regulate the use of private property in Missouri.

Streams and Road Beds

We support enforcement of the Missouri State Constitution and statutes which would require the State Tax Commission to assess and tax abutting landowners for property between the discernible streambanks, other waterways, and easements to protect their property rights.

We support the current interpretation of trespass which is determined by the normal high water mark on floatable streams.

We support education efforts and enforcement action to promote respect for private property rights.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

We believe it is urgent that Farm Bureau increase its efforts in telling the story of modern food and fiber production to the American public through traditional media and new technologies, including social media. We also believe Missouri Farm Bureau should encourage American Farm Bureau, U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance and commodity groups to do more outreach using non-agriculture media.

We believe that whenever possible Farm Bureau should visibly and aggressively present agriculture's viewpoint on wetlands, endangered species, water pollution, animal rights, etc. to urban audiences.

We in agriculture must have the understanding and support of nonagricultural people if our society is to receive the benefits of an efficient agriculture. It is especially important for consumers to understand that the use of public funds for agricultural research results in benefits for all citizens. We therefore encourage the Missouri Farm Bureau and the American Farm Bureau to actively and aggressively support and help lead state and national agriculture coalitions with other state Farm Bureaus and state and national commodity organizations and checkoff boards to preserve and expand the important agriculture industry in Missouri and across the nation.

We encourage a renewed focus on educating consumers about all plant and animal agriculture.

Missouri Farm Bureau should continue to inform its members about its programs, services and accomplishments through all possible means of communication. Missouri Farm Bureau should continue to educate and work with the news media to help us relay our story to the American public.

We recommend that the Missouri Farm Bureau and American Farm Bureau work toward a monthly, or more often if necessary, news release outlining how prices of raw farm products relate to the cost of food to consumers. This would allow consumers to be educated as to a fair price of a product at the grocery store based on what the farmer/producer sold it for.

We believe that Missouri should put more emphasis on agri-tourism. We urge county Farm Bureaus to become more involved in local issues, property rights, fairs and other agricultural related activities.

We recommend that the agricultural business industry continue to educate their personnel about their direct personal stake in the financial condition of farmers. We commend their efforts in telling the story of American agriculture through the news media.

In view of the many years of economic contribution in showcasing agriculture, we support the American Royal's continuing presence in Kansas City. We commend the American Royal Board of Governors for their efforts to improve the facilities and programs.

We commend the St. Louis Science Center for its GROW exhibit to better educate the public about today's agriculture.

We encourage county Farm Bureaus to support local youth (such as FFA and 4-H) to promote agricultural education in public settings such as county annual meetings, local fairs and State Fair.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

Our nation was and is founded on spiritual belief and trust in God.

We believe in man's right to worship God, to offer prayers and to read the Bible as God's word, in private and public places, including schoolrooms.

We believe the First Amendment provides freedom of religion to all Americans. The liberty this Amendment guarantees should be respected and religious based businesses/business owners should be protected from lawsuits or being forced to sacrifice their religious beliefs.

We believe there should be no infringement on the right to pray or to sing Christmas carols in public schools, and there should be no infringement on the right of those who decline to participate. We oppose the removal of the traditional use of the words "Merry Christmas" with the politically correct substitution of the words "Happy Holidays." We believe in the use of the manger scene as a Christian symbol of Christmas.

We believe the Ten Commandments should be allowed to be posted in public schools and other public buildings.

RURAL YOUTH

We encourage Farm Bureau to continue active support of 4-H, FFA and other youth programs to encourage youth to continue in agriculture.

We believe the publicity of Farm Bureau-sponsored activities and programs for rural youth should be more aggressively publicized.

We recommend that Missouri Farm Bureau continue to sponsor youth programs designed to increase the understanding of rural youth in our free enterprise system, the responsibilities of citizenship and related areas.

SAFETY

All-Terrain Vehicles

Due to the alarming increase in accidents and fatalities with the all-terrain vehicles, we encourage Farm Bureau to take the lead in promoting ATV safety awareness.

Automobiles

We encourage automobile manufacturers to make additional design adjustments to air bags to make them more safe, especially for small children, including the current practice of providing off switches.

We oppose any lens cover that darkens or obstructs any headlight, taillight or turn signal on all vehicles while being operated on any public highway.

Farm Safety

We support the farm safety efforts being provided through the 4-H and FFA programs. Additionally, we encourage local farm safety training for families allowing the parents and children both classroom and hands-on experiences to enhance their understanding of working safely on the farm and ranch. Topics ranging from equipment operation and safety modifications (e.g. Roll Over Protective Structures) to safe ways to lift heavy objects should be included. These training sessions could be done at the local level in cooperation with MU Extension, local Agricultural Education Departments, County Farm Bureaus and other businesses serving agriculture. The content of the training would vary based upon the agricultural production in the area and the exposure to risk.

We acknowledge the University of Missouri Extension program for their leadership in farm safety training as well as the AgrAbility Program for its efforts to assist farmers who have become injured.

We support the continuation of Farm Bureau's farm safety and awareness program. Farm safety information may be included in the Show Me magazine, fair displays, local events, Western Farm Show and other appropriate venues as reminders of safe practices for farm workers.

We urge county Farm Bureaus to encourage participation in child safety programs (e.g. general farm safety, equipment and livestock).

Gun Safety

We urge county Farm Bureaus to promote programs on firearm safety, such as the hunter safety program.

Roadway Safety

We favor farm safety signs being included in all drivers' training manuals.

We recommend that SMV emblems be displayed on slow-moving vehicles only when traveling on county or state roads. We oppose any effort to require escort vehicles to accompany wide farm machinery when it is being transported on a public road.

We believe the Missouri Department of Transportation should work with Farm Bureau members and agricultural producers to develop a program that addresses the public safety concerns associated with moving agricultural machinery on roadways.

We urge MoDOT to make temporary road signs warning motorists of farm equipment moving on roadways readily available to farmers and ranchers upon request. In addition, we urge MoDOT to continue to display warning signs at locations where the risk to motorists and farmers moving equipment is higher than average.

We believe that motorists who are cited for a traffic violation that is committed against someone transporting farm machinery should have their fine doubled.

We recommend that all hard surfaced roads have a painted center line and a painted fog line.

We believe the Department of Transportation should keep all intersections mowed to assure clear visibility.

We support a defensive driving program for beginning drivers.

We encourage a review of the national standards for vehicle headlights and tail lights. Headlights that are too bright are a hazard to oncoming vehicles and unsafe. We encourage the enforcement of current laws that prohibit driving with more than two headlights unless conditions merit their use.

We believe mandatory flashing lights, turn signals, reflective material, and the appropriate slow moving vehicle emblem should be reinstated as part of the requirements for operators of horse-drawn vehicles.

We believe all railroad cars should have reflective markings on both sides of each car.

We support a national standard for the color of emergency lights on emergency vehicles.

We believe a standard color would eliminate confusion between neighboring states.

We support a change to traffic signals that would allow approaching traffic to have advanced warning of a signal change.

We support prohibiting drivers from passing other vehicles on two-lane roads while driving on any portion of the entire length of highway construction zones between the work zone signs.

We support banning texting while driving for all drivers.

SOCIAL SECURITY

We believe Social Security should be self-supporting. We oppose any subsidization of the program from general funds or windfall profit taxes. We believe all workers, including elected officials and government employees, should pay Social Security taxes. We recognize each individual's right to participate in pension plans in addition to Social Security. We therefore oppose any proposals to place funds from any other existing pension plan into the Social Security trust fund.

We believe since Social Security was originally meant for supplementary retirement income, that Social Security funds should not be used to expand programs or to fund new programs. We urge Congress to separate the medical programs from Social Security and to finance these programs from general revenue funds. Such a transfer should be accompanied by a reduction in Social Security taxes equal to the amount necessary to fund the medical programs. We support action now to eliminate the projected deficit in the Social Security Trust Fund.

We are opposed to prison inmates and illegal immigrants receiving Social Security benefits.

We favor exempting Social Security benefits from the Missouri state income tax. Current Social Security surplus income should not be used to offset budget deficits, but should be segregated from other federal revenues and invested in real securities.

We believe self-employed people should be allowed to deduct one-half of their Social Security costs as a business expense. This would give farmers and other self-employed individuals the same break currently given to employees.

We oppose efforts to end the Social Security tax exemption for farmers who employ their spouses.

We urge correction of the inequity in the method of determining earnings of self-employed persons subject to Social Security taxes when substantial portions of these earnings are related to a return on their investment in business property.

We believe individuals should have direct control over a portion of their social security investments.

STATE FAIR

We encourage more year-round use of the fairgrounds and we believe the state should appropriate the funds necessary to support year-round use.

We favor the ever popular events, tractor pulling and car racing, being held in front of the grandstand.

We support the Super Teen Farmer Contest at the Missouri State Fair.

We favor an increased and continued emphasis on agriculture at the State Fair with areas designated to be used for agriculture displays only.

We favor an increased effort to control alcohol abuse and alcohol use on the fairgrounds during the State Fair.

We favor increased and improved support of funding for State Fair facilities.

We favor reinstating general revenue funding to support the State Fair.

We encourage a display at the Missouri State Fair that would show various breeds of livestock involved in animal agriculture, i.e. beef cattle, dairy cattle, swine, sheep and equine. Currently, not all breeds are on the fairgrounds at the same time. This would be a good tool to inform and educate the general public about the different types of livestock involved in Missouri agriculture.

We believe the 4-H and FFA livestock shows should remain separate during the State Fair.

TRANSPORTATION

MOFB members acknowledge the need for increased highway and bridge funding and could support additional funding through fuel tax, sales tax, and/or vehicle fees, if MoDOT could ensure the fair distribution of funding between rural and urban areas.

With so many different plans, routes (such as I-70), cost figures and estimated tolls being talked about for Missouri, we are skeptical about the idea of implementing tolling in Missouri and would need to have specifics of any tolling proposal to determine if our members would support.

While we support critical transportation infrastructure; we believe that any conversion of divided, four-lane, US Highway to a US Interstate system should provide adequate outside infrastructure of outer roads, overpasses, bridges and culverts to facilitate current agricultural equipment travel, rural EMS, school buses, mail delivery, and access to farms and homes.

Bicycles

All bicyclists should abide by local and state traffic laws.

We believe bicycles operated on Missouri public roads should display safety lighting.

Bicycle race organizers should give communities advance notice of planned routes, dates and times on streets, roads, and highways.

County and State Roads and Bridges

To increase public input into its decision-making process, we support adding two more members to the six-member Missouri Highway and Transportation Commission.

Adequate roads and bridges from county systems to interstate highways are essential for the production and distribution of all commodities, including crops and livestock. We support bridges constructed on county roads be built at a minimum of 20 feet wide, to allow for and support the movement of large agriculture implements and machinery. We also believe the Missouri Department of Transportation should work to improve the state's roads and bridges to meet the needs of our military and civil defense operations in the state.

We believe MoDOT's local maintenance sheds are important to servicing and maintaining state roads in their areas and the necessary materials and supplies must be provided to them so they can do their job. Because MoDOT's local employees understand the needs and problems in their counties, they are a valuable resource in the planning and decision-making processes for their areas.

We believe more emphasis should be placed on returning structurally deficient bridges to two-way traffic. In cases where this is not economically feasible, we favor one-way bridges over reduced load limits.

We encourage county Farm Bureaus to assist County Commissioners in planning road and bridge construction and maintenance.

We support requiring counties and the state to repair and replace bridges as soon as possible.

We strongly encourage the Missouri Department of Transportation to make more of an effort to control all prohibited and noxious weeds. These weeds should be eliminated and prevented from going to seed by the most effective means possible.

We believe the Missouri Department of Transportation and other state agencies should improve the timeliness of mowing operations.

Rights-of-way should be mowed to the fence or property line to control brush and keep highways safe.

We recommend that the Department of Transportation plant only species that are palatable to livestock (even until seed head formation) on Missouri highway rights-of-way.

We recommend that the Department of Transportation introduce no new species that are not native to the midwest United States as it is difficult to determine how non-native plants will spread into surrounding environments.

We also recommend that the State Highway Department hard-surface all county road approaches to the state-owned roads and keep weeds mowed at intersections.

We support upgrading bridges to allow the legal weight of at least a minimum of 80,000 pounds on all state-maintained highways.

We believe county governments should accurately determine and post the maximum load limits of county bridges.

We favor all counties adopting a uniform numbering system, such as a uniform base grid system for county roads and residences to assist emergency response vehicles.

We oppose efforts to transfer responsibility for any state highways to the counties. The state's access to federal and state motor fuel tax revenues provides them with a much stronger revenue base than the counties with which to build and maintain roads and bridges.

We believe that the penalties for the illegal possession of a state, county, or municipal road sign should be increased and/or more strictly enforced and increased fines levied.

The Governor's appointments to the Highway and Transportation Commission must be fair and balanced representing both rural and urban interests.

A fair allocation of highway funds should be implemented using such objective criteria as vehicle miles traveled, recognizing not only the importance of the interstates but also the importance of the state/federal highway system and the farm-to-market roads.

Any plan for system expansion, rehabilitation, reconstruction or maintenance should identify specific projects and commit to general timelines for completion.

All earmarked federal highway and transportation related funds received in Missouri should be taken into consideration in the allocation of the state funds and other remaining federal funds.

Taxes and fees generated by highway use should be spent on the highway system and not diverted to other modes of transportation and non-highway use.

The Missouri Highway Patrol is essential to the safe operation of our highways and waterways. Consideration should be given to a sunset clause or otherwise requiring a periodic renewal of any increased taxes for transportation.

We believe associations or other community groups should be allowed to have tractor cruises on public roads (except interstate highways) for parades, special events, or fundraising purposes as long as they meet reasonable requirements by the Missouri State Highway Patrol, such as having an escort.

We believe the Missouri Department of Transportation should take additional steps to ensure an objective evaluation process is used to determine fair market value for land acquisition and to pay fair market value including business losses, regardless of the amount of acreage acquired, or value of the property. If litigation proves that MoDOT has failed to make a good faith effort to determine a fair market value, landowners' legal fees should be paid by the agency, and fair market value be paid.

We urge the Missouri Department of Transportation in conjunction with county officials to improve the road closing notification systems particularly during periods of flash flooding.

Farm Trucks

The unique characteristics of agricultural transportation warrant distinction in state and federal laws and regulations. We oppose repeal of existing statutory and regulatory exemptions.

We believe farmers hauling their own products intrastate or to nearby markets in bordering states should not be held to the same regulatory trucking standards as commercial truckers. We urge the Missouri Department of Transportation and Highway Patrol to continue to work with neighboring states to streamline and/or ease requirements through reciprocity agreements or legislation.

We are concerned about actions taken against farmers complying with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) and the confusion that exists among farmers and agricultural organizations because of the lack of consistency between state and federal transportation officials regarding the applicability of the FMCSRs to farm vehicle drivers and the extent to which they must be enforced at the state level.

We support increased flexibility for all commercial vehicles transporting livestock or perishable agriculture commodities from hours of service regulations.

We favor legislation at the state level and/or federal level to extend exemptions currently afforded to farmers operating trucks with Missouri farm license plates designated for farm use and licensed for 42,000 pounds or less to those operating vehicles licensed for more than 42,000 pounds;

We oppose the inclusion of agricultural producers in the Unified Carrier Registration (UCR) program. We support restoring an agricultural exemption from the program at the federal level.

We favor dropping the state inspection on trucks requiring a federal inspection.

Farm trucks hauling agricultural products and supplies should be permitted to travel any place in the United States without Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) or state reciprocity permits.

We oppose any weight/distance tax for trucks.

We favor elimination of the federal highway use tax on farm trucks. Until such action is taken, we support the current exemption from federal highway use tax for farm trucks traveling less than 7,500 miles per year.

We support the variance for trucks hauling agricultural commodities on Missouri highways during harvest.

We favor legislation allowing trucks and trailers to haul overwidth loads (big hay bales) from fields to storage areas on public highways during daylight hours and be exempt from permitting such loads.

We support weight, width and length limit exemptions for forage trucks during extreme conditions such as drought.

We believe all state roadways should have a legal load width of eight feet six inches.

We support current law providing a 5,500 pound variance to the total gross weight of vehicles hauling livestock, and for vehicles hauling milk from farm to processor.

We believe farmers transporting their own produce should be able to pay state and federal fuel tax to their supplier and be exempt from making special fuels monthly reports on bulk fuel storage.

We believe farmers delivering their own unprocessed commodities to facilities in neighboring states should not be subject to the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) license requirements so long as they are traveling in close proximity to the state line. We urge the State of Missouri to form IFTA reciprocity agreements with surrounding states.

We believe that agricultural chemicals, fuel and anhydrous ammonia should be exempt from placarding when the net weight of the products is three tons or less.

We favor continuation of the farm exempt status on Commercial Driver's Licenses.

We urge the Department of Revenue to revert back to the policy of allowing farm truck licenses to be renewed during January and February with no penalty.

Highway Speed Limits

We approve of the current Missouri speed limits.

We support any unpaved thoroughfare not posted with a speed limit sign in a rural area be limited to a speed limit of 45 miles per hour.

License Fees

We favor a uniform or a flat license fee for traditional passenger cars, rather than the current variable fees based on horsepower, providing the flat fees are set to provide the same total income as the variable fees. We believe electric cars should pay an additional license fee due to the fact they do not pay a fuel tax.

Mass Transit

We oppose the use of either state or federal highway funds for mass transit.

Missouri State Highway System

We support the elimination of excessive federal and/or state road and bridge designs and standards that are required of counties in order for the counties to receive matching funds.

In the interest of safety and promotion of tourism, we believe the Missouri Department of Transportation should establish rest areas on major thoroughfares other than interstates.

Motor Vehicle Inspection

We favor abolition of the Missouri Vehicle Inspection Law. We feel that the law does not or has not worked in making for safer vehicles and should be abolished for this reason.

We are opposed to any implementation of the vehicle emissions inspection programs in Missouri.

Railroads

We believe railroads should be allowed to operate in the most efficient manner possible. We encourage the use of larger cars to reduce rates.

Missouri Farm Bureau should be involved in proceedings when a railroad requests abandonment.

We also believe railroads should control all noxious weeds, grasses and brush on their property by preventing such weeds from producing seeds or obstructing visibility upon approach.

We favor keeping the old Rock Island Line from Owensville to Kansas City as a railroad, because railroads are vital to agriculture and the economy of rural communities and are a far better choice than the tax burden of building and maintaining a trail. We oppose any effort to create a recreational trail. If efforts to stop the conversion of the rail corridor to a recreational trail fail, then we oppose state or federal taxpayer funding for conversion and maintenance of such a trail.

We believe that railroad companies should be responsible for maintaining a safe degree of slope on public and private road approaches.

We oppose railroads eliminating crossings in order to raise the height of tracks to avoid future flood damage. Instead, railroads should seek to acquire additional easements by negotiating with adjacent landowners.

We also call for better rail traffic management to minimize blocked crossings, which are increasingly frequent, lengthy and widespread.

We believe that railroad mergers have resulted in fewer carriers and reduced service for agriculture. This consolidation has forced increased reliance on other less efficient and more

costly forms of transportation. We support additional oversight of the railroad industry, including any future plans for consolidation.

In addition, we believe the federal government and Congress should review the current situation and implement reforms that recognize the needs of U.S. agriculture.

School Bus Safety

We support the implementation of a program by the Missouri State Highway & Transportation Department for placing "School Bus Crossing" signs on Missouri secondary roads where vision of on-coming drivers is impaired by trees, hills or other obstructions.

We support the implementation of a program to equip all school buses with flashing strobe lights to be used when loading and unloading students.

We oppose the state mandating the use of seat belts on school buses.

State Supplementary Roads

We recommend that the State Highway Commission give high priority to expansion of the supplementary system when funds become available.

Waterways

We oppose an excessive use tax on barge lines.

Any user fee applied to water transportation should be at a level which will provide no more than that portion of the cost of waterways allocable to transportation, inasmuch as the waterways also provide significant public benefits in recreation, wildlife preservation, public water supply, and flood control.

We believe utilization of the inland waterway system is critical to the long-term success of American agriculture and support modernizing locks and dams on the Mississippi River.

We support the Maritime Administration's Marine Highway Program and designation of Marine Highway corridors on major waterways including the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. We support federal funding of Marine Highway grants to promote economic growth and enhance the efficiency of our surface transportation system.

We believe more should be done to develop and improve the port facilities on Missouri's major rivers. Funding options could include taking a portion of state general revenue for a port development fund and/or using a portion of new state taxes generated by increased economic activity of the ports.

We support Missouri River management to achieve a 9 feet deep by 300 feet wide channel for the navigation season, March through November.

We believe farmers and ranchers need every opportunity to reduce their cost of production and increase income. Therefore, we believe Congress should repeal the 1920 Jones Merchant Marine Act (Jones Act) which drives up the cost of agriculture inputs and outputs shipped from port to port in the U.S. waters.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

We favor prompt, reliable and more efficient postal service.

We recommend that the United States Postal Service continue its practice of screening and hiring local people to fill postal positions.

We support six-day delivery, but would support five-day per week delivery if it would prevent closing small-volume offices or increasing postal rates.

We propose that in lieu of any further postage rate increases, more contract mail deliveries (including in town) should be made.

We oppose any fee or tax on e-mail.

We also suggest that there should be more quality control and less waste.

We are opposed to the sponsorship of any activity or event by the U.S. Postal Service.

UTILITIES

General

Farm Bureau should continue to represent its membership before the Public Service Commission. Farm Bureau should work to have one individual with a farm background on the Public Service Commission.

We favor the Public Service Commission (PSC) being more strict in granting rate increases.

We urge the Missouri Public Service Commission to thoroughly review any request for utility status.

We urge the Public Service Commission to deny authorization to exercise eminent domain power for any transmission line proposed by private, out-of-state entities that do not serve Missouri customers. We believe the PSC's decision granting the power of eminent domain to the Grain Belt Express merchant transmission line should be overturned.

With increasing demand for electricity and regulatory pressure to build new infrastructure for renewable energy, we support stronger statutory and legal protections for landowners in negotiations pertaining to siting, compensation and related considerations.

We support retaining statutory and regulatory requirements making assent by county commissions in all counties where infrastructure related to utility service would be located prerequisite to project approval by the Public Service Commission.

We believe agriculture should be included among stakeholders affiliated as advisors to regional transmission organizations, including Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO).

We believe that all public utilities must maintain height, width and depth standards. These standards must accommodate all modern farming practices, including subsoiling and chisel plowing. If these standards are not met the utility should not be eligible for damages.

We believe that damages collected by utilities should be limited to repairs.

In the interest of safety for firemen and other emergency personnel as well as the safety and convenience of the property owner, we believe all electric utility companies should provide a "main disconnect" switch located below the meter.

We believe legislation should be introduced to ensure property owners have the ability to choose which company or companies serve them when the boundary line between two utility companies borders or divides their real estate.

Rural electric cooperatives should continue to expand service to customers even if they are incorporated into city limits.

We support maintaining state authority to exempt normal agricultural and farm tillage practices from one-call requirements under Federal Pipeline Safety Regulations.

We support modifying the agricultural exemption from notification requirements for excavation work by increasing the depth limit. We also support Farm Bureau working with Missouri One Call officials to promote awareness of potential hazards where underground utility infrastructure is located.

In addition, we support the existing requirement that utilities annually notify landowners of pipeline, cable and other underground utility infrastructure in particularly hazardous areas. We believe that landowners should not be liable for damages that result from incorrectly marked or located utilities.

Power Generation & Distribution

We support the continuation of the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) as the primary source of financing for the rural electric cooperative system.

We will oppose state and federal regulations for electric utility restructuring which would shift costs from large industrial users to farm and residential users. This includes “retail wheeling,” the ability of an electric company to deliver their electricity over another companies’ lines to serve retail customers.

We will support provisions in retail wheeling plans that provide for the full recovery of stranded costs and ensure electric system safety. We urge Farm Bureau to work to ensure that proposed deregulation of the electrical industry will treat rural customers fairly.

We favor legislation to protect rural electric cooperatives from unrealistic and damaging liability claims for environmental clean-up costs being imposed on them by the Environmental Protection Agency under such laws as the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA).

We recommend continued research in storage of electricity for use during peak hours.

We support the efforts of Missouri rural electric cooperatives to provide customers with ethanol powered hydrogen fuel cells.

We believe that any customer with net metering on a utility should pay all fixed costs associated with their interconnection to the grid.

With the rapid growing wind energy industry, we strongly encourage safe and responsible wind energy development including safe siting of wind turbines in accordance with manufacturers’ recommendations without imposing additional restrictions on neighbors.

We support the formation of an interagency task force to examine these and other issues regarding industrial wind energy complexes and report findings to state legislative committees of jurisdiction.

Telecommunications

We strongly encourage efforts by utility providers to continue to invest in advancement of telecommunications capabilities in the rural areas of the state.

We support Missouri adopting a state broadband office.

We believe that rural people should have equal access to cell phone services and that Farm Bureau should represent the membership before the Public Service Commission, so one company cannot own and control the cell service in any one area.

We urge the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to work with cell phone companies to increase interoperability among towers in rural areas.

We believe fees assessed by cell phone companies for the early termination of contracts are excessive and should be eliminated.

We believe that it is of great importance that 911 service be available to all counties of the state, including the rural counties not currently being served.

We support assessing a fee on cell phones, voice over internet protocols, or any other device that can access the 911 system to support local 911 emergency response services.

We believe rural people should be allowed to call their trade area toll-free if economically feasible and if they so desire.

We believe that commercial mass cold canvass telephone calls should be prohibited.

We support the National and State No-Call list.

When a boundary line between two telephone companies divides a piece of real estate, we believe the property owner should have his/her choice of which company or companies serves him/her anywhere on that property.

We support telephone companies becoming involved in electronic data and information transfer and cable TV services.

We oppose legislation or regulations pertaining to access fees that could hinder the availability of affordable advanced services (i.e. broadband) or result in dramatic rate increases for rural Missouri.

We believe that network and other advertisement-supported television programming should be transmitted in such a manner as not to interfere with free reception on home satellite dishes. In areas unable to receive the broad benefits of broadcast television or cable television service, we believe all premium, basic cable, superstation and network programming distributors which sell to consumers should be on terms and conditions which are equal to those afforded cable companies for distribution to cable consumers. Doing so will assure that the home satellite dish system user enjoys television at rates that are non-discriminatory when compared to cable consumers' rates.

We urge the FCC to examine ongoing television reception problems resulting from the analog to digital conversion and work with broadcast stations to ensure the continued availability of free local programming.

Access to high-quality voice, data, graphics and video via the Internet is increasingly important in our schools, hospitals, businesses and homes. As such, we support the FCC's

definition for broadband (25 megabits per second download speed and 3 Mbps upload speed). We encourage investments in rural areas to provide high-speed fiber or other types of networks that will meet and exceed the FCC's standard.

We believe the FCC should implement a research program designed to improve the efficiency of the reverse auction process and the quality of broadband projects selected for funding. The research program should include grants awarded on a competitive basis. Such research would include: 1) measuring the economic consequences of allocations associated with funding under current FCC models; 2) analyzing the economic consequences of various modifications to existing FCC formulas; and 3) the development and implementation of a comprehensive, dynamic econometric modeling system to analyze the consequences of policy options for expansion of broadband in rural areas.

We support standardizing the minimum acceptable speed for all federally-funded broadband projects to a speed not less than 25 Mbps/3Mbps.

We believe the goals of the USDA Rural Utilities Service's broadband program should be to assist broadband providers in expanding high-speed internet access to underserved areas and to promote competition in underserved areas to lower the price of high-speed internet access for consumers. USDA and Congress should use the Farm Bill and annual appropriations bills to modify the program to increase utilization of loans and grants in rural and underserved communities.

Furthermore, we support increased funding for and improvements in USDA's Community Connect, Distance Learning and Telemedicine, and Rural Gigabit Network Pilot programs.

We support making rural electric cooperatives and other entities eligible for Connect America funding to provide "next generation" broadband access.

We support the creation of a state incentive/development fund to improve the availability of broadband in rural areas. Suggested funding options could include current general revenue or new fees on related telecommunication services.

We support allowing Department of Economic Development's Community Improvement District and Neighborhood Improvement District programs to be used to facilitate broadband deployment within those districts.

We support increased cooperation among internet providers to increase access to internet in rural areas through coordination/sharing of either current assets or the construction/installation of necessary infrastructure.

We support state legislation and appropriations to match federal funding under the universal service Schools and Libraries Program, commonly known as the E-rate Program, that ensures rural schools in Missouri can obtain high-speed Internet access and telecommunications at affordable rates.

The FCC and an independent technology company should be required to implement rigorous testing to ensure there is not interference between broadband and GPS. Any cost resulting from technical upgrades or fixes must be assumed by the communication company responsible.

We support verification of applicant data prior to, during, and post-award if federal funding is utilized to deploy broadband projects.

We support strengthening data collection processes and reporting for broadband services.

WELFARE

We believe the problem of second and third generation welfare is undermining one of the basic strengths of our country.

We believe our current system discourages work. In many instances, welfare benefits are more rewarding than the benefits of work.

We favor the testing of welfare recipients for illegal drug use for the purpose of determining benefit eligibility on an ongoing basis.

One way to encourage welfare recipients to work would be to allow some continuation of certain public assistance, such as child day care, rent subsidies and health care, when a job is obtained. Benefits could be phased out as wage earning capacity increases.

Since more money is being spent each year on aid to dependent children, we support reform efforts that would remove the financial incentives for welfare mothers to have additional children.

We believe welfare aid of any kind should not be paid to workers on strike or to college students.

We oppose replacing electronic benefits transfer (EBT) cards currently used in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP; formerly known as the Food Stamp Program) with cash assistance. We favor better control of regulating what can be purchased through SNAP.

We oppose illegal immigrants receiving welfare benefits.

We favor the consolidation of welfare and other social programs into a minimum of agencies with the main emphasis on the truly needy provided the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as the Food Stamp Program) remains in the United States Department of Agriculture.

We believe that Missouri should have provisions to protect the elderly from becoming destitute before becoming eligible for welfare assistance.

We favor a more stringent control of welfare recipients through an improved type of identification system to decrease fraudulent and multiple collections.

We believe the state government should administer the welfare program.

YOUNG FARMERS

General

We recommend active support of Farm Bureau Young Farmers groups and encourage each county Farm Bureau to have an active Young Farmers program. We also recommend young farmer participation and involvement in all phases of the county Farm Bureau.

We believe Farm Bureau should continue to sponsor county meetings and state conferences for young farmers with emphasis on leadership training.

We recommend a greater emphasis be placed on educating young farmers of the value of participating in all Farm Bureau programs.

We believe Farm Bureau Young Farmers programs should encourage young farmers to stay on farms and be involved in agriculture.

Collegiate Farm Bureau

We encourage the establishment and active support of Collegiate Farm Bureau Chapters on college campuses throughout the state. We believe the emphasis should be on leadership training as well as policy development.

We encourage collegiate participation in all statewide Farm Bureau events, and recommend county sponsorships whenever possible.

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Christy Clark.....Senior Director, Information Technology
Keith Cramer.....Senior Director, Legacy Life Co & Underwriting
Shannon Dravenstott.....Assistant to the President
Leslie Holloway.....Senior Director, Regulatory Affairs
Jenna Korsmeyer.....Director, Human Resources
Jennifer Poindexter.....Director, Promotion & Education
Nick Schollmeyer.....Senior Director, Town & Country/New Horizons
Kelly Smith.....Senior Director, Marketing & Commodities
BJ Tanksley.....Director, State Legislative Affairs
Spencer Tuma.....Director, National Legislative Programs
Mike Voiles.....Senior Director, Life Company/Brokerage
Eric Volmer.....Senior Director, Field Services & Young Farmers

REGIONAL COORDINATORS

NORTHEAST Mindy Breid.....(573) 644-2087
304 North Main St, Madison 63263
SOUTHWEST Robin Farmer.....(417) 638-5408
17668 Tiger Road, Stark City 64866
SOUTHEAST Katie Fennewald.....(573) 837-6888
780 County Highway 311, Scott City 63780
WEST CENTRAL Ed Holhubner.....(660) 827-4035
18362 Woodland Road, Sedalia 65301
NORTHWEST Meredith Lange.....(660) 247-0341
8157 Liv 430, Dawn 64638
EAST CENTRAL Nick Roberts.....(573) 896-4439
1199 Choctaw Ridge, Holts Summit 65043

2019 MOFB STATE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN Todd Hays, MOFB Vice President (Marion)

STATE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- Andy Clay, District 3 (Moniteau)
- Chris Brundick, District 5 (Maries)
- Lane Baxter, District 7 (Greene)
- Jamie Johansen, Advisory (Laclede)

STATE PROMOTION AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- Mary Fischer, Chair (Bates)
- Dana Lane, District 2 (Linn)
- Tammy Rapp, District 4 (Bates)
- Laura Nothdurft, District 6 (Cape Girardeau)

COUNTY PRESIDENTS

- Keith Sutton, District 1 (Davies)
- Nathan Rogers, District 2 (Mercer)
- Bruce Fowler, District 3 (Ralls)
- Taylor Bush, District 4 (Henry)
- Chris Rowden, District 5 (Maries)
- Brian Koenig, District 6 (Perry)
- Carl Burton, District 7 (Jasper)
- Mike Luerssen, District 8 (Texas)

STATE YOUNG FARMERS' COMMITTEE

- Trey & Shelby Garst, District 1 (Atchison)
- Ethan & Lezlie Durst, District 2 (Lewis)
- Zachary & Lauren Schmutzler, District 3 (Cole)
- Andrew & Brittany Beeman, District 4 (Benton)
- Jacob & Sara Schwartz, District 5 (Maries)
- Jacob & Kimberly Jones, District 6 (New Madrid)
- Mark & Emma Alexander, District 7 (Greene)
- Tanner & Kerre Clark, District 8 (Douglas)

COMMODITY COMMITTEE CHAIRS

- Heather Counts (Johnson) Agritourism
- Keith Tate (Wright)..... Beef
- Allen Below (Stoddard)..... Cotton
- Mark Fellwock (Lawrence) Dairy
- Debbie Birk (Cape Girardeau) Equine
- Mike Rosenbaum (Nodaway) Feed Grains & Wheat
- Steve Wilkerson (Douglas)..... Forestry
- Brett Fahrmeier (Lafayette) Horticulture
- Nathan Deppe (Franklin)..... Pork
- David Brittenham (Barry)..... Poultry
- Kevin Fennewald (Scott)..... Rice
- Jess McPhee (Clinton) Sheep and Goat
- Brian Martin (Boone)..... Soybean

NOTES