

2026 Rocky Mountain Farmers Union Policy

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Preamble

We the members of Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, present our policy to address agriculture, energy, environment, social, and other issues vital to the lives of all Americans. This policy has been developed in true democratic fashion, with recommendations and proposals originating from our local chapters. These recommendations and revisions have been approved by members at the RMFU annual convention.

RMFU's policy is divided into four sections: National Advocacy, Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming. This approach is more evidence of our grassroots culture, with our members having a say not only in their own state policy but also in the policy developed by National Farmers Union at its annual convention where RMFU delegates will join others from across the country to debate and approve the national organization's policy.

RMFU's policy provides our members and communities with the tools they need to be profitable, to build better futures, and to have a voice that is heard by local, state, and national policymakers.

RMFU's policy is representative of its members in CO, WY, and NM regardless of their 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 affirm that human rights are universal. We stand in solidarity with farm families and farm workers everywhere. We support those policies that strengthen them and resist such policies or actions that harm them.

Our members believe a "family farm" is an agricultural production unit using land and other capital investments and operated by one or more farm operator families who provide the management, take the economic risk, and do the work required to operate and manage the unit. A "family farm corporation" is defined as a corporation founded for farming and the ownership of agricultural land in which most of the voting stock is held by, and the majority of the stockholders are, members of a family, at least one of whom is the person managing and working on the farm.

RMFU POLICY FOR NATIONAL ADVOCACY

Article I. Government Programs

A. National Food and Farm Policy

We call for the 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 family farmers and ranchers while protecting our nation's greatest natural resources—the land, air, and water and the lives they sustain.

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

We support making congressional salary payments contingent on the timely passage of the Food and Farm Bill every five years.

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.
- Simplified federal grant and program application processes.
- International trade agreements that achieve profitability for all American producers, regardless of how small in size.
- Required Congressional approval of sanctions and embargos, tariffs, and before they can be enacted.
- Incentives to encourage production of and investment by family farmers and community-based organizations develop renewable energy systems and distribute energy equitably.
- 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.
- Country of Origin Labeling.

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 support the reconstruction of USAID and other international aid policy recognizing their benefit to farmers as a market for their product.

1 We support reinstatement of funding for research benefitting agriculture and rural communities that has
2 been cut by Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).

3
4 We support reinstatement of critical public data defunded or made inaccessible under the Trump
5 Administration.

6
7 We urge that requirements and fees be scaled with a focus on the difference between corporate and family
8 agriculture and remove from the regulations the needless elements that serve the purposes of corporate
9 agriculture at the expense of family farms, sovereign nations, growers of local foods, and consumers.

10
11 We encourage the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to develop adequate training requirements for
12 qualified auditors under the Preventive Controls regulation.

13
14 We urge Congress to provide funding to support the implementation of FSMA and to reinstate the Grain
15 Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA).

16
17 We support USDA efforts to modernize the enforcement of the Packers & Stockyards Act through the two
18 actions related to rulemaking and urge Congress to expedite the rulemaking process. These two rules
19 include:

- 20 1. A new rule that will provide greater clarity to strengthen enforcement of unfair and deceptive
21 practices, undue preferences, and unjust prejudices.
22 2. A rule to clarify that parties do not need to demonstrate harm to competition in order to bring an
23 action under section 202 (a) and 202 (b) of the P&S Act.
24

25 We support Packers and Stockyards rule changes that support the financial sustainability of family farms
26 and ranches.
27

28 **B. Farm Program Recommendations**

29 **1. Parity**

30 We support the concept of parity (equal purchasing power) of commodity prices to provide equality of
31 income for farm families comparable to incomes of families in other segments of the economy.
32

33 **2. The Concept of Parity**

34 Parity (farm price index) measures the percentage change in prices received by farmers for the products they
35 sell in relation to the prices paid by farmers for goods and services used in production, interest on capital,
36 taxes, and wages, compared with the base period of 1910-1914. A ratio of 100 percent implies the same
37 relationship that existed in the base period. A 75 percent parity ratio indicates that the farmer's purchasing
38 power was down to 75 percent of what it would buy in the base period. Congress deemed the 1910-1914
39 base period as one in which there was a balanced relationship between farm and non-farm prices.
40

41 **3. Parity as a Measurement**

42 We reaffirm our basic commitment to the parity formula (using the base year 1910-1914) established by law
43 as the standard by which to determine prices for all agricultural commodities.
44

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 family farmers and ranchers 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 support farm programs which provide a true safety net and oppose programs which rely on routine Ad Hoc payments.

Farm programs and policies which encourage and incentivize more diverse crop production and inclusion of livestock in operations.

~~We urge future farm programs to include income support mechanisms, such as supply management. We support farm programs which encourage production levels more closely matched to domestic consumption.~~

We support creation of temporary, voluntary, and compensated land set aside programs to match production to demand and reduce current stockpile.

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 competitive compensation for participation in conservation programs.~~

We urge that future farm programs provide producers with adequate compensation for ecological and conservation services.

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.

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

4
5 ~~We support farm program payments for the benefit of family farms and family farm corporations. We~~
6 ~~support tiered subsidy levels on crop and revenue protection products prioritizing the success of family~~
7 ~~farms and ranches.~~

8
9 ~~We support limits on farm program payments that benefit multi-nation corporations, oligopolies, or food~~
10 ~~system dominating companies. We support a cap on all government program payments which are tied to~~
11 ~~individual owners, not operational structure.~~

12
13 ~~We support limits on government program payments at a level that supports family agriculture. Such~~
14 ~~payments should be tied to owners, not operations.~~

15
16 A ban on government agricultural program payments to all foreign entities.
17

18 **6. Organics & “Natural” Foods**

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

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

23
24 We urge the USDA National Organic Program to adhere to the intent and integrity of the national organic
25 standards.

26
27 We oppose organic certification inconsistent with the spirit of the NOP, and biases towards non-family scale
28 operations.

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

32
33 We support efforts to develop uniform national definitions and standards for any food that is labeled
34 “natural” or “regenerative”.

35
36 We support the USDA National Organic Program addressing issues between food safety requirements and
37 encouraging producers to protect pollinator and wildlife species and habitat corridors next to organic
38 production.

39
40 RMFU urges government programs, on federal, state, county, and municipal levels, to be designed to
41 include and benefit urban and peri-urban farmers with small acreage farming and ranching, including under
42 an acre, such as:

- 43 • USDA farm programs
- 44 • Crop and animal insurance
- 45 • Conservation programs

- Farm lending programs
- Mental health programs
- Peer to peer mentoring programs
- Water rates for producers
- Zoning, permitting, and licensing

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.

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

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.
- Allow charitable donations or gleaning of non-marketable product without negating coverage or claims.
- Encourages 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.
- Provides coverage for loss of grazing due to drought, wildfire, lack of access, or breach of leasing contract.
- Utilizes tiered subsidy levels for crop insurance at a level that supports family agriculture. Such levels should be tied to the owners, not operations.

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. County Expected Yields should have different quantities for organic production versus conventional and published as such.

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 maintaining premium subsidy levels on crop insurance, which enables the program to be an affordable risk management tool for family agriculture.~~

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.

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

3
4 We support RMA using weather data where available on a section basis to assess moisture availability
5 (rainfall and snowmelt) for crop production, when making a determination on preventive crop planting or
6 crop losses. Risk management rules should not penalize producers for using locally recommended
7 conservation measures.

8
9 We support the creation of a new federal risk management insurance pool to provide broad liability
10 coverage to cooperatives and individuals who wish to market their products directly to consumers.

11
12 We oppose any surcharge to farming practices after an organic APH is established.

13
14 We oppose RMA allowing crop insurance premium discounts involving specific crop inputs offered by a
15 single company.

16
17 We support cross-state coordination by RMA for the required reporting of planting dates within the same
18 watershed.

19 20 **2. Disaster Programs**

21 We support a fully funded permanent disaster assistance program with streamlined USDA, Federal
22 Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and Small Business Administration (SBA) relief regarding
23 seasonal needs.

24
25 ~~We support USDA ad hoc disaster direct payments to landowners in exceptional drought, as we recognize~~
26 ~~drought as a natural disaster, as well as the multi-year effects of drought. We support drought being~~
27 ~~included in disaster programs.~~

28
29 The USDA, when administering disaster program payments, should reevaluate structure to account for
30 climate change, with multi-year, streamlined application and sustainability in mind. Resilience should be
31 invested in, encouraged, and supported given the long-term nature of these weather patterns over the coming
32 decades.

33
34 We support measures to prevent predatory real estate transactions in disaster zones.

35
36 We support streamlining the distribution of aid in disaster zones.

37
38 We support collaboration and coordination between federal, state, and local emergency management
39 services for emergency preparedness planning and response.

40
41 We support-federal program payments be directly attributed to people and not business entities including but
42 not limited to payment limitation policy.

43
44 We support government payments be scaled to ensure family farmers, sovereign Indigenous nations,
45 growers of local food, and people residing in the U.S. are paid proportionally and are structured to favor
46 family farming communities.

1 We support the progressive factoring of federal funds, based on scale, to ensure that family farms are
2 prioritized in government programs.
3

4 **3. Conservation**

5 We support more control in conservation program decisions by locally elected Conservation District Boards
6 of Supervisors.
7

8 We support land leases that incentivize conservation practices.
9

10 We support stacking benefits with regard to conservation and energy programs.
11

12 We encourage flexibility when administering any conservation programs for tribal communities.
13

14 **4. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) & Conservation Reserve Enhancement 15 Program (CREP)**

16 We support flexibility in CRP that reflects local environmental conditions as determined by the local FSA
17 county committee, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office, and soil and water conservation
18 districts.
19

20 We endorse the effort to preserve and protect our more fragile farmland, and to restore the health of native
21 grasslands through best management practices that utilize CRP lands in rotational grazing systems.
22

23 We support the right to rebid the contract for an additional term at the same rate or a rate adjusted for
24 inflation for landowners and/or operators.
25

26 We support allowing enrollees to manage permanent vegetative cover to enhance wildlife habitat and
27 ecosystem health.
28

29 We favor managed haying and grazing of CRP and CREP stands for maintaining the health of the plant
30 communities and minimizing fire hazard and the spread of designated noxious weeds.
31

32 We support controlling noxious weeds, pests, and undesirable plants on land in CRP.
33

34 We support a re-classification of noxious weeds so that it reflects the beneficial use of such plants.
35

36 We support the continuation and urge full funding of CREP.
37

38 We support researching the best species and management for reestablishing stands of cover on “de-
39 irrigated” arid landscapes across the West.
40

41 CREP and CRP standards and management should reflect the soil goals of maintaining and sustaining
42 adapted plant communities and soil health.
43

44 **5. Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**

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

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

4
5 We urge NRCS to make CSP₂ contracting a high priority, and such system should be accessible, functional,
6 and yield deliverables linked to ecosystem function.

7 8 **6. Cost Share Programs, Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP),** 9 **Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)**

10 We urge USDA to make every reasonable effort to simplify cost share programs and educate and assist
11 family farmers and ranchers in a timely manner.

12
13 We support continuation of cost share programs that:

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

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

21
22 We support amending the technical requirements for erosion control structures to permit iterative and
23 systems-based approaches.

24
25 We oppose producers being penalized for non-compliance with program requirements resulting from “Acts
26 of God” such as drought, fire, and floods, extreme heat, excessive cold, wind events, and extreme weather
27 conditions.

28 29 **7. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**

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

31
32 We support continuation of NRCS snow surveys and Snow Telemetry (SNOTEL) measuring stations.

33
34 We support the implementation of technologies to accurately forecast water supplies from snowpack and
35 runoff, including the continuation and refinement of snow survey and snow telemetry measuring
36 approaches.

37
38 We encourage NRCS to train staff and technical service providers to work with young and beginning
39 farmers and ranchers, USDA-defined “Historically Underserved Producers”, and nontraditional farm
40 enterprises.

41
42 We urge USDA to establish and enforce performance measures and levels in each NRCS office.

43 44 **8. Wool and Mohair Program**

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

1 **9. Sugar Program**

2 We support the continuation of the Sugar Program.

3
4 We urge close collaboration with the sugar beet growers associations of CO, NM, and WY.

5
6 **10. Honey Loan Program**

7 We support the Honey Loan Program.

8
9 **11. Livestock Indemnity Program**

10 Indemnity should be paid at 100% market value with 25% of funds to be used to mitigate future deaths.

11
12 **E. Labeling**

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

15
16 We support labeling indicating that water was added during processing.

17
18 We support education of consumers regarding labeling of foods that contain additives and genetically
19 modified and engineered organisms.

20
21 We oppose misleading, inaccurate, and vague label language.

22
23 We urge agricultural products to be labeled accurately, and that agricultural product descriptions serve to
24 educate and inform the consumer.

25
26 We urge the development of certifiable and verifiable “Grass-fed” labeling standards that are regulated in a
27 manner similar to “Organic.”

28
29 We support reinstatement of, full funding for, and compliance with mandatory Country of Origin Labeling
30 (mCOOL).

31
32 All labeling costs associated with determining and marketing foreign country-of-origin products (not born,
33 raised, and processed in the United States) shall be paid by the importers.

34
35 In the absence of mCOOL, the same labeling standards outlined in mCOOL should be maintained to benefit
36 producers and consumers in any voluntary program. Imported food should carry a quality grade label
37 consistent with domestically produced foods and country-of-origin labels.

38
39 We support the USDA creating a label to describe USA fiber-produced products that are manufactured,
40 milled, and processed with fiber reared or grown in the USA.

41
42 We favor clear and mandatory uniform federal labeling standards for Genetically Modified Organisms
43 (GMOs) in all food and feed. In the absence of a mandatory standard, we support a clear and voluntary
44 uniform federal standard.

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

3
4 We support labeling with respect to food additives and irradiation.

5
6 We support FDA efforts to redefine “healthy” to align with nutrition facts, labeling regulations, and current
7 evidence-based nutritional science.

8
9 We encourage the FDA to continually update and evaluate the regulations of the 1958 Food Additives
10 Amendment to ensure that safe ingredients are permitted to be used in food, and that unsafe ingredients are
11 prohibited.

12
13 We support the labeling of organic products in accordance with the National Organic Standards Food
14 Production Act.

15
16 We support the prosecution of individuals or entities who knowingly sell or import nonorganic products as
17 certified organic.

18
19 We urge the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service to amend its regulations to require that all
20 meat/poultry labeled as “natural” be required to be sourced from animals that were not administered growth
21 hormones or subtherapeutic antibiotics, and all “natural” products to be third party verified.

22
23 We support requiring any laboratory-produced product to be labeled as laboratory or industrially produced.

24
25 We support meat defined as a product derived from the tissue or flesh of animals that have been harvested in
26 the traditional manner.

27
28 We oppose labeling alternative protein sources as meat.

29
30 The rights of both GMO and non-GMO producers should be respected as appropriate regulatory agencies
31 continue to research and evaluate these concerns. This includes, but is not limited to, required consumer
32 labeling for foods made from or containing GMOs.

33
34 We support nuclear magnetic resonance testing and/or the most current method of testing on all imported
35 products that are labeled as honey or food grade oils to ensure purity of product.

36 37 **F. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)**

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

41
42 All positions in all divisions within USDA should be fully staffed, and staff administering federal farm
43 programs should be fully informed and trained before enrollment periods begin.

44
45 We urge streamlining the application, reporting, and certification processes for federal grants and programs,
46 and those processes be consistent in all state offices.

1 We support USDA program and staff continuity to better support constituency via overlap of outgoing and
2 incoming staff.

4 We encourage the USDA to standardize definitions used within its subordinate agencies and programs.

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

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

12 We urge USDA to support offering intensive language training opportunities for regional technical staff, to
13 assure historically underserved producers are not further limited access to programs due to language
14 limitations.

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

20 We support changing the USDA definition of a small business, including meat and poultry processing
21 businesses, to one of less than 200 employees.

23 We support extending funding for the local meat capacity grant (LocalMCap).

25 We support the creation of a program, similar to the Fair Food Program, assuring a voluntary, collaborative
26 process between farms and workers on farms to deliver certifiable, market rewarded, and market-enforced
27 payment on products to benefit wages, profits, and livelihoods of workers and of farmers. We support
28 USDA creating incentives for participation in this program.

~~30 We support USDA creating incentives for participation in this program. Programs like these could allow~~
31 ~~workers to gain more market share towards wages, accountability of employers for fair standards and~~
32 ~~hearing grievances, and buy-in from food product end-users to ensure that goods are not purchased at below-~~
33 ~~production costs and labor rates.~~

35 We urge the USDA to designate funds for capacity in regional offices in areas identified under the Justice40
36 Initiative to better serve socially-disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers.

38 We urge the USDA across all of its programs to promptly respond to fluctuating prices due to inflation, and,
39 when necessary, supply chain issues to reflect contemporary economic conditions, current costs, and take
40 into full account economic forecasts and potential price increases when allocating programmatic funding.

42 We support the full funding of the Regional Food Business Center program or similar food business
43 programs.

45 We oppose the termination of the USDA climate hubs.

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 support the creation of FSA loan and loan guarantee programs to restructure debt of family farms and ranches.

We strongly encourage the State Executive Director be changed to a merit promotion and not be a political appointment.

We strongly encourage the State Committee members be elected by ranchers and farmers enrolled in FSA programs and not be political appointments.

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

We support FSA considering ~~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 fully digitize its application process into an online format as an option.

We urge the USDA to establish and enforce performance measures and levels in each FSA office.

We support all FSA county offices reviewing loan applications without the requirement of prior denial of business plans or producer by a commercial lender.

We support all FSA county offices exclude retirement savings smaller than \$500,000 from review and calculation of loan approval, especially for beginning and underserved farmers and ranchers.

1 We urge FSA to support direct-to-consumer and other similar business structures and their associated
2 pricing models when evaluating program applications.

4 We support an increase to the direct loan limit for Beginning Farmer Down Payment Loan Programs and
5 increasing the Down Payment loan limit to match Direct Farm Ownership loan limits.

7 We support giving the FSA flexibility of the use of loan funds reserved for beginning farmers, to ensure full
8 utilization of loan funds each fiscal year.

10 **H. Cooperative Financing**

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

14 **I. Federal Grading and Inspections**

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

19 We support inspection of all meats, excepting those allowed through custom-exempt slaughterhouses, either
20 domestic, imported, or non-amenable (bison, deer, elk, or other exotic species), to ensure such products
21 meet all state and USDA regulations and standards.

23 We support expansion of direct-to-consumer and intra-state meat sales from custom-exempt and state-
24 inspected slaughterhouses.

26 We strongly support hiring additional USDA inspectors to conduct these required inspections. The USDA
27 grading and inspection services necessary for food quality and safety should be tailored to meet the needs of
28 individuals and cooperatives. There should be no charge for these services.

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

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

35 ~~We support marketing of state-inspected meats from current state-licensed and inspected plants across state~~
36 ~~lines to individuals, retailers, or food service outlets, when state meat inspections meet or surpass federal~~
37 ~~regulations.~~

39 We support the scaling of USDA meat inspection services to reflect risk and the volume of product
40 produced.

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

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

3
4 We support standardizing the federal laws to determine moisture content allowance of all meat products.

5
6 We support mandatory recall authority for FDA and USDA.

7
8 We oppose assessing any user fees or overtime charges for federal meat inspection services, including
9 inspection of non-amenable species.

10
11 We oppose federal preemption over meat inspection.

12 13 **J. Agricultural Labor and Immigration**

14 The National Labor Relations Act should be extended to workers on all farms that employ enough hired
15 help to be subject to the federal minimum wage provisions applicable to agricultural workers.

16
17 We support agricultural labor standards including:

- 18 ○ Worker protection standards regarding wage rates, health, safety, and housing conditions for
19 migrant, seasonal, minority, herders, and other farm laborers and for education of their
20 children; and
- 21 ○ A right to organize and protect whistleblowers and organizers; and
- 22 ○ A livable wage tied to the cost of living in the region including all compensation; and
- 23 ○ Overtime wage standards that reflect the seasonality of agricultural production, the
24 economics of family farm and ranch operations, and the needs of agricultural workers.

25
26 We support providing training and tools to minimize the risk of injury at the workplace.

27
28 We support practicable federal heat stress standards.

29
30 We support a fair process for agricultural employers and employees to resolve conflict.

31
32 We support employees having access to service providers and medical care during non-work hours, or
33 during a shift if there is an emergency while ensuring landowners can keep visitors safe and protect their
34 operations.

35
36 We oppose oligopolies, price fixing, unfair trade agreements and practices, consolidations, anticompetitive
37 behavior and practices including kickbacks, volume discounts, and any other practice that has the effect of
38 limiting competition and cheap food policies that harm farmers and farm workers.

39
40 We support efforts to assure fairness for all involved in the production of food.

41
42 We urge Congress to work on reforming and enforcing immigration laws in the interest of homeland
43 security, rural economies, and labor needs in agriculture.

44
45 We urge Congress to include a pathway to citizenship for agricultural workers as part of comprehensive
46 immigration reform.

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

3
4 We urge a comprehensive overhaul of immigration policy that provides a sensible path forward for
5 immigrants who are here without legal status and are committed to becoming fully participating members of
6 our society.

7
8 We oppose any actions leading to mass deportations of immigrants, recognizing we rely heavily on
9 immigrant labor on our farms and ranches and food processing facilities.

10
11 We urge the adoption of federal immigration legislation with an agricultural worker program that provides
12 work authorization for experienced and consistent farm labor force, with visas of adequate length and
13 flexibility to meet the diverse needs of agriculture and the security needs of the United States.

14
15 We oppose the adoption of a mandatory E-Verify program without the inclusion of a workable agricultural
16 worker program.

17
18 We support programs such as ALBA (Agriculture and Land Based Training Association) for career path and
19 progression for documented immigrant farm laborers.

20
21 We support federal Ag JOBS legislation which provides access to a consistent, legal supply of seasonal
22 workers to meet the needs of agriculture.

23
24 We urge expediting and streamlining the process to allow approved immigrant workers to travel back and
25 forth from their home country.

26
27 We urge OSHA to use its full authority to protect workers' rights in food processing from known safety
28 hazards, harmful work environments, and ensure whistleblower protection.

29
30 We urge OSHA to strengthen standards and enforcement affecting agricultural workers living in employer-
31 provided housing to specifically address the challenges of public health and safety emergencies.

32
33 We urge streamlining the regulatory process or replacing the H-2A program with a guest worker program
34 that serves the needs of family farmers, ranchers, and guest workers.

35
36 We will work towards the reform of the H-2A program to better align with farmers' needs.

37
38 We support an increase of the federal minimum wage to a level equivalent to the US population's median
39 living wage, and the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) to be set based on that.

40
41 We will continue to support alternative programs, like the mobile workforce program, to help find
42 alternative labor solutions.

43
44 We support efforts to assure fairness for all involved in the production of food nationwide. We recognize
45 that oligopolies, fixing prices, and cheap food policies harm farmers and farm workers.

1 We support the USDA in creating training and informational videos and materials for the education of ag
2 workers in all languages that producers/workers may require, to aid producers in obtaining/providing
3 required information.

4
5 We support maintaining provisions that permit children of any age to work for businesses owned by their
6 parents.

7
8 We encourage the federal government to fund and provide resources that aid immigrants to get legal work
9 status, healthcare, legal and social services and assistance in obtaining and renewing a driver's license.
10

11 **K. Federal School Meals Programs**

12 We urge the government to mandate the purchase of domestically produced agricultural products for use in
13 school meals programs, prioritizing and incentivizing locally produced food where possible.

14
15 We support the federal government subsidizing the milk program for all nutrition programs.

16
17 We support the sourcing of food for school and juvenile detention center meal programs from school
18 gardens and farms.

19
20 We urge the USDA to administratively and financially support a school meal program at the federal level
21 that provides flexibility and reduces federal regulations while encouraging a healthy diet, the use of local
22 foods, and local food preparation; and to provide our country's children with the highest quality food and
23 farm products rather than the cheapest.

24
25 We support the Geographic Preference rules for school meal programs to financially encourage the purchase
26 and use of local farm products and to allow "local" as a specification in the procurement bidding process.

27
28 We support the allowance of the word "local" as a descriptor of a desired commodity in the school nutrition
29 procurement process.

30
31 We encourage Congress to fund, strengthen, and expand Farm to School and other institution programs.

32
33 We support expansion of the USDA Farm to School Grant Program to include preschools, summer food
34 service program sites, before and after school programs, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program
35 (CACFP).

36
37 We encourage Farm-to-school partnerships to increase consumption of nutritious and/or traditional foods
38 while also supporting farmers and ranchers.

39
40 We encourage the use of Standard Administrative Expenses (SAE) funding to support farm-to-school
41 programs.

42
43 We urge the reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act and oppose block grant funding of the Act.

44
45 We support flexibility regarding the safe distribution and reimbursement of meals for qualifying students,
46 even when schools are closed due to emergencies.

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

4 **L. Federal Public Lands**

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

- 7 ➤ Programs to mitigate potential wildfires in urban and forest interface corridors, including rural
8 private lands adjacent to state and federal forests.
- 9 ➤ Management and control of the transportation of insect-infested and diseased wood and fuel wood to
10 prevent spreading the insects to healthy and uninfected tree populations.
- 11 ➤ The use of the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) for logging transportation subsidies to
12 help expedite and facilitate the movement of diseased wood.
- 13 ➤ Assistance to logging contractors through educational programs and software products, including
14 software development, to minimize existing transportation inconsistencies; and
- 15 ➤ Meaningful education programs for the public concerning overall forest health.

17 **1. Management of Lands**

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

22 We support the expansion and utilization of BLM Resource Advisory Councils (RACs) in order to provide
23 local input into land management decisions. We advocate for the inclusion of grazing interests on RACs that
24 oversee areas with grazing leases.

26 We support having lessee input into decisions in public land access.

28 We support public access on public land being addressed on a lease-by-lease basis to ensure appropriate
29 access for the use. Public access to these lands shall only be on designated routes.

31 Travel Management Plans associated with public lands for designated routes must include input from
32 adjacent landowners, permittees, and any other appropriate private and public stakeholders. The ecological
33 impact created by recreational activities must be considered in these plans.

35 We support lessee/lessor access for year-round, multiple-use management.

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

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

44 We support grazing allotment holders to be compensated for ecological services on public lands.

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

3
4 We support livestock grazing as a management tool in maintaining the health of these resources.

5
6 We support outcome-based management of grazing on federal lands based on scientific data and monitoring
7 of individual allotments, and we also encourage increased funding for this research.

8
9 We encourage increased funding for grazing management, and for land monitoring and enforcement of
10 mutually agreed upon standards and rules between agencies and grazing permittees.
11 Grazing allotments should be restricted to family farms and family farm entities.

12
13 We support flexibility in grazing allotment regulations to allow for the viability of family farms and ranches
14 and family farm and ranch entities and for them to respond to erratic weather.

15
16 We support incentivized and collaborative active management of public land.
17 We support federal laws currently banning any public entity (including municipalities and non-
18 governmental organizations) from owning or leasing federal grazing allotments.

19
20 We oppose the permanent retirement of grazing leases or permits on the BLM and USFS.

21
22 We support establishing user fees for both consumptive and non-consumptive use of public lands.

23
24 We urge federal grazing fees continue to be set by the Public Rangeland Improvement Act (PRIA) formula
25 and increases shall not exceed the annual rate of inflation.

26
27 We support keeping local grazing committees intact to handle grazing allotments, management issues, and
28 disputes.

29
30 We support efforts to establish native grass banks and pollinator-friendly plants on public lands.

31
32 We support the formation of locally owned cooperatives and businesses to harvest and process forest
33 products.

34
35 We oppose regulations that mandate the removal of a permittee's livestock during an administrative appeal
36 process.

37
38 We oppose governmental agencies taking and disposing of private property, including livestock, prior to
39 being heard in the courts, a judgment being rendered, and with appeals exhausted.

40
41 We oppose allowing non-grazers to bid up the price of an allotment thus denying access to farmers and
42 ranchers.

43
44 We oppose separating water from existing leases.
45

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

4 We support evaluation of wages of federal employees to ensure public land offices are fully staffed.

6 We support relevant federal agencies and departments give public notice, explanation, and accept comments
7 on all grazing permit retirements and transfers.

9 **2. Forest Health**

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

14 We support expedited dispersal to, and appropriate and full compensation for those harmed by loss of
15 control of management practices, whether by mismanagement or “Acts of God”.

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

20 We support implementation and full funding of efforts to minimize the effects of insect epidemics on
21 national and state forests throughout the Western United States. Federal, state, and private programs must be
22 approved immediately to protect open space, wildlife habitat, watersheds, clean air, and other natural
23 resources as well as infrastructure such as roads and utility lines.

25 **3. Wild Horse and Burro Population**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

44 We recommend that captured horses placed in government supported holding facilities be limited to five
45 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.
- Prohibitions on check-off funds going to any person or organization which participates in lobbying.
- Priority given to development of domestic markets for check off products.
- Programs which encourage production matching demand, not encouraging maximum production.
- Works for the benefit of producers of the checkoff commodities.
- 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.~~ We support required periodic approval of a majority of producers in order to continue collection of checkoff.

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.

1 **O. Regulatory Agencies**

2 We urge Congress to fund regulatory agencies to allow full staffing to properly function.

3
4 We oppose statutes of limitations for chemical manufacturers whose products harm human or environmental
5 health.

6
7 We urge review of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) policies on agricultural chemicals to ease the
8 financial and regulatory burden upon agricultural producers without compromising adequate worker safety
9 standards.

10
11 We urge application of the precautionary principle, guided by publicly available peer-reviewed science, in
12 regulating pesticides, herbicides, and genetically modified organisms.

13
14 We support inclusion of community health risk from pesticide exposure as part of EPA’s review process.

15
16 We urge Congress to fund EPA to allow full staffing to address the backlog of review requests.

17 We urge EPA to prioritize review of, and to give reasonable pricing to inherently low risk chemicals,
18 substances, and biorational pest control methods.

19
20 We recommend federal resource management agencies work together to form a single definition for
21 wetlands and riparian zones.

22
23 We oppose regulatory actions that infringe on private property rights and do not provide compensation for
24 affected landowners.

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

26
27 We urge the EPA to regulate aromatics under the Clean Air Act and encourage their replacement with
28 domestically grown advanced biofuels.

29
30 We support the “Chevron Deference” precedent.

31
32 We strongly urge that regulation and rulemaking regarding PFAS include provisions that protect farmers
33 and ranchers from situations they did not create.

34
35 We urge the EPA to develop and validate methods to detect and measure PFAS in the environment.

36
37 We urge the EPA to restrict PFAS discharges from industrial sources through the development of Effluent
38 Limitations Guidelines written specifically for PFAS.

39
40 **P. Food Security and Nutrition Programs**

41 We oppose separating nutrition title programs from the Farm Bill.

42
43 We support comprehensive agricultural policy that jointly considers policies impacting nutrition and
44 production agriculture.

1 We support continuation and expanded funding of the Women, Infant and Children (WIC) Farmers Market
2 Nutrition Program (FMNP) and Senior FMNP including expanded program and administrative funding for
3 all states, territories, and tribal nations.

4
5 We support purchases of local meats and eggs for the WIC, FMNP, and Senior FMNP.

6
7 We support incentive programs such as Double-Up Food Bucks, that doubles the value of Supplemental
8 Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) purchases for local fruits, vegetables, local meats, dairy, eggs, and
9 grains and the use of delivery service do not exclude these programs.

10
11 We support reauthorization and full funding of all federal nutrition programs.

12
13 We support continuation of the SNAP Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) program and expansion of the
14 program to include farmers' markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs).

15
16 We oppose USDA SNAP retailer stocking requirements that would disqualify farmers markets, farm stands,
17 and direct-marketing producers from EBT authorization based on category variety.

18
19 We support the USDA allowing online SNAP benefits purchases wherever eligible retail online food is sold.

20
21 We support education of the elderly about the EBT program.

22
23 We support gleaning bills that enable farmers to donate produce to organizations for distribution to the
24 needy and the poor and to take a tax credit for such donations.

25 We support food education programs and local food nutrition trainings.

26
27 We support transparent supply chains and local and regional food procurement for domestic hunger relief.

28
29 We strongly oppose any disproportionate cuts to the Food and Nutrition Title that change the structure of
30 food assistance in a way that decreases benefits or changes eligibility and qualifications.

31
32 We urge Congress to improve food assistance programs by including more education on health, nutrition,
33 and family budgeting, controlling costs, and eliminating junk food and sugar sweetened drinks from
34 nutritional funding.

35
36 We support the allocation of national resources to alleviate "food deserts," as defined by USDA, by
37 increasing accessibility to a comprehensive range of nutritious foods.

38
39 We urge Congress to create and fund a national food pantry assistance program that funds technical
40 assistance and the purchase of local foods direct from the producers for use by food banks.

41
42 We support the expansion of federal initiatives to facilitate the ability of tribal food producers and
43 processors to supply federal food distribution programs in tribal nations.

44
45 We support Food is Medicine initiatives, which encourages consumption of fresh, healthy, non-ultra-
46 processed foods grown and produced in the US, including meats.

1 We support the federal funding of nutrition programs at or above the 2015 levels and in the event of a
2 government shutdown, the use of contingency funds or interchange authority to maintain assistance until the
3 government reopens.
4

5 **Q. Local Agricultural Advisory Committees**

6 We support the establishment of Local Agricultural Advisory Committees comprised of residents and
7 citizens who are involved in agricultural production and agribusiness to advise local governments on all
8 matters relating to agriculture in their jurisdictions.
9

10 **Article II. Agricultural Technology**

11 **A. Research and Development into Alternative Crops and Production Methods**

12 We support and encourage long-term research and development on small and large-scale plots and
13 advancement in production methods focused on soil health and production, including but not limited to
14 cover crops and reduced tillage in the various production methods.
15

16 We support and encourage research and development of alternative crops that are less water intensive and
17 drought, pest, and disease resistant.
18

19 We support and encourage research and development of perennial crops, including cereal grains such as
20 Kernza.
21

22 We support alternatives to energy and chemical intensive methods of production.
23

24 We urge Congress and the USDA to re-commit and fully fund research into alternative crops and methods
25 and uses for crops at all USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) centers.
26

27 We support increasing public funding for independent research to benefit all family farmers and ranchers.
28 This research should be produced by the USDA, universities, and community colleges.
29

30 We support full disclosure of all funding sources for those conducting research.
31

32 We support the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices that enhance environmental quality; make the
33 most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources; sustain the economic viability of
34 agriculture operations; enhance the quality of life for farmers, ranchers, and society; and where appropriate,
35 integrate natural biological cycles and controls to protect the resource base on which agriculture depends.
36

37 **B. New Agricultural Production Technologies/Genetically Modified Organisms**

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

41 We support the rights of both GMO and non-GMO producers as appropriate regulatory agencies continue to
42 research and evaluate ethical, environmental, and food safety concerns, including but not limited, to
43 required consumer labeling for foods made from or containing GMOs.
44

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

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

7 **C. Other Agricultural Production Techniques**

8 We oppose the introduction of products made from cloned animals.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 We support public accessibility to production methods and equipment developed with public funding.

30 **D. Agricultural Structures**

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

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

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

40 We support public occupancy to agricultural utility buildings, without the requirement of meeting
41 commercial building standards, especially in the context of retail farm stands and stores.

43 **E. Bees and Pollinators**

44 We support beekeeping, pollination services, queen breeding, pollinator husbandry, and honey production as
45 an agricultural operation.

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

2
3 We acknowledge the results of research indicating that multiple factors contribute to the decline in
4 pollinators, including pesticides, habitat loss, pathogens, parasites, and climate change.

5
6 We encourage action to support the health of bees and other pollinators.

7
8 We urge USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to make recommendations for the
9 health and protection of pollinators, with enforcement and research dating back to 2009.

10
11 We urge EPA to include “lethal” criteria and “chronic injury, weakness or disease” criteria for pesticides
12 labels.

13
14 We urge the USDA to provide education on agricultural practices that have harmful and devastating effects
15 on pollinator population.

16
17 We urge the EPA’s office of Pesticide Programs to adopt reforms to ensure that pesticide approvals and use
18 decisions are science-based to protect pollinator and human health.

19
20 We support reclassification of noxious weeds so that it considers the beneficial use of such plant to
21 pollinators.

22
23 We support classifying Neonicotinoids as restricted use chemicals.

24 25 **F. Small Business Development Authority**

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

28
29 We support defining a small business as one having less than 200 employees.

30 31 **G. Genetic Ownership**

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

34
35 We support legislation to put the liability incurred from unwanted propagation of GMO traits on the patent
36 owner, and we support indemnification for the contamination of non-GMO/identity-preserved crops by
37 GMO patent holders.

38
39 We support legislation to prohibit the patenting of heritage, livestock breeds, and other genetic material,
40 except for Indigenous patents.

41
42 We support the right of farmers to plant seed derived from proprietary organisms on their own land.

43
44 We oppose the patenting of plants and animals.

1 We support establishing and maintaining foundation seed banks.

2
3 We support all cultivars developed with public funds and protection of the rights of farmers to save seeds
4 and breeders to share and improve such germplasm and breeds.

5
6 We support all publicly funded cultivars be immediately available for breeders.

7 8 **H. Unmanned Aerial Systems**

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

11 12 **I. Livestock Health**

13 We urge USDA APHIS and other research organizations actively pursue research to clearly establish
14 transmission modes, preventive measures including vaccination, and a protocol for vesicular stomatitis

15
16 We request quarantine restrictions be periodically reevaluated.

17
18 We support the authority of USDA to control animal movement in the event of an animal disease outbreak.

19
20 We support all cattle entering the United States from foreign soil be tested for diseases and pests, that those
21 testing positive for any disease or pests should be handled according to established protocol regarding
22 quarantine and/or impounded at the expense of the importer.

23
24 We request APHIS provide necessary resources to control and prevent disease spread in outbreak situations
25 in consultation with affected state livestock health professionals.

26
27 We support incentives for veterinarians who agree to serve underserved areas.

28
29 We urge all federal and state agencies entrusted with wildlife management also be mandated to implement a
30 comprehensive management plan to eradicate brucellosis and chronic wasting disease from all wildlife
31 under their control.

32
33 We require full market value compensation for domestically raised game and other livestock destroyed by
34 the government on private and commercial ranches.

35
36 We support voluntary vaccination of livestock to prevent disease.

37
38 We oppose the prophylactic use of antibiotics in livestock.

39
40 We oppose the importation of ruminant animals and products from any country that does not have an
41 enforceable ban on animal by-products used in feed for ruminant animals that meets USDA standards.

42
43 We oppose moving acute use veterinary antibiotics to prescription use only.

1 We oppose the importation of livestock or livestock products from countries with endemic reportable
2 diseases or pests.

3
4 We support a comprehensive New World Screwworm management plan and- program that works closely
5 with farms in the U.S. and Mexico.
6

7 **J. Animal Identification and Livestock Traceability**

8 We support workable methods of monitoring livestock diseases and safeguarding animal health.
9

10 We oppose any national animal ID program that results in a shift from disease control to monitoring disease
11 through traceability.
12

13 We oppose any mandatory animal identification program designed to force livestock producers to register
14 their premises through 4-H, FFA, or fair programs.
15

16 We oppose any premise registration, electronic, or biometric identification program that

- 17 ➤ Is mandatory.
- 18 ➤ Establishes another level of regulation and an expensive requirement for registering premises and/or
- 19 animals.
- 20 ➤ Interferes with producers' privacy and proprietary information; or
- 21 ➤ Has the potential to undermine market opportunities.
22

23 We urge all states to have an acceptable form of identification for producers who move cattle inter-state
24 under the Animal Disease Traceability Program.
25

26 We support alternative animal identification methods such as freeze branding.
27

28 **K. Telecommunications**

29 We support the efforts of RUS to provide rural broadband services to their members.
30

31 We support enhanced 911 emergency telephone services in rural areas.
32

33 We support competitively priced high-speed Internet access in rural communities to create jobs, to support
34 health care, education, and rural economic development, and to access government services.
35

36 We support municipal high-speed Internet where markets fail to provide competitive, high-speed options.
37

38 We support the continuation of those media programs that meet the needs of the agricultural community.
39

40 **L. Ag Data**

41 Agriculture data collected by organizations, companies, and educational institutions and other entities
42 should not be used, monetized, or distributed without the express permission of those producers from whom
43 the data are gathered.
44

1 We support policies that create clear terms within data license agreements and standardized data protection
2 practices between tech providers and agricultural producers.

3
4 We support strong interoperability portability rights and owner access on a real-time basis.

5
6 We urge federal regulatory agencies to develop and enforce non-compliance fines for agriculture tech
7 providers and other penalties including data processing suspension.

8
9 We support federal automated auditing procedures to ensure ethical and responsible access and use of data
10 throughout the value chain.

11 12 **M. Right to Repair**

13 We support Fair Repair and Right to Repair legislation that would allow farmers and independent
14 mechanics access to diagnostic software, information, and other tools to repair modern equipment.

15
16 We support the development of a universal diagnostic system for agricultural equipment similar to OBD2.

17 18 **Article III. Competition and Concentration**

19 **A. Industrial Corporate Farming**

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

23
24 We support the prohibition of farming by industrial corporate farms and by foreign owners.

25
26 ~~We support the strengthening and enforcement of antitrust laws.~~

27
28 We oppose the vertical integration and consolidation of production and processing by industrial corporate
29 farms through mergers and acquisitions.

30
31 We oppose packer ownership of animals, except family farm-owned packing operations.

32
33 We oppose multinational grain and food conglomeration.

34
35 We oppose centralization of food production systems that endanger food security.

36 37 **B. Infrastructure Ownership**

38 We oppose foreign ownership or control of any infrastructure, including but not limited to highways,
39 airlines, railroads, data centers, public or private utilities (such as water systems and communications
40 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 imposing tariffs on imported products which are also produced in the US to level the cost of foreign production and currency differences.

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 uncompensated harm to family farmers local to regions in a crisis.

We support a shift in US foreign agricultural policy towards prioritizing support for localized and/or indigenous sustainable agricultural development in low-income countries. This could include technical assistance, and localized capacity building to help those countries meet their agricultural needs.

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 ~~producers to~~ 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.

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

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

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

11 We support the food sovereignty of all nations.

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

15 **2. Long-term Trade Agreements**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3
4 We oppose the Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS).

5
6 We oppose the exploitation of developing countries by forcing them to abandon domestic food production
7 and security.

8
9 We oppose fast-track trade authority as well as the Trade Promotion Authority for the President of the
10 United States.

11
12 We oppose the fast-track system of ratification of trade agreements in which the entire trade package must
13 be approved without amendment or rejected in total by Congress within a 60-day limit.

14 15 **B. International Relations**

16 **1. United Nations**

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

19 20 **2. Agricultural Democracy**

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

23 24 **3. World Food**

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

27
28 We support programs that distribute and assure delivery of food and resources to the needy in ways that do
29 not harm family farmers in those same regions.

30 **4. Basic Climatological Observations**

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

33 34 **5. Paris Climate Accord**

35 We support the goals articulated in the Paris Climate Accord.

36 37 **Article V. Credit**

38 **A. Farm Credit System (FCS)**

39 We support a strong cooperatively owned Farm Credit system.

40
41 We oppose the purchase of any FCS bank or portion of the FCS banking system by any non-FCS entity.

42
43 We oppose allowing FCS banks to sever mineral and water rights on property foreclosed upon and
44 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 a dedicated funding program for cooperative startups.

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.

We support a required review of Cooperative businesses to ensure they abide by the cooperative principles in order to benefit from the designation as a cooperative business under the Capper-Volstead Act.

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 the verification of businesses calling themselves cooperatives are in fact bona fide cooperatives operating under state law.

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

4
5 We urge that cooperative members consider the long-term consequences of selling their cooperatives for
6 short-term goals and urge the board oppose the sale of any cooperative venture to agribusiness.

7 8 **Article VII. Water, Land, and Conservation**

9 **A. Agricultural Land**

10 **1. Ownership**

11 We oppose nonresident foreign and industrial corporate ownership of American farms, food production
12 companies, ~~and~~ real estate, water and mineral rights.

13
14 We strongly oppose the sale of American farms, real estate, and food processing operations to foreign
15 governments, investors, corporations, or any other foreign entity, especially in circumstances where the
16 merger, sale, or acquisition consolidates markets.

17
18 We oppose any conversions of agricultural lands or reallocation of agricultural water to construction or
19 operation of data centers and server “farms”.

20
21 We strongly urge the Department of Justice (DOJ) to block any merger, sale, or acquisition that will
22 undermine U.S. food security, safety, and family farming interests.

23
24 We urge tax advantages now available to foreign and industrial corporate investors be eliminated
25 immediately to discourage foreign and industrial corporate ownership of agricultural land.

26
27 We support that all demand lands owned by foreign investors have all income taxes computed on an accrual
28 basis so that agricultural products cannot be exported out of the United States without any income tax
29 payment as is now possible on a cash basis.

30
31 We support that a All foreign ownership of land shall be reported to each state’s secretary of state. Failure to
32 report shall have substantial penalties. ~~Compliance will ensure payment of taxes by foreign owners.~~

33
34 We oppose foreign citizens leasing state land or holding federal grazing allotments. Those foreign citizens
35 holding current leases should be required to relinquish them.

36
37 We urge foreign owners of American lands be required to comply with an approved soil conservation plan.

38 39 **2. Agricultural Land Preservation Programs**

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

42
43 We support increased permanent funding for the purchase of farm and ranch properties at both the federal
44 and state levels that ensures long-term affordability of farmland for future generations of farmers and
45 ranchers.

1 We support incentives to landowners for agricultural leasing terms of 5 years and greater.

2
3 We support the advancement of land partnerships, such as farm incubator programs, which provide
4 opportunities for for-profit, non-profit, and cooperative agricultural entities and strive to support educational
5 farms that teach agricultural and business skills.

6
7 We support when land is purchased for open space with public funds with the intent of reselling the land for
8 agricultural purposes with development restrictions, the resale must be handled by offering that land
9 publicly for purchase at that time.

10
11 We demand all entities honor the terms of all conservation easements.

12
13 We urge the preservation of urban and regional farmland and water using intergovernmental, public, and
14 private partnerships that fund methods and structures for cooperation and collaboration.

15
16 We support tax credits generated through the creation of a conservation easement be marketable to those
17 who have a tax liability, with appropriate safeguards.

18
19 We support policies that would enable a workable Buy-Protect-Sell transaction model for non-governmental
20 organizations and local governments to buy agricultural land as a temporary landowner, sell a conservation
21 easement on that land, permanently protecting it from conversion and reducing its fair market value, and sell
22 that encumbered land to a farmer or rancher.

23
24 We support flexibility in the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) that allows for future
25 amendments to a conservation easement to keep that land in agricultural production.

26
27 We support expanding funding for the voluntary placement of conservation easements over farms and
28 ranches.

29
30 We support expanding the eligibility for the conservation easement tax credit for the protection and
31 conservation of water, productive soils, and farmland.

32 33 **3. Eminent Domain**

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

37
38 We strongly oppose the use of eminent domain by government agencies on behalf of any private entity that
39 does not itself have eminent domain powers.

40
41 We urge entities that have the right of eminent domain be required to prove that the land is needed to serve
42 the public interest, that fair environmental standards will be observed, and that no more land is taken than is
43 required.

44
45 We support any access to properties being considered for projects shall only be by written notice with
46 adequate time frames included to adjust scheduling of entry for surveying and siting.

1 We support that all reclamation work will include input from the landowner and shall occur in a timely
2 manner with bonding in place until mutually agreed project success.

3
4 We support having a public hearing on any proposed use of eminent domain in the affected area, after legal
5 notification of all area residents and landowners.

6
7 We support good faith negotiations between the property owner and developer that include the option of
8 yearly fees to the owner for current or future use before eminent domain shall be exercised.

9
10 We urge a non-governmental third-party entity agreeable to all parties to assess land value in cases of
11 condemnation and owners being compensated with appropriate annual payments or a lump sum of no less
12 than three times the appraised value.

13
14 We insist court-adjusted compensation return value of highest use of a property—including relocation
15 costs—to the owner, and that all legal costs should be paid by the entity condemning the property.

16
17 We oppose the expansion of military reservations, including the taking of the lands and other associated
18 rights, including air space, without just compensation.

19 20 **B. Public Lands**

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

23
24 We recommend that wild land firefighting and other disaster management expenses be budgeted separately
25 from other federal land health programs.

26
27 We urge creation and regular maintenance of communication systems between Bureau of Land
28 Management, Forest Service, and local governmental entities to ensure quick and effective emergency
29 response and communication with permittees.

30
31 We support the rights of farmers and ranchers to work with federal land management agencies, including
32 the BLM, on master leasing plans and other stakeholder processes to support healthy water, air, and soil in
33 agricultural systems.

34
35 We support reforms to the Equal Opportunity Justice Act, making individual citizens the only eligible
36 entities to be compensated.

37 We support revitalization of unused municipal land as farmland.

38
39 We support long-term conservation of farmland and agricultural water access in peri-urban areas.

40
41 We oppose the sale or exchange of public lands currently used in agriculture production to non-agricultural
42 use.

43
44 We urge Congress to permanently authorize Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools
45 (SRS), and to fully fund these programs annually. We further urge Congress to create a timeline for
46 payment that supports local budgeting and planning.

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

3
4 We support land use and management of public lands that will encourage ecosystem stewardship.

5
6 We oppose the transfer of federal public lands to state control.

7
8 We support increased efforts for getting vacant grazing allotments filled.

9
10 We support reducing barriers for young and beginning farmers and ranchers to access public lands for
11 agricultural production.

12
13 We oppose the sale of federal public lands without a full environmental review and meaningful public
14 comment.

15 16 **C. Domestic Horse Population**

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

19
20 We oppose the portion of the Safeguard American Food Exports Act of 2017 which denies horse meat
21 consumption.

22
23 We support the sale and consumption of horse meat that meets the same health and safety standards already
24 in place for other livestock meats such as beef, pork, and lamb.

25
26 We urge legislation that will provide for better disposition of feral or domestic horses and burros,
27 specifically the sale of the animals with immediate ownership at local auction markets.

28
29 We urge transportation regulations be revisited to allow transportation of horses at the discretion of the
30 owner in the most cost-effective manner and for their intended purposes.

31 32 **D. Endangered Species Act (ESA)**

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

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

37
38 We urge USFWS require the use of the best available scientific data on population trends, available habitat,
39 and genetic background in determining the listing and possible protection of any candidate species.

40
41 We urge federal funds be appropriated to state or federal agencies to manage endangered species and
42 provide just compensation for producers with ESA habitat and/or for losses or harassment caused by
43 animals protected by ESA.

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

3
4 We oppose the application of the ESA critical habitat designation to habitat that is not occupied by any
5 listed species.

6
7 We oppose the introduction, reintroduction, and/or relocation of endangered species or predatory animals
8 onto lands where agricultural operations, wildlife, domestic animals, or humans might be adversely affected.
9 This includes but is not limited to wolves and grizzly bears.

10
11 We strongly oppose efforts to list the greater sage grouse, lesser prairie chicken and prairie dogs as
12 endangered or threatened under the ESA.

13
14 We support compensation to family farmers who are adversely affected by the ESA and are managing for
15 species and habitat recovery at a cost to their agribusiness in proportion to their loss, including stress and
16 hardship.

17
18 We support candidate conservation agreements with assurances as a tool to lessen impacts to agricultural
19 producers from candidate species that are warranted but precluded or listed.

20 21 **E. Conservation**

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

26
27 We support full funding and fund disbursement of the abandoned mines reclamation program.

28
29 We support local participation and control in the permitting process for conservation and construction
30 projects.

31
32 We support an increased emphasis on reclamation and re-establishment of healthy and functioning riparian
33 zones and other habitats impacted by mining, oil and gas development, and overuse. We support the reuse of
34 all products possible.

35
36 We recognize the beneficial impacts of beavers in appropriate context and support reasonable efforts to
37 manage beaver populations without negatively impacting farmers and ranchers.

38
39 We insist that all open and unused water wells, inactive or abandoned mines, seismograph holes, and wells
40 used to produce oil and gas be covered or filled to prevent underground pollution and to eliminate danger to
41 people, animals, and agricultural operations.

42
43 We support preventing contamination in surface and groundwater including shallow and porous aquifers
44 under the protection of the Safe Drinking Water and Clean Water Acts.

45
46 We support efforts to remediate contamination where it exists.

1 We support the exploration and development of new ‘payment-for-ecosystem-service’ markets.

2
3 We urge that Data Centers increase clean usable net positive water resources available to the agricultural
4 community and synergistically work with farmers and ranchers to restore aquifers, increase organic carbon
5 content in soil and economically benefit the watersheds they are located in.
6

7 **F. Noxious Weeds and Pests**

8 We urge rigid enforcement of laws to control noxious weeds and pests on all public and private lands.
9

10 We recommend increased funding of cost-share programs to control noxious weeds and pests.
11

12 We support alternatives to chemical control measures to control noxious weeds on public lands.
13

14 We support local education programs designed for the identification and management of noxious weeds and
15 pests.
16

17 We support the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) as the primary regulatory act for
18 applications of pesticides by farmers and ranchers. Any additional permitting required by EPA under court
19 mandate should mirror existing record keeping, education and training requirements.
20

21 We urge the EPA require companies with conditionally labeled pesticides (insecticides, fungicides,
22 rodenticides, or herbicides) to complete testing within the five-year conditional labeling period.
23

24 We support Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and continued research on biological controls to address
25 noxious weeds and pests.
26

27 We urge the EPA improve the permitting process to enable the effective use of poisons, biologicals, and
28 other control tools for predators and pests.
29

30 We support penalties on willful or negligent occurrences of chemical and biological trespass.
31

32 We support USDA APHIS control of near plague-level pests.
33

34 We support a two-step noxious weed program that creates conditions to replace noxious weeds with
35 beneficial plants.
36

37 **G. Water**

38 We support managing water resources for the benefit of all people and the environment, including future
39 generations to have sufficient water to meet domestic needs and grow our own food, while maintaining the
40 historic doctrine of prior appropriation.
41

42 We strongly encourage:

- 43 ➤ The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) expediting preparation of new sources and new measures
44 based on current and projected hydrologic conditions to protect long-term sustainability of western
45 river basins for maintaining agriculture, urban use, and ecosystems;

- Revising the current guidelines for operation of dams and other storage structures that are necessary to address the likelihood of continued low-runoff or flood conditions;
- The Bureau of Reclamation accurately accounting for evaporation and transit losses;
- All relevant government agencies developing protocols and best practices for shepherding water through entire watersheds; and
- All relevant government agencies prioritizing addressing factors impacting the supply of water and prioritizing the health of watersheds, improving water cycles, riparian areas, soil organic matter, vegetative ground cover, and the health of forest ecosystems and other headwater areas, while recognizing the role of agriculture in these efforts.

We support investments to increase storage and improvements to distribution systems of water. Planning, investment, and regional strategic readiness should be implemented in order to prepare for extreme weather events causing catastrophic harm to landscapes from both over abundance and/or extreme lack 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 oppose any plan to construct additional trans-basin diversions.

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.

1 We support federal legislation creating a water pool in Lake Powell and other headwater reservoirs for
2 Upper Basin water storage.
3
4 We support state, inter-basin, and federal rules and legislation that advocate for the sharing of burden across
5 all water sectors and water users, and across the continental divide so that agricultural water rights, and
6 agriculture itself, are not injured.
7
8 We support alternative transfer methods that allow agricultural water users to benefit from the value of their
9 water rights without the permanent transfer of the rights, and without adverse impacts to the local
10 communities and the regional economy.
11
12 We support water access and regulation that encourages urban and peri-urban sustainable agriculture.
13
14 We support the right of states to negotiate and enter into interstate compacts without federal government
15 involvement.
16
17 We oppose speculation on water and water rights when a water right is purchased without legitimately using
18 the water for a beneficial use within a reasonable timeframe.
19
20 We support water planning based on accurate and comprehensive hydrological data.
21
22 We support recognizing and respecting Indigenous and acequia cultural practices and traditions when
23 making water decisions.
24
25 We support agricultural participation in strategic water planning discussions that will serve all water users
26 and uses.
27

28 **H. Native American Water and Land Rights**

29 We support appropriate water development or just compensation to meet the water appropriations of Native
30 American water rights, to protect current agricultural water users.
31 We urge that any irrigation project developed on tribal land be used by Native American family farmers and
32 not operated as a non-tribal corporation, farm, or business.
33
34 We support using the Winters Doctrine (*Winters v. United States*) in adjudicating Native American water
35 rights.
36
37 We urge the United States Department of Interior and tribal governments to clarify existing and/or develop
38 better agriculture land-use policies for farming and ranching in the protection of Native American Water
39 Rights and Land Rights.
40
41 We encourage better communication between agencies, stewards, and tribal entities regarding neighborly
42 land stewardship plans that includes pesticides, rodenticides, and any land and water alteration efforts.
43
44 We support replacing the agricultural land use and grazing permit system with a ten year lease system
45 within Navajo Nation in order for individual farmers and ranchers to more effectively access insurance and
46 USDA programs.

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 oppose permitting new mining operations that will negatively impact water quality.

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 projects that support irrigation.

1 **K. Soil Health**

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

5
6 We support soil health practices that reduce dependence on commercial chemicals and fertilizers and
7 increase the economic viability of farms and ranches.

8
9 We support adoption of soil health principles, as advocated by NRCS, which include manage more by
10 disturbing less; diversify soil biota with plant diversity; keep a living root growing throughout the year; keep
11 the soil covered as much as possible; and include livestock when possible.

12
13 We support public and private funding to pay farmers to develop deeper topsoil, as determined by such
14 metrics as depth of soil aggregate formation. Soil aggregates are foundational to the function of watersheds
15 and the longevity of infrastructure, and their tending requires adaptive management by the farmer.

16
17 We encourage USDA, private industry, other relevant agencies, and collaborative efforts among farmers to
18 explore economic opportunities for family farmers who utilize ecosystem services which improve
19 resiliency, increase soil health, and promote healthier watersheds.

20
21 We support legislation that aims to reduce bare soil.

22
23 We support any definition of regenerative agriculture including management practices that:

- 24 1. Cover the soil
25 2. Minimize soil disturbance
26 3. Keep living roots in the soil
27 4. Increase biodiversity of all organisms in the soil, and in and on the land and air
28 5. Integrate livestock

29
30 **L. Greenhouse Gas Mitigation**

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

33
34 We support agricultural producers having the opportunity to benefit from carbon capture and storage
35 through the trading of credits.

36
37 We support the trading of carbon credits and the potential for inclusion of carbon sequestration and methane
38 capture as agricultural conservation practices.

39
40 We support research into terrestrial carbon sequestration. This should encompass all practices, including
41 grazing lands, energy feedstock production, organic cropping, wood lots, CRP, no-till, biochar, and other
42 proven conservation methods.

1 We support investment in technologies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions while producing renewable
2 energy and scientifically-verified biological soil amendments, with consideration of emissions of carbon
3 dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide.

4
5 We support research and development of carbon and nitrogen emission reduction and capture strategies
6 including those with USDA commitment to creating a net zero emissions agricultural sector by 2050.

7
8 We support ongoing independent research into the safety and viability of long-term geologic storage of
9 carbon dioxide.

10
11 We support requiring surface owners' consent for geologic carbon storage and that they retain their right to
12 the pore space.

13
14 We support requirements for robust bonding, so the liability for long-term carbon storage remains with the
15 producer, transporter, and operator.

16
17 We support the use of the USDA or their entities to manage the inspection/verification of carbon credits on
18 agricultural lands, as opposed to the EPA.

19
20 We demand verification and regulation by the USDA, not the EPA, of any agriculture regulation related to
21 climate change legislation.

22
23 We support state and national greenhouse gas reduction targets that use a voluntary incentive-based
24 approach to continue the economic viability of farms and ranches.

25
26 We recognize that a carbon fee may be an important component of addressing emissions mitigation strategy
27 so long as agricultural producers are not adversely affected.

28
29 We urge the development of strategies and incentives at the local, state, and federal level to:

- 30 ➤ Improve our nation's crop and rangeland resiliency as well as its long-term sustainability and
31 productivity.
32 ➤ Promote increased water storage and management solutions that help producers adapt to changing
33 conditions and decrease production losses due to lack or excess of water availability.
34 ➤ Empower family farmers to lessen the negative impacts of climate change.

35 36 **M. Waste Disposal**

37 **1. Toxic Waste**

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

39
40 We urge the development and evaluation of methods to reduce and remove PFAS in the environment.

41
42 We support requiring compost operations that incorporate biosolids to measure, track, and publish PFAs
43 levels of the finished product. We support the development and evaluation of alternative ways to safely
44 dispose of concentrated biosolids from wastewater treatment centers.

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

5
6 We support legislation requiring companies producing PFAs to bear the true costs of health and
7 environmental damages resulting from the products.
8

9 **2. Non-Toxic Waste**

10 We support efforts in Congress to require industry be accountable for the waste they generate.
11

12 We support the ability of rural landowners to utilize alternative waste systems that have National Sanitation
13 Foundation approval without the requirement of a conventional onsite wastewater treatment system.
14

15 We support regulated and researched non-water-based land use human waste systems, such as composting
16 and incinerating toilets.
17

18 **3. Recycling**

19 We favor recycling of all products, including oil and other lubricants.
20

21 We encourage development of recycling and composting.
22

23 We encourage creation of incentives to increase the use of recyclable materials.
24

25 We support reduction of food waste according to the EPA food recovery hierarchy.
26

27 We encourage initiatives and funding to provide more waste diversion opportunities including commercial
28 compost operation and composting fit for use in agricultural and food production.
29

30 We encourage the use of reusable, recyclable, and renewable packaging in the processing, transport, and
31 retailing of agricultural products.
32

33 We support a reduction in plastic and packaging materials in all products.
34

35 We support research, development, and investment in biodegradable and renewable products, which can
36 replace packaging and disposable items.
37

38 We support the development of a National Recycling and composting program funded, in part, by
39 manufacturers of packaging materials.
40

41 **4. Pollution Prevention**

42 We support policies that create incentives to avoid production of waste rather than policies to remediate the
43 production of waste.
44

1 **Article VIII. Energy**

2 **A. Power Utilities**

3 We oppose electric deregulation at the federal and state level.

4
5 We oppose any sale of Power Marketing Authorities.

6
7 We support the allocation of Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) power for cooperatives.

8
9 We support electrical storage as an integral part of the electrical system.

10
11 We encourage the further build-out of transmission infrastructure, including upgrades of existing
12 distribution lines to support distributed energy generation for renewable energy.

13
14 We are opposed to any surcharge on hydroelectric rates.

15
16 We oppose changing historic use of stored water in relation to power generation.

17
18 We urge development of hydroelectric power-generated energy with appropriate safeguards for the
19 environment, fish and wildlife, agricultural land, and water rights.

20
21 We support the modernization of existing hydroelectric plants to provide maximum electrical energy,
22 especially in the western states, with any increase of energy allocated to preference power users.

23
24 We urge the development of secondary hydrogeneration structures at existing dam sites to at least double
25 current energy production.

26
27 We support net metering.

28
29 We support uniform interconnectivity standards that allow for farm and ranch operations to fully utilize
30 existing system capacity.

31
32 **B. Energy**

33 **1. Research and Development**

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

37
38 We support continued research and development of natural, non-polluting, renewable energy sources.

39
40 We urge individuals and companies to make their homes and businesses more energy efficient.

41
42 We support public utilities and rural electrics exploring other energy sources for generation.

43
44 We oppose efforts to initiate commercial leasing of federal shale resources before effectiveness of and
45 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.

We encourage the land grant and community colleges to focus their research on those cropping systems that provide renewable energy.

We support that 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 support requiring bonding for removal of, decommissioning, 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.

1 We support the prioritization of agrivoltaics over traditional solar developments.

2
3 We call for a clear definition of agrivoltaics to prevent the transfer of the use of agricultural land to energy
4 production.
5

6 **3. Distributed Energy Generation**

7 We support distributed energy generation in rural areas because it can provide additional income to farmers
8 and ranchers who place energy generation systems (i.e., small hydroelectric, anaerobic digesters, wind
9 generators, photovoltaic arrays, etc.) on their land, circulating local development dollars through the local
10 economy and benefiting rural communities.
11

12 We support the development of agrivoltaics, the blending of photovoltaics with farming operations when
13 those systems meaningfully support and retain the agricultural production of converted lands.
14

15 We support the development of funding mechanisms that reduce the high first cost of renewable energy
16 generators that have no continuing fuel costs.
17

18 We support the development of rural microgrids to provide resiliency on the electric grid in the face of
19 increasing challenges to rural energy infrastructure.
20

21 **4. Federal Transmission Planning**

22 We strongly support continued build out of the federal transmission system. Proposals have called for the
23 federal government to promote and administer large transmission projects. When siting transmission
24 corridors we urge consideration of the needs of landowners.
25

26 We support a comprehensive strategy to increase security of the national electric grids to prevent rolling
27 blackouts and to protect utility infrastructure.
28

29 We support large-scale investment in transmission lines and the grid energy system across the country by
30 federal and state authorities to aid in the efficient use and sharing of energy, especially renewables.
31

32 **5. Nuclear**

33 We support the use of nuclear power with extreme caution, using safe and proper methods of waste
34 transportation and disposal.
35

36 We support the conversion of the decommissioned coal fired electrical plants to nuclear electric generating
37 facilities, if possible.
38

39 We support research into thorium, cold fusion technology, and other fuels to replace uranium in nuclear
40 plants.
41

42 We oppose federal preemption in permitting nuclear waste facilities.
43

44 We support continued development of fusion reactors.
45

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.

We support the elimination of federal oil and gas subsidies and those monies be transitioned into renewable sources of energy, transmission of energy, and research into energy efficient construction and development.

C. Alternative Fuels

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

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

3
4 We support long term federal financial support of ethanol infrastructure including development of “flex
5 fuel” vehicles that run on greater ethanol blends, pipelines to transport ethanol, and “blender pumps” at
6 fueling stations to accommodate the fuel.

7
8 We encourage the utilization of oxygenated fuel, such as ethanol, to achieve improved air quality and reduce
9 dependence on foreign energy imports.

10
11 We support the continued availability of non-oxygenated fuels for all engines with older technologies.

12
13 We support the expansion of available gasoline blends up to the highest blended ratio supported by
14 scientific data.

15
16 We encourage the use of biodiesel to decrease our dependency on foreign fuel.

17
18 We oppose any weakening of federal renewable fuel standards through the granting of waivers to refineries.

19
20 We support the federal bio-fuels standard.

21
22 We support the development of infrastructure to permit use of natural gas as an economical transportation
23 fuel.

24
25 We support keeping the federal fuel tax and adding an annual tax to charge electric vehicles their fair share
26 of road maintenance costs proportionate to their impact on roads.

27 28 **Article IX. Economic and Social**

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

31 32 **A. Economic Development**

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

35
36 We support public access to small private farms with owner permission for the purpose of, but not limited
37 to, agritourism and agricultural education.

38
39 We support programs that help young and/or beginning farmers and ranchers, small and/or independent
40 meat processors and packers to access the capital needed at favorable rates and terms, for land, business
41 ownership and operations.

42
43 We support diversification of rural economies that sustain the economic viability of rural communities.

1 We support initiatives to expand access to remote employment opportunities with the federal government in
2 rural communities.

3
4 We support federal funding for grant and loan programs, including USDA’s Healthy Food Financing
5 Initiative and Rural Business Development Grants that help rural, frontier, and locally owned grocery stores
6 upgrade equipment and remain viable food access points for their communities.

7
8 We support granting preference points during the federal hiring process to members of rural communities.

9
10 We oppose federal agencies adopting telework agreements that exclude internet service providers that are
11 prevalent in rural communities, such as fixed wireless and satellite internet.

12 13 **B. Farm to Consumer Food Systems**

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

17
18 We support CSA/subscription farms and farm-to-consumer cooperatives and herd shares to sell direct to
19 restaurants, grocers, and festivals.

20
21 We support opportunities for farmers and ranchers to sell their products locally through farmers’ markets,
22 on-line markets, CSAs, and other local marketing initiatives.

23
24 We encourage the development and support of the “Food Hub” model for sourcing and distributing local
25 foods to wholesale and consumer markets.

26
27 We support federal agencies adopting policy that sets standards for local food purchasing within their
28 agencies.

29 30 **C. Animal Welfare**

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

33
34 We support the humane treatment of all domesticated animals and working animals, and their access to
35 proper food, shelter, and water.

36
37 We oppose the adoption of laws that criminalize whistleblowing, documentation, and reporting of animal
38 welfare violations.

39
40 We support the prosecution of individuals who falsely document, falsely report, or manipulate evidence of
41 animal mistreatment. These individuals should be made to provide for a remedy at equity or at law incurred
42 by the victims of such false documentation.

43
44 We encourage producers throughout our region to follow accepted industry standards on animal welfare
45 based on expert input and consideration.

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

3
4 We support the development of egg sexing technologies to eliminate the euthanasia of male chicks raised in
5 egg-laying operations.

6
7 We oppose the prohibition of generally accepted animal husbandry practices.

8
9 We support a state's right to regulate the sale of animal products.

10
11 We oppose animal shelters, rescues, and affiliated organizations that are involved in "Retail Rescue."

12
13 We oppose the illegal importation and/or inter-state trafficking of animals for animal shelters, rescues, and
14 affiliated organizations.

15 16 **D. Tax Reform**

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

20
21 We urge Congress to close loopholes that allow corporations or individuals to evade their fair share of taxes
22 and fund and empower the IRS to enforce existing tax law.

23
24 We urge Congress to continue the task of tax revision. Changes should include the following:

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

40
41 We support improved tax benefits for producers to donate marketable and/or non-marketable agriculture
42 products to charitable or gleaning organizations.

43
44 We support incentives for businesses to have low pay ratios (highest pay : median pay).

45
46 We support tiered levels of agriculture-related deductions based on total income.

1 We support property tax policies which encourage operator ownership and discourage investor ownership of
2 land.

3
4 We support tax policies which discourage sale of small and family-owned businesses to larger corporations.

5
6 We support the exploration of new tax policy that favors transition to the next generation, including but not
7 limited to, increased flexibility in stepped up basis.

8 9 **E. Estate Tax**

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

12
13 We oppose shifting tax liability from the estate tax to the capital gains tax through the elimination of the
14 “step-up” provision within the capital gains tax policy.

15 16 **F. Internet Sales Tax**

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

19 20 **G. Commodity Futures Markets**

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

23
24 We support a new research revenue stream with an assessment of \$1 per agricultural commodity futures
25 contract traded on an exchange. Such assessments would be deposited in the state checkoff fund for the
26 respective commodity, be used exclusively for research for that commodity, and not displace existing
27 checkoff funding sources.

28
29 We urge the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to modify the authority granted the
30 exchanges to expand commodity price variations.

31
32 We urge the CFTC direct exchanges to return the variation allowances to the year 2000 spread which will
33 bring more stability to the daily market of commodities and provide a partial safety net to producers.

34
35 We urge the CFTC direct exchanges to expand the number of delivery points within their regions for actual
36 delivery options for farmers and elevators buying from farmers.

37
38 We support the study of the impacts of restricting the trading of commodity futures to those who have the
39 ability and intention of producing or taking physical delivery of those commodities.

40 41 **H. Warehousing**

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

44
45 We support requiring warehouses issue negotiable warehouse receipts upon request.

1 We support the right of individual states to regulate the grain merchandising activities of warehouses
2 licensed by the federal government under the Grain Standards and Warehouse Improvement Act of 2000
3 (USWA).
4

5 **I. Vertical Integration and Price Fixing**

6 We urge all branches of government act to prevent oligopolies and monopolies and remedy the
7 concentration of power in the packing, marketing, processing, and crop and livestock input industries.
8

9 We support USDA's efforts to create, implement, and fund GIPSA rules and regulations per Congressional
10 authority.
11

12 We demand the authorities prohibit large corporate meat packers from operating feedlots and/or owning and
13 controlling captive supply livestock.
14

15 We support the ability of producers to own value-added processing and crop and livestock input marketing
16 facilities within a cooperative structure.
17

18 We support reinstating mandatory price reporting laws.
19

20 **J. Anti-Trust Enforcement**

21
22 We support enforcement of the Packers and Stockyards and the Sherman Acts, up to an including forced
23 break up of monopolies and oligopolies.
24

25 We support passage of new anti-trust law that explicitly sets anti-trust policy to police harmful dominance
26 rather than consumer welfare.
27

28 We support aggressive DOJ/SEC investigation and scrutiny on all proposed corporate mergers/buy outs to
29 ensure they do not create or reinforce market dominance or otherwise harm competitive conditions.
30

31 We support Congress and the Executive Branch using the full might of anti-trust laws to break up
32 oligopolies that are causing unfair markets, price fixing, and non-competitive industry consolidation.
33

34 We urge anti-trust legislation be enforced to control monopolistic concentration in energy production and
35 distribution, and investigation of large corporate interests that control our current energy sources.
36

37 We support a stringent review process of any large agribusiness, food and beverage manufacturing,
38 distribution, and grocery retail and oppose any merger that will further constrict the food value chain and
39 negatively impact farmers, ranchers, agricultural workers, and consumers.
40

41 We support policies that protect independently-owned and rural grocery stores from displacement by large
42 chain and big-box retailers.
43
44

1 **K. Scaling of Legislation and Regulations**

2 We oppose legislation and regulations that fail to consider the differences between small family or
3 community operations and multi-national corporations.
4

5 **L. Federal Reserve**

6 Appointments to the Federal Reserve Board should be limited to a term of five years, and one-half of the
7 appointees should represent segments of the economy other than banking, including one bona fide family
8 farmer.
9

10 We support an annual audit of the Federal Reserve System.
11

12 **M. Regulating Risk in the Financial Services Industry**

13 We support reinstatement of the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933 to regulate the financial services industry. We
14 support monitoring and regulation of the derivatives market.
15

16 We support reestablishment of small transaction fees to reduce the abuses of flash trading.
17

18 **N. Alternative Crops**

19 We support hemp production and hemp derivatives in the United States, except on sovereign nations.
20

21 We support research into the medical use of cannabis and other natural psychotropic substances.
22

23 We support the removal of cannabis from the federal Controlled Substances Act, and we support the
24 declassification of cannabis as a Schedule 1 drug.
25

26 We support the end of restrictions surrounding the transportation and importation of hemp seeds and live
27 hemp plants across state and federal boundaries.
28

29 We support a definition of industrial hemp to have a THC threshold of less than or equal to 1 percent.
30

31 We support the development and use of heritage seeds.
32

33 We support assistance to family farms, ranches, and cooperatives in obtaining grants and financial aid to
34 develop bio-fuel crops.
35

36 We support research and development of less-water-intensive crops, perennial grasses and grains, pest and
37 drought-resistant, and successions of crops and cover crops, etc.
38

39 We urge land grant universities to maintain agricultural extension and research programs which include
40 alternative crop production for renewable energy, carbon sequestration, and other uses.
41

42 We support allowing banks to provide services to licensed cannabis-related businesses without penalty.
43

44 We support the recognition of hemp and marijuana as alternative agricultural crops
45

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

2
3 We support the development of a hemp industry that focuses on processed hemp goods, such as fiber and
4 building materials in addition to CBD products.

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

7
8 We support research into alternative uses for high THC biomass.

9
10 We support the development of hemp processing infrastructure.

11 **O. Education**

12
13 We urge Congress and the Secretary of Education give full and complete attention to the unique challenges
14 and programs of rural and small community schools, giving emphasis to the broad aspects of rural life.

15
16 We urge Congress to fully fund the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) while providing more
17 flexibility to state and local education agencies in implementation of the act.

18
19 We urge Congress to fully fund the federal mandated Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to
20 assist all districts (especially rural districts) in meeting the needs of all students.

21
22 We support agricultural education, personal resource development, career technical training programs, and
23 other occupational preparation courses as an integral part of our public educational system that should be
24 available to all who will enter the work force from the public schools.

25
26 We recommend that more education about cooperatives be introduced into the total educational system.

27
28 We support programs teaching consumers about the marketing disparity in agricultural products between the
29 producer and consumer.

30
31 We support consumer education regarding the value of family farmers in mitigating climate impacts.

32
33 We support educational programs, educational materials, and curricula that promote American family
34 agriculture's commitment to food quality and safety; agricultural literacy; ethical farm practices; a safe and
35 healthful environment, land, water, and energy resource stewardship; sustainability of food supplies; and the
36 value of recycling.

37
38 We support the development and expansion of school garden and apiary programs.

39
40 We support competitive salaries and other incentives to recruit, hire, and retain teachers, administrators, and
41 support staff, especially in rural areas.

42
43 We support the expansion of federal student loan forgiveness programs to include agricultural producers and
44 hard-to-fill occupations in underserved areas.

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

3
4 We support the implementation of the Career and Technical Education Act.

5
6 We support the extension of broadband capacity for high-speed internet to all schools equivalent to the
7 services available in urban areas.

8
9 We support further funding be allocated to expand and improve broadband connectivity in rural areas to
10 allow students the ability to participate in on-line learning at home at capacity for education purposes.

11
12 We support the development of federal programs that provide sourcing of computer equipment to school
13 districts allowing them the ability to issue personal electronic learning devices to each student.

14
15 We support the development of programs that allow households, caregivers, and educators the resources and
16 funding to ensure students have proper support in the case of long-term virtual learning.

17
18 **P. Land Grant Universities**

19 We encourage land grant universities to actively recruit and support students from rural backgrounds and
20 underrepresented communities.

21
22 We urge land grant universities recommit to their original mission and purpose.

23
24 We urge the federal government restore historic levels of funding for land grant universities in order to limit
25 corporate influence in research.

26
27 We urge the governing board be made up of at least 50 percent individuals engaged in family agriculture.

28
29 We urge increased financial support for land grant universities for agricultural extension and research
30 programs that:

- 31 ➤ Utilize the experience of people involved in innovative production agriculture.
- 32 ➤ Support conventional agriculture.
- 33 ➤ Support agricultural practices rooted in traditional ecological knowledge.
- 34 ➤ Facilitate adding value to farm products in locally owned cooperatives and businesses and empower
35 low and moderate-income families to improve their economic conditions.
- 36 ➤ Develop training and outreach to assist small-acreage owners in understanding and implementing
37 proper resource management practices.
- 38 ➤ Focus research on crops suitable for efficient renewable energy production.
- 39 ➤ Focus research on crops suitable for small diversified agricultural operations.
- 40 ➤ Support 4-H and FFA programs.
- 41 ➤ Provide support, technical assistance, and programming for urban, peri-urban, and small diversified
42 agricultural operations.

1 **Q. Health Care**

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

4
5 We support expanding public school-based and student-centered health care services.

6
7 We support the right of every American to have access to quality, affordable end-of-life care.

8
9 We support lowering health costs through disease prevention, wellness promotion, nutrition, and alternative
10 healthcare practices.

11
12 We support increased funding of public health programs for disease control and prevention.

13
14 We support federal appropriations for medical research, public health services, and scholarships for training
15 all health professionals.

16
17 We urge that federal, state, and local public health agencies provide coordinated and timely services and
18 communications.

19
20 We support legislation which will promote active, evidence-based, and non-political interventions for
21 disease control and prevention.

22
23 We support federal funding for Medicare and Medicaid.

24
25 We support the expansion of Medicare to age 55.

26
27 We oppose any reduction in Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement to providers, particularly those serving
28 rural communities.

29
30 We support basic acute inpatient services and outpatient primary care in rural communities, and rural
31 hospitals and Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) that provide services as a healthcare hub for rural areas.

32
33 We support payment reform efforts and continued cost-based reimbursement for rural hospitals and CAHs
34 for Medicare services.

35
36 We support recalculation of Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement formulas to ensure medical coverage to
37 all citizens.

38
39 We support Medicare coverage for hearing, vision, and dental services.

40
41 We oppose Medicare Advantage plans that disadvantage rural healthcare facilities.

42
43 We support federal funding for rural health clinics.

44
45 We oppose federal and state regulations that hinder emergency medical technicians and fire department
46 services.

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

2
3 We oppose the Medicaid Estate Recovery Program.

4
5 We are opposed to unnecessary hospital construction or expansion and duplication of sophisticated hospital
6 equipment.

7
8 We urge expanded use of physician assistants or nurse practitioners in areas that cannot support a medical
9 doctor.

10
11 We support cost containment of pharmaceuticals, healthcare services, and medical devices.

12
13 We support incentives for medical professionals who agree to serve medically underserved areas.

14
15 We urge local medical facilities and hospitals to provide medical care for the indigent and working poor
16 who do not qualify for Medicare or Medicaid or do not have their own health insurance.

17
18 We urge the Medicare program to include the treatment of long-term illness as a covered benefit.

19
20 We support changing the Medicare Part A hospice benefits, so they are dependent upon physician
21 certification rather than a specified time limit.

22
23 We urge the federal government allow the purchase of prescription drugs from the least expensive source.

24
25 We support the reauthorization and expansion of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

26
27 ~~We support a workable, affordable, single-payer, and standardized national health insurance program~~
28 ~~available to all citizens.~~

29
30 We support a workable, affordable public option health insurance program that is available to all citizens.

31
32 We support insurance companies providing coverage for preventative care.

33
34 We support improvements in the Affordable Care Act and its implementation to provide coverage to all
35 Americans, especially those living in rural communities and those working in agriculture.

36
37 We oppose the takeover of locally owned hospitals by large corporations.

38
39 We support requiring published pricing be made available to the public in all healthcare facilities.

40
41 We support comprehensive legislation that addresses responsible prescribing of opioids and
42 benzodiazepines, when appropriate, and encourages alternatives under the direction of licensed medical
43 providers.

44
45 We support addressing the cost of healthcare with requirements that those cost reductions be reflected in
46 health insurance costs.

~~We support affordable universal healthcare.~~

We support Congress restoring funding for medical, epidemiological, and scientific research defunded by the Department of Government Efficiency.

We support requiring agrochemical companies to bear the true cost of the health and environmental damages resulting from their products.

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 the 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.

We oppose any reduction in Social Security payments or any moves to end the Social Security System.

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.

We support financial literacy education for youth so they can understand how social security works and why it matters.

1 We support efforts to increase accessibility and address issues facing disabled persons.

2
3 **T. Veterans' Benefits**

4 We support full implementation and funding of veterans' benefits.

5
6 We support medical research and localized care for our veterans.

7
8 We support equal access to veterans' benefits in rural areas and tribal communities.

9
10 We support veterans' programs to develop job skills and small businesses, such as the Farmer Veteran
11 Coalition and the Veteran Farmer Projects.

12
13 **U. Congressional and Presidential Elections**

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

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

17
18 We support a cap on federal election spending and all campaigns be publicly financed.

19
20 We support a limit on Political Action Committee (PAC), personal, and corporate contributions to
21 campaigns.

22
23 We support a campaign length limit of six months for all political campaigns.

24
25 We believe any presidential candidate who receives federal funds, including Secret Service protection, must
26 participate in public debates.

27
28 We urge that telephone "do not call" lists apply to political calls (recorded or live).

29
30 We support all efforts to overturn the Supreme Court's decision in the Citizens United v. Federal Election
31 Commission case that allows corporations to make unlimited campaign contributions.

32
33 We support the elimination of "527" organizations.

34
35 We support limiting the amount of money spent by candidates in federal, state, and local elections.

36
37 We urge full disclosure of all financial tax records of all candidates participating in state and federal
38 elections.

39
40 We support secure, efficient processes that promote ease and access to voting by all citizens, including
41 postage paid mail-in ballots, early voting, convenient access to polling places, and same day registration.
42 These measures are particularly important for rural voters.

43
44 We support the use of "ranked choice" voting systems for elections.

1 We support making election day a federal holiday.

2
3 We support the constitutional authority of states that gives them primary authority over the times, places,
4 and manner of conducting elections.

5 6 **V. Federal Government Processes**

7 We support the implementation and enforcement of ethics rules for the Supreme Court.

8 9 **W. Equality and Equity under Law**

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

12
13
14 We support equality and equity under law of all citizens regardless of age, race, color, religion, national
15 origin, ethnicity, citizenship, immigration status, gender expression, marital status, source of income,
16 military status, disability, criminal record, genetic information, or any other status protected by applicable
17 federal, state, or local law.

18
19 We oppose the mass deportation of any peoples from the United States regardless of their documentation
20 status.

21
22 We support current laws that allow law-abiding citizens to protect themselves, their families, and their
23 property.

24
25 We support the removal of Columbus Day as a national holiday.

26
27 We support the creation of a new federal holiday titled Indigenous Peoples Day.

28
29 We oppose racial profiling.

30
31 We encourage the review of current and future federal agricultural policies and programs meant to serve all
32 producers in order to ensure Native American/Indigenous producers' particular needs such as distinct
33 structural challenges in accessing land, capital, agricultural programs, and services, etc., are addressed, and
34 equal access is provided.

35
36 We support actions to eliminate discrimination in the workplace, society, and marketplace.

37
38 We oppose the non-emergency use of martial law and support the rights of states to govern their
39 communities.

40 41 **Article X. Rural Development**

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

- 44 ➤ We support multi-year funding for the Rural Business and Cooperative Development Service at
45 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 USDA Rural Development housing programs to increase landowner size eligibility up to 40 acres.

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 support lower minimums of product required in order for a train to stop at a rural site.

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.

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

2 3 **2. Highways**

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

6
7 We support the completion of the “Port to Plains” highway system.

8
9 We insist that all foreign trucks on U.S. highways meet the same standards as U.S. carriers.

10
11 We recommend a nationwide standardization of the axle weights and lengths on all inter-state highways.

12
13 We support increasing GVW weights to 97,000 lbs. for agricultural product carriers with 6 axles.

14
15 We urge the Federal Highway Administration consider standardizing the maximum width, length, and
16 weight for Longer Combination Vehicles (LCVs) to help equalize state to state commerce. This should
17 include input from agricultural representatives from each state.

18
19 We support requiring mud flaps on vehicles over 6,000 pounds of unloaded weight.

20
21 We oppose the implementation of e-log in the commercial transportation of any agricultural products.

22
23 We urge the implementation of safe multi-modal design and infrastructure for highways and other arteries
24 across America.

25 26 **3. Air Freight**

27 We support both public and private funding for research and development of airships (lighter than air
28 aircraft) particularly as an alternative method of commercial freight for transportation of agricultural
29 products.

30 31 **B. United States Postal Service (USPS) and Rates**

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

34
35 We urge Congress to fund the USPS to achieve timely delivery services, especially in rural areas, and for
36 live animal shipments.

37
38 We recommend that the USPS seek out consumer advice in initiating any changes in postal service.

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

1 We oppose the closure of any rural Post Office. The lack of high-speed internet and broadband requires
2 rural residents and businesses to rely on the USPS for transacting their business. Closures or consolidation
3 of rural Post Offices must include provisions for patrons to receive their mail by rural free delivery.
4
5 We oppose any increase in postal rates more than inflation for all classes of mail.
6
7 We urge Congress to block any efforts to privatize the USPS.
8
9 We support the reestablishment of the Postal Service Bank and support the creation and expansion of new
10 services offered by the USPS to facilitate economic growth and development in rural and inner-city
11 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 slaughter processing units to increase access to USDA certified processing in rural areas.

We urge the state to fund incentive programs to incentivize livestock producers to utilize county carcass pits to prevent the attractant to wolves.

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 improve 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 state cost share or subsidy programs to offset the cost of USDA GAP certification and traceability audits for small and midsize producers.

We support CDA's Community Food Access Program including the Community Food Access Tax Credit and Small Food Business Recovery and Resilience Grants. We urge continued and expanded funding to recognize small, rural and independently owned grocery stores as essential food infrastructure

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

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

2
3 We urge CDA hire and train inspectors to keep backlog and wait times to a minimum for producers for
4 certification purposes.

5
6 We support beekeeping and honey production as an agricultural operation.

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

8
9 We acknowledge the results of research indicating that multiple factors contribute to the decline in
10 pollinators including pesticides, habitat loss, pathogens, parasites, and climate change.

11
12 We encourage action to support the health of bees and other pollinators.

13
14 We support the continuation of the regulation of pesticides to remain under CDA.

15
16 We support state preemption of pesticide regulation.

17
18 We call for a moratorium on the open-air planting of genetically engineered biopharmaceutical crops in
19 Colorado because of the lack of knowledge of the possible effects on the environment, nearby crops, and
20 citizens, and an inadequate regulatory process.

21
22 We support the Commissioner of Agriculture and Colorado legislators providing and requiring more
23 independent research, public participation, and open records to the public regarding the proceedings,
24 findings, and recommendations on research or further advancement of pharmaceutical crops.

25
26 We urge CDA to define the terms “farmers’ market”, “indoor farmers’ market,” “on-farm market,” and “on-
27 line farm market”, as well as “ag commercial” and “ag processing.” We further encourage the CDA to
28 support access to farmers’ markets and direct producer marketing efforts within the State of Colorado.

29
30 We urge CDA to enforce the Bee Caution Label.

31
32 We endorse the work of the Palisade Insectary, and furthering outreach and education about its efforts.

33
34 We support continued funding for the Colorado’s State Insectary in Palisade.

35
36 We recommend CDA continue to monitor and enforce the Farm Products and Commodity Handler Act.

37
38 We support the Colorado Agriculture Workforce Development Program within the CDA to provide
39 financial assistance to hire interns to enhance our agricultural workforce and provide opportunities for
40 training the next generation of farmers and ranchers.

41
42 We support the establishment of a Young or Beginning Farmer Advisory Board that will serve to identify
43 and address issues relating to young or beginning farmers in the state, make policy recommendations to the
44 Governor, General Assembly, and Commissioner of Agriculture, and communicate to the public and
45 policymakers about the importance of young or beginning farmers and ranchers for the future of agriculture
46 and regional food security.

1 We support the Cottage Foods Act.

2
3 We support foods prepared according to the standards in the Cottage Foods Act be allowed to be sold in the
4 same building, farm stands, CSAs, etc. as USDA processed and frozen meats.

5
6 We support a diversified representation in Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council (COFSAC) of
7 members of the Colorado agricultural community, including voices representing farm labor.

8
9 We support legislation for diversified crop insurance for urban and small farms.

10
11 We support legislation that would increase reimbursement to Colorado institutions for locally procured
12 foods.

13
14 We urge CDA to ensure public funding of research is spent on independent research free of corporate or
15 other influence and all researchers disclose all other funding sources.

16
17 We support CDA to provide permanent funds for technical assistance to family farmers for grant writing
18 assistance.

19
20 We urge the CDA to support and develop incentive-based programs for climate smart water use.

21
22 We support the development of Colorado Agriculture Workforce Services Program in consultation with the
23 Colorado Ag Mediation Program to include employer/employee mediation of labor disputes with the
24 Department of Labor.

25
26 We support CDA licensing and regulating equine rescue facilities.

27
28 We support the CDA creating training and informational videos and materials for the education of ag
29 workers in all languages that producers/workers may require, to aid producers in obtaining/providing
30 required information.

31
32 We support the state legislature to add additional funds to the CDA's soil health programs.

33 34 **1. Weights and Measures**

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

37
38 We support laws standardizing dockage procedures on all applicable crops sold in Colorado.

39 40 **2. Colorado Agricultural Development Authority (CADA)**

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

43
44 We support expanding the role of CADA to include a state loan program for renewable energy projects.

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

2
3 We support maintaining a sufficient fund to make both ownership and operating loans available at reduced
4 interest rates for beginning farmers and producer owned value-added cooperatives.

5
6 We oppose the use of CADA bonds by large corporations and agribusinesses not owned by local producers.

7 8 **3. State Fair**

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

12
13 We support citizens of rural and agricultural communities serving on the Colorado State Fair Authority
14 Board of Commissioners to promote agricultural-related issues and to further the true mission of the fair.

15
16 The above-stated support of our Colorado State Fair, however, is diminished by the Fair's requirement for
17 premises ID. Since the national Animal Identification System proposal has been dropped by the USDA,
18 premises ID should no longer be required by the State Fair.

19 20 **4. Immigration**

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

22
23 We support refugees settling in Colorado to come to rural and agricultural communities.

24 25 **5. Labeling and Food Safety**

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

28
29 We support the labeling of organic products in accordance with the Organic Foods Production Act as it
30 would apply in our state.

31
32 We support education of consumers regarding food safety, origin, and labeling of foods regarding additives
33 and genetically modified and engineered organisms.

34
35 We urge application of the precautionary principle, guided by publicly available peer-reviewed science, in
36 regulating pesticides, herbicides, and genetically modified organisms.

37
38 We support efforts by the CDA to provide food safety trainings and resources to food producers and
39 processors in order to meet food safety requirements.

40 41 **6. Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)**

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

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

4
5 We support collecting death loss data in CAFOs.

6 We urge CDA to support and fund programs that remediate pollution and create energy utilizing the waste
7 in CAFOs.

8 9 **7. Colorado Climate Plan**

10 We urge CDA to work with Colorado State University to continue developing and implementing strategies
11 and incentives to support the Colorado Climate Action Plan.

12 13 **8. Urban Agriculture**

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

16
17 We support adding agriculture as a permitted use in all types of zoning.

18
19 We support the creation of dedicated resources or offices within municipal, county, and/or state entities that
20 support urban agriculture.

21
22 We support the classification of high tunnels as temporary as opposed to permanent structures with regard to
23 municipal codes.

24
25 We support ancillary structures in urban and peri-urban municipalities as an agricultural application as
26 opposed to commercial industrial or residential including animal housing, shade, storage, fencing, and cold
27 storage.

28
29 We support the use of greenhouses and hoop houses/high tunnels for specialty crops as an agricultural
30 application, as opposed to commercial or industrial, in urban and peri-urban municipalities.

31 32 **B. Other Government Programs**

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

35 36 **Article II. Agriculture Technology**

37 **A. Raw Milk**

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

41
42 We support the testing standards and management practices for raw milk production established by the Raw
43 Milk Association of Colorado. We believe the producers have a responsibility for product knowledge and
44 labeling and should be required to inform consumers of the risks of consuming raw milk.

1 We firmly endorse the herd share model, understanding that it is distinct from a direct-to-consumer,
2 wholesale, or community supported (CSA) model.
3

4 **B. Animal Identification**

5 We oppose any required premise registration for animal identification purposes.

6 We oppose any mandatory animal identification program designed to force livestock producers to register
7 their premises through 4-H, FFA, or fair programs.
8

9 We oppose any animal ID program that results in a shift from disease control to monitoring disease through
10 traceability because Colorado has workable methods of monitoring livestock diseases and safeguarding
11 animal health.
12

13 **C. Alternative Crops**

14 We urge land grant universities to maintain agricultural extension and research programs which focus on
15 alternative crop production for renewable energy and other uses for such crops.
16

17 We urge our land grant university approach research and extension across a diversity of production scales,
18 and to include food, feed, fiber, and fuel research of alternative crops.
19

20 We support investment in hops, malting barley, rye, cider apples, and other producer's opportunities to
21 support Colorado's microbrew industry.
22

23 We urge the Colorado State Legislature to support the development of a healthy hemp industry.
24

25 We support research into viable alternative uses for high THC biomass.
26

27 We support the development of a hemp industry that focuses on processed hemp goods, such as fiber and
28 building materials in addition to CBD products.
29

30 **D. Cover Crops**

31 We support land grant universities and agricultural extension services developing substantial increases and
32 acceleration of field trials for cover crops, mixes and sequences of cover crops, and rotations of crops for
33 diversification and resilience.
34

35 **Article III. Cooperatives**

36 We encourage cooperatives to adhere to the traditional democratic principle of one person, one vote.
37

38 We support promotion and establishment of "new generation" cooperatives that enable farmers to sell
39 locally made, value-added, consumer-ready products to provide supplemental income.
40

41 We encourage careful consideration be given prior to any mergers between cooperatives and private or
42 public corporations and/or any joint ventures.
43

44 We encourage the formation of cooperatives for industrial hemp growing, processing, and seed distribution.
45

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

3
4 We advocate that economic development agencies, as well as publicly funded schools, colleges, and
5 universities, consider the cooperative business model and the values of the cooperative principles as an
6 important alternative to addressing our economic, environmental, and political challenges.

7 8 **Article IV. Water, Land, and Conservation Policy**

9 **A. Land Use**

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

11
12 We support counties sharing best management practices in agricultural land use with the help of state
13 funding.

14
15 We support enforcement of statutes that protect landowner rights and rights to privacy, as well as statutes
16 that prevent trespassing and takings.

17
18 We support use of residential cluster development on less productive land to protect, in perpetuity, more
19 productive land for continued agricultural use.

20
21 We support the amendment of CDPHE Regulation 43 to include alternative waste systems that have
22 received National Sanitation Foundation certification without the requirement of a conventional onsite
23 wastewater treatment system.

24
25 We support any additional costs and demands for increased services created by residential and commercial
26 development being paid for by the developer.

27
28 We support local control in determining the impacts of natural resource development on the health, safety,
29 and welfare of its citizens and community.

30
31 We urge implementation of adequate impact fees on new growth that affects agricultural operations. The
32 public should be provided with an impact statement on proposed development.

33
34 We support expediting permitting processes by local governments for agricultural production and/or food-
35 based project proposals.

36
37 We support incentives or programs for land access in urban areas intended for sustained urban agricultural
38 production.

39
40 We support cities and municipalities, through their land use processes, explicitly allowing agricultural
41 operations in non-agricultural zoned properties in urban areas.

42
43 We support land use requirements that allow the public to interact with accessory farm buildings without
44 having to conform to commercial building use standards.

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

3
4 We support egg-laying operations with a Class 4 license or lower to be classified as agricultural instead of
5 commercial.

6
7 We encourage counties, cities, and municipalities allow farm stands to operate on principle use sites of any
8 size, regardless of zoning. Retail sale of goods from farm stands must include items grown or produced on
9 the principal use site where the farm stand is located.

10
11 We support legislation that limits the powers of Home Owners' Associations (HOAs) and requires HOAs to
12 allow agricultural use of land that is zoned "Agricultural" or "Agricultural Estate".

13
14 We support advancement of land partnerships, such as farm incubator programs, that provide opportunities
15 for for-profit and non-profit agricultural entities and strive to support educational commercial farms that
16 teach agricultural and business skills.

17
18 We oppose corporate and foreign ownership of Colorado's agricultural land and farms.

19
20 We support revitalization of unused municipal land as farmland, community or pollinator gardens, food
21 forests, or agricultural educational and incubation spaces.

22
23 We support long-term conservation of farmland and agricultural water access in peri-urban areas.

24
25 We support land leases that incentivize conservation practices.

26 27 **B. Agricultural Land Preservation**

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

30
31 We support a robust state conservation easement tax credit program.

32
33 We support the purchase of land by local, regional, and national land trusts in pursuit of conservation, soil
34 health, open space, and agricultural preservation or lease opportunities.

35
36 We support cooperation between local and county authorities and landowners on farmland conservation
37 easements to ensure ease of installment of agricultural accessory buildings and other structures necessary for
38 agricultural production.

39
40 We support when land is purchased for open space with public funds with the intent of reselling the land for
41 agricultural purposes with development restrictions, the resale must be handled by offering that land
42 publicly for purchase at that time.

43
44 We support legislation that requires public entities to honor the terms of a conservation easement.

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

3
4 We encourage land trusts to accept farmer or community-owned renewable energy power generation
5 equipment as part of easement agreements.

6
7 We support oversight over conservation easements and easement holders.

8
9 We support land link programs to ensure our working lands have a strong continuum of stewardship.

10
11 We support robust state funding for the preservation of agricultural land.

12 13 **1. State and Local Government Lands**

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

16
17 We recommend that the State Land Board follow the recommendations of the local soil conservation
18 districts before any state pasturelands are disturbed for farming purposes.

19
20 We support the State Land Board policy of having one principal lessee on trust lands. Multiple use and
21 agricultural uses should be continued on all lands currently in agricultural or grazing use.

22
23 We support an expanded interpretation of “the public good” as it exists in city charters to include for-profit
24 farms, so they can be established on city and county parks and open space lands.

25
26 We oppose the development of any county-mandated land use plan that diminishes the opportunity for
27 agricultural producers to maximize the value of their agricultural land.

28
29 We urge that the current lessee maintain their preferential right on their current lease.

30
31 We oppose assessment of the lessee of any property taxes on property owned by the state.

32
33 We support the state paying appropriate local property tax on state lands on an assessment basis equivalent
34 to the surrounding area.

35
36 We oppose the wholesale transfer of federal lands to the state.

37
38 We urge the State require all development, without exception, to have water acquired before project can go
39 forward or building permits can be issued with public notice.

40
41 We encourage the state land board to prioritize agricultural leases and uses in any future reorganization of
42 land use.

1 **2. Eminent Domain**

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

4
5 We demand the Colorado State Legislature pass laws to counteract the U.S. Supreme Court ruling (Kelo v.
6 City of New London) allowing state or local condemnation of private land for private gain.

7
8 We oppose metro districts invoking governmental or quasi-governmental powers for condemnation of
9 private property.

10
11 **3. Multi-National Corporate Farming**

12 We support legislation that prohibits ownership by non-U.S.-residents or foreign governments of
13 agricultural operations and food processing companies, including land and water rights.

14
15 We urge policies against corporate consolidation of agriculture.

16
17 We oppose centralization of food production systems that endangers food security.

18
19 **C. Preservation of Agricultural Water**

20 We support managing water resources for the benefit of all people and the environment, including future
21 generations to have sufficient water to meet domestic needs and grow our own food, while maintaining the
22 historic doctrine of prior appropriation.

23
24 We support state legislation that allows Conservation Easements for the protection of agricultural water
25 rights from use for development.

26
27 We believe water is a private property right and support Colorado's historic doctrine of prior appropriation.

28
29 We oppose the public trust doctrine.

30
31 We support legislation that protects agricultural and individual water rights.

32
33 We support the funding and implementation of the Colorado Water Plan.

34
35 We support methods for water conservation and efficiency for in-stream use or other agricultural uses
36 without revoking farmers' and ranchers' water rights for not using their allocated share under "use it or lose
37 it" water policy clauses.

38
39 We oppose the 'use it or lose it' water policy clause.

40
41 We support policies that reward conserved consumptive use.

42
43 We support water shepherding as a beneficial use.

44
45 We support local control of water resources within the confines of the prior appropriations doctrine.

1 We oppose the state taking and reviving abandoned water rights to meet compact requirements.
2
3 We support the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) continued effort to assess the water supply-
4 and-demand situation in the state.
5
6 We urge the State Engineer notify all individual water right holders of any modification to policy or
7 regulations within a water basin which is directly affected by that decision.
8
9 We support the State Engineer’s authority over the management of rivers and wells.
10
11 We support the establishment of a state funded office that provides publicly funded legal representatives to
12 financially disadvantaged water right owners.
13
14 We support the management of water to allow aquifers to recharge.
15
16 We support incentives and funding for cities to build sewage plants using land treatment systems if they are
17 not injurious to water users that have a priority for the use of the water.
18
19 We support the implementation of water conservation and efficiency strategies.
20
21 We support new research into the effects PFAS chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and other solid human waste
22 byproducts may have before placing them on agricultural ground.
23
24 We urge municipalities pursue other alternatives for water supplies, including conservation and water
25 projects, before acquiring agricultural water.
26
27 We support the continuation of the NRCS snow surveys and SNOTEL measuring stations throughout
28 Colorado.
29
30 We support the implementation of technologies to accurately forecast water supplies from snowpack and
31 runoff.
32
33 We support compensation from federal crop insurance being available to farmers when water rights have
34 been curtailed, through no fault of their own.
35
36 We urge development projects provide proof of a sustainable water supply before being issued permits to
37 build.
38
39 We support groundwater recharging for maximum beneficial use of water rights.
40
41 We support research and development related to use of reclaimed water on food producing crops and other
42 purposes.
43
44 We support the Colorado River Cooperative Agreement and the process by which it was designed.
45

1 We support reclamation of lands in “buy and dry” and “lease and cease” situations. The entity buying or
2 leasing the water rights shall bear the expense of re-vegetating the land, mitigating weeds and dust.
3
4 We urge Colorado state leaders to work with their state and federal agency partners to ensure timely
5 strategies for reservoir rehabilitation and reducing sedimentation.
6
7 We oppose transfer of ownership of the Shoshone Power Plant water right to the state.
8
9 We oppose any effort to circumvent anti-speculation accepted practices as of 2022 by industrial water users.
10
11 We support ag exemptions, such as maintenance and repair of irrigation infrastructure, in water permitting
12 processes.
13
14 We support water access and regulation that encourages urban and peri-urban sustainable agriculture.
15
16 We support the reuse of gray water.
17
18 We support the legal beneficial use of water for agricultural purposes including but not limited to stock
19 ponds.
20
21 We support expanding statutory exceptions that allow ~~small-scale~~ rainwater catchment for on-farm
22 agricultural use, consistent with the protection of existing water rights under Colorado's prior appropriation
23 system.
24
25 We support legislation that adds clarity to Right to Float laws. Such legislation should protect private
26 property rights while creating safety measures for floaters and landowners alike.
27
28 **D. Water Diversion**
29 We support cooperation with other states to preserve the water allocated under existing compacts.
30
31 We support the establishment by the Division of Water Resources of best practice recommendations for
32 irrigation ditch rider roles and for coordination of local ditch companies and water users’ associations.
33
34 We oppose approval of any new development project that does not have secured water rights/sources.
35
36 We support top priority for agricultural water if such projects do not cause loss or injury to existing
37 agricultural operations.
38
39 We urge that when water is diverted from one watershed to another, those receiving the benefits of such
40 diversion pay for any damage, including but not limited to increased salinity, decreased quality and quantity,
41 legal fees, and recreational and business income losses.
42
43 We oppose any plan to construct additional trans-basin diversions.
44

1 **E. Water Quality**

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

4
5 We urge everyone use best management practices and established state and industry standards, in both
6 metropolitan and rural areas, to minimize and mitigate surface and groundwater contamination.

7
8 We support identification of, and restrictions being placed on, the source of contamination.

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

11
12 We support vigorous enforcement of laws and regulations designed to protect the water quality of all
13 Colorado rivers and their tributaries from sewage discharges and storm water runoff.

14
15 We support the Water Quality Control Commission and ask that they maintain their regulation of water
16 discharges from energy exploration and operations.

17
18 We urge water produced in Coal Bed Methane (CBM) development meet existing state water quality
19 standards for water quality discharge. Laws requiring mitigation of impacts associated with CBM water
20 must be established to protect adjacent landowners.

21
22 We support preventing chemical and biological contamination in shallow and porous aquifers, and we
23 support efforts to remediate contamination where it exists.

24
25 We support a flexible state water supply that includes allowing and encouraging water reuse and recycling
26 for food crops.

27
28 We support the protection of water quality and riparian area health by allowing flow-through alternatives to
29 watering stock.

30
31 **F. Non-Toxic Waste**

32 We support allowing landowners to utilize safe, innovative, and environmentally sound alternatives to waste
33 systems without the requirement of conventional onsite waste water treatment centers.

34
35 **G. Soil and Water Conservation**

36 We urge the continuation of a strong relationship with the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts
37 (CACD) and the state NRCS technical committee to help maintain present programs and to implement new
38 programs for conserving soil and other natural resources.

39
40 We encourage the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) and CDA to provide grants, loans,
41 technical support, education, and assistance programs to promote voluntary on-farm water and soil
42 conservation and efficiency practices and methods.

43
44 We encourage programs that support soil health research, education, and implementation.

1 We support soil health practices that regenerate our agricultural lands, enhance water holding capacity,
2 increase resilience to extreme weather events, improve farm and ranch profitability, and increase watershed
3 function.

4
5 We recognize the beneficial impacts of beavers and support reasonable efforts to manage beaver
6 populations.

7
8 We support policy where the purchasing party responsible for irrigation dry-up be held accountable for the
9 financial burden of successful revegetation.

10
11 We support the development of statewide revegetation regulations for irrigation dry-up initiatives to protect
12 soil health and keep lands working for family farmers.

13
14 We support the development of statewide regulations for all solar developments requiring revegetation to
15 protect soil and public health.

16 17 **H. Recycling**

18 We encourage the creation of incentives, research, and outlets to facilitate and increase the use of recyclable
19 materials.

20
21 We support the use of modern cogeneration technology that uses waste as fuel.

22
23 We encourage the promotion of recycling and on-farm composting.

24
25 We encourage the development of regional recycling centers throughout the state.

26
27 We support the promotion and generation of at-home recycling and composting pickup programs.

28
29 We encourage statewide initiatives to provide more waste diversion opportunities, including commercial
30 compost operations.

31
32 We encourage the development of compost operations that produce compost fit for use in agriculture and
33 food production.

34
35 We support requiring compost operations that incorporate biosolids to measure, track, and publish PFAS
36 levels of the finished product.

37
38 We urge the development and evaluation of alternative ways to safely use or dispose of concentrated
39 biosolids from waste water treatment centers.

40
41 We support the use of excess food for the highest purposes according to the EPA food recovery hierarchy.

42
43 We support alternatives to single-use plastics.

44
45 We support research, development, and investment in biodegradable and renewable products, which can
46 replace packaging and disposable items.

1 **I. Alternative Livestock and Non-Amenable Species (Bison, Elk, Deer, and Other Exotic**
2 **Species)**

3 We support the State Veterinarian's authority over all livestock and alternative livestock disease issues.

4
5 We support the ranching of alternative livestock if it is properly regulated, managed, and licensed by CDA.
6 We request legislative support that all regulatory changes be based upon the best available science, facts,
7 and evidence.

8
9 We oppose Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) having any authority over livestock and alternative
10 livestock disease or movement issues.

11
12 We support chronic wasting disease surveillance program for alternative livestock as regulated by CDA.

13
14 We oppose management of any facet of the alternative livestock business by ballot initiative.

15
16 We urge consideration of full market value compensation for alternative livestock and other livestock
17 destroyed by the government on private and commercial ranches, except in cases of producer negligence.

18
19 **J. Noxious Weeds and Pests**

20 We support the formation of weed control districts across the state, including municipalities.

21
22 We support the ongoing effort to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species.

23
24 We urge the Colorado State Legislature to provide a funding mechanism for the control of noxious weeds
25 and pests that prevent the elimination of plants that will adversely affect pollinator health.

26
27 We urge state, local, and federal governments to plant ecologically appropriate plants along roadways and
28 control noxious weeds in a timely manner.

29
30 We urge continued research into Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and other alternative methods of
31 controlling noxious weeds and invasive species.

32
33 We urge state and federal land managers work closely and cooperatively with county weed control districts
34 for better management of invasive and non-native species.

35
36 We support the reclassification of noxious weeds so that it reflects the beneficial use of such plants.

37
38 **Article V. Energy Policy**

39 **A. Oil and Minerals**

40 We support an assessment of taxes on natural resource extraction adequate to fund resulting infrastructure
41 needs for affected communities and the state.

42
43 We urge mineral rights, if not leased, revert to the surface owner if the holder of the severed mineral rights
44 is delinquent on taxes for three years. If mineral rights have returned to the surface owner, there should be
45 no separate tax on the mineral rights.

1 We urge royalty payments be issued within 180 days of completion of drilling of a new well.

2
3 We urge the passage of legislation that gives local governments the authority to regulate off-site impacts of
4 oil and gas development to ensure that companies are in compliance with all applicable rules, regulations,
5 and stipulations prior to issuing drilling permits.

6
7 We oppose efforts to initiate commercial leasing of federal shale resources before effectiveness of and
8 impacts from research, development, and demonstration technologies are known.

9
10 We encourage meaningful participation by local governments and the public in the federal leasing process.

11
12 We support adequate funding for state agencies with regulatory authority over oil shale development.

13
14 We support lessees of oil or mineral rights paying for all entries on the land abstracts and all transfers if the
15 lease is resold or divided.

16
17 We oppose the sale of federal oil shale lands and mineral rights.

18
19 We support enforcement of monitoring meters on oil and gas wells for purpose of severance tax collection.

20
21 We support the right to explore non-productive oil and gas zones with a primary lease.

22
23 We urge any mining operation provide meaningful assurances such as a bond that they will not harm water,
24 air, or soil quality or public health, before they are given the required local and state permits to commence
25 their operation.

26
27 We oppose permitting open-pit cyanide gold mines in the State of Colorado, to protect our valuable natural
28 resources, including our ground and surface water.

29
30 **B. Colorado Energy and Carbon Management Commission (ECMC)**

31 We believe the development of the natural resources of oil and gas in the State of Colorado should be
32 regulated for the protection of public health, safety, welfare, and the environment.

33
34 We support requiring oil and gas companies to publicly disclose all chemical compounds being introduced
35 into the environment in oil and gas production and development.

36
37 We support a working relationship with the ECMC and agriculture agencies to forge productive options and
38 solutions for mineral development compensation.

39
40 We support equal representation by non-industry citizens on the ECMC, including a representative of the
41 health industry and a family farmer or rancher.

42
43 We support reasonable and fair compensation to surface owners for damage caused by mineral
44 development, especially for those circumstances involving a split estate, as well as legal recourse available
45 for disputes to all citizens of the United States.

1 We support fair compensation to the surface owner.

2
3 We support setback restrictions of one thousand feet from occupied dwellings including schools and
4 hospitals for drilling site location and tank battery placement.

5
6 We urge landowner input be sought in locating tank batteries and other production structures.

7
8 We demand stringent casing standards be established and enforced to insure bore hole containment
9 integrity.

10
11 We demand comprehensive water quality baselines and adequate subsequent water testing be completed to
12 ensure water quality is protected. In addition, we support ongoing monitoring of chemicals using best
13 available technology according to industry standards in all phases of petroleum production.

14
15 We support all produced water either be purified or re-injected to its parent formation.

16
17 We support requiring oil and gas facilities utilize all produced water prior to accessing surface or subsurface
18 water.

19
20 Well contamination mitigation and closure of wells and pipelines shall be the responsibility of oil and gas
21 companies and shall be completed in a timely manner.

22
23 We support compensation for damages resulting from earthquakes caused by injection of water and other
24 fluids from oil and gas production.

25
26 We support a reclamation bond be placed on all new oil and gas wells in an amount equal to the average
27 cost of cleanup and reclamation of existing abandoned wells.

28 29 **C. Colorado Energy Office**

30 We call on the Department of Natural Resources and the Colorado Energy Office to develop a
31 comprehensive energy policy.

32
33 We support a balanced energy policy that conserves and protects our nation's environment and recognizes
34 the special energy needs of America's agricultural sector.

35
36 We urge state support of alternative and renewable types of distributed power systems.

37
38 We support incentives for renewable energy development.

39
40 We support research and development of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) facilities and encourage a state
41 policy that landowners will own the pore space that stores carbon, with the understanding that landowners
42 will not share in the risks associated with CCS.

43
44 We support the development of infrastructure to permit use of natural gas as an economical transportation
45 fuel.

1 **D. Biofuels**

2 We support the Colorado bio-fuels industry and the use of alternative crops for energy use.

3
4 We urge the use of ethanol-based fuels.

5
6 We support the further development and distribution of E-85 fuel and biodiesel, including long term
7 financial support to build the infrastructure bio-fuel firms say is necessary to compete in the marketplace.

8
9 We support the further development of infrastructure for blender pumps.

10
11 We support the expansion of available gasoline blends to the highest blended ratio as supported by scientific
12 data.

13
14 **E. Wind**

15 We encourage the individual or community-owned development and ownership of wind energy and co-
16 generation production; in cases of development, we support fair reimbursement to landowners.

17
18 We oppose the severance of wind rights from landowner surface rights.

19
20 We support wind energy facilities to be designed and operated in ways that minimize risk and injury to
21 livestock and wildlife.

22
23 **F. Solar**

24 We encourage the development of solar energy, including solar thermal and agrivoltaics, in Colorado.

25
26 We oppose the severance of solar rights from landowner surface rights.

27
28 We support the prioritization of agrivoltaics over traditional solar developments.

29
30 We support agrivoltaics developments and urge for a definition of agrivoltaics that meaningfully retain the
31 ecological value and agricultural production present on converted agricultural lands.

32
33 We oppose the separation and displacement of irrigation as a result of solar energy development. We urge
34 any development on irrigated acres to include an irrigation plan.

35
36 We support solar installations being sited and installed after consultation with Colorado Parks and Wildlife
37 to minimize the negative impact on wildlife habitat and migration.

38
39 **G. Hydro-Electric**

40 We support explicit authorization for in-pipe small hydro and in-ditch small hydro.

41
42 **H. Distributed Energy Generation**

43 We support local distributed energy generation in rural areas because it circulates local development dollars
44 through the local economy and benefits rural communities.

1 We support utility providers' development of distribution line up-grade plans to provide for future
2 distributed generation assets in a timely, logical and economical manner.

3
4 We support the development of rural microgrids to provide resiliency in the face of natural disasters and to
5 support the ability to separate from the larger grid when it is experiencing difficulties for any reason.

6 7 **I. Electric Transmission**

8 We support new transmission corridors if landowners are compensated in a fair and equitable fashion for the
9 easement.

10
11 We support annual payments as a form of compensation for easements.

12
13 We oppose allowing independent transmission developers siting corridors to exercise eminent domain.

14
15 We urge private property owners be invited to be part of transmission planning meetings.

16 17 **J. Net Metering Policy**

18 We support the expansion of net metering to include the totality of farm and ranch operations.

19
20 We support standard offers for locally owned renewable energy projects that are economically viable and
21 provide benefits to the energy grid through distributed energy production.

22 23 **K. Financial Incentives**

24 We support community renewable energy projects to allow for greater public participation.

25
26 We support a state tax credit for smaller renewable energy projects which is tradable to any interested
27 parties.

28
29 We support a personal property and sales tax exemption for renewable energy equipment similar to the
30 Farm Equipment Exemption.

31
32 We support the dedication of a portion of Colorado's severance tax revenues to individual and community-
33 owned renewable projects.

34
35 We support the incorporation of individual and community-owned projects into larger commercial projects,
36 such as the sharing of transmission lines.

37
38 We support the reservation of transmission line capacity for renewable energy.

39 40 **L. Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS)**

41 We support a state policy that would create an expanded renewable portfolio standard for alternative energy,
42 especially advocating solar, wind, biomass, geo-exchange, and biofuels.

43
44 We support renewable energy goals to reduce carbon emissions.

1 We support state policy that requires life-cycle analysis on all generation options.

2
3 We urge the Colorado Rural Electric Association (CREA), Tri-State Generation and Transmission
4 Association, WAPA, and all member-owned utilities to fully support the development of distributed
5 renewable energy generation, including opening their grid to purchasing individual and community-owned
6 renewable energy.

7
8 We support renewable energy storage systems.

9
10 We support continued research and development of natural, non-polluting, renewable energy sources,
11 including but not limited to cellulosic ethanol and woody biomass.

12
13 We encourage the Colorado Energy Office to organize interested stakeholders into a task force on
14 renewable energy, to provide research and support for renewable energy programs, bio-fuel production, and
15 carbon sequestration.

16
17 We encourage the Colorado Energy Office to work in cooperation with CREA to conduct a statewide
18 distributed generation study.

19 20 **M. Energy**

21 We direct the Colorado State Legislature to instruct the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), Rural Electric
22 Associations, and their power suppliers to prioritize energy efficiency, conservation, and renewable energy
23 as pre-requisites to approval of additional power generating facilities.

24
25 We oppose the sale of any Power Marketing Authorities (PMA).

26
27 We oppose any deregulation of rural utilities and services that will increase rates.

28
29 We oppose the breaching of any dams generating electric power or providing agricultural water.

30
31 We encourage mitigation and revitalization efforts for local communities that have been negatively
32 impacted by state or federal energy policy.

33
34 We support repurposing coal-fired power plants into cleaner energy sources.

35 36 **N. Emissions**

37 We support the trading of carbon credits when it reduces buyers' emissions over time and the potential for
38 inclusion of carbon sequestration and methane capture as agricultural conservation practices.

39
40 We support research in terrestrial carbon sequestration. This should encompass all practices, including
41 grazing lands, energy feedstock production, organic cropping, wood lots, CRP, CREP, no-till, biochar, and
42 other proven conservation methods.

43
44 We support state and national greenhouse gas reduction targets that use a voluntary incentive-based
45 approach to continue the economic viability of farms and ranches.

1 We ask for mandated greenhouse gas emission reductions across all sectors of the economy.

2
3 We oppose mandatory requirements for the purchase or use of electric vehicles or agricultural equipment.

4 5 **Article VI. Economic and Social Policy**

6 **A. Social Justice Policy**

7 We affirm that human rights are universal. We stand in solidarity with farm families and farm workers. We
8 support those policies that strengthen them and resist such policies or actions that harm them.

9
10 We oppose profiling and discrimination based on age, race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity,
11 citizenship, immigration status, gender expression, marital status, source of income, military status or
12 disability, criminal record, genetic information, or any other status protected by applicable federal, state, or
13 local law

14
15 We support actions to eliminate discrimination in the workplace, society, and marketplace.

16 17 **B. Agricultural Labor, Worker Dignity, and Economic Justice**

18 We support paying a fair wage based on the type of work and industry standards.

19
20 We support providing appropriate training and tools to minimize the risk of injury in the workplace.

21
22 We support employees having access to service providers and medical care during breaks or during a shift if
23 there is an emergency.

24
25 We recognize oligopolies, fixing prices, and cheap food policy harm farmers and farm workers. We support
26 efforts to assure fairness for all involved in the production of food.

27
28 We support the creation of a program similar to the Fair Food Program, including incentives for
29 participation.

30
31 We support allowing individuals under the age of 18 to work on family farms and ranches.

32 33 **C. Economic Development**

34 We support state economic development strategies that support all regions within Colorado.

35
36 We support the use of nonproductive lands in agricultural areas for nonagricultural uses provided they
37 maintain or create a harmonious environment in the community and do not place an undue burden on local
38 economies and local governments.

39
40 We support the establishment of more localized food systems that prioritize investment in regional
41 producers, processors, distributors, co-packers, and other entities comprising a local food supply chain.

42
43 We support public access with owner permission to small private farms for the purpose of, but not limited
44 to, agritourism and agricultural education.

1 We encourage programs and policies that promote and fund the institutional procurement of locally and
2 regionally farmed foods.

3
4 We support an infrastructure that promotes stable economic systems that preserve rural character.

5
6 We oppose incentives that attract multi-national businesses and corporations that compete unfairly with
7 local small businesses.

8
9 We support the adoption of food security advocacy programs such as the Denver Food Vision across the
10 state.

11
12 We support continued research and development of the Colorado Blueprint for Agriculture and Food.

13
14 We urge the creation and support of programs that help young and beginning farmers access capital needed
15 at favorable rates and terms for land and farm business ownership.

16
17 We urge the creation and support of programs that help small and independent processors and meat packers
18 access the capital needed at favorable rates and terms to operate state and USDA inspected facilities.

19
20 We support assessment and practical implementation of state deployed funding instruments for family
21 farms, ranches and meat processors through state issued bonds, similar to long term financing options
22 currently offered for waste, transportation, and water systems.

23 24 **D. Taxes**

25 We support reimbursement to counties for a portion of property taxes lost when tracts of land are removed
26 from tax rolls.

27
28 We support requiring any municipality or utility owning land outside its corporate limits to pay property
29 taxes at the current taxing level.

30
31 We support the concept of basing agricultural property tax on productivity.

32
33 We recommend that repair parts for farm equipment continue to be exempt from state and local sales tax.

34
35 We support using a progressive income tax and severance tax for education and other essential government
36 services.

37
38 We urge rural fire district approval of substations whenever a community is willing to staff and financially
39 support that substation.

40
41 We support the increase of severance taxes on all non-renewable energy sources and minerals in Colorado
42 to make them comparable with those of neighboring states.

43
44 We support tax advantages to farmers who donate to hunger relief organizations.

45
46 We encourage state efforts to finance beginning farmers and ranchers including the use of tax incentives.

1 We oppose the assessment of possessory interest taxation on the value of grazing and farming leases on
2 government lands.

4 We support allowing a county or special district to lower the mill levy for 2 years without having to go to
5 the voters to put it back to its previous level.

7 We support state tax credits, refunds, or other financial opportunities for agricultural worker overtime
8 payments, ecosystem service benefits, and conservation easements for family farmers and ranchers.

10 We oppose a state inheritance and/or estate tax.

12 We support the implementation of a new tax credit for small retail outlets that carry Colorado produced
13 and/or regeneratively produced foods.

15 **E. Infrastructure**

16 We urge the Colorado State Legislature to continue the use of the Water Conservation Board Construction
17 Fund to rehabilitate dam structures and increase storage/holding capacity.

19 We urge the Colorado State Legislature to provide a fund for water projects, including:

- 20 ➤ Construction of new dams, or rehabilitation and enlargement of existing dams;
- 21 ➤ Rehabilitation or construction of agricultural water supply systems including diversion dams,
22 ditches, and head gates;
- 23 ➤ Reduction of evaporative and transit loss.

25 We support creating uniform standards to protect and promote farm-based agritourism.

27 We urge the Colorado State Legislature to establish a permanent fund for watershed health, to be engaged
28 by interested local governments on a cost-share basis, to hire land managers to grow deep topsoil
29 watersheds, and to fund the quantification of ecosystem service deliverables relative to soil health and
30 human health.

32 We support a study to build a downstream water storage project in the South Platte River Basin to capture
33 flood water from high spring runoff and heavy rain events for supplying water rights of Nebraska and
34 Kansas in a reliable, steady fashion, augmenting agricultural water rights in Colorado, recharging the
35 Ogallala Aquifer in portions of eastern Colorado, and supplementing water flows in the Republican River
36 Basin.

38 We support those water projects that retain water use in the State of Colorado and encourage construction of
39 additional projects which are directly beneficial to agriculture and the economy of our state, such as the
40 Northern Integrated Supply Project (NISP).

42 We support impact fees for new houses, multi-family units, and homes with new wells, to be used to fund
43 future water storage projects.

45 We support a reduced water rate and waiving tap fees for community-based food systems developed by
46 producers using municipal sources.

1 We support municipalities providing an ag-only metered hydrant to ensure producers do not pay into
2 sanitary rates for agricultural production.

3
4 We oppose privatization of public water systems or sanitation systems.

5
6 We encourage the Colorado State Legislature consider additional resources to support the state's
7 transportation infrastructure.

8
9 We support the development of broadband capacity internet in rural areas to be equivalent to urban areas.

10
11 We support regulation equalizing telephone and broadband internet access throughout the state.

12 13 **F. Workers' Compensation**

14 We support subsidized workers' compensation rates and costs for family farms and their seasonal industries.

15
16 We recommend that the workers' compensation law be amended to recognize the unique nature of
17 agriculture and to provide an option for small employers to find other resourceful alternatives.

18 19 **G. Mechanic's Lien**

20 We support amending the mechanic's lien law to protect an individual who can prove payment for materials
21 to a contractor from the contractor's creditors.

22
23 We support a mechanic's lien sunset after a three-year period.

24 25 **H. Wildlife Management**

26 We encourage CPW, prior to the process of setting seasons, harvest, wildlife populations, and overall
27 management objectives, provide adequate and proper notice to landowners, farmers, and ranchers, in the
28 spirit of cooperation, to allow for their active participation, recommendations, and input throughout this
29 process.

30
31 We support equitable damages being reimbursed by CPW for forage, crop, and livestock losses, loss of
32 productivity, damages to fencing, etc., attributable to wildlife even if the landowner or lessee receives
33 bounty or hunting fees on the property.

34
35 We support the development of state policies and funding to enable farmers and ranchers to mitigate the
36 impacts of predators to livestock.

37
38 We oppose wildlife damage compensation in cases where problem wildlife is being harbored, and where
39 crops and associated structures are used primarily to attract and harvest wildlife.

40
41 We request legislative relief by permitting farmers and ranchers free licenses to hunt the legal limits on their
42 own land, as is the practice in other states.

43
44 We support the Habitat Partnership Program.

1 We support best management practices in wildlife management administered by the CPW.
2
3 We support the State of Colorado permitting the use of active ingredients (Diphacinone and
4 Chlorophacinone) and other effective techniques for the control of prairie dogs.
5
6 We oppose increasing wildlife populations at the expense of agricultural operations or to the detriment of
7 the ecosystem.
8
9 We urge CPW to develop a comprehensive management plan to reduce the threat posed by chronic wasting
10 disease.
11
12 We oppose wildlife management by ballot initiative.
13
14 We oppose the re-location of prairie dogs from urban to rural and agricultural lands.
15
16 We oppose the reintroduction of endangered species or predatory animals onto lands where agricultural
17 operations, wildlife, domestic animals, or humans might be adversely affected. This includes but is not
18 limited to wolves and grizzly bears.
19
20 We support state funding to cover costs of roadkill recovery and the receipt of livestock mortalities from
21 Colorado family farms and ranches to avoid wolf attraction.
22
23 We urge CPW to include agriculture specifically in their strategic planning, recognizing the interactions and
24 impacts of the agency on agricultural operations.
25

26 **I. Animal Welfare**

27 We support teaching animal welfare through educational programs and agricultural organizations.
28
29 We support humane treatment of all domesticated animals, and their right to have proper food, shelter, and
30 water.
31
32 We support prosecution of individuals who falsely document, falsely report, or manipulate evidence of
33 animal mistreatment. These individuals should be made to provide for a remedy at equity or at law for
34 victims of such false documentation.
35
36 We support the state's right to regulate the sale of animal products.
37
38 We oppose the regulation of domestic livestock and animal husbandry by ballot initiative.
39
40 We oppose the prohibition of generally accepted animal husbandry practices.
41
42 We oppose the adoption of laws that criminalize whistleblowing, documentation, and reporting of animal
43 welfare violations.
44
45 We oppose animal shelters, rescues, and affiliated organizations that are involved in "Retail Rescue".
46

1 We support telehealth for domestic livestock and working animals.

2
3 We support establishing a veterinarian-client-patient relationship through telehealth or in-person visit.

4
5 We oppose requiring a veterinarian to establish a relationship with an individual domestic livestock or
6 working animal prior to care.

7 We support veterinarian technicians under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian to provide care to
8 domestic livestock through available large animal handling certification programs confirming their
9 proficiency in safe handling. We also support a mid-level practitioner certification for veterinary care
10 analogous to a physician's assistant.

11
12 We support development of a temporary license program that allow veterinarians licensed in other states to
13 practice in Colorado during a declared animal emergency.

14 15 **J. Health Care**

16 We support access to affordable medical, dental, vision, and mental health services, as well as to long-term
17 care and hospice care, for all people.

18
19 We support enhanced funding of local public health agencies and school nurse programs for infection
20 prevention (including vaccinations), reproductive health, food safety, control of communicable disease
21 outbreaks and epidemics, prevention of chronic health problems such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer,
22 and promotion of occupational safety.

23
24 We support a workable and affordable national universal health care plan to provide equal opportunity for
25 adequate health care for all people.

26
27 In the absence of a national universal health care plan, we support universal health insurance for Colorado.

28
29 We support a single-payer health care system.

30
31 We support affordable rural group health care insurance plans statewide for those living in population areas
32 of 2,500 residents or less per square mile.

33
34 We support the public and legislative educational work done to raise the issues of healthcare access and
35 affordability in rural Colorado.

36
37 We support the Colorado Provider Recruitment program, within the Colorado Rural Health Center, which
38 assists rural and medically under-served communities in recruiting and retaining health care professionals.

39
40 We support providing incentives for medical students who agree to serve in rural and medically under-
41 served areas.

42
43 We support investments in Colorado's loan repayment program, Colorado Health Service Corps, be
44 maintained so that the resource is available for primary care providers serving rural and underserved areas.

1 We support essential primary healthcare services in all geographic areas, including the use of physician
2 assistants and nurse practitioners.
3
4 We support federal and state funding for hospitals, inpatient mental health services, rural health clinics, and
5 emergency medical services in rural counties that are medically underserved.
6
7 We support rural health clinics and community funded safety net clinics as critical parts of Colorado's
8 healthcare safety net system. We urge these entities be provided the same access to funding that is available
9 to other safety net providers.
10
11 We support the inclusion of rural and community-funded safety net providers in the programs and services
12 included in the Affordable Care Act.
13
14 We urge local medical facilities and hospitals to provide medical care for the indigent and working poor
15 who do not qualify for Medicare or Medicaid or do not have their own health insurance.
16
17 We support lowering healthcare costs through nutritional and cooking education, disease prevention and
18 wellness promotion.
19
20 We oppose the practice of rate banding by health insurance companies.
21
22 We oppose coverage denial based on pre-existing health conditions.
23
24 We support the development of regional healthcare cooperatives to help meet the healthcare needs of the
25 residents in their regions.
26
27 We encourage healthcare companies and insurers to focus on wellness and preventive care, invest excess
28 revenues in improved services and lower premiums, and place people before profits.
29
30 We urge efforts be made to ensure that rural Colorado be included as the state implements a Health
31 Information Technology (HIT) system, to use computer network systems to store, protect, retrieve, and
32 transfer clinical, administrative, and financial information electronically.
33
34 We urge state and federal legislation to eliminate gaps in incentive funding for rural health clinics and
35 community funded safety net clinics to obtain funds to establish the systems necessary to fully serve their
36 patients with new information technology.
37
38 We support capital investment by federal and state governments to build and sustain the infrastructure for
39 tele-medicine.
40
41 We support state regulation of hearing tests and sales of associated equipment. Those providing these
42 services must be licensed doctors of audiology or trained individuals who have passed the necessary exams
43 and are licensed to provide these services.
44
45 We support published public pricing be required in health care facilities.
46

1 We support a state-funded system of mental health services and substance abuse services across the state,
2 including in rural areas.

4 We oppose the consolidation of health service providers.

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

9 We support funding for opioid use disorder, harm reduction, and treatment.

11 We support research and development of evidence-based prescription for healthy foods.

13 We support expanding public school and student-centered healthcare services.

15 **K. Education**

16 We support increased public funding of Pre-K-12 education and state supported post-secondary education
17 systems, with a goal of approaching the national average.

19 We support strong state funding for public colleges and universities to provide a broad array of post-
20 secondary options for our citizens, and continued state support for public higher education also to keep
21 tuition low and reduce student debt.

23 We support additional state funding for financial aid awards for first generation students at our institutions
24 of higher education.

26 We support additional investment in secondary and post-secondary career and technical education programs
27 to train young people as electricians, plumbers, welders, mechanics, and similar professions needed in rural
28 communities.

30 We support public funding for Agricultural Experiment Stations and the Cooperative Extension Service.

32 We support increased state funding for public libraries in underserved or rural areas.

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

39 We support removing financial barriers and disincentives to locally initiated consolidations.

41 We support resource sharing between schools and school districts as a local approach to improving the
42 viability of rural schools.

44 We oppose any state-mandated consolidation of rural school districts and community colleges.

1 We support funding for rural Pre-K-12 school districts that recognizes the challenges faced by rural school
2 districts, especially those facing declining enrollment and low assessed valuations.

3
4 We support adequate opportunities for local preschool childcare and encourage common-sense approaches
5 to solving any shortage.

6
7 We support expanding access to rural childcare that accommodates the seasonal and irregular hours of
8 agricultural work.

9
10 We support the Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) program and encourage the state to identify
11 additional sources of revenue to support this program.

12
13 We oppose “vouchers” that would divert funding from public education to private schools.

14
15 We support agricultural literacy and efforts to combine curricula and disseminate it.

16
17 We support a progressive student loan repayment system based on annual income after graduation. The
18 repayment system will become effective once a minimum annual income is surpassed.

19
20 We support further funding be allocated to expand and improve broadband connectivity in rural areas to
21 allow students the ability to participate in on-line learning at home at capacity for education purposes.

22
23 We support the development of state programs that provide sourcing of computer equipment to school
24 districts allowing them the ability to issue laptops or tablets to each student.

25
26
27 We support the development of programs that allow households, caregivers, and educators the resources and
28 funding to ensure students have proper support in the case of long-term virtual learning.

29
30 We support Colorado Department of Education (CDE) integrating food and agricultural curricula into
31 academic standards in K-12 education.

32
33 We support the development, expansion, and funding of school gardens and apiary programs.

34
35 We support integrating food and agricultural curricula in pre-K-12 education such as through programs like
36 Colorado Agriculture in the Classroom.

37
38 We support the use of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and other special education programs. We urge
39 continued support and funding of special education services in the public school setting.

40
41 We support financial literacy education for youth so they can understand how Social Security works and
42 why it matters.

43
44 We encourage land grant universities to actively recruit and support students from rural backgrounds and
45 unrepresented communities.

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 the implementation, expansion, and funding 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 GusNIP grant program.

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

We support policies that address food deserts and promote access to healthy foods.

We support the continuation and full funding of Healthy School Meals for All (HSMA), which provides free breakfast and lunch to all Colorado students.

We support increasing state appropriations to at least \$0.50 per meal for the HSMA Local Food Program Grant.

We support a stringent review process of any large agribusiness, food and beverage manufacturing, distribution, and grocery retail and oppose any merger that will further constrict the food value chain and negatively impact farmers, ranchers, agricultural workers, and consumers.

M. Local Food Systems

We support the following definition of farmers markets: "Two or more farmer-producers, their employees, or their designated representatives 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 using the term "farmers markets."

We support farmers' markets and other local product initiatives

We support the identification of product origin at farmers markets.

We support the expansion of producer-only farmers markets.

We support agricultural buildings for public use specifically to allow producers to sell goods to their communities.

We support the continuation, ~~and~~ expansion, and funding of SNAP Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards to farmers' markets and CSAs.

1 We support community-supported agriculture/subscription farms and farm-to-consumer co-ops selling
2 directly to restaurants, grocers, and festivals.

3
4 ~~We support farmers' markets and other local product initiatives.~~

5
6 We support and promote the development and integrity of the Colorado Proud program to benefit Colorado
7 producers and include a requirement that the Colorado Proud products must contain ingredients grown in
8 Colorado.

9
10 We support the Good Food Purchasing program.

11
12 We support the Colorado Food Pantry Assistance Grant. We support a local procurement mandate for Food
13 Pantry Assistance Grant funds.

14
15 We support incentives for food hubs, food cooperatives, value-added producers, small Colorado-owned,
16 grocery and stores, and regional agricultural producers to encourage purchasing from Colorado farmers and
17 ranchers.

18
19 We support the purchase of locally-grown-raised food by food pantries, state and local governments, and
20 state funded institutions, and the funding of technical assistance to support those purchases.

21
22 We support domesticated rabbits being designated the same as poultry regarding slaughter of animals.

23 24 **N. Department of Corrections**

25 We support supervised and voluntary opportunities for inmates to work to enhance knowledge and build
26 employable skills in the agricultural and food processing industries.

27
28 We support that all facilities have proper heat, air conditioning, ventilation, nutrition, and medical services.

29
30 We oppose the privatization of correctional facilities.

31 32 **O. Political Reform**

33 We oppose the use of recall elections to effect policy decisions. Recall should be limited to cases of
34 malfeasance.

35
36 We support removing TABOR and Amendment 23 provisions from the state constitution and returning tax
37 and budgeting authority to the Colorado State Legislature, the Governor, and other appropriate elected
38 officials.

39
40 We support efforts to enable counties and other governmental units to establish agreements about common
41 issues with counties in adjoining states.

42
43 We support expanding requirements for changes to the Colorado constitution via ballot initiatives to all
44 citizen ballot initiatives.

1 We urge adoption of public financing of all statewide and state legislative campaigns.

2
3 We oppose the passage of any amendments or laws that limit the effectiveness of elected officials or limit
4 our use of the representative form of government.

5
6 We support the use of ranked-choice voting systems for elections.
7

8 **P. Housing**

9 We support both movable and foundation-based safe, flexible, and affordable housing options for
10 agricultural workers.

11
12 We encourage local governments to allow on-site housing for agricultural workers and/or volunteers on
13 agricultural-use properties based on the nature and needs of the farm or ranch.

14
15 We urge Colorado Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) to modify standards affecting agricultural
16 workers living in employer-provided housing to specifically address the challenges during public health and
17 safety emergencies.

18
19 We support flexibility in Proposition 123 funding to allow for different Average Median Incomes and
20 circumstances in rural low-income and tourist counties and municipalities.
21

22 **Article VII. Rural Development**

23 **A. Industrial Siting Act**

24 We support enactment of an industrial siting act in Colorado that would include the following:

- 25 ➤ Support for local land use control and the county land use commission in maintaining control of the
26 location and development of heavy industry and mining development. It should be a location that
27 will cause the least impact to agriculture and the rural environment.
- 28 ➤ State agencies should assist local entities in minimizing the impact on and use of prime agricultural
29 land for such development through feasibility studies to determine the full impact of selected sites
30 and development.
31

32 We support a definitive procedure ensuring public information with respect to such proposed land
33 development.
34

35 We support a provision to encourage rural towns and communities, if desired, to acquire lands for industrial
36 parks. These parks would be used as a method of controlling the scope and development of industry, which
37 would aid in stabilizing local economies.
38

39 We urge our state government to offer incentives for these new industries to locate in rural areas, except
40 data centers unless they are publicly community owned.
41

42 **B. Transportation**

43 We recommend passage of legislation that would allow weight variance permits for trucks with farm plates
44 of up to 15 percent within a 100-mile radius during harvest season.
45

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.

We support the legalization of the registration of Kei and mini trucks in Colorado.

We support the prioritization of the maintenance of state roads.

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 local governments and rural electric co-ops being able to provide 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 multinational 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.

There are 23 federally recognized tribes in New Mexico, including the Navajo Nation. These tribes have a unique political status with their own governing authority and have existed as sovereign nations since before European arrival. Where applicable, when members are advocating to tribal governments, we support extension of these policies to those contexts.

Article I. Government Programs

A. Agricultural Services

We support funding to institute programs necessary for the eradication of Trichomoniasis (Trich) in New Mexico.

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 strongly encourage the State Executive Director to be changed to a merit promotion and not be a political appointment.

We strongly encourage the State Committee members to be elected by ranchers and farmers enrolled in FSA programs and not political appointments.

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 in-eligible cause of loss for perennials.

1 We urge the FSA State Office petition the policy holders of the NAP handbook to rescind the changes to
2 paragraph 51E of 1 NAP (Rev. 2) to not include perennials as needing an Adequate Water Supply at the
3 beginning of the coverage period.
4

5 We urge the FSA State Office to make concerted efforts to gather sufficient data to support average annual
6 yields in the National Crop Table.
7

8 We urge the FSA State Office to prioritize customer service.
9

10 We believe producers should not have their irrigated base taken away due to unnatural lake, river, and
11 stream conditions.
12

13 We oppose the burden of record keeping for hay and grain producers for bioterrorism on hay when other
14 safeguards are already in place.
15

16 We support the NMDA and other agencies to improve and diversify outreach efforts, using culturally
17 appropriate means to disseminate information about technical assistance and grant opportunities,
18 specifically to reach disenfranchised agricultural producers.
19

20 We support that the Secretary of Agriculture prioritize programs and policies that actively work to empower
21 disenfranchised producers through increased access to funding opportunities, technical assistance, culturally
22 appropriate outreach methods, and racial equity trainings for NMDA and other agency program staff.
23

24 We support increased funding for county and regional agricultural extension services and a recommitment
25 by all levels of government to the original extension funding formula.
26

27 We support expanding the capacity of local, state and federal agencies to provide services and administer
28 programs for producers especially underserved producers and support organizations and in a timely basis.
29

30 We support amending the Anti-Donation Clause of the New Mexico State Constitution to increase access to
31 state funding for agricultural producers, and other businesses across the food supply chain.
32

33 We support the expansion of current programs and development of new programs that provide monetary
34 compensation to producers for documented ecosystem services provided by well managed agricultural
35 lands.
36

37 We support New Mexico's land grant communities and support efforts to improve their access to public
38 funding and technical services.
39

40 We support funding to New Mexico Ag/Livestock Incident Response Team (NM-ALIRT).
41

42 We strongly urge the State of New Mexico and other relevant agencies to proactively address the loss of
43 farmers and farmland, as well as the increasing average age of farmers in New Mexico.
44
45

1 **B. Secretary of Agriculture**

2 We support the New Mexico State University (NMSU) Board of Regents appointing the New Mexico
3 Secretary of Agriculture and the office to remain in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

4
5 We support the New Mexico Organic Certification Program to be maintained by NMDA.

6
7 We strongly urge NMDA to maintain the appropriate state level positions to fully serve producers in
8 meeting the New Mexico Organic Certification Program.

9
10 We encourage NMDA to continue applying for the federal Organic Certification Cost Share Program.

11
12 We support the Public Regulation Commission remaining an elected body and not becoming an appointed
13 commission by the Governor.

14
15 **C. Game and Fish**

16 We urge the New Mexico Game and Fish Department to coordinate hunting seasons and area permitting to
17 control nuisance and destructive wildlife.

18
19 We strongly support reforming the New Mexico Game Commission to ensure that it will function
20 effectively, free from political influence or control, to steward wild game in New Mexico for the benefit of
21 the public and especially for the benefit of farmers, ranchers, and land managers who are most impacted by
22 the elk herd.

23
24 We strongly support requiring the inclusion of a minimum of two land managers actively engaged in
25 farming and ranching in New Mexico on the game commission.

26
27 We strongly urge depredation hunts in January to ensure population targets set by game management plans
28 are met.

29
30 We support managing the elk herd in New Mexico primarily as a source of meat for New Mexicans, and
31 insist that the allocation of hunting permits to private land owners be tied to the real benefit afforded to the
32 public elk herd by their land management practices.

33
34 **D. State Livestock Board**

35 We support State Meat Inspection that:

- 36 ➤ Reduces barrier to entry for small, very small, and mobile meat processing companies.
37 ➤ Provides clear and achievable guidelines that are consistently enforced.
38 ➤ Meets or exceeds Federal Standards whilst not being a redundancy thereof.
39 ➤ Is responsive to the needs of a diverse and inclusive group of producers.
40 ➤ Increases equity in the marketplace.
41 ➤ Is permanently funded.

1 We oppose State Meat Inspection that:

- 2 ➤ Is a ‘cut and paste’ redundancy of federal inspection.
- 3 ➤ Is conducted as a policing action.
- 4 ➤ Increases regulation on businesses operating under federal inspection rules.
- 5 ➤ Is mandatory along with Federal inspection or existing custom exempt inspection.

7 We support:

- 8 ➤ Brand inspection of all live cattle being sold at auction.
- 9 ➤ Review of cattle prices and reporting anti-competitive behavior in the marketplace.
- 10 ➤ Expanding capacity to effectively respond to public emergencies like drought, fire, and flood to
- 11 protect livestock producers and their animals.
- 12 ➤ Clear, transparent, easily accessible, and uniformly enforced brand inspection rules.

14 We oppose brand inspection being required for hogs, sheep, and goats.

15 **E. Public Facilities and Infrastructure**

16 We support the use of public facilities and public funds for multiple community purposes that encourage the
17 public good, such as tool-sharing programs, community and/or commercial kitchens, etc.

19 We recommend the use of public facilities for storm and rainwater projects for environmental health.

21 We support more resources for animal crossings.

23 **F. Food Safety**

24 We support increased food safety and security with additional testing, especially of foreign-produced
25 products.

27 We are in favor of clear and mandatory labeling of additives, meat irradiation, and genetically modified
28 organisms in all food.

30 We believe that there should be better labeling with respect to the number of additives in food products.

32 We recommend that all imitation and synthetic products be labeled and disclosed in a clear manner.

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

37 We support the efforts by our partner organizations and affiliates to provide food safety trainings and
38 resources to food producers and processors, to meet food safety requirements in collaboration with the New
39 Mexico Departments of Agriculture and Environment and the Cooperative Extension Service.

41 We support full funding of any implementation costs associated with food safety rules and regulations by
42 the appropriate agencies.

Article II. Agriculture Technology

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 data sharing of publicly appropriate data between agencies and with the public.

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 control of noxious weeds and pests on all public, tribal, and private lands through Integrative Pest Management strategies.

We urge the New Mexico Department of Transportation be required and funded to control perennial noxious, invasive, and poisonous weeds along the state roadways through Integrative Pest Management strategies.

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 support use of acequia and ditch water in controlled agricultural environments such as high tunnels and greenhouses (excluding cannabis).

We support agricultural water conservation through programs such as conservation tax credits or rebates.

We urge that Data Centers increase clean usable net positive water resources available to the agricultural community and synergistically work with farmers and ranchers to restore aquifers, increase organic carbon content in soil and economically benefit the watersheds that they are located in.

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.

1 We support ensuring that agricultural water users have equitable social, political, and economic access to all
2 processes to protect their water rights and eliminating the threat of loss of water right through non-use.

3
4 We urge all surface water compacts between New Mexico and other states be subject to review and possible
5 re-negotiation considering recent developments for irrigation and municipal water projects. Current
6 restrictions on acre-footage to be held by the state should be adjusted to reflect these issues.

7
8 We support efforts to conserve water by removing invasive species such as salt cedar from all rivers and
9 tributaries, including the Pecos, Rio Grande, Rio Chama, and Canadian Rivers.

10
11 We recommend that groundwater compacts be negotiated with other states to address any future claims
12 upon aquifers and basins.

13
14 We support positions taken by the 22 water regions supporting regional water plans for future utilization of
15 water resources.

16
17 We support the creation of a water trust fund to ensure the state has adequate water resources and can
18 defend its interests in lawsuits with neighboring states. Any losses incurred by New Mexico users should be
19 fully compensated by the neighboring state or user that resides there.

20
21 We urge the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer to not allow water to be monopolized by any entity
22 and that it not eliminate permits for new drilling of water wells, including supplemental water wells, by
23 surface rights owners.

24
25 We urge that water wells are not drilled horizontally, and any that would be plugged with the owner fined
26 based upon the length of well usage and volume of water removed.

27
28 Water produced in the State of New Mexico will not be allowed to be transported outside of New Mexico. It
29 must be put to beneficial use within the State of New Mexico.

30
31 When disputes over surface water arise between states, ground water users near stream flows should not be
32 penalized for loss of downstream flow.

33
34 We oppose all initiatives to tax the use of water.

35
36 We encourage best management practices for the release of water to increase habitat for threatened or
37 endangered species.

38
39 We encourage the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer to use its statutory authority to investigate and
40 enforce the priority call of agricultural waters, rivers, and their tributaries.

41
42 We oppose any efforts to divert agricultural use water to other uses without a full study and/or payment for
43 loss of use.

44
45 Agriculture water use should be equal to domestic priority use.

1 We support water and water rights for the cultivation of food for New Mexicans.

2
3 We support water reduction techniques.

4
5 We support the reuse of gray water.

6
7 We support the use of domestic wells for limited commercial agricultural production for producers growing
8 on one acre or less except where such strategies do not increase depletions, injure the integrity of aquifers,
9 and with the caveat that use cannot exceed maximum allowed use.

10
11 We support funding for increased oversight by the Office of the State Engineer to identify and prosecute
12 those engaged in illegal water withdrawals from streams, acequias, and aquifers.

13
14 We recommend that standards be adopted to deal with possible environmental contamination by industrial
15 and corporate farms.

16
17 We support the development of municipal water projects utilizing existing local reservoirs. We oppose the
18 removal of dams on any river or destruction of any reservoir.

19
20 We recognize the value, growth, and importance of the dairy industry to New Mexico. It is critical that this
21 industry be a responsible user and conservator of water resources. It is also essential that this industry exercise
22 due care to protect groundwater resources.

23
24 We oppose efforts by the BLM and other federal agencies to force local irrigation districts to release water
25 from reservoirs for habitat preservation without an impact study and public hearing. Producers losing the
26 use of this water should be justly compensated for loss of production.

27
28 We support the development of local water courts and mediation to settle adjudication claims.

29
30 We oppose the transfer of groundwater out of the state of New Mexico, and support efforts to conserve
31 water in the state.

32
33 When groundwater is to be transferred out of state, an impact assessment and public hearing should be held.

34
35 We oppose the transfer of surface water out of the state of New Mexico, and support effort to conserve
36 water in the state.

37
38 We support the metering of domestic wells, particularly when the use of these wells by commercial and
39 residential properties is impacting agricultural operations.

40
41 We oppose the practice of preliminary approvals of water right leases by the New Mexico Office of the
42 State Engineer without due process.

43
44 We support water policy that ensures we are able to produce food in New Mexico for New Mexico
45 consumption.

1 We support appropriately engineered temporary surface water impoundment for the duration of the growing
2 season, without additional permissions from OSE and pursuant to a held agricultural water right and
3 recommendation of a ditch authority.
4

5 **2. Potable Water**

6 We support the development and completion of water projects by the affected communities as they see fit
7 while protecting their water allocations.
8

9 We do not support the reduction of domestic well production below the three-acre feet per year level.
10

11 We oppose the use of potable water in oil, gas, and mineral extraction and processing.
12

13 **3. Wastewater**

14 We support the development of a fund for rural areas to give assistance with the mandated updating of
15 septic tank disposal systems, and to assist older treatment systems to comply with current codes.
16

17 We support the reuse of municipal wastewater for agricultural purposes with proper permitting and
18 treatment.
19

20 **4. Water Projects Financing**

21 We urge that any financing for water projects be used for their designated intent and not be diverted to other
22 projects.
23

24 We strongly support that the Water Trust Board review and recommend local water supply project
25 applications and provide their list in order of highest priority and project readiness to the New Mexico State
26 Legislature prior to the annual legislative session.
27

28 **D. Property Rights**

29 We support property rights legislation on the state and federal level. Market or use value, whichever is
30 greater, should be paid in any ‘taking’.
31

32 We recognize water conservation as a bona fide use of surface and subsurface water rights.
33

34 We support air space remaining as a part of the surface right estate.
35

36 We support reasonable and fair compensation to surface owners for damage caused by mineral
37 development. Compensation to the surface owner should include but not be limited to, loss of production
38 income, lost land value, and lost access to surface owners remaining land, including loss of improvements.
39

40 We support the affected landowners’ concerns being addressed when endangered species designations are
41 made.
42

43 We urge that New Mexico farmers and ranchers be appropriately compensated for land and water usage that
44 is restricted because of the ESA, EPA programs, and other related agency programs.
45

1 We support new transmission corridors with landowners being compensated in a fair and equitable fashion
2 for the easement, including the option to include a multi-year payment.

3
4 We do not support the use of eminent domain to transfer private property from a landowner to a for-profit or
5 non-governmental entity without the landowner having the right to negotiate a multi-year payment.

6
7 We do not support eminent domain proceedings for merchant projected corridors.

8
9 We encourage private property owners be part of the transmission planning process.

10
11 We urge that a written agreement be in place prior to entry.

12
13 We oppose any efforts to implement state-wide planning or zoning.

14
15 We support surface rights protection.

16
17 We oppose mergers of city and county governments.

18 19 **E. Pollinators**

20 We urge NMSU and other New Mexico institutions to do research on pollinators and their conservation
21 needs as it supports needed pollination services for food, fiber, livestock, and wild game.

22
23 We urge the appropriation of state funds to help support research, education, outreach, and promotion of
24 healthy pollinator forage.

25
26 We encourage Integrative Pest Management (IPM) strategies for supporting healthy shared spaces for both
27 managed and wild pollinator species.

28
29 We support a producer-driven process for establishing and maintaining a healthy wildlife and agricultural
30 system through a whole systems review and interconnected methodology.

31 32 **F. Predators and Pests**

33 We strongly support legal measures in the effort to restore effective predator control.

34
35 We urge New Mexico State University to do research on non-poisonous pest and predator control means.

36
37 We urge the appropriation of federal funds to help control destructive birds because they are a serious crop
38 and health hazard.

39
40 We urge control of destructive insects and rodents on state land adjacent to cropland, using multiple
41 resource methods, to encourage natural pollinators and beneficial wildlife.

42
43 We support a producer-driven process for establishing and maintaining a healthy and balanced wildlife and
44 agricultural system.

1 We support USDA APHIS control of near plague-level pests.

2
3 We support funding to agricultural producers for coexistence measures and to pay for direct and
4 indirect damages done by predator species.

6 **G. Soil Health**

7 We strongly support efforts to increase soil health in the state of New Mexico. We urge NMDA and other
8 state offices to recognize the importance of soil health, and to provide support and compensation to
9 producers looking to implement new practices. Furthermore, we encourage ample recognition be given to
10 the various cultures of New Mexico who have been stewarding these lands for centuries.

11
12 We support funding for education, research, and technical assistance for bioregionally appropriate
13 agroforestry and other perennial agricultural practices for soil health.

14
15 We strongly support efforts in the agricultural industries to improve soil health and increase carbon
16 sequestration, increased forage production, and water infiltration.

17
18 We support more and adequately funded soil testing facilities and technology in the state of New Mexico.

19
20 We strongly support the full funding of the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund for no less than
21 \$350,000,000. The Fund was established during the 2023 legislative session as a source of money to be used
22 as a non-federal match to fund restoration and maintain conservation projects.

23
24 We support the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund to be expanded beyond any specific agency to allow for
25 any entity or individual to apply for funds.

26
27 We support all working farms and ranch lands that subscribe to basic soil health principles be allowed to
28 participate in the governor's 30x30 Conservation Plan.

30 **H. Land Access**

31 We urge the State of New Mexico to recognize the importance of agricultural land transition planning,
32 technical service provision, and working land conservation programs to ensure:

- 33 ➤ That land is affordable for the next generation, in particular for beginning, socially disadvantaged,
34 and/or limited resource heir, and non-heir farmers or ranchers.
- 35 ➤ That agricultural land stay in agriculture in the hands of family farmers.
- 36 ➤ That transfer of skills and knowledge accompany transfer of land between current future generations
37 of farmers and ranchers.
- 38 ➤ That the unique needs of tribes at the tribal, local, state, and federal levels are addressed.

39
40 We support publicly funded conservation easement programs that prioritize agricultural easements that keep
41 farms and ranches in production and owned by farmers and ranchers.

42
43 We support programs and policies that help to resolve heir's land ownership and succession issues because
44 the State of New Mexico has adopted the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act (UPHPA).

1 We strongly oppose converting agricultural land for domestic development.

2
3 **Article VI. Energy Policy**

4 The positive economic impact on agriculture and rural communities through expanded tax bases, reduced
5 outward migration of rural populations, and reduced dependence on fossil fuels, foreign oil, and traditional
6 grain markets makes the continued development of viable renewable energy imperative. Therefore, we
7 support and call for continued favorable legislation at the state and federal levels for the development of
8 renewable energy resources.

9
10 We encourage members and the public to support renewable energy resources.

11
12 We support the building of the Tres Amigas project, a super conductor switching station in Curry County,
13 New Mexico.

14
15 We support the focus of economic development efforts to build the infrastructure and secondary facilities
16 for new energy development, and to allow rural electric cooperatives to be part of the process.

17
18 We strongly encourage the use of renewable energy products in state, county, and city vehicles.

19
20 We support allowing REAs to increase net metering for agricultural operations and rural businesses.

21
22 We support a revolving loan fund for renewable energy economic development projects.

23
24 We urge information on carbon credit opportunities be made available to agricultural producers.

25
26 We support a state tax credit for smaller renewable energy projects that is tradable.

27
28 We support a personal property and sales tax exemption for renewable energy equipment and supplies.

29
30 We recommend that intra-state prices of natural gas be reduced to compare with inter-state prices.

31 We support the installation and operation of renewable energy systems with just compensation to the
32 acreage owners.

33
34 We support the enactment of a state methane waste prevention rule.

35
36 We urge that oil and gas property tax evaluations be audited and updated regularly and that the valuation,
37 methods, and procedures for collection are both current and fair.

38
39 We oppose any increase in gasoline taxes under the guise of a carbon tax.

40
41 We support the monitoring of meters on oil and gas wells for purposes of severance tax collection.

42
43 To protect our water, air, land, and the public's health, we support regulations that require that oil, gas, and
44 mineral companies disclose all chemical compounds being used in the development, production, and
45 processing of oil, gas, and minerals. We consider this a public safety requirement.

1 We support all produced water from oil and gas development be reused by oil and gas before any other
2 water. Before any produced water is used in agricultural production, producers must have assurance of the
3 water quality.

4
5 We support strong rules that eliminate energy waste and greenhouse gas emissions caused by routine
6 venting and flaring.

8 **A. Utilities**

9 We oppose any utility deregulation or regulation that results in higher cost to consumers.

11 **Article VII. Economic & Social Policies**

12 **A. Taxes**

13 We support the current property tax program under which agricultural land is taxed on its ability to produce
14 rather than on its sale value.

15
16 We support tax incentives for seniors and public senior programs to share agricultural knowledge with
17 youth.

18
19 We recommend that the tax level be maintained at 33 1/3 percent of the assessed value.

20
21 Increased capital outlay costs should be paid for by taxes raised in an equitable fashion so that the burden
22 will be borne by all segments of the economy.

23
24 We recommend that a broader and more equitable state tax base be formulated and that a halt be made to
25 increasing ad valorem taxes.

26
27 We recommend that the state drop the sales or excise tax on farm machinery and agricultural production
28 items.

29
30 We recommend that the mileage-use tax on farm trucks be eliminated, and a flat license fee be established
31 and handled by the Motor Vehicle Department.

32
33 We support one-tenth of a percentage of taxes collected by municipalities being used for economic
34 development. Specifically, funds generated should be allocated to local economic development corporations
35 for local business and cooperative development.

36
37 We support moving one-tenth of the economic development tax and designating it specifically for rural
38 economic development.

39
40 We urge transparency and accountability regarding the revenues received from the tobacco lawsuit into New
41 Mexico's Tobacco Settlement Program Fund and Tobacco Settlement Permanent Fund.

42
43 We urge the State of New Mexico to make a \$3 million commitment of tobacco settlement funds distributed
44 from New Mexico's Tobacco Settlement Permanent Fund to assist beginning farmers and start-up rural
45 agricultural businesses with operational guaranteed loans and other financial assistance.

1 We support updating agricultural valuation statute and regulation in order to better reflect the needs,
2 practices and ecosystem benefits of agriculture and agricultural lands. Updates should include, but not be
3 limited to:

- 4 ➤ Agricultural valuation for agricultural infrastructure;
- 5 ➤ Decreased minimum lot sizes;
- 6 ➤ Removal of requirement for contiguity for grazing lands;
- 7 ➤ Participation in state and federal conservation programs;
- 8 ➤ Cover cropping and other soil health practices; and,
- 9 ➤ For land that has been brought into production but has not yet produced a crop.

10 **B. Veterinarians**

11 We urge the State of New Mexico to establish a veterinary program. Until then, we urge New Mexico
12 universities to work with other universities to accept more of our veterinary students.

13 We encourage lottery monies to be used for tuition for veterinary students studying out of state due to the
14 lack of an in-state program.

15 We support funding to encourage food animal veterinary services in underserved areas of New Mexico.

16 **C. Alternative Crops**

17 We strongly support research and development by private and public efforts to create industrial uses and
18 markets for products produced on our farms, such as ethanol blended and bio-diesel fuels, medicines,
19 protein supplements, and cosmetics, as well as other innovative uses needed by industry.

20 We support the reintroduction of industrial hemp (defined as Cannabis Sativa), having one percent or less
21 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

22 We support research into the viability and economic potential of industrial hemp produced in the United
23 States.

24 We encourage NMDA to continue to foster dialogue between GMO and non-GMO agricultural interests.

25 **D. Urban Agriculture**

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

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

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

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

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

4
5 We support the use of greenhouses and hoop houses/high tunnels for specialty crops as an agricultural
6 application, as opposed to commercial or industrial, in urban and peri-urban municipalities.

7 8 **E. Gun Control**

9 We oppose any legislation, on any and all levels, that infringes on our Second Amendment rights.

10
11 We support all firearm education safety courses and safe and legal use of firearms.

12
13 We support strict enforcement of existing laws.

14
15 We oppose gun confiscation laws imposed upon U.S. citizens by any local, state, or federal agency.

16
17 We oppose the ban on semiautomatic weapons.

18 19 **F. Right to Work**

20 We believe right-to-work laws should be a state prerogative.

21
22 We support the ability of employers to recover the cost of defending themselves when being falsely accused
23 by employees of practices such as but not limited to harassment or discrimination based on race, age, sex.

24
25 We oppose any common situs picketing bill.

26 27 **G. Workers' Compensation**

28 We support collaborative and cooperative efforts to help reduce workers compensation rates and costs for
29 family farms and ranches and seasonal industries.

30
31 We recommend that any worker's compensation law recognize the unique nature of agriculture and provide
32 an option for small employers to find other resourceful alternatives.

33 34 **H. State Education**

35 We support a fair and equitable formula for distributing state education funds.

36
37 We support additional funding for agriculture education, home economics, vocational-technical training
38 programs, school gardens, and other occupational preparation courses as an integral part of our free, public
39 educational system.

40
41 We support student loan repayment or forgiveness programs that are accessible and equitable for those who
42 are in agricultural sectors.

43
44 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.

I. 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 support:

- Funding for the development and implementation of values-based food procurement in New Mexico.
- Expanding funding for institutions (schools, senior centers, etc.) to purchase local meat.
- Requiring that all meat purchased be born, raised, finished, and if possible processed in New Mexico.
- Allocating sufficient funds to pay producers a fair price based on the costs associated with producing meat in New Mexico.

We support resources for New Mexico farm and ranch raised foods for New Mexico food assistance programs.

We support use of Double Up Food Bucks for the purchase of New Mexico raised proteins.

J. 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.

1 We urge that health facilities and staffing be maintained and/or developed in rural communities, and support
2 incentives to encourage staff to live and work in rural areas.

3
4 We support reconsideration of the elimination and/or reassignment of National Guard units out of rural
5 areas.

6
7 We support the use of public funds to enhance the ability of local producers to add value to their agricultural
8 products and urge the state to create consistent policies across county lines regarding Cottage Food Laws.

9
10 We support efforts to expand the ability to process New Mexico meats within the state, to provide economic
11 opportunities for both producers and processors.

12 13 **ARTICLE IX. Tribal Lands**

14
15 We urge the Department of Interior (DoI) and tribal governments to clarify existing and/or develop better
16 agriculture land-use policies for farming and ranching in the protection of Native American land and water
17 rights.

18
19 We encourage better communication between agencies, stewards, and tribal entities regarding neighborly
20 land stewardship plans that include pesticides, rodenticides, and any land and water alteration efforts.

21
22 We support NRCS boundaries to be along state lines in New Mexico and Arizona.

23
24 We support replacing the land use and grazing permit system with a five-year lease system within Navajo
25 Nation in order for individual farmers and ranchers to more effectively access insurance and USDA
26 programs.

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 consumed by wildlife and habitat utilized on private land. Compensation should be based on herd numbers and paid on average animal/unit/month values.

When wildlife numbers greatly exceed herd management objectives, game managers must institute measures to reduce these numbers as quickly as possible.

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, particularly in the Sweetwater Rocks region.

We support landowner hunting tags for game species.

We oppose the sale of landowner hunting tags for game species to anyone other than land owner and their family.

We encourage game and fish to allow landowner tags to be transferable to a family member.

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.

1 We support legislative delisting of the grizzly bear and all wolf species as specified in the ESA by the U.S.
2 Fish and Wildlife Service and barring judicial review.

3
4 We support continued efforts designed to keep prairie dogs off the endangered species list.

5
6 We oppose the listing of the Preble's meadow jumping mouse.

7
8 We applaud the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's decision not to list the greater sage grouse and oppose any
9 court actions to overturn that decision.

10 11 **C. Livestock Regulations –Wyoming Livestock Board**

12 We urge state livestock regulations be amended to require owner notification before mis-shipped livestock
13 are sold.

14
15 We oppose any fee increases for brand inspection until efficiencies in day-to-day operations are identified
16 and instituted.

17
18 We recommend landowners be able to file security interests against livestock to collect pasture and feed
19 debt.

20
21 We urge brand inspection on sheep be repealed when a more efficient method of ownership determination
22 and predator fee assessment can be developed and implemented.

23
24 We oppose the undue burden placed on livestock producers in the Designated Surveillance Area (DSA)
25 Northwest Wyoming by the requirement of testing for brucellosis.

26
27 We oppose the loss of a state's brucellosis "free" status based only on infections traced and proven to be
28 from wildlife.

29
30 Producers' fees for brand inspection should be set at a level to cover actual brand inspection program costs
31 and not general administration, disease prevention or trace back costs.

32
33 Any state beef check-off administered and collected under the Wyoming Livestock Board statutes must
34 meet the following requirements:

- 35 ➤ All collections on sales will have a provision for refund;
- 36 ➤ Be approved by most producers voting on the referendum by mail, with spouses allowed to vote
37 individually;
- 38 ➤ Disbursement of funds collected, and operations of the program are controlled by boards of
39 producers elected by the producers assessed;
- 40 ➤ Major changes in existing check-off programs should be submitted to the producers affected and
41 subject to approval by a two-thirds vote; and,
- 42 ➤ Programs being formulated or currently in operation be subject to a five-year review.

43
44 We oppose mandatory electronic ID of livestock.

1 **D. Veterinarians**

2 We support veterinary telehealth programs with a prior Veterinary Client Relationship for large animal
3 care.

4
5 We support veterinarian technicians under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian to provide care for
6 domestic livestock through available large animal handling certification programs confirming
7 their proficiency in safe handling. We also support a mid-level practitioner certification for veterinary care
8 analogous to a physician’s assistant.
9

10 **E. Damage Notification Requirements**

11 People causing damage to property, and law enforcement officers investigating such damage, should be
12 required to notify landowners of the damage and parties found guilty of causing the damage be required to
13 pay for the damage.
14

15 **F. Mediation Service**

16 We support mediation between disputing parties to reach workable agreements.
17

18 **G. Conflict of Interest**

19 We support legislation defining conflict of interest for legislators and elected officials.
20

21 **H. Domestic Sheep Grazing**

22 We endorse the “Wyoming Plan” concerning domestic sheep vs. Big Horn sheep grazing conflicts.
23

24 **I. Superintendent of Public Instruction**

25 We support maintaining the position of Superintendent of Public Instruction as an elected position.
26

27 **J. Nutrition**

28 We urge the state legislature to appropriate funding to fully participate in SNAP and WIC programs.
29

30 We support state funding for local food council(s).
31

32 **K. Disaster Relief**

33 We encourage state funding of emergency services to respond to natural disasters.
34

35 We support a consistent funding source with programs to manage disaster response, mitigation, and
36 restoration funding.
37

38 **Article II. Water, Land, and Conservation Policies**

39 **A. Water Law**

40 We encourage the wise use and conservation of underground water between states.
41

42 We oppose the backdating of water rights.
43

1 We urge the Wyoming State Legislature prohibit the permanent transfer in use of any existing agricultural
2 water rights to commercial industrial uses.

3
4 We recommend that the sale of adjudicated irrigation water be limited to agricultural uses.

5
6 We oppose allowing holders of water rights to sell any or part of such rights for nonagricultural uses.

7
8 We oppose all actions to take water being used for agricultural purposes.

9
10 We oppose any privately held water rights being used for instream flow purposes.

11
12 We support Wyoming to defend using Wyoming water for in-state ag purposes.

13 14 **B. Utilization of Water**

15 We urge the limited remaining water resources allocated to the state of Wyoming be developed under law
16 for beneficial use in the state, with special emphasis upon maximizing reservoir storage of surface water.

17
18 We recognize the desirability of protecting the high quality of our waters and assuring their suitability for
19 beneficial uses, and support legislation to do so.

20
21 We urge the State of Wyoming to encourage and assist in the development of economically feasible
22 innovative technology and incentives oriented toward efficient uses of the waters in this state when they do
23 not injure vested water rights.

24
25 We support the concept of storing and beneficially using all unappropriated Wyoming water within the state
26 in accordance with existing Wyoming water law.

27
28 We oppose granting underground or other supplemental water rights to land where the surface water rights
29 have been sold.

30 31 **C. Water Project Funding**

32 We urge additional funding be made available, including all federal stimulus sources for the immediate
33 construction and rehabilitation of water projects state-wide.

34
35 We oppose the ongoing raiding of Water Development Funds for the operation of the State Board of Control
36 and urge these funds be made whole.

37
38 We urge the Governor, Legislators, and agencies tasked with regulation and funding of water infrastructure
39 undertake a comprehensive study, not funded in any way by an irrigation district or company, of the
40 structural condition and needs of water delivery systems allowing irrigation districts or companies to choose
41 their own type and/or form of participation.

42
43 We urge funding is identified and committed to these needs to help ensure water deliveries aren't disrupted
44 at a critical time for crops in the future.

1 We urge structures with the highest need or repair are ranked and contracts issued to facilitate these repairs.

3 **D. North Platte River**

4 We urge that the proposed enlargement of water storage as part of the Platte River Cooperative Agreement
5 on the North Platte River and its tributaries be completed.

7 **E. Municipal Water**

8 Wyoming municipalities and schools should be required to submit a report to the State Board of Control on
9 the amount of potable water used to irrigate park grounds and rights-of-ways urged to consider using gray
10 water and dryland grass varieties instead of irrigated grass varieties where feasible.

12 **F. Water Quality**

13 Water produced in methane development must meet state water quality standards for surface water
14 discharge.

15
16 Laws requiring mitigation of impacts associated with coal-bed methane water must be established to protect
17 adjacent landowners.

19 **G. Land Use**

20 Wyoming statutes provide for comprehensive planning and zoning on a countywide basis, covering
21 unincorporated areas. The following statutory revisions should be made by the Wyoming State Legislature:

- 22 ➤ Planning and zoning decisions should be made as close to the people affected as possible.
- 23 ➤ Prohibit the state from preempting local decision-making except where land use is clearly not just a
- 24 local concern.
- 25 ➤ Although we recognize the need for industrial expansion and the purchase of land for industry, we
- 26 strongly oppose the acquisition of productive agricultural land for non-agricultural uses.

27
28 We oppose legislation that limits the ability of landowners to implement conservation easements.

29
30 We support multi-use management practices as tools to maintain public lands.

31
32 We oppose the sale of public lands without a full environmental review and meaningful public comment

33
34 We oppose legislation that infringes on private landowners rights.

36 **H. Recycling**

37 The state should encourage all forms of recycling by requiring a deposit on all non-biodegradable recyclable
38 materials.

39
40 We support a statewide recycling project.

42 **I. Reclamation**

43 We support passage of a reclamation statute to enforce agreed upon reclamation plans to protect private
44 landowners and the environment. All projects requiring reclamation should include bonding requirements to
45 insure completion.

1 **J. Noxious Weed Control**

2 We support stronger enforcement of state laws to control declared noxious weeds and pests and require each
3 county to control declared noxious weeds and pests on all lands, with stiff penalties for noncompliance.

4
5 We request the re-establishment of a “state cost share” to aid in controlling prairie dogs and/or noxious
6 weeds.

7
8 We support funding to fight invasive plants.
9

10 **K. Wildfire**

11 We support efforts by electrical utilities to mitigate wildfire risks associated with powerlines.
12

13 **Article III. Energy Policy**

14 **A. Mineral Rights**

15 We recommend that 25-year time limits be established on ownership of severed mineral rights, including
16 those retained by the state. After this period, mineral rights ownership shall revert to the surface owner in all
17 cases where present production of minerals is not occurring.

18
19 We urge that the decision to allow mining and oil companies the use of private lands should lay with the
20 surface owner, and in all cases, compensatory payments should be made to the landowner for all damages
21 incurred.
22

23 **B. Leases**

24 We support changes in existing law to require prior consent be obtained from surface rights owners before a
25 lease may be acquired by mineral companies to develop minerals.
26

27 **C. Oil and Gas**

28 We urge caution in the development of CBM and request all available technology be used in development
29 and reclamation of products and by-products.
30

31 We urge caution in the development of all producing formations and request all available technology and
32 best management practices be used in the development, production, and reclamation of oil and gas products
33 and by-products.
34

35 We oppose the practice of extending and renewing drilling permits by the Wyoming Oil and Gas
36 Conservation Commission unless exploration activity has occurred under the initial drilling permit.
37

38 We oppose the practice of allowing a minority mineral owner to dictate oil and gas development unless all
39 owners are under lease.
40

41 **D. Alternative Energy**

42 We support renewable energy production within Wyoming.
43

44 We encourage state-assisted community-sized bio-fuels development and production.
45

1 We support renewable energy development and storage rights remaining with the surface rights.

2
3 We support reserving a percentage of the capacity of any publicly funded transmission line for power
4 generated from renewable sources.

5
6 We urge new transmission line routes be sited to maximize wind power opportunities.

7
8 We support state research into alternative crops for bio-fuels use.

9
10 We encourage the individual and cooperative development and ownership of wind energy and co-generation
11 production; in cases of development, we support fair reimbursements to landowners.

12
13 We support sequestration of carbon, where safety and stability can be assured.

14
15 We strongly support the ownership of pore space remain with the surface owner.

16 17 **Article IV. Economic & Social Policies**

18 **A. Education Policy**

19 We recommend the continuation of an elected school board in sub-district areas.

20
21 We support short-term borrowing from permanent funds to assist in education funding shortfalls, with the
22 intention these monies be paid back when funds become available.

23
24 We support the organization of a Farmers Union local for students at the University of Wyoming.

25
26 We stress the primacy of academics over athletics at all levels of education,

27
28 When state school funding reductions are necessary, local districts need to be able to identify their own
29 areas of cutbacks.

30
31 All state education programs mandated for local districts by the State of Wyoming must have accompanying
32 funding.

33
34 We urge local input be considered when adopting statewide assessments.

35
36 We urge all schools to offer a strong agriculture and vocational education curriculum.

37
38 We encourage a statewide mill levy to support community colleges.

39
40 We support funding increases for STEM programs.

41
42 We recommend testing at the local level be recognized as a measure of proficiency to guarantee that
43 Wyoming state standards and benchmarks are met.

1 We support additional investment in secondary and post-secondary career and technical education programs
2 to train young people in skilled trades for rural communities.

3 We support efforts and policies that enhance the viability of rural schools.

4
5 We support the implementation, expansion and funding of a “farm to school (cafeteria)” programs
6 and school meal programs including before and after school programs
7

8 **B. Healthcare**

9 We support access to affordable medical, dental, vision and mental health services as well as to long-term
10 care and hospice care, for all people.
11

12 **C. Tax Policy**

13 **1. Ad Valorem Taxes**

14 We oppose sales tax on staple food items.
15

16 We support ag operations in recognized beginning farmer/rancher programs or marketing their products
17 “farm to table” receive a five-year exemption from meeting the gross sales requirement to qualify for ag
18 land classification.
19

20 We urge the continuation of the gas tax credit for agricultural production. Agricultural operations should be
21 allowed a five-year average to meet the dollar criteria in qualifying for the credit.
22

23 We oppose the elimination of the state fuel tax for mileage-based tax.
24

25 We support Wyoming’s method of collecting fuel tax for electric vehicles on a per gallon basis and oppose a
26 method of a per mile charge.
27

28 We urge the State of Wyoming review its assessment procedures in mineral production to make sure they
29 reflect verifiable production figures, not company self-assessments.
30

31 We are opposed to a state income tax for Wyoming.
32

33 We oppose a property tax exemption for business and business investment in the free enterprise system
34 made by churches and religious groups.
35

36 We urge the abolishment of payment of taxes under protest.
37

38 **2. Wyoming Inheritance Tax**

39 We oppose a state inheritance and/or estate tax.
40

41 Until these taxes are abolished, we urge tax reform that will allow the value of farm and grazing lands to be
42 based on the productivity of such lands for gift and inheritance tax purposes.
43

44 **3. Sales and Use Tax**

45 We believe that noncommercial sales should be exempt from state sales tax.

1 We ask the Wyoming State Legislature to exempt agricultural parts and supplies from sales tax.
2 We propose that personal property tax be abolished on agricultural equipment. We strongly support the
3 exemption of farm equipment from sales tax.
4

5 **4. Vehicle Registration**

6 Taxes and licensing requirements on seasonal-use farm vehicles should correspond with length of time in
7 use.
8

9 We oppose any increase in vehicle registration fees.
10

11 We support a one-time registration fee for trailers.
12

13 **5. Severance Tax**

14 We support existing severance and mineral tax rates.
15

16 **6. Property Taxes**

17 We support retaining the 4 tiered property tax system.
18

19 We support taxing ag lands in accordance with production capacity.
20

21 We oppose the reduction of any type of property tax that injures rural communities and shifts burdens on
22 to agriculture or undermines essential public services.
23

24 **D. Worker's Compensation**

25 We strongly urge that worker's compensation for farmers and ranchers continue to be optional.
26

27 **E. Warehouse Law**

28 The issuance of warehouse receipts should be mandatory, and the warehouse receipts should post all
29 handling, cleaning, and storage charges, pro-rated on actual tare and purity as well as all other information
30 now required by Wyoming law.
31

32 We encourage the Wyoming State Legislature to take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the stored
33 commodities shall remain the property of the owners that delivered the commodities for storage in the case
34 of bankruptcy of the warehouse.
35

36 We recommend warehouses be required to issue warehouse receipts no later than 45 days from the date of
37 original delivery as shown by scale tickets or upon request. The scale delivery tickets should be considered
38 proof of ownership until sale, or the warehouse receipt has been issued. Warehouse receipts shall be issued
39 on all producer-owned commodities prior to leaving the state. When a warehouse certifies itself as empty,
40 an automatic audit will be triggered regardless of whether the license is renewed or not.
41

42 We demand that commodities stored in warehouses be inspected bi-annually for quality as well as quantity,
43 and more frequently and unannounced as deemed necessary.
44

1 **F. State Land and Investment Board**

2 We recommend the State Land and Investment Board (SLIB) continue making direct real estate loans to
3 producers.

4
5 We urge the SLIB to allow irrigation loans to finance renewable energy power systems for irrigation
6 practices.

7
8 We oppose the sale of state school lands. Any sale of state land shall be scrutinized in regard to maintaining
9 a balance, both geographically and economically.

10
11 We recognize state trust lands are not “public lands” and the public has no inherent right to access.

12
13 All users should have fees established for use of state school trust lands.

14
15 We urge that current lessees maintain their preferential right when renewing their current lease(s).

16
17 We urge the reestablishment of beginning farmer/rancher loan allocation within the existing farm loan fund.

18
19 **Article V. Rural Development Policies**

20 We welcome economic development that complements our present economic base rather than jeopardizes it.

21
22 We ask the Wyoming State Legislature to provide incentives for rural communities to establish agricultural
23 commodities and biofuels processing within the state.

24
25 We urge the state’s economic development efforts be directed toward small community projects.

26
27 We urge economic development in Wyoming be focused on attracting clean industries, paying a living
28 wage.

29
30 We support the ability for producers to market their commodities and value-added products to consumers
31 direct and through other markets.

32
33 We support efforts to expand market opportunities like those allowed by the Wyoming Food Freedom Act.

34
35 **A. Landowner Reimbursement**

36 We support full landowner and fire district reimbursement for damages and fire suppression costs on both
37 public and private properties caused by railroads.

2026 Special Order of Business

Soil Health on BLM and USFS

Whereas: the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and United States Forest Service (USFS), land management agencies, as well as other agencies that manage land for grazing, have been recently adopting policies that are not aligned with healthy soils principles, in fact, often cause erosion and other impacts that degrade ecosystem function and land productivity,

Whereas: Increasing wildfire, drought, and other natural disasters make prioritization of healthy soils on public lands urgent,

Whereas: BLM manages 155 million and the USFS manages 73.7 million acres of land in agricultural production with grazing leases,

Whereas: the BLM and USFS has made it difficult, if not impossible, to uphold healthy soils principles, even at no cost to these agencies, that would increase grass production and overall ecosystem function, particularly on brittle Western landscapes,

Whereas: the BLM has designated certain Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) where continuation of historical land management practices—such as discing and seeding, bush hogging, and the application of solid-form herbicides—is allowed, however, in practice, has often denied these activities simply because it is easier to say “no” than to support the continuation of necessary, previously permitted management actions,

Whereas: the US congress has introduced the Voluntary Grazing Permit Retirement Act (VGPPRA), similar to the recently voted down Wildlife- Livestock Conflict Resolution Act (S. 2980), which would allow for the retirement of BLM and USFS grazing allotments, removing livestock grazing which is essential for the continuation of good soil health.

Therefore, be it resolved: that the BLM and USFS listen to the voices of knowledgeable ranchers and other land use managers concerning the above-mentioned concerns, and

Therefore, be it further resolved: the BLM and USFS appoint a Soil Health Resource Advisory Councils consisting of ranchers and other land use managers to consult in the implementation of practices to prioritize soil health and ecosystem function, and

Therefore, be it further resolved: the BLM and USFS act quickly on establishing agendas to quickly put these soil health practices into effect before it is too late and precious soil is lost to wind and water erosion, and

Therefore, be it further resolved: the US Congress and Senate vote down and refrain from federal legislation allowing for the donation and permanent retirement of grazing leases or permits on the BLM and USFS by individuals permittees and/or private interest groups because of the potential detriment to soil health by the removal of livestock from these lands.

Special Order of Business 2026

Food and Farm Policy for the Future of Family Agriculture

Whereas, family farmers across the country are enduring the fourth consecutive year of increasing input costs and decreasing commodity prices, decreasing the ability to access necessary operating loans, and

Whereas, trade deficits continue to grow, with commodity exports dropping and record crops predicted, presenting a situation where there will be little to no room to store this year's crops, and

Whereas, new and beginning farmers and ranchers, including the next generation of existing family farms and ranches, are facing the highest risk, and

Whereas, corporate monopolies in the supply and sales sectors of agriculture continue to show record profits and further consolidate, and

Whereas, current policies have led to reliance on export markets and the subsequent overproduction of many commodities, necessitating government payments for survival,

Therefore, be it resolved, RMFU calls for a systemic change in the food and farm policies of the United States government to bring fairness to family farmers and ranchers, including:

- Emphasis on government programs which provide a true safety net and not a program that relies on perpetual annual "safety net" payment.
- Farm programs and policies which encourage and incentivize more diverse crop production and inclusion of livestock in operations.
- Tiered subsidy levels on crop and revenue protection products, prioritizing the success of family farms and ranches.
- A cap on all government program payments which are tied to individual owners, not to operational structure.
- FSA loan and loan guarantee programs to restructure debt of family farms and ranches.
- A ban on government agricultural program payments to all foreign individuals and entities.
- Imposing tariffs on imported products which are also produced in the US to level the cost of foreign production and currency differences.
- Temporary, voluntary and compensated land set aside programs to match production to demand and reduce current stockpile.
- Enforcement of Packers and Stockyards and the Sherman Act, up to and including forced breakup of monopolies and oligopolies.
- Passage of a new anti-trust law that explicitly sets anti-trust policy to police harmful dominance rather than consumer welfare.
- Aggressive DOJ/SEC investigation and scrutiny on all proposed corporate mergers/buy outs to ensure they do not create or reinforce market dominance or otherwise harm competitive conditions.
- Tax policy changes which incentivize the survival of family farms and ranches and encourage operator ownership of agricultural land.
- Overhaul of all checkoff programs which:
 - Prevents any persons or organizations lobbying from receiving check off dollars.

- 1 o Prioritizes the development of domestic markets.
- 2 o Encourages production which more closely matches demand.
- 3 o Works on behalf of producers of the commodities-
- 4 o Requires periodic approval of a majority of the producers who pay checkoff fees to
- 5 continue collecting checkoff dollars.