

2022 Rocky Mountain Farmers Union Policy

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RMFU POLICY FOR NATIONAL ADVOCACY

Article I. Government Programs

A. National Food and Farm Policy

We call for implementation of food, farm, fuel, and fiber policies that strengthen the family farm unit for protecting safe, healthy, domestically produced food, fuel, and fiber for our citizens. These policies should include the following:

- A goal of income parity on par with other sectors of the economy.
- Credit systems that provide flexibility to farmers and ranchers to finance inputs and invest in economic opportunities, including, but not limited to, processing and production facilities, to increase income.
- Conservation programs that will compensate agricultural producers while protecting our nation’s greatest natural resources— the land, air, and water.

We support referring to the “Farm Bill” as the “Food and Farm Bill” and advocating for such in our national conversations.

We support:

- Financial, tax, and grant incentives to assist in making farming a career opportunity for all people, with a focus on new and beginning farmers and ranchers.
- International trade agreements that achieve profitability for all American producers, regardless of how small in size.
- Required Congressional approval of sanctions and embargos of agricultural and medical exports before they can be enacted.
- Incentives to encourage production of and investment by family farmers and community-based organizations in the processing and distribution of renewable energy systems.
- Regulations that establish and maintain fair, open, and competitive markets with a transparent price discovery system.
- Implementation and safeguarding of food safety measures and enforcement of those measures already in place.
- Increased food safety and security with additional testing especially of foreign-produced products.
- Enforcement of existing food safety regulations that are scale appropriate for handlers and processors.

We urge a continued evaluation of the regulations for the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), to rationally address the practice of organic, natural, and diversified farm operations vital to the local food economy.

We urge that requirements and fees be scaled with a focus on the difference 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.

We encourage the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to develop adequate training requirements for qualified auditors under the Preventive Controls regulation.

We urge Congress to provide funding to support the implementation of FSMA and to reinstate the Grain Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA).

B. Farm Program Recommendations

1. Parity

We support the concept of parity (equal purchasing power) of commodity prices to provide equality of income for farm families comparable to incomes of families in other segments of the economy.

2. The Concept of Parity

Parity (farm price index) measures the percentage change in prices received by farmers for the products they sell in relation to the prices paid by farmers for goods and services used in production, interest on capital, taxes, and wages, compared with the base period of 1910-1914. A ratio of 100 percent implies the same relationship that existed in the base period. A 75 percent parity ratio indicates that the farmer's purchasing

power was down to 75 percent of what it would buy in the base period. Congress deemed the 1910-1914 base period as one in which there was a balanced relationship between farm and non-farm prices.

3. Parity as a Measurement

We reaffirm our basic commitment to the parity formula (using the base year 1910-1914) established by law as the standard by which to determine prices for all agricultural commodities.

4. The Goal of Parity

Price supports for agricultural commodities are meant to achieve parity for family farmers and ranchers. The levels of support of farm prices should be adjusted regularly to reflect changes in costs to farmers of producing farm commodities and for family living.

5. Future Farm Programs

We support the development of a future farm program that enables farmers to achieve income parity on par with other sectors of the economy at an income level that covers costs of production plus a reasonable rate of return.

We urge future farm programs to include income support mechanisms, such as supply management.

We urge future farm programs to include farmer-owned commodity loans on a limited amount of production for an individual operator. The commodity loan rate should be set at 80 percent of the national average of cost-of-production, indexed annually for inflation. This program would provide farmers a tool to empower themselves, on a voluntary basis, to influence market prices. The proposed income support should link closely with the government's risk management programs, insuring against production losses.

We urge that future farm programs provide producers with appropriate compensation for participation in conservation programs.

We urge future farm programs to provide incentives to encourage producer participation directly in the development, ownership, processing, and distribution of renewable energy and fuels. Such farm programs will be flexible, will limit government financial exposure, will keep the government out of the storage business, and will provide farmers with income support at a time of low market prices, along with the tools to empower farmers to improve market prices and manage their risks during natural disasters.

We strongly support establishing and funding programs within the agencies of USDA that would aid beginning farmers/ranchers in their effort to become full-time producers

We urge that any reduction in any federal agricultural programs be reallocated and committed to fund improvement in the permanent disaster program, commodity support program, risk management program, or funding for conservation, renewable energy, and/or rural development programs.

We support limits on farm program payments **for the benefit of family farms and family farm corporations.**

6. Organics & “Natural” Foods

We support those farmers who wish to pursue the production of food and fiber through organic, sustainable and regenerative methods of farming.

We urge close monitoring of the implementation of the Organic Foods Production Act to protect the interests of family farmers and consumers and the integrity of the Act.

We urge the USDA National Organic Program to adhere to the intent and integrity of the national organic standards, and that the National Organic Standards Board continues to have full authority over materials allowed or prohibited in organic production and handling.

We urge the USDA National Organic Program to consider financial and technical support programs for producers transitioning land into certified organic production going through the three-year transition requirement.

We support efforts to develop uniform national definitions and standards for any food that is labeled “natural.”

C. Urban Agriculture

We acknowledge and support the integration and expansion of for-profit and non-profit agriculture in urban, peri-urban, and open spaces, and in parks settings.

We support urban agricultural operations educating and informing consumers about local and regional agricultural production.

We support municipalities adopting comprehensive rules to enable agriculture production inside city limits (e.g., zoning permitting and ag vehicle licensing).

We support adding agriculture as a permitted use in all types of zoning.

We support the classification of high tunnels as temporary as opposed to permanent structures regarding municipal codes.

We support the classification of ancillary structures in urban and peri-urban municipalities as an agricultural application as opposed to commercial, industrial, or residential including animal housing, shade, storage, fencing, and cold storage.

We support classifying the use of controlled growing environments (greenhouses and hoop houses/high tunnels) as an agricultural application, as opposed to commercial or industrial in urban and peri-urban municipalities.

D. Risk Management

1. Federal Crop Insurance

We support efforts to continually improve the federal crop insurance program that:

- Recognize federal crop insurance is not an effective substitute for other agricultural safety-net policies or programs.
- Do not penalize producers that use nontraditional crops and/or rotations by insuring crops with increased premiums and lower coverage.
- Are consistent with, and complement the goal of improving, short and long-term family farm and ranch economic sustainability.
- Provide equitable and adequate whole farm coverage levels at affordable prices for a broader range of commodities, including fruits, vegetables, and other specialty crops or production techniques and in all geographic regions.
- Effectively cover small, diversified beginning farmers and ranchers and eliminate barriers for them to participate in the program.
- Encourage innovation to develop and improve risk management tools, such as dollar per-acre coverage and revenue products for the livestock and dairy sectors.
- Provide coverage for producers that are diversifying with non-traditional crops not covered by the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for the first three years. The coverage would be for direct input costs only but would not replace retroactive claims after the three-year waiting period.
- Recognize that short-term financial soundness should not be the sole determinant in establishing types of coverage, insurance levels, or rates.
- Eliminate penalties for un-harvested production for all crops.
- Risk Management Agency (RMA) eligibility should consider “Acts of God” prior to requiring compliance of the conservation plan.
- Encourage federal crop/livestock insurance premium structure to incentivize adoption of agricultural practices that improve environmental resiliency and streamlining program access to ensure family farmers have equal access to useful, appropriate coverage, including small scale farms.
- **Provide coverage for loss of grazing due to drought, wildfire, lack of access, or breach of leasing contract.**

We recommend that farmers relying on irrigation not be penalized by being forced to sign up crop acreage as dry land instead of irrigated land due to an “Act of God.”

We recommend coverage based on Actual Production History (APH) where available; for cases without APH, the transitional yield cannot be lower than Farm Service Agency (FSA) **County Expected Yields**.

We urge the establishment of APH yield floors to protect the producer in the event of successive disasters. This floor cannot be lower than FSA **County Expected Yields**.

We support crop insurance that makes available up to 100 percent coverage levels.

We urge Congress to maintain the current premium subsidy levels on crop insurance, enabling the program to be an affordable management tool for **family farms and family farm corporations**.

We urge limiting risk management audits of farm records to seven years of production history, regardless of crop rotation.

We urge RMA to expand crops that are covered under crop insurance, and we request RMA reevaluate the rules and practices of existing covered crops and additional covered crops.

We support crop insurance settlements based on cost of production, not Board of Trade prices.

We support extension of preventive crop planting coverage annually within over-drafted aquifer systems to farmers who are actively managing their water resources for both short-term and long-term risk avoidance.

We support RMA using weather data where available on a section basis to assess moisture availability (rainfall and snowmelt) for crop production, when making a determination on preventive crop planting or crop losses. Risk management rules should not penalize producers for using locally recommended conservation measures.

We support the creation of a new federal risk management insurance pool to provide broad liability coverage to cooperatives and individuals who wish to market their products directly to consumers.

We oppose any surcharge to farming practices after an organic APH is established.

We oppose RMA allowing crop insurance premium discounts involving specific crop inputs offered by a single company.

We support cross-state coordination by RMA for required reporting of planting dates within the same watershed.

2. Disaster Programs

We support a fully funded permanent disaster assistance program with streamlined FEMA and SBA relief regarding seasonal needs.

We support USDA ad hoc disaster direct payments to landowners in exceptional drought, as we recognize drought as a natural disaster.

3. Conservation

We support more control in conservation program decisions by locally elected Conservation District Boards of Supervisors.

We support stacking benefits with regard to conservation and energy programs.

We encourage conservation programs to provide flexibility for tribal communities.

4. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) & Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

We support flexibility in CRP that reflects local environmental conditions as determined by the local FSA county committee, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office, and soil and water conservation districts.

We endorse the effort to preserve and protect our more fragile farmland, and to restore the health of native grasslands through best management practices that utilize CRP lands in rotational grazing systems.

We support the right to rebid the contract for an additional term at the same rate or a rate adjusted for inflation for landowners and/or operators

We support allowing enrollees to manage permanent vegetative cover to enhance wildlife habitat and ecosystem health.

We favor managed haying and grazing of CRP stands for maintaining the health of the grass species and minimizing fire hazard.

We support controlling noxious weeds, pests, and undesirable plants on land in CRP.

We support a complete re-classification of noxious weeds so that it reflects the beneficial use of such plants to pollinators.

We support continuation and urge full funding of CREP.

5. Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

We support CSP as a full, nationwide, and unrestricted program.

We urge implementation of CSP in a manner that recognizes conservation practices appropriate to different climatic regions and provides such agricultural production practices to be adequately scored by the Conservation Management Tool.

We urge NRCS to make CSP₂ contracting a high priority, and such system should provide accessible, functional, and yield deliverables linked to ecosystem function.

6. Cost Share Programs, Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)

We urge USDA to make every reasonable effort to simplify cost share programs and educate and assist producers in a timely manner.

We support continuation of cost share programs that:

- Target monies to family-sized operations with payment limitations per contract.
- Assist in solving natural resource challenges.
- Aid in assisting agriculture operations to co-exist with wildlife.
- Assist farmers and ranchers to meet regulatory requirements; and
- Conserve precious natural resources including soil and water.

We support the establishment of a new tiered EQIP funding mechanism specifically designed for small and beginning farming and ranching operations.

We oppose producers being penalized for non-compliance with program requirements resulting from “Acts of God” such as drought, fire, and floods.

8. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

We support NRCS as the agency under USDA providing technical support and assistance.

Offices must be funded and staffed to ensure full and timely implementation of all programs.

We support continuation of NRCS snow surveys and Snow Telemetry (SNOTEL) measuring stations.

We support the implementation of technologies to accurately forecast water supplies from snowpack and runoff, including the continuation and refinement of snow survey and snow telemetry measuring approaches.

We encourage NRCS to train staff and technical service providers to work with young and beginning farmers and ranchers and nontraditional farm enterprises.

9. Wool and Mohair Program

We support reinstatement of the original revenue-generating Wool and Mohair Program.

10. Sugar Program

We support continuation of the Sugar Program.

We urge close collaboration with the sugar beet growers associations of CO, NM, and WY.

11. Honey Loan Program

We support the Honey Loan Program.

12. Livestock Indemnity Program

Bison should be afforded equitable rate schedules for the Livestock Indemnity Program reimbursement rate as a stand-alone product based on bison market prices, separate from beef or beefalo.

E. Labeling

We believe consumers have the right to know what is in their food, and we support uniform federal labeling standards for food.

We support labeling indicating that water was added during processing.

We support education of consumers regarding labeling of foods that contain additives and genetically modified and engineered organisms.

We oppose misleading, inaccurate, and vague label language.

We urge agricultural products be labeled accurately, and that agricultural product descriptions serve to educate and inform the consumer.

We urge the development of certifiable and verifiable “Grass-fed” labeling standards that are regulated in a manner similar to “Organic.”

We support reinstatement of, full funding for, and compliance with mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (mCOOL).

All labeling costs associated with determining and marketing foreign country-of-origin products (not born, raised, and processed in the United States) shall be paid by the importers.

In the absence of mCOOL, the same labeling standards outlined in mCOOL should be maintained to benefit producers and consumers in any voluntary program. Imported food should carry a quality grade label consistent with domestically produced foods and country-of-origin labels.

We favor clear and mandatory uniform federal labeling standards for Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in all food and feed. In the absence of a mandatory standard, we support a clear and voluntary uniform federal standard.

We urge any federal definition of genetically engineered material be consistent with the definition of excluded methods in 7 CFR S 205.2, the National Organic Standards.

We support labeling with respect to food additives and irradiation.

We support FDA efforts to redefine “healthy” to align with nutrition facts, labeling regulations, and current nutritional science.

We encourage the FDA to continually update and evaluate the regulations of the 1958 Food Additives Amendment to ensure that safe ingredients are permitted to be used in food, and that unsafe ingredients are prohibited.

We support labeling of organic products in accordance with the National Organic Standards Food Production Act.

We support the prosecution of individuals or entities who knowingly sell or import nonorganic products as certified organic.

We urge the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service to amend its regulations to require that all meat/poultry labeled as “natural” be required to be sourced from animals that were not administered growth hormones or subtherapeutic antibiotics, and all “natural” products to be third party verified.

We support requiring any laboratory-produced product to be labeled as laboratory or industrially produced.

We support meat defined as a product derived from the tissue or flesh of animals that have been harvested in the traditional manner.

We oppose labeling alternative protein sources as meat.

The rights of both GMO and non-GMO producers should be respected as appropriate regulatory agencies continue to research and evaluate these concerns. This includes, but is not limited to, required consumer labeling for foods made from or containing GMOs.

We support nuclear magnetic resonance testing on all imported products that are labeled as honey or food grade oils to ensure purity of product.

F. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

We urge full funding be appropriated for all USDA agencies and programs, and that all funding appropriated to USDA and its subordinate agencies be used for its intended purposes and that monies available for loans to family farms be designated for that purpose.

All positions in all divisions within USDA should be fully staffed, and staff administering federal farm programs should be fully informed and trained before enrollment periods begin.

We urge streamlining the application, reporting, and certification processes for federal grants and programs, and that processes be consistent in all state offices.

We support increasing and modernizing outreach and program participation by utilizing multiple technologies to meet the needs of all farmers.

We support historically disenfranchised producers and farm owners, especially those without deed or title, to receive all the loans, benefits, and programs of the USDA and federal government.

We support funding and utilization of USDA Climate Hubs to coordinate resource sharing of climate information, agronomic and risk management support, and programs that enhance opportunities for family farmers and ranchers to participate in the ecosystem service market.

We support changing the USDA definition of a small business to one of less than 200 employees.

We support the creation of a program, similar to the Fair Food Program, assuring a voluntary, collaborative process between farms and workers on farms to deliver certifiable, market rewarded, and market-enforced payment on products to benefit wages, profits, and livelihoods of workers and of farmers.

We support USDA creating incentives for participation in this program. Programs like these could allow workers to gain more market share towards wages, accountability of employers for fair standards and hearing grievances, and buy-in from food product end users to ensure that goods are not purchased at below-production costs and labor rates.

We support the collection of death loss data in confined animal feeding operations.

G. Farm Service Agency (FSA)

We support FSA as the primary agency within the USDA for developing, administering, and dispersing benefits for agriculture programs and policies toward the goal of providing security for the family farm system.

We oppose downsizing FSA and other USDA agencies as it is detrimental to rural America and the ability of the agencies to fulfill their mission.

We oppose county office consolidation, and we demand each county have full funding, staffing, and training to provide good service to the agriculture community.

We strongly urge continuing and strengthening the state, county, and community committee system for farm program administration.

We urge that program announcement dates be timely regarding cropping seasons for agriculture operations, and strictly adhered to.

We urge FSA loan programs allow cooperative equity stock to serve as collateral for farmer investment in new cooperatives.

We urge FSA to include programs that incentivize and support beginning farmers and ranchers, and small, diversified agricultural operations.

We urge FSA to support farming practices that help improve our soils and promote conservation practices.

FSA should always consider preventive plant acres in revenue calculations as it pertains to, but not limited to, farm safety net programs, risk management programs, and disaster programs.

We strongly encourage FSA to digitize its application process into an online format.

H. Cooperative Financing

We support the expansion and improvement of the Business and Industry Loan Program (BILP) and other federal sources to assist producers in making equity investments in new cooperatives.

I. Federal Grading and Inspections

We urge all imported meat and other foods federally inspected under federal health laws to carry an “imported and inspected” label. All imported foods that do not meet USDA or FDA standards should not be allowed into the United States.

We support inspection of all meats, either domestic, imported, or non-amenable (bison, deer, elk, or other exotic species), to ensure such products meet all state and USDA regulations and standards.

We strongly support hiring additional USDA inspectors to conduct these 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 no charge for these services.

We support a program allowing the hiring of local veterinarians to serve as USDA inspectors in rural areas.

We urge continued federal funding of the meat-grading program and oppose any privatization of meat-inspection services.

We support 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 inspections meet or surpass federal regulations.

We urge USDA to establish simplified and minimal paperwork and record keeping requirements for small USDA inspected meat packing plants.

We urge that an independent commission be established where small plants can appeal directives from the inspection and compliance division of the USDA meat inspection service **and timely resolution of issues.**

We support standardizing the federal laws to determine moisture content allowance of all meat products.

We support mandatory recall authority for FDA and USDA.

We oppose assessing any user fees or overtime charges for federal meat inspection services, including inspection of non-amenable species.

J. Agricultural Labor and Immigration

We support agricultural labor standards including:

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;

A right to organize; and

A livable wage including all compensation.

We support providing training and tools to minimize the risk of injury at the workplace.

We support employees having access to service providers and medical care during non-work hours, or during a shift if there is an emergency, while ensuring landowners can keep visitors safe and protect their operations.

We recognize oligopolies, **price fixing, unfair trade agreements, consolidations,** , and cheap food policies harm farmers and farm workers.

We support efforts to assure fairness for all involved in the production of food.

We urge Congress to work on reforming and enforcing immigration law in the interest of homeland security, rural economies, and labor needs in agriculture.

We urge Congress to include a pathway to citizenship for agricultural workers as part of comprehensive immigration reform.

We encourage any people seeking permanent residence in the United States to apply for citizenship with all the rights and responsibilities that accompany citizenship.

We urge a comprehensive overhaul of immigration policy that provides a sensible path forward for immigrants who are here without legal status and are committed to becoming fully participating members of our society.

We urge the adoption of federal immigration legislation with an agricultural worker program that provides work authorization for experienced and consistent farm labor force, with visas of adequate length and flexibility to meet the diverse needs of agriculture and the security needs of the United States.

We oppose the adoption of a mandatory E-Verify program without the inclusion of a workable agricultural worker program.

We support programs such as ALBA (Agriculture and Land Based Training Association) for career path and progression for documented immigrant farm laborers.

We support federal Ag JOBS legislation which provides access to a consistent, legal supply of seasonal workers to meet the needs of agriculture.

We urge expediting and streamlining the process to allow approved immigrant workers to travel back and forth from their home country.

We urge OSHA to use its full authority to protect workers' rights in food processing from known safety hazards, harmful work environments, and ensure whistleblower protection.

We urge OSHA to strengthen standards and enforcement affecting agricultural workers living in employer-provided housing to specifically address the challenges of public health and safety emergencies.

We urge streamlining the regulatory process or replacing the H-2A program with a guest worker program that serves the needs of family farmers, ranchers, and guest workers.

We support any upcoming legislation, in line with this policy, that seeks to remedy the farm labor crisis.

We will work towards the reform of the H-2A program to better align with farmers' needs.

We will work with policy makers to create policies to control the growth of the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR).

We will continue to support alternative programs, like the mobile workforce program, to help find alternative labor solutions.

K. Federal School Meals Programs

We urge the government to **mandate** the purchase of domestically produced agricultural products for use in school meals programs, **where possible**.

We support the federal government subsidizing the milk program for all nutrition programs.

We support the sourcing of food for school and juvenile detention center meal programs from school gardens and farms.

We urge the USDA to administratively and financially support a school meal program at the federal level that provides flexibility and reduces federal regulations while encouraging a healthy diet, the use of local foods, and local food preparation; and to provide our country's children with the highest quality food and farm products rather than the cheapest.

We support the Geographic Preference rules for school meal programs to financially encourage the purchase and use of local farm products, and to allow "local" as a specification in the procurement bidding process.

We support the allowance of the word "local" as a descriptor of a desired commodity in the school nutrition procurement process.

We encourage Congress to fund, strengthen, and expand Farm to School and other institution programs.

We support expansion of the USDA Farm to School Grant Program to include preschools, summer food service program sites, before and after school programs, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

We encourage Farm to School partnerships to increase consumption of nutritious and/or traditional foods while also supporting farmers and ranchers.

We encourage the use of Standard Administrative Expenses (SAE) funding to support farm to school programs.

We urge the reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act and oppose block grant funding of the Act.

We support flexibility regarding the safe distribution and reimbursement of meals for qualifying students, even when schools are closed due to emergencies.

We support full funding of the federal school meal programs to provide school meals to all public school students.

L. Federal Public Lands

We support full funding of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and United States Forest Service (USFS) to allow for proper management and regulation of our federal lands, including such items as:

- Programs to mitigate potential wildfires in urban and forest interface corridors, including rural private lands adjacent to state and federal forests.

- Management and control of the transportation of insect-infested and diseased wood and fuel wood to prevent spreading the insects to healthy and uninfected tree populations.
- The use of the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) for logging transportation subsidies to help expedite and facilitate the movement of diseased wood.
- Assistance to logging contractors through educational programs and software products, including software development, to minimize existing transportation inconsistencies; and
- Meaningful education programs for the public concerning overall forest health.

1. Management of Lands

We support a workable plan whereby our federal lands are sustained in a responsible manner using multiple-use management and with quality stewardship. **These plans shall be monitored and enforced, and if found to be out of compliance continuously, the leases should be terminated.**

We support the expansion and utilization of BLM Resource Advisory Councils (RACs) in order to provide local input into land management decisions.

Public access to these lands shall only be on designated routes.

Travel Management Plans associated with public lands for designated routes must include input from adjacent landowners, permittees, and any other appropriate private and public stakeholders.

Lessee/lessor access is needed for year-round multiple-use management.

The ecological impact created by recreational activities must be considered in these plans.

We strongly urge federal land managers (USFS, BLM, NPS, etc.) to prioritize the health and resiliency of forest lands and wilderness through management practices that will increase carbon sequestration and other ecosystem services and will prevent extreme wildfire events, ecosystem collapse, watershed damage, and erosion.

We support the continuation and expansion of local Forest Service and BLM Offices, and we oppose the consolidation or further closures and vacating of local Forest Service and BLM Offices.

We support livestock grazing as a management tool in maintaining the health of these resources.

We support management of grazing on federal lands based on scientific data and monitoring of individual allotments and encourage increased funding for this research.

Grazing allotments should be restricted to family farms and family farm entities.

We support federal laws currently banning any public entity (including municipalities and nongovernmental organizations) from owning or leasing federal grazing allotments.

We support establishing user fees for both consumptive and non-consumptive use of public lands.

We urge federal grazing fees continue to be set by the Public Rangeland Improvement Act (PRIA) formula and increases shall not exceed the annual rate of inflation.

We support keeping local grazing committees intact to handle grazing allotments, management issues, and disputes.

We support efforts to establish native grass banks and pollinator-friendly plants on public lands.

We support the formation of locally owned cooperatives and businesses to harvest and process forest products.

We oppose regulations that mandate the removal of a permittee's livestock during an administrative appeal process.

We oppose governmental agencies taking and disposing of private property, including livestock, prior to being heard in the courts, a judgment being rendered, and with appeals exhausted.

We oppose allowing non-grazers to bid up the price of an allotment thus denying access to farmers and ranchers.

We oppose separating water from existing leases.

We oppose the efforts of the U.S. Forest Service and BLM to reduce or eliminate domestic sheep grazing from federal lands.

2. Forest Health

We urge federal forest management plans be updated to address forest health issues with actions such as the reinstatement of Categorical Exclusion for the USFS to use as a tool to expedite and accelerate the harvest of small timber stands in Western United States forests.

We support appropriate and full compensation for those harmed by loss of control of management practices, whether by mismanagement or "Acts of God".

We urge federal and state forests be accessible to the renewable energy industry to allow harvesting of devastated wood products for use in environmentally beneficial value-added products to improve the health of our forests.

We support implementation and full funding of efforts to minimize the effects of insect epidemics on national and state forests throughout the Western 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.

3. Wild Horse and Burro Population

BLM must follow through with required annual surveys and management plans to control wild horse and burro populations to minimize damage to private and public lands.

We urge continued study and reasonable use of lethal and non-lethal methods in addition to the use of sterilization techniques to help control population.

We support the harvest of excess feral horses and burros for consumption.

We oppose the portion of the Safeguard American Food Exports Act of 2017 which denies horse meat consumption.

We support horse meat consumption that meets the same USDA health and safety standards already in place for other livestock meats such as beef, pork, or lamb.

We support the USDA-inspected horse and burro adoption program.

We oppose the release of non-adopted animals onto public lands.

We recommend that captured horses placed in holding facilities be limited to five years of captivity.

M. Commodity Check-off Programs

We support research, promotion, and education programs financed by voluntary contributions by producers of agricultural commodities, only if all the following criteria are met:

- Disbursement of funds collected, and operations of the program are controlled by boards of producers elected by the producers assessed.
- Approval is by most producers voting on the referendum by mail, with spouses allowed to vote individually.
- Programs being formulated or currently in operation be subject to a five-year Congressional sunset review.
- Collection on sales will have a provision for refund.
- Penalties should be assessed against those who use funds for political or lobbying activities.
- Major and significant changes in existing check-off programs should be submitted to the producers affected and subject to approval by a two-thirds vote.
- After a federal check-off program is in effect, all review referenda should be financed and conducted by the federal government.
- Whenever a commodity check-off is assessed on American producers, the same fee should be assessed on imports of that commodity with no refund allowed. Importers and/or non-producers should not be entitled to voting representation.

We call for a full Congressional investigation of federally sanctioned commodity check-off programs and for Congress to issue a public report on their effectiveness, including a complete, transparent accounting of all funds collected and disbursed. As part of this review, we request Congress hold public hearings throughout the nation to allow producers an opportunity to participate.

Any producer who pays into the check-off programs shall have access to financial audits.

We oppose mandatory commodity check-off programs other than those periodically approved by producer vote.

N. Rural Utilities Service (RUS)

We support rural utility cooperatives and oppose their privatization.

We encourage Congress to keep the RUS Revolving Fund intact.

We urge that Congress grant rural utility cooperatives territorial protection.

We encourage RUS and we direct Rural Electric Associations (REAs) and their generation and transmission providers to expand their portfolio to include both centralized and distributed clean energy production, energy efficiencies, and demand-side management.

O. Regulatory Agencies

We urge review of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) policies on agricultural chemicals to ease the financial and regulatory burden upon agricultural producers without compromising adequate worker safety standards.

We recommend federal resource management agencies work together to form a single definition for wetlands and riparian zones.

We oppose regulatory actions that infringe on private property rights and do not provide compensation for affected landowners.

We urge compliance with and enforcement of current anti-pollution laws.

We urge the EPA to regulate aromatics under the Clean Air Act and encourage their replacement with domestically grown advanced biofuels.

P. Food Security and Nutrition Programs

We oppose separating nutrition title programs from the Farm Bill.

We support continuation and full funding of the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs.

We support incentive programs such as Double-Up Food Bucks, that doubles the value of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) purchases for local fruits and vegetables, and the use of delivery service do not exclude these programs.

We support the effort to combine the WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs.

We support reauthorization and full funding of all federal nutrition programs.

We support continuation of the SNAP Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) program and expansion of the program to include farmers' markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs).

We support education of the elderly about the EBT program.

We support gleaning bills that enable farmers to donate produce to organizations for distribution to the needy and the poor and to take a tax credit for such donations.

We support food education programs and local food nutrition trainings.

We support transparent supply chains and local and regional food procurement for domestic hunger relief.

We strongly oppose any disproportionate cuts to the Food and Nutrition Title that change the structure of food assistance in a way that decreases benefits or changes eligibility and qualifications.

We urge Congress to improve food assistance programs by including more education on health, nutrition, and family budgeting, controlling costs, and eliminating junk food and sugar sweetened drinks from nutritional funding.

We support the allocation of national resources to alleviate "food deserts," as defined by USDA, by increasing accessibility to a comprehensive range of nutritious foods.

We urge Congress to create and fund a national food pantry assistance program that funds technical assistance and the purchase of local foods direct from the producers for use by food banks.

Article II. Agricultural Technology

A. Research and Development into Alternative Crops and Production Methods

We support and encourage long-term research and development on small and large-scale plots and advancement in production methods focused on soil health and production, including but not limited to cover crops and reduced tillage in the various production methods.

We support and encourage research and development of alternative crops that are less water intensive and drought, pest, and disease resistant.

We support and encourage research and development of perennial crops, including cereal grains such as Kernza.

We support alternatives to energy and chemical intensive methods of production.

We urge Congress and the USDA to re-commit and fully fund research into alternative crops and methods and uses for crops at all USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) centers.

We support USDA, ARS, **universities**, and community colleges increase publicly funded independent research to benefit all producers.

We support the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices that enhance environmental quality; make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources; sustain the economic viability of agriculture operations; enhance the quality of life for farmers, ranchers, and society; and where appropriate, integrate natural biological cycles and controls to protect the resource base on which agriculture depends.

We support the use of the term “GMO” to refer to plants and organisms which have been modified at the genomic level through genetic manipulation such as splicing or recombination, and foods and feed that contain these ingredients.

We support full disclosure of all funding sources for those conducting research.

B. New Agricultural Production Technologies/Genetically Modified Organisms

We support the rights of both GMO and non-GMO producers as appropriate regulatory agencies continue to research and evaluate ethical, environmental, and food safety concerns, including but not limited, to required consumer labeling for foods made from or containing GMOs.

We urge open dialogue, cooperation, and understanding in trade negotiations relating to GMOs and biotechnology.

We oppose the introduction or use of GMOs as pharmaceuticals until independent scientific research proves that they are safe both ecologically and for human and animal consumption.

C. Other Agricultural Production Techniques

We oppose the introduction of products made from cloned animals.

We oppose the prosecution of farmers who unknowingly plant proprietary organisms on their own land for their own purposes.

We support legislation like the Hatch-Waxman Act of 1984, which encouraged true, generic competition in off-patent drugs, and to encourage and allow the development and use of off-patent crop protection chemicals.

We oppose the use of Bovine Growth Hormone (BGH) (BST).

We oppose the use of imported milk protein concentrate (casein).

We oppose culturing meat in a laboratory for industrial production of food.

We recommend increasing public funding for agricultural research to ensure scientific rigor and impartiality of findings.

We urge land grant universities establish multi-state templates for less formal and much faster field trials.

D. Agricultural Structures

We support the use of controlled growing environments as an agricultural application, as opposed to commercial or industrial

We recognize controlled growing environments to include permanent or temporary greenhouses and hoop houses.

We support ancillary structures as an agricultural application, as opposed to commercial, industrial, or residential, including animal housing, shade, storage, fencing, and cold storage.

E. Bees and Pollinators

We support research on solutions to the causes of pollinator loss.

We acknowledge the results of research indicating that multiple factors contribute to the decline in pollinators, including pesticides, habitat loss, pathogens, parasites, and climate change.

We encourage action to support the health of bees and other pollinators.

We urge USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to make recommendations for the health and protection of pollinators, with enforcement and research dating back to 2009.

We urge EPA to include “lethal” criteria and “chronic injury, weakness or disease” criteria for pesticides labels.

We urge the USDA to provide education on agricultural practices that have harmful and devastating effects on pollinator population.

We urge the EPA's office of Pesticide Programs to adopt reforms to ensure that pesticide approvals and use decisions are science-based to protect pollinator and human health.

F. Small Business Development Authority

We support the concept of a small business development authority that would allow tax incentives for the development of new technology and innovative uses of agricultural products.

We support defining a small business as one having less than 200 employees.

G. Genetic Ownership

We support legislation exempting farmers and ranchers from payment of royalties on offspring of patented animals and plants.

We support legislation to put the liability incurred from unwanted propagation of GMO traits on the patent owner, and we support indemnification for the contamination of non-GMO/identity-preserved crops by GMO patent holders.

We support legislation to prohibit the patenting of heritage genetic material.

We support the right of farmers to plant seed derived from proprietary organisms on their own land. We oppose the patenting of plants and animals.

We support establishing and maintaining foundation seed banks.

We support all cultivars developed with public funds and protection of the rights of farmers to save seeds and breeders to share and improve such germplasm and breeds.

We support all publicly funded cultivars be immediately available for breeders.

H. Unmanned Aerial Systems

We support the use of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS – or “drones”) as a management tool in agricultural operations.

I. Livestock Health

We urge USDA APHIS and other research organizations actively pursue research to clearly establish transmission modes, preventive measures including vaccination, and a protocol for distinguishing vesicular stomatitis from foot and mouth disease.

We request quarantine restrictions be periodically reevaluated.

We support the authority of USDA to control animal movement in the event of an animal disease outbreak.

We support all cattle entering the United States from foreign soil be tested for diseases and that those testing positive for any disease should be handled according to established protocol regarding quarantine and/or impounded at the expense of the importer.

We request APHIS provide necessary resources to control and prevent disease spread in outbreak situations in consultation with affected state livestock health professionals.

We support incentives for veterinarians who agree to serve underserved areas.

We urge all federal and state agencies entrusted with wildlife management also be mandated to implement a comprehensive management plan to eradicate brucellosis and chronic wasting disease from all wildlife under their control.

We require full market value compensation for domestically raised game and other livestock destroyed by the government on private and commercial ranches.

We oppose the prophylactic use of antibiotics in livestock.

We oppose the importation of ruminant animals and products from any country that does not have an enforceable ban on animal by-products used in feed for ruminant animals that meets USDA standards.

We oppose moving acute use veterinary antibiotics to prescription use only.

J. Animal Identification and Livestock Traceability

We support workable methods of monitoring livestock diseases and safeguarding animal health.

We oppose any national animal ID program that results in a shift from disease control to monitoring disease through traceability.

We oppose any mandatory animal identification program designed to force livestock producers to register their premises through 4-H, FFA, or fair programs.

We oppose any premise registration and electronic or biometric identification program that

- Is mandatory.
- Establishes another level of regulation and an expensive requirement for registering premises and/or animals.
- Interferes with producers' privacy and proprietary information; or
- Has the potential to undermine market opportunities.

We urge all states to have an acceptable form of identification for producers who move cattle inter-state under the Animal Disease Traceability Program.

K. Telecommunications

We support the efforts of RUS to provide rural broadband services to their members.

We support enhanced 911 emergency telephone services in rural areas.

We support greater uniformity of cellular (mobile) telephone service and user rates, as well as uniformity in roaming rates applied outside the local service area of the user.

We support competitively priced high-speed Internet access in rural communities to create jobs, to support health care, education, and rural economic development, and to access government services.

We support municipal high-speed Internet where markets fail to provide competitive, high-speed options.

We support the continuation of those media programs that meet the needs of the agricultural community.

We oppose the merger of cable television or satellite dish services but support the development of cooperative cable television systems to rural sectors.

L. Ag Data

Agriculture data collected by organizations, companies, and educational institutions and other entities should not be used, monetized, or distributed without the permission of those producers from whom the data are gathered.

M. Right to Repair

We support 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.

We support the development of a universal diagnostic system for agricultural equipment similar to OBD2.

Article III. Competition and Concentration

A. Industrial Corporate Farming

An “Industrial Corporate Farm” is any corporate entity, not including Family Farms as defined by the RMFU Policy Manual Preamble, engaged in agricultural production or agribusiness sales for the primary fiscal or tax benefit of shareholders.

We support the prohibition of farming by industrial corporate farms and by foreign owners.

We support the strengthening and enforcement of antitrust laws.

We oppose the vertical integration and consolidation of production and processing by industrial corporate farms through mergers and acquisitions.

We oppose packer ownership of animals, except family farm-owned packing operations.

We oppose multinational grain and food conglomeration.

B. Infrastructure Ownership

We oppose foreign ownership or control of any infrastructure, including but not limited to highways, airlines, railroads, public or private utilities (such as water systems and communications systems), and energy production.

Article IV. International Relations & Trade

A. Trade Policy

1. Foreign Policy

All imported agricultural commodities, food, feed, and fiber must receive the same degree of inspection as those produced in the U.S. and meet the same health and safety standards and regulations.

We support a U.S. trade policy that encourages a positive trade balance.

We support holding those who import/export prohibited animal products accountable, revoking their import/export license, prosecuting them to the full extent of the law, and holding them financially accountable for the market losses of producers.

We support legislation that would prohibit the export of pesticides not registered for food and fiber uses in the U.S. for food and fiber uses in other countries.

We strongly request the USDA work to expand foreign markets for any domestically produced farm and ranch commodities.

We support the following provisions to improve international food assistance:

- Food and development aid should be assured for those here and abroad who are poor, and those endangered by natural disasters and famine, to assure their survival and well-being;
- Food should be distributed once it reaches the intended destination.
- There should be no tolerance for donors using poverty-stricken nations as a dumping ground for unsafe commodities.
- **Food as crisis relief cannot be used as a means to cause unmitigated harm to family farmers local to regions in a crisis.**

We support food assistance programs operating in cooperation with hunger and agricultural organizations supporting economic development opportunities for people in less-developed countries.

We support the removal of lead-containing metals used in the processing or storage of all imported foods.

We oppose trade agreements that override the sovereign authority of any nation and fail to address currency manipulation.

We urge the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to appoint active producers to the USDA agricultural trade advisory committees and that the department reimburse the cost of travel and lodging to attend committee meetings.

We strongly support increased funding in the Farm Bill to better protect the domestic organic market from fraudulent imported agricultural products.

We oppose the use of embargos, sanctions, and tariffs for political purposes that are detrimental to **family farmers**.

We oppose exporters/importers adding foreign materials to grains, and any intentional contamination of food products must be responded to with full enforcement of the law.

We urge Congress and especially USDA and other agencies of the federal government immediately stop their unilateral support of free trade agreements that benefit multinational corporations and destroy our nation's food independence and sovereignty.

We support the food sovereignty of all nations.

We oppose the dumping of foreign agricultural products into the United States.

2. Long-term Trade Agreements

We support the inclusion of the following goals, objectives, and provisions in our domestic trade policy and in trade negotiations and agreements:

- Establish trade agreements that address the causes of and need for trade distorting practices, e.g., domestic food safety and security, inadequate economic returns to producers resulting from market failure, lack of market competition, and an imbalance in supply and demand.
- Ensure global food security and safety, including the elimination of unilateral sanctions on agricultural and medical products.
- Enhance **family farmer** returns, economic development and individual standards of living.
- Acknowledge and accommodate the non-market costs/benefits and resource sustainability of agriculture.
- Create an agriculture trade environment that encourages increased and transparent market competition, limits the concentration of market power, and coordinates public competition policy to ensure the efficient and appropriate allocation of resources within all agricultural sectors **to benefit family farmers**.

We urge trade negotiators develop an inclusive methodology for measuring impact of domestic support programs, including effective subsidies conveyed through monetary, policy, labor, and environmental regulations.

We urge establishment of trade agreements that verify all participating countries have a history of compliance with international laws on human rights.

We support the normalization of trade with other countries through the establishment of a fair-trade agreement that requires other countries to meet labor, production, inspection, environmental standards of the United States, and forbids manipulation of their currency.

We call upon Congress to review and evaluate all existing trade agreements regarding achieving an increase in commodity and livestock prices and increasing transparent and public competition in all market sectors of agriculture. If improvements cannot be documented, Congress is encouraged to take corrective actions, including repealing trade agreements.

We believe Congress should use its full opportunity to review and amend provisions of a trade agreement because fast-track trade authority could easily sweep the concerns of agriculture aside.

We oppose the Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS).

We oppose the exploitation of developing countries by forcing them to abandon domestic food production and security.

We oppose fast-track trade authority as well as the Trade Promotion Authority for the President of the United States.

We oppose the fast-track system of ratification of trade agreements in which the entire trade package must be approved without amendment or rejected in total by Congress within a 60-day limit.

B. International Relations

1. United Nations

We urge the United States government continue its support of the United Nations, with other nations providing their proportional share.

2. Agricultural Democracy

We support progressive, nonviolent movements, such as the World Farmers Organization, and non-governmental organizations committed to agricultural justice for all people of this nation and the world.

3. World Food

We recommend that America continue its leadership role in providing food reserves to help in times of famine and natural disaster, with the cost being shared by all developed countries.

We support programs that distribute and assure delivery of food and resources to the needy in ways that do not harm family farmers in those same regions.

4. Basic Climatological Observations

We support the maintenance and continuity of basic environmental observations such as stream gauges, weather stations, and satellite observations of weather, water, and other conditions.

5. Paris Climate Accord

We support the goals articulated in the Paris Climate Accord.

Article V. Credit

A. Farm Credit System (FCS)

We support a strong cooperatively owned Farm Credit system.

We oppose the purchase of any FCS bank or portion of the FCS banking system by any non-FCS entity.

We oppose allowing FCS banks to sever mineral rights on property foreclosed upon and subsequently sold.

Article VI. Cooperatives

A. Cooperatives

We support member-owned cooperatives as an effective institution through which members can reduce costs of production, maintain a reliable source of inputs, and effectively market and process their products.

We support the basic Rochdale Cooperative principles, the one person, one vote principle, and urge Farmers Union members and organizations to provide leadership in patronage, philosophy, and operation of cooperatives. It is the individual responsibility of each Farmers Union member to be a full participant and patron in the cooperative movement and to build a closer relationship between the farm organization and cooperatives.

We support concerted efforts to form specialized cooperatives that allow farmers to sell locally grown products and locally made value-added products directly to consumers.

We support strengthening agricultural cooperatives in the American farming system to enable farmers to achieve greater bargaining power, both in marketing and purchasing.

We support consumer food cooperatives that can provide better services through cooperative purchasing by their members.

We recommend cooperative board members, managers, and employees attend training about the philosophy of cooperatives.

We urge cooperatives to set aside a portion of their net proceeds for educational programs.

We support the Capper-Volstead Act, passed in 1922, that allows agricultural producers to join cooperatively to market, package, transport, and buy their products.

When developing a new cooperative, we encourage at least one non-agricultural member and one person with a business background to serve on the board of directors.

We urge caution when considering joint ventures between cooperatives and corporations or other entities not protected under the Capper-Volstead Act.

We oppose the double taxation of a cooperative on both total earnings and the producer's share of these returns as personal income.

We strongly encourage all Farmers Union members to verify that businesses calling themselves cooperatives are in fact bona fide cooperatives operating under state law.

We oppose any federal legislation that would make all cooperative financial paper, including patronage dividends, subject to the rules, regulations, and jurisdiction of the Federal Securities and Exchange Commission.

We urge that cooperative members consider the long-term consequences of selling their cooperatives for short-term goals and urge the board oppose the sale of any cooperative venture to agribusiness.

Article VII. Water, Land, and Conservation

A. Agricultural Land

1. Ownership

We oppose nonresident foreign and industrial corporate ownership of American farms and real estate.

We strongly oppose the sale of American farms, real estate, and food processing operations to foreign governments, investors, corporations, or any other foreign entity, especially in circumstances where the merger, sale, or acquisition consolidates markets.

We strongly urge the Department of Justice (DOJ) to block any merger, sale, or acquisition that will undermine U.S. food security, safety, and family farming interests.

We urge tax advantages now available to foreign and industrial corporate investors be eliminated immediately to discourage foreign and industrial corporate ownership of agricultural land.

We demand lands owned by foreign investors have all income taxes computed on an accrual basis so that agricultural products cannot be exported out of the United States without any income tax payment as is now

possible on a cash basis. All foreign ownership of land shall be reported to each state's secretary of state. Failure to report shall have substantial penalties. Compliance will ensure payment of taxes by foreign owners.

We oppose foreign citizens leasing state land or holding federal grazing allotments. Those foreign citizens holding current leases should be required to relinquish them.

We urge foreign owners of American lands be required to comply with an approved soil conservation plan.

2. Agricultural Land Preservation Programs

We support the use of transferable development rights, conservation easements, and other tools that will keep agricultural lands in production while also providing open space.

We support increased permanent funding for the purchase of farm and ranch properties at both the federal and state levels that ensures long-term affordability of farmland for future generations of farmers and ranchers.

We support the advancement of land partnerships, such as farm incubator programs, which provide opportunities for for-profit, non-profit, and cooperative agricultural entities and strive to support educational farms that teach agricultural and business skills.

We support when land is purchased for open space with public funds with the intent of reselling the land for agricultural purposes with development restrictions, the resale must be handled by offering that land publicly for purchase at that time.

We demand all entities honor the terms of all conservation easements.

We urge the preservation of urban and regional farmland and water using intergovernmental, public, and private partnerships that fund methods and structures for cooperation and collaboration.

We support tax credits generated through the creation of a conservation easement be marketable to those who have a tax liability, with appropriate safeguards.

3. Eminent Domain

We support the Fifth Amendment of the United States Constitution, which assures that "private property (shall not) be taken for public use, without just compensation." Public use shall not be construed to mean private entities using eminent domain for private property.

We strongly oppose the use of eminent domain by government agencies on behalf of any private entity that does not itself have eminent domain powers.

We urge entities that have the right of eminent domain be required to prove that the land is needed to serve the public interest, that fair environmental standards will be observed, and that no more land is taken than is required.

Any access to properties being considered for projects shall only be by written notice with adequate time frames included to adjust scheduling of entry for surveying and siting.

All reclamation work will include input from the landowner and shall occur in a timely manner with bonding in place until mutually agreed project success.

We support having a public hearing on any proposed use of eminent domain in the affected area, after legal notification of all area residents and landowners.

We support good faith negotiations between the property owner and developer that include the option of yearly fees to the owner for current or future use before eminent domain shall be exercised.

We urge a non-governmental third-party entity agreeable to all parties to assess land value in cases of condemnation and owners being compensated with appropriate annual payments or a lump sum of no less than three times the appraised value.

We insist court-adjusted compensation return value of highest use of a property—including relocation costs—to the owner, and that all legal costs should be paid by the entity condemning the property.

We oppose the expansion of military reservations, including the taking of the lands and other associated rights, including air space, without just compensation.

B. Public Lands

We oppose the acquisition of private land by government entities without public hearings and the approval of local elected officials.

We recommend that wild land firefighting and other disaster management expenses be budgeted separately from other federal land health programs.

We support the rights of farmers and ranchers to work with federal land management agencies, including the BLM, on master leasing plans and other stakeholder processes to support healthy water, air, and soil in agricultural systems.

We support reforms to the Equal Opportunity Justice Act, making individual citizens the only eligible entities to be compensated.

We support revitalization of unused municipal land as farmland.

We support long-term conservation of farmland and agricultural water access in peri-urban areas.

We oppose the sale or exchange of public lands currently used in agriculture production to non-agricultural use.

We urge Congress to permanently authorize Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools (SRS), and to fully fund these programs annually. We further urge Congress to create a timeline for payment that supports local budgeting and planning.

We urge the establishment of policy at local, state, and federal levels that will enable development of ecosystem payments to public land permittees for deliverables of interest to ecosystem services markets.

We support land use and management of public lands that will encourage ecosystem stewardship.

We oppose the transfer of federal public lands to state control.

C. Domestic Horse Population

We urge Congress and the USDA to immediately reinstate and fund federal inspection for harvesting and processing of equine species.

We oppose the portion of the Safeguard American Food Exports Act of 2017 which denies horse meat consumption.

We support the sale and consumption of horse meat that meets the same health and safety standards already in place for other livestock meats such as beef, pork, and lamb.

We urge legislation that will provide for better disposition of feral or domestic horses and burros, specifically the sale of the animals with immediate ownership at local auction markets.

We urge transportation regulations be revisited to allow transportation of horses at the discretion of the owner in the most cost-effective manner and for their intended purposes.

D. Endangered Species Act (ESA)

We support an Endangered Species Act (ESA) that is amended to take input from affected landowners, tribal, and elected officials from a large geographic area before getting a designation under the ESA.

We support legislative delisting of the grizzly bear and all wolf species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under the ESA.

We urge USFWS require the use of the best available scientific data on population trends, available habitat, and genetic background in determining the listing and possible protection of any candidate species.

We urge federal funds be appropriated to state or federal agencies to manage endangered species and provide just compensation for producers with ESA habitat and/or for losses or harassment caused by animals protected by ESA.

We support the automatic triggering of the delisting process when the critical mass of species identified in the listing document is reached.

We oppose the application of the ESA critical habitat designation to habitat that is not occupied by any listed species.

We oppose the introduction, reintroduction, and/or relocation of endangered species or predatory animals onto lands where agricultural operations, wildlife, domestic animals, or humans might be adversely affected. This includes but is not limited to wolves and grizzly bears.

Given that public and private efforts designed to increase the population of candidate species have proven successful, federal agencies should be required to work with landowners to continue this effort.

We strongly oppose efforts to list the greater sage grouse, lesser prairie chicken and prairie dogs as endangered or threatened under the ESA.

We support candidate conservation agreements with assurances as a tool to lessen impacts to agricultural producers from candidate species that are warranted but precluded or listed.

E. Conservation

We encourage responsible stewardship of land, water, and energy resources, and appropriate conservation practices that include state and federal reclamation standards with enforcement bonding requirements for public and private projects, including mining, logging, fossil fuels exploration, and right-of-way or easement operations, with bonds in place until reclamation is complete and successful.

We support full funding and fund disbursement of the abandoned mines reclamation program.

We support local participation and control in the permitting process for conservation and construction projects.

We support an increased emphasis on reclamation and re-establishment of healthy and functioning riparian zones and other habitats impacted by mining, oil and gas development, and overuse.

We support the reuse of all products possible.

We insist that all open and unused water wells, inactive or abandoned mines, seismograph holes, and wells used to produce oil and gas be covered or filled to prevent underground pollution and to eliminate danger to people, animals, and agricultural operations.

We support preventing contamination in surface and groundwater including shallow and porous aquifers under the protection of the Safe Drinking Water and Clean Water Acts.

We support efforts to remediate contamination where it exists.

F. Noxious Weeds and Pests

We urge rigid enforcement of laws to control noxious weeds and pests on all public and private lands.

We recommend increased funding of cost-share programs to control noxious weeds and pests.

We support alternatives to chemical control measures to control noxious weeds on public lands.

We support re-classification of noxious weeds so that it considers the beneficial use of such plants to pollinators.

We support local education programs designed for the identification and management of noxious weeds and pests.

We support 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 record keeping, education and training requirements.

We urge the EPA require companies with conditionally labeled pesticides (insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides, or herbicides) to complete testing within the five-year conditional labeling period.

We support Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and continued research on biological controls to address noxious weeds and pests.

We urge the EPA improve the permitting process to enable the effective use of poisons, biologicals, and other control tools for predators and pests.

We support penalties on willful or negligent occurrences of chemical and biological trespass.

G. Water

We support investments to increase storage and improvements to distribution systems of water.

We support the conservation and efficient use of water.

We support state primacy in agricultural and individual water rights within their jurisdiction.

We oppose the use of federal environmental law or water law as a method for re-allocation or restriction of water rights acquired pursuant to state law.

We support legislation to prevent the change of use or removal of water from the basin of origin or non-tributary groundwater without a complete impact statement concerning the effect on agriculture, environment, and economic stability. The basin of origin must be compensated for any water removed.

We strongly urge federal agencies, such as the EPA and USDA, when altering the “Historic Use” of water point/system, to apply a “consensus model” by seeking input from local stakeholders including private landowners, producers, and local communities to find solutions that are inclusive, comprehensive, and resourceful.

We strenuously oppose any efforts by the federal government through the usage or expansion of a national water policy and ESA to usurp the rights and prerogatives of individual states, irrigation districts, and power generation facilities.

We oppose water rights being created with wilderness and National Park designations except those adjudicated by state law.

We oppose farmers assuming higher costs for irrigation water due to increasing demands placed on water resources, instream flow for recreation, or habitat enhancement for EPA listings.

We strongly support the concept of a voluntary, temporary, and compensated demand management program to best preserve all western agriculture.

We support federal legislation creating a water pool in Lake Powell for Upper Basin water storage.

We urge local, state, and federal governments to join together to research the feasibility of, and fund and build if feasible, water pipelines from Missouri, Mississippi and Columbia Rivers to water deficit areas for the purpose of production agriculture and hydro-electric projects.

We support state, inter-basin, and federal rules and legislation that advocate for the sharing of burden across all water sectors and water users, and across the continental divide so that agricultural water rights, and agriculture itself, are not injured.

We support alternative transfer methods that allow agricultural water users to benefit from the value of their water rights without the permanent transfer of the rights, and without adverse impacts to the local communities and the regional economy.

H. Native American Water Rights

We support appropriate water development or just compensation to meet the water appropriations of Native American water rights, to protect current agricultural water users.

We urge that any irrigation project developed on tribal land be used by Native American family farmers and not operated as a non-tribal corporation, farm, or business.

I. Water Quality

We recognize the desirability of protecting the quality of our water and assuring suitability for beneficial uses.

We support enforcement of the Clean Water Act.

We urge water produced in Coal-Bed Methane (CBM) development meet existing state water quality standards for surface water discharge. Laws requiring mitigation of impacts associated with CBM water must be established to protect adjacent landowners.

We urge municipalities and other outlying areas be ensured equal access to a domestically owned safe drinking water supply.

We support maintaining and enhancing water quality in rivers and streams to protect our environment.

We encourage pro-active efforts to implement watershed restoration to maintain or improve water quality.

We urge water quality laws account for discharges from wildlife, as well as industrial, residential, and commercial sources.

We support the development of ecosystem service markets using regenerative agricultural practices in keeping with the NRCS Principles of Soil Health and the Integration of Regenerative Grazing of Livestock.

We oppose the use of potable water in oil/mineral extraction and processing.

We strongly oppose in situ leach mining.

We encourage private landowners and public lands organizations to collaborate in actively managing forested areas with the intention of increasing water yield and enhancing forest health.

J. Federal Water Projects

We urge that the economic benefit to agriculture be considered before permitting any new federally funded water projects.

We support federal investment in increased storage and distribution of water.

We urge the federal government to streamline the process for approving additional water storage projects.

We support the funding of grants and loans to build, rebuild, and maintain federal irrigation projects.

K. Soil Health

We encourage and support soil health practices that aim to increase organic matter, sequester carbon, increase water-holding capacity, increase resilience to extreme weather events, and stabilize the soil microbiome.

We support soil health practices that reduce dependence on commercial chemicals and fertilizers and **increase the economic viability of farms and ranches.**

We support adoption of soil health principles, as advocated by NRCS, which include manage more by disturbing less; diversify soil biota with plant diversity; keep a living root growing throughout the year; keep the soil covered as much as possible; and include livestock when possible.

We support public and private funding to pay farmers to develop deeper topsoil, 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.

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.

L. Greenhouse Gas Mitigation

We support continued research and development of carbon sequestration technologies including but not limited to involving agriculture in carbon capture and storage.

We support agricultural producers having the opportunity to benefit from carbon capture and storage through the trading of credits.

We support the trading of carbon credits and the potential for inclusion of carbon sequestration and methane capture as agricultural conservation practices.

We support research into terrestrial carbon sequestration. This should encompass all practices, including grazing lands, energy feedstock production, organic cropping, wood lots, CRP, no-till, biochar, and other proven conservation methods.

We support the use of the USDA or their entities to manage the inspection/verification of carbon credits on agricultural lands, as opposed to the EPA.

We demand verification and regulation by the USDA, not the EPA, of any agriculture regulation related to climate change legislation.

We support state and national greenhouse gas reduction targets that use a voluntary incentive-based approach to continue the economic viability of farms and ranches.

We recognize that a carbon fee may be an important component of addressing emissions mitigation strategy so long as agricultural producers are not adversely affected.

We urge the development of strategies and incentives at the local, state, and federal level to:

- Improve our nation's crop and rangeland resiliency as well as its long-term sustainability and productivity.
- Promote increased water storage and management solutions that help producers adapt to changing conditions and decrease production losses due to lack or excess of water availability.

Empower family farmers to lessen the negative impacts of climate change.

M. Waste Disposal

1. Toxic Waste

We support using best available technology in disposing of hazardous waste.

We support the detoxification or neutralization of hazardous waste as opposed to concentrating the waste in another locality. No purchase, construction, or use of proposed toxic waste sites shall be allowed before approval by county and state health officials, EPA, and county commissioners in the county where disposal is to take place.

2. Non-Toxic Waste

We support efforts in Congress to require industry be accountable for the waste they generate.

3. Recycling

We favor recycling of all products, including oil and other lubricants.

We encourage development of recycling and composting.

We encourage creation of incentives to increase the use of recyclable materials.

We support reduction of food waste according to the EPA food recovery hierarchy.

4. Pollution Prevention

We support policies that create incentives to avoid production of waste rather than policies to remediate the production of waste.

Article VIII. Energy

A. Power Utilities

We oppose electric deregulation at the federal and state level.

We oppose any sale of Power Marketing Authorities.

We support the allocation of Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) power for cooperatives.

We support electrical storage as an integral part of the electrical system.

We encourage the further build-out of transmission infrastructure, including upgrades of existing distribution lines to support distributed energy generation for renewable energy.

We are opposed to any surcharge on hydroelectric rates.

We oppose changing historic use of stored water in relation to power generation.

We urge development of hydroelectric power-generated energy with appropriate safeguards for the environment, fish and wildlife, agricultural land, and water rights.

We support the modernization of existing hydroelectric plants to provide maximum electrical energy, especially in the western states, with any increase of energy allocated to preference power users.

We urge the development of secondary hydrogeneration structures at existing dam sites to at least double current energy production.

We support net metering.

We support uniform interconnectivity standards that allow for farm and ranch operations to fully utilize existing system capacity.

B. Energy

1. Research and Development

We support the development and implementation of a comprehensive national energy policy which aids in the United States' energy independence, fair and equitable distribution, and includes a focus on conservation.

We support continued research and development of natural, non-polluting, renewable energy sources.

We urge individuals and companies to make their homes and businesses more energy efficient.

We support public utilities and rural electrics exploring other energy sources for generation.

We oppose efforts to initiate commercial leasing of federal shale resources before effectiveness of and impacts from research, development, and demonstration technologies are known.

2. Alternative and Renewable Energy

We support a balanced energy policy that conserves and protects our nation's environment and recognizes the special energy needs of America's agricultural sector.

We support the development of renewable sources of energy as our top priority in reducing dependence on fossil fuels.

We urge Congress to direct the appropriate federal agencies to conduct a study of the national rural electric grid to determine its existing capacity to develop a domestic, distributed generation network.

We support federal energy incentives for all forms of alternative and renewable energy that encourage community, farm, and ranch-owned production, including the Production Tax Credit, Rural Energy for America Program, and Biomass Crop Assistance Program.

We support farmer and rancher ownership of and involvement in alternative energies.

We support the establishment of a wide variety of renewable energy sources that include but are not limited to wind, solar, biomass, hydro, hydrogen fuel cells, algae, geothermal, and any other available source. It is important to encourage the land grant and community colleges to focus their research on those cropping systems that provide renewable energy. Federal and state funds should be targeted to encourage diversified community-based energy systems that create jobs and new wealth in rural areas of the country.

We support renewable energy goals to reduce carbon emissions.

We support renewable energy developmental rights remaining with surface owners, including the use of air space.

We support maximum opportunities for wind development through cooperative wind associations.

We support a tradable federal production tax credit for locally owned projects.

We urge all states to require bonding for removal of and reclamation for all renewable energy projects.

We strongly support increased federal investment in transmission capacity, including merchant lines.

We urge siting of new transmission lines to take advantage of existing corridors wherever possible.

We urge siting on public lands vs. private lands. If sited on private lands, landowners should be compensated in a fair and equitable fashion for the easement, including the option of annual payments.

We support research in and development of advanced cellulosic biofuels.

3. Distributed Energy Generation

We support distributed energy generation in rural areas because it can provide additional income to farmers and ranchers who place energy generation systems (i.e., small hydroelectric, anaerobic digesters, wind generators, photovoltaic arrays, etc.) on their land, circulating local development dollars through the local economy and benefiting rural communities.

4. Federal Transmission Planning

We strongly support continued build out of the federal transmission system. Proposals have called for the federal government to promote and administer large transmission projects. When siting transmission corridors we urge consideration of the needs of landowners.

We support a comprehensive strategy to increase security of the national electric grids to prevent rolling blackouts and to protect utility infrastructure.

5. Nuclear

We support the use of nuclear power with extreme caution, using safe and proper methods of waste transportation and disposal.

We support research into thorium, cold fusion technology, and other fuels to replace uranium in nuclear plants.

6. Petroleum/Domestic Energy Production

We oppose the EPA's classification of crankcase oil and other lubricants as hazardous waste.

We support Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) standards as they have wide-ranging benefits resulting from less fuel consumption.

We support setback restrictions from occupied dwellings including schools and hospitals for drilling site location and tank battery placement. Such setback restrictions should be in full compliance with federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) standards and take into consideration potential impact on nationally designated archeological sites.

We urge landowner input be sought **and prioritized** in locating tank batteries and other production structures.

We support full public disclosure of chemicals used in drilling, fracturing, and production practices.

We support compensation for damages to structures, lives, and livelihoods resulting from earthquakes caused by injection of water and other fluids from oil and gas production.

We urge stringent casing standards be established and enforced to ensure bore hole containment integrity.

Well contamination and closure of wells and pipelines shall be the responsibility of oil and gas companies.

We support a reclamation bond be placed on all new oil and gas wells in an amount equal to the average cost of cleanup and reclamation of existing and abandoned wells.

We urge comprehensive baseline and subsequent water testing be completed to ensure our water quality is protected.

We support ongoing monitoring with tracers to track the movement of chemicals used in all phases of petroleum production.

We support all produced water either being purified or re-injected to its parent **geologic** formation.

We support requiring oil and gas facilities utilize all produced water prior to accessing surface or subsurface water.

We support strong rules that eliminate energy waste and greenhouse gas emissions caused by routine venting and flaring.

C. Alternative Fuels

We support programs that assist family farms, ranches, and cooperatives in obtaining grants and financial aid to develop bio-fuel plants.

We support Congress enacting a permanent extension of the Production Tax Credit that will be only available to domestic producers.

We support long term federal financial support of ethanol infrastructure including development of “flex fuel” vehicles that run on greater ethanol blends, pipelines to transport ethanol, and “blender pumps” at fueling stations to accommodate the fuel.

We encourage the utilization of oxygenated fuel, such as ethanol, to achieve improved air quality and reduce dependence on foreign energy imports.

We support the continued availability of non-oxygenated fuels for all engines with older technologies.

We support expansion of available gasoline blends up to the highest blended ratio supported by scientific data.

We encourage the use of biodiesel to decrease our dependency on foreign fuel.

We oppose any weakening of federal renewable fuel standards through the granting of waivers to refineries.

We support the federal bio-fuels standard.

We support the development of infrastructure to permit use of natural gas as an economical transportation fuel.

We support keeping the federal fuel tax and adding a fee to charge electric vehicles their fair share.

Article IX. Economic and Social

We urge Congress and DOJ investigate corporate consolidation, and the elimination of fair markets, which create uneven economic playing fields for small, minority, and independent family producers.

A. Economic Development

We support economic development that preserves and expands present agricultural economic base and focuses on value-added opportunities for agricultural crops, livestock, and renewable energy.

We support diversification of rural economies that sustain the economic viability of rural communities.

B. Farm to Consumer Food Systems

We support Farm-to-School (cafeteria, college, institution), Share U.S.A., the Good Food Purchasing Program, and similar programs which encourage consumers and publicly funded institutions to purchase food directly from domestic agricultural producers.

We support CSA operations as another source of accessing farm fresh products.

We support CSA/subscription farms and farm-to-consumer cooperatives to sell direct to restaurants, grocers, and festivals.

We support opportunities for farmers and ranchers to sell their products locally through farmers' markets, on-line markets, and other local marketing initiatives.

We encourage the development and support of the "Food Hub" model for sourcing and distributing local foods to wholesale and consumer markets.

We support federal agencies adopting policy that sets standards for local food purchasing within their agencies.

C. Animal Welfare

We support teaching animal welfare, as opposed to animal rights, through educational programs and agricultural organizations.

We support humane treatment of all domesticated animals, and their access to proper food, shelter, and water.

We oppose the adoption of laws that criminalize whistleblowing, documentation, and reporting of animal welfare violations.

We support prosecution of individuals who falsely document, falsely report, or manipulate evidence of animal mistreatment. These individuals should be made to provide for a remedy at equity or at law incurred by the victims of such false documentation.

We encourage producers throughout our region to follow accepted industry standards on animal welfare based upon expert input and consideration.

We urge owners of all types of livestock properly dispose of their animals and not release them on private or public lands.

We support the development of egg sexing technologies to eliminate the euthanasia of male chicks raised in egg-laying operations.

We oppose the euthanasia of chicks because of their sex.

We oppose the prohibition of generally accepted animal husbandry practices nationwide.

We oppose animal shelters, rescues, and affiliated organizations that are involved in “Retail Rescue.”

We oppose the illegal importation and/or inter-state trafficking of animals for animal shelters, rescues, and affiliated organizations.

D. Tax Reform

We urge Congress to take a proactive approach to the reduction of the federal deficit. The balanced approach would result in a combination of reduced federal government spending and an increase in revenue through modest federal tax increases for individual taxpayers, businesses, and corporations.

We urge Congress to close loopholes that allow corporations or individuals to evade their fair share of taxes and fund and empower the IRS to enforce existing tax law.

We urge Congress to continue the task of tax revision. Changes should include the following:

- Provide federal income tax credits or refunds if no tax liability exists for the payment of state and local property taxes.
- Reform of the capital gains tax to include an exemption on the sale of farm real estate comparable to the exemption provided on the sale of a residence.
- Reduction or elimination of the capital gains tax for a seller when land and machinery are sold to a beginning farmer at a reduced rate, or the seller finances the purchase at a discounted interest rate.
- Allow a one-time per person rollover of the capital gains from the sale of a farm or small business into an approved retirement plan.
- Federal tax credits be given to landowners who implement riparian improvements on their property under approved federal agency guidelines, such as those of NRCS.
- Any tax policy change should continue allowing the cost of health insurance coverage for self-employed people to be fully deductible for income tax purposes on Schedule C or Schedule F;
- Elimination of the ability to utilize offshore tax havens to reduce tax liability.

E. Estate Tax

We support a permanent exemption system for estate taxes which allows family-owned farms, ranches, and rural, agriculturally related businesses to continue to exist.

We oppose shifting tax liability from the estate tax to the capital gains tax through the elimination of the “step-up” provision within the capital gains tax policy.

F. Internet Sales Tax

We support requiring that Internet purchases be subject to local and state sales tax based on the physical address of the purchaser

G. Commodity Futures Markets

We support producer education in the use of commodity futures markets. Any illegal activities by commodity futures traders and speculators should be dealt with by the full enforcement of the law.

We support a new research revenue stream with an assessment of \$1 per agricultural commodity futures contract traded on an exchange. Such assessments would be deposited in the state checkoff fund for the respective commodity, be used exclusively for research for that commodity, and not displace existing checkoff funding sources.

We urge the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to modify the authority granted the exchanges to expand commodity price variations.

We urge the CFTC direct exchanges to return the variation allowances to the year 2000 spread which will bring more stability to the daily market of commodities and provide a partial safety net to producers.

We urge the CFTC direct exchanges to expand the number of delivery points within their regions for actual delivery options for farmers and elevators buying from farmers.

H. Warehousing

We urge Congress to take all necessary legislative action to ensure that stored commodities shall remain the property of those persons who delivered them for storage.

We support requiring warehouses issue negotiable warehouse receipts upon request.

We support the right of individual states to regulate the grain merchandising activities of warehouses licensed by the federal government under the Grain Standards and Warehouse Improvement Act of 2000 (USWA).

I. Vertical Integration and Price Fixing

We urge all branches of government act to prevent oligopolies and monopolies and remedy the concentration of power in the packing, marketing, processing, and crop and livestock input industries.

We support USDA's efforts to create, implement, and fund GIPSA rules and regulations per Congressional authority.

We demand the authorities prohibit large corporate meat packers from operating feedlots and/or owning and controlling captive supply livestock.

We support the ability of producers to own value-added processing and crop and livestock input marketing facilities within a cooperative structure.

We support reinstating mandatory price reporting laws.

J. Anti-Trust Enforcement

We support Congress and the Executive Branch using the full might of anti-trust laws to break up oligopolies that are causing unfair markets, price fixing, and non-competitive industry consolidation.

We urge anti-trust legislation be enforced to control monopolistic concentration in energy production and distribution, and investigation of large corporate interests that control our current energy sources.

K. Scaling of Legislation and Regulations

We oppose legislation and regulations that fail to consider the differences between small family or community operations and multi-national corporations.

L. Federal Reserve

Appointments to the Federal Reserve Board should be limited to a term of five years, and one-half of the appointees should represent segments of the economy other than banking, including one bona fide family farmer.

We support an annual audit of the Federal Reserve System.

M. Regulating Risk in the Financial Services Industry

We support reinstatement of the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933 to regulate the financial services industry. We support monitoring and regulation of the derivatives market.

We support reestablishment of small transaction fees to reduce the abuses of flash trading.

N. Alternative Crops

We support the removal of marijuana from the federal Controlled Substances Act.

We support the end of restrictions surrounding the transportation and importation of hemp seeds and live hemp plants across state and federal boundaries.

We support a definition of industrial hemp to have a THC threshold of less than or equal to 1 percent.

We support the development and use of heritage seeds.

We support assistance to family farms, ranches, and cooperatives in obtaining grants and financial aid to develop bio-fuel crops.

We support research and development of less-water-intensive crops, perennial grasses and grains, pest and drought-resistant, and successions of crops and cover crops, etc.

We urge land grant universities to maintain agricultural extension and research programs which include alternative crop production for renewable energy, carbon sequestration, and other uses.

We support allowing banks to provide services to licensed cannabis-related businesses without penalty.

We support the recognition of hemp and marijuana as alternative agricultural crops

We support the use of hemp and hemp seed as livestock feed.

We encourage cannabis entrepreneurs, scientists, and cultivators to pursue ventures in hemp in order to utilize and further realize the nutritional, medicinal, and industrial potentials of the cannabis plant.

We urge the U.S. Congress declassify marijuana as a Schedule 1 Drug.

We support research into alternative uses for high THC biomass.

We support the development of hemp processing infrastructure.

O. Education

We urge Congress and the Secretary of Education give full and complete attention to the unique challenges and programs of rural and small community schools, giving emphasis to the broad aspects of rural life.

We urge Congress to fully fund the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) while providing more flexibility to state and local education agencies in implementation of the act.

We urge Congress to fully fund the federal mandated Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to assist all districts (especially rural districts) in meeting the needs of all students.

We support agricultural education, personal resource development, career technical training programs, and other occupational preparation courses as an integral part of our public educational system that should be available to all who will enter the work force from the public schools.

We recommend that more education about cooperatives be introduced into the total educational system.

We support programs teaching consumers about the marketing disparity in agricultural products between the producer and consumer.

We support consumer education regarding the value of family farmers in mitigating climate impacts.

We support educational programs, educational materials, and curricula that promote American family agriculture's commitment to food quality and safety; agricultural literacy; ethical farm practices; a safe and healthful environment, land, water, and energy resource stewardship; sustainability of food supplies; and the value of recycling.

We support the development and expansion of school garden programs.

We support competitive salaries and other incentives to recruit, hire, and retain teachers, administrators, and support staff, especially in rural areas. We support the expansion of federal student loan forgiveness programs to include agricultural producers and hard to fill occupations in underserved areas.

We support a progressive student loan repayment system based on annual income once a minimum annual income is surpassed.

We support the implementation of the Career and Technical Education Act.

We support the extension of broadband capacity for high-speed internet to all schools equivalent to the services available in urban areas.

We support further funding be allocated to expand and improve broadband connectivity in rural areas to allow students the ability to participate in on-line learning at home at capacity for education purposes.

We support the development of federal programs that provide sourcing of computer equipment to school districts allowing them the ability to issue personal electronic learning devices to each student.

We support the development of programs that allow households, caregivers, and educators the resources and funding to ensure students have proper support in the case of long-term virtual learning.

P. Land Grant Universities

We urge land grant universities recommit to their original mission and purpose.

We urge the federal government restore historic levels of funding for land grant universities.

We urge the governing board be made up of at least 50 percent individuals engaged in family agriculture.

We urge increased financial support for land grant universities for agricultural extension and research programs that:

- Utilize the experience of people involved in innovative production agriculture.
- Support the agricultural practices of traditional people.
- Facilitate adding value to farm products in locally owned cooperatives and businesses and empower low and moderate-income families to improve their economic conditions.
- Develop training and outreach to assist small-acreage owners in understanding and implementing proper resource management practices.
- Focus research on crops suitable for efficient renewable energy production.
- Focus research on crops suitable for small diversified agricultural operations.
- Support 4-H and FFA programs.

Q. Health Care

We support the right of every American to have access to affordable and quality medical, dental, vision, and mental health services.

We support the right of every American to have access to quality, affordable end-of-life care.

We support lowering health costs through disease prevention, wellness promotion, nutrition, and alternative healthcare practices.

We support increased funding of public health programs for disease control and prevention.

We support federal appropriations for medical research, public health services, and scholarships for training all health professionals.

We urge that federal, state, and local public health agencies provide coordinated and timely services and communications.

We support legislation which will promote active, evidence-based, and non-political interventions for disease control and prevention.

We support federal funding for Medicare and Medicaid.

We support the expansion of Medicare to age 55.

We oppose any reduction in Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement to providers, particularly those serving rural communities.

We support basic acute inpatient services and outpatient primary care in rural communities, and rural hospitals and Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) that provide services as a healthcare hub for rural areas.

We support payment reform efforts and continued cost-based reimbursement for rural hospitals and CAHs for Medicare services.

We support recalculation of Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement formulas to ensure medical coverage to all citizens.

We support Medicare coverage for hearing, vision, and dental services.

We support federal funding for rural health clinics.

We oppose federal and state regulations that hinder emergency medical technicians and fire department services.

We urge priority be given to building assisted-living facilities in rural communities.

We are opposed to unnecessary hospital construction or expansion and duplication of sophisticated hospital equipment.

We urge expanded use of physician assistants or nurse practitioners in areas that cannot support a medical doctor.

We oppose removal of mandated health benefits.

We support cost containment of pharmaceuticals, healthcare services, and medical devices.

We support incentives for medical professionals who agree to serve medically underserved areas.

We urge local medical facilities and hospitals to provide medical care for the indigent and working poor who do not qualify for Medicare or Medicaid or do not have their own health insurance.

We urge the Medicare program to include the treatment of long-term illness as a covered benefit.

We support changing the Medicare Part A hospice benefits, so they are dependent upon physician certification rather than a specified time limit.

We urge the federal government allow the purchase of prescription drugs from the least expensive source.

We support the reauthorization and expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

We support a workable, affordable, single-payer, and standardized national health insurance program available to all citizens.

We support a workable, affordable public option health insurance program that is available to all citizens.

We support insurance companies providing coverage for preventative care.

We support improvements in the Affordable Care Act and its implementation to provide coverage to all Americans, especially those living in rural communities.

We oppose the takeover of locally owned hospitals by large corporations.

We support requiring published pricing be made available to the public in all healthcare facilities.

We support comprehensive legislation that addresses responsible prescribing of opioids and benzodiazepines, when appropriate, and encourages alternatives under the direction of licensed medical providers.

R. Social Security

We support the principles of the social security program, the cost-of-living increases, and the surviving spouse receiving full social security benefits from their spouse's account.

We oppose the use of "Chain-weighted CPI" as the method of calculation for cost-of-living increases.

We encourage implementation of a method of cost-of-living calculations that specifically addresses the needs of social security beneficiaries.

We support removing the income cap on FICA and oppose any reductions in the withholding rate to ensure the long-term solvency of the Social Security Insurance program.

We oppose the loss of benefits after remarriage, reductions in social security payments based on participation in pension programs, and inequities in the social security program when joint tax returns are filed.

We oppose any proposal to tax social security benefits, the use of social security funds for purposes other than social security payments and putting social security funds into private investment.

S. Social Services

We support statutory provisions that will fairly and appropriately divide the assets and incomes of couples when one spouse is institutionalized.

We urge the social services system to commit resources necessary to provide services to the poor.

We urge the federal government to reevaluate the federal poverty line to determine social services eligibility.

We support distributing surplus Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) agricultural commodities to the needy.

We support increased funding for rural foster care opportunities.

T. Veterans' Benefits

We support full implementation and funding of veterans' benefits.

We support medical research and localized care for our veterans.

We support equal access to veterans' benefits in rural areas and tribal communities.

We support veterans' programs to develop job skills and small businesses, such as the Farmer Veteran Coalition and the Veteran Farmer Projects.

U. Congressional and Presidential Elections

We urge full disclosure and transparency of all monies spent on campaigns by any source.

We oppose a single national primary election day. Candidates must be encouraged to campaign in rural communities to stay in touch with rural needs and interests.

We support a cap on federal election spending and all campaigns be publicly financed.

We support a limit on Political Action Committee (PAC), personal, and corporate contributions to campaigns.

We support a campaign length limit of six months for all political campaigns.

Any presidential candidate who receives federal funds must be included in public debates.

We urge that telephone “do not call” lists apply to political calls (recorded or live).

We support all efforts to overturn the Supreme Court’s decision in the Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission case that allows corporations to make unlimited campaign contributions.

We support the elimination of “527” organizations.

We support limiting the amount of money spent by candidates in federal, state, and local elections.

We urge full disclosure of all financial tax records of all candidates participating in state and federal elections.

We support secure, efficient processes that promote ease and access to voting by all citizens, including postage paid mail-in ballots, early voting, convenient access to polling places, and same day registration. These measures are particularly important for rural voters.

We support the use of “ranked choice” voting systems for elections.

We support making election day a federal holiday.

V. Equality and Equity under Law

We support an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that Congress shall pass no law that applies to a citizen of the United States but not to senators or representatives, or vice versa.

We support equality and equity under law of all citizens regardless of age, race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, citizenship, immigration status, gender expression, marital status, source of income, military status, disability, criminal record, genetic information, or any other status protected by applicable federal, state, or local law.

We oppose the mass deportation of any peoples from the United States regardless of their documentation status.

We support current laws that allow law-abiding citizens to protect themselves, their families, and their property.

We support the removal of Columbus Day as a national holiday.

We support the creation of a new federal holiday titled Indigenous Peoples Day.

We oppose racial profiling.

We encourage the review of current and future federal agricultural policies and programs meant to serve all producers in order to ensure Native American/Indigenous producers' particular needs such as distinct structural challenges in accessing land, capital, agricultural programs, and services, etc., are addressed, and equal access is provided.

We support actions to eliminate discrimination in the workplace, society, and marketplace.

Article X. Rural Development

Sustainability of rural America depends upon an enhanced quality of life for rural people who can build competitive businesses and cooperatives, therefore:

- We support multi-year funding for the Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service at levels that will sustain and expand programs for revolving loans, grants, and loan guarantees.
- We support increased and appropriated funding for cooperative development activities, flexibility in cost sharing, and training and technical assistance for all cooperatives.
- We support fully funding and expanding existing rural development programs.
- We support the reestablishment of an Undersecretary for Rural Development at USDA.

We support workforce development programs to provide financial assistance to hire interns to enhance our agricultural workforce and provide opportunities for training the next generation of farmers and ranchers.

We support the establishment of a fund to make both ownership and operating loans available at reduced interest rates for beginning farmers and producer owned cooperatives.

A. Transportation & Infrastructure

1. Railroads

The Certificate of Transportation (COT) system is discriminatory and anti-competitive and violates the intent of Congress in its adoption of the Staggers Act.

We urge Congress to:

- Conduct an immediate investigation into the use of COTs and the impact on agricultural producers and their local elevators; and
- Amend the Staggers Act to prohibit the use of such devices that force shippers to compete against each other for rail service.

We urge the Surface Transportation Board, Federal Railroad Administration, railroads, elevators, and grain terminals to work together to provide hopper cars in sufficient quantities in a timely manner to alleviate harvest delays.

We urge railroads to ship grains in a timely manner so agricultural producers are not penalized.

We oppose additional mergers and abandonment of service, and demand breakup of existing railroad monopolies.

We urge the expansion of the national passenger and freight railway service.

We urge railroads paint or put reflecting tape on the sides of all railroad cars, making them visible at night.

We urge the addition of warning lights and dropping arms at all major railroad crossings.

We urge continued research on railroad crossing technology and safety.

We recommend that railroads be required to maintain safe tracks and auto crossings.

We urge railroads to abide by Federal Railroad Administration guidelines not to impede grade crossings.

2. Highways

We support additional federal highway funding for transportation and for planning, development, and maintenance of roads and bridges.

We support the completion of the “Port to Plains” highway system.

We insist that all foreign trucks on U.S. highways meet the same standards as U.S. carriers.

We recommend a nationwide standardization of the axle weights and lengths on all inter-state highways.

We support increasing GVW weights to 97,000 lbs. for agricultural product carriers with 6 axles.

We urge the Federal Highway Administration consider standardizing the maximum width, length, and weight for Longer Combination Vehicles (LCVs) to help equalize state to state commerce. This should include input from agricultural representatives from each state.

We support requiring mud flaps on vehicles over 6,000 pounds of unloaded weight.

We oppose the implementation of e-log in the commercial transportation of any agricultural products.

We urge the implementation of safe multi-modal design and infrastructure for highways and other arteries across America.

B. United States Postal Service (USPS) and Rates

We urge that the United State Postal Service (USPS) coordinate its mail delivery system so that all destinations in the nation receive efficient and timely mail delivery service.

We urge Congress to fund the USPS to achieve timely delivery services, especially in rural areas, and for live animal shipments.

We recommend that the USPS seek out consumer advice in initiating any changes in postal service.

We urge Congress to repeal the requirement that the USPS pre-fund 75 years of projected USPS pension program costs in 10 years.

We oppose political manipulation of the USPS and call on Congress to restore all funds contributed by the USPS to pre-fund the pension program used by the government to offset debt and to authorize the USPS to use those funds for operational costs.

We oppose the closure of any rural Post Office. The lack of high-speed internet and broadband requires rural residents and businesses to rely on the USPS for transacting their business. Closures or consolidation of rural Post Offices must include provisions for patrons to receive their mail by rural free delivery.

We oppose any increase in postal rates more than inflation for all classes of mail.

We urge Congress to block any efforts to privatize the USPS.

We support the reestablishment of the Postal Service Bank and support the creation and expansion of new services offered by the USPS to facilitate economic growth and development in rural and inner-city communities.

COLORADO STATE POLICY

Article I. Government Programs

A. Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA)

We promote educational efforts to publicize the fact that Colorado agricultural producers provide critical benefits to the economic and environmental well-being of our state through the production of food, fiber, energy, and medicinal crops.

We encourage the Commissioner of Agriculture advocate for Colorado's family farmers and ranchers.

We urge the CDA budget be fully funded from Colorado's General Fund and not rely on user fees.

We urge the CDA make annual inspections and tests on all licensed scales and grading or testing equipment.

We urge the CDA implement and fund a state meat and poultry inspection and grading system which would enable Colorado meat and poultry producers to market their products in retail and wholesale settings

without requiring USDA inspection certifications. Until then, we urge the expansion of the number of mobile slaughter processing units to increase access to USDA certified processing in rural areas.

We support the continued viability of new and existing farms by allowing on-site slaughter and processing, including open air poultry processing, for farms in compliance with state health and safety laws.

We support expanding the Meat Act to allow sales directly to restaurants and wholesale.

We urge the CDA continue its role as a U.S. Department of Agriculture accredited organic certification agency.

We urge the CDA enhance educational services that can inform producers who want to grow organic commodities or be certified organic.

We urge the CDA to provide technical support to agricultural producers attempting to become GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) certified.

We support wholesale buyers accepting producer choice for sourcing auditors and inspectors for GAP and organic certification.

We support laws standardizing the way moisture content of meat products is determined.

We urge CDA hire and train inspectors to keep backlog and wait times to a minimum for producers for certification purposes.

We support research that investigates solutions to the causes of pollinator loss.

We acknowledge the results of research indicating that multiple factors contribute to the decline in pollinators including pesticides, habitat loss, pathogens, parasites, and climate change.

We encourage action to support the health of bees and other pollinators.

We call for a moratorium on the open-air planting of genetically engineered biopharmaceutical crops in Colorado because of the lack of knowledge of the possible effects on the environment, nearby crops, and citizens, and an inadequate regulatory process.

We urge CDA support the Soil Health Program.

We support the Commissioner of Agriculture and Colorado legislators providing and requiring more independent research, public participation, and open records to the public regarding the proceedings, findings, and recommendations on research or further advancement of pharmaceutical crops.

We urge CDA to define the terms “farmers’ market”, “indoor farmers’ market,” “on-farm market,” and “on-line farm market”, as well as “ag commercial” and “ag processing.” We further encourage the CDA to support access to farmers’ markets and direct producer marketing efforts within the State of Colorado.

We urge CDA to enforce the Bee Caution Label.

We endorse the work of the Palisade Insectary, and furthering outreach and education about its efforts

We recommend CDA continue to monitor and enforce the Farm Products and Commodity Handler Act.

We support the Colorado Agriculture Workforce Development Program within the CDA to provide financial assistance to hire interns to enhance our agricultural workforce and provide opportunities for training the next generation of farmers and ranchers.

We support the establishment of a Young or Beginning Farmer Advisory Board that will serve to identify and address issues relating to young or beginning farmers in the state, make policy recommendations to the Governor, General Assembly, and Commissioner of Agriculture, and communicate to the public and policymakers about the importance of young or beginning farmers and ranchers for the future of agriculture and regional food security.

We support the Cottage Foods Act.

We support foods prepared according to the standards in the Cottage Foods Act be allowed to be sold in the same building, farm stands, CSAs, etc. as USDA processed and frozen meats.

We support a diversified representation in Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council (COFSAC) of members of the Colorado agricultural community, including voices representing farm labor.

We support legislation for diversified crop insurance for urban and small farms.

We support legislation that would increase reimbursement to Colorado institutions for locally procured foods.

We urge CDA to ensure public funding of research is spent on independent research free of corporate or other influence and all researchers disclose all other funding sources.

We support CDA to provide permanent funds for technical assistance to family farmers for grant writing assistance.

1. Weights and Measures

We support the state certification and inspection of all agricultural commodities testing equipment.

We support laws standardizing dockage procedures on all applicable crops sold in Colorado.

2. Colorado Agricultural Development Authority (CADA)

We support operation of the Colorado Agriculture Development Authority (CADA) in accordance with its original legislative intent.

We support expanding the role of CADA to include a state loan program for renewable energy projects.

We support full disclosure and accountability of all funds disbursed by CADA.

We support the establishment of a sufficient fund to make both ownership and operating loans available at reduced interest rates for beginning farmers and producer owned value-added cooperatives.

We oppose the use of CADA bonds by large corporations and agribusinesses not owned by local producers.

3. State Fair

We encourage the Colorado State Legislature and the citizens of the state to support the Colorado State Fair and Industrial Exposition as an exhibition of agriculture, mining, water conservation, education, scientific facilities, processes, and products in or of the State of Colorado.

We support citizens of rural and agricultural communities serving on the Colorado State Fair Authority Board of Commissioners to promote agricultural-related issues and to further the true mission of the fair.

The above-stated support of our Colorado State Fair, however, is diminished by the Fair's requirement for premises ID. Since the national Animal Identification System proposal has been dropped by the USDA, premises ID should no longer be required by the State Fair.

4. Immigration

As immigration is a federal issue, we oppose the adoption of programs like E-Verify at the state level.

5. Labeling and Food Safety

We believe that consumers have a right to know what is in their food and where their food is produced; therefore, we support nationally approved labeling standards for foods as they apply in our state.

We support the labeling of organic products in accordance with the Organic Foods Production Act as it would apply in our state.

We support education of consumers regarding food safety, origin, and labeling of foods regarding additives and genetically modified and engineered organisms.

We urge application of the precautionary principle, guided by publicly available peer-reviewed science, in regulating pesticides, herbicides, and genetically modified organisms.

We support efforts by the CDA to provide food safety trainings and resources to food producers and processors in order to meet food safety requirements.

6. Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)

We urge the Colorado State Legislature and related state regulatory agencies to support the vote of the people and not debate or change any aspect of Amendment 14 as passed in 1998 but allow it to work as intended, to set water and air quality standards.

We will engage with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and other related state agencies regarding the adoption, modification, and implementation of any rules and regulations on CAFOs.

We support collecting death loss data in CAFOs.

7. Colorado Climate Plan

We urge CDA work with Colorado State University to develop strategies and incentives to support the implementation of the Strategies and Policy Recommendations of the Colorado Climate Action Plan of 2015 regarding agriculture.

8. Urban Agriculture

We support municipalities adopting comprehensive rules to enable agriculture inside city limits (e.g., zoning, permitting, and ag vehicles licensing).

We support adding agriculture as a permitted use in all types of zoning.

We support the creation of dedicated resources or offices within the CDA that support urban agriculture.

We support the classification of high tunnels as temporary as opposed to permanent structures with regard to municipal codes.

We support ancillary structures in urban and peri-urban municipalities as an agricultural application as opposed to commercial industrial or residential including animal housing, shade, storage, fencing, and cold storage.

We support the use of greenhouses and hoop houses/high tunnels for specialty crops as an agricultural application, as opposed to commercial or industrial, in urban and peri-urban municipalities.

B. Other Government Programs

We support improvement of the process for receiving and renewing driver identification for undocumented workers.

Article II. Agriculture Technology

A. Raw Milk

We support the production, distribution, and sale of raw milk and raw milk products, and believe the consumer has the right to food choices and the ability to determine their own risk regarding the consumption of raw milk and raw milk products.

We support the testing standards and management practices for raw milk production established by the Raw Milk Association of Colorado. We believe the producers have a responsibility for product knowledge and labeling and should be required to inform consumers of the risks of consuming raw milk.

B. Animal Identification

We oppose any required premise registration for animal identification purposes.

We oppose any mandatory animal identification program designed to force livestock producers to register their premises through 4-H, FFA, or fair programs.

We oppose any animal ID program that results in a shift from disease control to monitoring disease through traceability because Colorado has workable methods of monitoring livestock diseases and safeguarding animal health.

C. Alternative Crops

We urge land grant universities to maintain agricultural extension and research programs which focus on alternative crop production for renewable energy and other uses for such crops.

We urge our land grant university approach research and extension across a diversity of production scales, and to include food, feed, fiber, and fuel research of alternative crops.

We support investment in hops, malting barley, and other producer's opportunities to support Colorado's microbrew industry.

We urge the Colorado State Legislature to support development of a healthy hemp industry.

We support research into viable alternative uses for high THC biomass.

D. Cover Crops

We support land grant universities and agricultural extension services developing substantial increases and acceleration of field trials for cover crops, mixes and sequences of cover crops, and rotations of crops for diversification and resilience.

Article III. Cooperatives

We encourage cooperatives to adhere to the traditional democratic principle of one person, one vote.

We support promotion and establishment of “new generation” cooperatives that enable farmers to sell locally made, value-added, consumer-ready products to provide supplemental income.

We encourage careful consideration be given prior to any mergers between cooperatives and private or public corporations and/or any joint ventures.

We encourage the formation of cooperatives for industrial hemp growing, processing, and seed distribution.

We recommend cooperative board members, managers, and employees attend training in the philosophy of cooperatives.

We advocate that economic development agencies, as well as publicly funded schools, colleges, and universities, consider the cooperative business model and the values of the cooperative principles as an important alternative to addressing our economic, environmental, and political challenges.

Article IV. Water, Land, and Conservation Policy

A. Land Use

We support member involvement in planning, zoning, and other policy-making decisions.

We support enforcement of statutes that protect landowner rights and rights to privacy, as well as statutes that prevent trespassing and takings.

We support use of residential cluster development on less productive land to protect, in perpetuity, more productive land for continued agricultural use.

We support any additional costs and demands for increased services created by residential and commercial development being paid for by the developer.

We support local control in determining the impacts of natural resource development on the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens and community.

We urge implementation of adequate impact fees on new growth that affects agricultural operations. The public should be provided with an impact statement on proposed development.

We support incentives or programs for land access in urban areas intended for sustained urban agricultural production.

We support cities and municipalities, through their land use processes, explicitly allowing agricultural operations in non-agricultural zoned properties in urban areas.

We support counties, cities, and municipalities, through their land use processes, allow small-scale commercial poultry as a use by right in agriculturally zoned properties.

We encourage counties, cities, and municipalities allow farm stands to operate on principle use sites of any size, regardless of zoning. Retail sale of goods from farm stands must include items grown or produced on the principal use site where the farm stand is located.

We support advancement of land partnerships, such as farm incubator programs, that provide opportunities for for-profit and non-profit agricultural entities and strive to support educational commercial farms that teach agricultural and business skills.

We oppose increasing the size exemption on the 35-acre rule.

We oppose corporate ownership of Colorado's agricultural land and farms.

We support revitalization of unused municipal land as farmland.

We support long-term conservation of farmland and agricultural water access in peri-urban areas.

B. Agricultural Land Preservation

We support allowing the use of transferable development rights, conservation easements, and other tools that will keep agricultural lands in production while also providing open space.

We support the purchase of land by local, regional, and national land trusts in pursuit of conservation, soil health, open space, and agricultural preservation or lease opportunities.

We support cooperation between local and county authorities and landowners on farmland conservation easements to ensure ease of installment of agricultural accessory buildings and other structures necessary for agricultural production.

We support when land is purchased for open space with public funds with the intent of reselling the land for agricultural purposes with development restrictions, the resale must be handled by offering that land publicly for purchase at that time.

We support legislation that requires public entities to honor the terms of a conservation easement.

We support compensation for agricultural producers who maintain open space, wildlife habitat, watershed protection, clean air, and other natural resource conservation.

We encourage land trusts to accept farmer or community-owned renewable energy power generation equipment as part of easement agreements.

We support oversight over conservation easements and easement holders.

We support land link programs to ensure our working lands have a strong continuum of stewardship.

1. State and Local Government Lands

We support a State Land Board policy on access to state trust lands, which gives the current surface lessee authority to control public access.

We recommend that the State Land Board follow the recommendations of the local soil conservation districts before any state pasturelands are disturbed for farming purposes.

We support the State Land Board policy of having one principal lessee on trust lands. Multiple use and agricultural uses should be continued on all lands currently in agricultural or grazing use.

We support an expanded interpretation of “the public good” as it exists in city charters to include for-profit farms, so they can be established on city and county parks and open space lands.

We oppose the development of any county-mandated land use plan that diminishes the opportunity for agricultural producers to maximize the value of their agricultural land.

We urge that the current lessee maintain their preferential right on their current lease.

We oppose assessment of the lessee of any property taxes on property owned by the state.

We support the state paying appropriate local property tax on state lands on an assessment basis equivalent to the surrounding area.

We oppose the wholesale transfer of federal lands to the state.

We urge the State require all development to have water acquired before project can go forward or building permits can be issued with public notice.

2. Eminent Domain

We oppose state laws which allow condemnation of property for private enterprise projects or the condemnation of private property for private gain and support the repeal of any such state laws.

We demand the Colorado State Legislature pass laws to counteract the U.S. Supreme Court ruling (Kelo v. City of New London) allowing state or local condemnation of private land for private gain.

3. Multi-National Corporate Farming

We support legislation that prohibits ownership by non-U.S.-residents or foreign governments of agricultural /food processing operations.

| We are opposed to multi-national processing corporations owning any agricultural land.

We urge policies against corporate consolidation of agriculture.

C. Preservation of Agricultural Water

We believe water is a private property right and support Colorado's historic doctrine of prior appropriation.

We oppose the public trust doctrine.

We support legislation that protects agricultural and individual water rights.

We support the funding and implementation of the Colorado Water Plan.

We support methods for water conservation and efficiency for in-stream use or other agricultural uses without revoking farmers' and ranchers' water rights for not using their allocated share under "use it or lose it" water policy clauses.

We support local control of water resources within the confines of the prior appropriations doctrine.

We support the Colorado Water Conservation Board's (CWCB) Statewide Water Supply Initiative (SWSI) that was formed to assess the water supply-and-demand situation in the state.

We urge the State Engineer notify all individual water right holders of any modification to policy or regulations within a water basin which is directly affected by that decision.

We support the State Engineer's authority over the management of rivers and wells.

We support the management of water to allow aquifers to recharge.

| We support incentives and funding for cities to build **sewage plants using land treatment systems** if they are not injurious to water users that have a priority for the use of the water.

We support the implementation of water conservation and efficiency strategies.

We urge municipalities pursue other alternatives for water supplies, including conservation and water projects, before acquiring agricultural water.

We support the continuation of the NRCS snow surveys and SNOTEL measuring stations throughout Colorado.

We support the implementation of technologies to accurately forecast water supplies from snowpack and runoff.

We support compensation from federal crop insurance being available to farmers when water rights have been curtailed.

We urge development projects provide proof of a sustainable water supply before being issued permits to build.

We support groundwater recharging for maximum beneficial use of water rights.

We support research and development related to use of reclaimed water on food producing crops and other purposes.

We support the Colorado River Cooperative Agreement and the process by which it was designed.

We support reclamation of lands in “buy and dry” and “lease and cease” situations. The entity buying or leasing the water rights shall bear the expense of re-vegetating the land.

D. Water Diversion

We support cooperation with other states to preserve the water allocated under existing compacts.

We support top priority for agricultural water if such projects do not cause loss or injury to existing agricultural operations.

We urge that when water is diverted from one watershed to another, those receiving the benefits of such diversion pay for any damage, including but not limited to increased salinity, decreased quality and quantity, legal fees, and recreational and business income losses.

We oppose any plan to construct additional trans-basin diversions.

E. Water Quality

We support monitoring and participating in regulatory proceedings to establish standards for preserving the quality of surface and underground water.

We urge everyone use best management practices and established state and industry standards, in both metropolitan and rural areas, to minimize and mitigate surface and groundwater contamination.

We support identification of, and restrictions being placed on, the source of contamination.

We urge water quality laws account for discharges from wildlife, as well as industrial, residential, and commercial sources.

We support vigorous enforcement of laws and regulations designed to protect the water quality of all Colorado rivers and their tributaries from sewage discharges and storm water runoff.

We support the Water Quality Control Commission and ask that they maintain their regulation of water discharges from energy exploration and operations.

We urge water produced in Coal Bed Methane (CBM) development meet existing state water quality standards for water quality discharge. Laws requiring mitigation of impacts associated with CBM water must be established to protect adjacent landowners.

We support preventing chemical and biological contamination in shallow and porous aquifers, and we support efforts to remediate contamination where it exists.

We support a flexible state water supply that includes allowing and encouraging water reuse and recycling for food crops.

F. Soil and Water Conservation

We urge the continuation of a strong relationship with the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) and the state NRCS technical committee to help maintain present programs and to implement new programs for conserving soil and other natural resources.

We encourage the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) and CDA to provide grants, loans, technical support, education, and assistance programs to promote voluntary on-farm water and soil conservation and efficiency practices and methods.

We encourage programs that support soil health research, education, and implementation.

We support soil health practices that regenerate our agricultural lands, enhance water holding capacity, increase resilience to extreme weather events, improve farm and ranch profitability, and increase watershed function.

G. Recycling

We encourage the creation of incentives, research, and outlets to facilitate and increase the use of recyclable materials, including glass.

We support the use of modern cogeneration technology that uses waste as fuel.

We encourage the promotion of recycling and on-farm composting.

We encourage the development of regional recycling centers throughout the state.

We support the promotion and generation of at-home recycling pickup programs.

We encourage statewide initiatives to provide more recycling opportunities, including commercial compost operations.

We support the recycling of excess food for the highest purposes according to the EPA food recovery hierarchy.

H. Alternative Livestock and Non-Amenable Species (Bison, Elk, Deer, and Other Exotic Species)

We support the State Veterinarian's authority over all livestock and alternative livestock disease issues.

We support the ranching of alternative livestock if it is properly regulated, managed, and licensed by CDA.

We request legislative support that all regulatory changes be based upon the best available science, facts, and evidence.

We oppose Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) having any authority over livestock and alternative livestock disease or movement issues.

We support chronic wasting disease surveillance program for alternative livestock as regulated by CDA.

We oppose management of any facet of the alternative livestock business by ballot initiative.

We urge consideration of full market value compensation for alternative livestock and other livestock destroyed by the government on private and commercial ranches, except in cases of producer negligence.

I. Noxious Weeds and Pests

We support formation of weed control districts across the state, including municipalities.

We urge stronger enforcement of state laws to control noxious weeds and pests on all lands. This would include federal lands, state and county highway rights-of-way, pastureland, recreation areas, and private housing and subdivision property. **Fill material** hauled from one location to another should be free of noxious weeds and seeds.

We support the ongoing effort to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species.

We urge the Colorado State Legislature to provide a funding mechanism for the control of noxious weeds and pests that prevents the elimination of plants that will adversely affect pollinator health.

We urge state, local, and federal governments to plant appropriate plants along roadways and control noxious weeds in a timely manner.

We urge continued research into IPM and other alternative methods of controlling noxious weeds and invasive species.

We urge state and federal land managers work closely and cooperatively with county weed control districts for better management of invasive and non-native species.

Article V. Energy Policy

A. Oil and Minerals

We support an assessment of taxes on natural resource extraction adequate to fund resulting infrastructure needs for affected communities and the state.

We urge mineral rights, if not leased, revert to the surface owner if the holder of the severed mineral rights is delinquent on taxes for three years. If mineral rights have returned to the surface owner, there should be no separate tax on the mineral rights.

We urge royalty payments be issued within 180 days of completion of drilling of a new well.

We urge the passage of legislation that gives local governments the authority to regulate off-site impacts of oil and gas development to ensure that companies are in compliance with all applicable rules, regulations, and stipulations prior to issuing drilling permits.

We oppose efforts to initiate commercial leasing of federal shale resources before effectiveness of and impacts from research, development, and demonstration technologies are known.

We encourage meaningful participation by local governments and the public in the federal leasing process.

We support adequate funding for state agencies with regulatory authority over oil shale development.

We support lessees of oil or mineral rights paying for all entries on the land abstracts and all transfers if the lease is resold or divided.

We oppose the sale of federal oil shale lands and mineral rights.

We support enforcement of monitoring meters on oil and gas wells for purpose of severance tax collection.

We support the right to explore non-productive oil and gas zones with a primary lease.

We urge any mining operation provide meaningful assurances such as a bond that they will not harm water, air, or soil quality or public health, before they are given the required local and state permits to commence their operation.

We oppose permitting open-pit cyanide gold mines in the State of Colorado, to protect our valuable natural resources, including our ground and surface water.

B. Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC)

We believe the development of the natural resources of oil and gas in the State of Colorado should be regulated for the protection of public health, safety, welfare, and the environment.

We support requiring oil and gas companies to publicly disclose all chemical compounds being introduced into the environment in oil and gas production and development.

We support a working relationship with the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) and agriculture agencies to forge productive options and solutions for mineral development compensation.

We support equal representation by non-industry citizens on the COGCC, including a representative of the health industry and an agricultural landowner.

We support reasonable and fair compensation to surface owners for damage caused by mineral development, especially for those circumstances involving a split estate, as well as legal recourse available for disputes to all citizens of the United States.

We support fair compensation to the surface owner.

We support setback restrictions of one thousand feet from occupied dwellings including schools and hospitals for drilling site location and tank battery placement.

We urge landowner input be sought in locating tank batteries and other production structures.

We demand stringent casing standards be established and enforced to insure bore hole containment integrity.

We demand comprehensive water quality baselines and adequate subsequent water testing be completed to ensure water quality is protected. In addition, we support ongoing monitoring of chemicals using best available technology according to industry standards in all phases of petroleum production.

We support all produced water either be purified or re-injected to its parent formation.

We support requiring oil and gas facilities utilize all produced water prior to accessing surface or subsurface water.

Well contamination and closure of wells and pipelines shall be the responsibility of oil and gas companies.

We support compensation for damages resulting from earthquakes caused by injection of water and other fluids from oil and gas production.

We support a reclamation bond be placed on all new oil and gas wells in an amount equal to the average cost of cleanup and reclamation of existing abandoned wells.

C. Colorado Energy Office

We call on the Department of Natural Resources and the Colorado Energy Office to develop a comprehensive energy policy.

We support a balanced energy policy that conserves and protects our nation's environment and recognizes the special energy needs of America's agricultural sector.

We urge state support of alternative and renewable types of distributed power systems.

We support incentives for renewable energy development.

We support research and development of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) facilities and encourage a state policy that landowners will own the pore space that stores carbon, with the understanding that landowners will not share in the risks associated with CCS.

We support the development of infrastructure to permit use of natural gas as an economical transportation fuel.

D. Biofuels

We support the Colorado bio-fuels industry and the use of alternative crops for energy use.

We urge the use of ethanol-based fuels.

We support the further development and distribution of E-85 fuel and biodiesel, including long term financial support to build the infrastructure bio-fuel firms say is necessary to compete in the marketplace.

We support the further development of infrastructure for blender pumps.

We support the expansion of available gasoline blends to the highest blended ratio as supported by scientific data.

E. Wind

We encourage the individual or community-owned development and ownership of wind energy and co-generation production; in cases of development, we support fair reimbursement to landowners.

We oppose the severance of wind rights from landowner surface rights.

F. Solar

We encourage the development of solar energy, including solar thermal and agrivoltaics, in Colorado.

We oppose the severance of solar rights from landowner surface rights.

G. Hydro-Electric

We support explicit authorization for in-pipe small hydro and in-ditch small hydro.

H. Distributed Energy Generation

We support distributed energy generation in rural areas because it circulates local development dollars through the local economy and benefits rural communities.

I. Electric Transmission

We support new transmission corridors if landowners are compensated in a fair and equitable fashion for the easement.

We support annual payments as a form of compensation for easements.

We oppose allowing independent transmission developers siting corridors to exercise eminent domain.

We urge private property owners be invited to be part of transmission planning meetings.

J. Net Metering Policy

We support net metering.

We support standard offers for locally owned renewable energy projects that are economically viable and provide benefits to the energy grid through distributed energy production.

We support community renewable energy projects to allow for greater public participation.

K. Financial Incentives

We support a state tax credit for smaller renewable energy projects which is tradable to any interested parties.

We support a personal property and sales tax exemption for renewable energy equipment similar to the Farm Equipment Exemption.

We support the dedication of a portion of Colorado's severance tax revenues to individual and community-owned renewable projects.

We support the incorporation of individual and community-owned projects into larger commercial projects, such as the sharing of transmission lines.

We support the reservation of transmission line capacity for renewable energy.

L. Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS)

We support a state policy that would create an expanded renewable portfolio standard for alternative energy, especially advocating solar, wind, biomass, geo-exchange, and biofuels.

We support renewable energy goals to reduce carbon emissions.

We support state policy that requires life-cycle analysis on all generation options.

We urge the Colorado Rural Electric Association (CREA), Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, WAPA and all member-owned utilities to fully support the development of distributed renewable energy generation, including opening their grid to purchasing individual and community-owned renewable energy.

We support continued research and development of natural, non-polluting, renewable energy sources, including but not limited to cellulosic ethanol and woody biomass.

We encourage the Colorado Energy Office to organize interested stakeholders into a task force on renewable energy, to provide research and support for renewable energy programs, bio-fuel production, and carbon sequestration.

We encourage the Colorado Energy Office to work in cooperation with CREA to conduct a statewide distributed generation study.

M. Energy

We direct the Colorado State Legislature to instruct the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), Rural Electric Associations, and their power suppliers to prioritize energy efficiency, conservation, and renewable energy as pre-requisites to approval of additional power generating facilities.

We oppose the sale of any Power Marketing Authorities (PMA).

We oppose any deregulation of rural utilities and services that will increase rates.

We oppose the breaching of any dams generating electric power or providing agricultural water.

We encourage mitigation and revitalization efforts for local communities that have been negatively impacted by state or federal energy policy.

N. Emissions

We support the trading of carbon credits and the potential for inclusion of carbon sequestration and methane capture as agricultural conservation practices.

We support research in terrestrial carbon sequestration. This should encompass all practices, including grazing lands, energy feedstock production, organic cropping, wood lots, CRP, CREP, no-till, biochar, and other proven conservation methods.

We support state and national greenhouse gas reduction targets that use a voluntary incentive-based approach to continue the economic viability of farms and ranches.

We oppose mandatory requirements for the purchase or use of electric vehicles

Article VI. Economic and Social Policy

A. Social Justice Policy

We oppose profiling and discrimination based on age, race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, citizenship, immigration status, 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

We support actions to eliminate discrimination in the workplace, society, and marketplace.

B. Agricultural Labor, Worker Dignity, and Economic Justice

We support paying a fair wage based on the type of work and industry standards.

We support providing appropriate training and tools to minimize the risk of injury in the workplace.

We support employees having access to service providers and medical care during breaks or during a shift if there is an emergency.

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

We support the creation of a program similar to the Fair Food Program, including incentives for participation.

C. Economic Development

We support state economic development strategies that support all regions within Colorado.

We support the use of nonproductive lands in agricultural areas for nonagricultural uses provided they maintain or create a harmonious environment in the community and do not place an undue burden on local economies and local governments.

We support the establishment of more localized food systems that prioritize investment in regional producers.

We encourage the formulation of policies to promote the institutional procurement of locally and regionally farmed foods.

We support an infrastructure that promotes stable economic systems that preserve rural character.

We oppose incentives that attract multi-national businesses and corporations that compete unfairly with local small businesses.

We support the adoption of food security advocacy programs such as the Denver Food Vision across the state.

We support continued research and development of the Colorado Blueprint for Agriculture and Food.

D. Taxes

We support reimbursement to counties for a portion of property taxes lost when tracts of land are removed from tax rolls.

We support requiring any municipality or utility owning land outside its corporate limits to pay property taxes at the current taxing level.

We support the concept of basing agricultural property tax on productivity.

We recommend that repair parts for farm equipment continue to be exempt from state and local sales tax.

We support using a progressive income tax and severance tax for education and other essential government services.

We urge rural fire district approval of substations whenever a community is willing to staff and financially support that substation.

We support the increase of severance taxes on all non-renewable energy sources and minerals in Colorado to make them comparable with those of neighboring states.

We support tax advantages to farmers who donate to hunger relief organizations.

We encourage state efforts to finance beginning farmers and ranchers including the use of tax incentives.

We oppose the assessment of possessory interest taxation on the value of grazing and farming leases on government lands.

E. Infrastructure

We urge the Colorado State Legislature to continue the use of the Water Conservation Board Construction Fund to rehabilitate dam structures and increase storage/holding capacity.

We urge the Colorado State Legislature to provide a fund for water projects, including:

- Construction of new dams, or rehabilitation and enlargement of existing dams;
- Rehabilitation or construction of agricultural water supply systems including diversion dams, ditches, and head gates.

We support creating uniform standards to protect and promote farm-based agritourism.

We urge the Colorado State Legislature to establish a permanent fund for watershed health, to be engaged by interested local governments on a cost-share basis, to hire land managers to grow deep topsoil watersheds, and to fund the quantification of ecosystem service deliverables relative to soil health and human health.

We support a study to build a downstream water storage project in the South Platte River Basin to capture flood water from high spring runoff and heavy rain events for supplying water rights of Nebraska and Kansas in a reliable, steady fashion, augmenting agricultural water rights in Colorado, recharging the Ogallala Aquifer in portions of eastern Colorado, and supplementing water flows in the Republican River Basin.

We support those water projects that retain water use in the State of Colorado and encourage construction of additional projects which are directly beneficial to agriculture and the economy of our state, such as the Northern Integrated Supply Project (NISP).

We support impact fees for new houses, multi-family units, and homes with new wells, to be used to fund future water storage projects.

We support a reduced water rate and waiving tap fees for community-based food systems developed by producers using municipal sources.

We oppose privatization of public water systems or sanitation systems.

We encourage the Colorado State Legislature consider additional resources to support the state's transportation infrastructure.

We support the development of broadband capacity internet in rural areas to be equivalent to urban areas.

We support regulation equalizing telephone and broadband internet access throughout the state.

F. Workers' Compensation

We support subsidized workers' compensation rates and costs for family farms and their seasonal industries.

We recommend that the workers' compensation law be amended to recognize the unique nature of agriculture and to provide an option for small employers to find other resourceful alternatives.

G. Mechanic's Lien

We support amending the mechanic's lien law to protect an individual who can prove payment for materials to a contractor from the contractor's creditors.

We support a mechanic's lien sunset after a three-year period.

H. Wildlife Management

We encourage CPW, prior to the process of setting seasons, harvest, wildlife populations, and overall management objectives, provide adequate and proper notice to landowners, farmers, and ranchers, in the spirit of cooperation, to allow for their active participation, recommendations, and input throughout this process.

We support equitable damages being reimbursed by CPW for forage, crop, and livestock losses, loss of productivity, damages to fencing, etc., attributable to wildlife even if the landowner or lessee receives bounty or hunting fees on the property.

We support the development of state policies to enable farmers and ranchers to mitigate the impacts of predators to livestock.

We oppose wildlife damage compensation in cases where problem wildlife is being harbored, and where crops and associated structures are used primarily to attract and harvest wildlife.

We request legislative relief by permitting farmers and ranchers free licenses to hunt the legal limits on their own land, as is the practice in other states.

We support the Habitat Partnership Program.

We support best management practices in wildlife management administered by the CPW.

We encourage Colorado Parks and Wildlife to take the advice of the Stakeholder Advisory Group and the Technical Working Group as they make plans for wolf reintroduction and as they design livestock owner compensation plans.

We support the State of Colorado permitting the use of active ingredients (Diphacinone and Chlorophacinone) and other effective techniques for the control of prairie dogs.

We oppose increasing wildlife populations at the expense of livestock grazing or to the detriment of the ecosystem.

We urge CPW to develop a comprehensive management plan to reduce the threat posed by chronic wasting disease.

We oppose wildlife management by ballot initiative.

We oppose the re-location of prairie dogs from urban to rural areas.

We oppose the introduction, relocation, or rerelease of endangered species or predatory animals onto lands where agricultural operations, wildlife, domestic animals, or humans might be adversely affected. This includes but is not limited to wolves and grizzly bears.

I. Animal Welfare

We support teaching animal welfare through educational programs and agricultural organizations.

We support humane treatment of all domesticated animals, and their right to have proper food, shelter, and water.

We support prosecution of individuals who falsely document, falsely report, or manipulate evidence of animal mistreatment. These individuals should be made to provide for a remedy at equity or at law for victims of such false documentation.

We oppose the regulation of domestic livestock and animal husbandry by ballot initiative.

We oppose the prohibition of generally accepted animal husbandry practices.

We oppose the adoption of laws that criminalize whistleblowing, documentation, and reporting of animal welfare violations.

We oppose animal shelters, rescues, and affiliated organizations that are involved in “Retail Rescue”.

J. Health Care

We support access to affordable medical, dental, vision, and mental health services, as well as to long-term care and hospice care, for all people.

We support enhanced funding of local public health agencies and school nurse programs for infection prevention (including vaccinations), reproductive health, food safety, control of communicable disease outbreaks and epidemics, prevention of chronic health problems such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer, and promotion of occupational safety.

We support a workable and affordable national universal health care plan to provide equal opportunity for adequate health care for all people.

In the absence of a national universal health care plan, we support universal health insurance for Colorado.

We support a single-payer health care system.

We support the public and legislative educational work done to raise the issues of healthcare access and affordability in rural Colorado.

We support the Colorado Provider Recruitment program, within the Colorado Rural Health Center, which assists rural and medically under-served communities in recruiting and retaining health care professionals.

We also support providing incentives for medical students who agree to serve in rural and medically under-served areas.

We support investments in Colorado's loan repayment program, Colorado Health Service Corps, be maintained so that the resource is available for primary care providers serving rural and underserved areas.

We support essential primary healthcare services in all geographic areas, including the use of physician assistants and nurse practitioners.

We support federal and state funding for hospitals, inpatient mental health services, rural health clinics, and emergency medical services in rural counties that are medically underserved.

We support rural health clinics and community funded safety net clinics as critical parts of Colorado's healthcare safety net system.

We urge these entities be provided the same access to funding that is available to other safety net providers.

We support the inclusion of rural and community-funded safety net providers in the programs and services included in the Affordable Care Act.

We urge local medical facilities and hospitals to provide medical care for the indigent and working poor who do not qualify for Medicare or Medicaid or do not have their own health insurance.

We support lowering healthcare costs through nutritional and cooking education, disease prevention and wellness promotion.

We oppose the practice of rate banding by health insurance companies.

We oppose coverage denial based on pre-existing health conditions.

We support the development of regional healthcare cooperatives to help meet the healthcare needs of the residents in their regions.

We encourage healthcare companies and insurers to focus on wellness and preventive care, invest excess revenues in improved services and lower premiums, and place people before profits.

We urge efforts be made to ensure that rural Colorado be included as the state implements a Health Information Technology (HIT) system, to use computer network systems to store, protect, retrieve, and transfer clinical, administrative, and financial information electronically.

We urge state and federal legislation to eliminate gaps in incentive funding for rural health clinics and community funded safety net clinics to obtain funds to establish the systems necessary to fully serve their patients with new information technology.

We support capital investment by federal and state governments to build and sustain the infrastructure for tele-medicine.

We support state regulation of hearing tests and sales of associated equipment. Those providing these services must be licensed doctors of audiology or trained individuals who have passed the necessary exams and are licensed to provide these services.

We support published public pricing be required in health care facilities.

We support a state funded system of mental health services and substance abuse services across the state, including in rural areas.

We oppose the consolidation of health service providers.

We support comprehensive legislation that addresses responsible prescribing of opioids and benzodiazepines, when appropriate, and encourage alternatives under the direction of licensed medical providers.

We support funding for opioid use disorder, harm reduction, and treatment.

K. Education

We support increased public funding of K-12 education and state supported post-secondary education systems, with a goal of approaching the national average.

We support strong state funding for public colleges and universities to provide a broad array of post-secondary options for our citizens, and continued state support for public higher education also to keep tuition low and reduce student debt.

We support additional state funding for financial aid awards for first generation students at our institutions of higher education.

We support additional investment in secondary and post-secondary career and technical education programs to train young people as electricians, plumbers, welders, mechanics, and similar professions needed in rural communities.

We support public funding for Agricultural Experiment Stations and the Cooperative Extension Service.

We support increased state funding for public libraries in underserved or rural areas.

We support educational programs and educational materials and curricula that promote American family agriculture's commitment to food quality and safety, ethical farm practices, a safe and healthful environment, land, water, and energy resource stewardship, sustainability of food supplies, and the value of recycling.

We support removing financial barriers and disincentives to locally initiated consolidations.

We support resource sharing between schools and school districts as a local approach to improving the viability of rural schools.

We oppose any state-mandated consolidation of rural school districts and community colleges.

We support funding for rural K-12 school districts that recognizes the challenges faced by rural school districts, especially those facing declining enrollment and low assessed valuations.

We support adequate opportunities for local preschool childcare and encourage common-sense approaches to solving any shortage.

We support the Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) program and encourage the state to identify additional sources of revenue to support this program.

We oppose "vouchers" that would divert funding from public education to private schools.

We support agricultural literacy and efforts to combine curricula and disseminate it.

We support a progressive student loan repayment system based on annual income after graduation. The repayment system will become effective once a minimum annual income is surpassed.

We support further funding be allocated to expand and improve broadband connectivity in rural areas to allow students the ability to participate in on-line learning at home at capacity for education purposes.

We support the development of state programs that provide sourcing of computer equipment to school districts allowing them the ability to issue laptops or tablets to each student.

We support the development of programs that allow households, caregivers, and educators the resources and funding to ensure students have proper support in the case of long-term virtual learning.

L. Food Security and Nutrition

We urge the Colorado State Legislature to appropriate funding to fully participate in the USDA Farmers' Market Nutrition, Senior Market Nutrition, School Meal, and WIC programs.

We support implementation and expansion of a "Farm to School (Cafeteria)" program for the school meal programs, including before and after school programs for public and private schools.

We support food education programs and local food and nutrition seminars.

We support doubling the value of purchases of fruits and vegetables that are locally and regionally grown and are supportive of the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) grant program.

We support flexibility regarding the safe distribution and reimbursement of meals for qualifying students even when schools are closed due to emergency.

M. Local Food Systems

We support the following definition of farmers markets: "Two or more farmer-producers or their employees that sell their own agricultural products directly to the general public at a fixed or online location, which includes fruits and vegetables, meat, fish, poultry, dairy products, grains, and other agricultural products."

We oppose entities not meeting this definition from using the term "farmers markets."

We support the identification of product origin at farmers markets.

We support the expansion of producer-only farmers markets.

We support the continuation and expansion of SNAP Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards to farmers' markets and CSAs.

We support community supported agriculture/subscription farms and farm-to-consumer co-ops selling directly to restaurants, grocers, and festivals.

We support farmers' markets and other local product initiatives

We support and promote the development and integrity of the Colorado Proud program to benefit Colorado producers, and include a requirement that the Colorado Proud program be limited to those products primarily grown in Colorado.

We support the Good Food Purchasing program.

We support the Colorado Food Pantry Assistance Grant. We support a local procurement mandate for Food Pantry Assistance Grant funds.

We support incentives for food hubs, food cooperatives, value-added producers, and regional agricultural producers to encourage purchasing from Colorado farmers and ranchers.

We support the purchase of locally grown and raised food by food pantries and state funded institutions and the funding of technical assistance to support those purchases.

We support domesticated rabbits being designated the same as poultry regarding slaughter of animals.

N. Department of Corrections

We support supervised and voluntary opportunities for inmates to work to enhance knowledge and build employable skills in the agricultural and food processing industries.

We support that all facilities have proper heat, air conditioning, ventilation, nutrition, and medical services.

O. Political Reform

We oppose the use of recall elections to effect policy decisions. Recall should be limited to cases of malfeasance.

We support removing the Gallagher, TABOR, and Amendment 23 provisions from the state constitution and returning tax and budgeting authority to the Colorado State Legislature, the Governor, and other appropriate elected officials.

We support efforts to enable counties and other governmental units to establish agreements about common issues with counties in adjoining states.

We support expanding requirements for changes to the Colorado constitution via ballot initiatives to all citizen ballot initiatives.

We urge adoption of public financing of all statewide and state legislative campaigns.

We oppose the passage of any amendments or laws that limit the effectiveness of elected officials or limit our use of the representative form of government.

We support the use of ranked choice voting systems for elections.

P. Housing

We support both movable and foundation-based safe, flexible, and affordable housing options for agricultural workers.

We encourage local governments to allow on-site housing for agricultural workers on agricultural-use properties based on the nature and needs of the farm or ranch.

We urge Colorado Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) to modify standards affecting agricultural workers living in employer-provided housing to specifically address the challenges of public health and safety emergencies.

Article VII. Rural Development

A. Industrial Siting Act

We support enactment of an industrial siting act in Colorado that would include the following:

- Support for local land use control and the county land use commission in maintaining control of the location and development of heavy industry and mining development. It should be a location that will cause the least impact to agriculture and the rural environment.
- State agencies should assist local entities in minimizing the impact on and use of prime agricultural land for such development through feasibility studies to determine the full impact of selected sites and development.

We support a definitive procedure ensuring public information with respect to such proposed land development.

We support a provision to encourage rural towns and communities, if desired, to acquire lands for industrial parks. These parks would be used as a method of controlling the scope and development of industry, which would aid in stabilizing local economies.

We urge our state government to offer incentives for these new industries to locate in rural areas.

B. Transportation

We recommend passage of legislation that would allow weight variance permits for trucks with farm plates of up to 15 percent within a 100-mile radius during harvest season.

We oppose additional railroad mergers and abandonment of service.

We support the continued development of light rail to connect Colorado communities.

We support improved access to rail service for agricultural products for family farmers and aggregators.

C. Telephone and Internet Service

We direct the PUC to review the existing inequities of the different telephone patterns in rural communities and, where feasible, to help make changes that would be more equitable to rural telephone customers.

We are opposed to the deregulation efforts that could allow rural areas to be left without a carrier. Service providers that maintain telephone lines should be closely monitored and pricing kept comparable to metro areas.

We support municipal/rural electric co-op high speed internet where markets fail to provide competitive high-speed options.

NEW MEXICO STATE POLICY

We support legislation and regulations that consider the differences between small family farms and ranches, family farm corporations, or community and cooperative businesses operations versus multi-national corporations. Legislation and regulations should reflect differences in scale and the fundamental differences between real persons and corporations. We support a diverse and equitable food system that is inclusive.

Article I. Government Programs

A. Agricultural Services

We encourage the review of current and future federal agricultural policies and programs meant to serve all producers in order to ensure Native American/Indigenous producers' particular needs such as distinct structural challenges in accessing land, capital, agricultural programs, and services, etc., are addressed, and equal access is provided.

We encourage the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) to align and facilitate access to research, informational resources, and agricultural services regarding the needs of rural people, the services available, and the responsiveness of agencies.

We urge that appropriate testing be made available for local areas for soil, crops, water, etc.

We oppose any efforts by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Risk Management Agency (RMA) to force ditch irrigators to sign up their farms as dryland acres during an irrigation water shortage.

We urge the FSA State Office rescind any mandate or deny any future proposal that states that acequias and all other surface water right users are not irrigated land for NAP purposes.

We urge the FSA State Office rescind any mandate or deny any future proposal that states ‘drought’ as an ineligible cause of loss for perennials.

We urge the FSA State Office petition the policy holders of the NAP handbook to rescind the changes to paragraph 51E of 1 NAP (Rev. 2) to not include perennials as needing an Adequate Water Supply at the beginning of the coverage period.

We urge the FSA State Office to make concerted efforts to gather sufficient data to support average annual yields in the National Crop Table.

We urge the FSA State Office to prioritize customer service.

We believe producers should not have their irrigated base taken away due to unnatural lake, river, and stream conditions.

We oppose the burden of record keeping for hay and grain producers for bioterrorism on hay when other safeguards are already in place.

We support the NMDA and other agencies to improve and diversify outreach efforts, using culturally appropriate means to disseminate information about technical assistance and grant opportunities, specifically to reach disenfranchised agricultural producers.

We support that the Secretary of Agriculture prioritize programs and policies that actively work to empower disenfranchised producers through increased access to funding opportunities, technical assistance, culturally appropriate outreach methods, and racial equity trainings for NMDA and other agency program staff.

B. Secretary of Agriculture

We support the New Mexico State University (NMSU) Board of Regents appointing the New Mexico Secretary of Agriculture and the office to remain in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

We support the New Mexico Organic Certification Program to be maintained by NMDA.

We strongly urge NMDA to maintain the appropriate state level positions to fully serve producers in meeting the New Mexico Organic Certification Program.

We encourage NMDA to continue applying for the federal Organic Certification Cost Share Program.

We support the Public Regulation Commission remaining an elected body and not becoming an appointed commission by the Governor.

C. Game and Fish

We urge the New Mexico Game and Fish Department to coordinate hunting seasons and area permitting to control nuisance and destructive wildlife.

We support legislation to allow farmers and ranchers to hunt the legal limits on their own land with the realization that wildlife is owned by the public.

D. Public Facilities

We support the use of public facilities and public funds for multiple community purposes that encourage the public good, such as tool sharing programs, community and/or commercial kitchens, etc.

E. Food Safety

We support increased food safety and security with additional testing, especially of foreign-produced products.

We are in favor of clear and mandatory labeling of additives, meat irradiation, and genetically modified organisms in all food.

We believe that there should be better labeling with respect to the number of additives in food products.

We recommend that all imitation and synthetic products be labeled and disclosed in a clear manner.

We support labeling of organic products in accordance with the National Organic Standards Food Production Act.

We support the efforts by our partner organizations and affiliates to provide food safety trainings and resources to food producers and processors, to meet food safety requirements in collaboration with the New Mexico Departments of Agriculture and Environment and the Cooperative Extension Service.

We support full funding of any implementation costs associated with food safety rules and regulations by the appropriate agencies.

Article II. Agriculture Technology

A. Premise Registration and Animal Identification

We believe New Mexico has workable methods of monitoring livestock diseases and safeguarding animal health.

We believe the New Mexico Livestock Brand Board and state veterinarians have the necessary tools to track diseased livestock.

We oppose any mandatory 4-H, FFA, or fair program designed to force livestock producers to register premises or animals in a system that is unnecessary and intrusive.

We oppose any premise registration that:

- Is mandatory.
- Establishes another level of regulation, with registering premises and/or animals.
- Interferes with a producer's privacy and proprietary information; or
- Has the potential to undermine an open and competitive market system.

We believe these programs have nothing to do with health and security.

Article III. Trade

We encourage more economic opportunities for rural and underserved communities, particularly for disenfranchised communities, working to improve their purchasing options while expanding markets for farming and ranching families and accelerating local economic activities.

We support inter-state, intrastate, and foreign trade of New Mexico agricultural products.

A. International Relations

We support an immigration policy that protects and enforces the process of immigrants coming into the country legally while protecting the property and well-being of private property owners and public entities affected by border issues.

Article IV. Credit Policy

A. Banking

We urge credit unions be represented by the financial industry as viable institutions important to rural communities.

We support and encourage the efforts of credit unions that create specific products and services that support New Mexico's rural communities.

Article V. Water, Land, and Conservation Policies

A. Noxious Weeds

We urge the New Mexico Department of Transportation be required and funded to control perennial noxious, invasive, and poisonous weeds along the state roadways.

We recommend the use of mite control for bindweed as tested.

B. Land Commissioner

We support the continuation of an oversight board or authority over the office of State Land Commissioner, and we urge that it be structured so that it is responsive to the wishes of the people.

C. Water

1. Agriculture Water

We support legislative and programmatic efforts to maintain and improve upon the health and rights of New Mexico's acequia systems and the agricultural, hydrological, biological, cultural, and social benefits they provide New Mexico's communities.

We strongly oppose the permanent transfer of any agricultural water right, whether surface or ground, from agriculture to any other use.

We support water banking and leasing programs to protect agricultural water rights.

We urge active participation and consultation of irrigating farmers and ranchers in the revision process of interstate stream compacts and state water plans. Further, interstate stream compact allocations should reflect percentages of actual available water rather than hypothetical quantity of water based on dated hydrological information.

We support methods for water conservation and efficiency for water rights or other agricultural uses without revoking farmers' and ranchers' water rights for not using their allocated share under "use it or lose it" water policy clauses.

We urge all surface water compacts between New Mexico and other states be subject to review and possible re-negotiation considering recent developments for irrigation and municipal water projects. Current restrictions on acre-footage to be held by the state should be adjusted to reflect these issues.

We support efforts to conserve water by removing invasive species such as salt cedar from all rivers and tributaries, including the Pecos, Rio Grande, Rio Chama, and Canadian Rivers.

We recommend that groundwater compacts be negotiated with other states to address any future claims upon aquifers and basins.

We support positions taken by the 22 water regions supporting regional water plans for future utilization of water resources.

When groundwater is to be transferred out of state, an impact assessment and public hearing should be held.

We support the creation of a water trust fund to ensure the state has adequate water resources and can defend its interests in lawsuits with neighboring states. Any losses incurred by New Mexico users should be fully compensated by the neighboring state or user that resides there.

We urge the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer to not allow water to be monopolized by any entity and that it not eliminate permits for new drilling of water wells, including supplemental water wells, by surface rights owners.

We urge that water wells are not drilled horizontally, and any that are would be plugged with the owner fined based upon the length of well usage and volume of water removed.

Water produced in the State of New Mexico will not be allowed to be transported outside of New Mexico. It must be put to beneficial use within the State of New Mexico.

When disputes over surface water arise between states, ground water users near stream flows should not be penalized for loss of downstream flow.

We oppose all initiatives to tax the use of water.

We encourage best management practices for the release of water to increase habitat for threatened or endangered species.

We encourage the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer to use its statutory authority to investigate and enforce the priority call of agricultural waters, rivers, and their tributaries.

We oppose any efforts to divert agricultural use water to other uses without a full study and/or payment for loss of use.

We oppose any attempt to reduce agricultural water use to a lower priority. Agriculture should be raised to second or third priority, with domestic use being first priority.

Agriculture water use should be equal to domestic priority use.

We support water and water rights for the cultivation of food for New Mexican's.

We support water reduction techniques.

We support the reuse of gray water.

We recommend that standards be adopted to deal with possible environmental contamination by industrial and corporate farms.

We support the development of municipal water projects utilizing existing local reservoirs. We oppose the removal of dams on any river or destruction of any reservoir.

We recognize the value, growth, and importance of the dairy industry to New Mexico. It is critical that this industry be a responsible user and conservator of water resources. It is also essential that this industry exercise due care to protect groundwater resources.

We oppose efforts by the BLM and other federal agencies to force local irrigation districts to release water from reservoirs for habitat preservation without an impact study and public hearing. Producers losing the use of this water should be justly compensated for loss of production.

We support the development of local water courts and mediation to settle adjudication claims.

We oppose the transfer of groundwater out of the state of New Mexico, and support efforts to conserve water in the state.

We oppose the transfer of surface water out of the state of New Mexico, and support effort to conserve water in the state.

We support the metering of domestic wells, particularly when the use of these wells by commercial and residential properties is impacting agricultural operations.

2. Potable Water

We support the development and completion of water projects by the affected communities as they see fit while protecting their water allocations.

We do not support the metering of domestic wells.

We do not support the reduction of domestic well production below the three-acre feet per year level.

We oppose the use of potable water in oil, gas, and mineral extraction and processing.

3. Wastewater

We support the development of a fund for rural areas to give assistance with the mandated updating of septic tank disposal systems, and to assist older treatment systems to comply with current codes.

We support the reuse of municipal wastewater for agricultural purposes with proper permitting and treatment.

4. Water Projects Financing

We urge that any financing for water projects be used for their designated intent and not be diverted to other projects.

We strongly support that the Water Trust Board review and recommend local water supply project applications and provide their list in order of highest priority and project readiness to the New Mexico State Legislature prior to the annual legislative session.

D. Property Rights

We support property rights legislation on the state and federal level. Market or use value, whichever is greater, should be paid in any 'taking'.

We recognize water conservation as a bona fide use of surface and subsurface water rights.

We support air space remaining as a part of the surface right estate.

We support reasonable and fair compensation to surface owners for damage caused by mineral development. Compensation to the surface owner should include but not be limited to, loss of production income, lost land value, and lost access to surface owners remaining land, including loss of improvements.

We support the affected landowners' concerns being addressed when endangered species designations are made.

We urge that New Mexico farmers and ranchers be appropriately compensated for land and water usage that is restricted because of the ESA, EPA programs, and other related agency programs.

We support new transmission corridors with landowners being compensated in a fair and equitable fashion for the easement, including the option to include a multi-year payment.

We do not support the use of eminent domain to transfer private property from a landowner to a for-profit or non-governmental entity without the landowner having the right to negotiate a multi-year payment.

We do not support eminent domain proceedings for merchant projected corridors.

We encourage private property owners be part of the transmission planning process.

We urge that a written agreement be in place prior to entry.

We oppose any efforts to implement state-wide planning or zoning.

We support surface rights protection.

We oppose the mergers of city and county governments.

E. Predators and Pests

We strongly support legal measures in the effort to restore effective predator control.

We encourage the judicious use of cyanide guns on federal, state, and private lands to control coyotes and wolves to protect livestock.

We urge New Mexico State University to do research on non-poisonous pest and predator control means.

We urge the appropriation of federal funds to help control destructive birds because they are a serious crop and health hazard.

We urge control of destructive insects and rodents on state land adjacent to cropland, using multiple resource methods, to encourage natural pollinators and beneficial wildlife.

We support a producer-driven process for establishing and maintaining a healthy and balanced wildlife and agricultural system.

F. Soil Health

We strongly support efforts to increase soil health in the state of New Mexico. We urge NMDA and other state offices to recognize the importance of soil health, and to provide support and compensation to producers looking to implement new practices. Furthermore, we encourage ample recognition be given to the various cultures of New Mexico who have been stewarding these lands for centuries.

We strongly support efforts in the agricultural industries to improve soil health and increase carbon sequestration, increased forage production, and water infiltration.

We support the formation of a Trust Fund as a permanent source of money to be used as non-federal match to fund maintenance and restoration projects to promote healthy soils and increase water retention in New Mexico.

We support all working farms and ranch lands that subscribe to basic soil health principles be allowed to participate in the governor's 30x30 Conservation Plan.

G. Land Access

We urge the State of New Mexico to recognize the importance of agricultural land transition planning, technical service provision, and working land conservation programs to ensure:

- That land is affordable for the next generation, in particular for beginning, socially disadvantaged, and/or limited resource heir, and non-heir farmers or ranchers.
- That agricultural land stay in agriculture in the hands of family farmers.
- That transfer of skills and knowledge accompany transfer of land between current future generations of farmers and ranchers.
- That the unique needs of tribes at the tribal, local, state, and federal levels are addressed.

We support publicly funded conservation easement programs that prioritize agricultural easements that keep farms and ranches in production and owned by farmers and ranchers.

We support programs and policies that help to resolve heir's land ownership and succession issues because the State of New Mexico has adopted the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act (UPHPA).

We strongly oppose converting agricultural land for domestic development.

Article VI. Energy Policy

The positive economic impact on agriculture and rural communities through expanded tax bases, reduced outward migration of rural populations, and reduced dependence on fossil fuels, foreign oil, and traditional grain markets makes the continued development of viable renewable energy imperative. Therefore, we support and call for continued favorable legislation at the state and federal levels for the development of renewable energy resources.

We encourage members and the public to support renewable energy resources.

We support the building of the Tres Amigas project, a super conductor switching station in Curry County, New Mexico.

We support the focus of economic development efforts to build the infrastructure and secondary facilities for new energy development, and to allow rural electric cooperatives to be part of the process.

We strongly encourage the use of renewable energy products in state, county, and city vehicles.

We support allowing REAs to increase net metering for agricultural operations and rural businesses.

We support a revolving loan fund for renewable energy economic development projects.

We urge information on carbon credit opportunities be made available to agricultural producers.

We support a state tax credit for smaller renewable energy projects that is tradable.

We support a personal property and sales tax exemption for renewable energy equipment and supplies.

We recommend that intra-state prices of natural gas be reduced to compare with inter-state prices.

We support the installation and operation of renewable energy systems with just compensation to the acreage owners.

We support enactment of a state methane waste prevention rule.

We urge that oil and gas property tax evaluations be audited and updated regularly and that the valuation, methods, and procedures for collection are both current and fair.

We oppose any increase in gasoline taxes under the guise of a carbon tax.

We support the monitoring of meters on oil and gas wells for purposes of severance tax collection.

To protect our water, air, land, and the public's health, we support regulations that require that oil, gas, and mineral companies disclose all chemical compounds being used in the development, production, and processing of oil, gas, and minerals. We consider this a public safety requirement.

We support all produced water from oil and gas development be reused by oil and gas before any other water. Before any produced water is used in agricultural production, producers must have assurance of the water quality.

We support strong rules that eliminate energy waste and greenhouse gas emissions caused by routine venting and flaring.

A. Utilities

We oppose any utility deregulation or regulation that results in higher cost to consumers.

Article VII. Economic & Social Policies

A. Taxes

We support the current property tax program under which agricultural land is taxed on its ability to produce rather than on its sale value.

We recommend that the tax level be maintained at 33 1/3 percent of the assessed value.

Increased capital outlay costs should be paid for by taxes raised in an equitable fashion so that the burden will be borne by all segments of the economy.

We recommend that a broader and more equitable state tax base be formulated and that a halt be made to increasing ad valorem taxes.

We recommend that the state drop the sales or excise tax on farm machinery and agricultural production items.

We recommend that the mileage-use tax on farm trucks be eliminated, and a flat license fee be established and handled by the Motor Vehicle Department.

We support one-tenth of a percentage of taxes collected by municipalities being used for economic development. Specifically, funds generated should be allocated to local economic development corporations for local business and cooperative development.

We support moving one-tenth of the economic development tax and designating it specifically for rural economic development.

We urge transparency and accountability regarding the revenues received from the tobacco lawsuit into New Mexico's Tobacco Settlement Program Fund and Tobacco Settlement Permanent Fund.

We urge the State of New Mexico to make a \$3 million commitment of tobacco settlement funds distributed from New Mexico's Tobacco Settlement Permanent Fund to assist beginning farmers and start-up rural agricultural businesses with operational guaranteed loans and other financial assistance.

B. Veterinarians

We urge the State of New Mexico to establish a veterinary program. Until then, we urge New Mexico universities to work with other universities to accept more of our veterinary students.

We encourage lottery monies to be used for tuition for veterinary students studying out of state due to the lack of an in-state program.

C. Alternative Crops

We strongly support research and development by private and public efforts to create industrial uses and markets for products produced on our farms, such as ethanol blended and bio-diesel fuels, medicines, protein supplements, and cosmetics, as well as other innovative uses needed by industry.

We support the reintroduction of industrial hemp (defined as Cannabis Sativa), having one percent or less tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

We support research into the viability and economic potential of industrial hemp produced in the United States.

We encourage NMDA to continue to foster dialogue between GMO and non-GMO agricultural interests.

D. Gun Control

We oppose any legislation, on any and all levels, that infringes on our Second Amendment rights.

We support all firearm education safety courses and safe and legal use of firearms.

We support strict enforcement of existing laws.

We oppose gun confiscation laws imposed upon U.S. citizens by any local, state, or federal agency.

We oppose the ban on semiautomatic weapons.

E. Right to Work

We believe right-to-work laws should be a state prerogative.

We support the ability of employers to recover the cost of defending themselves when being falsely accused by employees of practices such as but not limited to harassment or discrimination based on race, age, sex.

We oppose any common situs picketing bill.

F. Workers' Compensation

We support collaborative and cooperative efforts to help reduce workers compensation rates and costs for family farms and ranches and seasonal industries.

We recommend that any worker's compensation law recognize the unique nature of agriculture and provide an option for small employers to find other resourceful alternatives.

G. State Education

We support a fair and equitable formula for distributing state education funds.

We support agriculture education, home economics, vocational-technical training programs, and other occupational preparation courses as an integral part of our free, public educational system.

We support student loan repayment or forgiveness programs that are accessible and equitable for those who are in agricultural sectors.

We encourage the review or study of school vouchers.

We encourage better utilization of rural school systems and facilities by reversing the practice of busing students from rural areas to urban schools.

We oppose diversion of principal from the permanent state fund for education.

H. Local Food Purchasing

We support efforts to incentivize the purchase of New Mexico agricultural products at a fair and just price across all sectors in New Mexico.

We encourage counties, cities, and municipalities to allow farm stands to operate on principal use sites of any size, regardless of zoning. Retail sale of goods from farm stands must include items grown or produced on the principal use site where the farm stand is located.

I. Emergency Powers

We support amendment of the Emergency Powers Code to require emergency executive orders to terminate after 30 days if the Governor has not called for a special or extraordinary session.

We support providing the legislature with the power to terminate emergency executive orders by concurrent resolution during a regular, special, or extraordinary session.

Article VIII. Rural Development Policies

A. Rural Livelihood

We support rural development that expands our present agriculture economic base and focuses on increasing infrastructure, value-added processing, and aggregation and distribution for agricultural crops and livestock and infrastructure for renewable energy.

We encourage an increase in the supply, distribution, and quality of New Mexico foods through food aggregation, and wholesale, retail, and infrastructure development while all the time providing healthy and safe food.

We support New Mexico grown produce, agricultural products, and processing of New Mexico raised foods for school meals and other institutions to provide economic opportunities for New Mexico producers.

We encourage private and public partnerships that support economic development in rural areas.

We urge that health facilities and staffing be maintained and/or developed in rural communities, and support incentives to encourage staff to live and work in rural areas.

We support reconsideration of the elimination and/or reassignment of National Guard units out of rural areas.

We support the use of public funds to enhance the ability of local producers to add value to their agricultural products and urge the state to create consistent policies across county lines regarding Cottage Food Laws.

We support efforts to expand the ability to process New Mexico meats within the state, to provide economic opportunities for both producers and processors.

WYOMING STATE POLICY

Article I. Government Programs

A. Game and Fish Department

We request the state Game and Fish Department be prohibited from introducing or transplanting predatory animals within the state.

We ask that trespass laws be strictly enforced.

We oppose the direct purchase of agricultural land by the Game and Fish Department; instead, they should consider leasing and/or buying easements.

We urge that landowners who allow hunting be compensated for forage by wildlife and habitat utilized on private land. Compensation should be based on herd numbers and paid on average animal/unit/month values.

We urge that game coupons be retained.

We urge the Game and Fish Department to properly protect Wyoming's ungulate wildlife resources from the ever-increasing threat of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and brucellosis.

We urge the Game and Fish Commission to compensate private landowners/lessees for wolf predation of livestock and animals guarding livestock in areas where the wolf is classified the same as other trophy game animals.

We oppose relocation of and habitat expansion for Bighorn Sheep when existing domestic sheep operations may be negatively impacted.

B. Endangered Species Act

We support amending the ESA with input from affected landowners and tribal and elected officials from a large geographic area before getting a designation under the ESA.

We urge the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service require the use of the best available scientific data on population trends, available habitat, and genetic background in determining the listing and possible protection of any candidate species.

We support legislative delisting of the grizzly bear and all wolf species as specified in the ESA by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and barring judicial review.

We support continued efforts designed to keep prairie dogs off the endangered species list.

We oppose the listing of the Preble's meadow jumping mouse.

We applaud the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decision not to list the greater sage grouse and oppose any court actions to overturn that decision.

C. Livestock Regulations -Wyoming Livestock Board

We urge state livestock regulations be amended to require owner notification before mis-shipped livestock are sold.

We oppose any fee increases for brand inspection until efficiencies in day-to-day operations are identified and instituted.

We recommend landowners be able to file security interests against livestock to collect pasture and feed debt.

We urge brand inspection on sheep be repealed when a more efficient method of ownership determination and predator fee assessment can be developed and implemented.

We oppose the undue burden placed on livestock producers in the Designated Surveillance Area (DSA) Northwest Wyoming by the requirement of testing for brucellosis.

We urge USDA APHIS rewrite brucellosis rules to remove brucella abortis from the select agent list to reflect lessened human health risks.

We oppose the loss of a state's brucellosis "free" status based only on infections traced and proven to be from wildlife.

Producers' fees for brand inspection should be set at a level to cover actual brand inspection program costs and not general administration, disease prevention or trace back costs.

Any state beef check-off administered and collected under the Wyoming Livestock Board statutes must meet the following requirements:

- All collections on sales will have a provision for refund;
- Be approved by most producers voting on the referendum by mail, with spouses allowed to vote individually;
- Disbursement of funds collected, and operations of the program are controlled by boards of producers elected by the producers assessed;
- Major changes in existing check-off programs should be submitted to the producers affected and subject to approval by a two-thirds vote;
- Programs being formulated or currently in operation be subject to a five-year review.

D. Damage Notification Requirements

People causing damage to property, and law enforcement officers investigating such damage, should be required to notify landowners of the damage and parties found guilty of causing the damage be required to pay for the damage.

E. Mediation Service

We support mediation between disputing parties to reach workable agreements.

F. Conflict of Interest

We support legislation defining conflict of interest for legislators and elected officials.

G. Domestic Sheep Grazing

We endorse the "Wyoming Plan" concerning domestic sheep vs. Big Horn sheep grazing conflicts.

H. Superintendent of Public Instruction

We support maintaining the position of Superintendent of Public Instruction as an elected position.

Article II. Water, Land, and Conservation Policies

A. Water Law

We encourage the wise use and conservation of underground water between states.

We oppose the backdating of water rights.

We urge the Wyoming State Legislature prohibit the permanent transfer in use of any existing agricultural water rights to commercial industrial uses.

We recommend that the sale of adjudicated irrigation water be limited to agricultural uses.

We oppose allowing holders of water rights to sell any or part of such rights for nonagricultural uses.

We oppose all actions to take water now being used for agricultural purposes.

We oppose any privately held water rights being used for instream flow purposes.

B. Utilization of Water

We urge the limited remaining water resources allocated to the state of Wyoming be developed under law for beneficial use in the state, with special emphasis upon maximizing reservoir storage of surface water.

We recognize the desirability of protecting the high quality of our waters and assuring their suitability for beneficial uses, and support legislation to do so.

We urge the State of Wyoming to encourage and assist in the development of economically feasible innovative technology and incentives oriented toward efficient uses of the waters in this state when they do not injure vested water rights.

We support the concept of storing and beneficially using all unappropriated Wyoming water within the state in accordance with existing Wyoming water law.

We oppose granting underground or other supplemental water rights to land where the surface water rights have been sold.

C. Water Project Funding

We urge additional funding be made available, including all federal stimulus sources for the immediate construction and rehabilitation of water projects state-wide.

We oppose the ongoing raiding of Water Development Funds for the operation of the State Board of Control and urge these funds be made whole.

We urge the Governor, Legislators, and agencies tasked with regulation and funding of water infrastructure undertake a comprehensive study, not funded in any way by an irrigation district or company, of the structural condition and needs of water delivery systems allowing irrigation districts or companies to choose their own type and/or form of participation.

We urge funding is identified and committed to these needs to help ensure water deliveries aren't disrupted at a critical time for crops in the future.

We urge structures with the highest need or repair are ranked and contracts issued to facilitate these repairs.

D. North Platte River

We urge that the proposed enlargement of water storage as part of the Platte River Cooperative Agreement on the North Platte River and its tributaries be completed.

E. Municipal Water

Wyoming municipalities and schools should be required to submit a report to the State Board of Control on the amount of potable water used to irrigate park grounds and rights-of-ways urged to consider using gray water and dryland grass varieties instead of irrigated grass varieties where feasible.

F. Water Quality

Water produced in methane development must meet state water quality standards for surface water discharge.

Laws requiring mitigation of impacts associated with coal-bed methane water must be established to protect adjacent landowners.

We support existing water quality standards affecting agriculture, livestock, and wildlife and feel no changes are necessary.

G. Land Use

Wyoming statutes provide for comprehensive planning and zoning on a countywide basis, covering unincorporated areas. The following statutory revisions should be made by the Wyoming State Legislature:

- Planning and zoning decisions should be made as close to the people affected as possible.
- Prohibit the state from preempting local decision-making except where land use is clearly not just a local concern.
- Although we recognize the need for industrial expansion and the purchase of land for industry, we strongly oppose the acquisition of productive agricultural land for non-agricultural uses.

H. Recycling

The state should encourage all forms of recycling by requiring a deposit on all non-biodegradable recyclable materials.

We support a statewide recycling project.

I. Reclamation

We support passage of a reclamation statute to enforce agreed upon reclamation plans to protect private landowners and the environment. All projects requiring reclamation should include bonding requirements to insure completion.

J. Noxious Weed Control

We support stronger enforcement of state laws to control declared noxious weeds and pests and require each county to control declared noxious weeds and pests on all lands, with stiff penalties for noncompliance.

We request the re-establishment of a “state cost share” to aid in controlling prairie dogs and/or noxious weeds.

Article III. Energy Policy

A. Mineral Rights

We recommend that 25-year time limits be established on ownership of severed mineral rights, including those retained by the state. After this period, mineral rights ownership shall revert to the surface owner in all cases where present production of minerals is not occurring.

We urge that the decision to allow mining and oil companies the use of private lands should lay with the surface owner, and in all cases, compensatory payments should be made to the landowner for all damages incurred.

B. Leases

We support changes in existing law to require prior consent be obtained from surface rights owners before a lease may be acquired by mineral companies to develop minerals.

C. Oil and Gas

We urge caution in the development of CBM and request all available technology be used in development and reclamation of products and by-products.

We urge caution in the development of all producing formations and request all available technology and best management practices be used in the development, production, and reclamation of oil and gas products and by-products.

We oppose the practice of extending and renewing drilling permits by the Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission unless exploration activity has occurred under the initial drilling permit.

We oppose the practice of allowing a minority mineral owner to dictate oil and gas development unless all owners are under lease.

D. Alternative Energy

We support renewable energy production within Wyoming.

We support an RPS for Wyoming.

We encourage state-assisted community-sized bio-fuels development and production.

We support renewable energy development and storage rights remaining with the surface rights.

We support reserving a percentage of the capacity of any publicly funded transmission line for power generated from renewable sources.

We urge new transmission line routes be sited to maximize wind power opportunities.

We support state research into alternative crops for bio-fuels use.

We encourage the individual and cooperative development and ownership of wind energy and co-generation production; in cases of development, we support fair reimbursements to landowners.

We support terrestrial sequestration of carbon, where safety and stability can be assured.

We strongly support the ownership of pore space remain with the surface owner.

Article IV. Economic & Social Policies

A. Education Policy

We recommend the continuation of an elected school board in sub-district areas.

We support short-term borrowing from permanent funds to assist in education funding shortfalls, with the intention these monies be paid back when funds become available.

We support the organization of a Farmers Union local for students at the University of Wyoming.

We stress the primacy of academics over athletics at all levels of education,

When state school funding reductions are necessary, local districts need to be able to identify their own areas of cutbacks.

All state education programs mandated for local districts by the State of Wyoming must have accompanying funding.

We urge local input be considered when adopting statewide assessments.

We urge all schools to offer a strong agriculture and vocational education curriculum.

We encourage a statewide mill levy to support community colleges.

We support funding increases for STEM programs.

We recommend testing at the local level be recognized as a measure of proficiency to guarantee that Wyoming state standards and benchmarks are met.

B. Tax Policy

1. Ad Valorem Taxes

We urge sales tax on food be reinstated before any other general tax increases be instituted.

We support ag operations in recognized beginning farmer/rancher programs or marketing their products “farm to table” receive a five-year exemption from meeting the gross sales requirement to qualify for ag land classification.

We urge the continuation of the gas tax credit for agricultural production. Agricultural operations should be allowed a five-year average to meet the dollar criteria in qualifying for the credit.

We oppose the elimination of the state fuel tax for mileage-based tax.

We urge implementation and enforcement of the current alternative fuel tax.

We urge the State of Wyoming review its assessment procedures in mineral production to make sure they reflect verifiable production figures, not company self-assessments.

We are opposed to a state income tax for Wyoming.

We oppose a property tax exemption for business and business investment in the free enterprise system made by churches and religious groups.

We urge the abolishment of payment of taxes under protest.

2. Wyoming Inheritance Tax

We oppose a state inheritance and/or estate tax.

Until these taxes are abolished, we urge tax reform that will allow the value of farm and grazing lands to be based on the productivity of such lands for gift and inheritance tax purposes.

3. Sales and Use Tax

We believe that noncommercial sales should be exempt from state sales tax.

We ask the Wyoming State Legislature to exempt agricultural parts and supplies from sales tax.

We propose that personal property tax be abolished on agricultural equipment. We strongly support the exemption of farm equipment from sales tax.

4. Vehicle Registration

Taxes and licensing requirements on seasonal-use farm vehicles should correspond with length of time in use.

We oppose any increase in vehicle registration fees.

5. Severance Tax

We support existing severance and mineral tax rates.

C. Worker's Compensation

We strongly urge that worker's compensation for farmers and ranchers continue to be optional.

D. Warehouse Law

The issuance of warehouse receipts should be mandatory, and the warehouse receipts should post all handling, cleaning, and storage charges, pro-rated on actual tare and purity as well as all other information now required by Wyoming law.

We encourage the Wyoming State Legislature to take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the stored commodities shall remain the property of the owners that delivered the commodities for storage in the case of bankruptcy of the warehouse.

We recommend warehouses be required to issue warehouse receipts no later than 45 days from the date of original delivery as shown by scale tickets or upon request. The scale delivery tickets should be considered proof of ownership until sale, or the warehouse receipt has been issued. Warehouse receipts shall be issued on all producer-owned commodities prior to leaving the state. When a warehouse certifies itself as empty, an automatic audit will be triggered regardless of whether the license is renewed or not.

We demand that commodities stored in warehouses be inspected bi-annually for quality as well as quantity, and more frequently and unannounced as deemed necessary.

E. Grain Indemnity Fund

We oppose any grain indemnity fund.

F. State Land and Investment Board

We recommend the State Land and Investment Board (SLIB) continue making direct real estate loans to producers.

We urge the SLIB to allow irrigation loans to finance renewable energy power systems for irrigation practices.

We urge continued support of beginning farmer/rancher loan programs.

We oppose the sale of state school lands. Any sale of state land shall be scrutinized in regard to maintaining a balance, both geographically and economically.

We recognize state trust lands are not “public lands” and the public has no inherent right to access.

All users should have fees established for use of state school trust lands.

We urge that current lessees maintain their preferential right when renewing their current lease(s).

Article V. Rural Development Policies

We welcome economic development that complements our present economic base rather than jeopardizes it.

We ask the Wyoming State Legislature to provide incentives for rural communities to establish agricultural commodities and biofuels processing within the state.

We urge the state’s economic development efforts be directed toward small community projects.

We urge economic development in Wyoming be focused on attracting clean industries, paying a living wage.

We support the ability for producers to market their commodities and value-added products to consumers direct and through other markets.

We support efforts to create new market opportunities such as those allowed by the Wyoming Food Freedom Act.

A. Landowner Reimbursement

We support full landowner and fire district reimbursement for damages and fire suppression costs on both public and private properties caused by railroads.