



National
Farmers
Union

122ND ANNIVERSARY CONVENTION
SCOTTSDALE, AZ · 2024

POLICY BOOK

Policy of the National Farmers Union

Enacted by delegates to the 122nd anniversary convention

Scottsdale, AZ

March 10 – 12, 2024

National Farmers Union Mission and Vision Statements

Our Mission is to...

Advocate for family farmers, ranchers, fishers, and their communities through education, cooperation, and legislation.

Our Vision is of...

A world in which farm families and their communities are respected, valued, and enjoy economic prosperity and social justice.

We Value...

Integrity –

Maintaining the highest standards of honesty, accountability, and morality.

Influence –

Driving political, educational, and social change on behalf of family farmers, ranchers, fishers, and their communities.

Leadership –

Inspiring and empowering future leaders of agriculture and rural communities.

Stewardship –

Responsible and respectful use and care for all resources – human, natural, and financial.

Inclusivity –

Ensuring all people are welcome and valued in Farmers Union, and all members are represented fairly in policy, education, and society.

Transparency –

Being clear, honest, and forthright in our words, processes, and actions.

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1 **PREAMBLE**

2 We, the members of National Farmers Union, in the following policy statement,
3 strive to articulate the fundamental principles of a food, fiber, and energy policy
4 essential to our nation and our planet. This issue transcends every social, economic,
5 environmental, and geographic boundary of our planet.

6 The goal of NFU is to protect and enhance the economic well-being and quality of
7 life for family farmers, ranchers, fishers, and our local communities. Our experiences as
8 family farmers, ranchers, fishers, and those concerned with the survival of productive
9 family-oriented agriculture provide us with a unique and qualified perspective to make
10 meaningful contributions to this issue.

11 The Farmers Union symbol, a triangle constructed with education at its base and
12 completed with cooperation and legislation on its sides, represents a structure that
13 takes on more importance than ever before. Education is not only for our youth, but also
14 for adults, families, and our seniors. It affords us the opportunity to share and learn
15 from both young and old.

16 The educational process must extend beyond our farms and reach out to all
17 consumers, as well as across borders and oceans. Sharing information is important, but
18 sharing our values, concerns, and spirit is of greater significance.

19 The goals of Farmers Union have grown out of our understanding of God, nature,
20 and the love of our country, with respect for the past and vision for the future. Our goals
21 are nourished through the truth and rightness of the ideals expressed in the Declaration
22 of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and its Bill of Rights. We affirm
23 our faith in a benevolent God, whose grace has bestowed upon us immensely fertile
24 resources, and whose justice demands stewardship.

25 Woven throughout this document is a sense of moral and ethical values that family
26 farmers embrace as we assume the responsibilities that are part of every acre of land,
27 drop of water, animal, plant, or any of the multitude of resources entrusted to our care.
28 We are also very cognizant of the need to extend beyond our fence rows and townships
29 to ensure these gifts are shared and not exploited or wasted.

30 We recognize the invaluable contributions of stewardship and expertise offered by
31 indigenous people and multigenerational farmers as well as all farmers who embrace
32 and perpetuate historically rooted and traditional approaches to farming and fishing.

1 The family farm system of agricultural production can provide opportunities for
2 individual enterprise to all families in our society. This system achieves economic and
3 social stability, as well as soil, water, and environmental stewardship of our natural
4 resources and unparalleled production efficiency. We cannot change or improve the
5 past but will proactively advance, with a strong vision for the future, the best interests
6 of today's family-oriented agriculture.

7 We acknowledge that family farmers employ a wide variety of philosophies and
8 practices. Our responsibility is to be inclusive and serve all types of family farms in
9 legislative, educational, and cooperative areas.

10 The loss of family farms and other independently owned businesses is not
11 inevitable. We believe the accelerated march toward a vertically integrated production
12 system must be reversed. This requires action to enforce and enhance antitrust and
13 competition laws, strengthen the regulatory system, and revitalize independently
14 owned businesses and competitive markets.

15 Parity is the cornerstone of our policy. Our definition of parity expands beyond the
16 simple economic definition. We believe that it should encompass a sense of balance that
17 not only diminishes hunger, but also fosters peace and justice.

18 We remain wholly dedicated to the strengthening of the family farm system and
19 farmer cooperatives. The essence of the cooperative movement – farmers working
20 together for our mutual benefit – is the spirit that motivates Farmers Union activity. We
21 view attempts to restrict farmer-owned and –controlled cooperatives as an assault on
22 farmers themselves, and we will vigorously defend the Capper-Volstead Act. Family
23 farmers have a valuable tool in working together in farmer-owned and –controlled
24 cooperatives. They are essential to our economic well-being and success.

25 Cooperation also comes from knowledge as well as respect for other people and
26 cultures. Our spirit of cooperation must continue to grow and not have limits. Our
27 challenge is to take this knowledge and spirit and incorporate it into meaningful policy
28 through legislation on local, state, and national levels.

29 This document is not a collection of words, but an anthology of the spirit of the
30 hundreds of thousands of family farmers, ranchers, fishers, and their advocates that
31 make up our organization. We dedicate this document, along with our energy and

- 1 efforts, to bring about long-term meaningful policy that identifies our common thread
- 2 and utilizes that energy for the common good.

1 **ARTICLE I – AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS FOR THE FAMILY FARM**

2 A family farm or structured family farm is operated by a family, with the family
3 providing the base of the labor needed for the farming operation, assuming the
4 economic risk, and making the management decisions. NFU policy is written for the
5 family farmer and their farms and should be read as such.

6 The family farm is the keystone of a free, progressive, democratic national society,
7 as well as a strong America, and is the basis of a safe, secure, and stable food system. A
8 vertically integrated and/or multinational grain and food conglomerate is not a family
9 farm. We support legislation and regulations that recognize the differences between
10 family farms or community-based operations and multinational corporations.

11 The control and ownership of agriculture is a fundamental issue facing our nation
12 and the world. National farm policy must provide direction with an emphasis on
13 profitable farm commodity prices to ensure that control and responsibility of
14 agriculture is vested within the family farm. The decline in the number of family farms
15 must be reversed.

16 Sustainable agriculture integrates three main goals – environmental health,
17 economic profitability and viability, and social economic equity. We believe the family
18 farm system of agricultural production is the best way to achieve sustainability.
19 Farmers engaged in sustainable agriculture set out to protect the environment, improve
20 their quality of life, and enhance the communities in which they live. Programs that
21 encourage sustainable agriculture through diversified production, improved marketing
22 strategies, and enhanced value-added opportunities can be key to reversing this trend.
23 Another important aspect of reversing the decline of these farms is to encourage new
24 farmers to enter the agriculture industry. Farms and consumers need stability and
25 fairness in a farm program. Farmers, rural communities, and consumers are at the
26 mercy of a marketplace that is increasingly dominated by vertically integrated,
27 multinational grain and food conglomerates.

28 Family farms have the right to a fair and competitive environment in their pursuit to
29 be financially viable. We support farm policy that protects net farm income for family
30 farmers.

31 We commit ourselves to being good stewards of the land and resources by working
32 toward innovative approaches that move beyond the parameters of past farm programs

1 and seek to bridge philosophical differences within the agricultural community and our
2 nation's political structures.

3 At the core of our willingness to embrace new agricultural policy directions is the
4 fundamental need to direct the benefits of federal agricultural policies to the production
5 levels of family farm and ranch operations.

6 Choice and diversity of agricultural practices have always been essential to the
7 success and prosperity of agriculture in the United States. As advances continue to
8 occur in all agricultural practices, NFU calls on all people affected by agriculture to be
9 mindful of their neighbors and show mutual respect toward their farming practices and
10 production choices. Six major goals to improve agricultural legislation for family
11 farmers are:

- 12 1. Profitability: to enhance and protect net family farm income and provide a safety
13 net;
- 14 2. Accountability: to reduce government costs and prevent activities that are
15 counter-productive to the intent of the programs;
- 16 3. Directed benefits: to direct benefits toward family farming operations;
- 17 4. Simplicity: to require less bureaucracy and red tape, to lessen the burden of
18 mandated data collection, and to ensure the availability of electronic signatures;
- 19 5. Conservation: to maintain and enhance our natural resources; and
- 20 6. Diversity: to maintain opportunities for family farmers, regardless of crop and
21 management choice.

22 **A. GENERAL PROGRAM PROVISIONS**

23 **1. MEASURES OF ECONOMIC EQUITY**

24 For generations, farming and ranching income has lagged the overall prosperity
25 of the nation. The national farm policy based on "parity" was intended to create
26 tools that would balance this inequity of agricultural income compared to the
27 average income in other segments of society. Like other economic measures such as
28 the Consumer Price Index and the Cost of Living Index, an economic yardstick for
29 agriculture is essential. "Parity" prices provide a reasonable standard for measuring
30 the relative economic health of agriculture, and we urge continued support of the
31 calculation of an Agricultural "Parity Index." NFU continues to be unique in its
32 unwavering support for this measurement of economic equity.

1 We support indexing farm program support levels to reflect changes in the cost
2 of production. We strongly support national farm policy providing a return of the
3 cost of production plus an opportunity for reasonable profit for farmers and
4 ranchers.

5 **2. DIRECTING BENEFIT PROTECTION TO FAMILY FARMS**

6 Characteristically, a family farm is owned and/or operated by a farm family with
7 the family providing the base of the labor needed for the farming operation,
8 assuming the economic risk, making most of the management decisions, and
9 depending substantially on agriculture for a livelihood.

10 Family farms are at economic risk as crop and livestock production and land
11 ownership are being concentrated into the hands of non-family farms.

12 The primary objectives of national agricultural policy should be to enable
13 farmers to significantly increase net farm income, improve the quality of rural life,
14 and increase the number of family farmers, so farmers may continue to provide a
15 reliable supply of food and fiber and continue to serve as good stewards of our
16 nation's resources. Rural communities are richer and more viable with more
17 farmers, even if there is the same amount of agricultural production.

18 We believe payment limits should be directed to persons actively engaged in
19 production agriculture and/or personal management, and be realistic, meaningful,
20 transparent, and enforceable.

21 We support directing farm program benefits to the production levels of family
22 farm operators in such a way as to reduce government costs while furthering the
23 sustainability and diversity of our family farms, our rural communities, and our
24 natural resources.

25 To protect the viability and continued operation of small- and mid-size farms
26 and to improve their competitiveness in an industry of increasingly large players,
27 federal farm programs need tighter eligibility requirements and caps on benefits to
28 farmers.

29 We support the reduction in payment limits to ensure farm programs are
30 directed toward operations most in need.

31 Directed benefit provisions should include:

- i. The family farm should be protected from the cuts scheduled under the terms of any budget acts;
- ii. Prohibition of artificial subdivision of farms to avoid limits should be enforced; and
- iii. Prohibition of program payments to monopolies and food system dominating companies, and foreign corporations or entities.

We support farm policy which recognizes our geographical differences and provides for flexibility regardless of the type of agriculture operation.

We encourage USDA to review current and future federal agricultural policies and programs meant to serve all producers to ensure the particular needs of Native American, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Indigenous, and Tribal Nations producers (hereafter known as ‘native producers’) – such as structural challenges in accessing land, capital, agricultural programs, and services – are addressed, and equal access is provided.

3. PROVIDING A SAFETY NET

NFU urges Congress to give the secretary of agriculture the authority to implement commodity loan programs with loan rates set at a level that at least equals the regional cost of production as measured by the Economic Research Service.

To provide a safety net, we must take action to:

- i. Continue to improve, develop, implement, and fully fund permanent disaster programs in lieu of using one-time, ad-hoc disaster payments;
- ii. Ensure that should ad-hoc disaster payments be needed, they be authorized by Congress and should account for the unique impacts on various forms of crops and livestock in different regions, such as local basis prices or animal health issues;
- iii. Streamline distribution of aid in disaster zones;
- iv. Support measures to prevent predatory real estate transactions in disaster zones;
- v. Improve commodity loan rates and terms;
- vi. Give the secretary of agriculture the authority to improve commodity loan rates in times of disaster;

- vii. Improve and expand risk management tools (*see Article I.F.2 – Crop and Livestock Insurance*);
- viii. Adequately fund livestock compensation programs to prevent the sell-off of base breeding herds of the United States in the event of a disaster declaration;
- ix. Expand the coverage of the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) to include animals that die from pneumonia as a direct result of an eligible adverse weather event;
- x. Urge USDA to expand the reporting timeline for LIP;
- xi. Ensure that Livestock Forage Program (LFP) payments are increased to the full estimated value of lost forage. We also support including all calves in LFP payment calculations;
- xii. Establish a regionalized cost of production floor under dairy prices;
- xiii. Establish a farmer-owned Strategic National Food, Feed and Biofuels Feedstock Reserve;
- xiv. Expand the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust;
- xv. Implement an effective inventory management program for all farm commodities;
- xvi. Support the Farm Storage Facility Loan Program;
- xvii. Continue and support effective conservation programs, such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and an ongoing Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP);
- xviii. Limit the authority of the secretary of agriculture to take discretionary actions that would result in lower farm income;
- xix. Protect beginning farmers and ranchers;
- xx. Support farm programs that reflect the current year's crops; and
- xxi. Support a farm safety net that is counter-cyclical.

4. FARM VIABILITY PROGRAMS FOR FAMILY FARMS

Congress should continue to support programs to improve the profitability of farms and increase opportunities for family farmers and ranchers. We support revitalizing local and regional food and energy systems, increasing wealth and asset-

building in rural communities and encouraging entrepreneurship, innovation, and diversification in farming and ranching by funding programs that address:

- i. Market development and promotion;
- ii. Product development/differentiation and promotion;
- iii. Diversified farming;
- iv. Consumer education;
- v. Business planning and risk management;
- vi. Alternative ownership models and structures;
- vii. Local and regional infrastructure needs;
- viii. Local and regional food security needs;
- ix. Local and regional food sovereignty needs;
- x. Local and regional energy needs;
- xi. Attracting new and beginning farmers and ranchers;
- xii. Attracting a reliable labor pool; and
- xiii. Ecosystem services.

5. LOCAL FOOD & FOOD SYSTEMS

NFU supports all initiatives aimed at regionalizing our food system. This may include encouraging the development of regional food hubs, incentivizing those farms who commit to growing non-commodity food crops and easing/simplifying the restrictions on small meatpackers to process meat for retail sale, as well as the farmers who sell direct-to-consumer and institutions that purchase their products for resale, and educating consumers. We support the expansion of agricultural operations in urban and peri-urban areas.

The local food movement has many benefits including:

- i. Enhanced markets for the products that many members' farms produce;
- ii. The ability for farmers to capture a larger share of the retail food dollar;
- iii. Opportunities to employ and engage more Americans, in more regions, in the pursuit of agriculture;
- iv. Keeping consumer dollars circulating in each respective region, and to the family farms therein;
- v. Reconnecting consumers and their families to the food they eat;
- vi. Reducing transportation costs;

- vii. Providing fresher, healthier food products, with a reduced need for transportation, long-term storage, processing, or treatment;
- viii. Food security: encouraging food production to be spread across the country;
- ix. Allowing for more profitable and sustainable methods of agriculture to be employed; and
- x. Interns and apprentices educated on locally oriented farms results in improved farm viability, larger pool of skilled agricultural labor, and more beginning farmers.

We support:

- i. USDA's promotion of buying local and regional agricultural products, to provide new and larger markets for smaller specialty crop farmers. Local will be defined by the consumer to be the immediate area, state, or region, and must be U.S.-produced and processed;
- ii. Promotion of farm-to-school and farm-to-institution programs;
- iii. Promotion of farmers markets and community-supported agriculture (CSA);
- iv. Producers being able to sell cottage food products across state lines if they meet the requirements of the states of production and sale;
- v. Promotion of family-farm based agritourism;
- vi. Regional food hub distribution centers;
- vii. Funding to construct food safety qualified infrastructure to include washing, commercial-kitchens, packaging, and other value-added facilities;
- viii. The purchase of surplus fruits and vegetables for federal food aid programs;
- ix. Incentives and the removal of barriers, so that farmers markets and farm stands can redeem federal, state, and local nutrition benefits;
- x. Geographically disadvantaged provisions for U.S. areas not included in main farm programs;
- xi. Local seed producers who produce regionally adapted seed;

- xii. Improved access to reasonably priced liability, crop, and whole farm insurance for small local-market and direct-marketing producers; and
- xiii. The requirement that organizations receiving funds for farmers' markets provide farmers with the right to direct the policies of the farmers' markets.
- xiv. Expanding local and regional meat processing development through:
 - a. Continuing support for meat processing training programs at technical colleges and expanding educational opportunities for meat processing;
 - b. Supporting incentives for employee retention;
 - c. Supporting generational transition of processing plants, including through apprenticeships;
 - d. Development of an equitable and scale-appropriate regulatory framework for meat inspection;
 - e. Working across government to establish financing options, develop model business plans, provide technical assistance, streamline regulations and permitting, and otherwise make it easier to start a new processing business; and
 - f. Improving access to markets, including direct marketing, food service, supermarkets, and grocery stores.
- xv. A state's right to regulate the sale of animal products.

6. BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCHERS (*ALSO SEE ARTICLE V.A. - FSA CREDIT PROGRAMS*)

We recognize that the average age of a U.S. farmer continues to increase, and a majority of the nation's farmland is changing hands due to the aging farmer population. The ability of the next generation of family farmers to continue to produce food and fiber is critical to the economy, health, and security of our nation and local communities. In order to address this critical concern, the necessary programs must be in place and funded in order to meet the unique needs and barriers facing beginning farmers and ranchers, with special emphasis on returning military veterans, and ensure that they can enter and sustain farming and/or ranching as a viable livelihood.

1 We support:

- 2 i. The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Individual Development Accounts
- 3 program;
- 4 ii. The loan category within FSA that directs operating loans to provide
- 5 flexible capital through operating microloans for beginning farmers and
- 6 ranchers;
- 7 iii. FSA becoming a more nimble lender to better support beginning farmers
- 8 and ranchers;
- 9 iv. Reducing collateral requirements to secure FSA Microloans, including
- 10 Farm Operating Loans, Farm Storage Facility Loans, and Farm Ownership
- 11 Loans for beginning farmers and ranchers;
- 12 v. Maintaining the loan set-aside within the direct and guaranteed FSA loan
- 13 program for beginning farmers and ranchers;
- 14 vi. Increasing the Farm Ownership Down Payment loan program limit;
- 15 vii. Increasing the USDA direct Farm Ownership Loan program limit;
- 16 viii. FSA Farm Ownership Loans that accommodate beginning farmers and
- 17 ranchers who already own land;
- 18 ix. Incentives and/or tax credits to landowners to lease or sell to beginning
- 19 farmers or ranchers (*also see Article VII.C. - Land Transfer*);
- 20 x. Cost-share differentials and funding set-asides for beginning farmers and
- 21 ranchers in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP),
- 22 Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and other programs;
- 23 xi. Including a priority for projects benefiting beginning farmers and
- 24 ranchers within Value-Added Grant Program and fostering new
- 25 entrepreneurial opportunities for beginning farmers and ranchers within
- 26 the Rural Development grants and loans programs;
- 27 xii. Continuation and funding programs that provide education and training
- 28 to beginning farmers and ranchers, including for agricultural
- 29 rehabilitation and vocational training programs for military veterans;
- 30 xiii. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) ensuring fair access to crop and
- 31 revenue insurance by beginning farmers and ranchers including an
- 32 additional crop insurance subsidy;

- 1 xiv. The adoption of a uniform definition for a Beginning Farmer and Rancher
2 to be used by all agencies within the department. We suggest that any
3 definition used by the FSA adds these provisions directing the FSA to
4 allow a producer to exclude certain years from their beginning farmer
5 status if the producer meets one of the following criteria:
- 6 a. while they are under the age of 18 (including the crop year you
7 turn 18);
- 8 b. while they are on full time active duty in the U.S. military; and
- 9 c. while they are in a post-secondary education program (the post-
10 secondary education exclusion cannot exceed five years);
- 11 xv. NIFA supporting research, education, and extension on issues related to
12 beginning farmers and ranchers, farm transition, and farm entry;
- 13 xvi. The reauthorization and full funding of programs previously
14 administered by the National Sustainable Agriculture Information
15 Service to serve as a resource for beginning farmers and ranchers;
- 16 xvii. The establishment of a funding priority for the federal Farm and Ranch
17 Land Protection Program for easements conserving farmland for which
18 there is a generational farm transfer plan, easements which include the
19 use of an Option to Purchase at Agricultural Value or easements which
20 occur in conjunction with the transfer of the conserved land to a
21 beginning farmer;
- 22 xviii. Funding for beginning farmers and ranchers training and education
23 access programs;
- 24 xix. Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act and the inclusion of farming
25 and ranching in the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program;
- 26 xx. Legislation that would forgive a portion of the student loans carried by
27 new farmers and ranchers in their first five years of farming;
- 28 xxi. Funding for farmers and ranchers to educate interns and apprentices on
29 their farms;
- 30 xxii. Increased funding and set asides for beginning farmers and ranchers in
31 disaster programs;

- 1 xxiii. Funding and training for organizations with beginning farmer training
2 programs to be vetted and credentialed to accept GI Bill education funds;
3 and
4 xxiv. The advancement of land partnerships, such as farm incubator programs,
5 that provide opportunities for non-profit and for-profit agricultural
6 entities, and that support educational commercial farms that teach
7 agricultural and business skills.

8 **7. URBAN FARMING**

9 National Farmers Union recognizes urban agriculture as an important part of
10 meeting rising food demands, supplying easier access to highly nutritious vegetables
11 and fruits, reconnecting the food consumer with the farmer, storing carbon out of
12 the earth's atmosphere, and as an important new market opportunity for emerging
13 farmers.

14 We support:

- 15 i. Urban and peri-urban farmers having access to all farm programs and all
16 farm loans;
17 ii. Programs that develop land for urban agriculture;
18 iii. Empowering urban residents to create their own community food
19 systems;
20 iv. The integration and expansion of for-profit and non-profit agriculture in
21 urban, peri-urban, and open spaces, and in park settings; and
22 v. Increased funding for the USDA Office of Urban Agriculture and
23 Innovative Production.

24 **B. DAIRY, LIVESTOCK, AQUACULTURE AND FISHING**

25 **1. DAIRY POLICY**

26 i. **Domestic Dairy Policy**

27 We urge Congress to develop a comprehensive dairy program to allow dairy
28 producers across the nation to receive a profitable return on their investment.

29 It should:

- 30 a. Encourage and enable producers to use sustainable environmental
31 practices;
32 b. Provide a high-quality, stable supply of dairy products to consumers;

- c. Assist new farmers entering dairying;
- d. Balance milk supply and demand through a long-term supply management program;
- e. Encourage voluntary producer assessments for an industry-managed program that must clearly demonstrate they will stabilize and increase producer prices;
- f. Prohibit mandatory producer assessments unless it can clearly be demonstrated that they substantially increase producer income;
- g. Provide full funding of the School Milk Program and Special Milk Programs;
- h. Include 100 percent real dairy products, including whole milk, in the National School Lunch Program as well as in school vending machines;
- i. Utilize the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) to mitigate low prices;
- j. Provide transparency in milk price reporting;
- k. Require mandatory participation of processors in an audited National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) survey;
- l. Require mandatory participation of processors in an audited cold-storage report;
- m. Include development of a transparent pricing mechanism to replace the inadequate Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) pricing system;
- n. Require USDA and CME to standardize labeling and packaging of surplus dairy products;
- o. Ensure research and promotion activities are directed toward enhancing income to family farmers;
- p. Provide an incentive payment to domestic producers who agree to voluntary limits. Funding should be provided by those producers who increase production from the previous year and produce more than a level targeted to family-sized farms;
- q. Prohibit volume premiums;

- r. Include market loss assistance during times of low prices, with capped payments based on production. The cap levels should be targeted to family farmers;
- s. Prohibit federal legislation allowing dairy forward contracts that give processors and marketers the ability to pay below the minimum market order price;
- t. Include a floor price policy for milk. The floor price should help producers in all regions of the country and provide for supply management. The floor price should be set at a level that allows producers to earn a fair return on their milk from the marketplace, but not so high as to encourage overproduction;
- u. Provide for minimum prices that are based on a formula that reflects what consumers are paying for all dairy products;
- v. Require plants to pay the minimum prices established by USDA for butter, nonfat powder, and cheddar cheese;
- w. Prohibit domestic dumping by dairy marketers in the United States;
- x. Expansion of Livestock Gross Margin Dairy Program;
- y. Prohibit the use of fluid milk as a loss leader at the retail level. Any future dairy program should establish fair prices, manage milk inventories, and restore profitability to dairy farmers across the United States; and
- z. Restrict all forms of direct and indirect ownership or control of agricultural products by agribusinesses, including the prohibition of ownership, control, and operation of milk production facilities by conglomerate, investor-owned dairy processing companies.

ii. **Market Order Reform**

A federal order system should be maintained and expanded to include all areas within the continental United States. A national milk marketing order and pricing reform should emphasize maximum return to producers. Transportation differentials, quality premiums, and usage result in price disparities throughout the United States. A revised national milk marketing order should include:

- a. A price discovery formula at the producer level allowing for variable market conditions;
- b. A floor price on all classes of milk;
- c. Price incentives that reflect the value of all milk components;
- d. Tests for component pricing that are checked for accuracy by USDA;
- e. A national make allowance that is adjustable to cover processing and fortification. This allowance should be generated from the market, not deducted from the established price through end-product pricing;
- f. A base make allowance that is adjustable to reflect the difference between milk prices and the producer's cost of production;
- g. Elimination of bloc voting on market orders; and
- h. The continuation of the current order provisions following the defeat of a proposed change. Orders should only be eliminated through a producer referendum with no bloc voting.

iii. **Milk Protein Concentrate/Ultra-Filtered Milk Products** (*also see Article I.C. – Labeling of Commodities and Commodity Products*)

Imported casein, milk protein concentrate (MPC) and ultra-filtered (UF) milk products, blends, and food preparations have benefited from a significant loophole in U.S. dairy trade policy and have distorted the nation's dairy market.

We support:

- a. Maintaining Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) current definition of milk to prevent casein and MPC from being used in standardized cheese;
- b. Actions that restrict the importation of casein, MPC, dairy blends, and food preps;
- c. Properly informing consumers about the use of casein, MPC/UF dairy blends and food preps in food production, including labeling;
- d. Immediate passage of legislation to subject casein, MPC, and other dairy blends to a tariff rate quota;
- e. Imposing strong penalties for the dairy plants using casein and/or MPC and dairy blends in standardized cheese production;

- f. Requiring an end-use certification on all imports of MPC, dairy blends and food preps;
- g. Bringing a trade action against nations that are dumping subsidized MPC, dairy blends and food preps;
- h. Disallowing MPC for human consumption until it meets the necessary generally regarded as safe (GRAS) requirements; and
- i. Prohibiting government subsidization of the production of MPC.

iv. **Consumer Protection** (*also see Article I.C. – Labeling of Commodities and Commodity Products*)

We support the following initiatives to ensure consumers can make informed purchasing decisions:

- a. State and federal legislation to require all schools to use rBST-free milk;
- b. Restricting the use of the Real Seal to domestically produced dairy products and subsequent enforcement of its standards;
- c. Educating and promoting the Real Seal program to consumers;
- d. Increasing the federal standards for fat and solids in fluid milk to meet the national average of the milk content produced on U.S. farms;
- e. Requiring imports to meet the same high standards used for domestically produced dairy products; and
- f. Prohibiting the addition of artificial sweeteners, such as aspartame, to dairy products. If allowed, they must be labeled as such.

v. **Raw Dairy**

We support:

- a. The production and sale of raw/unpasteurized milk as it provides a market niche for dairies. Because of the possible risks of cross-contamination, we recommend that raw/unpasteurized milk be bottled as the product of a single source and wherever possible at the physical location of that source. Single-source bottling will keep intact the chain of responsibility and greatly aid in tracking possible cases of contamination;

- b. Policies, practices and standards for responsible raw/unpasteurized milk production for dairy producers that choose to produce raw/unpasteurized milk (or raw/unpasteurized dairy products) for human consumption;
- c. Access to raw/unpasteurized milk (and/or raw dairy products) for human consumption for all consumers that choose to consume raw/unpasteurized milk; and
- d. The production of raw butter and its sale over state lines and urge the FDA to modify its regulations to allow this to legally occur.

2. LIVESTOCK POLICY

i. Animal Welfare

We support:

- a. Producers' rights to own and raise livestock and have livestock and their products recognized as personal property;
- b. The promotion of animal welfare and the teaching of animal welfare through educational programs and agricultural organizations as opposed to animal rights initiatives imposing mandatory restrictions on traditional methods of animal agricultural production;
- c. Responsible care and management of animals to provide for the welfare of herds and flocks;
- d. Educating the public regarding the important use of animals for agricultural and medical research. Any illegal actions taken by animal rights organizations toward producers should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law;
- e. The development of egg sexing technologies to eliminate the euthanasia of male chicks hatched in egg laying operations; and
- f. Revising transportation regulations to allow transportation of horses at the discretion of the owner in the most cost-effective manner for their intended purposes.

We oppose:

- a. A ban on the slaughter of horses and the criminalization of individuals processing, shipping, transporting, purchasing, selling,

1 delivering, or receiving any horse, horseflesh, or carcass for the
2 purpose of harvest;

3 b. The euthanasia of chicks because of their sex; and

4 c. The abandonment of animals on private or public lands.

5 We call for the reinstitution of facilities and funding for USDA inspection to
6 deal with the processing and humane disposal of horses.

7 ii. **Livestock and Livestock Product Imports** (*also see Article IV. –*
8 *International Trade, Cooperation, and the Family Farm*)

9 The importation of livestock and livestock products is causing serious
10 damage to our domestic industry. Additionally, a lack of sufficient meat
11 import inspection poses an increased potential of contaminated food
12 reaching tables in the United States. We recommend that Congress
13 incorporate the following steps to protect U.S. livestock producers from
14 unfair trading practices:

15 a. Investigate the impact of foreign pricing practices on the U.S. market;

16 b. Impose countervailing duties to offset subsidies paid to foreign
17 exporters;

18 c. Require the amount of imported meat and live animals intended for
19 slaughter be reported weekly;

20 d. Re-establish Section 301, allowing the United States to impose trade
21 sanctions against foreign countries that the USTR determines
22 applicable;

23 e. Re-establish the Meat Import Act, which was replaced under the
24 Uruguay Round, by replacing existing tariff rate quota system with an
25 import quota system; and

26 f. Require end-use certificates to monitor the flow of livestock being
27 imported.

28 iii. **Federal Meat Grading and Inspection**

29 We support the following to ensure safe, fair, and equitably enforced
30 rules for meat grading and inspection:

- a. Inspection of all meats, either domestic, imported, non-amenable (bison, deer, elk, or other exotic species) to ensure such products meet all state and/or applicable USDA regulations and standards;
- b. Hiring additional USDA inspectors to conduct required inspections. The USDA grading and inspection services necessary for food quality and safety should be tailored to meet the needs of individuals and cooperatives. There should be a scaled fee schedule, with higher-volume facilities paying more;
- c. Continued federal funding of the meat-grading program;
- d. Marketing of state inspected meats from current state-licensed and inspected plants across state lines to individuals, retailers, or food service outlets, when state meat inspection meets or surpasses federal regulations through existing Talmadge-Aiken laws, cooperative inspection, and/or removal of restrictions on interstate shipments of state-inspected products;
- e. Simplified and minimal paperwork, testing, and record keeping requirements for small USDA inspected meat packing plants; and
- f. Establishment of an independent ombudsman where small plants can appeal “directive to correct” from the inspection and compliance division of the USDA meat inspection service;
- g. Allowing both exempt and inspected poultry in USDA inspected establishments; and
- h. Redefining USDA and Small Business Administration (SBA) definitions of very small, small, and large establishments.

iv. **Consumer Protection** (*also see Article XI.K. – Food Safety and Article I.C – Labeling of Commodities and Commodity Products*)

We support:

- a. Strengthening USDA and FDA safety standards to prevent bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) contaminated products from being imported (*also see Article I.B.2.v. – Livestock Health*);
- b. Prohibiting the importation of livestock or livestock products from countries with endemic reportable diseases;

- c. Requiring more vigorous inspection of imported meat processing facilities and imported meats to ensure that they meet U.S. standards;
- d. Banning meat and/or meat products from foreign countries that allow use of medications or additives not approved for use in the United States;
- e. Prohibiting the importation of ground and shaved meat into the United States;
- f. Enforcing all existing quarantine requirements and health standards as set forth by USDA/Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) regarding imports of livestock and other commodities; and
- g. USDA ensuring a rigorous and enhanced meat inspection system, to maintain consumer confidence in the safety and wholesomeness of meat and poultry products.

We oppose:

- a. The shipping of U.S. beef, pork, poultry, or fish to be processed in foreign countries that is then returned to the U.S. for U.S. consumption; and
- b. Any changes to slaughter inspection that moves inspection tasks away from USDA and state inspectors. This includes any expansion of the HACCP-Based Inspection Models Project or any other project that would privatize inspection roles.

v. Livestock Health

Livestock health is critical to production agriculture and our nation's ability to provide a safe food supply. Achieving the necessary means to ensure livestock health is a priority for NFU. We support good animal husbandry practices as the primary means of livestock health maintenance, as well as the following initiatives to ensure livestock health:

- a. We encourage all livestock producers to develop professional relationships with their veterinarians to understand all aspects of the Veterinary Feed Directive as implemented;

- b. We support incentives for large animal veterinarians who agree to serve underserved areas;
- c. Continue to allow FDA to permit the use of therapeutic antibiotics approved for use in livestock unless valid scientific evidence proves the product is unsafe. NFU believes that antibiotic treatment should be reserved for clinical treatment of illness and for judicious use in preventing illness during periods of stress, and supports producers' right to treat his or her animals with antibiotics to address herd health issues while opposing the constant subtherapeutic use of antibiotics;
- d. We oppose moving acute-use veterinary antibiotics to prescription use only;
- e. To protect the continued and effective use of antibiotics for human health care, we oppose the off-label use of antibiotics and/or arsenicals and fluoroquinolones in animal production;
- f. Fully fund disease eradication programs, including testing of wildlife, non-traditional livestock species and imported livestock and livestock byproducts;
- g. Ban livestock, animal protein products, and meat imports that would jeopardize U.S. efforts to eradicate livestock diseases, including BSE and Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD);
- h. Encourage congressional support for emergency economic assistance for producers who have suffered economic and market losses because of an incident of livestock disease, as covered by the Animal Health Protection Act (PL 108-498);
- i. Establish funding for a voluntary Johne's Disease testing program;
- j. Increase research on transmission modes, vaccine regimens, and protocol for vesicular stomatitis by federal officials and private organizations;
- k. Re-evaluate the quarantine restriction and reclassification of vesicular stomatitis from Class A to a Class B disease;

1. Prevent Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) through:
 1. Increasing federal and international research to understand and prevent BSE/FMD;
 2. Continuing the site-specific ban on processing, blending, and shipping of meat from a plant where BSE has been found, until subsequent test results show that the plant is free of BSE;
 3. Rescinding the USDA rules that allow the import of livestock and meat products from countries with active disease outbreaks;
 4. Continuing the ban on livestock and meat imports from countries with BSE/FMD outbreaks until the disease is controlled and/or eradicated;
 5. Banning all meat and feed imports from countries that have not implemented and enforced a ruminant-to-ruminant feed ban;
 6. Prohibiting the importation of animal protein products from countries that cannot certify BSE- and transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE)-free products;
 7. Prohibiting TSE-positive materials in non-ruminant feeds; and
 8. Cross-referencing all regulations for complete consistency of standards;
 - m. Develop a comprehensive strategy and work with electric providers to help producers detect and eliminate stray voltage;
 - n. Enforce Section 21 General Requirement Rule 215-B of the National Electric Safety Code to prohibit using the ground as the sole conductor or return to utilities substations;
 - o. Require user-fees for importers to implement inspections and disease prevention;
 - p. Encourage Congress to continue funding research and prevention methods for all harmful and life-threatening strains of influenza.
- USDA should develop a strategic plan to help producers detect,

- monitor, and eradicate infected animals. Vaccination compensation for mandatory culling should be directed toward producers with limited finances to prevent the driving out of small producers;
- q. Urge Congress to upgrade the Plum Island Animal Disease Center; however, we oppose completion of the National Bio- and Agro-Defense research facility in any location critical to food production in our nation. If completed, rigorous standards of containment must be developed, and the government should assume complete liability should containment not be successful. Funding must be full, adequate, and continuous to meet the rigorous standards of containment. To prevent any biosecurity risk, funding for this facility should be exempt from any budgetary cuts; and
- r. We support legislative efforts to amend the Minor Use and Minor Species Animal Health Act of 2004 to include language that would provide federal incentives, tax, and others, for the development and labeling of much needed pharmaceuticals for minor species and minor uses.

vi. State Animal Identification

We support the USDA's action to leave animal identification for disease management to the states. We urge state programs to establish voluntary individual animal identification systems that recognize that the collected information is the sole, proprietary property of the producer and those authorized to use it. Any livestock database shall be housed at the state government level – not privately held. The data shall only be shared in the event of a disease outbreak and to the extent necessary for its control.

vii. National Animal Identification

NFU does not currently support a mandatory National Animal Identification System due to a vast array of issues not yet addressed:

- a. Costs of implementing the program remain uncertain. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has stated the necessity of a national animal I.D. program to combat terrorism; therefore, we urge Congress to provide the full funding necessary to create and maintain

- 1 the database and provide compensation to producers for their costs
2 of implementing the program;
- 3 b. Any national animal I.D. program should be administered by USDA;
- 4 c. Mitigate producer liability for contaminated food products. A
5 seamless system should be provided at all retail levels that ensures
6 the information gathered through an I.D. system is complementary
7 with that provided through mandatory country-of-origin labeling;
- 8 d. Use of the proprietary information should include clear limits to
9 ensure protection under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).
10 Access to producer information should be available only to relevant
11 federal and state agencies and only in times of animal disease
12 outbreaks or bioterrorism attacks;
- 13 e. Ensured uniformity of identification system with tracking technology
14 and database management; and
- 15 f. Control of the database needs to remain under the control of the
16 federal government. The concerns we have with a privately managed
17 database system include:
- 18 1. It forces producers to bear the financial burden, which they
19 cannot afford;
- 20 2. This public database will create a revenue source for private
21 entities seeking to make a profit;
- 22 3. It does not contain oversight to protect confidential producer
23 information;
- 24 4. It does not mitigate producer liability;
- 25 5. It will create opportunities for packers to condition the
26 purchase of livestock upon participation in a voluntary I.D.
27 program;
- 28 6. It assumes coordination among a complex web of data with no
29 guarantees of success; and
- 30 7. It assumes all sectors of the livestock industry will agree upon
31 the development and maintenance of a single entity to
32 represent each species' interests.

viii. **Aquaculture, Fishing and Alternative Livestock**

1. Land-based aquaculture and alternative livestock

The land-based aquaculture and alternative livestock industries represent opportunities for family farmers to establish new and/or more diversified farming enterprises.

To ensure consumer confidence in the health and safety of these products, we support:

- a. The extension of federal, or equivalent state, food inspection services for these products and recommend that a uniform inspection fee system be adopted by the agency of jurisdiction;
- b. Recognizing farm-raised freshwater fish and shellfish production as a domesticated livestock under USDA definition and moving its inspection from FDA to USDA jurisdiction;
- c. Recognizing game farms as livestock operations and subjecting them to all livestock health regulations, as well as making them eligible for any benefits provided traditional livestock operations;
- d. Recognizing vermiculture and insect farming as agricultural practices, and worms and insects as an alternative livestock;
- e. USDA, utilizing state departments of agriculture where feasible, being the agency that regulates all health issues for these farms and ranches, as well as providing production, processing, and market development assistance for these products; and
- f. Assisting small producers to comply with regulations.

2. Marine Aquaculture

The development of industrial-scale offshore finfish aquaculture is detrimental to the family fishers and local economies of historic fishing communities. It should not be allowed to proceed unless and until there is national legislation in place that ensures it can be conducted without harming marine ecosystems and coastal fishing communities.

We oppose:

- a. Promotion of offshore aquaculture operations that displace or endanger traditional fishing practices and onshore infrastructure;

- b. Inefficient use of marine resources as feed within such operations;
- c. Federal subsidies to promote, sustain or further develop such operations; and
- d. Marine fishing operations that are not community-based and do not contribute to the promotion of locally and sustainably caught wild seafood.

3. Sustainable Working Waterfronts and Fisheries

Small boat fishers face many of the same challenges as family farmers: an aging population, consolidation of the fishing fleet, and high cost of production in fuel and license costs make it hard to enter or sustain a fishing business. Overfishing of forage fish habitat has led to a current economic crisis for many small boat fishers and their coastal communities. Drastic declines in commercial and ground fish off all U.S. coasts will necessitate extreme cuts to fish harvest. The economic impact of these reductions will be devastating for small boat fishers.

We support:

- a. Protecting our working waterfronts so that viable family fishing businesses can thrive and grow;
- b. Disaster assistance for small boat fishers;
- c. Full assistance of USDA Risk Management Agency for small boat fishers;
- d. Development and support of cooperative marketing, processing, and branding models that provide a fair livelihood for fishing families, healthy local food products, and sustainability of wild harvest fisheries;
- e. Extension of the full range of USDA Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food (KYF) programs to support small boat fishers and provide access to education and training for beginning fishers;
- f. Programs that provide regionally appropriate research and technical assistance to improve profitability of sustainable fishing

- practices, enhanced marketing, and processing of sustainably caught fish;
- g. Programs that enhance the production and processing of local meat and poultry should be extended to include fish;
 - h. USDA conservation programs that support the development and adoption of sustainable fishing practices and protect coastal ecosystems;
 - i. Nutrition program incentives should be extended to fresh fish;
 - j. Catch limits as essential means of rebuilding fish stocks;
 - k. Selective harvesting practices that allow healthy stocks to be targeted, while at-risk and depleted stocks are avoided;
 - l. Reviewing current practices as well as development of new fishing gear or techniques that avoid depleted stocks;
 - m. Forage fish populations being carefully managed to avoid overharvest using science-based annual catch levels and a risk adverse management strategy;
 - n. Development of meaningful protections for sensitive sea floor habitat essential for the needs of managed species based on best available science;
 - o. Prohibiting fishing gears and/or practices that are not conducive to protecting these important and vulnerable areas; and
 - p. We oppose opening closed areas of the ocean fisheries in response to recent declines in ground fish stocks.

C. LABELING OF COMMODITIES AND COMMODITY PRODUCTS

1. COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN LABELING

We support reauthorization and full implementation of mandatory country-of-origin labeling (COOL) for agricultural, aquaculture and wild-caught seafood products. Mandatory COOL is a valuable marketing tool for producers, and it allows consumers to know where the meat products they consume are born, raised, and harvested. U.S. producers and consumers have the right to distinguish products from those of other countries and U.S. products should not be categorized as a North

1 American product (*also see Article III. – Agriculture Competition and Concentration*).

2 We strongly urge that USDA and Congress reinstate mandatory COOL.

3 We support the following principles in the continued implementation of
4 mandatory COOL to qualify and be labeled as U.S.-produced:

- 5 i. Meat products must come from an animal born, raised, and harvested in
6 the United States;
- 7 ii. Fresh produce, honey, and nuts must be exclusively grown and processed
8 in the United States;
- 9 iii. Dairy products to be labeled to indicate country-of-origin;
- 10 iv. Farm-raised fish and shellfish must be hatched, raised, and processed in
11 the United States or wild fish and shellfish harvested and processed
12 solely in the United States or by a U.S.-flagged vessel;
- 13 v. USDA should prohibit any third-party compliance reviews and third
14 parties dictating what types of records producers need to keep and the
15 way the records should be kept;
- 16 vi. USDA should perform any/all producer audits to determine compliance
17 with the law;
- 18 vii. Allow those who solely produce U.S. products to self-verify that fact;
- 19 viii. Producers, processors, and retailers should maintain records in a manner
20 of their choosing, as long as the information is available and can be
21 transferred to a standardized format in the event of an audit by USDA;
- 22 ix. In the absence of mandatory COOL, the same labeling standards outlined
23 in mandatory COOL should be maintained to benefit producers and
24 consumers in any voluntary program; and
- 25 x. If a national animal identification program is implemented, the
26 information should include country-of-origin distinction for consumers
27 of covered commodities at all retail levels.

28 **2. TRUTH IN LABELING OF FOOD PRODUCTS**

29 Thorough and accurate food labels are an important tool that helps consumers
30 make informed decisions and allows producers to differentiate their products. We
31 support conspicuous, mandatory, uniform, and federal labeling for food products

1 throughout the processing chain to include all ingredients, additives, and processes
2 such as:

- 3 i. Artificial growth hormones;
- 4 ii. Products derived from cloned animals;
- 5 iii. The identity and country of ownership of the parent company;
- 6 iv. Carbon monoxide injected in meat and seafood or packaging for
7 appearance or shelf-life purposes;
- 8 v. Point of origin and producer-determined standards for geographic
9 indicators, including percentage coming from that origin;
- 10 vi. Date of kill, for meat and seafood;
- 11 vii. Whether the meat was frozen;
- 12 viii. The date/dates the meat was subsequently refrozen;
- 13 ix. Irradiated products, and we call for further research on its long-term
14 effects on human health;
- 15 x. Maintaining and protecting the integrity of organic labeling;
- 16 xi. Labeling standards for the sale of organic products, while not limiting
17 opportunities to market other natural or sustainably produced food
18 products;
- 19 xii. A designation for soil-less systems so as to maintain the integrity of the
20 USDA Organic label;
- 21 xiii. Requiring labeling of milk from cows injected with recombinant bovine
22 somatotropin (rBST), a hormone to stimulate milk production. In the
23 absence of federal labeling requirements, we encourage farmer-certified
24 rBST-free labeled products;
- 25 xiv. Labeling the use of casein, MPC/UF dairy blends, and food preps in food
26 production;
- 27 xv. Requiring the labeling of artificial sweeteners;
- 28 xvi. Requiring any laboratory or artificially produced products to be labeled
29 as such;
- 30 xvii. Adding to the Food Standards and Labeling Policy Book the following
31 definitions and labeling requirements for meat and beef:

- a. "Meat" is a product derived from the tissue or flesh of animals that have been harvested in the traditional manner;
- b. "Beef" is a product derived from the tissue of cattle born, raised, and harvested in the traditional manner;
- xviii. The development of certifiable and verifiable "Grass-fed" labeling standards that are regulated in a manner similar to "Organic;"
- xix. The standardization of federal laws to determine moisture content allowance of all meat products, and that any water injected during processing must be identified on the label; and
- xx. All imported meat and other foods federally inspected under federal health laws carrying an "imported and inspected" label.

We oppose:

- i. Labeling poultry chilled below 26 degrees Fahrenheit as fresh;
- ii. USDA regulation that allows the addition of up to eight percent water-weight to poultry products without mandating that these products are so labeled;
- iii. Labeling alternative protein sources as meat;
- iv. Cellular technology being called agriculture;
- v. The use of the words milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, or other words used to describe dairy products in labels on imitation or substitute dairy products;
- vi. The use of the word milk to designate any product not derived from mammals; and
- vii. Labeling meat products produced from animals born, bred, raised, harvested, or processed outside the United States as "Product of U.S.A." or equivalent.

3. NUTRITION LABELING

We support providing consumers with information on nutrients in food products to help avoid misleading health claims.

D. COMMODITIES

1. WHEAT, COARSE GRAINS, SMALL GRAINS, OILSEEDS, RICE, AND COTTON

- 1 A farm program should recognize the market realities of the fundamentally
2 unique business of farming. Such a program should include these basic provisions:
- 3 i. Price support and income support mechanism for wheat, coarse grains,
4 oilseeds, rice, and cotton that establishes a floor under market prices and
5 enables producers to obtain their income from the marketplace;
 - 6 ii. Price and income support should primarily be provided by CCC non-
7 recourse, commodity loans;
 - 8 iii. A dual enrollment option for ARC and PLC, which allows producers to
9 receive the higher of the two calculated payments;
 - 10 iv. Higher reference prices that more closely reflect the current costs of
11 production and commodity markets;
 - 12 v. Flexible loan maturity periods should be able to be extended at the
13 discretion of the producer for up to 18 months, with the producer able to
14 forfeit after 9 months;
 - 15 vi. Price support and CCC loan rates should be set at levels to ensure
16 producers can receive a fair return on their investment and the CCC loan
17 rate should not be for less than the USDA national rolling average cost of
18 production. CCC loan rates should be adjusted annually to reflect
19 inflation and productivity;
 - 20 vii. Price supports and CCC loan rates should be annually balanced in an
21 upward manner to prevent market and planting distortions; and
 - 22 viii. NFU strongly urges the establishment of a voluntary, farmer-owned
23 market-driven inventory system that reduces volatility in agricultural
24 commodity markets. For such a system to succeed, we recommend the
25 following:
 - 26 1. USDA will offer per bushel storage rates for commodities when
27 prices fall below a designated loan rate, which is set near the
28 midpoint between the variable and full cost of production for
29 each commodity. Enrollment in the storage program will cease
30 when prices recover;
 - 31 2. Farmers may enter any portion of their crop into storage, which
32 must remain enrolled in the program until the market price for

- the commodity reaches the release price, or approximately 160 percent of the loan rate;
3. Farmers must maintain the crop in proper condition while in storage;
 4. Economically sound inventory caps should be set on each commodity. Should the inventory cap be reached for a commodity, a voluntary set-aside program may be made available by USDA;
 5. When the release price is reached, the farmer may sell the commodity into the market or hold the commodity, but storage rates will cease;
 6. Allowing the secretary of agriculture the authority to manage price-depressing surpluses by providing producers incentives to plant dedicated energy crops on acres which are now, or may be produced, in surplus;
 7. Commodity support based on actual production history (APH), where available. For cases without APH, the program yield cannot be lower than FSA County Expected Yields (CEY).
 8. The establishment of APH floors to protect producers in the event of successive crop failure brought on by natural disasters. This floor cannot be lower than the FSA CEY;
 9. CEY should have different quantities for organic production versus conventional production with county thresholds;
 10. Flexibility in choosing which crops to plant;
 11. Low-interest grain storage facility loans should be made available to producers;
 12. Each farm operator and crop share landlord should be eligible for maximum loan volume targeted to family farms;
 13. Farmers should have the right to periodically update acreage bases and proven yields on all crops for each farm; and
 14. Farmers should have the option to store forfeited grain and receive storage payments until final sale is consummated.

1 **2. OTHER PROGRAM COMMODITIES (WOOL, MOHAIR, HONEY, PULSE CROPS,**
2 **ETC.)**

3 We support:

- 4 i. The establishment of an economic safety net program for other eligible
5 commodities based on price income supports provided through CCC non-
6 recourse, commodity loans in a manner comparable to more traditional
7 farm program crops. Other eligible commodities include, but are not
8 limited to wool, mohair, honey, pulse crops, and forage crops (if hayed or
9 grazed);
- 10 ii. Funding the Wool and Mohair Program from tariffs on sheep and wool
11 imports;
- 12 iii. The Pulse Crop Health Initiative, a focused effort to increase and leverage
13 scientific research on the advantages of pulse crops; and
- 14 iv. Including hay, forage crops and managed pasture as program crops for
15 the purposes of commodity program payments.

16 **3. INDUSTRIAL HEMP**

17 The Hemp Farming Act of 2018 removed the regulations regarding low THC
18 containing hemp from the Controlled Substances Act and legalized growing
19 industrial hemp across the country. However, because interest in this new industry
20 is expanding rapidly, there are issues with the quality and authenticity of products
21 currently being sold to consumers and very little FDA oversight to protect
22 consumers from subpar products. To protect this burgeoning new industry, Farmers
23 Union supports:

- 24 i. Clear federal rules on CBD products, as well as truth in labeling what is in
25 said products for any kind of consumption or topical use;
- 26 ii. CBD oil processors engaging in best practices in a food grade facility, and
27 having a certification program to show that what is printed on the label is
28 accurate as well as having accurate dosing recommendations allowing
29 family farmers who are manufacturing hemp products with hemp grown
30 and processed on their own farm;

- 1 iii. The acknowledgement by FDIC and USDA/FSA that industrial hemp has
- 2 been declassified as a controlled substance and allowing farmers to
- 3 continue obtaining operating loans;
- 4 iv. We support the National Credit Union Administration in recognizing and
- 5 working with hemp producers to provide financial services;
- 6 v. Continuing to work to establish crop insurance options beyond Whole
- 7 Farm policies;
- 8 vi. Funding continued research into the benefits of CBD oil, industrial hemp
- 9 being used as supplemental livestock feed, and seed studies, as well as
- 10 studying ways to use the entire plant, for example, but not limited to
- 11 hemcrete bricks, animal feed, plastics, and human nutrition;
- 12 vii. Establishing long term markets to carry this budding industry beyond
- 13 the current boom;
- 14 viii. Federal and state water rights will be permitted for the purpose of
- 15 irrigating industrial hemp crops;
- 16 ix. Programs that incentivize regional processing and distribution hubs; and
- 17 x. Maintaining a level playing field for family farmers by taking steps to
- 18 police both monopoly and monopsony within all related markets.

19 **4. TOBACCO**

20 We urge action by Congress and the administration to:

- 21 i. Provide for a plan and funding for economic development assistance to
- 22 tobacco-dependent communities;
- 23 ii. Establish country-of-origin labeling for tobacco;
- 24 iii. Ensure that all imported tobacco meets the same standards of domestic
- 25 leaf and is monitored and tracked in a similar fashion as domestic leaf;
- 26 and
- 27 iv. Act to include provisions to continue the inspection of foreign tobacco for
- 28 U.S.-banned chemicals and pesticides.

29 **5. PEANUTS**

30 Historically, U.S. farm policy has recognized that for peanuts, the cost of

31 requirements of the sector, such as specialty harvesting equipment and storage

32 facilities would attract a limited number of equipment dealers, processors, and

1 marketers. Therefore, family-sized farms would require particular attention to the
2 orderly and honest marketing of such a crop.

3 We support:

- 4 i. Grower marketing associations and federal marketing and warehouse
5 assistance to aid in the maintenance of fair and transparent market
6 competition;
- 7 ii. Increased research funding to develop alternative uses for peanuts;
- 8 iii. Prohibiting the importation of peanuts or any peanut products from
9 countries that produce no peanuts; and
- 10 iv. Prohibiting the importation of peanuts or peanut products from
11 countries that have plant disease problems, use unjust labor practices, or
12 have less stringent pesticide regulations than the United States.

13 **6. SUGAR**

14 We support the continuation of the no-cost U.S. sugar program and encourage
15 Congress to work with U.S. sugar producers to adopt a strong sugar program to
16 provide security for domestic producers of sugar. We oppose a federal price cap on
17 sugar. We support provisions for a realistic import quota of foreign sugar and
18 protection from the dumping of subsidized foreign sugar on the domestic market.

19 We support continuation of the suspension agreements governing sugar trade
20 with Mexico.

21 We oppose ethanol produced from imported sugar receiving any taxpayer
22 subsidies.

23 **7. TREE FARMS AND FORESTRY**

24 The economic well-being, as well as the independent existence of family tree
25 farmers, is threatened by regulatory uncertainty, over-regulation of wetlands and
26 restraining buffer zones. We support the family tree farmers.

27 NFU encourages private landowners to adopt cooperative sustainable forest
28 management practices, including but not limited to completion and implementation
29 of forest stewardship management plans as recognized by USDA or state forest
30 services.

31 We support the USDA Tree Assistance Program (TAP).

32 **8. SPECIALTY CROPS**

1 Specialty crops include but are not limited to fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried
2 fruits, nursery crops, pulse crops, floriculture and horticulture including turf grass,
3 sod, *Camellia sinensis* teas, coffee, hemp, and herbal crops. Congress should provide
4 mandatory funding for a safety net program, including risk management tools, to
5 allow producers to earn the cost of production.

6 We support:

- 7 i. Mandatory and expanded funding for the Specialty Crop Block Grant
8 Program. Specialty crop block grants that are provided to states should
9 be provided to producers and not supplant state budgets;
- 10 ii. Collaboration with consumer, culinary and other food groups to promote
11 U.S. specialty crops;
- 12 iii. Protection for specialty crop producers from imports during the primary
13 harvest season for perishable crops (window of harvest);
- 14 iv. Incentives for all federal nutrition program beneficiaries to use their
15 benefits at farmers markets, CSAs and other direct marketing outlets.
16 Reauthorization and expansion of the SNAP-based Food Insecurity
17 Nutrition Incentive Grant Program and the Child Nutrition Act with
18 continued prioritization for the direct-to-consumer marketing and the
19 local and regional sourcing of fruits and vegetables;
- 20 v. Increasing the allowable THC content of industrial hemp to 3 percent;
- 21 vi. Adopting policies and regulations that ensure the market for cannabis is
22 accessible to family farms and do not create unfair advantages to large
23 companies and monopolies. We oppose “pay to play” systems;
- 24 vii. A state’s right to make their own choice on medical and recreational
25 marijuana by calling on Congress and U.S. DEA to reclassify marijuana as
26 a schedule 2 or lower drug;
- 27 viii. USDA designation of tree syrups as a specialty crop;
- 28 ix. Both seed exchanges and seed libraries for the open exchange of
29 heirloom and open-pollinated seed;
- 30 x. Flexibility to allow occasional fruit and vegetable production without
31 losing base acres for covered commodities; and

- 1 xi. The development of other non-food uses for agricultural products (e.g.,
2 road maintenance).

3 **9. HONEY/POLLINATION**

4 Pollinators are vital to agriculture and to the production of fruits, vegetables and
5 crops. Research indicates that multiple factors contribute to the decline in
6 pollinators including pesticides, habitat loss, pathogens, parasites, and climate
7 change.

8 Therefore, we support:

- 9 i. Agricultural research and education to encourage innovative approaches
10 to protecting honeybee health and improve genetic stocks of honeybees;
11 ii. Development and expanded research to enhance native pollinators;
12 iii. Encouraging EPA to enforce its pesticide use labels to ensure proper
13 application of pesticides;
14 iv. Encouraging collaboration between the pesticide manufacturing and
15 pollinator industries to educate applicators and producers about the
16 potentially harmful effects of pesticides on pollinator populations;
17 v. Continued monitoring of pest populations and pest control methods;
18 vi. Continued monitoring of pollinator imports, accidental importation of
19 pests and invasive species;
20 vii. Ensuring that pollinator-beneficial habitat and best management
21 practices are eligible for cost-sharing assistance and incentives in USDA
22 conservation programs intended to assist producers;
23 viii. Public research of effects of pesticides, such as neonicotinoids, on bee
24 colonies, especially related to Colony Collapse Disorder;
25 ix. The FDA defining honey as a food product based on the Codex
26 Alimentarius standards so that U.S. beekeepers can utilize trade and legal
27 mechanisms when imported honey is adulterated. Until the FDA defines
28 honey as a food product, we support efforts at the state level to authorize
29 state departments of agriculture to define honey using the Codex
30 Alimentarius standards as a guideline;
31 x. Honeybees and hives for inclusion in livestock compensation programs;
32 and

- 1 xi. Effective and aggressive enforcement of chemical restrictions and
2 management practices that harm pollinators.

3 We oppose any attempt to classify sweet, white, or yellow clover as an invasive
4 species or to prohibit the sale or planting of sweet clover seed because of its
5 important role in honey production.

6 **10. VALUE-ADDED AND MINIMALLY PROCESSED FOODS**

7 We support artisan producers for creating value-added revenue streams from
8 agricultural products.

9 We support policies and programs that encourage the further development of
10 these types of farm-based enterprises.

11 **11. VALUE-ADDED USES OF FARM PRODUCTS**

12 We support value-added uses of farm commodities that encourage the
13 development of bio-degradable consumer packaging as the standard choice for
14 storage containers, packaging, and bags.

15 **E. AGRITOURISM**

16 We support:

- 17 1. The inclusion of agritourism as part of the definition of agriculture;
18 2. Encouraging USDA to recognize the value of agritourism and on-farm
19 education programs as a critical value-added product; and
20 3. USDA developing and implementing a program to educate producers about
21 liabilities associated with agritourism operations.

22 **F. RISK MANAGEMENT**

23 We encourage:

- 24 1. The expansion of risk management tools to cover all commodities;
25 2. The FSA to always consider prevented planting acres in revenue calculations
26 not limited to farm safety net programs, risk management programs and
27 disaster programs; and
28 3. The Inventory Management Soil Enhancement Tool (IMSET) as a mechanism
29 for farmers to voluntarily use annually to enhance individual farmer's
30 pricing inventory while enhancing their land's marginal soil.

31 **1. LIVESTOCK PRODUCER ASSISTANCE**

32 We support:

- i. Full and permanent funding for the livestock compensation programs;
and
- ii. Safeguards to assure that program benefits are targeted to family
farmers and ranchers.

2. CROP AND LIVESTOCK INSURANCE

Crop insurance and revenue coverage should not be considered a replacement
for fair market prices and an adequate price support program.

We support:

- i. The continuation and improvement of the federal crop insurance
program;
- ii. Maintaining the current or higher subsidy level for crop insurance;
- iii. A permanent disaster program, in addition to crop insurance that
addresses both catastrophic and shallow losses;
- iv. Enhancing the affordability of coverage above 75 percent of actual
production history (APH);
- v. A limitation on the cumulative value of all federal premium subsidies for
the purchase of “buy-up” crop insurance coverage. In the event budget
cuts result in decreased “buy-up” premium subsidies, those cuts should
be accomplished by caps on per-individual subsidies. Crop insurance
subsidies should be attributed to individuals based on their share of
ownership of insurable production and entities they own;
- vi. Development of federal crop insurance policies that provide a dollar-per-
acre, multi-peril coverage option similar to policies that exist for single-
peril hail coverage;
- vii. Development of federal crop insurance policies based on the regional
average cost of production for the insured commodity;
- viii. Development of new products that allow producers to protect their
income in times of low prices and/or quality losses;
- ix. Expanded production loss and revenue protection programs to cover
more crops and livestock in an equitable and comparable manner in all
states;

- 1 x. RMA continuing to develop risk management tools that will benefit
- 2 livestock producers and that are subsidized in a way similar to crop
- 3 insurance, like Livestock Risk Protection (LRP), Livestock Gross Margin
- 4 (LGM), Dairy Revenue Protection (DRP), Pasture, Rangeland, Forage
- 5 (PRF), and Weaned Calf Risk Protection (WCRP);
- 6 xi. Legislation that requires insurance companies that provide income
- 7 support products, such as LRP, to provide proof of sound insurance
- 8 business practices;
- 9 xii. Directing RMA to further develop the Whole Farm Revenue Protection
- 10 Program to be more equally treated with other RMA programs;
- 11 xiii. Legislative action to provide RMA authority to allow nationwide crop and
- 12 revenue insurance pilot programs;
- 13 xiv. The differentiation of spring wheat and winter wheat for enterprise
- 14 units;
- 15 xv. Increasing the producer representation on the Federal Crop Insurance
- 16 Corporation (FCIC) board of directors and establishing a local appeals
- 17 process including conflict resolution;
- 18 xvi. Providing family farm producers the opportunity to use all available
- 19 disaster programs without penalty; farmers relying on surface water for
- 20 irrigation should not be penalized by being forced to sign up crop as dry-
- 21 land instead of irrigated land due to an “act of God” resulting in lack of
- 22 water because of drought;
- 23 xvii. Reasonable funding for crop insurance agent and company
- 24 reimbursement;
- 25 xviii. No reduction of APH for federal crop insurance purposes when
- 26 production is reduced by natural disasters;
- 27 xix. Offering an adequate, individual catastrophic coverage program to
- 28 provide a safety net against crop disasters with a graduated premium
- 29 based on acres rather than crops;
- 30 xx. Signup requirements that contain enough flexibility including changes to
- 31 established planting dates to allow producers to respond to weather
- 32 changes;

- 1 xxi. Being eligible to plant a “ghost” crop when a producer collects a payment
2 for a prevented planting with no reduction to producers’ actual
3 production history
- 4 xxii. The use of cover crops for stewardship purposes on prevented planting
5 acres when feasible;
- 6 xxiii. Prevented planting provisions in insurance policies that can provide
7 valuable coverage when extreme weather conditions prevent expected
8 plantings. To maintain the integrity of the program and avoid abuse,
9 producers should make planting decisions based on agronomically sound
10 and well-documented crop management practices. We encourage the
11 RMA to develop guidelines that are objective rather than subjective;
- 12 xxiv. Maintaining eligibility to receive prevented planting indemnity payments
13 regardless of the producer’s planting history;
- 14 xxv. The inclusion of local quality and basis adjustments in revenue
15 protection (RP) products;
- 16 xxvi. The risk management program recognizing and accommodating the
17 unique production and actuarial experiences of producers of certified
18 organic commodities;
- 19 xxvii. The Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) and Enhanced Coverage
20 Option (ECO), and efforts to encourage the affordability of these and
21 other supplemental insurance products;
- 22 xxviii. Requiring the RMA and the FSA to coordinate all definition, reporting
23 requirements and information technologies;
- 24 xxix. The creation of regional advisory committees composed of producers,
25 insurance agents and insurance company officials to work with RMA
26 regional staff and offices to establish appropriate policies, procedures
27 and educational activities for the individual RMA regions;
- 28 xxx. The development and expansion of products that allow producers of
29 non-program commodities, small and/or diversified farming operations
30 of specialty and minor crops to have equitable insurance coverage based
31 on the market for which it is produced.

- 1 xxxi. USDA making the regulatory or operational changes necessary to remove
2 barriers and ensure fair access to crop and revenue insurance for
3 beginning farmers and ranchers;
- 4 xxxii. The concept of a risk management account that would be a private, self-
5 insured policy for farmers that is like the current health savings account.
6 This is not a replacement for crop insurance; rather, it is an alternative
7 tool for farmers;
- 8 xxxiii. Prevented planting losses including all weather contingencies, including
9 drought;
- 10 xxxiv. A crop insurance premium due date of December 1 with no interest
11 charges to the premium if the claim is unsettled;
- 12 xxxv. Conservation compliance to be eligible for federal crop insurance
13 subsidies, but recognize the need for the following specialized carve-out
14 provisions:
- 15 a. Expedited land classification determinations by NRCS;
- 16 b. Expedited classification appeals;
- 17 c. Ability to waive penalties for “in good faith” or other minor
18 errors;
- 19 d. Conservation compliance documentation being the sole
20 responsibility of the lessee or operator on cash rented land;
- 21 e. Ability to mitigate before penalties are assessed;
- 22 f. Assessment of penalties on individuals’ tracts only, not whole
23 farms;
- 24 g. Severability of penalties between landowners and tenants;
- 25 h. Penalties applying only going forward for “in good faith” errors;
26 and
- 27 i. Relaxed requirements for regions that have not received the
28 benefit of natural drainage in cooperation with NRCS.
- 29 xxxvi. The continued development of risk management tools for organic-
30 certified crops;
- 31 xxxvii. Additional crop insurance subsidies for farmers using proven and
32 effective conservation practices;

- 1 xxxviii. Crop and forage insurance reforms to allow for adequate coverage of
2 double-cropping systems;
- 3 xxxix. Crop insurance reforms that protect producers against quality losses,
4 including but not limited to protein discounts and yield reductions, and
5 making coverages available up to the cost of production. The effects of
6 quality losses and multi-year claims on production histories must be
7 minimized so that a producer's coverage is not diminished;
- 8 xl. The grading of durum for claim purposes should be by durum standards,
9 not spring wheat standards;
- 10 xli. Reducing the rotational restrictions for broadleaf and pulse crops used
11 by RMA;
- 12 xlii. Limiting risk management audits of farm records to seven years of
13 production history, regardless of crop rotation;
- 14 xlili. Revisions in crop insurance, possibly by a special provision statement,
15 which would allow farmers to exempt saline acres from crop insurance
16 coverage at acreage reporting time. This would permit a "conservation
17 planting" of salt tolerant crops, such as barley, sunflower, oats, rye, or
18 others to be utilized as a remediation crop without requiring it to be
19 insured;
- 20 xliv. Recommending that the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation amend and
21 change their policy language to eliminate their definition of "fire
22 coverage." The definition should include "any non-arson" fire and not
23 "natural occurring," as is the present definition. Additionally, a yield loss
24 caused by fire should not impact a producer's yield history and the
25 producer should be allowed to use that farm's yield average for future
26 crop insurance and farm program calculations;
- 27 xlv. Crop insurance and alternatives being offered by federal agencies when
28 local crops are not supported by commercial RMA coverage, or when
29 climate change impacts growing seasons, temperatures, and
30 precipitation allowing expansion of previously unsupported but
31 commonly grown feed grain and oilseed crops;

- 1 xlvi. RMA using weather data on a section-by-section basis, where available,
2 to assess moisture availability (rainfall and snowmelt) for crop
3 production, in determination of prevented planting or crop losses. Risk
4 management rules should not penalize producers for using locally
5 recommended conservation measures; and
6 xlvii. Cross-state coordination by RMA for required reporting of planting dates
7 within the same watershed.

8 We oppose:

- 9 i. RMA allowing outside influence on crop insurance premium levels
10 regarding specific crop inputs, practices, or technologies;
11 ii. The sale of crop insurance by ag lending institutions and other ag
12 industries that can coerce the producer, (i.e., lenders discounting interest
13 or requiring purchase of the lender's own crop insurance product as
14 condition of receiving a loan);
15 iii. Reducing established crop insurance during that crop year;
16 iv. The voiding of an entire crop insurance policy due to an error in a single
17 line of the policy; and
18 v. Penalizing producers that use nontraditional crops and/or rotations by
19 insuring crops with increased premiums and lower coverage.

20 **3. FOOD LIABILITY INSURANCE**

21 We support food liability insurance products and programs to assure that
22 unprocessed or less processed whole foods, fresh fruits, cheese and dairy products,
23 meats and fresh vegetables continue to remain accessible in the marketplace.
24 Current U.S. food liability culture places the farmer in an unfair position, and this
25 must be addressed if we intend to have farm-fresh or less processed foods available
26 to consumers.

27 **4. RISK MANAGEMENT EDUCATION**

28 We encourage the USDA to continue funding risk management education grants.

29 **G. FARM PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

30 We urge full implementation and funding of all provisions of the 2018 Farm Bill,
31 consistent with the intent of Congress. Furthermore, all positions in all divisions within

1 USDA should be fully staffed, and staff administering federal farm programs should be
2 fully informed and trained before enrollment periods begin.

3 We urge streamlining the application, reporting, and certification processes for
4 federal programs, and that those processes be consistent in all state offices. We support
5 increasing and modernizing outreach by using multiple technologies to meet the needs
6 of all farmers. We urge the speedy appointment and approval of FSA State Executive
7 Directors (SEDs) following nomination. We support socially disadvantaged producers
8 and farm owners, especially those without deed or title, to receive all the loans, benefits,
9 and programs of USDA and federal government.

10 We oppose downsizing FSA and other USDA agencies because it is detrimental to
11 rural America and the ability of the agencies to fulfill their mission. We oppose county
12 office consolidation, and we demand each county have full funding, staffing, and training
13 to provide good service to the agriculture community.

14 **1. FARMER-ELECTED COMMITTEES**

15 We support:

- 16 i. The integrity and independence of farmer-elected committees in carrying
17 out farm programs;
- 18 ii. Sufficient funding so the committee members can be trained and can
19 function effectively;
- 20 iii. Appointees to state FSA committees, which administer farm programs,
21 being family farmers;
- 22 iv. Farmer-elected, county- or area-farmer committees;
- 23 v. Uniformity of interpretation of USDA programs to the maximum degree
24 possible, while still meeting local needs;
- 25 vi. Offering appeals at the local, state, and national levels;
- 26 vii. Continuing an independent appeals process and the producer's right to
27 mediation;
- 28 viii. Programs to educate producers and others about mediation processes;
29 and
- 30 ix. Greater authority given to FSA county committees in determining the
31 disaster designations and the appropriate program applications.

1 We oppose selection of the county or area farmer committees by political
2 appointment.

3 **2. NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**

4 The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) should be the service
5 agency to provide technical assistance working with local boards and local
6 conditions whenever possible. We support the following changes to NRCS:

- 7 i. Giving the soil conservation district boards the authority to hear farmer
8 appeals on conservation land-use issues, including good, fair variances;
- 9 ii. Providing full funding for conservation technical assistance to implement
10 conservation programs;
- 11 iii. Appointees to the NRCS state technical committees, which provide advice
12 and counsel to state conservationists, being actively engaged in a family
13 farm operation;
- 14 iv. NRCS state technical committees and local conservation districts having
15 voting power over the cost-share rates and ranking procedures; and
- 16 v. Funds designated to NRCS programs being used to hire local fishers and
17 farmers to implement conservation projects;
- 18 vi. Use of federal funding to provide the most recent conservation mapping
19 technology for use by NRCS and associated field staff to make their work
20 less time-consuming and more precise;
- 21 vii. Federal funding to create and sustain programs to train and incentivize
22 emerging and established conservation professionals to work in NRCS or
23 for local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) to help alleviate
24 employee shortages; and
- 25 viii. Require NRCS to train field staff on conservation practices tailored for
26 small-scale and urban agriculture, and to conduct outreach to small-scale
27 farmers and ranchers.

28 We oppose:

- 29 i. The privatization of the services of the NRCS and object to forcing
30 farmers to pay for the technical assistance, which should be provided by
31 NRCS staff; and

- 1 ii. Any effort to eliminate NRCS or shift conservation services to some other
2 agency or branch of the USDA.

3 **3. IMPROVED MARKETING MECHANISMS**

4 NFU reaffirms its support for enabling legislation to establish a National
5 Agricultural Relations Board or separate board for single commodities or groups of
6 closely related commodities. Once established, this board should:

- 7 i. Bring farmers and farm cooperatives together with handlers and
8 processors, for the purpose of bargaining over prices received by
9 agricultural producers. Farmers need and are entitled to a firm legal
10 procedure which will enable them to manage the production and
11 marketing of their products; and
12 ii. Help preserve the long-standing rights of family farmers to participate in
13 bargaining associations and cooperatives without being subject to
14 antitrust action.

15 **H. SPECIAL AGRICULTURAL POLICIES AND SERVICES**

16 **1. FARM LABOR**

17 We encourage Congress to continue funding existing programs and establish
18 new grant initiatives that aim to improve the supply, stability, and training of the
19 agricultural labor force.

20 We urge Congress to enact comprehensive farm labor reforms such that
21 programs like H-2A visa programs contribute to a flexible, efficient, and
22 compassionate agricultural workforce.

23 We urge USDA to create a program like the Fair Food Program, assuring a
24 collaborative process between farmers and workers on farms to deliver certifiable,
25 market-rewarded, and market-enforced payment on products to benefit wages,
26 profits, and livelihoods of workers and of farmers.

27 The National Labor Relations Act should be extended to workers on corporate
28 and other farms that employ enough hired help to be subject to the federal
29 minimum wage provisions applicable to agricultural workers.

30 We support the modification of the Fair Labor Standards Act to ensure:

- i. Worker protection standards regarding wage rates, health, safety, and housing conditions for migrant, seasonal, minority and other farm laborers and for education of their children;
- ii. The rights of workers to bargain collectively for fair wages; and
- iii. A livable minimum wage.

We recognize oligopolies, fixing prices, and cheap food policies harm farmers and farm workers. We support efforts to assure fairness for all involved in the production of food.

We support USDA offering grants or low interest loans to family farms for new construction and/or remodeling of existing farm labor housing to provide a safe, clean, and healthy living environment for domestic and/or guest workers.

2. SAFETY OF FARMERS AND FARM WORKERS

We recommend:

- i. Farmers take advantage of training opportunities, including pesticide applicator programs, as often as possible;
- ii. Farm equipment manufacturers be subject to rules requiring product safety, and that manufacturers be liable for damages suffered due to injuries caused by faulty equipment;
- iii. Developing incentives for the purchase of rollover protection for farm equipment;
- iv. Standardized hazard and caution lights and distinct turn signals on all farm equipment that uses public roadways, and increased education of the public on the need to respect them;
- v. Discouraging the use of Slow Moving Vehicle emblems for purposes other than their intended use;
- vi. Farmers and their employees have access to information regarding hazardous materials used on the farm;
- vii. Farmers maintain adequate records on their transportation, use, storage, and disposal of fertilizers and pesticides;
- viii. Stakeholders having a voice in assuring that safety rules established for the protection of those employed by farmers are reasonable and

- workable, financially viable, penalties are not excessive, and that reasonable periods of time are allowed for compliance;
- ix. That any federal heat and cold stress standards are practicable;
 - x. That Congress provide for continued exemption of small farms and businesses that have 10 or fewer employees from the inspection provisions of the law;
 - xi. Family farmers exercise reasonable care to promote the safety of themselves and their families;
 - xii. Developing International Labor Organization (ILO) standards that adequately protect the health and safety of children;
 - xiii. USDA create resources for employers to provide training and tools to minimize the risk of injury at the workplace; and
 - xiv. OSHA use its full authority to protect workers' rights in food processing plants with over 100 employees from known safety hazards, harmful work environments, and ensure whistleblower protections.

3. STORABLE COMMODITIES PRODUCER PROTECTION

i. Federal Warehouse Act

We support the right of individual states to regulate the grain merchandising activities of warehouses licensed by the federal government. NFU will oppose federal preemption of state regulatory authority over grain merchandising unless:

- a. Federal regulation includes appropriate and effective oversight of federally licensed warehouses and merchandising activities;
- b. Modifications to federal warehouse and merchandising activities that may have an impact on producers are proposed and adopted through public rulemaking procedures rather than the annual licensing process;
- c. Producers are provided a protection program funded by the warehouse and merchandising industry against losses from warehouse and merchandising company insolvencies and bankruptcies at no less than:

1. 100 percent in the case of warehouse receipted stored grain and grain sold for payment within 30 days of delivery; and
 2. \$3 million per producer for each commodity stored, delivered, or contracted within 31-365 days of delivery;
- d. Limitations on the level of licensing flexibility provided to grain warehouses and merchandisers are enacted to ensure it does not result in a reduction in existing financial protections for producers; and
 - e. States' abilities to fund operations and inventory transactions, liquidity, and maintain "weights-and-measures" regulations are protected.

We further urge that each state provide supplemental guarantees beyond any federal maximum. Congress should take whatever action is necessary to ensure that stored commodities remain the property of those persons who delivered them for storage. Warehouses should be required to issue negotiable warehouse receipts upon request, at a cost not to exceed the dump charge.

ii. **Ag Merchantiser or Supplier Bankruptcies and Receiverships**

If an ag merchantiser or supplier enters bankruptcy or receivership, farmers should be given first position priority for commodities that were sold under deferred and/or delayed payment agreements. They should also be given first position priority for any account credits or for prepayments made on inputs such as seed, fertilizer, crop protection products, feed ingredients, etc.

iii. **Commodity Basis**

Basis should reflect the cost of transportation and storage from the point of local delivery to the point of terminal delivery and it is not to be used as a risk mitigation tool for the grain merchantiser. We call for oversight by the Surface Transportation Board and/or the appropriate federal agency to investigate abuses of the basis levels.

4. AGRICULTURAL CENSUS

Census data are useful in designing farm programs and defending and promoting the interests of family farm operations. The census of agriculture provides data that show the trends in the agricultural economy of each county and

1 state and for the nation. NFU encourages the following relative to the census of
2 agriculture:

- 3 i. Continue to be conducted every five years;
- 4 ii. Opposition to efforts to increase the minimum financial criteria for
5 classifying agricultural operations;
- 6 iii. Continued collection of needed data relating to corporate involvement in
7 agriculture and coordination with information collected on foreign
8 involvement in the purchase of farmland and agricultural enterprises to
9 reflect the pattern of ownership and management of U.S. agriculture
10 more clearly; and
- 11 iv. That USDA does not use information obtained in the census in a manner
12 detrimental to family farmers and ranchers.

13 **5. NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE (NASS)**

14 We support adequate funding levels for NASS and recognize the importance of
15 surveys. As USDA uses NASS information for multiple programs, NASS should work
16 with the farmers to record the needed information instead of using another data
17 source.

18 We encourage producers to recognize the importance of filling out NASS data,
19 which is used by USDA to determine price and yield information for multiple USDA
20 programs and grant opportunities within our states and county governments that
21 call for such metrics.

22 **6. USDA'S INFORMATION MANDATE**

23 USDA should provide accurate income statistics for farmers and ranchers.
24 Separation of income levels for producers, landlords and integrators would permit
25 more accurate net farm incomes in USDA's farm projections.

26 USDA should produce and provide science- and research-based reports
27 projecting the potential impact of our changing climate on states and various
28 growing regions.

29 We oppose charging user fees for formerly free USDA reports and information or
30 supplying them only on a paid basis by computer.

31 **7. COMMODITY RESEARCH AND PROMOTION PROGRAMS**

1 We support a voluntary checkoff, with producer participation determined at the
2 point of sale. Our support for producer-financed commodity research and
3 promotion programs is determined by the extent to which producers who are
4 actively involved in production agriculture control the programs.

5 NFU will support programs financed from the proceeds of sales by producers of
6 agricultural commodities, only if the following criteria are met:

- 7 i. Research and promotion programs are for the sole financial benefit of
8 domestic family farmers;
- 9 ii. Disbursement of funds collected is controlled solely by boards of non-
10 processing domestic producers elected by the domestic producers
11 assessed, and the operations of the program are solely controlled by
12 those domestic producer boards;
- 13 iii. Members of national producer-funded boards shall be nominated and
14 elected by producers, with the election process supervised by FSA;
- 15 iv. It shall be mandatory that all eligible producers be provided with a ballot
16 for all elections and referendums;
- 17 v. Each producer of an agricultural product to be covered under any multi-
18 commodity checkoff shall have one vote in any referendum to determine
19 whether that checkoff program should be created, and the board so
20 created should adequately represent family farm producers;
- 21 vi. Congress completes an investigation of federally sanctioned commodity
22 checkoff programs, with public hearings held across the country, and
23 issues a public report on checkoff programs that includes a complete and
24 transparent accounting of all funds collected and disbursed, to ensure it
25 is creating a positive impact for family farms;
- 26 vii. Approval is by 60 percent of producers voting in a referendum prior to
27 implementation of the order, with spouses allowed to vote individually,
28 and no bloc voting allowed;
- 29 viii. The outcome of producer referendums should be determined solely
30 based on one vote per person;

- ix. Changes in levies and administrative and operational procedures should be submitted to producers affected and subject to approval by a simple majority vote;
- x. Periodic review referendums should be financed and conducted by the federal government every fifth year, with no producer funds used to influence the voters. A simple majority of producers voting in a referendum shall be able to recall a commodity checkoff program. USDA shall make available the total number of producers;
- xi. When an assessment is collected from U.S. producers of a commodity, an equal, non-refundable fee should continue to be assessed on imports of that commodity, in either raw or manufactured form. Any special provisions extended to U.S. regions, remote states or territories should not be extended to imported products;
- xii. The assessment should also be collected from those integrators who are currently exempted by virtue of being in a vertically integrated operation;
- xiii. Periodic independent, outside evaluations and audits of all financial records should be conducted to ensure that the benefits of the program outweigh the costs to producers, with copies of the audits available to all who pay the assessments;
- xiv. Procedures should be provided to enable producers to immediately obtain the refunds of the research and promotion funds they were assessed;
- xv. Research funds generated through producer assessments should not be used as a substitute for publicly generated research funding;
- xvi. Farmers and ranchers have the right to designate the use of the checkoff dollars he or she contributes for research, promotion, expanded cooperative development, or nutrition programs and food banks;
- xvii. Prohibiting the use of dairy producers' checkoff money to conduct research into the use of casein and/or MPC's in the making of cheese and other dairy products, or to promote anything other than U.S.-produced natural dairy products;

- 1 xviii. Mandatory producer assessments should not go to organizations that
2 engage in lobbying. No funds should be donated, or contracts provided to
3 organizations that carry out political or lobbying activities or to their
4 shared staff, even if records are kept which separate their activity. No
5 checkoff programs/events shall be held in concert or conjunction with
6 any policy organization's programs/events. An audit should be
7 conducted, and severe criminal penalties should be assessed for using
8 funds for personal, political, or lobbying activities;
- 9 xix. The payment of a mandatory commodity checkoff must not constitute
10 membership in a producer organization; and
- 11 xx. Producer-funded research should remain the property of the producers.
12 Patents granted because of the research should also belong to the
13 producers. Royalties collected should be returned to the producers'
14 research fund.

15 **8. GRAIN STANDARDS**

16 Our nation's grain standards must reward producers who strive to distinguish
17 the desired quality related to the end users of the commodity.

18 We support:

- 19 i. Producers receiving a premium for higher quality grain;
- 20 ii. Regulation or legislation that provides a consistent grading and moisture
21 discount scale that is monitored and enforced at the local elevator or
22 mill; and
- 23 iii. A periodic review of our nation's grain standards so our producers can
24 more effectively compete in world markets based on the quality of their
25 production.

26 Revised standards should:

- 27 i. Reward positive actions taken by producers, such as genetic
28 improvement and sound grain-handling practices;
- 29 ii. Establish grade and non-grade factors that can be commonly understood
30 and mutually determined by producers and end-users;
- 31 iii. Adopt dry-matter grading by the grain trade as a better way of
32 compensating the producer for the grain delivered to the elevator;

- iv. Ensure testing standards that reflect actual grain quality; and
- v. Establish standardized tests that are accurate and reproducible.

9. GRAIN INSPECTION

We reaffirm our position for the high standards in grain inspection and support the weighing system as authorized under the original Federal Grain Inspection Act.

To protect and improve our reputation as exporters of U.S. commodities, we support legislation that would:

- i. Prohibit and penalize exporters adding foreign material or moisture to any commodity for overseas shipment;
- ii. Require export customers to pay for shipments on a clean-grain basis, just as farmers are paid on a clean-grain basis;
- iii. Provide grain inspection personnel to spot check U.S. grain at foreign ports to determine whether it is of the same kind, class, quantity, and condition that was certified upon shipment;
- iv. Prohibit the imposition of user fees for the inspection and grading of agricultural commodities. Federal inspection and grading of such commodities are in the public interest and should not be charged to the producer;
- v. Continue to investigate grain companies as to the total pricing system and any quality discounts such as those for protein schedules, test schedules, DON (vomitoxin) levels, falling numbers and scab; and
- vi. Prohibit privatization of grain export inspections.

10. NATIONAL ORGANIC STANDARDS *(ALSO SEE ARTICLE I.C. – LABELING OF COMMODITIES AND COMMODITY PRODUCTS)*

NFU recognizes the importance of protecting the integrity and strength of the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) and its value to organic family farming.

We support:

- i. The enforcement and monitoring of the national organic standards promulgated by USDA and the prosecution of individuals or entities who knowingly sell or import nonorganic products as certified organic;
- ii. Strict uniform enforcement of the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) “120-day pasture rule” for all certified organic dairy producers;

- 1 iii. Greater enforcement of the USDA NOP pasture rule by requiring
- 2 certifiers to inspect all organic dairy farms twice during their 120-day
- 3 designated pasture season with one visit being on an “unannounced
- 4 basis” to assure that all milk cows are on pasture and 30% DMI is being
- 5 achieved;
- 6 iv. All certifiers and their inspectors being required to complete additional
- 7 online training on USDA NOP pasture standards, documentation, and
- 8 expectations. This training would reinforce USDA dry matter intake
- 9 (DMI) and pasture rule compliance;
- 10 v. Each dairy herd feeding group DMI being calculated separately from each
- 11 other, with no combining of milk cows with dry cows, or any other
- 12 groups;
- 13 vi. The use of testing of milk samples to verify compliance with the pasture
- 14 rule when testing technologies become available and validated;
- 15 vii. Ensuring accreditation and certification costs do not discriminate against
- 16 small producers, including support and full funding for the National
- 17 Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP);
- 18 viii. Ensuring the funding level of National OCCSP is provided at the
- 19 beginning of the fiscal year;
- 20 ix. Requiring USDA to maintain the role of the National Organic Standards
- 21 Board (NOSB) as the official source of developing policies and
- 22 procedures to interpret and implement the federal organic standards.
- 23 Adequate staffing must be provided to enable the NOSB to fulfill its
- 24 obligation to organic producers;
- 25 x. Implementing and enforcing the organic livestock and poultry
- 26 production standards, that are uniform and account for feeding and
- 27 animal health care and welfare practices for continuous or transitional
- 28 organic management;
- 29 xi. Prohibiting genetically modified organisms, irradiation, and the use of
- 30 biosolids and other industrial waste products that contains heavy metals
- 31 and other contaminants as part of an organic production system;

- xii. Protecting organic producers from chemical and/or genetic pollution and providing reasonable redress for any damage caused by drift;
- xiii. USDA negotiating trade arrangements to eliminate the need for NOP-certified U.S. farmers to certify through multiple international agencies;
- xiv. The continued development of risk management tools for organic-certified crops (*also see Article I.F.2. – Crop and Livestock Insurance and Article XI.B.1. – Public Research*);
- xv. Requiring increased monitoring and testing of organic products originating outside the United States to ensure those products comply with USDA organic standards;
- xvi. An emergency pest treatment, by removing out of certification the area to be treated while not losing certification in the process;
- xvii. Continue requiring that all replacement animals on certified organic farms be organic in origin, without exception. Replacement animals organic in origin should be defined as animals that have been raised as organic at least from the last third of gestation; and
- xviii. Strictly prohibiting transitioning certified animals in and out of organic production.

We oppose the use of food products and additives derived from genetically modified or altered organisms in certified organic products.

11. PLANT BREEDING

We support the modification of the Plant Variety Protection Act of 1994 regarding royalty fees, taking into consideration a reasonable period of time for specific commodities, and based on scientific methods.

We support immunity from legal action for grain handlers from consequences of the Plant Variety Protection Act when handling grain without a fee.

We support precision breeding innovations that do not move genetic material from one species to another.

12. PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES

We support:

- i. Enhancing and diversifying the genome and plant genetic resources pools;

- 1 ii. Recognizing farmers' contributions to the development and conservation
- 2 of plant genetic resources by protecting farmers' rights, including the
- 3 right to save seed;
- 4 iii. Keeping public research and research results in the public domain and
- 5 protected from acquisition by corporations or other private entities
- 6 attempting to develop their own products derived from public research
- 7 genetic pools;
- 8 iv. Legislation exempting farmers and ranchers from payment of royalties
- 9 on offspring of patented plants and plant genetic resources;
- 10 v. The rights of farmers and breeders to save seeds from all plant varieties
- 11 and cultivars developed with public funds; and
- 12 vi. Establishing and maintaining foundation seed banks.

13 **13. ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES**

14 We support:

- 15 i. The right of farmers to breed animals on their own farm without
- 16 restriction;
- 17 ii. Legislation exempting farmers and ranchers from payment of
- 18 royalties on offspring of patented animals and animal genetic
- 19 resources; and
- 20 iii. The rights of farmers, ranchers, and breeders to share and improve
- 21 animal breeds and genetic resources developed with public funds.

22 **14. FEDERAL AGENCY HEADQUARTERS**

23 We oppose the moving of any federal agency headquarters out of Washington,

24 DC, without the consent of Congress.

ARTICLE II – FAMILY FARMERS AND TECHNOLOGY

With the continued development of technology, we as an organization are invested in agriculture and excited about these opportunities. Technology will offer farmers, ranchers, and fishers many advantages but there are possible risks that need to be considered.

A. BIOTECHNOLOGY

The rights of both genetically modified organism (GMO) producers and non-GMO producers should be respected as appropriate regulatory agencies continue to research and evaluate GMO concerns. All producers should have the right to accurately advertise, label and promote products.

We respect all nations' sovereignty and food policies and thus urge open dialogue, cooperation and understanding in trade negotiations relating to biotechnology.

We support:

1. The release of new GMO traits after issues of cross-pollination, liability, commodity and seed stock segregation and market acceptance are objectively addressed and fairly resolved for the protection of all producers and consumers. While biotech traits are under patent, the patent holder should be prepared to indemnify its trait users against financial burdens caused by claims;
2. Research conducted in an environmentally secure facility being exempt from the above requirements. Research conducted in open field production should be subject to mandatory public disclosure of persons or entities initiating the research, location of test sites, specific species and traits involved, and the characteristics of the intended resultant genetically modified plant to be created;
3. Legislation to prohibit the patenting of heritage seed and animal and biological genetics;
4. Legislation to prohibit the release of terminator seed technology;
5. The right of farmers to plant seed derived from proprietary organisms on their own land;
6. New products involving GMOs being certified as safe by the FDA in testing done independently of the patent holder, before being allowed on the

1 market. Such testing is to be done at the expense of the specific patent
2 holders seeking to market such products;

- 3 7. Legislation requiring that patent holders or owners of GMO technology be
4 held strictly liable for damages cause by genetic trespass including safety,
5 health, economic, and environmental effects. Farmers are not to be held
6 liable for food safety, human health or environmental problems, including
7 cross-pollination, related to the use of GMOs as long as generally accepted
8 crop production practices are followed;
- 9 8. Congressional action to regulate the biotech industry's technology
10 agreements. Farmers should not have to sign away their fundamental rights,
11 including but not limited to a jury of their peers in court, in exchange for the
12 so-called "privilege" of growing biotech crops. Grievances should be settled
13 in the home state of the farmer, not the state of the biotech corporation;
- 14 9. Any damages caused to farmers through lower prices, lost markets, or
15 contamination shall be fully reimbursed to farmers, including legal fees, by
16 the company producing the genetically modified product;
- 17 10. All data used in the analysis of the health and environmental effects of GMOs
18 being public record, and that criminal penalties be established for the willful
19 withholding or altering of such data;
- 20 11. Prohibiting government regulatory agencies from licensing genetically
21 modified products that are not acceptable for both human consumption and
22 animal feed;
- 23 12. USDA and FDA improving oversight and regulation of pharma crops. NFU
24 does not endorse or support pharma farming based on economic,
25 environmental, food safety, and liability risks to producers and consumers;
- 26 13. Requiring governmental regulatory agencies and input suppliers to ensure
27 farmers are informed of all potential market risks and segregation
28 requirements associated with planting any licensed genetically modified
29 crop;
- 30 14. Requiring USDA to further investigate and research the effects of GMO feeds
31 on livestock;

15. Government regulatory agencies considering domestic and foreign consumer acceptance of the product when licensing;
16. Requiring all GMO seed to be clearly labeled with the following information:
 - a. Markets (foreign or domestic) where the product is not accepted; and
 - b. All planting restrictions.
17. Development of a verification system and a storage, transportation and marketing plan to aid farmers with non-GMO grains;
18. Identity-preserved systems and insist they receive protection from cross-contamination;
19. The development and implementation of patent rules, legislation (i.e., the Hatch-Waxman Act for pharmaceuticals) or regulations, which promote and maintain free market competition for generics production;
20. Prohibiting the sale of seed for pesticide resistant crops if the pesticides have not received regulatory approval; and
21. Efforts to increase USDA funding devoted to public plant and animal breeding using classical/conventional breeding techniques, to provide farmers with seeds and breeds that are locally and regionally adapted to their soils and farming systems, and to address changing climates and consumer demand.

B. AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY

We support:

1. The Nebraska Tractor Test Laboratory, the only U.S.-approved Organization for Economic Cooperation Development laboratory and the unbiased, third-party testing information that it provides at little or no cost to U.S. farmers so they can make informed buying decisions;
2. The first-sale doctrine, whereby an individual who knowingly purchases a copyrighted work from the copyright holder receives the right to sell, display, or otherwise dispose of that particular copy and protections not otherwise available for licensees;

3. Fair Repair and Right to Repair legislation that would allow farmers and independent mechanics access to diagnostic software, information, and other tools to repair modern equipment; and
4. The development of a universal diagnostic system for agricultural equipment similar to OBD2.

C. INFORMATION COLLECTION AND PROTECTION

Agricultural data collected by organizations, companies, educational institutions, and other entities should not be used, monetized, or distributed without the permission of producers from whom the data is gathered, to:

1. Ensure data collected remains the property of the producer;
2. Protect privacy;
3. Avoid consolidation of market power;
4. Maintain competition; and
5. Prevent manipulating markets.

We support:

1. Policies that create clear terms within data license agreements and standardized data protection practices between agriculture technology providers and agricultural producers;
2. Strong interoperability and portability rights and owner access on a real-time basis; and
3. Federal auditing procedures to ensure ethical and responsible access and use of agricultural producers' data.

We oppose being required by companies and other entities that sell data-generating products or tools, to agree to authorize others to capture, use, share, and/or sell the data generated on our farms and ranches with those products or tools, in exchange for complete access to or use of those products or tools.

We urge federal regulatory agencies to develop and enforce non-compliance fines for agriculture technology providers and other penalties.

D. UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLES (DRONES)

We support:

1. The use of unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) for agricultural purposes, only after landowner or land operator approval; and

1 2. Opening the National Airspace System to allow drones for agricultural
2 purposes.

3 We oppose the use of drones for covert surveillance of agricultural operations.

4 **E. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

5 We support the responsible design, development, and deployment of Artificial
6 Intelligence (AI) technologies that take into consideration the ethical, environmental,
7 and societal impacts of these tools, based on the fundamental principles of
8 transparency, sustainability, and equity.

1 **ARTICLE III – AGRICULTURE COMPETITION AND CONCENTRATION**

2 Inadequate market competition is one of the most pressing issues facing producers
3 across the country. As evidenced by the sharp decline in the number of family farms in
4 the past decade and the increasing trend toward horizontal and vertical concentration
5 in the agriculture and food sector, independent producers cannot succeed in the
6 absence of protection from unfair, anti-competitive practices. Competitive provisions
7 should be established that ensure fairness, transparency, protection, and bargaining
8 rights for producers, and restore and enhance competition for agricultural markets.

9 Farmers are experiencing the effects of consolidation at every stage of the process.
10 Concentration in the input, transportation, and grain export sectors has occurred at a
11 rapid pace in recent years. For example, in 2015, the four largest firms controlled 85
12 percent of the corn seed market, and 76 percent of the soybean seed market. In 2017,
13 the four largest global pesticide firms controlled 84 percent of the market. Additionally,
14 there are only seven Class 1 railroads remaining in the United States.

15 Packers have always had the ability in most states to own animals for their
16 company's personal use when the spot/open market for live animals from independent
17 producers was higher than they wanted to pay. By slaughtering their own animals for
18 days and even up to weeks, the supply of livestock from independent producers would
19 escalate, causing the price on the spot/open market to drop. Additionally, the
20 meatpacking industry is heavily concentrated; the top four packers in 2019 controlled
21 approximately 85 percent of cattle, 67 percent of hogs, 53 percent of broilers, and 55
22 percent of turkeys. Economists state any concentrated market power over 40 to 60
23 percent would demonstrate a lack of competition in commerce within the respective
24 industry.

25 Farmers are often incorrectly blamed for rising food and fiber prices. Retail prices
26 are more often determined by forces outside the control of farmers, ranchers, and
27 fishers. We support efforts to increase the farmer's share of the consumer's dollar.

28 **A. COMPETITION AND ANTITRUST**

29 Consolidation and anti-competitive action throughout every industry sets
30 precedent that opens the door for continuing consolidation in agriculture. We support
31 stricter anti-trust enforcement and merger standards across all industries. Specifically,

1 we support the following initiatives to achieve true competition for family farmers in
2 the marketplace:

- 3 1. Implementation of a temporary moratorium on large agricultural mergers to
4 provide Congress with time to review and strengthen current laws as
5 appropriate;
- 6 2. Stringent reviews for any proposed merger or acquisition of large
7 agribusiness, food and beverage manufacturing, distribution, and grocery
8 retail companies;
- 9 3. Requiring USDA to collect and publish concentration information;
- 10 4. Clarification of the Packers and Stockyards Act to allow individual producers
11 to seek recourse for abuse of market power without having to prove
12 competitive injury to the entire marketplace;
- 13 5. Requiring the Justice Department (DOJ), Federal Trade Commission (FTC),
14 and the Surface Transportation Board (STB) where applicable to require
15 firms to submit information on joint ventures and alliances between firms
16 above a certain size. In many cases, firms that are participating in joint
17 venture arrangements behave just like firms that have merged and should be
18 subject to the same level of antitrust scrutiny as mergers. The disclosure
19 requirement should be set at a threshold sufficient to include firms that
20 account for a significant percentage of market share at a regional level;
- 21 6. Requiring the DOJ, FTC, or STB to publicly disclose why a merger subject to
22 antitrust review is approved;
- 23 7. Expanding the role of USDA to initiate and/or participate in the review of
24 proposed mergers in the agricultural sector;
- 25 8. Requiring economic and environmental impact statements detailing the
26 impact of a proposed merger on farmers, ranchers, and consumers, including
27 in rural areas, prior to approval;
- 28 9. Establishing an Office of Special Counsel on Competition within USDA to
29 streamline and increase the effectiveness of USDA investigation and
30 enforcement of competition laws;

10. Establishing a level of concentration that triggers a presumption of a violation of antitrust law to make it easier for the DOJ, FTC, or STB to prevent high levels of concentration;
11. The right of producers to hold retailers, distributors, and manufacturers responsible for price gouging;
12. Prohibiting slotting fees that provide windfall profits to retailers and create a barrier for new firms and products;
13. A target price program on a limited volume of production as automatic compensation for livestock producers when a lack of antitrust enforcement or unfair imports damage their markets;
14. Congress repealing statutory provisions that exempt railroads from the antitrust injunctive actions, as well as the judicially developed Keogh doctrine that limits antitrust damage remedies;
15. Supporting state anti-corporate and contract producer protection legislation;
16. Providing strong protection to employees that report non-competitive practices;
17. The reinstatement of the Grain Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) as an independent agency;
18. The Department of Justice (DOJ) blocking any merger, sale, or acquisition that will undermine U.S. food security, safety, and family farming interests;
19. Anti-trust legislation that is enforced to control monopolistic concentration in energy production and distribution, and investigation of large corporate interests that control our current energy sources;
20. Agency recognition of the upstream effects of mergers and anti-competitive behavior on farmers and farm labor; and
21. Enforcement of antitrust laws in the case of grocery retail mergers.

B. LIVESTOCK MARKET REFORM

We support the following initiatives to reduce livestock market concentration and enhance competition:

1. Restriction of all forms of direct and indirect ownership or control of agricultural products by agribusinesses, including the prohibition of ownership, control and feeding of livestock by packing companies;

2. Encouraging development of farmer-owned cooperatives for marketing and processing;
3. Placing restrictions on the percentage of captive supply and that firm-bid pricing be established in forward contracts;
4. Making permanent the mandatory price reporting law;
5. Efforts to increase transparency of mandatory price reporting information, including but not limited to:
 - i. Eliminating or lowering the kill capacity reporting exemption;
 - ii. Regular reporting after the fact, even when a proprietary exemption precludes price and volume reporting on a daily basis; and
 - iii. Enhancing the reported date to be user friendly.
6. Protecting livestock producers from unfair competition and monopolistic practices by strengthening the definition of the Packers and Stockyards Act. All livestock producers should have equal access to markets that do not discriminate against family-farm livestock producers;
7. Enacting legislation that clearly defines and prohibits volume-based price discrimination in livestock markets; and
8. Legislation to require packers to purchase fifty percent of cattle from the cash market. To be considered a 'cash sale' the packer must slaughter the animal within 14 days of the purchase.

C. POULTRY MARKET REFORM

We support enacting legislation to reinstate USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) and task it with enforcement over poultry. We also recommend for the protection of poultry growers:

1. Extension of the protection of the Packers and Stockyards Act to producers who grow and care for any type of poultry and poultry products, as defined by USDA;
2. Modifications to regulations under the Packers and Stockyards Act that govern integrator fair-trade practices and strengthen the enforcement mechanisms therein, including, but not limited to, regulations to:
 - i. Prohibit companies from retaliating against producers for speaking out about problems in the industry or about their contracts, or for

- 1 attempting to organize other producers to negotiate as a group for
2 better contract terms;
- 3 ii. Prohibit companies from requiring producers to make unnecessary
4 upgrades to their facilities unless the company pays for the costs of
5 those upgrades;
- 6 iii. Reform the system used to pay producer, i.e., the ranking system, to
7 assure that producers are not penalized for inputs controlled by the
8 company, and that there is full transparency in the factors used to
9 calculate the producers' payment;
- 10 iv. Prohibit companies from cancelling a producer's contract or reducing
11 the number of livestock units placed on their farm based solely on the
12 failure of the producer to make equipment changes, so long as
13 existing equipment is in good working order; and
- 14 v. Require the production contracts be long enough in term to allow
15 producers to recoup their investments.
- 16 3. Enactment of state legislation which better defines contract production for
17 growing arrangements; and
- 18 4. Requiring integrators to provide an accurate cash-flow analysis to new
19 poultry contract operations.

20 **D. PRODUCTION CONTRACTING**

21 Current law falls short of ensuring fairness and protection for producers under
22 contract. We support the following initiatives/legislation to enhance contract producer
23 protection:

- 24 1. Strengthening the Agricultural Fair Practices Act to provide improved
25 protection for contract producers;
- 26 2. Implementation of all GIPSA provisions including disclosure of contract
27 clauses for farmers who contract, the right to discuss the contract with their
28 lawyer, financial advisor, or family member;
- 29 3. Requiring contracts and contract rights to be written in plain language and
30 disclose risks to producers;
- 31 4. Providing contract producers three days to review and cancel production
32 contracts;

- 1 5. Providing producers with a first-priority lien for payments due under
- 2 contracts;
- 3 6. Protecting producers from contract termination or price reduction because
- 4 of:
- 5 i. Retaliation purposes,
- 6 ii. Inadequate or faulty inputs/services provided by contractor, and
- 7 iii. Denying opportunity to remediate problems related to production
- 8 specifications;
- 9 7. Making it an unfair practice for processors to retaliate or discriminate
- 10 against producers who exercise rights under the proposed legislation;
- 11 8. Authorizing producer bargaining to encourage contract producers to form
- 12 collective bargaining units to negotiate with integrators;
- 13 9. Prohibiting the use of mandatory arbitration clauses in livestock and poultry
- 14 contracts to assure that farmers have adequate access to justice in the event
- 15 of fraud, misrepresentation, breach of contract or other contract disputes
- 16 with a processor or integrator. Arbitration should be a voluntary mechanism
- 17 for dispute resolution agreed to by both parties after a dispute arises;
- 18 10. Prohibiting contracts involving ag producers from containing language that
- 19 prohibits a trial by jury; and
- 20 11. Publicizing and widely distributing educational materials regarding the
- 21 rights of contract producers.

1 **ARTICLE IV – INTERNATIONAL TRADE, COOPERATION, AND THE FAMILY FARM**

2 International trade agreements, when properly constructed, are useful vehicles that
3 lessen world trade tensions and increase development opportunities and economic
4 growth. Further, the international trading framework under the World Trade
5 Organization (WTO) provides a forum for working with allies to address disputes, such
6 as those with China. Unilateral actions, however, run the risk of inflicting long-term
7 damage to our relationships with trading partners, making it harder to re-establish
8 markets and expand into new ones.

9 NFU urges the federal government to build coalitions of our trading partners to
10 create free and fair agreements to properly address conflicts with countries that trade
11 unfairly, to resolve trade issues that affect family farmers, and to ensure the WTO can
12 act as a neutral arbiter in trade.

13 NFU further urges the federal government to create a supply-based program for
14 agricultural products to provide economic stability for domestic producers when unfair
15 trade actions occur.

16 Future trade agreements must be designed to ensure fair market returns for
17 producers and production of safe, quality food for consumers. Thus, future trade
18 agreements must not be limited to regulating domestic support levels, export subsidies,
19 and market access. Rather, every future trade agreement must address differences in
20 labor standards, environmental standards, health standards, and the trade-distorting
21 effect of currency manipulation and cartelization of agriculture markets.

22 The measure of the success of a trade agreement must be its benefit to U.S.
23 agriculture and specifically of its producers' net income. Vague promises of "market
24 access" to foreign markets do not offset opening our borders for even larger amounts of
25 foreign-produced goods to enter our markets. Market access does not equal market
26 share. NFU supports the federal government conducting a formal and thorough analysis
27 of current agricultural trade agreements to determine their success at meeting their
28 promised goals before any new trade agreements are negotiated or proposed.

29 Companies who repeatedly send banned products to countries with specified
30 requirements and standards for imports should be held liable for market losses by
31 producers resulting from the shipment.

1 Our trade negotiators need to recognize that food security is non-negotiable for
2 many trading partners, and that they will never agree to give us full market access.

3 **A. AGRICULTURAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS**

4 Fair trade, not free trade, holds the potential to increase family farm profitability
5 and U.S. food security, but trade by itself is only one tool. In creating a fair agricultural
6 trade environment, we support the inclusion of the following goals, objectives, and
7 provisions in U.S. trade policy and in international trade negotiations and agreements
8 that:

- 9 1. Require all countries to meet health, environmental, food sovereignty,
10 working conditions, and labor rights standards equal to those of producers
11 in the United States;
- 12 2. Allow U.S. producers the right to distinguish their products from those of
13 other countries. U.S. products should not be categorized just as North
14 American products;
- 15 3. Call for a formal and thorough analysis of current agricultural trade
16 agreements to determine their success at meeting their stated goals before
17 any new bilateral or regional trade agreements are negotiated or approved;
- 18 4. Address domestic food safety, security, and inadequate economic returns to
19 producers resulting from market failure, lack of market competition, and an
20 imbalance in supply and demand;
- 21 5. Ensure global food security and safety, including the elimination of unilateral
22 sanctions on agricultural and pharmaceutical products;
- 23 6. Enhance producer returns, economic development, and individual standards
24 of living;
- 25 7. Foster the economic and resource sustainability and efficiency of food
26 production and distribution systems;
- 27 8. Achieve an equitable distribution and balance of the costs/benefits of
28 agricultural trade among all participants, including producers and
29 consumers;
- 30 9. Acknowledge and accommodate the multi-functionality of agriculture,
31 including non-economic considerations of value to producers and
32 consumers;

- 1 10. Diminish poverty and hunger;
- 2 11. Do not undermine U.S. laws, jurisdiction or sovereignty of a country and its
- 3 political subdivisions;
- 4 12. Are negotiated and enacted through a transparent democratic process;
- 5 13. Provide consumers with an adequate, high-quality, safe, and affordable
- 6 supply;
- 7 14. Coordinate efforts to reduce dumping, balance supply and demand, share
- 8 responsibility to provide nutrition assistance and maintain an optimal level
- 9 of buffer stocks for food security;
- 10 15. Allow the United States to impose trade remedies against nations using
- 11 currency manipulation to gain an unfair trade advantage;
- 12 16. Have a speedy and fair method of resolving disputes among trading
- 13 partners;
- 14 17. Advocate for the reform of the WTO adjudication process so that cases are
- 15 decided by an independent and unbiased judiciary;
- 16 18. Allow flexibility for individual nations to provide economic safety net
- 17 programs and address unforeseen production, market, and trade
- 18 circumstances;
- 19 19. Encourage a balance of increased and transparent market competition, limits
- 20 on the concentration of market power and coordinated public competition
- 21 policy to ensure the efficient and appropriate allocation of resources within
- 22 all agricultural sectors;
- 23 20. Maximize the opportunity for individual and cooperative participation in all
- 24 segments of agriculture;
- 25 21. Create an effective, efficient, timely and transparent implementation,
- 26 compliance, and dispute resolution process;
- 27 22. Prevent further conversion of rainforests to production agriculture;
- 28 23. Publish meaningful, current, and standardized reports on imports of all
- 29 agricultural products, quantities and types, and a USDA report on the impact
- 30 of the WTO on agricultural producers;
- 31 24. Establish tariffs on foreign imports of all dairy ingredients that displace
- 32 domestically produced milk usage including animal feed ingredients;

- 1 25. Use GSM-102 export credit guarantees;
- 2 26. Further utilize the Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market
- 3 Development (FMD) program;
- 4 27. Compensation payments to farmers in an amount that covers farmers'
- 5 market losses and their lost income resulting from embargoes and tariffs on
- 6 farm commodities;
- 7 28. Eliminate export subsidies in a uniform, worldwide manner;
- 8 29. Increase transparency and market disciplines of state trading enterprises;
- 9 30. Increase equity and balance in agricultural tariff and tariff rate quota
- 10 regimes;
- 11 31. Develop an improved and more inclusive methodology for measuring the
- 12 level and impact of domestic support programs, including green box
- 13 supports and effective subsidies conveyed through monetary policy and
- 14 labor and environmental regulation;
- 15 32. Allow countries to address the circumvention of tariffs and tariff rate quotas
- 16 by trading partners;
- 17 33. Provide consumer information (labeling) on agricultural products to address
- 18 food safety concerns and enhance market access;
- 19 34. Allow for national flexibility in the design and implementation of domestic
- 20 support programs within reasonable negotiated limits such as the Trade
- 21 Adjustment Assistance program;
- 22 35. Cooperatively develop, implement and enforce competition policies;
- 23 36. Utilize end-use certificates to monitor the flow of all agricultural imports;
- 24 37. Allow countries to restrict the import of agricultural commodities that are
- 25 contaminated or infected with disease or other toxic or noxious organisms
- 26 that threaten domestic production and/or food safety; and
- 27 38. Recognize the United Nations' International Treaty for Plant Genetic
- 28 Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA).

29 We oppose:

- 30 1. Elimination of tariffs, tariff rate quotas and domestic trade remedies utilized
- 31 to counter the effects of dumping and other unfair trade practices, including

1 the use of monetary, labor, and environmental regulations that create
2 competitive trade advantages;

- 3 2. Elimination of “credit” for supply management programs (WTO blue box);
- 4 3. Requirements that domestic support programs be de-coupled;
- 5 4. Importation of agricultural products from countries that do not grow or
6 produce such products;
- 7 5. The use of embargoes and tariffs on farm commodities to further
8 international trade or international relations objectives that are not directly
9 related to the success of family farmers in the United States;
- 10 6. The Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS); and
- 11 7. Trade policies that increase market concentration or that directly benefit
12 dominant firms.

13 **B. TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY (FAST-TRACK)**

14 We support the immediate repeal of Trade Promotion Authority (TPA).

15 We oppose:

- 16 1. Fast-track negotiating authority for the president; and
- 17 2. The fast-track system of ratification of trade agreements in which the entire
18 trade package must be approved without amendment or rejected in total by
19 Congress.

20 Congress should have full opportunity to review and amend provisions of a trade
21 agreement, consistent with the authority and power endowed by the U.S. Constitution.
22 Because agriculture is only one area considered in the trade agreement negotiation,
23 fast-track could easily sweep agricultural concerns aside.

24 **C. FAIR AND TRANSPARENT TRADE PRACTICES**

25 U.S. products entering international trade are subject to various potential
26 exclusionary mechanisms, impediments, and manipulations. These barriers to fair trade
27 include tariffs, unnecessary phytosanitary requirements, arbitrarily adjusted exchange
28 rates, prejudicially applied border and value-added taxes, as well as selectively applied
29 local taxes and regulations specifically designed to prevent fair and equitable treatment
30 of our products. These unfair trade practices are a significant economic burden on
31 domestic producers. Therefore, we support:

- 32 1. Anti-dumping petitions on behalf of all U.S. producers;

2. Creation and implementation of a “green tariff” to be imposed on all imported goods and services produced or created under less restricting environmental constraints than those originating from U.S. sources;
3. Conducting adequate supply chain audits to identify sources of, and seek solutions to, uncompetitive practices that influence price to the final consumer;
4. Re-establishment of the Byrd Amendment;
5. Removing “digital trade” provisions that might undermine the Right to Repair from existing and proposed international trade agreements;
6. The U.S. Trade Representative investigating countries for revocation of Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) benefits from countries that may no longer qualify for programming and supporting the U.S. Congress looking into the way that other countries subsidize agriculture and its detrimental effects on U.S. farmers; and
7. That the power to levy tariffs should rest with the U.S. Congress, except in times of emergency. When emergency tariffs are put in place by an Administration, within 60 days of their enactment Congress should review and vote on whether the tariffs should stay in place.

D. HEALTH AND INSPECTION STANDARDS FOR FOOD AND FIBER IMPORTS

We believe that food imports pose a much greater food safety threat to American consumers than domestic food. Only a minimal amount of food imports are physically inspected, and of those which are inspected, many are rejected for reasons ranging from mislabeling of residues to pesticides banned for use in this country.

We support:

1. Increased funding and number of inspectors for the Agriculture Quarantine Inspections Program and transfer inspectors back to USDA from Department of Homeland Security (DHS);
2. Prohibiting the export of chemicals not registered for food and fiber uses in the United States for food and fiber uses in other countries;
3. Strict monitoring of imports to prevent importation of residues of chemicals banned in the United States for food and fiber;

4. All imported foods that do not meet USDA or FDA standards should not be allowed into the United States;
5. Nuclear magnetic resonance testing on all imported products that are labeled as honey to ensure the purity of the honey;
6. Processing facilities for such imported products should be inspected at least annually. Food products from that facility should be labeled as such, even if the product originated in the U.S.;
7. Requiring inspection be continuous and thorough, not just an occasional, minor sampling. Products that fail inspection should be condemned and not allowed a second opportunity to enter our country;
8. Expenses for all inspections coming from fees on the imported products paid by the exporter at the point of origin;
9. Implementing increased USDA, FDA, and customs inspection and regulation of casein, milk derivatives and milk adhesives imported for food use; and
10. Increased funding, monitoring, and inspections to better protect the domestic organic market from fraudulent imported agricultural products.

E. CHINA TRADE

We support annual reviews of the impact of the Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) for China to document its effect on U.S. farmers. Such reviews should also address whether China:

1. Ratifies and enforces all pending United Nations covenants on human rights;
2. Develops a history of complying with international trade agreements;
3. Enacts and enforces rules that protect individual rights, establishes appropriate environmental standards, and fosters fair trade; and
4. Enacts and enforces food and product safety standards equal to those required of producers in the United States.

We oppose trade provisions that pit the agricultural sector against the industrial or manufacturing sectors (*also see Article IV.A. – Agricultural Trade Negotiations*).

F. INTERNATIONAL FOOD ASSISTANCE

Everyone should have the right to have access to safe and nutritional food. We support the following provisions to enhance international food assistance:

1. Funding for food aid programs be used to purchase U.S.-produced food when in-country local food is unavailable;
2. Food and developmental aid for those here and abroad who are poor, and certainly for those endangered by famine, to assure their survival and well-being;
3. Providing available means and agencies to supply the necessary food;
4. Emphasizing distribution of food once it reaches recipients' country;
5. Providing donations of high-quality commodities instead of using poverty-stricken nations as a dumping ground for poor-quality grains;
6. Adequate funding of the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition program;
7. Continued work with CARE and other hunger and agricultural organizations to support economic development opportunities for people in less-developed countries;
8. Forfeited grain from Non-recourse Marketing Assistance Loans be reverted to the USDA to be used for overseas relief packages to third world countries;
9. Development of a world food/grain reserve that is structured as to not depress prices or discourage food production in developing countries; and
10. Continued support of P.L. 480 as long as food aid is not used for political objectives.

We oppose the monetization of U.S. food aid to purchase food commodities for developing countries when adequate supplies of U.S.-produced foods are available.

G. WORLD FARMERS ORGANIZATION (WFO)

As a founding member of the World Farmers Organization (WFO), we believe that WFO plays a vital role in providing the world's farmers with a forum in which to exchange ideas and information, not only about farming techniques, but policies that affect farmers' economic well-being and daily lives.

We urge WFO to be an active advocate for the world's farmers.

H. FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION

We support the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations.

I. POLICIES TOWARD INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND DEVELOPING NATIONS

We support:

1. The use of the United States' economic strength, in cooperation with our private sector and other nations, to promote the economic, social, and human development of less-developed nations;
2. Ending the embargo and establishing fair trade relations with Cuba;
3. Respecting the food sovereignty of developing countries by not undercutting the price of local staples;
4. The adequate compensation of indigenous peoples for the consumption of their resources; and
5. The protection of other countries, nations, and indigenous peoples' domestic food security policies, indigenous seed stock, foods, natural resources, and cultural practices.

We oppose:

1. The dumping of agricultural products in developing countries which puts local farmers out of business and destabilizes local economies;
2. The forced removal of indigenous peoples from their traditional homelands; and
3. The exploitation of developing countries through forcing them to abandon their own domestic food security policies, indigenous seed stocks, foods, and cultural practices.

J. FARMERS AND FARM YOUTH EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

Since a better understanding of agriculture and trade can help promote a more peaceful and prosperous world, we believe that educational exchange programs including farmers, farm leaders, and farm youth should be encouraged.

K. OWNERSHIP OF FARMLAND BY INSTITUTIONAL INVESTORS IN ALL COUNTRIES

National Farmers Union opposes the investment in and ownership of forest lands, range, and arable lands in all countries by institutional investors (corporations, commercial and investment banks, pension funds, life insurance companies, endowments, high net-worth individuals, sovereign wealth funds, and similar types of entities). These lands should primarily be owned, managed, and farmed by domestic family farmers in each country.

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10. Mandatory funding and expansion of the Certified Agriculture Mediation Program (CAMP), and extension of the program authorizing matching grants to states with qualified mediation programs;
11. Maintaining Chapter 12 as part of permanent bankruptcy law, reforming the filing process and encouraging educational efforts to farmers about their rights under Chapter 12;
12. Tax amnesty for taxes imposed on family-sized farms and ranch operators who face tax liabilities after restructuring or forced sales; protecting the interests and rights of borrowers, lenders, and taxpayers through the proper and consistent implementation of existing legislation; prohibiting a debtor to reorganize into a larger-than-family-farm-size unit; and encouraging all options be made available for Farm Service Agency (FSA) borrowers with shared appreciation agreements, due to artificially inflated land values;
13. Special attention given to the credit needs of surviving spouses of farmers who want to continue farming; and
14. Requiring banks, credit unions, and other financial institutions to publish and identify, independently of interest rate, any additional discounts, whether additional points or credit rate decrease or increase based on other business with the institution, including crop insurance.

A. FARM SERVICE AGENCY (FSA) CREDIT PROGRAMS

We support:

1. Guaranteed loans and direct lending;
2. Emphasizing adequate funding for direct-lending programs for farm ownership and operating expenses to beginning and socially disadvantaged and/or historically underserved family farmers (*also see Article I.A.6. – Beginning Farmers and Ranchers*);
3. Increasing the maximum loan amounts to reflect land values and provide opportunities for additional family farmers;
4. A consistent, sufficient funding mechanism ensuring loan funding allocations are available to all approved FSA loans in a timely fashion;
5. Increasing emergency funding so that it is available on a timely basis;

6. Encouraging the secretary of agriculture to seek the necessary authority to increase the maximum level of federal emergency farm operating loans that may be made available to producers who have suffered multiple years of weather-related disasters;
7. Educating borrowers on sound farm management principles to reduce foreclosure rates. Borrower training should be provided by existing programs, including Farm Business Management and Cooperative Extension;
8. Permitting the guarantee of loans for stock purchases in the farmer-owned, value-added cooperative, as long as the cooperative can demonstrate its feasibility;
9. Allowing producers who have used debt restructuring to be eligible for all federal loans, including FSA and emergency loans;
10. Processing applications for credit and appeals in a timely manner to meet production demands;
11. Not garnishing federal farm program payments to pay delinquent farm credit payments except in cases of delinquency exceeding 3 years without loan restructuring;
12. Streamlining and digitizing loan programs and the appeals process;
13. Implementing debt restructuring, including debt forgiveness, as equitably as possible and allowing additional restructuring to be considered;
14. Continuing to enable the USDA National Appeals Division (NAD) to be an independent and fair forum for agricultural producers;
15. Increasing consistency and education on the county and state appeals process and FSA servicing responsibilities to the borrower;
16. Prohibiting the use of private collection agencies and offsets of income tax refunds to recover outstanding debt from borrowers who voluntarily liquidate their assets;
17. Elimination of term limits for non-delinquent borrowers;
18. Prohibiting the imposition of long-term or permanent wildlife or conservation easements on land acquired by FSA foreclosures;
19. The nullification of government-enacted conservation easements that were created after the land was acquired by FSA foreclosures;

20. Establishing a revolving loan pool for all FSA loans to ensure loan repayment is credited to the FSA budget;
21. Providing FSA loans only to family farm operations who cannot obtain financing elsewhere; and
22. All FSA county offices excluding retirement savings smaller than \$500,000 from review and calculation of loan approval, especially for beginning and underserved farmers and ranchers.

B. FARM CREDIT SYSTEM

The Farm Credit System (FCS) should follow its original purpose – keeping the family farmer on the land – by actively providing credit to all family farms within their district, regardless of size, and maintaining farmer-elected control of FCS boards.

We support:

1. Prohibiting differential interest rates for FCS member-borrowers because they are contrary to cooperative principles;
2. An investigation of the discriminatory effects of differential interest rates;
3. Local control and participation of all FCS associations and banks while remaining on the forefront of good governance practices to keep the system viable for producers in the future;
4. All FCS directors, officers, and bondholders to take the lead in advocating improved farm income as the basic means of repaying farm debt and securing the FCS;
5. FCS enforcement of regulations governing the borrowers' rights sections of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1987, including the use of cease-and-desist powers when necessary;
6. Congress giving past and present FCS borrowers the right to pursue litigation against FCS institutions they have done business with;
7. FCS continuing to be the primary source for financial services for farmer cooperatives and their associated businesses. We call upon member cooperatives to ensure that these institutions remain farmer-controlled;
8. Preventing FCS institutions from being sold to outside entities, thereby exiting the system. The ability to exit the system negates the benefits of

farmer control and makes it difficult to replace the services mandated by the Agricultural Credit Act;

9. Expanding FCS lending authority only to the extent it directly benefits family farmers, ranchers, and rural communities. Expanded lending authority must support domestic investments and operations;

10. FCS maximizing the patronage and dividend distribution to its borrower-members so they have access to the FCS capital they helped to create;

11. Full access to rural credit for farmers, ranchers, fishers, and the communities in which they live. We are particularly concerned about the lack of available credit in rural areas with high unemployment, including, but not limited to native producers on their homelands;

12. Competition in lending to allow credit options for our members;

13. Jurisdiction of the FCS remaining under the authority of the U.S. House and Senate Agriculture Committees; and

14. Farmers and ranchers given first choice to purchase any foreclosed or financially distressed farmland under FCS jurisdiction.

C. COOPERATIVE FINANCING

Cooperatives are special business entities, which are unique in nature and have unique needs. Cooperative financing institutions need to provide financial services and investment financing necessary to assist established cooperatives in re-tooling to meet changing times in the markets, and to participate in new opportunities to service rural communities and their family farmer and rancher owners.

These cooperative financing institutions need to establish a program to assist farmers and ranchers and their rural communities by providing risk capital to start new cooperative ventures. The program should also provide financial grants to new cooperatives for in-depth training of their respective board of directors.

The National Cooperative Bank is an important financial resource for rural and urban consumer cooperatives and we encourage the bank to place greater emphasis on rural lending.

1 **ARTICLE VI – FARM COOPERATIVES AND THE FAMILY FARM**

2 Farmer-owned cooperatives reduce costs of production, maintain a reliable source
3 of inputs, effectively market and process farm products, improve member livelihoods,
4 and help recreate rural communities. NFU encourages its members and organizations to
5 provide leadership in the patronage, direction, operation, and development of
6 cooperative enterprises, and in the education of members and the public as to
7 cooperative philosophy and principles and working in collaboration with other
8 cooperative sectors including consumer, food, worker, insurance, and financial co-ops
9 and credit unions.

10 **A. COOPERATIVE LAW**

11 Federal law provides a fundamental economic right to individual farmers to join in
12 cooperative associations for the purposes of pricing, processing, marketing,
13 transporting, and selling their products, and bargaining with processors and handlers
14 for prices and other terms of sale, without being subject to prosecution under antitrust
15 laws. This is a right for farmers as individuals and not the cooperatives that they
16 establish.

17 The basic cooperative authorities are set forth in the Clayton Act of 1914, the
18 Capper-Volstead Act of 1922 (allowing agricultural producer associations), the
19 Cooperative Marketing Agreement Act of 1926, the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1929,
20 the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1937, and other statutes, including those that deal
21 with the status of cooperatives under the federal tax system. These laws are vital.

22 Government policies and programs should help to better develop, protect, advance,
23 and promote farmer cooperatives' role in assembling, processing, selling, marketing,
24 and distributing farm commodities and services. We support the expansion of USDA's
25 efforts on behalf of cooperatives and call for full funding of these initiatives. We oppose
26 any attempt to revise cooperative laws, administratively or legislatively, that would
27 diminish or jeopardize the democratic nature of cooperatives, their unique governance
28 structure as member- owned and -controlled enterprises, and ability to maintain
29 financial and ethical integrity.

30 We oppose new state laws that allow supposed "cooperatives" to structure ventures
31 with non-members in ways that give the outside investor voting control of the
32 combined entity, including the Uniform Limited Cooperative Association Act statutes

1 that undermine the democratic nature of the cooperative enterprises and the interests
2 of producer, worker, and consumer members. Such legislation contradicts the basic
3 purpose of a cooperative established by 100 years of legal practice and precedent as a
4 user-owned, user-controlled entity that distributed benefit based on use rather than
5 capital invested.

6 **B. ROCHDALE PRINCIPLES**

7 We reaffirm our belief in the basic Rochdale Principles of cooperation as last
8 updated in 1996 that were designed to ensure democratic control of the business by its
9 members and that the members receive the primary benefits of their cooperative
10 enterprise, including:

11 1. Voluntary and Open Membership

- 12 a. Open membership to all who share the common bond and objective of the
13 co-op;

14 2. Democratic Member Control

- 15 a. One vote per member, regardless of the volume of business done by the
16 member, with no proxy voting;
17 b. Elimination of bloc voting;
18 c. Directors elected by active members; and
19 d. Open records access by members;

20 3. Member Economic Participation

- 21 a. Savings/earnings of the cooperative distributed back to the member-
22 users in proportion to the members' patronage volume;
23 b. Limited interest/dividends on invested capital; and
24 c. Sales at competitive prices, and trading normally conducted on a cash
25 basis;

26 4. Autonomy and Independence;

27 5. Education, Training, and Information;

- 28 a. A continuous cooperative education program to teach cooperative
29 philosophy, principles, and operation, funded by five percent of a
30 cooperative's net margin;

31 6. Cooperation among Cooperatives; and

32 7. Concern for Community;

- a. Cooperatives working for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.

C. ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES

To further the cooperative movement, we support:

1. Cooperatives returning to the original intention of Capper-Volstead, which allows cooperatives to collectively process, prepare for the market, handle, and market in interstate commerce;
2. The rights of cooperative members to organize and operate regional and interregional cooperatives (marketing agencies in common) or to merge with other cooperative associations and not be restricted by law or government regulation;
3. Exhausting all options of maintaining local control, including merger or joint ventures with a nearby cooperative, before a local co-op is absorbed by a regional cooperative;
4. Encouraging local members or nearby cooperative associations to repurchase a local facility that has been absorbed by a regional cooperative;
5. Encouraging regional boards to work with local cooperatives to help them operate for the benefit of members;
6. Requiring business entities to provide members with “due diligence” information that is timely and adequate before voting on a merger between two or more cooperatives;
7. Cooperative members giving serious consideration to the long-term consequences of selling a cooperative to private entities for short-term gains;
8. Individual Farmers Union members taking responsibility to be full participants and patrons in the cooperative movement and to build closer relationships between their farm organization and their cooperatives;
9. Encouraging cooperatives benefitting from nontraditional income in events, such as litigation, to expeditiously distribute the proceeds to all relevant parties;

10. Traditional farmer-owned cooperatives lending their experience and cooperation in building new value-added cooperatives that will enhance their local communities and increase the profitability of their farmer-owners;
11. Cooperatives working to return the cost of production and reasonable profit. In addition, they should support federal farm policy that enables producers to receive profitable farm prices;
12. Cooperatives being of sufficient size and strength to be effective in representing their farmer-members without competing with family farmers;
13. Increased funding for Rural Business Cooperative Services (RBCS) to focus its primary efforts on working directly with farmers in the organization and development of cooperatives, including providing on-the-ground services to producers such as feasibility studies and organizational assistance to farmers, as well as start-up and development grants;
14. Funding for the Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) Program; RCDG grants of up to three years should be given to centers that have previously received funding and have demonstrated success in starting businesses. Remaining funding should be made available for new centers to apply for annual grants;
15. Revisions in rules and regulations to allow loans to producers who choose to purchase stock in established agricultural processing cooperatives and new cooperatives formed for the purpose of adding value to agricultural commodities;
16. Deferral of capital gains taxes when a refining or processing facility is sold to a farmer-owned cooperative if the benefit is passed onto family farm cooperative members;
17. Strengthening the ability of rural citizens to establish new member-owned enterprises that enhance farm income and quality of life in rural America, by continuing our work with the network of cooperative development centers;
18. Focusing on a national school/training program that both identifies opportunities and trains cooperators in the formation and operation of

1 value-added cooperatives. NFU could serve as the coordinator of such a
2 project;

3 19. Membership in state Farmers Union organizations being required of all
4 Farmers Union cooperative board and company members; and

5 20. Either spouse should be able to represent the family farm in voting at
6 cooperative meetings. We encourage both spouses to become voting
7 members of cooperatives.

8 We oppose:

- 9 1. Cooperatives (except cooperative farms) engaging in domestic and foreign
10 agricultural production activities, including land ownership in direct
11 competition with agricultural producers;
- 12 2. Mergers or joint ventures between regional cooperatives and multinational
13 corporations unless such a merger or joint venture would benefit local
14 cooperative members;
- 15 3. The practice of allowing individuals, other than “at risk” producers, to serve
16 as a director in a producer cooperative. Status of such “other individuals”
17 should be limited to non-voting and advisory roles;
- 18 4. Government efforts to dictate the time and manner for returning cooperative
19 patronage earnings;
- 20 5. The use of net savings of a cooperative to be used to invest in production
21 agricultural operations by the cooperative; and
- 22 6. Cooperatives allowing a single member or entity to fill more than one board
23 seat.

24 **D. TEAMWORK OF FARMERS UNION AND COOPERATIVES**

25 The link between NFU, Farmers Union cooperatives and all other cooperatives
26 strengthens all entities. The farm-income improvement measures and strategies
27 advocated by Farmers Union deserve the interest and support of farm cooperatives
28 genuinely concerned about the well-being of their member families.

29 **E. CHS**

30 We urge CHS not to lose sight of the fundamental cooperative principles upon which
31 it was founded.

1 We oppose CHS owning farmland in the United States and other countries and
2 producing crops that will be in direct competition with farmers in the United States.

3 We also oppose:

- 4 1. Giving the CHS board of directors the flexibility to approve non-member
5 patronage arrangements; and
- 6 2. Modifying the CHS membership definition to allow non-producers the rights
7 granted to members currently.

1 **ARTICLE VII – WATER AND LAND POLICY, CONSERVATION AND THE FAMILY FARM**

2 **A. OBJECTIVES OF A COMPREHENSIVE LAND POLICY**

3 Family farmers and ranchers have historically been our best soil and water
4 conservationists when given the economic incentives and flexibility necessary to do so.
5 Our policy encourages a well-balanced, sensible environmental policy that protects the
6 public and the environment without unduly burdening family farmers through
7 excessive regulation or economic hardship and, when applicable, provide farmers and
8 ranchers with opportunities for increased income. We also recognize that the most
9 dangerous of all monopolies is the monopolization of both land and water.

10 We call on all federal and state regulatory agencies to act in accordance with the
11 above principles and use the least intrusive, economically practical, and science-based
12 methods to accomplish sound environmental quality goals, with consideration given to
13 all these factors and not any one exclusively. We support a national land policy that:

- 14 1. Recognizes multiple use values of public lands while striving for sustainable
15 use in all areas;
- 16 2. Emphasizes agriculture as the most productive use of existing high-quality
17 farmland;
- 18 3. Recognizes the right of private landowners to be compensated for
19 government land-use restrictions that amount to takings of property;
- 20 4. Recognizes the value of independently owned and operated family farms to
21 stewardship of natural resources;
- 22 5. Develops education and outreach materials for the public to achieve land use
23 goals for the benefit of future generations;
- 24 6. Encourages entry into the business of farming or ownership of agricultural
25 lands by farm families, as opposed to non-farm interests or non-family farm
26 corporations;
- 27 7. Allows states to prohibit corporate interests from circumventing corporate
28 farm laws by contracting with individual producers;
- 29 8. Strengthens and enforces state laws to protect family-owned and –operated
30 farms;
- 31 9. Prohibits concentration of farmland ownership by off-farm corporations,
32 associations, and interests. These laws must be closely monitored and

strengthened so they may continue to preserve production agriculture for family farmers;

10. Discourages the concentration of land ownership and off-farm ownership via state programs of graduated land taxes and similar disincentives or limitations;

11. Recognizes the importance of wetlands, prairies, forests, savannas, and other critical ecosystems (*also see Article VII.S.6 – Wetlands*); and

12. Respects existing farming operations and practices, especially under the pressures of urban encroachment.

B. PROHIBITION OF OWNERSHIP OF FARMLAND, COMMERCIAL FISHING PRIVILEGES AND DISCLOSURE BY FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND INVESTMENT BANKS

Foreign interests, including those acting through U.S.-registered entities (except families or individuals seeking U.S. citizenship), should be prohibited from acquiring U.S. agricultural lands, holding federal grazing allotments or commercial fishing privileges. We respect the right of other nations to put similar limitations on agricultural lands in their nations.

Foreign individuals, corporations or governments should be required to disclose to appropriate agencies their ownership of any U.S. business, financial, energy or real estate assets, in a manner comparable to procedure in the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act of 1978.

We support the establishment of a private right of action for farmers to sue foreign individuals, corporations, or governments who fail to disclose their ownership of any U.S. business, financial, energy or real estate assets.

Citizens of the United States have a right to know the extent of such ownership or control so that remedial steps may be taken.

C. LAND TITLE TRANSFER

We support:

1. Establishing a joint federal-state cooperative effort to assist beginning and socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers to acquire an economically viable family farm enterprise;
2. Establishing income tax incentives for landowners and retiring farmers who sell or lease farmland to beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers and

1 veterans, which provides for the orderly transfer of land, prior to the seller's
2 death, as part of an established estate plan;

- 3 3. Encouraging religious, educational, charitable and similar nonprofit
4 institutions that obtain farmland to ensure that such lands are operated or
5 sold in a manner which preserves and promotes family farm units and does
6 not disrupt land values with reasonable time limits being placed on holdings
7 in order to return the land to local tax rolls as quickly as possible;
- 8 4. Maintaining existing effective conservation practices when land is
9 transferred; and
- 10 5. Holding the party responsible for contamination of private land liable, after
11 environmental audits reveal conclusive scientific evidence of contamination,
12 whether they are the current or former owners. Current or new individual
13 family agricultural operators should not be held liable for contamination that
14 did not occur during their ownership.

15 **D. PUBLIC LANDS**

16 We recommend that Congress maintain its commitment to the responsible multiple
17 use of public lands. The federal land stewardship agencies should improve their land
18 management techniques on all public lands.

19 Livestock production in the 17 western public lands states is highly dependent upon
20 public land grazing and local government services. The health of wildlife habitat is
21 dependent on well-managed livestock grazing. Government actions that drastically
22 change the way livestock grazing is conducted on public lands could greatly damage the
23 economy in rural America.

24 We support:

- 25 1. The current Public Rangeland Improvement Act (PRIA) formula as a fair and
26 equitable method for determining appropriate grazing fees. Grazing fees
27 represent the dividends of stewardship of the federal land, not the value of
28 the forage on the rangeland;
- 29 2. The management of grazing on federal lands to be based on scientific data
30 and monitoring of individual allotments and encourage increased funding for
31 this research;

3. Utilization of the local Resource Advisory Council (RAC) to set standards and guidelines for grazing tailored to the local area;
4. Reinstatement of local grazing committees;
5. Public-land managers assisting public-land permittees to develop their own goals and grazing plans that would be utilized in managing their public-land grazing allotments;
6. Flexibility in grazing allotment regulations in response to drought, floods, fires, and other climatic challenges;
7. Linking the holding of grazing permits with actual ownership of grazing animals by resident family farmers and ranchers and their entities;
8. A certified mediation service for all disputes regarding grazing with the United States Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM);
9. Public-land grazing legislation to require that in disputes between public-land managers and permittees, the permittees be advised of their rights under Section 8 of the PRIA, which authorizes land-grant university staff to provide assistance and advocacy services to permittees;
10. Efforts to establish grass banks on public lands;
11. Efforts to establish and preserve plantings of heirloom seeds and native plants on public lands for the purpose of ensuring biodiversity and the protection of native flora;
12. Allowing ranchers to travel by motorized vehicles, control predatory animal populations, continue range improvements and develop water resources;
13. Requiring the federal and state governments to pay the full amount of the “in lieu of property tax” (PILT) payments on property that it owns or acquires. If full payment is not made, there should be a moratorium on any further land acquisition by the agency that fails to meet its responsibility;
14. Requiring the BLM to follow through with:
 - a. Annual surveys and management plans to control wild horse and burro populations to minimize damage to private and public lands; and
 - b. A limit of five years of captivity for captured horses in holding facilities;

15. The USDA-inspected horse and burro adoption program and oppose the release of non-adopted or domestic horses or burros on public lands;
16. The harvest of excess feral horses and burros for consumption;
17. Reimbursing family farmers and ranchers by the appropriate government agency, with an equitable lease payment annually adjusted to reflect current land values, including for expenses incurred in the acquisition, development, and improvement of public grazing lands in the event permits are revoked;
18. Public access to federal and state lands being only on designated routes;
19. Public access to public lands being specifically addressed in leases with lessee input;
20. Encouraging public-land managers to support and facilitate the formation of locally owned cooperatives and businesses to harvest and process forest products;
21. All federal agencies charged with wildlife management taking steps to eradicate diseases from all wildlife under their control on federal lands;
22. Involving permittees in the process of revising, updating, creating, and otherwise modifying plans that govern use of public lands in advance of public hearings, including draft plans;
23. The use of public lands for the development of energy production and transmission with priority given to renewable energy except where existing livestock grazing permits are negatively impacted;
24. Decisions made by the administration that support input from livestock producers on best management practices and range conditions while achieving a strong balance between resources on public lands that include grazing;
25. The transfer of vacant, unused, or abandoned grazing allotments to qualified family ranchers rather than permanently retiring or abandoning the allotment;
26. Policies that enable payments to flow to public land permittees for ecosystem services; and

1 27. Incentivizing collaboration with conservation groups to improve grazing
2 allotments and to restore ecosystems beyond base stewardship
3 requirements.

4 We oppose:

- 5 1. Grazing regulations and legislation that require permittees to remove their
6 livestock while they appeal a decision of a public-land manager;
- 7 2. Permitting non-grazers to acquire so-called “conservation allotments” that
8 result in the bidding up of the price of an allotment, thus denying access of
9 grazing permits to low- and moderate-income families;
- 10 3. Any swaps of public lands with private developers that would adversely
11 impact the agricultural community. Hearings regarding such swaps must be
12 held within 50 miles of the proposed land to be swapped. Cultural and
13 economic impact studies must be done to assess the impact of such proposed
14 swaps;
- 15 4. Taking private water rights and private structures on public lands;
- 16 5. Reintroduction of species detrimental to livestock production and
17 agriculture;
- 18 6. The expansion of military reservations;
- 19 7. Legislation that would allow the buyout of grazing permits on federal lands;
- 20 8. Grazing of cattle not born and raised in the United States on public lands;
- 21 9. The transfer of federal public lands to state control;
- 22 10. Separating water from existing leases;
- 23 11. The renewed efforts of the USFS and BLM to reduce or eliminate domestic
24 sheep grazing from federal lands;
- 25 12. BLM leasing subsurface mineral rights on private land; and
- 26 13. Energy development on public lands with sites of historical, cultural, and
27 ecological value and significance.

28 **E. NATIVE PRODUCER LANDS AND WATER**

29 We support:

- 30 1. The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) clarifying existing and developing
31 improved agricultural land use policy for the protection of native producer
32 water rights and farmlands.

2. The negotiation and settlement of water compacts between federal, state, and tribal authorities for water rights distribution and usage by each of the parties.
3. Tribes having appropriate water rights based on their treaty.
4. Tribes' ability to develop their water rights.

F. NATIONAL GRAZING LANDS COALITION

The National Grazing Lands Coalition (NatGLC), which grew out of the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI), seeks to provide high-quality technical assistance on privately owned grazing lands on a voluntary basis, and to increase awareness of the importance of grazing land resources through a coalition of individuals and organizations functioning at the local, state, regional and national levels.

We support working cooperatively with NatGLC to promote the benefits of sustainable grazing practices and their continued line-item funding.

G. FOREST HEALTH

We support:

1. Maintaining Categorical Exclusion capability in federal forest management plans to address forest health issues, so the USFS can accelerate the harvest of small timber stands in western U.S. forests;
2. Federal and state forests being accessible to the renewable energy industry to allow the use of devastated wood product in environmentally beneficial value-added products;
3. Implementation and full funding of efforts to minimize the effects of the insect epidemics on the national and state forests throughout the United States. Federal, state, and private programs must be approved immediately to protect open space, wildlife habitat, watersheds, clean air, and other natural resources as well as infrastructure such as roads and utility lines for public safety;
4. Funding for programs that provide meaningful education for the public concerning overall forest health; and
5. Livestock grazing as a management tool in maintaining forest and range health.

H. WATER

1 **1. WATER QUANTITY DISTRIBUTION**

2 Laws impacting water distribution should not favor industrial, wildlife, and
3 recreational uses over those of agricultural producers. Furthermore, laws impacting
4 water distribution should ensure sufficient and indefinite access to adequate water
5 supplies and support healthy water cycles to ensure family farms and ranches can
6 continue providing enough food to maintain national food sovereignty.

7 We support:

- 8 i. States recognizing domestic, irrigation, and livestock water usage in
9 neighboring states when issuing irrigation permits on shared tributaries
10 and aquifers;
- 11 ii. The use of interstate water compacts between federal, state, and tribal
12 governments for regulating water sharing between neighboring states;
- 13 iii. The use of water storage through impoundment structures, conservation
14 measures, USDA Small Watershed Program, and implementation of soil
15 health principles as primary means for water development;
- 16 iv. Adoption of legislation to protect agricultural water rights through state
17 water rights to prevent future power and energy plants from consuming
18 water to the detriment of agriculture;
- 19 v. Requiring new energy plants to return water to a level of quality capable
20 of use by agriculture;
- 21 vi. Requiring industrial and tech infrastructure and manufacturing to adopt
22 and use water recycling technology;
- 23 vii. Subjecting new, large enterprises that will use a significant quantity of
24 water to a permitting process to assess the environmental and
25 community impacts of the proposed use;
- 26 viii. Enforcement of the limitations on the size of farm operations eligible for
27 federally subsidized irrigation water;
- 28 ix. Deferred implementation of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation regulation on
29 the use of federally developed water supplies and facilities and the
30 practice known as “water spreading.” The economic impact of any policy
31 changes on family farmers and rural communities should be completed
32 before implementation:

- a. Water leasing instead of buy and dry policies; and
- b. The United Nations adding a 31st article to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, establishing access to clean and potable water as a fundamental human right;
- x. Appropriate water development or just compensation to meet the water appropriations of tribal nations' treaty water rights to protect current agricultural water users;
- xi. The economic benefit to agriculture be considered before permitting any new federally funded water projects;
- xii. Federal rules and legislation that advocate for the sharing of burden across all water sectors and water users in the arid West, so that agricultural water supply and agriculture itself are not injured;
- xiii. A voluntary, temporary, and compensated water demand management program to sustain agricultural communities and agricultural economies; and
- xiv. Federal legislation creating a water pool in Lake Powell for Upper Basin water storage.

We oppose:

- i. The movement of any water for the purpose of a coal slurry pipeline or similar venture unless a method can be developed to return water of equal quantity and quality to the original area from which it was taken. Prior to the exportation of any water, an environmental and economic impact statement should be completed to determine its effect on agriculture;
- ii. Any efforts by the federal government through the usage of a national water policy to usurp the rights and prerogatives of the individual states;
- iii. An outright ban on "water spreading," as currently defined which would have devastating impacts on agricultural producers in the Columbia Basin and other Bureau of Reclamation irrigation projects throughout the West;
- iv. Removal of dams on the Snake and Columbia River systems;

- v. Producers bearing the cost of taking inventory of irrigated lands and any mandated renegotiation of bureau contracts through their irrigation district. Agricultural producers should be credited, and not penalized, for increased efficiencies and for their aquifer recharge efforts;
- vi. The condemnation of agricultural water rights; and
- vii. The change of use or removal of water from the basin of origin or non-tributary groundwater.

2. WATER QUALITY PROTECTION

The protection of our surface water and groundwater resources is critical not only to continuing farm operations, but as a source of drinking water for many rural residents.

We support:

- i. The creation of a national database on the extent of water quality problems, including nationwide voluntary well-testing programs that include cost sharing of landowners;
- ii. Legislation or regulations limiting groundwater contamination by incentivizing regenerative land management practices in keeping with soil health principles, while enacting effective groundwater cleanup of already contaminated water sources;
- iii. Continued implementation of the Safe Drinking Water Act;
- iv. The uniform administration of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) policies throughout the nation. Adding to the list of contaminants that municipalities and rural water districts are required to test for, as mandated by EPA, must be backed by science. We encourage EPA to stop its practice of targeting specific regions with stricter standards than applied in non-targeted regions;
- v. Requiring inspectors be public employees, rather than employees of the companies who are being regulated;
- vi. Information and education concerning the present condition of our underground water supply and what we can and should do to prevent any further contamination;

- 1 vii. Efforts in research that clarify the issue of point source pollution and
2 non-point source pollution;
- 3 viii. Programs to protect and improve the quality of surface waters, such as
4 the Western Lake Erie Basin Partnership, Chesapeake Bay Program, and
5 the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA), and urge that all
6 who use the resource, such as boaters and fishers, be included in the
7 effort;
- 8 ix. Producers participating in state watershed assessment programs;
- 9 x. Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) being required to post
10 the appropriate bonds to cover the cost of cleaning up any contamination
11 of land and water resources. When posting these bonds, CAFOs should
12 also be required to develop and submit waste storage closure plans;
- 13 xi. National minimum guidelines, or standards, that give primacy for
14 implementation and flexibility in regional planning to the states;
- 15 xii. Encouraging states and localities to establish standards beyond the
16 federal minimums;
- 17 xiii. Cost-share provisions targeted to small and medium-sized farmers.
18 Responsibility for submitting a waste management plan and complying
19 with the waste management provisions should be shared by the owner of
20 the livestock and the operator of the facility;
- 21 xiv. The application of best management practices (BMP) established by
22 agencies of the USDA for disposal of poultry waste and animal manure,
23 and recommend such manure be classified as soil supplements and plant
24 food, and not toxic or hazardous waste. If BMP is subject to regulation,
25 we urge the appropriate state department to be assigned as the
26 regulator;
- 27 xv. Research to determine the environmental impact of animal-feed content
28 on animal waste;
- 29 xvi. Family farmers being appointed to serve as advisers to any federal
30 agency when a national waste standard is developed;
- 31 xvii. Targeting water subsidies to family-sized farms;

- xviii. EPA encouraging communities and municipalities to partner with landowners in upstream watersheds on voluntary incentive-based programs to implement best management practices to address water quality;
- xix. Water produced in Coal-Bed Methane (CBM) development be treated to meet existing state water quality standards for surface water discharge before disposal in a manner that would endanger freshwater sources. Laws requiring mitigation of impacts associated with CBM water must be established to protect adjacent landowners; and
- xx. Water quality laws that account for discharges from wildlife, as well as industrial, residential, commercial, and agricultural sources.

We oppose:

- i. The method of deep-well injection of hazardous waste;
- ii. Legislation that restricts livestock grazing in pastures where running streams or ponds are located and mandatory fencing of rivers, streams, and ponds;
- iii. In situ leach mining;
- iv. Any infrastructure or resource development that jeopardizes the health, safety, and quality of freshwater aquifer resources; and
- v. Any EPA policy directive that would mandate the testing and/or certification of water or farmland unless a federal fund is established to pay necessary costs of meeting certification requirements.

3. CLEAN WATER ACT

Clean Water Act rulemaking requires Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) be established for 303(d) listed watersheds, i.e., streams that are impacted by pollution. Compliance with mandatory state and federal watershed TMDL regulations can create a hardship on family agricultural producers for compliance with state and federal water quality standards.

We support:

- i. Voluntary compliance and incentive-based, cost-sharing programs currently working to minimize production agriculture's impact on our nation's water quality;

- ii. Protecting the quality of our water and assuring its suitability for beneficial uses;
- iii. Regulations for the process to identify waters protected under the Clean Water Act (CWA) being made clearer, simpler, and faster;
- iv. Exemptions for normal agricultural activities being reaffirmed;
- v. Agricultural producers and representatives of local government entities from all agricultural areas of the U.S. being included in discussions to address the issues concerning the proposed changes to jurisdiction of the CWA;
- vi. Extensive monitoring of water quality to accurately assess progress toward clear goals;
- vii. Proper appropriation of funding to fully implement clean water efforts;
- viii. Ongoing evaluation and recalibration of nutrient reduction and conservation efforts; and
- ix. Employment of agronomic practices, conservation efforts and funds, with a focus on those that have the largest positive impact toward reaching clean water goals.

We oppose:

- i. Broadening the definition of what waters are considered jurisdictional under the CWA;
- ii. The deletion of the word “navigable” waters from the federal Clean Water Act which would expand the taking of private property rights and provide additional intrusiveness;
- iii. Current rulemaking by EPA that would establish regulatory-based TMDLs for family agricultural producers; and
- iv. The broadening of the federal government’s jurisdiction over a group of waters such as the entire prairie pothole region simply because the bodies of water are near each other.

4. DROUGHT MONITORING

We support continued federal support of the National Drought Mitigation Center.

5. WESTERN STATES RIVER BASINS

1 NFU recognizes that the states west of the 100th meridian are experiencing an
2 ongoing drought crisis. This drought necessitates continued collaborative efforts among
3 state and federal agencies and sovereign nations. Farmers in western states have
4 adapted to recent drought and low runoff conditions by reducing historical diversions
5 due to lack of water availability and comparative lack of storage capacity.

6 We strongly encourage:

- 7 i. The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) expediting preparation of new
8 sources and new measures based on current and projected hydrologic
9 conditions to protect long-term sustainability of western river basins for
10 maintaining agriculture, urban use, and ecosystems;
- 11 ii. Revising the current guidelines for operation of dams and other storage
12 structures that are necessary to address the likelihood of continued low-
13 runoff or flood conditions;
- 14 iii. The Bureau of Reclamation accurately accounting for evaporation and
15 transit losses;
- 16 iv. DOI equitably apportioning water across basins according to the spirit of
17 existing interstate stream compacts;
- 18 v. All relevant government agencies developing protocols and best
19 practices for shepherding water through entire watersheds; and
- 20 vi. All relevant government agencies prioritizing addressing factors
21 impacting the supply of water and prioritizing the health of watersheds,
22 improving water cycles, riparian areas, soil organic matter, vegetative
23 ground cover, and the health of forest ecosystems and other headwater
24 areas, while recognizing the role of agriculture in these efforts.

25 **I. AIR QUALITY**

26 Production agriculture should be exempt from the regulating of particulate matter.
27 Agriculture should be a stakeholder in research and education about the role of
28 agricultural production in particulate matter emissions. Agricultural producers should
29 follow best management practices when practical to help reduce particulate matter and
30 improve air quality.

31 **J. ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATIONS (AFOs)**

1 NFU recognizes that family farm agriculture and good, sound environmental
2 practices need to work together. Our policy encourages a well-balanced, sensible
3 environmental policy that protects the public and the environment without unduly
4 burdening family farmers through excessive regulation or economic hardship.

5 When properly managed, livestock waste is a valuable resource that provides
6 essential nutrients to cropland and lessens the need for commercial fertilizer. We
7 oppose the defining of animal manure, waste or nutrients as being considered
8 hazardous and regulated under the federal "Superfund" law, the Comprehensive
9 Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA) and the
10 Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA).

11 Animal feeding operations should be regulated beginning at the local level. Cost
12 sharing for regulatory compliance should be made available and targeted to family-
13 sized producers.

14 We support standards that are on a graduated system of at least three tiers: small,
15 medium, and large. They should be implemented with a sliding scale of standards that
16 address each size of operation.

17 **K. CONCENTRATED ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATIONS (CAFOs)**

18 We support requiring permits for large-scale feeding operations, i.e., confined
19 feeding operations that require National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
20 (NPDES) permits as defined under the February 2003 EPA rule change. Under the rule
21 change, all large CAFOs require permits and all other CAFOs that discharge pollutants
22 into surface water require a permit. The issue of scale is critical in determining the level
23 of risk associated with waste management. Therefore, we support the following
24 standards:

- 25 1. Holding animal owners and/or contractors responsible for spills and manure
26 disposal in contract feeding operations;
- 27 2. Using best available technology to reduce the environmental impact of waste
28 and setting higher standards for waste storage, including open-air lagoons;
- 29 3. Requiring a CAFO to have a reasonable setback distance from an existing
30 residence, business, church, school, public use area or riparian area;
- 31 4. Permit applications must prepare and submit a nutrient management plan
32 containing detailed information regarding proposed methods of distribution.

- 1 Application of animal waste should be monitored by the states' departments
2 of health and should adhere to the agronomically sound, best management
3 practices adopted by the state in which the facility exists. No waste should be
4 applied to ice, to highly erodible slopes, or where the ground is frozen;
- 5 5. Requiring written manure spreading agreements for all acres included in a
6 CAFO's nutrient management plan not owned by a CAFO owner;
- 7 6. Including sound, science-based guidelines for using phosphorus and
8 nitrogen as limiting factors on the gallons of liquid livestock waste and tons
9 of solid waste to be applied per acre as a part of the nutrient management
10 plan;
- 11 7. Permit applications for a large-scale facility must serve notice in a timely
12 fashion for public comment describing the type of facility to be constructed,
13 including information on the type of waste to be generated;
- 14 8. Permit holders must disclose the number of animal units within a facility
15 upon request by the appropriate regulatory agency;
- 16 9. A livestock owner whose permit has been revoked in one jurisdiction not
17 being allowed a permit in another jurisdiction;
- 18 10. Facilities that close being required to use proper cleanup, including re-
19 vegetation, within three years of closure;
- 20 11. Existing operations being required to comply with permit requirements at
21 the time of permit approval;
- 22 12. Permits requiring financial assurance including proof of liability insurance,
23 equity, or adequate bonding;
- 24 13. Appropriate penalties for those who fail to comply with permitting
25 requirements;
- 26 14. Implementing a temporary moratorium on the establishment of CAFOs
27 based on issues of health until local control is re-established; and
- 28 15. CAFOs processing animal waste nutrients into renewable energy resources.

29 We oppose efforts to restrict the property rights of family farmers and rural
30 residents by limiting their ability to regain compensation in court against a neighboring
31 CAFO nuisance caused by negligence or poor management.

32 **L. PESTICIDE REGULATION**

1 We support pesticide regulations that include:

- 2 1. Protection for producers of non-targeted crops that incur damage due to
3 drift from pesticides onto their property;
- 4 2. Liability insurance requirements for commercial licensed pesticide
5 applicators;
- 6 3. An exemption from liability through EPA for groundwater cleanup for
7 farmers who applied pesticides according to label directions;
- 8 4. Provisions emphasizing protection of uncontaminated groundwater and
9 providing means to keep residue levels from increasing;
- 10 5. Access to health and safety information for farmers, farm laborers and
11 emergency medical personnel;
- 12 6. Greater cooperation between EPA and USDA to help ensure that pesticide
13 regulations and disposal do not unnecessarily interfere with normal farming
14 practices and land transfers;
- 15 7. Legislation designed to eliminate U.S. production of pesticides not registered
16 for use in the United States, or for which a pesticide residue tolerance has
17 not been set;
- 18 8. Restrictions on the import of food products produced with such pesticides,
19 with more frequent inspections at borders to protect consumers from unsafe
20 pesticide use;
- 21 9. The agriculture secretary developing regulations implementing authorized
22 programs for less chemically intensive farming practices. Full funding for
23 these farm programs and for pest-control research initiatives should be
24 included;
- 25 10. Cooperation among farmers, chemical companies, and governmental
26 agencies to reduce pollution hazards by using integrated pest management,
27 biological controls or other effective alternatives to pesticides when
28 available;
- 29 11. Funding additional avenues for applicators to implement the use of smart or
30 precision spraying systems to reduce pesticide use, drift, and resistance;
- 31 12. The creation and implementation of safety standards protecting people from
32 exposure to pesticides;

13. Continued prudent use of approved chemicals for crops, including expedited registrations for minor use pesticides and requiring EPA to use peer-reviewed, third-party science, such as land-grant universities, in their registration review process;
14. Chemical manufacturers increasing the use of reusable, pre-measured, water-soluble, and bulk containers;
15. Federal and state assistance for recycling containers and in establishing central locations for disposal of chemical containers;
16. Standardization of farm chemical prices and regulations between the United States and other countries;
17. Fair pricing of chemicals and pesticides not tied to commodity prices;
18. Full funding for the IR-4 minor crop pesticide registration program;
19. The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) as the primary regulatory act for applications of pesticides by farmers and ranchers. Any additional permitting required by EPA under court mandate should mirror existing recordkeeping, education and training requirements and any increases in training requirements should carry provisions for the expenses associated with such training;
20. Extensive research on new technologies and their applications regarding their impact on non-targeted organisms;
21. Prohibition on the export of pesticides not registered for food and fiber uses in the U.S. for food and fiber uses in other countries;
22. Application of the precautionary principle, guided by publicly available, peer-reviewed science in regulating pesticides and herbicides;
23. The creation of a user-friendly electronic pesticide drift reporting system; and
24. Protections of the rights for farmers to use the civil justice system to defend their health and property. Liability shields for manufacturers of pesticides, fungicides, and rodenticides should not be allowed.

M. FERTILIZER REGULATIONS

The future of agricultural producers worldwide depends to a great extent on developing and implementing the best use of fertilizers.

1 We support:

- 2 1. No hazardous waste being included in fertilizers;
- 3 2. Manufacturers labeling all ingredients in fertilizers and providing
- 4 notification to buyers;
- 5 3. Anhydrous ammonia continuing to be classified as non-hazardous for the
- 6 purposes of transporting nurse tanks on public roadways;
- 7 4. Privately owned anhydrous ammonia facilities and equipment to meet the
- 8 same safety requirements and standards as that of licensed dealers. We
- 9 encourage private owners to attend anhydrous ammonia safety training
- 10 classes;
- 11 5. The federal government stepping up enforcement of the illegal production of
- 12 methamphetamines and fully funding measures to prevent the theft of
- 13 agricultural materials and cleanup of confiscated methamphetamine labs;
- 14 6. Biosolids generated from human waste being inoculated, composted, or
- 15 spread in a timely fashion with a nutrient and pathogen management plan.
- 16 Farmers must be provided with a complete nutrient and contaminant
- 17 analysis of the biosolids;
- 18 7. Updated and thorough testing and certification of biosolids for heavy metals,
- 19 industrial chemicals, flame retardants, PFAS, steroids, and pharmaceuticals;
- 20 8. Programs and policies that indemnify producers against losses and damages
- 21 from the approved use of biosolids and providing for the remediation of
- 22 contaminated land;
- 23 9. Educational or informational resources being provided to family farmers
- 24 regarding the risks associated with the application of biosolids to
- 25 agricultural lands; and
- 26 10. Sufficient consideration being given before OSHA implements changes to the
- 27 enforcement of Process Safety Management of Highly Hazardous Chemicals
- 28 Standards for Retail Facilities.

29 **N. NOXIOUS AND INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL**

30 Much of the current infestation problem is attributed to insect or other invasive
31 species population growth on public lands. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
32 (APHIS) needs increased funding so it can properly inspect all imported and interstate

1 movements of agricultural products, monitor insect hatch and damage, and coordinate
2 measures in states affected by infestations. Federal grants or cost sharing on both
3 public and private lands should be made available for dealing with widespread
4 infestations of invasive insects, plants, and animals.

5 Increased monitoring and inspection of domestic and foreign imported products are
6 needed to prevent introduction of invasive species. Vigorous control and eradication
7 measures are needed to ensure that invasive species be eliminated.

8 Where needed and requested, the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) must engage
9 systems-based insect ecology research on the interaction between soil health
10 implementation and pest infestation occurrence and should provide adequate standing
11 funding for practical, applied research and Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
12 programs to help farmers implement rapid, highly organized and cooperative IPM
13 responses to infestations. It is especially important that the additional cost of such
14 programs be wholly or partially underwritten for small-scale farms to enable them to
15 participate effectively in them.

16 Coordinated efforts and adequate funding are urgently needed for improved control
17 of noxious weeds on public lands and all road rights of way. We are concerned that
18 farmers are expected to control weeds on their land while nearby public land goes
19 without weed control. Whenever this responsibility is not being met, there should be a
20 moratorium on any further land acquisition by the appropriate agency.

21 We support:

- 22 1. Alternatives to chemical control measures to control noxious weeds on
23 public lands; and
- 24 2. USDA APHIS control of near plague-level pests.

25 **O. PRESCRIBED BURNING**

26 Prescribed burning is a viable farming practice.

27 We support:

- 28 1. The right to safe burning when necessary;
- 29 2. The use of prescribed fire as a tool to reduce wildfire risk and improve range
30 and forest health; and
- 31 3. Ongoing research to discover economically viable alternatives to burning.

32 **P. LANDOWNER RIGHTS**

1 We support:

- 2 1. Private property rights, including ownership of land and all its attributes
- 3 above, on, and below the surface, including pore space, unless otherwise
- 4 marketed;
- 5 2. Land lessees' rights;
- 6 3. Just compensation to farmers and ranchers who suffer losses because of any
- 7 state or federal agency ruling;
- 8 4. Local control;
- 9 5. The expiration (null and void) of any pipeline or utility right-of-way grant
- 10 five years after abandonment or period of non-use for the original purpose
- 11 or use of the grant;
- 12 6. Trespassers being held liable for any damages done to private property,
- 13 including along public accesses;
- 14 7. The use of transferable development rights, conservation easements, and
- 15 other tools that will keep agricultural lands in production; and
- 16 8. The property right to harvest the power from the sun to produce energy in
- 17 all its forms: feed, fiber, fuel, and electricity.

18 We oppose:

- 19 1. The "big open" concept, and the resulting confiscation of private property;
- 20 2. Any agency or individual entering into a mineral lease or granting a permit
- 21 for the extraction of minerals without the consent of the land surface owner,
- 22 including just compensation to the agricultural operation;
- 23 3. Landowners being held liable for injuries obtained by a trespasser;
- 24 4. The ability of landowners to sever air rights or any other property rights
- 25 above the surface; and
- 26 5. Any attempts by the government to take away a landowner's right to
- 27 compensation for use of pore space and a landowner's rights to bring claims
- 28 for trespass, nuisance, or other torts for unauthorized use of pore space.

29 **Q. EMINENT DOMAIN** (*ALSO SEE ARTICLE IX.F. – IRS TAX CODE 1031 EXCHANGES*)

30 Abuses of eminent domain occurring across the country raise serious concern to the
31 rights of private property owners. While government entities are permitted to seize
32 private property for public use via eminent domain, it is contrary to American values to

1 seize property from one private owner and give to another for purposes of increasing
2 tax revenue.

3 The rights of private property owners need to be protected against parties with
4 condemnation rights and due process should be applied to all proceedings involving
5 eminent domain. Every effort should be made to preserve farmer ownership.

6 In all public and private projects where eminent domain proceedings may
7 eventually be used, we support:

- 8 1. Individual notifications and public hearings being held prior to project
9 implementation;
- 10 2. Public hearings held in the county in which the project is slated;
- 11 3. Negotiations between the property owner and utility to include yearly
12 royalty fees to be paid to the owner for each occurrence of current or future
13 use;
- 14 4. Severance damages including payment for the diminution of remaining land
15 values, increased expenses and inconvenience suffered by affected
16 landowners and operators;
- 17 5. All initial court expenses, including attorney and appraiser fees, being borne
18 by the constructing agency in condemnation proceedings;
- 19 6. Values being determined by appraisers at the highest and best use value;
- 20 7. Easements for utilities being for the life of the utility only. If the new
21 equipment is installed on an existing easement, the landowner should be
22 compensated at fair market value of the land, any related opportunity costs,
23 and for surface damage, at the time of installation. The landowner should
24 receive an ongoing cash payment from the project. If the entity is for-profit, it
25 should not fall under the eminent domain law;
- 26 8. Owners being compensated with appropriate annual payments or a lump
27 sum of no less than three times the appraised value;
- 28 9. Federal and/or state legislation that would strengthen private property
29 rights against the use of eminent domain to transfer property to any private
30 person, non-governmental entity, or other public-private business entity;

1 10. Offering seized property back to the original property owner if property is
2 not used in a timely manner or if property is not used for its original public
3 use intent; and

4 11. The right of a landowner to receive a tax shelter, and/or 1031 like-kind
5 exchange against capital gains from the sale of properties taken by eminent
6 domain.

7 We oppose:

- 8 1. The use of eminent domain by state and local governments for the purpose
9 of “economic development” when it involves taking private property,
10 especially farmland, from one owner and giving it to another private entity;
- 11 2. The use of eminent domain without the developer putting into place
12 environmental safeguards, maintaining conservation and drainage practices,
13 and assuming liability for damages;
- 14 3. The acquisition of productive farmland through use of the eminent domain
15 process to extend wildlife habitat; and
- 16 4. Granting eminent domain authority to any private, corporate, or foreign
17 entity.

18 **R. ZONING**

19 We support:

- 20 1. The preservation of farm units in any rezoning efforts. Any state and federal
21 legislation should recognize that agricultural land must be preserved for the
22 future. Family farmers should be represented in all relevant zoning
23 deliberations;
- 24 2. Farmland near areas already converted to urban or other uses, which may be
25 appreciating in speculative value, being taxed as agricultural land as long as
26 the land continues to be farmed by a family farmer;
- 27 3. Requiring economic and environmental studies to determine the effects on
28 future water supplies of changing land-use designations from agriculture to
29 some other use;
- 30 4. Federal and state funds for flood control projects to protect communities and
31 agricultural land. We favor zoning laws prohibiting development of areas
32 that flood frequently;

5. Legislation to strengthen the rights of local government units to protect the health, safety, and welfare interests of their residents, including improved governance provisions for regulating concentrated feeding operations and future land use requirements;
6. Zoning regulations describing borders, setbacks, and bonding for reclamation;
7. Zoning regulations within urban and incorporated areas that contain clear definitions of agriculture and promote agricultural uses within non-traditional areas;
8. Zoning regulations that allow farm stands to operate on all principal use sites. Retail sale of goods from farm stands must include items grown or produced on the principal use site where the farm stand is located; and
9. The further defining of agritourism to allow for regional specifications and for the purposes of zoning regulations.

S. CLIMATE CHANGE AND CARBON SEQUESTRATION

NFU is concerned about the effects of climate change and believes further research and analysis is necessary to determine its impacts, current and future. We acknowledge and accept the scientific evidence that clearly indicates that human activities are a contributing factor to climate change. We believe that human activity also has the potential to help mitigate climate change.

We support:

1. Farmers and ranchers being consulted as the United States moves forward to reduce its emission of greenhouse gases;
2. Soil health practices that aim to increase organic matter and humus development;
3. Carbon sequestration as an innovative way to enhance income for producers and protect the environment. Therefore, the trading of carbon or tax credits with the inclusion of carbon sequestration as an agricultural conservation practice for fair and equitable carbon offset payments should be encouraged;
4. Consumer education regarding the value of family farmers in mitigating climate impacts;

5. Carbon sequestration research and carbon payments not being biased toward a single practice, such as no-till, and instead integrating soil health principles into all agricultural practices, including grazing lands, energy feedstock production, organic cropping, wood lots, the Conservation Reserve Program, cover cropping, industrial hemp, improvements in livestock feed efficiency, and other proven conservation methods;
6. A carbon trading exchange to compensate farmers and ranchers for sequestering carbon;
7. A national mandatory carbon emission tax or fee and dividend system to reduce non-farm greenhouse gas emissions that:
 - i. Grants USDA control, verification and administration of the agriculture offset program, rather than EPA;
 - ii. Does not place an artificial cap on domestic offset allowance;
 - iii. Bases carbon sequestration rates upon science;
 - iv. Recognizes early actors; and
 - v. Allows producers to stack credits.
8. Agriculture being uncapped in any climate change legislation;
9. The inclusion of provisions that are advantageous to agriculture while minimizing potential negative effects to agriculture and rural communities such as increased input costs, elevated electricity costs and decreased global competitiveness;
10. All nations participating to reduce carbon emissions, as climate change is a global responsibility;
11. Research and development of carbon capture and storage (CCS) facilities, with the understanding that landowners will not share in the risks and liabilities associated with CCS with the understanding that affected landowners and farmers will be the beneficiaries of tax credits associated with CCS;
12. Research and promotion of resilient farming practices, such as the NRCS Soil Health Initiative, that mitigate and adapt to the potential effects of climate change;
13. Practices that reduce agricultural methane emissions;

- 1 14. Investment in the development and deployment of small-scale technologies
- 2 that work for family farms to capture methane emissions from agricultural
- 3 production and that can produce renewable energy or biological soil
- 4 amendments;
- 5 15. Efforts to preserve rainforest land and convert cleared rainforest land back
- 6 into diversified agroforestry;
- 7 16. Increasing USDA research funding for public plant breeding programs to
- 8 provide farmers with seeds that are regionally adapted to changing climates;
- 9 and
- 10 17. The goals articulated through the Paris Climate Accords;
- 11 18. USDA's Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities and efforts to promote
- 12 price transparency in markets for climate-smart commodities;
- 13 19. Creating an incentive program for cost share on practices that help
- 14 producers voluntarily reduce greenhouse gases through reduction in
- 15 emissions or capture of greenhouse gas;
- 16 20. The swift implementation of the Growing Climate Solutions Act and other
- 17 carbon and ecosystem service market regulations to protect the interests of
- 18 family farmers;
- 19 21. USDA using planning and producer outreach to better inform producers of
- 20 the risks associated from extreme weather events that may be exacerbated
- 21 by the changing climate;
- 22 22. Increased federal funding for research on the use of biochar to improve soil
- 23 health and sequester soil carbon, and incentives for its use by farmers and
- 24 ranchers;
- 25 23. Funding and utilization of USDA Climate Hubs to coordinate resource
- 26 sharing of climate information, agronomic and risk management support;
- 27 and
- 28 24. Programs that enhance opportunities for family farmers and ranchers to
- 29 participate in the ecosystem service market.

30 We oppose:

- 31 1. Any plan that does not cover carbon emissions from all sectors of the
- 32 economy;

2. Considering international indirect land use changes when determining U.S. carbon and energy policy; and
3. Exempting small domestic refiners (producing 150,000 barrels per day or less) from an emission cap.

T. CONSERVATION

Strong conservation efforts promote healthy soils. Conservation programs should be fully funded to benefit the environment, reward stewardship of land and water resources and marine habitat, discourage speculative development of fragile land resources, strengthen family farming, and enhance rural communities. Conservation assistance should be at a level designed to meet the needs as shown in the federal land conservation inventory, the appraisals under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, and other federal studies.

We support:

1. The development of a one-stop conservation planning system for agriculture through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) with conservation program decisions being made by locally elected conservation entities, where appropriate;
2. A single conservation plan jointly developed by the farm operator and approved by NRCS being established to fulfill the requirements as recommended. This conservation planning system should replace the existing sodbuster, swampbuster, Corps of Engineers flood plain and other regulations which affect agricultural lands. The plan should be supervised and approved by the USDA committee process, with the technical assistance of the NRCS;
3. The objectives of the conservation plan being used to reduce and control wind and water erosion, prevent non-point source pollution, and enhance the soil and water capacities of the land;
4. Designation of which highly erodible soils should not be tilled, and which may be tilled, with approved conservation practices;
5. Programs that promote soil health and sustainable farming practices;

6. Accurate mapping and documentation of both existing and drained wetlands, as well as any drains and channels. The plan should outline the conservation of wetlands, as well as the maintenance of drains and channels;
7. Restoring NRCS annual appropriations for conservation technical assistance at the field office level to adequately meet the needs of America's farmers, ranchers, and landowners;
8. A payment system that moves toward an outcome-based approach where real changes and environmental benefits are tracked and rewarded, but does not disadvantage smaller-scale operations;
9. Programs being based on voluntary continuous signup and precluding the use of a bidding system;
10. That when a conservation plan is implemented, a producer being considered compliant with all federal agencies. Producers should be allowed to remedy inadvertent or unavoidable failures to carry out conservation plan practices without automatically being penalized. Loss of full federal farm program benefits should be imposed only in cases of purposeful destruction of conservation practices;
11. Federal financing to meet clean water and air standards of the EPA being available to farmers from funds appropriated by Congress for this purpose, and that such funds be administered through the farmer-elected committees;
12. Adequate funding to enable the small watershed programs to provide for the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing structures built under federal water control and flood protection programs, as well as to build additional structures to provide flood control, livestock water, irrigation water, and recreational benefits to rural America;
13. State efforts to create cost-share programs for soil and water conservation practices;
14. The continuation of NRCS snow surveys and Snow Telemetry (SNOTEL) measuring stations;
15. Limiting programs that increase the role of private companies and non-governmental organizations in conservation planning, technical assistance, or implementation;

- 1 16. Conservation programs such as the Conservation Stewardship Program
2 (CSP) and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) supporting
3 early adopters of climate-smart, soil health, and regenerative agriculture
4 practices;
- 5 17. The concept of an expanded safety net for U.S. agriculture that includes a
6 direct support program for producers who undertake climate-smart, soil
7 health, and regenerative agriculture practices; and
- 8 18. Flexibilities to allow for livestock grazing on land enrolled in federal
9 conservation programs, especially in drought years;
- 10 19. The continuation and expansion of the Environmental Quality Incentives
11 Program (EQIP), which provides federal cost-share and technical assistance
12 to enable farmers to comply with environmental requirements, and we urge
13 full appropriation of existing authorized funding and an increase in future
14 funding. Additionally, we support:
- 15 i. Appropriate caps on funding levels to assure funds are directed to
16 family farmers and ranchers;
 - 17 ii. Preference and priority going to family farmers below a 500-
18 animal waste unit threshold;
 - 19 iii. The agriculture secretary prioritizing the use of EQIP funds for
20 family farmers and ranchers, accounting for the geographical
21 differences in farming and ranching operations;
 - 22 iv. EQIP program eligibility and cost-share levels being consistent
23 with commodity program eligibility and payment limits;
 - 24 v. USDA funding public and private research and development of
25 composting and that composting be eligible for cost sharing
26 under EQIP as an enhancement of pollution control;
 - 27 vi. The use of EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts; and
 - 28 vii. The establishment of a new tiered EQIP funding mechanism
29 specifically designed for small and beginning farm and ranch
30 operations.

31 We oppose conservation program provisions which exclude or penalize producers
32 who are early adopters of stewardship practices and those that penalize producers for

1 non-compliance with program requirements resulting from “Acts of God” such as
2 drought, fire, and floods.

3 **1. LAND RETIREMENT AND EASEMENT PROGRAMS**

4 We urge the full funding of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the
5 Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP).

6 We support native prairie grasslands and groundwater as eligible classes for
7 ACEP or similar programs.

8 We support flexibility in the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program
9 (ACEP) that allows producers to amend a conservation easement to keep that land
10 in agricultural production.

11 Greater emphasis should be placed on improved farm management techniques.
12 We believe that assisting farmers in becoming the best possible stewards of natural
13 resources is a better long-term approach to sustainability than simple land
14 retirement.

15 We support a flexible short-term land idling program that compensates farmers
16 for reduction in acreage for crop production.

17 **2. CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)**

18 We support:

- 19 i. CRP contracts and contract extensions which maintain CRP lands in
20 private ownership of resident family farm and ranch operators;
- 21 ii. CRP payment rates that are competitive but do not exceed average local
22 land values and/or rental rates so as not to discourage participation;
- 23 iii. A 25-percent-per-county acreage limit for CRP, unless it is determined
24 that lifting the cap would address local endangered species concerns and
25 not have a negative economic impact on rural communities;
- 26 iv. Adequate funding to ensure close monitoring by the NRCS and the Farm
27 Service Agency (FSA) to enforce contract requirements for adequate
28 weed, erosion, insect and fire control;
- 29 v. Enrollees being allowed to manage permanent, vegetative cover to
30 enhance wildlife habitat and ecosystem health;
- 31 vi. Landowners’ rights to implement agroforestry practices on CRP land
32 when ecologically appropriate;

- vii. Landowners' rights to collect hunting or recreational use fees on CRP land;
- viii. The program being better focused to serve the needs of family farmers and ranchers and to protect highly erodible land and other environmentally sensitive lands;
- ix. Land enrolled in CRP having an end-of-contract plan in place for use of the land following the contract expiration date, accounting for erodibility, soil type, and conservation practices;
- x. Voluntary participation to transfer CRP lands that qualify for ACEP to that program;
- xi. Evaluation of all CRP lands currently or previously enrolled in the program for contract re-enrollment. The most environmentally sensitive land should be given first opportunity for contract. Land enrolled in CRP that is critical habitat for endangered species should be given an extension of up to 15 years. CRP lands diverted into long-term timber and forestry conservation projects should be given a high priority for contract re-enrollment;
- xii. Financial and technical assistance being provided to producers in preparing CRP acreage for sustainable agricultural systems that will meet established conservation standards;
- xiii. Land managed with appropriate organic standards while enrolled in CRP being eligible for organic certification upon leaving the program;
- xiv. Land that was farmed prior to being enrolled in CRP being eligible for crop insurance upon contract expiration;
- xv. In times of extended drought conditions or weather disasters, authorization of haying or grazing on CRP acres to livestock producers based on need, with CRP acres being used to replenish feed supplies. Haying and grazing of CRP by a producer in a disaster declared county should not be restricted to land in the disaster-declared county or state. The FSA farmer-elected county committees should be given the authority to set the date of harvest to maximize the feed value of hay and forage. These regulations should be established so the procedures are known in

- 1 advance. The maximum landowner income from the haying and grazing
2 should not exceed the annual CRP contract amount from that farm;
- 3 xvi. No further reductions in total acres enrolled in CRP;
- 4 xvii. The CRP Transition Incentives Program (TIP) that allows CRP payments
5 to continue to landowners that transfer the land to beginning, veteran
6 and/or socially disadvantaged farmers;
- 7 xviii. TIP requiring that base acres are reattached to the tract they were
8 removed from;
- 9 xix. Planting property to shelterbelts or other conservation measures being
10 encouraged through reduced property taxes on those acres. Producers
11 who destroy shelterbelts or wooded areas should establish the same
12 number of acres of new trees for a minimum of 10 years;
- 13 xx. An expedited process to adopt rules and regulations to re-enroll or to
14 extend CRP contracts;
- 15 xxi. Allowing approved CRP conservation cover crops to be used for biomass
16 production in areas where needed until the biomass industry evolves to a
17 more economically viable level. CRP payments would be paid on these
18 acres in years where biomass is harvested; and
- 19 xxii. Expanded access and increased acres to Grassland CRP.

20 **3. BUFFER STRIPS**

21 We support:

- 22 i. Incentives to install and maintain permanent buffer strips along
23 waterways;
- 24 ii. Development of new markets for products of perennial systems, such as
25 biofuels and feedstock crops; and
- 26 iii. Enterprise research to evaluate and develop new plant material
27 selections along with associated production, harvesting and processing
28 technologies to discover and develop new uses for products of perennial
29 systems.

30 **4. CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (CSP)**

31 We support:

- i. Full funding, implementation, and expansion of the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP);
- ii. Implementation of CSP in a manner which recognizes conservation practices appropriate to different climatic regions and provides for such agricultural production practices to be adequately scored by the Conservation Management Tool (CMT);
- iii. Allowing new conservation enhancements made to land in an existing CSP contract to count as credit on subsequent CSP contracts as a way of rewarding early adopters; and
- iv. Consistent interpretation of the rules and guidance documents among all NRCS offices.

5. SODBUSTER AND SWAMPBUSTER PROVISIONS

We support:

- i. Provisions that give the secretary of agriculture greater discretion in handling sodbuster and swampbuster violations. FSA should be the single regulatory agency;
- ii. The goal of soil conservation practices being to reduce soil losses to tolerable levels, or “T-levels”;
- iii. Alternative conservation systems being used only in cases of financial hardship, after recommendation of local conservation officials; and
- iv. A federal sodsaver provision, which disallows the payment of farm and crop insurance subsidies for crops planted on land without any previous cropping history.

6. WETLANDS

We support:

- i. Producers being provided full opportunity to participate in the development and review of a single, coordinated approach to wetlands protection. Requiring recertification of wetlands at 5-year intervals creates a moving target for producers in compliance efforts;
- ii. Making NRCS and FSA the lead agencies in wetlands delineation on agricultural land, but oppose the use of special interest groups making wetland determinations;

- 1 iii. All federal agencies using a single, universal framework for making
- 2 wetland determinations;
- 3 iv. Any and all wetlands determinations throughout the United States
- 4 relying on the presence of all three of the following mandatory wetland
- 5 criteria simultaneously appearing on the same site year-round:
- 6 a. Hydrology;
- 7 b. A predominance of hydric soil; and
- 8 c. A prevalence of hydrophytic vegetation.
- 9 v. The federal government consulting with the state and local governments
- 10 to develop a unified, mutually agreeable management program to protect
- 11 our nation's wetlands;
- 12 vi. Wetlands management programs balancing wetland values and the
- 13 needs of the various states and their political subdivisions and individual
- 14 property rights;
- 15 vii. Any leaseholder, renter or owner being compensated equitably for the
- 16 taking of lands through the classification of wetlands;
- 17 viii. The final interagency manual being revised with greater consideration
- 18 for the food and fiber producers of the United States;
- 19 ix. Wetlands of less than one acre not falling under any jurisdiction of state
- 20 or federal agencies;
- 21 x. When dealing with farmland, primary consideration being given to the
- 22 economic and environmental impact on agriculture;
- 23 xi. In cases where adjacent landowners are not affected, landowners being
- 24 able to move water within the contiguous boundaries of their own
- 25 property without regulation, interference, or easements;
- 26 xii. Water outside the boundary of a wetland being considered sheetwater
- 27 and not subject to jurisdiction by the state or federal agencies;
- 28 xiii. NRCS and FSA cooperating with state and local agencies on wetland
- 29 mitigation;
- 30 xiv. The right to remove excess water from wetlands under federal
- 31 easements, and make physical adjustments pursuant to such removal, in

- 1 amounts that correspond to excess moisture removal from productive
2 farmland into the same wetland under easement; and
3 xv. Restoration of wetlands that have been damaged by excessive
4 precipitation.

5 **U. SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE**

6 We support programs that promote soil health and sustainable farming practices as
7 defined by the USDA definition of sustainable agriculture. Sustainable agricultural
8 practices enhance environmental quality; make the most efficient use of nonrenewable
9 and on-farm resources; sustain the economic viability of agriculture operations;
10 enhance the quality of life for farmers, ranchers, and society; and where appropriate,
11 integrate natural biological cycles and controls to protect the resource base on which
12 agriculture depends.

13 **V. REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE**

14 Regenerative agriculture is a system of farming and ranching principles and
15 practices that increase biodiversity, enriches the soil, purifies watersheds, and all while
16 increasing in-farm fertility, which may help producers save money by reducing input
17 expenses. Regenerative practices include no tillage to minimal tillage, diverse cover
18 crops, multiple crop rotations, agroforestry and silvopasture, all of which should be
19 augmented by holistic grazing guidelines.

20 We support:

- 21 1. Incentives for regenerative farming and ranching practices that sequester
22 more carbon, improve soil health and productivity, slow erosion and build
23 up topsoil, and increase water infiltration;
- 24 2. Development of new markets for farmers and ranchers who are currently
25 practicing regenerative farming and ranching or who are transitioning to
26 regenerative practices;
- 27 3. Applied research on soil health in regenerative food production systems;
- 28 4. The making and use of compost to invigorate beneficial microbial soil life
29 while recycling nutrients back onto the farm;
- 30 5. Educational, legislative, policy, and advocacy efforts aimed at furthering the
31 practice of regenerative;

6. Efforts that incentivize regenerative agriculture practices, whether administered through the government, private entities, or the marketplace, so that the financial burden of implementing them is not borne solely by family farmers, but by all that benefit;
7. Public and private funding to pay farmers to develop healthier soil, as determined by such metrics as depth of soil aggregate formation. Soil aggregates are foundational to the function of watersheds and the longevity of infrastructure, and their tending requires adaptive management by the farmer; and
8. We encourage USDA, private industry, other relevant agencies, and collaborative efforts among farmers to explore economic opportunities for family farmers who utilize ecosystem services which improve resiliency, increase soil health, and promote healthier watersheds.

W. PREDATOR AND RODENT CONTROL

We support:

1. Restoring the original intent of the 1931 Animal Damage Control Act (ADC), which mandates the federal government protect the livestock industry from predatory loss. To the extent that an adequate ADC program is not available to farmers, we recommend that a federally financed indemnity program be instituted to pay for crop and livestock losses;
2. Judicious use of control practices being continued on federal and state lands to control coyotes, feral hogs and other damaging species. Control practices on private lands must be done with landowners' permission;
3. Farmers and ranchers being allowed to defend against predatory animals, including those on the endangered species list, on their land by using the most effective, safe, economical, and humane means; and
4. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service assuming full responsibility for any livestock losses resulting from the reintroduction of non-domesticated animals.

We oppose the reintroduction of predatory animals.

X. ENDANGERED SPECIES

We support:

1. All impacted industries and individuals being compensated for actual annual losses due to critical habitat designation;
2. Federal policy establishing meaningful incentives for landowners in the business of farming and ranching who provide habitat for endangered species;
3. Requiring federal agencies to continue cooperative public/private efforts designed to increase the population of candidate species since such efforts have proven successful;
4. Candidate conservation agreements as a tool to lessen impacts to agriculture producers from candidate species that are warranted-but-precluded or listed; and
5. Amending the law by specifying that no species may be listed as endangered or threatened and no critical habitat may be so designated unless the following conditions exist:
 - i. Site-specific studies have been done that find the species occupies or has occupied within the last 15 years, habitat that is declared critical;
 - ii. Cultural and economic impact studies have been done which determine what impact the declaring habitat or listing of species will have on rural economies and rural cultures;
 - iii. Treaty law has been observed by the development of mutual agreements between federal agencies and tribes and other indigenous peoples protected by treaties;
 - iv. Hearings are held within a 50-mile radius of the proposed critical habitat, with all public land permittees provided written notice; and
 - v. Managing any species that are threatened or listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to prevent detrimental effects on working agricultural crops, lands, and livestock;
6. Federal, state, and private entities collaboratively managing the Greater Sage Grouse, Lesser Prairie Chicken and certain prairie dog populations rather than listing of these species under the Endangered Species Act.

Y. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

1 We urge that the authority of the Army Corps of Engineers be limited to its historic
2 role of maintaining navigable waterways, dams, and facilities on public lands. We urge
3 the corps to designate flood control and rebuilding levees destroyed by floods a priority.

4 **Z. NUCLEAR, RADIOACTIVE, AND TOXIC WASTE, AND OTHER HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES**

5 We support:

- 6 1. Enactment and vigorous enforcement of legislation, both federal and state, to
7 prohibit dumping of nuclear, radioactive, toxic, and other hazardous wastes
8 without detoxification;
- 9 2. Development of hazardous waste encapsulation and disposal with robust
10 public input related to siting and construction methods with stricter
11 enforcement of laws on transporting, handling, and disposal;
- 12 3. Banning the use of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and their
13 disposal as land applied waste until research has determined safe levels; and
- 14 4. Legislation that requires companies that historically or currently produce
15 PFAS to contribute to an indemnity fund to compensate farmers and
16 homeowners impacted by PFAS contamination.

17 **AA.SURFACE MINING**

18 With proper enforcement of the law, energy and other resources can be provided
19 without permanently damaging our nation's most important natural resources, namely
20 land, water, and air.

21 We support:

- 22 1. Strong enforcement of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act
23 including hard rock;
- 24 2. Ensuring that land stripped to recover underground resources is returned to
25 its original or better condition;
- 26 3. Public involvement in the monitoring and enforcement of the surface mining
27 law;
- 28 4. Mandatory public disclosure of chemicals used in the mining process; and
- 29 5. Adequate bonding for post-mining reclamation.

1 **ARTICLE VIII – ENERGY AND THE FAMILY FARM**

2 **A. ENERGY OBJECTIVES**

3 We support a balanced energy policy that seeks energy independence for the United
4 States and, at the same time, protects our nation’s environment and recognizes the
5 special energy needs of America’s agricultural sector and its potential contributions.

6 We urge Congress and the Administration to address additional elements of a
7 national energy policy including:

- 8 1. Making the development of renewable sources of energy our number one
9 priority in reducing our dependence on fossil fuels;
- 10 2. Ambitious mandates for renewable energy production;
- 11 3. Equitable distribution and efficient development of energy while assuring
12 appropriate production of food and fiber;
- 13 4. Incentives for environmentally safe domestic exploration, drilling and
14 development to assure a reasonable degree of self-sufficiency and to mitigate
15 all negative economic consequences incurred by farmers, fishers, and fishing
16 businesses by such exploration and subsequent drilling resulting from said
17 exploration;
- 18 5. A balance of energy needs with a sustainable environment;
- 19 6. Concern for the survival of independent oil producers through the elimination
20 of the oil depletion allowance on all but domestic production;
- 21 7. Opposition to federal deregulation of the electric utilities industry;
- 22 8. A stand-alone Energy Efficiency Resource Standard that will achieve greater
23 energy efficiencies, including savings of electricity and natural gas from new
24 building codes, and equipment efficiency standards;
- 25 9. The right of farmers and property owners to feed back into the commercial
26 energy grid at equitable rates. Farmers should be encouraged to utilize both
27 agricultural crops and agricultural byproducts in the production of energy.
28 However, we oppose efforts to mandate net metering policies that would
29 require cooperatives to compensate customers who own distributed energy
30 resources at the cooperative’s retail rates;
- 31 10. Country-of-origin labeling for fuels, requiring the secretary of energy to
32 implement country-of-origin disclosure requirements with respect to fuels;

11. The impacts on our rural economy of eliminating existing power plants before they achieve their maximum intended lifecycle while transitioning to a clean power economy;
12. Acceleration of development of fusion energy technology;
13. Ability of states using mass-based and rate-based emissions reduction standards to trade carbon emissions;
14. A national renewable energy standard that would include the United States producing 30 percent of its own energy from renewable sources by 2030; and
15. Legislation that restricts price gouging resulting from disasters.

B. DISTRIBUTION

1. PETROLEUM SUPPLY

To ensure an uninterrupted flow of petroleum products for priority uses, we call for:

- i. The U.S. government to ensure a necessary level of refining capacity to process the crude oil that would be available in a petroleum-supply emergency;
- ii. Crude oil at competitive prices to be made available during an emergency to refineries so the resulting petroleum products will be provided to the agricultural sector;
- iii. Strategic Petroleum Reserve supplies being allocated to cooperative and other independent domestic refineries at equitable prices at the early stages of any supply disruption;
- iv. The reserve being used only in shortfall of stock, not price, to avoid price manipulation;
- v. The creation of reserves in other fuel sources, including ethanol; and
- vi. The support of the Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) standards.

We oppose:

- i. Efforts to force conservation through excise taxes, and support a continuation of the farm-use exemption from such taxes;
- ii. Excise taxes on gasoline for deficit reduction purposes; and
- iii. Efforts to curtail or eliminate the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

2. ELECTRICITY AND DEREGULATION

We support:

- i. Local regulation of power to ensure all U.S. residents have access to affordable, high-quality electric service;
 - a. We urge the EPA to place more emphasis on preliminary planning assessment with the states and tribes expanding the Visibility Protection Program through the addition of the regional haze concept and to propose a rule that addresses a more reasonable and realistic approach to the issues of regional haze.
 - b. We encourage the EPA to use actual air quality monitoring data and improved computer modeling to determine if a state is in compliance with EPA to air quality requirements for Class 1 areas such as national parks and other designated natural treasures.
- ii. Federal policy that would provide nonprofit power groups with the necessary credit and financial support to set up needed generating and transmitting facilities;
- iii. Electric utilities providing rate structures that offer an incentive to consumers to use off-peak power;
- iv. The development of wind, solar, and other alternative sources of energy in community-based and individually owned systems where viable;
- v. The development of a national electrical grid designed with the capacity to carry renewable energy from the production source to the areas where it is needed;
- vi. Federal and state electric distribution studies on rural electric cooperative (REC) and municipal utility lines and substations to identify necessary improvements and available capacity for renewable energy production;
- vii. A national Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) of at least 30 percent by 2030 that includes a strong local ownership component;
- viii. When siting lines “cross country,” citizen input should be a first priority in the siting process;

- ix. Alternatives to siting lines “cross country,” such as aggressive energy efficiency, demand-side management, distributed generation incentive programs, and scheduled low-voltage improvements;
- x. When new transmission lines and substations are placed, a yearly rental payment to the landowner should be established;
- xi. Fair compensation for farmers and landowners whose adjacent property and operations are devalued by the siting of new transmission lines;
- xii. Farmers with proposed renewable energy projects on their farms being provided with adequate compensation and protections from onerous interconnection requirements;
- xiii. The use of the best available clean air technology when using fossil fuels to even out the production of electricity from renewable sources. The use of fossil fuels, nuclear energy, and energy storage in conjunction with renewable energy sources is necessary given today’s level of technology to produce reliable and affordable electricity; and
- xiv. Consideration and mitigation of the negative impacts on our economy of eliminating coal-fired power plants before they achieve their maximum intended lifecycle.

We oppose:

- i. Infringement upon the existing service areas of rural electric cooperatives (RECs) by investor-owned companies;
- ii. Energy provider overreach where ownership safeguards have not been set in place for the use of alternative energy sources on privately owned land;
- iii. Federally mandated restructuring of the electric utilities industry;
- iv. Development of local transmission lines, which do not ensure financing for low-voltage upgrades, which will be needed for many community energy projects to reach these larger grids;
- v. NEPA studies on public lands for energy transmission corridors without local notification of landowners and local governments at the scoping process;

- vi. Granting eminent domain authority to or on behalf of foreign corporations, state or federal governments for merchant transmission or non-public utility projects, and any new nuclear plants in the United States until safety issues are reviewed and confirmed; and
- vii. Siting transmission lines cross-country when a viable alternative exists.

3. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

We support:

- i. Utilization and adequate funding of the USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS) to provide direct low-interest loans to rural electric cooperatives and their members to carry out renewable energy projects, energy conservation measures, and for rural electric cooperative distribution system improvements to withstand extreme weather events;
- ii. Expanding RUS's role to provide funding for financing renewable energy transmission and substations to community-based projects;
- iii. Assistance to landowner associations or groups to conduct renewable energy resource assessments and environmental impacts studies;
- iv. Full disclosure of all classifications of subsidies received by private utilities; and
- v. Authorizing RUS to restructure existing debt for coal infrastructure projects owed by Rural Electric Cooperatives to finance deployment of wind and solar generation.

4. PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF POWER MARKETING ADMINISTRATION AND POWER GENERATORS

Public ownership has been an essential element in providing reasonably priced hydroelectric power to rural areas in the United States. Access to federally produced and subsidized power must be guaranteed to new and existing public or cooperative electric utilities. We oppose the sale of Power Marketing Administrations (PMA), the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), state or tribally owned dams or other publicly owned power generators.

5. HYDROELECTRIC POWER

NFU recognizes that hydroelectric power is an important renewable energy source.

1 We support:

- 2 i. Continued development of hydroelectric power sites, where they are
- 3 cost-effective and ecologically and environmentally compatible, and
- 4 upgrading of current sites for better efficiency;
- 5 ii. Amending the Federal Power Act to provide preference to rural electric
- 6 cooperatives in the licensing and re-licensing of waterpower projects;
- 7 iii. Inclusion of micro, small, and existing hydro in national renewable
- 8 energy legislation; and
- 9 iv. Funds received from sale of public water that displaces hydro generation
- 10 being returned to the generating authority.

11 **6. PIPELINES**

12 We support:

- 13 i. An understandable process that clarifies when and how eminent domain
- 14 can be used, who has what liability where there are damages from
- 15 pipeline failure, siting standards and routing criteria, environmental
- 16 considerations, and decommissioning expectations and costs. The
- 17 process should provide for transparency in the planning and routing
- 18 process including public input, fair compensation to landowners and a
- 19 process to deal with landowner and public complaints and conflicts;
- 20 ii. Pipeline developers being barred from using non-disclosure agreements;
- 21 iii. Privately owned pipeline companies building and operating a pipeline
- 22 maintaining insurance/bonds to cover liability for pipeline failure costs ;
- 23 iv. Regulations mandating that soil disturbed during pipeline construction
- 24 be returned to its previous condition and farmland returned to its
- 25 previous level of production; and
- 26 v. Adequate compensation for landowners for loss in value of a farm
- 27 crossed by a pipeline, for any future loss to land value associated with
- 28 the pipeline or its construction.

29 We oppose:

- 30 i. The classification of a private, foreign-owned pipeline as a public utility;
- 31 ii. The classification of a foreign-owned pipeline as a common carrier unless
- 32 it can be demonstrated that the majority of the transported material is

1 from domestic sources and that majority of the transported material is
2 for domestic consumption;

3 iii. Pipeline construction across farmland without permission of all affected
4 landowners; and

5 iv. Forcing additional rights of way or leases upon landowners where a lease
6 or right of way currently exists, as this would further devalue the land for
7 agricultural use.

8 **C. DEVELOPMENT OF RENEWABLE ENERGY AND FUELS FROM THE FARM**

9 **1. PRIORITIES**

10 NFU should promote, expand, and ensure localized farmer ownership to the
11 fullest degree possible in renewable/alternative energy development including
12 wind, solar, biofuels, woody biomass, methane, and other technologies. Policies that
13 can achieve this goal are feed-in tariffs, incentives, and mandates for locally owned
14 facilities. We support the efforts of “host” communities and municipalities to
15 accurately calculate the income-generating capacity of potential renewable energy
16 projects, regardless of ownership type, and to establish feeds, property tax
17 provisions, or impact assessments to ensure that a reasonable amount of the
18 economic benefits are shared by all of the local communities and residents without
19 deterring smaller-scale, distributed, community-based and individually owned
20 projects.

21 NFU should lead efforts to educate family farmers, ranchers, and rural
22 communities about how to adapt to the effects of climate change on their own
23 operations, as well as the enormous economic benefits that renewable energy
24 brings to our rural areas.

25 We support:

- 26 i. Expanded research and development dollars and full funding for
27 renewable energy programs and technology;
- 28 ii. The development and promotion of renewable energy sources
29 appropriate to their location and directed toward developing self-
30 sufficient units suitable for farm, home, small industry, and business use;
- 31 iii. Farmer-owned cooperatives pursuing the development and marketing of
32 renewable energy;

- iv. Adequate funding levels for feasibility studies under the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) should be reinstated and cover all pre-development activities involved, including thorough wildlife studies by public agencies;
- v. Incentives for local development and ownership of renewable energy production;
- vi. Development of new markets for cellulosic products from perennial systems;
- vii. Enterprise research to evaluate and develop new plant material selections along with associated production, harvesting and processing technologies to discover and develop new uses for products of perennial systems;
- viii. Research and development on utilizing biomass for energy of all forms;
- ix. Federal support for production of bioenergy and biochar from biomass to create new markets and income opportunities for farmers while building soil health and addressing climate change;
- x. The Biomass Crop Assistance Program and other such programs;
- xi. Economic assistance for family farmers to make agriculture more self-sufficient through increased application of alternative forms of energy and energy efficiency;
- xii. Reversing the trend toward concentration of the ownership or control of sources, production, and distribution of energy;
- xiii. Targeting funds to encourage diversified, community-based, and individually owned energy systems that create jobs and new wealth in rural areas of our country;
- xiv. Eliminating the importation of foreign sources of biofuels;
- xv. An import fee on non-renewable foreign-produced energy, to fund the development of domestic renewable energy;
- xvi. Creation of a Strategic Biofuels Feedstock Reserve;
- xvii. A program to tackle the lack of infrastructure in the expansion of renewable energy. We support many increases in research and development, particularly in the areas of:

- a. Pipelines designated or altered for the transport of biofuels;
- b. Solidifying the railroads in this country to move renewable fuels to each coast;
- c. Expanded use of flex/blender pumps;
- d. Expanding availability of higher blend filling stations/pumps; and
- e. Expanding and creating a network of transmission lines throughout the country to aid in the movement of renewable energy from sources such as wind and solar;
- xviii. Extension and expansion of renewable energy tax credits, including adding high efficiency biomass thermal technologies to the list of renewable energy technologies that currently benefit from investment tax credits under the residential and commercial/industrial sections of the tax code, incentives and loan guarantee programs including a permanent renewable energy production tax credit (PTC) that includes nonprofit organizations as qualifying entities;
- xix. The use of production tax credits to provide long-term financial incentives for wind and solar energy development; Encourage local ownership of wind turbine manufacturing, development and operations;
- xx. Biodiesel, renewable diesel, sustainable aviation fuel, and ethanol blenders' tax credits, and the cellulosic production tax credits and loan guarantees;
- xxi. Policies to create greater domestic production of biofuel facilities and other renewable energy components;
- xxii. Fully funding the BioPreferred Program, as well as ensuring the federal government is a leader in procuring these products;
- xxiii. Expanded energy conservation research and development as well as implementation of programs that encourage the conservation of energy inputs by the agricultural and food sectors;
- xxiv. Working with landowners and other groups to develop a landowner's bill of rights for renewable energy;
- xxv. Research and development on the production of fuels and fertilizers from renewable electricity;

- xxvi. Expanding the utilization of anaerobic digesters;
- xxvii. Funding for research and technical advancement of energy storage systems allowing for reliable and consistent availability of renewable energy;
- xxviii. Renewable fuels being used in all government vehicles;
- xxix. A national net metering standard for systems up to 100kW to help expand the use of smaller wind and solar energy systems;
- xxx. The Community Based Energy Development (CBED) ownership model created in Minnesota and Nebraska;
- xxxi. Renewable energy projects tied to the creation of supply chain businesses in the surrounding rural communities;
- xxxii. Rural energy cooperatives being able to recoup reasonable fixed costs when members choose to use distributed generation but remain connected to the grid;
- xxxiii. Use of the Greenhouse Gases, Regulated Emissions, and Energy Use in Transportation (GREET) model as a standard assessment tool for measuring energy and emissions impacts;
- xxxiv. Net metering from utilities so farmers receive a fair price for their farmer-generated electricity; and
- xxxv. Virtual net metering from utilities so farmers can aggregate multiple electric meters usage onto one account so net metering can offset all electrical usage from one farm.

We oppose:

- i. Efforts by power utilities to discourage distributed renewable power generation; and
- ii. Fuels that are imported or derived from imported commodities being eligible for any tax incentives or exemptions.

2. ETHANOL

We support:

- i. An ethanol program to include:
 - a. Renewable resources that should be established through low-interest federal loans to farmer-owned cooperatives;

- b. Further federal legislation to provide for conversion of farm products and byproducts into ethanol emphasizing on-farm and local cooperative site development;
 - c. State legislation granting tax credits on each gallon of ethanol-enhanced fuel sold within each state;
 - d. Promotion of research on usage and marketing of dry distillers' grain for feed and other value-added uses;
 - e. An aggressive and ambitious cellulosic program, geared to rapidly developing necessary technology, to compliment traditional ethanol supplies of motor fuel;
 - f. Expansion of available gasoline blends to E30 or higher, as supported by scientific data, and the EPA and all government regulators immediately reversing statements and regulations prohibiting, restricting, or implying it is illegal, unsafe, or harmful for non-flexible fuel vehicles to use and operate on gasoline-ethanol blends up to and including E30, or higher blends as supported by research and data, which are delivered through blender pumps;
 - g. Flexibility for new fuel systems to accommodate advances in ethanol blend utilization technology; and
 - h. Research and production of engines designed to run solely on ethanol.
- ii. The extension of the ethanol fuel tax incentive to include the ethanol portion of ethyl tertiary butyl ether (ETBE);
 - iii. Allowing ETBE refiners the ability to claim the ethanol excise tax exemption at the blend point;
 - iv. The use of ethanol as a fuel additive for gasoline formulations to enhance octane levels, with an expanded role of replacing aromatics, in accordance with the Clean Air Act;
 - v. Urging all vehicle manufacturers to actively produce and market flex-fuel options in all market classes; and
 - vi. A strict interpretation on eligibility for small refinery exemptions.

1 We oppose:

- 2 i. Any future efforts to eliminate ethanol tax incentives;
- 3 ii. Liability protection for MTBE producers; and
- 4 iii. Any further use of methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) in gasoline.

5 **3. RENEWABLE FUEL STANDARD**

6 We support:

- 7 i. Expanding the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) to set an ambitious
- 8 mandate for production of biofuels to make up one-third of the nation's
- 9 fuel supply as soon as possible, consistent with grain availability for
- 10 livestock production;
- 11 ii. Separate mandates of production for each form of biofuel, including
- 12 cellulosic ethanol and biodiesel;
- 13 iii. Full implementation of RFS legislation that will:
 - 14 a. Supply clean-burning renewable fuels to reduce air pollution;
 - 15 b. Provide strict anti-backsliding requirements in the RFS;
 - 16 c. Ensure that air quality gains from the reformulated gasoline
 - 17 programs are preserved;
 - 18 d. Provide incentives to expand use of other biofuels, and encourage
 - 19 the use of eligible feedstocks to meet the requirements for other
 - 20 advanced biofuels under the RFS; and
 - 21 e. Establish a separate requirement for a national RFS for biodiesel
 - 22 use in transportation fuels;
- 23 iv. Legislation to ensure that American farmers, not ethanol importers,
- 24 would benefit from the RFS; and
- 25 v. Eliminating the small refinery waivers that are circumventing the RFS
- 26 standards that are now in law and reallocating the four billion plus
- 27 gallons lost due to the small refinery waivers given by the EPA.

28 We oppose:

- 29 i. Ethanol import schemes that would thwart ethanol import tariffs;
- 30 ii. The importation of renewable fuels; and
- 31 iii. Changes to the RFS mandate that are not based on the best available
- 32 science and subject to public review.

1 **4. BIODIESEL, RENEWABLE DIESEL, AND SUSTAINABLE AVIATION FUEL**

2 We support:

- 3 i. A nationwide minimum B5 blending requirement;
- 4 ii. Retailers providing higher blends of biodiesel fuels to their customers
- 5 and urge marinas to offer biodegradable biodiesel fuels to their
- 6 customers;
- 7 iii. Increased research funding to demonstrate the effectiveness of biodiesel
- 8 and renewable diesel;
- 9 iv. Research and development of oilseed crops and animal byproducts for
- 10 use as biodiesel, renewable diesel, and other alternative fuels;
- 11 v. DOE developing a rapid commercialization program for biodiesel,
- 12 renewable diesel, and sustainable aviation fuel;
- 13 vi. Legislation to provide for the recycling of used cooking oils and waste
- 14 greases generated at government facilities to be processed into biodiesel
- 15 for use in government vehicle fleets, wherever feasible;
- 16 vii. ASTM D6751 as the biodiesel industry's quality standards to meet the
- 17 requirements of the railroads, military, and other heavy industry;
- 18 viii. The development of renewable diesel and sustainable aviation fuel
- 19 processing facilities and infrastructure;
- 20 ix. CHS Inc. promoting the use of renewable fuels and providing consistent
- 21 and competitively priced supplies to our local cooperatives;
- 22 x. Canola and other minor oilseeds as an RFS approved feedstock for
- 23 renewable diesel; and
- 24 xi. Expanding the RFS approved feedstock for sustainable aviation fuel to
- 25 include canola and other minor oilseeds while still giving preference to
- 26 the current RFS approved feedstocks.

27 **5. COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS**

28 We support the development of infrastructure to permit use of compressed

29 natural gas as a transportation fuel.

30 **6. WIND ENERGY**

31 We support:

- i. Development and distribution of electric generation from wind, including a reasonable timeline for approval for interconnection to the electric grid;
- ii. Efforts to educate our farmers and ranchers about their wind rights and other related issues;
- iii. Federal legislation to require all utilities to allow community-based wind projects access to the electric grid by actively pursuing power purchase agreements;
- iv. Account balancing of small wind generators on an annual basis; and
- v. Creating a grant program for local RECs who will upgrade their system to monitor the flow of energy both ways within their system to accept net-metered energy produced by a local REC customer.

7. SOLAR ENERGY

We support:

- i. The development of solar energy, including solar thermal and agrivoltaics without excessive restrictions;
- ii. Requiring solar developers to treat farmers, landowners, neighbors of solar installations, and communities fairly, including by requiring reasonable project transparency and fair revenue sharing;
- iii. For all large-scale and utility-scale solar energy development, requiring an agricultural impact statement that assesses impacts on all agricultural production and related businesses and support services, and strong and transparent Community Benefits Agreements or related agreements that ensure strong community investments and benefits;
- iv. Community solar garden models to allow for greater participation in solar projects;
- v. Educating our landowners about solar rights and other related issues;
- vi. Research into concentrated solar and other developing solar technologies;
- vii. Replacing fossil fuel-powered heating and drying applications with solar powered systems; and

- 1 viii. The development of community and commercial solar farms in areas
2 with no current value-added use.

3 **8. RENEWABLE ENERGY STORAGE**

4 We support development of storage technology and infrastructure for electricity
5 produced by intermittent renewable sources.

6 **9. COOPERATIVE DEMONSTRATIONS**

7 We support:

- 8 i. Consumer-owned utilities uniting to develop and demonstrate the
9 economic feasibility of renewable and other alternate energy systems.
10 The economic viability of those cooperative utilities must be taken into
11 consideration;
12 ii. Cooperatives providing consumers price incentives for using ethanol- or
13 biodiesel enhanced fuels;
14 iii. Continued federal funding for the Great Plains Synfuels Plant; and
15 iv. Placing alternative marketing devices for alternative fuels such as
16 E85/biodiesel and flex/blender pumps at every cooperative retailer in
17 the nation.

18 **D. ENVIRONMENTAL PRECAUTION IN ENERGY PRODUCTION AND USE**

19 We support:

- 20 1. The Clean Air Act;
21 2. Regulations that emphasize achieving the greatest amount of pollution
22 control through the most cost-effective measures available; and
23 3. Diesel emissions being reduced in the most cost-effective manner possible,
24 consistent with good fuel economy.

25 We oppose:

- 26 1. Gas flaring; and
27 2. Release of natural gas into the air.

28 **1. FUEL STORAGE TANKS**

29 We support:

- 30 i. Rules for underground fuel storage tanks that provide cost sharing to
31 mitigate the financial impact of compliance on farmer-owned, locally-
32 owned and cooperatively-owned outlets;

- ii. An exemption for farm and ranch use in the EPA rule pertaining to existing above-ground fuel storage tanks; and
- iii. Above-ground fuel storage tanks being monitored and replaced on an as-needed basis as the condition of the tanks change and leaking becomes detectable.

2. WASTE PRODUCTS

We support:

- i. Recycling as a socially responsible activity;
- ii. Programs that facilitate the recycling of plastics used on the farm;
- iii. Federal assistance to help establish an effective recycling system throughout the country for agricultural, post-consumer and industrial waste;
- iv. The creation and use of reusable, recyclable, compostable, and biodegradable materials for packaging of products used on the farm;
- v. Only the environmentally safe use of solid wastes in the production of energy;
- vi. Composting of food and organic fiber waste, and the opening of markets for the sale and distribution of the composted products, especially for schools and other public institutions; and
- vii. Comprehensive baseline and subsequent water testing be completed to ensure our water quality is protected.

3. HYDRAULIC FRACTURING AND WASTEWATER INJECTION

We support:

- i. Holding energy companies that use the hydraulic fracturing process and wastewater injection well owners liable for all expenses resulting from environmental damage, earthquakes and health impacts incurred as a result of the activity and handling of wastewater and other byproducts associated with the extraction process;
- ii. A complete Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), with assessments of health and economic impacts, baseline water quality and quantity and the effect of a diversion of water that may currently be assigned to agricultural, private, and municipal use or under contracted obligations;

- iii. Local oversight and regulation of the fracking process and wastewater disposal;
- iv. Mandatory disclosure of the chemicals, including percentages, used in fracking drilling fluids and wastewater injection. Such chemicals must be identified as environmentally safe before use or injection;
- v. Mandatory monitoring of possible groundwater contamination and oversight of wastewater injection wells;
- vi. Compliance with the Federal Right to Know Act (Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act). Oil and gas well operators must report all hazardous chemicals in use or stored at drilling sites to the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC). The SERC shall maintain a current database with this information that is easily accessible to first responders and the public; and
- vii. Requiring oil and gas facilities using as much produced water as possible prior to accessing surface or subsurface water.

E. LANDOWNER RIGHTS IN NATURAL RESOURCES PROJECT DEVELOPMENT (WIND, SOLAR, FRACKING, OIL, ETC.)

We support a comprehensive policy that protects landowners from speculation and unfair contracts in the development of natural resources. We support the following landowners' rights:

1. Prohibition of non-disclosure or secrecy clauses in leases. Landowners should be allowed to review leases with attorneys, lenders, and other holders of leases to ascertain the relative value of a lease offer;
2. Establishment of a registry of current standard natural resources leases that is accessible to the public;
3. Prohibiting mandatory arbitration clauses;
4. Limiting length of lease options to encourage the use of lease options for actual development instead of speculation; wind and solar power leases to terminate after five years if the project is not developed;
5. Private property rights, including ownership of land and all its attributes above, on, and below the surface, unless otherwise marketed;

- a. We support a regulatory process that ensures the ending spot and direction of directional drilling; and
 - b. We urge legislation to apportion the present real estate tax between the surface owner and the mineral owner;
6. Authorizing collective bargaining of leases to encourage fairness in the application of lease terms among multiple landowners;
7. Bonding and reclamation protections to encourage responsible energy development and transmission at outset of the lease by providing funds up front for reclamation of land after equipment, tower or project life has expired;
8. Prohibiting prior investment as a condition of lease or option of fulfillment;
9. Prohibiting farmland ownership by energy development or generation companies to ensure that agricultural land remains in the hands of producers and retains the agricultural value of the land used in energy development;
10. Prohibiting right of first refusal by developers, which allows a developer to tie up land, and/or reduce marketability of landowner's land without purchasing an option;
11. Disclosure of actual lease payments in contracts;
12. Five-day cooling-off period after a lease agreement is signed to allow a landowner to have a window to reconsider;
13. Ownership of wind, solar, and mineral rights should not be severed from surface rights and ownership of land;
14. Ownership of wind rights should extend up to a minimum of 100 feet above the height of the wind turbine;
15. Enacting a moratorium on industrial wind siting in federal waters until an open public process is developed for siting industrial wind power generation;
16. Landowners sharing in percentage of energy revenues transmitted through transmission lines sited on their property;

- 1 17. Landowner models for developing transmission associations that will create
2 transmission corridors and receive compensation on an annual basis
3 through royalties rather than one-time payments;
4 18. An annual tax credit for landowners with renewable energy transmission
5 based on value of land impacted by development; and
6 19. Landowners should retain the right to determine when they can lease their
7 land for renewable energy projects.

8 **F. USDA ENERGY INITIATIVES**

9 We support initiatives at USDA designed to assist agricultural producers, rural
10 communities, and rural electric cooperatives to improve energy efficiency and increase
11 the use of renewable energy sources including the EQIP On-Farm Energy Initiative and
12 the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP).

1 **ARTICLE IX – ECONOMIC REGULATION AND THE FAMILY FARM**

2 **A. FEDERAL BUDGET REFORM**

3 The federal budget process is not working effectively. We urge Congress to revise
4 the entire budget process to prevent understating the true deficit problem and to
5 provide realistic reduction goals.

6 To cure the structural failings, we support:

- 7 1. Congress imposing the same Generally Accepted Accounting Principles
8 (GAAP) on the federal government as it has imposed on private financial
9 institutions;
- 10 2. Static scoring by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and Joint Committee
11 on Taxation;
- 12 3. A transparent scoring process by CBO and Joint Committee on Taxation;
- 13 4. All long-term credit programs, permanent and long-term improvements,
14 multipurpose conservation, dam and watershed projects, public buildings,
15 highways, and inland waterways, be placed in a “capital budget,” distinct
16 from the annual operation budget;
- 17 5. Farmers’ assessments or trust fund revenues not being used for deficit
18 reductions;
- 19 6. Congress demonstrating fiscal responsibility;
- 20 7. Reviewing all programs. Programs that fail to meet their intended objectives
21 should be restructured or terminated; and
- 22 8. The requirement that new legislation contain a mandatory sunset clause to
23 ensure timely review.

24 We oppose:

- 25 1. Using budget sequestration in an attempt to reduce the federal deficit;
- 26 2. Any proposed agricultural cuts to relieve the federal deficit;
- 27 3. Attempts to reduce funding for farm bill programs through budget
28 reconciliation;
- 29 4. Dynamic scoring;
- 30 5. Reducing the farm bill baseline budget for savings generated through the
31 safety net; and
- 32 6. The use or threat of use of a government shutdown.

1 **B. MONEY AND CREDIT POLICY** *(ALSO SEE ARTICLE V. – CREDIT AND THE FAMILY FARM)*

2 We support:

- 3 1. Consumer, farmer, and small business representation on the Federal Reserve
4 Board (Fed);
5 2. Requiring the Fed to comply with provisions of the Humphrey-Hawkins Full
6 Employment and Balanced Growth Act of 1978;
7 3. Congress immediately authorizing a nonpolitical outside entity to conduct a
8 thorough audit and investigation of the Fed and its policies; and
9 4. Allowing cannabis and cannabis-related businesses that are state regulated
10 to have access to the normal banking system.

11 **C. BANKING, FINANCIAL, AND INVESTMENT REGULATION**

12 From the beginnings of this country, public policy has favored a decentralized
13 banking system, avoiding the abuses that would come from a highly concentrated
14 financial structure.

15 We are concerned about recent trends in bank regulation that have accelerated the
16 loss of independent community banks and have decreased the banks' desire to service
17 agricultural credit needs. It has also reduced community reinvestment.

18 We support:

- 19 1. Re-regulation of the financial services industry and reinstating provisions of
20 the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933, which would prohibit commercial banks from
21 engaging in speculative investments using bank depositor funds;
22 2. The consumer protection provisions and easing the regulatory requirements
23 on small banks within Dodd-Frank;
24 3. Increasing the individual Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)
25 coverage to at least \$500,000;
26 4. Vigorous investigation and prosecution of criminal activity in our financial
27 institutions; and
28 5. Reestablishment of small transaction fees to reduce the abuses of high
29 frequency trading.

30 **D. CREDIT UNIONS**

31 We support:

- 1 1. Maintaining the National Credit Union Share Insurance Fund as a separate
- 2 and independent agency from other federal deposit insurance systems;
- 3 2. The credit union movement in its efforts to combat the anti-competitive
- 4 regulatory tactics undertaken by other segments of the financial services
- 5 industry; and
- 6 3. The right of all Americans to choose how and where they deposit their
- 7 earnings and transact their personal financial business.

8 We oppose any proposal that seeks to curtail services by credit unions to their
9 members under the false guise of regulatory reform or financial soundness. Such
10 proposals are especially discriminatory against rural credit unions that provide
11 agricultural credit services.

12 We oppose mergers between credit unions, unless such a merger or joint venture
13 would benefit local credit union members.

14 **E. ESTATE AND GIFT TAX POLICY**

15 We support:

- 16 1. Estate tax relief for family-owned farms, ranches, and small businesses to
- 17 facilitate the transfer of those enterprises to the next generation;
- 18 2. Creating policy that taxes agriculture estates based on production value and
- 19 not on potential development value so long as the estate and its property
- 20 remain in agriculture production;
- 21 3. Permanently maintaining the federal estate tax exemption per individual at
- 22 \$11 million, \$22 million per couple, indexed for inflation, with an additional
- 23 \$5 million exemption if the estate continues to be operated by a family
- 24 member or transfers to a beginning farmer;
- 25 4. Simplifying the exemption qualification rules and requirements;
- 26 5. Implementing graduated rates with a base rate of 35 percent; and
- 27 6. Allow a one-time per person rollover of the capital gains from the sale of a
- 28 farm or small business into an approved retirement plan.

29 We oppose shifting tax liability from the estate tax to the capital gains tax through
30 the elimination of the “step-up” in basis provision.

31 **F. IRS TAX CODE 1031 EXCHANGES**

32 We support:

1. A study on the impact of IRS Tax Code 1031 Exchanges (Starker Exchange) on farmland values;
2. The return to a stricter interpretation of like kind property exchanges, i.e., agricultural land for agricultural land;
3. Allowing livestock and equipment to be included in like kind property exchanges; and
4. Allowing property owners a minimum of 18 months to identify and complete a 1031 exchange if the property was lost through eminent domain (*also see Article VII.P. – Eminent Domain*).

G. INCOME TAX REFORMS

We support:

1. A more progressive tax structure and oppose a flat tax;
2. A simplified tax code;
3. The full deductibility for the individual payment of premiums for health, disability, and long-term care. Premiums on life insurance benefits as required to be carried by creditors should also be deductible;
4. A limited refundable federal income tax credit equal to all or a percentage of the state and local real estate taxes paid by farmers and ranchers on farmland utilized for commercial agriculture production;
5. Income from a farm sale being put into a tax-deferred individual retirement account (IRA);
6. Annual gift tax limits of \$25,000 per individual;
7. The concept of family savings accounts, the saver's credit for low-income families with net incomes of \$40,000 or less, and other state and federal programs known as an Individual Deposit Account (IDA) that are targeted at low-income savers;
8. Permanent tax legislation for deductions of expenses accrued on the farm and ranch under section 179 of the tax code of no less than \$1,000,000;
9. Tax expensing tools that allow family farmers to elect to deduct part or all the cost of qualifying farm assets in the year they are placed in service. Such tools include adequately high limits of the accelerated depreciation deduction and bonus depreciation deductions;

10. Deferring the tax consequences of a forced liquidation of livestock if it is due to severe weather conditions or other causes and if the animals are replaced within a 5-year time frame; and
11. Equitable deductions for farmers who sell to co-ops.

H. TAXATION

We support:

1. Legislation that would hold multinational and offshore corporations responsible for their full tax burden, including user fees to cover the cost of import inspections;
2. Closing tax loopholes for corporations and individuals to balance the tax burden for funding the federal government;
3. The right of state governments to tax production of nonrenewable resources such as coal, oil, natural gas, and minerals;
4. Reforming U.S. capital gains tax laws to allow tax-free conversion of farm assets in exchange for investments in all categories available to the general public and other business entities;
5. A \$2,000,000 capital gains exemption tax on farm real estate sales;
6. Studying the inclusion of a federal mechanism to equalize the effects of foreign consumption taxes on trade;
7. An expansion to Internal Revenue Code Section 280E that would allow businesses compliant with state laws to claim deductions and credits associated with the production and sale of medical and industrial cannabis; and
8. Extending the Section 199A deduction.

We oppose:

1. Multinational corporations moving to tax havens to avoid tax liabilities;
2. Legislation and court action that would prohibit states from taxing multinational corporations based on the volume of business done in the state;
3. Any taxation for the use of the internet;
4. Enactment of a national sales tax;
5. Unfunded federal mandates being imposed on state and local jurisdictions;

- 1 6. Efforts to prohibit the cash method of income and expense accounting;
- 2 7. A Border Adjustment Tax (BAT); and
- 3 8. Classifying the sale or trade of depreciable machinery and equipment that
- 4 was used in the normal course of operations of a farm or ranch as nonfarm
- 5 income.

6 **I. TAX CREDIT**

7 A properly designed tax credit can encourage new enterprises in rural communities,

8 be a stimulus for encouraging new family farms and family fishing businesses and be an

9 opportunity for retiring farmers to sell their operations to beginning family farmers.

10 We support:

- 11 1. Tax credits, designed to incentivize the sale of farmland, agricultural
- 12 equipment, and livestock, to beginning or young farmers;
- 13 2. Credit being extended to a sale of land or a small business from one
- 14 generation to the next;
- 15 3. Continuation of the investment tax credit;
- 16 4. A federal tax credit for approved conservation practices for non-deductible
- 17 expenses;
- 18 5. An investment in tax credit allowance to farmer-owned cooperatives that
- 19 build facilities in rural America. The investment tax credit should be
- 20 required to be allocated back to the patron-members of the co-op;
- 21 6. A tax credit for renewable energy; and
- 22 7. Tax credits generated through the creation of a conservation easement be
- 23 marketable to those who have a tax liability with appropriate safeguards.

24 We oppose the forced sale of assets under receivership of bankruptcy resulting in

25 tax liabilities that exceed the capacity of asset liquidation funds to meet those tax

26 obligations.

27 **J. COMMODITY FUTURES**

28 To ensure that the objectives of the commodity futures regulatory statutes are

29 carried out, we support:

- 30 1. Oversight and authorization jurisdiction for the Commodity Futures Trading
- 31 Commission (CFTC) being maintained by the Senate and House Agriculture

- 1 Committees; efforts to merge the CFTC with the Securities and Exchange
- 2 Commission (SEC) should be defeated;
- 3 2. Increased farm owner-operator representation on exchange boards,
- 4 specifically on those committees responsible for rulemaking relating to new
- 5 agricultural commodity contracts;
- 6 3. Establishing appropriate contract and aggregate position limits for all
- 7 commodities in all price discovery markets with input from agricultural
- 8 producers and commercial market users;
- 9 4. The collection and publishing of data on the total value of index funds and
- 10 other passively held long-only positions in all markets;
- 11 5. Requiring over-the-counter (OTC) trades be cleared by a CFTC-regulated
- 12 clearing organization and reported publicly;
- 13 6. Increased transparency between domestic and foreign boards of trade;
- 14 7. Clearly defining hedgers and the hedger exemption to only include those
- 15 with a legitimate commercial interest in the physical commodity; and
- 16 8. Studying and developing new research revenue streams such as an
- 17 assessment on agricultural commodity futures contracts.

18 We oppose the adoption of policies that shift agricultural risk to individual
19 producers and force producers to depend on the commodity exchanges for risk
20 management protection.

21 Accordingly, CFTC should:

- 22 1. Guard against insider trading by individuals or firms;
- 23 2. Examine and investigate the role of increasing market power of funds, the
- 24 connections between funds and large commercial interests, the ability of
- 25 these organizations to exchange information and the effects on the
- 26 commodities market;
- 27 3. Ensure there are an adequate number of delivery points for hedging
- 28 participants;
- 29 4. Work in cooperation with other federal and state securities enforcement
- 30 agencies to investigate and prosecute violators of the Commodities Exchange
- 31 Act;

- 1 5. Monitor with special vigilance any market movements that indicate a
- 2 deliberate accumulation of excessive speculative positions that exceeds the
- 3 limited number of positions an individual speculator may hold and to
- 4 exercise, when necessary, the emergency powers granted by the Act;
- 5 6. Monitor and guard against proposals by the commodity futures exchanges
- 6 impacting trading rules and trading limits that would increase market
- 7 volatility to the detriment of agricultural producers;
- 8 7. Continue to monitor off-exchange-traded agricultural options and ensure
- 9 they are operated in a manner that benefits family farmers;
- 10 8. Monitor activity on so-called “dark markets;” and
- 11 9. Have a minimum of three of the five commissioners with agricultural
- 12 backgrounds.

1 **ARTICLE X – RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE FAMILY FARM**

2 **A. RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

3 We support a comprehensive rural development policy that includes:

- 4 1. Coordination and cooperation of the various government agencies involved
5 to better utilize existing programs and funds;
- 6 2. Consideration of social needs, such as a living wage, health care, childcare,
7 education, access to healthy and nutritious foods, and human resource
8 development, as well as venture capital, transportation and
9 telecommunications;
- 10 3. Continuation and expansion of federal and state funding for rural healthcare
11 facilities, hospitals, clinics, mental health facilities, and nursing homes to
12 provide for the health needs of rural communities;
- 13 4. Incentivizing and expanding childcare and early childhood care and
14 education resources and opportunities for rural America;
- 15 5. Research and development of additional and alternative uses for existing
16 agricultural and seafood commodities and new alternative crops and fish
17 stocks, with a commitment to marketing and processing these products;
- 18 6. Development of local expertise, to make the best use of available programs
19 and local talent;
- 20 7. Low-interest loan and grant programs that foster the development of value-
21 added products;
- 22 8. Low-interest loan and grant programs that foster energy efficiency and
23 renewable energy production;
- 24 9. Creation of agricultural opportunities for a new generation of beginning
25 farmers as a central component of rural development;
- 26 10. The organization of cooperative enterprises that retain equity, control, and
27 ownership within rural communities as a proven self-help, home-grown
28 rural development mechanism which builds needed economic infrastructure
29 for rural people;
- 30 11. Access to credit, technical expertise and markets as essential ingredients in
31 securing opportunities for rural and agricultural enterprises;

- 1 12. Competitive grants and producer opportunity payments to stimulate
- 2 research, education, market development and farm innovation that increase
- 3 the farm and ranch share of food system profit;
- 4 13. Revitalization of agricultural communities through entrepreneurship,
- 5 enhanced food security by offering consumers greater choice and access to a
- 6 diversity of agricultural products;
- 7 14. The approval, funding and construction of water projects and waste systems
- 8 for rural communities and native producers' homelands, and increased
- 9 funding for water and wastewater programs through RUS;
- 10 15. The development of farmer-owned cooperative facilities;
- 11 16. Increased funding of loans and grants to rural communities for advanced
- 12 telecommunications, including high-speed broadband to improve schools,
- 13 medical facilities, judicial systems, and other essential services;
- 14 17. Increased funding for loans and grants for rural essential services
- 15 infrastructure;
- 16 18. RUS, Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS), and Rural Housing Service
- 17 (RHS) using local investment revolving funds, grants, and technical
- 18 assistance;
- 19 19. The Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) program to encourage
- 20 and improve the capability of volunteers, locally elected officials, and civic
- 21 leaders;
- 22 20. Incentives for rural business opportunities for veterans; and
- 23 21. Incentives for development of enterprises connected to community food
- 24 systems that lead to farmers retaining a higher percentage of consumer food
- 25 spending.

26 We oppose rural development grants that encourage the establishment or
27 expansion of larger non-family farms or open ocean aquaculture.

28 **B. TRANSPORTATION**

29 An integrated intermodal transportation system of waterways, railways, and roads
30 is of crucial importance to America's farmers. Maintenance of a viable, competitive
31 transportation network within the United States ensures the free flow of farm products
32 to the market.

1 We support federal transportation policy that:

- 2 1. Fosters a balanced competition between all modes of transportation and
3 maintains protections for transportation users in those areas where such
4 competition does not exist;
- 5 2. Addresses deregulation of the nation's transportation system that has
6 reduced the quality of, or eliminated altogether, public transportation
7 services for small cities and rural communities. This trend has been evident
8 in airline services for several years and is now being felt in reduced or
9 eliminated bus service;
- 10 3. Extends the hazardous materials exemption for transportation of
11 agricultural production materials to family farmers and/or end-users, as it
12 relates to the Department of Transportation's HM-200 rule;
- 13 4. Exempts farm machinery operators from Commercial Driver's License
14 (CDL) requirements;
- 15 5. Exempts farm operations that are delivering their own product from CDL
16 requirements;
- 17 6. Encourages development of alternative transportation systems including
18 electric, CNG, and other alternative fuels;
- 19 7. Economically incentivizes individuals to get their CDLs in rural areas; and
20 8. Allows for reasonable excess load permits for commodity transportation.

21 We oppose:

- 22 1. Federal budget cuts that could further damage the transportation services
23 remaining in our rural communities;
- 24 2. Proposals to terminate funding or privatize Amtrak rail service; and
- 25 3. The use of gas tax funds for deficit reduction. Federal, state, and local
26 support must be supplied to provide an integrated transportation system to
27 serve America's farmers and other rural residents.

28 **1. U.S. HIGHWAY TRUST FUND**

29 Money raised by highway excise taxes and interest earned on such revenues
30 accumulates in the Highway Trust Fund and can only be used for highway purposes,
31 with the exception that Congress has allowed part of such funds to be diverted to

1 mass transit construction and subsidies. We support using a portion of the trust
2 fund to repair county and rural bridges that are structurally deficient.

3 **2. TRUCK TRANSPORTATION**

4 NFU believes that regulation of the trucking industry should focus on high
5 quality, energy-efficient and reliable service for rural areas. Honest competition
6 should be encouraged and rates should be regulated to prevent unfair practices by
7 trucking companies.

8 We support:

- 9 i. Trucking industry regulations that permit cooperative-owned trucks to
10 haul up to 30 percent of non-member, general merchandise;
- 11 ii. Review of backhaul restrictions on trucking, while maintaining an
12 emphasis on food safety, to save energy and lower shipping costs;
- 13 iii. The Federal Highway Administration consider standardizing the
14 maximum width, length, and weight for longer combination vehicles
15 (LCV) to help equalize state to state commerce. This should include input
16 from agricultural representation from each state;
- 17 iv. Exclusion of farm vehicles, used exclusively to transport products of the
18 farmer owner-operator, from federal highway-use taxes collected by the
19 IRS, and exemption from any unnecessary federal regulation regarding
20 the transportation of hazardous substances being used by farmers in the
21 course of their own farming operations. Farm machinery and farm
22 vehicles used for off-road purposes should be exempt from using taxable
23 highway fuel;
- 24 v. Increased law enforcement to ensure commerce shipping is subject to
25 traffic law so that community residents enjoy adequate protection of
26 their safety; and
- 27 vi. An hours of service waiver for livestock and insect haulers.

28 We oppose:

29 Any regulations that would provide for the ELD mandate until further research
30 on the unintended consequences is conducted and resolved.

31 The above-listed regulations, as well as U.S. safety standards, must apply to all
32 members of USMCA.

1 We believe family-farm operations hauling their own commodities should be
2 exempt from mileage limitations, commercial driver's licenses, and commercial
3 truck licensing requirements, including International Fuel Tax Association (IFTA)
4 tax requirements and issues relative to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Act.

5 **3. RAIL TRANSPORTATION**

6 **i. Rail Service**

7 Federal rail transportation policy should recognize that deregulation of
8 railroads cannot be treated in the same manner as deregulation of other
9 industries. Continuing rail mergers result in elimination of rail service to many
10 communities and the establishment of a single railroad service to entire portions
11 of the country. Federal policy must provide for government regulation or
12 antitrust enforcement in instances where there is no rail competition.

13 We support:

- 14 a. The enforcement of the nation's antitrust laws to break up any
15 monopolistic railroads and prevent any new mergers;
- 16 b. The Surface Transportation Board (STB) addressing the problems of
17 captive shippers, including:
 - 18 1. Ensuring that common carrier obligations are adhered to;
 - 19 2. Providing oversight of branch-line abandonment, in addition
20 to transferring jurisdiction of branch-line abandonment to
21 state regulatory agencies from the federal government;
 - 22 3. Ensuring that reasonable notice of rate changes is continued;
 - 23 4. Establishing trackage rights to encourage rail-to-rail
24 competition;
 - 25 5. Establishing reciprocal switching within, and for an
26 appropriate distance outside of terminals to encourage rail-
27 to-rail competition;
 - 28 6. Authorizing a maximum rate for a movement to a captive
29 shipper;
 - 30 7. Authorizing, when petitioned, the removal of agreement
31 provisions that prevent short-line railroads from delivering
32 traffic to any railroad;

- 1 8. Enacting a policy that would hold railroads responsible for
- 2 losses due to delayed delivery of rail cars; and
- 3 9. Reasonable rates for less than unit train pricing;
- 4 c. Taking action to avoid a rail car shortage for transporting grain and
- 5 other perishable commodities;
- 6 d. Expansion of regional railroads where local residents deem
- 7 appropriate, using a route that spares productive farmland;
- 8 e. Strict enforcement of the Railroad Regulatory Reform Act of 1980
- 9 (Staggers Act);
- 10 f. Legislation that would provide efficient, affordable, and adequate
- 11 bulk commodity and intermodal shipping facilities;
- 12 g. Funds to finance a survey to determine the most desirable location of
- 13 sub-terminals as well as adequate financing of sub-terminals and
- 14 equipment, including rolling stock;
- 15 h. Provisions to assure continued local control over the movement and
- 16 storage of farm commodities;
- 17 i. Federal legislation that would create rural transportation
- 18 cooperatives and finance programs, patterned after the rural electric
- 19 cooperative program, for railroad cooperatives seeking to preserve
- 20 rail service in rural areas;
- 21 j. Careful consideration of proposals to create utility corridors or
- 22 federalize the railroad beds, thereby improving railroad efficiency
- 23 and promoting more competition among conventional and
- 24 alternative railroads;
- 25 k. "Unit train" loading that provides for pooling of grain shipments and
- 26 is not limited to one-stop terminal loading, in addition to stricter
- 27 regulations and better enforcement of laws to require companies to
- 28 provide proportionately equal service to elevators in the allocation of
- 29 rail cars;
- 30 l. Rate regulations that incorporate provisions to protect smaller
- 31 shippers from rate discrimination;

- m. Continued regulation of freight rates and commodities shipped by rail;
- n. Statutory provisions to govern mergers or reorganizations of railroad lines facing financial difficulty to assure that such mergers do not destroy competition or necessary service;
- o. Allowing adjacent landowners or existing businesses leasing the property to be given first option to purchase abandoned railway rights-of-way, including mineral acres, at fair appraisal value;
- p. Legislation to prevent companies or railroad property owners from charging unreasonable prices for railroad property and lease sites;
- q. A moratorium on all rail-line abandonments;
- r. Prohibition of railroad companies from forming holding companies or subsidiaries for the purpose of hiding assets originally received from land grants;
- s. The expansion of high-speed rail, including in rural areas; and
- t. Economically incentivizing rail providers to reduce the emissions directly associated with the transportation of commodities to create a more efficient rail system for farmers and ranchers.

We oppose any merger between major railroad carriers.

ii. **Certificates of Transportation (COT)**

The Certificate of Transportation (COT) system is discriminatory, anti-competitive, and violates the intent of Congress in its adoption of the Staggers Act. NFU urges the STB to review the use of COTs and the impact on producers and their local elevators.

iii. **Safety**

We support:

- a. Continued improvements to the safety mechanisms on railcars and railways to better protect our rural citizens, including:
 - 1. Requiring reflective stripes to be placed and maintained on all railroad cars;
 - 2. Enforcing lower speed limits going through communities;

3. Requiring railroads to erect warning light and arm signals on all crossings near schools;
 4. On-time implementation of safety mandates; and
 5. Requiring any train or light engine used in connection with the movement of freight being operated with a crew consisting of at least two individuals; and
 6. Mandatory modern safety sensors on railcar axles.
- b. The STB establishing and enforcing rules that minimize the time a train can block a road;
 - c. The STB enacting a policy that will force railroads to upgrade the railway infrastructure as a first step in protecting the public and ensuring the safe transport of commodities; and
 - d. The rail authority being held liable for expenses incurred by local fire and emergency response departments for updating equipment and training to deal with potential rail accidents.

C. PORT DEVELOPMENT, SHIPPING POLICY

We support:

1. Adequate funding to improve our inland waterway transportation system, including funding to repair our system of locks. We are particularly concerned with needed lock renovation on the Mississippi River;
2. The lowest possible user fee for the use of locks on inland rivers;
3. Keeping the Great Lakes shipping channels, including the St. Lawrence Seaway and the twin ports of Duluth and Superior, open while such lanes are navigable, to maximize this nation's export capabilities;
4. Restricting the management of our nation's port system to U.S.-owned and -based companies;
5. The Jones Act;
6. Efforts to deepen and maintain ports in the U.S., especially those that load agricultural commodities; and
7. Increasing the labor efficiency and load capacity of international ports to ensure there is no disruption to the supply chain.

We oppose:

1. Legislation that requires agricultural interests to pay a disproportionate fee for operation, maintenance and construction of deep-draft channels and ocean and Great Lakes ports; and
2. Any excessive increases in the inland Waterways Fuel Tax.

D. AIR TRANSPORTATION

We support:

1. Maintaining feeder and commuter airline services to farm/rural communities to ensure mail and passenger service;
2. The continuation of federal regulation of all airline services to protect public safety;
3. Regulations that would assure that rural areas are not penalized in airline rate structures;
4. The funding and development of lighter-than-air aircraft for the purpose of transportation of commodities;
5. Full funding of the Essential Air Service (EAS); and
6. Building a robust industry to support the production of homegrown, renewable bio-jet fuels for commercial and military aviation.

We oppose airline fees imposed at airports, after ticket purchase, such as a surcharge for checked luggage.

E. RURAL UTILITIES

We support:

1. The RUS loans, loan guarantees, and economic development programs for rural electric and rural telephone cooperatives;
2. Policies that allow for distributed generation that would enable family farmers to provide electricity for themselves and their communities; and
3. Facilitating the creation of high-speed broadband networks operated by rural utility cooperatives for unserved and underserved rural communities.

We oppose termination or privatization of RUS.

1. TELEPHONE SERVICES

We support:

- i. The Universal Service Fund;

- ii. Continued access, maintenance, and improvement to landline (including metal wire) telephone service;
- iii. Expansion and improvement of cellular service in rural areas, including mobile data;
- iv. Enforcement of antitrust laws to address anticompetitive practices among cellular telephone providers;
- v. Reduced regulatory burdens for rural telephone providers; and
- vi. Enhanced 911 telephone services in rural areas.

2. ELECTRIC SERVICES

We support:

- i. The continuation of a low-interest-loan pool program for rural electric cooperatives; and
- ii. The continuation and expansion of RUS grant and loan programs for electric cooperatives created by the Inflation Reduction Act.

We oppose encroachment on rural electric cooperative service areas by private and municipal power companies.

3. TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Access to information, education and entertainment programming in an information age is increasingly important to the quality of life in rural communities.

We support:

- i. A ban on cross-ownership of media that results in higher telephone and subscription television rates;
- ii. The continuation of the e-rate program;
- iii. The development of cooperative cable television systems to serve both rural and urban sectors;
- iv. Adoption of FCC policies that encourage sound technical standards for rural radio, including AM radio, and television service;
- v. Legislation to allow citizens to participate in boards and committees via the use of telecommunications;
- vi. Greater transparency in billing for telecommunications services; and
- vii. Congress reinstating the Fairness Doctrine;

viii. Ensuring AM radio continues to be a free, standard feature in all vehicles;
and

ix. Requiring manufacturers to install AM radios in all new vehicles and
farm equipment.

We oppose:

i. Federal, state, or local governments imposing taxes and fees on services
such as subscription television or internet; and

ii. Proposals that would weaken, reduce access to, or eliminate radio and
television farm news, public service broadcast time and other services.

4. RURAL ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION

We support:

i. Efforts to ensure competitively priced, high-speed broadband and
wireless access to the internet for rural America, at download speeds of
25 megabytes per second (mbps) or higher;

ii. Collaborative efforts that leverage internet-based technology and use the
internet to improve communications;

iii. Net neutrality;

iv. The further advancement of the cell tower and fiber optic networks to
cover all rural communities to support:

a. New technology in agriculture;

b. Faster, more improved emergency services;

c. Access to emerging technologies; and

d. Access to telehealth; and

v. Waiving, for six years, pole attachment fees in areas of underserved
broadband access to ensure coverage in these areas. These fees will
return to a negotiated rate after the waiver period. This will allow access
to broadband companies while not permanently burdening electric
cooperatives with covering all the costs of pole replacement and
maintenance.

F. SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

1. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BONDS

We support:

- i. Each state being allowed a minimum base allocation in addition to the per-capita allocation allowed industrial development bonds, to provide equity among states;
- ii. Judicious use of these bonds to ensure priority is given to long-term, locally based economic development projects within the community; and
- iii. States using industrial development bonds to finance beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer programs.

2. SMALL BUSINESS POLICY

We support:

- i. Federal policy that protects small businesses from predatory encroachment by monopolistic big business;
- ii. Small businesses being given a fair opportunity to bid on government contracts;
- iii. Continuation of the Small Business Administration (SBA);
- iv. Expansion of SBA guaranteed loan programs;
- v. Increasing loan guarantees to 85 percent on all SBA small loans;
- vi. Small-business loan funds being available through the SBA to meet credit-worthy applications; and
- vii. Regulations and paperwork to be administered in ways that do not place an undue burden on small businesses.

3. ENTERPRISE FACILITATION

We encourage family farmers, ranchers and small boat fishers and their local communities to utilize various USDA Rural Development technical assistance and funding programs through the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, Rural Cooperative Development Grants (RCDG), Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG), the Agricultural Marketing Resource Center (AgMRC), Agricultural Innovation Centers (AIC), and regional food hubs, as well as others.

1 **ARTICLE XI – QUALITY OF LIFE IN RURAL AMERICA**

2 NFU urges the adoption of national policies that address the difficulties and greater
3 costs of providing necessary health, education, consumer protection, public and
4 emergency services for our children, sick, needy, individuals with disabilities and
5 elderly.

6 **A. HEALTH CARE**

7 NFU strongly affirms the right of all Americans to have access to affordable, quality
8 health care, with emphasis on disease prevention and access to nutritional food.

9 **1. HEALTH CARE COVERAGE, ACCESS, AND CARE**

10 We support:

- 11 i. A continued effort toward an improved national comprehensive health
12 plan, which includes a public option that allows citizens to choose their
13 own healthcare providers, that provides universal, affordable, and
14 accessible coverage and elder care for all Americans;
- 15 ii. Adoption of a single-payer national health insurance program with no
16 deductible and minimal co-pays that provides comprehensive health care
17 services. Government funds to operate such a system, similar to
18 Medicare, should be raised in a manner based on ability to pay;
- 19 iii. Maintaining the mandated coverage for preventive care and retention of
20 choice of healthcare providers;
- 21 iv. Federal funding for rural health clinics;
- 22 v. Incentives for medical professionals who serve in underserved areas;
- 23 vi. Including health promotion and education in long-term policy and
24 planning;
- 25 vii. Consumer education with special emphasis on childhood education on:
 - 26 a. The benefits of nutritionally sound foods;
 - 27 b. Health dangers of harmful products; and
 - 28 c. Education about the benefits and risks of immunization;
- 29 viii. The effort to educate our communities on identifying the signs associated
30 with depression, and how to help those with depression and suicidal
31 thoughts;
- 32 ix. Increased funding for mental health and addiction treatment services;

- x. Research and education, including increased publicly funded research, to prevent the spread of, and to find a cure for, life-threatening diseases;
- xi. The development, research and use of licensed alternative medicines and practices. Such remedies should be eligible for reimbursement;
- xii. Expedited access to promising treatments for terminal illnesses, including those in trial phase;
- xiii. Increased access to, and use of, palliative care for patients in end-of-life situations;
- xiv. Third-party reimbursement for advanced health care professionals to allow nurses, resident caregivers, nurse practitioners, and physician's assistants to set up clinics and to allow improved access to home health care, health promotion, and health maintenance in rural America;
- xv. Long-term care, end-of-life care, and expanded in-home care coverage being included in any universal coverage reform. In addition, asset spend-down limits should be increased;
- xvi. Continuation of the National Health Service Corps. Funds should also be allocated to communities to provide training and equipment for emergency health care;
- xvii. Self-employed farmers having the same access to dependent care services as those in other industries;
- xviii. Assistance to families struggling to provide care to their dependents, including children, individuals with disabilities and the elderly;
- xix. Adoption of a comprehensive program of federal aid for dependent care, including the use of tax credits;
- xx. Congress opposing tort reform that precludes consumers' ability to receive adequate compensation for wrongful actions;
- xxi. Continued implementation and full funding of the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network;
- xxii. The elimination of any payment or benefit caps including but not exclusive to preexisting conditions;
- xxiii. Decisions regarding patient care residing with the physician and patient, not with the insurance company or government;

- xxiv. Implementation of Health Information Technology (HIT) systems in rural areas and funding for Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) and Community-Funded Safety Net Clinic (CSNCs);
- xxv. A uniform health insurance exchange system;
- xxvi. States expanding Medicaid coverage to additional low-income citizens;
- xxvii. The reauthorization and expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP);
- xxviii. The establishment of cooperative-based health insurance companies; and
- xxix. Federal and state regulation of health sharing ministries and other forms of unregulated health plan coverage.

2. PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

We support:

- i. Immediately addressing discriminatory pricing policies, the ability of providers to negotiate the price of drugs, access to generic drugs and an adequate prescription drug benefit for all Americans;
- ii. Providing rural access to prescription drugs and pharmacy services. Retail pharmacies must have equal access to pharmaceutical manufacturers' discounts, and state and federal legislative efforts are encouraged to ensure equal access;
- iii. The clear labeling of all prescription drugs' purposes;
- iv. The general re-importation of prescription drugs from other countries and repealing the federal law that prohibits it;
- v. Consumer access to safe and proven generic prescription drugs and an end to extended delays by drug companies or the FDA;
- vi. Education, prevention, and treatment for drug misuse and addiction; and
- vii. Requiring that most life-saving drugs protecting our public health being manufactured within federal guidelines, and that no other country produces more than 50 percent of one drug for the United States.

3. MEDICARE AND MEDICAID

We support:

- i. The ability to negotiate the price of drugs for a prescription drug program;

- ii. Expediting Medicare reimbursement to health care providers. All health care providers should be reimbursed at a rate no lower than the provider's actual cost as determined by independent audit;
- iii. Extension of the Medicare program to include the treatment of long-term illness as a covered benefit regardless of age;
- iv. Reducing the Medicare entry age to 55;
- v. Elimination of the "donut hole" (coverage gap) in Medicare;
- vi. The reform of Medicare and Medicaid to enable and encourage doctors and dentists to serve all Medicare and Medicaid patients, especially in rural areas; and
- vii. Payment reform efforts and continued cost-based reimbursement for rural hospitals and Critical Access Hospitals (CAH) for Medicare services.

We oppose:

- i. Any cuts to Medicare and Medicaid;
- ii. Privatizing Medicare;
- iii. Increasing the Medicare eligibility age;
- iv. Proposals to block-grant Medicaid and strip its status as an entitlement; and
- v. Increased use by hospitals of keeping people overnight for observation care status instead of admitting patients to hospitals.

4. VETERANS' RIGHTS

We support:

- i. Veterans qualifying for USDA programs under veteran farmer or rancher status without expiration of that status;
- ii. Increases in the VA's medical care operating budget and allowing veterans to use that budget for private providers;
- iii. Redoubling efforts to ensure all veterans receive localized timely and quality care;
- iv. Funding to ensure the preservation of veterans' rights and benefits;
- v. Rejecting any proposal that would close or privatize VA hospitals;
- vi. Continuation of federal and state funding for existing rural hospitals and nursing homes to provide for the health needs of veterans;

- vii. Programs that aid individuals suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and all mental health issues, including through agriculture and access to land; and
- viii. Agricultural rehabilitation and vocational training programs for military veterans, such as the Farmer Veteran Coalition.

B. EDUCATION

We support:

1. Maintaining the U.S. Department of Education and establishing an assistant secretary for rural education;
2. Continuation and full funding of the Perkins Act at the secondary and post-secondary level and drivers' education programs;
3. Maintaining career and technical education under the umbrella of the Department of Education;
4. A strong national educational set of standards designed to maintain consistency when students transfer schools;
5. Congress to fully fund the federally mandated Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to assist all districts (especially rural districts) in meeting the needs of all students;
6. Ensuring that all youth and young adults are aware of the relevance of agriculture, cooperatives and family farming in their society through adequate funding for coursework and/or other activities required by education institutions;
7. Voluntary Bible-reading and prayer in our public schools;
8. States finding more equitable ways other than property tax to fund public education;
9. Continued involvement with, and active support of, Organizations Concerned with Rural Education (OCRE);
10. Expansion of grants and lower "low interest" student loans to assist students of all ages with the cost of higher education;
11. The interest rate level on student loans should be equal to, or less than the 10-year Treasury rate that is enjoyed by the large banking institutions;

- 1 12. Revising financial aid forms to ensure a more equitable system for both
- 2 urban and rural farm students;
- 3 13. Establishment of a federal student loan forgiveness program for students
- 4 who attend college and subsequently return to rural communities, based on
- 5 years of service to those communities;
- 6 14. The inclusion of agricultural producers in a federal and/or state student loan
- 7 forgiveness program based on years of service to rural communities;
- 8 15. Rural schools being assured their fair share of both federal and state
- 9 resources and support;
- 10 16. Ensuring all adults have the opportunity to participate throughout life in
- 11 meaningful educational and vocational training programs;
- 12 17. The federal Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZAB) program;
- 13 18. Farmers Union members monitoring the implementation of the Vocational
- 14 Education Act in their local schools and state vocational technical programs
- 15 to be sure that the interests of agriculture are met;
- 16 19. Involvement in local, state, and national 4-H, FFA, and other vocational
- 17 education organizations, and we encourage these organizations to link with
- 18 family farmers;
- 19 20. Unemployed workers having the opportunity for retraining and upgrading
- 20 their skills as part of their unemployment benefits;
- 21 21. The continuation of federal or state-funded retraining programs for
- 22 displaced farmers and ranchers and their spouses;
- 23 22. Teaching animal welfare and husbandry, as opposed to animal rights;
- 24 23. Adequate funding for public education;
- 25 24. Schools that have developed courses in entrepreneurship as a means of
- 26 encouraging young people to remain, engage, and flourish in their rural
- 27 communities;
- 28 25. Encouraging rural schools to explore all educational possibilities to enhance
- 29 the curriculum, such as distance-learning courses, which serve as an
- 30 alternative to school consolidation or closure;
- 31 26. The development and retention of remote learning centers to provide a
- 32 broader range of educational opportunities;

- 1 27. Consumer and regulator education on the benefits of healthy soils and water
- 2 in relation to our physical health;
- 3 28. Funding of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) while providing more
- 4 flexibility to state and local education agencies in implementation; and
- 5 29. The development and expansion of school garden programs;
- 6 30. The extension of broadband capacity for high-speed internet to all schools
- 7 equivalent to the services available in urban areas; and
- 8 31. Incentives to recruit, hire, and retain teachers, especially in rural areas.

9 We oppose:

- 10 1. Mandatory consolidation of rural schools;
- 11 2. Excessive testing requirements incumbent to such programs as “Common
- 12 Core”;
- 13 3. Unfunded mandates from state or federal governments on schools;
- 14 4. The use of vouchers;
- 15 5. Requirement of using credit ratings in determining loan eligibility;
- 16 6. The privatization of state and federal student loan programs;
- 17 7. Cuts in student aid; and
- 18 8. The use of federal financial aid for students at for-profit colleges and
- 19 universities.

20 **1. PUBLIC RESEARCH**

21 NFU supports increased funding for public agricultural research. We are
22 concerned by the reductions in state and federal funds for crop and livestock
23 research. The resulting increase in private research has reduced the sharing of
24 information and increased costs of production inputs. Land-grant and sea grant
25 colleges and universities and other public research colleges and universities helped
26 create the technological revolution in agriculture.

27 We support:

- 28 i. Expanded funding for the research title of the farm bill for land-grant
- 29 colleges and universities and other public research colleges and
- 30 universities;
- 31 ii. Expanding funding for farmer-led research initiatives such as the
- 32 Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program;

- 1 iii. Land-grant colleges and universities and other public research colleges
2 and universities focusing on research to increase family farm net income,
3 specialty crops and commodity prices;
- 4 iv. Farmers Union state organizations scrutinizing relationships between
5 USDA grants and the land-grant colleges and universities and large
6 agribusiness corporations to ensure that research by those colleges and
7 universities is in the best interest of family farmers;
- 8 v. Full, public financial disclosure of funding sources for agricultural
9 research projects;
- 10 vi. The continuation and additional funding for all federal formula
11 allocations, such as Hatch Act of 1887 and Smith-Lever Act funds;
- 12 vii. Increased funding supporting land-grant colleges for research into
13 alternative agricultural technologies which would benefit small and
14 specialized family farmers by reducing input costs and by developing a
15 system of sustainable agriculture;
- 16 viii. Targeted research specifically designed to explore innovative production,
17 processing and marketing topics that enhance small or family-sized farm
18 operations;
- 19 ix. Amending the Internal Revenue Code to create a new type of 501(c)(3)
20 organization, as an agriculture research organization (ARO), to conduct
21 agricultural research and increase funding to advance agriculture;
- 22 x. Publicly funded research, findings and by-products of the research
23 remaining in the public domain and benefiting family-sized farms;
- 24 xi. Consideration to authorize the distribution of federal agriculture
25 research funds to both land-grant universities and other post-secondary
26 agricultural educational institutions;
- 27 xii. Long-term research and development focused on soil health, including
28 but not limited to cover crops and reduced tillage in the various
29 production practices;
- 30 xiii. Funding for organic food and agricultural research commensurate with
31 the total level of organic food and fiber sales;

- xiv. Research and development of non-GMO and GMO alternatives crops that are less water intensive and drought, pest, and disease resistant;
- xv. Research and development of perennial crops, including cereal grains such as Kernza;
- xvi. The establishment of multi-state templates for less formal and faster field trials; and
- xvii. Research into the health and environmental impacts of PFAS.

2. LAND-GRANT AND SEA GRANT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES AND NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Land-grant colleges and universities and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) were established with the mandate to help the public learn about and apply to everyday activities the latest technology and management knowledge. This valuable rural information delivery system's role must be reassessed and strengthened to meet the demands of a rapidly changing, highly sophisticated technology delivery system now available in this country.

We support:

- i. Land-grant universities re-envisioning agricultural extension training so that it respects and utilizes the experience of farmers and ranchers and the significant role this experience plays in the science of agriculture;
- ii. Farmers and ranchers being part of the research team;
- iii. Extension training respecting and utilizing the agricultural practices of traditional native peoples and acknowledge the significant role these practices play in sustainable agriculture;
- iv. Education, research, and support of small, diverse farms as well as larger farms;
- v. The ability to earn college credit through continuing adult and extension education programs;
- vi. Agricultural extension educators mentoring low- and moderate-income families to improve agricultural economies by adding value to agricultural products;
- vii. No funds utilized by NIFA being used to carry out political or lobbying activities; and

1 viii. The governing board of land-grant universities be made up of at least 50
2 percent individuals engaging in agriculture.

3 We oppose the consolidation of extension services into larger than single-county
4 units.

5 **C. SOCIAL SECURITY**

6 We support:

- 7 1. Active participation in developing a plan to help ensure the solvency for
8 Social Security for future years;
- 9 2. Preserving a major portion of any budget surplus for Social Security;
- 10 3. Social Security tax being applicable to all earnings by removal of the income
11 cap;
- 12 4. Social Security being a mandatory, universal system to assure benefits in the
13 future;
- 14 5. Continued strengthening and protecting of the Social Security program;
- 15 6. Congress changing laws so that spouses who are equal business partners in a
16 farming operation can collect equally on the Social Security tax that was paid
17 because of that business; and
- 18 7. Congress changing the eligibility requirements for individuals who haven't
19 worked off the farm long enough to qualify for benefits.

20 We oppose:

- 21 1. Using Social Security funds for anything other than their intended use;
- 22 2. A freeze on the Social Security cost-of-living allowance for all recipients;
- 23 3. Any part of Social Security being invested in non-government-insured
24 investments; and
- 25 4. Proposals that would privatize the system.

26 **D. PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

27 We support:

- 28 1. Public and private programs aimed at providing development, therapy, and
29 rehabilitation of Americans with developmental, physical and mental
30 challenges;

2. Equal and gainful employment for individuals with disabilities and the development of special supports for farmers who are disabled and who want to continue to farm; and
3. The National AgrAbility program.

E. EMPLOYMENT

We recognize the need to prepare a skilled workforce that will be required for a healthy, competitive, full employment economy.

We support:

1. Expanding present policy to further training and employment opportunities for all people who want to work;
2. Assistance being targeted to retraining dislocated workers and displaced farmers;
3. A preference for training with agriculture or agricultural related industries;
4. Directing special emphasis to stimulating economic growth and increasing research and development of technology that will generate productive jobs with fair wages and benefits; and
5. The elimination of the Multiemployer Pension Reform Act of 2014 (MPRA).

F. IMMIGRATION POLICY

We believe the growing consequences of a broken immigration system must be addressed in a bipartisan effort that considers the following principles:

1. Our immigration system must be flexible enough to address the needs of businesses while protecting the interests of workers;
2. Immigration is a federal issue that should be addressed at the federal level. We therefore oppose programs such as E-Verify at the state level only;
3. We support adoption of a mandatory E-Verify program only in conjunction with a coherent and viably effective agricultural worker program. The E-Verify system must allow communication among federal agencies for determining status to protect the integrity of the worker and of the employer;
4. As strong families are critical to developing successful individuals and cohesive communities, our immigration policies should prioritize keeping families together to most enable supportive home environments for all

1 children and to not support separation of children from families as a border
2 security policy and to reunite all separated children to their families; unless
3 indication to do so would endanger the child;

- 4 5. Our immigration enforcement strategy should focus on public safety and
5 consider consequences to businesses, workers, and consumers.

6 Furthermore, our broader immigration reform effort should include a path
7 to determine reliably and affordably who is permitted to work, ensuring an
8 adequate labor force for a growing economy;

- 9 6. Immigrants are part of both our rural and urban communities. We recognize
10 the critical role immigration has played in our nation's history and economy;

- 11 7. Immigration policies must provide a sensible path for those who are here
12 without legal status, are of good character, pay taxes and are committed to
13 becoming fully participating members of our society. The legalization of
14 undocumented workers may occur after paying appropriate fines and
15 incurring penalties for illegal entry;

- 16 8. Encouraging any people seeking permanent residence in the United States to
17 apply for citizenship with all the rights and responsibilities that accompany
18 it;

- 19 9. Recognition of the basic human rights of all immigrants and asylum seekers
20 and their safe and humane treatment; and

- 21 10. Immigration and asylum processes must occur in a timely and judicious
22 manner.

23 We also support:

- 24 1. The DREAM Act;
25 2. A fast track toward U.S. citizenship for those immigrants of upstanding
26 character who seek citizenship and serve with honor in a branch of the U.S.
27 military service;
28 3. A pathway to citizenship or legal residency for undocumented agricultural
29 workers that does not restrict their employment to any specific farm or
30 group of farms;
31 4. Programs that encourage career path progression for documented
32 immigrant farm laborers and non-immigrant process of adjustment of status;

- 1 5. Expediting and streamlining the process to allow approved immigrant
- 2 workers to travel back and forth from their home country;
- 3 6. A pathway to citizenship for asylum seekers;
- 4 7. A pathway to citizenship for children of undocumented immigrants; and
- 5 8. Driver's licensing for guestworkers and immigrants regardless of
- 6 immigration status.

7 We oppose:

- 8 1. The indentured servitude of a captive workforce; and
- 9 2. The mass deportation of any peoples from the United States

10 **G. TEMPORARY GUEST WORKER PROGRAM**

11 Farmers require a secure, affordable, and fully capacitated agricultural labor

12 program to ensure farms and rancher can get their work done on time with skilled

13 workers.

14 We support:

- 15 1. Development and improvements to non-immigrant visa programs, including
- 16 H-2A, to help the agricultural community by allowing a more flexible, cost-
- 17 effective, and reliable program;
- 18 2. Program changes which would allow producer-owned cooperatives to
- 19 participate in the H-2A program;
- 20 3. An effective visa system responsive to geographic proximity and economic
- 21 and cultural factors, which acknowledges the beneficial contributions foreign
- 22 laborers make as workers, taxpayers, and consumers;
- 23 4. Controlling the growth of the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR), which has
- 24 generated an unsustainable increase in farmers' labor costs;
- 25 5. A guest worker program that reflects the reality of a farming calendar,
- 26 including accommodations for year-round labor needs and staggered start
- 27 dates; and
- 28 6. Guest workers in programs such as H-2A having the freedom to find their
- 29 own housing with financial support from the employer.

30 **H. EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS**

31 In keeping with the traditional American concept of individual dignity in our

32 democratic society, all older Americans are entitled to enjoy an active involvement in

1 our society. The number of older Americans continues to increase, and efforts must be
2 expanded to continue to make use of their experience, skills, and energy to fill the needs
3 of our society through citizen involvement, employment and volunteer activities.

4 We support:

- 5 1. The energies and talents of retired Farmers Union members and employees
6 being used to strengthen and expand our organization;
- 7 2. The Older Americans Act (OAA);
- 8 3. Experience Works, formerly Green Thumb, a nonprofit organization
9 conceived by NFU because older Americans who had the ability and desire to
10 work were not given the opportunity to do so;
- 11 4. The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), providing full
12 funding at authorized levels and opposing block-granting; and
- 13 5. The development of policies to allow our seniors to age in place.

14 **I. FOOD AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS**

15 It is imperative that our national nutrition policy addresses both the quantity and
16 quality of food available to needy Americans. Nutrition programs should place an
17 emphasis on fresh and local foods to ensure that Americans of all income levels have
18 access to healthy, nutritious foods.

19 **1. ADMINISTRATION OF FOOD AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS**

20 We support:

- 21 i. Reauthorization and full funding of federal nutrition programs under
22 USDA;
- 23 ii. Expansion of nutrition programs to include farm-to-school, WIC and
24 Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Programs, programs that allow SNAP
25 and other federal nutrition program beneficiaries to double their benefits
26 at farmers markets and others;
- 27 iii. Including local grains and animal proteins as approved purchases
28 through the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) and
29 similar federal nutrition incentive programs;
- 30 iv. SNAP and federal nutrition program benefits used for grocery delivery
31 and pick-up services for the purchase of approved food items;
- 32 v. Congress continuing federal responsibility for nutrition programs;

- vi. Maintaining federal standards as well as the USDA's authority for commodity donations to nutrition programs;
- vii. Requiring comprehensive and unbiased research precede any official dietary advice regarding the relationship between diet and health;
- viii. The United States Dietary Guidelines to utilize the abundant and thorough evidence suggesting that Americans should consume a balanced diet rich in nutrients, which includes meats and dairy products;
- ix. All federally funded nutrition programs following the U.S. Dietary Guidelines;
- x. Periodic reviews of federally funded nutrition programs to assess their effectiveness;
- xi. Expansion of nutrition feeding programs for the elderly, including how to use Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) and the distribution of excess commodities when available;
- xii. The ability of consumers to purchase whole, less processed and unprocessed foods as a nutritional tool to encourage prevention of disease and strengthen immunity through gut microbiome diversity; and
- xiii. Purchasing decisions being left to nutrition program beneficiaries within program guidelines.

We oppose:

- i. The privatization of the administration of federally funded nutrition programs;
- ii. The shifting of nutrition programs to state block grants;
- iii. Separating nutrition title programs from the farm bill; and
- iv. Increased work requirements for eligibility in food and nutrition programs.

2. FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

We support:

- i. The Food Stamp Act of 1964;
- ii. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);

- 1 iii. Outreach efforts to extend services to the increasing number of hungry
- 2 people who should be served, particularly in rural areas where access is
- 3 a problem;
- 4 iv. Exclusion of farm loans as income in determining eligibility for SNAP;
- 5 v. Continued development of the EBT Program and education on how to use
- 6 EBT;
- 7 vi. Prohibiting efforts to substitute cash payment for SNAP;
- 8 vii. Programs which allow SNAP users to purchase food directly from
- 9 farmers markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) programs, and
- 10 local producers;
- 11 viii. Streamlining farmer participation in food assistance programs as
- 12 approved vendors;
- 13 ix. Commodity distribution programs such as The Emergency Food
- 14 Assistance Program (TEFAP), the Commodity Supplemental Food
- 15 Program (CSFP) and child feeding programs;
- 16 x. The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), as well
- 17 as including indigenous foods and foods grown on Tribal homelands in
- 18 the program;
- 19 xi. The expansion of federal initiatives to facilitate the ability of tribal food
- 20 producers and processors to supply federal food distribution programs
- 21 in tribal nations;
- 22 xii. USDA making healthy surplus foods readily available to food banks and
- 23 emergency kitchens, bearing the cost of transportation and storage;
- 24 xiii. Federal law that requires commodities distributed for nutrition
- 25 programs be domestically produced;
- 26 xiv. Transparent supply chains and local and regional food procurement for
- 27 domestic hunger relief;
- 28 xv. Congress creating and funding a permanent national food pantry
- 29 assistance program that funds technical assistance and the purchase of
- 30 local foods direct and/or through existing local food supply chains from
- 31 producers for use by food banks and pantries, including permanent

- 1 funding for the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement
2 (LFPA) program; and
3 xvi. The allocation of national resources to alleviate “food deserts,” as defined
4 by USDA, by increasing accessibility to a comprehensive range of
5 nutritious foods.

6 **3. CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS**

7 We support:

- 8 i. Full funding and expansion of child nutrition programs such as the
9 School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care
10 Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Service Program, the farm-to-
11 school program, WIC, Community Eligibility Program (CEP), and other
12 USDA nutrition assistance programs;
13 ii. Congress redirecting USDA to support a school meal program at the
14 federal level that provides flexibility and reduces federal regulations
15 while encouraging a healthy diet, the use of local foods and local food
16 preparation;
17 iii. Free breakfast and lunch under the School Breakfast and Lunch
18 Programs for all public school students;
19 iv. The Special Milk Program for children;
20 v. Congress strengthening and expanding farm-to-school programs by
21 supporting an increase in annual mandatory funding for the USDA Farm
22 to School Grant Program. We support expansion of the USDA Farm to
23 School Grant Program to include preschools, summer food service
24 program sites, and before and after school programs. We encourage farm
25 to school partnerships to increase consumption of nutritious and/or
26 traditional foods while also supporting farmers and ranchers;
27 vi. Increased emphasis on the use of locally produced foods in all
28 government nutrition programs;
29 vii. The removal of soda sales in public schools during lunch hours; and
30 viii. The Geographic Preference rules for school meal programs to financially
31 encourage the purchase and use of local farm products, and to allow
32 “locally produced” as a specification in the procurement bidding process.

1 **J. NUTRITION MONITORING** (*ALSO SEE ARTICLE I.C. – LABELING OF COMMODITIES AND*
2 *COMMODITY PRODUCTS*)

3 The National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act creates a national
4 system for monitoring the nutritional status of the U.S. population and, for this reason,
5 is of great importance to those concerned with hunger, malnutrition and the broad
6 planning for adequate food and farm policy. We urge continued effort to establish such
7 mandated information collection as a basis for sound national policy.

8 **K. FOOD SAFETY** (*ALSO SEE ARTICLE IV.D. – HEALTH AND INSPECTION STANDARDS FOR FOOD*
9 *AND FIBER IMPORTS AND ARTICLE I.C. – LABELING OF COMMODITIES AND COMMODITY*
10 *PRODUCTS*)

11 **1. REGULATORY AUTHORITY**

12 Current U.S. laws are not sufficient to address the complexities of our modern
13 food supply. The creation of a single food safety agency to regulate the whole U.S.
14 food supply, including imported and domestic food, could help rectify this situation.
15 Therefore, we support:

- 16 i. Greater collaboration between the USDA and FDA;
17 ii. Congress providing increased funding for outreach, education, training,
18 and compliance for food safety; and
19 iii. The authority of the regulatory agency to require a recall in the event of
20 an outbreak of unsafe food.

21 **2. FOOD SAFETY STANDARDS**

22 It is imperative that we maintain the high quality of our food supply. This means
23 ensuring high standards for production, processing, and transportation.

24 We support:

- 25 i. Vigorous action by U.S. regulatory agencies to prevent the introduction of
26 bovine spongiform encephalopathy, tuberculosis, foot-and-mouth
27 disease, and other communicable diseases into the food system;
28 ii. A moratorium on mechanical de-boning until the process can be
29 improved to ensure that no undesired portions of the carcass are present
30 in the final product;
31 iii. Opposition to the transportation of food in containers that have carried
32 incompatible substances;

- iv. Protecting our nation's food supply and the rigorous inspection of all imported food, fiber, milk protein concentrate (MPC), animal products and by-products to ensure they meet our nation's sanitary and phytosanitary standards including safe pesticide levels. USDA inspection stamps/seals should be placed only on the individual items inspected;
- v. The development of fairly administered Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) for field-grown vegetable crops which support the biodiversity of farming operations and which do not discriminate against smaller operations. These GAPs should be administered by the USDA, in cooperation with state departments of agriculture. Further, it should be recognized that the most effective method of preventing foodborne illnesses is for rigorous measures instituted at the time that field-grown crops enter processing, packaging, and subsequent transportation and storage;
- vi. National food safety policies that protect consumers without limiting farmers, ranchers or small food processors who sell into local and regional markets. Regulations should be size- and risk-appropriate;
- vii. FDA ensuring Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) rules are science-based, have size-appropriate regulatory flexibility, and do not conflict with the National Organic Program;
- viii. A continued evaluation of the regulations for FSMA to rationally address the practice of organic, natural and diversified farm operations vital to the local food movement, to scale requirements and fees with an understanding of the differences between corporate and family agriculture, and remove from the regulations the needless elements that serve the purposes of corporate agriculture at the expense of family farms, sovereign nations, growers of local foods, and consumers; and request that Congress provide appropriate funding to support the implementation of FSMA;
- ix. Allowing interstate shipment of state-inspected meat that complies with federal standards, and assisting processors who wish to participate in such a program;

- x. Permitting cross-utilization of meat inspectors and meat graders in all federally and state-inspected meat processing plants which meet federal inspection standards; and
- xi. When tracking foodborne illnesses, the utilization of the epidemiological model as pioneered by the University of Minnesota.

3. INSPECTION OF PERISHABLE COMMODITIES

NFU recognizes the need for integrity and accountability in the federal inspection services. Federal agencies must maintain food inspection credibility without adding to grower or packer costs by implementing the following:

- i. Checks and balances to discover and address infractions that interfere with transaction fairness;
- ii. Stiff penalties on violators;
- iii. Improved supervision and auditing; and
- iv. Identification and prosecution of violators.

4. AGRI-TERRORISM

With increased attention and focus on potential agri-terrorism attacks on our nation's food chain, rural America must be educated, prepared and vigilant of all potential circumstances.

We support:

- i. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and USDA immediately developing mechanisms to combat agri-terrorism with full funding provided by DHS. Such mechanisms should ensure the safety of the consumer and agricultural industry;
- ii. Increased cooperation between USDA, DHS, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to establish, expand and continue to determine vulnerabilities within the agricultural and food industries;
- iii. Establishing a USDA public awareness and education campaign for producers;
- iv. Providing federal guidance and funding to states and localities to develop and implement plans for agricultural disease prevention, recovery, and

1 response, based upon already established state animal response
2 activities; and

- 3 v. A requirement of representatives of federal, state and county agencies to
4 notify landowners prior to non-emergency access of their private
5 property. Representatives and vehicles used for access should also
6 display appropriate agency signage and identification.

7 **L. FOOD WASTE**

8 We support:

- 9 1. The EPA's food recovery hierarchy to prioritize actions to prevent and divert
10 food waste;
11 2. USDA's efforts to continue to measure and document food waste;
12 3. USDA's efforts to study techniques for reducing and/or recovering food
13 waste;
14 4. Policies that are designed to economically reduce, recover, and recycle food
15 waste;
16 5. The establishment of municipal or regional agricultural composting facilities
17 to provide a final opportunity to utilize food waste according to the EPA's
18 food recovery hierarchy, and their eligibility for support under USDA's
19 conservation programs; and
20 6. The Good Samaritan Food Donation Act and gleaning bills that enable
21 farmers to donate produce to qualified organizations and to receive a tax
22 credit for such donations.

23 **M. WORLD FOOD DAY**

24 NFU urges participation in World Food Day as proclaimed by the United Nations'
25 Food and Agriculture Organization.

26 **N. HOUSING**

27 We support:

- 28 1. Increased support for affordable housing, with allocation of units to rural
29 areas in proportion to need;
30 2. Development of housing options for senior citizens and disabled veterans to
31 allow them to continue living in or near their communities and families;

3. Acceleration of rural, cooperative, farm-labor housing programs, self-help, and building-site programs; and
4. Expansion, continuation, and full federal commitments to Title V housing programs administered through the Rural Housing Service (RHS) of USDA.

O. LIABILITY INSURANCE

We urge a study into the rapid escalation of officers' and directors' liability insurance costs, especially as they affect our farm cooperatives and nonprofit businesses.

Because of the high costs to taxpayers and the reduced availability of liability insurance, we urge that liability against all local units of government be limited to cases of gross negligence.

P. CONSUMER PROTECTION

As one of the largest consumers of goods and services, farm producers are critically affected by legislation to protect consumers.

We support:

1. Vigorous enforcement of consumer protection laws, including Truth-in-Labeling, Truth-in-Lending, and Truth-in-Advertising, and oppose exempting agricultural lending from Truth-in-Lending;
2. Loan institutions carrying insurance to protect the borrower against failures of the lending institutions; and
3. Continued cooperation with other consumers and organizations of consumers to protect our common interests.

Q. CAMPAIGN FINANCE AND ELECTIONS

1. CAMPAIGN FINANCE

We support the passage of an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to clarify that the rights protected by the Constitution of the United States are the rights of natural persons only; the spending of money to influence elections is not speech under the First Amendment, therefore contributions and expenditures to political issues and campaigns, including a candidate's own, shall be regulated by local, state, and federal governments, and must be fully disclosed.

We support comprehensive campaign finance reform, including:

- i. Public financing;

- 1 ii. Caps on total spending;
- 2 iii. Caps on total contributions;
- 3 iv. Prohibition of unreported soft money;
- 4 v. Full reporting of all types of contributions;
- 5 vi. Eventual elimination of all political action committees;
- 6 vii. Elimination of “527” organizations;
- 7 viii. Legislation overturning the Supreme Court’s decision in the Citizens
- 8 United v. Federal Election Commission case that allows corporations to
- 9 make unlimited campaign contributions; and
- 10 ix. Full disclosure of contributors to political issues and candidate
- 11 campaigns.

12 Until the time this is achieved, we support participation in the NFU Political
13 Action Committee (NFUPAC) as a means for our voice to be heard.

14 **2. ELECTIONS AND ELECTED OFFICIALS**

15 We support:

- 16 i. The federal government’s assistance to local government units to offset
- 17 the cost of election voting machines that are mandated by the federal
- 18 government;
- 19 ii. States adopting standards to avoid uncertainty in voting and counting
- 20 ballots to provide a paper trail that makes reviews and recounts possible
- 21 for election security;
- 22 iii. Barring TV and radio news reports of national elections and exit polls
- 23 until all voting stations are closed in the 48 contiguous states;
- 24 iv. Programs that encourage youth involvement in the voting process;
- 25 v. Legislation that states Congress shall pass no law that applies to a citizen
- 26 of the United States that it does not apply to itself as an institution or to
- 27 individual senators or representatives, or vice versa, except as it relates
- 28 to national security issues and/or their personal security;
- 29 vi. Voting, vote counting, and post-election auditing conducted with
- 30 electronic tabulation equipment must ensure reported results reflect
- 31 votes cast, and not be reliant on proprietary software inaccessible to
- 32 bipartisan election oversight;

- vii. Legislation requiring political campaigns and issue-based interest groups to adhere to the “do not call” list. Furthermore, this provision should roll over into a “do not text” list;
- viii. Broad enforcement of the equal-time rule;
- ix. Full disclosure of all financial tax records of all candidates participating in federal elections;
- x. The designation of a General Election Day as a national holiday to increase access to voting for all citizens;
- xi. The use of ranked choice voting systems for elections;
- xii. A campaign length limit of six months for all political candidates;
- xiii. A requirement that any candidate receiving federal funds must be invited to participate in major debates;
- xiv. Secure, efficient processes that promote ease of access to voting by all citizens, including mail-in ballots, ballot drop boxes, early voting, convenient access to polling places, and same day registration;
- xv. Mail-in ballots being accessible to voters for a minimum of two weeks in advance of the due date;
- xvi. The principles of the Voting Rights Act; and
- xvii. Mandating candidates who choose to use negative campaigning appear in the commercials they authorize.

We oppose:

- i. Term limitations;
- ii. Practices that lower voter participation; and
- iii. A single, nationwide primary day.

R. U.S. FREEDOMS AND LIBERTIES

Although much has been accomplished to ensure freedom and equal opportunity for all citizens, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, or religion, much remains to be done.

We support:

- 1. Efforts to provide equality of rights for all in every aspect of life. These rights shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state within;

2. Diversity in our communities and stand against inequalities based on profiling and discrimination including age, race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, citizenship, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender expression, marital status, source of income, military status or disability, criminal record, genetic information, or any other status protected by applicable federal, state, or local law;
3. Efforts to remedy historical inequities in access to farm programs and other systemic barriers to succeeding in agriculture faced by socially disadvantaged groups, especially farmers of color;
4. Vigorously defending the right of privacy;
5. Elimination of the abuse of federal agency powers and surveillance of law-abiding citizens;
6. The right of reporters to keep their news sources confidential as inherent in the “citizens’ right to know”;
7. Proper display and respect of the U.S. flag;
8. The usage of “God” on government buildings, legal documents and legal tender and we oppose the removal of existing references;
9. The men and women of the U.S. armed services for their contributions around the world;
10. Stronger enforcement of our human trafficking laws, and we urge local communities to become educated about this growing epidemic; and
11. Implementation and enforcement of U.S. Supreme Court ethics rules.

S. POSTAL SERVICE

It is the specific intent of Congress that effective postal service be assured to residents of both urban and rural communities. Rural America has the right to expect the U.S. Postal Service to adhere to the policy of the Postal Reorganization Act of 1971.

We support:

1. Raising First Class postage rates consistently and concurrently with bulk mailing or Second Class rates;
2. Congress correcting the difficult situation it has imposed on the U.S. Postal Service by requiring excessive advance funding of pension funds;
3. Re-establishment of the Postal Savings Bank; and

- 1 4. Appointing a blue-ribbon panel to investigate the expansion and creation of
- 2 new services offered by the USPS to facilitate economic growth and
- 3 development in rural and inner-city communities.

4 We oppose:

- 5 1. Closing small post offices solely because they are operating at a deficit;
- 6 2. Changes in postal policy that will result in reduced, less frequent or
- 7 insufficient mail services for rural areas including the elimination or
- 8 reduction in parcel post delivery for rural areas or increased rural postal
- 9 rates; and
- 10 3. Privatization of the U.S. postal system, including the establishment of
- 11 contracted rural routes.

12 **T. RURAL EMERGENCY SERVICES AND MANAGEMENT PLANNING**

13 Agricultural communities face potential threats and emergencies (i.e., medical,

14 biological, natural, and environmental disasters); therefore, we support:

- 15 1. The implementation of federal, state, and local emergency management
- 16 plans;
- 17 2. Opportunities for citizens to become informed about and implement
- 18 preventative steps;
- 19 3. The dedicated volunteers who serve as emergency medical technicians,
- 20 firefighters, and law enforcement reserves;
- 21 4. Training schedules that recognize the time commitments of the volunteers;
- 22 5. Current laws that allow pre-hospital providers to perform services under a
- 23 doctor's written or verbal protocol;
- 24 6. Development, preservation, and expansion of the rural 911 emergency
- 25 response systems; and
- 26 7. Prohibiting cuts and the elimination of any useful programs that benefit first
- 27 responders in rural areas;
- 28 8. Increased funding for rural emergency services, training, and equipment;
- 29 and
- 30 9. Increased funding for mental health support for rural and volunteer
- 31 emergency services personnel.

32 **U. VOTING DISTRICTS**

1 **1. REDISTRICTING**

2 We support:

- 3 i. A nonpartisan redistricting process when voting districts are redrawn;
- 4 ii. The establishment of a nonpartisan redistricting process by states that
- 5 uses computer software to generate a redistricting map that does not
- 6 take into account any political information;
- 7 iii. The removal of politics from any redistricting process; and
- 8 iv. Voting districts being drawn according to the following criteria:
- 9 a. Population equality;
- 10 b. Contiguity;
- 11 c. Unity of counties and municipalities; and
- 12 d. Compactness.

13 We oppose:

- 14 i. Current legislators drawing district lines; and
- 15 ii. Gerrymandering of voting districts to dilute rural representation or give
- 16 advantage to any political party.

17 **2. STATE LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS**

18 We support efforts to allow for the apportionment of one of the two legislative

19 bodies of bicameral state legislatures based upon scientific geographical areas and

20 the other body apportioned based upon population.

21 The U.S. Congress follows this approach to determining the composition of the

22 Senate and the House of Representatives and the same method should be allowed

23 for state legislatures. This method would duplicate the system defined in the U.S.

24 Constitution for the Congress.

25 Since the Supreme Court ruling in Reynolds v. Sims in 1964, state legislatures

26 have been forced to apportion both bodies in a bicameral legislature based solely

27 upon population under the “one person, one vote” theory. This has led to a decline in

28 the ability of citizens in rural areas to be effectively represented in the state

29 legislatures. Declining rural populations have significantly changed the composition

30 of most state legislatures to the detriment of rural citizens, with the interests of

31 citizens in rural areas being underrepresented in the legislative process.

1 **ARTICLE XII – FAMILY FARMERS AND THEIR ORGANIZATION**

2 National Farmers Union should strive to bring a broad understanding of the
3 humanities and sense of place to the public to perpetuate the spirit of cooperation,
4 education, and community upon which our organization was founded. Realization of
5 democratic aims and ideals requires citizen participation in the processes of
6 government as individuals and as members of people-oriented movements and
7 organizations.

8 NFU serves its members by providing an organizational structure in which they can
9 participate more effectively in the processes of our society. The objectives of the
10 Farmers Union challenge us to make the organization strong and effective. To
11 accomplish these goals, we must:

- 12 1. Require dedicated efforts of officers, leaders, and grassroots members;
- 13 2. Encourage participation of family members in this effort;
- 14 3. Encourage gender balance on all committees, boards and in all offices, from
15 the local to the national level, within our organization;
- 16 4. Encourage qualified individuals, regardless of age, race, color, religion,
17 national origin, ethnicity, citizenship, immigration status, sexual orientation,
18 gender, gender expression, marital status, source of income, military status
19 or disability, criminal record, genetic information, or any other status
20 protected by applicable federal, state, or local law, to serve on all
21 committees, boards, and in all offices;
- 22 5. Urge members to become more active in their own organization and local
23 cooperatives, and in state, regional, and national public life. Active
24 participation can best be inspired when attention is paid to:
 - 25 i. The study of issues;
 - 26 ii. Decision-making within the organization;
 - 27 iii. Carrying out group efforts to implement policy;
 - 28 iv. Attracting more members into the organization; and
 - 29 v. Promoting the use of the business services associated with Farmers
30 Union.

31 NFU must take the lead on educating policymakers and the public on the real cost of
32 corporate welfare.

1 NFU should initiate and work with other organizations to educate the public on the
2 important issues of our NFU policy. NFU should allow for each state to continue
3 teaching the history of NFU, their state Farmers Union and agriculture in their
4 respective state.

5 **A. EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

6 **1. SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS**

7 Special sessions should be held at all Farmers Union levels on issues that are of
8 special concern at a particular time. Seminars should also be directed to special
9 groups interested in farm cooperatives or particular farm commodities.

10 State organizations are encouraged to include among their educational
11 activities: camps for youth and adults, legislative workshops, leadership training
12 institutes, and other events, especially on timely issues.

13 **2. FARMERS UNION YOUTH PROGRAMS**

14 Its strong national and state youth programs make the Farmers Union unique
15 among farm organizations. The highest priority and support should be given by
16 national and state Farmers Union leadership to the Farmers Union youth programs.
17 Farmers Union youth must be prepared to assume eventual leadership of our
18 organization through the following methods:

- 19 i. Greater encouragement for Farmers Union youth to attain positions of
20 responsibility within the organization;
- 21 ii. Special emphasis given to ongoing study programs, camps, All-States
22 Camps and seminars;
- 23 iii. Increased involvement of youth in the organization's decision-making
24 process, group action and conventions;
- 25 iv. Frequently updated Farmers Union educational materials and texts for
26 youth leaders;
- 27 v. Recognition of state and national youth leaders who have given of
28 themselves in building the organization's youth programs as well as the
29 youth that are involved in the organization's youth programs;
- 30 vi. Action from state organizations to encourage young people to remain
31 active in Farmers Union as they become adults; and

- 1 vii. Formation of a collegiate Farmers Union chapter in each member state
2 and holding a national collegiate conference no less than once annually.
3 We support more activities for young adults to inform them on
4 involvements in Farmers Union.

5 **3. FARMERS UNION YOUNG FARMER PROGRAM**

6 Through its education program, the national organization, in conjunction with
7 state Farmers Unions, should continue to develop its beginning farmer leadership
8 programs upon the principles of cooperation, education and legislation to assist
9 those interested in family agriculture and to develop community.

10 **4. ALL-STATES CAMP**

11 It is imperative that we maintain a robust youth camp program. All-States must
12 build on the important work of individual state camps, while also serving as an
13 opportunity for states without formal camp programs. All-States Camp is not only a
14 highlight of our youth program, but also represents the time that young adults have
15 become true participants in NFU. We urge that every effort be made to continue this
16 opportunity.

17 **5. FARMERS UNION EDUCATION CENTER**

18 Any monies from the sale of this facility shall be invested with proceeds used to
19 continue education programs at NFU and state associations.

20 **B. COMMUNICATIONS**

21 Communications within the organization, and with the media and public, are vital to
22 promote and support Farmers Union activities and to call attention to the organization's
23 goals. We encourage members and others to utilize all NFU communications tools.

24 **C. FARMERS UNION LEGISLATIVE BUDGET FUND**

25 The NFU Legislative Budget Fund is an important source of support for the overall
26 legislative staff effort. Individual Farmers Union members, local and county units,
27 affiliated cooperatives and other interested groups should give increasing support to
28 this cause.

29 **D. POLITICAL EFFECTIVENESS**

30 Political education should be continuous.

1 Discussions of relevant political issues should be carried on throughout the
2 organization with maximum opportunities for members to participate in efforts to
3 influence political decisions.

4 The financial aspects of political action should not be ignored. Members should
5 consider being more supportive of NFUPAC. Additionally, as a collective effort, we
6 encourage state organizations to help collect a dollar per member per year. Candidates
7 should be given support if, in the judgment of members, they regard Farmers Union
8 recommendations favorable.

9 Members have a right to know the voting records of members of state legislatures
10 and Congress on issues which Farmers Union has clearly indicated a position, and,
11 therefore, the national organization and state Farmers Unions should continue to
12 supply such information to their members.

13 In view of the steady decline in rural populations and of those directly involved in
14 agriculture, it has become even more important for our national and state organizations
15 to build alliances with consumer groups, other agricultural organizations, urban
16 legislators, non-farmer rural residents and leaders to leverage our political
17 effectiveness.

18 **E. MEMBERSHIP EXPANSION**

19 Growing our organization should be our number one priority. The best hope for
20 family agriculture is for producers to join together to build the Farmers Union.

21 We encourage the expansion of our organization and affiliate memberships for like-
22 minded organizations and ventures. *(Additional information can be found at*
23 www.nfu.org)

24 We encourage individual state organizations to make membership growth a
25 priority. Each state should establish a specific membership plan of action. Farmers
26 Union members should be encouraged to sign up new members. A special emphasis
27 should be made to ensure that all cooperative patrons and board members are
28 members of Farmers Union.

29 We are encouraged by the efforts of national and state Farmers Union organizations
30 in development of new programs and services. Special emphasis should be made to
31 ensure that participants in these programs and services are members in their respective
32 state Farmers Union organization.

1 **F. MEMBERSHIP BUDGET INFORMATION**

2 For information on the Farmers Union budget, members are encouraged to contact
3 their state president. A complete comparative written financial report shall be given to
4 delegates at the start of the NFU Convention.

5 **G. FARMERS UNION RELATED SERVICES**

6 Farmers Union business services, whether in marketing or providing inputs and
7 services, are important to the members and the organization. Cooperatives which work
8 with the Farmers Union in its program for agriculture deserve the loyalty of the
9 members in the areas served.

10 Expansion and improvement of the NFU insurances and business services will be
11 important to agriculture in the time ahead. Therefore, close working relationships are
12 essential.

13 The affiliation of Farmers Union cooperatives and insurances to the Farmers
14 Educational and Cooperative Union of America is paramount to any other affiliations
15 because such activities have been built by Farmers Union members as components of an
16 organization of, by, and for rural families.

17 **H. COOPERATION WITH RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS**

18 NFU has a long history of cooperation with religious organizations on many issues
19 of common concern.

20 We believe our nation is strong because its many diverse religious bodies bring their
21 moral viewpoints to bear on public policy. We pledge our continuing cooperation to this
22 common purpose.

23 **I. COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

24 NFU should continue to seek and explore opportunities to work with other
25 organizations at the local, state, and national levels to advance the economic situation of
26 family-scale operators.

27 We have worked aggressively to further build alliances and coalitions with diverse
28 interests including commodity, rural interest, consumer, labor, minority,
29 environmental, conservation, sustainable agriculture, health and nutrition, energy and
30 other groups not typically involved in the nation's farm policy debate.

1 The information shared in those coalitions and alliances has shown that we often
2 have much more in common with those primarily concerned with consumer,
3 environmental and social matters than we have differences.

4 NFU should designate representatives, either by appointment or volunteer, to form
5 a farmer-labor solidarity commission. The commission should discuss policy,
6 campaigns, and the common interests of farmers and labor unions.

7 It is in the best interest of family farmers that NFU continues this practice of seeking
8 allies among those who may not be directly associated with agriculture.

9 We support the development of both state and national contract grower
10 associations to improve the welfare of contract growers. Benefits will be realized as a
11 result of this mutually supportive relationship, including the establishment of a far-
12 reaching precedent likely to impact future contract production of poultry, hogs, cattle
13 and other commodities.

14 **J. COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

15 NFU shall make efforts to assist in the development of cooperatives to benefit its
16 members and the rural American economy. Efforts shall be made both legislatively and
17 through active support of state organizations and other groups seeking knowledge of
18 cooperative principles and law.

19 **K. POLICY DEBATE**

20 During NFU convention policy debate, delegates are encouraged to voice their
21 opinions with passion, vigor, and respect for all the farmers in our organization in ways
22 that value the diversity of their farms, including their location, their size of operation,
23 and their production methods.

24 Farmers Union policy debate is best when it is pragmatic, jovial, and respectful. Our
25 work is practical, serious, and full of comradery. Policy debate is intended to build our
26 organization by working together. Our cooperative spirit is real and at full strength
27 during policy debate.

Glossary

1031 exchange – also known as a Starker exchange or a tax-deferred exchange; permits investment property owners to sell a property and defer tax payments by reinvesting the proceeds into a “like-kind” investment property or properties. A 1031 exchange is enabled by Section 1031 in the Internal Revenue Code.

527 organization – tax-exempt organizations primarily utilized to influence political elections. The structure of a 527 allows unlimited financial contributions and are typically not regulated by the Federal Election Commission or state elections commissions.

AFO – animal feeding operation; agricultural enterprise where animals are kept and raised in a confined situation. An AFO congregates animals, feed, manure and urine, dead animals, and production operations on a small land area.

Aggie Bonds – state agriculture loan program based on the use of tax-exempt bonds to assist beginning farmers and first-time farmers.

AgJOBS – legislation aimed at reforming labor and immigration laws specifically for agriculture.

AGR/AGR-Lite – whole-farm crop insurance that provides producers with protection against low revenue from natural causes and market fluctuations; covers income from agricultural commodities, as well as income from animals, animal products and aquaculture species reared in a controlled environment.

AgrAbility – a program to enhance quality of life for farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers with disabilities. See: <http://www.agrability.org/about/program/>

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) – a federal program, administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), that helps landowners, land trusts, and other entities protect, restore, and enhance wetlands or protect working farms and ranches through conservation easements.

Agricultural Credit Act of 1987 – enacted in response to the 1980s farm crisis, the Act authorized a \$4 billion financial assistance package for Farm Credit System (FCS) institutions, mandated other FCS changes, and created the Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation (Farmer Mac).

Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act of 1978 – requires disclosure of transactions and holdings of any foreign person who acquires, disposes of, or holds an interest in U.S. agricultural land.

Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) – an income support program, first authorized by the 2014 farm bill, that provides payments when actual crop revenue declines below a guarantee level that is based on an Olympic average of market prices.

Agritourism – A form of commercial enterprise that links agricultural production and/or processing with tourism to attract visitors onto a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for the purposes of entertaining or educating the visitors while generating income for the farm, ranch, or business owner.

American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) – an international standards organization that develops and publishes voluntary consensus technical standards for a wide range of materials, products, systems, and services.

AMS – Agricultural Marketing Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA); administers programs that facilitate the efficient, fair marketing of agricultural products, including food, fiber, and specialty crops.

APHIS – Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA); a multi-faceted agency that includes protecting and promoting U.S. agricultural health, regulating genetically engineered organisms, administering the Animal Welfare Act, and carrying out wildlife damage management activities.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) – Refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machines that are programmed to think and mimic human actions. It encompasses a wide range of techniques and approaches, including machine learning, deep learning, natural language processing, computer vision, robotics, and more. AI systems are designed to perform tasks that would typically require human intelligence, such as problem-solving, decision-making, understanding natural language, recognizing patterns, and learning from experience. The ultimate goal of AI is to create machines that can perform tasks autonomously and adapt to new situations without human intervention.

ASTM D6751 – a directive from the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) that dictates specifications for biodiesels blended with middle distillate fuels and how those properties are tested.

base – labor that provides significant support, including material day-to-day operational support, for a family farm, business, etc.

basis – in commodities, the difference between a local cash price and the relevant futures contract price for a specific period.

BFP – basic formula price.

Big Open – also referred to as the “buffalo commons,” and another term for the Great Plains. It is sometimes used in reference to proposed schemes, originally floated in the 1980s, in which ranches would be phased out of the Great Plains in favor of wildlife and tourism.

Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust – a special authority in the 2014 Farm Bill that allows USAID’s Office of Food for Peace to respond to unanticipated food crises abroad when other Title II resources are not available.

Biobased Markets Program – authorized in the 2002 Farm Bill and expanded in the 2008 Farm Bill, it establishes a process for determining eligibility criteria for federal purchase of biobased products.

biodiesel (ASTM D6751) – The American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM)-approved standard for biodiesel, which covers blends between 5 and 20 percent biodiesel by volume blended with petroleum diesel fuel; also known as B100.

blue Box – a subsidy based on production quantity but is constrained to minimize trade distortions for purposes of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

brucellosis – livestock disease, which causes cows to abort calves.

BSE – bovine spongiform encephalopathy; a progressive neurological disorder of cattle that results from infection by an unusual transmissible agent called a prion.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – an agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) responsible for administering public lands.

“buy up” crop insurance coverage – higher levels of crop insurance coverage that a farmer may purchase in addition to a base policy.

Byrd Amendment – legislation that provides for the annual distribution of antidumping (AD) and countervailing duties (CVD). The distribution is available to “affected domestic producers for qualifying expenditures.” An “affected domestic producer” is defined as a manufacturer, producer, farmer, rancher, or worker representative (including associations of such persons) that 1) was a petitioner or

interested party in support of a petition with respect to which an AD or CVD order was in effect and 2) remains in operation. It was repealed in 2005.

CAFO – concentrated animal feeding operation; an AFO that meets the EPA regulatory definition of CAFO, which is based primarily on a minimum threshold of animal units confined at a given site for more than 45 days during the year. Any AFO that discharges manure or wastewater into a natural or man-made ditch, stream, or other waterway is defined as a CAFO, regardless of size. CAFOs are regulated by EPA under the Clean Water Act.

cap and trade – a regulatory program that sets a cap level of permissible emissions and allows firms to buy credits if they exceed the limit and sell credits if they are under the limit.

Capper-Volstead Act – a 1922 law that allows producers to organize into cooperatives without violating antitrust laws.

carbon sequestration – the process of capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂), a method of reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere with the goal of reducing global climate change. Geologic carbon sequestration stores CO₂ in underground geologic formations; biologic carbon sequestration stores CO₂ in vegetation, soils, woody products, and aquatic environments.

CARE International – a humanitarian agency, founded in 1945, that provides emergency relief and long-term international development projects.

casein/caseinates – milk protein that is manufactured from skim milk and used in processed foods and in industrial products.

cannabidiol (CBD) – a chemical derived from Cannabis species (such as marijuana and hemp), or that can be produced synthetically in a laboratory, that is nonintoxicating, and known to have analgesic, anti-inflammatory, antineoplastic, and chemoprotective activities.

CBO – Congressional Budget Office; produces independent analyses of budgetary and economic issues to support the congressional budget process.

CBOT – Chicago Board of Trade.

CCC – Commodity Credit Corporation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture; government-owned and operated entity that was created to stabilize, support, and

protect farm income and prices; also helps maintain balanced and adequate supplies of agricultural commodities and aids in their orderly distribution.

Certificate of Transportation (COT) – a futures contract issued by railroads to grain customers as a guarantee to present empty covered hoppers for loading at a specific location with an option to lock in price.

CFTC – Commodity Futures Trading Commission; has regulatory oversight of U.S. futures trading.

CHS – the forerunner of CHS Inc. Cenex Harvest States was formed in 1998 by a merger between two regional cooperatives, Cenex and Harvest States Cooperatives. Cenex Harvest States changed its legal name to CHS Inc. effective August 5, 2003.

climate change – refers to significant changes in average conditions (such as temperature, precipitation, wind patterns, and other aspects of climate) that occur over the long-term; these changes can be caused by natural variability in climate over time, but since the 1800s, changes have been primarily driven by human activity; not synonymous with global warming, which is a narrower term and just one way in which climate is affected by rising concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Codex Alimentarius – a commission created in 1963 by FAO and WHO to develop food standards, guidelines, and related texts such as codes of practice under the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.

Colony Collapse Disorder – the phenomenon in which a majority of worker bees in a colony disappear and abandon a queen, plenty of food and a few nurse bees to care for the remaining immature bees and the queen.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) – traditionally consists of a community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of food production; CSA models are diverse and has been adapted to fit a variety of direct marketing opportunities.

conservation allotment – a BLM allotment or service permit where the base property is purchased or leased by an entity that has no intention of grazing animals on said allotment or permit.

contract grower – a person who will grow or raise a commodity owned by a processor or meatpacker. The grower provides the labor and facility; other production inputs

including feed, medicine and the animals are provided by the integrator, processor, or meatpacker.

cooperative development center – entities that focus on providing technical assistance to groups that wish to organize cooperative, or to existing cooperatives.

cottage good – non-potentially hazardous food products that are unlikely to grow harmful bacteria or other toxic microorganisms at room temperature.

countervailing duties (CVD) – specific duties imposed on imports to offset the benefits of subsidies to producers or exporters in the exporting country. The executive branch of the U.S. government has been legally empowered since the 1890s to impose countervailing duties in amounts equal to any “bounties” or “grants” reflected in products imported into the United States.

CRP – Conservation Reserve Program, administered by USDA FSA; in exchange for a yearly rental payment, landowners enrolled in CRP remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that improve environmental health and quality; the long-term goal of the program is to re-establish valuable land cover to help improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat.

CSP – Conservation Stewardship Program, administered by USDA NRCS; helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resource concerns.

dark market – secretive, unregulated (though often technically legal) trading in commodity futures.

decoupling – the removal of the link between the receipt of a direct payment and the production of a specific product.

dry matter intake (DMI) – the amount of feed a cow consumes per day on a moisture-free basis.

E15 – gasoline blend consisting of 15 percent ethanol, approved for use in 2001 model year and newer vehicles.

E85 filling station – a station capable of handling up to an 85 percent ethanol blend.

ecosystem services – the environmental benefits that ecosystems provide, including clean water and air, flood prevention, healthy soils, and wildlife habitat. When ecosystem services can be measured and quantified – such as the amount of carbon

stored in soil, improvements in water quality, or habitat creation – they can be bought and sold through markets known as ecosystem services markets.

Endangered Species Act (ESA) – administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Commerce Department’s National Marine Fisheries Service, with the purpose of protecting and recovering imperiled species and the ecosystems upon which they depend.

EPA – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentive Program, a program administered by USDA NRCS; a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers and non-industrial forest managers to address natural resource concerns.

Essential Air Service (EAS) – a program intended to guarantee that small communities that were served by certificated air carriers before airline deregulation maintain a minimal level of scheduled air service.

ETBE – ethyl tertiary butyl ether, a renewable gasoline oxygenate, which uses ethanol as a feedstock.

Fair Food Program – the “Fair Food Program” describes itself as “a unique partnership among farmers, farmworkers, and retail food companies that ensures humane wages and working conditions for the people who feed our families.” It is a program of the Fair Food Standards Council and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers. More at <http://fairfoodprogram.org>.

fairness doctrine – a tenet of licensed broadcasting that ensures a reasonable opportunity for the airing of conflicting viewpoints on controversial issues.

family farm (size definitions) –USDA’s Economic Research Service (ERS) provides a definition based on measured by annual gross cash farm income (GCFI), a measure of the farm's revenue (before deducting expenses) that includes sales of crops and livestock, payments made under agricultural federal programs, and other farm-related cash income including fees from production contracts; small family farms (GFCI less than \$350,000), midsize family farms (GCFI between \$350,000 and \$999,999), and large-scale family farms (GCFI of \$1,000,000 or more), including large farms (GCFI between \$1,000,000 and \$4,999,999) and very large farms (farms with GCFI of \$5,000,000 or more).

Farmer Mac – Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation; government-sponsored enterprise with the mission of providing a secondary market for agricultural real estate mortgage loans, rural housing mortgage loans, and rural utility cooperative loans.

farmers market – a public, recurring assembly of farmers or their representatives selling local agricultural products that they have grown, raised, or produced, directly to the consumer. Such markets may include other products, which reasonably serve the public or enhance the market's diversity.

FAS – Foreign Agricultural Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture; links U.S. agriculture to the world to enhance export opportunities and global food security.

FCIC – Federal Crop Insurance Corporation; a wholly owned government corporation that administers the Federal crop insurance program and housed at the Risk Management Agency (RMA) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

FDIC – Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation; independent agency created by congress to maintain stability and public confidence in the nation's financial system.

Fed – Federal Reserve Board.

FIFRA – Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, which provides for federal regulation of pesticide distribution, sale, and use.

finfish – a true fish, distinguished from shellfish.

fishers – a person who catches fish for a living or for sport.

flex pump – a filling station fuel pump that allows consumers to select the desired blend of gasoline and ethanol (also known as a blender pump).

Flex-fuel vehicles – Flexible fuel vehicles (FFVs) are vehicles which contain engines that can run on either gasoline or fuel blends containing mostly ethanol, like the E85 blend.

fluoroquinolones – a class of antimicrobials that kill bacteria or prevent their growth.

food hub – a centrally located facility with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally or regionally produced foods.

food loss – the decrease in the quantity or quality of food resulting from decision and actions by food suppliers in the chain, excluding retailers, food service provider, and consumers.

food waste – the decrease in the quantity or quality of food resulting from decisions and actions by retailers, food service providers and consumers.

FSA – Farm Service Agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture

GAO – The U.S. Government Accountability Office; originally established as the General Accounting Office; an independent, non-partisan legislative branch agency that provides auditing, evaluation, and investigative services for the United States Congress.

gender – The socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women.

Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) – a program designed to promote economic growth in the developing world by providing preferential duty-free entry for about 4,800 products from 131 designated beneficiary countries and territories.

genetically modified organism (GMO) – an organism whose genetic material has been altered using genetic engineering techniques.

ghost crop – a second or late season planting that does not interfere with an insurance claim.

GIPSA – Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, a former agency of USDA; established in 1994 to facilitate the marketing of livestock, poultry, meat, cereals, oilseeds, and related agricultural products, and to promote fair and competitive trading practices for the overall benefit of consumers and American agriculture; a final rule published in November 2018 eliminated GIPSA as a stand-alone agency, and delegated authority to the USDA AMS Administrator to administer the United States Grain Standards Act, the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921, and the United States Warehouse Act.

Glass-Steagall Act – a law passed by Congress in 1933, which prohibited commercial banks from engaging in the investment business. The law was repealed by the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act of 1999.

grass bank – a section of rangeland that is set aside for the use of grazing services by a permitted user. A grass bank can act as an exchange between public or private entities and a family farmer/rancher for the commitment of the institution of conservation practices on the permittees private land, the creation of land access for beginning and under-served farmer/ranchers, or as an additional community forage source during times of drought.

Green Thumb – a training and employment program established in 1965 by NFU for the purpose of providing jobs for low-income people who were age 55 or older and wanted to work; the program is authorized in the Older Americans Act and funded through the Department of Labor. Now known as Experience Works.

Greenhouse Gases Regulated Emissions and Energy Use in Transportation (GREET) model – a tool that examines the life-cycle impacts of vehicle technologies, fuels, products, and energy systems by simulating the energy use and emissions output of various vehicle and fuel combinations (see greet.es.anl.gov)

GSM-102 – short-term export credit guarantees. This commercial loan program, administered through the USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, leverages financing from the private sector to support and encourage U.S. agricultural exports to foreign markets. On average, CCC's credit guarantee covers 95 percent of the combined principal and interest in GSM-102 transactions.

GSM-103 – intermediate-term (3-10 year) export credit guarantees.

Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) – a federal program administered by USDA that provides grants to projects that offer incentives – such as matching funds or discounts – to Supplemental Nutrition Incentive Program (SNAP) participants to purchase fruits and vegetables. The aim of the program is to improve access to fresh fruits and vegetables for low-income individuals and families while supporting local and regional food systems and farmers by increasing demand for their products.

Hatch Act – limits certain political activities of most executive branch employees.

Hatch-Waxman Act – a 1984 federal law which encourages the manufacture of generic drugs by the pharmaceutical industry and established the modern system of government generic drug regulation in the U.S.

Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) - A management system in which food safety is addressed through the analysis and control of biological, chemical, and physical hazards from raw material production, procurement, and handling, to manufacturing, distribution, and consumption of the finished product.

Higher Education Act – governs the administration of federal higher education programs. Signed into law in 1965.

HM-200 rule – a rule issued by the Department of Transportation in 1997 that expanded the scope of the Hazardous Materials Regulations to provide a uniform system of safety standards to all intrastate transportation of hazardous materials.

Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Act – an act of legislation that explicitly instructs the nation to strive toward four ultimate goals: full employment, growth in production, price stability, and balance of trade and budget, by setting requirements and goals for the federal government to attain.

hydraulic fracturing – the process by which a specially blended liquid is pumped down a well into a formation under pressure high enough to cause the formation to crack open, forming passages through which oil can flow into the well bore.

in situ leach mining – also known as in situ recovery (ISR) or solution mining, is a mining method used to extract minerals from underground ore bodies without the need for conventional mining techniques like digging and blasting. It is commonly used for extracting minerals such as uranium, copper, and other metals.

integrator – a processor or meatpacker that provides animals, feed, medicine, and other production inputs to an individual as outlined in a production contract.

International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

(ITPGRFA) – The ITPGRFA, also known as the International Seed Treaty or Plant Treaty, is an international agreement regarding the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of their use. Learn more: <https://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/en/>

Investment Tax Credit (ITC) – a federal tax incentive for business investment, not to be confused with the USITC, the U.S. International Trade Commission.

Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) – a system, included in many trade agreements and treaties, through which investors can sue nation states for alleged discriminatory practices.

IRA – individual retirement account; n account set up at a financial institution that allows an individual to save for retirement with tax-free growth or on a tax-deferred basis.

Johne's Disease – chronic disease affecting domestic animals, especially cattle and sheep, caused by bacterium.

Jones Act – legislation that regulates maritime commerce between U.S. cities; requires that goods and passengers transported by water between U.S. ports be done in U.S.-made ships, owned by U.S. citizens and crewed by U.S. citizens.

Keogh Doctrine – also known as the Filed Rate Doctrine; precludes an award of damages under the antitrust laws when a plaintiff seeks a recovery measured by payments made according to rates approved by a regulatory agency.

land operator – person who runs the farm, making day-to-day management decisions. The operator could be an owner, hired manager, cash tenant, share tenant and/or a partner.

leach mining – the recovery, by chemical leaching, of the valuable components of an orebody without physical extraction of the ore from the ground.

livestock – in this policy document, the term includes cattle, swine, sheep, poultry, goats, horses, buffalo and farmed Cervidae (deer family) that are produced for food, fiber, or feed.

Livestock Compensation Programs – A suite of USDA programs that include: the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP).

longer combination vehicles (LCV) – any combination of a truck tractor and two or more trailers or semi-trailers that has a gross vehicle weight greater than 80,000 pounds and is operated on the Interstate Highway System.

make allowance – a factor used in a formula for determining the price of milk. In the formula, an allowance is given for what it costs to turn raw milk into cheese and nonfat dry milk.

Margin Protection Program – an insurance program run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to protect dairy producers during times of low margins.

McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program – a global school feeding program that promotes education, child development, and food security for some of the world's poorest children, through donations of agricultural commodities and financial and technical assistance for school feeding and maternal and child nutrition projects in low-income countries.

MPC – milk protein concentrate.

Multiemployer Pension Reform Act of 2014 (MPRA) – allows trustees of multiemployer pensions to apply to the Treasury Department to reduce pension benefits to prevent a plan from running out of money.

NAFTA – North American Free Trade Agreement, an international trade agreement linking Mexico, the United States, and Canada; enacted in November of 1993; it was replaced by USMCA, effective 1 July 2020.

NASS – National Agricultural Statistics Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

NFUPAC – the National Farmers Union Political Action Committee.

National Airspace System (NAS) – the airspace, navigation facilities, and airports of the United States, including associated information, services, rules, regulations, policies, procedures, personnel, and equipment, including components shared with the military.

National Credit Union Share Insurance Fund – provides deposit insurance to protect the accounts of credit union members at federally insured institutions in the U.S.

Created by Congress in 1970 and is run by the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA).

National Electric Safety Code – standards for the safe installation, operation, and maintenance of electric power and communication utility systems.

National Grazing Lands Coalition (NatGLC) –founded to provide technical assistance on privately owned grazing lands on a voluntary basis and to increase the awareness of the importance of grazing land resources.

National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation – a member-owned, nonprofit cooperative and the premier lender for electric cooperatives, including Rural Utilities Service (RUS) borrowers and non-RUS borrowers.

National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service – the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service is another name used to refer to the ATTRA Sustainable Agriculture program. ATTRA stands for Appropriate Technology Transfer to Rural Areas, a program codified at 7 U.S.C. 1932(i)(4). The ATTRA Sustainable Agriculture Program is managed by the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT). The program provides sustainable agriculture information to those engaged in or serving commercial agriculture.

neonicotinoids – a class of insecticides with a common mode of action that affects the central nervous system of insects, causing paralysis and death.

NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act, which requires federal agencies to integrate environmental values into their decision-making processes by considering the environmental impacts of their proposed actions and reasonable alternatives to those actions.

net neutrality – a principle that states internet service providers may not discriminate between different kinds of content and applications online. It guarantees a level playing field for all websites and internet technologies.

NIFA – National Institute of Food and Agriculture, formerly the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES); provides leadership and funding for programs that advance agriculture-related sciences.

nonrecourse loan – A commodity loan that gives the borrower the options of repaying the loan in cash or forfeiting the commodity (collateral) to the lender who accepts said collateral to satisfy payment of the loan, without recourse against the borrower.

NPDES – National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit program authorized by the Clean Water Act to control water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants into waters of the United States.

NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service of USDA; provides America's farmers and ranchers with financial and technical assistance to voluntarily make conservation improvements.

OBD2 – Also written as "OBD-II," this refers to a version of an automobile's self-diagnostic and reporting capability system. This system gives vehicle owners and technicians access to the status of vehicle sub-systems and to a series of standardized diagnostic trouble codes (or DTCs). OBD2 was an improvement over OBD1 in capability and level of standardization.

OMB – Office of Management and Budget; oversees the performance of federal agencies and administers the federal budget.

organic – the use of organic claims shall be defined by USDA under the Organic Foods Production Act and the National Organic Program (NOP).

Packer Consent Decree of 1921 – an agreement struck between packers and the attorney general's office that allowed the packers to avoid antitrust prosecution in exchange for agreeing to 1) sell holdings in stockyards, railroads, market newspapers

and public warehouse, 2) abandon all retail meat business, 3) abandon control of transportation facilities, and 4) dissolve any conspiracies with other packers.

parity index – originally, the price per bushel, pound or bale that would be necessary for a bushel today to buy the same quantity of goods (from a standard list) that a bushel would have bought in the 1910-14 base period at the price then prevailing. In 1948, the parity price formula was revised to make parity prices dependent on the relationship of farm and nonfarm prices during the most recent 10-year period for non-basic commodities. Basic commodities, including wheat, corn, rice, peanuts, and cotton, use the higher of the historical formula or the new formula (referred to by USDA as the “prices paid index”). See:

https://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide_to_NASS_Surveys/Prices/Chapter%20Four%20Parity%20and%20Feed%20Price%20Ratios%20v10.pdf

particulate matter – solid or liquid particles less than 10 microns in diameter suspended in the air.

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) – Also known as PFAS, these substances are manufactured chemicals that have been used in industry and consumer products since the 1940s. There are thousands of different PFAS, with varying levels of use and study. PFAS are commonly referred to as “forever chemicals” because they often break down slowly and can bioaccumulate, or build up in people, animals, and in the environment. As of 2023, these chemicals have been found on only a few farms with heavy groundwater contamination, but there is a concern that contamination is more widespread. The full health impacts of these chemicals are still being investigated.

pesticide – a chemical that is used to kill or control animals, insects, plants, or other organisms. The purpose of a pesticide is to reduce or eliminate damage to crops or livestock. Includes insecticides, herbicides, miticides, rodenticides, fungicides, etc.

pharma crops – crops grown specifically for use in pharmaceuticals such as vaccines and medicine.

PL-480 – the commonly used term for the “Food for Peace Act of 1954” which provides statutory authority for most international food assistance programs; these programs include Food for Peace (FFP) Title II, the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust, Farmer-to-Farmer (also known as FFP Title V), Food for Progress, and the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program; Congress has

reauthorized these programs in periodic farm bills; these programs provide primarily in-kind aid or, in the case of Farmer-to-Farmer, technical assistance.

Plant Variety Protection Act of 1994 – provides legal intellectual property rights protection to breeders of new varieties of plants which are sexually reproduced (by seed) or tuber-propagated.

Plum Island Animal Disease Center – a high-security federal research facility located off the coast of Long Island, New York, dedicated to the study of infectious animal disease.

poultry – any domesticated bird being processed for human consumption, according to the Poultry Products Inspection Act of 1957.

Price Loss Coverage (PLC) – an income support program, first authorized by the 2014 farm bill, that provides payments when the price of a covered commodity falls below an effective reference price.

Public Service Loan Forgiveness – the remaining balance on federal student direct loans is forgiven after 120 qualifying monthly payments are made under a qualifying repayment plan while an individual works full-time for a qualifying public service employer.

Pugh clause – a clause added to an oil lease to limit holding non-producing lands or depths beyond the primary term of the lease.

pulse crop – legumes that are harvested exclusively for dry grain such as peas, lentils, beans, and chickpeas.

Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZABs) – a types of tax credit bond authorized under IRC Section 54A, that allows a credit to investors who hold such a bond on one or more of the quarterly credit allowance dates.

raw – any food in its natural state.

RBS – Rural Business Cooperative Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

rBST – recombinant bovine somatotropin, a synthetic hormone injected in dairy cows to increase milk production.

REAL® Seal – the Seal is a federal registered trademark, depicted as a white drop of milk with a red border and the word “Real” inside. Originally developed in 1976 by the California dairy industry, with the goal of combatting the use of imitation cheese on pizzas. A product cannot carry the Seal if it fails to meet required standards or if it

contains dairy products imported from other countries. In March of 2012, the Seal was licensed to the National Milk Producers Federal (NMPF).

REC – rural electric cooperative.

recourse loan – a commodity loan that must be repaid in cash, plus interest.

renewable diesel – a biofuel that is chemically the same as petroleum diesel fuel.

Renewable diesel meets the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) specification ASTM D975 for petroleum diesel and may be used in existing petroleum pipelines, storage tanks, and diesel engines.

Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) – a policy that requires retail energy suppliers to provide energy from renewable sources as part of their electricity portfolio.

retail wheeling – allowing utilities to abandon current service territories and sell power in an open market to the highest bidder.

RMA – Risk Management Agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Rochdale Principles – a set of guidelines for cooperatives, established by a group of artisans in Rochdale, England, who formed the first modern cooperative business in 1844. These principles are known today as: 1) voluntary and open membership; 2) democratic member control; 3) member economic participation; 4) autonomy and independence; 5) education, training, and information; 6) cooperation among cooperatives; and 7) concern for community.

Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) – provides financial assistance to agricultural producers and rural small business to purchase, install, and construct renewable energy systems, make energy efficiency improvements to non-residential buildings and facilities, reduce energy consumption, and participate in energy audits.

Rural Utilities Service (RUS) – an agency at USDA Rural Development; administers programs that provide much-needed infrastructure or infrastructure improvements to rural communities.

Small Business Administration (SBA) – a United States government agency that delivers loans, loan guarantees, contracts, counseling sessions and other forms of assistance to small businesses.

Section 22 – a section of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 (P.L. 73-10) that authorizes the president to restrict imports by imposing quotas or fees on imports that

interfere with federal price support programs or substantially reduce U.S. production of agricultural products.

Section 199A deduction –also known as the Qualified Business Income (QBI) deduction, it is a tax deduction available to eligible pass-through entities and sole proprietors in the United States. It was introduced as part of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) passed in December 2017.

sexual orientation – a person’s sexual identity in relation to the gender to which they are attracted.

slotting fee – a fee charged to companies or manufacturers by retailers in order to have their products placed on shelves.

small wind – a residential wind turbine system, installed on top of a tall tower with 100kW capacity or less, which collects kinetic energy from the wind and converts it to electricity that is compatible with a home’s electrical system. Extra power generated is typically sold to local utility.

Smith-Lever Act – established a national Cooperative Extension Service that extended outreach programs through land-grant universities to educate rural Americans about advances in agricultural practices and technology.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) – a federally funded health and nutrition program that helps families by providing checks for buying healthy supplemental foods from WIC-authorized vendors, nutrition education, and help finding health care and other community services.

Staggers Act – law that significantly deregulated the rail industry, passed in 1980.

Star School/Medical Link – telecommunications used to link research hospitals to community hospitals.

“step-up” in basis – the readjustment of the value of an appreciated asset for tax purposes upon inheritance.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – formerly known as food stamps; a federal aid program administered by the USDA that provides financial assistance for purchasing food to low- and no-income people living in the United States.

Surface Transportation Board – a bipartisan, decisionally independent adjudicatory body organizationally housed within the U.S. Department of Transportation. The Board provides a forum for the resolution of surface-transportation disputes and other

matters within its jurisdiction. It has the authority to limit or remove regulatory requirements where appropriate.

Sustainable – an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will, over the long term:

- Satisfy human food and fiber needs;
- Enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agricultural economy depends;
- Make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls;
- Sustain the economic viability of farm operations; and
- Enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

T-level or “T” – refers to the “soil loss tolerance rate (T)” – the maximum rate of annual soil loss that will permit crop productivity to be sustained economically and indefinitely on a given soil; erosion is considered greater than T if either the water (sheet & rill) erosion or the wind erosion rate exceeds the soil loss tolerance rate.

telehealth – the provision of healthcare remotely by means of telecommunications technology.

tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) – the principal psychoactive constituent of cannabis.

thorium – a naturally occurring, slightly radioactive metal found in most rocks and soils.

TMDL – a TMDL is the calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant allowed to enter a waterbody so that the waterbody will meet and continue to meet water quality standards for that particular pollutant; a TMDL determines a pollutant reduction target and allocates load reductions necessary to the source(s) of the pollutant; according to the Clean Water Act, each state must develop TMDLs for all the waters identified on their Section 303(d) list of impaired waters, according to their priority ranking on that list.

transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE) – a family of rare progressive neurodegenerative disorders that affect both humans and animals

Tree Assistance Program (TAP) – provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes, and vines damaged by natural disasters.

U.S. Warehouse Act – authorizes the secretary of agriculture to license warehouse operators who store agricultural products and meet specific standards.

UF – ultra-filtered (milk products).

unmanned aerial vehicle – an aircraft without a human pilot aboard, commonly known as a drone.

USMCA – a free trade agreement between the United States, Mexico, and Canada, commonly known as the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) in the United States; it replaced the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and it is sometimes characterized as NAFTA 2.0 or “New NAFTA.”

USTR – U.S. Trade Representative; responsible for developing and coordinating U.S. international trade, commodity, and direct investment policy, and overseeing negotiations with other countries.

VAT – value-added tax.

vermiculture – the raising and production of earthworms and worm castings.

vesicular stomatitis – a viral disease that primarily affects horses and cattle and occasionally swine, sheep, goats, llamas, and alpacas.

vomitoxin – also known as deoxynivalenol (DON), this mycotoxin occurs predominantly in grains such as wheat, barley, oats, rye, and corn, and less often in rice, sorghum, and triticale.

water spreading – the practice of using allocated water on undesignated acres.

WFO – World Farmers Organization, of which NFU is a member.

World Food Summit – U.N. meeting where heads of state committed to reducing hunger.

WTO – World Trade Organization; an international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations; established in 1995, it is the successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT); it provides a legal and institutional framework for the implementation and monitoring of trade agreements, as well as for settling disputes arising from their interpretation and application.

WTO boxes – used to categorize programs based on their impact on trade; amber box programs are the most trade distorting; blue box programs are less trade distorting; green box programs have no significant impact on trade.

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